



**Early Childhood
Literacy in Head Start
Programs**

March 2011

**FY 2011
Report
To the
Legislature**

**As required by
Minn. Stat. §119A.50**

COMMISSIONER:
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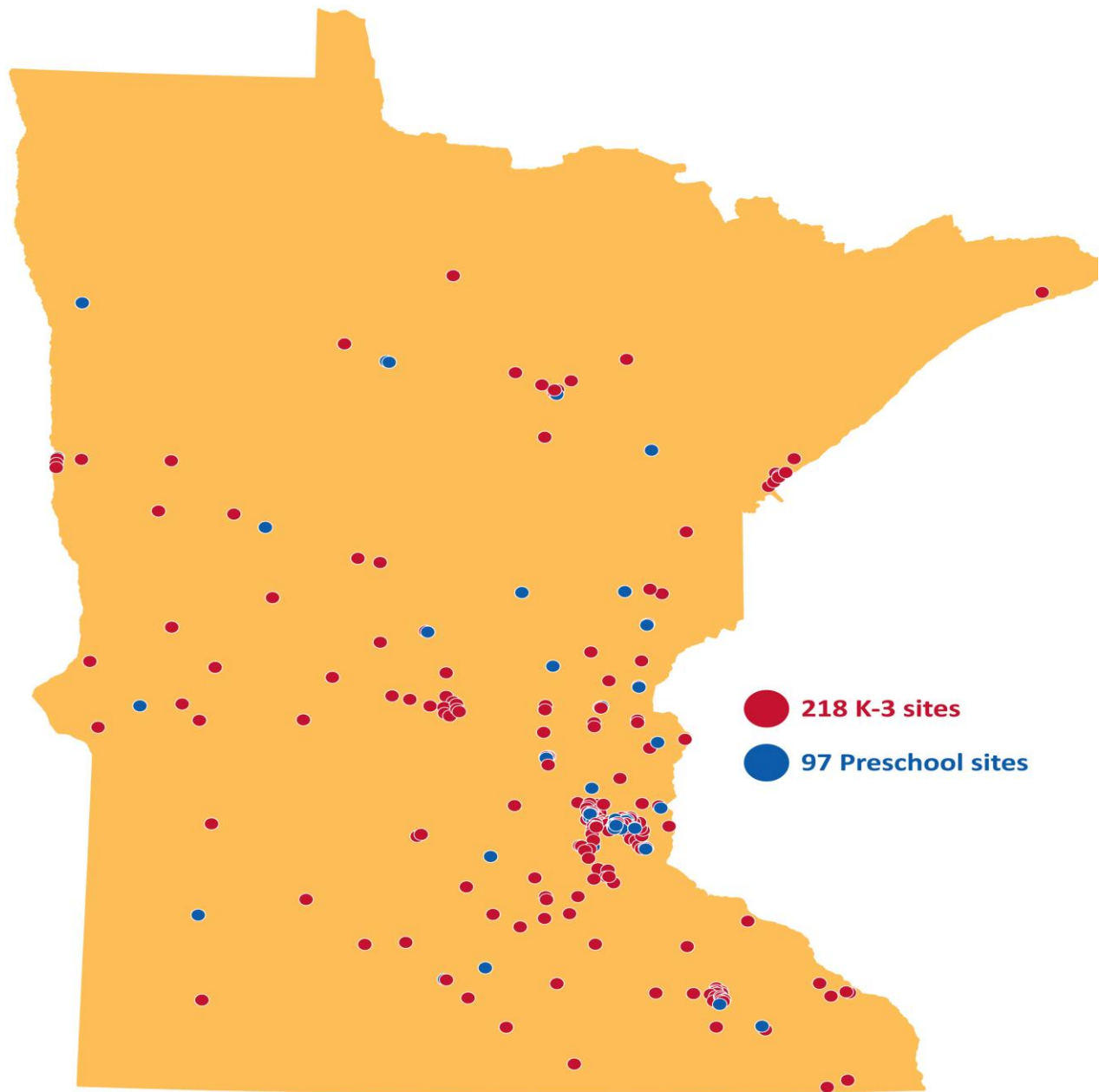
ESTIMATED COST OF PREPARING THIS REPORT

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Minnesota Reading Corps 2009 -2010 Evaluation Summary



The Minnesota Reading Corps is the largest statewide initiative to help Minnesota children become successful readers by the end of third grade. In 2009-2010, the program operated in more than 300 sites in 90 school districts across Minnesota.

Minnesota Reading Corps Program Vision and Description

Minnesota Reading Corps is a statewide AmeriCorps program that is designed to be a permanent part of Minnesota's solution to childhood illiteracy. The Reading Corps strategy brings effective, research-based, data-driven literacy instruction together with the resources and infrastructure necessary to extend them to unprecedented numbers of young children needing targeted-not just extra-tutoring to become successful readers.

