

Miles To Go

Arkansas

Pre-Kindergarten:

The Key to a Better Future for All



Southern Education Foundation

135 Auburn Avenue NE, 2nd Floor • Atlanta, GA 30303

www.southerneducation.org

The Southern Education Foundation

The Southern Education Foundation (SEF), www.southerneducation.org, is a nonprofit organization comprised of diverse women and men who work together to improve the quality of life for all of the South's people through better and more accessible education. SEF advances creative solutions to ensure fairness and excellence in education for low-income students from preschool through higher education.

SEF develops and implements programs of its own design, serves as an intermediary for donors who want a high-quality partner with whom to work on education issues in the South, and participates as a public charity in the world of philanthropy. SEF depends upon contributions from foundations, corporations and individuals to support its efforts.

SEF'S VISION

We seek a South and a nation with a skilled workforce that sustains an expanding economy, where civic life embodies diversity and democratic values and practice, and where an excellent education system provides all students with fair chances to develop their talents and contribute to the common good. We will be known for our commitment to combating poverty and inequality through education.

SEF'S TIMELESS MISSION

SEF develops, promotes and implements policies, practices and creative solutions that ensure educational excellence, fairness, and high levels of achievement among African Americans and other groups and communities that have not yet reached the full measure of their potential. SEF began in 1867 as the Peabody Education Fund.

CREDITS

Miles To Go Arkansas: Pre-Kindergarten is one of a series of reports by SEF in which we undertake research, disseminate information and work with policymakers to expand education and economic opportunities in the South. Prior *Miles To Go* reports on Arkansas and other Southern states can be found at www.southerneducation.org.

SEF thanks all Arkansans who offered their time and talent leading to this report and who continue to be leaders shaping the public policy agenda for P-16 education reform across the state. SEF especially wishes to credit the work and assistance of Robert Johnston, SEF consultant; Sybil Hampton, President, and Bill Rahn, Senior Program Manager, of the Winthrop Rockefeller Foundation; and SEF program coordinator Steve Suitts, who with the assistance of SEF Researcher Lauren Veasey, was primarily responsible for the development of this report.

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foreword

This report brings good news to the people of Arkansas, who are concerned about their future and that of their children. The news is that there is an effective way to narrow the achievement gap in education and build a stronger economy. There is a way to reduce inequality and lay the foundation for the creation of high-skilled jobs in industries that pay livable wages. There is a way to help the state's huge numbers of low-income students escape from poverty, dependence and marginalization. There is an educational strategy that expert research shows will have positive impact and outcome.

The good news is that high-quality pre-kindergarten (Pre-K) programs do in fact help children develop the intellectual, social and practical skills that they need to be successful in school and in life. As a result, everyone benefits. This report summarizes the growing body of evidence that demonstrates Pre-K's high return on investment and its potential impact for Arkansas.

Arkansas has already made an important investment in Pre-K. It is off to a good start. However, it is crucial that Arkansas find ways to extend its Pre-K program to all children in a more equitable and inclusive way. The State must develop a better infrastructure to sustain Pre-K, find better means to assess program quality, ensure sustainability of services through enduring revenue sources, and move toward universal coverage for all children.

A public charity that has been a leader in Southern education reform for almost 140 years, the Southern Education Foundation (SEF) has long pressed for greater attentiveness to the need to invest in the education of young children. Years ago, SEF pressed for public kindergarten for all children. Such programs are now in most states across the South and nation, and the positive results achieved are demonstrable. Now, SEF brings to the fore the growing body of research related to quality Pre-K education and its positive effects. We foresee a day and time when all states will accept Pre-K as essential for all children, and the good news will become a reality.

With a sense of gathering enthusiasm, SEF commends this report and findings to the good people of Arkansas. Now is the time for the business community, policymakers, civic leaders and the public to act decisively in service to the common good and make high-quality Pre-K a reality for all Arkansans. The future begins today.

Lynn Huntley
President

The Southern Education Foundation

executive summary

Miles To Go: Arkansas Pre-K

In 2004, Arkansas ranked 49th in the nation in per capita income: each person in the state had on average \$7,317 less income than the average American. The primary reason is education. Almost 70 percent of the difference in per-person income between Arkansas and the nation is due to the state's lower levels of education.

Now, Arkansas has a rare opportunity to begin to move out of the bottom in education, income and economic growth. The opportunity can be realized by providing high-quality pre-kindergarten (Pre-K).

High-quality Pre-K helps children onto the right track for learning and achievement. As an investment, it is far more effective and efficient in shaping good grades, good social behavior, and a good life, especially for low-income children, than virtually any other single available strategy today.

Pre-K: Key to Economic Gains

Long-term studies of high-quality Pre-K show its economic value. Based on one important study, adults who had the benefits of Pre-K are four times more likely than those without the program to earn a good monthly income. They are almost three times more likely to own their own home and twice as likely to have never been on welfare as an adult. The findings from other programs with long-term studies show much the same results.

The estimated cost-benefit ratio for high-quality Pre-K in Arkansas is \$8 in benefits for every \$1 spent on Pre-K. In other words, for every dollar Arkansas invests in high-quality Pre-K, the state will get back at minimum \$8 over time.

Pre-K gains can also make a big impact on Arkansas' economy by dynamically increasing lifetime earnings and jobs over time.

By conservative projections, Arkansas' economy can grow by an *extra \$15 billion* by 2035, if high-quality Pre-K becomes available to all three- and four-year-olds among the state's low-income and working families.

Arthur J. Rolnick, senior vice-president of the Federal Reserve Bank of Minneapolis, finds that, even after adjusting for inflation, Pre-K provides a rate of return of 12 to 16 percent. Nobel laureate economist James Heckman believes that Pre-K is currently the most effective and efficient investment in building human capital. High-quality Pre-K produces the largest returns for individuals and for states in developing human skills. One reason for such remarkable results, Heckman observes, is that at ages three and four children learn both how to learn and how to achieve.

Pre-K for Arkansas children is the state's best economic investment for the future.

Pre-K: Key to Education Gains

Pre-K is also among the best education investments a state can make. High-quality Pre-K provides children with a jumpstart that helps them stay in school and achieve at higher levels over time.

In neighboring Oklahoma, independent studies show that high-quality Pre-K prepares *all* children to be school-ready. Students in *every* racial and ethnic group and in *every* income group made substantial gains in basic cognitive skills in 2003. In fact, Pre-K in Oklahoma delivered the largest gains in early learning skills to minority and low-income children. In the long run, the educational impact is equally impressive. According to most long-term studies, Pre-K students have been three times *more* likely to make better grades and significantly more likely to graduate from high school on time.



These findings carry a very important message for Arkansas since many children in Arkansas apparently are not school-ready when they arrive at school. The percentage of students who repeat the first grade in Arkansas is at least three times larger than the rate of retention in any other elementary grade, and it is double the rate of every middle school grade across the state. Pre-K is necessary to help Arkansas children start school-ready and to achieve at higher levels.

The benefits of Pre-K are especially significant to Arkansas to help enable the state to meet constitutional standards and to create an adequate K-12 education system in the 21st century.

Pre-K in Arkansas Today

As of the beginning of 2006, Arkansas had approximately 14,360 Pre-K students throughout the state. This number represents only 30 percent of the three- and four-year-olds currently eligible by law (children in families below 200 percent of poverty) and only 20 percent of all three- and four-year-olds in the state.

The pattern of Pre-K development across the state is uneven. Pre-K programs cover half or more of eligible children in only 8 Arkansas counties, including Pulaski. At the other end of the spectrum, 30 Arkansas counties have less than 20 percent of eligible children enrolled in Pre-K. In seven counties, there was no child in a Pre-K class as of the beginning of 2006. Generally, northeast Arkansas has higher enrollment percentages than the other sections of the state. The lowest levels of Pre-K enrollment are in the northwest part of Arkansas. Elsewhere, counties with low and high enrollment are mixed.

Currently, the state's low levels of coverage for eligible children make it virtually impossible for Pre-K in Arkansas to deliver on its potential to improve the whole state's educational achievement and to spur economic progress over time. By serving less than one out of three children in the eligible Arkansas population, Pre-K currently does not reach a critical mass of children.

The Pre-K program needs to reach more children in order to have a decisive impact on Arkansas' education and economy. Pre-K in Arkansas needs to continue robust, statewide growth.

Pre-K: Challenges Ahead in Arkansas

Several challenges have begun to emerge for Arkansas Pre-K. The most important set of challenges include:

- providing reliable increases in Pre-K funding and coverage;
- assuring consistent, high-quality programs;
- developing qualified, experienced teachers;
- creating program integration and innovation;
- assuring access and equity; and
- providing active cooperation among state agencies.

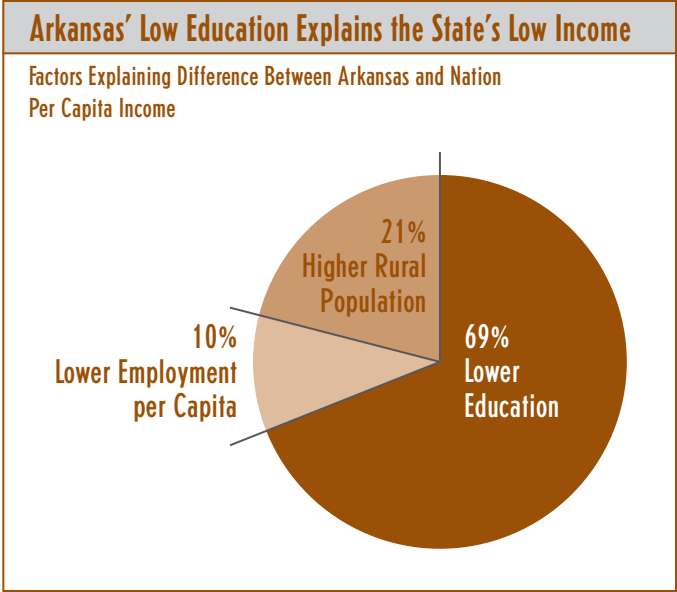
Arkansas already has made important strides in Pre-K. It can help lead the nation by investing wisely and rapidly in high-quality Pre-K. Now is the time for Arkansas to re-double its effort to improve the state's education and economic development. The future of Pre-K in Arkansas is now.

A Strategic Opportunity

It is common knowledge in Arkansas that the state has lagged behind the South and the nation in education for many decades. This historical trend largely accounts for the fact that Arkansas has been and remains today at the bottom among states in economic growth and income. In 2004, for example, Arkansas ranked 49th in the nation in per capita income: each and every person in the state on average had \$7,317 less income than did the average American.

The primary reason is education. As a study commissioned by the Southern Education Foundation has found, almost 70 percent of the difference in per-person income between Arkansas and the nation is due entirely to the state’s lower levels of education. Said another way, if the education levels in Arkansas roughly equaled those of the nation at large, each and every person in Arkansas would have enjoyed in 2004 an additional \$5,049 in personal income – and even more income each year afterwards.

Now, Arkansas has a rare, strategic opportunity to begin in a concerted manner to change its historical deficit – to move out of the bottom in education, income and economic growth. It is also a chance to make a big difference in the quality of life for individual children and for the whole state. The opportunity is grounded on simple common sense and considerable research: if you give children a good, solid start, it goes a long way in assuring a good education and a good life. The strategy is high-quality, early childhood education – pre-kindergarten (Pre-K).



