



# READ Act Update February 2025

Bobbie Burnham | Assistant Commissioner, Office of Teaching and Learning

# Ten Minnesota Commitments to Equity

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



# READ Act Literacy Goal

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

[Minnesota Session Law Chapter 55, Article 3, READ ACT.](#)

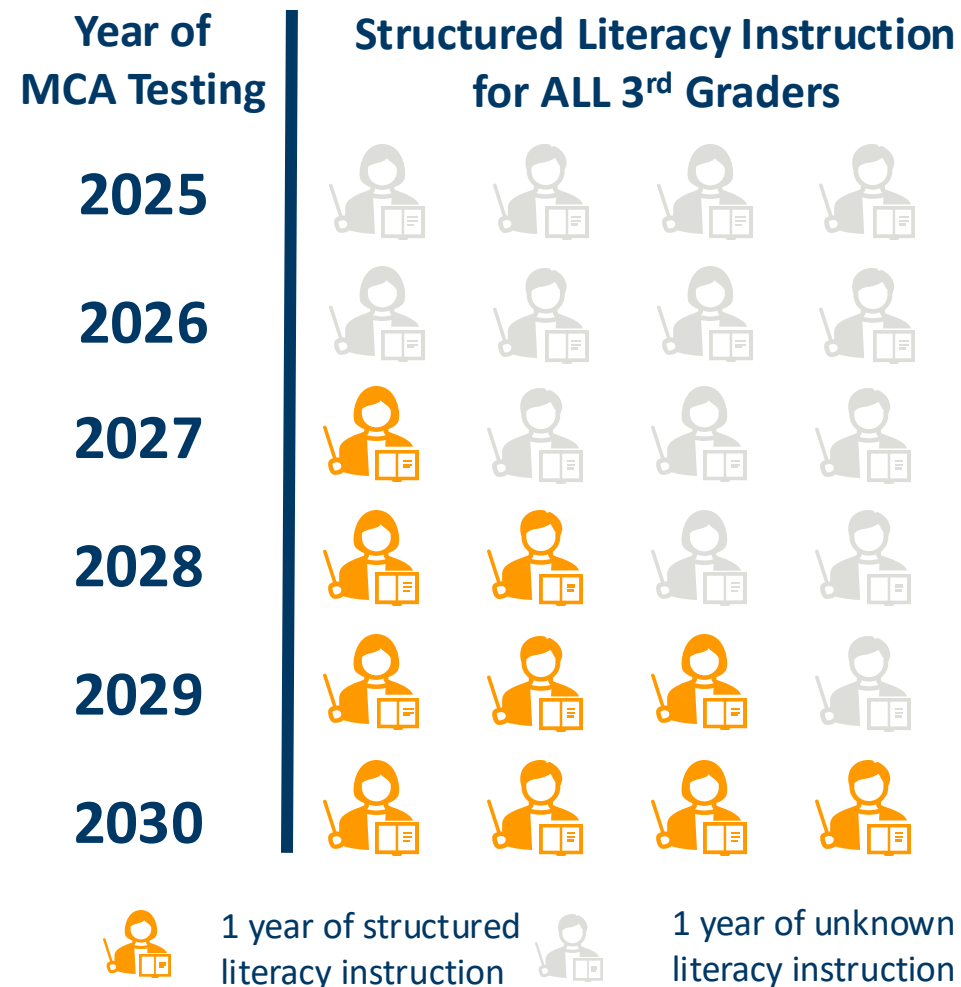
- Basic reading proficiency is a core developmental milestone in a child's educational experience.
- Research shows that third grade students who are not reading proficiently face long-term challenges.<sup>1</sup>
- Quality instruction, assessments, interventions, and curriculum paired with professional development and ongoing coaching for educators are the foundations of comprehensive systems of support that enable all learners to achieve reading proficiency by the end of third grade.



