

Friendship Aspire – NLR Elementary Accountability Profile

Prepared by
Arkansas Department of Education
Charter School Office

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Section 1: Abstract

Friendship Aspire – NLR Elementary, originally serving grades K–5 but restructured to K–3 in 2024–2025, is operating at a critically low enrollment level—only **49 students**, representing **1.76%** of the districtwide enrollment cap. Attendance levels remain comparable to state averages, and discipline incidents remain minimal; however, chronic absenteeism remains high (25–27%) and exceeds the state average in one of the past two years, posing challenges for early literacy and numeracy development. Student demographic patterns have remained consistent over multiple years.

Academic performance remains the school’s most urgent challenge. The school received a **D** in 2023–2024 and an **F** in 2024–2025, reflecting a significant decline in overall academic health. Achievement scores on the ATLAS assessment for 2024–2025 fall far below state averages across all subjects, with proficiency rates ranging from **12.5% in English** to **18.75% in Math and Science**, placing students squarely in the “Not Meeting Standard” category. Growth scores show mixed results: while English growth nears the “Meeting Standard” threshold at **45.31%**, Math growth exceeds the state benchmark at **59.38%**, suggesting potential momentum in mathematical instruction. However, insufficient data prevented reporting of lowest 25% growth, indicating assessment participation or data fidelity gaps.

Operationally, the profile highlights significant governance and transparency concerns. Essential leadership information, board meeting schedules, and minutes are difficult to locate on the school’s website, with the most recent publicly available documentation dating back to early 2023. The staff recruitment and retention plan is outdated, created in 2022, and lacks measurable goals or evidence of implementation. Financial performance data for the CMO (Friendship Academies) show persistent weaknesses in liquidity—days cash on hand remain far below required levels—and consecutive years of negative or near-zero operating margins. Despite small improvements projected for 2025–2026, the overall financial position indicates vulnerability. While the School Improvement Plan is structured around academic proficiency, attendance, and parent engagement, it requires more specific success metrics and clearer fidelity monitoring to ensure meaningful progress.

Section 2: School Summary

Background Information

Location	3901 Virginia Drive, North Little Rock, AR
Year Opened	2018 (District)
Grade Levels	k-5 – changed to k-3 in 2024 - 2025
Enrollment Cap	2,785 (District)
Charter Type	Open Enrollment
Mission Statement	The mission of Friendship Aspire Academy is to provide a world-class education that motivates students to achieve high academic standards, enjoy learning and develop as ethical, literate, well-rounded and self-sufficient citizens. Friendship Aspire Academy seeks to fulfill this mission by providing students a high quality, liberal arts education focused on preparing students with the academic and life skills needed to be successful in college and beyond.

Leadership Team

There does not appear to be any information on the Friendship general website or the school website regarding the makeup of their leadership team, nor board members, board meeting agendas nor minutes. The principal noted on the webpage is Jherrithan Dukes; however, contact information was unavailable.

Personnel	Title	School / Organization	Email
Denise Simmons	Superintendent	Friendship Aspire	
Brianna Reynolds	School Principal	Friendship – NLR Elementary	breyolds@friendshipaspire.org

