

Student Outcomes in Arkansas's Open Enrollment Charter Schools: 2021 to 2023

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Abstract:

This study examines student outcomes of value-added growth and weighted achievement of Arkansas's open-enrollment public charter schools and traditional public schools. Using publicly available school-level data, we use weighted averages to account for variations in school size in analyzing student performance in English Language Arts (ELA) and mathematics from the 2020-21 school year to the 2023-23 school year. To aid interpretation of the results, we translate the scores of the open-enrollment charter group and the traditional public school group into statewide percentile ranks within year and outcome.

The results reveal that statewide, students attending open-enrollment charter schools are consistently demonstrating greater value-added growth and achievement than their peers in traditional public schools. Regional analyses for schools in Central Arkansas and Northwest Arkansas also reflect students attending open-enrollment charter schools consistently demonstrating greater value-added growth and achievement than their peers in traditional public schools. In the Delta region, students attending open-enrollment charter schools are consistently demonstrating greater value-added growth although achievement is slightly lower than that of students attending traditional public schools in the region. Among schools serving the highest populations of students facing economic disadvantages (over 87% FRL), students attending open-enrollment charter schools demonstrate greater growth but somewhat lower achievement than students in traditional public schools. Among schools serving the lowest populations of students facing economic disadvantages (under 34% FRL), students attending open-enrollment charter schools demonstrate greater value-added academic growth and achievement than students in traditional public schools.

Keywords: Charter schools, Value-added growth, Achievement PLCs, PLC at Work, professional development

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I. Introduction

In this report, we descriptively examine the value-added growth and achievement of students attending Arkansas’s open-enrollment charter schools and traditional public schools. For the purposes of this analysis, district-conversion charter schools are considered traditional public schools as they have a specific attendance zone. We limit our analysis to schools serving typical populations of students through a face-to-face instructional model.

II. Analytic Approach

To see how the students in charters and traditional public schools were performing, we used publicly available school-level data from [myschoolinfo](https://my.schoolinfo.org/). We use data from the three most recent school years (2020-21, 2021-22, and 2022-23) to compare how students in grades 3-10 throughout the state performed on required annual assessments in English Language Arts (ELA) and mathematics.

Value-added growth represents how much a student improved their score on state assessments compared to other students across the state who had similar prior test score histories. Value-added scores are not correlated with student’s prior achievement, allowing all students, whether very high performing, very low performing, or average performing, to demonstrate growth. Growth scores are a combination of ELA and mathematics. The scores are weakly correlated with school-level poverty rates ($r = -0.27$) reflecting that schools serving a larger percentage of students who face economic disadvantage can obtain high growth scores.

Weighted achievement represents how well students performed on the annual assessment. Schools receive one point for each student performing at or above grade level expectations, 0.5 points for each student who is close to grade level expectations, and zero points for each student who performed at the lowest level. This measure of achievement in ELA and mathematics is negatively correlated with school-level poverty rates ($r = -0.63$) reflecting that schools serving a larger percentage of students who face economic disadvantage receive lower achievement scores.

For this analysis, we report weighted averages by school group for value-added growth and achievement metrics. The weighted average for value-added growth is the school-level value multiplied by the number of with a growth score, summed for all schools in the group and divided by the total number of students with a growth score. The weighted average for achievement is the school-level weighted achievement value multiplied by the number of students tested, summed for all schools in the group and divided by the total number of students tested. The weighted average gives greater influence on the group average score to larger schools. To aid in the interpretation of the scores, we translate the average weighted growth and achievement scores into the school-level percentile rank among all schools in the state. The percentile rank reflects how students in each group were growing and achieving compared to individual schools across the state.

An overview of the statewide percentile results for growth and achievement are presented in Table 1. Percentiles were produced using weighted averages and illustrate that **students attending Arkansas’s open-enrollment charter schools are growing their learning and achieving at higher rates than their peers in traditional public schools.**

Table 1. Statewide Percentile Ranking for Weighted Average of Growth and Achievement by Geographic Area and School Type, 2021-2023

	Type	Growth %ile			Achievement %ile		
		2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23
Statewide	Charter	55	67	68	59	66	61
	TPS	52	52	54	53	51	52
Central AR	Charter	49	63	66	42	50	44
	TPS	28	45	45	23	26	26
NWA	Charter	82	81	80	97	97	97
	TPS	76	66	67	76	75	74
AR Delta	Charter	22	56	60	10	13	23
	TPS	18	32	32	12	15	13
Highest 10 % Poverty	Charter	35	50	67	10	10	11
	TPS	35	33	47	15	13	13
Lowest 10 % Poverty	Charter	77	78	82	96	96	96
	TPS	77	70	67	89	88	89

