

Arkansas Virtual Academy Middle  
Accountability Profile

Prepared by  
Arkansas Department of Education  
Charter School Office

March 2026



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## Section 1: Abstract

Arkansas Virtual Academy – Middle School (ARVA Middle) is an open-enrollment charter serving grades 6–8 with an enrollment of 1,352 students during the 2025–2026 school year, representing 19% of its authorized capacity. The school operates within a virtual instructional model and serves a high percentage of economically disadvantaged students (approximately 73%), with additional representation from special populations including English learners and students with disabilities. Attendance rates have declined in recent years to 89.2%, falling below the state average of 92%, while chronic absenteeism has risen significantly to 60%, indicating substantial challenges in student engagement within the virtual environment.

Academic performance data indicate persistent underperformance relative to state expectations. The school has earned a “D” rating for three consecutive years, compared to a state average of “C.” Growth and achievement outcomes on the ATLAS assessment remain consistently below state averages in both English Language Arts and Math. In 2024–2025, student growth in ELA (46%) and Math (42%) lagged behind the state averages (53% and 52%), while achievement rates in ELA (25%), Math (30%), and Science (32%) also fell below statewide benchmarks. Chronic absenteeism and decreased attendance rates further compound these academic challenges, particularly for the lowest-performing students.

Despite academic concerns, the organization demonstrates strong financial stability and overall operational compliance. Revenues have steadily increased, with a projected ending balance of \$15.8 million (35.01% of revenue) in 2025–2026, reflecting strong fiscal health and sustainability. The school maintains compliance with accreditation standards, employs a fully certified teaching staff, and reports no disciplinary incidents. However, planning documents – such as the School Improvement Plan and recruitment/retention strategy – lack measurable goals, clear benchmarks, and robust monitoring systems, limiting their effectiveness in driving meaningful improvement.

## Section 2: School Summary

### *Background Information*

<b>Location</b>	717 West 7 <sup>th</sup> Street, Little Rock, AR
<b>Year Opened</b>	2003 - 2004
<b>Grade Levels</b>	6 - 8
<b>Enrollment Cap</b>	7,000 (District Cap)
<b>Charter Type</b>	Open Enrollment
<b>Mission Statement</b>	Arkansas Virtual Academy exists to build relationships, instruct with relevance, and prepare students for the rigor of career and college success.

### *Leadership Team*

<b>Personnel</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>School / Organization</b>	<b>Email</b>
Amy Johnson	Superintendent	ARVA	<a href="mailto:amjohnson@arva.org">amjohnson@arva.org</a>
Cassandra Melcher	Principal	ARVA Middle	<a href="mailto:cmelcher@arva.org">cmelcher@arva.org</a>
Jess Askew	Board Chair	ARVA CMO	
Joel Edel	Vice Chair	ARVA CMO	
Paige Gorman	Secretary/Treasurer	ARVA CMO	
Dana Kelley	Board Member	ARVA CMO	
Gary McHenry	Board Member	ARVA CMO	
David Straessle	Board Member	ARVA CMO	

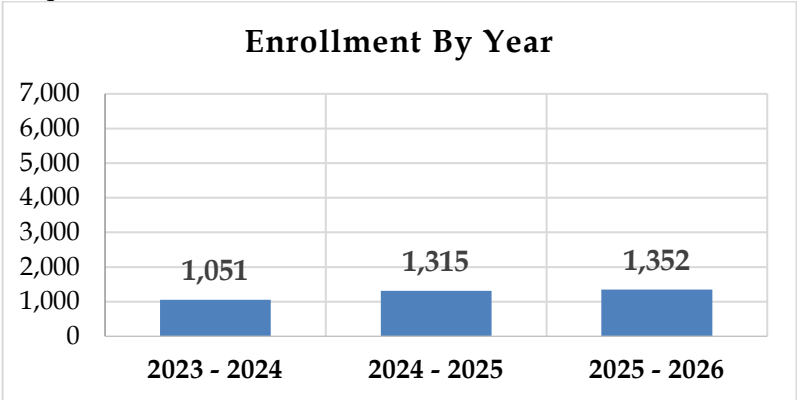
### Section 3: Student Enrollment Data

Table 3.0 - 2025 - 2026 Enrollment

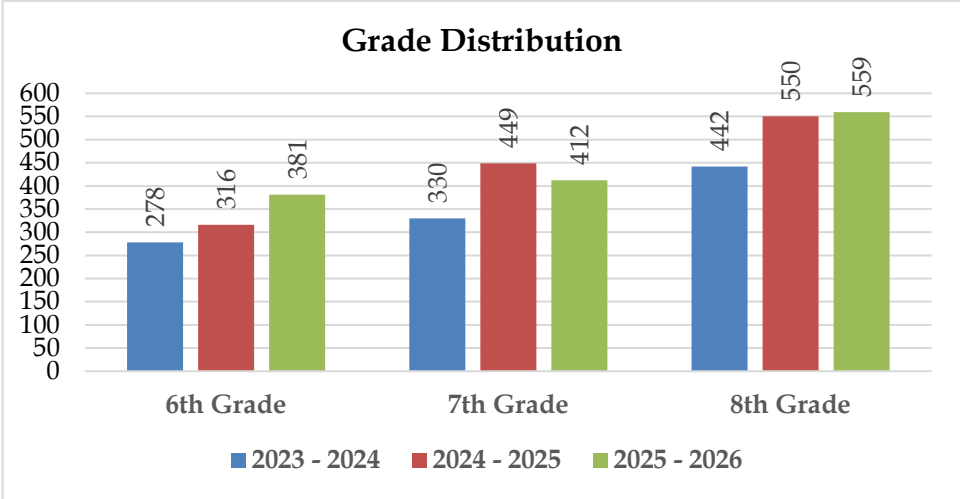
2025 - 2026 Enrollment	Enrollment CAP	Percent of Cap
1,352	7,000 (District)	19%

