



Research Report

**Review of School Improvement Consulting
Expenditures and Results**

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INTRODUCTION

In 2002, then-President George W. Bush signed the reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, known as No Child Left Behind. The legislation established the school accountability system setting student achievement goals and consequences for schools that fail to meet them. Arkansas schools that did not meet established goals were placed on a school improvement list for the first time in 2002.

As the No Child Left Behind accountability system was being developed, several consulting businesses were created with the idea of selling education expertise to failing schools. Some of the first companies, such as America's Choice and JBHM (headquartered in Washington D.C. and Jackson, Mississippi, respectively), offered full-service school reform models, which included remediation curriculum, professional development, test score analysis and consultants who visit the school one or two days a week to provide teacher coaching. The school consulting business also attracted enterprising educators who started their own companies, recruited other public school employees and retired educators, and began offering their expertise to struggling schools. These companies charge anywhere from \$45,000 or \$50,000 per year for school improvement services to \$300,000 per school.

Fostering these businesses was new federal money distributed to the states to pay for turnaround efforts through two sections of the No Child Left Behind Act: Title I, Sections 1003(a) and 1003(g). Some Arkansas districts received this funding in the form of grants distributed by the state Department of Education (ADE), and some chose to use the money to hire school improvement consultants. Other districts hired consultants using other funding sources, such as state National School Lunch Act (NSLA) funding.

In 2006, ADE used school improvement funding (as provided by Section 1003(a)) to contract with America's Choice. ADE then required that schools in the most advanced stages of school improvement receive state-purchased services from America's Choice.

The school improvement providers' role was cemented in 2009 when the state included the hiring of a consultant among its options for struggling schools. ADE's Smart Accountability plan requires some schools in Year 4 or 5 of school improvement to replace the principal of the school or hire a school improvement specialist. Additionally the plan gives the state Education Commissioner the authority to assign a school improvement director to any school in Year 6 or beyond.

Also that year Congress passed the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009, which greatly increased the 1003(g) federal funding. That money was channeled to the states through a grant program that required states to identify their worst schools, known as "persistently lowest achieving." Those schools then competed for grants of up to \$2 million a year. In return schools had to agree to choose one of four drastic turnaround strategies: 1.) convert to a charter school, 2.) close the school, 3.) terminate at least half of the staff or 4.) implement a strategy called "Transformation." The Transformation model, selected by every Arkansas school that applied for the first round of the ARRA funding, required schools to replace the principal (unless already recently replaced) and make other broad changes, such as rewarding staff who increase student achievement and institute comprehensive instructional reform.

The grant program did not require grantees to work with a school improvement provider, but guidance from the U.S. Department of Education said grantee districts must "Ensure that the school receives ongoing, intensive technical assistance and related support from the LEA [local education agency], the SEA [state education agency], or a *designated external lead partner organization (such as a school turnaround organization or an EMO [education management organization])*" (emphasis added). The grant money and guidance further encouraged districts to use school improvement providers and enhanced their credibility.

At the same time the ARRA-funded grants were being awarded in 2010, ADE decided not to renew its contract with America's Choice. Instead, ADE began distributing the 1003(a) funding directly to districts. That allowed districts to choose their own school improvement provider and gave them the money to do it.

In the previous five years, nearly 300 schools have received some type of service from a school improvement provider, with a total price tag across the state of nearly \$70 million. In 2010-11 alone, school districts spent nearly \$20 million on school improvement consulting services. With access to new and greatly enhanced funding and intense pressure to pull up test scores, districts find themselves facing an aggressive school improvement consulting industry vying for their business. Yet with scant objective analysis comparing the results of these companies in Arkansas, school districts must choose their provider based on little more than anecdotal evidence and marketing pitches.

This report describes the money being spent on school improvement providers and identifies the largest providers in the state. It also provides objective analysis on the results those providers are achieving in their client schools. Finally, the report examines the first-year gains made by schools that received ARRA-funded school improvement grants to see whether a significant infusion of funding makes a notable difference in student achievement.

SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT FUNDING

Districts can use a variety of types of funding to hire school improvement providers, including state NSLA funding and foundation funding. Additionally, since 2002, federal funding has been available to help districts pay for this type of service and other school improvement strategies. Section 1003 of Title I of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act provides two types of school improvement grants available to states: 1003(a) funding and 1003(g) funding. (A copy of Section 1003 is available in Appendix A.)

1003(A) SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT FUNDING

Section 1003(a) allows states to keep 4% of the Title I funding allocated to individual schools. States can either 1.) give that funding to school districts to pay for corrective action or restructuring in schools that are in school improvement or 2.) use the money to provide services to the school districts themselves. Between 2002 and 2006, the Arkansas Department of Education provided that funding to schools in school improvement Year 3 or beyond. The schools were required to apply for the funding, but they were allowed to use the money however they wanted. Some schools chose to offer extended day programs, for example, while others opted to fund co-teaching programs.

During those initial years, ADE officials realized that there was no way to determine how well the schools were implementing their plans or whether the money was having any impact. ADE decided to pool the money and contract with one external provider. For four years (FY2007 through FY2010), ADE contracted with America's Choice to help struggling schools. The state paid America's Choice roughly \$6 million a year to work with 30 to 37 schools annually.

The 2009-10 school year was the last year in which the state maintained a contract with America's Choice. The state chose not to renew the contract, and instead distributed the funding directly to districts, allowing them to choose their own provider or use the money in another way. ADE also asked that school improvement providers apply to be included on a state list of "external providers." Beginning with the 2010-11 school year, districts applied for 1003(a) funding, which they could use to hire their own school improvement provider or to fund other types of activities to improve student achievement. In the 2010-11 fiscal year, ADE distributed \$3.9 million to 73 school districts.

1003(G) SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT GRANTS

Title 1, Section 1003(g) of the No Child Left Behind Act created the School Improvement Grant (SIG) program. It provides funding states can use to provide subgrants to school districts. The funding was intended to help districts comply with the requirements of being in school improvement, corrective action or restructuring. According to the Education Department, Arkansas received 1003(g) funding beginning in FY2008 in the following amounts:

	1003(g) SIG Grants to Arkansas
FY08	\$1,190,751
FY09	\$5,287,815
*FY10	\$6,188,796
ARRA	\$34,007,841

*Not released to state until FY11

The first year the 1003(g) funds were available (FY2008), districts were asked to apply for the grant funding for any of their Title I schools in school improvement Year 3 or beyond that were also in corrective action. The funding could be used for a wide range of activities including paying for technical assistance (an external provider), paying for professional development, hiring new staff, supporting tutoring programs or establishing small learning communities.

The second year, when the state received more than \$5 million in 1003(g) funding, ADE expanded the eligibility of schools that could apply for funding to schools in earlier stages of school improvement. ADE did not change the criteria describing how schools could use the funding.

The state did not receive its scheduled 1003(g) grant funding in 2009-10 due to some delays and changes being implemented by the U.S. Department of Education. However, the state's FY10 allotment of more than \$6 million was combined with more than \$34 million in ARRA funding to give the state more than \$40 million in FY11.

SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT PROVIDERS

A school improvement provider, also called an external provider, is a relatively new and evolving concept. Many of the school improvement companies started out providing professional development and gradually began to offer more comprehensive services as more federal school improvement funding has become available. Until 2009-10, ADE maintained no official definition of "external providers," nor any list of the external providers working in Arkansas schools. However, federal monitors required ADE to develop an approval process to help districts hire quality providers.

Today ADE has an approval process for three types of external providers:

- School improvement directors
- School improvement specialists
- School turnaround (individuals or organizations)

ADE's Arkansas Smart Accountability Resource Guide provides definitions of school improvement directors and specialists, but does not offer a definition of a school turnaround provider. School improvement directors and specialists are defined as "an individual holding a valid Arkansas teacher's license meeting the criteria for a highly qualified teacher who will work directly with school leadership and staff in School Improvement." The main difference between the two is that a school improvement *director* is selected by the state Education Commissioner and answers directly to him, while a school improvement specialist answers to the school principal or superintendent. Both school improvement directors and specialists are paid for with

school district money. Even though ADE has established an approval process, schools may hire whomever they wish, regardless of whether they are approved or not.

Of the 41 consultants and companies that have applied for approval, five have been rejected. Of the 36 approved external providers:

- Most (24) are listed as being approved in all three categories: school turnaround providers, school improvement directors and school improvement specialists.
- Two are listed as approved in two categories.
- Four are listed as school turnaround providers only.
- One is listed as being a school improvement director only.
- Five are approved school improvement specialists only.

For this review, we attempted to contact all organizations on ADE's list of approved external providers and identify which, if any, have previously provided school improvement services in Arkansas. We were interested in only those organizations that have provided a comprehensive set of turnaround services, including some combination of professional development, coaching, diagnostic analysis of schools' weaknesses, special curriculum and regular visits by consultants.

From those companies that said they have provided school improvement services in Arkansas schools, we requested a list of schools with which they have contracted, a description of the services provided and the amount of money charged for those services. The companies that provided information were:

1. America's Choice, Washington D.C.
2. Arkansas Leadership Academy's School Support Program (ALA-SS), Fayetteville, AR
3. Cap for Success, Arkadelphia, AR
4. Elbow 2 Elbow (E2E), Little Rock, AR
5. Educators Consulting Services (ECS), Hot Springs, AR
6. Evans Newton, Scottsdale, AZ
7. JBHM, Jackson, MS
8. JP Associates, Valley Stream, NY
9. Learning Forward, Oxford, OH
10. Marilyn Carpenter, Hamburg, AR
11. Mindset, North Little Rock, AR
12. Renaissance Learning, Wisconsin Rapids, WI
13. SREB, Atlanta, GA

Many providers on ADE's list said they have not yet provided school improvement services in Arkansas. The following external providers either have not provided services in Arkansas schools or said they have not provided comprehensive school improvement services:

1. Access Educational Management Corporation, Little Rock, AR
2. Arkansas Public School Resource Center, Little Rock, AR
3. Dr. Alice Barnes Rose, Forrest City, AR
4. Dr. Sheketa McKisick, Forrest City, AR
5. ERJ & Associates, Magnolia, AR
6. Houghton Mifflin Harcourt Alliance for School Turnaround, Boston, MA
7. Istation, Richardson, TX
8. JLucas Consulting, Crossett, AR
9. Johns Hopkins University, Baltimore, MD
10. Ladell Looper, Hot Springs, AR
11. Mosiaca Turnaround Partners, Atlanta, GA
12. Patricia Chandler, Tallulah, LA
13. Pearson Learning Teams, Santa Monica, CA
14. Scholars Group, Austin, TX

External providers who did not respond to the request for information or did not provide complete updated information include:

1. Academic School Turnaround, Little Rock, AR
2. Elnor Joyce Makia, The Education Enhancement Group, Magnolia, AR
3. International Center for Leadership in Education, Rexford, NY
4. Literacy First, Enid, OK

TYPICAL CHARGES

America's Choice

The Arkansas Department of Education contracted with America's Choice for four years (FY2007 through FY2010). Under the contract the state paid America's Choice roughly \$6 million a year to work with 30 to 37 schools in advanced stages of school improvement. We asked America's Choice to provide the per-school charge for its work under the state contract (e.g., \$100,000 to work with School A and \$175,000 to work with School B), but America's Choice could not provide the information, citing time and staffing constraints. The following figures show the average amount per school the state paid the company:

- 2006-07: \$190,357 (31 schools)
- 2007-08: \$208,084 (30 schools)
- 2008-09: \$167,655 (37 schools)
- 2009-10: \$178,358 (35 schools)

The state chose not to renew the contract for the 2010-11 school year, and instead distributed funding directly to districts, allowing them to choose their own provider or use the money in another way. After the state contract ended, America's Choice began charging schools \$50,000 or \$100,000, typically, for school improvement services.

