



ARKANSAS DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

**For Immediate Release
January 12, 2010**

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

LITTLE ROCK: The Arkansas Department of Education (ADE) today released to members of the Arkansas General Assembly a report on grade inflation, which identified 58 high schools in the state as inflating 20 percent or more of its grades.

The report, mandated by Act 2197 of 2005, compares the grades of public high school students taking Algebra I and Geometry during the 2000-2009 school year with their scores on the state's 2009 End of Course exams for those courses. High schools for which 20 percent or more of students made an A or B in the course but failed to score proficient or advanced on the corresponding End of Course exams are identified as having grade inflation.

"One of the main reasons for standardized tests is to make sure that the same level of rigor is being taught in classrooms across the state," said Dr. Tom W. Kimbrell, Arkansas commissioner of education. "It is important for an Algebra I student in Mena to know he is receiving the same quality of instruction as an Algebra I student in Marion."

The report takes on additional significance for students and their families this year as it is included in the criteria for qualifying for an Arkansas Academic Challenge Scholarship. Students who graduate from a high school identified on the grade inflation list who otherwise meet the criteria must either score a 19 or higher on the ACT or an equivalent test, or score proficient on all End of Course exams.

The department is in the process of hiring staff who will provide technical assistance to those schools with grade inflation of 20 percent or higher. "We want all students to have the best education possible, and also to have the easiest access possible to the scholarships the state has to offer. By identifying schools where grade inflation is occurring and then working them to alleviate this, we are striving to serve both schools and students," Kimbrell said.

The list of all schools and their percentages in inflated grades are attached. The list shows that 46 Arkansas high schools experienced no grade inflation at all.

-- ADE --

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.