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## 2008 Report Card on Arkansas Schools

Gary Ritter

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# 2008 REPORT CARD ON ARKANSAS SCHOOLS

October 14, 2008

Office for Education Policy  
Director: Gary Ritter

# About OEP

- The Office for Education Policy is a research and service unit of the College of Education and Health Professions at the University of Arkansas.
- OEP was established in 2003 and is housed in the Department of Education Reform.
- Mission: The **Office of 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  
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# Overview of Report

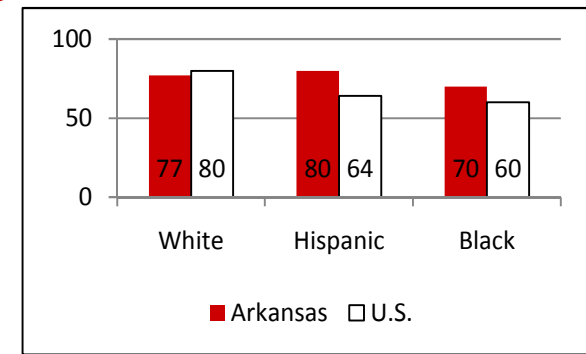
- Goal: Per the advice of Senator Argue, to present an “outside” look and monitoring function of K-12 education in Arkansas
- Sections of the Report:
  - ▣ Performance on Standardized Assessments
  - ▣ Achievement Gaps
  - ▣ Secondary and Beyond
  - ▣ School Characteristics
- We attempted to focus on appropriate measures for comparisons (e.g. NAEP, SAT-10, and ACTAAP instead of ACT or SAT)
- In this presentation, we highlight key findings

# Ultimate Goal of K-12 Progress Toward Higher Ed

- Advanced Placement (AP) Exams for HS Students
  - ▣ Sharp increase in students taking the AP exam since 2002
  - ▣ Percentage of students scoring a three or higher has declined
  - ▣ Actual number of students scoring a three or higher has nearly doubled since 2002 (Table 3.3 of report)
  
- Graduation Rates
  - ▣ Arkansas students are slightly above the national average (Table 3.4)
  - ▣ Hispanic and black students in Arkansas are graduating at a higher rate than their peers across the US (Table 3.5)

	AR 2002	AR 2007	US 2007
Percent of graduates who took AP exam	9.8%	32.2%	24.9%
Percent of students who scored a 3 or higher	50.7%	29.8%	61.0%
Number of students scoring 3 or higher	1,337	2,611	N/A

	Graduation Rate
United States	74.7%
Southern Region States <sup>1</sup>	72.8%
Arkansas	75.7%



# Benchmark Scores Rise

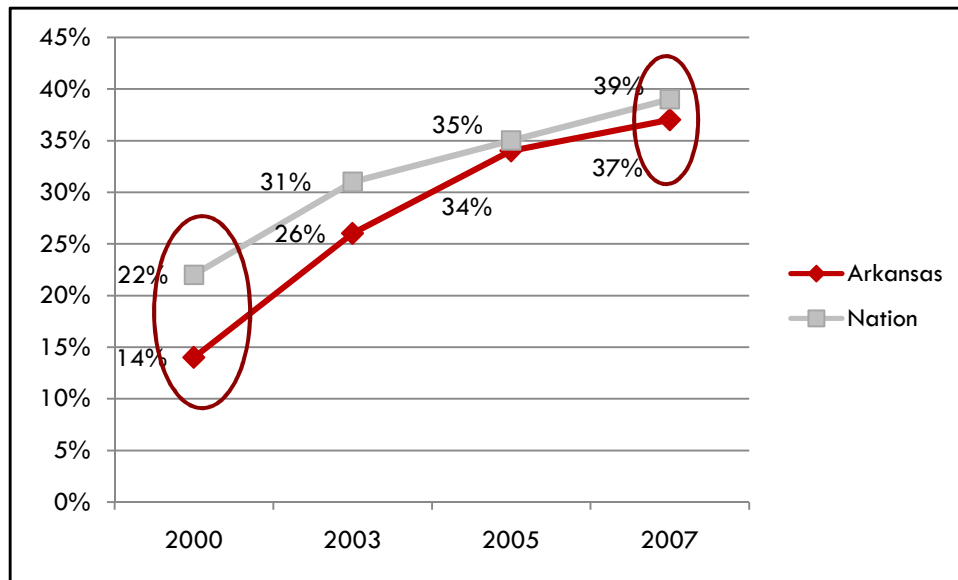
- All grade levels in each subject have improved since 2005.  
(Table 1.3 of report)
- *Students are improving at skills connected to the Arkansas curricular frameworks.*

