

SPOTLIGHT ON

# Dayton Public Schools



In this interview, **Superintendent Elizabeth Lolli** describes how Dayton Public Schools is investing federal COVID-19 relief funds to accelerate learning after the pandemic.

## **Q: How did COVID-19 impact students in Dayton Public Schools?**

The pandemic disrupted many aspects of people's lives. Our school communities were no exception. Looking at test results for Dayton students, we saw achievement slipping. We also saw a rise in behavior incidents. Both were understandable, given the upheaval brought on by the pandemic.

**Our district recognized that it was essential to address both factors — achievement and classroom environments — to help students get back on track.**

## **Q: How are American Rescue Plan funds helping Dayton Public School students recover from learning loss?**

The federal funding has been so meaningful for our district. It's allowing us to address students' critical needs at each level throughout K-12. And we've been able to give extra attention to the younger grades, where learning loss can have serious long-term consequences.

**In first through third grades, we hired nearly 100 new teachers to support a double-teaching approach to classroom instruction.**

Under this initiative, two teachers are in the same classroom at the same time, and they teach simultaneously — one literacy, the other math. The approach allows for small-group instruction, reducing class size and enhancing individual students' learning.

We also used relief funds to hire paraprofessional assistants who could each split time between two kindergarten classrooms. These paraprofessionals help students with review and computer work, and sometimes with behavior management, while the teacher concentrates on instruction.



## Q: What has Dayton Public Schools done to help students manage their emotional needs?

With the help of our relief funds, we also hired student resilience coordinators for each of our schools. These coordinators work with students to understand their individual needs, provide long-term counseling and pair students with services through Dayton Children's Hospital. Our district partners with the hospital to facilitate students' access to mental health services.

We also used relief funds to hire a behavior therapist for every two schools in the district. Their focus is more on short-term counseling, things that require immediate response.

Together, our student resilience coordinators and behavior therapists are helping to build more positive, productive classroom environments.

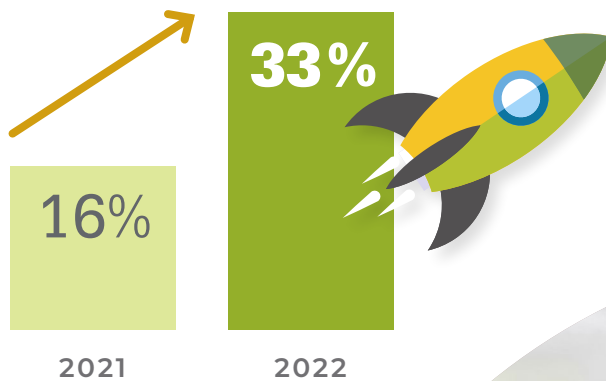
## Q: How have these initiatives helped students?

By working to foster calm, positive classroom environments and to address pandemic-related learning loss, we hope to position our students for success after the pandemic. Dayton Public Schools is proud of the student-oriented approach we've taken with the use of our American Rescue Plan funds.

It's still early, but data already show the positive impact of these initiatives on student learning. **In 2021, only 16% of third grade students showed proficiency in reading. This year, that number has more than doubled to 33%.**

We're excited to see how Dayton Public Schools' commitment to accelerating learning shines through in other indicators of academic success in the months and years ahead.

### READING PROFICIENCY



Data already show a **positive impact.**