

Southside Charter High School Accountability Profile

Expedited Review

Prepared by
Arkansas Department of Education
Charter School Office

February 2026



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Section 1: Abstract

Southside Charter High School is a district conversion charter serving grades 10–12, opened in 2015, with a mission centered on helping every student develop a “Future Story” supported by strong instructional foundations and personalized preparation for postsecondary success. The school enrolls 459 students, operating at approximately 38% of its enrollment cap of 1,200. The Expedited Review Accountability Profile provides a multi-year overview of enrollment, student populations, academic outcomes, graduation performance, financial status, governance practices, and school improvement systems.

Academic performance indicators are notably strong and trending upward. The school earned letter grades of B, B, and A over the past three years, outperforming the state average of C each year and improving to an A in the most recent cycle. ATLAS growth and achievement comparisons in English Language Arts, Math, and Science are presented against state averages, including both all-student and lowest-quartile growth measures. Graduation rate comparisons are also included as a component of overall academic performance. The school improvement framework emphasizes student ownership, engagement, intervention systems, literacy and math supports, and structured advisory programming.

Financial and operational indicators reflect stability and compliance. ADE Finance reported no financial concerns or findings. The governing board conducts regular monthly meetings with documented oversight of budgets, financial reports, academic updates, personnel actions, and compliance items. Required budget adoption and financial approvals were completed on schedule, and both recruitment/retention and school improvement planning artifacts are present and structured. Overall, the profile reflects a high-performing charter high school with strong governance and continuous improvement systems in place

Section 2: School Summary

Background Information

Location	70 Scott Drive, Southside, AR 72501
Year Opened	2015
Grade Levels	10 th -12 th
Enrollment CAP	1200
Charter Type	Open Enrollment/District Conversion
Mission Statement	At Southside Schools, every student has a Future Story. As that story evolves, teachers and administration at Southside lay the foundation to make each student's future story a reality

Leadership Team

Personnel	Title	School / Organization	Email
James R Hodges	High School Principal	Southside Charter High	jimmy.hodges@southsideschools.org
Dion Stevens	Superintendent	Southside Charter High	Dion.stevens@southsideschools.org
Eric Low	School Board President	Board Member	Eric.low@southsideschools.org
Vonda Halford	Vice President	Board Member	Vonda.halford@southsideschools.org
Tony May	Member	Board Member	Tony.may@southsideschools.org
Kyle Miller	Member	Board Member	Kyle.miller@southsideschools.org
Brad Cummings	Member	Board Member	Brad.cummings@southsideschools.org

