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Charlene A. Reid

Gary W. Ritter

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ARKANSAS EDUCATION REPORT
Volume 13, Issue 4

**OUTSTANDING EDUCATIONAL PERFORMANCE AWARDS:
HIGHLIGHTING HIGH-ACHIEVING ARKANSAS SCHOOLS,
2016**

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

March 1, 2017

By:

**Charlene A. Reid
Gary W. Ritter**

**Office for Education Policy
University of Arkansas
211 Graduate Education Building
Fayetteville, AR 72701
Phone: (479) 575-3773
Fax: (479) 575-3196
E-mail: oe@uark.edu**

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INTRODUCTION

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

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

In the 2015-16 academic year, Arkansas students have yet again undergone a change in their assessment of student performance to replace the **Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College Careers (PARCC)**. The 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.

This edition of the **OEP Awards** will highlight high-performing schools in Arkansas based on their performance in the Math, ELA and Science exams at the Elementary, Middle, Junior and High school level.

In 2012, we introduced an academic performance indicator, the **“GPA” rating system**, to rank the highest-performing schools. Unlike the commonly reported percentage of students scoring at or above the proficient level on each assessment which suffers from being an “all-or-nothing” measure in which a student is either proficient or not, the “GPA” includes information provided by student scores that are placed into the four different performance categories: **In Need of Support, Close to Meeting Expectations, Ready, and Exceeded Expectations**.

Our GPA indicator gives the most credit to students who have exceeded expectations and the least credit to those that are in need of support. In this GPA measure, parallel to the familiar grade point average for individual students, a 4.0 is a perfect score. The GPA measure, we believe, is a better representation of student achievement on statewide standardized exams.

ACT Aspire Performance Category	GPA Points Awarded
Exceeded Expectations	4.0
Ready	3.0
Close to Meeting Expectations	2.0
In Need of Support	1.0

In this report, we are presenting a list of the top 20 schools in each area. In some cases, these “top 20 lists” will contain more than 20 schools as some schools’ GPA scores will be identical.

In the following weeks, we will focus on high-performing 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 achievement while serving a high percentage of low-income students). Our release schedule is:

- **High-Achieving Elementary Schools**
- **High-Achieving Middle Schools**
- **High-Achieving Junior High Schools**
- **High-Achieving High Schools**
- **Beating the Odds: High-Achieving Schools Serving Low-Income Communities**

II. 2016 OEP AWARDS: HIGH ACHIEVING MIDDLE SCHOOLS IN ARKANSAS BASED ON PERFORMANCE ON THE ACT ASPIRE EXAMS

This section highlights high-performing Middle schools across the state based on the Arkansas ACT Aspire exams. The ACT Aspire examinations in Math, Reading, Writing, English and Science were administered to students in grades 3 through 10 in April 2016.

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 is located, the grades served at the school, the percent that met the readiness benchmark in 2016, and the GPA of the school in that particular subject.

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 6-12, are categorized as middle schools in this report. In the cases where these grades overlap, we used enrollment data to determine whether a school served more elementary or middle school students (see Appendix B).

E. Middle School Overall ACT Aspire Scores, 2016

Table 25: Top 20 *Middle Schools* in Arkansas based on *Overall* ACT Aspire Achievement (Math, ELA and Science combined)

	School (District)	Region	Grades Served	% Met/ Readiness Benchmark	GPA
1	Bright Field Middle (Bentonville)	NW	5-6	75%	3.11
2	McNair Middle (Fayetteville)	NW	5-6	73%	3.05
3	Harrison Middle (Harrison)	NW	5-6	71%	2.99
4	East Hills Middle (Greenwood)	NW	6-7	68%	2.94
5	Pottsville Middle Grade (Pottsville)	NW	4-6	67%	2.91
6	Greenbrier Middle (Greenbrier)	CN	6-7	67%	2.90
7	Bethel Middle (Bryant)	CN	6-8	65%	2.86
7	Ruth Barker Middle (Bentonville)	NW	5-6	65%	2.86
9	Lisa Academy (Lisa Academy)	CN	6-8	63%	2.85
10	Bergman Middle (Bergman)	NW	5-8	64%	2.83
11	Nemo Vista Middle (Nemo Vista)	NW	6-8	63%	2.82
12	Benton Middle (Benton)	CN	6-7	62%	2.80
13	Hellstern Middle (Springdale)	NW	6-7	62%	2.79
14	Valley Springs Middle (Valley Springs)	NW	5-8	63%	2.78
14	Old High Middle (Bentonville)	NW	5-6	62%	2.78
14	Kirksey Middle (Rogers)	NW	6-8	61%	2.78
17	Cabot Middle South (Cabot)	CN	5-6	62%	2.77
17	Ruth Doyle Middle (Conway)	CN	5-7	62%	2.77
17	Ardis Ann Middle (Bentonville)	NW	5-6	61%	2.77
17	Gravette Middle (Gravette)	NW	6-8	61%	2.77

