



## PRESS RELEASE

### ▶ New Maryland READS Report Examines Reading Outcomes in Community Schools and Identifies Literacy Coaching as Key to Delivering Academic Results

Report highlights progress in attendance in Maryland's Community Schools and calls for statewide literacy coaching to ensure Maryland's historic investment translates into improved reading proficiency

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Wheaton, Maryland — March 24, 2026 — Maryland READS today released a new report, **From Attendance to Achievement: The Promise of Community Schools**, offering the first comprehensive statewide analysis of reading proficiency trends in Maryland's community schools. The report examines how reading outcomes are changing across hundreds of schools that have received significant investment under the Blueprint for Maryland's Future, and how additional investment in literacy coaching can help improve reading proficiency in these schools.

"Maryland made a bold and necessary investment in community schools," said **Trish Brennan-Gac, Executive Director of Maryland READS**. "These schools are doing important work to remove barriers to learning and help students show up ready to learn. The next step is ensuring that when students arrive in the classroom, they receive the high-quality literacy instruction that will help them succeed. Community schools address barriers to learning. Literacy coaches ensure learning actually happens."

Research and state data show that attendance is improving in community schools, confirming that wraparound supports such as health services, family engagement, and enrichment opportunities are helping stabilize students and families. But the report finds that attendance alone does not guarantee academic improvement.

After analyzing reading proficiency data across elementary, middle and high schools that were designated as community schools statewide from 2022 - 2025. Maryland READS found that 408 schools (57%) saw increases in reading proficiency, while 244 schools (34%) experienced declines, demonstrating mixed academic outcomes and highlighting the need for stronger instructional supports.

To ensure that Maryland’s investment in community schools delivers meaningful academic results, the report identifies statewide literacy coaching as the critical next step, pointing to evidence that when dedicated literacy coaches support teachers in classrooms—modeling instruction, analyzing student work, and ensuring that evidence-based practices aligned with the Science of Reading are implemented consistently—schools are far more likely to see sustained gains in reading proficiency.

“Community schools create the conditions for learning,” **Brennan-Gac said**. “Literacy coaching strengthens the instruction that makes learning possible. When we combine these strategies, we can accelerate progress and ensure Maryland’s historic investment delivers the results our students deserve.”

The report recommends that Maryland:

- Make reading proficiency a core success measure of community school implementation.
- Invest in a statewide literacy coaching program, prioritizing high-need schools.
- Protect coaches from non-instructional duties so they remain focused on improving classroom practice.
- Align community school funding and district literacy plans to support consistent implementation of the Science of Reading.
- Commit to transparent statewide analysis of academic outcomes to inform continuous improvement.

Maryland READS notes that the state is already laying the groundwork for this next phase of progress. All 24 districts have developed literacy plans aligned with the Science of Reading, and state leadership has signaled a strong commitment to improving literacy outcomes.

“Maryland has the opportunity to lead the nation,” Brennan-Gac said. “Community schools have laid the foundation. Now we must complete the theory of change and ensure that every classroom has the support needed to help children learn to read.”

The full report, *From Attendance to Achievement: The Promise of Community Schools*, is [available here](#).

## ABOUT MARYLAND READS

Maryland READS is a statewide nonprofit organization working to improve reading outcomes for children across Maryland. Through research, policy advocacy, and community partnerships, Maryland READS works to advance evidence-based instruction aligned with the Science of Reading, strengthen thriving reading ecosystems, and address barriers that prevent children from becoming proficient readers. For more information, visit [marylandreads.org](http://marylandreads.org)

