



# Laurel School District 2023-2024 Report

In partnership with STRIVE INC



**Laurel Public Schools**

*Dedicated to the individual development of each  
student, every day, without exception*



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## Introduction

Laurel Public Schools faced several significant challenges that highlighted the need for a focus on literacy:

1. **Students with Disabilities:** Less than 20% of students with disabilities were proficient on local and state measures, compared to an average of 43% for grade-level peers.
2. **Economically Disadvantaged Students:** Only 16% of economically disadvantaged students scored proficient, significantly below the 37% of their grade-level peers.
3. **Remediation Needs:** 14% of Laurel High School graduates required remedial intervention upon entry into the Montana University System, compared to 18% statewide.
4. **PreK Assessment Gaps:** There were no valid and reliable assessments for PreK, and no diagnostic assessments for appropriate placement in Tier 2 instruction.
5. **Misalignment of Instruction:** Instructional programming was misaligned with standards for elementary Core (Tier I) instruction, and there was a lack of alignment of curriculum, assessments, and best practices across PreK-12.

## How Did They Do It?

Laurel Public Schools implemented several key initiatives as part of their focus on improving literacy outcomes:

1. **Leadership Training:**
  - Trained leaders to facilitate Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) to foster collaboration and improve student outcomes.
  - Created School Leadership Teams to set measurable goals and clear action steps focusing on improving teaching and learning.
  - Implemented instructional coaching to support teachers in implementing new curriculum, assessments, and best practices.
2. **Strengthened MTSS (Multi-Tiered System of Supports) PreK-12:**
  - Incorporated evidence-based instructional programming to provide structured support across all grade levels.
3. **Established a Comprehensive Assessment System:**

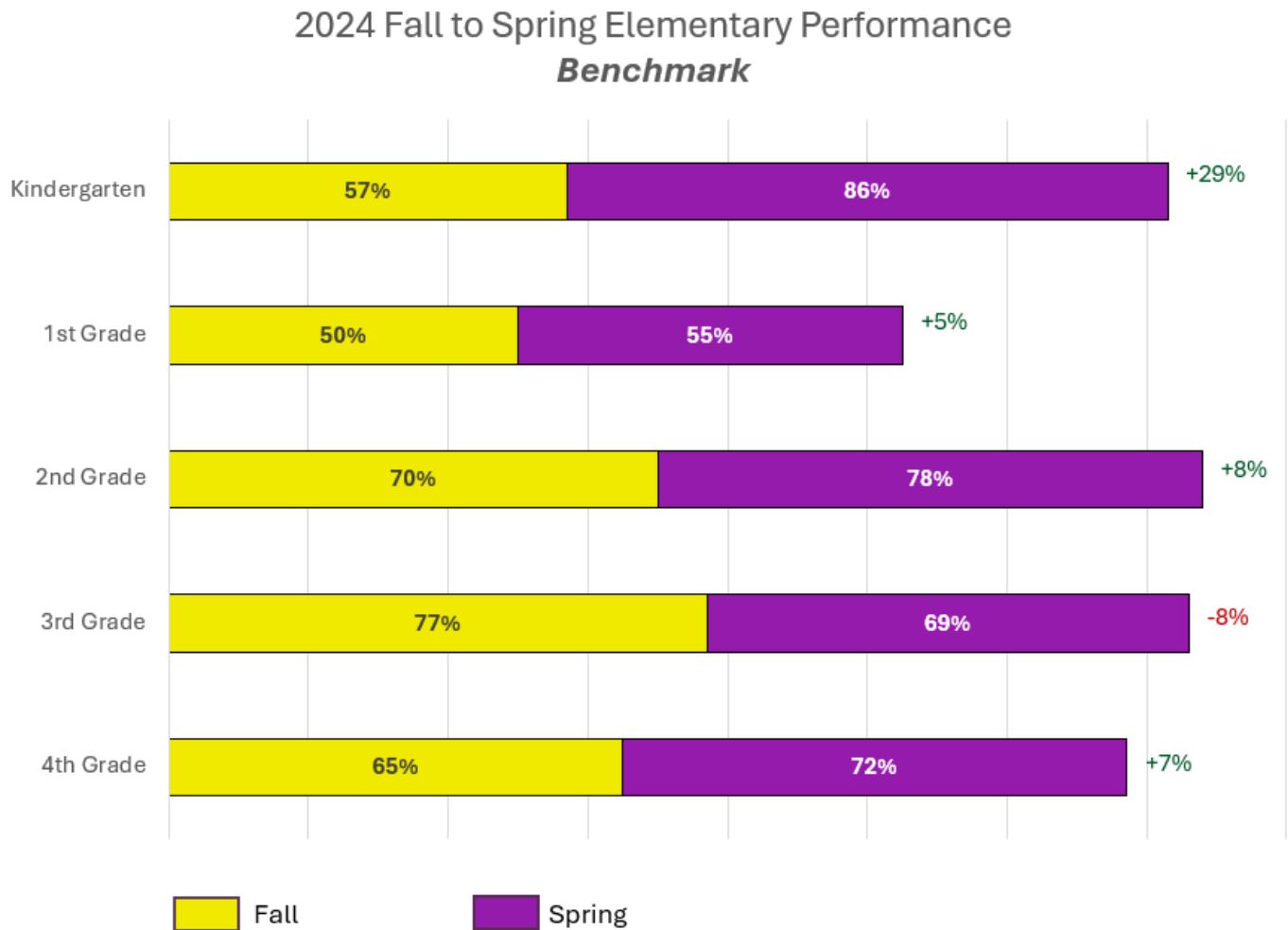
- Implemented new assessments, including diagnostic assessments to measure student progress and help determine placement for interventions to close skills gaps and need for scaffolds and supports in meeting grade level standards.
  - Developed and utilized a progress monitoring system to monitor the effectiveness of MTSS and ensure accurate placement and intervention strategies.
- 4. Provided High-Quality Professional Development (PD):**
- Delivered PD on evidence-based literacy practices for teachers across all grade levels to enhance instructional quality and consistency.
- 5. Developed PreK Opportunities:**
- Beyond special education, they coordinated early childhood programs, identified student needs, and provided appropriate screening tools and instructional resources.
- 6. Aligned Instructional Resources:**
- Purchased evidence-based instructional resources for Core Tier I instruction, provided supports and scaffolds for Tier II and realigned existing resources and purchased new ones to provide Tier III interventions.
  - Created Instructional Frameworks across all buildings to focus on bell-to-bell learning.
- 7. Focused on Data-Based Decision Making:**
- Trained teachers in data-based decision making and progress monitoring, particularly for Tier II supports and Tier III interventions.

