

2007 Arkansas School Performance Report



THE ARKANSAS DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
DIVISION OF ACADEMIC ACCOUNTABILITY
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UNDERSTANDING the 2007 Arkansas School Performance Report

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THE ARKANSAS DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

Office of Public School Academic Accountability
2007 Performance Report

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THE ARKANSAS DEPARTMENT OF

Education 

The Office of Public School Academic Accountability gathers and publishes information based on legislative mandates. The core of the Arkansas Performance Report consists of specific statistical performance information. This information is organized into seven essential accountability indicators that every parent needs to know about their child's school. For more information, contact Dr. Charity Smith, Assistant Commissioner, Division of Public School Academic Accountability at (501) 682-1298.

Accountability Indicator 1: ACHIEVEMENT

Achievement is measured by state and national assessments. State assessments include the Benchmarks and End-of-Course Criterion-Referenced Exams. National assessments include the Iowa Test of Basic Skills Norm-Referenced Exam and the American College Test (ACT). The Achievement Section includes participation in Advanced Placement classes and the No Child Left Behind Adequate Yearly Progress.

Accountability Indicator 2: ACCESS

Access is measured by state enrollment by grade, annual accreditation status, attendance rate, dropout rate, graduation rate, grade inflation rate, college remediation rate and October 1 enrollment.

Accountability Indicator 3: RETENTION

Retention is the number and percentage of students retained for each grade.

Accountability Indicator 4: DISCIPLINE

Discipline is an indicator of school climate and includes discipline policies distributed to parents, disciplinary training for staff, parental involvement plans, the number of serious incidents, and district alternative learning environment compliance.

Accountability Indicator 5: DEMOGRAPHICS

Demographic data about schools includes contextual information about teaching quality, teacher licensure and school board member training.

Accountability Indicator 6: CHOICE

Choice data describes the percentage of students choosing to go to another district.

Accountability Indicator 7: ECONOMIC

Economic includes mills voted, expenditure per student, teacher salaries, school expenditures, and free and reduced lunch rates.

Arkansas Ranks 8th in Nation on the 2008 Annual Quality Counts Report Published by Education Week

- The U.S Department of Education in 2007 recognized Arkansas as being at the forefront in implementing rigorous learning standards for students. In a study mapping standards for proficiency on the Arkansas Benchmark Exam to the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) standards for fourth and eighth grade literacy and mathematics, Arkansas ranked as high as fourth and consistently ranked in the top 10 for all four tests. In a June 2007 Op-Ed piece, U.S. Secretary of Education Margaret Spellings wrote: "States that have shown true leadership, such as Arkansas and Massachusetts, can inspire others to act."
- Arkansas is recognized as a leader in the high school redesign movement, being one of 10 states to receive a \$2 million matching grant from the National Governors Association.
- The College Board touts the "Arkansas Model" for the state's policies regarding Advanced Placement (AP) classes. Arkansas requires that all high schools offer AP classes in the four core areas – math, English, science and social studies – by the 2008-2009 school year. The state also pays for AP exams at the end of courses for students. These measures prompted Arkansas to have the largest increase in students taking AP exams in AP history (a 108 percent increase from 2004 to 2005). In 2006, only New Hampshire tied with Arkansas for having the largest increase in students scoring a 3, 4 or 5 on AP exams on the 1-5 scale. Participation rates and the number of students scoring a 3 or higher on AP exams continued to climb in 2007.
- The National Math and Science Initiative (NMSI) awarded Arkansas in August 2007 a \$13.2 million, six-year grant to allow schools to implement research-proven training and incentive methods to improve the performance of students in Advanced Placement and Pre-AP courses so that they are better prepared for college-level work in math, science and engineering. Only seven states received the NMSI grants.
- Arkansas is considered a leader in terms of implementing technology in the education system, being one of the first states to develop individual student identifiers. This process provides a longitudinal tracking system for academic achievement as well as electronic transcripts that follow students through Arkansas public schools into the state's higher education system. Arkansas was one of 14 states selected to receive a U.S. Department of Education grant (\$3.2 million) to further these efforts and was lauded for achieving the majority of the 10 elements the department said were necessary for a quality data system.

