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THE ARKANSAS ACHIEVEMENT GAP

UNEQUAL OPPORTUNITIES

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For

Arkansas Public Policy Panel

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Table Of Contents:

• INTRODUCTION	PAGE 3
○ Major Findings	Page 6
○ Recommendations	Page 8
○ Unanswered Questions And Needs For Further Research	Page 10
○ Why Care About The Education Achievement Gap?	Page 11
○ Methodology	Page 12
○ Tips For Using The Report	Page 13
• THE ARKANSAS LITERACY GAP	PAGE 14
○ Findings, Conclusions and Remaining Questions	
• THE ARKANSAS MATHEMATICS GAP	PAGE 17
○ Findings, Conclusions and Remaining Questions	
• COMPARISON OF ARKANSAS BENCHMARK RESULTS WITH NAEP TEST RESULTS	PAGE 20
○ Findings, Conclusions and Remaining Questions	
• THE ARKANSAS ADVANCED PLACEMENT, GIFTED AND TALENTED AND DROPOUT GAPS	PAGE 23
○ Findings, Conclusions and Remaining Questions	
• THE ARKANSAS COLLEGE READINESS GAP	PAGE 27
○ Findings, Conclusions and Remaining Questions	
• APPENDIX:	PAGE 29
○ Definitions	
○ Additional Resources	
○ Data Tables and End Notes	

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Introduction:

Every child in Arkansas should have the same opportunity to excel in school regardless of their race, class, culture or location. Sadly, this is not currently the case. This report is a summary of available data highlighting the severity of the achievement gap in Arkansas schools.

Every child is born with as much ability to learn as any other child, regardless of economic class, race or ethnicity. Family, community and academic factors that influence children explain the gaps in performance.

We believe in public schools and believe we can make a positive difference by studying the achievement gap problems in Arkansas. This report does not show one cause, one person to blame, or one silver bullet solution. Arkansas needs to examine all of the systems that impact student performance and ask how we can make them better. For those children struggling to get by, they can hardly afford to wait.

This report is intended to spur an informed dialogue on the achievement gap in Arkansas. It provides documentation of the problems, but does not offer concrete policy reforms to solve the gap. This report recommends significant study of the achievement gap causes and solutions; and calls for much more dialogue between community members and policy makers about these problems. We will work collaboratively with communities, other community organizations and hopefully with state officials to produce follow up reports and discussions aimed at finding concrete solutions.

The Arkansas Department of Education website describes the achievement gap as: “disparities in achievement among economically and racially diverse groups of students.ⁱ” The North Carolina Department of Education defines the achievement gap as:

a persistent, pervasive and significant disparity in educational achievement and attainment among groups of students as determined by a standardized measure. When analyzed according to race and ethnicity, achievement disparities negatively impact educational outcomes for poor children and children of color on a consistent basis.ⁱⁱ





THE ARKANSAS ACHIEVEMENT GAP – UNEQUAL OPPORTUNITIES

Achievement gaps can exist based on race, income, gender, disability, primary language and geography. They can be measured with standardized test scores, graduation rates, remediation rates, access to advanced course work, discipline rates, and college attendance ratesⁱⁱⁱ. This report documents a significant achievement gap in Arkansas schools using a number of these measurements.

In addition to having an achievement gap between groups of students, Arkansas students overall have a gap relative to students in other states. One long-term impact of the achievement gap is the income gap where Arkansas' average household income is 24% less than the National average (\$42,785 to \$56,604 per year)^{iv}. Average Arkansas African American household income is 35% less than Caucasian household income (\$29,511 to \$45,196 per year). Average Arkansas Latino household income is 20% less than Caucasian income (\$36,320 to \$45,196 per year). The Southern Education Foundation cites the Arkansas education gap as one of the primary causes of our economic gap.^v

The world of public education is in turmoil. Politicians struggle with how to fund the Arkansas Supreme Court ordered improvements in education. Citizens are demanding more accountability from school professionals and effective use of tax dollars. Rural school districts are being consolidated. Poor school districts have sued to get a fair break in the distribution of state funds. Teachers, school administrators, economic development commissions, parent organizations, proponents of civil rights and other interests are demanding a place at the table as we seek to make the public education system more responsive to the needs of our children and our state.

Lawmakers deserve credit for recently creating programs to close the achievement gap. Expanded pre-school funding for low-income children, school funding targeted for children in poverty, and significant increases in minimum teacher pay are examples. Lawmakers deserve particular praise for the \$60 million dollars they have appropriated to quality pre-school programs for low income children because it was not required by the courts.





THE ARKANSAS ACHIEVEMENT GAP – UNEQUAL OPPORTUNITIES

But are these reforms sufficient to close the gap and raise performance for all children? This report illustrates that the gap is extremely severe and that we need to consider whether enough has been done to solve this problem.

Arkansas doesn't know what it would take to close the achievement gap because we have not seriously asked. The Arkansas Supreme Court found the Arkansas school system unconstitutional in 2002 for two different reasons: inadequate quality, and unequal opportunity. The state commissioned a study and funded many of its recommendations to improve overall quality^{vi}. But with achievement gaps of this size and seriousness, questions remain about whether enough attention has been given to the children furthest behind.

This data shows clearly that the pressing issue of equality remains insufficiently answered.



Major Findings:

Arkansas has a severe achievement gap problem. Arkansas students perform worse than most national peers, and this gap is even worse for low-income, minority and disabled students. In addition to using test score data, this report shows that minorities are statistically under represented in academic excellence programs, and are over represented in the numbers of students dropping out early.



In literacy, overall Arkansas ranks 32nd in national 8th grade literacy scores, but Arkansas African Americans rank 46th out of the 50 states and the District of Columbia. A nearly 3 to 1 gap exists in 11th grade literacy scores between Caucasian and African American students. Economically disadvantaged, Latino and other student sub-groups do not fare significantly better. The percentage of children passing literacy proficiency actually *declines* as they get older across all subgroups. See pages 8-9.

In mathematics, overall Arkansas ranks 46th in national 8th grade mathematical proficiency scores. There is a 4 to 1 gap in the percentage of students scoring proficient or above in 8th grade math between Caucasian and African American students in the state test. The overall mathematic gap between white and black students is the 15th largest in the nation, and scores for African Americans in Arkansas are the worst in the country. Similar to literacy scores, the percentage of children passing mathematical proficiency actually *declines* as they get older across all subgroups. See pages 10-11.

A gap also exists in the rates that students attend advanced placement classes and gifted and talented programs; and a gap exists in the rates that students drop out of school. More Caucasians and Asians are in advanced placement and gifted and talented programs than are statistically expected. There are fewer African American and Latino students in these academic programs. Only a small percentage of those African American students who are in the Advanced Placement courses score well (16% to 24%). African Americans and Latinos are likewise under-represented in Arkansas Gifted and Talented



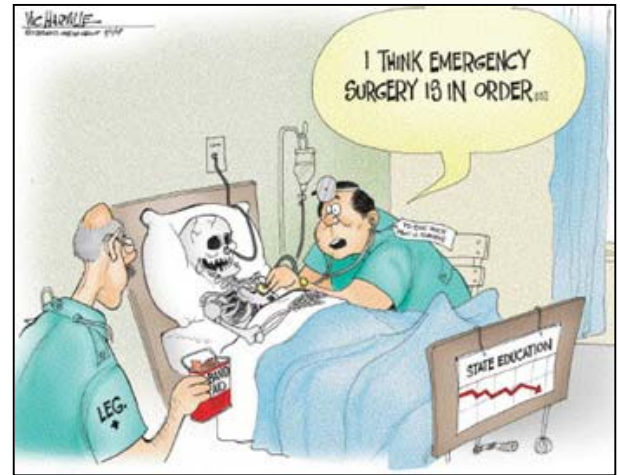
programs, and African Americans make up higher than expected percentages of dropouts and expulsions. See pages 14-16.

In terms of college readiness, again there are large gaps between subgroups of Arkansas students. More than half of all Arkansas high school graduates entering college needed remedial classes in 2004. African Americans score 15 to 20% below the state average on the ACT test. Other minorities scored 12 to 15% below the state average on the ACT. See page 17.

The report did not find a significant gender gap in Arkansas in any major category examined. Children with disabilities score extremely low across nearly every measurement.

Recommendations:

Efforts must continue to focus on raising the performance of all children, but this report shows that **special attention needs to be paid to children who are furthest behind**. The achievement gap is an entrenched and complex social problem. Instead of presuming concrete policy reforms, this report recommends the following:



1. **Arkansas lawmakers and communities need to have a much more serious and broad discussion** about the achievement gap in our schools, its origins and causes, and identify concrete reforms that will close the gap. Issues need to be explored such as what impact could lowering class sizes have, or further raising teacher salaries in low-wealth communities?
2. **State Lawmakers should fund a study or studies** to inform the state with data how to close the achievement gap with data and context specific to Arkansas.
3. **Arkansas needs to arrive at consensus about defining “equitable education”, and communities need to be involved in creating this definition.** State lawmakers, who once thought that equal state spending created equity, deserve credit for changing that definition in recent years to one that includes trying to determine what each student needs to achieve a minimum level of adequacy and recognizing that the children furthest behind will need more resources to achieve that level. This has moved lawmakers to put more resources into low-income schools. But will this definition lead Arkansas to close the achievement gap?
4. **Parents and students need to get more involved in their schools and form more parent action groups to demand reform.** Arkansans for Excellence in Education is one such group that is building chapters in various communities across Arkansas.
5. **Policy makers, school professionals, community members, parents and students need to think more holistically about how to improve performance.** Schools most often reflect the conditions and the values of the communities they represent. Sweeping education policy changes are

likely needed, but there may also be changes needed in non-academic factors like parental involvement, social expectations, family income, access to healthcare and other things outside the school that influence student performance significantly^{vii}. We need to examine how the school district, the community, the individual school, and the family all affect student performance and the gap.

