MARYLAND READS

2025
IT'S TIME FOR A COMEBACK
AFTER A DECADE OF DECLINE

CONTENTS

"Literacy is not a luxury — it is a lifeline."
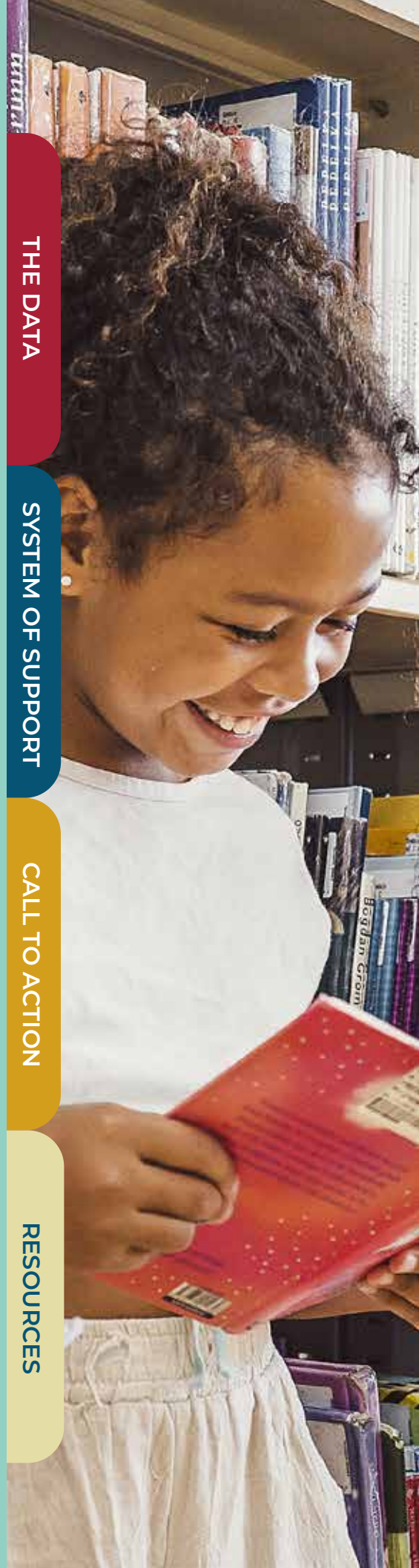
Scan to donate
to MD READS.

THE DATA

SYSTEM OF SUPPORT

CALL TO ACTION

RESOURCES

LETTER FROM OUR
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Trish Brennan-Gac, JD, Executive Director, *Maryland READS*

We are living in a time of extraordinary change. Across Maryland, families and communities are navigating uncertainty — economic pressures, shifting educational landscapes, and new challenges and uncertainties emanating from Washington, DC. But even in these uncertain times, one truth remains: **reading is the foundation of a child's future.**

Reading is more than a subject in school. It is a critical life skill — the doorway to opportunity, success, and empowerment. And right now, we cannot afford to take our eye off the ball when it comes to our state's reading crisis.

"We must remain vigilant."

Six years ago, I experienced a personal family crisis. In the chaos, I stopped tracking my daughter's reading progress — something I had done consistently through her early years. It was only later that her reading struggles came to light. Had I kept my attention on her progress, I might have caught it sooner. That experience taught me a painful but valuable lesson when it comes to building strong readers: **we must remain vigilant.**

Families across Maryland are facing similar challenges. That's why we must come together — as educators, parents, policymakers, and community leaders — to ensure every family and every child is supported in developing a confident, capable reader.

This year's report reflects what we've observed and learned through our engagement across the state. It's not a simple story with easy answers. The challenges are complex and multifaceted — but so is the progress we've made. Maryland has laid a strong foundation. Now, we must build on it.

Reading proficiency is one of the clearest indicators of whether our investments in education and our collective efforts to build a thriving reading ecosystem are working. If we're not moving the needle there, we're not doing enough.

"We must all take responsibility."

We must all take responsibility. It is our collective responsibility to ensure that every dollar, every effort, and every program are making a measurable difference in the lives of our children.

We've designed this report to spark conversations — at the dinner table, in classrooms, at the statehouse, and beyond. Sections include critical insights, action steps, and valuable tools that everyone can use. Our call to action outlines how we can improve instruction, advance thriving reading ecosystems, and remove barriers to proficiency — starting with tackling the emerging digital dilemma.

If you care about Maryland's future, this report is worth your time. Let's work together to change the trajectory for children across our state — because when kids can read, they can succeed.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

2024 was a pivotal year for reading in our state. Maryland READS is grateful to the state leaders who made reading a priority and to the individuals and organizations who helped our organization grow in this foundational year.

First and foremost, we are grateful for the leadership provided by our president, Jennifer Bell-Ellwanger; secretary, Winsome Waite; and our volunteer board of directors, Lisa Blottenberger, Ellen O'Neill, and Kerri Valencia.

Our work last year would not have been possible without the generous support of our funders:

- **Nam-Macgill Family Fund**
- **Sherman Family Foundation**
- **Abell Foundation**
- **T. Rowe Price Foundation**

Maryland READS was thrilled that so many Marylanders stepped up to establish READ Strong Networks in Baltimore City, Montgomery County, Prince George's County and Queen Anne's County. In addition, we welcomed members of our network to our Maryland READS Expert Advisory Delegation whose insights, expertise and experience inform our work. We are grateful to them, along with AttendanceWorks and Improving Education, for sharing their insights to improve this report.

Thank you to everyone who joined with us to support Maryland children in becoming proficient readers. Your support and engagement matters now more than ever!

Nam-Macgill Family Fund

SHERMAN FAMILY FOUNDATION
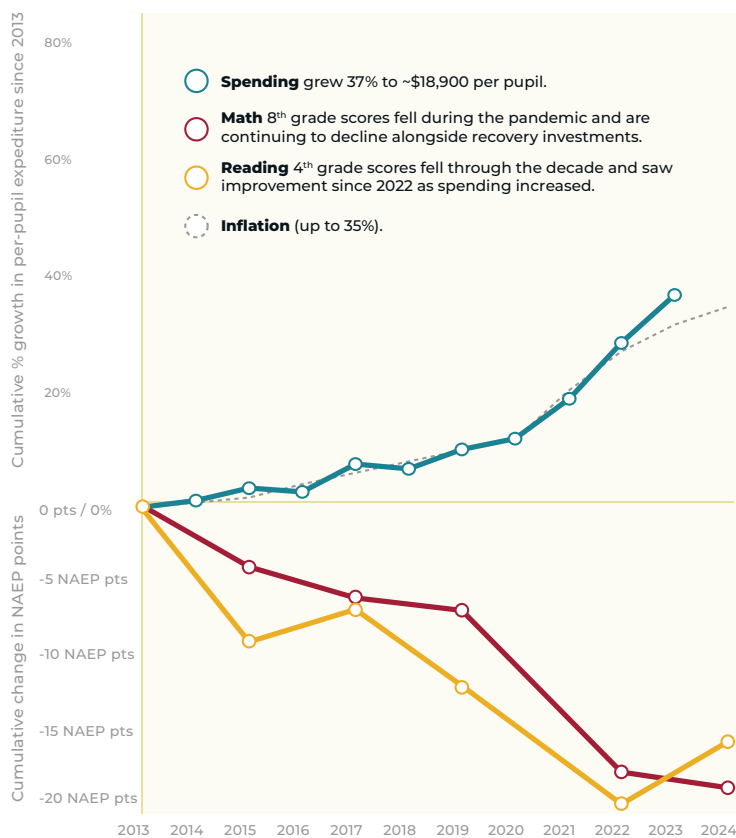
ABELL FOUNDATION

T. Rowe Price

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Just as we were finalizing *The State of Reading in Maryland 2025*, the powerful graphic below caught our attention. It struck a deep chord — especially now, when our state legislature was confronted with tough budget decisions and the challenge of prioritizing where investments can make the greatest difference. Unfortunately, the Legislature fell short when they failure to fund the coaching program supported by MSDE and the State Board.

Yes, additional funding matters. **But what matters even more is what that funding achieves.** In education, one of the most meaningful indicators of success is reading proficiency.

This chart is a wake-up call. It shows us that despite significant investment, we still have a long way to go. To truly transform outcomes for Maryland students, we must go beyond spending — we must relentlessly monitor, measure, and hold ourselves accountable for impact. Most of all, we must be willing to change our practices.

While we find that Maryland is making modest progress, our message this year is straightforward — **now is the time for urgent action.**

At the state level, we are building a strong system of support for reading. Because we know that change can be challenging, this system of support provides school leaders and educators with the resources they need to successfully transform how reading is taught in the classroom. We must also build systems of support to help our communities advance thriving reading

Maryland: Change in Spending and Scores since 2013

- **Spending** grew 37% to ~$18,900 per pupil.
- **Math** 8th grade scores fell during the pandemic and are continuing to decline alongside recovery investments.
- **Reading** 4th grade scores fell through the decade and saw improvement since 2022 as spending increased.
- **Inflation** (up to 35%).

Analysis by Edunomics Lab usig data from these sources: *Scores*: The Nation's Report Card (NAEP) 2013–2024. *Spending*: U.S. Census Annual Survey of School System Finances through 2023. *Inflation*: CPI, BLS. *Questions*: Edunomics@Georgetown.edu

EDUNOMICS LAB

We must go beyond spending — we must relentlessly monitor, measure, and hold ourselves responsible for impact.

67%

of fourth grade students in Maryland were

NOT PROFICIENT
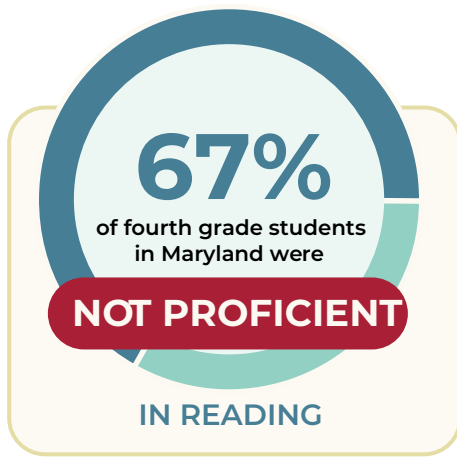
IN READING

ecosystems. Finally, we cannot ignore the growing body of research that is revealing the significant negative impact screens are having on reading.

This year's data from the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) and the Maryland Comprehensive Assessment Program (MCAP) showed a slight improvement in 4th-grade reading. This growth, combined with a series of foundational actions taken by state leaders, offered a glimmer of hope. However, this is only a small step forward in the face of a troubling reality: **67% of Maryland's 4th-grade students are still not proficient readers.**

Let that sink in.

If we were able to continue to have a 3% increase every two years (equivalent to our most recent NAEP increase in reading proficiency), it will take over 40 years for Maryland's children to reach the 95% proficiency rates that research tells us is possible.

As for 8th-grade, the downward trend continues, albeit at a slower pace than in past years.

We must be blunt — we are far from where we need to be.

We must be blunt: we are far from where we need to be. A crisis that was more than a decade in the making cannot be solved in a single year.

Maryland's reading proficiency is nowhere near its potential, and students in our school systems are underperforming. To close this gap, state leaders must provide the necessary resources, support, and accountability to drive real change.

- We must have superior instruction that begins with dramatic reforms to teacher-preparation programs.
- Current educators need to take advantage of the no-cost training programs secured by the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE).
- State leaders must invest in the creation of a statewide coaching program to support our teachers.
- Communities must unite to provide additional resources and support outside school to help students learn to read well.
- And, finally, we must face the growing challenge of a technology landscape that impacts students' ability to develop deep-reading and critical-thinking skills.

The time for incremental progress is over. It's time for urgent action.

We must fix what is broken, abandon what is not working, build on the foundation we've established, and push even harder to ensure every child has the opportunity to succeed.

The time for incremental progress is over. It's time for urgent action.

THE DATA

How Strong Are Maryland's Reading Instruction Systems?

Looking at data is like checking your body's health. If your temperature is 98 degrees and your pulse is 80 beats per minute, you're more likely to be healthy. But if your temperature or pulse is a little high or a little low, it may be a sign of something wrong. If it's way off, you know you're sick. This is a warning to visit a doctor, figure out what's wrong, and how to fix it.

Maryland READS uses the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) and The Maryland Comprehensive Assessment Program (MCAP) reading scores as a temperature and pulse check on how well our schools are doing at teaching reading. If our schools are doing well, we expect most students to have good reading scores.

ABOUT THE DATA

Our reading proficiency scores come from two data sources:

The National Assessment of Educational Progress is run by the U.S. Department of Education's National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) and managed by the National Assessment Governing Board (NAGB). The English language arts test measures how well students can read. Since the same test is given in every state, it helps us compare how students are doing in different states. That's why it's often called The Nation's Report Card. www.nationsreportcard.gov

The Maryland Comprehensive Assessment Program (MCAP) is run by the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) and follows the Maryland College and Career-Ready Standards (MCCR). These standards show what students should know and be able to do at each grade level. When we say a student is proficient on a state reading test, it means they are reading at the level they should be for their grade. We can use MCAP tests to see how students improve each year. www.reportcard.msde.maryland.gov

> **Time's up — we must all work together and begin building tomorrow's readers today.**

WHAT THE DATA REVEALS

Each year, Maryland READS dives deep into reading proficiency data and key factors that influence literacy to assess whether we are meeting our fundamental responsibility to educate Maryland's children.