Tables 26-30: Top 5 **Middle Schools** in Arkansas by Regions, **Overall** Achievement



Table 16: Top 5 middle schools in the **Northwest** Region based on **Overall** ACT Aspire performance (Math, ELA and Science combined)

	School (District)	Grades Served	# of Test Takers	% Met Readiness Benchmark	GPA
1	Bright Field Middle (Bentonville)	5-6	1,988	75%	3.11
2	McNair Middle (Fayetteville)	5-6	2,123	73%	3.05
3	Harrison Middle (Harrison)	5-6	1,278	71%	2.99
4	East Hills Middle (Greenwood)	6-7	1,636	68%	2.94
5	Pottsville Middle Grade (Pottsville)	4-6	1,161	67%	2.91



Table 27: Top 5 middle schools in the **Northeast** Region based on **Overall** ACT Aspire performance (Math, ELA and Science combined)

	School (District)	Grades Served	# of Test Takers	% Met Readiness Benchmark	GPA
1	Southwest Middle (Searcy)	4-6	2,562	58%	2.68
2	Brookland Middle (Brookland)	4-6	1,539	58%	2.67
3	Mountain View Middle (Mountain View)	5-8	1,110	57%	2.66
4	Heber Springs Middle (Heber Springs)	6-8	1,199	56%	2.65
5	Swifton Middle (Jackson Co.)	5-7	636	53%	2.57



Table 28: Top 5 middle schools in the **Central** Region based on **Overall ACT Aspire** performance (Math, ELA and Science combined)

	School (District)	Grades Served	# of Test Takers	% Met Readiness Benchmark	GPA
1	Greenbrier Middle (Greenbrier)	6-7	1,608	67%	2.90
2	Bethel Middle (Bryant)	6-8	2,680	65%	2.86
3	Lisa Academy (Lisa Academy)	6-8	1,382	63%	2.85
4	Benton Middle (Benton)	6-7	2,340	62%	2.80
5	Ruth Doyle Middle (Conway)	5-7	1,551	62%	2.77
5	Cabot Middle South (Cabot)	5-6	2,093	62%	2.77



Table 29: Top 5 middle schools in the **Southwest** Region based on **Overall ACT Aspire** performance (Math, ELA and Science combined)

	School (District)	Grades Served	# of Test Takers	% Met Readiness Benchmark	GPA
1	Gary E. Cobb Middle (Genoa Central)	5-8	1,068	61%	2.72
2	Mena Middle (Mena)	6-8	1,158	60%	2.68
3	DeQueen Middle (DeQueen)	6-7	1,058	57%	2.64
4	Goza Middle (Arkadelphia)	6-8	1,221	51%	2.55
5	Nashville Elementary (Nashville)	4-6	1,299	48%	2.45



Table 30: Top 5 middle schools in the **Southeast** Region based on **Overall ACT Aspire** performance (Math, ELA and Science combined)

	School (District)	Grades Served	# of Test Takers	% Met Readiness Benchmark	GPA
1	Monticello Middle (Monticello)	6-8	1,226	52%	2.51
2	Meekins Middle (Stuttgart)	5-6	649	45%	2.35
3	DeWitt Middle (DeWitt)	6-8	836	44%	2.29
4	Hamburg Middle (Hamburg)	6-8	1,344	41%	2.25
5	Crossett Middle (Crossett)	5-8	1,523	40%	2.23

F. Middle School Math ACT Aspire Scores, 2016

Table 31: Top 10 *Middle Schools* in Arkansas based on ACT Aspire *Math* Achievement