## Results

The results of these focused efforts demonstrated clear improvements:

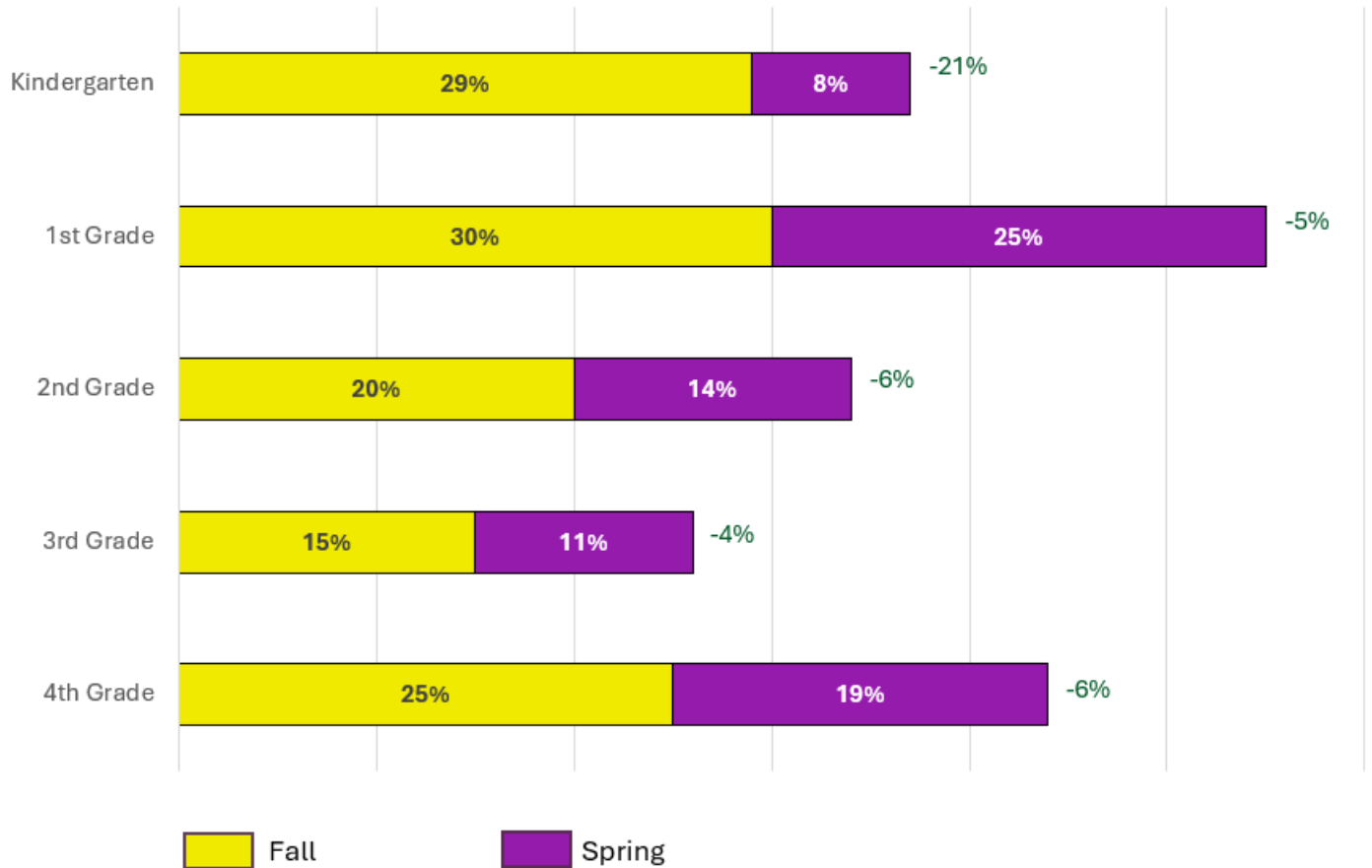
- **Elementary (EL) Performance:**

- **Benchmark:** Increased from 62% in Fall 2020 to 64% in Fall 2022 and maintained at 64% in Fall 2023.
- Average **increase of 8.2%** Elementary benchmark from Fall to Spring 2024



