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**UAMS Receives \$1.9 Million Department of Justice Grant
for Emergency Response Program in Little Rock Schools**

LITTLE ROCK — The University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences’ (UAMS) Institute for Digital Health & Innovation has received a three-year, \$1.9 million grant from the U.S. Department of Justice to create a community-based emergency response program in Little Rock schools.

“We are grateful to have been awarded these funds by the Department of Justice and look forward to improving safety infrastructure for our partner schools,” said Joseph Sanford, M.D., the institute’s director.

The Little Rock Violence Intervention and Safety Innovative Outreach Network (LR VISION) will implement advanced safety technologies, including behavioral threat assessments, to manage and intervene in potential threats early. It will provide campus digital mapping to enhance emergency responses, anonymous reporting systems that are safe and confidential, and comprehensive site assessments to identify and address safety concerns within school infrastructures.

“With school districts facing increasing safety concerns, this project will bring in proactive measures and educational programs to make the Little Rock School District safer and better equipped,” said Julie Trammell Sheppard, Ed.D., project director for LR VISION and grant manager with the institute. “The goal is to create an environment where every student and staff member feels secure and cared for. It’s exciting to be part of something that provides the district with the tools to create meaningful change and build a stronger, safer community for everyone.”

Sheppard is a career public school educator and administrator who joined UAMS after retiring from decades of service to Arkansas public schools.

LR VISION will create a digital learning platform to provide virtual training and education for school faculty and staff, with the UAMS Arkansas Trauma Resource Initiative for Schools providing trauma-informed training, Sheppard said. An advisory

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council made up of teachers, students and community members representing each school will help identify any emerging issues.

The Little Rock School District includes 42 school campuses serving over 20,000 students. The City of Little Rock, the Little Rock Police and Fire departments and Metropolitan Emergency Medical Services are among those providing support for LR VISION.

“We deeply appreciate our partnership with UAMS and the support from the Department of Justice in launching LR VISION, a program that aligns seamlessly with our mission to foster safe, supportive and nurturing environments for students,” said Little Rock School District Superintendent Jermall Wright, Ed.D. “By integrating advanced safety technologies that include behavioral threat assessments and intervention, and providing professional development in trauma-informed practices, this initiative will equip our staff with the tools and expertise to better support our students’ needs. We are excited to continue this valuable collaboration as we work together to enhance safety and well-being across our schools.”

“LR VISION adds another critical piece to the quilt of solutions we have created through a holistic, inclusive approach to violence reduction in Arkansas’s capital city,” said Little Rock Mayor Frank Scott Jr. “We applaud UAMS for securing grant money and building this program, and we look forward to working collaboratively with LRSD, law enforcement and other stakeholders to ensure LR VISION’s success.”

“Through LR VISION, we aim to foster a safe, nurturing educational environment that supports the well-being and academic success of all students,” Sheppard said. “By integrating technological innovation, professional training and community involvement, we believe this project will make a lasting impact and lead to positive outcomes.”

The UAMS Institute for Digital Health & Innovation oversees the UAMS e-Link Network, the UAMS HealthNow virtual care program, the Stroke Program, the Sexual Assault Assessment Program and the Adult Sickle Cell Program. The institute has five maternal and neonatal initiatives as well as five trauma programs. The institute also offers language interpreter services and educational resources for patients and providers.

UAMS is the state’s only health sciences university, with colleges of Medicine, Nursing, Pharmacy, Health Professions and Public Health; a graduate school; a hospital; a main campus in Little Rock; a Northwest Arkansas regional campus in Fayetteville; a statewide network of regional campuses; and eight institutes: the Winthrop P. Rockefeller Cancer Institute, Jackson T. Stephens Spine & Neurosciences Institute, Harvey & Bernice Jones Eye Institute, Psychiatric Research Institute, Donald W. Reynolds Institute on Aging, Translational Research Institute, Institute for Digital Health & Innovation and the Institute for Community Health Innovation. UAMS includes UAMS Health, a statewide health system that encompasses all of UAMS’ clinical enterprise. UAMS is the only adult Level 1 trauma center in the state. UAMS has 3,485 students, 915 medical residents and fellows, and seven dental residents. It is the state’s largest public employer with more than 11,000 employees, including 1,200 physicians who provide care to patients at UAMS, its regional campuses, Arkansas Children’s, the VA Medical Center and Baptist Health. Visit www.uams.edu or www.uamshealth.com. Find us on [Facebook](#), [X \(formerly Twitter\)](#), [YouTube](#) or [Instagram](#).