

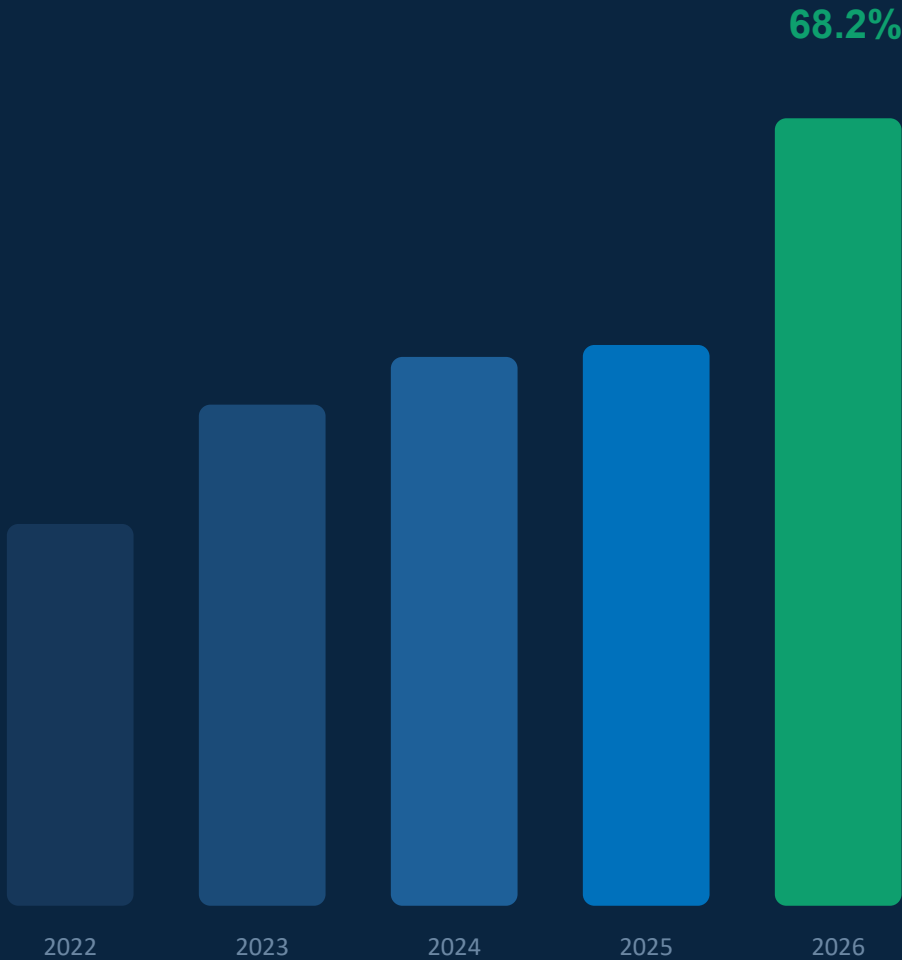


2026 TESTING & ACCOUNTABILITY RESULTS

A breakthrough year

Proficiency, graduation, academic growth and school grades all moved forward in the same year.

Board of Education – 9/15/2026 | Data, Research & Accountability Department



Overall proficiency, 2022–2026



THE HEADLINE

2026 in four numbers

91.3%

+0.6 pts

Four-year graduation rate

12,571 of 13,763 students in the Fall
2022 9th grade cohort

68.2%

+3.8 pts

Overall proficiency

Above the pre-pandemic baseline for
the first time

17

-43%

**Schools designated low-
performing**

Down from 30 last year; fewest since
2016

0

was 2

Schools graded F

Lowest since 2014

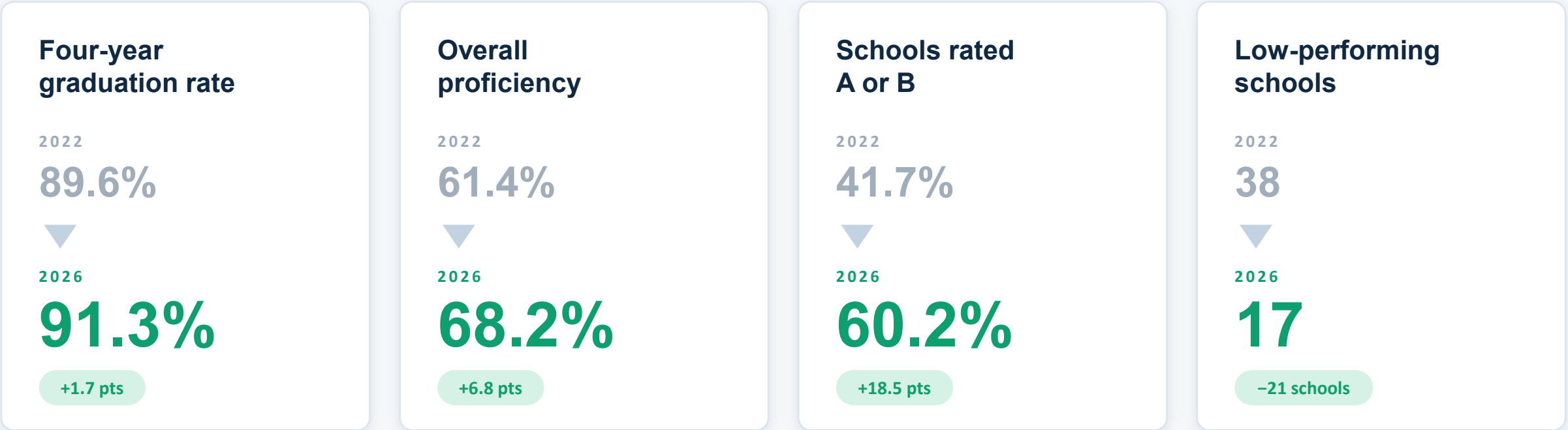
Four measures. One year. All moving in the right direction.