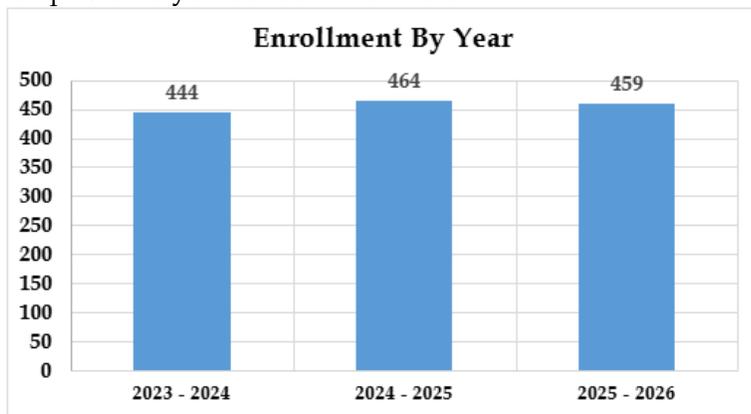
Section 3: Student Enrollment Data

Table 3.0 – 2025 – 2026 Enrollment

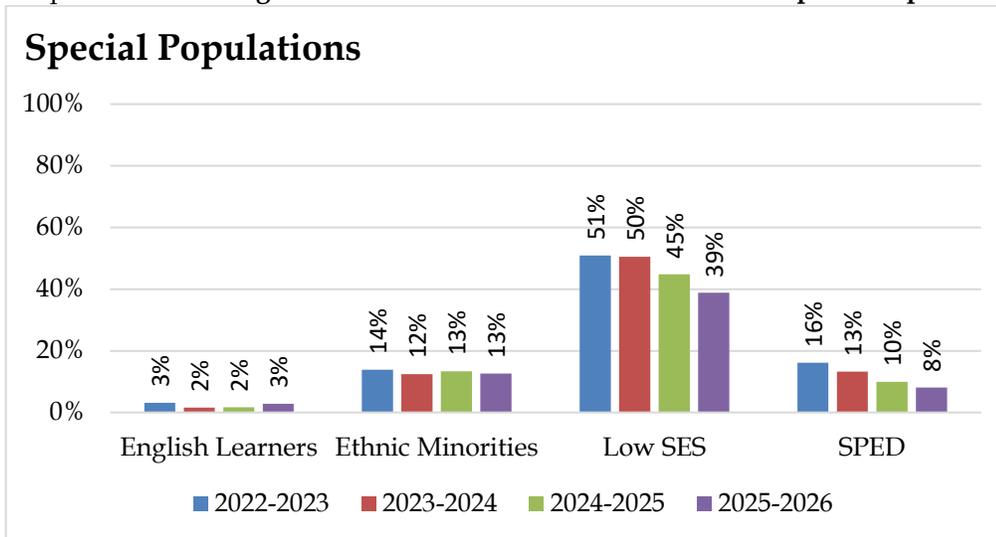
2025 – 2026 Enrollment	Enrollment Cap	Percent of Cap
459	1200	38.25%

Graph 3.0 reports the past three years’ total enrollment count; **Graph 3.1** shows student demographics over the past three years. **Graph 3.2** provides the charter school’s enrollment percentages of students identified as part of a special population during the past three years. The data reported was captured from the Arkansas Department of Education’s Data Center and is current as of the October 2025 school census count.

Graph 3.0 - 3-year School Enrollment



Graph 3.1 - Percentage of Enrolled Students Considered Part of Special Populations **



** Students who are English language learners, those who receive a free or reduced lunch, and those with an IEP are included in the state’s definition of special populations.

Section 4: Academic Performance Data

In 2013, the Arkansas legislature passed A.C.A 6-15-2105, requiring the state to implement an A-F grading scale for schools as an indicator of a school’s overall academic health. **Table 4.0** shows the school’s past three years of letter grades compared to the state.

Table 4.0 - Letter Grade Comparison

School	2022-2023	2023-2024	2024-2025
Southside Charter High School	B	B	A
State average	C	C	C

Growth and Achievement

Growth scores show how many students met their **individual growth goals** on the end-of-year tests. It highlights how well a school helps **all students make progress**, no matter where they start.