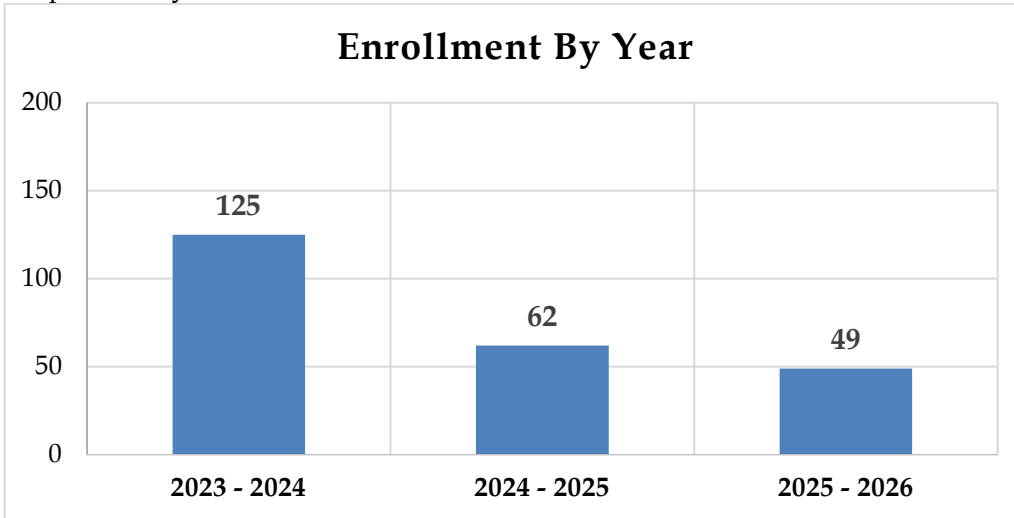
Section 3: Student Enrollment Data

Table 3.0 - 2025 - 2026 Enrollment

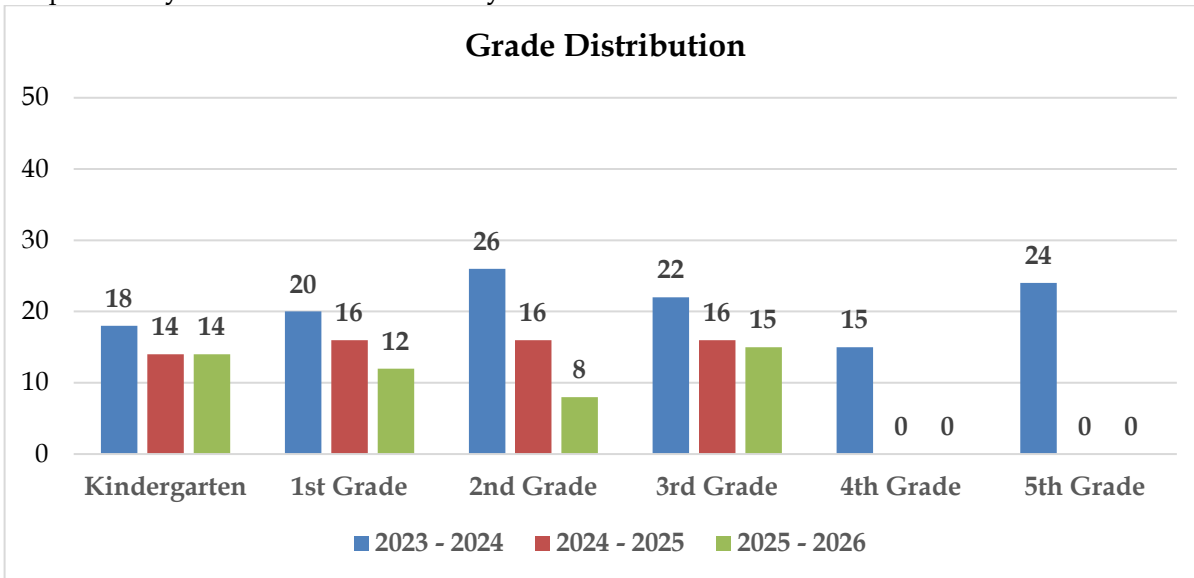
2025 - 2026 Enrollment	Enrollment CAP	Percent of Cap
49	2785	1.76%

Graph 3.0 reports the total enrollment count by year; **Graph 3.1** shows student enrollment by grade for the past three school years; **Graph 3.2** shows student demographics over the past three years. The data reported was captured from the Arkansas Department of Education’s Data Center.