In our inaugural report, *the results were stark:* for the preceding decade, our reading proficiency rates had been in a steady decline that was largely ignored — and our state systems of support had failed to deliver on their promises and potential.

This year, we saw a glimmer of hope with a slight improvement in 4th-grade reading scores. However, these are just preliminary steps forward in the face of a troubling reality: **67% of Maryland's 4th-grade students are still not proficient readers.**

As for 8th-grade, the downward trend continues, albeit at a slower pace.

Last year, we sounded the alarm about the growing reading crisis in our state. Today, while we recognize the strides being made to build stronger systems of support, **we must be blunt: we are far from where we need to be.** A crisis a decade in the making cannot be solved in a single year.

Time's up — we must all work together and begin building tomorrow's readers today. We can begin by taking a close look at where we stand and where we want to go.
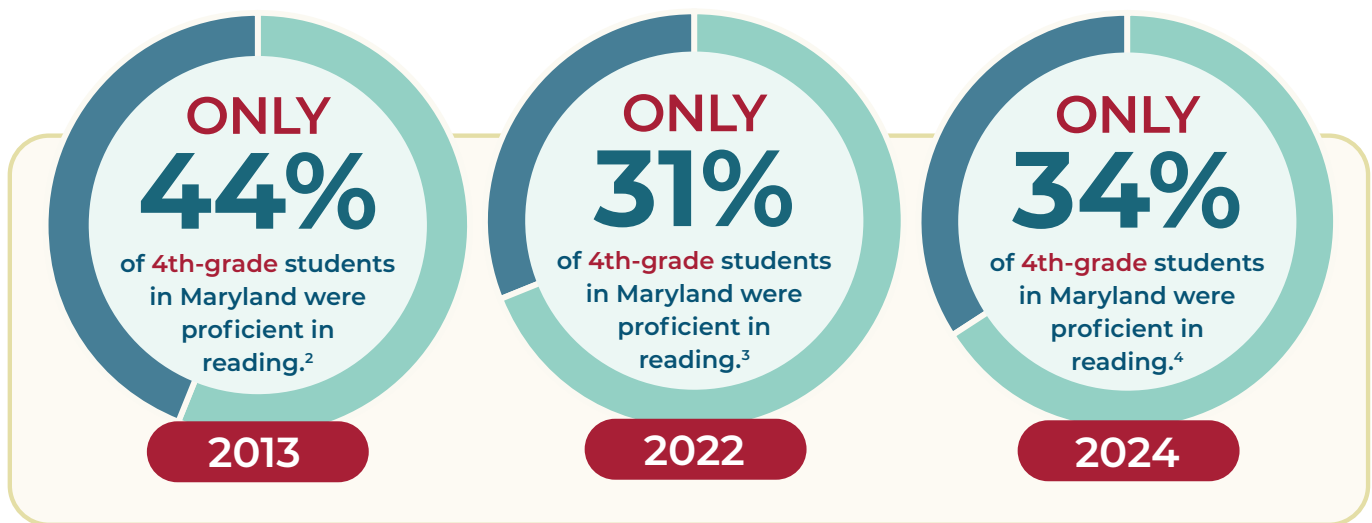
Incremental Progress in Early Literacy

Improving how we teach reading in the early grades is important not only because it means more students will learn to read but also because it will help them understand harder reading material as they move to more difficult subjects in school.

Studies show that students who can read well by the end of 4th-grade are much more likely to finish high school on time and go to college or get a good job. A report from the Annie E. Casey Foundation found that students who struggle with reading by 4th-grade are four times more likely to drop out of high school compared to students who are good readers.[1] This is because 4th-grade is a key time when students go from "learning to read" to "reading to learn." Students who fall behind in reading in the early grades can have a hard time keeping up in all subjects. Being a good reader early on is linked to better grades, more job opportunities, and success in life. By making sure more students can read well by 4th-grade, schools and communities can help students stay confident, engaged, and successful readers for the rest of their lives.

We must fix what is broken, abandon what is not working, build on the foundation we've established, and push even harder to ensure every child has the opportunity to succeed.

ONLY
44%
of **4th-grade** students in Maryland were proficient in reading.[2]

2013

ONLY
31%
of **4th-grade** students in Maryland were proficient in reading.[3]

2022

ONLY
34%
of **4th-grade** students in Maryland were proficient in reading.[4]

2024

The good news is that we halted our decline in 4th-grade reading scores, reversed the downward trajectory, and increased our state's national ranking. But this is just an incremental step forward. We are just beginning to see early improvement in reading proficiency scores. We need more dramatic change, and we can achieve it.

Maryland's 4th-grade reading scores increased from *212 to 216*.
While encouraging, it is not the dramatic progress our children need.

Average 4th-Grade Scores for State/Jurisdiction and the Nation (Public)

Maryland's 2024 Ranking Increased

40 SEAs*	SEAs Ranked **ABOVE** Maryland	20 SEAs
2022		**2024**
12 SEAs	SEAs Ranked **BELOW** Maryland	32 SEAs
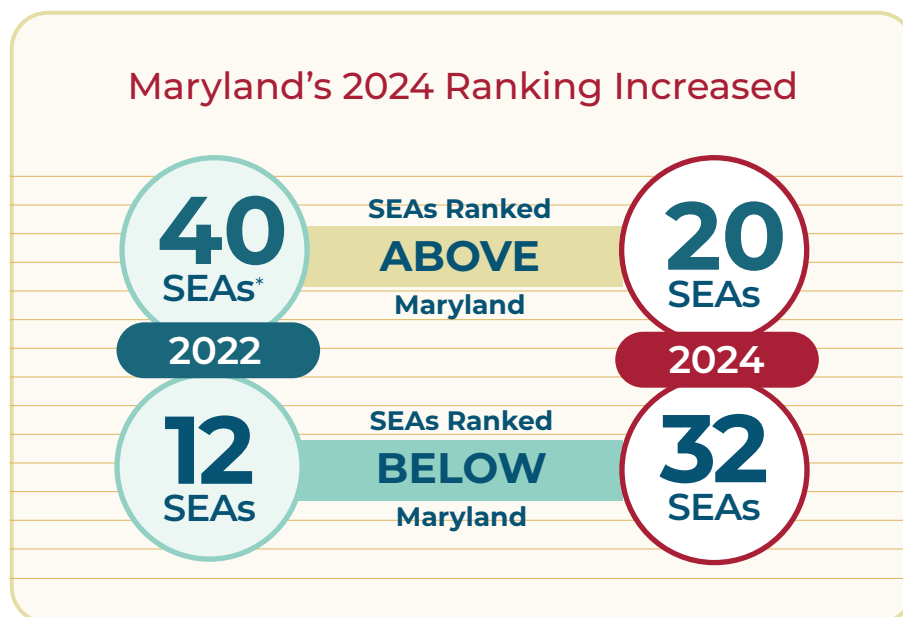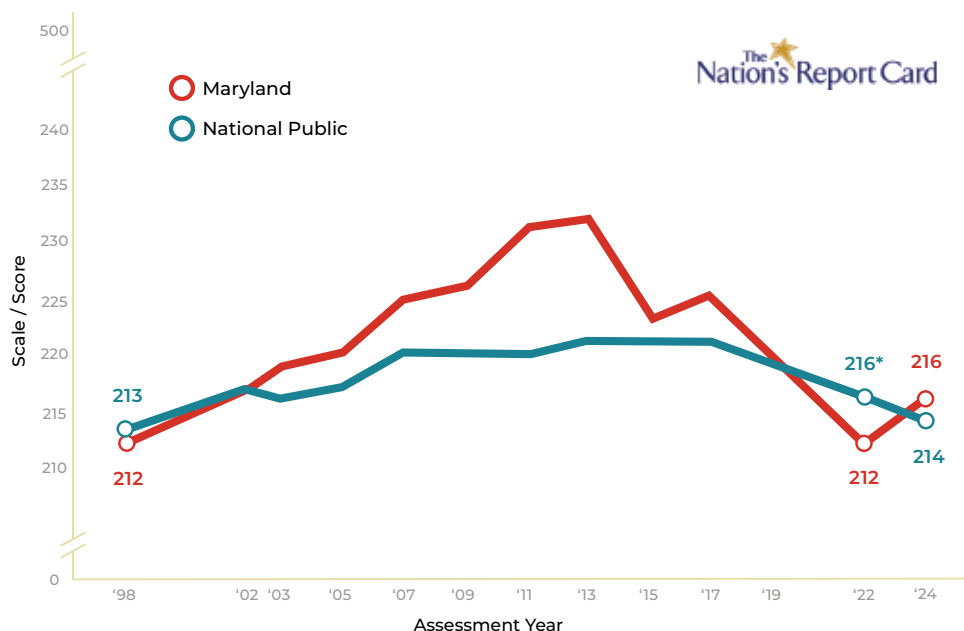
* SEA = State Education Agency
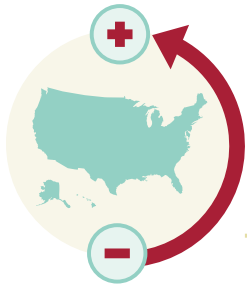
Maryland rose from *below* the national average to *above* the national average.

4th-Grade Reading Scores

2022

2022 4th GRADE

JURISDICTION	AVERAGE SCORE	
DoDEA	235	19
Massachusetts	227	11
Wyoming	225	9
Florida	225	9
Colorado	223	7
New Jersey	223	7
New Hampshire	223	6
Utah	221	5
Connecticut	219	3
Pennsylvania	219	3
Hawaii	219	3
Montana	219	3
Nebraska	219	3
Ohio	219	2
South Dakota	218	2
Iowa	218	2
Illinois	218	2
North Dakota	218	1
Wisconsin	217	1
Indiana	217	1
Rhode Island	217	1
Mississippi	217	1
Vermont	217	1
Washington	217	1
Kentucky	217	0
South Carolina	216	0
North Carolina	216	0
National public	216	
Georgia	216	0
Arizona	215	-1
Minnesota	215	-1
Idaho	215	-1
Kansas	215	-1
California	214	-2
Texas	214	-2
Virginia	214	-2
Tennessee	214	-2
New York	214	-3
Missouri	213	-3
Alabama	213	-3
Maine	213	-3
Maryland	212	-4
Louisiana	212	-4
Arkansas	212	-4
Michigan	212	-4
Nevada	212	-5
Oregon	210	-6
Delaware	208	-8
Oklahoma	208	-8
District of Columbia	207	-9
West Virginia	205	-11
Alaska	204	-12
New Mexico	202	-14
Puerto Rico	—	—

2024

2024 4th GRADE

JURISDICTION	AVERAGE SCORE	
DoDEA	234	20
Massachusetts	225	11
Wyoming	222	8
New Jersey	222	7
New Hampshire	221	7
Colorado	221	7
Indiana	220	6
Utah	219	5
Connecticut	219	5
Mississippi	219	4
Florida	218	4
Kentucky	218	4
Montana	217	3
Rhode Island	216	2
Ohio	216	2
Louisiana	216	2
Hawaii	216	2
Pennsylvania	216	1
Washington	216	1
Idaho	216	1
Maryland	216	1
North Dakota	216	1
Wisconsin	215	1
Tennessee	215	1
South Carolina	215	1
New York	215	0
Iowa	215	0
Minnesota	214	0
Georgia	214	0
National public	214	
Illinois	214	0
Virginia	214	0
South Dakota	214	0
North Carolina	213	-1
Alabama	213	-1
Nevada	213	-1
Kansas	213	-1
Vermont	213	-2
Texas	212	-2
Missouri	212	-2
California	212	-3
Nebraska	212	-3
Arkansas	210	-5
Maine	210	-5
Delaware	210	-5
District of Columbia	209	-5
Michigan	209	-5
Arizona	208	-6
Oklahoma	207	-7
Oregon	207	-7
West Virginia	206	-8
Alaska	202	-13
New Mexico	201	-14
Puerto Rico	—	—

While this change in trajectory is encouraging, **we cannot overlook this glaring fact: 67% of Maryland 4th-graders were not proficient readers.**

If we were able to continue to have a 3% increase every two years (equivalent to our most recent NAEP increase), **it will take over 40 years for Maryland's children to reach the 95% proficiency rate that research tells us is possible.**

In the *State of Reading in Maryland 2024*, we looked at a Watershed Advisors study of how 4th-grade reading scores have changed. Over the past 10 years, Maryland had the fastest decline in reading scores among all states. What about this year?

Watershed Advisors' 2025 study looked at the most recent 4th-grade NAEP reading scores, examining how Maryland's changes compare to other states.

At the current rate of progress, it will take over 40 years for Maryland's children to reach the 95% proficiency rate that research tells us is possible.

This good news is that Maryland is now one of the top states for improving its reading scores. We believe this has its roots in early reading investments, such as the Maryland Leads grants from the MSDE.

Are we willing to sustain these investments so we can maintain — and dramatically improve — this nascent momentum?

