



ARKANSAS EDUCATION REPORT
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**OUTSTANDING EDUCATIONAL PERFORMANCE AWARDS:
HIGHLIGHTING HIGH ACHIEVING ARKANSAS SCHOOLS, 2012**

**HIGH ACHIEVING “OVERALL” SCHOOLS IN ARKANSAS
BASED ON PERFORMANCE ON THE BENCHMARK EXAMS**

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INTRODUCTION

Since our founding in 2003, the mission of the Office for Education Policy has been to look at pressing issues through the lens of academic research and disseminate our findings to educators, policymakers, and other stakeholders around Arkansas. *Every once in a while, however, we think it is okay to stray from issue analysis and simply share some good news!*

In this Arkansas Education Report (AER), we aim to highlight excellent performance and offer our congratulations. To that end, we are happy to highlight many excellent schools around the state in our now-annual AER, entitled the **O**utstanding **E**ducational **P**erformance Awards or the OEP awards.

Over a three month period this fall, a new set of **OEP Awards** will be released every couple of weeks to highlight the high performing schools in Arkansas on the Benchmark exam in math and literacy, and End-Of-Course (EOC) exams in Algebra, Geometry, Literacy (Grade 11), and Biology. This **first release** will begin by featuring high performing elementary and middle schools on Benchmark performance in literacy, math, and combined test score performance.

This year, we are using a new academic performance indicator, the **“GPA” rating system**, to rank the highest performing schools. In the past, the rankings were created based on the percentage of students scoring at the proficient or advanced level on each assessment. Generally, when discussing academic achievement on the Benchmark exams, policymakers focus on this figure. However, this indicator suffers from being an “all-or-nothing” measure, in which a student is either proficient or not.

For example, this mark “throws away” real information provided by student scores that are placed into the four different performance categories: below basic, basic, proficient, and advanced. The percent proficient and advanced measure, for example, does not differentiate between a school in which 100% of students score proficient and a school in which 100% of students score advanced. Both of these schools would show 100% of students performing at proficient and advanced levels; however, in the latter school, students actually performed at a significantly higher level. Thus, a slightly more informative indicator gives the most credit to students who score at the advanced level and the least credit to students who score at the below basic level. For these purposes then, we have created the “GPA” rating system. In this GPA measure, parallel to the familiar grade point average for individual students, we treat the benchmark test scores in a similar way, whereby a 4.0 is a perfect score!

Category	GPA Points Awarded
Advanced	4.0
Proficient	3.0
Basic	2.0
Below Basic	1.0

The GPA measure, we believe, is a better representation of student achievement on statewide standardized exams. In this report, we are presenting a list of the top 25 schools in each area. In

some cases, these "top 25 lists" will contain more than 25 schools as some schools' GPA scores will be identical. This is not a new phenomenon, as we also exceeded 25 schools in previous reports when using the percent proficient and advanced metric as an indicator for student achievement; however, there are fewer ties using the more precise GPA measure.

After we present our overall snapshot of high performing schools, we will release subsequent reports every few weeks focusing on different subsets of schools. For example, in section two of the **OEP Awards** AER, we will feature schools that are beating the odds (that is, schools that have high levels of student achievement while serving a high percentage of low-income students). In the following weeks, we will focus on high performing elementary schools, middle schools, and high schools in the various regions across the state. Finally, we will conclude our report by focusing on the schools with the greatest improvement in test scores.. Our release schedule is:

- **High Achieving “Overall” Schools in Arkansas**
- **Beating the Odds – High Achieving Schools Serving Low Income Students**
- **High Achieving Elementary Schools by Region**
- **High Achieving Middle Schools by Region**
- **High Achieving High Schools Across Arkansas**
- **Most Improved Schools**

Stay tuned over the next ten weeks to see which schools in your area are recognized for our **OEP Awards!**

I. 2012 OEP AWARDS: HIGH ACHIEVING “OVERALL” SCHOOLS IN ARKANSAS BASED ON PERFORMANCE ON THE BENCHMARK

This section highlights high performing elementary and middle schools across the state based on the Arkansas Benchmark exam. The Benchmark exams in math and literacy were administered to students in grades 3-8 in April 2012. Each table in this section presents the top 25 schools for the noted subject and school level. In addition, these tables include the region in which the school is located, the grades served at the school, the percent of students scoring at the proficient and advanced levels in 2012, and the GPA of the school in that particular subject.

