ALA Evaluation Report Executive Summary

The Arkansas Leadership Academy commissioned analysis from evaluating partners to track the growth of participants in programming.

History
Following a 2020 Request for Proposals by the Arkansas Department of Education, the Arkansas Leadership Academy (ALA) was awarded to a collaborative of partners spearheaded by The Arkansas Public School Resource Center in coordination with Arkansas State University and EduTas, a professional development and technical assistance support provider, at The University of Oklahoma. The request of the State Board of Education at the time was to ensure progress monitoring and growth data was collected, analyzed, and reported as a transparency mechanism for public funding of the program and alignment with DESE goals and outcomes. For an annual award of 1.4 million dollars, ALA operates its flagship program, The Master Principal Program built for school leaders, along with cohort programs for Executive Leaders, Instructional Leaders, Teacher Leaders, and School Teams. Additionally, ALA operates REACH!, a leadership development program that operates primarily digitally and is available to educators across the state both live and recorded, on-demand.

Process
ALA partnered with eTeam (an evaluative arm of the University of Oklahoma) to analyze program outcomes for the Master Principal Program as a direct correlation to school academic growth. **Factors that influence the collection of data include the following:**

Principal/ Leadership Changes- Principals within the program may change schools and not have three consecutive years of data at the same school or move into a different role in a district (Federal Programs, Deputy Superintendent, etc.).
School Structure- Some principals serve campuses that operate without their own LEA or without their own accountability data (public primary/ preschools, virtual schools, hybrid schools, ALE's etc.).
Timing/ Structure- Previously, ALA has tracked school letter grades. Adoption of a new accountability system has delayed the assignment of publicly published letter grades for schools/ districts.

Outcomes
Response to Programming: Current applications for the coming year number 560 with representation from each educational cooperative area, each Arkansas county, and 63% of districts as of May 22. The 2025-2026 school year is on track for a 100% increase in the number of educators served from the initial program year and a 200% increase over the prior operator service numbers.

Designations/ Certifications: 38 Lead Professional Designations have been awarded through the Teacher Leader Program prior to the 2024 cohort. An additional 150 portfolio submissions are currently in progress with a due date of July 15.

5 Principals have been awarded Master Principal designation prior to the current programming year. 5 additional site visits (2 Spring/ 3 Spring) have been awarded for 2025. Based on 2023-2024 data, 6 (of 17) Phase 2 completers and 5 (of 32) Phase 1 completers have already helped their schools reach the top quartile of value added growth with 1 and 2 years of support remaining respectively.

Academic Impact: The results of three year growth finds a statistical difference between schools with a Master Principal Phase 3 graduate compared to those in the state that do not have a Phase 3 graduate as seen below:

	Average Combined VA Growth Score
With a MPP 3 Grad	82.32 (Started at 79.9 in 2021)
Without a MPP 3 Grad	80.4

Schools with MPP 3 Grad:
*p=0.019 (statistically significant difference)

	Average Combined VA Growth Percentile
With a MPP 3 Grad	62.8 (Started at the 45.8 in 2021)
Without a MPP 3 Grad	47.43

Schools with MPP 3 Grad:
*p=0.07 (statistically significant difference)

The cohort began the Master Principal program below the state average in academic growth at the 46th percentile and graduated at the 60th percentile collectively.

Phase 1 Avg Growth Scores

+.53 Pts

Phase 1 Avg Growth Percentiles

+3.7 %

Phase 2 Avg Growth Scores

+.73 pts

Phase 2 Avg Growth Percentiles

+4.13 %

Phase 3 Avg Growth Scores

+1.59 pts

Phase 3 Avg Growth Percentiles

+14.16 %

Additional analysis specifically looked at the net growth in the Free and Reduced Lunch Population in participating schools as seen below:

School Name	FRL Math Growth 17_18	FRL Math Growth 23_24	Net Difference	FRL ELA Growth 17_18	FRL ELA Growth 23_24	Net Difference
Gentry SD-Gentry High School	79.12	88.23	9.11	79.95	83.75	3.8
SSSD-Siloam Springs Middle School	75.77	77.30	1.53	78.90	78.46	-0.44
Greenbrier SD-Greenbrier Westside Elementary	83.54	78.73	-4.81	81.86	82.89	1.03
Batesville SD-Batesville Junior High School	78.60	79.65	1.05	78.51	77.55	-0.96
Ashdown SD-Ashdown Junior High School	77.99	79.01	1.02	79.86	82.07	2.21
Cabot SD-Magness Creek Elementary	78.98	78.85	-0.13	80.46	84.09	3.63
Cabot SD-Cabot Freshman Academy	79.26	80.51	1.25	80.99	82.13	1.14
LRSD-Don Roberts Elementary School	84.14	84.05	-0.09	82.39	81.17	-1.22
Forrest City SD-Stewart Elementary School	71.62	83.58	11.96	71.77	80.71	8.94

Bald Knob SD-Bald Knob Middle School	76.06	79.07	3.01	77.44	79.66	2.22

The analysis shows geographically diverse schools, both small and medium sized districts, serving as the primary drivers of that growth as captured below:

Gentry High School of Gentry School District, Principal Justin Blanchard- Overall Math Growth of 10.19 points over 6 years (3 years prior to participation and the 3 years involved in Master Principal), Math growth for students served by Free and Reduced Lunch by 9.15 points, Overall ELA growth of 4.63 points over 6 years, and ELA growth for students served by Free and Reduced Lunch by 3.8 points over 6 years.

