



ARKANSAS DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

Johnny Key, Commissioner

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Arkansas Department of Education Receives Grant from Blue & You Foundation

LITTLE ROCK — The Arkansas Department of Education was recently awarded a \$150,000 grant from the Blue & You Foundation to provide physical education instructors additional professional development opportunities and classroom resources.

The one-year grant also will be used for the Sports, Play, and Active Recreation for Kids (SPARK) curriculum and equipment for regional SPARK physical education trainings. The SPARK curriculum enables teachers to engage students in physical activity and teach a variety of lifelong recreational activities.

The Arkansas Department of Education will identify four state-level SPARK certified physical education instructors, utilizing the nationally-recognized, evidence-based SPARK Physical Education Program. These instructors will contract with the ADE to provide regional professional development on how to use the SPARK curriculum. All public school physical education teachers will have an opportunity to register for the regional trainings offered through this initiative.

ADE recognizes the importance of high-quality physical education instruction as a way to improve lifelong physical fitness skills for public school children, as well as its contribution to overall academic success.

The SPARK curriculum has been honored as an exemplary program by the U.S. Department of Education and was featured in the U.S. Surgeon General's report as a "school-based solution to our nation's healthcare crisis." SPARK was also awarded "gold" (highest ranking) by the Cooper Institute for elementary and middle school physical education programs.

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