

## ON THE ROAD TO IMPACT:

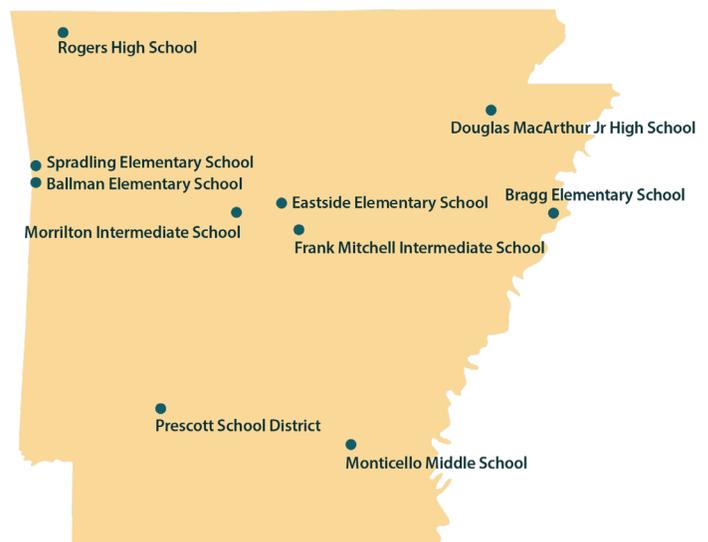
# Solution Tree Arkansas *PLC at Work*<sup>®</sup> Cohort 1 Year 2 Milepost Memo Executive Summary

As part of the state's commitment to continuous improvement in student achievement, the Arkansas Division of Elementary and Secondary Education partnered with Solution Tree to launch the *Professional Learning Communities at Work*<sup>®</sup> (*PLC at Work*) project in the 2017–18 school year. The nine schools and one district included in the evaluation received on-site support and professional development to build and sustain a strong culture of collaboration focused on enhancing student learning.

After two years, *PLC at Work* is having a **positive impact on achievement growth** in Arkansas, particularly in math. Education Northwest measured growth on the ACT Aspire English language arts (ELA) and math assessments between the year prior to implementation (2016–17) and the end of Year 2 (2018–19). The independent evaluation is designed to meet standards for Tier II evidence according to the Every Student Succeeds Act.

***"The attention [students are] getting through interventions has impacted them and they're very well aware that they're being helped more ... It's impacted their academic achievement ... and their self-confidence."***

***PLC at Work school administrator***



## KEY FINDINGS

### The Arkansas *PLC at Work* model:

- ▶ Had an **overall positive impact** on math ACT Aspire growth
- ▶ Had a **positive impact** for **specific student groups** on math ACT Aspire growth
- ▶ **Exceeded impact** on **math achievement gains** shown in other professional learning programs

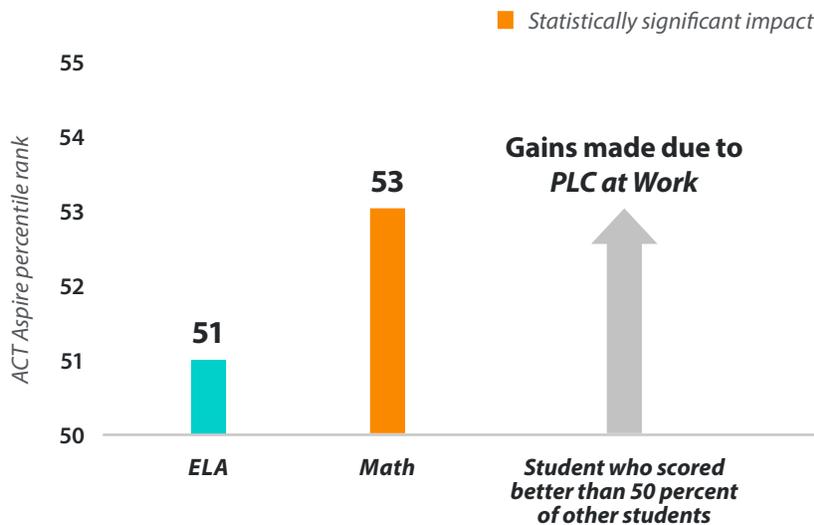
*The findings in this executive summary do not capture impacts from the full three-year implementation of PLC at Work in Cohort 1 schools. Due to COVID-19, state assessment scores for the third and final implementation year (2019–20) are not available. Future studies are needed to verify these promising results.*



## How did the Arkansas PLC at Work model impact student achievement for Cohort 1 students after two years?

The Arkansas PLC at Work model had a *positive impact on math ACT Aspire scores*. This impact translates to moving a student who would have scored at the 50th percentile (better than half of students who took the test) to the 53rd percentile (figure 1). In ELA, the same student would have moved from the 50th percentile to the 51st percentile.

**Figure 1. PLC at Work had a positive impact on math ACT Aspire scores**



**Positive impacts in math achieved after only two years**

Source: Analysis of Arkansas Division of Elementary and Secondary Education data, 2016–17 to 2018–19.

***"The lower students that have struggled their whole school lives, their confidence is so ... I mean, they're out there and they're proud. They're changing [from] getting Fs and now some would get an 80 percent on their tests because of interventions."***

**PLC at Work teacher**

***"Not only are [students] aware of their goals, they're aware of their weaknesses, and they're not afraid to target those weaknesses and work towards that to reach their goals."***

**PLC at Work teacher**

***"[PLC at Work] is positively impacting students, [and] we're seeing scores improve. They're not just jumping overnight, because we're in for a long haul. But we are seeing a positive trajectory to our scores and overall performance."***

**PLC at Work school administrator**

***"We have this completely new view of our students with data and everything else that we've achieved ... my teaching will never be the same because of it."***

**PLC at Work teacher**

## How did the Arkansas PLC at Work model impact student achievement for Cohort 1 students after two years?

The Arkansas PLC at Work model had a *positive impact on math student achievement for specific student groups*. ELA and math achievement gains for all student groups were either significantly higher than or about the same as their peers in non-PLC at Work schools (figure 2).

Students from demographic groups that generally experience positive academic outcomes also tended to see the most gains from PLC at Work implementation in their schools. Many groups of students from traditionally underserved backgrounds also outperformed the achievement of their peers in the comparison group, but these differences were often not large enough to rule out the possibility that they were due to chance.

**Figure 2. Students from different backgrounds made gains on the ACT Aspire ELA and math assessments at about the same rate or at higher rates than their peers**

 Achievement gains were about the same as peers
  Achievement gains were higher than peers
  Achievement gains were statistically significantly higher than peers

Demographic background	ELA	Math	Federal program enrollment	ELA	Math
	Black				Current English learner
Hispanic			Former English learner		
White			Never English learner		
Female			Ever eligible for free or reduced-price lunch		
Male			Never eligible for free or reduced-price lunch		
<b>Baseline ACT Aspire performance (2016–17 scores)</b>			Ever eligible for special education		
	ELA	Math	Never eligible for special education		
Top 25% in baseline ELA					
Top 25% in baseline math					
Bottom 25% in baseline ELA					
Bottom 25% in baseline math					

Source: Analysis of Arkansas Division of Elementary and Secondary Education data, 2016–17 to 2018–19.

**For more information about the independent evaluation of *PLC at Work* in Arkansas, please contact:**



Havala Hanson, Ph.D.  
*Principal Investigator*  
Havala.Hanson@ednw.org



Kathryn Torres, Ph.D.  
*Principal Investigator*  
Kathryn.Torres@ednw.org