



ARKANSAS DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

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LITTLE ROCK: Education Commissioner Tom W. Kimbrell has named new superintendents for two school districts in northwest Arkansas that have been under state control for the previous two years due to falling into “fiscal distress” status. Charles J. Cudney of Rogers will assume the superintendent’s position for the Greenland School District and Larry Ben will do so for the Decatur School District. Both will sign one-year contracts and will assume their duties on July 1.

“We were pleased to have such quality applicants to select from in both school districts and are excited at the caliber of gentlemen we were able to hire for these two important jobs,” Kimbrell said. Kimbrell made the final appointments after a vetting process which included recommendations from committees of community members in each district and interviews performed by Arkansas Department of Education assistant commissioners Bill Goff and Beverly Williams.

Cudney, who lives in Rogers, is a retired superintendent who was educated in Arkansas but has spent most of his professional life in Missouri, retired from the Monett R-1 school district in 2008. He is an adjunct professor at Southwest Baptist University Graduate School of Education in Bolivar, Mo. He will be paid \$92,000 for the 2010-2011 school year.

Ben, of Gravette, has taught biology and coached football at Rogers High School for the last two years. Before that, he was principal of Rogers Sophomore Campus from 2001-2008 and also has held administrative, teaching and coaching positions. He will earn \$87,000 for the 2010-2011 school year.

Because the Greenland and Decatur school districts have been under state control, the Arkansas Department of Education hired the new superintendents on behalf of the districts. Both districts will elect new school boards in September, who then will assume control of the district.

“I would be remiss if I didn’t thank Mr. Leroy Ortman and Dr. Roland Smith for their leadership of the Decatur and Greenland school districts these last two years,” Kimbrell said. “They are both to be credited for guiding the districts back to fiscal solvency while keeping a strong focus on academics.”

The Arkansas Department of Education strives to ensure that all children in the state have access to a quality education by providing educators, administrators and staff with leadership, resources and training.