III. Statewide Analysis

In 2022-23, there were 1,055 public schools in Arkansas. Included in the following analyses are the 1,019 schools serving typical populations of students through a face-to-face instructional model. Table 2 presents the enrollment, programmatic, and demographic characteristics of the schools analyzed for this report. The 51 open-enrollment charter schools included in the analysis served 3.5% of all public-school students in the analysis. Compared to students in the traditional public schools (TPS), students attending open-enrollment charters (Charters) were slightly less likely to face economic disadvantages (54%), and more likely to be English Language Learners (11%), Hispanic (16%), or African American (42%).

As presented in Table 2, compared to students attending traditional public schools, students attending open-enrollment charters throughout the state are slightly less likely to face economic disadvantages (54%), more likely to be English Language Learners (11%), and more likely to be Hispanic (16%) or African American (42%).

Table 2. Student Enrollment Characteristics, by School Type, 2022-23

	N	Enrollment	% FRL	% ELL	% White	% Hispanic	% African American
Charters	51	16,536	54	11	30	16	42
TPS	968	449,869	59	8	60	14	18
All	1,019	466,405	59	9	59	14	19
<i>Excluded*</i>	<i>36</i>	<i>10,075</i>	<i>56</i>	<i>3</i>	<i>61</i>	<i>8</i>	<i>23</i>

* Exclusion criteria included schools that are not assigned a letter grade from the state, online or virtual schools, alternative learning environments, and schools where over 33% of the population are identified as participating in special education. Twenty traditional public schools (TPS) and sixteen open-enrollment charter schools (Charters) were excluded based on these criteria. A complete list of excluded schools can be found in Table A4 in the Appendix.

The weighted average value-added growth scores for open-enrollment charter schools and traditional public schools are presented in Table 3. To aid interpretation, the statewide percentile rank for a school with the same growth score as the group averages is included. The percentile rank allows for an understanding of how students in each group were growing compared to individual schools across the state.

Table 3. Value-Added Growth, Weighted Average, by School Type, 2021-2023

	2021		2022		2023	
	Growth Score	%ile Rank	Growth Score	%ile Rank	Growth Score	%ile Rank
Charter	80.52	55	81.32	67	81.54	68
TPS	80.31	52	80.42	52	80.43	54
All	80.31	52	80.45	53	80.47	55

As shown in Table 3, students attending open-enrollment charter schools consistently demonstrate greater annual growth in their learning than students attending traditional public schools. The weighted average of school-level growth values presented in Table 3 reflects open-enrollment charter schools growing student learning at the rate of a school that was at the 55th percentile for growth statewide in 2021, and the 67th percentile in 2022, and the 68th percentile in 2023. Using the weighted averages, students in open-enrollment charter schools are demonstrating growth at a rate that is 3 to 15 percentiles higher than students attending traditional public schools. Students attending open-enrollment charter schools in the state are consistently demonstrating that they are learning more in a year than their peers in traditional public schools.

The weighted average achievement scores of the schools are presented in Table 4. The statewide percentile rank for a school with the same achievement score as the group average is included. This percentile rank allows for an understanding of how students in each group were achieving compared to individual schools across the state.

Table 4. Weighted Average Achievement, by School Type, 2021-2023

	2021		2022		2023	
	Ach. Score	%ile Rank	Ach. Score	%ile Rank	Ach. Score	%ile Rank
Charter	53.24	59	58.94	66	57.19	61
TPS	50.61	53	53.96	51	54.10	52
All	50.69	53	54.11	52	54.20	52

As shown in Table 4, when using a weighted average achievement which considers school size, students attending open-enrollment charter schools consistently outperform their

peers in traditional public schools on the achievement measure. The weighted average of school-level achievement values presented in Table 4 reflects students attending open-enrollment charter schools are achieving at the rate of a school that was at the 59th percentile for achievement statewide in 2021, the 66th percentile in 2022, and the 61st percentile in 2023. Using the weighted achievement average, students in open-enrollment charter schools are demonstrating achievement at a rate that is 6 to 15 percentiles higher than traditional public schools.

