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High-Growth Middle Schools in Arkansas Based on Performance on the ACT Aspire Examinations

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ARKANSAS EDUCATION REPORT
Volume 16, Issue 4

**OUTSTANDING EDUCATIONAL PERFORMANCE AWARDS:
HIGHLIGHTING HIGH-GROWTH ARKANSAS SCHOOLS, 2018**

**HIGH-GROWTH MIDDLE SCHOOLS IN
ARKANSAS BASED ON PERFORMANCE ON THE
ACT ASPIRE EXAMINATIONS**

November 14, 2018

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INTRODUCTION

The mission of the Office for Education Policy is to examine educational issues through the lens of academic research and disseminate our findings to educators, policymakers, and other stakeholders around Arkansas. Annually, we highlight excellent schools around the state in our **Outstanding Educational Performance Awards**, or the OEP awards.

This edition of the **OEP Awards** highlights schools in Arkansas based on student growth on the ACT Aspire exams in Mathematics and English Language Arts (ELA). This is a departure from prior awards, which were based on student proficiency.

We choose to focus on student growth for these OEP awards because we think it is a better reflection than proficiency rates of how the school is impacting students. Growth is calculated at the student level, and essentially reflects how much a student improved his or her score from the prior year compared to what was predicted based on prior achievement history. Proficiency rates, even those that move beyond the ‘percent proficient’ like our OEP GPA and Arkansas’ weighted achievement score, are more correlated with student demographics than growth scores. This means that schools can demonstrate high student growth regardless of the characteristics of the students that they serve.

In the 2017-18 academic year, ACT Aspire examinations were administered to students in grades 3 through 10 in Math, Reading, Writing, English and Science. For the purposes of this report, the scores obtained in Reading, Writing and English were combined to create a combined ELA score.

For the purposes of these awards, we are using the content-area growth calculated and reported by the Arkansas Department of Education (ADE). Note that we used only growth for math and English Language Arts, excluding the growth score for English Learner progress to English Language Proficiency). In addition, we identify the highest growth schools by school level as identified by the ADE under Arkansas’ ESSA Plan: Elementary, Middle, and High school level. In this report, we present a list of the top 20 schools in the state for Overall growth (average of Math and ELA growth), Math growth, and ELA growth. In some cases, these “top 20 lists” will contain more than 20 schools as some schools’ growth scores will be identical. This is not a new phenomenon, as we also exceeded 20 schools in previous reports when using the OEP GPA as an indicator for student achievement.

In the following weeks, we will focus on high-growth elementary schools, middle schools, and high schools in the various regions across the state. We will conclude this edition of the report by highlighting schools that are beating the odds (that is, schools that have high levels of student growth while serving a high percentage of low-income students).

We are pleased to be able to highlight how students are growing academically in schools across the state, and hope the information will spark discussion among stakeholders about how to ensure all schools are growing the knowledge of Arkansas students.

II. 2018 OEP AWARDS: HIGH ACHIEVING MIDDLE SCHOOLS IN ARKANSAS BASED ON CONTENT GROWTH IN THE ACT ASPIRE EXAMS

This section highlights middle schools across the state whose students demonstrated high growth on the Arkansas ACT Aspire exams. The ACT Aspire was administered to students in grades 3 through 10 in April 2018 in Math and ELA courses which include English, Writing, and Reading.

Each table in this section presents the Top 20 schools for the noted subject area and school level. In addition, these tables include the region in which the schools are located, the grades served at the school, the number of students tested, and the content growth score in that particular subject.

The level of the schools, namely Elementary, Middle, and High, have been based on the school allocation given through the [My School Info](#) portal of the Arkansas Department of Education website.

D. Middle School Overall ACT Aspire Growth Scores, 2018

Table 19: Top 20 *Middle Schools* in Arkansas based on *Overall ACT Aspire Growth*

