

Garfield Scholars Academy

Accountability Profile

Prepared by
Arkansas Department of Education
Charter School Office

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Section 1: Abstract

The Garfield Scholars Academy Accountability Profile provides a first-year performance overview of this newly established K-5 open-enrollment charter school. With 94 students enrolled, the school is operating at 27.65% of its authorized enrollment cap during its second year of existence. As a new school, several data points—attendance, enrollment stability, teacher retention, and multi-year comparisons—are limited or unavailable. Nevertheless, demographic data and grade-level enrollment distribution provide an early picture of the school's student body. The school reports no suspensions, expulsions, or chronic absenteeism in 2024-2025, signaling a positive behavioral climate during its inaugural year.

Academically, the school faces considerable early challenges. Garfield Scholars Academy earned an F letter grade in its first year, with ATLAS growth and achievement scores significantly below district and state averages. English growth at 29.03% and Math growth at 18.52% fall well within the "Not Meeting Standard" range. Achievement data also reveal proficiency rates far below statewide levels in English, Math, and Science. With no Reading data reported and incomplete baseline trends, the profile highlights a clear need for structured instructional systems, targeted interventions, and robust progress monitoring.

Financially, the school exhibits early indicators of instability typical of newly opened charters. Ending balances remain low at 1.41% and 3.81%, and days cash on hand—5.22 and 14.22 days—fall far below the required readiness thresholds. Board minutes indicate inconsistent budget adoption processes and reliance on audio recordings that impede transparent fiscal review. Operationally, the school meets minimum accreditation standards but lacks a posted School Improvement Plan and provides limited public access to governance documentation. Recruitment and retention planning is present but nonspecific and missing required components. As a developing institution, Garfield Scholars Academy must urgently strengthen its academic, financial, and operational systems to ensure sustainable growth and long-term success.

Section 2: School Summary

Background Information

Location	18432 Marshall ST., Garfield, AR 72732
Year Opened	2024
Grade Levels	k-5
Enrollment Cap	340
Charter Type	Open Enrollment
Mission Statement	The mission of Garfield Scholars' Academy is to empower our scholars to be purposeful learners, critical and creative thinkers, motivated citizens and leaders, and determined lifelong learners.

Leadership Team

Personnel	Title	School/ Organization	Email
Cheryl Harrison	Superintendent	Garfield Scholars Academy	cheryl.harrison@garfieldscholars.org
Dr. Melanie Kennon	CEO-Board President	Garfield Scholars Academy	melanie.kennon@garfieldscholars.org
Joy Sawyer	Board Member	Garfield Scholars Academy	joy.sawyer@garfieldscholars.org
Jenny Setzer	Board Secretary	Garfield Scholars Academy	jenny.setzer@garfieldscholars.org

