



2024-25

State of D.C. Schools

» *Forward momentum*

In school year 2024-25, D.C.'s public schools showed clear signs of system strength and stabilization, beyond pandemic recovery. Enrollment continued to grow, educator retention increased again, and students posted their largest gains in learning outcomes since before the COVID-19 pandemic.

At the same time, challenges remained. Chronic absenteeism stayed stubbornly high, college and career readiness indicators were mixed, and emerging federal and economic shifts—ranging from increased immigration enforcement to funding uncertainty to labor market softness—introduced new pressures for schools and families.

This year's State of D.C. Schools report puts these trends in the context of community perspectives. With comparisons to national and regional outcomes, the report assesses where the system is gaining ground and where targeted action is still needed.

Read the full report at dcpolicycenter.org.

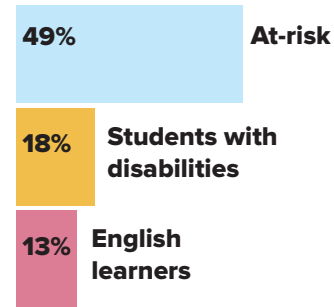
Who D.C.'s public schools serve

Student demographics were largely consistent with the previous school year. Of students in D.C.'s public schools, 55% attend a DCPS school, and 45% attend a public charter school.

RACE & ETHNICITY



SPECIAL POPULATIONS



A system showing strength

D.C.'s public schools showed evidence of growing enrollment and improved teacher retention in school year 2024-25.

GROWING ENROLLMENT

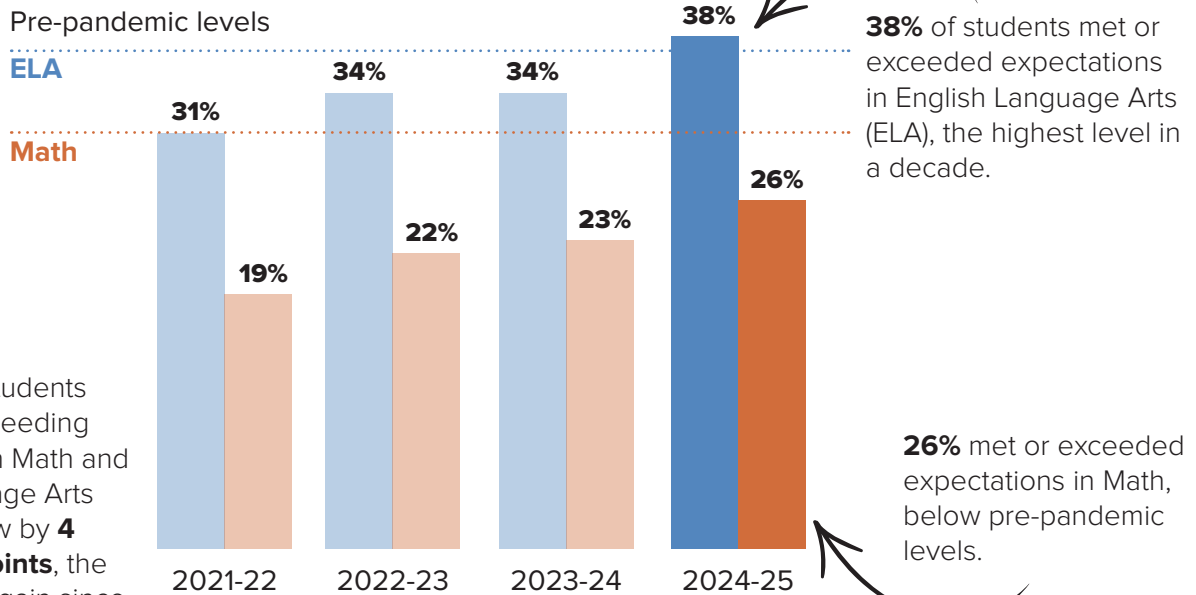
- ↳ Enrollment increased for the third consecutive year, rising 1% to reach **91,337** students in PK-12 grades.
- ↳ Growth was driven by middle and high school grades, which increased by **2%**, in contrast to national and regional decreases.

IMPROVING EDUCATOR RETENTION

- ↳ **76%** of teachers remained in the same role at the same school, up **2 percentage points** from the prior year.
- ↳ An additional **8%** moved to a different school, bringing overall retention to **84%**.

Moving beyond academic recovery

Academic gains in D.C. were broadly shared across wards and student groups.



The share of students meeting or exceeding expectations in Math and English Language Arts (ELA) both grew by **4 percentage points**, the largest annual gain since the pandemic.

38% of students met or exceeded expectations in English Language Arts (ELA), the highest level in a decade.

26% met or exceeded expectations in Math, below pre-pandemic levels.

Persistent engagement challenges

40% of students were chronically absent, unchanged from the previous school year.



6% of students received a suspension, the same as the previous year, with disproportionately higher rates for **Black students, students with disabilities, and economically disadvantaged students.**

For the first time, the **DC SAYS** survey set citywide sentiment baselines on school climate, creating a foundation for tracking changes over time.

Mixed success in college and career readiness

Four-year graduation rates rose to **79%**, the highest in more than a decade.

Postsecondary enrollment declined by **1 percentage point** to **55%** for the graduating class of 2023-24.

The percentage of students meeting the SAT college readiness benchmark decreased to **16%**, even as statewide assessment results improved.

Moving forward

School year 2024-25 marked a turning point, with historic gains in learning outcomes, rising graduation rates, growing enrollment, and improved educator stability. Yet chronic absenteeism, uneven college and career readiness, and mounting economic and federal uncertainty underscore that progress is neither uniform nor guaranteed. Sustaining forward momentum will require focused attention on student engagement, transitions beyond high school, and the broader conditions shaping family and school stability.