

Friendship Aspire – Hazel Street Pine Bluff Accountability Profile



Prepared by
Arkansas Department of Education
Charter School Office

December 2025



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Section 1: Abstract

The *Friendship Aspire – Hazel Street Pine Bluff Accountability Profile* presents a comprehensive review of the K–5 campus’s academic, financial, enrollment, and operational performance. The school operates far below its districtwide enrollment cap, with only 440 students (16% of capacity), and enrollment has remained relatively consistent over the past three years. Student demographics show stability, and attendance is generally comparable to statewide averages. However, chronic absenteeism rose from 11.08% in 2023–2024 to 15.20% in 2024–2025, remaining below the state level but trending in the wrong direction. Disciplinary incidents increased sharply in 2024–2025, with 69 suspensions compared to 2 the previous year, signaling emerging behavioral and climate concerns.

Academically, the school demonstrates significant performance volatility. After earning a *C* in 2022–2023 and a *B* in 2023–2024, the school received an *F* in 2024–2025. ATLAS assessment data reveal that both growth and achievement scores fall substantially below state averages, particularly in English Language Arts and Math. Only 27.08% of students met growth expectations in English and 32.73% in Math, compared to statewide growth indicators significantly above these levels. Proficiency rates across English, Math, Science, and Reading remain in the “Not Meeting Standard” range. These trends suggest systemic instructional challenges and inconsistent implementation of evidence-based teaching practices.

Operationally and financially, the profile highlights gaps in transparency, governance oversight, and long-term fiscal stability. Publicly accessible leadership and board information are limited or outdated, and required board minutes are unavailable for the past three years, hindering verification of financial oversight. Financial metrics reflect marginally adequate fund balances but insufficient cash on hand and repeated negative operating margins. While the school has submitted a School Improvement Plan, its goals and action steps lack sufficient specificity, interim benchmarks, and evidence of monitoring. Overall, the report indicates a school facing substantial academic and operational challenges that require immediate attention to ensure compliance, sustainability, and improved outcomes for students.

Section 2: School Summary

Background Information

Location	3911 S. Hazel Street, Pine Bluff, AR 71601
Year Opened	2018 (District)
Grade Levels	k-5
Enrollment Cap	2,785 (District)
Charter Type	Open Enrollment
Mission Statement	The mission of Friendship Aspire Academy is to provide a world-class education that motivates students to achieve high academic standards, enjoy learning and develop as ethical, literate, well-rounded and self-sufficient citizens. Friendship Aspire Academy seeks to fulfill this mission by providing students a high quality, liberal arts education focused on preparing students with the academic and life skills needed to be successful in college and beyond.

Leadership Team

There does not appear to be any information on the Friendship general website or the school website regarding the makeup of their leadership team, nor board members, board meeting agendas nor minutes. The principal noted on the webpage is Jherrithan Dukes; however, contact information was unavailable.

Personnel	Title	School / Organization	Email
Denise Simmons	Superintendent	Friendship Aspire	
Rebecca Newby	School Principal	Friendship – Hazel Street Pine Bluff	rnewby@friendshipaspire.org