Source: Miles To Go Arkansas Update

As this report demonstrates, early childhood education is more important today than ever before in shaping a child’s real-life prospects and a state’s future. High-quality Pre-K helps to get children onto the right track for learning and achievement and to continue along those lines throughout their schooling and beyond. As an investment, it is far more effective and efficient in shaping good grades, good social behavior, and a good life, especially for low-income children, than virtually any other single available strategy or investment today. It is not all that can be done, but it is an essential part of what should be done.

During the last few years, the Arkansas legislature and Governor Mike Huckabee have established the initial legal framework and funding for growing a statewide, voluntary pre-kindergarten program for all three and four-year-olds. This report examines the beginnings of this program – both the accomplishments and the challenges the state faces in assuring that children, local communities and all of Arkansas reaps the potential rewards of early childhood education. Pre-K is vitally important to the future of the state, but it is not self-implementing. Pre-K will bring home to Arkansas the benefits it needs to increase education and improve the state's quality of life, but only if Pre-K is a reliable, accessible, equitable and high-quality program.

Arkansas has a chance today to help lead – *not* lag behind – the nation in providing young children with the education they need to become good students and good citizens. In the last three years, Arkansas has joined the nation's leading states in expanding Pre-K first to those children who are most in need. It has led the nation in establishing state standards that, when implemented, can assure high-quality Pre-K to every child. In fact, in 2005, Arkansas was ranked among the top four states in establishing high-quality Pre-K standards. Arkansas has been among the top states recently in increasing Pre-K funding – at least until 2006-2007. According to a recent national survey, Arkansas is also in the top half of the states with Pre-K teachers who hold bachelor degrees.

If Arkansas continues to build on this new beginning, it can establish the state as a permanent leader in early childhood education. And, as this report documents, the major beneficiaries of a nationally ranked Pre-K program in Arkansas will be, in the short run, the state's children and, in the long run, all of the adults and children of Arkansas. The economic and educational benefits that Arkansas can realize by moving ahead of other states in the South and nation in Pre-K and staying ahead – by building a high-quality, universal system of early childhood care and education – make Pre-K this state's most important, competitive investment for improving education and advancing its quality of life and economic future.

The opportunity to move forward in establishing Arkansas as a national leader in Pre-K is now, but it requires a renewed, increased commitment on the part of policymakers, teachers, parents and residents for years to come. Also, there is no free lunch in building a system of early childhood education and the state's future. It will require additional state funding.

Pre-K cannot miraculously change overnight the longstanding patterns of poor, low levels of education and depressed levels of personal income that have burdened Arkansans for decades. Over time, high-quality Pre-K can make a big difference that economists will measure by numbers and ordinary people will see in their own lives and the lives of their communities. There is a “miracle” in every child that comes alive when that child has the opportunity to do his or her best in life. That is the miracle Arkansas needs to tap – and it is what Pre-K uniquely can help create for the benefit of all Arkansans in the years ahead.

Recent Developments in Pre-Kindergarten (Pre-K) in Arkansas

A statewide program for early childhood education has existed in Arkansas for over a decade, but in 2003 the state legislature adopted a law to establish a statewide system of voluntary pre-kindergarten (Pre-K) for the education of Arkansas' three- and four year-olds. The division of Child Care and Early Childhood Education (Early Childhood Division) in the Arkansas Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) administers the program by providing grants to public agencies and private organizations that meet state standards for providing high-quality preschool to eligible children.

At this time, three- and four-year-old children who come from families with incomes below twice the level of poverty are eligible to enroll. In 2004 this criterion permitted a family of four with an income of \$37,700 or less to enroll a child in an available Pre-K program. In effect, the statute currently makes approximately 48,000 children eligible for Arkansas Pre-K — almost two out of three of Arkansas's three- and four-year-old children.

In association with the Arkansas Department of Education, the Early Childhood Division develops rules and regulations to assure high standards of early education, efficient operations, and a safe and healthy environment. State law mandates public schools to cooperate with the state departments to establish or expand Pre-K in areas where schools have had chronically low test scores on literacy and math.

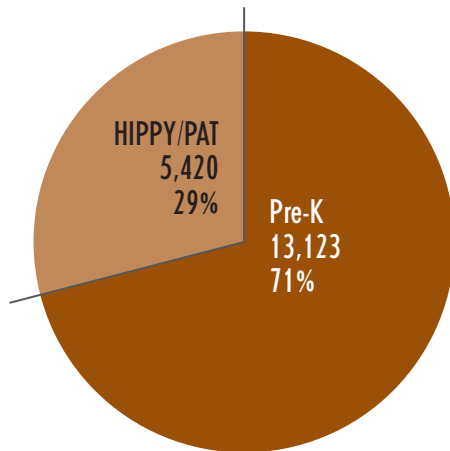
The foundation of Arkansas' statewide Pre-K system is the Arkansas Better Chance for School Success Program (ABC), which was established by the state legislature in 1991.

Its purpose has been to provide assistance to “educationally deprived” young children, from birth through five years of age, in order to enhance their development and increase their success in learning. In addition to Pre-K, which is center-based or set in public classrooms, the ABC program includes training for inexperienced, new parents, “Parents as Teachers” (PAT), and home instruction for preschool children, “Home Instruction for Parents of Preschool Youngsters” (HIPPY). There is a range of eligibility standards for all the different ABC programs, in part because they are financed by a variety of sources: federal funds, public school funds, an excise tax on beer sales and direct state appropriations.

There also are other public and private programs in Arkansas that provide some aspects of early child development and education. Head Start is a federally funded program of child development that primarily encompasses low-income children up to the age of four. In Arkansas, locally administered Head Start programs encompass nearly 10,000 children in part-time and full-day programs. Also, some childcare centers in Arkansas have been accredited by the DHHS for “program quality,” including components for social and educational development. Nearly 6,000 children are in these accredited centers across the state. In addition, according to survey data of the US Department of Education, more than 4,300 children are in preschool classes at private schools in Arkansas.

background

ABC Program Enrollment 2005–2006



Source: Arkansas Department of Health and Human Services; SEF Calculations

What Pre-K is ... and is not in Arkansas

This report does not consider or define Pre-K as including all of the state's ABC childhood education programs. Each element of the Arkansas Department of Health and Human Services' ABC programs has a real, promising role for improving the development and learning of young children from birth through five, but parent training (PAT) and assistance with in-home instruction (HIPPY) are not the same experience for a child as Pre-K. Nor is there a solid body of research yet to verify that these training programs have large educational and economic gains that match those of Pre-K. For these reasons, this report considers and defines pre-kindergarten (Pre-K) as only full-day preschool experiences in private centers and public classrooms that include independent standards and assessments to assure a high-quality program. In keeping with national practices and standards, our report departs from the DHHS practice of counting and projecting all ABC programs as an Arkansas Pre-K program.

Since the Arkansas legislature passed the new Pre-K law in 2003, the ABC program has expanded from less than 7,000 to include, as of the beginning of 2006, more than 13,000 children in Pre-K classes and centers across the state. In addition, the state of Arkansas serves more than 5,400 other children through its programs for parent training and home-based instruction. While worthwhile, these programs for parents are not always as complete as Pre-K in their effects on the child.

The expansion of Pre-K and, to a lesser extent, increases in home-based instruction have been made possible since 2003 by the Arkansas legislature's annual increase of \$20 million in appropriations. As of the fiscal year 2005-2006, Arkansas Pre-K and other ABC early childhood programs have received annual funding of approximately \$71 million.

The annual increase in Pre-K financing has been in keeping with the recommendations of the state legislature's expert education consultants, Lawrence O. Picus and Allan Odden, who have helped the state identify the elements and costs of an adequate education, and with 2003 Pre-K law which declares: "The goal of the state is to make available an Arkansas Better Chance for School Success Program for an additional one-fifth (1/5) of the qualifying students each year over a period of five (5) years, at which time the programs shall be available in all schools statewide." During its last session, however, the Arkansas legislature failed to increase funding to expand Pre-K during the fiscal year 2006-2007.

Pre-K: Key to Growing Arkansas' Economy and Quality of Life

In recent years, economists and business groups across the nation have begun to document the importance of early childhood education as an investment in economic development. In the last couple of years, for example, the Business Roundtable (representing America's top 500 corporations), the Committee for Economic Development (a 60-year old national business group), and the Federal Reserve Bank of Minneapolis have issued reports demonstrating that high-quality Pre-K programs provide over time perhaps the best long-term investment for economic growth. In other words, the economic return "on investment from early childhood development is extraordinary." Pre-K offers "greater potential returns and substantially less risk" than state subsidies and incentives that try to attract plant locations, company headquarters, office towers, entertainment centers, or professional sports stadiums and arenas.

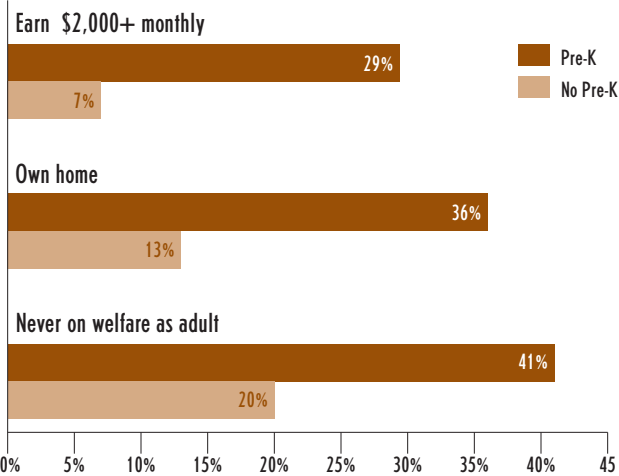
One of America's Nobel-laureate economists, James Heckman of the University of Chicago, is examining the economic gains in national productivity that come from early childhood education. Heckman has found that high-quality preschool programs have a very high economic benefit for communities. "We cannot afford to postpone investing in children until they become adults," Heckman observes, "nor can we wait until they reach school age..." The economic benefits that Heckman documents flow from the ways Pre-K sets in motion a long-range pattern of learning that helps to keep students in school, out of juvenile detention and crime, and on their way to becoming active citizens and productive workers who contribute to a state's increased productivity and quality of life.

Pre-K offers "greater potential returns and substantially less risk" than state subsidies and incentives that try to attract plant locations, company headquarters, office towers...

economic growth

High-Quality Preschool: Economic Outcomes

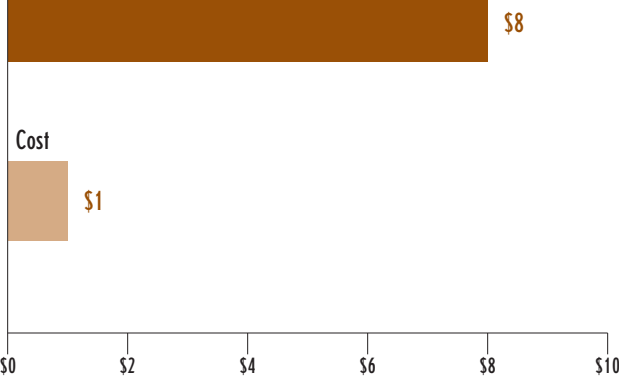
Perry Preschool: Economic Effects



Source: The High/Scope Perry Preschool Study Through Age 40

Economic Benefits of Investing in Arkansas Pre-K

Economic Benefits



Source: Entergy, The Economics of Education

There have been long-term studies of high-quality preschool education that show clearly the comparative economic value of Pre-K. For example, in one of the nation's older, most closely documented programs, Perry Preschool, researchers have followed neighborhood children into adulthood and now are able to compare what actually has happened to participants and non-participants from a working-class, low-income area. The results are striking.