Questions to consider about your child's school:

1. Is the percentage of students scoring at grade level higher or lower than overall district and state averages?
2. How does the attendance rate compare with that of the district?
3. How does the percentage of certified teachers at the school compare with the overall statewide percentage?
4. Are policies used to ensure a safe learning environment?
5. Are there specific areas in which the school performed better than the overall district and state averages?

Questions to discuss in your community:

1. What is being done to increase school performance?
2. What can I do to help the school improve?
3. What can I do to help my child increase his/her academic achievement?
4. What kind of parental activities are offered at the school, and how do I get involved?
5. Has the performance of the school improved or declined?
6. How can the local community support school improvement and student achievement in my district?

Dear Parents:

The Arkansas Department of Education is pleased to provide the 2007 Arkansas School Performance Report. This publication contains detailed statistical information about Arkansas' public schools. The purpose of this report is to provide you with reliable information about the performance of your child's school, as well as other schools in your community, state and nation. I encourage you to carefully review the information and contact your school with specific questions or concerns.

It is the intent of the Governor, the Arkansas General Assembly and the Arkansas State Board of Education to showcase performance and accountability in our schools, and we hope that this report will empower parents to become more engaged in the process.

The majority of the data presented in the report is a result of requirements contained in the Arkansas Comprehensive Testing, Assessment and Accountability Program (ACTAAP). ACTAAP has been the most important blueprint for educational reform in our state and is anchored by two initiatives – Smart Start (Grades K-4) and Smart Step (Grades 5-8.)

If you need additional information about the Arkansas School Performance Report, please contact your local school administrator.



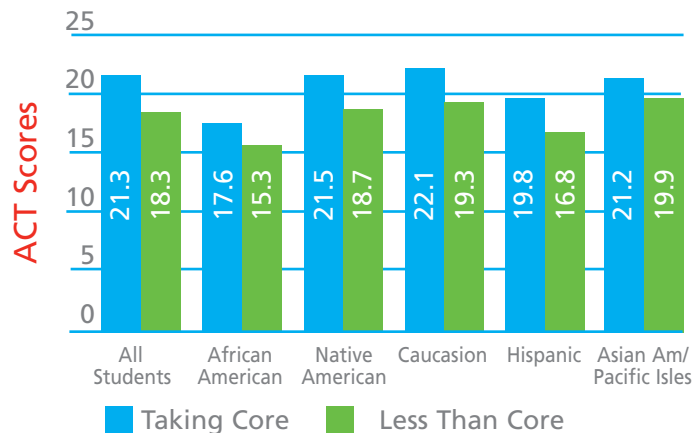
T. Kenneth James, Ed.D.
Commissioner, Arkansas Department of Education

Core Curriculum

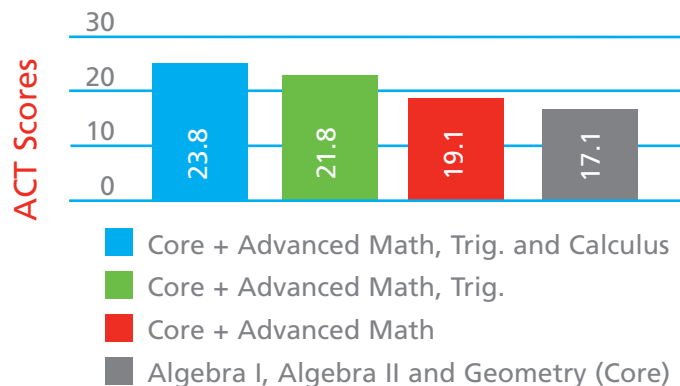
Improves Student Performance on the ACT:

Arkansas students who take the recommended core courses or more continue to perform better on ACT compared with students who take less than the recommended core. The recommended core courses, according to ACT, include four years or more of English, three years or more of math, three years or more of social studies, and three years or more of natural sciences.