# Expectations of READ Act impact on MCA scores

Transformation of the state's core literacy instruction is a multi-year, complex process. While we expect some improvements in MCA scores beginning in 2027, the full impact of the READ Act provisions on MCAs won't be seen until 2030. Screening assessment data is a leading indicator for foundational reading skill proficiency.

- By the 2026-2027 school year, all K-3 teachers should be trained and teaching with structured literacy instructional practices.
  - Widespread implementation will enable us to see the impact on the three-year goal measure at a statewide level.
  - Prior to this, we will see scattered improvement as districts and schools make the transition, however we do not control the timing of these changes.
- **Full** impacts of the READ Act are expected to be measurable in Spring 2030 MCAs and beyond.
  - Teachers will need time to become proficient in new teaching methods for students to fully gain the benefits of this methodology change.



# The MN READ Act Levers for Change

## Science of Reading in the Classroom

- Teachers and staff given science of reading training, enabling them to provide high-quality tiered literacy instruction statewide.
- MDE supports Communities of Practice and Instructional Coaching via the Regional Literacy Network to enable high fidelity literacy instruction.

### MEASUREMENT

- Pre/post training assessment of science of reading knowledge.
- Community of practice attendance, exit surveys and requests for support.
- Fidelity of implementation (observations).

## Student Screening

- MDE identified K-12 screeners.
- Screeners measure foundational reading skills and characteristics of dyslexia to enable early interventions.

### MEASUREMENT

- MDE will analyze student level data for performance and growth of foundational literacy skills.
- Grades K-3: Universal screening in Fall, Winter and Spring of growth in foundational literacy skills and characteristics of dyslexia.
- Grades 4-12: Screening for characteristics of dyslexia in all students not reading at grade level.

## Structured Literacy Curriculum

- MDE and CAREI reviewed core literacy curricula and identified five that are highly aligned with science of reading research.
- District use of an aligned curricular resource supports trained teachers in their design of effective literacy instruction and student learning.

### MEASUREMENT

- Short Term: Count of districts using curriculum highly to aligned to science of reading.
- Long Term: Percentage of districts with 80% of students at or above benchmark on K-3 screeners.

## Reading Intervention

- MDE and CAREI must create a list of 15 evidence-based intervention models by Nov 1, 2025.
- By the 2025-2026 school year, a district must use only evidence-based literacy interventions to support student learning.

### MEASUREMENT

- Short term measured with LLP and number of districts choosing interventions aligned with science of reading.
- Long term: growth in foundational reading skills by the lowest performing students from fall to spring on MDE approved screener.

## Local Literacy Plans

- Developing and implementing a Local Literacy Plan requires districts to review their student performance data and communicate how they will improve literacy outcomes for students.
- Districts must update the plan annually and engage in continuous plan improvements until literacy outcomes meet the READ Act goal of every child reading at grade level.

### MEASUREMENT

- Review district LLPs areas targeted for improvement annually.
- Count of districts adopting an MTSS framework.

# Year 1: July 2023 to June 2024

## 4-Year READ Act Implementation Plan

### Key Activities

- Survey districts on current literacy practices
- Establish partnerships and execute contracts: CAREI; MN Service Cooperatives; training vendors
- Develop Regional Literacy Network; hire staff
- Hire State Literacy Director and READ Act staff at MDE
- Generate READ Act webpage; post overview webinar and FAQ
- Determine and post universal screening menu and training options
- Determine process for curriculum review; selection and; post approved curriculum; and reimbursement process
- Generate Local Literacy Plan template; develop LLP and data submission process
- Generate District Literacy Lead position description
- MDE and WI/MN Comp Center develop an evaluation plan for The READ Act
- Plan, implement and evaluate first annual literacy conference

### Implementation Milestones

- Year 1 deadlines were met
- Local Literacy Plan template is provided to district with TA from the Literacy Unit
- All contracts were executed in a timely manner; staff were hired; regional literacy networks are being staffed with July 1 launch
- READ Act Evaluation Plan in development

### Key Progress Indicators

- Number of teachers registered for training by January 1, 2024
- Number of districts submitting Local Literacy Plan by June 15, 2024