THE TURNAROUND

Four years of steady, compounding progress

Every major accountability measure has moved in the right direction since 2022.



The through-line: Wake County is out of pandemic recovery and into sustained improvement — on all four measures at once.

2022 is the first post-pandemic accountability year. “Schools rated A or B” combines the A and B shares of School Performance Grades.



01 GRADUATION

More students finishing on time

- The four-year cohort rate and the five-year rate
- Four-year rates by student group
- Schools with the largest gains since 2022



SECTION AT A GLANCE

91.3%

four-year graduation rate, up 0.6 percentage points

91.9%

five-year rate for the Fall 2021 cohort

+7.8 pts

Largest single-year gain by any group



GRADUATION

91.3% of the Fall 2022 cohort graduated in four years or less

FOUR-YEAR RATE, 2026

91.3%

+0.6% single-year gain

12,571 of 13,763 students
Up from 90.7% in 2025

91.9%

Five-year rate

Fall 2021 cohort graduating in five years or less

+1.7 pts

Gain since 2022

Up from 89.6% four years ago

+7.8 pts

Largest group gain

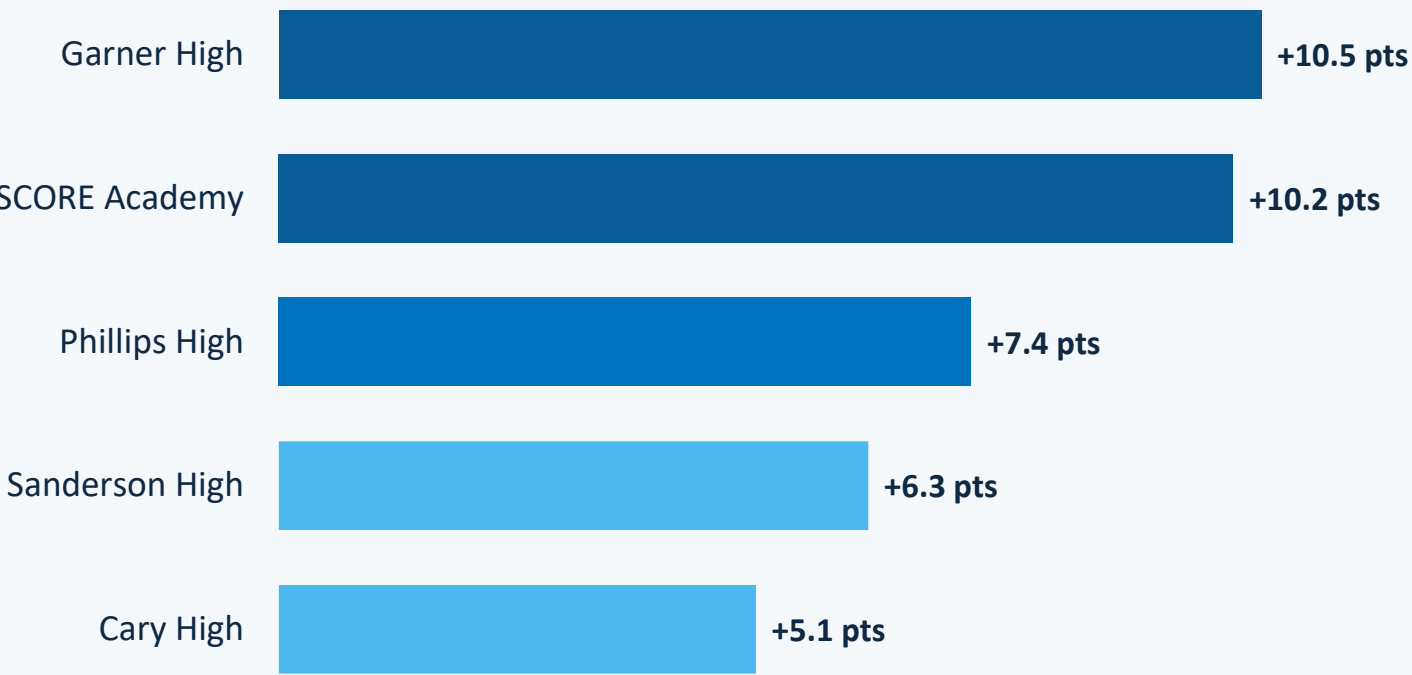
Multilingual Learners, the biggest single-year jump of any group

Why it matters: Had this year's cohort graduated at the 2022 rate, about 230 more students would have finished the year *without* a diploma.