The broad vision for the Minnesota Reading Corps includes the following:

1. All children in Minnesota, ages 3 to grade 3, that need the Minnesota Reading Corps, will have access to services, will start kindergarten on target, and will meet reading standards by 3rd grade.
2. Through the development of internal literacy coaching capacity provided by the Reading Corps, prekindergarten and K-3 school settings will acquire competency in and adopt a data-based problem solving model of literacy instruction, and will promote this method to their colleagues.
3. Through extensive, high-quality training and service opportunities, Minnesota Reading Corps members will pursue education related careers and/or continue to be knowledgeable and persuasive ambassadors for children's literacy throughout their lives.

In 2009-2010, the Minnesota Reading Corps harnessed the power of national service to place a total of 556 AmeriCorps members at pre-K and public elementary schools across the state. These members delivered targeted research-driven literacy tutoring to 14,578 children age 3 to grade 3 to help them catch up to their peers and become confident, competent readers with brighter futures. The following represents the pre-K/K-3 program breakout:

- **Prekindergarten:** 189 AmeriCorps members served with 12 Head Start programs, 5 community-based prekindergarten educational centers, and 51 public school prekindergarten sites to serve a total of 4,388 prekindergarten children.
- **K-3:** 367 AmeriCorps members served with 216 public elementary schools and 2 charter school sites to provide literacy support to 10,190 K-3 children.

In its seventh year, the Minnesota Reading Corps expanded its geographic reach, helped impressive numbers of children meet grade-level literacy and reading requirements, attracted new partners and funders, and sustained support and attention from educational, political and business leaders. The number of students served has grown significantly over the years-from just 500 in 2003 to more than 14,000 in this program year. By placing specific emphasis on monitoring progress through direct observation, the fidelity of program implementation is among the highest in the educational realm. Minnesota Reading Corps participants consistently outperform their growth targets for reading proficiency.

This report highlights Minnesota Reading Corps 2009-2010 evaluation results, demonstrating the program's impact on the children it serves, the sites with whom it partners, and the committed AmeriCorps national service members who invest a year of their lives to bring the best of literacy science to the front-lines of education.

2009-2010 Minnesota Reading Corps Impact At-a-Glance

In 2009-2010, the Minnesota Reading Corps:

- Served a total of **14,578 “Age 3 to Grade 3” students across Minnesota** with below-grade-level literacy skills.
- Worked with **235 elementary schools, 12 Head Start Associations and 5 pre-K educational centers** to put cutting-edge literacy research into practice to make literacy tutoring more effective.
- Recruited and supported **556 AmeriCorps members** to successfully complete a year of national service as Minnesota Reading Corps tutors and to become educated about literacy issues.
- Contributed to growing Minnesota’s educator pipeline with **70 percent of AmeriCorps members** planning to use their education award to **pursue a career in teaching or education.**
- Involved 258 ongoing community volunteers, 485 one-time volunteers and generated more than 7,000 volunteer hours to provide additional literacy tutoring and support.
- Raised \$912,808 in private funds to combine with state funds of \$1.4 million **to leverage an additional \$8.3 million in federal dollars** to grow the program and invest in strengthening children’s literacy within Minnesota.
- Achieved a 69 percent **pass rate on the statewide 3rd-grade MCA-II** test of reading proficiency for participating 3rd-grade children who were identified as below grade level in literacy skills and had completed their Minnesota Reading Corps tutoring.

Regional Breakdown by Member

| Region | Pre-K Members | | | K-3 Members |
|--------------|---------------|--------------|-----------------|-------------|
| | Head Start | School-based | Community based | |
| NorthEast | 0 | 6 | 0 | 18 |
| NorthCentral | 18 | 1 | 0 | 11 |
| NorthWest | 17 | 1 | 0 | 20 |
| Central | 12 | 7 | 0 | 47 |
| SouthEast | 16 | 1 | 0 | 35 |
| SouthWest | 7 | 3 | 0 | 17 |
| Metro | 22 | 57 | 21 | 219 |
| Totals | 92 | 76 | 21 | 367 |