# Year 2: July 2024 to June 2025

## 4-Year READ Act Implementation Plan

### Key Activities

- Districts provide access to approved trainings beginning July 1, 2024.
- Districts have or will hire Literacy Leads by August 2025.
- Regional Literacy Network staff and District Literacy Leads will participate in literacy leadership training jointly developed w/ CAREI.
- Regional Literacy Networks are fully staffed, completing SOR training, and offering districts READ ACT implementation support.
- Districts submit universal screening data with their Local Literacy Plan by June 15, 2025.
- MDE summarizes and reports local literacy plans to legislative committees by December 1, 2025.
- MDE tracks how districts are spending Literacy Incentive Aid.
- MDE, CAREI and WI/MN Comp Center implements evaluation plan for The READ Act.
- Convene a State Literacy Committee that will engage with MDE, partners, and OHE on continued planning of state literacy activities, statewide literacy, and integration of structured literacy coursework into higher education institutions.

### Implementation Milestones

- All districts are offering approved training.
- MDE reports to legislative committees.
- Literacy Incentive Aid is funding only comprehensive literacy reform efforts.
- All K-3 student are screened 3x/year.
- All Local Literacy Plans include screening data.
- Regional Literacy Network staff have completed CAREI training.

### Key Progress Indicators

- Number of districts purchasing approved curriculum
- Number of districts having a qualified Literacy Lead on staff
- All districts submitting Local Literacy Plan with universal screening and program data by June 15
- Run UFARS data to monitor use of Literacy Incentive Aid

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# Year 3: July 2025 to June 2026

## 4-Year READ Act Implementation Plan

### Key Activities

- Districts continue to offer approved trainings for teachers and school leaders; Phase I teachers complete required training
- District will submit universal screening data and local literacy plans to MDE by June 15, 2026
- Regional Literacy Networks continue to support districts in the implementation and evaluations of their local literacy plans and usage of data to inform implementation of plans and meeting student needs
- Ensure approved professional learning opportunities exist for early care and education teachers/educators
- Approved professional learning opportunities exist for school leaders
- Evaluation of Local Literacy Plans
- Convene State Literacy Team quarterly
- Summer Literacy Conference/Trainings

### Implementation Milestones

- Literacy Incentive Aid Use data will indicate a focus on literacy reform efforts

### Key Progress Indicators

- • Percent of teachers who have completed training
- • Number of school leaders and ECE staff enrolled in approved training
- • All districts are submitting Local Literacy Plan with universal screening and program data by June 15
- • Data showing growth from fall to spring screening in grade K-3

# Year 4: July 2026 to June 2027

## *4-Year READ Act Implementation Plan*

### Key Activities

- Continue supporting districts with the revision and implementation of Local Literacy Plan
- Continue analyzing data from Local Literacy Plans to determine where additional supports are needed
- Convene State Literacy Committee quarterly
- Summer Literacy Conference /Training

### Implementation Milestones

- Districts must provide evidence-based reading instruction as defined by statute

### Key Progress Indicators

- All teachers and instructional staff required to receive training under the READ Act must complete training no later than July 1, 2027
- Evaluation of Local Literacy Plans provides data that shows fidelity of implementation of The READ Act requirements

# Key progress indicators



## Science of Reading in the Classroom

- 547 districts (100%) engaged in the professional development process by identifying their district literacy contact.
- 3,194 Trained as of June 2024; 6% of total teachers
- As of January 2025, districts have requested 34,222 training slots
- 450 of 594 LEA organizations (includes service cooperatives, regional cooperatives, and collaboratives) identified a District Literacy Lead.



## Structured Literacy Curriculum

- The predominant highly aligned curriculum is UFLI (University of Florida Literacy Institute) Foundations.
- The predominant partially aligned curriculum is Wonders.