The middle-age adults who had the benefits of Perry Preschool are today four times more likely than those without the program to earn a good monthly income. They are almost three times more likely to own their own home and twice as likely to have never been on welfare as an adult. The results from other programs with long-term studies show much the same results.

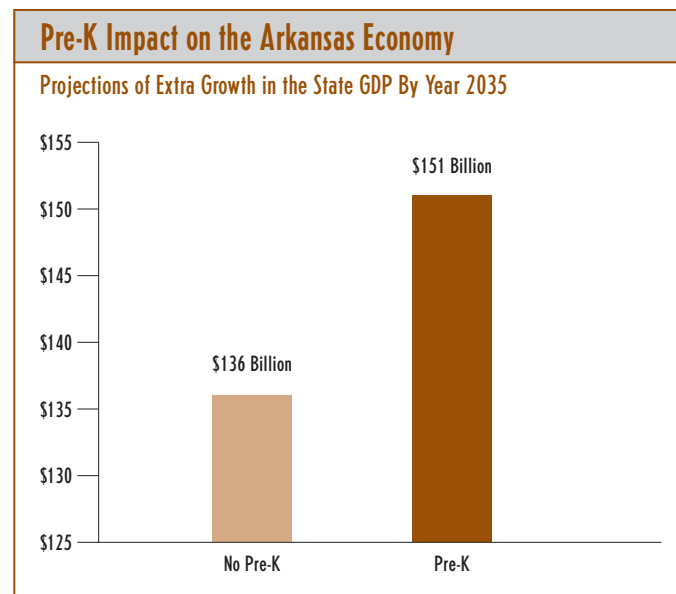
In Arkansas, Pre-K can have similarly dramatic benefits. According to recent, careful estimates, the cost-benefit ratio for public investments in high-quality Pre-K in Arkansas will be \$1 to \$8. Simply put, for every dollar Arkansas invests in high-quality Pre-K, the state will get back a minimum of \$8 over time.

These monetary benefits will come to Arkansas in the form of the increased tax contributions of more productive workers and from government savings arising from reductions in the numbers of failing students, juvenile and adult crime, unemployment and welfare-related costs over time. In addition, the state will enjoy other benefits that these numbers do not capture. For instance, by enabling increased gains in overall education, research also suggests that Pre-K in Arkansas will help to enlarge the number of citizens who vote, volunteer to help others, save for their own old age, and contribute to the common good.

The Pre-K gains can also make a big impact on the Arkansas economy by dynamically increasing lifetime earnings and jobs for more educated students who get a good start through high-quality pre-kindergarten. By conservative projections, Arkansas' economy can grow by an *extra \$15 billion*, if high-quality Pre-K is available to all three- and four-year-olds among the state's low-income and working families. This annual increase in jobs, income and economic prosperity could make a huge difference in the lives of most Arkansans and could take effect in large measure by the time the 2007 Pre-K class becomes working adults.

Using another economic measure, Arthur J. Rolnick, senior vice-president of the Federal Reserve Bank of Minneapolis, has documented that investing in high-quality Pre-K has a far greater rate of return than almost all other traditional economic development investment, including state subsidies for attracting new plants and industries. Rolnick finds that, even after adjusting for inflation, Pre-K provides a rate of return of 12 to 16 percent. This return on investment from Pre-K exceeds almost everything that both individual and institutional investors could hope to realize consistently in the private or public market. As Rolnick observes about investing in Pre-K, "the costs of not making such an investment are just too great to ignore."

Based on his review of hundreds of studies, Nobel laureate economist James Heckman believes that Pre-K is currently the most effective and efficient investment in building human capital for a state or nation. High-quality Pre-K produces the largest returns for individuals and for states in developing human skills. One reason for such remarkable results, Heckman observes, is that the early childhood years are when children develop some fundamental, lasting skills – both cognitive and



Source: McMahon, Education and Economic Development in the Deep South; SEF Calculations.

social skills. At three and four years of age, children learn both how to learn and how to achieve – absorbing lifelong qualities such as curiosity, persistence, focus, aspiration, patience and cooperation. The social skills that Pre-K students learn can influence success in school and in life just as much as their learning skills. In combination, these different skills can help take a child a long way.

In sum, across the wide spectrum of possible investments for creating economic growth and income, for improving a state's quality of life, and for developing physical and human capital for a state's future, Pre-K ranks above all of them. The Entergy Corporation's study, *The Economics of Education*, states the matter clearly: "Providing a high-quality preschool education to all low-income children makes good economic sense."

Indeed, both economic research and common sense underscore the central, inescapable conclusion: Pre-K for Arkansas children is the state's best economic investment for the future.

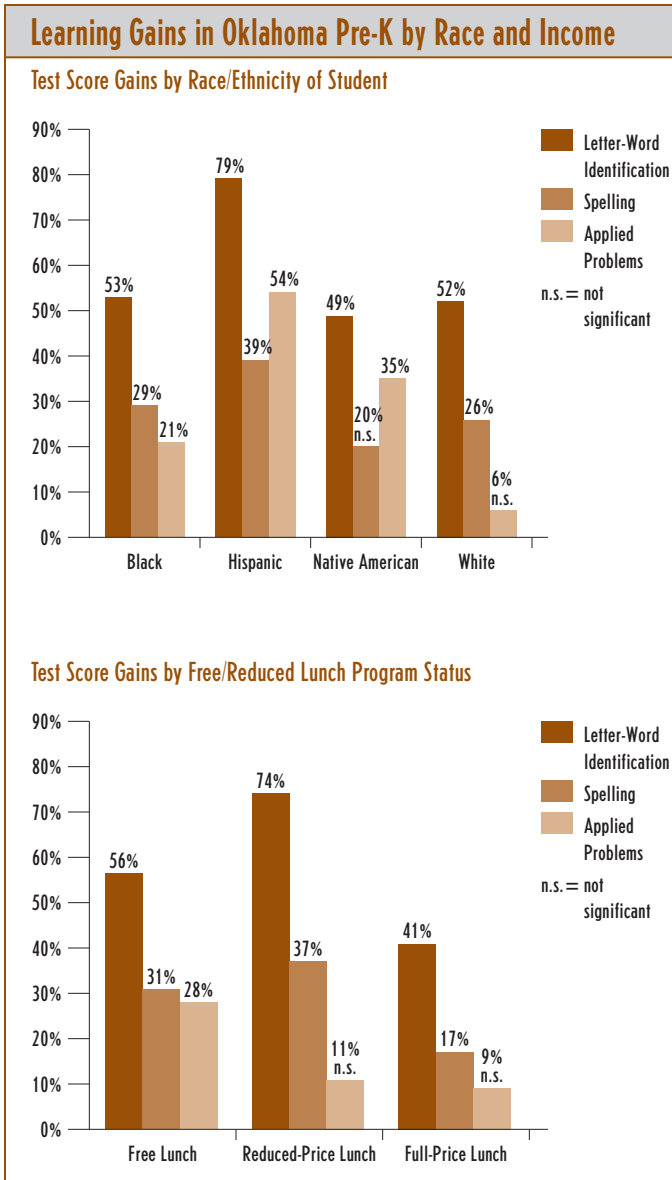
Pre-K: Key to Providing an “Adequate” Education

High-quality Pre-K programs are among the best education investments a state can make. Pre-K provides children with a jumpstart that helps them stay in school and achieve at higher levels over time.

The evidence for the effects of Pre-K is impressive and conclusive. In neighboring Oklahoma, for example, an independent study by Georgetown University demonstrates clearly that high-quality Pre-K prepares *all* children to be school-ready. After examining the learning skills of children enrolled in Pre-K in Tulsa over two years (2001-2003), the Oklahoma study shows that students in *every* racial and ethnic group and in *every* income group made substantial gains in basic cognitive skills.

In fact, the Oklahoma study confirms that Pre-K delivers the largest gains in early learning skills to minority and low-income children – the student groups who most often start school behind and score lowest on standardized tests. For example, both African American and Hispanic students in Pre-K made impressive gains in all tested skills – letter-word identification, spelling and problem solving – and they made significantly higher gains than those of white children. Similarly, children from low-income families in Tulsa’s Pre-K made excellent gains in learning that outpaced the gains of all other children from families with higher incomes.

These findings illuminate how Pre-K helps to jumpstart the learning of the children who often need the most support in school, while corroborating the fact that Pre-K is a benefit to all children. In comparing children with and without Pre-K, the study found that “the child exposed to Tulsa Pre-K is substantially better off.”



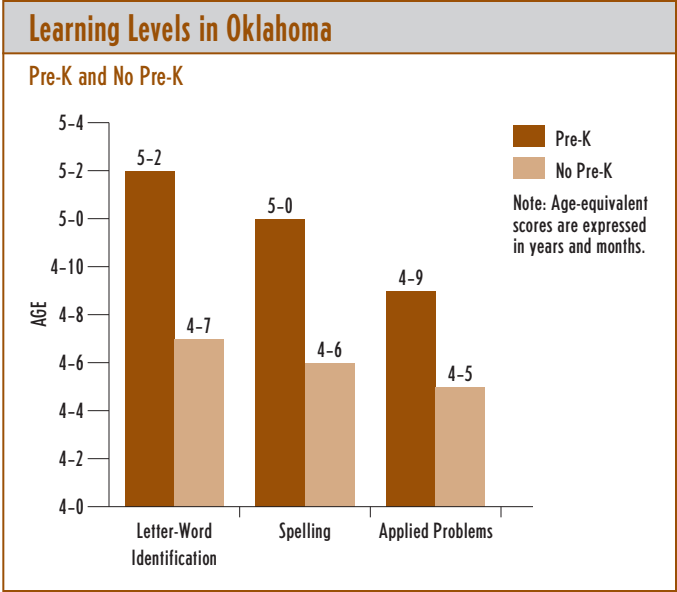
Source: Georgetown University Center for Research on Children in the U.S.

The children not yet exposed to Pre-K lagged behind Pre-K children in all three tests. Expressed in terms of age-appropriate skills, the study found that Pre-K kids were approximately seven months ahead of other children in cognitive skills for letter-word identification, six months ahead for spelling, and three months ahead in learning applied problems. All children can benefit from Pre-K.

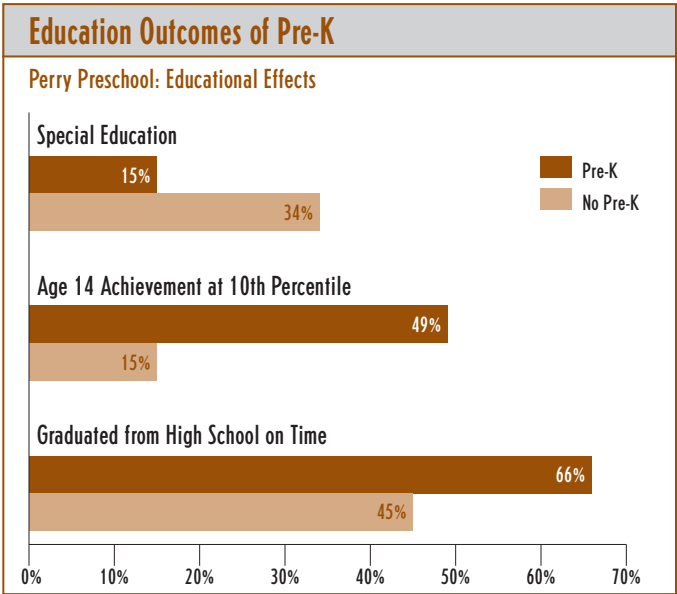
These early gains for children appear to continue throughout their education. In the long-term study of the Perry early childhood education program, students who attended preschool were three times *more* likely to make better grades and significantly more likely to graduate from high school on time than students without high-quality Pre-K.