Year	Grade 4		Grade 8	
	Math	Literacy	Math	Literacy
2005	50%	51%	33%	57%
2006	60%	61%	44%	66%
2007	65%	59%	48%	63%
2008	74%	67%	56%	67%

# Arkansas Compared to the US Average

- NAEP Math scores are increasing, and Arkansas continues to climb closer to the national average

(Table 1.5 and 1.6 of report).

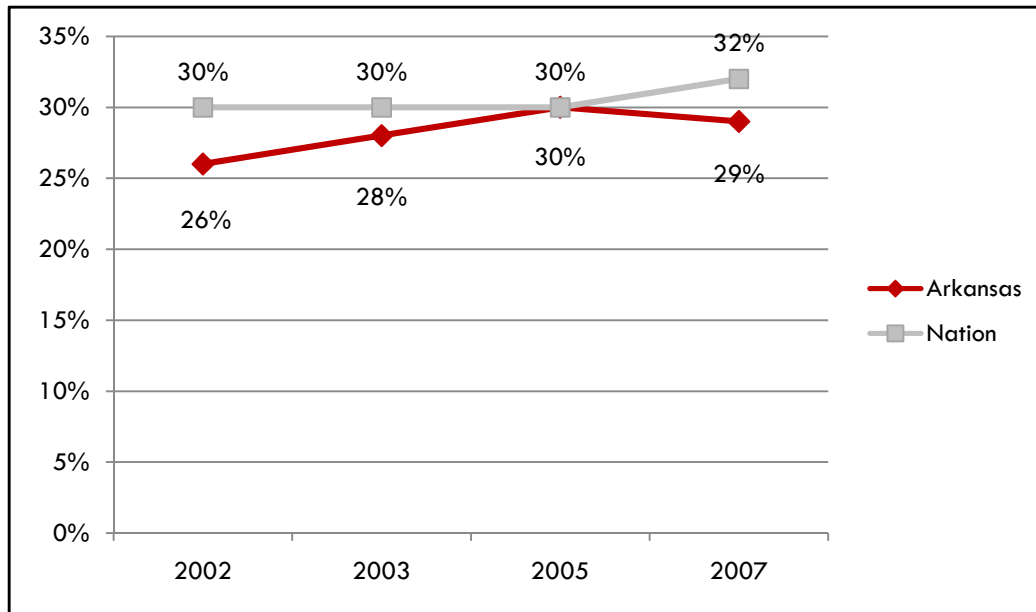


Grade 4 Math, percent proficient or advanced

# Arkansas Compared to the US Average

## □ NAEP Reading scores

- ▣ Grade 4 has increased since 2002, with a slight drop on the most recent exam.
- ▣ However, student performance in grade 8 has declined.