- **Intensive:** Decreased from 19% in Fall 2020 to 10% in Fall 2022 and remained at 10% in Fall 2023.
- Average **reduction of 8.4%** Elementary intensive from Fall to Spring 2024

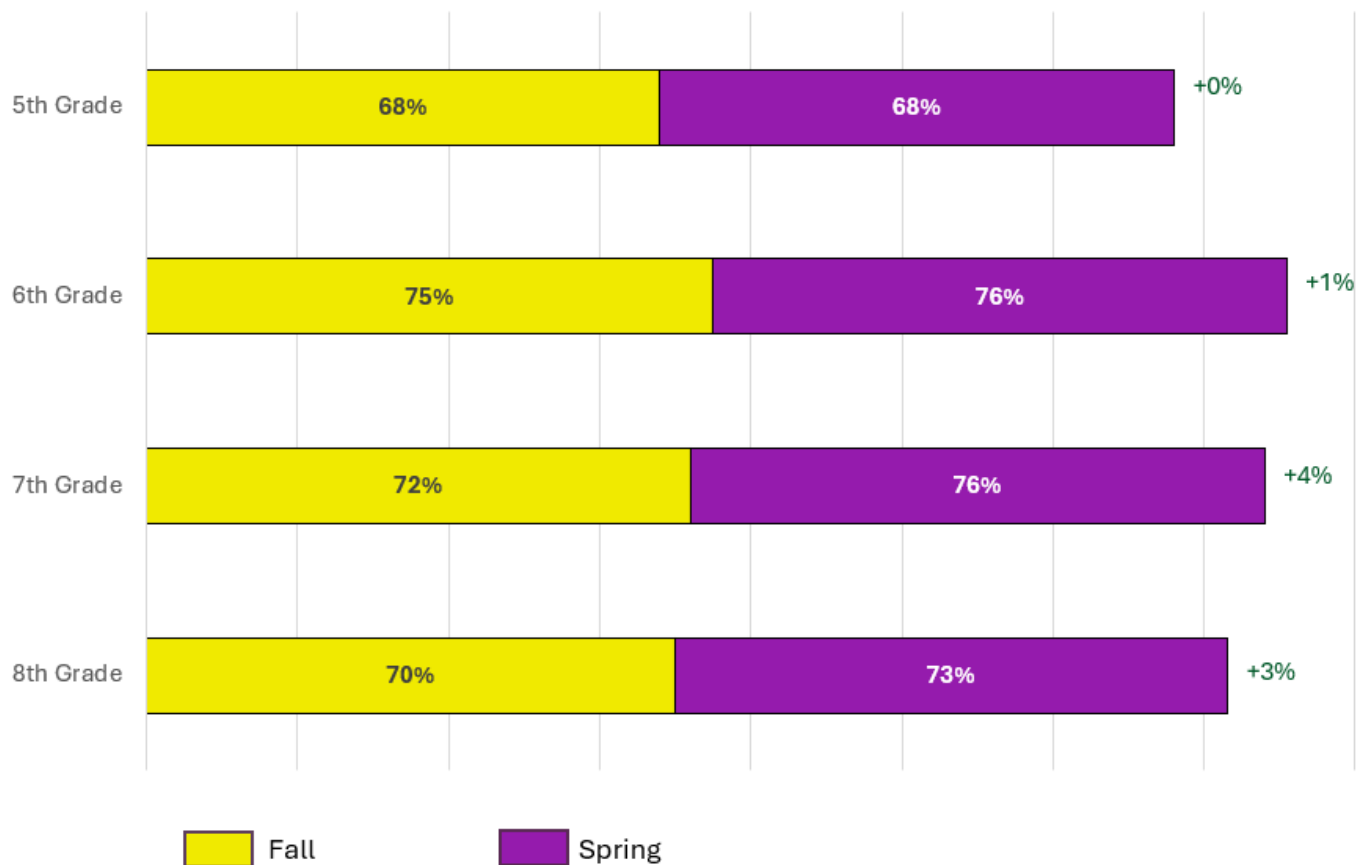
### 2024 Fall to Spring Elementary Performance *Intensive*



