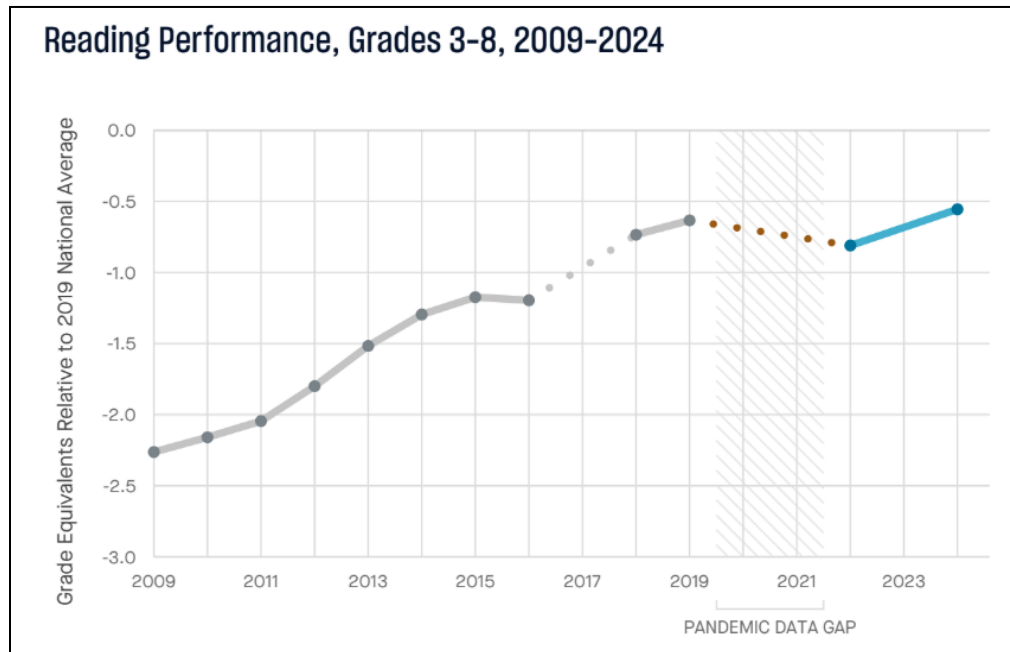


EDUCATION RECOVERY SCORECARD

District of Columbia Public Schools
Washington, District of Columbia



Student Demographics:

Total student population: 51,293

Black/African American: 55%

Hispanic/Latino: 22%

White: 17%

Students identified as at-risk*: 45%

ELL students: 16%

*According to DCPS, students who are at-risk are those who qualify for Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), have been identified as homeless during the academic year, who are under the care of the Child and Family Services Agency (CFSA or Foster Care), and who are high school students at least one year older than the expected age for their grade.

Dr. Antoinette S. Mitchell, Interim State Superintendent of Education

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- “It is our priority that every student in the District of Columbia has access to high-quality literacy instruction. Through strategic investments in high-impact tutoring and teacher training, we are providing all educators with the tools and resources needed to support students.”

Dr. Christina Grant, Former State Superintendent of Education (through June 2024)

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- “Prioritizing foundational literacy skills by investing in research-backed strategies and materials was pivotal in boosting our students’ reading scores. Our results demonstrate what is possible when we provide students with the resources they need to achieve positive outcomes.”

[Dr. Lewis D. Ferebee](#), Chancellor of District of Columbia Public Schools

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- ““Pandemic recovery is a top priority for DC Public Schools (DCPS), and the Education Recovery Scorecard is a critical resource for monitoring progress. The Scorecard highlights the success of Mayor Bowser’s investments in public education—including nearly \$40 million dedicated to high-impact tutoring, expanded literacy programs such as the DC Reading Clinic, and other initiatives designed to drive outcomes for students. I look forward to continuing the collaboration with OSSE and all our partners across the nation’s capital in our learning acceleration efforts.”

Background:

In the early 2000s, the District of Columbia Public Schools was in a [dire situation](#): half of its schools were failing despite its high per-pupil spending, there were not enough teachers to fill classrooms, and the district rotated through six different superintendents from 1997 to 2007. In 2002, the National Assessment of Educational Progress [reported](#) that only 10% of DCPS fourth-graders were proficient in reading. In 2007, the District of Columbia implemented significant educational reforms by granting the [mayor direct control over the traditional public schools](#), a move aimed at providing more centralized decision-making and accountability to improve the system’s performance. Since then, the district has increased student achievement for students in literacy through key investments such as evidence-based training for teachers and high-impact tutoring for students.