**Graph 3.0** reports the total enrollment count by year; **Graph 3.1** shows student enrollment by grade; **Graph 3.2** shows the percentage of students who are identified as part of a special population. The State of Arkansas’ definition of special populations includes students who receive a free or reduced lunch, English language learners, and students identified as SPED. The data reported was captured from the Arkansas Department of Education’s Data Center.

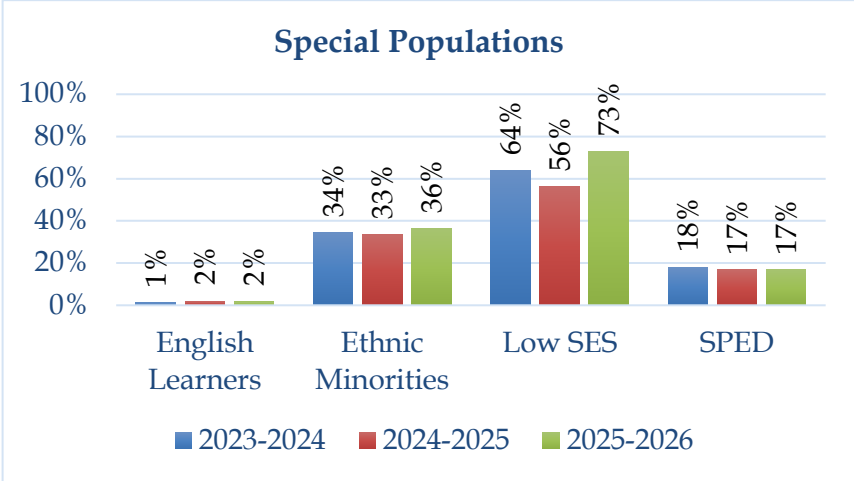
Graph 3.0 - School Enrollment



Graph 3.1 - Student Enrollment by Grade



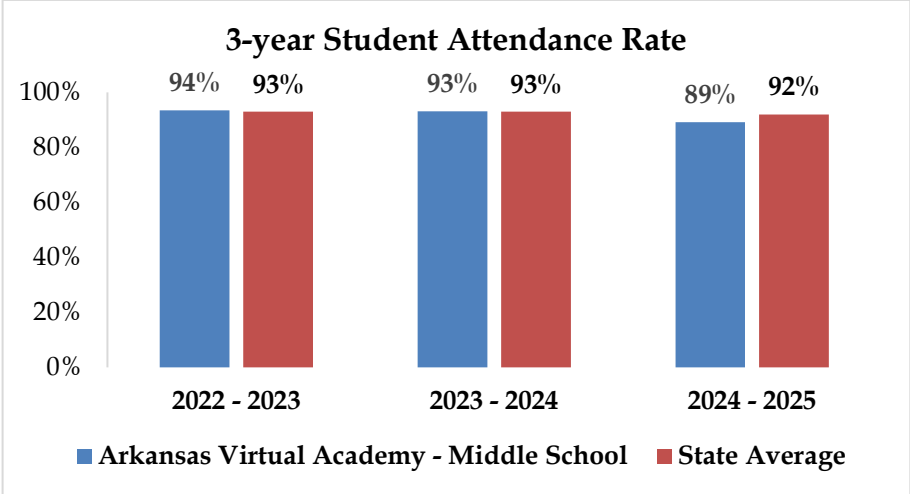
Graph 3.2 - Special Populations



*Student Attendance Rates*

Graph 3.3 presents student attendance rates along with a comparison to the state average attendance rate.

Graph 3.3 - Student Attendance Rate Comparison



## Section 4: Academic Performance Data

In 2013, the Arkansas legislature passed A.C.A 6-15-2105, requiring the state to implement an A-F grading scale for schools as an indicator of a school’s overall academic health. **Table 4.0** the school’s letter grade compared to the state.

Table 4.0 - Letter Grade Comparison

School	2022-2023	2023-2024	2024-2025
Arkansas Virtual Academy - Middle School	D	D	D
State average	C	C	C

### *Growth and Achievement Indicators*

**Growth scores** show how many students met their **individual growth goals** on the end-of-year tests. It highlights how well a school helps **all students make progress**, no matter where they start.

**Achievement scores** show the percentage of students who met or exceeded grade-level expectations on the annual statewide tests in comparison to state average.

Each public charter school is responsible for educating students according to the standards set for all Arkansas public schools. As of the 2024 - 2025 school year, the ATLAS assessment is being used to track both Growth and Achievement for schools.

