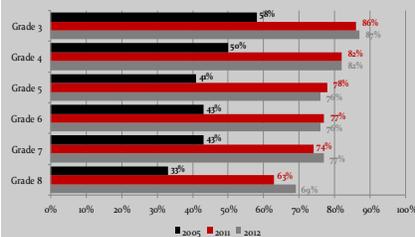




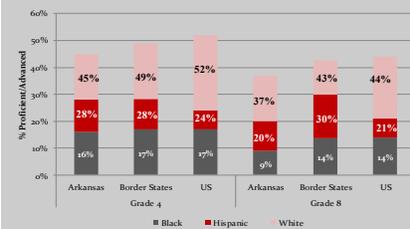
2012 Report Card on Arkansas Public Schools

Sections of this report:

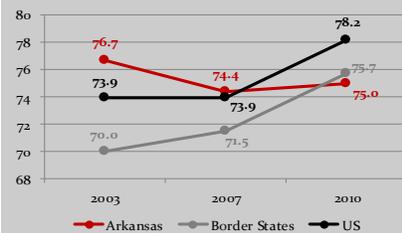
1. Standardized Tests



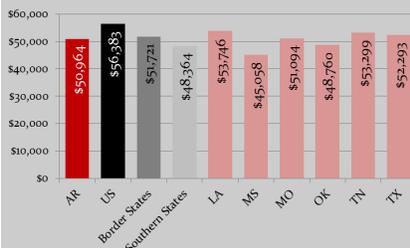
2-4. Achievement Gaps



5. Secondary and Beyond



6. Pre-/Secondary School and Teacher Characteristics



The OEP is pleased to bring you its *2012 Report Card* for Arkansas' public schools highlighting Arkansas' education performance and characteristics through the 2011-2012 academic year. This is the 5th year in a row we have produced an *Arkansas Report Card*. We hope this report is accessible and informative for educators and policymakers in the state. The charts and figures here are a reflection of the progress we have made as a state in the last decade. They also serve as a reminder that we still need improvement and reform to continue that progress.

A few good and bad highlights from the report:

- In general, more Arkansas students are scoring at proficient or advanced on both the Benchmark and End-of-Course state assessments each year. A general upward trend over the last several years continued into 2012.
- On the nationally-normed Iowa Test of Basic Skills (ITBS), Arkansas student performance in math and literacy has remained stagnant or declined since 2005
- The achievement gap between black students and non-blacks (including whites and Hispanics) as measured by the 2011 National Assessment of Education Progress (NAEP) is consistent between 4th and 8th grades, but is generally smaller than the overall US achievement gap.
- A low percentage of Arkansas students are academically ready for college as measured by the 2012 administration of the ACT. Students' college readiness is lower in Arkansas than in nearby states and in the nation.
- On average, Arkansas teachers earn comparable salaries to teachers in nearby states, and compared to the nation as a whole, when regional cost of living is taken into account.
- Arkansas has fewer 4-year-olds enrolled in preschool but spends more money per-preschool-pupil than bordering states and the nation.

Thank you for reading and we hope you enjoy!

1. Performance on Statewide Standardized Assessments



This section highlights overall student performance on the Arkansas Comprehensive Testing Assessment and Accountability Program (ACTAAP) 'benchmark exams' administered in Arkansas. The benchmark exams are the state-developed criterion-referenced assessment administered to students in grades 3 through 8 each year.

In 2012, proficiency rates for math and literacy increased or stayed the same in most grades. Slight declines in math performance occurred in grades 5 and 6 from 2011.

Figure 1.1: AR Benchmark: Percent Proficient and Advanced in Math, 2005, 2011, & 2012