Change in Percent of 4th-Grade Students Proficient (2022 to 2024)

Jurisdiction	Rank	Value
District of Columbia	1	4
Louisiana	1	4
Maryland	3	3
Nevada	3	3
West Virginia	3	3
Kentucky	6	2
Tennessee	6	2
Connecticut	8	1
Delaware	8	1
Indiana	8	1
Mississippi	8	1
New York	8	1
Alabama	13	0
Idaho	13	0
New Jersey	13	0
South Carolina	13	0
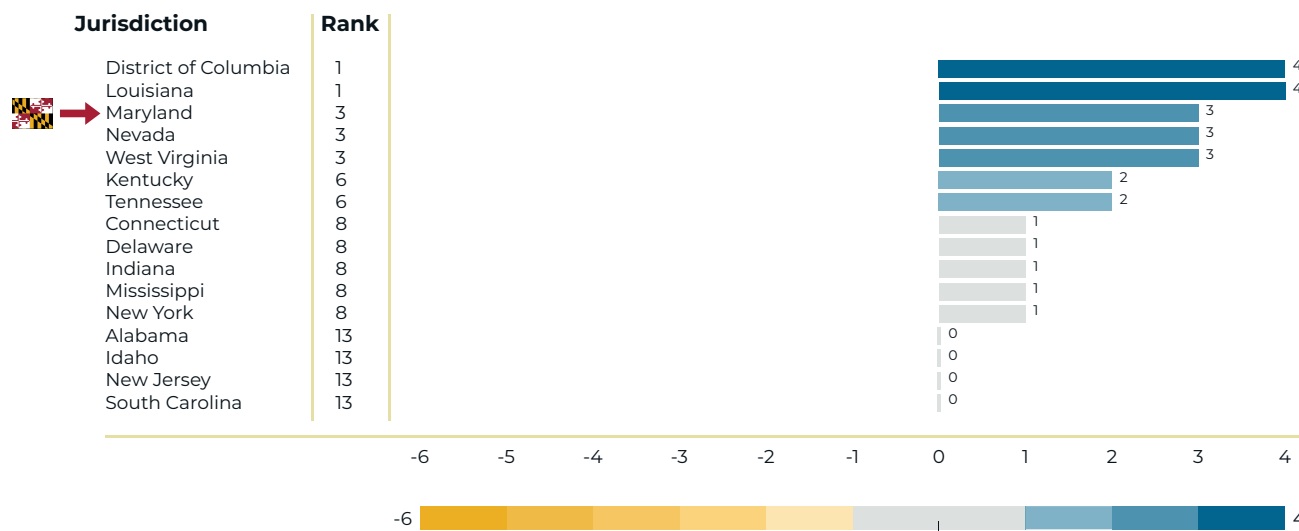
Continued, but Slower Decline in Adolescent Literacy

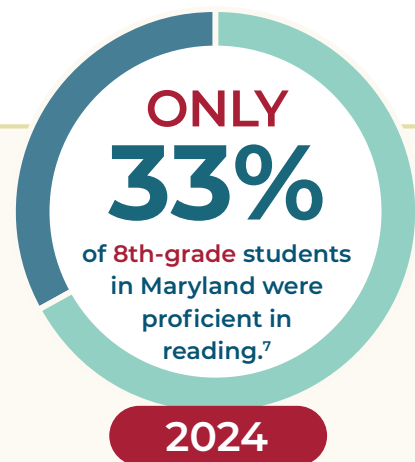As students move into middle and high school, they read more difficult texts in subjects like science, history, and math. They need strong reading comprehension, critical-thinking, and problem-solving skills. Without strong reading skills, they are likely to have trouble understanding their schoolwork, which can make it harder to do well in high school and beyond. Research from NAEP shows that students who struggle with reading in middle and high school are more likely to drop out and have fewer job opportunities. Also, reading skills are important for being active in the community, understanding media, and navigating the digital world.

The *State of Reading in Maryland 2024* focused only on early reading skills. This year, we are expanding our focus to include older students.

Research from NAEP shows that students who struggle with reading in middle and high school are more likely to drop out and have fewer job opportunities.

ONLY
43%
of **8th-grade** students in Maryland were proficient in reading.[5]

2013

ONLY
33%
of **8th-grade** students in Maryland were proficient in reading.[6]

2022

ONLY
33%
of **8th-grade** students in Maryland were proficient in reading.[7]

2024

Maryland's 8th-grade reading scores decreased one point from *259 to 258*.

Average 8th Grade Scores for State/Jurisdiction and the Nation (Public)
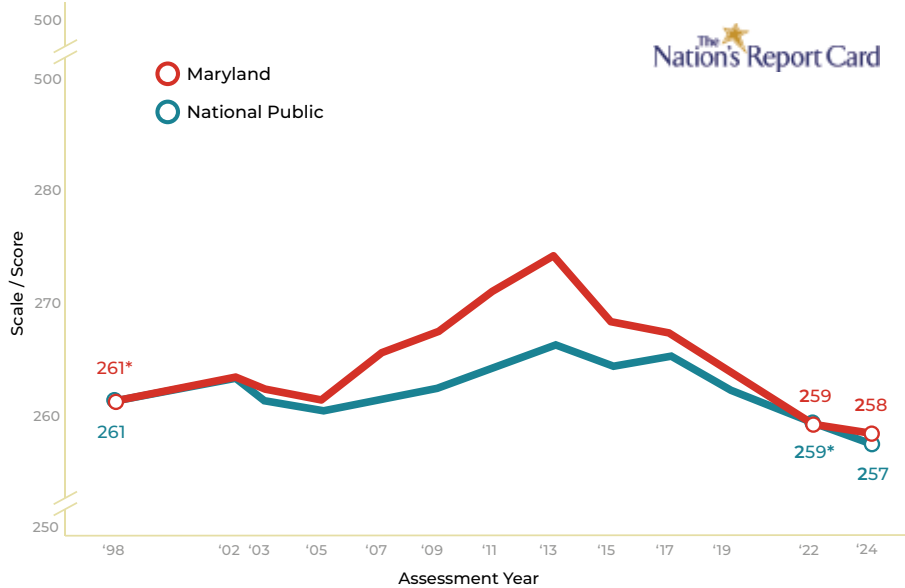
Our downward slide is continuing *but the rate of decline is slowing.*

Yet, even with this decrease, Maryland's state ranking increased.

Maryland rose from *resting at* the national average to *just above* the national average. However, this change of ranking is not due to improvement in Maryland but instead to a decline in other states.

Maryland's 2024 Ranking Increased

25 SEAs*	SEAs Ranked **ABOVE** Maryland	**20** SEAs
2022		2024
27 SEAs	SEAs Ranked **BELOW** Maryland	**32** SEAs
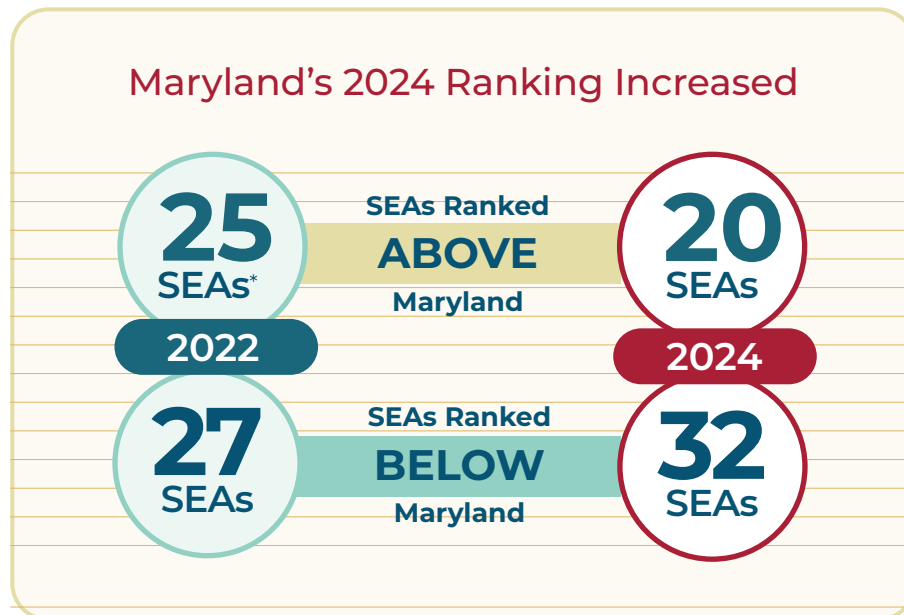
* SEA = State Education Agency

This improvement in state rankings is nothing to celebrate. Instead, it underscores that Maryland — and our nation — must focus on adolescent literacy.

8th-Grade Reading Scores

2022

The Nation's Report Card

2022 8th GRADE JURISDICTION	AVERAGE SCORE	
DoDEA	282	23
New Jersey	270	11
Massachusetts	269	10
Utah	265	6
Connecticut	264	5
Vermont	264	5
Idaho	264	4
Colorado	263	4
New Hampshire	263	4
Wisconsin	262	3
Ohio	262	3
Illinois	262	3
South Dakota	262	3
New York	262	3
Washington	262	2
Montana	261	2
Wyoming	261	2
Indiana	261	1
Minnesota	260	1
Georgia	260	1
Iowa	260	1
Florida	260	1
Virginia	260	0
Rhode Island	259	0
Nebraska	259	0
Maryland	259	0
National public	259	
Pennsylvania	259	0
Hawaii	259	0
Nevada	259	0
California	259	0
Arizona	259	-1
Michigan	259	-1
Kentucky	258	-1
North Dakota	258	-1
Missouri	258	-1
Tennessee	258	-2
Oregon	257	-2
Maine	257	-2
Louisiana	257	-2
Kansas	256	-3
North Carolina	256	-3
Texas	255	-4
Arkansas	255	-4
South Carolina	254	-5
Delaware	253	-6
Mississippi	253	-6
Alaska	253	-7
Oklahoma	251	-8
Alabama	251	-8
District of Columbia	250	-9
West Virginia	249	-10
New Mexico	248	-11
Puerto Rico	—	—

2024

The Nation's Report Card

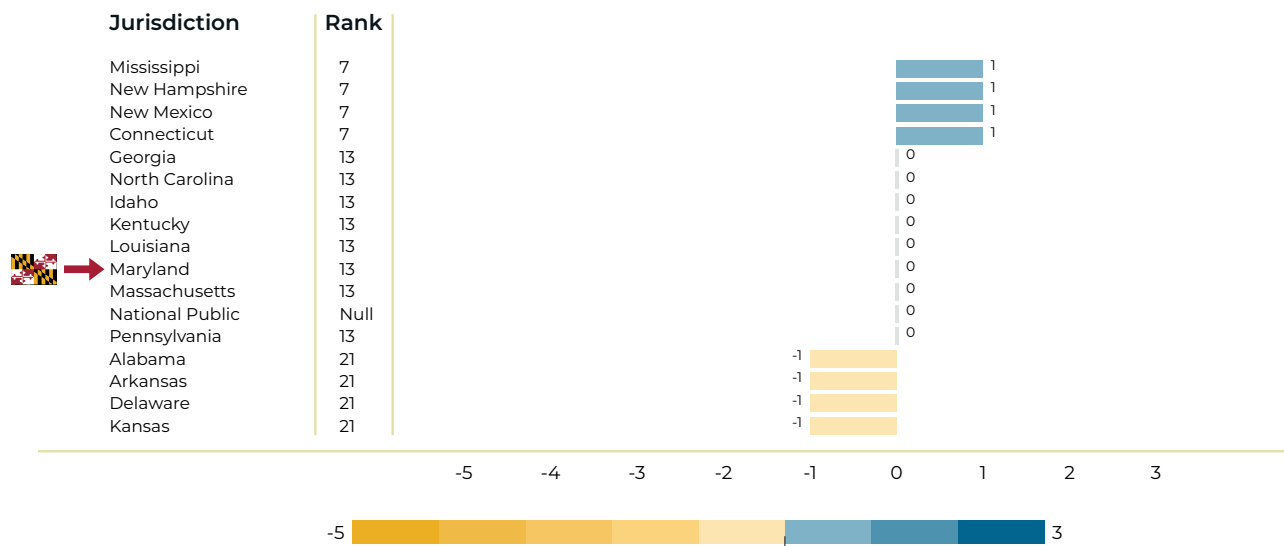| 2024 8th GRADE JURISDICTION	AVERAGE SCORE	
DoDEA	282	25
Massachusetts	268	11
New Jersey	266	9
Colorado	265	8
New Hampshire	264	7
Connecticut	263	6
Indiana	262	5
Illinois	262	5
Utah	261	5
Idaho	261	4
Iowa	261	4
Montana	261	4
Ohio	260	4
Wisconsin	260	3
Minnesota	260	3
Wyoming	260	3
South Dakota	260	3
Georgia	259	3
Washington	259	3
Pennsylvania	259	2
Tennessee	259	2
Maryland	258	2
Kentucky	258	1
Rhode Island	258	1
North Dakota	257	1
Hawaii	257	1
Vermont	257	1
New York	257	0
National public	257	
Louisiana	257	0
Virginia	256	0
Nebraska	256	-1
Kansas	255	-1
Missouri	255	-1
Michigan	255	-2
Maine	255	-2
North Carolina	255	-2
Oregon	255	-2
Arkansas	255	-2
California	254	-2
Arizona	254	-2
South Carolina	254	-3
Mississippi	253	-3
Nevada	253	-3
Florida	253	-4
Texas	252	-4
District of Columbia	251	-5
Alabama	250	-7
Delaware	249	-7
Oklahoma	249	-8
West Virginia	247	-9
Alaska	246	-10
New Mexico	245	-12
Puerto Rico	—	—

This improvement in state rankings is nothing to celebrate.

Watershed Advisors' analysis for 8th-grade reading tells a similar story as their analysis for 4th-grade.

From 2013 to 2024, Maryland's decline was among the fastest in the nation, putting our state fifth from the bottom in terms of declining scores. But an analysis of change from 2022 to 2024 puts Maryland in the middle of the pack.

Can we now build momentum in our rate of change so that it represents notable improvement?