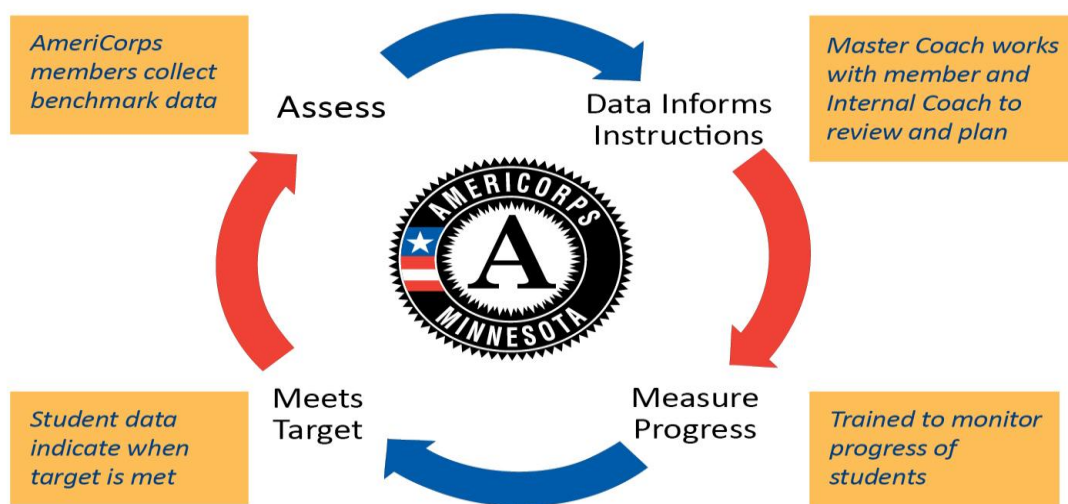
Regional Breakdown by Site

| Region | Pre-K Sites | | | K-3 Sites |
|--------------|-------------|--------------|-----------------|-----------|
| | Head Start | School-based | Community based | |
| NorthEast | 0 | 3 | 0 | 14 |
| NorthCentral | 1 | 1 | 0 | 10 |
| NorthWest | 3 | 2 | 0 | 16 |
| Central | 3 | 4 | 0 | 27 |
| SouthEast | 1 | 1 | 0 | 27 |
| SouthWest | 2 | 2 | 0 | 12 |
| Metro | 2 | 38 | 5 | 113 |
| Totals | 12 | 51 | 5 | 219 |

How the Minnesota Reading Corps Works

Minnesota Reading Corps, a strategic initiative of ServeMinnesota, is a statewide program to help every Minnesota child become a successful reader. The program matches trained AmeriCorps members with children from age 3 to grade 3 who need an extra boost to catch up to grade-level targets. Minnesota Reading Corps partners with school districts and pre-school agencies to place highly trained and professionally supported AmeriCorps members in early childhood education, Head Start, and K-3 classrooms. Reading Corps members are trained in specific research-based, literacy instructional protocols, and are supported by both site-based educational staff (Internal Coaches) as well as Master Coaches who are among Minnesota's top literacy experts.

What is the Model?



Research-Based, Proven Literacy Approaches

With access to the latest research on reading intervention strategies, trained AmeriCorps members work one-on-one with students to provide tailored interventions designed especially for each child.

Reading Corps members provide intensive, data-based tutoring to children age 3 to grade 3. Members use reliable, valid assessment tools to monitor student progress on a regular basis, and with help from their coaches, use data from assessments to inform tutoring strategies for each student. The use of specific research-based instructional techniques and technically adequate assessment tools to guide interventions make the Minnesota Reading Corps unique across the literacy landscape. In addition, community volunteers and parents/families participate to multiply the program's reach and effectiveness.

Training

The success of Reading Corps relies upon highly trained individuals capable of integrating cutting-edge research and educational practices on the front lines. Comprehensive training is provided in advance of and throughout a member's service. This intensive training model ensures that both members and internal coaches are able to successfully implement the Reading Corps tutoring model.

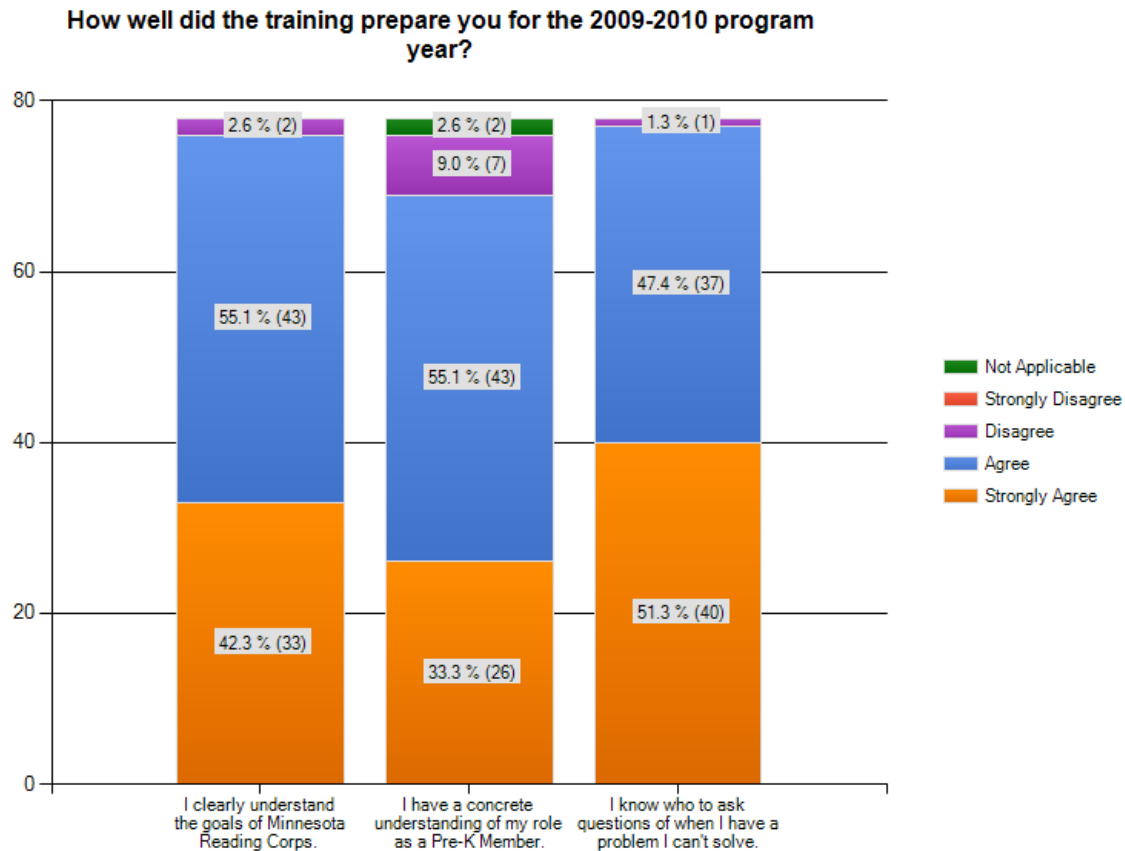
Reading Corps provides training on the following topics every year:

