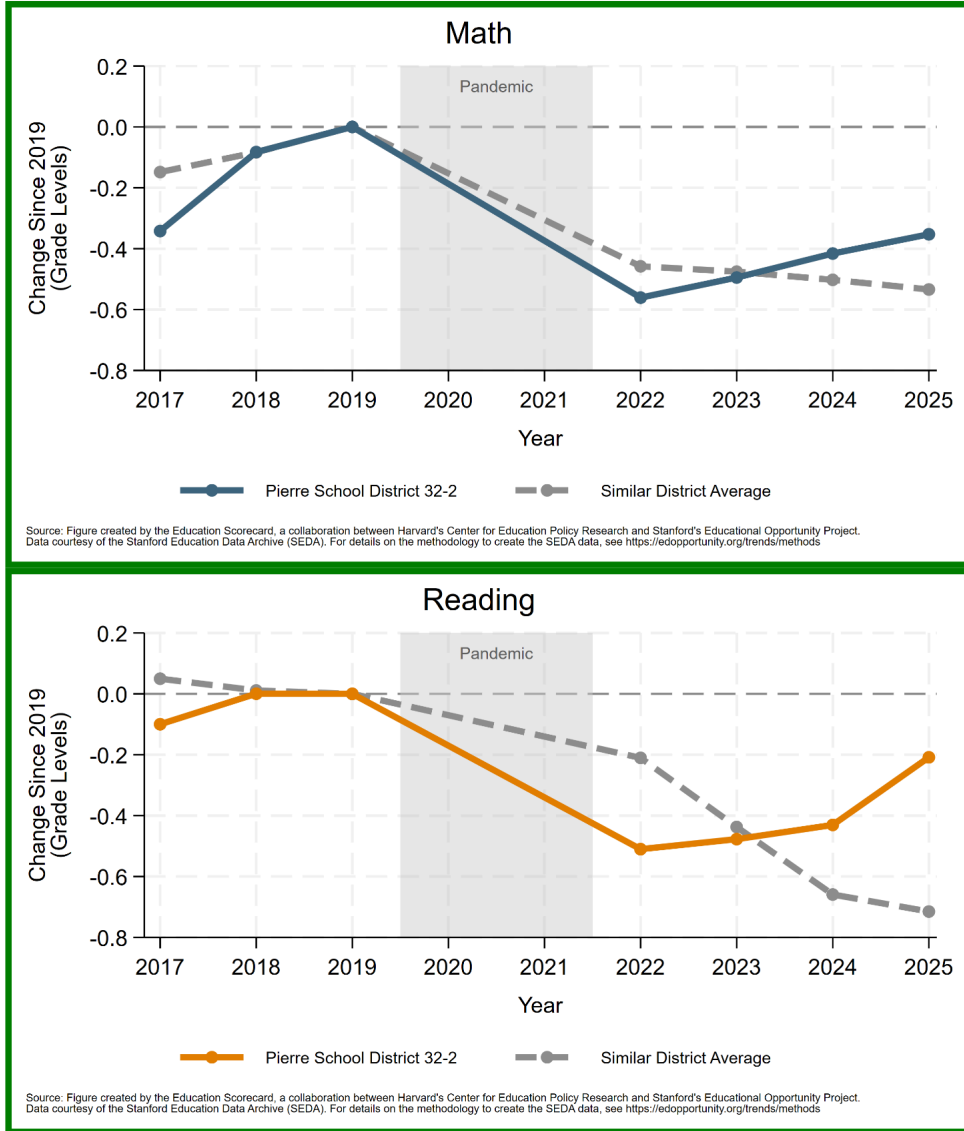


Pierre School District

Pierre, SD

Pierre School District 32-2, SD

Rising Faster than Similar Districts in Math & Reading



Similar Districts: Douglas School District 51-1, Yankton School District 63-3, Mitchell School District 17-2, Watertown School District 14-4, Aberdeen School District 06-1

Student Demographics:

Total student population: 2,680

Economically Disadvantaged: 31%

Three largest racial demographics:

