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2011 Report Card on Arkansas Public Schools

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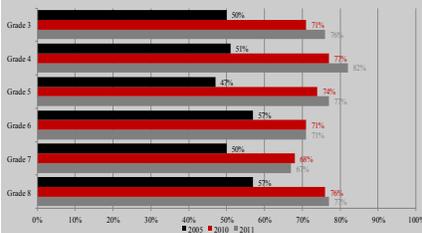
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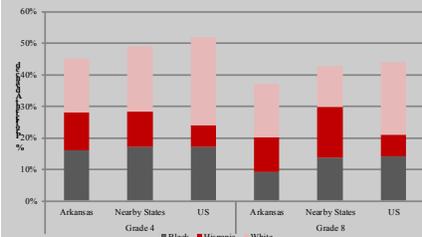
2011 Report Card on Arkansas Public Schools

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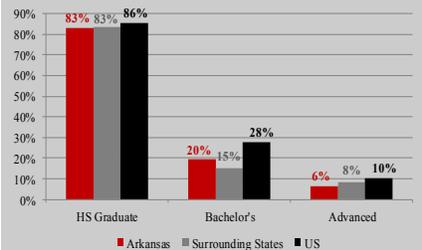
1. Standardized Tests



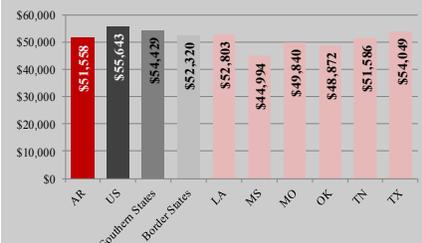
2-4. Achievement Gaps



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6. School and Teacher Characteristics



The OEP is pleased to bring you its *2011 Report Card* for Arkansas' public schools highlighting Arkansas' education performance and characteristics through the 2010-2011 academic year. We hope this report is accessible and informative for educators and policymakers in the state. The charts and figures here are a reflection of the progress we have made as a state in the last decade. They also serve as a reminder that we still need improvement and reform to continue that progress.

A few highlights from the report:

- More Arkansas students are scoring at proficient or advanced on both the Benchmark and End-of-Course state assessments each year. A general upward trend over the last several years continued into 2011.
- Arkansas students continue to achieve at lower levels than their peers nationally 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) is consistent between 4th and 8th grades, but is almost universally smaller than the overall US achievement gap as measured by 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.
- Arkansas teachers are paid well compared to teachers in nearby states, and compared to the nation as a whole, when regional cost of living is taken into account.
- 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 Statewide Standardized Assessments



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

In 2011, proficiency rates for math and literacy increased for four of the six grades and stayed the same for one. In both subjects, 7th grade achievement declined from 2010.

Figure 1.1: AR Benchmark: Percent Proficient and Advanced in Math, 2005, 2010, & 2011

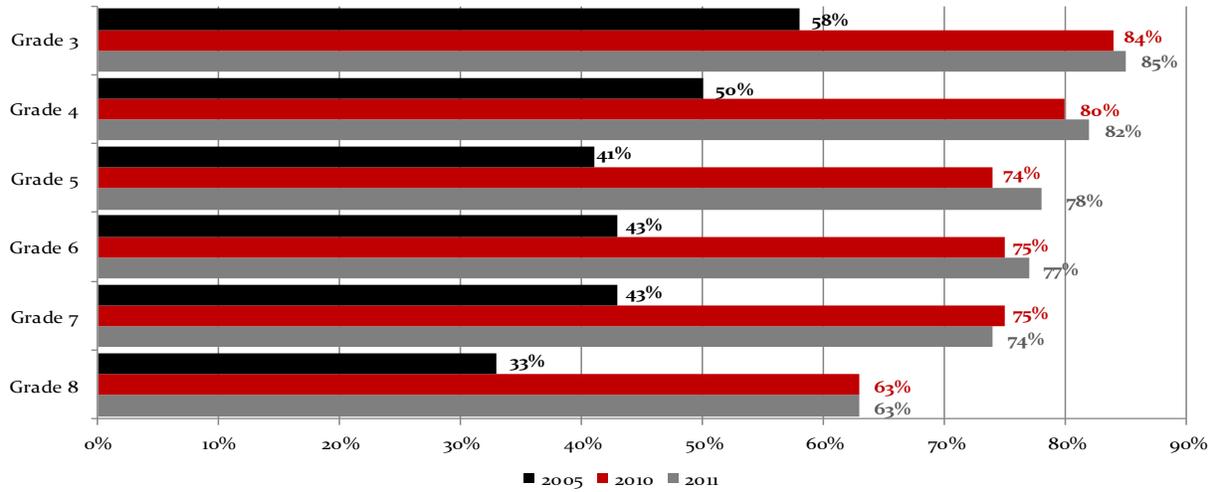


Figure 1.2: AR Benchmark: Percent Proficient and Advanced in Literacy, 2005, 2010, & 2011

