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Process Assessment of the Minnesota Reading Corps

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Executive Summary

Minnesota Reading Corps (MRC) is the largest AmeriCorps State program in the country. For the 2012-13 school year, the MRC program plans to serve over 30,000 students in 652 elementary schools, Head Start centers, and preschools using more than 1,100 AmeriCorps members. The goal of MRC is to ensure that students become successful readers and meet reading proficiency targets by the end of the third grade. The MRC program was started in 2003 to provide reading and literacy tutoring to children in four preschool (PreK) Head Start programs. In 2005, MRC expanded its program to serve students in kindergarten through third grade (K-3). The core activities of MRC, and its host organization, ServeMinnesota Action Network, are to recruit, train, place and monitor AmeriCorps members to implement research-based literacy enrichment activities and interventions for preschool children and at-risk K-3 students.

In 2012, NORC at the University of Chicago and its partner TIES completed a Process Assessment of the MRC program by studying the implementation experiences of 20 PreK and K-3 sites. The goals of the process assessment were: to understand how the MRC program was implemented at a variety of sites; to identify facilitators of and barriers to effective program implementation; and to make recommendations for program replication and scale-up. The study also aimed to provide a context for interpreting the findings of three complementary studies of MRC that are currently being conducted: an impact evaluation of the MRC K-3 program on elementary student literacy outcomes (Fall 2013); a quasi-experimental impact evaluation of the MRC PreK program on preschool student literacy outcomes (forthcoming in Fall 2014); and a survey of AmeriCorps members (Fall 2013). The process assessment focused on the following four research questions:

1. *Are AmeriCorps members receiving appropriate training and supervision?* What is the effect of member training and supervision on student outcomes?

2. *How is the program achieving its immediate, intermediate, and long-term outcomes?* How does the program's design and administration lead to the achievement of these outcomes?

3. *Are there characteristics of AmeriCorps members that are particularly effective with service recipients (i.e., students)?*

4. *Which findings and lessons learned from the MRC can be applied to other models and programs?* Are there characteristics that are suitable for similar reading tutoring programs to replicate?

To explore the research questions associated with the process assessment, the research team relied primarily on qualitative data collected through site visits to a purposive sample of 20 PreK and K-3 programs in diverse regions of the state and a review of MRC program documentation (e.g., PreK and K-3 training manuals from the Summer Institute, reports from previous evaluations, MRC program materials, and the MRC website).

A. About the Minnesota Reading Corps

AmeriCorps members serve in school-based settings to implement MRC literacy enrichment strategies and conduct interventions with students using a Response to Intervention (RtI) framework. The key aspects of the MRC RtI framework are:

- Clear literacy targets at each age level from PreK through grade 3
- Benchmark assessment three times a year to identify students eligible for one-on-one interventions

- Scientifically based interventions
- Frequent progress monitoring during intervention delivery
- High quality training in program goals, and literacy assessment and instruction

In the RtI framework, data play the key roles of screening student eligibility for additional services and then monitoring student progress towards achieving academic goals (i.e., benchmarks). MRC screens students for program eligibility three times a year (i.e., fall, winter, spring) using research-validated grade- and content-specific performance benchmarks. Program staff use scores from the assessment to categorize students into one of three possible tiers (i.e., proficiency levels): Tier 1 students score at or above benchmark and benefit from typical classroom instruction; Tier 2 students score below benchmark and require specific supplemental interventions until they meet benchmarks; and Tier 3 students require intensive intervention provided by a special education teacher or literacy specialist and often have individualized educational plans.

Members in the MRC PreK program provide whole-class literacy enrichment for all students (i.e., Tier 1), and a targeted one-on-one component, where members provide individualized interventions to Tier 2 and Tier 3 students. The MRC K-3 program provides only one-on-one tutoring where members support primarily Tier 2 students in Kindergarten through 3rd grade.

1. Overview of the PreK and K-3 Programs

At the PreK level, the MRC program focuses on integrating the "Big Five" Early Literacy Predictors outlined by the National Reading Panel into all aspects of the daily classroom routine. The "Big Five" for preschool students include conversational skills, vocabulary and background knowledge, book and print rules, phonological awareness (i.e., rhyming and alliteration), and alphabetic knowledge. AmeriCorps members are tasked with creating a Literacy Rich Classroom using research-based practices assessed in the ELLCO (Early Language & Literacy Classroom Observation) and implementing a literacy rich daily schedule. Along with implementing classroom-based strategies, members provide targeted individual or small group literacy tutoring for Tier 2 and Tier 3 students until they meet program-specified criteria that predict proficiency. Members implement 5-10 minute scripted interventions working on students' literacy skills.

Within the PreK program, there are several different roles for instructional staff and AmeriCorps members. Each PreK classroom has a "lead teacher" (a licensed teacher who is the students' primary instructor) and a MRC member. Two types of AmeriCorps members may be assigned to a classroom: Educator Corps[1] or Community Corps. Community Corps members are recruited from the community and are embedded into a classroom to collaborate with teaching staff. Educator Corps members are current employees of the service site. Both Community Corps and Educator Corps members' roles are to enhance daily literacy opportunities and conduct literacy assessments to help children develop their emergent literacy skills in preparation for kindergarten.

At the K-3 level, the program is focused on the "Big Five Ideas in Literacy" as identified by the National Reading Panel, including phonological awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension. AmeriCorps members serve as one-on-one tutors for Tier 2 students. Full-time members individually tutor approximately 14-18 K-3 students daily for 20 minutes each. The tutoring interventions are supplemental to the core reading instruction provided at each school. The goal of the tutoring is to raise individual students' literacy levels so that they are on track to meet or exceed the next program-specified literacy benchmark. One variation among K-3 members is the Kindergarten-Focus

[1] In previous years, Educator Corps members were referred to as Professional Corps members.

(K-Focus) position. K-Focus members continue to tutor K-3 students, though they tend to spend a majority of their time providing Kindergarteners with two small-group (20-minute) sessions daily, for a total of 40 minutes of literacy-focused intervention.

2. Supervisory Staff and Training Resources

MRC provides three layers of supervision to ensure integrity of program implementation: Program Coordinators, Master Coaches, and Internal Coaches. Program Coordinators are MRC employees who provide administrative oversight for program implementation to sites located across large geographic regions. Master Coaches are contracted literacy experts who provide site staff (i.e., Internal Coaches and AmeriCorps members) within these regions with expert consultation on literacy instruction and ensure integrity in the implementation of MRC program elements. Site-specific Internal Coaches, who are typically staff literacy specialists, teachers, or curriculum directors, serve as immediate on-site supervisors, mentors, and advocates for members. According to program guidelines, the Internal Coach's role is to monitor members and provide guidance in the implementation of MRC's literacy rich schedule (PreK only), assessments and interventions. As the front-line supervisor, the Internal Coach tends to be the most critical component of the supervisory structure.

Each summer, the Minnesota Reading Corps hosts a four day Summer Institute to train returning and new Master Coaches, Internal Coaches, and AmeriCorps members.[2] This intensive, information-filled conference provides training in the research-based literacy interventions employed by MRC. During several sessions at the Summer Institute, members learn the essential skills, knowledge, and tools needed to serve as literacy interventionists. Members are provided with detailed *Literacy Handbooks* specific to the PreK and K-3 programs as well as online resources that mirror and supplement the contents of the *Handbooks* (e.g., videos of model interventions and best practices). Both the *Handbooks* and website are intended to provide members with just-in-time support, and opportunities for continued professional development and skill refinement.

In addition to member training, the Summer Institute provides Internal Coaches with a comprehensive orientation to MRC, including program and early literacy background, intervention delivery, benchmarking and progress monitoring. Internal Coaches are instructed in their responsibilities, including ensuring fidelity to the MRC model, orienting the member to the school, introducing school staff to the member, setting Tier 2 or Tier 3 intervention schedules, and coordinating professional development opportunities for their members. Internal Coaches also are oriented to the layers of support provided by MRC, including the Master Coach and Program Coordinator.

B. Process Assessment Methodology

In developing the conceptual framework for the process assessment, the research team focused on a number of integrated processes that enable the transfer of evidence-based interventions into diverse program settings and that support implementation fidelity over time. Specifically, the research team used a modified version of an evaluation model, originally conceived by the National Implementation Research Network (NIRN) and modified by Metz, Blasé, and Bowie (2007), which focuses on core components or "drivers" for implementing evidence-based practices in after-school programs:[3]

1. Recruitment and selection of AmeriCorps members

[2] Members attend all four days of the Summer Institute (one day orientation and three days of training). New Coaches attend three days and returning Coaches attend one day.
[3] Metz, A., Blase, K. & Bowie, L. (October 2007). *Implementing evidence-based practices: Six "drivers" of success*. Washington, DC: Child Trends.

2. Pre-service and in-service training (provided by MRC and sites/schools)
3. Coaching and supervision (by Internal Coaches and Master Coaches)
4. Using data to assess performance (through fidelity assessments of AmeriCorps members and benchmarking and progress monitoring of students)[4]
5. Internal management support by MRC and sites/schools supports
6. Systems-level partnerships with external groups to support practitioners.

1. Site Selection and Recruitment

The research team solicited 3-5 recommendations for a diverse spectrum of potential PreK sites and K-3 schools from each of the MRC Program Coordinators in four MRC regions (Metro, Central, Southwest, and Southeast). The research team considered descriptive information provided by the Program Coordinators as well as administrative data from MRC to select the first nine sites visited in May and June 2012, and repeated this process in the selection of the 11 sites and schools visited in November and December 2012. In order to obtain a cross-section of sites and schools implementing MRC, sites were selected based on geographic diversity (urban, suburban, rural), program types offered (PreK only, K-3rd only, or both), institution type for PreK programs only (Head Start, community-based, and charter or public schools), site enrollment size, concentration of poverty among households served, program maturity, and number of AmeriCorps members serving.

Once the research team vetted and selected the sites and schools, the Chief Executive Officer of ServeMinnesota sent a letter to each site seeking their participation in the study. Upon approval by the site director or principal, the research team scheduled and arranged the site visit agenda with each site's Internal Coach. Members of the site visit team participated in a full-day training for conducting the site visits, including obtaining informed consent, administering the protocols, preschool and elementary school culture and routines, and site visit follow-up procedures (i.e., team debrief, site team transcription and data entry, analysis, report write-up).

2. Primary Data Collection and Analysis

Teams of two researchers conducted one-day visits to the 20 selected MRC sites (8 PreK and 12 K-3). All visits included in-depth interviews with a variety of respondents, including PreK site directors, PreK and K-3 principals, Internal Coaches, and AmeriCorps members. Focus groups or individual interviews were held with PreK and K-3 teachers. The research team also observed literacy interventions conducted by Professional and Community Corps members at PreK sites and intervention sessions conducted by members with K-3 students. General observation of the school environment and surrounding community was documented. The interview protocols captured information from multiple perspectives and addressed topics such as: management and staffing of the MRC program at the site; program responsibilities of site staff; organizational supports provided to AmeriCorps Members; facilitators and barriers to program implementation; and perceptions of MRC program effectiveness and lessons learned.

Two strategies were used to analyze data at the site level and across sites. Qualitative data derived from respondents at each site were coded using pre-determined categories corresponding to the topic of the interview and focus group questions. Responses within a site were compared and contrasted across respondents, and

[4] In the Metz, Blasé, and Bowie model, this component combines "staff performance and appraisal" and "use of decision support data systems."

triangulated. These findings were incorporated into a structured site visit summary template. At the cross-site level, the findings in each site visit summary were analyzed comparatively across the PreK sites and K-3 schools and similarities and differences were identified. Findings were reported based on the frequency with which respondents expressed a perception or referred to certain practices relevant to the topic.

C. Findings and Conclusions

Below, we offer conclusions based on these findings and organizes them by the four major research questions, followed by a discussion of implications for MRC program replication.

1. Are AmeriCorps members receiving appropriate training and supervision? What is the effect of member training and supervision on student outcomes?

A comprehensive training regime and a multi-layered supervisory structure were two of the most critical features of the MRC program that contributed to effective program implementation. The consensus among all parties interviewed (i.e., AmeriCorps members, Internal Coaches, principals, teachers) and from the observations of site visitors was that MRC's training regime was both appropriate and effective in preparing members to implement the MRC program at their sites. The effectiveness of MRC's training regime results from its combination of a program-sponsored, centralized training (e.g., Summer Institute) with hard-copy and web-based reference materials (e.g., *Literacy Handbook*, website) and program-provided trainings throughout the service year, as well as ongoing peer support.

The MRC Summer Institute was a particularly effective mechanism for training and for building a common knowledge-base among both new and returning members. The Summer Institute was both comprehensive and intense, providing members with all the information and materials they needed to implement the MRC program at their site and fulfill their contractual service obligation. In addition, members reported using their *Literacy Handbook* throughout their service period. MRC also provided members with web-based resources that further supported consistent program implementation. Each of these three resources (i.e., in-person training at the Summer Institute, hard-copy reference handbooks, and web-based materials) contributed to members' capacities to implement the MRC program successfully and with fidelity at their sites. In addition to the Summer Institute, members received additional training during the school year from MRC on specific interventions and data management technology and participated in Professional Learning Groups (PLGs), which convene monthly to allow members to share experiences and best practices with one another.

Over and above MRC-provided trainings, AmeriCorps members were offered varying degrees of site-specific trainings, including orientations to the school, teacher in-service professional development opportunities, training in additional literacy interventions, and informal teacher mentorships. Many members commented that additional training, particularly in student behavior management, would be a valuable addition to the training regimen. Members often noted that site-specific training on expectations and procedures for handling student inattentiveness, behavior problems and discipline would significantly improve their abilities to effectively implement MRC at their sites.

The second key feature that facilitated successful program implementation was the multi-layered supervisory structure of the MRC model, which includes Internal Coaches, Master Coaches, and Program Coordinators. The important lesson learned from the MRC model is that creating a layered framework for supervision where each level contributes unique skills can help to ensure fidelity of program implementation. Differentiation of responsibility and assignment of tasks to individuals with appropriate skills and knowledge can greatly multiply the effectiveness of supervisors. Furthermore, it is critical that the immediate supervisor (Internal Coach) have sufficient dedicated time to properly supervise their member(s). For MRC, the Internal Coach served as both an administrative supervisor and a professional educator/trainer. This is a strength in that it allows for implementation of consistent fidelity checks,

provision of continual professional improvement, and an ever-present just-in-time literacy education resource for members. In combination, the Master Coach, Internal Coach, and AmeriCorps members are able to deliver with integrity the literacy interventions and/or literacy rich schedule (PreK only) that research has shown to be effective in increasing literacy proficiency.

2. How is the program achieving its immediate, intermediate, and long-term outcomes? How does the program's design and administration lead to the achievement of these outcomes?

While site visitors were unable to independently verify student-level outcomes, there was consensus among those interviewed at the sites and schools that students were on track to meet their targets and/or were making progress while enrolled in the MRC program. In particular, interviewees noted that students' participation in MRC's research-based interventions and immersion in the literacy rich schedule (PreK only) were responsible for achieving the program's desired immediate and intermediate literacy proficiency goals.[5]

Adherence to MRC's RtI-based program structure was a key element of the program that contributed to successful student outcomes. At all eight PreK sites: members benchmarked their students during the three benchmarking periods (Fall, Winter, Spring) using recommended assessment tools and progress monitored students receiving Tier 2 or Tier 3 intervention monthly; students benefited from the literacy rich schedule and Big 5 transitions (Tier 1 instruction); students who received the lowest benchmark scores were targeted for Tier 2 and Tier 3 small group or individual intervention sessions; and students receiving Tier 2 and 3 interventions generally participated in the same number of intervention sessions weekly. Adherence to the MRC RtI framework was equally strong all K-3 schools visited: benchmarking was conducted during the Fall, Winter, and Spring, and progress monitoring was conducted on a weekly basis with students receiving services; Tier 2 students received services at all schools; students received literacy interventions on a daily basis; most tutoring sessions occurred for 15-20 minutes; and students exited the program when they met pre-defined, standardized exit criteria.

MRC successfully facilitates member and staff adherence to the RtI framework through intentional program design and active coaching and administration. Under the auspices of ServeMinnesota, MRC provides assistance and resources to support implementation along the continuum of early to full installation. Sites and schools that adopted the program as recently as a year ago had similar experiences to those in the program for five or more years. The research team concluded that MRC shapes and supports this process by focusing on the six core implementation components that are needed to bring research-based interventions into daily, educational practice.[6] MRC administrative and regional staff assist site-based education administrators with recruitment and/or selection of members to ensure a good fit with their specific school environment. The organization provides intensive pre-service training for the assigned members and ongoing coaching and consultation. The RtI framework's emphasis on data-driven decision-making informs entry and exit into the program as well as the use of targeted interventions. Administrative support operates at multiple levels, extending from the Program Coordinator at the regional level to the Internal Coach on-site.

Besides the obvious structural differences between the PreK and K-3 programs, our analysis also revealed some key contrasts between the two program types in terms of their impact on the school environment. First, the research team found some indication that membership type in the PreK program (Educator Corps and Community Corps) may result

[5] The long-term outcomes for students cannot yet be assessed since they relate to Kindergarten readiness and 3rd grade demonstrated proficiency.
[6] Fixsen, D., Naoom, S., Blase, K., & Wallace, F. (2007, Winter/Spring). Implementation: The missing link between research and practice. *The APSAC Advisor*, pp. 4–10.

in different levels of impact on the school environment. The research team plans to further examine the differences between the influence of Educator Corps and Community Corps members on the school environment in the next phase of the MRC evaluation. The PreK program may have a broader and more immediate influence on the school environment (teachers and students) than the K-3 program. Thus, transformation of the school environment may be more readily achievable with the PreK program than the K-3 program, which may require additional time to take root.

3. Are there characteristics of AmeriCorps members that are particularly effective with service recipients (i.e., students)?

A considerable strength of the MRC program is that the comprehensive training, multi-layered supervisory structure, and ongoing coaching allows for effective program implementation by members from a strikingly diverse range of backgrounds. That is, the program structure is designed to allow individuals with no specific academic or professional prerequisites to successfully implement the program.[7] While one might expect backgrounds in education and literacy instruction to be necessary prerequisites or impart an advantage to members who possess such skills, no such benefits were found. The most frequently reported characteristics of effective AmeriCorps members included *"soft-skills"* such as the ability to work well with others and to be flexible, organized, and proactive, as well as *dispositions*, such as intrinsic motivation, a desire to instill a love for learning and literacy in children, a deep commitment to advancing student achievement, and a strong affinity for working with young children.

AmeriCorps members who possess these skills and dispositions tend to thrive in the program, in no small part because of the scripted nature of the literacy interventions, intensive training regime, continual coaching, and embedded supervisory structure. These features significantly increase the pool of potential applicants from which the program can recruit members. The ability to recruit members with diverse backgrounds and the rigorous training and supervisory structure have allowed for the rapid expansion of the MRC program statewide, while simultaneously maintaining effectiveness in achieving desired student literacy outcomes.

Thus, an important conclusion from the interviews and observations is that programs with highly scripted interventions, comprehensive initial and ongoing training, and robust supervisory structures can enable individuals with diverse backgrounds and technical skill levels to effectively implement a successful literacy enrichment and/or reading intervention program. Under such circumstances, the most critical member characteristics for effective program implementation include soft skills and dispositions such as intrinsic motivation, flexibility, ability to work well with children, and a strong commitment to achieve the program's vision or objective(s).

4. Which findings and lessons learned from the MRC can be applied to other models and programs? Are there characteristics that are suitable for similar reading tutoring programs to replicate?

Based on the findings and observations in our assessment of MRC, the program is a highly-adoptable model that can operate well in multiple contexts. Those interested in replicating the model should develop a comprehensive package of program-sponsored infrastructure and resources that include: comprehensive trainings of AmeriCorps members and program support staff; a multi-layered supervisory structure to ensure fidelity of program implementation; a defined framework (e.g., RtI) to guide objective instructional choices and allow for the assessment of program effectiveness; a limited set of highly scripted interventions that have been shown to be effective (i.e., research-based) in engendering desired student-level outcomes; and a screening process that is effective at identifying members with

[7] Indeed, the only *necessary* cognitive requirement is the ability to read. Note that illiterate persons have previously attempted to serve as members, but MRC now screens for literacy during the application process.

characteristics and dispositions that correspond with the program's vision or objective(s). This complete package of program-sponsored infrastructure and resources allows for the successful implementation of specialized interventions by members with diverse backgrounds regardless of their level of prerequisite technical skill.

Two key elements of this package include comprehensive trainings for AmeriCorps members and program support staff as well as the multi-layered supervisory support structure. Programs should develop a training regime that combines program-sponsored, centralized training (e.g., Summer Institute), hard-copy and web-based reference materials (e.g., *Handbook*, website), continual trainings throughout the members' service year, and formation of peer-support groups that meet on a regular basis. To complement trainings, further enhance members' skills, and ensure fidelity of program implementation, programs are also advised to adopt a multi-layered supervisory support structure. Such a structure allows for frequent fidelity checks, ongoing professional development opportunities for members, and just-in-time expert advice that enhances the effectiveness of less skilled members.

Obtaining the buy-in and understanding of teachers and site staff is critical to the success of the program. To foster this buy-in and understanding among school staff, programs should communicate with teachers and other school staff early in the school year about the objectives of the program. Initial, direct communication helps teachers to fully understand the purpose and role of the member in supporting student learning, as well as the rationale for and research behind targeting particular types of students (i.e., Tier 2 and/or Tier 3). Teacher buy-in and adaptability is also critical to the successful integration of the member into the site because it eases the scheduling of tutoring and facilitates productive communication about student progress.

D. Implications for Program Replication

As supported by the findings and conclusions from the process assessment, the MRC program appears to be highly replicable. If implemented in a scripted and rigorous manner in other locations, MRC can be transformed into a model for the development of other successful literacy enrichment and/or reading intervention programs for young students. One of the most important findings for replication is MRC's successful deployment of members lacking any specialized background in education or literacy. If similar program-based infrastructure and resources are provided and specialized interventions are accurately implemented and closely monitored, members with diverse backgrounds can serve without possessing any specialized prerequisite technical skill. However, key findings also indicate that the multi-layered supervisory structure, which supports the on-site implementation of the literacy enrichment strategies and interventions is critical to the success of the program. Both centralized (Master Coach and Program Coordinator) and on-site (Internal Coach) support are necessary for assuring the proper identification of students, implementation of interventions, and use of data-driven decision-making for education.

I. Introduction

Minnesota Reading Corps (MRC) is a statewide initiative with a mission to help every Minnesota child become a proficient reader by the end of 3rd grade. MRC engages a diverse group of AmeriCorps members to provide literacy enrichment and tutoring services to preschool children (PreK) and at-risk kindergarten through 3rd grade (K-3) elementary school students. As of the 2012-2013 school year, more than 1,100 AmeriCorps members implemented the MRC program in 652 schools or sites[8] and 184 school districts across the state of Minnesota.[9]

This report describes the implementation experiences of 20 PreK and K-3 sites participating in the Process Assessment of the MRC program. The goals of the process assessment were: to understand how the MRC program was implemented at a variety of sites; to identify facilitators of and barriers to effective program implementation; and to make recommendations for program replication and scale-up. The study also aimed to provide a context for interpreting the findings of three complementary studies of MRC that are currently being conducted: an impact evaluation of the MRC K-3 program on elementary student literacy outcomes (Fall 2013); a quasi-experimental impact evaluation of the MRC PreK program on preschool student literacy outcomes (forthcoming in Fall 2014); and a survey of AmeriCorps members (Fall 2012). The process assessment focused on the following four research questions:

1. *Are AmeriCorps members receiving appropriate training and supervision?* What is the effect of member training and supervision on student outcomes?
2. *How is the program achieving its immediate, intermediate, and long-term outcomes?* How does the program's design and administration lead to the achievement of these outcomes?
3. *Are there characteristics of AmeriCorps members that are particularly effective with service recipients (i.e., students)?*
4. *Which findings and lessons learned from the MRC can be applied to other models and programs?* Are there characteristics that are suitable for similar reading tutoring programs to replicate?

To address these questions, we begin in Section II by presenting a brief overview of MRC and its role in the recruitment, training, placement and monitoring of AmeriCorps members as they implement the program in preschool and elementary school settings. We then describe MRC's PreK and K-3 programs, the AmeriCorps members' role in program implementation, MRC's multi-layered supervisory structure, and their Summer Training Institute. Section III then provides information on the process assessment's methodology for selecting sites, data collection and analysis of findings.

This background information sets the context for the presentation of findings on the PreK and K-3 programs in Sections IV and V. Each section focuses on background information on program sites or schools visited, core curriculum for literacy instruction, students served by MRC interventions, MRC implementation highlights, key components driving successful implementation, facilitators and challenges, the AmeriCorps MRC service experience, and results and lessons learned.

