

THE STATE OF READING IN MARYLAND

2024

# THE SILENT CRISIS

OF OUR TEN YEAR DECLINE



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*Literacy is a foundational pillar of Baltimore City Schools' blueprint for student success, and a driver of our implementation of the Science of Reading. It is difficult work that asks much of our teachers and leaders. As Maryland READS points out, teaching reading is a complex process and improving reading instruction is just one step in the right direction. We need our entire community to unite in building a thriving reading ecosystem so that students receive the support, in and out of the classroom, that research shows can have a significant impact on their ability to read on grade level.*

DR. SONJA SANTELISES, CEO, BALTIMORE CITY SCHOOLS



# ▶ LETTER FROM OUR EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Dear Friends,

I stand before you with both anticipation and resolve. We spent the last year engaging in meaningful dialogue with individuals from throughout the state — education leaders, educators, parents, reading experts — the community who makes up the Maryland Reading Ecosystem. And our dialogue can and will shape the future of reading education in Maryland.

Our purpose today is not merely to present a report; it is to ignite a conversation. As you will learn, Maryland students have been suffering silently while a dramatic reading decline has taken place. Today, we want conversations to unfold in boardrooms and committee rooms and throughout our state we want those conversations to also permeate our communities, our classrooms and our homes. **We do not want you to be passive recipients of data; we challenge you to be active participants in change.**

I encourage each of you to share the questions that this report elicits — questions you will share with your colleagues, your neighbors, and with us. By asking questions collectively, we begin to inform ourselves and each other. These questions are not roadblocks; they are stepping stones toward understanding, improvement, and transformation.

Let us recognize this moment as the inception of a dialogue — an ongoing discourse about reading in Maryland. Our voices, when woven together, create a tapestry of collective wisdom. We are part of a cycle — a cycle of continuous improvement.

State leaders are moving swiftly to address the reading crisis that we document in this report. Maryland READS stands at the intersection, bridging the gap between state policies and local realities. We are more than an organization; we are a conduit. Practitioners, community activists, and local leaders — their insights are our compass. Together, we intend to navigate toward a brighter horizon.

As a new organization, we acknowledge that there is much more to add. We are building a network — one that thrives on collaboration, resilience, and shared purpose. Our story is still unfolding, and each of you holds a pen.

**Let us write the next chapter together.**

With unwavering commitment,



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

# ▶ LETTER FROM OUR BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Dear Fellow Advocates for Reading,

We are more than the Maryland READS board of directors; we are a community of passionate individuals dedicated to transforming lives through the power of reading. Our journey is fueled by the belief that every child in Maryland deserves the gift of reading proficiency—the key that unlocks doors to knowledge, opportunity, and fulfillment.

The report that follows represents the collective effort and due diligence of our emerging network of experts, practitioners, and community leaders who invested their time to inform this important resource. And we look forward to partnering with other individuals and organizations who are committed to supporting Maryland's shift to the Science of Reading and building a thriving ecosystem in our state.

Together we celebrate the tireless efforts of educators, families, and students. We recognize the late nights spent preparing lesson plans, the joy of witnessing a child's 'aha' moment, and the resilience of families navigating challenging circumstances. Despite our best efforts and hard work, a crisis is at hand. But, there are also real solutions.

We are proud to champion evidence-based practices, amplify success stories, and collaborate across sectors. Our collective impact is immeasurable, and the ripple effect of a child's improved reading skills extends far beyond the classroom.

Here's to all of us who refuse to accept the status quo. Let's turn the page on the reading crisis and write a new chapter filled with hope, determination, and brighter futures for Maryland.

With gratitude,

The Maryland READS Board of Directors



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## ▶ EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Maryland is in a reading crisis — and most Marylanders aren't talking about it. It's time for all Marylanders to acknowledge the problem, and join together to solve it. In this report, based on a year — long process led by Maryland READS, we describe in detail what every Marylander should do.

**More than half our students** — including students in every county, at every income level, and in almost every demographic group — aren't proficient readers for their grade level. *But even as we herald our return to pre-pandemic reading levels, almost no one is acknowledging that even those levels aren't good enough.* Even before the pandemic, our children's reading skills were far below where they should be, putting them at a dire disadvantage as they move toward high school graduation and into adulthood.

**This is an emergency.** But the news hasn't yet reached most Marylanders. In fact, some think we're still a national leader in reading, when in fact we've fallen to near the bottom. State education leaders have started to talk about solutions, and made early steps to change the way our schools teach reading. But real change won't come until everyone involved in our children's education understands how dire things have become, and what they need to do to help fix it.



### LET'S TALK

Let's talk about the crisis that is imperiling our children's future  
And the fact that focusing on the proficiency rates of students is more important than our state rankings.



### STRATEGIES

Let's talk about the teaching strategies that have been proven through research to make sure students learn to read.



### AND PRACTICE

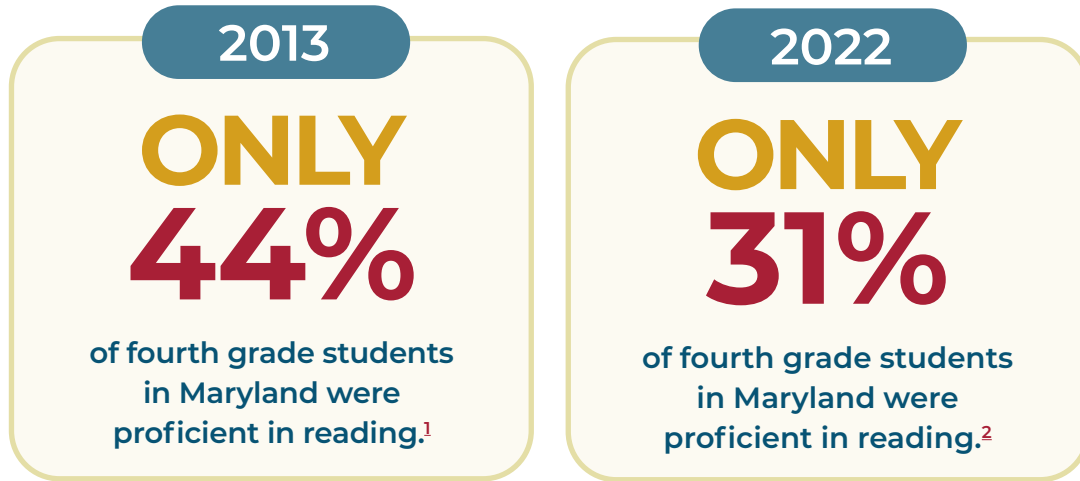
And let's put those strategies into practice in every school and every community in Maryland — so every child has the learning support they deserve.

In this report, Maryland READS isn't just asking for changes in how we teach or how we run our schools. We're calling on everyone in Maryland — not just every teacher and principal, but every district administrator, every parent, and every business and community leader — to join together to create a thriving reading ecosystem that can foster current and future generations of readers.



## How Serious is the Problem?

The data are irrefutable, and the situation is urgent. You may not be aware of it, but a majority of our students can't read at grade level.



As recently as a decade ago, Maryland fourth grader reading proficiency scores on the National Assessment of Education Progress (NAEP) were well above the national average. But since then, they've sharply declined, and we now stand at 40th in the nation.<sup>3</sup> Over the course of ten years as our scores were declining, no one was raising the alarm. Marylanders chose instead to focus on the fact that we remained above the national average.



## How Do We Solve Our Reading Crisis?

Maryland's reading proficiency levels have become an urgent problem that almost no one talks about. And we can't afford to sit on the sidelines any longer — it's time to turn things around. Our recommendations in this report are grounded in a teaching approach known as the **Science of Reading**<sup>4</sup> that evolved from the *Report of the National Reading Panel*, published in 2000 — almost 25 years ago.<sup>5</sup> But change has been slow. It was not until two months ago that the Maryland State Board of Education finally endorsed a statewide approach to teaching reading grounded in the Science of Reading.<sup>6</sup>

Bringing the Science of Reading to every student requires a range of changes, which you'll see in our seven-point plan below. We need to **shift our mindset**, and **train and support** our teachers to use research-based teaching strategies. We need to **track our students' performance**, and **intervene with extra support** for students who need it. We need to provide training and support to **principals, administrators**, and the **community at large**. And we need to **train tomorrow's teachers** effectively so they, too, are ready to meet the challenge.



## Why Reading Matters

**Reading proficiency changes our children’s lives and helps us build the better society all Marylanders deserve.**

No matter what life paths our children take, reading helps them reach their full potential, with enormous benefits for them and their families, for our workforce, for our economy, and for society at large. When every student is proficient in reading, we all benefit.

**Reading is the backbone of a child’s future success.**

A child who can read proficiently gains confidence and can envision a future full of possibilities; reading creates opportunity and equips a child to take advantage of it. A child who can’t read may feel left behind and alienated, leading to destructive behavior with the potential for serious life consequences impacting a student’s attendance at school, involvement in juvenile and adult justice systems, physical and mental health, and employability and income — *for life*.<sup>7</sup>

**Reading proficiency is the foundation of high school, college and career readiness.**

For students who enroll in a four-year college or university, reading proficiency determines whether they succeed. And when students join the workforce right away, enroll in a two-year college, or join the armed services, reading proficiency helps them thrive.

**Reading skills are the foundation of a thriving economy.**

Reading creates opportunity for workers, generates wealth for our communities, and makes Maryland a place where people want to live. Our economy has not grown since 2017, our cost of living is high, and our labor participation rate has not rebounded to pre-pandemic levels.

**Maryland trails surrounding states and the nation in GDP, personal income, real wages, and population growth.**<sup>8</sup> Improving reading proficiency in our state is a critical building block for rebuilding our economy.

**All young Marylanders should be academically equipped for success in life, and reading is the foundation.**

While we acknowledge the groundwork that has been laid, we need to do even more. Today, we lay out a concrete action plan that will make our educational system become more responsive to the needs of every student, and help us ensure all students get the support they need to become proficient readers.



