

## From the Commissioner

Dear Parents:

Since the landmark Lake View school funding ruling by the Arkansas Supreme Court in 2003, the discussion about education in Arkansas has focused on the concept of educational adequacy. Now, thirteen years later, it is time for our state to move beyond the concept of educational adequacy and begin a robust discussion about *educational excellence*.

Each year the Arkansas Department of Education publishes a Performance Report of the state's schools. Not to be confused with student report cards, this report provides parents and communities with information about each school and district including test performance, teacher qualification, retention, discipline and much more.

This report is not intended to spotlight the problems or deficiencies in our schools. It is designed to help open the lines of communication between educators, parents and the local community on how all stakeholders can work together toward excellence in your local schools. Parents can use the report when visiting their child's school for conferences and other meetings to ask questions about how well the school is performing and what measures are in place for improvement.

Because you are reading this, you have an interest in the educational experiences offered by your child's school. We trust the information included in the 2016 Arkansas School Performance Report will encourage you to become even more engaged in your child's education. When parents are partners in their children's education, the results are enhanced learning experiences leading to higher academic achievement.

You may encounter educational terms that are not familiar to you. To help you better understand the information, definitions of terms used in the Arkansas School Performance Report can be found at <http://adesrc.arkansas.gov/assets/documents/2016/Definitions.pdf>. If you need additional information about this report, contact your local school administrator.

Governor Hutchinson and the Arkansas Department of Education, along with many other state agencies, are working diligently to transform educational opportunities in Arkansas. With efforts like the replacement of Common Core State Standards with an improved set of Arkansas Math and English standards, the implementation of Governor Hutchinson's computer coding initiative, and the statewide upgrade of broadband access in schools, we are working to ensure Arkansas children — no matter where they live — have the knowledge and skills to succeed in college and the workforce.

Parents, educators, and communities must have high expectations for our students. I invite you to join in the discussion about how we can work together to achieve those expectations. For more information, we encourage you to visit <http://www.arkansased.org/>.

Respectfully,  
Johnny Key  
Commissioner of Education