2007 Arkansas ACT Scores Taking Core Compared with Taking Less Than Core



2007 Arkansas ACT Math Scores Increased by Taking Advanced Courses



Definitions

President George Bush signed the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act in January 2002. The legislation mandates increased accountability for states, school districts and schools; greater choice for parents and students, particularly those attending low-performing schools; more flexibility for school districts and schools in the use of federal education dollars; and a stronger emphasis on reading.

The NCLB Act requires that student performance be reported for all students, which is referred to in this document as the Combined Population, as well as for students in several other categories or subgroups. The subgroups include African-American students, Hispanic students and Caucasian students, as well as economically disadvantaged students, students with disabilities, and students who are limited English proficient. Results are also reported for migrant students, who are students who change schools throughout the year, often crossing school districts and state lines, to follow their families who seek work in agriculture, fishing, dairies, logging or the food processing industry. Performance results are also reported for male and female students.

NCLB also requires that at least 95 percent of a school's students be tested using the state's exams. This figure is one of the factors used in determining a school's performance.

INDICATOR 1: ACHIEVEMENT

ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE LEVELS FOR CRITERION-REFERENCED TEST

Student performance on the Benchmark, End-of-Course and the Grade 11 Literacy Exams is reported by performance levels. Listed below are the four performance levels and a brief definition for each one.

Advanced: Advanced students demonstrate superior performance well beyond proficient grade-level performance. They can apply Arkansas's established reading, writing and mathematics skills to solve complex problems and complete demanding tasks on their own. They can make insightful connections between abstract and concrete ideas and provide well-supported explanations and arguments.

Proficient: Proficient students demonstrate solid academic performance for the grade tested and are well prepared for the next level of schooling. They can use Arkansas established reading, writing and mathematics skills and knowledge to solve problems and complete tasks on their own. Students can tie ideas together and explain the ways their ideas are connected.

Basic: Basic students show substantial skills in reading, writing and mathematics; however, they only partially demonstrate the abilities to apply these skills. They demonstrate a need for some additional assistance, commitment or study to reach the proficient level.

Below Basic: Below Basic students fail to show sufficient mastery of skills in reading, writing and mathematics to attain the basic level.

Note: The numbers posted for the Benchmark, End-of-Course and Grade 11 Literacy Exams indicate the percent of students scoring at each of the four performance levels, as well as those students scoring at proficient and advanced. In the Benchmark graphs, in some instances because of rounding, "Below Proficiency" added to "At or Above Proficiency" may not equal 100 percent. Blanks in this report indicate that this information was not available at the time of printing; does not apply to a specific school's grade levels; or the number of students tested was less than 40. As additional information becomes available, it will be published on http://arkansased.org/performance_report/index.html.

ARKANSAS BENCHMARK EXAMS

This number shows the percent of students performing at each of the four performance levels, as well as those students scoring at or above proficient, on the Arkansas Benchmark Exams. The exams are written and designed by the testing contractor in partnership with teachers and the Arkansas Department of Education for Arkansas schools. The exams are administered to students in Grades 3-8 in the areas of reading/literacy and mathematics. Results from the Benchmark Exams show how well a student is doing at a particular stage of the student's schooling.

END-OF-COURSE EXAMS

The End-of-Course Exams are administered to students at the end of a course to determine whether the student demonstrates attainment of knowledge and skills necessary for mastery of that subject. End-of-Course Exams are given in algebra I and geometry.

GRADE 11 LITERACY EXAM

This exam is administered to students completing Grade 11. The exam is given in March of each year.

NORM-REFERENCED TEST (ITBS)

The Iowa Test of Basic Skills (ITBS) was administered to Arkansas students in Grades 5 and 9 in the 2003-2004 school year and Grades K-9 in later years. The ITBS compares Arkansas's student performance with the performance of a sample of students from across the country. The results are reported by percentile ranging from a low of 1 to a high of 99. The 50th percentile represents the national average, or the point above which half of the national sample scored. This figure indicates the average performance. Students in Grade 5 were tested in the areas of reading comprehension, mathematics concepts and estimation, and mathematics problem solving and data interpretation. In Grade 9, students were tested on reading comprehension and mathematics concepts and problem solving.

