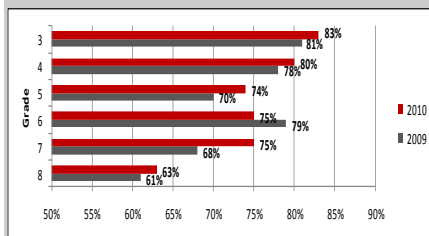




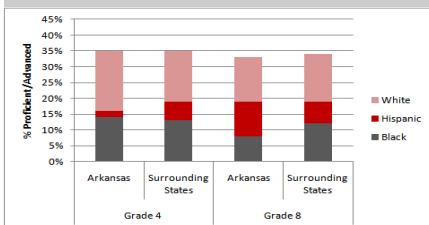
2010 Report Card on Arkansas Public Schools

Sections of this report:

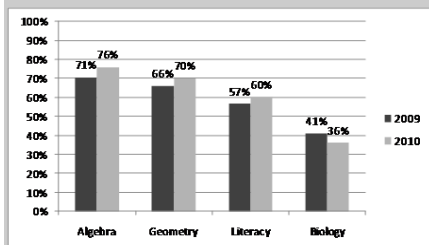
1. Standardized Tests



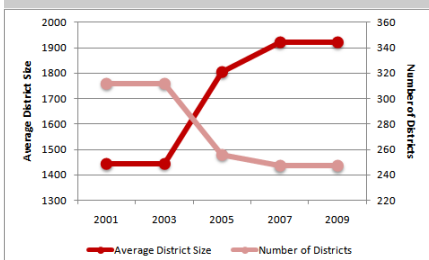
2. Achievement Gaps



3. Secondary and Beyond



4. School and Teacher Characteristics



Continuing our efforts to watch and report on the state of education in Arkansas, the OEP is glad to bring you its *2010 Report Card* for Arkansas’ public schools. We hope this report is accessible and informative for educators and policymakers in the state. The charts and figures here are both a reflection of their hard work up until now, as well as a spur to improvement and reform for the future of Arkansas’ students.

A few of the report’s highlights:

- More Arkansas students are scoring proficient and advanced on the state assessments—both the Benchmark and End-of-Course exams—each year. A general upward trend over the last several years continued into 2010.
- Arkansas students continue to achieve at lower levels than their national peers on the NAEP, the “Nation’s Report Card”. This gap exists in all subjects across grades 4, 8, and 12.
- The achievement gap between black students and non-blacks (including whites and Hispanics) grows greatly between 4th and 8th grades, and is considerably larger than the overall US achievement gap as measured by the NAEP.
- A low percentage of Arkansas students are academically ready for college as measured by the ACT. Students’ college readiness is lower than in nearby states and in the nation.
- Taking cost of living into account, Arkansas teachers are paid well compared to teachers in nearby states, and compared to the nation as a whole.
- Arkansas students have higher rates of poverty and more students are Hispanic today compared to 15 years ago.

Thank you for reading and we hope you enjoy!

1. Performance on Standardized Assessments



This section highlights overall student performance on the Arkansas Comprehensive Testing Assessment and Accountability Program (ACTAAP) and the National Assessment for Educational Progress (NAEP).

The Benchmark portion of the ACTAAP is the Arkansas-developed assessment administered to students in grades 3 through 8 each year. In 2010, proficiency rates increased in all grades for literacy and in five of six grades for math. Only 6th grade math proficiency declined from 2009 to 2010.