In this report, schools are considered as a whole, as opposed to a grade-by-grade basis. Across the state, within schools, there are many individual grade levels with exceptional performance on the Benchmark exam. In the third report, individual grade level performance will be highlighted for grades 3, 4, and 5. In the fourth report, individual grade level performance will be highlighted for grades 6, 7, and 8. In the third and fourth reports, schools will also be broken down into the five regions and top regional performance will be highlighted.

For the purposes of this report, elementary schools are defined as schools which primarily serve grades 3-5, and middle schools are defined as schools which primarily serve grades 6-8. In the cases where these grades overlap, we used enrollment data to determine whether a school served more elementary or middle school students. For a detailed description of the classification of schools, see Appendix B at the end of this document.

A. Benchmark Scores in Mathematics, 2012

Table 1: Top 25 Elementary Schools in Arkansas Based on Benchmark Math Achievement

	School (District)	Region ¹	Grades Served	% Proficient/Advanced ²	GPA ³
1	Mount Pleasant Elementary School (Melbourne) ♦	NE	K-6	97%	3.89
2	Park Magnet School (Hot Springs) ♦	CN	K-5	99%	3.84
3	Academy of Technology (Vilonia) ♦	CN	2-4	98%	3.82
4	Central Park at Morning Star Elementary (Bentonville) ♦	NW	K-4	96%	3.81
5	Pottsville Elementary School (Pottsville) ♦	NW	K-3	95%	3.79
5	Richland Elementary School (West Memphis) ♦	NE	K-6	97%	3.79
7	Eudora Elem School (Lakeside)	SE	P-3	91%	3.77
8	Bellview Elementary (Rogers)	NW	K-5	95%	3.76
8	Bob Folsom Elementary School (Farmington)	NW	K-3	94%	3.76
10	Ellen Smith Elementary School (Conway) ♦	CN	K-4	96%	3.75
10	Jim Stone Elementary School (Conway) ♦	CN	K-4	97%	3.75
10	Stagecoach Elementary School (Cabot)	CN	K-4	97%	3.75
10	Woodrow Cummins Elementary School (Conway) ♦	CN	K-4	96%	3.75
14	Julia Lee Moore Elementary School (Conway)	CN	K-4	95%	3.74
15	Dover Elementary School (Dover) ♦	NW	K-4	97%	3.73
15	Evening Shade Math & Science Academy (Cave City) ♦	NE	K-4	94%	3.73
15	Lake Hamilton Elementary School (Lake Hamilton)	CN	2-3	93%	3.73
18	Centerpoint Primary School (Centerpoint)	SW	P-3	99%	3.72
18	Forest Park Elementary School (Little Rock)	CN	P-5	94%	3.72
18	Vandergriff Elementary School (Fayetteville)	NW	K-5	94%	3.72
21	Cooper Elementary (Bentonville)	NW	K-4	95%	3.71
21	Springhill Elementary School (Bryant)	CN	K-5	95%	3.71
21	Woodland Heights Elementary School (Harrison)	NW	K-4	94%	3.71
24	Don R. Roberts Elementary School (Little Rock)	CN	P-5	92%	3.70
24	Sequoyah Elementary School (Russellville)	NW	K-4	94%	3.70

♦ Indicates school placed on same list in 2010-11.

¹ Schools are divided into five regions in Arkansas: Northwest (NW), Northeast (NE), Central (CN), Southwest (SW), and Southeast (SE).

² Schools are ranked based on the percent of students performing at proficient or advanced levels in the noted subject. The percent proficient/advanced value shown is rounded. Ranks are based on actual values.