IV. Regional Analyses

All but one of Arkansas’s open-enrollment charter schools included in this analysis are in three geographic locations: Central, Northwest, and the Delta region. For this analysis, schools were classified based on their physical geographic location. Schools located in Pulaski County were identified as Central Arkansas. Schools located in Benton and Washington Counties were identified as Northwest Arkansas (NWA), and schools located in Jefferson and Phillips Counties were identified as Delta. Future School of Fort Smith located in Sebastian County and, therefore, is not included in the regional analyses that follow.

Central Arkansas

The enrollment, programmatic and demographic characteristics of the 107 schools in the Central Arkansas region (Pulaski County), are included in this analysis are presented below in Table 5. The 28 open-enrollment charter schools in Central Arkansas served 18.5% of all public-school students in the region.

Table 5. Central Region Student Enrollment Characteristics, by School Type, 2022-23

	N	Enrollment	% FRL	% ELL	% White	% Hispanic	% African American
Central Charter	28	9,892	62	13	24	18	50
Central TPS	79	43,507	66	10	26	14	54
All Central	107	53,399	65	11	26	14	54

Students attending Central charter schools are generally demographically and programmatically similar to students attending traditional public schools in the region. Open-

enrollment charter students are slightly less likely to face economic disadvantages (62%) and be African American (50%), but more likely to be English Language Learners (13%), and Hispanic (18%). Tables 6 and 7 present the weighted average value-added growth scores and weighted average achievement scores for Central region schools.

Table 6. Central Arkansas Region Weighted Average Growth, by School Type, 2021-2023

	2021		2022		2023	
	Growth Score	%ile Rank	Growth Score	%ile Rank	Growth Score	%ile Rank
Central Charter	80.06	49	81.06	63	81.31	66
Central TPS	78.36	28	80.00	45	79.87	45
All Central	78.72	32	80.22	49	80.17	50

The weighted average of school-level growth values presented in Table 6 demonstrate that Central open-enrollment charter schools were growing student learning at the rate of a school that was at the 49th percentile for growth statewide in 2021, the 63rd percentile in 2022, and the 66th percentile in 2023. Using weighted growth averages, students in Central open-enrollment charter schools are demonstrating growth at a rate that is 18 to 21 percentiles higher than student learning growth in traditional public schools in the region.

Table 7. Central Region Weighted Average Achievement, by School Type, 2021-2023

	2021		2022		2023	
	Ach. Score	%ile Rank	Ach. Score	%ile Rank	Ach. Score	%ile Rank
Central Charter	46.67	42	53.73	50	50.63	44
Central TPS	37.23	23	42.14	26	42.42	26
All Central	39.21	27	44.66	32	44.09	29

The weighted average of school-level achievement values presented in Table 7 reflects students in Central open-enrollment charter schools achieving at the level of a school that was at the 42nd percentile for achievement statewide in 2021, the 50th percentile in 2022, and at the 44th percentile in 2023. Using the weighted average, students in Central open-enrollment charter schools are demonstrating achievement at a rate that is 11 to 24 percentiles higher than traditional public schools in the region.

A list of Central region open-enrollment schools and their statewide growth and achievement percentiles is presented in Table A1 in the Appendix.

Northwest Arkansas

The 12 open-enrollment charter schools in NWA served 4.9% of all public-school students in the region. Table 8 presents the enrollment, programmatic and demographic characteristics of the open-enrollment charter and traditional public schools located in Northwest Arkansas (Benton and Washington Counties).

Table 8. Northwest Region Student Enrollment Characteristics, by School Type, 2022-23

	N	Enrollment	% FRL	% ELL	% White	% Hispanic	% African American
NWA Charter	12	4,416	21	13	55	17	3
NWA TPS	134	86,061	46	18	55	29	3
All NWA	146	90,477	45	18	55	28	3

Compared to students in the traditional public schools in NWA, students attending open-enrollment charters are much less likely to face economic disadvantages (21%) and are less likely to be English Language Learners (13%) or Hispanic (17%). Following the analyses used statewide, Tables 9 and 10 present weighted average value-added growth scores and weighted average achievement scores for NWA schools.

Table 9. Northwest Arkansas Region Weighted Average Growth, by School Type, 2021-2023

	2021		2022		2023	
	Growth Score	%ile Rank	Growth Score	%ile Rank	Growth Score	%ile Rank
NWA Charter	82.95	82	82.33	81	82.55	80
NWA TPS	82.11	76	81.22	66	81.47	67
NWA Overall	82.15	77	81.26	67	81.52	68

The weighted average of school-level growth values presented in Table 9 reflects that NWA open-enrollment charter schools are demonstrating consistent success in growing student learning. Using the weighted average, students in NWA charters grew at the rate of students in a school at the 82nd percentile for growth statewide in 2021, and the 81st percentile in 2022, and the

80th percentile in 2023. Weighted average growth for students in NWA open-enrollment charter schools is 6 to 15 percentiles higher than average growth for students attending traditional public schools in the region. Students attending NWA open-enrollment charter schools are consistently demonstrating that they are learning more annually than their peers in traditional public schools.