**Maryland READS** introduces a new effort bringing together parents, educators, experts, and the business community to raise awareness of Maryland’s reading crisis and issue evidenced-based solutions. Our singular goal is to transform the literacy landscape of Maryland and address the urgent need for improvement in reading proficiency among children.

## Landscape Scan

Over the last year, Maryland READS conducted interviews with a cross-section of experts, policy makers, and practitioners — including educators and district staff — across 14 counties in Maryland.

In November 2023, Maryland READS hosted a statewide working meeting attended by over 70 state and local leaders; national and state experts; educators; higher education leaders; families; and community organizations. Building on that meeting, we convened four working groups comprised of 40 individuals representing a cross-section of Maryland constituencies who donated their time to dive deeper into topics related to instruction, leadership, district systems, and state systems.

Our working groups produced an extensive and thoughtful list of recommendations for state education leaders; teachers, school leaders, and district leaders; teacher preparation programs; and the community at large.

**To turn around Maryland's reading decline, and raise proficiency levels of all Maryland students, everyone has a part to play — including you.**

## “ THE POWER OF A POSITIVE MINDSET

*Foundational literacy is key to lifelong success. This report from Maryland READS comes at a critical juncture in public education. Through the collaboration of school, government and philanthropic partners, we are working to improve reading proficiency statewide. I know that all children can learn to read, regardless of socioeconomic status or cultural backgrounds. We appreciate Maryland READS as a partner in this work.*

DR. CAREY M. WRIGHT  
INTERIM STATE SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS







## Maryland READS Seven-Part Action Plan

To address our reading crisis, Maryland READS is proposing a seven-part action plan rooted in evidence, with proven outcomes, recommended by practitioners in the field who are closest to the problem.



### Shift Our Approach

Embrace the Science of Reading across our state.



### Improve Instruction

Support existing teachers in improving reading instruction in our schools.



### Build Better Data and Progress Monitoring Systems

Collect better data, improve how student progress is monitored, and support teachers in using data to address areas where students are struggling to read.



### Intervene Early and Effectively for All Students

Immediately provide extra help to students who need it — including early learners as well as those who are struggling in middle and high school.



### Develop Leadership Capacity

Train principals, and those who supervise them, in the Science of Reading, so they understand how to support teachers as they shift their instruction based upon the Science of Reading.



### Create a Thriving Reading Ecosystem

Bring together state and district education leaders, community institutions, parents, business leaders, and the public to coordinate efforts and give students reading reinforcement from all sides.



### Prepare the Next Generation

Transform teacher preparation programs to teach tomorrow's educators and administrators how to apply Science of Reading principles in the classroom and in their communities.

Maryland READS envisions a future where every child in Maryland has the skills to read proficiently, opening doors to endless possibilities.

## About the Science of Reading

For at least 50 years, reading proficiency has been declining across the country, including in Maryland. In part, this is because the instructional approaches that held sway for decades in teacher preparation programs and classrooms, like Whole Language and Balanced Literacy, were not grounded in research.<sup>9</sup>

In 1998, the National Reading Panel was convened to address the problem, and spent two years studying research on reading instruction. In 2000, the Report of the National Reading Panel was published, and identified instructional components that the research showed were likely to bolster reading proficiency. The teaching approach integrating these research-based components came to be known as the **Science of Reading**.<sup>10</sup>

Mississippi blazed a new path when state leaders embraced the Science of Reading, closely monitored its implementation, and employed the insights they learned to develop a statewide approach to reading education, which has had a noteworthy impact on student performance.<sup>11</sup>

**Dr. Carey Wright**, who served as Mississippi's State Superintendent of Education during the state's period of steady improvement, was named Maryland's new Interim State Superintendent of Education in October 2023. *Dr. Wright served on the board of directors of Maryland READS from May 2022 to October 2023 prior to her appointment as Interim State Superintendent.*

## THE POWER OF AN ECOSYSTEM

*When I graduated high school in 1969, I could not read due to my dyslexia. But by the grace of God, strong support from family and friends, and a bull-headed determination, I learned to read and that changed the trajectory of my life. It's time for us to end business as usual in Maryland education so that we can change the lives of generations of children. We need a thriving reading ecosystem at both the state and local levels to turn our reading scores around. But the Maryland public educational system can't do it alone. Parents, guardians, friends, neighbors, taxpayers, and everybody must get involved. We must hold our children accountable for learning and ask them how did they behave, and what did they learn in school today? And I want to thank Maryland READS for giving me an opportunity to provide comments in support of their great work.*

CLARENCE CRAWFORD, CHAIR  
MARYLAND STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION



# ▶ THE CRISIS OF THE STATE OF READING IN MARYLAND

Maryland READS examined multiple data sources, connected the dots, and discovered that our problems with reading proficiency rates have risen to a crisis level. This section details the data on The State of Reading in Maryland that shows:



PROFICIENCY RATES AMONG MARYLAND STUDENTS HAVE BEEN DECLINING FOR A DECADE, RESULTING IN PLUMMETING STATE RANKINGS.



MARYLAND HAS THE FASTEST RATE OF DECLINE IN FOURTH GRADE READING IN THE ENTIRE COUNTRY.



MARYLAND IS ONE OF THE MOST DIVERSE STATES IN THE COUNTRY, AND WE ARE FAILING TO ADDRESS THE NEEDS OF OUR MOST VULNERABLE STUDENTS.



A MAJORITY OF TEACHER PREPARATION PROGRAMS IN MARYLAND INSTITUTIONS OF HIGHER EDUCATION ARE INEFFECTIVE.



MOST STUDENTS DON'T HAVE ACCESS TO HIGH QUALITY INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS IN READING.

## ABOUT THE DATA

Our reading proficiency scores come from two data sources:



The **National Assessment of Education Progress (NAEP)**, a congressionally mandated program of the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), is governed by the National Assessment Governing Board (NAGB). The English Language Arts assessment is a tool to measure student proficiency in reading.

Because the same NAEP assessments are administered in every state, NAEP can be used to make state-by-state comparisons and is often referred to as The Nation's Report Card.<sup>12</sup>



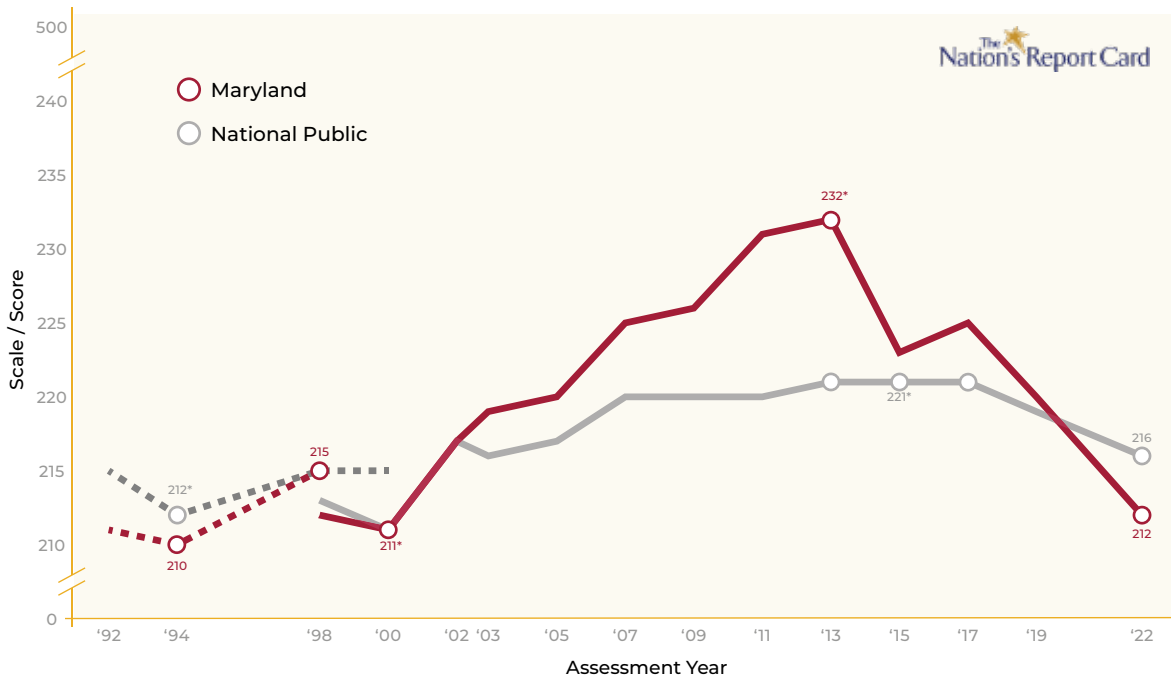
The **Maryland Comprehensive Assessment Program (MCAP)** is administered by the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) and based on the Maryland College and Career-Ready Standards (MCCR). Proficient rates for state assessments are tied to standards that outline what students are expected to know and to 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 expected grade level. We can use MCAP assessments to track year-over-year progress.<sup>13</sup>



## What the Data Reveals

The NAEP scores released in 2022 revealed, for the first time in almost a quarter of a century, that reading proficiency among Maryland’s fourth grade students had fallen below the national average. There was no public discourse sounding the alarm.