Table 4.1 – Growth Score Ranges for the ASPIRE and ATLAS assessments\*

	ASPIRE Growth Score Ranges	ATLAS Growth Score Ranges
Exceeding Standard	85% or Higher	51% or Higher
Meeting Standard	80% - 84%	45% - 50%
Approaching Standard	70% - 79%	35% - 44%
Not Meeting Standard	69% or Lower	34% or Lower

Table 4.1.a Achievement Score Ranges

	Achievement Score Ranges
Exceeding Standard	Greater than the state average
Meeting Standard	Equal to or within 5% of the state average
Approaching Standard	6 - 10% below the state average
Not Meeting Standard	11% or more below the state average

*\*Team members from the Charter School Office worked with Public School Accountability team members to create estimated ASPIRE score ranges for comparison to ATLAS Growth Scores.*

**Table 4.2** depicts both growth and achievement scores. (note: during the 2021 - 2022 school year, the ASPIRE assessment was utilized for both Growth and Proficiency(Achievement). The ATLAS assessment was first used in the 2023 - 2024 and there were no officially published scores for the 2023 - 2024 school year).

Table 4.2 - Growth and Achievement Scores

Growth - English					State Average
	Exceeding Standard	Meeting Standard	Approaching Standard	Not Meeting Standard	
2021-2022 ASPIRE			77%		80%
2022-2023 ASPIRE			78%		80%
2023-2024	No Official Scores Published by the State				
2024-2025 ATLAS		46%			53%

Growth - Math					State Average
	Exceeding Standard	Meeting Standard	Approaching Standard	Not Meeting Standard	
2021-2022 ASPIRE			76%		80%
2022-2023 ASPIRE			74%		80%
2023-2024	No Official Scores Published by the State				
2024-2025 ATLAS			42%		52%

Achievement - English					State Average
	Exceeding Standard	Meeting Standard	Approaching Standard	Not Meeting Standard	
2021-2022 ASPIRE			32%		39%
2022-2023 ASPIRE				29%	42%
2023-2024	No Official Scores Published by the State				
2024-2025 ATLAS			25%		34%

Achievement - Math					State Average
	Exceeding Standard	Meeting Standard	Approaching Standard	Not Meeting Standard	
2021-2022 ASPIRE		23%			27%
2022-2023 ASPIRE		19%			23%
2023-2024	No Official Scores Published by the State				
2024-2025 ATLAS			30%		38%

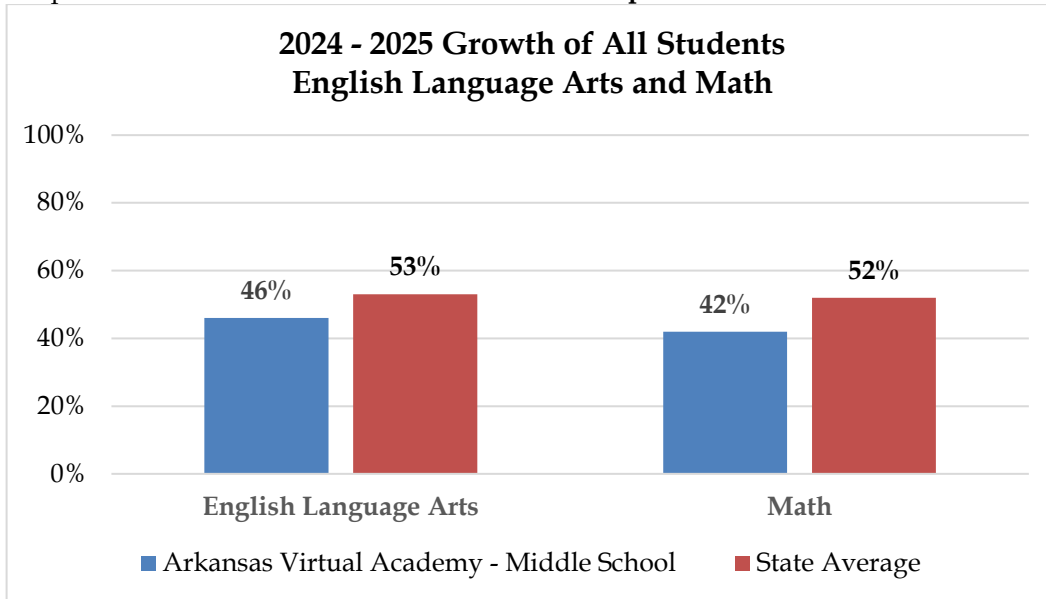
Achievement - Science					State Average
	Exceeding Standard	Meeting Standard	Approaching Standard	Not Meeting Standard	
2021-2022 ASPIRE	32%				30%
2022-2023 ASPIRE		30%			30%
2023-2024	No Official Scores Published by the State				
2024-2025 ATLAS			32%		39%

Achievement - Reading					State Average
	Exceeding Standard	Meeting Standard	Approaching Standard	Not Meeting Standard	
2021-2022 ASPIRE	39%				38%
2022-2023 ASPIRE		37%			39%
2023-2024	No Official Scores Published by the State				
2024-2025 ATLAS	29%				28%

