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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

March 6, 2026

Norfolk Public Schools Celebrates Student Winners of the 2026 Read with MEAC Literacy Initiative

Norfolk, VA – Norfolk Public Schools (NPS) proudly recognizes the outstanding achievements of our elementary and middle school students who were named top readers in the 18th Annual *Read with MEac* reading contest. This partnership with the Mid-Eastern Athletic Conference (MEAC), TowneBank, and Dominion Energy, is a longstanding program that continues to foster a culture of literacy excellence across our division.

“We at Norfolk Public Schools are thankful to have community partners such as MEAC to encourage students to find their love for reading through this 18-year partnership through the Read with MEAC contest,” said Dr. Jeff Rose, Superintendent of Norfolk Public Schools. “Having engaged and enthusiastic support from MEAC leadership and other community partners is wonderful for our students because they deserved to be recognized for their commitment to literacy which is a win-win both in the classroom and beyond.”

Read with MEac, was founded by the MEAC’s Senior Woman Administrators and is designed to foster a love of reading while strengthening literacy outcomes for our students. From October through February 2026, students’ reading growth was measured through the NPS Growth Assessment Program, reinforcing consistent engagement and measurable academic progress.

“The Read with MEac initiative continues to demonstrate the power of partnership and community impact,” said MEAC Commissioner Sonja Stills. “Each year, this program strengthens the connection between our conference, the City of Norfolk, Norfolk Public Schools, and our committed supporters at TowneBank and Dominion Energy. Early reading skills open the door to every future academic achievement. When we nurture strong readers, we help cultivate curiosity, problem solving, and lifelong confidence. Together, our educators, families, and community leaders play a vital role in ensuring every child has the opportunity to thrive through literacy.”

The 2026 winners will be formally recognized during a celebratory event at Larchmont Elementary School on Tuesday, March 10. Also, this year’s winning schools, classes, and individual students exemplify the academic focus and perseverance that define Norfolk Public Schools.

2026 Read with MEAC Winners

School Awards

- **First Place School (\$2,000):** Larchmont Elementary School
- **Second Place School (\$1,500):** Academy for Discovery at Lakewood
- **Third Place Schools (tie, \$500 each):** Taylor Elementary School and Ghent School
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Winning Class (\$1,000)

- **Margaret Lenaghan, 1st Grade** – Academy of International Studies at Rosemont



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2026 Read with MEAC Winners

Top Readers

- Isabella Thrasher, 3rd Grade – Monroe Elementary School
- Ares Hicks, 3rd Grade – Larrimore Elementary School
- Benjamin Haber, 4th Grade – Taylor Elementary School
- Nadie Christian, 4th Grade – Little Creek Elementary School
- Henry Martins, 5th Grade – Ghent School
- Eleanor Tomberlin, 5th Grade – Larchmont Elementary School
- Samuel Hastey, 6th Grade – Academy of International Studies at Rosemont
- Sofia Miller, 6th Grade – Academy of International Studies at Rosemont
- Gracelynn Adkins, 7th Grade – Academy of International Studies at Rosemont
- Riley Coren, 7th Grade – Crossroads School
- Isabella Clark, 8th Grade – Academy of International Studies at Rosemont
- Maximus Whalen, 8th Grade – Norview Middle School
- Natalie Shannon, 8th Grade – Academy of International Studies at Rosemont
- Thea White, 4th Grade – Academy for Discovery at Lakewood
- Scarlett Gahagan, 5th Grade – Taylor Elementary School

Most Improved Students

- Vincent Patterson, 6th Grade – Blair Middle School
- Nicholas Newsome, 7th Grade – Northside Middle School
- Jesler Iriarte Lopez, 7th Grade – Norview Middle School
- Amir McCrary, 4th Grade – Crossroads School
- Tahj Beauford, 3rd Grade – Southside STEM Academy at Campostella
- Adebare Farohun, 3rd Grade – Academy for Discovery at Lakewood
- Ma'Leika Childress, 5th Grade – Monroe Elementary School
- Aden Banks, 5th Grade – Coleman Place Elementary School
- Sevyynn Townsend, 4th Grade – Oceanair Elementary School
- Loyalty Taylor, 5th Grade – Willard Model Elementary School
- Jaidyn Norman, 4th Grade – Coleman Place Elementary School
- Avery Murillo, 7th Grade – Norview Middle School
- Trinity McLarty, 4th Grade – Norview Elementary School
- Kyleigh Dash, 3rd Grade – Bay View Elementary School
- Abraham Adler, 7th Grade – Blair Middle School

Most Improved Classes

1. Ralph Thomas, 6th Grade – Norview Middle School
2. Andrea Trover, 3rd Grade – Academy for Discovery at Lakewood
3. Debbie Dawson, 4th Grade Reading – Taylor Elementary School

Norfolk Public Schools extends its appreciation to MEAC, TowneBank, and Dominion Energy for their continued investment in our students' literacy development. Through strong community partnerships and a shared commitment to academic excellence, we remain focused on ensuring every student develops lifelong literacy skills.

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Established in 1858, Norfolk Public Schools exists to serve the students and families who call it home. NPS is dedicated to strengthening community connections and shaping a future that is inclusive, resilient, and sustainable for today and generations ahead.