

From Commitment to Capacity: Building Literacy Across Minnesota



Minnesota leaders are working toward a shared literacy goal: helping every child read at or above grade level, beginning in kindergarten. Enacted in 2023, the **READ Act** requires districts and charter schools to screen students regularly, use evidence-based Structured Literacy instruction, provide timely intervention, develop annual literacy plans, train educators in approved reading practices, and use student data to guide instruction. The law also calls on schools to support multilingual learners and students who receive special education services in reaching their individualized reading goals.

The state has established a clear set of expectations. Now, district and school leaders are working to build the capacity needed to carry them out consistently. That means connecting literacy curricula, screenings, intervention, professional learning, coaching, staffing, and local literacy plans around common goals. Educators also need time, support, and feedback to turn Structured Literacy knowledge into everyday classroom practice.

Where Minnesota stands



Minnesota passed the **READ Act** in 2023. The law requires districts and charter schools to screen students, provide evidence-based instruction and intervention, submit a local literacy plan each year, and track educator training and literacy support.



Minnesota lawmakers committed nearly \$70 million in 2023 for professional development and curricula. They also added \$37.2 million in 2024 for educator compensation, additional training, culturally responsive materials, and other implementation supports.



The state funds **approved Structured Literacy professional development** and uses regional networks, coaching, and facilitator communities to help educators apply what they learn. Phase 2 educators in grades 4–12 must complete approved training by July 1, 2027.



On the 2024 National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) reading assessment, **31% of Minnesota fourth graders** and **28% of eighth graders** reached the NAEP Proficient level. Average scores held steady from 2022, while longer-term results show a continued need for sustained literacy improvement.



Minnesota expects **curricula and instruction to support multilingual learners** through culturally and linguistically responsive materials. Leaders are working to build foundational literacy and language development together from the start.

Challenges facing Minnesota leaders

At Lexia's 2026 Science of Reading Leadership Summits, leaders across the Midwest described implementation challenges that may feel familiar to Minnesota districts:



Too many school and district initiatives compete for the same time, attention, and funding, making it difficult to keep literacy work focused.



Professional learning may end before teachers have enough opportunity to practice new routines, receive feedback, and build confidence.



Schools may interpret shared expectations differently, leading to variation in Structured Literacy practices from one building to the next.



Leaders are balancing support for multilingual learners, students receiving special education services, and students who need additional reading support while working within tight budgets, staffing constraints, and full schedules.



Where leaders can start

- 1 Take an inventory.** Compare current curricula, screening, interventions, professional learning, and classroom practice with READ Act expectations.
- 2 Prioritize the work.** Focus on a few implementation priorities and pause work that distracts from them.
- 3 Sustain professional learning.** Pair training with modeling, coaching, collaborative planning, feedback, and time to practice.
- 4 Create shared language across schools.** Agree on a few instructional look-fors and use them to guide support.
- 5 Review progress at regular intervals.** Choose student indicators to track, then adjust support before adding something new.

Districts and schools across Minnesota are turning literacy expectations into consistent classroom practice. Explore how **Lexia supports literacy in Minnesota**, including alignment with the Minnesota READ Act.