# Annual REPORT

2025-2026









ARKANSAS SCHOOL FOR THE DEAF & BLIND

1849 1859











# Mission Statement

At the Arkansas School for the Deaf and Blind, our mission is to empower students with the tools, confidence, and support to grow into independent, capable adults. We are committed to providing a student-centered education that recognizes and nurtures each learner's unique strengths, interests, and potential. Through specialized instruction, individualized support, and a strong community, we prepare our students for lifelong success.

**Vision Statement**

The Arkansas School for the Deaf and Blind envisions a future where every student confidently navigates life with purpose, independence, and pride. We strive to be a national leader in accessible, specialized education; where all learners are equipped to define and achieve their own version of success, contribute meaningfully to their communities, and live fulfilling lives beyond school.

**At the school, we believe in:**

**P - Professionalism**

We act with integrity, stay current in our fields, and strive for excellence. We maintain a positive image and do what is right for each other and our students.

**R – Respect**

We value all individuals, embracing diverse cultures, languages, abilities, and opinions. We remain kind and professional, even during disagreements.

**I – Inclusion**

We create a safe, accessible, and welcoming environment where every student and staff member feels seen, heard, and valued.

**D – Determination**

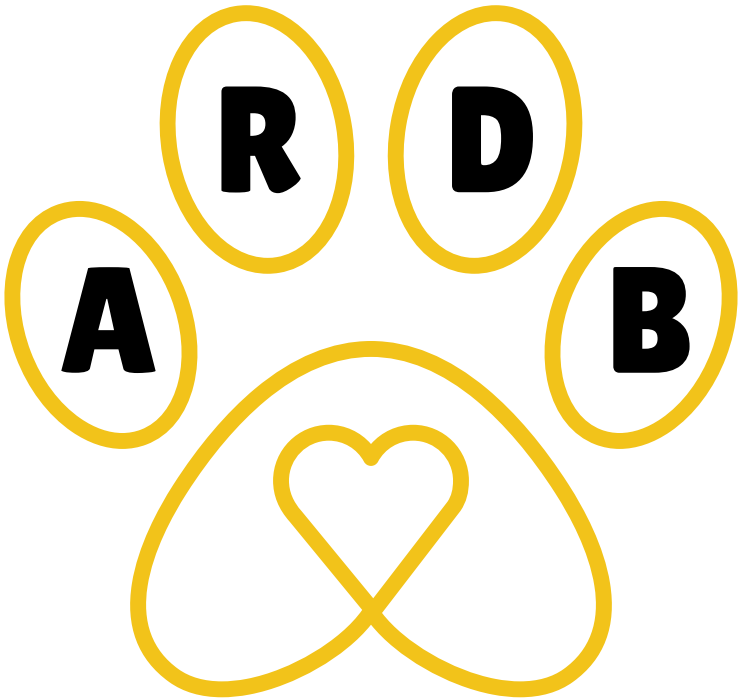
We believe in the potential of every student and support their growth, independence, and success through resilience and high expectations.

**E – Empowerment**

We uplift student voice and choice, promote open communication, and collaborate across roles to help each other thrive.

# Table of Contents


| | |
|---|---|
| Message from the Superintendent | 2 |
| School Year 2025-2026 | 4 |
| Deaf Department | 6 |
| Blind Department | 8 |
| Student Enrollment | 10 |
| Demographics | 14 |
| Testing & Student Growth | 16 |
| 2025-2026 ATLAS Results | 18 |
| Literacy - Deaf Department | 20 |
| Literacy - Blind Department | 22 |
| Related Services Department | 24 |
| Food Service | 26 |
| Residential-Life Program | 28 |
| Health Services | 30 |
| Early Intervention Services | 32 |
| Development Department | 34 |
| Looking to Our Future | 35 |
| Setting the Path to Excellence | 36 |
| Crystal Bridges Museum | 41 |
| Athletics | 43 |
| Deaf Department Athletics | 44 |
| Blind Department Athletics | 45 |
| Student Activities | 48 |
| Deaf Department Class of 2026 | 49 |
| Blind Department Class of 2026 | 50 |



# LETTER FROM OUR SUPERINTENDENT

## NICOLE WALSH

Dear ARDB Families, Staff, Partners, and Friends,

As we reflect on this year at the Arkansas School for the Deaf and Blind, I am proud of the progress we are making together and grateful for the people who make it possible. ARDB stands at an important moment in its history as we honor the legacy of Deaf and Blind education in Arkansas while building a stronger, more unified future for the students and families we serve.

Last year, our work centered on the transition from the 2024-2025 school year into 2025-2026 and the changes needed to support one school with one shared mission. This year, we are deepening that work. We are honing our craft, strengthening instruction, expanding access, and working toward our goal of becoming a model program for Deaf and Blind education across the nation. At the center of that goal is a clear commitment: every student deserves instruction tailored to their needs, communication preferences, strengths, and future goals.

Instructional improvement remains at the heart of this effort. Across classrooms, residential programs, related services, career and technical education, and statewide supports, our teams are using student data, professional learning, collaboration, and evidence-based practices to make instruction more responsive and meaningful. Whether students are building language and communication skills, accessing Braille or assistive technology, developing orientation and mobility skills, learning American Sign Language, strengthening independent living skills, or preparing for future careers, our purpose is the same: to see the whole child and prepare each student for a life of confidence, opportunity, and purpose.

Becoming a national model does not happen in isolation. It happens because donors invest in possibilities, volunteers share their time and talents, families trust us with their children, legislators champion the needs of Deaf and Blind students, and community partners help us extend learning beyond our campus. Your support strengthens our programs, expands opportunities, and reminds our students that Arkansas believes in them.

We are especially excited to look ahead to our move into a new state-of-the-art instructional building in March 2027. This facility represents more than new walls and modern spaces; it reflects a commitment to accessibility, safety, innovation, and belonging. It will help bring students together in new ways, support hands-on learning, and strengthen services for children who are Deaf, hard of hearing, Blind, visually impaired, or Deafblind across Arkansas.

As we move forward, ARDB will continue reaching beyond Little Rock to serve students, families, educators, and communities across the state. We will keep listening, learning, and improving so every student has access to the instruction, tools, and relationships they need to thrive.

Thank you for believing in our students, supporting our school, and walking with us into this exciting next chapter. Together, we are building a stronger ARDB and a model of what Deaf and Blind education can be for Arkansas and for the nation.