The long-term studies of the other high-quality preschool programs reveal the same trends: Pre-K students are more likely to graduate and are better students throughout their education. As a group, they perform better in school, stay out of trouble with the law, and graduate on time from high school more often than other students.

These findings carry a very important message for Arkansas. There is evidence that many children in Arkansas are not school-ready when they arrive at school. For example, more students were retained in 2004-05 (and in prior years) in the first grade than in any other grade throughout Arkansas schools. The percentage of students who repeat the first grade – usually one out of every 20 students – is at least three times larger than the rate of retention in any other elementary grade, and it is double the rate of every middle school grade across the state.



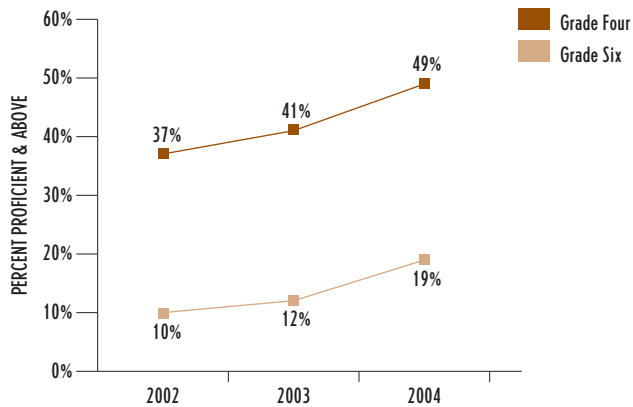
Source: Georgetown University Center for Research on Children in the U.S.



Source: The High/Scope Perry Preschool Study Through Age 40

Early Grades Set the Pattern of Achievement

Decline in African American Literacy Proficiency from 4th to 6th Grade
2002–2004



Source: Arkansas School Information Site, State Benchmark Examination Performance

It is very difficult for young children to catch up once they fall behind in their learning. This problem especially relates to African American, Hispanic and low-income children across the state. Arkansas test scores, for instance, indicate that only 37 percent of 4th grade African American students in 2002 scored at a proficient or above level in literacy. Two years later, in the 6th grade, scores continued to decline: only 19 percent of African American students in the state were proficient or above in literacy. In other words, 81 percent of Arkansas' African American students in the 6th grade were not proficient.

In fact, test scores show that students in Arkansas are at their highest levels of proficiency in literacy and in math in the early grades and that proficiency declines as they go through school. In every year of Arkansas' current standardized tests (2002–2004), students in the 4th grade achieve at higher levels of proficiency in every subject than students in all other grades. This pattern applies to all students and to all student groups by race, ethnicity and income. Equally instructive, as 4th grade scores have increased over the years, so have scores generally in the later grades.

Each of these patterns reaches the same two conclusions:

- a) more students in Arkansas need to start school-ready; and
- b) students who are more proficient in the early grades will score higher throughout their schooling. In short, Pre-K is necessary to help Arkansas children become school-ready and to achieve at higher levels since no group of students catch-up later in school.

The benefits of Pre-K for early learning are especially significant to Arkansas because the state school system is currently under a court order from the Arkansas Supreme Court to provide an adequate education to all students. The Court's decision in *Lake View School District No. 25 v. Huckabee* in 2004 held that the state constitution does not expressly mandate Pre-K as a part of an "adequate" K-12 education system; however, this holding does not mean that Pre-K is unnecessary as a central strategy to meet the objectives and the terms of Court's decree.

At this juncture, it is difficult, if not impossible, to understand how the state of Arkansas can successfully provide an "adequate" education that makes a real difference in the educational results of students across the state without providing most or all Arkansas children with high-quality Pre-K. This conclusion has been borne out by anyone who has looked with care and impartiality at the whole system of Arkansas education. It certainly was, in effect, the opinion of the legislative experts, Picus and Odden, who undertook Arkansas' independent adequacy study in 2004.

From all quarters, the evidence is clear and convincing that high-quality Pre-K is essential in Arkansas in order for large numbers of children, especially children from working, low-income, African American families, as well as Hispanic families, to be school-ready and to succeed at higher levels in K-12 grades. Therefore, Pre-K in Arkansas is in fact obligatory for compliance with *Lakeview*. It is an educational remedy that is necessary to enable the state to meet the constitutional standards to capture the practical advantages of an adequate K-12 education system in the 21st century.

...more students in Arkansas
need to start school-ready...

Pre-K in Arkansas in 2006

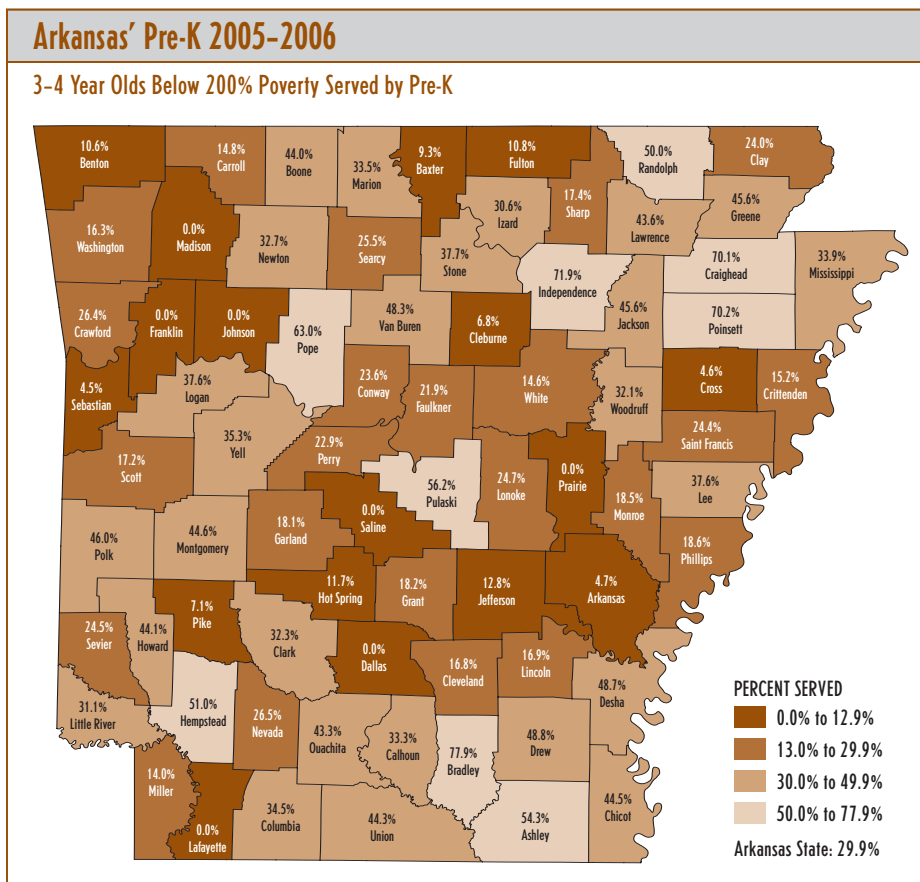
In 2003 the Arkansas legislature built a sturdy framework for high-quality Pre-K. Since then, the Arkansas legislature has added \$20 million each year to the annual funding for Pre-K in order to progressively increase the number of children served. In the fiscal year ending in 2006, Arkansas will spend roughly \$71 million to provide Pre-K for approximately 13,000 children; however, the legislature so far has failed to allocate additional funding in order to continue a steady increase in Pre-K coverage in the year 2006-07 and beyond.

Some local school districts across the state have used special funding that the legislature allocated to assist low-income students in order to establish additional Pre-K classes in their schools. These school districts have added an estimated

1,237 children to the Pre-K program. In total, as of 2006, Arkansas has approximately 14,360 Pre-K students throughout the state. This number represents only 30 percent of the three- and four-year-olds currently eligible by law and only 20 percent of all three- and four-year-olds in the state.

The pattern of Pre-K development across the state is uneven. In only 8 counties, including Pulaski, Pre-K programs cover half or more eligible children. Four of those counties have 70 percent or more eligible children in Pre-K; Bradley County leads the state by enrolling 77.9 percent of eligible children in Pre-K.

At the other end of the spectrum, 30 Arkansas counties have less than 20 percent of eligible children enrolled in Pre-K. In seven counties –



Source: Arkansas Department of Health and Human Services, Arkansas Department of Education, U.S. Census Bureau

Madison, Johnson, Franklin, Lafayette, Dallas, Saline and Prairie – there are no three- and four-year-old children in a Pre-K class, despite substantial numbers of low-income and near-poor students in those counties. (Some children in these seven counties are in other ABC programs that provide parental education and support.)

Currently, there are no consistent regional patterns of Pre-K development across Arkansas, except perhaps in the state's northeast and northwest corners. As a group, the counties of northeast Arkansas have higher enrollment percentages than the other sections of the state; three of only four counties serving 70 percent or more of the eligible children – Independence, Craighead and Poinsett – are located here. The lowest levels of enrollment are in the northwest part of Arkansas. Here is where three of the seven counties without any Pre-K classes are located. (Appendix 1 provides an alphabetical county list with the percent of eligible served.)

Elsewhere, counties with low and high enrollment are mixed throughout the state. In Arkansas' Delta, counties have some of the highest percentages of enrollment and some of the lowest. For instance, Desha County has 49 percent of eligible children in Pre-K, but a neighboring Arkansas county has only five percent. Most of the counties in the north and south parts of the Delta have enrollment levels that exceed the state average while those near the Mississippi River generally have lower enrollment percentages than the state as a whole.

Currently, the state's low levels of coverage for eligible children make it virtually impossible for Pre-K in Arkansas to deliver on its potential to improve the whole state's educational achievement and to spur economic progress over

What is “High-Quality” Pre-K?

There are different ways to define high-quality Pre-K, but essentially all such programs usually will have the following components:

a) a healthy, child-friendly and safe environment; b) effective, high-quality teaching; c) the practice of proven learning and teaching approaches; d) a strong curriculum; e) small classes with a relatively low child-teacher ratio; (f) meaningful parental involvement; and (g) valuable assessment.

time. By serving less than one out of three children in Arkansas' eligible population – and only one in five of all three- and four-year-olds across the entire state – Pre-K currently does not reach a critical mass of children.

The number of three- and four-year-old children enrolled in full-day Head Start and preschool programs in private schools in Arkansas – more than 4,000 children – could markedly enlarge Pre-K coverage. But, at this juncture there is no way to determine the quality of these programs in Arkansas, nor is there a systematic means for the state to assure and assess the quality of these programs in the future. Children in these programs may or may not be receiving an experience that constitutes high-quality Pre-K.

All things considered, despite brisk growth over the last 3 years, Arkansas falls far short today of a statewide Pre-K program that can set in motion far-reaching educational and economic gains for the state. The program needs to reach more children to have a decisive impact. Pre-K in Arkansas needs to continue robust, statewide growth.

challenges

Pre-K Challenges Ahead in Arkansas

Growing the coverage of the Pre-K program in Arkansas is essential. It is also necessary to grow it in ways that assure high quality for all students for decades to come. Over the last three years, as increasing numbers of children have entered the ABC preschool programs, several challenges have begun to emerge. Also, some additional issues are very likely to crop up as the state moves forward. The most important set of challenges will include: 1) reliable increases in Pre-K funding and coverage; 2) consistent, high-quality programs; 3) qualified, experienced teachers; 4) program integration and innovation; 5) access and equity; and 6) active cooperation among state agencies. Each of these issues must be addressed satisfactorily if Arkansas is to realize the educational and economic benefits of Pre-K.

