



Arkansas Department of Education

Johnny Key, Commissioner

Transforming Arkansas to lead the nation in student-focused education

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ADE Launches Family and Community Engagement Framework & Toolkit

LITTLE ROCK — The role of family and community engagement in student success is undeniable. Not only do strong relationships, collaboration, and a shared responsibility among families, schools, and communities meet the diverse, immediate needs of children, they also lead to personal and professional success beyond high school.

To encourage and foster these relationships, the Arkansas Department of Education is pleased to launch the Family and Community Engagement Framework & Toolkit, a research-based birth-to-grade 16 (four years post high school) guide for improved engagement.

The framework identifies six essential characteristics of effective family and community engagement: Communication, Partnerships, Equity, Leadership, Innovation, and Safe/Friendly Schools. Each of these features includes multiple key elements that assist with incorporating the characteristics. The accompanying toolkit includes resources, strategies, videos, and model examples of engagement to aid in these efforts.

“I want to commend the Arkansas Department of Education and all stakeholders who participated in the development of this framework and toolkit,” Gov. Asa Hutchinson said. “ADE identified a need, reallocated existing resources, and made family and community engagement a priority, while incorporating stakeholders early in the development process. Our students will greatly benefit from the extensive commitment from the students, parents, educators, business leaders, and community members who spent countless hours providing input, feedback, and guidance for the framework and toolkit. Arkansas, once again, serves as an example for other states and is leading the way in education.”

“The social, emotional, academic, and physical supports that students need cross all boundaries and must be shared by families, educators, and communities,” said Kim Wright, ADE’s director for family and community engagement. “Arkansas’ framework and toolkit were developed by stakeholders for stakeholders and will lead to improved conversations, community participation, and engagement on local levels. Together, we can help all children achieve their potential and graduate from high school prepared for college, career, and community engagement.”

The development of the framework and toolkit began more than a year-and-a-half ago. In addition to a State Board of Education committee that began addressing the importance of engagement, Arkansas became one of six cohort states selected by the Council of Chief State School Officers to

develop the framework and toolkit. Instead of developing guidelines to be used by only schools and districts, Arkansas incorporated stakeholder input and developed the framework and toolkit for use by all stakeholders: students, families, community members, schools/programs, school districts, and the state education agency. The State Board of Education approved the framework in February, which led to the development of the toolkit.

“With the implementation of the Every Student Succeeds Act, the conversation shifted from parental involvement to family and community engagement,” Wright said. “Parental involvement has always played a critical role in student success, but engagement includes so much more, from utilizing ongoing, effective two-way communication and developing meaningful partnerships to improving cultural understanding. Our framework and toolkit accomplish all of these things.”

ADE initially created the Arkansas Family and Community Engagement Coalition, comprised of 80 stakeholders from around the state. The coalition was divided into four subcommittees that focused on four main areas: culture, professional development, instruction, and leadership. This group developed the framework and toolkit, held numerous meetings, and conducted 10 community meetings in five regional locations. In addition to the coalition, ADE also developed a stakeholder network of more than 175 people who provided ongoing feedback throughout the process.

The framework and toolkit are available on the Parents, Teachers, and Administrators webpages at <http://dese.ade.arkansas.gov> or can be accessed by going to <http://bit.ly/EngagementMattersAR>.

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