Stewart Elementary School of Forrest City School District, Principal Rafael Smith- Overall Math Growth of 12.15 points over 6 years (3 years prior to participation and the 3 years involved in Master Principal), Math growth for students served by Free and Reduced Lunch by 11.96 points, Overall ELA growth of 8.69 points over 6 years, and ELA growth for students served by Free and Reduced Lunch by 8.94 points over 6 years.

Qualitative Outcomes:
ALA commissions qualitative feedback that compares instructional capacity building. In the last full year of programming, all cohort program areas demonstrated growth from start of year to end of year as well as each cohort growing over previous program delivery years with the exception of School Team which fell from 94% to 93%.
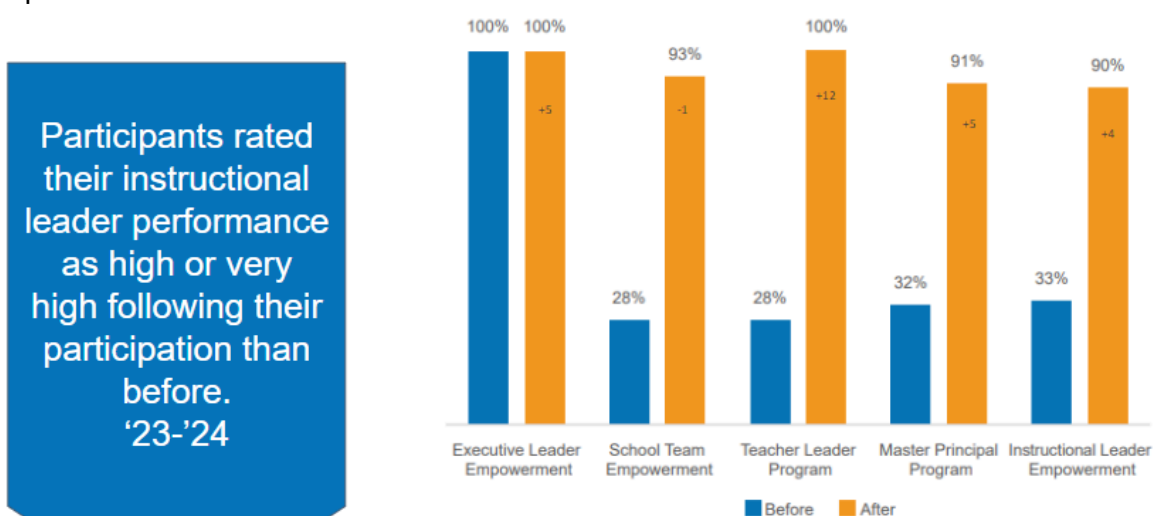

Figure 4. *Percentage of ALA participants who rated their performance as instructional leaders as high or very high before and after their participation in the program. Some respondents participated in more than one program; their results appear for both programs in which they participated.*

ALA is interested in the impact educator growth impacts schools and districts. All cohorts reported a positive impact on collective instructional capacity as seen below.
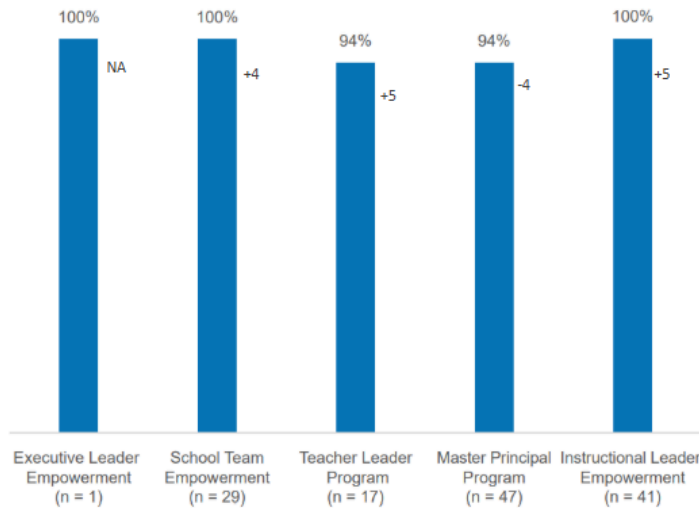
Figures shown:

- Executive Leader Empowerment (n = 1): 100%, NA
- School Team Empowerment (n = 29): 100%, +4
- Teacher Leader Program (n = 17): 94%, +5
- Master Principal Program (n = 47): 94%, -4
- Instructional Leader Empowerment (n = 41): 100%, +5

Eighty-nine percent or more of respondents (by program) indicated that their school or district improved in instructional effectiveness due to their participation in the ALA some or a great deal. '23-'24

Figure 5. *Percent of participants who rated the level of improvement in instructional effectiveness in their school or district as 'some improvement' or 'a great deal of improvement' due to their participation in the ALA. Some respondents participated in more than one program; their results appear for both programs in which they participated.*

In looking at the year-to-year comparison, all cohorts with the exception of Master Principal showed an increase from prior cohorts. When asked, principals reported the unknowns around effectiveness of new curriculum adoptions and assessment timelines as a major influence in their rating.

Budget/ Fiscal Responsibility:

At an award of 1.4 million dollars per year, the Academy operates in a streamlined staffing model with 3 full-time personnel, 6 part-time/ shared personnel, 2 national partnerships, and coaching/ mentoring support from program graduates across the state. Through this model, ALA has operated at or under budget for each of the first 4 program years, while continuing to grow service delivery options, including virtual Teacher Leader Cohorts and on-site School Team Empowerment coaching, as well as maintaining high quality programming. Participation is free to all public schools and districts with a district only paying incurred substitute/ travel expenses.