

ARKANSAS EDUCATION REPORT
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**OUTSTANDING EDUCATIONAL PERFORMANCE AWARDS:
HIGHLIGHTING HIGH-ACHIEVING ARKANSAS SCHOOLS, 2013**

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

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INTRODUCTION

Since our founding in 2003, the mission of the Office for Education Policy has been to look at pressing issues through the lens of academic research and disseminate 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 the high-performing schools in Arkansas on the Benchmark exam in math and literacy, and End-Of-Course (EOC) exams in Algebra, Geometry, Literacy (Grade 11), and Biology. This **first release** will begin by featuring high-performing elementary and middle schools on Benchmark performance in literacy, math, and combined test score performance.

Last year, we first introduced a new 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, this indicator suffers from being an “all-or-nothing” measure, in which a student is either proficient or not.

The percent proficient and advanced 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.

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

The GPA measure, we believe, is a better representation of student achievement on statewide standardized exams. 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. For example, in section two of the **OEP Awards** AER, 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). In the following weeks, we will focus on high-performing elementary schools, middle schools, and high schools in the various regions across the state. 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**
- **Beating the Odds – High-Achieving Schools Serving Low-Income Communities**
- **High-Achieving Elementary Schools by Region**
- **High-Achieving Middle Schools by Region**
- **High-Achieving High Schools Across Arkansas**
- **Most Improved Schools**

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

I. 2013 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 2013. 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 2013, 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 third report, individual grade-level performance will be highlighted for grades 3, 4, and 5. In the fourth report, individual grade level performance will be highlighted for grades 6, 7, and 8. In the third and fourth 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.

A. Benchmark Scores in Mathematics, 2013

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

	School (District)	Region ¹	Grades Served	% Proficient/Advanced ²	GPA ³
1	Park Magnet School (Hot Springs) ♦	CN	K-5	100%	3.96
2	Mount Pleasant Elementary School (Melbourne) ♦	NE	K-6	98%	3.86
3	Vandergriff Elementary School (Fayetteville) ♦	NW	K-5	97%	3.81
4	Centerpoint Primary School (Centerpoint) ♦	SW	P-3	98%	3.79
4	Pottsville Elementary School (Pottsville) ♦	NW	K-3	95%	3.79
6	Central Park at Morning Star Elementary (Bentonville) ♦	NW	K-4	97%	3.78
6	Elm Tree Elementary School (Bentonville)	NW	K-4	96%	3.78
8	Julia Lee Moore Elementary School (Conway) ♦	CN	K-4	96%	3.77
9	Don Roberts Elementary School (Little Rock) ♦	CN	P-5	94%	3.76
10	Academy of Technology (Vilonia) ♦	CN	2-4	100%	3.75
11	Cooper Elementary School (Bentonville) ♦	NW	K-4	95%	3.74
11	Willowbrook Elementary School (Bentonville)	NW	K-4	94%	3.74
13	Forest Heights Elementary School (Harrison) ♦	NW	K-4	96%	3.73
13	Richland Elementary School (West Memphis) ♦	NE	K-6	97%	3.73
15	Ellen Smith Elementary School (Conway) ♦	CN	K-4	93%	3.71
16	Brookland Elementary School (Brookland)	NE	P-3	97%	3.70
16	Woodrow Cummins Elementary School (Conway) ♦	CN	K-4	96%	3.70
16	Forest Park Elementary School (Little Rock) ♦	CN	P-5	95%	3.70
16	Bellview Elementary (Rogers) ♦	NW	K-5	94%	3.70
16	Eagle Heights Elementary School (Harrison)	NW	K-4	93%	3.70
16	Skyline Heights Elementary School (Harrison)	NW	K-4	92%	3.70
22	College Hill Elementary School (Texarkana)	SW	K-4	95%	3.69
23	Center Valley Elementary School (Russellville)	NW	K-4	95%	3.68
24	Westside Elementary School (Searcy)	NE	K-3	96%	3.67
24	Bob Folsom Elementary School (Farmington)	NW	K-3	94%	3.67

♦ Indicates school placed on same list in 2011-12.

