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New Study Confirms Minnesota Reading Corps is Making a Powerful Impact on Literacy Skills of Students and Closing the Achievement Gap for At-Risk Students

Students' literacy skills grew the equivalent of a half to almost a full year of extra school.

Research replicates and extends statistically significant findings from a 2014 study, shows an even larger effect size, and demonstrates an even stronger impact with at-risk students.

Hundreds of reading and math tutors still needed throughout Minnesota.

MINNEAPOLIS – (September 13, 2018) -- A new third-party evaluation of [Minnesota Reading Corps](#), the nation's largest AmeriCorps tutoring program, has confirmed that the program makes a significant impact on the literacy skills of students. In fact, according to the independent study conducted by [NORC at the University of Chicago](#), the additional growth demonstrated by students being tutored equates to an extra 50 to 90 percent of a year of schooling – or the equivalent of a half year to almost a full year of extra school.

The study, which replicated and extended the findings of a study conducted in 2014, showed Reading Corps not only continued to deliver an impact, it increased its impact -- producing an even larger effect size. Such findings are rare in educational research, and are extremely rare when replicated.

Equally meaningful, the study found that, while the impact of Reading Corps is impressive for all participating students, it is even more significant for English Language Learners (ELL) and children from traditionally underprivileged groups, such as non-White racial groups.

According to Audrey Suker, CEO of ServeMinnesota, the state's administrator for AmeriCorps programs, these results are statistically significant and extremely rare for educational research. "Replication studies are rare but important, because students change, policies change, and schools take on new initiatives. Reading Corps not only continues to achieve outstanding results for our students, this study shows its impact is even greater. And, given the fact that this AmeriCorps program serves more than 600 schools and upwards of 30,000 students each year, this clearly demonstrates that Reading Corps is making significant headway in closing the achievement gap."

Among the key findings:

Kindergarten Students

- Kindergarten students who received Minnesota Reading Corps tutoring achieved significantly higher letter sound fluency scores by the end of the first semester (Winter 2018) than Kindergarten control students who did not receive the program.
- On average, program students correctly identified an average of 10.9 more letter sounds in one minute than control group students.
- Kindergarten students who received Reading Corps tutoring demonstrated additional growth equaling an extra 50 to 90 percent of a year of schooling.

First Grade Students

- First grade students who received Minnesota Reading Corps tutoring achieved significantly higher word-reading scores by the end of the first semester (Winter 2018) than students who did not receive the program.
- Impacts of first grade Reading Corps transferred to the broader reading skill of oral reading fluency, an essential foundational literacy skill.

Second and Third Grade Students

- Minnesota Reading Corps second and third grade students attained significantly higher oral reading fluency scores by the Spring benchmark than control group students.

At Risk Students

- A statistically significant impact of Reading Corps was found for second and third grade students regardless of minority status (i.e., Black), gender, or ELL status.
- Second and third grade students in each of these groups significantly outperformed control students on oral reading fluency scores, *and* grew faster than the typical Reading Corps student, reflecting a closure of the achievement gap.
- Together, the findings show that the Minnesota Reading Corps program can have a substantial and positive impact on at-risk students who are often underserved because they fall between students performing at grade level and special education referrals, and typically have fewer resources available to them.

Overall

- Based on findings from two highly rigorous, impartial, and complementary studies, the Minnesota Reading Corps K-3 program conclusively improves K-3 students' early reading skills.

NORC's simultaneous evaluations of Florida Reading Corps and Wisconsin Reading Corps found the program can be reliably replicated with the same impact on student growth.

Reading Corps has the power to dramatically improve student outcomes, and schools across the state have partnered to bring Reading Corps to their students. More tutors are needed for the 2018-19 school year throughout the state of Minnesota. Anyone interested is encouraged to go to readingandmath.net.

About Minnesota Reading Corps

One in three Minnesota third graders is not reading at grade level. Minnesota Reading Corps, a statewide program and strategic initiative of ServeMinnesota, provides a solution. The program places trained AmeriCorps tutors in schools and preschools, where they deliver proven literacy strategies to help children get ready for Kindergarten and on track to become successful readers by the end of third grade. Two independent and highly rigorous studies conducted by the University of Chicago confirm Reading Corps to be one of the most effective literacy programs nationwide. It is replicated in 12 states and the District of Columbia. For more information, please visit www.minnesotareadingcorps.org.

About NORC

[NORC](http://www.norc.org) at the University of Chicago delivers objective data and meaningful analysis to help decision-makers and leading organizations make informed choices and identify new opportunities. Since 1941, NORC has applied sophisticated methods and tools, innovative and cost-effective solutions, and the highest standards of scientific integrity and quality to conduct and advance research on critical issues. Headquartered in downtown Chicago, NORC works in over 40 countries around the world, with additional offices on the University of Chicago campus, the DC metro area, Atlanta, Boston, and San Francisco. For more information, visit www.norc.org.