Figure 1.1: AR Benchmark: % Proficient and Advanced, Mathematics

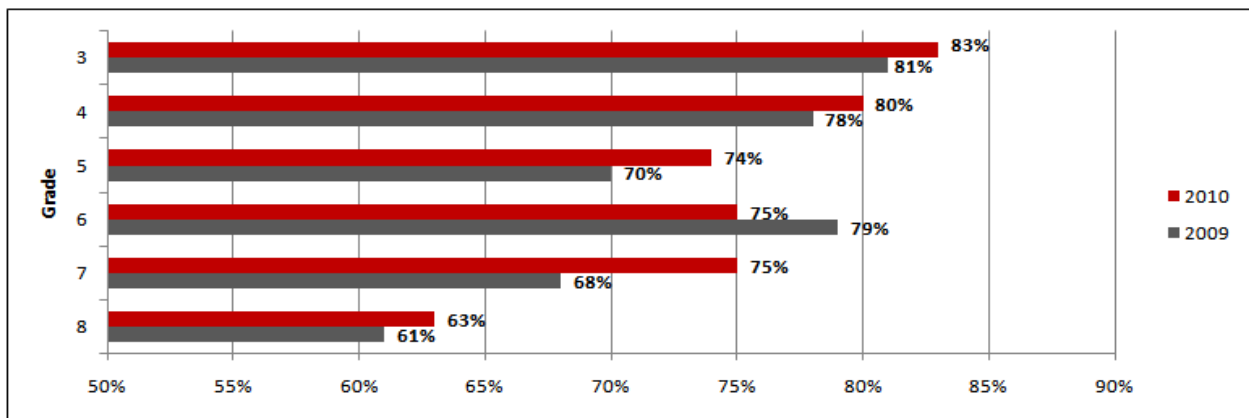


Figure 1.2: AR Benchmark: % Proficient and Advanced, Literacy

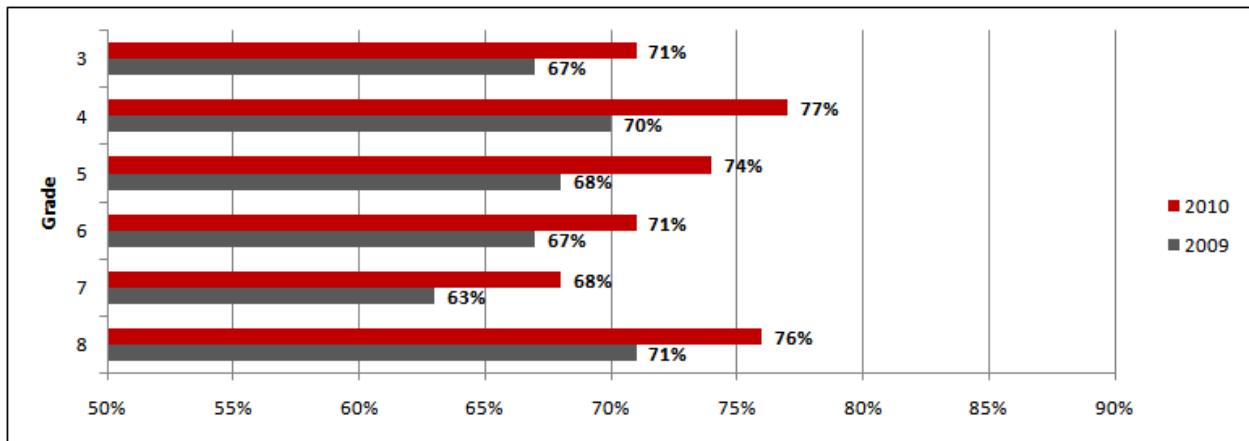
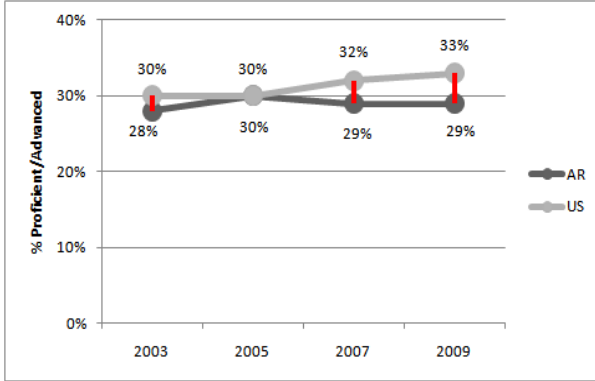


Table 1.1: AR Benchmark: % Proficient and Advanced, Grades 4 and 8

Year	Grade 4		Grade 8		State proficiency rates have increased since 2006. These gains are larger in math than in literacy, and larger in 4th grade than in 8th grade.
	Math	Literacy	Math	Literacy	
2006	60%	61%	44%	66%	
2008	74%	67%	56%	67%	
2010	80%	77%	63%	76%	
Change 06-10	+20 pts	+16 pts	+19 pts	+10 pts	

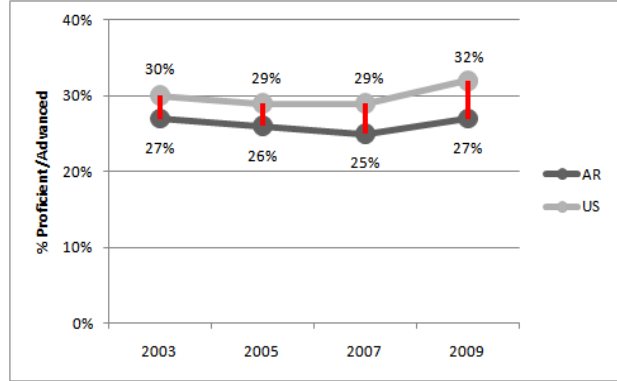
NOTE: Red lines on this page represent the gaps between Arkansas and US scores each year.