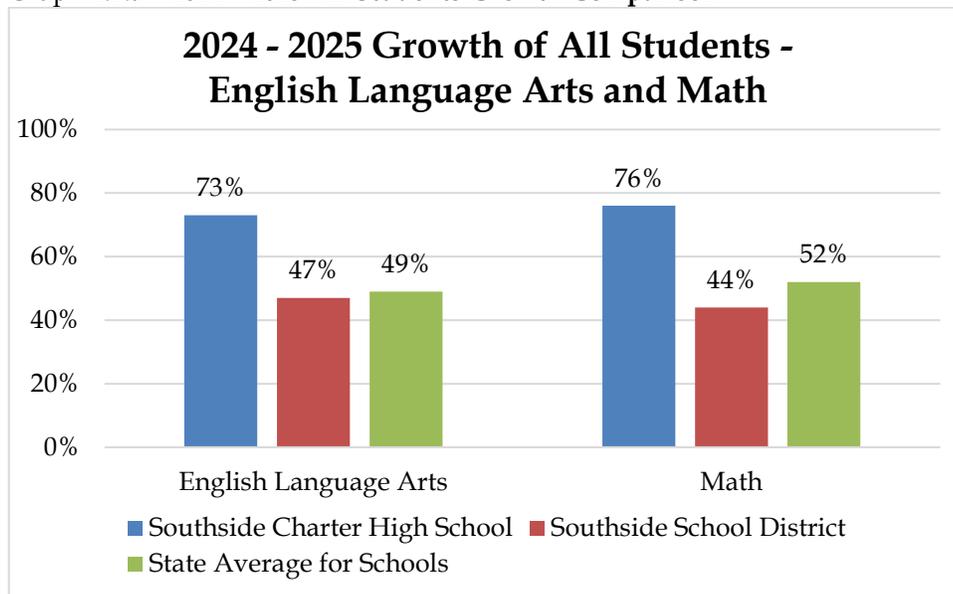
Achievement scores show the percentage of students who met or exceeded grade-level expectations on the annual statewide tests.

All public charter schools are responsible for educating students according to the standards set for Arkansas public schools. As of the 2024 – 2025 school year, the ATLAS assessment is being used to track both Growth and Achievement for schools.

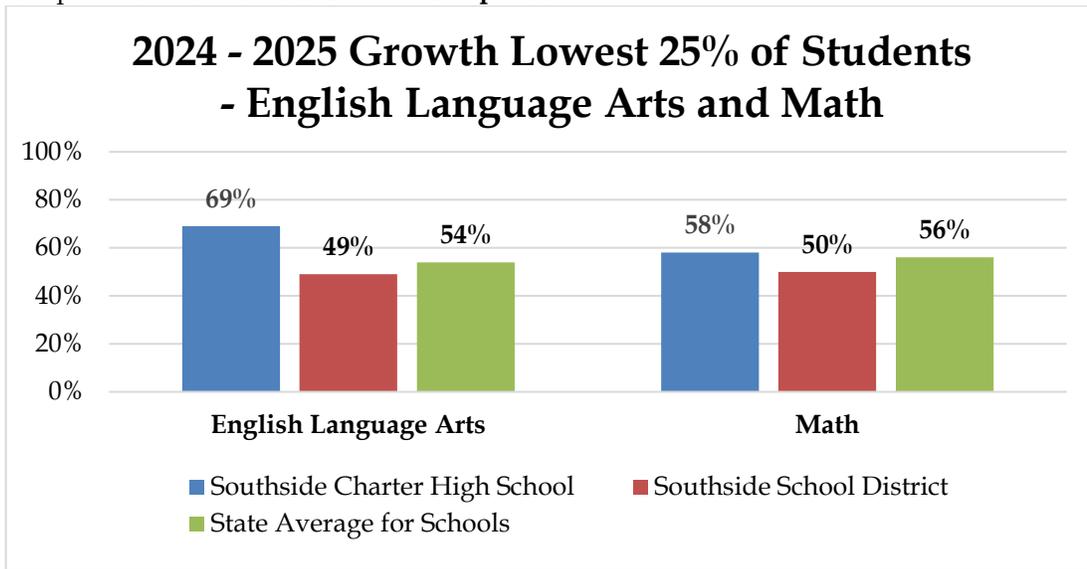
School Growth Comparison Data 2024 – 2025 school year

Graph 4.1.a compares growth of all students at the charter school in English Language Arts and Math with the state average. **Graph 4.1.b** compares growth of the charter school’s lowest 25% of students in English Language Arts and Math with the state average.

