

ACT 222 LEGISLATIVE REPORT SCHOOL SUPPORT PROGRAM HANDOUT

ARKANSAS LEADERSHIP ACADEMY
UNIVERSITY OF ARKANSAS
COLLEGE OF EDUCATION AND HEALTH PROFESSIONS
346 N. WEST AVENUE ROOM 300
FAYETTEVILLE, AR 72701
479-575-3030
FAX 479-575-8663

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Arkansas Leadership Academy

Purpose

The Academy, through the use of research and best practices, designs creative and innovative approaches to establish learning communities in public schools by developing human resources and by modeling and advocating collaboration, support, shared decision making, team learning, risk taking, and problem solving. Partners commit to changing their organizations to support system improvement.

Vision

An innovative academy preparing educational leaders who develop high performing learning communities throughout Arkansas.

Mission

To develop and sustain a cadre of leaders in public education in Arkansas through collaborative governance by Academy partners resulting in an expanded vision, statewide system change initiatives, synergy among stakeholders, and leadership development institutes.

Beliefs

- People support what they help create.
- Diversity is embraced and valued.
- To change others, change yourself.
- The greatest leaders are known by the number of leaders they create.



Arkansas Leadership Academy School Support Program Information

Period of Performance

- Minimum of three years participation in the Arkansas Leadership Academy School Support Program

Intended Results:

- Build the leadership capacity of the school and district personnel.
- Train a diverse school leadership team, including, but not limited to, the superintendent/designee, school principal, and teachers.
- Provide a cadre of highly-experienced, trained performance coaches to work in the school on a regular basis.
- Visit the school at least weekly to facilitate leadership activities, professional development and provide follow-up on professional development implementation and strategic planning.
- Work with the school, school district staff, school board members, parents, community members, and other stakeholders as necessary to provide a comprehensive support network.
- Work with superintendent and school board regularly to establish goals for the school district and engage in strategic planning to meet district goals.
- Engage the community to gather input concerning strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and barriers within the school/district.
- Take systems leadership to scale, so that student and adult learning performance will be improved.

Capacity Building Leader - provided for an average of 1 day per week with each school.

- To facilitate data analysis in the school/district.
- To build and facilitate collaborative team efforts in improving instruction for all students based upon best practices and data.
- To build and facilitate Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) within the school/district.
- To facilitate action research in the school/district.
- To provide specific resources and training identified through analysis of student and adult performance data.

Services to be provided by the Arkansas Leadership Academy

- Build leadership capacity of individuals and teams within each school.
- Provide professional learning through Arkansas Leadership Academy institutes - residential day agendas begin at 7:30 am and end at 8:00 pm:
 1. Superintendent Institute - superintendent attends in first year of SSP (10 residential days over 4 to 5 sessions, one to four school visits, additional job-embedded requirements).
 2. Master Principal Institute- (Phase I and II) - principal attends each institute over the three year period (Phase I - 14 residential days over 4 sessions, Phase II - 10 residential days over 3 sessions, additional job-embedded requirements with each).
 3. Assistant Principal Institute- (5 days residential, technology component for additional on-line meetings, additional job-embedded requirements).



Arkansas Leadership Academy School Support Program Information

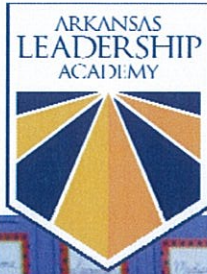
4. Teacher Leadership Institute - 2 participants from each school per year (13 residential days over 4 sessions, additional job-embedded requirements).
 5. Leadership Team Institute - 6 participants from each school per year (6 to 8 residential days over 2 to 3 sessions, additional job-embedded requirements). Each team is made up of the principal, central office personnel, and 4 teacher leaders.
 6. School Board Training - at least 9 hours annually.
 7. Effective Meetings Training - 2 participants per school per year (1 day only).
 8. Facilitator Institute Training - 1 participant per school per year (2 residential days).
 9. Community Involvement Design - planning time with additional evening meetings
 10. Central Office Leadership Institute (pilot 2011-12) (5 days residential, technology component for additional on-line meetings, additional job-embedded requirements).
- A Capacity Building Leader will be provided for each school site to provide coaching, mentoring and leadership training to individuals and teams. This Capacity Building Leader will work with school staff an average of one day per week.
 - The Arkansas Leadership Academy will facilitate resource development through Academy learning opportunities and Academy partnerships.
 - The Arkansas Leadership Academy will provide an annual review of assessment data and assist in the development of school and district annual strategic planning.

Additional Information

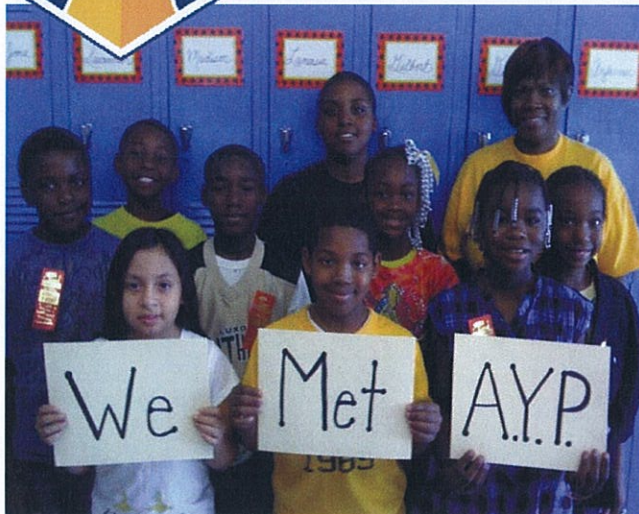
- Capacity Building Leaders are all proven educational leaders, and most have graduated from the Arkansas Leadership Academy Master Principal Program and/or the Superintendent Institute. All have a record of improving student and adult performance in their previous schools and districts. Each full-time Capacity Builder (CB) works with four schools. They work together as a professional learning team and assist in each other's schools.
- All strategies are based on proven and accepted educational research and best practices. The Arkansas Leadership Academy will conduct its own research and evaluation efforts as we strive for continuous improvement in our own organization and to improve our ability to maximize leadership capacity building initiatives in our state.
- Any funds remaining at the end of the contract period will be refunded to the school/district.