- **Literacy Standards:** Participants learn objective criteria so there is consistent knowledge and understanding of what children must learn to achieve reading proficiency.
- **Introduction to Literacy:** Participants learn importance of literacy and the skills children need to learn in order to read.
- **Assessment:** Participants learn how to administer fall, winter and spring assessments with students to pinpoint literacy gaps.
- **Interventions:** Participants learn how to implement research-based interventions with students. There are 11 interventions that are based on the "big 5" components of literacy as defined by the National Reading Panel and recommendations of the National Research Council, National Academy of Sciences and other current literacy research.
- **Progress Monitoring:** Participants learn how to administer regular progress monitoring assessments that provide necessary data to teachers and inform instructional decisions for children.
- Other topics include child confidentiality, motivating students and family engagement.

In addition, members serving in preschool classrooms receive an additional 17.5 hours of early literacy training (SEEDS of Emergent Literacy) to learn effective literacy instruction methods that can be used during core instruction time. In an effort to build sustainability, Reading Corps provides a five-day Train-the-Trainer session to allow one staff person from each prekindergarten program to become a licensed SEEDS Trainer. The SEEDS Trainer is then able to provide training to the Reading Corps members staff each year at their site.

Delivering on Minnesota Reading Corps Program Management Goals

Post-training and post-service surveys indicate the Minnesota Reading Corps is equipping both members and Internal Coaches with the skills and support needed to effectively implement research-based interventions.



Literacy Coaching

Members and Internal Coaches receive on-site monthly coaching from literacy experts, called Master Coaches to:

- 1) Ensure the program is being implemented with fidelity.
- 2) Select the appropriate interventions for students.
- 3) Review student progress to help make instructional decisions.

Master Coaches provide the school with additional support by visiting the school regularly and responding to questions and concerns from members and staff.

Prekindergarten: Prekindergarten AmeriCorps members serve in preschool classrooms supporting one class of between 17- 20 children each year and perform the following specific activities:

- Collect data on each child related to key literacy skills so that specific interventions can be tailored to specific needs of each child. Benchmark data is collected three times per year and students' literacy progress is regularly monitored using the following five measures: picture naming (vocabulary), alliteration, rhyming, letter name and letter sounds.
- Create literacy rich environments by setting up and updating five classroom centers to make play more meaningful through integrating reading, writing and talking into all activities.
- Implement a “5 Day Read Aloud” using dialogic reading techniques to expand vocabulary, phonological awareness and letter knowledge by reading the same book for five days.
- Provide tailored relationship-based interventions to small groups of children needing focused time on specific skills such as phonological awareness, vocabulary, alphabetic principles, conversation and book/print concepts.
- Implement activities to make writing meaningful for young children.

K-3: Each full-time AmeriCorps member tutors a total of 25-40 children during the course of the school year and performs the following specific activities:

- Provides between 80-100 minutes of one-on-one individualized research-based literacy interventions per child per week.
- Conducts progress monitoring by collecting weekly fluency measures on children tutored. Children graduate from the Minnesota Reading Corps on a rolling basis when they learn the literacy skills required to “catch-up” with their peers and are monitored to ensure they are re-enrolled if they do not stay on track to become successful readers by 3rd grade.

Who the Minnesota Reading Corps Serves:

The Minnesota Reading Corps has worked with educators and partners to pinpoint unmet needs within the state's educational system and to clearly define its target audience of children who would benefit most by working with its members and program.

Prekindergarten: For children 3-5 years old, the Minnesota Reading Corps supports educational centers such as Head Start and public preschools with high rates of poverty and other risk factors resulting in large numbers of children without the early literacy skills critical for school and reading readiness.

K-3: Programming focuses on the large numbers of K-3 children who are not on target to meet the Minnesota Comprehensive Assessment (MCA-II) standards for reading proficiency but whose scores are not low enough to make them eligible to receive assistance from No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Title I tutors or special education/learning disabilities teachers. These “Tier II” children who often “fall between the cracks” and otherwise are typically assisted only through whatever extra support individual teachers manage to rally or directly provide and rarely receive ongoing progress monitoring to determine whether interventions are working or need altering.

