

Benchmark Workshop Students Show Growth on ELA Tests

Implementation

During the 2022–2023 school year, a public school district in Arkansas adopted *Benchmark Workshop* as its core English Language Arts (ELA) program for Grades K–5. ELA achievement data were collected and analyzed from two sources to evaluate student performance: the *ACT Aspire*® ELA assessment and *Istation's Indicators of Progress*® for English Language Arts (ISIP ELA).

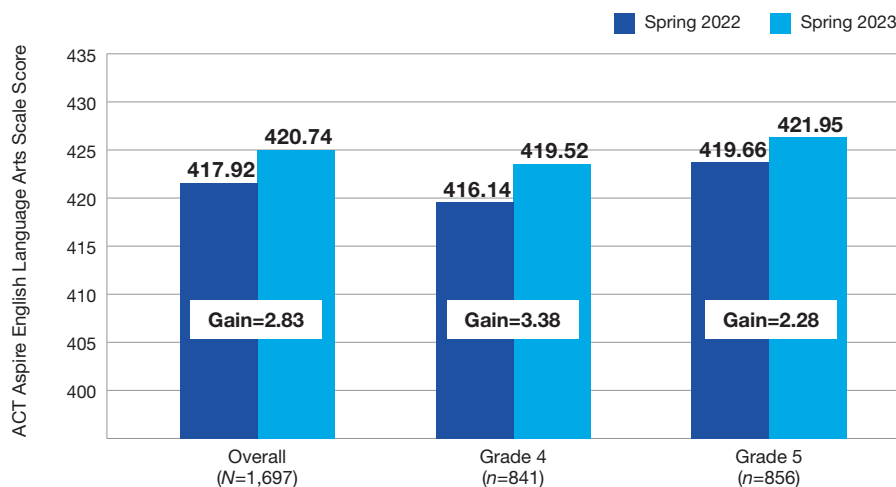
Impact

ACT Aspire ELA data were analyzed for two groups of students: (1) those in Grade 4 during the 2022–2023 school year and had been in Grade 3 before the program launched in Spring 2022, and (2) those in Grade 5 during 2022–2023 and had been in Grade 4 prior to the program's launch. Spring 2023 served as the posttest. Grades 4 and 5 students demonstrated statistically significant gains on the *ACT Aspire ELA* assessment from Spring 2022 to Spring 2023 (see Figure 2). Average scores increased from 417.92 to 420.74—a gain of 2.83 points—with a large effect size of 0.90 ($p < .001$). When analyzed by grade level, dependent t-tests revealed statistically significant gains in both Grade 4 (3.38 points) and Grade 5 (2.28 points).

FIGURE 1. Arkansas Public School District Demographics: *ACT Aspire ELA* Sample Grades 4 and 5

Student Group (N=1,697)	Percent
COHORT	
Grade 3 (2022) to Grade 4 (2023)	49.6%
Grade 4 (2022) to Grade 5 (2023)	50.4%
ETHNICITY	
American Indian/Alaska Native	4.1%
Asian	6.6%
Black/African American	16.3%
Hispanic/Latino	34.8%
Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander	0.4%
White	50.1%
GENDER	
Female	48.3%
Male	51.7%
SPECIAL EDUCATION	
504	4.8%
IEP	13.2%
OTHER	
English Language Learners	20.2%
Gifted	11.8%

FIGURE 2. Arkansas Public School District *Benchmark Workshop* Students, Grades 4–5 (N=1,697) Performance on the *ACT Aspire ELA* Test, Spring 2022 to Spring 2023



¹Effect sizes are reported in terms of Cohen's *d*. An effect size of 0.2 is considered small, 0.5 medium, and 0.8 large (Cohen, 1988). Effect sizes were as follows: Overall ($d=0.90$), Grade 4 ($d=1.10$), and Grade 5 ($d=0.74$).

All Subgroups Show Improvements on ACT Aspire ELA Test

Results showed that regardless of ethnicity, gender, English learner status, special education classification, or gifted identification, all students demonstrated significant gains from Spring 2022 to Spring 2023 (see Figure 3).