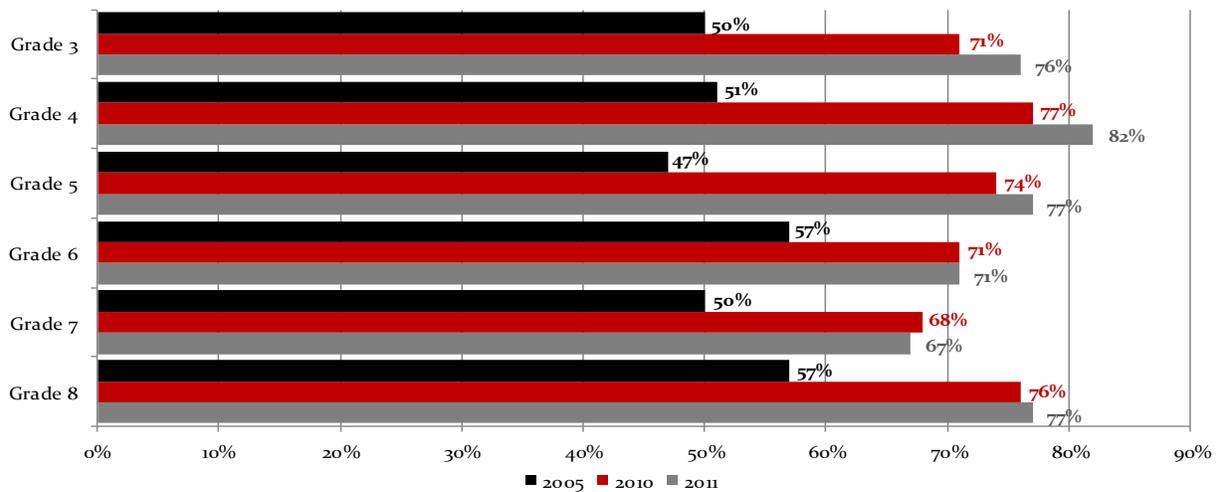


Table 1.1: AR Benchmark: Percent Proficient and Advanced in Grades 4 and 8

Year	Grade 4		Grade 8	
	Math	Literacy	Math	Literacy
2007	65%	59%	48%	63%
2009	78%	70%	61%	71%
2011	82%	82%	63%	77%
Change 07-11	+17 pts	+23 pts	+15 pts	+14 pts

State proficiency rates on the benchmark have increased since 2007. These gains are generally larger in 4th grade than in 8th grade.

2. Performance on National Standardized Assessments

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

As can be seen in the NAEP graphs, Arkansas’ performance continues to lag behind that of the country as a whole in math and reading.

Figure 2.1: NAEP: Math Proficiency, Grade 4, 1992-2011

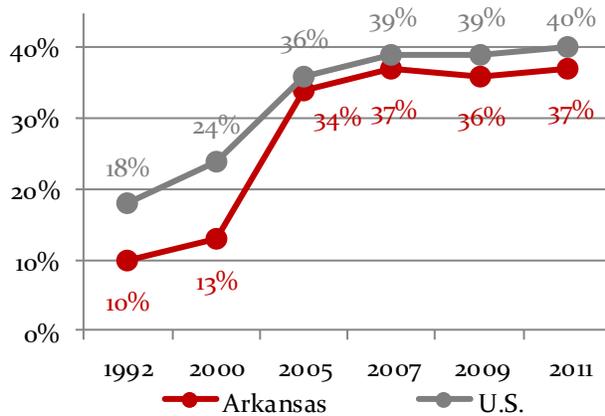
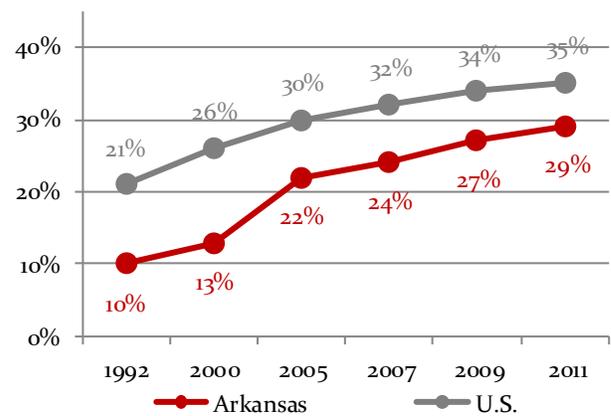


