2026 - 2027 Press Releases

Press Release: PGCPS Students Show Continued Growth on 2026 State Assessments

July 28, 2026

For Immediate Release

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District outpaced Maryland in Grades 3–8 mathematics while recording gains across nearly every English Language Arts and mathematics assessment.

UPPER MARLBORO, Md. — Prince George's County Public Schools (PGCPS) students demonstrated continued academic progress on the 2026 Maryland Comprehensive Assessment Program (MCAP), with mathematics proficiency gains in every grade from Grades 3 through 8 outpacing statewide improvement and notable gains across nearly every English Language Arts (ELA) and mathematics assessment.

PGCPS students recorded gains in ELA across every assessed grade except English 10 and improved in every mathematics assessment except Algebra I.(*Of note, the number of test takers largely increased by nearly 13,000 students from SY25 to SY26, impacting the overall assessment results reported).* The results reflect continued momentum as the district strengthens instruction through *Forward by Design: Acceleration 2029*, its new three-year strategic plan focused on accelerating achievement in literacy and mathematics while ensuring every student has access to rigorous, high-quality learning experiences.

"These results demonstrate meaningful progress, but more importantly, they demonstrate momentum," said Superintendent Dr. Shawn Joseph. "Our students are growing, our educators are strengthening instruction, and our system is becoming more focused on what matters most—accelerating learning for every student while reducing variation across schools."

Our results also clarify where we must concentrate our efforts. Students in Grades 3–5 continue to trail the state in reading proficiency by approximately 10–15 percentage points, while Grade 10 performance in English 10 and Algebra I remains about 10 percentage points below statewide performance. These results will continue to guide our investments in high quality instruction, targeted supports, and rigorous learning experiences that prepare every student for future success.

“As a Board of Education, we have been unwavering in our commitment to strengthening outcomes in reading, mathematics, special education, and services for our multilingual learners,” said Board of Education Chair Branndon Jackson. “We are encouraged by the progress, but also recognize that more must be done. We remain committed to accelerating student achievement, reducing disparities across our schools, and ensuring excellence in every school, every day, for every child.”

The results come as the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) prepares to transition from the MCAP to the Maryland System of Testing Academic Readiness (MSTAR) beginning this school year. The new assessment system places greater emphasis on measuring student growth over time, aligning with PGCPS' ongoing

focus on continuous improvement and ensuring every student makes meaningful academic progress each year.

Progress Across Student Groups

PGCPS also recorded encouraging gains among student groups that remain central to the district's instructional priorities.

Students with disabilities demonstrated notable growth in:

- Grade 3, Grade 5 and Grade 6 English Language Arts
- Grade 3, Grade 6 and Grade 8 Mathematics

Multilingual learners demonstrated notable growth in:

- Grade 5 and English 10 English Language Arts
- Grade 4, Grade 8 and Algebra I Mathematics

Several Comprehensive Support and Improvement (CSI) and Additional Targeted Support and Improvement (ATSI) schools posted especially strong gains among historically underserved student groups, demonstrating what is possible through focused instructional support and high expectations.

Highlights include:

- **Barack Obama Elementary School**, where multilingual learners achieved 42.8 percentage-point growth in English Language Arts.
- **Forest Heights Elementary School**, with 24.7 percentage-point growth among economically disadvantaged students and more than 20 percentage-point gains in both English Language Arts and mathematics.
- **Robert Gray Elementary School**, where students with disabilities posted a 28.4 percentage-point gain in English Language Arts.

- **Hillcrest Heights Elementary School**, where students with disabilities achieved a 23.5 percentage-point gain in mathematics.
- **John Bayne Elementary School**, which recorded 20-plus percentage-point gains in both English Language Arts and mathematics.

"These schools remind us that demographics do not determine destiny," Dr. Joseph said. "When instruction is coherent, expectations are high and students receive the right supports, extraordinary growth is possible. Our work now is to ensure those successes become common practice across every school in Prince George's County."

Building on Momentum

The assessment results reinforce the district's strategic priorities outlined in Forward by Design: Acceleration 2029, particularly accelerating mathematics and literacy outcomes, strengthening support for multilingual learners and students with disabilities, and investing in instructional excellence.

This fall, PGCPS will continue strengthening instructional coherence by engaging educators in curriculum refinement, aligning professional learning with classroom expectations and providing teachers with clear guidance and ongoing coaching before instructional changes are implemented.

The district will also make progress more visible through quarterly Forward by Design Progress Reports, which will publicly track student achievement, mathematics and literacy growth, attendance, student belonging, college and career readiness, outcomes for multilingual learners and students with disabilities, and central office service measures.

"Our commitment is to make progress visible and act on what we learn," Dr. Joseph said. "We will be transparent about our results, celebrate meaningful gains, confront challenges honestly and continuously improve. Every student deserves a

school system that never stops learning, and these results show we are moving forward together."

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