6. **Communities need to consider what they can do to provide struggling children with more support.** For example, what impact would expanded parent training programs or after school programs have on the gap?
7. **Families need to consider what they can do to better support students.** High expectations, parental involvement and stable homes can make big differences for children.
8. **Focus on individual students, individual schools and the individual communities that make up the Arkansas School System as well as State reform.** Students face individualized challenges and we must look at the local level as well as the state. We know, for example that both African American students and low-income students are struggling, but we don't know if the reasons for their poor performance are the same, or if they are facing different challenges. Are the challenges facing under-performing students in Fayetteville the same as they are in Lake Village?
9. **Each school and school district needs to make specific plans to close the achievement gap.** Plans should include significant input from the community. The plans need to be implemented, monitored and evaluated in a transparent process.

Arkansas needs to identify barriers and create solutions holistically, from the individual up to the state,. State lawmakers and education professionals cannot do this alone. The whole state needs to be involved in identifying and creating solutions.





Unanswered Questions And Needs For Further Research:

Many questions remain from the data analysis to date:

- What are the **root causes** of the gap in our culture, communities, and schools?
- **What specific reforms are needed** to close the gap and how fast should parents and students expect the gap to be closed?
- **Why do scores drop** as children advance through grades?
- What **impacts have high-stakes tests** had on student learning?
- **Is race or income a more significant** contributor to student performance? The state does not currently have data available to determine this, but much of the State's response to the achievement gap is geared towards low-income students. Will this close the gap for minorities?
- **Is there a rural or urban bias** in student performance?
- **How is the gap in Arkansas influenced by per-pupil expenditures**, class size, teacher pay or qualifications, or other in-school influences?
- **What are the impacts of existing programs to close the achievement gap:** pre-school, poverty funding, increased teacher pay, etc? Are the programs being implemented effectively?
- **What out-of-school factors** in communities and families affect the gap? Do things like access to health care, average work week for parents, parent training programs, after school programs and others affect it?
- **What community and family supports would help** raise overall performance and close the gap?
- **How equal is equal enough?** Is the state obligated to close the gap, or are large gaps in performance acceptable as long as students are reaching a minimum proficiency?
- **What is the economic cost of the gap;** both in terms of lost productivity to the State, and in terms of lost wages to under-performing students?

Why Care About The Education Gap?

Every child in Arkansas suffers because of the achievement gap and it affects us all. The state cannot advance economically with a school system lagging behind the rest of the country, and the state cannot advance with whole categories of students left behind. The quality of our education system and the quality of our economy negatively impact everyone because of the gap. Not to mention that it is unfair.

We have a tremendous opportunity to develop a stronger state. US Census data suggests that better educational achievement would raise salaries in Arkansas. Only 16.7% of Arkansans have a college degree, and only one state has fewer college graduates than Arkansas – West Virginia^{viii}. Consider the median household earnings in 2000 by educational attainment:

- Arkansas average: \$26,383^{ix} 19% less than the national average (\$32,717)
- **No high school degree: \$20,014 24% less than the state average**
- High school degree: \$23,181 12% less than the state average
- Some college: \$26,476 about the state average
- **Bachelors degree: \$35,394 34% above the state average**
- Post bachelor education: \$42,180 60% above the state average and 111% above those without high school degrees.



A study done by the Southern Education Foundation found that **the single best thing Arkansas could do to develop economically would be to improve schools^x.**

Data shows clearly that Arkansas' children do not yet have equal opportunities in school – a violation of the American promise. **Closing the achievement gap is morally right and in the self-interest of all Arkansans.**



Methodology:

The primary data for this report is from the Arkansas Department of Education's (ADE) annual reports on student achievement on the Arkansas Benchmark Examinations^{xi}. Annually, a state literacy test is given to students in the 4th, 6th, 8th, and 11th grades. A state mathematics test is given to the 4th, 6th, and 8th grades, and to students who complete Algebra I and Geometry. The results are reported in five competency categories:

- Percent Below Basic
- Percent Basic
- Percent Proficient
- Percent Advanced
- Percent Proficient and Above (combines Proficient and Advanced)

This report uses the last category, Percent Proficient and Above, as the most representative of the achievement of students. Proficient and above means that students are able to do the work expected of them at their grade level or better.

We compared data for 2004 with 2002 (the earliest data comparable to the 2004 data) for the categories in the reports: race (African-American, Hispanic, and Caucasian), economically disadvantaged, students with disabilities, limited English proficient, migrants, and gender. See Appendix A for the definitions of the special categories. In some places additional data for people of Asian or Native American descent were available.

State Benchmark test scores were compared to the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) scores, which are national examinations and are also administered annually. The Education Trust, Inc. compared the results for Arkansas students in fourth and eighth grade reading and mathematics. Its report, Education Watch Arkansas: Key Facts and Figures, was released in the spring of 2004 and provides important comparative data for 2003^{xii}.

To evaluate a student's readiness for college courses we used the American College Test (ACT) scores. In 2004, 73% of Arkansas high school graduates took the ACT. The ACT results are more widely representative of the performance of Arkansas high school graduates and have been used in this analysis over the comparable but less often used SAT test.



The ACT results for Arkansas are reported by race and gender^{xiii}. The racial classifications differ from the ones used by the Arkansas Department of Education. The ACT does not report results for economically disadvantaged students, students with disabilities, or students with limited English proficiency.

Tips For Using This Report

Different testing systems use different racial classifications. The author has chosen to report the results in the categories used by the testing system. Therefore, the reader may have to make some interpretations among the data sets for the Arkansas Benchmark Tests, the NAEP tests, and the ACT. For example, in some instances the data is recorded as Caucasian, Hispanic and African American. In other places it is recorded as White, Black, and Mexican American – Chicano. We simply used the categories as they were reported by the data source.

The statistical measures used to compile this report change over time as new state and federal reporting requirements are instituted. It is not always possible to compare the same data. For example, the dropout/withdrawal data by race is fairly complete for the 2003-2004 school year. For the 2001-2002 school year, it is summarized into two large categories instead of the 14 classifications used in 2003-2004.

Over time, tests change as do the standards for interpreting them. This report makes no attempt to determine, for example, why the percentage scoring proficient and above on the Arkansas Benchmark Exams rose so markedly from 2002 to 2004. We do not explain the variation in performance between state and federal tests. These are questions that need more study, and a more diverse set of policymakers and community members to answer.



THE ARKANSAS LITERACY GAP

See Tables 1-5

Findings

1. Overall, compared to the nation, Arkansas' **8th grade literacy scores rank 32nd** in proficient or above on the NAEP tests.^{xiv}
2. There is a **large and persistent gap in literacy** between different classes of students at all grade levels.
 - a. At the 11th grade level, more than **twice as many Caucasian students test literate (still only 55%) than do African American (19%), Economically Disadvantaged (27%), or Hispanic (28%) students.**
 - b. **Only 1 in 20 students with disabilities tested literate** at the 11th grade level (6.5%).
3. The **percentage of students scoring proficient or above declined markedly from the 4th to the 11th grades** in all population groups, as Table 5 shows:
 - a. In the 4th grade, 49% of the African American students scored proficient and above. This rate declined to 19% in the 6th grade, rose to 28% in the 8th grade, and then dropped to 19% in the 11th grade.
 - b. In the 4th grade, 64% of Hispanics scored proficient and above and then declined precipitously to 28% by the 11th grade.
 - c. Caucasian scores also dropped, from 76% in the 4th grade to 55% in the 11th.
 - d. The economically disadvantaged scoring proficient and above dropped from 59% to 27%.
 - e. The students with disabilities dropped from 21% to 6.5%, cut by more than two-thirds.
 - f. Students with limited English proficiency tested half as literate in the 11th grade as in the 4th (30% versus 60%).
 - g. Migrant students tested almost two-thirds less literate in the 11th grade as in the 4th grade (19% versus 52%).



THE ARKANSAS ACHIEVEMENT GAP – UNEQUAL OPPORTUNITIES

4. **The 2004 scores on the Arkansas Benchmark exams are substantially better than the 2002 scores at every grade level and in every category.** In fact the scores improved so much that they **beg for an explanation**. In some grades, the percentage reported as proficient or above more than quadrupled for students with disabilities, those economically disadvantaged, and those with limited English proficiency. Major gains were reported for African American and Hispanic students and for both genders. See Tables 1 through 4 for details.
5. There was **no significant gender difference in the literacy** data in higher grades, but girls do start with higher literacy levels than boys. In the 4th grade, 77% of females tested proficient or above; in the 11th grade, it was down to 53%. Males started lower (62% in the 4th grade) and fell less (48% in 11th grade) but still dropped by 25% overall.

