star ACADEMY

# Arkansas

## 2022-2023 Year End Report

The Star Academy Program is supported by Nola Education. All data contained in this annual report was released by school districts and the State of Arkansas.

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## Executive Summary

The 2022-2023 Year End Report for the State of Arkansas showcases the impact the Star Academy program has had on students, teachers, districts, and communities during the course of this academic school year. The program has helped hundreds of students across the state by improving attendance, behavior, and academic performance.

Designed to re-engage at-risk students who have fallen behind, Star Academy uses a hands-on, STEM-inspired curriculum that is aligned to Arkansas state standards, as well as district-specific standards. Instead of a traditional blackboard-and-lecture style of learning, students experience interactive project-based learning in science, math, English language arts, and social studies. Students participate in daily lessons that capture their attention, and are provided opportunities to practice skills in problem-solving and communication.

Star Academy also exposes students to employment possibilities and potential careers, and directly ties what they are learning to over 117 specific career tracks. This level of career exposure not only sparks a new interest in learning for students, but it has also caught the attention of state and municipal authorities interested in workforce readiness.

*The thing that really struck me about Star Academy was that it provided an opportunity for our kids who had not been successful in a traditional setting to find success. There were students and parents who were leery about what the experience would look like, but when they were able to get their hands on all of the equipment, they were quickly able to see a different setting for education and find success.*

John "Skipper" Ward

*Superintendent, Magnolia School District*

Section 01

# Star Academy History

The history of Star Academy begins in 2004, when a team of educators set out to create an educational program for overage students with the goal of keeping them in school, advancing them to their appropriate grade levels, exposing them to career possibilities, and imparting social skills that would help them throughout their lives.

The first Star Academy sites were rolled out across the state of South Carolina. The program eventually spread to over 100 school systems in 15 states, with new Academies being established each year.

To date, over 20,000 students have passed through Star Academy programs in rural and urban school districts from Maine to Arizona. The mission remains to re-engage students who have lost interest in their education, catch them up, and help get them get back on track with the skills, hope and confidence they need to live successful lives as productive citizens.

Star Academy's relationship with Arkansas dates back to 2020, when the Arkansas Division of Workforce Services funded the state's first two Star Academy projects (launched in 2021). With the success of these two Star Academy sites, nine more sites were added, six of them launching in 2022 and three more in 2023.

## Partners in Arkansas

### 2021 Programs

- Dumas
- Hope

### 2022 Programs

- Magnolia
- Pine Buff Focus Academy
- Pine Bluff Explore Academy
- Blytheville
- El Dorado
- Osceola
- Strong-Huttig

### 2023 Programs

- Camden-Fairview
- Lakeside
- Stuttgart

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Section 02

# 2022-2023 Usage Report

## A. Highlights - Pine Bluff

2022-2023 was a year of impressive successes across Arkansas' ten Star Academy sites. Over 600 at-risk students experienced a new kind of learning that boosted their academic growth, social skills, and determination to finish school and pursue a fulfilling career.

### Attendance, Discipline and Academic Improvements

- 94% attendance rate for 7th graders and 92% attendance rate for 8th graders (compared to low 80s the previous year.)
- Fewer than 10 discipline referrals for the entire school year
- 87% improvement in reading fluency

### What Students are Saying

- 93% of students felt valued as a student
- 98% of students felt they were being adequately prepared for high school and life after

### What Parents are Saying

- 100% of parents felt their child was valued as a student
- 100% of parents are satisfied with the quality of education

### What Students are Learning

- 110 Learning Modules were used
- 339 State curriculum standards
- 418 career paths exposed

## B. Implemented in the State's Most Challenged Schools

Because the Star Academy program is designed to re-engage at-risk students, Academies typically are found in areas with lower-socioeconomic statuses and schools ranking lower among peers in the state.

| Location | School | School Rating | ESSA School Index Score |
|---|---|---|---|
| Blytheville | Blytheville Middle School | F | 50.58% |
| Camden | Camden Fairview Middle School | D | 54.52% |
| Dumas | Dumas Middle School | D | 58.31% |
| El Dorado | El Dorado High School | D | 60.22% |
| Hope | Yerger Middle School | D | 54.03% |
| Lake Village | Lakeside Middle School | D | 59.36% |
| Magnolia | Magnolia Middle School | D | 60.11% |
| Osceola | Choices Learning Center | D | 55.06% |
| Pine Bluff | Explore Academy | F | 49.06% |
| Pine Bluff | Focus Academy | F | 49.06% |
| Strong-Huttig | Strong High School | D | 55.26% |
| Stuttgart | Stuttgart Junior High School | C | 57.56% |

## C. Program Description

Star Academy classroom environments have proven to be inviting for students, to better capture interest and encourage collaboration with peers. The classroom design and learning "Modules" make Star Academy classrooms different from traditional ones, where at-risk students often become disengaged and fall behind.

Star Academy Modules are hands-on, engaging lessons with activities that incorporate items used in the real-world workplace, guiding students through multi-curricular coursework. A Module typically spans seven days, with each day of the first six building upon content from the previous day, and on the seventh day a capstone project.

Each Module is designed to enhance student engagement, highlighting the practical applications of the Module's content, while relating the student's learning experience with a career, trade skill, or real-world challenge.

Modules include worksheets, teacher tips, vocabulary sheets, pre- and post-tests, knowledge checkpoints and links to career enrichment.

