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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

ForwARd Arkansas Unveils Statewide Survey on Education Initiative Announces Steering Committee Members

LITTLE ROCK, Ark. (Jan. 15, 2015) - ForwARd Arkansas, a strategic partnership of the Winthrop Rockefeller Foundation, Walton Family Foundation and Arkansas Board of Education, today urged educators, parents, students, community leaders and policy makers to visit its new website and complete an online survey on how to prepare Arkansas students for success in college and/or the workplace. Arkansans are encouraged to complete the survey on ForwardArkansas.org by mid-February.

“As ForwARd works to improve our state’s education system, it’s critical that we get feedback from those who know our schools best—our students, teachers, parents and local community leaders,” said Sherece West-Scantlebury, president and CEO of the Winthrop Rockefeller Foundation. “Following careful review of this feedback, we will be able to develop a strategic plan for consideration by policy makers that will help advance education in our state and move Arkansas forward.”

The survey was designed by ForwARd as a mechanism for all Arkansans to participate in the process; a tool to determine the public’s commitment to a stronger education system; and a way to get a sense of the geographic differences in perceptions about our state education system.

ForwARd has brought together a diverse group—geographically, professionally, racially and socioeconomically—of Arkansas leaders to lead its statewide outreach. Through meetings, advocacy group outreach, and social media, the steering committee will encourage stakeholders from across the state to share their feedback and complete ForwARd’s online survey at ForwardArkansas.org.

Later this month, ForwARd will release *The State of Public Education in Arkansas*, a report of the baseline data on the state’s educational outcomes. The steering committee plans to complete and release the comprehensive strategic plan by late spring 2015.

Members of ForwARd steering committee include Shane Broadway, Toby Daughtery, Kim Davis, Bill Dillard III, Marcy Doderer, Matt Dozier, Bob East, Sen. Joyce Elliott, Melanie Fox, Lavina Grandon, Johnny Key, Tom Kimbrell, Ginny Kurrus, Michele Linch, Hugh McDonald, Justin Minkel, John Riggs, David Rainey, Scott Shirey, Ray Simon, Kathy Smith, Ladonna Spain, Bob Watson, Sherece West-Scantlebury, Darrin Williams, Kenya Williams and Diana Gonzales Worthen.

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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