



## Press Release

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# Arkansas Virtual School Shows Strong Results on AR Benchmark Exams

*Little Rock, AR* – Students in the Arkansas Virtual School (ARVS) posted strong scores on the state benchmark examinations for the 2004-2005 school year, according to the results recently released by the Arkansas Department of Education.

ARVS students in grades 3 through 8 took the criterion-referenced tests which compares students' performance to other students in the state and against the Arkansas frameworks in math and literacy. The Arkansas Department of Education (ADE) defines the benchmark exams, which are a part of the Arkansas Comprehensive Testing, Assessment and Accountability Program (ACTAAP), as important indicators for individual student progress.

Among the highlights of the ARVS scores:

- ARVS students in 3<sup>rd</sup> through 8<sup>th</sup> grades performed above the state average in literacy.
- ARVS students in 3<sup>rd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup>, 6<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup>, and 8<sup>th</sup> grades performed above the state average in math.
- Compared to other school districts in the state, ARVS students in seventh grade ranked 7<sup>th</sup> in math and 12<sup>th</sup> in literacy (out of 262 reported school districts).
- Compared to other school districts in the state, ARVS students in third grade ranked 26<sup>th</sup> in literacy and math (out of 262 reported school districts).

Below is a table showing the percentage of students, per grade level, performing at proficient and advanced, compared to statewide percentages published by the ADE on October 5, 2005:

Grade Level	Math		Literacy	
	ARVS	State	ARVS	State
3 <sup>rd</sup>	76.6%	58%	66%	58%
4 <sup>th</sup>	55.6%	50%	61.1%	52%
5 <sup>th</sup>	38.1%	41%	54.8%	47%
6 <sup>th</sup>	54.9%	43%	66.7%	57%
7 <sup>th</sup>	67.5%	43%	72.5%	50%
8 <sup>th</sup>	42.3%	33%	69.2%	57%

Benchmark results are reported in four performance levels: below basic, basic, proficient and advanced. Students scoring proficient are considered by the ADE to have mastery of the material and skills set forth in the frameworks for each subject in each grade.

### **Strong Scores on ITBS**

The strong benchmark scores follow the recently released 2004-05 Iowa Test of Basic Skills (ITBS) results for ARVS students, which also demonstrated strong performance by ARVS students. ARVS students in 3<sup>rd</sup> through 8<sup>th</sup> grades were at or above the state average in all categories on the ITBS. The ITBS scores also indicated that the longer the students stay in ARVS program, the higher their performance.

Karen Ghidotti, the new ARVS Head of School, said, "We are pleased with the performance of our students on the statewide exams. The Arkansas Virtual School is a high-quality public school program that is delivering academic results for students across the state.

"ARVS teachers, students and parents should be very proud of the school's success. Their hard work and commitment to academic achievement are reflected in these scores."

To request a copy of the complete analysis of ARVS student performance on the benchmark exams and ITBS, contact Karen Ghidotti at (501) 664-4225 or [kghidotti@arvs.org](mailto:kghidotti@arvs.org).

### **ARVS Program Description**

The Arkansas Virtual School is a program of the Arkansas Department of Education offered to public school students in grades kindergarten through eighth grade. The ARVS program is currently in its fourth year of operation. ARVS uses the comprehensive standards-based curriculum provided by K12 Inc. The K12 curriculum provides a research-based learning program and innovative instructional tools, blending traditional content with innovative technology. ARVS' unique "team teaching" approach involves a powerful partnership between parents and teachers in which children receive individual attention and a personalized course of instruction. Students complete daily lessons delivered online by K12. However, most student work is completed away from the computer using books, workbooks, art supplies, and manipulatives.

This innovative public school program is available to students throughout the state, but enrollment is limited to approximately 430 students due to limited funding. In accordance with the guidelines of the U.S. Department of Education's Voluntary Public School Choice Grant, ARVS grants priority enrollment to students assigned to attend low performing schools as identified by the Arkansas Department of Education in compliance with Arkansas Omnibus Education Act 1467 of 2003 and with the federal No Child Left Behind Act of 2001. ARVS enrolled 129 students for the 2004-05 school year from schools identified by the Arkansas Department of Education as in need of improvement. These students account for 80% of all newly enrolled students.

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