

READ Act Implementation Update

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DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

Ten Minnesota Commitments to Equity

1. Prioritize equity.
2. Start from within.
3. Measure what matters.
4. Go local.
5. Follow the money.
6. Start early.
7. Monitor implementation of standards.
8. Value people.
9. Improve conditions for learning.
10. Give students options.



Three-Year Measurable Goal

To have every child in Minnesota reading at or above grade level beginning in kindergarten and multilingual learners and students receiving special education services are supported in achieving their individualized reading goals in order to meet grade level benchmarks.

Why this goal? Reading proficiency, at every grade, enables students to understand and learn from increasingly complex texts and materials during K-12 instruction, thus enabling them for postsecondary career or college success.

Regional Literacy Network

The RLN is composed of nine Literacy Leads and twenty Literacy Coaches who are located across each of the nine Minnesota service cooperatives. The RLN provides support in three key areas:

- **Planning:** Assist districts and charters in creating and implementing their local literacy plan, addressing all requirements included in the Minnesota READ Act.
- **Implementation:** Provide monthly training and coaching to district and charter literacy leads, administrators, teachers and staff on implementing effective, evidence-based literacy practices, specifically structured literacy, within a multi-tiered system of supports (MTSS) framework.
- **Evaluation:** Support districts and charters in tracking the success of their local literacy plan implementation and make recommendations for continuous improvement.

- In the first full year of operation (July 2024 – July 2025), the Regional Literacy Network leads and coaches provided **over 45,905 hours of professional development, coaching, consultation and implementation support** with **over 90% of districts and charters engaging** with the RLN this past year. These efforts represent a foundational investment in workforce development, instructional capacity, and sustainability of the professional development required by the READ Act.

- **COMPASS partnership**; MnMTSS supports based in structured literacy through COMPASS Literacy Pathways.

RLN: Building statewide capacity

- **Strategic Foundation:** Coherent theory of change was embedded in both legislation and policy which created the "space for change“: establishing clear mandates while allowing innovation to emerge and balancing top-down direction with bottom-up creativity and local context.

- **Central Leadership Capacity:** MDE Literacy Unit provides central leadership across the state system, developing evidence-based guidance, fostering continuous learning, and creating conditions for sustainable change rather than attempting to control implementation.

- **Networked Infrastructure:** The Regional Literacy Network serves as a skills and relationship building hub that enables bidirectional knowledge flow. The Network connects state guidance to local contexts while surfacing practitioner wisdom to inform statewide strategy, helping stakeholders "see the larger system" beyond their individual organizational boundaries.

- **Distributed Leadership:** District Literacy Leads function as system leaders who bridge state vision with local reality, cultivating ownership and collective problem-solving capacity among district administration and educators while maintaining accountability for student outcomes through school leadership partnerships.

The MN READ Act Theory of Change and Progress Indicators

Data Source: Local Literacy Plans, June 2025

Science of Reading in the Classroom

- High quality Tier 1 instruction, based on the science of reading, results in proficiency for 80% or more of students.
- Teacher training and support through a Regional Literacy Network enables high quality instruction.

MEASURES

- 89% of Phase 1 educators trained or in progress; Deadline June 30, 2026
- 35% of Phase 2 educators trained or in progress; Deadline June 30, 2027

Student Screening

- Screeners identify students who need additional instructional support.
- Screeners measure foundational reading skills (unlike the MCAs which test English Language Arts standards)
- Screeners also identify characteristics of dyslexia

MEASURES

- Districts using FastBridge are screening 87% of K-3 students on average
- 99.9% of districts and charters are using an approved screener

Structured Literacy Curriculum

- District use of curricular resources highly aligned to the science of reading research base supports (1) trained teachers in their design of effective literacy instruction and (2) student learning.

MEASURES

- 70% of districts using curriculum aligned to science of reading research base.

Reading Intervention

- District and charter use of evidence-based literacy interventions to support student learning outcomes.