## Local Literacy Plans

- Minnesota has 550 districts and charter schools. Of those, 431 submitted by the June 15<sup>th</sup> deadline, and 525 total submitted by the close of the system on Nov 16, 2024.
- All districts that receive Literacy Aid submitted a Local Literacy Plan.

# READ Act Required Training

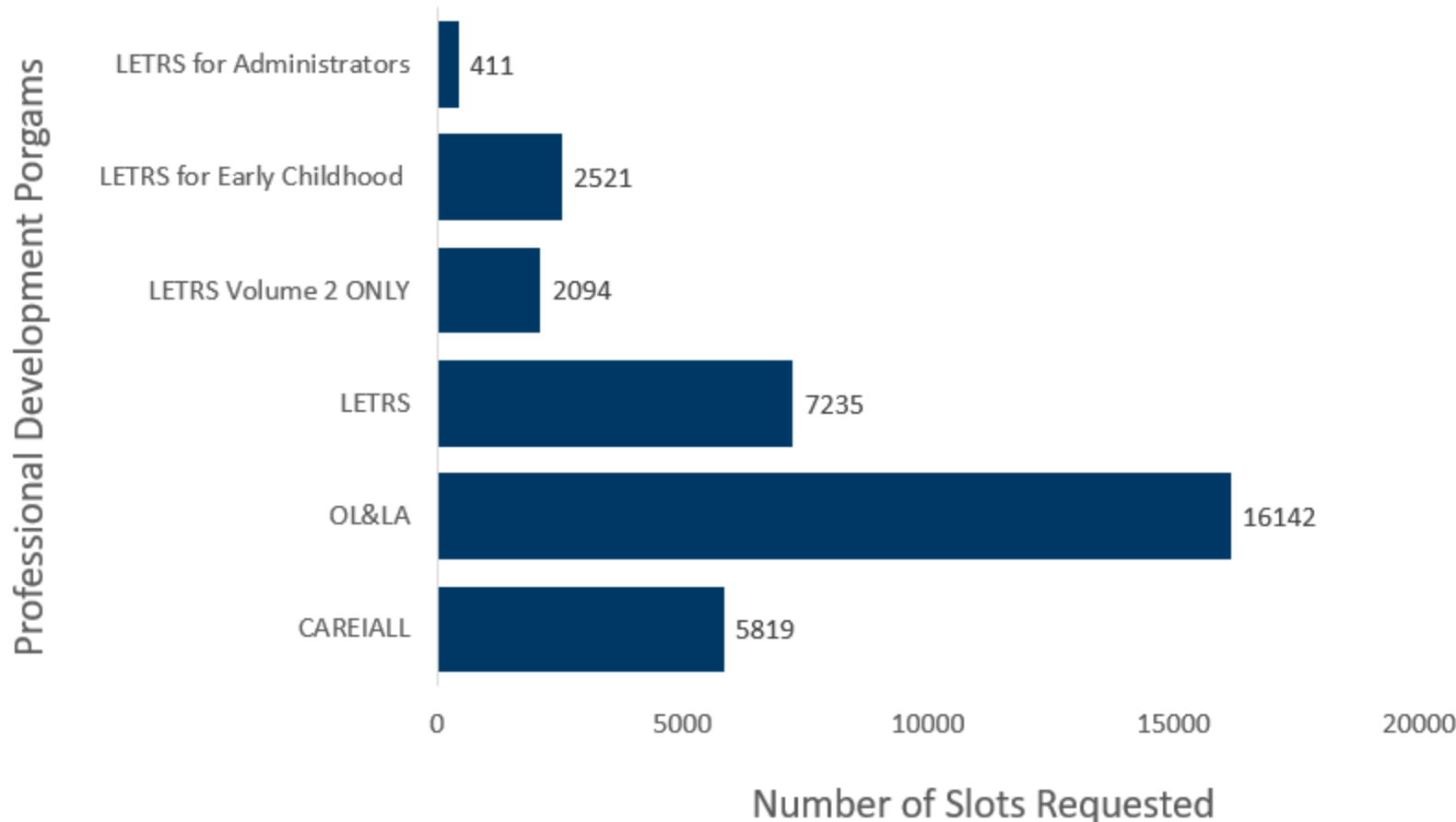
Phase 1	Phase 2	Para/Volunteer
<p>Phase 1 PD Training Options: CAREIALL, LETRS, OL&amp;LA</p> <p>Phase 1 PD: 34,000+ educators <a href="#">have registered</a></p> <p>Phase 1: Training completed by July 1, 2026</p>	<p>Phase 2 PD Training Options: in process; working with vendor to negotiate pricing</p> <p>Phase 2 educators: completed by July 1, 2027</p>	<p>Paraprofessional/Instructional Support Staff/Volunteer Professional Development</p> <p>8 hours – offered through the Regional Literacy Network</p>