Reliable Increases in Funding and Coverage

Despite a good beginning, the Arkansas legislature has interrupted the steady increase in Pre-K funding and coverage by failing to allocate added funds for Pre-K growth in the 2006-2007 fiscal year. It is essential both for effective planning and growth and for tapping the “miracle” of Pre-K children that the legislature increase funding *each and every year* until Pre-K is an established, comprehensive statewide program. In addition, part of Pre-K funding currently depends upon a temporary tax on beer sales. This is an inadequate basis of building a permanent system of education. The income for Pre-K should be based on regular state revenues, not temporary taxes.

Finding available funding for expanding Pre-K is not a current obstacle. As of 2006, the state of Arkansas has a surplus of over \$250 million and a recent growth rate for state revenues that exceeds almost all past years. The state funds are available. In addition, several school districts across the state have left unspent approximately \$37 million in the monies allocated by the legislature for focusing on improving the academic



achievement of low-income students. Most of the school districts with large amounts of unspent funds, which are being carried over to this fiscal year, have large unmet needs for Pre-K (Appendix 2).

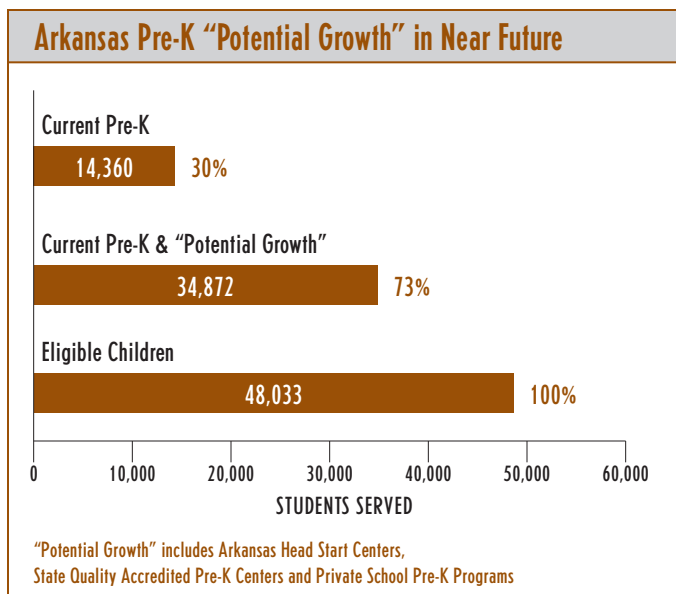
While Pre-K is a voluntary educational program, it is clear that the program has grown very unevenly across the state and has not always expanded in proportion to local needs. This pattern suggests there are problems in the way Pre-K programs develop by means of local application. For instance, it is difficult to imagine that there is no need for or interest in Pre-K among eligible families in the seven counties currently with no Pre-K program. It is certain that Arkansas as a whole has a state interest in assuring that the program reaches into every county and that families are encouraged to enroll eligible children.

Assured funding is also necessary to overcome the practical barriers that Pre-K expansion faces in the coming years. There are substantial difficulties that the DHHS faces in expanding coverage of Pre-K to reach an additional 7,000 children each year. Janie Huddleston, DHHS' deputy commissioner who once ran the division responsible for early childhood education, has stated: "In order to serve the approximately 7,000 additional children . . . between 250-275 additional classrooms will be needed; and each classroom will need to be staffed with a certified preschool through fourth-grade teacher as well as an aide that meets the Child Development Associate Credential or holds an Associate Degree. . . . The Division will have to complete education and training and provide technical assistance to providers. . . . The division will also have to make site visits to confirm provider compliance with the standards."

These are enormous practical challenges, which the Division of Childhood Education has admirably strived to manage, but they will be virtually impossible to overcome annually, if there is no opportunity for the division and providers of local Pre-K to undertake planning and startup work that is necessary for building a comprehensive statewide Pre-K system. In fact, as the Pre-K system expands across Arkansas, DHHS will require more time and more effort to create new Pre-K classes.

The easiest, most convenient locations that are ready and able to pull together a Pre-K program have now been enlisted. In the future, it will take more than a few months after a legislative appropriation has actually passed to build a Pre-K class: to develop and assemble the local school or organizational capacity, appropriate space, qualified staff, professional training and evaluation tools – all in one place – in order to assure high-quality Pre-K. There is – and will continue to be – the necessity for longer-term developmental work that builds capacity in one year in order to open new Pre-K classes in years that follow.

For this vital developmental work to go forward, the Arkansas legislature must establish a long-term, uninterrupted commitment to building a universal, voluntary system for Pre-K. It must assure a stream of funds for Pre-K expansion so that the work to expand Pre-K can take place over a period of more than just one fiscal year.



Source: Arkansas Department of Health and Human Services, Arkansas Department of Education, U.S. Census Bureau, Arkansas Head Start Association, National Center for Education Statistics (See also Appendix 3)

If Arkansas commits a reliable, multi-year stream of funds to continue to expand Pre-K coverage, the good news is that there already exists across Arkansas the scaffolding for building the needed expansion. In every Arkansas county, there exist Head Start programs, “quality accredited” childcare facilities, and private school preschool classes. Together, these centers are already serving more than 20,500 children, a large number of whom are three and four years of age.

Here lies the potential for the orderly, rapid growth of Pre-K. Across Arkansas, through recruitment, technical assistance and professional development, many of these children’s centers could begin to convert some of their classrooms and centers to Pre-K. It is the best route for quick and reliable expansion. It is a practice that has been tried successfully in other states. Converting existing early childhood programs to high-quality Pre-K can accelerate the growth of Pre-K in Arkansas.

High-Quality Pre-K

Fortunately, Arkansas has one of the nation’s highest sets of standards for assuring high-quality Pre-K. Over the last two years, the National Center for Early Childhood Education has ranked Arkansas at the top among states for quality standards. This is a tribute to the state’s early childhood education leaders, past and present, and to the administrators of DHHS’ Division of Early Childhood Education.

This excellent start must be continued, as Pre-K expands and matures over time. It is far easier to articulate and apply high standards in a small program than to implement high standards year after year in every Pre-K classroom in a growing statewide program. There lies the future challenge for high-quality Pre-K in Arkansas.

To meet this upcoming challenge, professional development will be the crucial factor. The state must assure that each prospective and current Pre-K teacher has regular, high-quality professional assistance and development, especially including mentoring in the actual classroom. As a seasoned Pre-K educator has observed: “Most three- and four-year-olds learn playing on the floor, and that is where teachers must teach – and where they must learn the appropriate, effective methods of teaching.”

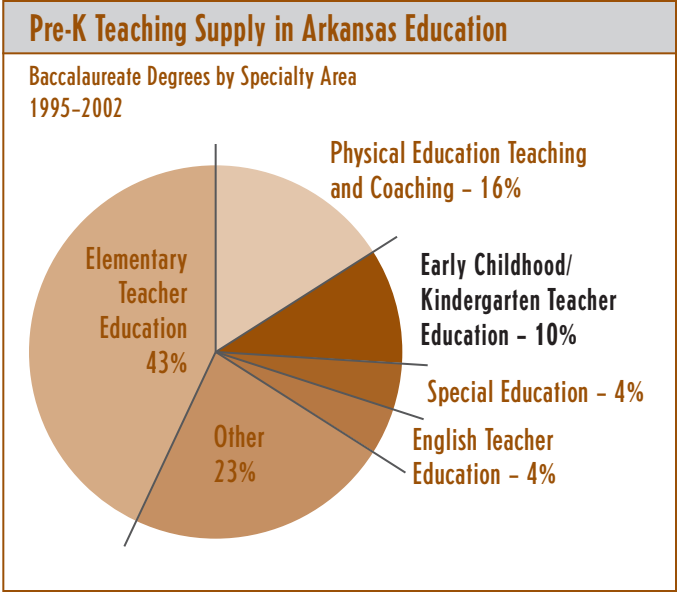
Also, in accordance with both best practices and the 2003 enacting legislation, the state must evaluate on-site, local Pre-K programs and measure appropriately the educational value of the whole Pre-K program over time. These evaluations should include instruments that not only judge quality and impact but also are “value-added” by assisting Pre-K programs and teachers with feedback that can help them improve the educational and social quality of their classrooms over time.

Pre-K Teaching Staff

As Pre-K grows, Arkansas must also enlarge its own supply of highly qualified teachers who can teach in Pre-K classrooms. The state programs do not pay high enough salaries to rely upon competitive pay to attract teachers from other states. Arkansas also should learn from its own past mistakes in other special fields of teaching such as high-school math and middle-grades sciences where shortages in qualified teachers are creating severe problems for students’ opportunities to learn. In effect, Arkansas must grow its own qualified teachers for Pre-K.

The state is at a good starting point. From 1995-2002 (the latest available data), the schools of education in Arkansas colleges and universities produced 1,200 graduates with a specialty in the general field of early childhood education. This number constituted approximately 10 percent of all graduates in education over seven years and was the third largest segment of future teachers behind elementary school majors and physical education majors.

With the continued growth of Pre-K, Arkansas schools of education will need to do more. They will need to graduate a larger number of highly qualified teachers specifically with training in early childhood education, and the state may need to develop new strategies for incentives and recruitment to assure that a sufficient number of college students graduate with this specialty. In addition, the state will need to assist teachers and paraprofessionals in existing early childhood education programs, especially Head Start and “quality accredited” child centers, to upgrade their credentials and skills. SEF has helped schools of education in the South in the past implement remarkably successful “grow your own” teacher training programs that have both increased the teacher supply and assured racial diversity in the teaching



Source: Arkansas Department of Higher Education

force (Beatriz Chu Clewell and Ana Maria Villegas, *Absence Unexcused: Ending Teacher Shortages in High-Need Areas*, The Urban League, 2001).

Access and Equity

If Pre-K in Arkansas is able to fulfill its miraculous education and economic promise, it will need to reach the children who need the program most. For this simple reason, the state must undertake special efforts to assure that the program grows and succeeds over time in Arkansas’ poorest sections and neighborhoods.

As of early 2006, too many children in low-income areas of the state were still not participating in Pre-K. For example, several Arkansas counties with the lowest levels of Pre-K enrollment included some of the state’s poorest counties. These underserved, low-income counties include significant percentages of both black and white poverty. All need additional efforts for outreach, planning, and longer-term development to assure that Pre-K helps the children who need it most.

In addition, the state must be vigilant in the future to assure that African American children are not left behind in Pre-K expansion. As a group, these children in Arkansas are scoring lowest today in K-12 tests, and studies suggest that Pre-K can help advance these children's future academic and social development often by the largest margins. Although current, available information is incomplete, data from the Arkansas Department of Education (ADE) indicates that in some counties, primarily in the lower Delta, the state will need to make greater efforts to assure larger participation by African American children (compare maps in Appendix 2 and Appendix 4). For example, Pre-K serves less than 17 percent of eligible children in Lincoln, a county where 100 percent of the Pre-K children are African American.

Also, in the western part of the state, where several local communities now have significant Hispanic populations, Pre-K appears to be under-serving eligible students. The ADE data on Pre-K enrollment by race and ethnicity also suggest that Hispanic children are under-represented in existing Pre-K classes located in public schools.

