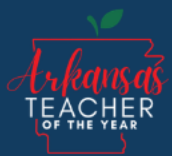


The Arkansas Advantage

AAEA - July 2026



Upcoming ADE Events & Initiatives



2027 ATOY Finalists Recognition Event

August 6, 2026 | Governor's Mansion



ADE Teacher Appreciation Night at the Travs

August 22, 2026 | Dickey-Stephens Park



Arkansas ACCESS Portal Launch

August 2026 | Statewide



High Impact / Literacy Tutoring Applications

August 2026 | Statewide

- Intent to Submit due by August 7
- Applications due by August 21



Key ADE Initiatives and Releases

September 2026 | Statewide

- Early Career Exposure Trainings
- Updated ATOY guidance
- Release of School and District ratings & student growth data for public schools



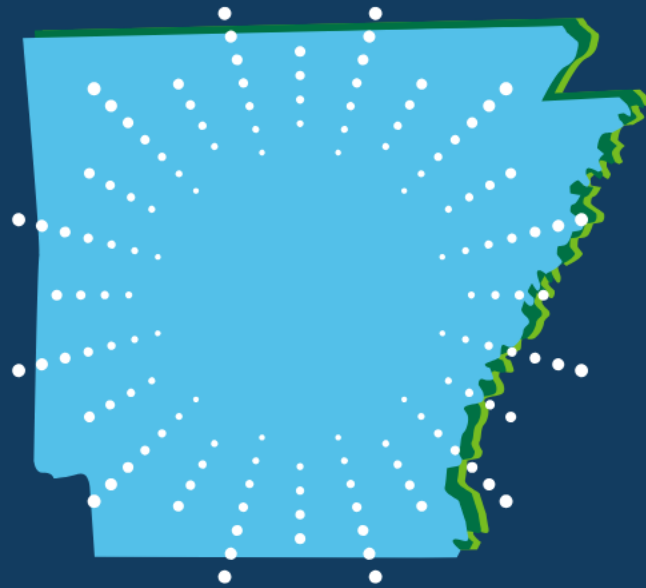
Implementation of LAUNCH for Students

Fall 2026 | Statewide

- Schools should be prepared to use LAUNCH for Students as a core tool for student-centered academic and career planning.

Planning for Scale

Supporting statewide improvements requires planning for scale across Arkansas.



To deliver its unified plan, Arkansas requested flexibilities from specific ESEA requirements through three mechanisms.

What is ESEA?

ESEA is the main federal law governing K-12 education. It directs the use of Title funds (e.g., Title I for low income schools, Title II for teacher training) and sets accountability and testing requirements.

While not all ESEA provisions can be waived, states may request flexibility from certain elements of accountability, assessment, reporting, and school improvement.

Returning Education to the States Waiver

Waives specific ESEA funding and assessment provisions that create barriers to scaling Arkansas' unified strategy. Covers AFUA expansion pilot, state set-aside consolidation, and assessment flexibility for accelerated students.

ED-Flex Waiver

Allows ADE to waive certain ESEA statutory requirements on behalf of districts. Enables statewide and individual LEA waivers through the AR App process to reduce district-level compliance burden.

Revised ESSA Plan

Allows ADE to update its federal education strategy to reflect evolving priorities and needs. Ensures alignment of funding, accountability, and supports to improve student outcomes while increasing coherence and flexibility for districts.



What changes for your district?

BEFORE FEDERAL FLEXIBILITY

NOW

ACCOUNTABILITY

Schools are identified under separate state and federal systems.

Schools are identified under the state accountability system only. One A-F letter grade identifies and supports every school.

ASSESSMENT

Accelerated students are double tested. They must take the grade-level test even when it duplicates an EOC.

Accelerated students in grades 5-8 who complete end-of-course exams are tested once. Those in credit-bearing courses take only the EOC for that course.

