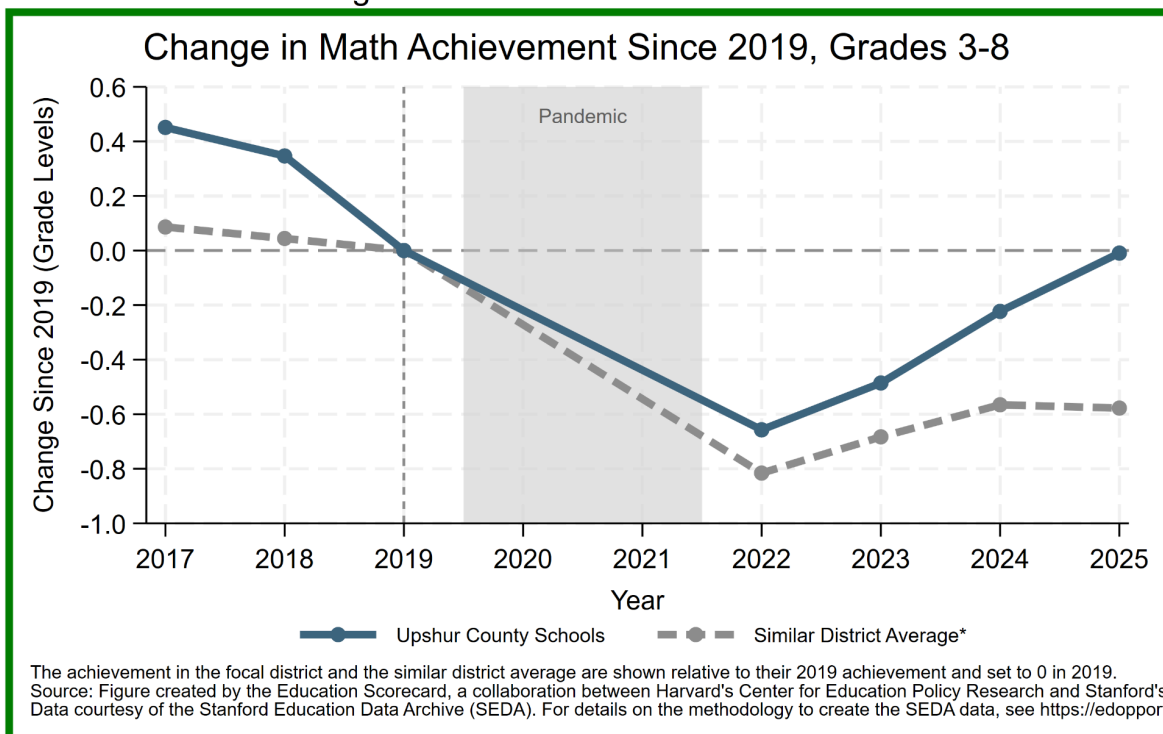


# EDUCATION RECOVERY SCORECARD

**Upshur County Schools**  
Buckhannon, WV

## Upshur County Schools, WV Rising Faster than Similar Districts in Math



\*Similar Districts: Mason County Schools, Lewis County Schools, Greenbrier County Schools, Jackson County Schools, Taylor County Schools

### **Student Demographics:**

Total student population: 3,197

Socioeconomically disadvantaged: 52%

Three largest racial demographics:

White: 97%

Hispanic/Latino: <1%

Mixed-Race: <1%

### **Christy Miller, Superintendent**

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- “One of the biggest strengths that we have in the community is the support from our families, and that the community values education. There’s a concentrated effort and working together is what really makes the difference.”
- “In West Virginia, we have numeracy coordinators who work at the district level. They’re provided by the state’s Department of Education and come in and share good practices. They provide the district with information collected from classroom observations on what is going on in math instruction and we use this information to target professional development opportunities for our classroom teachers to strengthen their instruction with all of our students.”

### **Background:**

Situated in rural West Virginia, over half of the students in Upshur County Schools (UCS) come from socioeconomically disadvantaged backgrounds, qualifying every school in the district for Title I funding. Despite the challenges facing its students, UCS has seen steady improvements in student learning outcomes over the last several years, especially in math. Led by Superintendent Christy Miller, the district has implemented concerted efforts to improve curriculum design, enhance mathematics instruction, and engage parents in their children’s schooling.