***The Modules also allow the students to see what career paths are available with the subject matter tied to the Modules. These students are students who excel with hands-on activities versus a more traditional classroom setting.***

*Crissy Klober*

*Assistant Principal, Magnolia Middle School*

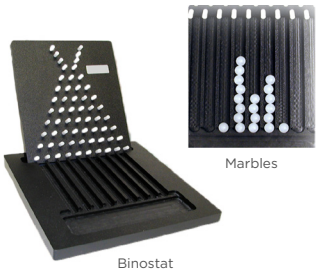
**Below are two lessons used in Star Academies, illustrating the hands-on, project-based learning approach. Students are able to collaborate with other students on projects such as these, strengthening their skills in communication and problem-solving.**

## Statistical Analysis
### Binostat

**Parts Included:**

- Bionstat Boards
  - 60 pegs
  - 100 plastic marble

*Students will need a pencil and Binostat WS from SMN to complete activity.*




**Purpose:**

Students will use the Binostat and their statistical analysis skills to calculate the odds of a marble landing in a certain row. Students will first map out the paths the marbles can take using the Binostat Worksheet, to determine how the probabilities change as more rows are added. The objective of this session is for students to calculate probabilities for specific events by generating Pascal's triangle.

## Instructions

1. Set up the Binostat peg board on a flat surface with the holes facing up. Firmly push the pegs into the holes until all holes are filled.
2. Insert the end of the Binostat peg board with the groove (located just below the row with 10 pegs) into the long hole in the base. Hold up the base a bit and angle the bottom on the Binostat peg board forward and set the two pieces down. The two pieces should fit together so the Binostat peg board is supported at a slight angle.

**Activity**

1. Place a pencil under the triangle directly below the line with three pegs.
2. Notice the marble has only two paths
3. Move the pencil down one line
4. Notice the ball has multiple paths, sometimes ending in the same spot.
5. Map out the number of paths to end at each spot on the "Binostat" Worksheet, working your way down lines using the pencil.
6. After completely illustrating Pascal's triangle, student will take turns dropping marbles through the slot.
7. Predict where the marble will end up, and if correct, give yourself 2 points, if you were off by one row, give yourself 1 point. If you were off by 2 slots you receive 0 points.
8. The player with the most points wins.

### Things to Note

Binostat WS Answer Key is provided under Related Content.
Binostat must be level to work properly. If not level, slide a few sheets of paper under to make level.

## Natural Disasters
### Stream Table Kit

**Parts Included:**

- a plastic tray
- drain trough
- elevation wedge
- siphon tube
- hose clamp (module BOM) - Natural Disasters
- gallon bucket (module BOM) - Natural Disasters

**Purpose:**

A stream table allows students to explore the intricate processes of rivers and streams in a hands-on and visual manner. It enables students to witness erosion, sediment transport, and the formation of landforms. In Natural Disasters students will use the stream table to generate wind waves, tsunamis, and floods. In Sustainable Agriculture, students will use the long trough and elevation wedge to test soil erosion.

## Instructions

**Natural Disasters**

1. Attach the piece of plastic tubing to the drain in one end of the stream table. Secure the tubing with the clamp provided to prevent leakage around the tubing connection.
2. Place the plastic bucket on the floor and place the other end of the plastic tubing in the bucket.

**Activity**

1. Discover the effects of waves on shorelines. (410-415)
2. Tsunami Generator (423-425)
3. Use the stream table to discover the effects of a flash flood. (511-514)

### Things to Note

You will need at least 5 feet of space for setup. Keep away from power sources/electronics. The stream table utilizes sand and water spills are likely. It is ok to reuse sand from one class to the next (sand may be wet). **There should be student to student discussions based on the questions the teacher on screen is asking.** Students may need to pause to answer all questions.

## Curriculum Modules Used in Arkansas

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 1. Animals | 21. Geometric Packing | 40. Population Perspective |
| 2. Applied Physics | 22. Gravity | 41. Projectile Motion |
| 3. Aquaculture | 23. Gravity of Algebra | 42. Properties of Math |
| 4. Bio-Engineering | 24. Heat & Energy | 43. Reactions |
| 5. Carbon Footprint | 25. Home Makeover | 44. Rocks & Resources |
| 6. Chemical Math | 26. Hotel Management | 45. Simple Machines |
| 7. Climate & Biomes | 27. Immunology | 46. Soils |
| 8. Climate Change | 28. Lenses & Optics | 47. Sports Statistics |
| 9. Confident Consumer | 29. Lights & Lasers | 48. Statistical Analysis |
| 10. Dynamic Earth | 30. Material Science | 49. Supply & Demand |
| 11. Eco-Architecture | 31. Math Behind Your Meals | 50. Sustainable Agriculture |
| 12. Ecology | 32. Microbiology | 51. The Universe |
| 13. Electricity | 33. Mission to Mars | 52. Unsolved Mysteries |
| 14. Environmental Issues | 34. Natural Disasters | 53. Water Management |
| 15. Environmental Math | 35. Nuclear Energy | 54. Water Quality |
| 16. Factoring & Polynomials | 36. Oceanography | 55. Weather |
| 18. Food Science | 37. Organism Reproduction | 56. Weights & Measures |
| 19. Forces | 38. Plants & Pollination | 56. Where in the World |
| 20. Forensic Math | 39. Plastics & Polymers | |

# Examples Of Module Career Linkages

## D. Career Exposure

Students receive exposure to a diverse array of over 100 different career paths throughout the academic year. Each Module is connected to 5-10 specific careers, fostering a direct link between the skills acquired in the classroom and their practical applications in various professional fields.