FIGURE 3. Arkansas Public School District *Benchmark Workshop* Students, Grades 4-5 Students (N=1,697) Performance on the ACT Aspire ELA Test, Spring 2022 to Spring 2023

Student Group	N	Spring 2022 ACT ELA Mean (SD)	Spring 2023 ACT ELA Mean (SD)	2022 to 2023 ACT ELA Gain (SD)	p	Effect Size (d)
ETHNICITY*						
Asian	112	419.71 (5.97)	422.30 (5.83)	2.60 (3.05)	p<.001	0.85
Black/African American	227	416.67 (5.47)	419.59 (5.46)	2.92 (3.07)	p<.001	0.95
Hispanic/Latino	590	416.74 (5.47)	419.35 (5.35)	2.60 (3.08)	p<.001	0.85
American Indian/ Alaska Native	70	420.37 (5.48)	422.23 (6.17)	1.86 (2.91)	p<.001	0.64
White	850	418.86 (5.93)	421.90 (5.84)	3.03 (3.19)	p<.001	0.95
GENDER						
Male	878	417.44 (5.82)	420.21 (5.71)	2.77 (3.11)	p<.001	0.89
Female	819	418.43 (5.81)	421.32 (5.75)	2.89 (3.16)	p<.001	0.92
SPECIAL EDUCATION SERVICES						
504	81	415.79 (5.35)	419.07 (5.17)	3.28 (3.16)	p<.001	1.04
IEP	224	412.56 (4.57)	415.45 (4.91)	2.89 (2.86)	p<.001	1.01
OTHER						
English Learners	342	413.54 (3.94)	416.22 (3.60)	2.67 (2.96)	p<.001	0.90
Gifted	201	424.44 (4.43)	427.29 (4.46)	2.85 (3.11)	p<.001	0.92

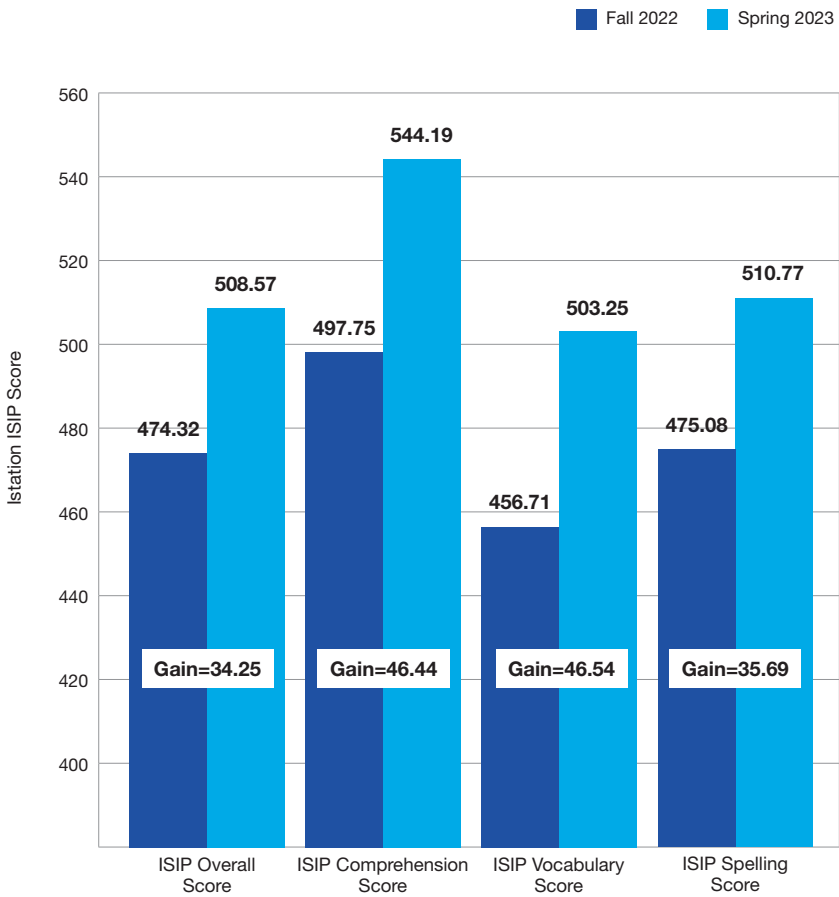
*Data for the Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander group are not shown due to the small sample size. To protect student privacy, results are not reported for groups with fewer than 10 students.

