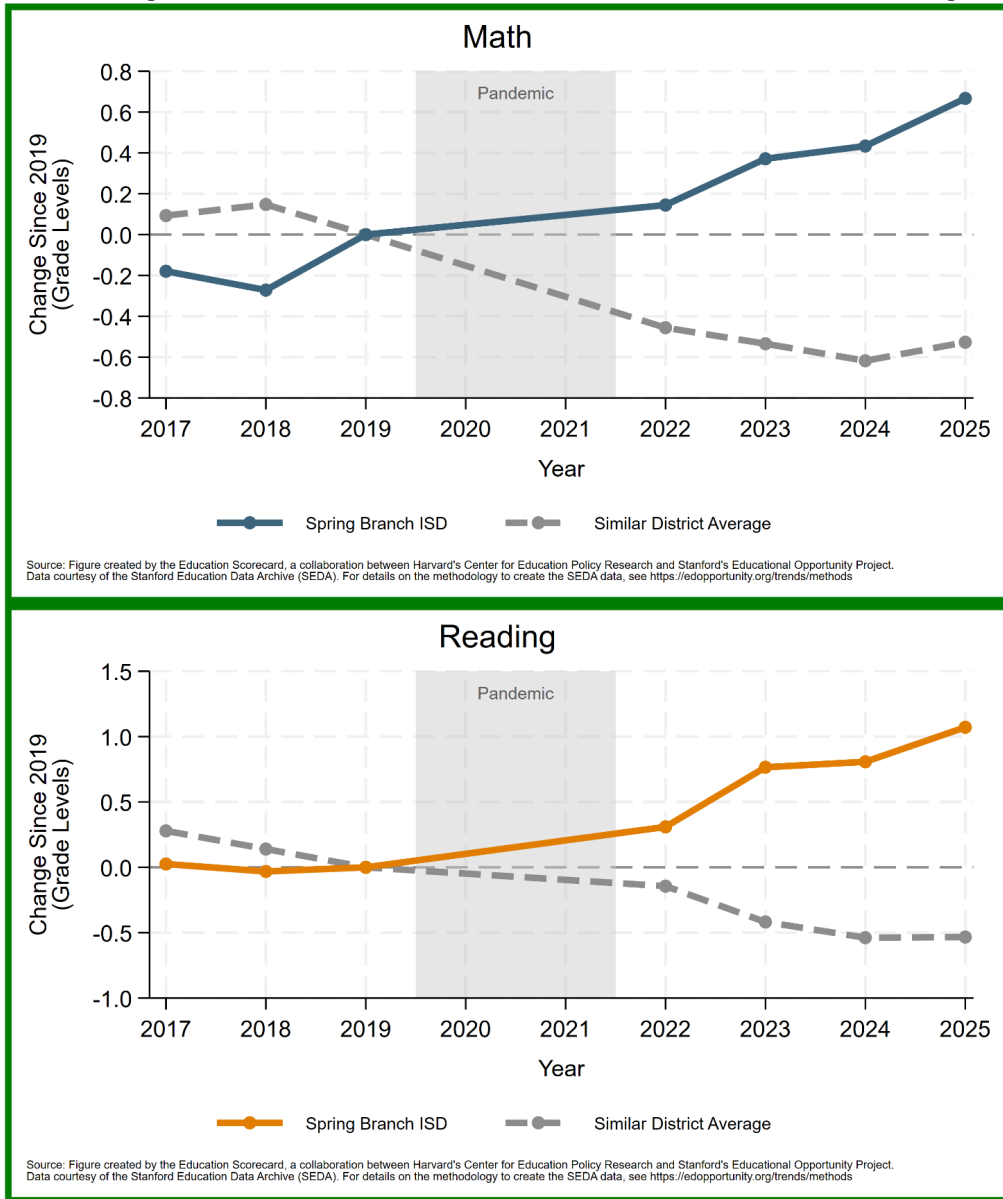


Spring Branch Independent School District
Houston, Texas

Spring Branch ISD, TX
Rising Faster than Similar Districts in Math & Reading



Similar Districts: North East ISD, Victoria ISD, Midland ISD, Eagle Mt-Saginaw ISD, Sherman ISD



Student Demographics:

Total student population: 32,668
Economically disadvantaged: 55%
Emergent bilingual students: 37%

Three largest racial demographics:

Hispanic: 56%

White: 29%

Asian: 7%

Dr. Jennifer Blaine, Superintendent

Linda Buchman, Associate Superintendent, Communications and Community Engagement,
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- “Our T-2-4 vision is more than a graduation goal; it is a promise that every student who walks through our doors will be academically prepared for the complexities of a technical certificate, military service, or a college degree. By defining clear literacy and numeracy milestones, we ensure that rigor is embedded in the student experience from the very beginning.”
- “We believe that foundational literacy is a community-wide responsibility, which is why we’ve bridged the gap between our classrooms and our neighborhoods through initiatives like the Reading Buddies Program. This intentional focus on the early years allows us to use sophisticated data to catch gaps before they widen, ensuring every child is on a trajectory toward success.”