**Arkansas Leadership Academy
School Support Program
Staff Credentials**

Dr. Debbie Davis Director, Arkansas Leadership Academy	Master Principal Designee National Distinguished Principal Ed.D. Educational Leadership
Dr. Denise Airola Research & Data Specialist	Team Institute Graduate Teacher Licensure Ph.D. Education Statistics & Research Methods Grant Writer
Belinda Akin School Support Program Leader	Master Principal Institute Phase 3 Graduate National Distinguished Principal
Amanda Linn Curriculum Coordinator, Institute Facilitator, Capacity Building Leader	Teacher Institute Graduate, TLC Milken Award Winner National Board Certified Teacher
Diana Peer Master Principal Program Leader, Capacity Building Leader	Master Principal Designee
Blaine Alexander Capacity Building Leader, Master Principal Institute Facilitator	Master Principal Designee
Joe Fisher Capacity Building Leader	National Distinguished Principal
Joe Franks Capacity Building Leader	Master Principal Institute Phase 3 Graduate
Dr. Delena Gammill Capacity Building Leader	Superintendent Institute Graduate Ed.D. Educational Leadership
Tracey Montgomery Teacher Institute Facilitator	MPI Phase 2 Graduate Coaches Training Graduate ESOL Certified
Karen Sullards Capacity Building Leader	Master Principal Institute Phase 3 Graduate
Jerry Vaughn Capacity Building Leader	Master Principal Institute Phase 3 Graduate National Distinguished Principal
Sharon Williams Team Institute Facilitator	Ed. S., University of AR, Fayetteville Facilitator for Arkansas Leadership Academy Team Institutes, Master Principal Program and Coaches Training
Marie Parker Consultant for School Support Program	A.B.D. Education Administration, University of AR, Fayetteville; M.A. Ouachita Baptist University Educational Administration Certification Former Director of Great Expectations of Arkansas and Arkansas A+ Schools



Arkansas Leadership Academy School Support Program



A close look at our Arkansas schools reveals a rich diversity in students, teachers, and administrators. As teachers and administrators, we acknowledge the challenge that lies before us to teach *every* child and to offer each child the opportunity to embrace a life that is fulfilling and rewarding. Because all students have individual learning needs and learning styles, we recognize that adults in their lives must find the paths that will assure successful learning for each and every Arkansas student.

ALA accepts this challenge as we take the lead in building leadership capacity in

Arkansas school districts and individual stakeholders. With knowledgeable and positive school leaders in place, we can make a difference in Arkansas and across our nation. ALA focuses on building leaders for the schools of Arkansas.

Who is the Arkansas Leadership Academy?

ALA is a team of experienced educators with strong leadership skills, working solely to increase leadership capacity throughout a school district. Working systemically, this team provides tools and knowledge to school boards, superintendents, principals, teachers, leadership teams, and communities to create a positive impact on student and adult learning, resulting in increased student achievement.

What makes ALA different?

ALA has earned the respect of educational leaders, business leaders, and policymakers not only within Arkansas but across the nation for challenging traditional educational practices and, instead, embracing the complexities that are unique to educational leaders.

Providing on-site, weekly coaching and support to School Support Program schools is one component of the work of ALA. To further support district leadership, various institutes broaden the scope of our work by focusing on five performance areas: Creating and Living the Mission, Vision, and Core Beliefs; Leading and Managing Change; Developing Deep Knowledge of Teaching and Learning; Building and Maintaining Collaborative Relationships; and Building and Sustaining Accountability Systems. Institutes are available for teachers, assistant principals, principals, superintendents, and leadership teams. In addition, Effective Meeting and Facilitator Training enhance the leadership skills of these school leaders. All of the work of the ALA focuses on increasing student achievement.

“Arkansas Leadership Academy had the best record for getting schools back on track.” (p. 28)

Review of School Improvement Consulting Expenditures and Results Presented by the Bureau of Legislative Research to the Joint Education Committee
February 7, 2012



Arkansas Leadership Academy School Support Program

In the School Support Program, ALA in collaboration with the Arkansas Department of Education provides support and builds leadership capacity in schools or school districts. The School Support Program was created by ACT 1229 of 2005 during the Arkansas 85th General Assembly. The ALA was selected by the Southern Regional Education Board (SREB) in 2001 to design a program for low-performing schools. A state-wide design team helped create the Intensive School Support for Low-Performing Schools which eventually became the School Support Program in 2005. ACT 222 of 2009 continued the authorization of the program work in schools in School Improvement.



School Support Program's Preliminary Results

- **Schools engaged in the Arkansas Leadership Academy's SSP have demonstrated substantial improvements during their involvement in the program, particularly in literacy performance.**
 - ⇒ **Among the lowest performing schools in the state in 2009, schools in Year 3 of SSP gained 21.8 percentage points in literacy and 14 percentage points in math.**
 - ⇒ **SSP students have demonstrated consistent increases in percent of students Advanced as well as Proficient in literacy performance.**
 - ⇒ **Students in SSP schools are closing the gap in literacy and math performance with all other students in Arkansas.**
 - ⇒ **Eight School Support Schools were recognized by the University of Arkansas' Office for Education Policy (OEP) for Outstanding Educational Performance Awards in 2011 including Most Improved, High Achieving, and Beating the Odds.**

"ALA has given Arkansas High School the gift of systemic change. We have learned that change does not have to be painful as long as everyone is involved enough to believe in the product and there is a structured plan to guide everyone through the process of that change."

