



THE SCHOLARMADE JOURNEY

CHOOSE MORE FOR YOUR
CHILD.
THEY DESERVE IT.



The Scholarmade Reading Movement: February 2026

Source: Arkansas Reads provides interactive data visualizations on statewide reading performance and growth for publicly funded schools, highlighting measures such as "Percentage Reading Ready" and "Percentage Not Close to Reading Ready."
<https://www.arkansasreads.org>

THE SCHOLARMADE READING MOVEMENT

In 2018, when ScholarMade first opened its doors, the reading data told a hard truth. Nearly all of our children were struggling readers.

In 2019, our first full baseline year, 83% of our scholars were placed in the lowest reading category. Eight out of ten children. Many had already begun to believe that reading simply wasn't for them. Many had moved from school to school. Many had never been given sustained, targeted literacy support.

- We could have explained it away.
- We did not.
- Instead, we built around it.

We refined instruction. We restructured literacy blocks. We deployed interventions with urgency. We studied standards, regrouped students, adjusted pacing, and trained teachers. We stayed with the work after the pandemic disrupted learning across the state. And we kept reading at the center.

- Year after year, the percentage shifted.
- Eighty-three percent became seventy. Seventy became sixty. Then fifty.
- By 2025, 37% of our scholars remained in the lowest category.
- That is a 46-point reduction over the life of our charter.
- **Not a temporary bump. Not a single-year spike. A sustained shift.**



Last year, Grade 8 told the clearest story. In one cycle, the percentage of eighth graders in the lowest category dropped from 65% to 20% — a 45-point decrease. That means students walked into high school stronger readers than when they arrived to us. That changes course trajectories. That changes confidence. That changes access.

Across Arkansas, **ScholarMade** ranked among the top public systems for movement out of the lowest classification and led charter systems in advancement toward grade-level readiness. Those numbers are not accidental. They are tied to disciplined instructional systems, focused intervention blocks, clear expectations, and classrooms that refuse to lower the bar for children who start behind.

Behind every percentage point is a student who now reads with more independence. A student who can decode complex text. A student who can write with clarity. A student whose options widened.

This progress is not theoretical. It lives in daily lesson plans, small-group instruction, corrective teaching on Fridays, and teachers who refuse to let data sit untouched.

When we say our scholars are Made for More, we mean that growth is possible with structure, persistence, and belief anchored in action.

The data tells one chapter.

The work continues to write the rest.



SYSTEM TRAJECTORY OVERVIEW

The data reveal a clear story of how students are progressing — and it unfolds in two connected stages.

Stage One: Moving Out of the Lowest Level

A large group of students transitioned out of the lowest reading category.

This shift reflects focused work on the fundamentals — decoding, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension. Students who once struggled to access grade-level text are now reading with greater skill and confidence. This stage is about building a foundation strong enough to stand on.

Stage Two: Moving Toward Grade Level

Students did not just leave the lowest band — many continued forward into grade-level readiness.

Their growth outpaced sector peers. That means they were not simply stabilized; they advanced. This stage reflects academic momentum. It shows students climbing, not hovering between adjacent categories.

Together, these two stages show real movement across performance levels. This is not a minor reshuffling of scores. It is upward progression.

What This Means

- ◆ Students who entered significantly behind in reading are making measurable progress toward grade-level expectations.
- ◆ Instruction and intervention are aligned across classrooms, creating a coordinated path forward.
- ◆ Compared with public systems across Arkansas, ScholarMade is demonstrating strong movement on this measure.
- ◆ Among charter schools statewide, ScholarMade is leading in reading advancement.



These results matter even more when viewed in context.

Many students arrive having experienced interrupted learning, limited early literacy access, or other barriers that affect reading development. Growth reflected in this data represents real academic repositioning. **Students who began well below benchmark expectations are gaining footing.**

Progress like this comes from steady, daily work — small-group instruction, corrective lessons, targeted reading supports, and consistent standards. It signals that structured effort is shifting student trajectories in visible ways.

These outcomes offer credible evidence during renewal reviews, advocacy conversations, and philanthropic discussions. They demonstrate the school's capacity to move students forward through deliberate academic strategy — not chance, not short-term gains, but disciplined execution over time.

ONE-YEAR CHANGE IN STUDENTS MOVING OUT OF THE LOWEST READING CATEGORY TOWARD GRADE-LEVEL PROFICIENCY

STATEWIDE STANDING (ALL SYSTEMS INCLUDED)

Change: -17 percentage points [moved 17% of its students out of Level 1]

Statewide Rank: 2 of 252 systems
- Only one system recorded a larger shift (-22)

Charter Rank: 1 of 16 Open Enrollment Charters

GRADES 3-10 1-YEAR CHANGE IN PERCENTAGE NOT CLOSE TO READING READY

Open Enrollment Charter	Reduction in the Percentage of Students at Level 1
Scholarmade Achievement Place of Arkansas	-17
Premier High Schools of Arkansas	-4
KIPP Delta Public Schools	-3
LISA Academy	-3
Arkansas Lighthouse Academies	-2
eStem Public Charter Schools	-2
Westwind School for the Performing Arts	-2
Founders Classical Academies of Arkansas	0
Haas Hall Academy	0
Arkansas Virtual Academy	3
Exalt Academy of Southwest Little Rock	3
Academics Plus Public Charter Schools	4
Arkansas Connections Academy	4
Responsive Ed Solutions Premier High School of Springdale	5
Friendship Aspire Academies Arkansas	6
Graduate Arkansas Charter	10

What This Means

This level of change places ScholarMade among the **strongest shifts** in reading placement observed statewide during the reporting cycle. The magnitude reflects more than incremental movement; it indicates meaningful repositioning of students relative to the lowest performance band.