Schools are recommending that Minnesota Reading Corps be part of their literacy instruction model:

“We have interventions in place for the kids who are really struggling hard, but we were concerned about those who fall into that strategic gap. Studies show that they’ll have more and more trouble learning as they get older. Minnesota Reading Corps helps us meet that area of need so that we’re not overlooking students who can succeed with just a little extra attention.”

Mike Malmberg, Principal, Parker Elementary, Elk River

Assessing Impact

Minnesota Reading Corps uses assessment tools to collect data on children’s progress in demonstrating key literacy skills. This data is immediately and graphically available to members and their sites through a web-based data collection system, AIMSweb, so that adjustments can be made to the interventions being used with individual children. Data from all tools is assessed on a quarterly basis using a “dashboard” reporting system.

Prekindergarten: The Individual Growth and Development Indicators (IGDIs) literacy assessments measure literacy outcomes for 3 and 4-year-olds. After an initial reliability check, members administer IGDI fall/winter/spring to establish benchmarks and track progress. Members consult with Master Coaches to analyze the data, make instructional decisions for children needing extra member support, and to set classroom goals. Final IGDI scores measure improvement in critical literacy skills and compare each child’s results to benchmarks correlated with 1st and 3rd grade reading scores. The Early Language and Literacy Classroom Observation (ELLCO) (Smith, Dickenson, et al, 2002) tool is also used to inventory strengths and areas of need in the Minnesota Reading Corps members’ classroom. The tool is completed in the fall and spring. Results provide an objective report about what is needed to design a more literacy-rich classroom. Members implement improvements such as setting up stations to practice specific literacy skills, adding more books, or more visible literacy props.

Student Data for Pre-school Programs:

| | Fall | Winter | Spring |
|--|---|---|---|
| Age 3 on or before Sept 1 st * | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ IGDI Rhyming ▪ IGDI Picture Naming ▪ IGDI Alliteration | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ IGDI Rhyming ▪ IGDI Picture Naming ▪ IGDI Alliteration | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ IGDI Rhyming ▪ IGDI Picture Naming ▪ IGDI Alliteration |
| Age 4 on or before Sept 1 st | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ IGDI Rhyming ▪ IGDI Picture Naming ▪ IGDI Alliteration ▪ Letter Naming Fluency ▪ Letter Sound Fluency | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ IGDI Rhyming ▪ IGDI Picture Naming ▪ IGDI Alliteration ▪ Letter Naming Fluency ▪ Letter Sound Fluency | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ IGDI Rhyming ▪ IGDI Picture Naming ▪ IGDI Alliteration ▪ Letter Naming Fluency ▪ Letter Sound Fluency |
| Age 5 on or before Sept 1 st but not enrolled in K | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ IGDI Rhyming ▪ IGDI Picture Naming ▪ IGDI Alliteration ▪ Letter Naming Fluency ▪ Letter Sound Fluency | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ IGDI Rhyming ▪ IGDI Picture Naming ▪ IGDI Alliteration ▪ Letter Naming Fluency ▪ Letter Sound Fluency | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ IGDI Rhyming ▪ IGDI Picture Naming ▪ IGDI Alliteration ▪ Letter Naming Fluency ▪ Letter Sound Fluency |

K-3: To measure K-3 literacy outcomes, members conduct one-on-one tutoring sessions based on results from benchmark testing completed three times per year. The general outcome measures contain elements

of reading that precede reading connected text named Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills (DIBELS), (Good, et al, 2002) and connected text reading is measured by oral reading fluency (R-CBM) for the end of 1st, 2nd and 3rd grades (Fuchs & Deno, 1991). Weekly, members use a progress monitoring system with one-minute standardized tests. Results are entered into AIMSweb which produces performance charts used to fine-tune weekly tutoring.

Student Data for K-3 Programs:

| | Fall | Winter | Spring |
|---------------------|--|--|--|
| Kindergarten | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Letter Naming Fluency ▪ Letter Sound Fluency | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Letter Naming Fluency ▪ Letter Sound Fluency ▪ Nonsense Word Fluency | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Letter Naming Fluency ▪ Letter Sound Fluency ▪ Nonsense Word Fluency |
| Grade 1 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Letter Naming Fluency ▪ Letter Sound Fluency ▪ Nonsense Word Fluency | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Nonsense Word Fluency ▪ Oral Reading Fluency (3 passages) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Oral Reading Fluency (3 passages) |
| Grade 2 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Oral Reading Fluency (3 passages) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Oral Reading Fluency (3 passages) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Oral Reading Fluency (3 passages) |
| Grade 3 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Oral Reading Fluency (3 passages) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Oral Reading Fluency (3 passages) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Oral Reading Fluency (3 passages) |

