

**Progress report for
Minnesota Reading Corps:
*Helping more Minnesota children
learn to read with AmeriCorps.***

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Minnesota Reading Corps partners include ServeMinnesota (state commission for AmeriCorps*State programs) the Minnesota Literacy Council, (the host organization for the Minnesota Reading Corps program), and Saint Croix River Education District (the training, coaching, and technical assistance provider from 2002 – 2007), the literacy coaches, the site supervisors, and the hundreds of AmeriCorps members who served in national service through Minnesota Reading Corps since the pilot year in 2003.

Executive Summary

The Minnesota Reading Corps has completed its fourth year of operations and the results indicate strong, measurable progress for 3,000 participating age 3 to Grade 3 children as they become successful readers. The statewide initiative continues its successful expansion plan to serve more Minnesota children with a 100% increase in numbers served from 05-06 to 06-07 and plans to more than double the numbers served in 07-08. The Minnesota Reading Corps is made possible by AmeriCorps members – individuals who dedicate a year or two to service in schools and at early childhood learning sites.

Introduction

With the belief that trained AmeriCorps members and an alliance of key partners can narrow the literacy achievement gap for young children, ServeMinnesota joined in partnership with the Minnesota Literacy Council, Saint Croix River Education District, the Minneapolis Public Schools, and others, to pursue this goal in 2003. Minnesota Reading Corps began as an early literacy program piloted in Head Start sites in Minneapolis. Now a statewide initiative, the Minnesota Reading Corps has expanded to an age three to grade 3 data-based instruction model for students at risk for reading difficulties. With focused efforts of intensively trained, dedicated AmeriCorps members, an early literacy intervention model is helping large numbers of struggling early readers, based on practice developed through research, standardization across settings, and with documented results (ACET, Inc. 2007) (Heistad et al, 2007). This progress report outlines the need and rationale for Minnesota Reading Corps and provides an update on implementation and evaluation of the statewide initiative through 2007.

The literacy issue

Nearly 50% of children who live in poverty enter school with underdeveloped reading readiness skills (*U.S. Department of Education, 2000*) and 37% of fourth grade students across the nation are not proficient readers (National Assessment for Education Progress, 2005). Reading readiness and the ability to read proficiently are critical skills needed by all of our nation's children for their ongoing well-being and academic success. In Minnesota, the statistics are very similar to the national figures. Over fifty percent of children included in a strategic sample of Minnesota kindergartners were assessed as not proficient in language and literacy (Minnesota School Readiness Study, 2004). Twenty percent of third grade Minnesota students and thirty percent of fourth grade Minnesota students are not reading at proficient levels (MCA-II, 2007).

Children who start out not ready to read or who struggle to read in the early grades are likely to have deficits throughout their schooling (Juel, 1988; Torgesen & Burgess, 1998). The "Mathew Effect"- based on studies that track students' literacy performance over time - confirmed that the "rich get richer and the poor get poorer." Readers who do well tend to read more and become better readers while readers who initially struggle with early literacy skills tend to avoid reading and don't improve (Stanovich, 1986). However, research also confirms that most reading difficulties in the early elementary years are believed to be related to instruction and experience, not the cognitive abilities of the learner (Vellutino & Scanlon, 2001). It is important to act fast and effectively to get struggling readers on track to love to read.

At the federal level, standards-based education and accountability has been reinforced through initiatives and legislation. These, in turn, have led to the development of methods that can make a difference for struggling readers. The Clinton Administration's America Reads Challenge Act (1997) led to a proliferation of community-based, national service literacy initiatives across the country. The 1999 Reading Excellence Act provided grants to states with the requirement to use "scientifically-based" research methods in approaches to train teachers to provide high quality reading instruction. Most recently, the Bush administration's No Child Left Behind (NCLB) legislation set standards for proficiency and built in the use of tutoring as a supplemental service for underperforming schools.

Expanding the instructional workforce

One-to-one tutoring is effective. "Tutoring, as a supplement to classroom teaching, is generally considered the most powerful form of instruction for increasing underachieving students' reading achievement" (Burns, et al. 2004). However, tutoring can be of considerable cost in dollars and staff time. A study by the San Diego (California) Unified School District (1992) found that the average annual cost per pupil served by Reading Recovery, a teacher-delivered one-to-one tutoring curriculum, was \$3,250 in 1992, with more recent costs at an average of \$8,000 - \$10,000 per pupil. Reading Recovery teachers typically are assigned to the program for 50% of the school day and tutor only four students at a time. The typical Reading Recovery teacher serves no more than eight children over the course of a school year (Pullen, 2004).

The effectiveness of Reading Recovery, and similar tutoring programs, has led educators to search for less expensive and more feasible methods that produce similar outcomes. Wasik (1998b) reviewed volunteer tutoring programs and found common practices that can lead to measurable gains for students; the presence of a certified specialist to supervise the volunteers, ongoing training and feedback to the volunteers, structured tutoring sessions that follow a lesson plan, intensive and consistent timing of sessions with the tutor, and ongoing assessment of the progress of the student.

Volunteers have proven to be effective tutors. In a summary study to assess the effectiveness of supplemental, adult-delivered, one-to-one interventions for elementary school children with low reading skills, Elbaum et al (2001) found that, on average, students who received one-to-one instruction performed at a level 2/5 of a standard deviation higher than the average level of the comparison group. "For students experiencing severe difficulty in reading, an effect of this magnitude would not likely be sufficient to raise performance to within the average range for a grade level or to eliminate the need for sustained support beyond the time frame of the intervention. The benefit might, however, be great enough to allow these students to keep up with classroom instruction and to avoid academic failure" (Elbaum, et al, 2001).