GRADUATION

Five schools transformed their graduation rates



+10.5

points at Garner High — the largest four-year graduation gain of any school in the district.

Improving three times faster

The district gained 1.7 points over the same four years. Every school on this list improved at least 3x faster than WCPSS as a whole.

Percentage point change in four-year cohort graduation rate, 2022 to 2026.



02 PROFICIENCY

Past pre-pandemic, for the first time

- The five-year trend against the pre-pandemic baseline
- The largest gains by subject and by school
- Proficiency rates by student group



SECTION AT A GLANCE

68.2%

overall proficiency, above the pre-pandemic baseline

+3.8 pts

gained in a single year

+8.0 pts

largest subject-level gain (Biology)

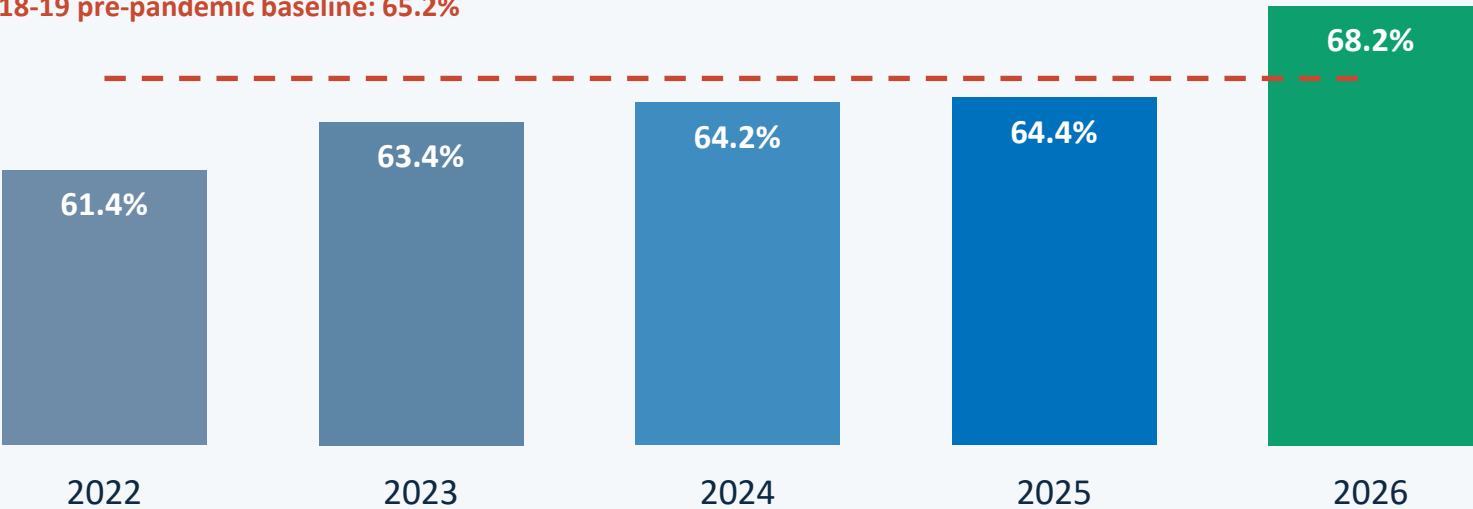


PROFICIENCY

Above the pre-pandemic baseline for the first time

Overall proficiency reached 68.2% — three points above the 2018-19 figure and the highest rate since 2012.

2018-19 pre-pandemic baseline: 65.2%



+3.8

percentage points gained in a single year — the largest one-year jump of the last five.

Where we still trail

Proficiency now meets or exceeds the pre-pandemic baseline in every tested grade and subject except grades 3, 6 and 7 reading.

Percentage of students scoring proficient (i.e., Level 3+) across all tested grades and subjects.



PROFICIENCY

Biology, third-grade reading and science led the way

Three subjects accounted for an outsized share of this year's district-wide gain.

+8.0 pts

Biology, End-of-Course

Now at **69.8%** proficient

The largest single-subject gain anywhere in the district this year.

+7.9 pts

Grade 3 Reading, EOG

Now at **64.8%** proficient

Up from 56.9% in 2025 — movement in the district's most-watched early literacy measure.

+6.8 pts

Grade 8 Science, EOG

Now at **75.9%** proficient

The highest proficiency rate of the three subjects shown here.