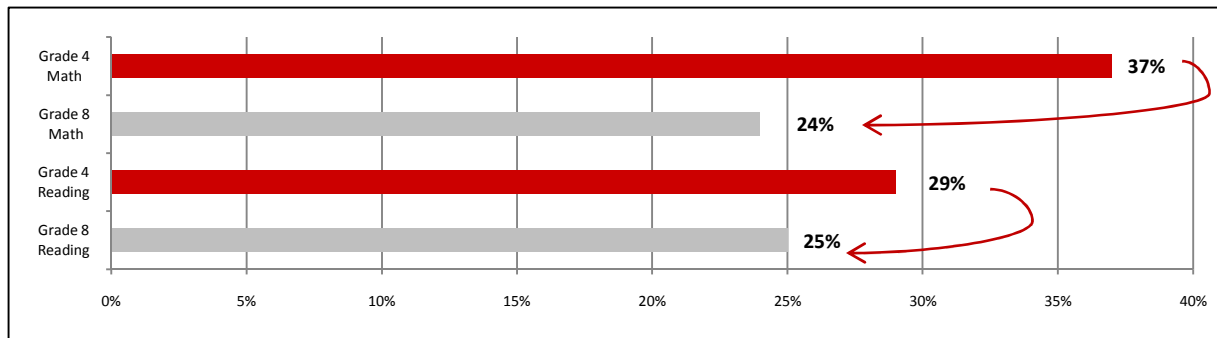


Grade 4 Reading, percent proficient or advanced

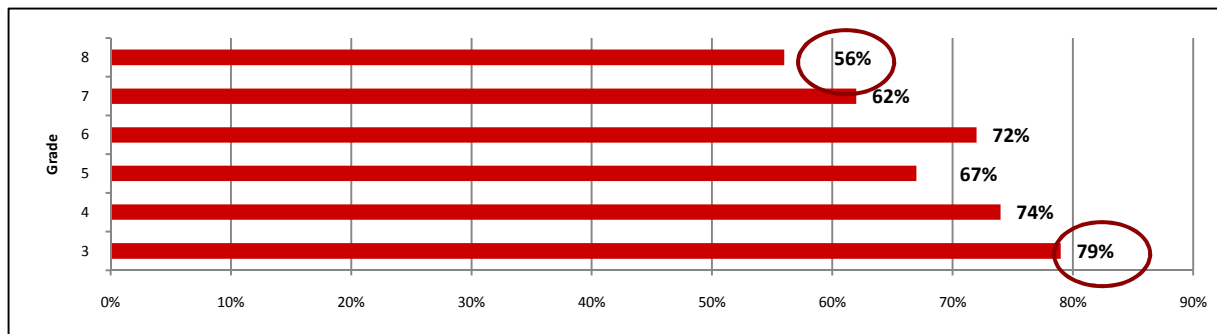


# Elementary Scores Higher Than Middle

## □ NAEP 2007 Percent Proficient or Advanced



## □ AR Benchmark 2008 Math Percent Proficient or Advanced



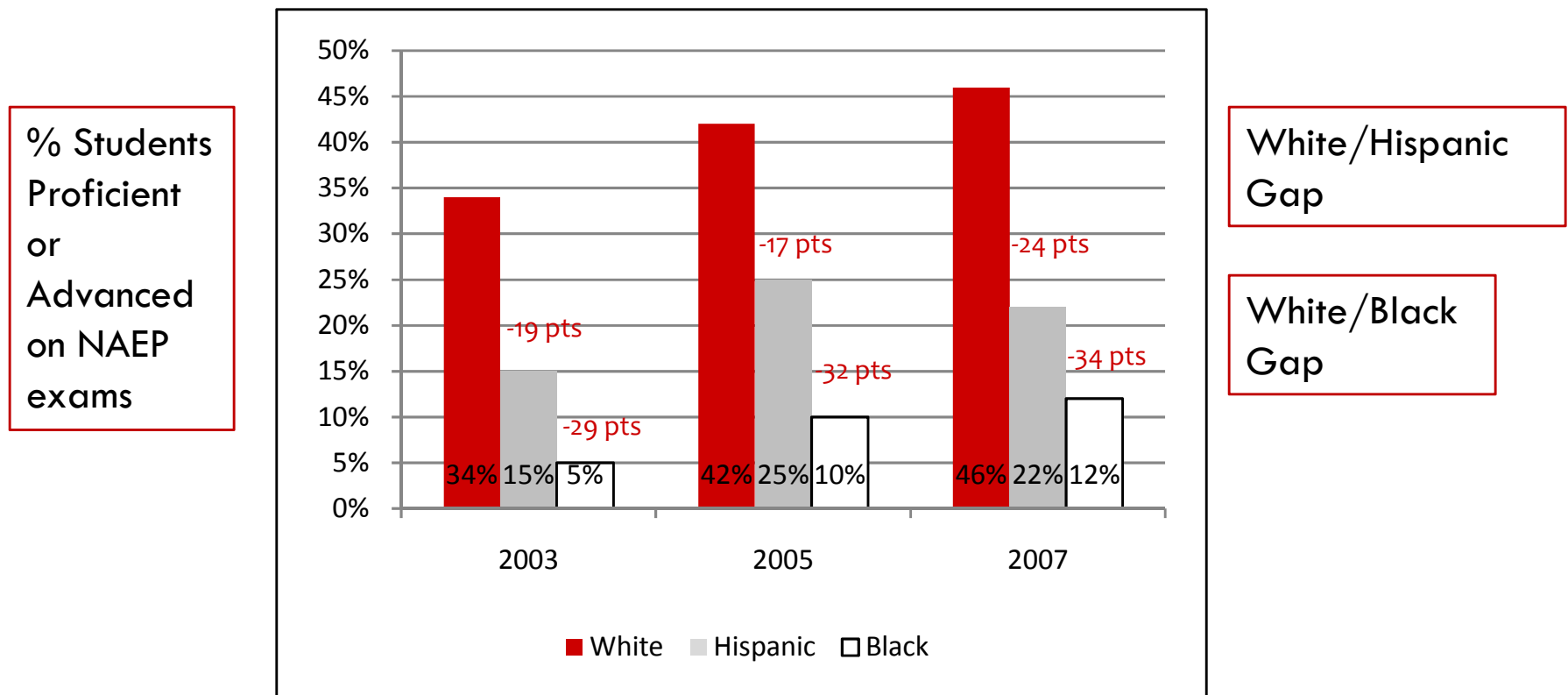
# Overall Scores



1. Arkansas students are ...
  - a. ... doing a better job each year on Arkansas Benchmark exams