White: 67%

American Indian and Alaska Native: 28%

Two or more races: 5%

Dr. Kelly Glodt, Superintendent

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“We are incredibly proud of our school board, administrative team, teachers, and support staff for their accomplishments. Our student achievement results reflect a shared commitment to continuous improvement and a belief that every student can learn and succeed at high levels. Our staff has embraced a growth mindset and remained dedicated to the Professional Learning Communities process, using collaboration and data to continually strengthen instruction and improve outcomes for students. Most importantly, this recognition is a reflection of a team that genuinely cares for kids, believes in their potential, and works every day to provide the high-quality education every student deserves.”

Troy Wiebe, Director of Education

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- “It can be hard for the public to get excited about small data wins, but through staffing changes, curriculum changes, state standards changes, etc, if we can continue to see small, positive growth, I believe it shows our staff is doing something correct and positive gains are worth celebrating. Data points like this help validate our processes as well as all of the building-level staff.”

Background:

Like districts across the country, Pierre School District saw declines in student performance during the pandemic. Under the leadership of Dr. Kelly Glodt, who has served as superintendent since 2007, and Director of Education Troy Wiebe, the district has driven a steady recovery through an intentional strategy that braided together deep buy-in to the Professional Learning Community (PLC) model, an early transition to the science of reading, and a relentless focus on small-group intervention at the elementary level. Pierre's approach is grounded in a long-term school improvement philosophy of small, continuous improvements over time.

Strategies for Success

Embedding the Professional Learning Community process

- Six to seven years ago, the district moved from “PLC light” to a fully embedded PLC process across every building, with all schools using the model rather than a single pilot building.
- Under district leadership, principals engage in ongoing structured data analysis cycles grounded in the four essential PLC questions, with a districtwide emphasis on ensuring timely and effective responses when students struggle.

- Districtwide, staff systematically triangulate multiple data sources, including the South Dakota state assessment, NWEA MAP, Acadience, and IXL, to drive instructional decisions, align supports, and match students with appropriate interventions.
- This coordinated approach allows students to move fluidly between intervention groups throughout the year, supported by continuous monitoring, regular progress review, and district-aligned adjustment embedded within the school improvement process.

Transitioning to the Science of Reading

- The district led a multi-year transition from a balanced literacy curriculum to a [science of reading](#) approach, establishing a consistent, research-based framework for literacy instruction across all schools.
- The district invested in systemwide professional learning to ensure all K–8 educators share a common language, instructional practices, and expectations grounded in the science of reading.
- The district prioritized early and targeted intervention by training staff in Orton-Gillingham, Heggerty, and Barton to support students with the greatest reading needs.
- The district adopted [Open Court Reading](#) (K-5, McGraw-Hill) and [Amplify](#) (6-8) in fall 2025 to implement aligned science of reading-based core curricula.

Building Intervention into the School Day

- The district sets expectations for elementary master schedules to include protected common planning time and a dedicated daily intervention block in every elementary school.
- The district implements an elementary intervention model that deploys all available staff—including trained aides and tutors—to deliver targeted small-group instruction aligned to teacher-identified skill needs.
- The district directs Title I resources at [Buchanan, Jefferson, and Kennedy elementary schools](#) to provide structured, research-based interventions with clear pathways for students to transition to more independent reading as they progress.
- Reading and math blocks include embedded intervention time, ensuring teachers can respond in real time to student needs identified through NWEA, Acadience, and IXL data.

Targeted use of ESSER Funds

- The district allocated ESSER resources to implement attendance supports, including hiring attendance specialists to conduct ongoing, check-and-connect-style outreach with families of chronically absent students.
- The district strategically used [ESSER](#) funds to hire short-term interventionists to accelerate learning for students not meeting grade-level standards, with clear plans for the positions to sunset alongside the funding.
- The district maintained a disciplined fiscal approach by avoiding long-term staffing commitments tied to temporary federal funding, instead targeting ESSER investments to

defined needs while sustaining improvement through established systems and processes.