The qualifications of the individuals who tutor make a difference in the effect size. Two subgroups of volunteer tutors emerged, those who maintained treatment fidelity (e.g. came to each tutoring session, tutored for the full amount of time) and those who did not. The effect size associated with consistent tutors was 0.85 while the effect size of inconsistent tutors is .06. (Vadasy et al, 2002) Not surprisingly given the recommendations of Barbara Wasik, tutor training was also a vital component to an intervention program, with the effect size of trained tutors (+.59) significantly higher than the effect size associated with untrained tutors (-.17). These analyses suggest that the reported gains were the result of the tutoring interventions.

AmeriCorps and literacy tutoring

The AmeriCorps program is one initiative of the Corporation for National & Community Service, a public corporation established by the National Service Trust Act of 1993. AmeriCorps is composed of three programs: State/National; National Civilian Community Corps (NCCC) and Volunteers in Service to America (VISTA). State/National programs are primarily operated through state commissions and they support a network of participants, referred to as "members," who engage in a year or two of community service. In exchange for a year of full-time service, members, ages 18 and older, receive a stipend and earn an education award that can be used to pay for higher education or to repay existing student loans. Education-related service has been a priority for the Corporation for National & Community Service from the beginning and education programs make up the largest single area of service and funding focus. In 2001, more than one third of all AmeriCorps State/National programs provided direct instruction in the form of tutoring.

In recognition of the strong emphasis on tutoring for AmeriCorps members, a national tutoring outcomes study was conducted in 2001 to assess the impact of members' efforts. Participating students, who were below grade level at pretest, improved their reading performance more than the gain expected for the typical child at their grade level. This finding held for students at all grade levels tested and was consistent across different ethnic/racial backgrounds. Four core, effective practices were identified as related to significant reading gains; tutoring sessions should occur at least three times a week, tutors must receive training both prior to and during the course of tutoring, the program needs to be at least moderately or fully implemented at the site, and programs must evaluate the effectiveness of their tutoring activities. These effective tutoring practices were statistically related to student reading skill gains documented in the study, and led the external evaluator to attribute these gains to the AmeriCorps program efforts (Abt Associates, Inc. 2001). These findings also led to the Corporation for National and Community Service developing standards for AmeriCorps programs that provide tutoring.

AmeriCorps members have proven to effectively supplement the instructional workforce and can help to positively change the course of literacy gaps facing many young learners. Social change requires "expanded support for organizations that are approaching social-sector problems in a fundamentally new way and creating scalable, sustainable, systems-changing solutions" (Christensen, et al, 2006). The seemingly overwhelming numbers of children who are at risk or who cannot read at grade level can be tutored, one by one or in small groups, and can learn to read. The Minnesota Reading Corps vision is that every Minnesota child reads by the end of third grade.

The Minnesota Reading Corps model

The Minnesota Reading Corps is a model built upon data-based instruction with research-based interventions. Prior to the start of each school year, AmeriCorps members receive intensive training in early literacy interventions. Members, who give one to two years of fulltime or part time regularly-scheduled service, are each responsible for providing approximately 20 - 40 children per school year with literacy instruction. To date, Minnesota Reading Corps sites include Head Start programs, community preschools, child care centers, ECFE classrooms, and elementary schools (both public and charter). The Minnesota Reading Corps model is based on identified best practices for both the initiative and the site at which the services are delivered. These practices include:

1. Literacy-rich environments,
2. Incorporation of a research-based reading curriculum,
3. Setting of school goals for improving literacy of students,
4. Establishing literacy benchmarks for individual students,
5. Frequently monitoring progress, and
6. The use of a web-based data management tool.

Minnesota Reading Corps sites are selected based on the presence of, or willingness to, incorporate these characteristics or practices into the school setting.

The ongoing involvement of experienced, specialized literacy coaches with the members insures that the skills they gain through training are maintained throughout the year and that student interventions are monitored. Master literacy coaches visit sites, observe members, and review literacy assessment scores to help determine the best literacy strategies for each child.

The Minnesota Reading Corps strategies are designed for both preschool-aged students and K – 3rd grade students. The members work with preschool-aged children in their classrooms to create literacy-rich environments. Benchmark data is collected for each child to tailor literacy interventions for individual children, children in small groups, and for whole classrooms.

Members serve as one-on-one tutors in the K-3 settings and provide individualized, research-based interventions to students who are just below proficiency in reading. The members tutor students over three sessions per week, a total of sixty minutes on average, to build the fluency skills needed by each student as indicated by continuous progress monitoring. Fluency has been demonstrated to be the most reliable predictor of reading comprehension in early elementary grades (Schatschneider, 2004).

Members deliver research-based literacy interventions to K – 3rd grade students through a set of exercises that include: letter name and sound, nonsense word fluency, letter/sound correspondence, phoneme blending, phoneme segmenting, blending words, repeated reading, newscaster reading, pencil tap, stop/go, and repeated reading with question generation. (For a complete description of the measurement rationale and tools for the Minnesota Reading Corps, refer to Stewart & Wedl's *ServeMinnesota Literacy Program Evaluation: Using AIMSweb © Benchmark and Progress Monitoring Systems*, 2004).

