

THE STATE OF EDUCATION IN ARKANSAS

2015 FULL REPORT



WORKING TOGETHER TO
ADVANCE EDUCATION

ForwARd



Dear Arkansan:

ForwARd Arkansas, a strategic partnership of the Winthrop Rockefeller Foundation, Walton Family Foundation and Arkansas Board of Education, has been established to develop a strategic plan to dramatically improve public education in Arkansas.

ForwARd has brought us together, a diverse group of Arkansas leaders with a wide range of experiences, to form its steering committee. We are reaching out to educators, parents, students, community leaders and policy makers across our state for input on how to advance education and move Arkansas forward. Following careful review of input from the community and based upon our understanding of where we stand today (which we share with you in this report), we plan to complete and release a holistic plan for P-16 education.

We start this process from a position of strength. Arkansas has been successful in improving access to education across all ages from pre-K to college. We have also established policies and standards that should support improved student outcomes. However, student outcomes are still far below our aspirations. Too few students are graduating from our schools prepared for college and the workforce. Additionally, the achievement gap is still significant despite recent gains.

ForwARd's work will not stop with the release of a plan. ForwARd is committed to working with the rest of Arkansas to change these outcomes in the coming years. And the opportunity is great. Just to give one example: if we are able to bring Arkansas's 6-year college graduation rates up from 39% (among the lowest in the nation) just to the national average of 57%, 11,000 more Arkansas students would graduate from college in the next five years in 4-year public universities alone.¹

Education is important to all of us. Let's move ForwARd together.

Sincerely,

ForwARd Arkansas Steering Committee
Working Together to Advance Education

Steering Committee

Shane Broadway, Director, Arkansas Department of Higher Education
Toby Daugherty, Lead Recruiter and Outreach Coordinator, The STAND Foundation
Kim Davis, Board Member, Arkansas State Board of Education
Bill Dillard III, Vice President, Dillard's Inc.
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Darrin Williams, CEO, Southern Bancorp Inc.
Kenya Williams, Co-Chair, Strong-Community Leadership Alliance

For more information on the Steering Committee, please visit ForwardArkansas.org.

About ForwARd

ForwARd Arkansas is a partnership of education, business, government and civil society professionals committed to improving public education in the state. The group is currently conducting extensive research, encouraging statewide discussion and developing a holistic plan to strengthen public education.

ForwARd is organized by the Winthrop Rockefeller Foundation, Walton Family Foundation and Arkansas Board of Education, and advised by The Boston Consulting Group (research and strategic planning), Eric Rob & Isaac (web and report development), and The Peacock Group (communications).

VISION: Every Arkansas student will graduate prepared for success in college and the workplace

MISSION: To help Arkansas create one of the finest public education systems in the nation

GOAL: To create a holistic strategic plan for P-16 education in Arkansas, with specific recommendations for academically distressed schools and school districts, that will provide actionable recommendations to shape and guide the state's time and resources to realize this vision and mission

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Arkansas Education at a Glance

A Changing Landscape

A lot has changed in the last several years. Arkansas has more students in fewer schools, with increases in percentage of minority students and percentage of students qualifying for free or reduced lunch (FRL). State spending per student enrolled has dropped 8%

for pre-K and increased 3% for K-12, with Arkansas ranked 33rd in the nation for per-pupil expenditure. There has also been a 24% increase in the number of students attending 2- or 4-year institutions.

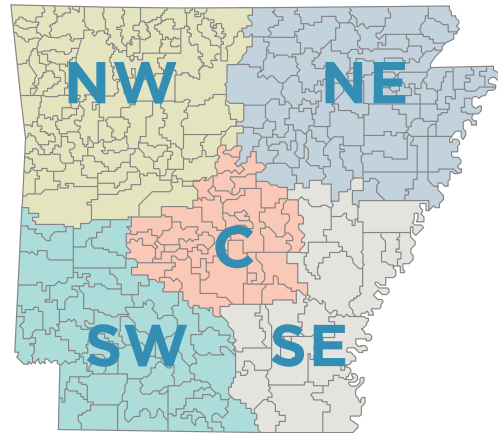
Key Changes Since 2005-06²

| | 2005-06 | 2012-13 | Change from '05-'13 |
|---------------------------|---|---------|--------------------------|
| Pre-K³ | 3- & 4-year-olds enrolled | 37,000 | +2,000 students (+5%) |
| | \$ per pupil | \$6,014 | -\$500 (-8% pts) |
| K-12 | Number of school districts | 261 | -3 districts |
| | Avg students/district | 1,766 | +75 stud./district (+4%) |
| | Number of schools | 1,111 | -29 schools (-3%) |
| | Number of teachers ⁴ | 33,000 | — |
| | Number of students | 464,000 | +11,000 (+2%) |
| | % of students minority | 31% | +6% pts |
| | % of students qualifying for FRL ⁵ | 54% | +7% pts |
| \$ per pupil ⁶ | \$9,173 | \$9,411 | +\$238 (+3%) |
| Higher Ed | Number of students in 2- or 4-year | 146,000 | +35,000 (24%) |
| | % of students in 4-year schools ⁷ | 61% | +4% pts |
| | % of students minority ⁸ | 26% | +6% pts |

Understanding Regional Differences

Racial and economic composition in the Arkansas student population varies widely from region to region, with significant numbers of children from low-income families present in all areas of the state.

For the purpose of this report, regions are defined according to the Arkansas Comprehensive Testing and the Assessment and Accountability Program.



Student Demographics by Region⁹

| | NW | NE | Central | SW | SE | Arkansas |
|-------------------------------------|-------|------|---------|------|------|----------|
| White | 70% | 71% | 56% | 56% | 46% | 63% |
| Black | 3% | 22% | 33% | 30% | 46% | 21% |
| Hispanic | 19% | 5% | 7% | 11% | 6% | 11% |
| Other Races | 8% | 2% | 4% | 3% | 1% | 5% |
| Total Students (k) | 162.5 | 93.7 | 146.0 | 48.5 | 24.2 | 474.9 |
| FRL-Eligible | 58% | 67% | 56% | 68% | 74% | 61% |
| % Age 0-17 in Poverty (2012) | 26% | 31% | 25% | 34% | 39% | 28% |
| ELL (2014-15) | 16% | 2% | 5% | 6% | 3% | 8% |
| 504 (2014-15) | 3% | 3% | 3% | 3% | 3% | 3% |

Note: May not sum to 100% due to rounding.

Report Summary: 4 Major Findings¹⁰

1 Access

Arkansas has been successful in improving access to education and in increasing participation in higher-level educational activities.

- ▶ **Pre-K Access:** Top 20 nationally
- ▶ **High School Graduation Rate:** Above national average
- ▶ **AP Exams & ACT:** Very large increase in participating students
- ▶ **College-Going Rate:** Top 20 nationally

2 Standards

Arkansas has established policies and standards that should support improved student outcomes.

- ▶ **Common Core:** Arkansas is now 4 years into the implementation of this rigorous college-ready standards program
- ▶ **Principal & Teacher Licensure & Training:** Arkansas has been recognized as a leader in developing standards in these areas
- ▶ **Per-Pupil Expenditure:** Arkansas's per-pupil expenditure has increased in recent years and is near national average

3 Outcomes

Student outcomes are still far below aspirations across the state; opportunity exists to improve.

- ▶ **Pre-K:** For low-income children who attended pre-K, only 18% were considered 'developed' in all six QELI categories: 31% in at least 5 categories, 43% in at least 4 categories and 57% in 3 or less categories
- ▶ **4th- and 8th-Grade:** Bottom 20 nationally in math and literacy test scores – and that rank has dropped since 2005
- ▶ **College Graduation Rate:** 39% (48th in the nation)

4 Achievement Gap

Despite recent gains, the achievement gap is still significant, and this is reflected in economic, racial and regional disparities.

- ▶ **Low-Income & Minority Students:** Perform below other students on national tests, although the gap has narrowed since 2005
- ▶ **Regional Achievement:** Southeast has lowest average but largest gains; Central has largest disparity and concentration of academically distressed schools
- ▶ **Pockets of Performance:** Across Arkansas, there are pockets of high and low performance suggesting opportunity to spread what already works well statewide

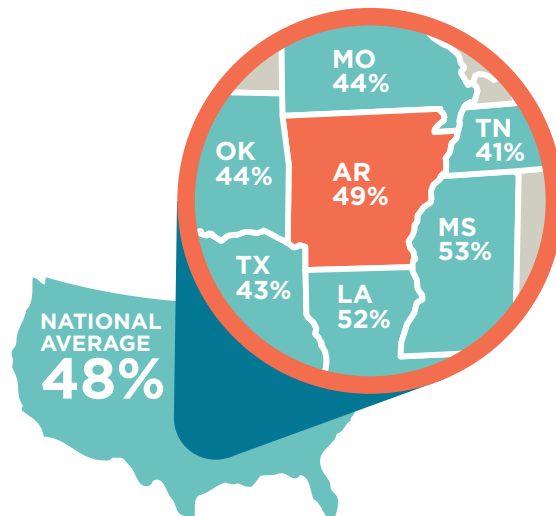
ACHIEVING STUDENT ACCESS TO EDUCATION

Arkansas has been successful in improving access to education and in increasing participation in higher-level educational activities. More students are attending pre-K, and high school graduation and college-going rates are higher than the national average. College enrollment is up.

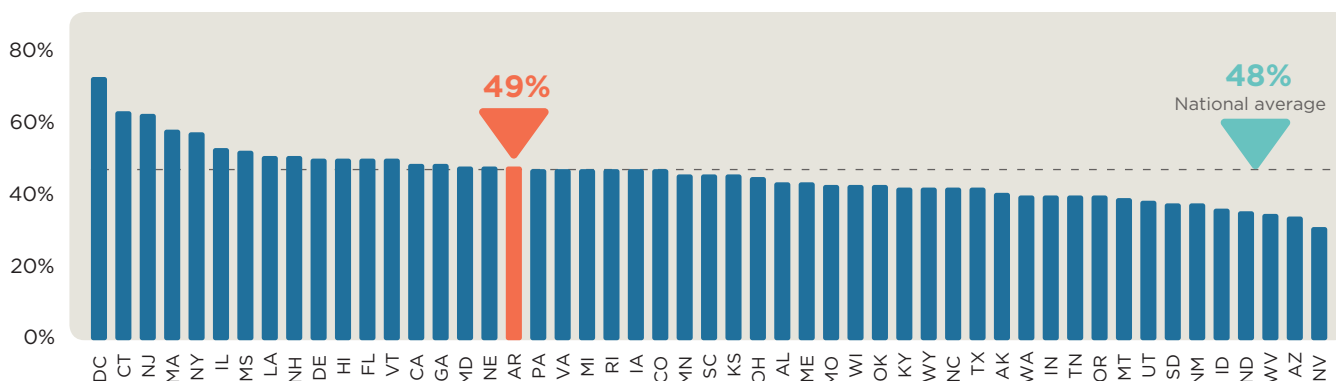
Improved Opportunity for Pre-K Students

49% of Arkansas 3- and 4-year-olds attend pre-K which is in line with the national average of 48%. While we rank 18th in the nation, we have only increased pre-K attendance by 0.6% since 2005-06 compared to a national average increase of 3%.¹¹

To help improve these numbers, Arkansas recently received a \$60 million grant from the U.S. Department of Education and U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. This grant will be used to improve services for roughly 1,700 students and increase pre-K capacity by nearly 2,200 students.¹²



3- and 4-Year-Olds Enrolled in Preschool in 2012-13



Source: Ed Week Quality Counts database accessed 10/21/2014.

