



Striving Readers Comprehensive Literacy Grant Application

Howard County Public School Comprehensive Literacy Plan

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Project partners:

Howard County Government • Children's Learning Center
Community Action Council of Howard County
Custom Media Options • Howard Community College
Howard County Chamber • Howard County Family Child Care Association
Howard County Health Department • Howard County Library System
Howard County Department of Social Services
Howard County Office of Children and Families
MSDE, Division of Early Childhood Development
The Judy Center Partnership

Amount Requested: \$3,000,000.00

Project Statement:

Through the consistent needs assessments, quality first instruction in reading fundamentals, evidence-based phonics and comprehension intervention programs, and professional learning opportunities, HCPSS will advance literacy for children from birth through grade 12 with an assurance of strategies to assist disadvantaged students. The development of HCPSS Comprehensive Literacy Plan supports Maryland's State Comprehensive Literacy Plan, Keys to Comprehensive Literacy. The grant extends multiple existing partnerships to serve stakeholders with many interests. Representation in the stakeholder group includes literacy supervisors; early childhood providers; preschool educators; content teachers; literacy experts; and educators representing English Learners; students receiving Special Education, and other at-risk learners.

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Howard County Comprehensive Literacy Plan Focus Group

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Introduction

This comprehensive Literacy Plan is a work in progress, and as such, will evolve to increase its alignment to Maryland Comprehensive Literacy Plan.

The Howard County Public School System (HCPSS) seeks to ensure that every student achieves academic excellence in an inspiring, engaging, and supportive environment. In every English language arts classroom, “all students must have the opportunities and resources to develop the language skills they need to pursue life's goals and to participate fully as informed, productive members of society” (Guiding Visions, NCTE, 2012). To achieve this, there must be effective, consistent, and impactful implementation of the Maryland College and Career-Ready Standards for English Language Arts (MCCRS-ELA), with fidelity, and at the intended level of rigor. The HCPSS has developed research-informed strategies to ensure that each and every student has an opportunity to access rigorous, college-level, language arts courses prior to graduation. Implementation of the HCPSS Language Arts Program with fidelity is crucial in realizing the goals set forth in the HCPSS’s Strategic Call to Action which focus on the following desired outcomes:

- Equity and relationships are at the foundation of all decisions and actions.
- Students’ social-emotional learning is nurtured through life skills development and collaborative dialogue, such as restorative practices to solve problems.
- Graduation rates among all high schools and each demographic group are at exemplary levels.
- Students graduate with the skills, and knowledge necessary to acquire meaningful and rewarding employment in a dynamic international workplace.
- All students have equitable opportunities to earn college credit or industry certification.
- Through collaboration with families and the greater community, all students enter kindergarten ready to learn.
- Each and every student receives a high-quality education through individualized instruction, challenges, supports and opportunities.
- High quality special education services are delivered in a consistent and collaborative manner.

- Curriculum is based on standards and best practices, implemented with fidelity, and aligned with meaningful assessments that provide actionable data for instructional planning.
- Students see diversity and inclusion reflected in the curriculum, and respect the contributions of all populations.
- Staff reflects the diversity of the student and community population.
- Parents, guardians and community members trust in the integrity of the school system and are active and valued partners.
- All staff feel valued, are effective in their roles, and have equitable access to additional opportunities through professional learning and leadership development.
- Organizational culture and climate are supportive and nurturing, and provide a safe and healthy environment for all.
- All operations and practices are responsive, accountable, efficient and student-centered.

It is important to communicate consistent messages when discussing Literacy instruction with all stakeholders. To that end, creating an instructional plan for Pre-K-12 Language Arts becomes essential for establishing consistency and quality. Creating shared goals, and targeted actions to reach those, connects the various stakeholders involved in successful implementation of the language arts program. It will also establish a reasonable timeframe and milestones for monitoring teacher implementation and analyzing student growth data. Celebrating achievements and adjusting the plan, as needed, are also a vital part of any improvement process.

Some HCPSS students, especially those from traditionally underserved populations and/or those receiving special services (i.e., those who have IEPs, are English learners, or are eligible for Free and Reduced-Price Meals (FARMS), are not attaining the highest levels of literacy learning. The Howard County Public School System is committed to ensuring that all students graduate college and career ready. The objectives of the Pre-K-12 Language Arts Program are to: 1) provide students with a solid foundation in the skills and processes of literacy to produce strategic independent readers who value reading as a lifelong pursuit; 2) accelerate student achievement in language arts and eliminate the achievement gaps among student groups; 3) provide rigorous language arts curricula and assessments reflecting Maryland College and Career-Ready Standards for English/Language Arts that integrate language arts and writing instruction into the content areas.

The Pre-K-12 Language Arts Program is designed to provide every student with opportunities to read comprehensively, write effectively, speak meaningfully, and listen critically, thereby producing successful communicators. The core of Howard County Public School System Language Arts Program is based on current research stating that children develop language skills by using them in authentic contexts in an atmosphere where they are constantly immersed in spoken and print language. Howard County's program uses a student-centered, integrated instructional approach to ensure that learners become thinking, probing users of language.

In order to achieve these objectives a Pre-K-12 Comprehensive Literacy Plan (CLP) was developed.

Core Beliefs

Every HCPSS stakeholder is valued and feels happy and rewarded in their roles and takes pride in cultivating the learning community. Individualized achievement focus supports on every person in reaching milestones for success. Students and staff connect in a thriving safe, nurturing and inclusive culture that embraces diversity, and schools, families and the community are mutually invested in student achievement and well-being.

Vision

Every student and staff member embraces diversity and possesses the skills, knowledge and confidence to positively influence the larger community.

Mission

Howard County Public School System ensures academic success and social-emotional wellbeing for each student in an inclusive and nurturing environment that closes opportunity gaps.

Definition of Literacy

"Literacy is the ability to identify, understand, interpret, create, compute, and communicate using visual, audible, and digital materials across disciplines and in any context. The ability to read, write, and communicate connects people to one another and empowers them to achieve things they never thought possible. Communication and connection are the basis of who we are and how we live together and interact with the world." (Why Literacy?)

In order to help children develop a strong early literacy foundation and build on those skills, Maryland

expanded its approach to literacy by integrating multiple content areas in its definition of literacy.

“Disciplinary Literacy is the use of discipline-specific practices to access, apply, and communicate content knowledge, and, in Maryland, it is a shared responsibility. Literacy skills are an important part of every academic discipline; however, each discipline relies on different types of texts, writing styles, and language to convey ideas and learning. For students to be fully prepared for the challenges and expectations of college and career, it is critical that they develop literacy skills in all content areas.”

(MDK12) In June 2010, the Maryland State Board of Education adopted the Common Core State Standards for English Language Arts K-12 and Literacy in History/Social Studies, Science, and Technical Subjects 6-12. In 2011, Prekindergarten literacy standards were developed and added. All of these standards represent a shift in approaches to reading to explicitly identify and include reading and writing standards in the content areas of Science /Technical Subjects and History/Social Studies as companions to the English Language Arts Standards. The Common Core Standards for Disciplinary Literacy are organized by content: Science, Technical Subjects, and History/Social Studies. Each set of standards is further organized into strands for reading and writing. The Standards specify the literacy skills and understandings required for college and career readiness in each discipline.

Background

Within the Howard County Public School System, literacy instruction is not limited to English Language Arts classes but takes place throughout the day during content classes such as science, social studies, and fine arts. Development of disciplinary literacy skills is critical to being fully prepared for college and careers. Eighty percent of reading in college and careers is informational text. Students must build the skills necessary to independently read, analyze, and evaluate sophisticated texts in a variety of disciplines. Teachers must not only build generic literacy skills, but also deepen students’ understanding of essential discipline-specific content and strengthen their abilities to comprehend, write, argue, and persuade within the norms of different disciplines. Each discipline has its own content standards and practices for developing conceptual understandings. When reading and writing is meaningfully integrated with content, students have greater opportunities to engage, understand, clarify, question, or enrich their conceptual understandings.

The Howard County Public School System works very closely with early childhood stakeholders from

across the county to ensure that literacy practices, instruction, and initiatives for children birth to age five are based on research and are aligned to the PK-12 program. Instruction in HCPSS prekindergarten programs (for both general education and special education students who are three and four years old) is based on the Maryland Early Learning Standards, which cover the domains of language and literacy, mathematics, social studies, science, health, physical education, fine arts, and social foundations. These are aligned with, and include, the PK-Gr 2 portion of the Maryland College and Career-Ready Standards (MCCRS). Training is provided on an ongoing basis to a diverse group of childcare professionals about these standards and best practices for implementation through venues such as Director's meetings and the Launch Into Learning School Readiness Series. In addition, Healthy Beginnings (which was developed by MSDE and articulates the early learning standards for children birth through three years old) provides guidance for HCPSS for work done with children, families, childcare providers, and other community partners. That document provides information on expectations for pre-literacy and language skills, as well as activities that caregivers can do to begin building those skills at home.

Needs Assessment: Making Equity Central to the Howard County Public School System Comprehensive Literacy Plan

Howard County Public School System has a long history of supporting literacy at all levels, the Howard County Literacy Team compiled demographic and trend academic data to evaluate whether existing county-level activities are meeting needs of all children. This led to the Literacy Team's plan to engage in timely and meaningful consultation with a broad range of stakeholders and examine relevant data to determine the needs of students, schools, and/or educators, to find out what Howard County and community-based programs have in place, and determine what is needed to ensure equity in literacy is certain for all children. In making this guarantee a reality, two surveys were created and distributed to all educational stakeholders and community-based programs with the goal of gathering feedback regarding literacy needs as the first step in establishing a formal Comprehensive Literacy Plan. The Literacy Team used data from the Comprehensive Literacy Plan Needs Assessment to develop Howard's Comprehensive Literacy Plan. The surveys generated data from respondents including childcare providers, public library staff, parents, teachers, administrators, directors, resource teachers, content coordinators, and grade level experts. Generally, results showed a strong sense of knowledge and use of the MCCRS and Early Learning Standards (Birth to age 3) across settings with most responses falling in the "agree" and "strongly agree". The needs assessment displays that

both the K-12 survey and the Birth to Five survey indicated that roughly one-third of the parents, community, and other partners within the LEA are not included in the professional learning for literacy; there is not enough time to plan for or attend literacy meetings and collaborative planning, there needs to be an increase in the developmental appropriateness of literacy instruction that are strongly aligned to MCCR standards, increase classroom instructional rigor to meet MCCR standards, increase use of literacy assessment tools to inform decision-making and increase teacher use of Universal Design for Learning (UDL) to provide flexibility in instruction.

In summary, survey, demographic, and academic data sets provide the foundation for ensuring equitable practices result from Howard County's Comprehensive Literacy plan. *(See survey results in Appendix B)*

Rationale and Theory of Action

Keys to Comprehensive Literacy

As a result of the Comprehensive Needs Assessment, Howard County has established five keys to guide Howard's Comprehensive Literacy Plan. Based on identified needs, the Comprehensive Literacy Plan identifies the following five keys as essential to increased literacy achievement for all students, Instructional Leadership, Professional Learning, Standards Based Instruction, Comprehensive System of Assessments and Tiered Instruction and Interventions. The keys are arranged from Birth to Age Five, Kindergarten to Grade Five, Grade Six to Grade Eight, Grade Nine to Grade Twelve. The divisions demonstrate an alignment to Howard County's commitment to literacy development that begins with birth and continues through high school, college, and careers.

Key 1 Instructional Leadership

The leadership on every level (central office, school based teams and early childhood programs) must recognize and tap into the needs, strengths, and concerns of the community; the cultural makeup of its citizens; and the equity issues which impact the state, school, and local educational agency. These driving forces of the Comprehensive Literacy Plan are reflected in the leadership, the instruction, and the training that is provided. Components of Instructional Leadership include identifying and encouraging teacher leaders; establishing leadership ladders; providing opportunities for regular literacy meetings, data dialogues, joint planning; and monitoring and assessing progress.

Key 2 Strategic Professional Learning

Clear, systematic, needs-based professional learning is vital to impact student growth. Howard County's CLP embraces the whole child, from birth to Grade 12. This occurs through strong partnerships with families and guardians, early childhood educators, PreK-12 teachers, higher education staff members, other community stakeholders, and a high-quality and sustained system of professional development for educators. Together central office, school-based, and early childhood teams will establish and disseminate needs-based professional learning in a variety of mediums to K-12 Educators, Birth to 5 organizations, administrators, and community members. The team will also establish a system for addressing the needs of individual students through data dialogue, peer coaching, and mentoring.

Key 3 Continuity of Standards and Evidence-based Instruction

With the adoption of the MCCRS and the *Early Learning Standards*, educators have developed an understanding of the progression of standards from birth through twelfth grade and across content areas. Working with community-based programs, Howard County Early Childhood Advisory Council, public libraries, and institutions of higher education, Howard County will expand its vision of literacy to include the continuum of birth to twelfth grade to engage all groups and to increase alignment. True equity of instruction cannot be achieved until all students receive instruction aligned to the standards and delivered with fidelity.

Key 4 Comprehensive System of Assessments

Assessments provide information on various forms of instruction, student knowledge, and achievement. A comprehensive system of assessments includes state, local, school, and teacher assessment data. This data is analyzed in collaborative teams using data-dialogue, peer coaching, and mentoring to guide and refine evidence-based instruction. A comprehensive assessment system allows for strategic data-informed decision making to meet the needs of the individual student.

Key 5 Tiered Instruction and Interventions

Howard County has adopted regulation for the inclusion of Universal Design for Learning (UDL) in all classrooms. This approach provides choice and individualization for students, which, in turn, allows teachers to provide tiered instruction. In addition, Howard County has developed a Tiered Response to

Intervention Framework. The county's tiered systems of support will continue to be refined, will include all children, and will provide enrichment and intervention models to achieve comprehensive literacy for all.

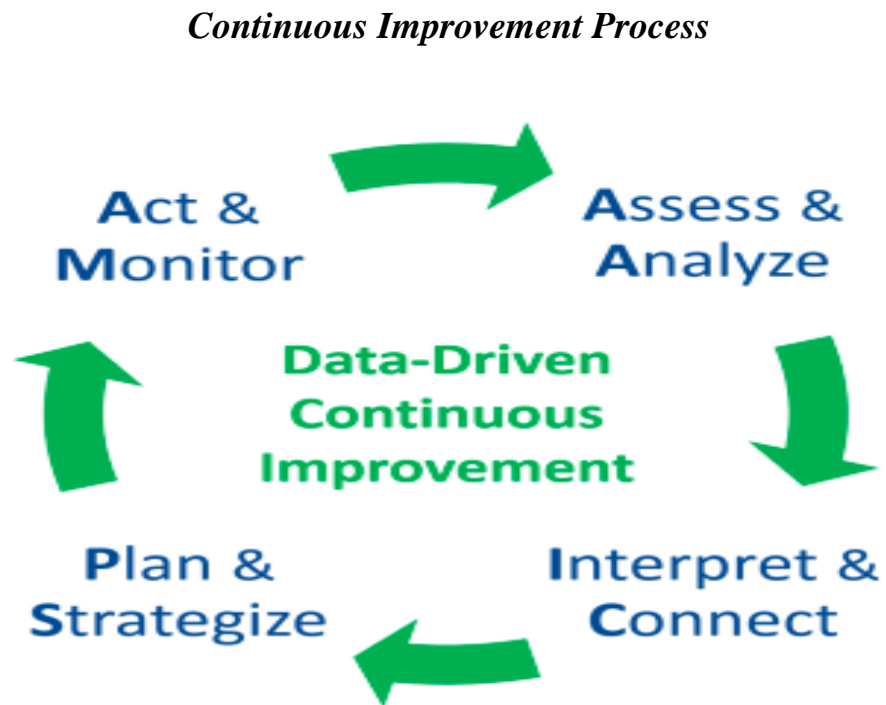
Theory of Action

The Howard County Public School System will support schools in evidence-based literacy instruction. All Five Keys became part of a Howard County Comprehensive Literacy Plan and are implemented with fidelity within each school. The plan is monitored and adjusted by instructional leadership team comprised of administrators, curriculum specialists, teacher leaders, parents, students and community members to meet the diverse needs of children. Structures are in place to sustain the literacy program for all children birth to grade 12, with a focus on disadvantaged groups. Once all educators are trained continuously to enable students to succeed, Howard County's children will improve in reading and writing.

Continuous Improvement Process

Measuring the effectiveness and impact of initiatives and innovations will be a common and ongoing activity by Howard County Public School System. If the impact is positive, it can continue with the goal of becoming replicable and sustainable; yet, if the innovation is not determined successful, then Howard County must make improvements or seek assistance from the State, as necessary. The process of accomplishing and evaluating for continuous improvement using data collection is inherently important. Ensuring educators and educational leaders participate in ongoing training in data collection for formative and summative data is paramount to ensuring a standardized approach to data collection. This continuous improvement process (see *Figure 1*) must be iterative and cyclical to truly identify how baseline data has changed over time. With baseline data collection of reading scores and other supporting academic data at the initial stage (Plan), the State and Howard County can verify growth or achievement over time by collecting the same type of data at the mid-year and end-of-year time periods (Assess & Analyze stage). The process, when followed with fidelity, can lead to continuous improvement. Sharing this among central office, schools, and early childhood will lead to a sustainable and successful Comprehensive Literacy Plan.

Figure 1: Howard County Public School System Continuous Improvement Protocol



Measures of Progress

Performance Outcome	Performance Measure
The percentage of participating four-year-old children who achieve significant gains in oral language skills.	Howard County will gather data to report on four-year-old oral language growth using the MD Early Learning Assessment (ELA) and the Kindergarten Readiness Assessment (KRA). This will allow us to monitor progress of all four-year-olds enrolled in an HCPSS prekindergarten program (general education and special education) plus any community programs that we work with that agree to use ELA... then all kindergarten students will take the KRA which has some oral language items (within various domains) built on the same progressions as ELA.* <i>*Pending decision to return to census administration.</i>
The percentage of participating fifth-grade students who meet or exceed proficiency on State reading/language arts assessments	Howard County will use the PARCC assessment as the performance measure to determine the percentage of participating fifth-grade students who meet or exceed proficiency on a statewide assessment in English language arts/literacy.
The percentage of participating eighth-grade students who meet or exceed proficiency on State reading/language arts assessments	Howard County will use the PARCC assessment as the performance measure to determine the percentage of participating eighth-grade students who meet or exceed proficiency on a statewide assessment in English language arts/literacy.
The percentage of participating high school students who meet or exceed proficiency on State reading/language arts assessments	Howard County will use the PARCC assessment as the performance measure to determine the percentage of participating high school students who meet or exceed proficiency on a statewide assessment in English language arts/literacy.

***Howard County's Comprehensive Literacy Plan Provides Equity for All
Rigorous Standards and Increasing Diversity***

The Maryland College and Career Standards require an increase in the rigor and deep analysis that has driven instructional shifts in English Language Arts/Literacy. Consequently, Howard County replaced its assessment system with the Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC) with its benchmark administration during SY 2013-14. Howard County uses PARCC to determine students' knowledge in reading and writing in grades three through eight, and in grade ten.

A sampling (30%) of kindergarten students are assessed annually using the Kindergarten Readiness Assessment (KRA) in four domains: literacy, mathematics, social foundations, and physical well-being with a composite score indicating the level of readiness for kindergarten. PARCC and KRA Assessment results have indicated achievement gaps in performance of all students compared to subgroups of disadvantaged students. At nearly the same time as the introduction of higher order, complex standards, texts and assessments was a recognition of Howard County's changing demographics, including ethnicity, language, and percent in poverty. Shifts in racial and ethnic composition indicate Howard County as being a diverse county with minorities accounting for 48.5% of the state's population in 2016. By making equity a priority, Howard County is committed to advancing literacy skills for all children from birth through grade 12.

