



READ Act Implementation Progress

Report to the Legislature, as required by Minnesota Statute 2023, section 120B.12

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Introduction

The Minnesota Reading to Ensure Academic Development (READ) Act

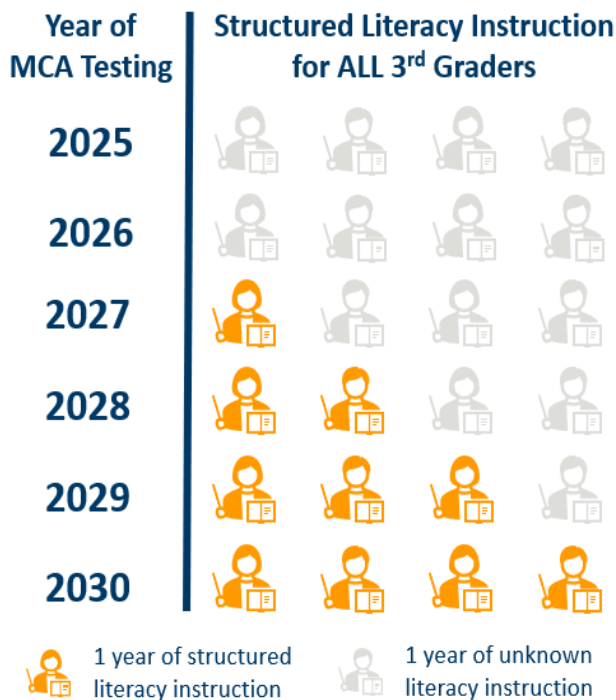
Minnesota Reading to Ensure Academic Development Act, known as the READ Act, was passed and signed into law by Governor Tim Walz on May 24, 2023. The long-term goal of this legislation is to have every Minnesota child reading at or above grade level every year, beginning in kindergarten, and support multilingual learners and students receiving special education services in achieving their individualized reading goals in order to meet grade level proficiency.

Access and read the full legislation under [Laws of Minnesota, chapter 55, article 3, READ Act](#).

Updated information from READ Act 2.0 can be accessed under [Minnesota Statutes 2023, section 120B.12](#).

The READ Act mandates that independent school districts and charter schools within the state of Minnesota use evidence-based methods to teach literacy. Structured literacy is an approach to reading instruction in which teachers carefully sequence important literacy skills, concepts, and instruction to facilitate children’s literacy learning and progress. Foundational skills progress is assessed through periodic screenings. Over time, structured literacy instruction will put Minnesota students on track to meet comprehension and proficiency goals.

Minnesota has made tremendous strides in the first three years of implementing READ Act requirements given that this is a comprehensive, statewide systemic reform effort. It is important to note that state literacy initiatives of this size typically follow a multi-year (3-5) implementation plan moving from legislative mandates to classroom-level accountability with full system alignment typically at year 5.



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 Minnesota Comprehensive Assessments (MCAs).

MCAs assess more complex literacy skills identified in English Language Arts Anchor Standards 4-9.

By the 2026-27 school year, all K-3 teachers should be trained and teaching with structured literacy instructional practices.

Full impacts of the READ Act are expected to be measurable in spring 2030 MCAs and beyond.

School systems and educators 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)

Implementation Progress

According to *A Republic of Readers: Governor's Forum on Reading (2025)*, Minnesota's focus on improving reading outcomes is aligned to key best practices in four categories of policy and implementation:

- A. **Educator Preparation:** Ensure new teachers learn how to teach reading correctly.
- B. **High-Quality Professional Learning and Development:** Ensure that sitting educators understand the science of reading and receive ongoing coaching support.
- C. **High-Quality Instruction Materials:** Ensure that educators have access to instructional materials that align with the science of reading.
- D. **Screening and Intervening:** Ensure that educators use screeners and interventions that align with the science of reading to help identify and support struggling readers.

As we study other states' progress with high impact practices and lessons learned, the Minnesota Department of Education (MDE) is taking actions that research shows consistently improve reading instruction. Legislative decisions have made the goal clear: all students must receive high quality instruction. We are making steady progress toward meeting the benchmarks for the initial phase of implementation.

Some states, including Mississippi, have third grade retention policies that require students who are not yet reading at grade level to repeat third grade. Because these students are held back, they are a year older—or have had an extra year of schooling—by the time they reach fourth grade. This means they are no longer part of the same cohort of students who advanced on time. As a result, states with mandatory third grade retention can appear to perform better on fourth grade NAEP reading scores, since a significant number of their lowest performing students are not included in the tested fourth grade group the following year.

The READ Act stands out in several areas from other states from the start:

- Prioritizing multilingual and students with disabilities;
- Requiring training for secondary educators and support staff;

- Requiring annual Local Literacy Plan (LLP) review;
- Requiring screening for characteristics of dyslexia;
- Requiring highly qualified district literacy leads;
- Annual submission of LLP and disaggregated student screening data; and
- Aligned regional support structure—Regional Literacy Network (RLN)—supporting schools across the state with a consistent, research-based implementation model based on our Minnesota Multitiered System of Support Framework (MnTSS) in partnership with our school improvement framework, Collaborative Minnesota Partnerships to Advance Student Success (COMPASS)

The information in this report is based on data submitted by school districts and charter schools, as well as feedback from educators and stakeholders. It is intended to inform legislative decision-making and support continued progress toward the goal of ensuring all Minnesota students become proficient readers.

Table 1 The Minnesota READ Act Theory of Change

Science of Reading in the Classroom	Student Screening	Structured Literacy Curriculum	Reading Intervention	Local Literacy Plans
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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. <p>MEASURES</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Percent of educators trained (legislative mandate: 100%) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Screeners measure foundational reading skills (unlike the MCAs which test English Language Arts standards). Screeners identify students who need additional instructional support. Screeners also identify characteristics of dyslexia. <p>MEASURES</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Percent of districts and charters screening K-3 students 3x/year (legislative mandate: 100%) Percent of districts and charters that are using an approved screener (legislative mandate: 100%) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Districts and charters use of evidence-based curricular resources supports (1) trained teachers in their design of effective literacy instruction and (2) student learning. <p>MEASURES</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Percent of districts and charters using evidence-based curriculum aligned to science of reading (legislative mandate: 100%) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> District and charter use of evidence-based literacy interventions to support student learning results. <p>MEASURES (next goal review)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Percent of districts and charters utilizing evidence-based reading Interventions (legislative mandate: 100%) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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 <p>MEASURES</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Percent of districts and charters submitting a local literacy plan (legislative mandate: 100%) Percent of districts and charters having a qualified Literacy Lead identified (legislative mandate: 100%)

The READ Act has five key components that support legislatively named requirements for long term, statewide comprehensive reform in local literacy education. These components are part of the theory of change that will, over time, result in improved reading proficiency for Minnesota students.

The READ Act requires school districts and charter schools across the state to improve literacy outcomes for all Minnesota students through evidence-based instruction and materials, professional development, and universal screening. The legislature instructed MDE to monitor implementation of fidelity by districts and charter schools and report to the legislature annually.

Enabling success for each and every student.

Minnesota's READ Act distinguishes the state from others nationwide by explicitly including multilingual learners and students receiving special education services in its goals for student reading proficiency. This inclusive approach sets a higher standard for equity and access. Over time, this requirement will help build a comprehensive statewide system that ensures every child in Minnesota learns to read and receives the support they need throughout their K-12 education journey.