Additional Data

Observations of assessment fidelity - three times per year

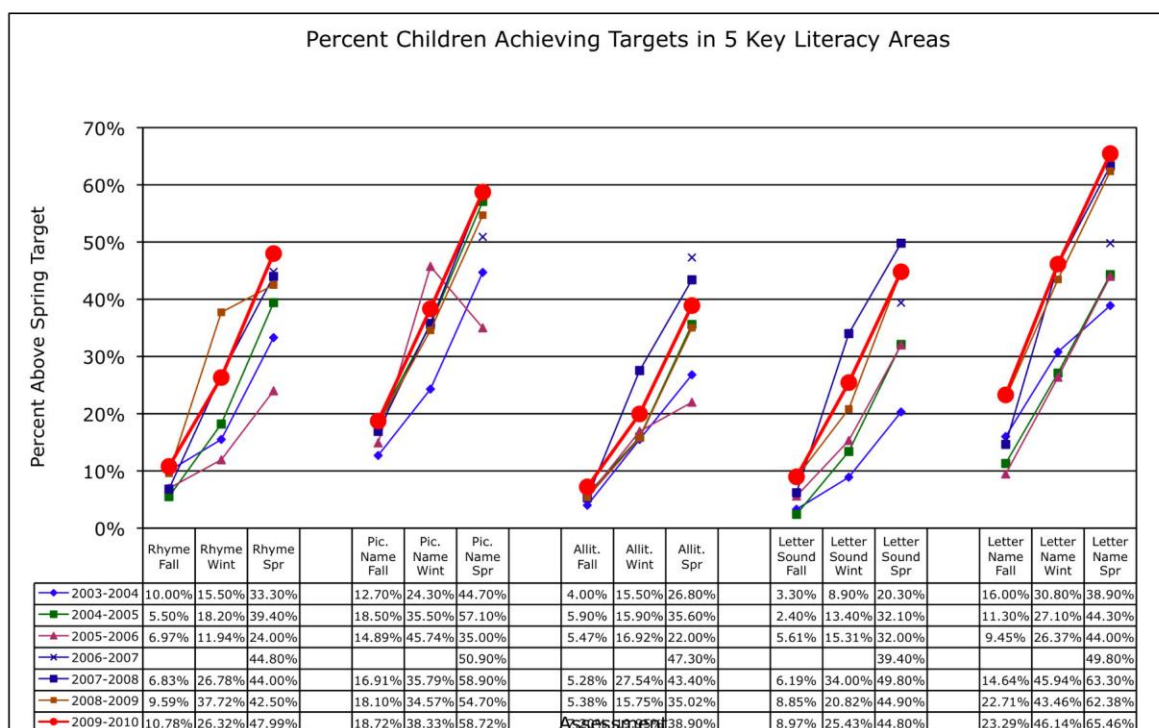
Observations of intervention fidelity - nine times per year in K-3 programs only

Early language and Literacy Classroom observation - two times per year in prekindergarten programs only

End of year Minnesota Reading Corps member survey

End of year Minnesota Reading Corps site survey

Minnesota Reading Corps Pre-K Results: Early Literacy Outcomes for Minnesota's Youngest Students

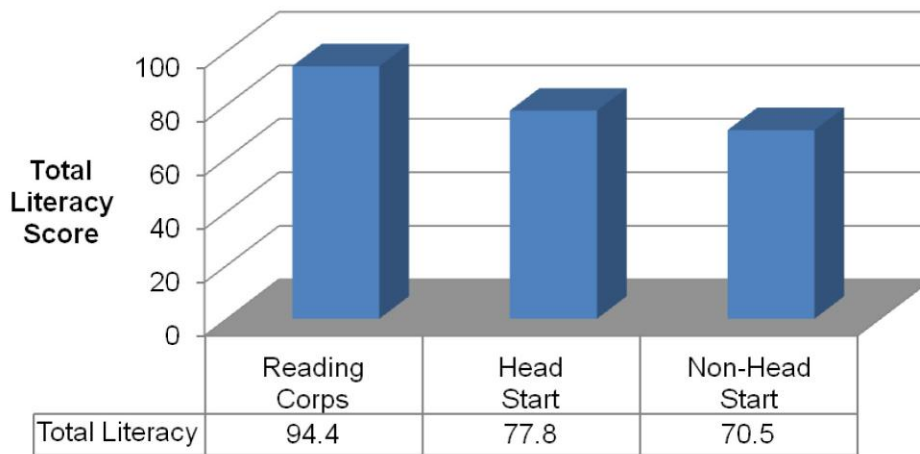


Results linked to the literacy interventions and tutoring strategies with individual students are compelling. The figure above shows the percent of 4-year-old Minnesota Reading Corps participants meeting the assessments spring target scores for fall, winter and spring assessment times across years. It is noted that the 2006-2007 data was analyzed by an outside agency, and only includes students enrolled in Head Start Minnesota Reading Corps classrooms. Across successive school years, fairly stable fall performance is noted along with an overall increase in percent of students meeting spring target scores by the spring benchmark window. Data from the current year shows that more children are meeting or exceeding their performance targets than in years past.

For five consecutive years, Minnesota Reading Corps preschool participants in Minneapolis scored significantly higher in phonemic awareness, alphabetic principle, and total literacy than children in matched comparison groups entering kindergarten in Minneapolis Public Schools (based on the predictive validity of the Beginning Kindergarten Assessment (BKA) used by the Minneapolis Public Schools).