Change in Percent of Students Proficient (2022 to 2024)

WATERSHED ADVISORS

Jurisdiction	Rank	Change
Mississippi	7	1
New Hampshire	7	1
New Mexico	7	1
Connecticut	7	1
Georgia	13	0
North Carolina	13	0
Idaho	13	0
Kentucky	13	0
Louisiana	13	0
Maryland	13	0
Massachusetts	13	0
National Public	Null	0
Pennsylvania	13	0
Alabama	21	-1
Arkansas	21	-1
Delaware	21	-1
Kansas	21	-1

-5 -4 -3 -2 -1 0 1 2 3

-5 ▬▬▬▬▬▬▬▬▬ 3

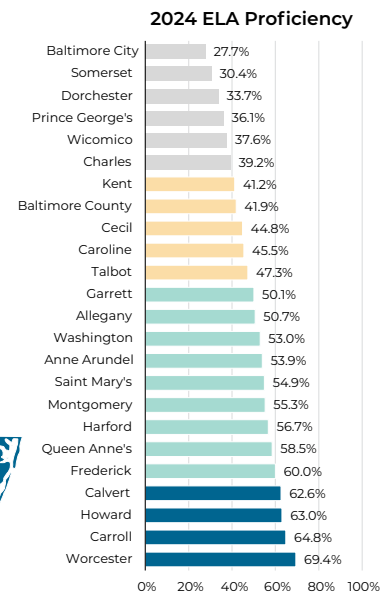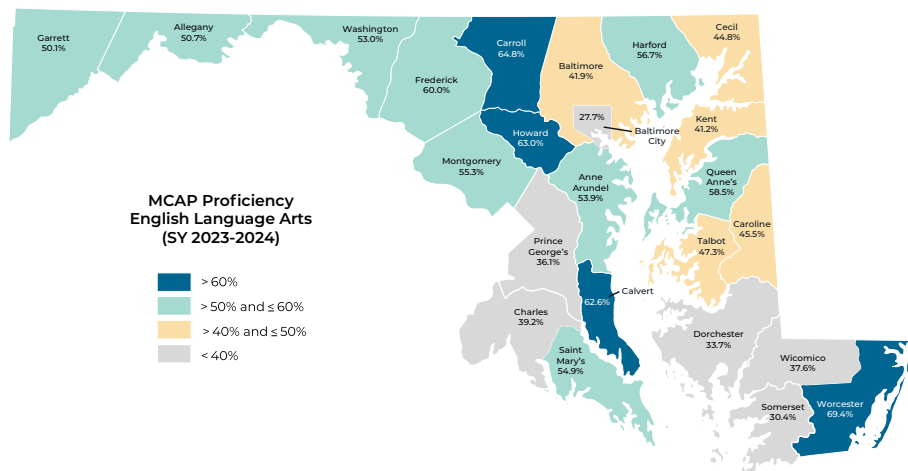**66,619 Maryland 4th and 8th graders cannot read proficiently.**

Trends Within Maryland

As Marylanders, we are interested in knowing how we measure up to other states, but we also want to know how our students' performance compares in their school districts within the state. Maryland READS uses the Maryland Comprehensive Assessment Program (MCAP) reading scores to assess the health of reading instruction in individual districts.

When looking across ALL grades, countywide reading proficiency rates for **all tested students** range from 27.7% to 69.4%.

ELA Proficiency by LEA*, SY 2023-2024

ELA proficiency for all tests combined varied from 27.7% to 69.4% across LEAs.

MCAP Proficiency English Language Arts (SY 2023-2024)

- > 60%
- > 50% and ≤ 60%
- > 40% and ≤ 50%
- < 40%

Garrett 50.1%, Allegany 50.7%, Washington 53.0%, Carroll 64.8%, Harford 56.7%, Cecil 44.8%, Frederick 60.0%, Baltimore 41.9%, Howard 63.0%, Baltimore City 27.7%, Kent 41.2%, Montgomery 55.3%, Anne Arundel 53.9%, Queen Anne's 58.5%, Prince George's 36.1%, Caroline 45.5%, Talbot 47.3%, Calvert 62.6%, Charles 39.2%, Dorchester 33.7%, Saint Mary's 54.9%, Wicomico 37.6%, Somerset 30.4%, Worcester 69.4%

**LEA = Local Education Agency

2024 ELA Proficiency

LEA	Proficiency
Baltimore City	27.7%
Somerset	30.4%
Dorchester	33.7%
Prince George's	36.1%
Wicomico	37.6%
Charles	39.2%
Kent	41.2%
Baltimore County	41.9%
Cecil	44.8%
Caroline	45.5%
Talbot	47.3%
Garrett	50.1%
Allegany	50.7%
Washington	53.0%
Anne Arundel	53.9%
Saint Mary's	54.9%
Montgomery	55.3%
Harford	56.7%
Queen Anne's	58.5%
Frederick	60.0%
Calvert	62.6%
Howard	63.0%
Carroll	64.8%
Worcester	69.4%

To understand the progress each district is making, we'll examine 4th- and 8th-grade proficiency rates in two ways.

First, we examine the current district proficiency rates. This tells us where we are. Second, we examine the change in proficiency rates. This gives us insight into the impact to district efforts to improve literacy.

4th-Grade Proficiency Rates

CURRENT
PROFICIENCY RATES (2024)

LEA District	2024 Proficient	Change in ranking	Change in Proficiency Rates
Worcester	72.7	0	1.6
Carroll	64.2	0	-2.2
Frederick	63.6	4	4.7
Calvert	63.5	-1	.8
Queen Anne's	61.4	0	-.7
Harford	61.8	0	2.6
Howard	61.8	-3	-.4
Allegany	58.5	4	9.9
Saint Mary's	56.0	1	3.4
Anne Arundel	55.9	-1	2.3
Montgomery	55.9	-3	-1.7
Garrett	52.3	3	7.7
Washington	50.5	-2	-.2
Caroline	47.6	4	3.9
Baltimore	47.2	1	2.8
Cecil	46.2	-3	-1.5
Talbot	43.1	0	-.8
Charles	40.2	2	-.2
Kent	39.8	-5	-7.5
Wicomico	38.1	2	2.9
Dorchester	37.0	2	2.5
Prince George's	35.4	-1	-1.8
Somerset	35.7	-4	-5.2
Baltimore City	23.7	0	.4

■ 50% or more   ■ 25-50%   ■ Less than 25%

CHANGE
PROFICIENCY RATES (2023-2024)

LEA District	2024 Proficient	Change in Ranking	Change in Proficiency Rates
Allegany	58.5	4	9.9
Garrett	52.3	3	7.7
Frederick	63.6	4	4.7
Caroline	47.6	4	3.9
Saint Mary's	56.0	1	3.4
Wicomico	38.1	2	2.9
Baltimore	47.2	1	2.8
Harford	61.8	0	2.6
Dorchester	37.0	2	2.5
Anne Arundel	55.9	-1	2.3
Worcester	72.7	0	1.6
Calvert	63.5	-1	0.8
Baltimore City	23.7	0	0.4
Charles	40.2	2	-0.2
Washington	50.5	-2	-0.2
Howard	61.8	-3	-0.4
Queen Anne's	61.4	0	-0.7
Talbot	43.1	0	-0.8
Cecil	46.2	-3	-1.5
Montgomery	55.9	-3	-1.7
Prince George's	35.4	-1	-1.8
Carroll	64.2	0	-2.2
Somerset	35.7	-4	-5.2
Kent County	39.8	-5	-7.5

■ rates increased   ■ rates decreased

- In almost half (11) of our school districts, more than 50% of 4th-grade students cannot read proficiently.
- In the highest-performing district, more than 27% of students cannot read proficiently.
- Almost half of Maryland school districts (11) had a decline in proficiency rates.
- Two of the five districts with the highest proficiency rates had a decline in proficiency rates.
- Three of the five districts with the lowest proficiency rates saw an increase.

8th-Grade Proficiency Rates

CURRENT
PROFICIENCY RATES (2024)

LEA District	2024 Proficient	Change in ranking	Change in Proficiency Rates
Worcester	68.3	0	-1.9
Carroll	65.0	1	2.3
Howard	61.5	2	1.2
Calvert	61.3	-2	-5.8
Queen Anne's	60.6	-1	.2
Frederick	58.8	0	2.7
Garrett	56.0	4	4.2
Allegany	53.8	6	3.6
Anne Arundel	53.2	1	.9
Montgomery	52.7	-1	.0
Harford	52.4	2	1.3
Saint Mary's	51.8	-5	-3.6
Washington	49.5	-5	-5.2
Talbot	46.7	1	2.6
Cecil	44.5	-3	-6.8
Charles	39.5	0	-1.2
Wicomico	39.2	4	4.6
Caroline	36.9	-1	-3.5
Kent	36.6	-1	-2.1
Baltimore	35.8	0	.6
Prince George's	32.9	-2	-5.5
Dorchester	30.4	1	1.8
Baltimore City	28.4	-1	-.6
Somerset	20.4	0	-5.7

🟩 50% or more   🟨 25-50%   🟥 Less than 25%

CHANGE
PROFICIENCY RATES (2023-2024)

LEA District	2024 Proficient	Change in Ranking	Change in Proficiency Rates
Wicomico	39.2	4	4.6
Garrett	56.0	4	4.2
Allegany	53.8	6	3.6
Frederick	58.8	0	2.7
Talbot	46.7	1	2.6
Carroll	65.0	1	2.3
Dorchester	30.4	1	1.8
Harford	52.4	2	1.3
Howard	61.5	2	1.2
Anne Arundel	53.2	1	0.9
Baltimore	35.8	0	0.6
Queen Anne's	60.6	-1	0.2
Montgomery	52.7	-1	0.0
Baltimore City	28.4	-1	-0.6
Charles	39.5	0	-1.2
Worcester	68.3	0	-1.9
Kent	36.6	-1	-2.1
Caroline	36.9	-1	-3.5
Saint Mary's	51.8	-5	-3.6
Washington	49.5	-5	-5.2
Prince George's	32.9	-2	-5.5
Somerset	20.4	0	-5.7
Calvert	61.3	-2	-5.8
Cecil	44.5	-3	-6.8

🟩 rates increased   🟥 rates decreased

- In half (12) of our school districts, more than 50% of 8th-grade students cannot read proficiently.

- In the highest-performing district, roughly 32% of students cannot read proficiently.

- Almost half of Maryland school districts (11) had a decline in proficiency rates from the previous year.

- Two of the five districts with the highest proficiency rates had a decline in 8th-grade reading proficiency rates

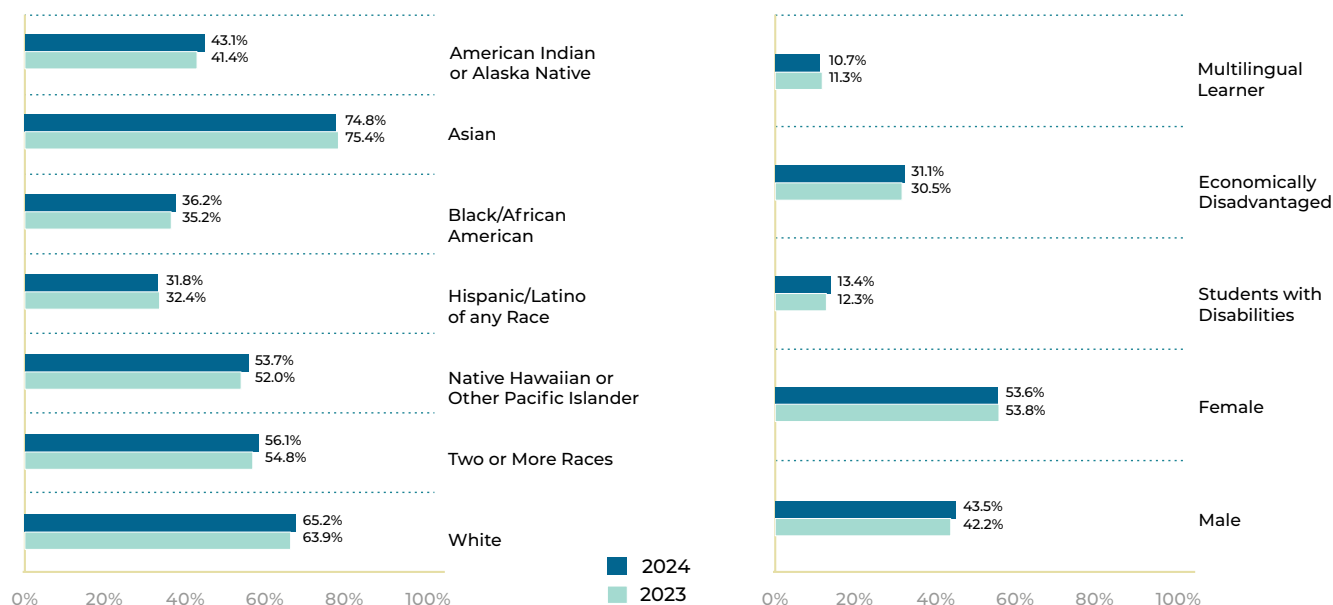- Two of the five districts with the lowest proficiency rates saw an increase.

Performance Among Demographic Groups of Students

Since Maryland is one of the most diverse states in the country, we need to think about not just where students live, but also how race, ethnicity, and family income can affect their education outcomes. MCAP data gives us important information about how different groups of students are doing.