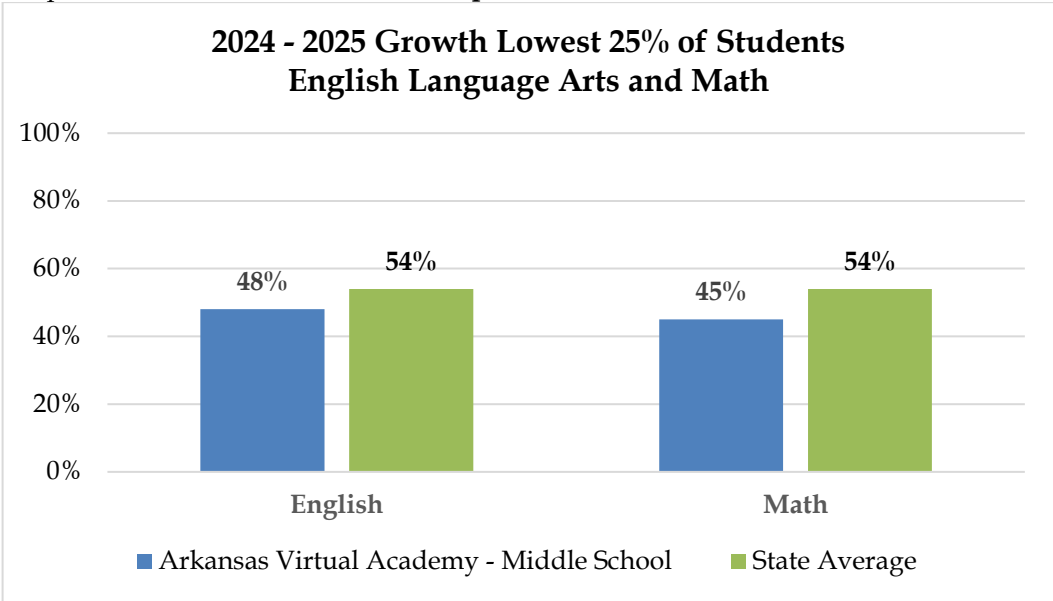
*School Growth Comparison Data 2024 – 2025 school year*

**Graph 4.0.a** compares growth of all students at the charter school in English Language Arts and Math with the state average. **Graph 4.1.b** compares growth of the lowest 25% of students at the charter school in English Language Arts and Math with the state average.

Graph 4.0.a – 2024 – 2025 All Students Growth Comparison



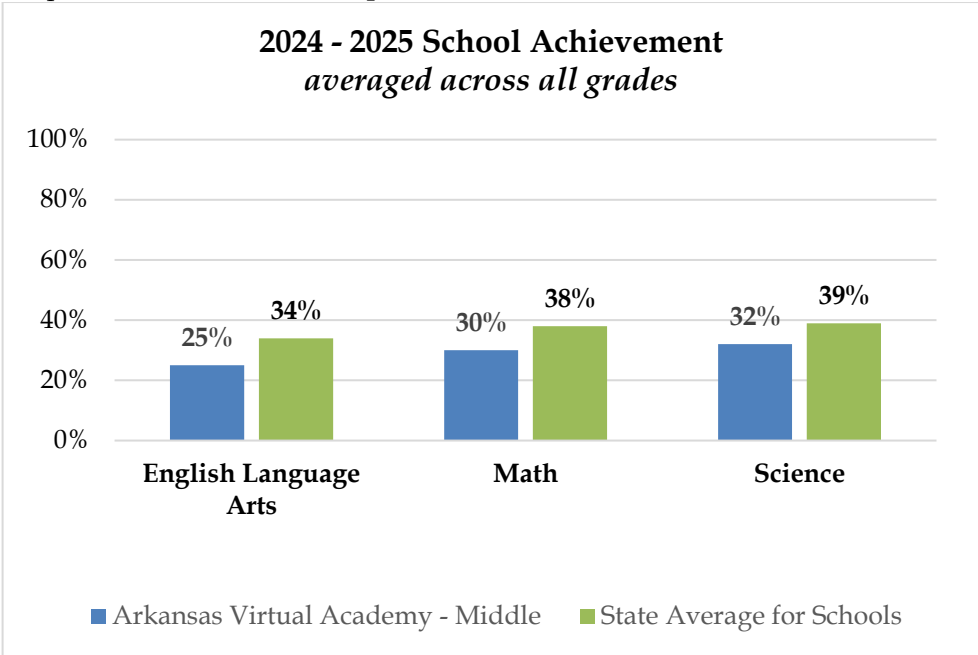
Graph 4.0.b - Lowest 25% Growth Comparison



*School Achievement Comparison Data*

Graph 4.2 presents proficiency scores, averaged across all grades, for the charter school in English Language Arts, Math, and Science for the 2024 - 2025 school year compared to the state average.