MEASURES

- #/% of districts utilizing evidence based interventions
- Note: *Initial list of reviewed intervention materials was completed in November, 2025. This data will be included in the 2026 LLP submission.*

Local Literacy Plans

- Developing and implementing a Local Literacy Plan requires districts to review their student performance data and create district plans to improve literacy outcomes to meet the READ Act requirements

MEASURES

- 99.9% of districts submitting a local literacy plan
- 100% of districts designated a Literacy Lead
- 44% of districts using the MnMTSS framework.

Legislatively Mandated Deadlines

Meeting all legislatively mandated deadlines on time.

2023

- July 1, Approved Screeners
- August 15, Approved Professional Development

2024

- January 1, Approved Curricular Resources for K-5
- June 15, Local Literacy Plan Submission
- June 25 - 26, COMPASS Institute (w/ Literacy component)
- July 1, Launch Regional Literacy Network
- November, Intervention Resources Review planning process begins

2025

- Grades 4+ Screener Identification
- June 15, Local Literacy Plan Phase 2 Submission (w/ student screening data)
- August 30, District Literacy Leads hired
- November, Intervention models identified
- December 1, Legislative Summary of District Literacy Plans

2026

- June 15, Local Literacy Plan updated Submission platform w/student screening data (1st year with grade 4-12 data)
- July 1, All Phase 1 teachers and support staff required by statute will have completed training

2027

- June 15, Ongoing LLP Submission
- July 1, All Phase 2 teachers and support staff required by statute will have completed training

Science of Reading in the Classroom

Data Source: Local Literacy Plans, June 2025

Teacher training is on track to meet legislative mandate for all Phase 1 teachers to be trained by 7/1/2026.

- More educators are understanding the critical nature of evidence-based structured literacy instruction.
- Teachers are sharing that they feel more competent, greater ability to serve students, and greater job satisfaction.

Indicators

Educators registered for training to date:

- Phase 1: 30,000
- Phase 2: 2,200

Educators who have completed training:

- Phase 1 64% (23,972)
- Phase 2 26% (2,257)

RLN Training SY25-26:

- Para Training – 5035
- Para Structured Literacy Train the Trainer: 649

SY 23-24

- Launch retraining of all K-3 teachers in science of reading

SY 24-25

- Support districts in the implementation of the READ Act (Regional Literacy Network)
- Develop paraprofessional training

SY 25-26

- Provide paraprofessional and volunteer training through the Regional Literacy Network
- Provide training to Higher Ed Institutions; new cohort began January 2026
- Develop school leader training
- Begin Phase 2 teacher training

Student Screening

Data Source: Student Screening data submitted as part of Local Literacy Plans, June 2025

2024-2025 screening data is baseline data to truly understand the status of foundational skills proficiency in MN K-3 grade students **beginning** in Kindergarten.

This data is directly impacted through implementation of the READ Act and enables MDE to identify areas of concern and to support educators and districts to more effectively align resources to student needs.

Note: MCA data provides information on the status of student proficiency in grades 3-8 and 10 on ELA standards **beginning** in Grade 3.

Indicators

Summary results will be available early 2026

- SY24-25 percentage of K-3 students screened statewide:
  - Districts using FastBridge are screening 87% of K-3 students on average

SY 23-24

- K-3 Universal screeners chosen by MDE

SY 24-25

- K–3 students complete reading screening in fall, winter and spring; schools report disaggregated results to MDE.
- Screening tools for grades 4-12 identified

SY 25-26

- Analyze K-3 student data to assess outcomes and to identify where improvement and support are needed.
- Implement grades 4-12 screening for students who are not meeting grade level benchmarks in reading.
- Implement the oral language screener in early adopter schools

Structured Literacy Curriculum

Data Source: Local Literacy Plans, June 2025

When teachers have resources that align to their professional learning, they are better able to implement in the classroom what they are learning.

As a result, teachers can more easily focus on individual students and their needs instead of finding or developing material.

This consistency improves the overall system.

Indicators

At least one curricula resource aligned to science of reading

- 49% of districts using highly aligned
- 51% of districts using partially aligned

Layered Implementation: Many districts report combining highly aligned phonics programs with broader partially aligned literacy programs to strengthen Tier 1 instruction.