³ The GPA rating is a score derived from an average where, an advanced score is counted as a 4.0 like an "A", proficient score as a 3.0, like a "B", basic score as a 2.0, like a "C", and below basic as a 1.0, like a grade of "D".

Table 2: Top 25 *Middle Schools* in Arkansas Based on Benchmark Math Achievement

	School (District)	Region	Grades Served	% Proficient/Advanced	GPA
1	Haas Hall Academy (Haas)	NW	8-12	100%	3.78
2	Ruth Barker Middle School (Bentonville) ♦	NW	5-6	94%	3.66
3	Ruth Doyle Intermediate School (Conway) ♦	CN	5-6	92%	3.59
4	Academy of Service and Technology (Vilonia) ♦	CN	5-6	91%	3.58
4	McNair Middle School (Fayetteville) ♦	NW	6-7	92%	3.58
4	Washington Junior High School (Bentonville) ♦	NW	7-8	93%	3.58
7	Pea Ridge Middle School (Pea Ridge) ♦	NW	6-8	93%	3.56
8	East Hills Middle School (Greenwood) ♦	NW	6-7	89%	3.52
8	Old High Middle School (Bentonville) ♦	NW	5-6	90%	3.52
10	Swifton Middle School (Jackson County) ♦	NE	5-7	91%	3.49
11	Lakeside Middle School (Lakeside) ♦	CN	5-7	91%	3.48
12	Lincoln Junior High School (Bentonville) ♦	NW	7-8	91%	3.47
12	Pottsville Middle Grades (Pottsville) ♦	NW	4-6	88%	3.47
14	Spring Hill Middle School (Bentonville) ♦	NW	5-6	88%	3.46
15	Benton Middle School (Benton)	CN	6-7	88%	3.45
16	Greenbrier Middle School (Greenbrier)	CN	6-7	88%	3.43
16	Ozark Middle School (Ozark)	NW	6-7	88%	3.43
18	Carl Stuart Middle School (Conway) ♦	CN	7-8	88%	3.41
19	Cabot Middle School North (Cabot)	CN	5-6	86%	3.39
20	Ahlf Junior High School (Searcy)	NE	7-8	87%	3.38
20	Brookland Middle School (Brookland)	NE	4-6	86%	3.38
20	Cabot Middle School South (Cabot)	CN	5-6	86%	3.38
20	Harrison Middle School (Harrison) ♦	NW	5-6	85%	3.38
20	Russellville Middle School (Russellville) ♦	NW	6-7	85%	3.38
20	Sheridan Middle School (Sheridan)	CN	6-8	87%	3.38

♦ Indicates school placed on same list in 2010-11.

Elementary and Middle School Math Scores

Eleven elementary schools and sixteen middle schools on this year's "Top 25 List" for math achievement were repeats from last year's honors.

The statewide math GPA average¹ for elementary and middle schools combined is 3.14, and the statewide math average for students scoring proficient or advanced is 78%. Elementary schools have a higher average than middle schools in both the GPA measure and the percentage of students scoring proficient or advanced.

¹ All averages are weighted by the number of students tested.

Statewide, the elementary school GPA average for math benchmark performance is a 3.27 with 82% of elementary students scoring at the proficient or advanced level. Of the 505 schools classified as elementary schools, 282 have a math GPA at or above the statewide average in this category, and 288 schools reached 82% or more students scoring proficient or advanced. Recall that because we ranked using the GPA measure, the number of schools meeting or exceeding the statewide averages for both GPA and percent of students scoring proficient or advanced will not always be equal.

The statewide middle school math GPA average is a 3.01 with 74% of middle school students scoring proficient or advanced. Of 355 middle schools, 158 middle schools in Arkansas meet or exceed the state's average GPA, and 180 middle schools have 74% or more students scoring proficient or advanced.

Two regions stood out on the "Top 25 List" for math scores. In the elementary ratings, 11 schools are from the Central region, and nine schools are from the Northwest region. The Conway School District (Central) has three schools on this list. In the middle school ratings, 13 schools are from the Northwest region, and nine schools are from the Central region. The Bentonville School District (Northwest) has five schools on this list.