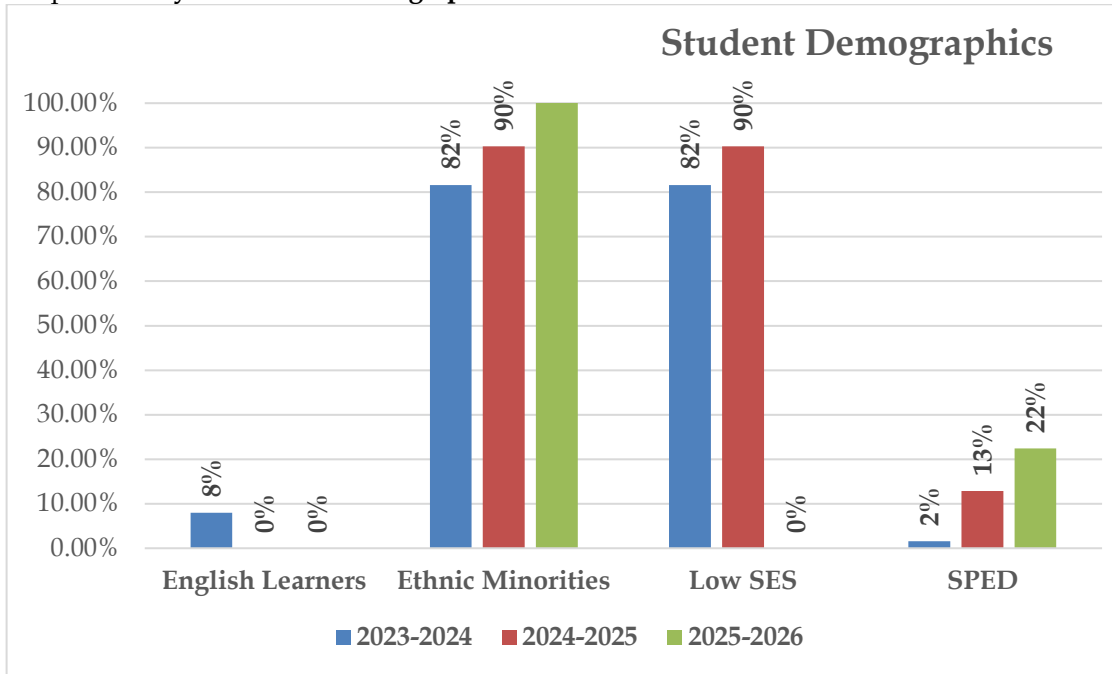
Graph 3.0 - 3-year School Enrollment



Graph 3.1 - 3-year Student Enrollment by Grade



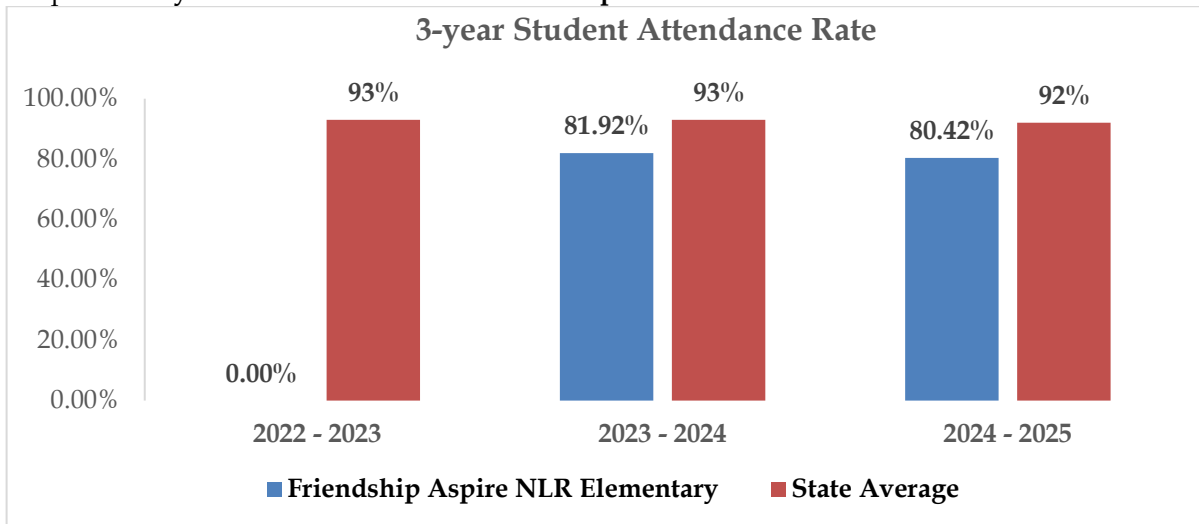
Graph 3.2 - 3-year Student Demographics



Student Attendance Rates

Graph 3.3 presents student attendance rates from the 2022-2023 school year through the 2024-2025 school year along with a comparison to the state average attendance rate.

Graph 3.3 - 3-year Student Attendance Rate Comparison



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 three-year history of the school’s letter grade compared to the Pine Bluff School District and state.

Table 4.0 - Letter Grade Comparison

School	2022-2023	2023-2024	2024-2025
Friendship Aspire - NLR Elementary	No Data	D	F
Pine Bluff School District	F	F	F
State average	C	C	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. (note: during the 2021 - 2022 school year, the ASPIRE assessment was utilized for both Growth and Proficiency(Achievement). The ATLAS assessment was first used in the 2023 - 2024 and there were no officially published scores for the 2023 - 2024 school year).

Table 4.2 - Growth and Achievement Scores

Growth - English					State Average
	Exceeding Standard	Meeting Standard	Approaching Standard	Not Meeting Standard	
2021-2022 ASPIRE	No Data				80.00%
2022-2023 ASPIRE	No Data				80.14%
2023-2024	No Official Scores Published by the State				
2024-2025 ATLAS				31%	53%

Growth - Math					State Average
	Exceeding Standard	Meeting Standard	Approaching Standard	Not Meeting Standard	
2021-2022 ASPIRE	No Data				79.83%
2022-2023 ASPIRE	No Data				79.88%
2023-2024	No Official Scores Published by the State				
2024-2025 ATLAS			44%		52%