Matt Coleman
Instructional Facilitator
Arkansas High School

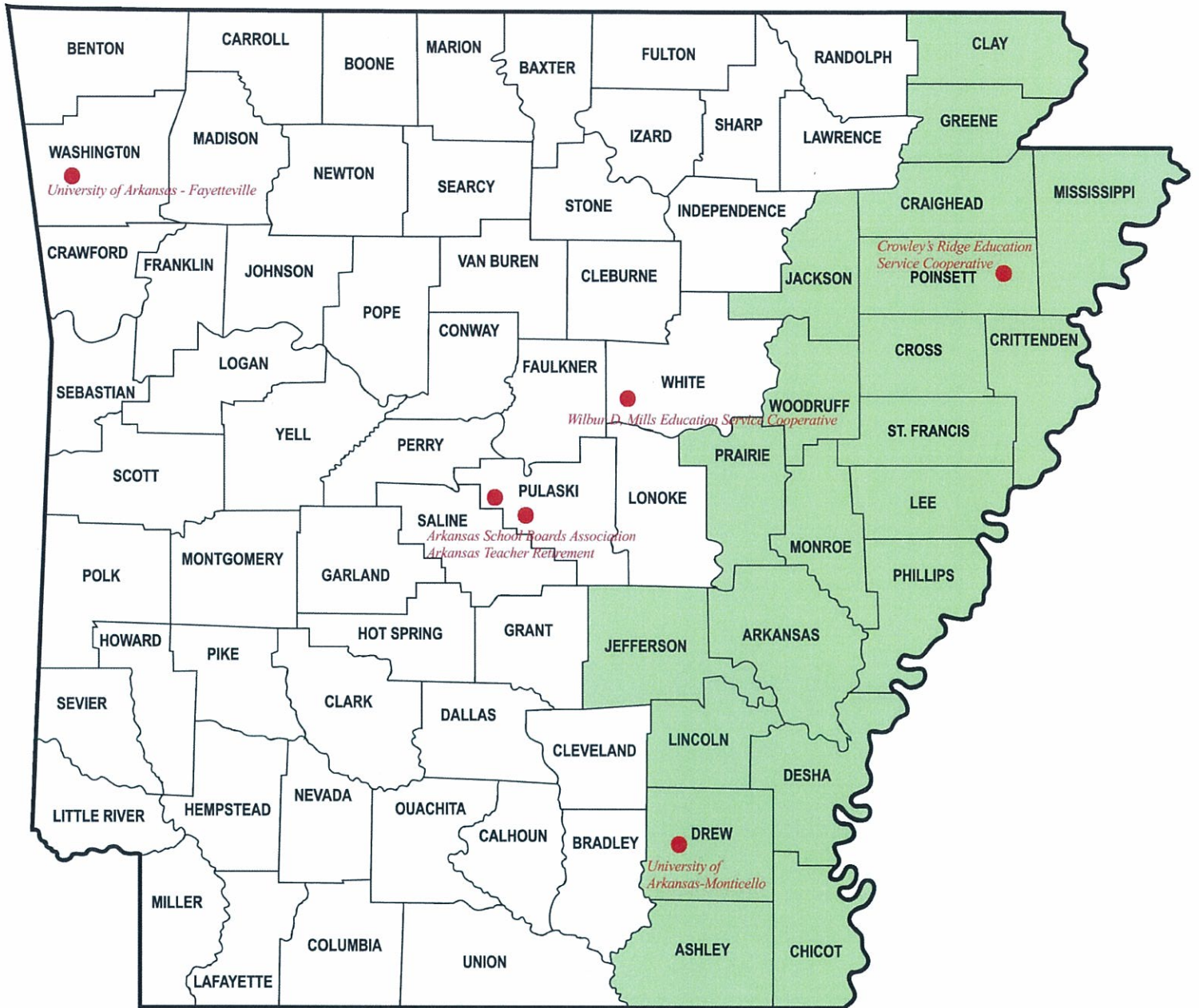
Want to know more about the Arkansas Leadership Academy?

Visit arkansasleadershipacademy.org to learn more about the ALA, its institutes, and the School Support Program or call Belinda Akin (479-200-4369) for more information.

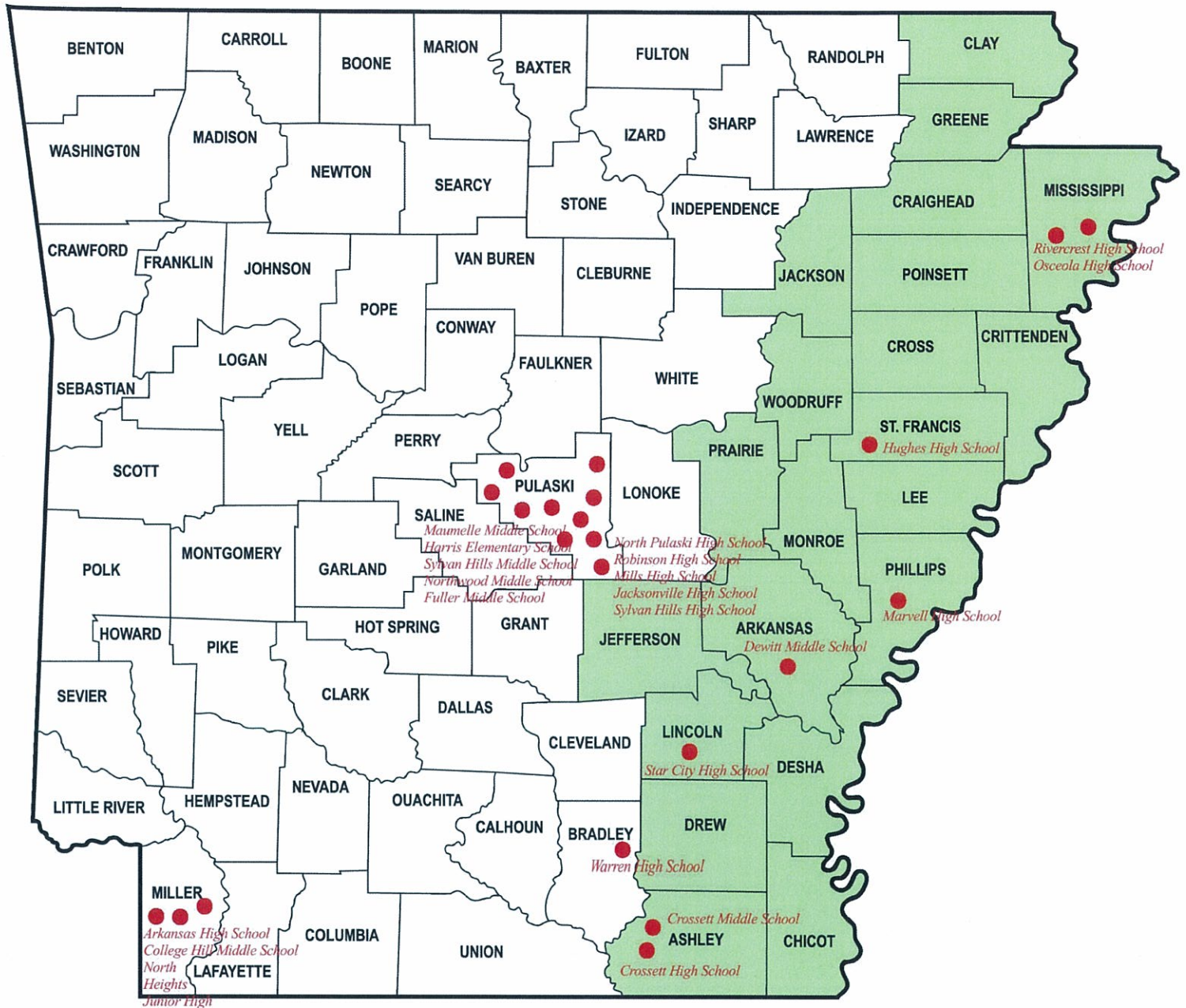
Arkansas Leadership Academy
346 N. West Avenue, Room 300
1 University of Arkansas
Fayetteville, AR 72701
(479) 575- 3030
arkansasleadershipacademy.org