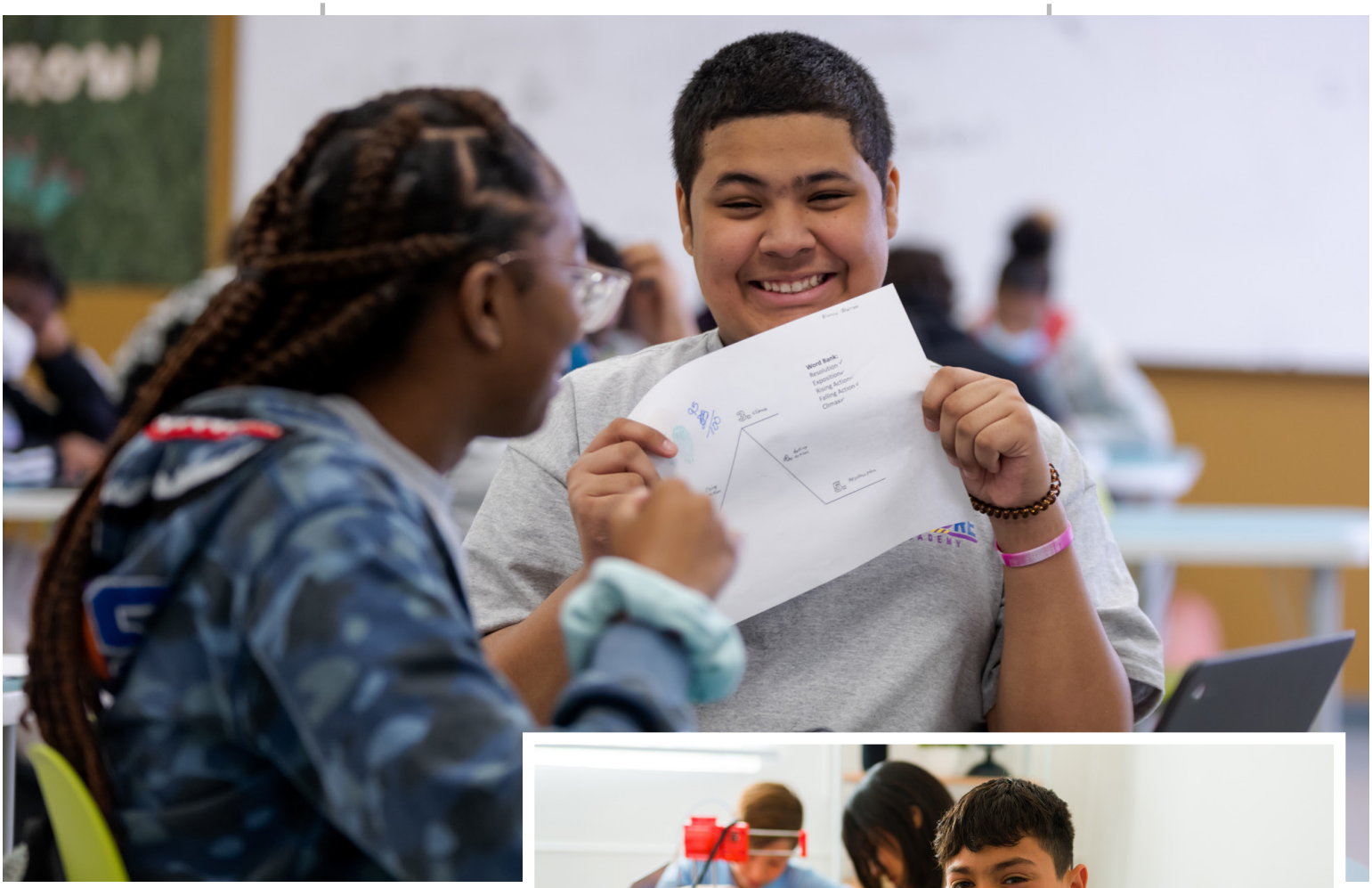
An illustration of this approach is evident at Explore Academy in Pine Bluff. Here, students went beyond traditional classroom boundaries by visiting the University of Arkansas at Pine Bluff (UAPB) Aquaculture center. This excursion allowed them to directly apply knowledge gained from social studies Expeditions and science Modules. Immersed in the intricacies

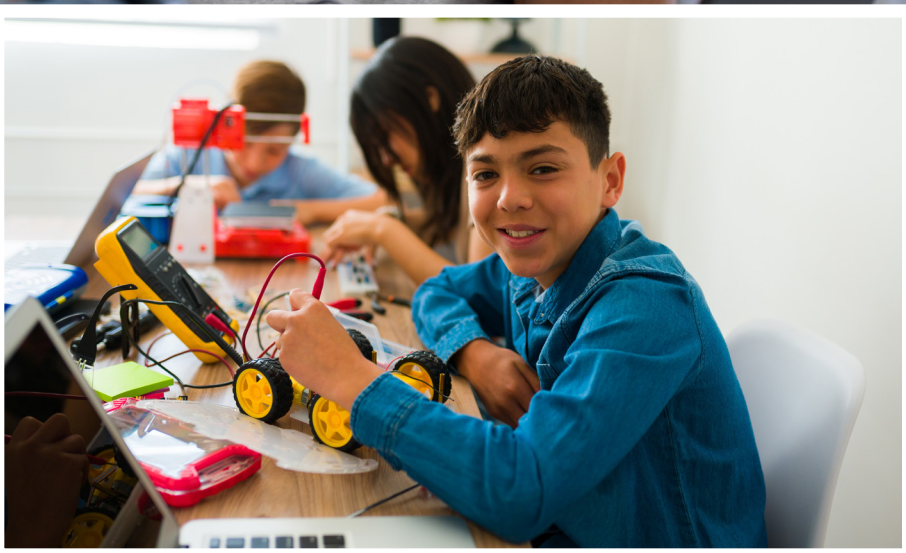
of greenhouses, water levels, and aquaculture practices, students not only absorbed valuable information but also engaged in hands-on experiences. The day concluded with an afternoon of fishing, an experience many students had never had before, allowing them to apply what they had learned in the Aquaculture Module to real life.

