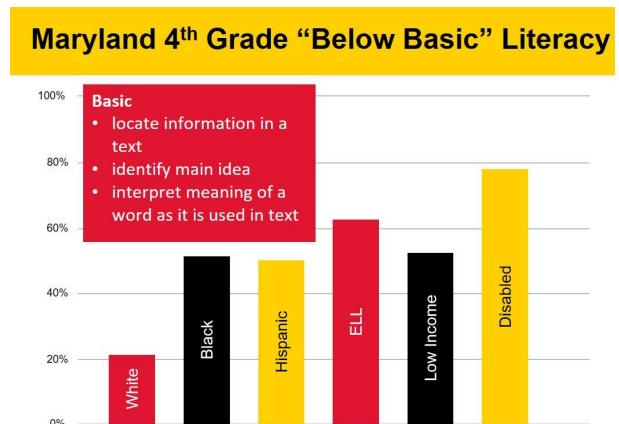




**House Appropriations Committee  
House Bill 1277  
Education - Maryland Institute for Literacy and Equity - Establishment  
March 10, 2026  
Urging a Favorable Report**

[The Maryland Initiative for Literacy and Equity \(MILE\)](#), a partnership between the University of Maryland and Morgan State University, functions as the state’s Research and Technical Assistance Center for literacy and equity across Maryland. MILE provides evidence-based resources, professional development, and targeted support to educators, schools, policymakers, and families to improve literacy outcomes. State funding will support sustainable infrastructure and capacity for this essential literacy work. Today, over [20% percent of adults](#) in Maryland read below a 4th grade level, which is estimated to cost the state nearly \$396 million in annual GDP through unemployment, underemployment, incarceration, and healthcare costs. Schools and educators attempting to implement the Blueprint need access to the leading research-based methods to address literacy challenges particularly for our racially and economically marginalized communities, MILE ensures access to expert literacy resources and capacity, ensuring that ALL districts continue to make progress.

Maryland’s 4th grade reading scores have declined sharply over the last decade, placing Maryland 41st of 50 US states on the 2022 National Assessment for Educational Progress (NAEP) in English Language Arts. Unlike Virginia ([The Virginia Literacy Partnership](#)) and Pennsylvania ([PaTTAN](#)), Maryland has no dedicated university-based center to provide research and technical assistance on effective literacy practices. MILE leverages the incredible assets across our R1 land grant university and premier HBCU to ensure that all Marylanders have equitable access to literacy. MILE creates literacy research and solutions for policy and implementation that is by Marylanders, for Marylanders.



MILE serves as the statewide hub for research, policy, and technical assistance in the implementation of evidence-based and equity-focused literacy practices to. Modelled as a regional educational laboratory focused on the needs and assets of Maryland, MILE advances literacy practices, policies, and systems based on evidence and focused on equity. MILE serves as a collaborative for educators, administrators, policymakers, researchers, and community partners to improve outcomes for all students and communities.

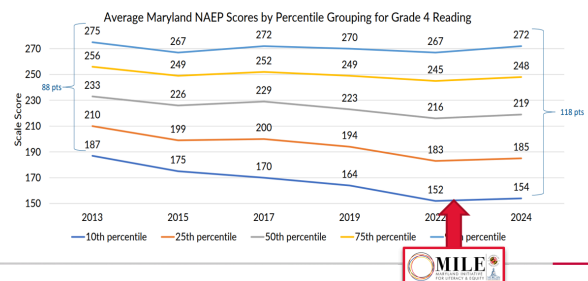


## Early Proof of Concept

- Supported **MSDE and all 24 Maryland LEAs**, as well as the Juvenile Services Education Program, [development and implementation](#) of their K-12 Comprehensive Literacy Plans. This included visits to 10% of all elementary schools in each school system to ensure alignment between the literacy plans and the work in schools. We centered the views of 800 educators, visiting 400 classrooms, and received additional feedback from over 1,000 teachers via survey. These reviews also informed a [presentation](#) and [report](#) to the AIB.
- Cohosted [Statewide Literacy Leadership Summit](#), with MSDE, brought together **more than 300 educators** representing every school system and most higher education institutions that prepare teachers. Used the time to work individually with faculty from Educator Preparation Programs and to train administrators from LEAs to understand data analysis requirements aligned with new MSDE policies. The summit also connected LEAs and IHEs to understand how training might be integrated into teacher preparation
- Convenes representatives from **all educator preparation programs** across Maryland universities and colleges to work towards defining and [addressing challenges to preparing future teachers of reading and writing through our Maryland Higher Education Literacy Collaborative](#). We meet quarterly.
- MILE has also provided **professional learning, coaching, and content development support** to educators and leaders across Maryland related to science of learning, tutoring programs, dual-language programming, literacy data analysis for instructional decisions, and other crucial topics related to MSDE priorities and Blueprint goals.

### Maryland's Average NAEP Scores – Grade 4 Reading

The gap between higher- and lower-performers in Grade 4 Reading in Maryland has widened since 2013. In 2024, scores increased across the distribution.



## Key Functions of MILE:

- **Research:** engaging partners in identifying and conducting research in practices and materials, including digital resources, toolkits, and case studies to support educators, policymakers, families, and communities.
- **Technical Assistance:** providing technical support for implementing effective literacy programs including guidance on curriculum, assessments, and integration of data-informed decision-making for literacy instruction.
- **Professional Development:** creating workshops, seminars, and hands-on coaching models grounded in evidence-based, equity focused literacy practices.
- **Collaboration and Networking:** facilitating collaboration among educators, researchers, policymakers, and community organizations to foster innovation and iterative implementation.



- Data Analysis and Evaluation: assisting state, district, and school leaders to analyze and interpret data to inform decision-making, develop data-driven action plans, and improve literacy related outcomes.
- Advocacy and Policy Development: engaging in advocacy efforts to promote literacy policies that support effective instruction and equitable access and outcomes and connecting educators to policy.
- Community Engagement: supporting literacy across the broader community through outreach programs, family initiatives, and partnerships with local organizations.

Dr. Donald J. Bolger

Associate Professor, College of Education

Co-Director: [Maryland Initiative for Literacy and Equity](#)

Director: [Laboratory for the Neurodevelopment of Reading & Language](#)

Department of Human Development & Quantitative Methodology

University of Maryland, College Park

[djbolger@umd.edu](mailto:djbolger@umd.edu)

Dr. Simone Gibson

Associate Professor, Department of Teacher Education & Professional Development

Co-Director: [Maryland Initiative for Literacy and Equity](#)

Assistant Director: [National Center on the Elimination of Educational Disparities](#)

Morgan State University

[simone.gibson@morgan.edu](mailto:simone.gibson@morgan.edu)