The Minnesota Reading Corps model offers key components that have been identified as important to a successful volunteer tutoring program; the integration of certified specialists who supervise and coach the volunteers, ongoing training and feedback to the volunteers, structured tutoring/literacy intervention sessions that are in accordance to a lesson plan, intensive and consistent tutoring/intervention, and ongoing assessment of student progress (Wasik, 1998b).

As K- 3rd grade students get back on track to read by third grade, they “graduate” from Minnesota Reading Corps and additional children are tutored by the member. In the K – 3rd grade settings, the tutors work with school staff to use the literacy benchmark data to decide which children will most benefit from participation. Ongoing progress monitoring data is tracked to help decide when a child has “caught up” their literacy skills at the rate to be back on course to read by the end of third grade. Benchmark and progress monitoring data are also used to evaluate the effectiveness of the program as a whole on an annual basis. Minnesota Reading Corps members implement standardized strategies to involve parents and community volunteers at each site.

2007 Minnesota Reading Corps results

Students Served

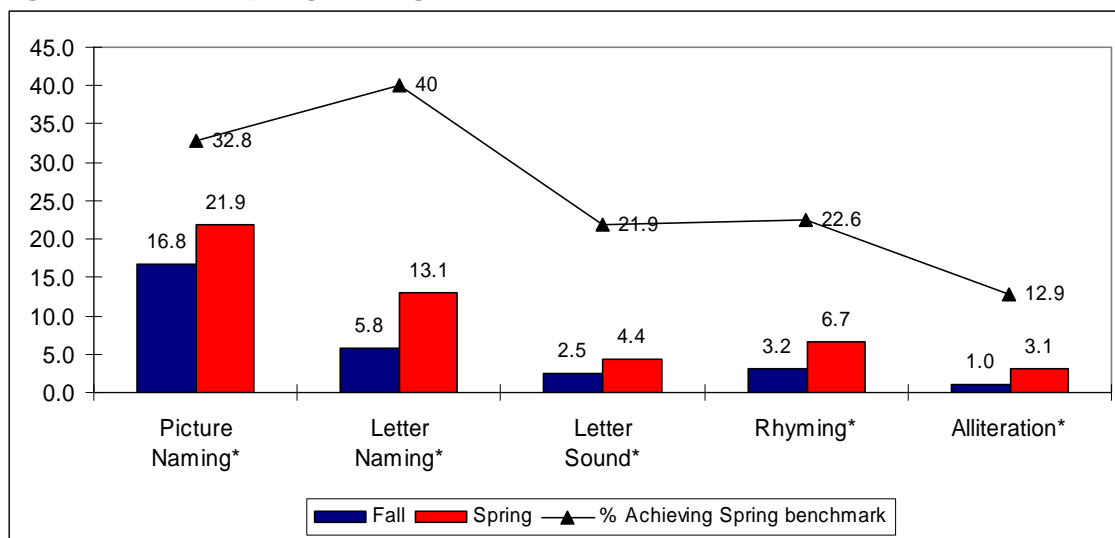
Minnesota Reading Corps targets at-risk preschool and kindergarten students and 1st, 2nd, and 3rd grade students who are just below proficiency. Benchmarks are established for all students in the fall and/or prior to beginning Minnesota Reading Corps involvement. In 2006-2007, 3,051 students participated in or were screened for inclusion in the Minnesota Reading Corps and 2,594 children were served.

Community-based Preschool Student Literacy Assessment Results

A total of 83 (78 four-year-olds and 5 five-year-olds) preschool students who attended community-based preschools participated in Minnesota Reading Corps in 2006-2007. These preschool students were assessed on 5 Individual Growth and Development Indicators, or IGDIs, (McConnell, Priest, Davis & McEvoy, 2002), which measure student knowledge in five key literacy areas: rhyming, letter sounds, vocabulary, alliteration, and letter identification. Only spring benchmarks have been established for the IGDIs and this group of students scored substantially below the spring goal when they began the program in the fall ($p < .05$). For a complete description on methods and analyses of the literacy assessment results, see the ACET, Inc. (2007) technical report.

A summary of the average fall-to-spring community-based preschool student performance on all 5 IGDI measures is shown in Figure 1. Note that, for all 5 IGDI measures, there was a statistically significant ($p < 0.01$) improvement from fall to spring.

