



# Which 3 Students Will Learn to Read?

Only 42% of Our Public School Students Pass a Reading Test and 25% pass Math. Who Loses?



## Most Delaware Public School Graduates Can't Read at Grade Level; 1 out of 4 Can Do Math!

The latest test results for the 2022-23 school year show students most public school students are below grade level. In English language arts (ELA), 38% of students in grades 3-8 scored at or above their grade's proficiency level, down 2 percentage points from last year. In mathematics, 32% of students in grades 3-8 scored at or above their

grade's proficiency level, up 2 percentage points from last year. For high school statewide assessment, Delaware uses the SAT. This year 42% of students scored proficient or higher on the reading test, down 3 percentage points from last year while 23% scored proficient or higher in mathematics, down 1 percentage point from last year. On the essay test, 42% scored proficient or higher, up 4 percentage points from last year. To see all test scores for Delaware, by District and school at visit [www.doe.k12.de.us](http://www.doe.k12.de.us).

## What Happens to Colonial and Christina Students Who Graduate High School and Can't Read?

Do Poor Reading Skills Lead to Unemployment, Poverty & Jail Time?

Illiteracy with young people has come to the forefront, painting a complex picture of challenges faced by individuals grappling with poor reaching skills. Beyond the classroom, the consequences ripple through various parts of their lives. Illiteracy not only stifles academic progress, limiting access to educational opportunities, but also fosters social isolation as communication difficulties hinder effective engagement with peers and society.

Emotional struggles, marked by diminished self-esteem and confidence, accompany the economic disadvantage illiterate youth face, with restricted employment prospects curbing their ability to break the cycle of poverty. Among adults, 43% of those living in poverty have low literacy levels. This lack of basic reading and writing skills limits their access to information, job opportunities, and self-improvement

The vulnerability to crime increases as limited economic opportunities create a precarious environment. 85% of juveniles who interface with the juvenile court system are functionally low-literate. While illiteracy is not a direct cause of criminal behavior, it is often associated with factors that contribute to criminal involvement. High school dropouts are 3.5 times more likely than high school graduates to be arrested during their lifetime. Three out of four people who depend on welfare can't read.

Illiteracy, more than a stumbling block in education, sets the stage for long-term consequences, affecting higher education opportunities and daily life tasks, disrupting the life trajectory of young individuals. 70% of all incarcerated adults in the United States cannot read at a fourth-grade level. This means they lack the reading skills necessary for many everyday tasks or higher-paying jobs.

## Memory Lane: Initiatives to Fix Delaware Schools

### Here are Five Campaigns to Improve Delaware Schools “We’ve Tried So Many Things. What should be next?”

Since 2000, there have been several significant campaigns and initiatives aimed at improving schools in the United States and Delaware:

**No Child Left Behind Act (2001):** Signed by President George W. Bush, this act aimed to close student achievement gaps by increasing accountability and providing more flexibility and choice for parents. It required states to test students in reading and math and track their progress.

**The Rodel Foundation’s Vision Coalition of Delaware** is a public-private partnership composed of a broad range of Delawareans who work together to improve Delaware public education. The coalition’s leadership developed the Vision 2015 plan in 2006. Test Scores did not improve.

**Race to the Top (2009):** This competitive grant program, introduced during President Barack Obama’s administration, encouraged states to adopt educational reforms such as expanding charter schools, adopting Common Core standards, and reforming teacher evaluations. Delaware gets \$119M.

**Every Student Succeeds Act (2015):** This act replaced No Child Left Behind and shifted more control over schools back to the states and local districts, while still maintaining a commitment to equal opportunity for all students. Decline Accelerated. **SchoolSafety.gov Awareness Campaign:** Launched by the Biden-Harris Administration, this campaign supports schools with safety resources and aims to create safer school environments. Result not reported!

## We want your opinion:

Tell us what you think should be the top priority for our Public Schools? Reading & Math or All the Other Stuff?



# Unlocking Lifelong Success: The Crucial Role of Proficient Reading by Third Grade

In the education world, teaching students to read proficiently by the third grade emerges as a pivotal milestone, wielding profound implications across multiple dimensions of their academic and personal development.

**Foundation for Learning:** Much like constructing a sturdy house, proficient reading serves as the bedrock for all other learning endeavors. Without this solid foundation, the entire structure of education becomes precarious. As students progress through their academic journey, the ability to decipher complex subjects across various disciplines becomes paramount, from textbooks and scientific articles to historical documents.

**Long-Term Academic Success:** Research underscores the critical importance of achieving reading proficiency by the third grade. Students falling short of this benchmark are four times more likely to drop out of high school. The cumulative effect of struggling with reading compounds over time, with early difficulties often persisting into later grades.

