



Arkansas Department of Education

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Asa Hutchinson
Governor

Johnny Key
Secretary

July 16, 2021

The Honorable Kim David Hammer
Arkansas Senate
500 Woodlane Street Suite 320
Little Rock, AR 72201-1089

Dear Senator Hammer:

Thank you for your letter concerning Arkansas Governor's School. The Arkansas Governor's School is funded by the Arkansas Department of Education through the Gifted and Talented line item of the Public School Fund appropriation. The oversight of Arkansas Governor's School is outlined in the [Arkansas Department of Education Rules Governing Arkansas Governor's School Site Selection](#), a copy of which I have attached for your reference. Those rules, which were updated last in January 2004, are very general with respect to AGS curriculum and programing, and they do not give the department authority to develop or prepare curriculum or materials. This process is conducted by the host institution, which is currently Arkansas Tech University.

I am acutely aware of the concerns voiced by members of the Arkansas General Assembly during the recent session regarding the teaching of racist or hateful theories, and I believe your passage of Act 684 that empowers parents to challenge curricula, materials, and activities at the local level was a positive step forward.

I am equally aware of concerns voiced by members of the Arkansas General Assembly about executive branch departments exceeding their authority granted by statute or rule approved by the legislative branch. Without explicit authority granted by the General Assembly to oversee the curriculum of Arkansas Governor's School, I would be hesitant to demand Arkansas Tech make immediate changes in the curriculum out of concern for possible executive branch overreach.

The Arkansas Department of Education does not support the teaching of topics that purport to indoctrinate students in racist or hateful theories and other concepts that are subversive to the best ideals of our nation. I look forward to working with you to make the regulatory or statutory changes to ensure Arkansas Governor's School provides a positive experience for our students.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Johnny Key".
Johnny Key