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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

ForwARd Arkansas Releases State of Education Report *Full Report Available at ForwardArkansas.org*

LITTLE ROCK, Ark. (Jan. 27, 2015) – ForwARd Arkansas today released *The State of Education in Arkansas* report, which confirms key facts about our state’s educational system and student outcomes.

- **Arkansas has been successful in improving access to education and increasing participation in higher-level educational activities.**
- **Arkansas has established policies and standards that should support improved student outcomes.**
- **Student outcomes are still far below aspirations across the state; opportunity exists to improve.**
- **Despite recent gains, the achievement gap is still significant, and this is reflected in economic, racial and regional disparities.**

“Arkansas has made great strides when it comes to our education system, yet student outcomes are still below aspirations.” said Sherece West-Scantlebury, president and CEO of the Winthrop Rockefeller Foundation and ForwARd steering committee member. “The State of Education in Arkansas report is a call to action to improve education outcomes for all Arkansas students by providing the best education to serve them in the future.”

This report provides the public and the steering committee with the data needed to inform, guide and focus ForwARd’s strategic plan for P-16 education in Arkansas. The report is the result of extensive research on school performance, student demographics, test scores, graduation rates and other education metrics.

“This report is one of several data sources ForwARd will use to develop its comprehensive plan to improve education in our state,” said West. “Paired with the input from Arkansans through our online survey, meetings and advocacy group outreach, this report will give us a strong foundation to advance education in Arkansas.”

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Arkansans are encouraged to share their feedback and complete ForwARd's online survey about the state's education system on ForwardArkansas.org by mid-February. The ForwARd steering committee—a diverse group of Arkansas leaders—plans to complete and release a comprehensive strategic plan by late spring 2015.

“This is our home, these are our children and we need solutions to improve education in all regions of the state,” said West. “We owe them, the future of our state, the best education possible.”

About ForwARd Arkansas

ForwARd Arkansas was established as a strategic partnership of the Winthrop Rockefeller Foundation, Walton Family Foundation and Arkansas Board of Education to help enhance student outcomes and educational opportunities. ForwARd aims to develop a comprehensive plan to guide state policy for P-16 education, with a focus on schools in academic distress. For more information, visit ForwardArkansas.org.

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