Strategies to Address the Needs of Disadvantaged Students

Under the direction of the HCPSS Call to Action, system-wide professional development will include the identification and implementation of evidence-based instructional interventions/programs, data analysis for instructional modifications, and infusion of culturally relevant instructional materials. Howard County's instructional program includes frequent, repeated, developmentally-appropriate practices such as:

- evidence based instructional strategies in reading and writing across content areas;
- intentional instruction in foundational literacy skills, including print concepts, phonological awareness, phonics and word recognition, vocabulary, and fluency;
- explicit instruction in authentic and purposeful writing;
- high-interest, diverse, high-quality print and non-print materials
- differentiated instructional approaches, including individual and small group instruction, and discourse;
- opportunities for using and developing vocabulary;

- valid and reliable system of assessments including screening, diagnostic, formative, and summative assessment tools;
- strategies to enhance children’s motivation to read and write and children’s engagement in self-directed learning;
- principles of universal design for learning;
- professional development around strategies and practices for increased literacy achievement
- alignment in all content areas to the Maryland College and Career Ready Standards

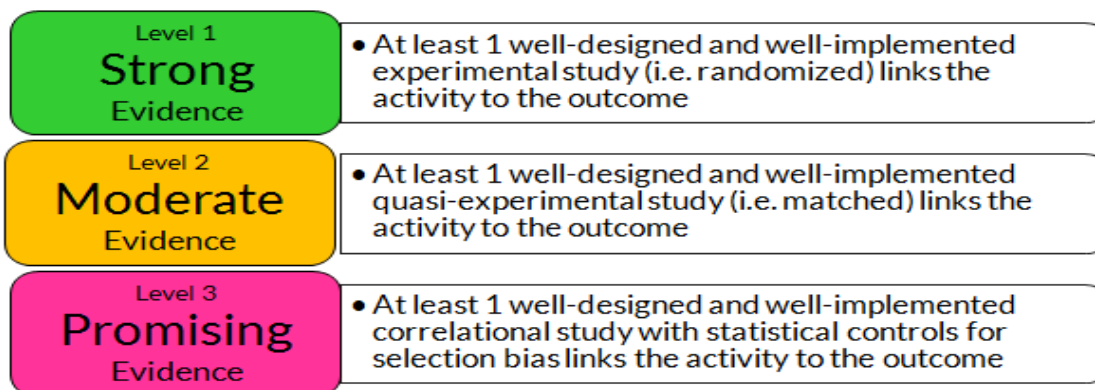
Evidence-Based Practices

The term “evidence-based practices” is used frequently in Howard County’s Comprehensive Literacy Plan. These practices are different from Research-Based Practices in a vital way: research-based means there are theories behind the strategies or practices, but the research is simply in theory and not supported through proof. Evidence-based practices are proven effective and have the support to back them up. According to Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), the definition of “evidence-based” activities, strategies, and interventions is as follows:

An “evidence-based” activity, strategy, or intervention:

- (i) demonstrates a statistically significant effect on improving student outcomes or other relevant outcomes based on [one of three levels of evidence, or]
- (ii) demonstrates a rationale based on high-quality research findings or positive evaluation that such activity, strategy, or intervention is likely to improve student outcomes or other relevant outcomes.

ESSA's definition of "evidence-based" includes three levels of evidence *specific to the activity*



All practices used to support students, whether they are from a disadvantaged group or not, must be 1, 2, or 3. Those interventions and practices are supported by moderate or strong evidence, where evidence is applicable and available. Any evidence from studies that found that particular activities or interventions had a statistically significant effect on improving students' literacy outcomes could be considered strong or moderate. What determines strong evidence is that it is based on at least one well designed and well implemented experimental study.

Works Cited

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Key 1

Instructional Leadership



Key 1 Instructional Leadership

Purpose: The intent of this key is to develop system instructional leaders who are knowledgeable about evidence-based literacy practices and can analyze the strengths and needs of the school and its community. Instructional leaders articulate clear goals, encourage innovation, support professional development and collaboration, and monitor teaching and learning. Leaders will implement a system for effective school-wide literacy instruction that will narrow achievement gaps.

Birth to Grade Twelve Programs/Initiative

Instructional literacy leaders should be provided with the knowledge and resources to build effective collaborative literacy initiatives beginning at birth and continuing through grade twelve. To ensure a solid instructional program, we have worked to strengthen the capacity of all our instructional leaders. School administrators have worked to ensure smooth implementation of the curriculum by working with stakeholders to develop meaningful action steps as part of their School Improvement Plans. Principals and Assistant Principals have access to professional learning on literacy curriculum and instruction at Administrators, Curriculum and Instruction (ACI) meetings five times during the year. Throughout the school year, administrators receive information on the literacy research, the Maryland College and Career-Ready Standards, and instructional best practices.

Birth to Age Five System of Early Care and Education

Areas to consider include:

- provide and protect time for prekindergarten instructional teams (including Pre-K and RECC) to meet regularly to analyze student data and work products, plan instruction that aligns to the Maryland Early Learning Standards, reflect on instructional practices, and determine instructional modifications;
- provide opportunities for communication between Head Start teacher, child care providers, HCPSS prekindergarten and kindergarten teachers;
- engage the entire school in a cohesive literacy plan for helping all readers to improve their literacy skills, making sure that the school staff recognizes the role/importance of birth to five programs;
- collaborate with Howard County Library System and other community resources to build literacy
- provide teachers (and child care providers, as much as possible) with job-embedded professional learning opportunities specific to their professional goals and responsibilities; and
- make available Reading Support Teachers, Reading Specialists, ESOL teachers and Special

Educators to provide professional learning to classroom teachers in order to meet the needs of all learners.

Support for leaders can include the following:

- the blending of multiple funding sources such as Preschool Development Grants, Child Care Development Funds, and Title I, IIA, and Title III funds to support literacy;
- the identification of community-based child care providers' professional development needs in order to create a plan for feeder system capacity building;
- the identification of community child care and Head Start program staff to participate in joint professional learning opportunities with public school prekindergarten and kindergarten teachers;
- the creation of Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) that include prekindergarten teachers, EL teachers, special educators, and literacy staff to foster collaborative learning, analyze prekindergarten data and kindergarten readiness data to determine progress of individual students and school / system wide programs, and to make evidenced-based decisions to provide support and/or intervention to students with literacy achievement gaps;
- collaboration and resources with a variety of organizations to support dual language learners, who are English learners who range in age from birth through five years old and who are learning two or more languages, and their families and guardians;
- collaboration with the Howard County Early Childhood Advisory Council (HCECAC) in the implementation of the HCECAC's literacy and family engagement campaigns; HCECAC includes strong representation and engagement from HC Library System, HC Head Start, Howard Community College, HHC Department of Social Services, HC Health Department, HC Chamber of Commerce, HC Office of Children & Families, HC Office of Child Care, HC Recreation and Parks, HC Healthy Families, HC Family Child Care Association, Judy Center @ Cradlerock, Custom Media Options (local business), Columbia Association, and many others.

Kindergarten to Grade Five

Effective leadership in elementary schools targets literacy as a school priority and communicates a vision for embedding literacy across the school day—a vision where, every day in every classroom, students are reading, writing, and listening/speaking experiences about print and nonprint materials. To achieve this vision, learning communities are developed that provide opportunities for school wide collaborative learning.

Areas to consider include:

- provide and protect time for instructional teams to meet regularly to analyze student data and work products, plan instruction that aligns to the Maryland College and Career Ready Standards, reflect on instructional practices, and determine instructional modifications;
- engage the entire school in a cohesive literacy plan for helping all readers to improve their literacy skills;
- collaborate with public libraries and community resources to build literacy
- provide teachers with job-embedded professional learning opportunities specific to their professional goals and responsibilities; and
- increase availability of Reading Support Teachers, Reading Specialists, ESOL teachers and Special Educators for professional learning to classroom teachers in order to meet the needs of all learners.

Support for leaders can include the following:

- the implementation of effective data analysis of literacy screening, diagnostic, progress monitoring, and outcomes data for each student in order to differentiate instruction and provide any needed supports for learning;
- development of a School Improvement Plan (SIP) which includes literacy goals based on data analysis which are designed to reflect the needs of the school population for the coming school year with input from curriculum office and school-based leaders.
- utilizing grade level literacy leaders to support teams in a shared belief about literacy development and instructional practices;
- utilization of Reading Support Teachers to provide a coaching model to support teachers' use of evidenced-based instructional strategies and supports;
- the creation of Professional Learning Communities that provide professional development of staff in the use of evidenced-based instructional strategies and supports;
- the identification of evidenced-based high quality literacy curriculum to be implemented with fidelity, and ongoing progress monitoring;
- collaboration and resources that promote the language development of English Learners (ELs) and support the students' home languages;
- methods to work with public libraries and community resources to build literacy; and
- ways to address the equity and access issues that exist for students, families, and stakeholders.

Grade Six to Grade Eight

Effective leadership in middle schools targets literacy as a school priority and communicates a vision for embedding literacy across disciplines—a vision where, every day in every classroom, adolescents are reading, writing, and talking about print and nonprint materials. To achieve this vision, principals build learning communities and structure opportunities for school wide collaborative learning.

Areas to consider include:

- provide and protect time for teacher teams to meet regularly to study the Maryland College and Career-Ready Standards, analyze student data and work products, plan instruction, reflect on instructional practices, and determine instructional modifications;
- engage the entire school in a cohesive literacy plan for helping all readers to improve their literacy skills;
- create opportunities for teachers to collaborate across disciplines;
- provide teachers with job-embedded professional learning opportunities specific to their professional goals and responsibilities; and
- make available reading/literacy specialists integral members of the learning community.

Support for leaders can include the following:

- effective Student Services Teaming (SST) to ensure standardized data collection, and implementation/documentation of recommended evidence-based practices, with progress monitoring;
- strategic planning for instructional leadership teams within a school to meet monthly.
- ways to use the School Progress/School Improvement Plan in instructional decision making;
- regular data sharing with school administrators and with local educational agency level representatives regarding literacy;
- strategies for growth, as developed in grade-level teams;
- supports for team leaders who meet with resource teachers from curriculum offices in order to meet the needs of all students;
- best practices for formal and informal observations;
- feedback that is grounded in the goals of the School Progress/School Improvement Plan;
- professional learning within the school and within a local educational agency that is based on the goals outlined in the School Progress/School Improvement Plan;

- resources that enhance language development and access to grade-level content for ELs;
- fostering relationships with students, parents, and community members; and
- collaborate with public libraries and community resources to build literacy.

Grade Nine to Grade Twelve

Adolescents deserve a culture of literacy in their schools and a systematic and comprehensive programmatic approach to increasing literacy achievement. School leaders play an important role in supporting efforts across disciplines to integrate appropriate adolescent literacy instruction. Effective leadership is essential for creating a safe school climate that supports students' literacy development and provides an encouraging and culturally relevant climate.

Areas to consider include the following:

- engage the entire school in a cohesive literacy action plan for helping struggling readers close their literacy achievement gap;
- engage and challenge all readers to use and adapt literacy skills and strategies to meet their needs in different contexts;
- create opportunities for teachers to collaborate across disciplines;
- provide teachers with job-embedded professional learning opportunities specific to their professional goals and responsibilities; and
- make available reading/literacy specialists integral members of the learning community.

Support for leaders can include the following:

- the formation of teams consisting of school administrators, content leaders, special education leaders, EL leaders, and school counselors;
- designs for a strategic plan to improve literacy based on the goals of the School Progress/School Improvement Plan;
- informal and formal observation tools to provide teachers with regular feedback and support;
- revisiting the School Progress/School Improvement Plan to evaluate progress and establish new goals based on student data;

- resources that enhance language development and access to grade-level content for ELs.
- methods for developing literacy skills in English as well as other languages;
- methods for fostering relationships with students, parents, and community members; and
- methods for working with public libraries and community resources to build literacy.

Preparing students with 21st century skills that meet the Maryland College and Career-Ready Standards requires educators to teach with an expanded repertoire of skills in evidence based reading instruction and differentiation. A cohesive professional learning plan that supports a balanced literacy approach is essential to a successful implementation of literacy instruction, designed to ensure all students are able to independently process increasingly challenging text.

Key 1: Instructional Leadership

Key 1: The intent of this key is to develop instructional leaders who are knowledgeable about evidence-based literacy practices and can analyze the strengths and needs of the school and its community. Instructional leaders articulate clear goals, encourage innovation, support professional development and collaboration, and monitor teaching and learning. The expertise will enable leaders to implement a system for effective school-wide literacy instruction that will narrow achievement gaps.

Goals	Birth to Age 5	K- Grade 5	Grades 6-8	Grades 9-12
Develop instructional leaders who are knowledgeable about evidence-based literacy practices		Administrator, Curriculum and Instruction professional learning (ACI) Enhance administrator's awareness of: * the difference between literacy interventions and first instruction * obligation to provide instructional accommodations for ELs to increase access to age/grade/course	Provide PL for administrators for intervention programs - understanding of the expected literacy practices Enhance administrator's awareness of: * the difference between literacy interventions and first instruction for English	Provide PL for administrators for intervention programs - understanding of the expected literacy practices Enhance administrator's awareness of: * the difference between literacy interventions and first instruction for English

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		<p>appropriate standards.</p> <p>The need to provide time for collaborative planning for school based teams and support staff.</p> <p>Support Administration in understanding the components of Early Childhood Education and Social Emotional Development during Administration, Curriculum and Instruction professional learning sessions. I</p> <p>Collaboration between offices: Special Education, Reading, ESOL, Title 1, Secondary Reading as a PLC</p> <p>Literacy Leader (grade level leaders) training to develop a deeper understanding of evidenced-based</p>	<p>Language Development (ELD)</p> <p>Enhance administrator's awareness of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * the difference between literacy interventions and first instruction for Special Education <p>Enhance administrator's awareness of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * the difference between literacy interventions and first instruction for 504 <p>Enhance administrator's awareness of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * the difference between literacy interventions and first instruction for below grade readers <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * the obligation to provide instructional accommodations for ELs to increase access to 	<p>Language Development (ELD)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * the obligation to provide instructional accommodations for ELs to increase access to age/grade/course appropriate standards. <p>The need to provide time for collaborative planning for school based teams who serve ELs</p> <p>ACI</p>
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		<p>instructional practices</p> <p>Continued training for Reading Support Teachers</p>	<p>age/grade/course appropriate standards.</p> <p>The need to provide time for collaborative planning for school based teams who serve ELs</p> <p>ACI</p>	
Support HCPSS in analyzing the strengths and needs of the school and its community	<p>Child care program mapping w/ school attendance areas</p> <p>ELA and KRA analysis</p> <p>SI planning</p>	<p>KRA analysis</p> <p>School Improvement Plan: planning and review</p> <p>Analyze disaggregated performance on PARCC ELA 3-5 claims/subclaims</p>	<p>SI planning</p> <p>Analyze disaggregated performance on PARCC ELA 6-8 claims/subclaims</p>	<p>SI planning</p> <p>Analyze disaggregated performance on PARCC English 10 claims/subclaims</p>
Support HCPSS and the members of the System of Early Care and Education in developing strategies for monitoring teaching and	<p>ACI</p> <p>Training child care directors</p>	<p>School level accountability for English Language data</p> <p>Administrator, Curriculum</p>	<p>School level accountability for EL data</p> <p>ACI</p>	<p>School level accountability for EL data</p> <p>ACI</p>

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learning	<p>PK Walkthrough Tools</p> <p>Provide resources (e.g., data protocols) to facilitate data conversations at the classroom/teacher team level</p>	<p>and Instruction</p> <p>Walkthrough tools</p> <p>Provide resources (e.g., data protocols) to facilitate data conversations at the classroom/teacher team level</p>	<p>Walkthrough tools/ Exemplary Practices</p> <p>Provide resources (e.g., data protocols) to facilitate data conversations at the classroom/teacher team level</p>	<p>Walkthrough tools/ Exemplary Practices</p> <p>Provide resources (e.g., data protocols) to facilitate data conversations at the classroom/teacher team level</p>
Participate in Howard County school, collaborative leadership conversations.	<p>ACI</p> <p>CCSSO* Networked Improvement Community (a birth to age 8 initiative)</p>	ACI	ACI	<p>ACI</p> <p>Walkthrough tools/ Exemplary Practices</p>

Established Programs/Initiatives

The Howard County Early Childhood Advisory Council will spearhead a more concentrated focus on literacy efforts. Recently, a request was made to elementary school administrators for additional representation on the HCECAC and several have volunteered. This will help to build even more coherence from Birth to Grade 5. Additionally, our interim superintendent established a new leadership structure this year, which includes three “clusters” overseen by Birth to Grade 12 Community Superintendents. We are creating additional opportunities for articulation between child care providers, Head Start teachers, and HCPSS prekindergarten and kindergarten teachers within our clusters.

The Howard County Public School System has established collaboration between the Office of Leadership Development and School Improvement and the Curriculum Offices to provide targeted support to Howard County Public Schools and to foster the growth of effective leaders. The offices provide professional learning experiences to future and current school leaders that focus on the skills and knowledge required to be successful in the leadership positions. This shared leadership structure within the school building aims to develop consistency in fostering a strong literacy program.

This collaboration is guided by Dimensions of Instructional Leadership and the Five Core Beliefs that states that among school-related factors, school leadership is second only to teaching in its potential influence on student learning. Instructional leadership is a critical component of school leadership. The work of instructional leaders is to ensure that every day, in every classroom, every student has a powerful learning experience. Doing so requires that instructional leaders lead for the improvement of instruction and the improvement of student learning. (Center of Educational Leadership)

Instructional leadership:

1. Learning-focused, strengths-based and measured by improvement in instructional practice and in the quality of student learning.
2. Reside with a team of instructional leaders; administrator serves as the “leader of leaders.”
3. Requires a culture of public practice and reflective practice.
4. Must address the cultural, linguistic, socioeconomic and learning diversity of the school community.
5. Is grounded in the relentless pursuit of equity and the use of data as levers to eliminate the achievement gap.

Research/Evidence to Support Instructional Leadership

Research suggests that effective instructional leadership is a key ingredient in educational reform (Bryk, Sebring, Allensworth, Luppescu, & Easton, 2010). In fact, effective instructional leadership has been linked to improved student outcomes (Robinson, Lloyd, & Rowe, 2008; Waters, Marzano, & McNulty, 2003). Thus, instructional leadership is essential for facilitating implementation of a comprehensive literacy plan.

Research suggests that key players in instructional leadership include central office personnel, principals and assistant principals, and teacher leaders (Elmore, 2000; King, 2002; Spillane, Halverson, & Diamond, 2000).

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Key 2

Strategic Professional Learning



Key 2 Strategic Professional Learning

Purpose: Clear, systematic, needs-based professional learning is vital to impact teacher and student growth, and occurs through strong partnerships with families and guardians, early childhood providers and general and special educators, PreK-12 teachers, higher education staff members, other community stakeholders, and a high-quality and sustained system of professional learning. Together central office, school-based, and early childhood teams will establish and facilitate needs-based professional learning in a variety of mediums PreK-12 educators, birth to 5 organizations, administrators, child care teachers and directors, and community groups that support families. Teams will also establish a system for addressing the needs of individual students through data dialogue, peer coaching, progress monitoring and mentoring.

Birth to Grade 12 Programs/Initiatives

To ensure a solid instructional program, Howard County has worked to strengthen the capacity of all instructional leaders. School administrators have worked to ensure smooth implementation of the curriculum by working with stakeholders to develop meaningful action steps as part of their School Improvement Plans. Principals and Assistant Principals have access to professional learning on literacy curriculum and instruction at Administration, Curriculum and Instruction (ACI) meetings five times during the year. Throughout the school year, administrators receive information on the literacy research, the Maryland College and Career-Ready Standards, and instructional best practices. The Elementary and Secondary Language Arts Offices have been framing professional learning around using the Understanding by Design Framework. The Understanding by Design (UbD) framework offers a planning process and structure to guide curriculum, assessment, and instruction. Its two key ideas are to 1) focus on teaching and assessing for understanding and learning transfer, and 2) design curriculum “backward” from what students should be able to demonstrate that they have achieved. Effective curriculum is planned backward from long-term, desired results through a three-stage design process (Desired Results, Evidence, and Learning Plan).

Birth to Age Five System of Early Care and Education

High Quality Child Care Programs

To promote high quality literacy and language acquisition for early learners, MSDE provides quality sustained training to the early childhood community by training the state-approved Child Care trainer pool

on current literacy research and best practices in order for them to train early childhood educators and staff effectively. Training includes evidenced-based, culturally relevant literacy practices, implementing state-approved curriculum, implementing evidence-based interventions, and supporting families in developing the child's literacy skills.

HCPSS collaborates very closely with the Howard County Office of Children and Families (which includes the Child Care Resource Center) and the Office of Child Care to ensure ongoing communication and alignment across programs. Work is being done to increase participation in EXCELS, to support the credentialing process, and to provide job-embedded professional development for child care staff. For example, HCPSS PALS teachers are special educators who not only support students with IEPs in their community-based child care settings but also simultaneously offer relevant training and support to the teachers. Another example is the Launch Into Learning school readiness training series which has been designed collaboratively by HCPSS and the Office of Children and Families and is delivered by HCPSS teachers to child care professionals including child care center directors and teachers, nursery school directors and teachers, and family child care providers. The sessions focus on kindergarten readiness and how early care and education professionals can support young children ages 3-5, as well as their families. Each session takes an in-depth look at a specific learning domain and provides participants with effective strategies, activities, and resources aligned to MD early learning standards.

