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**ForwARd Shares Strategic Goal for Dramatically Improved Outcomes**  
*Implementation Working Group to Put Recommendations into Action*

LITTLE ROCK, Ark. (Aug. 14, 2015) – In an update to the Arkansas Board of Education today, ForwARd reiterated its strategic goal that Arkansas become a leading state in education by dramatically improving student achievement and closing the achievement gap in a generation. ForwARd also announced the formation of an Implementation Working Group (IWG), a group of diverse Arkansans who will be responsible for putting ForwARd’s recommendations into action and monitoring its progress.

“It is critical that we all buy into this bold goal,” said Dr. David Rainey, chairman of ForwARd’s IWG and a member of the ForwARd steering committee. “If we are going to make the improvements necessary, as quickly as they need to be made, we have to start with the idea that we won’t settle for anything less than excellence in our state.”

The IWG is a subset of the ForwARd steering committee. In addition to Rainey, IWG members include Deborah Coffman, Peggy Doss, Matt Dozier, Senator Joyce Elliot, Melanie Fox, Ed Franklin, Lavina Grandon, Jared Henderson, Ginny Kurrus, Michelle Linch, Suzann McCommon, Kathy Moreledge, John Riggs, Brenda Robinson, Scott Shirey, Kathy Smith, Ladonna Spain, Joy Springer, Dr. Sherece West-Scantlebury and Kenya Williams. Bios on IWG members can be found at [ForwARdArkansas.org](http://ForwARdArkansas.org).

“As we put the finishing touches on the recommendations, the IWG is developing a strategy to begin the implementation process and make this goal a reality,” said Rainey.

In the coming weeks, the IWG will release and share ForwARd’s recommendations with students, parents, educators, community members and business leaders across the state. They will also work with the Arkansas Department of Education to support recommendations to turn around schools in academic distress.

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Since November 2014, ForwARd has been gathering information about the state of education in Arkansas. Its first set of findings, The State of Education in Arkansas Report, was published in January 2015. Since then, it has engaged a broad set of Arkansans through nearly 8,500 online surveys, 50 community conversations, 100s of hours of interviews and extensive research.

“Input from our communities has been essential in shaping ForwARd’s strategic plan and participation from all Arkansans will be critical in helping implement it statewide,” said Rainey. “We’re eager to continue our open dialogue across the state as we work together to build a system of excellent schools for every child in every Arkansas community.”

### **About ForwARd**

ForwARd is a strategic partnership of the Winthrop Rockefeller Foundation, Walton Family Foundation and Arkansas Board of Education that aims to prepare every Arkansas student for success in college and the workplace. To achieve this vision, ForwARd is working to create a holistic plan for P-16 education aimed at dramatically improving student achievement, closing the achievement gap and helping Arkansas become a leading state in education. For more information, visit [ForwardArkansas.org](http://ForwardArkansas.org).

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