FUNDING

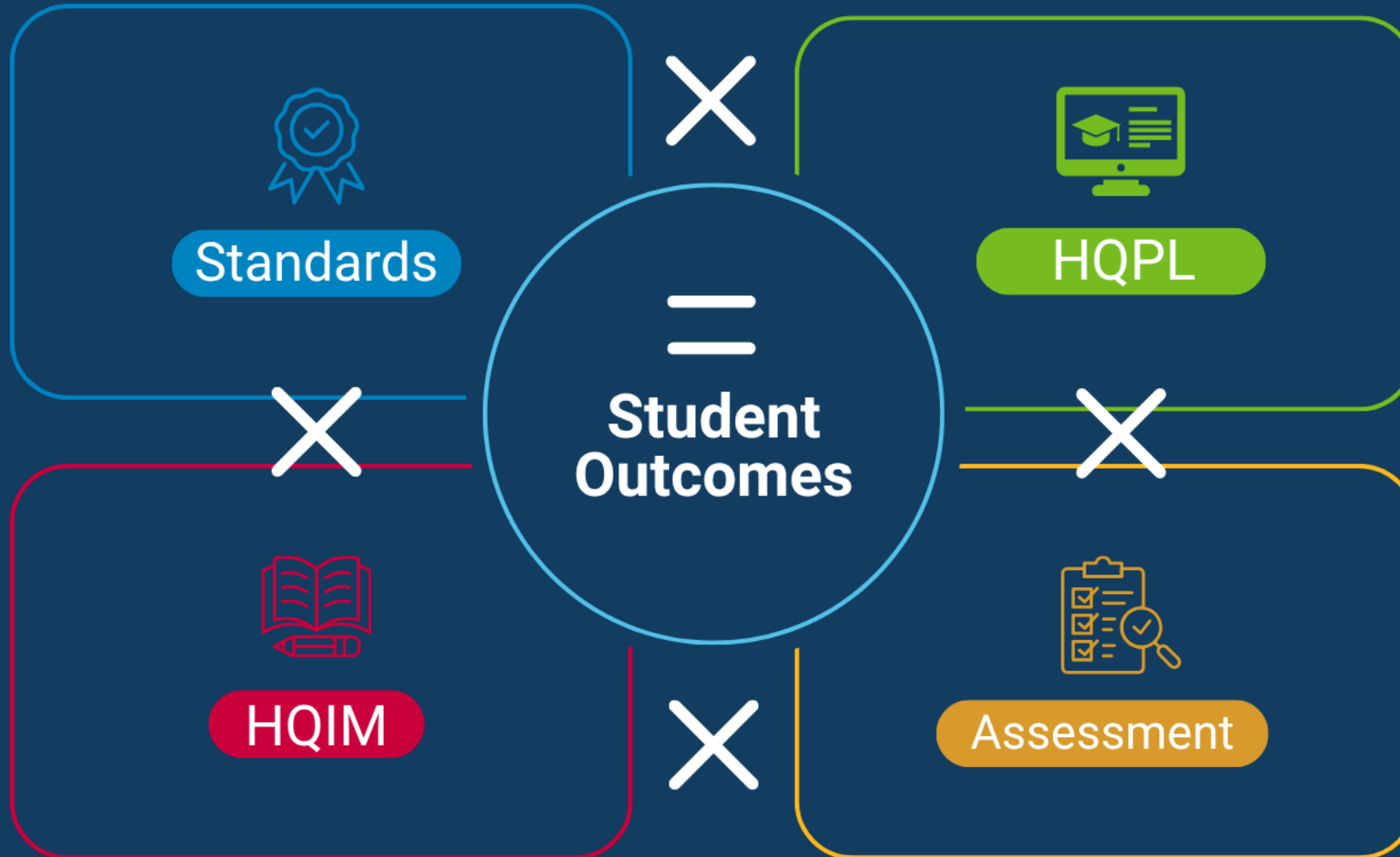
Districts budget grant-by-grant, causing administrative burden. Funding flexibilities apply unevenly across districts.

