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## Outstanding Educational Performance Awards: Highlighting High-Achieving Arkansas Schools, 2014

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**ARKANSAS EDUCATION REPORT**  
***Volume 11, Issue 5***

**OUTSTANDING EDUCATIONAL PERFORMANCE AWARDS:  
HIGHLIGHTING HIGH-ACHIEVING ARKANSAS SCHOOLS, 2014**

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

**September 3, 2014**

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## INTRODUCTION

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

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

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

Two years ago, we first introduced an academic performance indicator, the “**GPA**” **rating system**, to rank the highest-performing schools. In the past, the rankings were created based on the percentage of students scoring at the proficient or advanced level on each assessment. Generally, when discussing academic achievement on the Benchmark exams, policymakers focus on this figure. However, the proficiency indicator suffers from being an “all-or-nothing” measure, in which a student is either proficient or not. The proficiency measure disregards real information provided by student scores that are placed into the four different performance categories: below basic, basic, proficient, and advanced. Additionally, this mark does not differentiate between a school in which 100% of students score proficient and a school in which 100% of students score advanced. Both of these schools would show 100% of students performing at proficient and advanced levels; however, in the latter school, students actually performed at a significantly higher level.

Thus, a slightly more informative indicator gives the most credit to students who score at the advanced level and the least credit to students who score at the below basic level. For such purposes, we have created the “GPA” rating system. In this GPA measure, parallel to the familiar grade point average for individual students, we treat the Benchmark test scores in a similar way, whereby a 4.0 is a perfect score. The GPA measure, we believe, is a better representation of student achievement on statewide standardized exams.

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

In this report, we are presenting a list of the top 25 schools in each area. In some cases, these "top 25 lists" will contain more than 25 schools as some schools' GPA scores will be identical.

This is not a new phenomenon, as we also exceeded 25 schools in previous reports when using the percent proficient and advanced metric as an indicator for student achievement; however, there are fewer ties using the more precise GPA measure.

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

- **High-Achieving “Overall” Schools in Arkansas**
- **High-Achieving Elementary Schools**
- **High-Achieving Middle Schools**
- **High-Achieving High Schools**
- **Beating the Odds: High-Achieving Schools Serving Low-Income Communities**
- **Most Improved Schools**

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

## **I. 2014 OEP AWARDS: HIGH-ACHIEVING “OVERALL” SCHOOLS IN ARKANSAS BASED ON PERFORMANCE ON THE BENCHMARK**

This section highlights high-performing elementary and middle schools across the state based on the Arkansas Benchmark exam. The Benchmark exams in math and literacy were administered to students in grades 3-8 in April 2014.

Each table in this section presents the top 25 schools for the noted subject and school level. In addition, these tables include the region in which the school is located, the grades served at the school, the percent of students scoring at the proficient and advanced levels in 2014, and the GPA of the school in that particular subject.

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

For the purposes of this report, elementary schools are defined as schools which primarily serve grades 3-5, and middle schools are defined as schools which primarily serve grades 6-8. High schools that also serve middle school grades, e.g. schools that serve grades 7-12, are categorized as middle schools in this report. In the cases where these grades overlap, we used enrollment data to determine whether a school served more elementary or middle school students (see *Appendix B*).

## A. Benchmark Scores in Mathematics, 2014

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

	School (District)	Region <sup>1</sup>	Grades Served	% Proficient/Advanced	GPA <sup>2</sup>
1	Park Magnet School (Hot Springs) ♦	CN	K-5	99%	3.85
2	Bob Folsom Elementary School (Farmington) ♦	NW	K-3	97%	3.82
3	Mount Pleasant Elementary School (Melbourne) ♦	NE	K-6	99%	3.81
4	Pottsville Elementary School (Pottsville) ♦	NW	K-3	97%	3.78
5	Skyline Heights Elementary School (Harrison) ♦	NW	K-4	96%	3.76
6	Forest Heights Elementary School (Harrison)	NW	K-4	97%	3.73
7	Central Park at Morning Star Elementary School (Bentonville) ♦	NW	K-4	96%	3.72
8	Vandergriff Elementary School (Fayetteville) ♦	NW	K-5	95%	3.71
9	Elm Tree Elementary School (Bentonville) ♦	NW	K-4	94%	3.67
10	Cooper Elementary School (Bentonville) ♦	NW	K-4	92%	3.66
10	Jerry "Pop" Williams Elementary School (Farmington)	NW	K-3	92%	3.66
12	Academy of Technology (Vilonia) ♦	CN	2-4	100%	3.64
12	Brookland Elementary School (Brookland) ♦	NE	P-3	95%	3.64
12	Janie Darr Elementary School (Rogers)	NW	K-5	94%	3.64
12	Stagecoach Elementary School (Cabot)	CN	K-4	94%	3.64
16	Bernice Young Elementary (Springdale)	NW	K-5	94%	3.63
16	Cowsert Elementary School (Clinton)	NW	K-3	94%	3.63
16	Eagle Heights Elementary School (Harrison) ♦	NW	K-4	93%	3.63
16	Gillett Elementary School (DeWitt)	SE	P-5	90%	3.63
16	Green Forest Elementary School (Green Forest)	NW	K-3	92%	3.63
16	Julia Lee Moore Elementary School (Conway) ♦	CN	K-4	93%	3.63
16	R. E. Baker Elementary School (Bentonville)	NW	K-4	91%	3.63
16	Richland Elementary School (West Memphis) ♦	NE	K-6	96%	3.63
24	Don Roberts Elementary School (Little Rock) ♦	CN	P-5	91%	3.62
24	Salem Elementary School (Salem)	NE	K-6	94%	3.62