Arkansas Other states

Pre-K Access in Arkansas¹³

Study after study shows the benefit of pre-K education for 3- and 4-year-olds. Pre-K provides our children the learning foundation they need to succeed in kindergarten and beyond.

“The research is strong,” Rich Huddleston, executive director for Arkansas Advocates for Children and Families, said in a July 11, 2013, *Arkansas Times* article reporting on pre-K access in the state. “For low-income and at-risk kids, if you don’t get to them early and if they start school behind, it’s less likely that they’re going to catch up to their peers.”

In Arkansas, we continue to make strides in pre-K access, leading the nation as one of the Top 20 states in this area. Although we rank higher than other states, we still have room to grow. Between the federal Head Start and Early Head Start and the state program, Arkansas Better Chance, we serve 47% of eligible 3-year-olds and 80% of eligible 4-year-olds. That leaves approximately 15,000 eligible low-income 3- and 4-year-old children without pre-K slots.

The need for pre-K access is great and helps families like Charlotte Franklin’s son, Christopher, who was featured in the *Arkansas Times* article. Christopher attended a Head Start program in Little

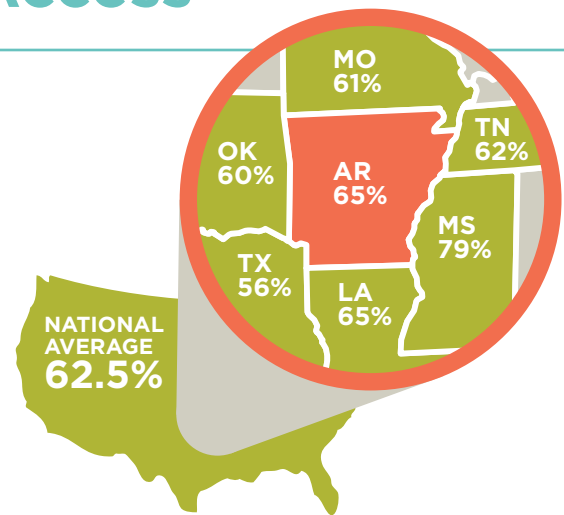
Rock when he was 3 years old after his mom saw a sign about it and decided to check it out. Now, Christopher is in 4th grade at eStem, a charter school in downtown Little Rock.

His mom said Christopher’s pre-K foundation made all the difference in his school readiness, social skills and academic performance. For Christopher, pre-K instilled in him a love for learning.

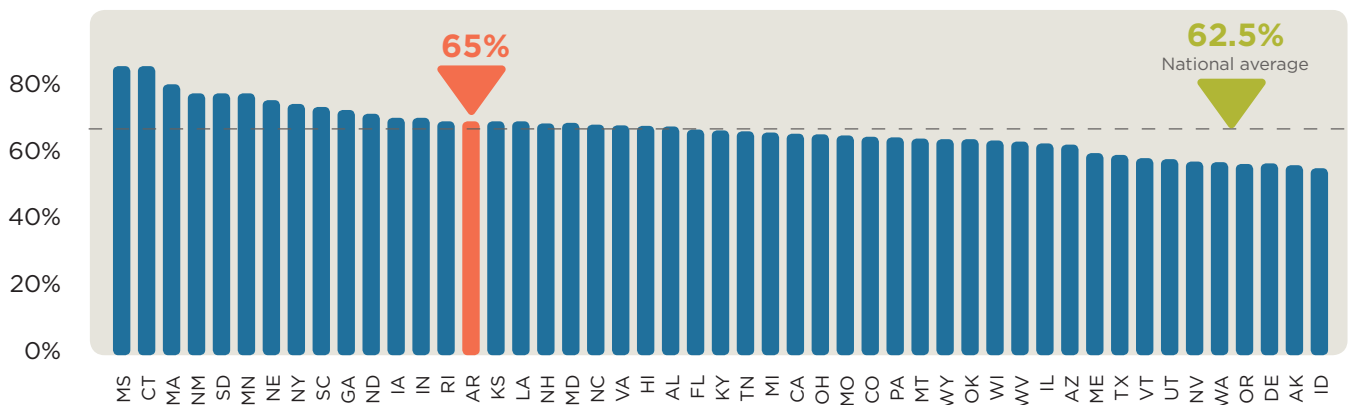
“At Head Start, we learned math, writing and literacy,” Christopher told the reporter. “It helped me a lot when I went to kindergarten. I like school. I want to go to college.”

Improvement in College Access

84% of Arkansas high school students graduate, and 65% of those who graduate attend college. This is a 9% increase in students attending college from 2004, indicating that college access has improved. The national average for college attendance has only increased by 6.8% since 2004.¹⁴



Percentage of High School Graduates Going on to College in 2010



Source: NCHEMS Information Center

More Students Participate in AP Exams and the ACT

Participation in AP exams and the ACT helps pave the way for access and success in college. 59% of Arkansas junior and senior students took AP exams in 2012, ranking us 6th in the nation for participation. 88% of Arkansas students took the ACT in 2012, which is a 14% increase from 2008, with the average score staying consistent.¹⁵

▶ Success of the AAIMS Program¹⁶

Some of these gains can be attributed to the Arkansas Advanced Initiative for Math and Science, Inc., an affiliate of the National Math and Science Initiative. AAIMS works to build enrollment and increase the number of students taking – and earning qualifying scores on – AP exams in mathematics, science and English (MSE). The program launched in 2008 and includes a special focus on traditionally underserved students.

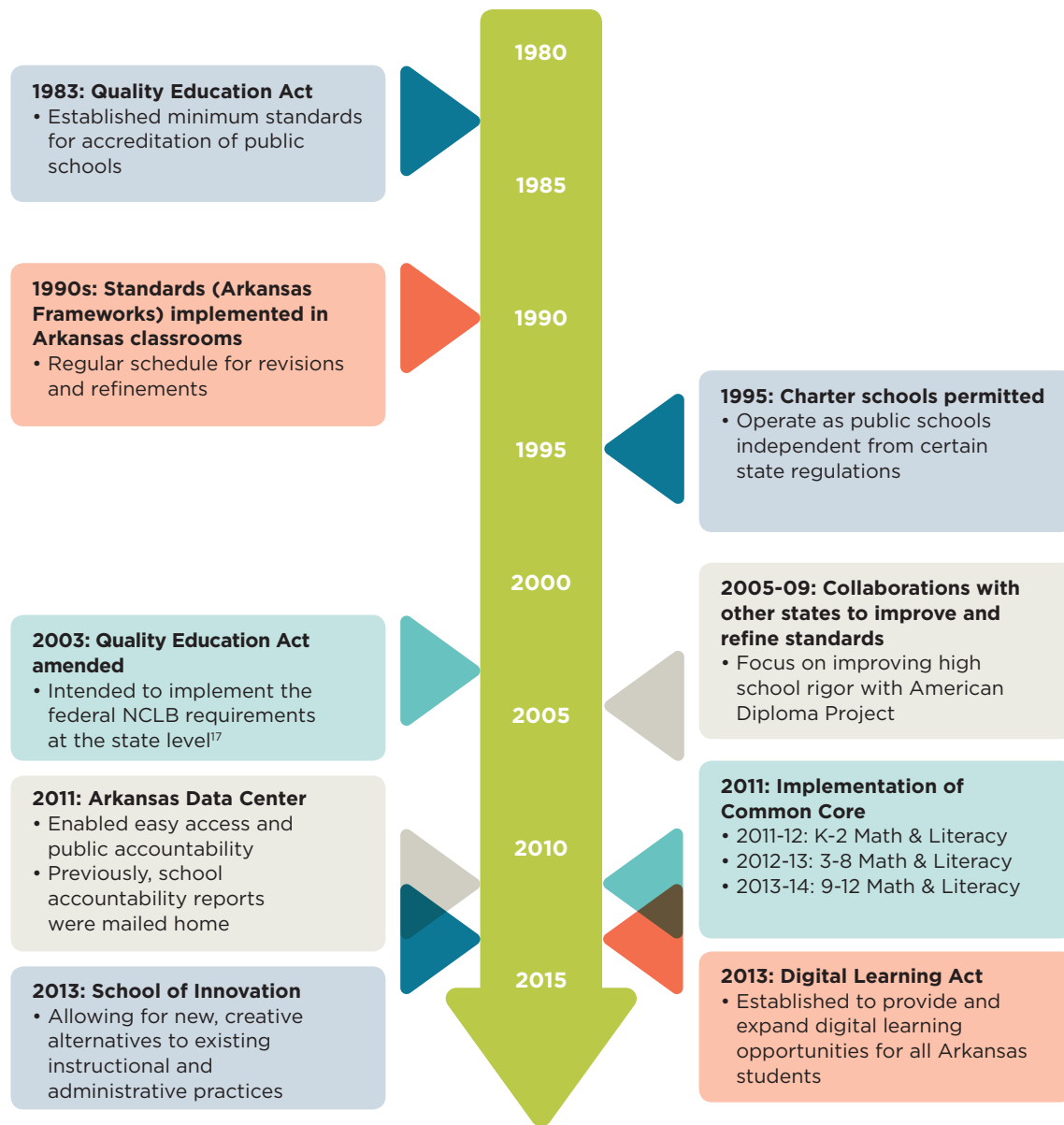
AAIMS focuses on working with teachers, students and schools on best practices for preparing for AP exams, including providing annual incentives for teachers, students and schools.

In looking at results for 2012-13, AAIMS participants accounted for 43% of qualifying scores and 41% of MSE exams, but only 14% of schools. In 2012, 17,700 students took AP exams through AAIMS, accounting for 28% of students who took AP exams in Arkansas that year. AAIMS is a strong example of a program that is helping more high-school students take AP exams and perform well on AP exams, better preparing them for the rigors of college-level coursework.

STRONG POLICIES & STANDARDS

Arkansas has strong policies and standards in place to support student outcomes. In fact, Arkansas has a long history of supporting education initiatives, working to establish standards and provide clear accountability since 1983. The state's leadership should continue to strive for innovation and excellence when establishing policies and standards for public school students. The groundwork has been laid, but there is still work to be done to dramatically improve student outcomes.

Policies & Standards Power Student Outcomes



Sources: Interviews with ADE; University of Arkansas Office of Education Policy "Quality Education Act of 2003"

▶ Common Core in Arkansas¹⁸

From 2011 to 2014, Arkansas implemented the K-12 Common Core State Standards, a set of research-based national education standards for math and English. Common Core will help Arkansas's schools meet the standards needed for students to succeed at every grade level. Adopting the Common Core means that a child in Arkansas is now expected to learn the same core knowledge and skills as a child in the same grade in Oklahoma, Mississippi, Louisiana and 40 other states.

The state has also adopted assessments developed by the Partnership for the Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC). These assessments, which reflect the Common Core, were piloted in the 2013-14 school year across the state and will replace the current Benchmark exams in the 2015-16 school year.

Educators Meeting Quality Counts Standards

Arkansas is being recognized for success in equipping teachers and providing strong leadership. In 2012, Arkansas earned top honors from *Education Week* for meeting standards in teacher licensure and training.