Like all states, DC has a department of education called the Office of the State Superintendent of Education (OSSE). OSSE oversees large initiatives and funding that supports the District of Columbia Public Schools (DCPS) and the public charter school networks operating in DC. Because of the small size of the District of Columbia, both OSSE and DCPS have been able to implement focused efforts to boost student literacy.

Strategies for Success:

Teacher training and supports:

- OSSE [invested](#) over \$3 million in ESSER funds and \$16 million in grant funds to expand access to evidence-based literacy training for teachers, including the LETRS program (Language Essential for Teachers of Reading and Spelling).
- As of the [2023 OSSE Annual Report](#), more than 350 teachers had completed science of reading training so far, and another 300 had registered for such training. Teachers who participated in the training received a \$1,000 stipend.
- OSSE also hired dedicated literacy systems specialists in schools to support local districts with planning and professional learning related to literacy.
- In 2023, OSSE released the recommendations of its Early Literacy Task Force, which suggested requiring structured literacy training for teachers and administrations, providing more supports to teachers, and recommending high-quality ELA curriculum based in the science of reading.
- DCPS operates the [DC Reading Clinic](#), a program that offers in- and out-of-school professional development and coaching to educators to implement structured literacy

instruction. The program offers resources for educators as well as resources for families to support literacy at home.

- DCPS' performance evaluation system, IMPACT, provides frequent and meaningful feedback while celebrating teachers for high effectiveness with bonuses and ensuring teachers have the support they need to succeed. The district has a 94% retention rate for teachers who have earned "Effective" and "Highly Effective" evaluations.

Tailored literacy curriculum:

- The DCPS Elementary Literacy team has built its own curriculum. Grades K-5 each have a year-long curriculum of detailed learning plans including text lists, text-dependent questions, task suggestions, Cornerstone experiential learning opportunities (experiences deemed to be rigorous and developed by DCPS teachers), and writing practice. Each summer, teachers spent time enhancing pieces of the curriculum.
- Students in kindergarten through second grade use a decodable book series called the [DCPS Readers Next Door series](#) to practice certain sound-letter patterns taught as part of phonics. The series builds early literacy skills, content knowledge, and language comprehension through inclusive content that represents the unique backgrounds, identities, and locales that represent DC. The series includes more than 100 books and is written and illustrated by DCPS educators.
- DCPS emphasizes using a [multi-tiered system of support](#) to bolster literacy outcomes. MTSS ensures that students struggling with literacy receive targeted interventions, while advanced learners are challenged appropriately.

High-impact tutoring:

- In 2023, OSSE offered high-impact literacy tutoring to [7,600 students](#).
- OSSE's [multi-year investment](#) of almost \$40 million into high-impact tutoring aimed to accelerate learning and provide services to more than 8,000 students in the 2022-23 and 2023-24 school years.
- DCPS has adopted the science of reading high-impact tutoring, a research-based approach to literacy instruction that prioritizes phonics, vocabulary development, reading fluency, and comprehension for 7,600 students.
- A 2024 [Stanford study](#) found that DC students who received the required high-impact tutoring dosage level were more likely to attend school and had greater academic growth than similar students.

DC's Unique Charter School Landscape:

This case study primarily focuses on the results and initiatives of DCPS, the traditional public school district in DC. Notably, DC's education landscape is uniquely composed, with nearly a 50/50 split between [DCPS](#) and [charter](#) schools. Although the Education Recovery Scorecard does not report on outcomes for public charter networks in DC, OSSE's investments outlined above also support charter districts throughout the district, and existing research shows promising results for DC public charters.

Patricia A. Brantley, CEO of Friendship Public Charter School

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- "At Friendship, post-pandemic, we have seen tremendous progress across our 15 schools and thousands of school children. Our family of schools have outpaced peers in returning students to pre-pandemic learning levels and, even, rising above pre-pandemic learning. We are encouraged by the progress being made, though we are not done and, in retrospect, we are not surprised."