Research shows that a student's socioeconomic status (SES) can impact their school performance. Studies [8] have found that these factors are related to the achievement gaps between Black and White students (which range from 34% to 64%, depending on the subject and grade). While many factors affect reading skills, it's important to explore why some groups of students have lower reading scores and find ways to help them. If we don't, we will be to blame for leaving those students behind.

According to the MSDE, most student groups saw a small increase or no change in their MCAP scores in English language arts (ELA) scores for the 2023-2024 school year. The only groups that had declines were Asian, Hispanic/Latino, and multilingual learners. However, there are still large gaps in proficiency between Hispanic/Latino, Black/African American, and Native American students compared to White and Asian students.

ELA Proficiency by Student Group, SY 2023-2024 Compared to SY 2022-2023

American Indian or Alaska Native: 43.1% (2024), 41.4% (2023)
Asian: 74.8% (2024), 75.4% (2023)
Black/African American: 36.2% (2024), 35.2% (2023)
Hispanic/Latino of any Race: 31.8% (2024), 32.4% (2023)
Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander: 53.7% (2024), 52.0% (2023)
Two or More Races: 56.1% (2024), 54.8% (2023)
White: 65.2% (2024), 63.9% (2023)

Multilingual Learner: 10.7% (2024), 11.3% (2023)
Economically Disadvantaged: 31.1% (2024), 30.5% (2023)
Students with Disabilities: 13.4% (2024), 12.3% (2023)
Female: 53.6% (2024), 53.8% (2023)
Male: 43.5% (2024), 42.2% (2023)

Every Data Point is a Child

According to the 2024 MCAP Data, **32,538 4th-grade students and 34,381 8th-grade students cannot read proficiently. This is 66,919 children in just two grades!**

4th-Grade Proficient and Non-proficient Students (2024)

LEA District	Percent Proficient	Percent Non-proficient	Number of Students Not Proficent
Worcester	72.7	27.3	136
Carroll	64.2	35.8	716
Frederick	63.6	36.4	1251
Calvert	63.5	36.5	401
Queen Anne's	61.4	38.6	199
Harford	61.8	38.2	1075
Howard	61.8	38.2	1601
Allegany	58.5	41.5	248
Saint Mary's	56.0	44.0	552
Anne Arundel	55.9	44.1	2768
Montgomery	55.9	44.1	4987
Garrett	52.3	47.7	114
Washington	50.5	49.5	798
Caroline	47.6	52.4	198
Baltimore	47.2	52.8	4191
Cecil	46.2	53.8	561
Talbot	43.1	56.9	177
Charles	40.2	59.8	1158
Kent	39.8	60.2	68
Wicomico	38.1	61.9	700
Dorchester	37.0	63.0	211
Prince George's	35.4	64.6	6123
Somerset	35.7	64.3	137
Baltimore City	23.7	76.3	4168

8th-Grade Proficient and Non-proficient Students (2024)

LEA District	Percent Proficient	Percent Non-proficient	Number of Students Not Proficent
Worcester	68.3	31.7	166
Carroll	65.0	35.0	666
Howard	61.5	38.5	1663
Calvert	61.3	38.7	442
Queen Anne's	60.6	39.4	202
Frederick	58.8	41.2	1450
Garrett	56.0	44.0	117
Allegany	53.8	46.2	279
Anne Arundel	53.2	46.8	2942
Montgomery	52.7	47.3	5485
Harford	52.4	47.6	1316
Saint Mary's	51.8	48.2	598
Washington	49.5	50.5	806
Talbot	46.7	53.3	163
Cecil	44.5	55.5	586
Charles	39.5	60.5	1277
Wicomico	39.2	60.8	612
Caroline	36.9	63.1	248
Kent	36.6	63.4	90
Baltimore	35.8	64.2	4946
Prince George's	32.9	67.1	6308
Dorchester	30.4	69.6	222
Baltimore City	28.4	71.6	3637
Somerset	20.4	79.6	160

OTHER CRITICAL FACTORS IMPACTING READING PROFICIENCY

One of the most important ways to improve reading skills is by making sure classroom teachers follow the Science of Reading through clear and direct instruction. Part of the reason for our reading problem can be attributed to teacher-training programs.

When the 2024 NAEP scores were released, many news sources, including the Associated Press,[9] started to examine **factors beyond instruction** that could influence student performance. Two such factors were the large numbers of students missing school (chronic absenteeism) and an inappropriate amount of screen time.

On the next pages, we share data about teacher training, absentee rates, and the overuse of screen time as barriers to reading proficiency in Maryland.

Teacher-Preparation Programs

The *State of Reading in Maryland 2024* discussed a 2023 report from the National Center on Teacher Quality (NCTQ) that showed most teacher-training programs in Maryland weren't helping teachers learn how to teach reading well. In 2024, NCTQ released a new report called *State of the States 2024* that listed five important policy steps states can take to strengthen reading instruction. Maryland got a moderate rating in this report.
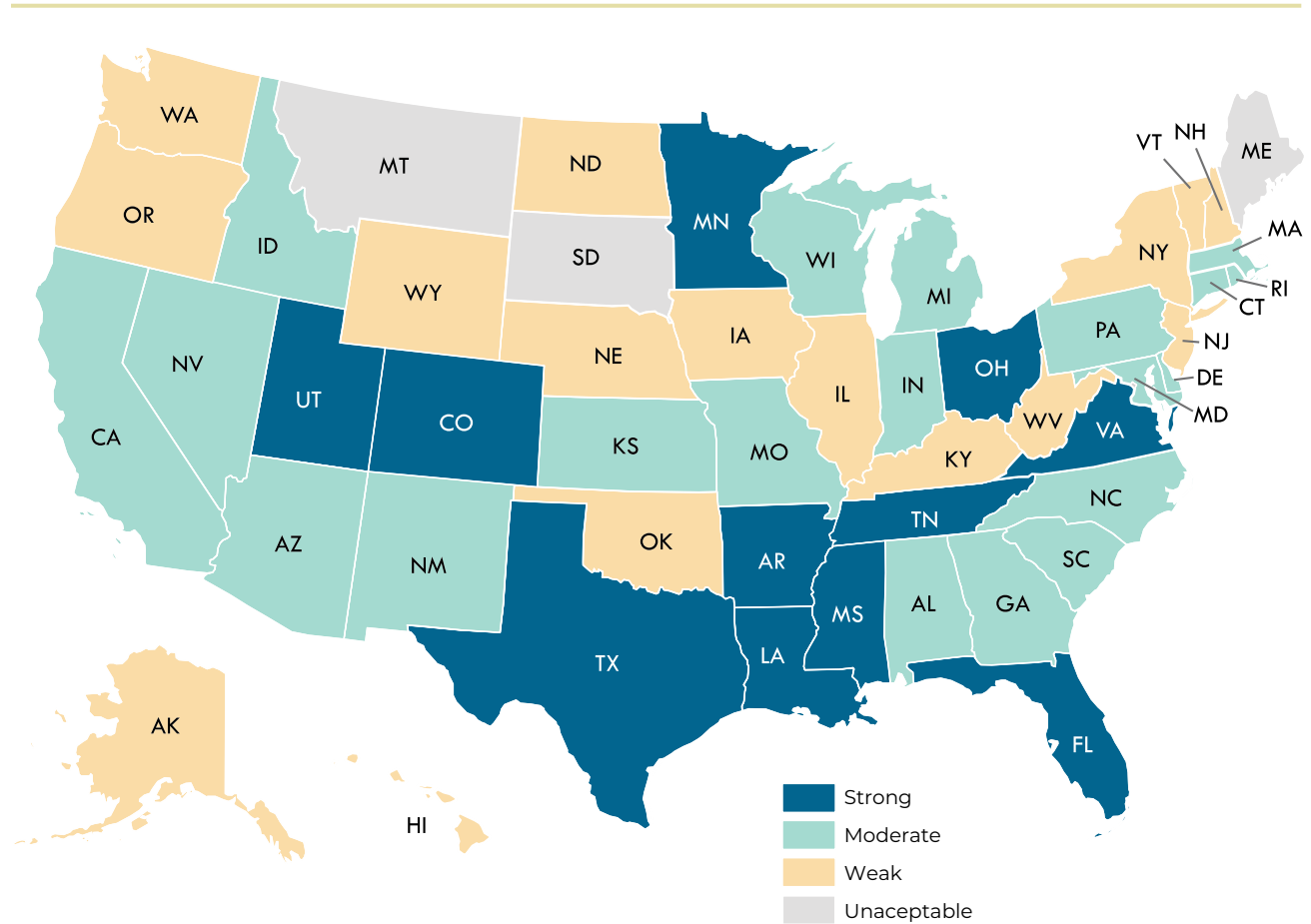
Legend:
- Strong
- Moderate
- Weak
- Unaceptable

Maryland got a "weak" rating for not ensuring that teacher-preparation programs are successfully teaching the Science of Reading.

While Maryland is above the national average in NCTQ's rankings, the findings show that we could do more to make sure teacher-training programs are preparing candidates to teach reading. Specifically, **Maryland got a "weak" rating for not ensuring that teacher-preparation programs are successfully teaching the Science of Reading.** This is a problem area for many colleges in Maryland, and the state needs to step in and oversee this more actively.

How is Maryland performing on the five state policy actions?

Overall, Maryland ranks **above** the national average, but there's room for improvement on specifc actions.

1	Sets specific, detailed reading standards for teacher-preparation programs	**Strong**
2	Reviews teacher-preparation programs to ensure they teach the Science of Reading	**Weak**
3	Adopts a strong reading licensure test	**Strong**
4	Requires districts to select high-quality reading curriculum	**Moderate**
5	Provides professional learning for teachers and ongoing support to sustain the implementation of the science of reading	**Moderate**

Student Attendance

When students miss school, they are not learning. The Education Recovery Scorecard observed that "a sharp rise in chronic absenteeism (students missing more than 10 percent of a school year) from 20 percent of students in 2019 before the pandemic to 30 percent in 2023 is slowing the [COVID] recovery in many districts in Maryland." [10]

While chronic absenteeism rates have been declining since 2022, there is more work to do to reach pre-pandemic levels.

Chronic Absenteeism Rate (2017 to 2024)

Grade spans are as follows: Elementary – grades 1-5; Middle – grades 6-8; High – grades 9-12
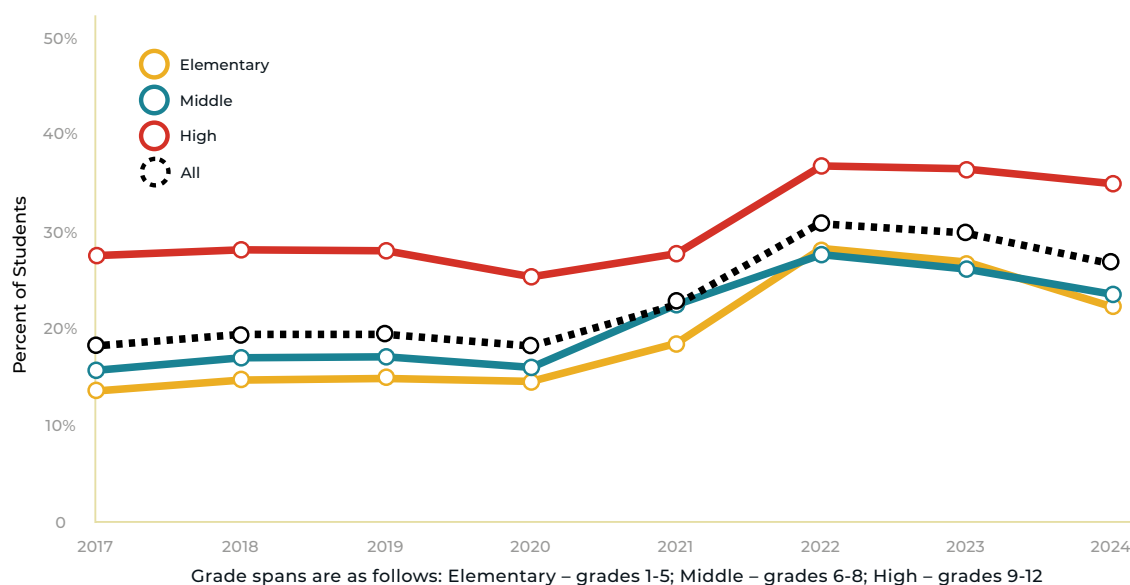
Percent Chronically Absent, SY 2023-2024

Chronic absence rates varied from 17% to 49% in SY 2023-2024

Percent Chronically Absent (SY 2023-2024)
- > 35%
- 30.1—35.0%
- 25.1—30.0%
- 20.1—25.0%
- ≤ 20%

County	Percent
Frederick	16.8%
Howard	17.3%
Calvert	18.5%
Carroll	20.2%
Harford	20.3%
Garrett	20.8%
Worcester	21.5%
Anne Arundel	22.1%
Queen Anne's	22.9%
Cecil	23.5%
Montgomery	23.6%
Wicomico	25.1%
Kent	26.0%
Washington	26.9%
Charles	27.0%
Caroline	28.0%
Baltimore County	28.0%
Saint Mary's	28.1%
Talbot	28.5%
Prince George's	32.7%
Somerset	33.5%
Allegany	36.4%
Dorchester	38.3%
Baltimore City	48.7%

The Overuse of Screen Time

Maryland READS has come to believe that the overuse of screens is having a significant negative impact on reading proficiency and that this issue needs to be brought to the forefront of conversations to improve reading proficiency.

On September 19, 2024, Maryland READS convened a group of stakeholders to discuss the **Digital Dilemma** and raise awareness of the growing concerns surrounding digital devices. We began by collaborating with The Albert Shanker Institute and Dr. Maryanne Wolf in this critical conversation.