Background:

Spring Branch Independent School District (SBISD) serves a large, diverse student population in Houston. Under the direction of Superintendent Dr. Jennifer Blaine, the district maintains a rigorous focus on literacy, numeracy, and holistic student supports beginning in the earliest grades. These efforts are anchored in the district’s T-2-4 vision, which aims to prepare all students to attain a technical certificate, military training, or a two- or four-year degree. To reach this goal, SBISD leverages sophisticated data analysis and high-impact community partnerships to ensure all students meet essential academic milestones.

Strategies for Success:

Data-driven instruction and decision-making:

- [T-2-4](#) is SBISD’s vision for all graduates to attain a technical certificate, military training, or a two-year or four-year degree. There are six [core characteristics](#) of a T-2-4 Ready Graduate, each of which are measured through defined milestones for fifth, eighth, and twelfth grades.
- The first of the six core characteristics is that students are academically prepared, which includes the goal that every student develops strong literacy, numeracy, scientific, technology, and reasoning skills. Milestones for this goal include mastery of specific literacy and numeracy skills such as using “number sense and reasonableness to solve



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problems” in fifth grade and applying “number sense, reasonableness, and approximation to determine solutions” by eighth grade.

- District-developed Priority Standard Assessments (PSAs) track student progress in math, ELA, science, and social studies. These short assessments are aligned to the classroom curriculum and are designed to measure students’ mastery of grade-level standards. Teacher teams and principals conduct regular data conversations to analyze PSA data and inform instructional decisions.
- Teachers are provided with exemplary work for every assignment they give to students to help with delivering high-quality feedback.
- All pre-kindergarten classrooms emphasize early literacy and numeracy through purposeful play, oral language development, storytelling, dramatization, and engaging, project-based learning experiences that foster critical thinking and problem-solving skills. Every nine weeks, students receive a report card that reflects their progress in mastering essential skills, as measured by detailed rubrics. The [“Welcome to Pre-K”](#) video highlights the program’s foundation for early learning.

Advancing literacy through community and classroom support:

- SBISD launched the [ReadSBISD Reading Buddies Program](#) in fall 2019 to increase second graders’ literacy levels through one-to-one tutoring. Through this program, volunteer Reading Buddies meet with the same student for 30 minutes a week for the duration of the school year.
- The district partners with local churches and community spaces to recruit volunteers, many of whom are part of the area’s large 65+ community. Volunteers receive training grounded in evidence-based reading instruction developed by the district’s ELA and communications teams.
- Since 2019, 641 students and 340 volunteers have participated in the program. Over 60% of volunteers have served as a Ready Buddy for at least two years.
- According to SBISD, 88% of the students in the Reading Buddies program showed an increase in oral reading fluency from the beginning of the year to the end of the year.
- SBISD used a portion of its ESSER funding to heavily invest in early literacy. In the 2021-2022 school year, every kindergarten classroom (a total of 71) was staffed with a paraprofessional trained in evidence-based instruction and data interpretation. Unlike traditional models, these paraprofessionals helped the teacher deliver instruction to the entire class rather than being assigned to specific students.
- SBISD reports that pre-kindergarten and kindergarten paraprofessionals helped reduce behavior districts and ensured that kindergarten students continued to outperform state and regional data on kindergarten readiness (over 10% higher than the state and regional averages in 2021-2022).

Strengthening foundational numeracy:

- The [SBISD Counts! Math Parent Guide](#) equips families of students in grades pre-K4 to second grade with information about the district’s approach to numeracy instruction and



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tips and strategies to help families support their students at home. Every student in the early grades receives a printed copy in English or Spanish to take home.

- Data-driven math instruction begins in pre-kindergarten. Students are given short assessments of learning in the beginning, middle, and end of the school year developed by campus teams to measure student progress.