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[8] According to the Minnesota Department of Education (MDE), during the 2011-2012 school year, 942 public schools served grades K-12. Of those schools, 912 offered PreK services. The total number of preschools in the state of Minnesota (i.e., public schools and non-public schools) was not available. http://w20.education.state.mn.us/MDEAnalytics/Summary.jsp

[9] According to MDE, during the 2011-2012 school year, there were 333 public operating elementary & secondary independent school districts, 3 intermediate school districts, and 148 charter schools (which are considered public school districts in Minnesota).

We conclude our report in Section VI by returning to the research questions. We address the effectiveness of AmeriCorps members' training and supervision and the characteristics that support their service in MRC, along with a discussion of how the design, administration, and implementation of the MRC program contribute to student literacy proficiency. Finally, we discuss the implications of the findings and lessons learned for replication of the MRC program. A glossary of terms to assist the reader is provided in Appendix F.

II. About the Minnesota Reading Corps

A. Statewide Implementation of MRC: 2003-2012

Minnesota Reading Corps (MRC) is the largest AmeriCorps State program in the country. The goal of MRC is to ensure that students become successful readers and meet reading proficiency targets by the end of the third grade. The MRC program was started in 2003 to provide reading and literacy tutoring to children in four preschool (PreK) Head Start programs. In 2005, MRC expanded its program to serve students in kindergarten through third grade (K-3). The core activities of MRC, and its host organization, ServeMinnesota Action Network, are to recruit, train, place and monitor AmeriCorps members to implement research-based literacy enrichment activities and interventions for preschool children and at-risk K-3 students.

Minnesota Reading Corps is a strategic initiative of ServeMinnesota. ServeMinnesota is the state commission for all AmeriCorps State programs in Minnesota, including the Minnesota Reading Corps, and helps leverage the federal, state and private dollars to operate MRC. As a catalyst for positive social change and community service, ServeMinnesota works with AmeriCorps members and community partners to meet critical needs in Minnesota. As a nonprofit organization, it recruits and supports thousands of individuals to improve the lives of Minnesotans by offering life-changing service opportunities that focus on education, affordable housing, employment, and the environment. The ServeMinnesota Action Network serves as fiscal host to provide statewide management and oversight for the MRC program. The Action Network is a nonprofit organization and serves as a home to incubate, replicate and scale evidence-based AmeriCorps programs that address critical state priorities. In addition, the Saint Croix River Education District (SCRED) and TIES have been funded by ServeMinnesota to conduct an annual evaluation of the MRC program.[10]

In the MRC program, AmeriCorps members serve in school-based settings to implement MRC literacy strategies and conduct interventions with students. MRC members serve as AmeriCorps members, bound to the program's call to service. As a direct service program, MRC engages its members in service to work towards the solution of a social issue. In exchange for their service of 1700 hours a year (full-time) or 900 hours a year (part-time), members receive certain benefits. These benefits include a bi-weekly stipend, student loan forbearance, and an education stipend for the first two years of service.

In addition to AmeriCorps members serving in the classroom, the MRC model provides supports for maintaining the fidelity of the intervention through the assignment of one or more Internal Coaches at each site or school to mentor and guide members. Internal Coaches are typically specialists, teachers, or curriculum directors employed by the site or school. Expert-level Master Coaches are also assigned to each Internal Coach to provide consultation on literacy interventions and assessment, as well as ensure fidelity to the MRC model. The MRC Program Coordinators provide administrative support to individual sites (Principals, Internal Coaches, and Master Coaches) and assist members with their AmeriCorps responsibilities.

For the 2012-13 school year, the MRC program plans to serve over 30,000 students in 652 elementary schools, Head Start centers, and preschools using more than 1,100 AmeriCorps members, making it one of the largest AmeriCorps programs in the country. Based on the early success of the MRC program, replication is underway in Colorado, Massachusetts, Michigan, and Santa Cruz County, CA. In the future, plans call for replication of the MRC program in Texas, North Dakota, Iowa, South Carolina, and Rhode Island.

[10] ServeMinnesota 2011, Background document.

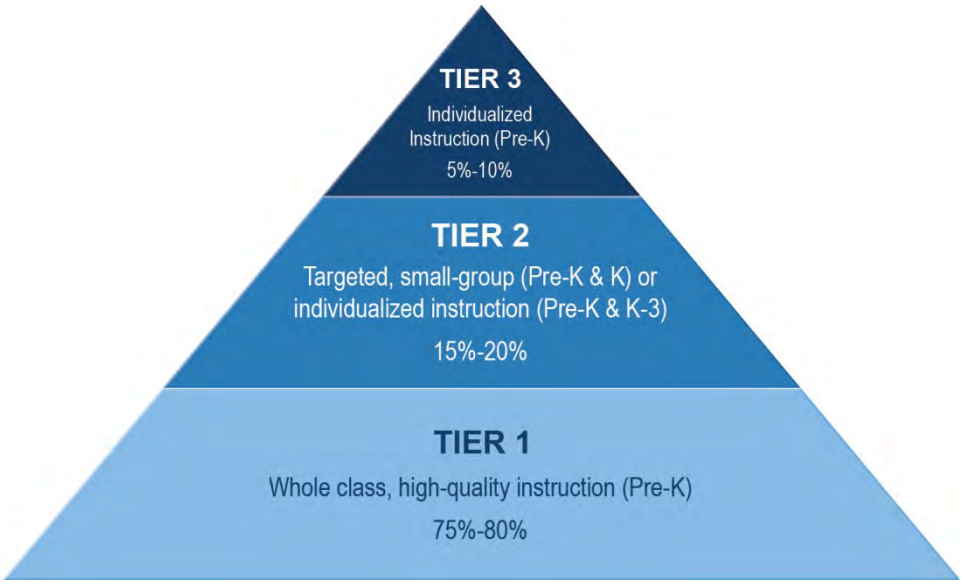
B. Foundational Framework and Staffing Structure in MRC

The MRC program utilizes a Response to Intervention (RtI) framework. The RtI model is based on a problem solving approach which was incorporated into the 2004 Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) and has been gaining popularity among educators, policymakers, administrators, teachers, and researchers. The key aspects of the MRC RtI framework are:

- Clear literacy targets at each age level from PreK through grade 3
- Benchmark assessment three times a year to identify students eligible for one-on-one interventions
- Scientifically based interventions
- Frequent progress monitoring (formative assessment) during intervention delivery
- High quality training in program goals, and literacy assessment and instruction

In the RtI framework, data play the key roles of screening students' eligibility for additional services and then monitoring students' progress towards achieving academic goals (i.e., benchmarks). The Minnesota Reading Corps screens students for program eligibility three times a year (i.e., fall, winter, spring) with two sets of grade-specific, literacy-focused general outcome measures (i.e., IGDI for PreK and AIMSWeb for K-3) that possess research-validated grade- and content-specific performance benchmarks. Program staff use scores from the general outcome measures to categorize students into one of three possible tiers (i.e., proficiency levels; see Exhibit II-1): Tier 1 students score at or above benchmark and benefit from typical classroom instruction; Tier 2 students score below benchmark and require specific supplemental interventions until they meet benchmarks; and Tier 3 students require intensive intervention provided by a special education teacher or literacy specialist and often have individualized educational plans.

Exhibit II-1. Response to Intervention Tiers



The MRC PreK program includes both an immersive "push-in" component, where members provide whole-class literacy enrichment for all students (i.e., Tier 1), and a targeted one-on-one component, where members provide individualized interventions to students struggling with emergent literacy skills (i.e., Tiers 2 and 3).The MRC K-3

program provides only one-on-one tutoring where members provide supplemental individualized literacy interventions to primarily Tier 2 students in Kindergarten through 3rd grade. Generally, those Tier 2 students who score closest to the benchmark are offered MRC's intervention services first because they should require the least amount of intervention (i.e., time in program) to be set on the appropriate learning trajectory. The students closest to the benchmark can be moved through the program more quickly than those students with greater need, allowing MRC to maximize the number of students receiving services.

1. Overview of PreK Program Literacy Focus and AmeriCorps Members' Role

At the PreK level, the MRC program focuses on integrating the "Big Five" Early Literacy Predictors outlined by the National Reading Panel into all aspects of the daily classroom routine. The "Big Five" for preschool students include conversational skills, vocabulary and background knowledge, book and print rules, phonological awareness (i.e., rhyming and alliteration), and alphabetic knowledge. Internal Coaches and AmeriCorps members are tasked with creating a Literacy Rich Classroom using research-based practices assessed in the ELLCO (Early Language & Literacy Classroom Observation). The ELLCO assesses five key elements of the literacy environment: classroom structure, curriculum, language environment, books and book reading, print and early writing. According to the ELLCO, a "Literacy Rich Classroom" is one that embeds literacy activities among daily routines. As such, each classroom's day is structured around a Literacy Rich Schedule. The schedule includes nine activities, in order: Arrival, Sign-in, Meal Time, Daily Message, Repeated Read Aloud, Tier 1 Small Group, Journal (weekly), Choice Time/Active Learning, Tier 2 or Tier 3 Small Group. Within and between each scheduled activity, teachers and members strive to integrate MRC expected routines, including "Strive for 5" conversations using an overarching theme, functional vocabulary, and "Big 5 Transitions." The Big 5 Transitions occur as students move from one part of the literacy rich schedule to another. Members and teachers engage the students in an activity focused on one of four skills (oral language, phonological awareness, letter names, and letter sounds), such as rhyming games or letter and sound songs. In addition, AmeriCorps members serving in the PreK program are responsible for enacting the SEEDS of Emergent Literacy Professional Development Curriculum,[11] [12] which provides both members and teachers with specific strategies to enhance literacy instruction for *all students* in the classroom (i.e., including Tier 1 students).

Along with implementing classroom-based strategies, members provide targeted individual or small group literacy tutoring for at-risk students (i.e., Tier 2 and 3 students) until they meet program-specified criteria that predict proficiency. Members implement 5-10 minute scripted interventions working on students' literacy skills. For each student, members address vocabulary and oral language, then visual discrimination, and finally phonological awareness. One-on-one intervention sessions occur daily until the student achieves MRC's exit requirements.

Within the PreK program, there are several different roles for instructional staff and members. Each PreK classroom has a "lead teacher" (a licensed teacher who is the students' primary instructor) and a MRC member. Two types of AmeriCorps members may be assigned to a classroom: Educator Corps or Community Corps. Community Corps members are recruited from the community and are embedded into a classroom to collaborate with teaching staff. Educator Corps members are current employees of the service site at the time of recruitment. Both Community Corps and Educator Corps members' roles are to enhance daily literacy opportunities and conduct literacy assessments to help children develop their emergent literacy skills in preparation for kindergarten.

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[11] In the SEEDS curriculum each letter stands for various behaviors found in a quality teacher: (S)ense and respond, (E)ncourage and enjoy, (E)ducate, (D)evelop through doing, and (S)elf image.

[12] Horst, K., & Passe, A. (2004). *Creating Literacy Rich Classrooms for Preschool Children (Ages 0-5).* Presented at the 2004 CEED Symposium. Minneapolis, MN.

2. Overview of K-3 Program Literacy Focus and AmeriCorps Members' Role

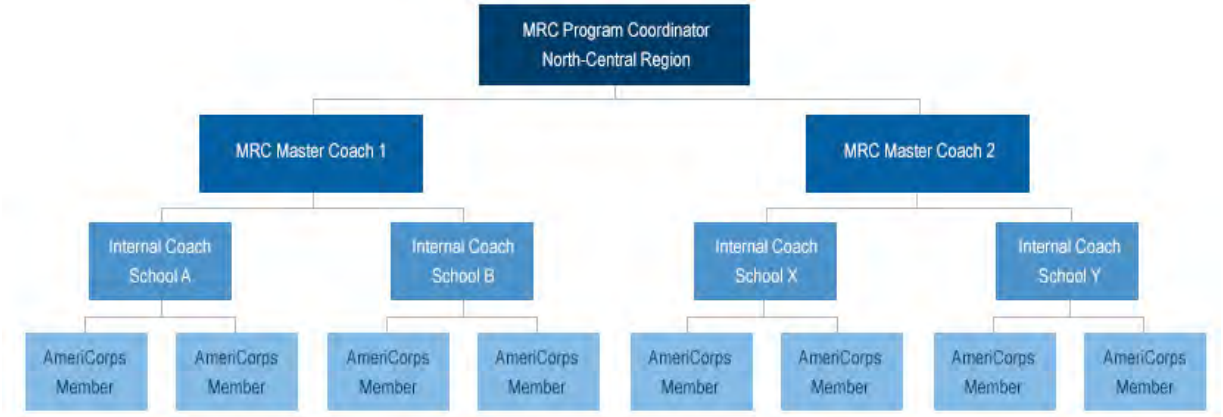
At the K-3 level, the program is focused on the "Big Five Ideas in Literacy" as identified by the National Reading Panel, including phonological awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension. AmeriCorps members serve as one-on-one tutors and enact research-based interventions with students who are just below grade-specific literacy benchmarks (i.e., Tier 2 students). Full-time members individually tutor approximately 14-18 K-3 students daily for 20 minutes each. The literacy interventions consist of a set of prescribed, research-validated activities such as "Repeated Reading with Comprehension Strategy Practice" or "Duet Reading." Unlike the PreK program, the various interventions are not strictly ordered, but are introduced to students based upon the outcomes of regular progress monitoring. The tutoring interventions are supplemental to the core reading instruction provided at each school. The goal of the tutoring is to raise individual students' literacy levels so that they are on track to meet or exceed the next program-specified literacy benchmark. Meeting benchmark will allow the student to benefit fully from general (i.e., Tier 1) literacy instruction already provided in the classroom.

One variation among K-3 members is the Kindergarten-Focus (K-Focus) position. K-Focus members continue to tutor students in grades Kindergarten through 3rd; however, they tend to spend a majority of their time providing Kindergarteners with a daily "double-dose" of MRC interventions. In the K-Focus program, each Kindergarten student participates in two (20-minute) sessions daily, for a total of 40 minutes. One session is a 5-day Repeated Read Aloud intervention that is conducted in a small group setting (typically four students). The other session is a standard MRC early literacy intervention that is selected by the Internal Coach based on student needs (phoneme blending, phoneme segmenting, letter sounds or word blending) and is conducted in pairs of students.

3. Supervisory Staff

The Internal Coaches and Master Coaches play important roles in MRC program implementation for both the PreK and K-3 programs (see Exhibit II-2 for an illustration of the complete MRC supervisory structure). The Internal Coach is a school employee who is trained to provide on-site literacy support and oversight to AmeriCorps members serving as literacy tutors at the site. In order to ensure fidelity to the MRC model, the Internal Coach conducts monthly integrity checks for each intervention and scores the member using the Accuracy of Implementation Rating Scale (AIRS) before each benchmarking period. The Internal Coach provides the member with feedback based on these observations. The Internal Coach also ensures that the member is accurately reporting student data in AIMSWeb and OnCorps. Throughout the school year, the Internal Coach works with the member to select appropriate interventions for each student and to determine if students are ready to exit the program. The Internal Coach also works closely with MRC program staff and school administration to address any concerns about member performance and to address disciplinary action if necessary. MRC estimates that the time commitment for Internal Coaches is 6-9 hours per member per month. The additional time commitment for required training is 56 hours for new PreK Internal coaches and 24 hours for returning PreK Internal coaches; 32 hours for new K-3 Internal coaches and 16 hours for returning K-3 Internal coaches.

Exhibit II-2. MRC Supervisory Structure



Initially, the MRC program did not require schools to provide an Internal Coach. Through lessons learned in the first few years of the program, MRC realized that the program required an internal member of the individual school environment in order to facilitate achievement of the program's goals. Specifically, to advance a more data-driven school culture and develop essential buy-in to the program philosophy within individual schools, MRC began to require their sites to provide an Internal Coach. The Internal Coach is key to providing regular supervision and coaching of the members, but also is an essential link to school staff and teachers for enforcing the data drive approach to instruction. MRC also found that having buy-in from the schools through the appointment of an Internal Coach leads to greater sustainability of the program, ensuring that the data-driven culture continues to mature over time.

The Master Coach is a literacy expert employed by MRC who serves as a literacy consultant to the Internal Coach and member(s). The Master Coach supports the Internal Coach and the member in making decisions about student eligibility and instruction by reviewing benchmark data. The Master Coach also helps to ensure fidelity to the MRC model. The Master Coach visits schools at different frequencies throughout the year depending on the schools' degree of experience implementing MRC, ranging from once a month for schools that have recently implemented MRC to three times a year for schools where MRC is well-established. Visits last approximately one hour, during which the Master Coach, Internal Coach and member(s) discuss students' assessment data, progress towards achieving benchmark goals, and implementation challenges. In the PreK program, Master Coaches also lead data review meetings on-site three times a year, which are attended by the site principal/director, Internal Coach, and teacher(s).

Other Master Coach responsibilities include communicating with the Internal Coach and member(s) about preparing for benchmarking; performing member fidelity checks along with the Internal Coach to ensure appropriate administration of benchmark assessments and interventions; providing consultation as needed regarding the identification and prioritization of students to receive MRC tutoring; reviewing student progress monitoring graphs; and providing program updates to the Internal Coach and member. If the Internal Coach cannot answer a member's question, the Master Coach can often provide advice. The Master Coach can also answer questions about topics such as AIMSWeb, OnCorps, or scheduling.

For administrative issues, such as questions about training schedules and timesheets, the Internal Coach or member can contact their MRC Program Coordinator. The Program Coordinator also helps members answer questions about their community service requirement and requested leaves of absence. Program Coordinators also are to be notified about all member disciplinary issues.

C. Summer Institute Training

Each summer, the Minnesota Reading Corps hosts a four day Summer Institute for training returning and new Master Coaches, Internal Coaches, and AmeriCorps members.[13] ServeMinnesota and MRC staff orchestrate the organizational and administrative aspects of the Summer Institute, while Minnesota literacy experts conduct training sessions. This intensive, information-filled conference provides expert training in the research-based literacy interventions employed by MRC. In its most basic form, the Summer Institute is a learning forum for literacy interventions and teaching techniques. However, the Summer Institute also serves an important role in developing member, coach, and eventually, school adherence to the MRC model. Speeches from former and current members, funders, parents, and officials from the Minnesota Department of Education and local school districts encourage this process and enhance the inspirational atmosphere of the training sessions. At the Summer Institute, the members also meet with their Internal Coach, and sometimes Master Coach, with whom they will be working throughout the upcoming school year.

During several intensive sessions at the Summer Institute, members learn the essential skills, knowledge, and tools needed to serve as effective literacy tutors. These sessions introduce members to the MRC program model, the interventions that constitute the instructional core of the program, as well as the underlying research and theories supporting the interventions and program model. Importantly, members are provided with detailed *Literacy Handbooks* specific to the PreK and K-3 programs to serve as a resource for supporting program implementation. The handbooks provide an introduction to the MRC program, information on policies and procedures and service requirements, procedures for the benchmarking and progress monitoring of students, and specific direction and materials for conducting MRC strategies and interventions (see Appendix A for an outline of *Handbook* contents). In addition, members are provided with online resources that mirror the contents of the *Literacy Handbook* and supplement it with other resources such as videos of model interventions and best practices. Both the *Handbook* and website are intended to provide members with just-in-time support, as well as opportunities for continued professional development and skill refinement.

At the Summer Institute, PreK and K-3 members are mostly trained separately to be able to deliver their programs' different strategies and interventions. On-site, PreK members receive training on the SEEDS of Emergent Literacy curriculum, which serves as the instructional framework within which members and teachers create a literacy rich classroom environment. In addition to the Summer Institute, PreK members participate in multiple smaller trainings throughout the school year. K-3 AmeriCorps members are trained to provide the MRC research-based, reading interventions that help K–3 students reach grade-level literacy benchmarks. K-3 members are trained how to implement the majority of instructional interventions during the Summer Institute. However, members also participate in two additional trainings early in the fall where they learn to use the assessment tool, AIMSWeb, and Great Leaps, a comprehensive intervention for struggling readers that focuses on sound awareness (phonological/ phonemic awareness), letter recognition and phonics, high frequency sight words and phrases, and stories for oral reading.

In addition to member training, at the Summer Institute each Internal Coach receives a comprehensive orientation to MRC, including program and early literacy background, intervention delivery, benchmarking and progress monitoring. At their training sessions, Internal Coaches also receive information about their roles, responsibilities and expectations while serving in the program. The Internal Coaches are instructed in their responsibilities, including ensuring fidelity to the MRC model, orienting the member to the school, introducing school staff to the member, setting the tutoring schedule and coordinating professional development opportunities for their members. Internal

[13] Members attend all four days of the Summer Institute (one day orientation and three days of training). New Coaches attend three days, and returning Coaches attend one day.

Coaches also are oriented to the layers of support provided by MRC, including the Master Coach and Program Coordinator.

D. The Role of Data in MRC Program Implementation and Improvement

In the fall, winter, and spring of each school year, AmeriCorps members collect general outcome measure data on all PreK students in an MRC classroom using the Individual Growth and Development Indicators (IGDI) assessment. The IGDI assesses five critical emergent literacy skills: 1) rhyming 2) picture naming 3) alliteration, as well as assessments of 4) letter name fluency and 5) letter sound fluency. Students' scores on the IGID are used to identify PreK students who are eligible for Tier 2 or 3 interventions. Members then collect monthly progress monitoring data on those Tier 2 and 3 students for whom they provide individualized or small-group MRC interventions. The MRC program uses the OnCorps and AIMSWeb internet-based data entry systems to record and store general outcome measure and progress monitoring data on all students served by the program.

In the K-3 program, members collect general outcome measure data in the fall, winter, and spring using the AIMSWeb literacy assessments. The AIMSWeb assessments evaluate four critical literacy skills that are appropriate for specific grade levels and seasons: 1) letter naming fluency (Kindergarten), 2) letter sound fluency (1st Grade – Fall/Winter), 3) nonsense word fluency (1st Grade – Winter/Spring), and 4) oral reading fluency (2nd & 3rd Grades). As with the PreK IGDI assessments, the AIMSWeb assessments are used to identify K-3 students who are eligible for Tier 2 interventions. Given the sometimes large student to AmeriCorps member ratio at participating school, the Internal Coach typically prioritizes which student the member will assess. Generally, Internal Coaches prioritize students from who previously received MRC services, and any student the Internal Coach believes may benefit from MRC services. Once selected to receive services, members collect weekly progress monitoring data on their Tier 2 tutees.

In both the PreK and K-3 programs, progress monitoring allows members to chart student progress, assess effectiveness of current interventions, gauge if students require a change in interventions, or determine if they are ready to exit the program. Every student's progress monitoring scores are graphed and then reviewed monthly by a collaborative team consisting of the members, Internal Coach and Master Coach. In both the PreK and 1-3 programs, Tier 2 and 3 students receive intervention services until their progress monitoring data shows that they have achieved 3 to 5 consecutive data points above the AIMline (i.e., projected growth trajectory) and two scores at or above the upcoming season benchmark target. Similar criteria are used for the discontinuation of services with kindergarten students, although the Spring rather than Winter target is used to determine eligibility for all seasons. Once these criteria are met, a student is deemed "on-track" to achieve appropriate grade-level benchmark at the next assessment window, and is "exited" from the MRC program (i.e., the member no longer provides intervention services). The Internal Coach, AmeriCorps member, and classroom teacher discuss each student's assessment results over time before deciding to exit the student from service.

The data intensive orientation of the MRC program provides members, coaches, teachers and principals/directors with a consistent, objective means of identifying students to receive program services, tracking their progress toward achieving academic goals related to critical literacy skills, and informing instruction. As will be discussed later in this report, the assessment data play an important role in garnering site-wide support from non-MRC-affiliated site staff, particularly as they see quantitative improvement in student outcomes. The data also provide members and coaches with objective information about the efficacy of the interventions with individual students, which can in turn be used to tailor the most effective instruction for the student's skill level.

In addition to using assessment data to identify individual students for services and to inform instruction, the MRC program also uses data to evaluate and improve the program itself. This continued investment in research and development has led to a number of examples of innovations and program improvements at the systems level. For example, in the formative years of the MRC program, little to no definitive research existed on the reliability of and linearity of measurements of students' slopes of growth using the program's general outcome measurements (i.e., IGDI and AIMSWeb). MRC initially used the research-supported recommendation of two consecutive data points above a student's projected growth trajectory, measured from the most recent benchmark period to the next (e.g., fall to winter or winter to spring), for their exit criteria. This projected growth trajectory is referred to as an AIMline. Over the years, MRC gathered data on the progress monitoring and benchmark assessments, as well as statewide reading assessments in third grade to examine whether the exit criteria were appropriate. The resulting analysis showed that the slope of growth of progress monitoring scores over the course of a school year among students who successfully exited the program, yet later did not reach grade-level criteria on either benchmark assessments or statewide reading assessments, was non-linear; thus, overestimating the student's end of year performance . In response, MRC raised its exit criteria, requiring three consecutive data points above the AIMline with at least two of those data points also being above the upcoming season's benchmark target score to ensure that students who exit the MRC program remain on-track to perform at grade-level reading targets.

