



Mike Beebe  
*Governor*

## Department of Workforce Education

William L "Bill" Walker, Jr.  
*Director*

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### Media Advisory

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### **Gov. Beebe Hosts National Jobs for America's Graduates Board Meeting in Little Rock**

**Little Rock** – The National Jobs for America's Graduates (JAG) Board of Directors will hold its annual meeting April 14-15 at the Capitol Hotel in Little Rock and will feature remarks from JAG Board Chairman, Maine Governor John Baldacci and Arkansas Governor Mike Beebe. Gov. Beebe sits on the JAG Board of Directors.

JAG is a school-to-career program implemented in 700 high schools, alternative schools, community colleges and middle schools across the country and in the United Kingdom. It is JAG's mission to keep at-risk young people in school through graduation while providing work-based learning experiences that will lead to career advancement opportunities or enrollment in a post-secondary institution that will lead to a rewarding career. JAG Model Programs deliver a unique set of services to targeted youth in high school – including 12 months of post-graduation follow-up services – that will result in the graduate pursuing a post-secondary education and/or entering the workforce in a quality job leading to a career.

In Arkansas, 1,300 students currently participate in 41 Jobs for Arkansas's Graduate programs at 36 middle and high schools. In 2008, 23 of these programs earned JAG's prestigious 5-of-5 status for meeting the national program's performance model based on a set of five standards considered critical to the success of local programs and the future success of students. These standards include: Graduation/GED Completion Rates, Positive Outcome Rates, Employment Rates, Full-Time Job Rates, and Full-Time Placement Rates.

Nationally, JAG serves nearly 40,000 participants in 28 active JAG State Organizations. This includes 700 in-school (middle and high school) and out-of-school programs. More than 600,000 students have participated in the JAG program since its creation in 1980.

"Arkansas is fully committed to the JAG program," said Department of Workforce Education Director William L. "Bill" Walker, Jr., "On average, one student in our state drops out of school every 51 minutes. JAG can help reduce that rate dramatically. It is a proven success that not only keeps students in school, but it encourages them to continue their education and helps them find a career."

There's no doubt JAG has met with compelling and consistent results since its inception:

- A graduation rate of 94.0 percent (within 12 months of the normal school graduation date).
- An overall success rate of 77.78 percent at the end of 12 months of follow-up after graduation: on the job, in post-secondary training, and/or in the military.
- An enrollment rate in post-secondary education of 40.89 percent. (This is especially significant in light of the fact that most students who enroll in JAG programs do not anticipate attending college when they begin the program.)

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The Arkansas Department of Workforce Education (DWE) is breaking new ground with the application of JAG. The agency's Career and Technical Education Program has recently provided New Start-Up Grant funding to help create 29 new JAG programs within alternative learning environments at several schools in the state as a way to emphasize career and technical components for special populations.

The department also aided in the creation of two JAG programs that are the first of their kind anywhere in the country. The JAG program at the Arkansas Schools for the Deaf and Blind is the only one that addresses the needs of deaf and blind students. The JAG program at the DWE's Arkansas Rehabilitation Services Division's Arkansas Career Training Institute in Hot Springs is unique in that it is the first JAG program that caters to adult students who are disabled.

"We feel we have made giant steps forward in Arkansas in the application of our JAG programs," said DWE JAG Program Manager Marylene Tate. "We've experienced a great deal of success and we want to see that success grow exponentially to every corner of the educational spectrum."

For additional information about Jobs for America's Graduates, log on to [www.jag.org](http://www.jag.org). The following is a schedule of events for the JAG Board of Directors' Meeting:

**APRIL 14, 2009**

**5:15 p.m. JAG Board Tour of the Governor's Mansion and Reception**

**6:15 p.m. JAG Board of Director's Dinner**

**Governor's Mansion**

Recognition to Leadership of Wal-Mart  
and Verizon

Governor John Baldacci, Maine  
Governor Mike Beebe, Arkansas

JAG-Arkansas Briefing

- William L. "Bill" Walker, Jr., Director  
Department of Workforce Education  
Topic: JAG-Arkansas Overview of Programs
- Dr. Kenneth James, Commissioner  
Arkansas Department of Education  
Topic: Importance of JAG from an Education Standpoint
- JAG-Arkansas Student Testimonials

Summation

Ken Smith, JAG President and Chief Executive Officer

**APRIL 15, 2009**

**8 a.m. JAG Board Tours Arkansas Schools for the Deaf and Blind**

JAG Board members will arrive at the school by 8:10 a.m. and be greeted at the doors by 8:15 a.m. Half will be escorted to a deaf classroom and half will go to a blind classroom. Teachers will welcome the Board members and allow them to observe the students and have a question and answer session. The visit is scheduled to end at 9 a.m.

**11:45 a.m. JAG Board of Director's Luncheon**

**Capitol Hotel**