

Adequacy Study 2024

Student Achievement

Prepared for the
House and Senate
Committees
on Education



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Introduction

This report reviews Arkansas public school student achievement data and assessment systems in other states. Student achievement data includes results from the National Assessment for Educational Progress (NAEP), Advanced Placement (AP), the ACT college entrance exam, results from the current statewide assessment (ACT Aspire), and high school graduation rates. English language learner students and students with disabilities have additional assessments and achievement measures specific to their population that are also included.

The adequacy study statute, Ark. Code Ann. § 10-3-2102, calls for the biennial study to “[a]ssess, evaluate and monitor the entire spectrum of public education” as well as to “[e]valuate the effectiveness of any program implemented by a school, a school district, an education service cooperative, the ADE, or the State Board of Education.” Additionally, the same statute calls for a review of the Arkansas Educational Support and Accountability Act (AESAA) and the state’s standing under the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA). AESAA mandates Arkansas students participate in the NAEP and statewide student assessment. The state’s ESSA plan¹ includes the long-term (12 year) goal of having 80% of Arkansas students achieve grade-level proficiency.² The current definition of adequacy also includes, “The goal is to have all, or all but the most severely disabled, students perform at or above proficiency on these tests,” referring to the state tests.³

National Assessment for Educational Progress

NAEP – a “congressionally mandated large-scale assessment administered by the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES)—consists of print and digital assessments in various subject areas.”⁴ It is administered to a sample of students in every state approximately every two years in 4th and 8th grades across a variety of subjects. “Allowable accommodations are provided as necessary for students with disabilities and/or English learners.”⁵ The most recent assessment available was taken in 2022. The 2021 NAEP was rescheduled for 2022 due to COVID-19.⁶ Students in the 12th grade are also tested but on a different schedule. It is the “largest nationally representative and continuing assessment of what students in public and private schools in the United States know and are able to do in various subjects.”⁷ It allows for a “common measure of student achievement that allows for direct comparisons among states and participating urban districts... Results are reported as scores and as percentages of students reaching NAEP achievement levels – NAEP Basic, NAEP Proficient, and NAEP Advanced.”⁸ These achievement levels are defined below. NAEP results included in this report do not include private schools.

- NAEP Basic – “denotes partial mastery of prerequisite knowledge and skills that are fundamental for Proficient work at each grade.”
- NAEP Proficient — “represents solid academic performance. Students reaching this level have demonstrated competency over challenging subject matter.”
- NAEP Advanced — “represents superior performance.”⁹

¹ Arkansas first received approval for its Every Student Succeeds Act plan in 2017. New English Language Arts cut scores occurred in 2018 and an amendment to the plan was approved that reset the 12-year goal to date from 2018.

² “Every Student Succeeds Act Arkansas State Plan,” page 30.

³ “Final Report on the Legislative Hearings of the 2020 Educational Adequacy Study,” Volume 1, page 107.

⁴ <https://nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard/assessments/>

⁵ https://nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard/subject/about/pdf/naep_overview_brochure_2021.pdf

⁶ <https://www.nagb.gov/news-and-events/news-releases/2020/governing-board-statement-on-postponment-of-naep-2021.html>

⁷ https://nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard/subject/about/pdf/naep_overview_brochure_2021.pdf

⁸ Id.

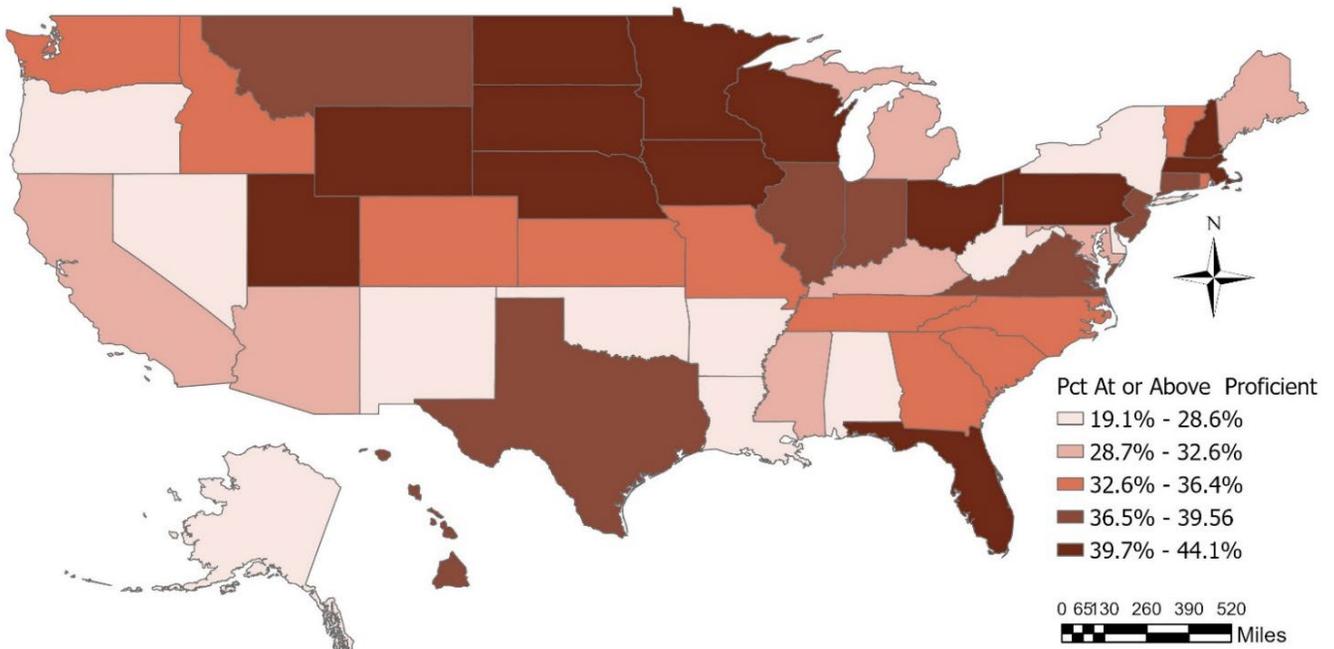
⁹ NCES. Retrieved from: <https://www.nationsreportcard.gov/ndecore/help#sec38>

4th Grade Math

In 2022, 28% of Arkansas 4th grade students and 35% of 4th grade students nationally scored proficient or above in math. Both the percentage of students scoring proficient or above in Arkansas and nationally fell from 2017 to 2022.¹⁰

Both in Arkansas and the U.S. in 2022, 20% of students qualifying for the National School Lunch (NSL) program scored proficient or above in 4th grade math. The percentage point gap¹¹ between students qualifying for the national student lunch program and students who did not was 23 points in Arkansas compared to 31 points nationally. The NSL program is a federal program that provides low-cost or free lunches to eligible students. It is also known as the free or reduced-price lunch program. In Arkansas, 7% of students with disabilities scored proficient or above in math compared to 14% nationally. The percentage point gap between students with disabilities¹² and students without was the same at 24 points.

All Students – 4th Grade Math (2022)

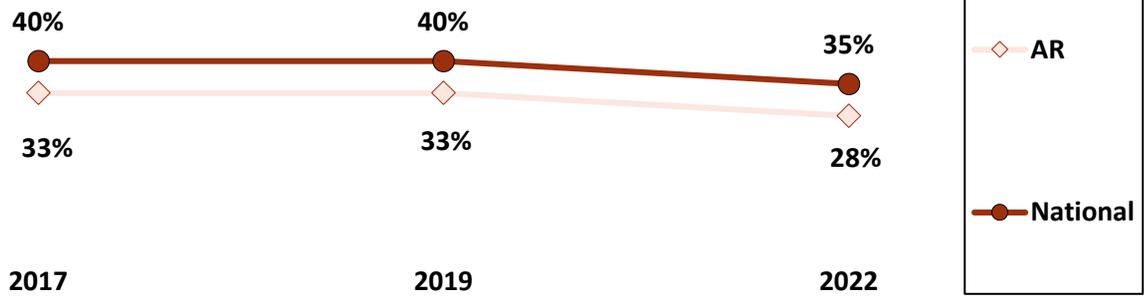


¹⁰ <https://www.nationsreportcard.gov/ndecore/landing>

¹¹ Percentage point is the difference between two percentages. The percentage point gap describes the difference between the percentage of each group being compared.

¹² Students with disabilities include only those students with individualized education program (IEP). It does not include students with a 504 plan.

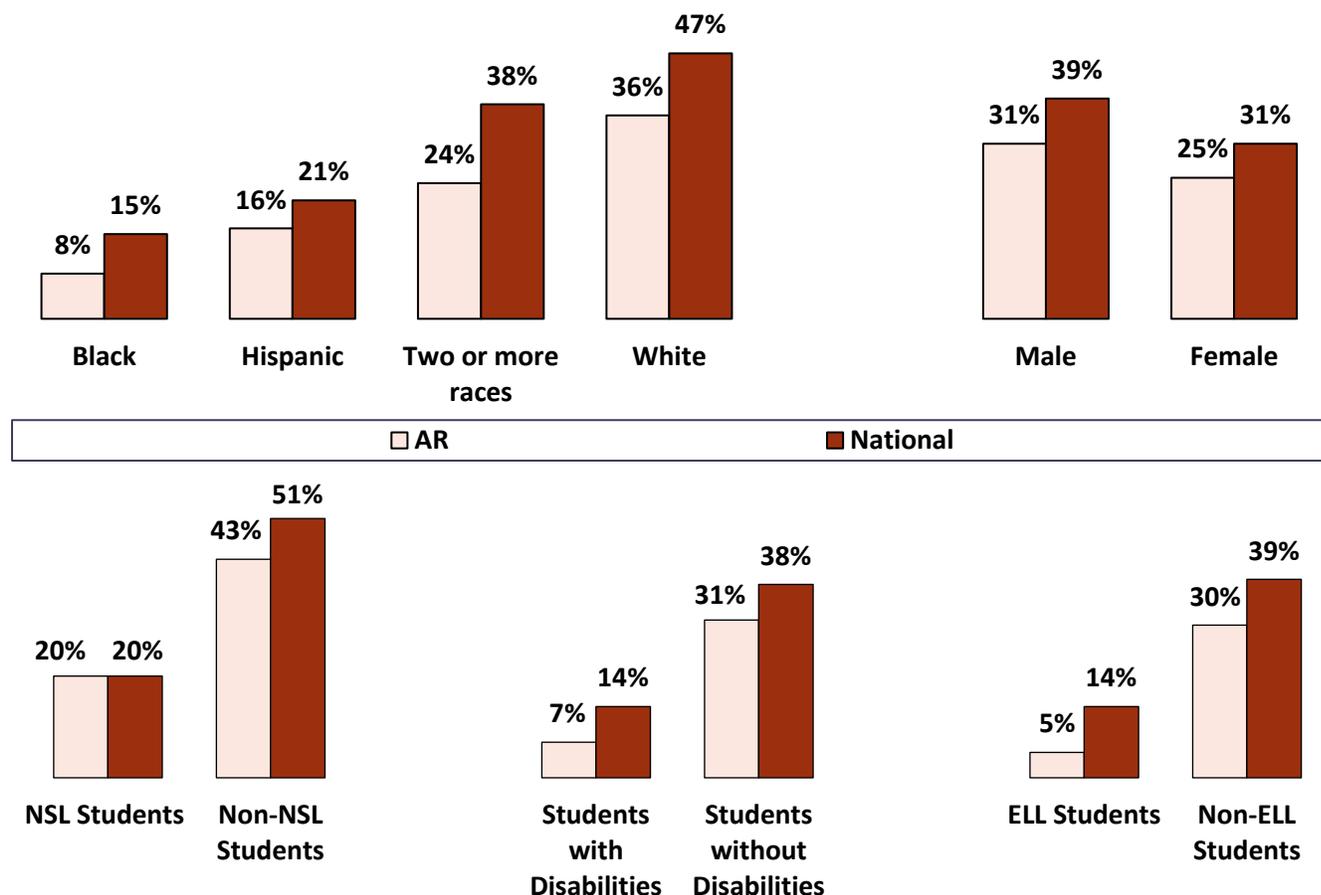
Pct. At or Above Proficient - 4th Grade Math



In Arkansas, performance data for the 4th grade math assessment was not available for Asian, American Indian/Alaskan Native students, or Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander students. Data for Arkansas students of two or more races was only available in the 4th grade math assessment because reporting standards were not met. In Arkansas, the percentage point gap between black and white students in 4th grade math was 28 points compared to 32 points nationally. There was a six-percentage point gap between male and female students in Arkansas compared to an eight-percentage point gap nationally. Between English Language Learners (ELL) and non-ELL students, the percentage point gap in Arkansas and the U.S. was the same at 25 points.

4th Grade Math (2022)

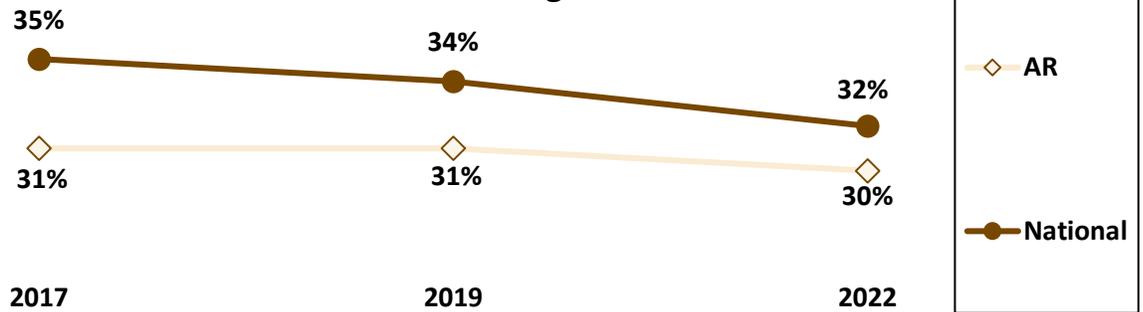
Pct. At or Above Proficient - 4th Grade Math (2022)



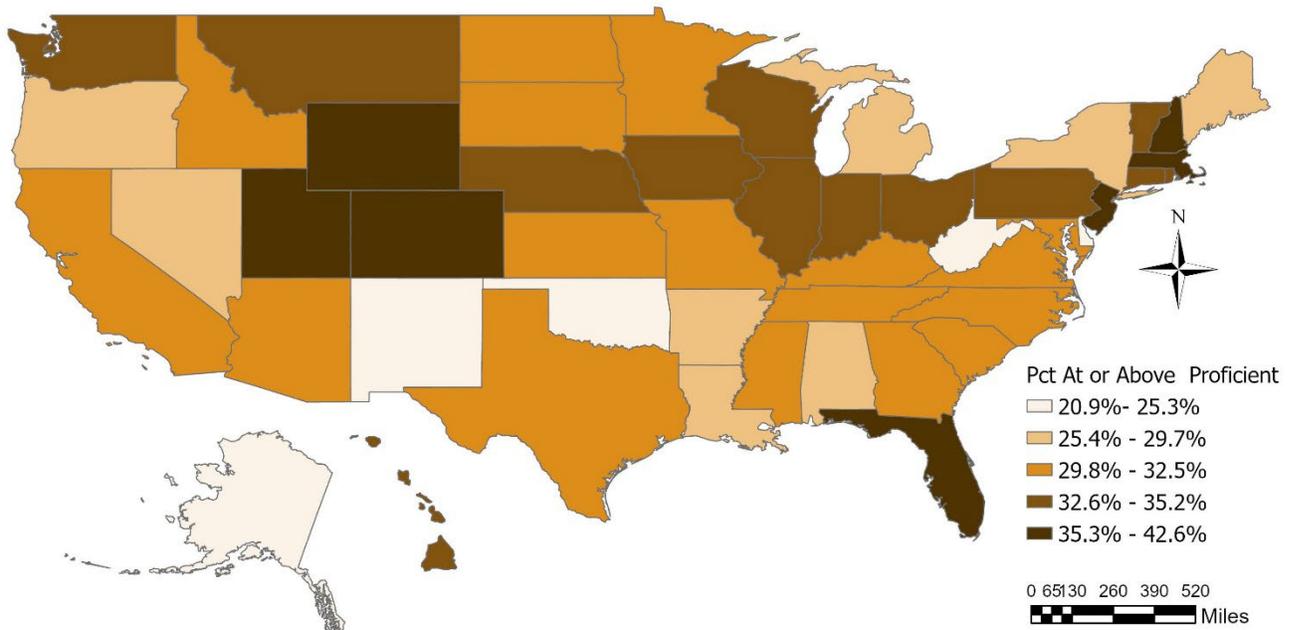
4th Grade Reading

In 2022, 30% of Arkansas 4th grade students scored proficient or above in reading compared to 32% of students nationally. These were both overall decreases from 2017.

Pct. At or Above Proficient - 4th Grade Reading



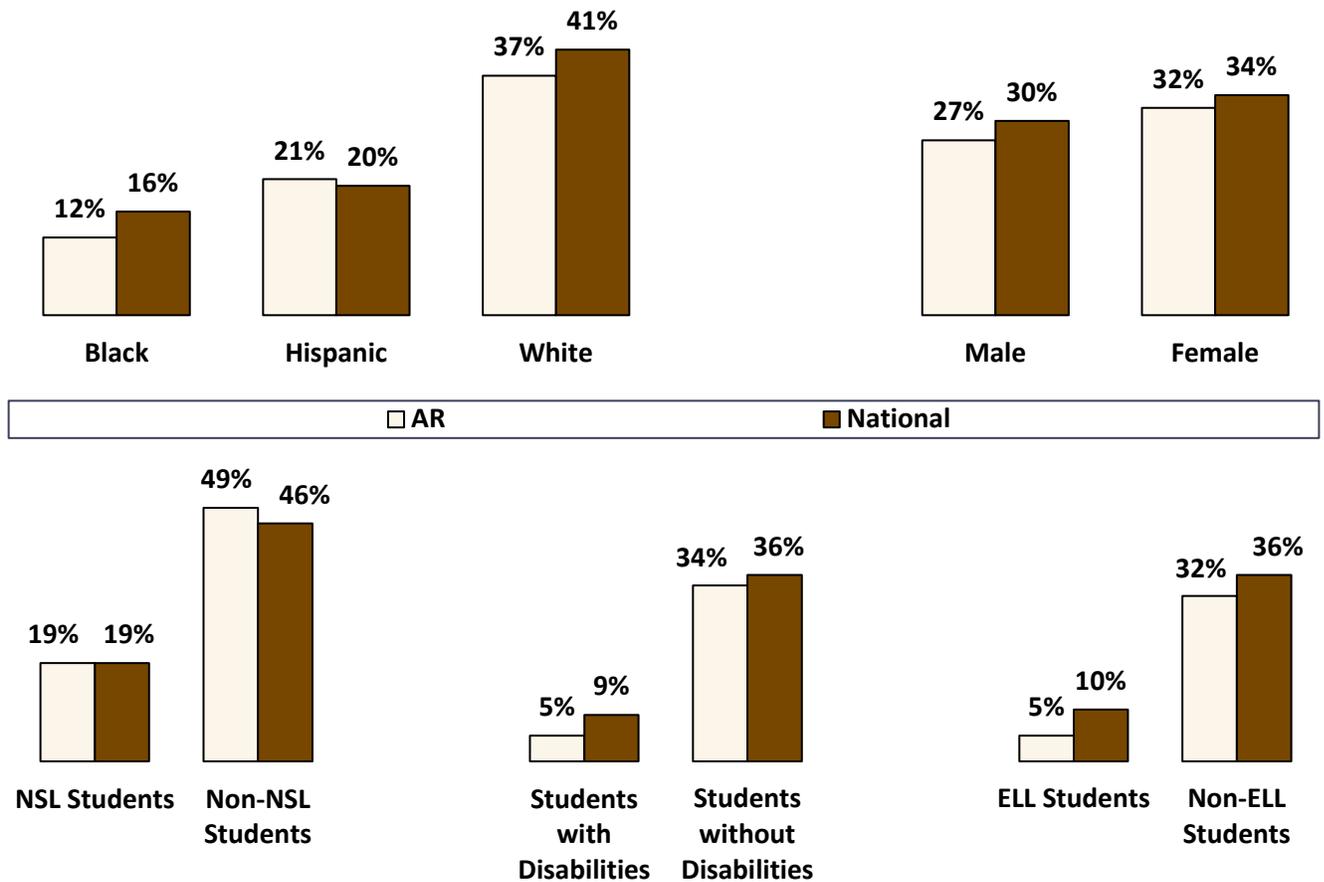
All Students – 4th Grade Reading (2022)



The percentage point gap between white and black students was 25 points both in Arkansas and nationally. In Arkansas, 32% of female 4th grade students scored proficient or above compared to 27% of male students.

