Established by the Arkansas General Assembly in 2003, the Education Renewal Zones (ERZ) are a multiyear Pre-K-16 initiative funded by the state of Arkansas to help improve public school performance and student academic achievement. The Northwest ERZ is a collaborative effort between the University of Arkansas, Arkansas Department of Education, the Northwest Arkansas Education Services Cooperative, partner schools, and community partners.

Education Renewal Zone Goals:

- Ensure that each partner school has a comprehensive professional development program
- Assist partner schools in developing a P-16 curriculum that is rigorous, intentionally aligned, and reflects the needs of the stakeholders
- Develop mentoring programs for students, pre-service teachers, new teachers, and experienced teachers
- Assist schools with strategies to recruit and retain highly qualified teachers
• Develop and implement strategies to encourage parental and community involvement
• Encourage collaboration between the University of Arkansas, partner schools, NWA Education Service Co-op, and community organizations

Activities to Reach our Goals:
What are we up to at ERZ? Currently, work is in progress to set up U of A students as tutors in area schools. Mentoring programs will be set up in partner schools with an emphasis on Adopt-a-Classroom, a program placing University of Arkansas professors in an area classroom once a month for a school year. The purpose of this? Students will become excited about becoming a college student in the not-so-distant future, and teachers will observe “Best Practices” right in their own classrooms!

There's an online form to fill out if you are interested in participating or learning more.

The Northwest ERZ is working closely with the NWA Education Services Co-op to establish the Northwest Arkansas P-16 Task Force. Fourteen representatives from local schools, higher education institutions in our area, and the co-op have joined this task force to identify and address the needs of students as they transition from high school to higher education. This group will meet each semester, beginning in November.

If you are interested in learning more about the NWA P-16 Task Force, please contact Elizabeth Smith at ees005@uark.edu.

What do we envision for ERZ's future? Other possibilities include:

• ACT training for students, teachers and parents at partner schools
• Creating programs to address drop-out, retention and graduation rates at partner schools
• Generating innovative methods for valuing teachers to assist schools in recruiting and retaining highly qualified teachers

Partner Schools:

• Elkins Public Schools
• Gentry Public Schools
• Lincoln Public Schools
• Owl Creek School, Fayetteville
• Ramay Junior High School, Fayetteville
• Springdale Public Schools
Our Staff: Ready to Go!

For more information, please visit erz.uark.edu or call or email us

Elizabeth Smith, Director
College of Education and Health Professions
338 Graduate Education Building
Fayetteville, AR 72701
479-575-3641  fax 479-575-8797
ees005@uark.edu
www.uark.edu

The college appointed Elizabeth Smith, who previously served as the college's field placement director, to serve as Education Renewal Zone director. Smith earned a Master of Education in higher education leadership from the College of Education and Health Professions and also has a bachelor's degree in political science from the university. She is pursuing a doctorate in public policy. She has worked in several other roles that brought her into close contact with educators and students, including coordinator of leadership development at NorthWest Arkansas Community College, counselor coordinator for University Access Talent Search at the University of Arkansas, academic counselor for Talent Search and assistant director of the university's Office of Admissions.

Priscilla Wetzel, Administrative Assistant
College of Education and Health Professions
338 Graduate Education Building
Fayetteville, AR 72701
479-575-4582  fax 479-575-8797
prwetzel@uark.edu
www.uark.edu

Priscilla Wetzel, ERZ administrative assistant, is coming to ERZ from a former career as an elementary and middle school teacher and Pathwise mentor in Prairie Grove. Wetzel earned a bachelor’s degree in elementary education from the College of Education and Health Professions and has also completed graduate coursework in education.