



NEWS RELEASE

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ANNUAL TEACHER RECRUITMENT EVENT SET

Diane Woods had dropped out of college and was raising her family in her hometown of Turrell when School District Superintendent Alfred Hogan convinced her to return to college so she could teach in the Delta community. It was a win-win-win situation: Woods fulfilled a dream, Hogan hired a needed teacher, and fourth-graders at Turrell Elementary benefit each year from a dedicated, caring instructor.

"Diane's is just one of the many inspiring stories we have heard in our office about people who find their way to the teaching profession. While the path they follow is not always direct, it is always rewarding," said Beverly Williams, assistant commissioner for human resources and licensure for the Arkansas Department of Education (ADE).

Would-be educators like Woods will have the opportunity to learn how to transform their teaching goal into a reality at ADE's A Call to Teach: Pathways to Teaching from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. Saturday, November 10, at the Embassy Suites Hotel, 11301 Financial Centre Parkway, in Little Rock.

"The Department's goal is for every Arkansas student to be as fortunate as those fourth-graders in Turrell, to be taught by a highly qualified teacher," Williams said. "Too many Arkansas students do not receive the benefits of learning from a teacher with subject-area or grade-level expertise. Those shortages are even more pronounced in the southern and eastern areas of the state."

Representatives from colleges of education as well as from ADE will be present at the event to guide participants through the requirements of obtaining an Arkansas teaching license. Persons can register at www.teacharkansas.org or by calling (501) 682-5535.

Arkansas' teaching shortage areas by subject are: art; foreign languages (French, German and Spanish); gifted and talented; guidance and counseling; library media; mathematics (grades 7-12) middle childhood mathematics/sciences (grades 4-8); middle childhood English/language arts/social studies (grades 4-8); life/earth science (grades 7-12); physical earth science (grades 7-12); deaf education; visually impaired education; and special education.

Each year, the state awards teacher's licenses to between 1,200 and 1,300 graduates of Arkansas' 18 colleges of education as well as to another 450 to 600 persons through it's non-traditional licensure program. But these numbers fall short of the expected retirements of many teachers, which will exacerbate the current shortages, Williams said.

"We need more people like Diane Woods," Williams said. "She had the intelligence and the commitment to young people that are integral to being a good teacher. All she needed was the encouragement and someone to guide her through the process – that is what ADE is attempting to provide to others through A Call to Teach: Pathways to Teaching."

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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.