

2021 SENATE EDUCATION

SB 2219

2021 SENATE STANDING COMMITTEE MINUTES

Education Committee
Room JW216, State Capitol

SB 2219
1/26/2021

A BILL for an Act to provide an appropriation to the department of commerce to provide funding for research-based literacy intervention services to students.

Chair Schaible opened the hearing at 2:15 p.m.

Discussion Topics:

- Regional Education Association
- ND Reading Corps

Senator	Attendance
Chairman Schaible	P
Senator Elkin	P
Senator Conley	P
Senator Lemm	P
Senator Oban	P
Senator Wobbema	P

Sen Davison, Dist 41, Fargo: introduced the bill. #3548.

Jolene Garty, SE Ed Cooperative - testified in support. #3082

Danielle Bosse, Principal Barnes County, testified via Zoom in support. #2804

Lucas Schaefer, Dir Central Regional Ed Assoc., Minot.-testified via Zoom in support. #2960.

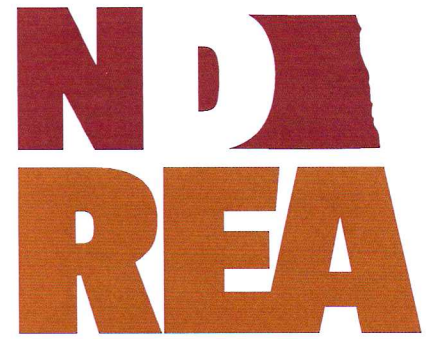
Additional written testimony:

Thomas Hill – support, #3092
Renee Bowen – support, #3017
Matthew Webb – support, #2992
Tara Hoffman – support, #2303

Adjourned at 3:07 p.m.

Lynn Wolf, Committee Clerk

Regional Education Association



NORTH DAKOTA REGIONAL
EDUCATION ASSOCIATION

The mission of NDREA is to support and strengthen education in North Dakota.

WHO

Who are members of the NDREA?

The North Dakota Regional Education Association's (NDREA) primary members are the regional education association (REA)* directors and REA staff members. Other members include REA lead administrators and representatives from other organizations that help to advance the mission.

What does the NDREA do?

The NDREA provides support to strengthen the seven REAs across the state. Through these seven REAs we serve 99.9% of the state's public schools and over 112,000 public school students, plus over 6,450 students in private schools, Bureau of Indian Education Schools, ND School for the Deaf and ND Youth Correctional Center. We believe through collaboration, a systemic approach, solution-oriented strategies and a focus on continuous improvement we can improve the quality of education across North Dakota.

NDREA members use a systematic approach to effectively share methods and practices that research has found to produce the best performance and results. Members support each other to ensure such practices are modeled in the operation of each respective REA.

WHAT

HOW

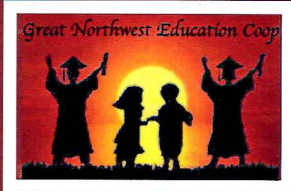
How does NDREA support education?

- Identifies and establishes clear standards of quality for professional development/ learning including standards for quality outcomes and processes.
- Exercises leadership to plan and implement high-quality programs and services within each REA and statewide.
- Capitalizes on new statewide strategic initiative opportunities that will benefit all schools.

*A regional Education Association (REA) is a group of school districts seeking to improve their educational programs and services through cooperation and pooling of resources. There are seven REAs in North Dakota and 99% of all the public school districts in the state are members of an REA. About 99% of all public school students in the state are served by an REA. Each REA offers unique program and services based on the needs of the region and they strive to offer high-quality programs and services that are delivered in the areas of professional development, technology support, data system support, school improvement support, and curriculum enrichment. Beginning in 2011, all the REAs began working toward consistent offerings of high-quality programs and services in the areas of professional development, technology support, data systems support, school improvement support, and curriculum enrichment.

Great Northwest Education Cooperative [GNWEC]

16 Public School Districts
11,324 Students



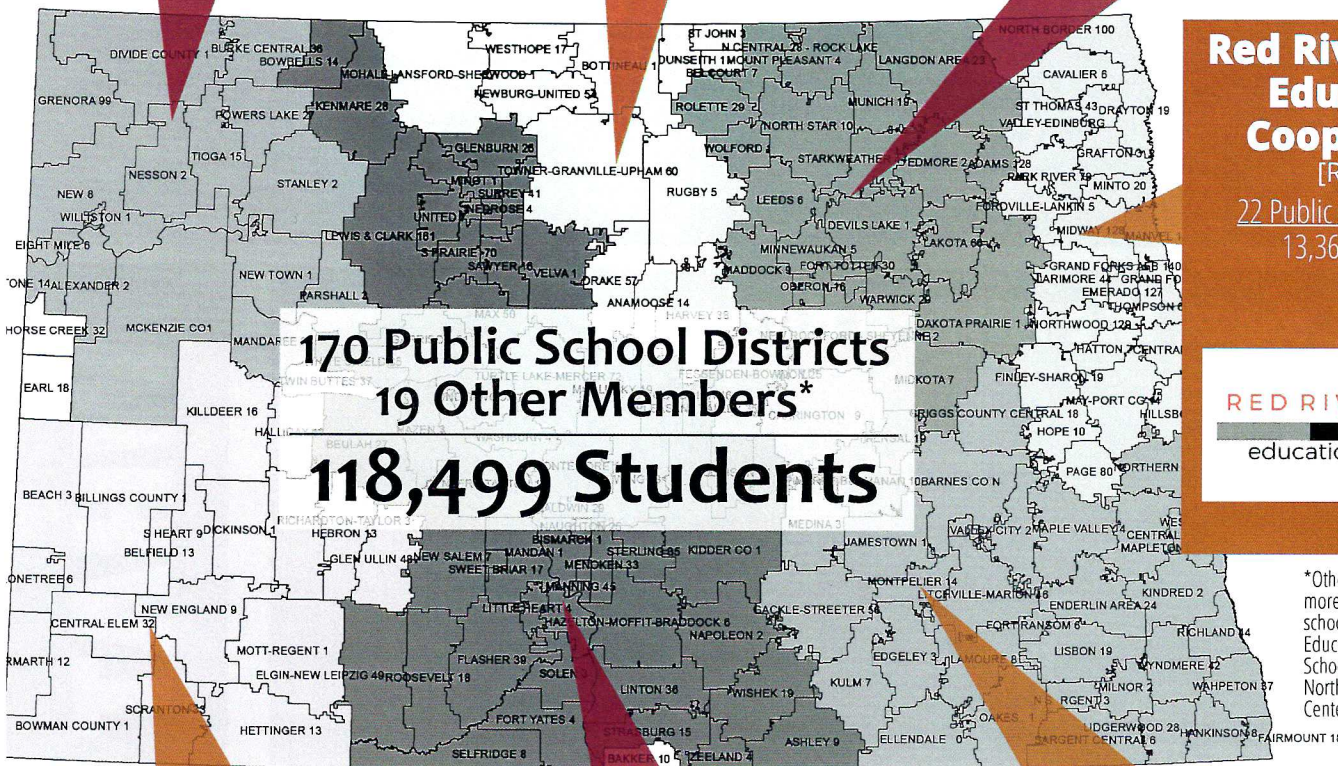
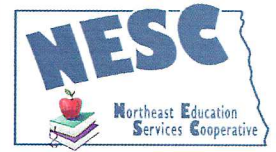
North Central Education Cooperative [NCEC]

12 Public School Districts
5,146 Students
4 Other Members*
623 Students



Northeast Education Services Cooperative [NESC]

21 Public School Districts
5,124 Students
4 Other Members*
660 Students



Red River Valley Education Cooperative [RRVEC]

22 Public School Districts
13,363 Students

RED RIVER VALLEY
education cooperative

*Other members include one or more of the following: private schools, Bureau of Indian Education (BIE) schools, N.D. School for the Deaf (NDS), or North Dakota Youth Correctional Center (NDYCC).