  - b. ... generally improving on the national NAEP exam, and, in some areas, have caught the national averages
2. In each of these areas, performance is better at the elementary level than at the middle level
3. However, good news apparent on overall scores mask some important areas of concern

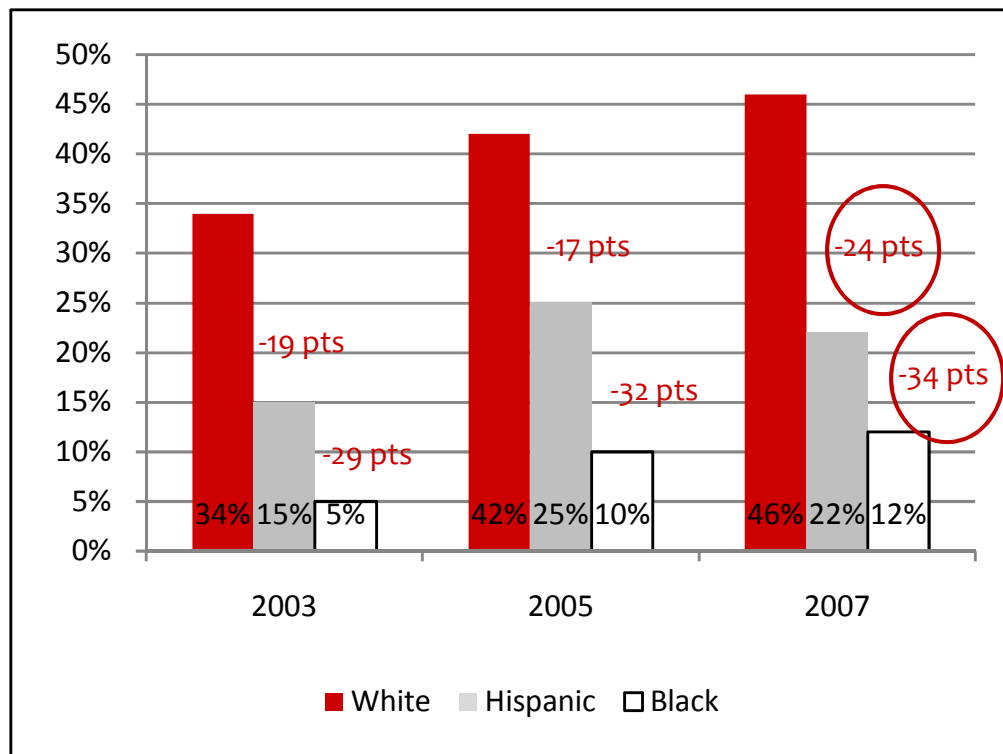
# Achievement Gaps

- We used the NAEP to analyze the achievement gap between advantaged and disadvantaged students.