Figure 1.3: NAEP Reading: % Proficient and Advanced, Grade 4, 2003-2009*



Fewer Arkansas 4th graders are proficient in reading and science than are their peers across the nation. The gap in both subjects has grown slightly over the last decade.

Figure 1.4: NAEP Reading: % Proficient and Advanced, Grade 8, 2003-2009*



Arkansas' 8th grade reading proficiency in 2009 was unchanged from 2003, while the nation's rate grew 2 points to 32%. In science, the state lagged the US by 5 points in 2009.

Figure 1.5: NAEP Science: % Proficient and Advanced, Grade 4, 2000-2009

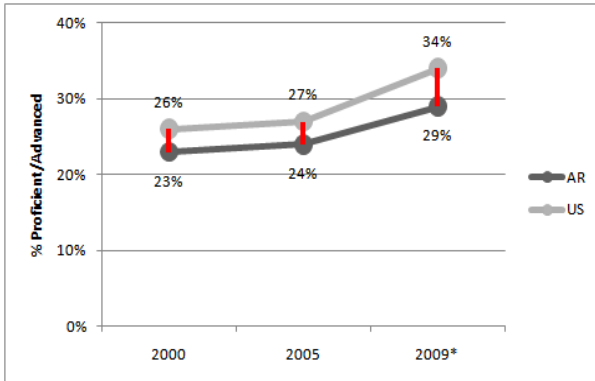
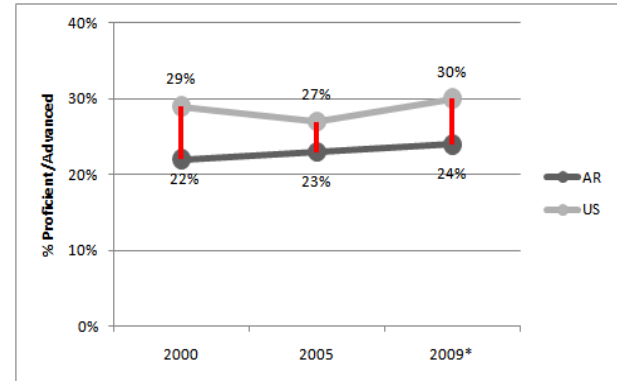


Figure 1.6: NAEP Science: % Proficient and Advanced, Grade 8, 2000-2009



*2009 NAEP science scores used a new framework; results may not be directly comparable from year to year.

The NAEP, often called “The Nation’s Report Card”, is given to a relatively small but representative sample of Arkansas students in grades 4, 8, and 12 every other year. As can be seen by the red lines in the NAEP graphs, Arkansas’ performance continues to lag behind that of the country as a whole. The math and writing results in last year’s Report Card are not included here because there are no new results to report. New results were available, however, in reading and science.

