

Ensure That All Children Learn to Read & Reduce the Achievement Gap

The Facts

- **Minnesota has the highest achievement gap in the nation** (between Caucasian and African American students).¹
- **63 percent of Minnesota's fourth graders and 64 percent of Minnesota's eighth graders are NOT proficient in reading**²
- **Students not proficient at reading by the beginning of third grade have only a 25 percent chance of catching up** over their entire public school experience.³

What's Not Happening in Minnesota

- **Less than 5 percent of all course credits in Minnesota four-year undergraduate teacher preparation programs relate to the teaching of reading.** Too little time is allocated for prospective teachers to learn how to teach reading.⁴
- **Only 10 out of 120 questions on the current Minnesota elementary teacher licensure test evaluate the topic of reading instruction.**⁵ Minnesota's teacher preparation programs do NOT require their graduates to pass a stand-alone reading assessment showing competency in the teaching of reading before licensure.
- **Results from national surveys indicate that beginning teachers often feel unprepared to teach reading...New teachers are particularly concerned that they cannot meet the needs of students from diverse cultural backgrounds or students learning English as a second language.**⁶
- Results from a survey given to Minnesota elementary teachers showed **only 27 percent of teachers felt prepared to teach reading based upon initial licensure training.** However, **86 percent of these same teachers reported reading improvement in the classroom after they were trained on, and implemented teaching of, the five strands of reading in their classrooms.**⁷

Minnesota Law

Current Minnesota statute 122A.18 Subd. 2a Reading Strategies requires our elementary teacher preparation programs to provide reading instruction consistent with MN Statute 122A.06 subd 4, which at MINIMUM requires instruction in the five components of reading: phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension.

The Time to Act is Now!

- **Encourage the Minnesota Board of Teaching to approve standards for Early Childhood and Elementary Teacher licensure that are consistent with Minnesota statute 122A.18 Subd. 2a Reading Strategies.** By approving new, specific reading standards for teacher candidates, the Board of Teaching communicates to higher ed teacher preparation programs that we want our teacher candidates to have more than 5 percent of their coursework focused on the teaching of reading.
- **Support legislation that requires a reading assessment test,** prior to initial licensure, that measures competency in the teaching of reading.

Footnotes

¹ NAEP Grade 4 Reading Average Scale Score (page 4): <http://www2.edtrust.org/edtrust/summaries2006/Minnesota.pdf>

² MN NAEP scores for fourth grade <http://nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard/pdf/stt2007/2007497MN4.pdf>, eighth grade <http://nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard/pdf/stt2007/2007497MN8.pdf>

³ According to research sponsored by the National Institutes of Health (NIH)

⁴ Review of 24 of the 28 Higher Education submissions of syllabi to evidence compliance with MN statute

⁵ Praxis Test for Elementary Education: Content Knowledge (0014) http://www.ets.org/Media/Tests/PRAXIS/taag/0014/topics_1.htm

⁶ "Minnesota Reads": literacy research revised and released in 2007 by four Minnesota colleges and universities.

⁷ 2007 PASD survey of Minnesota teachers, from schools who received federal grants and training for scientifically based reading instruction