



Mike Beebe  
Governor

## Department of Workforce Education

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### Media Advisory

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### **National Jobs for America's Graduates Board Begins Today in Little Rock**

**Little Rock** – The National Jobs for America's Graduates (JAG) Board of Directors will kick off its annual meeting today and continue tomorrow at Little Rock's Capitol Hotel. The meeting will feature a tour of the Arkansas Schools for the Deaf and Blind tomorrow, which is the only school of its kind in the nation to feature a JAG program; student speakers, remarks from JAG Board Chairman, Maine Governor John Baldacci, and Arkansas Governor Mike Beebe who also sits on the JAG Board of Directors and is hosting the event.

JAG is a school-to-career program that serves young people with barriers to success. The more barriers to success that a young person might have, the more he or she is considered 'at-risk' of graduating from high school or having a successful transition from school to an entry level job that leads to a career. 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 leads to a rewarding career.

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.

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.

"Jobs for America's Graduates is a first-rate success," said Department of Workforce Education Director William L. "Bill" Walker, Jr., "One of our top priorities at the Department of Workforce Education is ensuring that Arkansas students are prepared for the high-tech, high-demand, high-skill careers of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. They have to first get a high school diploma to receive the training they need to do that. JAG is an indispensable tool we have to help make sure our state's kids stay in school and develop the workplace skills they need to start down a responsible career path."

The highlights of the JAG National Board of Directors meeting will include the Board of Director's Dinner at 6:15 p.m. today, a tour of the Arkansas Schools for the Deaf and Blind tomorrow at 8 a.m., and the Board of Director's Luncheon at the Capitol Hotel tomorrow at 11:45 a.m. For additional information about Jobs for America's Graduates, log on to [www.jag.org](http://www.jag.org).