A second example of MRC's continued program innovation and improvement through the use of data pertains to its K-Focus program. K-Focus is an attempt to serve more students, increase the amount of time spent in intervention, and broaden the scope of interventions used to serve students in Kindergarten, without adding resources or sacrificing effectiveness. K-Focus achieved these goals by modifying MRC's standard early literacy interventions to be delivered to pairs rather than individual students and by adding a 20-minute shared book reading intervention that includes dialogic reading to focus on phonemic awareness, phonics, and vocabulary instruction. A pilot study in the 2010-11 school year showed that student performance in K-Focus was stronger than in traditional interventions and that 5 to 7 times as many kindergarten students could be served by the program. In the following year, the program was expanded and additional data were collected, which confirmed the first-year findings. The K-Focus program is now likely to become a standard component of the MRC K-3 program.

There are several other examples of MRC's continued investment in research and development in order to drive program improvement and innovation. The use of paired interventions in grades 1st through 3rd, the implementation of a new Word Construction intervention, and the implementation of a family literacy component known as *Read at Home* (RAH) are three such additional examples. All of these program adjustments are borne out of research, but implemented in a way that allows the MRC program to gather data on the effectiveness of the changes for the students they serve.

III. Process Assessment Research Questions and Methods

The goal of the process assessment is to understand how the MRC program is implemented at diverse sites; identify facilitators and barriers that will inform lessons learned for program replication and scale-up; and understand aspects of AmeriCorps members' service experience as a literacy tutor. The study also aims to provide a context for interpreting the findings of the impact evaluation of the MRC K-3 program and the quasi-experimental evaluation of the MRC PreK program. The process assessment focused on the following four questions:

1. *Are AmeriCorps members receiving appropriate training and supervision?* What is the effect of member training and supervision on student outcomes?
2. *How is the program achieving its immediate, intermediate, and long-term outcomes?* How does the program's design and administration lead to the achievement of these outcomes?
3. *Are there characteristics of AmeriCorps members that are particularly effective with service recipients (i.e., students)?*
4. *Which findings and lessons learned from the MRC can be applied to other models and programs?* Are there characteristics that are suitable for similar reading tutoring programs to replicate?

To explore these research questions, this report relies primarily on qualitative data collected through site visits to a purposive sample of 20 PreK and K-3 programs in diverse regions of the state and a review of MRC program documentation (e.g., PreK and K-3 training manuals from the Summer Institute, reports from previous evaluations, MRC program materials, and the MRC website).

A. Stages of Implementation and Core Components

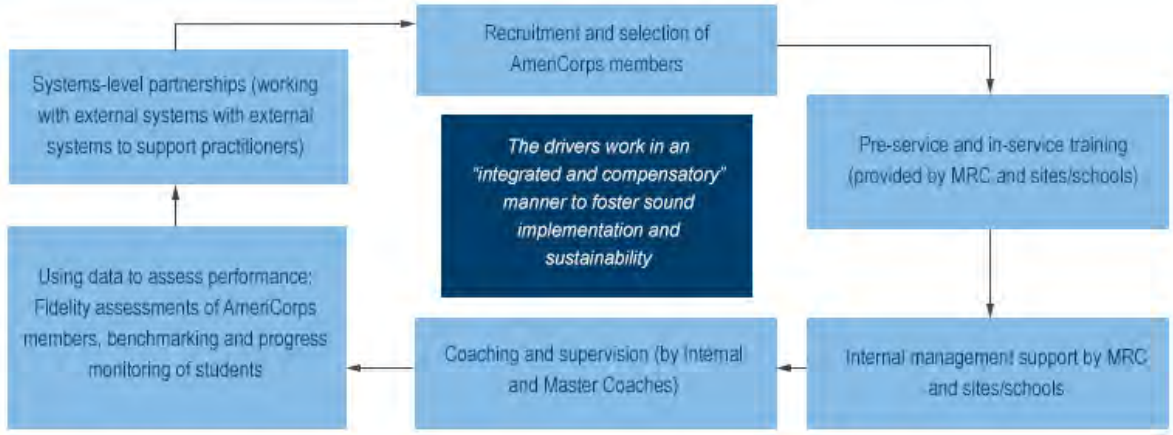
In developing the conceptual framework for the process assessment, the research team focused on a number of integrated processes that enable the transfer of evidence-based interventions into diverse program settings and that support implementation and intervention fidelity over time. This transfer process occurs through four successive phases: dissemination, adoption, implementation, and sustainment.[14] Each phase requires careful attention from both program developers and implementers to prevent common problems, such as model drift, lack of fidelity or diminishing returns over time.

Implementation of evidence-based interventions into educational settings is recognized as a complex, dynamic, and multi-layered process.[15,16] Researchers from the National Implementation Research Network (NIRN) have distilled the process to focus on seven core implementation components or "drivers" that work together during the early adoption or installment phase and through successive periods of program implementation and maturity.[17] Exhibit III-1 depicts the seven core implementation drivers: 1) staff selection, 2) pre-service and in-service training, 3) coaching and supervision, 4) staff performance and appraisal, 5) decision support data systems (i.e., quality improvement,

[14] Durlak, J.A., & DuPre, E.P. (2008). Implementation Matters: A review of research on the influence of implementation on program outcomes and the factors affecting implementation. *American Journal of Community Psychology* 41: 327-350.
[15] Metz, A., Blase, K. & Bowie, L. (October 2007). *Implementing evidence-based practices: Six "drivers" of success*. Washington, DC: Child Trends.
[16] Aarons, G.A., & Palinkas, L.A. (2007). Implementation of evidence-based practices in child welfare: Service provider perspectives. *Administration and Policy in Mental Health and Mental Health Services Research 34: 411-419.*
[17] Fixsen, D., Naoom, S., Blase, K., & Wallace, F. (2007, Winter/Spring). Implementation: The missing link between research and practice. *The APSAC Advisor*, vol. 41, nos. 1-2, pp. 4–10.

fidelity measures, or outcome assessment), 6) facilitative administrative supports (i.e., organizational leadership), and 7) systems intervention (i.e., working with external systems to support practitioners).[18]

Exhibit III-1. Core Implementation Components



Adapted from Fixsen, Blase, Naoom, and Wallace (2007), using the core components suggested by Metz, Blase, and Bowie (2007)

Using a slightly modified version of the seven driver model conceived by the NIRN, we focus on six elements derived from the implementation guidance developed by Metz, Blasé, and Bowie (2007) for implementing evidence-based practices in after-school programs. The six implementation components that we examine are:

1. Recruitment and selection of AmeriCorps members
2. Pre-service and in-service training (provided by MRC and sites/schools)
3. Coaching and supervision (by Internal Coaches and Master Coaches)
4. Using data to assess performance (through fidelity assessments of AmeriCorps members and benchmarking and progress monitoring of students)[19]
5. Internal management support by MRC and sites/schools supports
6. Systems-level partnerships (i.e., working with external systems to support practitioners).

Optimal implementation would find these components working interactively to influence staff behavior and organizational culture and practices. Furthermore, the components operate in a compensatory manner, so that weakness in one area is offset by strength in another. The dynamic nature of the integrated components helps to keep program implementation "on track" or to signal where adjustments are needed.

The logic model for the MRC program, outlined below in Section B. Logic Mode, shows the core inputs and activities of the MRC program that we examined in assessing how the six core implementation components operate and work together to facilitate implementation. Also, described in Section D. Primary Data Collection, we structured the data collection for the process assessment to obtain information about each component (with slight changes in

[18] Fixsen, D., Naoom, S., Blase, K., & Wallace, F. (2007, Winter/Spring). Implementation: The missing link between research and practice. *The APSAC Advisor*, vol. 41, nos. 1-2, pp. 4–10.
[19] In the Metz, Blasé, and Bowie model, this component combines "staff performance and appraisal" and "use of decision support data systems."

terminology to better suit MRC program elements), and used this information to assess implementation strengths and limitations for each program type (PreK and K-3).

B. Logic Model

The research team began the design of the process assessment and the impact evaluation by meeting with MRC staff to develop a logic model that would serve as a conceptual framework for the integrated components of the evaluation. The logic model is provided in Appendix B. We provide here a brief description of its components. Our focus for the process assessment was on describing the implementation at diverse PreK and K-3 sites and the achievement of short-term outcomes within the 12- month timeframe of the process assessment.

Through an iterative process, we identified the key MRC and school based inputs that were essential to program operations. This included: 1) selection of MRC sites based on degree of student need and internal capacity to partner effectively; 2) selection of at-risk PreK and K-3 (Tier 2 and 3) students within the site or school based on assessment of current literacy skills; 3) school incorporation of web-based data management systems to track and monitor student progress with literacy intervention (i.e., OnCorps and AIMSWeb); and 4) school implementation of research-based core curriculum.

Theorizing that the AmeriCorps member is both a key input and beneficiary of MRC, we identified three strategic inputs: 1) recruitment, screening and placement of members by MRC and school staff; 2) training of members and Internal Coaches in literacy interventions, assessment, data-driven decision-making and program rules; and 3) identification and assignment of dedicated Internal Coaches at each site and school to support and monitor the members.

In consultation with program stakeholders and the review of materials, we identified the key activities of the Internal Coach in the MRC model. This included supervision and coaching of members through: 1) monthly meetings to review student progress and set individualized plans for each student; 2) ongoing observation and coaching to refine each member's delivery of interventions; and 3) fidelity assessment of members' delivery of MRC interventions. Ongoing consultation between the Internal Coach and a Master Coach was identified as a key program activity.

The MRC model has both a PreK and a K-3 program with different activities and intended outcomes for program participants. Thus, we isolated the key components of each model and the anticipated short and long-term outcomes for PreK and K-3 students, respectively.

- Professional and Community Corps members' activities in the PreK settings (either in Head Start, community-based centers or public or charter schools) were to 1) support classroom instruction (individualized, small group, and whole class interventions); 2) enrich the literacy environment; 3) chart progress of targeted students; 4) conduct progress monitoring of targeted students; 5) assess all students three times per year on literacy skills through benchmarking (Fall, Winter, Spring); and 6) deliver one-on-one and small group literacy interventions to students needing extra assistance. The intended short-term outcomes for PreK students is demonstrated on 3-5 Individual Growth and Developmental Indicators (IGDI) & Early Literacy Outcomes (ELO) Measures at subsequent benchmarking periods. Achievement of "kindergarten ready" targets on IGDI & ELO measures is the long-term outcome of the PreK program.
- For the K-3 program, the key activities of full- or part-time members were to 1) assess students identified by site staff as needing assistance (i.e., closest to target performance); 2) Deliver one-on-one tutoring to selected students (20 minutes/day, 5 days/week); 3) chart weekly student progress in AIMSWeb; 4) conduct weekly progress assessments and benchmarking three times per year; and 5) "exit" students that

were found to be on track and identify new students for the program. For K-3 students, the intended outcomes are demonstrated improvement on AIMSWeb measures at subsequent benchmarking period (Fall, Winter, Spring) and a successful exit from intervention services. Demonstrated proficiency on the state's 3rd grade reading test (MCA-II) is the intended long-term outcome of the K-3 program.

For the members, the intended outcomes were to: 1) implement the MRC model with fidelity; 2) demonstrate increased ability to implement MRC literacy interventions; 3) pursue educational-related careers upon the completion of service; and 4) increase civic engagement (stemming from their MRC and other school-based volunteer activities).

We identified seven site and school-based practices that supported full implementation of the PreK and K-3 program. These include: 1) implement literacy-rich core curricula; 2) implement MRC as a supplemental intervention; 3) schedule interventions; 4) designate an Internal Coach; 5) support implementation fidelity of the MRC model; 6) support coaching, assessment, and benchmarking practices; and 7) integrate AmeriCorps members into the school setting. In addition to school-based practices, we identified several system-level outcomes for the process assessment, including: 1) an enriched classroom literacy environment (Pre-K only); 2) an expansion of early literacy goals; and 3) increased integration of data-based decision making into school culture. Over time, these activities would result in increased internal capacity for implementation of an RtI frame work and literacy instruction within each school setting, as well as expand literacy goals site-wide.

C. Site Selection

The research team solicited 3-5 recommendations for potential PreK sites and K-3 schools from each of the MRC Program Coordinators in four MRC regions (Metro, Central, Southwest, and Southeast). The site selection was limited to these regions due to their proximity to Minneapolis/St. Paul (within 4 hours of the Twin Cities). Site selection was conducted to ensure sufficient diversity of programs to represent all MRC programs across the state. The research team asked the Program Coordinators to recommend sites and schools that met one or more of the following criteria:

- Recently implemented their programs successfully and were currently serving students;
- Recently struggled to implement their programs;
- Experienced particular environmental challenges facing many schools with MRC programs (e.g., high percentage immigrant population, low parental involvement, high free and reduced price lunch (FRPL) population, etc.);
- Served as an example of where the MRC program had a strong impact (i.e., where the components MRC had not been previously emphasized or implemented); and
- Incorporated different or innovative strategies in their learning environments to facilitate the MRC program.

The research team applied descriptive information provided by the Program Coordinators as well as administrative data from MRC to select the first nine sites visited in May and June 2012. We repeated this process in the selection of the 11 sites and schools visited in November and December 2012. In order to obtain a cross-section of sites and schools implementing MRC, the recommended sites were selected based on the following criteria:

- Regional membership to ensure that the selection of sites was distributed across MRC regions (Metro, Central, Southwest, and Southeast);
- Geographic diversity across urban, rural, and suburban locations throughout the state of Minnesota;

- Program type being implemented to include PreK only, K-3rd only, or both types of MRC programs;
- Institution type for PreK programs to include Head Start, community-based programs, and charter or regular public schools;
- Enrollment levels (i.e., size of student body) with a range of small to large sites represented;
- Concentration of poverty to include a mix of sites with a range of medium to high percentages of FRPL-eligible students;
- Level of experience defined by year of implementation, which covered a mix of newer and experienced programs to address both implementation issues and observe more established programs;
- Number of AmeriCorps members serving at the site during the program year; and
- Schools that experienced and overcame significant implementation challenges.

Once the research team vetted and selected the sites and schools, the Chief Executive Officer of ServeMinnesota sent a letter to each site seeking their participation in the study. Upon approval by the site director or principal, the research team scheduled and arranged the site visit agenda with each site's Internal Coach. In the event that a site was unable to participate, due to time constraints or pre-arranged school activities, a replacement site was identified. Replacement sites were selected in coordination with ServeMinnesota and were similar in demographics and location to the originally selected site.

Members of the site visit team participated in a full-day training for conducting the site visits, including obtaining informed consent, administering the protocols, preschool and elementary school culture and routines, and site visit follow-up procedures (i.e., team debrief, site team transcription and data entry, analysis, report write-up). Between the two rounds of site visits, the research team also participated in the 2012 MRC Summer Institute Training held in St. Paul, MN (described in the previous section). A refresher training for the site visitors was held prior to the second round of site visits.

Key characteristics of the sites and schools that participated in the process assessment are provided in Exhibit III-2 below.

Exhibit III-2. Characteristics of Sites and Schools Participating in the MRC Process Assessment

Pre-K Site	Location in MN	MRC Region	Urbanicity (urban, rural, suburban)	Year MRC began	Number of AmeriCorps Members serving (at time of visit)	FRPL	Student Enrollment
Anoka County Community Action Program (ACCAP) Head Start	Coon Rapids	Metro	Suburban	2003	1 FT PC 3 FT CC	100%	481
Child Care Resource and Referral's Head Start: Congregational Church	Rochester	Southeast	Rural	2006	4 PC 2 CC	100%	102
Mille Lacs Head Start	Onamia	Central	Rural	2007	4 FT PC.	80%	162
Pond Center Preschool	Bloomington	Metro	Suburban	2008	2 PT CC 11 FT CC	50%	255
Bryn Mawr Elementary	Minneapolis	Metro	Urban	2009	2 FT CC	77%	80
Bethel King Community Development Center	St. Paul	Metro	Urban	2010	1 FT CC	76%	33

Pre-K Site	Location in MN	MRC Region	Urbanicity (urban, rural, suburban)	Year MRC began	Number of AmeriCorps Members serving (at time of visit)	FRPL	Student Enrollment
Sibley-East-Gaylord & Sibley-Arlington Elementary Schools	Gaylord	Southwest	Rural	2011	2 CC	63%	13
St. Paul City Schools	St. Paul	Metro	Suburban	2011	4 FT PC 2 FT CC	95%	30
K-3 School							
Pine City ES	Pine City	Central	Rural	2005	2 FT	52%	856
Kennedy Community School	St. Joseph	Central	Rural	2006	2 FT; 1 PT	35%	395
Chatfield ES	Chatfield	Southeast	Rural	2007	1 FT	28%	490
Hartley ES	Wauseca	Southwest	Rural	2009	1 FT	41%	510
Sibley East, Gaylord	Gaylord	Southwest	Rural	2009	1 FT	48%	360
A School for All Seasons	Isanti	Central	Rural	2009	1 FT	28%	225
Folwell Performing Arts Magnet (formerly Ramsey Elementary)	Minneapolis	Metro	Urban	2009	4 FT	87%	1262
Mississippi Creative Arts	St. Paul	Metro	Urban	2009	4 FT	95%	504
Sunnyside ES	Redwing	Southeast	Rural	2011	3 FT	40%	502
Prairie Woods ES	New London	Central	Rural	2011	1 FT	29%	574
Eagle Creek ES	Shakopee	Metro	Suburban	2011	1 FT	17%	836
Monroe ES	Mankato	Southwest	Rural	2011	1 FT	36%	458

Key: PC = Educator Corps; CC = Community Corps; FT = Full-time; PT = Part-time
[a] ACCAP is a multi-site center and has 3 PC and 4 CC members across the sites.

Sources: MRC Program Administrative Data 2011
Minnesota Department of Education Data Center

D. Primary Data Collection

Teams of two researchers conducted one-day visits to the 20 selected MRC sites, eight implementing the PreK program and 12 implementing the K-3 program. To the extent feasible, visits to sites and schools were grouped by proximity to each other.

All visits included in-depth interviews with a variety of respondents, including PreK site directors, PreK and K-3 principals, Internal Coaches, and AmeriCorps members. Focus groups or individual interviews were held with PreK and K-3 teachers. As noted in Exhibit III-3, 111 people participated in the interviews and focus groups. The research team also observed 17 literacy interventions conducted by Professional and Community Corps members at PreK sites and observed 55 intervention sessions conducted by members with K-3 students. (Copies of the Observation Protocols are provided in Appendix C). General observation of the school environment and surrounding community was documented. Following the site visit, a thank you note was sent to each site director or school principal.

Exhibit III-3. PreK and K-3 Respondents for the MRC Process Assessment

	PreK	K-3
Directors/Principals	5	12[a]
Internal Coaches	11	12[a]
AmeriCorps Members • Community Corps • Educator Corps	25 17 8	19
Teachers	15	24

	PreK	K-3
• Interviews • Focus groups	14 (7 interviews) 1 (1 focus group)[a]	16 (8 interviews) 8 (3 focus groups)
Total	56	55
Observations conducted	17	24
Other individuals interviewed	Education Manager (1)[b] Master Coach (1)[c]	

a. At one site, a focus group was conducted with one teacher (an Educator Corps member), the Internal Coach and two former members
b. The Program Director at one site was not available, so the Education Manager, who effectively manages the MRC program at the center, was interviewed.
c. The Master Coach at one site was also interviewed

The interview protocols captured information from multiple perspectives and addressed the following topics:

- Background/History of site's relationship with MRC;
- Management and staffing of the MRC program within the site;
- Program responsibilities of the director/principal, internal coach(es), teacher(s), and AmeriCorps member(s);
- AmeriCorps member(s) demographics and characteristics;
- AmeriCorps member recruitment and selection process;
- Coach and member training and supervision;
- Student identification, selection, and assignment process;
- Tutoring services and their integration into the school curriculum;
- Organizational supports provided to AmeriCorps Members and the MRC program;
- Facilitators and barriers to program implementation;
- Alternative reading assistance programs provided at the site; and
- Perceptions of MRC program effectiveness and lessons learned.

AmeriCorps members were asked about their motivation for service and participation in MRC, training and supervision, MRC program implementation, and benefits of the service experience. Copies of the OMB-approved protocols are provided in Appendix D.

E. Analysis

Two analytic strategies were used to analyze data at the site level and across sites. Qualitative data derived from respondents at each site were coded using pre-determined categories corresponding to the topic of the interview and focus group questions (e.g., role in selection process, frequency of coaching, perceptions of student outcomes). Responses within a site were compared and contrasted across respondents, and triangulated. These findings were incorporated into a structured site visit summary template (provided in Appendix E). At the cross-site level, the findings in each site visit summary were analyzed comparatively across the eight PreK sites and 12 K-3 schools. Similarities and differences across sites and schools were identified. Findings were reported based on the frequency with which respondents expressed an attitude, perception or referred to certain practices relevant to the topic (e.g., training needs of members, challenges experienced). The interview transcripts were also analyzed to identify relevant themes emerging from the data across respondents and sites. This strategy facilitated the identification of new topics and issues and enhanced our understanding of the program and its implementation.

The research team conducted a content analysis across the 20 sites and presents aggregated findings in this report on PreK and K-3 programs that convey similarities and differences in program implementation. The topics addressed for PreK and K-3 are: 1) background information; 2) core and supplemental curriculum for literacy instruction; 3) description of students served by the MRC interventions; 4) implementation highlights; 5) discussion of key components driving successful implementation; 6) facilitators and challenges to implementation; 7) perceptions of service; and 8) results and lessons learned.

F. Limitations of the Study

The process assessment identified important implementation issues, provided information on how the programs achieved observed results, and draws lessons about service delivery facilitators and challenges that can improve the program and its replication. However, the findings in this report provide only a limited perspective on the MRC program. In conjunction with the process assessment there are three complementary studies of MRC also currently being conducted: an impact evaluation of the MRC K-3 program; a quasi-experimental evaluation of the PreK program; and a survey of AmeriCorps members. Results from these additional evaluation activities will be made available in the future and will likely supplement the findings from the process assessment. A further limitation of the study is the self-reported nature of the qualitative interview data that informs this report. Although triangulation across respondents was used wherever possible, our findings and conclusions could not be independently verified by researchers. Finally, the sample size of 20 schools and the process through which sites were selected resulted in a sample that is not necessarily representative of the entire population of MRC schools; thus, limiting the generalizability of our findings and conclusions.

IV. PreK MRC Programs: Site Visit Findings

This section of the report presents the findings from the site visits to eight PreK programs in May and June 2012 and in November and December 2012. It provides *Background Information* on the eight diverse PreK sites, describing key characteristics and MRC-specific facts, such as the reasons each site applied to participate in MRC, the number of members who served since program implementation began, and the roles of the Educator Corps and/or Community Corps members. Next, the *Core Curriculum for Literacy Instruction* is presented, addressing both the PreK core curriculum at each site and any supplemental programs offered. This is followed by information regarding the types of students served by MRC, notification to parents of students' MRC eligibility and participation, the desired program outcomes for early learners, students' receptivity to program participation, and students' progress in achieving their literacy targets.

Implementation Highlights of the PreK program follows, which summarizes the approaches to delivery across the eight sites. Topics addressed are: students targeted for interventions, types of interventions provided to Tier 2 and Tier 3 students, the duration of Tier 2 and Tier 3 sessions, intervention dosage, location of Tier 2 and Tier 3 tutoring sessions, elements of the PreK Literacy Rich Daily Schedule, the use of technology in Tier 2 and 3 interventions, scheduling and coordination, the type and frequency of student assessments, implementation fidelity, and adaptations to MRC protocols.

The next section, *Key Components Driving Successful Implementation*, examines the adoption and installation of the MRC program in diverse contexts, as well as the particular contribution of AmeriCorps members. [1] First, we address the recruitment and selection process of the AmeriCorps members across the sites, as well as the qualities sought in AmeriCorps members. Second, we describe the pre-service and in-service training that the members received from both MRC and the PreK sites. We present staff and members' perceptions of training quality, intensity, and effectiveness, as well as unmet training needs or areas where additional training would be helpful. Third, we describe the all-important topic of coaching and supervision of members. This includes the frequency of coaching, as well as the topics addressed during coaching sessions and any additional on-site training provided. In this context, we also present staff perceptions of the adequacy of members' supervision and delivery of interventions. Next, we address school support for MRC implementation. This is examined in a number of ways, including the implementation roles of Program Coordinators, Internal Coaches, and Master Coaches across sites, school policies and procedures that were changed to support the MRC program, the data driven culture shift within sites, how members were integrated into the school environment, and the types of support provided by the site in hosting members. An additional component concerns the direct support provided by MRC to the PreK site to implement the program. Finally, system level partnerships operating at the district or community level to support MRC are described.

In the section on *Facilitators and Challenges*, we present staff and members' perspectives on how well MRC was implemented at their sites. We then detail the challenges encountered while implementing the literacy rich schedule and Tier 2 and 3 interventions and while working with members. This is followed by suggestions for improvement or changes to the program. In the section on *Service and the Minnesota Reading Corps*, we present members' reported motivations to serve with MRC, the rewards and challenges of service, and future plans inspired by their experiences. The section on *Results and Lessons Learned* presents staff satisfaction with the PreK program, perceptions of program impact, and lessons learned from the sites' experiences that can inform continuous improvement or replication.