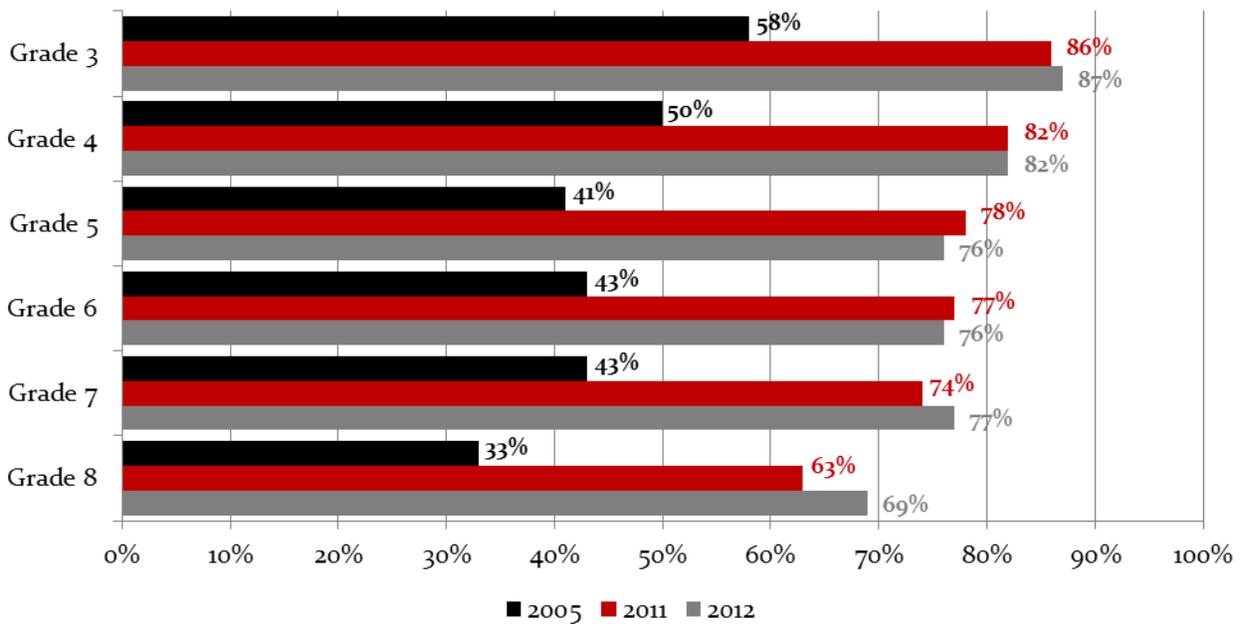
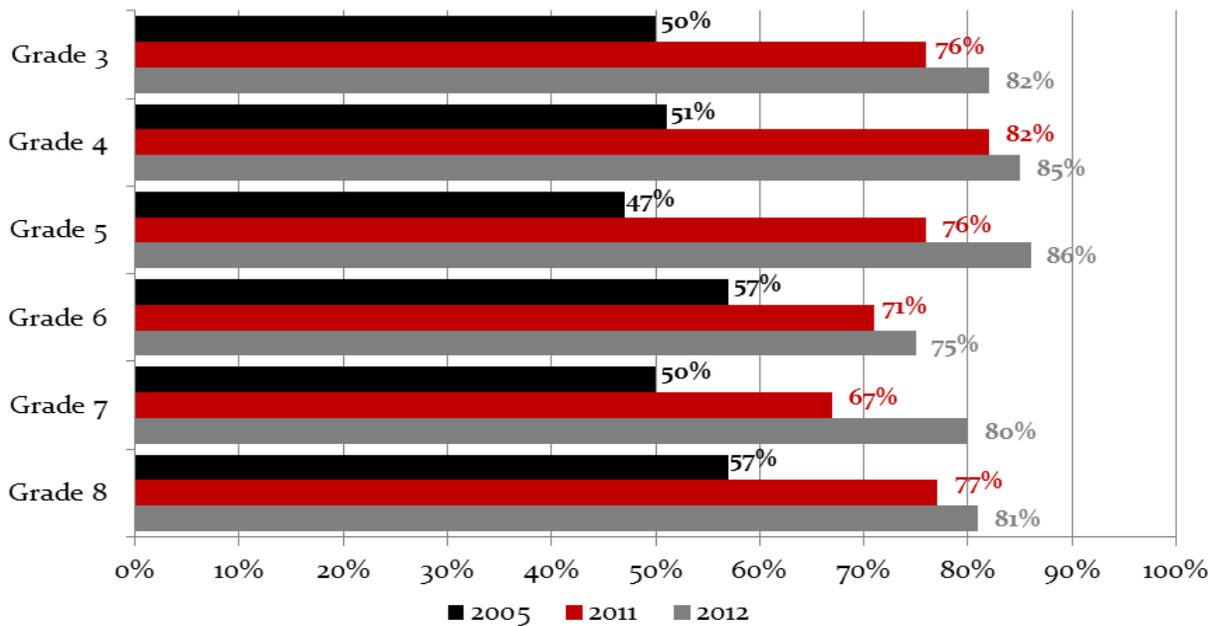


Figure 1.2: AR Benchmark: Percent Proficient and Advanced in Literacy, 2005, 2011, & 2012



2. Performance on National Standardized Assessments

The Arkansas Augmented Benchmark Exam contains items from the criterion-referenced (ACTAAP) exams in math, literacy, and science as well as a norm-referenced component achieved by folding in questions from the Iowa Test of Basic Skills (ITBS). The Arkansas Department of Education (ADE) reports separate ITBS data on student performance.