**Social and Emotional Well-Being:** Beyond academics, proficient reading

plays a significant role in shaping the social and emotional well-being of students. Proficient readers exude confidence and capability, fostering positive self-esteem. Effective communication, a product of reading skills, allows students to actively participate in discussions, express themselves, and connect meaningfully with their peers.

**Life Skills and Independence:** The impact of proficient reading extends to practical, everyday tasks. From following instructions to understanding labels, filling out forms, and navigating public spaces, reading is an essential skill for autonomy and success. Moreover, proficient readers develop critical thinking abilities, enabling them to analyze information, make informed decisions, and solve problems effectively.

**Intervention Window:** By the critical juncture of third grade, educators can identify reading difficulties and implement targeted interventions. Early intervention during this key period significantly im-

proves overall outcomes for students, setting them on a trajectory towards sustained academic success.

**Parental Involvement:** Recognizing the integral role parents play in a child's educational journey, fostering a reading-friendly home environment becomes paramount. Reading together at home not only culti-

vates a love for books but also reinforces classroom learning. Additionally, parents can advocate for their child's reading needs within the school system, further fortifying the foundation for academic achievement.

In conclusion, teaching students to read proficiently by the third grade is a cornerstone for lifelong learning, academic success, and overall well-being. This crucial skill not only unlocks the doors to knowledge but also empowers students to navigate the complexities of life with confidence and independence.

By Eric Braunstein, Community Advocate and activist for Children.

Students “learn to “read” in K- 3rd Grade. They “read” to “learn” after 3rd Grade. Kid starts really falling behind if they can’t read at grade level at 3rd Grade.

## Community Poll: What We Expect From Our Public Schools?

In an recent online survey, Delaware residents seem to disagree with State Officials:

Public Schools Should Teach Reading and Math and the basics?

71% Yes.  
29% No,

Teach Financial Literacy, Black History, Computer Skills, Civics, Robotics?

68% Yes. Inflation is hurting families, They need help.  
28% No. Government is better equipped to help people fairly.

How should we judge the effectiveness our public Schools:

74% Local School Board Members & Parents  
26% The Department of Education

An Online Survey of 250 Delaware voters between 3/1 and 3/7/2024

# Delaware Tech Partners with UD to Provide Offshore Wind Training

Delaware Technical Community College has partnered with the University of Delaware to launch an offshore wind training initiative that started in January 2024. The

partnership was made possible through a Department of Labor grant.

Prior to offering the program on the College's Owens Campus, Delaware Tech worked closely with Maersk Training, a global training provider specializing in maritime and wind training, to evaluate and approve the training site. Additionally, four Delaware Tech instructors worked with Maersk Training to undergoing the Global Wind Organization (GWO) Basic Safety Training's Train the Trainer program to become certified training instructors.

“Upon completion of this course, the students will attain skills that they can use in

everyday life,” said Tom Peet, certified basic safety training instructor. “All of these classes teach content that may save someone's life or prevent injuries. Overall, this program is a great investment for anyone working in an industrial environment.”

The College's inaugural offshore wind training program spanned five days, with seven participants seeking their GWO Basic Safety Training certification. In order to become certified, the participants must

succeed in the following topics: first aid, materials handling, working at heights, sea survival, and fire awareness.

With this certification, individuals who wish to pursue a career in the growing offshore wind industry will have completed an industry prerequisite.

Of the seven participants enrolled, six successfully completed the program and received their certifications.

“I am so glad to have been a part of the first cohort and to be a

recipient of the University of Delaware grant for wind farm safety,” said Tracey Gross, one of the students of the program. “I learned a ton and I was happy to push myself out of my comfort zone. There was a lot of attention on our safety and learning what to do in times of emergency in order to help others.”

At this time, the College will offer GWO Basic Safety Training on an as-needed basis to support job opportunities in the offshore wind training industry potential impact on the surrounding community.

**Editors Note:** *We believe there are many opportunities like this one for graduates. However, students for this and other program must have a basic math and reading skills to get accepted to the program.*



## About This Paper

For more information about this publication, please feel free to call George D. Rotsch 302-354-5730.



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# “A Common-Sense Call to Revitalize Delaware's Public Schools: Prioritizing Reading and Math”

By Rep. Michael Ramone  
21st Representative District

Over the years, Delaware has tried lots of things to address the issues in our schools. How about we try “Common Sense”. We need our educational leaders to address these the current challenges head-on, ensuring every student has the foundational skills necessary for future success: Starting with Reading and Math.