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

² Schools are ranked based on the percent of students performing at proficient or advanced levels in the noted subject. The percent proficient/advanced value shown is rounded. Ranks are based on actual values.

³ 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) ♦	NW	8-12	100%	3.88
2 Pottsville Middle Grade (Pottsville) ♦	NW	4-6	92%	3.56
3 Academy of Service and Technology (Vilonia) ♦	CN	5-6	87%	3.55
4 McNair Middle School (Fayetteville) ♦	NW	6-7	92%	3.51
5 Nettleton Middle School (Jonesboro)	NE	6	88%	3.48
5 Pea Ridge Middle School (Pea Ridge) ♦	NW	6-8	91%	3.48
7 East Hills Middle School (Greenwood) ♦	NW	6-7	87%	3.45
8 Lakeside Middle School (Lakeside-Garland County) ♦	CN	5-7	88%	3.42
9 Bright Field Middle School (Bentonville)	NW	5-6	89%	3.41
9 St. Joe High School (Ozark)	NW	7-12	88%	3.41
11 Valley View High School (Valley View) ♦	NE	7-12	90%	3.40
12 Benton Middle School (Benton) ♦	CN	6-7	86%	3.39
12 Greenbrier Middle School (Greenbrier) ♦	CN	6-7	86%	3.39
12 Ruth Barker Middle School (Bentonville) ♦	NW	5-6	87%	3.39
15 Cabot Middle School North (Cabot) ♦	CN	5-6	86%	3.36
15 Cabot Middle School South (Cabot) ♦	CN	5-6	85%	3.36
17 Tuckerman High School (Jackson County)	NE	8-12	88%	3.35
18 Gary E. Cobb Middle School (Genoa Central)	SW	5-8	87%	3.34
18 Woodland Junior High School (Fayetteville)	NW	8-9	87%	3.34
20 Ahlf Junior High School (Searcy) ♦	NE	7-8	86%	3.33
20 Carl Stuart Middle School (Conway) ♦	CN	5-7	85%	3.33
22 Ruth Doyle Intermediate School (Conway) ♦	CN	5-7	82%	3.32
23 Ardis Ann Middle School (Bentonville)	NW	5-6	83%	3.31
23 Nashville Elementary School (Nashville)	SW	4-6	83%	3.31
25 Washington Junior High School (Bentonville)	NW	7-8	86%	3.30
25 Brookland Middle School (Brookland)	NE	4-6	85%	3.30

♦ Indicates school placed on same list in 2011-12.

Elementary and Middle School Math Scores

Sixteen elementary schools and seventeen middle schools on this year's "Top 25 List" for math achievement were repeats from last year's honors.

The statewide math GPA average¹ for elementary and middle schools combined is 3.06, and the statewide math average for students scoring proficient or advanced is 75%. Elementary schools have a higher average than middle schools in both the GPA measure and the percentage of students scoring proficient or advanced.

Statewide, the elementary school GPA average for math Benchmark performance is a 3.04, with 74% of elementary students scoring at the proficient or advanced level. Of the 503 schools classified as elementary schools, 354 have a math GPA at or above the statewide average in this category, and 356 schools reached 75% or more students scoring proficient or advanced. Recall that because we ranked using the GPA measure, the number of schools meeting or exceeding the statewide averages for both GPA and percent of students scoring proficient or advanced will not always be equal.

The statewide middle school math GPA average is a 3.05, with 76% of middle school students scoring proficient or advanced. Of 364 middle schools, 128 middle schools in Arkansas meet or exceed the state's average GPA, and 176 middle schools have 75% or more students scoring proficient or advanced.