*What makes Star Academy special is that it integrates science, technology, engineering, and mathematics into our core subjects. In the classrooms, when they study these subjects, they are able to relate them to careers that they integrate into their core classes.*

Mike Radebaugh

*Principal, Yerger Middle School*





*The conversations in the car have totally changed. He talks about his day and what he did. He also talks about what he wants to be in the future.*

Star Academy Parent

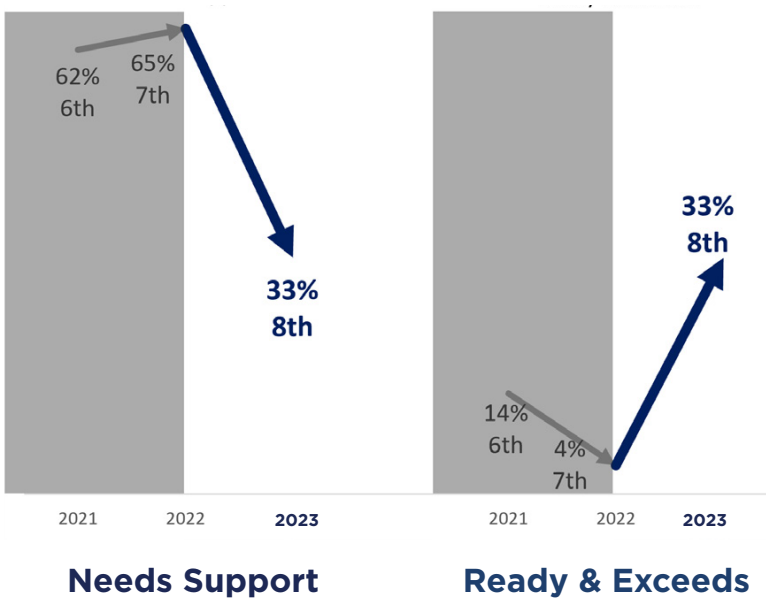
Section 03

# Student Success

## A. Academic Improvements

Throughout Arkansas, Star Academy students have had plenty to brag about across all subject matters. Below are a few highlights.

### Improved Reading Performance




**Before Star Academy was Introduced:**

- ★ 65% of students tested as Needing Support
- ★ Few students met the standard for Ready.
- ★ No students met the standard for Exceeding.

**After One Year in Star Academy:**

- ★ A decrease in 50% of students Needing Support.
- ★ An increase from 4% to 33% in Ready and Exceeding.

### Students Reading at Grade Level Improvements

At the beginning of the 2022-2023 school year, when Star Academy was implemented at Dumas Middle School, only 44% of the students were reading at grade level. By end of the school year, that percentage had increased to 63%.

## Benchmark Assessment Improvements

In January of 2023, students at the two Arkansas Star Academy programs, operating under the names Explore Academy and Focus Academy, were given two benchmark assessment tests. Scores reflected significant improvements for students participating in the Star Academy program:

### After Star Academy was Introduced at Explore Academy:

- ★ 89% of 9th graders advanced two or more grade levels in at least one benchmark assessment.
- ★ 73% of 7th graders advanced one or more grade levels in at least one benchmark assessment. Of this 73%, 45% advanced two or more grade levels.
- ★ 69% of 8th graders advanced one or more grade levels in at least one benchmark assessment. Of this 69%, 44% advanced two or more grade levels.

### After Star Academy was Introduced at Focus Academy:

- ★ 62% of students advanced one or more grade levels in at least one benchmark assessment. Of this 62%, 38% advanced two or more grade levels.

### Benchmark Results from ELA Course

Since Focus Academy's student population is more transient than most, Benchmark Results were reported on students who completed an entire year in the Academy. Benchmark Results from Star Academy ELA course results are shown below.

**ELA (Language Live)**

| | BOY Results (avg) | EOY Results (avg) |
|---|---|---|
| Class 1 | 132 | 533 |
| Class 2 | 591 | 673 |
| Class 3 | 647 | 723 |
| | *BOY - Beginning of Year | *EOY - End of Year |

## B. Students and Parents Approve

Star Academy educates the whole student. This means not just keeping them in school and getting them back on track academically, but also giving them the social skills, discipline, and self-confidence to thrive in a job of their choosing. Students learn to collaborate with peers, manage their time, and prioritize what's important. It's common to see kids who were once distracted and uninvolved in learning make a radical shift towards eager participation and pride in their accomplishments.