All districts have more freedom to spend federal funds where needed, and rural districts will pilot expanded flexibility.



Systems Alignment in Arkansas

The accountability system measures and reflects effective systems alignment.



Improving Outcomes for Arkansas' Youngest Learners

Every grade (K-2) showed proficiency increases from 2025 to 2026 in both literacy and math.

Subject	Grade	% of all students performing at Level 3 or 4		
		2025	2026	2025 - 2026 Change
Literacy	K	50.20%	66%	15.80%
	1	46.20%	55.90%	9.70%
	2	39.40%	48.50%	9.40%
Math	K	45.50%	57.50%	12%
	1	45.20%	53.30%	8.10%
	2	43.70%	50.80%	7.10%

Largest foundational jump in the state

Note: Percentages are rounded to the one decimal place. Changes in percentages may vary slightly due to additional precision in source data.

ATLAS ELA Level 3 & 4 Results Over Time

Over 13,500 more students are proficient this year in ELA compared to 2024 across all grade-levels.

Grade	2024	2025	2026	Percent Proficient Change, 2025 - 2026	Percent Proficient Change, 2024 - 2026
3	36.10%	36.00%	42.90%	6.90%	6.80%
4	36.00%	39.20%	41.50%	2.30%	5.50%
5	36.50%	36.60%	40.90%	4.30%	4.40%
6	34.10%	35.30%	40.90%	5.60%	6.70%
7	32.30%	32.70%	37.80%	5.10%	5.50%
8	32.00%	33.00%	37.20%	4.20%	5.20%
9	32.20%	31.00%	38.00%	7.00%	5.90%
10	31.80%	34.10%	37.30%	3.20%	5.50%

Note: Percentages are rounded to the one decimal place. Changes in percentages may vary slightly due to additional precision in source data.

ATLAS Math Level 3 & 4 Results Over Time

Over 14,000 more students are proficient this year in math compared to 2024 across all grade-levels, but results in Algebra and Geometry highlight a need to continue strengthening mathematics instruction.

Grade	2024	2025	2026	Percent Proficient Change, 2025 - 2026	Percent Proficient Change, 2024 - 2026
3	37.80%	39.70%	45.50%	5.80%	7.70%
4	38.00%	43.10%	47.10%	4.00%	9.10%
5	38.00%	37.20%	45.00%	7.80%	7.00%
6	37.70%	39.60%	45.10%	5.50%	7.40%
7	37.80%	39.30%	44.20%	5.00%	6.40%
8	27.50%	31.70%	36.30%	4.60%	8.80%
Algebra	26.90%	30.80%	37.00%	6.20%	10.10%
Geometry	18.00%	21.50%	26.50%	4.90%	8.50%

Note: Percentages are rounded to the one decimal place. Changes in percentages may vary slightly due to additional precision in source data.