Professional Learning about Early Childhood Pedagogy and Early Literacy for Other Community Stakeholders

HCPSS and the Howard County Early Childhood Advisory Council provide multiple opportunities for others in the community to learn relevant information about early literacy, early childhood pedagogy, family engagement, etc. and to better understand their role in helping to facilitate these things in their program/area of influence. Some examples include:

- training about KRA/kindergarten expectations for the children's services staff of the Howard County Library System;
- presentations about school readiness, developmental screenings, available services for children and families to pediatricians at Howard County General Hospital;
- discussions with the Chamber of Commerce about the future economic impact of current school readiness initiatives and ways that the business community can get involved

Statewide Professional Learning Focused on Early Learning

State-wide professional learning opportunities focus on essential practices to support all school and community staff including, principals, assistant principals, child care and Head Start Directors, and teachers of early learners with research, skills, and strategies to increase student achievement and close achievement gaps as early as possible. Professional learning topics include brain research on young children, developmentally appropriate instruction, impact of PreK-2 instruction on future learning, needs assessments, personalization, data analysis, peer coaching, and mentoring. These opportunities include the Ready At Five School Readiness Symposium series, the MSDE Educator (Summer) Symposia, various workgroups, etc. Howard County consistently takes advantage of these opportunities, and ensures that a wide variety of stakeholders from across HCPSS and across the community are able to attend.

Howard County School Improvement Process

County-wide protocol for a process to organize school based collaborative teams to conduct strategic data analysis and data dialogue to guide instruction. It is a process for increasing student achievement that is planned and carried out by school-based staff. Data conversations occur during school-wide and grade level meetings, utilizing a data protocol. The Howard County data protocol is a cycle of continuous reflection and improvement of assess, analyze, interpret, connect, plan, strategize, act, and monitor.

Kindergarten to Grade Five

There has been a focus in the professional learning opportunities for teachers of Pre-K to 5th grade on developing literacy skills through small group guided reading. Guided reading is reading instruction designed to provide differentiated teaching that supports students in developing reading proficiency. The small group model allows children to be taught in a way that is intended to be more focused on their specific needs, accelerating student progress.

- Teachers received at least a day of professional learning
- Sessions consisted of a combination of guided reading lesson demonstrations and instructional seminars

County based instructional leaders

Throughout the school year, literacy leaders receive information on the literacy research, the Maryland College and Career-Ready Standards, and instructional best practices.

To ensure a solid instructional program, Howard County provides professional learning on literacy curriculum and instruction. Each elementary school identifies one literacy leader per grade level. These leaders present the professional learning with their grade level teams.

Literacy Leaders receives coaching on ways to support their teams around the following topics:

- Grade level instructional best practices
- Grade level team goal setting
- Monitoring long range planning
- Discuss quality instruction and student achievement with grade level teams

Each elementary school has a Reading Specialist and a Reading Support Teacher. The Reading Specialist improves reading achievement for striving readers by providing instructional support and assessments. All Reading Specialists receive ongoing support on reading best practices. Many Reading Specialists attend or presents at the state reading conference, SoMIRAC, so they can drive change and build a culture of literacy in their school or county.

Reading Specialist receives training around the following topics:

- Balanced Literacy
- Small group instruction
- Tiered Systems of Support
- Various intervention programs

The Reading Support Teacher provides ongoing professional development within the school building. All Reading Support Teachers receive ongoing support on reading best practices and coaching skills.

Reading Support Teachers facilitate sessions with classroom teachers around the following topics:

- Balanced Literacy
- Using common language to describe reading behaviors.
- Discussing management and classroom structure during guided reading.
- Data and grouping practices.
- Planning appropriately to use strategies and skills to advance student learning.

Grade Six to Grade Twelve

Professional Learning for Classroom Teachers

Preparing students with 21st century skills that meet the Maryland College and Career-Ready Standards requires educators to teach with an expanded repertoire of skills in reading instruction and differentiation. A cohesive professional learning plan that supports a balanced literacy approach in classrooms is essential to a successful implementation of literacy instruction, designed to ensure all students are able to independently process increasingly challenging text. Teachers were provided professional learning around differentiated reading instruction as well as writing instruction with mentor texts while avoiding formulaic responses.

Professional Learning for Reading Specialists

A continued focus has been on the review of intervention student data to improve instructional practices to assist in the growth of student performance. Data is reviewed three times throughout the school year with the opportunity for teacher dialogue and sharing. Reading Specialist were provided with professional learning on essential instructional routines to maximize speaking and listening to support all student learning.

Howard County Go Open

Howard County is participating in Maryland Go Open and will share free openly licensed digital resources with all stakeholders. This effort will:

- identify current and relevant quality resources that support UDL practices;
- verify accessibility of resources;
- reduce redundancy of efforts;
- provide engaging and interactive resources;
- support personalized teaching and learning; and
- promise access on anytime, anywhere basis.

As a #GoOpen state, Howard County Language Arts Department will:

- adopt/implement a technology strategy that includes the use of openly licensed resources;
- develop and maintain a repository;
- publish OER resources to the Learning Registry;
- participate in a community of practice; and

- create a webpage to share the commitment to and progress for #GoOpen.

Preparing students with 21st century skills that meet the Maryland College and Career-Ready Standards requires educators to teach with an expanded repertoire of skills in reading instruction and differentiation. A cohesive professional learning plan is essential to a successful implementation of literacy instruction, designed to ensure all students are able to independently process increasingly challenging text.

The following chart identifies the number of participants in current statewide professional learning opportunities.

Initiatives and Participation

Current Professional Learning Initiatives	Educator Participation
Administrator Curriculum and Instruction	2015 - present
Howard County School Improvement Process	Ongoing
Guided Reading Tenants and practices	2016-present
Elementary Literacy Leads (2 times a year)	246 participants Ongoing
Elementary Classroom Teachers (4 times a year)	Ongoing
Elementary Reading Support Teachers (bi-weekly)	23 participants Ongoing
Elementary Reading Specialist (monthly)	80 participants Ongoing
Elementary Reading Recovery Teachers (5 times a year)	23 participants Ongoing
Howard County Go Open	In progress
Houghton Mifflin Harcourt Coaching for Read 180 (2 days)	6 participants Ongoing
Read 180 training the trainer (2 times a year)	Ongoing
Secondary Classroom teachers (2 times a year)	Ongoing

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Middle School Reading Specialist (5 times a year)	35 participants Ongoing
High School Reading Specialist (3 times a year)	10 participants Ongoing
Secondary English Instructional Team Leaders (monthly)	33 participants Ongoing
Secondary Literacy Coaches (bi-weekly)	6 participants

Key 2: Strategic Professional Learning

Key 2: Clear, systematic, needs-based professional learning is vital to impact teacher and student growth, and occurs through strong partnerships with families and guardians, early childhood providers and general and special educators, PreK-12 teachers, higher education staff members, other community stakeholders, and a high-quality and sustained system of professional learning. Together state and local teams will establish and facilitate needs-based professional learning in a variety of mediums to local educational agencies, PreK-12 educators, birth to 5 organizations, child care teachers and directors, and local community groups that support families. Teams will also establish a system for addressing the needs of individual students through data dialogue, peer coaching, progress monitoring and mentoring.

Goals	Birth to Age 5	K- Grade 5	Grades 6-8	Grades 9-12
To create a high-quality and sustained system of professional learning	Launch Into Learning training series for child care teachers	<p>Include professional development for literacy leads, culturally proficiency, data analysis, vertical planning</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide professional development for ELA teachers and interventionists on strategies to differentiate content/process/product for ELs 	Provide professional development for ELA teachers and interventionists on strategies to differentiate content/process/product for ELs as well as students with IEPs and 504s.	Provide professional development for ELA teachers and interventionists on strategies to differentiate content/process/product for ELs as well as students with IEPs and 504s.

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To build preservice and in-service teacher capacity	NTO, Mentoring for Pre-K	<p>New Teacher Orientation and New Teacher Mentoring:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide literacy professional development for interns to support teacher capacity, self-paced modules in Canvas • Alternative pd- webinars, face to face, Saturday, before school begins [August] • Human Resources to identify dually certified candidates to increase staff capacity for working with ELs 	<p>HR identify dually certified candidates to increase staff capacity for working with ELs</p> <p>NTO</p> <p>ITL meetings- train the trainer model when possible</p> <p>Title 2 funds for time with schools.</p> <p>Professional Development Days</p> <p>Reading Specialist trainings</p>	<p>HR identify dually certified candidates to increase staff capacity for working with ELs</p> <p>NTO</p> <p>ITL meetings- train the trainer model when possible</p> <p>Title 2 funds for time with schools.</p> <p>Professional Development Days</p>
To support job-embedded, peer-to-peer professional learning	Walkthroughs with a team including classroom teachers	<p>Guided Reading cohort:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Arrange for teachers to visit classrooms within a building and throughout the county to observe 	<p>Allow opportunities for RS to visit other RS classrooms - coaching training - many schools have only one RS</p> <p>Reading Specialist coach and</p>	<p>Allow opportunities for RS to visit other RS classrooms - coaching training - many schools have only one RS</p> <p>Provide systemic collaborative</p>

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		<p>master teachers in guided reading.</p> <p>Team Level Peer Walkthroughs:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Peer observation and coaching <p>Reading Specialist trainings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coaching and peer evaluation • Monthly professional learning on interventions and literacy development 	<p>training in house</p> <p>Provide systemic collaborative planning time during Professional Learning Days</p>	<p>planning time during Professional Learning Days</p>
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Enhancements/Improvements for Howard County Public School System:

Support from English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) programs, special education offices, and Title I should be given to individual schools as needed and as requested by the school administrators. More frequent learning walks by these offices and other support specialists, as well as strategic planning time to meet with teams of teachers would promote regular professional development that is specifically tailored to the literacy needs of that specific school or grade level. Feedback would also be timelier and instructional decisions could be clearly grounded in observations and suggestions from these offices. These specialists could also facilitate professional learning for child care, Head Start, parents, and community members, as they have increased resources of parent advocates, interpreters, and support personnel.

Research/Evidence to Support Strategic Professional Development

Strategic professional learning is an important component in education reform. In fact, research suggests that ongoing and intensive professional learning opportunities can have a substantial effect on student achievement (Yoon et al., 2007). Models of effective professional learning suggest that it is tied to clear standards, aligned curricula, and systemwide accountability (Garet, et al., 2001). It also includes active learning opportunities, a focus on sets of discrete skills, relevant practice, and sustained duration (Darling-Hammond et al., 2009; Desimone, 2009). Providing ongoing professional learning and instructional support (e.g., coaching) from an instructional leader is associated with improved teacher implementation of evidence-based practices (Becker, Bradshaw, Domitrovich, & Jalongo, 2013). Notably, ongoing instructional support has been highlighted as an essential component of professional learning for facilitating teachers' translation of research to practice (Joyce & Showers, 2002). Center-based programs play a vital role in providing explicit instruction on pre-literacy skills such as phonological awareness, letter naming, and print awareness (National Early Literacy Panel, 2008). Knowledge of these skills vary substantially across teachers (Powell et al., 2008; Connor et al., 2006), thus professional development interventions have clear benefits on the quality of instruction and children's language outcomes (Powell et al., 2010). Multiple models have proven effective including on-going feedback (Landry et al., 2006), pre-specified curriculum (Bierman et al., 2008), or technologically mediated remote coaching (Powell et al., 2010).

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Key 3

Continuity of Standards-based Instruction



Key 3 Continuity of Standards-based Instruction

Purpose: Curriculum based on the Maryland College and Career-Ready Standards has been fully implemented since the 2014-2015 school year. This curriculum raises the level of rigor for all students and shows promise for better preparing students for success in higher education and careers. Teachers engage students in conversations that are grounded in a variety of texts that students read, hear, or write. The most critical component of high-quality classroom instruction is ensuring that students experience explicit teacher modeling, receive opportunities for guided practice, and have time to pursue independent reading and writing for real purposes on a daily basis. The development of thinking processes is at the core of all successful teaching strategies. As students work in cooperative groups to respond to texts guided by culturally responsive teaching strategies, their unique needs are supported. Teachers guide learners through meaning-seeking activities by employing higher-level thinking questions that enable students to become proficient readers and writers.

Birth to Grade Twelve

Working with community-based programs, Howard County Early Childhood Advisory Council, public libraries, and institutions of higher education, Howard County will expand its vision of literacy to include the continuum of birth to twelfth grade to engage all groups and to increase alignment. True equity of instruction cannot be achieved until all students receive instruction aligned to the standards and delivered with fidelity.

Birth to Age Five System of Early Care and Education

Young children need to be engaged in language and literacy interactions throughout their day. These activities should be occurring through every day experiences such as communicating with friends and family, traveling in the car or through the neighborhood, and through daily household activities. They also need exposure to being read to and discussing the text and the vocabulary, pretend reading, and engaging in open-ended questions and talk. As children move into prekindergarten, classroom activities should build phonemic awareness, print concepts, initial alphabet knowledge, and building language comprehension, which includes vocabulary knowledge, background knowledge, and knowledge of text and sentence

structures. All of these activities should occur through natural opportunities including play-based or center-based learning.

In order to promote continuity of standards based instruction, Howard County will continue to:

- strengthen partnerships among System of Early Care and Education and local educational agencies;
- identify and promote alignment of curriculum with Maryland College and Career Ready Standards and Early Learning Standards across contents;
- increase collaboration with the Offices of Special Education and ESOL Programs; and
- provide appropriate accommodations and curriculum resource suggestions to meet the literacy needs of all students.

Kindergarten to Grade Five

Literacy knowledge and skills developed in kindergarten through third grade predict later literacy achievement. Classroom instruction can have an enormous impact on the development of literacy knowledge and skills. The instruction in these early grades, especially K-2 nd grade should reflect developmentally appropriate instruction. Kindergarten should build on those same areas that began in prekindergarten including moving from initial alphabet knowledge to full alphabet knowledge and from phonological awareness to phonemic awareness. Beginning around 1st grade, children should also begin building fluency in context and automatic word recognition. 2nd graders begin developing reading comprehension in strategic knowledge that includes understanding general and specific purposes for reading and writing. In grades three to five, students also need to build knowledge of the strategies for reading and writing about reading. In order to promote continuity of standards based instruction, Howard County will continue to:

- identify and promote alignment of curriculum with Maryland College and Career Ready Standards and Early Learning Standards across contents;
- increase collaboration with the Offices of Early Childhood, Secondary Language Arts, Special Education, Title 1, and ESOL Programs;
- provide appropriate accommodations and curriculum resource suggestions to meet the literacy needs of all students; and
- provide appropriate instruction that allows students opportunities for authentic purposes for reading and writing.

Grade Six to Grade Eight

Adolescents need many opportunities to work with print and nonprint materials to make meaning and build relationships in their academic and social worlds. The Maryland College and Career-Ready Standards (MCCRS) provides a shared interdisciplinary approach to ensure middle school students meet the end of year expectations that will enable them to be college and career ready. To successfully support adolescent literacy development, we must provide access to engaging and motivating content and instruction to support their continued development.

Areas to consider include the following:

- provide opportunities for adolescents to work with text that is inclusive of print and nonprint materials;
- offer Web-based learning experiences;
- provide appropriate professional development for middle school educators;
- implement assessment methods that allow students to demonstrate strengths as well as needs; and
- differentiate instruction to include culturally responsive pedagogy as our classrooms become increasingly diverse learning environments.

In order to promote alignment of standards based instruction, HCPSS will continue to:

- identify and promote alignment of curriculum with Maryland College and Career Ready Standards for English Language Arts/Literacy across contents;
- increase collaboration with the Offices of Special Education, Elementary Language Arts, and ESOL Programs
- provide appropriate curriculum resource suggestions to meet the literacy needs of adolescent students; and
- collaborate with institutions of higher education that prepare teachers to include literacy standards with those that guide content preparation in their courses.

Grade Nine to Grade Twelve

Adolescents have many interests and experiences that involve some form of literacy experiences including the use of traditional print materials, the Internet, social media, instant messaging, texting, video games, and reading and writing on their job. The academic literacy demands required in school need to connect with the literacy practices in adolescent's lives. The Maryland College and Career-Ready Standards

(MCCRS) provide a shared interdisciplinary approach to ensure high school students meet the end of year expectations that will enable them to be college and career ready.

Content area teachers play a key role in building the disciplinary knowledge and strategy use that will help students learn from complex discipline specific print and nonprint materials.

Areas to consider include the following:

- encourage collaboration between teachers with expertise in literacy and all content areas inclusive of the academic disciplines, the performing arts, and the technical subject areas;
- include the use of traditional print materials, the Internet, social media, instant messaging, texting, and video games, all of which can be used as tools for understanding academic content as well as forming social relationships; and
- differentiate instruction to include culturally responsive pedagogy as our classrooms become increasingly diverse learning environments.

In order to promote alignment of standards based instruction, HCPSS will continue to:

- promote alignment of curriculum with Maryland College and Career Ready Standards for English Language Arts/Literacy across contents;
- increase collaboration with the Offices of Special Education and ESOL Programs;
- provide appropriate curriculum resource suggestions to meet the literacy needs of adolescent students; and
- collaborate with institutions of higher education that prepare teachers to include literacy standards with those that guide content preparation in their courses.

Literacy instruction is not limited to Language Arts classes, but takes place throughout the day during content classes such as science, social studies, and fine arts. Development of disciplinary literacy skills is critical to being fully prepared for college and careers. Eighty percent of reading in college and careers is informational text. Students must build the skills necessary to independently read, analyze, and evaluate sophisticated texts in a variety of disciplines. Teachers must not only build generic literacy skills, but also deepen students' understanding of essential discipline-specific content and strengthen their abilities to comprehend, write, argue, and persuade within the norms of different disciplines. Each discipline has its own content standards and practices for developing conceptual understandings. When reading and writing is meaningfully integrated with content, students have greater opportunities to engage, understand, clarify, question, or enrich their conceptual understandings.

Key 3: Continuity of Standards-Based Instruction

Key 3: Working with Howard County School system, community-based programs, local Early Childhood Advisory Councils, public libraries, and institutions of higher education, Howard County will expand its vision of literacy to include the continuum of birth to Grade 12 to engage all groups and to increase alignment.

Goals	Birth to Age 5	K- Grade 5	Grades 6-8	Grades 9-12
To expand the vision of literacy to engage all groups to include the continuum of birth to grade five and the alignment from grade six through 12	<p>Launch Into Learning series (training child care teachers, including Head Start)</p> <p>Sharing of HCPSS online curriculum resources (Canvas) w/ 'early care and education' community</p> <p>Partnership w/ library (field trips, classes, etc.)</p>	<p>Partnership w/ library (field trips, classes, etc.)</p> <p>Include instruction with the 5 components of reading: PA, phonics, vocabulary, fluency, comprehension</p>	Further collaboration with ELA, Spec Ed, and ELL	Further collaboration with ELA, Spec Ed, and ELL
Form a Curriculum Support Materials (CSM) Collaborative to review	Need to know what curricula are being used by local child care centers	Development of integrated reading units of study with scope and sequence,	Alignment of MCCRS and literacy content standards	Alignment of MCCRS and literacy content standards

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and catalog instructional materials in use		<p>alignment of standards and other content standards.</p> <p>Instruction resources to support writing instruction with alignment of grade level standards</p>	Aligned Scope and sequence for units, standards and student objectives	Begininng to align 9th and 10th grade scope and sequence for units, standards and student objectives
Support district in implementing the Early Learning and Maryland Content Standards	<p>Need more vertical articulation/conversations around standards/ developmental progressions/etc. (from Pre-K to K, but also from Head Start to Pre-K)</p> <p>New standards-based report cards</p> <p>ACI</p>	<p>Need more vertical articulation/conversations around standards/developmental progressions/etc.</p> <p>New standards-based report cards</p> <p>ACI</p> <p>Increased support in accessing and interpreting PARCC results to reflect on</p>	<p>Need more vertical articulation/conversations around standards/developmental progressions/etc.</p> <p>ACI</p> <p>Increased support in accessing and interpreting PARCC results to reflect on instruction</p>	<p>Need more vertical articulation/conversations around standards/developmental progressions/etc.</p> <p>ACI</p> <p>Increased support in accessing and interpreting PARCC results to reflect on instruction</p>

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		instruction		
Increase knowledge of effective, evidence-based literacy instruction for all students	<p>Need more videos of exemplary practices- can't just keep 'telling', need to show teachers</p> <p>HC Early Childhood Advisory Council's literacy initiatives (w/ Library, Health Dept, Social Services, pediatricians, etc.) and family engagement initiatives (Launch Into Learning, ReadyRosie, Talk With Me)</p> <p>Training for Pre-K paraeducators</p>	<p>Need more videos of exemplary practices- can't just keep 'telling', need to show teachers.</p> <p>Need to develop a repository of play-based, center-based, and project-based programs or strategies that have demonstrated effectiveness for supporting K-5 literacy skills, and include information on the efficacy for specific student groups (e.g., SpEd, ESOL, FARMS).</p> <p>Build literacy teams including reading specialist, reading support teachers, special education, esol, title 1, classroom teachers per grade level</p> <p>Training for paraeducators</p>	<p>Need to develop a repository of programs or strategies that have demonstrated effectiveness for supporting 6-8 literacy skills, including information about culturally-responsive pedagogy, and include information on the efficacy for specific student groups (e.g., SpEd, ESOL, FARMS).</p> <p>Via LMS, curriculum models rigorous research-based differentiated first instructional models</p>	<p>Need to develop a repository of programs or strategies that have demonstrated effectiveness for supporting 9-12 literacy skills, including information about culturally-responsive pedagogy, and include information on the efficacy for specific student groups (e.g., SpEd, ESOL, FARMS).</p> <p>This summer via LMS, curriculum models rigorous research-based differentiated first instructional models</p>

Increase staff knowledge of formative assessments that allow students to demonstrate strengths as well as needs aligned to standards to inform instruction.				
Create structures that allow teachers to collaborate (a) across content areas in the same school, (b) with other schools with similar populations, and (c) vertically across school levels.				
Participate in Howard County, and state-level, collaborative conversations and provide support (to schools from these collaboratives).	CCSSO Networked Improvement Community (for birth to age 8 initiative)	CCSSO Networked Improvement Community (for birth to age 8 initiative)		Engage in conversations with higher education to better align reading and writing skills necessary for being deemed college-ready.