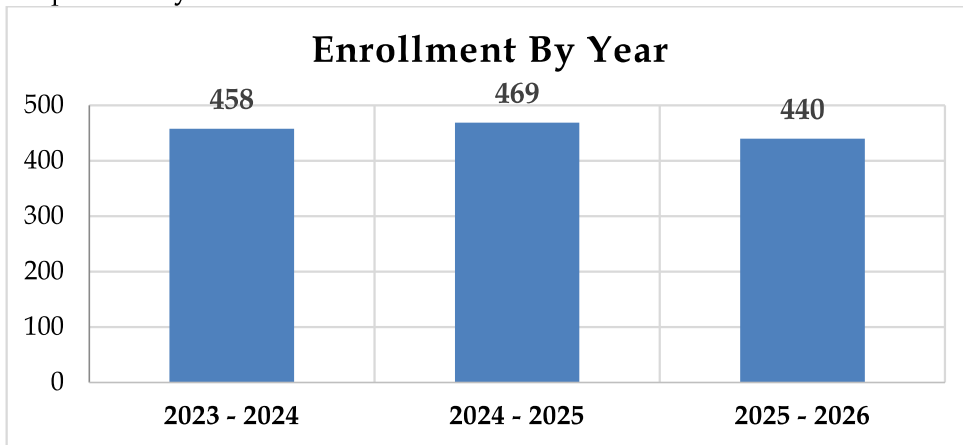
Section 3: Student Enrollment Data

Table 3.0 - 2025 - 2026 Enrollment

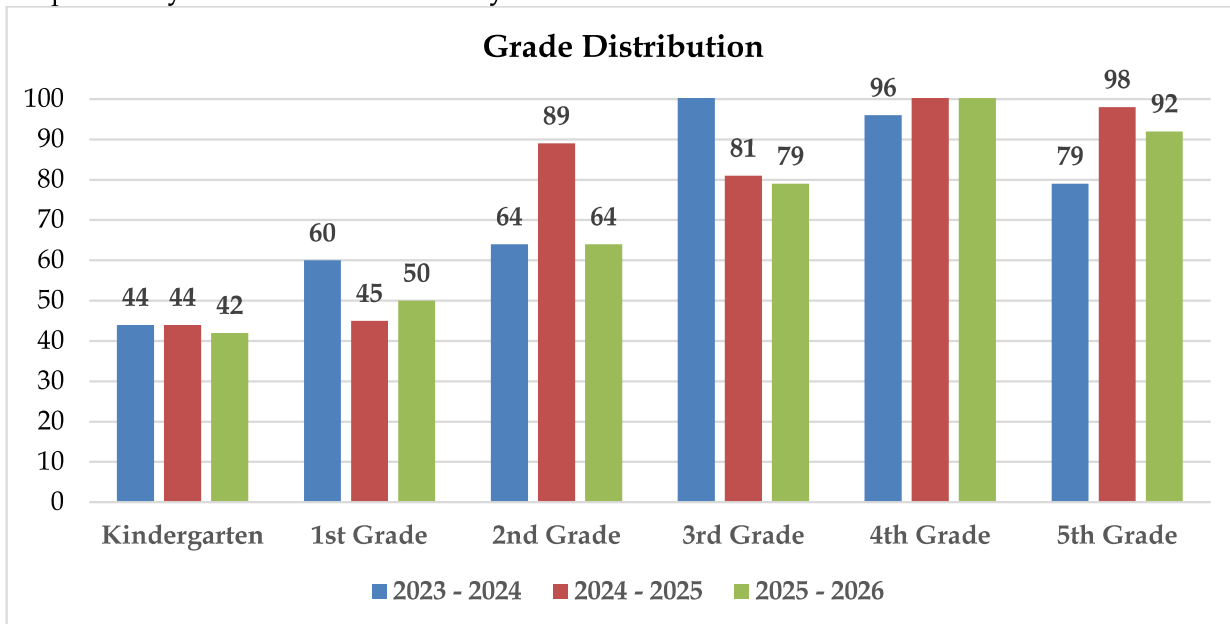
2025 - 2026 Enrollment	Enrollment CAP	Percent of Cap
440	2785	15.79%

Graph 3.0 reports the total enrollment count by year; **Graph 3.1** shows student enrollment by grade for the past three school years; **Graph 3.2** shows student demographics over the past three years. The data reported was captured from the Arkansas Department of Education's Data Center.