Roughrider Education Services Program [RESP]

18 Public School Districts
7,266 Students



Central Regional Education Association [CREA]

48 Public School Districts
34,499 Students
7 Other Members*
3,199 Students



South East Education Cooperative [SEEC]

33 Public School Districts
35,305 Students
4 Other Members*
1,990 Students



ConnectEd [NESC]



The NESC supports ND educators in their efforts to provide high-quality, extended day programming for students through live lessons & instructional resources in the areas of STEAM & Problem-based Learning, 21st Century Skills & the 4Cs, Career Exploration & Community Partners, & Social & Emotional Learning. Weekly synchronous & asynchronous opportunities are available for K-8 students statewide. This is possible through partnerships with [NESC 21st Century Community Learning Centers](#) & [ND Afterschool Network](#) & is supported in part by a [ND Council on the Arts](#) grant which receives funding from the state legislature & the National Endowment for the Arts. *Resources and lesson schedules are available at <https://sites.google.com/nescnd.org/nescconnected>.*

ND Educational Hub [NCEC]



The ND Educational Hub (NCEC) – The ND Educational Hub provides educators and school districts a cost effective and convenient way to learn and grow together. In 2017, NCEC began providing virtual professional learning communities for educators, which then grew to include online professional development and book reads. The ND Educational Hub allows educators who may be isolated and often singletons in rural schools the opportunity to learn alongside other educators like them. Educators can take classes at their convenience with no travel or subs required. In 2020, interest in the Hub expanded to include visitors from 46 states and 15 countries with users taking 31 classes earning 263 professional learning credits during the 2019-2020 school year.

Passion & Purpose for Teaching & Learning [RRVEC]



The RRVEC provides quality learning experiences that promote innovation and success in our schools. Collaborative efforts include Career Exploration, Technology services, and ongoing professional development aligned to principal and teacher support. Examples include instructional rounds, proficiency scale collaboration, and standards-referenced implementation.

North Dakota Public Health Insurance Trust (NDPHIT) [SEEC]



The SEEC has worked diligently over the past couple of years to address the need for more competitive health insurance options for public schools across North Dakota. After selecting to work with health insurance consultant, Hays Companies, it was determined that forming a Voluntary Employee Benefit Association (VEBA) trust would give us the flexibility and savings to meet our schools need. During our initial start-up work, we found an additional partner in the North Dakota Insurance Reserve Fund (NDIRF) and their members. In Dec. 2020, the first board meeting was held and on Jan. 1, 2021 NDPHIT launched with over 1,100 individuals from public entities across the state. NDPHIT's next step is to focus on educating schools on NDPHIT and benefit options including medical, dental, vision, life, disability, COBRA, flexible spending cafeteria plans and health savings accounts. New members to NDPHIT would begin their benefit period Oct. 1, 2021.

Pathways to Reading (PTR) [RESP]



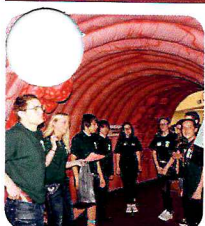
PTR, a curriculum for beginning readers in grades K-2 and struggling readers in upper grades, asks the critical question, "What must be learned in order to transform the printed letters on the page to words that have meaning?" Its primary focus, guided by 40+ years of research, is to help teachers understand, and apply in the classroom, five scientifically validated core components of the reading process: phonemic awareness; phonics; fluency; vocabulary; and comprehension. RESP training reached six member districts with small/large group instructional strategies, assessments and lesson plans.

ND eCARE School Health Program [CREA]



The ND eCARE School Health Program provides or extends school nursing services via a telehealth (live audio/video) platform in an affordable manner to increase access to healthcare for under-served ND students. The goal of the program is to minimize health-related barriers to learning by providing safe, effective care from an experienced school nurse to keep students in school and caregivers at work.

Great Northwest Scrubs Camp [GNWEC]



The Great Northwest Scrubs Camp was attended by 187 students from 10 school districts in Northwest ND for a day of health career exploration. Students chose eight sessions from the 15 stations on health careers taught by 38 presenters. This event provides 7th grade students hands on opportunities in the health career fields they might be interested in learning more about. The GNWEC received the "R-COOL-Health Scrubs Camp of the Year" award for 2017 for hosting the Scrubs Camp deemed as the top camp of the year.

Central Regional

Education Association [CREA]

128 Soo Line Dr Ste 102 900 N Broadway, Ste 300
Bismarck, ND 58051 Minot, ND 58703
www.creand.org

Luke Schaefer, Director
luke.schaefer@k12.nd.us
701-751-4041

Red River Valley

Education Cooperative [RRVEC]

4201 James Ray Dr, Ste 2001
Grand Forks, ND 58202
www.rrvecnd.org

Janet O'Hara, Director
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218-779-5121

Great Northwest

Education Cooperative [GNWEC]

222 University Ave
Williston, ND 58801
www.gnwec.k12.nd.us

Brian Lawton, Director
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701-609-5681

Roughrider Education

Services Program [RESP]

300 13th Ave W, Ste 6C
Dickinson, ND 58601
www.resp-k12-education.org

Riley Mattson, Director
riley.mattson@k12.nd.us
701-483-0999

North Central

Education Cooperative [NCEC]

620 Main St
Bottineau, ND 58318
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Debby Marshall, Director
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701-537-3195

South East

Education Cooperative [SEEC]

1305 9th Ave S
Fargo, ND 58103
www.ndseec.com

Kyle Davison, Director
kyle.davison@k12.nd.us
701-446-3175

Northeast Education

Services Cooperative [NESC]

810 10th St SE
Devils Lake, ND 58301
www.nesc.k12.nd.us

Jennifer Carlson, Director
jennifer.carlson@nescnd.org
888-701-NESC (6372)

2019-2020

NDREA Impact Data

407 STUDENT EVENTS
AND PROGRAMS

24,426
ENGAGED STUDENTS

**Students may have attended more than one opportunity meaning this number isn't a unique count.*

UNIQUE PROJECTS,
ACTIVITIES, EVENTS

371

1,354
sessions

4,095
hours

5,983
UNIQUE educators

22,473
TOTAL participants

OF PROFESSIONAL
LEARNING DELIVERED

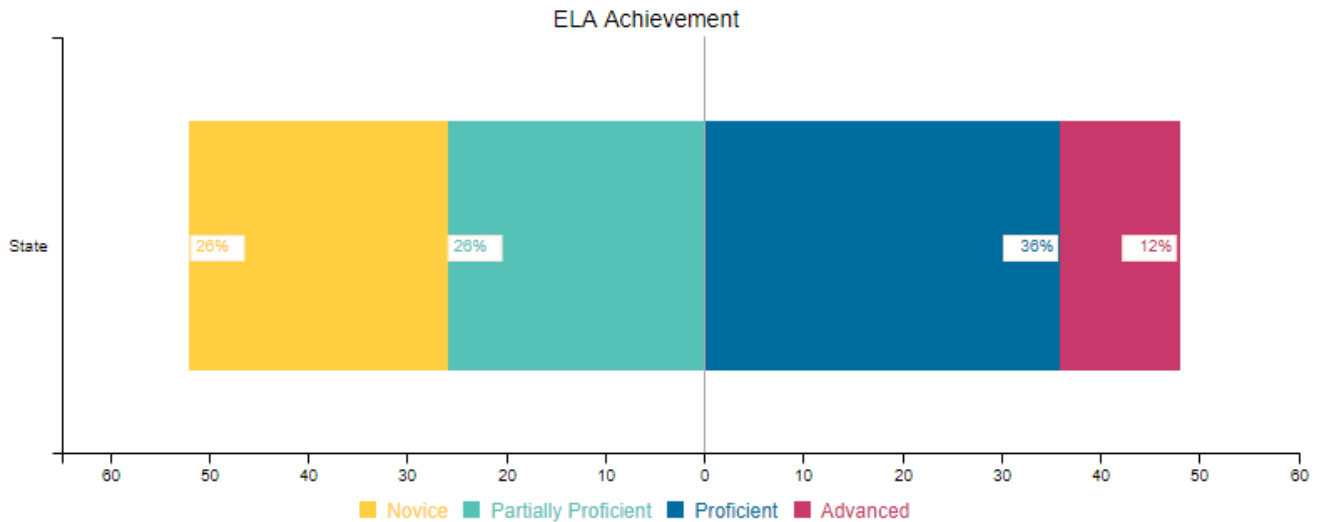
Testimony
67th Legislative Assembly
Senate Education Committee
Senate Bill
January 25, 2021