Conclusions:

1. African American, Economically Disadvantaged and Hispanic students are struggling mightily in Arkansas. **Only 1 in 5 African American juniors scored proficient** or better on the literacy test. **Only 1 in 4 Hispanic or Economically Disadvantaged juniors scored that well.**
2. The students with **special needs are faring even worse**. Marked declines in literacy were recorded for all three groups in the 11th grade versus the 4th:
 - a. Students with disabilities 7% versus 21%
 - b. Students not proficient in English 30% versus 60%
 - c. Migrants 19% versus 52%
3. The literacy test results show a declining percentage of students proficient and above in all races and in all grades. **Overall 7 in 10 were proficient or above in the 4th grade but less than half in the 11th.**

MAJOR QUESTIONS ABOUT THE ARKANSAS LITERACY SCORES AND GAPS:

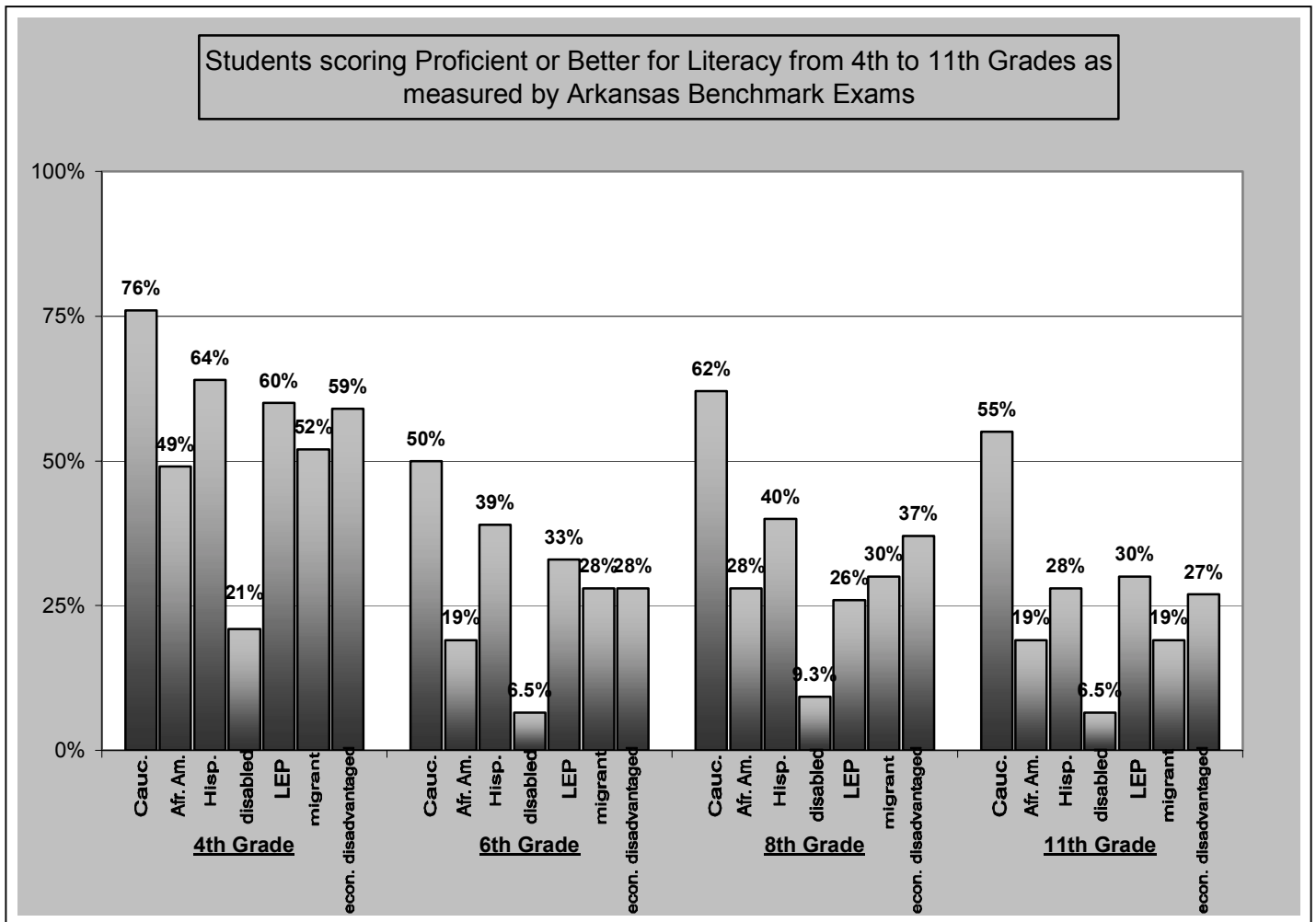
1. **How is it that scores improved so dramatically in such a short period of time?** Were students smarter, did teaching methods improve, did schools start



THE ARKANSAS ACHIEVEMENT GAP – UNEQUAL OPPORTUNITIES

teaching to the tests, were the tests consistent with previous years, were the tests valid indicators of student knowledge?

2. **What is causing the declining student performance on the proficiency tests?** 20 and 30 point drops in performance across all demographic groups between 4th and 11th grades are shocking.
3. **What can be done to reverse the declining performance and close the gaps?**





The Arkansas Mathematics Gap

See Tables 6-11

Findings:

1. **Arkansas is behind the rest of the country in our mathematics scores,** ranking 46th in proficient or above on the 8th grade mathematics NAEP tests^{xv}.
2. The percentage of African Americans proficient and above in the 4th grade is just over half of that for Caucasians; by the 8th grade it is less than one quarter.
 - a) **Only 1 in 5 African American students scored proficient** or above on the Algebra I exam.
 - b) On the Geometry exam, African Americans did even worse with only 1 in 7 scoring proficient or above.
3. **The percentage of Hispanics proficient and above** is close to the combined population in the 4th and 6th grades, but **drops below in the 8th grade** and stays below through Algebra and Geometry.
 - a) **Only 1 in 4 Hispanic 8th graders were proficient or better.**
 - b) Hispanics did better on the Algebra I and Geometry tests with about 40% proficient or above on each exam.
4. **The special needs students, as they did on the literacy exam, fared far worse.** Note the changes in the 8th grade versus the 4th grade:
 - a) Economically disadvantaged students 19% versus 53%
 - b) Students with disabilities 6% versus 28%
 - c) Students not proficient in English 24% versus 63%
 - d) Migrants 16% versus 52%
5. **The percentage of Caucasians proficient and above declines by 45%** from the 4th grade to the 8th grade though the starting proficiency rate is higher than the combined scores for all three grades, but less than half of the best performing class of students are testing proficient.
6. **The percentage of students scoring proficient or above in all population groups declined by over 50%** from the 4th grade to the 8th grade.
 - a) Equally worrisome, the scores for Algebra I and Geometry, essential courses for entering college, show less proficiency than the students had at the 4th grade.



THE ARKANSAS ACHIEVEMENT GAP – UNEQUAL OPPORTUNITIES

7. The 2004 mathematics scores rose significantly in all student groups and all grades from those in 2002. The percentage of the combined population rated proficient or above in the 4th grade, for example, rose from 49% in 2002 to 65% in 2004, an improvement of 33%. The similar percentage for students with disabilities in all three grades at least doubled. **This rapid improvement raises the same questions** that rapid improvements in literacy scores raised. Tables 6 through 11 contain the relevant data.
8. Declining performance in mathematics knows no gender bounds. **Both male and female ratings declined over 50%** from the 4th to the 8th grade. The percentage of males and females rated proficient and above parallel each other in all three grades and in Algebra I and Geometry.

Conclusions

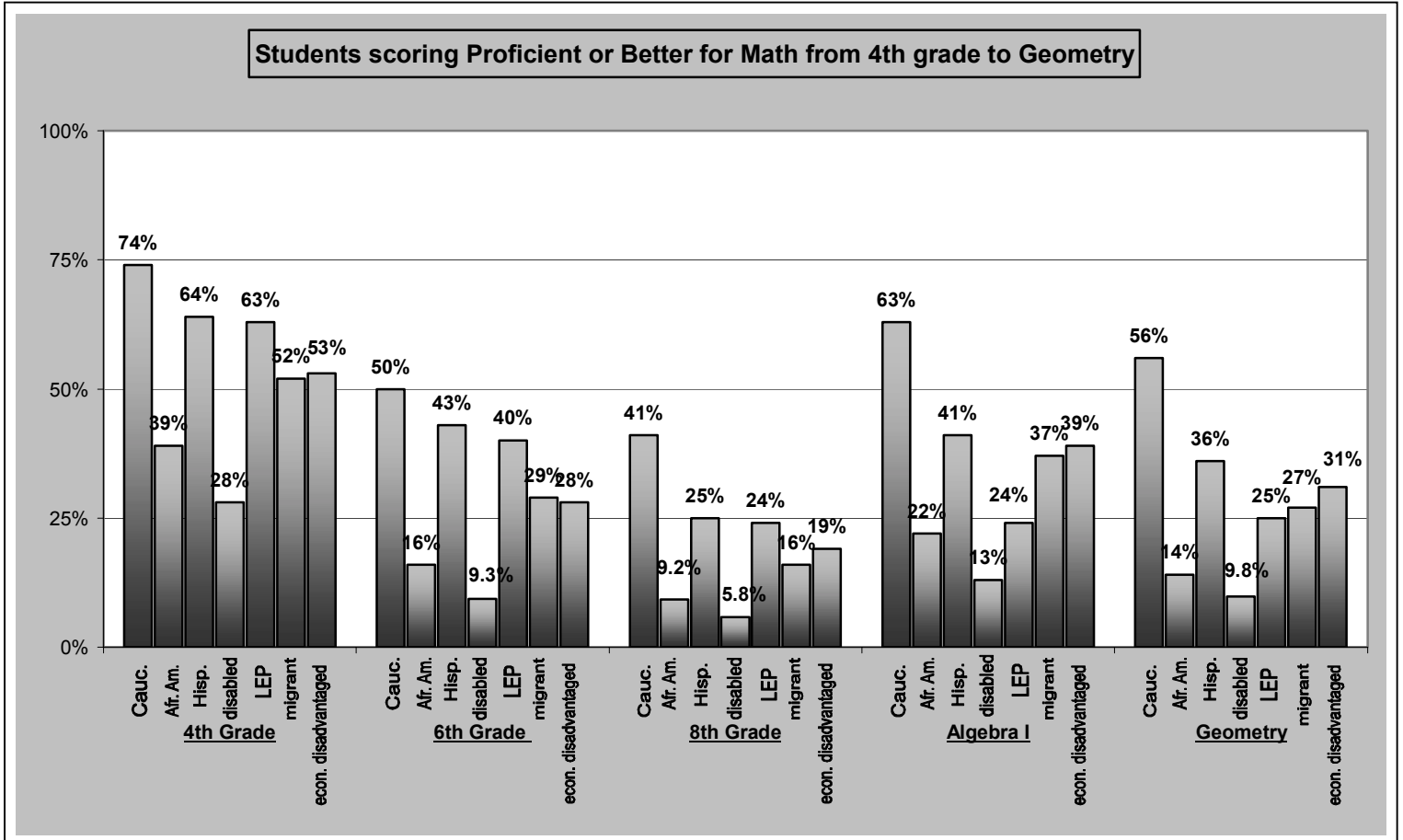
1. **Arkansas is failing to produce sizable numbers of students proficient in mathematics.** In fact, the proficiency declines significantly over time.
2. **African Americans, the economically disadvantaged, students with disabilities, and migrants score significantly below the combined population.** African American scores are particularly startling, with fewer than 1 in 7 mathematically proficient in geometry, and barely 1 in 5 proficient in Algebra.
3. Approximately 50% of all students taking the Algebra I and Geometry tests rated proficient and above. The scores indicate that **students are not adequately prepared to go on to college** or higher education. Minorities and special needs students and being left the furthest behind.