Figure 1: Fall-to-Spring Average IGDI Scores and Benchmarks

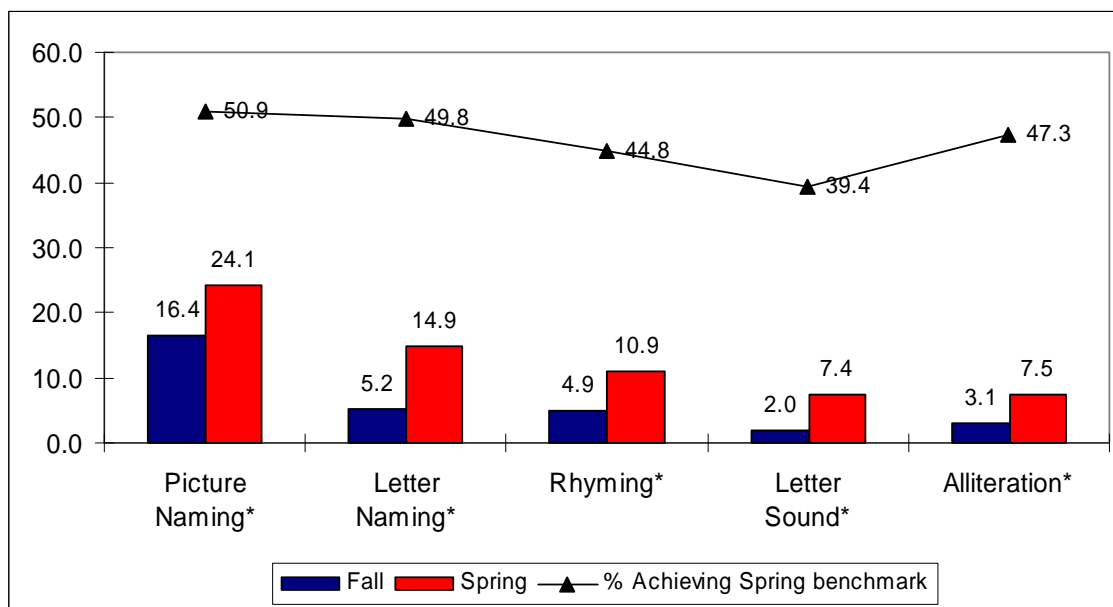


*Indicates statistically significant improvement from fall to spring at $p > 0.01$.

Head Start Student Literacy Assessment Results

A total of 984 Head Start 4 year old students were assessed at least once on 5 IGDI measures between fall and spring 2007. These students scored considerably below the spring goal when they began the program in the fall ($p < .05$). Average fall-to-spring IGDI scores and percent of students meeting spring benchmarks for each measure for Head Start students are shown in the Figure 2. Note that, for all 5 IGDI measures, there was a statistically significant ($p < 0.01$) improvement from fall to spring. Nearly half or half of these students met the spring benchmark scores for picture naming, letter naming, and alliteration.

Figure 2: Fall-to-Spring Change in Average IGD Performance



Minnesota Reading Corps Effects on Early Literacy Skills.

Fifty-seven of the preschool students who participated in Minnesota Reading Corps Head Start classrooms during the 2005-2006 school year enrolled in the Minneapolis Public Schools for kindergarten in Fall 2006. For the third consecutive year, the Minnesota Reading Corps preschool cohort entering kindergarten in a Minneapolis Public school was matched with two other groups of kindergarten students; one group of students who participated in Head Start but not Minnesota Reading Corps, and another group who did not participate in either Head Start or Minnesota Reading Corps. The full report (Heistad, et al 2007 in draft) of this study is available for review.

Minneapolis Public School District (2006-2007) data indicates that:

- 90% of the fifty-seven children were enrolled in free or reduced price lunch,
- 2% were identified as qualifying for special education services,
- 56% were identified as English language learners,
- 30% entered kindergarten with a first language of Spanish and 20% with a first language of Somali,
- 61% were male,
- 56% were identified as African American and 30% were identified as Hispanic,
- 44% were living with both parents.

Minneapolis Public Schools assessed entering kindergarten students using the Beginning of Kindergarten Assessment (BKA). More information about the scales and the technical adequacy of these measures are detailed in the BKA technical manual (Betts J., Pickart, M., Reschley, A., and Heistad, D., 2004). Figure 3 shows the difference in mean Total Literacy scores and Figure 4 shows the percent of students who met the district standard (i.e. a total score of 65 or higher) which predicts passing the No Child Left Behind reading assessment in the Minnesota Comprehensive Assessment – II in 3rd grade. Using a paired sample t-test, Minnesota Reading Corps participants' Total Literacy Scores were significantly higher when compared to Head Start only participants, and again when compared to students who did not participate in Head Start or Minnesota Reading Corps. Finally, nearly half of the Minnesota Reading Corps participating kindergarten students met the district standard and were on track to pass the 3rd grade reading assessment.

Figure 3: 2005-2006 Beginning Kindergarten Literacy Scores for Reading Corps and Control Groups (n=57)

