



# Arkansas Department of Education

*Transforming Arkansas to lead the nation in student-focused education*

November 13, 2017

**Johnny Key**  
*Commissioner*

The Honorable Betsy DeVos  
Secretary of Education  
400 Maryland Avenue SW  
LBJ Education Building  
Washington DC 20202

**State Board  
of Education**

**Dr. Jay Barth**  
*Little Rock  
Chair*

Dear Secretary DeVos:

**Joe Black**  
*Newport  
Vice Chair*

As most of the U.S. is now aware, President Trump recently released a Presidential Memorandum for the Secretary of Education on Increasing Access to High-Quality Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) Education. In part, this memo directed that, "The Secretary shall, to the extent consistent with law, establish a goal of devoting at least \$200 million in grant funds per year to the promotion of high-quality STEM education, including Computer Science in particular." Arkansas's initiative is recognized by multiple international and national entities as the leader in statewide implementation of computer science. By leading the Arkansas initiative for Gov. Asa Hutchinson and the State, and by being called upon by numerous other states and entities to provide guidance and advice for their initiatives, I have been able to acquire a fairly comprehensive understanding of the diverse nature and varied degrees of advancement of many state initiatives.

**Susan Chambers**  
*Bella Vista*

**Charisse Dean**  
*Little Rock*

**Dr. Fitz Hill**  
*Little Rock*

**Ouida Newton**  
*Poyen*

With this in mind, I respectfully request that the U.S. Department of Education consider allowing each state the sole right of first refusal in applying for any funding awarded to the state and the following when establishing the criteria for access to this funding:

**Mireya Reith**  
*Fayetteville*

**R. Brett Williamson**  
*El Dorado*

**Diane Zook**  
*Melbourne*

1. Allow the states through their Governor's Office and/or state Superintendent/Commissioner of Education determine how and the level to which local educational authorities may apply for this funding including allowing for:
  - a. A single state-level Department of Education application or single state-level Department of Education and state educational non-profit co-signed application aligned with well-defined state CS initiatives (such as Arkansas's) that may include:
    - i. State Department of Education sub-granting of funds to local educational authorities and/or other entities that support the state's initiative, and
    - ii. State Department of Education expensing of funds as warranted to support the state's initiative, or,
  - b. Each state indicating what entities in addition to the State may apply for funding to be awarded and used within that state.

Four Capitol Mall  
Little Rock, AR  
72201-1019  
(501) 682-4475  
ArkansasEd.gov

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2. Allow the states to submit this determination as an addendum to the Every Student Succeeds Act plan to be reviewed and approved by the U.S. Department of Education, and
3. If the state ESSA plan allows for multiple eligible entities within that state to apply and receive funding under this program, only the applications that the state Department of Education recommends will receive priority funding consideration by the U.S. Department of Education.

Please allow me to express appreciation to the White House and Ms. Ivanka Trump, both from the State of Arkansas and me personally, for this financial commitment to, and other support of, computer science education under their #CSforKids initiative. Our state initiative has demonstrated that Arkansas is investing heavily in building and growing a quality computer literate workforce. The Arkansas Department of Education Office of Computer Science eagerly awaits further guidance from the U.S. Department of Education on how our amazing initiative may be bolstered to new heights with the support of this federal funding.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Anthony A. Owen', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Anthony A. Owen  
Arkansas Director of Computer Science Education