Arkansas Leadership Academy's School Support Program

The Arkansas Leadership Academy receives \$300,000 annually from the state to support its School Support Program. Using this funding, the program started in 2006-07 with four schools, or \$75,000 each. The Leadership Academy continued working with these four schools in 2008 and three in 2009 (one school closed). In 2010, the Arkansas Leadership Academy expanded the number of schools it served and began charging districts about \$50,000 for their services, to supplement the \$300,000 it was receiving from the state. The average per-school expenditures on the School Support Program were:

- 2006-07: \$75,000
- 2007-08: \$75,000
- 2008-09: \$100,000
- 2009-10: \$60,000 to \$70,000
- 2010-11: \$60,000 to \$65,000

Cap for Success

\$1,500 per day for 14 to 17 days per semester (\$42,000 to \$51,000 per year)

Elbow 2 Elbow

Annual per-school charges ranged from less than \$10,000 for professional development to \$235,000.

Educators Consulting Services

Annual per-school charges ranged from about \$20,000 to \$99,000.

Evans Newton

Evans Newton worked only with the Little Rock School District, and its per-school charges varied each year.

- 2007-08: 6 schools, \$85,000 each
- 2008-09: 44 schools, \$28,000 each
- 2009-10: 2 schools, 122,300 each
- 2010-11: 11 schools, about \$117,000 each and 17 schools about \$15,000 each

JBHM

For school improvement services, JBHM typically charges \$50,000 or \$100,000. Schools frequently purchase additional services such as the company's Struggling Learners Support, through which JBHM offers a consultant to help schools improve the test scores of students who previously tested just under the proficiency level. JBHM typically charges \$45,000 for this service. JBHM also provides a separate Teacher Coaching service, and charges schools between \$3,000 and \$65,000 for this service.

JP Associates

For its on-site coaching service, JP Associates charged between \$10,000 and \$46,000 per school in 2010-11.

Learning Forward

Learning Forward had no Arkansas contracts before 2010-11. That year it had two contracts: one for \$99,000 for school improvement consulting services for one school and another for \$14,000 for district training.

Marilyn Carpenter

Dr. Carpenter typically charges \$700 per day, and consulting contracts range from a week to 90 days.

Renaissance Learning

Renaissance Learning, a company known for its Accelerated Reader program, joined forces with JBHM to provide a service called SetPoint. SetPoint was offered to schools that received ARRA-funded school improvement grants in 2010-11. For its share of the services, Renaissance Learning charged between \$100,000 and nearly \$500,000. Some of the company's contract costs pay for curriculum, computers and other technology to support its individualized reading/math enrichment programs.

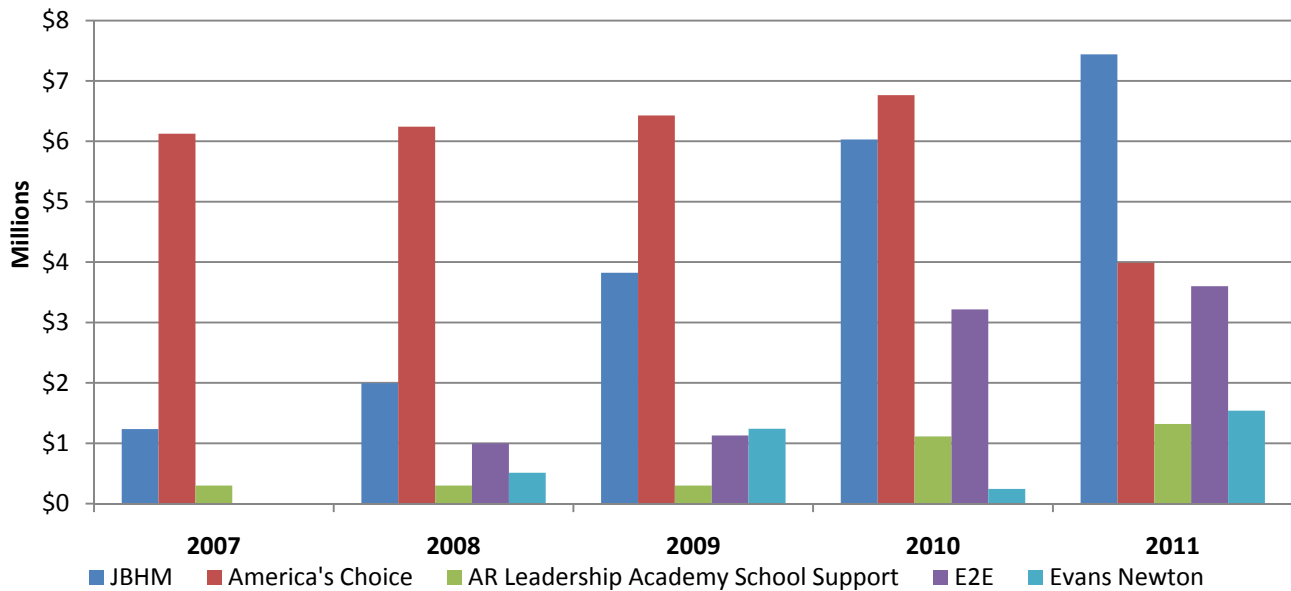
Southern Regional Education Board (SREB)

SREB charged six schools between \$16,000 and \$85,000. It had one contract for \$220,000, but most of those services will be provided in the 2011-12 school year.

The following chart shows the providers with the highest total contract amounts over the last five years (2006-07 to 2010-11). As mentioned earlier, the state contracted with America's Choice to provide services in the schools specified by ADE, but some school districts also contracted directly with the company.

The following chart shows both state and district expenditures. Similarly, because the Arkansas Leadership Academy receives state funding in addition to its district charges, the chart reflects the total state and district expenditures for the School Support Program each year.

Total Arkansas Contracts by Five Largest Providers



The following chart shows the 11 districts where the most money was spent on the school improvement providers listed on page 4. The amounts include state and district expenditures. The figures below were calculated using an average per-school expenditure for the America's Choice schools included in the state contract between 2007 and 2010.

District	Schools Receiving Services 2007-2011	Total Spending 2007-2011	School Improvement Provider
Little Rock	46 (although 24 schools received 91.5% of all purchased services)	\$10.5 million	Evans Newton, America's Choice and SREB
Pulaski County Special	15	\$4.2 million	JBHM; America's Choice; Arkansas Leadership Academy, School Support; and E2E
West Memphis	12	\$3.5 million	E2E
Lakeside (Lake Village)	7	\$3.1 million	JBHM, E2E, JP Associates
North Little Rock	9	\$3 million	America's Choice and JBHM
Marvell	3	\$3 million	America's Choice and E2E
Fort Smith	9	\$2.8 million	America's Choice, JBHM and Renaissance Learning
Osceola	5	\$2.8 million	JBHM, Renaissance Learning, and America's Choice
Pine Bluff	10	\$2.1 million	JBHM
Lee County	4	\$2 million	JBHM, America's Choice, Arkansas Leadership Academy's School Support Program, Learning Forward, ECS
Watson Chapel	5	\$2 million	E2E, America's Choice, and JBHM

EXAMINING OUTCOMES

METHODOLOGY

To examine each provider's outcomes, we categorized schools by their chosen vendor. We included only schools that received at least one year of service between 2006-07 and 2010-11, which we defined as spending at least \$50,000 per school in a single school year. To determine the per-school cost of services, we used data provided by each vendor. We opted to use this self-reported data instead of the financial data captured in APSCN because districts don't electronically record these types of expenditures in a consistent way.

We excluded amounts less than \$50,000 as a way of eliminating less intensive services, such as a single day of professional development. We set that level—roughly the average teacher's salary—also as a way of defining a reasonable amount of services from which to expect a school turnaround.

One limitation of this study is that the \$50,000 year of service criteria may mean providers offering the similar levels of services at a more cost-effective rate (less than \$50,000) were excluded from this review. Another limitation is that the billing data collected does not allow for a perfect dollar-to-dollar comparison. For example, in some instances individual billings included more than one school, making it difficult to tell how much of the billings were paid for each school. In these instances it is much easier to determine which schools that each school received at least \$50,000 worth of services, than it is to determine the exact price of those services. As a result, this study generally does not distinguish between the schools that received \$50,000 worth of services in a year and those that received \$300,000.

We also recognized differences in billing practices among providers. For example, one vendor may have charged one package amount for a variety of services, while another charged separate amounts for each service. For this study we looked at total annual billings for each school by vendor.

In some cases, school improvement providers reported charges on a district level rather than by school. For example, if a vendor provided a day of professional development for the entire district, it may have reported those charges as a \$2,000 district-level billing. Because we were interested in examining turnaround services specifically provided on the school level, we generally excluded these billings. However, we did include district-level charges above \$20,000. In these instances we divided the district-level charge by the number of schools in the district to arrive at a per-school charge. We then added these per-school amounts to the amount of service for each school in the district. For example, in 2010-11, JBHM reported providing \$199,500 worth of coaching and school improvement services to the Lafayette County School District. We counted that as \$99,750 for Lafayette County Elementary and \$99,750 for Lafayette County High School, or one year of service for each.

Schools that received services (at least \$50,000 in a single year) from two or more providers were put into a category we labeled "Multiple Provider." These schools may have had two vendors in the same years or they may have had one vendor for some period of time and then switched to another company.

The following table shows the number of schools with which each vendor worked. Again, the number of schools do not include any that had less than \$50,000 billings in a single year. We also eliminated from our review consultant Marilyn Carpenter and ECS, both of which had only one school in which they alone provided services. (They both had client schools that used multiple providers and were included in the "Multiple Provider" category.)

Vendor	Number of Schools
JBHM	67
America's Choice	38
E2E	20
Evans Newton	12
Arkansas Leadership Academy School Support Program	9
ECS	1
Marilyn Carpenter	1
Multiple Providers	46
TOTAL	194

We also randomly selected 190 schools that received no services (or less than \$50,000 worth of services in any given year) as a control group. These schools were selected from a total pool of 925 schools that were in operation in both 2006 and 2011.

