


Minnesota Reading Corps Impact Research
February 11, 2015

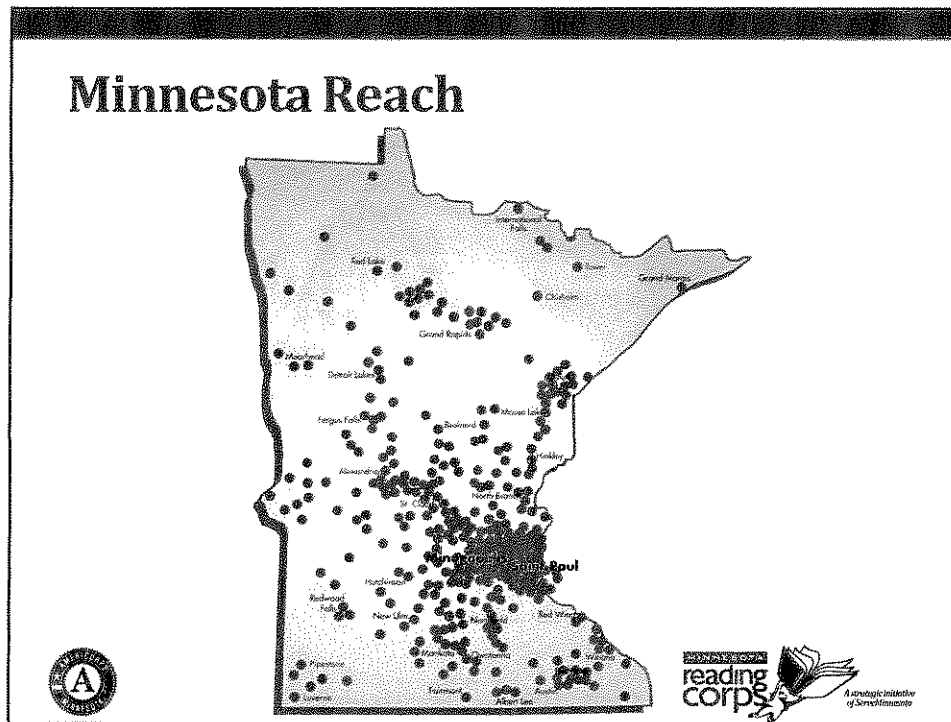
Dave Heistad, Ph.D.
Executive Director of Research, Evaluation and Assessment
Bloomington Public Schools



Minnesota Reading Corps

- **Largest AmeriCorps tutoring program** in the country; a strategic initiative of ServeMinnesota
- Designed to help all Minnesota students become **successful readers by third grade**
- Combines the people power of AmeriCorps with **evidence-based programming**
- Recently completed multi-year external **evaluation validates effectiveness**





Overview of the Special Education Study

- K-3 students who were served by Minnesota Reading Corps (MRC) volunteers during 2010-11 in Minneapolis Schools were matched with students with similar demographic characteristics who were not served by Reading Corps volunteers.
- Special education status was obtained from the official MARSS report submitted to the Minnesota Department of Education
- A matched sample analysis found a statistically significantly different Special Education placement rate for MRC vs. Matched students



Matching Criteria

- The file of all k-3 students with fall total literacy (K-1) or fall MAP reading scale scores (Grades 2 and 3) was sorted hierarchically on variables in the MPS data system in spring of 2011 using the following sort order:
 1. Fall 2010 Literacy/Reading scale scores
 2. Fall Special Education Disability Category
 3. English Language Learner Status (end of year)
 4. Home Language (end of year)
 5. Free or reduced price Lunch (end of year)
 6. Racial Ethnic Category (end of year)
 7. Prior year Attendance (grades 1-3 only)
 8. Gender (end of year)
 9. Homeless/highly mobile status (end of year)
 10. Birth date (only to break ties)



5

Matching Procedures

- Students included in the comparison groups were identical on at least 7 of 9 variables
- The best match was chosen by the computer after sorting the data file of students with fall literacy/reading scores and no missing demographic codes. Following sorting, the matched student selected was the student record directly above or directly below the Reading Corps who had the most matches with the MRC student characteristics.
- Ties (e.g. if the student above and below in the file each had a match on all 9 variables) were broken based on birth date closest to the Reading Corps student