The Northwest region stood out on the "Top 25 List" for math scores, with 12 schools in the elementary ratings and 10 schools in the middle school ratings. In the elementary ratings, seven schools are from the Central region, four are from the Northeast region, and two are from the Southwest region. The Bentonville School District (Northwest) has four schools on this list and the Harrison School District (Northwest) has three schools on this list. In the middle school ratings, 11 schools are from the Northwest region, and eight schools are from the Central region. The Bentonville School District (Northwest) has four schools on this list.

As was the case in previous years, the schools on "Top 25 List" serve relatively more advantaged student populations. For example, the average free or reduced lunch (FRL) rate for elementary schools in the top 25 list is 38%, as compared to the state average for elementary schools of 68%. Similarly, of the middle schools on the list, the average percentage of FRL students is 41%, while the statewide average for middle schools is 63%. Additionally, the percentages of minority students in the elementary (19%) and middle schools (19%) on the "Top 25 List" are lower than the state average (36% and 30%). Lastly, the average enrollment of the schools on the "Top 25 List" is larger than the statewide average for both elementary and middle schools.

¹ All averages are weighted by the number of students tested.

B. Benchmark Scores in Literacy, 2013

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	99%	3.87
2	Vandergriff Elementary School (Fayetteville) ♦	NW	K-5	97%	3.81
3	Forest Park Elementary School (Little Rock) ♦	CN	P-5	96%	3.79
4	Forest Heights Elementary School (Harrison)	NW	K-4	99%	3.75
5	Ellen Smith Elementary School (Conway)	CN	K-4	95%	3.73
5	Westside Elementary School (Rogers)	NW	K-3	94%	3.73
5	Don Roberts Elementary School (Little Rock)	CN	P-5	94%	3.73
5	Pottsville Elementary School (Pottsville) ♦	NW	K-3	93%	3.73
9	Mount Pleasant Elementary School (Melbourne) ♦	NE	K-6	98%	3.72
9	Bellview Elementary (Rogers) ♦	NW	K-5	94%	3.72
11	College Hill Elementary School (Texarkana) ♦	SW	K-4	96%	3.71
11	Hunt Elementary School (Springdale) ♦	NW	K-5	96%	3.71
11	Elm Tree Elementary School (Bentonville) ♦	NW	K-4	97%	3.71
11	Norfork Elementary School (Norfork)	NW	K-6	95%	3.71
11	Richland Elementary School (West Memphis) ♦	NE	K-6	95%	3.71
11	Julia Lee Moore Elementary School (Conway) ♦	CN	K-4	93%	3.71
17	Hardin Elementary School (Redfield)	CN	K-5	94%	3.68
18	Academy of Technology (Vilonia) ♦	CN	2-4	98%	3.67
18	Baker Interdistrict Elementary School (Pulaski County Special)	CN	K-5	92%	3.67
20	Elza R. Tucker Elementary School (Rogers)	NW	K-5	93%	3.66
21	Gillett Elementary School (DeWitt) ♦	SE	P-5	95%	3.65
21	Dover Elementary School (Dover) ♦	NW	K-5	94%	3.65
21	Eastside Elementary School (Rogers)	NW	K-5	94%	3.65
21	Jefferson Elementary School (Little Rock)	CN	P-5	94%	3.65
21	Magness Creek Elementary (Cabot)	CN	K-4	93%	3.65

♦ Indicates school placed on same list in 2011-12.

