

Reading, math tutors help students achieve academic success

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In the 2013-14 academic year, more than 900 Minnesota schools will be providing students additional help in achieving academic success in the face of sobering statewide statistics. Those schools have been named Minnesota Reading Corps and Minnesota Math Corps sites to proactively help with literacy and math learning issues facing many Minnesota students. According to data from last year's state standardized tests, 40 percent of Minnesota of 8th graders do not demonstrate proficiency in math. Equally sobering is the statistic that one-in-five third graders is not reading at grade level.

Minnesota Reading Corps and Minnesota Math Corps are statewide, research-based initiatives designed to help every Minnesota child become a successful reader by the end of 3rd grade and/or proficient in math by the end of 8th grade. Both programs have been highly successful. Minnesota Reading Corps sees 80 percent of 3rd graders who successfully completed the program -- all of whom previously were not on track to succeed -- pass the statewide reading exam. This matches Minnesota's overall pass rate. In Minnesota Math Corps, 74 percent of students meet or exceed their growth targets, as measured by Measurement of Academic Progress. This statistic is significantly higher than the gains made by typical 4th through 8th graders nationally.

"We have been able to realize these impressive results because of the people power and commitment of our members," said Sheila Piippo, executive director at Minnesota Reading Corps and Minnesota Math Corps.

Research shows that when students get off to a poor start academically, they rarely catch up with other students. For example, the 2011 Hernandez study noted that students who do not read proficiently by 3rd grade are four times more likely than proficient readers to drop out of high school. A study from Johns Hopkins University found that only 11 percent of students who failed 6th grade math went on to earn high school diplomas.

Piippo noted that there's reason to be optimistic. In the context of literacy, research supports that 95 percent of all children have the capacity to learn to read proficiently if effective interventions are provided.

Piippo encourages anyone who is interested in making a difference in the lives of struggling students to consider becoming tutors. "I encourage others to seek out this rewarding position. There's an opportunity to make a real impact students lives, which will ultimately help the entire community. "

Those interested in learning more about Minnesota Reading and Math Corps, or to apply to serve as a tutor, are encouraged to visit www.MinnesotaReadingCorps.org or www.MinnesotamathCorps.org, or contact 866-859-2825.