

Childers Named Recipient of Coveted Career Technical Education Award

LITTLE ROCK – Charisse Childers, Ph.D., the director of the Arkansas Department of Career Education (ACE), has been presented with the “***State Director: Rising Star***” award, presented by Advance CTE. Advance CTE is the longest-standing national non-profit organization that represents state directors and state leaders responsible for secondary, postsecondary, and adult Career and Technical Education (CTE) across the country. This honor is awarded to State CTE Directors who display unequivocal dedication to and engagement with the goals of advocating career and technical education. Childers accepted this award at the organization’s spring meeting in Washington, D.C.

Governor Asa Hutchinson appointed Childers to lead ACE in January 2015, when he took office. The agency has four divisions: Arkansas Adult Education, Arkansas Rehabilitation Services, Career & Technical Education, and the Office of Skills Development. She directs the work and vision of the agency of nearly 600 employees across the state, along with a twenty member industry-led board, while overseeing workforce training grants, adult education, and vocational rehabilitation services. Childers oversees and coordinates more than \$170 million in federal and state funds.

During the 2015 Legislative Session, Childers worked with Governor Asa Hutchinson and State Senator Jane English (R-Conway) in ensuring the passage of Act 892, which established the Office of Skills Development. This legislation is responsible for aligning workforce development programs with the skills needed by business and industry. Childers is also an adviser to Governor Hutchinson as she serves as a member of the Governor’s Cabinet and a five-member workforce cabinet.

Before leading ACE, Childers headed and managed Accelerate Arkansas, a group of business and education leaders working to develop Arkansas’ knowledge-based economy. She built the organization’s statewide recognition and credibility as a leader in strengthening the state’s economy in STEM education, innovation, research, and entrepreneurship.

“I am honored to have been selected by the Advance CTE Board of Directors for this national award,” Childers said. “I look forward to continuing to represent Advance CTE, my state, and Governor Asa Hutchinson, the Arkansas Department of Career Education, and CTE leaders as we demonstrate the importance and exemplary work in career and technical education.”

Kimberly Green, the executive director of Advance CTE said the following: “Charisse has been a visionary trailblazer for Arkansas and has worked tirelessly throughout her career to advance Career Technical Education. We are lucky to have her as a passionate and talented leader for CTE in Arkansas, as well as the nation.”

Childers earned her bachelor’s, master’s, and specialist degrees from Arkansas State University. She received Ph.D. in public policy with a specialization in education policy from the University of Arkansas.



Childers (in orange) accepts the award.

The Arkansas Department of Career Education (ACE) prepares a job-ready, career-bound workforce to meet the needs of Arkansas employers. For more information about ACE and other programs please visit the website www.ace.arkansas.gov or follow us on Twitter at @ARCareerEd.

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