SY 23-24

- Identified curricula aligned to evidence-based literacy.

SY 24-25

- Helped districts review and adopt high-quality curriculum resources.
- Aligned structured literacy guidance with 2020 Minnesota ELA standards.

SY 25-26

- Support districts to refine and supplement curriculum for students' contexts to improve outcomes.
- Support new ELA standards and deepen structured literacy expertise in districts (via Regional Literacy Network).
- Integrate curriculum and ELA standards into the COMPASS MnMTSS framework
- Conducting culturally responsiveness review of select curricula
- Pilot curriculum review process

Reading Intervention

Intervention list that resulted from the CAREI review was published in November, 2025.

Districts are required to use an evidence-based intervention; however, they are not required to use an intervention from the review.

An ongoing MDE process is being developed for review of additional intervention materials.

Indicators

Data due to MDE in LLP 6/15/2026

- % of districts using an intervention from the identified list
- Growth in foundational reading skills by the lowest performing students (screening data)



SY 23-24

- No planned actions

SY 24-25

- Conduct review of reading interventions to identify resources based on evidenced-based practices

SY 25-26

- Provide targeted training and coaching so districts can confidently implement evidence-based literacy interventions.
- Update and distribute state guidance and resources to design, implement, and evaluate intensive literacy supports.
- Help districts select, implement, and monitor Tier 2 and Tier 3 evidence-based reading interventions by partnering with COMPASS utilizing the MnMTSS Framework.

Local Literacy Plans (LLP)

Publishing LLPs on the MDE website increased accountability and transparency which was welcomed by district and community stakeholders.

LLP will be updated annually to reflect legislative changes and identified requirements.

LLP content is guiding Regional Literacy Network guidance and implementation support for districts.

Indicators

99% of districts submitting local literacy plans

- 518 of 533 on time
- 526 of 533 total

78% of districts adopting an MTSS framework.

100% of districts designated a Literacy Lead



SY 23-24

- Launched initial online tool to collect Local Literacy Plans from districts.
- Analysis of data clarified districts' implementation progress and supports needed.

SY 24-25

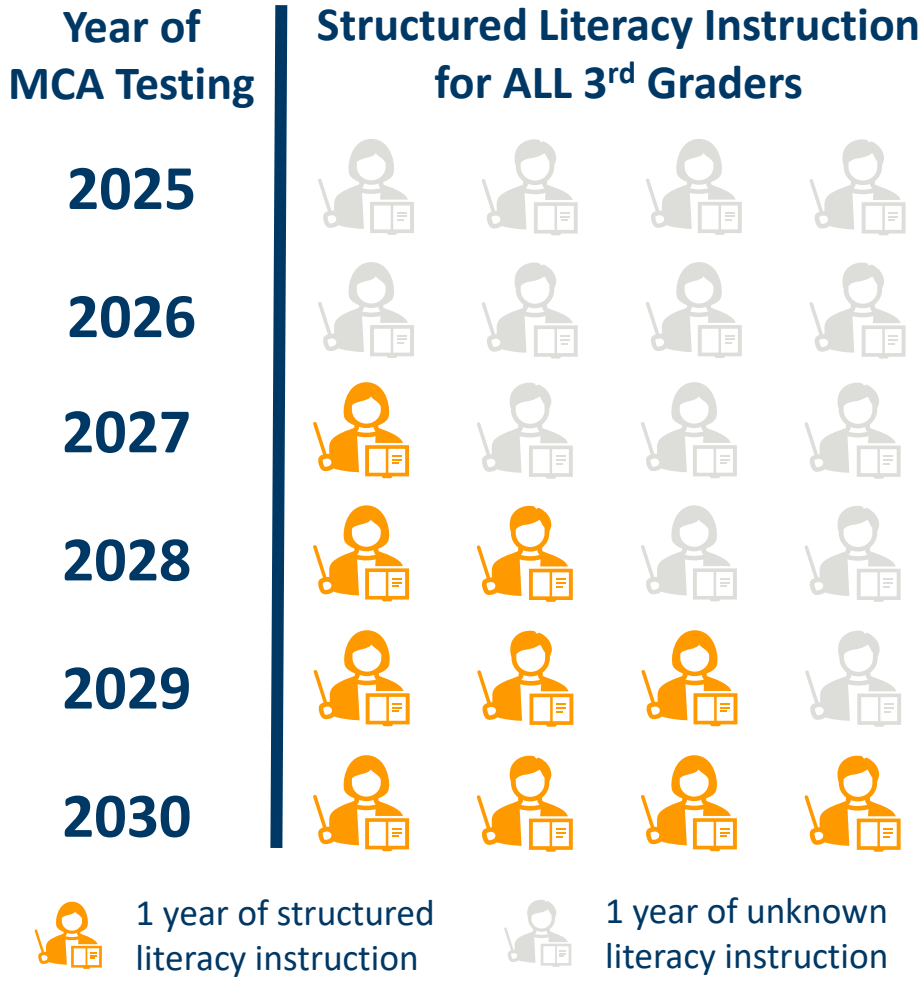
- Developed system for student assessment data submission.
- Enhanced LLP collection tool; published plans online.
- Completed second LLP submission and first student data collection.