National Percentile Ranks (NPR) have declined or remained stagnant since 2005 in both math and literacy across the entire state, and in each geographic region in Arkansas.

Figure 2.1: *ITBS*: National Percentile Rank by Region in **Math**, 2005, 2011, & 2012

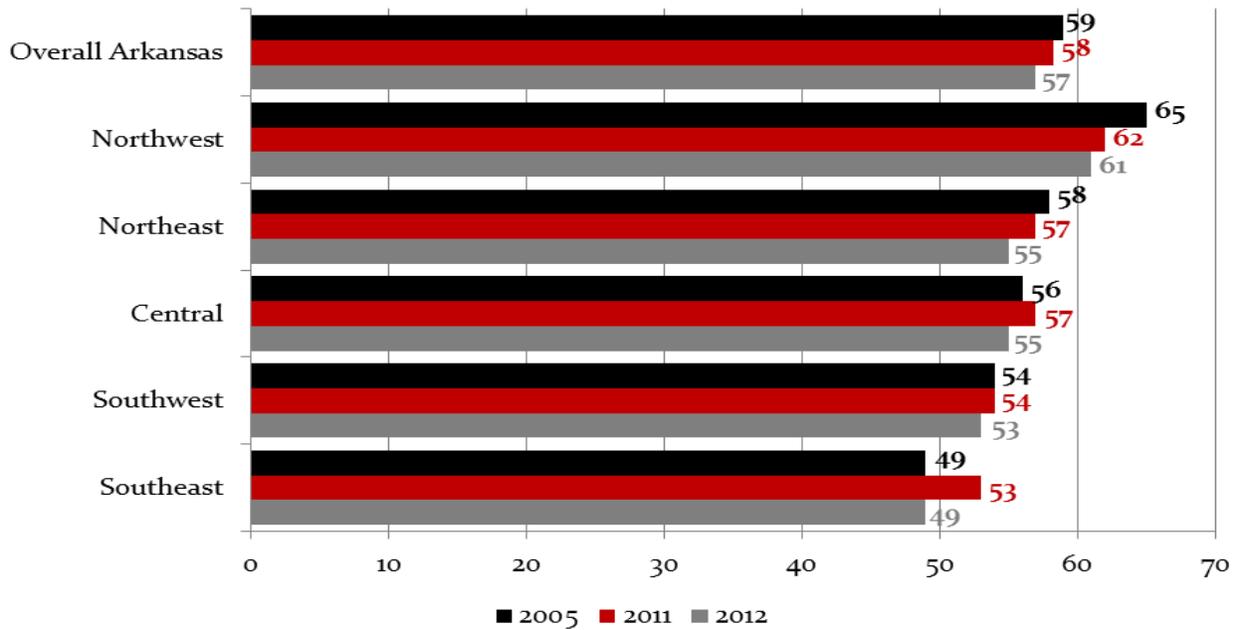
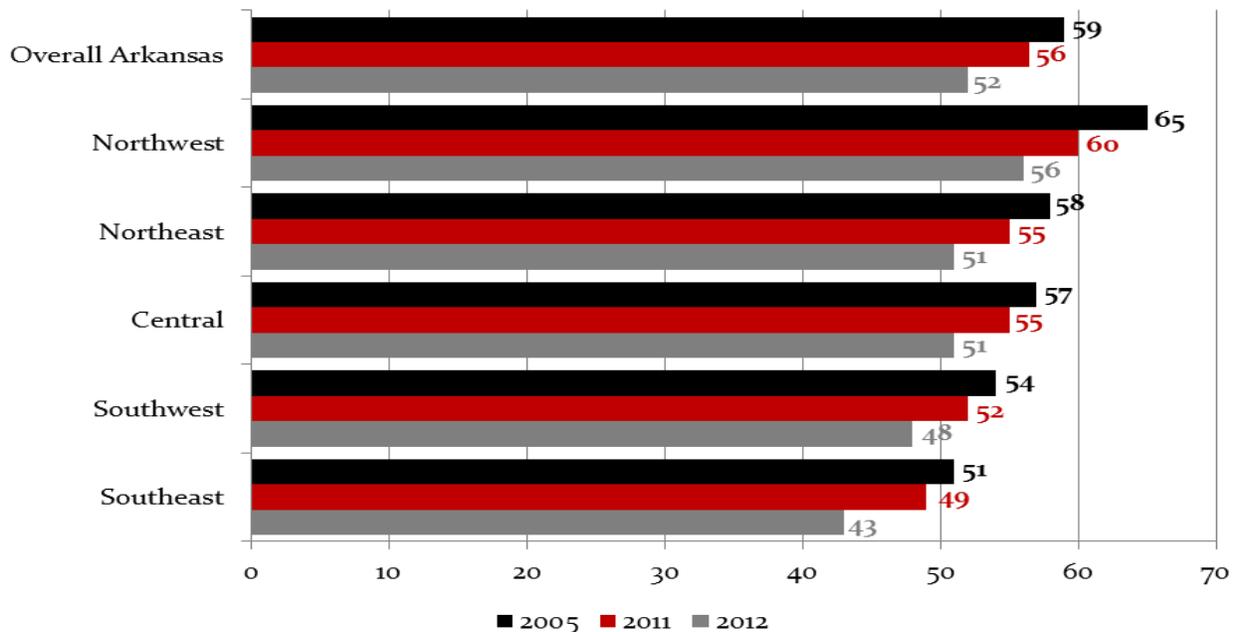