For ELL 4th grade students in Arkansas, 5% scored proficient in reading compared to 32% non-ELL 4th grade students. Both in Arkansas and the U.S., 19% of students qualifying for the national student lunch program scored proficient or above in 4th grade reading. The percentage point gap between students qualifying for the national student lunch program and students who did not was 30 points in Arkansas compared to 27 points nationally. In Arkansas, 5% of students with disabilities scored proficient or above in math, compared with 9% nationally. The percentage point gap between students with disabilities and students without was 29 points in Arkansas and 27 points nationally.

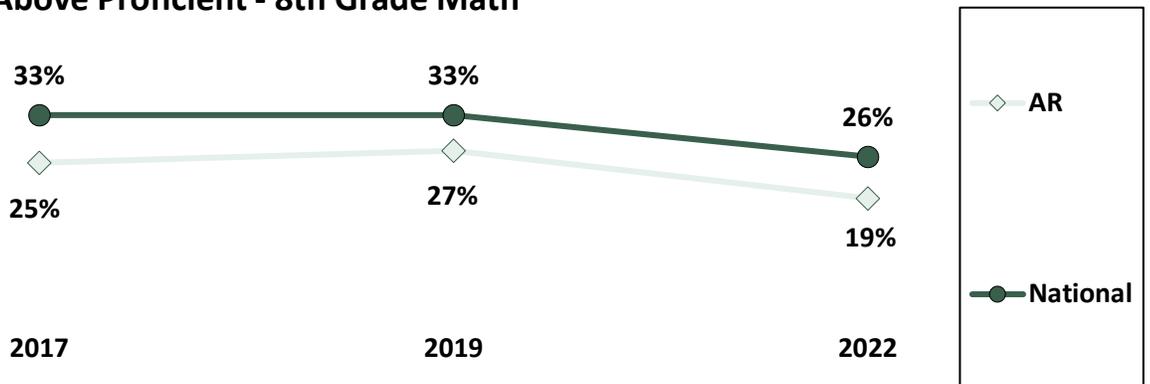
Pct. At or Above Proficient - 4th Grade Reading (2022)



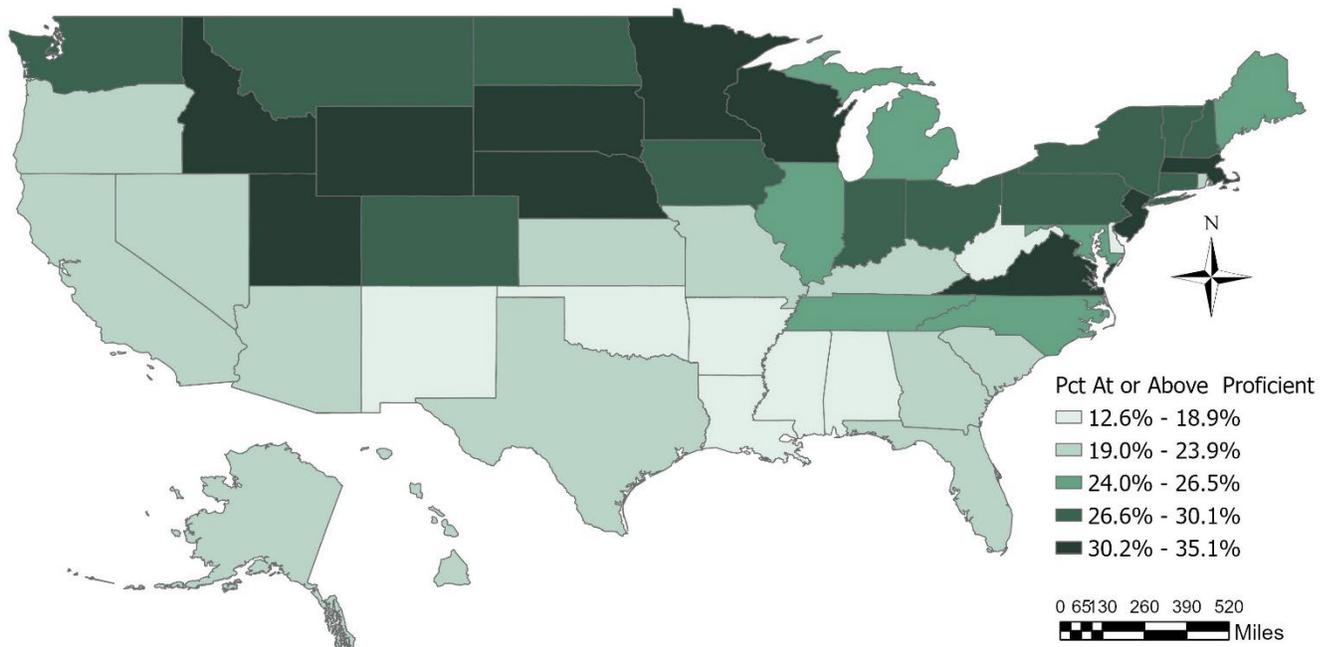
8th Grade Math

In 2022, 19% of Arkansas 8th grade students scored proficient or above in math compared to 26% nationally. For Arkansas, this was an eight-percentage point decrease from 2019 and seven-percentage point decrease nationally.

Pct. At or Above Proficient - 8th Grade Math



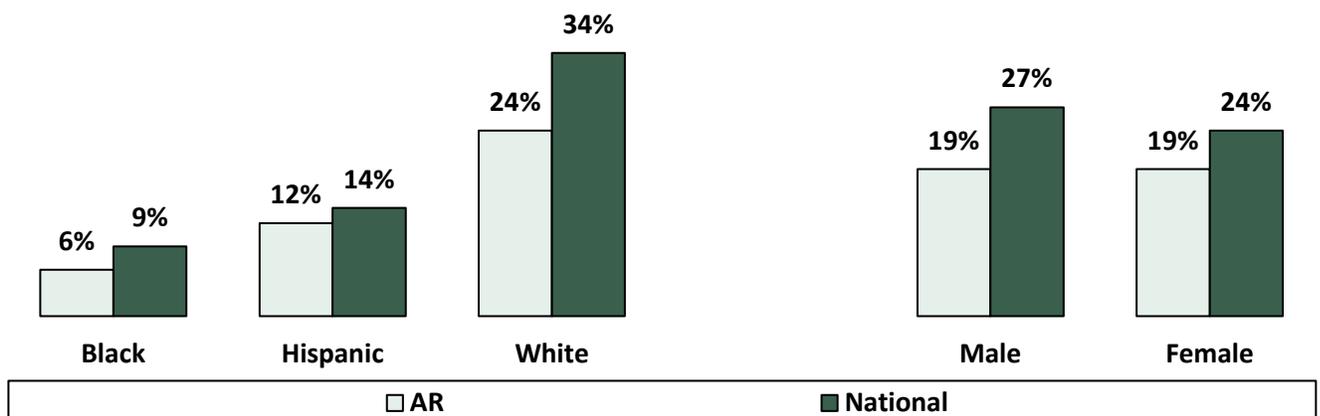
All Students – 8th Grade Math (2022)



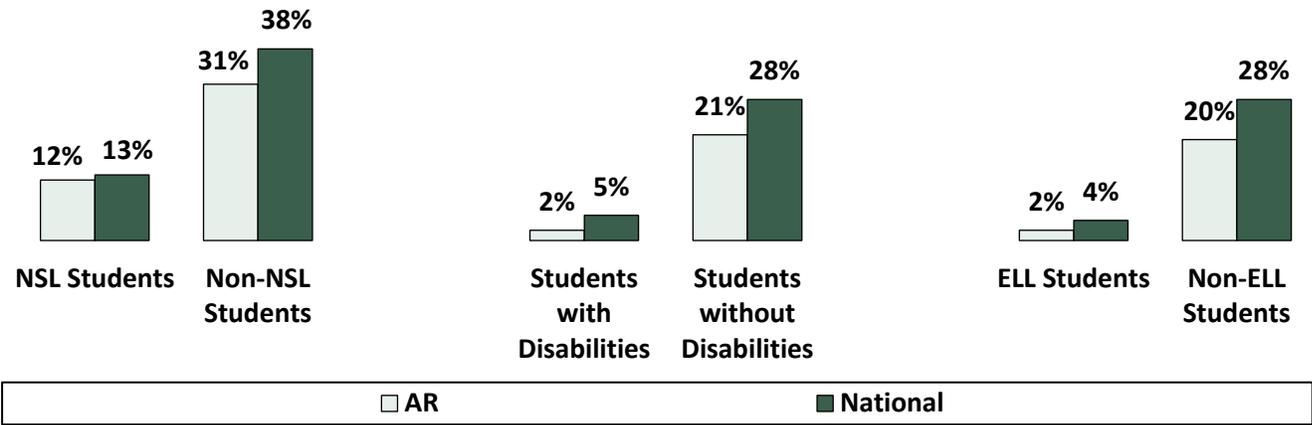
As shown in the following graph, in Arkansas, an 18-percentage point difference occurred between white and black 8th grade students in math compared to a 25-percentage point difference nationally. In Arkansas, 19% of both male and female 8th grade students scored proficient or above in math compared to 27% and 24%, respectively, nationally. Nationally, there was a three-percentage point difference in male and female students scoring proficient or above and no difference in Arkansas.

In Arkansas, 2% of ELL 8th grade students scored proficient or above in math compared to 4% nationally. The percentage point gap between ELL and non-ELL students was 18 percentage points in Arkansas and 24 nationally. In Arkansas, 12% of 8th grade students qualifying for the NSL program scored proficient or above in math compared to 13% nationally. There was an 18-percentage point gap in Arkansas between students qualifying and students not qualifying. This is compared to a 24-percentage point gap nationally. In Arkansas, 2% of 8th grade students with disabilities scored proficient or above in math compared to 5% nationally. There was a 19-percentage point gap in Arkansas between students with disabilities and students without compared to 23 percentage points nationally.

Pct. At or Above Proficient - 8th Grade Math (2022)



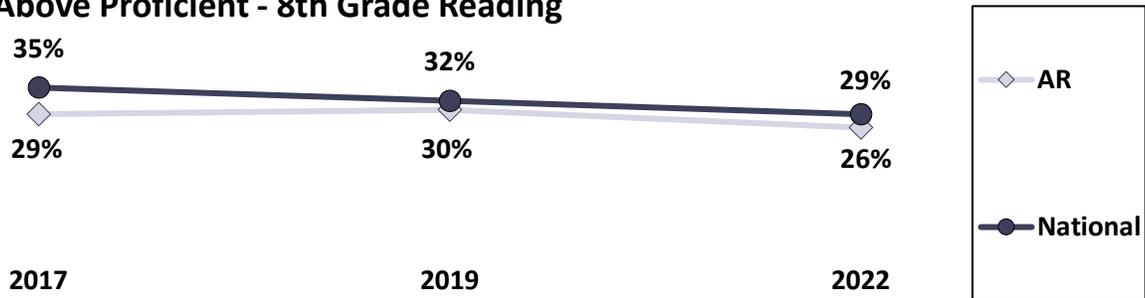
Pct. At or Above Proficient - 8th Grade Math (2022)



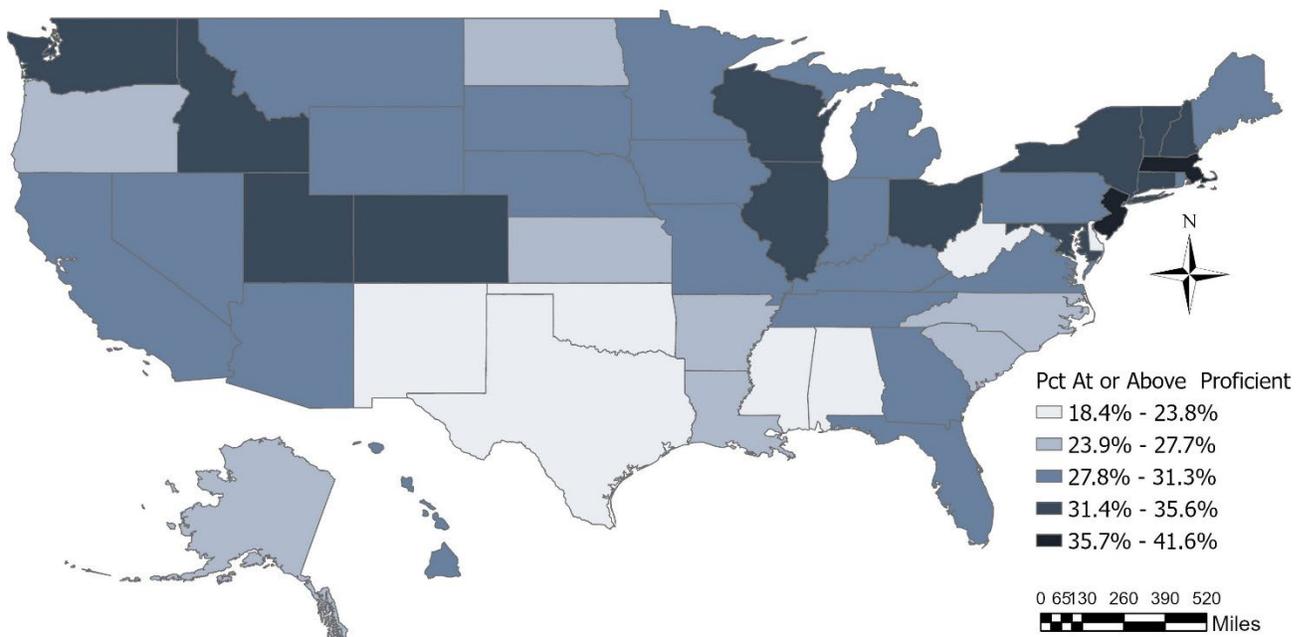
8th Grade Reading

In 2022, 26% of Arkansas 8th grade students scored proficient or above in reading compared to 29% nationally. For Arkansas, this was a three-percentage point decrease from 2017 compared to a six-percentage point decrease nationally.

Pct. At or Above Proficient - 8th Grade Reading



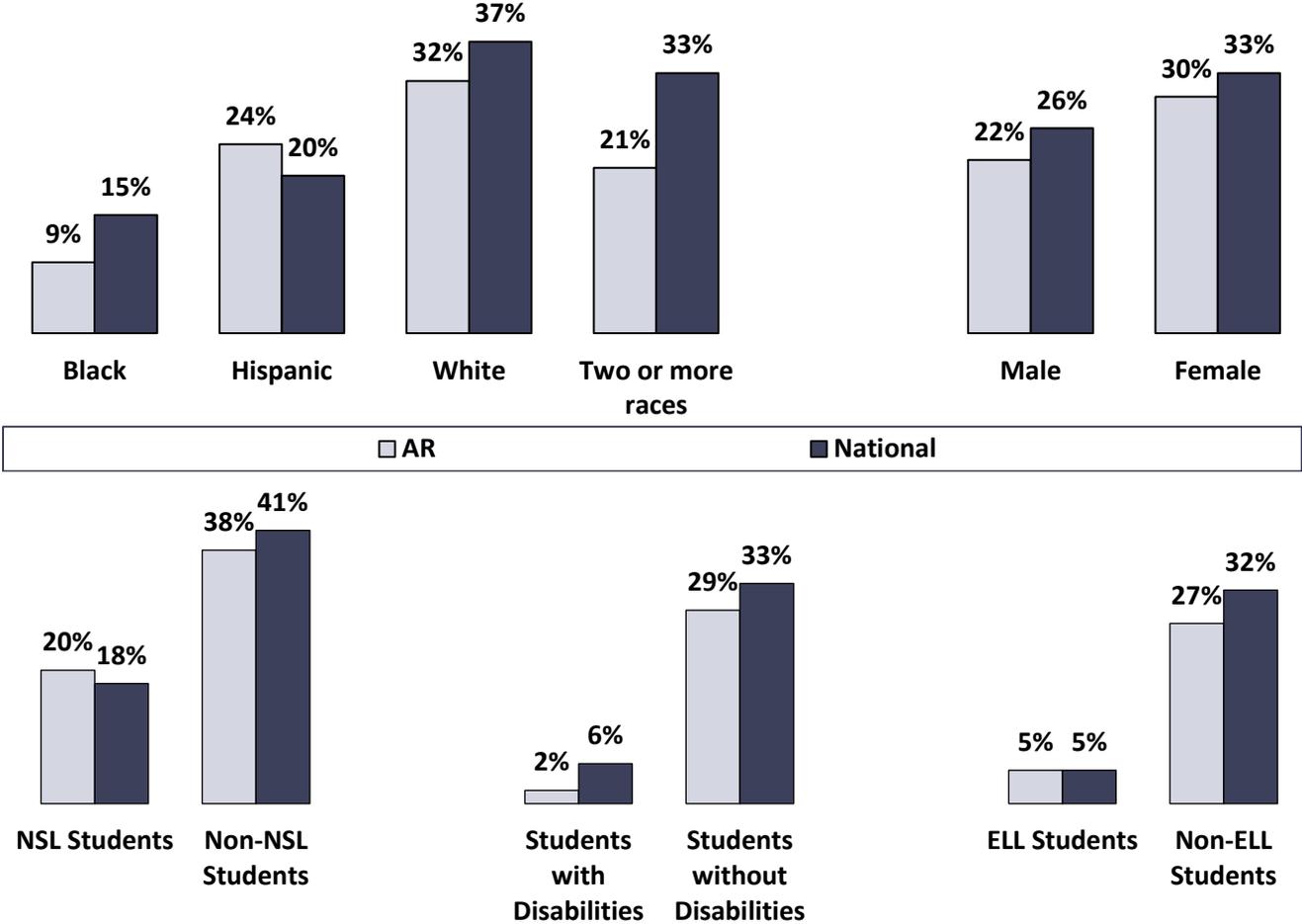
All Students – 8th Grade Reading (2022)



As shown in the following graph, a 23-percentage point gap existed between white and black Arkansas 8th graders' average reading scores compared to 22 points that existed nationally. In Arkansas, 22% of male 8th grade students scored proficient or above in reading compared to 30% of female 8th grade students. This was an eight-percentage point gap between female and male students in Arkansas compared to seven points nationally.

Both in Arkansas and the U.S., 5% of ELL 8th grade students scored proficient or above in reading. This is compared to 27% and 32%, respectively, nationally. An 18-percentage point gap occurred between Arkansas 8th grade students qualifying for NSL and students not qualifying for NSL. This is compared to a 23-percentage point gap nationally. In Arkansas, 2% of 8th grade students with disabilities scored proficient or above in reading compared to 6% nationally. In both Arkansas and the U.S., the percentage point gap between students with disabilities and students without was 27 points.

Pct. At or Above Proficient - 8th Grade Reading (2022)



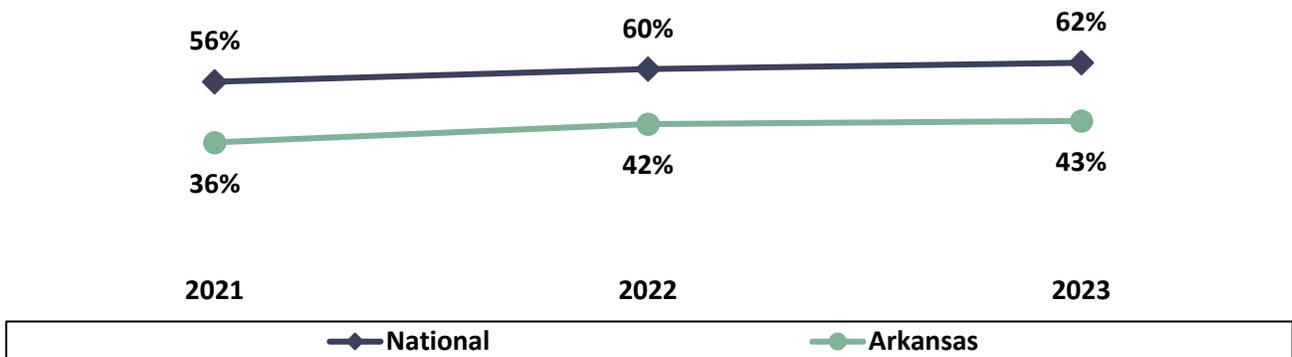
Advanced Placement

The Advanced Placement program gives students “the opportunity to pursue college-level studies while still in secondary school through a high school preparatory course for a College Board Advanced Placement test that incorporates all topics specified by the College Board and Educational Testing Service on its standard syllabus for a given subject area and is approved by the College Board and Educational Testing Service.”¹⁵ Advanced Placement courses are “offered in each school district in the state in the four core areas of English, math, science, and social studies to provide advanced educational courses that are easily accessible and will prepare students for admission to and success in a postsecondary educational environment.”¹⁶ The College Board Advanced Placement test provides students the opportunity to qualify for college/university-level credit. These exams are scored on a scale of 1 to 5. Many U.S. colleges grant credit and/or advanced placement for scores of 3 or above.

FY 2023	Arkansas	National
Number of Students Taking AP Courses	27,457	2,869,418
Number of AP Exams Taken	43,142	5,197,601
Percentage of Exams That Scores 3 or Above	43%	62%
Data Sources: College Board ¹³ ; DESE ¹⁴ - AR data does not include the AR School for the Blind, AR School for the Deaf, and the Division of Youth Services School System.		

