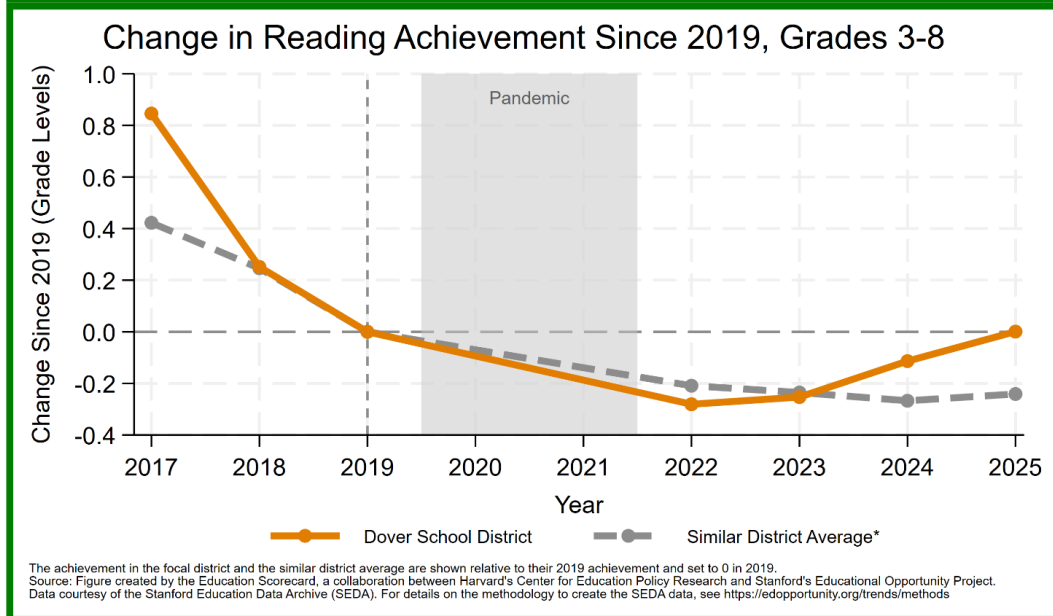
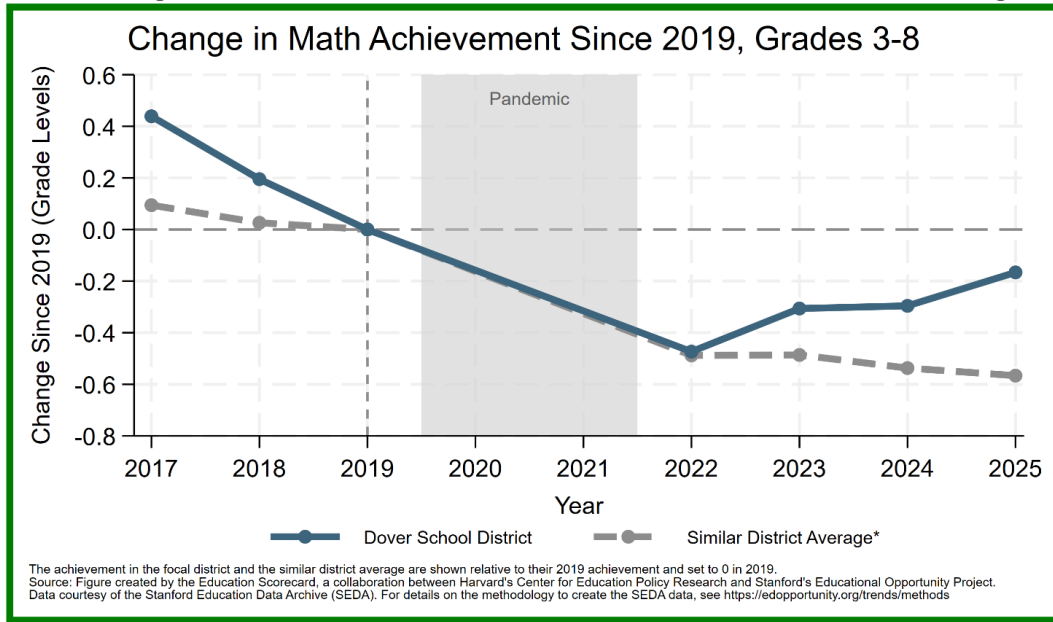