Figure 2.2: *ITBS*: National Percentile Rank by Region in **Literacy**, 2005, 2011, & 2012



3. Achievement Gaps on NAEP Math 2011



The NAEP, often called “The Nation’s Report Card”, is administered to a representative sample of Arkansas students in grades 4, 8, and 12 every other year. In the most recent administration of the NAEP (Spring 2011), math and reading subtests were given across the nation.

This section of the Report Card highlights **NAEP math performance** for student groups in two categories: race and poverty status.

Figure 3.1: NAEP Math Proficiency Rates for Selected Race/Ethnicities, 2011

In Arkansas, there is a racial achievement gap in NAEP **math** performance in grade 4 and in grade 8. However, despite this gap, grade 4 Hispanic students in Arkansas perform as well as their peers in the border states.

Further, more Hispanic students score at the proficient or advanced level on the NAEP **math** exam in Arkansas (28%) as compared to their Hispanic peers nationwide (24%).

The opposite is true in grade 8 with only 20% of Arkansas’ Hispanic students scoring at the proficient and advanced level on the NAEP **math** exam compared with 30% in the border states and 21% nationwide.

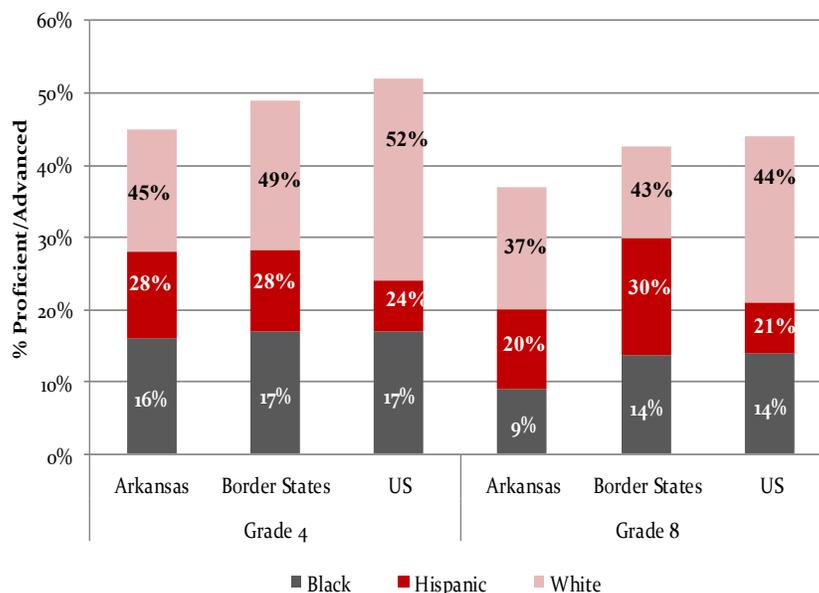
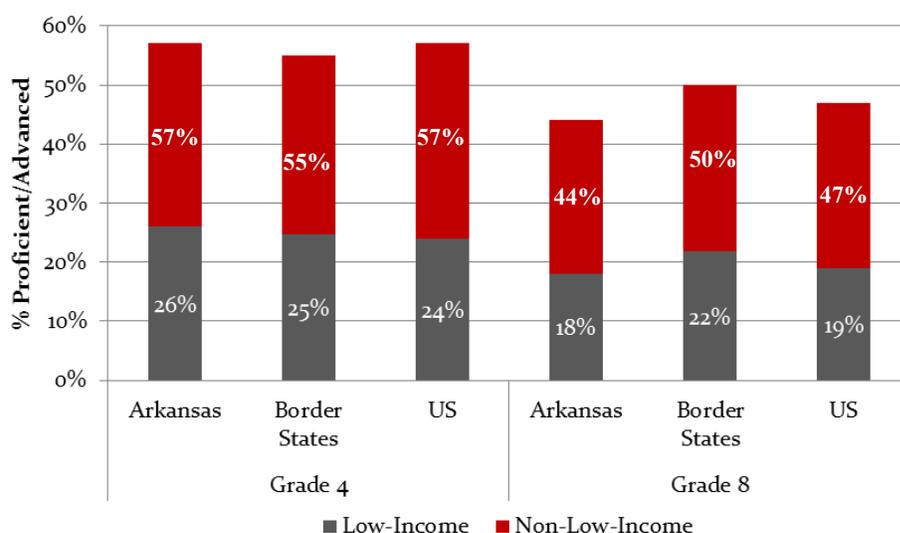


