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Marietta City Schools' focus on literacy creates long-term, district-wide success

Four-year trend reveals double-digit gains for MCS significantly outpacing GA, metro Atlanta

Marietta, GA — Since 2022, [Marietta City Schools](https://www.marietta-city.k12.ga.us) (MCS) has outpaced the state and Metro Atlanta in English Language Arts (ELA) across every grade level. Most noticeably, in 3rd grade, MCS growth in the mean scale score over this same period is 17 times greater than the state of Georgia.

"Marietta is recognized as one of the state leaders in literacy - the reason is obvious as you look at our students' growth over the last four years," said Superintendent Dr. Grant Rivera. "We remain committed to the science of reading, ensuring that every teacher has the training, time, and resources to help every child reach their fullest reading and writing potential."

Our vision began with the launch of Literacy & Justice for All in 2021. This citywide collaboration, in partnership with the United Way and the Rollins Center for Language and Literacy, was designed to build the deep reading brain of every child, birth through 3rd grade. In MCS, that meant we followed the science and changed our approach to reading instruction and completely changed the face of our elementary classrooms--hiring 35 reading specialists to reduce class size and provide intensive reading support. Last year, we expanded these efforts, crafting an aggressive plan to meet the complex challenge of teaching middle grades students who are behind in reading. The longitudinal results of our work are compelling, especially when compared to the state and metro Atlanta.

Mean Scale Score Growth, Spring 2022-2025 (ELA)

Grade	2022 - GA	2022 - Metro Atlanta	2022 - MCS	2025 - GA	2025 - Metro Atlanta	2025 - MCS	Change - GA	Change - Metro Atlanta	Change - MCS
Grade 3	499	504	498	500	504	515	+1	0	+17
Grade 4	504	507	510	508	512	521	+4	+5	+11
Grade 5	512	516	516	515	519	528	+3	+3	+12
Grade 6	507	513	504	509	515	515	+2	+2	+11
Grade 7	504	510	494	509	515	509	+5	+5	+15
Grade 8	513	518	513	512	517	513	-1	-1	0
American Lit	511	517	509	513	520	515	+2	+3	+6

During this same four-year period, on the Georgia Milestones, Marietta City Schools saw an 11% increase in the number of students reading at or above grade level—outpacing both metro Atlanta and the state.

District	Change in % of Students at or Above Grade Level (Reading, Grades 3–8, Spring 2022–2025)
Marietta City Schools	+11%

Metro Atlanta	+1%
State of Georgia	-1%

This year, Marietta students beat the state in all seven English Language Arts (ELA) assessments. Students receiving special education services and English Learners in Marietta also saw substantial gains in ELA, often outperforming their state-level peers. In all grades, students with disabilities scored higher than the state in mean scale score for ELA.

The data shows the district's focus on literacy has had a positive impact on student performance across all subject areas. Elementary and middle school students who were immersed in the science of reading for multiple years - which includes 3rd through 7th graders - outpaced the state and metro Atlanta in math, as well.

Mean Scale Score Growth, Spring 2022-2025 (Math)									
Grade	2022 - GA	2022 - Metro Atlanta	2022 - MCS	2025 - GA	2025 - Metro Atlanta	2025 - MCS	Change - GA	Change - Metro Atlanta	Change - MCS
Grade 3	519	521	523	521	524	529	+2	+3	+6
Grade 4	520	523	528	528	532	542	+8	+9	+14
Grade 5	511	514	524	516	521	534	+5	+7	+10
Grade 6	504	508	510	514	519	517	+10	+11	+7
Grade 7	512	516	502	521	528	519	+9	+12	+17

Similarly, MCS elementary students who experienced the science of reading over the last four years significantly outpaced the state and metro Atlanta in 5th-grade science:

Mean Scale Score Growth, Spring 2022-2025 (Science)									
Grade	2022 - GA	2022 - Metro Atlanta	2022 - MCS	2025 - GA	2025 - Metro Atlanta	2025 - MCS	Change - GA	Change - Metro Atlanta	Change - MCS
Grade 5	510	514	506	516	519	521	+6	+5	+15

"This level of growth doesn't happen overnight," said Board Vice-Chair Jaillene Hunter, who also serves on the Georgia Council on Literacy. "It's the result of hard work by our teachers, thoughtful investments by our board of education, and the resources and expertise of community partners. We are committed to this work because reading proficiently is critical to success in life."

Districtwide Notable Achievements:

- West Side Elementary is ranked #1 (out of 1,240) in Georgia for 3rd-grade ELA and Math mean scale scores.
- MCAA is ranked #1 (out of 1,240) in Georgia for 3rd-grade students reading at or above grade level and for the percentage of students scoring at Proficient and Distinguished in Math and ELA.
- Lockheed Elementary is ranked #12 and #47 (out of 1,244) in Georgia for Student Growth Percentile in 4th-grade Math and ELA, respectively.

For a full breakdown of results, [click here](#).

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