To begin our analysis, we examined the average 2011 NSLA percentages of the schools included in the study. When we divided the schools into two groups, those that received services (regardless of provider) and those that did not, we found a statistically significant difference between the average NSLA percentage in schools that received services and the NSLA percentage in the randomly selected schools that did not. **Schools that received services typically had higher NSLA rates.**

	Average NSLA %
Schools that received services	79%
Randomly selected schools that received no services	67%

This finding may not be surprising, considering the schools that hired school improvement consultants are, by nature, low performing schools, and high rates of poverty are associated with lower student performance.

We also examined the schools' NSLA rates by vendor to see if any particular vendor was serving schools with generally more poverty or affluence. While the averages between vendor schools varied widely, only a few statistically significant differences were detected. Evans Newton's schools had the highest average NSLA rate, which is also statistically higher than America's Choice, JBHM, as well as the schools in the multiple provider group and the group of schools that received no services.

Vendor	Number of Schools	Average NSLA %
JBHM	67	79%
America's Choice	38	78%
E2E	20	80%
Evans Newton	12	94%
Arkansas Leadership Academy School Support Program	9	62%
Multiple Providers	46	77%
No Services	190	67%

Next, we examined the vendor schools' performance in two ways:

- The percentage point change in vendor schools' student achievement. Did the percentage of students testing proficient increase after receiving services?
- The percentage of vendors' schools that actually got out of school improvement.

The sections that follow describe our findings.

PERCENT PROFICIENT OR ADVANCED

We examined school improvement providers' results by looking at changes in their schools' overall percentage of students scoring proficient or advanced on the state Benchmark exams. NORMES provided us with data for each school, for each year since the 2004-05 school year. The percent proficient or advanced calculation represents the percentage of all students in the school *who took the test* and scored either proficient or advanced. So, for example, the percentage calculation for a K-5 school would include only the percentage of students in third, fourth and fifth grades who scored proficient/advanced, because the other grades are not Benchmark tested. Each school had a percent proficient/advanced in literacy and a percent proficient/advanced in math.

Because we wanted to determine the impact of school improvement providers, we examined improvements in vendor schools' percent proficient or advanced. We measured this improvement in two ways:

- Because there were few school improvement consultants in Arkansas before 2007, we looked at the individual school performance over the last five years. We calculated the difference in the school's 2006 percent proficient/advanced calculation and its 2011 calculation. This allowed for a uniform measurement for comparing schools that received services (in a variety of years) with schools that did not (a control group).
- We also compared the vendor schools' proficiency gains during the specific years they received services. For each school, we identified the years in which it received services and matched that with the school's percent proficient/advanced for those years. We then divided those gains by the number of years of service, for an average annual gain. For example, if a school contracted with a vendor in 2008 and 2009, we took its 2009 percent proficient/advanced—say 70%—and subtracted its 2007 percent proficient/advanced (the school's student performance just prior to receiving services)—say 60%—and divided it by the number of years it receive services—2, for an annual average gain of 5 percentage points. This analysis allowed for a more precise examination of gains made while working with a particular consultant, but it eliminated the use of a control group.

PROFICIENCY GAINS BETWEEN 2006 AND 2011

The following section attempts to define each vendor's impact by examining its schools' performance over the last five years. As mentioned above, we calculated the difference between the school's 2006 percent proficient/advanced calculation and its 2011 calculation.

To provide a frame of reference we calculated the statewide average percent of students who tested proficient or advanced for 2006 and 2011 as well as the five-year gains. (Throughout this report, we refer to "gains." Although these calculations are based on the same test data used to calculate the state gains ratings [<http://arkansased.org/programs/nclb/accountability.html>], the two calculations are unrelated and should not be confused.)

	2006 State Average	2011 State Average	5-Year Gain
Literacy	57.7%	74.4%	+16.7
Math	56.7%	76.3%	+19.6

Data for these calculations were provided by NORMES.

When we analyzed the NSLA rates in our sample of 194 schools that received school improvement services and the 190 schools that did not, we found that **the higher the NSLA rate (i.e., the more poverty in a school), the greater the proficiency gains were between 2006 and 2011**. For every 10 percentage points higher a school's NSLA rate, the school could expect 2 percentage points greater literacy gain between 2006 and 2011 and 1.4 percentage point math gain. The analysis also found **the lower a school's math and literacy proficiency in 2006, the greater its gains were over the five-year period**. For every 10 percentage points lower a school's 2006 proficiency, the school could expect 4.3 percentage points greater literacy gain between 2006 and 2011 and 3.6 points greater math gain.

We also compared the two groups' 2006 proficiency, 2011 proficiency and the groups' gain between 2006 and 2011. The following table shows the average for each group. Our analysis found that two groups' 2006 math and literacy proficiency were statistically different, with **vendor schools having lower 2006 proficiency than schools that did not receive services**. Again, this finding may not be surprising considering the schools that hired turnaround consultants were, by nature, poor performing schools.

	2006		2011		Five-Year gain	
	No Services	Vendor Schools	No Services	Vendor Schools	No Services	Vendor Schools
Literacy	48.2%	40.5%	60.6%	59%	12.4	18.6
Math	51.5%	40.2%	68.3%	62.5%	16.6	22.2

Perhaps more importantly, however, our analysis found statistically significant differences in the gains by the vendor schools compared with the schools that received no services. **In both literacy and math, vendor schools had higher percentage point gains**. Our analysis did not determine whether this increased gain was *caused* by the providers or something else; only that vendor schools' gains outpaced those of our control group. The following tables show the average five-year literacy and math gains made by each vendor's schools.

Literacy

Vendor	Average Five-Year Gain in Vendor Schools
Evans Newton	25.7
AR Leadership Academy School Support	21.1
E2E	21.1
JBHM	20.1
Multiple Providers	15.5
America's Choice	14.9
No Services	12.4

There are two ways to look at these results. First, the values can be "eyeballed" as raw averages. Viewed this way, Evans Newton, the Arkansas Leadership Academy's School Support Program and E2E substantially outperformed other (sometimes more expensive) providers.

However, a more systematic review uses statistical analysis to account for variation in sample size and outliers. For example, two schools with high proficiency percentages in a small sample of 10 schools will raise the average for that group considerably, while those same two schools in a sample of 1,000 will have less impact. Statistics are used to account for these types of differences. We used statistical tests to compare each provider's results against those of the control group (no services). We found **the results of JBHM, E2E and Evans Newton were superior to the control group**. There was no statistically significant difference between the other providers' results and the control group. We also compared providers against one another and found that **none of the differences between the providers was statistically significant**.

We performed similar analysis of the schools' math proficiency, the results of which are shown in the following table.

Math

Vendor	Average Five-Year Gain in Vendor Schools
AR Leadership Academy School Support	27.3
Evans Newton	26.8
E2E	23.7
JBHM	22.2
America's Choice	20.5
Multiple Providers	20.4
No Services	16.6

As with the literacy scores, the raw averages show some substantial differences in the five-year gains. However, our statistical analysis found that only **the results of JBHM were statistically superior to the control group. (Evans Newton fell just shy of statistical significance [p=.067].)** There was no statistically significant difference between the other providers' results and the control group. **None of the differences between the providers was statistically significant.**

PROFICIENCY GAINS DURING THE SPECIFIC PERIOD OF SERVICE

The following data examines the gains made by each vendor's schools in the specific years in which the company provided services. For each school, we identified the years in which it received services and matched that with the school's percent proficient/advanced for those years. We then divided those gains by the total number of years of service, for an average annual gain. For this analysis, there was no control group.

First, we wanted to determine whether vendors were working with schools with similar student achievement levels or if some providers were contracting with higher achieving schools than other providers. Were there any providers that tended to work with the worst performing schools?

The following table provides an average percent proficient/advanced for each vendor's schools for the year just before the vendors began providing services. For example, if a vendor started working with one school in the 2008 school year and another school in the 2010 school year, the proficiency data for each school was pulled from 2007 and 2009, respectively.

Vendor	Avg. % Proficient or Advanced at Service Initiation-Literacy	Avg. % Proficient or Advanced at Service Initiation-Math
AR Leadership Academy School Support	54.9%	57.9%
E2E	54.5%	67.4%
JBHM	48.3%	53.2%
America's Choice	44.2%	45.7%
Multiple Providers	38.1%	37.1%
Evans Newton	42.5%	47.5%

The raw averages indicate that schools that hired the Arkansas Leadership Academy and E2E tend to be higher scoring schools than those that hired the other providers. We used a series of statistical tests to compare providers against one another to determine if any of their schools' starting test scores were statistically different from any of the other companies'. The analysis revealed that the **schools that work with multiple providers had statistically lower math and literacy proficiency at the start of service than JBHM, Arkansas Leadership Academy and E2E.** This finding may not be surprising, considering schools that hire multiple providers may be the most in need of help.

Our analysis also found E2E's schools had statistically higher starting math proficiency than America's Choice, JBHM, and Evans Newton. This finding suggests that **E2E contracts with**

schools that tend to be higher performing in math than the schools contracting with other providers. Other differences between providers were not statistically significant.

Next we examined the average annual gains each provider's schools made. For a frame of reference, we've provided the annual gains set by the school improvement targets. For example to hit the target and make AYP in 2009-10, an elementary school had to have at least 70% of students proficient in math. The next year, the school had to have at least 77.5% proficiency, a difference of 7.5 percentage points gain. Every year the elementary school math target increases by 7.5 percentage points.

	Literacy	Math
K-5	7.2	7.5
6 th -8 th	8.1	8.86
9 th -12 th	8.06	8.85

In practice, however, the average gains have not typically reached the 7- or 8-point range. The following chart shows the average annual proficiency gains from one year to the next for all students statewide.

	Literacy	Math
2007 change from 2006	1.7	5.0
2008 change from 2007	3.7	5.2
2009 change from 2008	7.4	4.8
2010 change from 2009	1.7	2.9
2011 change from 2010	2.2	1.7

The following table shows the average annual gains made by each vendor's schools during the service period. Again, there are two ways of viewing this data. Simply eyeballing the raw averages one can identify substantial differences in the average annual gains of each vendor's schools. For example, the Arkansas Leadership Academy's School Support program showed average annual gains of nearly 8 percentage points in literacy, while America's Choice schools achieved about a quarter of that.

Vendor	Average Annual Literacy Gain	Average Annual Math Gain
AR Leadership Academy School Support	7.8	6.0
Evans Newton	7.7	5.4
E2E	7.3	2.3
JBHM	5.9	5.1
Multiple Providers	4.2	5.2
America's Choice	1.9	3.2

A second systematic way of examining the data uses statistical tests that consider variations in sample size and outliers. Using that statistical analysis, we compared a provider's results against each of the other providers to determine if any companies statistically outperform the others. When we conducted this analysis we found that **E2E and JBHM schools significantly outperformed America's Choice schools in literacy. (Evans Newton fell just shy of statistical significance [p=.056].) None of the differences between the other providers was statistically significant in math.**

SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT STATUS

The ultimate goal of school improvement providers is to turnaround their client schools and help them get out of school improvement. This section of the report examines external providers by the number of their client schools who were actually removed from school improvement.