AMERICAN COLLEGE TEST (ACT)

This number shows the average scores of high school seniors taking the American College Test (ACT). The ACT score ranges from 1 to 36. Most public colleges and universities in Arkansas require the ACT as part of their admissions process. The average scores are for mathematics and English, as well as an overall composite score. Students have more than one opportunity to take the exam. The data reported here is for the best test scores for the students in the graduating class.

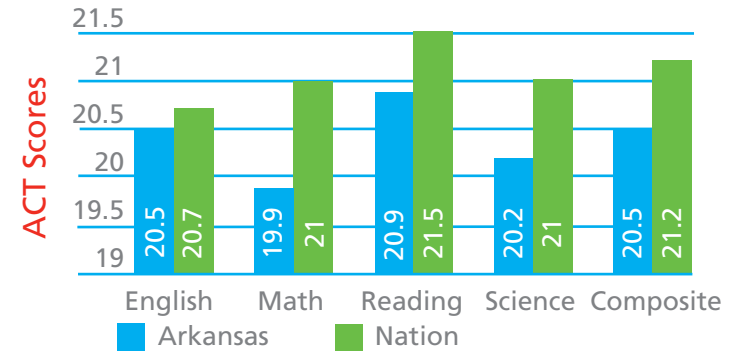
ADVANCED PLACEMENT CLASSES

These figures indicate the number of students who are enrolled in Advanced Placement (AP) classes, and the number of AP exams taken. AP exams are given at the completion of an AP class. Also reported is the number of AP exams with scores of 3 or above. Students must score a 3 or better in order to be eligible to receive college credit for the course.

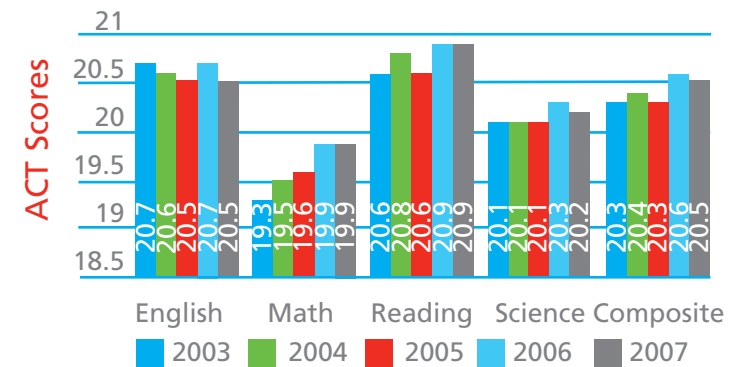
ADEQUATE YEARLY PROGRESS (AYP)

NCLB requires each state to define Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) for school districts and schools using student performance data and a non-academic indicator. The state's goals must be set based on student performance on the assessment system. AYP is defined as the increase in the percentage of students becoming proficient who will move the school toward the goal of 100 percent proficient by the year 2014.

2007 National ACT Score Comparisons



Arkansas ACT Scores Five Year Trend



ACT 35 Annual School Ratings System

The Act 35 Annual School Rating System was designed for the purpose of improving student achievement through school accountability and recognition. As required, the rating system will be based on the tests included in the Arkansas Comprehension Testing, Assessment and Accountability Program (ACTAAP).

Act 35, §6-15-1901 (c), requires that each school be classified into "two (2) category levels" as follows:

"Category One" for the "school's improvement gains" tracked longitudinally using value-added calculation known as the annual improvement category level and,

"Category Two" based on "performance from the prior year" referred to as "the annual performance category" (or "status").

The Standards Setting for Category One will be completed in the Spring of 2008. The Annual School Rating System will be finalized for both categories in 2009-10.