Sincerely,
Nicole Walsh, Superintendent, ARDB


Share
hello sunshine
equivalent fractions

# SCHOOL YEAR 2025-2026

The ARDB Curriculum Department targeted literacy instruction and building staff capacity to better serve our students who are Deaf, Hard of Hearing, Blind, or Visually Impaired. A major initiative was the adoption of a new English Language Arts (ELA) curriculum. After months of careful research, review of multiple programs, and input from teachers, specialists, and administrators, the team recommended American Reading Company (ARC) Core. The process included presentations from ARC representatives, site visits to the Kansas School for the Deaf, and collaboration with the Arkansas Department of Education. The investment in ARC provides classroom libraries, assessments, intervention toolkits, and professional development for teachers, ensuring students have access to high-quality, evidence-based reading instruction. ARC was chosen because of its strong alignment with the Science of Reading, its focus on building both foundational literacy skills and background knowledge, and its accessibility supports for students who do not have auditory access to phonics.

In addition to curriculum adoption, the department continued the Para Academy, now in its second year. This program provides paraprofessionals with targeted training and tutoring in reading and math through the iXL platform. With weekly onboarding sessions, personalized tutoring, and independent practice, many paraprofessionals showed remarkable growth. This success reflects both the strength of the program and the dedication of the staff.

Looking ahead to the 2025–26 school year, ARDB will continue to implement the ARC curriculum in both the Deaf and Blind Departments, continue building on the success of Para Academy, strengthen teacher mentoring, and expand professional development opportunities. Together, these efforts reflect our commitment to giving every student the literacy tools they need to succeed and every educator the support they need to thrive.








GET READY FOR
A
Dd
Oo
Uu
Hh

# DEAF DEPARTMENT

The Deaf Department at the Arkansas School for the Deaf and Blind (ARDB) offers a comprehensive scope of education that supports students from their very first classroom experience through adulthood. Our mission is to ensure that every student develops strong language, academic life skills while also having access to opportunities that create a well-rounded education and prepares them for life after graduation.

The Deaf Department at ARDB offers a comprehensive scope of education that supports students from their very first classroom experience through adulthood. Our mission is to ensure that every student develops strong language, academic and life skills while also having access to opportunities that create a well-rounded education.

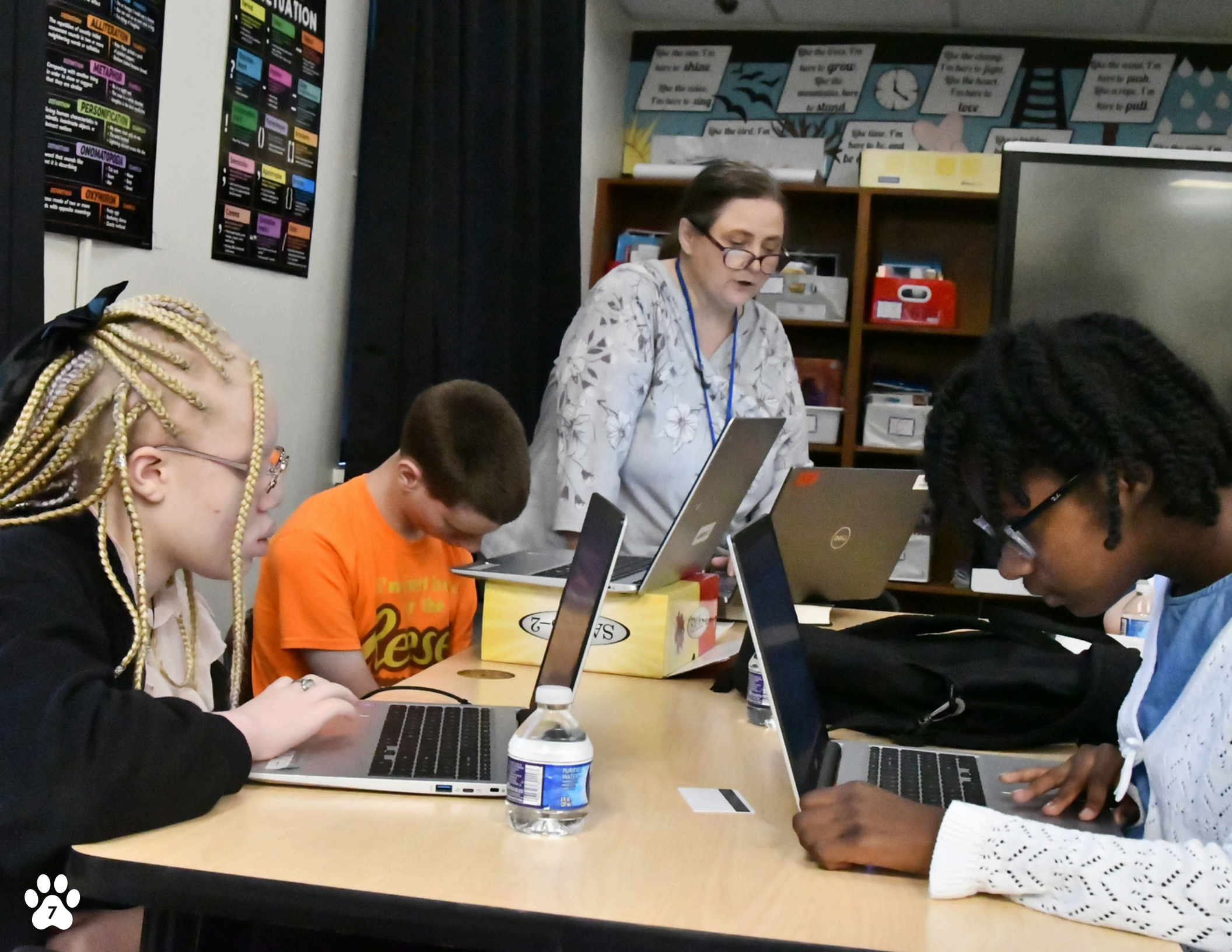
**Lower School (Pre-K - Grade 6)**
Our Pre-K program builds the foundation for lifelong learning by focusing on language development, communication, and social-emotional growth. Using Foundations for Literacy, we equip our youngest learners with the tools they need to enter school ready to succeed.