Achievement - English					State Average
	Exceeding Standard	Meeting Standard	Approaching Standard	Not Meeting Standard	
2021-2022 ASPIRE	No Data				38.59%
2022-2023 ASPIRE	No Data				41.73%
2023-2024	No Official Scores Published by the State				
2024-2025 ATLAS				13%	37%

Achievement - Math					State Average
	Exceeding Standard	Meeting Standard	Approaching Standard	Not Meeting Standard	
2021-2022 ASPIRE	No Data				26.67%
2022-2023 ASPIRE	No Data				23.45%
2023-2024	No Official Scores Published by the State				
2024-2025 ATLAS				19%	40%

Achievement - Science					State Average
	Exceeding Standard	Meeting Standard	Approaching Standard	Not Meeting Standard	
2021-2022 ASPIRE	No Data				30.22%
2022-2023 ASPIRE	No Data				30.17%
2023-2024	No Official Scores Published by the State				
2024-2025 ATLAS				19%	38%

School Growth Comparison Data 2024 – 2025 school year

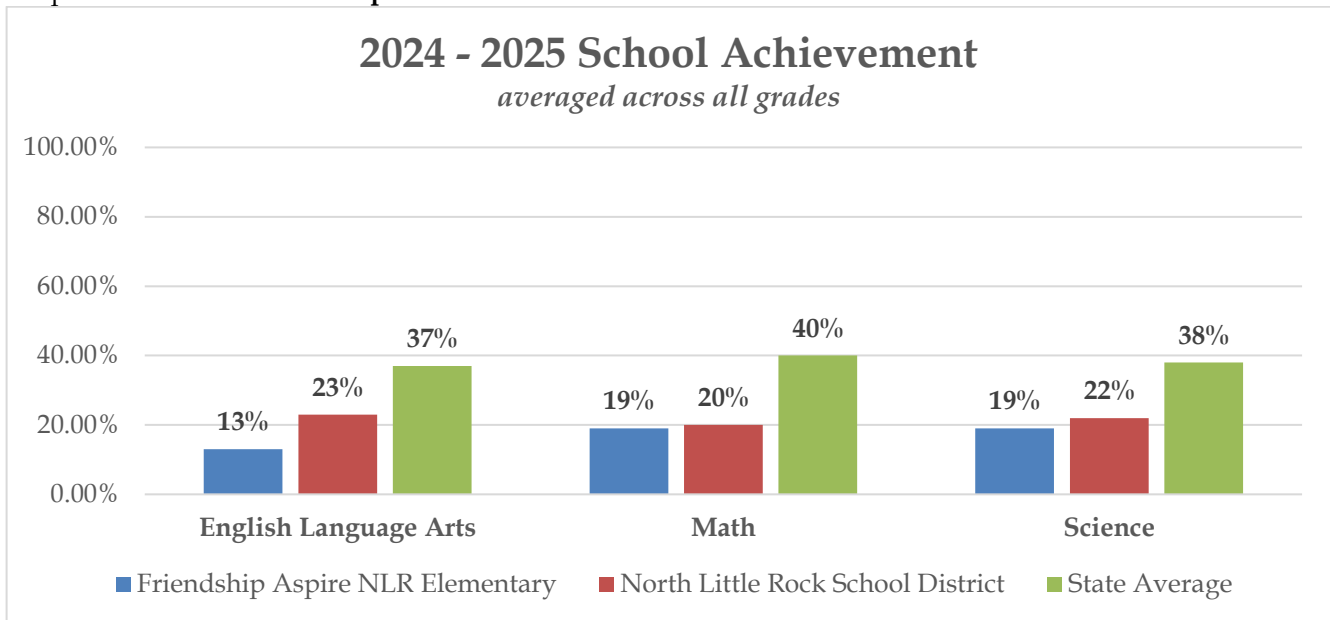
Graph 4.0.a compares growth of all students at the charter school in English Language Arts and Math with the North Little Rock School District and state average. **Graph 4.1.b** compares growth of the lowest 25% of students in English Language Arts and Math for the North Little Rock School District and state average.

There was not enough data to score the charter school’s student growth.

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 North Little Rock School District and the state average.