Chairman Schaible and members of the Education Committee, thank you for the opportunity share information about North Dakota Reading Corps. For the record, my name is Jolene Garty, and I am the Director of Student Services at the South East Education Cooperative (SEEC) and I oversee North Dakota Reading Corps.

SEEC is one of the seven Regional Education Associations or REAs in North Dakota. We are based out of Fargo and serve 33 public schools, 3 private schools and more than 2,800 teachers and 35,000 students.

ND Reading Corps is a reading intervention program that partners with school districts in North Dakota to deliver services during the school day. Reading Corps combines the power of national service through AmeriCorps with the Science of Reading to help struggling readers transform into confident and capable students. During the 2019-20 school year, we served 622 students. Students served by Reading Corps score below the 49th percentile in proficiency on district reading assessments. These students are often referred to as the “bubble kids”. They are at-risk for reading failure, but schools do not typically have capacity to work one on one with these students. Schools focus their resources on students who are 1 to 2 years behind. This waiting period widens the gap, and it takes more intensive and expensive intervention to get these students to proficiency. The goal of Reading Corps is to catch those students before they are that far behind. By doing so, the district can focus its staff and resources on students who have more intensive needs.

Research tells us that students who are reading proficiently by 3rd grade are 4 times more likely to graduate from high school. The 2018-19 NDSA English Language Arts (ELA) Achievement data shows that 52% of 3rd graders are not proficient in reading.



Third grade also marks the transition from “learning to read” to “reading to learn” so a lack of reading proficiency continues to affect students throughout their education. Reading Corps is a cost-effective way to close the literacy gap in North Dakota to help achieve the State’s Strategic Vision Framework goal of increasing the number of 3rd graders reading proficiently.

How K-3 Reading Corps Works

SEEC and the Central Regional Education Association (CREA) work together along with school districts to implement this program. The program recruits individuals from the community to commit to a year of service as a tutor through AmeriCorps which is known as the domestic version of the Peace Corp. Reading Corps trains these individuals to deliver evidence-based literacy interventions to students in Kindergarten through 3rd grade. Our tutors come from all walks of life and many are parents, retirees, or college students. Some have experience working in education and others do not. Tutors are placed in an elementary building part-time to work one-on-one with students 20 minutes a day, 5 days a week. In exchange for their service, they earn a stipend of \$8,200 or \$11,000 each year plus an education award of \$2,400 to \$3,000 to use towards student loans or future tuition expenses. Tutors who are over 55 can transfer the award to a child or grandchild for those purposes.

Tutors use evidence-based interventions tailored to student need based on assessment data to boost early literacy skills like letter names, letter sounds,

phoneme (sound) blending, letter sound correspondence, and connected text skills like fluency, expression, and comprehension. Student progress is monitored weekly to track growth and provide data for decision-making. Students "graduate" from the program on a rolling basis when they demonstrate that they have acquired the literacy skills required to "catch up" with their grade-level peers. A new student is then placed in that spot to receive services.

The success of Reading Corps is based using strategies that are aligned to how the brain learns to read, which is known as the Science of Reading. Reading Corps helps students learn phonemes, to decode, build fluency and comprehension skills. Reading Corps is also implemented as a full model which includes 5 days of training and a multi-layer coaching system which includes an on-site Internal Coach, who is a district employee, and an REA Master Coach. Both coaches meet with the tutor monthly to observe tutoring sessions using a fidelity checklist and to review student progress data.

Proven Results

During the 2019-20 school year, 79% or 499 out of 632 students in 11 school districts had a weekly growth rate above their grade level target; meaning they made more than a years' worth of growth within a year's time to close the gap. This growth occurred even though the in-person school year and tutoring were cut short.

Further, in 2018-19, we completed an impact evaluation using a matched-comparison analysis of 99 students receiving Reading Corps service and 99 students with similar demographics (race, gender, free or reduced lunch status). Reading Corps students received an average of 65 minutes of support for 20 weeks. The evaluation found that all grade levels exceed the reading scores of the comparison group. Most notably, second and third grade students assigned to Reading Corps outperformed their peers by 68 points on STAR Reading, a

remarkable feat equivalent to roughly 18 additional weeks of typical reading instruction.

OUTCOMES FROM THE 2018-2019 EVALUATION



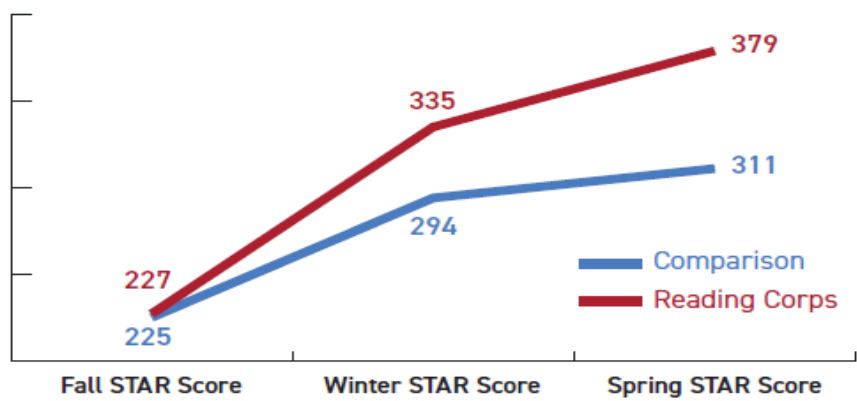
99 Reading Corps students were compared to 99 similar students in the district



Reading Corps students received an average of 65 minutes of support each week for 20 weeks

OUTCOMES FOR GRADES 2-3

Reading Corps students outperformed non-participants by a wide margin



Reading Corps Expansion Through Legislative Support

During the 2019 Legislative Session, \$200,000 was appropriated to ND Reading Corps through a grant from Department of Commerce which also holds our AmeriCorps funding. This funding has been used over the biennium to expand the program to 11 new school districts which has served 139 additional students this school year alone. The chart below outlines the school districts served this year, including the expansion sites:

Reading Corps 2020-21

**expansion school*

Elementary School	Number of Students Served
Bismarck	44
Barnes County North*	12
Wilton	15
Ellendale*	11
Enderlin*	12
Litchville-Marion*	10
Minot*	41
Medina*	10
Underwood*	10
Washburn	15
Valley City*	8
Wahpeton*	8
Fargo	138
Lisbon*	13
Jamestown	9
West Fargo	59
Total as of Jan 20, 2021	415

Cost Savings

Through our partnership with AmeriCorps, we can leverage almost \$500,000 in federal funding which comes to us through the North Dakota Department of Commerce. With the combination of grants and a low fee from school districts, we can deliver effective intervention services for around \$1,100 per student. This is a significantly lower price per student than other programs. For example, Reading Recovery, a well-known program which does not align to the Science of Reading and only serves first graders costs over \$5,000 per student. Further, a study conducted in Minnesota found that the average cost to deliver special education, once the gap is wide enough for a student to need that level of intervention, is over \$10,000 per student.