Our Mission: *To develop and sustain a cadre of leaders in public education in Arkansas through collaborative governance by Academy partners, resulting in expanded vision, statewide system change initiatives, synergy among stakeholders, and leadership development institutes.*

Arkansas Leadership Academy Offices



Arkansas Leadership Academy School Support Program Schools 2012-2013



Observations in “Improving” Schools

1. A positive change occurred in the school’s culture.
 - Increased ownership of shared vision
 - Increased collaboration between teachers and administrators
 - A safe and orderly environment in place for all stakeholders
2. A strong focus on data identified student needs and data informed decision making.
3. PLCs and adult learning were embedded in the school routine; this was “protected” time for learning and collaboration.
4. The staff assumed a collective responsibility for students’ behavior and learning.
5. Staff understood the significance and outcomes of student engagement in the learning; this resulted in focused instruction and higher student engagement.
6. High retention of teachers and administrators.
7. Evidence of strong leadership at all levels; superintendent, principal, and teacher leaders.

Observations in “Low-Performing” Schools

1. A culture of low expectations for teachers and students as well as for administration
2. Resistance to change.
3. Barriers to change in school culture.
4. Lack of oversight and/or accountability for teaching/learning.
5. Lack of data focus or data informed decision making.
6. Lack of effective, engaging, teaching strategies.
7. Failure attributed to others—students, parents, other staff, etc.
8. Lack of collaboration due to scheduling barriers.
9. No evidence of strong leadership
10. High turnover of staff and administration.

EVIDENCE-BASED PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT TO IMPACT STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT

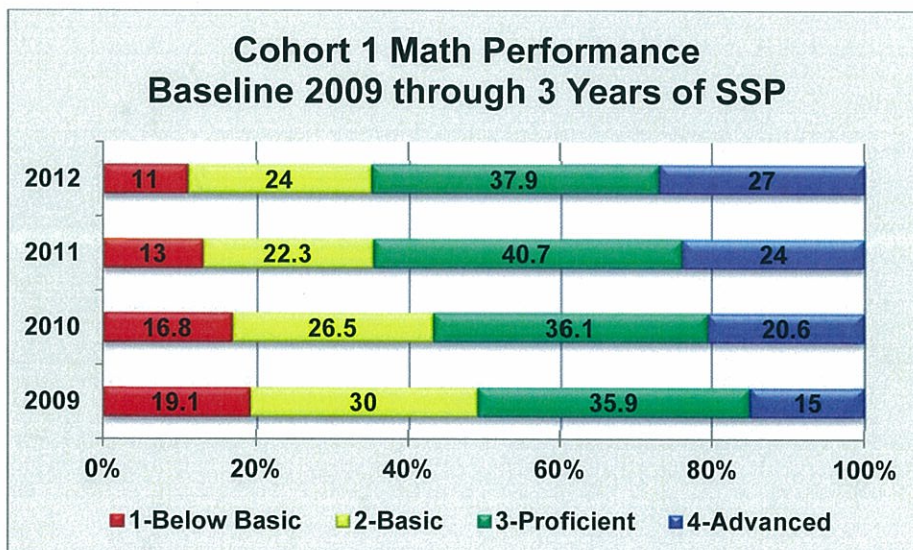
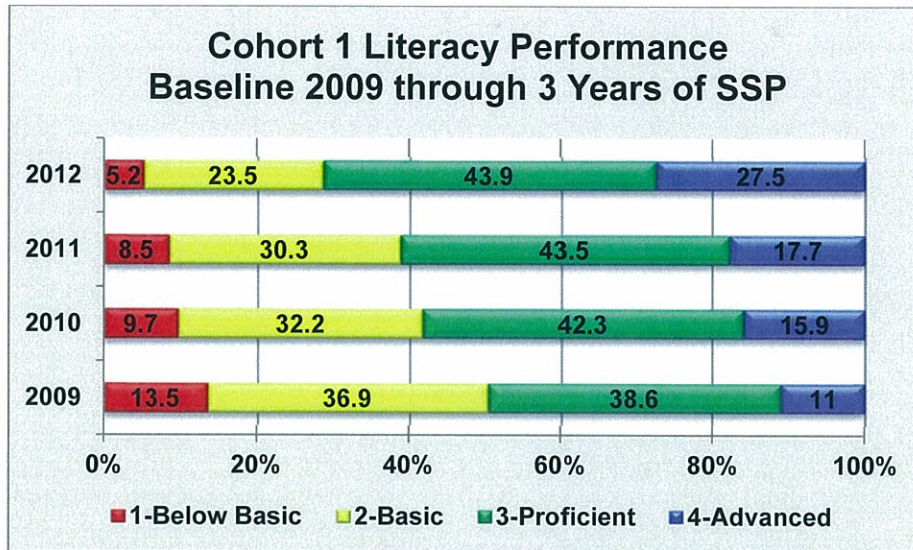
The purpose of the Arkansas Leadership Academy School Support Program (Academy SSP) is to build the capacity of leaders in local education systems to improve student achievement and sustain high levels of expectation and attainment for all students. The Academy SSP focuses on building leadership capacity at the school and district levels to support transformational change and continuous school improvement. The Academy SSP provides a cadre of highly trained, experienced capacity-building leaders embedded in the school at least once weekly to develop and sustain a positive support network for leadership as one component of its comprehensive support. Capacity building leaders engage in weekly mentoring, modeling and facilitation activities at participating Academy SSP schools with the goal of building the leadership capacity of low performing schools to create and sustain positive change. Capacity building leaders focus on developing local leaders' skills in five performance areas: Living the vision and mission, managing change, developing deep knowledge about teaching and learning, building and maintaining collaborative relationships, and building and maintaining accountability systems.