School Improvement Background

The No Child Left Behind Act required states to set annual targets schools must meet each year. The targets, a certain percentage of students testing proficient or advanced, are set progressively higher with the ultimate goal of having 100% of students proficient or advanced by the 2013-14 school year. For example, in 2009-10, the target for elementary schools was having 70% of students proficient or advanced in math, while the following year, the target was 77.5%.

Schools that do not meet these targets are placed on “school improvement.” It takes two consecutive years of failing to meet the targets to get on the school improvement list and, once on school improvement, it takes two consecutive years of hitting the targets to be removed from the list. (There are two other ways schools can make adequate yearly progress (AYP): growth and safe harbor.) A school’s performance can be measured by the number of years the school has been in school improvement. Generally, the worse a school’s performance, the longer it has been in school improvement. Because 2002 was the first year schools were placed in school improvement Year 10 is the most advanced a school can be.

The first year a school fails to meet AYP, it is considered on “Alert.” If it fails to meet AYP a second year, it will be in school improvement Year 1. The first year a school is in school improvement but makes AYP, its status is designated with a (M). For example, a school in Year 3 that makes AYP the next year, will have a status of Year 3(M). If it makes AYP a second year, it will be removed from the school improvement list.

Schools in school improvement must comply with a series of requirements aimed at improving student achievement. Schools in Year 4 and 5 are considered to be in “restructuring,” and some of them are required to “replace the principal of the school in school improvement status or *hire a school improvement specialist* (as approved by ADE) who shall oversee the work of the principal on a full or part-time basis at the school’s expense” (emphasis added). The school improvement specialist may be an external provider or an internal provider — an employee. All schools in Year 6 and higher are considered to be “state directed.” For a school in Year 6 or higher, the Education Commissioner may assign a school improvement director who reports to the Commissioner, but is paid by the school district.

School Improvement in Arkansas

In 2011, 480 schools were in school improvement, including 28 in Year 8, six in Year 9, and one in Year 10 (Rose City Middle School in North Little Rock). Each year across the state between 5% and 10% of the schools on school improvement the previous year are removed from the list.

	Schools on School Improvement List		Schools Removed From School Improvement List	%
2005	254	2006	14	6%
2006	307	2007	32	10%
2007	325	2008	19	6%
2008	374	2009	32	9%
2009	401	2010	34	8%
2010	420	2011	22	5%
		Total	153	

A school is less likely to be removed from school improvement the longer it has been on the list. Of the 153 schools that have been removed from the school improvement list since 2006, 38, or 25%, were in Year 3 or higher the year before they were removed (17 were in Year 3, 14 in Year 4, four in Year 5, and three in Year 6). Because these 38 schools represent perhaps the

most significant improvement, we have examined which consultants worked with each. Our analysis found of the 38:

- 21 were released from school improvement without the services of a school improvement provider.
- Six received services from America's Choice alone and one received America's Choice services along with services from another provider.
- Five received services from JBHM alone.
- Two received services only from the Arkansas Leadership Academy's School Support program, while another two received services from the School Support program and another provider.
- Two received services from E2E alone, while one received services from E2E and another provider.

For a listing of the 38 schools, the year in which each was removed from school improvement and the external provider with which it worked, see Appendix B.

It takes two years of adequate improvement for a school to get out of school improvement. The following table shows the number of schools with which each provider worked for at least two years and the number of those schools that were removed from the school improvement list.

Vendor	Total Schools	Schools Removed From School Improvement	Percentage of Schools
AR Leadership Academy's School Support	5	3	60%
Elbow 2 Elbow	10	3	30%
America's Choice	23	5	22%
JBHM	41	4	10%
Multiple Providers	44	1	2%
Evans Newton	3	0	0%

SCHOOLS WITH EXCEPTIONAL IMPROVEMENT

Of the schools that worked with a school improvement provider, a few achieved some extraordinary gains. The following table shows the schools with the highest annual average percentage point gains in literacy and in math and their school improvement provider. All of them were schools that had only one year of services (defined as at least \$50,000 of worth of services in a single year). In all of the schools shown below, there were no grade reconfigurations or school district consolidations in the year in which the gain was made. Additionally, each of the schools below were able to maintain, in subsequent years, the gains achieved.

School	Vendor	Year of Service	Average Lit Gain	Average Math Gain
Highest Average Annual Literacy Gains				
Harrisburg High, Harrisburg	JBHM	2008-09	30.2	8.4
Manila High, Manila	JBHM	2009-10	29.6	4.1
Wilson Elementary, Little Rock	Evans Newton	2010-11	25.4	23.2
Highest Average Annual Math Gains				
Retta Brown Elementary, El Dorado	JBHM	2009-10	21.3	28.1
Wilson Elementary, Little Rock	Evans Newton	2010-11	25.4	23.2
Woodruff Elementary, Little Rock	Evans Newton	2007-08	4.6	23.2

The following chart shows the highest average annual literacy and math gain by the number of years of service received. For example, among all the schools that received 5 years of services, Lynch Drive Elementary had the highest average annual literacy gain. Some of the schools reconfigured grades during the time period in which the schools received services. Those schools are marked with an asterisk.

School	Vendor	Years of Service	Average Lit Gain	Average Math Gain
Largest Average Annual Literacy Gains				
Lynch Drive Elementary, North Little Rock*	America's Choice and JBHM	5 years	6.8	3.9
Jackson Elementary, West Memphis	E2E	4 years	9.0	9.3
Trusty Elementary, Fort Smith	JBHM and Renaissance Learning	3 years	11.9	12.1
Morrison Elementary, Fort Smith	JBHM	2 years	16.2	12.8
Largest Average Annual Math Gains				
Augusta Elementary, Augusta*	America's Choice	5 years	5.9	11
Gibbs Albright Elementary, Newport	AR Leadership Academy, School Support and America's Choice	4 years	6.6	9.6
Lucilia Wood Elementary, Marvell**	America's Choice and E2E	3 years	10.4	22.5
England Middle School, England	AR Leadership Academy, School Support	2 years	5.2	13.8

* Augusta Elementary went from being a K-8 school to a K-7 school in 2009-10.

** Lucilia Wood Elementary became part of the Marvell School District in 2006-07 and changed from a K-6 school to a K-3 school in 2008-09. The LEA# was eliminated in 2009-10.

SCHOOLS WITH DISAPPOINTING RESULTS

The following schools had the largest declines in the percent proficient or advanced during the time period in which they received services. These schools were not subject to any grade reconfigurations or district consolidations in the year in which the services were provided.

School	Vendor	Years of Service	Average Decline in Literacy	Average Decline in Math
Largest Average Annual Literacy Declines				
Turrell Elementary, Turrell	America's Choice	1 year	-19.8	1.1
Blytheville Charter, Blytheville	JBHM	1 year	-15.6	-14.1
Yerger Middle School, Hope	America's Choice	1 year	-8.0	.4
Largest Average Annual Math Declines				
Blytheville Charter, Blytheville	JBHM	1 year	-15.6	-14.1
Fordyce High School, Fordyce	Arkansas Leadership Academy's School Support and E2E	2 years	-.1	-8.4
Anna Strong Elementary, Lee County	America's Choice	1 year	-4.6	-8

The following chart shows the lowest average annual literacy and math gain (or largest decline) by the number of years of service received. For example, among all the schools that received 5 years of services, Oak Grove High School had the largest declines in annual average literacy proficiency.

School	Vendor	Years of Service	Average Change in Literacy	Average Change in Math
Largest Average Annual Literacy Declines				
Oak Grove High, Pulaski County Special	Arkansas Leadership Academy's School Support and America's Choice	5 years	-.3	8.6
Turrell High, Turrell	America's Choice	4 years	-1.6	2.4
Whitten Elementary, Lee County	Arkansas Leadership Academy's School Support and America's Choice	3 years	-.4	-1.6
Forrest City High, Forrest City	America's Choice	2 years	-4.3	8.4
Largest Average Annual Math Decline/Smallest Average Annual Math Gain				
Watson Chapel Jr. High, Watson Chapel	America's Choice and E2E	5 years	2.8	1.8
Watson Chapel High, Watson Chapel	E2E	4 years	3.4	-3.0
Whitten Elementary, Lee County	Arkansas Leadership Academy's School Support and America's Choice	3 years	-.4	-1.6
Fordyce High School, Fordyce	Arkansas Leadership Academy's School Support and E2E	2 years	-.1	-8.4

SCHOOLS WITH THE LARGEST INVESTMENT IN SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT PROVIDERS

Ideally, the schools where the largest investment in school improvement consultants have been made would have the highest gains in school improvement. Unfortunately that has not been the case. The following table shows the schools where the highest expenditures have been made on external providers. Some, such as Marked Tree Elementary have made significant achievement over the last five years, while others, such as Marvell High School have seen less than impressive gains.

District	School	2011 Enrollment	Five-year Spending: 2007-2011	Five-year Literacy Gain	Five-year Math Gain	2011 School Improvement Status
STATE AVERAGE				16.7	19.6	
Marvell	Marvell High School	232	\$1,191,732	3.7	10.4	Year 9
Marvell	Marvell Primary	229	\$1,174,032	8.1	42	Year 6
Little Rock	Cloverdale Middle /Cloverdale Aerospace*	593	\$1,124,490	1.6	17.5	Alert*
Little Rock	J.A. Fair	867	\$1,076,129	7.9	21.1	Year 8
North Little Rock	Rose City Middle	138	\$1,074,455	20.6	18.7	Year 10
Lakeside-Lake Village	Lakeside High	346	\$974,637	9.6	29.5	Year 7
Marked Tree	Marked Tree Elem.	282	\$970,582	31.3	46.2	Year 7
Hughes	Hughes High	223	\$947,459	10.2	25.4	Year 7
Pulaski County Special	Oak Grove High**	492	\$941,079	-1.7	43	Year 3

District	School	2011 Enrollment	Five-year Spending: 2007-2011	Five-year Literacy Gain	Five-year Math Gain	2011 School Improvement Status
Little Rock	Watson Elem./ Intermediate	403	\$914,490	25.4	23.2	Year 7(M)
Brinkley	Brinkley High School	307	\$912,955	26.6	10.2	Year 6

* Cloverdale Middle School became a charter school beginning in 2010-11. The change allowed it to be considered a new school and shed its history in school improvement. However the school did not make AYP in its first year of operation, so it was assigned the status of "Alert." If the school fails to make AYP next year, it will be in school improvement Year 1.

**Oak Grove High was in school improvement Year 7(M) in 2010. Although the school remains in school improvement, being in Year 3 is a considerable improvement in status.

SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT GRANTS

This section of the report examines the gains made by schools that received ARRA-funded school improvement grants. We wanted to see whether a large infusion of funding, used to pay for a significant amount of consulting and other services, makes a notable difference in student achievement.