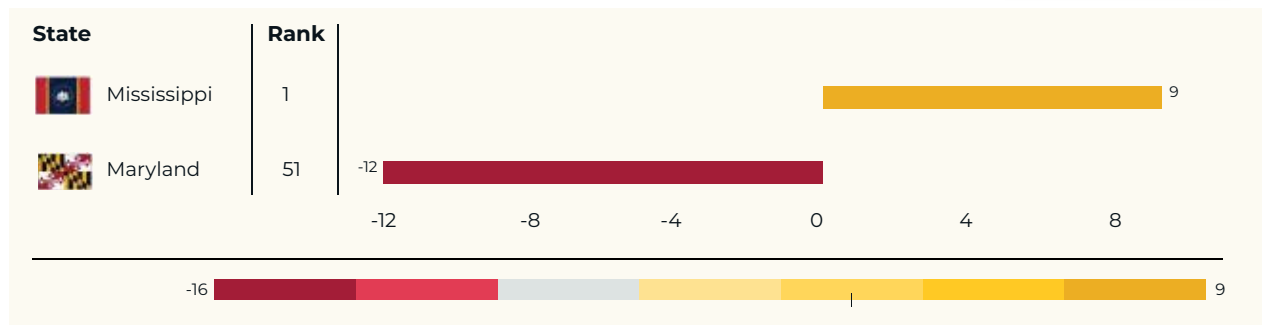
**From 2011 to 2022, Maryland’s fourth grade proficiency scores fell faster than any other state.**



Furthermore, a rate-of-change analysis after the 2022 NAEP scores were released, documented that seventeen states (led by Mississippi, Hawaii, and Washington, DC) saw their fourth grade reading proficiency rates improve from 2011 to 2022. During that same time period, Maryland’s scores fell by 12 percent.<sup>14</sup>

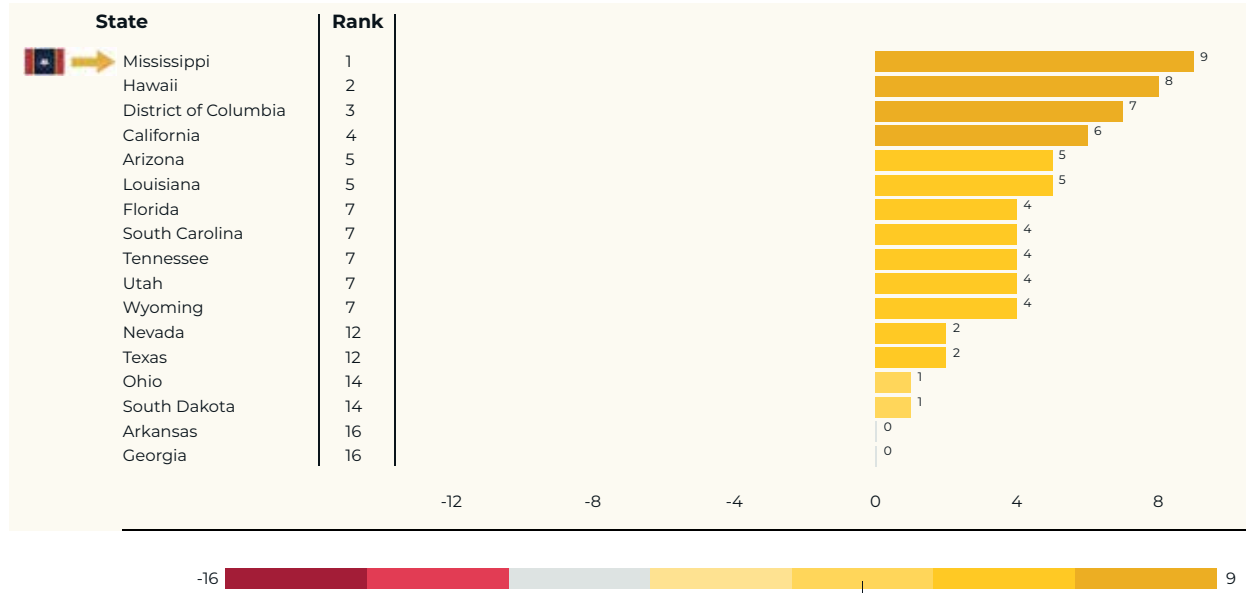
**Maryland students have been experiencing a downward trend for a decade.**

Change in Percent of Students Proficient (2011 to 2022)



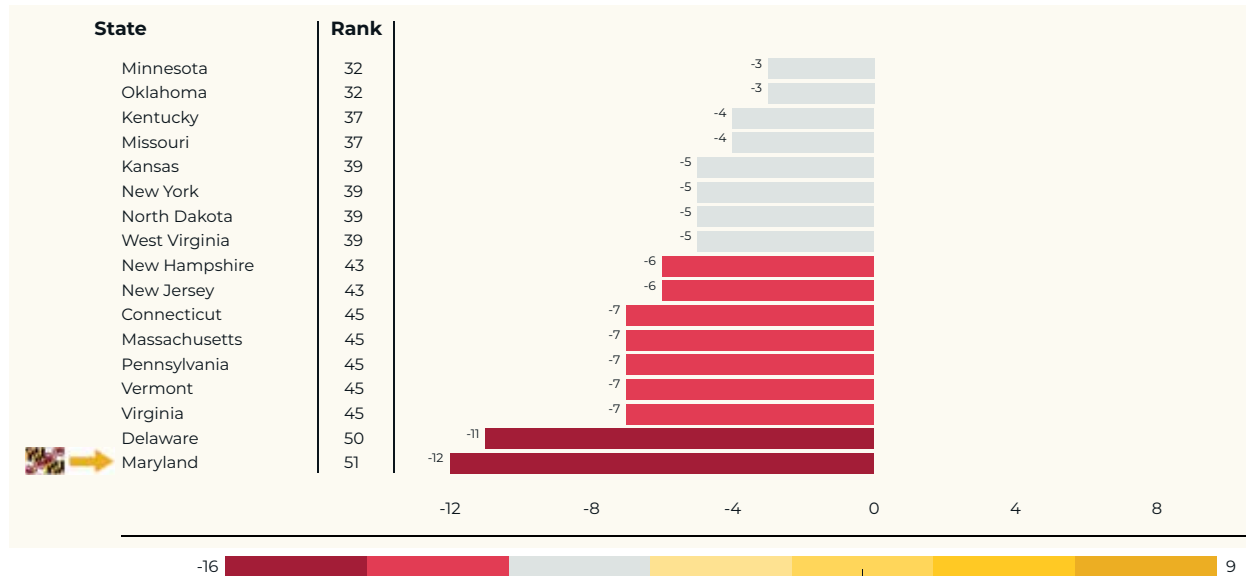
Mississippi was ranked first for having the fastest positive rate of change from 2011 to 2022.

Change in Percent of Students Proficient (2011 to 2022)



Maryland was ranked dead last. When it comes to reading proficiency, Maryland has been winning the race to the bottom. And it is impacting students throughout our state.

Change in Percent of Students Proficient (2011 to 2022)



The most recent MCAP scores from the 2023 school year confirm that the majority of Maryland's fourth graders cannot read proficiently.

### 2022 NAEP

**ONLY  
31%**

#### OF FOURTH GRADE STUDENTS

in Maryland scored in the proficient range — below the national average for the first time in 20 years.<sup>15</sup>

### 2023 MCAP

**ONLY  
48.7%**

#### OF FOURTH GRADE STUDENTS

in Maryland scored in the proficient range.<sup>16</sup>

### THE VOICE OF A STRUGGLING READER





*When I was in high school all my friends were talking about books they were reading and I thought something was wrong with me – I just could not relate. I felt stupid – and had a lot of anxiety and depression. When I was a junior in high school, I finally asked for help. After hours and hours of testing, I found out I had a reading disorder, a vision disorder, and anxiety and depression. I spent every afternoon of my senior year either working with an Academic Therapist to improve my reading, a vision specialist to address my vision disorder, or a counselor to help me with my anxiety and depression. And my parents had to pay for all this themselves. It made me wonder, **“What happens when students don’t get the support they need like I did?”***

CAITLYN, COLLEGE SOPHOMORE



Throughout our extensive landscape scan, it became clear that Marylanders see our state as a national leader. That’s because we used to be: our students’ reading scores consistently rose from 2003 through 2013. At our peak, we topped the charts for fourth grade reading proficiency. While many Marylanders think we’re still a leader, the honest truth is that our scores slowly and silently began a sharp decline in 2015.

Maryland now stands at 40th in the nation for fourth grade reading proficiency.

The Nation's Report Card		2013		The Nation's Report Card		2022	
		JURISDICTION	AVERAGE SCORE	JURISDICTION	AVERAGE SCORE		
	→	Maryland	232	11	Mississippi	217	1
		Massachusetts	232	12			
		DoDEA	232	11			
		New Hampshire	232	11			
		Connecticut	230	9			
		New Jersey	229	8			
		Virginia	229	8			
		Vermont	228	7			
		Florida	227	7			
		Minnesota	227	6			
		Colorado	227	6			
		Pennsylvania	226	6			
		Wyoming	226	5			
		Delaware	226	5			
		Indiana	225	5			
		Washington	225	4			
		Maine	225	4			
		Kentucky	224	4			
		North Dakota	224	3			
		Ohio	224	3			
		Iowa	224	3			
		New York	224	3			
		Kansas	223	3			
		Nebraska	223	3			
		Montana	223	2			
		Rhode Island	223	2			
		Utah	223	2			
		Missouri	222	2			
		North Carolina	222	2			
		Georgia	222	1			
		Wisconsin	221	#			
		National public	221	†			
		Tennessee	220	-1			
		Idaho	219	-1			
		Oregon	219	-2			
		Alabama	219	-2			
		Illinois	219	-2			
		Arkansas	219	-2			
		South Dakota	218	-3			
		Michigan	217	-3			
		Oklahoma	217	-4			
		Texas	217	-4			
		Hawaii	215	-6			
		West Virginia	215	-6			
		Nevada	214	-7			
		South Carolina	214	-7			
		Arizona	213	-8			
		California	213	-8			
		Louisiana	210	-10			
		Alaska	209	-11			
	→	Mississippi	209	-12			
		New Mexico	206	-15			
		District of Columbia	206	-15			
		Puerto Rico	—	†			
		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	#			
		South Carolina	216	#			
		North Carolina	216	#			
		National public	216	†			
		Georgia	216	#			
		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	—	†			

The MCAP data released in September 2023 tells a similar story.

