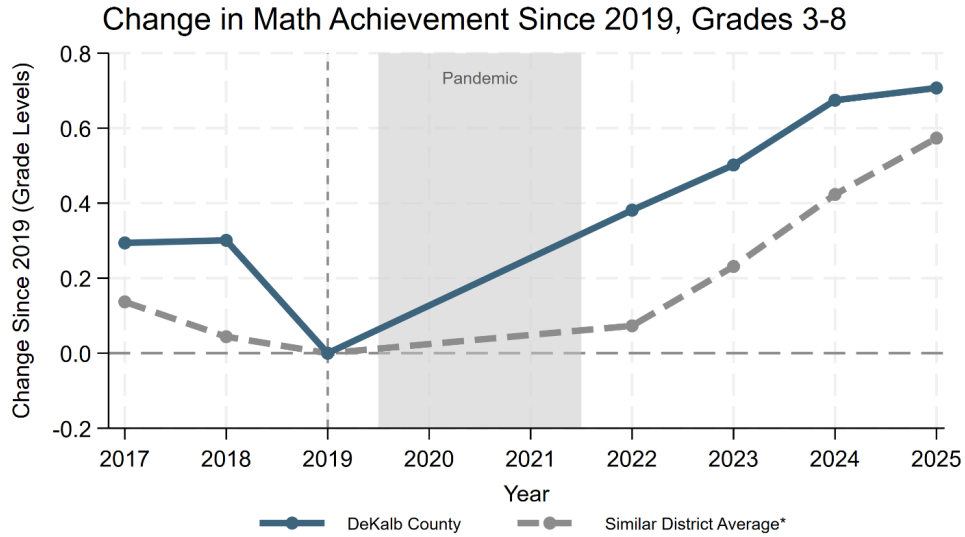


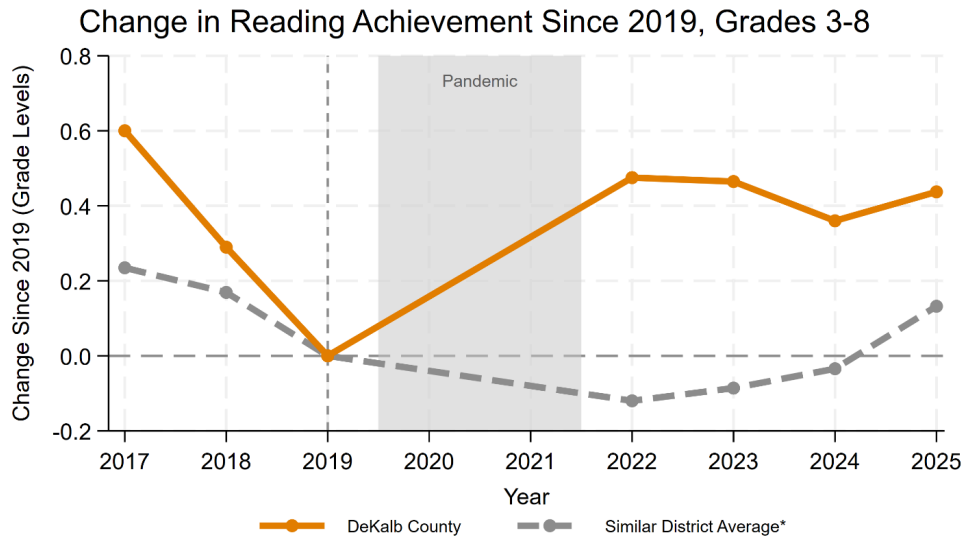
# EDUCATION RECOVERY SCORECARD

**DeKalb County School District**  
Rainsville, Alabama

## DeKalb County, AL



The achievement in the focal district and the similar district average are shown relative to their 2019 achievement and set to 0 in 2019.  
Source: Figure created by the Education Scorecard, a collaboration between Harvard's Center for Education Policy Research and Stanford's Educational Opportunity Project. Data courtesy of the Stanford Education Data Archive (SEDA). For details on the methodology to create the SEDA data, see <https://edopportunity.org/trends/methods>



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\*Similar Districts: Blount County, Franklin County, Jackson County, Chilton County, Morgan County

### **Student Demographics:**

Total student population: 8,346

Economically disadvantaged: 71%

Students with limited English proficiency: 22%

Three largest racial demographics:

White: 71%

Hispanic/Latino: 37%

American Indian/Alaskan Native: 21%

### **Wayne Lyles, Superintendent**

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- “Improving teacher instruction is the fastest way to improve student outcomes. The majority of the credit for our strong math outcomes goes to our hardworking teachers who do the work every day.”
- “Our goal in DeKalb is to have an effective teacher in every classroom. To make that a reality, we have a responsibility to provide the materials and training needed for them to be successful.”