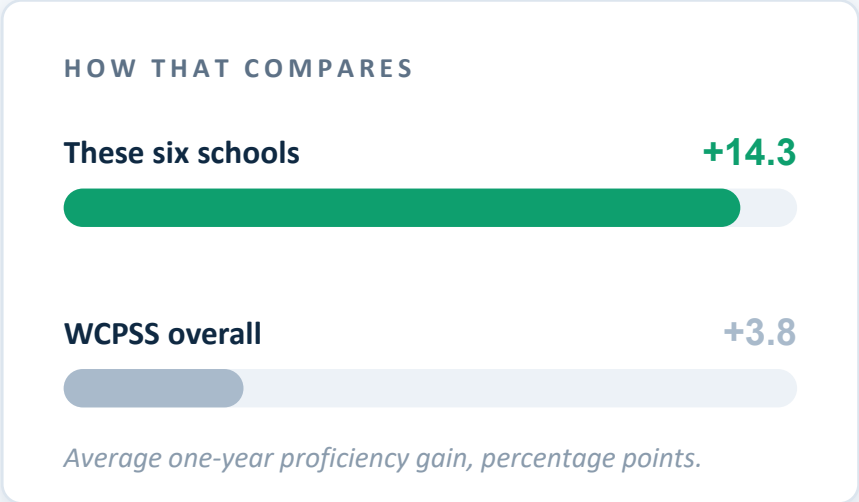
Change in percentage of students scoring proficient, 2025 to 2026.



PROFICIENCY

Six schools gained more than 13 percentage points in one year

1	Southeast Raleigh High	+17.4 pts
2	Fuquay-Varina High	+14.1 pts
3	Mount Vernon	+14.1 pts
4	Pleasant Grove Elementary	+13.9 pts
5	River Bend Middle	+13.4 pts
6	Knightdale Elementary	+13.1 pts



Elementary, middle, and high schools all appear on this list — the improvement is not confined to one grade band.

Change in overall school proficiency rate, 2025 to 2026.



03 EVERY STUDENT GROUP

Gains where they matter most

- Four-year graduation rates by student group
- Proficiency rates by student group
- Four-year proficiency gains since 2022



SECTION AT A GLANCE

+7.8 pts

One-year graduation gain for Multilingual Learners

+5.4 pts

One-year proficiency gain for Economically Disadvantaged students

+11.7 pts

Four-year proficiency gain for Economically Disadvantaged students, the largest of any group

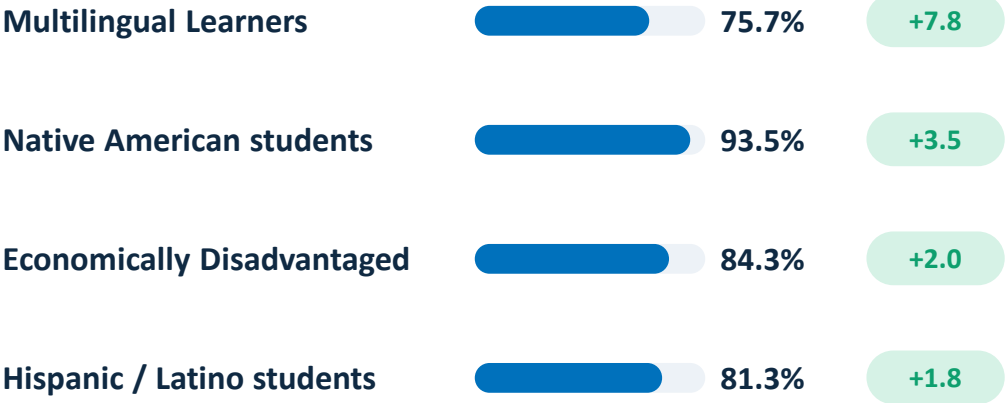


Graduation gains reached nearly every student group

Percentage of the Fall 2022 cohort graduating in four years or less, with the change from 2025.

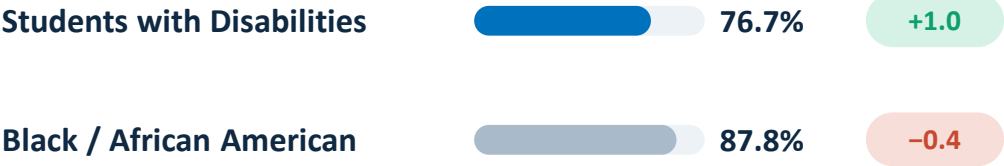
SIGNIFICANT MOMENTUM

Groups posting meaningful year-over-year gains:



NEEDS TO ACCELERATE

Where the rate is flat, falling, or still furthest from the district average:



Students with Disabilities remain 14.6 percentage points below the district rate — the widest graduation gap of any group.

District four-year rate: 91.3%. Change shown in percentage points versus 2025.



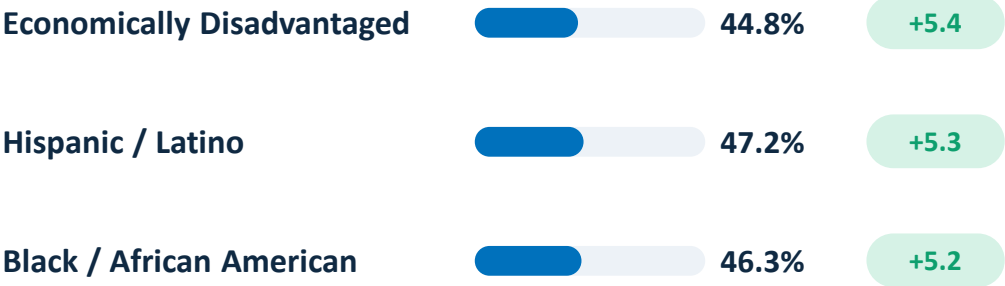
PROFICIENCY

The biggest proficiency gains went to the groups furthest behind

Three student groups gained more than five percentage points compared with 2025.

