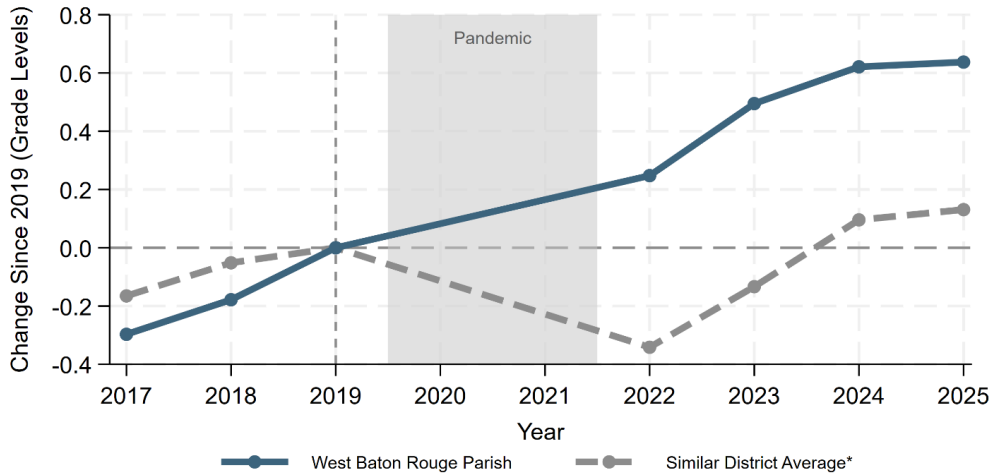
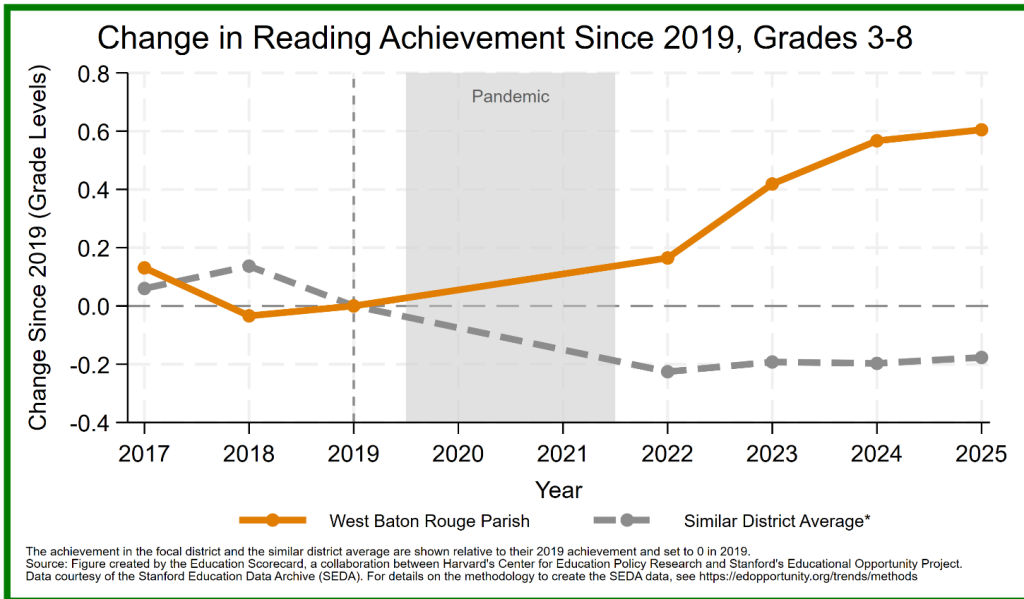


**West Baton Rouge Schools**  
Port Allen, Louisiana

**West Baton Rouge Parish, LA**  
Rising Faster than Similar Districts in Reading  
Change in Math Achievement Since 2019, Grades 3-8



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: St. John the Baptist Parish, St. James Parish, Assumption Parish, Central Community School District, St. Charles Parish



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## **Student Demographics:**

Total student population: 4,165

Economically Disadvantaged: 72.8%%

Three largest racial demographics:

Black/African American: 53.1%

White: 36.3%

Hispanic/Latino: 8%

**Dr. Chandler Smith**, Superintendent

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- “Our success in West Baton Rouge is rooted in our focus on improving and measuring the ‘ABCs’—Attendance, Behavior, and Core Instruction. By tracking these indicators in real-time, we have moved beyond just looking at numbers to performing deep, student-level diagnostics that allow us to pinpoint exactly where challenges lie and fix them before they become permanent gaps.”
- “A major catalyst for our growth was the implementation of a common, high-quality curriculum that ensures every student has access to rigorous, Tier 1 instruction. We recognize the tension between teacher autonomy and district consistency, but we approach this by distinguishing between the ‘what’ and the ‘how’—the district defines the rigorous content, but our teachers bring the art and creativity to the delivery. By providing teachers with the best science-backed materials and common assessments from the start, we free them from the burden of designing every lesson from scratch so they can focus entirely on the internalization and delivery of instruction that helps our students thrive.”

