



# ARKANSAS DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

**For Immediate Release**  
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LITTLE ROCK: Arkansas placed tenth in the nation in Quality Counts, the annual report by Washington-based Education Week that ranks the 50 states and the District of Columbia based on education policies and student achievement. Overall, the state earned a 79.6 (B-minus), about five points behind top-scoring Maryland, which had an 84.7 (B).

Quality Counts 2009 was released today in print and at [www.edweek.org](http://www.edweek.org). The national rankings are available only online at [www.edweek.org](http://www.edweek.org).

“Ranking in the top 10 nationally is a tribute to the efforts this state has made to improve our public education system,” Arkansas Commissioner of Education Ken James said. “Yet, as we continue to say, we must not get too comfortable with this news. As a state, we can’t afford to quit striving to become better. We must remain diligent, use our resources in the wisest and most research-proven ways possible and keep the goal of educating our children to compete in today’s global economy uppermost in our minds.”

Only three of the six categories the publication assessed last year were reevaluated for a grade 2009: Chance for Success, Transitions and Alignment and School Finance. These grades are bolded in the chart below; the others reflect the 2008 grades.

Category	Arkansas	United States
<b>Overall</b>	<b>B-</b>	<b>C</b>
<b>Chance for Success</b>	<b>C-</b>	<b>C+</b>
K-12 Achievement	D	D+
Standards, Assessments and Accountability	B+	B
<b>Transitions and Alignment</b>	<b>B</b>	<b>C</b>
The Teaching Profession	B+	C
<b>Finance</b>	<b>C</b>	<b>C+</b>

The issue also collected data, much of it for the first time on a national basis, about the population of English Language Learners. “This is very encouraging to have the issues this population both presents and faces brought into the national focus in such a detailed manner,” Dr. James said. No grades were issued in this

area, and, for the most part, the state's policies were in line with the national norm.

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***The Arkansas Department of Education strives to ensure that all children in the state have access to a quality education by providing educators, administrators and staff with leadership, resources and training.***