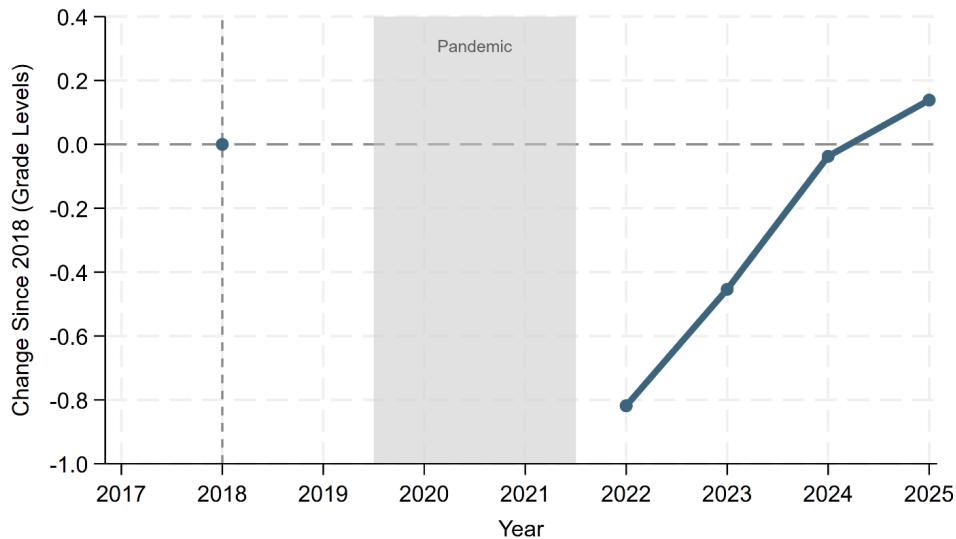


# EDUCATION RECOVERY SCORECARD

**District of Columbia Public Schools**  
Washington, District of Columbia

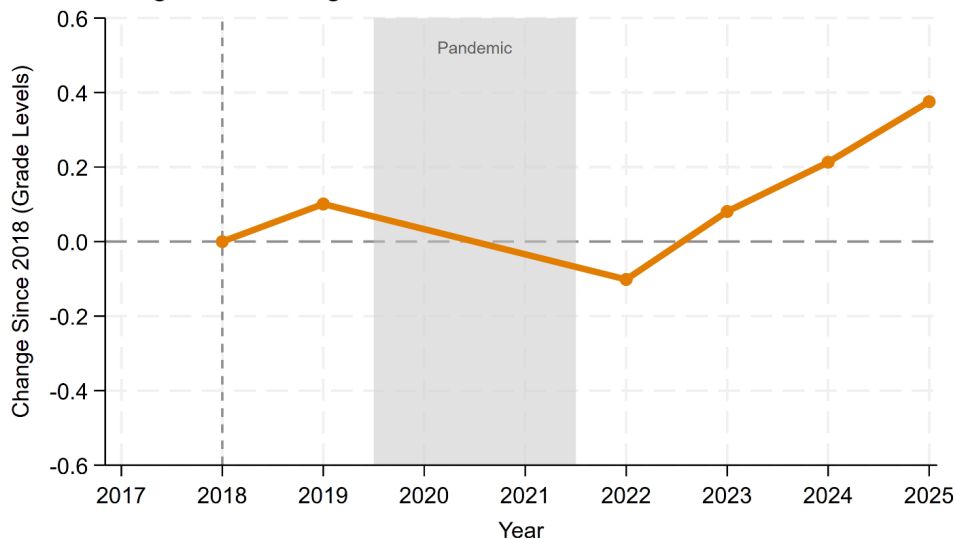
## District of Columbia Public Schools,

Change in Math Achievement Since 2018, Grades 3-8



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>

Change in Reading Achievement Since 2018, Grades 3-8



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>

\*Since achievement data for math in 2019 isn't available, we use 2018 as the baseline year for both math and reading in the District

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## **Student Demographics:**

Total student population: 52,030

Black/African American: 54%

Hispanic/Latino: 22%

White: 18%

Asian: 2%

Students identified as at-risk\*: 45%

ELL students: 16%

\*Students who are at-risk are those who qualify for Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), have been identified as homeless during the academic year, who are under the care of the Child and Family Services Agency (CFSA or Foster Care), and who are high school students at least one year older than the expected age for their grade.