Grounded in evidence-based research, the Academy SSP combines role-based professional development through Academy Institutes to develop content knowledge/skills with onsite, customized job-embedded PD to provide coherence and collaborative structures that enhance adult learning and application of new knowledge and skills within the school/district context. Participation in the Academy's Institutes provides partner schools/districts with ongoing, content-rich PD in evidence-based effective leadership and instruction to develop deep knowledge regarding teaching and learning to align instructional systems with the academic rigor and relevance required in Common Core State Standards (CCSS) necessary to ensure all students access and maintain a path to college and career readiness.

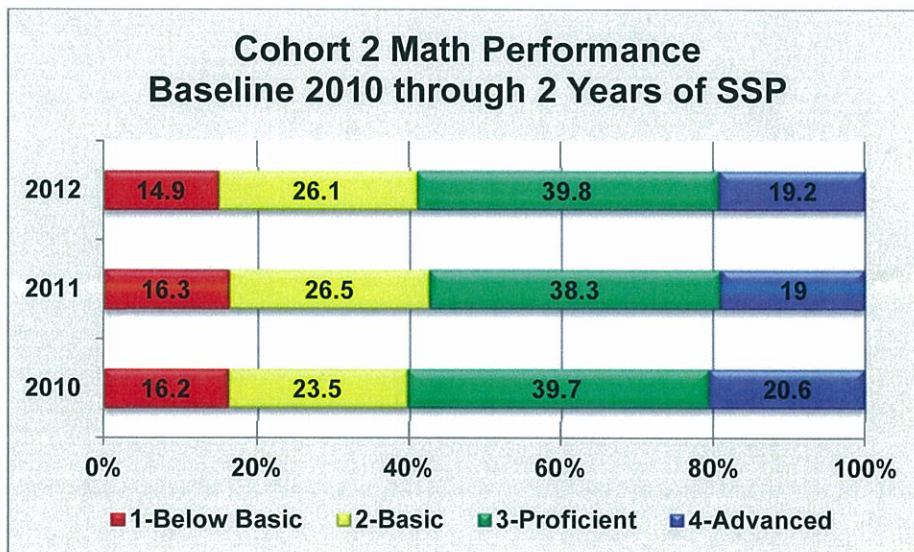
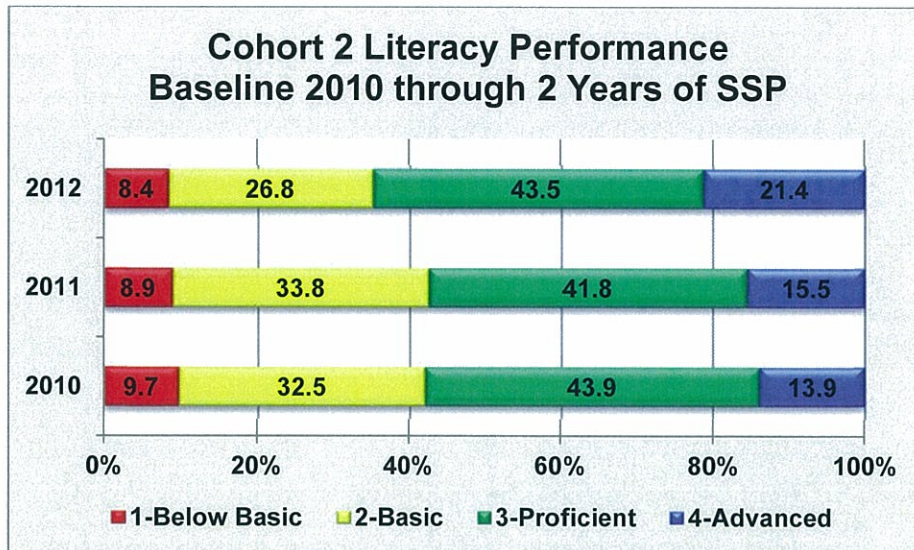
Annual results of the Arkansas's mandated assessments provide evidence to support the change in performance of schools involved in the Academy SSP. Although the formal focus of Arkansas's accountability system has been on attaining at least Proficient performance on grade level Benchmark Exams and End of Course Exams, the focus is shifting toward ensuring all students achieve and maintain a trajectory leading to college and career readiness. This requires attention to student performance at all levels of the achievement continuum—moving all students to the next level regardless of their initial starting point. The majority of students in the Academy SSP schools demonstrate this desirable performance, particularly over time.