# Achievement Gaps by Race

- All groups are experiencing improvement, but ...
  - Gaps are substantial and are not decreasing



## Grade 4 Math

### Good News:

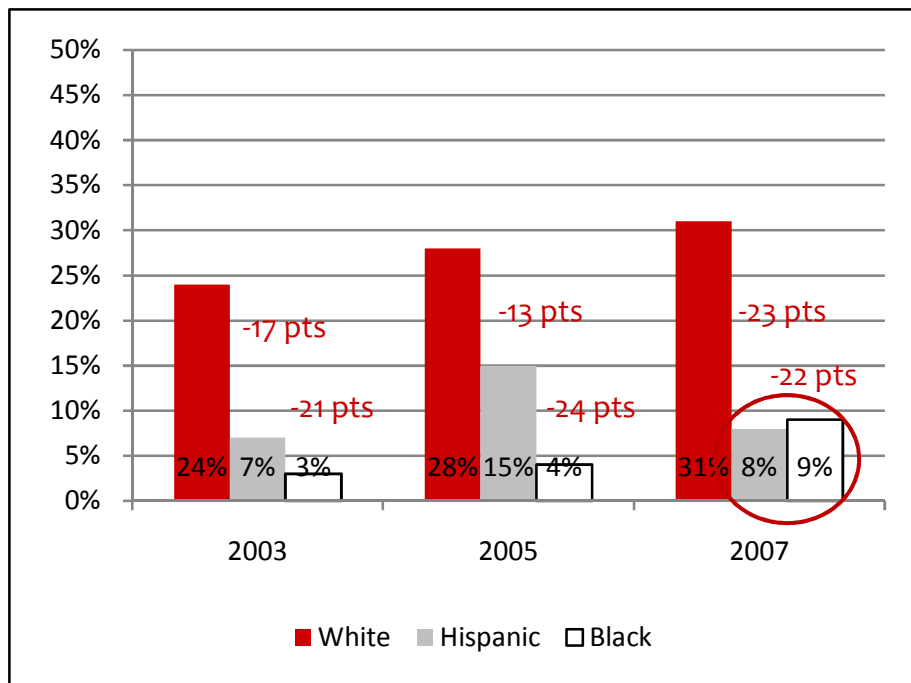
Since 2003, there has been an increase in proficiency rates in all subgroups.

### Bad News:

The gaps are growing.

# Achievement Gaps by Race

- Performance in middle school (grade 8) is relatively low, and particularly low in important racial subgroups