Graph 4.2 - Achievement Comparison



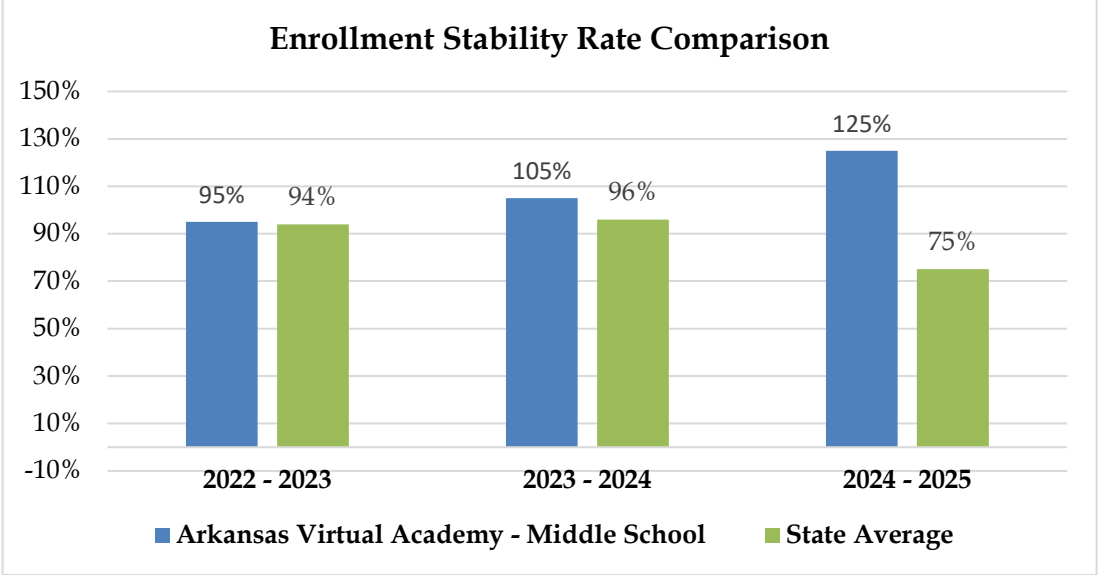
*Learning Services Summary*

Arkansas Virtual Academy - Middle had limited support from ADE Learning Services.

*Enrollment Stability Rates*

**Graph 4.4** illustrates the school’s enrollment stability as compared to the state average. Enrollment stability is defined as the percentage of students who return to the same school from the previous school year.

Graph 4.4 - Enrollment Stability Rate Comparison



*Student Discipline*

**Table 4.3** presents the school’s disciplinary history and compares it to the state average.

Table 4.3 - 3-year Disciplinary history

	Arkansas Virtual Academy - Middle Whole Number Count	State Average
<b>School Suspensions (In &amp; Out of school)</b>		
2022-2023	0	103.93
2023-2024	0	103.90
2024-2025	0	96.03
<b>Expulsions</b>		
2022-2023	0	1.06
2023-2024	0	0.94
2024-2025	0	0.81
<b>Chronic Absenteeism Percentage</b>		
2022-2023	46%	22%
2023-2024	56%	27%
2024-2025	60%	21%

## Section 5: Financial Performance Data

Financial information was provided by the Arkansas Department of Education’s Finance office in late October 2025. Financial data submitted are for the entire charter management organization rather than the individual school. Table 5.1 provides three years of financial data for the charter management organization.

The ARVA Board fulfilled its fiscal oversight responsibilities through formal review and approval of the annual budget and ongoing financial monitoring. On June 9, 2025, the Board conducted a comprehensive review of financial planning documents, including federal program budgets (Title I, Title II-A, and Title IV) and the 2025–2026 school budget . Following presentation and discussion, the Board formally approved the 2025–2026 annual budget, representing official adoption of the school’s operating budget.

### 3-year Financial Data for the charter management organization

Topics	2023-2024 <b>Actual</b>	2024-2025 <b>Actual</b>	2025-2026 <b>Budgeted</b>
<i>Beginning Balance</i>	\$2,787,267.60	\$1,649,903.07	\$2,558,544.78
<i>Revenue</i>	\$31,142,930.03	\$39,643,852.98	\$45,101,347.74
<i>Expenditures</i>	\$32,280,294.56	\$38,735,211.27	\$31,871,238.10
<i>Ending Balance</i>	\$1,649,903.07	\$2,558,544.78	\$15,788,654.42
<i>Ending Balance % of Revenue</i>	5.30%	6.45%	35.01%

## Section 6: Operational Performance Review

This section reviews the charter school's compliance with applicable laws, enrollment and recruitment practices, and school improvement plans. The data assists in ensuring accountability and allows ADE to support continuous improvement in charter schools. Additionally, the information aids ADE's Charter School Office in deciding whether to recommend that the Charter Authorizing Panel renews the charter contract.

### *School Compliance Summary*

Currently, the charter school does not have any standing flagging actions and is compliant with the ADE Standards for Accreditation.

### *Charter School Board*

Board meeting agendas and minutes for the current (2025-2026) school year are only posted for June, July, and November 2025. The minutes posted dated January and March 2026 are those for the previous year. During the July 14, 2025 meeting, the Board received an Academic and Enrollment Update, which included information on student performance trends and enrollment patterns. This represents a formal review of academic data tied to overall school performance and student outcomes.

The ARVA Board fulfilled its fiscal oversight responsibilities through formal review and approval of the annual budget and ongoing financial monitoring. On June 9, 2025, the Board conducted a comprehensive review of financial planning documents, including federal program budgets (Title I, Title II-A, and Title IV) and the 2025–2026 school budget. Following presentation and discussion, the Board formally approved the 2025–2026 annual budget, representing official adoption of the school's operating budget.

### *Staff Recruitment and Retention Plan*

The Arkansas Virtual Academy Recruitment and Retention plan is organized around the three required statutory focus areas – recruitment, retention, and student pipeline development – and includes baseline demographic comparisons between the student population, staffing, and community composition. This provides a reasonable needs-assessment foundation and shows that the plan is grounded in actual representation data rather than general statements alone. The goals themselves are directionally appropriate: increasing teacher diversity to better reflect the student population, retaining at least 85% of diverse staff, and increasing the number of students entering education-related pathways. These are relevant and aligned to state expectations. However, from a school improvement planning perspective, the goals are only partially complete because they do not consistently define precise annual benchmarks, interim checkpoints, or a clear three-year trajectory toward success. For example, “increase the diversity of their teaching staff to match that of their student population” is meaningful, but it lacks a measurable target by subgroup or year, which limits the plan's usefulness for monitoring progress.