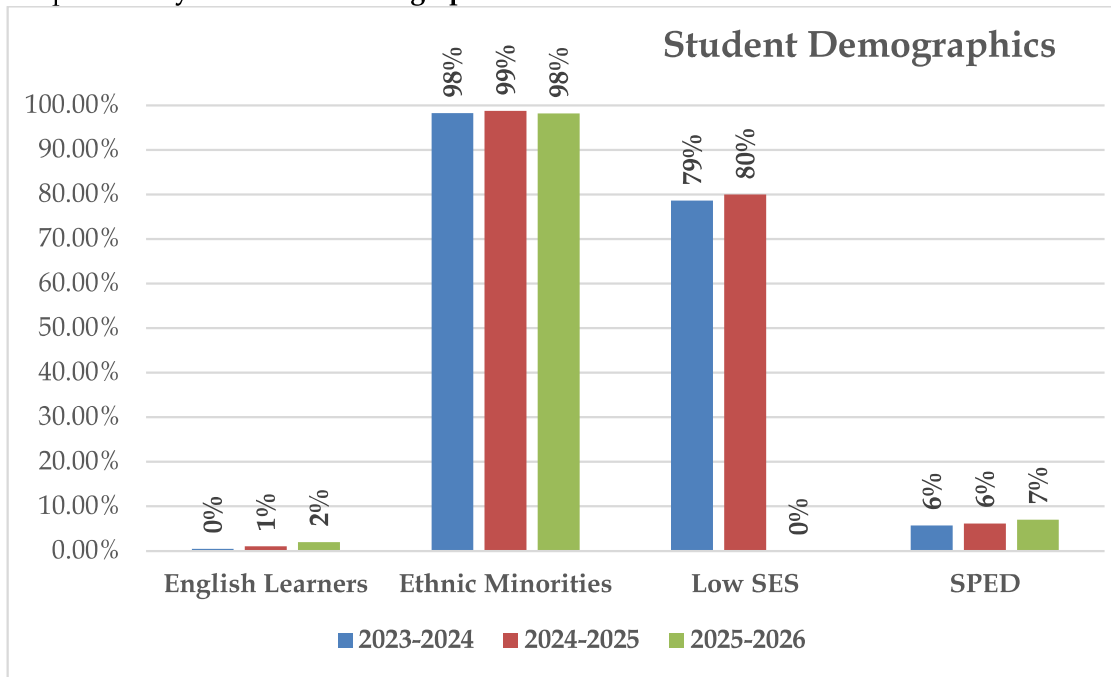
Graph 3.0 - 3-year School Enrollment



Graph 3.1 - 3-year Student Enrollment by Grade



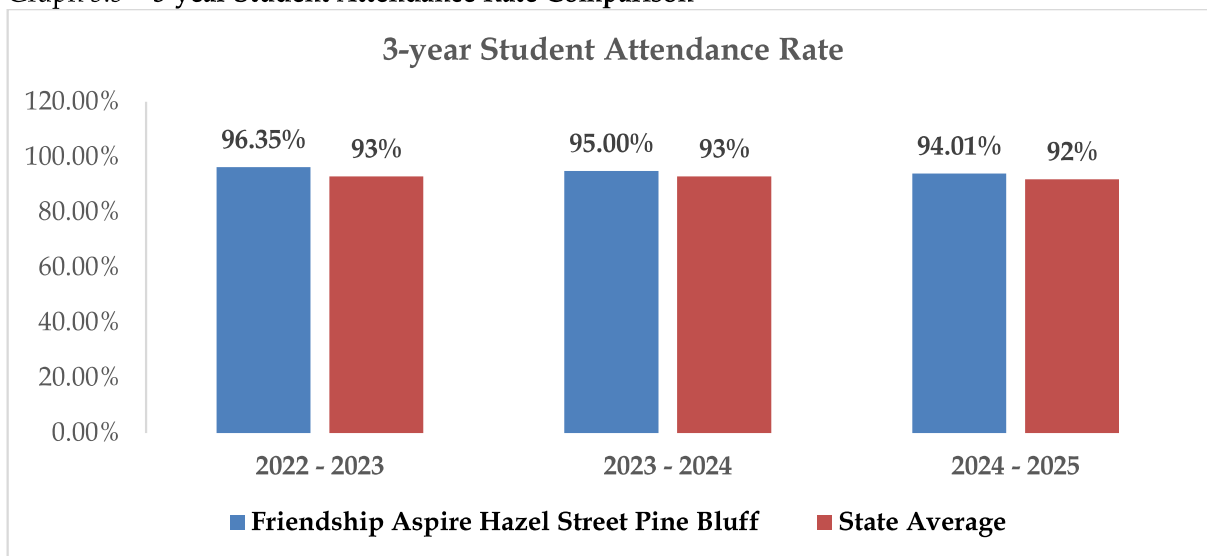
Graph 3.2 - 3-year Student Demographics



Student Attendance Rates

Graph 3.3 presents student attendance rates from the 2022-2023 school year through the 2024-2025 school year along with a comparison to the state average attendance rate.

Graph 3.3 - 3-year Student Attendance Rate Comparison



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 three-year history of the school's letter grade compared to the Pine Bluff School District and state.

Table 4.0 - **Letter Grade Comparison**

School	2022-2023	2023-2024	2024-2025
Friendship Aspire – Hazel Street Pine Bluff	C	B	F
Pine Bluff School District	F	F	F
State average	C	C	C

Growth and Achievement Indicators

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 in comparison to state average.

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

Table 4.1 – **Growth Score Ranges for the ASPIRE and ATLAS assessments***

	ASPIRE Growth Score Ranges	ATLAS Growth Score Ranges
Exceeding Standard	85% or Higher	51% or Higher
Meeting Standard	80% – 84%	45% - 50%
Approaching Standard	70% - 79%	35% - 44%
Not Meeting Standard	69% or Lower	34% or Lower

Table 4.1.a **Achievement Score Ranges**

	Achievement Score Ranges
Exceeding Standard	Greater than the state average
Meeting Standard	Equal to or within 5% of the state average
Approaching Standard	6 – 10% below the state average
Not Meeting Standard	11% or more below the state average

**Team members from the Charter School Office worked with Public School Accountability team members to create estimated ASPIRE score ranges for comparison to ATLAS Growth Scores.*

Table 4.2 depicts both growth and achievement scores. (note: during the 2021 - 2022 school year, the ASPIRE assessment was utilized for both Growth and Proficiency(Achievement). The ATLAS assessment was first used in the 2023 - 2024 and there were no officially published scores for the 2023 - 2024 school year).

Table 4.2 - **Growth and Achievement Scores**

Growth - English					State Average
	Exceeding Standard	Meeting Standard	Approaching Standard	Not Meeting Standard	
2021-2022 ASPIRE			78.13%		80.00%
2022-2023 ASPIRE		82.30%			80.14%
2023-2024	No Official Scores Published by the State				
2024-2025 ATLAS				27.08%	51.94%

Growth - Math					State Average
	Exceeding Standard	Meeting Standard	Approaching Standard	Not Meeting Standard	
2021-2022 ASPIRE			78.35%		79.83%
2022-2023 ASPIRE		80.54%			79.88%
2023-2024	No Official Scores Published by the State				
2024-2025 ATLAS				32.73%	52.15%

Achievement - English					State Average
	Exceeding Standard	Meeting Standard	Approaching Standard	Not Meeting Standard	
2021-2022 ASPIRE	53.15%				38.59%
2022-2023 ASPIRE			36.47%		41.73%
2023-2024	No Official Scores Published by the State				
2024-2025 ATLAS				29.86%	35.39%

Achievement - Math					State Average
	Exceeding Standard	Meeting Standard	Approaching Standard	Not Meeting Standard	
2021-2022 ASPIRE	52.25%				26.67%
2022-2023 ASPIRE	61.64%				23.45%
2023-2024	No Official Scores Published by the State				
2024-2025 ATLAS	39.07%				32.88%

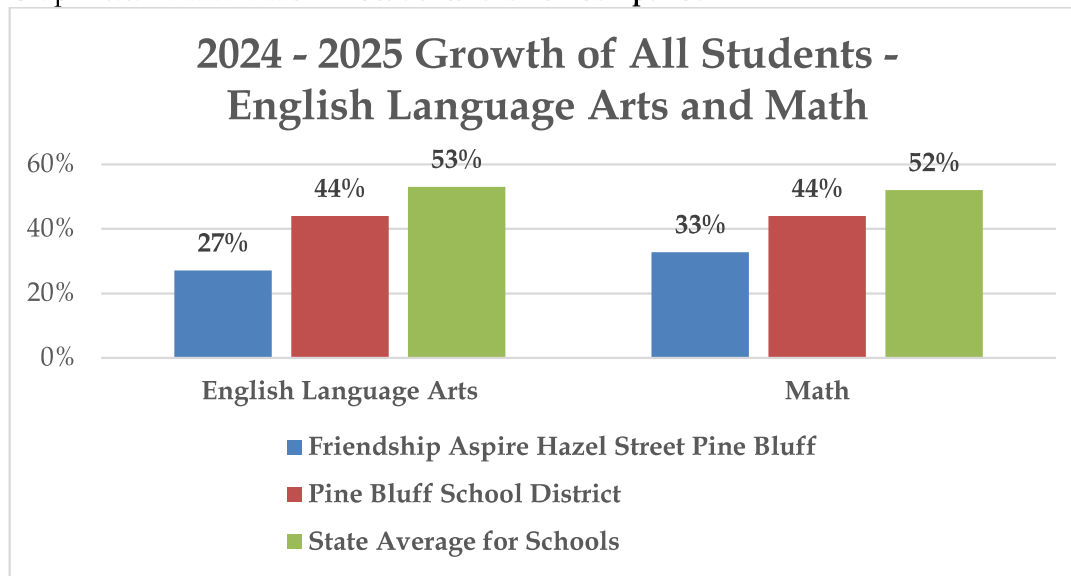
Achievement - Science					State Average
	Exceeding Standard	Meeting Standard	Approaching Standard	Not Meeting Standard	
2021-2022 ASPIRE				22.52%	30.22%
2022-2023 ASPIRE		27.67%			30.17%
2023-2024	No Official Scores Published by the State				
2024-2025 ATLAS				28.32%	36.97%