In 2022, 27,063 Arkansas students took AP courses and 41,265 AP exams were taken. Of those exams taken, 42% received scores of 3 or above. Nationally, 60% of 4.7 million AP exams taken received scores of 3 or above. These percentages are both increases from 2021 but lower than 2020 scores. It is possible that the national numbers and percentage represent a different population of students accessing AP courses.¹⁷ AP courses are offered in each AR school district but that may not be true in other states.

Percent of AP Exams Scoring 3, 4, or 5



¹³ <https://apcentral.collegeboard.org/media/pdf/ap-score-distributions-all-subjects-2003-2023.pdf>

¹⁴ <https://myschoolinfo.arkansas.gov/Plus/Districts>

¹⁵ DESE. Rules for Gifted and Talented Program Approval Standards. (2009).

https://dese.ade.arkansas.gov/Files/20201102110215_Gifted%20and%20Talented%20Program%20Approval%20Standards%20ADE%2080.pdf

¹⁶ Division of Secondary and Elementary Education (DESE). AP/IB Program. <https://dese.ade.arkansas.gov/Offices/learning-services/gt-ap/apib-services>

¹⁷ Email from DESE dated Jan. 4, 2024.

The chart to the right shows the percentage of AP exams taken in Arkansas in 2023 broken out by a variety of school-level and district-level categories. (The methodology used to determine how schools and districts were categorized can be found in the Methodologies and Definitions Report.) These percentages are based on school averages.

Performance on the AP exams higher in both charter and urban schools. Among levels of free or reduced-price lunch students (FRPL), the highest percentage of AP exams with scores 3 or higher—44%—occurred in the quintile of schools with the lowest level of FRPL students.

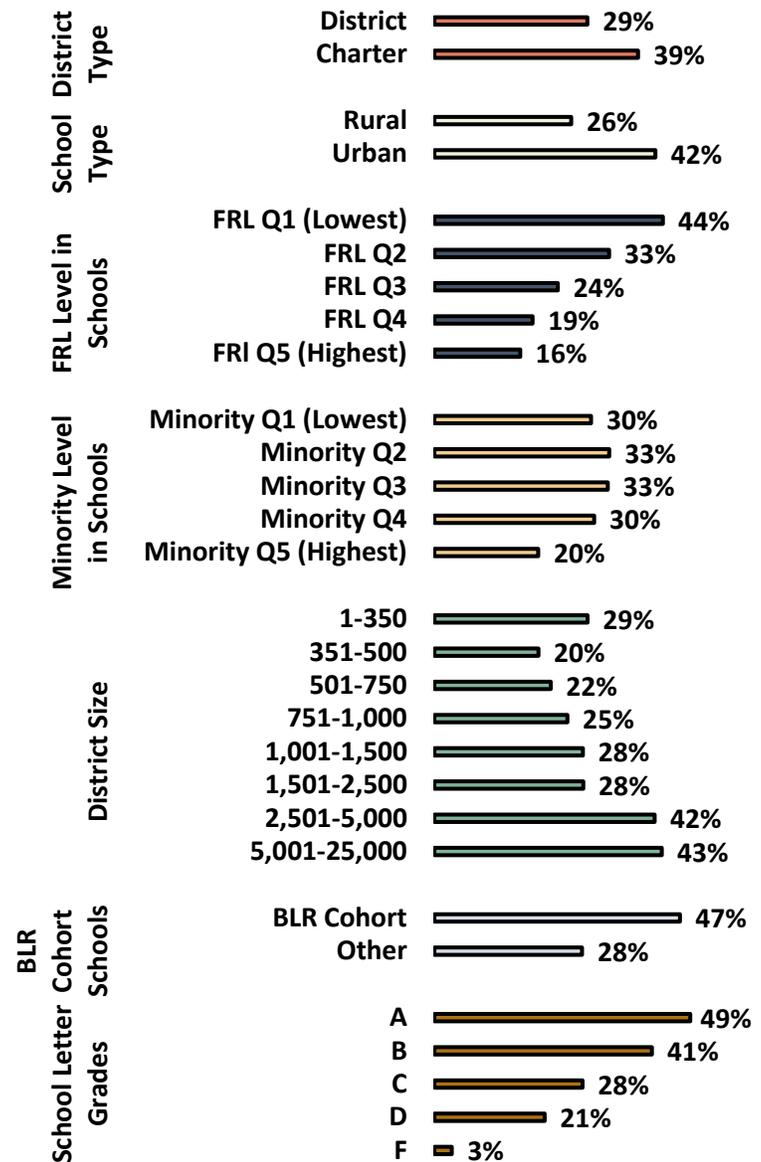
When it came to levels of minority students, the percentage of AP exams with a 3 or higher was lowest in the 20% of schools with the highest level of minority students. The percentage of AP exams with a 3 or higher was lowest in districts with fewer than 350 students and generally increased as district size increased.

BLR cohort schools refer to schools found to have students performing at higher-than-expected achievement levels based on a “successful school” model frequently used by education researchers. More details on the methodology used to determine these schools can be found in the Methodologies and Definitions report.

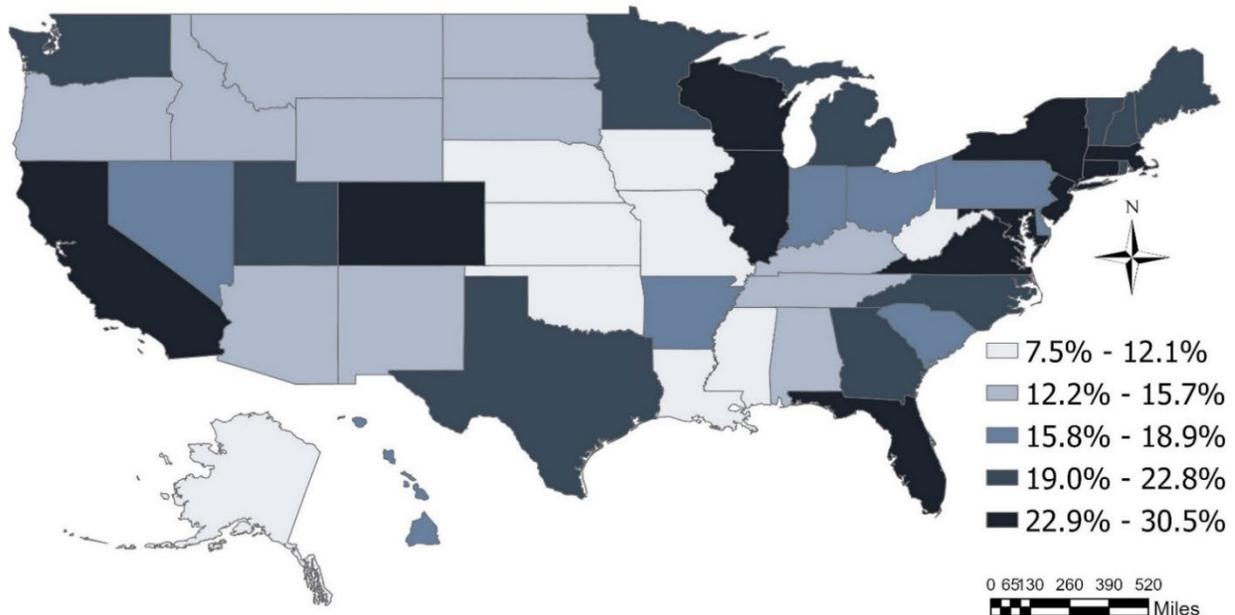
In BLR cohort schools, 47% of AP exams were scored at 3 or higher compared to 28% in other schools. Finally, performance was also examined by school letter grades, which are determined by ADE based on a variety of factors. Performance on the AP exams was highest for schools graded “A” (49%) and decreased to 3% in schools graded “F”.

The map on the next page shows how performance on the AP exam varied across the country using data from the College Board. This national data looks at AP exams strictly from the class of 2022 instead of all AP exams taken. Mississippi had the lowest percentage of AP exams scoring 3 or higher with 7.5% and Massachusetts had the highest with 30.5%. Arkansas was in the middle of this group with 18% of graduating seniors scoring 3 or above on an AP exam in 2022.

Pct. AP Exams Scored 3, 4, or 5 (2023)



Percent Students Scoring 3 or Above on an AP Exam During High School (2022)



Data Source: <https://reports.collegeboard.org/ap-program-results/class-of-2022>

ACT

The ACT is a national college admissions examination recognized by universities and colleges in the U.S. “All Arkansas 11th grade students enrolled in a public or charter school will be given the opportunity to take the ACT during the spring of their junior year. The exam will be given at each student’s school and can be used for all scholarship and college admittance purposes. The ACT multiple-choice tests are based on what students have learned in English, reading, math, and science.”¹⁹ The ACT is “designed to measure skills that are most important for success in postsecondary education and that are acquired in secondary education. The score range for each of the four multiple-choice tests is 1-36. The composite score is the average of the four test scores rounded to the nearest whole number.”²⁰ In 2023, Arkansas’s average ACT composite score for 11th grade students was 18.2, a decrease from 18.3 in 2022. According to DESE, since these scores only represent those from 11th grade students, these “may exclude scores of higher scoring students who take [the] ACT in Grade 10 and do not avail themselves of the opportunity at Grade 11.”²¹

Students Tested	
2021	27,577
2022	28,721
2023	28,732
Data Source: DESE ¹⁸	

ACT also has the College and Career Readiness System that “provides a longitudinal approach to educational and career planning through assessment, curriculum support and student evaluation.”²² The standards “are empirically derived descriptions of the essential skills and knowledge students need to become ready for college and career giving clear meaning to test scores and serving as a link between what students have learned and what they are ready to learn next.”²³

¹⁸ DESE. Arkansas ACT State Profile Report – Grade 11 (2022); Average Composite Scores (2023).

<https://dese.ade.arkansas.gov/Offices/public-school-accountability/assessment-test-scores/2023>

¹⁹ <https://dese.ade.arkansas.gov/Offices/public-school-accountability/assessment/the-act>

²⁰ ACT. <https://www.act.org/content/act/en/products-and-services/the-act-educator/the-act-test.html#order-reg-materials>

²¹ Email from DESE dated Jan. 4, 2024.

²² <https://dese.ade.arkansas.gov/Offices/public-school-accountability/assessment/the-act>

²³ <https://www.act.org/content/act/en/college-and-career-readiness/standards.html>

The following tables show how Arkansas juniors performed on the ACT from 2021 to 2023 and how their ACT scores varied by race and ethnicity in 2023.

Arkansas – 11 th Grade		2021	2022	2023
English	Pct. Met College Readiness Benchmarks	46%	46%	46%
	Average ACT Score	17.6	17.7	17.7
Math	Pct. Met College Readiness Benchmarks	19%	19%	19%
	Average ACT Score	17.8	17.7	17.6
Reading	Pct. Met College Readiness Benchmarks	29%	31%	30%
	Average ACT Score	18.4	18.6	18.5
Science	Pct. Met College Readiness Benchmarks	22%	24%	23%
	Average ACT Score	18.6	18.7	18.6
All Subjects	Pct. Met College Readiness Benchmarks	12%	13%	12%
	Average ACT Composite Score	18.2	18.3	18.2

Data Sources: DESE²⁴

Race/Ethnicity	Arkansas 11 th Grade – Average ACT Scores – 2023				
	Composite	Math	Science	English	Reading
Asian	22.2	22.2	22.3	21.9	21.8
American Indian/ Alaska Native	16.7	16.5	17.4	15.6	16.8
Black/African American	15.2	15.2	16.0	14.1	15.2
Hispanic/Latino	17.1	16.8	17.6	16.2	17.1
Native Hawaiian Other Pacific Islander	15.9	16.2	16.3	15.3	15.4
White	19.4	18.4	19.7	19.2	19.9
Two or More Races	18.7	17.8	19.1	18.2	18.9
Ethnicity – Preferred Not to Respond	18.3	17.8	18.5	17.6	18.8
No Ethnicity Information Provided	15.2	15.4	15.8	14.0	15.2

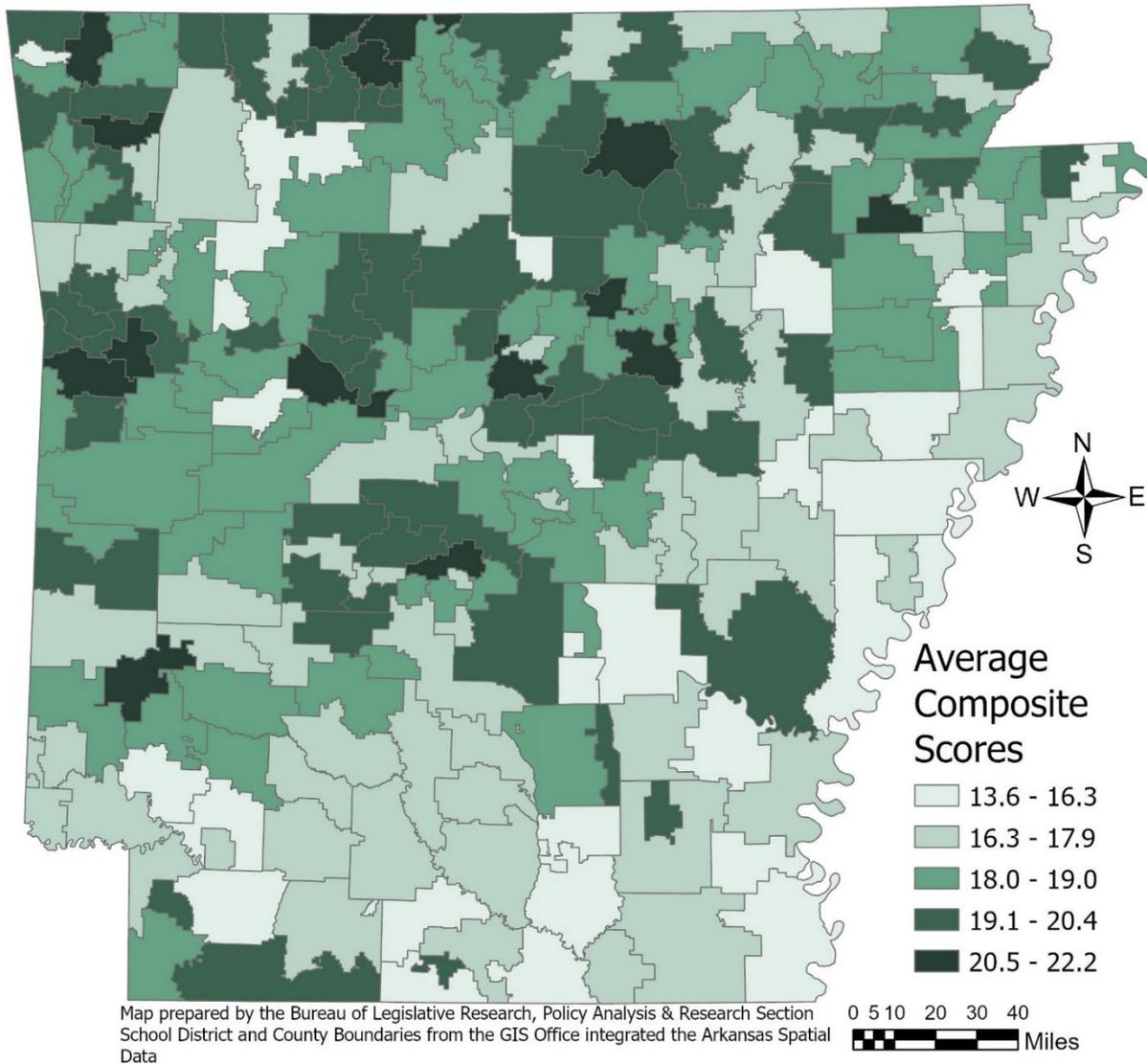
Data Sources: DESE²⁵

²⁴ DESE. Average Composite Scores (2023), Percent Meeting College Career Readiness (CCR) Benchmarks (2023), Arkansas ACT State Profile Report – Grade 11 (2022). <https://dese.ade.arkansas.gov/Offices/public-school-accountability/assessment-test-scores>

²⁵ DESE. Average Composite Scores by Race/Ethnicity (2023). <https://dese.ade.arkansas.gov/Offices/public-school-accountability/assessment-test-scores/2023>

The following map shows how the average ACT composite scores vary across traditional school districts. The average ACT composite score in school districts ranged from 13.7 to 22.2. Among open-enrollment public charter schools, the average composite scored varied from 12.6 to 26.7.

Average ACT Composite Scores (2023)

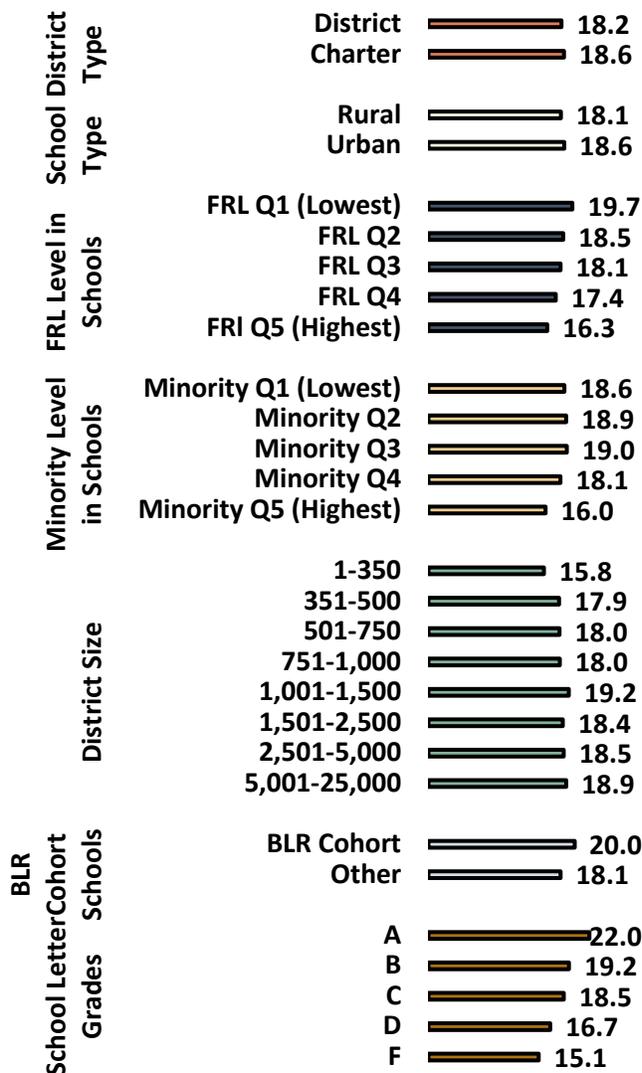


The following graphs show how ACT performance varied by types of schools and districts. These percentages are based on school averages. Performance on the ACT was higher in open-enrollment public charter schools than in districts and higher in urban schools than in rural schools, though the differences were smaller with composite scores.

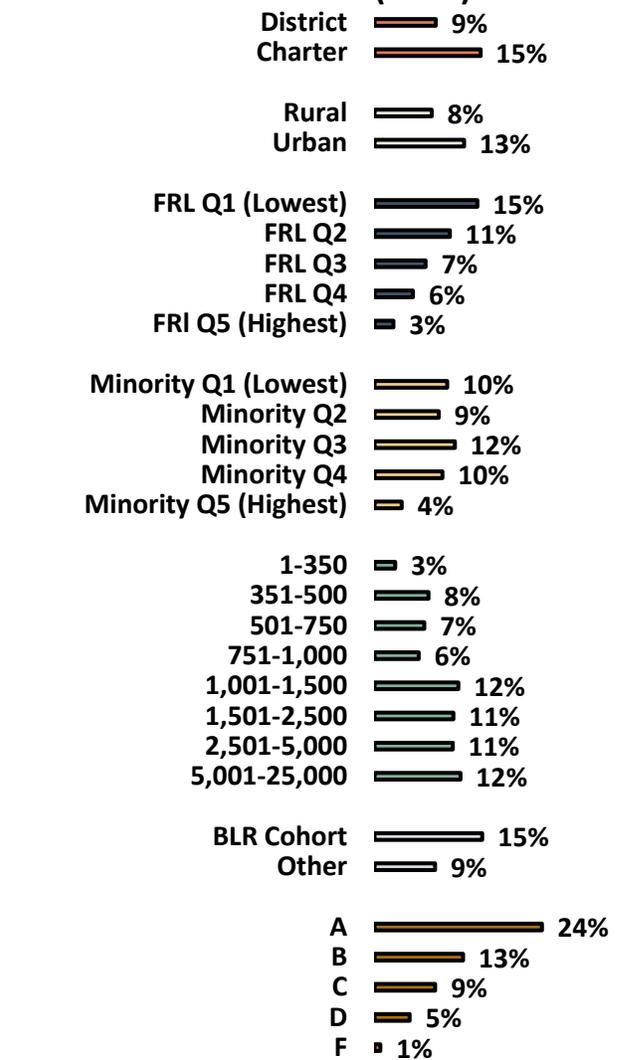
Performance was highest in schools with the lowest levels of FRPL rates and decreased with increased levels of FRPL students. Performance was also lowest in schools with the highest levels of minority students.