Established Programs/Initiatives

The Maryland College and Career Ready Standards Curriculum Frameworks were developed by Maryland educators to unpack the Common Core State Standards and identify the essential skills and knowledge that a student would need in order to master the grade specific standards. The Frameworks are intended to guide the development of standards aligned curriculum and to foster a continuum of developmentally appropriate instruction. Along with the MCCRS Clarifications, teachers, Reading Specialist, and Reading Support Teachers (RST) developed resources and reading units that are intended to help develop common understandings and valuable insights into what a student must know and be able to do to demonstrate proficiency with the standards. With the MCCR Standards, teachers in all subject areas build discipline-specific literacy into daily instruction. Maryland's disciplinary literacy framework identifies essential skills for accessing, analyzing, and evaluating content-rich informational texts and presenting evidence-based conclusions in argumentative and explanatory writing, emphasizing research. The disciplinary literacy standards are not meant to replace existing content standards, but rather to support them. Library Media Specialists to build strong partnerships with local libraries to support all students.

Enhancements/Improvements for LEAs to Consider

Additional time needs to be allotted for vertical team co-planning so that teachers from the pre-school, elementary, middle, and high school levels can collaborate and share evidence-based practices as students transition from one school to the next. Of equal importance, time for teachers to plan across contents and to collaborate with other schools with similar populations to share best practices. Literacy teams need to be clearly established within the school and these teams need to collaborate with others on the local educational agency and state level to review curriculum, share best practices, and ensure alignment and rigor to the standards and ensure a deeper understanding of what the standards intend to achieve. Adding secondary reading coaches in each middle and high school to support teachers' understanding of the standards and the alignment of reading instruction from grade level to grade level and to address the needs of diverse learners. Elementary level teams should also provide opportunities to include child care and Head Start members and should partner with their local Early Childhood Advisory Council in order to participate in their local literacy campaign and outreach to engage parents. Models of schools and programs successfully using evidence based online literacy apps and resources should be shared with LEAs, Child Care, and Head Start programs.

Research/Evidence for Continuity of Standards and Evidence-based Instruction

Alignment from birth through secondary school is essential for providing students the coherence and support they need to develop effective literacy skills. Misalignment between early childhood and K-12 standards results in disconnected instructional practices that limit student learning (Claessens, Engel, & Curran, 2014). Connections across ages and grade levels as well as across curricula, assessment, and professional development are needed to ensure that students experience a seamless literacy education (Bogard & Takanishi, 2005). These connections, especially from early childhood to K-12 education, must cross boundaries between non-formal and formal education (Coffman & Kauerz, 2012), and they must foster shared goals and instructional strategies across age and grade levels (Correnti & Rowan, 2007). Differences in early language mirror distinctions in the communicative input to children from varying SES backgrounds. Hart and Risley (1995) estimate that relative to their higher-SES counterparts, children from lower-SES backgrounds face a cumulative input gap of 30 million words by the time they reach the school-aged year. In addition to sizable effects of input quantity, more nuanced factors such as vocabulary diversity (Rowe, 2012), informativity of the extra-linguistic context (Cartmill et al., 2013), and the connectedness or fluency of the communicative interactions (Hirsh-Pasek et al., 2015) also predict vocabulary growth. Well-established associations between language outcomes and caregiver input motivate interventions that focus on increasing caregiver input among lower-SES groups. For example, storybooks are a key source of linguistic input and a strong predictor of vocabulary size (Senechal et al., 1996) since they feature unique words that are not found in child-directed speech (Montag et al., 2015). Parent-child interventions that focus on book reading generate improvements in vocabulary size that sustain over follow-up periods (Whitehurst et al., 1994; Brooks-Gunn & Markman, 2005). Recent interventions that look beyond vocabulary size can examine other dimensions of language that impact early reading (e.g., use of complex syntactic structures, decontextualized language). These approaches have incorporated technology that provide real-time information about how much caregivers talk to children and home audio environment (e.g., amount of background noise), e.g., 30-Million Words Initiative (thirtymillionwords.org), Providence Talks (providencetalks.org). When paired with home-based programs, these methods may be effective for delivering and assessing low-cost strategies for promoting school readiness (Susskind et al., 2013).

However, since caregiver input varies substantially across cultural and SES backgrounds (Hoff-Ginsberg, 1991), center-based programs paired with a parenting component are able to achieve larger improvements compared to those that focus on parents alone (Brooks-Gunn & Markman, 2005; Burger, 2010). Relative to

control groups that do not receive services, children who enroll in early Head Start (HS) programs show improved cognition, language, attention, and health (Love et al., 2013). These effects sustain over time when children continue onto formal programs following the completion of early HS. Similarly, HS children take part in a family-based training program show greater improvements in language and cognition beyond those who were enrolled in HS alone (Neville et al., 2013).

Evidenced-based practices are those “effective educational strategies supported by evidence and research” (ESEA, 2002). The federal Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) of 2015 non-Regulatory Guidance: *Using Evidence to Strengthen Education Investments* (2016) states, “using, generating, and sharing evidence about effective strategies to support students gives stakeholders an important tool to accelerate student learning”. Therefore, supporting the use of evidenced-based strategies in the classroom is essential to improving teacher literacy instruction.

Educators must take part in thoughtfully designed professional learning experiences to ensure evidence-based strategies are at the core of all literacy instruction. Although utilizing evidenced based strategies provides tools to improve learning, “changing literacy instruction in an evidence-based approach is hampered by a lack of knowledge regarding exactly how to combine multiple effective practices into a comprehensive instructional program” (Greenwood, C.R., Tapia, Y., Abbott, M., Cheryl Walton, C., 2003). Evidence-based strategies, learning experiences, and interventions must be part of an ongoing cycle that includes identifying local needs, selecting the evidence-based intervention, having the capacity to implement, and examining while reflecting upon how the intervention is working. It is necessary for educators to be guided on how to make the connections from evidenced-based strategies to effective instructional practices. Carefully designed supports must be in place to identify strong and moderate evidence-based interventions that also consider the needs of students, schools, and communities. When selecting evidence-based practices there are several concepts that are to be considered. According to Non-Regulatory Guidance: *Using Evidence to Strengthen Education Investments* (2016), “Interventions supported by higher levels of evidence, specifically strong evidence or moderate evidence, are more likely to improve student outcomes because they have been proven to be effective” (p.4). In addition to identifying practices that are shown to be successful, “teachers also must examine the generalizability, or fit, of the evidence” (International Reading Association, 2002). Intentional time and support must be allotted for educators to explore evidenced-based strategies in order to improve instruction. Utilizing evidence-based strategies to improve student outcomes is part of a larger ongoing process of improvement to

instruction. The impact of utilizing evidence-based strategies is evident. However, successful identification and implementation of these strategies does not just happen. It takes support in identifying needs, identifying evidenced-based strategies, and planning for implementation.

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Key 4
Comprehensive
System of
Assessments



Key 4 Comprehensive System of Assessments

Purpose: Assessments provide information on various forms of instruction, student knowledge, and achievement. A comprehensive system of assessments includes state, local, school, and teacher assessment data. This data is analyzed in collaborative teams using data-dialogue, peer coaching, and mentoring to guide and refine evidence-based instruction. A comprehensive assessment system allows for strategic data-informed decision making to meet the needs of the individual student and should include the appropriate balance of screening tools, diagnostic tools when needed, progress monitoring of students receiving interventions, and tools to measure outcomes.

Birth to Grade Twelve Programs/Initiatives

"Assessment-literate educators...come to any assessment knowing what they are assessing, why they are doing so, how best to assess the achievement of interest, how to generate sound samples of performance, what can go wrong, and how to prevent these problems before they occur (Chappuis et al. 2011). Data gathered from initial assessments guided the improvement of instruction for students across the county.

Birth to Age Five System of Early Care and Education

Early Learning Assessment

The MD Early Learning Assessment (ELA) is a formative assessment tool available to all child care, Head Start, and LEAs for use with children from 36-72 months. HCPSS is currently utilizing the ELA for all special education preschool students. HCPSS is developing rubrics, data collection and formative assessment tools that are aligned to ELA and to Fountas & Pinnell's Literacy Beginnings and that will assist all general education Pre-K teachers with consistency in teaching, assessing, monitoring progress, and reporting.

Kindergarten Readiness Assessment

Maryland's Kindergarten Readiness Assessment (KRA) measures school readiness in four domains -- social foundations, language/literacy, mathematics, and physical well-being and motor development. HCPSS currently utilizes the KRA for a sampled population but is (tentatively) planning to move back to census administration for the 2018-2019 school year.

The Early Learning Assessment is a formative assessment tool available to all child care, Head Start, and LEAs for use with children from 36-72 months.

The new Maryland College and Career Standards raised the bar for all school age students, including

kindergarteners. As a result, in 2014 Maryland began using the Kindergarten Readiness Assessment (KRA) developed under the Race to the Top Early Learning Challenge Grant in partnership with MSDE, the Johns Hopkins University Center for Technology in Education, the Ohio Department of Education, the Connecticut State Department of Education, and West-Ed based on the states' Prekindergarten standards. It is a required state assessment of Kindergarten Readiness given during the first 6 weeks of school. Ready for Kindergarten (R4K) is Maryland's Comprehensive Early Childhood Assessment System. It aligns with the new Maryland Early Learning Standards. The R4K system helps identify the supports children need to be successful in school. R4K data is used to inform teachers, families, schools, programs, and the state so together we can meet the needs of every child. R4K currently has two components:

- Kindergarten Readiness Assessment (KRA) measuring school readiness in four domains -- social foundations; language/literacy, mathematics, and physical well-being and motor development.
- Early Learning Assessment (ELA) (36 to 72 months) measuring the learning progress of young children in seven domains of learning -- social foundations, language/literacy, mathematics, physical well-being and motor development, science, social studies, and the fine arts.

The KRA provides information regarding school readiness levels, making it possible to determine if entering students have the knowledge, skills, and abilities required to succeed in kindergarten. The KRA can:

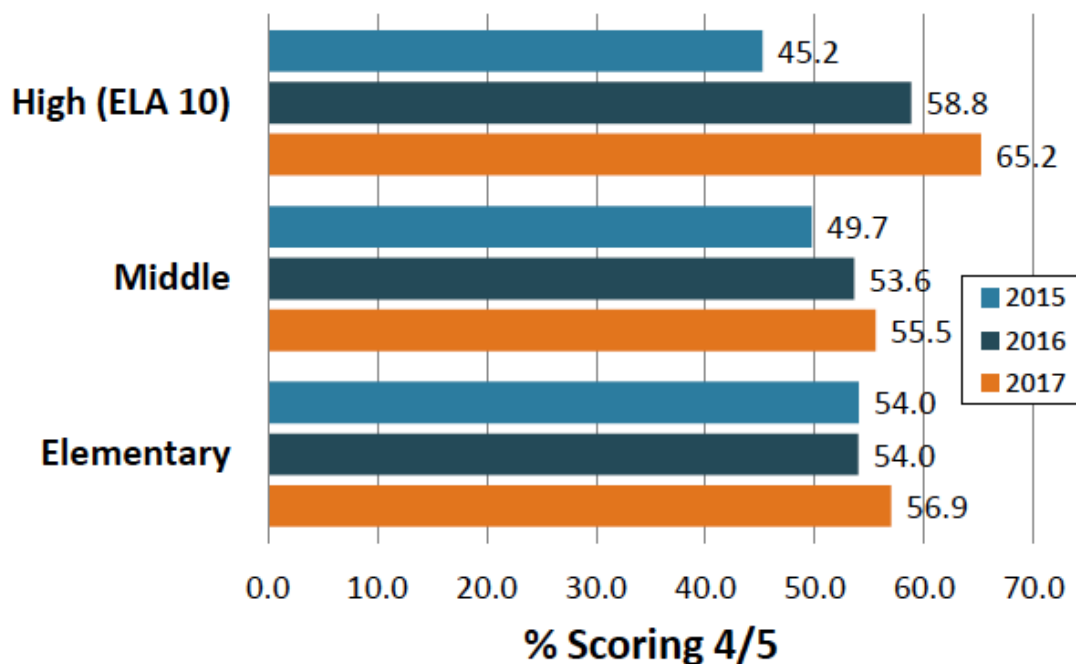
- provide student Level Data: Gives teachers rich information about each assessed child's knowledge, skills, abilities, and learning needs;
- inform Families: Each assessed child's readiness for school is described in the Kindergarten Readiness Assessment Individual Student Report (ISR) and is provided to the family of every assessed child;
- instruct Community Leaders and Policy Makers: Stakeholders at the community, jurisdictional, and state levels gather important information about how well-prepared their children are for kindergarten; and
- advise School Leaders and Early Childhood Programs: The data offer schools and programs information about the learning needs of assessed children.

It also identifies the individual needs of children, enabling teachers to make informed instructional decisions and produces reports for children with disabilities that align with Maryland's online Individualized Education Plan (IEP) system.

PARCC

The PARCC tests, which resulted from the collaboration of several states and Parcc Inc., are considered end-of-course exams. Howard County Public School System assesses students in grades three through eleven, they are given toward the end of the school year. For the English test, students read passages from real texts (fiction and nonfiction) and sometimes watch video or listen to audio. They write, using what they've learned from the passages and multimedia to support their arguments. For students in high school, they are normally given to students after they complete most of Algebra 1, geometry, or Algebra 2 in math and their 10th English course. The PARCC tests in English language arts measure writing at every grade because it is key to showing readiness for the next level of academic work or college and career readiness. The following chart identifies students who met or exceeded expectations on statewide assessments. 29,827 ELA test takers participated in PARCC English Language Arts (ELA) testing. 65.2 percent of English 10 students performed at a level 4 or 5. 55.5 percent of students in grades 6-8 and 56.9 percent of students in grades 3-5 performed at a level 4 or 5. All levels showed increases from 2016 to 2017. Chart 1 summarizes the English Language Arts (ELA) performance of the HCPSS PARCC test takers by level.

Chart 1: PARCC ELA% Scoring 4/5 by Level



A breakdown of ELA PARCC performance by student groups is presented in charts 2 and 3. Individual student groups reflect incremental increases, however gaps in achievement between student groups have increased for ELA.

Chart 2: PARCC ELA % Scoring 4/5 by Race/Ethnicity (Combined ELA 3-8 & 10)

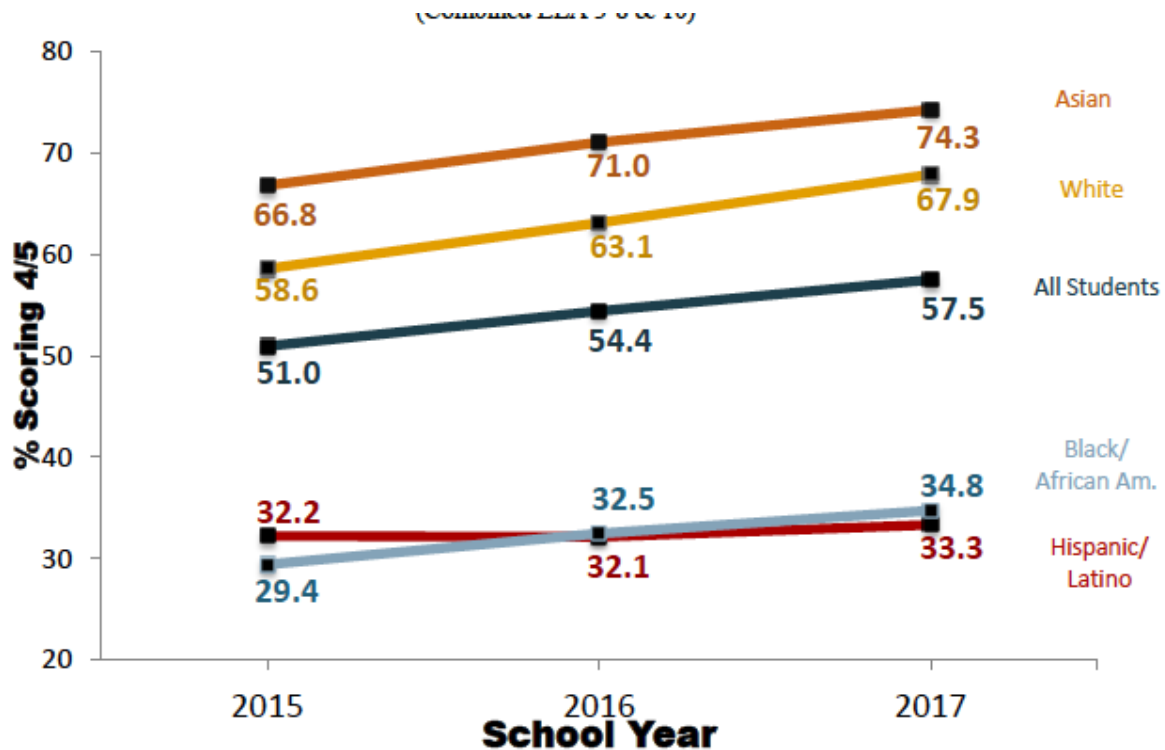
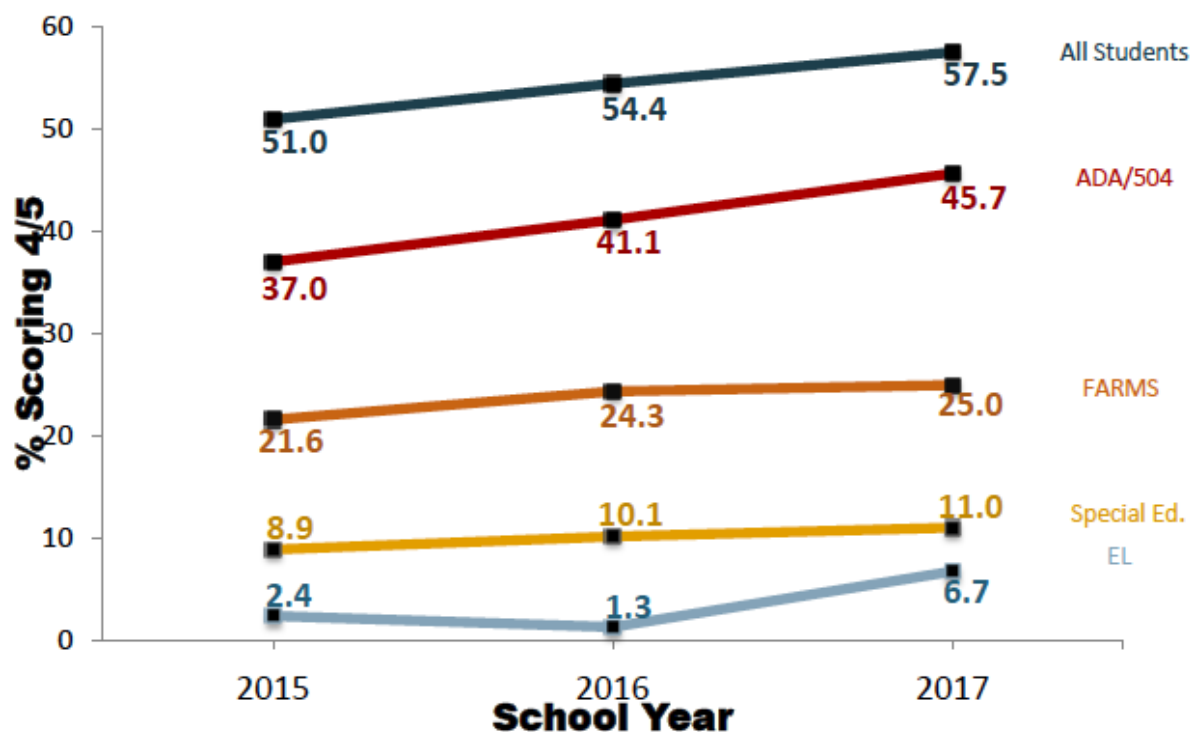


Chart 3: PARCC ELA % Scoring by Service Group (Combined ELA 3-8 & 10)



Breakdown of HCPSS PARCC Results by School is located in the Appendix B

Maryland Integrated Science Assessment

Maryland has replaced the Maryland School Assessment with the Maryland Integrated Science Assessment (MISA), which is administered every spring to students in fifth and eighth grade. The test was first administered in the 2016-17 school year.

