



NEWS RELEASE

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ROUTES TO A CAREER IN EDUCATION EXPLAINED IN "A CALL TO TEACH" EVENT

The Arkansas Department of Education (ADE) will sponsor the second annual A Call to Teach: Pathways to Teaching, an event designed to help potential educators find their best routes to the classroom, whether their starting point is in school or in another career.

The event, which is scheduled from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. on Saturday, January 27, at Little Rock's Embassy Suites, is especially geared to reach those who are interested in teaching where Arkansas' highest classroom needs are, both in terms of geography and subject area. Last year, more than 1,000 people attended the event.

"The Department's goal is for every Arkansas student to be taught by highly qualified teachers," said Beverly Williams, ADE Assistant Commissioner for Human Resources/Licensure. "We hope events like these will help us meet that goal. We have students across the state who 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. Special sessions for those interested in ADE's Non-Traditional Licensure program will be held periodically throughout the day. Registration is required to attend one of these sessions. 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.

"In addition to the students traveling the traditional path to a teaching career, Arkansas is full of people who have a wealth of expertise they've gained from other jobs who are ideal candidates for our Non-Traditional Licensure program," Williams said. What we hope to do is help these teachers find their dream jobs in areas in which the state's children most need them."

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 its non-traditional licensure program. But these numbers fall short of the expected retirements of many teachers, which will exacerbate the current shortages, Williams said.

"Teaching is such a rewarding career," she said. "What's more, teachers are the critical element in how well a child learns. All of our children deserve to have the best education our state can provide."

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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.