Reading Corps programs are now in 13 other states and Washington D.C. Minnesota currently invests \$7.95 million of state funding annually, serving 25,000 students.

Support SB2219

In closing, I would like to thank the committee again for the opportunity to testify in support of SB2219. North Dakota Reading Corps is an evidence-based literacy intervention program with a proven track record of helping students close the proficiency gap. With continued state funding, Reading Corps will have the funds to help expand the program to additional schools across the State to serve an additional 175 students. Reading Corps can help during this time of COVID learning loss and to help achieve North Dakota's vision to increase the number of students who demonstrate reading proficiency in 3rd grade.

I'll stand for any questions from the committee.

Submitted by:
Jolene Garty
Director of Student Services
SEEC

Barnes County North Public School District #007^{#2804}

2184 101st Ave SE. Wimbledon ND 58492

Phone 1-701-646-6202

FAX 1-701-646-6566



January 25th, 2021

To Whom It May Concern and the 66th Legislative Education Committee:

As you navigate making decisions regarding funds at the 66th Legislative Session, we at Barnes County North Public School District #007, highly recommend providing funds in support of North Dakota K-3 Reading Corps, bill #2219. We have implemented the program this year with tremendous results.

BCN Elementary implemented the NDMTSS (North Dakota Multi-Tiered System of Supports) this year after being trained last year. Our goal is to provide interventions during the early childhood years of learning to eliminate the need for interventions in the upper grades when it's harder to get them on track. As part of our NDMTSS Reading Pathway, we were confident in the Reading Corps program to meet the needs of our Tier two students.

After utilizing Reading Corps for two quarters during the 2020-2021 academic year two students have qualified to exit the program and we are still serving an additional ten students who are showing growth within the program, on our District benchmark assessments, and application in their classrooms.

To be able to see that type of growth by using the grant will give us data to present to our School Board for future approval. We have our Reading Corps Coach (BCN's Instructional Coach) present data to the Board following each quarter. We have their support for program implementation and now we need yours!

Thank you again,

Danielle Bosse
Barnes County North Elementary Principal

Board Members: Mike Schwehr – President, Lee Guscette - Vice-President,
Cynthia Christianson, Brent Bruner, Robert Harstad, Chad Bakken, Bret Fehr, Michele Elston
Michael Severson – Superintendent, JR Wilson - HS Principal, Danielle Bosse - Elementary Principal,
Lindsay Polk - Business Manager

Testimony regarding SB 2219
Senate Education Committee
Jan 25, 2021

1/21/2021

Dear Chairman Schaible and members of the Education Committee,

My name is Luke Schaefer and I am the Executive Director of the Central Regional Education Association, one of seven service agencies that exist to provide support to ND schools in many forms. Further, I am a member of the ND State Lead Team for ND Multi-Tiered System of Supports which is a framework to provide training, coaching, and resources to schools to help them create systems which will get students the help they need, when they need, whether that is academic, behavioral, or social-emotional. Lastly, I have been an educator in ND for 17 years. I would like to provide testimony for how SB 2219 aligns with the philosophy and practices we teach in MTSS, an evidence-based approach to increasing student outcomes.

This bill would continue the efforts laid out for providing a critical intervention to students who typically would not receive it. Many of our schools have systems which provide 1-1 learning for students who are at least two years behind on their learning, receiving support from special educators, paras, or specially designed instruction. They also have supports, if they receive Title 1 dollars, for students who are more than one year behind on their learning to work in very small groups or in some instances, 1-1 situations. However, few lack the resources to work 1-1 with students who are falling behind, but have not reached the point where services are available- the bubble students.

Reading Corps is designed specifically to assist students who are just below their grade level proficiency with intentional, 1-1 interventions offered by specifically trained tutors. Students receive 20-minute intervention daily with specific changes in practice as they improve and the tutors are guided by interventionists in the school with Master Coaches who push in to check progress and offer guidance. The evaluation of the program speaks for itself; 79% of students in Reading Corps interventions in the 2019-2020 school year had more than a year's growth, which meant they closed the gap to their proficiency. Further, when 99 students receiving these interventions were measured against like students in other districts, Reading Corps students outscored their peers by nearly 70 points on their interim assessments; that's the same as 18 weeks of instruction.

Schools engage in many aspects of assisting students through a system called MTSS. The simple way to make a system is get your general education teachers to be as good as possible. Then have specific interventions for students who general education isn't quite working and they are slipping behind. Then use a team-based problem-solving approach (like an IEP) for students who both instruction and strategic interventions are not working. The recipe calls for knowing these pieces before students start to fail. Key beliefs related to this bill for schools who engage in MTSS include:

1. Early prevention
2. Clearly articulated goals and decision-making protocols
3. Using assessments to determine student needs to the skill level (breaking down complex problems)
4. Matching evidence-based interventions to the skill deficit
5. Using data to monitor, communicate and make ongoing decisions to get back on track
6. Building Infrastructure & Supports – resource allocation, Professional learning, scheduling, access
7. Watching and monitoring fidelity and evaluation of the implementation at all points along the continuum.

This bill addresses the number one belief, that of early prevention mechanisms. Addressing student reading proficiency is one of ND's Strategic Vision Framework outcomes, to increase the number of students proficient in reading by 3rd grade. This program is incredibly efficient, and effective at that outcome.

Thank you for your tireless work and for gaining a deeper understanding of this program. A do pass would provide the ability to continue expanding and strengthening our K-3 Reading proficiency across the state.

Respectfully submitted,

Luke Schaefer (Minot, ND)
Executive Director, Central Regional Education Association

67th North Dakota Legislative Session, Testimony for Senate Education Committee

SB 2219 *A BILL for an Act to provide an appropriation to the department of commerce to provide funding for research-based literacy intervention services to students.*

Submitted by: Thomas Hill, Vice President of Community Impact, United Way of Cass-Clay

January 26, 2021

Dear Senate Education Committee,

United Way of Cass-Clay (United Way) improves lives by activating resources to solve complex community issues and create lasting social change. We seek to make measureable progress toward increasing access and reducing barriers for underserved, at-risk, and vulnerable individuals and families to achieve four Bold Goals:

1. Reduce Hunger & Homelessness
2. Prepare Children to Succeed
3. Help People be Independent
4. Lift People out of Poverty

By focusing on our Bold Goals, we look to improve lives and create a better tomorrow for everyone in

In order to *Prepare Children to Succeed* United Way strives to ensure students are successful as they progress through school and upon graduation are “choice ready” for postsecondary or workforce. We accomplish this by partnering with community-based organizations to organize a system of wraparound supports for students as they progress through school and by partnering with schools to ensure student engagement and learning as they progress through school. These partnerships are allowing us to make strategic, data-driven decisions that will make the greatest difference in the lives of students. One of the strongest, research-based investments United Way of Cass-Clay is making is to support Reading Corps.

Beginning in 2013, United Way provided local seed funding to bring this research-based reading program to the state, specifically in Cass County.

Reading Corps works in partnership with local school districts to place elementary literacy tutors in their buildings to provide evidence-based literacy interventions to students who are at risk for reading failure. Schools included in this project currently provide classroom reading instruction, including core reading instruction for all students, and supplementary instruction to students identified with moderate to severe reading skill deficits through Title teachers, Reading Specialists, and Special Education teachers.

