Date

Chair

Xx School Board

Address

Town

Re: Request for Support, Ready to Read Act of 2019, [House Bill 690](http://mgaleg.maryland.gov/2019RS/bills/hb/hb0690f.pdf), [Senate Bill 734](http://mgaleg.maryland.gov/2019RS/bills/sb/sb0734f.pdf)

Dear Chair of xx Board of Education:

On behalf of Decoding Dyslexia Maryland, xx chapter, we respectfully request your support for the [**The Ready to Read Act of 2019 (SB734 / HB690)**](http://mgaleg.maryland.gov/webmga/frmMain.aspx?pid=billpage&stab=01&id=hb0690&tab=subject3&ys=2019RS) sponsored by Senator Craig Zucker and Delegate Eric Luedtke.

Maryland’s reading scores **are concerning**. According to recent data from the National Assessment for Educational Progress (NAEP) and Maryland reading data, only 43% of Maryland’s fourth graders are proficient in reading. This means 57% of all Maryland fourth graders, at the age of 10, are left without the basic reading skills needed to become “college and career ready.”

**Students who would benefit from an early warning system** for reading include English language learners, students at risk for dyslexia and students who experience poverty at home or in the community.[[1]](#footnote-1) Maryland’s reading achievement data, combined with the number of students who cannot gain admission to community college without first taking a remedial English class, underscores why we must focus resources on all students as early as possible to prevent reading failure and poor academic and mental health outcomes.[[2]](#footnote-2)

The Ready to Read Act would call on local Boards of Education to implement a preventative reading screening and intervention framework for all pre-kindergarten, kindergarten and first grade students. Each year students would be screened for risks of reading difficulty using valid, reliable and predictive measurement tools, chosen by the local boards, to determine who may need supplemental reading instruction that is systematic, explicit and cumulative instruction in foundational reading skills.[[3]](#footnote-3) [[4]](#footnote-4),[[5]](#footnote-5)

An early warning system is designed to eliminate or reduce costly efforts to address reading gaps ***after*** a student has fallen behind.[[6]](#footnote-6) Research shows that reading difficulties can be remediated with less difficulty, time and expense when addressed early. Intervention to remediate a fourth grade student can take two hours daily compared to thirty minutes for a kindergarten student in order to achieve the same outcome.[[7]](#footnote-7)

Several school districts are in the process of implementing a universal reading screening framework. St. Mary’s County is partnering with the [National Center on Improving Literacy](https://improvingliteracy.org/state/beacon/maryland) to establish a Reading Screening Beacon Site Program and the materials and metrics developed in the program can be used to facilitate implementation of reading screening across the state.

In closing, the Ready to Read Act will help students receive effective core instruction and supplementary interventions at a time when it will have the most impact and require the fewest resources. The bill is aligned to federal, state and local requirements for reading and literacy education.[[8]](#footnote-8) **We respectfully request that the xx County Board of Education support the Ready to Read Act in a letter or resolution of support to the bill sponsors.**

Thank you for your consideration of our request. The Prince George’s County Board of Education adopted the resolution of support on Feb. 7 during its Board of Education meeting.

Sincerely,

INSERT NAME

AFFILIATION

Attachment: SB 734, HB 690

**Ready to Read Act Coalition, Contact Information**

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1. [Reading Outcomes by Subgroup, Maryland 4th Grade Students](https://www.decodingdyslexiamd.org/uploads/1/7/7/2/17722255/maryland_reading_outcomes_by_subgroups.pdf) (PARCC 2018) [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. [Remedial Coursework in Maryland Community Colleges, 9.2018, MLDS](https://mldscenter.maryland.gov/egov/Publications/ResearchSeries/2018/RemedialEducationNov2018.pdf) [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. [Maryland’s Comprehensive Literacy Plan](http://www.marylandpublicschools.org/about/Documents/Grants/MarylandComprehensiveLiteracyProgram.pdf) [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. [Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment, Maryland Department of Education](http://marylandpublicschools.org/programs/Documents/Special-Ed/TAB/MarylandTABImprovingOutcomesforSWD.pdf), p. 6-8, pp. 13, 16 [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. [Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), Literacy Education for All, Sec. 2221](http://www.everystudentsucceedsact.org/title-ii-/) [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. See [Transitional Supplemental Instruction, Working Group 3, Element 3c, Commission on Innovation & Excellence in Education, Kirwan Commission](http://dls.maryland.gov/pubs/prod/NoPblTabMtg/CmsnInnovEduc/2019_01_18_DraftequitysectionRevised.pdf). [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. [Dr. Joseph Torgesen, 2004, 2007](https://psy.fsu.edu/faculty/torgesenj/torgesen.dp.php) [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. MCCRS, Appendix A, ESSA (LEARN Act), ESSA Title I and Title II, Maryland Comprehensive Literacy Plan [↑](#footnote-ref-8)