Report Organization

The READ Act is designed to fundamentally reshape the teaching of reading skills in grades K-3 by charter schools and districts. This statewide comprehensive systemic reform effort requires educators, administrators, and schools to develop new skills and adopt evidence-based instructional practices. The goal is to ensure that every child receives high-quality Tier 1 instruction as the foundation for literacy success. The READ Act charges the MDE to support this skill development and to track compliance of school districts with the provisions in the READ Act. To measure the success of the READ Act, MDE is monitoring outcomes to understand statewide progress to increase reading proficiency and to continuously improve our literacy education system.

This report is organized by the five areas of the adoption of evidence-based literacy instruction, required by legislation, and reporting of student outcomes:

- **Local Literacy Plan (LLPs):** District and charter school level planning and implementation of evidence-based literacy instruction.
- **Evidence-based Instruction in the Classroom:** Implementation of evidence-based instruction in the classroom.
- **Structured Literacy Curriculum:** Use of aligned curriculum to increase fidelity of classroom instruction.
- **Reading Intervention:** Use of aligned interventions to build on classroom instruction, systematically.
- **Student Screening:** Early identification of struggling readers to provide early intervention and support.
- **Student Outcomes**
- **Next Steps**

Each area includes two components:

- **Part 1 - School District and Charter School Compliance:** The systemic change requires training teachers in new skills, integration of evidence-based curriculum and methods into classroom teaching, and continuous improvement of districts' and charters' literacy education systems to improve student outcomes. This part of the report summarizes the early progress made by school districts and charter schools during the 2024-2025 school year.
- **Part 2 – Systemic Change:** To support the compliance reporting and the transition to statewide structured literacy, the Minnesota Department of Education needed to build capacity in the existing organizational structures. This part of the report summarizes the actions completed by MDE to support the transition.

The final sections of the report discuss student outcomes and next steps. While structured literacy instructional methods are evidence-based teaching practices, strong outcomes are a result of educators practicing these methods with high fidelity of implementation within classrooms. This portion of the report summarizes statewide outcomes.

Local Literacy Plans

Individual district and charter school Local Literacy Plan data and program information can be found at [Local Literacy Plan Report](#).

A charter school and district's Local Literacy Plan (LLP) serves as a strategic roadmap for improving literacy outcomes for all students. It identifies goals, strategies, and resources to ensure systematic, sequential, explicit, diagnostic, and culturally and linguistically responsive literacy instruction across all grade levels. *Note: Minnesota Districts have been required to submit an annual Local Literacy Plan under the Read Well by Third Grade legislation since 2011. Under the READ Act, Local Literacy Plan information has been added to the MDE Data Reports and Analytics webpage.*

Key functions of the LLP include:

- Establishing specific, measurable literacy improvement goals.
- Describing the current status of evidence-based, culturally responsive instruction.
- Supporting data-driven decision-making and continuous improvement.
- Promoting collaboration, communication, and effective resource alignment.

The LLP guides district and charter school efforts to meet the READ Act goal of every student reading at or above grade level each year beginning in kindergarten, with attention to multilingual learners and students with special education needs. Districts and charter schools must update their plan annually to reflect progress and ongoing improvement efforts and post it to their district website.

Part 1 – Local Literacy Plan School District and Charter School Compliance

Legislative requirement: 100% of districts and charter schools must submit a local literacy plan, 99.9% compliance.

Approximately 99.9% of districts and charter schools submitted their Local Literacy Plan for the 2024-25 school year; the four schools that did not submit data were charter schools that were closing at the end of school year 2024-2025.

Legislative requirement: 100% of districts and charter schools must have a qualified literacy lead, 99.9% compliance.

100% of districts and charter schools must have qualified Literacy Lead; 99.9% of districts have designated a district literacy lead. Only one district, a charter school, hasn't yet identified a Literacy Lead.

Data source: The Local Literacy Plans are the main source of compliance data and are submitted by school districts and charter schools by June 15 of each year. Thus far, districts/charters submitted program implementation data **only** for *school year 2023-2024* and program implementation **and** K-3 student screening data for *school year 2024-2025*.

Part 2 – Local Literacy Plan Systemic Change

To support this legislative requirement, MDE updated the LLP submission process and created a student screening database for grades K-3.

Legislatively Mandated Timeline

- June 15, 2024: First READ Act Local Literacy Plan submission. Completed.
- June 15, 2025: Updated READ Act Local Literacy Plan submission; first submission inclusive of grades K-3 student universal screening data. Completed.
- August 30, 2025: District Literacy Leads hired. Completed.

Initial Implementation Highlights and Challenges

- Compliance from districts and charter schools has been exceptional.
- Districts and charter schools have appreciated the partnership that MDE has provided to ease the compliance process.
- Regional Literacy Network Leads and Coaches consistently engage district and charter school literacy leads in the ongoing review and refinement of their Local Literacy Plans (LLPs) through monthly professional learning sessions, individualized coaching, and leadership consultation. These LLPs are treated as living documents—actively used and updated throughout the year—as district/charter school literacy leads deepen their knowledge and foster a shared understanding of effective literacy practices. This continuous engagement supports the implementation of high-leverage strategies aimed at improving student literacy outcomes and building sustainable, system-wide capacity.
- LLPs indicated that some district and charter school literacy leads may not meet required qualifications. In some cases, particularly small rural districts, the literacy lead may be an administrator that does not have a literacy background or an educator who has the responsibility added to their list of duties. This poses a risk to outcomes because the district Local Literacy Plan may not be equipped to implement the necessary steps to generate the desired student outcomes.

Next Steps

- The LLP submission process is being refined for the 2025-2026 to provide a more efficient end user experience.
- The database for screening data is being expanded to include data for students in grades 4-12 who are reading below grade level.
- An audit process is being developed to provide more systematic feedback on the quality of Local Literacy Plans in order to customize the support given to districts and charter schools.
- A process is being developed to validate that district and charter school literacy leads have the needed skills and knowledge to lead school district literacy reform.

Evidence-based Instruction in the Classroom

The science-based reading research refers to a vast, interdisciplinary body of research from education, cognitive psychology, neuroscience, and linguistics that explains how children learn to read. This research identifies the most effective methods for teaching reading, emphasizing the importance of explicit, systematic instruction in foundational skills such as phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension. It supports structured literacy approaches that are especially beneficial for all learners, including those with reading difficulties.

Widespread improvements in student proficiency depend on strong Tier 1 core instruction in classrooms, which requires all core teachers to be knowledgeable and capable of delivering evidence-based reading instruction. Effective professional development in evidence-based reading instruction emphasizes systematic and explicit instructional methods. Comprehensive initial training is essential for teachers to gain knowledge and practice new methods of teaching. The READ Act requires all teachers who provide English foundational reading instruction to be trained in science-based reading instruction.

Once trained, teachers begin integrating their new skills into their teaching. Coaching from seasoned literacy specialists enables teachers to apply their new knowledge with fidelity within classrooms and directly improve students' foundational reading skills, reading comprehension, vocabulary, and writing. Additionally, ongoing training and coaching ensures that educators stay current with evolving science-based research and structured literacy practices, enabling teachers to refine their skills and deepen their understanding of literacy development. The READ Act provides funding for the Regional Literacy Network which provides coaching and ongoing training as part of the statewide systemic reform effort.

In addition, 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.

When professional development is consistent across a school or district, it leads to aligned instructional practices, creating a cohesive and effective literacy program, which ultimately empowers educators and drives systemic improvement from kindergarten through high school.

Part 1 – Evidence-based Instruction School District and Charter School Compliance

Legislative requirement: 100% of Phase 1 educators must complete training by July 1, 2026 (should additional time be needed for those educators taking LETRS, extensions will be granted); 89% complete.