However, there are a number of students who could benefit from additional instruction and practice in reading who are not typically served by existing resources in a school. These students typically fall in the 35th to 49th percentile. These students are the focus of this project. They are what educators often call the "bubble kids", the children who are close to reaching proficiency but aren't given the attention to boost their abilities.

Partner school districts identify which school buildings to place Reading Corps tutors in by taking into account their existing resources as well as the number of students who would qualify for service (building-level data is annualized annually). Previous district-wide data showed that nearly a third of students in these districts scored below the 49th percentile on reading assessments.

Reading Corps achieves improved educational outcomes for targeted children by:

1. Partnering with school districts to place trained and supported AmeriCorps members in elementary schools where each member provides intensive, research-based tutoring and literacy support to approximately 15 children over the course of the school year.
2. Requiring members and their Internal Coaches to participate in the 3 day Reading Corps Institute where they receive intensive training on collecting benchmark data, monitoring student progress, and implementing research-based literacy interventions.
3. Providing members and Internal Coaches with monthly on-site coaching from Master Coaches (literacy experts) to tailor interventions for each student, based on the data collected on key literacy measures.
4. Monitoring students who have successfully learned the literacy skills and graduated from Reading Corps to ensure that they stay on track to become successful readers by the end of 3rd grade.

United Way of Cass-Clay has financially supported Reading Corps locally in Cass County for almost a decade. Each year, outcome data demonstrates that children who are NOT reading at the grade-appropriate level receive the assistance, guidance and tutoring necessary to bring them up to be able to the grade-appropriate level.

Reading proficiency is significant for many reasons. First being that grade-level reading proficiency is one of the highest indicators of whether or not a student will be able to graduate from high-school. According to national research, children who do not reading proficiently by 3rd grade are more than four times as likely to NOT graduate high school.

Secondly, from birth to grade three, children are learning to read. Their minds are learning the sounds of letters, the forming of words, the structure of sentences, and how to comprehend information. From third grade on, children read to learn. Reading fluency and proficiency are critical for students to be able to learn and retain lessons, thus preparing them for success in the future.

Finally, the North Dakota Department of Public Instruction supports the Choice Ready Framework-where students will be ready for post-secondary, labor or military service upon high school graduation. Whatever choice and path a student is preparing for, reading proficiency is paramount to their future success.

United Way of Cass-Clay strongly supports making data-driven decisions and supports making investments into research-based interventions for students locally.

United Way of Cass-Clay is supportive of the North Dakota Legislature making an appropriation into research-based literacy interventions for students across the state and ask for a DO PASS recommendation.

Respectfully,



Thomas Hill
Vice President of Community Impact
United Way of Cass-Clay

Written Testimony on Senate Bill No. 2219
Presented to the House Education Committee
Renee Bowen, Litchville-Marion Public School District #46
January 21, 2021

Good morning Chairman Schaible and members of the House Education Committee. For the record, my name is Renee Bowen and I serve as the elementary principal for the Litchville-Marion School District. I am providing written testimony in support of Senate Bill 2219.

The Reading Corps Program was able to be implemented in our school district during the 2019-2020 school year. In that short time, we have seen an increase in student achievement in the K-3 grades, but more importantly a confidence and love of reading in struggling readers. There are many different programs that we are offered by companies to increase reading achievement for struggling readers that are computer programs, interventions taught in small groups, or a combination of these. The core of this program is a dedicated tutor for each student that allows them to have 20 minutes a day of focused interventions by a trained adult. In my opinion, having a one to one tutor is the reason this program works. Each child that is in this program has their need met individually because of thorough testing, teacher feedback, and tutor guidance.

My Title One, Primary, and Special Education staff feel that the Reading Corps Program is essential in building strong, confident readers. Our student population for K-4 at this time is 64 students. Of those 64 students, 23 students were selected for the Reading Corps Program. 78.3% of those students are on target for growth with this intervention. According to our

23 AimsWeb Plus testing, 71% of all Kindergarten-5th grade students are at or above benchmark
24 testing and of the 3rd-5th grade students 87% are at or above benchmark.

25 I ask that you support the continuation of support for this program through a Do Pass
26 Recommendation on Senate Bill 2219. I would be open to questions and may be reached
27 through email at Renee.Bowen@k12.nd.us or through phone at (701) 762-4234.

January 25, 2021
Submitted by: Matthew Webb
K-6 Principal
Enderlin Area Schools

This is our first year using Reading Corp. We are seeing progress and growth with the students that are involved. We are hopeful that getting kids back to grade level after the shut down last year will progress more quickly with the help of the RC program. Thank you to everyone involved in allowing the Enderlin district to participate.

Parent Quote: "Thank you for sending the reading homework home with my daughter. I enjoy doing this with her. We really want here to be a good reader!"

Title Teacher Quote: "I love listening to the Reading Corps. students read aloud! They are reading much more fluently since starting this program. I can tell that several of them are enjoying reading more so now!"

Medina Public School District #3

#2303

PO Box 547 300 School Street SE Medina, ND 58467
701-486-3121 FAX: 701-486-3138

Damon Bosche, Superintendent/AD
Tara Hofmann, K-12 Principal

Rory Hoffmann, Board President
Dawn Moser, Business Manager

<http://www.medina.k12.nd.us/>

"We Enter to Learn, We Leave to Achieve"

Testimony on SB 2219

January 26, 2021

Tara Hofmann, Principal, Medina Public Schools

Chairman Schaible and Members of the Committee:

I am writing this testimony in support of Reading Corps for Senate Bill 2219. We have had the Reading Corps program in our school for the past 1 ½ years. I worked closely with this program for an additional 3 years in a prior role in a different ND school district. After working with ND Reading Corps for 3 years, I knew that my current school district could benefit from this program. We have many students who don't qualify for Title I support, but we knew they needed individual support in developing early reading skills. Reading Corps is based on researched interventions with fidelity checks to make sure that interventions are being delivered effectively. We review data regularly and meet with a master coach to be specific on instructional delivery and student engagement. We meet to adjust instruction as needed.

When we were approached about adding the program to our school in 2019-2020, I visited with our superintendent and shared the success and support it provided to students I had worked with in another school district. He was supportive and we were pleasantly surprised when we were able to access the program for free, due to state funding support. We implemented ND Reading Corps in the 2019-2020 school year and we quickly identified students who would benefit from this program and support. We had students enter the program and have great reading gains. We were able to exit many students during the year and serve additional students. Teachers, parents, and students have seen the benefit of this program.

When the decision needed to be made about continuing the program into the 2020-2021 school year, with the possibility of us needing to pay for it, my superintendent said that we would continue, even with the cost. He saw the benefits of the program and the growth in students and agreed that we needed to continue the program. We were also presented the opportunity to add Math Corps to our school and we added that without hesitation because we know the

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effectiveness of Reading Corps and wanted to provide the same type of systematic and specific support for students.