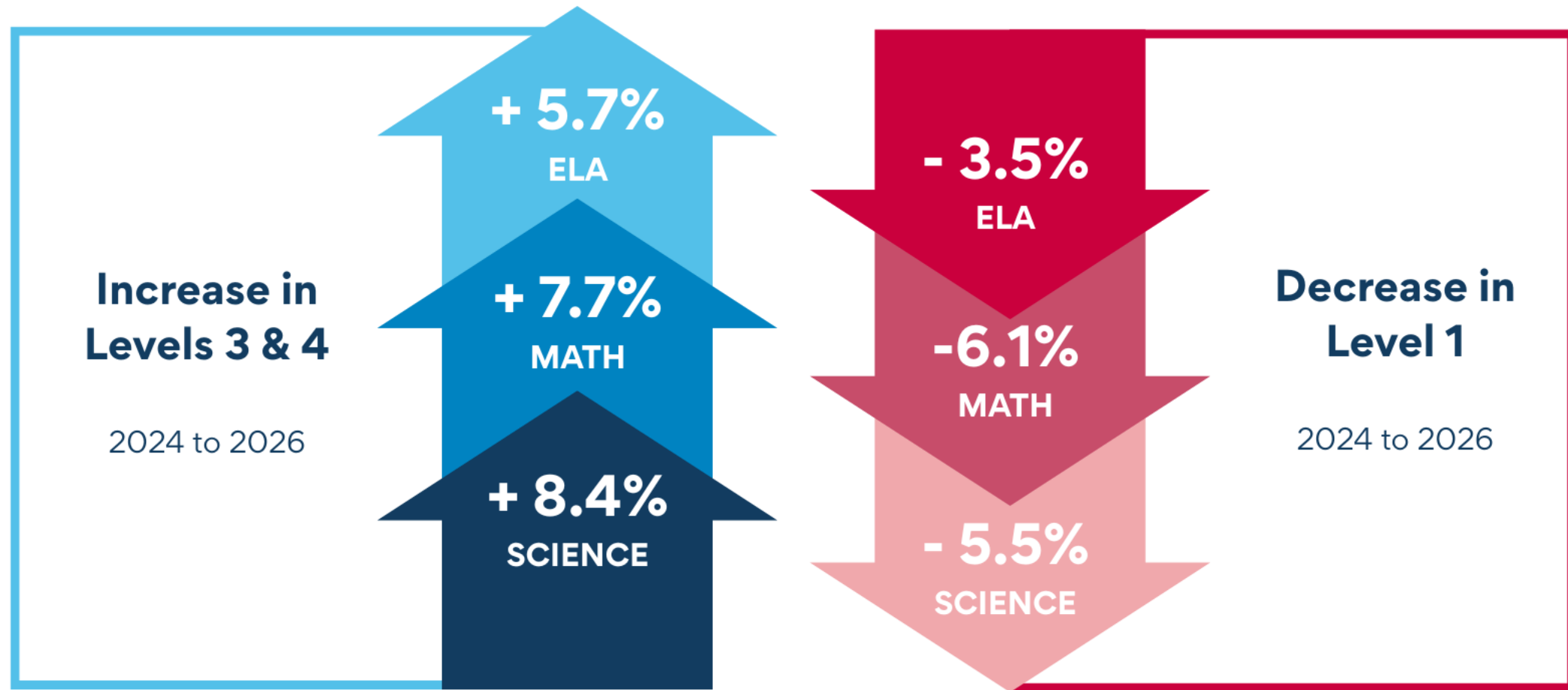
ATLAS Science Level 3 & 4 Results Over Time

Over 16,000 more students are proficient this year in Science compared to 2024 across all grade-levels.

Grade	2024	2025	2026	Percent Proficient Change, 2025 - 2026	Percent Proficient Change, 2024 - 2026
3	35.90%	38.50%	45.50%	+ 7.00%	+ 9.60%
4	35.70%	39.40%	44.40%	+ 5.00%	+ 8.70%
5	35.60%	37.80%	43.80%	+ 6.00%	+ 8.20%
6	34.60%	36.70%	42.60%	+ 5.80%	+ 8.00%
7	36.40%	38.40%	45.00%	+ 6.60%	+ 8.60%
8	35.30%	38.10%	43.00%	+ 4.90%	+ 7.70%
Biology	36.40%	37.70%	42.80%	+ 5.10%	+ 6.40%

Note: Percentages are rounded to the one decimal place. Changes in percentages may vary slightly due to additional precision in source data.