Achievement - Reading					State Average
	Exceeding Standard	Meeting Standard	Approaching Standard	Not Meeting Standard	
2021-2022 ASPIRE		35.14%			38.44%
2022-2023 ASPIRE			33.33%		39.01%
2023-2024	No Official Scores Published by the State				
2024-2025 ATLAS			30.69%		34.13%

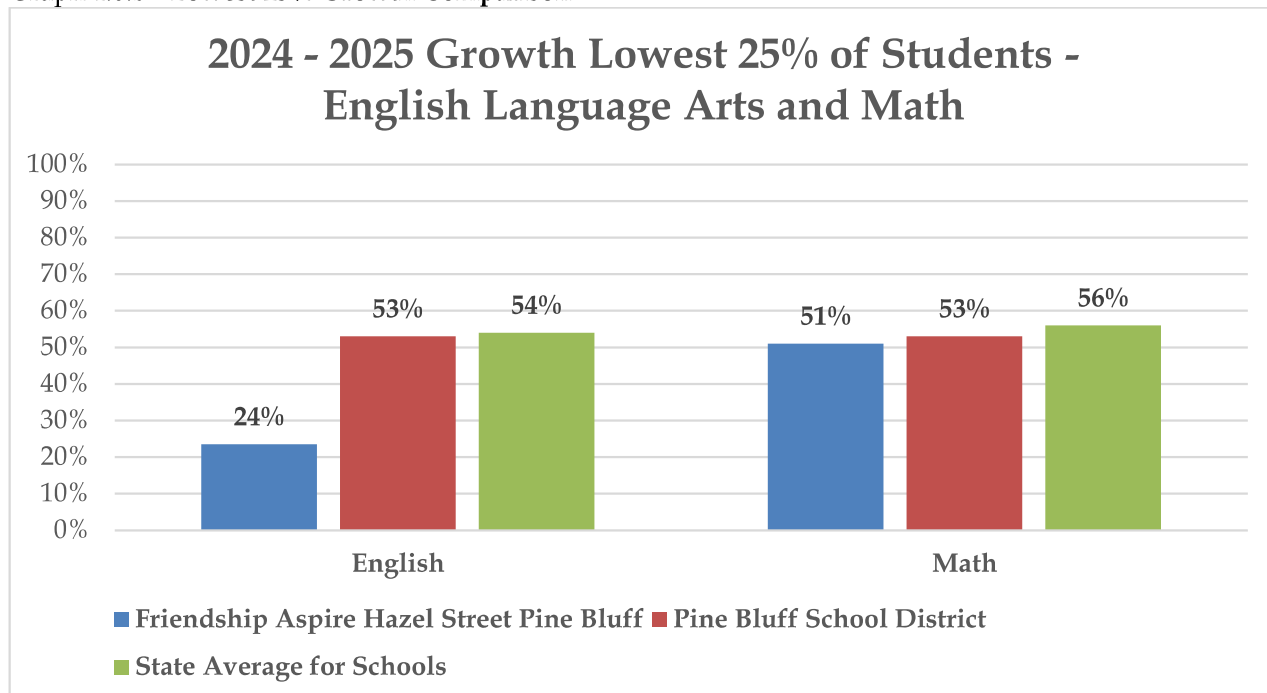
School Growth Comparison Data 2024 – 2025 school year

Graph 4.0.a compares growth of all students at the charter school in English Language Arts and Math with the Pine Bluff School District and state average. **Graph 4.1.b** compares growth of the lowest 25% of students in English Language Arts and Math for the Pine Bluff School District and state average. *There was not enough data* to score the charter school's lowest 25% of students' growth.