**For comparison, Mississippi data shows that by 2026, more than 19,000 educators have undergone training, this is over a 13-year span, whereas Minnesota has trained over 30,000 in a three-year time span. Minnesota also requires mandatory training for grades 4-12 educators responsible for foundational skills instruction and grades 6-12 district personnel responsible for selecting English Language Arts materials.*

READ Act professional development requirements for Phase 1 educators include:

- Participation in one of the MDE approved professional development programs.
- Submission of a certificate of completion with a passing score of 80% to district or charter school.

At the end of the 2024–2025 school year, educator and staff literacy training data was compiled from LLPs as self-reported by organizations. The following tables outline the number of teachers and other staff who have completed MDE’s approved literacy professional development or are currently in progress and those still required to complete it under section 120B.123, subdivision 5 of the READ Act.

Table 2 **Phase 1** Educator Professional Development Progress

Phase 1 Educators required to take training:	Total Phase 1 Educators Needing Training	Completed Training	Training in Progress	Need Training
PreK Classroom and Part B/619 Early Childhood Special Education Educators responsible for early literacy instruction	3385	2629	498	248/7%
PreK through 12 Educators who work with English learners (Licensed ELL teachers)	2411	1289	491	634/26%
K-3 Classroom Educators	12058	8262	3192	649/5%
Grades 4-5 (or 6) Classroom Educators (if applicable)	5312	3287	1460	539/10%
K-12 Reading Interventionists	2805	1835	667	307/11%

Phase 1 Educators required to take training:	Total Phase 1 Educators Needing Training	Completed Training	Training in Progress	Need Training
K-12 Special Education Educators responsible for reading instruction	10405	6229	2826	1352/13%
PreK through grade 5 Curriculum Directors	972	506	215	255/26%
Totals/Percentage as of June 15, 2025	37348	24037/ 64%	9349/ 25%	3984/ 11%
Total: Completed and in Progress	33,386 / 89%			

Legislative requirement: 100% of Phase 2 educators must complete training by July 1, 2027 (should additional time be needed for those educators taking LETRS, extensions will be granted); 35% complete.

READ Act professional development requirements for Phase 2 educators include:

- Participation in one of the MDE approved professional development programs
- Submission of a certificate of completion with a passing score of 80% to district or charter school

Registration for Phase 2 opened December 15, 2025. The legislature extended the deadline for Phase 2 educators to complete the required professional development to July 1, 2027. This extension allows time for districts and charter schools to transition to and implement 2020 English Language Arts standards and ease the professional development scheduling calendar for the 2025-2026 school year.

At the end of the 2024–2025 school year, educator and staff literacy training data was compiled from LLPs as self-reported by organizations. The following tables outline the number of teachers and other staff who have completed MDE’s approved literacy professional development or are currently in progress and those still required to complete it under section 120B.123, subdivision 5 of the READ Act.

Table 2 Phase 2 Educator Professional Development Progress

Phase 2 Educators required to take training:	Total Phase 2 Educators Needing Training	Completed Training	Training in Progress	Need Training
Grades 4-12 Classroom Educators who provide foundational reading instruction	6985	1616	547	4827/69%
Grades K-Age 21 Educators who work with students who qualify for the graduation incentives program under section 124D.68	679	153	107	421/62%
Grades 6-12 Curriculum Directors	388	191	59	134/35%
Employees who select literacy instructional materials for Grades 6-12	750	309	89	357/48%
Totals/Percentage as of June 15, 2025	8802	2269/26%	802/9%	5739/65%
Total: Completed and in Progress	3071/35%			

Any educator from Phase 2 who has already participated in Phase 1 professional development has met the requirement and would not qualify for a second training. School districts and charter schools are on track to meet this requirement.

Part 2 – Systemic Change for Evidence-based Instruction

Legislatively Mandated Timeline

- August 15, 2023: MDE should identify approved professional development. Completed.
- July 1, 2024: MDE should launch the Regional Literacy Network (RLN). Completed.

Professional Development Support

Identified professional development

MDE approved the following evidence-based literacy instruction training.

Table 3 Approved Professional Development

Phase 1 Educators	Phase 2 Educators
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CAREIALL: Advancing Language and Literacy – Center for Applied Research and Educational Improvement (CAREI University of Minnesota) • OL&LA: Online Language and Literacy Academy – Consortium on Reaching Excellence in Education (CORE) • LETRS: Language Essentials for Teachers of Reading and Spelling (Lexia) • LETRS, LETRS for Administrators, and LETRS for Early Childhood Educators 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CAREIALL Secondary: Advancing Language and Literacy – Center for Applied Research and Educational Improvement (CAREI University of Minnesota) • Neuhaus Structured Literacy Modules • OL&LA Secondary (Grades 4-12): Online Language and Literacy Academy – Consortium on Reaching Excellence in Education (CORE) • STRIVE Science of Reading Grades 4-12

Registered educators for professional development and directly paid training costs.

MDE launched a registration process for school districts to request training spots for their schools. This process for educators enabled training providers to directly bill the state, which eased the administrative burden on districts and charters.

Developed a professional development waiver process

A number of educators qualified for waivers under section 120B.123, subdivision 5, from completing training approved by MDE.

As of October 10, 2025, MDE has granted 289/335 waivers to educators who have completed alternative training that meets the statutory requirements of the READ Act. These educators are therefore, exempt from completing one of the state-approved training programs.

Examples of alternative training courses that qualify for a waiver include:

- Completion of a college or university course focused on the science of reading and evidence-based reading instruction
- Completion of a Center for Effective Reading Instruction (CERI)–accredited university program
- Completion of a CERI-accredited independent teacher training program
- Completion of a professional development course aligned with READ Act requirements
- Completion of training offered by an organization accredited by the International Multisensory Language Education Council (IMSLEC) or the Orton-Gillingham Academy (OGA)
- Completion of training aligned with the International Dyslexia Association’s Knowledge and Practice Standards for Teachers of Reading
- Holding certification from the Academic Language Therapy Association (ALTA)

Paraprofessional Structured Literacy Training

As part of the statewide implementation of the READ Act, the RLN played a critical role in building local capacity to support paraprofessionals in their contribution to evidence-based literacy instruction by developing and delivering training for paraprofessionals. In school year 2024-2025, a team of regional leads and coaches developed an eight-hour Paraprofessional Structured Literacy Training (PSLT) along with a PSLT Train the Trainer option. In the spring of 2025, the development team piloted the course with 15 districts, reviewed the feedback, made adjustments, and began statewide delivery of the content.

- **District and Charter School Participation:** Regional district participation in training efforts ranged from **60% to 92%**, with most regions exceeding 80% of districts engaged in training their paraprofessionals.
- **Paraprofessionals Trained:** To date, over **5,100 paraprofessionals** have received training across the state.
- **Train-the-Trainer Participation:** A total of **636 individuals** has completed Train-the-Trainer sessions, enabling districts/charters to deliver ongoing professional development.

Regional Literacy Network

The legislature authorized and funded the creation of the RLN to (a) support Minnesota school districts, charter, and Tribal schools with their implementation of comprehensive literacy reform as specified in the Minnesota READ Act, Minnesota Statutes 2023, section 120B.12, and (b) ensure consistent access, coherence, and alignment of literacy initiatives across the state. MDE established the RLN in collaboration with the Minnesota Service Cooperatives.

The RLN is composed of nine literacy leads and 20 literacy coaches who are located across each of the 9 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.
- **MnTSS 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 RLN 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.