Graph 4.1.a – 2024 – 2025 All Students Growth Comparison



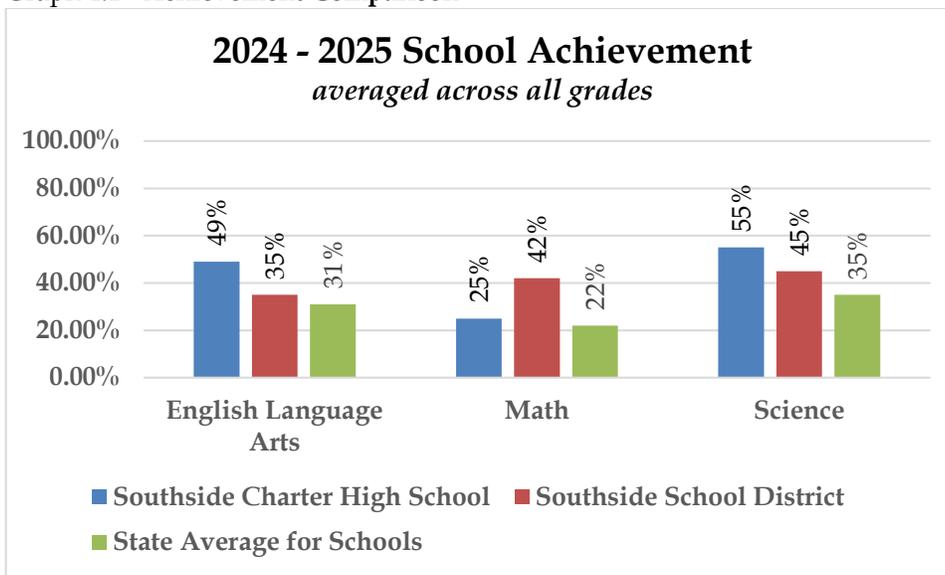
Graph 4.1.b - Lowest 25% Growth Comparison



School Achievement Comparison Data

Graph 4.1 presents proficiency (achievement) scores, averaged across all grades, for the charter school in English Language Arts, Math, and Science for the 2024 - 2025 school year compared to the state average.