LEADERSHIP METRICS:
1 of 3 states meeting all 4 standards

| | Standard | AR |
|---|---|-------------------------------------|
| 1 | State provides incentives for principals who work in targeted schools | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| 2 | State has standards for licensure of school administrators | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| 3 | State requirements for initial licensure include a supervised internship | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| 4 | State requirements for initial licensure include participation in an induction or mentoring program | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |

BEGINNING TEACHERS:
Arkansas had 3 of the 4 supports; most states had none

| | Standard | AR |
|---|--|-------------------------------------|
| 1 | All new teachers required to participate in a state-funded induction | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| 2 | All new teachers required to participate in a state-funded mentoring program | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| 3 | State has standards for selecting, training and/or matching mentors | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| 4 | State has reduced-workload policy for first-year teachers | <input type="checkbox"/> |

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT:
1 of 7 states meeting all standards

| | Standard | AR |
|---|--|-------------------------------------|
| 1 | State finances professional development for all districts | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| 2 | State has formal professional development standards | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| 3 | State requires a specific amount of time to be set aside for professional development | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| 4 | State requires districts to align professional development with local priorities and goals | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |

Source: Education Week Quality Counts Database 2012.¹⁹

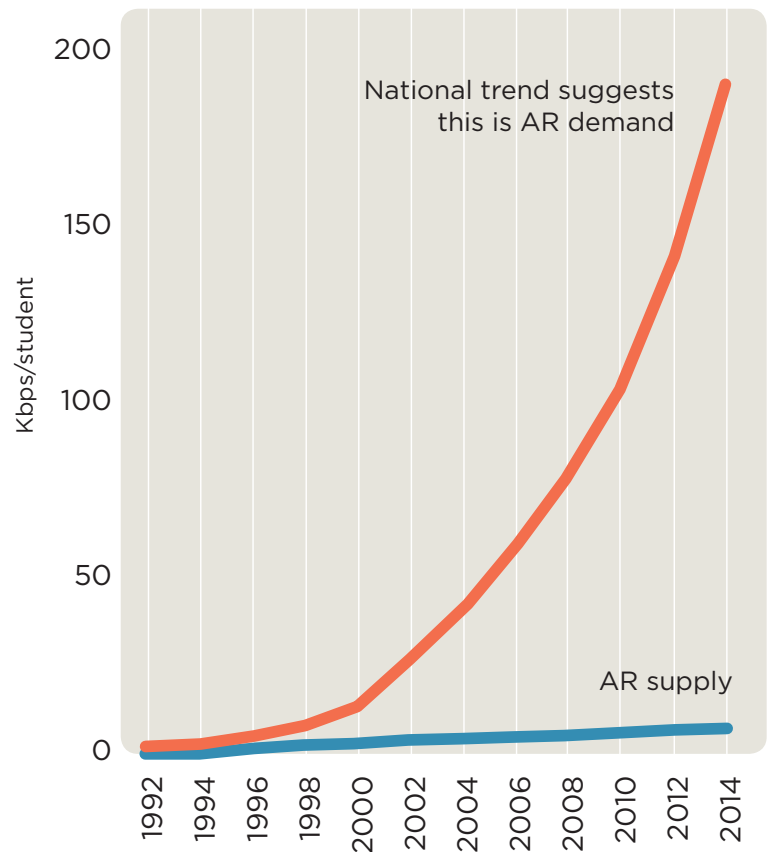
While Arkansas is recognized as a leader in meeting these standards, these efforts are not sufficient to improve student outcomes. The 2015 edition of *Education Week* shifted the focus from licensure and training to educational outcomes.

Expanding Digital Learning

Investing in high-speed Internet access is a priority for schools as they strive to take advantage of the opportunities made available through the Internet. Opportunities exist across many areas of education including augmenting classroom instruction, distance learning, professional development and learning management tools.

Arkansas approved the Digital Learning Act of 2013 to provide and expand digital learning opportunities for all Arkansas students. While this legislation is designed to make digital learning accessible throughout the state, broadband access in Arkansas is still severely limited, hindering schools from meeting the requirements.²⁰

Limited Broadband Access



25% annual increase in demand seen nationally

Actual APSCN/CIV capacity²¹

Source: Arkansas Department of Education Digital Learning webpage



Innovative Learning Models

There are two innovative learning models in Arkansas: charter schools and schools of innovation.

CHARTER SCHOOLS

A charter school is publicly funded, but is typically governed by a group or organization under a legislative contract (or charter) with the state. The school is exempt from certain state or local rules and regulations. However, it must meet the same accountability standards as traditional public schools.

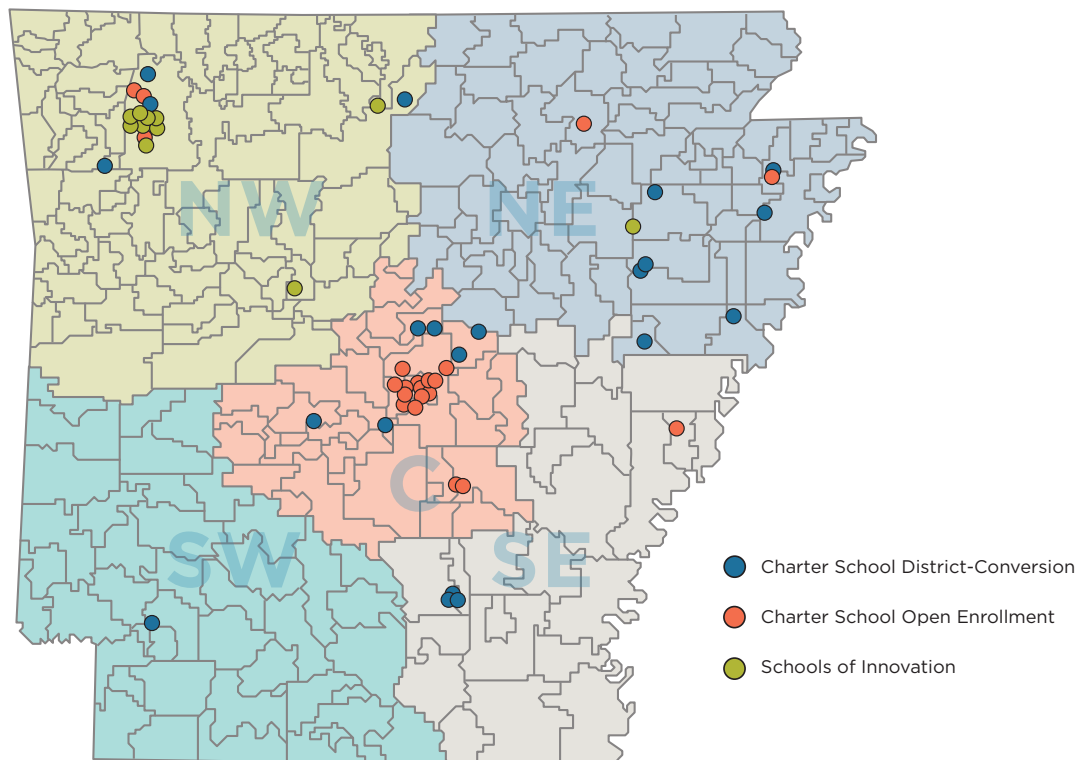
While charter schools are an option for Arkansas students and families, availability is limited. Fewer students in Arkansas attend charter schools compared to other states, with students in charter schools accounting for approximately 3% of the total number of Arkansas students.²²

SCHOOLS OF INNOVATION

In 2013, Arkansas created the Schools of Innovation program. Through the program, school districts and individual schools are encouraged to design new and creative alternatives to the existing instructional and administrative practices. These changes are intended to improve academic performance and learning. Approval to become a School of Innovation is determined by the Commissioner of Education, is granted for a four-year period, and can give schools flexibility on state laws and policies to implement their plans.

For the 2014-15 school year, five schools and one school district were named Schools of Innovation, serving approximately 9,000 students (less than 2% of public K-12 students in Arkansas).²³

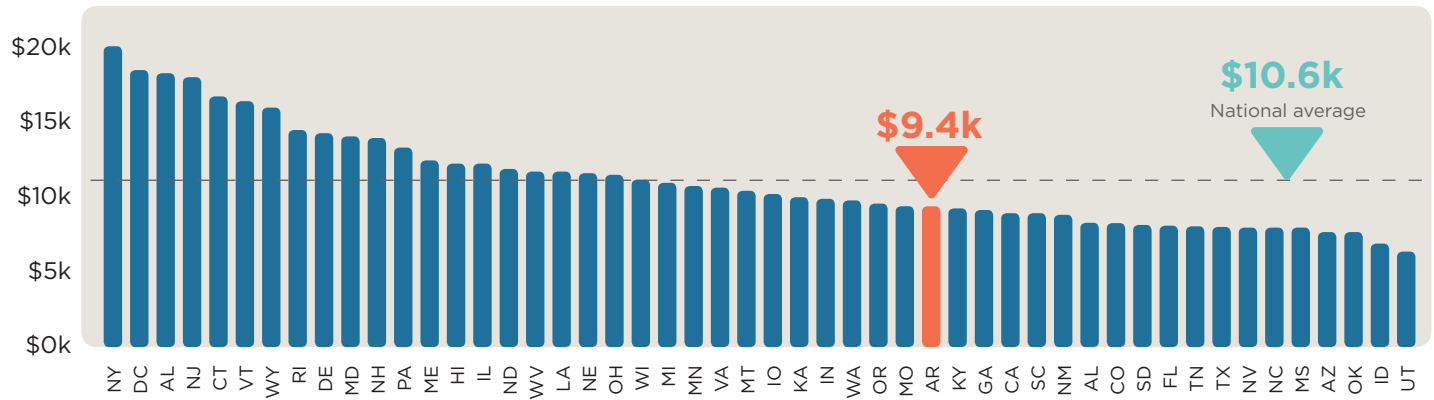
Charter Schools and Schools of Innovation in Arkansas as of December 2014



Source: ADE Charter Schools and Schools of Innovation website

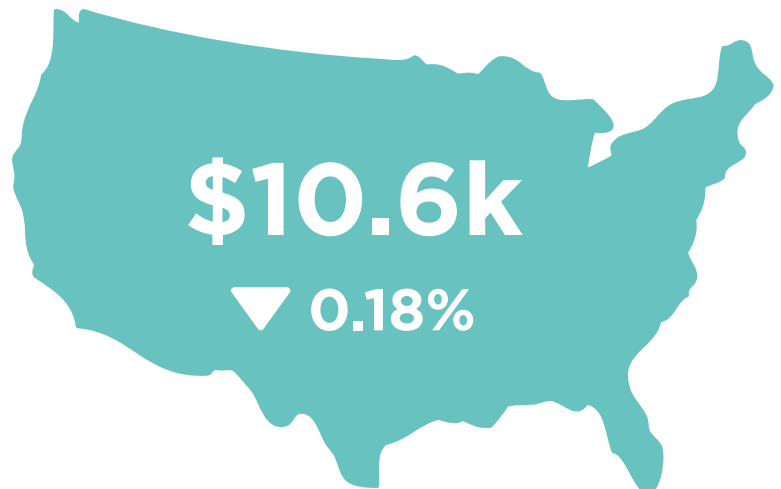
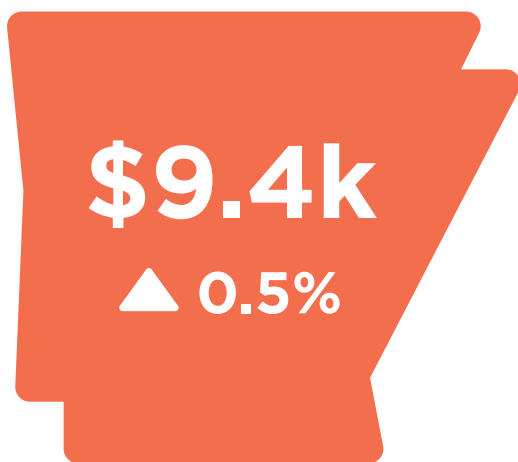
Investing in Education


Current Expenditure Per Pupil in 2012



Sources: Census of Governments: Finance - Survey of School System Finances <http://www.census.gov/govs/school/>. National Center for Education Statistics (NCES): <http://nces.ed.gov/>.