## Grade 8 Math

### Good News:

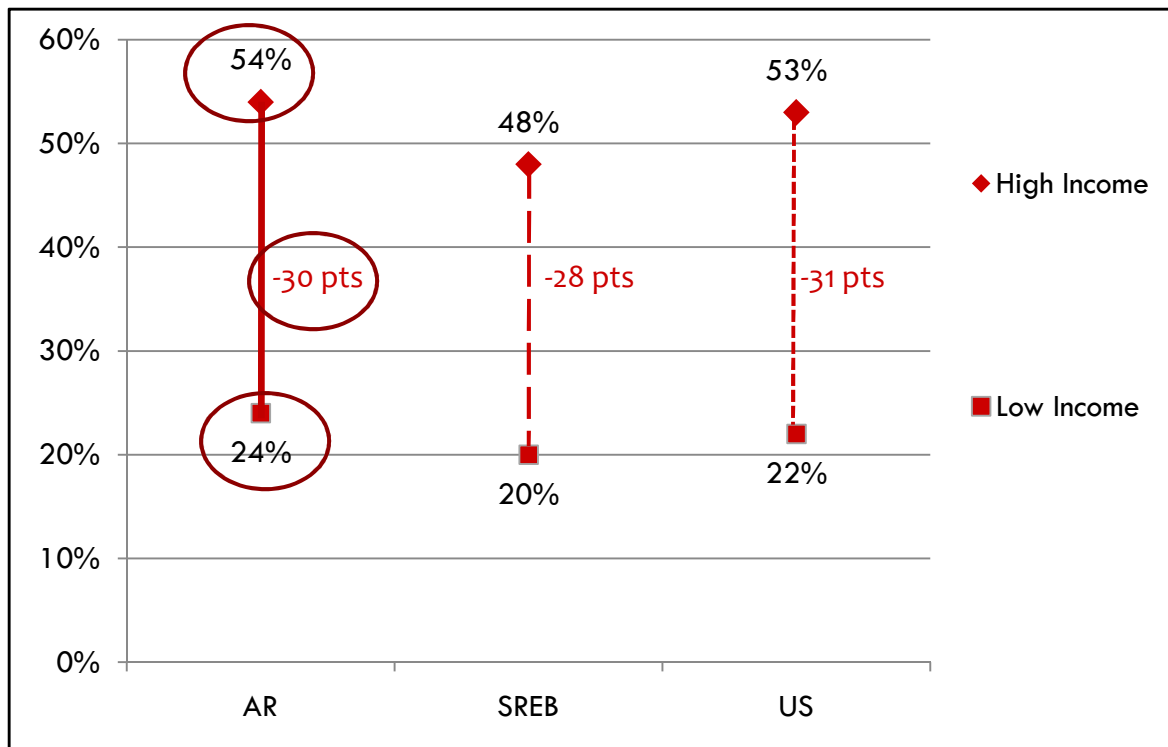
Again, each sub group has increased since 2003.

### Bad News:

Even after improvement, the Hispanic and black proficiency rates are in the single digits.

# Achievement Gaps by Poverty

- To evaluate the poverty achievement gap, we looked at the performance of FRL students and non-FRL students.
  - ▣ We compared Arkansas to the SREB and US average.