How Category One (Gains) Will Be Calculated

1. Student growth is based upon changes in student performance levels across two adjacent years.
2. To assess annual changes more precisely, each student performance level (Below Basic, Basic, Proficient, and Advanced) will be split into two sub-categories. (Below Basic 1, Below Basic 2, Basic 1, Basic 2, Proficient 1, Proficient 2, Advanced 1, and Advanced 2)
3. If student achievement improves, value is added. No value is added if instruction does not move a student's achievement from a given performance category to a higher performance category. If a student's achievement moves to a lower performance category, then value is lost.

Schools will be classified in one of the following categories in Category One (gains).

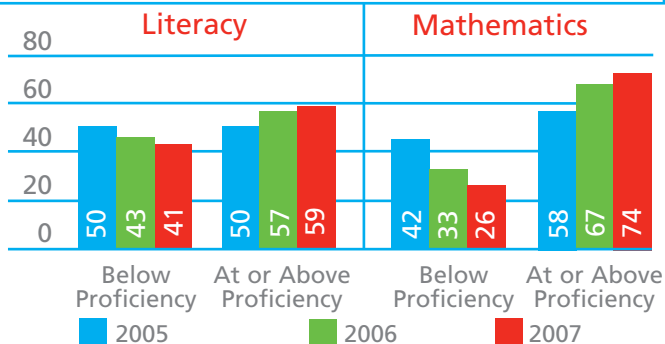
- Level 1 – Schools in need of immediate improvement
- Level 2 – Schools on alert
- Level 3 – Schools meeting improvement standards
- Level 4 – Schools exceeding improvement standards
- Level 5 – Schools of excellence for improvement

How Category Two (Status) Will Be Calculated

Multiply the number of students (20) by the points assigned to the category (4) to get the points produced by the students in the Advanced category. Add up the points for each category. Divide the total points for the school (260) by the number of students (100) to get a rating score (2.6), meeting standards.

Number of Students	Categories	Points Assigned to Categories	Total
20	Advanced	4	80
30	Proficient	3	90
40	Basic	2	80
10	Below Basic	1	10
Total Points for the school for all categories			260
Cut Score	Performance Category	Rating	
3.23 - 4.0	Schools of excellence	5	
2.79 - 3.22	Schools exceeding the standards	4	
2.21 - 2.78	Schools meeting standards	3	
1.719 - 2.20	Schools approaching the standards (alert)	2	
1.0 - 1.718	Schools in need of immediate improvement	1	

Arkansas Benchmark (Grade 3)



Combined Population.

This is the third year for Benchmark Grade 3.

Aside from the academic performance of a school's students, a school can be placed in "School Improvement" if less than 95 percent of eligible students were tested or the school did not meet the secondary indicator. For elementary and middle schools, the secondary indicator was student attendance. At the high school level, the secondary indicator was the graduation rate. A school designated as Year One of School Improvement did not make AYP for two consecutive years. Corrective Action is shown for a school that did not make AYP for four consecutive years. Restructuring is shown for a school that did not make AYP for five or more consecutive years.

INDICATOR 2: ACCESS

ANNUAL ACCREDITATION STATUS

Accredited means that a school complies with the standards set by the State Board of Education.

Accredited-Cited status is assigned for teacher licensure deficiencies, improper class sizes caused by population shifts and failure to provide required reports. Probationary status can be assigned for failure to correct a cited violation by the given deadline, improper class sizes not caused by population shifts, failure to teach required courses or align courses with content standards, teacher licensure deficiencies, failure to employ the required staff, lack of required written policies, failure to file an Equity Compliance Report and failure to provide the required guidance, health, media, special education or gifted and talented programs.

ATTENDANCE RATE

This number indicates the average percentage of students actually attending school on any given day during the school year.

DROPOUT RATE

This figure is the percentage of students dropping out of school in Grades 7-12 from October of one school year to October of the next school year. Beginning with the 2003-04 school year, students who enter a GED program are considered as dropout students. The change is part of the mandates of NCLB.

GRADUATION RATE

This number indicates the percentage of students enrolled during Grades 9-12 and completing Grade 12. The graduation rate reflects the NCLB requirement to count GED students as dropouts.