Statewide, 51.3% of our fourth graders cannot read proficiently. Even in our highest performing county (Worcester), more than 28.9% of fourth graders are not proficient readers.



**MARYLAND STUDENTS FALL SHORT OF READING STANDARDS IN EVERY ZIP CODE AND EVERY COUNTY**



Access information on your county. [Click here to learn more.](#)

2023 MCAP 4th Grade Proficiency Rates by County<sup>17</sup>

LEA District	Proficient	Nonproficient
Worcester	71.1	28.9
Carroll	66.4	33.6
Calvert	62.7	37.3
Howard	62.2	37.8
Queen Anne's	62.1	37.9
Harford	59.2	40.8
Frederick	58.9	41.1
Montgomery	57.6	42.4
Anne Arundel	53.6	46.4
St. Mary's County	52.6	47.4
Washington	50.7	49.3
Allegany	48.6	51.4
Cecil	47.7	52.3
Kent	47.3	52.7
Garrett	44.6	55.4
Baltimore County	44.4	55.6
Talbot	43.9	56.1
Caroline	43.7	56.3
Somerset	40.9	59.1
Charles	40.4	59.6
Prince George's	37.2	62.8
Wicomico	35.2	64.8
Dorchester	34.5	65.5
Baltimore City	23.3	76.7

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

*I think a huge problem that needs to be considered systemically, is the tools that we're using don't often meet the needs of language learners. It does become very much a compliance thing rather than really meeting a student's need and informing instruction.*

KERRI VALENCIA, PHD, MARYLAND READS BOARD MEMBER  
CHIEF ACADEMIC OFFICE, MORELAND UNIVERSITY







## Acknowledging Maryland's Diversity and Achievement Gaps

Poor reading proficiency affects students of all races and cultural groups, but there is a racial and socioeconomic achievement gap impacted by systemic resource under-allocation and exacerbated by a lack of support for effective instruction, progress monitoring, and interventions.<sup>18</sup>

More than half of white, black, and Hispanic students in Maryland don't meet reading proficiency standards, and almost half (46%) of Asian students don't meet them. Yet we cannot ignore the gap that is much greater in black and Hispanic communities than others, and this needs to be acknowledged, studied, and addressed.

A child's ability to read well is not a function of race or income; it's determined by whether they receive the strong and effective reading instruction, support, and interventions they need to succeed. Whether they do is dependent on resources, but it's also influenced by culturally relevant education.

The Nation's Report Card

STUDENT GROUP	% WHO READ PROFICIENTLY IN 4TH GRADE
Asian students	54%
Caucasian students	47%
ALL STUDENTS	31%
Black students	20%
Hispanic students	15%
Students eligible for National School Lunch Program	14%
Students with disabilities	12%
English language learners	6%

### THE VOICE OF A STRUGGLING READER

*In 2nd grade, I found out I have a learning difference and it wasn't easy to hear. My parents sent me to a private school, away from my friends. I didn't know anyone and the first school was majority white, so I felt very alone, all because I had trouble learning to read. It was very hard for me, but I feel like that experience helped me grow. I still have challenges with reading, but I know how to advocate for myself. And, I get frustrated that decisions around my education depend on whether the school understands how I learn. **Why can't all teachers in all schools teach all children how to read?***

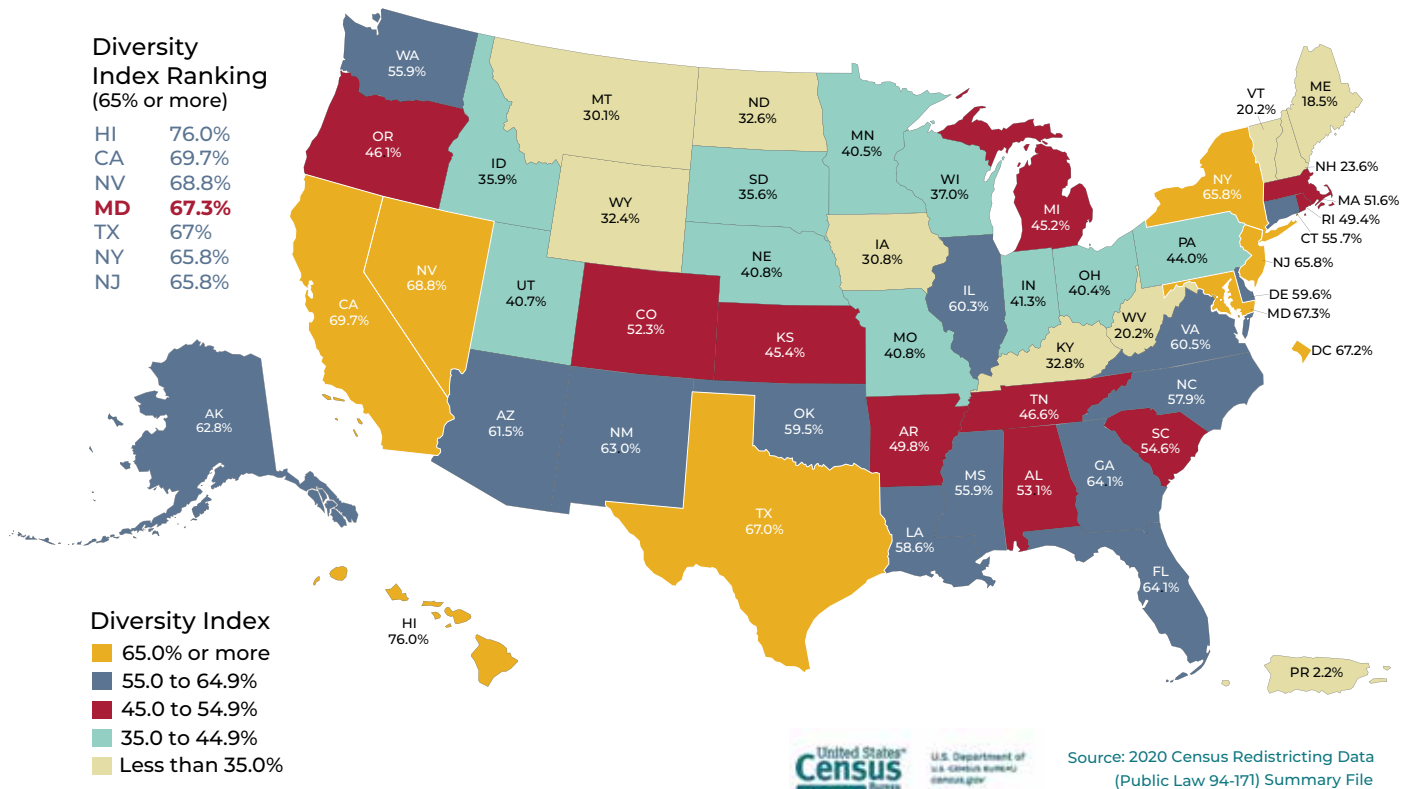


LOGAN, EIGHTH GRADER

### Maryland ranks 4th on Diversity Index.

Researchers have shown that differences in race, culture, and the primary language spoken in children’s homes impact their ability to learn to read. And even many Marylanders don’t realize that ours is the fourth most diverse state in America, behind only Hawaii, California, and Nevada — and above Texas and Florida.<sup>19</sup> Prioritizing improvement in instruction benefits all students and can have an even greater impact for students who have been historically underperforming.

#### Racial and Ethnic Diversity Index by State: 2020



*This will be Maryland’s decade. Not because we say so, but because we make it so — together.*

**GOVERNOR WES MOORE**  
2024 STATE OF THE STATE ADDRESS

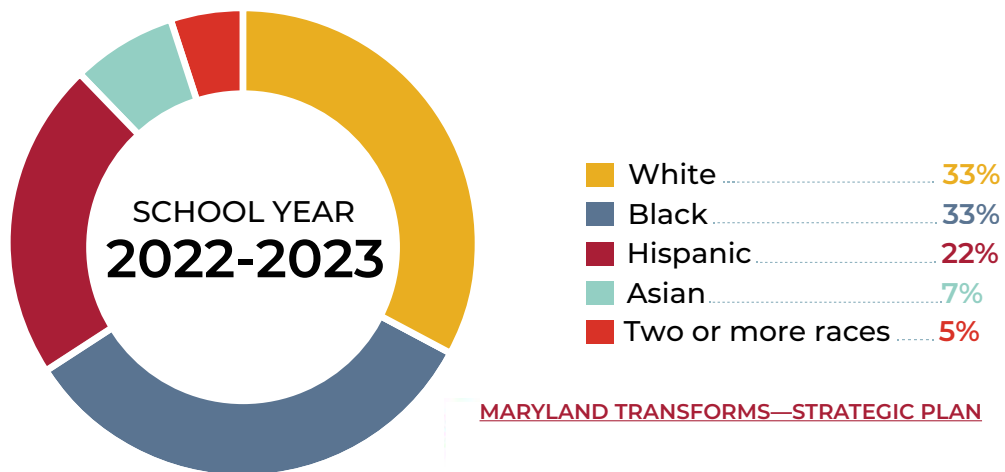


## Maryland's school population.

A breakdown of Maryland's school population shows that the diversity extends to our students, who are 33% White, 33% Black, 22% Hispanic, 7% Asian, and 5% multiracial.

Research has shown that students are more engaged in content; attend school more; have higher efficacy and self-confidence in their learning; and are more successful academically when teaching and learning affirm their culture, background, languages, histories, and experiences.<sup>20</sup>

As our state becomes more diverse, we must ensure that resources and support continue to flow fairly to all our communities. And to effectively address the achievement gap, we must also embrace culturally relevant teaching. Students who see themselves in what they are learning will stay engaged and learn better and faster, and educators who apply asset-based mindsets to their students and affirm and honor their cultures and backgrounds will be more effective teachers of all school subjects and skills — including reading.