Figure 3.2: NAEP Math



More grade 4 low-income (measured by their participation in the federal free or reduced-price lunch—FRL—program) in Arkansas (26%) are scoring at the proficient or advanced level on the NAEP **math** exam as compared to the border states (25%) and nation (24%).

However, the opposite is true among grade 8 students.

Explanation of Charts: The top of each group’s color represents that group’s proficiency rate in **math** as measured by the NAEP. This format is possible because gaps occur in the same direction across both grades and all three areas. For example, white students consistently have higher proficiency rates than Hispanic students, and Hispanic students have higher rates than black students. The same holds for other graphs: non-poverty students consistently have higher proficiency rates than poverty students.

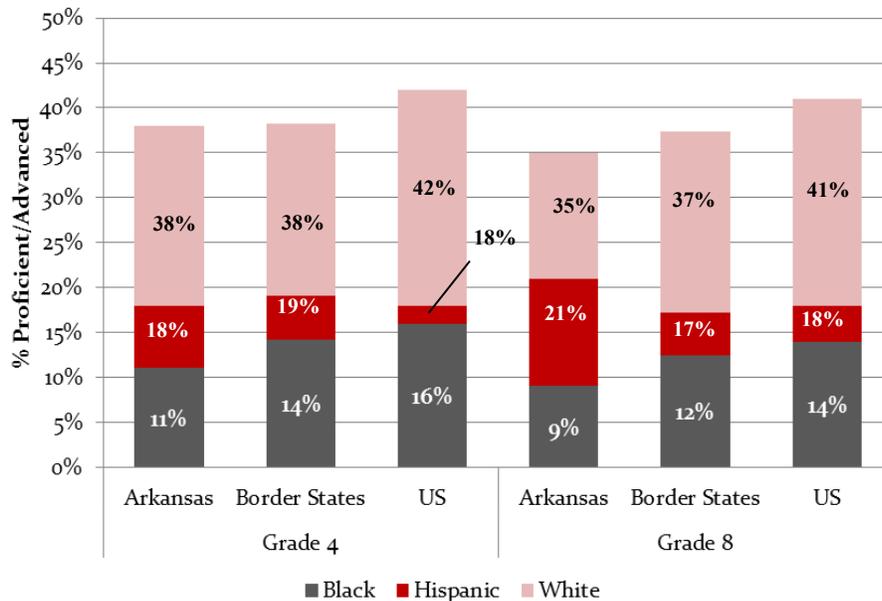
4. Achievement Gaps on NAEP Reading 2011

The NAEP, often called “The Nation’s Report Card”, is administered to a representative sample of Arkansas students in grades 4, 8, and 12 every other year. In the most recent administration of the NAEP (Spring 2011), math and reading subtests were given across the nation.

This section of the Report Card highlights **NAEP reading performance** for student groups in two categories: race and poverty status.



