Celebrations & Strategic Plan

August 11, 2026

We start the year by looking back at what our students accomplished, and forward to Year 3.

Agenda

1. Executive Summary
2. Celebrating 2025-2026
3. Year 3 of the Strategic Plan
4. Next Steps






1

We made real progress last year, and there is a lot to celebrate.

Executive Summary

- **Students gained ground in both subjects.** Math proficiency rose from 41.5% to 48.8% over four years, a gain of 7.3 points. Reading reached a four-year high of 63.1%.
- **We are still below the targets we set for ourselves.** Our district targets are 52% in math and 70% in reading. We finished 3.2 points below in math and 6.9 points below in reading. The direction is right. The pace is not yet enough.
- **Gaps are widening for two groups of students, and growth points the way.** This year reading proficiency fell 1.8 points for economically disadvantaged students and 1.6 points for multilingual students, while their peers gained. At the same time, 65% of multilingual students met their reading growth target, compared with 51% of their peers. Students who stay with us are growing. Proficiency has not yet caught up.
- **Year 3 of the strategic plan continues to focus our work.** We propose pursuing 18 initiatives across the same five priorities, anchored by six Board focus areas: mathematics, SEL and MTSS, students with disabilities, multilingual learners, instructional leadership, and staff support, equity, and belonging.
- **Every active initiative now names what will be different by June 2027.** Each carries a success statement with checkable deliverables and specific measures, so progress can be tracked and reported to you consistently.

Celebrating 2025-26

What our students, staff, and schools accomplished last year

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Equity and access: we saw progress in special education and completed a review of multilingual programming.

Priority 1: Equity

- **Portland Public Schools was named Agency of the Year.** The Maine chapter of the National Association of Social Workers recognized the district for culturally responsive, collaborative practices with students & families.
- **Special education met its implementation target everywhere.** All specialized programs reached the 70% implementation target, and Individualized Education Program compliance is now tracked through monthly data reviews.
- **Language development is moving into core instruction.** The Secondary Network more than doubled the use of high-leverage multilingual strategies in grades 6 to 8 English language arts, and we completed an external review of our ESOL program through the Center for Applied Linguistics.
- **Multilingual students gained in English reading.** Every multilingual ninth grader at Casco Bay improved their ACCESS reading score. Lyseth exited twice as many multilingual students from services as the year before.
- **Families can reach us in the language they speak.** Language Access handled 2,264 service requests and interpreted 2,256 parent-teacher conferences, totaling 1,128 hours.
- **Portland Adult Education graduated the largest class in its history.** 74 students earned a high school diploma and 65 earned a HiSET credential, including 20 who had aged out of our high schools. A further 110 people completed workforce programs and 121 internationally trained professionals received advising.

2

Achievement: individual schools moved their own numbers, not just the district average.

Priority 2: Achievement

- **Schools made real progress in math.** In grades 3 to 5, Talbot moved from 39% to 52% proficient, East End from 40% to 48%, and Lincoln from 38% to 49%.
- **Schools made real progress in reading.** Portland High rose 19 points, with 61% of students now at or above state expectations. Rowe reached 79% at or above expectation in grade 5, above the state average.
- **Schools are building strong early readers.** At Reiche, a cohort that entered kindergarten at 40% proficient in reading finished kindergarten at 47% and grade 1 at 66%.
- **High school students are on track and career ready.** 95% of Casco Bay ninth graders met the RISE on-track definition. PATHS produced 183 career and technical education completers, 427 industry certifications, and 646 college credits, and sent three SkillsUSA gold medalists to nationals.
- **We now have a process for curriculum review and adoption.** We have used it to adopt/implement curricula in foundational reading, reading, mathematics, and social emotional learning.

Community and belonging: students and families report a stronger connection to our schools.