Graph 4.0.a – 2024 – 2025 All Students Growth Comparison



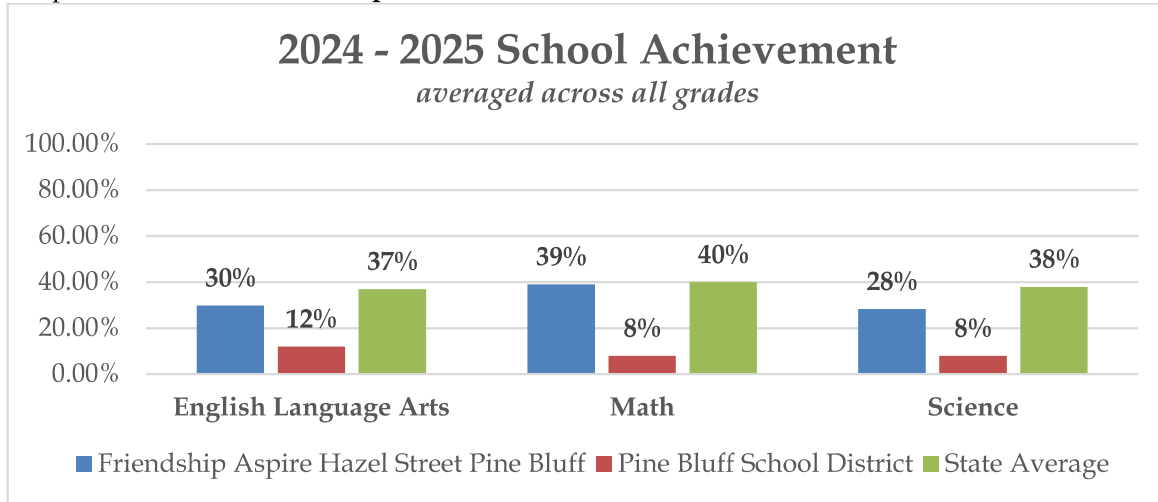
Graph 4.0.b - Lowest 25% Growth Comparison



School Achievement Comparison Data

Graph 4.2 presents proficiency 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 Pine Bluff School District and the state average.

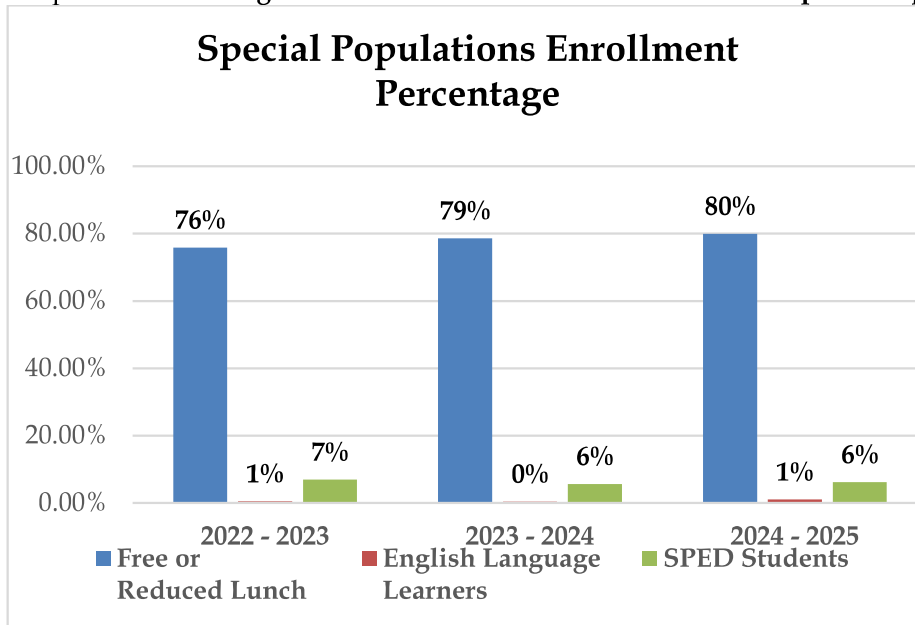
Graph 4.2 - Achievement Comparison



Special Populations

The State of Arkansas' definition of special populations includes students who receive a free or reduced lunch, English language learners, and students identified as SPED. **Graph 4.3** provides the charter school's enrollment percentages of students identified as part of a special population during the past three years.

Graph 4.3 - Percentage of Enrolled Students Considered Part of Special Populations



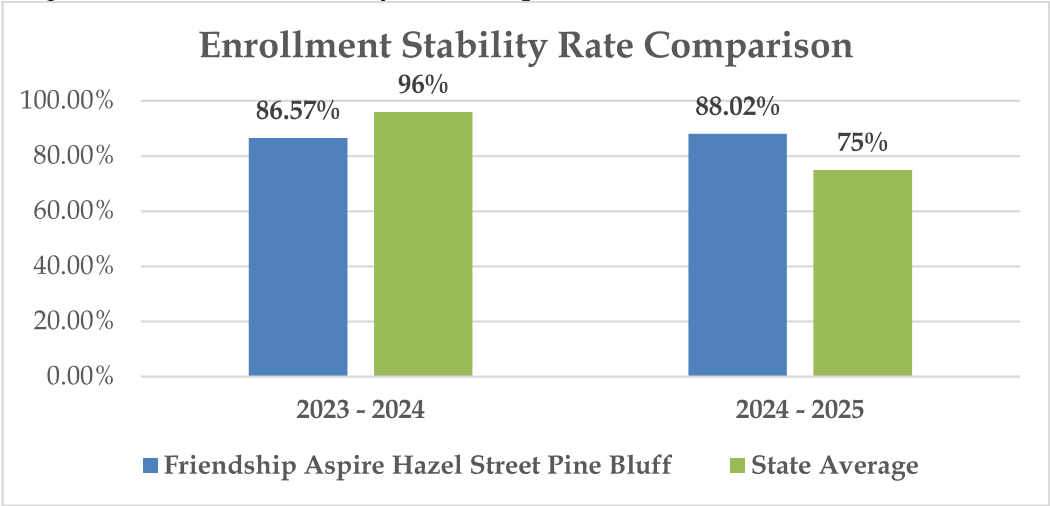
Learning Services Summary

Friendship Aspire Hazel Street Pine Bluff had limited support from ADE Learning Services.