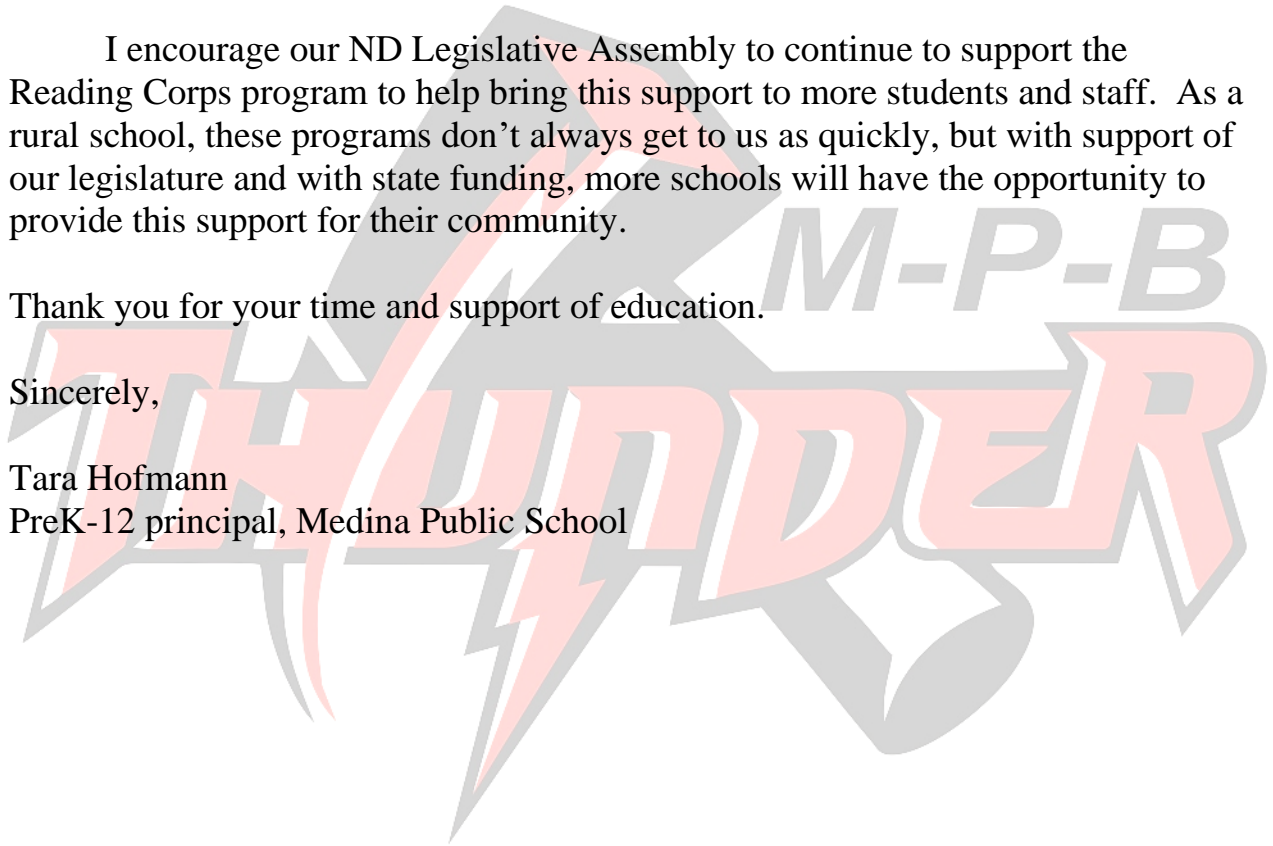
The Reading Corps program has been beneficial for more than 25 of our students who would not have received instructional support without this program. Not only has this program supported students, the teaching strategies have been shared with classroom teachers and specialists who can use the effective teaching tools in their own classroom and with small groups.

I encourage our ND Legislative Assembly to continue to support the Reading Corps program to help bring this support to more students and staff. As a rural school, these programs don't always get to us as quickly, but with support of our legislature and with state funding, more schools will have the opportunity to provide this support for their community.

Thank you for your time and support of education.

Sincerely,

Tara Hofmann
PreK-12 principal, Medina Public School



2021 SENATE STANDING COMMITTEE MINUTES

Education Committee
Room JW216, State Capitol

SB 2219
1/27/2021

A BILL for an Act to provide an appropriation to the department of commerce to provide funding for research-based literacy intervention services to students.

Chair Schaible called to order at 2:27 p.m.

Discussion Topics:

- Reading program funding

Sen Oban: Moved a Do Pass

Sen. Elkin: Seconded

Roll Call Vote: 6-0-0 Motion Passed

Sen Elkin will carry the bill.

Adjourned at 2:41 p.m.

Lynn Wolf, Committee Clerk

Senator	Attendance
Chairman Schaible	P
Senator Elkin	P
Senator Conley	P
Senator Lemm	P
Senator Oban	P
Senator Wobbema	p

SB 2219	Vote
Chairman Schaible	Y
Senator Elkin	Y
Senator Conley	Y
Senator Lemm	Y
Senator Oban	Y
Senator Wobbema	Y

REPORT OF STANDING COMMITTEE

SB 2219: Education Committee (Sen. Schaible, Chairman) recommends **DO PASS** (6 YEAS, 0 NAYS, 0 ABSENT AND NOT VOTING). SB 2219 was placed on the Eleventh order on the calendar.

2021 SENATE APPROPRIATIONS

SB 2219

2021 SENATE STANDING COMMITTEE MINUTES

Appropriations Committee Roughrider Room, State Capitol

SB 2219
2/10/2021
Senate Appropriations Committee

A BILL for an Act to provide an appropriation to the department of commerce to provide funding for research-based literacy intervention services to students.

Senator Holmberg opened the hearing at 8:29 a.m.

Senators present: **Holmberg, Krebsbach, Wanzek, Bekkedahl, Poolman, Erbele, Dever, Oehlke, Rust, Davison, Hogue, Sorvaag, Mathern, and Heckaman.**

Discussion Topics:

- Reading Growth in Students
- Department of Commerce
- CARES Act Money

Senator Davison, District 41, introduced the bill.

Jolene Garty, Director of Student Services, South East Education Cooperative, testified in favor and submitted testimony #5975.

Luke Schaefer, Executive Director, Central Regional Education Association, testified in favor and submitted testimony #5895.

Additional written testimony: #5770 and #5894

Chairman Holmberg closed the hearing at 8:58 a.m.

Rose Laning, Committee Clerk

**Testimony
67th Legislative Assembly
Senate Appropriations Committee
Senate Bill 2219
February 10, 2021**

Chairman Holmberg and members of the Appropriations Committee, thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of SB2219. For the record, my name is Jolene Garty, and I am the Director of Student Services at the South East Education Cooperative (SEEC) and I oversee North Dakota Reading Corps.

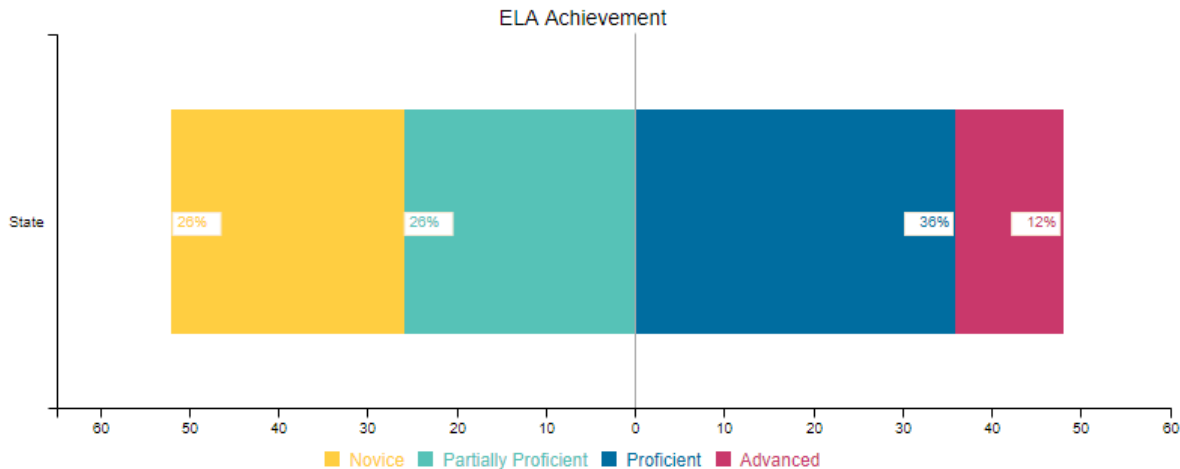
SEEC is one of the seven Regional Education Associations or REAs in North Dakota. We are based out of Fargo and serve 33 public schools, 3 private schools and more than 2,800 teachers and 35,000 students.