Arkansas has continued to invest more in its students, with a 0.5% increase in spending from 2007. Other states have cut funding, causing the national average to fall 0.18%. Our per-pupil expenditure has increased, bringing it closer to the national average - \$9,400 per pupil in Arkansas compared to \$10,600 nationally. Increased spending allows Arkansas to build a strong foundation for continued improvement in educational outcomes.²⁴





STUDENT OUTCOMES ARE BELOW ASPIRATIONS

While access to academic programs and opportunity is on the rise in Arkansas, student outcomes from pre-K through college are still low and far below aspirations. While the Academically Distressed schools are of particular concern, there are significant opportunities to improve rigor and policy execution across the state.

Access vs. Achievement

Even though Arkansas continues to improve access for students pre-K through college, student achievement is still far below aspirations.

Pre-K

Attending pre-K helps children, especially children from low-income families, develop the necessary skills for success in kindergarten and beyond. According to the Qualls Early Learning Inventory assessment, which assesses kindergarten readiness through observing six learned behaviors, a greater percentage of children from low-income families were considered 'developed' when attending the Arkansas Better Chance early childhood education program (ABC), Arkansas's state-funded pre-K, vs. not on each of the six behaviors assessed. Also, 7% more low income children were considered 'developed' across all six behaviors after pre-K vs. not. Furthermore, when these children were tracked longitudinally, attending ABC was found to have led to better scores in language, math and literacy at the end of first and second grade, and better scores in literacy at the end of 3rd grade.

However, further evaluation and potential program adjustments may be needed to be sure that all children are fully developed in all necessary skill areas. For those who attended pre-K, only 18% of low-income children were considered developed in all six QELI categories: 31% were developed in at least 5 categories, 43% were developed in at least 4 categories and 57% were developed in 3 or less categories.²⁵

For low-income children who attended pre-K, only 18% were considered 'developed' in all six QELI categories: 31% in at least 5 categories, 43% in at least 4 categories and 57% in 3 or less categories.

Arkansas ranks in the bottom 20 states – and dropping – on 4th- and 8th-grade national tests in math and literacy.

Elementary & Middle School

The National Assessment of Educational Progress is the largest nationally representative and continuing assessment of what American students know in various subject areas. For Arkansas 4th- and 8th-graders, the NAEP shows modest improvement in math and reading from 2005 to today, but the improvement did not keep pace with national averages. Arkansas's 4th-grade rankings dropped in both categories from 33rd to 36th. The 8th-grade ranking for reading remained flat at 38th in the nation and dropped in math from 40th to 42nd in the nation.²⁶

College

Arkansas is among the top 20 states for students attending college. However, it appears that students are not prepared when they get to college. Almost 50% of all students enrolling in public universities require remedial coursework, and Arkansas's six-year college graduation rate is among the lowest in the nation.²⁷

Only 20% of students taking the ACT met college-ready benchmarks in all four subjects.

Almost 50% of all students enrolling in public universities require remedial coursework.

Arkansas is among the lowest in the nation for college graduation and degree attainment rates.

▶ Elementary Schools Moving the Needle²⁸

Although it was once among Little Rock School District's state-identified "priority" schools - the 5% lowest-performing schools in Arkansas - Wilson Elementary School now finds itself on the much shorter list of state-named "exemplary" schools. There were only nine of the latter for the 2013-14 school year.

Wilson was recognized for sizable year-to-year achievement gains, specifically for the gains made by pupils who are poor, require special education services or are non-native English language learners.

According to the Arkansas Education Report from the Office for Education Policy at University of Arkansas, Wilson was among the Top 20 (#4) Most Improved Elementary Schools based on Benchmark mathematics achievement from 2009-14. The student

average increased from 58% proficient/advanced initially to 87% proficient/advanced. Wilson also was among the Top 20 (#3) Most Improved Elementary Schools for literacy achievement.

According to a May 27, 2014, article in the *Arkansas Democrat-Gazette*, "Faculty members and other observers of [Wilson Elementary] list many reasons for the school's recent achievement gains, including the school's small size, its care for the individual child, its partnerships with churches whose members mentor pupils, its analysis of student test data to identify and teach to each child's needs, and the direct services the school receives from the Arkansas Department of Education and Pearson School Achievement Services, a school improvement company."

Success at Wilson is also attributed to

literacy and math coaches, who were hired in 2012 as trainers and resources for teachers.

Similarly, Jones Elementary School in Springdale improved, with the percentage of students reading on grade level increasing from 26% to 73%.

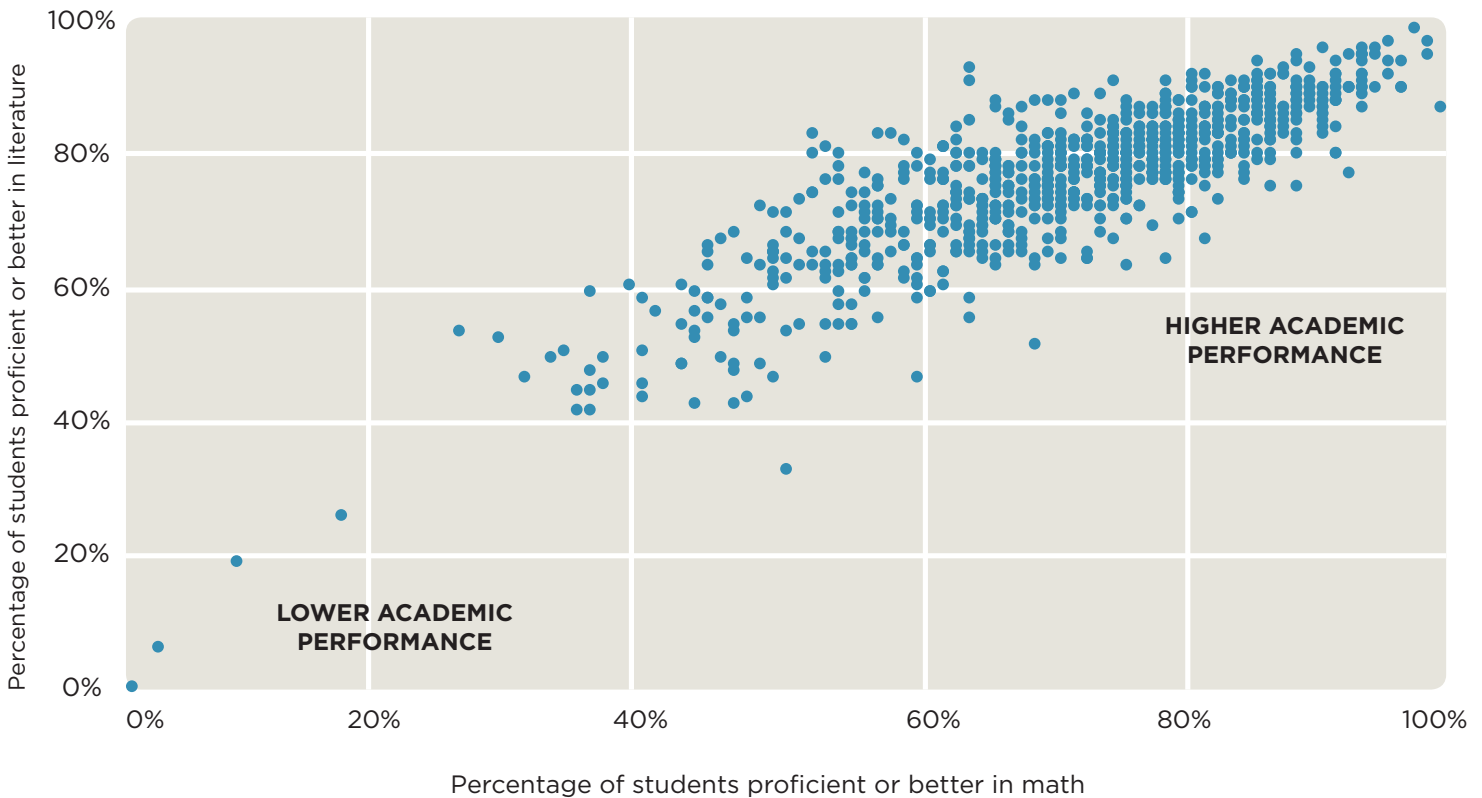
For Jones Elementary, educators credit their data-driven approach, the school's teamwork, and their principal, Melissa Fink, for their drastic improvements. The school makes decisions based on the data teachers are collecting in the classroom and the data the school is collecting from parents. The teachers focus not just on their own classrooms but on the grade as a whole, and they listen and learn from each other. Fink places a strong emphasis on growth for her teachers - setting goals as teachers in the same way that their students set goals.



Academic Performance Varies by School

Student academic performance varies by school across the state. Most schools have more than 60% of students scoring proficient or better in math and literature on Augmented Benchmark Exams (ABE).

Average Scores by School on ABE Grades 3-8, 2013-14²⁹



Source: Arkansas DOE 2013-2014 Benchmark Exam Data by District

▶ Academic Distress in Arkansas³⁰

Schools are identified as being in Academic Distress if 49.5% or less of students score at or above proficiency on a composite of math and literacy tests over a three-year period. While the majority of Arkansas schools are not in this category, many are performing below aspirations.

Under old regulations put in place by the Arkansas General Assembly in 2004, only school districts could be placed in Academic Distress. The requirements had to include school data for all schools in the district, meaning the criteria and

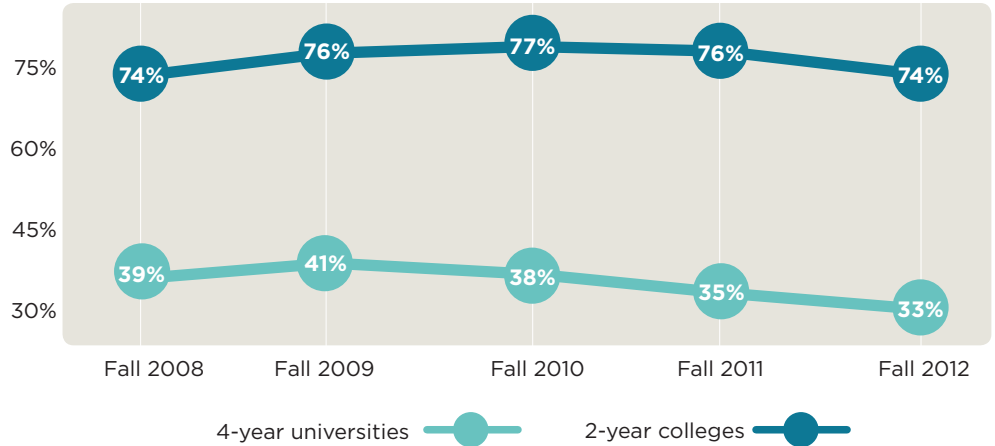
standards for takeover were quite high. Therefore, only a few school districts were ever placed in Academic Distress. A few had been placed in Fiscal Distress, and a handful had even been taken over by the state for financial mismanagement.

