

### About the EAST Initiative

The EAST<sup>®</sup> Initiative is a non-profit organization that supports schools and other educational institutions across the country in the establishment of programs that utilize the EAST<sup>®</sup> model. Since its initial pilot in 1996, the EAST<sup>®</sup> model of service learning projects, technology education and individualized education goals has helped students, facilitators, and schools better prepare for the realities of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. It has been named a best practice model by the United States Departments of Education and Labor and has proven, research-based results. The Initiative works with schools to equip classrooms, train facilitators and provide technical training for students at local and regional training centers, as well as online. EAST<sup>®</sup> has grown to a network of over 200 schools in the nation, 194 in Arkansas, and will engage over 25,000 students and teachers in the 2011/2012 school year.

### REAL: Relevant Education for Active Learners

In coordination with the Arkansas Department of Education and the Governor's Workforce Cabinet, the EAST Initiative will be piloting a whole school model based on the research verified results of the EAST<sup>®</sup> methodology. This pilot, **REAL: Relevant Education for Active Learners**, will focus on four major strategies to achieve success:

- Interdisciplinary Teaching Teams
- Sophisticated Technology Integration in curricular learning
- Project Enhanced Curriculum
- STEM Focused Education

The **REAL: Relevant Education for Active Learners** model will build on established EAST<sup>®</sup> programs to phase in the implementation of teaching teams in the participating schools. These schools will be supported by the EAST<sup>®</sup> Initiative's training and technical staff.

### Research on the EAST<sup>®</sup> model

Through the years, the EAST<sup>®</sup> model has been the subject of intensive research. Two studies conducted by Metis Associates examined the qualities of the impact of EAST<sup>®</sup> on student success. The first study determined that the EAST<sup>®</sup> model has a positive, statistically reliable impact on problem solving, motivation, self-directed learning – characteristics widely recognized as being important for both academic and career success. The second study found that students participating in EAST<sup>®</sup> scored significantly higher on standardized tests than their peers. Additionally, this study found that students who began participating in EAST<sup>®</sup> in the middle school years outperformed students that began EAST<sup>®</sup> in high school.

Another study, conducted by the University of Central Arkansas Center on Community and Economic Development, measured the economic impact of EAST<sup>®</sup> projects throughout Arkansas. The study estimates the annual economic impact throughout the state to be \$15.2 million, the average total value of projects per facilitator to be over \$85,000, and that students contribute over 1.5 million service hours in completing these service projects. EAST<sup>®</sup>'s impact goes well beyond the students involved and benefits the entire state of Arkansas.

For more information about EAST<sup>®</sup> or the REAL: Relevant Education for Active Learners models, please contact **Matt Dozier** at 501.317.5016 or [matt@eaststaff.org](mailto:matt@eaststaff.org).