*I am particularly interested in exploring the reality around language and culture in our state and how it relates to children learning to read. Let's explore the number of languages spoken in our schools, the number of countries the children or their parents come from and engage in a meaningful dialogue about the rich diversity in Maryland.*

**SUE FOTHERGILL, MARYLAND READS BOARD MEMBER  
SENIOR FELLOW, ATTENDANCEWORKS**





## The Teacher Training Gap

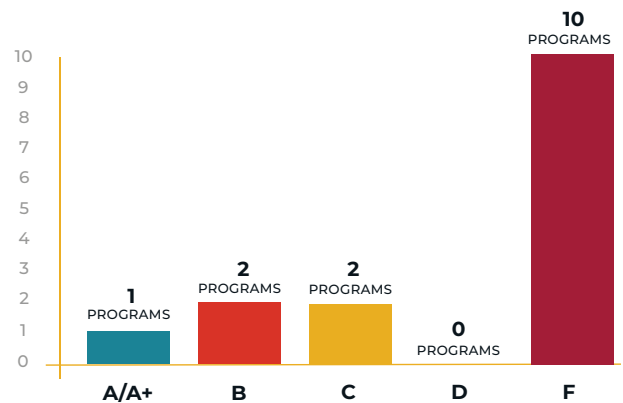
The human brain is not hard-wired to read.

Learning to read is a complex neurological process that does not come naturally as we grow, the way seeing and speaking do. In a sense, reading teachers are like brain surgeons: they are rewiring our children’s brains for a new skill. And, like surgeons, they need precise training and preparation to understand how to do their work, and ongoing professional development to maintain their skills and show them new approaches that have been proven to work.

In an evaluation of reading education in teacher preparation programs, in Maryland by the [National Council on Teacher Quality](#),<sup>21</sup> only one of the 15 reviewed (McDaniel College) received an A grade. Ten received F grades, 2 received B grades, and 2 received C grades.

Most of our teacher preparation programs aren’t properly serving teachers, or our students.

SCHOOL	PROGRAM LEVEL	GRADE
McDaniel College	UG	A
Salisbury University	UG	B
Towson University	UG	B
Morgan State University	UG	C
University of Maryland - College Park	UG	C
Bowie State University	UG	F
Bowie State University	G	F
Coppin State University	G	F
Frostburg State University	UG	F
Frostburg State University	G	F
Hood College	UG	F
St. Mary’s College of Maryland	UG	F
Towson University	G	F
University of Maryland - Baltimore County	UG	F
University of Maryland - College Park	G	F



*We human beings were never born to read; we invented reading and then had to teach it to every new generation. Each new reader comes to reading with a ‘fresh’ brain — one that is programmed to speak, see, and think, but not to read.*

UCLA PROFESSOR MARYANNE WOLF  
AUTHOR OF *READER COME HOME*





## The Instructional Materials Gap

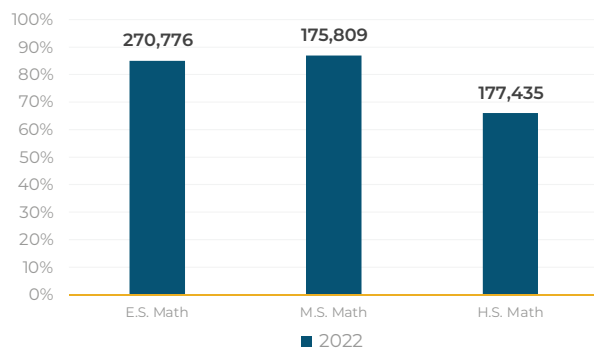
In 2017, the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO) launched the High-Quality Instructional Materials and Professional Development Network (IMPD), and Maryland joined in 2022. In November 2023, CCSSO released a report, the [Impact of the CCSSO IMPD Network](#), documenting findings from participating states.

The report highlights a survey of Maryland district materials that was conducted in early 2022. The survey revealed that 85% of Maryland elementary students have access to high-quality instructional materials for math, but *less than half* (46%) of those same students have access to high-quality instructional materials for reading. And in both reading and math there is a sharp decline in access to high-quality instructional materials at the high school level.

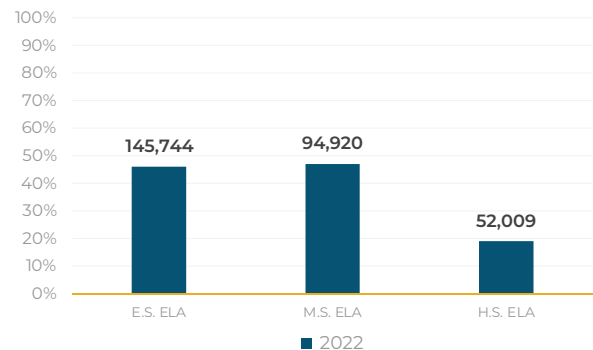
Throughout our conversations, many experts and practitioners in Maryland highlighted our state’s engagement in CCSSO’s IMPD network. While this is a public report, we acknowledge there is little information about how the survey was conducted.

### More than half of elementary students in Maryland have access to high quality instructional materials for English Language Arts.

**Math: Students with Access to HQIM**



**ELA: Students with Access to HQIM**



Math Statewide	Elementary	Middle	High
% All Students	85% — 2022	87%	66%
% of Students of Color	81%	82%	60%
% of Students from Low-Income Families	87%	86%	64%

ELA Statewide	Elementary	Middle	High
% All Students	46% — 2022	47%	19%
% of Students of Color	50%	53%	27%
% of Students from Low-Income Families	52%	38%	30%

Source: HQIM LEA Survey, 2022



# ▶ THE STATE OF READING IN MARYLAND IS ON THE PRECIPICE OF CHANGE

2021

The General Assembly passes the [Blueprint for Maryland's Future](#), which allotted additional dollars to expand early childhood programming in an effort to improve early learning reading outcomes.



2022

Maryland joins the [Council of Chief State School Officers Instructional Materials and Professional Development Network](#)

The IMPD Network helps states work with their districts to adopt high-quality instructional materials (HQIM) and provide professional development opportunities aligned to those materials.



February 2022

MSDE prioritizes reading through the [Maryland Leads Grant Initiative](#) incentivizing school districts to implement a comprehensive literacy plan aligned to the Science of Reading.



March 2023

The Accountability and Implementation Board requires [literacy plans as a condition of Blueprint funding](#).

MSDE begins requiring school districts to outline a five-point literacy strategy, including Science of Reading training and HQIM, in order to apply for Blueprint funding.

## January 2024

The State Board sets reading targets. In its [Reading Resolution](#), the State Board of Education sets a statewide aspirational target for Maryland to rank as one of the top ten states in reading on the fourth and eighth grade NAEP exams by 2027.

Dr. Wright introduces the [Continuous Literacy Improvement Framework](#), with an aim toward universal proficiency in reading for all Maryland students by the end of third grade.

## October 2023

MSDE appoints a new Interim State Superintendent of Education, [Dr. Carey Wright](#), who led Mississippi's reading turnaround.

## December 2023

MSDE publishes [revisions to COMAR regulations for Educator Licensure](#) and Programs for Professionally Licensed Personnel. Educators renewing teacher licenses must demonstrate proficiency in the Science of Reading beginning in 2025. Teacher preparation programs are also required to be more transparent with respect to reading instruction.

## June 2023

MSDE prioritizes reading in its [strategic plan](#). MSDE's new strategic plan states that all Maryland students should be proficient in reading by the end of third grade, and those who are not should receive the necessary support to become proficient readers.

## Progress is on the horizon.

For the last three years, the focus on improving reading achievement has been picking up steam. A timeline starting in 2021 shows how Maryland is refining its literacy strategy and making progress toward adopting and implementing a strategy grounded in the Science of Reading.

## ▶ OUR CALL TO ACTION

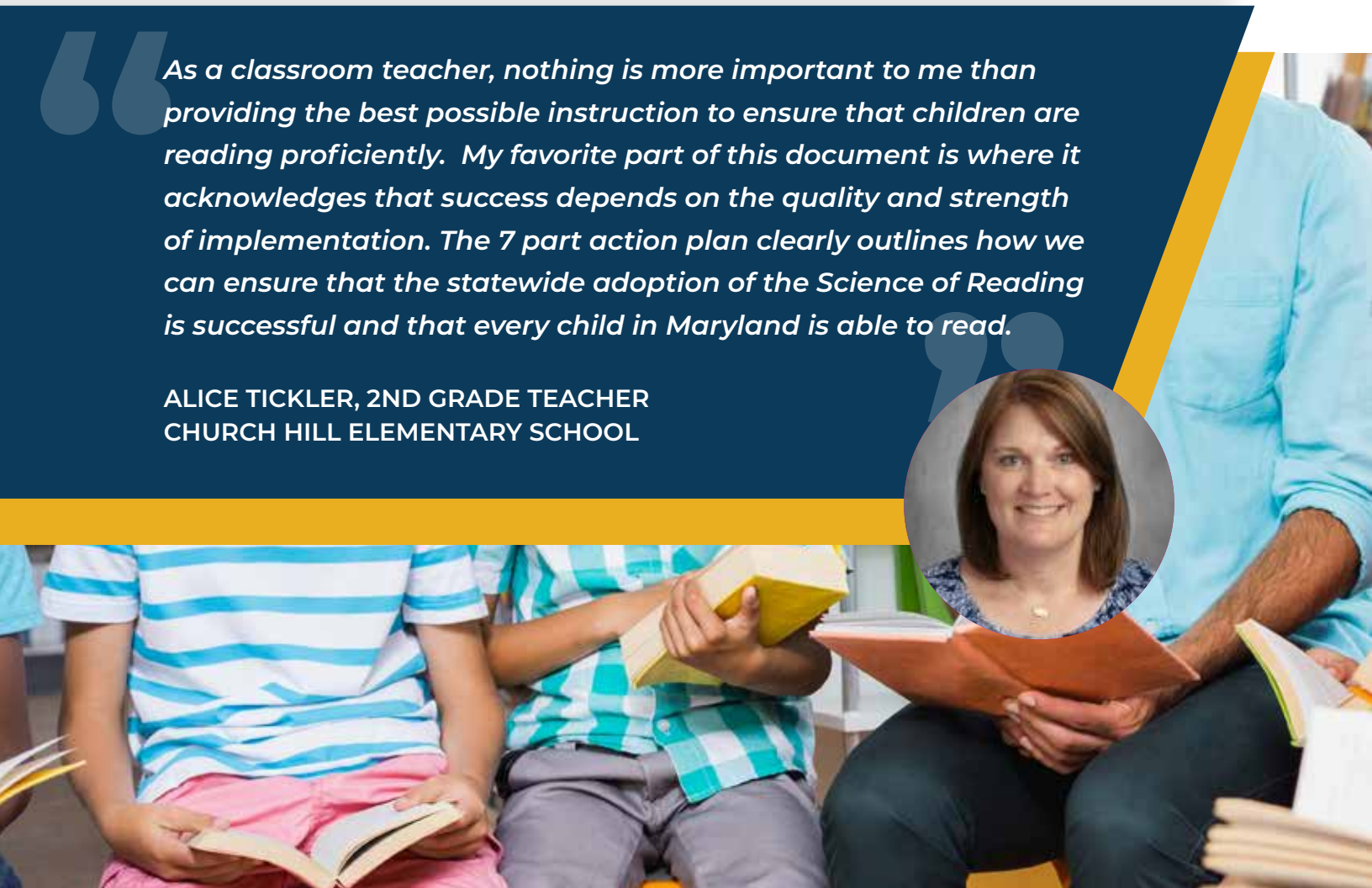
The success or failure of a statewide adoption of the Science of Reading rests on the strength of implementation. Research shows that the quality of implementation plays a significant part in bringing about outcomes. The truth of the matter is that educators are regularly presented with new initiatives and mandates — usually new ones every year. Many have seen promising initiatives come and go with leadership changes, the onset of new priorities, or programs shut down because of spotty early outcomes. However, **we cannot allow the statewide adoption and implementation of literacy instruction based on the Science of Reading to fail.**