♦ Indicates school placed on same list in 2012-13.

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

<sup>2</sup> The GPA rating is a score derived from an average where, an advanced score is counted as a 4.0 like an "A", proficient score as a 3.0, like a "B", basic score as a 2.0, like a "C", and below basic as a 1.0, like a grade of "D".

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

	School (District)	Region	Grades Served	% Proficient/ Advanced	GPA
1	Haas Hall Academy (Haas Hall Academy) ♦	NW	8-12	98%	3.83
2	McNair Middle School (Fayetteville) ♦	NW	6-7	87%	3.46
3	Greenbrier Middle School (Greenbrier) ♦	CN	6-7	88%	3.42
4	Concord High School (Concord)	NE	7-12	91%	3.39
4	East Hills Middle School (Greenwood) ♦	NW	6-7	87%	3.39
6	Bright Field Middle School (Bentonville) ♦	NW	5-6	89%	3.37
7	Lakeside Middle School (Lakeside – Garland County)	CN	5-7	88%	3.36
7	Pottsville Middle Grades (Pottsville) ♦	NW	4-6	86%	3.36
9	J. William Fulbright Junior High School (Bentonville)	NW	7-8	86%	3.35
10	Pea Ridge Middle School (Pea Ridge) ♦	NW	6-8	85%	3.34
10	Woodland Junior High School (Fayetteville) ♦	NW	8-9	86%	3.34
12	Cabot Middle School South (Cabot) ♦	CN	5-6	87%	3.32
12	Valley View Junior High School (Valley View) ♦	NE	7-9	87%	3.32
14	Cabot Middle School North (Cabot) ♦	CN	5-6	87%	3.31
14	Hellstern Middle School (Springdale)	NW	6-7	83%	3.31
16	Lincoln Junior High School (Bentonville)	NW	7-8	86%	3.30
17	Brookland Middle School (Brookland) ♦	NE	4-6	85%	3.29
18	De Queen Middle School (DeQueen)	SW	6-7	82%	3.28
19	Benton Middle School (Benton) ♦	CN	6-7	82%	3.25
19	Kirksey Middle School (Rogers)	NW	6-8	82%	3.25
19	Scranton High School (Scranton)	NW	7-12	83%	3.25
22	Gary E. Cobb Middle School (Genoa Central) ♦	SW	5-8	84%	3.24
22	Kingston High School (Jasper)	NW	7-12	83%	3.24
24	Academy of Service and Technology (Vilonia) ♦	CN	5-6	79%	3.22
24	Marshall High School (Searcy County)	NW	7-12	85%	3.22

♦ Indicates school placed on same list in 2012-13.