Because Arkansans believe in an America of opportunity and fairness, the state should make special efforts to ensure that Pre-K is available to these children. These communities also embody where Pre-K can have the largest gains for future students and the future of the state.

Program Integration and Innovation

Pre-K is developing in Arkansas as a grand experiment for public-private education. Arkansas Pre-K today is inside and outside of K-12 schools, inside public schools, institutions and centers, as well as inside private ones. For example, at the beginning of 2006, 48 percent of the Pre-K classrooms were located in agencies, programs and institutions that are not a part of the K-12 public schools.

This diverse system for delivering education to our youngest children can have some distinct advantages, but it requires clear and effective strategies to align and integrate Pre-K education with kindergarten and elementary schools, especially through the 3rd grade, despite the separate, different nature of Pre-K agencies. Optimally, teachers from Pre-K through the third grade should share, coordinate and align the learning plans for *each* child in *each* Pre-K classroom.

This type of seamless integration of curriculum and learning is also a big challenge. To make this kind of integration actually happen, the state must have a workable, flexible structure for cooperation. Luckily, Arkansas already has such a model in the School for the 21st Century. This cooperative network of schools – known as the 21-C Network – has joined schools together across the state to promote coordinated planning, evaluation and implementation of innovative methods of teaching and learning. The Winthrop Rockefeller Foundation and Yale University's Bush Center, started by one of the authors of the Head Start program, support the 21-C Network. The Network's six primary principles and program components include:

- 1) strong parental support and involvement;
- 2) universal access to child care;
- 3) non-compulsory programs;
- 4) focus

on the overall development of the child; 5) high-quality programming; and 6) professional training and advancement opportunities. These components reflect the basic elements of a high-quality Pre-K program. As of 2006, Arkansas' 21-C schools were in at least 33 communities and plan to continue to expand (Appendix 6).

The importance of networks such as 21-C lie not only in their cooperation, integration and the high quality of their programs, but also as the vehicle for spurring and sharing innovation. Arkansas should build on this base of existing 21-C schools to ensure that Pre-K education flows naturally into early elementary education for every child and to have a flexible structure for private and public agencies to participate in a network that facilitates coordination, high quality and innovation across traditional boundaries.

Coordination Between State Agencies

The organization of Arkansas Pre-K is different from most other states. In Arkansas, the Department of Health and Human Services, not the Department of Education, administers pre-kindergarten. The enabling legislation of 2003 provides for some areas of shared responsibility between the two for establishing education standards.

There are real advantages in this arrangement since most of Arkansas' other early childhood services inside and outside of the ABC program are located in DHHS. Yet, on the state level, just as on the local level, there will be a growing need for better methods of sharing, coordination and joint decision-making among state agencies as Pre-K grows.

More on Arkansas Pre-K ... on the Web

www.southerneducation.org

Additional maps, graphs, charts, tables and details about Arkansas Pre-K and other early childhood education programs across the state are available at SEF's web site. Visit the site at www.southerneducation.org and go to "Programs."

For example, the two state departments will need to develop, coordinate and provide effective professional development and curriculum alignment for Pre-K and early elementary school teachers. They must share the development and coordination of assessment tools, tests and data collection. In addition, the two state departments must share responsibility for working with schools of education, private K-12 schools, and private and public agencies to facilitate and develop both the expansion of Pre-K coverage and the implementation of standards for high quality.

These future demands for increased, efficient interagency cooperation will require that both departments build new relationships and assign new, permanent responsibilities to their divisions and their leaders.

arkansas in the 21st century

Pre-K: Key to Early Childhood Development and Education

Pre-kindergarten for three- and four-year-old children is the keystone for building Arkansas' future in the 21st century. At the same time, as scientific research has now proven conclusively, children start learning and growing their life skills much earlier than 3 years of age. Even before the moment of birth, children begin to shape themselves and their life chances and emerge into this world like a sponge absorbing knowledge and skills by whatever they hear, touch, smell and perceive. The experiences and understanding of the earliest years do not pre-determine a child's life, but they help determine a child's life chances.

For this reason, the state of Arkansas needs voluntary Pre-K as the keystone for a broader mandate to help, and where needed, to improve the development of the approximately 180,000 children under the age of five in Arkansas. The state's various ABC programs were established to fulfill this overall goal, and these programs – Pre-K, HIPPIY, and PAT – constitute its foremost continuing initiative along these lines.

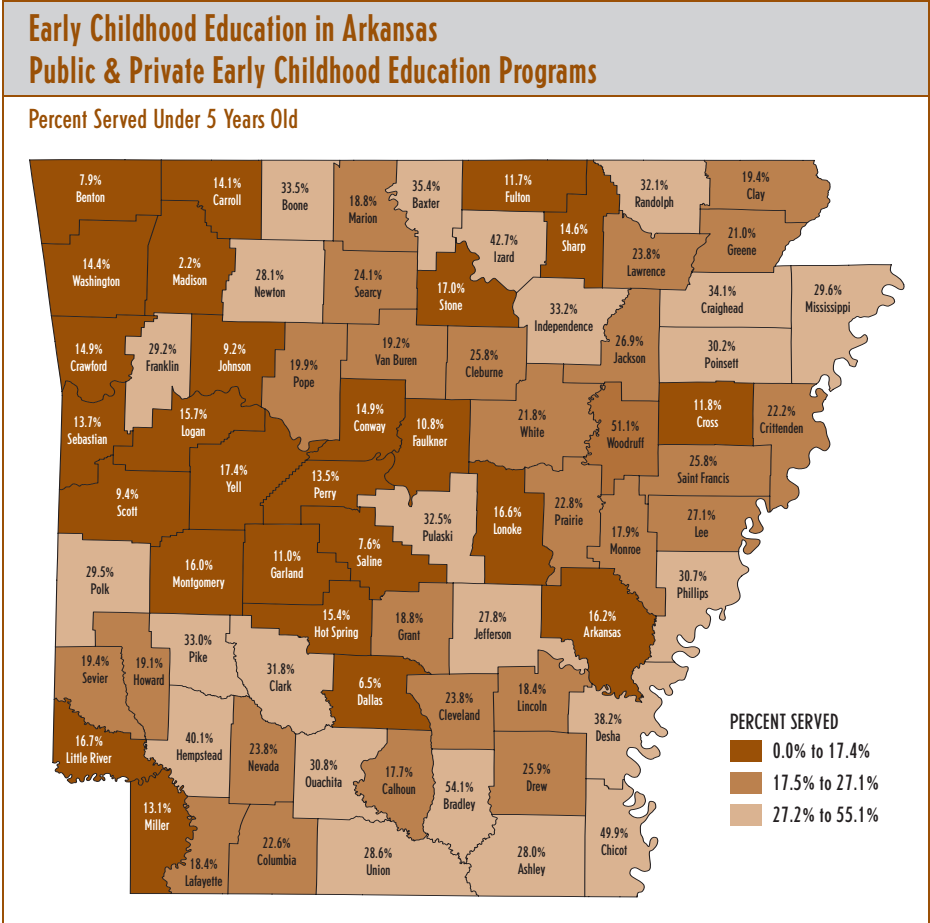
Other programs in Arkansas, both private and public, also attempt to promote the development of children under five. These programs primarily include Head Start and childcare facilities that have been "quality accredited" by state or national professional agencies. In addition, there are preschool programs operating as a part of Arkansas' private schools.

Unlike the bulk of other childcare arrangements that Arkansas parents find and use for small children, these programs have some intentional, evident components for early childhood development and education. When tallied across the state, all of these programs in 2005-2006 served a little more than 35,500 children – an estimated one in five of all children under five years of age in Arkansas.



The statewide pattern of services for childhood development and education by county is very mixed and reflects generally the same pattern as Pre-K programs. Bradley County leads the state in serving 54 percent of its children under five. Woodruff County serves 50 percent. Madison is last among counties, serving only two percent of children under five. In Pulaski County, where over 25,000 children under five live – the largest number in the state – an estimated one in three are served by an intentional program with child development or education components.

Arkansas has miles to go before it begins to reach most of its youngest children with some age-appropriate assistance in developing their life skills. Pre-K is, and should continue to be, the first and most significant strategy by which Arkansas tries to provide young children with a better chance to succeed in life. Pre-K is the key, but it should never be the single way by which Arkansans develop their youngest children for the 21st century.



Source: Arkansas Department of Health and Human Services, Arkansas Department of Education, U.S. Census Bureau, Arkansas Head Start Association, National Center for Education Statistics

conclusions

Conclusions and Recommendations

By every reliable research-based indicator and predictor, Pre-K of high quality is Arkansas' key to better education, increased income, an improved quality of life and a more robust economic growth. Of course, two years of early childhood education and development alone cannot transform a whole state. There must be an adequate, accessible and equitable educational system from kindergarten through college, and the state will need to undertake other efficient strategies for long-term economic development. Still, Pre-K programs can tap the miracle in each and every child to do his or her best in life and, if brought to full coverage, can unlock a series of changes and life chances that in the aggregate have the power to make Arkansas' future better than its past. It holds more potential for a return on investment and economic gain than any other state strategy for educational advancement or economic development within Arkansas' reach.

Arkansas already has made important strides that have put it in the company of up-and-coming states that are attempting to lead the nation now and in the future by investing wisely and rapidly in high-quality Pre-K. Now is the time for Arkansas to re-double its effort and extend its reach in this vital field of education and economic development. The future of Pre-K in Arkansas is now.

In order to seize this rare opportunity to move ahead and not lag behind the nation, Arkansas leaders must take decisive steps in several areas to accelerate the state momentum towards developing a voluntary, universal system of Pre-K for all children that becomes available first to those children who are most in need.



Primarily, these necessary steps include the legislature allocating existing and new state monies, as they become available, to assure the rapid, reliable growth of Pre-K over the next few years – at minimum to the point that all currently eligible children have a chance to be served. In addition, the Arkansas Department of Health and Human Services and Arkansas Department of Education needs to facilitate and establish new processes, networks and standards for extending Pre-K growth in coverage, program quality, professional development, integration and innovation, equity, evaluation and coordination. The education leaders of Arkansas need to organize working groups that develop and propose plans and policies for a “grow your own” strategy that can assure a diverse pipeline of qualified Pre-K teachers, as well as effective professional development.

In particular, the Arkansas legislature should consider the following:

- Provide an additional \$20 million annual appropriation for the growth of pre-kindergarten (Pre-K) in 2006-2007, when it is next in session, and continue to make state appropriations for each year afterwards until the state has established a universal Pre-K system that is supported by regular state revenues.
- Authorize the Department of Health and Human Services to undertake activities and to spend funds, when necessary, for the development and recruitment of Pre-K centers and classrooms on a two-year cycle so that the Department and local agencies may have a planning process of 24 months, when necessary, to develop Pre-K programs in local areas of need.

Specifically, the Arkansas Department of Health and Human Services and/or the Department of Education should consider the following:

- Report on Pre-K programs only as full-day, center-based or classroom-based programs separately tallied and accounted for from its other ABC programs so that the legislature and general public may understand clearly the status of Pre-K in Arkansas.
- Undertake an effective, multi-year plan for the orderly recruitment, outreach and professional development of Head Start programs, “quality accredited” child care centers and private school Pre-K programs in order to convert some agencies’ existing classes to Pre-K classrooms with qualified teachers. This initiative should take place first in those areas where Pre-K enrollment remains far below the numbers of eligible children. This approach constitutes the most efficient, quickest means to accelerate rapid growth of high-quality Pre-K in the state.
- Provide or contract with proven providers to offer *on-site* regular and high-quality professional development for all Pre-K teachers, especially new teachers, during each year.
- Facilitate and support the creation of networks of cooperation and innovation, such as the 21-C Network, across the state.