**We call Marylanders to action. Let's build on these first important steps, and transform our state educational system into one that makes research-based strategies and tactics the foundation of reading education for our children so that reading proficiency rates can soar.**

In preparing this report, Maryland READS spoke with teachers, district administrators, state leaders, parents, funders, and education nonprofits to discuss barriers to progress and to identify systemic solutions. Together, this wide-ranging group of Marylanders illuminated the challenges we face in effective reading instruction — and showed us a path forward for our state and local leaders, our teachers, and our community.

*As a classroom teacher, nothing is more important to me than providing the best possible instruction to ensure that children are reading proficiently. My favorite part of this document is where it acknowledges that success depends on the quality and strength of implementation. The 7 part action plan clearly outlines how we can ensure that the statewide adoption of the Science of Reading is successful and that every child in Maryland is able to read.*

**ALICE TICKLER, 2ND GRADE TEACHER  
CHURCH HILL ELEMENTARY SCHOOL**





# The Maryland READS Seven-Part Action Plan



## Shift Our Approach

**Embrace the Science of Reading across our state.** Prioritize teaching approaches and tactics that are rooted in Science of Reading research and evidence.<sup>22</sup>



## Improve Instruction

**Improve core reading instruction,** by giving our existing teachers consistent, comprehensive, and job-embedded professional learning opportunities coupled with high-quality research-based instructional materials.



## Build Better Data and Progress Monitoring Systems

**Improve how we collect, select, and analyze data and how we train educators to use it to monitor student progress** so they can identify students who are struggling to read as early as possible and provide immediate, targeted, and effective support.



## Intervene Early and Effectively for All Students

**Provide interventions for struggling readers at all levels,** from the early elementary years all the way through high school, because students of all ages are still acquiring and refining reading skills.



## Develop Leadership Capacity

**Train our principals and those who supervise them in the Science of Reading** so they understand the research, how teachers are being asked to change their practices, and how they can create supportive environments that help teachers become more effective.



## Create a Thriving Reading Ecosystem

**Build a thriving reading ecosystem** that includes a coherent state system of support, community resources that encourage and nourish research-based strategies for students, and education and advice for parents so *they* can also reinforce what districts are doing to help children become thriving readers



## Invest in the Next Generation

**Prepare the next generation of teachers and administrators.** Align teacher preparation programs to the Science of Reading, ensure that all elements of Balanced Literacy and Whole Language Instruction are removed from the curriculum, inspire faculty to improve reading instruction curriculum, and hold their leaders accountable for progress.



## APPROACH

### Shift our approach to embrace the Science of Reading statewide.

It's been a quarter of a century since the landmark National Reading Panel report.<sup>23</sup> And here in Maryland and nationwide, we are finally beginning to adopt the research-based instructional strategies it outlined — now referred to as the Science of Reading.

Everyone involved in helping our students learn to read needs to understand that neuroscience is at work when a child learns to read, and the evidence-based instructional skills and strategies encompassed in the Science of Reading approach are proven to work.

The Maryland State Board of Education's Reading Resolution requires that "All literacy instruction in Maryland public schools must be aligned to the Science of Reading, including structured literacy, effective School Year 2024-25."

**Let's answer the call — and work together to make the Science of Reading the foundation of all reading instruction in Maryland, for students of all ages.**

### Making it Happen

**Districts are beginning to respond to the Reading Resolution. We need all our districts to act swiftly and decisively.**

- ▶ Everyone in Maryland needs to work together to realize the promise of the Science of Reading.
- ▶ There should be wide-scale adoption of the MSBE Reading Resolution from state and local leaders such as state agencies, legislators, county school boards, to county councils, superintendents, PTAs, and teachers unions.

- ▶ Community members such as parents, business leaders, and community leaders can show your support: join us in supporting the Reading Resolution.

**Maryland needs more public voices championing the shift to the Science of Reading in every sector.**

- ▶ Maryland READS will provide support and tools to help you leverage your voice and champion the shift to the Science of Reading.

# Resolution of the Maryland State Board of Education: Statewide Adoption and Implementation of the Science of Reading

[Download the full document in its entirety](#)

**WHEREAS**, Education Article §2-205 vests the authority in the State Board of Education, and by delegation the State Superintendent of Schools, to establish policy and guidelines pertaining to elementary and secondary education and the program of instruction for public schools.

**NOW, THEREFORE, THE MARYLAND STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION, BY VIRTUE OF THE AUTHORITY VESTED IN IT BY THE LAWS OF MARYLAND, INCLUDING BUT NOT LIMITED TO, TITLE 2 OF THE EDUCATION ARTICLE, DOES HEREBY RESOLVE:**

- I. The State Board aims to dramatically improve reading proficiency for students from all backgrounds in Maryland as indicated by improved outcomes on the state MCAP assessment and the NAEP exam. The State Board sets a statewide aspirational target for Maryland to rank as one of the top ten states on the 4th and 8th grade NAEP exams by 2027.
- II. All literacy instruction in Maryland public schools must be aligned to the Science of Reading, including structured literacy, effective School Year 2024-25.
- III. The State Board charges the State Superintendent of Schools with drafting a comprehensive literacy policy aligned to the Science of Reading for consideration to the State Board for approval, including but not limited to curriculum adoption, assessment, data analysis, early warning system, intervention, and accountability.
- IV. The State Superintendent of Schools will review all current state literacy guidance, standards, policies, and regulations for alignment with the Science of Reading and make recommendations for revisions as needed, including a prioritized review of the Maryland College and Career Ready Standards for Reading/English Language Arts to ensure alignment to scientifically-based reading instruction.
- V. The State Superintendent of Schools will establish strategic partnerships with institutions of higher education to improve the alignment of teacher preparation and professional development to the Science of Reading.
- VI. The Maryland State Department of Education shall incorporate a specific evaluation of reading instruction in the licensure program renewal process and take action if programs are not aligned with the state's standards for scientifically-based reading instruction.
- VII. The State Board will continue to partner with the Blueprint Accountability and Implementation Board to ensure that the Blueprint for Maryland's Future advances the Science of Reading and improves literacy outcomes.



## INSTRUCTION

### Improve core reading instruction.

Science has shown that when students are provided with systematic, explicit instruction grounded in research, they build the foundational skills they need to become successful readers.

**Teachers need to be trained in instructional strategies aligned to the Science of Reading and supported in translating that training into classroom practice.**

In our interviews, we learned that there is a knowledge gap among teachers, and they need comprehensive professional development in this area, as well as high-quality instructional materials they can use in the classroom. MSDE has launched several initiatives to help teachers, including training K-3 teachers, sourcing and distributing content-rich instructional materials and assessment tools, and requiring comprehensive district literacy plans that include teacher support.<sup>24</sup> But we need to do more.

### Making it Happen

**Professional development is piecemeal and is often not part of a comprehensive instructional program. Educators want comprehensive professional development, not intermittent training, and they need to understand how to get it.**

- ▶ State and district leaders can work together to identify or develop a coherent and comprehensive approach to professional development.
- ▶ Teacher unions can work as partners and prioritize teacher time for professional development in the Science of Reading

**Educators report that professional development opportunities are not communicated in a manner that allows educators to plan effectively.**

- ▶ State and local leaders can improve approaches to inform educators about training and professional development opportunities and how to take advantage of them, and explain why it is important for them to do so.

**To provide high-quality professional development, school districts struggle with the expertise and time needed to identify which programs, providers and materials are effective and aligned to the Science of Reading. Delivering high quality professional development should not rest solely on the shoulders of school districts.**

- ▶ MSDE should leverage its capacity to help districts by developing a process to vet providers, and coordinating the planning and deployment of professional development programs statewide.

- ▶ School districts should consider pooling their professional development funds to purchase professional development support.