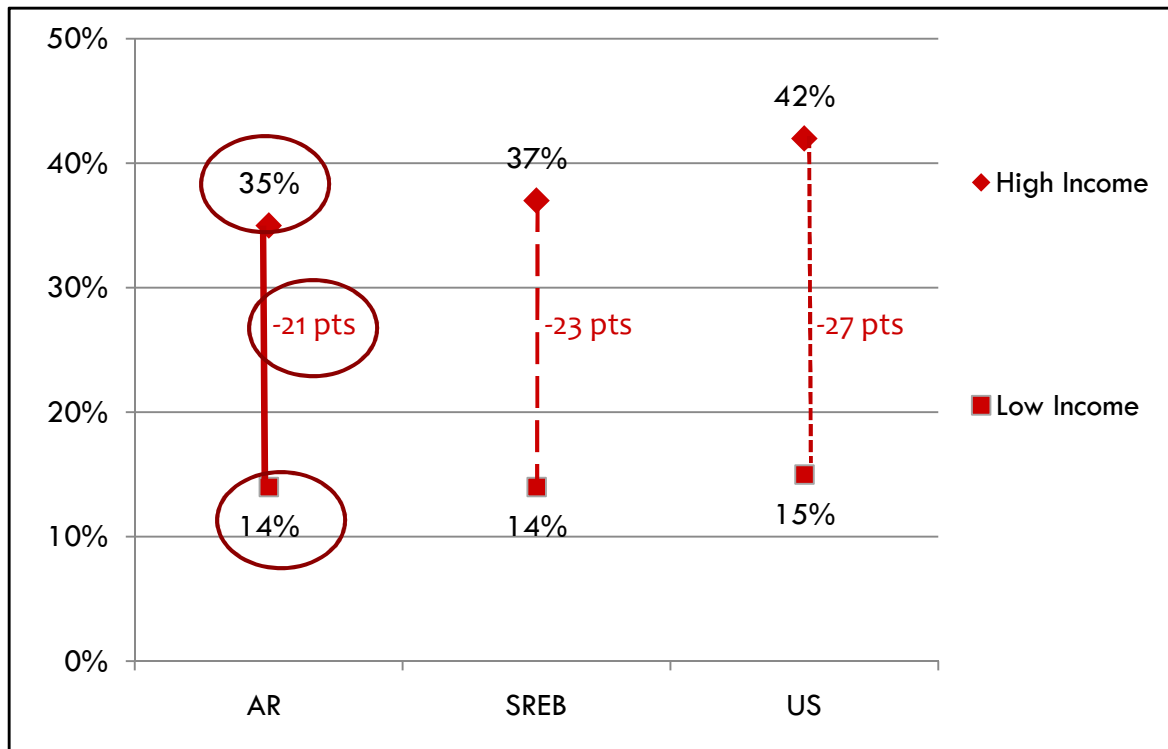
Grade 4 Math

**Good News:**  
Both subgroups, high and low income students, scored higher than their SREB and US peers.

**Bad News:**  
The gap is still wide.

# Achievement Gaps by FRL

- The story is similar in grade 8, but ...
  - ▣ Arkansas students do not outperform their peers across the country as they did in grade 4.



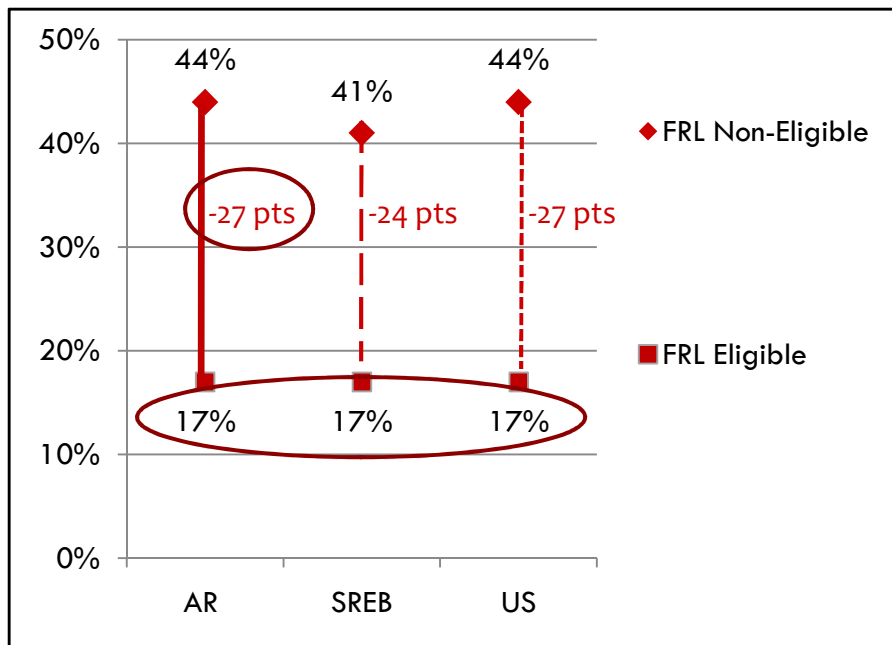
Grade 8 Math

Good News:  
Arkansas' gap is smaller than the SREB and US gap.