Priority 3: Whole Student and Community

- **Attendance improved.** Chronic absenteeism is down overall, and five elementary schools are now below the state goal of 10%.
- **Families feel welcome and included.** At Presumpscot, every family surveyed reported that their child feels a sense of belonging and that they felt welcome at the school, and every multilingual family reported feeling like an active partner.
- **School climate is improving.** At Ocean Avenue, student agreement that students treat each other well rose 10 points, and chronic absence fell below 10%. Lincoln reduced out-of-school suspensions by 82%.
- **Students have adults they trust.** 81% of Portland High students report having an adult at school they can go to for help.
- **Support for parents was widespread.** Parent University held 20 events with 645 attendees.
- **Targeted support for multilingual learners.** Make It Happen supported 96 seniors, 91 of whom are pursuing higher education.
- **We have strong support.** The Foundation for Portland Public Schools raised $2.4 million, including $250,000 in emergency assistance that reached more than 900 people, plus 170 staff grants.

People and systems: the operations behind every classroom got stronger and steadier.

Priority 4 and 5: People and Systems

- **Students travel safely.** Transportation covered roughly 1,500 miles per day with no major accidents or injuries, added scan cards for pre-kindergarten and kindergarten riders, and brought out-of-district routes in house.
- **Students eat better.** Food Service served more than 100,000 lunches using 6,000 pounds of local beef and 4,000 pounds of halal chicken, and removed 3,800 pounds of sugar from menus.
- **Staffing and career pathways improved.** Human Resources hired more than 150 substitutes, visited every school site, and built career pathways for education technicians, special education staff, and aspiring leaders.
- **Facilities absorbed major new responsibility.** The team completed more than 2,300 work orders, supported more than 360 events, and delivered $7 million in capital projects across 1.5 million square feet, while taking over district HVAC operations from the City.
- **Financial systems continue to improve.** A month-end reconciliation process and written standard operating procedures are now in place, and auditor corrective actions are underway.
- **Technology kept the district running and secure.** 4,257 help desk tickets resolved, 4 million malicious emails blocked, 2,503 enrollment records processed, and more than 300 multilingual intake appointments held.
- **Communications reached farther than ever.** Livestreamed graduations reached families in five countries, and a new newsletter platform and mobile app launch this year.

The District Picture

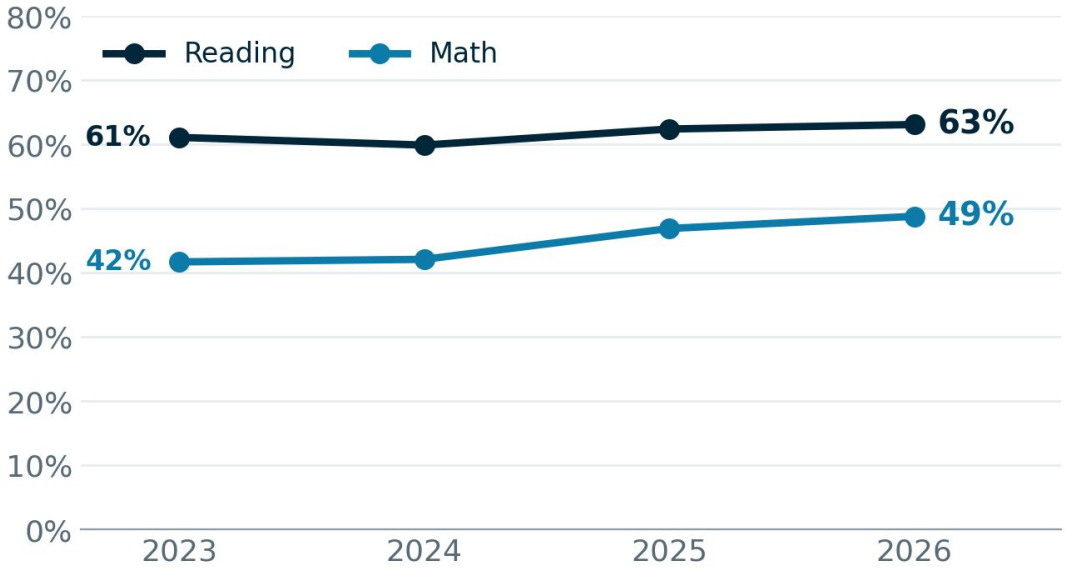
Standardized assessments provide one picture of how are students are doing and where we need to refine our focus.