## B. Benchmark Scores in Literacy, 2014

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

	School (District)	Region	Grades Served	% Proficient/Advanced	GPA
1	Park Magnet School (Hot Springs) ♦	CN	K-5	98%	3.88
2	Forest Park Elementary School (Little Rock) ♦	CN	P-5	97%	3.79
3	Vandergriff Elementary School (Fayetteville) ♦	NW	K-5	96%	3.77
4	Ellen Smith Elementary School (Conway) ♦	CN	K-4	95%	3.73
4	Mount Pleasant Elementary School (Melbourne) ♦	NE	K-6	96%	3.73
6	Elm Tree Elementary School (Bentonville) ♦	NW	K-4	95%	3.72
7	Bernice Young Elementary (Springdale)	NW	K-5	96%	3.71
7	Root Elementary School (Fayetteville)	NW	K-5	96%	3.71
7	Skyline Heights Elementary School (Harrison)	NW	K-4	98%	3.71
10	Forest Heights Elementary School (Harrison) ♦	NW	K-4	95%	3.70
11	Central Park at Morning Star Elementary School (Bentonville)	NW	K-4	93%	3.68
11	Eastside Elementary School (Rogers) ♦	NW	K-5	97%	3.68
13	Pottsville Elementary School (Pottsville) ♦	NW	K-3	91%	3.67
14	Genoa Central Elementary School (Genoa Central)	SW	K-4	97%	3.66
15	Armored Elementary School (Armored)	NE	K-6	96%	3.65
15	Baker Interdistrict Elementary School (Pulaski County Special) ♦	CN	K-5	93%	3.65
15	Gillett Elementary School (DeWitt) ♦	SE	P-5	94%	3.65
15	Richland Elementary School (West Memphis) ♦	NE	K-6	95%	3.65
19	Hardin Elementary School (White Hall) ♦	CN	K-5	96%	3.64
19	Janie Darr Elementary School (Rogers)	NW	K-5	93%	3.64
21	Bellview Elementary (Rogers) ♦	NW	K-5	92%	3.63
21	Eagle Heights Elementary School (Harrison)	NW	K-4	91%	3.63
21	Salem Elementary School (Salem)	NE	K-6	93%	3.63
24	Center Valley Elementary School (Russellville)	NW	K-4	92%	3.62
25	Academics Plus Elementary School (Academics Plus)	CN	K-5	95%	3.61
25	Perrin Elementary School (Benton)	CN	K-5	95%	3.61

♦ Indicates school placed on same list in 2012-13.

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

	School (District)	Region	Grades Served	% Proficient/ Advanced	GPA
1	Haas Hall Academy (Haas Hall Academy) ♦	NW	8-12	100%	3.76
2	Pottsville Middle Grades (Pottsville) ♦	NW	4-6	93%	3.58
3	J. William Fulbright Junior High School (Bentonville)	NW	7-8	92%	3.53
4	Lincoln Junior High School (Bentonville) ♦	NW	7-8	92%	3.52
4	Valley View Junior High School (Valley View) ♦	NE	7-9	93%	3.52
6	Brookland Middle School (Brookland) ♦	NE	4-6	91%	3.51
7	Woodland Junior High School (Fayetteville) ♦	NW	8-9	91%	3.49
8	Academy of Service and Technology (Vilonia) ♦	CN	5-6	92%	3.48
8	McNair Middle School (Fayetteville) ♦	NW	6-7	89%	3.48
10	Bright Field Middle School (Bentonville) ♦	NW	5-6	87%	3.42
11	Greenbrier Middle School (Greenbrier) ♦	CN	6-7	88%	3.40
11	Norfolk High School (Norfolk)	NW	7-12	93%	3.40
11	Pottsville Junior High School (Pottsville)	NW	7-9	89%	3.40
14	Cabot Middle School South (Cabot) ♦	CN	5-6	88%	3.39
14	Kingston High School (Jasper)	NW	7-12	91%	3.39
16	East Hills Middle School (Greenwood)	NW	6-7	86%	3.38
16	Kirksey Middle School (Rogers) ♦	NW	6-8	88%	3.38
16	L. A. Chaffin Junior High School (Fort Smith) ♦	NW	7-9	89%	3.38
16	Ruth Barker Middle School (Bentonville) ♦	NW	5-6	87%	3.38
16	Valley Springs Middle School (Valley Springs) ♦	NW	5-8	86%	3.38
21	Gary E. Cobb Middle School (Genoa Central) ♦	SW	5-8	88%	3.37
22	Harrison Junior High School (Harrison)	NW	7-9	87%	3.36
22	Spring Hill High School (Spring Hill)	SW	7-12	89%	3.36
24	Armored High School (Armored)	NE	7-12	84%	3.35
24	Concord High School (Concord)	NE	7-12	88%	3.35
24	Elmwood Middle School (Rogers)	NW	6-8	88%	3.35
24	Harrison Middle School (Harrison) ♦	NW	5-6	88%	3.35
24	Washington Junior High School (Bentonville) ♦	NW	7-8	86%	3.35

♦ Indicates school placed on same list in 2012-13.

## APPENDIX

### A. Methods

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

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

All data were analyzed at the school level; however, the ADE provides data at the grade level. Therefore, in order to present an accurate *school*-level measure, a weighted average for each school was calculated to account for different levels of enrollment at each grade level.

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

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

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

## B. School Classification

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

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

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

*Table A: School Classifications*

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