Maryland High School Assessments

The conceptual history of the Maryland High School Assessment Program dates back to 1989, when the Governor's Commission on School Performance reported on the issues of high-quality assessment. The Government and Biology HSAs are intended to meet the testing requirements for Maryland high school graduation as well as the high school testing requirements for federal law.

ACCESS for ELLs 2.0

ACCESS for ELLs 2.0 is an English language proficiency assessment administered to English Learners (ELs) identified in kindergarten through 12th grade. It is given annually to monitor students' progress in acquiring academic English and assesses ELs' skills in listening, speaking, reading, and writing.

MSAA

Maryland's Multi-State Alternate Assessment (MSAA) is designed to assess skills in English Language Arts and Mathematics for students with significant cognitive disabilities in grades 3 through 8 and 11. This represents a very small number of students. The MSAA is based on alternate achievement standards which have been derived from and are aligned to the Maryland College and Career Ready Standards (MCCRS). The overall goal of the MSAA is to make sure that all students achieve increasingly higher academic outcomes and leave high school ready for post-school options.

Alt-Maryland Integrated Science Assessment

The Alternate Maryland Integrated Science Assessment (Alt-MISA), also known as Dynamic Learning Maps (DLM), is designed for students with the most significant cognitive disabilities for whom the general education science assessment (MISA) is not appropriate, even with accommodations. The Alt-MISA is based on alternate achievement standards which have been derived from and are aligned with the Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS).

Measures of Academic Progress

The Measures of Academic Progress (MAP) assessment is designed to measure a student's academic achievement and growth over time in reading and mathematics. Together with other classroom-based information, MAP results can help teachers make instructional decisions that match the needs of each child.

MAP is a computer adaptive assessment. In a computer adaptive assessment, as a student responds to questions, the test responds to the student, adjusting up or down the difficulty of the questions presented to the student. This creates a personalized assessment for every student.

Currently, MAP is being used in all elementary and middle schools in Howard County. In order to monitor growth across the school year, students in grades 1 through 8 take MAP two or three times a year: in the

beginning (fall), in the middle (winter), and at the end of the school year (spring), with students in grades 3 through 8 only participating in fall and winter.

MAP assessment items are designed to align to objectives in the Maryland College and Career Ready Standards, which are now being taught throughout the Howard County Public School System (HCPSS).

Fountas and Pinnell Benchmark Assessment System

The Fountas and Pinnell Benchmark Assessment System is utilized to determine student's independent and instructional reading levels, teachers are able to observe student reading behaviors one-on-one, engage in comprehension conversations that go beyond retelling, and make informed decisions that connect assessment to instruction.

Currently, Fountas and Pinnell Benchmark Assessment System is being used in all elementary schools in Howard County. In order to monitor growth across the school year, students in kindergarten through second grade and striving readers in grades three through five engage in Fountas and Pinnell Assessments three times a year.

Key 4: Comprehensive System of Assessments

Key 4: Assessments provide information on various forms of instruction, student knowledge, and achievement. A comprehensive system of assessments includes state, local, school, and teacher assessment data. This data is analyzed in collaborative teams using data-dialogue, peer coaching, and mentoring to guide and refine evidence-based instruction. A comprehensive assessment system allows for strategic data-informed decision making to meet the needs of the individual student.

Goals	Birth to Age 5	K- Grade 5	Grades 6-8	Grades 9-12
Determine and report to stakeholders readiness for and progress toward college and career readiness for all Howard County students	Enhance articulation between levels using reliable assessment data including formative and local assessment data Healthy Beginnings (0-3), developmental screenings	Enhance articulation between levels using reliable assessment data including formative and local assessment data	Enhance articulation between levels using reliable assessment data including formative and local assessment data	Enhance articulation between levels using reliable assessment data including formative and local assessment data
Provide workshops, webinars, and resources regarding interpretation of various assessment data	HC Early Childhood Advisory Council reaches numerous stakeholder groups	IIT, Assessment sessions with teachers, PARCC Resources on Canvas	Provide further PL for RS, Spec Educators, ESOL and English teachers to interpret student data as teams to guide instruction	Provide further PL for RS, Spec Educators, ESOL and English teachers to interpret student data as teams to guide instruction
Facilitate data conversations at all levels	Implement data protocols in conjunction with user-	Implement data protocols in conjunction with user-	Implement data protocols in conjunction with user-	Implement data protocols in conjunction with user-

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(e.g., schools, program, district) that translate assessment data into specific plans that address instructional root causes for skill and performance gaps.	friendly data dashboards	friendly Hoonuit dashboards	friendly Hoonuit dashboards	friendly Hoonuit dashboards
Support district level assessment initiatives	ELA (Early Learning Assessment)	<p>Testing windows</p> <p>Alignments</p> <p>KRA (Kindergarten Readiness Assessment) (move to full census/not sampling!?)</p> <p>State considering “gauges” for end of K, 1, 2</p> <p>Training on appropriate use of Benchmark assessment system and results</p> <p>Leveraging MAP results to support planning for</p>	Leveraging MAP results to support planning for instruction and engaging students in personalized academic goal-setting	

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		instruction and engaging students in personalized academic goal-setting		
Participate in Howard County school, and state-level, collaborative conversations and provide assessment support.	CCSSO Networked Improvement Community (for birth to age 8 initiatives)	<p>Ensure that ELs receive instructional and assessment accommodations</p> <p>CCSSO Networked Improvement Community (for birth to age 8 initiatives)</p> <p>Ongoing data dialogue using county based protocol</p> <p>Discuss discrepancy between F& P data, MAP, PARCC</p> <p>Understand the purpose of formative assessments and how to inform instruction</p>	Ensure that ELs receive instructional and assessment accommodations	Ensure that ELs have access to assessed courses and receive instructional and assessment accommodations

Enhancements/Improvements for HCPSS to Consider

Creative scheduling must be put into place to ensure that there is common planning time among grade level teams in tested areas to analyze data and share best practices. These common planning meetings should also include EL teachers and special educators, as well as a school administrator as needed. Central Office personnel should be regularly invited to common planning meetings to provide additional support. A balanced plan for assessment needs to be created and adjusted that includes screening, diagnostic, progress monitoring, and outcomes tools to assess standards for each grade level throughout the entire school year. These assessments should be in conjunction with mandated testing opportunities so that the support for the MCCRS is maintained. The progress monitoring program should provide data that can be analyzed from the beginning to the end of the school year. Schools need to use the individual and school data on these assessments to plan for improvement based on an aligned statewide data analysis-planning model. These assessments should be shared in the needs assessment and as part of the School Progress Plan. HCPSS will continue to monitor the assessments and their alignment to the standards. The Early Childhood, ESOL program, and Special Education offices will also receive data reports and provide support as needed.

Research/Evidence for Comprehensive System of Assessments

A comprehensive system of assessment is a coherent plan for monitoring student achievement across age and grade levels and includes measures for screening, progress monitoring, diagnosis, and evaluation (Fletcher & Vaughn, 2009; Walpole & McKenna, 2007). Screening assessment is used to determine whether students may need additional support in a particular area. Progress monitoring is used to determine whether students are responding to instruction. If students are identified as needing support, diagnostic assessment can be used to determine specific areas to target. Finally, outcome assessment can be used to determine (a) how much a student grew and (b) where he or she ended up in relation to their peers in a given area. Did students make gains? Did they begin to catch up with their peers or get closer to grade level? Data from these assessment systems must be used as part of a continuous cycle of instructional improvement (Hamilton, et al., 2009). A comprehensive system of assessment may include teacher, center/school evaluation plans that can be used to inform professional development and school improvement efforts (Darling-Hammond, 2012).

Formative assessment as critical component of Multi-tiered Systems of Support

Formative assessment is a critical component of effective school systems that improve students' performance and close the achievement gaps. Multi-tiered Systems of Support (MTSS), discussed in Key 5, rely on three basic components: (a) the provision of multiple tiers of generally effective instructional practices, with a core curriculum that meets the needs of most (e.g., 80%) students; (b) access for all students to high-quality instruction that is matched to their needs; (c) an emphasis on formative assessment data to document the match between students' needs and their instruction; and (d) a mechanism to evaluate system effectiveness across tiers, using a problem-solving model of data-based decision making (Atkins & Cummings, 2011). Strong measurement tools are integral in the conceptualization of MTSS and to its success or disappointment in being able to both improve academic outcomes and provide data for the identification of LD (Fletcher & Vaughn, 2009). The assessment demands of an MTSS approach bring forth an increased need for formative assessments that both meet the traditional criteria for psychometric acceptability and are predictive of high-stakes achievement outcomes. Additionally, these measures should be brief, repeatable, and instructionally relevant so that they can be used to improve instruction and, ultimately, student outcomes. Screening instruments have risen to prominence in education due to the need to identify students as being at risk for poor reading and other outcomes. The practical benefits of universal screening include efficient measurement and the opportunity to prevent more serious deficits. Screening systems can help teachers make more efficient and effective instructional decisions (e.g., Stecker, Fuchs, & Fuchs, 2005) and reduce disproportionality in special education referrals (Marston, Muyskens, Lau, & Canter, 2003). Curriculum-based measurement (CBM) technology has evidence of utility as a formative assessment tool (Deno, 1985; Deno, 2003; Fuchs & Deno, 1992). Historically, CBMs have been used in special education to provide student-level data that measures how students are progressing in a curriculum towards specific outcomes. More recently, CBMs are being used to provide system-level data to improve the overall academic health of the school, including the progress of students in general education (Kaminski & Cummings, 2007).

CBM as a Formative Assessment Tool

Curriculum-based measurement was developed as a system for formative assessment; a methodology for adapting teaching to meet student needs (Deno, 1985). Because the primary purpose of formative assessment is to support student learning, it is linked to assessment practices for purposes of improving

student outcomes (Kaminski & Cummings, 2007). In addition to setting individual student goals, formative assessment also aims to provide a data base on which effective instructional programs may be developed empirically over time (Fuchs, 1986).

Formative assessment linked to student outcomes

One way to ensure that all students are on track for being successful readers is to provide educators with assessment tools that allow them to make timely, appropriate decisions about a child's response to instruction (Cummings, Kaminski, Good, & O'Neill, 2011).

The practice of collecting formative assessment data on a wide scale can have a dramatic effect on global student achievement (Ervin, Schaughency, Goodman, McGlinchey, & Matthews, 2006). Other benefits of formative assessment include reduced referral and eligibility rates for the category of specific learning disability (SLD; VanDerHeyden, Witt, & Gilbertson, 2007; Wanzek & Vaughn, 2011), reduced disproportionality in special education placements (Marston et al., 2003; O'Connor, Bocian, Beach, Sanchez, & Flynn, 2013), and improved achievement (O'Connor et al, 2013; Sharp, Sanders, Noltemeyer, Hoffman, & Boone, 2016).

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Key 5

Tiered Instruction and Interventions



Key 5 Tiered Instruction and Interventions

Purpose: Tiered Instruction tailors instruction to meet individual needs in which the instruction delivered to students varies on several dimensions that are related to the nature and severity of the student's difficulties. When using 'tiered' instruction, teachers make slight adjustments within the same lesson to meet the needs of students. All students learn the same fundamental skills and concepts but through varying modes and activities. The tiers appropriately challenge students at their instructional levels. The teacher's challenge is to make sure all tasks, regardless of the tier level, are interesting, engaging, and challenging. Activities and assignments are adjusted in any of the following ways:

- level of complexity
- amount of structure
- materials provided
- time allowed
- pacing of the assignment
- number of steps required for completion
- form of expression
- level of independence required

Heacox, D. (2002).

Birth to Grade Twelve Programs/Initiatives

Howard County Public School has adopted regulation for the inclusion of Universal Design for Learning (UDL) in all classrooms. This approach provides choice for students, which, in turn, allows teachers to differentiate lessons and activities, and differentiation is a key to tiered instruction.

For some students, the foundational level of support provided through first instruction is not sufficient. These students will require supplemental interventions. Targeted interventions grounded in curricular goals with specific instructional approaches should be implemented to develop skill mastery. Student success is contingent on a consistent match of effective explicit instruction to student needs. Intensity varies with group size, frequency and duration of intervention, and expertise of the professionals providing instruction. These services and interventions are provided in small-group settings in addition to instruction in the general curriculum. Student progress should be monitored on a regular basis with clear entrance and exit

criteria. Instruction must be supported by strong evidence-based research and must include frequent, repeated, developmentally-appropriate practices such as:

- instructional strategies in developing skills in listening, speaking, reading and writing across content areas;
- targeted instructional approaches and strategies to increase the language development and access to grade-level content for ELs;
- intentional instruction in foundational literacy skills, including phonological awareness, phonics and word recognition, print concepts, vocabulary, and fluency;
- explicit instruction in authentic and purposeful writing;
- high-interest, diverse, high-quality print materials;
- differentiated instructional approaches, including individual and small group instruction, and discourse;
- opportunities for using and developing vocabulary;
- valid and reliable system of assessments including screening, diagnostic, formative, and summative assessment tools;
- strategies to enhance children's motivation to read and write and children's engagement in self-directed learning;
- principles of Universal Design for Learning;
- professional development around evidence-based strategies and practices for increased literacy achievement;
- alignment to Maryland Content Standards and the Early Learning Standards; and
- collaboration with the local Early Childhood Action Council's Birth-2nd Grade literacy campaign, including strong partnerships with the public libraries, and participation in family engagement literacy strategies used by the ECACs.

The success of interventions cannot be judged without data collections that can demonstrate whether they are actually benefiting students. Effective interventions contain the following data elements: 1) clear definition of the presenting student problem(s); 2) calculation of the student's starting point, or baseline performance, in the identified area of concern; 3) setting of a specific goal for student improvement; and 4) selection of a method to monitor the student's progress. Instructional interventions are designed to build

and improve a striving student's skills in areas that are necessary to allow him/her to meet grade-level expectations.

Birth to Age Five System of Early Care and Education

Early differences in language development, which contribute to reading development, begin in infancy and grow larger over time. Thus particular emphasis on supporting language development in children in early childhood is needed. Rich language experiences are needed to support the development of vocabulary, comprehension, and syntactic construction. While the requirement to administer developmental screening to all children enrolled in licensed child care programs is currently on hold, some early childhood programs and pediatricians provide developmental screening to young children and use these data to seek additional interventions if needed. Intervention in the earliest years includes families as their child's first teacher.

Maryland's Early Childhood Engagement Framework outlines goals and strategies to support family engagement initiatives implemented by early care and education providers including building family capacity to support their children's school readiness. Partnerships with organizations that support the provision of high quality early care and education including MD Childcare Resource Network, Maryland State Child Care Association, MD EXCELS, Maryland State Family Child Care Association and the ECACs serve as a link to early education and care providers that may be leveraged to build capacity for data analysis, instructional planning and family engagement in literacy initiatives.

The language and literacy data for children available through the use of developmental screenings and other assessment tools such as the Early Learning Assessment, which provides data on seven domains of learning, and Kindergarten Readiness Assessment will guide providers in their instructional planning and in seeking additional interventions if needed.

Kindergarten to Grade Five

Screening, diagnostic, and progress monitoring tools are employed to gather data on students progress. Students who fall below the expected levels of accomplishment (benchmarks) and are at some risk for academic failure participate in interventions based on their identified needs. Interventions are typically incorporated into the daily reading rotation and differ based on the aspect of reading that particular students find most challenging.

General Reading Strategies

- **Reading Recovery** is a highly effective short-term intervention of one-to-one tutoring for low-achieving first graders. Individual students receive a half-hour lesson each school day for 12 to 20 weeks with a specially trained Reading Recovery teacher. Reading Recovery is used as a supplement to good classroom teaching.
- **Leveled Literacy Intervention (LLI)** is a small-group (2-3 students) supplementary literacy intervention designed to help teachers provide powerful, daily instruction for the lowest achieving students in each grade level. LLI is a short-term program designed for 18-24 weeks of instruction. It emphasizes reading, writing, and phonics/word study.

Phonics

- **Really Great Reading** provides a comprehensive set of tools to diagnose, group and teach students with weaknesses in their foundational reading skills. Students are explicitly taught phonemic awareness, phonics concepts and word attack skills. Really Great Reading focus on reading accurately, which translates to better comprehension. The lessons are research based, multisensory, and highly effective.
- **Words Their Way** is a developmental word study program which has students work with level-appropriate word sorts in order to improve their understanding of written language. Word sorts categorize words based on similar spelling, sound, or semantic characteristics.
- **Teaching Phonics** by Wiley Blevins is a group of research-based strategies and systematic activities that aid in teaching essential phonics skills and helping young learners become confident and successful readers.
- **Foundations** is a 30 minute small group systematic program used with K-3rd grade struggling readers. This program focuses on critical foundational skills, emphasizing, phonemic awareness, phonics/word study and reading fluency.
- **The Wilson Reading System** is a highly structured sensory approach to learning vocabulary and phonics for students in grades 2-12 who are not making sufficient progress in other interventions or who may require more intensive instruction. It is provided by a certified instructor in groups of up to six students. This intervention is delivered 3-5 time per week for 45 minutes session.

Comprehension

- **Soar to Success** is a research-based, reading intervention program in which the teacher meets with up to seven students for a daily 45-minute instructional block for up to 20 weeks. It incorporates authentic, high-interest literature and uses reciprocal teaching strategies. Through these strategies, students are guided to construct meaning from text by leading strategy discussions and by modeling summarizing, question generating, clarifying, and predicting.
- **Exploring Reading** guide students to become strong, independent, readers. Students master essential comprehension strategies, integrate multiple strategies to comprehend complex text, and apply the strategies to read a wide range of authentic texts.

Guided Reading Support

- The MacMillan Reading Series, *Treasures*, has components that support struggling readers and that compliment the first instruction of students. *Treasure Chest* is an intervention that supports decoding, vocabulary, fluency and comprehension. *Treasure Chest* can be used along with texts for students who are reading two years below grade level. It may be used to support students in grades K-5 in small groups. Along with this intervention, *Triumphs* supports EL students in small groups.

Middle School Reading Interventions Grades 6-8

Students who are enrolled in middle school reading seminar courses are provided with targeted supports to address their specific needs in the areas of decoding, fluency, and comprehension. Reading Seminars focus on eliminating achievement gaps by accelerating student growth. While these students may comprehend at a literal level, they have challenges moving to a deeper analysis of text.

The course is conducted using a flexible grouping model to incorporate individual student needs. Literacy success is achieved by providing personalized educational experiences in decoding, fluency, and reading comprehension while continuing to address the Maryland College and Career-Ready Standards. Individual student achievement data is constantly monitored to provide timely, meaningful information to help teachers adjust instruction to provide the appropriate level of challenge for learners. Clearly defined criteria are established to exit this class once the standards have been met.

The middle school reading intervention to support students who need assistance with decoding and comprehension is Seminar D. It provides explicit instruction in critical foundational skills using a multi-sensory approach that focuses on phonological automaticity and reading fluency while providing explicit comprehension and vocabulary instruction and writing opportunities. *System 44* is the curricular program used in this seminar. Reading Specialists address phonemic fluency and balanced literacy in small group instruction with an individualized software component which includes multiple texts, video, and daily guided instruction.

The middle school reading intervention course provided for students who need support with comprehension is Seminar C. It is designed to help students read independently with understanding and to develop the comprehensive skills and strategies of vocabulary, fluency, independent reading, and writing techniques. Seminar C utilizes the *SIM*, *Soar to Success*, and *Read 180* curricula.

Read 180 is currently utilized at eight middle schools. *Read 180* meets the needs of at-risk reading students through its innovative use of computer software and teacher-guided instruction. The technology component of *Read 180* offers differentiated reading instruction to students in an engaging framework. The teacher instructional model of *Read 180* provides a balanced literacy program of reading, writing, vocabulary, and language. This program will also support a seamless transition for student who progress in Seminar D, with *System 44*, to Seminar C.

High School Strategic Reading (Grades 9-12)

High School Strategic Reading allows for targeted reading instructional support in the areas of vocabulary, fluency, metacognition, and comprehension in all content areas in order to eliminate achievement gaps. Instruction occurs in a small group setting utilizing research-based instructional strategies. Students are provided with relevant technologies, including collaborative online environments that enhance learning.

The goal of Strategic Reading is to support students in becoming functional readers across all content areas as a basis for moving toward disciplinary literacy proficiency. The course is designed to accelerate student literacy, strategic competencies, effective communication skills, academic independence, and confidence that will transfer to the rest of each student's academic career. Student achievement data is constantly monitored to provide timely, meaningful information to help teachers adjust instruction to provide

the appropriate level of challenge for learners. Clearly defined criteria are established to exit this class once the standards have been met.

The intervention programs utilized with High School Strategic Reading are ***Achieve 3000*** and ***Text Connections***. *Achieve 3000* uses a Level Set Lexile assessment tool and software, with selections on the same topic differentiated for students at their Lexile level. The program aligns with Maryland College and Career-Ready Standards in reading and writing.