Figure 2.2: NAEP: Math Proficiency, Grade 8, 1992-2011



Fewer Arkansas 4th graders are proficient in math and reading than are their peers across the nation. The gap in both subjects has narrowed over time, but persists nonetheless.

Arkansas’ 8th grade math proficiency rate has gradually approached the national average, while its reading proficiency rate has remained relatively consistent at 5 to 6 points below the national average.

Figure 2.3: NAEP: Reading Proficiency, Grade 4, 1992-2011

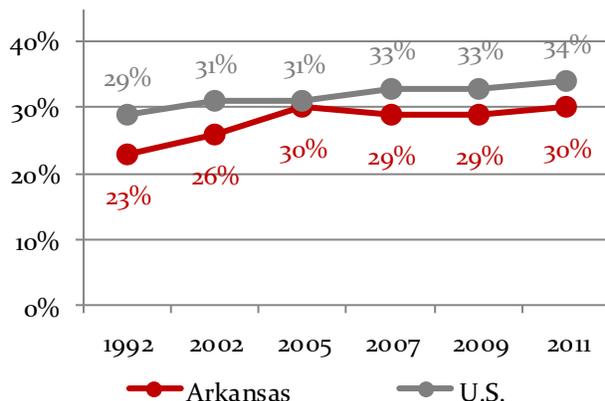
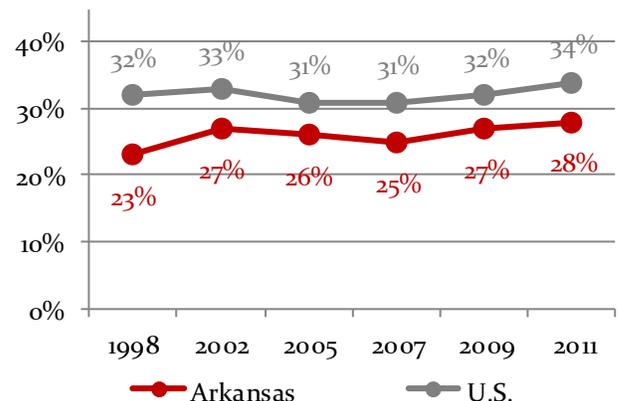


Figure 2.4: NAEP: Reading Proficiency, Grade 8, 1998-2011



3. Achievement Gaps on NAEP Math 2011

This section of the Report Card highlights differences in NAEP math performance between students in two categories: race and poverty status.

In Arkansas, there is a racial achievement gap in NAEP math performance in grade 4 and in grade 8. However, despite this gap, grade 4 Hispanic students in Arkansas perform as well as their peers in the border states. Further more Hispanic students score at the proficient or advanced level on the NAEP math exam in Arkansas(28%) as compared with their Hispanic peers nationwide (24%). The opposite is true in grade 8 with only 20% of Arkansas' Hispanic students scoring at the proficient and advanced level on the NAEP math exam compared with 30% in the border states and 21% nationwide.

More grade 4 students eligible for a free or reduced-price lunch (FRL) in Arkansas (26%) are scoring at the proficient or advanced level on the NAEP math exam as compared to the border states (25%) and nation (24%). However, similar to performance by race, the opposite is true among grad 8 students.