	School (District)	Region	Grades Served	% Met Readiness Benchmark	GPA
1	Pottsville Middle Grade (Pottsville)	NW	4-6	79%	3.14
2	Bright Field Middle (Bentonville)	NW	5-6	73%	3.05
3	Harrison Middle (Harrison)	NW	5-6	70%	2.98
4	East Hills Middle (Greenwood)	NW	6-7	68%	2.94
5	Siloam Springs Intermediate (Siloam Springs)	NW	5-6	69%	2.92
5	Gravette Middle (Gravette)	NW	6-8	65%	2.92
5	Lisa Academy (Lisa Academy)	CN	6-8	64%	2.92
8	Greenbrier Middle (Greenbrier)	CN	6-7	68%	2.91
8	McNair Middle (Fayetteville)	NW	5-6	68%	2.91
8	Benton Middle (Benton)	CN	6-7	67%	2.91

Tables 32-36: Top 5 *Middle Schools* in Arkansas by Regions, *Math* Achievement



Table 32: Top 5 middle schools in the *Northwest* Region based on *Math* ACT Aspire performance

	School (District)	Grades Served	# of Test Takers	% Met Readiness Benchmark	GPA
1	Pottsville Middle Grade (Pottsville)	4-6	387	79%	3.14
2	Bright Field Middle (Bentonville)	5-6	665	73%	3.05
3	Harrison Middle (Harrison)	5-6	426	70%	2.98
4	East Hills Middle (Greenwood)	6-7	546	68%	2.94
5	Siloam Springs Intermediate (Siloam Springs)	5-6	604	69%	2.92
5	Gravette Middle (Gravette)	6-8	413	65%	2.92



Table 33: Top 5 middle schools in the *Northeast* Region based on *Math* ACT Aspire performance

	School (District)	Grades Served	# of Test Takers	% Met Readiness Benchmark	GPA
1	Southwest Middle (Searcy)	4-6	854	63%	2.82
2	Brookland Middle (Brookland)	4-6	513	63%	2.79
3	Southside Middle (Southside (Independence))	4-6	388	61%	2.77
4	Swifton Middle (Jackson Co.)	5-7	212	56%	2.67
5	Heber Springs Middle (Heber Springs)	6-8	400	54%	2.65



Table 34: Top 5 middle schools in the **Central** Region based on **Math** ACT Aspire performance

	School (District)	Grades Served	# of Test Takers	% Met Readiness Benchmark	GPA
1	Lisa Academy (Lisa Academy)	6-8	461	64%	2.92
2	Greenbrier Middle (Greenbrier)	6-7	536	68%	2.91
2	Benton Middle (Benton)	6-7	780	67%	2.91
4	Cabot Middle South (Cabot)	5-6	698	67%	2.88
5	Bethel Middle (Bryant)	6-8	894	64%	2.87



Table 35: Top 5 middle schools in the **Southwest** Region based on **Math** ACT Aspire performance

	School (District)	Grades Served	# of Test Takers	% Met Readiness Benchmark	GPA
1	Mena Middle (Mena)	6-8	386	67%	2.84
2	Gary E. Cobb Middle (Genoa Central)	5-8	356	64%	2.80
3	DeQueen Middle (DeQueen)	6-7	353	60%	2.74
4	Goza Middle (Arkadelphia)	6-8	407	54%	2.68
5	Nashville Elementary (Nashville)	4-6	433	55%	2.66



Table 36: Top 5 middle schools in the **Southeast** Region based on **Math** ACT Aspire performance

	School (District)	Grades Served	# of Test Takers	% Met Readiness Benchmark	GPA
1	Meekins Middle (Stuttgart)	5-6	217	59%	2.68
2	Monticello Middle (Monticello)	6-8	409	54%	2.63
3	Crossett Middle (Crossett)	5-8	508	43%	2.34
4	Hamburg Middle (Hamburg)	6-8	448	42%	2.33
5	DeWitt Middle (DeWitt)	6-8	279	41%	2.30

G. Middle School ELA ACT Aspire Scores, 2016

Table 37: Top 10 Middle Schools in Arkansas based on ACT Aspire *ELA* Achievement