Initial Implementation Highlights and Challenges

- School districts and charter schools have appreciated the open communication from MDE and the “customer service” approach embraced by the agency especially for the registration process for professional development.

- The paraprofessional training delivered by the RLN has greatly increased local capacity in literacy instruction support with possibilities to extend this knowledge to school volunteers and parents.
- Strong, positive collaboration between District/Charter Literacy Leads (DLLs) and RLN leads and coaches is characterized by open, consistent two-way communication. DLLs appreciate opportunities to develop deep understanding of the READ Act requirements, unpack English Language Arts standards, analyze data, and engage in question-and-answer sessions. The personalized support, especially for small districts, has been a critical resource as many DLLs feel they couldn't do their jobs effectively without the RLN support.
- Districts/Charters value the networking opportunities with similar districts, especially with preparing for the implementation of the revised English Language Arts Standards for the 2025-2026 school year.
- RLN leads and coaches have engaged with district/charter leadership and have helped address teacher resistance and provided valuable support to both teachers and administrators.
- Given the limited number of coaches in each region, RLN staff are not able to directly support teachers in the classroom. To truly impact instructional practices in the classroom, teachers need ongoing support and coaching to implement with fidelity, which requires additional coaches in each region.

Next Steps

- Continue supporting district/charter school planning, implementation, and evaluation needs.
- Use data (end of training surveys and LLPs) to identify training and support needs, create, and modify the RLN program to fulfill these needs.

Evidence-based Curriculum

High-quality curricular resources assist teachers in delivering instruction that is challenging, well-structured, and engaging for all students. These materials incorporate evidence-based structured literacy practices and reflect the latest research from science-based reading research, ensuring that lesson design and delivery are grounded in supported research methods. In addition, they equip teachers with tools for efficient lesson planning, instruction, and differentiation to meet the diverse needs of learners.

A strong literacy curriculum is helpful for teachers in providing all students with a high-quality, equitable learning experience. To support districts/charters in selecting aligned materials, MDE, in partnership with the Center for Applied Research and Educational Improvement (CAREI), conducted a curriculum review. This review provides districts and charter schools with detailed information on how well materials align with evidence-based practices. The results can help guide districts and charter schools in selecting high-quality curricula and identifying areas where additional support or supplemental materials may be needed.

Part 1 – School District and Charter School Compliance with Evidence-based Curriculum

Legislative requirement: 100% of districts and charter schools must use evidence-based curriculum. 70% compliance.

- Note: Districts and charter schools are not required to purchase a reviewed curricular resource.
- Highly Aligned Programs: Approximately 49% of Minnesota districts/charters (about 233 districts/charters) use at least one highly aligned Tier 1 curriculum.
- Partially Aligned Programs: Approximately 51% of districts/charters (about 243 districts) use at least one partially aligned Tier 1 curriculum, though many are transitioning to highly aligned materials as required under the READ Act.

Data source: Local Literacy Plans

As part of READ Act implementation, districts/charters were required to report the Tier 1 instructional resources used to deliver core literacy instruction in grades K-5. The data below reflect self-reported information from 476 Minnesota districts and charter schools for the 2024-2025 school year. Districts/Charters reported a wide range of instructional resources, often using multiple programs across grades. Among these districts/charters, 20% used their READ Act Literacy Aid funds to purchase highly aligned curriculum. *Due to Statute revisions during the 2025 Legislative Session, terminology regarding alignment is only used for the purpose of summarizing the findings of the review; it is not used to limit how districts may spend their Literacy Aid.*

Table 5 Most Frequently Reported Tier 1 Resources

Program	Category	Alignment	Districts Using (n)	% of Districts
UFLI Foundations (2022)	Foundational	Highly Aligned	110	23%
Functional Phonics and Morphology (2023)	Foundational	Highly Aligned	52	11%
Wit & Wisdom	Knowledge Building	Highly Aligned	29	6%
EI Education Open Up	Comprehensive	Highly Aligned	24	5%
Bridge2Read, Serve Minnesota (2024)	Foundational	Highly Aligned	14	3%
Magnetic Reading Foundations (2023)	Foundational	Highly Aligned	10	2%

Program	Category	Alignment	Districts Using (n)	% of Districts
Wonders (2023)	Comprehensive	Partially Aligned	95	20%
Benchmark Advance (in press)	Comprehensive	Partially Aligned	62	13%
Amplify CKLA (2022)	Comprehensive	Partially Aligned	57	12%
HMH Into Reading (2022)	Comprehensive	Partially Aligned	43	9%
Bridge to Reading Foundational Skills Kit (Heggerty) (2023)	Foundational	Partially Aligned	19	4%
Really Great Reading (Countdown, Blast Foundations, HD Word)	Foundational	Partially Aligned	14	3%
Imagine Learning EL Education (2019)	Comprehensive	Partially Aligned	10	2%
95 Phonics Core Program (95 PCP) (2020–2023)	Foundational	Partially Aligned	10	2%

Part 2 – Systemic Change with Evidence-based Curriculum

Legislatively Mandated Timeline

- January 1, 2024: Approved Curricular Resources for K-5. Completed.
- March 3, 2025: Final review of previously submitted curriculum. Completed.

MDE, in collaboration with the University of Minnesota Center for Applied Research and Educational Improvement (CAREI,) completed a review of K-5 Literacy Curricula as required by the Minnesota READ Act. Districts are encouraged to consider the results of the reviewed curricula to support an informed decision. [Tier 1 \(Core\) Curricula Aligned to Evidence-based Structured Literacy Practices](#) provides detailed information about reviewed curricula.

Culturally Responsive Curricular Review Process

As directed in legislation, the READ Act curricular resources will undergo a deeper review in the 2025-2026 school year to ensure they reflect cultural and linguistic competency. Minnesota Statutes 2023 Supplement, section 120B.123, subdivision 7 (f) states, “the department must ensure the models are reviewed by a

contracted third party for culturally responsive guidance and materials and make those findings available to districts once the review process is complete.” MDE entered into a contract on July 1, 2025, to meet this implementation element.

Initial Implementation Highlights and Challenges

- **Shift Toward Alignment:** Nearly half of all districts/charters are now implementing highly aligned core instructional programs, reflecting substantial statewide progress toward implementation of evidence-based curriculum.
- **Layered Implementation:** Many districts/charters report combining highly aligned phonics programs (e.g., UFLI, Functional Phonics and Morphology) with broader partially aligned literacy programs (e.g., Wonders, CKLA) to strengthen Tier 1 instruction.
- **Emerging Programs:** Recently developed curricula, such as Bridge2Read (Serve Minnesota) and Magnetic Reading Foundations, show growing adoption among districts/charters seeking fully evidence-based materials.
- **Ongoing Transition:** The continued use of programs that are not evidence-based highlights the need for ongoing professional development, funding, and technical support as districts move toward full implementation of the READ Act’s Tier 1 instructional standards.

Next Steps

- An ongoing curricular review process is under development that will provide districts/charters with continuing details on curricular resource alignment to evidence-based practices, state English Language Arts standards, and culturally responsive and linguistically sustaining methods.

Reading Intervention

The Minnesota READ Act requires that districts/charters provide targeted and aligned reading interventions for students identified under [Minnesota Statutes 2025, section 120B.12, subdivision 2](#). These interventions are designed to accelerate student growth and help each learner reach grade-level reading proficiency by the end of the current school year. If a student is not reading at or above grade level by year’s end, the district/charter must continue providing intervention until the student reaches proficiency.

Evidence-based reading interventions:

- Address essential literacy skills and processes such as phonological awareness, phonics, decoding, fluency, oral language, and comprehension.
- Prevent long-term academic challenges, including comprehension difficulties and limited vocabulary development.
- Promote equity by ensuring all students have access to the support they need to succeed.