- **Middle School (MS 6-8) Performance:**

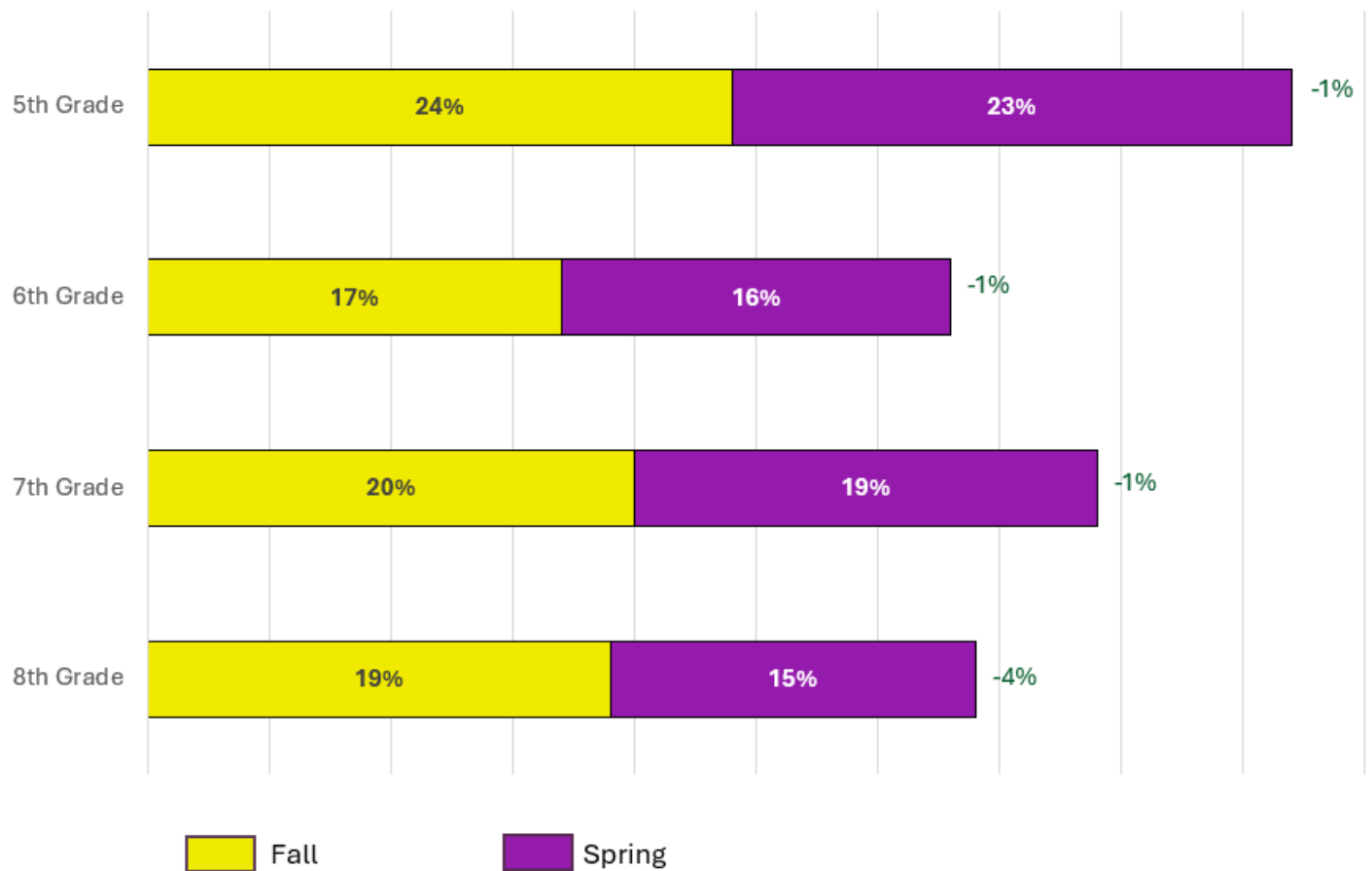
- **Benchmark:** Improved from 57% in Fall 2020 to 71% in Fall 2022 and remained at 71% in Fall 2023.
- Average **increase of 2%** Middle School benchmark from Fall to Spring 2024