	School (District)	Region	Grades Served	Overall Content Growth
1	Heber Springs Middle (Heber Springs)	NE	6-8	86.35
2	Valley Springs Middle (Valley Springs)	NW	5-8	86.02
3	LISA Academy North Middle Charter (LISA Academy)	CN	6-8	85.34
3	Oak Grove Middle (Paragould)	NE	5-6	85.34
5	Cabot Middle North (Cabot)	CN	5-6	85.31
6	Lincoln Junior High (Bentonville)	NW	7-8	85.23
7	L. A. Chaffin Junior High (Fort Smith)	NW	7-9	85.08
8	Cabot Junior High North (Cabot)	CN	7-8	85.07
9	Manila Middle (Manila)	NE	5-8	84.98
10	Paragould Junior High (Paragould)	NE	7-8	84.93
11	J. William Fulbright Junior High (Bentonville)	NW	7-8	84.62
12	Swifton Middle (Jackson Co.)	NE	5-7	84.49
13	Bismarck Middle (Bismarck)	CN	5-8	84.19
14	Washington Junior High (Bentonville)	NW	7-8	83.97
15	Cedarville Middle (Cedarville)	NW	5-8	83.94
16	Gravette Middle (Gravette)	NW	6-8	83.79
17	Pleasant View Campus (Mulberry/Pleasant View Bi-County Schools)	NW	5-8	83.78
18	LISA Academy (LISA Academy)	CN	7-8	83.46
19	Helen Tyson Middle (Springdale)	NW	6-7	83.37
20	Butterfield Trail Middle (Van Buren)	NW	6-8	83.29

Tables 20-24: Top 5 **Middle Schools** in Arkansas by Regions, **Overall Growth**



Table 20: Top 5 schools in **Northwest** Region based on **Overall Middle ACT Aspire Growth**

	School (District)	Grades Served	# of Test Takers	Overall Content Growth
1	Valley Springs Middle (Valley Springs)	5-8	258	86.02
2	Lincoln Junior High (Bentonville)	7-8	738	85.23
3	L. A. Chaffin Junior High (Fort Smith)	7-9	704	85.08
4	J. William Fulbright Junior High (Bentonville)	7-8	822	84.62
5	Washington Junior High (Bentonville)	7-8	658	83.97



Table 21: Top 5 schools in the **Northeast** Region based on **Overall Middle ACT Aspire Growth**

	School (District)	Grades Served	# of Test Takers	Overall Content Growth
1	Heber Springs Middle (Heber Springs)	6-8	337	86.35
2	Oak Grove Middle (Paragould)	5-6	416	85.34
3	Manila Middle (Manila)	5-8	319	84.98
4	Paragould Junior High (Paragould)	7-8	435	84.93
5	Swifton Middle (Jackson Co.)	5-7	181	84.49



Table 22: Top 5 schools in the **Central** Region based on **Overall** Middle ACT Aspire Growth

	School (District)	Grades Served	# of Test Takers	Overall Content Growth
1	LISA Academy North Middle Charter (LISA Academy)	6-8	210	85.34
2	Cabot Middle North (Cabot)	5-6	758	85.31
3	Cabot Junior High North (Cabot)	7-8	774	85.07
4	Bismarck Middle (Bismarck)	5-8	282	84.19
5	LISA Academy (LISA Academy)	7-8	327	83.46



Table 23: Top 5 schools in the **Southwest** Region based on **Overall** Middle ACT Aspire Growth

	School (District)	Grades Served	# of Test Takers	Overall Content Growth
1	Beryl Henry Upper Elementary (Hope)	5-6	234	83.11
2	Barton Junior High (El Dorado)	7-8	640	80.60
3	Yerger Junior High (Hope)	7-8	190	80.54
4	DeQueen Middle (DeQueen)	6-7	297	80.44
5	Mena Middle (Mena)	6-8	351	80.08



Table 24: Top 5 schools in the *Southeast* Region based on *Overall* Middle ACT Aspire Growth

	School (District)	Grades Served	# of Test Takers	Overall Content Growth
1	DeWitt Middle (DeWitt)	6-8	262	81.51
2	Warren Middle (Warren)	6-8	359	80.59
3	KIPP:Delta College Prep (KIPP Delta Public Schools)	6-8	194	80.07
4	Dumas Junior High (Dumas)	7-9	223	80.05
5	Monticello Middle (Monticello)	6-8	377	80.04

E. Middle School Math ACT Aspire Growth Scores, 2018

Table 25: Top 10 *Middle Schools* in Arkansas based on ACT Aspire *Math* Growth

	School (District)	Region	Grades Served	Math Content Growth
1	Paragould Junior High (Paragould)	NE	7-8	88.75
2	Cabot Junior High North (Cabot)	CN	7-8	88.05
3	Lincoln Junior High (Bentonville)	NW	7-8	87.35
3	LISA Academy North Middle Charter (LISA Academy)	CN	6-8	87.35
5	Beebe Junior High (Beebe)	NE	7-8	87.00
5	Cabot Middle North (Cabot)	CN	5-6	87.00
5	Manila Middle (Manila)	NE	5-8	87.00
5	Swifton Middle (Jackson Co.)	NE	5-7	87.00
5	Valley Springs Middle (Valley Springs)	NW	5-8	87.00
10	Heber Springs Middle (Heber Springs)	NE	6-8	86.65
10	Washington Junior High (Bentonville)	NW	7-8	86.65