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

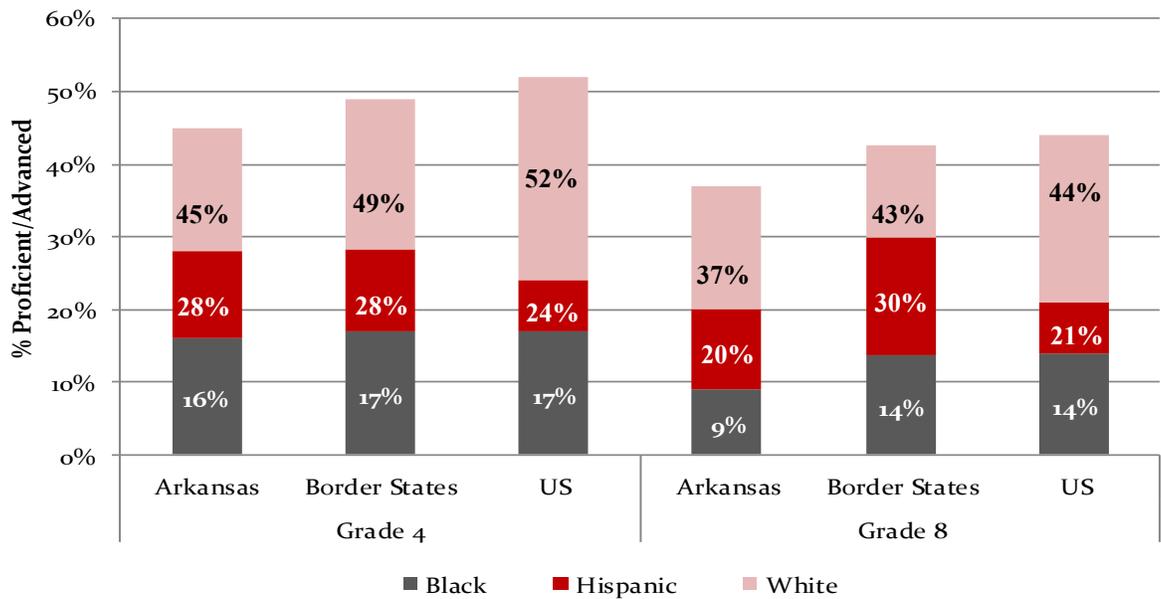
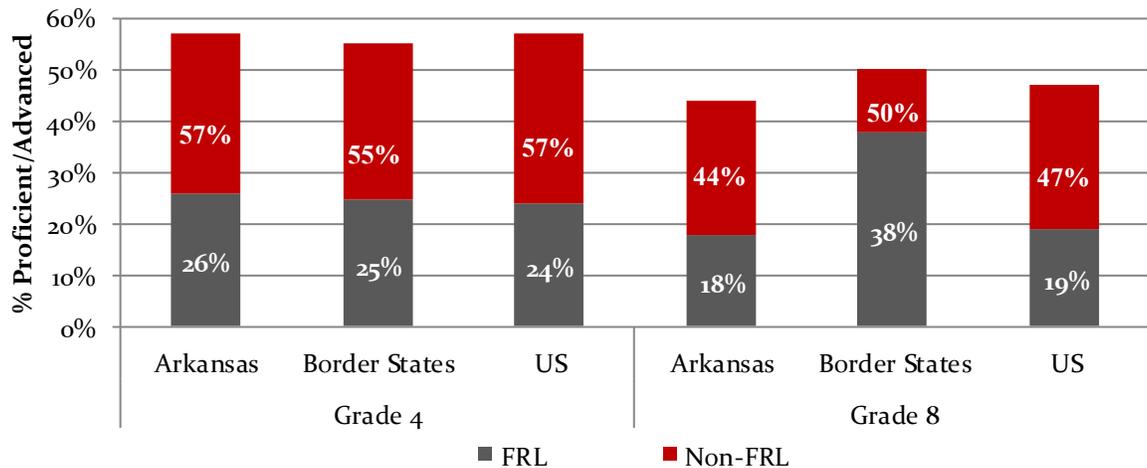


Figure 3.2: NAEP Math Proficiency Rates by Poverty Levels, 2011



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

4. Achievement Gaps on NAEP Reading 2011



This section of the Report Card highlights differences in **NAEP Reading performance** between students in two categories: race and poverty status. For each of the categories, the achievement gap in Arkansas is compared to that of bordering states and of the nation as a whole.

In Arkansas, there is a racial achievement gap in NAEP reading performance in grade 4 and in grade 8. However, more grade 8 Hispanic students are scoring at the proficient or advanced level in Arkansas (21%) than their peers in the border states (17%) and the nation (18%).