2024 Fall to Spring Middle School (6-8) Performance  
**Benchmark**



- **Intensive:** Slightly decreased from 13% in Fall 2020 to 12% in Fall 2022 and Fall 2023.
- Average **increase of 2%** Middle School benchmark from Fall to Spring 2024

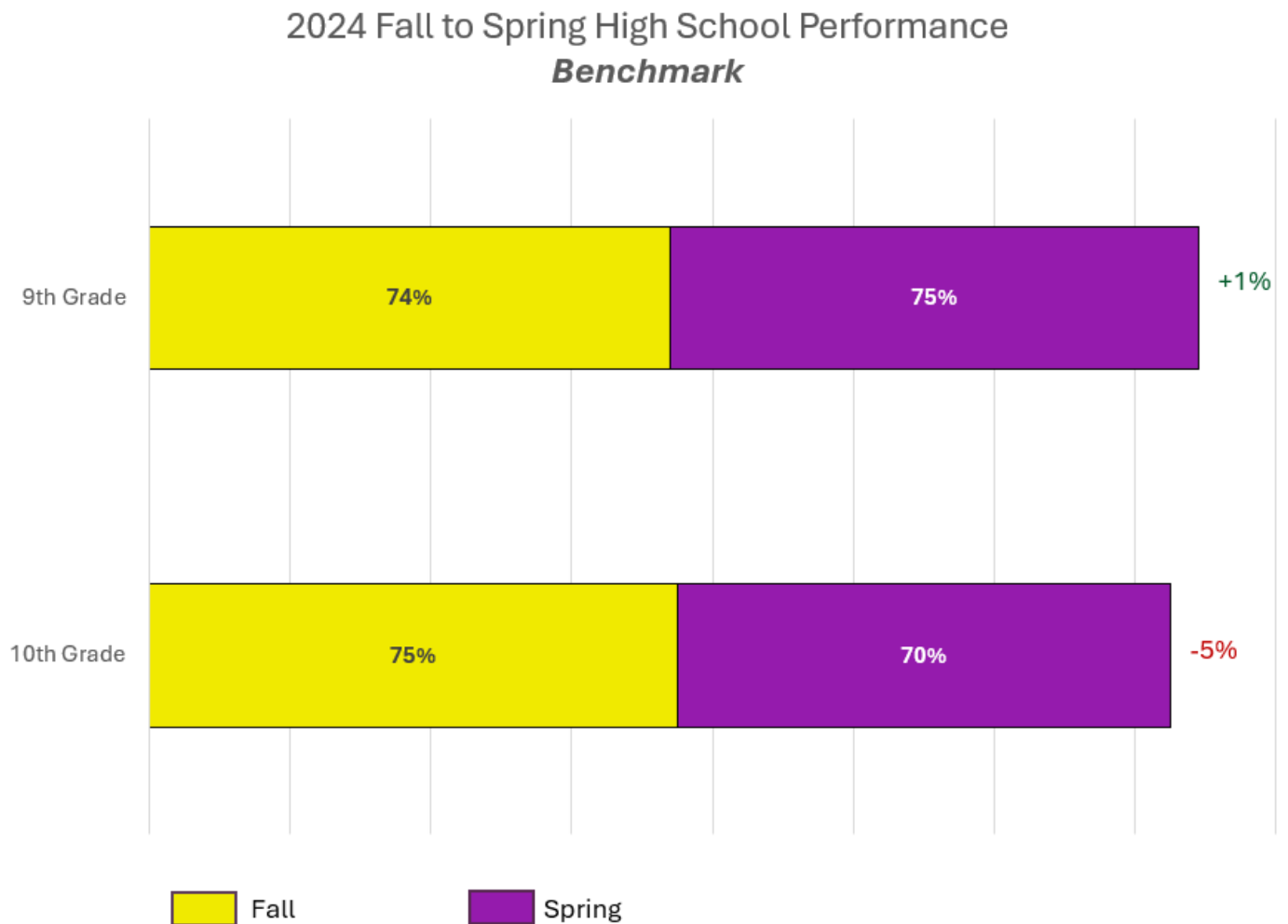
### 2024 Fall to Spring Middle School (6-8) Performance *Intensive*