# Current Progress of Structured Literacy Training

January 2025

Professional Development Training Requested  
by Program, January 2025



- For the 38,821 educators needing training (self-identified by districts), **districts have requested 34,222 training slots through January 2025.**
- While MDE asked for Phase 1 requests only, some schools requested training more broadly; these numbers include a small portion of Phase 2 teachers and paraprofessionals.
- Additionally, while these are the requested slots, some schools have not used all their slots in this phase 1 training (e.g. some schools requested slots for potential incoming teachers). They may utilize these slots for phase 2 teacher training.
- While this was a wider initial net than planned, it enabled us to quickly get teachers registered and participating in professional development quickly.

# Aligned Curriculum

		Grade					
		K	Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5
Highly aligned curriculum used in 2023-2024 School Year	EL Ed Open Up (K-5)	10	11	12	13	14	15
	Functional Phonics (K-5)	17	17	19	24	26	24
	Magnetic Reading (K-2)	2	1	2	1	1	1
	UFLI (K-2)	114	125	117	29	14	11
	Wit & Wisdom (K-5)	15	16	15	16	16	17
	Subtotal	158	170	165	83	71	68
Partially aligned curriculum used in 2023-2024 School Year**	CKLA (K-5)	30	30	31	31	31	29
	Imagine Learning EL (K-5)	1	1	1	1	1	1
	Wonders (K-5)	71	72	73	80	80	76
	95 Phonics (K-5)	5	5	5	11	8	8
	Bridge to Reading (K-2)	16	9	8	3	0	0
	Really Great Reading (K-2), Countdown (K), Blast Foundations (1st), HD Word (2nd)	11	10	8	5	3	3
	Subtotal	134	127	126	131	123	117
Total		292	297	291	214	194	185

- Providing *highly trained* teachers with highly aligned curricular resources and structured literacy practices should result in the best outcomes for students.
- These curricula are for core, Tier 1, instruction. We would not expect every district to adopt this curriculum; for example, a Tier 1 resource would not be appropriate for use in a special education district.
- During start up, we are monitoring the increasing usage of aligned curriculum across the state as a leading indicator for the READ Act implementation rollout.
- Ongoing, we can review student outcomes and curriculum to make specific district recommendations through the Regional Literacy Network.

The light gray boxes indicate when curriculum is being used outside of its designed grade level.

\*\*Note: these are from a write-in response question in the 2023-2024 Local Literacy Plan. As such, not all listed will be using the specific edition of curricula reviewed and determined to be partially aligned. New data will be available June 2025

# Intervention Material Review

- February-October 2025: CAREI facilitates review process
- November 2025: MDE in partnership with CAREI announce 15 evidence-based literacy intervention models
- 2025-2026 School Year: All schools begin using evidence-based literacy interventions.
- Fall 2026: Begin reporting of interventions implemented
- Winter 2027: Begin reporting on growth rates of lowest performing students