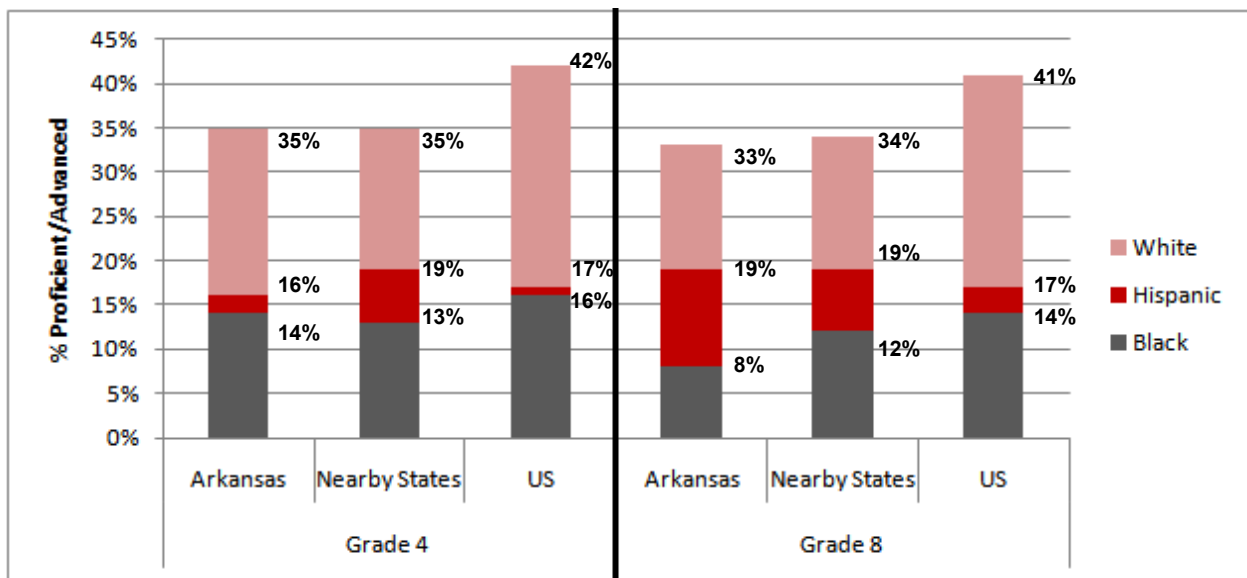
1. Performance on Standardized Assessments

2. Achievement Gaps on NAEP Reading 2009



For educators and policymakers, the achievement gap—the difference in test scores between different groups of students—is often just as urgent a concern as are overall levels of achievement. This section of the Report Card highlights differences between students in three categories: gender, race, and poverty status. While last year’s Report Card examined NAEP math scores from 2009, this year’s examines reading scores from the same year. For each of the three categories, the achievement gap in Arkansas is compared to that of surrounding states and of the nation as a whole.

Figure 2.1: NAEP Reading Proficiency Rates, by Racial Group, 2009

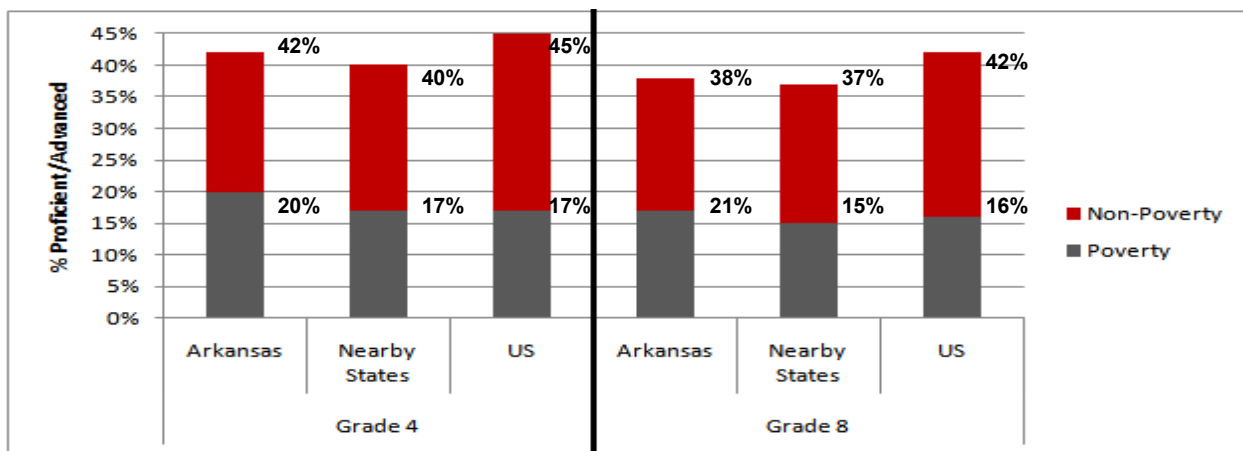


Race: Subgroup scores are shown for white, Hispanic, and black students.

- In Arkansas, the proficiency rate for black students drops between 4th and 8th grade, from 14% to 8%. The state’s black 4th graders (14%) are near the national average (16%), but our black 8th graders (8%) perform well below their peers nationally (14%).
- Arkansas’ Hispanics are more proficient in 8th grade reading (19%) than Hispanics nationally (17%).
- Reading proficiency rates for Arkansas whites fall well below the national average for both 4th grade (35% AR v. 42% US) and 8th grade (33% AR v. 41% US).