In Lower School, grades K-6, instruction emphasizes literacy and numeracy. Students benefit from Deaf-specific Curricula such as Fingerspelling our Way to Reading, alongside general programs such as the American Reading Company. This balance ensures students have access to grade level content while receiving specialized support that meets their communication needs.

**Upper School (Grades 7-12)**
At the Upper School level (grades 7-12), students complete core academic courses required for graduation while also preparing for their future. Career and Technical Education (CTE) is a hallmark of this work, with pathways in Culinary Arts, Graphic Design, Robotics, and Business. ARDB has partnered with Little Rock School District Metropolitan Career-Technical Center to. Offer expanded CTE opportunities. We operate under our unique Three E's for post-graduation planning: Enrollment, Engagement, and Entrepreneurship.

**Postsecondary Transition and Adult Support**
Beyond graduation, the Arkansas Deaf Career Center provides individualized support for students and young adults from age 14 through college completion. By focusing on transition planning, life skills, academic advising and career readiness, this program empowers students to transition confidently into higher education, employment and independent living.

These programs build teamwork, leadership and creativity-skills as vital as academics in shaping tomorrow's leaders. From early childhood through adult services, ARDB's Deaf Department remains committed to providing every student with the resources, opportunities and support needed to thrive. We believe that a strong, confident adult begins with a student who has been given every chance to grow.


ALLITERATION
METAPHOR
PERSONIFICATION
ONOMATOPOEIA
OXYMORON

# BLIND DEPARTMENT

The Blind Department at the Arkansas School for the Deaf and Blind (ARDB) provides a comprehensive educational framework supporting students from their initial classroom experiences through adulthood. Our mission is to ensure every student develops literacy, academic, mobility, and life skills while accessing opportunities that foster well-rounded growth and prepare them for life after graduation.

**Lower School (Pre-K – Grade 6)** Our Pre-K program establishes a foundation for lifelong learning by focusing on language development, communication, and social-emotional growth through specialized support such as our Birth-to-Three Program and Low Vision Clinic. Utilizing specialized tools and early outreach, we equip our youngest learners with the tools necessary for school readiness and long-term success.

In Lower School (K–6), instruction emphasizes foundational literacy and numeracy. Students benefit from specialized curricula—such as Building on Patterns through the American Printing House for the Blind for braille instruction—alongside core High-Quality Instructional Materials (HQIM) like American Reading Company (ARC) and Illustrative Mathematics (IM) 360. This balanced approach ensures students access grade-level content while receiving specialized support tailored to their unique communication needs, orientation and mobility, and IEP goals.

**Upper School (Grades 7–12)** At the Upper School level, students complete core academic requirements for graduation while preparing for their future careers. Career and Technical Education (CTE) is a hallmark of our secondary programming, featuring specialized pathways and dedicated skill instruction. We operate under our unique 3E model of post-graduation: Enrollment, Employment, + Entrepreneurship.

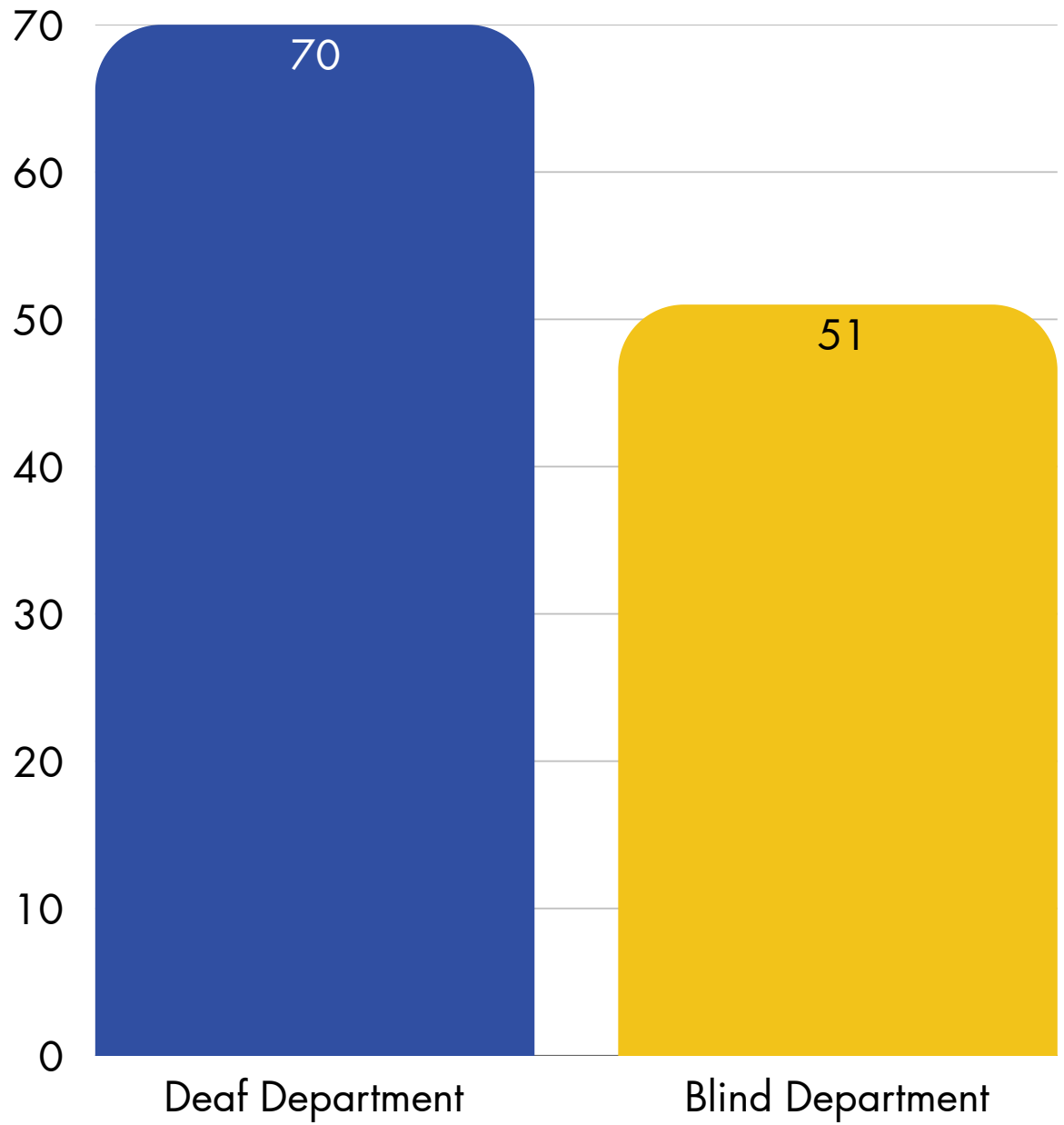
Students are encouraged to take the Accuplacer and/or ACT for opportunities to earn college credits through Arkansas Tech University / Virtual Arkansas Online or in person at the University of Arkansas at Little Rock. Additionally, students may utilize an elective to participate in a hands-on work-study experience course.

