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

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**OUTSTANDING EDUCATIONAL PERFORMANCE AWARDS:
HIGHLIGHTING HIGH-GROWTH ARKANSAS SCHOOLS, 2022**

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

November 16, 2022

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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).

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. In this case, the calculations are based on the 2021-22 scores. 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 2021-22 academic year, ACT Aspire examinations were administered to students in grades 3 through 10 in Math, Reading, Writing, English, and Science. 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.

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. 2022 OEP AWARDS: HIGH GROWTH 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 2022 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 weighted achievement score, 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, 2022

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

	School (District)	Region	Grades Served	Overall Content Growth
1	eStem East Village Junior High (eStem)	Central	7-9	86.05
2	Vilonia Middle (Vilonia)	Central	7-8	85.42
3	Gravette Middle (Gravette)	Northwest	6-8	85.24
4	Bright Field Middle (Bentonville)	Northwest	5-6	84.99
5	Washington Junior High (Bentonville)	Northwest	7-8	84.90
6	Highland Middle (Highland)	Northeast	5-8	84.78
7	L.A. Chaffin Middle (Fort Smith)	Northwest	6-8	84.68
8	Lincoln Junior High (Bentonville)	Northwest	7-8	84.65
9	Valley Springs Middle (Valley Springs)	Northwest	5-8	84.49
10	Northridge Middle (Van Buren)	Northwest	6-8	84.30
11	eStem Junior High (eStem)	Central	7-9	84.26
12	Pea Ridge Middle (Pea Ridge)	Northwest	5-6	83.84
13	Mansfield Middle (Mansfield)	Northwest	5-8	83.73
14	Huntsville Middle (Huntsville)	Northwest	6-8	83.49
15	Ruth Doyle Middle (Conway)	Central	5-7	83.31
16	Atkins Middle (Atkins)	Northwest	5-8	83.30
17	Elkins Middle (Elkins)	Northwest	6-8	83.28
18	McNair Middle (Fayetteville)	Northwest	5-6	83.27
19	Heber Springs Middle (Heber Springs)	Northeast	6-8	83.18
20	DeQueen Middle (DeQueen)	Southwest	6-7	83.09

Tables 20-24: Top 5 Middle Schools in Arkansas by Region, 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	Gravette Middle (Gravette)	6-8	408	85.24
2	Bright Field Middle (Bentonville)	5-6	559	84.99
3	Washington Junior High (Bentonville)	7-8	604	84.90
4	L.A. Chaffin Middle (Fort Smith)	6-8	698	84.68
5	Lincoln Junior High (Bentonville)	7-8	587	84.65



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

	School (District)	Grades Served	# of Test Takers	Overall Content Growth
1	Highland Middle (Highland)	5-8	426	84.78
2	Heber Springs Middle (Heber Springs)	6-8	351	83.18
3	Wonder Junior High (West Memphis)	7-9	270	82.57
4	Cave City Middle Career And Collegiate Preparatory (Cave City)	6-8	251	82.40
5	Beebe Junior High (Beebe)	7-8	494	81.87



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

	School (District)	Grades Served	# of Test Takers	Overall Content Growth
1	eStem East Village Junior High (eStem)	7-9	298	86.05
2	Vilonia Middle (Vilonia)	7-8	406	85.42
3	eStem Junior High (eStem)	7-9	431	84.26
4	Ruth Doyle Middle (Conway)	5-7	500	83.31
5	Lisa Academy West Middle (Lisa Academy)	6-8	473	82.72



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

	School (District)	Grades Served	# of Test Takers	Overall Content Growth
1	DeQueen Middle (DeQueen)	6-7	346	83.09
2	Mena Middle (Mena)	6-8	353	82.61
3	Hope Academy of Public Service (Hope)	5-8	205	82.48
4	Gary E. Cobb Middle (Genoa Central)	5-8	321	81.14
5	Goza Middle (Arkadelphia)	6-8	383	80.89



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

	School (District)	Grades Served	# of Test Takers	Overall Content Growth
1	Star City Middle (Star City)	6-8	325	82.43
2	KIPP:Delta College Prep (KIPP Delta)	6-8	171	81.84
3	DeWitt Middle (DeWitt)	6-8	244	81.77
4	Hamburg Middle (Hamburg)	6-8	349	81.62
5	Drew Central Middle (Drew Central)	5-8	311	81.18

E. Middle School Math ACT Aspire Growth Scores, 2022

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

	School (District)	Region	Grades Served	Overall Content Growth
1	Vilonia Middle (Vilonia)	Central	7-8	88.07
2	eStem East Village Junior High (eStem)	Central	7-9	87.56
3	Washington Junior High (Bentonville)	Northwest	7-8	87.15
4	Valley Springs Middle (Valley Springs)	Northwest	5-8	86.91
5	Pea Ridge Middle (Pea Ridge)	Northwest	5-6	86.86
6	Benton Middle (Benton)	Central	5-7	86.71
7	Lincoln Junior High (Bentonville)	Northwest	7-8	86.40
8	Northridge Middle (Van Buren)	Northwest	6-8	86.19
9	Woodland Junior High (Fayetteville)	Northwest	7-8	86.15
10	Gravette Middle (Gravette)	Northwest	6-8	86.13

