

Test Scores Transform Troubled School into National Model

The town of Portland, AR, (population: 552) is home to an elementary school with a reading achievement success story so big it has attracted national attention. In 2000, only 45% of Grade 4 students scored at or above proficiency on the Arkansas Benchmark Reading and Writing Literacy Exam. By 2004, that percentage doubled to 90, compared to 77% at top comparable schools and 68% statewide.

Principal Ernest Smith said Portland Grade 4 students had the highest scores in the district in both 2003 and 2004. That wasn't the case in the mid-1990s, however. *Reading Mastery* was