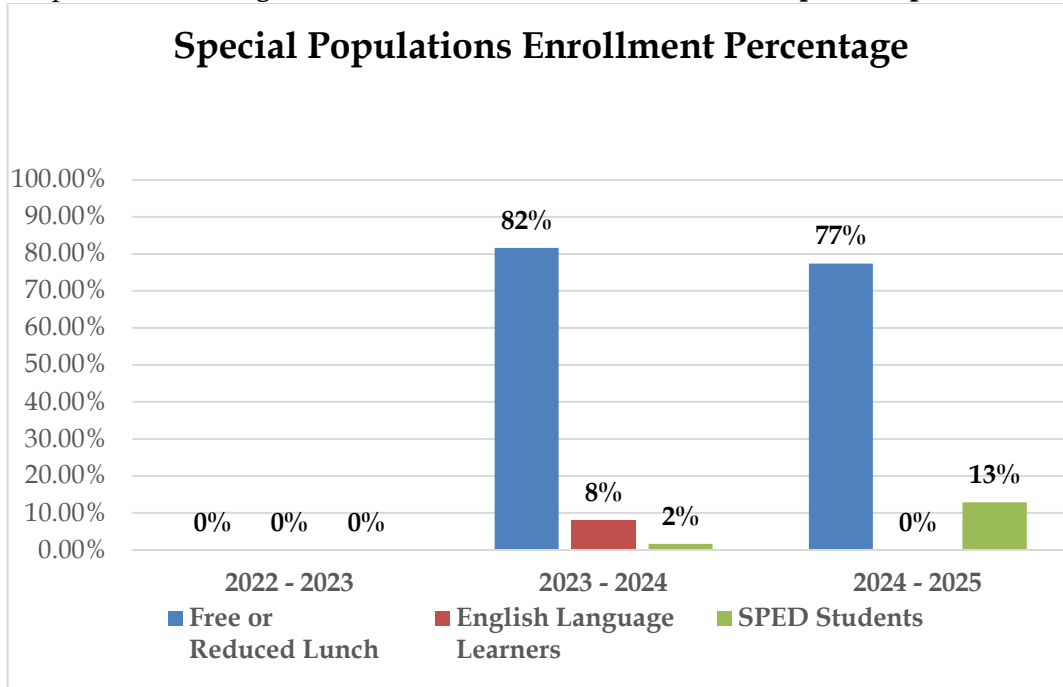
Graph 4.2 - Achievement Comparison



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 during the past three years.

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



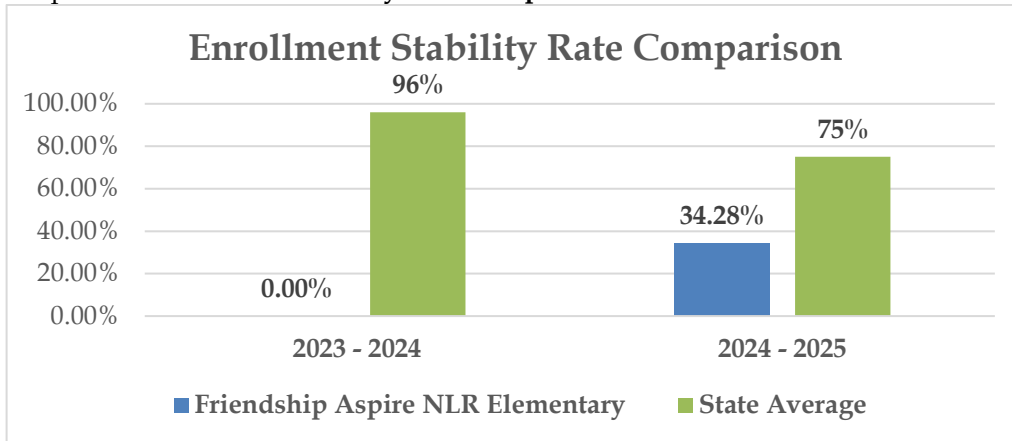
Learning Services Summary

Friendship Aspire Hazel Street Pine Bluff had limited support from ADE Learning Services.

Enrollment Stability Rates

Graph 4.4 illustrates the charter school’s enrollment stability for the past two years as compared to the state average. Enrollment stability is defined as the percentage of students who return to the same school from the previous school year.

Graph 4.4 - Enrollment Stability Rate Comparison



Student Discipline

Table 4.3 presents the school’s disciplinary history over the past 3 years and compares it to the state average.

Table 4.3 - 3-year Disciplinary history

	Friendship Aspire NLR Elementary Whole Number Count	State Average
School Suspensions (In & Out of school)		
2022-2023	No Data	103.93
2023-2024	0	103.90
2024-2025	1	96.03
Expulsions		
2022-2023	0	1.06
2023-2024	0	0.94
2024-2025	0	0.81
Chronic Absenteeism		
2022-2023	No Data	22%
2023-2024	26.92%	27%
2024-2025	25.80%	21%

Section 5: Financial Performance Data

Financial information was provided by the Arkansas Department of Education’s Finance office in late October 2025. There were no Board Meeting minutes found on the CMO’s website to determine whether discussions about finances were part of the Board’s agenda.