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Both reading and math proficiency has increased district-wide over the last four years.

District overall proficiency rates in ELA & math

PROFICIENCY LENS



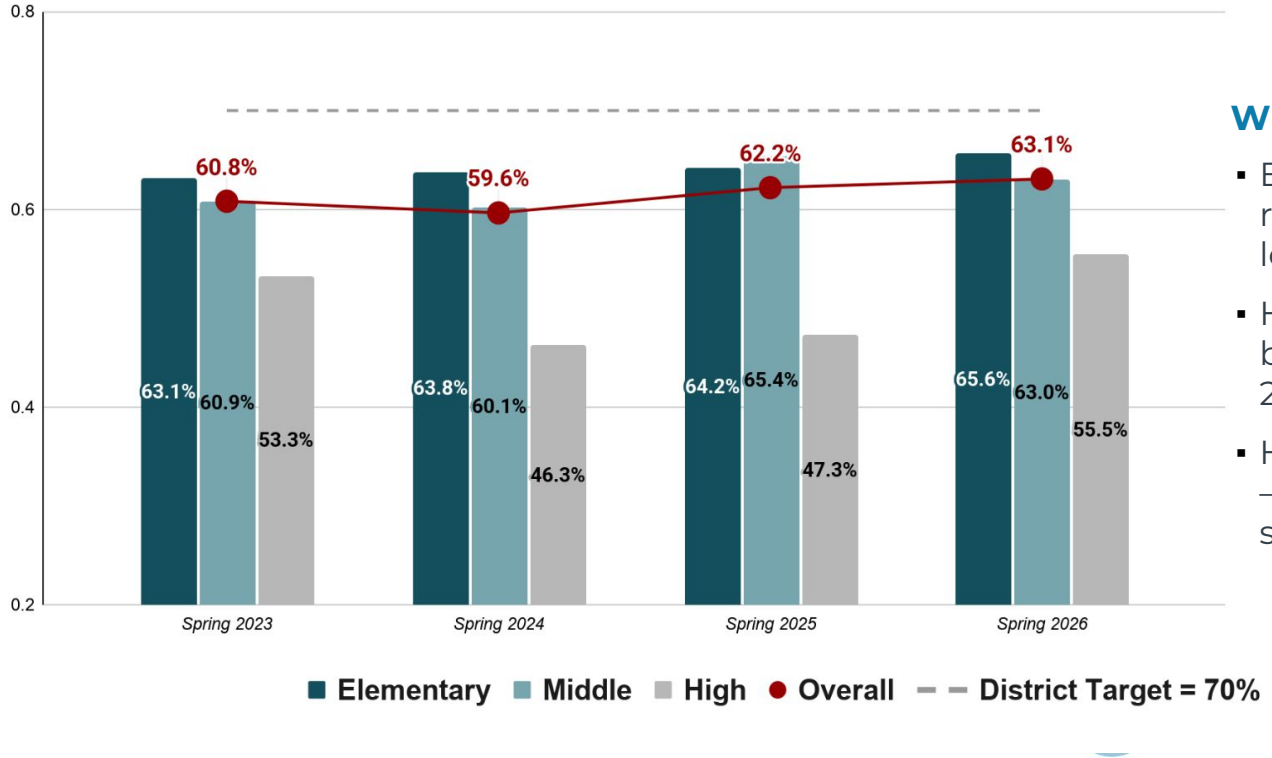
What we see

- Math climbed from 42% to 49% proficient — a 7-point gain over four years
- Reading held steady in the low-60s, consistently our stronger subject
- About 1 in 2 students is now proficient in math, up from about 2 in 5

Overall reading proficiency is at a four-year high, with every grade band gaining since 2023.