Arkansas students classified as FRL-eligible students in both grade 4 and grade 8 are outperforming, or performing as well as their FRL-eligible peers in the border states and across the nation.

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

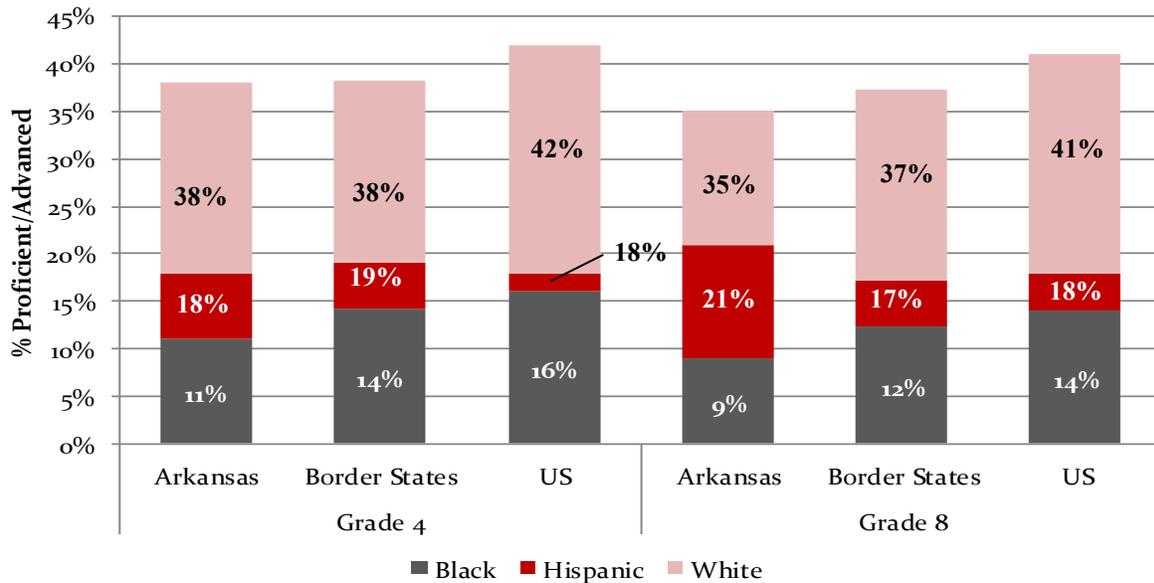
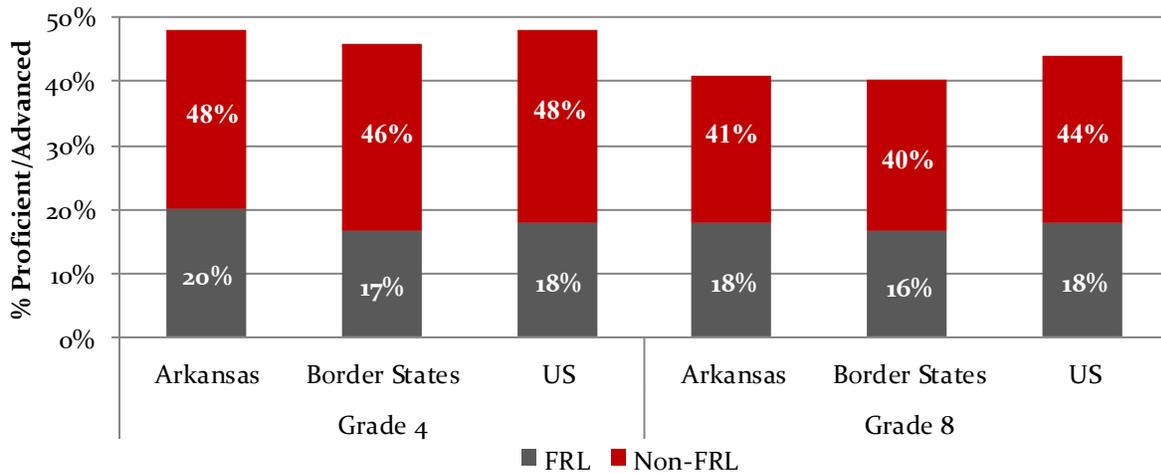