The Minneapolis Public Schools (MPS) identified a score of 80 as the target for the literacy portion of the BKA, representing a performance that predicts future success in reading development and adequate performance on state assessments of reading. As seen in the figure on the next page, the average total literacy score for Reading Corps participants within the Head Start program who continued on to Kindergarten within the MPS system exceeds this target score. After achieving five years of statistically significant results, lead evaluator Dr. David Heistad was convinced they did not need to keep repeating the same research design. Given those impressive results, MPS is currently exploring major expansion of the program throughout the district.

Reading Corps Students Exceed Literacy Targets



Minnesota Reading Corps K-3 Results: More than Expected Progress

In 2008-2009, Minnesota Reading Corps was recognized for their strategic role in statewide efforts to increase early literacy achievement. For the first time, the Minnesota Reading Corps secured a data sharing agreement from the Minnesota State Department of Education which allowed the program to access the 2009 MCA-II scores of all 3rd grade children participating in the program statewide.

In 2009-2010, Minnesota Reading Corps participants exceeded their growth targets in grades K-3 and made more than the expected progress.

Minnesota Reading Corps K-3 Children Exceeding Growth Targets

| | Grade K | Grade 1 | | Grade 2 | Grade 3 |
|--------------------------------|----------------------|--|---|----------------------|----------------------|
| | Letter Sound Fluency | Nonsense Word Fluency (Fall to Winter) | Oral Reading Fluency (Winter to Spring)** | Oral Reading Fluency | Oral Reading Fluency |
| Reading Corps Mean Growth Rate | 1.95 | 2.1 | 1.58 | 1.61 | 1.37 |
| Target Growth Rate | 1.15 | 1.11 | 1.67 | 1.31 | 1.08 |
| Number of Students | 1,666 | 2,509 | 1,563 | 2,664 | 3,003 |

* Only students with 3 or more data points on the given measure were included in growth rate calculations

** Students in this group may have also participated in Grade 1 (NWF)

Minnesota Reading Corps tutored a total of just over 5 percent 3,003 of the state's 59,965 3rd graders that took the 3rd grade MCA-II's in the spring of 2009. Of the 3rd grade children that successfully completed their Reading Corps tutoring indicating they were on a trajectory to demonstrate reading proficiency, 69 percent tested as proficient. Statewide, the 2009-2010 pass rate for *all* 3rd graders was 76 percent. Given

that 100 percent of the Minnesota Reading Corps 3rd-graders who took the MCA-II's were identified by literacy specialists as at significant risk of literacy failure, this program-wide pass rate demonstrates remarkable progress for the 988 3rd graders that were otherwise likely to have been left behind.

Additionally, in 23 sites or 30 percent of the districts served by the Minnesota Reading Corps, the pass rate for 3rd grade Minnesota Reading Corps graduates was between 90-100 percent. Also, of significance was that in 42 sites or 55 percent of the 77 districts served by the Minnesota Reading Corps, the pass rate for Reading Corps graduates met or exceeded the district average for all children tested in the district.

Putting Cutting-Edge Literacy Science to Use in Minnesota's Classrooms and Deepening Alignment with Statewide Educational Innovations to Improve Student Achievement

Direct impact on individual student performance is the chief priority of the Minnesota Reading Corps. However, the program pursues this goal within a broader mission that includes advancing systems change to ensure its sites and their educators become equipped to transfer literacy science and research into hands-on support to struggling readers. Through the work of its Master Coaches and training delivery, the Minnesota Reading Corps is investing substantial resources to ensure that these practices are integrated and supported within the larger literacy education delivery systems of schools and their districts.

The Minnesota Reading Corps is pleased to share that 2009-2010 evaluation findings indicate the program made significant progress this year in advancing its host sites' capacity to apply proven research-based literacy strategies that maximize effectiveness and greatly accelerate the rate at which children acquire critical early literacy skills. End-of-year surveys captured how site supervisors, internal coaches and teachers at each participating site view the Reading Corps' impact on the local system, and the extent to which the model is becoming an organizing structure for literacy intervention in the local building:

- 95 percent of teachers agree that greater emphasis has been placed on selecting literacy interventions that have a scientific research base in their school or program.
- 94 percent of internal coaches agree that the Minnesota Reading Corps model and approach made a positive impact on improving student literacy skills at their school/site.

Preparing the Next Generation of Literacy Leaders: Impacts from a Year of Service

The Minnesota Reading Corps not only addresses the immediate education needs of children, but also impacts the quality, commitment, and number of future Minnesota educators and advocates through the high-quality training and service opportunity provided to its AmeriCorps members. While outcome data and ongoing assessment underlies the Reading Corps' success, its very human front-line delivery system makes the program truly transformative. This year's AmeriCorps members brought consistent commitment and energy to making a lifelong difference in the lives of the children they served. In the process, they, too, were often transformed.