With district size, performance was lowest in the smallest districts and generally increased as district sizes increased. Additionally, the performance was higher among BLR cohort schools and was highest in "A" schools and decreased with lower school letter grades.

Average Composite Score (2023)

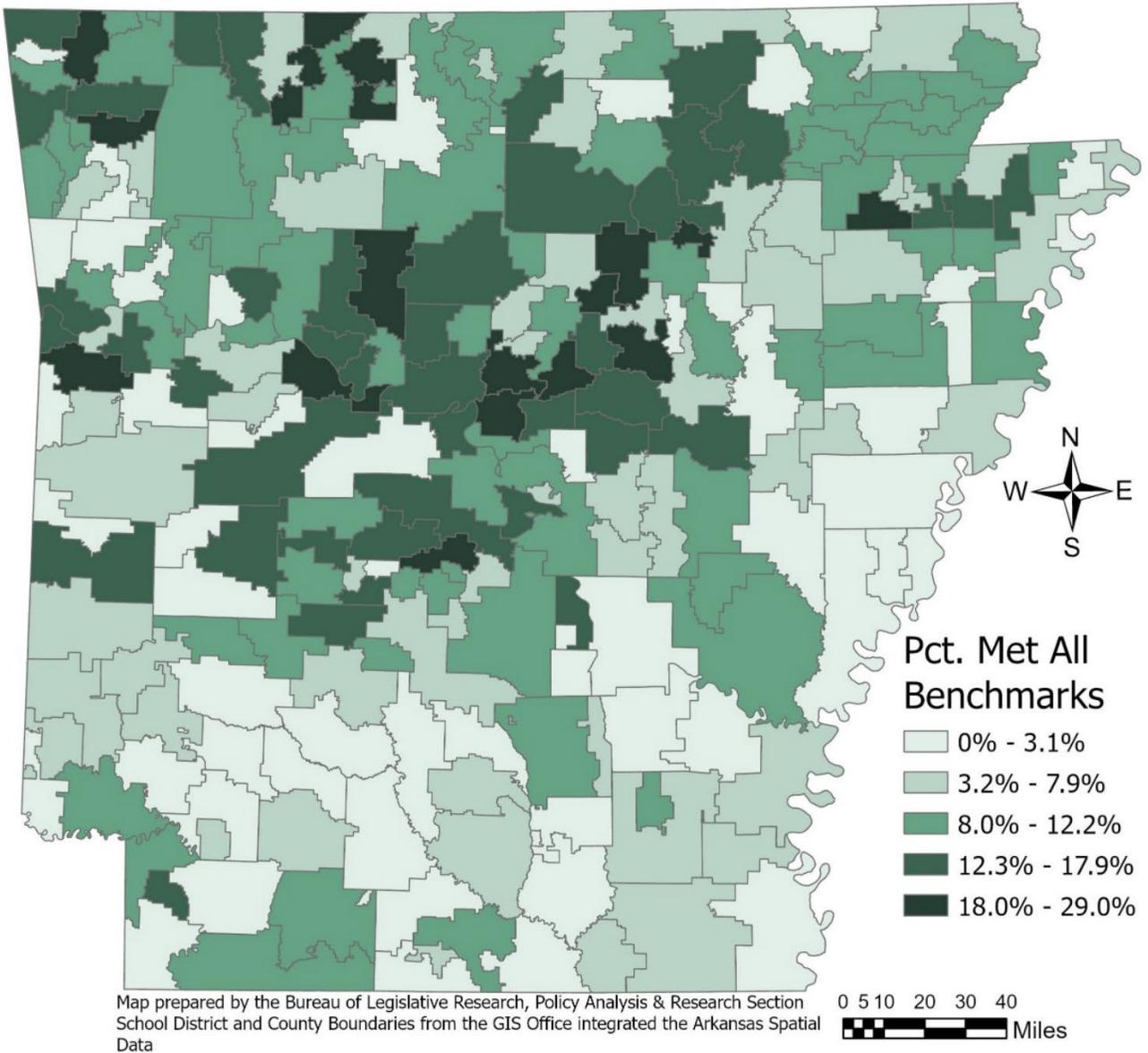


Pct. Meeting All College Readiness Benchmarks (2023)



The following map shows how the percentage of students meeting all college readiness benchmarks vary by traditional school districts. That percentage ranges in school districts from 0% to 29%. Among open-enrollment public charter schools, the percentage of students meeting all four readiness benchmarks ranged from 0% to 45.7%.

Pct. Students Meeting All ACT Benchmarks – 2023



For a national comparison, ACT provides results from graduating seniors for each state. To compare Arkansas ACT scores to those in other states, the BLR looked strictly at states with similar rates of students tested, as ACT suggests²⁶. In 2023, an estimated 96% of Arkansas graduates were tested. The following table shows the comparable states with more than 90% of students tested. Among these states, the average composite score ranged from 17.2 in Nevada to 19.9 in Utah.

States with >90% Tested (2023)	Estimated Pct. of Graduates Tested	Average Composite Score	Pct. Meeting English Benchmark	Pct. Meeting Math Benchmark	Pct. Meeting Reading Benchmark	Pct. Meeting Science Benchmark
Alabama	100%	18.0	42%	30%	18%	21%
Kentucky	100%	18.7	49%	36%	23%	24%
Louisiana	100%	18.2	47%	32%	19%	22%
Mississippi	100%	17.6	41%	26%	16%	18%
Nevada	100%	17.2	36%	27%	16%	18%
Oklahoma	100%	17.8	42%	30%	16%	19%
Tennessee	100%	18.4	47%	33%	23%	23%
Wyoming	100%	19.0	48%	37%	25%	27%
Arizona	98%	17.7	40%	29%	22%	20%
Montana	98%	18.8	44%	36%	26%	27%
Arkansas	<u>96%</u>	<u>18.6</u>	<u>48%</u>	<u>33%</u>	<u>21%</u>	<u>25%</u>
Nebraska	96%	19.2	50%	36%	29%	30%
Wisconsin	95%	19.4	51%	38%	31%	32%
North Carolina	90%	18.5	41%	36%	25%	26%
Utah	90%	19.9	55%	44%	32%	33%
Group Average	<u>98%</u>	<u>18.5</u>	<u>45%</u>	<u>34%</u>	<u>23%</u>	<u>24%</u>
National Average	<u>37%</u>	<u>19.5</u>	<u>51%</u>	<u>40%</u>	<u>30%</u>	<u>31%</u>

Data Source: ACT.²⁷ "Average ACT Scores by State – Graduating Class of 2023"

ACT Aspire

"Arkansas law requires that all public-school students shall participate in a statewide program of educational assessments per Ark. Code Ann. § 6-15-419, 6-15-433, and 6-15-2009. In the 2015-16 school year, the Arkansas State Board of Education adopted the ACT Aspire summative assessment."²⁸ The ACT Aspire end-of-year summative assessment is used to "assess all Arkansas public school students in grades 3-10 unless they qualify for an alternate assessment" in English, reading, writing, math, and science. Average scores for English, reading, and writing are combined to form an English language arts (ELA) score that is shown below. Scale scores at each grade are used to determine students' readiness levels for college and workplace readiness. The four readiness levels are: "Exceeding", "Ready", "Close", and "In Need of Improvement." Students whose scores fall within the "Exceeding" or "Ready" categories are considered on target for college and workplace readiness by the end of high school. The state's long-term goal²⁹ is for 80% of students to score proficient for their grade level by 2030. The following ACT Aspire scores do not include the Arkansas School for the Blind and Visually Impaired, Arkansas School for the Deaf, or Division of Youth Services of the Arkansas Department of Human Services.

In 2023, the AR statewide percentage of students tested was 99%. This is an increase from 95% in 2021. Additionally, student-level achievement ACT Aspire data was used for the following analyses.

²⁶ <https://www.act.org/content/dam/act/unsecured/documents/2023-Average-ACT-Scores-by-State.pdf>

²⁷ <https://www.act.org/content/dam/act/unsecured/documents/2023-Average-ACT-Scores-by-State.pdf>

²⁸ DESE. <https://dese.ade.arkansas.gov/Offices/public-school-accountability/assessment/act-aspire>

²⁹ "Every Student Succeeds Act Arkansas State Plan," page 30.

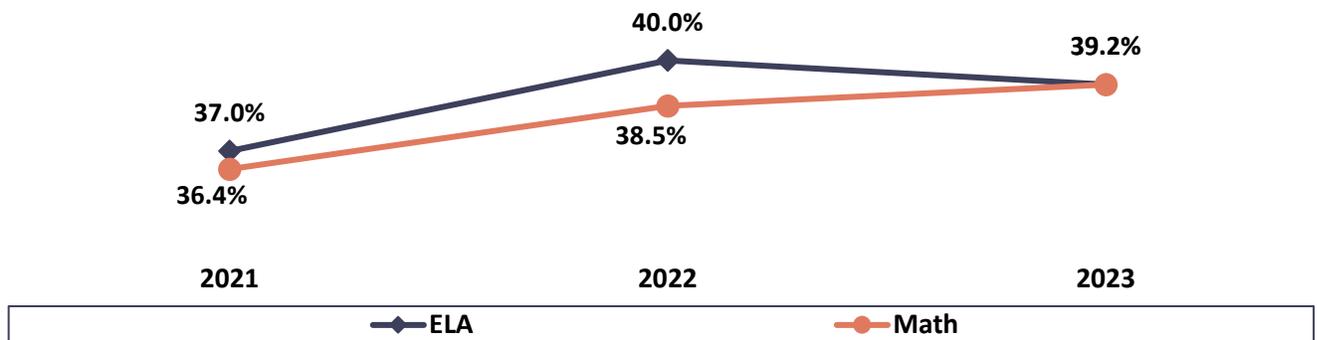
The ATLAS end-of-year summative assessment will replace the ACT Aspire as the end-of-year summative assessment beginning in the 2023-24 school year. It will be used to “assess all Arkansas public school students in grades 3-8 in the content areas of English Language Arts (ELA), mathematics, and science... students will take end of year exams for ELA in grades 9 and 10 and end of course exams for algebra I, geometry, and biology.”³⁰

All Students

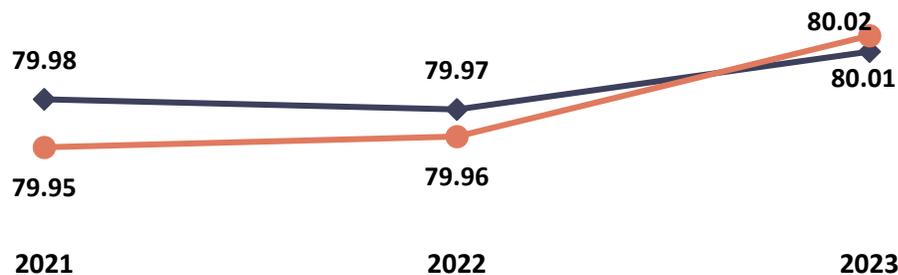
In 2023, approximately 291,000 students were tested on the ACT Aspire in grades 3-10. In both ELA and math, 39.2% of those students scored ready or exceeding. This report also shows average student growth scores. Student growth scores are calculated using a value-added growth model. The student growth score is the difference between what the student is expected to achieve, based on prior achievement scores, and what the student achieves in the current year.³¹ Each growth score tells whether each student performed as well as expected, based on how he/she performed in earlier years. Each student is assigned a numerical value between -1 and 1 to indicate the degree to which they met or exceeded their expected growth. Student growth scores are combined to produce a School Level Value added Score which is transformed onto a 100-point scale to be included in the school performance system. A school growth score of 80 indicates students, on average, met expected growth. The higher the score above 80, the more students are exceeding their expected scores. The state average growth scores for both subjects increased from just under 80 in 2021 to just over 80 in 2023. According to DESE, the state average is expected to “be at or around 80 by design. Variation from 80 at the state level may indicate that students are not making the expected progress.”³²

	ELA	Math
	Students Tested	Students Tested
2021	284,835	285,607
2022	289,751	290,400
2023	291,566	291,885

Pct. Students Scoring Ready or Exceeding



Average Growth Scores



³⁰ DESE. <https://dese.ade.arkansas.gov/Offices/public-school-accountability/assessment/atlas-3-10>

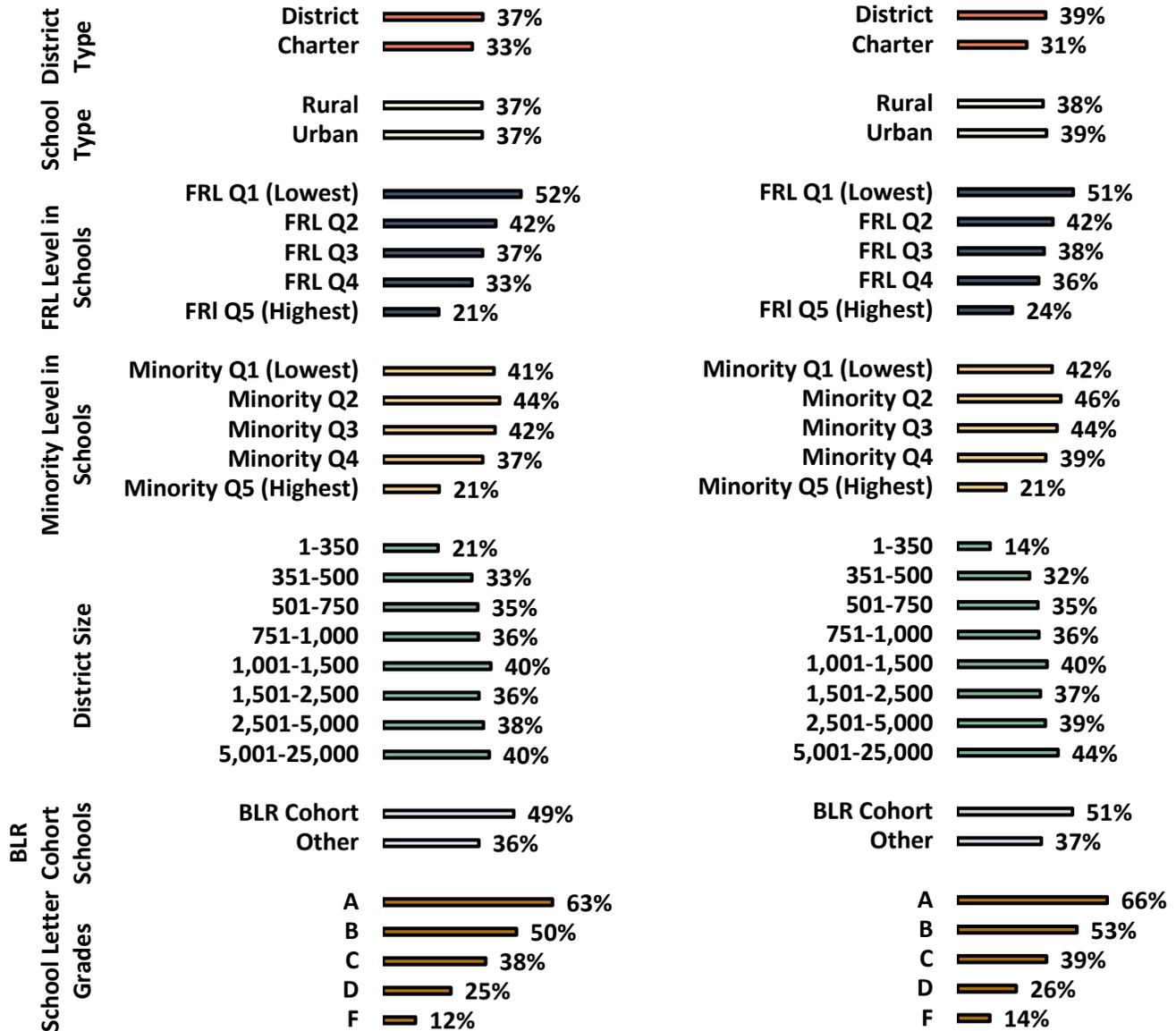
³¹ https://dese.ade.arkansas.gov/Files/20201126144918_School%20Growth%20Explanation%20for%20ES%20and%20DC%20111017.pdf

³² Email from DESE dated Jan. 4, 2024.

The percentage of students scoring ready or exceeding in both ELA and math was higher in districts than in charters. There was little difference when comparing performance between rural and urban schools. When looking at concentrations of FRPL students, average performance was highest in the quintile of schools with the lowest concentration of FRPL students and decreased with increased concentrations of FRPL students. When looking at schools by concentration of minority students, performance was typically highest at the middle quintiles of schools and lowest at the highest quintile. Additionally, performance was lowest in districts under 350 enrollment and generally increased with larger districts. Finally, performance was highest in BLR cohort schools and in “A” schools. Performance decreased, as expected, with lower school letter grades.

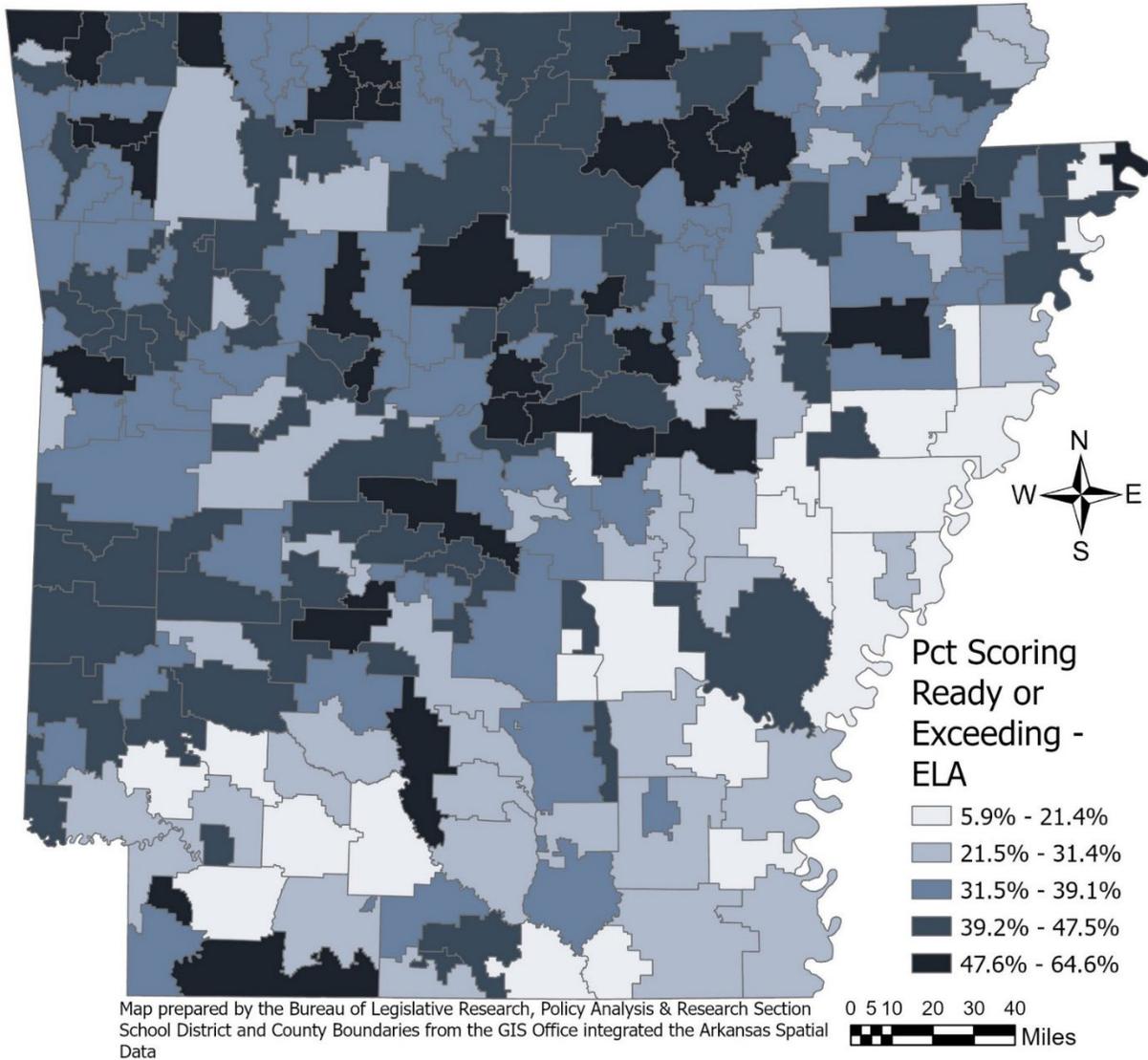
Pct. Ready or Exceeding - ELA

Pct. Ready or Exceeding - Math



The following map shows how the percentage of students scoring ready or exceeding in ELA varies across traditional school districts. That percentage ranged from 5.9% to 64.6% among open-enrollment public charter schools, the average composite scored varied from 3% to 87%.