Table 10. Northwest Arkansas Region Weighted Average Achievement, by School Type, 2021-2023

	2021		2022		2023	
	Ach. Score	%ile Rank	Ach. Score	%ile Rank	Ach. Score	%ile Rank
NWA Charter	82.06	97	84.26	97	82.30	97
NWA TPS	59.44	76	62.11	75	62.32	74
NWA Overall	60.41	78	63.03	77	63.20	76

The weighted average of school-level achievement values presented in Table 10 reflects high achievement of students in NWA open-enrollment charter schools. Charter students in the region were achieving at the rate of a school that was at the 97th percentile for achievement statewide in 2021, 2022, and 2023. Using the weighted average, students in open-enrollment charter schools are demonstrating achievement that is 21 to 23 percentiles higher than that of students in local traditional public schools. Students attending NWA open-enrollment charter schools are consistently achieving at higher rates than their peers in traditional public schools.

A list of Northwest region open-enrollment schools and their statewide growth and achievement percentiles is presented in Table A2 in the Appendix.

Arkansas Delta Region

The ten open-enrollment charter schools in the Delta region served 16.8% of all public-school students in the region in 2023. Table 11 presents the enrollment, programmatic and demographic characteristics of the ten open-enrollment charter and 25 traditional public schools located in the Delta region of Arkansas (Jefferson and Phillips Counties).

Table 11. Delta Region Student Enrollment Characteristics, by School Type, 2022-23

	N	Enrollment	% FRL	% ELL	% White	% Hispanic	% African American
Delta Charter	10	1,987	85	1	4	2	93
Delta TPS	25	9,827	77	1	27	2	67
All Delta	35	11,814	78	2	23	2	71

Students attending charters in the Delta region are more likely to face economic disadvantages (85%) and to be African American (93%) than their peers in traditional public schools. Tables 12 and 13 present weighted average value-added growth scores and weighted average achievement scores for Delta region schools.

Table 12. Arkansas Delta Region Weighted Average Growth, by School Type, 2021-2023

	2021		2022		2023	
	Growth Score	%ile Rank	Growth Score	%ile Rank	Growth Score	%ile Rank
Delta Charter	77.74	22	80.64	56	80.86	60
Delta TPS	77.20	18	79.16	32	79.19	32
Delta Overall	77.26	18	79.30	33	79.47	37

The weighted average of school-level growth values presented in Table 12 reflects open-enrollment charter schools in the Delta growing students at the rate of a school that was at the 22nd percentile for growth statewide in 2021, the 56th percentile in 2022, and the 60th percentile in 2023. Using the weighted average growth values, students in Delta open-enrollment charter schools are demonstrating growth at a rate that is 4 to 28 percentiles higher than average growth of students attending traditional public schools in the region.

Table 13. Arkansas Delta Region Weighted Average Achievement, by School Type, 2021-2023

	2021		2022		2023	
	Ach. Score	%ile Rank	Ach. Score	%ile Rank	Ach. Score	%ile Rank
Delta Charter	27.74	10	33.85	13	40.55	23
Delta TPS	29.12	12	34.87	15	35.22	13
Delta Overall	28.97	12	34.29	14	36.11	15

As shown in Table 13, students attending Delta region open-enrollment charter schools demonstrated achievement in 2021 and 2022 that was slightly lower than that of students attending traditional public schools in the region but surpassed that of students attending traditional public schools in 2023. The weighted average of school-level achievement values presented in Table 13 reflects students in Delta charter schools achieving at the rate of a school that was at the 10th percentile for achievement statewide in 2021, the 13th percentile in 2022, and at the 23rd percentile in 2023. Using the weighted average, students in Delta charter schools are demonstrating achievement at a rate that is slightly below traditional public schools in 2021 and 2022, but 10 percentiles higher than traditional public schools in 2023.

A list of Delta region open-enrollment schools and their statewide growth and achievement percentiles is presented in Table A3 in the Appendix.