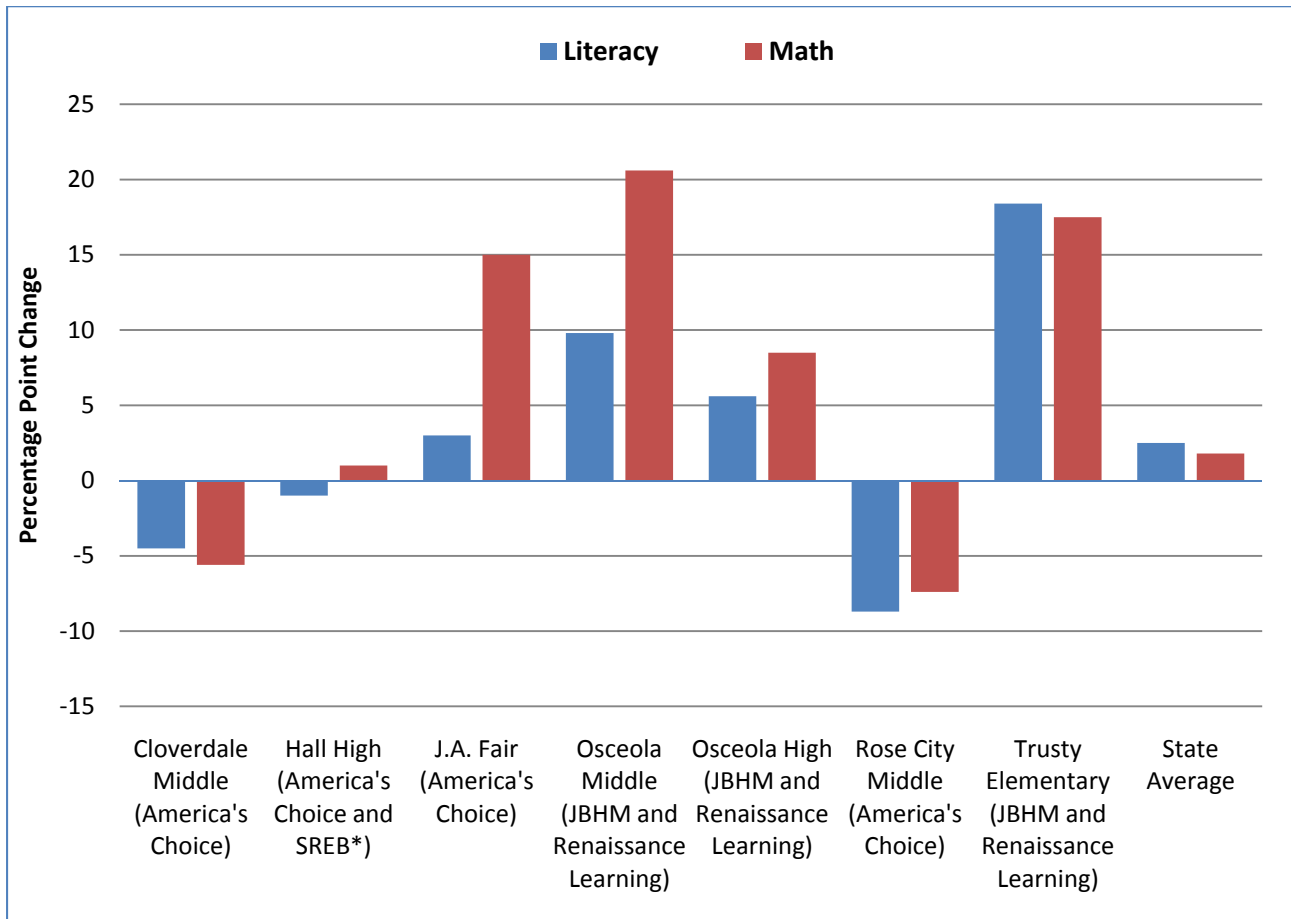
In FY2011, the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act significantly increased the funding available for school improvement grants that already existed under Section 1003(g) of Title I of the No Child Left Behind Act. However, the federal government required states to focus the enhanced funding on the their lowest performing schools. In Arkansas 14 schools applied for the first year of funding, and seven schools were selected. (Hughes High School, Dollarway High School, Dollarway Middle School, Central High School in Helena/West Helena, Lynch Drive Elementary in North Little Rock, Palestine-Wheatley Senior High School, and Jacksonville High School applied but were not awarded grants.) The seven schools awarded funding in 2010-11 and the 11 schools awarded funding in 2011-12 are listed in the following table.

School	2010-11 Award	2011-12 Award
Cloverdale Middle School	\$1,987,834	\$1,937,708
Hall High School	\$1,987,282	\$1,981,956
J.A. Fair High School	\$1,970,121	\$1,932,095
Osceola Middle School	\$665,000	\$632,500
Osceola High School	\$695,000	\$652,500
Rose City Middle School	\$991,451	\$683,172
Trusty Elementary School	\$990,135	\$589,865
Central High School		\$1,987,425
Dollarway High School		\$724,267
Jacksonville High School		\$2,000,000
Marvell High School		\$1,516,827
Total Awarded	\$9,286,823	\$14,638,315

All seven school awarded grants in the first year used some of their funding to hire a school improvement provider. Although none of the schools was removed from school improvement, one school, Trusty Elementary in Fort Smith, made AYP. If the school makes AYP again in 2011-12, it will be removed from school improvement. In 2010-11, Trusty Elementary improved its literacy scores by 18.4 percentage points and its math scores by 17.5 points.

The following chart shows the percentage point gain/loss in proficiency during the first year schools received the ARRA-funded school improvement grants. Also included is the state average gain among schools that were in operation in both 2009-10 and 2010-11.

SIG Grant Schools: Percentage Point Change, 2009-10 to 2010-11



* Hall High's contract with SREB was initiated in 2010-11, but most of the services are being provided in the 2011-12 school year.

Four schools greatly outpaced the state average: J.A. Fair High, Osceola Middle, Osceola High and Trusty Elementary. Of those, three contracted with JBHM and Renaissance Learning and one contracted with America's Choice. Two schools had significant declines in proficiency: Cloverdale Middle and Rose City Middle. Both schools as well as Hall High, which saw little change, contracted with America's Choice. All of the schools were awarded a second year of funding.

The following charts provide historical spending on school improvement providers, changes in school improvement status and changes in proficiency for the schools that received ARRA-funded school improvement grants.

CLOVERDALE MIDDLE SCHOOL, LITTLE ROCK SCHOOL DISTRICT

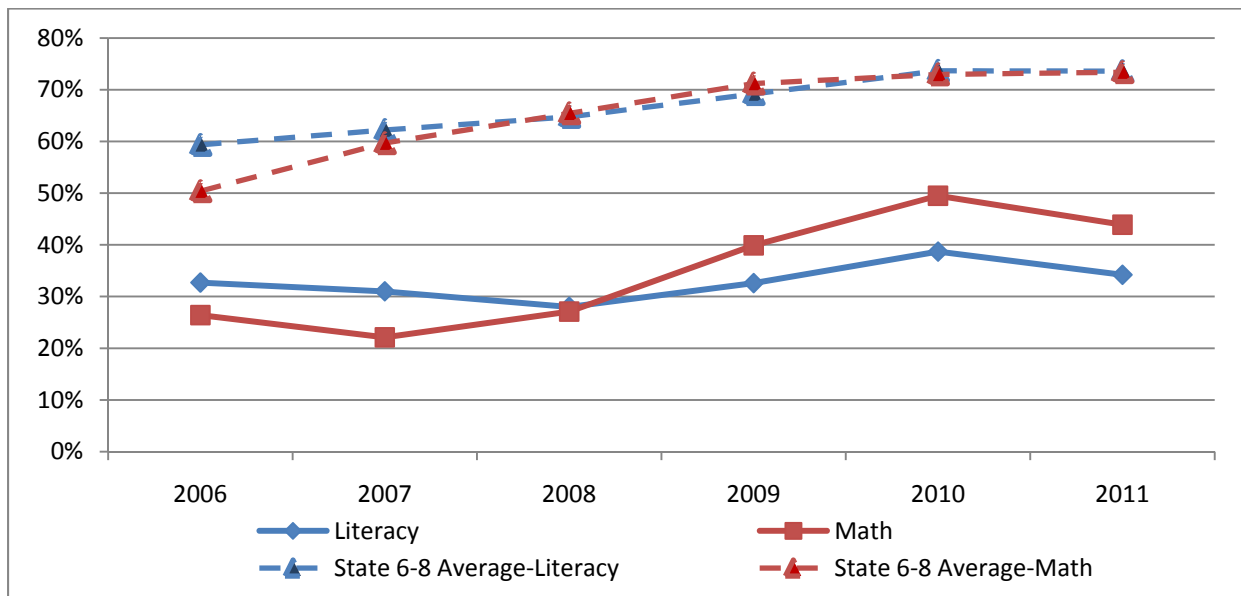
Cloverdale Middle School was in its 8th year of school improvement when it was awarded nearly \$2 million for the 2010-11 school year. It had already received four years of services from America's Choice and with its new school improvement grant, the school hired the company for a fifth year. However, the results were disappointing. The school spent \$310,000 of its grant on America's Choice, but test scores actually declined.

The decline may have been caused in part by a change in the school's structure. For the 2010-11 school year, Cloverdale Middle School converted into Cloverdale Aerospace Technology Conversion Charter Middle School. Converting to a charter school allowed it to enroll new students living outside the school's previous school zone, but it also allowed students who lived in the Cloverdale zone to switch to another LRSD school.

The change also allowed it to receive a new LEA number and therefore a new school improvement status. Instead of moving into Year 9 of school improvement, the new charter school was considered to be in its first year of not making AYP, or "on Alert." (It takes two years of not meeting AYP to be in school improvement.)

The following chart shows the percentage of the school's students who tested proficient or advanced each year in literacy and in math.

