# Preventing Reading Difficulties in Young Children

Talking Points: The Ready to Read Act of 2019

What It Does

- **Predicts which students may** be at risk for poor learning outcomes before they fall behind by using brief, valid, developmentally appropriate and reliable screening measures (ESSA, 20 U.S.C. 6641.Sec. 2221 (1)(h)) and Maryland Comprehensive Literacy Plan).

- **Promotes Reading Success**. Pre-kindergarten, kindergarten and first grade students would be screened each year to determine if they are at risk for reading difficulties, including dyslexia. Reading screening instruments measure pre-literacy and early literacy skills that are highly predictive of future reading, such as phonemic awareness, rapid naming and phonics skills (National Early Literacy Panel, 2008).

- **Ensures that vulnerable students have access to instructional best practices for reading.**
    - Only 43% of Maryland students were proficient in reading (2018 MD Reading PARCC).
    - 75% of children whose help is delayed to age 9 or later, continue to struggle throughout their school career (Vellutino, Scanlon, Sipay, Small, Pratt, Chen & Denckla, 1996).
    - In 4th grade, students need 2 hours of instructional time to make the same gains as made in 30 minutes of instructional time in Kindergarten (Joseph Torgeson, 2004, 2007).
    - Many students are not college & career ready and require out-of-pocket, non-credit, remedial English classes for entry into community college.
    - Federal prison reform requires all inmates be screened for reading difficulties and provided reading intervention to prevent recidivism and facilitate employment opportunities.

All Maryland 4th Grade Students[a]

- 57% — Not Proficient
- 43% — Proficient in Reading

(a) Source: 2018 MD ELA PARCC scores. Students scoring 4 or 5 are considered Proficient in Reading. A score of 1, 2 or 3 is considered Not Proficient

- **Requires evidence-based screening & instruction aligned to Federal & State law.** Students determined to be at risk for reading difficulties are provided systematic, explicit, comprehensive reading instruction to prevent reading failure as required by Maryland's Comprehensive Literacy Plan and as defined by the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), Literacy Education for All, Sec. 2221.

- **Supports Students & Educators.** Continued screening and progress monitoring ensures that all students are on a path to grade level reading *and* provides feedback on the effectiveness of a school system's core reading instruction and practices.
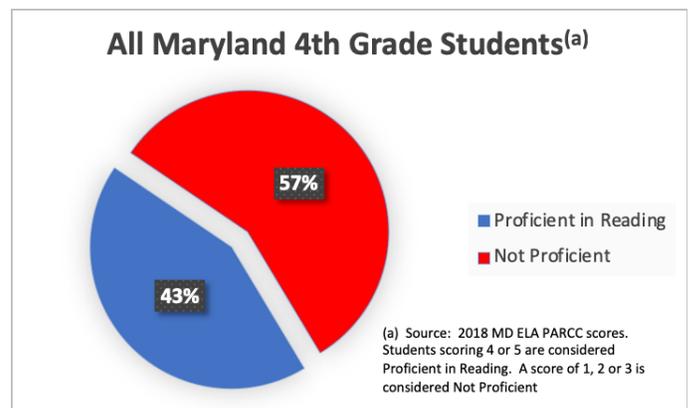
What It Does Not

- **Require specific screening instruments or programs**. School districts may select the most appropriate screening measures and supplemental instruction programs that meet the bill's requirements & align with the Every Student Succeeds Act of 2015 (20 U.S.C. 6641, Sec. 2221: Comprehensive Literacy Instruction).

❏ **Diagnose "dyslexia" or specific reading disabilities**. Reading screening is part of the general education process and will catch students who may be at risk so they can receive early interventions in their areas of need.

❏ **Place more children in "special education."** Many students, when provided early intervention, will not require special education. Research shows that 5-7% of students require intensive interventions in a special education setting for reading when the core and supplemental reading instruction is aligned with reading science (National Reading Panel, 2000).

❏ **Burden educators.** Screening is a brief, valid and reliable measure that provides valuable information on student risk factors for reading difficulties. It also provides information on the efficacy of the core reading instruction used by the school or district.

❏ **Remove Local Control.** The Ready to Read Act provides a recipe for reading success; local districts can select the ingredients that work best.

❏ **Require Additional Funding.** Existing per pupil foundation funding for education traditionally includes assessments, including screening measures. Other funding sources for districts include the Kirwan Commission's plan to boost per pupil funding, the Kirwan Early Literacy Grants for struggling students, federal/state grants under ESSA/LEARN Act, Early Childhood Literacy Grants, and Early Intervening Services funds (EIS).

How to Support the Ready to Read Act	Asks
Ask your Delegates and Senators to contact Delegate Luedtke and Senator Zucker to **COSPONSOR** the Ready to Read Act of 2019.	Cosponsor
Ask your Delegates and Senators to **VOTE YES** on the Ready to Read Act	Vote Yes
Ask Delegates & Senators on the Education Committees to **VOTE Yes!** To be effective, the bill must include the key literacy precursor skills that predict future reading in each grade.	**Vote No** on Amendments that remove the science from the bill
Ask your **Local Boards of Education and County Councils/Commissions** to support the legislation and provide a letter of support to the Committee Chairs: Senator Paul Pinsky, Chairman, Senate Education, Health and Environment Committee and Delegate Anne Kaiser, Chairman, House Ways & Means Committee.	Letters of Support to Committee Chairs in House and Senate

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