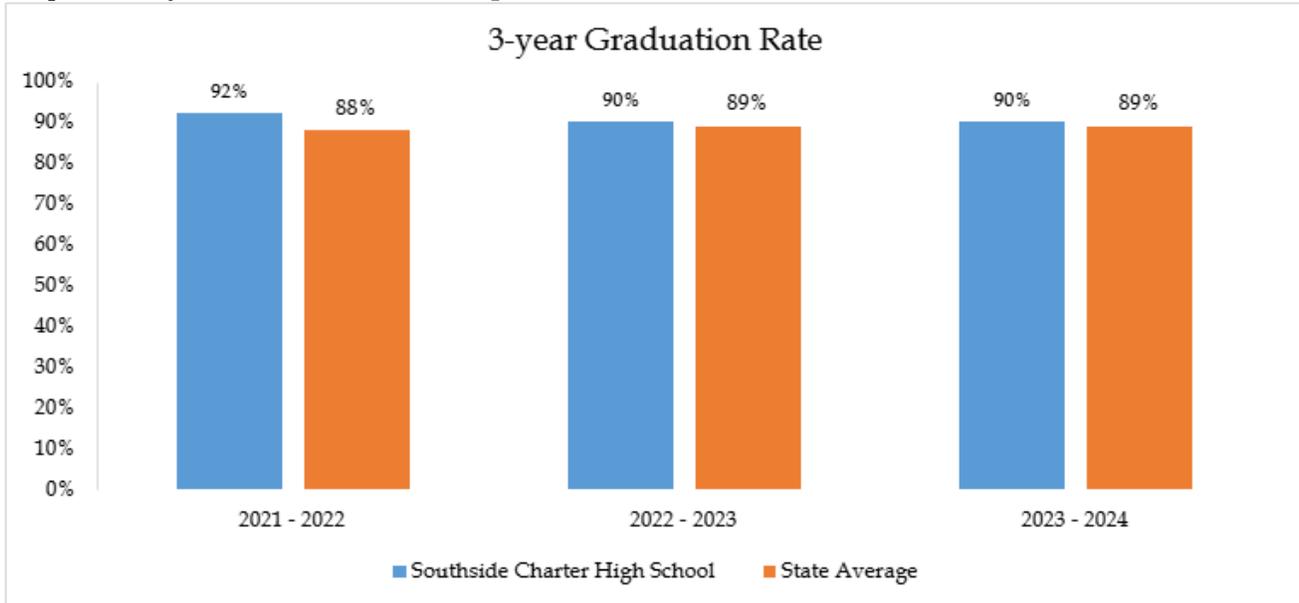
Graph 4.1 - Achievement Comparison



Graduation Rate Comparison Data

Graduation rate is included in determining a school's academic performance. **Graph 4.2** compares the school's graduation rate with the state average over the past three years.

Graph 4.2 - 3-year Graduation Rate Comparison



Section 5: Financial Summary

Financial information was provided by the Arkansas Department of Education's Finance office in late October 2025. There were no financial concerns or findings for the school.

Section 6: Operational Performance Summary

This section reviews the charter school's compliance with applicable laws, enrollment and recruitment practices, and school improvement plans. The data assists in ensuring accountability and allows ADE to support continuous improvement in charter schools. Additionally, the information aids ADE's Charter School Office in deciding whether to recommend that the Charter Authorizing Panel renews the charter contract.

Charter School Board

Southside School District conducted regular monthly board meetings from July through November 2025, during which the Board consistently exercised oversight of district operations, finances, personnel, and academic programs.

Academic Data Review and Instructional Oversight

Across all reviewed meetings, the Board received regular principal reports from the Preschool, Elementary, Middle School, Junior High, and High School levels. These reports were presented at the July 14, August 11, September 22, October 13, and November 10, 2025, meetings, demonstrating a recurring structure for reviewing campus-level academic and operational updates. While the minutes do not reflect formal votes on academic performance data (such as assessment results), the inclusion of these reports indicates routine Board engagement with instructional progress and school-level information. Additionally, the September 22, 2025, meeting included a Board training and financial analysis presentation by Stephens, Inc., further supporting informed governance related to district performance and planning.

Budget Adoption and Financial Review

The Board fulfilled its statutory fiscal responsibilities through multiple formal actions. At the July 14, 2025, meeting, the Board adopted the proposed budget of expenditures with tax levy for Fiscal Year July 1, 2026, through June 30, 2027, approving all related election documents. This action represents the district's formal annual budget adoption. Subsequently, at the September 22, 2025, meeting, the Board approved the finalized 2025–2026 budget, indicating continued fiscal review and confirmation early in the school year. In addition to these major actions, the Board approved monthly financial reports at each meeting, reviewed large purchases, authorized fund transfers, and received ongoing financial updates from the superintendent and treasurer, demonstrating sustained fiscal oversight throughout the fall semester.

Ongoing Governance and Accountability

Beyond academics and finance, the Board addressed personnel actions, contracts, policy updates, calendar adoption, facility-related expenditures, and compliance items at each meeting. The November 10, 2025, meeting also included the Annual Report to the Public, reinforcing transparency and accountability to the community. Collectively, these meetings reflect a consistent pattern of Board engagement in instructional monitoring, fiscal stewardship, and organizational governance aligned with district and state expectations.

Staff Recruitment and Retention Plan

The Southside School District's Recruitment and Retention Plan outlines a structured, compliant approach to strengthening the educator pipeline across three focus areas: recruiting staff, retaining staff, and increasing student engagement in education-related pathways. The recruitment component is well-articulated, with measurable vacancy-fill targets and concrete annual actions such as intent-letter collection, job fair participation, and competency-based interviewing. Evidence sources are clearly defined, and the district reports meeting its hiring goals in the prior year, demonstrating effective implementation.