Wolf shared that a **growing body of research** reveals the detrimental effects of digital devices on students' reading and critical-thinking skills.

Throughout the elementary years, students are taught to read accurately, fluently, and meaningfully, which requires sustained attention and patience.

Teachers say print materials tend to slow students so they can reflect with increasing levels of depth about what is on the page — researchers call this "deep reading." But **today, students are scrolling, skimming, and zig-zagging on screens, which diminishes the brain's capacity for immersive reading.**

Today, students are scrolling, skimming, and zig-zagging on screens, which diminishes the brain's capacity for immersive reading.

When the NAEP scores were released in January 2024, Martin West, vice chair of the National Assessment Governing Board (NAGB), raised questions about screen time's impact on scores at the NAEP Day town hall.[11] This was not the first time the NAGB and other NAEP leaders considered the impact of screen time on reading proficiency.

- In 2019, NAEP included a survey with the assessment to collect data on screen time use. An analysis by *Education Week* found an association between more use of a computer or digital device for ELA work and lower proficiency on the reading test for grades 4 and 8.[12]

- In 2023, NAEP survey findings revealed that the percentage of 13-year-olds who read for pleasure every day dropped from 27% in 2012 to just 14% in 2023.[13]

Maryland READs will continue to drive this conversation. We applaud the MSDE for establishing a task force to examine the Phone-Free Schools movement and its implications for Maryland.

As highlighted by the researcher Jonathan Haidt in *The Anxious Generation*,[14] devices in schools have unleashed a host of problems. But there is a deeper systemic problem with devices when it comes to reading, and Maryland should take the opportunity to lead on this front. **We will not solve the reading dilemma without a smart approach to technology.**

We will not solve the reading dilemma without a smart approach to technology.

Daily Time Spent on Language Arts Using Digital Device

Grade 4

	Below basic	At basic	Proficient/advanced
Less than 30 minutes	29%	31%	40%
About 30 minutes	32%	33%	36%
About 1 hour	34%	32%	34%
About 2 hours	39%	31%	31%
About 3 hours	49%	26%	24%
4 or more hours	65%	22%	13%

Grade 8

	Below basic	At basic	Proficient/advanced
Less than 30 minutes	23%	39%	38%
About 30 minutes	29%	39%	32%
About 1 hour	29%	39%	32%
About 2 hours	31%	40%	29%
About 3 hours	33%	43%	24%
4 or more hours	45%	38%	17%

Readling level
Below basic   At basic   Proficient/advanced

Percentages may not add to 100 due to rounding.

SYSTEM OF SUPPORT

What we are Doing in Response to the Reading Crisis

Now that we know where Maryland stands in reading proficiency rates and the factors influencing these outcomes, we can look at what's being done to tackle this challenge. Let's explore the steps Maryland is taking to improve reading instruction as well as what Maryland READS and local communities are doing to create a supportive environment that ensures every student has the opportunity to become a skilled reader.

2024 was a foundational year of action to address our state's reading crisis. State leaders made a bold commitment to align reading instruction to the Science of Reading and provide critical training, resources, and services to support educators in making this transition. In addition, communities throughout Maryland were taking action to build thriving reading ecosystems.

Maryland READS launched the READ Strong Network and is working to establish pilot projects in four counties.

School systems continue to prioritize the work of community schools that connect students with critical community supports that have tremendous potential to move the needle in improving reading proficiency rates.
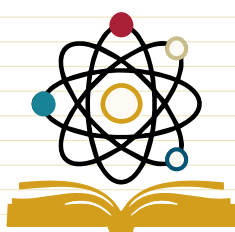
About the Science of Reading

The Science of Reading is based on many years of research about the best ways to teach reading and how the brain helps us learn to read.

In 1989, the U.S. Congress designated the 1990s as the Decade of the Brain, resulting in worldwide investment in brain research.[15] In 1997, the National Reading Panel was created to study the research on how we learn to read. By looking at this research, we learned how the brain works and which teaching methods are best for helping young children become strong readers.

We can all help children learn to read based upon the principles of the Science of Reading.

To learn more, refer to our chart "The Science of Reading in Practical Terms" in the resource section.

STATE ACTIONS TO BUILD SYSTEMS OF SUPPORT

Reading Resolution

Appointment of Dr. Carey Wright

Literacy policy draft for public comment

January 2024	February 2024	March 2024	April 2024	May 2024	June 2024	July 2024

Assessment and Accountability Task Force formed

Includes two MD READS board members

Literacy Review Teams update

National Board **literacy standards revisions**

Coaching Hub development

$6.5M Science of Reading training grant

Scan to visit MD READS website.

Standards & Frameworks Validation Committee: ELA

June thru **October**
MD READS engages in process to develop literacy policy

Governor's Budget

Excellence in Maryland Public Schools Act

MD READS provides testimony

Coaching Hub launch

Final PreK-3 Literacy Policy

August 2024	September 2024	October 2024	November 2024	December 2024	January 2025	February 2025

$40M Striving Readers grants

MD READS provides letter of support

ENOUGH grants

Foundations of Teaching Reading Assessment for teacher licensure

Teacher Advisory Committee

MREAD CoChair on Teacher Advisory Committee

Principal Advisory Committee

THE STATE OF READING IN MARYLAND
STATE ACTION DETAILS

2024

January

Reading Resolution: The State Board of Education (SBOE) called for Maryland to adopt the Science of Reading, an evidence-based instructional philosophy, in the 2024-25 school year.

February

Assessment and Accountability Task Force: Comprising 27 educators, policymakers, and stakeholders, the task force aimed to refine assessment strategies, ensure equitable measurement of student learning, and strengthen accountability frameworks that support high-quality education. The group produced recommendations to enhance transparency, effectiveness, and continuous improvement in Maryland's education system. Members included two **Maryland READS** board members, President Jennifer Bell-Ellwanger and Ellen O'Neill.

Literacy Review Teams update the SBOE on efforts to support and enhance literacy instruction across the state. Composed of expert educators, they reviewed instructional practices, provided targeted support, and ensured alignment with evidence-based literacy strategies.

National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (NBPTS) **announced revisions to its literacy standards.** These updates aimed to strengthen teaching excellence by incorporating the latest research, fostering equity, and enhancing instructional effectiveness.

MSDE began developing a **Coaching Hub** to give K-5 school and district coaches access to tools and resources, professional development opportunities, and communities of practice.

April

Dr. Carey Wright appointed as state superintendent of schools.

May

MSDE announced a $6.85 million, four-year philanthropic partnership with the nonprofit Ibis Group. This grant provides high-quality professional development aligned with the Science of Reading for thousands of Maryland educators and administrators.

June

MDSE released the first draft of its literacy policy for public comment. **Maryland READS** organized working sessions with our network members to inform our comments on the draft policy and continued to engage with MSDE throughout the review period.

July

MSDE established the **Standards & Frameworks Validation Committee: ELA** to review and validate ELA standards and frameworks to ensure they align with best practices and support high-quality instruction.

August

[MSDE launches Coaching Hub](#) as a central resource for educators to access expert coaching, professional development, and evidence-based strategies to enhance instruction.

Maryland Matters published **Maryland READS'** [op-ed on the draft literacy policy.](#)

Maryland READS provided comments on the draft literacy policy at SBOE meeting.

September

[MSDE secured a $40.3 million,](#) five-year grant award from the U.S. Department of Education to help build the state's system of support. This was part of $149 million in federal funds to support initiatives focused on 3rd-grade literacy proficiency across 23 states.

October

MSDE adopts final [PreK-3 Literacy Policy.](#) With community feedback, the state developed a statewide plan to enhance literacy outcomes through evidence-based instruction aligned with the Science of Reading, including universal screening, tiered interventions, Student Reading Improvement Plans, and a requirement that 3rd-grade students demonstrate adequate reading proficiency to be promoted to 4th-grade (with provisions for good cause exemptions and parent/guardian consent) starting in the 2027-2028 school year.

Maryland READS submitted a second round of comments on the literacy policy.

December

[The Maryland Governor's Office announced recipients of first ENOUGH](#) grants to combat child poverty. The $13.1 million in grant funds will support community partnerships focused on improving education, health, and economic security, all of which are key to enhancing literacy.

Maryland adopted the [Foundations of Teaching Reading Assessment](#) as part of its teacher licensure requirements to ensure educators have a strong understanding of evidence-based reading instruction. This assessment aligns with state literacy goals and supports high-quality teaching practices to improve student reading outcomes.

2025

January

Governor Moore released [Maryland's state budget,](#) which includes a significant focus on literacy

The [Excellence in Maryland Public Schools Act](#) included a focus on literacy and leadership development. **Maryland READS** provided testimony in support of investments in reading and literacy coaches.

February

MSDE established the [Teacher Advisory Council](#) as a platform for teachers to actively participate in educational decision-making processes.

MSDE established the [Principal Advisory Council](#) to provide direct input to the State Superintendent of Schools on critical issues affecting Maryland's public schools.

COMMUNITYWIDE ACTIONS TO CREATE THRIVING READING ECOSYSTEMS

In addition to participating in the important work happening at the state level to improve reading instruction, Maryland READS is elevating the powerful role of communities in helping students develop both their reading skills and their love for reading.

In 2024, we launched the READ Strong Network, taking a county-by-county approach to build thriving reading ecosystems. This community-driven effort complements statewide investments aimed at creating a strong network of community schools across Maryland. Community schools provide essential wraparound services, which research shows can greatly improve student performance and well-being.[16] When programs that tap into community resources — both in and out of school — are paired with efforts to improve reading instruction, they can create a dramatic and lasting impact on students' success.

Community Schools

Community schools focus on the whole child, not just on academics. They are intended to support students' social and emotional well-being, along with their learning needs, to make sure they are ready and able to learn.

These schools work with other community organizations to offer extra services like language and academic support, food, and health care (such as medical, dental, and mental health care), along with regular classroom lessons.

The Blueprint for Maryland's Future and the Accountability and Implementation Board (AIB) took a systemic approach to investing in community schools, and the number of these schools grew from 69 to more than 650. Maryland READS has examined the proficiency rates in all existing community schools and found that many schools made substantial, double-digit gains in improving reading proficiency from 2022 to 2024. However, at the same time, many schools also declined in their proficiency rates. We can learn a lot from schools that improved in order to replicate successful reading strategies so more students can become proficient readers. We should all work together to create strong reading ecosystems in our communities.

The READ Strong Network — Working from the Outside In

The READ Strong Network is a statewide, county-based effort to unite our communities around a common goal of improving reading proficiency for all students. While our schools and teachers have the primary job of instructing our children through the Science of Reading, building thriving reading ecosystems will reinforce the work happening in the classroom.

Maryland READS provides data tools to make the case for why reading matters, coaching to help organizations in the network, and collaboration to define pilot projects and secure resources to support the work. There are currently READ Strong Network leadership teams in Baltimore City, Montgomery County, Prince George's County, and Queen Anne's County. They include school district representatives, education and reading advocates, parents, community leaders, policymakers, school board members, and librarians, among others. Maryland READS is actively working to develop new partnerships.

We envision a network of thriving reading ecosystems where reading becomes not just a skill but a value that the entire community nurtures. It's an environment where everyone — families, schools, businesses, and community organizations — works together to make sure children have the tools, support, and opportunities to become lifelong readers.

Top 10 Attributes of Thriving Reading Ecosystems

1. Recognizing Reading's Importance
2. Early and Ongoing Engagement with Reading
3. Community-Wide Support
4. Access to Books and Reading Materials
5. Responsible Integration of Technology and Traditional Reading Instruction
6. Support for Struggling Readers
7. Community and Family Involvement
8. Sustained Investment in Literacy
9. Opportunities for Social and Emotional Development
10. Ongoing Assessment and Growth

See resources section for more on these 10 attributes.

CALL TO ACTION

While Maryland has made important strides, the work is far from over. With only 34% of 4th-grade students and 33%of 8th grade students reading proficiently, it's clear that we must do more.

This is a pivotal moment — sitting on the sidelines is no longer an option. Now is the time for all of us to step forward, take action, and fully commit to the work ahead. We must fix what is broken, abandon what is not working, build on the foundation we've established, and push even harder to ensure every child has the opportunity to succeed. Our children's futures depend on what we do today.

Here are specific things we must do to continue on this journey and make a lasting impact on students lives:

We challenge educators to complete the AIM Pathways courses and complete the SUNY New Paltz micro-credential.

IMPROVING READING INSTRUCTION

TRAIN TEACHERS

More teachers and school leaders need to take advantage of MSDE's no-cost training programs. To date, more than 1,751 teachers and administrators have enrolled in the 6,000 slots available under the IBIS-funded **AIM Pathways** professional learning opportunities, and more than 10,073 pre-service and in-service educators enrolled in the 27,500 slots available under the **SUNY New Paltz SOR micro-credential**. We challenge 1,417 teachers and administrators to complete the AIM Pathways courses and 5,809 educators to complete the SUNY New Paltz micro-credential each year for the next three years so that all available slots are utilized.

FUND MSDE's STATEWIDE COACHING MODEL

Coaching helps ensure that the training teachers receive translates into impact in the classroom and, ultimately, improved proficiency rates. The legislature must prioritize consistent funding to support the statewide implementation of coaching, and the community must support these efforts.

