January 2014

Education Renewal Zone

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.

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Adopt-A-Classroom
During the 2013-2014 fall and spring semesters, 35 U of A faculty and staff volunteers from six colleges across campus are matched with local teachers from seven districts and nine schools through the ERZ’s Adopt-A-Classroom program. The second year of AAC began with faculty training and a Welcome Reception on Oct. 9 where the participants were paired.

One Adopt-A-Classroom partnership recently resulted in Elkins High School students learning more about marketing and pricing at a local Walmart. Dr. Tara Dryer, program coordinator at the Global Campus, is partnering with a business education teacher at Elkins High School. Through Adopt-A-Classroom, Dr. Dryer has included local vendors (such as Kelly Stewart from Nuk, seen above in a picture from the *Arkansas Democrat-Gazette*) to teach students about current business practices. KUAF’s Ozarks at Large recently aired a story about Adopt-A-Classroom, which can be heard on their [website](http://www.kuaf.org).

Brittany Acuff, (at right) UREC Assistant Director, recently visited her adopted classroom at Leverett Elementary to teach them about healthy snacks. She taught how to make a healthy alternative to an ice
cream bar with bananas, yogurt, and granola.

Toby Fitzsimons (above), a researcher in the Dale Bumpers College of Agricultural, Food, and Life Sciences, has partnered with a fifth-grade science teacher at Owl
Creek Elementary in Fayetteville. Toby recently visited the classroom to share experiments related to states of matter. Students learned about sublimation through the use of liquid nitrogen, dry ice, and water.

The ERZ wants to extend the invitation to join Adopt-A-Classroom to faculty and staff in the College of Education and Health Professions as an additional 37 teachers would like to participate in the program but are in need of a U of A faculty or staff partner. If you are interested in adopting a local classroom in the spring semester, please contact Elizabeth Smith.

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**Future Teacher's Day**

Eighty-five local high school students attended the first-ever Future Teacher’s Day on Oct. 29, where they learned about majoring in education and were welcomed to campus by Dean Tom Smith.

The group toured campus and shared a meal at the Northwest Quad Dining Hall, attended a class, and questioned a panel of education students. The panel covered differences between education courses and core courses, internship and practicum requirements, living-arrangements on campus, Greek organizations, and financial aid.

Field experience information was shared by Leah Chamberlain, director of the Office
of Field Placement and Teacher Licensure. Working collaboratively, Elizabeth Smith, director of the Education Renewal Zone, and Jake Ayo, coordinator of undergraduate student recruitment for the College of Education and Health Professions, sponsored the event.

The next Future Teacher’s Day has been scheduled for April 15 and will target students from local rural schools who are interested in a teaching career. Additionally, the event will be expanded to include break-out sessions featuring each COEHP teacher-education program so students can obtain more detailed information about their area of interest.

Northwest Arkansas P-20 Task Force

The Northwest Arkansas Education Service Cooperative (NWAESC) and the Education Renewal Zone hosted the third meeting of the Northwest Arkansas P-20 Task Force on Jan. 24. Dr. Tom Kimbrell, Arkansas Commissioner of Education, and Shane Broadway, Director of the Arkansas Department of Higher Education, were the featured guests at the meeting and urged the attendees to pursue P-20 collaboration for the benefit of students.

More than 70 local school district administrators and higher education representatives attended the meeting to discuss ways to partner with each other. At Dr. Kimbrell’s behest, the task force plans to facilitate conferences between high school faculty and higher education faculty this spring so the two groups can work toward vertical alignment.

The next meeting of the NWA P-20 Task Force will be in May, and University of Arkansas faculty and staff are welcome to attend. Please e-mail Elizabeth Smith if
ERZ Advisory Board Meetings

The UA ERZ Advisory Board, comprised of University representatives and administrators from 27 local schools, meets three times a year to provide guiding feedback on ERZ operations. At the September meeting, Priscilla Wetzel, program coordinator for the ERZ, and Mike Van Dyke, director of the Northwest Arkansas Education Services Cooperative, provided an update to partners on the implementation of the Literacy Design Collaborative, a template-based approach to the literacy demands of college and the workplace. ERZs throughout the state are partnering with the co-ops to support schools as they implement LDC to meet the increased expectations for literacy proficiency as defined by the Common Core State Standards. The ERZ Advisory Board is also considering how to bring College Summit to Northwest Arkansas to provide greater support to low-income students pursuing post-secondary education.

At the quarterly Advisory Board meetings, the ERZ also hosts presentations from various offices on the U of A campus that can provide services to our school partners. If you have information or services you would like to share with this group in the 2013-2014 school year, please contact Elizabeth Smith. The next scheduled meeting of the ERZ Advisory Board is Wednesday, March 19.

Partner Schools:
Decatur Public Schools
Elkins Public Schools
Farmington Public Schools
Fayetteville Public Schools
Gentry Public Schools
Lincoln Public Schools
Springdale Public Schools

Our Staff: Ready to Go!
For more information, please visit erz.uark.edu or call or email us

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