Students who entered far below readiness benchmarks exited the lowest classification at one of the highest rates recorded in Arkansas. A shift of this scale represents measurable redistribution across performance bands rather than cohort variation.

The results align with the structure and execution of targeted reading supports and demonstrate the capacity of intervention systems to influence student placement. When viewed alongside demographic context and starting baselines, the magnitude of movement holds weight in equity-centered evaluation.

Why This Matters

- ◆ Reflects large-scale student transition out of the lowest performance category
- ◆ Indicates coordinated instructional and intervention impact
- ◆ Places ScholarMade among top-performing systems statewide on this indicator
- ◆ Establishes leadership among open enrollment charter systems

This outcome represents a significant repositioning of students within the reading continuum during the current cycle and contributes meaningful evidence of system responsiveness and academic movement.

MOVEMENT INTO GRADE-LEVEL READING READINESS

Statewide Standing (All Systems)

Change: +8
percentage
points

State Rank: 6
of 255 systems

Charter Rank: 1
of 16 charters

Highest gain
recorded
among
Arkansas
charter systems



GRADES 3-10 1-YEAR CHANGE IN PERCENTAGE READING READY

Open Enrollment Charter	% Change to Level 3 or above
Scholarmade Achievement Place of Arkansas	8
Premier High Schools of Arkansas	6
Graduate Arkansas Charter	4
KIPP Delta Public Schools	4
LISA Academy	3
Arkansas Lighthouse Academies	2
Responsive Ed Solutions Premier High School of Springdale	2
Arkansas Connections Academy	1
eStem Public Charter Schools	1
Founders Classical Academies of Arkansas	1
Westwind School for the Performing Arts	1
Arkansas Virtual Academy	0
Exalt Academy of Southwest Little Rock	0
Haas Hall Academy	0
Academics Plus Public Charter Schools	-1
Friendship Aspire Academies Arkansas	-1



What This Means

This level of change places ScholarMade in the top tier of improvement across Arkansas. Only five districts posted larger gains statewide, and ScholarMade reported the highest gains among public charter schools. Growth of this size signals real movement across readiness levels — not small shifts within the same band.

Students are moving out of the lowest category, and many are advancing into grade-level readiness. Within the charter sector, ScholarMade demonstrated the strongest movement on this measure. That reflects upward progress across the reading continuum.

Why This Matters

This positions ScholarMade as:

- A school that does not give up on children
- A campus demonstrating sustained reading growth
- A practitioner voice shaped by implemented intervention
- A competitive statewide performer
- A system producing measurable shifts in academic placement
- A model influencing long-term student outcomes

The results affirm a clear belief: **all children** are Made for More. Structured instruction, targeted intervention, and consistent expectations can shift readiness benchmarks.

Taken together, these outcomes reflect disciplined work centered on student growth. The data represent children gaining stability where gaps once existed and advancing toward standards that expand future options. Progress of this kind is earned through daily effort and focused leadership.

ScholarMade remains grounded in its responsibility to serve students who have too often been underestimated. The progress reflected here aligns directly with that charge. Work of this nature is frequently overlooked or undervalued, yet it requires precision, persistence, and sustained commitment. The effort continues with clear purpose and steady confidence that where a child begins does not define where that child can go.



ABOUT SCHOLARMADE ACHIEVEMENT PLACE



ScholarMade Achievement Place is a K–8 public charter school located in Little Rock, grounded in a model centered on Emotional Intelligence and Personalized Learning. The school was founded to expand opportunity for students who have historically had limited access to high-quality learning environments and continues to advance practices that build both academic competence and self-awareness.

Dr. Phillis Nichols-Anderson, Founder and Chief Executive Officer, brings more than 30 years of experience across the K–16 spectrum in traditional public and charter environments. Her leadership includes opening and managing schools in multiple regions of the country and contributing to national conversations on school design, educational access, and student development. She completed AAEA's Leaders of Literacy initiative, further advancing her work in structured reading improvement.

Dr. Nichols-Anderson holds a Doctorate and Master's degrees in Educational Administration from the University of Arkansas at Little Rock and a Master of Legal Studies from the Washington College of Law at American University. She is a Cohort 3 Manati Fellow with the National Charter Collaborative and a NewSchools Venture Fund Innovative Schools leader.

ScholarMade earned five **2025 "Beating the Odds" Growth Awards** from the Office for Education Policy at the University of Arkansas, recognizing high overall, math, and ELA growth at both the statewide and Central Region levels.