V. Analyses by School Enrollment Characteristics

Highest 10% Poverty Schools

Due to the strong negative correlation between the percentage of students enrolled in a school that face economic disadvantages and the schools' academic achievement, we examine student performance for the ten percent of schools serving the highest rates of students who are eligible for Free and Reduced Lunch, an indicator that students are facing economic disadvantages outside of school. All schools included in this analysis enroll more than 87% of students who are eligible for Free and Reduced Lunch.

The open-enrollment charter schools served 6.3% of all public-school students in the highest-poverty group in 2023. Table 14 presents the enrollment, programmatic and demographic characteristics of the highest-poverty schools. Ten open-enrollment charter and 94 traditional public schools included in the highest-poverty group. This highest-poverty school group includes 20% of charter schools and 10% of traditional public schools in the state.

Table 14. Highest-Poverty Schools’ Student Enrollment Characteristics, by School Type, 2022-23

	N	Enrollment	% FRL	% ELL	% White	% Hispanic	% African American
Highest Poverty Charter	10	2,108	91	21	2	25	73
Highest Poverty TPS	94	31,344	92	20	14	24	53
All Highest Poverty	104	33,451	91	21	13	25	54

Among the highest-poverty schools, charter and traditional public schools are equally as likely to be serving over 90% of students facing economic disadvantages outside of school and 20% of students who are English Language Learners. Students attending higher-poverty charter schools are more likely to be African American (73%) than their peers in similar traditional public schools. Tables 15 and 16 present weighted average value-added growth scores and weighted average achievement scores for the highest-poverty schools.

Table 15. Highest-Poverty Schools’ Weighted Average Growth, by School Type, 2021-2023

	2021		2022		2023	
	Growth Score	%ile Rank	Growth Score	%ile Rank	Growth Score	%ile Rank
Highest Poverty Charter	79.10	35	80.25	50	81.47	67
Highest Poverty TPS	79.00	35	79.27	33	80.01	47
Highest Poverty Overall	79.00	35	79.31	33	80.10	49

The weighted average of school-level growth values presented in Table 15 reflects highest-poverty open-enrollment charter schools growing student learning at the rate of a school that was at the 35th percentile for growth statewide in 2021, the 50th percentile in 2022, and the 67th percentile in 2023. Using the weighted average growth values, students in highest-poverty open-enrollment charter schools are demonstrating growth at a rate that is 0 to 27 percentiles higher than students in similarly high-poverty traditional public schools.

Table 16. Highest-Poverty Schools’ Weighted Average Achievement, by School Type, 2021-2023

	2021		2022		2023	
	Ach. Score	%ile Rank	Ach. Score	%ile Rank	Ach. Score	%ile Rank
Highest Poverty Charter	27.75	10	31.15	10	32.38	11
Highest Poverty TPS	31.60	15	33.45	13	34.61	13
Highest Poverty Overall	31.41	14	33.31	13	34.47	13

As shown in Table 16, students attending the highest-poverty open-enrollment charter schools consistently demonstrate achievement that is slightly lower than that of students attending similarly higher-poverty traditional public schools. The weighted average of school-level achievement values presented in Table 16 reflects students in charter schools with the highest-poverty rates achieving at the level of a school that was at the 10th percentile for achievement statewide in 2021, and 2022, and at the 11th percentile in 2023. Using the weighted average, students in the highest-poverty charter schools are demonstrating achievement at a rate that is 2 to 5 percentiles lower than traditional public schools with similarly high poverty rates.

Lowest 10% Poverty Schools

Due to the strong negative correlation between the percentage of students enrolled in a school that face economic disadvantages and the schools’ academic achievement, we also examine charter and TPS student performance for the ten percent of schools in the state with the lowest poverty rates. All schools included in this analysis enroll fewer than 34% of students who are eligible for Free and Reduced Lunch.

Table 15 presents the enrollment, programmatic and demographic characteristics of the ten percent of schools with the lowest poverty rates in the state. There are 15 open-enrollment charters and 87 traditional public schools included in this group. This lower-poverty school group includes 29% of charter schools and 9% of traditional public schools in the state.

Table 15. Lowest-Poverty Schools’ Student Enrollment Characteristics, by School Type, 2022-23

	N	Enrollment	% FRL	% ELL	% White	% Hispanic	% African American
Lowest Poverty Charter	15	894	17	7	59	10	8
Lowest Poverty TPS	87	13,768	25	4	76	9	5
All Lowest Poverty	102	14,662	24	4	74	9	5

The fifteen open-enrollment charter schools in the lowest poverty group served 8.8% of all public school students in lower-poverty schools in 2023. Students attending charters are less likely to face economic disadvantages (17%), but more likely to be English Language Learners (7%) or African American (8%) than their peers in similarly lower-poverty traditional public schools. Tables 16 and 17 present weighted average value-added growth scores and weighted average achievement scores for the lower-poverty schools.