Percent Proficient/Advanced in Literacy and Math



	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
America's Choice		\$190,537*state contract \$41,875 district contract	\$208,084*	\$167,655*	\$178,358*	\$310,000
School Improvement Status	Year 4	Year 5	Year 6	Year 7	Year 8	Alert

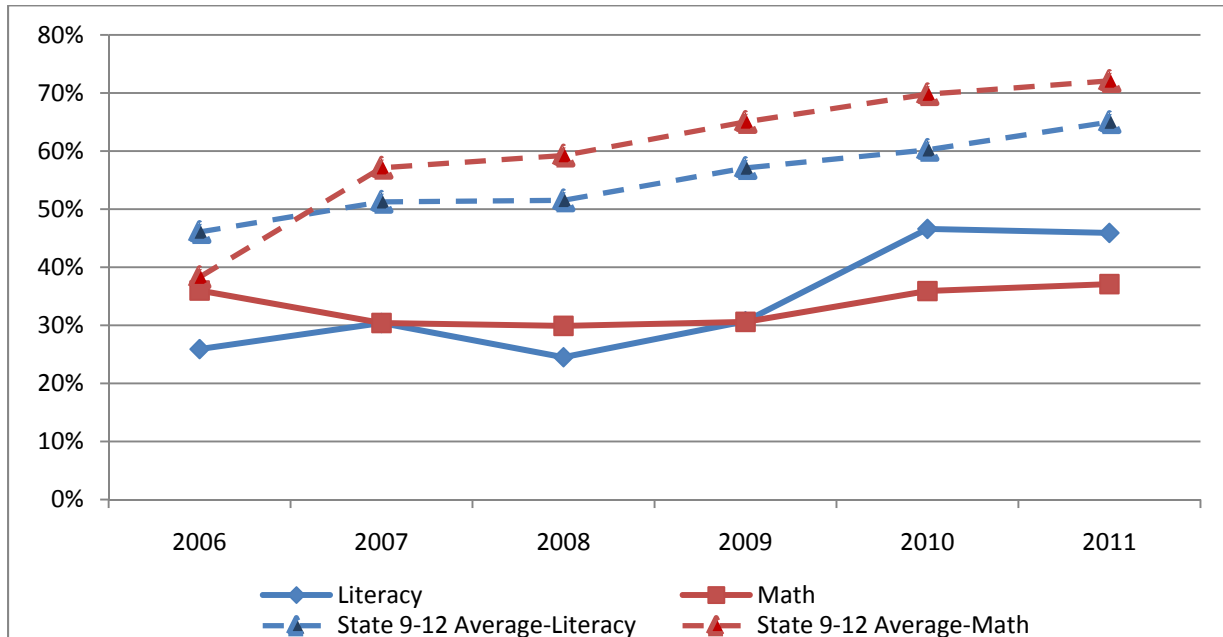
* The state contract amounts listed for America's Choice for 2007 through 2010 represent the average state expenditure for the schools that received America's Choice services each year.

HALL HIGH SCHOOL, LITTLE ROCK SCHOOL DISTRICT

Hall High School was in its 6th year of school improvement when it was awarded nearly \$2 million for the 2010-11 school year. It had already received a year of services from SREB and a lesser amount of services from Evans Newton. With its new school improvement grant, the school hired America's Choice and purchased additional services from SREB (Most of the services in the 2011 SREB contract are being delivered in 2012.) However, the results were unimpressive. The school spent about \$400,000 of its grant to achieve 1 percentage point increase in math and 1 percentage point decline in literacy.

The following chart shows the percentage of the school's students who tested proficient or advanced each year in literacy and in math.

Percent Proficient/Advanced in Literacy and Math



	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
Evans Newton			\$28,160		
America's Choice					\$394,000
SREB				\$66,010	\$222,471
School Improvement Status	Year 4	Year 5	Year 6	Year 6	Year 7

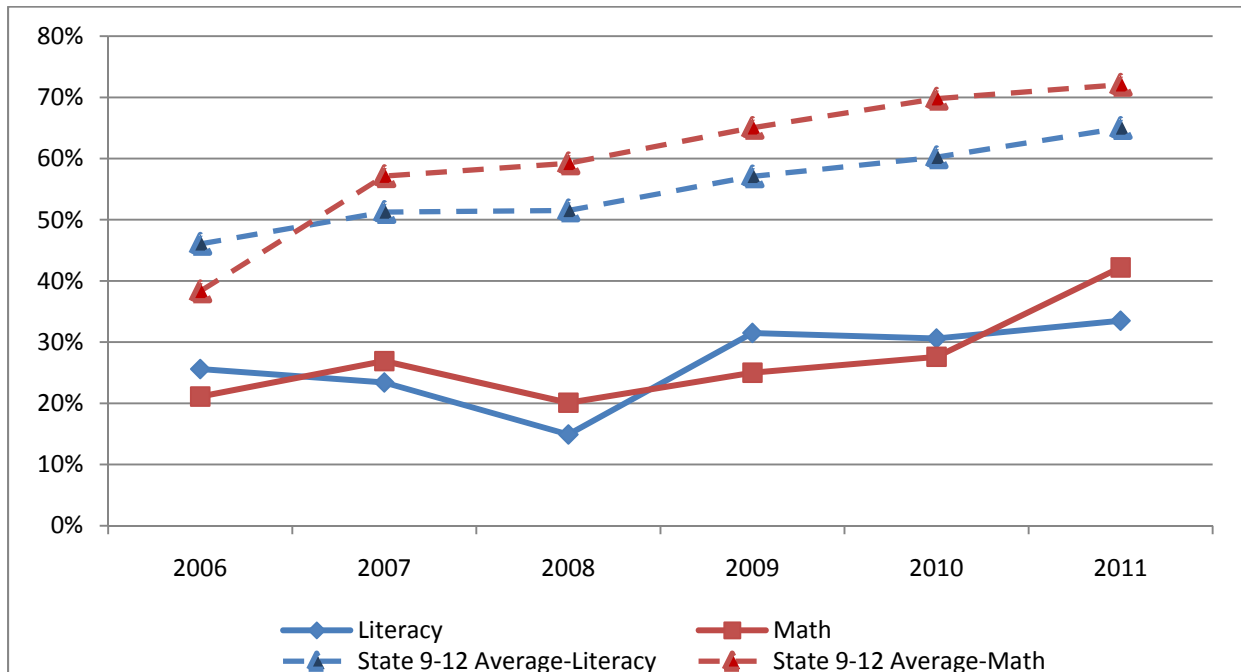
* Hall High's contract with SREB was initiated in 2010-11, but most of the services are being provided in the 2011-12 school year.

J.A. FAIR HIGH SCHOOL, LITTLE ROCK SCHOOL DISTRICT

J.A. Fair High School was in its 7th year of school improvement when it was awarded nearly \$2 million for the 2010-11 school year. It had already received three years of services from America's Choice and a lesser amount of services from Evans Newton. With its new school improvement grant, the school purchased more than \$400,000 in services from America's Choice. The school achieved a 15 percentage point increase in math, and a 3 percentage point increase in literacy.

The following chart shows the percentage of the school's students who tested proficient or advanced each year in literacy and in math.

Percent Proficient/Advanced in Literacy and Math



	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
America's Choice			\$208,084*	\$167,655*	\$178,358*	\$409,000
Evans Newton				\$28,160		
School Improvement Status	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Year 6	Year 7	Year 8

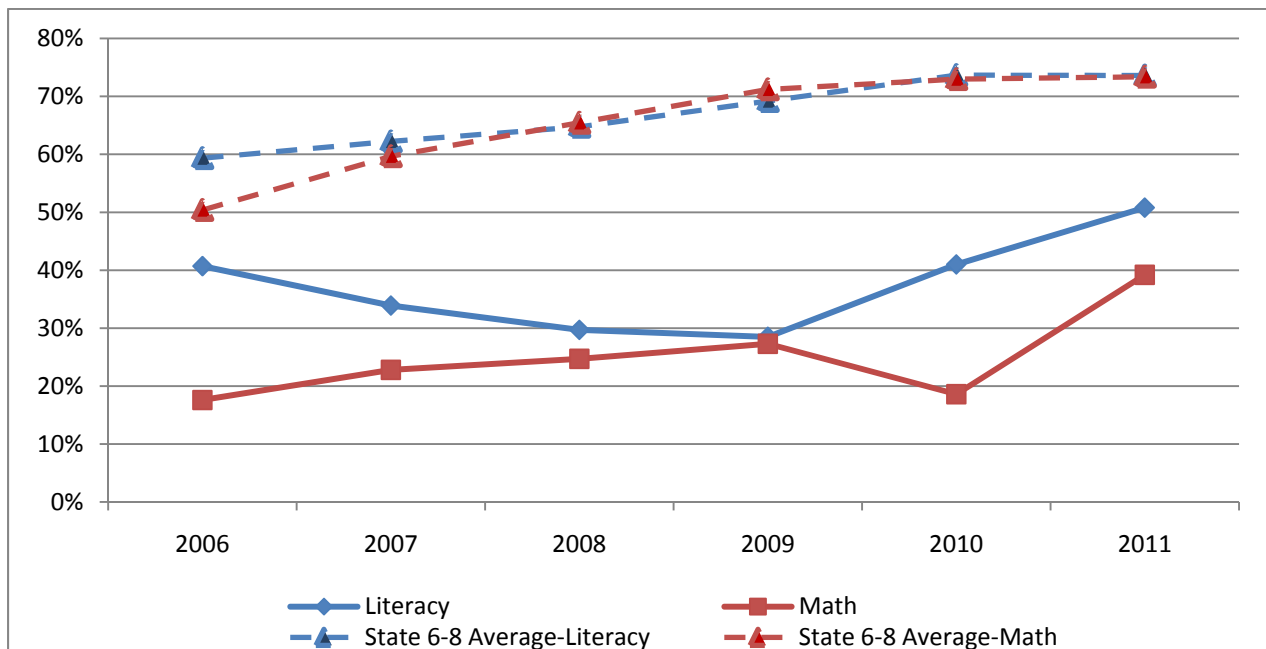
* The state contract amounts listed for America's Choice for 2007 through 2010 represent the average state expenditure for the schools that received America's Choice services each year.

OSCEOLA MIDDLE SCHOOL, OSCEOLA SCHOOL DISTRICT

Osceola Middle School was in its 5th year of school improvement when it was awarded \$665,000 for the 2010-11 school year. The school had already received two years of services from JBHM. Using its new school improvement grant and other district funds, the school purchased more than \$900,000 worth of services from JBHM and Renaissance Learning [IT PURCHASED MORE SERVICES THAN IT RECEIVED IN GRANT FUNDING?]. The school achieved a 20.6 percentage point increase in math, and a 9.8 percentage point increase in literacy. The school made AYP in literacy, but remained in Year 4(M), due to its math scores. If the school makes AYP in math in 2011-12, it could be removed from school improvement entirely.

The following chart shows the percentage of the school's students who tested proficient or advanced each year in literacy and in math.