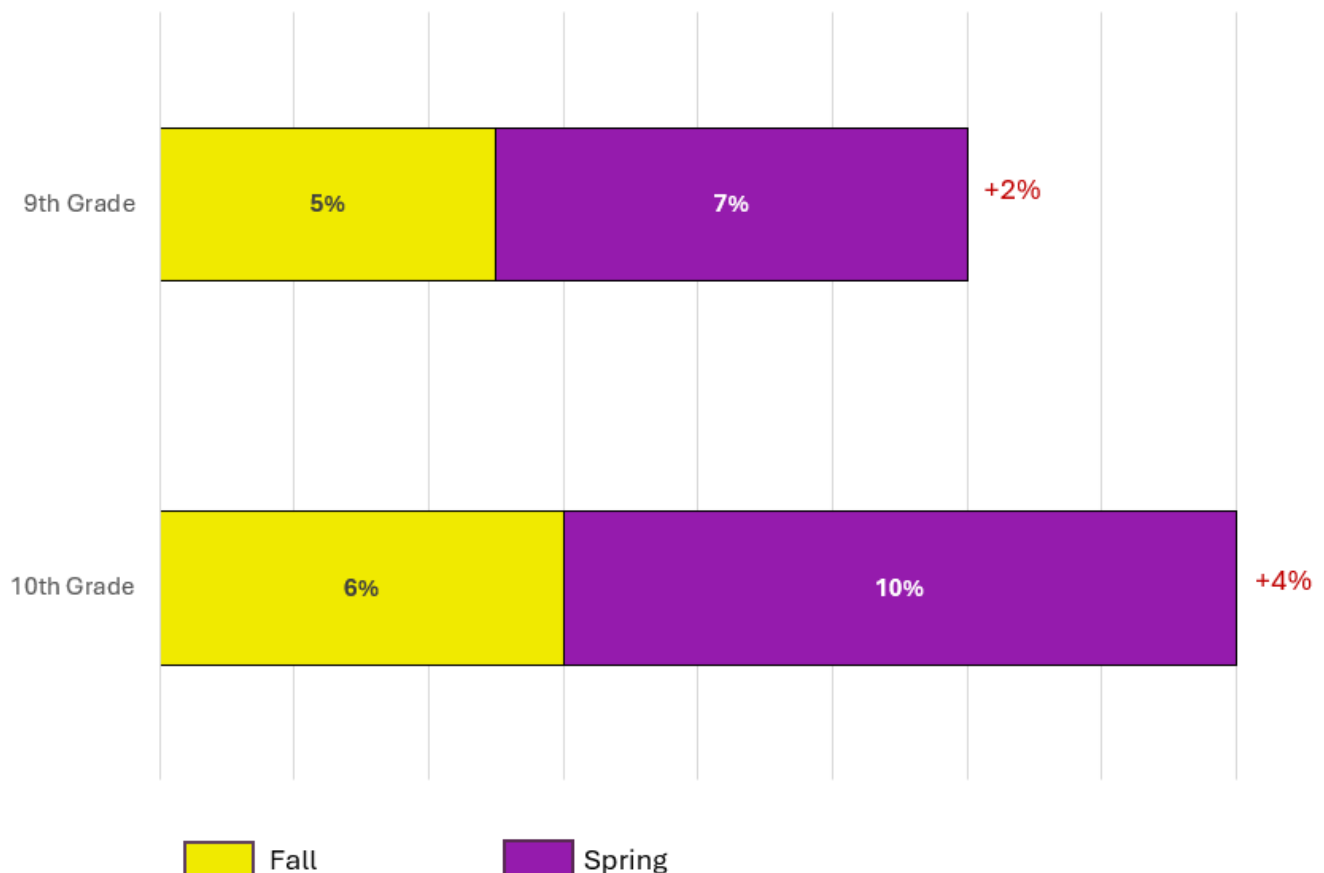
- **High School (HS) Performance:**

- **Benchmark:** Stable at around 71% to 74% from Fall 2020 to Fall 2023.
- No Measurable Increase in High School benchmark from Fall to Spring 2024



- **Intensive:** Increased from 10% in Fall 2020 to 21% in Fall 2022 and Fall 2023, highlighting an area for continued focus and improvement.
- No Measurable reduction in High School intensive from Fall to Spring 2024

### 2024 Fall to Spring High School Performance *Intensive*



- **Spring Performance:**

- **Elementary (EL):** Maintained benchmark performance with some increases and overall reduced number of students needing intensive supports
- **Middle School (MS 6-8):** Increased benchmark performance overall and reduced number of students needing intensive supports.