SUMMARY OF SCHOOL PERFORMANCE BY COHORT AND SUBJECT AREA

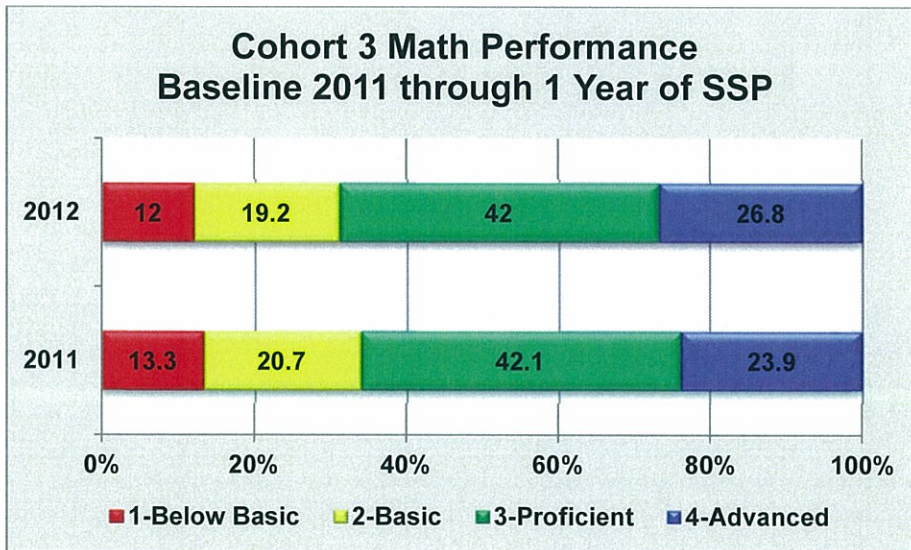
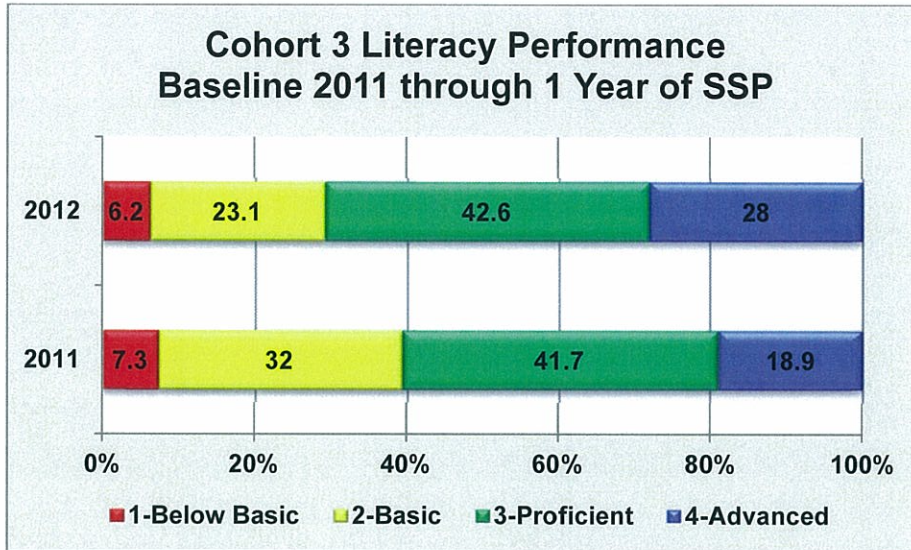
Cohort 1 schools have participated in the Academy SSP for three years. These schools consist of six elementary schools, one middle school and three high schools that were among the lowest performing schools in the Arkansas in 2009 (lowest 25% of schools). These schools have a baseline for performance comparison of the school year 2008-09. Cohort 1 schools have made consistent progress in increasing student achievement of higher performance levels increasing percentages of students Proficient and Advanced while reducing the percentages of students Below Basic and Basic in mathematics and literacy.



Cohort 2 schools have participated in the Academy SSP for two years. These schools consist of one elementary school, two middle schools and seven high schools. These schools were among the schools in the bottom quartile (lowest 25 percent) in Arkansas in 2010. These schools have a baseline for performance comparison of the school year 2009-10. Although these schools demonstrated an initial implementation dip, particularly in math, these schools have begun to demonstrate improved performance in mathematics and particularly in literacy. Schools in Cohort 2 have experienced numerous contextual factors that require a longer term commitment to change and improvement.



Cohort 3 schools have completed their first year of the Academy SSP. These schools consist of three middle schools and three high schools. These schools were among the schools in the bottom quartile (lowest 25 percent) in Arkansas in 2011. These schools have a baseline for performance comparison of the school year 2010-11. These schools have demonstrated the desirable pattern of improvement moving students out of the lower performance classes and increasing the percentages of students Proficient and Advanced.



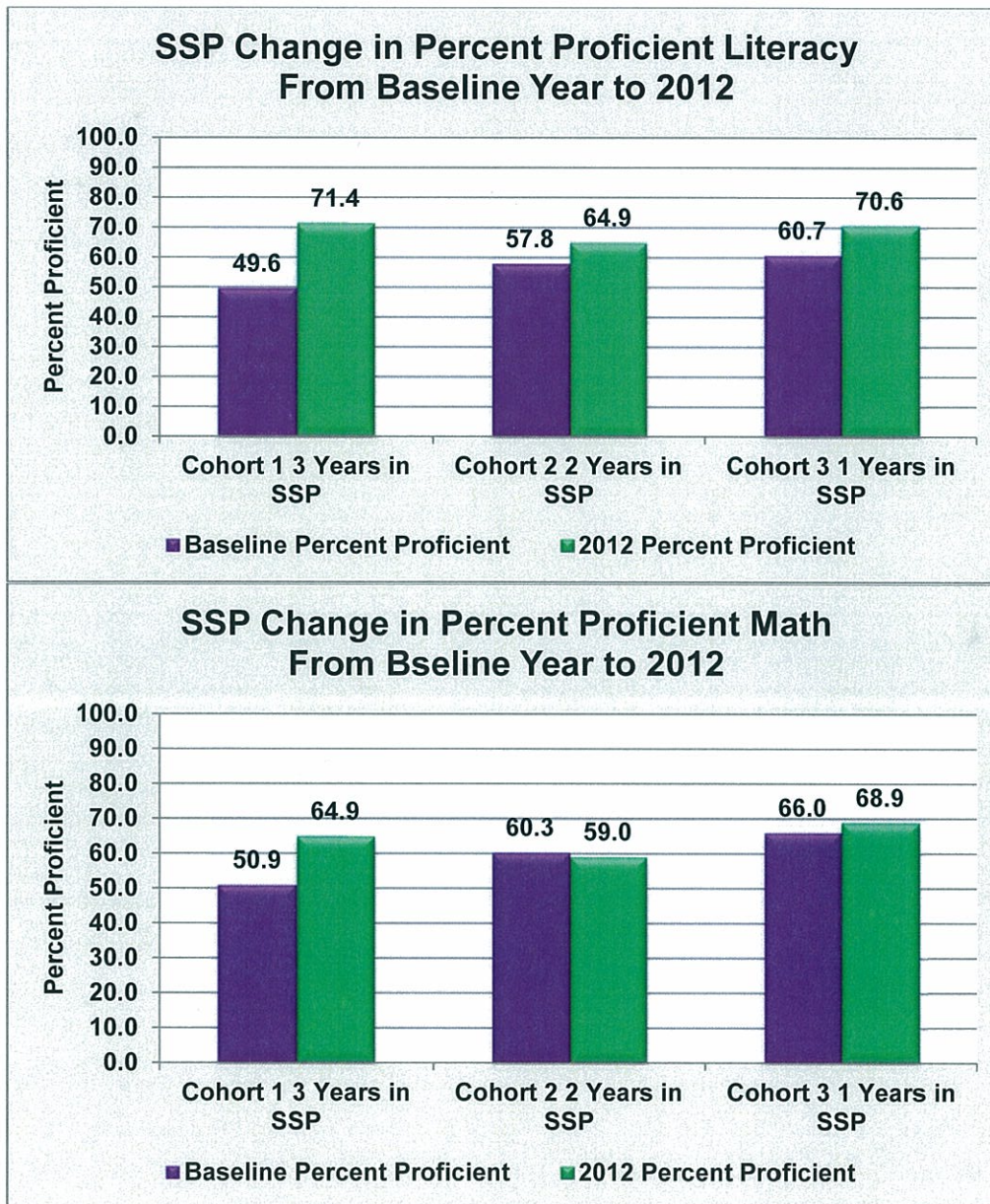
WHY THREE YEARS FOR THE ACADEMY SCHOOL SUPPORT PROGRAM?