# READ Act Workgroups

Read Act Deaf, Deafblind, And Hard Of Hearing Working Group	MDE Dual Language Immersion Programs
Legislative Workgroup	MDE Cross Division Workgroup
<p>Working group purpose</p> <p>The Department of Education must establish a working group to make recommendations on literacy training, screeners, and curriculum for students who cannot fully access sound-based approaches such as phonics.</p> <p>Report submitted: January 15, 2025</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Cross division team at MDE has been collaborating around needs from districts</li><li>• The team will convene a Focus group from districts to discuss implementation concerns</li><li>• Survey went out to districts with dual language programs the week of February 3, 2025</li></ul> <p>Information asked for:</p> <p>Language</p> <p>Model of program</p> <p>Resources used</p>



# Regional Literacy Network

**Purpose:** Partnership between the department, CAREI and the Minnesota Service Cooperatives to provide the following to districts, charter schools, and tribal schools:

- ongoing training and coaching based in structured literacy
- support with comprehensive literacy reform efforts based on structured literacy including supports for district and site level leadership teams; literacy data collection and analysis; and curriculum selection
- supports for the planning, implementation and evaluation of Local Literacy Plan

## **Communities of Practice**

- *Local Certified Facilitators*
- *District Literacy Leads – supports the implementation elements of the Local Literacy Plan*

Service Co-op	Literacy Lead	Literacy Coaches
BrightWorks	1	5
SE	1	3
SC	1	1
SWWC	1	2
Lakes County	1	2
Resource	1	3
Sourcwell	1	1
NE	1	2
NW	1	1

# Regional Literacy Network- Launched July 2024

## Strategic Goals:

- Strengthen Tier 1 (core) literacy instruction
- Create a sustainable, long-term system change toward structured literacy and evidenced based practices
- Develop a network of subject matter experts

## Benefits:

- First statewide infrastructure for reading instruction in Minnesota, a long-awaited system
- Provides consistent regional support for evidence-based structured literacy practices
- Open access: Districts can self-identify and request resources
- Enables inter-district collaboration and collegial problem-solving across regions
- Reduces state-level information bottlenecks

## Organizational Structure:

- Part of the COMPASS Statewide System of Support and builds on MnMTSS
- Includes 9 regional leads and 20 geographically distributed coaches

## Collaboration between:

- Minnesota Department of Education (MDE)
- Nine Minnesota Service Cooperatives (MSC)
- Center for Applied Research and Educational Improvement (CAREI)

## Funding:

Supported through joint powers agreements involving COMPASS and READ Act legislation

# Regional Literacy Network: highlights

- Leads and coaches
  - Trained to support facilitation of the approved professional development
  - Completed training for MnMTSS; engaging in Capacity Building Framework training
  - Building relationships with districts in their region
- Districts are engaging with the Network through the community of practice for district literacy leads. Monthly exit survey data is reviewed to be responsive to district needs.
  - October – 185 districts
  - November – 300 districts
  - January – Data is being collected

# READ Act implementation takeaways from focus groups

- Many focus group respondents finding their connections with Regional Literacy Networks to be highly valuable.
- Many focus group respondents reported setting aside professional development time for coaching and processing of approved professional learning.
- Many focus group respondents, particularly from smaller and rural districts, reported liking the curriculum review rubric resource and found it helpful to their curriculum review.
- Many focus group respondents reported delaying further actions until secondary (6th - 12th grade) resources and information are released (e.g. curriculum or screening tool selection).
- Focus group respondents identified a need for more funding and allocated time to support the work.



# READ Act Evaluation

## DID WE SUCCEED?

### Summative Evaluation

Assess actual outcomes against expected outcomes.

#### ARE WE ACHIEVING EXPECTED OUTCOMES?

Multiple measures like MCAs and screening assessments tell us if we are getting the outcomes we expected.

Disaggregated data by student groups or by geography tell us where more support is needed.



#### CAUSAL EVALUATION

Did the READ Act interventions cause an increase or decrease in reading scores?



*Why won't we have a causal evaluation?*

*The universal nature of the rollout does not allow causal study because we don't have comparison groups.*

## HOW CAN WE IMPROVE?

### Formative Evaluation

Assess the program activities, outputs, processes ensure fidelity to causal interventions and to improve programs.