Figure 4.1: NAEP Reading Proficiency Rates for Selected Race/Ethnicities, 2011

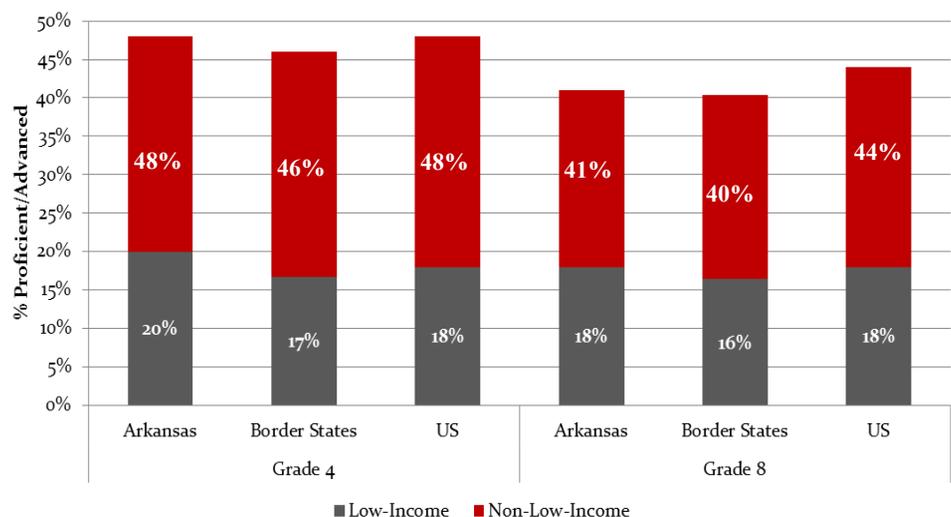


In Arkansas, there is a racial achievement gap in NAEP **reading** performance in grade 4 and in grade 8.

However, more grade 8 Hispanic students are scoring at the proficient or advanced level in Arkansas (21%) than their peers in the border states (17%) and the nation (18%).

Figure 4.2: NAEP Reading Proficiency Rates by Poverty Levels, 2011

On the NAEP **reading** exam, Arkansas’ low-income students in both grade 4 and grade 8 are outperforming, or performing as well as their low-income peers in the border states and across the nation.



Explanation of Charts: The top of each group’s color represents that group’s proficiency rate in **reading** as measured by the NAEP. This format is possible because gaps occur in the same direction across both grades and all three areas. For example, white students consistently have higher proficiency rates than Hispanic students, and Hispanic students have higher rates than black students. The same holds for other graphs: non-poverty students consistently have higher proficiency rates than poverty students.

5. Secondary and Beyond



In preparation for graduation and postsecondary education, Arkansas students take End-of-Course (EOC) examinations, and most take the ACT. The following section highlights the most recent scores for both EOC and ACT exams and examines NAEP proficiency and college readiness for graduating seniors. Lastly, we examine Arkansans' overall education levels, comparing them to other states, as well as to earlier years.

Arkansas trails ACT Composite and College Readiness when compared to similar states and the nation. On the positive side, more Arkansas students are performing at the proficient or advanced level on the state EOC exams, and more individuals are seeking post-secondary degrees.

Table 5.1: Average Composite ACT, 2011-12

	Arkansas	Similar States*	National
% Grads Tested	81%	84%	52%
Composite	20.3	21.2	21.1
English	20.0	20.8	20.5
Math	20.0	20.9	21.1
Reading	20.6	21.7	21.3
Science	20.1	21.2	20.9

*Includes states whose participation rate was within 10 percentage points of Arkansas. (AL, KS, NE, OK, SD, UT)

Figure 5.1: Arkansas End-of-Course Exams, % Proficient and Advanced, 2011-12

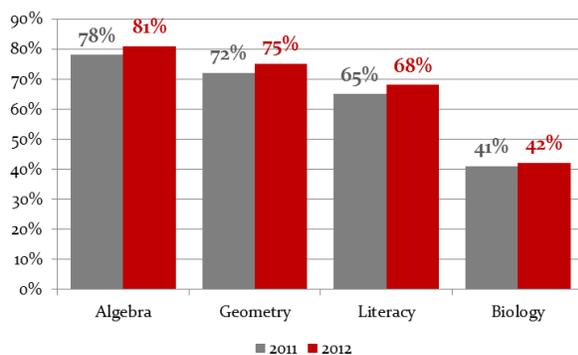
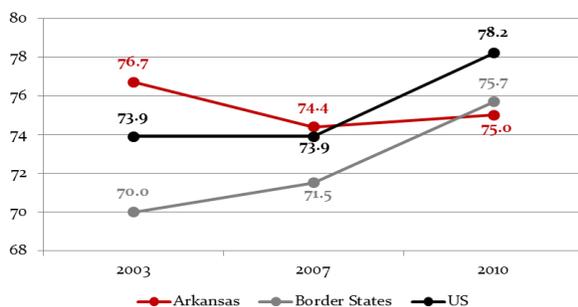


Figure 5.3: Average High School Graduation Rates, 2003-2010*



*For more information on the definition of the Averaged Freshman Graduation Rate, see http://nces.ed.gov/pubs2011/dropout08/app_a3.asp

Table 5.2: Percent of Students Meeting ACT College Readiness Standards, 2011-2012*

	Cut Score	AR	Similar States	U.S.
All Four Subjects		19%	25%	24%
English	18	64%	70%	66%
Math	22	36%	45%	43%
Reading	21	48%	55%	52%
Science	24	23%	31%	29%

*Readiness here is defined as percentage of students scoring high enough to have a 50% chance of getting an A or B in the college subject. The ACT score cutoff for readiness is higher than the score used to place students in remedial courses.

