

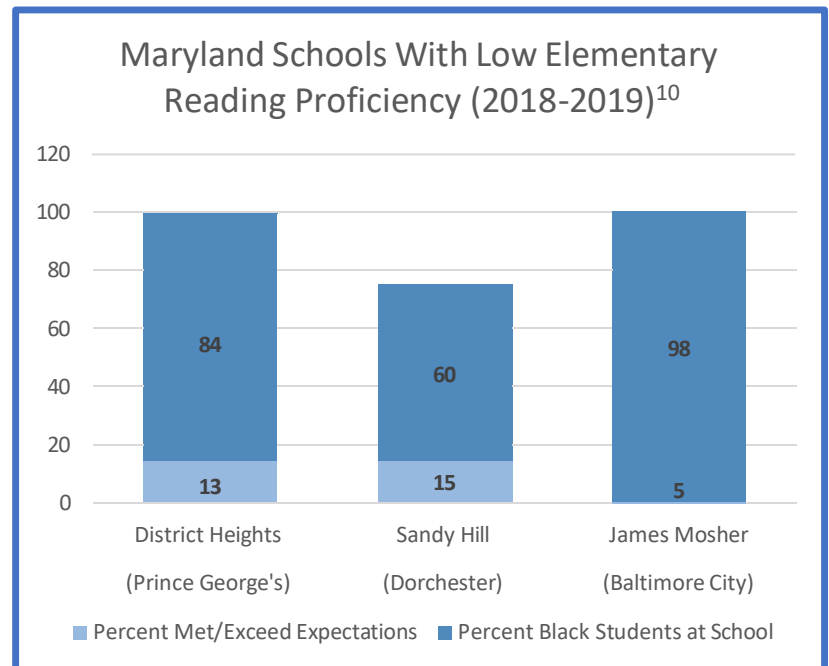


Maryland's Early Literacy Crisis for Black Children

Sandra Donnay, Ph.D., Lisa Sanon-Jules, Ed.D., & Carolina Torres

November 2021

- ◆ Maryland ranked [second to last](#) among states for 4th grade literacy proficiency progress in 2019.¹
 - ◆ Maryland's literacy scores [declined in recent years](#) and are not significantly different from its 2003 levels.¹⁶
 - ◆ Black children scored about [27 points lower](#) than White children. This gap was not significantly different from 1998 levels.¹⁶
 - ◆ **In Baltimore City, about 23* schools reported that less than 10% of their students met or exceeded 3rd grade reading expectations.**¹⁰
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- ◆ Reading is a developmental process.² Cognitive gaps in infancy are associated with reading gaps in early elementary school.^{2,3}
 - ◆ Poor reading proficiency by the end of 3rd grade places children at risk of high school dropout, low earnings, teen pregnancy, poor emotional and physical well-being, and incarceration.^{5,6,11,15}
 - ◆ Instruction quality, family, school, and neighborhood processes, that are linked to lower economic status, establish and maintain achievement gaps.^{2,4,7}



Policy Recommendations to Improve Early Literacy

- The state of Mississippi (ranked first¹ in reading proficiency progress) was successful in significantly [improving reading proficiency](#)¹² by enacting:
 - Teacher training in [evidence-based strategies](#) emphasizing phonetic learning.^{8,9}
 - [The Early Learning Collaborative \(ELC\) Act](#) that established partnerships among public schools, childcare agencies, including Head Start, to coordinate and standardize instruction that promotes reading proficiency by kindergarten.³
 - Students who attend collaboratives perform better than those who attend other Pre-K classes.¹⁴
 - The [Literacy-Based Promotion act \(LBPA\)](#) focusing on K-3 evidence-based instruction, literacy coaches, individual reading plans, and mandating that *all* children accomplish grade level reading by 3rd grade.
- Interventions that begin in infancy and that are sustained have the largest effects on cognitive and language skills.^{2,8} Home visiting programs should be available to all low-income families and be an integral part of collaborative efforts to promote early childhood reading proficiency.



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**Baltimore City School Districts with Less Than 10% of Students Reading at Third - Grade Reading Proficiency (2018-2019)¹⁰*

District	Elementary School	Percent Met/Exceed 3 rd Grade Proficiency	Percent Black Children	Percent Free and Reduced Lunch
Baltimore City	Alexander Hamilton	9.9	98.87	71.8
	Belmont	5.6	97.74	76.4
	Cecil	9.7	95.65	73.4
	Dallas F. Nicholas, Sr.	6.3	87.13	63.6
	Dorothy I. Height	7.1	95.01	72.1
	Dr. Bernard Harris, Sr	3.7	97.78	80.2
	Edgecombe Circle	8.3	95.21	74.6
	Edgewood	7.1	97.86	76.1
	Eutaw-Marshburn	0	95.75	83.9
	Frederick	6.6	84.11	84.3
	George Washington	7	82.43	69
	Gilmor	3.5	98.82	84.7
	Harford Heights	8.6	97.78	77.8
	James Mosher	4.6	97.51	75.9
	Johnston Square	1.8	96.12	79.8
	Lockerman Bundy	9.4	98.12	77.5
	Matthew A. Henson	3.6	96.94	77.4
	Moravia Park	8.7	88.96	59.9
	Robert W. Coleman	9.3	96.98	76.6
	Roots and Branches	8.5	99.28	74.5
Sarah M. Roach	2.2	93.1	70.2	
The Historic Samuel Coleridge- Taylor	9.2	95.86	81.3	



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