Grades 3-10 Increased Proficiency & Declining Risk



TOP 10

% increase in achievement

DISTRICTS

East End School District
Woodlawn School District
Jackson County School District
Brookland School District
Crossett School District
Hillcrest School District
Norfolk School District
Scranton School District
Mineral Springs School District
Elkins School District

SCHOOLS

Riverview Primary (*Riverview*)
Anne Watson Elementary (*East End*)
Woodlawn Elementary (*Woodlawn*)
Brookland High School (*Brookland*)
Mayflower Elementary (*Mayflower*)
Tuckerman Elementary (*Jackson County*)
Vilonia Primary (*Vilonia*)
Valley Springs Elementary (*Valley Springs*)
Bob Folsom Elementary (*Farmington*)
Pottsville High School (*Pottsville*)





Best States Education Ranking

2026: 36th



2023: 43rd



America's Top States for Business Education Ranking

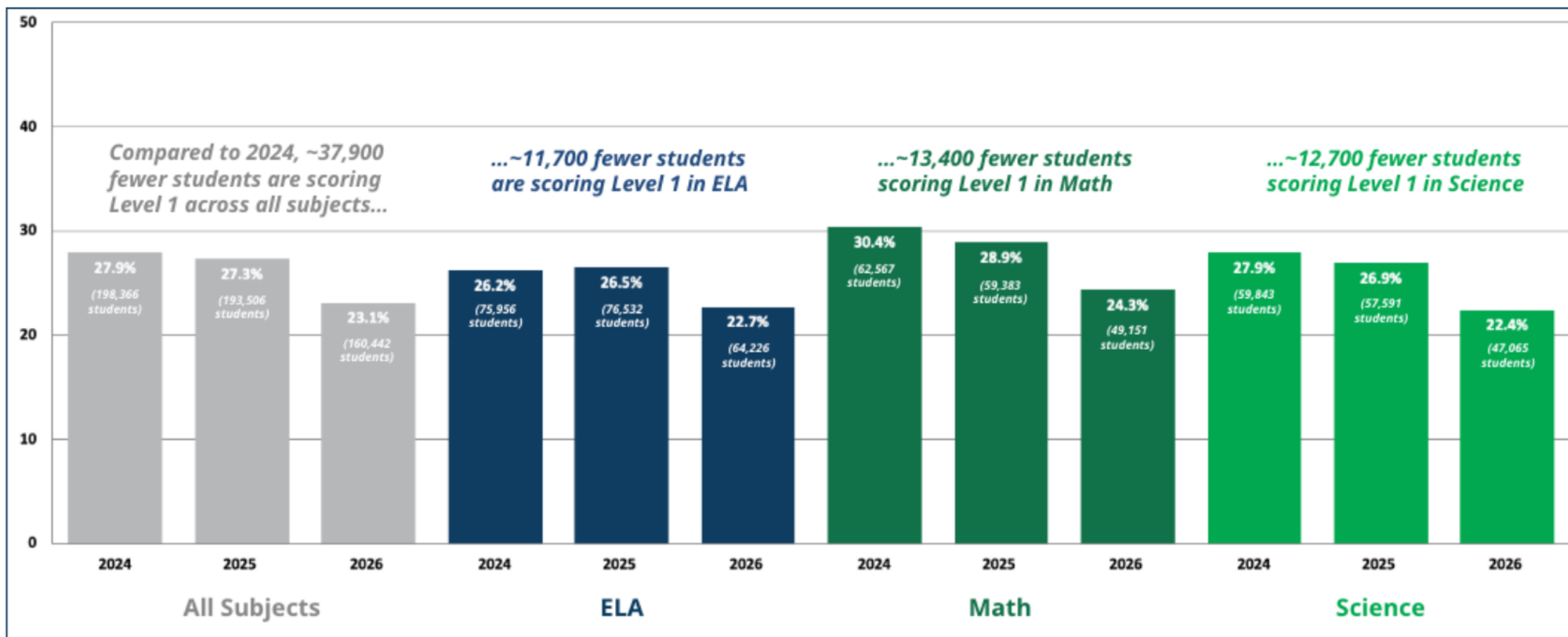
2026: 36th



2023: 42nd

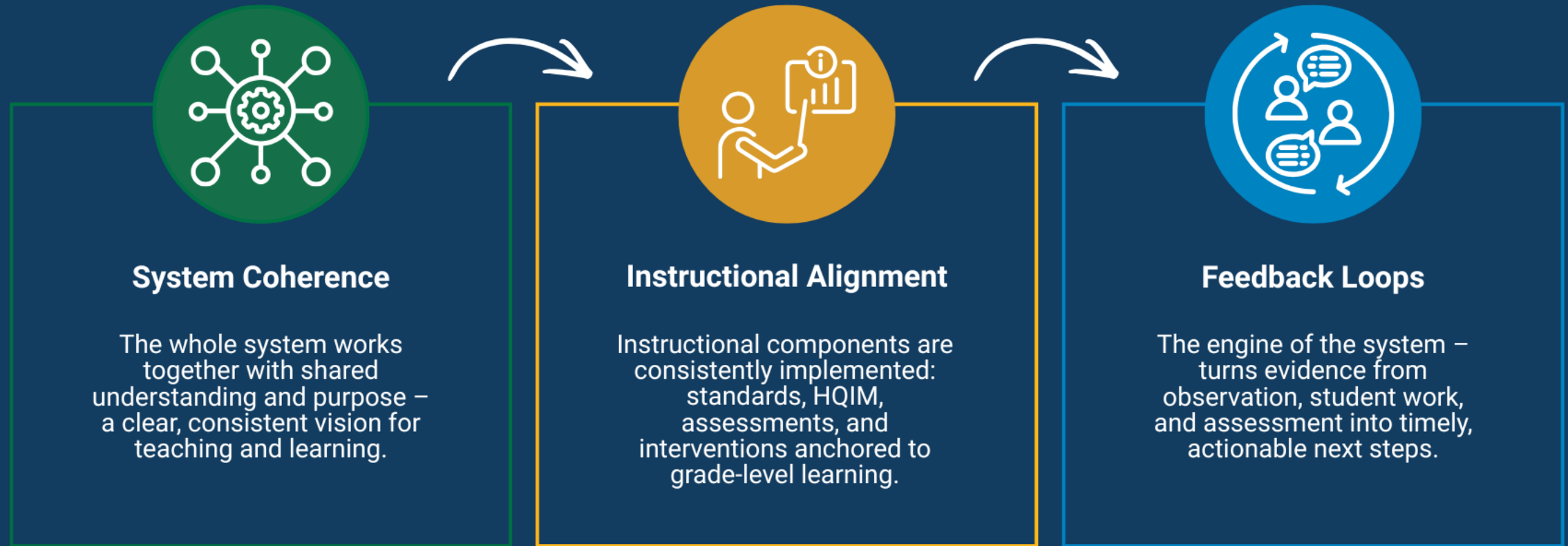
Across all subjects & grade levels, the percentage of students earning Level 1 has decreased.

ATLAS Results - % of students performing at Level 1



Instructional Coherence in Arkansas

The Sequence: Coherence first, then Alignment sustained by Feedback



“You do not rise to the level of your goals. You fall to the level of your systems.” - James Clear

Who owns instruction?

Ownership is not a single role – it is a collective responsibility aligned across every level of the system.



District Leaders

Set the vision, expectations, funding structures, and policies that support aligned instruction.



School Leaders

Build implementation systems, student-centered schedules, professional learning, and feedback loops.



Educators

Deliver aligned instruction so each student engages in meaningful, grade-level work every day.



Students

Demonstrate agency over their own learning and ownership of their academic growth.

Key Levers for Instructional Leaders

Walkthrough Tool

Targeting Foundational Literacy Skills Instruction: Key Levers for Instructional Leaders



DIVISION OF ELEMENTARY
& SECONDARY EDUCATION

5 Impact Areas:

- Structure for Learning
- Aligned Content
- Direct Instruction
- Student Practice
- Assessment & Differentiation

Ratings:

- **Strong Evidence:** Most look-fors are observed with skillful application.
- **Partial Evidence:** Some look-fors are observed with skillful application.
- **Little Evidence:** Little evidence of look-fors are observed or inconsistent application
- **No Evidence:** No evidence of look-fors are observed