Pre-K programs can tap the miracle
in each and every child to do his or
her best in life...

- Assign specific performance-based duties among department leaders for maintaining interagency cooperation and departmental responsibility to provide alignment of curricula and teaching from Pre-K through the 3rd grade; to assure access and equity without regard to race or ethnicity; to align testing instruments for long-range evaluation of program impact; and to assure that the priorities of the enacting legislation are met throughout each period of Pre-K growth.

The leaders of Arkansas' schools of education also should consider:

- Establishing a working group to develop and present an effective plan and proposal to the appropriate state departments and the legislature on how Arkansas can undertake a comprehensive strategy to “grow its own” Pre-K teachers workforce for the future.

These specific recommendations are offered for consideration as important next steps. Certainly, they are not the only means for moving forward with Pre-K in Arkansas. They do identify the type of actions that the state of Arkansas must undertake on the primary issues, if Pre-K is to be more than a lost opportunity for Arkansas' young children and the state's future. Above all else, Arkansans and their leaders must understand and act to establish Pre-K as a vital part of Arkansas education across the state.

Now is the time to act. Now is the time to invest in a future for Arkansas that is better for more people than was the past. Truly, today, now, Pre-K is the key to Arkansas' opportunity of a lifetime.

Appendix 1

Estimates by County of the Percent of Eligible Children Served by Pre-K					
County Name	Percent of 3-4 Year Olds Below 200% Poverty Served	County Name	Percent of 3-4 Year Olds Below 200% Poverty Served	County Name	Percent of 3-4 Year Olds Below 200% Poverty Served
Arkansas State	29.9%	Garland	18.1%	Ouachita	43.3%
Arkansas	4.7%	Grant	18.2%	Perry	22.9%
Ashley	54.3%	Greene	45.6%	Phillips	18.6%
Baxter	9.3%	Hempstead	51.0%	Pike	7.1%
Benton	10.6%	Hot Spring	11.7%	Poinsett	70.2%
Boone	44.0%	Howard	44.1%	Polk	46.0%
Bradley	77.9%	Independence	71.9%	Pope	63.0%
Calhoun	33.3%	Izard	30.6%	Prairie	0.0%
Carroll	14.8%	Jackson	45.6%	Pulaski	56.2%
Chicot	44.5%	Jefferson	12.8%	Randolph	50.0%
Clark	32.3%	Johnson	0.0%	Saline	0.0%
Clay	24.0%	Lafayette	0.0%	Scott	17.2%
Cleburne	6.8%	Lawrence	43.6%	Searcy	25.5%
Cleveland	16.8%	Lee	37.6%	Sebastian	4.5%
Columbia	34.5%	Lincoln	16.9%	Sevier	24.5%
Conway	23.6%	Little River	31.1%	Sharp	17.4%
Craighead	70.1%	Logan	37.6%	St. Francis	24.4%
Crawford	26.4%	Lonoke	24.7%	Stone	37.7%
Crittenden	15.2%	Madison	0.0%	Union	44.3%
Cross	4.6%	Marion	33.5%	Van Buren	48.3%
Dallas	0.0%	Miller	14.0%	Washington	16.3%
Desha	48.7%	Mississippi	33.9%	White	14.6%
Drew	48.8%	Monroe	18.5%	Woodruff	32.1%
Faulkner	21.9%	Montgomery	44.6%	Yell	35.3%
Franklin	0.0%	Nevada	26.5%		
Fulton	10.8%	Newton	32.7%		

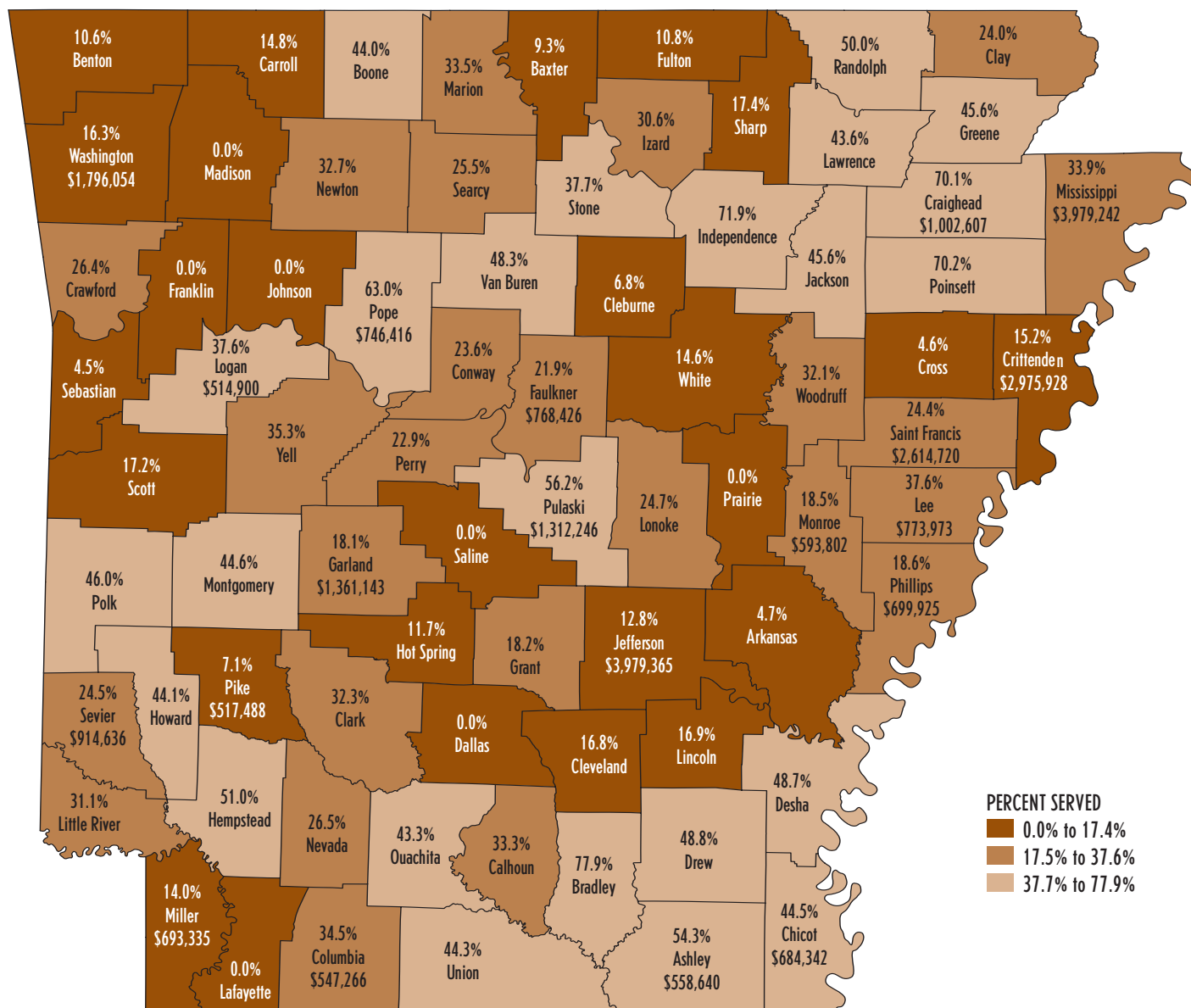
Source: Arkansas Department of Health and Human Services, Arkansas Department of Education, SEF Calculations, U.S. Census Bureau

appendices

Appendix 2

Arkansas Pre-K 2005–2006

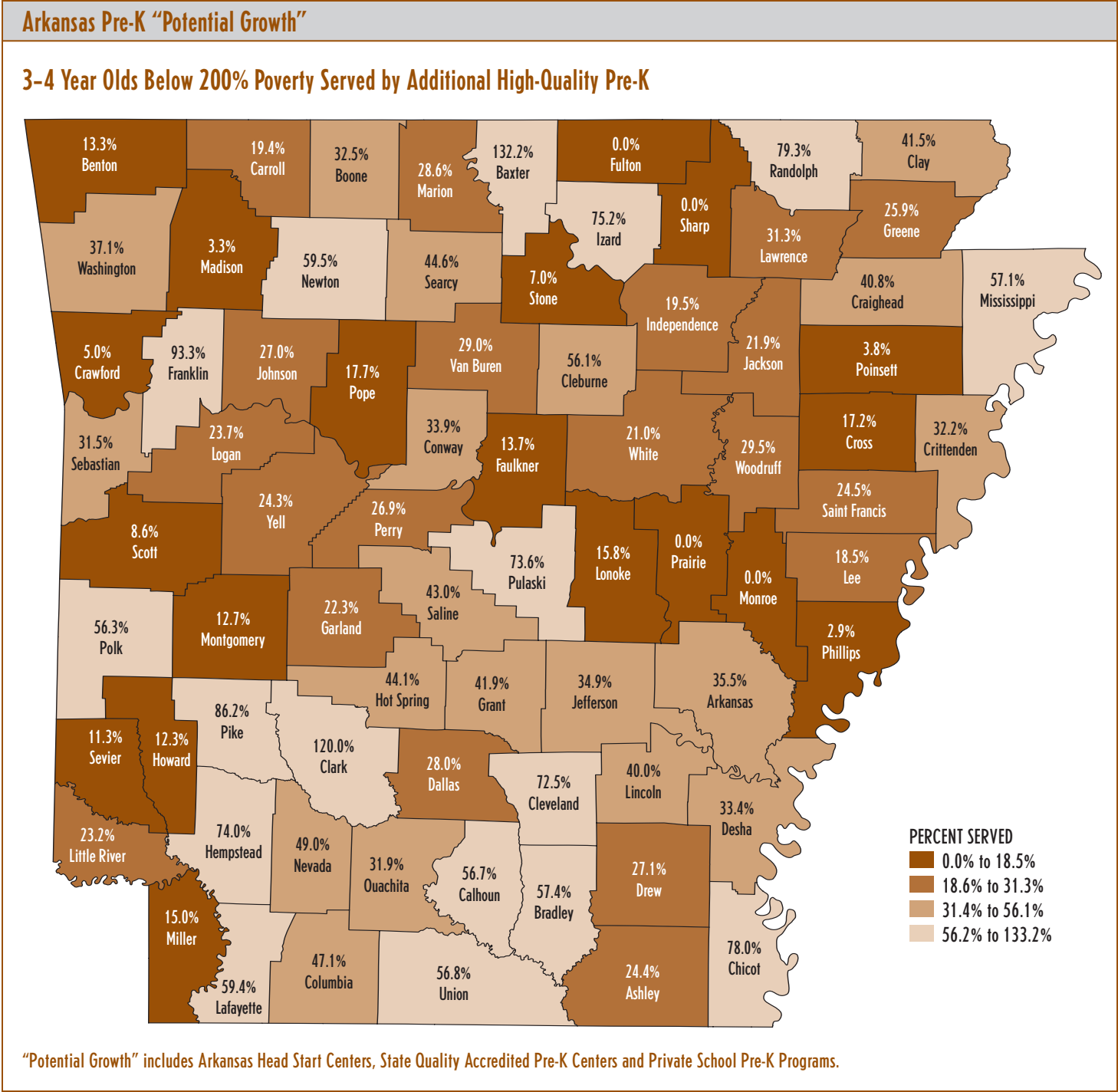
3–4 Year Olds Below 200% Poverty Served by Pre-K, With Unspent “Poverty Money”



“Poverty Money” is Arkansas Public School Districts’ Unspent Allocated National School Lunch Act Funds, as of July 2005.