- **High School (HS):** Consistently high benchmark performance with an increase in intensive support needs.

## Steps for Improvement

### What are the Next Steps for Improvement?

By continuing regular cycles of improvement, Laurel Public Schools can continue to celebrate their successes while addressing areas for improvement, ensuring that all students demonstrate growth and achievement.

### Elementary School (K through Grade 5)

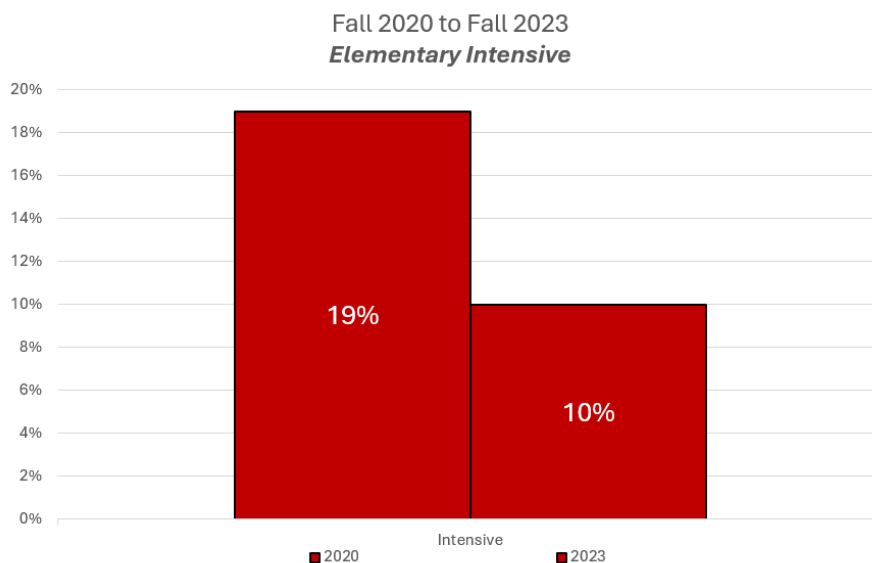
#### Celebrate Successes:

##### 1. Benchmark Improvement:

- The percentage of students reaching benchmark levels increased from 62% in Fall 2020 to 64% in Fall 2022 and maintained this improvement into Fall 2023.

##### 2. Reduction in Intensive Support Needs:

- The percentage of students requiring intensive support decreased significantly from 19% in Fall 2020 to 10% in Fall 2022 and remained at 10% in Fall 2023.



## Areas for Improvement:

### 1. Enhance Core (Tier 1) Instruction:

- Despite some progress, continuous improvement in Tier 1 instruction is essential to maintain and increase benchmark levels. This includes:
- **Bell to Bell Learning:** Ensuring all instructional time is used effectively across the school day.
- **Purposeful Reading and Writing:** Integrating reading and writing into every subject throughout the day to enhance literacy skills.

### 2. Close Skill Gaps for Intensive Support Students:

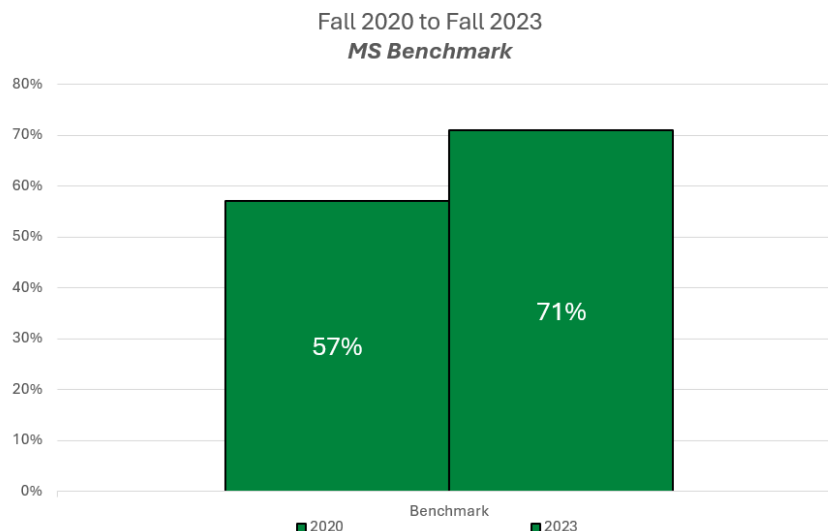
- To further reduce the number of students needing intensive support:
- **Identify Student Needs:** Use diagnostic assessments to pinpoint specific areas where students are struggling.
- **Targeted Interventions:** Provide focused interventions to address specific skill gaps identified through assessments.
- **Use of PDSAs**

## Middle School (Grades 6-8)

## Celebrate Successes:

### 1. Significant Improvement in Benchmark Levels:

- The percentage of students reaching benchmark levels improved markedly from 57% in Fall 2020 to 71% in Fall 2022 and maintained this level into Fall 2023.