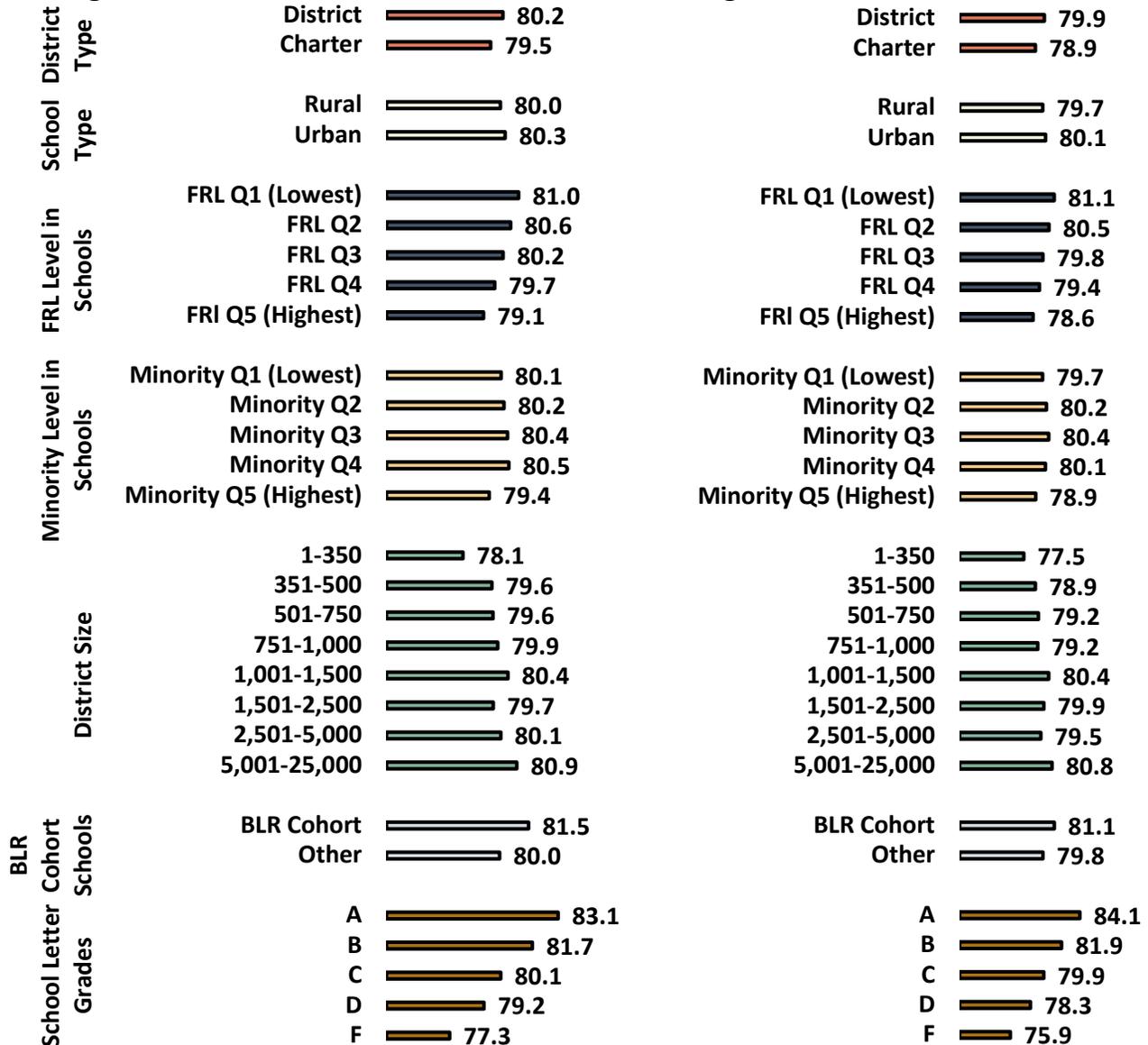
Pct. Of Students Scoring Ready or Exceeding – ELA (2023)



When comparing by types of districts and schools, average growth scores in both ELA and math were highest in districts, though the ELA growth score in districts was the only with an 80 or above. The difference between average growth in rural and urban schools is not statistically significant. When looking at concentrations of FRPL students, average growth was highest in the quintile of schools with the lowest concentration of FRPL students and decreased with increased concentrations of FRPL students. When looking at schools by concentration of minority students, growth was typically highest in the middle quintiles of schools and lowest in the schools with the most minority students. Growth was lowest in districts under 350 enrollment and generally increased with larger districts. Finally, growth was highest in BLR cohort schools and in “A” schools.

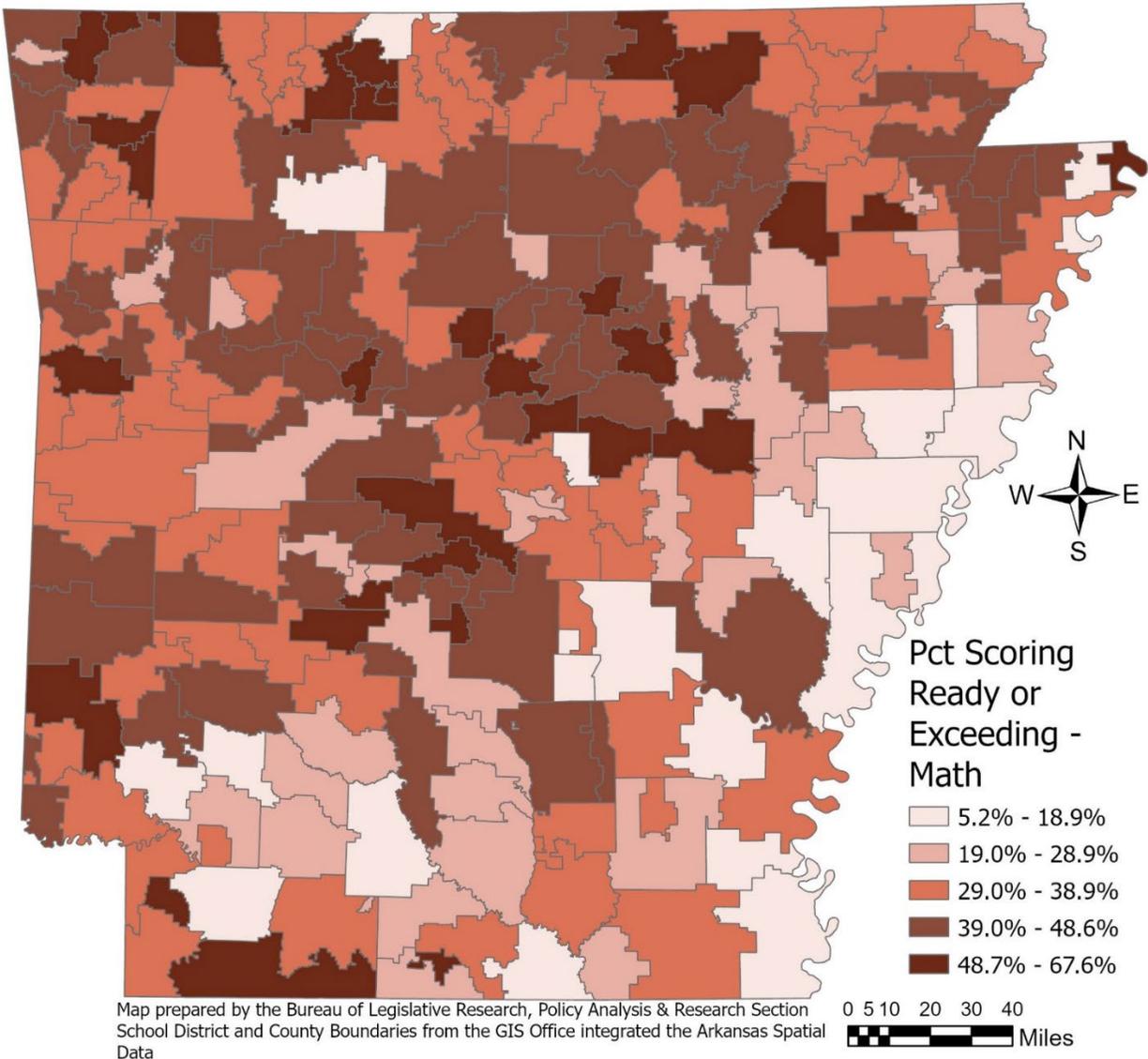
Average Growth Scores - ELA

Average Growth Scores - Math



The following map shows how the percentage of students scoring ready or exceeding in math varies across traditional school districts. That percentage ranged from 5.2% to 67.6% Among open-enrollment public charter schools, the average composite scored varied from 0% to 82%.

Pct. Of Students Scoring Ready or Exceeding – Math (2023)

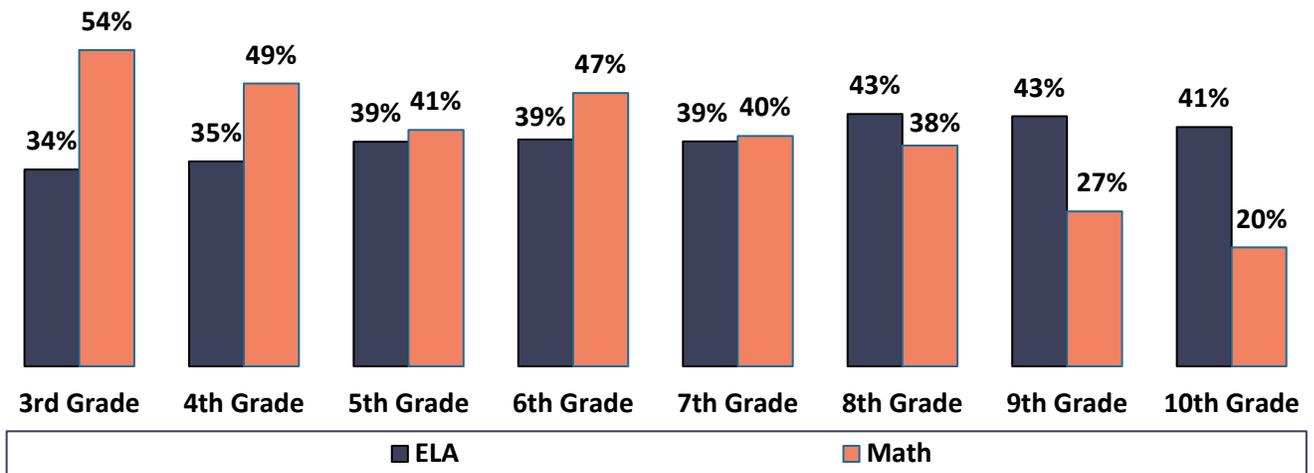


By Grade Level

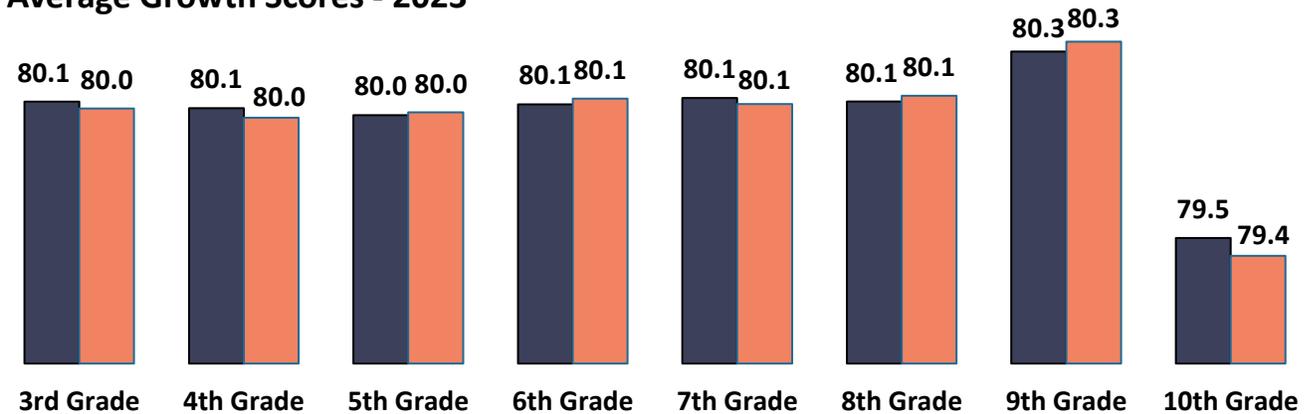
Charts on the next page show how achievement varied by grade level. In 2023, the percentage of students scoring "ready" or "exceeding" generally decreased through higher grade levels in math, excluding the 6th grade, and generally increased for higher grade levels in ELA. Average growth scores held steady around 80 for all grades, excluding 10th grade, in which scores were closer to 79.

Grade Level	Number of Students Tested	
	ELA	Math
3 rd	35,246	35,270
4 th	35,518	35,539
5 th	35,549	35,572
6 th	35,522	35,541
7 th	36,355	36,381
8 th	37,434	37,485
9 th	38,732	38,791
10 th	37,210	37,306

Pct. Students Scoring Ready or Exceeding - 2023



Average Growth Scores - 2023



By Gender, Race, and Ethnicity

In 2023, 45% of female students scored "ready" or "exceeding" in ELA, compared to 34% of male students. For math, 40% of male students scored "ready" or "exceeding" compared to 39% of female students.

Similarly, average growth scores were higher for female students, 80.7, compared to 79.4 for male students. As a reminder, an average growth score of 80 means students' growth is on track. Average growth scores in math were also close for male and female students, at 80.0 and 80.1, respectively.

Based on race and ethnicity, the largest percentage of students scoring "ready" or "exceeding" in both ELA and math are Asian students in ELA (65%) and math (67%). In ELA, the lowest percentage of students scoring "ready" or "exceeding" are Pacific Islander /Native Hawaiian students at 17%. In math, the lowest percentage of students scoring "ready" or "exceeding" are black students at 18%.

Asian students also had the highest average growth scores in ELA, 82.7, and math, 85.1. Average growth scores of 81 and above indicate that students scored higher than expected. All student groups did have growth scores of 80 or above excluding black students whose average growth score in ELA was 79.3. For average growth scores, three groups of students had growth scores at 79 or below (American Indian/Alaskan native, Black, and students of two or more races).

	Pct. Scoring Ready or Exceeding			Average Growth Scores		
	2021	2022	2023	2021	2022	2023
English Language Arts						
Male	31%	35%	34%	79.2	79.5	79.4
Female	43%	46%	45%	80.8	80.5	80.7
American Indian/ Alaskan Native	38%	38%	38%	80.5	79.6	80.0
Asian	62%	67%	65%	83.8	83.5	82.7
Black	17%	19%	20%	77.8	78.6	79.3
Hispanic	30%	32%	31%	81.1	80.5	80.3
Pacific Islander / Native Hawaiian	14%	18%	17%	82.1	80.7	81.3
Two or more races	38%	41%	41%	79.8	80.0	80.0
White	45%	48%	47%	80.3	80.2	80.1
Math						
Male	36%	39%	40%	79.9	79.9	80.0
Female	36%	38%	39%	80.0	80.0	80.1
American Indian/ Alaskan Native	36%	35%	37%	80.0	79.1	79.8
Asian	64%	68%	67%	85.7	85.5	85.1
Black	14%	16%	18%	76.8	78.3	78.6
Hispanic	31%	32%	32%	80.7	80.1	80.3
Pacific Islander / Native Hawaiian	19%	18%	21%	82.6	80.2	81.5
Two or more races	36%	41%	40%	79.7	79.8	79.9
White	44%	48%	47%	80.6	80.3	80.3

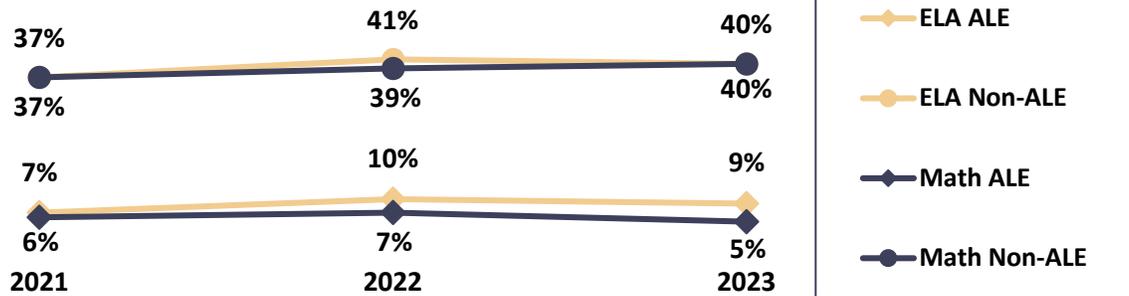
Alternative Learning Environment (ALE) Students

Alternative learning environments (ALE) were designed to provide services to students who do not learn well in traditional classroom environments. Intervention services include those needed to address specific educational and behavioral needs. Charts on the next page that, in 2023, 9% of ALE students scored "ready" or "exceeding" and 5% in math. This compares to 40% of non-ALE students for both ELA and math. These percentages are a decrease from 2022 but an overall increase since 2021.

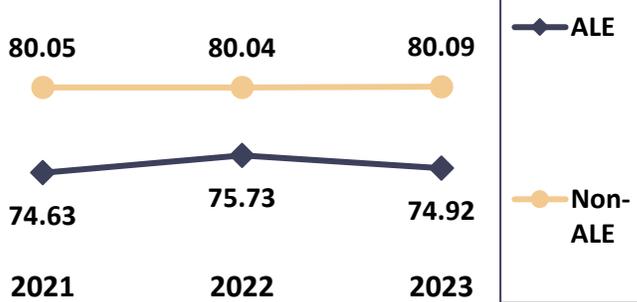
Students Tested		2021	2022	2023
ELA	ALE Students	3,863	4,556	4,514
	Non-ALE Students	280,972	285,195	287,052
Math	ALE Students	3,903	4,622	4,561
	Non-ALE Students	281,704	285,778	287,324

Average growth scores for ALE students have stayed around 75 for the past three years in both ELA and math compared with an average growth score of around 80 for non-ALE students for that same time period. According to DESE, “students who attend ALE tend to have been losing ground in the traditional setting and have lower achievement. The growth scores for ALE indicate that these students are not growing in achievement in ALE settings. Rather, the low average growth scores indicate these groups of students are losing ground relative to expectations.”³³

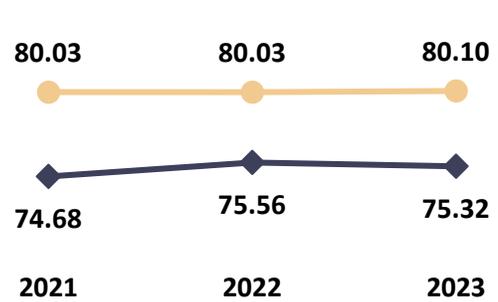
Pct. Ready or Exceeding



Average Growth Scores - ELA



Average Growth Scores - Math



English Language Learner (ELL) Students

Arkansas uses a variety of methods of measuring and monitoring ELL students’ success. This report provides information on three main types: progress toward English language proficiency, student achievement on academic content, and graduation rates. This section will address student achievement on academic content as demonstrated through the ACT Aspire.

Students Tested		2021	2022	2023
ELA	ELL Students	21,069	21,828	22,384
	Non-ELL Students	263,766	267,923	269,182
Math	ELL Students	21,102	21,896	22,421
	Non-ELL Students	264,505	267,923	269,464

English Language Learner (ELL) students are those that have been identified by their school district as being limited English proficient. ELL students remain in the program and receive services until they are able to exit the program. The district level Language Proficiency and Assessment Committee annually reviews progress of each identified ELL student’s progress in acquiring English. This decision is based on three pieces of evidence, including demonstrating academic content proficiency. This can be achieved by multiple pieces of evidence that include, but are not limited to, scoring “ready” or “exceeding” on individual components of the ACT Aspire.

³³ Email from DESE dated Jan. 4, 2024.

ACT Aspire scores shown in this section will first compare ELL students to non-ELL students. In this analysis, ELL students include *current* ELL students but does not include former ELL students that are still being monitored. Scores for former ELL students being monitored in 2023 will be provided at the end of this section.

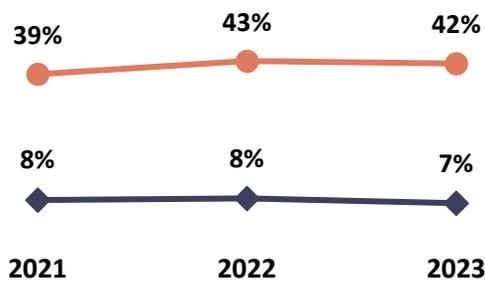
In 2023, 22,384 ELL students took the ELA portion of the ACT Aspire and 22,421 took the math portion. Of those students, 7% of ELL students scored "ready" or "exceeding" in ELA and 14% in math.

Growth scores are shown by type of school and district for ELL students beginning on the next page. In both ELA and math, these growth scores slightly increased from 2021 to 2023, but remained under 80.