Financial Metrics (3-years)

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 CMO (Friendship Academies)

Color Legend	Meets	Does Not Meet	Falls Far Below
	2023 – 2024	2024 - 2025	2025 - 2026
<i>Ending Balance % of Revenue</i>	7.97%	7.23%	8.7%
<i>Days Cash on Hand</i>	28.81	26.34	32.21
<i>Operating Margin</i>	- 0.01	-0.02	0.01
<i>Unrestricted Fund Balance</i>	7.89	7.21	8.82
<i>Enrollment Stability</i>	100	82.98	87.5
<i>Fiscal Management & Oversight</i>	No Board Minutes	No Board Minutes	No Board Minutes

Financial Data (3-years)

Table 5.2 - 3-year Financial Data for the CMO (Friendship Academies)

Topics	2023-2024 Actual	2024-2025 Actual	2025-2026 Budgeted
<i>Beginning Balance</i>	\$983,046.90	\$870,402.81	\$845,139.90
<i>Revenue</i>	\$10,914,413.99	\$11,682,261.80	\$11,719,832.00
<i>Expenditures</i>	\$11,027,058.08	\$11,707,524.71	\$11,545,869.73
<i>Ending Balance</i>	\$870,402.81	\$845,139.90	\$1,019,102.17
<i>Ending Balance % of Revenue</i>	7.97%	7.23%	8.7%

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 School Improvement Plan that included two goals and plans for achieving each goal.

Charter School Board

Board meeting agendas and minutes are very difficult to find on the charter school’s website. Finding the State Required Information was challenging. There is a small vertical link “Explore” on the left side of the website that lists Board of Trustees meeting schedule & minutes; when selecting that link, the only schedules are for 2021 - 2022 and 2022 - 2023. Minutes posted are for June, July, September, October, and November 2022 and January 2023.

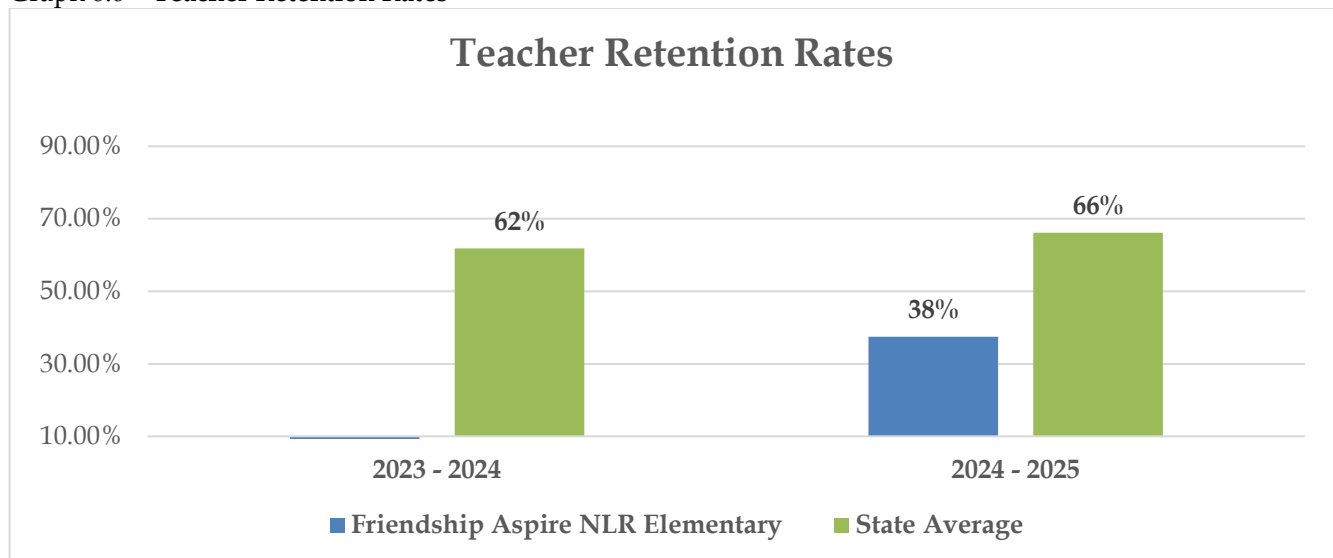
Staff Recruitment and Retention Plan

The staff recruitment and retention plan for the charter school is not easily found on their website (see explanation under Charter School Board section). The recruitment and retention plan was created and submitted in 2022. The goals and action steps lack specificity, nor is there evidence of plan execution or success.