Enrollment Stability Rates

Graph 4.4 illustrates the charter school’s enrollment stability for the past two years as compared to the state average. Enrollment stability is defined as the percentage of students who return to the same school from the previous school year.

Graph 4.4 – Enrollment Stability Rate Comparison



Student Discipline

Table 4.3 presents the school’s disciplinary history over the past 3 years and compares it to the state average.

Table 4.3 - 3-year Disciplinary history

	Friendship Aspire Hazel Street Pine Bluff Whole Number Count	State Average
School Suspensions (In & Out of school)		
2022-2023	No Data	103.93
2023-2024	2	103.90
2024-2025	69	96.03
Expulsions		
2022-2023	0	1.06
2023-2024	0	0.94
2024-2025	0	0.81
Chronic Absenteeism		
2022-2023	No Data	22%
2023-2024	11.08%	27%
2024-2025	15.20%	21%

Section 5: Financial Performance Data

Financial information was provided by the Arkansas Department of Education’s Finance office in late October 2025. There were no Board Meeting minutes found on the CMO’s website to determine whether discussions about finances were part of the Board’s agenda.

Financial Metrics (3-years)

Table 5.0 provides definitions used for categories, while **Table 5.1** provides data for the charter school based on the Financial Performance rubric sections provided by ADE Finance (1. Essential Financial Readiness, 2. General Financial Readiness, 3. Financial Sustainability).

Table 5.0 – **Performance Metrics’ Category Definitions**

Category	Meets	Does Not Meet	Falls Far Below
<i>Ending Balance % of Revenue</i>	Greater than 8%	Between 8 – 6%	Below 6%
<i>Days Cash on Hand</i>	Greater than 60 days	30 – 60 days	Less than 30 days
<i>Operating Margin</i>	Equal to or greater than 1	Between 1 – 0.05	School demonstrates a negative Margin
<i>Unrestricted Fund Balance</i>	Greater than or equal to 8.33%	Between 8.33 - 7.33%	Less than 7.33%
<i>Enrollment Stability</i>	Greater than or equal to 90%	Between 89 – 80%	Less than 79%
<i>Fiscal Management & Oversight</i>	Yes , clear signs of the board meeting, discussing, and acting on quarterly reviews and/ or addressing financial issues. Also, a fiscal audit has been performed each operational year and is discussed within the board.		No , there are clear gaps in board meetings, no clear discussion, and/or acting on quarterly reviews. Also, there are clear gaps in fiscal audits being performed. No clear actions or discussion have been undergone

Table 5.1 - **3-year Financial Performance for CMO (Friendship Academies)**

Color Legend	Meets	Does Not Meet	Falls Far Below
	2023 – 2024	2024 - 2025	2025 - 2026
<i>Ending Balance % of Revenue</i>	7.97%	7.23%	8.7%
<i>Days Cash on Hand</i>	28.81	26.34	32.21
<i>Operating Margin</i>	- 0.01	-0.02	0.01
<i>Unrestricted Fund Balance</i>	7.89	7.21	8.82
<i>Enrollment Stability</i>	100	82.98	87.5
<i>Fiscal Management & Oversight</i>	No Board Minutes	No Board Minutes	No Board Minutes

Financial Data (3-years)

Table 5.2 - 3-year Financial Data for the CMO (Friendship Academies)

Topics	2023-2024 Actual	2024-2025 Actual	2025-2026 Budgeted
<i>Beginning Balance</i>	\$983,046.90	\$870,402.81	\$845,139.90
<i>Revenue</i>	\$10,914,413.99	\$11,682,261.80	\$11,719,832.00
<i>Expenditures</i>	\$11,027,058.08	\$11,707,524.71	\$11,545,869.73
<i>Ending Balance</i>	\$870,402.81	\$845,139.90	\$1,019,102.17
<i>Ending Balance % of Revenue</i>	7.97%	7.23%	8.7%

Section 6: Operational Performance Review

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.

School Compliance Summary

Currently, the charter school does not have any standing flagging actions and is compliant with the ADE Standards for Accreditation. The school provided a School Improvement Plan that included two goals and plans for achieving each goal.

Charter School Board

Board meeting agendas and minutes are very difficult to find on the charter school's website. Finding the State Required Information was challenging. There is a small vertical link "Explore" on the left side of the website that lists Board of Trustees meeting schedule & minutes; when selecting that link, the only schedules are for 2021 – 2022 and 2022 – 2023. Minutes posted are for June, July, September, October, and November 2022 and January 2023.