6

Racial/Ethnic Background of Study Participants

Home Language	Reading Corps	Non- Reading Corps Matched Sample
American Indian	51 (6.8%)	50 (6.6%)
African American	360 (47.8%)	359 (47.7%)
Asian/ Pacific Islander	73 (9.7%)	75 (10.0%)
Hispanic	160 (21.2%)	162 (21.5%)
White	109 (14.5%)	107 (14.2%)
Total	753	753



7

Home Language Background of Study Participants

Home Language	Reading Corps	Non- Reading Corps Matched Sample
English	496 (65.9%)	495 (65.7%)
Hmong	54 (7.2%)	54 (7.2%)
Spanish	153 (20.3%)	153 (20.3%)
Somali/Amharic	38 (5.0%)	38 (5.0%)
Other	12 (1.6%)	13 (1.7%)



8

Other Demographic Characteristics

Reading Corps Students

- 93.7% Prior year attendance
- 84.6% Free or reduced lunch
- 50.1% Male
- 8.4 % Homeless/highly mobile

Matched Sample Students

- 93.7% Prior year attendance
- 81.3% Free or reduced lunch
- 47.0% Male
- 6.1% Homeless/highly mobile



9

All Grades End of Year Special Education Status

		Minnesota Reading Corps 2010-11		Total
		no	yes	
Last Special Ed Status	Regular Education	703	727	1430
	Assessed but not eligible	6	9	15
	Eligible but not served	3	4	8
	Spec Ed	39	11	50
	Evaluated, eligible, but parent refused	0	2	2
	IEP terminated	1	0	1
Total		752	753	1505



10

Overall Special Education Placement Results

- 17/ 753 Reading Corps students ended up Eligible for Special Education at the end of the year = 2.3%
- 43/753 Matched Sample students ended up Eligible for Special Education at the end of the year = 5.7%



11

Special Education Cost Savings Estimates for Reading Corps

- Extrapolating these findings for the state of Minnesota would result in a conservative estimate for special education cost savings of \$9 million annually.
 - "The Minneapolis cost estimate of \$8,527.49 for both initial evaluation and instruction in 2010 is well within the national average and in fact is a low estimate. When removing the initial evaluation costs, the special education instruction only cost is \$5,397.66"
 - "The cost estimates in Minneapolis were compared with national data. In 1999-2000, Jay G. Chambers, Jamie Shkolnik and Mania Perez did an analysis of special education costs for the National Center on Special Education Finance. The report published in 2003 was titled, "Total Expenditures for Students with Disabilities Variation by Disability." It concluded that the national average costs for serving children with learning disabilities was \$6,489 of which \$4,071 was special education costs and \$2,418 regular education support."



12

A Growing Body of Evidence

Reading Corps participants:

- Are nearly three times less likely to be referred to special ed (Heistad, 2012)
- Outperform peers on the Kindergarten Readiness Assessment (Heistad, 2005-2009)
- Score twice as high as their peers, after a single semester of tutoring (NORC, 2014)
- Demonstrate greater growth, even with higher risk factors (NORC, 2014)



Conclusions

- **AmeriCorps members enrich the language and literacy instruction at program schools.**
 - Higher scores than comparison sites
 - Intentional instruction
- **Effective in all school types and with all students**
 - Head Start centers, public schools, community-based preschools
 - Urban, suburban and rural
 - Regardless of gender, race/ethnicity, DLL status
- **Program is highly replicable**
 - Comprehensive initial and ongoing training
 - Multi-layered support structure - Coaches, teachers and peers
 - Objective data-based decision making framework for program implementation
- **Affects the entire classroom instructional culture**



Appendix A: Kindergarten End of Year Special Education Status

		Minnesota Reading Corps 2010-11		Total
		no	yes	
Last Special Ed Status	Regular Education	85	91	176
	Assessed but not eligible	1	1	2
	Spec Ed	6	2	8
	Spec Ed under PL89-750	2	0	2
Total		94	94	188