Teacher Retention Rates

Graph 6.0 shows teacher stability for the charter school compared to the state average. Teacher stability is defined as the percentage of teachers who return to the school from the previous school year. There was no data available for the 2023 - 2024 school year.

Graph 6.0 – Teacher Retention Rates

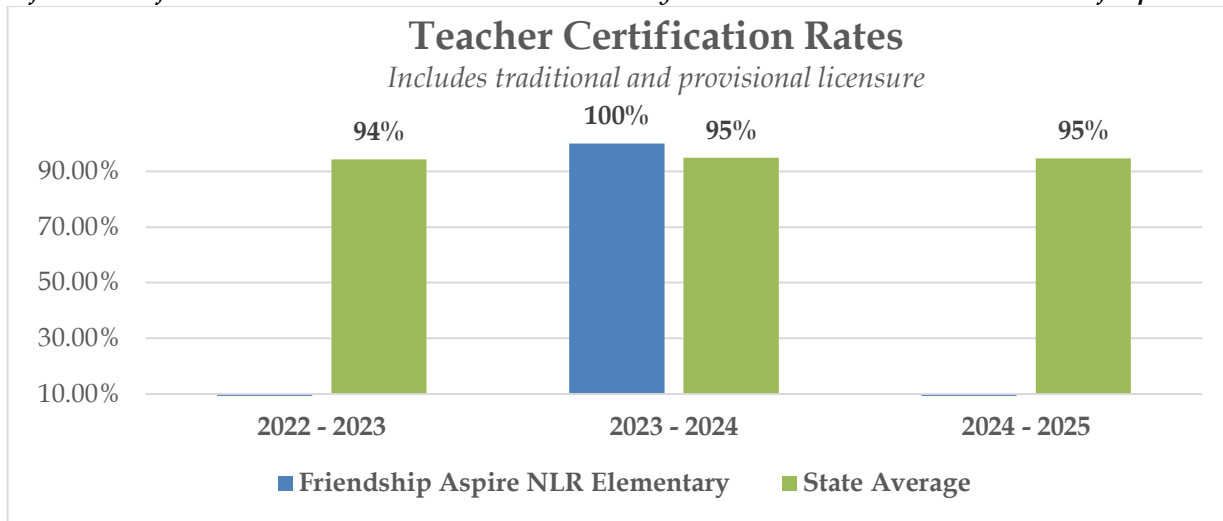


Teacher Certification Rates

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

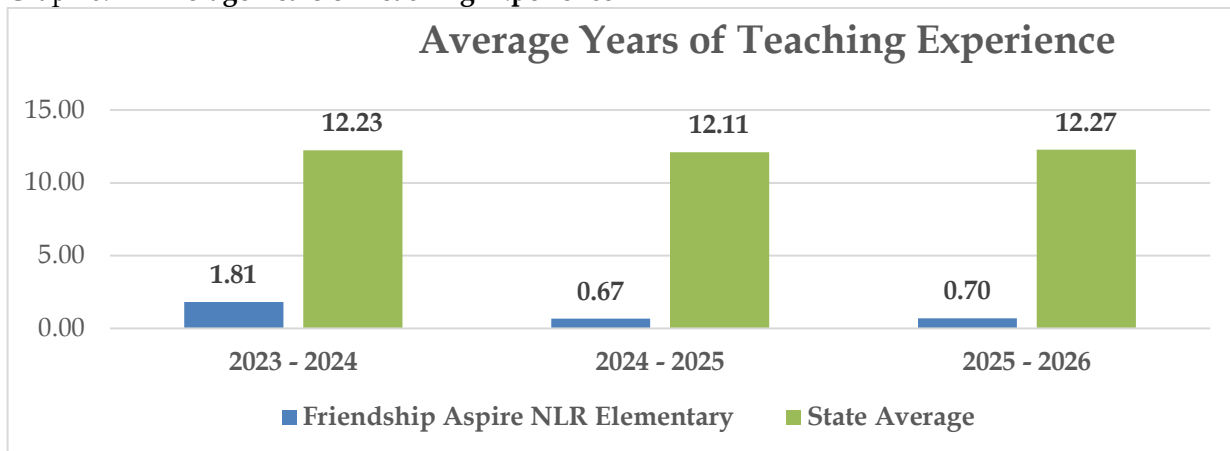
Information for the 2022 - 2023 and 2024 - 2025 school years was not available at the time of report creation.



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

The FAANLR School Improvement Plan outlines three major improvement priorities for the 2024–2025 school year: increasing academic proficiency, improving daily attendance, and strengthening parental engagement. The plan is grounded in early-year assessment data showing significant performance gaps across grade levels—particularly in 3rd grade, where interim readiness levels are extremely low. To address academic concerns, the plan includes actions such as professional development on evidence-based curriculum, weekly teacher data meetings, hiring a content specialist, and implementing PLC structures to support consistent instructional improvement.