Continuous and sustained improvement for students results from building capacity for systems change. SSP works side-by-side with district and school leaders to develop school cultures that support high expectations for teaching and learning, as well as routines and school structures that enable adaptive changes to meet the ever-evolving landscape of 21st century education. Building leadership capacity for *sustained* results takes three to five years on average—five to eight years in high school settings. The return: capacity and sustainability!

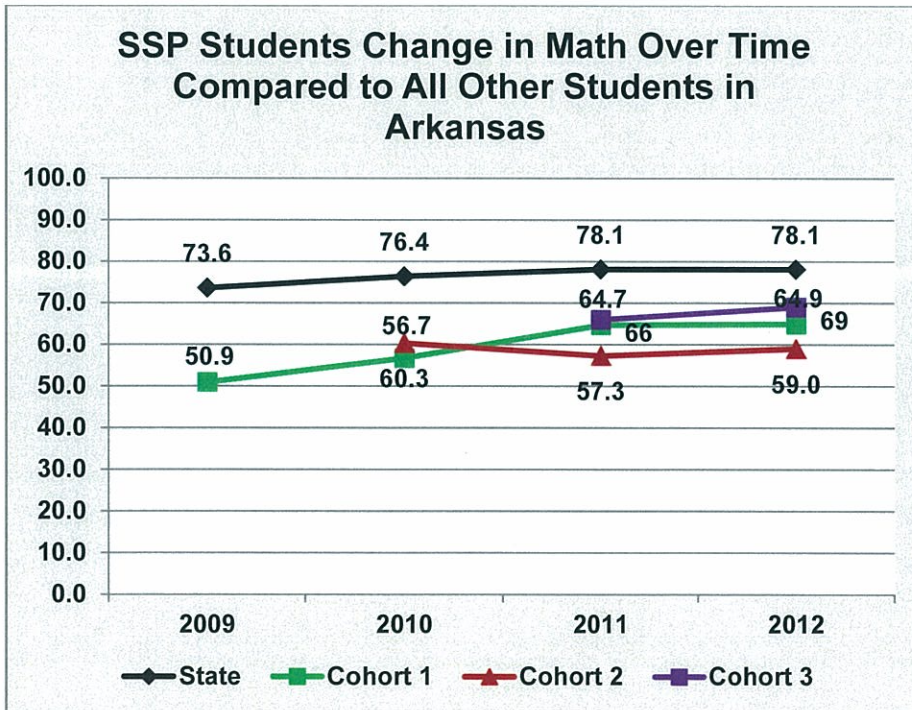
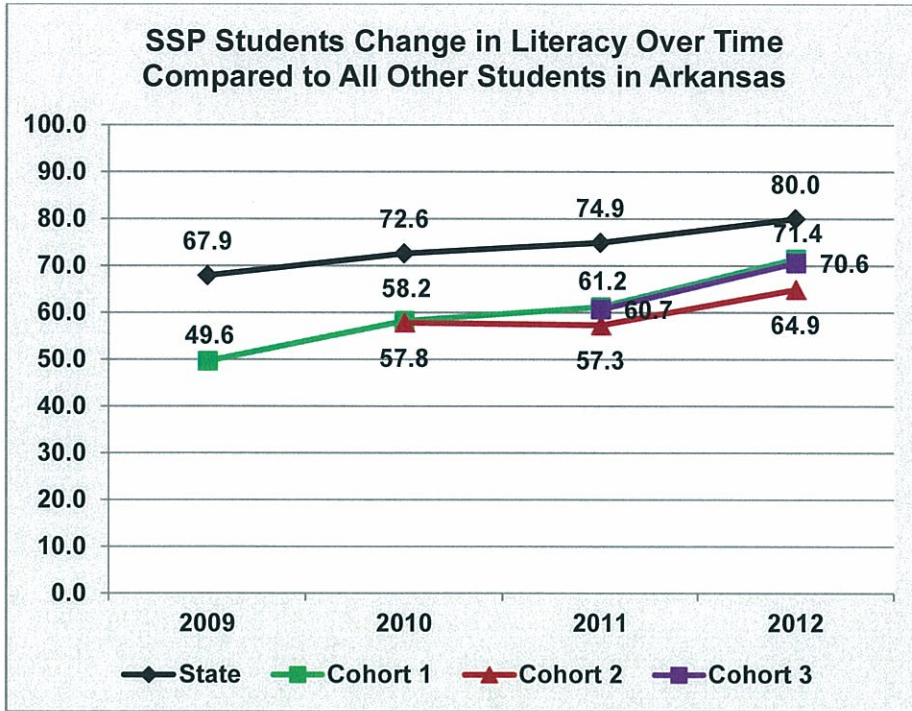
Cohort 1 includes six elementary, one middle and three high schools.

