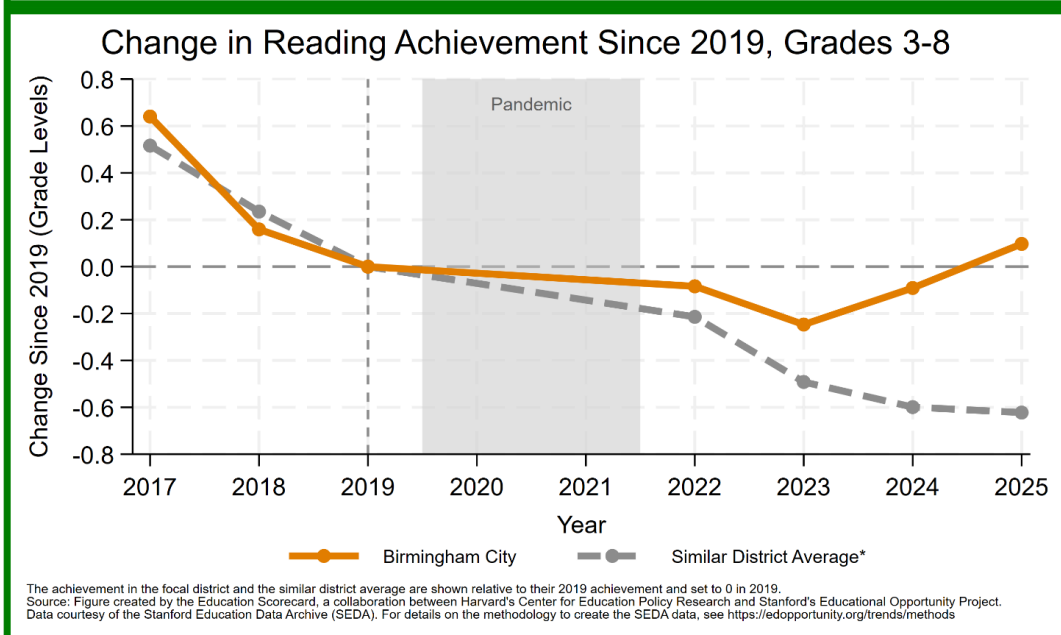
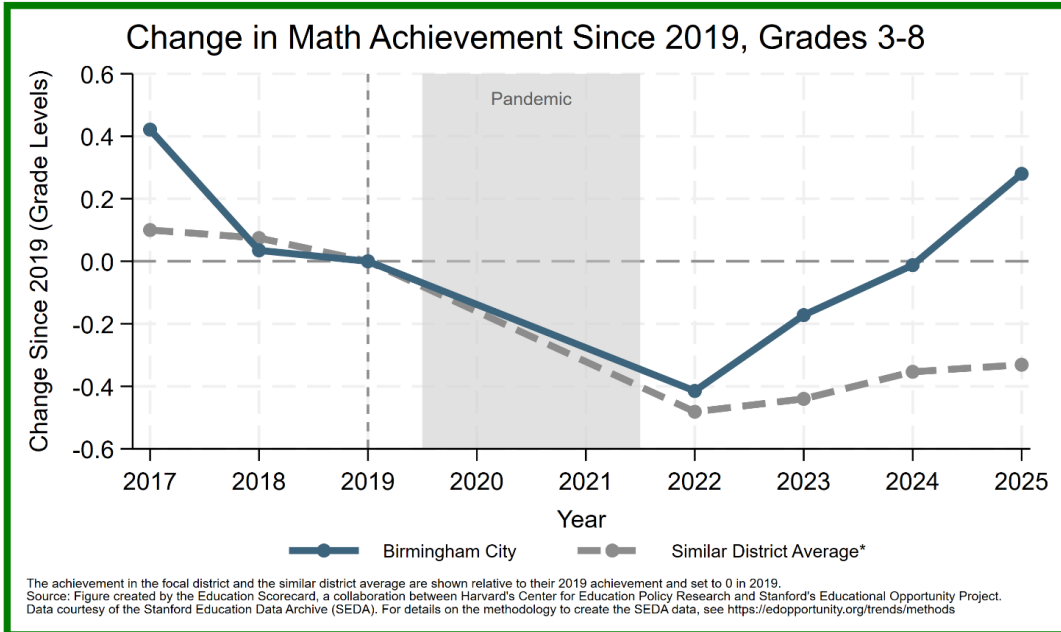


**Birmingham City Schools**  
Birmingham, Alabama

## Birmingham City, AL

### Rising Faster than Similar Districts in Math & Reading



\*Similar Districts: Montgomery County, Tuscaloosa City, Dothan City, Opelika City, Anniston City



### **Student Demographics:**

Total student population: 19,710  
Economically disadvantaged: 84%

Three largest racial demographics:

Black/African-American: 84%  
Hispanic: 14%  
White: 6%

### **Dr. Mark A. Sullivan, Superintendent**

“The progress we’re seeing in Birmingham City Schools didn’t happen by chance. It’s the result of intentional, student-centered work happening across our district every single day. By expanding instructional time, strengthening attendance, investing in high-dosage tutoring, and working closely with our families and community partners, we’ve been able to accelerate academic growth and achieve the highest district performance score in our history on the Alabama Department of Education State Report Card. Most importantly, this progress reflects our commitment to making sure every child has the support, opportunities, and high-quality instruction they need to succeed in college, careers, or life.”