Section 3: Student Enrollment Data

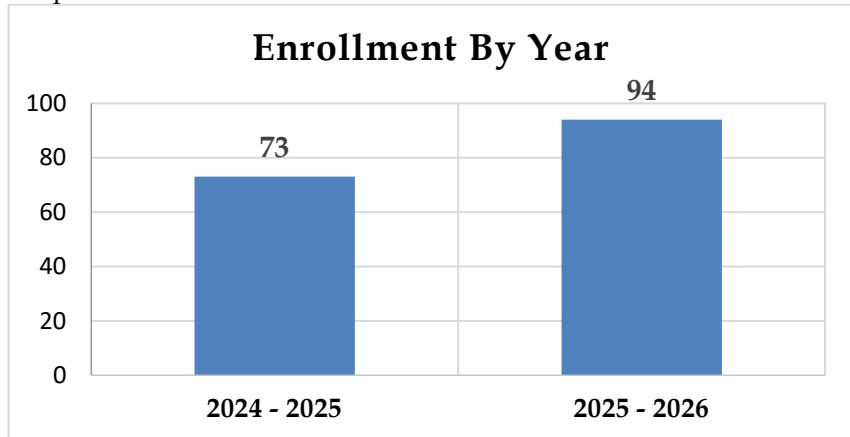
Table 3.0 – 2025 – 2026 Enrollment

2025 – 2026 Enrollment	Enrollment CAP	Percent of Cap
94	340	27.65%

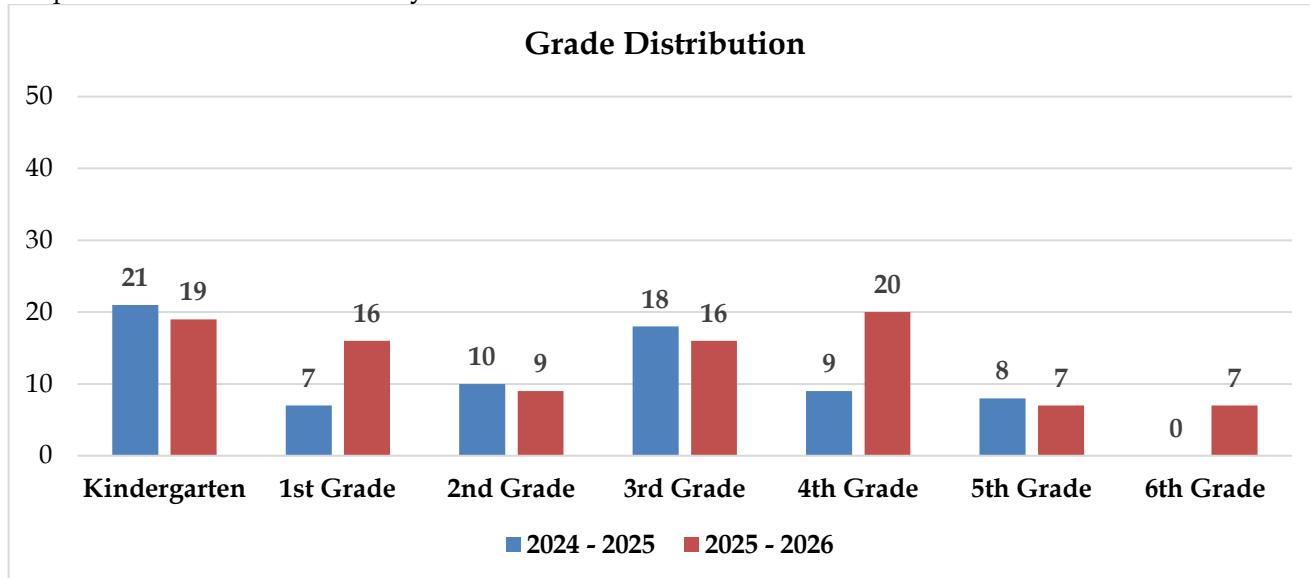
Garfield Scholars Academy's first year of operation was the 2024 – 2025 school year; many of the data elements are only available for the 2025 – 2026 school year.