GRADE INFLATION RATE

This figure reports the statistical gap between actual grades assigned for core classes at the high school level and student performance in corresponding subjects on ACT.

COLLEGE REMEDIATION RATE

This number indicates the percentage of incoming college freshmen who would have to take a remedial course or courses at an Arkansas college or university based on their performance on the mathematics and English sections of the ACT.

OCTOBER 1 ENROLLMENT

This number indicates the number of students enrolled on October 1.

INDICATOR 3: RETENTION

STUDENT RETENTION

These figures indicate the number and the percentage of students retained for each grade for Grades 1-8.

INDICATOR 4: DISCIPLINE

SCHOOL DISCIPLINE

This information indicates whether the school's discipline policy has been distributed to parents and whether the school's staff has received training concerning the discipline policy. Another notation in this section indicates whether a school has adopted a parental involvement plan. The number shown for expulsions indicates the percentage of students who have been expelled from school during the school year.

The next numbers indicate the percentage of school-related incidents involving students that occurred at the school. These include students possessing weapons, assaulting staff members and assaulting other students. The district's Alternative Learning Environment (ALE) compliance status indicates if the ALE is conducive to learning, and provides intervention services designed to address individual needs of students.

INDICATOR 5: DEMOGRAPHICS

TEACHING STAFF

The first number indicates the percentage of teachers at the school who have a valid Arkansas teaching license and teach in the area(s) for which they hold the license. When schools employ teachers for more than 30 days who are not fully qualified (licensed), the schools are required to request a waiver from the State Board of Education to continue to employ those teachers. The percent of teachers teaching out of area represents the number of waivers divided by the number of certified (licensed) staff. This category also shows the percentage of teachers who have a bachelor's degree, a master's degree, or an advanced degree. The percent of (Core Academic) Classes Not Taught by Highly Qualified Teachers is divided into three sections. The first section has information for high poverty schools – those with 75 percent or more students receiving free and reduced-price lunches. The second section is for low poverty schools – those with 25 percent or less receiving free and reduced-price lunches. The third section is an aggregate of all economic levels. Highly Qualified Teachers have at least a bachelor's degree, are licensed and demonstrate content knowledge in the subject area(s) taught.

SCHOOL BOARD MEMBER TRAINING

This section lists the School District Board of Directors and the hours of training and instruction they have received in school-related topics.