To further broaden student opportunities, ARDB engages students through dynamic extracurriculars, including NCASB track (national champion girls' team and 3rd place boys' team), goalball, wrestling, cheerleading (3rd place nationally), bowling, Special Olympics, EAST Conference (featuring two EAST Student Champions), and joint summer camp programs with Camp Aldersgate.

**Post-Secondary Transition and Adult Support** Prior to graduation, the Blind Department works closely with students and families through the IEP process to determine the best next steps for each individual. Through transition planning, essential life skills, and academic advising, we connect students with key community partners, local colleges, and support agencies—such as World Services for the Blind—to empower them to transition confidently into higher education, employment, and independent living.


play
dough tools

# 2025–2026 STUDENT ENROLLMENT

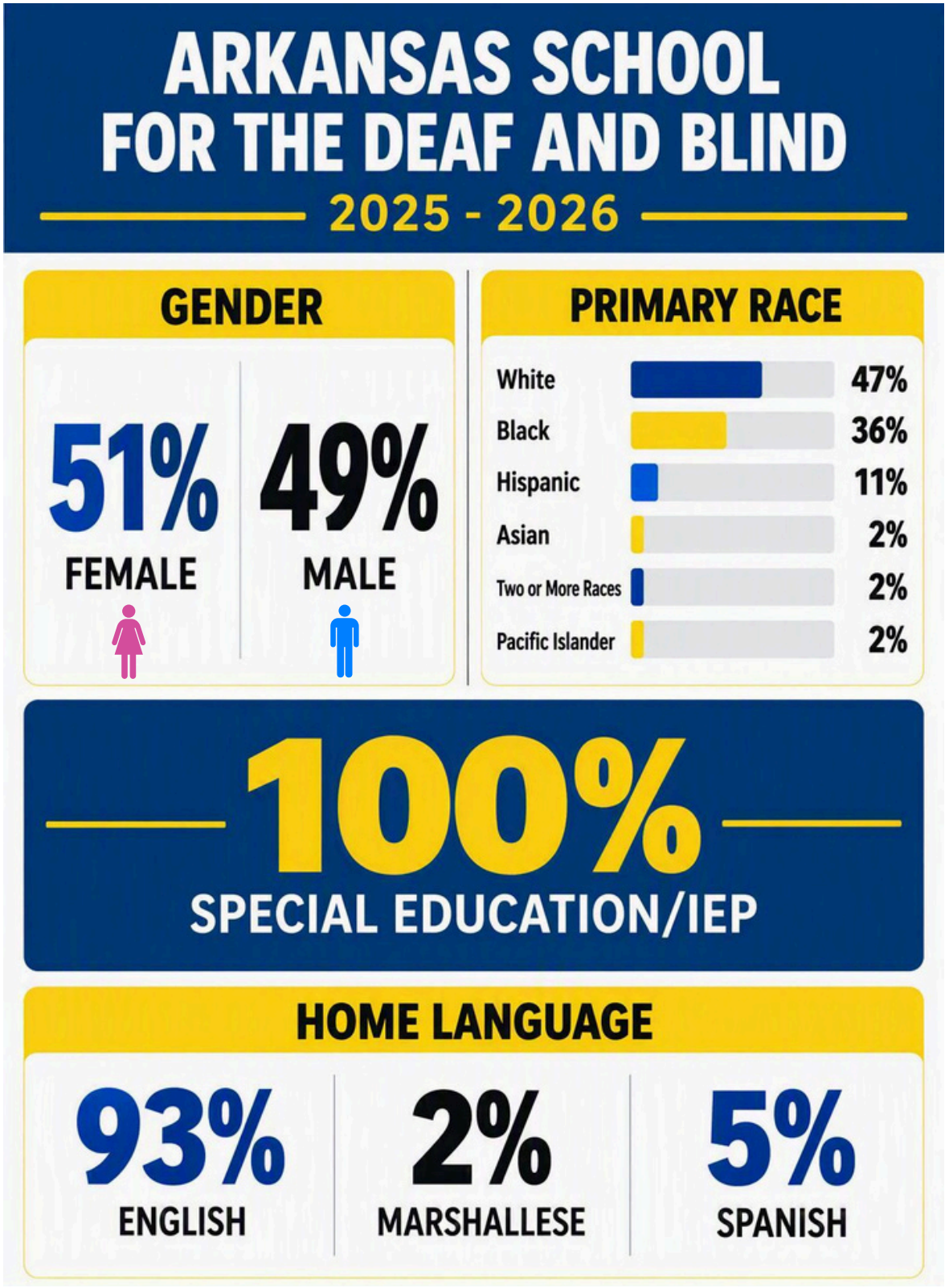



courteous
PECTFUL
Core Profile


INTO
My Three Best Friends and Me, Zulay
Cari Best
Pictures by


PROTECT

# DEMOGRAPHICS




8-18-26
Bell Ringer
the book was interesting. it had a lot of action, and i liked the characters.
LEOPARDS
GREAT REASONS TO READ
Read to understand the past.
Read to explore your world.
Read to plan for your future.
Read to visit new places.
Read to create great things.
Read to make a good decision.
Read to have fun.
Read to exercise your mind.
Read to keep in touch.
Read because you can!

# TESTING & STUDENT GROWTH

At ARDB, we recognize MAP as a valuable tool for measuring student growth and achievement based on each student's current instructional level. ARDB students completed two MAP assessments during the 2025-2026 school year, once in the fall and again in the spring. The resulting data provides teachers and staff with detailed information that helps guide instruction and support students as they work toward their individual learning goals.

Educational leadership reviews MAP data and compares student performance to results from previous years to better understand patterns of growth over time. This information helps us identify areas of strength, target instructional needs, and provide appropriate support for continued growth. Our staff remains committed to using MAP data to inform instructional decisions and ensure that all students receive the support they need to make meaningful academic progress.