Reading Corps is an intervention program that partners with North Dakota school districts to deliver reading services during the school day. It combines the power of national service through AmeriCorps with the Science of Reading to help struggling readers transform into confident and capable students.

This bill is a renewal of the legislation passed in 2019 which appropriated \$200,000 to ND Reading Corps to expand the program to new schools in the state. This funding has been used over the biennium to expand the program to 11 new school districts which has served 139 additional students.

I'd like to explain how Reading Corps works and why this program is an important support for school districts.

Research tells us that students who are reading proficiently by 3rd grade are 4 times more likely to graduate from high school. The 2018-19 NDSA English Language Arts (ELA) Achievement data shows that 52% of 3rd graders are not proficient in reading.



Third grade also marks the transition from “learning to read” to “reading to learn”. After 3rd grade, students who are behind in reading begin to fall behind in other subjects. Reading Corps is a cost-effective way to close the literacy gap in North Dakota to help achieve the State’s Strategic Vision Framework goal of increasing the number of 3rd graders reading proficiently.

Reading Corps works with students who score below the 49th percentile in proficiency on district reading assessments. They are often referred to as the “bubble kids”. They are at-risk for reading failure, but schools do not typically have capacity to work one on one with these students. Instead, schools need to focus their resources on students who are much further behind. This waiting period widens the gap, and it takes more intensive and expensive intervention to get these students to proficiency. The goal of Reading Corps is to catch those students before they are that far behind. By partnering with Reading Corps, the district can focus its staff and resources on students who have more intensive needs.

To implement the program, SEEC and the Central Regional Education Association (CREA) work in partnership with school districts to serve students who qualify during the school day. We recruit individuals from the community to commit to a year of service as a tutor through AmeriCorps, which is known as the domestic version of the Peace Corps. Reading Corps trains tutors to deliver evidence-based literacy interventions to students in Kindergarten through 3rd grade. Our tutors come from all walks of life and many are parents, retirees, or college students. Some have experience working in education and others do not. Tutors

are placed in an elementary building part-time to work one-on-one with students 20 minutes a day, 5 days a week. In exchange for their service, they earn a stipend of \$8,200 or \$11,000 each year plus an education award of up to \$3,000 to use towards student loans or future tuition expenses. Tutors who are over 55 can transfer the award to a child or grandchild for those purposes.

The success of Reading Corps is based on using strategies that are aligned to how the brain learns to read, which is known as the Science of Reading. Tutors assess students to identify which reading skills each individual student needs help with. Tutors meet with students for 20 minutes a day, 5 days a week, one-on-one to deliver evidence-based literacy interventions. "Interventions" means scripted practice which targets specific reading skills. Reading Corps helps students with phoneme (sound) blending, decoding, building fluency, comprehension, and expression. Student progress is monitored weekly to track growth and provide data for decision-making. Students "graduate" from the program on a rolling basis when they demonstrate that they have acquired the literacy skills required to "catch up" with their grade-level peers. A new student is then placed in that spot to receive services.

Reading Corps is also implemented as a full model which includes 5 days of training and a multi-layer coaching system which includes an on-site Internal Coach, who is a district employee, and an REA Master Coach. Both coaches meet with the tutor monthly to observe tutoring sessions using a fidelity checklist and to review student progress data.

Reading Corps programs are now in 13 other states and Washington D.C. Minnesota currently invests \$7.95 million of state funding annually, serving 25,000 students.

Proven Results

One of the benefits of Reading Corps is that we know that it works. During the 2019-20 school year, 79% or 499 out of 632 students served in 11 school districts had a weekly growth rate above their grade level target; meaning they made more than a years' worth of growth within a year's time to close the gap. This

growth occurred even though the in-person school year and tutoring were cut short.

Reading Corps has also undergone multiple studies nationally, including a large randomized-control trial and an impact evaluation completed with West Fargo Public Schools in 2018-19. That study used a matched-comparison analysis of 99 students receiving Reading Corps service and 99 students with similar demographics (race, gender, free or reduced lunch status). Reading Corps students received an average of 65 minutes of support for 20 weeks. The evaluation found that all grade levels exceed the reading scores of the comparison group. Most notably, second and third grade students assigned to Reading Corps outperformed their peers by 68 points on STAR Reading, a remarkable feat equivalent to roughly 18 additional weeks of typical reading instruction.

OUTCOMES FROM THE 2018-2019 EVALUATION



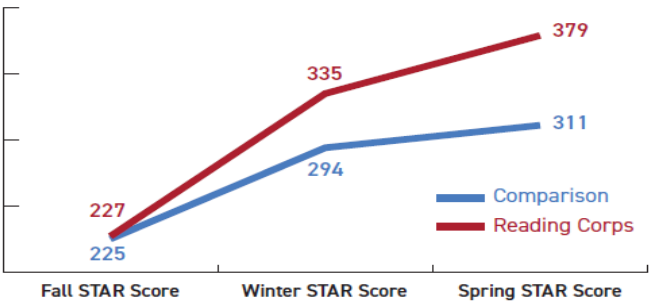
99 Reading Corps students were compared to 99 similar students in the district



Reading Corps students received an average of 65 minutes of support each week for 20 weeks

OUTCOMES FOR GRADES 2-3

Reading Corps students outperformed non-participants by a wide margin



Cost Savings

Through our partnership with AmeriCorps, we can leverage almost \$500,000 in federal funding which comes to us through the North Dakota Department of Commerce. With the combination of grants and a low fee from school districts, we can deliver effective intervention services for around \$1,100 per student. This is a significantly lower price per student than other programs. For example, Reading Recovery, a well-known program which only serves first graders and does not align to the Science of Reading costs over \$5,000 per student.

Support SB2219

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of SB2219. With continued state funding, Reading Corps can serve an additional 175 students who are not receiving service. We can help support students during this time of COVID learning loss and to help increase the number of 3rd graders reading proficiently in ND. You will find additional testimony in support of this bill online from principals and parents who have had students in the program.

I'll stand for any questions from the committee.

Reading Corps 2020-21 Participating Districts **expansion school*

Elementary School	Number of Students Served
Bismarck	44
Barnes County North*	12
Wilton	15
Ellendale*	11
Enderlin*	12
Litchville-Marion*	10
Minot*	41
Medina*	10
Underwood*	10
Washburn	15
Valley City*	8
Wahpeton*	8
Fargo	138
Lisbon*	13
Jamestown	9
West Fargo	59
Total as of Jan 20, 2021	415

Testimony regarding SB 2219
Senate Education Committee
Feb 10, 2021

2/08/2021

Dear Chairman Holmberg and members of the Senate Appropriations Committee,

My name is Luke Schaefer and I am the Executive Director of the Central Regional Education Association, one of seven service agencies that exist to provide support to ND schools in many forms. Further, I am a member of the ND State Lead Team for ND Multi-Tiered System of Supports which is a framework to provide training, coaching, and resources to schools to help them create systems which will get students the help they need, when they need, whether that is academic, behavioral, or social-emotional. Lastly, I have been an educator in ND for 17 years. I would like to provide testimony for how SB 2219 aligns with the philosophy and practices we teach in MTSS, an evidence-based approach to increasing student outcomes.

This bill would continue the efforts laid out for providing a critical intervention to students who typically would not receive it. Many of our schools have systems which provide 1-1 learning for students who are at least two years behind on their learning, receiving support from special educators, paras, or specially designed instruction. They also have supports, if they receive Title 1 dollars, for students who are more than one year behind on their learning to work in very small groups or in some instances, 1-1 situations. However, few lack the resources to work 1-1 with students who are falling behind, but have not reached the point where services are available- the bubble students.

