



# ARKANSAS DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

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DECATUR: Retired educator Leroy H. Ortman was named superintendent of the Decatur School District today by Dr. Ken James, Arkansas Commissioner of Education. Ortman is assuming the role with the school district a week after it was taken over by the state because of fiscal mismanagement.

“I am pleased that Mr. Ortman was willing to take on this role,” James said. “He is well aware of the circumstances the Decatur School District is in as well as the challenges it faces in obtaining fiscal stability. I believe he has the expertise to help Decatur through this difficult process.”

Ortman, who has spent several weeks this summer as a paid consultant to help review Decatur School District’s finances, retired from the Gravette School District as superintendent in 2005. Before moving there in 1995, he had worked as a superintendent in both Iowa and Nebraska. He received his bachelor’s degree in 1959 from Southern State Teachers College in South Dakota and his master’s degree from the University of Nebraska in 1962.

Earlier this summer, the Arkansas Department of Education was notified of problems with the district’s bookkeeping and has since found that Decatur had failed to properly record expenditures in the Arkansas Public School Computer Network, checks had been written manually and not recorded on district books, the bank account had not been reconciled, tax reports had not been filed and payroll taxes had not been paid.

The State Board of Education placed the Decatur School District in fiscal distress at its July 14 meeting and voted for state takeover of the district in a specially called meeting on July 31, at which time the district was predicted to end the 2008-2009 school year with a negative balance of \$510,251.

***The Arkansas Department of Education strives to ensure that all children in the state have access to a quality education by providing educators, administrators and staff with leadership, resources and training.***