Grade Band Breakdown: Reading Proficiency Over Time

PROFICIENCY LENS



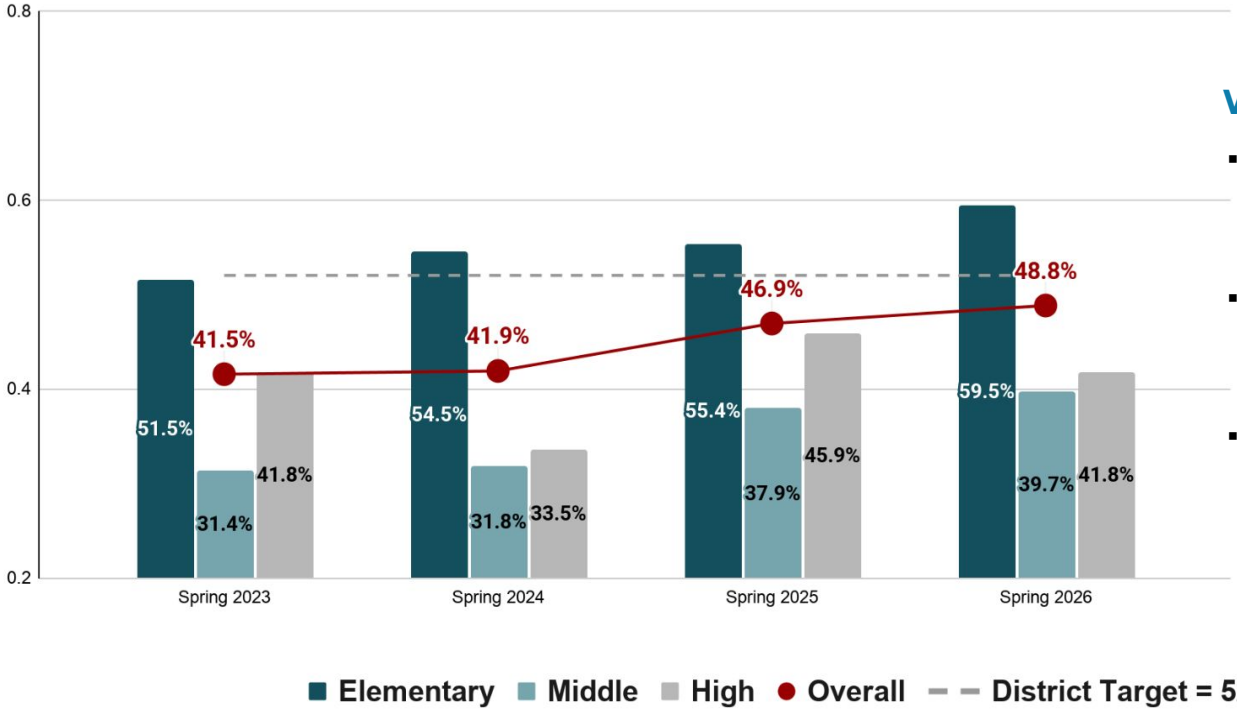
What we see

- Elementary and middle reading both sit in the low-to-mid 60s
- High school reading bounced back to 56% in 2026
- High school is grade 10 only — small numbers make it swing

Math proficiency rose 7.3 percentage points in four years. Elementary schools are above the district wide target.

Grade Band Breakdown: Math Proficiency Over Time

PROFICIENCY LENS



What we see

- Elementary math up 8 points (52% → 60%) — our strongest trend
- Middle school remains lowest but rose from 32% to 40%
- High school swings year to year — it is a single tested grade (10), so read it with caution

Every student group gained in reading over four years, but three groups lost ground this past year.

Reading Proficiency: Subgroup Breakdowns Over Time

	ED	Non-ED	ML	Non-ML	IEP	Non-IEP
Spring 2023	40.5%	74.4%	30.8%	74.8%	33.8%	66.3%
Spring 2024	41.3%	76.8%	31.0%	74.7%	35.6%	64.3%
Spring 2025	45.6%	81.7%	35.2%	75.3%	38.7%	66.9%
Spring 2026	43.8%	83.2%	33.6%	78.4%	38.0%	69.2%
Change 2025→2026	**-1.8%**	**1.4%**	**-1.6%**	**3.1%**	**-0.6%**	**2.3%**
Change 2023→2026	**3.3%**	**8.8%**	**2.8%**	**3.6%**	**4.2%**	**2.9%**

Every student group gained in reading over four years, but two groups lost ground this year.