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

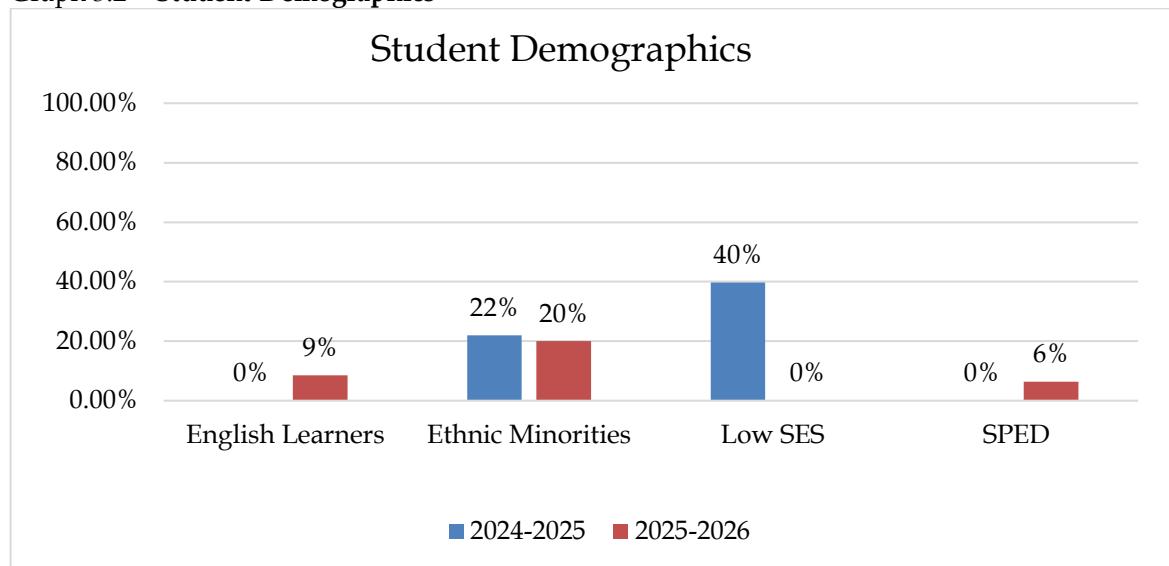
Graph 3.0 - School Enrollment



Graph 3.1 - Student Enrollment by Grade



Graph 3.2 - Student Demographics



Student Attendance Rates

No student attendance rate data was available at the time of report creation.

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 letter grade compared to the Rogers School District and state.

Table 4.0 - Letter Grade Comparison

School	2024-2025
Garfield Scholars Academy	F
Rogers School District	B
State average	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.

Table 4.2 - Growth and Achievement Scores

Growth - English					State Average
	Exceeding Standard	Meeting Standard	Approaching Standard	Not Meeting Standard	
2024-2025 ATLAS				29%	53%

Growth - Math					State Average
	Exceeding Standard	Meeting Standard	Approaching Standard	Not Meeting Standard	
2024-2025 ATLAS				19%	52%

Achievement - English					State Average
	Exceeding Standard	Meeting Standard	Approaching Standard	Not Meeting Standard	
2024-2025 ATLAS			31%		37%

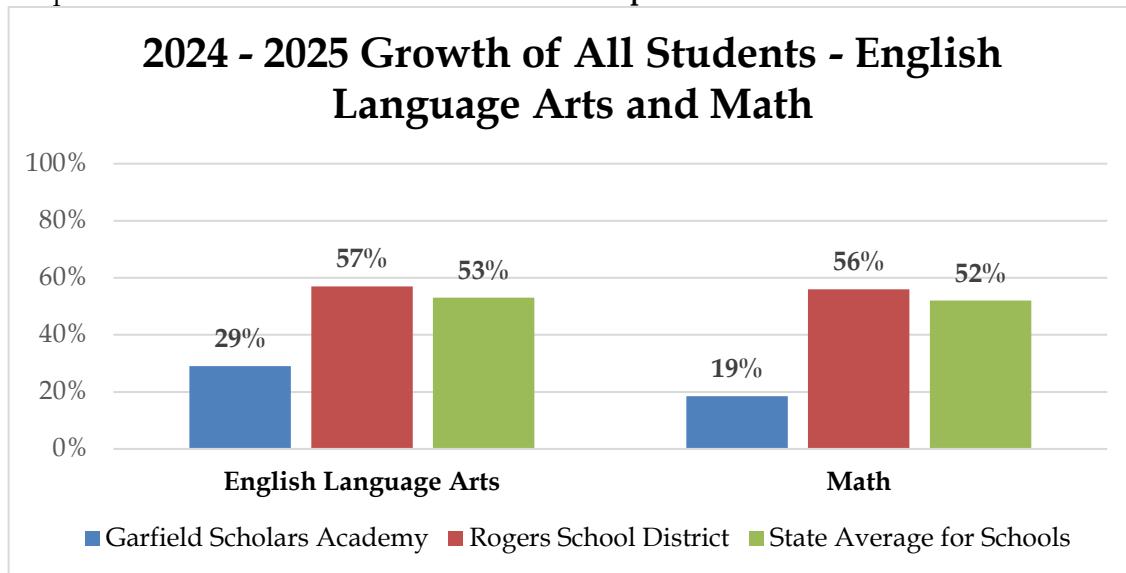
Achievement - Math					State Average
	Exceeding Standard	Meeting Standard	Approaching Standard	Not Meeting Standard	
2024-2025 ATLAS				28%	40%

Achievement - Science					State Average
	Exceeding Standard	Meeting Standard	Approaching Standard	Not Meeting Standard	
2024-2025 ATLAS			28%		38%

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 Rogers School District and state average. **There was not enough data to score the school's Lowest 25% Growth.**

