



ARKANSAS DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

Johnny Key, Commissioner

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Saunders Named Assistant Commissioner for Research and Technology

LITTLE ROCK — Arkansas Department of Education Commissioner Johnny Key is pleased to announce that Dr. Eric Saunders has been selected as the assistant commissioner for Research and Technology.

Saunders, who is currently serving as the assistant commissioner for Fiscal and Administrative Services, will begin transitioning to his new position July 1. He will replace Dr. Cody Decker, who has been named the director of the Office of Institutional Research at the University of Arkansas at Little Rock.

“Dr. Saunders’ comprehensive background has prepared him for this new role,” Key said. “Not only does he have extensive experience with financial matters, Dr. Saunders has a strong understanding of how to use research and technology to make data-driven decisions that lead to an increase in student achievement.”

The recipient of three consecutive statewide longitudinal data system grants, the ADE Division of Research and Technology has consistently been recognized nationally for promoting a culture of data use in the state and as a leader for educational information systems.

In his new role, Saunders will oversee the agency’s data reporting systems such as the ADE Data Center; the Data Quality Unit; technology initiatives and resources such as the StudentGPS Dashboards; and the agency’s Technical Support Unit.

Prior to joining ADE in July 2014, Saunders served as superintendent of the East End School District in Bigelow for three years. During his time at East End, Saunders led a successful millage increase campaign and wrote several grants for the district and community. He also supervised multiple building projects.

From 2006 to 2011, Saunders served as principal at Lavaca High School, where he instituted data

teams and conducted professional development that focused on using data to increase student achievement. During that time, the high school's classification improved from School Improvement to Achieving status.

Before becoming a principal, Saunders was a math teacher and coach at Gentry High School, where he taught various math courses including calculus and Advanced Placement statistics.

Saunders earned a Bachelor of Science in Secondary Education from Oklahoma State University as well as a Master of Education and a Doctor of Education from Harding University in Searcy.

He completed the Arkansas Leadership Academy's Superintendent Institute and phase one of the Master Principal Program.

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