Major Questions About The Arkansas Mathematics Scores And Gaps:

1. **How is it that scores improved so dramatically in such a short period of time for math as well as literacy?**
2. **What is causing the declining student performance on the proficiency tests?**
3. **What can be done to reverse the declining performance and close the gaps?**



THE ARKANSAS ACHIEVEMENT GAP – UNEQUAL OPPORTUNITIES





COMPARISON OF ARKANSAS BENCHMARK RESULTS WITH NAEP TEST RESULTS

See Tables 12, 18 and 19

Findings

1. **Arkansas students consistently score lower on the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) exams than on the Arkansas Benchmark exams.** See Table 12 for the details.
2. In contrast to the results of the Arkansas Benchmark Examinations, Arkansas scores on the NAEP examinations have not changed markedly over the recent years. Fourth and eighth grade math scores were up slightly in 2003 over the 2000 results. Reading scores for those two grades were unchanged or slightly lower in 2003 compared to 2002 (2000 results are not reported).
3. **Fourth grade reading scores are much worse by comparison.**
 - a. The gap between white and African American scores is the 11th largest among the 50 states and the District of Columbia.
 - b. The average NAEP score for African American students in Arkansas rates 46th out of 51.
 - c. Only 10% of African American fourth graders scored proficient and above on the NAEP reading test versus 41% on the Arkansas Benchmark exam.
 - d. Latino students fared slightly better with 17% at proficiency or above on the NAEP versus 58% on the Arkansas Benchmark.
 - e. White students scored half as well on the NAEP as the Arkansas Benchmark—35% versus 70%.
4. **The eighth grade mathematics scores are poor on both scales.**
 - a. The gap between White and African American NAEP scores is the 15th largest among the 50 states and the District of Columbia.
 - b. The average NAEP score for Arkansas' African American students (3% proficient or above) is the lowest in the nation—51st out of 51.
 - c. Only 4% of African American students scored proficient and above on the Arkansas Benchmark exam and that dropped to 3% on the NAEP.
 - d. Latino students scored almost half as well on the NAEP as the Arkansas Benchmark—7% versus 13%.



THE ARKANSAS ACHIEVEMENT GAP – UNEQUAL OPPORTUNITIES

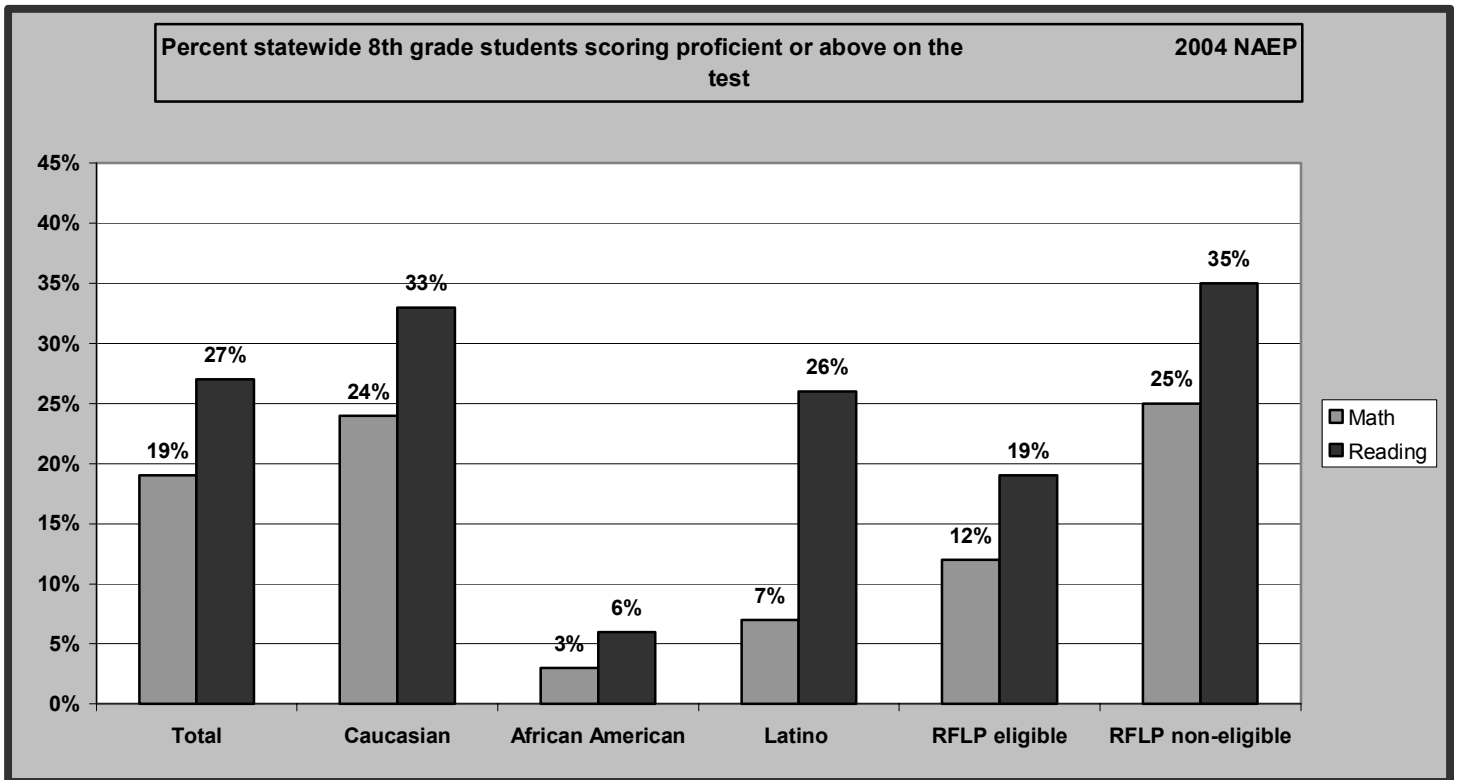
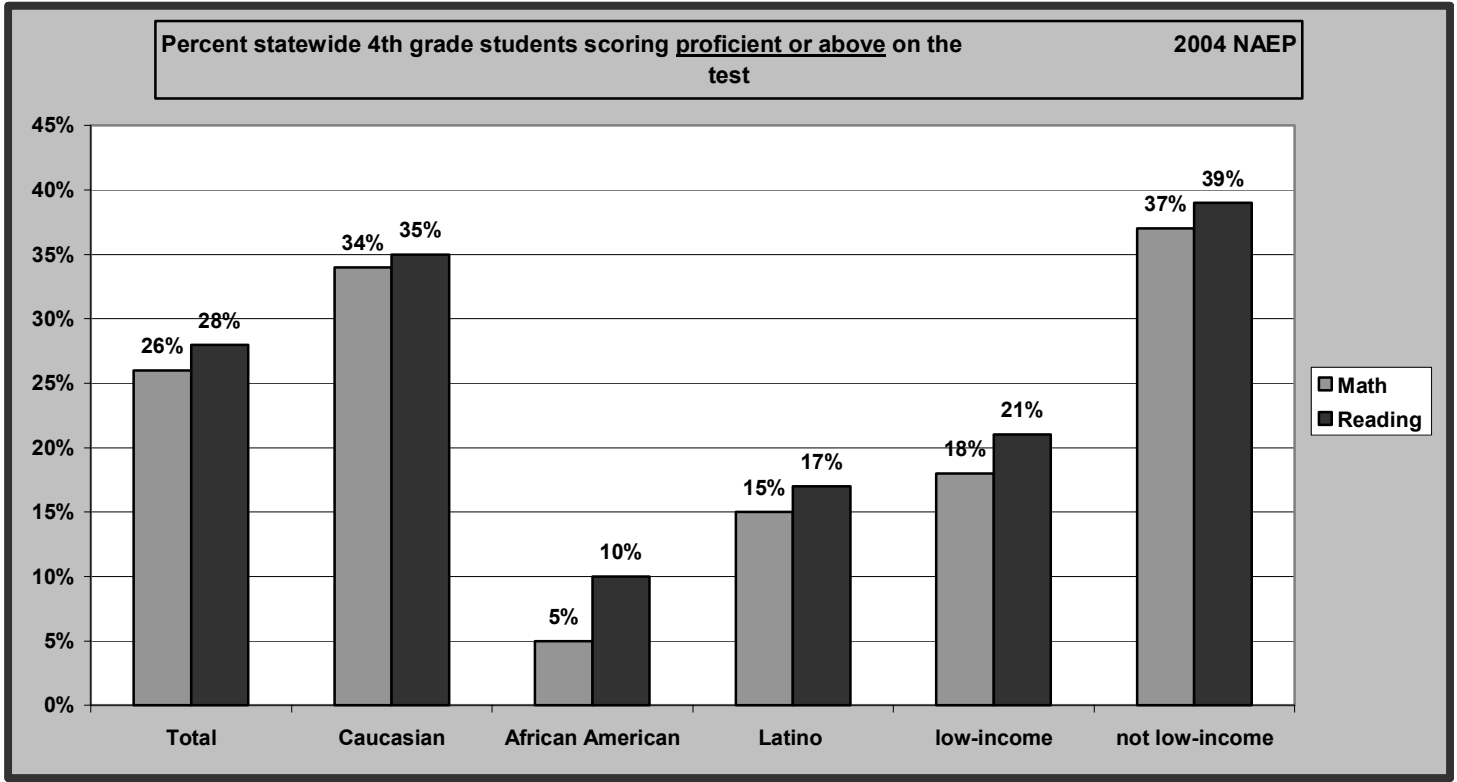
- e. 30% of the White students scored proficient or better on the Arkansas Benchmark, but only 24% on the NAEP.