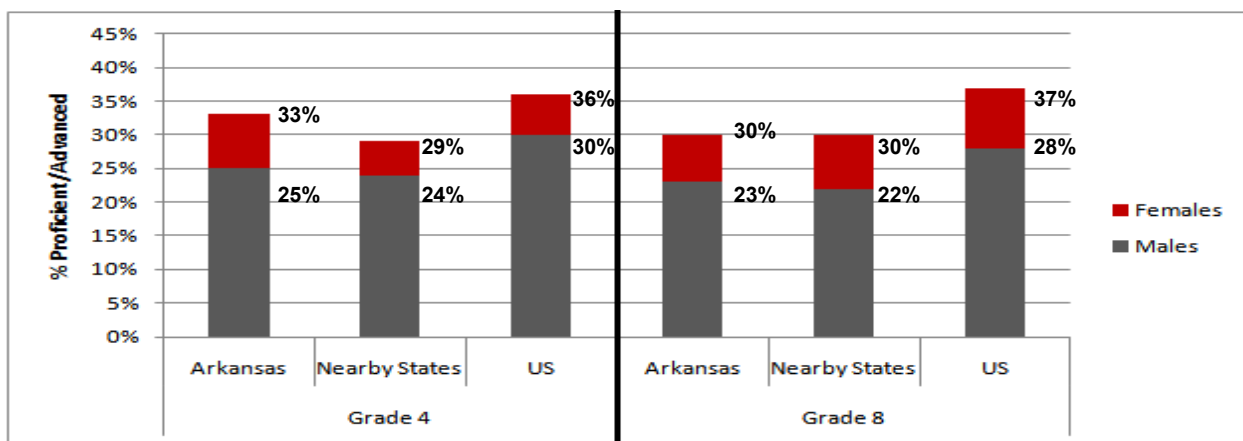
Note: The top of each group’s color in the bar graphs represents that group’s proficiency rate in reading as measured by the NAEP in the most recent administration for which scores are available (2009). The comparison to nearby states includes the six states bordering Arkansas: Louisiana, Mississippi, Missouri, Oklahoma, Tennessee, and Texas. Rates for “nearby states” are simple averages of rates for these six states.

Figure 2.2: NAEP Reading Proficiency Rates, by Poverty Level, 2009



Poverty Status: The gaps between poor and non-poor, as measured by free and reduced lunch status, are large and similar both between grades and between states in NAEP reading. One positive note — low-income students in Arkansas do better than their peers nationally.

Figure 2.3: NAEP Reading Proficiency Rates, by Gender, 2009



Gender: In reading, girls outperform boys in all regions and at both grade levels. This gap is not as large as poverty and race achievement gaps. By comparison, this gap grows slightly for surrounding states and for the United States.

Based on the NAEP reading 2009 results, the racial gap and the poverty gap in reading are widening. The percent of students scoring proficient and advanced is increasing for white students, while it is remaining fairly stable for black and Hispanic students. The same is true for the poverty achievement gap—non-poverty students gained six to ten percentage points between 2005 and 2009, while poverty students gained only two percentage points.

2. Achievement Gaps on NAEP Reading 2009

3. Secondary and Beyond



In preparation for graduation and postsecondary education, Arkansas students take End-of-Course (EOC) examinations, and most take the ACT. Here, we highlight the most recent scores for both EOC and ACT exams, and we also present results for high school NAEP assessments and college readiness for graduating seniors. Lastly, we examine Arkansas' overall education levels, comparing them to other states, as well as to earlier years.

Table 3.1: ACT in State and Nation, 2010

	Arkansas	Similar States*	National
% Grads Tested	81%	77%	47%
Composite	20.3	21.4	21.0
English	20.1	21.0	20.5
Math	19.9	21.0	21.0
Reading	20.6	21.7	21.3
Science	20.2	21.4	20.9

*Includes states with an ACT participation rate was similar to that in Arkansas. (AL, KS, ND, NE, OK, SD)

Table 3.2: ACT College Readiness, 2010*

	Cut Score	AR	Similar States	U.S.
All Four Subjects		18%	24%	24%
English	18	64%	71%	66%
Math	22	35%	44%	43%
Reading	21	47%	56%	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 3.1: Arkansas End-of-Course Exams: % Proficient and Advanced, 2010