Part 1 – School District and Charter School Compliance for Reading Intervention

Data is not yet available on district/charter compliance of approved intervention resources. The LLP for the 2025-2026 school year will collect data inclusive of the identified list of evidence-based interventions. Data will be available in the 2026 legislative report.

Part 2 – Systemic Change for Reading Intervention

Legislatively Mandated Timeline

- November 1, 2025: MDE should identify evidence-based literacy intervention models for students in grades K–12 Intervention models identified. Completed.

The Minnesota READ Act required MDE to partner with the CAREI to approve evidence-based literacy intervention models, subject to final determination by the department ([Minn. Stat. 120B.124, subd. 1 \[2025\]](#)).

MDE contracted with CAREI to conduct the review of intervention models. The two-step review process evaluated over 1,700 programs for alignment to ESSA Levels 1 and 2. The department received the results of the review on November 3, 2025, and will post the evidence-based list once the final determination has been made by MDE. The legislation also states that the department may identify additional literacy intervention models after the partnership with CAREI has ended.

Initial Implementation Highlights and Challenges

No data is available on initial implementation of reviewed interventions.

Next Steps

- MDE will finalize the intervention list and publish it to the READ Act webpage.
- MDE will analyze the 2025-2026 LLP data to determine district and charter school compliance.
- MDE will report on district and charter school compliance going forward.
- The ongoing curricular review process that is in development will also include intervention resources.

Student Screening

The READ Act mandates screening for foundational literacy skills as the first step in a comprehensive process to ensure that every child reads at or above grade level each year, beginning in kindergarten, including multilingual learners and students receiving special education services. Districts and charter schools are required to universally screen students in grades K–3 three times per year, as well as students in grades 4–12 who are not reading at grade level. The resulting data supports informed decision-making, enabling educators to identify students in need of additional support and to implement targeted interventions. This process includes three essential components: 1) Screen Students, 2) Identify Instructional Needs, and 3) Intervene to Address Identified Needs for students below grade level. Students at benchmark should continue to be screened at regular intervals in grades K-3 and if any data suggests they are below grade level in grades 4-12. Students at benchmark

should also continue to receive evidence-based, high-quality core instruction. These three steps are foundational to the READ Act and are critical to preventing and addressing reading difficulties statewide.

In addition to foundational literacy skills, all students in grades K-3 must be universally screened, as well as students in grades 4–12 who are not reading at grade level, for characteristics of dyslexia, using a screening tool approved by MDE. The definition of dyslexia is included in Minnesota Statutes, section 125A.01. As stated in statute, dyslexia is characterized by difficulties with foundational reading skills; specifically, phonemic awareness, decoding, and accurate, fluent word recognition. Students identified with characteristics of dyslexia demonstrate persistent difficulties with these foundational reading skills.

While Minnesota has consistently scored above average on eighth grade NWP Reading tests, we have seen a slight decline over the past decade. Minnesota’s trailblazing approach to literacy screening and identification beyond grade three, that began in the 2025-2026 school year, has the potential to prevent a further decline in scores and to even reverse this trend.

While Mississippi has seen impressive improvements in grade four NAEP scores, this has not resulted in corresponding improvements in the higher grades. Despite over 10 years of science of reading legislation and implementation, eighth grade scores have remained flat and below the national average.

Part 1 – Student Screening School District and Charter School Compliance

Legislative requirement: 100% of districts and charters to adopt and implement a K-3 MDE approved, literacy screener, 99.9% compliance.

Data source: Local Literacy Plans

The READ Act ([Minn. Stat. 120B.12, subd. 2\[2025\]](#)) requires school districts and charters to adopt and implement a K-3 literacy screener from the list of MDE-approved Literacy Screening Tools.

Under the Read Act, a LLP is not considered a complete submission until MDE has received both the district summary submission and the READ Act student screening data for the corresponding year. The percentage of successful LLP submissions reflects the percentage of districts/charters that submitted a LLP with student screening data. If districts do not submit a complete LLP inclusive of required screening data, they will not qualify to receive Literacy Aid.

MDE compiled the student screening data [for the most used MDE approved screening tool, FastBridge](#) (5) by school site and grade, using the measurements of foundational literacy skills and mastery identified by the department, both aggregated data and disaggregated data on student performance on the approved screeners using the student categories under section 120B.35, subdivision 3, paragraph (a), clause (2). LLP school submitted summary data may have discrepancies from MDEs screening summary due to local decision-making parameters.

Analysis of data from the other MDE K-3 approved tool, DIBELS, is under review and forthcoming.

Part 2 – Student Screening Systemic Change

Legislatively Mandated Timeline

MDE must approve screeners:

- Universal K-3 screeners. Completed – July 1, 2023
- Grades 4-12 screeners. Completed – March 13, 2025

Screening tools must include subtests to measure foundational reading skills as well as characteristics of dyslexia. Literacy screening tools must ensure adequate classification accuracy, reliability, validity, sample representativeness (norms), bias analysis, and ease of administration and scoring. [Screening Tool Review Criteria](#).

Initial Implementation Highlights & Challenges

Overall, district and charter school reporting demonstrates strong statewide compliance with the READ Act's universal screening requirements. The percentage of usage for the approved screening options for Minnesota districts, charter schools, and tribally controlled schools is as follows:

- FastBridge with CBMReading was the most frequently reported screener, used by an estimated 75–80% of districts and charter schools statewide. This broad adoption across multiple grade levels (K–3) provides a consistent tool for assessing statewide reading proficiency and trends.
- mCLASS DIBELS 8th Edition was used by approximately 15–20% of districts and charter schools, serving as a strong alternative, particularly for district/charter schools prioritizing progress monitoring aligned with the science of reading.
- DDS DIBELS 8th Edition was used by about 5–10% of districts/charters, typically within smaller or specialized programs using it for targeted literacy assessment.
- Capti ReadBasix is being used across the state for students reading below grade level in grades 4-12.

Reading Development

Children learn to read through the coordinated development of several foundational language and literacy skills. Reading begins with **oral language**, as children build vocabulary, background knowledge, and an understanding of sentence structure through listening and speaking; these abilities support later comprehension. As literacy instruction begins, children develop **phonemic awareness**, the ability to hear and manipulate the individual sounds (phonemes) in spoken words. This skill allows them to connect sounds to print when they learn **letter sounds**, or the relationships between letters and sounds. With practice, children apply this knowledge to **decoding**, including reading nonsense words, which demonstrates their ability to apply letter-sound correspondences rather than rely on memorized words. As decoding becomes more accurate and automatic, students develop **oral reading fluency**, reading passages with appropriate rate, accuracy, and expression. Fluency reflects the integration of foundational skills and supports comprehension by freeing cognitive resources which allows students to focus on meaning.