Cohort 2 includes one elementary, three middle and seven high schools.

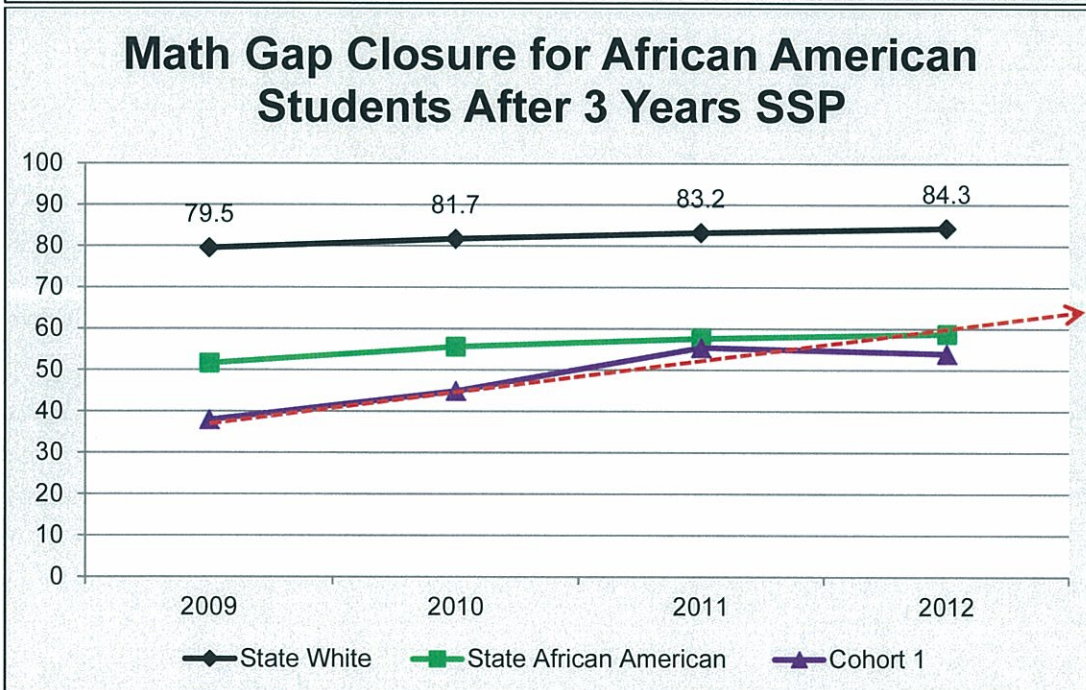
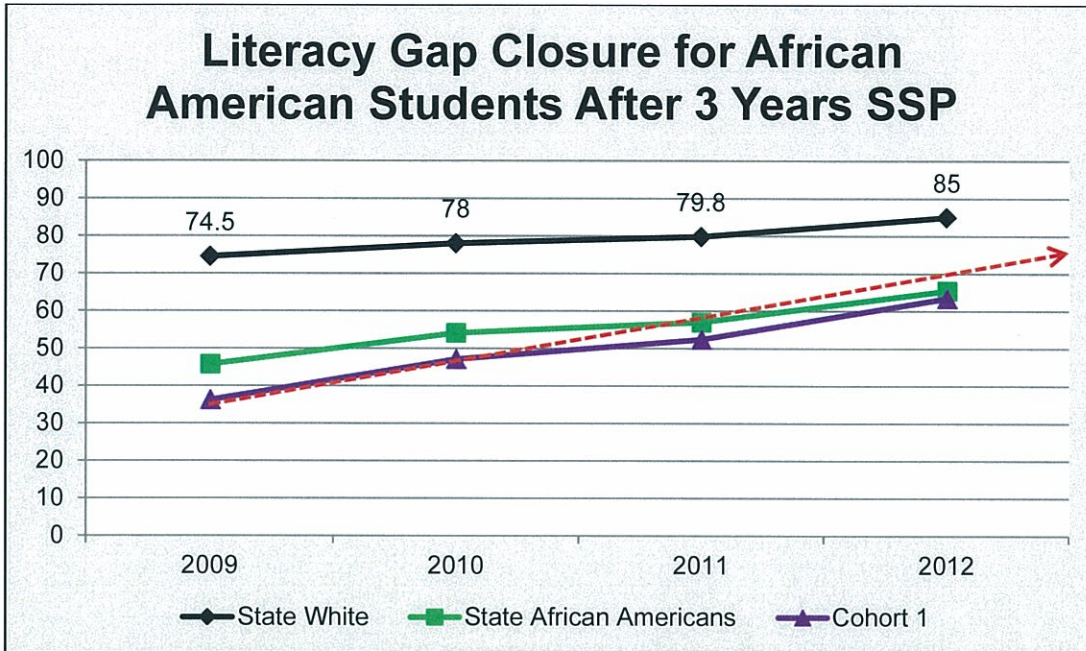
Cohort 3 includes three middle and three high schools.



In general, the Academy SSP schools are closing the gap with other schools in the state, particularly in literacy. Preliminary analyses support the conclusion that high school student achievement improvements take more time, particularly in systems that have had high leadership turnover before and during their tenure with the Academy SSP.



Overall performance may mask achievement gaps for subgroups of students. This has been the case for Academy SSP schools, particularly the historic White/African American achievement gap. These gaps existed prior to participation in the Academy SSP as is evidenced in the figures below for math and literacy for Cohort 1 African Americans, all other African American students in Arkansas and white students in Arkansas. Note that Cohort 1 schools have narrowed the achievement gap that existed in 2009 and are on a long term trajectory to close this gap.



The Academy SSP places particular emphasis on building the capacity of leaders throughout the school and engaging all stakeholders, administrators, teachers, support staff, students, parents and community in an effort to improve the learning community. In one school, African American students were encouraged to use their voices to help their peers understand the achievement gap and engage in strategies to close the gap, particularly in literacy. Through a student developed organization, the Gentlemen of Knowledge, students engaged in problem solving and goal setting to tackle the gap. The dramatic results of their efforts are illustrated in the figure below. Their story is featured in the article that follows this summary of results. A goal of the Academy SSP is to help all schools replicate this dramatic success.

