

# Arkansas Education Association 2015 Written Adequacy Testimony

Public school funding and the review of Adequacy for Arkansas'  
480,599 students

Public education funding in Arkansas is a joint enterprise between local, state, and federal governments. Arkansas is also under a 2002 Supreme Court ruling in the Lake View lawsuit over deprived school funding for the state's poorest students. Progress in improving public education in Arkansas, has been the combined work of the Arkansas Department of Education, local districts, individual schools and the Arkansas Education Association's members. The sustained efforts of these entities deserves credit for recognizing the work and resource outlays it takes to deliver for the Arkansas students.

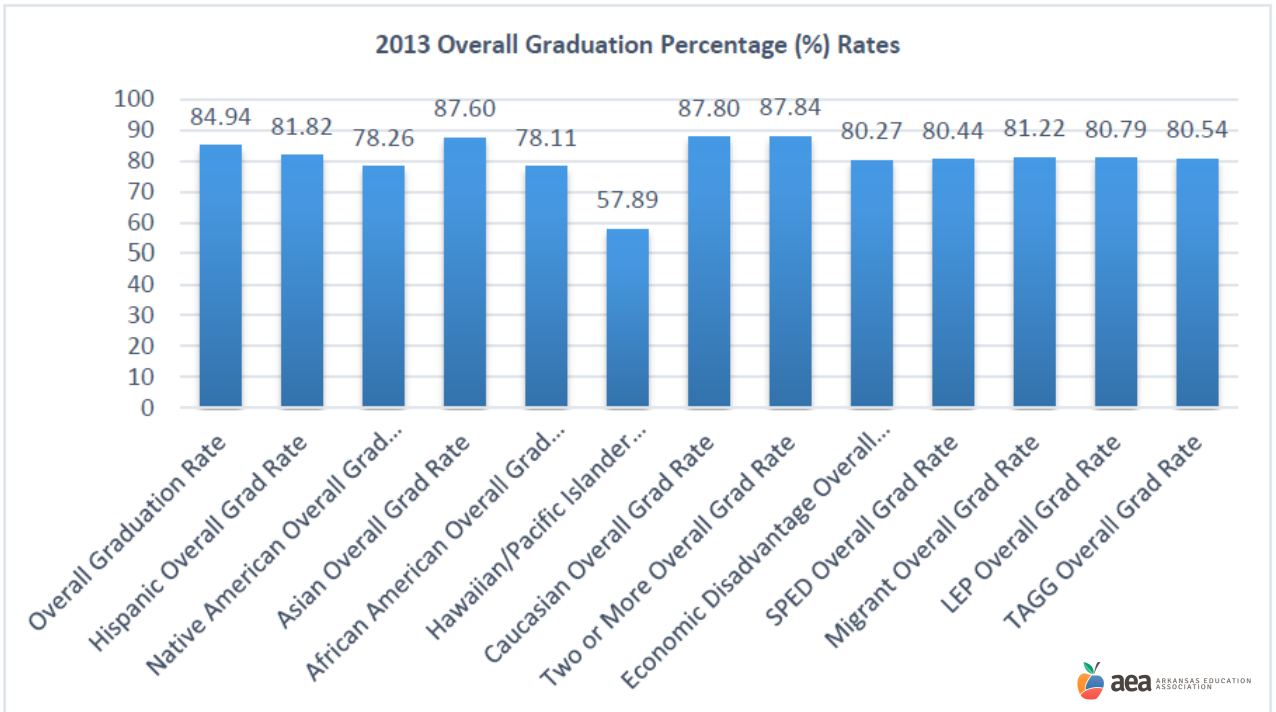


*“Being a teacher is about more than just gradebooks, homework and parent-teacher conferences.”*

*Corey Oliver,  
English Teacher and  
Milken Award Winner*

*Research suggests that the single most important factor in increasing student educational outcomes is teacher quality.*

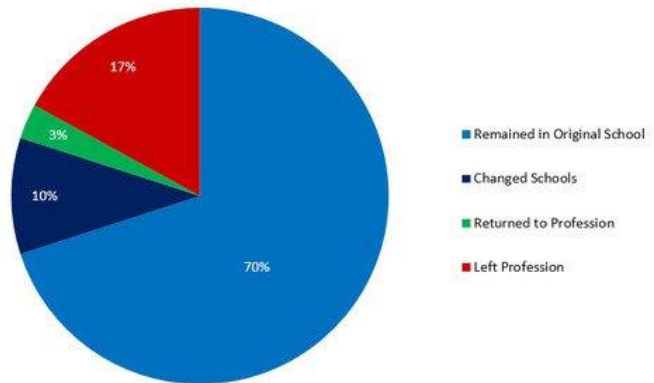
*The AEA is pleased to recognize National Board Certification as the gold standard in teacher certification, and joins with the National Board in believing that higher standards for teachers means better learning for students.*