Grade Six to Grade Twelve

Howard County uses the mandated testing information to drive and differentiate instruction and to provide remediation or enrichment instruction as necessary. Additionally, teacher reports, team meetings, and conferences with counselors, parents, and students provide additional information regarding ways to meet the needs of all students. This data will be viewed with research supporting learning of disadvantaged students, ELs, and students with special needs in order to improve equity.

Key 5: Tiered Instruction and Interventions

Key 5: Maryland has adopted regulation for the inclusion of Universal Design for Learning (UDL) in all classrooms. This approach provides choice and individualization for students which, in turn, allows teachers to provide tiered instruction. In addition, Maryland developed a structured Response to Intervention Framework in 2008 that was adopted statewide.

Goals	Birth to Age 5	K- Grade 5	Grades 6-8	Grades 9-12
Provide professional learning for LEA staff, on Multi-Tiered System of Support to meet the needs of all students, including students with disabilities	<p>Provide professional learning in utilizing reading and writing strategies that will support specific needs of diverse learners (LEA enhancement p. 85)</p> <p>Provide professional development to increase teachers' (e.g., Pre-K, Head Start, child care) awareness of the role that language proficiency plays in school readiness</p>	<p>Provide professional learning in utilizing reading and writing strategies that will support specific needs of diverse learners (LEA enhancement p. 85)</p> <p>Provide professional learning on identifying the linguistic demand of instructional task and providing on ramps for ELs whose language proficiency is lower than the linguistic demand identified</p>	<p>Provide professional learning in utilizing reading and writing strategies that will support specific needs of diverse learners (LEA enhancement p. 85)</p> <p>Provide professional learning on identifying the linguistic demand of instructional task and providing on ramps for ELs whose language proficiency is lower than the linguistic demand identified</p>	<p>Provide professional learning in utilizing reading and writing strategies that will support specific needs of diverse learners (LEA enhancement p. 85)</p> <p>Provide professional learning on identifying the linguistic demand of instructional task and providing on ramps for ELs whose language proficiency is lower than the linguistic demand identified</p>

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		Reinforce every students' exposure to grade level material or above	LEAs use mandated testing information to drive and differentiate instruction and to provide remediation or enrichment instruction as necessary (p.80-81).	LEAs use mandated testing information to drive and differentiate instruction and to provide remediation or enrichment instruction as necessary (p.80-81).
Provide resources for implementing multi-tiered systems of support	<p>Provide professional learning in understanding available literacy data and how to use it for identifying students for early intervention. (LEA enhancement p. 85)</p> <p>Provide more culturally relevant texts/materials</p>	<p>Embed/design resources for intervention and enrichments within Canvas learning management system. (LEA enhancement p. 85)</p> <p>Provide more culturally relevant texts/materials</p> <p>Identify evidence based interventions and instructional programs</p>	<p>Embed/design resources for intervention and enrichments within Canvas learning management system. (LEA enhancement p. 85)</p> <p>LEAs use mandated testing information to drive and differentiate instruction and to provide remediation or enrichment instruction as necessary (p.80-81).</p>	<p>Embed/design resources for intervention and enrichments within Canvas learning management system. (LEA enhancement p. 85)</p> <p>LEAs use mandated testing information to drive and differentiate instruction and to provide remediation or enrichment instruction as necessary (p.80-81).</p>
Provide technical support	Continue to refine/offer PD about exemplary literacy programming/schedules that includes first	Clarify the difference between literacy intervention and first instruction for language	Continue to refine/offer PD about exemplary literacy programming/schedules that includes first	Continue to refine/offer PD about exemplary literacy programming/schedules that includes first

APPENDIX 6.1

	instruction and intervention	development Continue to refine/offer PD about exemplary literacy programming/schedules that includes first instruction and intervention	instruction and intervention	instruction and intervention
Participate in Howard County school, and state-level, collaborative conversations and provide support.	CCSSO Networked Improvement Community (for birth to age 8 initiatives) Early Childhood Advisory Council's literacy initiatives (Library, Health Dept, Social Services, etc.)	Focus vertical articulation discussions to include focus on student progress and supports? (LEA enhancement p. 85) CCSSO Networked Improvement Community (for birth to age 8 initiatives)	Focus vertical articulation discussions to include focus on student progress and supports? (LEA enhancement p. 85)	Focus vertical articulation discussions to include focus on student progress and supports? (LEA enhancement p. 85)

Established Programs/Initiatives

Howard County encourages teachers to continue to work collaboratively to utilize responsive teaching methods grounded in student data to support growth. Targeted, small group instruction has been infused into classrooms as a best practice to provide personalized and customized instruction to meet the needs of all students. Paraeducators, resource teachers, EL teachers, Reading Specialist and special educators work together with general education teachers to develop and implement engaging and rigorous instruction grounded in the standards. Technology has been readily infused into instruction to provide customized options to support students who need additional support as well as students who could benefit from further extension of learning experiences to enhance growth.

Enhancements/Improvements for Schools to Consider

Teachers need additional professional learning in understanding available literacy data and how to use it for identifying student needs for early intervention, particularly in childcare, Pre-K and K-5. All teachers need additional professional learning in utilizing reading and writing strategies that will support the specific needs of their diverse learners. This will also include professional learning on culturally-responsive teaching that is grounded in best practices for literacy. Multi-tiered systems of support include interventions as well as enrichments and are for all students at all levels of proficiency and at every level of development. Collaboration is needed as students transition from one grade level to the next and from one school level to the next. In those meetings, teachers need to share student-specific best practices with the next grade level teachers. Additional support is needed in high school for students reading below grade level. Evidence-based programs to support students reading below grade level at the high school level may address some of these concerns; however, considerations for sustainability for literacy support should be investigated.

Research/Evidence to Support Tiered Instruction and Interventions

In 2016, Hanover Research reviewed the research-base on closing persistent achievement gaps, specifically in terms of improving student performance in reading and writing, mathematics, and science. This meta-analysis of research studies presented data from commonly-cited and rigorous investigations that have sufficiently large effect sizes to support their findings.

Key findings included:

- Interventions can be effective in narrowing the achievement gap for underperforming students in as little as one year.

- Schools should focus on reading and writing achievement early in students' education to reduce the risk of consistent underperformance in other academic and behavioral areas.
- In reading and writing in particular, small-group and one-on-one interventions are found to be the most effective for addressing the needs of lower-achieving students.
- Discussion-based lessons can bolster struggling students' reading comprehension and writing fluency.
- Districts can largely employ the same intervention strategies in reading and writing across both primary and secondary grade levels.
- Reading and writing teachers should be provided with supplementary, dedicated training opportunities.

Research/Evidence to Support Tiered Instruction

Tiered approaches to instructional delivery help students at all levels of achievement and assist their access to the core curriculum, irrespective of grade level. Districts or schools may implement a tiered model in a variety of ways (Berkeley, Bender, Peaster, & Saunders, 2009) but critical features include:

- A strong, evidence-based core reading program. One of the most critical components of any tiered model is that it is based on a strong general education curriculum (Tier 1; Foorman et al., 2016; Gersten et al., 2009). The core program forms the basis for all other intervention efforts and affects the achievement of all students.
- Multiple, flexible tiers of instruction. Successful tiered models also include 2-4 flexible tiers of supplemental, not supplanted, instruction. The purpose of these tiers is to provide additional supports to students who are struggling to make adequate progress in Tier 1 alone, though some schools also include tiers of enrichment for students performing above level. These supplemental tiers must be flexible, all students will move in and out of different support levels in accordance with their needs. According to a recent Department of Education Practice Guide (Gersten et al., 2009), Tier 2 supports demonstrated strong evidence in terms of improving students' reading achievement.
- Strategic integration. Supplemental supports should be based on and deliberately linked to Tier 1 content. Too often we intervene with students who are struggling by offering disparate interventions, expecting the students to make connections between interventions and their Tier 1 program (Tilly, 2008) This process hasn't been effective

because it can be redundant with other programs, provide conflicting information, and lacks coordination. For tiered systems to be successful, we must work to connect all supports—including flexible tiers but also special education and ELL supports, back to Tier 1.

- **Universal screening:** Best practices in universal screening assessment includes assessing all students at least twice per year (fall, winter). The purpose of screening is two-fold, first to determine students who may benefit from additional support and second to evaluate the various school-level supports. For example, schools can examine the percent of students whose needs are met by the core reading program, Tier 1 should meet the needs of the majority of students in the school (e.g., 60-80%). Schools can also examine the extent to which their supplemental supports are reducing risk for students. Universal screening alone has a moderate impact on student reading achievement, particularly if coupled with progress monitoring (Gersten et al., 2009).
- **Progress monitoring:** Students who have been identified as needing additional supports are unlikely to meet subsequent reading goals UNLESS we intervene to change that outcome. Thus, struggling readers should be monitored more frequently so that teachers can make decisions about their progress on a more frequent basis.

Grades K-5

Tiered systems have their roots in the elementary grades and are widely regarded as models for preventing reading difficulties and disabilities (Fuchs & Fuchs, 1998; Vaughn, Linan-Thompson, & Hickman, 2003; Vellutino, Scanlon, Small, & Fanuele, 2006). Vaughn et al., (2008) note the goal of any RTI approach is to “raise the achievement levels of all students, which requires a multi-tiered approach beginning in general education settings that provides increasingly intense and differentiated interventions for students who struggle with reading and learning from text.” (p.338).

Key milestones of tiered systems in the early grades focus on foundational reading skills. Foorman and colleagues (2016) identified four key recommendations for enhancing the quality of instruction and these include (p. iii):

1. Teach students’ academic language skills, including the use of inferential and narrative language, and vocabulary knowledge

2. Develop awareness of the segments of sounds in speech and how they link to letters
3. Teach students to decode words, analyze word parts, and write and recognize words
4. Ensure that each student reads connected text every day to support reading accuracy, fluency, and comprehension

The elementary grades represent a critical period for intervention in reading. We know that reading challenges in elementary school ultimately lead to school failure and harmful long-term consequences, from reduced academic performance (Torgesen, 2000) to poor employment opportunities (Juel, 1988; McGill-Franzen, 1987; McIntosh, Horner, Chard, Bolland, & Good, 2006). We also know that many students are not learning to read sufficiently well, indicated by the decline in reading proficiency over time (Hasbrouck & Tindal, 2006; Lee, Grigg, & Donahue, 2007). Tiered systems have demonstrated promise in preventing such risk factors and they do a better job remediating those that do exist. Such systems also show promise for reducing disability identification, can improve students' reading performance, and enhance their general academic functioning and future opportunities for gainful employment (Chard, Harn, Horner, & Sugai, 2008).

Successful implementation of tiered systems, however, rely on both structural components, such as data collection and decisions about placement into tiers, as well as evidence-based interventions. Although all five components listed above are important, the quality of instruction is, or at least should be, paramount. Put simply, regardless of the size of small groups, data collection, placement decisions, or other operational details associated with MTSS or other systems changes, poor-quality instruction will not likely produce proficient readers (e.g., Metis Associates, 2011) nor will it teach and reinforce appropriate, functional behaviors. At the same time, high-quality instruction could potentially preclude the need for tiered systems, per se (e.g., Carlson & Francis, 2002; Watkins, 1997).

Grades Six to Twelve

Many adolescents enter middle or high school after struggling with reading for years. Some students struggle with decoding multisyllabic words which they encounter frequently in secondary level text (Bhattacharya, Aplana, & Ehri, 2004). Others may be able to decode fluently, but they continue to face comprehension challenges. Their poor reading performance can be attributed to a variety of factors such as never receiving sufficiently intensive, explicit evidence-based instruction or intervention that targets their needs and/or having a reading disability. The consequences of poor reading ability are glaringly apparent

for some students from an early age and can result in frustration and less independent reading over time. In addition, some students may need supplemental literacy support because, although they have proficiency in a language other than English, they are in the process of developing English language skills.

Ultimately, reading less leads to a rapidly widening gap between these struggling secondary readers and their typically achieving peers. When students read less, they profit less. In other words, students who do not read often acquire less vocabulary, background, and content knowledge (Gelzheiser & Meyers, 1991; Hairrell et al., 2011; O'Sullivan, Ysseldyke, Christenson, & Thurlow, 1990). Without explicit instruction and practice, we also deprive students of a 'tool box' of strategies that they can apply to make sense of text when their comprehension breaks down (Snow, Porche, Tabors, & Harris, 2007; Smith, Doabler, & Kame'enui, 2016). Stanovich (1986) described this phenomenon as the Matthew Effect. Put simply, we can think of it as "the rich get richer and the poor get poorer." Unfortunately, poor reading ability can lead to grave consequences. For example, struggling readers are likely to demonstrate frustration, disengagement, and misbehavior (Lane, Carter, Pierson, & Glaeser, 2006). Thus, improving adolescent literacy achievement is critical.

A tiered model for secondary education can be implemented in a variety of ways (Berkeley, Bender, Peaster, & Saunders, 2009), hence it is referred to as a model and not a program. Besides variation in implementation within elementary level settings, implementation can also vary extensively between the elementary and secondary settings (Reed, Wexler, & Vaughn, 2012). Indeed, while tiered models at the secondary level share the same essential components as conceptualized at the elementary level listed above, there are some unique challenges and logistics that make the model somewhat different for secondary level implementation. For example, we can expect less growth from students as they get older (Bloom, Hill, Black, & Lipsey, 2008). Because of this, it is possible to conduct universal screening only one time per year if resources are scarce and we can use existing data (e.g., state test data) rather than using resources to assess all students. Furthermore, while it is important to use data on an ongoing basis to monitor students' progress and make instructional decisions, we can consider conducting formal progress monitoring less often (Reed, Wexler, Vaughn 2012). Finally, in many schools, more than 60% of the student population may qualify for supplemental, intensive intervention.

However, with scarce resources, schools can be challenged about how to intervene with all of the students who qualify for intervention. This makes providing evidence-based reading instruction in the Tier 1 (i.e.,

English language arts, science, social studies, and math) even more critical as students with disabilities spend a majority of their day in the Tier 1 setting (Newman, 2006; U.S.

Department of Education, 2011). In a practice guide on Improving Adolescent Literacy, Kamil and colleagues (2008) highlight the following evidence-based recommendations:

1. Provide explicit vocabulary instruction
2. Provide direct and explicit comprehension strategy instruction
3. Provide opportunities for extended discussion of text meaning and interpretation
4. Increase student motivation and engagement in literacy learning
5. Make available intensive and individualized interventions for struggling readers that can be provided by trained specialists.

Recommendations 1-4 should be integrated across the Tier 1 setting and in supplemental intervention settings. Recommendation 5 stresses the need for secondary schools to determine ways to provide more intensive supplemental intervention, typically during an elective period, to students who need more help in foundational level skills (i.e., word-reading).

Research/Evidence to Support Interventions

In 2016, Hanover Research reviewed the research on closing persistent achievement gaps, specifically in terms of improving student performance in reading and writing, mathematics, and science. This meta-analysis of research studies presented data from commonly-cited and rigorous investigations that have sufficiently large effect sizes to support their findings.

Key findings included:

- Interventions can be effective in narrowing the achievement gap for underperforming students in as little as one year.
- Schools should focus on reading and writing achievement early in students' education to reduce the risk of consistent underperformance in other academic and behavioral areas.
- In reading and writing in particular, small-group and one-on-one interventions are found to be the most effective for addressing the needs of lower-achieving students.
- Discussion-based lessons can bolster struggling students' reading comprehension and writing fluency.

- Districts can largely employ the same intervention strategies in reading and writing across both primary and secondary grade levels.
- Reading and writing teachers should be provided with supplementary, dedicated training opportunities.

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Conclusion

The Howard County Public School System is committed to ensuring that every student achieves academic excellence in an inspiring, engaging, and supportive environment. To achieve this, there must be effective, consistent, and impactful implementation of the Maryland College and Career-Ready Standards with fidelity, and at the intended level of rigor. Through the steps detailed above in the areas of leadership, professional learning, standards, assessment, and instruction, Howard County is addressing the strengths and needs of all learners and providing a solid foundation for critical thinking, independent learning, and future success in college and careers.

While Howard County Public School System has had a consistent focus on literacy, data shows that the county must continue its efforts and focus on disadvantaged populations beginning at birth. The Howard County Comprehensive Literacy Plan outlined in this document establishes the plan for success for all students.

Appendices

Appendix A: Howard County Public School System Profile 2017-2018

Howard County Public School is a public school district in Howard County, MD. 3742 full-time classroom teachers educate 51,400 students in grades Preschool - 12TH grade.

VISION

Every student and staff member embraces diversity and possesses the skills, knowledge and confidence to positively influence the larger community.

MISSION

HCPSS ensures academic success and social-emotional well-being for each student in an inclusive and nurturing environment that closes opportunity gaps.

Four Overarching Commitments:

Value: Every HCPSS stakeholder feels happy and rewarded in their roles and takes pride in cultivating the learning community.

Achieve: An individualized focus supports every person in reaching milestones for success.

Connect: Students and staff thrive in a safe, nurturing and inclusive culture that embraces diversity.

Empower: Schools, families and the community are mutually invested in student achievement and well being.

Howard County Public School System
77 schools operating in FY18
42 elementary schools
20 middle schools
12 high schools
3 education centers: special education, CTE

Total enrollment (K-12): 56,799
Elementary (K-5): 24,978
Middle (6-8): 13,180
High (9-12): 17,233
Special: 94
PreK: 1,1314

Students receiving special services:

Limited English proficiency: 5.09%

ESOL program: 3,081, representing 68 different languages, 89 countries

FARMS eligibility: 1 in 5 HCPSS students 22.1%

Special education: 8.8%

Escalation of student needs:

Over 5-years, increase in serving students' needs:

- Over 1 in 5 impacted by poverty, 43% increase
- 30% increase in number of FARMs eligible students
- 19% increase is students experiencing homeless
- 68% increase in students hosting limited English proficiency

Howard County (ACS 2016 Self Sufficiency Indicators Report)

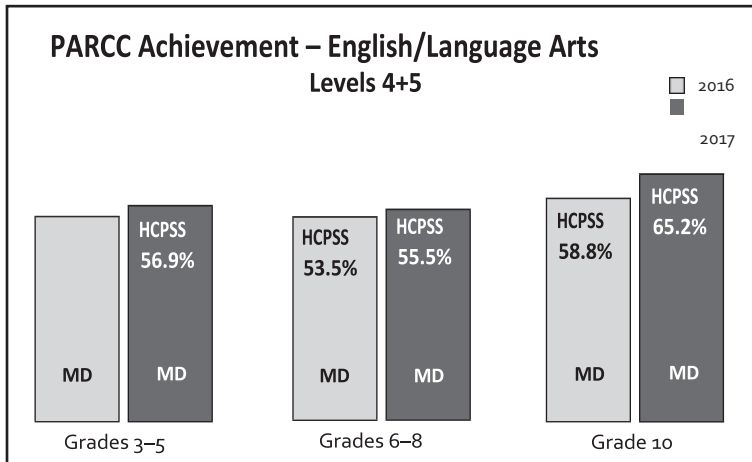
Households living in poverty: 5.2%

Households in Howard County that qualify for Housing Choice: >5,000

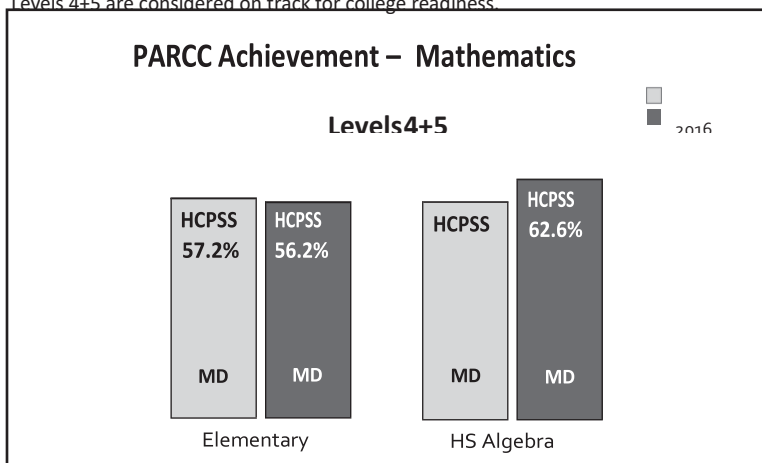
Special Education (HCPSS Dept. of Special Education Strategic Plan):

Howard County has the largest per capita population of children with autism in the State at 8%.

Achievement Data



Levels 4+5 are considered on track for college readiness.



2017 SAT Mean Scores

	Composite Score	Evidenced-based Reading & Writing	Mathematics
HCPSS	1,161	581	580
Maryland	1,046	528	518
National	1,044	527	517

Significant revisions were made to the SAT in March 2016; therefore, scores are not comparable with prior year results.