Conclusions:

1. **Scores on the Arkansas Benchmark exams are far higher than those for Arkansas students taking the comparable NAEP tests.** The NAEP scores are so low for some segments of students – where **in some cases only 1 in 25 students are scoring proficient** – that they are incredibly sobering.
2. The differences are greatest in the fourth grade reading exam where NAEP proficient and above scores are at least 50% lower than the Arkansas Benchmark scores.
3. **African American and Latino students fared the worst**, both in absolute scores and in the comparisons.
4. The results for the Arkansas Benchmark exams, as seen earlier, increased markedly from 2002 to 2004. However, the comparison with the NAEP scores in 2003 shows Arkansas students testing significantly worse than on the Arkansas Benchmark exams and raises questions about the Benchmark tests.

Major Questions About The Discrepancies Between Arkansas Benchmark Exams And Federal NAEP Tests?

1. **What explains the large differences in scores** between the State Benchmark exams and the Federal NAEP scores? Which are more accurate and reflective of actual ability?
2. **Why have the improvements in State Benchmark exam scores not been directly mirrored** by improvements in Federal NAEP scores? If students were truly improving, one would expect that to be reflected on any fair measuring stick.
3. **How can these tests be improved** to measure student performance more accurately, and what other kinds of measurements should we use?





The Arkansas Advanced Placement, Gifted And Talented And Dropout Gaps

Profile Of Arkansas Public Schools

For school year 2004-2005, the public schools in Arkansas enrolled 454,515 students^{xvi}.

- 51.4% were males and 48.6% females.
- Whites made up 69.3% of the student body, blacks 22.6%, Hispanics 6.0%, Asian Americans 1.3%, and Native Americans 0.6%.

See Tables 13 and 15 – 17

Findings

- 1. African American and Latino students are significantly underrepresented in Advanced Placement Courses.** Whites and Asian students participate at higher rates. See Table 13 for the details.
 - a. African Americans constituted 23% of the 2003-2004 enrollment, yet only represented 6% of the students taking AP Calculus, 7% of those taking AP Biology, and 7% of the AP English Language and Composition population.
 - b. Latinos constituted 4% of the enrollment, yet only 2% of the students in AP Calculus, 2% of the AP English Language and Composition, and 3% in the AP Biology classes.
 - c. Asian Americans constituted 1% of the student body, and 7% of the AP Calculus enrollment, 4% of the AP English Language and Composition, and 9% in AP Biology.
 - d. Whites are 71% of the students overall and 85% of those enrolled in AP Calculus, 87% of those in AP English Language and Composition, and 81% in AP Biology.
- 2. Those that score well on the Advanced Placement tests (a score of 3, 4, or 5) vary significantly by race** with Asian American students scoring the best, whites next, and African Americans last.
 - a. One in six African Americans scored well on the Calculus and the Biology tests. One in four did well in English Language and Composition.



THE ARKANSAS ACHIEVEMENT GAP – UNEQUAL OPPORTUNITIES

- b. Seven in ten Asian Americans scored well in Calculus, over six in ten did the same in Biology, and 45% scored well in English.
 - c. Slightly over half of White students aced the Calculus course, half scored well in the English course, and 43% did well in Biology.
 - d. Too few results were available to report for Latino students.
3. **Gifted and Talented Program.** This Program enrolled 42,950 students for 2004-2005 or 20.7% of the total student enrollment. See Table 16 for details.
- a. **Blacks equal 22.6% of the total student body but only 16.3%** of those in the Gifted and Talented Program.
 - b. **Hispanics equal 6.0% of the students but only 1.7%** of those in the Gifted and Talented Program.
 - c. Whites equal 69.3% of the students but 80.0% of those enrolled in the Gifted and Talented Program.
4. **Dropouts and Withdrawals.** In 2003-2004, the latest school year for which data are available, 35,210 students withdrew or dropped out of Arkansas public schools; 27,890 enrolled in another school, but 7,320 left the system for a variety of reasons. See Table 17 for details.
- a. Blacks equaled almost one third of those who left school before graduation but represent less than 23% of the student body. Blacks are 37.0% of the total of those suspended or expelled.
 - b. 61.5% of the dropouts were white although they constitute over 70% of the student body.
 - c. Asian American, Hispanic, and Native American dropouts were proportional to their representation in the student body.
5. **School Personnel.** The public schools of Arkansas hired 37,590 personnel to operate and maintain the system in the 2004 – 2005 school year^{xvii}. See Table 15 for details.
- a. Only 10.6% of school personnel were black in comparison to 22.6% of the student body.
 - b. Hispanics held 0.4% of school positions compared to 6.0% of the student population.
 - c. Over 88% of school personnel were white compared to 69.3% of the student body.



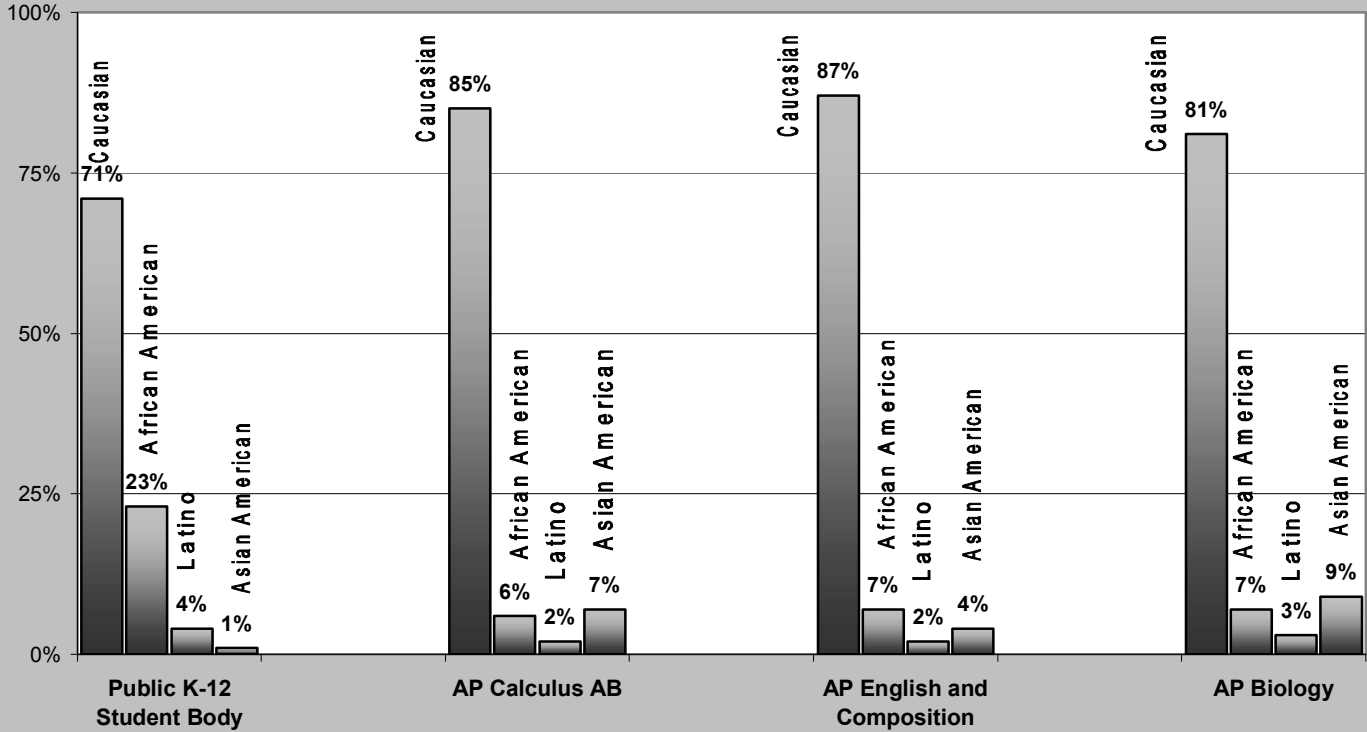
Conclusions

- 1. Compared to the composition of the student body, blacks and Hispanics are:**
 - Under represented among school personnel.
 - Under represented in Advanced Placement courses.
 - Under represented in the Gifted and Talented Program.
 - Over represented in those who leave school for reasons other than to transfer to another school system.
- 2. Compared to the composition of the student body, Whites are:**
 - Over represented among school personnel.
 - Under represented in Advanced Placement courses.
 - Over represented in the Gifted and Talented Program.
 - Under represented in those who leave school for reason other than to transfer to another school system.
- 3. A relatively small percentage (16% to 24%) of African Americans who enroll in the Advanced Placement courses score well.**
- 4. For whites, the percentage scoring well ranges from 43% to 54%. Asian Americans did the best with 45% to 69% scoring well.**