K-3 Fastbridge Screening Highlights & Challenges

This year's screening outcomes should be viewed as baseline for READ Act implementation with an expected growth in skills over the next several years as schools move to complete implementation of READ Act. This baseline data revealed the following highlights and challenges:

- First, kindergarten and first grader outcomes showed young students' strength in phonemic awareness. Over 70% of kindergarteners ended the year at or above benchmark in the FastBridge subtest Word Segmenting which measures the skill of phonemic awareness. At the beginning of grade one this was still the case and growth in phonemic awareness of the first grade year was also high with 86% of first graders ending the year at or above benchmark in phonemic awareness.
- While strength in phonemic awareness is a highlight, reading skills beyond phonemic awareness remain a challenge.
 - Only 53% of kindergarteners ending the year at benchmark for letter sounds and only 53.5% ended the year able to decode basic two- and three-letter words.
 - Only 49% of first graders ended the school year able to decode basic two- and three-letter words at benchmark levels.
- Once students begin reading passages during screening, in the middle of first grade, data revealed both highlights and challenges:
- One highlight is that students' reading accuracy steadily increased in each grade 1-3. While the data detailed below shows that reading rate remains a challenge, reading accuracy is the more important component of oral reading fluency.
 - 61.4% of first grade students ended the year able to read at the MDE set accuracy benchmark of 91%.
 - 72.5% of second grade students ended the year able to read at the MDE set accuracy benchmark of 95%.
 - 80.8% of third grade students ended the year able to read at the MDE set accuracy benchmark of 95%.
 - Reading rate or speed, however, is still a challenge in each grade 1-3.
 - Only 48.5% of first grade students ended the year able to read at the benchmark rate.
 - Only 49.2% of second grade students ended the year able to read at the benchmark rate.
 - Only 50.4% of third grade students ended the year able to read at the benchmark rate.

Next Steps

- Analysis of universal screening data will support next steps with district and charter school literacy leads and implementation of evidence-based instruction.
- Analysis of universal screening data will be used to verify that students who need additional support are being accurately identified.
- Continued literacy data support for districts and charters facilitated through the Regional Literacy Network.

- Development of screening guidance specific to multilingual students, dual language immersion programs, and deaf, deafblind, and hard of hearing students.

Student Outcomes

Achieving the state’s goal of increasing reading proficiency as measured by the Minnesota Comprehensive Assessment (MCA) – Reading Standards require strong foundational literacy instruction in grades K–3; however, the relationship between foundational literacy skills and MCA Reading scores is not straightforward. For a statewide initiative at the scale of the READ Act, full systemwide implementation typically takes three to five years.

Measurable improvements in student outcomes often begin to emerge in **implementation years two through four**, influenced by several critical factors:

- The quality and consistency of professional learning, coaching, and implementation support;
- Strong leadership at the state, district, and school levels;
- Alignment of curriculum, assessment, and instructional practices; and
- The system’s capacity to use data for continuous improvement.

Note: Mississippi’s Literacy Law was passed in 2013, putting that state 10 years further into implementation than Minnesota. Based on the average performance in the state for third graders on the state assessment, it was year 6 before Mississippi started seeing noticeable gains for third graders. This would align with the projection Minnesota has made that we expect to see systemic changes by 2030.

MCA Assessments vs. Screening Assessments

The MCA, a standardized test administered annually, is the historic and most common measure for tracking student proficiency in reading from third through eighth and tenth grade. The MCA measures Reading Standards 4 to 9, part of the *Minnesota 2020 English Language Arts Standards*, which focus on higher level reading skills such as comprehension, interpretation, analysis, knowledge of text structure, evaluation of arguments, and more.

The **2020 Minnesota Academic Standards in English Language Arts** are required to be fully implemented in the 2025-2026 school year.

- [2020 Minnesota Academic Standards in English Language Arts – Full text](#) (PDF)
- [2020 Minnesota Academic Standards in English Language Arts – Spreadsheet version](#) (Excel)

The READ Act legislation is focused on *Minnesota 2020 English Language Arts Reading Standard 1*. This standard is focused on the foundational reading skills of phonemic awareness, phonics, morphology, and reading accuracy and fluency. Proficiency in these skills means that students have strong word recognition and language comprehension skills, which enables students to accurately read the words and to comprehend text. These word reading skills are *necessary* to be proficient in the higher-level skills measured by the MCA, however strong word reading alone is *not sufficient* to ensure proficiency in English Language Arts Standards 4-9.

Because MCA testing begins in third grade, it does not test for English Language Arts Standard 1 foundational skills. The READ Act requires **universal screening** three times a school year, with specific subtests, to assess student proficiency in these foundational skills. The required screening subtests assess the skills necessary for automatic word recognition. This skillset is the foundation upon which reading comprehension is built, which is why it is a critical component of READ Act implementation. These specialized screening assessments provide educators with deeper understanding of students’ proficiency and gaps in foundational skills which enable educators to provide differentiated teaching. These screening assessments are leading indicators for success on the MCA.

**Note: A new MCA-IV will be administered for English Language Arts Standards in the 2026-2027 School year.*

When to expect improved outcomes in MCA assessment

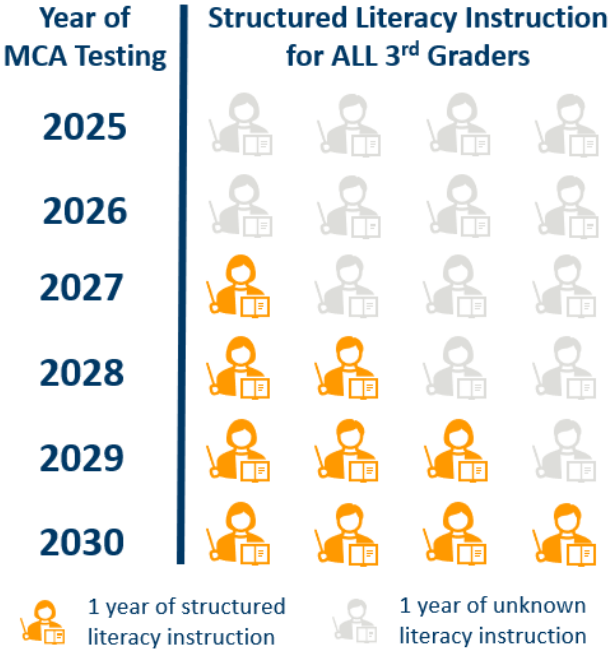


Figure 6 Timeline of Structured Literacy Instruction for all 3rd graders

While we expect some improvements in MCA scores beginning in 2027, the full impact of the READ Act provisions on MCA scores aren’t predicted to be fully seen until 2030.

Third graders tested in 2025 entered kindergarten in 2021—before the 2023 passage of the READ Act—and did not receive the benefit of systematic, sequential teaching of foundational skills at each grade level. As a result, we do not see improved scores yet. We expect to begin to see the impact in 2027 when *all* third graders will have gotten at least one year of structured literacy, but a critical tipping point will happen in 2030, when school year 2026-2027 kindergarten students progress through third grade with fully trained teachers.

While current proficiency levels are not yet where we aspire them to be, they reflect a system in transition—one that is now equipped with the tools and transparency needed to drive meaningful change. For the first time, we have a shared, statewide data foundation that highlights where support is most needed and where progress is beginning to take hold.

MDE remains firmly committed to eliminating educational disparities and ensuring that all students—regardless of background—have access to high-quality, evidence-based literacy instruction. With sustained effort and strong partnerships among educators, school leaders, and communities, Minnesota is building the conditions necessary for long-term, equitable literacy success.

When to expect improved outcomes in screening assessments

Initial review of FastBridge screening data (the screener used by 80% of school sites) shows that approximately 10% of school sites have 80% or more of kindergarten students meeting or exceeding the benchmark on a key literacy indicator – Letter Sounds – by the end of the year. The data also reflect an expected trend: end of year student outcomes at these sites are generally stronger in kindergarten than in higher grades. This may be attributed to the fact that many kindergarten students received evidence-based instruction aligned with the READ Act, particularly when their teachers have completed approved professional development. In contrast, older students may not have had access to systematic and sequential literacy instruction beginning in kindergarten, contributing to persistent learning gaps.

