

**Arkansas Department of Education**  
Dr. Tom Kimbrell, Commissioner

**News Release**

June 9, 2011

**Contact:**

Seth Blomeley  
501-683-4788  
[seth.blomeley@arkansas.gov](mailto:seth.blomeley@arkansas.gov)

**HECTOR SUPERINTENDENT NEW ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER**

LITTLE ROCK — Arkansas Education Commissioner Dr. Tom Kimbrell today announced the hiring of Dr. Karen Cushman as assistant commissioner for human resources and teacher licensure.

Cushman has served as the superintendent of the Hector district in Pope County since 2007. She will start in her new role at the Arkansas Department of Education (ADE) on July 1.

"Dr. Cushman provides the valuable perspective of a rural school administrator to our leadership team," Kimbrell said. "Rural superintendents quickly learn to do it all, including staffing schools with effective and qualified people. Her background, insight and abilities will help school districts recruit, attract and retain highly effective teachers and leaders ensuring Arkansas students are college and career ready."

Cushman's resume includes stints as superintendent of the former Evening Shade school district and as assistant superintendent of the Bismarck district. She has also been a principal and third-grade teacher in Evening Shade, and a kindergarten and first-grade teacher at St. Paul Elementary in Pocahontas. She received a doctorate in educational leadership from Harding University earlier this year.

Cushman said her respect for Kimbrell's leadership on education in Arkansas is one reason she was interested in the position at ADE.

"I also think this position will be involved in many things coming up in the future for the good of the state," she said.

She will replace Beverly Williams, who was assistant commissioner for human resources and teacher licensure since 2005. The ADE announced last week that Williams is retiring effective June 30. Kimbrell said quickly finding a replacement was necessary to help the department implement Act 1209, which restructures how teachers are evaluated. She'll also continue the work on principal evaluation development and the review of licensure standards currently underway.