## **Dr. Antoinette S. Mitchell, State Superintendent of Education**

[osse.superintendent@dc.gov](mailto:osse.superintendent@dc.gov)

- “DC’s continued academic progress shows what is possible when students are in school consistently, engaged in their learning, and supported by strong instruction. We work with teachers and school districts citywide and are committed to the practices that work—improving attendance, deepening student engagement, and partnering with families—so we can sustain and build on this momentum.”

## **Dr. Christina Grant, Former State Superintendent of Education (through June 2024)**

[christina\\_grant@gse.harvard.edu](mailto:christina_grant@gse.harvard.edu)

- “The District’s progress is the result of strong alignment across agencies, educators, and communities, all focused on delivering for students. By investing in research-based instruction, high-quality materials, and targeted supports like tutoring, D.C. is demonstrating how coordinated systems can drive sustained improvement.”

## **Dr. Lewis D. Ferebee, Chancellor of District of Columbia Public Schools**

[Evan.Lambert@k12.dc.gov](mailto:Evan.Lambert@k12.dc.gov)

- “These results reflect a districtwide commitment to strengthening the student learning experience. We remain focused on sustaining what works, including robust professional development opportunities for educators and student supports such as small group instruction, tiered interventions, and high-impact tutoring. Staying the course with these strategies has helped DC Public Schools return reading achievement to pre-pandemic levels and deliver the highest math proficiency gains on record on the district’s state assessment.”

## **Background:**

In the early 2000s, the District of Columbia Public Schools (DCPS) faced significant [academic challenges](#) and leadership instability. Student achievement levels were [among the lowest](#) in the

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nation, and the district experienced frequent leadership turnover. In 2007, the District implemented [mayoral control](#) to centralize decision-making and accountability. Since then, sustained investments in evidence-based instruction, tutoring, and educator support have contributed to steady gains in student achievement. These efforts have contributed to measurable improvements in reading and math performance and have helped position DC as one of the nation's leading school districts, demonstrating notable growth.

Like all states, DC has a department of education called the Office of the State Superintendent of Education (OSSE). OSSE oversees large initiatives and funding that supports DCPS and the public charter school networks operating in DC. Because of the District's relatively small size, leaders across OSSE and DCPS are able to coordinate closely on initiatives designed to improve literacy, math instruction, and student engagement across schools.

## Strategies for Success:

### Strengthening math instruction:

- OSSE established the [DC Math Task Force](#) in October 2024, which was charged with developing a set of recommendations for all DC students to achieve proficiency in math skills and concepts. The Task Force published a 2025 [report](#) with recommendations in five key areas: high-quality instructional materials, professional learning, diagnostic assessment and intervention, family and community engagement, and consideration for integrated math.
- Led by the DC Public Education Fund, the [Capital Math Collective](#) is a landmark \$20 million public-private partnership supporting math instruction across DCPS and public charter schools. The Collective's goal is **"to make D.C. the first urban school district where students from economically disadvantaged families outperform the national average in math by 2030."**
- With funding from the Collective, DCPS is developing two new [DCPS Math Centers](#) to serve as hubs for specialized teacher training, student tutoring, and academic support. The Collective aims to [provide](#) professional development to more than 2,000 math teachers and high-impact tutoring to more than 6,000 students.
- Through its [Math for Educators](#) program, the Collective has partnered with Trinity Washington University to fund graduate-level credentials for up to 1,000 math teachers and coaches, incentivizing current teachers to master advanced evidence-based math instruction.
- In 2024, DCPS partnered with [Trinity Washington University to launch its Math for Educators program](#), which incentivizes current teachers to enroll in the four-semester professional development commitment. The Capital Math Collective has committed to funding up to 1,000 teachers and math coaches from DCPS and public charter schools to complete the program.

### Strengthening literacy instruction:

- Following a successful \$16 million Comprehensive Literacy State Development (CLSD) grant that saw student growth of up to 16 percentage points, OSSE [secured](#) a new \$50

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million CLSD grant in 2024. The first grant served over [17,000 students](#), 90% of whom were economically disadvantaged and 91% of whom identified as Black or African American. OSSE [used](#) the CLSD funds to hold citywide literacy convenings, supporting professional learning cohorts, and implement data-driven interventions.