Table 16. Lower-Poverty Schools’ Weighted Average Growth, by School Type, 2021-2023

	2021		2022		2023	
	Growth Score	%ile Rank	Growth Score	%ile Rank	Growth Score	%ile Rank
Lower Poverty Charter	82.20	77	82.04	78	82.68	82
Lower Poverty TPS	82.21	77	81.50	70	81.43	67
Lower Poverty Overall	82.21	77	81.54	70	81.54	68

The weighted average of school-level growth values presented in Table 16 reflects lower-poverty open-enrollment charter schools growing student learning at the rate of a school that was at the 77th percentile for growth statewide in 2021, the 78th percentile in 2022, and the 82nd percentile in 2023. Using the weighted average growth values, students in lower-poverty open-enrollment charter schools are demonstrating growth at a rate that is 0 to 15 percentiles higher than students in similarly lower-poverty traditional public schools.

Table 17. Lower-Poverty Schools’ Weighted Average Achievement, by School Type, 2021-2023

	2021		2022		2023	
	Ach. Score	%ile Rank	Ach. Score	%ile Rank	Ach. Score	%ile Rank
Lower Poverty Charter	79.03	96	81.99	96	81.43	96
Lower Poverty TPS	67.86	89	71.29	88	71.34	89
Lower Poverty Overall	68.80	90	72.18	89	72.22	90

As shown in Table 17, students attending lower-poverty open-enrollment charter schools consistently demonstrate achievement that is higher than that of students attending lower-poverty traditional public schools. The weighted average of school-level achievement values presented in Table 17 reflects students in lower-poverty charter schools achieving at the rate of a school that was at the 96th percentile for achievement statewide in 2021, 2022, and 2023. Using the weighted average, students in lower-poverty charter schools are demonstrating achievement at a rate that is 7 to 8 percentiles higher than the lower-poverty traditional public schools.

VI. Summary

Growth: Students attending open-enrollment charters in Arkansas have consistently demonstrated higher levels of value-added growth on state assessments in ELA and mathematics over the past three years than students attending traditional public schools.

In regional analyses, students attending open-enrollment charters in Central Arkansas, Northwest Arkansas, and the Delta region have consistently demonstrated higher levels of value-added growth on state assessments over the past three years than their peers attending traditional public schools in the respective regions.

When growth is examined for schools in the highest or lowest 10% of poverty statewide, students attending open-enrollment charter schools demonstrated similar growth to students in traditional public schools in 2021, and higher growth in 2022 and 2023.

Achievement: Students attending open-enrollment charters in Arkansas have consistently demonstrated higher levels of achievement on state assessments over the past three years. Statewide, the weighted average achievement results for open-enrollment charter schools are consistently higher than for traditional public schools.

When achievement is examined by region, students in open-enrollment charters in Central and Northwest Arkansas consistently achieve at higher rates than the students in traditional public schools in the regions. The regional analysis reflected that open-enrollment charter schools located in the Delta region demonstrated slightly lower achievement than the traditional public schools in 2021 and 2022, but that students attending charters performed better than students in regional traditional public schools in 2023.

When achievement is examined for schools in the highest 10% of poverty statewide, students attending open-enrollment charter schools demonstrate somewhat lower achievement than students in traditional public schools. This statewide comparison, however, only reflects the schoolwide poverty rate, not the geographic locations of the schools. It is important to note that 60% of the high-poverty charters are located in the Delta region, compared to 16% of the traditional public schools that are high-poverty.

When achievement is examined for schools in the lowest 10% of poverty statewide, students attending open-enrollment charter schools demonstrate higher achievement than students in traditional public schools. The lower-poverty charters also serve, on average, a lower percentage of students facing economic disadvantages than the lower-poverty traditional public schools. Sixty-seven percent of the lower-poverty charters are located in the Northwest Arkansas, compared to 53% of the lower-poverty traditional public schools.

Distinct schools not included in the analysis

Students who attend the 36 schools not included in this analysis are inherently different from the students served by the other 1,019 public schools in the state. These schools include those who are exempted from receiving an A-F letter grade from the state, schools that operate virtually or hybrid and schools that serve a high population of students receiving special education services.