As educators complete training, receive coaching on use evidence-based resources, and use screening data to adjust and support instruction at each grade level, we expect to see screening assessment data improve annually with consistent proficiency growth rates in grades K-3 by 2028.

Results of 2024 -2025 Screening Assessment Data

Screening Subtests

The Minnesota READ Act requires universal literacy screening in grades K-3 and additional literacy screening in grades 4-12 for students who are not reading at grade level. The 2024–2025 school year marks a significant milestone: for the first time, Minnesota is collecting consistent, statewide **baseline screening data** on foundational literacy skills. As we analyze this **baseline data**, we are beginning to identify early signs of progress—both across the system and within specific student subgroups.

Dyslexia Screening

Dyslexia screening data includes the number of students screened in each grade level and the number demonstrating reading difficulties, including characteristics of dyslexia, summarized below.

Table 7 Dyslexia Screening Data

	Kindergarten	Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3
Number of Students Screened	50565	52444	45257	46676
Number Demonstrating Characteristics of Dyslexia	15429	16628	15948	14618
Percent Demonstrating Characteristics of Dyslexia	30.5%	31.7%	35.2%	31.3%

Nationally, Dyslexia is estimated to affect up to 17% of students, or roughly 1 in 5. As shown in Table 3, currently in Minnesota, the number of students indicating characteristics of dyslexia is twice the expected rate of occurrence for a diagnosis of dyslexia. MDE hypothesizes that roughly half of the students identified in the chart above are showing persistent foundational reading difficulties due to limited evidence-based instruction rather than demonstrating a specific learning disability such as dyslexia. With continued teacher training and full implementation of the READ Act’s explicit, systematic instruction, the number of students demonstrating characteristics of dyslexia is expected to decline.

Early evidence from Minnesota districts that adopted structured literacy before the READ Act shows this pattern: in those districts, the grades that received high fidelity instruction in structured literacy, the percentage of students demonstrating characteristics of dyslexia falls below 17%.

READ Act Implementation Next Steps

Implementation of the READ Act is well underway across Minnesota, with strong engagement from school districts and charter schools, educators, and support networks. Over 33,000 educators have completed or are in the process of completing state-approved literacy training, and most districts are now using approved screeners and aligned curricula to support early reading development.

Initial (year 1 of collecting screening data) screening results highlight opportunities for improvement, while also establishing a critical baseline to measure progress and inform decision-making. Early implementation sites offer valuable insights into effective instructional practices and school conditions that may be contributing to early success and helping to close achievement gaps.

Although still in the early stages, MDE has already launched key supports, including intensive professional development, targeted technical assistance, and robust data systems to monitor implementation fidelity and student outcomes.

While progress is evident, the report identifies areas where continued investment is essential. These include expanding access to high-quality professional development and coaching, ensuring equitable implementation across diverse communities, and supporting districts in adopting evidence-based instructional materials aligned with Minnesota’s revised English Language Arts standards.

Dual Language Immersion Programs

Minnesota has a long history of dual language immersion (DLI) programs in languages including Spanish, Mandarin, Hmong, Korean, French, German, Ojibwe, and Dakota. DLI programs use English and a “partner language” (a non-English language) for instruction, with goals of high bilingualism and biliteracy, strong academic achievement, and sociocultural competence.

MDE currently provides limited technical support on DLI program design and instruction and has hosted a biliteracy network series focused on biliteracy frameworks and translanguaging pedagogy. Approximately 50 DLI educators have participated, and some programs are beginning to integrate these practices.

For READ Act implementation, MDE has an ongoing cross-division team (Literacy, Multilingual Learner, COMPASS, and Early Learning) focused on DLI contexts and the unique instructional needs. In 2025, MDE opened applications for a new DLI Advisory Committee, receiving 31 applications; this committee will advise MDE on READ Act guidance (e.g., screening, resources, professional development) that meets the needs of DLI programs.

Multilingual Learners

Multilingual learners represent the lowest-performing student group in statewide literacy proficiency rates. Teaching foundational literacy skills to these students presents unique challenges, as they are learning to read while simultaneously acquiring a new language. Differences in vocabulary, phonemic awareness, and background knowledge can affect their ability to decode and comprehend text. To address these challenges, effective instruction must integrate language development with literacy instruction through explicit, scaffolded, and culturally responsive approaches.

The MDE is prioritizing support in this area by coordinating efforts across divisions. As part of this work, MDE has created a Multilingual Literacy Specialist position. This position will lead the implementation of READ Act activities related to multilingual learners, including students with English learner (EL) status and those in Dual Language Immersion programs and will collaborate across MDE divisions, with other state agencies, and with external partners—including the Dual Language Immersion Advisory Group—to ensure the selection and alignment of evidence-based, linguistically responsive practices and resources. These efforts will be integrated with the Minnesota Multi-Tiered System of Support (MnMTSS) framework.

COMPASS

The COMPASS Statewide System of Support, **inclusive of the READ Act-funded RLN**, establishes a team of specialists at each of the nine Regional Service Cooperatives who work in close collaboration with MDE. These specialists offer expertise in the areas of Minnesota Multi-Tiered System of Support (MnMTSS), literacy, math, school climate and culture, equitable access to high-quality learning environments, and culturally responsive instructional leadership.

The MDE READ Act Integration Specialist, who oversees the RLN, will coordinate with the COMPASS Literacy specialist to support the development and delivery of cohesive guidance, professional learning, and flexible support for districts, charter schools, and schools participating in the COMPASS statewide system.

Deaf, DeafBlind, and Hard of Hearing Students

The READ Act required MDE to establish a **Deaf, DeafBlind, and Hard of Hearing (DHH) Working Group** to make recommendations on literacy training, screening, and curriculum for students who cannot fully access sound-based approaches such as phonics. Beginning October 2025, the working group reconvened to further refine recommendations from the DHH Legislative Report for posting on the READ Act webpage. Therefore, during the 2025-2026 school year, screening will remain optional for students who are deaf or hard of hearing (DHH) or

deafblind (DB). Screening may be conducted if deemed appropriate by the Individualized Education Program (IEP) team based on a student's level of hearing and use of assistive technology.

Teacher Preparation Activities

Office of Higher Education (OHE) and Professional Educator Licensing and Standards Board (PELSB) are partnering with MDE to highlight the teacher prep programs in the state of Minnesota that teach structured literacy instruction to their teacher candidates. In December 2025, PELSB is publishing a list of schools and coursework that meet the professional development requirements for the science of reading.

In addition, teacher prep programs are updating their reading instruction curriculum to align with structured literacy and science of reading methods. This change will fundamentally alter literacy instruction across the state for the long term as post-graduation training of teachers will no longer be necessary.

The state has established comprehensive reading standards that educator preparation programs are required to implement, and the state holds sole authority to approve and renew educator preparation programs. Educator preparation programs are required to use a Structured Literacy framework, encompassing explicit instruction in phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension.

- 89% (118 out of 133) of these programs have demonstrated PELSB's reading standards and passed the reading audit.
- Piloting literacy lab practicum experiences for preservice teachers.

What can Minnesota learn from other high-achieving states?

[Many studies have shown that school funding reforms](#) that increase and equalize per-pupil dollars have positive effects on school outcomes, especially for historically underserved students. High performing states also [did several things that changed the nature and quality of instruction](#). Investments in instruction, especially high-quality teachers, [were found to leverage the largest marginal gains in performance](#) (**Learning Policy Institute Blog, March 4, 2026*).