### What Students Are Saying

*"I absolutely enjoyed and loved doing all the hands-on science activities!"*

*"This school year has been my most liked school year, and I hope to keep Explore in my heart as I move forward."*

*"I am hoping that the school will add 9th grade next year so I can stay in these classrooms with these teachers."*

*"My most memorable experience was when I spoke in front of the school board and the mayor. I felt very honored because I had never done anything like that before."*

## What Parents Are Saying

*"My child loved the experiments they did at Explore."*

*"My child has made great progress overcoming her anxiety."*

*"I have no doubt that the kids who go through the Explore Academy program will be better off when they go to college and get a job."*

*"They have been challenged in such a way that will reflect in them for their future."*

*"Amazed at the improvement of my child and the dedication of the teachers and principal."*

Section 04

# Education Support

## A. Professional Development Training and Events

Star Academy Professional Development is open to new teachers and administrators of Star Academy. The professional development sessions are hosted and facilitated by NOLA Education and bring together educators for two days of networking and best practices.

NOLA Education trained over 100 educators in the course of four regional trainings in the summer of 2023, in addition to providing on-site training for new teachers and ongoing support throughout the school year.

### Star Academy Regional PD Sites:

- ★ Magnolia Middle School
- ★ NOLA Education Office/Headquarters

### Arkansas Districts Trained:

- ★ Stuttgart Public Schools
- ★ Lakeside Public Schools
- ★ Osceola School District
- ★ Arkansas River Education Service
- ★ Cooperative
- ★ Magnolia School District
- ★ Hope Public Schools
- ★ Strong-Huttig School District
- ★ Camden Fairview Public Schools
- ★ El Dorado School District

## B. Ongoing Educational Services and Support

Every Star Academy site in the state of Arkansas has its own dedicated Education Support Specialist (ESS). The ESS offers comprehensive support services that play a vital role in the success of Star Academy including monthly on-site visits and weekly communication with teachers.

ESSs, Curriculum Coaches, IT Technicians, and Program Liaisons are always just a phone call away. NOLA's Education Services team also offers professional development that enables educators to better understand the at-risk student experience and provides proven techniques to reach them effectively.

*I like the STAR Academy because it's fun, you get to do experiments. My grades are better—this year my grades are on top. I like the work.*

*Star Academy Student*

## C. Teacher Networking Resources

Star Academy educators communicate through the MobilizeTM platform. MobilizeTM is a place for the Star Academy community to meet, network, and learn and support one another. Building a sense of community is key to a successful Star Academy. MobilizeTM offers a platform for Star Academy teachers and administrators to reach out for support as well as to share stories and tips for success. Within the platform, Star Academy educators can connect with other Star Academies nationwide in our Krewe of Astraea group. Content area teachers and administrators also have access to their content groups for more direct content-related support.

## D. Teacher Testimonials

***Last year a 7th grade student came into the Academy. She was behind and a bit overwhelmed with school. This year she is in 8th grade, 2nd year in the Academy and soaring! She is a leader, supporting others in their learning, has self-confidence, and is excelling in all of her academics.***

Ginny Chambliss

*Science Teacher, Explore Academy*

***With that hands-on project based instruction and having that smaller classroom environment, the students can have more one-on-one time with me but they also know certain skills and what it is leading towards when it comes to college and their careers. It is just getting them more involved and hands-on experience.***

Dylan Harris

*Math Teacher, Explore Academy*

***Our scholars are glad to have it [Star Academy] because it just further increases their knowledge in what they are learning and it also gives them a hands-on component to their learning.***

Lawarn Rodgers

*Principal, Dumas Middle School*

***Star Academy is a lot more hands-on, there aren't really textbooks, there are hands-on lab activities and there is a project with everything. Not every kid learns from reading – they don't learn by just opening up a textbook, but a lot of kids learn by using their hands, so when there is something hands-on to use, they generally learn more.***

Presslee Carter

*Science Teacher, Dumas Middle School*

Section 05

# School and District

The Arkansas Superintendent Summit held in Summer of 2023 allowed participants to explore ways to effectively support their Star Academy sites.

**Sessions covered:**

- ★ Sharing Best Practices
- ★ Highlighting Successful Implementation
- ★ Understanding Site Roles and Responsibilities
- ★ A Leadership Roundtable
- ★ Curriculum Design and Support
- ★ Networking with Other Sites

STAR ACADEMY SUPERINTENDENT Summit

## A. Curriculum Alignment to State and District Standards

The curriculum is customized for every Star Academy site so that it aligns to state standards. The curricula combine Modules, Individualized Lessons, Math Connections, Blended Science, and Living Curriculum units of study. Also provided is a research and development lab area for collaborative projects, both for Academy students and the school community at large. Below are examples of standard aligned courses found in our Arkansas Star Academy sites.

- ★ Middle School Integrated Science
- ★ High School Physical Science
- ★ 7th Grade Math
- ★ 8th Grade Math
- ★ Algebra Readiness
- ★ Algebra I
- ★ ELA Tier II Intervention
- ★ United States History: Beginnings through 1850
- ★ United States History: 1850 through 1930
- ★ High School World History

## B. Retention and Attendance Improvement

According to national statistics, on average, 90% of students who fail one year will ultimately drop out. Over the years, the Star Academy program has documented a 95% retention rate among held-back students.

- ★ Arkansas Star Academy programs report a 94% attendance rate for 7th graders and 92% attendance rate for 8th graders.
- ★ The attendance rate in Pine Bluff rose to 93% from the low 80s the previous year.

## C. Behavioral Issues Improvement

At Dumas Middle School during the 2022-2023 school year, disciplinary referrals decreased by 62% from the previous school year among Star Academy students.