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[1] Metz, A., Blase, K. & Bowie, L. (October 2007). *Implementing evidence-based practices: Six "drivers" of success*. Washington, DC: Child Trends.

A. Background Information on Sites Visited

1. Description of Pre K sites and schools

The research team visited PreK programs operating in Head Start centers, community-based centers, and in charter and public schools in each MRC region. Information on the location of the site, its year of implementation, whether it has multiple sites, the number of Professional and Community Corps members, and the percent of the student population qualifying for Free and Reduced Price Lunch (FRPL) (as a proxy for poverty status) is presented below. Additional information about site characteristics is provided in Exhibit IV-1.

2. Aggregated information about PreK sites and schools

a. Year of MRC implementation

Of the eight PreK sites visited, one was a Head Start program that was one of the original sites to implement MRC. This site pilot tested MRC during the program's first year of operation, 2003. Additionally, two sites were early adopters of MRC having implemented the program in 2005 and 2006. One site implemented the program in 2008 and one site implemented the program in 2009. One site implemented the MRC program in 2010. Two sites had only recently implemented the program in 2011-2012.

b. Reason for applying for MRC

Each of the eight PreK sites described various reasons why they applied to participate in MRC: to enhance/support the literacy program already established at the site; to provide support to classroom teachers and facilitate additional literacy instruction for students; and to benefit the school and the students.

c. Number of AmeriCorps members since MRC first implemented

Across the eight sites visited, two have had a total of two AmeriCorps members serving since the program was first implemented at these sites in 2010 and 2011, respectively. At one site, eight members have served since the MRC program was implemented in 2011. Further, at two sites, approximately 15 members have served as MRC members since the program was first implemented in 2005 and 2006. Lastly, at one site approximately 35-90 AmeriCorps members have served over the past nine years (typically six members per year, though ranging from four to ten). Approximately 60 members have served at community-based center since the program's inception in 2008.

Exhibit IV-1. Background Information for the PreK Sites

PreK Site Name	Site Type	Multi-Site	Reason for Applying for MRC			Number of AmeriCorps members		Core Curriculum	Supplemental Programs
			Enhance existing literacy program	Benefit the site & students	Provide more support to teachers	All years	Current		
Site #1	Head Start	Yes	●		●	60[a]	4 PC 3 CC	Opening the World of Learning	• IEP • Interventions similar to MRC
Site #2	CBC	No	●		●	2	1 CC	Doors to Discovery	• N/A
Site #3	Public School	Yes	●			6[b]	2 CC	Core Workshop	• Small group instruction to build on-target skills • After school programming
Site #4	Head Start	Yes		●	●	15	4 PC 2 CC	Creative Curriculum System	• LEAP • Interventions similar to MRC
Site #5	Head Start	Yes		●	●	15	4 PC	Investigator Club	• N/A
Site #6	CBC	Yes			●	60	13 CC	Doors to Discovery	• Reading Buddies and reading kits
Site #7	Public School	No		●	●	2	2 CC	SEEDS	• N/A
Site #8	Public School	No	●	●	●	8	4 PC 2 CC	Creative Curriculum System	• IEP • Speech Therapy • After school programming • Family Education Day

[a] Each year there are usually six members assigned to the site. However, the number of members has ranged over the years from 4-10 members.
[b] This number is an estimate.
CBC = Community-based center
PC = Educator Corps
CC = Community Corps

a. Number and role of AmeriCorps member at PreK sites

A total of 52 AmeriCorps members were serving across all eight PreK programs at the time of the site visits. Of the 52 AmeriCorps members, 19 were Educator Corps members and 33 were Community Corps members.

The role and responsibilities of the Educator Corps members and Community Corps members differed, as did their relationship to the site. Of the 19 Educator Corps members serving, 15 served at Head Start programs and 4 served in a public school. There were no Educator Corps members serving at community-based centers. Educator Corps members were drawn from current employees who were in a teaching position at the site. They continued to fulfill their regular teaching responsibilities, but also incorporated specific MRC strategies into their instruction. At three sites visited, the Educator Corps member served as the lead teacher in the PreK classrooms where they provided Tier 1 instruction for all students. At one of the PreK sites visited, the Educator Corps member also completed small group and occasionally one-on-one Tier 2 and 3 interventions with students. This member was also responsible for benchmarking students three times per year, conducting the "Easy R's" early childhood screening[20], and was responsible for implementing the Individual Growth and Development Indicators (IGDI). At one site, the Educator Corps member was responsible for "marketing" the program to others in the community, teachers, and potential members.

Community Corps members were individuals recruited from the community (a recent college graduate, a parent, a retiree, etc.), who collaborated with the classroom teaching staff to incorporate the specific MRC strategies into the daily routine. Of the 33 Community Corps members, 5 served at Head Start centers, 14 served at community-based centers, and 14 served in public schools. Staff at these PreK sites stated that the Community Corps members provided additional supports to implement MRC; they performed the benchmarking and progress monitoring of students as well as the tiered pull-out interventions. The Community Corps members spent a majority of their time in the classroom providing the interventions and completing the Big Five transitions throughout the day. Community Corps members also led the daily repeated read aloud for the entire class. To fulfill service hours, Community Corps members ran the school library; coordinated a read-a-thon; assisted with IT; read to kindergarteners; participated in another supplemental reading program (e.g., *Reading Buddies*); helped teachers with classroom tasks, preparations, and management; coordinated a reading night for families and assist with site events such as carnivals and book sales; assisted with after-school programming and activities; and provided child care for parents who attended the parent classes offered at the site.

Both the Professional and Community Corps members supported literacy development; attended parent teacher conferences and attended all staff meetings and trainings; built relationships with the; and engaged in meaningful literacy rich interactions and conversations with students.

[20] This is a new screening that Head Start programs are requiring teachers to collect.

B. Core Curriculum for Literacy Instruction

1. Description of PreK curriculum at each school/site

The core curricula for PreK reading instruction varied widely across the eight sites. Two sites used the *Creative Curriculum System* and two sites used *Doors to Discovery* . The *Creative Curriculum System* is similar to MRC's "literacy rich schedule" and emphasized exploration, language and literacy. One site has also adopted *Project Early Kindergarten*, a literacy-based program that implements monthly themes in the classroom with stories associated with each of these themes. Additional curricula used for PreK instruction at the sites visited included *Investigator Club*, *Core Workshop*, *Opening the World of Learning*, and SEEDS.[21]

2. Description of supplemental programs

Three of the eight PreK sites interviewed indicated that there were no supplemental programs for literacy instruction at the site. However, one site offers a supplemental program during the school day called *Reading Buddies.* Students from the local high school who come into the classroom and read to the students one-on-one implement this supplemental program. One site also received grant funds for a home-based supplemental literacy-focused program called "Reading Kits". "Reading Kits" are shoebox kits containing instructional materials to support alphabetic knowledge and phonological awareness. Students either play literacy games with their parents or a teacher completes a home visit for students who need additional support. The teacher brings the shoeboxes and goes through the literacy activities with both the students and their parents.

Two sites noted providing special education services for students with Individualized Education Programs. Students also received specialized speech therapy at one site. At two sites, all students attended after school programming. One site organized a "Family Education Day" where teachers introduced parents to read aloud and vocabulary development techniques, which encouraged parents to read with their children at home.

Two sites noted that some students received other services offered by the site that are similar to interventions used by MRC. Also, at another PreK site, Educational Assistants worked in small groups with Tier 2 and 3 students on target skills identified during benchmark assessment.

C. Students Served by MRC Interventions

1. Process for placing members in classrooms

For three of the eight sites visited, members were matched with *classroom teachers*, rather than individual students, based on either how well the Internal Coach thought the members and teachers would work together (e.g., similar work styles/personalities) or with the intention of complementing opposite teacher-member strengths. At two sites, there was only one AmeriCorps member. As a result, the member served all students in the classroom to which she was assigned. Since AmeriCorps members at one site are Educator Corps members, all students in the members' classrooms automatically received MRC services.

Another process for matching students and members was based upon students' needs, and the member's personality and management style. At one site visited, it was noted that there was no process for matching students and tutors.

[21] All sites visited indicated that all teachers are trained in SEEDS. SEEDS is used as the foundation of literacy instruction at the sites; however, the only core curriculum utilized at this site is SEEDS.

Exhibit IV-2. Internal Coach Snapshot

- Number of Members currently coached: Ranges from 1-13
- Number of Members coached over time: Ranges from 2-90
- Number of 1st year Coaches: 2
- Number of IC's with two or more years' experience as Internal Coach: 7 (2-9 years)
- Current role within school: Mentor teacher, lead teacher, Internal Coach, Master Coach, Head Start Education Specialist, staff member, Early Childhood Family Education Coordinator, Curriculum and testing coordinator
- Previous roles: Mentor teacher, "High 5 Teacher", coached a Rochester Head Start and community center-based literacy project, PreK teacher, Reading First Literacy Coach, Mentor for education majors at local college, general classroom teacher, and Internal Coach at another site.
- Certifications: One coach is a licensed reading specialist; one teacher is a licensed PreK classroom teacher; one teacher is a Head Start Education Specialist; and three IC's do not possess any kind of certification

2. Notification to parents of students' MRC eligibility and participation

All parents were notified that their child would be working with AmeriCorps members, though parental permission was not required to receive MRC services. Mechanisms for notification included letters sent home to parents[22], school newsletters, parent-teacher conferences, or at the site "open house".

3. Desired program outcomes

Six of the eight sites visited noted that one goal/outcome of the MRC program was for students to be prepared to learn how to read when they enter Kindergarten. Other desired outcomes of the MRC program were for students to gain a strong grasp of pre-reading skills such as vocabulary, rhyming, letter identification and alliteration; to grow language, literacy, math, and science skills; and for all students to be "in the green" (i.e., on track to achieve assessment benchmark scores). Additional goals were students being on target with their literacy skills by the end of the school year; having the chance to work with all students in all three tiers; and assisting English Language Learners (ELL) to become better English readers.

4. Student's receptivity Tier 2 and Tier 3 interventions

Staff reported that students responded well to the tutoring and enjoy spending time with the members. The importance of the one-to-one tutoring was noted at three sites. Two sites indicated that "children think they are playing games" when they are being pulled out of the classroom for Tier 2 and 3 level interventions and are excited and eager for their time with the AmeriCorps member. Another site reported that students "love it". However, at two sites, staff reported that some students were reluctant to participate in the interventions if they were being pulled out of play/free time. To address this reluctance and compensate for interrupting play/free time, one site reported that the teachers and members ask students, "How about later?" or "I'll come back in 10 minutes, ok?", or give students incentives. On the other hand, one school indicated that personnel did not report any concerns with separating students from the classroom for MRC interventions. Additionally, staff at two sites stated that students are generally unaware that they are receiving interventions/specialized MRC services.

5. Student progress in meeting targets

At the time of the site visits, two sites reported that students were on track to meet their spring targets. Staff at four sites noted that they have seen students' make great progress towards improving their literacy skills and were better

[22] Parents sign a permission slip when children are enrolled at one site which covers different programs that students will be exposed to (this site frequently hosts student teachers and is accommodating of educational studies related to the university).

positioned to meet their reading proficiency targets. A staff member at one site noted that "students who have participated in the intervention have exhibited amazing growth."

Three sites indicated that it was premature to predict student progress in part because they were visited at the beginning of the school year. At one site the teachers and Internal Coach disagreed about the degree of progress made. While the teachers noted they had seen progress with students, the Internal Coach indicated that it was premature to predict student progress.

Exhibit IV-3. Matching Students to Members, Notification to Parents, and Desired Outcomes

	Process for matching students & members				Notification to parents of students' MRC eligibility and participation				Desired outcomes of MRC Participation				
PreK Site Name	Match Member(s) with teacher(s)	Only one member (no matching)	Students needs	No process	Letter is sent home	School newsletter	Parent-teacher conferences	"Open house"	Be ready for Kindergarten	Grow literacy skills	Meet benchmark goals/ be on target with literacy skills	Work with all students in all 3 tiers	Assist ELL students
Site #1	●				●				●	●	●	●	●
Site #2		●			●	●			●	●			
Site #3				●			●		●				
Site #4	●				●						●		
Site #5		●					●		●				
Site #6	●							●	●		●		
Site #7		●						●			●		
Site #8			●			●	●		●				●

D. MRC Implementation Highlights

Exhibit IV-4. PreK Intervention Highlights

Students targeted for interventions	• All students receive Tier 1 interventions in the classroom through their literacy rich daily schedule and Big 5 transitions. • Students targeted for Tier 2 and Tier 3 small group or individual intervention pull-out sessions are those students who had received the lowest benchmarking scores. Indicators include: ▪ "Red" in Picture Naming ▪ Entering K next year ▪ Students who have been dropped from Early Childhood Special Education services
Types of interventions provided to Tier 2 and Tier 3 students	• Phonemic Awareness: rhyming, alliteration • Oral Language • Visual Discrimination • Letter Names • Letter Sounds • Vocabulary: picture naming
Number of days per week students attend	• Every day • 4 days per week • 5 days per week
Duration of Tier 2 and Tier 3 intervention sessions	Varies among sites, ranging from 3-10 minutes: • 3-5 Minutes • 3-8 Minutes • 5 Minutes • 5-10 Minutes
Intervention dosage	Students receiving Tier 2 and 3 interventions generally receive the same number of sessions/interventions weekly (this is the goal), though the length of time they receive certain types of interventions and Tier 2 and 3 services overall can vary, as students are moved based upon their individual progress (all sites).
Location of tutoring session	• Hallways at designated tables outside of the classroom • In the classroom or at designated more secluded areas within the classroom • Library • Conference Rooms or Resource Rooms • Coat Closet
PreK Literacy Rich Daily Schedule *Modes and Frequency*	All sites completed all aspects of the required Literacy Rich Schedule on a daily basis.
Use of technology in Tier 2 and 3 interventions	Two sites reported using iPads, to play a matching game during interventions and to use literacy applications.[23]
Scheduling and coordination	• Teachers and Members coordinate to determine when interventions and Literacy Rich Schedule components take place • Teachers, Coaches, and Members coordinate together • Members utilize overall schedule to determine where the pull-out interventions can "fit in" • Lead teacher coordinates the scheduling

[23] Individual members decided to integrate the use of iPads into the tutoring sessions. MRC interventions do not use technology. Adaptations to intervention protocols must be approved by the Master Coach.

Student Assessments: *Type and Frequency*	• All sites benchmark their students during the three benchmarking periods (Fall, Winter, Spring) using the Individual Growth and Development Indicators (IGDI) assessment, the Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills (DIBELS) assessment, or both • Progress Monitoring: ▪ Once a month using IGDI assessments ▪ Once a month using DIBELS assessments ▪ Once a month ▪ "Regularly" ▪ Every 4 weeks or less frequently depending on student progress
Implementation fidelity	Formal Fidelity Assessments • Internal Coach observes Benchmarking assessments 3 times a year • Internal Coach observes Interventions once or twice a month • Internal Coach observes interventions 6-8 weeks • Master Coach observes once a month Informal Fidelity Assessments • Self-monitoring • Teachers monitoring in the hallway • Internal Coach (also classroom teacher) informally observes classroom • Lead teacher observes classroom and provides feedback to Internal Coach
Adaptations to MRC protocols	Few significant adaptations were made to MRC's model. Most adaptations were minor and were implemented to deal with student behavior or developmental needs, or to better integrate the program into the school: • Script adaptations/paraphrasing • Adaptations for student behavioral issues, including "on the spot" adaptations • Form/flash card adaptations to make them easier to read • Translations into the child's native language • Adaptations to align with a language immersion curriculum—incorporating Ojibwe language practice into the literacy rich schedule

E. Key Components Driving Successful Implementation

1. Literacy tutor recruitment and selection

a. Qualities sought in AmeriCorps members

Six sites felt that commitment to MRC (e.g., the individuals approach towards literacy, the students, and tutoring responsibilities) was one of the most important qualities sought in a tutor. Given that members were embedded in the classroom, five sites stated that having members with an early childhood education background or with interest in working with young children was valuable. Finding members who were passionate and motivated or "self-starters" were two other essential qualities sought, particularly due to the significant amount of time and effort members were asked to contribute throughout the year. Other critical qualities included "coachability, dependability/reliability, and having a kind/patient personality.

b. Role of the site in AmeriCorps member selection process

Five sites played an active role in recruiting both Professional and Community Corps members. Two sites stated that they made specific recommendations to MRC regarding which members they would like to recruit for the next year. Across six sites staff's main role was to conduct interviews of potential members. The staff who were included in the interview process varied, including the Internal Coach and Site Director (Educator Corps applicants; the Principal, Internal Coaches, and Site Coordinator; the Internal Coach, Site Director, and teachers; Internal Coaches and school staff such as lead teachers; and staff generally.

2. Pre-service or in-service training

a. Training provided

i. Minnesota Reading Corps

Members at all sites attended the four-day intensive training MRC held in St. Paul in August 2012, which introduced them to the various aspects of the program, the interventions, and their service commitment. Five sites mentioned that members attended additional trainings that MRC provided throughout the year. Descriptions of these additional trainings varied: six separate training sessions, five different days of training throughout the year, and all-day sessions on Saturdays held monthly. One site noted that they provided mentoring services as trainings when asked by MRC. Members at three sites attended different MRC leadership trainings/groups including Professional Learning Groups and Corps Action Leadership Training.

ii. Site-Specific Training

Five sites provided SEEDS training for their members, and six sites allowed their members to participate in staff in-service trainings, orientations, workshops and other site-based professional development activities. Six sites stated that significant "training" was provided by the teachers. Specifically the teachers provided daily informal, "on the job" or "in the classroom" training while working with the members in the classroom. Additional site-provided training included Early Education, Head Start, and Member "meetups" or gatherings to discuss strategies and practice interventions.

b. Perceptions of training quality, intensity, and effectiveness

Members interviewed at five of the sites felt the training was very comprehensive with respect to the interventions and provided members with a strong theoretical background for literacy instruction and the MRC program. A member at one site noted that the training was a strength of the program, and another stated it was "excellent." Members at other sites noted that coaching along with the training enabled the program to be successful and that additional trainings throughout the year were extremely helpful. One Internal stated that attending the training alongside the member and having breakout sessions with other Internal Coaches were extremely helpful aspects of the trainings.

However, members at three of the sites felt that while comprehensive, the training was, and lacked a "practical" aspect in terms of providing members with an understanding of how the program is carried out within the classroom. One member site observed that the trainings were not designed with Educator Corps members' experience in mind.

c. Unmet training needs or areas where additional training would be helpful

Members at seven sites identified the need for members to have training in more practical skills, particularly behavior management of students. At four sites, members indicated that behavior management training was a specific need. A member at one site expressed that student behavior management was "impossible" to avoid when leading small group activities among preschoolers. At three other sites, staff suggested that members should be required to shadow a member, observe a classroom, or partake in an extensive on-site orientation before the start of the school year. As a member at one site noted, only by being in a classroom can one "get a feel for how the class day goes, the routines, the transitions, the structure."

3. Coaching and supervision of AmeriCorps members

a. Frequency of coaching

Three of the sites' PreK Internal Coaches coached at multiple sites. As such, the frequency and duration of their coaching varied across sites. One site noted the frequency of formal coaching sessions differed between weekly and bi-weekly for Community Corps members and Educator Corps members, respectively.

i. Daily/Informally or As Needed: At two sites, the Internal Coach met with the members informally daily or as needed. One of the Internal Coaches at two sites each met with members in an informal manner daily.

ii. Weekly: The Internal Coaches at two sites met weekly with their members. At one of these sites, weekly coaching sessions occurred only for the Community Corps members.

iii. Twice a month: Internal Coaches at two sites meet approximately twice a month with their members. At one of those sites, only Educator Corps members meet twice a month with the Internal Coach, unlike the Community Corps members who meet weekly (described in the "Weekly" section). Members at one site met daily/as needed with the Internal Coach (described in the "Daily Section) and also met formally with the Master Coach twice monthly.

iv. Once a month: Internal Coaches at two sites stated that they generally meet once a month with their members. However, the Internal Coach at one of those sites aims to meet twice a month. The Internal Coach at the other site will only come twice or more a month if a member needs to achieve assessment integrity.

b. Topics addressed

Topics discussed during meetings (formal and informal) with the members revolved around the students and the integrity of intervention implementation, including student progress, behavior issues, and improving intervention implementation. Additionally, members and Internal Coaches used the sessions as a time to identify areas where members needed additional support or training, or discuss "general questions about things that may not be working out." Nine topic areas were identified, as in Exhibit IV-5 (following page). They are presented in the order of most to least common across the sites. Only two of the topic areas focus on the members' needs (service hours, need for training and support).

c. Delivery of additional on-site training

Should an individual member need additional training, four sites stated that the process would include a "triage" strategy, defined as the provision of more frequent and more intensive coaching sessions. The Internal Coaches at two sites provided additional, structured large group trainings for members. Internal Coaches at another site provided SEEDS training for members who have not yet received it. Three sites did not describe any provision method or type of additional training.

d. Perceptions of adequate supervision of AmeriCorps members for implementing Tier 2 and Tier 3 interventions

Staff at four sites stated that there were adequate and appropriate levels of supervision for the members. Some staff at one site were unsure of the recommended frequency of interaction between the Internal Coach and members, but felt that the Internal Coach kept very open lines of communication for them to reach out to her. Staff at two other sites stated that the Internal Coach provided regular and adequate assistance for the members. At one site, it was noted that "the support of the Internal Coach and teachers has facilitated successful implementation". At another site, the Internal Coach oversees six members and has responsibilities in other areas of the school, and, therefore, was unable to provide enough direct supervision; the principal stated they are addressing the workload issue. A teacher at one site felt that "there probably should be more supervision for the members," particularly when issues arise, indicating that while supervision works fine when the member is doing well, when a member presents issues, the level of supervision is inadequate. Overall, however, the perception of adequacy of supervision was mirrored the following statement of a Director at one site: "the part that makes MRC work is the coaching element…it's the coaching that makes the change."

Exhibit IV-5. Coaching Topics at PreK sites

Coaching Topics	Site #1	Site #2	Site #3	Site #4	Site #5	Site #6	Site #7	Site #8
Frequency of Coaching [a]	Varies [b]	Daily (lead teacher is Internal Coach)	Varies [c]	Weekly/Twice a month [d]	Twice a month	Once - Twice a month [e]	Twice a month	Once per month
Guidance on interventions	●	●	●	●		●	●	●
Student progress monitoring & reporting	●	●		●	●	●	●	
Student challenges (behavior or discipline)		●	●	●		●		●
Areas where members needed more training or support	●		●	●		●	●	
Teacher issues or relationships						●		●
Scheduling	●							●
Review of service hours		●						
Supplemental instructional materials							●	
Using OnCorps					●			

[a] Besides formal meetings, most ICs are also available on an as-needed basis for informal check-ins.
[b] There are three ICs at this site. One Internal Coach meets weekly with each of her members. Another IC meets daily with one member and twice a month with another member. The third Internal Coach meets at least weekly with her members.
[c] The Internal Coach at one site is one of three Internal Coaches across the High 5 sites in Minneapolis. While she attempts to meet with members twice a month, she admitted that this often varied across sites, and members stated that they see her relatively sporadically and communicate mostly through email.
[d] The Internal Coach meets with Community Corps members weekly and Educator Corps members twice a month.
[e] There are two Internal Coaches at this site and its additional sites. One Internal Coach meets with her members monthly unless they are working to reach assessment integrity, and the other meets twice a month with members.

4. School support of MRC implementation

a. MRC implementation roles across sites

Overall, the Program Coordinators and the Principal or Director served in "big picture roles." Program Coordinators focused on program start-up and administrative or personnel issues such as timesheets, completion of service hours, or member removal. Program Coordinators also played a role during the recruitment and interview process, and provided the sites with lists of potential applicants. The Internal Coaches and the site's Principal/Director also played

main roles in the interviewing and selection process for new members. However, the Principal/Director's role mainly included site-level infrastructure support. This included grant-writing and budgetary support, though several noted that they saw their role as supporting an overall staffing and school environment to support the implementation of the MRC model. Others described their role as being a "cheerleader" of the program, and ensuring that teachers and the site or school overall supported successful MRC implementation. Across all sites, the Master Coach served to support intervention integrity and provide coaching resources for the Internal Coach and the members, as needed. The Master Coach also sometimes helped with administrative tasks like personnel or timesheet issues. The Internal Coach served as the main programmatic support person for members and lead teachers, and ensured that all program components were implemented with fidelity. Since the PreK model was embedded into classrooms, lead teachers served as the main source of daily support, guidance, and mentoring for Community Corps or assistant teacher Educator Corps members. Common staff roles to support implementation are identified in Exhibit IV-6. School Support.