Benchmark Workshop Grades 3-5

Students Post Gains on ISIP ELA Test

During the 2022-2023 school year, students in Grades 3-5 who used *Benchmark Workshop* showed statistically significant improvements on the *ISIP ELA* assessment from Fall 2022 to Spring 2023 (see Figure 4). Overall average scores increased by 34.25 points, comprehension scores rose by 46.44 points, vocabulary scores increased by 46.54 points, and spelling scores grew by 35.69 points.

FIGURE 4. Arkansas Public School District *Benchmark Workshop* Students, Grades 3-5 (N=2,825) Performance on the *ISIP ELA* Test, Fall 2022 to Spring 2023



1Effect sizes are reported in terms of Cohen’s d. An effect size of 0.2 is considered small, 0.5 medium, and 0.8 large (Cohen, 1988). Effect sizes were as follows: Overall (d=0.94), Comprehension (d=0.75), Vocabulary (d=0.83), and Spelling (d=0.87).

FIGURE 5. Arkansas Public School District Demographics: *ISIP ELA* Sample Grades 3-5

Student Group (N=2,825)	Percent
COHORT	
Grade 3	34.7%
Grade 4	32.7%
Grade 5	32.6%
RACE	
American Indian/ Alaska Native	2.8%
Asian	6.3%
Black/African American	15.9%
Native Hawaiian/ Pacific Islander	0.4%
White	74.6%
ETHNICITY	
Hispanic/Latino	34.2%
GENDER	
Female	48.1%
Male	51.9%

All Subgroups Show Gains on ISIP ELA Test

These gains were consistent across all student groups from Fall 2022 to Spring 2023 (see Figure 6).

FIGURE 6. Arkansas Public School District *Benchmark Workshop* Students, Grades 3-5 Students (N=2,825) Performance on the *ISIP ELA* Test, Fall 2022 to Spring 2023

Student Group	N	Fall 2022 Overall ISIP ELA Mean (SD)	Spring 2023 Overall ISIP ELA Mean (SD)	2022 to 2023 ISIP ELA Gain (SD)	p	Effect Size (d)
RACE						
Asian	178	502.92 (73.27)	536.62 (73.73)	33.70 (35.25)	p<.001	0.96
Black/African American	448	461.09 (75.03)	494.20 (74.96)	33.11 (37.46)	p<.001	0.88
American Indian/ Alaska Native	80	489.90 (80.49)	523.50 (79.59)	33.60 (31.65)	p<.001	1.06
Native Hawaiian/ Pacific Islander	12	462.08 (60.10)	490.75 (57.29)	28.67 (25.55)	p=.003	1.12
White	2,107	474.19 (76.15)	508.78 (77.19)	34.60 (36.64)	p<.001	0.95
ETHNICITY						
Hispanic/Latino	967	457.59 (75.46)	491.93 (76.40)	34.33 (37.45)	p<.001	0.92
GENDER						
Male	1,467	473.01 (79.67)	507.66 (81.20)	34.64 (36.48)	p<.001	0.95
Female	1,358	475.72 (72.67)	509.55 (72.56)	33.83 (36.53)	p<.001	0.93

Conclusion

During the 2022-2023 school year, students demonstrated statistically significant gains in English Language Arts (ELA) during the first year of implementing *Benchmark Workshop* as their core ELA program. On average, Grade 4 and 5 students showed significant improvements on the *ACT Aspire ELA* Test, with large effect sizes observed across all demographic groups. Furthermore, Grades 3-5 students made notable gains on the *ISIP* test from Fall 2022 to Spring 2023.

Importantly, the *ACT ELA* and *ISIP* gains were not limited to one subgroup; all student groups, including English learners, students receiving special education services, and those from various racial and ethnic backgrounds, demonstrated significant growth over time. These results highlight promising early literacy and language development trends during the first year of *Benchmark Workshop* implementation.