1. It is imperative to review the impact the Partnership Program funding is having on furthering facilities disparities between students and within districts. If the disparities are found to be substantial, establishing alternate criteria for low wealth districts will have to be undertaken as disparities will widen the achievement gap, harming the state's education agenda.
2. The Partnership Program needs a consistent, dedicated and ongoing funding source to meet the evolving needs for students to access state-of-the-art facilities.
3. Put restrictions in place to prevent the re-routing of these funds. The transfer of approximately \$16 million annually to health insurance for public school employees has long-term implications for the facilities

1. Develop an Educator Mentoring Program to support new educators in their first 3 years.
2. Form longitudinal Partnerships with Institutions of Higher Education and Create High-Quality Alternative Routes to Certification.
3. Offer Incentives to Attract High-Quality Math, Science, and Special Education Teachers to Urban and Rural Districts with National Board Certified Teachers.
4. Streamline the Hiring Process.
5. Improve Working Conditions in school building so teachers have a collaborative environment
6. Support Professional Development efforts beyond school districts so teachers meet peers across the state.

Teacher Retention Over Five Years



Source: Institute for Education Sciences  
Chart: Ross Brennemman



1. Streamline the documentation of artifacts. Teachers are spending too much time uploading artifacts into Bloomboard.
2. Provide high quality for PD to support teachers.
3. More consistent training for teachers and administrators with guidelines to effectively implement TESS.
4. Further study of the TESS process and requirements to align with Every Student Succeeds Act and clearly define the expectation at the district level.



AEA supports directing these dollars to evidence-based interventions and programs such as these that have increased educational outcomes for low-income students for whom NSLA dollars were intended.



### The Professional Career Continuum for Teachers



1. Use Board certification as a qualification or preference for clinical faculty at teacher preparation programs, cooperating teachers who work with student teachers, and mentors who work with novice teachers.
2. Continue to support the National Board Certified Teacher annual retention stipend provided by Arkansas Department of Education funding. Double stipend amount to NBCT who teach in academic distressed or priority schools.
3. Continue to support the National Board candidate support system funded by the Arkansas Department of Education.

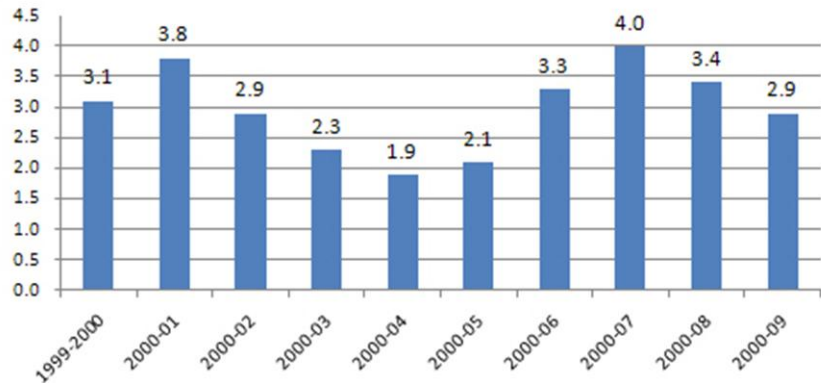




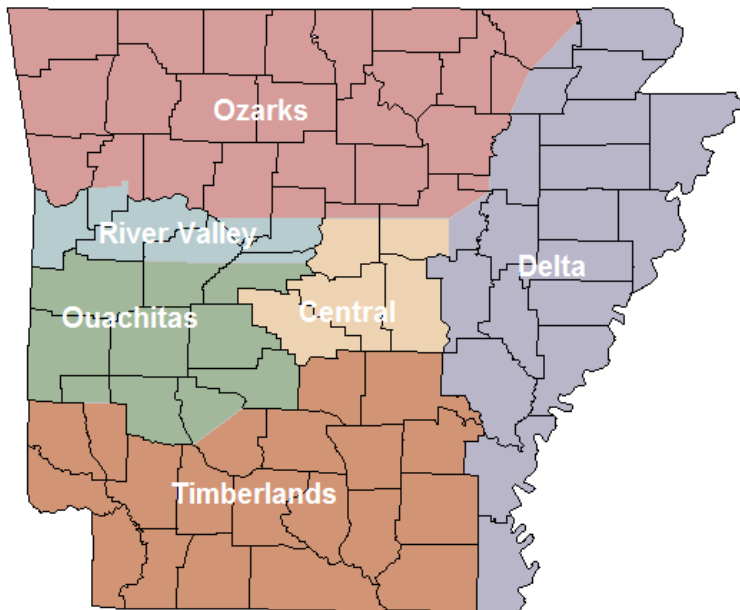
The AEA also believes that there is sufficient evidence to warrant that the Minimum Teacher Compensation Schedule [Arkansas Code 6-17-2403 (b)(1) and (b)(2)] be amended to reflect the 2% increases outlined.

In order to ensure that Arkansas teachers receive the adequate salaries contained in the matrix, the minimum teacher compensation schedules must be amended for each year of the next biennium.

**Percentage Change in Average Annual Salaries for Public School Classroom Teachers, 2000-2009**



*Rankings and Estimates: Rankings of the States 2009 and Estimates of School Statistics 2010.*



In light of this finding, the AEA recommends that school districts that receive declining enrollment funding for two or more consecutive years must demonstrate a reduction in the number of FTE's as a condition of receiving these funds.



