Issues Related to Arkansas's Current Grade Inflation Measure

- Measurement issues may occur when converting grades of other scales to 4.0 scores.
- Currently, the grade data is provided to NORMS in multiple formats which then requires data conversion to a 4.0 scale.
- The current measure of grade inflation utilizes only the top half of the distribution (student's with a "B" or greater) to draw conclusions about an entire school's population.
- A valid statistical argument does not appear to exist for the use of 20 % as a cut-off for defining a grade inflated school.
- For increased accuracy it needs to be linked directly to a cohort of students that are graduating at a given time.
- In larger districts that have multiple middle schools feeding into a high school students that took the test in the 8th grade at a different school than the one they graduated from may have negative impacts on the calculation.
- If grade inflation from high school is calculated to determine eligibility then the same should be done to determine if there is grade inflation at the postsecondary level for maintaining the scholarship.
- Grade inflation is an artifact of the institution or even a singular teacher, not of the individual student, and as such places an unfair burden of proof on students due to an institutional problem. As such grade inflation is an accountability/accreditation issue related to the school and not an actual student's performance.
- Studies that have examined the role of grade inflation and merit based scholarship programs have shown that while GPA's increased over time standardized test scores (SAT in particular) also increased at the same rate proving that the increases in GPA are not always due to grade inflation.
- It has also been found that many increases in GPA are a result of weighting of grades in Honors courses, AP courses, and IB courses and not actual "grade inflation" this has resulted in some states actually not taking the GPA from the high schools but recalculating the GPA based on only weighting AP and IB courses and not weighting Honors courses. This is because AP and IB courses have standardized curriculum and assessment practices that are national norm referenced.

Additional Issues Related to Grade Inflation

The law states that they were to calculate a measure to identify any school that had a "statistically significant variance" between GPA and performance on ACT or EOC exams. Current measure does not have the ability to establish a statistically significant calculation.

It is a snap shot of grades not grade inflation-Mulvenon

Only uses Algebra and Geometry because the results from the Biology were not good at all.-Mulvenon

Unit of analysis for GI is school while unit of analysis for Scholarship is Student-Mulvenon

End of course exam not designed to measure college readiness, they are design to measure mastery of benchmarks-Mulvenon

Not all colleges have the same college readiness standards. -Mulvenon

38% of students that scored as remedial based on ACT were actually scored as Proficient on the Algebra and Geometry EOC over a 3 year period.- Mulvenon

Need to address the issue of grade deflation as well as grade inflation- Dr. Smith

No valid statistical argument for the 20% rule-Brown

When applying grade inflation measures to current seniors we are not using the test scores and grades for the seniors that are graduating.-Brown

High school GPA is the strongest predictor of college success over any of the end of course exams or ACT for the majority of people.-Dr. Neal Gibson

ACT is only a strong significant predictor of college success for Arkansas students that score above a 25 on the ACT.-Dr. Neal Gibson