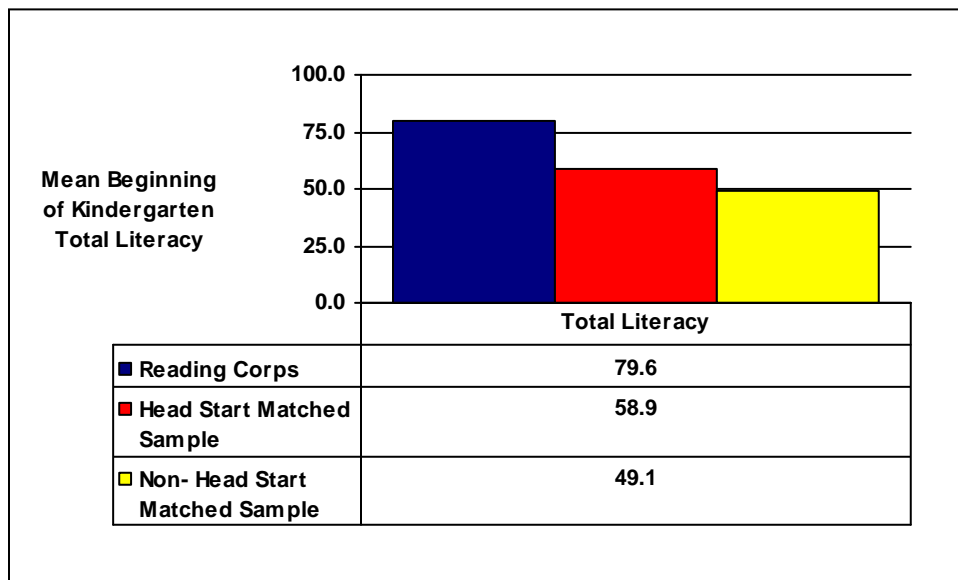
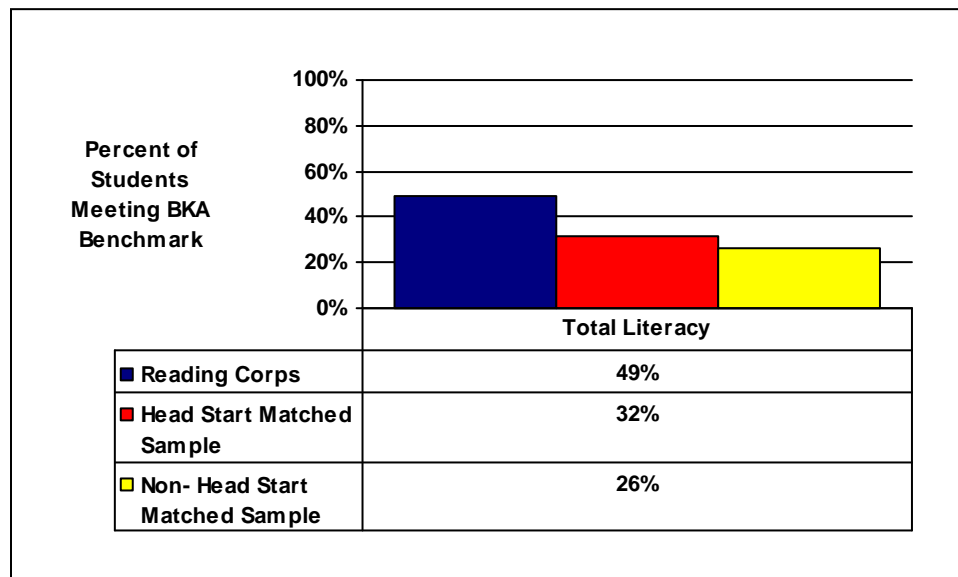


Figure 4: 2005-2006 Percent of Students Meeting Beginning Kindergarten Benchmarks by Group (n=57)



These results are similar to matched sample t-test results from two previous years and they indicate that Minnesota Reading Corps participation is playing a role in preparing children with the early literacy skills needed to start kindergarten. While these results are very promising, it is also important to note that “the studies of...early literacy achievement for students who entered Minneapolis Public Schools kindergarten classes in the fall ... provide preliminary evidence of the effectiveness of early literacy intervention provided by Americorps volunteers in Minneapolis Head Start classrooms. These findings should be interpreted with caution because the matched sample post-test only design did not have pre-intervention measure of literacy to control for student literacy experience prior to the intervention” (Heistad, 2006).

K-3rd Grade Student Literacy Assessment Results

Data-based instruction for K – 3rd grade participating students is guided by weekly progress monitoring results that measure student performance and growth while receiving MRC tutoring. The purpose of the progress monitoring is to determine if the student is responding to literacy instruction and to guide future intervention decisions. The master coach and the site supervisor/internal coach interpret student data and guide the member in the tutoring interventions used. From September 11, 2006 to May 25, 2007, 984 K – 3rd grade students were assessed at least twice on the same progress monitoring measure. The number of assessment points per student ranged from 2 – 35 over the course of the school year.

Overall, students made statistically significant progress from fall to spring ($p < 0.01$). Student modeled growth ranged from 1.20 letters/words per week to 1.91 letters/words per week, depending on the assessment. Progress monitoring scores, analyzed using growth modeling analyses, are summarized in Table 1. The proportion of students who were on track to meet benchmark goals established for each grade by the last week of testing was achieved in 50% of the assessments. This is significant considering that MRC is designed to serve students who scored below benchmark goals established for the fall.

Table 1. Student Modeled Scores for Each Time Point

Grade Level	n	Fall Scores	Winter Scores ¹	Spring Scores	Spring Goal	Growth per Week ²
Grade K (Letter Sound)	234	1.27 →	19.38 →	44.94*	36	1.78
Grade 1 (Nonsense Words)	216	15.08 →	52.55		52	1.91
Grade 1 (Oral Reading)	161		14.78 →	44.63	49	1.51
Grade 2 (Oral Reading)	235	29.62 →	60.10 →	83.33	90	1.49
Grade 3 (Oral Reading)	272	49.78 →	78.20 →	93.60	107	1.20

* The kindergarten group was on target to reach the spring goal by March 2007. The modeled score represented 3 preceding weeks (to April 9, 2007) of meeting this goal to illustrate the continued positive growth.

Figures 5,6,7,8 & 9 show modeled student growth over the course of the 2006-07 program year. MRC student scores are shown in blue while the benchmark goal is shown in red³. Students were assessed at different times in their experience with the program: some were assessed early on, some later, some during the entire 37-week period. These curves represent mean growth curves for students at different stages. MRC participating student scores, on average, showed growth that followed closely below the benchmark curve and, in some cases, surpassed that curve by the end of the 37 weeks. Given that these students started below proficiency, these rates of growth show that learning is occurring at a strong rate.