- OSSE has expanded access to the LETRS program (Language Essentials for Teachers of Reading and Spelling) for educators, even requiring the training for kindergarten teachers beginning in the 2026-27 school year. To date, over [650 educators](#) have completed this training, supported by [\\$1,000 completion stipends](#).
- DCPS has developed a proprietary K-5 literacy curriculum that integrates “Cornerstone” experiential learning with rigorous writing practice. This includes the [DCPS Readers Next Door](#) series, which includes over 100 decodable books written and illustrated by DCPS educators to reflect the diverse identities and locales of DC students.
- Through the [DC Reading Clinic](#), educators receive real-time coaching in structured literacy, while families are provided with tools to support literacy at home.
- DCPS emphasizes using a [multi-tiered system of support](#) (MTSS) to bolster literacy outcomes. MTSS ensures that students struggling with literacy receive targeted interventions, while advanced learners are challenged appropriately.
- These investments are contributing to measurable improvements in student outcomes, with DC announcing its [largest literacy gains](#) since 2019 in the 2024–25 school year.

## High-impact tutoring:

- A 2025 [Stanford study](#) found that DC students who received high-impact tutoring were more likely to attend school and had greater academic growth than similar students.
- The OSSE [High-Impact Tutoring \(HIT\) Initiative](#) began in 2021, providing funding for evidence-based high-impact tutoring with a focus on students who are “furthest from opportunity.” OSSE partners with over 30 tutoring providers across over 100 schools and community-based sites to serve over 10,000 students. Students receive at least two sessions of high-quality math or ELA tutoring per week for ten consecutive weeks, offered during or after the school day.
- Over [13,500 students](#) have received individualized tutoring support aligned to the science of reading through DCPS and [CityTutor](#)’s accelerator programming.
- A 2025 EmpowerK12 [study](#) found a high percentage of tutored students received at least 900 minutes of tutoring and gained an equivalent of 59 additional instructional days in math compared to similar peers who did not receive HIT.

## Attendance and student engagement:

- During the 2024-25 school year, DC launched [DC SAYS](#) (DC Survey About Your School), a statewide survey capturing real-time feedback from students, families, and staff. The survey provides insight into student belonging, peer relationships, and the overall school experience.
- High-level summaries of the survey results are published on the DC School Report Card, and district and school leaders receive analyses of the data that allows them to identify factors contributing to chronic absenteeism, concerns about school safety, and ways to improve school culture.

## School and district leadership:

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- DCPS developed a [cluster model](#) to manage schools throughout the district. Instructional Superintendents lead each of the nine clusters, [building leadership teams' capacity](#) to provide actionable feedback and providing a venue to share strategies that are working across schools, such as those for chronic absenteeism or academic performance. District leaders note that this collaborative, data-driven approach helps accelerate improvement by scaling strategies that are working across multiple schools.
- DCPS' IMPACT evaluation system provides frequent, actionable feedback for teachers that is used to inform performance bonuses. The District has a 94% retention rate for teachers who have earned "Effective" and "Highly Effective" evaluations.
- Mayor Muriel Bowser continues to build on the success of DCPS by investing in a [2.55% increase](#) to the uniform per student funding formula (UPSFF) foundation level.
- Strong collaboration with parent and community advocacy groups ensures that DCPS remains focused on evidence-based strategies and transparent student outcomes.

## DC's Unique Charter School Landscape:

This case study primarily focuses on the results and initiatives of DCPS, the traditional public school district in DC. Notably, DC's education landscape is uniquely composed, with nearly a 50/50 split between [DCPS](#) and [charter](#) schools. Although the Education Scorecard does not report on outcomes for public charter networks in DC, OSSE's investments outlined above also support charter districts throughout the district, and existing research shows promising results for DC public charters.

### Patricia A. Brantley, CEO of Friendship Public Charter School

[PBrantley@friendshipschools.org](mailto:PBrantley@friendshipschools.org)

- "At Friendship, post-pandemic, we have seen tremendous progress across our 15 schools and thousands of school children. Our family of schools have outpaced peers in returning students to pre-pandemic learning levels and, even, rising above pre-pandemic learning. We are encouraged by the progress being made, though we are not done and, in retrospect, we are not surprised."

### Josh Boots, Executive Director of Empower K12

[jboots@empowerk12.org](mailto:jboots@empowerk12.org)

- "D.C.'s equitable student funding formula provides a critical foundation by directing resources to the students who need them most, regardless of sector. Our education leaders pair that commitment with a shared reliance on data-driven strategies that allow school leaders across sectors to identify what is working and act on it. The academic gains our educators and students have accomplished are a direct result of consistent leadership focused on the right work."