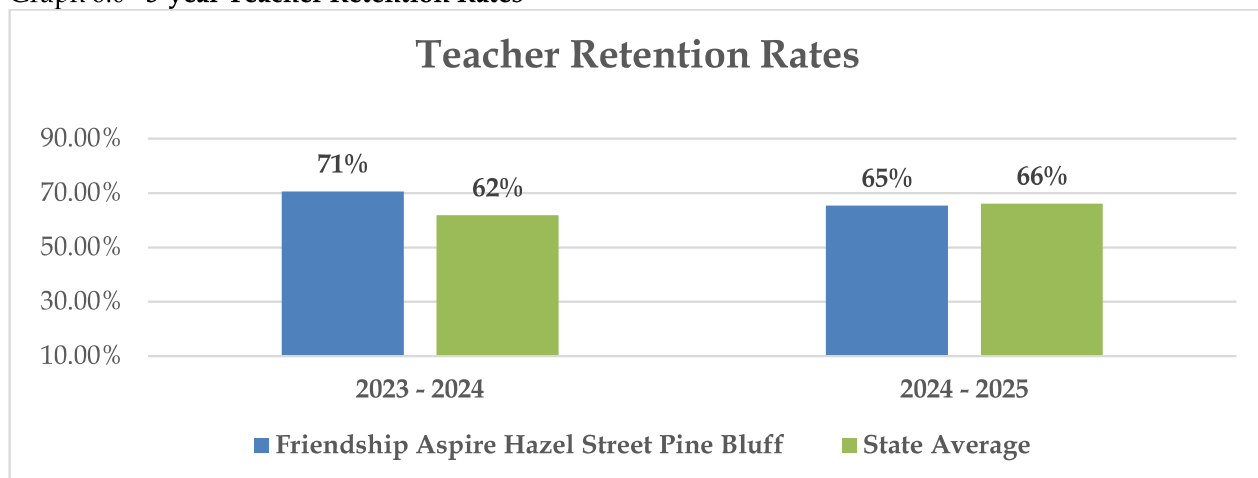
Staff Recruitment and Retention Plan

The staff recruitment and retention plan for the charter school is not easily found on their website (see explanation under Charter School Board section). The recruitment and retention plan was created and submitted in 2022. The goals and action steps lack specificity, nor is there evidence of plan execution or success.

Teacher Retention Rates

Graph 6.0 shows 3-year teacher stability for the charter school compared to the state average. Teacher stability is defined as the percentage of teachers who return to the school from the previous school year. There was no data available for the 2022 – 2023 school year.

Graph 6.0 –3-year Teacher Retention Rates

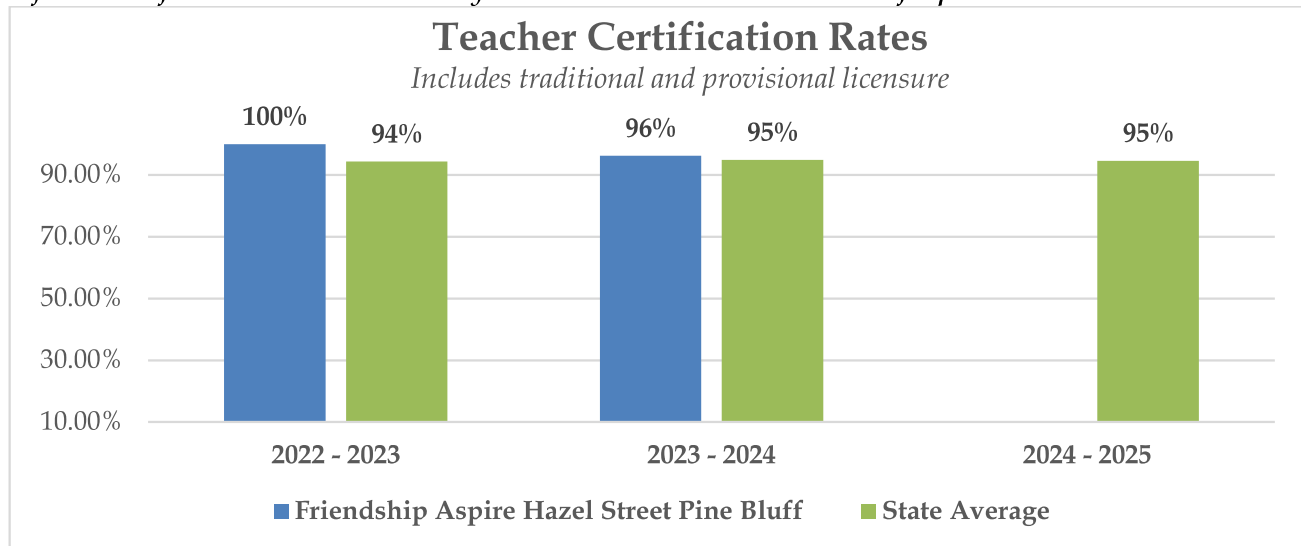


Teacher Certification Rates

Graph 6.1 provides the charter school's percentage of certified teachers compared to the state average. Understanding the percentage of credentialed teaching staff can be informative when discussing performance outcomes and teacher training needs.

Graph 6.1 – Teacher Certification Rates

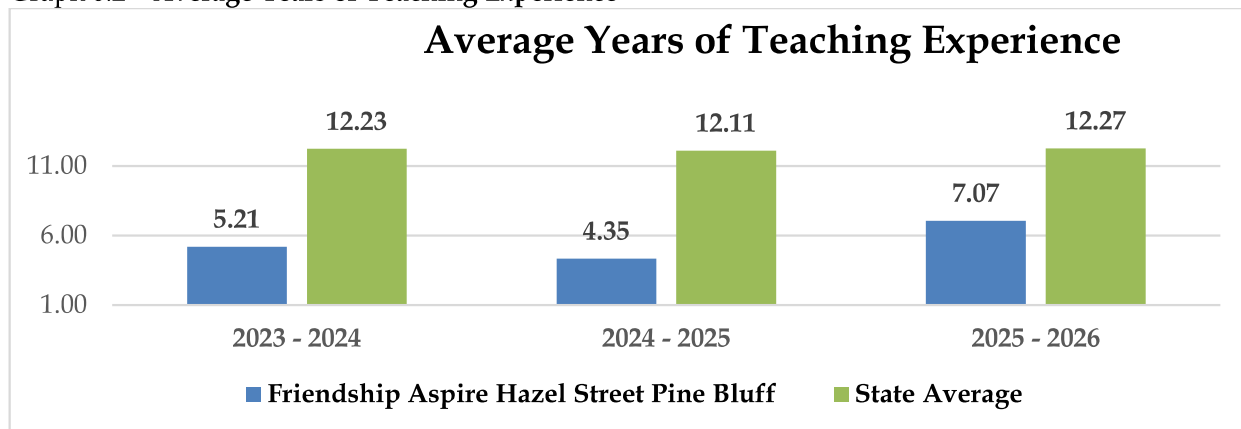
Information for the 2024 – 2025 school year was not available at the time of report creation.



