



NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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KEN JAMES' STATEMENT REGARDING TODAY'S ANNOUNCEMENT BY MURPHY OIL CORPORATION

"The Arkansas Department of Education lauds Murphy Oil Corporation for its incredibly generous gift to El Dorado students and for the enormous impact this \$50 million investment in students will have for education throughout Arkansas. This is much needed in a state where only 15 percent of the populace holds bachelor's degrees.

"We know that many Arkansas students face two major hurdles in their quest for college. One is financial; the other is being academically prepared for that freshman year. Because of this gift, the financial obstacle is eliminated for El Dorado students. And because of recent reforms by the state, a curriculum – Smart Core – is in place to give students the academic foundation they need to succeed in college. I am thrilled with the opportunities afforded these students and I challenge them to take Smart Core or the most challenging set of courses they can in high school. While this may mean they have to work harder and perhaps seek additional help from teachers or tutors, it also means they have to believe in themselves, to believe that they can make the most of this wonderful gift."

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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.