We are thrilled to share that end-of-year surveys for 2009-2010 indicate members had a very positive experience serving with Minnesota Reading Corps and suggest the program has played a strong role in encouraging and supporting the majority of members to pursue education-related careers and/or to continue to serve as lifelong ambassadors for children's literacy.

- 97 percent will continue promoting childhood literacy.
- 95 percent agree that serving with the Minnesota Reading Corps was a positive experience.
- 90 percent will continue to volunteer in schools.
- 70 percent are considering a career in teaching or education as a result of their participation in the Minnesota Reading Corps.

In addition, close to 60 percent of prekindergarten site supervisors reported an increase in their staff pursuing advanced credentialing in early childhood education through their participation with AmeriCorps. The feedback underscores how the Minnesota Reading Corps is addressing not only the immediate needs of individual children and their classrooms, but is also supporting already committed educators to increase their effectiveness through additional education. The Reading Corps is especially committed to elevating the skill of existing Head Start educators, 54 of whom participate as AmeriCorps members who work daily within their current classroom and invest an additional 3-5 hours of service a week beyond their standard work day enhancing their classroom skills through Reading Corps coaching and trainings, as well as through implementing new literacy interventions within their classrooms. Following successful completion of their term of service, they are supported to pursue and finance advanced education and credentialing through the use of their national service education award.

Finally, pointing to the need for additional expansion, nearly 80 percent of members indicate that there were more children at their site who could benefit from participating in the Minnesota Reading Corps program but whom they were unable to fit into their schedule.

Growing the Minnesota Reading Corps to Support More Successful Young Readers Statewide
ServeMinnesota is actively engaged in taking the Minnesota Reading Corps model to scale and is pursuing a three-pronged public-private strategy to move aggressively toward this goal:

- **Federal Funding:** Federal AmeriCorps funding will continue to provide 80 percent of the dollars required to administer the Minnesota Reading Corps. The authorization of the Serve America Act in late 2009 will lead to an unprecedented expansion of national service. With the availability of increased federal resources that target education as one of the six core areas for innovation and growth, the Reading Corps plans to accelerate its efforts to take the program to scale across the state.

Nationally, the Minnesota Reading Corps is being looked to as a program model with high potential for replication by fellow State Commissions for National and Community Service. Texas and New York have already begun their implementation of the program.

- **State Funding:** The Minnesota Reading Corps is especially honored that its outcome data and its unique cost effectiveness led to the 2009 legislative session concluding with support to increase an annual appropriation to the Minnesota Reading Corps from \$1 million to \$1.375 million. The state plays an essential role in leveraging federal funds for Minnesota's children and schools by supporting a national service funding model which matches every one dollar in state and private funding with four dollars in federal funds.
- **Foundation and Private Funding:** The state support also helps leverage foundation and other private support. For example, the Reading Corps model aligns with the vision of United Way Worldwide (UWW) to improve 3rd grade reading proficiency, a crucial marker in a child's educational development. Recognizing the potential for national replication, UWW has indicated their interest in activating a national Reading Corps as a dramatic and potentially far-reaching strategy for improving early literacy and changing the trajectory towards high school dropout. UWW is talking with several affiliates across the country, from Los Angeles to Boston, as well as a potential corporate sponsor to examine how to scale across their system for national impact.

As the precursor to this work, ServeMinnesota was selected as the lead partner in a pilot project between the Greater Twin Cities United Way (GTCUW) and the Saint Paul Public Schools (SPPS). Early-grade literacy was identified as the area most pressing and most beneficial for children and families in Saint Paul. Both organizations explored promising best practices models for the program design, and SPPS identified community partners who were currently demonstrating best practices in early grade literacy. While many strong partners were funded to deliver services, both SPPS and GTCUW agreed that ServeMinnesota would be the lead strategy to address literacy in Saint Paul schools.

In addition, Target announced a \$500 million commitment over five years to help children learn to read and selected ServeMinnesota as their key strategic partner to take the Minnesota Reading Corps to scale in the Minneapolis School District.

The importance of the state-private partnership was captured in testimony provided by Steve Shank, Chair of Capella Education Corporation, during the 2009 legislative session:

As someone familiar with education and the needs of the business community, I can tell you that the Minnesota Reading Corps represents the type of public-private effort we need if we are to ensure a literate workforce for our future. I've gotten to know the work of the Minnesota Reading Corps intimately over the last two years and can speak with confidence to the key factors that interest me as a business leader-these factors will not surprise you-the Reading Corps is data driven and has results to prove that it works, it is highly affordable and it is infinitely replicable. It's for these reasons that I remain committed to helping the Minnesota Reading Corps engage private support. We will stay aggressive on the private side-the last biennium we raised \$1 million and this next biennium we are willing to commit to a 50 percent increase to \$1.5 million but we need the state by our side in this effort. This powerful combination then of state and private support will allow us to leverage \$17.3 million in federal funds and to grow from serving 15,000 children to serving 29,000 children over the next biennium-it's a major step forward towards reaching every child in Minnesota that needs the Reading Corps and turning around the unacceptable fact that we now have 12,000 children every year failing the state's assessment of 3rd grade reading proficiency.