Impact Areas	Indicators
Structure for Learning	1. Students are engaged in the work of the lesson from start to finish; there is a sense of urgency about how time is used. Look Fors: • Students participate in meaningful activities throughout the lesson. • Students volunteer responses and ask appropriate questions. • Routines and transitions require minimal teacher prompting or redirection. • The lesson is well paced; the teacher works to maximize time spent on instructional activities aligned to the learning targets.
	Strong Evidence Partial Evidence Little Evidence No Evidence
Aligned Content	2. Teacher skillfully delivers grade-level appropriate lessons using district-adopted HQIM; lessons reflect grade-level standards. Look Fors: • Teacher skillfully uses the district-adopted curriculum, as appropriate, to teach the lesson. • The lesson is aligned within the scope and sequence, ensuring that students will engage with the full curriculum during the school year. • The objective of the lesson aligns with grade-level standards. • Lesson modifications are made to strengthen the alignment to the state standards, as appropriate. • Students' work shows past and current foundational skills and connections made by teacher and/or students to previously taught skills. • Teacher integrates curriculum-embedded strategies in alignment to the Science of Reading expectations.
	Strong Evidence Partial Evidence Little Evidence No Evidence
Direct Instruction	3. The lesson includes adequate time for aligned teacher instruction which is explicit, clear, and correct. Look Fors: • There is adequate time for instruction. • There is a clear articulation of the objective to students (stated verbally, written on student work, displayed visually, etc.). • Teacher provides clear and accurate pronunciation of sounds (phonemes). • Teacher enhances instruction via the use of visual aids/manipulatives (sound wall, presentation slides, sound chips, etc.). • Teacher provides a clear explanation of the rules for sound and spelling patterns, modeling of blending, segmenting, or other content-specific tasks.
	Strong Evidence Partial Evidence Little Evidence No Evidence
Student Practice	4. The lesson includes adequate time for student practice of targeted skills (i.e. listening, speaking, reading and/or writing). Look Fors: • Teacher provides adequate time for student practice. • There is adequate opportunity for students to practice targeted skill(s) through reading, writing, speaking, and/or listening. • Students use decodable texts¹ to read and/or reread for accuracy/automaticity • OR practice through authentic reading experiences. • Students write dictated sentences to practice spelling with accuracy/automaticity • OR practice through writing experiences.
	Strong Evidence Partial Evidence Little Evidence No Evidence
Assessment & Differentiation	5. Teacher collects and responds to student data to adjust instruction for all student(s). Look Fors: • Teacher checks for understanding throughout the lesson, and applies strategies in response to student need(s). • A data collection system is in place (checklisting, sampling dictation response, monitoring of student work, etc.). • Teacher provides on-the-spot feedback, correction, and confirmations of student answers. • There is small group instruction and/or differentiated tasks as appropriate.
	Strong Evidence Partial Evidence Little Evidence No Evidence

¹ Decodable texts are sentences or text containing previously taught high-frequency words and sound/spelling patterns

Source: Adapted from the TNTP Reading Foundational Skills Look for Tool
Arkansas Division of Elementary & Secondary Education | Targeting Foundational Skills



**Student
Practice**

4. The lesson includes adequate time for student practice of targeted skills (i.e, listening, speaking, reading and/or writing).

Look Fors:

- Teacher provides adequate time for student practice.
- There is adequate opportunity for students to practice targeted skill(s) through reading, writing, speaking, and/or listening.
- Students use decodable texts¹ to read and/or reread for accuracy/automaticity
OR practice through authentic reading experiences.
- Students write dictated sentences to practice spelling with accuracy/automaticity
OR practice through writing experiences.

Strong Evidence

Partial Evidence

Little Evidence

No Evidence

What must be managed in a district to ensure that all students thrive in every classroom?



**Coherent
Plan & Fiscal
Management**



Improving Academic Outcomes



Quality Educational Workforce



Safe & Healthy Schools



Enrolled



Enlisted



Employed

