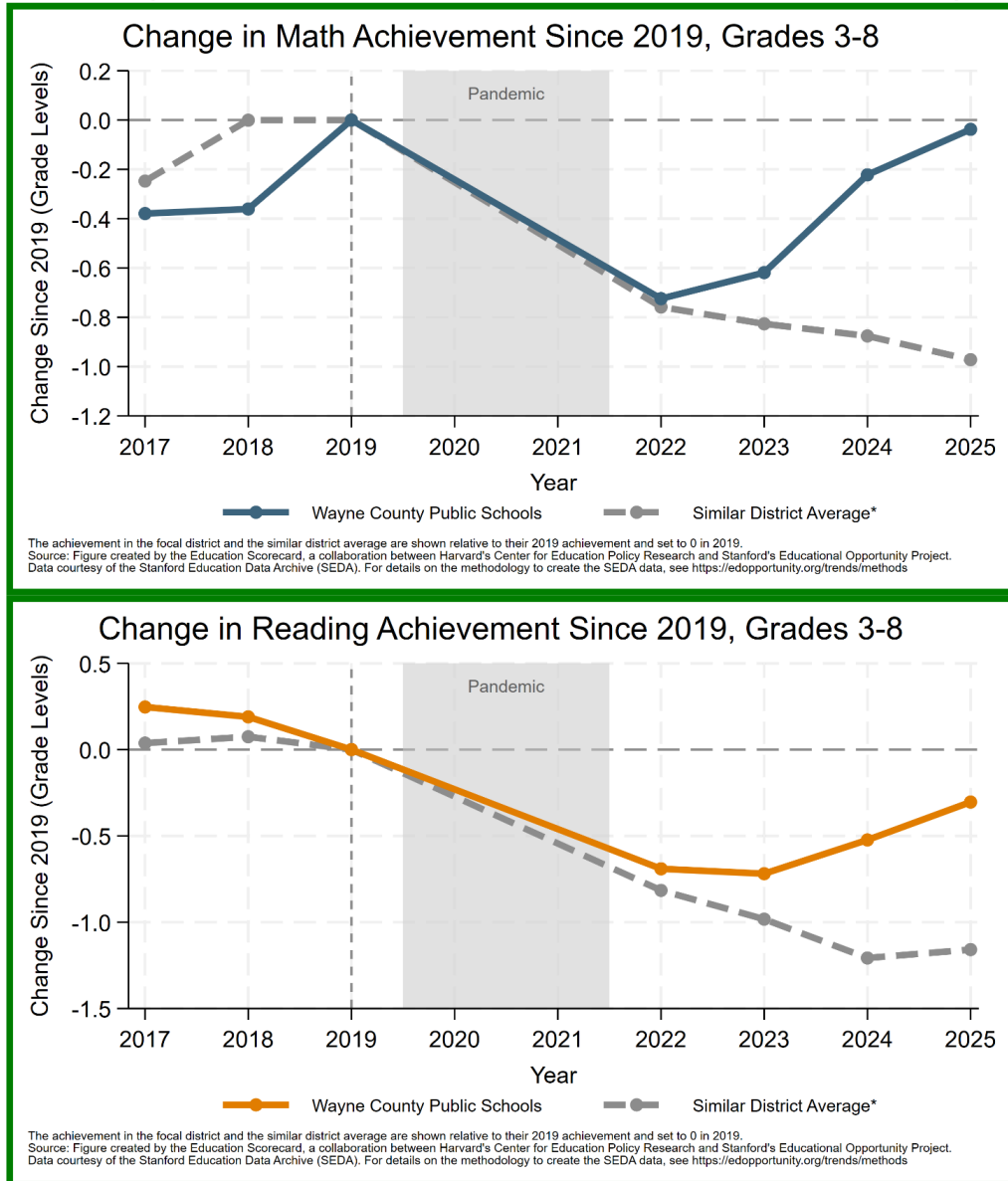


**Wayne County Public Schools**

Goldsboro, North Carolina

**Wayne County Public Schools, NC**

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



\*Similar Districts: Duplin County Schools, Beaufort County Schools, Columbus County Schools, Sampson County Schools, Greene County Schools