Percent Proficient/Advanced in Literacy and Math



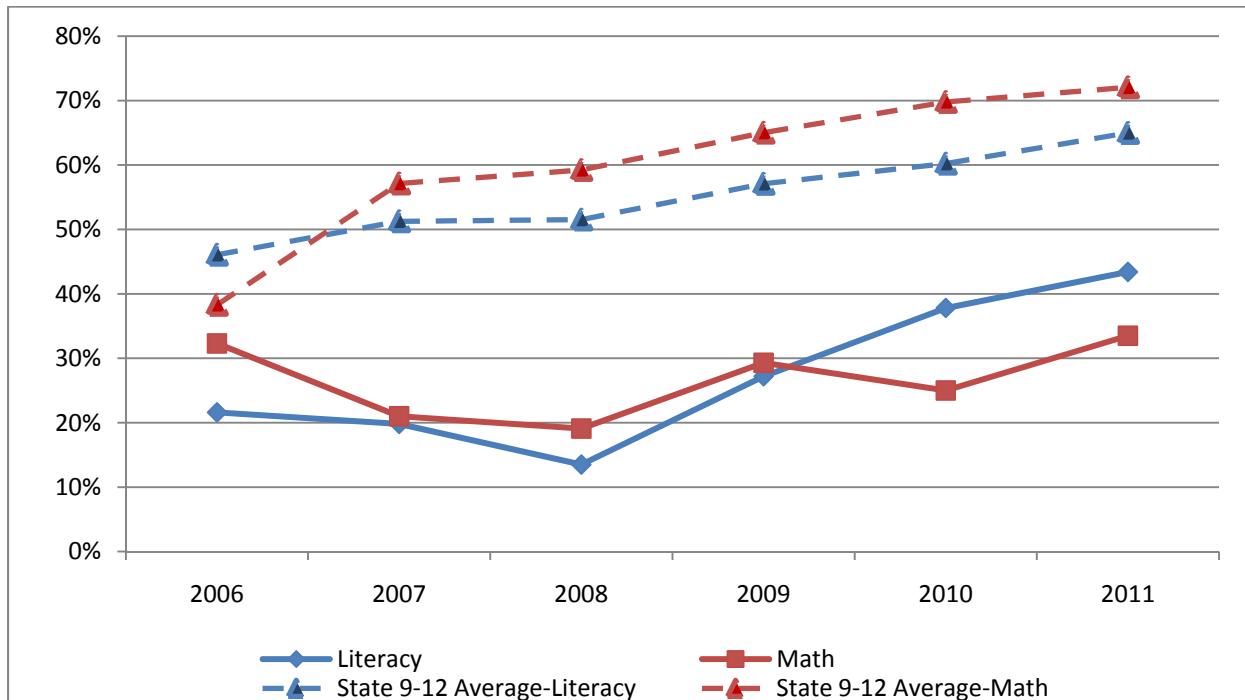
	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
JBHM				\$100,000	\$155,000	\$426,000
Renaissance Learning						\$486,241
School Improvement Status	Year 2(M)	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Year 5(M)	Year 4(M)

OSCEOLA HIGH SCHOOL, OSCEOLA SCHOOL DISTRICT

Osceola High School was in its 6th year of school improvement when it was awarded nearly \$700,000 for the 2010-11 school year. The school had already received two years of services from JBHM. Using its new school improvement grant and other district funds, the school purchased more than \$600,000 worth of services from JBHM and Renaissance Learning. The school achieved an 8.5 percentage point increase in math and a 5.6 percentage point increase in literacy.

The following chart shows the percentage of the school's students who tested proficient or advanced each year in literacy and in math.

Percent Proficient/Advanced in Literacy and Math



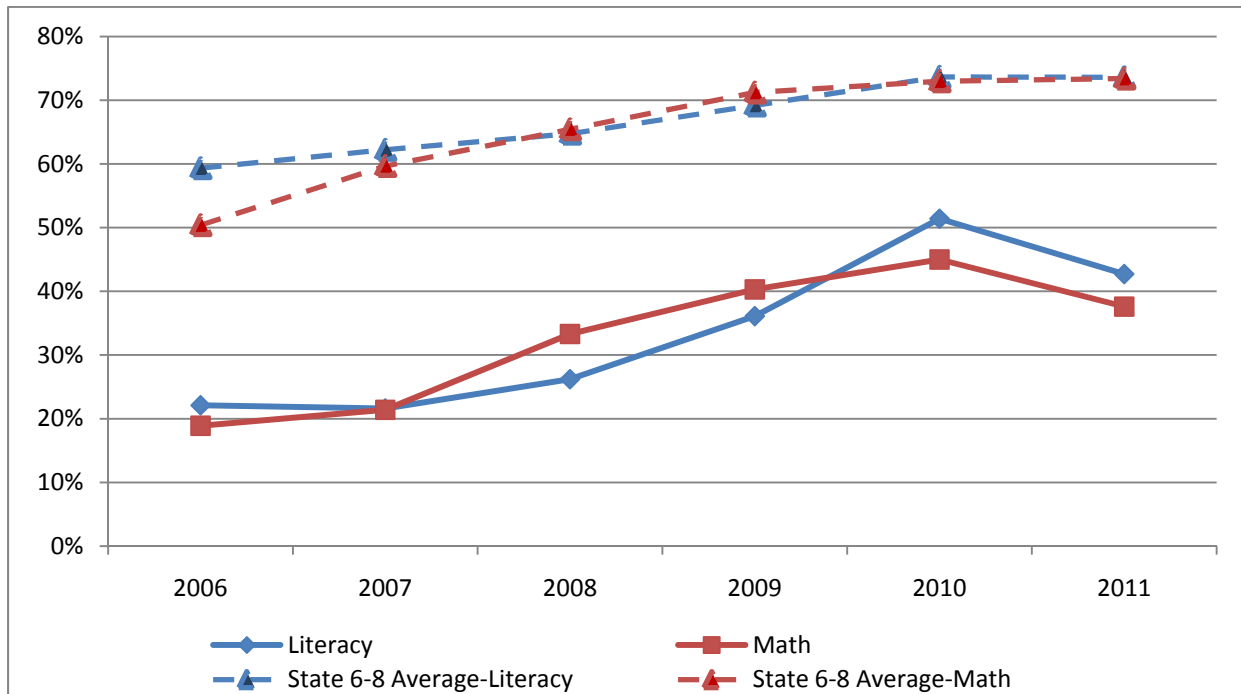
	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
JBHM				\$100,000	\$155,000	\$411,000
Renaissance Learning						\$222,002
School Improvement Status	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Year 6	Year 7

ROSE CITY MIDDLE SCHOOL, NORTH LITTLE ROCK SCHOOL DISTRICT

Rose City Middle School was in its 9th year of school improvement when it was awarded nearly \$1 million for the 2010-11 school year. The school had already received four years of services from America's Choice under the state's contract. With its new school improvement grant, the school purchased more than \$300,000 worth of services from America's Choice. The results were disappointing, with significant declines in both literacy and math scores.

The following chart shows the percentage of the school's students who tested proficient or advanced each year in literacy and in math.

Percent Proficient/Advanced in Literacy and Math



	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
America's Choice		\$190,537 state contract* \$20,000 district contract	\$208,084*	\$167,655*	\$178,358*	\$310,000
School Improvement Status	Year 5	Year 6	Year 7	Year 8	Year 9	Year 10

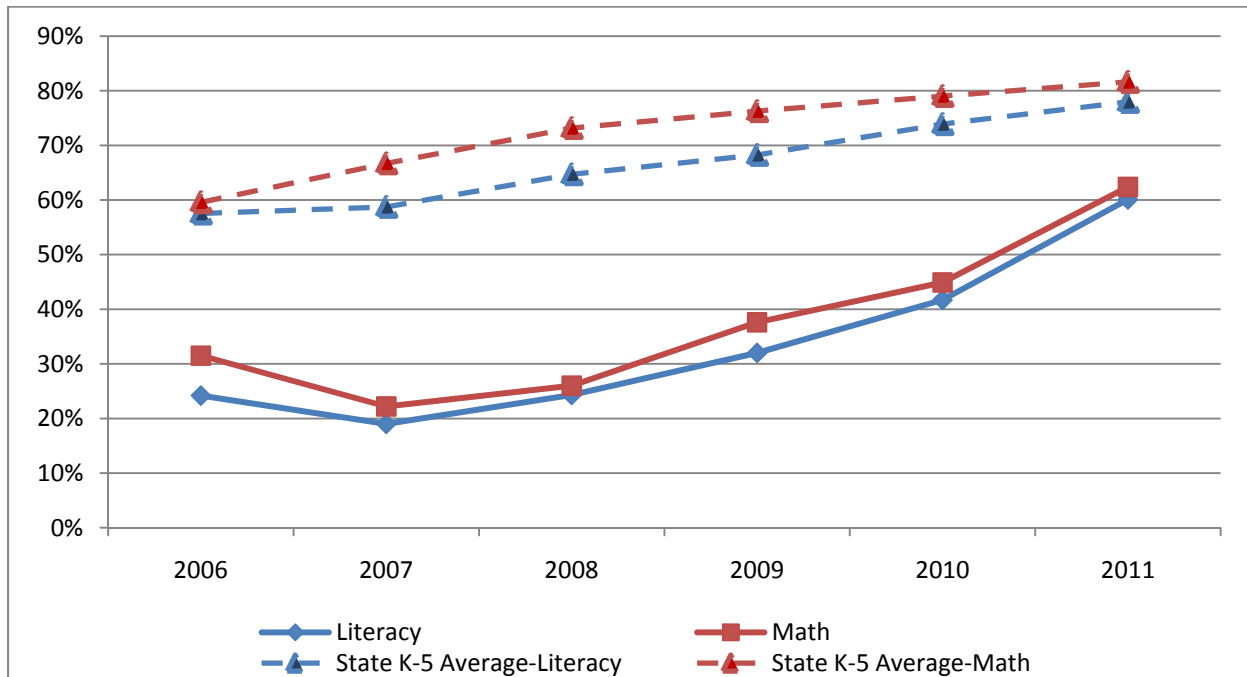
* The state contract amounts listed for America's Choice for 2007 through 2010 represent the average state expenditure for the schools that received America's Choice services each year.

TRUSTY ELEMENTARY SCHOOL, FORT SMITH SCHOOL DISTRICT

Trusty Elementary School was in its 7th year of school improvement when it was awarded nearly \$1 million for the 2010-11 school year. The school had already received two years of services from JBHM. With its new school improvement grant, the school purchased more than \$550,000 worth of services from JBHM and Renaissance Learning. The results were impressive, with an 18-point gain in literacy and a 17.5-point gain in math. The school made AYP, and if it does so again in 2011-12, it will be removed from school improvement.

The following chart shows the percentage of the school's students who tested proficient or advanced each year in literacy and in math.

Percent Proficient/Advanced in Literacy and Math



	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
JBHM				\$100,000	\$130,500	\$300,000
Renaissance Learning						\$261,373
School Improvement Status	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Year 6	Year 7	Year 7(M)

CONCLUSION

Following the passage of the No Child Left Behind Act, enterprising educators created several consulting businesses with the idea of selling education expertise to failing schools. Fostering these businesses was a state accountability system that encouraged troubled schools to hire consultants and new federal funding that allowed them to pay for it.

In the previous five years, nearly 300 schools have received some type of service from a school improvement provider, with a total price tag of nearly \$70 million, much of which was federal funding. In 2010-11 alone, school districts spent nearly \$20 million on school improvement consulting services. With access to new and greatly enhanced funding and intense pressure to pull up test scores, districts have found themselves facing an aggressive school improvement consulting industry vying for their business.

There are three types of ADE-approved external providers in Arkansas: school improvement directors, school improvement specialists and school turnaround providers (individuals or organizations). There are currently 36 approved consultants and companies listed as external providers, but most of the expenditures are made with just a handful of companies.