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



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

	School (District)	Grades Served	# of Test Takers	Overall Content Growth
1	Washington Junior High (Bentonville)	7-8	604	87.15
2	Valley Springs Middle (Valley Springs)	5-8	216	86.91
3	Pea Ridge Middle (Pea Ridge)	5-6	351	86.86
4	Lincoln Junior High (Bentonville)	7-8	587	86.40
5	Northridge Middle (Van Buren)	6-8	614	86.19



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

	School (District)	Grades Served	# of Test Takers	Overall Content Growth
1	Highland Middle (Highland)	5-8	426	85.29
2	Heber Springs Middle (Heber Springs)	6-8	351	85.27
3	Beebe Middle (Beebe)	5-6	410	83.80
4	Swifton Middle (Jackson Co.)	5-7	177	83.33
5	Cave City Middle Career And Collegiate Preparatory (Cave City)	6-8	251	83.22



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

	School (District)	Grades Served	# of Test Takers	Overall Content Growth
1	Vilonia Middle (Vilonia)	7-8	406	88.07
2	eStem East Village Junior High (eStem)	7-9	298	87.56
3	Benton Middle (Benton)	5-7	1232	86.71
4	eStem Junior High (eStem)	7-9	431	83.91
5	Glen Rose Middle (Glen Rose)	5-8	289	83.30



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

	School (District)	Grades Served	# of Test Takers	Overall Content Growth
1	DeQueen Middle (DeQueen)	6-7	346	84.10
2	Mena Middle (Mena)	6-8	353	82.96
3	Gary E. Cobb Middle (Genoa Central)	5-8	321	82.83
4	Goza Middle (Arkadelphia)	6-8	383	81.30
5	Arkansas Middle (Texarkana)	6-8	838	81.13



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

	School (District)	Grades Served	# of Test Takers	Overall Content Growth
1	DeWitt Middle (DeWitt)	6-8	244	84.80
2	KIPP:Delta College Prep (KIPP Delta)	6-8	171	83.34
3	Star City Middle (Star City)	6-8	325	83.00
4	Drew Central Middle (Drew Central)	5-8	311	81.29
5	Warren Middle (Warren)	6-8	358	80.98

F. Middle School ELA ACT Aspire Growth Scores, 2022

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

	School (District)	Region	Grades Served	Overall Content Growth
1	Bright Field Middle (Bentonville)	Northwest	5-6	85.42
2	eStem Junior High (eStem)	Central	7-9	84.62
3	eStem East Village Junior High (eStem)	Central	7-9	84.48
4	Elkins Middle (Elkins)	Northwest	6-8	84.43
5	Ruth Doyle Middle (Conway)	Central	5-7	84.39
6	Gravette Middle (Gravette)	Northwest	6-8	84.34
7	Bergman Middle (Bergman)	Northwest	5-8	84.27
7	Highland Middle (Highland)	Northeast	5-8	84.27
8	Hope Academy of Public Service (Hope)	Southwest	5-8	84.25
9	L.A. Chaffin Middle (Fort Smith)	Northwest	6-8	84.02
10	Lonoke Middle (Lonoke)	Central	6-8	83.53

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



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

	School (District)	Grades Served	# of Test Takers	Overall Content Growth
1	Bright Field Middle (Bentonville)	5-6	559	85.42
2	Elkins Middle (Elkins)	6-8	298	84.43
3	Gravette Middle (Gravette)	6-8	408	84.34
4	Bergman Middle (Bergman)	5-8	288	84.27
5	L.A. Chaffin Middle (Fort Smith)	6-8	698	84.02



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

	School (District)	Grades Served	# of Test Takers	Overall Content Growth
1	Highland Middle (Highland)	5-8	426	84.27
2	Beebe Junior High (Beebe)	7-8	493	83.33
3	Westside Middle (Westside Cons. - Craighead)	5-7	349	82.23
4	Wonder Junior High (West Memphis)	7-9	270	82.01
5	Cave City Middle Career And Collegiate Preparatory (Cave City)	6-8	250	81.66



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

	School (District)	Grades Served	# of Test Takers	Overall Content Growth
1	eStem Junior High (eStem)	7-9	431	84.62
2	eStem East Village Junior High (eStem)	7-9	297	84.48
3	Ruth Doyle Middle (Conway)	5-7	500	84.39
4	Lonoke Middle (Lonoke)	6-8	336	83.53
5	Jacksonville Lighthouse Flightline Academy (Arkansas Lighthouse Academies)	5-8	123	83.41



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

	School (District)	Grades Served	# of Test Takers	Overall Content Growth
1	Hope Academy of Public Service (Hope)	5-8	205	84.25
2	Beryl Henry Upper Elementary (Hope)	5-6	186	83.22
3	Mena Middle (Mena)	6-8	353	82.26
4	DeQueen Middle (DeQueen)	6-7	346	82.09
5	Nashville Junior High (Nashville)	7-9	450	81.27



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

	School (District)	Grades Served	# of Test Takers	Overall Content Growth
1	Hamburg Middle (Hamburg)	6-8	349	82.66
2	Star City Middle (Star City)	6-8	325	81.87
3	Dumas Junior High (Dumas)	7-9	235	81.09
4	Drew Central Middle (Drew Central)	5-8	311	81.07
5	Monticello Middle (Monticello)	6-8	379	80.98

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 2021-22 school year, using the ESSA School Index report. Values included

- 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

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