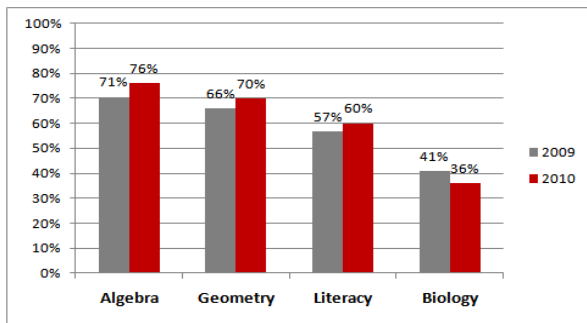


Figure 3.2: NAEP 12th Grade: % Proficient and Advanced, 2010

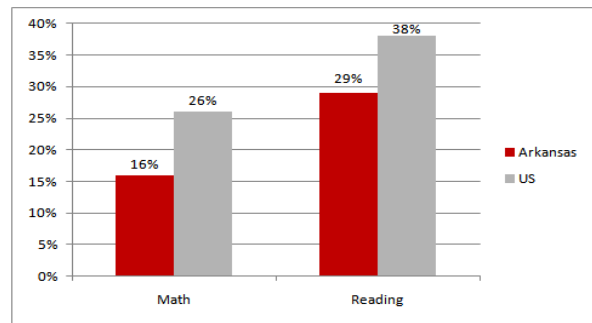


Figure 3.3: Comparison of Educational Attainment Levels, 2008

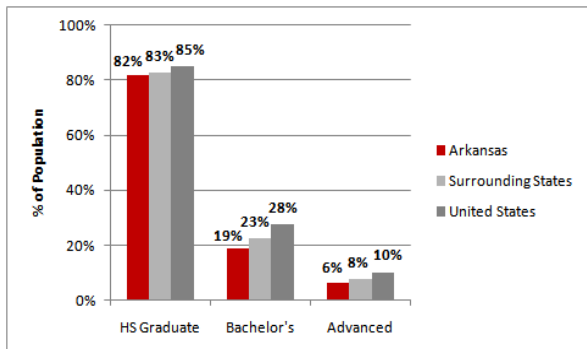


Table 3.3: Arkansas Educational Attainment, 1990-2008*

	High School Diploma	Bachelor's Degree	Advanced Degree
1990	66%	13%	5%
2000	75%	17%	6%
2008	82%	19%	6%
Change	+16 pts	+ 6 pts	+1 pt

*Percentages are given for the population as a whole, not solely for those in school. These are not graduation rates.

4. School and Teacher Characteristics

The OEP 2010 Report Card concludes with background information about students, teachers, and schools. We present figures on teacher salaries, per-student spending, changes in Arkansas' school districts, and finally, changes in the demographics of Arkansas students.



**Figure 4.1: Average Teacher Salary, 2009
(Adjusted for Cost of Living)**

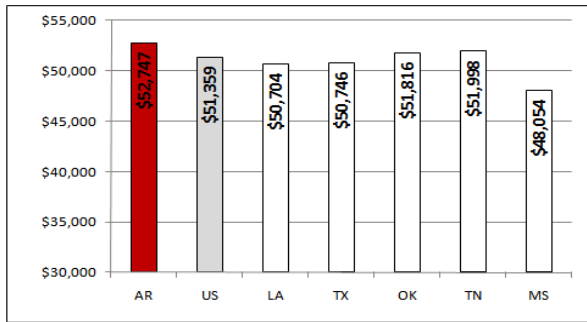


Table 4.1: Teacher Salary Compared to Median Personal Income, 2009*

Year	Average Teacher	Median Person	Teachers' % Above Median
Arkansas	\$52,747	\$35,257	50%
Border States	\$50,727	\$37,632	35%
Southern States	\$51,174	\$37,274	37%
United States	\$51,359	\$39,138	31%

*The important number here is the percentage. It tells how much higher teacher salaries are than the average personal incomes for the state.