Math Proficiency: Subgroup Breakdowns Over Time

	ED	Non-ED	ML	Non-ML	IEP	Non-IEP
Spring 2023	21.0%	57.1%	14.9%	56.0%	20.3%	45.6%
Spring 2024	22.3%	61.0%	16.1%	56.3%	21.6%	45.7%
Spring 2025	27.9%	69.8%	17.9%	62.1%	26.1%	50.9%
Spring 2026	27.8%	71.0%	19.8%	64.2%	26.9%	54.0%
Change 2025→2026	**-0.2%**	**1.2%**	**1.9%**	**2.2%**	**0.8%**	**3.1%**
Change 2023→2026	**6.8%**	**13.9%**	**4.9%**	**8.3%**	**6.6%**	**8.5%**

We need to celebrate progress and redouble our efforts for economically disadvantaged, multilingual and students with IEPs.

Where the gap is, and what we are doing about it

What the data shows

- Reading proficiency for economically disadvantaged students fell 1.8 points this year, from 45.6% to 43.8%, while their peers gained 1.4 points
- Reading proficiency for multilingual students fell 1.6 points, from 35.2% to 33.6%, while their peers gained 3.1 points
- Over four years both groups did gain (economically disadvantaged up 3.3 points, multilingual up 2.8), but their peers gained more, so the gap is wider than in 2023

What we are doing in Year 3

- Students with Disabilities (2.5): foundational curricula in specialized programs and resource-level literacy intervention
- Multilingual Learners (2.6): English language development scaffolds embedded in core content, starting with math
- A Lau-aligned multilingual data dashboard so these gaps are visible and acted on monthly, not annually
- Mathematics (2.1, 2.2, 2.3): Tier 2 support driven by benchmark data, with SEL and MTSS (3.1, 3.2) building the structures around it

Year 3 of the Strategic Plan

What we are proposing for 2026-27, and how we will monitor it

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Year 3 proposes 18 active initiatives, with equity carried across all five priorities.

Proposed Year 3 of the Strategic Plan

- **We have completed Year 2 (25-26) of the five-year strategic plan and are entering Year 3 (26-27).** The plan continues to organize our work across five priorities: Equity, Achievement, Community, People, and Systems.
- **The plan has produced meaningful gains for all students so far, including our historically underserved students.** Improved math and English outcomes for every student subgroup, a fully implemented PK-8 literacy curriculum, stronger special education systems, and recognition for our behavioral support work all reflect real progress.
- **We have adjusted the plan based on your feedback.** We engaged leaders throughout the district to gather feedback on the plan earlier this year. Based on that input, we have worked to narrow our focus and clearly articulate how equity is delivered throughout our plan.
- **Six focus areas anchor the board in 26-27.** Based on July one-on-ones, the Board's focus for SY26-27 is mathematics, SEL and MTSS (with attention to Tier 2 and secondary), students with disabilities, multilingual learners, instructional leadership, and staff support, equity, and belonging.
- **The work is concrete and largely underway.** Most initiatives are actively launching in 26-27: high-quality math and literacy curricula in classrooms, expanded SEL and MTSS supports, clearer special education deliverables, and multilingual scaffolds, backed district-wide by stronger instructional leadership, recruitment, onboarding, and data systems.
- **Every active initiative now defines what will be different by June 2027 and how we'll measure it.** Each initiative has a success statement that names concrete, checkable deliverables and the intended impact for students, families, and/or staff, with specific measures attached, so progress can be tracked consistently and reported clearly to schools and the Board.