**Back to Basics:** It's common sense that Delaware Public Schools should focus on the basics – reading and math. Yet, these fundamental skills are slipping through the



cracks, jeopardizing the educational journey for most of our students. *Common sense tells us it's time to bring the focus back to where it matters most: Basic Academics.*

**Leadership Must Have a New Vision:** Educational leaders must redirecting their efforts towards a more comprehensive approach to teaching essential skills. Common sense tells us that every student, regardless of background, deserves a solid foundation in reading and basic mathematics. *The test scores need to improve as the top priority.*

**School Budget based on Common Sense:** With common sense at the forefront, it's crucial to reallocate resources within the state education budget. Let's channel funds directly into teaching reading and math, unburdened by rigid curriculum mandates. Common sense dictates that investing in teachers in the classroom, rather than administrative overhead, is a practical and impactful shift. We need more than 20 reading specialist to fix the problem. *We need to focus more of our resources on the classroom vs. overhead.*

Moreover, common sense should prevail in empowering parents to make informed choices, allowing them to place their children in schools recognized for excellence

in teaching foundational skills. *We need to give parents in struggling schools options.*

**Protecting Futures :** Failing to address these educational challenges is, plainly put, a disregard of common sense. Graduates without proficiency in reading and math face futures fraught with limitations. Passing a basic skills test isn't just a measure of academic success; it's a common-sense approach to preparing students for a competitive world.

As the clock ticks, a common-sense revolution is needed in Delaware's education system. By refocusing efforts, reallocating resources wisely, and empowering parents with choices, we can ensure that every student leaves our schools equipped with the common-sense skills necessary for a promising future. It's not just an educational imperative; it's an investment in common-sense prosperity for generations to come.

Education News:

Use the QR Code to learn more about many of these topics

## Delaware Sports

### Top leaders in Delaware public schools have called the state's literacy scores unacceptable

"Let me be clear, our third grade literacy reading scores are not acceptable," Mark Holodick, state secretary of education, told lawmakers. He said the state must focus on boosting literacy. The discussion came among many topics in the JFC hearing — from the growing special education unit spending, to allowing districts to catch up to several curriculum-based bills, like the science of reading and Black history instruction.

### Nativity Prep School teaches Fifth Graders to Reader Above Grade Level in First Year

"We teach our fifth graders two thing for most of their first year at our School" sites Brian Ray, President of Nativity Prep. "We help student feel great about working hard to achieve their goals and we reteach almost all our students to read" "We know that reading is the one critical skill that is absolutely essential to learning. We spend the whole year to build reading skills so that in the last three years they are with us, we can catch them up on all the other skills they need to success in high school." Last year Nativity Prep had a 80% of high graduate who completed 8th grade go on to college. The other 20% attended trade school and will graduate next year. Nativity Prep is free school located next to Bayard Middle School whose has 10% of their students pass the reading test and 3% can do math at grade level.

### Governor Seeks to Add 20 Literacy Coaches as School Budget Grows to \$2.1 Billion in Delaware



Gov. John Carney is recommending \$2.1 billion to DDOE in fiscal year '25, with some \$3 million dogeared for early literacy coaches. That would fund 20 Literacy coaches to be deployed across schools as needed.

### LEEP Pre-Apprenticeship Program: Reteaching Basic Skills to Public School Graduates

"Delaware's Registered Pre-Apprenticeship Program is breaking barriers for individuals lacking experience or formal education, offering a springboard to a successful career. Aligned with existing Registered Apprenticeship initiatives in auto, general construction, and electrical fields, this program addresses result of students not graduating High School with enough reading and math and soft skills to work start a Union Apprentice Program. The program targets disadvantaged and underrepresented populations high unemployment rates. It becomes a vital avenue for these groups to acquire essential hard and soft skills, not taught by the Public Schools.

### Mississippi Now Requires All third Graders Pass the Reading Test Before Going to 4th Grade

While the state has faced challenges in the past, it has implemented measures to enhance reading skills among young students. Mississippi's requirement for third graders to pass a reading assessment before moving to fourth grade demonstrates the state's commitment to literacy. This policy aims to ensure that students have the necessary reading skills by the end of third grade. In the 2021-22 school year, approximately 85% of Mississippi third graders successfully passed the third-grade reading assessment after the final retest.

### Caesar Rodney Institute to Post Billboard on rt. 95

This month , a New Billboard will seek to inspire a new thinking about Public Schools. According to the Department of Education "State Report Card" we spent \$20,231 / per student, the 6th highest spending in the country. And yet Delaware is 3rd from the bottom in fourth grade math, and low-er in reading on the National Assessment of Educational Progress, compares all 50 states.