The action steps are appropriate in concept but vary in specificity and implementation strength. Recruitment actions such as building relationships with Arkansas HBCUs and introducing educational career pathways are relevant and promising, while retention strategies such as professional development and exit surveys are sensible starting points. Likewise, the student pipeline goal is supported by actions like creating a Teacher Cadet program and expanding career pathway marketing. However, many of the action steps remain too broad to function as strong improvement-plan strategies. Several target dates are outdated or vague (e.g., 2023, 2024, or August 2025 within a three-year plan), and the plan does not clearly identify how frequently data will be reviewed, who is accountable for progress checks, or what specific evidence would indicate success beyond general increases in participation or diversity.

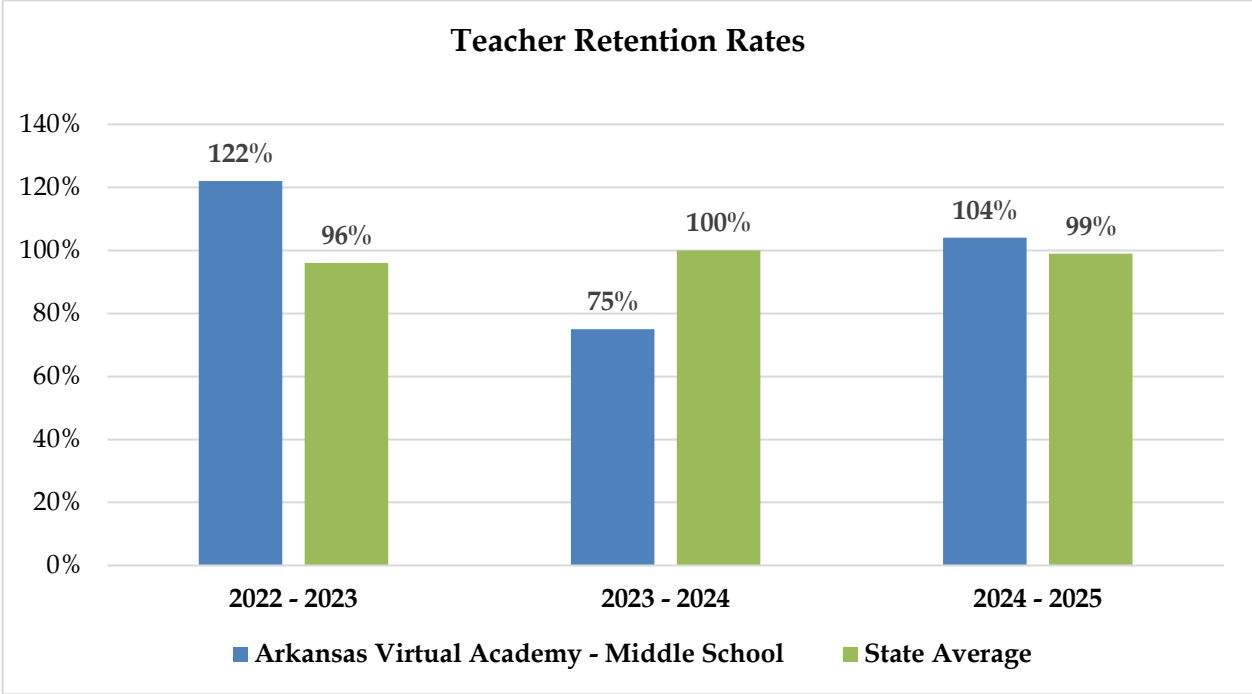
The “review progress” sections also remain limited, with statements such as “data collection remains in progress,” which suggests the monitoring component is underdeveloped.

Overall, this plan would be considered adequate for compliance purposes, but only moderately strong as an improvement plan. It contains the required components and demonstrates intentionality, but it would be significantly stronger if it included annual numeric targets, clearer subgroup-based staffing goals, specific implementation timelines, routine monitoring checkpoints, and stronger evidence measures such as applicant pool diversity, interview-to-hire conversion rates, retention disaggregated by subgroup, and annual participation/completion data for the Teacher Cadet or education pathway pipeline. In short, the plan has the right structure and direction, but it needs more precision and accountability measures to function as a high-quality strategic improvement document.

### Teacher Retention Rates

Graph 6.0 shows teacher stability for the charter school compared to the state average. Teacher retention is defined as the percentage of teachers who return to the school from the previous school year.