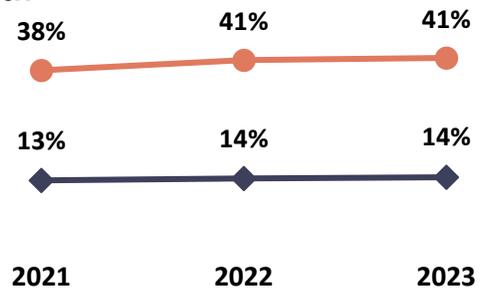
In ELA, the percentage of ELL students scoring "ready" or "exceeding" was higher in charter schools but the growth score was higher in districts. There was no difference between the percentage of ELL students scoring "ready" or "exceeding" in rural and urban schools, although average growth scores were higher in rural schools. The percentage of students scoring "ready" or "exceeding" and average growth scores generally decreased in schools with higher levels of FRPL and minority students, excluding some of the middle levels. There was some performance variability when looking at district size, and performance was higher in BLR cohort schools. Finally, performance also decreased with lower school letter grades.

Pct. Ready or Exceeding – ELL Students

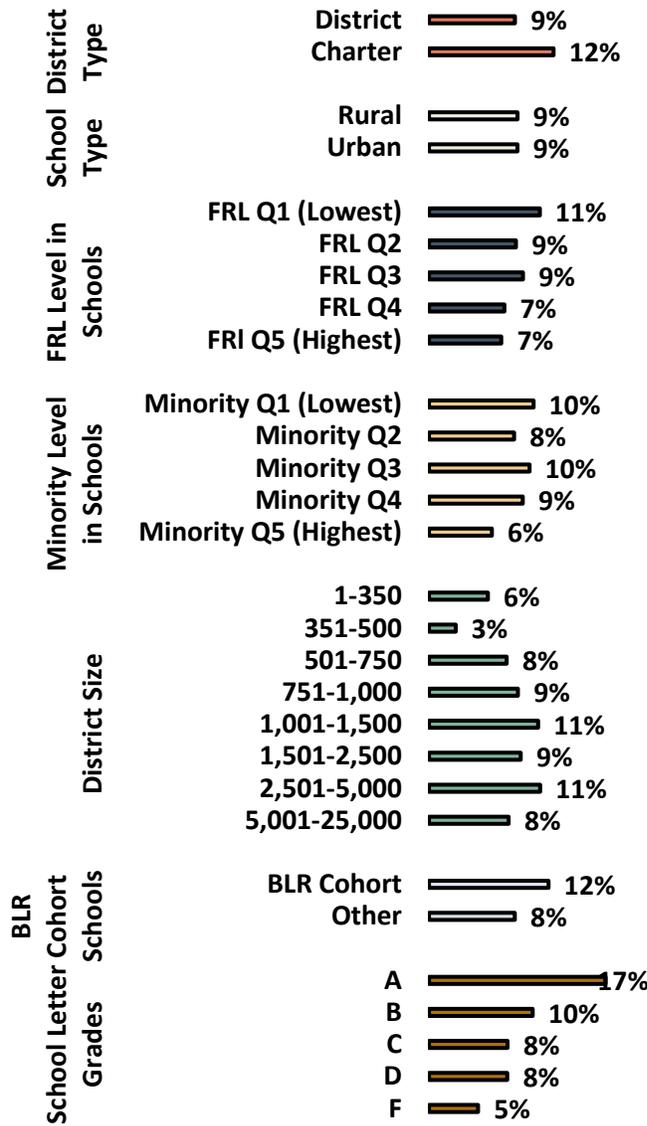
Pct. Ready or Exceeding - ELA



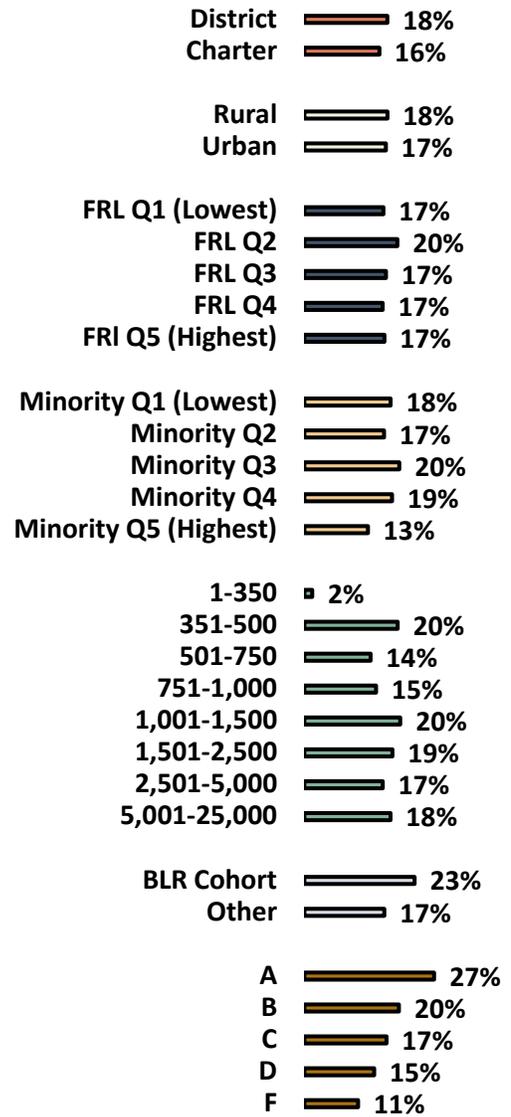
Pct. Ready or Exceeding - Math



Pct. Ready or Exceeding - ELA



Pct. Ready or Exceeding - Math

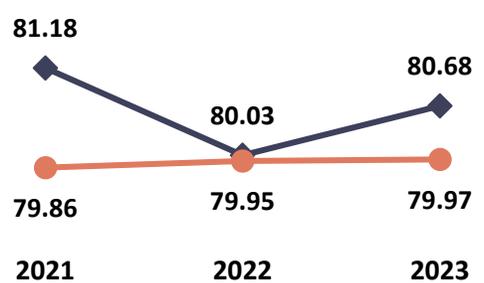


Average Growth Scores – ELL Students

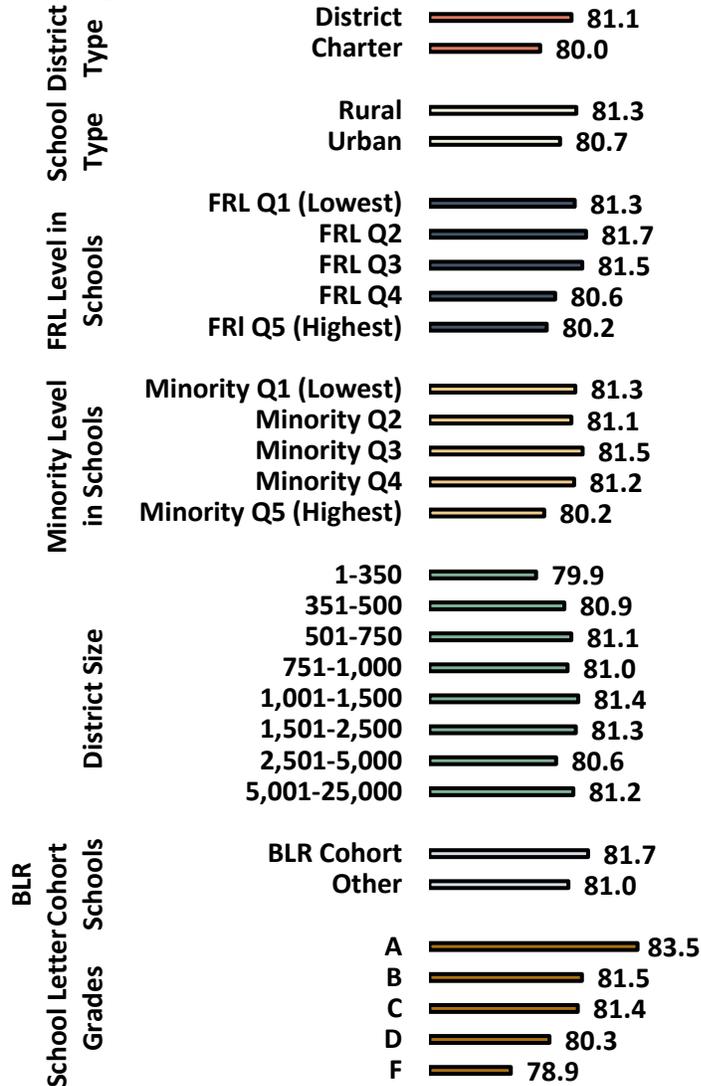
Average ACT Aspire Growth Scores - ELA



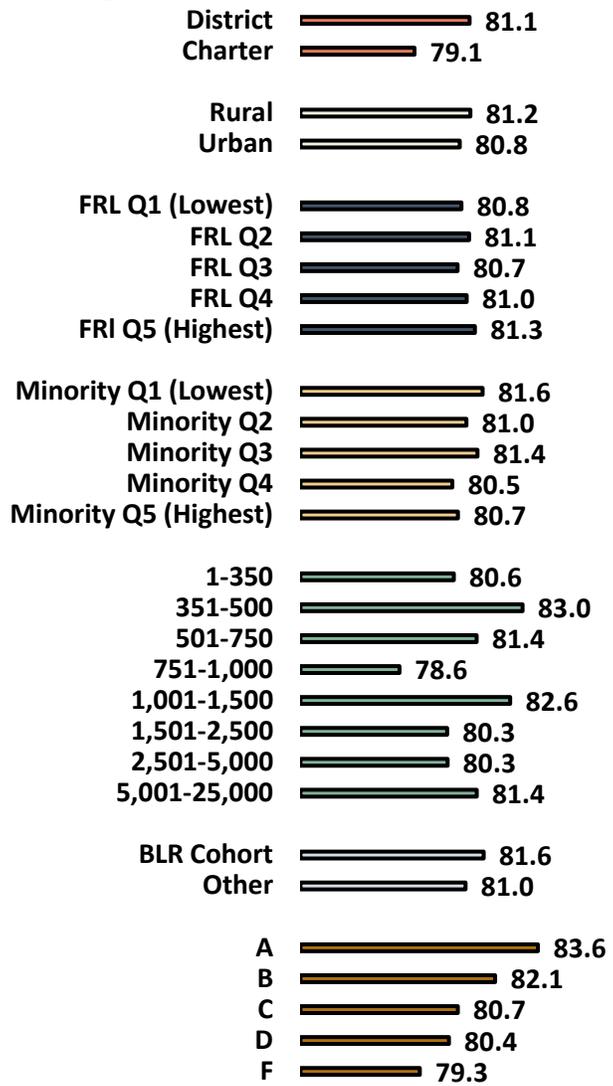
Average ACT Aspire Growth Scores - Math



Average Growth Scores - ELA



Average Growth Scores - Math



Monitored Former ELL Students

Once ELL students exit an ELL program, they must continue to be monitored and receive appropriate academic supports as needed for four years.³⁴ According to ADE, “[s]tudents are eligible to be released from monitoring if they continue to demonstrate English language proficiency and academic growth/success/grade-level proficiency in reading, writing, and other content areas.”³⁵ The language proficiency and assessment committee “will at least annually review Former English Learner performance and progress.”³⁶ A district or school can also determine if a student who no longer demonstrates language and grade-level proficiency needs to be transitioned back into an English language development program as an English learner.

In 2023, approximately 11,700 monitored former ELL students took the ACT Aspire assessment. In ELA, 54.5% of monitored former ELL students scored "ready" or "exceeding" compared to 38.6% of the remaining student population. Similarly, 57.8% of monitored former ELL students scored "ready" or "exceeding" in math compared to 38.4% of the remaining students.

³⁴ ESSA § 3121(a)(5)

³⁵ ADE. Professional Judgement Rubric/Exit Criteria Guidance. (2018).

³⁶ *Id.*

FY23	Pct. Students Scoring Ready or Exceeding		Average Student Growth Scores	
	Monitored Former ELL Students	All Other Students	Monitored Former ELL Students	All Other Students
English Language Arts	54.5%	38.6%	81.3	79.9
Math	57.8%	38.4%	81.8	80.0

Note: Scores from Monitored Former ELL Students include students at all four years of monitoring.

Free or Reduced-Price (FRPL) Lunch Students

In 2023, approximately 189,000 FRPL students took the ACT Aspire. Of these students, 30% scored "ready" or "exceeding" in both ELA and math. This compared to 57% of non-FRPL students in ELA and 56% in math. Both groups saw increases since 2021.

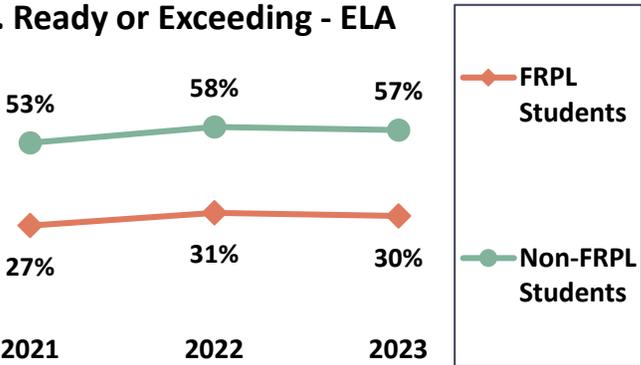
Students Tested		2021	2022	2023
ELA	FRPL Students	179,756	188,380	189,465
	Non-FRPL Students	105,079	101,615	102,101
Math	FRPL Students	180,360	188,867	189,708
	Non-FRPL Students	105,247	101,779	102,177

Student growth scores increased in both subjects for FRPL students since 2021. In 2023, the average growth score for FRPL students in both subjects was just under 80.

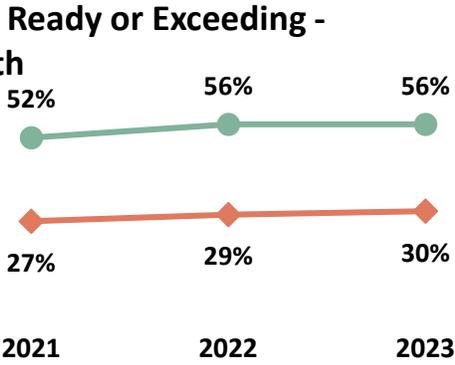
Performance was higher in traditional school districts. The percentage of FRPL students scoring "ready" or "exceeding" was higher in rural schools but the growth scores were more evenly split. Performance was higher in schools with the lowest level of FRPL students and decreased with more FRPL students. The percentage of students scoring "ready" or "exceeding" generally decreased with higher levels of minority students but growth scores were generally the same excluding schools with the fourth highest level of minority students, which was the only group that had a growth score of 80 or higher. Performance was higher in BLR cohort schools and in "A" schools.