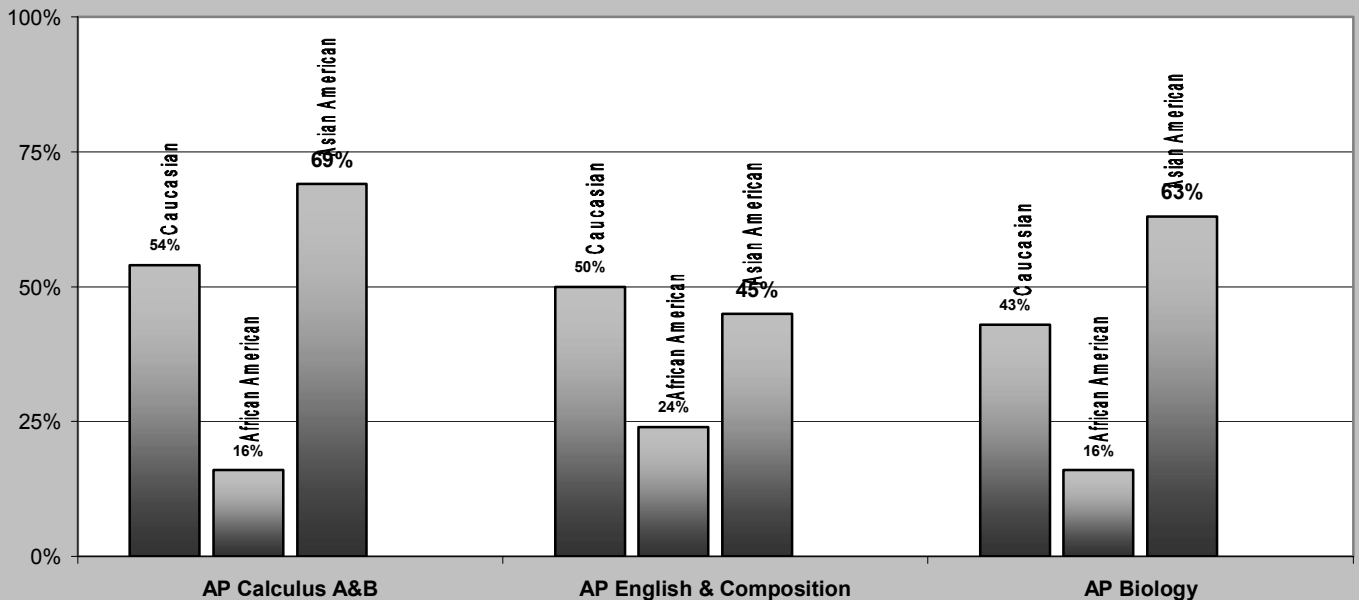
Major questions about AP, Gifted and Talented and Drop out Gaps:

- 1. How can these gaps in participation rates be explained and corrected?**
- 2. Why do the best minority students who take AP courses still score well below their peers? What can be done?**
- 3. What explains the large discrepancies between the school personnel makeup and the makeup of the student body? More importantly, how do we attract more minority teachers, and how do we recruit teachers to the areas where they are needed most?**

2003-2004 Racial Makeup of Public K-12 Student Body and AP Enrollement by Course



Students scoring Proficient or Better in AP courses by Race





THE ARKANSAS COLLEGE READINESS GAP

See table 14

Findings

1. The ACT scores cover almost three quarters of the Arkansas high school graduates and therefore offer a comprehensive picture of college preparation. The ACT has scores for five sections: English, Mathematics, Reading, Science, and Composite. See Table 14 for details.
 - a. **Arkansas students scored slightly higher than the national average on the English portion, but were below on the other three subjects and the Composite.** The difference in mathematics was marked – 19.5 for Arkansas versus 20.7 nationally. Scores range from low (1) to high (36).
 - b. African Americans are consistently 3.0 to 4.4 points below the Arkansas averages on the composite and the four subject matter areas. Stated another way, the **African American scores are 15 to 20% percent below the state average.** The differences are even higher when compared to the highest scoring races – white and Asian American or Pacific Islander.
 - c. The scores for American Indian/Alaskan Native, Mexican American / Chicano, and Puerto Rican/Hispanic are all clustered in a tight range with little significant difference among them. The scores for these three groups are 12 to 15% below the white and Asian American/Pacific Islander groups but 8 to 10% above those for African Americans
 - d. The Arkansas composite scores show no gender differences. Females scored better on English and Reading; males led in Mathematics and Science.
2. In 2004, **52% of Arkansas high school graduates entering college had to take remedial courses.** This figure, published annually the Arkansas Department of Education, is down from 57% in 2002. Unfortunately, the remediation rate is not reported by race or gender.



Conclusions

1. Based on scores on college admission tests, African American and Hispanic high school graduates in Arkansas are not as well prepared as the White and Asian American/Pacific Islander.
2. **One in two high school graduates admitted to college must take remedial courses.** That is hardly a surprising conclusion, given the findings on the literacy and mathematics tests noted earlier.
3. **A high school degree does not guarantee that an Arkansas student is prepared for further education** or for entry into the work force. Without basic skills in reading, writing, and mathematics, the graduate will be unable to adapt to changes in the workforce that demand training and retraining as well as specialized skills to survive economically.

Major questions about the Arkansas college readiness gap

1. What is causing it, and how do we correct it?
2. How do we encourage more children, and their families, to pursue college and higher education?



APPENDIX

DEFINITIONS USED FOR ARKANSAS BENCHMARK TEST REPORTS

The Arkansas Department of Education has prepared a Test Coordinator Manual that provides information to local district testing coordinators about special populations and instructs them on how to code them at testing time^{xviii}.

Economically Disadvantaged

All children who are eligible for free or reduced price lunches under the federal School Lunch Program.

Students with Disabilities

Students identified as disabled pursuant to P. L. 94-142 and under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended, if their Individualized Educational Plans (IEPs) indicate that testing is appropriate, with or without accommodations. Students in School Age Programs (DDS) are to be assessed. This requirement began with the 2002-2003 school year.

Limited English Proficient (LEP) Students

LEP Students are included in the standardized testing if, in the professional judgment of a language assessment committee comprised of appropriate district and school personnel, decides it is feasible. The following may be considered to determine language proficiency: reading inventories, writing samples, teacher observations, teach-made tests, and grades. If it is determined that a student is not to take the Benchmark Examination, that student should participate in the Alternative Portfolio Assessment System.



EDUCATION RESOURCES AND LINKS:

<http://arkedu.state.ar.us/>

The Arkansas Department of Education.

<http://normes.uark.edu/>

The NORMES web site has been designed as a resource for educators, policymakers, parents, and other stakeholders in education for finding reliable educational achievement data in Arkansas. See ALERT and School Report Card (via school performance link) sections for district and school-specific test scores.

<http://www.greatschools.net/>

Online listing of school profiles and performance levels nationwide.

<http://nces.ed.gov/>

National Center for Educational Statistics. The primary federal entity for collecting and analyzing data related to education in the U.S. and other nations. NCES is located within the U.S. Department of Education and the Institute of Education Sciences. NCES fulfills a Congressional mandate to collect, collate, analyze, and report complete statistics on the condition of American education; conduct and publish reports; and review and report on education activities internationally. Generates the annual “Nation’s Report Card”

<http://arkedu.state.ar.us/actaap/index.htm>

The **Arkansas Comprehensive Testing, Assessment and Accountability Program (ACTAAP)** encompasses the state's [Smart Start Initiative](#), which focuses on Grades K-4; the state's [Smart Step Initiative](#), which focuses on Grades 5-8; and education for Grades 9-12. Responsible for state assessment through use of the Arkansas Benchmark Exam.

<http://www2.edtrust.org/edtrust>

The Education Trust was established in 1990 by the American Association for Higher Education as a special project to encourage colleges and universities to support K-12 reform efforts. Since then, The Ed Trust has grown into an independent nonprofit organization whose mission is to make schools and colleges work for all of the young people they serve. We believe that it is impossible to achieve significant change in K-12 without simultaneously changing the way that postsecondary education does business. We also believe that postsecondary education needs improving as much as K-12. Leaders in closing the Achievement Gap whose basic tenet is that-All children will learn at high levels when they are taught to high levels.

www.aradvocates.org/

Advocates for Children and Families -- Working on early childcare and tax reform issues related to education.