SY 25-26

- Upgrade technology for increased accessibility and use.
- Include grades 4-12 screening data.
- Identify district support needs and evaluate student growth.

Expectations of READ Act impact on MCA scores

- READ Act literacy screeners measure foundational reading skills identified in English Language Arts Anchor Standard 1. These skills are necessary to read test materials, but not sufficient for proficiency on MCAs.
- MCAs assess more complex literacy skills identified in English Language Arts Anchor Standards 4-9.
- By the 2026-2027 school year, all K-3 teachers should be trained and teaching with structured literacy instructional practices.
  - Widespread implementation will enable us to see the impact on the three-year goal measure at a statewide level.
  - Prior to this, we will see scattered improvement as districts and schools make the transition, however we do not control the timing of these changes.
- **Full** impacts of the READ Act are expected to be measurable in Spring 2030 MCAs and beyond.
  - Teachers will need time to become proficient in new teaching methods for students to fully gain the benefits of this methodology change.
- Leading indicator: Screening assessment provides data on foundational reading skills to understand if we are on track to reach desired, long term student reading comprehension proficiency outcomes (e.g. MCA scores)



Landscape and Attitudes are shifting

Training & Implementation Fidelity

- As educators finish the required training, the Literacy Unit and the Regional Literacy Network are now focused on helping schools put evidence-based reading practices into action.
- Ongoing professional learning is being developed for districts and charters to support implementation and sustainability.
- Coaching and technical support are provided through the Regional Literacy Network.
- Tools to collect data on the implementation of the 2020 ELA Standards, structured literacy, and culturally responsive practices are also in development.

Higher Ed Alignment to READ Act Requirements

- **89% (118 out of 133) of these programs have demonstrated PELSB's reading standards and passed the reading audit.**
  - Of those, four programs are based in non-higher ed programs and 114 are based on institutions of higher education.
- There are 15 programs that have not yet passed the reading audit. Some of these programs are currently being reviewed or submitted and awaiting review.
- **Educators who successfully complete one of these programs can request a waiver for the professional development requirement through their District Literacy Lead to be submitted to MDE on their behalf.**
- Several higher ed programs have begun literacy lab practicums to give teacher prep candidates authentic experiences delivering evidence-based interventions to students who exhibit reading difficulties or characteristics of dyslexia.
- Currently 37 higher ed instructors are participating in a LETRS Training Cohort

Ongoing Work

- **Multilingual Literacy Specialist** position had to be reposted; interviews currently taking place
- **Deaf/Hard of Hearing and DeafBlind Working Group**
  - Screening: Recommending a Body of Evidence approach (Colorado as a model); Body of Evidence protocol is in development; READ Act screeners optional/supplemental for these populations – developing guidance for appropriate use
  - Curricular Resources: Creating rubrics for reviewing DHH-specific resources and traditional resources; preparing to review DHH curricular resources
  - Professional Development: Recommending a course(s) be created specifically for DHH and DeafBlind educators; in development
  - *Communication: Resources and guidance are being added to the MDE READ Act page as they become available*
- **Dual Language Immersion Advisory Committee**
  - Kickoff – 1/30; Representation of educators and families – strong
  - Screening is the prioritized topic so that guidance will be complete and posted before SY26-27
  - Resources and professional learning guidance will follow

Addressing concerns

Key groups that had concerns about the READ Act are seeing success and momentum in the system change and want to be part of the positive change.