	School (District)	Region	Grades Served	% Met Readiness Benchmark	GPA
1	McNair Middle (Fayetteville)	NW	5-6	79%	3.25
2	Bright Field Middle (Bentonville)	NW	5-6	77%	3.21
3	Harrison Middle (Harrison)	NW	5-6	75%	3.13
4	Nemo Vista Middle (Nemo Vista)	NW	6-8	73%	3.08
5	Ruth Barker Middle (Bentonville)	NW	5-6	71%	3.04
6	Bethel Middle (Bryant)	CN	6-8	71%	3.02
6	Quest Middle Of Little Rock (Responsive Ed. Solutions)	CN	5-12	68%	3.02
8	Kirksey Middle (Rogers)	NW	6-8	71%	3.01
8	Greenbrier Middle (Greenbrier)	CN	6-7	70%	3.01
8	Bergman Middle (Bergman)	NW	5-8	69%	3.01

Tables 38-42: Top 5 *Middle Schools* in Arkansas by Regions, *ELA Achievement*



Table 38: Top 5 middle schools in the *Northwest* Region based on *ELA ACT Aspire* performance

	School (District)	Grades Served	# of Test Takers	% Met Readiness Benchmark	GPA
1	McNair Middle (Fayetteville)	5-6	703	79%	3.25
2	Bright Field Middle (Bentonville)	5-6	656	77%	3.21
3	Nemo Vista Middle (Nemo Vista)	6-8	93	75%	3.13
4	Harrison Middle (Harrison)	5-6	424	73%	3.08
5	Ruth Barker Middle (Bentonville)	5-6	593	71%	3.04



Table 39: Top 5 middle schools in the *Northeast* Region based on *Middle ELA ACT Aspire* performance

	School (District)	Grades Served	# of Test Takers	% Met Readiness Benchmark	GPA
1	Mountain View Middle (Mountain View)	5-8	370	61%	2.81
2	Swifton Middle (Jackson Co.)	5-7	212	63%	2.79
3	Cave City Middle (Cave City)	6-8	300	61%	2.77
3	Heber Springs Middle (Heber Springs)	6-8	399	60%	2.77
5	Southwest Middle (Searcy)	4-6	854	58%	2.71



Table 40: Top 5 schools in the **Central** Region based on **ELA ACT Aspire** performance

	School (District)	Grades Served	# of Test Takers	% Met Readiness Benchmark	GPA
1	Bethel Middle (Bryant)	6-8	892	71%	3.02
1	Quest Middle Of Little Rock (Responsive Ed. Solutions)	5-12	230	68%	3.02
3	Greenbrier Middle (Greenbrier)	6-7	536	70%	3.01
4	Lisa Academy (Lisa Academy)	6-8	460	69%	2.98
5	Bismarck Middle (Bismarck)	5-8	289	67%	2.94



Table 41: Top 5 middle schools in the **Southwest** Region based on **ELA ACT Aspire** performance

	School (District)	Grades Served	# of Test Takers	% Met Readiness Benchmark	GPA
1	Gary E. Cobb Middle (Genoa Central)	5-8	356	65%	2.86
2	Mena Middle (Mena)	6-8	352	59%	2.74
3	DeQueen Middle (DeQueen)	6-7	386	60%	2.72
4	Paulette Smith Middle (Fouke)	6-8	237	54%	2.60
5	Acorn High (Ouachita River)	6-12	205	55%	2.56
5	Goza Middle (Arkadelphia)	6-8	407	52%	2.56



*Table 42: Top 5 middle schools in the **Southeast** Region based on **ELA ACT Aspire** performance*

	School (District)	Grades Served	# of Test Takers	% Met Readiness Benchmark	GPA
1	Monticello Middle (Monticello)	6-8	408	57%	2.64
2	DeWitt Middle (DeWitt)	6-8	278	50%	2.44
3	Hamburg Middle (Hamburg)	6-8	448	47%	2.43
4	Crossett Middle (Crossett)	5-8	507	43%	2.33
5	Meekins Middle (Stuttgart)	5-6	215	41%	2.32

H. Middle School Science ACT Aspire Scores, 2016

Table 43: Top 10 Middle Schools in Arkansas based on ACT Aspire Science Achievement

