



Arkansas Department of Education

Johnny Key, Commissioner

Transforming Arkansas to lead the nation in student-focused education

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ADE Receives \$9 Million Grant for School-Based Mental Health Programs

LITTLE ROCK — The Arkansas Department of Education is pleased to announce that the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration has awarded ADE a \$9 million grant to develop and support school-based mental health programs in the state.

ADE will receive approximately \$1.8 million each year for five years to fund the Advancing Wellness and Resilience in Education program, which will do the following:

- develop comprehensive school mental health programs in three pilot locations: Texarkana School District, Marvell-Elaine School District and Ozarks Unlimited Resource Educational Service Cooperative;
- develop a statewide infrastructure of support and training for school personnel in the Mental Health First Aid, Trauma Informed Schools and Adverse Childhood Experiences programs and initiatives; and
- promote a safe, supportive and positive school environment for students, staff, educators and the community.

"This grant comes at an especially significant time as we are studying ways to keep our students safe at school," Gov. Asa Hutchinson said. "The money will allow the department to seek training for educators that will equip them to recognize and address issues of substance abuse and mental health in schools. This awareness is essential to keeping our schools safe. We must take the administrative load off of school counselors so that they are free to interact with students and to counsel those in need of that attention. This is one of the most important things we can do to ensure that our schools are as secure as we can make them. I commend Commissioner Key for his leadership in securing this grant. Our schools will be the safer for it."

"This grant gives ADE an opportunity to provide leadership and support to schools and educators around the state to address critical mental health and school safety concerns," ADE Commissioner Johnny Key said. "Through Arkansas AWARE, we will build partnerships with stakeholders to enhance the prevention and intervention components of a safe school environment, resulting in increased safety and learning for all students."

The grant will allow ADE to develop a formal partnership with the Arkansas Department of Human Services' Division of Behavioral Health Services to implement the goals and objectives of the grant. ADE also will collaborate with the University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences (ARBEST), Arkansas Foundation for Medical Care, Arkansas State University at Jonesboro (Center for Community Engagement and Office of Behavioral Research and Evaluation), National Council for Behavioral

Health and Center for School Mental Health at the University of Maryland to support the implementation.

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