Figure 5.2: NAEP: 12th Grade, % Proficient and Advanced, 2010-11

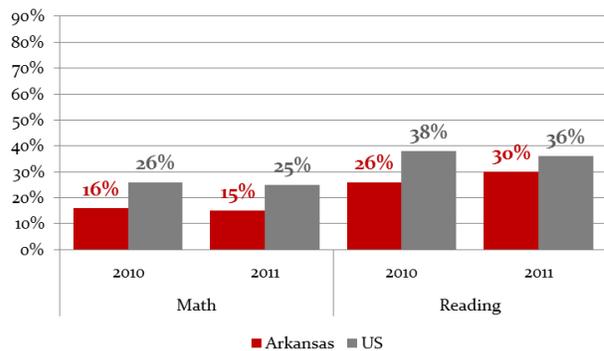


Table 5.3: Arkansas Educational Attainment for Persons 25 and Older, 1990-2009

	% Earning a High School Diploma	% Earning a Bachelor's Degree	% Earning an Advanced Degree
1990	66%	13%	5%
2000	75%	17%	6%
2009	82%	19%	6%
Change	+16 pts	+ 6 pts	+1 pt

6. Pre-/Secondary School and Teacher Characteristics

In addition to performance measures across the state, here we include background information about students, teachers, and schools at the preschool and secondary levels. Cost-of-living-adjusted salaries for Arkansas teachers are comparable to those in our bordering states. Further, the gap between the median individual income and the average teacher salary in Arkansas is noticeably higher than our bordering states and the nation (in favor of the teacher's salary). We also note more Pre-k spending in Arkansas as compared to our bordering states and the US since 2007.



Figure 6.1: Average Teacher Salary, 2011-12 (Adjusted for Cost of Living)

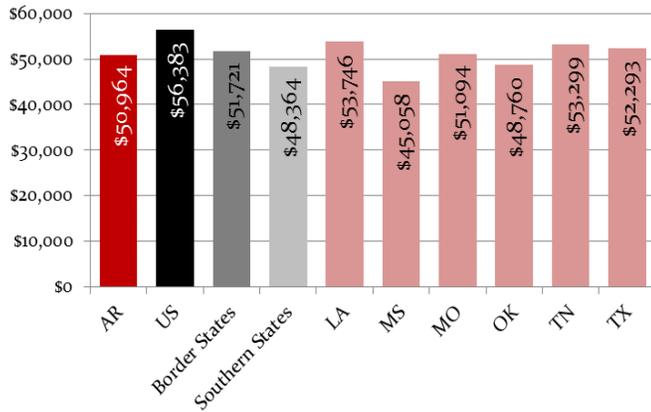


Table 6.1: Teacher Salary Compared to Median Household Income, 2011

Year	Average Teacher*	Median Household Income**	Teachers' % Above Median
Arkansas	\$46,632	\$39,806	17%
Border States	\$47,705	\$46,681	2%
Southern States	\$45,517	\$46,809	-3%
United States	\$56,383	\$52,762	7%

*Salaries are un-adjusted. Averages are weighted by # of classroom teachers in each state.

**Median Household Income from the US Census Bureau.

Figure 6.2: Real Per Pupil Spending, 2001-2009 (Adjusted for State by State Cost Differences)

