

NCLB Making a Difference in Arkansas



- Between 2002 and 2004 (latest data available):
 - Fourth-grade reading proficiency increased by 12 percentage points
 - Fourth-grade mathematics proficiency increased by 16 percentage points
 - The Hispanic-white achievement gap in fourth-grade reading narrowed by three percentage points
 - The Hispanic-white achievement gap in fourth-grade mathematics narrowed by three percentage points (*SchoolMatters.com*)
- “Little Rock’s Brady Elementary School showed the most improvement on combined [Iowa Test of Basic Skills, or ITBS] results in reading comprehension, math concepts, and math problems. Fifth-graders in the year just ended scored at the 44th percentile, up 23 points over the average scores earned by fifth-graders the previous year. Fulbright Elementary School improved 20 points, putting the average at the 74th percentile – which was the highest in the district. Terry Elementary School also improved 20 points over the 2003-04 school year, scoring at the 68th percentile . . . Twenty-nine of Little Rock’s 34 elementary schools demonstrated gains on the ITBS, as did four of five high schools in literacy.” (*Arkansas Democrat-Gazette*, 6/27/05)
- “About 70 percent of the children attending Oakland Heights [Elementary School] are eligible for free or reduced-price lunch. Most of the school’s 380 or so K-4 students are white, but about 15 percent are African-American and another 15 percent Latino, part of a rapidly growing population of Mexican and Central American families who began arriving in Russellville only a few years ago. Parents at Oakland Heights – except for the few who are self-employed in fields such as car repair and carpentry – generally process chickens at the nearby Tyson plant or make frozen dinners at the ConAgra plant. . . . To give a sense of what those demographics usually mean in Arkansas, [there’s] a 27-point gap between white and African-American students. But, at Oakland Heights, gaps have narrowed significantly. For example, 80 percent of all students met or exceeded state reading standards in 2004 – 81 percent of the white students, 74 percent of the African-American students, 82 percent of the Latino students and 78 percent of the poor students. . . . Oakland Heights has a higher percentage of students in some subgroups meeting or exceeding standards than the rest of the state.” (Achievement Alliance’s *Alliance Alert*, 5/23/05)
- “A dozen teachers from nine area high schools participated Wednesday in a roundtable discussion at the Springdale school district office, as part of the federal Teacher-to-Teacher Initiative. They shared concerns about professional development, preparing students for the next grade and for after high school and having enough time to meet with other teachers or attend workshops. . . . The initiative, formed under the federal No Child Left Behind Act, is focusing on high school issues during its second year. . . . ‘Just like everyone else, we want to increase our test scores,’ said Sherry Bell, a Lincoln High School English teacher. ‘Improving our reading skills—that’s what everybody’s concerned about.’ Michael Shepherd, a Springdale High School social studies teacher, said the teachers wanted to focus on ‘relevant’ professional development that keeps students’ needs in mind. . . . ‘It’s a great thing the federal government is doing to talk to the masses and talk to the people in the trenches,’ he said. The major goals of the Teacher-to-Teacher Initiative are to increase graduation rates and better prepare students for college and the work force.” (*Springdale Morning News*, 3/31/05)