These schools have a critical role to play by serving students who choose these options, and the metrics that we use for schools statewide may not capture their successes. Value-added growth, however, is a part of the statewide accountability system for all public schools and should be a critical metric of success for these distinct schools. Value-added growth reflects how much students are learning over the course of a year compared to students with similar test score histories. If students are not demonstrating growth in their learning, they are falling behind their peers in other schools across the state.

Continued student enrollment in these schools signals that parents and students value the option they select, however, stakeholders attending and working at these schools should have regular opportunities to share their perspectives on the quality of the educational experience with the Department of Education. Through this feedback, we may identify indicators of success that are unique to the student population being served.

Additional indicators such as where students go after attending one of these distinct schools would also be good information for the state to examine. Longer-term outcomes for schools, like workforce placement and earnings could also be helpful information for all education stakeholders. Developing accountability metrics for these schools that are aligned with the goals of the unique student populations will provide needed information for parents and students selecting into these distinct educational settings.

A complete list of distinct schools can be found in Table A4 in the Appendix.

VII. Appendix

Table A1. Central Arkansas Charter Schools' Value-added Growth and Achievement Percentiles, 2021-2023

School Name	Grades 2023	% FRL 2023	Academic Growth %ile			Achievement %ile		
			2021	2022	2023	2021	2022	2023
Maumelle Charter Elementary	K-3	25%	89	88	98	95	97	96
eStem Junior High	7-9	68%	60	94	94	48	61	49
LISA Academy North Middle	6-8	60%	79	58	93	73	64	72
eStem East Village Junior High	7-9	72%	59	99	92	39	56	49
Exalt Academy of Southwest Little Rock	K-8	96%	59	62	85	7	11	11
Friendship Aspire Academy Little Rock Middle	6-8	85%	77	71	78	7	8	7
LISA Academy North Elementary	K-5	63%	65	86	77	51	56	48
LISA Academy North High	9-12	57%	79	86	72	48	47	49
Maumelle Charter High	8-12	22%	30	17	72	84	81	84
LISA Academy West High	9-12	67%	64	66	67	24	21	16
Flightline Upper Academy	5-8	24%	71	72	62	64	68	71
LISA Academy West Middle	6-8	65%	59	75	61	61	69	58
eStem High	10-12	58%	81	87	59	25	33	14
Jacksonville Lighthouse College Prep Academy High	7-12	46%	32	27	57	5	4	8
Maumelle Charter Middle	4-7	22%	N/A	N/A	56	N/A	N/A	92
LISA Academy West Elementary	K-5	70%	75	44	51	48	42	37
Westwind School For Performing Arts	6-8	80%	N/A	36	50	N/A	25	26
eStem Elementary	K-6	75%	9	51	43	34	38	39
Founders Classical of AR West Little Rock Elementary	K-6	46%	N/A	92	36	N/A	99	32
Prodigy Preparatory Academy of Service	7-9	93%	51	18	34	11	6	3
eStem East Village Elementary	K-6	73%	9	17	31	34	31	32
Friendship Academy Little Rock Elementary	K-4	82%	77	87	30	7	38	5
Scott Charter	K-11	68%	46	8	22	29	18	21
Nichols Intermediate Academy of Leadership	4-6	93%	29	5	18	20	11	14
West Little Rock Classical Academy	7-12	34%	14	51	16	27	26	15
Capital City Lighthouse Elementary Academy	K-5	77%	15	1	5	7	5	4
Jacksonville Lighthouse Elementary	K-6	64%	12	5	1	13	7	9
Ivy Hill Academy of Scholarship	K-3	93%	57	37	1	20	17	17

Note: Color-coding is based on percentile rank: ≥ 66 , 34-65, ≤ 33

Table A2. Northwest Arkansas Charter Schools' Value-added Growth and Achievement Percentiles, 2021-2023

School Name	Grades	% FRL	Academic Growth %ile			Achievement %ile		
			2021	2022	2023	2021	2022	2023
LISA Academy Rogers-Bentonville Middle School	6-8	26%	N/A	N/A	96	N/A	N/A	98
Haas Hall Bentonville	7-12	4%	93	98	96	99	99	99
Northwest Arkansas Classical Academy	K-6	11%	76	92	95	97	99	98
Haas Hall Academy at The Lane	7-12	15%	91	93	93	99	99	99
Haas Hall Academy Jones Center	7-12	17%	89	79	88	99	99	97
Founders Classical Academies of Arkansas Rogers	K-6	4%	N/A	N/A	86	N/A	N/A	96
Northwest Arkansas Classical Academy High	7-12	9%	89	83	77	95	94	93
Haas Hall Academy	7-12	5%	83	82	72	99	99	99
LISA Academy Springdale	K-8	66%	88	58	69	70	61	60
Arkansas Arts Academy High School	7-12	28%	46	34	68	67	59	71
LISA Academy Rogers-Bentonville Elementary School	K-5	33%	N/A	N/A	67	N/A	N/A	92
Arkansas Arts Academy Elementary	K-6	42%	80	50	30	90	88	81