INDICATOR 6: CHOICE

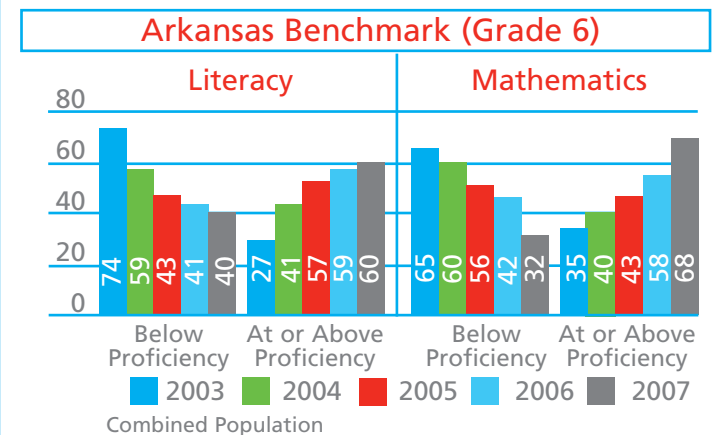
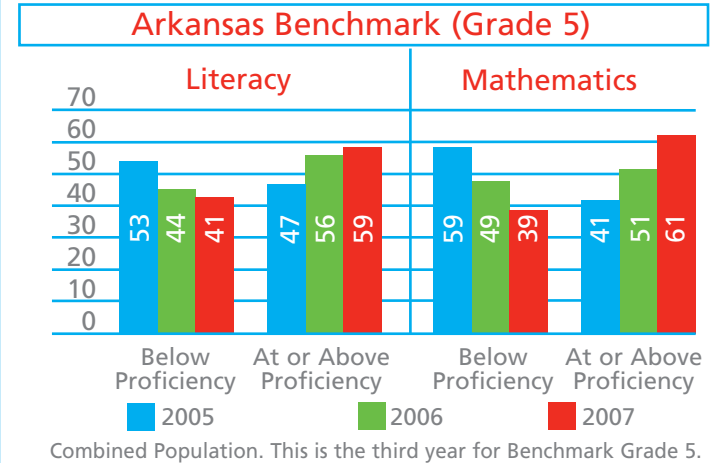
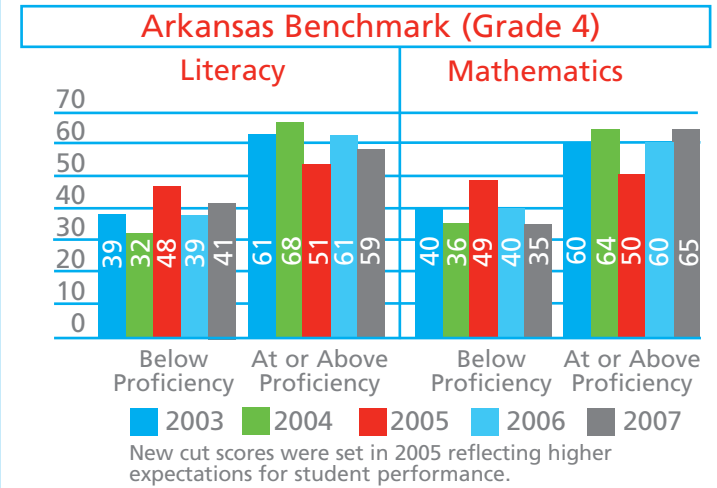
PERCENT OF STUDENTS OBTAINED THROUGH SCHOOL CHOICE

This number indicates the percentage of students who reside in another district, but are attending this school as part of the Arkansas Public School Choice Act.

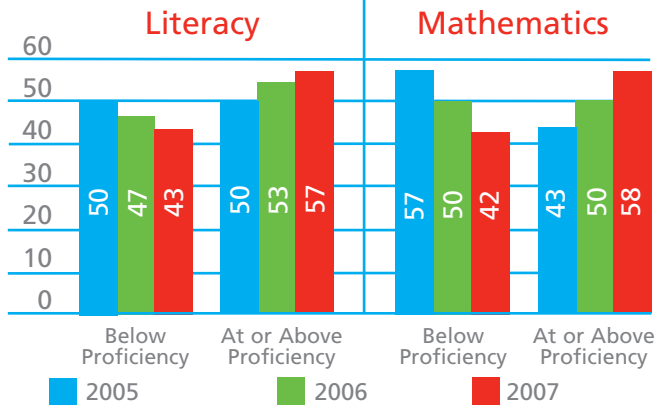
INDICATOR 7: ECONOMIC

TAXPAYER INVESTMENT

The district's millage rate is the tax rate approved for the district by the voters in the last annual school election.

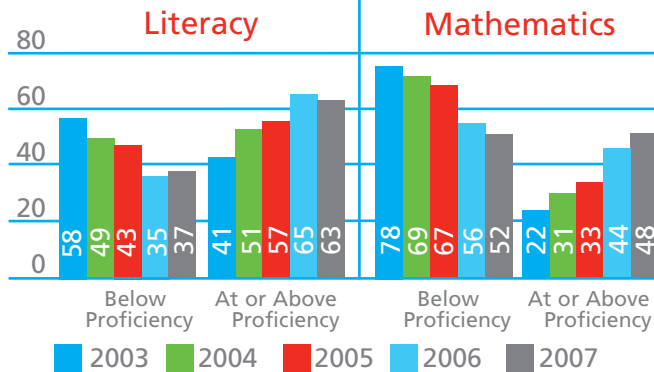


Arkansas Benchmark (Grade 7)



