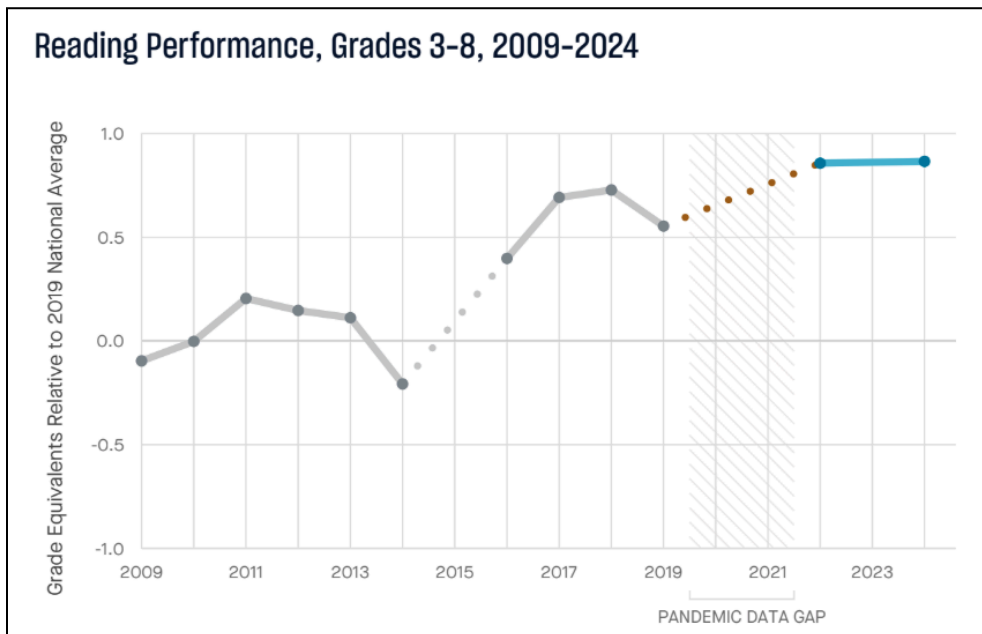
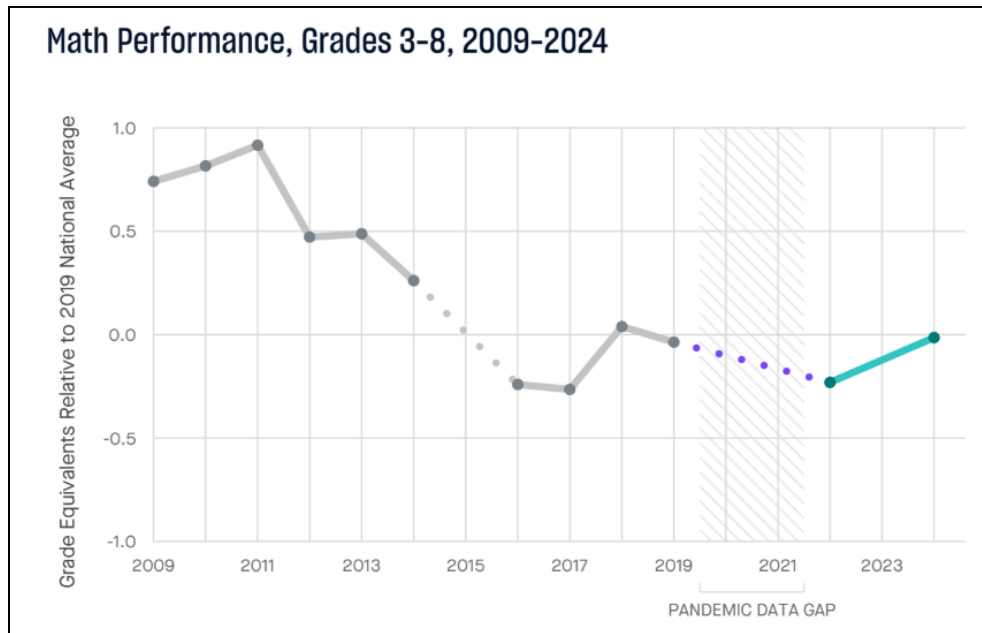


# EDUCATION RECOVERY SCORECARD

**Union City Public Schools**  
Union City, New Jersey



## Student Demographics:

Total student population: 12,907

Hispanic/Latino: 95%

White: 2%

Black/African American: 1%  
Economically disadvantaged: 84%  
English learners: 35%  
Foreign-born students: 55%, [according to the 2020 census](#)

### **Silvia Abbato, Superintendent**

#### **Background:**

In 1989, Union City School District was on the [brink of a state takeover](#) and given a one-year reprieve from the state. Students from low-income, minority, and immigrant backgrounds struggled academically, graduation rates were low, and the district faced instability among leadership. In the more than three decades since, the district implemented a strategic approach to improve student outcomes, focusing on evidence-based practices, teacher efficacy, and family engagement. Today, despite [ranking third in the state](#) for students with high needs, Union City boasts significant student growth in ELA and math proficiency and a graduation rate of over 90%.

#### **Strategies for Success:**

##### High-impact tutoring:

- In 2022, New Jersey awarded thousands of dollars to districts to implement high-impact tutoring programs to address learning loss. Rather than contract with a virtual tutoring company, Superintendent Abbato decided to use the \$614,000 state grant to employ Union City's own teachers as in-person tutors, understanding that teachers who know the students' strengths and weaknesses can create meaningful impact.
- Union City teachers tutored students in small groups during the lunch period or after school and were compensated for the extra instruction time. The number of participating teachers varied by school.

##### Investments in early childhood education:

- Unique to Union City is that since the late 1990s, the district has provided an early childhood curriculum to private early childhood learning centers to implement.
- According to Superintendent Abbato, the first cohort of fourth graders who participated in the high-quality early learning program [saw dramatic improvements](#) on the state assessment.
- Union City students [spend more time](#) on instruction than other students in the state.

##### Strong school and district leadership:

- Staff from the district office are [assigned](#) to specific schools and sometimes specific grade levels, which allows them to have greater insight and involvement in decisionmaking.
- District leadership provides targeted support for struggling schools, conducting frequent site visits and training new educators on district practices and collaborating on roadmaps for success.

##### Differentiated learning and targeted support for student needs:

- With nearly [75% of students](#) speaking Spanish at home, the district identified a need for additional support from staff even after students exit ESL status. To fill this need, Union City pays for select teachers to receive ESL certification. The district also offers an [extra ESL class period](#) to students and additional opportunities for native language instruction.