

What Do Educational Leaders Need to Know about Reading?

Reading is the cornerstone of all learning. In each subject area, the ability to read and comprehend written material is of the highest importance. Supporting the development of capable readers at every level is our goal as educators, parents, and as a community.

Current legislation:

- **Reading Well by Third Grade**
 - The legislature seeks to have all of Minnesota's children reading well by third grade.
 - Essentially a rewrite of existing statute 120B.12, this bill requires that all students be provided with comprehensive scientifically based reading instruction consistent with section 122A.06, subdivision 4.
 - Schools must notify parents of student progress at least annually for all students, and must give parents of students not reading at or above grade level K-3 timely information including reading assessments administered, services available, and strategies parents can use at home to support their student.
 - For students identified as not reading at or above grade level, a school needs to implement intervention evidence-based practices to meet the needs of learners and accelerate their growth toward grade level expectations. Assessment methods and data points used to determine grade level reading proficiency must be reported to the Commissioner annually beginning next school year. The first report needs to be submitted by June 1, 2012 and should be connected to the local literacy plan..
 - Districts must provide sufficient training for all licensed staff to improve reading instruction, and provide regular training and support so that elementary teachers can implement components of comprehensive, scientifically-based reading instruction, recognize students' diverse needs in cross-cultural settings and serve the oral language and linguistic needs of ELL students.
- **Local Literacy Plan**
 - A systemic approach to ensuring all students read well by third grade should be included in your Local Literacy Plan. This plan includes how you will ensure reading proficiency for all students by the end of Grade 3, the process to assess students' level of reading proficiency, how you will notify and involve parents, how and when you will intervene with students who are not reading at or above grade level, and how you will identify and meet staff development needs. This Literacy Plan must be posted on your official school district Web site.
- **Literacy Incentive Aid**
 - Beginning in fiscal year 2013, a school's proficiency allowance for the Literacy Incentive Aid is equal to the percentage of students in each building that meet or exceed proficiency on the third grade reading Minnesota Comprehensive Assessment, averaged across the previous three test administrations, times \$85. A school's growth allowance is equal to the percentage of students at that school making medium or high growth, under section 120B.299, on the fourth grade reading Minnesota Comprehensive Assessment, averaged across the previous three test administrations, times \$85. This aid may be added to general fund purposes, and could be used to enhance practices, services, or provide literacy leadership to continue to develop a coherent system of support for students across grades. (<https://www.revisor.mn.gov/laws/?id=11&doctype=Chapter&year=2011&type=1>).

- **122A.06 subd. 4: Current definition of scientifically based reading instruction:**
 - “The program or collection of practices must include at a minimum, effective, balanced instruction in all five areas of reading...”
 - Defined by the National Reading Panel (2000) as Phonemic Awareness, Phonics, Fluency, Vocabulary, and Comprehension
 - “Comprehensive, scientifically based reading instruction also includes and integrates instructional strategies for continuously assessing, evaluation, and communicating student’s reading progress and needs in order to design and implement ongoing interventions so that students of all ages and proficiency levels can read and comprehend text and apply higher level thinking skills.”
 - Nothing in changes to legislation limit or restrict the authority of school districts to select program or curriculum, or develop instruction. School districts can use new or existing materials and practices to best meet the needs of students.
 - <https://www.revisor.leg.state.mn.us/bin/bldbill.php?bill=H0002.5.html&session=ls86>
- **8710.7200 Clock Hours: Minnesota Requirements for Renewal of Professional Licenses.**
 - Requires all teachers to include reading training in licensure renewal
 - Empowers local districts to study their reading needs and design appropriate long-term professional development to meet needs
 - Teachers must have in-service preparation in scientifically based reading instruction, which the law identifies as: “instruction and practice in phonemic awareness, phonics and other word recognition skills, and guided oral reading for beginning readers, as well as extensive silent reading, vocabulary instruction, instruction in comprehension, and instruction that fosters understanding and higher-order thinking for readers of all ages and proficiency levels.”
 - <http://www.revisor.leg.state.mn.us/arule/8710/7200.html>
- **Reading Licensure Rule 8710.4725**
 - Any teacher who holds or qualifies for a professional license under Minnesota Rule 8710.4725 TEACHERS OF READING may teach reading to any K-12 student.
 - Any teacher who holds a valid reading license may teach reading to only those students within the scope (grade level) of the license: Elementary Remedial Reading grades 1-6; Secondary Remedial Reading grades 7-12; Secondary Development Reading grades 7-12.
 - ***Teachers of grades 7-12 assigned to teach one or more reading classes must hold a reading license for the grade level assigned.***
 - Teachers licensed to teach elementary grades are authorized to teach reading to students in their scope of licensure. However, while not required, it is recommended that elementary teachers assigned to teach multiple courses of “reading” should hold a reading license.
 - Contrary to past practices, any teacher who holds a professional license under Minnesota Rule 8710.4250 Teachers of Communication Arts and Literature, or holds licensure in English Language Arts, or English-Humanities is restricted to teaching reading only in their content area.

Early Literacy:

- From several decades of research we have learned about how children learn to read. This research tells us that to become skilled and confident readers over time, young children need repeated of opportunities to experience the building blocks of reading :
- Build spoken language by talking and listening
- Learn about print and books
- Learn about the sounds of spoken language (phonological awareness)

- Learn about the letters of the alphabet
- Listen to books read aloud
- <http://www.nifl.gov/publications/pdf/NELPReport09.pdf>
- <http://fcd-us.org/resources/prek-3rd-putting-full-day-kindergarten-middle>

Adolescent Literacy:

- In spite of careful research, the problems with reading at the secondary level, classroom instruction is remarkably similar to the climate described in Alvermann and Moore's Five Themes from 1991:
 1. Single text use predominates
 2. Learning facts in a dominant goal
 3. Little pre-teaching of concepts and vocabulary
 4. Teacher control and order are of paramount interest
 5. Accountability and testing and time constraints limit teachers efforts to implement content reading strategies
- International Reading Association Position Paper lists the following components as essential elements of a quality adolescent literacy support mechanisms:
 - Access to a range of material that adolescents **choose**
 - Assessment of strengths and weaknesses that provide guidance for teachers
 - Excellent instruction for struggling readers
 - Parental, community, and national support for adolescent readers
 - Quality instruction focusing on **skills** and **motivation**
 - Explicit instruction from qualified teachers across the curriculum
 - Instruction that is responsive to diversity – broadly defined
- <http://www.all4ed.org/files/archive/publications/ReadingNext/ReadingNext.pdf>
- <http://www.all4ed.org/files/WritingNext.pdf>
- <http://carnegie.org/programs/past-commissions-councils-and-task-forces/carnegie-council-for-advancing-adolescent-literacy/time-to-act/>

21st Century Skills:

- 21st century skills represent the necessary student outcomes for the 21st century:
 - Learning and Innovation Skills (creativity and innovation, critical thinking and problem solving, etc.)
 - Information, Media and Technology Skills
 - Core Subjects and 21st Century Themes (global awareness, financial literacy, etc.)
 - Life and Career Skills (initiative and self-direction, among others)
- http://www.21stcenturyskills.org/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=254&Itemid=120

For more information:

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Reading is a basic tool in the living of a good life.
~ Mortimer J. Adler ~