

# South Arkansas Mathematics Standards Partnership

The South Arkansas Mathematics Standards Partnership (SAMSP) is a collaborative effort of Southern Arkansas University, the University of Central Arkansas, South Central Service Cooperative, the Southwest-B Education Renewal Zone (ERZ) and the following school districts: Ashdown, Hope, Texarkana, Fouke, Harmony Grove, Junction City, Magnolia, Norphlet, Parkers Chapel, and Strong-Huttig. The ERZ partner is part of a P-K – 16 initiative funded by the state of Arkansas to identify and implement educational and management strategies designed specifically to improve public school performance and student academic achievement throughout the State. The majority of partnering school districts are high-need school districts that serve children from families where more than 25% of the students are on free or reduced lunch. Additionally, the majority of participating school districts are rural, isolated school districts with at least one building in school improvement.

SAMSP is designed to create and provide professional development activities to enhance both teacher content knowledge and instructional skills in two learning progressions identified in the Common Cores State Standards (CCSS) for mathematics. The two learning progressions are the Measurement and Data domain in grades 3-5 and the Statistics and Probability domain in grades 6-8.

Forty-seven 3<sup>rd</sup> -8<sup>th</sup> grade teachers from 10 school districts will participate in the two-week Common Core Mathematics Standards summer Institute to be held in June/July 2012. Approximately one-half of the participants will attend the summer institute at the South Central Service Cooperative in Camden, and the other half will participate via CIV (compressed interactive video) broadcast from South Central Cooperative to Texarkana School District during one week and Hope School District during the second week. The summer institute will include 10 days of intensive instruction to engage teachers in content-focused sessions in measurement, data, probability, and statistics. Additionally, teachers will participate in 6 follow-up professional development Saturdays and will be visited by professors conducting classroom visits at least four separated times during the academic year. Professors trained in the use of the Reformed Teaching Observation Protocol (RTOP) as an observation instrument will provide a standardized means for detecting the degree to which K-20 classroom instruction in mathematics or science is reformed per the national science and mathematics standards. The research study / professional development activities will provide a minimum of 100 contact hours during the first year of the project.

The identified goals of the South Arkansas Mathematics Standards Partnership are as follow: 1) increase teacher content knowledge in mathematics as measured by the Diagnostic Mathematics Assessments for Middle Level Teachers; 2) expand teaching skills of participants as measured by the Reformed Teacher Observation Protocol (RTOP); 3) increase student academic performance as measured by the Arkansas Mathematics Benchmark exams for students of participating teachers, and 4) create a sustained partnership among all partners/ participants to address the implementation of the Common Core State Standards in south Arkansas.

An external evaluator will collaborate with the project director to guide and monitor the project's formative and summative evaluation plan. The evaluation plan will utilize a quasi-experimental research design using a matched comparison group. Separate control groups, one for teachers and one for students, will be employed as a means to further measure and compare the impact of this particular professional development model on teacher content knowledge, teaching skills, the integration of the Common Core State Standards into classroom practices, and student performance on standardized state benchmark exams.