## DEAF DEPARTMENT

| Subject | Growth Percentile |
|---|---|
| 📚 Reading | **34th Percentile** |
| ➗ Math | **32nd Percentile** |



## BLIND DEPARTMENT

| Student Group | Math Growth | Math Achievement | Reading Growth | Reading Achievement |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Elementary** | **10th** | **13th** | **12th** | **11th** |
| **Secondary** | **36th** | **17th** | **46th** | **48th** |


Dodgers
LA

# 2025-2026 ATLAS RESULTS

We successfully completed another year of ATLAS testing. This year's ATLAS data provided valuable insight into how our students are performing within their grade bands across Math, English, and Science. As many at ARDB recognize, our students come to us with a wide range of learning needs, which are reflected in the assessment results. These results do not diminish our students' effort or perseverance. In fact, the data show that while some students demonstrated significant growth and achievement at or near mastery of grade-level standards, others are progressing at different rates. This variation highlights the diverse learning experiences of our students and helps guide our instructional planning. ATLAS results help us better understand where students are and where we can best support them. Our teachers and staff remain committed to addressing these challenges and continuing to build on student growth throughout the coming year.



**Deaf Department:** In ELA, many students demonstrated notable growth, particularly in grades 6 and 9, while other grade levels showed a range of progress. In Math, student performance reflected a similar pattern, with growth observed alongside areas of continued development across grades. In Science, Grade 6 students and several students participating in the Biology End-of-Course (EOC) assessment demonstrated strong growth.



**Blind Department:** ELA is the strongest ATLAS subject across most grades. Math scores demonstrate this as an area of targeted needs. Science scores demonstrated a need for consistent instruction and accessible curriculum. High-performing clusters appear in Grades 5, 6, and 9.


THE SCIENTIFIC METHOD
PURPOSE
Research
HYPOTHESIS
EXPERIMENT
Analysis
Conclusion
Classroom Safety Rules
SCIENCE
Notebook
SCIENCE
Notebook
Foster Denton
SCIENCE
Notebook

# LITERACY - DEAF DEPARTMENT







During the 2025-2026 school year, the Literacy Team continued its commitment to implementing evidence-based curricula and instructional practices designed to meet the unique educational needs of Deaf and Hard of Hearing (DHH) students. The team collaborated closely with teachers to support implementation of the American Reading Company (ARC) Core curriculum, a comprehensive literacy framework that promotes student growth through inquiry-based thematic units, differentiated instruction, and individualized learning opportunities. Through daily reading practice and targeted teacher coaching, students strengthened essential literacy skills while engaging with rigorous, grade-level content and developing a strong culture of reading.

Student reading development was measured using the Independent Reading Level Assessment (IRLA), ARC's embedded assessment system, which identifies students' current reading levels and informs instructional planning. Student progress was also monitored through the NWEA Measures of Academic Progress (MAP) assessment. Together, these tools provided valuable data to guide instruction, monitor growth, and support informed educational decision-making.

Elementary students also benefited from targeted literacy intervention programs, including Fingerspelling Our Way to Reading (FOWR) and Foundations for Literacy, both specifically designed to support Deaf and Hard of Hearing learners. These interventions provided additional support in developing foundational reading skills and language acquisition.

We remain committed to ensuring the success of every student through high-quality literacy instruction, evidence-based interventions, and accessible learning opportunities that promote literacy growth, academic achievement, and a lifelong love of learning.


BIRTHDAYS
MAKE
TODAY
COUNT

# LITERACY - BLIND DEPARTMENT





During the 2025-2026 school year, the Literacy Department remained committed to improving student achievement across all areas of literacy. We continued administering state-required assessments, including DIBELS, phonological awareness screeners, NWEA MAP, and ATLAS. Assessment data were used to guide instructional planning, monitor student progress, and identify areas requiring additional support. As a result of these targeted efforts, nearly 60 percent of our students improved their ATLAS performance compared to the previous year.

Professional learning remained a priority throughout the year. Teachers received ongoing instructional coaching, modeling, and feedback to strengthen literacy instruction and support effective implementation of the American Reading Company (ARC) curriculum. The Wilson Reading System continued to provide intensive, individualized intervention for students developing foundational reading skills and working toward grade-level proficiency.

Student progress was monitored through DIBELS, NWEA MAP, curriculum-based measures, and classroom observations. Regular instructional walkthroughs provided opportunities to support teachers, monitor implementation fidelity, and promote consistent, high-quality literacy instruction. We also hosted a successful Family Literacy Night, offering students and families engaging literacy activities and resources that reinforced the importance of reading beyond the classroom.

Throughout the year, the Literacy Department strengthened schoolwide literacy systems by analyzing assessment data, supporting collaborative planning, developing instructional resources, and providing ongoing support to teachers. These efforts promoted consistency in literacy instruction across classrooms while building educators' capacity to meet the diverse literacy needs of our students.

These efforts reflect our ongoing commitment to strengthening literacy instruction, supporting educators, engaging families, and improving literacy outcomes for all students.



# RELATED SERVICES DEPARTMENT

The Related Services Department provides speech-language pathology, occupational therapy, physical therapy, orientation and mobility, audiology, and low vision services for students who are deaf, hard of hearing, blind, visually impaired, or DeafBlind. Our specialists understand how these students access language, communication, and learning, and they respect each student's language and culture, including American Sign Language. Rather than receiving services from therapists who travel between multiple schools, ARDB students have a dedicated team on campus that knows them, works alongside them in their classrooms, and partners with their teachers and families. Our guiding belief is that therapy should occur where learning happens.

Over the past year, we have made significant strides in unifying and strengthening services across both campuses. We successfully integrated Related Services into a single department with shared expectations for scheduling, documentation, and family communication. To maximize student growth, we expanded classroom-based therapy, allowing therapists and teachers to collaborate directly on IEP goals during authentic instructional activities. We also strengthened oversight of contracted therapy services, including scheduling, documentation, and billing, to ensure high-quality care and responsible stewardship of state funds. Additionally, we laid the groundwork for the future by beginning development of an ARDB Speech-Language Pathology Assistant (SLP-A) program aligned with Arkansas Department of Education requirements.