Appendix B: Grade 1 End of Year Special Education Status

		Minnesota Reading Corps 2010-11		Total
		no	yes	
Last Special Ed Status 2011	Regular Education	197	201	398
	Assessed but not eligible	1	3	4
	Eligible but not served	1	1	2
	Spec Ed	9	3	12
Total		208	208	416



Appendix C: Grade 2 End of Year Special Education Status

		Minnesota Reading Corps 2010-11		Total
		no	yes	
Last Special Ed Status 2011	Regular Education	197	204	401
	Assessed but not eligible	1	2	3
	Eligible but not served	1	0	1
	Spec Ed	10	2	12
Total		209	208	417



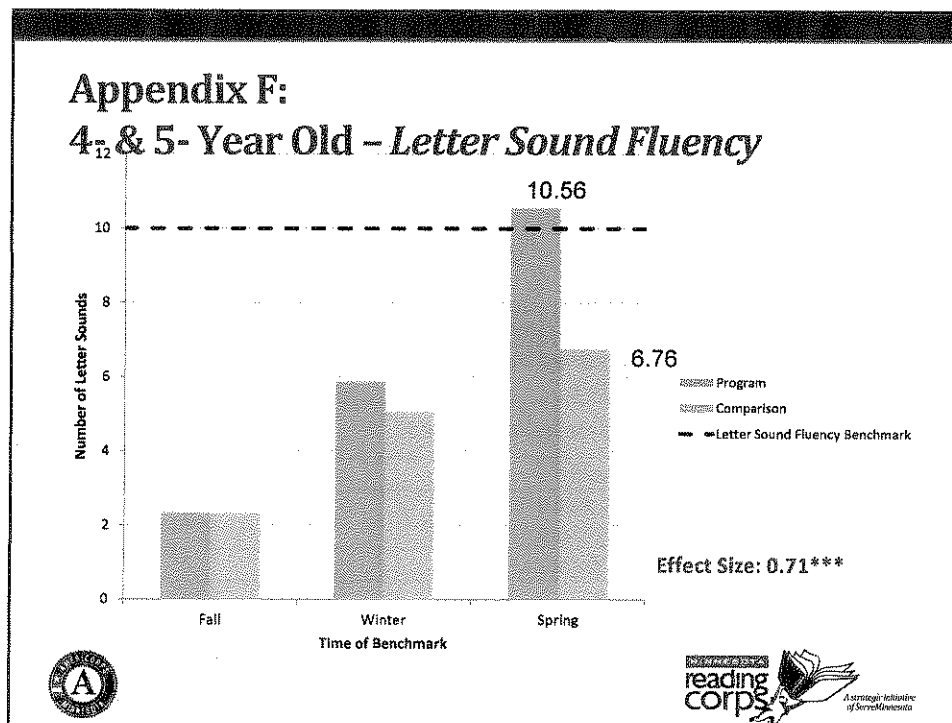
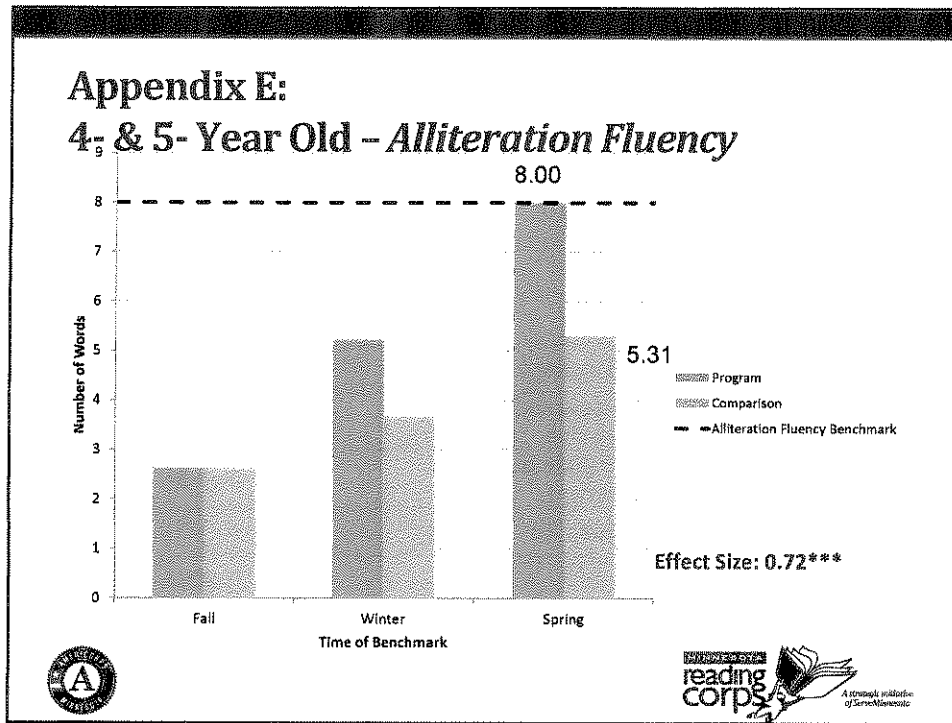
17