ALIGN TEACHER-PREPARATION PROGRAMS TO SCIENCE OF READING

10 of the 15 Maryland teacher-preparation programs **NCTQ reviewed in 2023** received failing grades on implementation of SOR. MSDE should immediately exercise its authority, including limiting grants and contracts, and hold Maryland teacher-

preparation programs accountable for aligning to Science of Reading by 2028 so that they effectively prepare candidates to teach reading, as evidenced by higher scores on future NCTQ evaluations.

DRAFT AN ADOLESCENT LITERACY POLICY

NAEP reading scores revealed that the downward trend in 8th-grade reading continues. By July 1, 2025, the MSDE should begin collaborating with educators and organizations to develop a adolescent literacy policy.

LEARN FROM COMMUNITY SCHOOLS

The state has made a significant investment in community schools, located in some of the most historically underserved communities in Maryland. A group of these schools have made double-digit gains in reading achievement, and we must learn more about this story so all students can benefit.

ADVANCING THRIVING READING ECOSYSTEMS

ESTABLISH READ STRONG NETWORKS

By the end of 2028, every county should establish a READ Strong Network. Philanthropic leaders and key decision makers need to come together to ensure resources are available to help these networks to adopt research-based approaches outside of the classroom that have a positive impact on reading proficiency.

EMPOWER LOCAL READING ACTIVISTS

MARYLAND READS provides data toolkits tailored to each county and can train READ Strong Network leaders to present county-level data to leaders and community members. Philanthropists, foundations, and government entities should contribute resources to support the launch of READ Strong Networks whose work is tailored to the needs of individual communities.

INSPIRE BUSINESS LEADERS TO COME TO THE TABLE

Business leaders should establish a statewide task force to support READ Strong Networks across the state. Business communities have a vested interest in improving reading proficiency to create a more robust workforce in Maryland that is prepared to meet the demands of the 21st-century economy.

ADDRESS CHRONIC ABSENTEEISM

Children learn when they are in school. Community leaders and organizations should educate themselves on attendance rates in their communities, investigate root causes for absenteeism, and design strategies to address those causes.

CALL TO ACTION

ADDRESSING BARRIERS TO READING PROFICIENCY —
THE DIGITAL DILEMMA

CREATE A STATEWIDE TASK FORCE

Research reveals that technology is having a detrimental impact on reading proficiency. State leaders should use existing research to identify how to limit the use of technology in teaching children to read.

LIMIT CHILDREN'S USE OF ELECTRONIC DEVICES

Young children and students should spend less time, in and out of school, on electronic devices. Community organizations should include strategies to limit digital devices in their work with students and families.

CREATE DIGITAL EDUCATION PROGRAMS FOR FAMILIES

We are just beginning to understand the negative impact of technology on developing reading proficiency in students. Parents, as their children's earliest teachers, need more education to understand what research is revealing on the role of screens and what they can do to change how they make screens available to children. We need to invest in tools and resources for parents and host public conversations in town halls, community meetings, congregations, and school events to raise awareness of the role caregivers can play.

CONCLUSION

The data is clear: learning to read is a complex challenge and there is no one-size-fits-all solution for every child. If Maryland is serious about dramatically improving reading proficiency rates, we must adopt a bold, multifaceted approach.

This means not only enhancing reading instruction through comprehensive training for current educators but also overhauling teacher-preparation programs to ensure our future educators are equipped to meet every child's needs. We must look at the data to understand where our investments are not yielding results and have the courage to shift resources to approaches that can move the needle to increase proficiency rates.

We must build vibrant, thriving reading ecosystems — empowering communities to actively support the development of reading skills among students and ensure they have access to books, while also tackling broader issues like attendance. Maryland READS is taking up this challenge through the READ Strong Network and we invite you to join us.

Finally, we must consider how our landscape is changing and how emerging barriers, such as screen time, are having a profound impact on reading proficiency. And we must start tackling these challenging topics. We started this conversation on the digital dilemma and believe it is critical to build upon that work in 2025.

It's time to address these obstacles head-on and create a comprehensive, community-driven effort that nurtures the reading skills every child deserves. The stakes are too high for anything less.

WHY READING MATTERS
Reading is the gateway to all other subjects.

DR. CAREY M. WRIGHT
STATE SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS

THE SCIENCE OF READING IN PRACTICAL TERMS

The Science of Reading represents what we have learned from decades of research on how the brain works to help us more effectively teach children to become readers. By actively reviewing educational materials and maintaining open communication with teachers, parents and guardians can ensure their children receive reading instruction consistent with the Science of Reading principles.

Children Best Learn To Read When They Are Taught	What You Can Do To Support A Child	What To Look For In Classrooms	Signs A Child May Need Different Instruction Or Support
PHONEMIC AWARENESS The ability to hear, identify, and manipulate individual sounds (phonemes) in spoken words. *Example: Being able to break down the word "cat" into its sounds: /k/, /a/, /t/ and understand how the word changes if "c" is replaced by "h."*	• Talk about how letters have sounds (when reading together, point to letters and say their sounds before blending them into words). • Practice breaking words into individual sounds. • Play sound games like rhyming games, clapping syllables, or identifying the first, middle, and last sounds in words. • Read aloud and emphasize sounds.	• Lessons on identifying individual sounds in words and practicing those sounds. • Sound recognition activities, like rhyming games or sound-matching tasks.	• Lack of lessons on identifying individual sounds in words practice of letter sounds in class. • Sole focus on oral activities, such as chants and songs, without incorporating letters.
PHONICS The relationship between sounds and their spellings. Note: This may involve more than one letter. *Example: Learning that the letter "b" makes the /b/ sound or that /f/ can be: "f," "ff," or "ph."*	• Talk about how letters make words. • Play letter-sound matching games. • Practice decoding words by having children sound out words while reading, rather than guessing.	• New sounds and letters introduced in a logical order, building on what students have already learned. • Reading and writing activities to practice these skills. • Decodable books for students to practice skills.	• Instruction that does not build upon what students have learned, and not enough time to practice skills. • Reliance on the three-cueing system, which involves guessing words based on pictures and context. • Students are encouraged to memorize sight words instead of sounding our the word.

Children Best Learn To Read When They Are Taught	What You Can Do To Support A Child	What To Look For In Classrooms	Signs A Child May Need Different Instruction Or Support
FLUENCY The ability to read text accurately, quickly, and with proper expression. Fluent readers can focus on understanding the text rather than decoding words.	• Build in breaks to talk about what's happening in a book while you are reading together. • Read a sentence aloud and have your child repeat it. • Use familiar books for practice and to build fluency.	• Students reading aloud with guidance and feedback. • Repeated reading practices in which students read the same passage multiple times to build confidence and proficiency.	• Assessment that relies solely on students summarizing what they read. • Insufficient guided oral reading practice. • Students do not repeat reading stories to build reading speed and confidence.
VOCABULARY Knowing the meaning of words and how to use them correctly. A strong vocabulary helps with comprehension.	• Let kids read many kinds of books. • Introduce new words in daily conversations. • Play word games, like word-of-the-day challenges, crossword puzzles, or picture-word matching games.	• Explicit vocabulary teaching with new words and clear definitions. • Teaching students how to understand unfamiliar words using context clues, prefixes, suffixes, and root words.	• Lack of direct vocabulary Instruction, where new words are not taught with definitions and examples. • Failure to teach strategies to learn new words with context clues, prefixes, suffixes, and root words.
COMPREHENSION The ultimate goal of reading — understanding what is being read. It involves making connections, asking questions, and summarizing information.	• Ask open-ended questions about the story to encourage thinking. • Make connections to real life.	• Summarizing, and clarifying to enhance understanding. • Use of graphic organizers to help organize information and visualize relationships within the text.	• No instruction or modeling of active reading strategies. • Underuse of graphic organizers.
WRITING Goes hand in hand with reading to reinforce reading skills and help students express their thoughts. Writing is a process, and instruction should not just be about the final product.	• Encourage your child to write stories, letters, or keep a journal. • Have your child help you write grocery lists, letters, or stories, contributing their own ideas and words.	• Students guided through stages of writing, including planning, drafting, revising, and editing. • Writing activities connected to reading assignments. • Writing integrated into different subjects.	• Instruction that skips stages like planning, drafting, revising, and editing. • Separating writing tasks from reading assignments.

RESOURCES

TOP 10 ELEMENTS OF A THRIVING READING ECOSYSTEM

A thriving reading ecosystem can look different in each community, but certain common, research-based elements show that reading is valued, supported, and promoted by a wide range of stakeholders and resources. Common characteristics of ecosystems that support reading include:

1 Recognition of Reading's Importance

- **Cultural value:** Reading is embedded in the culture of the community as a fundamental activity. Faith-based organizations, businesses, and local leaders regularly promote the value of reading.

- **Communitywide reading campaigns:** Awareness campaigns and outreach programs highlight the importance of reading for success in school and life, encouraging people to make reading a part of their daily routines.

2 Early and Ongoing Engagement with Reading

- **Starting from birth:** Families, pediatricians, and early childhood centers emphasize reading aloud from the earliest stages, encouraging language development.

- **Continuous exposure:** Children are consistently exposed to books and reading opportunities, both at home and in the community, throughout their childhood.

3 Communitywide Support

- **Collaboration:** Schools, businesses, libraries, faith-based organizations, community centers, and local governments work together to create a comprehensive system of support for reading development.

- **Inclusive participation:** Everyone in the community plays a role — parents, teachers, local businesses, and community leaders all contribute to fostering a reading culture.

4 Access to Books and Reading Materials

- **Equitable access:** Everyone has access to age-appropriate books and reading materials, whether through public libraries, free book exchanges, or community initiatives like Little Free Libraries.

- **Variety and diversity:** The ecosystem provides diverse reading materials, representing a range of genres, topics, languages, and cultures to ensure that all children find books that resonate with their interests and experiences.

5 Responsible Integration of Technology and Traditional Reading Instruction

- **Balanced use of technology:** Digital tools and resources need to be integrated more thoughtfully in order for students to develop deep reading skills and better comprehension of what they are reading. Technology can enhance skill development, build background knowledge, and break down language barriers, yet its use should be limited to avoid fostering screen time addiction.

- **Physical spaces for reading:** Libraries, bookstores, and community centers provide spaces where children and families can engage with books in a quiet, focused environment.

6 Support for Struggling Readers

- **Targeted interventions:** Strong systems are in place for identifying and supporting struggling readers early. This may involve tutoring, reading specialists, and after-school programs that provide tailored, research-based support for children who need extra help.

- **Personalized approaches:** Not all children learn in the same way, so the ecosystem offers a variety of research-based strategies to meet diverse needs, from one-on-one tutoring to group reading sessions.

7 Communitywide and Family Involvement

- **Parental engagement:** Parents are encouraged and supported to become active participants in their children's literacy development, whether by reading aloud, visiting libraries, or participating in family reading events.

- **Events and activities:** Regular community events, such as book fairs, story times, and reading challenges, engage families and children in the joy of reading outside formal education settings.

8 Sustained Investment in Reading

- **Funding and resources:** A thriving reading ecosystem is supported by consistent investment in educational programs, libraries, and reading initiatives.

- **Professional development:** Teachers, librarians, and community leaders receive ongoing professional development to stay informed about best practices for fostering literacy.

9 Opportunities for Social and Emotional Development

- **Reading as an emotional experience**: The ecosystem supports not only cognitive development but also the social and emotional aspects of reading. Storytelling, book discussions, and reading activities help children build empathy and communication skills.

- **Inclusive and welcoming environment:** There are efforts to make reading accessible and enjoyable for all children, regardless of their background, language, or socioeconomic status.

10 Ongoing Assessment and Growth

- **Reading proficiency used to measure school success:** Schools and communities publicly state that improving and maintaining reading proficiency rates is a key measure of success for schools.

- **Data-driven approaches:** Data is available in a format that is easy for communities, parents, and caregivers to understand and use. Schools regularly assess children's reading progress to ensure programs are effective. Community programs track reading proficiency rates and adjust strategies as needed to ensure all children are supported. Parents understand how to monitor their children's reading proficiency rates.

- **Continuous improvement:** The ecosystem continually evolves to respond to changing needs, such as by integrating new reading tools or adjusting programs to reflect community demographics.

RESOURCES

HOW TO SUPPORT MARYLAND READS' CALL TO ACTION

Improving Instruction

TRAIN TEACHERS

More teachers and school leaders need to take advantage of MSDE's no-cost training programs. To date, more than 1,300 teachers and administrators have enrolled in the 6,000 slots available under the IBIS-funded **AIM Pathways** professional learning opportunities, and more than 4,300 pre-service and in-service educators enrolled in the 27,500 slots available under the SUNY New Paltz SOR micro-credential. We challenge 1, 566 teachers and administrators to complete the AIM Pathways courses and 7,733 educators to complete the **SUNY New Paltz micro-credential** each year for the next three years so that all available slots are utilized.

WHAT EVERYONE CAN DO
Learn more about the AIM Pathways professional learning opportunities and the SUNY New Paltz SOR micro-credential. Consider enrolling if you are eligible.

WHAT TEACHERS AND LEADERS CAN DO
Complete the training and encourage your peers to do the same.

WHAT SCHOOL LEADERS CAN DO
- Provide incentives for teachers and leaders who have not yet taken the training.
- Provide recognition for staff who have taken the training.

WHAT PARENTS AND COMMUNITY MEMBERS CAN DO
Ask teachers and leaders at their school if they have taken this training. You can do this at back-to-school events and parent/teacher conferences.