Average Teaching Experience

Graph 6.2 presents the charter school's average years of teaching experience compared to the state average.

Graph 6.2 – Average Years of Teaching Experience



School Improvement Plan

The Friendship Aspire Academy Downtown School Improvement Plan outlines targeted goals to improve academic outcomes and strengthen family engagement during the 2024–2025 school year. The plan sets a measurable academic objective—to increase student proficiency in reading and mathematics by 10%—and anchors this goal in research-based strategies such as structured PLCs,

weekly data meetings, implementation of evidence-based curricula, and ongoing professional development. These actions are aligned with the stated theory of action that strong instructional systems, supported by leadership, will lead to measurable student growth.

In addition to academic improvement, the SIP emphasizes family engagement as a key lever for student success. The goal requires every homeroom to achieve an 80% participation rate in at least one campus event, supported through a series of structured family activities and workshops spanning the school year. Monitoring tools such as sign-in sheets and surveys are designated to document family involvement and guide future planning.

The plan also incorporates an evaluation framework focused on collaborative planning, consistent instructional blocks, and fidelity checks to ensure that instructional strategies and curriculum are implemented as intended. While the plan presents clear goals and relevant action steps, it would benefit from more detailed progress-monitoring procedures, defined interim benchmarks, and greater specificity in roles and responsibilities. Overall, the SIP provides a coherent structure for instructional improvement and community engagement, offering a foundation for measurable schoolwide progress.

Section 7: Executive Summary

Financial Performance

Financial review of the Friendship Aspire Academies CMO reveals several areas of concern. Key indicators—including ending balance percentage (7.23%–8.7%) and unrestricted fund balance (7.21%–8.82%)—are marginal but meet minimum state expectations. However, *days cash on hand* remain significantly below the 60-day threshold, ranging from 26 to 32 days across the past three years, which signals weak liquidity and vulnerability to fiscal disruptions. Operating margins were negative in both 2023–2024 and 2024–2025, improving only marginally to 0.01 in the 2025–2026 budget. Enrollment stability fell sharply from 100% to 82.98% and then to 87.5%, further impacting revenue predictability. Of greatest concern is the complete lack of posted board minutes for the three years reviewed, preventing confirmation that the board is meeting statutory obligations for financial review and oversight. Overall, the school's financial condition is precarious and requires strengthened governance and fiscal controls.

Operational Performance

Although the school remains compliant with ADE accreditation standards, substantial operational deficiencies are documented. Required public information—including leadership roles, board members, meeting schedules, agendas, and minutes—is largely missing from the school's website. The outdated staff recruitment and retention plan (created in 2022) lacks specificity, measurable outcomes, or evidence of execution. Teacher retention and certification data indicate variability and gaps; some annual data were unavailable at the time of reporting. Disciplinary incidents, which were previously low, sharply increased in 2024–2025, raising concerns about school climate and behavior management systems. The submitted School Improvement Plan includes two primary goals but lacks sufficient clarity regarding timelines, responsible parties, progress monitoring systems, and accountability structures necessary for meaningful implementation.

Academic Performance

The school's academic outcomes show a downward trajectory, culminating in an *F* letter grade for 2024–2025. ATLAS assessment data reflect low growth and achievement in all tested areas. Neither English Language Arts nor Math reached "Meeting Standard" levels for most students; only 27.08% met English growth targets and 32.73% met Math growth targets. Achievement outcomes also fall significantly below statewide averages, with ELA proficiency at 29.86% and Math at 39.07%. The school could not report growth data for its lowest 25% of learners due to insufficient assessment data, signaling concerns with assessment participation and internal data systems. Chronic absenteeism increased over the last two years, and the sharp rise in suspensions further complicates academic recovery efforts. These trends suggest

critical instructional, curricular, and leadership gaps that must be addressed to restore academic progress.

Recommendations to Address Deficiencies

Academic Recommendations

- Implement a structured, schoolwide data-driven instruction cycle, including weekly PLC data meetings aligned to ATLAS interim assessments.
- Establish targeted Tier II and Tier III intervention blocks with progress checks every 2–3 weeks, focusing especially on English Language Arts and Math.
- Improve assessment participation and fidelity to ensure full growth data reporting, especially for the lowest-performing quartile.
- Provide coaching, walkthroughs, and professional development on high-impact instructional strategies and classroom management.

Financial Recommendations

- Reinstate and publicly post all board meeting minutes to verify required fiscal oversight.
- Develop a cash reserve plan to increase days cash on hand toward the 60-day benchmark.
- Monitor expenditure growth closely and align staffing and programs with actual enrollment trends to stabilize the operating margin.
- Conduct quarterly financial risk assessments to identify emerging budget pressures earlier.

Operational Recommendations

- Update the school website to reflect accurate leadership information, board membership, meeting schedules, agendas, and minutes for all required years.
- Redesign the staff recruitment and retention plan with measurable goals, annual benchmarks, and detailed implementation steps.
- Strengthen family and community engagement structures to support enrollment stability and reduce absenteeism.
- Enhance school climate systems, including positive behavior supports and consistent discipline protocols, to address the increase in suspensions.