### **Strategies for Success:**

#### **Strengthening math instruction:**

- In mathematics, UCS utilizes Curriculum Associates’ Ready Math as its core curriculum, which is supported by the i-Ready data collection and assessment system. This approach aids teachers in making data-driven instructional decisions and improves Tier 1 core instruction by increasing student access to grade-level content.
- The diagnostic and benchmark data collected through the i-Ready system help educators identify gaps in student understanding, make informed instructional decisions, and provide targeted support to struggling students.
- UCS partners with Curriculum Associates staff members, who work directly with district educators. They provide learning walks for teachers, curricular workshops for district administrators, and meet with groups of teachers to review student data and highlight ways to utilize the Ready Math curriculum to improve student outcomes.
- As part of West Virginia’s [math4life](#) initiative, UCS prioritizes building students’ conceptual understanding of mathematics, which includes using manipulatives and hands-on learning strategies to help students develop a deeper understanding of mathematical concepts for future real-world application.

#### **Implementing rigorous curriculum design and evidence-based instruction:**

- UCS has strengthened core instruction across subjects by implementing principles of Rigorous Curriculum Design, a framework that guides educators in aligning the selected

high-quality curriculum with state standards, curriculum-aligned assessments, and effective teaching methods. [As shared](#) by Superintendent Miller, “Our use of rigorous curriculum designed units by our classroom teachers is the basis for implementing grade level standards along with a comprehensive assessment system to determine standards that are being mastered at the grade levels by each student.”

- Across content areas, the district prioritizes the collection and review of student data to inform instruction. In 2023, Superintendent Miller prioritized state-mandated data meetings, bringing together building-level administrators to review student data on literacy, numeracy, behavior, and chronic absenteeism to identify gaps in classroom instruction and/or administrator capacity. For the first year, Superintendent Miller met monthly with each principal individually. In the second year, she grouped principals into professional learning communities for meetings every six weeks.
- In 2023, UCS assessed ELA instruction by K-5 educators to identify gaps in teacher knowledge and instructional practices. After identifying a gap in phonics instruction, UCS shifted its instructional approach to align with the science of reading and adopted the [95 Percent Literacy Intervention System](#).
- UCS provides job-embedded professional development to improve curriculum understanding and application. Individuals employed by the 95 Percent Group provide professional development directly to school administrators and teachers, strengthening early literacy outcomes.
- [In 2025](#), as part of a wider state effort to improve literacy outcomes, UCS elementary school teachers received [Lexia LETRS®](#) (Language Essentials for Teachers of Reading and Spelling) training to equip them with practical, research-based strategies in the science of reading.
- Since 2023, UCS has utilized state-employed Literacy and Numeracy Coordinators to support the district’s implementation of high-quality literacy and math curricula and provide targeted professional development opportunities for teachers. The Coordinators visit the district once a month to analyze student data and determine goals for strengthening instruction.

#### Emphasizing community engagement:

- UCS makes a concerted effort to strengthen family-school communication by utilizing multiple communication channels to promote family awareness and understanding of their students’ learning. A key element of this effort is data transparency, including sharing consistent updates on student progress and enhancing resources for families to understand learning benchmarks and interpret data on student progress.
- Since 2023, UCS has hosted family literacy nights. These literacy nights include workshops for families to understand the district’s phonics-based ELA curriculum and informational sessions designed for caregivers to learn how to facilitate student learning at home.
- The district has a state grant to hire [Communities in Schools Coordinators](#), who provide wraparound support for students and families. The coordinators identify families whose students are at risk of chronic absenteeism and provide families with targeted supports and services. These include resources related to health, nutrition, and social services.
- The district also works closely with the [Foundation for Better Schools](#) in Upshur County, a nonprofit aiming to “bridge the gap between community resources and educational needs,” to incentivize attendance. Community partners, including the Foundation for Better Schools, donate prizes to the district for friendly attendance competitions.
- District and school leaders continue to emphasize the importance of developing welcoming school environments, where families feel valued as partners in their students’ education. Staff are encouraged to build relationships with student’s family members and

view them as team members in the educational process.

- UCS has also prioritized fostering a sense of community and a shared district culture within the system through guidance from the educational leadership company [J Casas and Associates](#). Superintendent Miller notes that the “intentional drive for UCS schools to become a system and not individual schools” has been influential in encouraging all UCS staff to expect excellence and champion their students.