



Arkansas Department of Education

Division of Elementary and Secondary Education

Jacob Oliva, Secretary

Dr. Ivy Pfeffer, Deputy Commissioner

Stacy Smith, Deputy Commissioner

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State Board of Education Names Oliva as DESE Commissioner

LITTLE ROCK — The Arkansas Department of Education is pleased to announce that the State Board of Education has selected Jacob Oliva as commissioner of ADE's Division of Elementary and Secondary Education.

The board went into executive session during its regularly scheduled meeting today to consider Oliva for the position. Upon returning, the board voted unanimously to employ him as commissioner.

"Mr. Oliva's experience as a teacher, administrator, and department leader is quite impressive," State Board Chair Ouida Newton said. "His dedication to student learning is evident in his leadership and efforts to implement successful programs and initiatives that support learning. I am confident that the students and educators of Arkansas will benefit from his expertise, and we look forward to working with him."

"I firmly believe that every student can learn and should have access to an educational environment that promotes learning, growth, and success," Oliva said. "I am honored to receive the board's approval today, and I look forward to working alongside the board and the division team to implement best educational practices that will ensure all students across the Natural State receive the high-quality education and supports they need to thrive."

In addition to serving as DESE commissioner, Oliva also was recently named secretary for the Arkansas Department of Education. Prior to being named commissioner and secretary, Oliva served

in numerous roles at the Florida Department of Education, most recently as interim commissioner. He joined the Florida department as executive vice-chancellor of the Public Schools Division in 2017 and became chancellor in 2019, where his division supported more than 2.8 million students in approximately 3,600 Florida public schools.

In 2021, he was promoted to senior chancellor, and his responsibilities expanded to include early learning, school choice programs, school safety, and school accountability. Additionally, he encouraged statewide leadership and communication between the Florida Department of Education and the state's school districts.

Oliva is a graduate of Miami-Dade County Public Schools and Flagler College in Florida. He began his educational career more than two decades ago as an elementary teacher for students with special needs. He later served as a principal at both the elementary and high school levels and as an assistant superintendent and superintendent of Flagler County Schools.

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Secretary Jacob Oliva (center) with State Board of Education members

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