As was the case in previous years, the schools on "Top 25 List" serve relatively more advantaged student populations. For example, only 32% of the elementary students in the top 25 list are receiving a free or reduced lunch (FRL), as compared to 65% of elementary students statewide. Similarly, of the middle schools on the list, the average percentage of FRL students is 38%, while the statewide average for elementary schools is 59%. Additionally, the elementary (19%) and middle schools (18%) on the "Top 25 List" have a lower percentage of minority students than the statewide average (36% and 33%). Lastly, the average enrollment of the schools on the "Top 25 List" is larger than the statewide average for both elementary and middle schools.

However, these averages above do little to highlight those high performing schools that do have higher numbers of economically disadvantaged student populations. For example, **Eudora Elementary School** in the Lakeside School District, where 93% of the students receive a free or reduced lunch, earned a math benchmark performance GPA of 3.77 and had 91% of their students scoring at the proficient or advanced (P/A) level on the math benchmark exam. Likewise, **Evening Shade Math & Science Academy** in the Cave City School District, with 89% FRL population earned a 3.73 math benchmark performance GPA and had 94% of their students scoring at the proficient or advanced level on the test. Congratulations to these schools for beating the odds!

Among middle schools, **Swifton Middle School** in the Jackson Country School District (60% FRL) earned a high math benchmark performance GPA (3.49) and had 91% of their students scoring P/A on the math benchmark exam.

B. Benchmark Scores in Literacy, 2012

Table 3: Top 25 Elementary Schools in Arkansas Based on Benchmark Literacy Achievement

School (District)	Region	Grades Served	% Proficient/Advanced	GPA
1 Ellen Smith Elementary School (Conway) ♦	CN	K-4	98%	3.82
1 Mount Pleasant Elementary School (Melbourne) ♦	NE	K-6	98%	3.82
3 Park Magnet School (Hot Springs) ♦	CN	K-5	98%	3.79
4 College Hill Elementary School (Texarkana) ♦	SW	K-4	97%	3.78
4 Vandergriff Elementary School (Fayetteville) ♦	NW	K-5	96%	3.78
6 Woodland Heights Elementary School (Harrison) ♦	NW	K-4	98%	3.77
7 Academy of Technology (Vilonia) ♦	CN	2-4	96%	3.76
7 Bellview Elementary (Rogers)	NW	K-5	95%	3.76
7 Forest Park Elementary School (Little Rock) ♦	CN	P-5	97%	3.76
7 Jim Stone Elementary School (Conway) ♦	CN	K-4	97%	3.76
11 Arnold Drive Elementary School (Pulaski County) ♦	CN	P-5	95%	3.75
11 Richland Elementary School (West Memphis) ♦	NE	K-6	97%	3.75
13 Central Park at Morning Star Elementary (Bentonville) ♦	NW	K-4	95%	3.73
13 Hunt Elementary School (Springdale) ♦	NW	K-5	94%	3.73
15 Dover Elementary School (Dover) ♦	NW	K-4	98%	3.72
16 Chenal Elementary School (Pulaski County) ♦	CN	K-5	95%	3.71
16 Elm Tree Elementary School (Bentonville) ♦	NW	K-4	94%	3.71
16 Gillett Elementary School (DeWitt) ♦	SE	P-5	95%	3.71
16 London Elementary School (Russellville)	NW	K-4	97%	3.71
16 Pottsville Elementary School (Pottsville) ♦	NW	K-3	94%	3.71
16 Woodrow Cummins Elementary School (Conway) ♦	CN	K-4	97%	3.71
22 Arrie Goforth Elementary (Norfork)	NW	K-6	96%	3.70
23 Salem Elementary School (Bryant) ♦	CN	K-5	95%	3.69
24 Don R. Roberts Elementary School (Little Rock)	CN	P-5	93%	3.68
24 Eagle Heights Elementary School (Harrison) ♦	NW	K-4	93%	3.68
24 Julia Lee Moore Elementary School (Conway)	CN	K-4	92%	3.68
24 Lowell Elementary School (Rogers)	NW	K-5	95%	3.68

♦ Indicates school placed on same list in 2010-11.