Reading Corps is designed specifically to assist students who are just below their grade level proficiency with intentional, 1-1 interventions offered by specifically trained tutors. Students receive 20-minute intervention daily with specific changes in practice as they improve and the tutors are guided by interventionists in the school with Master Coaches who push in to check progress and offer guidance. The evaluation of the program speaks for itself; 79% of students in Reading Corps interventions in the 2019-2020 school year had more than a year's growth, which meant they closed the gap to their proficiency. Further, when 99 students receiving these interventions were measured against like students in other districts, Reading Corps students outscored their peers by nearly 70 points on their interim assessments; that's the same as 18 weeks of instruction.

Schools engage in many aspects of assisting students through a system called MTSS. The simple way to make a system is get your general education teachers to be as good as possible. Then have specific interventions for students who general education isn't quite working and they are slipping behind. Then use a team-based problem-solving approach (like an IEP) for students who both instruction and strategic interventions are not working. The recipe calls for knowing these pieces before students start to fail. Key beliefs related to this bill for schools who engage in MTSS include:

1. Early prevention
2. Clearly articulated goals and decision-making protocols
3. Using assessments to determine student needs to the skill level (breaking down complex problems)
4. Matching evidence-based interventions to the skill deficit
5. Using data to monitor, communicate and make ongoing decisions to get back on track
6. Building Infrastructure & Supports – resource allocation, Professional learning, scheduling, access
7. Watching and monitoring fidelity and evaluation of the implementation at all points along the continuum.

This bill addresses the number one belief, that of early prevention mechanisms. Addressing student reading proficiency is one of ND's Strategic Vision Framework outcomes, to increase the number of students proficient in reading by 3rd grade. This program is incredibly efficient, and effective at that outcome.

Thank you for your tireless work and for gaining a deeper understanding of this program and the benefits that it will afford so many students in ND.

Respectfully submitted,

Luke Schaefer (Minot, ND)
Executive Director, Central Regional Education Association

Testimony in Support of Senate Bill 2219

Presented by Ashley Windhorst

Chairman and Members of the Committee:

I am in full support of SB 2219. As a parent who has had the privilege of two children in the Reading Corps program at Sunrise Elementary in Bismarck, I feel this bill would provide the opportunity for other schools and children to benefit from this program.

The Reading Corps program has been a blessing and has helped our children grow immensely in a short amount of time. It's nice to have a dedicated program like this to help children who may not qualify for help at the district level but aren't quite where they are supposed to be.

Our son, who is in kindergarten, started the program at the beginning of the school year to help develop his letter sounds. As of February 1, 2021, he was released from the program and not only knows his letter sounds but is reading simple short stories as well.

Our daughter is in third grade and is in the program working on her reading fluency. Since joining the program, she is more confident and now enjoys reading every day.

Please consider passing this bill to provide funding to support and expand this successful program.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Senate Bill 2219
Senate Appropriations Committee
Date

For the record, I am Amanda Anstrom. I am providing testimony in support of Senate Bill 2219.

My daughter Piper is currently in the 2nd grade at Wilton Public School. Piper is a typical, healthy student who loves school. However, there is one issue: Piper struggles with reading. Piper entered the second grade with very little reading skills and unable to comprehend the words she was reading. As a mom it was scary to see my child struggle with reading. She became extremely unmotivated, refused to practice reading in the evening, and her self-confidence began to drop. I felt completely helpless. We would read every evening together, but it would always end with her being frustrated due to her inability to read. At a point she wouldn't even try.

Piper's reading issues were first identified in the first grade, but no special interventions were made at that time. At the beginning of the 2nd grade, Piper's reading issues were once again identified. She scored below average on her reading tests but above average on all other assessments. When I became aware of her low test scores, I pushed even harder at home, but this only made it worse. She hated reading and there was nothing I could do. Luckily, the school recognized that Piper needed some help. An interventionist from the school contacted me and asked if I was willing to allow Piper to participate in a reading program called ND Reading Corps. She told me the program would excuse Piper from class for a short-individualized tutoring session from a reading tutor. I loved the idea however I was apprehensive as I knew how Piper worked with me at home. Regardless, we planned to start the reading program immediately. On day 1, I picked Piper up from school and asked her if she got to participate in some extra reading during the day. She exclaimed "yes" and proceeded to tell me all about her special reading time with Ms. Breanna, her reading tutor. She absolutely loved it. Not once did Piper feel singled out or identified as having a reading problem. She just loved having her special reading time with her reading tutor. As the weeks went by, I started to see major improvements in Piper's reading abilities. She was able to read for longer periods of time, she was comprehending what she was reading, and she had more confidence in sounding out words. But most importantly, Piper was finally starting to find joy in reading. We had a bit of a hiccup in October as our entire family contracted the Covid-19 virus. Piper was out of school for almost an entire month. I was worried her reading progress would stall. But it did not. Piper's reading tutor met via Zoom with Piper every day during our month-long quarantine and continued to coach her in reading. Piper loved it and it motivated her to read while we were stuck at home.

We are now 6 months into the program and Piper still enjoys her special reading time with her Reading Corps tutor. Piper is now starting to read chapter books with minimal assistance from me. She enjoys reading children books to me out loud and has found a new love for the Harry Potter books. Her goal is to be able to read these books all by herself. We both know this will take time and hard work but it's wonderful to see Piper make reading goals.

If you would have told me at the beginning of the second grade that Piper would be reading Chapter books by the end of the school year, I would have never believed it. Her reading levels were just too low to support an idea like this. Piper had no passion or motivation to want to learn to read. But thanks to the Reading Corps program, I now have a 2nd grader who loves to read and is working hard every day to become a better reader. I strongly encourage you to continue to support the Reading Corps program. I know my daughter is not the only

student to benefit from this program. I am forever grateful to the Reading Corps program and for what it has done for my daughter.

Thank you for your time.

2021 SENATE STANDING COMMITTEE MINUTES

Appropriations Committee Roughrider Room, State Capitol

SB 2219
2/17/2021
Senate Appropriations Committee

A BILL for an Act to provide an appropriation to the department of commerce to provide funding for research-based literacy intervention services to students.

Senator Holmberg opened the committee work at 9:35 a.m.

Senators present: **Holmberg, Krebsbach, Wanzek, Bekkedahl, Poolman, Erbele, Dever, Oehlke, Rust, Davison, Hogue, Sorvaag, Mathern, and Heckaman.**

Senator Bekkedahl moved DO NOT PASS on SB 2219.
Senator Davison second.

<i>Senators</i>		<i>Senators</i>	
<i>Senator Holmberg</i>	Y	<i>Senator Hogue</i>	Y
<i>Senator Krebsbach</i>	Y	<i>Senator Oehlke</i>	Y
<i>Senator Wanzek</i>	Y	<i>Senator Poolman</i>	Y
<i>Senator Bekkedahl</i>	Y	<i>Senator Rust</i>	Y
<i>Senator Davison</i>	Y	<i>Senator Sorvaag</i>	Y
<i>Senator Dever</i>	Y	<i>Senator Heckaman</i>	Y
<i>Senator Erbele</i>	Y	<i>Senator Mathern</i>	Y

Roll Call Vote – 14-0-0. Motion carried.

Senator Davison will carry the bill.

Senator Holmberg closed the committee work at 10:18 a.m.

Rose Laning, Committee Clerk

REPORT OF STANDING COMMITTEE

SB 2219: Appropriations Committee (Sen. Holmberg, Chairman) recommends **DO NOT PASS** (14 YEAS, 0 NAYS, 0 ABSENT AND NOT VOTING). SB 2219 was placed on the Eleventh order on the calendar.