Advanced Placement Test Results

School Year	Number of Exams Taken	Students taking an AP Exam	Percent of Exams with Score of 3	Percent of Exams with Score of 4	Percent of Exams with Score of 5
2016–2017	11,280	30.1%	27.1%	27.4%	25.4%
2015–2016	10,508	28.2%	26.2%	27.1%	26.3%
2014–2015	9,917	27.3%	28.4%	27.7%	24.7%

More Facts

Our Students

Race/Ethnicity FY18

American Indian/Alaskan	0.2%
Asian	21.9%
Black/African American	23.6%
Hawaiian/Pacific Islander	0.1%
Hispanic/Latino	10.7%
White	37.3%
Two or more races	6.2%

Students Receiving Special Services FY17

Free/Reduced-price Lunch	22.1%
Ltd. English Proficient	5.1%
Special Education	8.8%

Attendance Rate FY17

Elementary:	96.1%
Middle:	96.2%
High:	95.3%

ESOL Program FY17

- HCPSS English Learners (EL) represent 100 countries and 82 languages.
- 46% of our ELs are born in the U.S.
- The language most represented by our ELs is Spanish (40%).
- After Spanish, the languages most spoken each represent less than 10% of ELs: Hindi and Telegu (languages of India), Korean, Chinese, Burmese and Urdu.

Gifted and Talented Program FY17

Percentage of students who have participated in a wide variety of Gifted and Talented Education Program offerings:

K to Grade 5	50%
Grades 6–8	55%
Grades 9–12	65%

Graduation Rate FY17: 92.3%**

***4-year adjusted co*

Appendix B: Needs-Based Survey and Results

The first step in the development of Howard County's Comprehensive Literacy Plan was a needs assessment. The questions were created and sent to stakeholders across the county and their responses informed the direction of the CLP. The Birth to Grade 12 continuum required two surveys with similar questions but geared to the specific needs of various groups.

The Howard County Public School System (HCPSS) is in the process of developing a Comprehensive Literacy Plan (CLP) to support schools as we work in collaboration with community-based programs to improve children's achievement. The basis for this CLP will be the following five "Key" areas:

Key 1: Educational Leadership

Key 2: Strategic Professional Learning

Key 3: Continuity of Standards-based Instruction

Key 4: Comprehensive System of Assessments

Key 5: Tiered Instruction and Intervention

Your responses to this survey will provide a snapshot of the work being implemented in Howard County to help us determine the needs that need to be addressed to assure equity in literacy for children.

Appendix B Summary of data from Needs Assessment

Howard County Public School System
 76 schools operating in FY18
 41 elementary schools
 20 middle schools
 1 high schools
 3 education centers: special education, CTE

Total enrollment (K-12): 55,485
 Elementary (K-5): 24,978
 Middle (6-8): 13,180
 High (9-12): 17,233
 Special: 94
 PreK: 1,314

Students receiving special services:
 Limited English proficiency: 5.09%
 FARMs eligibility: 22.1%
 Special education: 8.8%

Graduation rate:
 Standard: 92.3%, FY17

Drop-out rate:
 Standard: 4.56% FY17

Kindergarten Readiness Assessment (KRA):
 Overall demonstrated readiness for kindergarten: 54%
 FARMs eligible: 29%
 Special education: 28%
 English learners: 23%

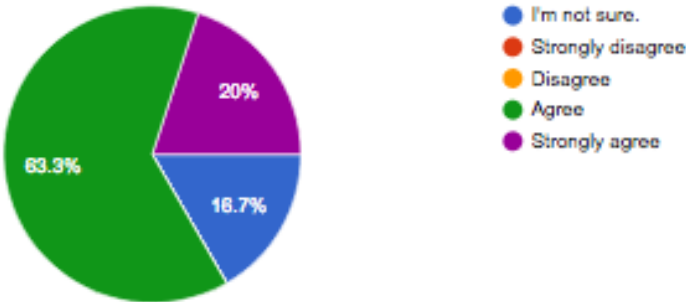
PARCC Achievement – English Language Arts
 Levels 4+5, 2017
 Grades 3-5: 56.9%
 Grades 6-8: 5.5%
 Grade 10: 49.3%

Key 1: Educational Leadership

HCPSS leadership, and/or Howard County (HC) community-based program directors/leaders, identify community, cultural, and equity concerns related to literacy.

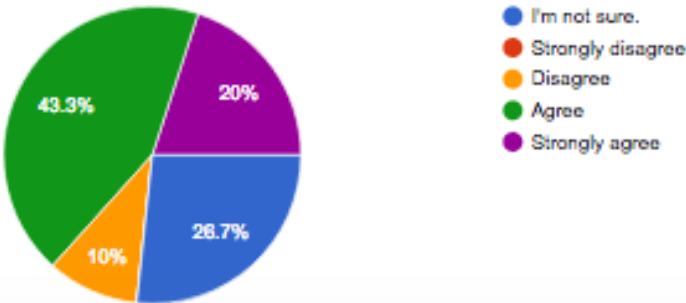


30 responses



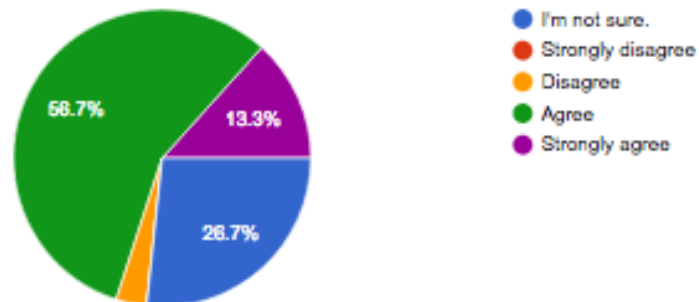
HCPSS leadership, and/or HC community-based program directors/leaders, share solutions to identified literacy equity concerns with staff, parents, and community partners.

30 responses



HCPSS leaders, and/or HC community-based program directors/leaders, provide time for regular literacy meetings and collaborative planning.

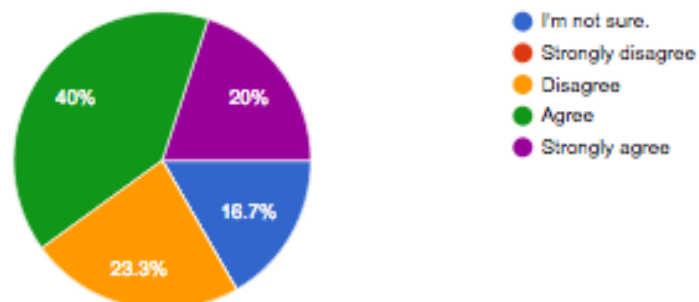
30 responses



HCPSS collaborates with HC community-based programs/providers to build leadership capacity in the early childhood community.



30 responses

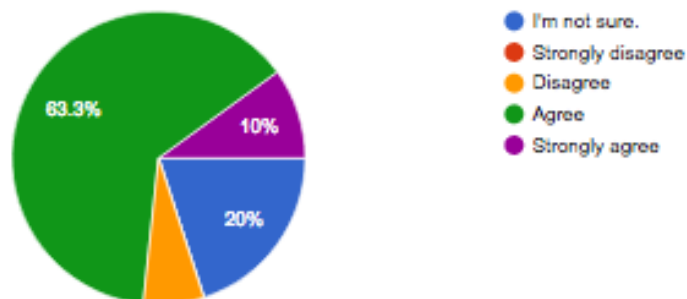


Key 2: Strategic Professional Learning

HC community-based programs involve staff, parents, and other partners in professional learning initiatives for literacy.

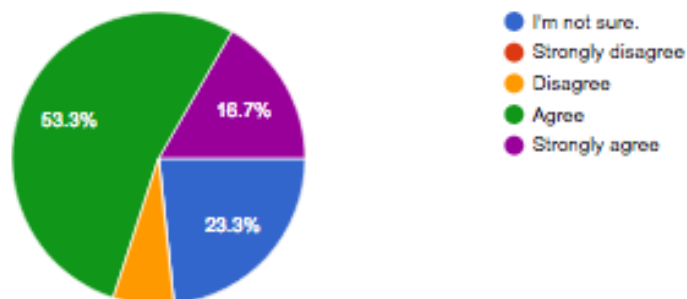


30 responses



Professional learning for literacy initiatives incorporates a variety of formats.

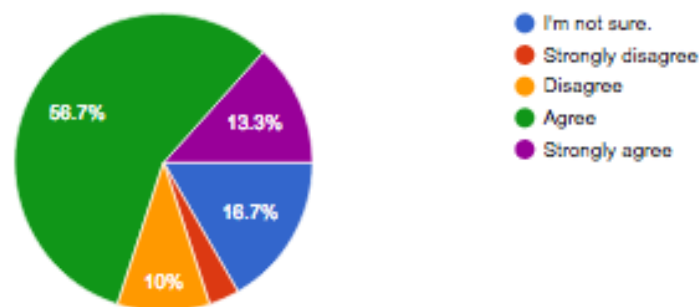
30 responses



Key 3: Continuity of Standards-based Instruction

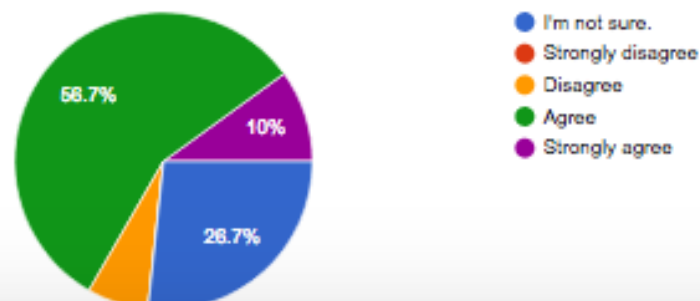
Literacy instruction provided by HC community-based programs is developmentally appropriate and uses state-recommended curriculum (which is strongly aligned to the Early Learning Standards for Birth-3 and/or the Maryland College and Career Ready Standards for PreK and K).

30 responses



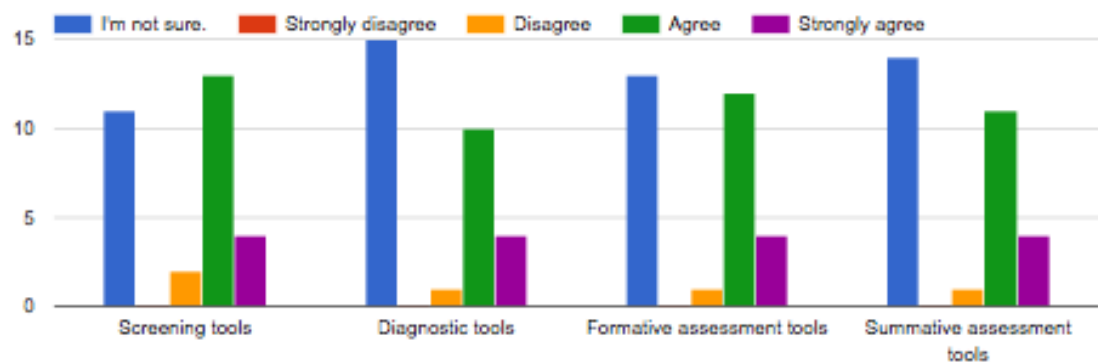
Instruction provided by HC community-based programs meets the rigor of the Early Learning Standards and/or the Maryland College and Career Ready Standards.

30 responses

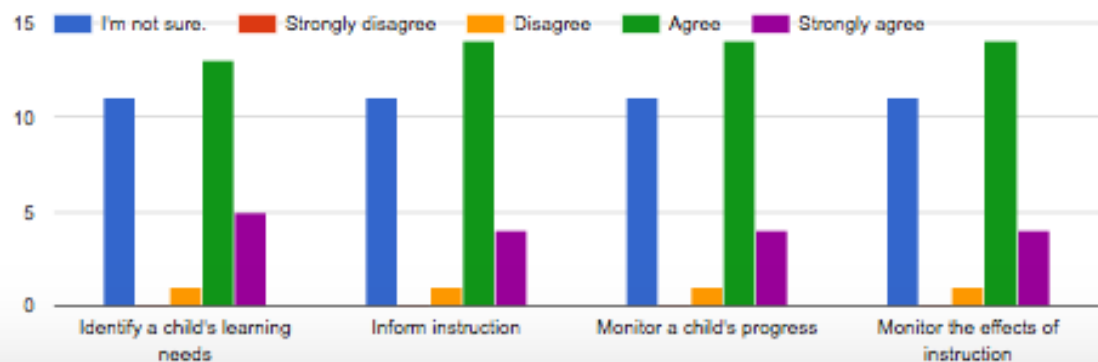


Key 4: Comprehensive System of Assessments

Literacy assessment systems used by HC community-based programs include valid and reliable:



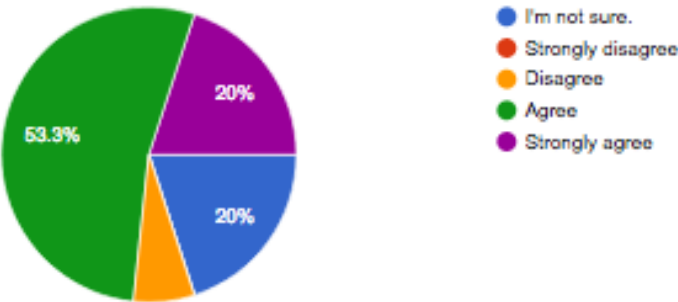
Literacy assessment tools used by HC community-based programs are used for data-informed decision-making in order to:



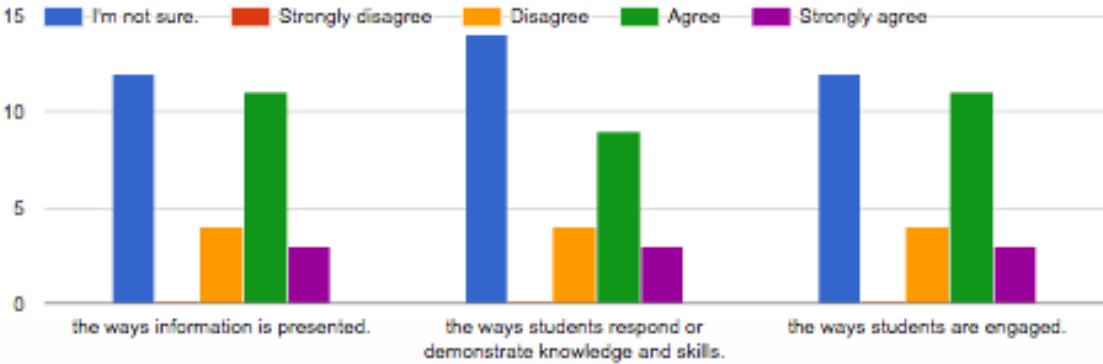
Key 5: Tiered Instruction and Intervention

HC community-based programs use various levels of support to provide interventions and practices to support each child's needs.

30 responses



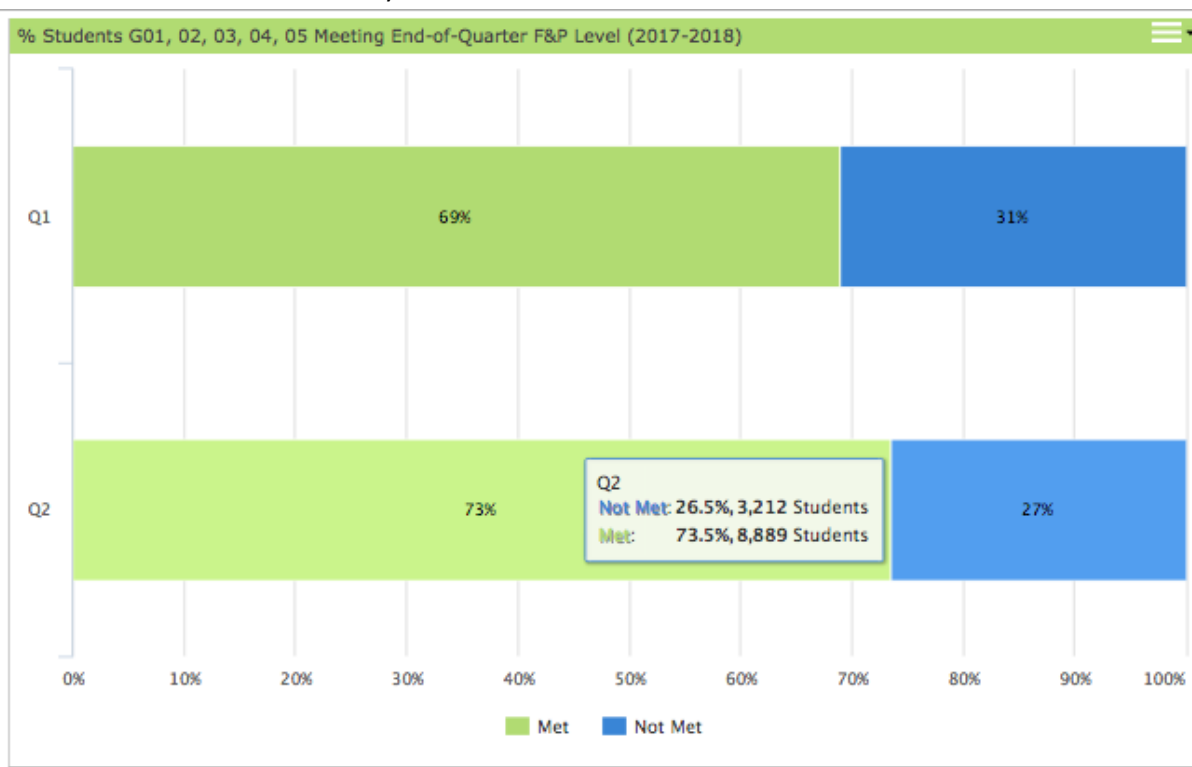
HC community-based program providers design(s) lessons using Universal Design for Learning (UDL) in order to provide flexibility in:



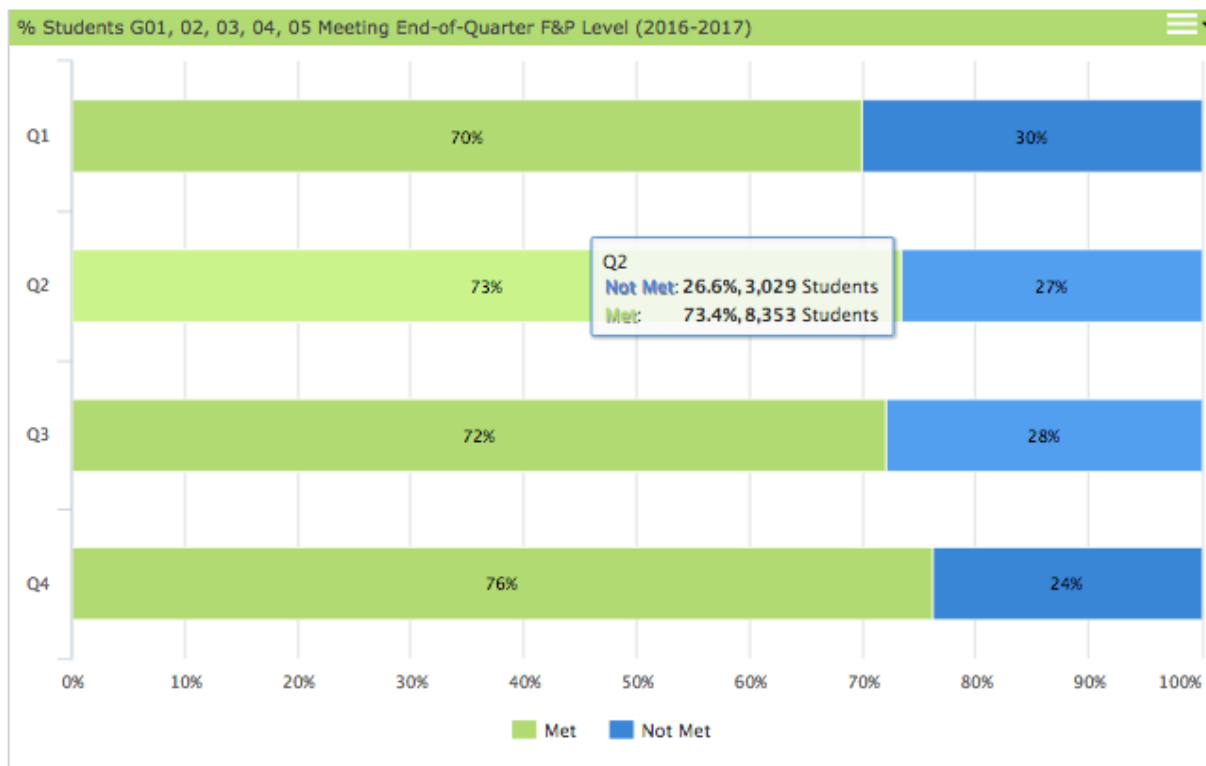
Appendix C: Howard County Public School System Assessment Results 2017

Howard County uses a comprehensive assessment system for strategic data-informed decision making to meet the needs of the individual student.