In 2013, legislators passed new policy that changed the rules, now allowing for individual schools to be put in Academic Distress. Following the writing of new rules and regulations, the State Board of Education identified 26 schools and two school districts to be officially in Academic Distress.

Increased Enrollment in College Remedial Courses

Although 65% of high school graduates attend college, 74% of students attending 2-year colleges and 33% of students attending 4-year colleges require remediation. Such high remediation rates suggest that although students may be graduating from high school and attending college, they may not be well prepared to succeed in higher education. This is especially a concern because students requiring remediation are far less likely to graduate from college.

'Anytime' Remediation Rates: Fall 2008 to Fall 2012



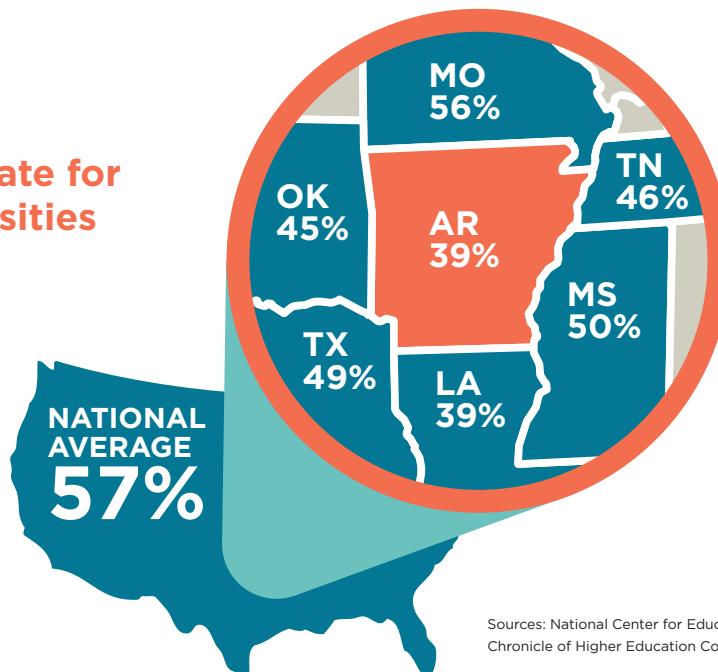
'Anytime' remediation rate is defined to be percentage of first-time degree-seeking students enrolled in a remedial class; the balance was placed in college-level coursework

Source: 2013 Comprehensive Arkansas Higher Education Annual Report

Low College Graduation Rates

Despite an above-average rate of students going to college, Arkansas is near the very bottom in college graduation rates. In 2010, Arkansas's college graduation rate was 39%, compared to 57% nationally in 2012. Arkansas ranked 48th in the nation in 2010 for first-time, full-time undergraduate enrollees in public 4-year institutions graduating in six years.

6-Year Graduation Rate for Public 4-Year Universities



Sources: National Center for Education Statistics Fast Facts and The Chronicle of Higher Education College Completion webpages

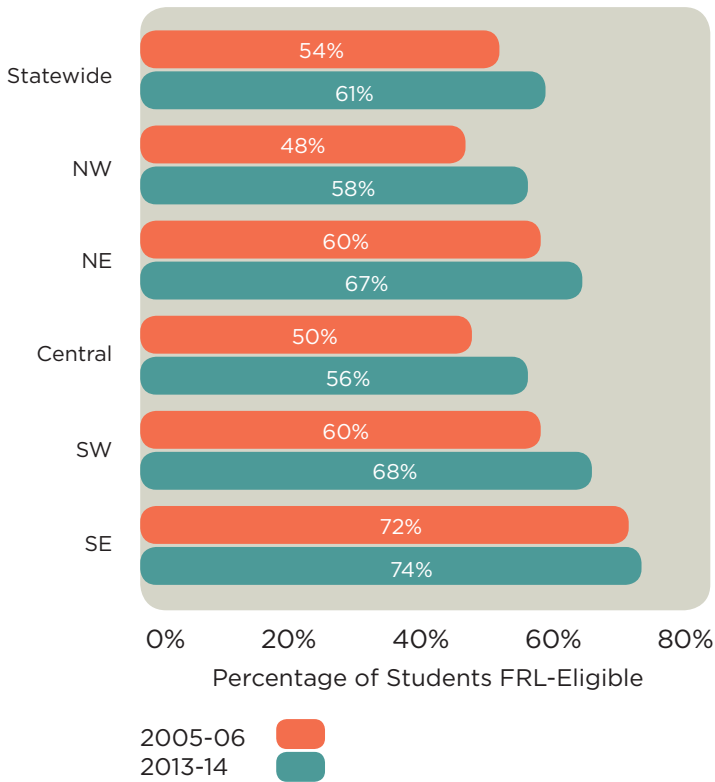
SIGNIFICANT ACHIEVEMENT GAPS

Arkansas is making strides to close the student achievement gap between students within our borders. However, significant achievement gaps still exist. In order to close these gaps and improve outcomes for all students, Arkansas must address economic, racial and even geographic disparities, both in and outside of the classroom.

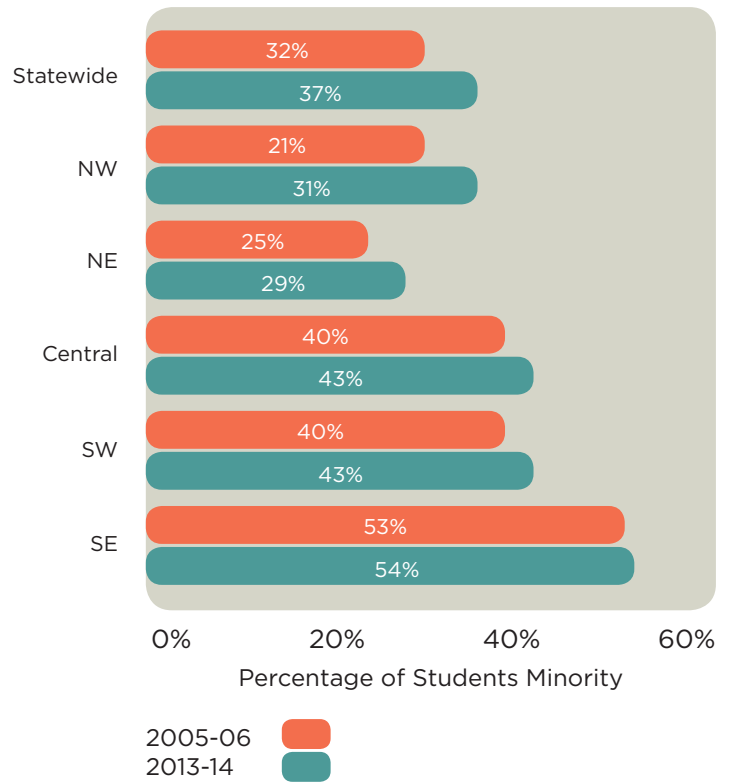
Population Changes in Arkansas

Historically, FRL-eligible and minority students perform below other students on national tests – although that gap has narrowed in the last decade – and both populations have increased steadily throughout Arkansas. While the Northwest region has seen the greatest change since 2005-06, the Southeast region continues to have the largest percentages of both minority and FRL-eligible students in the state.

Percentage of Students FRL-Eligible in Each Region



Percentage of Minority Students in Each Region



Source: Office for Education Policy demographic databases, 2005-06 and 2013-14



▶ Overcoming Poverty by Investing in Education³¹

Nearly three out of 10 kids are living in poverty in Arkansas. As dramatic as this figure is, research suggests that the true economic picture is even bleaker. More than half of all Arkansas children live in a household that struggles financially. Unfortunately, Arkansas is seeing the gap between low-income students and their more affluent counterparts grow wider.

According to Arkansas Advocates for Children and Families, studies have repeatedly shown that children living in poverty are more prone to negative educational outcomes such as poor

academic performance, low vocabularies, lower reading and achievement scores, higher drop-out rates and lower college graduation rates.

Poverty is also associated with higher rates of teen pregnancy, low self-esteem and feelings of anxiety, unhappiness and dependence. Children who experience poverty earlier in life have a harder time overcoming its impacts.

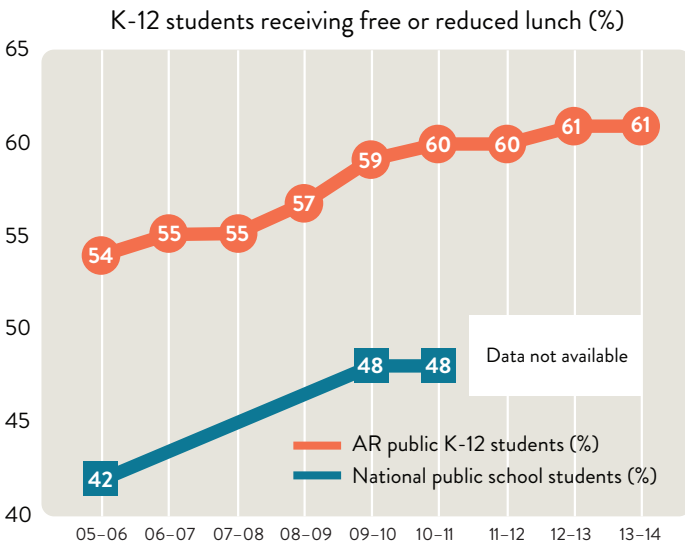
In some instances, poverty is compounded by an unstable home environment. Children in these situations are more likely to act

out, experience disobedience and aggression and have a more difficult time getting along with other children.

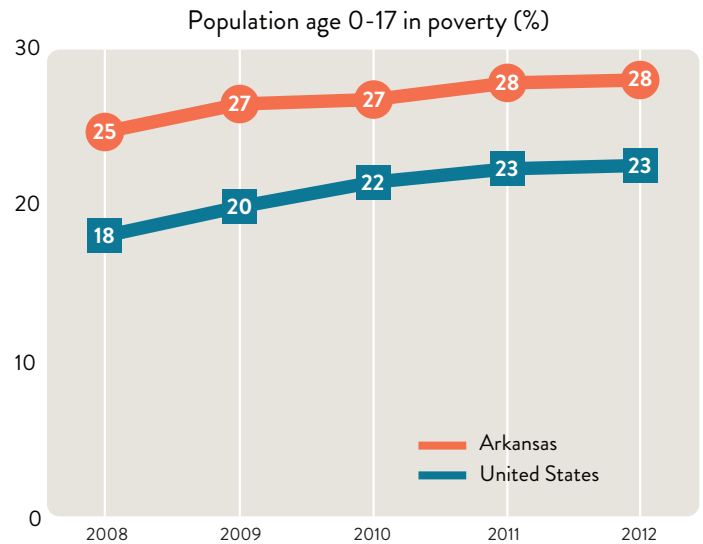
One way to combat Arkansas's high level of poverty over the long term is to invest in education. Higher levels of education allow Arkansans to get better jobs and provide for their families. Policies that help low-income children succeed academically also improve the odds that they will be able to get an education that helps them find better paying jobs.