This work has strong bipartisan support in the legislature, which continues to advance the work and send a clear message that structured literacy is here to stay.

School Boards, Administrators, and Educators

School and district leaders had significant concerns about effort required to implement the READ Act, and many were skeptical of the science-of-reading approach

Early stories and examples of positive impact shared through the Regional Literacy Network have created curiosity about the instructional shift based on the science of reading research.

The stories and pockets of positive data are translating into widespread belief and lasting change: educators will not be going back to their old practices.

Institutions of Higher Learning and Teacher Preparation

Institutions of higher learning and leaders in the teacher preparation community questioned the science-of-reading methodology and changing their programs

In Oct 2025,PELSB is publishing a list of schools and coursework that meet the professional development requirements for the science of reading.

Teacher prep programs are updating their reading instruction curriculum, fundamentally altering literacy instruction across the state for the long term.

Secondary Support

- Secondary Workshop Series: We have the Data, Now What?
- Phase 2 Professional Learning registration opened December 15, 2025
- Secondary Literacy Series: 4-12 Dyslexia
- District Literacy Lead Community of Practice (CoP) monthly support
- MDE and RLN presenting at Minnesota Council of Teachers of English (MCTE) specific to secondary
- COMPASS Summer Institute Sessions focused on Secondary
- Capti ReadBasix support: Open Office Hours and Capti Overview training session
- ELA Leaders' Network: Implementation of ELA Standards (cross-division collaboration)

Additional support of identified schools

- Schools identified for support in literacy under the North Star Accountability system will receive connected implementation support through COMPASS Continuous Improvement Staff and Regional Literacy Network Coaches.
- The goal is to provide **additional** aligned **support** for the evidence-based practices that are being required versus asking identified schools to do something different or additional.

Literacy Systems & Outcomes: Impact Highlights

Early literacy is turning the corner:

- **Multiple districts reported kindergarten proficiency above 80%** after winter screening. One district implementing UFLI with fidelity shared that proficiency increased from **79% → 89%**, and they did **not** experience their historical fall-to-winter proficiency decline.

Coherence + evidence-based instruction = acceleration:

- A district team reported replacing non-evidence-based materials with aligned core and intervention programs from MDE reviewed materials. These districts noted more early decoders, fewer students needing intervention, and stronger Tier 1–Tier 2 alignment.

Secondary momentum is building:

- Several school district 6–12 teams reported early progress in implementing MnMTSS decision-making, aligning instruction to standards, and strengthening Tier 1–2–3 coherence.

Capacity and systems are strengthening:

- Districts described improved walkthrough results—stronger explicit instruction routines, increased student engagement, and better pacing.

School Year 2026-27

In addition to day-to-day READ Act program implementation and improvement, the team will be working on the following:

- Continue to develop support for the Evidence-based Structured Literacy Practices with a focus on implementation of the practices and aligned coaching support.
- Transition the approved Phase 1 PD to the Regional Literacy Network to administer
- Phase 2 Professional Development – a focus on secondary support
- Respond to the identified needs voiced through the District Literacy Leads and the Local Certified Facilitators Communities of Practice.
- Develop a learning module for school principals; through the RLN convene a regional Community of Practice for school principals and leaders

School Year 2026-27 (Cont.)

In addition to day-to-day READ Act program implementation and improvement, the team will be working on the following:

- Promote the self-guided early literacy course directly to parents and through school district and ECFE channels.
- Continue to explore and deepen partnership opportunities with community partners.
- Deepen partnership with institutions of higher education to support coursework focused on science-based reading instruction
- Support schools in using the screening data to target instruction; getting more widespread use of data by all teachers is needed.

Questions