### Colonial School District Builds New Football Stadium with Referendum \$; 70% of Students Can't Read at Grade Level

The Colonial School District in Delaware successfully passed a referendum that includes significant investments in athletic fields. The referendum, which was approved on February 29, 2024, will fund various projects across the district's schools. Among these projects, there will be upgrades to running and walking tracks, playing fields at secondary schools, and the addition of a new multisport athletic complex at William Penn High School, The new money will also fund improvements to athletic fields at George Read Middle School, Gunning Bedford Middle School, McCullough Middle School.

Meanwhile, students in the schools n the Colonial School District struggle with reading and math.

**Math Proficiency:** Approximately 15% of students are proficient in math, which is below the Delaware public school average of 27%1.

**Reading Proficiency:** About 30% of students are proficient in reading, compared to the 42% statewide average1.

These figures indicate that the district is facing challenges in meeting state averages. What is the priority at the School Board?

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# People in the News



**Candace Esham**  
Community Advocate  
Working on Elder Care Issues



**Mark Holodick**  
Secretary Education  
State of Delaware



**Robin Crossan**  
Incumbent Candidate  
Colonial School District



**Joyce Hoover**  
Co-Publisher  
Bear Free-Beacon

## People Making an Impact In Delaware!

- Candace Esham is leading of group concerned about elder care in our community. Read more about the Delaware Elder Care Advocacy Coalition on Facebook.
- After 2 years, Sec. Mark Holodick acknowledges that only 42% of students in public schools can read is too low!
- Robin Crossan is seeking re-election to the Colonial School Board on May 9th.
- Joyce is a tireless leader in the Bear Community and has recently accepted the position of Co-Publisher of the Bear Free-Beacon. Welcome Aboard!

## School Board Elections Coming!

### Your Voice Counts: Vote in Your School Board Elections on May 9th!

#### Elect People to the School Board Who will prioritize Reading and Math First!

As the school board election approaches, casting your vote is not just a civic duty but a direct influence on the future of education in your community. Local impact is at stake, with school board decisions shaping curriculum choices, budget allocations, and the overall quality of education. Your vote directly contributes to the formulation of educational policies, influencing teaching methods, inclusivity, and diversity initiatives. Do we address the poor reading and math skills in a serious way?

Fiscal responsibility lies in the balance, affecting resources, teacher salaries, and

extracurricular activities. Do we direct more money to the classroom vs. the administration to improve reading and math skills of every graduate?

By voting, you play a role in ensuring that the school board reflects and represents future of our students. Ultimately, your vote influences student success, supporting leaders committed to academic achievement, student well-being, and a positive learning environment. Do we enable our graduates to compete in the workforce?

Reach out to the Candidates and ask them where they stand the issues that matter you to. And ask them about the reading and math skills of the students in their district?

### School Board Candidates in Christian and Colonial School District

**Christina: Matt Clifford vs. Any Trauth**

**Colonial: Robin Crossin vs. Tanya Kerns**



Read more about the candidates at  
[www.Citizens for Delaware Schools.com](http://www.Citizens for Delaware Schools.com)



## OUR MARCH/APRIL COMMUNITY CALENDAR

Junie B. Jones, the Musical at the Griffin Theatre on March 15-Sunday March 24 is a musical adaptation of best-selling book series. The show is for all ages and tickets are available for \$18/\$15 at [www.griffintheatre.org](http://www.griffintheatre.org)

The Candlelight Theatre presents the Tony Award Winner "The Mystery of Edwin Drood" opening March 16 and play thru April. Call the Box Office at 302-475-2313.

Let's Hatch Chicks in the Library in the Kids Room at the Bear Public Library between March 25 and April 5th to watch chicks hatch firsthand. 10:00. am.

Spring Flowers Arranging with Steel Magnolias Floral at Midnight Oil Brewing Company on Pencader Drive on March 27th for \$40.

Opening Day of Naaman's Little League Spring Baseball Season on Saturday, Morning April 6th at Heeney Field at 10:00 am

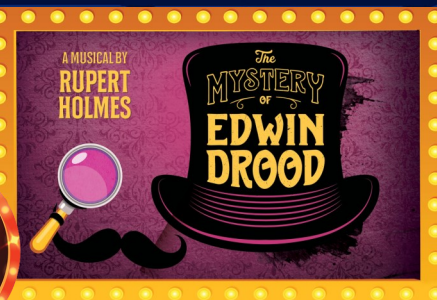
Financial Health and Total Wellness course taught at the Bear Library on Saturday April 27th from 1-4:30 organized by Gloria Godson & Summit Core Team. Register on [Eventbrite.com](http://Eventbrite.com)

An Evening with Brandon Slocumb is on April 30th at 7:00. Brandon is the author of The Violin Conspiracy at the Chase Center in Wilmington DE.



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