We will actively pursue 18 initiatives and monitor an additional 2 initiatives in Year 3

LAUNCH

- ★ 1.1 Equity Mindsets & Cultural Humility
- ★ 2.1 Math K–5
- ★ 2.2 Math 6–8
- ★ 2.3 Math 9–12
- 2.4 HS Model (9th Grade Success & Post-Secondary Readiness)
- ★ 2.5 Students with Disabilities
- ★ 2.9 Instructional Leadership Practices PK–12
- ★ 3.1 SEL PK–5 (Tier 2)
- ★ 3.2 SEL 6–12
- 3.7 Early Childhood SpEd (LEA responsibility for 4-yr-olds)
- ★ 4.2 Recruitment, selection & diversity pipeline

★ = *Board priority for 26-27*

PILOT

- 1.3 Adult Education Programs
- ★ 2.6 Multilingual Learners / Spanish Immersion
- 4.4 Central Office Evaluation (Pilot, while Designing Principal Eval)

DESIGN

- 1.2 Equitable Family Partnerships
- 2.1 ELA (9–12)
- 2.8 Middle School Research & Design (Board resolution)
- ★ 4.3 Onboarding Culture

MONITOR / REFINE

- 2.1 ELA K–5
- 2.1 ELA 6–8

Each of the six Board focus areas is carried by named initiatives with a defined phase.

Mathematics

- **2.1 Math K–5** *Launch*
- **2.2 Math 6–8** *Launch*
- **2.3 Math 9–12** *Launch*

SEL & MTSS

- **3.1 SEL PK–5 (Tier 2)** *Launch*
- **3.2 SEL 6–12** *Launch*

Students with Disabilities

- **2.5 Students with Disabilities** *Launch*

Multilingual Learners

- **2.6 Multilingual Learners / Spanish Immersion** *Pilot*

Instructional Leadership

- **2.9 Instructional Leadership Practices PK–12** *Launch*

Staff Support & Belonging

- **1.1 Equity Mindsets & Cultural Humility** *Launch*
- **4.2 Recruitment & Diversity Pipeline** *Launch*
- **4.3 Onboarding Culture** *Design*

We are prioritizing 6 areas to watch most closely throughout the 26-27 school year (1/2)

Focus area	Key Actions (This year, we will...)	Measures (...so that...)	Mission Measures (and ultimately...)
Mathematics 2.1 · 2.2 · 2.3 Math	• Launch high-quality math curricula (Illustrative Math K-8, Amplify Desmos 6-8, enVision 9-12) with fidelity. • Focus on backwards-planned units and fluency routines. • Use data to drive Tier 2 support.	• All students engage in grade level tasks and carry the cognitive load • Students show growth on benchmarks • Curricula is taught with fidelity	• Math proficiency increases and gaps between subgroups close
SEL & MTSS 3.1 · 3.2	• Implement PurposeFULL People (PK-5) and CharacterStrong (6-12) with PBIS and MTSS teaming • Utilize Tier 2 supports and a universal SEB screener in PK-5 • Provide staff support and training K-12	• Students rate their classroom culture highly • Behavioral referrals are reduced • Curricula is taught with fidelity	• Student belonging increases and gaps between subgroups close • Chronic absenteeism decreases
Students with Disabilities 2.5	• Implement foundational curricula in the Beach and Breathe programs • Implement resource-level literacy intervention across the continuum of services.	• Students with disabilities meet their IEP goals • Increased compliance rates	• Gaps between subgroups in ELA and math proficiency decrease
Multilingual Learners 2.6	• Embed English- language development scaffolds into core content (starting with math) • Develop a plan for the future of dual language immersion • Launch a Lau-aligned ML data dashboard.	• ML students are better served in class • Data is used to support MLLs • Future of dual language immersion is decided	• Math proficiency increases and gaps between subgroups close • ML students make recommended growth on ACCESS

We are prioritizing 6 areas to watch most closely throughout the 26-27 school year (2/2)

Focus area	Key Actions (This year, we will…)	Measures (…so that…)
Instructional Leadership 2.9	• Run consistent cycles of school plans, stepbacks, instructional rounds, and ILTs to strengthen observation, feedback, and data use. • Clear communication with staff on the purpose of each structure and a clear feedback loop after each.	• Leaders improve on data-analysis and observation/feedback skills on evaluations • Data stepbacks meet defined criteria for success • Instructional rounds yield next steps aligned to school improvement plans
Staff Support & Belonging 1.1 · 4.2 · 4.3	• Build leader capacity for belonging (Equity Leader Arc, Equity Advisory Committee, Community Circles) • Build recruitment pipelines for high need positions (Special Education, Leadership Apprentice, Ed Tech to Teacher Cohorts) • Ensure onboarding structures are in place and implemented for all new hires	• BIPOC belonging rises on the 2027 survey • New hires report positive onboarding experiences • Recruitment and apprenticeship data show participation and advancement

Note: Mission measures not included here, as these actions are staff-focused and mission measures are student-outcome focused.