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) ♦	NW	8-12	100%	3.94
2	Valley View High School (Valley View) ♦	NE	7-12	96%	3.61
3	Pottsville Middle Grades (Pottsville) ♦	NW	4-6	94%	3.60
4	Bright Field Middle School (Bentonville)	NW	5-6	93%	3.57
5	Umpire High School (Cossatot River)	SW	7-12	100%	3.53
6	McNair Middle School (Fayetteville) ♦	NW	6-7	91%	3.50
6	Washington Junior High School (Bentonville) ♦	NW	7-8	92%	3.50
8	Valley Springs Middle School (Valley Springs) ♦	NW	5-8	93%	3.48
8	Brookland Middle School (Brookland) ♦	NE	4-6	90%	3.48
10	Lincoln Junior High School (Bentonville) ♦	NW	7-8	90%	3.47
10	Cabot Middle School South (Cabot) ♦	CN	5-6	89%	3.47
12	Academy of Service and Technology (Vilonia) ♦	CN	5-6	89%	3.46
12	Ruth Barker Middle School (Bentonville) ♦	NW	5-6	89%	3.46
14	Ahlf Junior High School (Searcy) ♦	NE	7-8	90%	3.43
15	Vilonia Junior High School (Vilonia)	CN	8-9	90%	3.42
15	Kirksey Middle School (Rogers)	NW	6-8	88%	3.42
15	Woodland Junior High School (Fayetteville) ♦	NW	8-9	88%	3.42
18	Harrison Middle School (Harrison) ♦	NW	5-6	89%	3.41
18	Southwest Middle School (Searcy) ♦	NE	4-6	87%	3.41
20	Gary E. Cobb Middle School (Texarkana)	SW	5-8	89%	3.40
20	L.A. Chaffin Junior High School (Forth Smith) ♦	NW	7-9	89%	3.40
22	Bergman Middle School (Bergman)	NW	5-8	90%	3.39
22	Ardis Ann Middle School (Bentonville)	NW	5-6	88%	3.39
22	Lakeside Middle School (Lakeside-Garland County)	CN	5-7	88%	3.39
22	Greenbrier Junior High School (Greenbrier)	CN	8-9	87%	3.39

♦ Indicates school placed on same list in 2011-12.

Elementary and Middle School Literacy Scores

Fourteen schools and sixteen middle schools on this year's "Top 25 List" for literacy achievement were repeats from last year's honors.

The statewide literacy GPA average for elementary and middle schools combined is 3.18, and the statewide literacy average for students scoring proficient or advanced is 79%. As with math scores, elementary schools have a higher average than middle schools in both the GPA measure and the percentage of students scoring proficient or advanced.

Statewide, the elementary school literacy GPA average is 3.24, with 81% of elementary school students scoring proficient or advanced. Of 503 elementary schools, 317 schools have a literacy GPA at or above 3.18, and 339 schools reached 79% of more students scoring proficient or advanced.

The statewide middle school literacy GPA average is a 3.05, with 76% of middle school students scoring proficient or advanced. Of 364 middle schools, 137 schools have a GPA at or above 3.18, and 176 middle schools have 79% or more students scoring proficient or advanced.

Regionally, in the elementary ratings, 11 schools are from the Northwest region, and nine schools are from the Central region. The Little Rock School District (Central) has three schools on this list. In the middle school ratings, there are 14 schools from the Northwest region, five schools from the Central region, and four from the Northeast. The Bentonville School District (Northwest) has five schools on this list.

Again, it is worth noting that many of these schools in the top 25 serve relatively more advantaged student populations. For example, the average free or reduced lunch (FRL) rate for elementary schools in the top 25 list is 40%, as compared to the state average for elementary schools of 68%. Similarly, of the middle schools on the list, the average percentage of FRL students is 40%, while the statewide average for middle schools is 63%. Additionally, the percentages of minority students in the elementary (23%) and middle schools (17%) on the “Top 25 List” are lower than the state average (36% and 30%). Lastly, the average enrollment of the schools on the “Top 25 List” is larger than the statewide average for both elementary and middle schools.