- ★ Explore Academy in Pine Bluff saw improved attendance and discipline outcomes
- ★ Fewer than 10 discipline referrals for the entire school year
- ★ No fights

As superintendent of the Magnolia School District, Skipper Ward recently commented that the district was making gains in scores and performance, recognizing the importance of regular attendance. He indicated that the only difference between an "A" school and a "D" school was whether or not students attended.

## D. Recognition/Positive PR

Through partnership with NOLA Education, Star Academy sites are offered public relations services such as:

★ Event planning (ribbon cuttings & open houses)
★ Website & social media content
★ Accolades & ambassadorship
★ Press releases & media coverage
★ Photo shoots
★ Video shoots

The intention is to be able to allow districts to easily share their student success stories and feature their Star Academy program.

***Some students need a different approach, and we think that we have an opportunity with Star Academy in the Osceola School District to offer a different way of teaching and learning. Star Academy allows our students to thrive in an environment that focuses on a hands-on approach and allows for more one-to-one teacher interactions.***

*Dr. Toriano Green*

*Superintendent, Osceola School District*

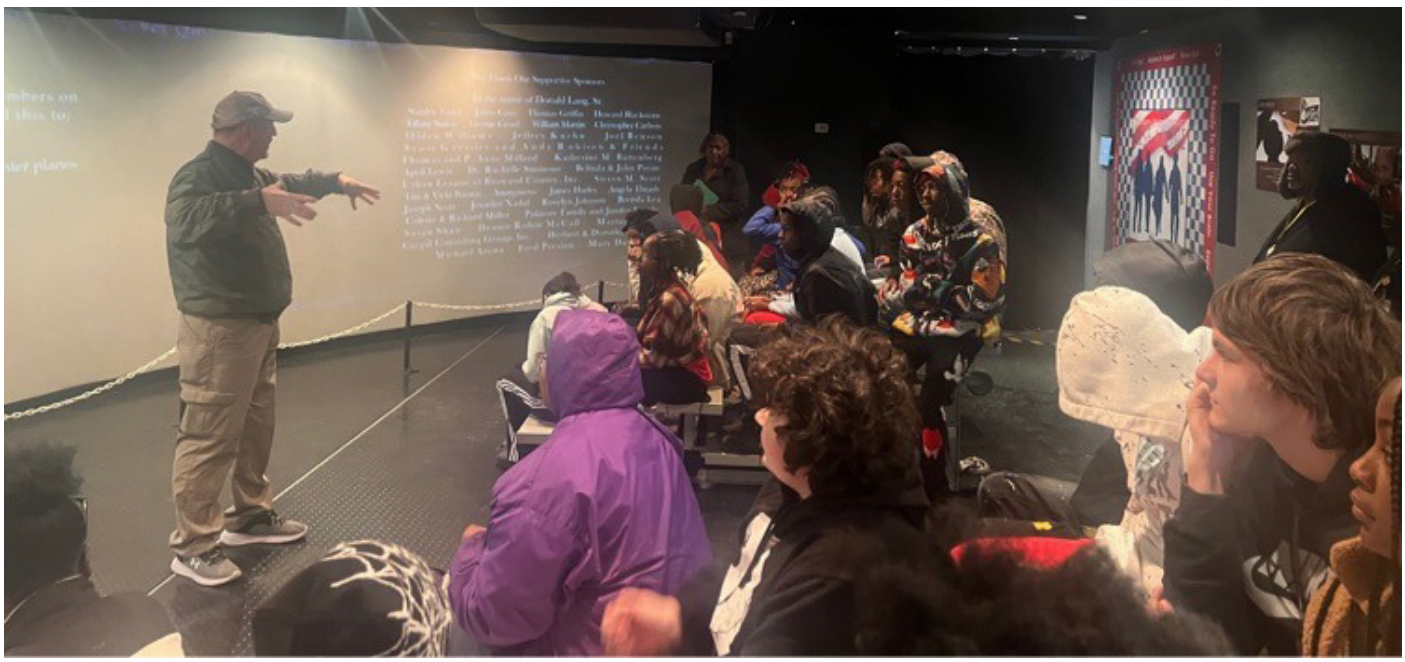
Section 06

# Community Impact

Star Academy sites are encouraged to build strong ties with local businesses and industries. This approach allows students to engage with their communities and gain insights into potential career paths that align with their classroom learning.

A shining example of this commitment is Choices Learning Academy in Osceola, AR, a Star Academy program that excels in integrating these principles into the student experience.