#### IMPLEMENTATION EFFECTIVENESS

If outcomes (summative data) are higher or lower than expected, this evaluation tells us why. We assess how well teachers' are using evidence-based practices in classrooms to ensure students are getting the full benefits of the science of reading research.



#### CONTINUOUS PROCESS IMPROVEMENT

MDE is investing in the Regional Literacy Network to increase the capability of districts and teachers to deliver evidence-based reading instruction. MDE will continually assess and improve these supports to ensure that they are aligned, responsive, and effective.



#### INTERVENTION DESIGN

In the creation of reading curriculums, interventions, and professional development, the designers of these programs work to ensure that their programs are effective.



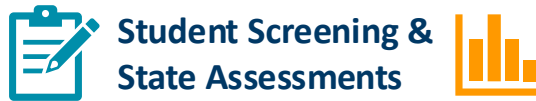
*Implementation outcomes will support MDE's recommendations for curriculum and PD .*

# Continuous improvement approach to evaluation

## DID WE SUCCEED?

*Summative Evaluation*

### ARE WE ACHIEVING EXPECTED OUTCOMES?



**Startup:** MDE is developing the measures and systems that need to be tracked and putting these into place for long term ongoing reporting.

**Ongoing:** MDE will be reporting on this data as part of its core work and annual legislative reporting. This data will help MDE to understand where outcomes are not being achieved so that it can provide additional support.

### IMPLEMENTATION EFFECTIVENESS



**Startup:** CAREI is analyzing qualitative data from year 1 of the Local Literacy Plans to identify challenges and shared learnings from implementations; findings will inform future policy and cross-sector collaboration.

**Ongoing:** MDE will use this initial start to build less-resource intensive ways to continue learning.

## HOW CAN WE IMPROVE?

*Formative Evaluation*

### CONTINUOUS PROCESS IMPROVEMENT.

#### Implementation of Science of Reading (SOR) in the classroom



**Startup:** MDE and CAREI are jointly creating assessments of teacher fidelity of the science of reading in classrooms

**Ongoing:** Regional Literacy Network will use this initial start to refine and evaluate teacher practices.



**Startup:** MDE conducts surveys after training and tools rollouts to improve the offerings of the Regional Literacy Network.

**Ongoing:** The Regional Literacy Network will continuously evaluate and improve its work processes and practices.



**Startup:** MDE/CAREI evaluated curriculums that were aligned to structured literacy.

**Ongoing:** Evaluate if the recommended curriculums are positively impacting student outcomes

# READ Act effects from the first year

- Nearly all submissions referenced the READ Act required professional learning, and review and/or adoption of a science of reading-based ELA curriculum.
  - Key actions required in the READ Act; the submissions confirm that district/charter literacy systems are implementing the provisions of and are adapting to the READ Act.
- Many districts and charter schools are also in the process of reviewing current literacy practices to ensure they are supporting each student with evidence-based practices.

# Qualitative analysis of Local Literacy Plans

## WHAT WENT WELL

- **Data driven instruction:** increase in the use of data to monitor student progress and to target instruction on skills and areas needing improvement.
- **Strategic planning** was also a key success for multiple districts that reviewed their process and developed literacy plans.

## WHAT NEEDS TO BE REFINED

- **Reviewing or adopting an MTSS framework:**
- Some districts/charter schools are reviewing their current framework while others are implementing a new framework.
- Reviewing the practices for middle/high school around literacy instruction.

## WHAT ARE THE KEY NEXT STEPS

- Increasing use of data-driven practices.
- Increasing supports to teachers.
- Increasing completion of the required professional learning.



# Literacy Incentive Aid (LIA)-proposed changes

The current formula for the Literacy Incentive Aid formula results in economically disadvantaged students and struggling readers receiving less funding for evidence-based reading support; a proposed change item would allocate more money to these students.