Exhibit IV-6. School Support

	Program Coordinator	Master Coach	Internal Coach	Principal/Director	Teachers	AmeriCorps Members
Recruitment	●		●	●		
Interviewing/ Hiring	●		●	●		
Trainings	●	●	●			
Administration	●			●		
Troubleshooting	●	●	●			
Schedule Coordination					●	●
Student Assessment			●			●
Intervention Delivery		●	●		●	●
Member supervision			●		●	
Benchmarking						●
Fidelity Monitoring		●	●			
Coaching & Support		●	●		●	

b. School policies and procedures changed to support the MRC program

No site had to make any changes to accommodate hosting the AmeriCorps member. Similarly, the sites made few or minor changes to incorporate the MRC model. Changes included rearranging the schedule, providing coaching hours to the literacy coordinator, and expanding their current assessments to include non-authentic assessments. Overall, the sites described the changes made to support the MRC program as more systemic, and involving a cultural shift toward embedding MRC theories throughout their facility and in their curricula. The incorporation of the model (i.e., the literacy rich schedule) into the school was described as providing "enrichments" to the current curricula.

c. Integration of AmeriCorps members into site environment

PreK members were well-integrated into their sites and, more definitively, classroom environments. This successful integration likely resulted from the members being embedded into the classroom setting. Additionally, most Educator Corps members had already been serving as teachers, and were already incorporated into the school environment as staff members. Several sites reported that the high degree of member integration was due in part to many of their current teachers having already served as Community or Educator Corps members. Members at one site explained that the site "has such a history with MRC that it was easy to integrate" and that "everyone at the site is very familiar with MRC and can answer questions about it." Other sites stated that they recruit members internally, and do this purposely to ensure a smooth integration period.

However, issues did arise sometimes when integrating members into the site environment. Notably, issues arose when the members' roles in the classroom were not clearly defined. Teachers often had to be reminded of the classroom duties the members could not perform (bus line, etc.). Paraprofessionals working in the classroom needed clarification and reassurance of the members' discrete role to offset concerns that they would be replaced. Additionally, members are not considered a part of the student/teacher ratio; and so they cannot be left alone in the classroom with PreK students. As one Internal Coach described, the member's integration into the site environment was a "balancing act" – while they were considered members of the site staff and well integrated into the classrooms, they had very defined responsibilities that could not be altered.

d. Site support for hosting AmeriCorps members

Sites supported the AmeriCorps members by providing resources such as computers, materials such as paper, pictures, markers, etc., and space. Sites also allowed members to partake in teachers' activities like meetings, professional development, or in-service days. Not only did the site provide these in-kind supports, but they also provided funding for the Internal Coach or provided in-kind time for them to coach members. Finally, sites provided support or "coverage" for teachers, coaches, and members to attend trainings.

5. Support provided by Minnesota Reading Corps

MRC mainly provided materials (binders, intervention scripts) and trainings for the sites. At one site where the program has been in place for several years, MRC staff mainly supported them in issues related to training logistics or database troubleshooting. MRC staff assisted one site with recruiting and interviewing new members. MRC Program Coordinators support the sites through hands-on and logistics assistance, or encouraging smooth implementation at sites.

Master Coaches provided administrative support and intervention integrity assistance. At three sites, the Master Coach's main role was to mentor to the Internal Coach.

6. System level partnerships

Only three sites described significant partnerships with external partners such as the school district, community volunteers, or local civic organizations. Because the MRC PreK program was embedded within the Minneapolis School District Early Education Program's High 5 Classrooms, the sites were able to share resources such as Internal Coaches, and provide cross-site support for members. Members at one site participated in "member meetups," which convened monthly and provided opportunities for members across High 5 Sites to problem solve collaboratively, create tutoring tools, and practice interventions. The Director at another site stated that their sites' current space (classrooms, etc.) was rented to them through a partnership with the local church. Finally, since one site's MRC program is located on a Native American reservation, it is closely linked with that tribe. This link allowed members to easily carry out their AmeriCorps service hour requirements though events such as an annual powwow, school board meetings, Head Start policy meetings, and an annual State of the Band address.

F. Facilitators and Challenges

Across the PreK sites, the consensus of staff and AmeriCorps members was that the MRC program had been implemented successfully. Existing programming and structures in place at the site enabled smooth integration into the classroom. Increased experience and familiarity with the MRC program over time facilitated success and buy-in with staff. Time constraints were cited at the most common challenge experienced by sites in implementing MRC, thus making it difficult to fit all required components of the literacy rich schedule into the day or to input student data. Other

challenges common to the PreK sites were engaging students, particularly ELL students, and experiencing technical issues with the OnCorps database. Most sites did not report challenges working with members in the current school year. However, the PreK sites identified a number of site-specific suggestions to improve MRC training, refine implementation processes, and increase communication with lead teachers and Internal Coaches.

1. Perceptions on How Well MRC is Implemented

All sites stated that MRC was implemented successfully. Four sites believed that existing programming and structures in place at the school (such as Head Start standards) allowed MRC to be smoothly integrated into the classroom. One site noted that "the school had already laid the foundation; and, so teachers see MRC as another tool to use to get kids proficient." Two sites, with faith-based and cultural programming, both believed that MRC was flexible enough to be incorporated alongside existing programming: a Christian pre-school[24] and an early childhood center that incorporated Native American cultural components into its curriculum. Staff at five sites believed that increased experience and familiarity with the MRC program facilitated success and buy-in—the longer the program was in place, the more comfortable teachers and staff grew with it. At three sites, former AmeriCorps members were retained to teach in the classroom, continuing the use of components of MRC and leading to teacher buy-in. Two sites noted that the parent engagement component of MRC had been particularly beneficial for the students.

2. Challenges Encountered

a. Challenges encountered implementing the MRC program

Challenges implementing MRC were generally related to time constraints. Members at six sites struggled to fit all required components of the literacy rich schedule into their classroom schedules each day and collect and input student data. This was a challenge even for full-day programs. For Educator Corps members at four sites, it was especially difficult to attend required MRC trainings throughout the year, as this required finding substitute coverage. Internal Coaches at three sites also found it difficult to balance coaching and oversight of members with their other responsibilities.

Some sites struggled to engage students in the interventions. Three sites experienced challenges engaging ELL students in MRC interventions. However, one of these sites addressed this problem by engaging the ELLs from Day 1 of the school year. One school had issues with implementing the program because of lack of student readiness. Teachers at one school, though *not* the Internal Coach, members or principal, believed that the interventions were too rigid for younger students. Especially during the initial years of implementation, members reported frustration when student progress was slow. Members at two sites shared that an important part of managing this frustration was learning to "meet students where they are" in terms of their abilities.

Other challenges related to technical issues with the OnCorps database. Several sites mentioned frequent glitches with passwords and logins and noted that MRC staff had been less responsive to these issues this year than in years past. Staff at these sites attributed this to the rapid and significant expansion of the program, which took place this school year.

Other school-specific challenges included insufficient teacher buy-in to the MRC program and lack of time to focus on member recruitment. The Internal Coach at another site noted that many teachers had to change their way of thinking and teaching as a result of MRC program participation, "which can be difficult". At one site, staff shared that a challenge was the discrepancy between the IGDI assessment and the language immersion component of the program. Students'

[24] AmeriCorps members are not engaged in religious activities such as instruction or worship.

responses were considered incorrect for picture naming if they used the Ojibwe term, which penalized them for Ojibwe language development, an important part of the site's early childhood curriculum.

b. Challenges encountered working with members

Most sites did not report challenges working with members in the current school year. In past years, lead teachers at four sites had to work with Community Corps members to clarify expectations related to classroom demeanor and responsibilities, especially concerning student behavior management and modification. Staff at one site noted that it took some time for new Community Corps members and teachers to build a trusting relationship when working together to implement MRC.

c. Suggestions for improvement or changes

Internal Coaches and members were asked to provide recommendations that could improve MRC implementation and potentially improve student results. Their recommendations are listed below:

i. AmeriCorps members' service hours: Provide members with more assistance and ideas to meet their service hours, which is especially challenging in PreK settings that are not full day.

ii. MRC training

- Integrate IGDI training into Summer Institute to facilitate more expedient benchmarking.
- Hold trainings on non-school days so that sites do not have to find substitute coverage for teachers.
- Integrate a practical component in training that spells out members' day to day responsibilities and common issues faced, including behavior management.

iii. MRC implementation

- Revisit IGDI assessments to ensure reliability for younger and ELL students.
- Provide greater support and flexibility for accommodating ELL students' needs, especially for *Read at Home*.
- Include lead teachers in student progress meetings even if the lead teachers are not AmeriCorps members.
- Provide sites with more financial support for Internal Coaches.
- If MRC is helping with recruitment of members, conduct on-site assessments to better match members with sites.
- For sites that successfully implemented MRC for several years, reduce number of meetings between the Internal Coach and Master Coach.

iv. Communication

- Ensure that the Internal Coach is located physically in the building in order to better respond to members' needs.

- MRC program staff should copy Internal Coaches on communication to members to ensure consistency.
- Consider sharing student data from the previous year at the beginning of each school year to demonstrate student progress to teachers and obtain their buy-in to the program.

G. Service and the Minnesota Reading Corps

Why did members commit to service in the PreK program and what did they gain from the experience? For PreK Community Corps members, serving as an MRC member was a way to gain experience serving in an early childhood classroom. For the Educator Corps members, who were already teachers, serving in AmeriCorps was as way to improve literacy instruction in their classrooms and to obtain additional training in literacy education. Helping students progress in their reading readiness, making a difference, and building strong relationships with the students were described as the rewards of their service. However, members reported a number of challenges with serving in AmeriCorps, both personally and in the classroom, including financial constraints, lack of sick leave, managing student behavior, and difficulty completing required service hours. Despite these challenges, most members reported plans to serve again in the next school year.

1. AmeriCorps member motivation

For PreK Community Corps members at four sites, serving as an MRC member was a way to gain experience serving in an early childhood classroom. A member at one school was a former K-3 member and believed that serving in PreK would allow her to make a greater difference for students by teaching them literacy at a younger age. At two sites, members were drawn to MRC because of the opportunity to serve in the public interest. Educator Corps members at four sites saw MRC as an opportunity to improve literacy instruction in their classrooms and seek additional training in literacy education. Many of these Educator Corps members were lead teachers in previous years, and saw that MRC led to vast improvements in students in other classrooms. As a member at one site explained, "[I] saw great improvement last year from students participating in MRC and wanted to continue the program. [I] wanted to make a difference in kids' lives and get more training for myself."

2. Rewards of service

Across sites, members reported the greatest rewards of service were helping students progress in their reading readiness, making a difference, and building strong relationships with the students. A member at one site explained that serving instills in her the "feeling that I'm actually…making an impact that can ultimately change these kids' lives." A member at another site stated that the greatest reward was "Seeing a child grow and knowing you are a part of it." At one site, members appreciated the opportunity to give students the tools they needed to express themselves. At another site, Educator Corps members believed that one of the greatest rewards of service was the ability to continue to integrate a literacy rich schedule and utilize MRC interventions in their current teaching following the period of service. One member at this site noted that "the MRC training pulls [literacy] to the forefront and makes you think about why you're doing what you're doing."

3. Challenges of service

Members cited various challenges associated with serving in AmeriCorps. This included financial constraints because of the meager living stipend; lack of sick leave; frustrations with managing student behavior and lack of student focus; learning to interact with a culturally diverse student and parent populations; and difficulty completing required service

hours. Members at five sites noted that it was challenging to fit all of the required elements of the literacy rich schedule, Tier 2 and 3 interventions, and data collection and entry into an already packed schedule.

4. Future plans

At least one AmeriCorps member from six of the sites indicated that he or she plans to serve again in the next school year. Members at two sites noted that although they were unsure of their exact career trajectory, service in MRC encouraged them to pursue careers in the early childhood or general education fields. Members at three sites said that MRC influenced their decision to pursue a career in teaching.

H. Results and Lessons Learned

Overall, PreK sites expressed satisfaction with the implementation and effectiveness of the literacy rich schedule and Tier 2 and Tier 3 one-on-one interventions. The extra support in the classroom provided by Community Corps members and the data-driven instructional approach were both helpful and valued. However, staff at two sites felt that the Tier 2 and 3 interventions could be better tailored to meet students' needs. Perceptions of program impact were favorable, with staff noting that MRC facilitated PreK students' progress and growth in literacy. Some lessons learned based on implementing the PreK model related to supporting the AmeriCorps members, such as being clear and transparent about performance expectations and responsibilities, sharing similar values to facilitate integration, or providing opportunities for professional development. A key lesson learned pertained to integrating the model into the PreK environment: as members and teachers become more familiar with the program over time, implementation becomes smoother and more successful for students.

1. Satisfaction with PreK program

Staff at each site expressed satisfaction with the effectiveness of the MRC PreK literacy rich schedule and interventions. A teacher at one site felt that the key features of MRC's success are that the "scaffolding of the interventions and that the interventions [themselves] are quick and simple – easy to understand – and the kids can get it done". Staff at three sites mentioned receiving positive feedback from parents and community members on the program. At one site, the AmeriCorps member became an unofficial point person for parents on literacy. For three sites, the extra support in the classroom from Community Corps members was described by staff as especially helpful. Staff at three PreK sites reported that MRC's data-driven approach has helped them comprehensively identify and address students' needs.

Two sites, although satisfied overall with MRC, commented that the Tier 2 and 3 interventions could be better tailored to meet students' needs. Staff at one of these schools believed the interventions were too rigid, especially for younger students, noting that the "predetermined order of interventions seemed somewhat strange and disjointed from actual student learning." Staff at the other school suggested that the interventions could be better tailored for its English Language Learner population.

2. Perceptions of program impact

Across sites, staff believed that MRC facilitated PreK students' progress and growth in literacy. Members at two sites reported that training provided by MRC has made their literacy instruction more intentional. At three sites, staff received positive feedback from parents about the program. At an additional school, staff reported that the program increased teacher accountability by setting expectations for students. The Internal Coach stated, "it convinces them that these children can really do these things." Three schools noted that their perception of student improvement was supported by data. An Educator Corps member at one of these schools shared, "seeing student success leads to it." In other

words, she believed that seeing students' progress through data motivates teachers to continue diligently adhering to the literacy rich schedule and interventions.

3. Lessons learned

Each PreK program offered valuable insights about implementing the MRC program. Most lessons learned were applicable to both PreK and K-3 programs and related to supporting the AmeriCorps member(s), being clear and transparent about expectations and responsibilities, and developing plans for both program implementation and meeting volunteer hours. However, these lessons may be especially important for the MRC PreK program because of members' central role in the classroom. Besides constantly interacting with students, PreK members were responsible for planning and implementing the literacy rich schedule and Tier 2 and 3 interventions, as well as collecting and inputting assessment data.

Lessons learned are presented below in the order of program implementation, starting with the AmeriCorps member selection process and ending with general guidance for making the MRC program function successfully:

- The school as a whole should be open to school-wide change and MRC integration. Educating teachers about the reasoning behind the program can promote teacher buy-in.
- Select a member that shares the site's values and is dedicated and patient
- Ensure that the Internal Coach is knowledgeable about program implementation. If the Internal Coach is new to the program, expect him/her to require additional time to become familiar with the role, program and expectations.
- Examine and clarify expectations for members about personnel policies, such as how to announce sick or vacation days.
- Give clear explanations to non-MRC lead teachers about what the member will be doing in the classroom and what MRC expects of members.
- Give clear directions to members about MRC and school-level expectations and responsibilities, especially related to student behavior management.
- Launch literacy rich schedule from the first day of school for all students regardless of language proficiency.
- Members should plan ahead for required MRC trainings and start early with fulfilling service hours.
- Members may benefit from observing teachers in the classroom prior to the start of their term of service.
- Members should be supported with in-school professional development opportunities.
- As members and teachers become more familiar with the program over time, implementation becomes smoother and more successful for students. There is tremendous value in having veteran members serve at a school.

V. K-3 MRC Programs: Site Visit Findings

This section of the report presents the findings from the 12 site visits conducted for the process assessment of the K-3 programs in May and June 2012 and in November and December 2012. It provides *Background Information* on the 12 diverse K-3 schools, describing key characteristics and MRC-specific facts, such as the reasons each school applied to participate in MRC, the number of members serving since program implementation began, and the role of the AmeriCorps member within the school environment.

Next, the *Core Curriculum for Literacy Instruction* is presented, addressing both the K-3 curriculum at each school and supplemental programs. This is followed by information regarding the types of students MRC serves, the process for matching students and members, notification to parents of students' MRC eligibility and participation, the desired outcomes of tutoring K-3 students, and students' receptivity to tutoring and their progress in achieving their literacy targets.

Implementation Highlights of the K-3 program follows, summarizing the approaches to program delivery across the 12 schools. Specifically, students targeted for tutoring assistance, the frequency and duration of the interventions, intervention dosage, the location of tutoring sessions, key aspects of intervention delivery, use of technology, scheduling and coordination, student assessments, monitoring implementation fidelity of tutoring interventions, adaptations and variations to MRC protocols are presented.

Similar to the PreK findings, the next section *Key Components Driving Successful Implementation*, examines the adoption and installation of the MRC program in diverse contexts, as well as the particular contribution of AmeriCorps members. First, we address the recruitment and selection process of the members across the schools, as well as the qualities sought in AmeriCorps members serving as literacy tutors. Second, we address pre-service and in-service training that members received and describe the training provided by MRC and the schools. We present staff and members' perceptions of training quality, intensity, and effectiveness, as well as unmet training needs or areas where additional training would be helpful. Third, we describe coaching and supervision strategies used with members. This includes the frequency of coaching, as well as the topics addressed during coaching sessions. In this context, we also present staff perceptions of the adequacy of members' supervision and tutoring services. An additional component addressed concerns school support of MRC implementation. This topic is examined in a number of ways, including MRC implementation roles across schools, school policies and procedures that were changed to support the MRC program, how the members were integrated into the school environment, and the types of support provided by the school for hosting members. Next, we present the types of direct support provided by MRC to the schools. Finally, system level partnerships operating at the district or community level to support MRC at the schools are described.

In the next section on *Facilitators and Challenges*, we present staff and members' opinions as to how well MRC was implemented at their schools. We then detail the challenges encountered while implementing literacy interventions and while working with members. This is followed by suggestions for improvement or changes. In the section on *Service and the Minnesota Reading Corps*, we present members' reported motivations to serve with MRC, the rewards and challenges of service, and future plans inspired by their experience. Our final section on *Results and Lessons Learned* presents staff and members' satisfaction with K-3 tutoring, perceptions of program impact, and lessons learned that schools recommend sharing to inform continuous improvement or replication.

A. Background Information

1. Description of K-3 schools

The research team visited 12 K-3 programs operating in elementary schools (ES) in each MRC region. Information on the location of the school, its year of implementation, AmeriCorps members, and the percent of the student population qualifying for Free and Reduced Price Lunch (FRPL) (as a proxy for poverty status) is presented below. Additional information about site characteristics is provided in Exhibit V-1.

2. Aggregated information about PreK sites and schools

a. Year MRC implemented

Among the 12 schools visited, two schools were early adopters of MRC, having implemented the program in 2005-2006. Other early adopters implemented the program in 2006-2007, 2007-2008, and 2008-2009. Four schools implemented MRC in the 2009-2010 school year. Four schools had only recently implemented the program in 2011-2012.

b. Reason for applying for MRC

All of the principals who were in place when the program was applied for indicated that the reason for applying to the MRC program was to bring additional literacy resources to their schools in order to provide a much-needed intervention for struggling K-3 students just below grade level so that they would pass the Minnesota Comprehensive Assessment in the 3rd grade. Two schools also mentioned that this was a good fit with the RtI model they were already implementing.

c. Number of AmeriCorps members since first implemented

Across the twelve schools visited, 53 members have served since 2005. At one school, 12 members have served since the MRC program was implemented in 2005.

d. Number of AmeriCorps members currently serving at the schools visited

A total of 22 full-time and 1 part-time members were serving in K-3 programs at the schools at the time of the visits. As suburban and rural schools tend to have fewer MRC members per school, two schools had four members, one schools had three members, two schools had two members, and the other seven schools had one member serving.

e. Role of AmeriCorps member(s) at school

Consistent across the schools implementing K-3 programs, AmeriCorps members' primary responsibility was to conduct 20 minute daily tutoring interventions. They also supported school literacy activities, such as administering DIBELS [25], entering data, volunteering in the school library or computer lab, bus and breakfast duty, and assisting teachers with grading papers and projects. Most members fulfilled the remainder of their service hours by assisting with other school programs, including morning child-care services (one school), supervising before school reading steps program (one school), after-care programs (eleven schools), and a summer school program (one school). At three schools, members assisted with special events, such as Parent Night and Reading Night.

[25] Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills (DIBELS) are a set of assessments used for universal screening and progress monitoring in grades K-6. DIBELS assessments help educators identify students who may need additional literacy instruction in order to become proficient readers. In the MRC program it is used by some schools as alternative assessment to AIMSWeb.

The Kindergarten-Focused position provided Kindergarten students with a daily “double-dose” of Reading Corps. Each student has two (20-minute) sessions daily, for a total of 40 minutes. One session is a 5-day Repeated Read Aloud intervention that is conducted in a small group setting (typically 4 students). The Repeated Read Aloud intervention involves tutors reading the same book five consecutive days to the students, with an emphasis on vocabulary and comprehension. Tutors explicitly teach vocabulary every day, ask open and closed questions, and incorporate concepts about print. The other session is a standard Reading Corps early literacy intervention that is selected by the Internal Coach based on student needs (Phoneme Blending, Phoneme Segmenting, Letter Sounds or Word Blending), and is conducted in pairs of students.

Exhibit V-1. Background Information for the K-3rd Grade Sites

K-3rd Grade Site Name	Reason for Applying for MRC			Number of AmeriCorps Members		Core Curriculum	Supplemental Programs
	Enhance existing literacy program	Benefit the site & students	District Level/ School Level	All years	Current		
Site #1		●		3	3 FT	Balanced Literacy Framework	● Reading Eggs
Site #2		●		1	1 FT	Reading Street	● Sidewalks on Reading Street and Read Naturally
Site #3	●			3	1 FT	Houghton-Mifflin series	● Soar to Success
Site #4		●		12	2 FT	● Signature Edition (DI): K-1st ● Houghton Mifflin:2nd-3rd	● Paras
Site #5		●	●	1	1 FT	Staff-created materials (they have not purchased any single curriculum for the school)	● My Sidewalks; Leveled Literacy; and Paras
Site #6	●			~8	1 FT	Harcourt and Trophies	● English as a Second Language (ESL) interventions ● Title I teachers provide small group interventions in corrective reading for Tier 3 students ● Paraprofessionals reading specialists provide one-on-one or small group interventions separate from the Title I program
Site #7		●		2	1 FT	Reading Street Curriculum	● A federally funded after school program ● Educational Assistants do interventions with selected students ● After school supplemental educational services including Sylvan and ClubZ
Site #8			●	1	1 FT	McMillan McGraw Hill Treasures	● Hired one reading intervention teacher and several paraprofessional support staff to provide extra services
Site #9	●			5	1 FT	Houghton Mifflin basal series	● Action 100 framework ● Reading Research Labs (RRL)
Site #10			●	9-10	4 FT	● Great Habits Great Readers ● Words this Way	● The Internal Coach hosts three small reading groups for students ● Other reading specialists work on phonics, math, and reading with small groups of 3-5 students ● An afterschool "backpack tutoring" program.
Site #11	●	●		6	2 FT 1 PT	no core curriculum-teachers integrate aspects of multiple curricula into their classrooms	● America Reads and Kids Stop
Site 12[a]				5[b]	4 FT	Mondo Bookshop	● Students receive small group guided reading for three to five students for 30 minutes every day and/or phonics lessons for up to ten students every day. ● Literacy and Math Nights ● ELL Tutoring (small group tutoring).

[a.] Both the Principal and Internal Coach started at this site (two years ago) after the program was implemented at the school three years ago. Consequently they cannot provide an accurate answer as to why their school applied to be in the MRC program.

[b.] The Internal Coach was unsure how many members served the first year of the program in 2010-11 since she was not at the school, but last year in 2011-2012, they had 4 FT and 1 PT member

B. Core Curriculum for Literacy Instruction

1. Description of core K-3 curriculum at each school

For K-3 instruction, the daily core curriculum at each school generally included up to one hour of large group instruction and up to one hour of differentiated small group instruction. The core curriculum for K-3 reading instruction varied across the schools. Two schools implemented the *Reading Street Curriculum* (K-3) by Pearson Scott Foresman. Additional curricula used for K-3 instruction were the *Balanced Literacy Framework*, Good Habits, Great Readers, Mondo Bookshop, *Houghton-Mifflin* series, *McMillan McGraw Hill Treasures*, and *Harcourt* and *Trophies* for K-3. One school had a dual core curriculum, using the *Reading Mastery Signature Edition* for grades K-1 instruction and *Reading Mastering* and *Houghton-Mifflin* series for grades 2-3. Finally, two schools did not employ a single, standardized curriculum; their curriculum was currently composed of staff-created materials and aspects of multiple curricula.

