Denise T. Airola, Ph.D.
Director of Innovation for Education
University of Arkansas
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Denise Airola founded the Office of Innovation for Education (OIE) at the University of Arkansas in 2013 with a grant from the Arkansas Department of Education (ADE). The OIE focuses on enabling and accelerating innovative policies and practices to address barriers to educational equity and student success. She acts as a liaison with the ADE and other organizations to advance student-focused learning systems. She earned her Ph.D. in education statistics & research methods after 18 years of PK-12 public school experience including classroom teaching, designing professional learning for adults, supervising curriculum, instruction, and assessment, and consulting at the state agency level.

Crystal M. Beshears, Ph.D.
Learning Design and Innovation Leader
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Combining 20 years of experience in a variety of educational settings, Crystal Beshears serves innovative schools for the Office of Innovation for Education at the U of A. Her diverse work includes: teaching social sciences to secondary students in the Arkansas Delta and Northwest Arkansas, supporting state and national school improvement efforts for the U of A and the National Institute for Excellence in Teaching, and teaching personal development and yoga locally and abroad.
Kelly Brady is the Director of Mastery Education for the Idaho Department of Education and has spent 30 years in the classroom. She devoted her last thirteen years before coming to the SDE, teaching in a unique personalized program for highly gifted students. With her vast experience, Brady is working to ensure all Idaho students have the opportunity to achieve their highest potential. Brady graduated from Boise State University, with a B.A. in Elementary Education and a M.A. in Curriculum and Instruction. She has an endorsement in gifted and talented education and is a certified parent coach.

Kristina Catanese joined the Kentucky Department of Education in 2016. Her main role within the Division of Innovation is to coordinate the Kentucky Innovation Lab Network, a group of about thirty school districts interested in sharing best practices around personalized learning. She also works with the state competency education and assessment consortium. Before moving to Kentucky, she taught elementary science curriculum and facilitated professional development workshops in Connecticut.