Looking ahead, we are excited to transition to a fully staffed ARDB provider team, reducing reliance on outside agencies and ensuring students receive services from professionals who know them and their families well. We are also carefully structuring campus-wide schedules to protect critical instructional time for reading, interventions, and braille instruction. Most importantly, we are aligning goals across all related service disciplines with the Expanded Core Curriculum, including communication, independent living, orientation and mobility, assistive technology, and self-advocacy, to support student success in school and beyond.

As ARDB became one agency, Related Services became one team. Working alongside teachers, administrators, and families, our providers help students communicate effectively, move safely, travel independently, and access the world around them. Together, we are committed to ensuring that every ARDB student can participate fully in school and life with the greatest possible independence.



# FOOD SERVICES

**School Year Highlights**
The ARDB Child Nutrition Department is proud to share the accomplishments of another successful school year. Our team remained committed to providing nutritious, appealing meals while delivering exceptional customer service to students, staff, and the ARDB community.

## Meal Service Statistics
## During the school year, we served:

| Meal Type | Number Served |
|---|---|
| Breakfasts | 15,775 |
| Lunches | 18,138 |





**Special Events and Community Engagement**
Throughout the year, the School Nutrition Department supported and catered numerous events that brought students, families, staff, and community members together. Highlights included Open House, Thanksgiving and Christmas dinners, sports banquets, graduation breakfast and dinner, prom, school dances, administrative and School Board meetings, and staff Back-to-School and end-of-year celebrations.

**Creating Memorable Experiences**
One of the highlights of the year was taking meal service beyond the cafeteria walls. Students especially enjoyed the Tailgate and Field Day lunches served from the football field concession stand, creating a fun and memorable dining experience.

**Compliance and Accountability**
We are pleased to report that the department successfully completed its required audit with no findings. This accomplishment reflects our team's commitment to maintaining accurate records, ensuring program integrity, and adhering to all federal and state requirements.



# RESIDENTIAL LIFE PROGRAM

The Student Life and Residential Life program at ARDB continues to provide students with a safe, supportive, and language-rich environment that extends learning beyond the classroom. Designed to serve residential students as well as those participating in after-school programs, athletics, enrichment activities, and special events, the program ensures meaningful access to campus life and opportunities for personal growth.

A strong emphasis is placed on communication access, language development, social-emotional learning, and independence. Through daily routines and structured activities, students develop practical skills in areas such as personal responsibility, organization, hygiene, money management, meal preparation, self-advocacy, decision-making, and household management. These experiences build confidence and prepare students for life beyond school.

Student Life also provides opportunities to strengthen relationships, develop leadership skills, manage emotions, resolve conflicts, and practice responsible decision-making. Shared meals, recreation, study time, athletics, evening activities, and weekend events foster a sense of belonging while promoting positive peer and adult relationships.

Learning extends into the broader community through outings, cultural events, shopping trips, restaurant visits, service projects, and recreational activities. These real-world opportunities allow students to practice communication, social, problem-solving, and independent living skills in authentic settings while expanding their awareness of new experiences and opportunities.

The success of the program is supported by dedicated staff who participate in ongoing training and professional development. Training focuses on language access, student safety, social-emotional learning, behavior support, cultural responsiveness, and independent living skills. This continued professional growth helps staff provide consistent, intentional, and high-quality support.

Student Life and Residential Life are an integral part of ARDB's commitment to educating the whole child. By combining a language-rich environment, meaningful experiences, strong relationships, and purposeful preparation for independence, the program helps students develop the skills and confidence needed for successful futures.



# HEALTH SERVICES

Health Services at the Arkansas School for the Deaf and Blind supports students whose healthcare needs extend beyond the classroom and the traditional school day. Care must also be accessible to students who are Deaf, blind, or have additional medical communication needs. During the 2025-2026 school year, the department collaborated with families, educators, residential staff, school leadership, and healthcare providers to help ensure students could participate safely and successfully in school and campus life.

During the year, Health Services navigated leadership transitions, evolving systems, and multiple out-of-state trips while maintaining consistent, high-quality care. In addition to providing daily nursing services, medication administration, and emergency response, the team developed individualized health and emergency care plans and coordinated medical support for school events and field trips. Health Services also partnered in the development of ARDB's new Mental Health Department and improved departmental organization, communication, and collaboration during a year of significant transition. These efforts strengthened the foundation for consistent procedures and high-quality student care across classrooms, dormitories, and travel settings.

Looking ahead to the 2026-2027 school year, Health Services will focus on developing a comprehensive resource manual, standardizing procedures and documentation, and strengthening staff accountability and collaboration. The team is also actively preparing for a smooth transition to the new school building in March 2027.

Through a continued commitment to student health, safety, and accessibility, Health Services remains dedicated to supporting student success and ensuring that every student has access to the care needed to thrive at ARDB.





# EARLY INTERVENTION SERVICES

Our program provides specialized early intervention services to families of children who are Deaf, Hard of Hearing, Blind, or Visually Impaired as soon as they are identified. We partner with families to provide individualized support within natural environments and daily routines, helping them navigate the opportunities and challenges that may accompany their child's diagnosis. Through family-centered services, we promote the development of communication, learning, and independence skills that prepare children for success in school and throughout life. Our goal is to empower families and help each child reach their fullest potential.

Throughout the year, we continued our strong collaboration with the ACH Speech Therapy Team and strengthened partnerships with several family-centered organizations that support the children and families we serve.

The Visual Impairment Program reached a significant milestone by receiving its first formal referrals with Individualized Family Service Plans (IFSPs). Previously serving children across the state on a consultative basis, the program can now provide direct IFSP services. The team also expanded collaborative partnerships throughout Arkansas, helping create a more coordinated and accessible system of support for infants and toddlers with visual impairments and their families.

To further enhance service quality and professional confidence, team members completed advanced training in First Connections, ERAVE, and Parent-Based Coaching Strategies. These professional learning opportunities strengthened our ability to provide high-quality services and effectively support the families we serve.

We remain committed to delivering early intervention services that empower families, strengthen developmental outcomes, and ensure children have the support they need to thrive.









Author
An Arkansas Anthology
A Special Collection of Writings by Arkansas Authors
ARKANSAS
"A timeless collection—meant to entertain, inspire, and share some thoughts that will linger in your heart."
History, Op-Ed, Inspiration, Satire, Poetry
A Benefit for Arkansas School for the Deaf & Blind

ARKANSAS SCHOOL FOR THE DEAF AND BLIND

# Development Department Year in Review

## FUNDRAISING AND REVENUE

**$190,243** in donations

**$37,205** facilities rental revenue

**$2.7M** grants secured

Also led efforts to obtain ARDB's federal tax ID and created new fundraising forms and processes, funding opportunities that state budget dollars alone do not cover.