Table 4: Top 25 *Middle Schools* in Arkansas Based on Benchmark Literacy Achievement

	School (District)	Region	Grades Served	% Proficient/Advanced	GPA
1	Haas Hall Academy (Haas)	NW	8-12	100%	3.93
2	Pottsville Middle Grades (Pottsville) ♦	NW	4-6	94%	3.63
3	McNair Middle School (Fayetteville) ♦	NW	6-7	93%	3.62
3	Valley View High School (Valley View)	NE	7-12	96%	3.62
5	Ruth Doyle Intermediate School (Conway) ♦	CN	5-6	94%	3.61
6	Washington Junior High School (Bentonville) ♦	NW	7-8	94%	3.60
7	Academy of Service and Technology (Vilonia) ♦	CN	5-6	92%	3.58
7	Ruth Barker Middle School (Bentonville) ♦	NW	5-6	92%	3.58
9	Lincoln Junior High School (Bentonville) ♦	NW	7-8	94%	3.57
10	Valley Springs Middle School (Valley Springs) ♦	NW	5-8	93%	3.55
11	Harrison Middle School (Harrison) ♦	NW	5-6	89%	3.49
11	L. A. Chaffin Junior High School (Fort Smith)	NW	7-9	92%	3.49
13	Cabot Middle School South (Cabot)	CN	5-6	91%	3.48
13	Southwest Middle School (Searcy) ♦	NE	4-6	90%	3.48
13	Weiner High School (Harrisburg)	NE	7-12	89%	3.48
16	Ahlf Junior High School (Searcy) ♦	NE	7-8	91%	3.47
16	Brookland Middle School (Brookland)	NE	4-6	89%	3.47
16	Mountain View Middle School (Mountain View) ♦	NE	6-8	90%	3.47
16	Old High Middle School (Bentonville)	NW	5-6	90%	3.47
16	Woodland Junior High School (Fayetteville) ♦	NW	8-9	90%	3.47
21	Benton Junior High School (Benton) ♦	CN	8-9	93%	3.46
21	Dierks High School (Dierks)	SW	7-12	90%	3.46
23	Greenwood Junior High School (Greenwood)	NW	P-9	92%	3.45
23	Hector High School (Hector)	NW	7-12	95%	3.45
23	Lisa Academy (Lisa) ♦	CN	6-8	90%	3.45

♦ Indicates school placed on same list in 2010-11.

Elementary and Middle School Literacy Scores

Twenty-one elementary schools and seventeen middle schools on this year's "Top 25 List" for literacy achievement were repeats from last year's honors.

The statewide literacy GPA average for elementary and middle schools combined is 3.23, and the statewide literacy average for students scoring proficient or advanced is 83%. As with math scores, elementary schools have a higher average than middle schools in both the GPA measure and the percentage of students scoring proficient or advanced.

Statewide, the elementary school literacy GPA average is 3.30 with 83% of elementary school students scoring proficient or advanced. Of 505 elementary schools, 266 schools have a literacy GPA at or above 3.30, and 294 schools reached 83% of more students scoring proficient or advanced.

The statewide middle school literacy GPA average is a 3.17 with 80% of middle school students scoring proficient or advanced. Of 354 middle schools, 173 schools have a GPA at or above 3.17, and 202 middle schools have 80% or more students scoring proficient or advanced.

Regionally, in the elementary ratings, 12 schools are from the Northwest region, and 11 schools are from the Central region. The Conway School District (Central) has four schools on this list. In the middle school ratings, there are 13 schools from the Northwest region, six schools from the Northeast region, and five schools from the Central region. The Bentonville School District (Northwest) has four schools on this list.