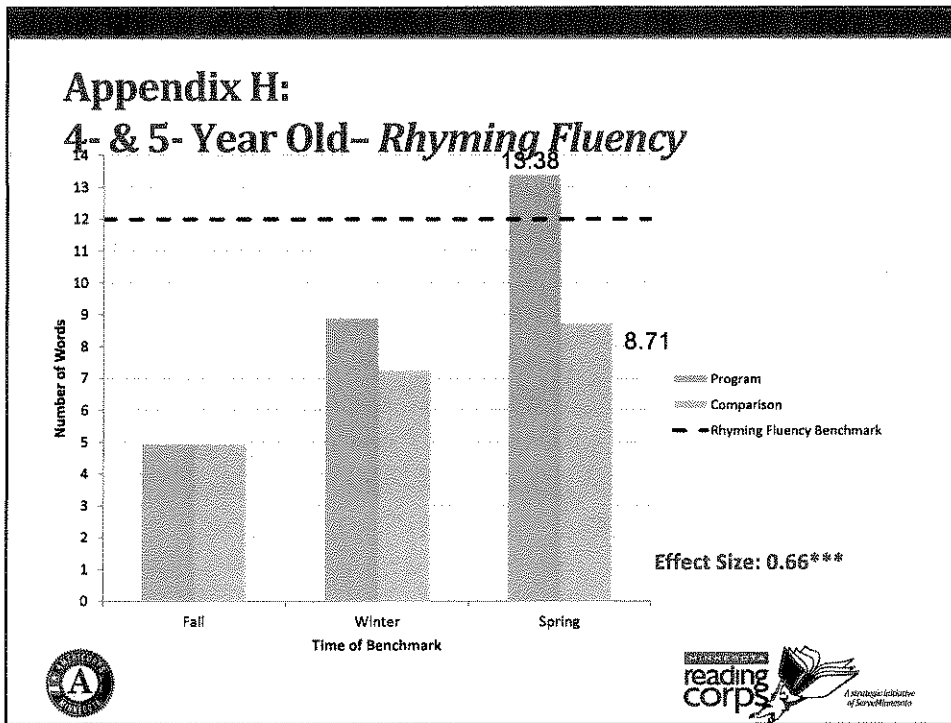
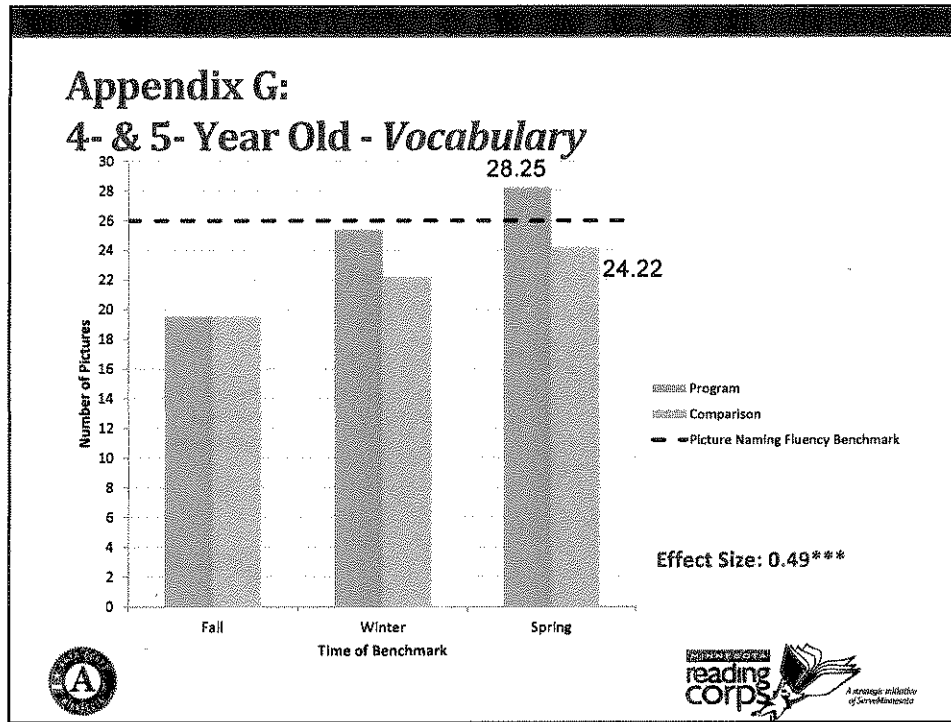
Appendix D: Grade 3 End of Year Special Education Status