**Teachers struggle to apply what they learned in professional development sessions.**

- ▶ Districts and schools can provide educators with job-embedded assistance from coaches trained in the Science of Reading.
- ▶ Coaches can be trained by MSDE to ensure quality and consistency across counties.

**A majority of students do not have access to high quality instructional materials in English Language Arts.**

- ▶ MSDE should act swiftly to learn where districts need assistance and determine barriers to accessing high-quality instructional materials for English Language Arts.
- ▶ A second survey of district reading materials should be administered in the fall of 2024 to measure progress.

- ▶ Educators can use the no-cost [Curriculum Evaluation Guidelines](#) available from The Reading League to determine whether or not their instructional materials are aligned with the scientific evidence base of how children learn to read.

**Teachers are experiencing growing diversity of cultural and linguistic backgrounds among their student populations and are not confident in their ability to meet the needs of these diverse students.**

- ▶ Educators can develop asset-based mindsets so they can affirm and honor the cultures and backgrounds of all of their students.
- ▶ Leaders and educators at all levels can assume responsibility for adjusting instructional approaches to meet the needs of culturally and linguistically diverse students.
- ▶ Districts and schools can provide educators with explicit professional development and job-embedded coaching specific to the diverse populations they are serving in the classroom.

*I have taught in Baltimore City Public Schools in the neediest areas and also in Montgomery County Public Schools in wealthy areas and in both cases, there was a great need for reading support for my students.*



**BRANDON WALLACE, EDD, PROFESSOR, MONTGOMERY COLLEGE;  
FACULTY ASSOCIATE, JOHNS HOPKINS UNIVERSITY**



# DATA AND PROGRESS MONITORING

## Build better data and progress monitoring systems.

Data provided to teachers and families should be timely and accessible so that it can be used to understand student needs and inform instruction. Without accurate and current data, teachers are limited in understanding how students are learning and where they can adjust instruction.

**District staff, school leaders, and educators across the state need access to timely, user-friendly data reports to inform and support instruction and student progress monitoring.**

These systems are critical for teachers to be able to identify students who need extra support and take immediate action to keep every student on track.

### Making it Happen

**Educators can overlook the ways in which students are struggling to read in the early years, which can become exacerbated as those students carry their struggles with reading throughout their educational careers.**

- ▶ Encourage our elementary teachers to identify students who need support and intervene right away. Empower them with data, training, and materials to meet their students' needs.

**Educators and district staff don't have access to data to help them track student progress and/or they don't know how to use it.**

- ▶ In the short term, train teachers to use existing data systems and monitoring tools to track student progress and inform their instruction.

- ▶ Where data doesn't exist or isn't available in a useful format, the state needs to work with districts to help them create tools to track student progress.

**Educators, district staff, and other stakeholders want a reading progress monitoring system that is aligned to state support to improve instruction.**

- ▶ In the long term, MSDE can create a new, modern, cohesive progress monitoring system and train staff at all levels.
- ▶ MSDE can evolve from a direct funding model and become a state system of support for districts and teachers working to improve reading.

- ▶ Progress monitoring systems can align resources and interventions so that teachers, families, and stakeholders can have clear concrete tools to help students improve in reading.

**Families, educators, and the public don't believe they have access to reports that help them understand reading proficiency rates of their students, schools, and districts.**

- ▶ MSDE can revise the State Report Card to present clearer data related to reading proficiency and make it more user-friendly.
- ▶ MSDE can provide a clear point of contact for families to request their student's MCAP scores.





## INTERVENTIONS

### Intervene early and effectively for all students.

The data in this report has largely focused on fourth grade reading proficiency, because fourth grade is conventionally considered the point when students shift from “learning to read” to “reading to learn.”

**We tend to overlook older struggling readers in middle school and high school — but we shouldn’t.**

Academic literacy must be taught at all grade levels and in all subject areas. Struggling readers exist at all grade levels, sometimes because they have learning challenges, sometimes because the instruction they received did not align with their needs or learning pace, and they didn’t receive the interventions and support they needed early enough. Because [Maryland’s K-12 English learner population comprises over 88,000 students who speak 178 languages](#), it is especially critical to provide teachers with the training and resources they need to be able to intervene early with students who are multilingual.<sup>25</sup> We need Science of Reading training and implementation at every level of the K-12 educational system to ensure that no student is left behind.

### Making it Happen

**Students in early grades do not receive immediate support when they are struggling with reading.**

- ▶ When educators observe students who are struggling to read, they should act immediately.

**Educators, families, and stakeholders all agree that many middle and high school students don’t receive the screenings or the reading interventions and support they need.**

- ▶ Identify intervention tactics that suit older students, too, and make sure middle and high school teachers know how to identify older students who struggle to read.

- ▶ Maryland READS believe that improving reading instruction for early learners and middle and high school students is not mutually exclusive. As part of our planning in 2024, we will continue to explore how we can leverage our resources and networks to elevate conversations that focus on support for middle and high school students.

- ▶ MSDE and school districts can provide free resources to families that are aligned to the Science of Reading so they are better positioned to reinforce the instruction and interventions their students are receiving at school.



**Most middle and high school educators aren't trained or prepared to provide reading interventions.**

- ▶ Prioritize Science of Reading training for middle and high school teachers, who often receive professional development on the subject they teach, but not on pedagogical topics.
- ▶ Develop and distribute intervention materials that are suitable for older students.

**District and school leaders at the middle and high school levels may not have the time or expertise to develop or vet interventions.**

- ▶ MSDE can take the lead in sharing intervention strategies for middle and high school students, and training educators.





## BUILD LEADERSHIP CAPACITY

**Train principals, and those who supervise them, in the Science of Reading.**

Implementing Science of Reading education doesn't just depend on teachers and MSDE. It requires everyone to help, including principals, school district leaders, school boards, and state and local leaders.

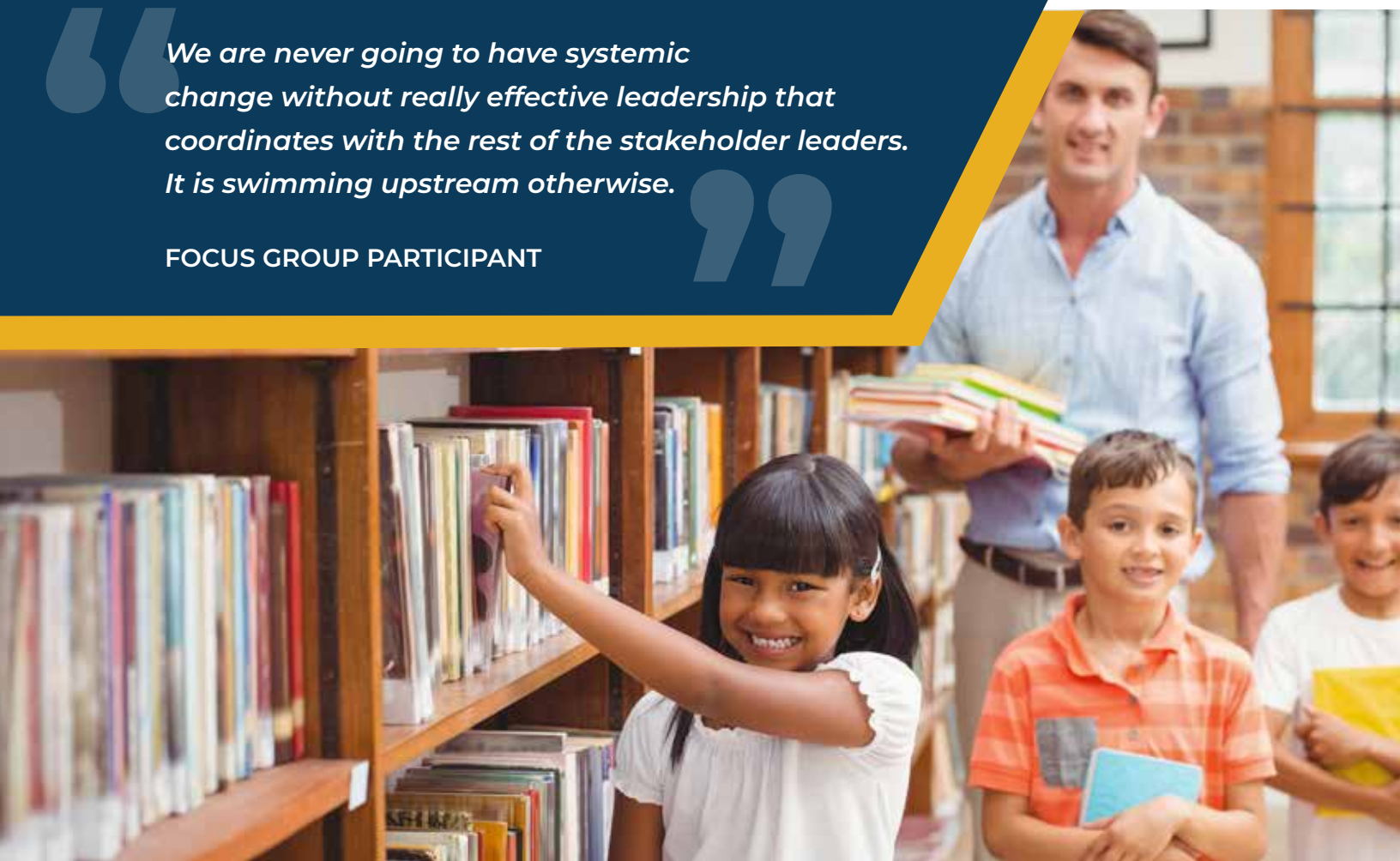
**We need to make sure everyone in the educational ecosystem understands the stakes, and does their part to bring the Science of Reading to our children.**

In 2004, The Wallace Foundation revealed this seminal finding in *How Leadership Influences Student Learning*: Leadership is second only to classroom instruction among all school-related factors that contribute to what students learn at school.<sup>26</sup> Bottom line, principals matter A LOT.