Pct. Ready or Exceeding – FRPL Students

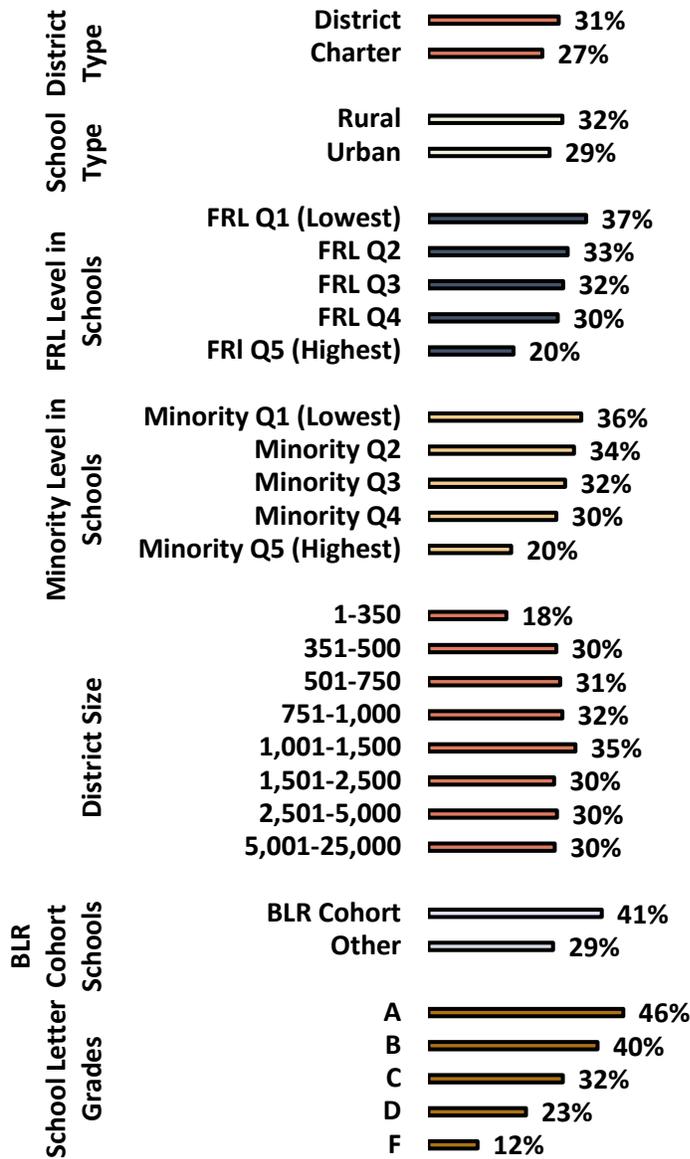
Pct. Ready or Exceeding - ELA



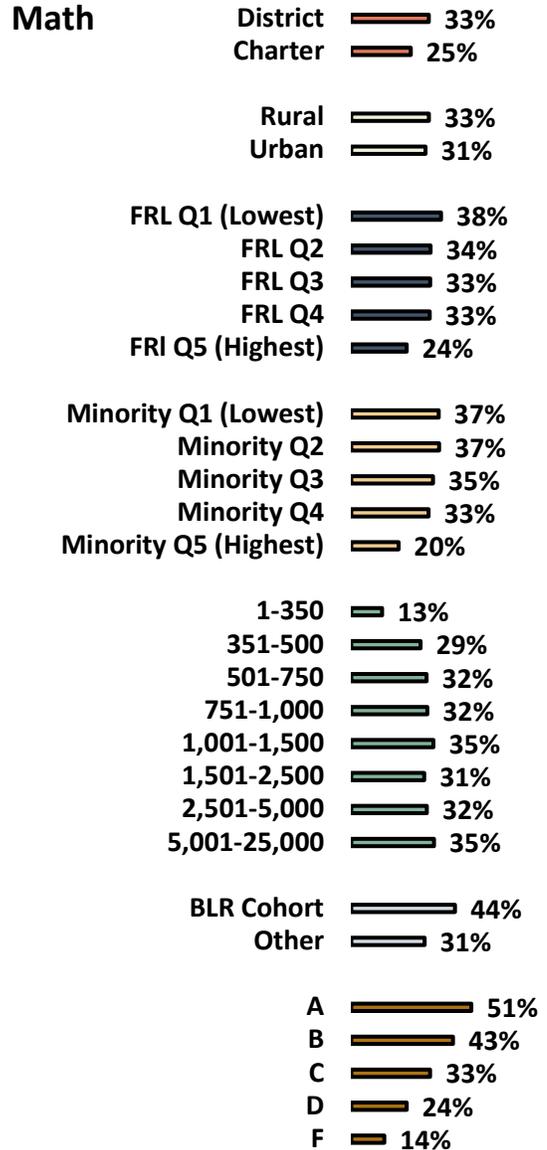
Pct. Ready or Exceeding - Math



Pct. Ready or Exceeding - ELA

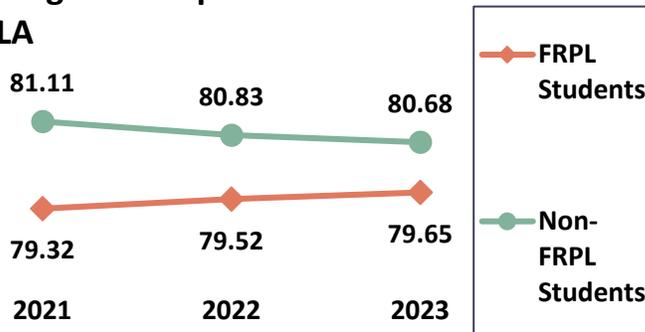


Pct. Ready or Exceeding - Math

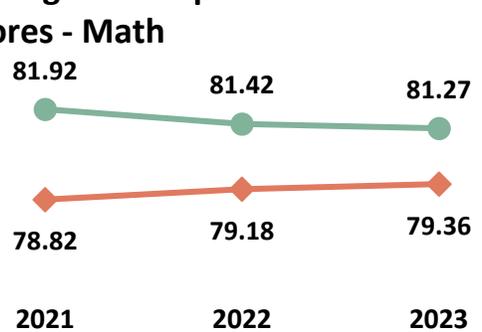


Average Growth Scores – FRPL Students

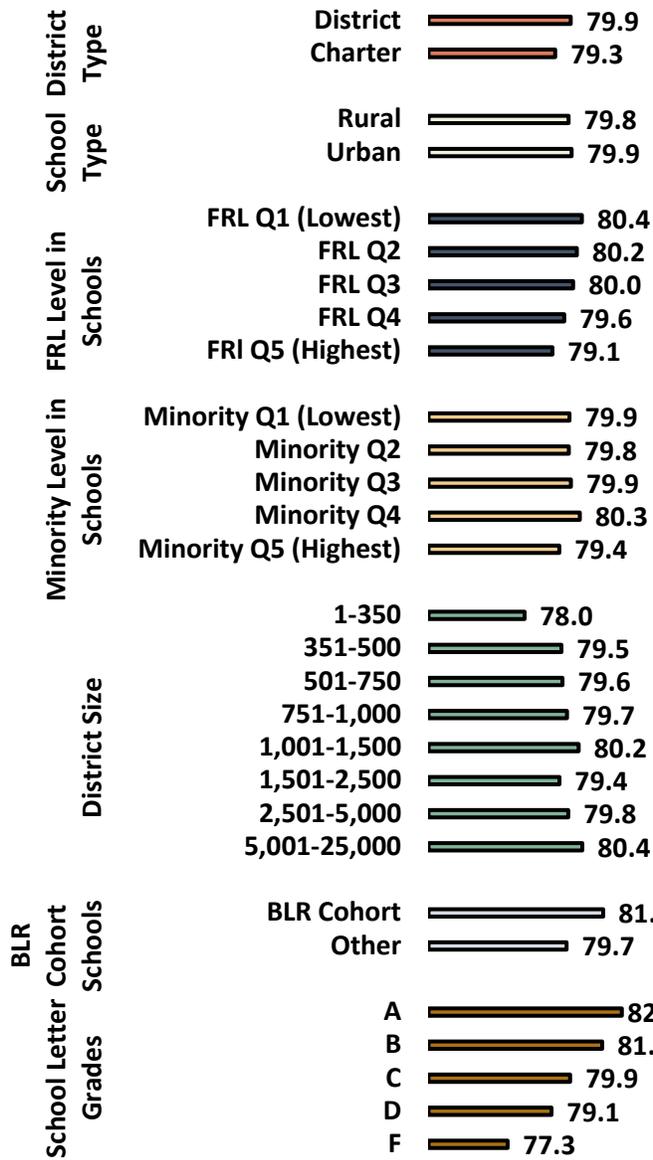
Average ACT Aspire Growth Scores - ELA



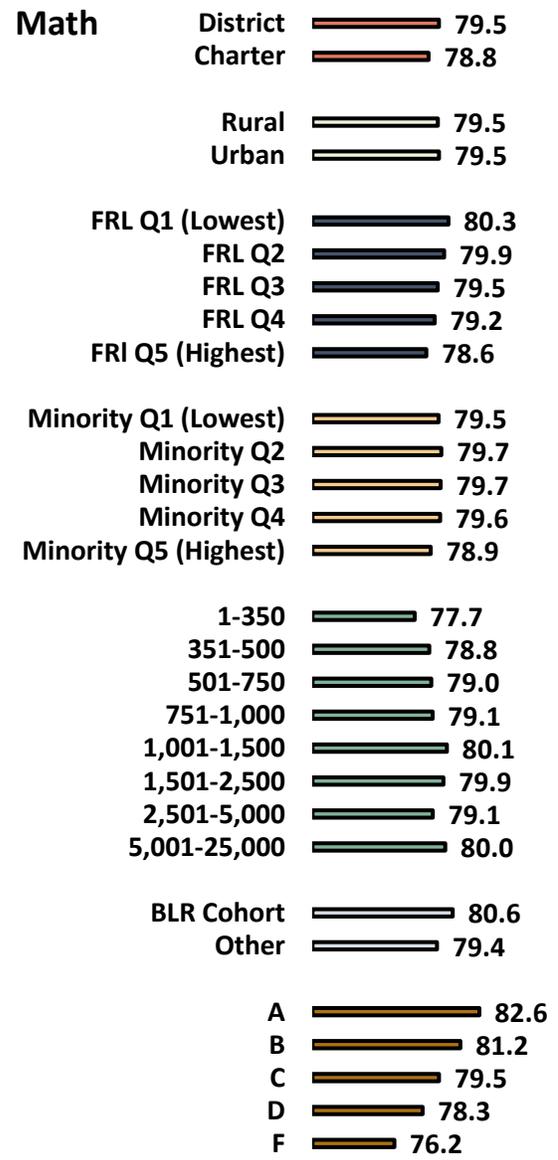
Average ACT Aspire Growth Scores - Math



Average Growth Scores - ELA



Average Growth Scores - Math



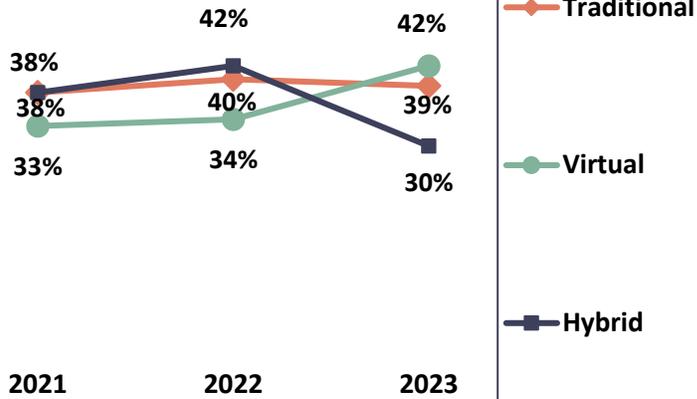
Instructional Methods

Arkansas students can receive instruction in onsite/traditional settings, virtually, or through a hybrid version of the two. The following data shows how students performed on the ACT Aspire based on their form of instruction. In both ELA and math, students in a virtual environment had the lowest percentages scoring "ready" or "exceeding." This also held true with average growth scores.

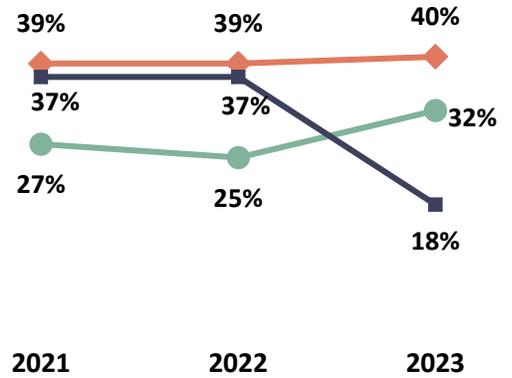
Students Tested		2021	2022	2023
ELA	Onsite/Traditional	192,234	278,420	283,534
	Virtual	55,270	10,130	6,728
	Hybrid	36,822	699	845
	N/A	509	502	459
Math	Onsite/Traditional	192,546	279,006	283,827
	Virtual	55,620	10,176	6,742
	Hybrid	36,915	701	847
	N/A	526	517	469

	Pct. Scoring Ready or Exceeding		Average Student Growth Scores	
	ELA	Math	ELA	Math
Onsite/Traditional	39%	40%	80.1	80.1
Virtual	30%	18%	77.5	75.2
Hybrid	42%	32%	80.0	78.4

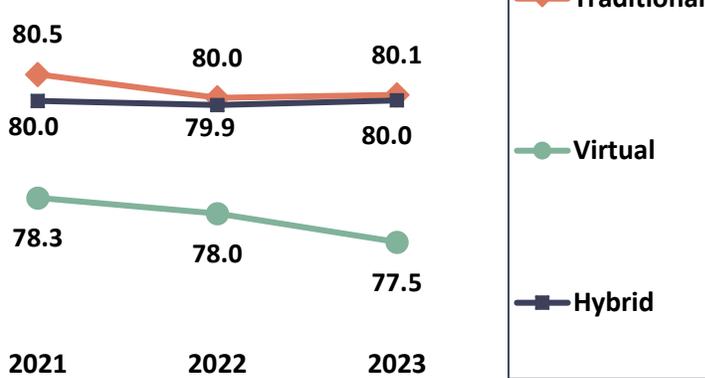
Pct. Ready or Exceeding - ELA



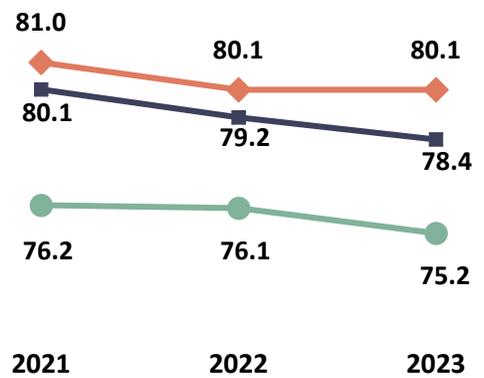
Pct. Ready or Exceeding - Math



Average ACT Aspire Growth Scores - ELA



Average ACT Aspire Growth Scores - Math



Students with Disabilities

Students with disabilities refer to students who are in special education and have an individualized education program (IEP).

Approximately 39,000 students with disabilities took the ACT Aspire in 2023. Among these students, 6% scored "ready" or "exceeding" in ELA and 10% did in math.

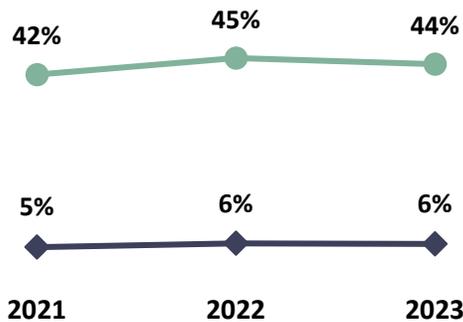
Students Tested		2021	2022	2023
ELA	Students with Disabilities	37,226	39,125	39,840
	Students without Disabilities	247,609	250,626	251,726
Math	Students with Disabilities	37,401	39,268	39,926
	Students without Disabilities	248,206	251,132	251,959

The average growth scores for students in disabilities were 78.3 in ELA and 79.5 in math.

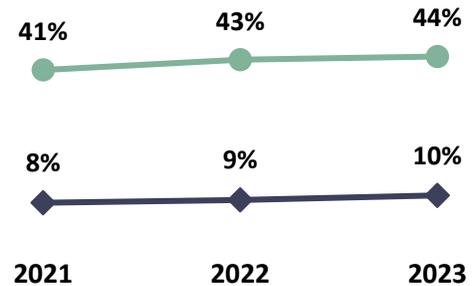
Performance of students with disabilities was slightly higher in charter schools in both subjects and also slightly higher in urban schools. Performance generally decreased with increased levels of FRPL students and varied with levels of minority students. Performance generally increased in larger districts. Performance was higher in BLR cohort schools for both subjects. Finally, performance was highest in "A" schools.

Pct. Ready or Exceeding – Students with Disabilities

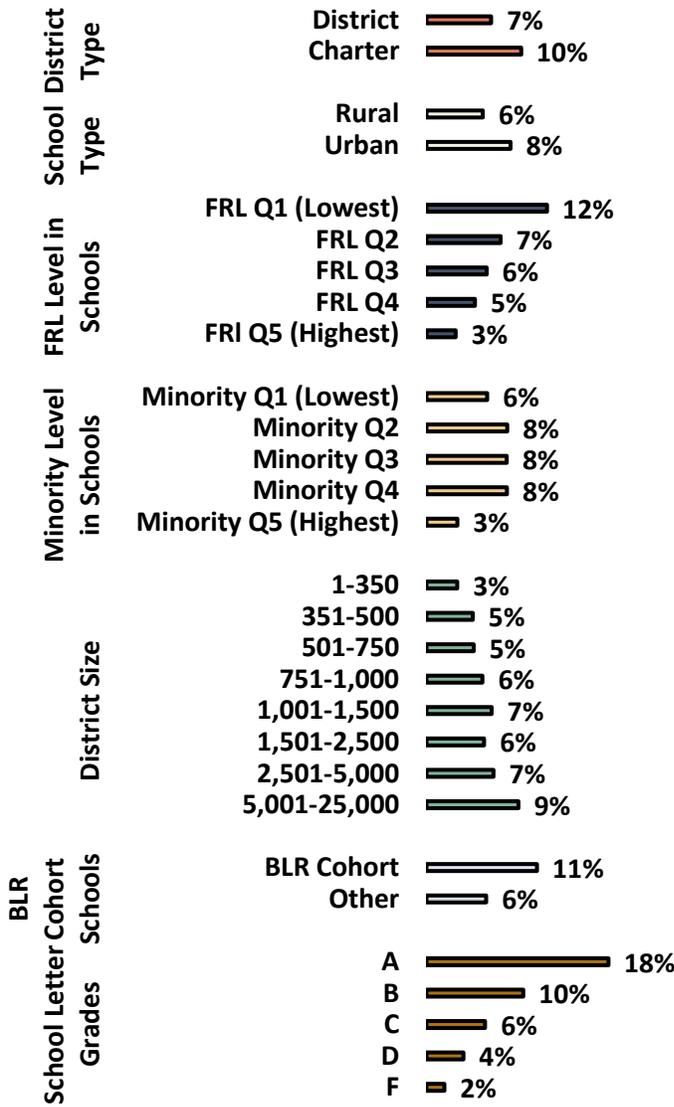
Pct. Ready or Exceeding - ELA



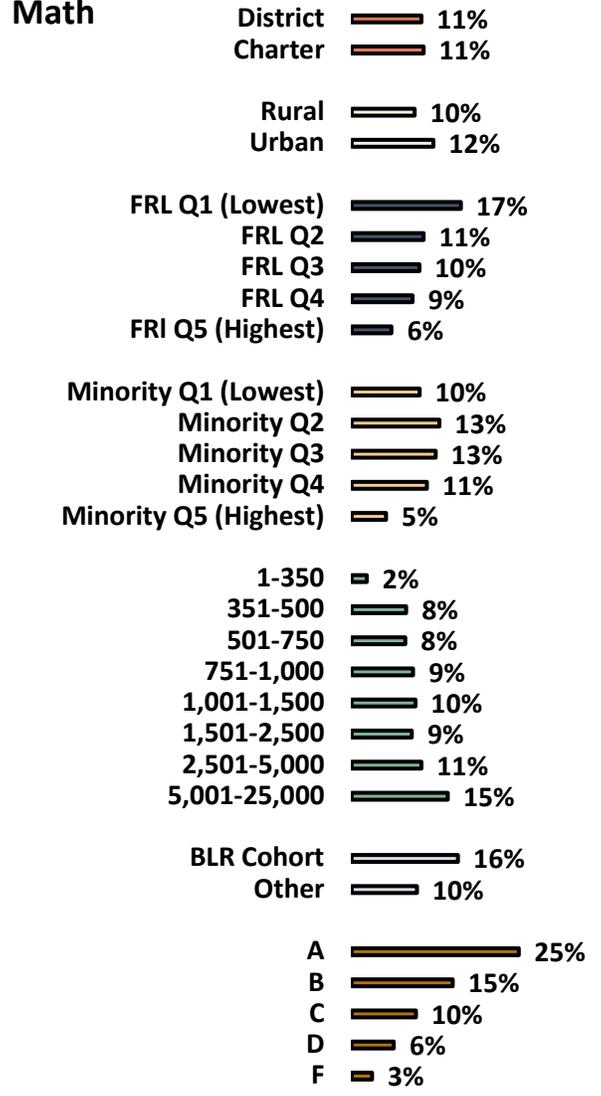
Pct. Ready or Exceeding - Math



Pct. Ready or Exceeding - ELA

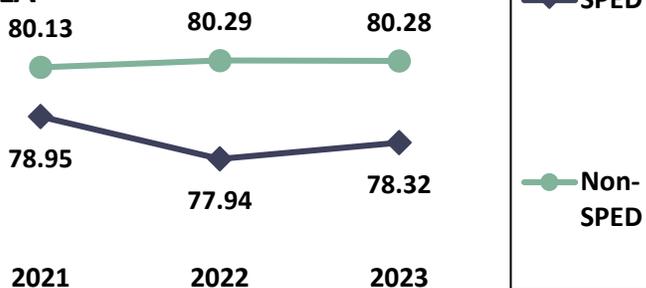


Pct. Ready or Exceeding - Math

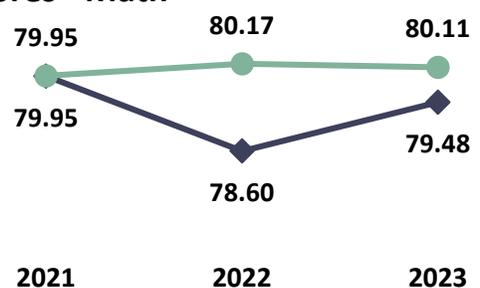


Average Growth Scores – Students with Disabilities

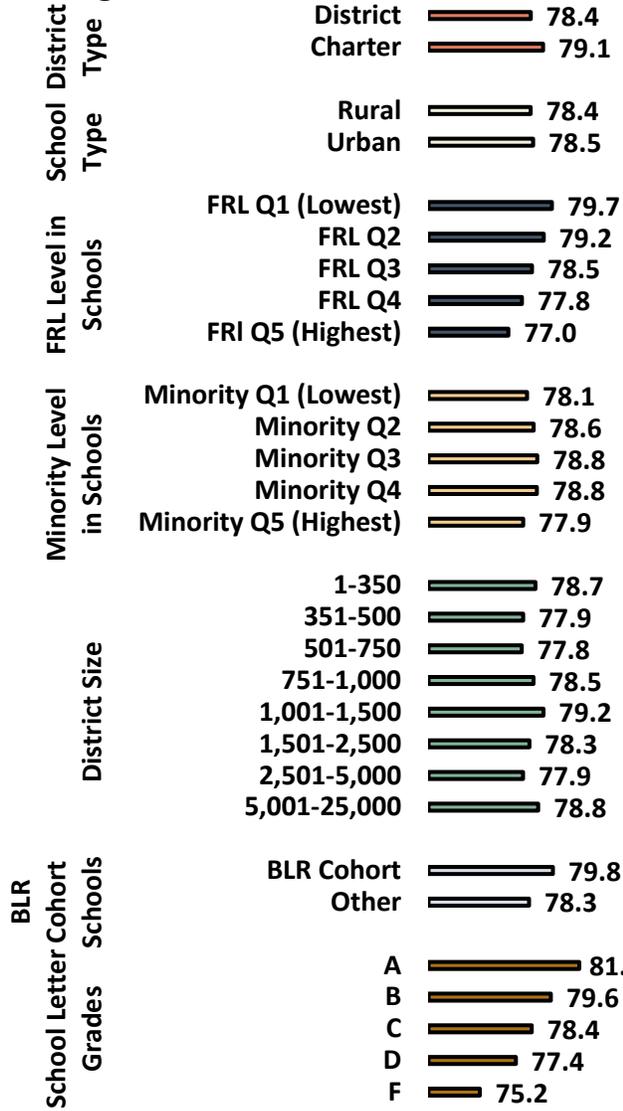
Average ACT Aspire Growth Scores - ELA



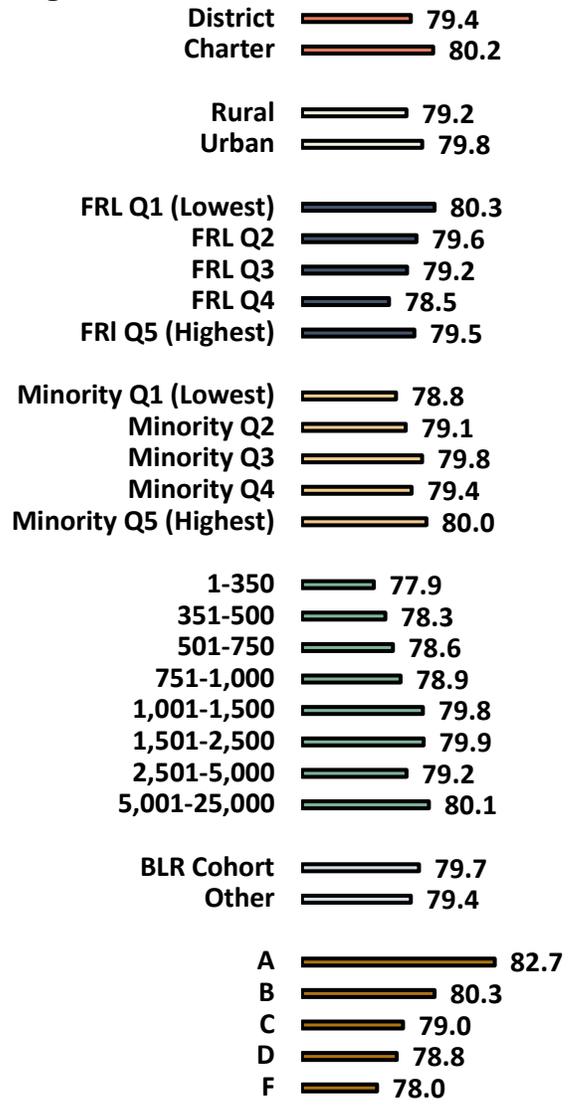
Average ACT Aspire Growth Scores - Math



Average Growth Scores - ELA



Average Growth Scores - Math



Summative Assessments in Other States

In 2019, Education Week, an education news organization, found that 15 states and the District of Columbia (DC) were administering either the Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC) or Smarter Balanced exams as their statewide summative assessment. Three states were mixing PARCC/New Meridian and Smarter Balanced questions with their own questions. The remaining 32 states were using their own tests.³⁷

In 2023, 12 states were members of the Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium.³⁸ PARCC changed its business model in 2015 so states can now either license the full PARCC exam or individual questions. States can then “build a test that’s a mixture of PARCC questions and questions they write themselves. In 2017, the states in the PARCC consortium hired a nonprofit called New Meridian to oversee that collection of 10,000-plus test questions—known as an ‘item bank.’”³⁹

³⁷ <https://www.edweek.org/teaching-learning/what-tests-does-each-state-require/2017/02>

³⁸ <https://smarterbalanced.org/our-vision/partnerships/>

³⁹ <https://smarterbalanced.org/our-vision/partnerships/>

Additional Achievement Measures for Special Populations

English Language Learners

To exit the ELL program, a language proficiency and assessment committee annually reviews the progress of each identified ELL student’s progress in acquiring English. This review includes the committee’s analysis of scores from Arkansas’s summative assessment for ELL students, the ELPA21, and other available student performance data. To exit a student from ELL status, the committee must verify that the student scored proficient on the ELPA21 and has two pieces of evidence of academic content proficiency.