¹ Winter timeline for kindergarten, second, and third grade is January 22, 2007; for first grade nonsense word is November 13, 2006 and oral reading is March 12, 2007.

² Mid-term growth calculations for kindergarten, second, and third grade is January 22, 2007; mid-term for first grade nonsense word is November 13, 2006 and for oral reading is March 12, 2007.

³ Benchmark goals were determined prior to the start of the 2006-07 evaluation. It appears that the weekly growth rates were developed using a linear statistical equation with the general formula of (Spring Goal – Fall Goal) / Number of Instructional Weeks with some differences between computed weekly growth rates and implementation noted in ACET, Inc. technical report (2007).

Figure 5: Kindergarten Letter Sound Fall to Spring Growth (n=234 students)

Red Line: Fall Goal=8 and Spring Goal=36
Blue Line: MRC Student Growth

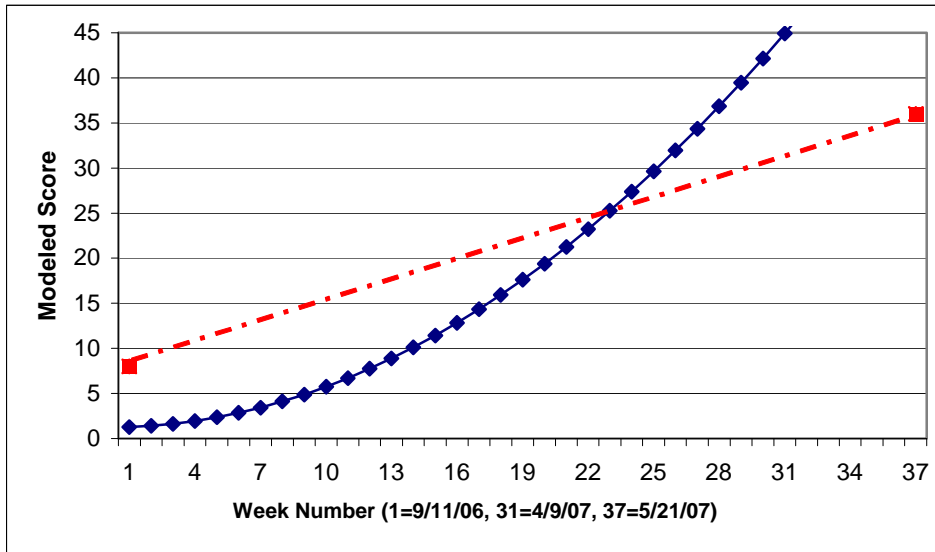


Figure 6: First Grade Nonsense Word Fall to Winter Growth (n=216 Students)

Red Line: Fall Goal=28 and Winter Goal=52
Blue Line: MRC Student Growth

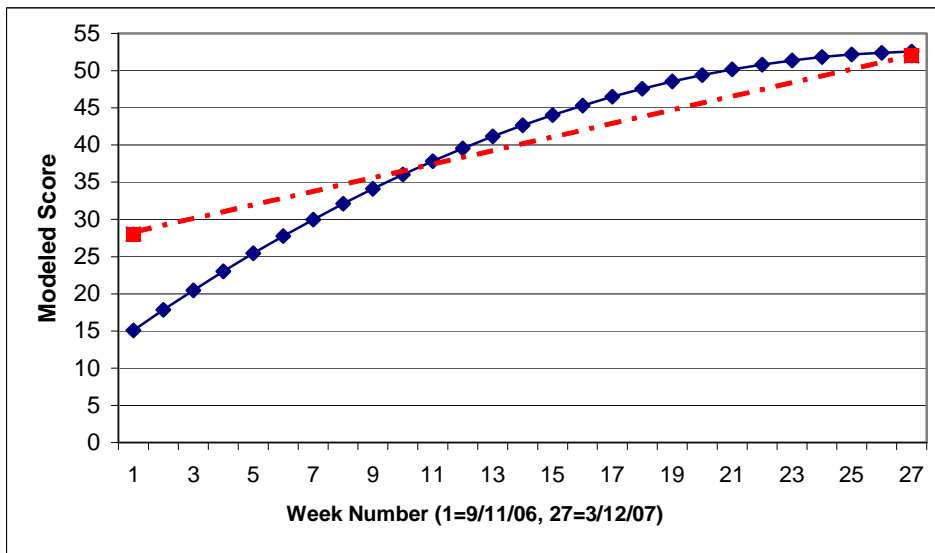


Figure 7: First Grade Oral Reading Winter to Spring Growth (n=161 Students)