SIGNIFICANT MOMENTUM

Groups posting the strongest year-over-year gains:



NEEDS TO ACCELERATE

Where rates remain lowest and gains are smaller:

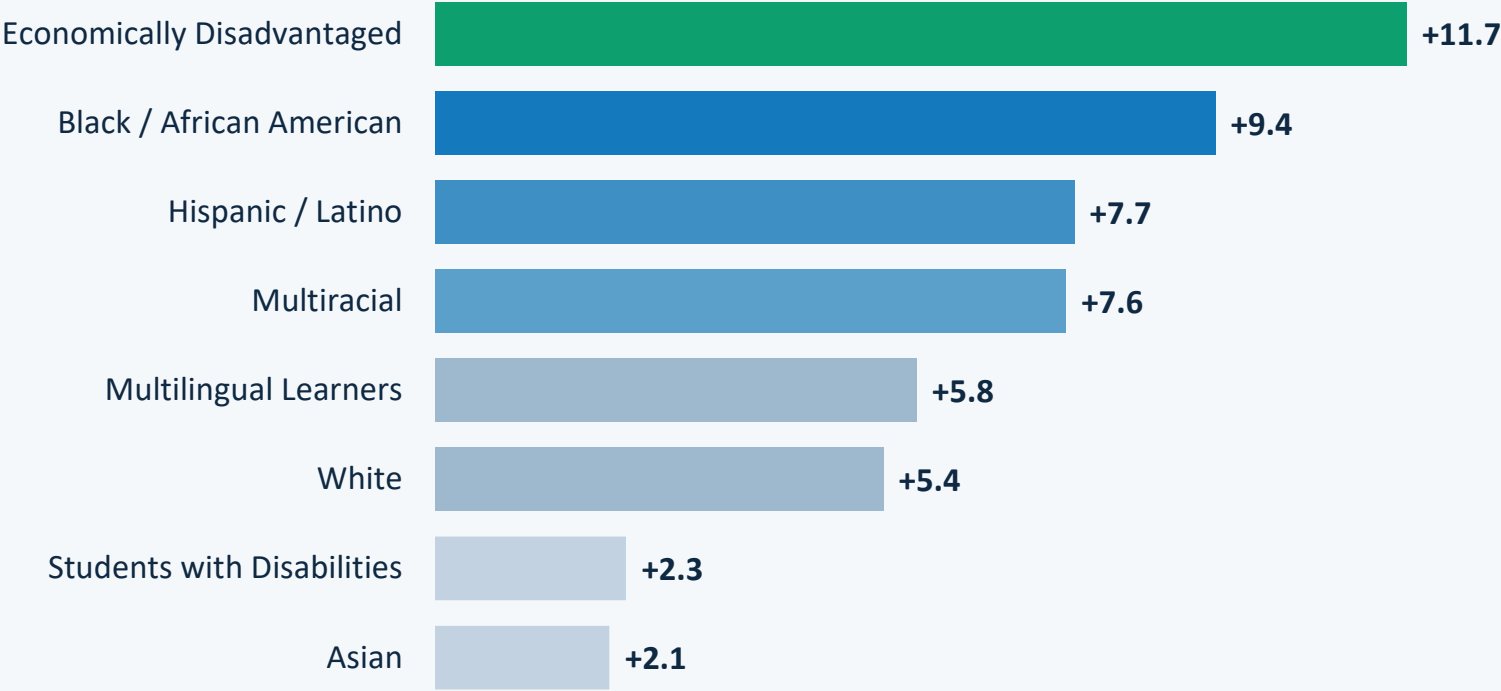


District overall proficiency: 68.2%. Change shown in percentage points versus 2025.



Four-year gains are largest where the need was greatest

Change in proficiency rate from 2022 to 2026, in percentage points.



+11.7

points for Economically Disadvantaged students since 2022 — nearly 2x the gain posted by the district’s overall.

The gap is closing

Economically Disadvantaged, Black/African American and Hispanic/Latino students — all well below the district average — posted the three largest gains.



04 SCHOOLS

Fewer struggling, more thriving

- EVAAS academic growth designations
- School Performance Grade distribution
- Low-performing school designations over time