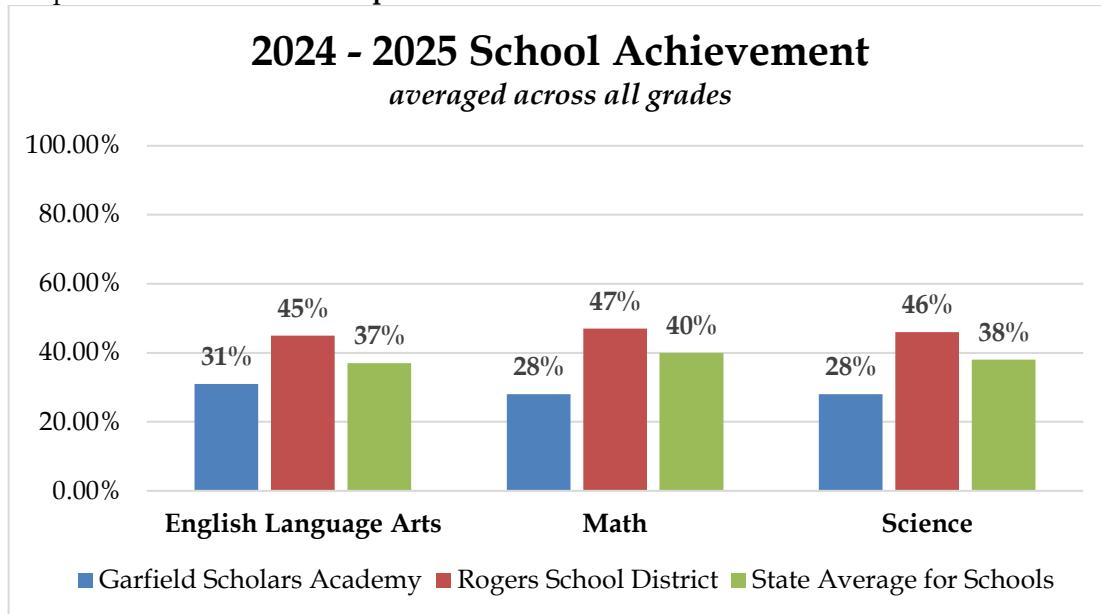
Graph 4.0.a – 2024 – 2025 All Students Growth Comparison



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 Rogers School District and the state average.