C. Benchmark Scores Combined (Math and Literacy)⁴, 2013

Table 5: Top 25 Elementary Schools in Arkansas Based on Benchmark Math and Literacy Achievement

	School (District)	Region	Grades Served	% Proficient/Advanced	GPA
1	Park Magnet School (Hot Springs) ♦	CN	K-5	99.5%	3.91
2	Vandergriff Elementary School (Fayetteville) ♦	NW	K-5	97%	3.81
3	Mount Pleasant Elementary School (Melbourne) ♦	NE	K-6	98%	3.79
4	Pottsville Elementary School (Pottsville) ♦	NW	K-3	94%	3.76
5	Don Roberts Elementary School (Little Rock) ♦	CN	P-5	93.5%	3.75
6	Elm Tree Elementary School (Bentonville) ♦	NW	K-4	96.5%	3.74
6	Julia Lee Moore Elementary School (Conway) ♦	CN	K-4	94.5%	3.74
6	Forest Heights Elementary School (Harrison)	NW	K-4	97.5%	3.74
6	Forest Park Elementary School (Little Rock) ♦	CN	P-5	95.5%	3.74
10	Richland Elementary School (West Memphis) ♦	NE	K-6	96%	3.72
10	Ellen Smith Elementary School (Conway) ♦	CN	K-4	94%	3.72
12	Central Park at Morning Star Elementary School (Bentonville) ♦	NW	K-4	95%	3.71
12	Academy of Technology (Vilonia) ♦	CN	2-4	99%	3.71
12	Bellview Elementary (Rogers) ♦	NW	K-5	94%	3.71
15	College Hill Elementary School (Texarkana) ♦	SW	K-4	95.5%	3.70
15	Westside Elementary School (Searcy)	NE	K-3	95%	3.70
17	Centerpoint Primary School (Centerpoint)	SW	P-3	97%	3.68
18	Hunt Elem. School (Springdale) ♦	NW	K-5	94.5%	3.67
19	Cooper Elementary School (Bentonville)	NW	K-4	93.5%	3.66
20	Willowbrook Elementary School (Bentonville)	NW	K-4	92.5%	3.65
20	Eagle Heights Elementary School (Harrison)	NW	K-4	91%	3.65
20	Skyline Heights Elementary School (Harrison)	NW	K-4	92.5%	3.65
20	Woodrow Cummins Elementary School (Conway) ♦	CN	K-4	94%	3.65
20	Magness Creek Elementary (Cabot)	CN	K-4	93.5%	3.65
20	Gillett Elementary School (DeWitt)	SE	P-5	95%	3.65
20	Norfolk Elementary School (Norfolk)	NW	K-6	94%	3.65

♦ Indicates school placed on same list in 2011-12.

⁴Combined score is a simple average of students earning proficient or advanced on Math and Literacy.

Table 6: Top 25 Middle Schools in Arkansas Based on Math and Literacy Achievement

	School (District)	Region	Grades Served	% Proficient/Advanced	GPA
1	Haas Hall Academy (Haas) ♦	NW	8-12	100%	3.91
2	Pottsville Middle Grades (Pottsville) ♦	NW	4-6	93%	3.58
3	Valley View High School (Valley View) ♦	NW	7-12	93%	3.51
4	McNair Middle School (Fayetteville) ♦	NW	6-7	91.5%	3.50
4	Academy of Service and Technology (Vilonia) ♦	CN	5-6	88%	3.50
6	Bright Field Middle School (Bentonville)	NW	5-6	91%	3.49
7	Ruth Barker Middle School (Bentonville) ♦	NW	5-6	88%	3.42
8	Cabot Middle School South (Cabot) ♦	CN	5-6	87%	3.41
9	Washington Junior High School (Bentonville) ♦	NW	7-8	89%	3.40
9	Lakeside Middle School (Lakeside-Garland County) ♦	CN	5-7	88%	3.40
9	East Hills Middle School (Greenwood) ♦	NW	6-7	86.5%	3.40
12	Brookland Middle School (Brookland) ♦	NE	4-6	87.5%	3.39
13	Ahlf Junior High School (Searcy) ♦	NE	7-8	88%	3.38
13	Woodland Junior High School (Fayetteville)	NW	7-8	87.5%	3.38
13	Greenbrier Middle School (Greenbrier) ♦	CN	6-7	87.5%	3.38
16	Valley Springs Middle School (Valley Springs) ♦	NW	5-8	89%	3.37
16	Gary E. Cobb Middle School (Texarkana)	SW	5-8	88%	3.37
16	Pea Ridge Middle School (Pea Ridge) ♦	NW	6-8	89%	3.37
16	Nettleton Middle School (Jonesboro)	NE	6	84%	3.37
20	Benton Middle School (Benton) ♦	CN	6-7	86%	3.36
21	Ardis Ann Middle School (Bentonville)	NW	5-6	85.5%	3.35
21	Carl Stuart Middle School (Conway) ♦	CN	5-7	85%	3.35
23	Harrison Middle School (Harrison) ♦	NW	5-6	86%	3.34
23	Bergman Middle School (Bergman)	NW	5-8	87%	3.34
23	Cabot Middle School North (Cabot)	CN	5-6	86.5%	3.34