Supporting evidence must align to the English language proficiency standards and Arkansas academic standards. It should “demonstrate success in Literacy through English Language Arts (ELA), science, social studies, and/or math as comparable to non-EL/native English-speaking peers.”⁴⁰

ELPA21

Schools are annually required to assess ELL students to determine whether they have progressed to English language proficiency or need continued services.⁴¹

The ELPA21 summative assessment is used to do this. Developed by a consortium of states, including Arkansas, the test assesses English language proficiency across four domains: listening, speaking, reading, and writing. The ELPA21 assigns each student a proficiency level based on his or her proficiency scores in each domain. While the ELPA21 does not assess prior academic knowledge, it does assess students’ proficiency in the grade-appropriate language of each academic subject. Because of that, the ELPA21 proficiency standards are aligned with Arkansas’s Academic Standards for English language arts, mathematics, and science.

Grade Level	Pct. Proficient	Total Tested
K	7%	4,379
1	15%	4,499
2	26%	3,816
3	24%	3,586
4	18%	2,974
5	12%	2,704
6	15%	2,576
7	8%	2,558
8	6%	2,652
HS	16%	9,865
FY23	9%	39,609
Note: Percentage Proficient indicate students eligible for exit consideration.		

In 2023, 39,609 ELL students were tested with the ELPA21 summative assessment and 9% were considered proficient. The table on the previous page shows how the percent scoring proficient varied by grade level in 2023.

For the English-language proficiency component of the School Index, ADE calculates an individual growth score for each ELL student, using the student’s prior performance on the ELPA21. The student’s actual score is compared against the student’s expected score (based on prior assessment performance) to determine whether the student met, exceeded, or failed to meet his or her expected performance. DESE combines the English-learner progress indicator with each school’s academic growth indicator (as measured by math and English language arts scores of all students on the ACT Aspire) to create a single growth indicator in the total ESSA School Index calculation. The school-level growth score will be calculated with the English learner proficiency progress indicator weighted relative to each school’s ELL population.

For 2023, the statewide average ELP growth score among ELL students was 83.08. A score higher than 80 indicates a higher level of ELP growth than would be expected for that student, and a score less than 80 indicates a score lower than would be expected for that student.

⁴⁰ DESE. English Learner Entrance and Exit Procedures.

⁴¹ U.S. Dept. of Justice and U.S. Dept. of Education. (2015). “Dear Colleague Letter dated January 7, 2015.” Retrieved from: https://dese.ade.arkansas.gov/Files/20201221103913_colleague-el-201501.pdf

Alt ELPA

According to ADE, the Alt ELPA is a “new alternate assessment of English language proficiency designed specifically for K-12 English learners with the most significant cognitive disabilities who are eligible to participate in Arkansas’ alternate assessment (Dynamic Learning Maps), as determined by a student’s IEP team... Its purpose is to provide fair and valid information on the English language proficiency of this historically underserved group of students.”⁴² Similar to the ELPA21, it also measures students’ English proficiency in four language domains: Listening, Reading, Writing, and Speaking. It was developed by the Collaborative for the Alternative Assessment of English Language Proficiency (CAAELP) project “in collaboration with state and national partners.”⁴³ According to the CAAELP, “the Alt ELPA will be the first standards-based ELP assessment designed specifically for this deserving group of students.”⁴⁴

Grade Level	Pct. Proficient	Total Tested
K	5%	77
1	4%	57
2	4%	57
3	4%	45
4	5%	40
5	6%	48
6	7%	36
7	21%	24
8	20%	35
9	15%	27
10	3%	32
11	23%	26
12	6%	32
FY23	12.7%	536

Note: Percentage Proficient indicate ELL students eligible for exit consideration.

ELL Assessment in Other States

Arkansas is part of the ELPA21 consortium with six other states: Iowa, Louisiana, Nebraska, Ohio, Oregon, and West Virginia.⁴⁵ Another seven states use their own assessment to test English-language proficiency. The remaining 37 states and the District of Columbia are part of the WIDA consortium that has multiple test options. The WIDA consortium also includes other U.S. territories and federal agencies. The WIDA consortium is a “member-based organization that is dedicated to the research, design and implementation of a high-quality, standards-based system for K-12 English learners.”⁴⁶ The ALT ELPA was first administered in 2023. There are nine other states administering this assessment: Arizona, Connecticut, Iowa, Louisiana, Nebraska, New York, Ohio, Oregon, and West Virginia. The WIDA consortium assessments also include alternate English language proficiency assessments.

Students with Disabilities

Students with disabilities are required to be assessed either through the state assessment (ACT Aspire) or through an alternate assessment. Students’ IEP teams must decide whether each student with disabilities will take the regular state assessment, the assessment with accommodations, or, for a very small percentage of students with significant cognitive disabilities, an alternate assessment (Dynamic Learning Maps).

Dynamic Learning Maps (DLM)

The total number of students taking each subject tested using the alternate assessment (math, ELA, or science) cannot exceed 1% of the total number of students in the state being assessed in that subject.⁴⁷ If states expect to exceed that cap, they must request a waiver through the U.S. Department of Education (DOE). Arkansas requested and received that waiver from 2017-18 through 2021-22.

⁴² <https://dese.ade.arkansas.gov/Offices/public-school-accountability/assessment/alt-elpa>

⁴³ <https://altelpea.org/caaelp-project/>

⁴⁴ <https://altelpea.org/caaelp-project/>

⁴⁵ <https://www.elpa21.org/resources/>

⁴⁶ <https://wida.wisc.edu/>

⁴⁷ <https://dese.ade.arkansas.gov/Offices/special-education/curriculum-assessment/assessment>

In 2023, approximately 2,400 students with disabilities were tested on the Dynamic Learning Maps (DLM) assessment. Of those students, 13% scored at target or advanced in math and 24% scored at target or advanced in ELA. These are both increases since 2021.

	Math		English Language Arts (ELA)	
	Pct. Students at Target or Advanced	Total Students Tested	Pct. Students at Target or Advanced	Total Students Tested
2021	11.7%	2,428	23.8%	2,451
2022	12.2%	2,474	23.9%	2,475
2023	13.3%	2,590	25.7%	2,598

Alternate Assessments in Other States

Nineteen other states and Washington, D.C., use the DLM as their alternate assessment for students with significant cognitive disabilities. Five states use the multi-state alternate assessment, and the remaining 25 states use their own form of alternate assessment.

High School Graduation Rates

The following graduation rates for Arkansas high school students are considered a four-year adjusted cohort graduation rate (ACGR). “Under the ESEA [Elementary and Secondary Education Act], each state and LEA must calculate and report on its annual report card a four-year adjusted graduation rate (ACGR), disaggregated subgroups.”⁴⁹ The guidance defines this rate as “the number of students who graduate from high school in four years with a regular high school diploma, plus all students with the most significant cognitive disabilities who are assessed using an alternate assessment aligned with alternate academic achievement standards...and who graduate with a State-defined alternative diploma, divided by the number of students who form the adjusted cohort for the graduating class. The cohort is based on the number of students who enter grade 9 for the first time adjusted by adding into the cohort any student who transfers in later during grade 9 or during the next three years and subtracting any student from the cohort who transfers out, emigrates to another country, transfers to a prison or juvenile facility, or dies during that same period.”⁵⁰ Arkansas graduation rates for the 2022 school year are the most recent data available for this report.

Four-Year Graduation Rates	2021	2022	2023
All Students	88.5%	88.2%	89.0%
Economically Disadvantaged Students	85.8%	85.4%	86.5%
Students with Disabilities	83.1%	83.0%	85.1%
Students with Limited English Proficiency	84.1%	82.1%	83.2%
Male Students	85.8%	86.4%	86.9%
Female Students	91.3%	90.2%	91.1%
African American Students	84.5%	84.7%	85.2%
Asian Students	93.7%	95.1%	96.2%
Caucasian Students	90.1%	89.9%	90.4%
Hawaiian/ Pacific Islander Students	77.8%	74.2%	72.7%
Hispanic Students	87.6%	86.8%	88.5%
Native American Students	85.4%	83.9%	87.5%
Students of Two or More Races	86.2%	85.9%	87.9%

Data Source: DESE⁴⁸

In 2023, Arkansas had a four-year graduation rate of 89.0%, an increase from 88.5% in 2021. Graduation rates averaged 86.9% for male students and 91.1% for female students. Based on race and ethnicity, graduation rates ranged from 72.7% among Hawaiian/Pacific Islander students to 96.2% among Asian students. Students with limited English proficiency had a graduation rate of 83.2%. The graduation rate was 85.1% for students with disabilities and 86.5% for economically disadvantaged students.

The following map⁵¹ shows four-year graduation rates by traditional school districts for the 2023 school year for traditional school districts. Among open-enrollment public charter schools, the average four-year graduation rate varied from 41% to 100%.

⁴⁸ DESE. “Graduation Rate/Graduation Rate Files.” Retrieved from:

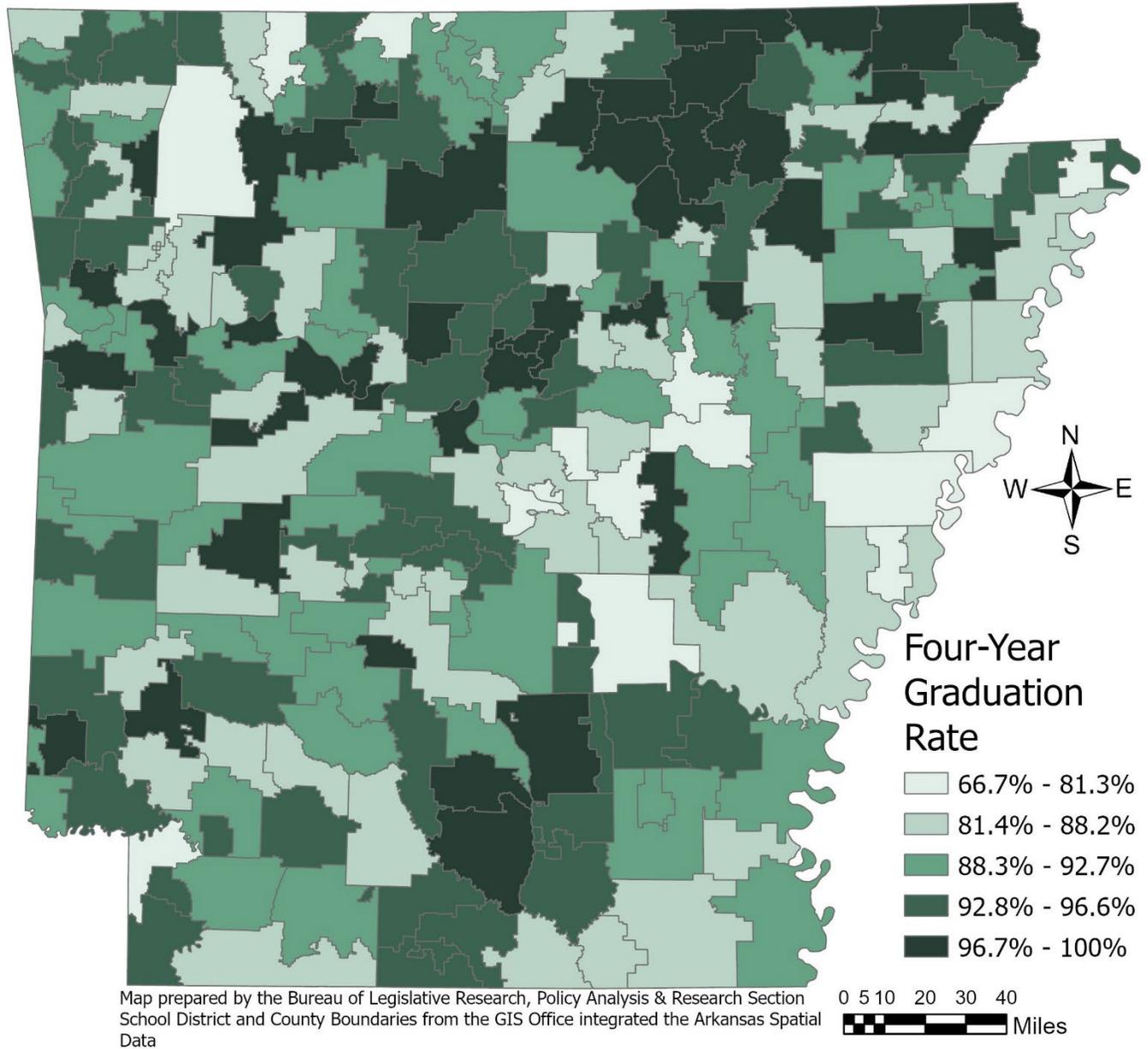
<https://adesandbox.arkansas.gov/project?v=fMTc0ZjVhNzJiMDY0MDkzMGJjOWQzN2ZmNGRkYzkzMTI>

⁴⁹ U.S. Department of Education (DOE). (January 2017). “Every Student Succeed Act High School Graduation Rate Non-Regulatory Guidance.” (p. 6). Retrieved from: [https://dese.ade.arkansas.gov/Files/20201215103932_Grad_Rate_Guidance_4_11_18%20\(1\).pdf](https://dese.ade.arkansas.gov/Files/20201215103932_Grad_Rate_Guidance_4_11_18%20(1).pdf)

⁵⁰ U.S. Department of Education (DOE). (January 2017). “Every Student Succeed Act High School Graduation Rate Non-Regulatory Guidance.” (p. 8). Retrieved from: [https://dese.ade.arkansas.gov/Files/20201215103932_Grad_Rate_Guidance_4_11_18%20\(1\).pdf](https://dese.ade.arkansas.gov/Files/20201215103932_Grad_Rate_Guidance_4_11_18%20(1).pdf)

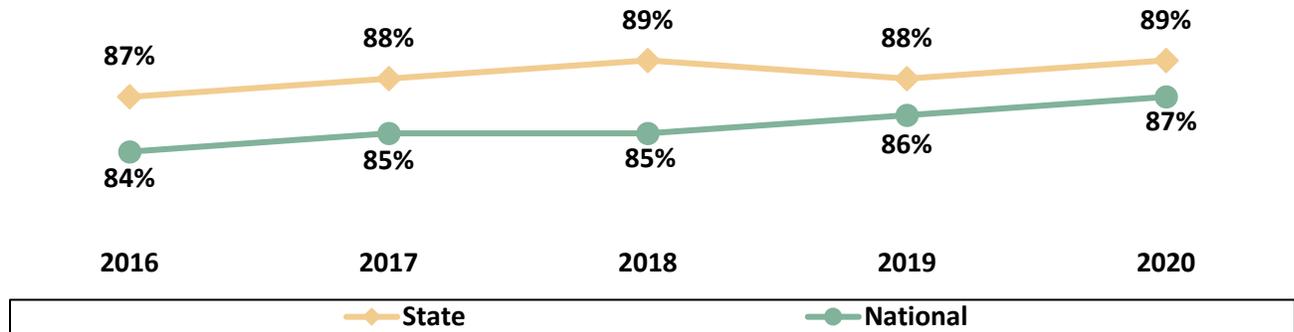
⁵¹ 2023 four-year graduation rates come from DESE through MySchoolInfo.

Four-Year Graduation Rates by School District – 2023

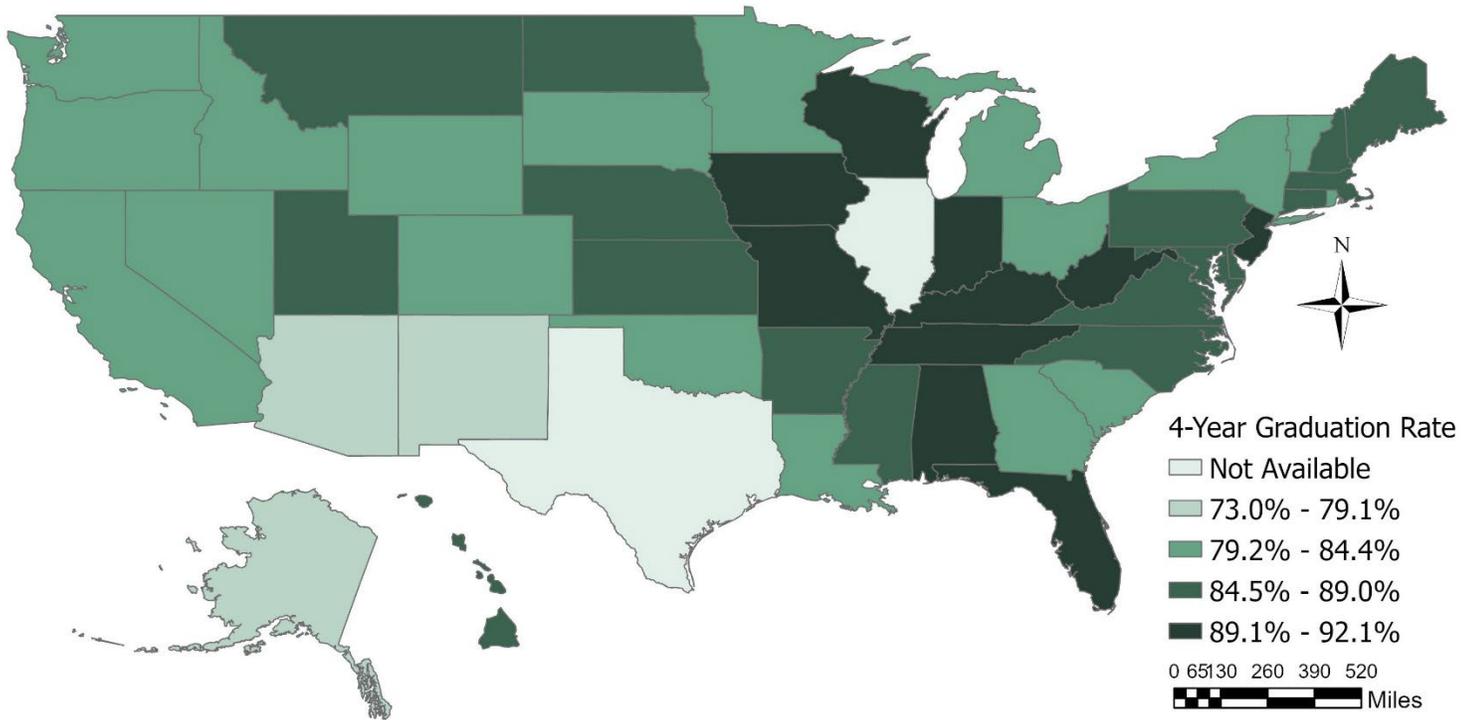


The National Center for Education Statistics (NCES)⁵² collects graduation rates by state. The most recent data is from 2020. Arkansas had a graduation rate of 87% compared to 89% at the national level. Rates ranged from 73% in the District of Columbia to 92% in West Virginia, as seen in the following map.

Four-Year Graduation Rates



Four-Year Graduation Rates by State – 2020



⁵² https://nces.ed.gov/programs/digest/d21/tables/dt21_219.46.asp

2023 Legislation

ACT 643 (SB432) permits a public school that operates primarily as a virtual school to administer a statewide student assessment to a student enrolled in the public school in a virtual setting that best meets the educational needs of the student and requires the public school to meet certain requirements in order to administer a statewide student assessment in a virtual setting.

ACT 654 (SB470) permits a career readiness assessment administered to a student in grades ten through twelve (10-12) to include without limitation the ACT WorkKeys National Career Readiness Certificate and requires that a Platinum, Gold, Silver, or Bronze credential through the ACT WorkKeys be used by an institution of higher education as transcribable credit towards the attainment of a postsecondary technical degree.