## EVENTS AND COMMUNITY

**631** events managed, 84 for external groups

- Staff appreciation and awards
- Homecoming parade
- Angel Tree
- Ghost Tours
- New community Braille classes
- Community ASL classes

## FEDERAL PROGRAMS

ARDB is a standalone statewide LEA. Final FY2025-26 allocations:

| | |
|---|---|
| Title I | $37,168.78 |
| Title II | $6,923.81 |
| Title IV | $10,000.00 |

Title I Section 1003 School Improvement grant application completed

## SOCIAL MEDIA REACH

**+79.1%** views across Facebook, Instagram, and LinkedIn

**12.5K** interactions, up 48.7%

**+141.6%** followers, 1.2K new follows

**+878.7%** link clicks, reaching 2.2K

## How You Can Help

Donate, volunteer, attend an event, or share our story. Every contribution of time or funds helps ARDB students learn, grow, and succeed.

**Scan to donate**



**SECRETARY JACOB OLIVA SPEAKING AT THE TOPPING OFF CEREMONY FOR THE NEW BUILDING AT THE ARKANSAS SCHOOL FOR THE DEAF AND BLIND.**

# SETTING THE PATH TO EXCELLENCE

Arkansas School for the Deaf and Blind (ARDB) has a bold vision for its students: preparing each one for a bright and successful future. That vision is becoming a reality. ARDB is investing in its students, staff, partnerships, and learning environments to ensure every student develops the knowledge, skills, and confidence needed to thrive after graduation.

**Investing in Opportunity**

ARDB is building partnerships with community businesses and local schools to give students more opportunities to explore careers, develop workplace skills, and connect with peers. These experiences help students discover their strengths, build confidence, and envision their future. We are also expanding accelerated and career-connected learning opportunities while providing targeted coaching for teachers and staff. This professional learning focuses on best practices for educating students who are deaf, hard of hearing, blind, visually impaired, or DeafBlind. Together, these investments strengthen instruction and help ensure every student receives the support and challenge needed to reach their full potential.

**A 21st-Century Learning Environment**

The State of Arkansas is strengthening this work through its investment in ARDB's new instructional building. More than a construction project, this facility represents a commitment to our students and their futures. Its modern, accessible spaces will support communication, technology integration, independence, and hands-on learning while allowing teachers to tailor instruction to individual needs. In this 21st-century learning environment, students will be challenged academically, creatively, technically, and professionally while developing the self-advocacy, knowledge, and confidence needed for success beyond ARDB.

**The Three Es: Pathways to Life After ARDB**

Our vision for every graduate is centered on the Three Es, three meaningful pathways for life after ARDB:

- Enrollment: Continuing education through a college, university, technical school, or training program.
- Employment: Beginning a career in a trade, skilled profession, or other meaningful employment.
- Entrepreneurship: Using creativity, innovation, and practical skills to start and grow a business.

We are grateful to the State of Arkansas, our community and school partners, our educators and staff, and the families who support ARDB's mission. Together, we are opening doors, raising expectations, and creating opportunities for every student. The path to excellence is taking shape, and our students are ready to lead the way.











Representatives Tippi McCullough and Joey Carr sign the building's final beam before it is placed.


NABHOLZ




NABHOLZ
SCM




MACKEY MITCHELL
NASHOLZ
SCM








Crystal Bridges
Museum of American Art





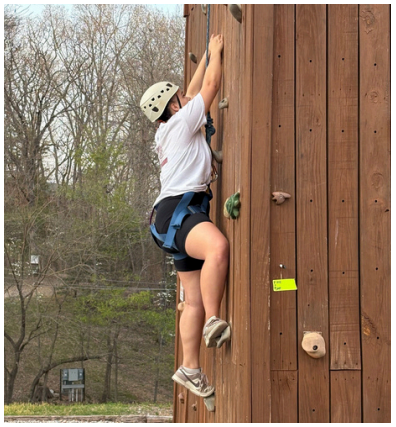












Students had the wonderful opportunity to attend Crystal Bridges' Art Beyond Sight and Sound event this year. Interactive activities included a career tour, art tour, art-making, and additional time at the museum. It was a great learning opportunity for students, and the interaction with museum staff will enhance learning experiences at the museum in the future.

# ATHLETICS



# DEAF DEPARTMENT ATHLETICS

Arkansas School for the Deaf and Blind (ARDB) Leopard Athletics is proud to provide student-athletes with opportunities to compete, build meaningful relationships, and develop skills that extend far beyond the playing field. Leopard Athletics offers a variety of athletic and academic activities, including Cross Country, Volleyball, Football, Girls Basketball, Boys Basketball, Cheerleading, Academic Bowl, Girls Track, Boys Track, and Special Olympics.

This season, Leopard Athletics was represented by one dedicated student-athlete in **Cross Country**. Competing as an individual requires commitment, perseverance, and self-discipline, and he met every challenge with determination.

**Volleyball** had a very young and enthusiastic team that gained valuable experience every time it took the court, and it is eager to keep learning and improving together.

The **Football** team had a small roster, so every player had to contribute, and the team played with heart through a demanding season.

**Girls Basketball** entered the season with a young team and just enough players for a varsity roster. Without enough athletes to field Junior High or Junior Varsity teams, they took on varsity-level competition and embraced the challenge.

**Boys Basketball** had only one senior, but this group still showed grit, determination, and heart. The players improved throughout the year and developed a stronger understanding of what it takes to compete as a team.

**Cheerleading** demands skill, strength, coordination, teamwork, and commitment. Our squad showed all of them.

**Academic Bowl** students gave it their best and represented our school with determination and pride. With a limited number of players, every member of the team had to contribute–and they gave it their best effort!

**Girls Track** may have had a small number of athletes, but the size of the team did not limit the size of their determination. Each girl stepped up, worked hard, and committed herself to becoming a better athlete.

**Boys Track:** This was a standout season. The boys showed tremendous improvement, determination, and athletic ability, and they were exciting to watch.

# BLIND DEPARTMENT ATHLETICS

The 2025-2026 athletic year was marked by growth, perseverance, and new opportunities for our student-athletes. The Blind Department's Lion Athletics offered competition in Track and Field, Goalball, Wrestling, Cheer, and Bowling, while also launching a new Youth Wrestling Club for elementary students.