### **Background:**

DeKalb County School District is a small district serving 13 schools in rural Alabama, a state that has invested heavily in helping students build foundational math skills through the [Alabama Numeracy Act](#). By developing a strategic plan for math instruction under the leadership of Superintendent Wayne Lyles and leveraging the state’s math initiatives, DeKalb County School District has become a model for how districts can accelerate student learning in math and recover from pandemic learning loss.

### **Strategies for Success:**

#### **Building teacher efficacy:**

- Under Superintendent Lyles’ leadership, DeKalb County School District has focused on helping teachers and instructional leaders grow to become more effective in the classroom.
- School leaders are trained to identify their school’s weaknesses, such as gaps in student understanding of specific skills, and create a targeted plan to help students in need of additional support.
- The district is in the fourth year of its partnership with [Marzano Resources](#), an organization that helps districts build school and teacher capacity and efficacy through data-driven school improvement efforts. Using the Marzano High Reliability Schools framework, the district defines five levels of performance that a school must work toward to be considered a High Reliability School, signaling that the school produces highly reliable student outcomes. The district sets clear objectives for equitable, rigorous instruction in every classroom, tied to sub-objectives with High Reliability School indicators outlined to meet those objectives.
- A major component of the High Reliability model is to include opportunities for teachers to work together to develop lessons and strategically plan together. Teachers are provided with professional learning community (PLC) opportunities for planning and vertical alignment.
- Teachers are also provided opportunities to conduct “Learning Rounds” in which teachers visit other teachers’ classrooms throughout the district to improve their own instruction.

### Implementing high-quality math materials:

- Under the Alabama Numeracy Act, the state requires that districts adopt high-quality math materials as identified by the state review process. As such, in 2021, DCSD implemented Ready Math, a high-quality curriculum with more rigorous standards and assessments than the district's previous math curriculum.
- DCSD measures student progress through iReady interim assessments. This provides teachers with real-time information and diagnostics about student performance and tracks growth for students. District leaders lead math data meetings at the beginning, middle, and end of the school year.
- All K-5 math and special education teachers in the district received math foundational training through the [Alabama Math, Science, and Technology Initiative](#) (AMSTI). Teachers also received Ongoing Assessment Project (OGAP) training from AMSTI, which focuses on how students learn math and addressing common math misconceptions.
- In order to enhance Tier I and Tier II instruction, the district's math instructional coaches led teachers through the introduction of "spiral reviews," short math lessons delivered in addition to the day's lesson. The spiral reviews cover the most important and prerequisite skills needed for students to master the content.
- DCSD offers math and science teachers in grades 6-12 [TEAMS](#) contracts (Teacher Excellence and Accountability for Mathematics and Science) that provide higher pay in exchange for more rigorous instructional training through AMSTI.

### Addressing chronic absenteeism:

- To curb chronic absenteeism in the district, DCSD hired a second supervisor to focus exclusively on the issue. The district is focusing on identifying the needs of its families and addressing the root causes of absenteeism in the community, such as transportation. Each school conducts weekly or biweekly attendance reports and carefully tracks student attendance.
- The district has conducted intentional parent outreach to communicate their definition of chronic absenteeism (18 absences, either excused or unexcused). This approach is grounded in the idea that parents who are aware of how absences pile up are more likely to be aware of their child's attendance record and make intentional efforts to get their child to school.
- In spring 2025, DCSD began [inviting](#) local physicians to lunch because too many students were missing school for doctors' visits. Now, the district reports that local doctors are more mindful of scheduling appointments around school hours.
- DCSD's "Flip the Dip" campaign aims to reduce absenteeism by [recognizing students](#) for missing four days of school or fewer every nine weeks. The campaign began as a monthlong initiative in November 2024, a month in which DCSD typically saw higher absenteeism rates. Before the campaign began, DCSD recorded an average monthly attendance rate of less than 90% in November. In 2025, the November attendance rate was nearly 95%, and the campaign has now been extended yearlong. Students who meet the attendance threshold are [entered](#) to win prizes, and teachers of students with strong attendance are also eligible to win prizes.