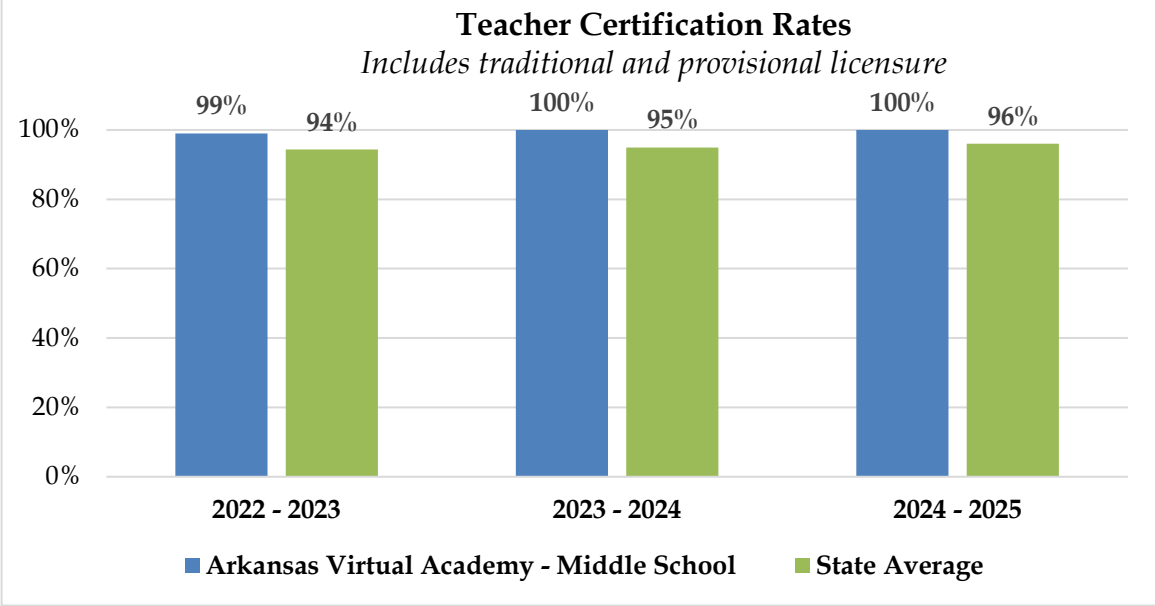
Graph 6.0 - Teacher Retention Rates



### Teacher Certification Rates

Graph 6.1 provides the charter school’s percentage of certified teachers compared to the state average. Understanding the percentage of credentialed teaching staff can be informative when discussing performance outcomes and teacher training needs.

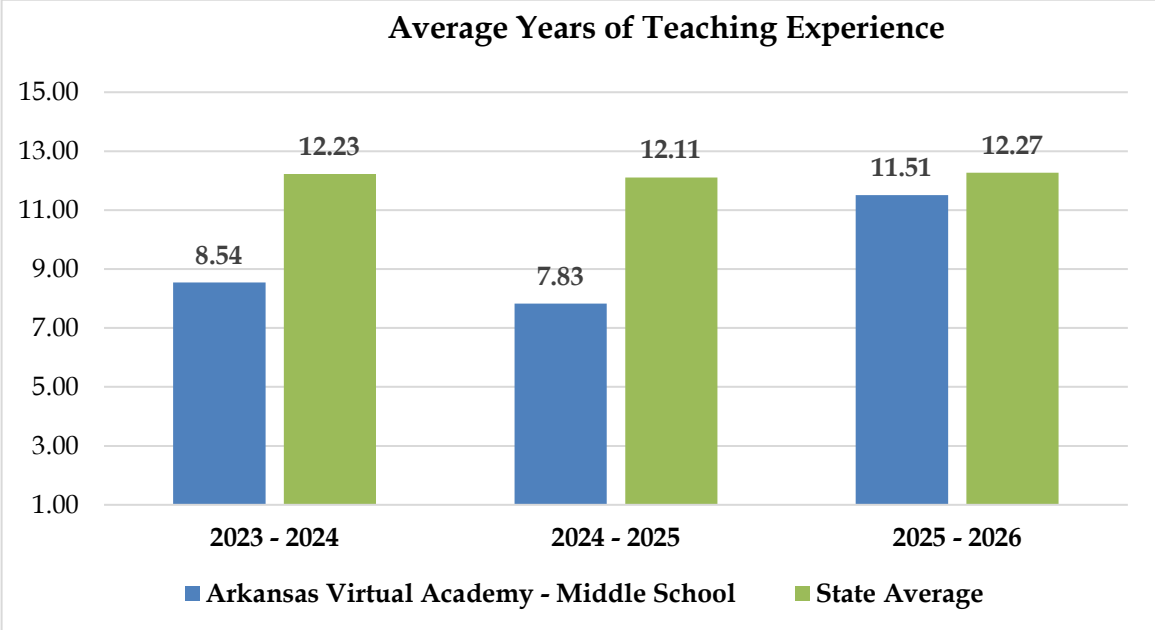
Graph 6.1 - Teacher Certification Rates



### Average Teaching Experience

Graph 6.2 presents the charter school’s average years of teaching experience compared to the state average.

Graph 6.2 - Average Years of Teaching Experience



### *School Improvement Plan*

The school's Improvement Plan 2025–2026 is a well-organized and generally strong school improvement document that reflects a thoughtful framework for continuous improvement across key areas of student success, including reading, math, science, social/emotional learning, and family engagement. A notable strength of the plan is that it identifies evidence-based practices, supporting tools, professional learning, implementation timelines, and progress-monitoring structures for each priority area. In particular, the reading section is the strongest and most complete, with clear alignment to RISE/Science of Reading, standards mastery, phonics intervention, comprehension strategies, and targeted intervention supports such as Lexia, tutoring, and interventionists. The plan also demonstrates a solid commitment to ongoing data review through quarterly, monthly, and annual checkpoints and includes multiple formative and summative measures such as STAR, interims, dyslexia screenings, Lexia diagnostics, and summative assessments.