Areas Minnesota needs to consider for sustainability and continuous improvement include:

- Bolstering our early childhood programs to ensure children enter kindergarten ready to learn reading, particularly for underserved communities;
- Providing school leader training at no cost through the RLN;
- Increasing capacity of the RLN by adding more regional coaches, and
- School funding reforms

Closing

MDE remains committed to working in partnership with schools, administrators, educators, and families to meet the goals of the READ Act. Ongoing collaboration, data-informed decision-making, and targeted support will be essential to ensuring that all students—regardless of zip code or race— receive a high-quality education.

Although MDE is in the initial stages of implementation, the agency has already launched key supports, including intensive professional development, targeted technical assistance, and the development of robust data systems to monitor implementation fidelity and student outcomes.

While progress is evident, the report also highlights areas where continued investment and support are needed. These include expanding access to high-quality professional development and coaching, ensuring equitable implementation across diverse communities, and supporting districts in transitioning to evidence-based aligned instructional materials that area aligned to our revise English Language Arts standards.

Supplemental Information

Minnesota Multi-tiered Systems of Support (MnMTSS)

Minnesota Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MnMTSS) is a systemic, continuous improvement framework for ensuring positive social, emotional, behavioral, developmental, and academic outcomes for every student. MnMTSS provides access to layered tiers of culturally and linguistically responsive, evidence-based practices and relies on the understanding and belief that every student can learn and thrive. In addition, it engages an anti-bias and socially-just approach to examining policies and practices and ensuring equitable distribution of resources and opportunity.

The [MnMTSS Framework](#) is inclusive of the following five components that work together to ensure efficient use of resources and positive student outcomes. View a graphic of the five components of MnMTSS. A brief introduction of each component can be found below. More detailed information is available on the linked pages for each component and the MnMTSS Framework document.

- [Minnesota Multi-tiered System of Supports \(MnMTSS\)](#)
 - [Component 1: Infrastructure for Continuous Improvement](#)
 - [Component 2: Family and Community Engagement](#)
 - [Component 3: Multilayered Practices and Support](#)
 - [Components 4 & 5: Assessment and Data-Based Decision Making](#)

As part of the ongoing implementation of the READ Act, our MnMTSS model plays a key role. The MDE Literacy Unit partners closely with the COMPASS Team to ensure our support is cohesive and aligned as the majority our the Read Act instructional practices are implemented through the MnMTSS model in districts and charter schools. As part of READ Act reporting requirements, Minnesota districts and charter schools were asked to identify whether they are implementing an MTSS framework using the Minnesota MTSS (MnMTSS) framework, and/or participating in MDE-sponsored MnMTSS professional learning. Responses were collected from 476 districts and charter schools statewide through LLPs.

District Implementation of MTSS

- 78% of districts and charter schools (approximately 371 districts/charter schools) reported implementing an MTSS framework.
- 22% (about 105 districts/charter schools) reported not yet implementing MTSS.

This reflects broad statewide adoption of MTSS as a structure for delivering evidence-based academic and behavioral supports.

Use of the MnMTSS Framework

- Of the 78% of districts or charter schools implementing MTSS, 64% (approximately 238 districts/charter schools) indicated that they are specifically using the MnMTSS framework developed by MDE.
- The remaining 36% (about 133 districts/charter schools) reported using a locally developed or alternative MTSS framework.

This demonstrates increasing alignment with the state's model, while also indicating that local flexibility remains common.

Participation in MnMTSS Professional Learning

- 42% of districts and charter schools (approximately 200 districts/charter schools) reported participating in MDE-led MnMTSS professional learning opportunities.
- Participation rates were higher among districts and charter schools that have adopted the MnMTSS framework, suggesting that professional learning is driving greater alignment and fidelity in implementation.

Key Trends

- Strong Growth in MTSS Implementation: Nearly 4 out of 5 districts and charter schools statewide are implementing MTSS frameworks to support academic and behavioral outcomes.
- Increased Adoption of MnMTSS: Over half of these districts and charter schools are now using the state-developed MnMTSS model, representing a substantial increase from prior years.
- Professional Learning Participation: MDE's professional learning supports appear to be positively associated with framework adoption and consistency in MTSS practices across districts.

Next Steps: Continued professional development, data-based coaching, and resource support will be critical to ensure consistent, high-fidelity implementation of MTSS statewide.

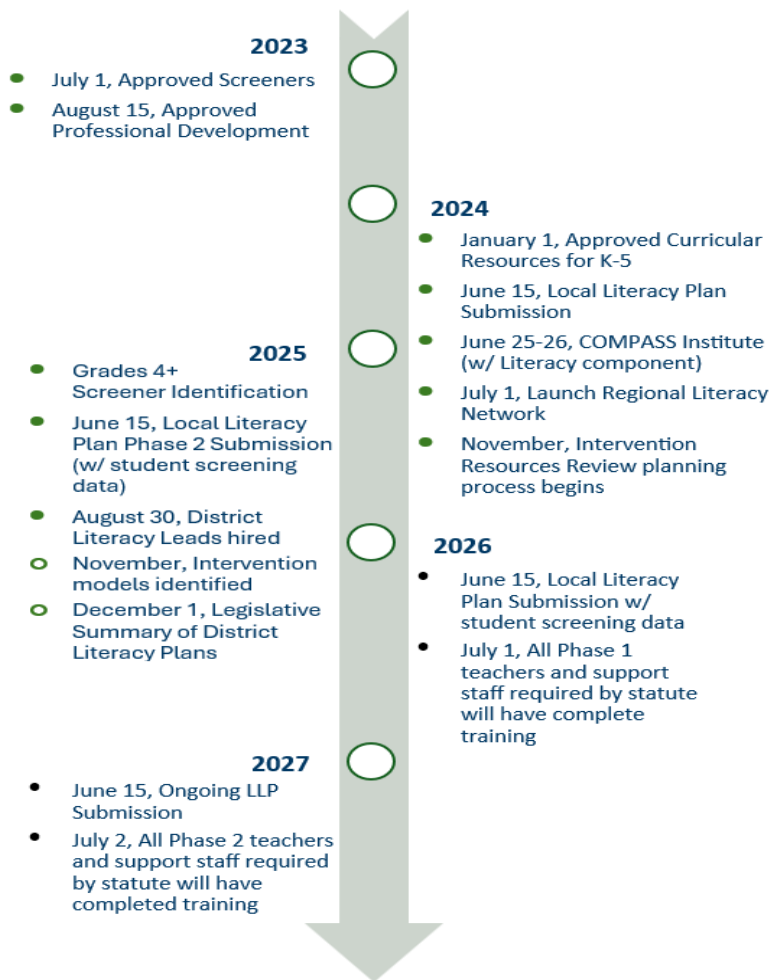
READ Act Promotion Activities

- Website and newsletters: Keep educators up to date and reduce calls into the central Literacy Unit.

- Parent Engagement: Release resources, such as the Families READ toolkit, that support families in fostering literacy at home and used social media to raise awareness.
<https://education.mn.gov/MDE/dse/READ/eng/toolkit/>
- READ Act Families READ page: 6,887 views, 4,103 active users
- Students and Families READ page: 2,922 views, 2,218 active users
- State Fair Strategy: Distribute literacy materials, use social media, and provide take-home games; give away 800 READ Act Games to Go.
- Media Engagement: Communication about 2025 data was highly coordinated, including journalist partnerships to ensure accurate reporting and understanding of assessment outcomes. Felt the news coverage was fair.

Implementation Timeline

Figure 8 Implementation Timeline



Key:

- Fully filled in green circle: Activity completed, on time.
- Partially filled in green circle: Activity in progress, on time.
- Partially filled in yellow circle: Activity in progress