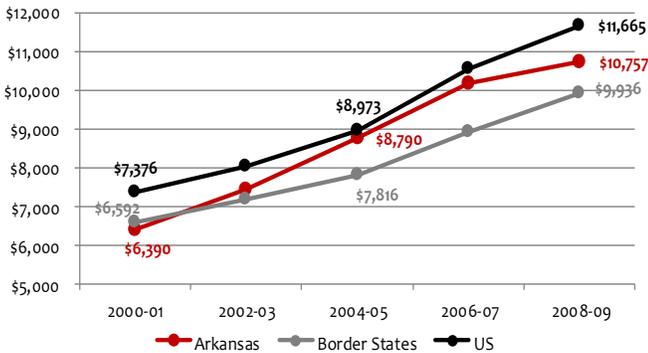


Figure 6.3: Arkansas School District Numbers and Sizes, 2001 to 2013

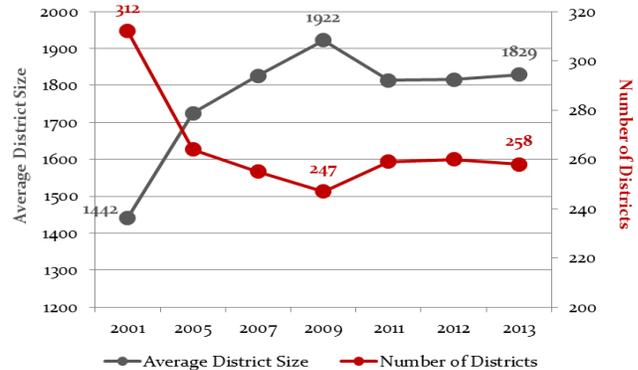


Figure 6.4: Percent of 4-Year-Olds Enrolled in Preschool, 2010-11

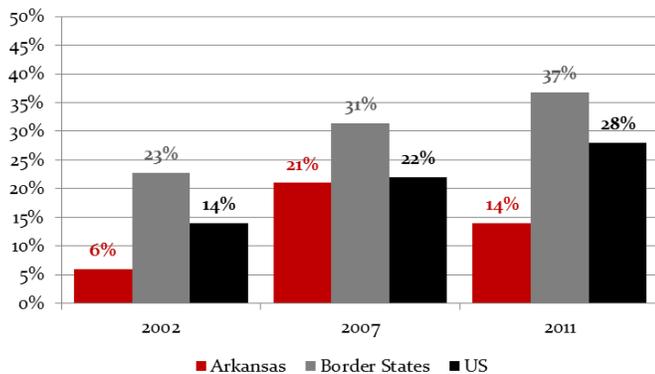
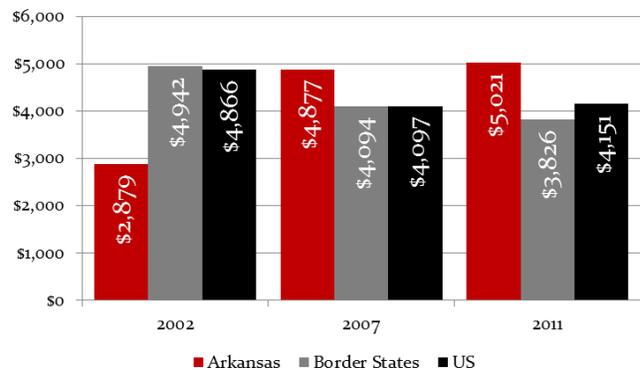


Figure 6.5: Average Pre-K Spending Per Child Enrolled, 2010-11 (2001 Dollars)



Source: [National Institute for Early Education Research: The State of Preschool, 2011](#)

Source: [National Institute for Early Education Research: The State of Preschool, 2011](#)

Office for Education Policy



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Office for Education Policy Mission:

The Office for Education Policy seeks to be a resource that aids state policymakers, educators, administrators, and other leaders in thoughtful decision-making concerning K-12 education in the state of Arkansas.

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The Director's Note

Thank you for your interest in the condition of education in Arkansas. Though some of the numbers are different, the trends in the 2012 Arkansas Report card do not differ substantially from those presented in last year's report. This year's Report Card highlights a few areas in which Arkansas has seen success and progress, and some in which the state has made little or no progress. We are glad to report a few positives: Generally, more Arkansas students are scoring proficient and advanced on the state's benchmarks; the state's low-income students are outperforming their peers nationally on the NAEP reading exam; more Arkansans hold high school and college diplomas than ever before, and per-pupil funding for preschool students has nearly doubled since 2002.

On the other hand, the state still faces many challenges. On the nationally-normed annual standardized exam, scores have declined steadily since 2005. Fewer Arkansas students are college ready than the national average. Of special concern is the prominent achievement gaps for between advantaged and disadvantaged students in 4th and 8th grade. However, these gaps are *smaller* in Arkansas than they are across the US. Finally, despite the increases in preschool funding per-pupil, overall preschool enrollments are down as compared to Arkansas' bordering states, and the national average.

We report on Arkansas education as new data become available. We have included some new measures for 2012 (i.e., preschool measures, ITBS performance, graduation rates, teacher salaries), however, because some data aren't released every year, we've also included data that was also presented in the previous report.

Again, many thanks for reading, and we hope this improves your overall understanding of education in Arkansas.

A document that provides the source for each table can be found at http://www.uark.edu/ua/oeplib/report_cards/2012_Report_Card_Sources.pdf
If you have any questions about this report, please contact us at oeplib@uark.edu.