Dover School District
Dover, New Hampshire

Dover School District, NH

Rising Faster than Similar Districts in Math & Reading



*Similar Districts: Portsmouth School District, Hudson School District, Salem School District, Rochester School District, Derry Cooperative School District

Student Demographics:

Total student population: 3,644

Economically Disadvantaged: 26.59%

Three largest racial demographics:

White: 80%

Two or more races: 7.5%

Asian or Asian Pacific Islander: 5.8%

Dr. Christine Boston, Superintendent

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“In Dover, our focus has been on building lasting systems that support both students and educators, not just responding to a moment in time. By investing in collaborative professional learning, strong instructional practices, and a comprehensive MTSS framework, we’ve created conditions where data drives decisions and every student receives the support they need to succeed. Just as importantly, we’ve been intentional about sustaining this work—aligning resources, planning for the future, and ensuring that what we built during a period of federal investment continues to benefit our students for years to come.”

Background

Dover School District has focused on building sustainable systems that support continuous improvement across schools. Under the leadership of Superintendent Dr. Christine Boston, the district implemented a districtwide strategy centered on collaborative professional learning communities (PLCs), a strong Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS), evidence-based curriculum adoption, and data-informed instruction. District leaders emphasized long-term planning and sustainability, using federal relief dollars to build systems they had already identified as priorities before the pandemic.

District leaders describe their approach as intentional and highly collaborative, with teachers, administrators, and intervention teams working together to monitor student progress and respond quickly to student needs. Dover also streamlined its strategic plan into a concise, community-facing document that is regularly reported to the school board and families to maintain transparency and accountability.

Strategies for Success:

Professional Learning Communities and Collaborative Instruction

- Dover implemented professional learning communities (PLCs) at every level across the district, creating consistent structures for teachers to collaborate around student data, instructional practices, and shared accountability.
- Teachers regularly analyze assessment data, discuss student progress, and set grade-level SMART goals in math and reading tied to benchmark targets.
- District leaders noted that these collaborative structures allowed educators to engage in ongoing analysis and conversations about instruction in ways that had not previously existed districtwide.

Building a Strong MTSS Framework

- Dover used ESSER funding to expand and strengthen its Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS), investing in systems the district had already identified through pre-pandemic capacity assessments.
- The district invested heavily in professional development tied to MTSS implementation, including training for K-12 administrators, principals, special education staff, and teacher leaders.
- Guided coalition teams and grade-level teacher leaders helped support implementation and build ownership of the work across schools.
- At the elementary level, intervention teams composed of general education and special education staff provide evidence-based reading and math interventions for students needing Tier 2 and Tier 3 support.
- As federal ESSER funding expires, Dover has prioritized sustaining key academic supports by incorporating positions such as the MTSS director into the local district budget.
- The district also established reserve funding strategies to gradually cover curriculum and MTSS-related costs over time, helping smooth future budget impacts and maintain continuity of services.

Evidence-Based Curriculum and Early Literacy Investments

- Dover revamped its curriculum adoption process to ensure instructional materials were evidence-based and aligned to state standards and research-backed practices.
- The district replaced outdated instructional materials and adopted new curricula across elementary and middle school English language arts, science, and social studies.
- In literacy instruction, the district shifted toward knowledge-building approaches focused on early literacy, integrated screening and progress monitoring, and science-based reading practices.
- District leaders reported that these curriculum changes contributed to increased teacher confidence and instructional effectiveness.

Data-Informed Decision Making

- Dover created districtwide data dashboards that allow educators to monitor student performance down to the individual student level using district assessments and benchmark data.
- District leaders use a systems-level approach to reviewing data and supporting schools, helping identify areas where additional interventions or instructional supports may be needed.
- Teachers and school leaders regularly use assessment results to guide instruction, intervention planning, and goal-setting efforts throughout the year.