



# ARKANSAS DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

**EMBARGOED**  
**Until 12 a.m. June 9**

**Contact: Julie Johnson Thompson**  
**(501) 683-4786 / (501) 766-7976**  
[julie.thompson@arkansas.gov](mailto:julie.thompson@arkansas.gov)

LITTLE ROCK: Arkansas's public high school graduation rate is above the national average, according to Diplomas Count 2009, the fourth annual report issued by Washington-based Education Week that outlines high school graduation policies and trends. Arkansas' graduation rate for 2006, the year for which the most recent data is available, was 71.9 percent, while the graduation rate for the nation was 69.2 percent.

"While we are happy to have a graduation rate higher than the national average, we would like for it to be much closer to 100 percent," said Dr. Diana Julian, deputy commissioner of the Arkansas Department of Education. "To that end, we have and will continue to work at the state level as well as with school districts on such initiatives as the Arkansas Greater Graduation Project, the College- and Career-Ready Policy Institute and our high school redesign initiative."

Arkansas graduated a higher percent than the national average in the male, female, American Indian, Hispanic, and black subgroups, according to the report. The only subgroup below the national average in Arkansas was whites, with the Arkansas average being 74.5 percent and the national average being 76.1 percent.

Arkansas' growth in graduation rates over the last ten years was 2.5 percent, which is nearly the national average of 2.8 percent.

On the annual Arkansas School Performance Report, the state reports graduation rates using the National Governors Association Model, which is calculated differently than the Diploma Counts rate. The report highlighted 33 urban school districts across the United States that graduated at least 10 percent more of their students than was expected in 2006. One of these "overachiever" school districts was the Fort Smith School District, which was number three on the list. Fort Smith was expected to graduate 66 percent in 2006, but actually graduated 84 percent.

*The Arkansas Department of Education strives to ensure that all children in the state have access to a quality education by providing educators, administrators and staff with leadership, resources and training.*