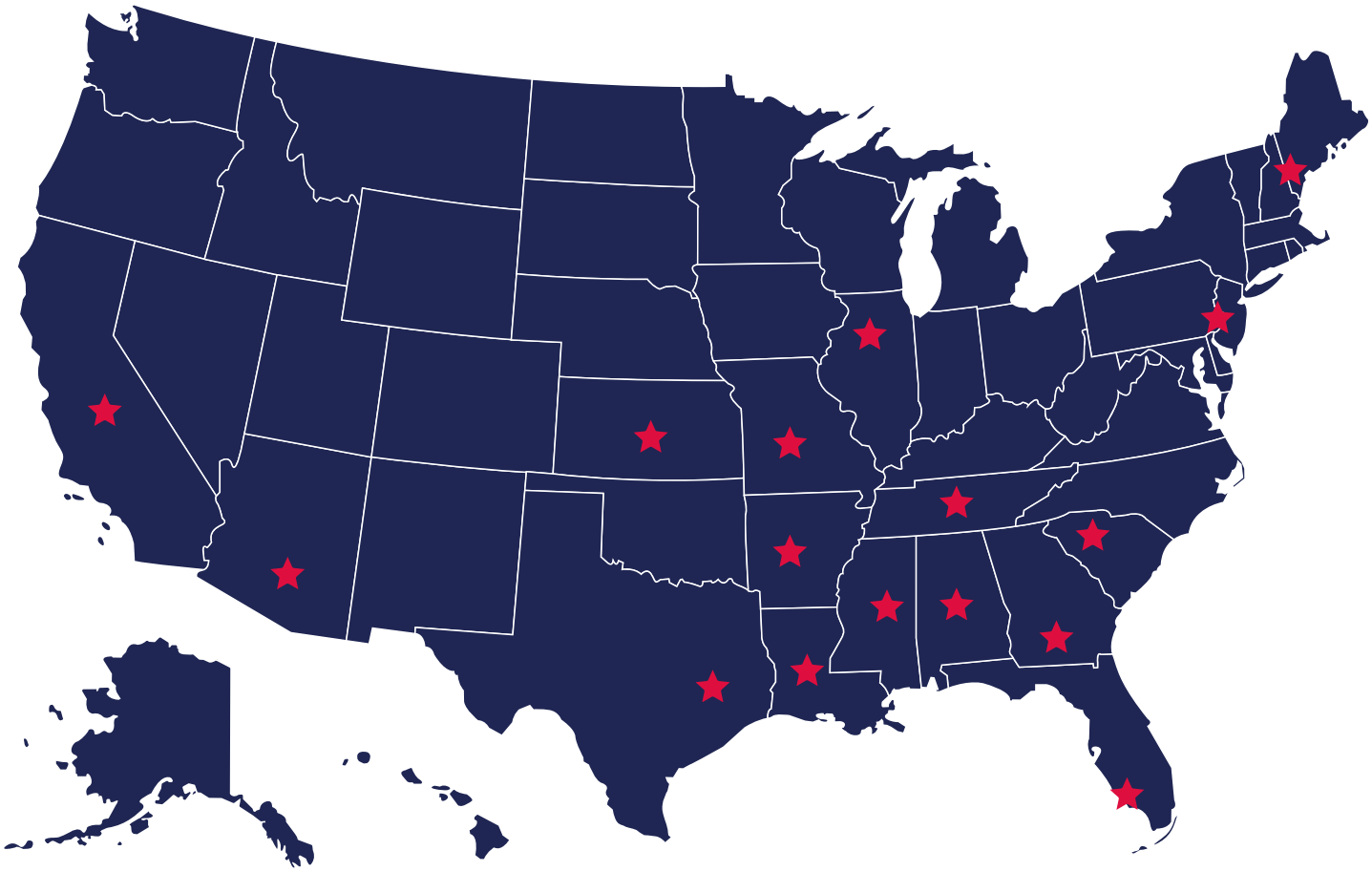
- **Annual Car Show:** Choices Learning Academy actively engages in community service by participating in the Annual Car Show, fostering a sense of community involvement among students.
- **City Wide Cleanup:** The Academy contributes to the betterment of its community by taking part in City Wide Cleanup days, instilling a sense of responsibility and environmental awareness in students.
- **Field Trip to Cold War Museum:** Choices Learning Academy enhances students' educational experiences by organizing field trips to places like the Cold War Museum. This hands-on approach broadens their understanding beyond the classroom, providing a unique perspective on historical events and technological advancements.



Section 07

# National Impact

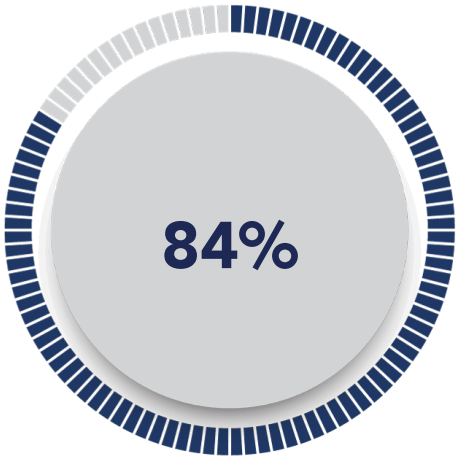
***16 States Served***
***80+ Schools • 20,000+ Students***



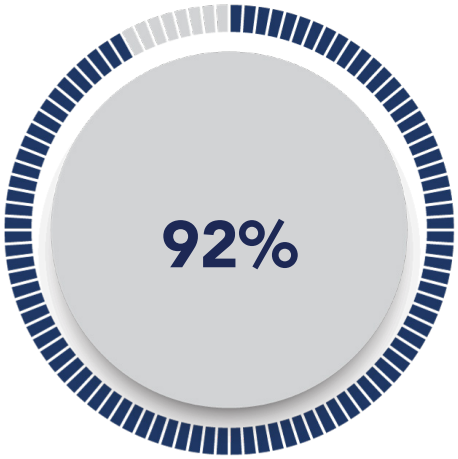
# National Impact

**Mississippi Schools 2-Grade-Level Advancement, Retention Rate**

Since 2014, five Star Academy programs in rural Mississippi have seen retention rates rise to 92%, while 84% of enrollees advanced two grade levels in a single year.