Tables 26-30: Top 5 *Middle Schools* in Arkansas by Regions, *Math Growth*



Table 26: Top 5 schools in *Northwest* Region based on Middle *Math* ACT Aspire Growth

	School (District)	Grades Served	# of Test Takers	Math Content Growth
1	Lincoln Junior High (Bentonville)	7-8	738	87.35
2	Valley Springs Middle (Valley Springs)	5-8	258	87.00
3	Washington Junior High (Bentonville)	7-8	658	86.65
4	Mansfield Middle (Mansfield)	5-8	226	85.95
5	J. William Fulbright Junior High (Bentonville)	7-8	822	85.60



Table 27: Top 5 schools in *Northeast* Region based on Middle *Math* ACT Aspire Growth

	School (District)	Grades Served	# of Test Takers	Math Content Growth
1	Paragould Junior High (Paragould)	7-8	435	88.75
2	Manila Middle (Manila)	5-8	319	87.00
2	Swifton Middle (Jackson Co.)	5-7	181	87.00
2	Beebe Junior High (Beebe)	7-8	482	87.00
5	Heber Springs Middle (Heber Springs)	6-8	337	86.65



Table 28: Top 5 schools in **Central** Region based on Middle **Math** ACT Aspire Growth

	School (District)	Grades Served	# of Test Takers	Math Content Growth
1	Cabot Junior High North (Cabot)	7-8	774	88.05
2	LISA Academy North Middle Charter (LISA Academy)	6-8	210	87.35
3	Cabot Middle North (Cabot)	5-6	758	87.00
4	Bismarck Middle (Bismarck)	5-8	282	86.30
5	LISA Academy (LISA Academy)	7-8	327	85.60
5	Vilonia Middle (Vilonia)	7-8	475	85.60



Table 29: Top 5 schools in **Southwest** Region based on Middle **Math** ACT Aspire Growth

	School (District)	Grades Served	# of Test Takers	Math Content Growth
1	Beryl Henry Upper Elementary (Hope)	5-6	234	82.80
2	Barton Junior High (El Dorado)	7-8	640	81.05
3	Gary E. Cobb Middle (Genoa Central)	5-8	340	80.35
4	Yerger Junior High (Hope)	7-8	190	80.00
5	DeQueen Middle (DeQueen)	6-7	297	79.65
5	Mena Middle (Mena)	6-8	351	79.65



Table 30: Top 5 schools in *Southeast* Region based on Middle **Math** ACT Aspire Growth

	School (District)	Grades Served	# of Test Takers	Math Content Growth
1	DeWitt Middle (DeWitt)	6-8	262	83.50
2	KIPP: Delta College Prep (KIPP Delta Public Schools)	6-8	194	80.70
3	Stuttgart Junior High (Stuttgart)	7-8	208	80.35
3	Warren Middle (Warren)	6-8	359	80.35
5	Hamburg Middle (Hamburg)	6-8	350	79.65

F. Middle School ELA ACT Aspire Growth Scores, 2018

Table 31: Top 10 Middle Schools in Arkansas based on ACT Aspire ELA Growth

	School (District)	Region	Grades Served	ELA Content Growth
1	Pleasant View Campus (Mulberry/Pleasant View Bi-County Schools)	NW	5-8	86.65
2	Heber Springs Middle (Heber Springs)	NE	6-8	85.95
3	L. A. Chaffin Junior High (Fort Smith)	NW	7-9	85.25
3	Oak Grove Middle (Paragould)	NE	5-6	85.25
3	Valley Springs Middle (Valley Springs)	NW	5-8	85.25
6	Bergman Middle (Bergman)	NW	5-8	84.20
6	Greenwood Junior High (Greenwood)	NW	7-8	84.20
8	Ardis Ann Middle (Bentonville)	NW	5-6	83.85
8	Cabot Middle North (Cabot)	CN	5-6	83.85
8	Hellstern Middle (Springdale)	NW	6-7	83.85
8	J. William Fulbright Junior High (Bentonville)	NW	7-8	83.85
8	Westside Middle (Westside Cons. (Craighead))	NE	5-7	83.85

