

# Implementation Guide

The idea for the Arkansas Committed to Education Foundation originated as a class project of the Little Rock Regional Chamber of Commerce Leadership program in 2000. The resulting formation of the 501 ( c ) ( 3 ) non-profit foundation occurred that same year, its program design aimed at providing a meaningful and measurable statewide impact to children throughout Arkansas.

The Foundation's mission is twofold: to encourage Arkansas elementary students to excel in school and to foster a greater widespread recognition of the importance of education in our state. These goals are accomplished through the creation and sales proceeds generated by the "Committed to Education" specialty license plate. Funds from sales of these plates go directly to the Foundation to purchase computers or other technology incentives for sixth grade students who meet certain academic criteria, including:

- Proficient level score on 6<sup>th</sup> grade literacy and mathematics benchmark exams
- 95% attendance in grades two through six
- Satisfactory conduct scores in grades two through six.

At the same time, the license plates provide Arkansans a very public means to show their awareness and support of the importance of education. Educators, parents, community leaders and businesses are encouraged to purchase a license plate for their individual vehicles and corporate fleets to illustrate their commitment to the education of our state's children.

The Foundation's program has intentionally been kept simple. Each year Arkansas principals or their designees will present the Committed to Education program to children in the second through sixth grades at a school assembly, using materials provided by the Foundation. Flyers detailing the program will be sent home with students so parents are aware of the program. Students meeting eligibility criteria outlined above each year will be rewarded with an interim incentive, to be coordinated by the local Chamber of Commerce. Students completing the sixth grade year and meeting all program criteria during all five academic years will have their names sent by school principals to the Committed to Education Foundation and will be awarded a complete personal computer system, *free of charge*.

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Similar to the Arkansas Scholars™ program, local chambers of commerce and PTAs (or other business/community leadership groups) also play a crucial role in the success of the program in three main areas: First, by soliciting local business support for the smaller “interim” incentives for the kids between the first and fifth grades; second, by organizing and providing an area speakers bureau to parents, teachers and civic groups educating them on the program and its process and third, by assisting in the marketing of the program locally in their periodic, local publications. These groups can also help by issuing the corporate challenge to businesses in their communities.

The diagram on the following page outlines the key activities for the management of the Committed to Education program and a more detailed checklist of the steps to take in order to fully implement the program.

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## The Arkansas Committed to Education Program Year

JULY	AUGUST	SEPTEMBER	OCTOBER	NOVEMBER	DECEMBER
Review prior year and make any necessary adjustments.	Implementation guide, presentation materials and student handouts are provided to elementary school principals.	Elementary school principals make presentations to second-sixth graders in an assembly.  Chambers of Commerce recruit speakers and include program information in the member communications.			
JANUARY	FEBRUARY	MARCH	APRIL	MAY	JUNE
Principals send bookmark reminders home with students.				Principals provide list of students in second through fifth grades who are eligible for interim rewards to local Chambers of Commerce/PTA.  Principals provide list of sixth grade students who are eligible to the Committed to Education foundation.	Chambers of Commerce/PTAs coordinate rewards for second through fifth grade students.  The Committed to Education Foundation awards computers to sixth grade students who qualify.

**School Principals' Checklist:**

1. Make presentations and distribute information to second-sixth grade students at the beginning of each school year.

- Presentation materials are enclosed with this guide. To acquire additional presentation materials, call the Foundation at 501-377-6015 or download them from the Department of Education's website at [www.arkedu.state.ar.us](http://www.arkedu.state.ar.us). Materials are provided as black & white masters, which can be copied onto overhead transparency material.
- Acquire student handouts from Foundation by calling 501-377-6015. Schedule an assembly to make presentations to students, based on the following schedule:
  - Fall, 2001 Second graders only
  - Fall, 2002 Second and third graders
  - Fall, 2003 Second-fourth graders
  - Fall, 2005 Second-fifth graders
  - Fall, 2006 Second-sixth graders

2. Distribute reminder bookmarks during January of each year.

- Download bookmark artwork from Department of Education website at [www.arkedu.state.ar.us](http://www.arkedu.state.ar.us).
- Copy bookmarks onto colored paper.
- Distribute to students participating in the program according to the schedule above.

3. Ensure that teachers and PTA groups are aware of and support the program.

- Post article found on Department of Education website at [www.arkedu.state.ar.us](http://www.arkedu.state.ar.us) in teacher's common area.
- Provide article to PTA for distribution to membership through newsletters, meetings, etc.

4. Provide a list of eligible students in second-fifth grades to local Chamber of Commerce or PTA each year.

- Through the students' permanent record, determine which students meet the criteria.
- Work with the local Chamber/PTA to coordinate the incentive for these students.

5. Provide a list of eligible students in second-fifth grades to the Committed to Education Foundation.

- Through the students' permanent record, determine which students have met the criteria during their second-sixth grade school years.
- E-mail this list to [ahooten@littlerockchamber.com](mailto:ahooten@littlerockchamber.com).

**Local Chambers of Commerce & PTA Checklist:**

1. Coordinate and provide interim incentives to qualifying students each spring.

- Recruit local businesses to provide incentives for qualifying students. You may estimate that 10% of students will qualify each year.
- Incentives may include a field trip to a local attraction, pizza parties, specialty items such as t-shirts, ball caps, etc.
- Contact elementary school principals and coordinate the delivery of the rewards in June, once the list of qualifying students has been developed.

2. Organize and provide a speakers bureau to help publicize the program – ongoing.

- Secure a presentation for speakers by calling 501-377-6015.
- Recruit speakers who are willing to publicize the program in other civic and volunteer organizations.
- Coordinate speaking engagements for the speakers throughout the year.

3. Issue the Corporate Challenge to businesses in your area – ongoing.

- Write a letter or make personal presentations to local companies, urging them to purchase license plates for their company vehicles.
- Publicize companies who decide to participate in your local newsletters.

4. Assist in publicizing program in newsletters and other local publications – ongoing.

- Secure a presentation about the program by calling 501-377-6015, and give that presentation to your membership at a meeting.
- Call 501-377-6015 to secure copies of articles introducing the program.
- Request that your Chamber's name be placed on a mailing list to receive regular updates for publication in your newsletters.

**And finally,** remember to show your support for education by purchasing a Committed to Education license plate. Call 501-682-4692 for ordering information.

Additional information.

More ideas, suggestions, and information on the Arkansas Committed to Education program are available by contacting the Foundation office.

Questions? Need help?

Contact Ashley Hooten at the Arkansas Committed to Education Foundation Administrative Office 501-377-6015 or email at [ahooten@littlerockchamber.com](mailto:ahooten@littlerockchamber.com).