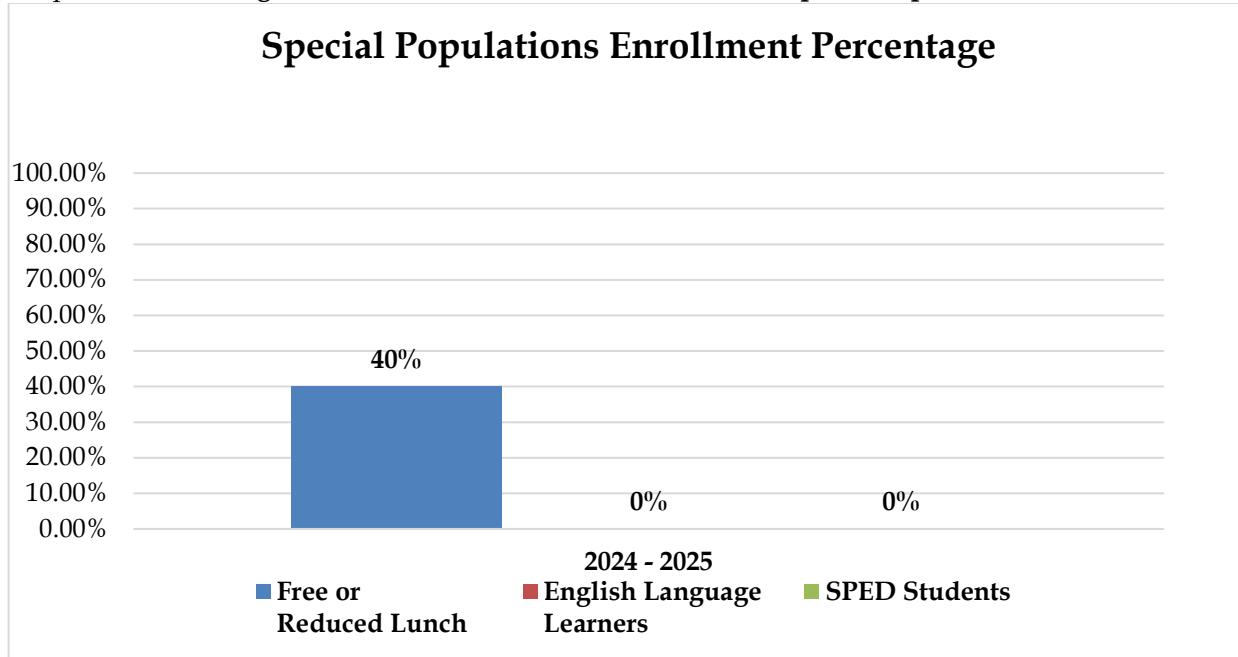
Graph 4.2 - Achievement Comparison



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.

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



Learning Services Summary

Garfield Scholars Academy had limited support from ADE Learning Services; the school participated in Foundations and Benchmark Workshops.

Enrollment Stability Rates

No enrollment stability information was available for Garfield Scholars Academy at the time of report creation.

Student Discipline

Table 4.3 presents Garfield Scholar Academy's disciplinary count and compares it to the state average.

Table 4.3 - 3-year Disciplinary history

	Garfield Scholars Academy Whole Number Count	State Average
School Suspensions (In & Out of school)		
2024-2025	0	96.03
Expulsions		
2024-2025	0	0.81
Chronic Absenteeism		
2024-2025	0	21%

Section 5: Financial Performance Data

Financial information was provided by the Arkansas Department of Education's Finance office in late October 2025.

Minutes provided on the school's website were in written form prior to the July 2025 meeting. Beginning July 2025 board meeting minutes that are available on their website are audio recordings, making it difficult to quickly review topics discussed without listening to entire recordings.

Regarding fiscal oversight, the Garfield Scholars Academy Board initiated a preliminary discussion of the 2025-26 annual budget on June 19, 2025, though the discussion was tabled and no subsequent meeting minutes show evidence of adoption or continued review. Routine finance updates occurred monthly, but the required formal budget adoption was not reflected in any of the written minutes through June 2025.

Financial Metrics

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 Garfield Scholars Academy

Color Legend	Meets	Does Not Meet	Falls Far Below
	2024 - 2025	2025 - 2026	
<i>Ending Balance % of Revenue</i>	1.41%	3.81%	
<i>Days Cash on Hand</i>	5.22	14.22	
<i>Operating Margin</i>	.014	0.02	
<i>Unrestricted Fund Balance</i>	1.43%	3.90%	
<i>Enrollment Stability</i>	No Data	128.7%	
<i>Fiscal Management & Oversight</i>	No Data	No Data	

Financial Data

Table 5.2 - Financial Data for the charter school

Topics	2024-2025 Actual	2025-2026 Budgeted
<i>Beginning Balance</i>	\$0.00	\$12,692.49
<i>Revenue</i>	\$899,959.73	\$844,863.00
<i>Expenditures</i>	\$887,267.24	\$825,388.68
<i>Ending Balance</i>	\$12,692.49	\$32,166.81
<i>Ending Balance % of Revenue</i>	1.41%	3.90%

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 document noting the 2024 – 2025 school year was their first year of operation and they planned to collect student data in preparation for the 2025 – 2026 school year. There is no 2025 – 2026 School Improvement Plan found on their website.

Charter School Board

The Board meeting schedule for the current school year, meeting agendas and minutes are not easily accessible; agendas and minutes are available through the current school year, but with restricted access.

The Board reviewed academic performance data at crucial points during the school year, notably in **November 2024** when detailed proficiency results were discussed, and again in **October 2025** when broader academic evaluation and program recommendations were presented. These discussions addressed both current achievement levels and strategies for improvement.

Budget oversight occurred consistently through regular finance reports, with **October and December 2024** involving deeper examination of expenditures and needed corrections, and **June 2025** initiating the next year's budget planning. However, the minutes provided do not include documentation of a formal budget adoption, only that the Board began preliminary review. Additional minutes may capture the final adoption depending on the meeting cycle.

Staff Recruitment and Retention Plan

The Garfield Scholars' Academy Teacher and Administrator Recruitment and Retention Plan provides a foundational structure for building a more diverse educator workforce. The plan outlines a clear overarching goal of increasing the number of qualified minority educators and includes several broad action steps such as marketing, participation in university recruitment fairs, and partnerships for student field experiences. Local demographic data is clearly reported and demonstrates a strong need for increased staff diversity to better mirror the student population and community.