THE ARKANSAS ACHIEVEMENT GAP – UNEQUAL OPPORTUNITIES

www.educationinarkansas.com/

Arkansas Blue Ribbon Commission on Education – This was a joint Legislative and citizen commission that studied Arkansas education system needs in 2002.

www.CitizensFirst.org

Arkansas Citizens First Congress – A community based coalition of 40+ organizations working together on a comprehensive education and tax reform agenda.

www.arkansashighered.com/

Arkansas Department of Higher Education – The state agency in charge of regulating colleges, universities and other post-secondary schools in Arkansas,

www.aeaonline.org

Arkansas Education Association – The state teacher's union who has excellent resources about education reform.

<http://www.uca.edu/org/aeaa/>

Arkansas Environmental Educators Association – Professional educators who teach environmental science.

www.arkleg.state.ar.us

Arkansas Legislature – Follow Education or Revenue and Tax Committee meeting schedules; look up pending bills or laws that have been passed; find the contact information and photo of your state legislator, etc.

www.acure.us

Arkansas Rural educators web site – This is a site by a rural activist in Southern Arkansas who is tracking the education debate from the perspective of rural communities.

www.arsba.org

Arkansas School Boards Association –

www.ruraledu.org

Rural School and Community Trust – Another national group with material about education reform in rural places like Arkansas.

www.southerned.org

Southern Education Foundation – Publishers of the Miles to Go reports that highlight the achievement gap between race and class in Southern States and proposes possible solutions.

www.wrockefellerfoundation.org

Winthrop Rockefeller Foundation – This is the Arkansas Foundation who produced the excellent study of Arkansas Tax system, as it relates to education reform, in 2003. You can download the study from their web site.



THE ARKANSAS ACHIEVEMENT GAP – UNEQUAL OPPORTUNITIES

DATA CHARTS:

Table 1 – Arkansas Fourth Grade Literacy Comparison, 2002 versus 2004			
<u>Grade and Area</u>	<u>2004 Percent Proficient and Above</u>	<u>2002 Percent Proficient and Above</u>	<u>Difference</u>
<u>Grade Four Literacy</u>			
African American	49	37	12
Hispanic	64	48	16
Caucasian	76	65	11
Combined Population	69	58	11
Economically Disadvantaged	59	45	14
Students with Disabilities	21	10	11
Limited English Proficient	60	32	28
Gender			
Female	77	67	10
Male	62	49	13
Migrant	52	42	10
Source: School Report Cards, Arkansas Department of Education			

Table 2 – Arkansas Sixth Grade Literacy Comparison, 2002 versus 2004			
<u>Grade and Area</u>	<u>2004 Percent Proficient and Above</u>	<u>2002 Percent Proficient and Above</u>	<u>Difference</u>
<u>Sixth Grade Literacy</u>			
African American	19	10	9
Hispanic	39	17	22
Caucasian	50	32	18
Combined Population	42	26	16
Economically Disadvantaged	28	15	13
Students with Disabilities	6.5	1.3	5.2
Limited English Proficient	33	5.7	27.3
Gender			
Female	50	33	17
Male	34	19	15
Migrant	28	11	17
Source: School Report Cards, Arkansas Department of Education			



THE ARKANSAS ACHIEVEMENT GAP – UNEQUAL OPPORTUNITIES

Table 3 – Arkansas Eighth Grade Literacy Comparison, 2002 versus 2004

<u>Grade and Area</u>	<u>2004 Percent Proficient and Above</u>	<u>2002 Percent Proficient and Above</u>	<u>Difference</u>
<u>Eighth Grade Literacy</u>			
African American	28	14	14
Hispanic	40	19	21
Caucasian	62	40	22
Combined Population	52	32	20
Economically Disadvantaged	37	19	18
Students with Disabilities	9.3	1.8	7.5
Limited English Proficient	26	6.4	19.6
Gender			
Female	63	41	22
Male	42	24	18
Migrant	30	14	16
Source: School Report Cards, Arkansas Department of Education			

Table 4 – Arkansas Eleventh Grade Literacy Comparison, 2002 versus 2004

<u>Grade and Area</u>	<u>2004 Percent Proficient and Above</u>	<u>2002 Percent Proficient and Above</u>	<u>Difference</u>
<u>Eleventh Grade Literacy</u>			
African American	19	15	4
Hispanic	28	21	7
Caucasian	55	46	9
Combined Population	45	38	7
Economically Disadvantaged	27	20	7
Students with Disabilities	6.5	1.1	5.4
Limited English Proficient	30	6.9	23.1
Gender			
Female	53	46	7
Male	48	29	19
Migrant	19	11	8
Source: School Report Cards, Arkansas Department of Education			



THE ARKANSAS ACHIEVEMENT GAP – UNEQUAL OPPORTUNITIES

Table 5 – Arkansas Literacy Comparison by Grade, 2004

<u>Student Populations</u>	<u>2004 Percent</u>	<u>2004 Percent</u>	<u>2004 Percent</u>	<u>2004 Percent</u>
	<u>Proficient and Above</u>	<u>Proficient and Above</u>	<u>Proficient and Above</u>	<u>Proficient and Above</u>
	<u>Fourth Grade</u>	<u>Sixth Grade</u>	<u>Eighth Grade</u>	<u>Eleventh Grade</u>
African American	49	19	28	19
Hispanic	64	39	40	28
Caucasian	76	50	62	55
Combined Population	69	42	52	45
Economically Disadvantaged	59	28	37	27
Students with Disabilities	21	6.5	9.3	6.5
Limited English Proficient	60	33	26	30
Gender				
Female	77	50	63	53
Male	62	34	42	48
Migrant	52	28	30	19

Source: School Report Cards, Arkansas Department of Education

Table 6 – Arkansas Fourth Grade Mathematics Comparison, 2002 versus 2003

<u>Grade and Area</u>	<u>2004 Percent</u>	<u>2002 Percent</u>	<u>Difference</u>
	<u>Proficient and Above</u>	<u>Proficient and Above</u>	
<u>Fourth Grade Mathematics</u>			
African American	39	22	17
Hispanic	64	40	24
Caucasian	74	60	14
Combined Population	65	49	16
Economically Disadvantaged	53	36	17
Students with Disabilities	28	14	14
Limited English Proficient	63	17	46
Gender			
Female	66	50	16
Male	65	50	15
Migrant	52	34	18

Source: School Report Cards, Arkansas Department of Education



THE ARKANSAS ACHIEVEMENT GAP – UNEQUAL OPPORTUNITIES

Table 7 – Arkansas Fourth Grade Mathematics Comparison 2002 versus 2004

<u>Grade and Area</u>	<u>2004 Percent Proficient and Above</u>	<u>2002 Percent Proficient and Above</u>	<u>Difference</u>
<u>Sixth Grade Mathematics</u>			
African American	16	9.6	6.4
Hispanic	43	23	20
Caucasian	50	40	10
Combined Population	41	31	10
Economically Disadvantaged	28	19	9
Students with Disabilities	9.3	3.6	5.7
Limited English Proficient	40	8.2	31.8
Gender			
Female	42	34	8
Male	41	30	11
Migrant	29	17	12

Source: School Report Cards, Arkansas Department of Education

Table 8 – Arkansas Eight Grade Mathematics Comparison, 2002 versus 2004

<u>Grade and Area</u>	<u>2004 Percent Proficient and Above</u>	<u>2002 Percent Proficient and Above</u>	<u>Difference</u>
<u>Eighth Grade Mathematics</u>			
African American	9.2	4.7	4.5
Hispanic	25	11	14
Caucasian	41	27	14
Combined Population	32	21	11
Economically Disadvantaged	19	9.8	9.2
Students with Disabilities	5.8	2.2	3.6
Limited English Proficient	24	2.5	21.5
Gender			
Female	32	20	12
Male	32	21	11
Migrant	16	6	10

Source: School Report Cards, Arkansas Department of Education



THE ARKANSAS ACHIEVEMENT GAP – UNEQUAL OPPORTUNITIES

Table 9 – Arkansas Algebra I Comparison, 2002 versus 2002

<u>Grade and Area</u>	<u>2004 Percent Proficient and Above</u>	<u>2002 Percent Proficient and Above</u>	<u>Difference</u>
End of Course Algebra I			
African American	22	12	10
Hispanic	41	23	18
Caucasian	63	45	18
Combined Population	53	36	17
Economically Disadvantaged	39	22	17
Students with Disabilities	13	6	7
Limited English Proficient	24	12	12
Gender			
Female	54	37	17
Male	53	34	19
Migrant	37	16	21
Source: School Report Cards, Arkansas Department of Education			

Table 10 – Arkansas Geometry Comparison, 2002 versus 2004

<u>Grade and Area</u>	<u>2004 Percent Proficient and Above</u>	<u>2002 Percent Proficient and Above</u>	<u>Difference</u>
End of Course Geometry			
African American	14	7.2	6.8
Hispanic	36	22	14
Caucasian	56	39	17
Combined Population	47	31	16
Economically Disadvantaged	31	17	14
Students with Disabilities	9.8	4.7	5.1
Limited English Proficient	25	13	12
Gender			
Female	45	30	15
Male	49	32	17
Migrant	27	18	9
Source: School Report Cards, Arkansas Department of Education			



THE ARKANSAS ACHIEVEMENT GAP – UNEQUAL OPPORTUNITIES

Table 11 – Arkansas Mathematics Comparison by Grade, 2004

<u>Student Populations</u>	<u>2004 Percent Proficient Plus</u>	<u>2004 Percent Proficient Plus</u>	<u>2004 Percent Proficient Plus</u>	<u>2004 Percent Proficient Plus</u>	<u>2004 Percent Proficient Plus</u>
	<u>Fourth Grade</u>	<u>Sixth Grade</u>	<u>Eighth Grade</u>	<u>Algebra I</u>	<u>Geometry</u>
African American	39	16	9.2	22	14
Hispanic	64	43	25	41	36
Caucasian	74	50	41	63	56
Combined Population	65	41	32	53	47
Economically Disadvantaged	53	28	19	39	31
Students with Disabilities	28	9.3	5.8	13	9.8
Limited English Proficient	63	40	24	24	25
Gender					
Female	66	42	32	54	45
Male	65	41	32	53	49
Migrant	52	29	16	37	27

Source: School Report Cards, Arkansas Department of Education

Table 12 – Comparative Scores, 2003 NAEP and Arkansas Benchmark Exams by Race

<u>Examinations</u>	<u>Percentage Scoring Proficient or Above</u>			
	<u>All Students</u>	<u>African American</u>	<u>Latino</u>	<u>Caucasian</u>
FOURTH GRADE READING				
Arkansas Benchmark	62%	41%	58%	70%
NAEP	28%	10%	17%	35%
Difference	34%	31%	41%	35%
EIGHTH GRADE MATHEMATICS				
Arkansas Benchmark	23%	4%	13%	30%
NAEP	19%	3%	7%	24%
Difference	4%	1%	6%	6%

SOURCE: Education Watch Arkansas; Key Facts and Figures prepared by the Education Trust, Inc. in the Spring 2004.