2. Description of supplemental programs

Seven schools reported that Title I services were provided for Tier 3 students using small group interventions. One school did not qualify for Title I in this academic year, but did in the past. Three schools reported offering interventions specifically for English Language Learners. Two schools reported having a *Read Naturally* program. An accelerated reading program for advanced students was reported as being used at one school. Another school reported using *Soar to Success* with a group of K-3 students who were not making progress and providing individual services for certain students (some of the MRC interventions had been incorporated into these services). One school reported using *Action 100* as a framework for providing supplemental literacy instruction, and *Reading Research Labs* for targeted instruction in reading. One school reported implementing *America Reads*, a program in which college students tutor lower performing students but do not conduct any assessment or progress monitoring activities. This school also reported offering support to struggling readers through intervention programs such as *Barton, Read 180* and *Early Success*.

C. Students Served by MRC interventions

1. Process for matching students and tutors

In eight of the schools, there was only one AmeriCorps member designated, so there was no need for a matching process. In one of the schools with two AmeriCorps members, some male students were matched with the male tutor in cases where teachers felt a role model would be helpful. Three other schools reported matching students and tutors based upon scheduling and availability.

2. Notification to parents of students' eligibility and participation

Practices in parental notification varied slightly across schools. All but one school sent parents a letter of introduction from the AmeriCorps member to notify them that their child would be receiving services. The remaining school notified parents of the services via students' report cards. Consent was required at one school prior to tutoring, with parents signing the letter to grant permission for students to participate. Two schools sent parents a letter when the child exited the MRC program to inform them of their child's reading progress and achievement in reaching the benchmark. At five schools, the teacher also informed parents of tutoring activities and student progress during parent-teacher conferences.

3. Desired outcomes of tutoring

Across schools, the goal of the tutoring intervention was for students to achieve grade level proficiency and to become proficient readers. Some sites noted an emphasis on fluency and comprehension for second and third grade students. Other schools identified increased confidence, improved self-efficacy, and enjoyment of reading as additional intended outcomes. However, one school noted that its standards for categorizing Tier 1-3 students at

each grade level exceeded the MRC guidelines, thus when students exited MRC program they did not necessarily achieve the school's grade level expectation.

4. Student's receptivity to tutoring

School staff reported that students looked forward to tutoring and enjoyed spending time with and forming a relationship with the AmeriCorps member(s). The importance of "one-on-one attention" was noted at seven schools. At two schools, however, it was noted that some students did not like leaving class, especially if they were pulled during science or social studies classes or gym, music, or art.

5. Student progress in meeting targets

At the time of the site visits, all schools reported that students were on track to meet their spring targets. Only one school reported that a few students did not progress enough and "hugged the [benchmark] line" all year; these students would tentatively participate in MRC tutoring again next year. One school indicated that several students had already met their benchmarks and had exited from the program.

D. Implementation Highlights

Exhibit V-2. K-3 MRC Implementation Highlights

K-3 Interventions	
Students targeted for tutoring assistance (K-3)	• At the beginning of the school year, Tier 2 students (just below benchmark level) received services (All schools) • Some ELL/ESL students received services (2 schools) • As students exited, Tier 2 students with lower scores received services (6 schools) • No Tier 3 or Title I students were served (All schools)
Frequency of intervention	Daily (All schools)
Duration of tutoring session (K-3)	• All sessions were 20 minutes (5 schools) • Two schools factored in transition time into the 20 minute intervention • One school indicated that a couple of students received approximately 15 minutes of service due to scheduling issues • One school indicted that Kindergarten service was provided 40 minutes per day
Intervention dosage	Number of weeks tutored was based on students' need and their progress; students exited when they reached benchmark (All schools). At one school, two students received MRC tutoring all year.
Location of tutoring session (K-3)	• Cubicle in library (1school) • Designated room or office (6 schools) • Shared classroom with other reading programs (2 schools) • Hallways at designated desks outside classroom (3 schools) • Multiple places: Hallways, coat closets, the Title 1 Room, anywhere available (1 school); Stairwells (1 school, prior to January 2012) • In the back of the classroom (1 school)
K-3 Literacy Intervention Delivery	Frequently used interventions across schools:[26] • Repeated Reading with Comprehension Strategy Practice (10 schools) • Duet Reading (7 schools) • Letter/Sound Correspondence (7 schools)
Use of technology in intervention	None (All schools)

[26] The Internal Coaches and AmeriCorps members were asked about how frequently each of the interventions were used: always, usually, about half the time, seldom, and never. Interventions that were "always" and "usually" used are noted.

K-3 Interventions	
Scheduling and coordination	• AmeriCorps members coordinated the tutoring schedule with the teachers (6 schools) • Internal Coach scheduled the tutoring sessions (1 school) • Internal Coach, AmeriCorps Member, and school staff established the tutoring schedule (4 schools)
Student Assessments	• Progress monitoring was conducted weekly (All schools); specifically conducted on Wednesdays (3 schools). • Benchmarking, conducted during the Fall, Winter and Spring (All schools)
Monitoring implementation fidelity of tutoring interventions	Internal Coach conducted observation: • Once per month (4 schools) • Once-twice per month (1 school) • Every three weeks (1 school) • Twice per month (3 schools) • The Internal Coach did not conduct observations of the tutors but sat in on the MC monthly observations (1 school) Master Coaches conducted observation once per month (4 schools), twice per month (1 school) or "regularly" (1 school). At one school, the fidelity observation was described as "informal and unstructured".

Adaptations to MRC protocols (Approved)	Four of the twelve schools adapted the MRC protocols to better meet student needs and did so with the approval of the Master Coach:
	• Prepared new reading materials (1 school)
	• Used magnetic letters instead of paper (1 school)
	• Revised protocol for Duet Reading
	  ▪ To increase motivation: Student graphing of first and last timing (1 school)
	  ▪ To increase engagement: Timing students during duet reading (timing not normally collected during this intervention)(1 school)
	One school used 15 minute intervention sessions instead of 20 with the Master Coachers approval (1 school)

Variations to MRC protocols	At four schools, AmeriCorps members had adapted or supplemented interventions or materials independently, without the approval of the Master Coach. The following adaptations were acknowledged: • Used passages with pictures (1 school) • Created a number grid for Repeated Reading to accommodate students reading more words per minute than the MRC worksheet could track (1 school) • Simplified instructions related to some interventions to make them clearer for students (1 school) • Created a reward system (1 school) • Added comprehension questions (2 schools) • Added (unspecified) supplemental activities to provide additional help (1 school)

E. Key Components Driving Successful Implementation

1. Literacy tutor recruitment and selection

a. Qualities sought in AmeriCorps literacy tutors

Staff at six schools emphasized "liking kids" and wanting to work with children as important qualities they sought in their AmeriCorps members. Being a self-starter, proactive, or energetic was also a consideration in member selection because it was believed that the member would need such qualities to be successful in the school environment. Two schools emphasized the importance of a member's willingness to be coached and openness to feedback. With regard to literacy and reading, one school emphasized the importance of being knowledgeable about literacy and another stressed dedication to supporting students' literacy improvement. Three other schools emphasized being passionate about literary and reading or a passion to teach. Staff at one school believed that it was beneficial for the member to be from the community and have previous experience working in a school. Having a commitment to service was an important consideration at three schools.

b. Role of site/school in AmeriCorps member selection process [27]

MRC staff screened applicants, conducted group interviews with candidates and sent promising candidates to the school to interview. All schools described being actively engaged in the selection process. Certain schools worked closely with their Program Coordinator to identify candidates, while others recruited qualified applicants locally or within their district by advertising within the school or at a nearby college, in the local newspaper, or on the radio. At all 12 schools, potential candidates were screened first by the Program Coordinator and then interviewed in-person by the Principal and/or Internal Coach. One school added that district-level interviews for potential AmeriCorps members were held with all Principals interviewing the applicants at the same time.

2. Pre-service or in-service training

a. Training provided

i. Minnesota Reading Corps

All members received intensive training to deliver the reading interventions and serve as a literacy tutor. Twenty members at 10 schools attended the Summer Reading Institute hosted by MRC. Three members that were hired late attended 3-4 full days of training that was offered in the fall. Members at 10 of the 12 schools also participated in Great Leaps training. Members at 10 schools also mentioned that they attended AIMSWeb training in the fall of the school year.[28] The consensus among school staff at all 12 sites was that the AmeriCorps members were adequately trained to tutor students in the literacy interventions.

ii. Site/School-Specific Training

Only a few schools provided members with additional training. At one school, the members attended the district's teacher training prior to the start of the new year. At another school, the member attended training on a new literacy initiative (*Action 100*) in order to obtain a general overview of this framework and how the school implemented it. At the Principal's discretion, members participated in professional development opportunities offered to staff at two schools. At another school, the member was welcomed to attend the teacher in-service days and any other school activities that paraprofessionals attend. Only three schools included members in their orientation for new teachers at

[27] The AmeriCorps member selection process was combined with the discussion of the school's role in the process.
[28] AIMSWeb training is only required for new members, not for returning members.

the start of the school year. Four of the schools visited did not provide any site-specific training for their AmeriCorps members.[29]

b. Unmet training needs or areas where additional training would be helpful

Members at five schools stated that training on behavior management and motivation would be helpful, specifically techniques to maintain students' attention and focus (e.g., sitting still, following directions). Another AmeriCorps member noted that it would be helpful to have training or be given tools to use to work with students that get bored with the interventions. One member reported that it would be helpful for the supplemental trainings on AIMSWeb, OnCorps and Great Leaps to occur sooner. Another member indicated that the training received on enunciating letter sounds appropriately using the Barton method would have been helpful for other members. Staff and members at four schools did not identify any unmet training needs or areas where additional training was needed.

Exhibit IV-3. Internal Coach Snapshot

- Number of ACMs currently coached: Ranges from 1-15
- Number of ACMs coached over time: 65
- Number of 1st year Coaches: 5
- Number with two or more years' experience as Coach: 7 (2-7 years) and one serving in fifth year as Master Coach
- Current role within school: Teacher, Reading or Literacy Coordinator, RTI Coordinator
- Previous roles: Elementary teacher (2)
- Certifications: One Coach has a MN Reading Endorsement Certification and another is a MN state-certified reading specialist. Two coaches have Master's degrees in Reading or Literacy

3. Coaching and supervision of AmeriCorps members

Coaching is a key element of the MRC implementation process to ensure intervention integrity and to provide on-site support to members. While the program guidance stipulates that coaching should occur regularly and at least monthly, we found that the timing and frequency of coaching differed. At some schools, the Internal Coach and the member met frequently and informally; whereas at other schools coaching was held on a regular schedule. Differences in the degree of coaching provided also appears to be related to whether the Internal Coach was stationed on-site at the school or whether s/he performed this role across multiple sites or served as a district-wide Coach.

a. Frequency of coaching

Patterns across the schools are presented as follows:

i. Once a week. Two schools reported that the Internal Coach met with members individually once a week. At one school, the Internal Coach met with all members as a group for 10-15 minutes due to time constraints and multiple commitments; however, this was not regarded as adequate by the members.

ii. Informally or as needed. Seven schools reported that the Internal Coach met with the member informally or on an as-needed basis. At three of these schools, the Internal Coach worked on-site at the school and communicated daily or frequently with the members. At one school, the Internal Coach (who also served as a Continuous Improvement Coach for the school district) spent two days a week at the school and met informally with the AmeriCorps member.

iii. Once a month. At three schools, the Internal Coach met with the member once per month. At one school, the coach provided "coaching" sessions after performing monthly observations. At one school, the Internal Coach also served as the Master Coach. At

[29] Information was not available for one school.

another school, the Internal Coach fulfilled her role across multiple schools in the district, and met with members on a monthly basis. At another school, the Master Coach conducted the monthly observations, rather than the Internal Coach.

iv. Twice a month. At two schools, the Internal Coach and member met twice a month. One coaching session occurred when the Master Coach conducted her monthly visit to the school. The member and coach also met daily over lunch where the AmeriCorps member received informal coaching.

v. More than twice a month. One school reported that the Internal Coach and AmeriCorps member held weekly coaching sessions.

b. Topics addressed

The topics addressed by the Internal and Master Coaches with the AmeriCorps members during coaching sessions tended to focus on students' progress, delivering the interventions and improving fidelity, and challenges experienced, including student behavior and member/teacher relationships. Nine topic areas were identified, as noted below, and are presented in the order of most to least common across the sites. Only two of the topic areas focus on the members' needs (service hours, need for training and support). Exhibit V-4 summarizes the topics addressed during coaching and the frequency across the schools.

c. Perceptions of adequate supervision of AmeriCorps member and tutoring

Overall, staff at MRC schools believed that members received adequate supervision. Teachers at one school reported that the AmeriCorps member received "extremely strong support" from the Internal Coach. Staff at another school noted that the members and the Internal Coach have a good rapport and strong relationship. Teachers at two schools "assumed" the member received adequate supervision, given that they had not experienced any problems and were not directly involved in member supervision. At one school, however, it appears that the Internal Coach had too many time demands to allocate sufficient time to the member. At two schools no information was provided on this topic.

4. School support of MRC implementation

a. MRC implementation roles across sites

Implementing the MRC program at each school was orchestrated across a number of key players, who played different roles in the process. As summarized in the table below, Program Coordinators were involved at the front-end with recruitment, interviewing and selecting AmeriCorps members, training and administrative matters related to their service at the school, and troubleshooting any concerns with the member's tenure or program implementation in general. Principals reported working closely with their Program Coordinators during the recruitment, interviewing, and selection phase, but then turned over day-to-day management of the MRC program and the AmeriCorps members to the designated Internal Coach. (However, one Principal reported that s/he examined progress monitoring and benchmark data and also continued to interact regularly with the school's members). Internal Coaches were also involved in the interviewing and selection process. Once the members came on board, Internal Coaches worked closely with them to conduct initial student assessments and then schedule or assist in scheduling the tutoring sessions with teachers. Internal Coaches, along with the Master Coaches, reinforced the integrity of the MRC interventions through fidelity monitoring, benchmarking students' performance at designated intervals, and coached the AmeriCorps member (this was the general practice with one exception as noted above). Coaches were solely responsible for member supervision, although both the Principal and Program Coordinator were available for troubleshooting. In some schools, AmeriCorps members coordinated schedules with teachers individually, without

the Coaches' involvement. Members conducted student assessments, delivered interventions, and conducted tri-annual benchmarking. In some schools, teachers also provided informal support and coaching to the members.

Exhibit V-4. Coaching Frequency and Topics

Coaching Topics	School											
	Site #1	Site #2	Site #3	Site #4	Site #5	Site #6	Site #7	Site #8	Site #9	Site #10	Site #11	Site #12
Frequency of Coaching	Once per month and as needed	Twice per month and as needed	Twice per month and as needed	Weekly and as needed	As needed	Once per month	Once per month and as needed	As needed	Once a week	Informally each day; formally every 2 weeks	Informally once a week	Group discussion once a week for 10-15 minutes
Student progress monitoring & reporting		●	●		●		●	●	●		●	
Student challenges (behavior or discipline)	●		●			●			●	●		
Teacher issues or relationships			●	●		●						
Guidance on interventions	●					●	●			●	●	
Scheduling						●		●				
Review of service hours		●					●					
Areas where AmeriCorps member needs more training or support				●								
Supplemental instructional materials					●							
Using AIMSWeb & OnCorps							●					
Varied issues or challenges (not specified)												●

Exhibit V-5. Types of Support by Role

	Program Coordinator	Master Coach	Internal Coach	Principal	Teachers	AmeriCorps Members
Recruitment	●			●		
Interviewing/ Hiring	●	●	●	●		
Trainings	●					
Administrative	●					
Troubleshooting	●			●		
Schedule Coordination			●		●	●
Student Assessments			●	●		●
Intervention Delivery		●	●			●
Member supervision			●	●		
Benchmarking		●	●	●		●
Fidelity Monitoring		●	●			
Coaching & Support		●	●		●	
Meet with teachers to discuss student progress			●			●

b. School policies and procedures changed to support the MRC program

i. Program implementation

All schools changed their scheduling procedures to accommodate MRC programming. There were no changes made to school policies to implement the MRC intervention. One school stipulated that students could not be pulled during SMART room time.[30]

ii. Hosting the AmeriCorps Member

At one school the member was provided access to student data, which is generally not provided to volunteers. Otherwise, the schools did not change school policies or procedures to host the AmeriCorps member.

c. Integration of AmeriCorps Member into site/school environment

All schools informally consider the AmeriCorps member as part of the school staff. As noted by a school that hosted two members, "[They] are considered a staff member and the students consider them to be a teacher. The members go to staff meetings and building meetings, and indicate that they often have received advice from teachers". One teacher noted that the other teachers asked the member to provide in-service training in order to learn more about the MRC interventions.

Schools made efforts to integrate the members into the school culture, relationships, and activities in a number of ways. The spirit of shared responsibility and member integration into the school was captured by a teacher who said, "My kids are her kids and her kids are my kids." Examples of the ways in which members were integrated into school routines include welcoming members at the beginning of the school year, attending staff meetings or para-professional activities, eating in the teachers' lunchroom, and participating in parent-teacher conferences. At one school, the members had a booth at parent-teacher conferences, where they explained what they do, demonstrated interventions, and trained parents in implementing Duet Reading at home. At other schools, members briefed

[30] Stimulating Maturity through Accelerated Readiness Training is a program based on brain research that enhances students' psychological/neurological readiness skills through physical activity while learning. One classroom is dedicated to this activity at the school noted.

teachers on student progress; one member shared progress monitoring graphs with the teachers every other week. At another school, members shared information with teachers in advance of parent-teacher conferences.

It is important to underscore that there was a near universal transition from initial cautiousness or skepticism among teachers towards acceptance of the member and the interventions once they had seen the results of the MRC program with their students. However, there were reports from seven schools that integrating the member into the environment and daily routines was either not well-received or met with initial skepticism. Staff at one school reported that the member was frequently absent and did not fulfill assigned responsibilities, which resulted in near-termination of the service agreement, poor rapport with certain teachers, and limited integration into the school culture. At another school an AmeriCorps member was advised by the Internal Coach early on that members were not "part" of the school; the member initiated a discussion with the coach to counter this perception and eventually became accepted by the school community. Additionally, at one school, the member reported that there was initial skepticism on the part of the teachers about how she would "fit in," but over time that perception changed in her favor. One school there was some initial hesitation about members pulling students from the classroom that was resolved. Finally, one member noted that the most difficult transition into the school environment involved learning how to interact with the teachers and knowing what is allowable and acceptable.

5. Support provided by schools and Minnesota Reading Corps

Schools supported the MRC program and the AmeriCorps member by providing in-kind supports, such as dedicated space, computers, and supplies. A number of schools and Internal Coaches praised the support and accessibility of the Program Coordinator in implementing the MRC program, noting the Program Coordinator's involvement during the member recruitment, screening and selection phase, assisting with the start-up process, handling administrative matters, and ongoing communication and troubleshooting.

Other schools reported that, overall, MRC had been very supportive of program implementation. One school noted that MRC provided sufficient support, particularly at the "front end of the process" with regard to member recruitment and hiring. One Internal Coach observed, "If you have anything to do with education, you know we don't get lifelines most of the time. Usually they say, "Here is a program, make it work." With MRC, however, "if you have a question, the same day you email, someone answers you."

However, one school did counter that MRC had been slow to respond to and turn around correspondence, and members at another school reported that there were delays in getting the program established. In both cases this was attributed to the rapid growth of the program and perceived under-staffing of MRC's statewide infrastructure.

6. System level partnerships

Three schools received additional support from external sources, such as the school district, community volunteers, or local civic organizations: Only three schools reported engaging in system level partnerships to facilitate the sustainability of the MRC program or literacy interventions. One school reported that the MRC program had significant district-level support. All district K-3 principals agreed to sign-up for the MRC program. These schools had two layers of coaching, a district-wide Internal Coach and on-site Internal Coaches at each school. This allowed for a uniform application of the program in all district schools. Another school worked with a local college to host tutors for the supplemental America Reads program. Another school was working with the local Rotary Club with the hope that it would financially support a Pre-K MRC program across several local sites. No other schools reported any formal partnerships with external stakeholders in education or in the community to provide additional resources to support the literacy interventions. There were no other system-level partnerships reported at the remaining schools.

F. Facilitators and Challenges

Across schools, the consensus expressed by staff was that the MRC K-3 program had been successfully installed. Among the factors that facilitated implementation at the schools were the active involvement and accessibility of the Program Coordinator, the quality of member training and support, integration of the MRC intervention into the school's literacy framework, and having good communication and working relationships among MRC staff, school staff and members. Challenges identified at K-3 schools related to implementing the literacy interventions and members' performance. Scheduling time for the literacy interventions so that it did not interfere with core instruction was by far the most common challenge experienced. Another significant challenge was providing an appropriate place to conduct the tutoring sessions, given the space constraints in certain schools. Ten of the 12 schools visited reported no challenges in working with members. Members' ability to connect with students, plus having a positive attitude and strong work ethic were noted as key facilitators. However, staff and members reported challenges with meeting the required number of service hours. Some site-specific concerns about member resignation and performance were reported. Suggestions for improvement focused on allowing greater flexibility in how AmeriCorps members fulfill service hours. Suggestions to improve MRC training focused on the timing and the content for both members and Coaches. Facilitating initial MRC program buy-in by school staff, providing more resources and materials for implementing the interventions, and increasing coordination among Internal Coaches were suggestions for improving MRC implementation.

1. Perceptions on how well the MRC program was implemented

Across schools, the consensus expressed by staff was that the MRC program had been successfully installed, and they were pleased with its implementation and students' results

Among the factors that facilitated implementation at the schools were the active involvement and accessibility of the Program Coordinator, the quality of member training and support, integration of the MRC intervention into the literacy framework, good communication and working relationships across MRC, school staff and members, and obtaining the support and buy-in of teachers.

Having a Response to Intervention (RtI) approach already in place was identified by two schools as providing a firm foundation for implementation of the MRC and teacher buy-in with supplemental interventions. At another school, teachers perceived the MRC interventions as blending well with the core curriculum. Staff at one school observed that intervention fidelity and having adequate institutional and staff support were critical to implementing the program.

Obtaining early buy-in supported early implementation. One school observed that inviting the Master Coach and Program Coordinator on site to introduce the program prior to its launch helped to educate staff about the MRC program and encourage initial buy-in. At one school, the Principal introduced the MRC program during staff meetings each fall and provides an overview of student eligibility for the intervention. At another school, the Internal Coach conducted a Power Point presentation to the teachers at the beginning of the school year, which proved helpful in informing them about the requirements and expectations of the MRC program.

At one school, implementation success was attributed to the Internal Coach's management of and relationship-building with the members and transparency in communications with the school faculty and staff. Teachers' trust in the Internal Coach facilitated buy-in and implementation at one school whereas teachers' openness and receptivity to additional literacy instruction facilitated buy-in at another school. Staff at one school observed that the commitment of the tutors and the strong communication skills of the coach contributed to the 'seamless' integration of the MRC program into the school's literacy practice. Similarly, staff at another school attributed the successful implementation

to the communication between the AmeriCorps member and coach, their attention to detail, and ability to work well with others.

The personal qualities of the member and his or her ability to work well with students and teachers were noted as an important factor in program implementation at two schools. At two schools, staff noted that when members came on board, they were trained, ready to work, and had a strong grasp on what they were teaching.