## CURRENT CALCULATION

- Current Calculation: based on two components.
  - Proficiency aid: Based on the percentage of 3rd grade students meeting or exceeding standards on the reading MCA
  - Growth aid: Based on the percentage of 4th grade students showing medium or high growth on the MCA
- Usage: As of 2023, the READ Act more clearly defined allowable uses for LIA, focusing on teacher training and instructional materials for literacy. The 2024 legislative broadened usage, as long as the expenses supported literacy (in prior years, the LIA had unrestricted use).
- Distribution: LIA distribution varies widely among districts, with some receiving millions and others little to no funding.

## PROPOSED CHANGE

- The 2025 proposal revises the formula to be based on a school poverty measure (% of students directly certified to access free and reduced lunch).
  - The 4<sup>th</sup> grade growth measure will be discontinued (no longer viable given other policy changes) in 2026; this already necessitates a change to the formula.
- The current proposal is budget neutral.

# Comparison of Literacy Incentive Aid formulas

	Current LIA Calculation (Proficiency & Growth)	Proposed Calculation (Free and Reduced Lunch Based)
Pros	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Incentivizes performance</li> <li>• Established system</li> <li>• Aligned with state assessments</li> <li>• Clear measurement criteria</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• More equitable resource distribution</li> <li>• Addresses broader learning needs</li> <li>• Recognizes systemic challenges</li> <li>• Supports schools with highest needs</li> </ul>
Cons	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Inequitable distribution</li> <li>• Limited scope of measurement</li> <li>• Potential performance bias</li> <li>• May disadvantage high-poverty schools</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Potential loss of performance incentives</li> <li>• Possible data reporting inaccuracies (in FRL counts)</li> <li>• Implementation challenges</li> <li>• Resistance from current high-performing districts</li> </ul>
Potential Impact on Schools	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Rewards high-performing schools</li> <li>• Minimal additional support for struggling schools</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provides more resources to high-poverty schools</li> <li>• Recognizes comprehensive learning challenges</li> <li>• Other legislative shifts may result in decreased funding for schools with fewer low SES students; these schools may need to manage a significant change in finances</li> <li>• May send a mixed message about supporting literacy in high proficiency/highly resourced schools</li> </ul>
Alignment with Research	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Focus on standardized test performance</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Aligns with research on socioeconomic learning barriers</li> </ul>

# Literacy Incentive Aid Data

		Actual		Proposed			
		FY24 Literacy Aid	FY25 Literacy Aid	FY26 Literacy Aid	FY27 Literacy Aid	FY28 Literacy Aid	FY29 Literacy Aid
1	Minneapolis and St. Paul	2,603,678	2,597,474	4,695,771	4,690,267	4,627,250	4,627,211
2	Other Metro, Inner	5,992,835	5,909,476	4,821,131	4,890,701	4,778,219	4,780,038
3	Other Metro, Outer	10,039,255	9,999,952	7,640,794	7,663,128	7,446,385	7,448,551
4	Nonmetro >=2K	5,123,079	5,270,590	5,154,421	5,179,473	5,085,156	5,088,465
5	Nonmetro 1K-2K	6,653,346	6,748,887	6,213,932	6,228,193	6,073,023	6,073,695
6	Nonmetro < 1K	15,295,182	15,367,831	14,765,581	14,812,878	14,561,608	14,566,322
7	Charters	3,186,751	3,230,787	5,677,045	5,912,260	5,950,869	5,945,374
2/10/2025		40,523,667	40,575,760	40,620,718	40,918,729	40,203,523	40,204,045

State aid for school districts, charter schools, and cooperatives units for evidence-based literacy supports for children PreK-12 based on structured literacy.

- \$35,000,000
  - Distributed in October, 2024
  - Funding totals are listed here: [School Finance](#)
- One time available until June 30, 2025
- \$250,000 available for administration

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# Questions?

[Bobbie.Burnham@state.mn.us](mailto:Bobbie.Burnham@state.mn.us)

<https://education.mn.gov/MDE/dse/READ/>