Tables 32-36: Top 5 *Middle Schools* in Arkansas by Regions, *ELA Growth*



Table 32: Top 5 schools in *Northwest* Region based on Middle *ELA* ACT Aspire Growth

	School (District)	Grades Served	# of Test Takers	ELA Content Growth
1	Pleasant View Campus (Mulberry/Pleasant View Bi-County Schools)	5-8	96	86.65
2	L. A. Chaffin Junior High (Fort Smith)	7-9	704	85.25
2	Valley Springs Middle (Valley Springs)	5-8	258	85.25
4	Bergman Middle (Bergman)	5-8	293	84.20
4	Greenwood Junior High (Greenwood)	7-8	560	84.20



Table 33: Top 5 schools in *Northeast* Region based on Middle *ELA* ACT Aspire Growth

	School (District)	Grades Served	# of Test Takers	ELA Content Growth
1	Heber Springs Middle (Heber Springs)	6-8	337	85.95
2	Oak Grove Middle (Paragould)	5-6	414	85.25
3	Westside Middle (Westside Cons. (Craighead))	5-7	360	83.85
4	Manila Middle (Manila)	5-8	318	83.15
5	Imboden Area Charter (Imboden Charter)	K-8	37	82.45



Table 34: Top 5 schools in **Central** Region based on Middle **ELA** ACT Aspire Growth

	School (District)	Grades Served	# of Test Takers	ELA Content Growth
1	Cabot Middle North (Cabot)	5-6	758	83.85
2	LISA Academy North Middle Charter (LISA Academy)	6-8	210	83.50
3	Bob Courtway Middle (Conway)	5-7	440	83.15
4	Cabot Junior High South (Cabot)	7-8	654	82.80
4	Ray/Phyllis Simon Middle (Conway)	5-7	382	82.80



Table 35: Top 5 schools in **Southwest** Region based on Middle **ELA** ACT Aspire Growth

	School (District)	Grades Served	# of Test Takers	ELA Content Growth
1	Beryl Henry Upper Elementary (Hope)	5-6	234	83.15
2	North Heights Junior High (Texarkana)	7-8	479	81.75
3	DeQueen Middle (DeQueen)	6-7	297	81.40
3	Paulette Smith Middle (Fouke)	6-8	203	81.40
5	Hope Academy (Hope)	P-9	200	81.05
5	Yerger Junior High (Hope)	7-8	188	81.05



Table 36: Top 5 schools in *Southeast* Region based on Middle *ELA* ACT Aspire Growth

	School (District)	Grades Served	# of Test Takers	ELA Content Growth
1	Monticello Middle (Monticello)	6-8	376	83.50
2	Dumas Junior High (Dumas)	7-9	223	81.75
3	Lakeside Middle (Lakeside (Chicot))	6-8	199	80.70
3	Warren Middle (Warren)	6-8	358	80.70
5	Star City Middle (Star City)	6-8	322	80.35

APPENDIX

A. Methods

All data used in this report were obtained from the Arkansas Department of Education via the link <https://myschoolinfo.arkansas.gov/Plus/Schools>.

We generated a statewide report for the 2017-18 school year, using the ESSA School Index report. Values included

- Final Weighted Achievement Adjusted for 95% Tested
- Grade Range
- Grade Span (School Level)
- Poverty Rate
- Combined Content Growth Score Current Year
- Combined Math Growth Score Current Year
- Combined ELA Growth Score Current Year

For more information about how school levels were assigned, see [http://www.arkansased.gov/public/userfiles/ESEA/Documents to Share/Grade Spans and Grade Configurations_rv.pdf](http://www.arkansased.gov/public/userfiles/ESEA/Documents%20to%20Share/Grade%20Spans%20and%20Grade%20Configurations_rv.pdf)

For more information about how growth values were calculated, see [http://www.arkansased.gov/public/userfiles/ESEA/Documents to Share/School%20Growth%20Explanation%20for%20ES%20and%20DC%20111017.pdf](http://www.arkansased.gov/public/userfiles/ESEA/Documents%20to%20Share/School%20Growth%20Explanation%20for%20ES%20and%20DC%20111017.pdf)