		Minnesota Reading Corps 2010-11		Total
		no	yes	
Last Special Ed Status	Regular Education	224	231	455
	Assessed but not eligible	3	3	6
	Eligible but not served	1	3	4
	Spec Ed	14	4	18
	Evaluated, eligible, but parent refused	0	2	2
	IEP terminated	1	0	1
Total		243	243	486

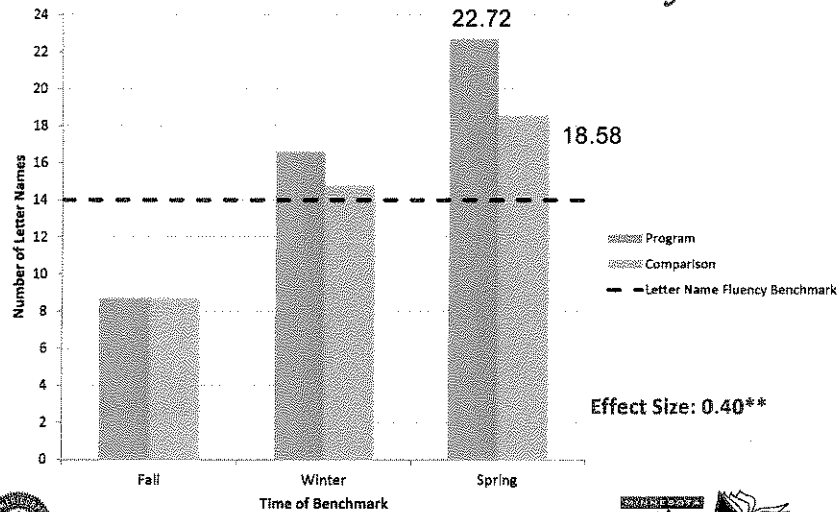


18





Appendix I: 4- & 5- Year Old – Letter Name Fluency



Appendix J: 4- & 5- Year Old – Effect Sizes in Spring 2014

IGDI Fluency Assessment	N	Average Growth (Treat-Comp)	SE	Effect Size
Picture Name	1343	4.03***	0.66	0.49
Rhyming	1342	3.51***	0.52	0.66
Alliteration	1278	2.68***	0.44	0.72
Letter Sounds	1267	3.80***	0.90	0.71
Letter Names	1354	4.15**	1.17	0.40

***p<.001; **p<.01

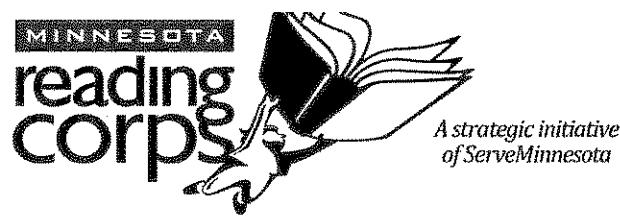


For further information on...