Again, it is worth noting that many of these schools in the top 25 serve relatively more advantaged student populations. For example, only 32% of the elementary students in the top 25 list are receiving a free or reduced lunch (FRL), as compared to 65% of elementary students statewide. Similarly, of the middle schools on the list the average percentage of students receiving free or reduced lunch is 36%, while the statewide average for elementary schools is 59%. Additionally, the elementary (23%) and middle schools (19%) on the “Top 25 List” have a lower percentage of minority students than the statewide average (36% and 33%). Lastly, the average enrollment of the schools on the “Top 25 List” is larger than the statewide average for both elementary and middle schools.

However, these averages also include high performing schools that do have higher numbers of economically disadvantaged student populations. For example, **Arrie Goforth Elementary School** in the Norfolk School District, where 85% of the students receive a free or reduced lunch, earned a literacy benchmark performance GPA of 3.70 and had 96% of their students scoring at the proficient or advanced (P/A) level on the literacy benchmark exam. Likewise, **Woodland Heights Elementary School** in the Harrison School District, with 74% FRL population earned a 3.77 literacy benchmark performance GPA and had 98% of their students scoring at the proficient or advanced level on the test.

Among middle schools, **Hector High School** in the Hector School District (71% FRL) earned a high math benchmark performance GPA (3.45) and had 95% of their students scoring P/A on the math benchmark exam.

These schools have earned resounding congratulations!

C. Benchmark Scores Combined (Math and Literacy)⁴, 2012

Table 5: Top 25 Elementary Schools in Arkansas Based on Benchmark Math and Literacy Achievement

	School (District)	Region	Grades Served	% Proficient/ Advanced	GPA
1	Mount Pleasant Elementary School (Melbourne) ♦	NE	K-6	98%	3.86
2	Park Magnet School (Hot Springs) ♦	CN	K-5	99%	3.81
3	Academy of Technology (Vilonia) ♦	CN	2-4	97%	3.79
4	Ellen Smith Elementary School (Conway) ♦	CN	K-4	97%	3.78
5	Central Park at Morning Star Elementary (Bentonville) ♦	NW	K-4	96%	3.77
5	Richland Elementary School (West Memphis) ♦	NE	K-6	97%	3.77
7	Bellview Elementary (Rogers)	NW	K-5	95%	3.76
8	Jim Stone Elementary School (Conway) ♦	CN	K-4	97%	3.75
8	Pottsville Elementary School (Pottsville) ♦	NW	K-3	95%	3.75
8	Vandergriff Elementary School (Fayetteville)	NW	K-5	95%	3.75
11	College Hill Elementary School (Texarkana) ♦	SW	K-4	97%	3.74
11	Forest Park Elementary School (Little Rock) ♦	CN	P-5	96%	3.74
11	Woodland Heights Elementary School (Harrison)	NW	K-4	96%	3.74
14	Dover Elementary School (Dover) ♦	NW	K-4	98%	3.73
14	Woodrow Cummins Elementary School (Conway) ♦	CN	K-4	97%	3.73
16	Arnold Drive Elementary School (Pulaski County) ♦	CN	P-5	95%	3.71
16	Julia Lee Moore Elementary School (Conway)	CN	K-4	94%	3.71
17	Hunt Elementary School (Springdale)	NW	K-5	94%	3.70
18	Don R. Roberts Elementary School (Little Rock)	CN	P-5	93%	3.69
18	London Elementary School (Russellville)	NW	K-4	96%	3.69
18	Springhill Elementary School (Bryant)	CN	K-5	95%	3.69
21	Elm Tree Elementary School (Bentonville)	NW	K-4	94%	3.68
21	Salem Elementary School (Bryant) ♦	CN	K-5	96%	3.68
21	Stagecoach Elementary School (Cabot)	CN	K-4	94%	3.68
24	Brookland Elementary School (Brookland)	NE	P-3	95%	3.67
24	Center Valley Elementary School (Russellville) ♦	NW	K-4	93%	3.67
24	Sequoyah Elementary School (Russellville)	NW	K-4	94%	3.67

♦ Indicates school placed on same list in 2010-11.