THE ARKANSAS ACHIEVEMENT GAP – UNEQUAL OPPORTUNITIES

Race	Percentage of Total Enrollment			
	Public K-12 Enrollment	Calculus AB	English Language and Composition	Biology
African American	23%	6%	7%	7%
Asian	1%	7%	4%	9%
Latino	4%	2%	2%	3%
White	71%	85%	87%	81%
Total	99%	100%	100%	100%
	Percentage Scoring Well (3, 4, or 5)			
African American		16%	24%	16%
Asian		69%	45%	63%
Latino		*	*	*
White		54%	50%	43%
Total		53%	48%	43%
	* Too few to report			
SOURCE: Education Watch Arkansas; Key Education Facts and Figures, prepared by the Education Trust Inc. in Spring 2004				

Table 14 – 2004 American College Test (ACT) Scores, Arkansas and National High School Graduates by Race and Gender

Average Score	All Students	Male	Female	African American	Am Indian Alaskan	Caucasian	Mexican Am Chicano	Asian Am Pac Island	P Rican Hispanic
Composite National	20.9	21.0	20.9	17.1	18.8	21.8	18.4	21.9	18.8
Composite Arkansas	20.4	20.4	20.4	16.7	19.9	21.2	18.6	20.7	18.8
English National	20.4	19.9	20.8	16.3	17.8	21.4	17.3	21.0	17.9
English Arkansas	20.6	20.1	21.1	16.2	19.7	21.6	18.1	20.6	18.0
Mathematics National	20.7	21.3	20.2	16.9	18.6	21.4	18.5	23.0	18.9
Mathematics Arkansas	19.5	20.0	19.2	16.3	19.0	20.2	18.2	21.2	18.8
Reading National	21.3	21.1	21.5	17.1	19.3	22.3	18.5	21.5	19.1
Reading Arkansas	20.5	20.5	21.0	16.8	20.6	21.6	18.8	20.4	18.7
Science National	20.9	21.3	20.5	17.4	19.2	21.6	18.6	21.7	19.0
Science Arkansas	20.1	20.5	19.8	17.1	19.8	20.8	18.8	20.8	19.0
Source: 2004 ACT National and State Scores; ACT High School Profile Report, Graduating Class of 2004. State Composite for Arkansas									



THE ARKANSAS ACHIEVEMENT GAP – UNEQUAL OPPORTUNITIES

Table 15 – Profile of Arkansas Public Education. 2004 – 2005								
Race	Student		Student		Total		School	
	Males	%	Females	%	Students	%	Personnel	%
Asian	2,955	1.3%	2,806	1.3%	5,761	1.3%	67	0.2%
Black	52,157	22.3%	51,430	23.3%	103,587	22.8%	3,968	10.6%
Hispanic	14,164	6.1%	13,149	6.0%	27,313	6.0%	117	0.3%
Native	1,442	0.6%	1,345	0.6%	2,787	0.6%	141	0.4%
White	162,933	69.7%	152,134	68.9%	315,067	69.3%	33,297	88.6%
Total	233,651	100.0%	220,864	100.0%	454,515	100.0%	37,590	100.0%
Source: 2004-2005 State Profile of Arkansas Public Schools								

Table 16 – Gifted and Talented Program Statewide, 2004 – 2005				
Category	State Totals	Percent of State Total	Gifted and Talented	Percent of Gifted/Talented
Female	221,864	48.7%	23,481	54.7%
Male	233,651	51.3%	19,469	45.3%
Total	455,515	100.0%	42,950	100.0%
Asian	5,761	1.3%	665	1.5%
Black	103,587	22.7%	7,012	16.3%
Hispanic	27,313	6.0%	750	1.7%
Native	2,787	0.6%	156	0.4%
White	316,067	69.4%	34,367	80.0%
Total	455,515	100.0%	42,950	100.0%
Free Lunch	200,697	44.1%	8,875	20.7%
SOURCE: ADE Data Administration Unit SIS Data 0304, Page 85				



THE ARKANSAS ACHIEVEMENT GAP – UNEQUAL OPPORTUNITIES

Table 17 – Dropouts and Withdrawals, 2003 - 2004

<u>Reported Reason</u>	<u>Asian</u>	<u>Black</u>	<u>Hispanic</u>	<u>Native</u>	<u>White</u>	<u>Total</u>
Enrolled in another school	375	5,467	1,348	248	20,452	27,890
Incarcerated	4	148	15	1	158	326
Deceased	1	21	4	0	73	99
Failing Gradees	0	4	0	0	16	20
Suspended or Expelled	1	100	9	3	157	270
Lack of Interest	10	394	82	6	597	1,089
Conflict with School	0	14	1	1	9	25
Economic Hardship	0	4	2	0	17	23
Pregnancy/Marriage	0	12	2	0	61	75
Peer Conflict	0	0	0	0	1	1
Enrolled in GED	5	201	43	9	1,501	1,759
Alcohol/Drugs	1	4	0	0	6	11
Health Problems	0	12	0	0	33	45
Other	53	1,380	249	25	1,870	3,577
Total without Transfers	75	2,294	407	45	4,499	7,320
Percent of total w/o transfers	1.0%	31.3%	5.6%	0.6%	61.5%	100.0%
Percent of Enrollment	1.1%	22.9%	5.3%	0.6%	70.1%	100.0%

Source: 2003-2004 Dropouts/Withdrawals State Totals; State Profile of Arkansas Public Schools

Table 18 – 2003-04 Arkansas NAEP scores

4th grade

	Total	Caucasian	African American	Latino	low-income	not low-income
Math	26%	34%	5%	15%	18%	37%
Reading	28%	35%	10%	17%	21%	39%

Source: The Nation's Report Card. NCES State Report Cards.2003.

Table 19 – 2003-04 Arkansas NAEP scores

8th grade

	Total	Caucasian	African American	Latino	low-income	not low-income
Math	19%	24%	3%	7%	12%	25%
Reading	27%	33%	6%	26%	19%	35%

Source: The Nation's Report Card. NCES State Report Cards.2003.



End Notes:

Most of the data for this report are taken from the ADE School Information web site (www.as-is.org).

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- ⁱ Arkansas Department of Education Website: http://arkedu.state.ar.us/good_news/iowa_test.html
- ⁱⁱ North Carolina Department of Education Website: www.ncpublicschools.org/schoolimprovement/closingthegap/strategies/movement/definition
- ⁱⁱⁱ North Central Regional Education Laboratory: www.ncrel.org/gap/library/text/whatmatters.htm
- ^{iv} US Bureau of the Census. Summary file 3. 2000 Census of Population & Housing
- ^v Southern Education Foundation: Miles to Go Update, www.southerned.org
- ^{vi} Arkansas Blue Ribbon Commission on Education in Arkansas: www.educationinarkansas.com/; and the 2003 An Evidence-Based Approach to School Finance Adequacy in Arkansas: www.arkleg.state.ar.us/data/education/FinalArkansasReport.pdf
- ^{vii} Class and Schools, Richard Rothstein, 2004. Economic Policy Institute
- ^{viii} 2004 UALR Arkansas Statistical Abstract, page 325
- ^{ix} 2004 UALR Arkansas Statistical Abstract, page 677
- ^x Southern Education Foundation: Miles to Go Update, www.southerned.org
- ^{xi} School Report Cards, Arkansas Department of Education. <http://normes.uark.edu/performance/index.html>
- ^{xii} Education Watch Arkansas; Key Facts and Figures prepared by the Education Trust, Inc. 2004. http://www2.edtrust.org/edtrust/summaries2003/AR_statesum.qxd.pdf
- ^{xiii} 2004 ACT National and State Score; ACT High School Profile Report, Graduating Class of 2004. State composite for Arkansas.
- ^{xiv} The Education Trust: 66.43.154.40:8001/projects/edtrust/index.html
- ^{xv} The Education Trust: 66.43.154.40:8001/projects/edtrust/index.html
- ^{xvi} 2004-2005 State Profile of Arkansas Public Schools
- ^{xvii} 2004-2005 State Profile of Arkansas Public Schools
- ^{xviii} Arkansas Department of Education District and School Test Coordinator Manual, 2005 -- <http://arkedu.state.ar.us/actaap/pdf/TCM%20JAN05.pdf>