Arkansas's Students are More Likely to be FRL-Eligible or in Poverty Than National Average

The impact of poverty and financial struggle can be seen in the classroom with potentially long-term effects. In 2010-11, Arkansas had the 6th-highest percentage in the nation of FRL-eligible students. A year later, in 2012, Arkansas had the 5th-highest percentage of children, ages 0-17, in poverty.³²



Source: ADE database and National Center for Education Statistics, Common Core of Data

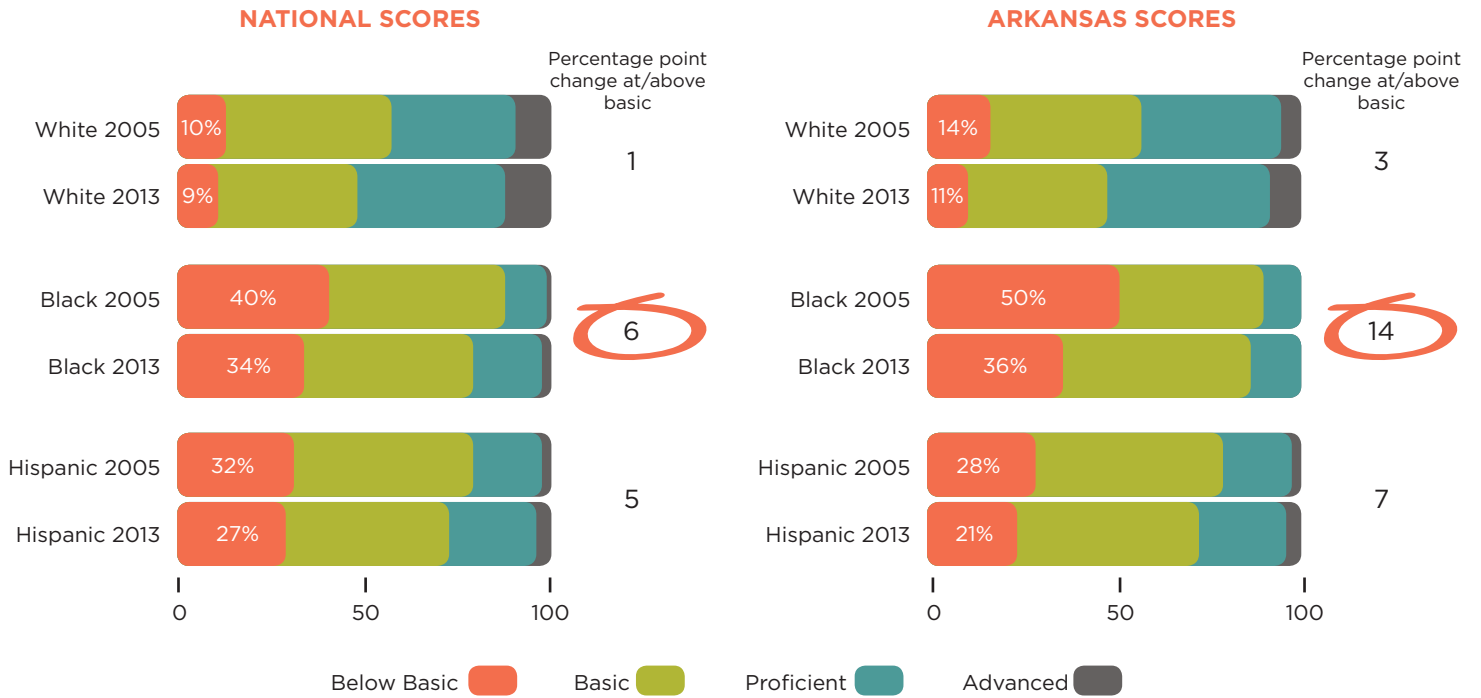


Source: Small Area Income and Poverty Estimates database

Minority Achievement Gaps

The achievement gap between white students and minority students has narrowed since 2005, with black and Hispanic students outpacing their white peers in terms of improved scores on the National Assessment of Educational Progress. In 2013, black students who scored basic or better increased by 14 percentage points in Arkansas compared to a national increase of only 6 percentage points. Despite these gains, the achievement gap for minority students is significant.

Narrowing the Gap in 4th Grade Math Scores (NAEP)

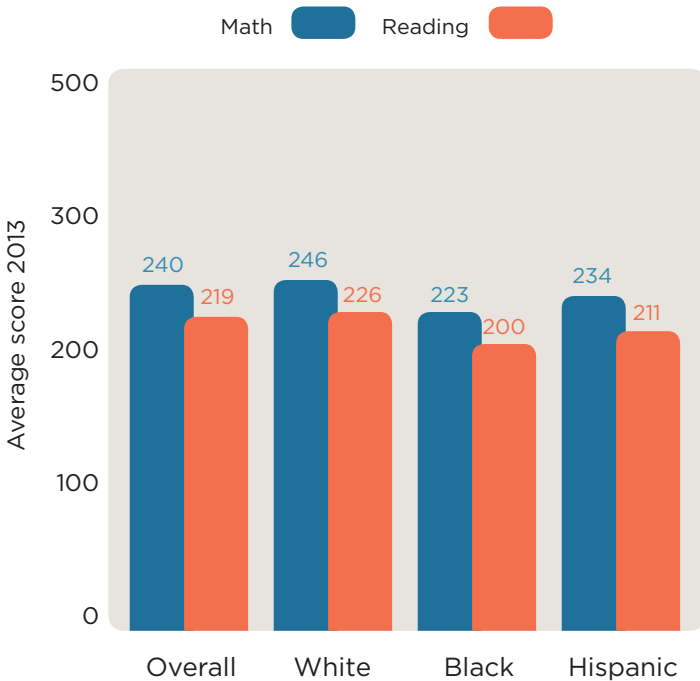


Source: NAEP Database data for 2005 and 2013.

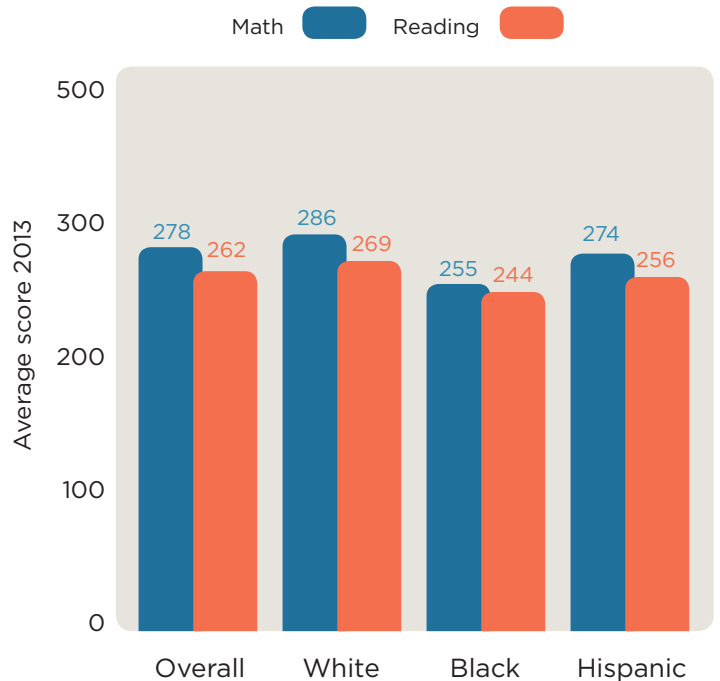


Narrowing the Gaps: 4th & 8th Grades

4th Grade NAEP Scores³³



8th Grade NAEP Scores



Change in Average 4th Grade NAEP Scores 2005-13

| | MATH | READING |
|----------|-----------|-----------|
| Overall | +4 | +1 |
| White | +3 | 0 |
| Black | +9 | +7 |
| Hispanic | +5 | -1 |

Change in Average 8th Grade NAEP Scores 2005-13

| | MATH | READING |
|----------|------------|-----------|
| Overall | +6 | +4 |
| White | +5 | 3 |
| Black | +12 | +7 |
| Hispanic | +7 | +6 |

+ Growth higher than white peers suggesting the achievement gap is narrowing.

Source: National Center for Education Statistics, NAEP Mathematics and Reading Assessments. Office for Education Policy Benchmark Exam databases

Regional Achievement Gaps

Arkansas has high- and low-performing schools in every region, but access to high-performing schools varies significantly by region. While the Central (particularly Little Rock) and Southeast regions have a disproportionate number of low-performing schools, the Northwest region has a disproportionate number of high-performing schools.

In addition, according to the Arkansas Department of Education, most academically distressed schools are in the Central or Southeast region. And none in the Northwest.

Regional differences are especially challenging for minority and lower-income students who – in disproportionate numbers – attend school in the lower-performing regions.³⁴

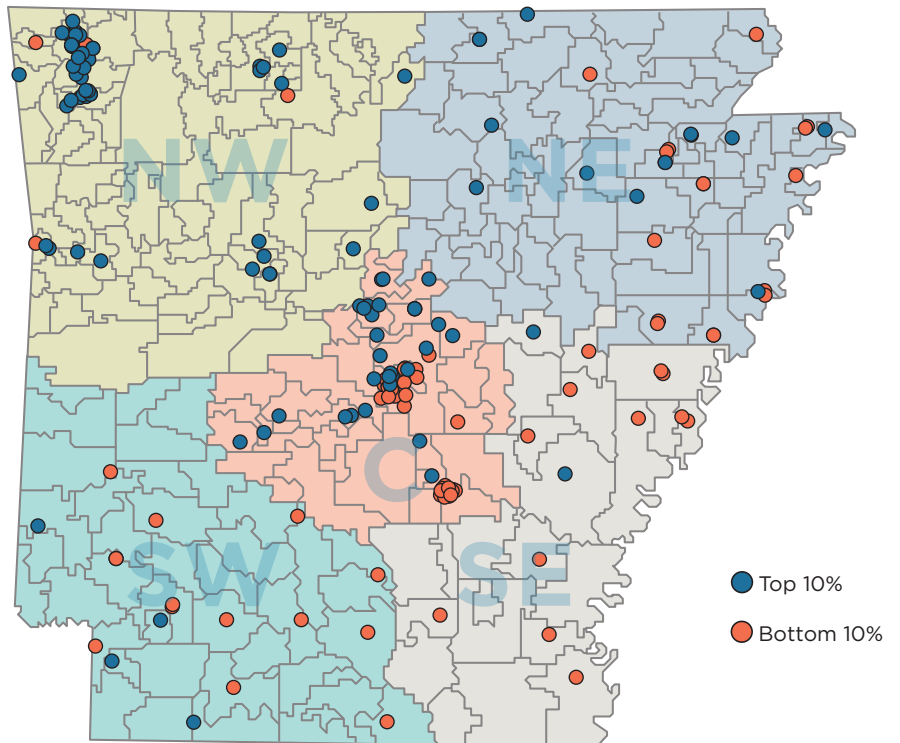
There are high-performing schools in every region, but access to such schools varies significantly.

Students in NW have the highest math and literacy proficiency; students in SE have the lowest.