2-Grade-Level Advancement

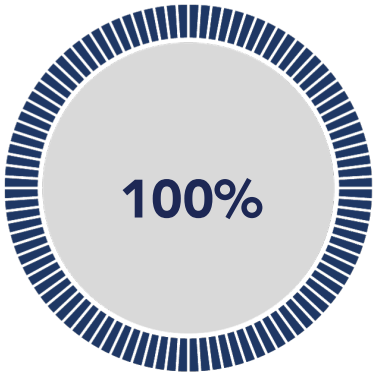



Retention

**Alabama Schools: Students Having Graduated or "On Track to Graduate"**

Three county school districts in Alabama were struggling to keep students moving ahead and graduating. Since introducing Star Academy, they've reported extremely high rates of students either awarded diplomas or "on track to graduate" as compared to peer districts.

Mobile County Schools 2012-Current

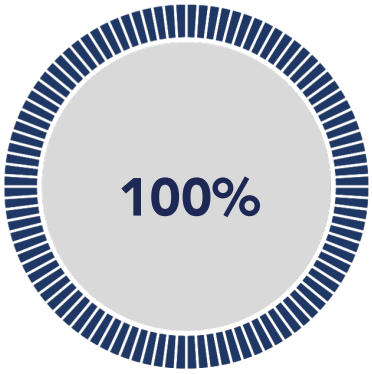



ESCAMBIA County Schools 2012-Current

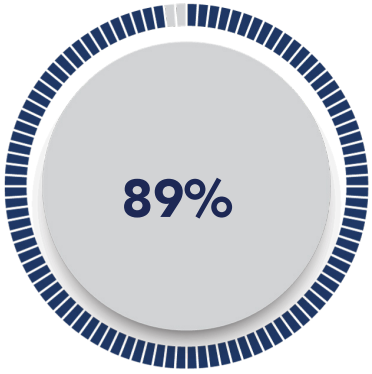
Montgomery County Schools 2012-Current

**Berrien County, Georgia: Standardized Test Pass Rates**

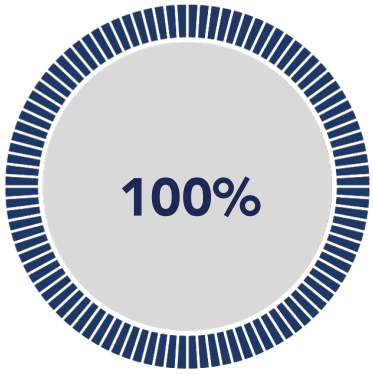
Since implementing the Star Academy program, schools in Berrien County, Georgia have greatly increased standardized test pass rates. In addition, they have reported a 71% increase in student attendance rates, and in 2020, that 98% of their Star Academy completers were still in school and on-track to graduate.




**Standardized Test Pass Rate: Literature**




**Standardized Test Pass Rate: Algebra**




**Standardized Test Pass Rate: Geometry**

Section 08

# National Summit Recap

Star Academy is committed to helping educators and administrators serve their students in the most effective way. To achieve this, the 2023 Star Academy Summit brought together over 50 Star Academy educators from across the nation for two days of engaging sessions.

Sessions allowed teachers, counselors, and administrators the opportunity to learn best practices, enhance leadership skills, and elevate their overall experience as a Star Academy partner.

This was the 4th annual Star Academy Summit and it proved to be a testament to the power of continuous learning and collaboration in education. The Summit served as a reminder that in the ever-evolving landscape of education, we are all lifelong learners.

## Educators and Administrators from the following districts attended:

- ★ Arkansas River Education Service Cooperative – Pine Bluff
- ★ Osceola School District – Osceola
- ★ Hope Public Schools – Hope
- ★ Magnolia School District – Magnolia
- ★ Strong-Huttig School District – Strong

Section 09

# Upcoming Expansion, Modifications & New Lessons

To further the Star Academy commitment of delivering products and services that help educators inspire students and facilitate engaging, effective learning experiences, we are excited to share a preview of what's to come in the following year.

- ★ In our continuous efforts to revolutionize learning, we're developing a new High School Physical Science Module course. This course will include diverse project-based learning opportunities and a cutting-edge digital experience for students to relate directly to real-world applications.
- ★ Star Academy is also working to streamline and enhance classroom management, with the development of an updated learning management system. Crafted to be powerful yet easy to use, this system will transform the management and delivery of classroom instruction.
- ★ Furthermore, in 2024, Star Academy will unveil the groundbreaking "Smart Practice" feature, which uses Artificial Intelligence to assess student understanding and offer tailored remediation, ensuring every student gets the individualized support they need to excel.
- ★ Student Program Initiatives - Star Academy is offering Student Programs to better serve students and allow for real-life learning opportunities. One of these programs is Student Jobs which will teach students employability skills and career awareness. Other programs include a Student Summit, Student of the Month/Year recognition, Student Ambassadors, Certifications, and more.
- ★ Student Portfolios - Star Academy students will be able to create portfolios, highlighting projects they have completed throughout the school year. Students will have their own accounts for uploading their projects, photos and videos to a special website, giving them a foundation to continue to build on with the goal of creating a portfolio they can use when they enter the workforce.

As we move forward into the coming year, we remain passionately dedicated to crafting cutting-edge tools for education, giving educators everything they need to make STEM learning immersive, inclusive, and inspiring.

## Thank you

*NOLA Education wants to acknowledge and thank the many in the state who have made the Star Academy program successful throughout Arkansas. We are so grateful for the support and look forward to next year.*

Google

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learn more at:

• • •

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