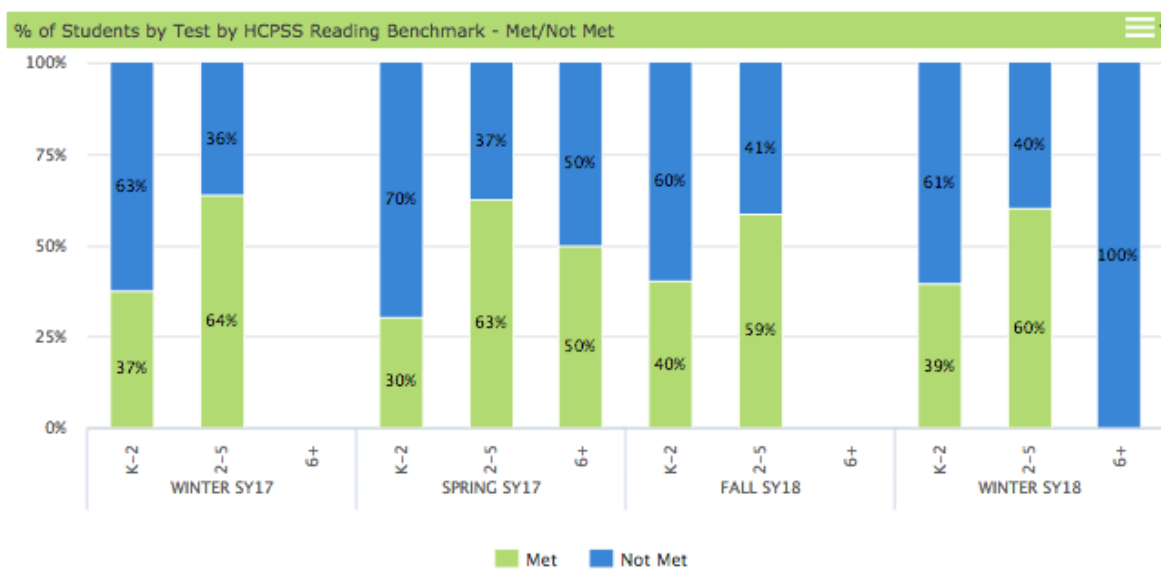
Fountas and Pinnell Assessment System End of Quarter 1 and 2



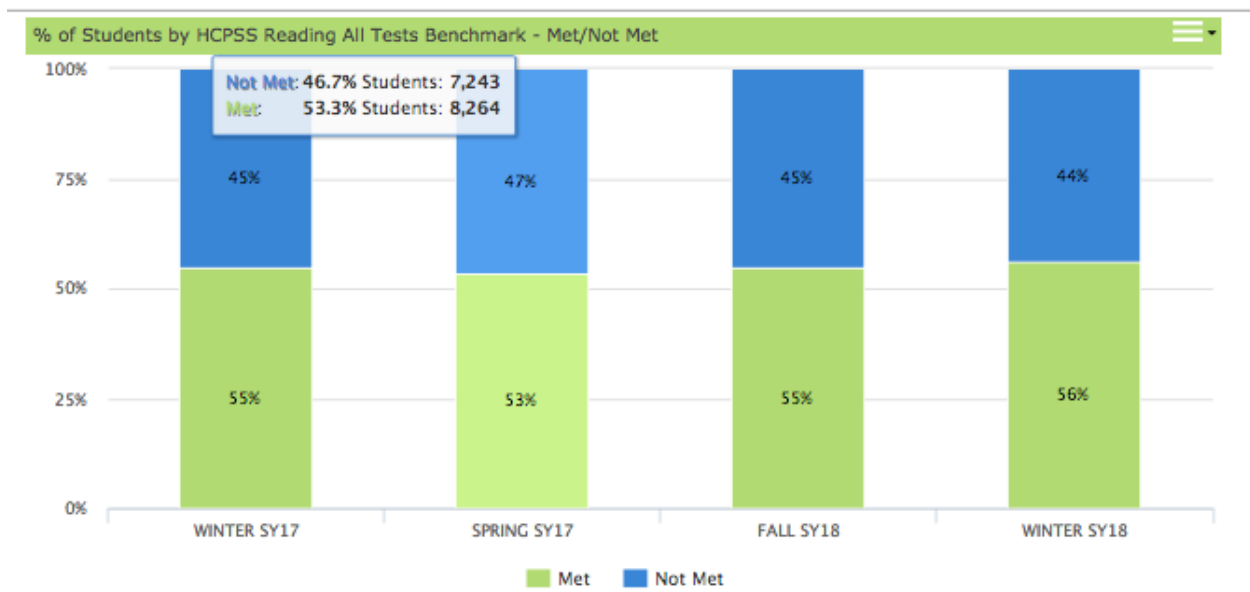
Fountas and Pinnell Assessment System Grades 1-5 End of Quarters, 1-4 (2016-2017)



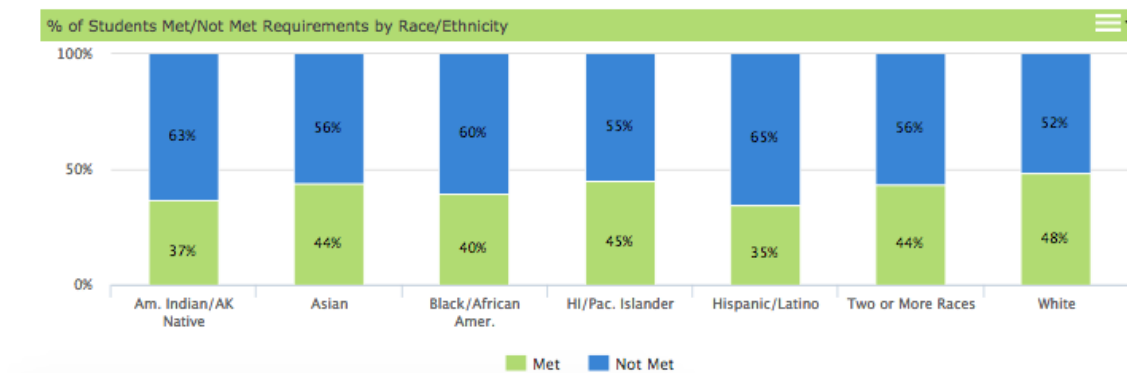
Percent of students tested by Measures of Academic Progress (MAP)



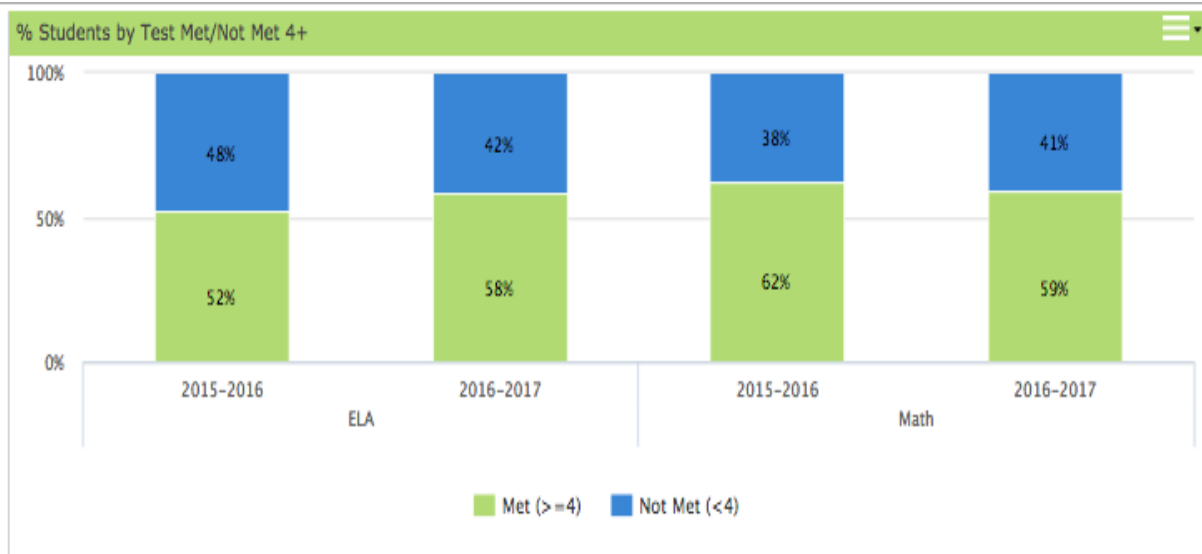
Percent of students tested by Measures of Academic Progress (MAP)



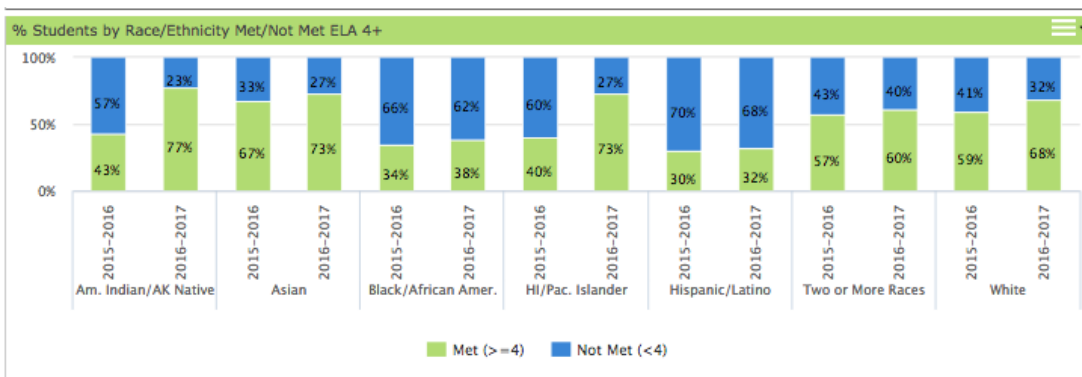
Percent of students Met/Not Met Requirements by Race/Ethnicity



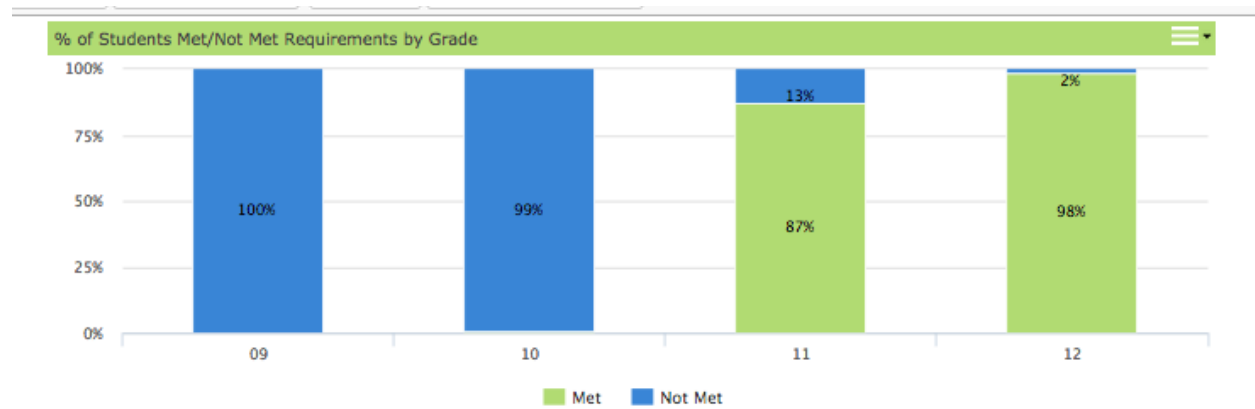
Percent of students tested by PARCC



Percent of students by Race/Ethnicity Met/Not Met PARCC



Percent of students Met/Not Met Graduation Requirements



Appendix D Evidence-based Resources

Sources of Evidence

1. “Warehouses” with multiple sources on various topics, pre-reviewed against the ESSA definition
 - [Evidence for ESSA](#) (Hopkins)
 - [What Works Clearinghouse](#) (IES)
 - [Evidence-Based Intervention Network](#) (University of Missouri)
 - [National Center on Intensive Intervention](#) (AIR)
2. Multiple sources on single topics, sometimes pre-reviewed against the ESSA definition
 - Sources synthesized by groups like Class Size Matters, Attendance Works, etc.
 - Literature reviews
3. Single sources, not pre-reviewed against ESSA definition
 - Academic and professional journals (these are reviewed, just not against the ESSA definition)
 - Vendors
 - Google

<i>What to ask after finding a piece of evidence?</i>		
Question	Answer	Evidence
Is the original source trustworthy?		
Is the evidence data and statistics, or research?		
Does the source clearly describe the activity, the desired outcome, and the conditions under which it was tested?		

What was the result of the activity? (Did the activity achieve the outcome?)		
What “Level” of evidence is it? (How strong is the link between the activity and the outcome?)		
What was the “effect size” of the activity? (To what degree did the outcome occur, a little or a lot?)		
What other factors might have contributed to the activity working (or not working)?		
Can (and should) the activity be selected for the decision at hand?		

Find the Evidence

The information and links below may guide LEAs in determining the level of evidence-based research for a program or resource.

1. “Warehouses” with multiple sources on various topics, evaluated against the ESSA definition:
Evidence for ESSA (Hopkins)

What Works Clearinghouse (IES) *has email subscription

Evidence-Based Intervention Network (University of Missouri)

National Center on Intensive Intervention (AIR)

Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Registry (SAMHSA)

2. Multiple sources on single topics, sometimes evaluated against the ESSA definition:

Sources synthesized by groups like Class Size Matters, Attendance Works, etc.

Literature reviews

3. Single sources, not pre-reviewed against ESSA definition:

Academic and professional journals (these are reviewed, just not against the ESSA definition)

Educational Resources Information Center (ERIC)

Vendors

Google

Checklist: Evaluating Plans for Evidence-Based Activities

Prior to selecting an evidence-based program, respond to the following questions.

1. Does the plan identify a need (and associated objectives/outcomes)?
2. What is the proposed activity to meet the need?
3. What level of evidence does the proposed activity demonstrate? (“How strong is the link between the activity and the outcome?”)
 - Level 1-3: Existing research links the *specific* activity to the need.
 - Level 4: Existing research links the *general* activity to the need, **and** the plan will evaluate whether the *specific* activity meets the need after it is implemented.
4. What is the effect size of the proposed activity? (“How large is the impact of the activity on the outcome?”)
5. Is the activity an appropriate choice, given the level of evidence, the effect size, and other context (student population, grade levels, delivery method, cost, etc.)?

Appendix E: Glossary of Terms

Child with a disability a child evaluated in accordance with §§300.304 300.311 as having mental retardation, a hearing impairment (including deafness), a speech or language impairment, a visual impairment (including blindness), a serious emotional disturbance (referred to in this part as “emotional disturbance”), an orthopedic impairment, autism, traumatic brain injury, another health impairment, a specific learning disability, deaf-blindness, or multiple disabilities, and who, by reason thereof, needs special education and related services.

Comprehensive literacy instruction instruction that—(a) Includes developmentally appropriate, contextually explicit, and systematic instruction, and frequent practice, in reading and writing across content areas; (b) Includes

age-appropriate, explicit, systematic, and intentional instruction in phonological awareness, phonic decoding, vocabulary, language structure, reading fluency, and reading comprehension; (c) Includes age-appropriate, explicit instruction in writing, including opportunities for children to write with clear purposes, with critical reasoning appropriate to the topic and purpose, and with specific instruction and feedback from instructional staff; (d) Makes available and uses diverse, high-quality print materials that reflect the reading and development levels, and interests, of children; (e) Uses differentiated instructional approaches, including individual and small group instruction and discussion; (f) Provides opportunities for children use language with peers and adults in order to develop language skills, including developing vocabulary; (g) Includes frequent practice of reading and writing strategies; (h) Uses age-appropriate, valid, and reliable screening assessments, diagnostic assessments, formative assessment processes, and summative assessments to identify a child's learning needs, to inform instruction, and to monitor the child's progress and the effects of instruction; (i) Uses strategies to enhance children's motivation to read and write and children's engagement in self-directed learning; (j) Incorporates the principles of universal design for learning; (k) Depends on teachers' collaboration in planning, instruction, and assessing a child's progress and on continuous professional learning; and (l) Links literacy instruction to the State's challenging academic standards, including standards relating to the ability to navigate, understand, and write about complex subject matters in print and digital formats.

Dual Language Learner	English learners who range in age from birth through five years old and who are learning two or more languages. The title of DLL acknowledges that very young children are still actively developing their home language(s) along with English.
English learner	an individual— (a) Who is aged 3 through 21; (b) Who is enrolled or preparing to enroll in an elementary school or secondary school; (c)(i) Who was not born in the United States or whose native language is a language other than English; (ii)(I) Who is a Native American or Alaska Native, or a native resident of the outlying areas; and (II) Who comes from an environment where a language other than English has had a significant impact on the individual's

level of English language proficiency; or (iii) Who is migratory, whose native language is a language other than English, and who comes from an environment where a language other than English is dominant; and (d) Whose difficulties in speaking, reading, writing, or understanding the English language may be sufficient to deny the individual— (i) The ability to meet the academic standards; (ii) The ability to successfully achieve in classrooms where the language of instruction is English; or (iii) The opportunity to participate fully in society

Professional development activities that— (a) Are an integral part of school and LEA strategies for providing educators (including teachers, principals, other school leaders, specialized instructional support personnel, paraprofessionals, and, as applicable, early childhood educators) with the knowledge and skills necessary to enable students to succeed in a well-rounded education and to meet the State’s challenging academic standards; (b) Are sustained (not stand-alone, one-day, or short term workshops), intensive, collaborative, job-embedded, data-driven, and classroom-focused; and (c) May include activities that—(1) Improve and increase teachers’—(i) Knowledge of the academic subjects the teachers teach;(ii) Understanding of how students learn; or (iii) Ability to analyze student work and achievement from multiple sources, including how to adjust instructional strategies, assessments, and materials based on such analysis; (2) Are an integral part of broad schoolwide and districtwide educational improvement plans; (3) Allow personalized plans for each educator to address the educator’s specific needs identified in observation or other feedback; (4) Improve classroom management skills; (5) Support the recruitment, hiring, and training of effective teachers, including teachers who became certified through State and local alternative routes to certification; (6) Advance teacher understanding of— (i) Effective instructional strategies that are evidence-based; or (ii) Strategies for improving student academic achievement or substantially increasing the knowledge and teaching skills of teachers; (7) Are aligned with, and directly related to, academic goals of the school or LEA; (8) Are developed with extensive participation of teachers, principals, other school leaders, parents, representatives of Indian Tribes (as applicable), and administrators of schools to be served under this program; (9) Are designed to

give teachers of English learners, and other teachers and instructional staff, the knowledge and skills to provide instruction and appropriate language and academic support services to those children, including the appropriate use of curricula and assessments; (10) To the extent appropriate, provide training for teachers, principals, and other school and community-based early childhood program leaders in the use of technology (including education about the harms of copyright piracy), so that technology and technology applications are effectively used in the classroom to improve teaching and learning in the curricula and academic subjects in which the teachers teach; (11) As a whole, are regularly evaluated for their impact on teacher effectiveness and student academic achievement, with the findings of the evaluations used to improve the quality of professional development; (12) Are designed to give teachers of children with disabilities or children with developmental delays, and other teachers and instructional staff, the knowledge and skills to provide instruction and academic support services to those children, including positive behavioral interventions and supports, multi-tier system of supports, and use of accommodations; (13) Provide instruction in the use of data and assessments to inform classroom practice; (14) Provide instruction in ways that teachers, principals, other school leaders, specialized instructional support personnel, and school administrators may work more effectively with parents and families; (15) Involve the forming of partnerships with institutions of higher education, including, as applicable, Tribal Colleges and Universities as defined in section 316(b) of the Higher Education Act of 1965, as amended (20 U.S.C. 1059c(b)), to establish school-based teacher, principal, and other school leader training programs that provide prospective teachers, novice teachers, principals, and other school leaders with an opportunity to work under the guidance of experienced teachers, principals, other school leaders, and faculty of such institutions; (16) Create programs to enable paraprofessionals (assisting teachers employed by an LEA receiving assistance under part A of title I) to obtain the education necessary for those paraprofessionals to become certified and licensed teachers; (17) Provide follow-up training to teachers who have participated in activities described in this paragraph (c) that are designed to ensure that the knowledge and skills learned by the

teachers are implemented in the classroom; or (18) Where practicable, provide for school staff and other early childhood education program providers to address jointly the transition to elementary school, including issues related to school readiness.

System of Early Care and Education in Maryland (SECE in MD): Maryland's early care and education system encompasses an array of programs with distinct purposes and designs. The system is complex with federally, state and privately funded programs subject to oversight by multiple authorizing and licensing agencies. The range of program options available to families of young children ages birth to 5 years includes:

Public Pre-Kindergarten

Community- based Pre-Kindergarten

Head Start

Early Head Start

Licensed Childcare Centers

Judy Centers

Family Childcare

Parochial Preschool

Montessori

Informal/Relative Care

World Language Immersion Program	a model of instruction in which academic content and literacy skills are taught through the use of both English and a partner language, usually beginning in kindergarten.
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