Most students in NW attend schools in top 50% of performance.

Most in SE attend schools in bottom 50%.

Top and Bottom 10% in ABE Proficiency for Schools Serving Grades 3–8



Source: Office of Education Policy Benchmark Exam database 2013-14

Conclusion

There's no doubt that Arkansas has made progress in improving the education of our students. We have seen many inspiring examples of great teaching by educators across the state. Yet there is still a long way to go to be sure that every student is provided the best education to serve them in the future.

This report is designed to help you better understand the state of education in Arkansas and how we compare nationally. The facts and figures found in this report set the foundation for creating a holistic plan to improve public education in our state.

This is our home and these are our children. We owe them, the future of our state, the best education possible. We owe the employers who have committed to building businesses here the most educated workforce. We are committed to making that happen, and we hope you'll join us in the journey.

Call to Action

We need all Arkansans to do their part in helping move the state forward. Here are a few steps you can take today!

1. Visit www.ForwardArkansas.org and use our online survey to share your thoughts on public education in Arkansas.
2. Share this report with your friends, families, teachers and community leaders. We make it easy through our social portals on Facebook and Twitter.
3. Encourage conversations in your community and email us at info@ForwardArkansas.org to tell us about your progress.
4. Sign up for our e-newsletter (on the home page of the website) to stay informed about ForwARd Arkansas's progress and how you can help.

Partnering Organizations



The Winthrop Rockefeller Foundation

www.wrfoundation.org

For 40 years, the Winthrop Rockefeller Foundation has helped to build and sustain the organizations that serve and strengthen Arkansas. Through grantmaking and strategic partnerships, the foundation works hard to help close the economic and educational gaps that leave too many Arkansas families in persistent poverty.



Walton Family Foundation

www.waltonfamilyfoundation.org

When Sam and Helen Walton launched their modest retail business in 1962, one of their goals was to increase opportunity and improve the lives of others along the way. This principle drives the philanthropic mission of the Walton Family Foundation. By working with grantees and collaborating with other philanthropic organizations, the foundation is dedicated to making a positive difference in three focus areas: K-12 education, freshwater and marine conservation, and quality of life initiatives in our home region.



ARKANSAS
DEPARTMENT
OF EDUCATION

The Arkansas Department of Education

www.arkansased.org

The Arkansas Department of Education (ADE) is a dedicated service agency that provides leadership, resources and technical support to school districts, school and educators. ADE serves students, parents and the general public by protecting the public trust through adherence to laws, strong stewardship of public funds and accountability for student performance.

Arkansas Advanced Initiative for Math and Science Inc.

(AAIMS): AAIMS, an affiliate of the National Math and Science Initiative, is a program that aims to increase the number of students taking and earning qualifying scores on AP Exams in these subjects. It is currently run in 14% of Arkansas's high schools.

<http://uarl.edu/aAIMS/>

Arkansas Better Chance (ABC): The Arkansas Better Chance (ABC) program was created in 1991 to offer high-quality early education services to children ages 0 to 5 exhibiting developmental and socioeconomic risk factors. In 2003, the Arkansas General Assembly made a commitment to expand early childhood education funding by \$100 million to serve low-income 3- and 4-year-old children with high-quality prekindergarten services. This expansion, known as Arkansas Better Chance for School Success, has become the state prekindergarten program. ABC is only available to students with family income that is 200 percent or less of the federal poverty line. It operates as a grant program, and participating providers must renew ABC grants annually.

<http://humanservices.arkansas.gov/dccece/Pages/aboutDCCECE.aspx>; ABC Shrinks Gaps (Arkansas Research Center)

Academic Distress: This term is used to describe a school or district that has, for a sustained period of time, demonstrated a lack of student achievement. Specifically, this is a classification assigned to (a) any public school or school district in which 49.5 percent or less of its students achieve proficient or advanced on a composite of math and literacy tests for the most recent three-year period; or (b) a Needs Improvement school (Priority) or a school district with a Needs Improvement (Priority) school that has not made the progress required under the school's Priority Improvement Plan (PIP). A Needs Improvement school is a school that has not met its annual targets in performance growth and high school graduation rates. See the Arkansas Accountability Addendum to Elementary Secondary Education Act Flexibility Request for more information.

http://www.arkansased.org/public/userfiles/ESEA/ESEA_Flexibility_Accountability_Addendum.pdf, ADE Rules Governing ACTAAP and the Academic Distress Program, Sept 2014: http://www.arkansased.org/public/userfiles/rules/Current/ACTAAP-FINAL_-_September_2014.pdf

ACT: The ACT is a national college admissions examination that consists of subject area tests in English, mathematics, reading and science.

<http://www.actstudent.org/faq/what.html>

Arkansas Department of Education (ADE): The administrative organization that carries out the state's education laws and policies of the state board.

Advanced Placement Exams (AP): AP Exams are rigorous, multiple-component tests that are administered at high schools each May. High school students can earn college credit, placement or both for qualifying AP Exam scores. Each AP Exam has a corresponding AP course and provides a standardized measure of what students have learned in the AP classroom.

<http://professionals.collegeboard.com/testing/ap>

Augmented Benchmark Exams: The Augmented Benchmark Exam is an assessment that is given in the spring to students in grades 3-8. It is a combination of questions from a criterion-reference test and questions from a norm-reference test. The criterion-reference test, commonly called the Benchmark, is based on specific student learning expectations (SLEs) found in the state frameworks. It is expected that every concept has been taught by the teacher and the student has learned the skill. The Benchmark test covers SLEs in math and literacy. Science SLEs are included in grades 5 and 7. Scores from the Benchmark are reported as below basic, basic, proficient and advanced. In the fall of the following school year, parents receive a brochure containing their child's scores and an explanation of the scores. An Academic Improvement Plan will be developed to identify skills where a student needs extra support to be successful in school if the student scored basic or below basic. Students scoring proficient or advanced combine to form our percentage reported as AYP (Adequate Yearly Progress). This percentage - or AYP - is reported to the public. The second part - augmented - of this assessment is the norm-reference test called ITBS. Questions from the ITBS are not based on Arkansas learning objectives. Because it is norm-referenced, it measures an individual student's performance to a nationwide group of students. Parents will receive their child's ITBS scores and an explanation as part of the Benchmark brochure. Scores from this part of the Augmented Benchmark are not part of the AYP calculations.

<http://www.cabotschools.org/curriculum/assessment-testing/benchmark-exams-grades-3-8>

Charter school: Charter schools are public schools that operate under a "charter," or "charter contract," which frees them from many regulations created for traditional public schools while holding them accountable for academic and financial results. The charter contract is between the charter school's sponsoring entity and the Arkansas State Board of Education or the Commissioner of Education.

<http://www.arkansased.org/faqs/105/what-is-a-charter-school>

Common Core State Standards: The Common Core State Standards is a set of high-quality academic standards in mathematics and English language arts/literacy. These learning goals outline what a student should know and be able to do at the end of each grade. The standards were created to ensure that all students graduate from high school with the skills and knowledge necessary to succeed in college, career and life, regardless of where they live.

<http://www.arkansased.org/divisions/learning-services/assessment/definitions-of-common-terms>

Degree Attainment Rate: Percentage of the state's working-age population (25-64) with at least an associate's degree.

Education Week - Quality Counts: Quality Counts is *Education Week's* annual report on state-level efforts to improve public education. It is published in January.

<http://www.edweek.org/ew/qc/index.html>

Free or Reduced Lunch (FRL): The National School Lunch Program is a federally assisted meal program operating in public and nonprofit private schools and residential child care institutions. It provides nutritionally balanced, low-cost or free lunches to children each school day. The program was established under the National School Lunch Act, signed by President Harry Truman in 1946. A student is eligible for free lunch at school if his or her family income is below 130 percent of the poverty line; the student is eligible for a reduced-price lunch if the family income is below 185 percent of the poverty line.

<http://www.fns.usda.gov/nslp/national-school-lunch-program-nslp>

National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP): NAEP is the largest nationally representative and continuing assessment of what students in the United States know and can do in various subject areas. Assessments are conducted periodically in mathematics, reading, science, writing, the arts, civics, economics, geography, U.S. history, and beginning in 2014, in technology and engineering literacy.

<http://nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard/about/>

P-16: Refers to the full spectrum of education from pre-K through the first four years of post-secondary education.

Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC): The Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC) is a group of states working together to develop a set of assessments that measure whether students are on track to be successful in college and in their careers. These K-12 assessments in mathematics and English language arts/literacy give teachers, schools, students and parents better information regarding student performance, and tools to help teachers customize learning to meet student needs. The PARCC assessments will be ready for states to administer during the 2014-15 school year.

<http://www.parcconline.org/about-parcc>

Poverty: Poverty thresholds are the dollar amounts used to determine poverty status. Each person is assigned one out of 48 possible poverty thresholds, which vary according to size of the family and ages of the members. The same thresholds are used throughout the United States; they do not vary geographically. As an example, in 2013, the poverty threshold for a family of four (two are children) was \$24,421.

<https://www.census.gov/hhes/www/poverty/about/overview/measure.html>

Qualls Early Learning Inventory (QELI): Qualls Early Learning Inventory (QELI) is an observational tool for use in the primary grades to identify student development in six areas related to school learning. The inventory observes behaviors developed in school so observations can be used to inform instruction and improve achievement.

Remediation Rate: Since 1988, all entering first-year students seeking an associate degree or higher from an Arkansas public college or university must meet Arkansas Higher Education Coordinating Board assessment and placement standards in the disciplines of English, math and reading. A cut-off score of 19 on the ACT exam (or the equivalent on the ASSET, SAT or COMPASS tests) is used for each of the three subject areas. In all charts, the remedial data are based on students who meet two criteria: (1) not meeting the board's cut-off score and (2) being assigned to enroll in developmental-level coursework.

Comprehensive Arkansas Higher Education Report, Dec 2013, Remediation Rates.