**Track and Field** had a successful season, with seven girls and one boy competing. The girls earned numerous first-place finishes, including two athletes who won all four of their individual events at the conference championship. The girls also placed second as a team at the conference championship.

**Goalball** continued to show steady improvement. The girls advanced to the championship tournament, while the boys competed with only four players but demonstrated determination throughout the season. We anticipate increased participation next year.

**Cheer** represented the school with pride throughout the season. After the conference championship was canceled due to winter weather, teams submitted virtual performances, and our squad earned third place in the conference.

**Bowling** made its debut as a new athletic program. Our girls' and co-ed teams showed tremendous improvement throughout the season, with several athletes achieving personal-best scores. The girls' team finished fifth at the conference championship.

**Secondary Wrestling** season was cut short due to unforeseen circumstances, but we remain committed to rebuilding the program and increasing participation.

A major accomplishment this year was the launch of the **Youth Wrestling Club**, which served 13 elementary students from both the Deaf and Blind Departments. Through a partnership with the University of Arkansas at Little Rock Wrestling Team, student-athletes received weekly instruction and mentorship from UALR wrestlers, creating a strong foundation for the future of the program. We look forward to competing in the Arkansas Youth Wrestling State Circuit next season.

Overall, the 2025-2026 school year reflected the continued growth of Lion Athletics. We are proud of our student-athletes for representing the Arkansas School for the Deaf and Blind with determination, sportsmanship, and school pride, and we look forward to building on this momentum in 2026-2027.


LIONS
9
ARKANSAS
GOALFIX
LIONS
3
CCM

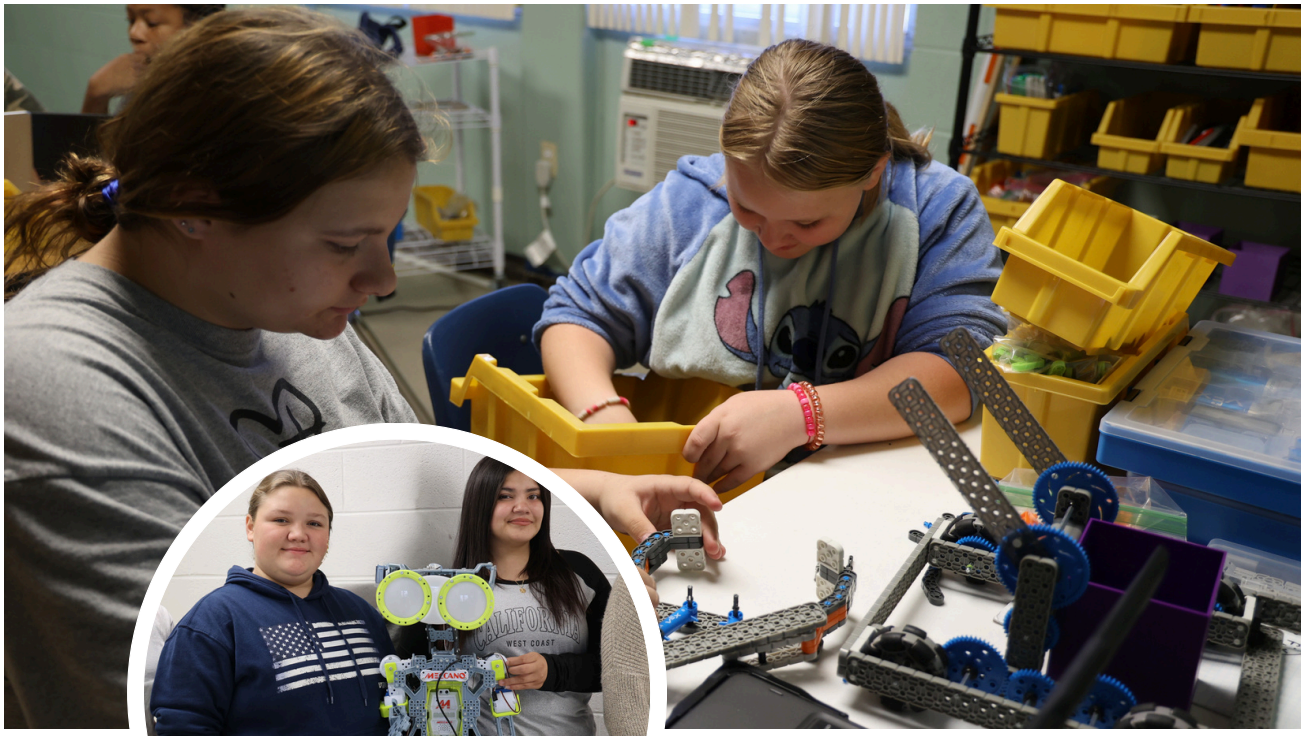

ARKANSAS
9




LEOPARDS
BOBCATS
JACKRABBIT
10
5

## Clubs

- Academic Bowl
- Drones
- FBLA
- FFA
- Jr. NAD
- Mathematics
- Robotics
- SkillsUSA
- SAC










# STUDENT ACTIVITIES



# DEAF DEPARTMENT
# CLASS OF 2026



# BLIND DEPARTMENT
# CLASS OF 2026

# THANK YOU TO OUR FY2026 DONORS

The Arkansas School for the Deaf and Blind extends its sincere gratitude to the individuals, organizations, and community partners whose generous contributions of $1,000 or more during Fiscal Year 2026 helped support opportunities for our students. Your investment strengthens educational programs, student experiences, and campus life, helping ARDB students learn, grow, and prepare for successful futures.



**Anonymous**
**ASBVI Alumni**
**Beverly Trager**
**D. Bachman**
**David Jerome Lawless Trust**
**Debra and Dennis Settlefield**
**Magnolia Lodge**
**Pettit & Pettit**
**Sorenson**
**Susan Pack**
**VC Johnson Trust**
**VisionCorps**

## Join our circle of supporters!

Every gift helps create opportunities for our students. We are grateful for the support of our donors, partners, families, and community members who help advance the mission of ARDB. Scan this QR code to donate and support ARDB students!



# CONNECT WITH US ON SOCIAL MEDIA

Scan the QR code for our
Linktree and Socials

Arkansas School for the Deaf and Blind
2400 West Markham Street
Little Rock, AR 72205