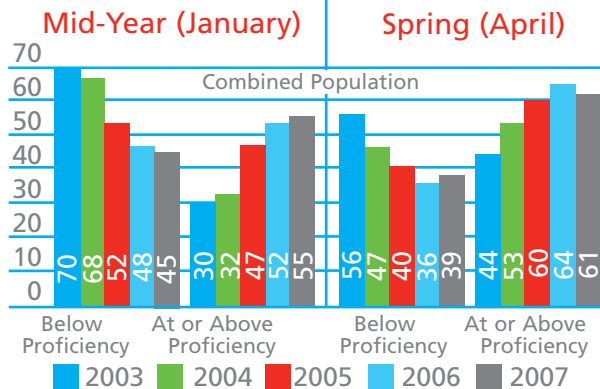
Combined Population. This is the third year for Benchmark Grade 7.

Arkansas Benchmark (Grade 8)



Combined Population

Arkansas Algebra I



SCHOOL EXPENDITURES

The expenditure per student shows how much money the school spends for each student. Average teacher salary figure shows the average annual salary of staff members who have an Arkansas teaching license. The next number indicates the total expenditures for the school and district. Extracurricular expenses pay for activities that are not part of the required curriculum. Capital expenditures are for land, buildings, vehicles and equipment that should last more than a year. Debt service expenditures are for payment of principal and interest on long-term debt.

PERCENT OF STUDENTS ELIGIBLE FOR FREE AND REDUCED-PRICE MEALS

This number indicates the percentage of students at the school eligible to receive free and reduced-price meals.

NATIONAL ACHIEVEMENT RANKING

Quality Counts is a nationally respected assessment of educational progress. Arkansas ranked eighth in the nation in the Achievement Index developed for the 2008 edition of Quality Counts, which is published annually by the Washington-based *Education Week*. Arkansas was second only to South Carolina in the survey's measurement of teachers.

THE INTERNATIONAL BACCALAUREATE PROGRAM

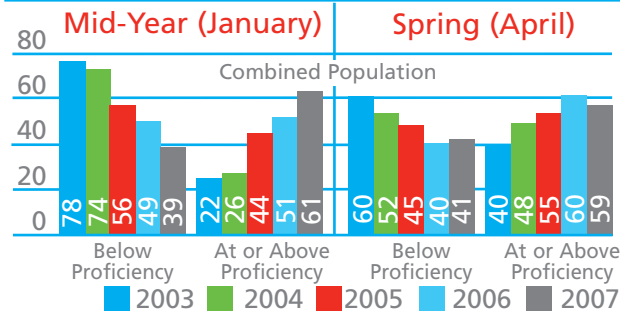
The International Baccalaureate (IB) Diploma Program is a challenging, high quality, two-year curriculum. It leads to a qualification that is widely recognized by the world's universities. Students completing this program can be awarded the full Diploma of Certificates of merit in individual subjects. North Little Rock High School West participates in this college preparatory program. Results in core subjects for May 2007 are listed below:

Subject	Number of Candidates	Average Grade School	Average Grade World-Wide	Highest Grade School
ENGLISH A1 HL	35	5.00	4.78	7
HIST. AMERICAS HL in ENGLISH	32	4.20	4.49	6
BIOLOGY SL in ENGLISH	37	3.24	4.29	5
CHEMISTRY SL in ENGLISH	8	2.50	3.91	4
PHYSICS HL in ENGLISH	7	3.71	4.47	6
MATH STUDIES SL in ENGLISH	27	4.27	4.49	7
MATHEMATICS SL in ENGLISH	13	4.83	4.60	7

Note: The standard four-year adjusted cohort high school graduation rate for Arkansas, recommended by the National Governor's Association, was 71 percent for 2005-06 and was 76 percent for 2006-07. The method of calculating individual school and district graduation rates in this Arkansas School Performance Report uses a different formula.

Note: Data on this report is correct as of 02/15/2008. For more information, contact: Dr. Charity Smith, Assistant Commissioner, Division of Public School Academic Accountability at (501) 682-1298.

Arkansas Geometry



Arkansas Benchmark Grade 11 Literacy