## Areas for Improvement:

### 1. Stabilize and Improve Intensive Support Needs:

- The percentage of students requiring intensive support decreased during the 2023-2024 school year:
- **Targeted Interventions:** Identify and address specific skill gaps through targeted interventions.
- **Strengthen Core Instruction:** Enhance the quality of Tier 1 instruction to reduce the number of students needing Tier 2 and Tier 3 support.
- **Progress Monitoring:** Implement regular progress monitoring to ensure interventions are effective and make adjustments as needed.

### 2. Consistent Use of Data for Decision Making:

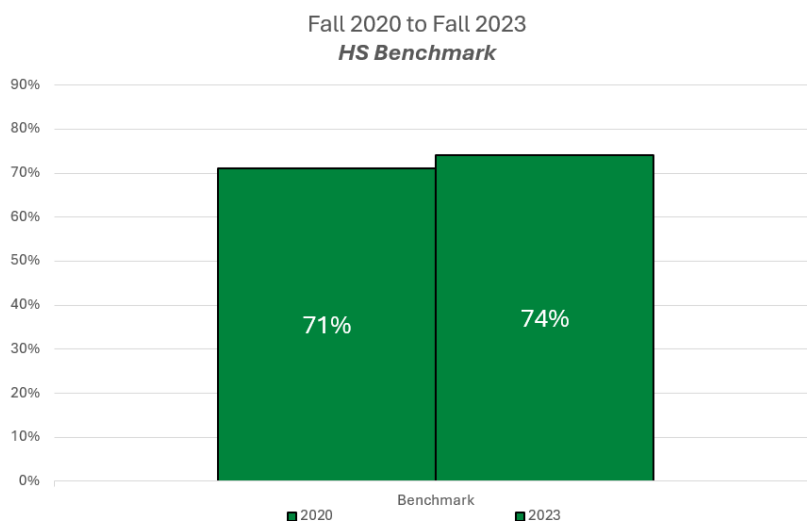
- Ensure that teachers are equipped with the skills to use data effectively for instructional planning:
- **Professional Development:** Provide ongoing training in data-based decision making and progress monitoring.
- **Collaborative Practices:** Encourage collaboration among teachers to share best practices and strategies for improving student outcomes.

## High School (Grades 9-12)

## Celebrate Successes:

### 1. Consistently High Benchmark Levels:

- The percentage of students achieving benchmark levels has remained consistently high, around 71% to 74%, from Fall 2020 to Fall 2023.



## Areas for Improvement:

### 1. Address the Increase in Intensive Support Needs:

- There was a significant increase in the percentage of students needing intensive support from 10% in Fall 2020 to 21% in Fall 2022 and Fall 2023:
- **Diagnostic Assessments:** Conduct thorough assessments to identify specific areas where students need support.
- **Targeted Interventions:** Implement targeted interventions to address specific skill gaps and reduce the number of students needing intensive support.

### 2. Improve Core Tier 1 Instruction Across All Content Areas:

- Given the stable but high benchmark percentages, there is a need to focus on improving core instruction to further boost student performance:
- **Bell to Bell Learning:** Ensure that instructional time is maximized and focused on purposeful reading, writing, and instruction across all content areas.
- **Explicit Instruction:** Incorporate explicit teaching of literacy strategies within all subjects to enhance student comprehension and performance.

## Conclusion

The focused literacy grant enabled Laurel Public Schools to implement a series of targeted interventions and supports that improved literacy outcomes. By aligning instructional resources, strengthening MTSS, and providing comprehensive professional development, the district was able to enhance student performance and reduce the percentage of students needing intensive support. The district was able to get back to pre-pandemic achievement and is now in a place to continue student and teacher growth and success. Continued efforts in these areas will further consolidate these gains and address remaining challenges, particularly in high school intensive support needs.

**Acknowledgement:** This report was drafted in partnership with Laurel Public Schools and STRIVE. STRIVE is grateful to have been a part of Laurel Public Schools' literacy journey over the past four years. [www.strivetlc.com](http://www.strivetlc.com)