We will report progress against these measures on a set cadence through the year.

Next steps and monitoring

- **Fall 2026.** School and department improvement plans are finalized and aligned to the six focus areas, baseline data is set and departments share their fall previews with the Board. The September 26 and November 21 Board retreats both take up the strategic plan.
- **Winter.** The strategic plan returns to the Board on December 1 with an update on progress in the first quarter of the school year.
- **Spring 2027.** Reviews of student results and the strategic plan follow on March 2 and May 25, bringing spring assessment results, ACCESS results for multilingual students, and the 2027 climate survey. Year 3 closes and Year 4 launches on June 22, 2027.
- **Every department, twice a year.** Each department will update the Board in the fall and again in the spring, so that work not named in the strategic plan still reaches you on a predictable cycle.
- **What we are asking of you tonight.** Your confirmation that these six focus areas are the right ones to monitor. All dates reflect the draft Board calendar scheduled for adoption on August 25.

The direction is right. Year 3 is about pace and focus.

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Thank you!

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Appendix

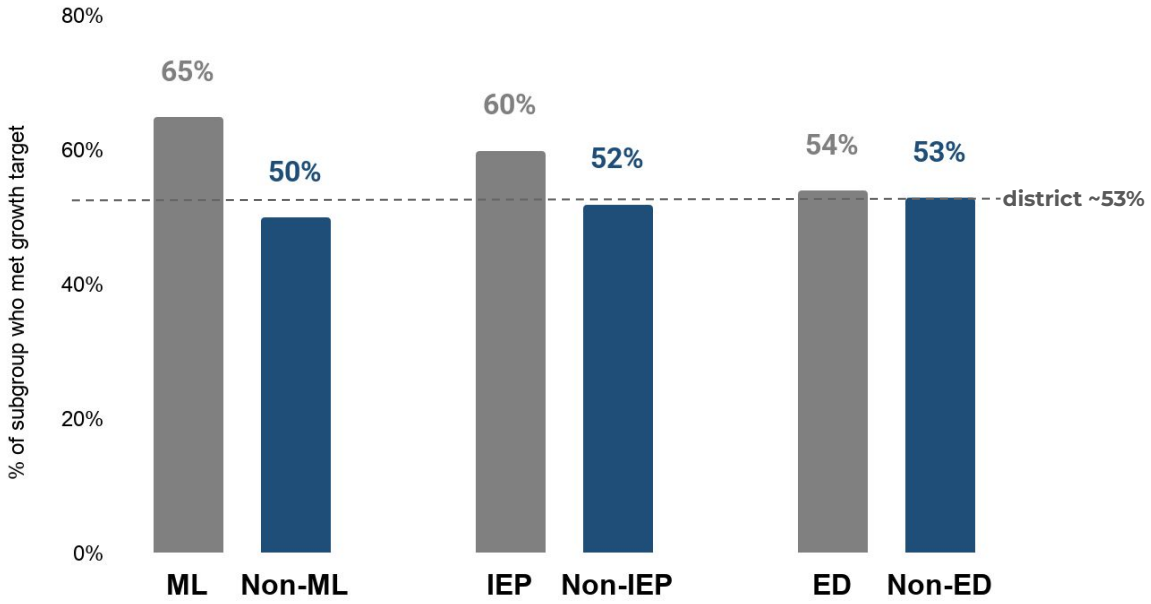
Supporting data and a glossary of terms

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In reading, multilingual and IEP students out-grow their peers.