While the plan satisfies basic state requirements, it would benefit from more specificity to strengthen implementation. Adding quantifiable targets – such as the desired percentage increase in minority hires or retention rate benchmarks – would provide clarity and measurable direction. Additionally, the retention section is brief and would be improved by incorporating comprehensive strategies, such as mentorship for new teachers, structured professional support, or intentional cultivation of an inclusive school culture. Because Garfield Scholars' Academy is a newly established charter school, the plan appropriately notes that progress updates will be added over time; however, including more detailed timelines and evaluation methods now will improve readiness for future updates.

Finally, the plan should include the required third goal area – expanding student interest in education-related careers, particularly for minority students. Incorporating this missing component and increasing

the specificity of measurable outcomes will ensure the plan fully aligns with Arkansas DESE expectations and supports sustainable, meaningful progress in educator diversity and retention.

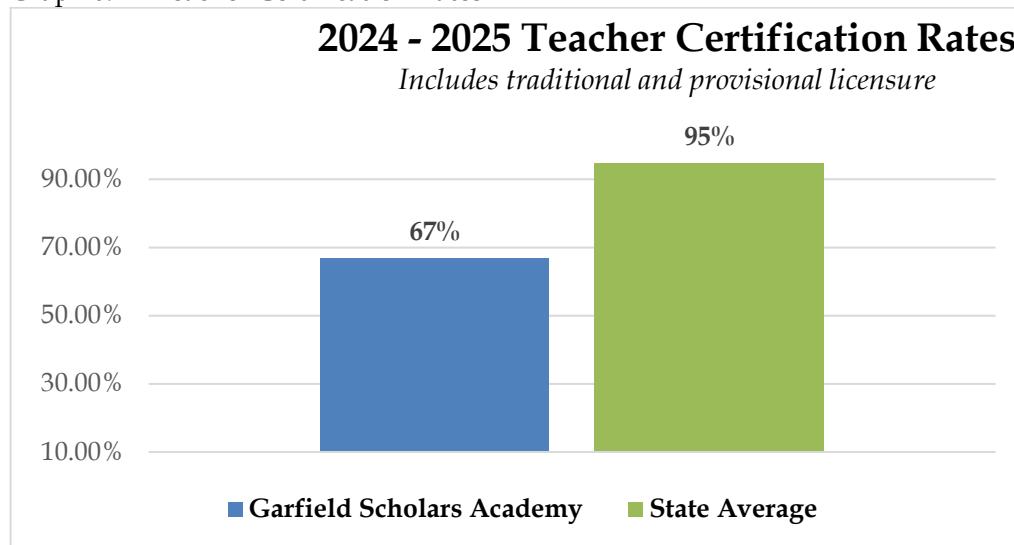
Teacher Retention Rates

No teacher retention rate information was available for Garfield Scholars Academy at the time of report creation.

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.

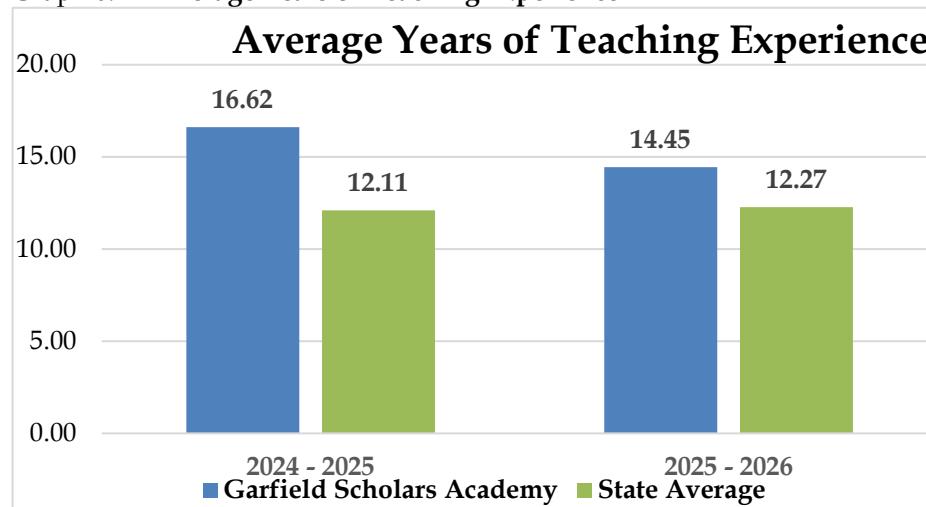
Graph 6.1 – Teacher Certification Rates



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

No current school improvement plan is posted on the Garfield Scholars Academy website.