Figure 4.2: NAEP Reading Proficiency Rates by Poverty Levels, 2011



5. Secondary and Beyond



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

Table 5.1: Average Composite ACT, 2009-10

	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 whose participation rate was within 10 percentage points of Arkansas. (AL, KS, ND, NE, OK, SD)

Figure 5.1: Arkansas End-of-Course Exams, % Proficient and Advanced, 2010-11

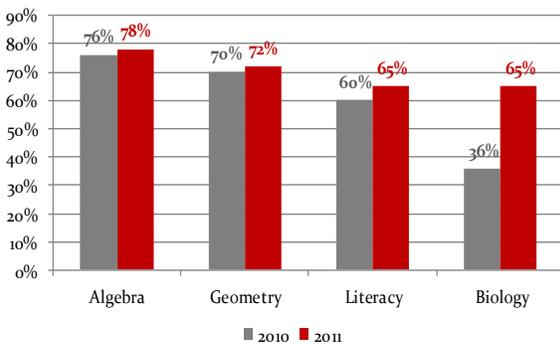


Figure 5.3: Comparison of Educational Attainment Levels, 2010

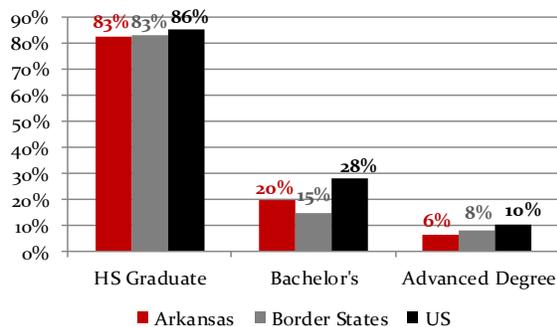


Table 5.2: ACT College Readiness, 2009-10*

	Cut Score	AR % Ready	Similar U.S. States	% Ready
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 5.2: NAEP: 12th Grade, % Proficient and Advanced, 2010-11

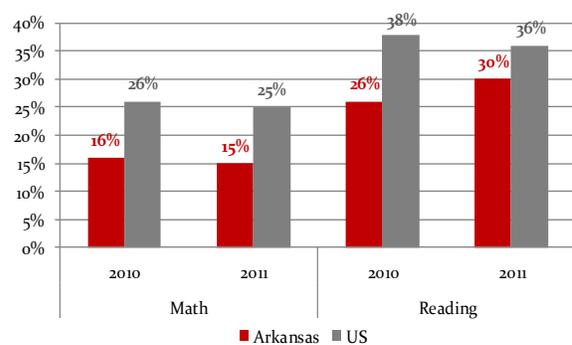


Table 5.3: Arkansas Educational Attainment, 1990-2010*

	High School Diploma	Bachelor's Degree	Advanced Degree
1990	66%	13%	5%
2000	75%	17%	6%
2010	86%	20%	6%
Change	+20 pts	+7 pts	+1 pt

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

6. School and Teacher Characteristics

This section concludes with background information about students, teachers, and schools. We include figures on teacher salaries, per-student spending, changes in Arkansas' school districts, and finally, changes in the demographics of Arkansas students.



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

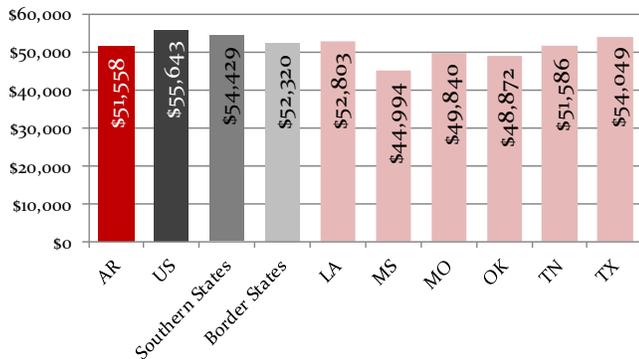


Table 6.1: Teacher Salary Compared to Median Individual Income, 2011*

	Average Teacher	Med. Indiv. Income (Census)	Teachers' % Above Median
Arkansas	\$51,558	\$38,307	35%
Border States	\$55,643	\$45,231	23%
Southern States	\$54,429	\$45,532	20%
United States	\$55,643	\$50,046	11%

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

Figure 6.2: Real Per Pupil Spending, 2001-2009 (Adjusted for Regional Cost Differences Over Time)

