



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

## **ForwARd Arkansas Hires Executive Director**

### *Statewide Partnership to Improve Public Education Brings on New Leadership*

**LITTLE ROCK, Ark. (April 12, 2016)** – Susan Bonesteel Harriman was named executive director of ForwARd Arkansas (ForwARd) because of her passion for transforming public education. She will lead the collective, statewide action necessary to realize the vision of ForwARd that every Arkansan will graduate high school prepared for college and the workplace.

“I’m truly honored to be joining a movement that I know will close our state’s achievement gap and make Arkansas a national leader for public education within a generation,” said Harriman.

“Susan will provide ForwARd with the leadership our students deserve, and I know she will effectively drive this movement to prepare Arkansans to succeed after they leave school and prosper,” said ForwARd Implementation Working Group Chair Dr. David Rainey. “We’re eager to implement ForwARd’s recommendations with her leading the way.”

ForwARd is a partnership of local education, business, government and civil society leaders committed to improving public education in the state. After conducting in-depth analysis of Arkansas’s education system and gathering input from nearly 8,500 Arkansans, ForwARd set a strategic goal to make Arkansas a leading state in education. ForwARd is determined to implement recommendations set forth in the report *A New Vision for Arkansas Education* to meet this goal and dramatically improve student achievement.

Starting in 2010, Harriman served as the policy and special projects director at the Arkansas Department of Education (ADE). There she managed the No Kid Hungry campaign, New Tech Network High Schools, UTeach teacher preparation program and other initiatives. Prior to working at the ADE, she served as the director of state services at the National Center for Education Achievement, the Secretary's Regional Representative at the U.S. Department of Education and founding executive director at the Texas Public Education Reform Foundation.

“Susan’s commitment to innovation and improvement in education has been invaluable at the Department of Education,” said Arkansas Commissioner of Education Johnny Key. “I am glad that she is taking on this new role to continue advancing education in Arkansas to where it should be.”

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“As we improve education outcomes here, race, gender, geography and socioeconomic conditions cannot continue to be barriers to success,” said Arkansas Board of Education Chair Toyce Newton. “Susan will ensure that this movement to improve education outcomes for students does not continue to leave behind whole groups of Arkansans.”

**About ForwARd Arkansas**

ForwARd Arkansas is a partnership of education, business, government and community leaders committed to improving public education in Arkansas. This partnership has conducted extensive research and continues to encourage statewide discussion and bold action to strengthen public education. ForwARd was established through a partnership between the Winthrop Rockefeller Foundation, Walton Family Foundation and Arkansas Board of Education.

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