⁴Combined score is a simple average of students proficient or advanced on Math and Literacy.

Table 6: Top 25 *Middle Schools* in Arkansas Based on Math and Literacy Achievement

	School (District)	Region	Grades Served	% Proficient/Advanced	GPA
1	Haas Hall Academy (Haas)	NW	8-12	100%	3.86
2	Ruth Barker Middle School (Bentonville) ♦	NW	5-6	93%	3.62
3	McNair Middle School (Fayetteville) ♦	NW	6-7	93%	3.60
3	Ruth Doyle Intermediate School (Conway) ♦	CN	5-6	93%	3.60
5	Washington Junior High School (Bentonville) ♦	NW	7-8	94%	3.59
6	Academy of Service and Technology (Vilonia) ♦	CN	5-6	92%	3.58
7	Pottsville Middle Grades (Pottsville) ♦	NW	4-6	91%	3.55
8	Lincoln Junior High School (Bentonville) ♦	NW	7-8	93%	3.52
9	Old High Middle School (Bentonville) ♦	NW	5-6	90%	3.50
10	East Hills Middle School (Greenwood) ♦	NW	6-7	89%	3.47
11	Lakeside Middle School (Lakeside) ♦	CN	5-7	91%	3.46
12	Pea Ridge Middle School (Pea Ridge) ♦	NW	6-8	90%	3.44
12	Spring Hill Middle School (Bentonville) ♦	NW	5-6	88%	3.44
14	Ahlf Junior High School (Searcy)	NE	7-8	89%	3.43
14	Cabot Middle School South (Cabot)	CN	5-6	89%	3.43
14	Carl Stuart Middle School (Conway)	CN	7-8	91%	3.43
14	Harrison Middle School (Harrison) ♦	NW	5-6	87%	3.43
14	Valley Springs Middle School (Valley Springs) ♦	NW	5-8	91%	3.43
14	Valley View High School (Valley View)	NE	7-12	90%	3.43
20	Brookland Middle School (Brookland)	NE	4-6	88%	3.42
21	Greenbrier Middle School (Greenbrier)	CN	6-7	89%	3.41
21	Ozark Middle School (Ozark)	NW	6-7	89%	3.41
21	Southwest Middle School (Searcy) ♦	NE	4-6	87%	3.41
21	Swifton Middle School (Jackson County)	NE	5-7	88%	3.41
25	Benton Middle School (Benton)	CN	6-7	87%	3.40

♦ Indicates school placed on same list in 2010-11.

Elementary and Middle School Combined Scores

Fifteen elementary schools and sixteen middle schools on this year's "Top 25 List" for combined achievement were repeats from last year's honors.

The statewide combined GPA average is 3.18 for elementary and middle schools combined, and the statewide combined average for students scoring proficient or advanced is 80%. Again, in this measure, the schools classified as elementary schools have a higher average than middle schools in both the GPA measure and the percentage of students scoring proficient or advanced.

Statewide, the combined elementary school GPA average is a 3.29 for with 82% of elementary students scoring proficient or advanced. Of 505 elementary schools, 279 schools have a combined GPA of 3.29 or above, and 304 schools have 82% or more students scoring proficient or advanced.

The statewide middle school combined GPA average is a 3.09 with 77% of middle school students scoring proficient or advanced. Of 354 middle schools, 169 schools have a combined GPA at or above the statewide, and 195 middle schools are at or above that statewide average.

Again, the Northwest and Central regions had the most schools on the “Top 25 List” for combined scores. In the elementary ratings, 12 schools are from the Central region, and 11 schools are from the Northwest region. The Conway School District (Central) has four schools on this list, and the Russellville School District has three schools. In the middle school ratings, 13 schools are from the Northwest region, and seven schools are from the Central region. The Bentonville School District (Northwest) has five schools on this list.