### **Sherman Collins, Jr., Birmingham City Schools Board President:**

“As President of the Birmingham City Schools Board of Education, I am proud of the momentum our district continues to build. This progress reflects the shared commitment of district leadership, educators, families, and community partners who are working together to create better outcomes for our students. The Board will continue to support initiatives that increase opportunity, promote stronger attendance, and advance student achievement across the district. Our responsibility is to keep moving this district forward and to make sure every student has access to the opportunities and support they deserve.”

### **Background:**

Before recent gains, Birmingham City Schools demonstrated steady academic progress, improving state report card scores from 66 to 71. Thanks to the strategic leadership of Superintendent Sullivan, Birmingham has accelerated that momentum, reaching a score of 77, the highest in its history. The district now aims to surpass 80 next year, building on a strategy centered on expanded instructional time, strong attendance systems, and consistent implementation of evidence-based practices.

### **Strategies for Success:**

#### **Sustained Progress & Systemwide Gains:**

- Birmingham’s recent gains reflect measurable improvements across multiple indicators:
  - Chronic absenteeism reduced [from 29% to 14%](#)
  - F-rated schools [decreased by 93%](#), leaving just one remaining
  - District performance [increased to a 77](#) (highest ever)
  - Extended learning participation scaled from ~1,800 to ~6,000 students

#### **Innovative programs and interventions to extend instructional time:**

- Following the expiration of ESSER funds, the district has sustained approximately \$1.8M



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in annual state funding over the past four years, for a total of \$7.2 million, supported by continued academic gains.

- Birmingham [increased instructional time](#) from approximately 180 to ~200 days annually and provided transportation and meals for all students. Teachers were compensated for additional instructional time.
- 6,000 students out of the 20,000 attended the intercessions, an increase from 1,800 students.
- Birmingham implemented intercessions and extended learning opportunities, paying teachers \$60/hour using ESSER funds for extra instructional time.
- Intercessions “offer direct and explicit whole group and small group instruction that directly aligns with the established criteria as aligned by the state of Alabama.”
- They also offer enrichment programs in math, ELA, and social studies “to support students in achieving lost instructional time due to the COVID-19 school closures.”
- Compromise with parents and teachers who did not want to extend the school year.
- These interventions included enrichment, remediation, and credit recovery programs.
- Smaller class sizes – around 14-16 students.

## Strengthening Attendance Through Systems and Community Partnerships

- [Standardized attendance processes](#) across schools, including consistent definitions, tracking, and communication
- Implemented real-time parent communication, including calls for each class period at the high school level
- Established monthly monitoring and accountability at both the school and district levels
- Partnership with the District Attorney’s office through the [Helping Families Initiative \(HFI\)](#)
  - Addressed root causes of absenteeism, including housing instability, access to clothing, and family needs
- The district joined the [Every Day Counts initiative](#) in partnership with the Housing Authority of the Birmingham District (HABD) to increase family engagement
  - Attendance incentives included raffles funded through donations, expanding from 5 to over 300 participating families
  - Prizes ranged from \$300–\$400 to help offset financial barriers impacting attendance

## High-dosage tutoring and partnerships:

- Collaborated with local universities for high-dosage tutoring, with college students paid \$15/hour to assist in schools.
- Tutoring is integrated into the school day and aligned with classroom instruction
- Supports are delivered through a multi-tiered system to ensure students receive targeted intervention based on need

## State Alignment for Math Instruction:

- The implementation of the [Alabama Numeracy Act](#) has strengthened math instruction across Birmingham City Schools, leading to:
  - Deployment of math coaches across K–5 schools, with plans to expand to all elementary schools based on student need
  - Requirement that math coaches hold professional learning credentials or meet established training hour thresholds
  - A focused emphasis on standards-aligned math instruction to support



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- high-quality classroom implementation
- Partnership with the state to implement targeted math interventions in K–5 schools, ensuring supports are aligned to individual school needs

### Expanding College and Career Readiness Pathways:

- Development of a new CTE center to expand career-connected learning opportunities
- Expansion of dual enrollment programs to increase college access
- Increased focus on college and career readiness at the high school level

### Social-emotional learning and community engagement:

- Invested in social-emotional learning and behavioral support, including a partnership with the DA's office on a program called 'Helping Families' to address school attendance issues.

### Additional Support and Programs:

- Utilized ESSER funds to provide instructional aids and free after-school care.
- Focused on implementing consistent instructional frameworks and using formative assessment tools.