Red Line: Winter Goal=20 and Spring Goal=49
Blue Line: MRC Student Growth

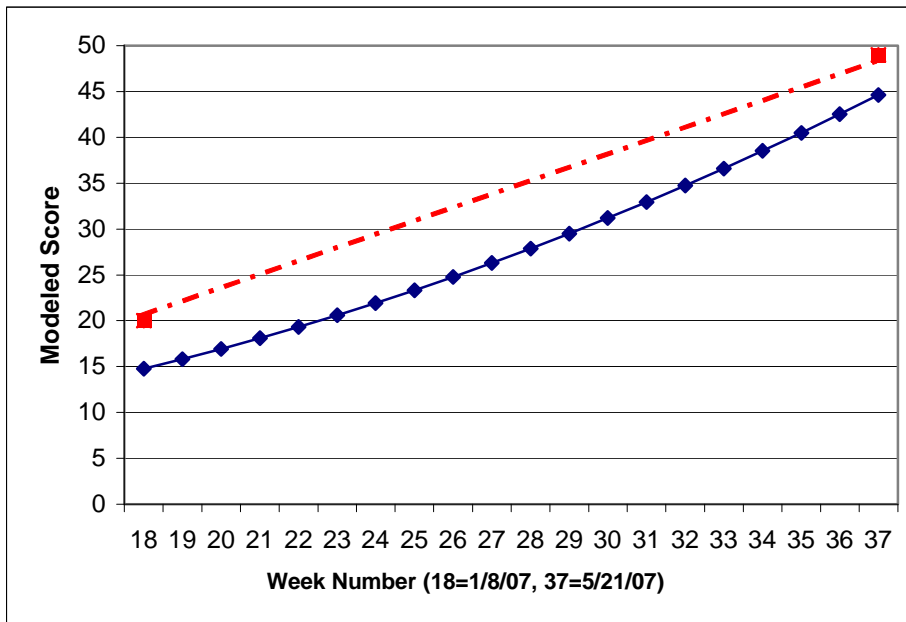


Figure 8: Second Grade Oral Reading Fall to Spring Growth (n=235 Students)

Red Line: Fall Goal=43 and Spring Goal=90
Blue Line: MRC Student Growth

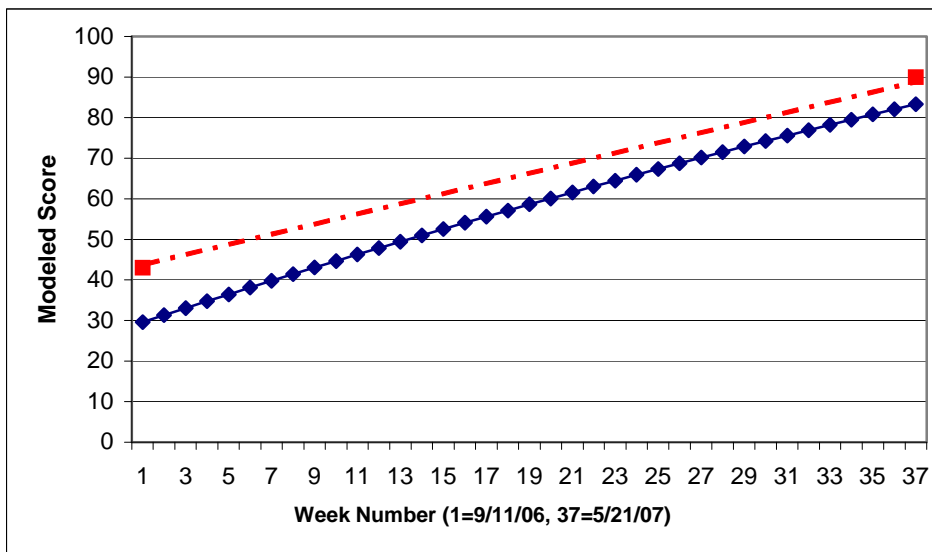
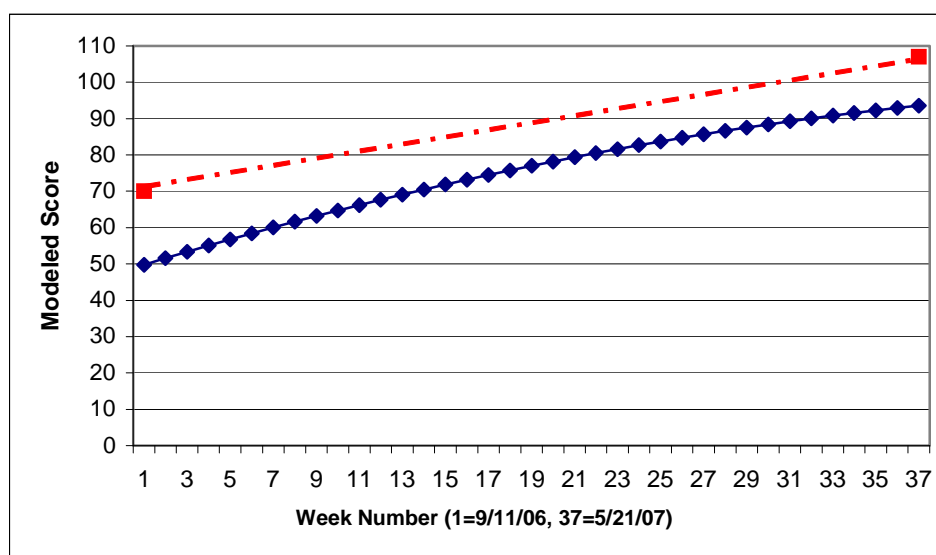


Figure 9: Third Grade Oral Reading Fall to Spring Growth (n=272 Students)

Red Line: Fall Goal=70 and Spring Goal=107
 Blue Line: MRC Student Growth



The total number of K – 3rd grade students tested in the fall benchmark period was 1,352 students. Within this group, the total number of students that had assessments with at least two time points (Fall, Winter, Spring) and with below proficient result levels in the Fall was 877. Overall, the students in these grades made statistically significant progress from one time period to another. These results from benchmark assessments parallel the results from progress monitoring. Tables 2, 3, 4, & 5 show the average score of students who were tested within the three testing time periods, as well as the number and proportion meeting benchmark by the last time they were assessed.

