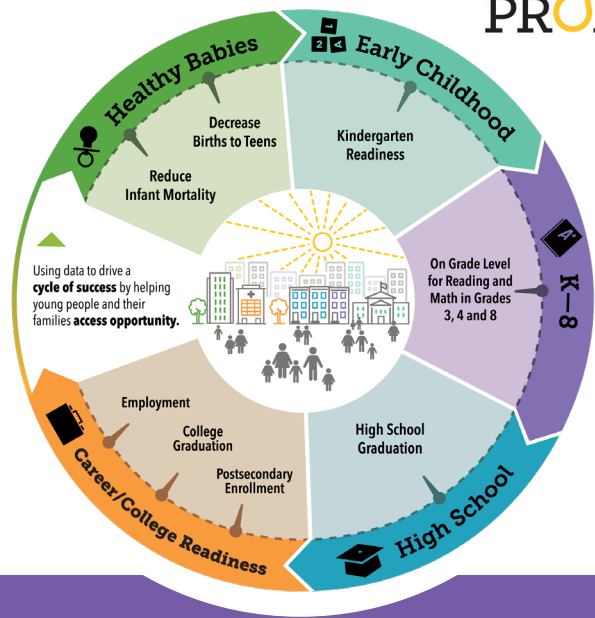


A Long-Term Focus: LITERACY

Imagine you are about to graduate high school in Baltimore City and you are thinking about your next step: entering job training, going to college, or completing a job application.

And the moment you make the first step toward your choice, **you realize you do not have the literacy level required** to succeed in—or even begin—your chosen path.



THE STATS:

Baltimore City Public Schools 11th and 12th graders

80% are reading **BELOW** 9th grade reading level

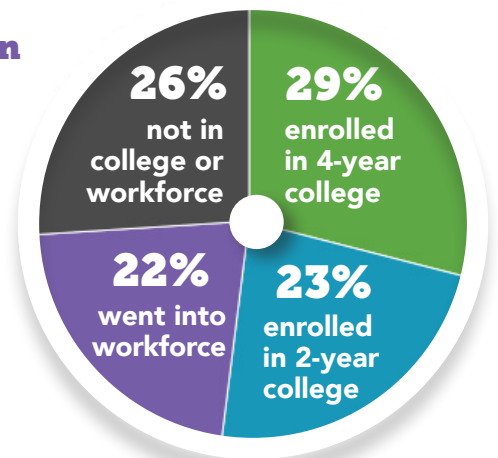
Only 4% of 12th grade students are reading at 11th grade level

Results from the Fall 2017 i-Ready reading test

Post-Graduation Outcomes

4,280
Graduates

Class of 2009



These are the stories and stats Baltimore's Promise heard as we partnered with organizations and young people in 2018 and 2019.

Our goal was to better understand what tangible, accessible postsecondary pathways for Baltimore City Public Schools graduates should look like and how well we as a city are supporting young people to get there.

IN RESPONSE, AND THROUGH PARTNERSHIPS, WE DID THE FOLLOWING:



Developed and implemented new initiatives, such as **Grads2Careers**

Convened 450+ partners (~**300** older youth and **150+** adults) and met with more than **25** groups and tables to understand the **root causes of literacy and employment outcomes** and what **enrichment opportunities** are needed in Baltimore City.



Collected Data

Collected a **robust set of data** via citywide surveys, data sharing with agencies and partners, youth and practitioner participatory data walks, and focus groups to **understand the stories and experiences** behind the literacy data and what enrichment opportunities exist for young people in Baltimore City.

At Baltimore's Promise, Race Equity and Inclusion was at the center of every partnership made, initiative started, or data analysis created.

We examined disproportionality, looked explicitly to see the impact of current data and our work on BIPOC* youth and vulnerable subpopulations, and strived to ensure that the voices of those in our data were informing how we understood data and moved toward action.

* Black, Indigenous, and People of Color

FROM THIS WORK, WE LEARNED:

Black/African American Women ages 16–24 disproportionately experience poor employment and earnings outcomes.

City Schools grads are likely to graduate with a reading level below high school proficiency. As students age, there are fewer opportunities to supplement enrichment and learning they receive in school, particularly for 14–24 year olds.

Many Grads2Careers participants graduated high school below the middle school-level proficiency required by training programs. In response, G2C instituted a paid summer academic remediation program resulting in math and literacy growth of 1–1.5 grade levels on average.

Youth indicated that positive, healthy relationships between adults and older youth are limited and that there is a desire for a more clear, centralized way to navigate and access enrichment and post-secondary opportunities.



BALTIMORE'S PROMISE RESPONSE:

With this information and these important stories top of mind, **Baltimore's Promise is committing to a long-term focus on 0-24 Literacy**, with a priority on older youth literacy and a goal of population-level change for Baltimore City's young people.

Here is what you can expect from Baltimore's Promise:



Committing to learning about, amplifying, and scaling effective local efforts.



Launching new initiatives co-designed with youth and young adults aimed at creating new opportunities and resources where they don't currently exist.



Transparently tracking, reporting on, and acting on the data informing this effort over the next decade.

THIS IS HOW BALTIMORE'S PROMISE WILL MEET YOUR EXPECTATIONS:



Engaging youth and residents in designing interventions and approaches addressing older youth literacy rates and their root causes.



Funding national and local research.



Committing \$300,000 through a youth-led grantmaking process to fund innovative solutions addressing the root causes of low literacy levels.



Continuing to collect, map, and analyze data about enrichment opportunities for youth over time.



Launching new, citywide workgroups that, along with youth and residents, research, and data, will inform the development and implementation of strategies.

By Fall 2021, our current research, convening, and piloting work will lead to recommendations for demonstration models designed to make population-level change in Baltimore City, improving literacy rates for older youth across the city.

Join us to learn more and find ways to get involved. For more information on Baltimore's Promise's commitment to improving older youth literacy rates and outcomes for young people in Baltimore City, please visit BaltimoresPromise.org/literacy.