



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

GEORGIA (March 3, 2026) – In celebration of Georgia Reads Day, leaders in government and education gathered at the Georgia State Capitol to recognize the ten 2026 Georgia Reads Community Award winners and Georgia’s student READBowl Champions.

Hosted by the Georgia Council on Literacy, the Georgia Reads Community Award highlights the power of sustained community partnerships to improve literacy outcomes across the state. The 2026 honorees represent communities with at least three years of demonstrated collaboration and measurable literacy gains. Each awardee will receive \$20,000 to further strengthen local literacy initiatives.

Additionally, each winning community partnership may select a school to be recognized locally and participate in a special “Read with Malcolm” event led by Georgia Reads Coach Malcolm Mitchell. As part of the celebration, Malcolm will visit the selected school to read with students and encourage a love of literacy, and he will also participate in an additional community literacy activity to celebrate the broader partnership and its impact.

“Literacy is the foundation for opportunity,” said Scott Johnson, Chair of the Georgia Council on Literacy. “These communities have shown what’s possible when schools, nonprofits, families, and local leaders work together with purpose. Their results are proof that when we invest in reading, we invest in Georgia’s future.”

Four schools were also recognized as Georgia’s 2026 READBowl Champions, earning “conference” championships in K–3, grades 4–5, middle, and high school reading competitions. The championship PAGE trophy, sponsored by the Professional Association of Georgia Educators, was presented to this year’s winners.

The 2026 READBowl state champions include:

PreK-3rd Grade: **Shryock/Hadden’s Busy Bees - Waynesboro Primary School** , Burke County,

4/5 Grade: **DLR Tenacious Tigers - David L. Rainer Elementary School**, Camden County,

Middle School: **DCSS Indians – 8th Grade Albany Middle School**, Dougherty County, and

High School: **Holland’s Homeroom, Chattahoochee County High School**, Chattahoochee County.

It should be noted that **DCSS Indians – 8th Grade Albany Middle School**, Dougherty County was also the National Winner for the 2025 READBowl



2026 Georgia Reads Community Award Winners

The 2026 Georgia Reads Community Award recipients include:

Books for Keeps, Clarke County; **For the Love of Reading, Inc.**, Upson County; **Harris Literacy Center at Augusta University**, Richmond County; **Jackson County Schools**, Jackson County; **Lumpkin County Schools**, Lumpkin County; **Mayors Impact Team**, Walton County; **Meriwether County School System**, Meriwether County; **Portal of Commencement Midpoint Shelter, Inc.**, Fulton County; **Reach Out and Read Georgia**, Fulton County; and **United Way of Hall County**, Hall County.

About READBowl

Sponsored by the Malcolm Mitchell's Share the Magic Foundation, READBowl is a global reading competition that encourages early learners, as well as elementary, middle, and high school students, to log their reading minutes. The competition kicks off the week before the College Football National Championship—held annually on the second Monday in January—and concludes on the morning of the NFL Super Bowl, when the World Champions of Reading are announced.

This year, 181,462 Georgia students participated, logging an impressive 108,021,989 total reading minutes. State champions are recognized as the schools with the highest average reading minutes at the close of the competition.

About the Georgia Council on Literacy

The Georgia Council on Literacy leads statewide efforts to improve reading outcomes for children, families, and adults. The Council is responsible for developing and advancing Georgia's comprehensive statewide literacy plan, aligning agencies and partners around evidence-based strategies to strengthen literacy from early childhood through adulthood. Working with educators, community leaders, and policymakers, the Council promotes policies and partnerships that ensure every Georgian has the literacy skills needed to succeed in school, work, and civic life.

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