To improve school culture and attendance, the SIP introduces a comprehensive attendance monitoring system, daily outreach to absent students, and incentives designed to drive and reward improved attendance. The plan also emphasizes increased family engagement, outlining monthly parent nights, online “coffee and chat” meetings, and transition events to strengthen communication and involvement. Monitoring tools across goals include walkthroughs, data reports, surveys, and attendance logs.

Overall, the SIP reflects a structured approach that links academic practices, culture-building, and parental engagement to clear goals. While action steps are aligned and supported by timelines and monitoring processes, the plan would benefit from more precise definitions of success measures, more detailed fidelity monitoring, and clearer accountability structures to ensure consistent implementation and progress tracking.

Section 7: Executive Summary

Academic Performance

Academic performance is the school's most urgent area of concern. After lacking data in 2022–2023, the school earned a **D** in 2023–2024 and an **F** in 2024–2025, indicating severe systemic deficiencies. ATLAS proficiency rates remain far below state averages in all subjects: **12.5% in English, 18.75% in Math and Science**, and insufficient data for Reading. These levels fall firmly into the “Not Meeting Standard” range for all categories. Growth scores show slightly more promise – English growth at **45.31%** approaches “Meeting Standard,” while Math growth at **59.38%** exceeds the state benchmark – but incomplete assessment participation prevented scoring for the lowest 25% of students. This issue points to critical weaknesses in testing administration, data tracking, or student participation systems. Overall, instructional practices are not yet producing acceptable levels of student achievement, particularly in foundational early literacy and numeracy.

Financial Performance

Financial indicators for the Friendship Aspire Academies CMO reveal notable vulnerabilities. Ending balance percentages (7.23–8.7%) and unrestricted fund balances (7.21–8.82%) meet the minimum expectations but sit at the lowest end of acceptable performance. The most significant financial risk is persistently inadequate liquidity: **days cash on hand remain between 26 and 32 days**, consistently falling below ADE's 60-day threshold for financial readiness. Operating margins were negative in 2023–2024 and 2024–2025, improving only slightly to 0.01 in the 2025–2026 projection. Enrollment stability – an important financial driver – declined sharply from 100% to 82.98% and then to 87.5%, indicating enrollment volatility that jeopardizes revenue predictability. Additionally, the absence of posted board minutes for all three reviewed years raises concerns about financial oversight and

Operational Performance

Operational weaknesses are persistent and structural. The school reports compliance with accreditation standards, but essential public-facing information – such as leadership team composition, board membership, meeting agendas, and board minutes – is missing or outdated, with the most recent documentation posted only through January 2023. The staff recruitment and retention plan, last updated in 2022, is vague, lacks measurable action steps, and shows no evidence of execution. Teacher retention and certification data are either incomplete or unavailable for multiple years, making it difficult to evaluate instructional capacity. Chronic absenteeism remains high (25–27%), and the school faces the added challenge of extremely low enrollment, which threatens program viability. While the School Improvement Plan outlines three priority areas – academic growth, attendance improvement, and parent engagement – its monitoring processes and success indicators require greater detail and rigor to support sustained improvement.

Recommendations to Address Deficiencies

Academic Recommendations

- Implement a structured, schoolwide data-driven instruction cycle, including weekly PLC meetings that analyze ATLAS interim data and guide reteaching.
- Establish Tier II and Tier III intervention systems with biweekly progress monitoring for struggling readers and emerging numeracy skills.
- Increase assessment participation through improved parent communication, test scheduling systems, and in-school supports to ensure full reporting of growth data.
- Provide targeted coaching and professional development in early literacy (science of reading) and conceptual math instruction.

Financial Recommendations

- Strengthen governance transparency by publicly posting all board minutes, agendas, and financial reviews for the past three years.
- Develop a cash reserve restoration plan to reach the 60-day liquidity benchmark within two years.
- Align staffing and operational costs with current enrollment levels to stabilize operating margins.
- Conduct quarterly financial monitoring at the board level, ensuring corrective actions are documented and publicly accessible.

Operational Recommendations

- Update the school and CMO websites to include required leadership, governance, and accountability information.
- Redesign the staff recruitment and retention plan with specific goals, action steps, timelines, and progress metrics.
- Implement a comprehensive attendance improvement strategy with daily tracking, family outreach protocols, and incentives to reduce chronic absenteeism.
- Enhance parent engagement structures outlined in the SIP, ensuring monthly events are tracked and participation goals are monitored.