Table 2. Average Kindergarten Benchmark Scores and Proportion Meeting Goal

Letter Naming **	N	Fall	Winter	Spring	Meeting Goal
Fall & Winter	60	5.4 →	21.0*		21 (35.0%)
Fall, Winter & Spring	37	5.0 →	23.5 →	36.8*	15 (40.5%)
Letter Sound	N	Fall	Winter	Spring	Meeting Goal
Fall & Winter	113	1.9 →	16.6*		52 (46.0%)
Winter & Spring	35		7.4 →	30.3*	13 (37.1%)
Fall, Winter & Spring	44	2.1 →	20.32 →	36.9*	26 (59.1%)
Nonsense Word	N	Fall	Winter	Spring	Meeting Goal
Winter & Spring	32		5.9 →	25.7*	17 (53.1%)

*Indicates statistically significant improvement from fall to spring at $p < 0.01$.

**A small number of students ($n=12$) completed Letter Naming Fluency in both Winter & Spring, however there were an insufficient number of observations to test statistically.

Table 3. Average First Grade Benchmark Scores and Proportion Meeting Goal

Nonsense Word	n	Fall	Winter	Spring	Meeting Goal
Fall & Winter	112	17.6 →	44.4*		35 (31.3%)**
Oral Reading	n	Fall	Winter	Spring	Meeting Goal
Winter & Spring	95		13.7 →	39.6*	26 (27.4%)

*Indicates statistically significant improvement from fall to spring at $p < 0.01$.

**This is the number and proportion of first grade students who met or exceeded the March (winter) nonsense word benchmark goal when assessed in January / February.

Table 4. Average Second Grade Benchmark Scores and Proportion Meeting Goal

	n	Fall	Winter	Spring	Meeting Goal
Fall & Winter	111	21.5 →	49.4*		20 (18.0%)
Winter & Spring	24		42.9 →	66.7*	4 (16.7%)
Fall, Winter & Spring	82	28.3 →	57.6 →	78.7*	29 (35.4%)

*Indicates statistically significant improvement from fall to spring at $p < 0.01$.

Table 5. Average Third Grade Benchmark Scores and Proportion Meeting Goal

	n	Fall	Winter	Spring	Meeting Goal
Fall & Winter	40	45.3 →	73.6*		8 (20.0%)
Winter & Spring	42		61.8 →	83.1*	9 (21.4%)
Fall, Winter & Spring	111	46.5 →	73.6 →	92.4*	26 (23.4%)

*Indicates statistically significant improvement from fall to spring at $p < 0.01$.

Implementation Reports from Site Supervisors and Members.

Each Minnesota Reading Corps site provides a site supervisor - a site-level staff person who serves as the liaison for the MRC, supervises the member, and receives training on the coaching methods. Site supervisors in program year 2006-2007 reported that the Minnesota Reading Corps model made a positive impact at their school and with their students. Specifically, the coaching component was recognized by a strong majority (89%) of site supervisors as a means for building sustainability for the literacy focus at the site. Master coaches “pass on” practices to site supervisors to incorporate into their role at the site. The consistency and expertise of the site supervisor/master coach partnership makes it possible to pursue the goal to reach every Minnesota child age 3 to Grade 3 who needs help reading. A majority of site supervisors reported that the model is a good fit at their site (85%), in particular because the instructional workforce is expanded.

Based on site supervisor reports, consistent alignment with the Minnesota Reading Corps model across sites can be strengthened through clearer definitions of the member and site supervisor roles, and expanding the practice of conducting regular assessment of student literacy progress across all students.

The Minnesota Reading Corps members rated the master coaching activities very positively. Members rated the training and coaching as effective in teaching members to provide the literacy interventions (87%), and rated the coaches as knowledgeable (100%). Members reported that coaches visited sites, observed interventions, and provided feedback regularly. Notably, over half of the members surveyed reported that their career plans have been influenced by their service in the Minnesota Reading Corps and many plan to go back to college or to shift their career to working with children.

Based on member reports, sustainability of the Minnesota Reading Corps model can be built by additional and timely training and support to members to recruit and supervise community volunteers. The model is designed with the vision that community volunteers will maintain the tutoring efforts at each site into the future under the guidance of site-level staff. Volunteers can carry on the foundation laid by the AmeriCorps member, thereby implementing the system-level change at the site.

Key Accomplishments of Minnesota Reading Corps:

- Grew from 75 members at XX sites serving 1,400 children in 05-06 to 127 members at 77 sites serving 3,000 number of children in 06-07,
- Secured an annual state appropriation of \$1 million to support reaching 15,000 children over the next biennium,
- For the third consecutive year, found that children from MRC Head Start Classrooms started kindergarten in Minneapolis Public Schools significantly more prepared in literacy skills than other children,
- K-3 children, on average, made statistically significant progress from one testing period to the next on appropriate measures.

Areas for Continuous Improvement:

- Carry out the design and implementation in 07-08 of a year long state-of-the art AmeriCorps member recruitment process so positions are filled early and there are many more applicants than openings,
- Establish greater standardization of the community volunteer component including the design and implementation of a coaching model for volunteer coordinators,
- Establish greater standardization of the family involvement component of the program,
- Develop a plan to take the model to scale in Minnesota and nationally,
- Continue strengthening of evaluation design by considering feasibility of a comparison design for K-3 settings, the use of fidelity data in analysis, and the inclusion of student demographic information in analysis.

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