FUND MSDE'S STATEWIDE COACHING MODEL

Coaching helps ensure that the training teachers receive translates into impact in the classroom and, ultimately, improved proficiency rates. The legislature must prioritize consistent funding to support the statewide implementation of coaching, and the community must support these efforts.

WHAT EVERYONE CAN DO
Learn more about **MSDE's Coaching Model**.

WHAT LEGISLATORS CAN DO
Provide the necessary funding to support the establishment and sustainability of a statewide coaching program.

WHAT EDUCATORS CAN DO
Speak out about the important role of coaches in teaching reading. Highlight the positive experiences that your team has already had.

WHAT PARENTS CAN DO
Tell your legislators you support investments in a statewide coaching program.

ALIGN TEACHER-PREPARATION PROGRAMS TO SCIENCE OF READING

10 of the 15 Maryland teacher-preparation programs **NCTQ reviewed in 2023** received failing grades on implementation of SOR. MSDE should immediately exercise its authority, including limiting grants and contracts, and hold Maryland teacher-preparation programs accountable for aligning to SOR by 2028 so that they effectively prepare candidates to teach reading as evidenced by higher scores on future NCTQ evaluations.

WHAT HIGHER EDUCATION LEADERS CAN DO

Hold department chairs that manage teacher-preparation programs accountable for embedding SOR approaches into their curriculum. Commit resources to support a two-year change process.

WHAT STATE LEADERS CAN DO

MSDE, the governor, and the legislature should use all levers available to hold Maryland institutions of higher education accountable for transforming their teacher-preparation programs. This can include limits on grants and contracts or requiring higher education institutions to pay for the reading instruction training their graduates still need.

DRAFT AN ADOLESCENT LITERACY POLICY

NAEP reading scores revealed that the downward trend in 8th-grade reading continues. By July 1, 2025, the MSDE should begin collaborating with educators and organizations to develop a draft adolescent literacy policy.

WHAT MSDE CAN DO

Convene a series of listening sessions to gather input from stakeholders to inform the development of an adolescent literacy policy.

WHAT DISTRICT LEADERS CAN DO

For districts that are seeing improvement in middle and high school reading proficiency, identify and share what contributed to the improvement.

WHAT COMMUNITIES CAN DO

Focus on programs and initiatives for middle and high school students, such as tutoring, creating inviting spaces to read, and providing free and engaging reading resources.

RESOURCES

IMPROVE READING SCORES IN COMMUNITY SCHOOLS

Community schools serve students in the historically underserved communities who most need support. Significant state investment in community schools provides a real opportunity to help students in all of these schools become proficient in reading.

WHAT STATE LEADERS CAN DO

- The AIB and MSDE should tie future funding for community schools to requirements for teachers and leaders to take the AIMR/SUNY trainings and engage in coaching.

- The Maryland legislature should publicly state that community schools are expected to increase reading proficiency rates for their students. Tie future funding to data related to proficiency rates in these schools.

WHAT COMMUNITY SCHOOL TEACHERS AND LEADERS CAN DO

Complete the AIM/SUNY training, participate in coaching, and encourage your peers to do the same.

WHAT PARENTS AND COMMUNITY MEMBERS CAN DO

Ask if the teachers and leaders at their school have taken this training.

Advancing Thriving Reading Ecosystems

ESTABLISH READ STRONG NETWORKS

By the end of 2028, every county should establish a READ Strong Network. Community and philanthropic leaders and key decision makers need to come together to ensure resources are available to support these networks to adopt research-based approaches outside of the classroom that have a positive impact on reading proficiency.

WHAT COMMUNITY ORGANIZATIONS CAN DO

- Contact Maryland READS to arrange a briefing on the tools and resources available to help you get started with a READ Strong Network.

- Consider how to layer in reading activities when working with families and children.

- Engage with schools to observe reading instruction in the classroom and talk with teachers and leaders about their needs and challenges to inform how to offer support.

EMPOWER LOCAL READING ACTIVISTS

Maryland READS provides data toolkits tailored to each county and can train READ Strong Network leaders to present county-level data to leaders and community members. Philanthropists, foundations, and government entities should contribute resources to support the launch of READ Strong Networks whose work is tailored to the needs of individual communities.

WHAT FUNDERS CAN DO

Sponsor a READ Strong Network in your community with a planning grant and then help them secure funding for initiatives.

WHAT COUNTY LEADERS CAN DO

Share this report with the philanthropy community in your county. Discuss local reading proficiency rates (contact Maryland READS if you need help gathering that data) and how the state is building a foundation for improvement. Discuss the important role communities play in creating thriving reading ecosystems and ask funders to invest in local initiatives.

INSPIRE BUSINESS LEADERS NEED TO COME TO THE TABLE

Business leaders should establish a statewide task force to support READ Strong Networks across the state. Business communities have a vested interest in improving reading proficiency to create a more robust workforce in Maryland that is prepared to meet the demands of the 21st-century economy.

WHAT BUSINESSES CAN DO

- Reach out to peers to establish a statewide task force.
- Provide time for employees to serve as reading tutors.
- Set up a library in your store or restaurant to encourage children and families to put screens away and read together.
- Provide financial support for local organizations engaged in reading-related activities.
- Lend your leadership skills or technical expertise to community organizations to help them establish a READ Strong Network.
- Offer to serve as a board member for Maryland READS.

WHAT COUNTY LEADERS CAN DO

Share this report with business leaders in your county. Discuss local reading proficiency rates (contact Maryland READS if you need help gathering that data) and how the state is building a foundation for improve. Discuss the important role communities play in creating thriving reading ecosystems and ask funders to invest in local initiatives.

RESOURCES

CREATE DIGITAL EDUCATION PROGRAMS FOR FAMILIES

We are just beginning to understand the negative impact of technology on developing reading proficiency in students. Parents, as their children's earliest teachers, need more education to understand what research is revealing on the role of screens and what they can do to change how they make screens available to children. We need to invest in tools and resources for parents and host public conversations in town halls, community meetings, congregations, and school events to raise awareness of the role caregivers can play.

WHAT STATE AND LOCAL LEADERS CAN DO

- Invest in tools and resources for parents to educate them about why they should limit screen time.

- Host public conversations in town halls, community meetings, congregations, and school events to raise awareness of the role caregivers can play in supporting children to develop appropriate screen time use.

WHAT SCHOOLS AND COMMUNITY ORGANIZATIONS CAN DO

Offer parent education programming to teach parents about the negative impact of screen time and equip them with strategies to replace screens with books.

> Teach parents about the negative impact of screen time and equip them with strategies to replace screens with books.
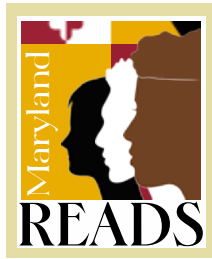
About Maryland READS

Maryland READS is a non-profit founded to end the literacy crisis in Maryland. We focus on three proven paths to closing the literacy gap: improving reading instruction through the Science of Reading; creating thriving community-based reading ecosystems; and addressing barriers that prevent students from becoming proficient readers. Through collaboration and strategic partnerships, we are building a powerful statewide network to engage, share best practices, advocate, and shape action plans to ensure all children have the literacy skills they need. Learn more at marylandreads.org

VISION

Maryland READS envisions a future where our diverse population of students become confident and proficient readers.

MISSION

To foster a transformative culture that dramatically improves reading proficiency across Maryland by empowering stakeholders and amplifying their collective voices to drive meaningful change in policy and practice within their communities and our state.

OUR BOARD OF DIRECTORS
We're recruiting!

Jennifer Bell-Ellwanger, MEd
President and CEO
Data Quality Campaign

Winsome Waite, PhD
Project Manager
Strategic Initiatives Office
Prince George's County
Public Schools

Ellen O'Neill, MA
Executive Director
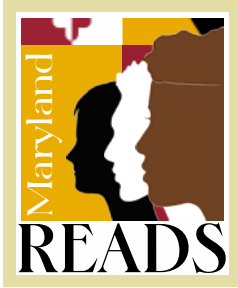Atlantic Seaboard Dyslexia
Education Center

Lisa Blottenberger, MEd
Founder
Boundless Expectations

Kerri Valencia, EdD
Chief Academic Officer
Moreland University

Support Maryland READS

Your Support for Maryland READS Matters More Than Ever

In this moment of economic uncertainty, one thing remains clear: if we fail to act now, an entire generation of Maryland children will be left behind. Literacy is not a luxury—it is a lifeline.

Maryland READS is dedicated to building the capacity of our state leaders and local communities to prioritize high-quality reading instruction, advance thriving reading ecosystems that support students and families, and address barriers to reading proficiency. Our work ensures that policy progress doesn't stall after it leaves the statehouse—it reaches classrooms, libraries, homes, and communities across Maryland.

We are **uniquely positioned** to bridge the gap between **policy and practice.** By supporting leaders at the state level while embedding practical solutions in local communities, we accelerate the pace of change. **Investing in Maryland READS fuels that momentum.** It empowers us to go farther and faster in addressing our reading crisis.

Whether you're a philanthropist seeking measurable impact, a business leader committed to workforce readiness, or an individual passionate about justice and opportunity—your support for Maryland READS will ripple outward to benefit generations to come.

Despite the economic challenges, **this is a moment for bold, strategic investment.** Literacy underpins every other aspect of life and opportunity. Supporting Maryland READS now means you are helping build the long-term infrastructure for a more literate, economically stable, and civically engaged Maryland.

We are ready to meet this moment. With a strong body of work and a growing statewide network, **Maryland READS is a trusted partner in the rollout of Maryland's new literacy policy.** We are actively aligning stakeholders, delivering on-the-ground support, and building the public will necessary to sustain change.

Through our **READ Strong Network** and statewide gatherings, we create spaces where educators, policymakers, funders, and community leaders come together to identify solutions, tackle barriers, and drive meaningful outcomes. Our collaborative approach ensures that diverse voices are heard—and that every region of Maryland is part of the solution.

Transparency and accountability are core to our work. The data, progress updates, and resources on our website allow our network to track change, celebrate progress, and stay engaged.

Supporting Maryland READS now means you are helping build the long-term infrastructure for a more literate, economically stable, and civically engaged Maryland.

Your investment today is more than a donation—it is a declaration that literacy matters, that equity matters, and that Maryland's children matter. Whether you're a philanthropist seeking measurable impact, a business leader committed to workforce readiness, or an individual passionate about justice and opportunity—your support for Maryland READS will ripple outward to benefit generations to come.

Let's not wait for stability to return to act. **Let's lead now—together.**

Visit our website to make your donation.
marylandreads.org/donate.

Scan to donate to MD READS.

ENDNOTES

1. The Annie E. Casey Foundation. "**Students Who Don't Read Well in Third Grade Are More Likely to Drop Out or Fail to Finish High School.**" 2011.

2. National Assessment of Educational Progress. "**The Nation's Report Card 2015 Reading State Snapshot Report. Maryland, Grade 4, Public Schools**."

3. National Assessment of Educational Progress. "**The Nation's Report Card: 2022 Reading State Snapshot Report. Maryland, Grade 4, Public Schools.**"

4. National Assessment of Educational Progress. "**The Nation's Report Card: 2024 Reading State Snapshot Report. Maryland, Grade 4, Public Schools.**"

5. National Assessment of Educational Progress. "**The Nation's Report Card: 2015 Reading State Snapshot Report, Maryland, Grade 8, Public Schools.**"

6. National Assessment of Educational Progress. "**The Nation's Report Card: 2024 Reading Snapshot Report, Maryland, Grade 8, Public Schools.**"

7. National Assessment of Educational Progress. "**The Nation's Report Card: 2024 Reading Snapshot Report, Maryland, Grade 8, Public Schools.**"

8. Eric Hengyu Hu & Paul L. Morgan. *Explaining Achievement Gaps: The Role of Socioeconomic Factors.* (Washington, DC: Thomas Fordham Institute, 2024).

9. Collin Binkley, '**U.S. children fall further behind in reading, make little improvement in math on national exam,**" Associated Press, January 29, 2025.

10. Education Recovery Scorecard. "**Maryland Ranked 44th Among States in Math Recovery and 17th in Reading Between 2019 and 2024.**" News release. February 11, 2025.

11. Martin West, "**2024 NAEP Mathematics and Reading Report Card Town Hall**" (NAGB Town Hall, Charles Sumner School Museum and Archives, Washington, DC, January, 29, 2025).

12. Sarah D. Sparks, "**Screen Time Up as Reading Scores Drop. Is There a Link?**" *Education Week*, November 8, 2019.

13. National Center for Education Statistics, *NAEP Long-Term Trend Assessment Results: Reading and Mathematics.*

14. Jonathan Haidt, *The Anxious Generation: How the Great Rewiring of Childhood is Causing an Epidemic of Mental Illness* (New York: Penguin, 2024).

15. National Reading Panel, **Teaching Children to Read: An Evidence-Based Assessment of the Scientific Research Literature on Reading and Its Implications for Reading Instruction,** (Bethesda, MD: Author, 2000).

16. Anna Maier et al., **Community Schools as an Effective School Improvement Strategy,** (Palo Alto, CA: Learning Policy Institute, 2017).

JOIN US!

Maryland READS is actively recruiting members for our board of directors, strategic advisory committee, and expert advisory committee, as well as partner organizations to join our coalition. Please contact us if you have questions or would like to learn about opportunities to be engaged.

Trish Brennan-Gac, Executive Director
202-360-0165
trishbrennangac@marylandreads.org

Maryland READS is a registered 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization that believes research and data drive discussions that lead to decisions.

Visit us online at **marylandreads.org**