The COVID-19 pandemic forced school leaders to devote attention to managing the resulting operational disruptions, but now that the immediate urgency of the pandemic has receded, it's time for them to turn their attention back to their underlying mission: leading and supporting their teachers in providing effective, research-based instruction.

*We are never going to have systemic change without really effective leadership that coordinates with the rest of the stakeholder leaders. It is swimming upstream otherwise.*

FOCUS GROUP PARTICIPANT



## Making it Happen

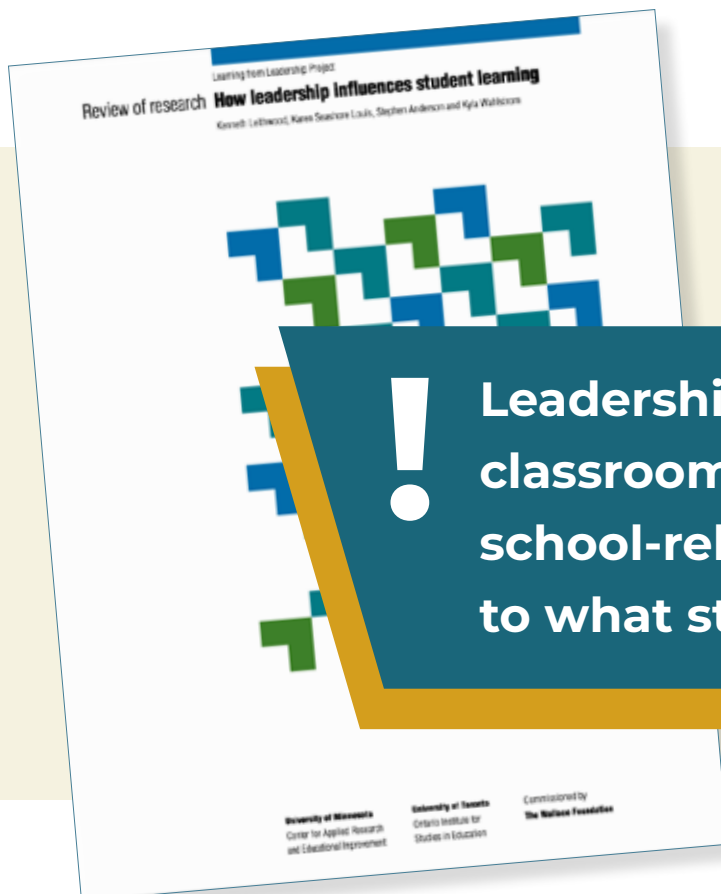
**Most school principals, principal supervisors, and school district leaders have never been trained on the Science of Reading.**

- ▶ All school leaders and key district personnel need to be trained to understand the Science of Reading, buy into the approach, and know how they can help.
- ▶ State and local leaders should provide professional development designed specifically for school and district leaders who are responsible for supporting implementation of the Science of Reading.

- ▶ Maryland READS has identified developing principal literacy leadership as a priority area of focus. Through our work, we will continue to bring focus to this critical issue and build partnerships with organizations who are committed to supporting principals. We invite you to join our efforts.

**COVID forced school leaders to focus more on building management than instructional leadership.**

- ▶ It is time to refocus our efforts on building the capacity of principals and their supervisors to become effective literacy leaders.





## ECOSYSTEM

### Build a thriving reading ecosystem.

Effective reading instruction requires an effective reading ecosystem, in which the state is marshaling teachers, school districts, parents, and other stakeholders to make progress together toward common goals, and students are provided 360-degree support as they acquire and refine their reading skills.

**At the state level**, reading-related initiatives need to be communicated as part of a single statewide effort to raise reading proficiency, which includes a coherent and coordinated set of sub-initiatives all leading back to that one all-important goal — **improving the reading proficiency of all Maryland students**.

### Making it Happen

#### **Educators and stakeholders don't believe the state has a unified vision for improving reading proficiency.**

- ▶ The State Board of Education and MSDE should use the Reading Resolution as an opportunity to reinforce the underlying goal — using research-based instruction to support all our children — and make clear how all their various initiatives are part of a coherent whole.

#### **State and local leaders don't always communicate effectively about their reading-related initiatives to educators and other stakeholders on the ground.**

- ▶ Outside organizations should continue to monitor monthly State Board of Education meetings and serve as a conduit to help disseminate updates to their networks, but that shouldn't be the only way information is communicated.
- ▶ State agencies can ensure there are regular and varied communications to teachers, school districts, and other stakeholders about statewide programs and progress toward reading goals.
- ▶ School districts can ensure that information is communicated swiftly to the leaders and educators who are on the front lines in our schools.

**For our students**, we need to reinforce reading instruction from all sides, not just via schools, but also through the actors in our local ecosystems — like libraries, childcare and afterschool programs, community initiatives, and parents and families. Research shows that doing this provides support and guardrails for students whose progress is at risk, to maximize the chance they will continue to learn. Everyone in the community can help by encouraging reading, modeling good reading behavior, and helping identify students who need special help.

## Making it Happen

**“Secondary stakeholders” outside the school system who make up our local ecosystems don’t always understand how important their role is, or don’t feel acknowledged for what they do to support reading instruction.**

- ▶ State agencies can communicate clearly that reading education is an interconnected activity, involving not just schools and the MSDE but a wide range of interconnected stakeholders in every community.
- ▶ As a model for districts across the state, forward-looking districts can implement a cross-social model of support for reading instruction, showing how agencies across the community can work together to help keep students on track.

**Most districts and communities don’t have obvious ways for individuals and organizations who want to support their local reading ecosystem to get involved.**

- ▶ Maryland READS will be part of the solution, by encouraging counties to coordinate literacy-related efforts and make it easier to participate, and through county-by-county tracking of activities and resources. Connect with us and tell us about organizations and institutions working to support reading proficiency in your community, so we can tell others.

**Business leaders are not active in reading reform efforts.**

- ▶ Business leaders can [endorse The Reading Resolution](#).

- ▶ Read the Business Roundtable’s guide, [Why Reading Matters — Now More than Ever](#) — that identifies why and how businesses can leverage their resources to improve reading in their communities.

- ▶ Contact Maryland READS to join our efforts in establishing a coalition of business leaders in Maryland.

**Community organizations struggle for resources to expand services focused on reading.**

- ▶ The Maryland funding community can organize and prioritize investments in research-based strategies to improve reading proficiency in Maryland and endorse The Reading Resolution.
- ▶ Funders can join with Maryland READS to create a funder table that can vet and expedite resources to organizations who propose strategies to build thriving reading ecosystems in their communities.

**Families struggle to understand how they can support their children in becoming proficient readers.**

- ▶ Provide parents with timely information on their child’s reading proficiency levels, as well as information about ways in which they can support their students at home.
- ▶ Districts, schools, and libraries can provide parents free or affordable resources they can use at home to support what is being taught to their children in school.



## INVEST IN THE NEXT GENERATION

### Prepare the next generation of teachers and administrators.

Changing the way we teach requires changing the way we train teachers, and **tomorrow's teachers and administrators need Science of Reading training from the beginning of their educational journey.** This requires action beyond the K-12 educational system. Maryland's colleges and universities need to embrace the research-based approach to elementary and secondary education; the state can continuously review regulations and processes that govern teacher and leader training; and professors and training curricula need to evolve, too.

### Making it Happen

#### **Our teacher preparation programs in institution of higher education in Maryland don't sufficiently embed the Science of Reading.**

- ▶ The state should closely monitor teacher preparation programs in our state colleges and universities to ensure they are adhering to the new regulations that were issued in December 2023. Particular attention must be paid to removal ineffective elements of Balanced Literacy and Whole Language from the curriculum. To train candidates in the Science of Reading, it is important that these institutions provide systematic coursework on the key components of the Science of Reading and are not permitted to just "check the box."

- ▶ School districts should prioritize knowledge of the Science of Reading in their candidate evaluation and hiring decisions.

- ▶ All teacher preparation programs should hire certified Science of Reading experts to help build their faculty's knowledge and expertise.

#### **Teacher preparation programs in Maryland need internal champions to drive change from within.**

- ▶ Maryland READS intends to support a cohort of individual faculty from teacher preparation programs to build their capacity to serve as change agents within their institutions.



*I had the opportunity to serve as adjunct at [a Maryland University] in one of their teacher preparation methods classes. And it was eye-opening how far behind they were when it came to the science of reading and research based practices. It was still very much *Balanced Literacy*... it rang off alarm bells of how much work we're still going to have to do with their students once they become teachers.*

MARYLAND READS WORK GROUP PARTICIPANT

## ► CONCLUSION

Given the initial progress of the last few years, this moment is an opportunity — a chance to redefine literacy education in Maryland and set a new standard for reading proficiency.

**But successfully deploying a Science of Reading approach across Maryland's schools, and giving our students the training and support they need to succeed, depends on all of us.**

So let's work together, and let's do it now. Let's make sure Maryland's children have the literacy skills to navigate the complexities of the 21st century... and the 22nd century, too, which our youngest children will live to see. Let's invest in new policies, training, and resources, and bring our communities together to give every child the very best chance.

And together, we'll turn the page towards a brighter, more literate Maryland.

Find out how you can be part of the movement for literacy for all Marylanders at [marylandreads.org](https://marylandreads.org).

*This is a fantastic document that tells the story without blame but a clear sense of the responsibility to act. It has data and points of view from many stakeholders and a clear plan for action. It's a model for Maryland and for other states.*

**ANDREW J. ROTHERHAM, CO-FOUNDER AND EXTERNAL RELATIONS LEADER, EXTERNAL RELATIONS, POLICY AND EVALUATION, BELLWETHER**





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## Nam-Macgill Family Fund

*We believe that the Maryland READS team can bring a new approach to a long-standing problem and get results where others haven't. These results will both help underserved communities and the state's economy as a whole.*

— Mary-Ragan (MR) Macgill



SHERMAN FAMILY FOUNDATION

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## 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.

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