SECTION AT A GLANCE

79.4%

of schools met or exceeded expected growth

60.2%

of schools earned an A or a B

17

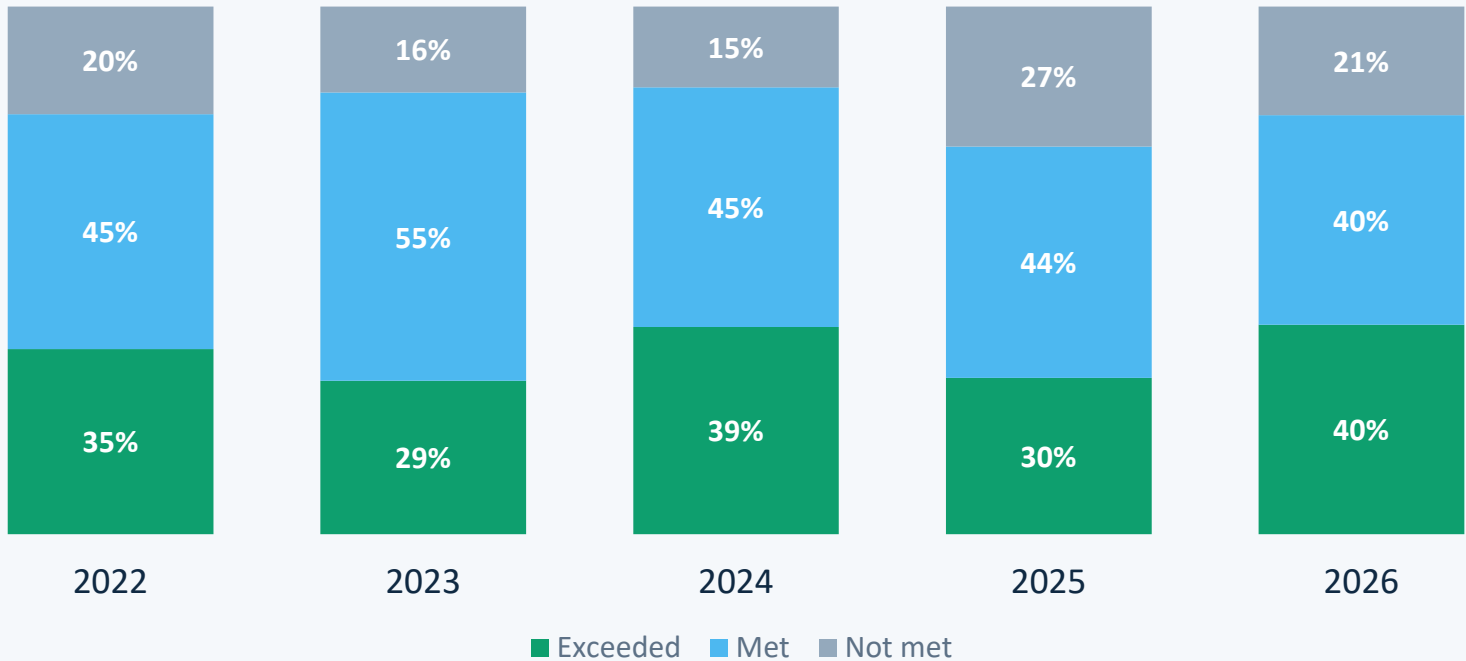
schools designated low-performing, down from 30



ACADEMIC GROWTH

Four in five schools met or exceeded expected growth

Share of schools exceeding, meeting, or not meeting expected academic growth.



79.4%

of schools met or exceeded expected growth — up from 73.5% last year.

Back above the 2024 high

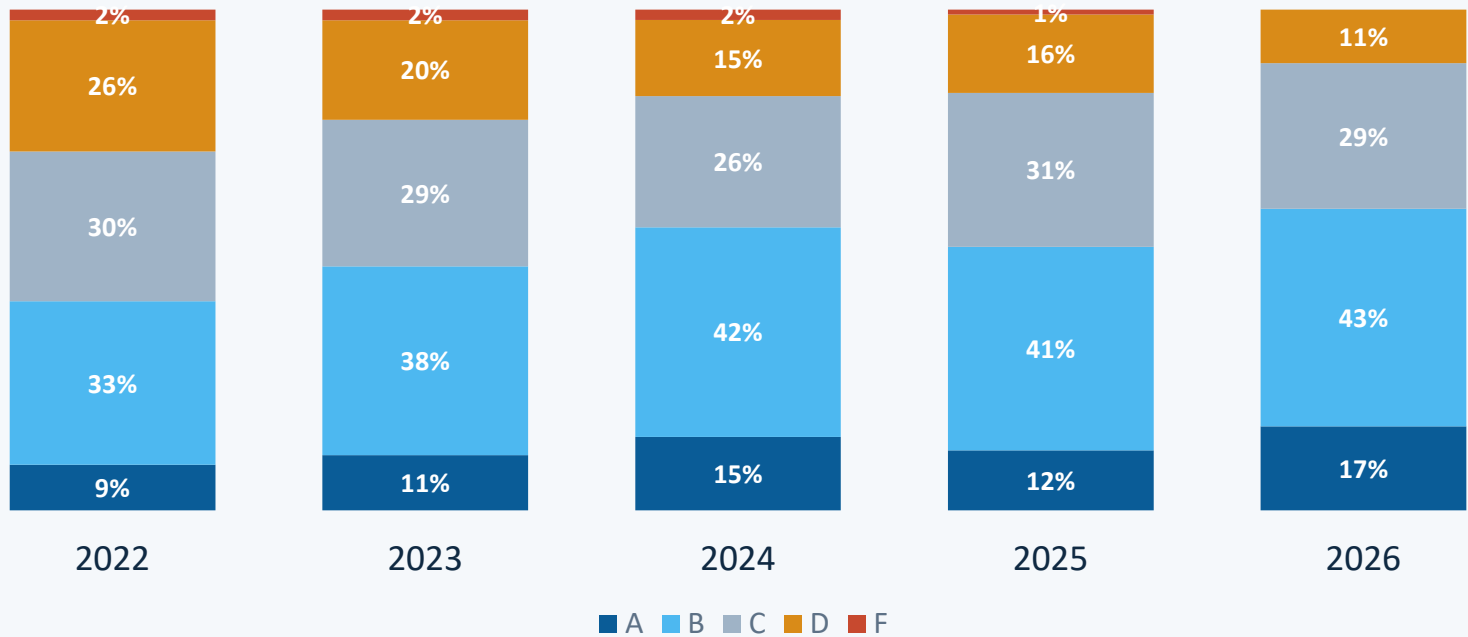
The share of schools exceeding growth returned to 39.7%, recovering the ground lost in 2025 and highest since 2013.