## **Background:**

In the 2024-2025 school year, West Baton Rouge Parish Schools (WBR) earned its highest performance score in its history, ranking in the top 25 school districts in Louisiana for students reaching the highest performance level. Data from the Louisiana Department of Education shows that [80 percent](#) of the district’s schools are improving year over year. This growth is evident across core subjects: K-3 literacy proficiency surged from 57 percent to 68 percent in a single year, while the rate of students reaching the highest performance level in math improved from 31st to 25th statewide. WBR is also among a small number in Louisiana [projected to maintain its B](#) rating under the state’s revised accountability system taking effect in 2025–26.

Since Superintendent Dr. Chandler Smith’s appointment in May 2023, the district has built a tightly aligned instructional system across its 10 schools. The model centers on school-wide plans as the core operating document, supported by a common curriculum, district-developed assessments aligned to state standards, and daily intervention blocks for all students.

## **Strategies for Success:**

### School-level progress monitoring:

- In 2023, the district implemented a unified School-Wide Plan organized around the district’s “ABC” framework: Attendance, Behavior, and Core Instruction.
- The district works with each school to set goals around the framework’s three pillars, which are tracked in real time on a shared platform with the district. Schools track a consistent set of monthly indicators, including attendance rates, behavior referrals by



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type, district common assessment results, participation in various academic interventions, and progress against prior-year baselines.

- Rather than comparing schools to one another, the district measures each school's progress against its own previous performance. This approach accounts for differences in demographics and context across the district while still holding schools accountable for growth.
- All School-Wide Plans embed a three-tier RTI/MTSS structure that is actively monitored. Students move between tiers based on assessment data and other indicators, ensuring the system drives action rather than documentation.
- District leaders conduct quarterly reviews of every school, including classroom visits, discussions of successes and challenges with school leaders, and formal feedback recorded directly into each plan. Schools are expected to translate recommendations into action steps for the following quarter.
- This system also enables the district to identify cross-school trends. For example, when 5th-grade math, 6th-grade math, and Algebra I emerged as common challenges in the district in 2024-25, the district's academic team provided targeted school-level support. By spring, Algebra I performance had improved enough to meet the district's goals, while 5th- and 6th-grade math remained priorities heading into 2025-26.

## Unified district curriculum

- In the fall of 2023, WBR conducted a comprehensive needs assessment with an external partner using ESSER funds. The review included an analysis of curriculum across all schools, staff surveys, and an analysis of student performance by subgroup, grade, and content area. The findings informed the adoption of new high-quality materials that were expected to be utilized consistently across the district.
- The district selected [Wit & Wisdom](#) (Great Minds) for ELA, which was already in use in several of its high-performing schools, and identified phonics and phonemic awareness as critical gaps. To address this, leaders added [Wilson Foundations](#) for K–3, creating a more complete literacy framework.
- WBR implemented the new curriculum over two years. District leaders addressed concerns and challenges through investments in leadership development and a clear distinction between what is taught, which is district-defined, and how it is taught, which remains teacher-driven.
- The district saw particular success among new and incoming teachers, who were able to focus less on deciding what to teach and more on how to deliver instruction effectively.

## Data-driven instruction:

- To enhance diagnostic data throughout the school year, the district built a system of district common assessments (DCAs) aligned to its curriculum. Coaches and teachers adapted publisher assessments to state standards and developed new ones where gaps were identified.
- The district designed assessments to be criterion-based rather than norm-referenced and validated them against prior [LEAP](#) results, targeting 60% to 65% alignment, with most subjects exceeding 85% by the end of Year 1.
- DCA results are tracked in [OnCourse](#) alongside prior [LEAP](#) scores, using combined data to project whether students are on track to meet growth targets and to identify struggling subjects and grade levels in real time.



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- WBR supports implementation through instructional coaches and weekly PLCs, where teachers align curriculum and assessments, while school leaders participate in parallel PLCs to reinforce expectations.
- The district analyzes results by subgroup, grade, and subject, using subgroup performance to direct academic team support and ensure gains are not masking gaps.
- WBR also implements a What I Need (WIN) intervention block for 30 minutes every day at all school levels (called Flex in high school). School leaders use student data to identify students across three tiers, which informs the type of instruction the students receive during the WIN block.

## Attendance as a multi-touch strategy:

- WBR implements a multi-touch family engagement strategy that includes daily texts to the families of children who are absent, additional personal outreach after consecutive absences, and escalating letters at 3, 5, and 11 days.
- Through a partnership with Everyday Labs, WBR sends research-based text messages to parents comparing their student's attendance to school averages, leveraging social norms to shift behavior and build awareness.
- The district frames attendance outreach as a learning conversation rather than a compliance measure, using consistent communication to build family understanding of attendance's academic impact.
- Schools track monthly attendance against prior-year baselines within their School-Wide Plan, using color-coded indicators and self-comparison to drive accountability. Schools also track chronic absenteeism at the student level within each plan, monitoring interventions case by case and connecting attendance directly to academic supports.