	School (District)	Region	Grades Served	% Met Readiness Benchmark	GPA
1	Bright Field Middle (Bentonville)	NW	5-6	75%	3.07
2	McNair Middle (Fayetteville)	NW	5-6	72%	2.99
3	East Hills Middle (Greenwood)	NW	6-7	67%	2.88
4	Harrison Middle (Harrison)	NW	5-6	67%	2.85
5	Old High Middle (Bentonville)	NW	5-6	65%	2.81
6	Greenbrier Middle (Greenbrier)	CN	6-7	64%	2.79
7	Ruth Barker Middle (Bentonville)	NW	5-6	62%	2.78
7	Pottsville Middle Grade (Pottsville)	NW	4-6	61%	2.78
9	Bergman Middle (Bergman)	NW	5-8	63%	2.74
10	Nemo Vista Middle (Nemo Vista)	NW	6-8	62%	2.72

Tables 44-48: Top 5 **Middle Schools** in Arkansas by Regions, **Science Achievement**



Table 44: Top 5 middle schools in the **Northwest** Region based on **Science ACT Aspire** performance

	School (District)	Grades Served	# of Test Takers	% Met Readiness Benchmark	GPA
1	Bright Field Middle (Bentonville)	5-6	665	75%	3.07
2	McNair Middle (Fayetteville)	5-6	709	72%	2.99
3	East Hills Middle (Greenwood)	6-7	546	67%	2.88
4	Harrison Middle (Harrison)	5-6	426	67%	2.85
5	Old High Middle (Bentonville)	5-6	619	65%	2.81



Table 45: Top 5 middle schools in the **Northeast** Region based on **Science ACT Aspire** performance

	School (District)	Grades Served	# of Test Takers	% Met Readiness Benchmark	GPA
1	Mountain View Middle (Mountain View)	5-8	370	55%	2.56
2	Brookland Middle (Brookland)	4-6	513	54%	2.53
2	Heber Springs Middle (Heber Springs)	6-8	400	53%	2.53
4	Southwest Middle (Searcy)	4-6	854	52%	2.50
5	Nettleton Middle (Nettleton)	6-6	263	51%	2.40



Table 46: Top 5 middle schools in the **Central** Region based on **Science ACT Aspire** performance

	School (District)	Grades Served	# of Test Takers	% Met Readiness Benchmark	GPA
1	Greenbrier Middle (Greenbrier)	6-7	536	64%	2.79
2	Bethel Middle (Bryant)	6-8	894	61%	2.69
3	Benton Middle (Benton)	6-7	780	59%	2.66
4	Lisa Academy (Lisa Academy)	6-8	461	56%	2.64
5	Cabot Middle South (Cabot)	5-6	698	57%	2.62



Table 47: Top 5 middle schools in the **Southwest** Region based on **Science ACT Aspire** performance

	School (District)	Grades Served	# of Test Takers	% Met Readiness Benchmark	GPA
1	Gary E. Cobb Middle (Genoa Central)	5-8	356	55%	2.51
2	Mena Middle (Mena)	6-8	386	52%	2.46
2	DeQueen Middle (DeQueen)	6-7	353	52%	2.46
4	Goza Middle (Arkadelphia)	6-8	407	48%	2.40
5	Paulette Smith Middle (Fouke)	6-8	236	45%	2.32



Table 48: Top 5 middle schools in the *Southeast* Region based on *Science ACT Aspire* performance

	School (District)	Grades Served	# of Test Takers	% Met Readiness Benchmark	GPA
1	Monticello Middle (Monticello)	6-8	409	45%	2.26
2	DeWitt Middle (DeWitt)	6-8	279	39%	2.13
3	Meekins Middle (Stuttgart)	5-6	217	34%	2.07
4	Crossett Middle (Crossett)	5-8	508	35%	2.02
5	Drew Central Middle (Drew Central)	5-8	306	33%	2.00

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 via the link <http://www.arkansased.gov/divisions/learning-services/student-assessment/test-scores/year?y=2016>. 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>).

As discussed in the introduction, in order to calculate the GPA measure we treat the ACT Aspire test scores similar to the existing grade point system.

ACT Aspire Performance Category	GPA Points Awarded
Exceeded Expectations	4.0
Ready	3.0
Close to Meeting Expectations	2.0
In Need of Support	1.0

We calculate the GPA measure for Math and ELA and Science scores. The GPA measure is comprehensive in that it takes into account all of the test score levels (Exceeded Expectations, Ready, Close to Meeting Expectations or In Need of Support), instead of combining Ready or Exceeded Expectations.

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 or 8)

There are 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 the associated classifications.

Table A: School Classifications

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