♦ Indicates school placed on same list in 2011-12.

Elementary and Middle School Combined Scores

Sixteen elementary schools and eighteen middle schools on this year's "Top 25 List" for combined achievement were repeats from last year's honors.

The statewide combined GPA average is 3.12 for elementary and middle schools combined, and the statewide combined average for students scoring proficient or advanced is 77%. Again, in this measure, the schools that are classified as elementary schools have a higher average than middle schools in both the GPA measure and the percentage of students scoring proficient or advanced.

Statewide, the combined elementary school GPA average is a 3.22, with 80% of elementary students scoring proficient or advanced. Of 503 elementary schools, 285 schools have a combined GPA of 3.22 or above, and 300 schools have 80% or more students scoring proficient or advanced.

The statewide middle school combined GPA average is a 2.93, with 71% of middle school students scoring proficient or advanced. Of 364 middle schools, 219 schools have a combined GPA at or above 2.93, and 106 middle schools are at or above the overall statewide average GPA (3.12).

Again, the Northwest and Central regions had the most schools on the “Top 25 List” for combined scores. In the elementary ratings, 12 schools are from the Northwest region, and eight schools are from the Central region. The Bentonville School District has four schools and the Conway School District (Central) has three schools on this list. In the middle school ratings, 14 schools are from the Northwest region, and seven schools are from the Central region. The Bentonville School District (Northwest) has four schools on this list.

Predictably, many of these schools in the top 25 serve relatively more advantaged student populations. For example, the average free or reduced lunch (FRL) rate for elementary schools in the top 25 list is 30%, as compared to the state average of 68% for elementary schools. Similarly, of the middle schools on the list the average percentage of students receiving free or reduced lunch is 36%, while the statewide average for middle schools is 63%. Additionally, the percentages of minority students in the elementary (20%) and middle schools (18%) on the “Top 25 List” are lower than the statewide average (36% and 33%). Lastly, the average enrollment of the schools on the “Top 25 List” is larger than the statewide average for both elementary and middle schools.

Once again, we would like to congratulate **ALL** of the schools on our High-Achieving “Overall” Schools in Arkansas based on performance on the Benchmark Exams. Our next installment will focus on schools that are ***Beating the Odds*** – that is, top performing schools with a high population of economically disadvantaged students.

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 the percentage of scores at the proficient and advanced level by grade. Therefore, in order to present an accurate *school*-level percentage of students scoring proficient and advanced across all grades, a weighted average for each school was calculated to account for different levels of enrollment at each grade level. In an effort to highlight schools that were strong in both subject areas, we calculated a simple average of the school level percent proficient and advanced in math *and* literacy at the elementary and middle school levels.

As previously discussed in the introduction, in order to calculate the GPA measure we treat the Benchmark test 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's math, literacy, and combined math and literacy scores. 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.

B. School Classification

For the 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		6-12
3-4		6-7
3-5		6-8
3-6		7-12
4-5		7-8
5*		7-9
K-3		8
K-4		8-9
K-5		8-12
K-6		9-12
K-7		K-12
K-8		
P-2		
P-3		
P-4		
P-5		
P-6		
P-7		
P-8		