Minnesota Reading Corps Research Details:

David Parker, Ph.D.
Research Director
ServeMinnesota
david@serveminnesota.org
612.746.1394





How Reading Corps Impacts System Change

The vision of Reading Corps is to broadly impact literacy outcomes for children, with the following primary goals: (1) All children, ages 3 to grade 3, who qualify for Reading Corps, will have access to Reading Corps and will meet reading standards by third grade, (2) AmeriCorps tutors will pursue education related careers and/or continue to be ambassadors for children's literacy throughout their lives, (3) Schools and community institutions/organizations will incorporate the Reading Corps methods for increasing literacy.

2013-2014 Survey Results*

Responses from Principal/Administrators - Improving Use of Data

Answer Options	Strongly Agree/ Agree	No Opinion	Disagree/ Strongly Disagree
Reading Corps supports our site in <i>implementing a rigorous, aligned, and developmentally appropriate system</i> of literacy interventions and assessments.	96.5% (171)	1.6% (3)	1.6% (3)
Reading Corps <i>fosters successful schools</i> through the use of research-based strategies.	93.7% (166)	5.0% (9)	1.1% (2)
Reading Corps is an <i>important part of our overall approach</i> to continuous school improvement.	89.8% (159)	7.9% (14)	2.2% (4)

Responses from Internal Coaches (School Employees) - Enhancing Literacy Support

Answer Options	Strongly Agree/ Agree	No Opinion	Disagree/ Strongly Disagree
Reading Corps has <i>enhanced the overall literacy program</i> at my site.	97.4% (271)	0.7% (2)	1.7% (5)
Reading Corps is <i>helping us reach every student</i> in need of literacy support.	84.7% (236)	4.3% (12)	10.7% (30)
Reading Corps training & experience provides <i>meaningful preparation in the high quality teacher pipeline</i> .	72.9% (203)	18.7% (52)	8.1% (23)

Responses from AmeriCorps Members - Fostering Future Educators

Answer Options	Strongly Agree/ Agree	No Opinion	Disagree/ Strongly Disagree
Participation in Reading Corps had a <i>positive impact on the students</i> I served this school year.	98.3% (593)	1.4% (9)	0.1% (1)
Participation in Reading Corps had a <i>positive impact on me</i> this school year.	92.2% (557)	4.1% (25)	3.3% (21)
I am considering a <i>career in teaching</i> or education.	66.2% (400)	16.0% (97)	17.5% (106)

*Excerpted from 2013-2014 Minnesota Reading Corps Annual Evaluation, Bollman and Parker



Hannah Davis
Minnesota Reading Corps – K-3
Highwood Hills
St. Paul, Minnesota

Educational Background:

St. Olaf College 2013, B.A. in English: Northfield, MN

The University of Minnesota 2016, M.ed./ Academic Behavior Strategist K-12 License: Minneapolis, MN

Why I Served with Minnesota Reading Corps:

I love working with students one-on-one and helping them achieve their reading goals. I especially believe in the necessity of early literacy interventions with students to set them up for success as they progress to middle and high school. Serving with Reading Corps helped me discover my passion for working with students with learning difficulties, and so now I am working on obtaining a special education teaching license.

History with Reading Corps:

I served at Highwood Hills in Saint Paul for the 2013-2014 school year, and now I work for ServeMinnesota as the edSpring Support Associate. I help Reading Corps members manage their students' data, and I work with our developers on improving our edSpring database.

Making a Difference:

I served to help students become proficient readers, build their confidence, and foster a love of reading. I served to be there for kids every day as someone who asks them about their day and cares about them. I wanted to give children who struggled in reading the extra support they needed in order to succeed in school.

Student Success Story:

I had a great group of hard-working students, and 13 students graduated the Reading Corps program throughout the year after they read on grade-level. I especially remember a 1st grade boy who I started tutoring at the beginning of the school year. He was very apprehensive about his tutoring sessions and very sleepy. English was his second language and he had a hard time remembering letter sounds. By the end of the year, however, he was fluently reading connected text and loved working with me on his reading. Every time I came to his classroom to tutor other students he would stand up and say, "Take me!"