**Figure 4.2: Per Pupil Spending, 2000-2008
(Adjusted for Cost Differences Across States and Over Time)**

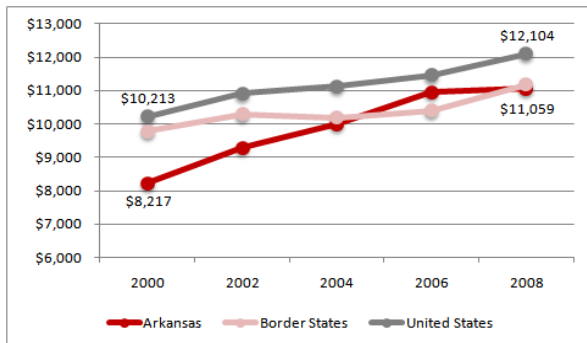


Figure 4.3: Arkansas School District Numbers and Sizes, 2001 to 2009

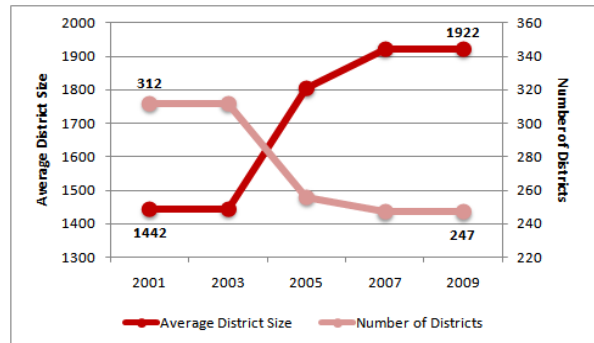


Figure 4.4: Arkansas Student Racial Composition, 1993-2009

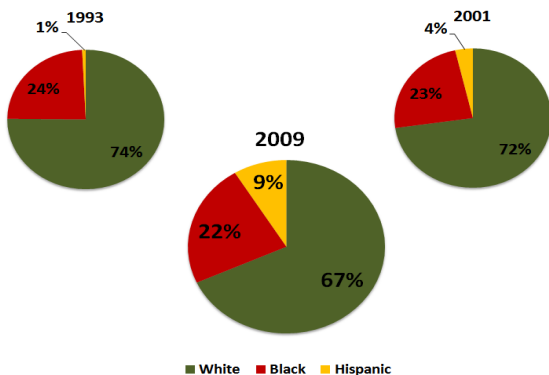
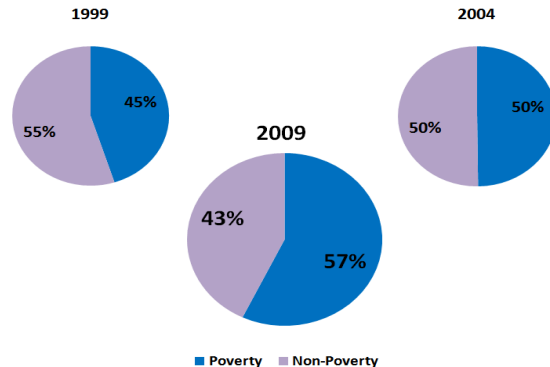


Figure 4.5: Arkansas Student Poverty Status, 1999-2009



Office for Education Policy



UNIVERSITY OF
ARKANSAS

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.

Office for Education Policy

University of Arkansas
211 Graduate Education
Building
Fayetteville, AR 72701

Phone: (479) 575-3773
Fax: (479) 575-3196
E-mail: oe@uark.edu
www.uark.edu/ua/oe

Blog:
officeforeducationpolicy.com

OEP Director:
Gary Ritter, PhD

Research Associates:
Nathan Jensen
Caleb Rose

Graduate Fellows:
Lynn Woodworth
Jeffery Dean

Outreach:
Misty Newcomb

The Director's Note

Thank you for your interest in the condition of education in Arkansas. This year's Report Card highlights a few areas in which Arkansas has seen success and progress, and some in which the state has not done as well. We are glad to report a few positives: more students are scoring proficient and advanced on the Arkansas assessments; the state's low-income students are outperforming their peers nationally on the NAEP reading exam; and more Arkansans hold high school and college diplomas than ever before.

On the other hand, the state still faces many challenges. On the NAEP, Arkansas' reading scores still lag the nation at all grade levels, and by a large amount in the 12th grade. Fewer Arkansas students are college ready than the national average. Perhaps most importantly, the racial and poverty achievement gaps are large and generally growing.

We report on Arkansas education as new data become available and we try to choose figures that are interesting and important. However, we may well be missing some items that our OEP constituents would like to see. Please contact us by email, through our blog, or in person to let us know what we should be following in Arkansas education. ***The OEP is here to serve you!***

Respectfully,
Gary W. Ritter
Director, Office for Education Policy