2. Challenges encountered
   a. Implementing the literacy interventions
      i. Scheduling. Ten schools indicated that scheduling posed a significant challenge. It was necessary to work closely with individual teachers to ensure that tutoring did not interfere with core instruction in reading or math. Related to this challenge, school staff such as the principals and coaches indicated that obtaining the buy-in of teachers was a challenge at first, but they "came around" once they saw the results of the winter benchmarking and student improvement.
      ii. Lack of or limited space for tutoring. Space constraints in each building and finding an appropriate place for conducting the tutoring sessions was noted as a challenge by staff at five schools and resulted in the creative use of places for tutoring (e.g., hallways, stage in the auditorium, setting up cubicles in a corner of the library).
      iii. Integrating MRC into the existing literacy framework. Two schools expressed integration challenges early in the program's implementation. One school reporting having difficulty understanding the role MRC would play within the school's existing literacy framework. The other school reported challenges integrating multiple reading intervention programs into daily practice. Another school reported difficulty integrating the MRC program because the school's grade level standards were higher than MRC's; this created misunderstandings with parents and teachers as students would exit MRC yet still not meet grade level expectations according to the school's performance criteria.
      iv. Limited interaction with the Internal Coach. At one school the Internal Coach had multiple school-based commitments and was not able to meet with the members individually for coaching. Instead, a brief weekly group check-in meeting was conducted. Members felt that more guidance, time, and one-on-one interaction with the Internal Coach was needed. At another school, one member indicated that the Internal Coach was hard to reach given that the Coach worked across three sites and was not always available to address daily issues.
      v. Managing students' behavior. One site expressed concern about a lack of protocols for member to address student behavioral issues.
      vi. Using DIBELS for assessment. Using DIBELS for student benchmark assessment and then translating the results into AIMSWeb posed a challenge at two schools, which resulted in an initial challenge in selecting students to be part of the intervention and then ensuring consistency in assessment.

   b. Challenges related to Member performance or availability:

At 10 schools, staff stated that there were no challenges working with the literacy tutor. The members' ability to connect with students, plus having a positive attitude and strong work ethic were noted as key personal attributes of success. However, staff and members reported a number of challenges associated with the rigidity of the expectations regarding member placement and service hours. One challenge stemmed explicitly from a member's poor performance.

i. Impact of member resignation. At two sites, three AmeriCorps members resigned for personal reasons. This resulted in a gap in service delivery for students who had been receiving tutoring and inability to replace a member during the school year.

ii. No back-up for member. Staff at another school observed that there is no "sick" or "holiday" time for the member should they need to deal with illness or personal issues. This can be difficult as there is no substitute or back-up for tutoring. It also makes it difficult for the member to fulfill the service hour requirement.

iii. Having too many members. One school applied for 2.5 members and was given 4.5 members instead. Consequently, having enough students for the members to tutor during the day and identifying service activities for the members to fulfill their 1,700 hour service requirement proved challenging.

iv. Concern with performance. At one school, staff expressed concern with a member's frequent absences (due to a personal tragedy), poor rapport with the several teachers, and non-fulfillment of service hours that led to her near termination with the school.

v. Site specific challenges to implementing MRC. Working within the strict guidelines in place for student eligibility and ensuring a flow of students into the program posed a challenge for one school. Having to search on one's own to locate additional materials (e.g., connected texts/passages) when the member ran out of passages to use with students was cited as a concern at two schools.

c. Suggestions for improvement or changes

Schools were pleased with the quality of the tutoring interventions and having a highly trained, dedicated tutor on-site to work with struggling students. The recommendations for improvement were described as "tweaks." Some recommendations were related to specific elements of the evidence-based interventions which could not be changed without compromising the protocols (e.g., altering the protocol for specific interventions, using texts with illustrations, use of technology) and are not provided in the discussion below. Eight schools provided recommendations:

i. AmeriCorps members service hours. Allow for greater flexibility in allowing members to engage in non-literacy activities to fulfill their service requirements such as allowing members to use the hours spent applying to graduate school to count toward the AmeriCorps community service requirement.

ii. MRC implementation. Provide more resources and materials for implementing the interventions, such as reading passages as well as additional resources for AmeriCorps members, such as forums where current members can share ideas. Expand the *Read at Home* program to first-graders. Broaden the eligibility criteria for students who are

performing below Tier II so that they can benefit from the one-on-one tutoring and additional practice in word recognition, reading fluency, and comprehension.[31]

iii. MRC training-related suggestions. Move up the Reading Institute training earlier in the summer to get members on board quickly at school start-up or to accommodate a year-round schedule. Provide training on how to work with students from diverse cultural backgrounds and students with different learning styles or behavior problems. Provide training on program management and logistics for Internal Coaches.

iv. Have members observe/shadow outstanding members. Staff at one school believed that one member in particular did an outstanding job delivering the interventions and noted that it would be helpful to have new members from other schools observe an outstanding member in order to learn tutoring best practices.

v. Increase coordination among Internal Coaches. Increased coordination among Internal Coaches would be helpful in order to share challenges and lessons learned about program implementation. This group brainstorming session could take place during required MRC trainings or Internal Coach Professional Learning Groups.[32] Likewise an Internal Coach at another school suggested using a "buddy system" (i.e., matching a new Internal Coach with a more experienced one at a nearby school or matching new Internal Coaches together). This would allow Internal Coaches to problem solve, learn, and grow together, and would provide a much needed system of support for Coaches new to the program.

vi. Reduce member per Internal Coach ratio. The Internal Coach at one school indicated that she has more members than she was prepared to supervise: the school requested 2.5 members for this school year and was assigned 4.5 by MRC. The Internal Coach is not sure why MRC provided them more tutors than they requested.

vii. Introducing MRC to School staff. It would be helpful for MRC to provide an introduction letter template that the members could circulate to teachers and district staff to introduce MRC and explain the target population for services. This may alleviate confusion among teachers and other school staff about the roles and responsibilities of members.

viii. Additional AmeriCorps Member Suggestions. Members at one school suggested that all members be part-time rather than full-time. Part time commitment would work better within the school schedule and would allow members to more readily achieve the service hour requirement.

[31] It is important to note that the MRC program and its research validated interventions were designed specifically to be effective with Tier II students, and that broadening program eligibility to Tier III students is not validated by the research literature. Further, the primary objective of the MRC program is to quickly improve proficiency of students who score just below grade level benchmarks so that they can benefit from existing Tier I instruction. As such, broadening eligibility would change the primary objective of MRC program.

[32] A Professional Learning Group consists of a group of colleagues who together to enhance educational opportunities for both the group members (in this case educators) and their students through collaboration and continual professional development and learning.

G. Service and the Minnesota Reading Corps

Why did members commit to service in the K-3 program and what did they gain from the experience? Members' reasons for serving in AmeriCorps were largely pragmatic. College graduates joined due to difficulty obtaining a job in a poor economy. Others sought experience in the education field or as a teacher in order to explore future career options. The greatest reward of AmeriCorps members' service was seeing their students succeed and make tangible gains in their literacy goals. Similar to the PreK experience, members reported a number of challenges with serving in AmeriCorps, both personally and in the classroom, including experiencing financial difficulty living on the AmeriCorps stipend, having a hard time managing student behavior, and finding it difficult to complete the required number of service hours within the school year.

a. Motivation for serving as a literacy tutor

At five schools, members noted that they were recent college graduates and that MRC was an attractive option for their first job in a difficult job market. For members at three schools, tutoring through MRC was a 'foot in the door' and a way to gain experience in the classroom. At four schools, members pursued MRC as a way to try teaching before committing to it as a career. Members at three schools were mothers who saw MRC as an opportunity to give back to their children's schools.

b. Rewards of service

Although it was expressed in different ways, AmeriCorps members across sites agreed that the greatest reward of their service was seeing students succeed.[33] As one said quite simply "the kids and their improvement" are the greatest rewards of service. Site-specific comments that complement this assertion are: seeing the students learn and make progress, helping a student that is struggling to reach grade level benchmarks or helping students improve their reading skills, seeing the students' progress as well as engaging their curiosity, seeing growth in reading ability and the confidence level of the students increase, and seeing students' response to reading – particularly their excitement. Other rewards of service included: getting the chance to help the student[s] each day with literacy, working with the students, seeing their progress, and seeing them get excited, and as one member noted, "even on the toughest days, watching them smile and making sure they are reading is fulfilling".

c. Challenges of service

Despite their enthusiasm for working with children and the seeing the everyday rewards of their service, members indicated that service had its challenges. Members at three sites noted that serving in AmeriCorps can be difficult financially, given that the stipend is meager. Some members needed to hold a part-time job to make ends meet and found it challenging to both serve and work. Members at four schools noted that fulfilling the required number of service hours in addition to the tutoring hours necessary for the education award was especially challenging, especially if one got a late start.

At one school, scheduling time for tutoring with teachers proved to be an ongoing challenge and required ongoing negotiation to accommodate students' involvement with enrichment activities and literacy interventions.

Another challenging component of their tutoring experience, reported by AmeriCorps members at five schools, was dealing with children that had behavioral issues (e.g., ADHD, short attention span) and not having been trained by MRC to handle such concerns. One member expressed difficulty in navigating a fine line between being a "friend and

[33] Due to time constraints during one site visit, this question was not posed to the members.

a role model" and disciplining students when their focus waned or behavior was not appropriate. Members at two different schools expressed frustration with the slow pace of student progress; another commented on the repetitive nature of the interventions.

Another member voiced frustration with the "levels of bureaucracy for decision making," indicating an inability to provide input on changing interventions or exiting students. Lack of consistent meetings with an Internal Coach was frustrating for one member; group coaching was frustrating for members at another school.

d. Future Plans

The year-long experience of being a tutor with the MRC program and working with elementary school children culminated with AmeriCorps members having different plans for future service and education. Members at three schools planned to pursue a teaching certificate or teaching as a career following MRC service.

At five schools, members planned to pursue graduate school in a field other than teaching (e.g., law social work, medical). Relatedly, the education award was a significant motivator to participate for members at three schools.

Members at three schools planned to continue to serve in the next school year. Members at five schools noted that they planned to continue to serve in the public interest in some capacity in the future.

H. Results and Lessons Learned

Overall, principals and teachers gave positive feedback about the MRC program and the tutoring services provided by the AmeriCorps members. Student progress was a key focus of teachers' satisfaction, as they noted gains in ability, literacy skills, reading fluency, comprehension, and confidence. Only one school expressed dissatisfaction with a member's performance, citing inconsistent attendance and poor rapport with staff. Lessons learned by K-3 schools in implementing the MRC program addressed all facets of implementation. Careful selection of the member to ensure a good fit was essential to program success, as was having an on-site Internal Coach. School-wide communication early in the year about the purpose and scope of the MRC program, along with the role and responsibilities of the member, helped ensure common understanding and facilitated buy-in among teachers. Flexibility and positive relationships among the teachers, members, and Internal Coaches helped ensure that scheduling assessments and interventions, as well as communication about student progress ran smoothly. It was important to create a welcoming environment for members, and to facilitate their integration into the school and its culture. Equally important was ensuring that members begin fulfilling non-tutoring service hours early in the school year so that they can meet their service requirements.

a. Satisfaction with K-3 tutoring services

All schools reported satisfaction with the MRC program and the tutoring services provided by the AmeriCorps members and referenced receiving positive feedback from teachers on student progress. For example, their positive appraisals ranged from "satisfied" to "consistently satisfied", "high satisfaction", and "extremely satisfied". Their satisfaction stems from the growth they see in the students' literacy proficiency and the rigor of the interventions. As one Internal Coach noted, "The members reinforce what the teachers try and do with the students, but the sessions are one on one so the time with the members is even better". One Principal noted, "The interventions are scientifically based and progress monitored. Everything is data-based and scripted, so the interventions are delivered the same regardless of the personnel". Receiving concrete scores and feedback on student proficiency through regular progress monitoring and benchmarking was noted as factors in teachers' positive response to the program, along with the daily intervention.

b. Perceptions of program impact

At all schools, principals reported positive reactions to the MRC program. Teachers reported positive feedback about the program. They observed that their students made significant gains in ability, literacy skills, reading fluency, and comprehension. They noted also that students had grown or exhibited greater confidence, including a "love of reading" that was not there before. At one school, the teachers were initially hesitant about the tutoring intervention, but began "asking to get their students into the program" as they saw its benefits. At another school, the staff recognized students' gains, but had mixed reviews about the effectiveness of AmeriCorps member, due to inconsistent attendance and poor rapport with faculty.

c. Lessons Learned

Each of the schools offered many valuable insights about implementing the MRC program. Lessons learned were largely site-specific based on each school's unique experience and context. However, some schools offered quite similar insights related to AmeriCorps member management and the need for the entire school community to be open and flexible when installing a new program in the dynamic, but highly-routinized school environment. The lessons learned are presented in the order of program implementation, starting with the AmeriCorps member selection process and ending with general guidance for making the MRC program run well.

- Start the program off right by "hiring good, competent, and the *right people*" is extremely important to successful implementation. Carefully select an AmeriCorps member who understands the full commitment and core tasks of the program and create clear guidelines for the AmeriCorps member so that all parties are aware of the expectations. Recruiting service minded individuals from the community has been instrumental in one program's success. Have a competent and knowledgeable Internal Coach on board who can handle logistics, such as scheduling, and ensure that the Coach is available on-site.
- Invest in early communication prior to program launch to obtain the support of the school community. Provide staff with an in-depth explanation of the program at the outset so that everyone has an understanding the program. Explain the AmeriCorps member's role and target population for services to staff prior to the start of the school year. This includes introducing the intended staffing of an AmeriCorps member within the school community in the spring prior to the new school year and explaining MRC's processes and target population for the intervention before the school year starts.
- Fully understanding the MRC program, being knowledgeable about the rules and guidelines of the program, and being flexible with time are all recommendations she would offer teachers at new MRC schools because the MRC tutoring program is "worth it".
- Facilitate the AmeriCorps member's integration into the school and school culture and make members feel like they are part of the school staff. Guidance for and from members included establishing a strong relationship with the Internal Coach, being serious about your role as a tutor at the school and being strongly committed to the program. Initiate discussions with teachers to introduce them to MRC and regularly check in about student progress. These regular discussions can facilitate teacher buy-in into the program.
- Ensure that AmeriCorps members begin fulfilling non-tutoring service hours early in the fall, at the beginning of the school year, so that they are able to fulfill their requirements by the end of the school year. Do as much as possible in the autumn months and before the cold Minnesota winters set in.
- "Be flexible". Cultivate an atmosphere of flexibility into the approach to scheduling among teachers, faculty, staff, volunteers, etc. so that the program can be integrated into daily routines.

- "Do the program as intended" and ensure that there are "proper supports for the AmeriCorps member" (including concrete resources such as space) and that the Internal Coach is committed to making the program successful.
- Value and support the program. This support includes finding a space for the intervention, equipping the AmeriCorps member with resources for implementation, ensuring that the AmeriCorps member feels comfortable with the school and school personnel, and offering verbal encouragement to the AmeriCorps member throughout the year.
- Form strong relationships with students. The most effective members provide fine-tuned positive feedback during the intervention; engage students in conversation before and after the intervention; and can intuitively determine and respond to children's specific needs. One teacher noted that students tend to progress faster when members make the interventions exciting for the students by giving of themselves and forming relationships.

VI. Conclusions

The findings from the process assessment provide important evidence for addressing the studies' key research questions (presented in Section III). Below, the study team offers our conclusions based on these findings and organizes them by the four major research questions. Following our assessment of the questions is a discussion on the implications of our findings on plans for replication of the MRC program.

1. Are AmeriCorps members receiving appropriate training and supervision? What is the effect of member training and supervision on student outcomes?

    a. Training

The consensus among all parties interviewed (i.e., AmeriCorps members, Internal Coaches, principals, teachers) and in the observations of site visitors was that MRC's training regime was both appropriate and effective in preparing members to implement the MRC program at their sites. In particular, the MRC Summer Institute in St. Paul was an effective mechanism for training and for building a common knowledge-base among both new and returning members. The Summer Institute served to indoctrinate members in MRC program goals, train members to implement MRC literacy interventions (K-3 and PreK) and the literacy-rich schedule (PreK only), and introduce members to their Internal Coaches. The Summer Institute was both comprehensive and intense, providing members with all the information and materials they needed to implement the MRC program at their site and fulfill their contractual service obligation. Given the significant amount of content covered in such a relatively short period of time, MRC provided hard-copies of comprehensive *Literacy Handbooks* specific to the PreK and K-3 programs, which was an effective resource for supporting program implementation. Members reported using their handbooks throughout their service period and appreciated having a comprehensive resource to reference as needed. In addition, MRC provided members with web-based resources (e.g., videos of model intervention implementation) that further supported program implementation. Each of these three resources (i.e., in-person training at the Summer Institute, hard-copy reference handbooks, and web-based materials) contributed to members' abilities to implement the MRC program successfully and consistently at their sites.

While members received the most intensive training during the Summer Institute, they also received additional training from MRC on specific interventions (i.e., Great Leaps – K-3 only; SEEDS – PreK only) and technology and data management (i.e., AIMSWeb), at various points throughout the school year. These more focused trainings were

helpful in further developing members' skills, but some members suggested that the timing of the trainings could be adjusted to implement MRC more efficiently.[34] Finally, MRC recently began organizing Professional Learning Groups (PLGs) comprised of members from a proximal geographical area. PLGs convene monthly and appear to be an effective way to enable members at different sites to share experiences and learn best practices from their peers.

In addition to MRC-provided trainings, AmeriCorps members were offered varying degrees of site-specific trainings. Site-provided trainings included orientations to the school, teacher in-service professional development opportunities, training in additional literacy interventions, and informal teacher mentorships. Site-provided trainings were led by Internal Coaches, principals/directors, teachers, or school district staff. The degree to which trainings were offered varied as a function of the resources already present at the site and the extent to which administrators and Internal Coaches considered the member to be part of the site's staff. For the most part, participation in these site-specific trainings enriched the AmeriCorps members' experience at the site and contributed to the perception of being integrated in the school.

Many members commented that additional training, particularly in student behavior management, would be a valuable addition to both the Summer Institute and supplemental training opportunities provided by MRC and/or their home site. Members often noted that site-specific training on expectations and procedures for handling student inattentiveness, behavior problems and discipline would significantly improve their abilities to effectively implement MRC strategies and interventions at their sites.

Overall, the effectiveness of MRC's training regime results from its combination of a program-sponsored, centralized training (e.g., Summer Institute) with hard-copy and web-based reference materials (e.g., Literacy Handbook, website) and program-provided trainings throughout the year, as well as the ongoing support from peer-based PLGs. Members can perform their duties even more effectively when sites provide training in site-specific expectations and procedures, especially as they relate to student behavior.

b. Supervision

The majority of principals, teachers, and AmeriCorps members reported that members received appropriate levels of supervision. The multi-layered supervisory structure of the MRC model was a key feature that resulted in the successful implementation of the MRC program with fidelity. MRC provides three layers of supervision to ensure integrity of program implementation: Program Coordinators, Master Coaches, and Internal Coaches. Program Coordinators are MRC employees who provide administrative oversight for program implementation to sites located across large geographic regions. Master Coaches are contracted literacy experts who provide site staff (i.e., Internal Coaches and AmeriCorps members) within these regions with expert consultation on literacy instruction and ensure integrity in the implementation of MRC program elements (e.g., assessment and intervention). Site-specific Internal Coaches, who are typically staff literacy specialists, teachers, or curriculum directors, serve as immediate supervisors, mentors, and advocates for members. According to program guidelines, the Internal Coach's role is to monitor members, and provide guidance and assistance in the implementation of MRC's literacy rich schedule (PreK only), assessments and interventions. Each layer of supervision contributes unique skills to ensuring fidelity of implementation. However, as the front-line supervisor, the Internal Coach tends to be the most critical component of the supervisory structure.

The primary tasks of Internal Coaches are to ensure that their AmeriCorps members complete assessments and conduct intervention with integrity and to provide ongoing coaching to improve members' skills and achieve desired

[34] For example, earlier AIMSWeb training would allow for an earlier start to tutoring in the K-3 program.

student literacy outcomes. While the program guidance stipulates that coaching should occur regularly, and at least monthly, the timing and frequency of coaching differed across sites. At some sites, the Internal Coach and the member met frequently and informally whereas at other sites coaching was more formalized and held on a regular schedule. The degree to which Internal Coaches spent time supervising and coaching members differed considerably across sites. Variables that influenced the amount of support Internal Coaches provided to members included: 1) the number of members under their supervision; 2) the amount of dedicated/free time they had available to coach; 3) whether they had responsibilities beyond the MRC program; 4) whether they were located on site or were required to travel among multiple sites; 5) their interpersonal relationship with their member; and 6) the member's performance.

On the whole, interviewees reported positive member and student outcomes when Internal Coaches engaged their members in the program-recommended regular coaching sessions. Perceptions of sufficient supervision were less positive when Internal Coaches did not have sufficient time to dedicate to coaching. When adequate supervision was lacking, the reasons reported and observed included having too many members to supervise, competing responsibilities, not being located physically on-site, or not connecting interpersonally.

The important lesson learned from the MRC model is that creating a layered framework for supervision can help to ensure fidelity of program implementation. Differentiation of responsibility and assignment of tasks to individuals with appropriate skills and knowledge can greatly multiply the effectiveness of supervisors. Further, it is critical that the immediate supervisor have sufficient dedicated time so that they can properly supervise their member(s). For MRC, the Internal Coach served as both an administrative supervisor and a professional educator/trainer. This is a strength in that it allows for implementation of consistent fidelity checks, provision of continual professional improvement, and an ever-present just-in-time literacy education resource for members. In combination, the Master Coach, Internal Coach, and AmeriCorps members are able to deliver with integrity the literacy interventions and/or literacy rich schedule (PreK only) that research has shown to be effective in increasing literacy proficiency.

2. How is the program achieving its immediate, intermediate, and long-term outcomes? How does the program's design and administration lead to the achievement of these outcomes?

While site visitors are unable to independently verify student-level outcomes, there was consensus among the sites and schools visited that students were on track to meeting their targets and/or were making progress while enrolled in the MRC program. From the perspective of those interviewed (i.e., AmeriCorps members, Internal Coaches, principals, teachers), the MRC program appeared to be making a difference for their students. Based on the findings from interviews and observations by site visitors, the program is achieving its desired immediate and intermediate outcomes[35] regarding PreK and K-3 student's literacy proficiency through the systematic implementation of a Response to Intervention (RtI) framework and research-based interventions. Furthermore, for the PreK program, students also benefited from adherence to the literacy rich schedule, as described in Section II.

Examination of MRC implementation at the eight PreK sites reveals strict adherence to the RtI framework. All students received Tier 1 interventions in the classroom through their literacy rich daily schedule and Big 5 transitions. Additionally, students who received the lowest benchmarking scores were targeted for Tier 2 and Tier 3 small group or individual intervention pull-out sessions. All sites benchmarked their students during the three benchmarking periods (Fall, Winter, Spring) using recommended assessment tools. The interventions provided to Tier 2 and Tier 3 students were age and grade appropriate, emphasizing phonological awareness, oral language, visual discrimination, letter names and sounds and vocabulary. Students receiving Tier 2 and 3 interventions generally received the same

[35] The long-term outcomes for students cannot yet be assessed since they relate to Kindergarten readiness and 3rd grade demonstrated proficiency.

number of sessions/interventions weekly, although the length of time they received certain types of interventions and Tier 2 and 3 services overall varied (based upon their individual progress). Progress monitoring occurred at least once a month in the majority of sites. Ongoing training and support was provided to members to deliver interventions (as noted in response to the research question above). This was supplemented with formal and informal fidelity assessments conducted by Internal Coaches, as well as monitoring and observations.

Adherence to the components of the RtI framework was equally strong at the K-3 schools. At the beginning of the school year, Tier 2 students (just below benchmark level) received services at all schools. Students received literacy interventions on a daily basis with most tutoring sessions occurring for 15-20 minutes. With regard to intervention dosage, at all schools the number of weeks tutored was based on student achievement and progress. Students exited when they met pre-defined and standardized exit criteria. At more than half of the schools, Repeated Reading with Comprehension, Duet Reading, Reading Comprehension with Chart, and Letter/Sound Correspondence were the most frequently used interventions. At all schools, progress monitoring was conducted weekly and benchmarking was conducted during the Fall, Winter, and Spring. Along with the training and support they provided, Internal Coaches and Master Coaches monitored members' fidelity of the tutoring interventions by formal and informal means.

MRC helps to facilitate member and staff adherence to the RtI framework at the PreK sites and K-3 schools through its intentional program design and active administration. Under the auspices of ServeMinnesota, MRC provides assistance and resources to support implementation along the continuum of early to full installation (as demonstrated through the similar experiences of sites and schools that adopted the program as recently as a year ago to those that have reached a state of steady implementation for more than five years). Importantly, MRC shapes and supports this process by focusing on six core implementation components—referred to in the literature as implementation "drivers"—that are needed to bring research-based interventions into daily, educational practice.[36] MRC administrative and regional staff assist site-based education administrators with recruitment and/or selection of members to ensure a good fit with their specific school environment. The organization provides intensive pre-service training for the assigned members and ongoing coaching and consultation. Data-driven decision-making (through benchmarking and progress monitoring), informs entry and exit into the program for PreK and K-3 students, as it informs the use of targeted interventions. Administrative support operates at multiple levels, extending from the Program Coordinator at the regional level to the Internal Coach on-site, to ensure compliance with AmeriCorps policies and procedures, as well as the MRC program components. Some sites and schools are embedded in broader systems at the community or district level that support MRC implementation and the expansion of literacy goals; at other sites and schools these system level partnerships remain an area for development. MRC's attention to the interactive drivers of program installation fosters implementation of the RtI framework into the daily practice and organizational culture of diverse educational settings to good effect.

Besides the obvious structural differences between the PreK and K-3 programs, our analysis also revealed some key contrasts between the two program types in terms of their implementation and impact on the school environment. First, two types of members can serve in the PreK program (Educator Corps and Community Corps) compared to a single membership type for K-3. The research team found some indication that membership type in the PreK program may result in different levels of impact on the school environment. These distinctions may be due to the different levels of influence and responsibilities between member types in PreK, whereas in the K-3 program, all members have the same responsibilities and duties. The research team plans to further examine the differences

[36] Fixsen, D., Naoom, S., Blase, K., & Wallace, F. (2007, Winter/Spring). Implementation: The missing link between research and practice. *The APSAC Advisor*, pp. 4–10.

between Educator Corps and Community Corps members and their influence on the school environment in the next phase of the MRC evaluation.