From an evaluation standpoint, the plan is comprehensive in structure but somewhat limited in goal specificity. The document clearly outlines what the school intends to do, but many of the "Priority/Goal" sections are framed more as focus areas than as fully measurable improvement goals. For example, the plan would be stronger if it included specific baseline data and numeric targets, such as increasing reading proficiency from one percentage to another, reducing the number of students below benchmark, or increasing family survey participation by a defined amount. Several actions are appropriate and aligned to best practice, but some are broad and repetitive across sections, particularly in the evaluation procedures, where similar quarterly review language appears regardless of content area. Overall, this is a solid and implementation-ready plan with strong instructional components and clear systems of support; however, it would be strengthened significantly by adding SMART goals, clearer expected outcomes for each strategy, and more precise success criteria tied directly to student performance and school improvement indicators.

## Section 7: Executive Summary

ARVA Middle is financially stable and operationally compliant but faces significant academic challenges driven by low student engagement and below-average performance outcomes. With strong fiscal resources and foundational systems already in place, the school is positioned to improve; however, success will depend on implementing targeted academic interventions, strengthening planning processes, and addressing chronic absenteeism within its virtual model.

### Academic Performance

Arkansas Virtual Academy – Middle School demonstrates consistently low academic outcomes across multiple measures, indicating a critical need for targeted improvement. The school has received a “D” rating for three consecutive years, reflecting performance below state expectations, where the average rating is a “C.”

Growth data from the 2024–2025 ATLAS assessment show that only 46% of students in English Language Arts and 42% in Math met growth expectations, compared to state averages of 53% and 52%, respectively. Growth among the lowest-performing quartile is similarly below state benchmarks, particularly in mathematics. Achievement data reinforce this concern, with ELA proficiency at 25%, Math at 30%, and Science at 32%, all trailing state averages by notable margins.

Student engagement indicators further exacerbate academic challenges. Attendance has declined to 89.2% – below the state average – and chronic absenteeism has increased from 46% to 60% over three years, nearly triple the state average. While the school reports zero suspensions or expulsions, indicating a positive behavioral climate, the data suggest that disengagement – rather than discipline – is the primary barrier to academic success.

### Financial Performance

Financial performance for the charter management organization is strong and improving. Revenue has grown significantly from \$31.1 million in 2023–2024 to a projected \$45.1 million in 2025–2026, demonstrating increasing financial capacity.

The organization maintains positive fund balances, with an ending balance increasing from \$1.65 million in 2023–2024 to a projected \$15.79 million in 2025–2026. This represents a substantial increase in financial reserves, with the ending balance rising from 5.30% to 35.01% of total revenue. Such a reserve level indicates strong fiscal health and provides the organization with significant flexibility to invest in programmatic improvements.

Governance practices related to finance are sound. The board has demonstrated appropriate oversight by reviewing and formally approving budgets and federal program allocations. No financial risks or compliance concerns are evident, and available resources appear sufficient to support academic interventions and operational improvements.

### Operational Performance

Operational performance is generally compliant, with systems in place to meet accreditation and governance requirements. The school currently has no outstanding compliance issues and meets Arkansas Department of Education standards.

Staffing indicators are largely positive. Teacher certification rates are at or near 100%, exceeding state averages, and teacher retention has remained relatively stable, though somewhat inconsistent across years. Average years of teaching experience have increased recently but still trail the state average, which may influence instructional effectiveness.

Planning and governance structures, while present, require strengthening. The Staff Recruitment and Retention

Plan includes appropriate focus areas but lacks measurable targets, timelines, and accountability mechanisms. Similarly, the School Improvement Plan is well-structured and aligned to evidence-based practices, particularly in literacy, but does not consistently include specific performance targets or defined success metrics. Additionally, board transparency is limited due to inconsistent posting of meeting agendas and minutes, reducing visibility into governance practices and decision-making processes.

## **Recommendations to Address Deficiencies**

### **1. Strengthen Academic Intervention Systems**

- Implement high-dosage tutoring and structured intervention blocks in ELA and Math.
- Use frequent formative assessments and PLC data cycles to guide instructional adjustments.
- Develop targeted supports for the lowest-performing 25% of students, particularly in Math.

### **2. Address Chronic Absenteeism and Engagement**

- Establish clear attendance expectations and real-time tracking systems.
- Implement tiered intervention protocols for disengaged students.
- Increase family engagement strategies, including regular communication and support for virtual learning.
- Introduce incentives and accountability measures to improve participation.

### **3. Strengthen School Improvement Planning**

- Revise the plan to include SMART goals with baseline data and measurable targets.
- Define clear timelines, responsible staff, and progress-monitoring checkpoints.
- Align strategies directly with ATLAS growth and achievement outcomes.

### **4. Enhance Recruitment and Retention Strategies**

- Establish annual numerical targets for recruitment, retention, and staff diversity.
- Track key indicators such as applicant pool diversity, retention by subgroup, and teacher satisfaction.
- Expand mentoring and professional development programs to improve teacher effectiveness.

### **5. Improve Governance Transparency and Oversight**

- Ensure consistent posting of board agendas and minutes.
- Develop a data dashboard for board oversight of academic, attendance, and staffing metrics.
- Increase board engagement in monitoring implementation and outcomes of improvement initiatives.