Appendix

Roles in Education in Arkansas

STRUCTURE

RESPONSIBILITIES

| | |
|---|--|
| <p>State Board of Education (9 members, 7-year terms, appointed by governor)</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • General supervision • Set accreditation standards and recommend courses of study for the public schools and teacher training institutions • Issue licenses based on credentials to teach in public schools |
| <p>Arkansas Department of Education</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Liaison between legislative action and district school boards • Carry out the state's education laws and policies of the state board |
| <p>Local school boards (1 per school district)</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Comply with state and federal laws • Determine district's education philosophy • Choose the superintendent and work constructively with him or her • Develop, adopt and review policies that will attract and keep personnel who can promote the district's AAIMS • Adopt policies and procedures to ensure finances are legally and effectively managed |
| <p>Superintendent (1 per school district)</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "CEO" of the school district: prepare budget and authorize purchases, reporting on progress toward goals • Provide recommendations to the school board about suspension, termination or non-renewal of a district employee • Provide substantive leadership for the schools' education programs and quality professional development for staff |

Other Associated Departments

STRUCTURE

RESPONSIBILITIES

| | |
|---|---|
| <p>Arkansas Department of Human Services (Division of Childcare and Early Childhood Education)</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coordinate child care and early childhood education programs, including operations of the Arkansas Better Chance program (state-funded pre-K for low-income students) • Ensure child care centers and family child care homes meet state-minimum licensing standards |
| <p>Arkansas Department of Human Services (Division of Behavioral Health Services)</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mental Health Delivery System for children with severe to moderate behavioral health needs • Arkansas Wraparound, a service for families with complicated needs (e.g., involved with multiple service agencies – juvenile justice, child welfare, schools, mental health, etc.) |
| <p>Arkansas Department of Career Education</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Oversee career and technical education programs in the secondary schools, career centers, apprenticeship programs, two post-secondary tech institutes, vo-tech school within the Department of Correction and adult education programs • Approve state educational programs for veterans' benefits |
| <p>Arkansas Department of Higher Education</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Manage state's scholarship and financial aid programs • Recommend higher education budgets to legislature • Assurance of academic program quality and viability • Professional development for faculty and staff • Educational support to business and industry |

Footnotes

- 1. Sources:** The Chronicle of Higher Education *College Completion* webpage (Winter 2015). <http://collegecompletion.chronicle.com/state>; Data is based on IPEDS, which tracks completions of first-time, full-time degree-seeking undergrad students. See also National Center for Education Statistics webpage (Winter 2015). <http://nces.ed.gov/fastfacts/display.asp?id=40>. See also 2013 Comprehensive Arkansas Higher Education Annual Report, Section 4: "Retention and Graduation Rates." http://www.highereducation.org/reports/college_readiness/gap.shtml.
- 2. Sources:** Pre-K spending data from NIEER 2013 Yearbook, pre-K volume from Ed Week Quality Counts and US Census data. All K-12 data from Arkansas Department of Education SIS State Profiles, unless otherwise noted. Higher Ed data from IPEDS and SREB. Teacher data a special pull by ADE. Per pupil expenditures from US Census, NCES.
- 3. Note:** Provided in NIEER 2013 yearbook as 2006 and 2013 state spending per child enrolled; constant USD 2013. Note that state-funded pre-K enrollment has increased dramatically, from -11k in 2005-06 to -19k in 2012-13 (NIEER).
- 4. Note:** Data compares 2005-06 and 2014-15, as reporting issue for 2013-14 prohibits comparisons.
- 5. Note:** FRL stands for Free or Reduced Lunch. A student is eligible for free lunch at school if his or her family income is below 130 percent of the poverty line; the student is eligible for a reduced-price lunch if the family income is below 185 percent of the poverty line.
- 6. Note:** The years are FY 2007 and FY 2012 in this case; constant FY 2012 values are shown (calculated using CPI inflator).
- 7. Note:** This is for 2011-12, data not available for 2012-13 (from SREB).
- 8. Note:** Minority includes all races except white.
- 9. Note:** The student population by race is estimated from the Office of Education Policy's 2013-14 demographic data, which provides, by region, an absolute # of students and the percent of students in the region of each ethnicity. This was used to derive the number of students of each ethnicity. As a result of rounding in the percentage data, student volumes may be off by 1-2k. Percentages may not sum to 100% due to rounding. To estimate the percent of the population in poverty in each region, computed a weighted average by county, using % of total population in poverty (estimate from 2012 Area and Small Income Estimates). A student is "in poverty" if the family income is less than the threshold set by the US Census Bureau. The thresholds vary by size and family composition. Family income is defined as income before taxes and does not include capital gains or noncash benefits (e.g., public housing, food stamps). The same thresholds are used throughout the US, but are updated annually for inflation via CPI. Although the thresholds in some sense reflect family needs, they are intended for use as a statistical yardstick, not as a complete description of what people and families need to live. In 2013, a family of four (two children) would be in poverty if the family income was less than \$23,624. See <http://www.census.gov/hhes/www/poverty/about/overview/measure.html> for more information.
- 10. Sources:** Source citations for the summary page can be found in the source citations for each report section.
- 11. Source:** Ed Week Quality Counts database accessed 10/21/2014.
- 12. Source:** <http://arkansasnews.com/news/arkansas/arkansas-awarded-60-million-grant-expand-pre-k-program>
- 13. Source:** Arkansas Times article, July 11, 2013
- 14. Note A:** Using adjusted cohort graduation rate, which is considered the most accurate measure available for reporting on-time graduation rates (Seastrom et al. 2006b). A 4-year ACGR is defined as the number of students who graduate in 4 years with a regular high school diploma divided by the number of students who form the adjusted cohort for that graduating class. The term "adjusted cohort" means the students who enter grade 9 plus any students who transfer into the cohort in grades 9-12 minus any students who are removed from the cohort because they transferred out, moved out of the country, or were deceased (34 C.F.R. § 200.19). The Office of Education Policy's graduation rate database also reports 2011-12 adjusted graduation rate as 84%.
- Note B:** College-going rate is defined as the number of first-time freshmen who graduated from high school in the past year from state X enrolled anywhere in the U.S./Public and private high school graduates. 2010 is the last year for which this was calculated. Note that the Arkansas Dept of Higher Ed's 2013 Comprehensive Report calculates the 2012 college-going rate as 52%; this difference is potentially due to the fact that only public high school students are considered.

Sources: NCES Public HS Four-Year On-Time Graduation Rates and Event Dropout Rates: School years 2010-11 and 2011-12. See NCHEMS Information Center for college-going rate, which relies on information from Tom Mortenson—*Postsecondary Education Opportunity* <http://www.postsecondary.org>

15. **Note:** Number of exams taken by the current year's 11th and 12th grade AP students (number of exams not given) divided by the state's "11th and 12th Grade Enrollment" x 1000. 11th and 12th grade enrollment represent enrollment for public schools only, from Applied Educational Research Inc. of Princeton, NJ.

Sources: College Board National AP Report. See also ACT Condition of College and Career Readiness Report 2012.

16. **Source:** Arkansas AIMS webpage: <http://ualr.edu/aaims/home/overview/>. Arkansas AIMS results, pdf accessed from: <http://ualr.edu/aaims/2013/12/10/2011-2012-result>

17. **Note:** NCLB = No Child Left Behind

18. **Note:** PARCC, the Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers is a group of states collaborating to design assessments to measure whether students are on track to be successful in college and career.

Sources: <http://www.corestandards.org/standards-in-your-state/>; http://www.arkansased.org/faqs/faq_categories/common-core-state-standards <http://officefordpolicy.com/2014/11/05/election-results-are-in-how-will-this-impact-education-in-arkansas/>; <http://www.parcconline.org/about-parcc>

19. **Note:** 2012 was most recent year data was available for a state by state comparison in the Education Week Quality Counts Database.

20. **Source:** Arkansas Department of Education *Digital Learning* webpage (Winter, 2014). <http://www.arkansased.org/divisions/learning-services/digital-learning-k-12>

21. **Note:** APSCN/CIV is the current K-12 education network.

22. **Sources:** ADE Charter Schools website: <http://www.arkansased.org/divisions/learning-services/charter-schools>. Enrollment estimates from Office for Ed Policy demographic database, 2013-14.

23. **Source:** ADE Schools of Innovation website: <http://www.arkansased.org/divisions/learning-services/schools-of-innovation> and Related Files.

24. **Note A:** Statewide data on current expenditures collected and aggregated from states by Census Bureau, statewide enrollment from National Center for Education Statistics (NCES)

Note B: Growth rate calculated on real 2012 dollars i.e. adjusted for inflation using the CPI inflator.

Sources: Census of Governments: Finance - Survey of School System Finances (FY2007-FY2012): <http://www.census.gov/govs/school/>. National Center for Education Statistics (NCES): <http://nces.ed.gov/>.

25. **Note:** Low-income defined in study as being free or reduced lunch eligible. For example, according to the Arkansas Research Center study "ABC Shrinks Gap in Kindergarten Readiness for Economically Disadvantaged Students", for a family of four an income of \$43,568 or less is classified as free or reduced lunch eligible.

Sources: Arkansas Research Center, ADE expert interview, National Institute for Early Education Research: "Longitudinal effects of the Arkansas Better CHance Program: Findings from First Grade through Fourth Grade": <http://nieer.org/publications/latest-research/longitudinal-effects-arkansas-better-chance-program-findings-first>.

26. **Sources:** U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Statistics, National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), 2005, 2007, 2009, 2011 and 2013 Mathematics and Reading Assessments.

27. **Note A:** The four subjects tested in the ACT are: English, Mathematics, Reading, and Science.

Note B: Using "anytime" remediation rate, which is defined to be % of first-time degree seeking students enrolled in a remedial class; the balance was placed in college-level coursework.

Sources: ACT Profile Report for Arkansas, Graduating Class of 2013. 2013 Comprehensive Arkansas Higher Education Annual Report, Section 4: "Remediation Rates": http://www.highereducation.org/reports/college_readiness/gap.shtml. http://collegecompletion.chronicle.com/state/no.state=AR§or=public_four; data is based on IPEDS, which tracks completions of first time, full-time degree seeking undergrad students.

28. **Sources:** <http://www.ed.gov/blog/2015/01/teamwork-data-big-gains-at-jones-elementary-school/>; Office for Education Policy, University of Arkansas; Arkansas Democrat-Gazette article, May 27, 2014

29. **Note:** School w/ 0% scoring proficient or better is the Arkansas School for the Deaf Elementary School.

30. **Sources:** ADE Rules Governing the Arkansas Comprehensive Testing, Assessment and Accountability Program (ACTAAP) and the Academic Distress Program, September 2014: <http://www.arkansased.org/divisions/legal/rules/current>. ADE interview.

31. **Source:** Arkansas Advocates for Children and Families

32. **Note A:** FRL stands for Free or Reduced Lunch. A student is eligible for free lunch at school if his or her family income is below 130 percent of the poverty line; the student is eligible for a reduced-price lunch if the family income is below 185 percent of the poverty line.

Note B: A student is “in poverty” if the family income is less than the threshold set by the US Census Bureau. The thresholds vary by size and family composition. Family income is defined as income before taxes and does not include capital gains or noncash benefits (eg, public housing, food stamps). The same thresholds are used throughout the US, but are updated annually for inflation via CPI. Although the thresholds in some sense reflect family needs, they are intended for use as a statistical yardstick, not as a complete description of what people and families need to live. In 2013, a family of four (two children) would be in poverty if the family income was less than \$23,624. See <http://www.census.gov/hhes/www/poverty/about/overview/measure.html> for more information.

Sources: ADE database: <https://adedata.arkansas.gov/statewide/>. National Center for Education Statistics, Common Core of Data (CCD), “Public Elementary/Secondary School Universe Survey,” 2000-01, 2005-06, 2009-10, and 2010-11. (This table was prepared December 2012.) For students in poverty, Small Area Income and Poverty Estimates database (source data: American Community Survey).

33. **Note:** The NAEP Mathematics and Reading scale ranges from 0 to 500. Some apparent differences between estimates may not be statistically significant.

Sources: National Center for Education Statistics, National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), 2005, 2007, 2009, 2011 and 2013 Mathematics and Reading Assessments. Office for Education Policy Benchmark Exam databases.

34. **Note:** Ranking for schools calculated by taking an average of % of students scoring proficient or better on the Augmented Benchmark Exams in literacy and math. There were 7 schools in the bottom 10% that were not in the 2014-15 school address database: Geyer Springs Elementary, Forest Heights Middle School, Pine Bluff Lighthouse Academy, Cloverdale Middle School, Stephens High School, Robert F Morehead Middle School, and WD Hamilton Learning Academy.

Source: ADE. Office of Education Policy (University of Arkansas) benchmark exam database and demographic data, 2013-14.



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