EVAAS school growth designations. Percentages may not total 100% due to rounding.



More A and B schools — and no F schools

Distribution of state School Performance Grades across WCPSS schools.



16.8% earned an A

The highest share of A-rated schools on record.

10.7% graded D

The lowest share since 2016.

Zero graded F

No WCPSS school received an F this year.

North Carolina School Performance Grades. Percentages may not total 100% due to rounding.



LOW-PERFORMING SCHOOLS

Low-performing designations fell by nearly half in one year

DESIGNATED LOW-PERFORMING, 2026

17

– 43% in one year

Down from 30 schools last year.
The fewest since 2016.

18

schools exited

Eighteen schools left low-performing status in 2026.

8.7%

of eligible schools

Seventeen of 196 schools eligible for the designation.

30

was last year's count

The baseline this year's reduction is measured against.

2016

last time it was lower

The count has not been this low in a decade.

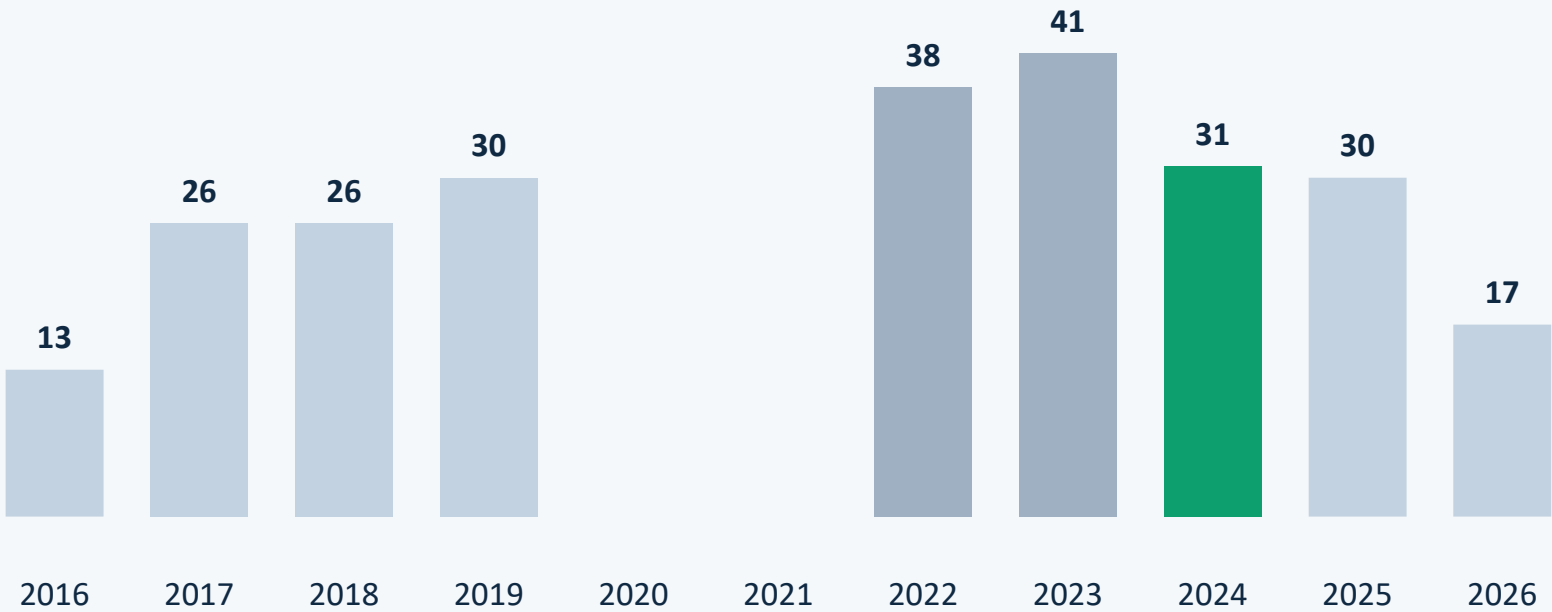
A school is designated low-performing when it earns a D or F School Performance Grade and does not exceed expected growth.



LOW-PERFORMING SCHOOLS

The lowest count in a decade — in a much larger district

Number of WCPSS schools designated low-performing. The district has grown from 167 schools in 2016 to 196 today.



Peak: 41

Low-performing schools peaked in 2023. The count has fallen in each of the three years since.