## **Student Demographics:**

Total students: 16,720

Economically Disadvantaged: 59.36%

English Learners: 25%

Three largest racial demographics:

Black/African American: 34.5%

Hispanic/Latino 30.5%

White: 28.6%

## **Marc Whichard, Superintendent**

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“WCPS is a District on the move. We lead with intentionality and are serious about educational outcomes for our students. While we are proud of our achievements, we expect to continue to move the needle. Parents have choices about where to send their students to school. We intend for WCPS to be the system of choice.”

### **Background:**

Wayne County Public Schools (WCPS) operates 33 traditional public schools serving students in grades K-12 in Goldsboro, North Carolina, approximately 50 miles southeast of Raleigh.

Established 149 years ago, the district has grown to employ approximately 3,000 staff members, making it the second largest employer in Wayne County.

In the spring of 2023, WCPS was identified by the state as a low-performing school district, with more than 50% of its schools below state expectations. Dr. Marc Whichard, a North Carolina superintendent with turnaround experience, was hired that year and began as superintendent on July 1, 2023. WCPS exited low-performing district status in his first year. By the end of his third year, the district had climbed from 91st of 115 North Carolina districts to 61st, posted the highest-growth high school and highest-growth middle school in the state simultaneously, and saw Eastern Wayne Middle School move from an F to a C in a single year.

The district achieved these gains while operating on a 2023-24 fiscal year state budget, with North Carolina per-pupil funding ranked among the lowest in the nation and teacher pay the lowest in the Southeast. District leaders project a continued climb into the low 40s for the 2025-26 results, more than 50 positions higher than three years ago.

### **Strategies for Success**

#### **Leadership and Accountability for Student Growth**

- Superintendent Whichard established “non-negotiables” for all schools, with clear accountability at every level for moving student outcomes forward.
- Senior district leaders meet monthly with principals of low-performing schools to report on what they are doing to move student learning forward.
- The district operates on the principle that inspection must follow expectation. Clear expectations are paired with accountability for results.

- Superintendent Whichard visits one to two schools per day without advance notice, sitting in the back of classrooms to observe instruction and student response firsthand.
- The district requires bell-to-bell instruction, mandating that field trips, assemblies, and any time out of class must be aligned to the [North Carolina Standard Course of Study](#) and intentional about advancing learning.
- The district employs a team of veteran coaches who teach teachers how to break down state standards and translate them into classroom instruction. These coaches also provide direct support to targeted schools, training site-based coaches to expand instructional capacity across the district.
- District-funded high-dosage tutoring is delivered during the school day by retired teachers with strong prior records in [North Carolina's EVAAS](#) system. Tutoring is structured as "core plus" instruction that supplements rather than replaces reading and math, and holding it during school hours saves transportation costs and ensures equal access for students who cannot stay after school.

#### Data Driven Instruction in Practice

- The district trains teachers and principals to use benchmark assessments, common formative assessments (CFAs), and the EVAAS system, which tracks growth projections for individual students based on prior achievement, to identify at-risk students in real time and reteach where students show gaps in proficiency.
- District leaders ensure the North Carolina Standard Course of Study is implemented with integrity, so the implemented curriculum matches the intended curriculum and the attained curriculum follows.
- District-built common formative assessments in reading and math are administered at least monthly, with bi-weekly assessments in some units, all aligned to the North Carolina Standard Course of Study.

#### Discipline as the Foundation for Learning

- The district views discipline as the foundation upon which a school is built, ensuring an environment conducive to teaching and learning.
- The district holds principals accountable for maintaining orderly schools and consistently supports principals in backing their teachers.
- The district enforces consistent, uniform discipline guidelines that have been shared with families and communities, demonstrating a serious commitment to student education and respectful behavior.