



Arkansas Department of Education

Johnny Key, Commissioner

Transforming Arkansas to lead the nation in student-focused education

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Registration for ADE's Reading Conference Maxed at 1,000; ADE to Live Stream Several Sessions

LITTLE ROCK — Interest in the Arkansas Department of Education's upcoming reading conference was so overwhelmingly positive, the department expanded registration by 300 to accommodate Arkansas educators. Registration is completely full, with 1,000 Arkansas educators scheduled to attend the department's Reading Conference for Arkansas Schools March 6 and 7 at the Hot Springs Convention Center.

"We are extremely thrilled at the response for this year's conference," said Stacy Smith, ADE's assistant commissioner for Learning Services. "We are receiving tremendous support for the state's R.I.S.E. Arkansas reading initiative, and that interest is reflected in the registration numbers for the conference. Not only are we at capacity, we have a waiting list. For those who are unable to attend in person, we are partnering with AETN to live stream some of the sessions."

The conference is one of the department's efforts to promote a culture of reading in Arkansas. ADE and Gov. Asa Hutchinson launched R.I.S.E. (Reading Initiative for Student Excellence) Arkansas Jan. 26. Stakeholder collaboration and additional instructional support to current and future teachers are necessary to achieving a culture of reading in the state and improving students' reading proficiency.

According to 2015 ACT Aspire results, 48.6 percent of Arkansas' students in grades three through 10 were proficient in English language arts. The ACT results for the same year showed 39 percent of Arkansas' graduating seniors met reading readiness benchmarks.

To provide support for Arkansas educators, ADE's conference next week will focus on dyslexia and the science of teaching reading. Dyslexia is a learning disability that is reflected in difficulty with reading accuracy and fluent word recognition, poor spelling and word decoding. According to data on the ADE My School Info website, 6,134 Arkansas students received dyslexia intervention in 2015-2016.

In addition to presentations by four national keynote speakers and multiple Arkansas educators, the conference will include 78 breakout sessions that focus on instructional practices; interventions; and

content knowledge for phonemic awareness, phonics, syllables and syllabication, morphology, fluency, comprehension and vocabulary. Attendees also will have the opportunity to hear presentations about dyslexia and related reading disabilities, IDEA and 504 regulations, gifted and talented program information, and practices to assist English learners.

To see the conference live stream schedule, access the live stream link and to learn more about R.I.S.E. Arkansas, visit <http://www.arkansased.gov/divisions/learning-services/r.i.s.e.-arkansas>. Also follow ADE on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram at #RISEArkansas.

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