A fair comparison

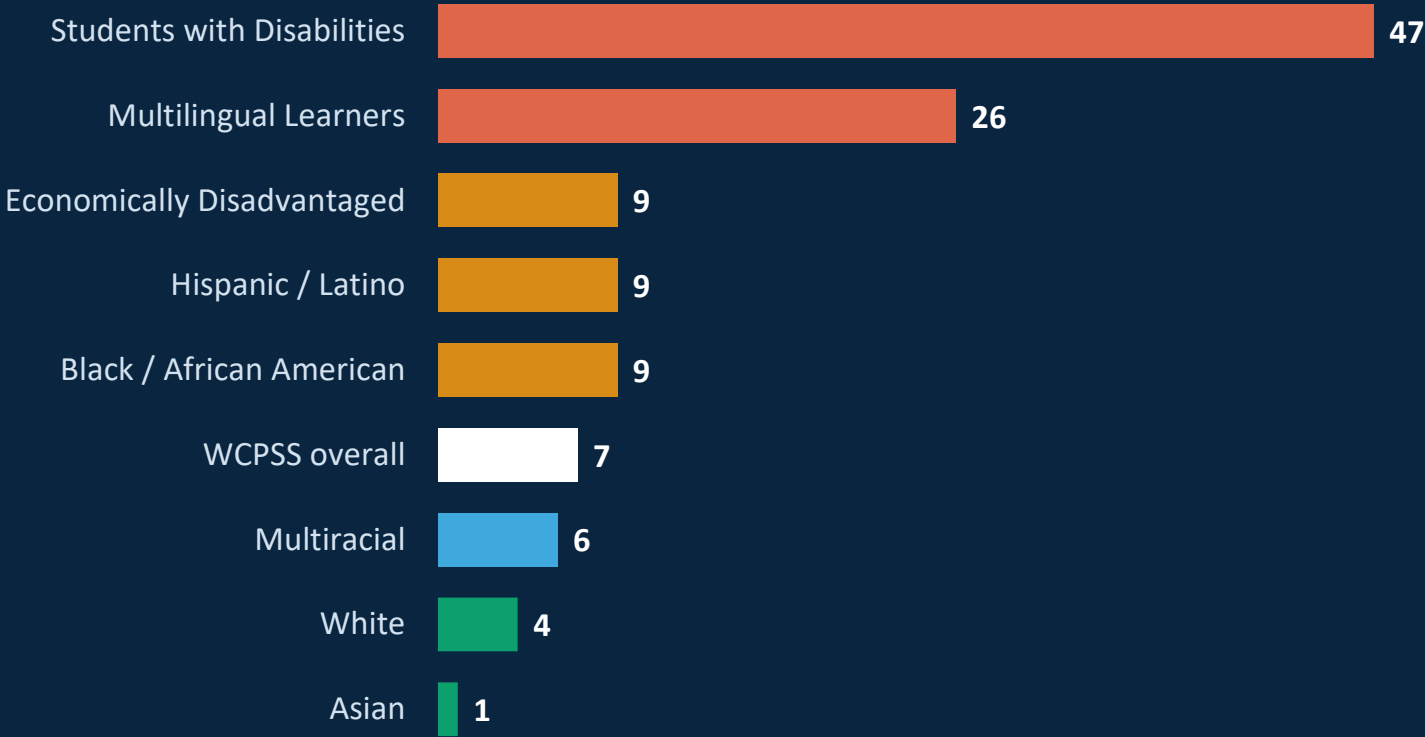
2016 had 13 out of 167. Today: 17 out of 196 — a nearly identical share, in a district with 29 more schools.

No accountability designations were issued for 2020 or 2021 due to pandemic testing waivers.



Where this momentum has to reach next

Years to reach 90% proficiency if each group continues its 2025-26 rate of improvement. Six of nine groups are within a decade.



Two groups

Students with Disabilities and Multilingual Learners are the two groups this year's momentum has not yet reached at scale — and the clearest target for the next strategic cycle.

How to read this

A projection, not a forecast — the exact years will change as rates change. It is here to show where to aim the momentum we have built, not to discount it.

Projection based on each group's 2025-26 single-year rate of improvement, held constant in the future.



What this adds up to

Three conclusions the board can draw directly from tonight's data.

1

Recovery is complete; improvement has begun

Proficiency at 68.2% has passed the 65.2% pre-pandemic baseline. Graduation, growth, and School Performance Grades all improved in the same year. The recovery framing no longer fits the data.

SUSTAIN

2

Targeted acceleration is working — where it is applied

The groups furthest behind posted the largest gains: Multilingual Learners +7.8 points in graduation, Economically Disadvantaged students +5.4 points in proficiency. Gaps narrow when effort is targeted.

EXTEND

3

A clear, narrow target for the next cycle

The remaining work is specific rather than system-wide: Students with Disabilities, Multilingual Learner proficiency, and reading in grades 3, 6 and 7. A focused district has a far better chance than a diffuse one.

TARGET



QUESTIONS & DISCUSSION

Recovery is behind us. Improvement is under way.

Thank you for your dedication to student success across the Wake County Public School System.

91.3%

graduation rate

68.2%

proficiency

17

low-performing schools

0

schools graded F