All of the providers working in Arkansas can point to individual client schools that have made impressive improvements, but they have also worked with schools with disappointing results. Schools considering hiring a provider have access to little objective data examining the results these providers have delivered. This report analyzed the results of school improvement providers in terms of the changes in their client schools' student achievement and the number of schools that actually got out of school improvement.

When we compared schools that received consulting services against those that did not, we found the schools that hired consultants typically had lower test scores in 2006 and had higher NSLA rates. Our analysis also found that vendor schools had significantly higher gains in both math and literacy over the last five years than the schools that received no services. Our analysis did not determine whether this increased gain was *caused* by the providers or something else; only that vendor schools' gains outpaced those of our control group.

When we compared the results of individual providers, we found that the literacy gains between 2006 and 2011 of JBHM, E2E and Evans Newton were superior to schools that received no services. Our analysis of math gains showed that only JBHM's math gains were statistically superior to the control group.

The table below shows the average annual gains made by each vendor's schools during the specific years in which each school received services.

Vendor	Average Annual Literacy Gain	Average Annual Math Gain
AR Leadership Academy School Support	7.8	6.0
Evans Newton	7.7	5.4
E2E	7.3	2.3
JBHM	5.9	5.1
Multiple Providers	4.2	5.2
America's Choice	1.9	3.2

The raw averages show substantial differences in the annual gains of each vendor's schools. However, a more systematic review, using statistical tests, found that E2E and JBHM schools significantly outperformed America's Choice schools in literacy. None of the differences between the providers was statistically significant in math.

We also reviewed the frequency with which vendor schools are removed from school improvement. Because it takes two years of adequate improvement for a school to get out of

school improvement, we examined the number of schools with which each provider worked for at least two years and the percentage of those schools that were removed from school improvement. This analysis found that the Arkansas Leadership Academy had the best record for getting schools back on track.

Vendor	Total Schools	Removed From School Improvement	Percentage of Schools
AR Leadership Academy's School Support	5	3	60%
Elbow 2 Elbow	10	3	30%
America's Choice	23	5	22%
JBHM	41	4	10%
Multiple Providers	44	1	2%
Evans Newton	3	0	0%

Seven schools were selected for ARRA-funded School Improvement Grants (SIG) in 2010-11, and all seven used their funding to hire a school improvement provider. None of the schools was removed from school improvement, but one school, Trusty Elementary in Fort Smith, made AYP.

Four of the SIG schools greatly outpaced the state's average proficiency gain for the year: J.A. Fair High, Osceola Middle, Osceola High and Trusty Elementary. Of those, three contracted with JBHM and Renaissance Learning and one contracted with America's Choice. Two schools had significant declines in proficiency: Cloverdale Middle and Rose City Middle. Both schools as well as Hall High, which saw little change, contracted with America's Choice. Because the SIG funding was distributed late in the 2010-11 school year with little time for full implementation, ADE decided to award all first-year schools with a second year of funding. The department, however, has indicated it will expect results from any school applying for a third year of funding.

APPENDIX A

SEC. 1003. SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT.

(a) STATE RESERVATIONS- Each State shall reserve 2 percent of the amount the State receives under subpart 2 of part A for fiscal years 2002 and 2003, and 4 percent of the amount received under such subpart for fiscal years 2004 through 2007, to carry out subsection (b) and to carry out the State's responsibilities under sections 1116 and 1117, including carrying out the State educational agency's statewide system of technical assistance and support for local educational agencies.

(b) USES- Of the amount reserved under subsection (a) for any fiscal year, the State educational agency —

(1) shall allocate not less than 95 percent of that amount directly to local educational agencies for schools identified for school improvement, corrective action, and restructuring, for activities under section 1116(b); or

(2) may, with the approval of the local educational agency, directly provide for these activities or arrange for their provision through other entities such as school support teams or educational service agencies.

(c) PRIORITY- The State educational agency, in allocating funds to local educational agencies under this section, shall give priority to local educational agencies that —

(1) serve the lowest-achieving schools;

(2) demonstrate the greatest need for such funds; and

(3) demonstrate the strongest commitment to ensuring that such funds are used to enable the lowest-achieving schools to meet the progress goals in school improvement plans under section 1116 (b)(3)(A)(v).

(d) UNUSED FUNDS- If, after consultation with local educational agencies in the State, the State educational agency determines that the amount of funds reserved to carry out subsection (b) is greater than the amount needed to provide the assistance described in that subsection, the State educational agency shall allocate the excess amount to local educational agencies in accordance with —

(1) the relative allocations the State educational agency made to those agencies for that fiscal year under subpart 2 of part A; or

(2) section 1126(c).

(e) SPECIAL RULE- Notwithstanding any other provision of this section, the amount of funds reserved by the State educational agency under subsection (a) in any fiscal year shall not decrease the amount of funds each local educational agency receives under subpart 2 below the amount received by such local educational agency under such subpart for the preceding fiscal year.

(f) REPORTING- The State educational agency shall make publicly available a list of those schools that have received funds or services pursuant to subsection (b) and the percentage of students from each school from families with incomes below the poverty line.

(g) ASSISTANCE FOR LOCAL SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT-

(1) PROGRAM AUTHORIZED- The Secretary shall award grants to States to enable the States to provide subgrants to local educational agencies for the purpose of providing assistance for school improvement consistent with section 1116.

(2) STATE ALLOTMENTS- Such grants shall be allotted among States, the Bureau of Indian Affairs, and the outlying areas, in proportion to the funds received by the States, the Bureau of Indian Affairs, and the outlying areas, respectively, for the fiscal year under parts A, C, and D of this title. The Secretary shall expeditiously allot a portion of such funds to States for the purpose of assisting local educational agencies and schools that were in school improvement status on the date preceding the date of enactment of the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001.

(3) REALLOCATIONS- If a State does not receive funds under this subsection, the Secretary shall reallocate such funds to other States in the same proportion funds are allocated under paragraph (2).

(4) STATE APPLICATIONS- Each State educational agency that desires to receive funds under this subsection shall submit an application to the Secretary at such time, and containing such information, as the Secretary shall reasonably require, except that such requirement shall be waived if a State educational agency submitted such information as part of its State plan under this part. Each State application shall describe how the State educational agency will allocate such funds in order to assist the State educational agency and local educational agencies in complying with school improvement, corrective action, and restructuring requirements of section 1116.

(5) LOCAL EDUCATIONAL AGENCY GRANTS- A grant to a local educational agency under this subsection shall be —

(A) of sufficient size and scope to support the activities required under sections 1116 and 1117, but not less than \$50,000 and not more than \$500,000 for each participating school;

(B) integrated with other funds awarded by the State under this Act; and

(C) renewable for two additional 1-year periods if schools are meeting the goals in their school improvement plans developed under section 1116.

(6) PRIORITY- The State, in awarding such grants, shall give priority to local educational agencies with the lowest-achieving schools that demonstrate —

(A) the greatest need for such funds; and

(B) the strongest commitment to ensuring that such funds are used to provide adequate resources to enable the lowest-achieving schools to meet the goals under school and local educational agency improvement, corrective action, and restructuring plans under section 1116.

(7) ALLOCATION- A State educational agency that receives a grant under this subsection shall allocate at least 95 percent of the grant funds directly to local educational agencies for schools identified for school improvement, corrective action, or restructuring to carry out activities under section 1116(b), or may, with the approval of the local educational agency, directly provide for these activities or arrange for their provision through other entities such as school support teams or educational service agencies.

(8) ADMINISTRATIVE COSTS- A State educational agency that receives a grant award under this subsection may reserve not more than 5 percent of such grant funds for administration, evaluation, and technical assistance expenses.

(9) LOCAL AWARDS- Each local educational agency that applies for assistance under this subsection shall describe how it will provide the lowest-achieving schools the resources necessary to meet goals under school and local educational agency improvement, corrective action, and restructuring plans under section 1116.

APPENDIX B

Year Removed	School	Previous Year School Improvement Status	School Improvement Provider
2007	Gardner-Strong Elementary	Year 4	America's Choice
2007	McRae Middle School in Prescott	Year 3	America's Choice
2008	Heber Springs Middle	Year 3	No Service
2008	Eudora Elementary	Year 3	JBHM
2008	Moody Elementary in White Hall	Year 3	No Service
2009	Cedar Park Elementary, Trumann	Year 5	America's Choice
2009	Blevins Elementary, Blevins	Year 4	America's Choice
2009	North Elementary, Osceola	Year 4	No Service
2009	East Elementary, Osceola	Year 4	America's Choice
2009	West Elementary, Osceola	Year 4	No Service
2009	Peake Elementary, Arkadelphia	Year 3	No Service
2009	S.C. Tucker Elementary, Danville	Year 3	No Service
2009	Anne Watson Elementary, East End	Year 3	No Service
2009	LePanto Elementary, East Poinsett	Year 3	No Service
2010	Wonder Elementary, West Memphis	Year 6	E2E
2010	Luxora Elementary, South Mississippi County	Year 5	E2E and Arkansas Leadership Academy School Support
2010	Gibbs Albright Elementary, Newport	Year 5	America's Choice and Arkansas Leadership Academy's School Support
2010	Fordyce Elementary, Fordyce	Year 4	Arkansas Leadership Academy's School Support
2010	Allbritton Upper Elementary*	Year 4	No Service
2010	Mineral Springs Elementary, Mineral Springs	Year 4	No service
2010	Paragould Junior High, Paragould	Year 4	JBHM
2010	Sheridan Elementary, Sheridan	Year 4	No Service
2010	Rector High, Rector	Year 3	No Service
2010	Sheridan Intermediate, Sheridan	Year 3	No Service
2010	Morrilton Junior High, South Conway County	Year 3	No Service
2010	Star City Middle, Star City	Year 3	No Service
2010	Weaver Elementary, West Memphis	Year 3	E2E
2010	Dunbar Middle, Earle**	Year 3	No Service
2011	Gosnell Elementary, Gosnell	Year 6	JBHM
2011	Landmark Elementary, Pulaski County Spec.	Year 6	Arkansas Leadership Academy School Support Program
2011	Morrison Elementary, Fort Smith	Year 5	JBHM
2011	Stewart Elementary, Forrest City***	Year 4	America's Choice
2011	Manila Elementary, Manila	Year 4	JBHM
2011	Nashville Elementary, Nashville	Year 4	No Service
2011	Jacksonville Elementary, Pulaski County Spec.	Year 4	No Service
2011	L.F. Henderson Intermediate, Ashdown	Year 3	No Service
2011	Gurdon Primary, Gurdon	Year 3	No Service
2011	Oak Grove Middle, Paragould	Year 3	No Service

* Allbritton Upper Elementary received between \$17,000 and \$26,000 worth of services each year from JP Associates, but these expenditures did not meet the year of service criteria established for this report.

** Dunbar Middle School received \$31,250 worth of services from ECS, but these expenditures did not meet the year of service criteria established for this report.

*** Stewart Elementary received \$43,012 in services from E2E, but these expenditures did not meet the year of service criteria established for this report.