Section 7: Executive Summary

Academic Performance

Garfield Scholars Academy earned an **F** in its first operational year, reflecting substantial deficiencies in student growth and achievement. ATLAS results show **English growth at 29.03%** and **Math growth at 18.52%**, both far below the “Meeting Standard” threshold and significantly behind district and state performance. Achievement data reveal similarly low proficiency levels – **31.25% in English, 28.13% in Math, and 28.13% in Science** – all falling well into the “Not Meeting Standard” range. No reading achievement data were available. While the school reports a positive behavioral environment with zero suspensions or chronic absenteeism, the academic data underscore the urgent need for structured tiered interventions, consistent instructional delivery, and evidence-based instructional leadership. Limited Learning Services support and the absence of a posted School Improvement Plan further hinder coordinated academic improvement efforts.

Financial Performance

Financial indicators reveal early signs of vulnerability typical of a new charter school but requiring immediate correction. Ending fund balances remain far below the required 8% benchmark – **1.41% in 2024-2025 and 3.81% projected for 2025-2026**. **Days cash on hand** at 5.22 and **14.22 days** represent severe liquidity concerns, indicating the school is operating with minimal financial cushion. Although operating margins are slightly positive, the low unrestricted fund balances (1.43% and 3.90%) further highlight limited financial stability. Board minutes indicate routine fiscal updates but lack documentation of a formal budget adoption. Moreover, reliance on audio-only minutes for several meetings limits transparency and prevents fast, clear fiscal review. These combined factors indicate weak financial infrastructure that must be strengthened for long-term viability.

Operational Performance

Operationally, Garfield Scholars Academy meets basic accreditation requirements but exhibits significant gaps in governance transparency and compliance readiness. Board agendas and minutes are difficult to access, especially after July 2025 when audio recordings replaced written minutes. While the board reviewed academic performance at several points during the year, access limitations impede public accountability. The recruitment and retention plan identifies the need for greater staff diversity but lacks measurable goals, timelines, and the required component for promoting educator career interest among students. Critical operational documents are missing – most notably, there is **no posted School Improvement Plan** for 2025-2026 despite state requirements. Teacher certification and experience data are available but lack context due to absence of comparative retention data. Given the school’s newness, operational systems are still forming, but immediate improvements are needed to ensure effective oversight and compliance.

Recommendations to Address Deficiencies

Academic Recommendations

- Develop and publicly post a comprehensive **School Improvement Plan** with measurable goals, timelines, and explicit strategies targeting English and Math proficiency.
- Implement structured **tiered intervention systems** (MTSS), including frequent progress monitoring and data-driven reteaching cycles.
- Strengthen teacher support through professional development aligned to early literacy, numeracy, and ATLAS-aligned instructional practices.
- Increase assessment participation fidelity to ensure full baseline data for future growth analysis.

Financial Recommendations

- Establish a formal budget adoption process documented in written board minutes and ensure all financial decisions are easily accessible to the public.
- Develop a **financial stabilization plan** to increase days cash on hand to at least 30 days within 12-18 months and move toward the 60-day benchmark.
- Improve financial oversight by transitioning from audio-only minutes to written summaries that clearly reflect fiscal decisions and discussions.
- Monitor spending closely to improve operating margins and build unrestricted fund balances.

Operational Recommendations

- Improve website transparency by posting all required governance documents – board rosters, meeting schedules, agendas, minutes, finance reports, and the School Improvement Plan.
- Revise and strengthen the recruitment and retention plan with measurable goals, targeted strategies, timelines, and the required third component promoting future educators.
- Develop structured systems for monitoring teacher certification, experience, and retention to support long-term staffing stability.
- Implement systematic stakeholder communication channels to build trust and reinforce family engagement as the school expands.