Growth by subgroup · reading · fall → spring 2026

GROWTH LENS



What we see

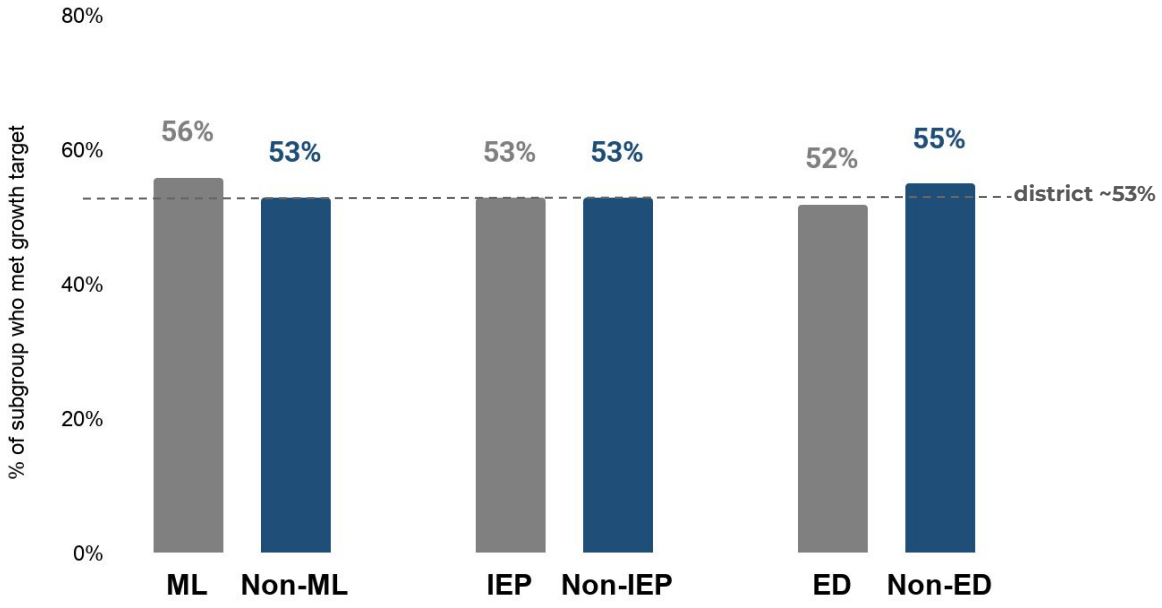
- Multilingual students met their reading growth target far more often than non-ML peers — 65% vs 51%, a 14-point edge.
- IEP students also out-grew non-IEP peers (60% vs 52%).
- Economic status made little difference on likelihood of student making growth (54% vs 53%).

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In math, growth differences between subgroups is small, with multilingual and non-economically disadvantaged students growing faster than peers.

Growth by subgroup · math · fall → spring 2026

GROWTH LENS



What we see

- Growth targets were met at similar rate across groups, with multilingual students growing at a slightly higher rate than non-ML peers (56% vs 53%).
- Growth rates between students with IEPs and without IEPs were the same.
- Non-ED students grew at a higher rate than ED peers and slightly above the district average.

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Glossary of terms used in this presentation.

Glossary

- **ACCESS:** the annual state test of English language proficiency for multilingual learners
- **ED:** economically disadvantaged, meaning a student eligible for free or reduced-price meals
- **HiSET:** High School Equivalency Test, an alternative route to a high school credential
- **IEP:** Individualized Education Program, the legal plan for a student receiving special education
- **ILT:** Instructional Leadership Team, the school-based team that leads instructional improvement
- **Lau-aligned:** aligned to Lau v. Nichols, the Supreme Court decision requiring meaningful access to instruction for multilingual students
- **ML:** multilingual learner, a student receiving English language development services
- **MTSS:** Multi-Tiered System of Supports, the framework for matching support to student need
- **MTY and MTYA:** Maine Through Year Assessment, the state assessment in reading and math
- **PBIS:** Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports
- **Proficiency:** the share of students meeting state expectations on the state assessment
- **RISE:** the ninth grade on-track measure, based on credits earned, grades, and attendance
- **SEB screener:** a universal social, emotional, and behavioral check on student wellbeing
- **SEL:** social emotional learning
- **Tier 2:** targeted additional support for students who need more than core instruction