



# ARKANSAS DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

*Johnny Key, Commissioner*

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## **Freno Named ADE General Counsel**

**LITTLE ROCK** — Arkansas Department of Education Commissioner Johnny Key is pleased to announce that Lori Freno has been named the department's general counsel effective July 1, 2016. Freno replaces Kendra Clay, who has accepted a job with the Springdale School District.

As general counsel, Freno will oversee the Office of Legal Services, which ensures agency compliance with federal and state laws; advises the commissioner and State Board of Education regarding policies and legislation; oversees the agency's rule-making process; and manages litigation.

"Ms. Freno has extensive legal experience, having practiced law for more than 25 years both in private practice and representing state and federal agencies," Key said. "During her career, she has litigated cases before state and federal courts at all levels, including the United States Supreme Court. She is an excellent choice for ADE general counsel."

Freno currently serves as the ADE's deputy general counsel, a position she has held since April 2013. As deputy general counsel, Freno has taken lead roles in several areas of the legal office, including litigation, human resources, and representation of the Division of Public School Academic Facilities and Transportation.

Prior to joining ADE, Freno worked for the Attorney General's Office for 15 years, serving under four attorneys general as both an assistant and senior assistant attorney general. In those roles, she represented and advised numerous state agencies, boards, commissions and state officials in a broad range of matters, with a focus on employment and civil rights law.

Freno's other work experience included serving as a general attorney for the Panama Canal Commission in the Republic of Panama for two years and in private practice for four years in Cincinnati, Ohio.

Born in Barberton, Ohio, Freno graduated magna cum laude with a Bachelor of Arts in Political Science from the University of Akron, Ohio, and received a Juris Doctor from the University of Cincinnati College of Law.

Freno has lived in Arkadelphia for the past 20 years with her husband, James Engman, a professor of biology at Henderson State University, and their four rescue dogs and rescue cat.

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