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 Service Cooperative, partner schools, and community partners.

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Adopt-A-Classroom
During the spring semester, sixteen University of Arkansas faculty volunteers from five colleges across campus were matched with local school educators through the ERZ’s Adopt-A-Classroom program. The pilot year of AAC concluded with a celebration reception on May 9 where the participants were recognized for their efforts.
K-12 educators and University of Arkansas faculty have developed meaningful partnerships through the inaugural year of Adopt-A-Classroom. One example is the collaborative relationship created by Ben Chamberlain, UA Associate Director of Bands, and Karri Altrogge, Gentry High School band director. These two Adopt-A-Classroom participants created opportunities for their students, colleagues, and even students’ parents to be involved in the program. Their semester-long partnership included Gentry High School students visiting campus and practicing alongside UA band members, UA band members teaching master classes at Gentry High School, and Ms. Altrogge serving as guest conductor at the UA Concert Band concert. Read [this Newswire](https://www.uark.edu/newsroom/newswire/2013/adoptionclassroom.html) story to learn more about this exemplary Adopt-A-Classroom partnership.

Other Adopt-A-Classroom pairings led to seventh-grade science students in Farmington utilizing a human brain for their research, second-grade students in Gentry building water filtration systems, and second-grade students in Elkins determining how termites use their sense of smell in place of eyesight. Additionally, three Adopt-A-Classroom professors brought their adopted students to campus to introduce them to campus life including specialized campus tours and attending UA classes.
The ERZ plans to continue the Adopt-A-Classroom program in the 2013-2014 school year and we want to extend the invitation to join to faculty and staff throughout the College of Education and Health Professions. If you are interested in adopting a local classroom next year, please contact Elizabeth Smith.

Northwest Arkansas P-20 Task Force
The Northwest Arkansas Education Service Cooperative (NWAESC) and the Education Renewal Zone hosted the second meeting for the Northwest Arkansas P-20 Task Force on February 27. The meeting was attended by representatives of local school districts and higher education institutions in Northwest Arkansas. The task force created and adopted the following mission statement at the February meeting:

*The mission of the Northwest Arkansas P-20 Task Force is to improve the transitions of Pre-Kindergarten through Post-Graduate students in Northwest Arkansas by*

- Minimizing barriers
- Expanding conversations among education, industry, and community stakeholders
- Increasing student and parent awareness of the impact of educational opportunities and choices
- Addressing the changing regional and global workforce needs

Moving forward, the priorities of the task force include investigating how to further develop a P-20 student data tracking system as well as how to link state funding to each individual student.

**Common Core State Standards Model Lessons Institute**

On Saturday, April 27, K-8 educators came together to share model lessons at the inaugural Common Core State Standards Model Lesson Institute sponsored by the Education Renewal Zone and the Dean's Office. Sessions were offered on a wide range of topics including Socratic Circles, integrating music and art with math and science, and STEM narrative lessons. [Arkansas Ideas](http://arkansasideas.org), an on-line professional development resource provided by the Arkansas Department of Education, plans to utilize presentations from this institute to train ADE employees and Arkansas teachers. The ERZ is already planning to host another Common Core Model Lessons Institute in the fall as 100% of the attendees agreed that the event should be repeated.

**ERZ Advisory Board Meetings**

Advisory Board meetings provide an opportunity for ERZ partners to discuss ERZ activities and services and the needs of partner schools. At the quarterly Advisory Board meetings, the ERZ also hosts presentations from various offices on the UA campus that can provide services to our school partners. In the past year, we've learned more about the Office for Education Policy, Center for Mathematics and Science Education, Northwest Arkansas Writing Project, Center for Economic Education, and the Office of Latino Academic Advancement and Community Relations through presentations to the Advisory Board. Thanks to each of those offices for sharing about the resources available to schools! If you have information or services you would like to share with this group in the 2013-2014 school year, please contact [Elizabeth Smith](mailto:esmith@ua.edu).

**ERZ School Partners**

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

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