Note: Color-coding is based on percentile rank: ≥ 66 , 34-65, ≤ 33

Table A3. Arkansas Delta Charter Schools’ Value-added Growth and Achievement Percentiles, 2021-2023

School Name	Grades 2023	% FRL 2023	Academic Growth %ile			Achievement %ile		
			2021	2022	2023	2021	2022	2023
KIPP Delta Elementary Literacy Academy	P-5	92%	26	73	91	10	16	16
KIPP Delta College Prep School	6-8	92%	17	77	90	9	20	25
KIPP Blytheville Collegiate High School	7-12	86%	78	71	67	18	9	5
Friendship Aspire Academy Downtown Pine Bluff	K-3	74%	N/A	20	65	N/A	59	73
Friendship Aspire Academy	K-4	76%	83	20	65	92	59	73
KIPP Delta Collegiate High School	9-12	88%	34	51	64	6	2	3
Pine Bluff Lighthouse Elementary Academy	P-5	91%	1	1	20	6	4	7
Pine Bluff Lighthouse Middle School Academy	6-8	92%	37	18	16	2	2	2
KIPP Blytheville College Prep	K-6	88%	5	3	3	13	9	7
Friendship Aspire Academy Southeast Pine Bluff	5-12	68%	N/A	N/A	1	N/A	N/A	28

Note: Color-coding is based on percentile rank: >= 66, 34-65, <=33

Table A4. Distinct Schools (*not included in analysis*)

School Name	Grades 2023	Reason not included in Analysis
Academic Center for Excellence	5-12	No Letter Grade
Agee Lierly Life Preparation Services School	9-12	No Letter Grade
Ark. School For the Blind Elementary	K-6	No Letter Grade
Ark. School For the Blind High School	7-12	No Letter Grade
Arkansas Consolidated High School-Alexander	5-12	No Letter Grade
Arkansas Consolidated High School-Dermott	9-12	No Letter Grade
Arkansas Consolidated High School-Harrisburg	7-12	No Letter Grade
Arkansas Consolidated High School-Mansfield	7-12	No Letter Grade
Belle Point Alternative Center	6-12	No Letter Grade
Creative Action Team School	K-12	No Letter Grade
CSTP Civilian Student Training Program	7-12	No Letter Grade
Guy Berry College and Career Academy	6-12	No Letter Grade
School For the Deaf	K-12	No Letter Grade
Centerpoint Academy of Agriculture & Skilled Trade	11-12	More than 33% SPED
Adventure Online Academy	K-12	Virtual/ Online/ Hybrid
Driven Virtual Academy	K-12	Virtual/ Online/ Hybrid
Fayetteville Virtual Academy	K-12	Virtual/ Online/ Hybrid
Fort Smith Virtual Academy	K-8	Virtual/ Online/ Hybrid
Polk County Virtual Academy	K-12	Virtual/ Online/ Hybrid
River Valley Virtual Academy	K-12	Virtual/ Online/ Hybrid
Graduate Arkansas Charter High	9-12	No Letter Grade
Premier High School of Fort Smith	9-12	No Letter Grade
Premier High School of Little Rock	9-12	No Letter Grade
Premier High School of North Little Rock	9-12	No Letter Grade
Premier High School of Texarkana	9-12	No Letter Grade
Premier High School Online	9-12	No Letter Grade
Premier High School of Springdale	9-12	No Letter Grade
Hope Academy of NWA Elementary	K-4	More than 33% SPED
Imboden Area Charter School	K-8	More than 33% SPED
Ark Virtual Academy Elementary	K-5	Virtual/ Online/ Hybrid
Ark Virtual Academy Middle School	6-8	Virtual/ Online/ Hybrid
Arkansas Connections Academy High	K-12	Virtual/ Online/ Hybrid
Arkansas Virtual Academy High School	9-12	Virtual/ Online/ Hybrid
Founders Classical Academy Elementary Online	K-6	Virtual/ Online/ Hybrid
Founders Classical Academy High School Online	7-12	Virtual/ Online/ Hybrid
LISA Academy Arkansas Hybrid School	K-12	Virtual/ Online/ Hybrid