Source: Arkansas Department of Health and Human Services, Arkansas Department of Education, U.S. Census Bureau

Appendix 3

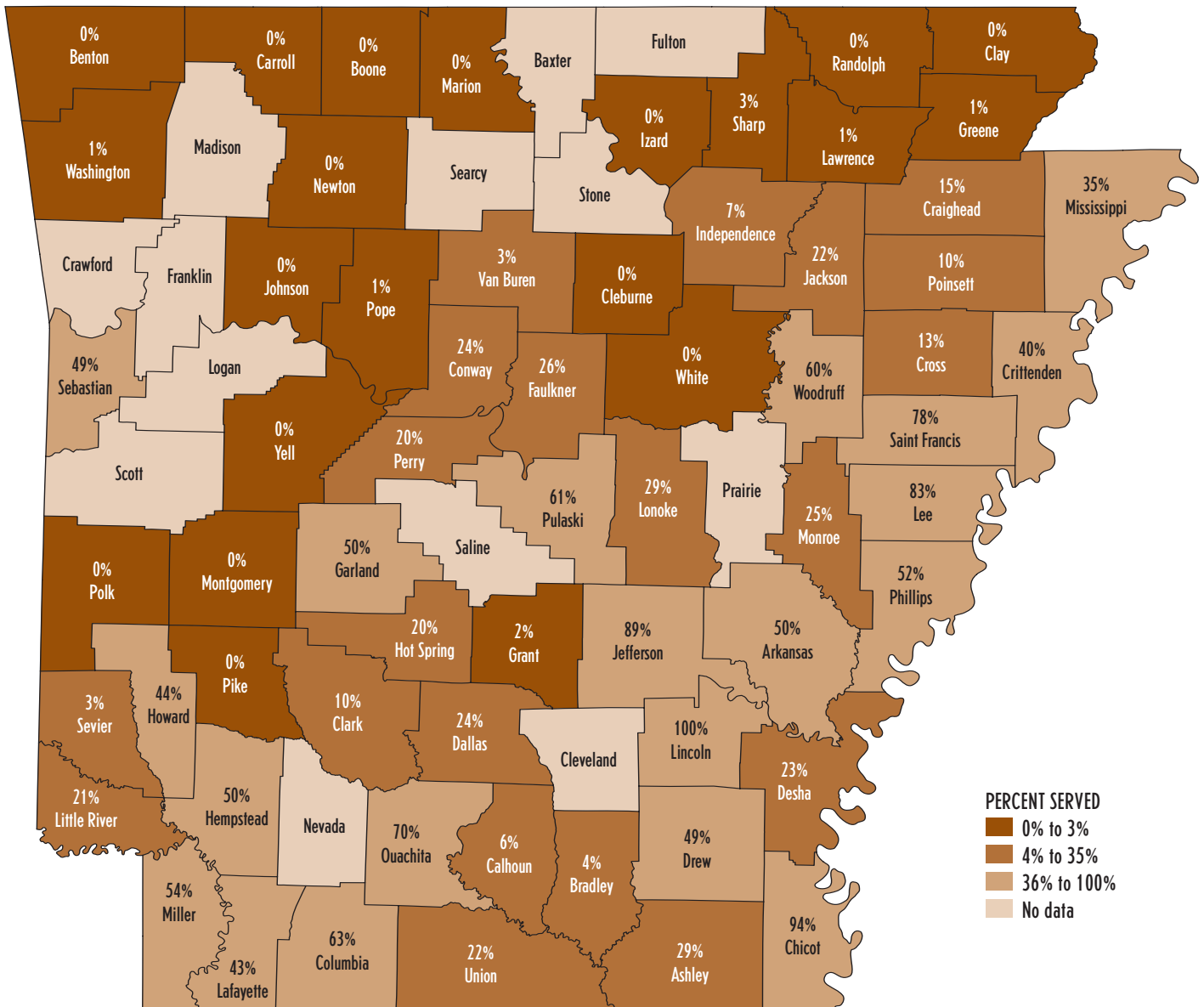


Source: Arkansas Department of Health and Human Services, Arkansas Department of Education, U.S. Census Bureau, Arkansas Head Start Association, National Center for Education Statistics

Appendix 4

African American Enrollment in Arkansas Pre-K

Percent African American Students in Public School Pre-K

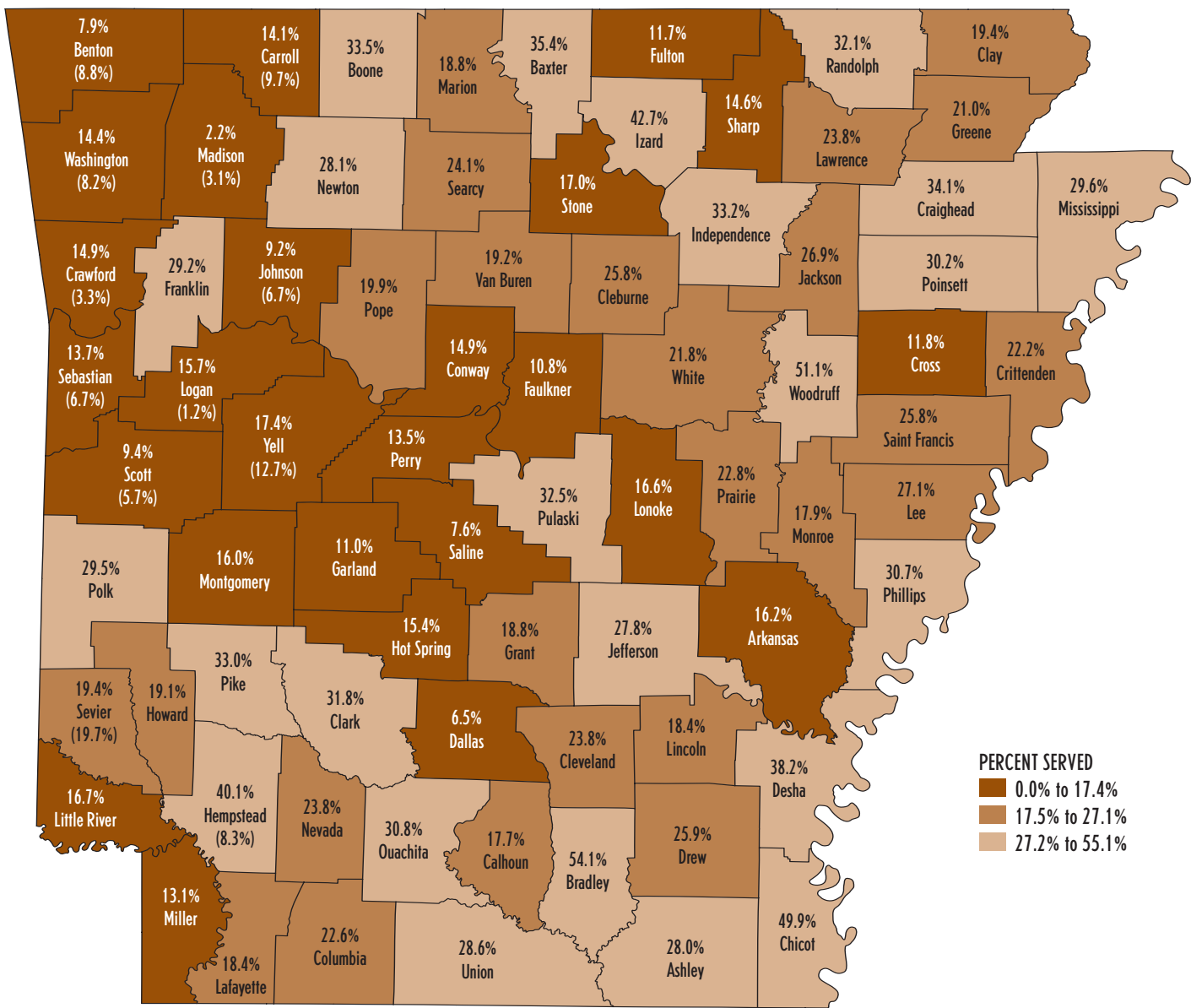


Source: Arkansas Department of Health and Human Services, Arkansas Department of Education

Appendix 5

Early Childhood Education in Arkansas Public and Private Early Childhood Education Programs

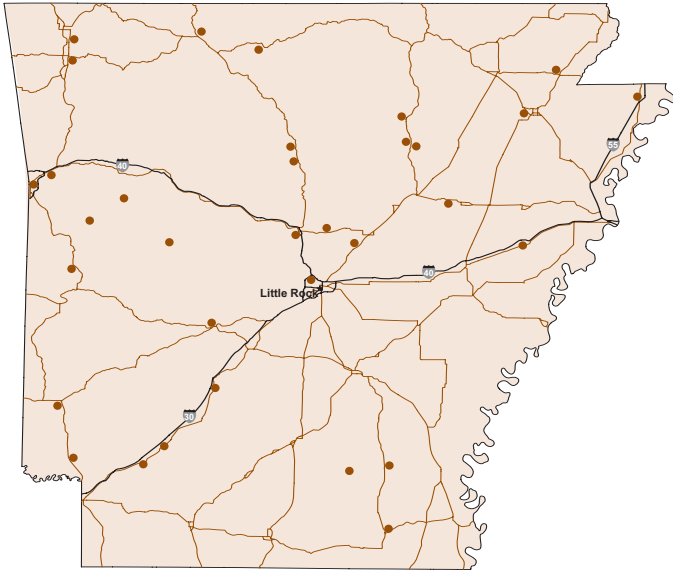
Percent Served Under 5 Years Old, With Hispanic Population (in parenthesis)



Source: Arkansas Department of Health and Human Services, Arkansas Department of Education, U.S. Census Bureau, Arkansas Heard Start Association, National Center for Education Statistics

APPENDIX 6

School of the 21st Century in Arkansas



Source: School of the 21st Century in Arkansas, Yale University

School/District	County
Arkadelphia Public Schools	Clark
Ashdown Public Schools	Little River
Augusta Child Care Center	Woodruff
Batesville School District	Independence
Cabot School District	Lonoke
Cedar Ridge School District	Independence
Clinton School District	Van Buren
Conway Public School District	Faulkner
Emmet School District	Nevada
Forrest City School District	St. Francis
Fort Smith School District	Sebastian
Hamburg School District	Ashley
Hot Springs School District	Garland
Jefferson Elementary/Fayetteville School District	Washington
King Elementary/Van Buren School District	Crawford
Lockesburg School District	Sevier
Magazine School District	Logan
Mississippi County Head Start	Mississippi
Monticello School District	Drew
Nettleton School District	Craighead
North Little Rock	Pulaski
Omaha School District	Boone
Paragould – School of the 21st Century	Greene
Paris School District	Logan
Rogers School District	Benton
Southside School District	Independence
Southside/ Bee Branch School District	Van Buren
Southwest Arkansas Educational Cooperative (Hope and Bradley School Districts)	Hempstead
Two Rivers School District	Yell
Vilonia School District	Faulkner
Waldron School District	Scott
Warren School District/SEACBEC	Bradley
Yellville-Summit School District	Marion

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