The retention section emphasizes creating a supportive professional environment through onboarding, mentoring by lead teachers, and quarterly satisfaction surveys. Evidence sources – including survey analysis and teacher-support documentation – align well with the actions taken, and early progress indicates intentional support of new educators.

Finally, the plan presents a focused student pipeline strategy centered on expanding the Educator Rising program by 15%. Action steps include establishing a complete pathway, conducting mock interviews with diverse participation, and leveraging minority educators as mentors. Baseline conditions and evidence measures are clearly identified, and the district reports notable improvements, including the first pathway complete and a 20% increase in student participation. Overall, the plan is strong in structure and compliance.

School Improvement Plan

The SCHS School Improvement Plan centers on student ownership as the key driver of academic success, identifying clear behavior, engagement, and academic characteristics that differentiate students who are thriving from those who are struggling. The needs assessment draws on multiple data sources, including office referrals, attendance patterns, ATLAS and ACT scores, credit deficiencies, and postsecondary participation trends. This analysis highlights a pressing need to improve engagement, reduce disruptive behaviors, and reverse declining assessment performance.

To address these concerns, the plan outlines an extensive system of supports, including daily intervention periods, structured advisory programs using John Baylor Prep, clear technology expectations, strengthened curriculum implementation, after-school supports, and additional reading and math courses. The plan also incorporates culture-building strategies such as extracurricular promotion, student recognition, and active communication through daily memos and social media. These initiatives are supported by defined roles, ongoing monitoring, and integration with professional development and literacy improvement structures. The plan reflects a comprehensive, multifaceted approach aimed at improving student engagement, strengthening instructional quality, and building a culture that supports student success.

Section 7: Executive Summary

Academic Performance

Southside Charter High School demonstrates strong and improving academic performance relative to state benchmarks. The school earned letter grades of B (2022–2023), B (2023–2024), and A (2024–2025), exceeding the state average of C in each year and showing upward trajectory. Growth and achievement results based on ATLAS assessments compare student performance in English Language Arts, Math, and Science against state averages, including measures for both all students and the lowest-performing quartile. Graduation rate trend data is also incorporated into the accountability framework and contributes to the school’s overall strong academic standing.

The School Improvement Plan is built around increasing student ownership, engagement, and academic success. Needs assessment data draws from discipline, attendance, ATLAS and ACT scores, credit deficiencies, and postsecondary participation. Planned responses include daily intervention periods, advisory supports using John Baylor Prep, targeted reading and math courses, after-school supports, technology expectations, and culture-building recognition systems. The framework is comprehensive and aligned with instructional improvement and engagement goals

Financial Performance

Financial performance and oversight are sound and compliant. Financial information provided by ADE Finance reports no financial concerns or findings for the school. The board completed all required annual fiscal actions, including adoption of proposed budgets, tax levy documentation, finalized annual budgets, and annual financial reports within statutory timelines.

Board minutes reflect ongoing fiscal oversight through approval of monthly financial reports, review of major purchases, authorization of fund transfers, and receipt of financial updates from district leadership and financial advisors. Board training and external financial analysis presentations further support informed fiscal governance. No audit flags or financial risk indicators are noted in the expedited review profile

Operational Performance

Operational performance is strong, transparent, and well-documented. The board held regular monthly meetings and consistently exercised oversight across academics, finance, personnel, policy, and facilities. Principal reports from multiple school levels were presented across meetings, and the Annual Report to the Public was delivered, reinforcing transparency and accountability. Governance records show consistent engagement with instructional and operational updates.

The district’s Recruitment and Retention Plan is structured and measurable, with defined hiring targets, onboarding and mentoring supports, satisfaction surveys, and educator pipeline development through Educator Rising and pathway completer strategies. Reported results include meeting hiring targets and increasing student participation in educator pathways. The School Improvement Plan is comprehensive and data-driven, with clearly defined supports, monitoring structures, and aligned professional development. Together, these systems demonstrate mature operational capacity and renewal readiness.