Predictably, many of these schools in the top 25 serve relatively more advantaged student populations. Using this metric, only 30% of the elementary students in the top 25 list are receiving a free or reduced lunch (FRL), compared to the 65% statewide. Similarly, of the middle schools on the list the average percentage of students receiving free or reduced lunch is 36%, while the statewide average for elementary schools is 59%. Additionally, the elementary (20%) and middle schools (18%) on the “Top 25 List” have a lower percentage of minority students than the statewide average (36% and 33%). Lastly, the average enrollment of the schools on the “Top 25 List” is larger than the statewide average for both elementary and middle schools.

Again, these averages also include high performing schools that do have higher numbers of economically disadvantaged student populations. For example, **Dover Elementary School** in the Dover School District, where 65% of the students receive a free or reduced lunch, earned a combined math and literacy benchmark performance GPA of 3.73 and had 98% of their students scoring at the proficient or advanced (P/A) level on the literacy benchmark exam. Likewise, **London Elementary School** in the Russellville School District, with 59% FRL population earned a 3.69 literacy benchmark performance GPA and had 96% of their students scoring at the proficient or advanced level on the test.

Among middle schools, **Ozark Middle School** in the Ozark School District (57% FRL) earned a high math benchmark performance GPA (3.41) and had 89% of their students scoring P/A on the math benchmark exam.

Once again, we would like to congratulate **ALL** of the schools on our High Achieving “Overall” Schools in Arkansas Based on Performance on the Benchmark Exams lists. Our next installment will focus on schools like those highlighted above that are **Beating the Odds** – that is, top performing schools with a high population of economically disadvantaged students.

APPENDIX

A. Methods

The Office for Education Policy strives to make all of our calculations and publications transparent to our readers. Thus, in this appendix we describe our data source, calculations performed on these data for the purposes of our reporting, and our method for determining a school's classification as an elementary, middle, or high school.

All data used in this report were obtained from the Arkansas Department of Education. Benchmark and End-of-Course exam scores were obtained from the testing section(<http://www.arkansased.org/divisions/learning-services/student-assessment>). Other data, such as the percent of students eligible for free and reduced lunch, were obtained from the Arkansas Department of Education Data Center (<http://adedata.arkansas.gov>).

All data were analyzed at the school level; however, the ADE provides the percentage of scores at the proficient and advanced level by grade. Therefore, in order to present an accurate *school* level percentage of students scoring proficient and advanced across all grades, a weighted average for each school was calculated to account for different levels of enrollment at each grade level. In an effort to highlight schools that were strong in both subject areas, we calculated a simple average of the school level percent proficient and advanced in math *and* literacy at the elementary and middle school levels.

As previously discussed in the introduction, in order to calculate the GPA measure we treat the benchmark test scores similar to the existing grade point system.

Category	GPA Points Awarded
Advanced	4.0
Proficient	3.0
Basic	2.0
Below Basic	1.0

We calculated the GPA measure for every schools math, literacy, and combined math and literacy scores. The GPA measure is comprehensive in that it takes into account all of the test score levels (advanced, proficient, basic, and below basic), instead of lumping together advanced and proficient scores.

B. School Classification

For the OEP Awards, we classified schools based on the following rules:

- Elementary School: primarily grades 3-5 (minimum grade P, K, 1, 2, 3, or 4)
- Middle School: primarily grades 6-8 (minimum grade of 4, 5, or 6 and maximum grade of 7, 8, or 9)

There were also a few “comprehensive schools,” such as K-8 or K-12 schools, that we included as either middle schools or elementary schools based on their enrollment numbers. The following table lists every grade configuration and their classifications.

Table 7: School Classifications

Elementary Schools	Middle Schools
1-5	6
1-6	4-6
1-8	4-8
2-3	5-6
2-4	5-7
2-5	5-8
2-6	6-12
3-4	6-7
3-5	6-8
3-6	7-12
4-5	7-8
5*	7-9
K-3	8
K-4	8-9
K-5	K-12*
K-6	8-12*
K-7	
K-8	
P-2	
P-3	
P-4	
P-5	
P-6	
P-7	
P-8	

*Only one school categorized by this configuration