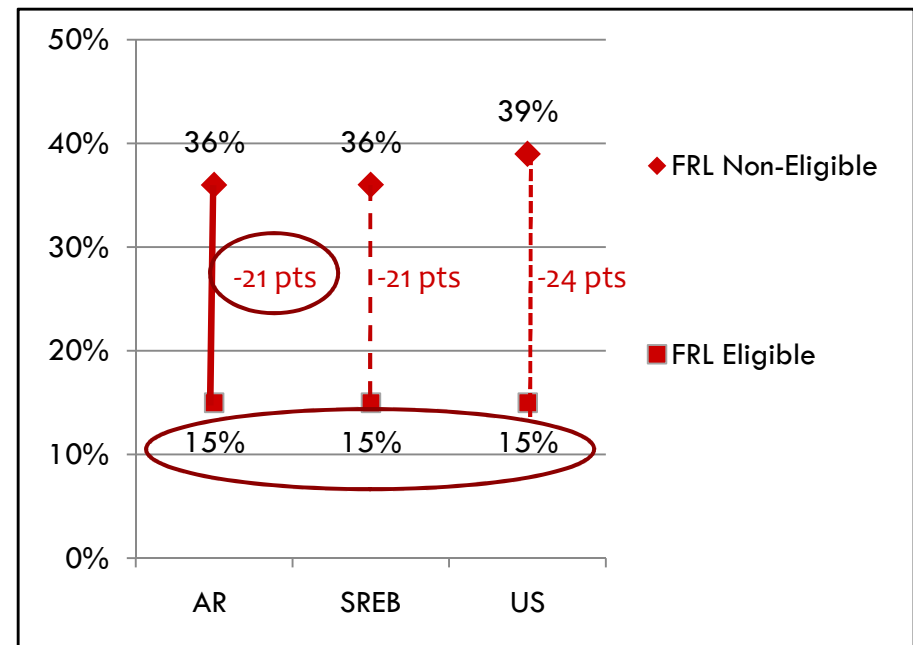
Bad News:  
The subgroups performed lower than the US.

# Achievement Gaps by FRL

- The story is the same for Reading.
  - ▣ Arkansas low income students scored the same as their SREB and US peers.
  - ▣ The elementary gap is wider, due to high income students performing better than their peers, while the middle school gap is smaller, due to the trend that overall, middle school students do less well.



Grade 4 Reading



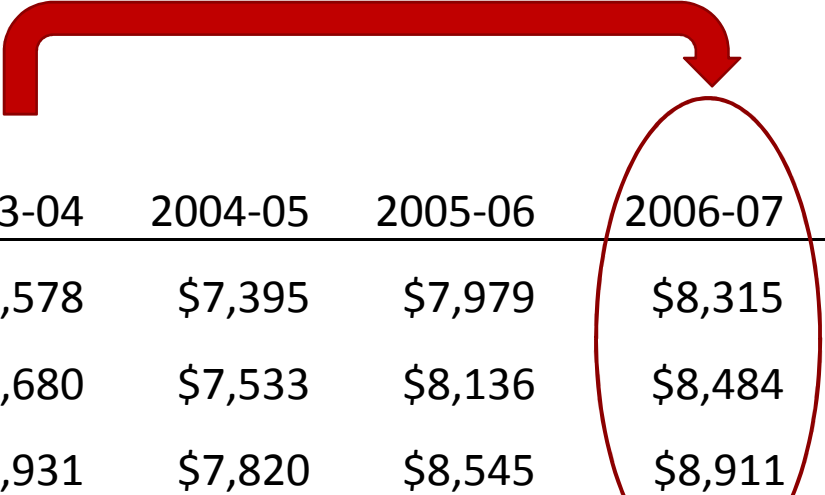
Grade 8 Reading



# Conclusions and Recommendations

- As reported in our paper (*“How Much Are Arkansas Schools Spending?”*), funding for education has increased substantially since *Lake View* ruling.
- After the 2004-05 increase in funding, AR teacher pay ranked 25<sup>th</sup> of 50. In previous years, AR ranked in the bottom two of all states.

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Student Group	2003-04	2004-05	2005-06	2006-07	Dollar Change, 2004 - 2007
All Students	\$6,578	\$7,395	\$7,979	\$8,315	\$1,737
FRL Students	\$6,680	\$7,533	\$8,136	\$8,484	\$1,804
Minority Students	\$6,931	\$7,820	\$8,545	\$8,911	\$1,980

# Conclusions and Recommendations



- More students are reaching proficiency on the Benchmark and our NAEP scores continue to creep up to the national average.
- More students than ever are taking and passing the AP courses and exams.
- However, our achievement gaps facing minority and economically disadvantaged students are clear reminders that we have much work left to do.
  - ▣ Policy makers have taken the first step and provided additional financial resources.
  - ▣ As professional educators, we need to work on the next step of effectively utilizing these resources to help all Arkansas students.

# Office for Education Policy

[www.uark.edu/ua/oep](http://www.uark.edu/ua/oep)

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