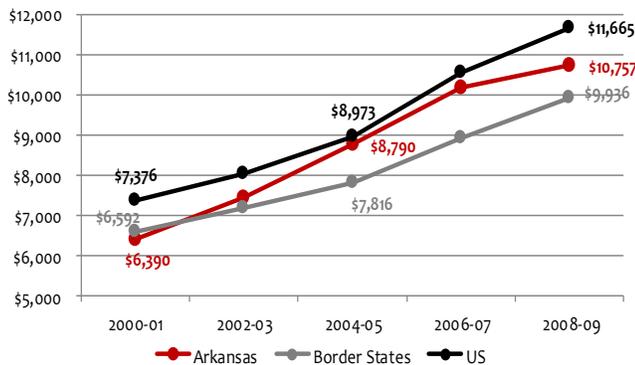


Figure 6.3: Arkansas School District Numbers and Sizes, 2001 to 2011

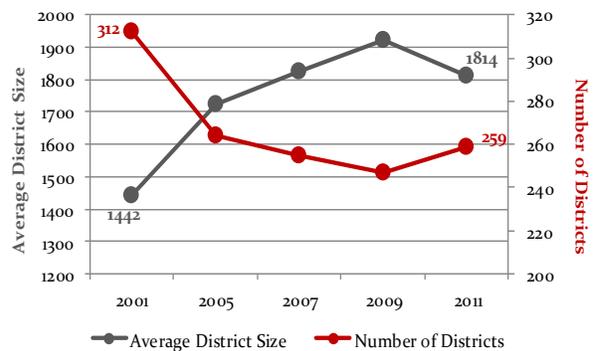


Figure 6.4: Arkansas Student Racial Composition, 1993-2011

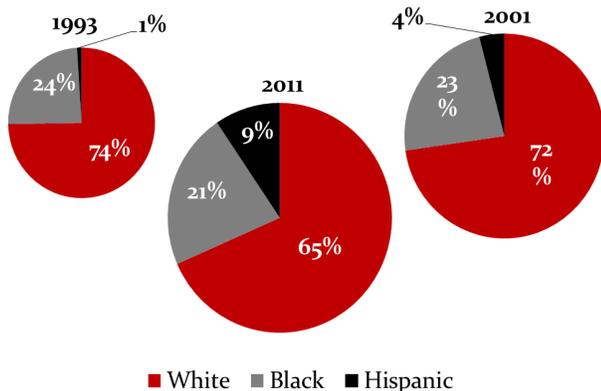
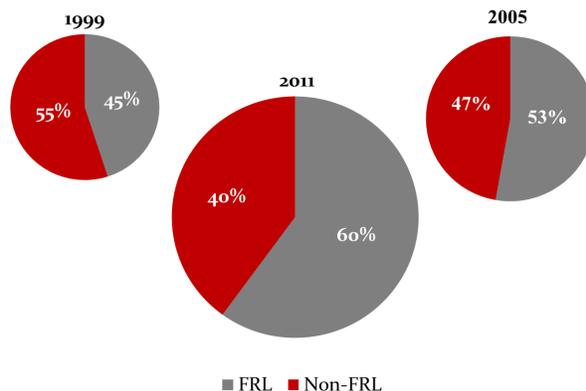


Figure 6.5: Arkansas Student Poverty Status, 1999-2011



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

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The Director's Note

Thank you for your interest in the condition of education in Arkansas. Though some of the numbers are different, the trends in the 2011 Arkansas Report card do not differ substantially from those presented in last year's report. This year's Report Card highlights a few areas in which Arkansas has seen success and progress, and some in which the state has made little or no progress. We are glad to report a few positives: more Arkansas students are scoring proficient and advanced on the state's benchmarks; the state's low-income students are outperforming their peers nationally on the NAEP reading exam; 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 still lags 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. Of special concern is the prominent achievement gap for blacks between 4th and 8th grade. However, these gaps are *smaller* in Arkansas than they are across the US.

We report on Arkansas education as new data become available. Because some data aren't released every year, we've focused this year on issues for which data weren't available last year. OEP Report Cards should thus be seen as complementing each other.

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

A document that provides the source for each table can be found at
http://www.uark.edu/ua/oeop/report_cards/2011_Report_Card_Sources.pdf
If you have any questions about this report, please contact us at oeop@uark.edu.