Another observation is that the two programs differ in their initial introduction to new schools or sites. Given the whole class impact of the PreK program, the Master Coaches work closely with the Internal Coaches and school staff when first introducing the program to a new site. In contrast, the Master Coaches typically do not interact with the teachers when the K-3 program is first introduced at a school. K-3 teachers are typically not as involved in implementing MRC, only in so much as they assist in coordinating times for students in their classrooms to be tutored. Furthermore, the PreK program impacts all students in the classroom, the entire instructional program (i.e., literacy rich schedule) and non-MRC school staff, whereas the K-3 program is targeted toward select Tier 2 students only. PreK members are trained both to provide interventions and assessments and to create and implement the Literacy Rich Schedule. K-3 members learn only how to provide interventions and assessments In general, these differences result in the PreK program having a broader and more immediate influence on the instructional environment (teachers and students). Thus, transformation of the instructional environment may be more readily achievable with the PreK program than the K-3 program, which may require additional time to take root.

Based on our observations of the MRC program, the successful implementation of a literacy enrichment and/or reading tutoring program for students as measured by improvement of student achievement is due to strict adherence to the RtI framework and, at the PreK level, implementation of the literacy rich schedule. The systematic implementation of components of an RtI framework would include: clear literacy targets for students, benchmark assessments, research-based interventions, progress monitoring, and member training and support. Organizational support is critical to the adherence and institutionalization of this approach.

3. Are there characteristics of AmeriCorps members that are particularly effective with service recipients (i.e., students)?

A considerable strength of the MRC program is that the comprehensive training, multi-layered supervisory structure, and ongoing coaching allows for effective program implementation by members from a strikingly diverse range of backgrounds. That is, the program structure is designed to allow individuals with no specific academic or professional prerequisites to successfully implement the program.[37] While one might expect backgrounds in education and literacy instruction to be necessary prerequisites or impart an advantage to members who possess such skills, no such benefits were found. The most frequently reported characteristics of effective AmeriCorps members included *"soft-skills"* such as the ability to work well with others and to be flexible, organized, and proactive, as well as *dispositions*, such as intrinsic motivation, a desire to instill a love for learning and literacy in children, a deep commitment to advancing student achievement, and a strong affinity for working with young children.

AmeriCorps members who possess these skills and dispositions tend to thrive in the program, in no small part because of the scripted nature of the literacy interventions, intensive training regime, continual coaching, and embedded supervisory structure. These features significantly increase the pool of potential applicants from which the program can recruit members. The ability to recruit members with diverse backgrounds and the rigorous training and supervisory structure have allowed for the rapid expansion of the MRC program statewide, while simultaneously maintaining effectiveness in achieving desired student literacy outcomes.

[37] Indeed, the only *necessary* cognitive requirement is the ability to read. Note that illiterate persons have previously attempted to serve as members, but MRC now screens for literacy during the application process.

It is important to note that MRC employs a thorough application and screening process to ensure that potential members possess desirable characteristics. A key feature of this process is the collaborative involvement of both the individual site and MRC program staff in member recruitment and selection. Individual sites oftentimes conduct their own local recruitment activities and encourage parents, school staff (in the case of Educator Corps members) and others to apply to the program. MRC program staff then screen the applicants for eligibility and conduct initial interviews. Screened applicants are then forwarded to sites where site staff (usually the principal/director and sometimes the Internal Coach) conduct an additional interview. Sites then provide their recommendations for members to MRC program staff, who typically agree with the sites' recommendations. Involving both MRC program staff and site staff in the recruitment and selection of members provides MRC with a means of screening out potentially problematic members, while providing sites with partial ownership of hiring decisions by empowering them to recruit members that will fit well in their school environment.

An important conclusion from the interviews and observations is that programs with highly scripted interventions, comprehensive initial and ongoing training, and robust supervisory structures can enable individuals with diverse backgrounds and technical skill levels to effectively implement a successful, literacy enrichment and/or reading intervention program. Under such circumstances, the most critical member characteristics for effective program implementation include soft skills and dispositions such as intrinsic motivation, flexibility, ability to work well with children, and a strong commitment to achieve the program's vision or objective(s).

4. Which findings and lessons learned from the MRC can be applied to other models and programs? Are there characteristics that are suitable for similar reading tutoring programs to replicate?

Based on the findings and observations in our assessment of MRC, the program is a highly-adoptable model that can operate well in multiple contexts. Those interested in replicating the model should develop a comprehensive package of program-sponsored infrastructure and resources that include: comprehensive trainings of AmeriCorps members and program support staff; a multi-layered supervisory structure to ensure fidelity of program implementation; a defined framework (e.g., RtI) to guide objective instructional choices and allow for the assessment of program effectiveness; a limited set of and highly scripted interventions that have been shown to be effective (i.e., research-based) in engendering desired student-level outcomes; and a screening process that is effective at identifying members with characteristics and dispositions that correspond with the program's vision or objective(s). This complete package of program-sponsored infrastructure and resources allows for the successful implementation of specialized interventions by members with diverse backgrounds regardless of their level of prerequisite technical skill.

Two key elements of this package include comprehensive trainings for AmeriCorps members and program support staff as well as the multi-layered supervisory support structure. Programs should develop a training regime that combines program-sponsored, centralized training (e.g., Summer Institute), hard-copy and web-based reference materials (e.g., *Handbook*, website), continual trainings throughout the members' service year, and formation of peer-support groups that meet on a regular basis. Members are most effective when sites provide training in site-specific expectations, especially as they relate to student behavior. To complement trainings, further enhance members' skills, and ensure fidelity of program implementation, programs are also advised to adopt a multi-layered supervisory support structure. Systematic differentiation of responsibility and assignment of tasks to program staff with appropriate skills and knowledge can greatly multiply the effectiveness of supervisors. Such a structure allows for frequent fidelity checks, ongoing professional development opportunities for members, and just-in-time expert advice that enhances the effectiveness of less skilled members.

In addition to program-sponsored infrastructure and resources, it is important for the entire community within a site to be open and flexible when installing the new program and to be accepting of the members who will implement the program. Obtaining the buy-in and understanding of teachers and site staff is critical to the successful deployment of volunteers who provide supplemental literacy instruction (PreK and K-3), and in particular for those who are tasked with creating systematic, classroom-level change (i.e., the literacy rich schedule in PreK). Teachers and site staff need to fully understand the intended reach and focus of the program, especially when the program targets students who do not traditionally receive the services provided. Essential to the MRC and RtI model is the data-driven nature of decision-making, which often removes the process of identifying eligible students and of determining appropriate interventions from the teacher's usual responsibilities. The MRC sites reported that once teachers were educated as to the purpose and proper application of benchmark and progress monitoring data, they were more amenable to this change in their teaching role.

To foster this buy-in and understanding among school staff, programs should communicate with teachers and other school staff early in the school year as about the objectives of the program. Initial, direct communication helps teachers to fully understand the purpose and role of the member in supporting student learning, as well as the rationale for and research behind targeting particular types of students (i.e., Tier 2 and/or Tier 3). Teacher buy-in and adaptability is also critical to the successful integration of the member into the site because it eases the scheduling of tutoring and facilitates productive communication about student progress. Good working relationships between teachers and members also help members become more integrated into the school environment and better support a site's approach to literacy instruction, thus enriching the service experience.

Implications for Program Replication

As supported by the findings and conclusions from the process assessment, the MRC program appears to be highly replicable. If implemented in a scripted and rigorous manner in other locations, MRC can be transformed into a model for the development of other successful literacy enrichment and/or reading intervention programs for young students. One of the most important findings for replication is MRC's successful deployment of members lacking any specialized background in education or literacy. If similar program-based infrastructure and resources are provided and specialized interventions are accurately implemented and closely monitored, members with diverse backgrounds can serve without possessing any specialized prerequisite technical skill. However, key findings also indicate that the multi-layered supervisory structure, which supports the on-site implementation of the strategies and interventions is critical to the success of the program. Both centralized (Master Coach and Program Coordinator) and on-site (Internal Coach) support are necessary for assuring the proper identification of students, implementation of interventions, and use of data-driven decision-making for education.

Appendix A:
Literacy Handbook Contents

Contents of the Reading Corps Pre-K Coach 2012-13 Literacy Handbook

Section 1: Introduction to the Minnesota Reading Corps

- Mission and History
- Program Model
- Program Results
- Minnesota Reading Corps - A National Service Program
- Supporting Roles and Responsibilities

Section 2: Policies and Procedures

- Code of Conduct
- Data Privacy & Mandated Reporting
- Internal Coach Role Expectations
- Master Coach Role Expectations

Section 3: Service Requirements

- Hours Planning and Management
- Member Time Sheets
- Trainings & Professional Development
- Professional Learning Groups
- Read for the Record Event

Section 4: A Day in the Life of a Reading Corps Member

Section 5: Literacy Rich Classroom

- A Literacy Rich Classroom Starts with a SEEDS Quality Teacher
- Introduction to ELLCO
- Classroom Structure
- Curriculum
- Language Environment
- Books and Book Reading Opportunities
- Print and Early Writing Supports

Section 6: Benchmark Assessments

- Introduction to Assessment
- Conducting the Assessment
- Recording and Submitting Data
- Next Steps for Benchmark Assessments

Section 7: Progress Monitoring

- Response to Intervention (RtI) in Early Childhood
- Steps to RtI
- Guide to Data Decision Making
- Embedded and Explicit Instruction

Section 8: Interventions and Integrity Observations

- Introduction to Tier 2 and 3 Interventions
- Integrity Observation Checklists and Intervention Scripts
- Benchmark Assessment Integrity Observation Checklist
- Pre-K Standard Assessment Instructions

Section 9: Transitions

Appendix A

- Glossary
- Zaner Bloser Auditory Script
- Progress Monitoring Form

Appendix B: SEEDS of Emergent Literacy

- Session 1: Early Literacy
- Session 2: SEEDS Quality Teacher
- Session 3: Developing Talkers and Thinkers
- Session 4: SEEDS of Book and Print Awareness
- Session 5: SEEDS of Phonological Awareness
- Session 6: SEEDS of Letter Knowledge and Written Expression
- Session 7: SEEDS of Social/Emotional Development

Appendix C: Coaching
Appendix D: Family Engagement
Appendix E: Professional Development

Contents of the Reading Corps K-3 Coach 2012-13 Literacy Handbook

Section 1: Introduction to Minnesota Reading Corps

- Mission and History
- Program Model
- Program Results
- Minnesota Reading – A National Service Program
- Supporting Roles and Responsibilities

Section 2: Personnel Policies and Procedures

- Code of Conduct
- Data Privacy & Mandated Reporting
- Internal Coach Role Expectations
- Master Coach Role Expectations

Section 3: Service Requirements

- Hours Planning and Management
- Member Time Sheets
- Training & Professional Development
- Professional Learning Groups
- Read for the Record Event

Section 4: A Day in the Life of a Reading Corps Tutor

- A Day in the Life of a Reading Corps Member

Section 5: Introduction to Reading

- The Importance of Literacy
- What to Teach – Essentials of K-3 Literacy
- How Does MRC Fit into Reading Instruction

Section 6: Administering and Scoring Reading Tests

- Benchmarking and Progress Monitoring
- Types of Tests and Testing Environment

- Using the Accuracy of Implementation Rating Scale (AIRS)

Section 7: Benchmarking and Recording Student Data

- Benchmark Data Collection and Entry Overview
- 7 Steps of Benchmarking – In Brief
- Benchmarking FAQs
- Adding New Students to a Tutor's Caseload BETWEEN Benchmark Windows
- Collecting Data Prior to Database Training
- Benchmark Data Entry Training

Section 8: Progress Monitoring: Using Data to Make Informed Decisions

- Progress Monitoring – An Overview
- Components of Progress Monitoring Graphs
- Sample Graphs by Grade Level
- Using Student Data to Make Decisions
- Practice – Reading Graphs
- Review – Using Data to Make Decisions
- AIMSWeb* Progress Monitoring Training
- AIMSWeb Progress Monitoring FAQ
- Intervention Descriptions

Section 9: MRC K-3 Interventions

- Letter/Sound Correspondence
- Phoneme Blending
- Phoneme Segmenting
- Blending Words
- Repeated Reading with Comprehension Strategy Practice
- Newscaster Reading
- Duet Reading
- Pencil Tap
- Stop/Go
- Great Leaps

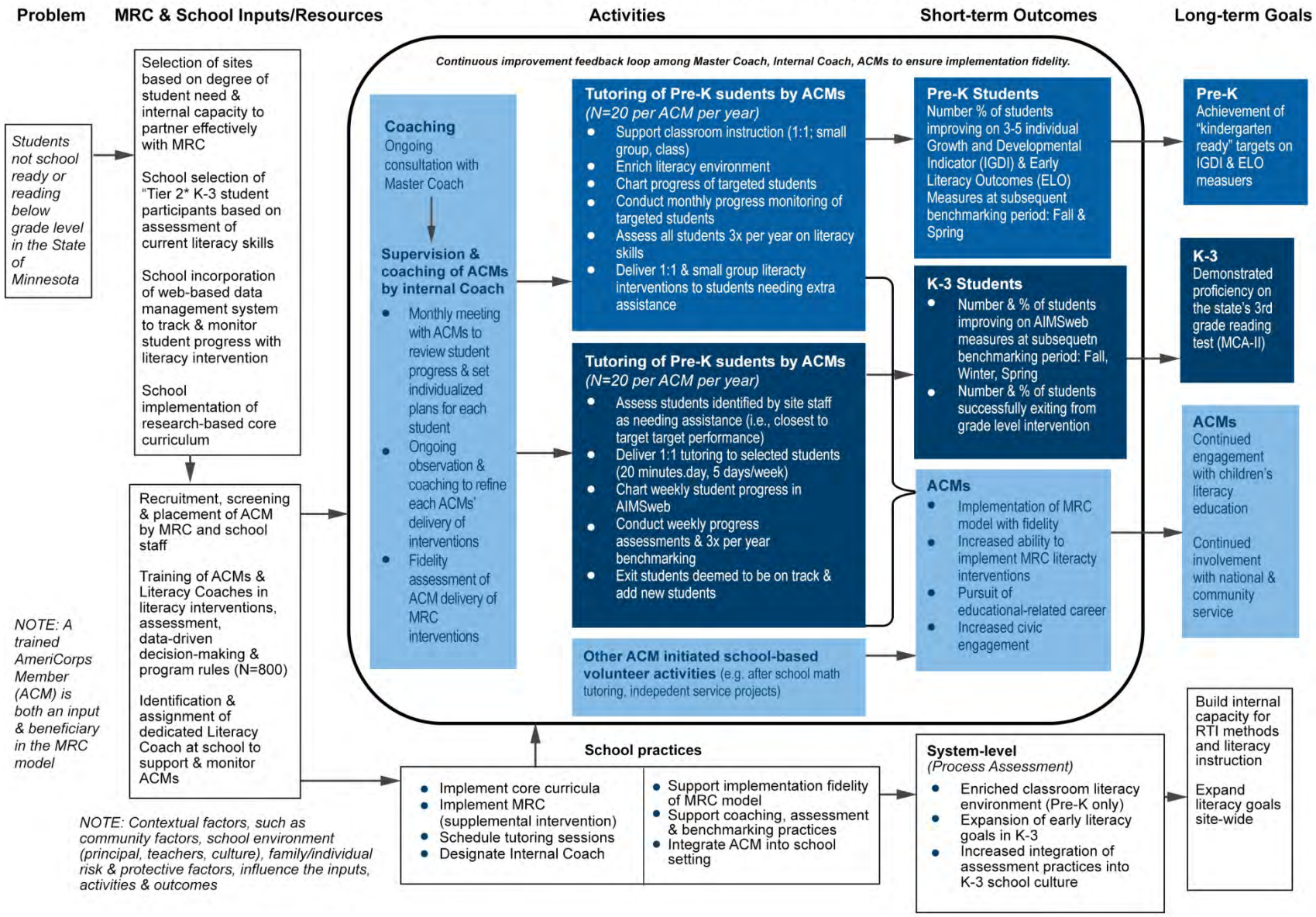
Appendix A: Progress Monitoring Probes

- Glossary
- Tutor Log
- Benchmark Measurement Net table
- Eligibility Scores table
- Service Hours Categories

Appendix C: Benchmark Probes
Appendix D: Coaches Appendix
Appendix E: Family Engagement
Appendix F: Professional Development

Appendix B:
Logic Model for the Process and Impact Evaluation of Minnesota Reading Corps

MINNESOTA READING CORPS (MRC) LOGIC MODEL (for Process & Impact Evaluation)



Appendix C:
Observation Protocols

Pre-K Literacy Rich Daily Schedule: Observation Tool		
What & When	Daily Schedule Routine	ELLCO Evidence Based Element
Arrival	☐ Greet Children ☐ "Big 5" Transition	1: Organization of the classroom 3: Classroom Management 9: Opportunities for Extended Conversations 10: Efforts to build vocabulary 11: Phonological Awareness
Sign-in	☐ Write Name ☐ "Big 5" Transition	
Meal Time	☐ "Strive for 5" conversation using theme and/or functional vocabulary ☐ "Big 5" Transition	8: Discourse Climate 9: Opportunities for Extended Conversations 10: Efforts to build vocabulary 11: Phonological Awareness
Daily Message	☐ Write and share a daily message ☐ "Big 5" Transition	17: Early Writing Environment 18: Support for Children's Writing 19. Environmental Print
Repeated Read Aloud	☐ Theme related read aloud ☐ Target Vocabulary daily ☐ "Big 5" Transition	: Discourse Climate 9: Opportunities for Extended Conversations 10: Efforts to build vocabulary 11: Phonological Awareness 15: Approaches to Book Reading 16: Quality of Book Reading
Tier 1 Small Group	☐ Read Theme Related Book-week 1 & 2 ☐ Read Rhyme/Alliteration Book or Nursery Rhyme-week 3& 4 ☐ "Big 5" Transition	: Discourse Climate 9: Opportunities for Extended Conversations 10: Efforts to build vocabulary 11: Phonological Awareness 15: Approaches to Book Reading 16: Quality of Book Reading
Journal Weekly	☐ Journal-draw or write ideas ☐ "Big 5" Transition	17: Early Writing Environment 18: Support for Children's Writing
Choice Time Active Learning	☐ Theme-related vocabulary props in 3 or more centers (dramatic play or writing center) ☐ Provide opportunities to Talk, Read & Write ☐ "Big 5" Transition	1: Organization of the classroom 2: Contents of the Classroom 5: Approaches to Curriculum 6: Opportunities for Child Choice and Initiative 9: Opportunities for Extended Conversations 10: Efforts to build vocabulary
Tier 2 or Tier 3	☐ Interventions done daily ☐ "Big 5" Transition	10: Efforts to build vocabulary 11: Phonological Awareness 18: Support for Children's Writing;

K-3 Literacy Interventions: Observation Tool			
School Name		*Date of Observation*	
Grade of Child Tutored	K 1st 2nd 3rd	*Child's gender* Boy Girl	
Identify intervention used:		*Identify materials used:*	
	Letter/Sound Correspondence		Reading Passage(s)
	Phoneme Blending		Timer
	Phoneme Segmenting		Clipboard and Marker (for Tutor)
	Blending Words		Chart to graph progress
	Repeated Reading with Comprehension		Crayons
	Strategy Practice		Stickers (other rewards)
	Repeated Reading Chart		Pencil
	Newscaster Reading		Tutor Log:
	Duet Reading		Other:
	Pencil Tap		Other:
	Stop / Go		Other:
	Great Leaps		Other:
Location of tutoring session and surrounding environment:		*Duration of session (in minutes):*	
In the space below, prepare a brief description of the intervention, including how the tutor and student greet each other, how they settle in into their routine, the instructions provided by the tutor, the tutor's comments on the student's performance, any comments made by the student about his/her performance or the intervention (e.g., "I'm going up,"" I want to do this again tomorrow", etc.) and the student's behavior (e.g., attentive, fidgety, on task, etc.). Once the intervention is completed, record any additional ways the tutor and student spent time together. Note that this observation is for descriptive purposes only.			

Appendix D:
Process Evaluation Data Collection Protocols

Form Approved
OMB 3045-0144
Expiration Date: 9/30/2015

Process Evaluation of the Minnesota Reading Corps
Site Director/School Principal

School Name:

Site Visitor Name:

Date:

Location:

Interviewee Name(s) and Title(s):

Introduction

Good morning/afternoon. My name is [INSERT NAME] and I am with [NORC at the University of Chicago/TIES]. We are working on behalf of the Corporation for National and Community Service to conduct a process evaluation of the Minnesota Reading Corps program to provide a thorough understanding of the operations and activities of the MRC as it is implemented in each PreK site or elementary school. It will seek to determine if the actual activities and service are true to the intended model of the program, and to assess whether the actual process is likely to produce the intended outcomes and reach the intended target population.

This interview will address these topics and others as we seek to understand your project's processes and strategies and any aspects of your program that can be replicated in other AmeriCorps programs. The interview should take approximately 30 minutes. Your open and honest opinions are appreciated, but participation is voluntary and you may choose to skip any questions or end the interview at any time. Please also be advised that we will be providing an evaluation report for each individual project to CNCS. While we will not use your name or any others in this report, and we will attempt to minimize the use of identifiable information, it may be possible for CNCS to identify you through your position or through other details that you share in your interview.

If you have questions about the study after this interview, please contact the Project Director, Carrie Markovitz, at 301-634-9388. If you have questions about your rights as a participant in this research project, please call the NORC Institutional Review Board Administrator at 866-309-0542.

Do you consent to participate in this discussion?

[IF YES, then proceed. IF NO, then terminate interview.]

I would like to record this interview in case my notes are not clear and comprehensive, and to make sure that we accurately report your responses. The recording will be shared only with the small team of researchers working on this study and will be deleted at the end of the project. Do you agree to have this interview recorded for note-taking purposes only?

[IF YES, then proceed. IF NO, then: "That's fine. Please be patient as I take notes."]

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Expiration Date: 9/30/2015

To begin, we would like to ask some background questions about your site/school. Then we would like learn about the process for selecting an AmeriCorps Member, staffing and management of the MRC program, the students and the Members. Finally we would like to discuss facilitators and barriers to program implementation and conclude with the results of the MRC program and lessons learned.

BACKGROUND

We are interested in learning about the process for developing and implementing the MRC program and hosting the AmeriCorps member at [name of site/school].

1. We understand that the program was implemented here at [name of site/school] in _____.
   Why did [name of site/school] apply for the program?

2. Who was involved in deciding to apply? Were you involved?

3. Did staff have any concerns about adhering to the MRC model as a condition for becoming an MRC site?

4. Were any school policies and procedures changed to support program implementation?

   YES NO

   a. [IF YES] Please describe.

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AMERICORPS MEMBER SELECTION PROCESS

We are interested in learning about the process for selecting the AmeriCorps Member to serve at [name of site/school].

5. Please briefly describe the process of selecting the AmeriCorps Member (s) to serve as a tutor at [name of site/school].

   [PROBE: What was the school's role in this process? Who was involved? [Identify by role/function]

6. What characteristics or qualities were you looking for in an AmeriCorps Member?

7. Were any school policies and procedures changed to support hosting an AmeriCorps member? If so, what were they?

   [PROBE: Schedule for interventions; Who is allowed to bring into school premises; Board or District approval; Data collection and management; Parental permission; Other]

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STAFFING/MANAGEMENT OF PROGRAM

Please tell us about the staffing and management of the program.

9. Who is involved in program implementation? Briefly describe their roles.

   [NOTE: Optional question. Will ask only if evaluation team meets with Director/Principal prior to meeting with the Internal Coach.]

   a. Director/Principal

   b. Reading Corps Program Coordinator

   c. Internal and Master Literacy Coach
      i. Who is designated as the "Internal Coach"? Is there one? More than one?

      ii. Who is the MRC-designated Master Coach?

   d. Classroom Teachers

10. How have Minnesota Reading Corps staff—Program Coordinators and Master Coaches—supported you in implementing the program at your site/school? *[PROBE: planning, monitoring, training]*

11. How do all the parties involved in overseeing and implementing the program communicate? *[PROBE: Internal Coach, Master Coach, Program Coordinator, Director/Principal].*

STUDENTS

We understand that _____ students are targeted to participate in the MRC program during this school year.

12. What are the desired student outcomes of the tutoring programs?
    a. Pre-K
    b. K-3

13. How do students respond to being *provided Tier 2 or Tier 3 interventions* [PreK]/*tutored* [K-3]?

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FACILITATORS AND BARRIERS TO PROGRAM IMPLEMENTATION

We would like to talk with you about what has worked well in implementing the program, where there may have been some challenges, and where some changes may be needed.

14. How well do you think the MRC program has been implemented at this site /school? Please explain.

15. What problems or challenges were encountered during implementation? Please describe.
    [PROBE: Changes in leadership; Changes in school personnel; Scheduling; Integrating AmeriCorps Member into school environment; Teacher resistance to intervention; Student Turnover; Other]

Challenge	Why was this a challenge?	How was it resolved?

16. Are site/school staff (i.e., administrators, teachers) supportive of the AmeriCorps Members(s)?
    [PROBE: If staff originally resistant, what changed over time?]

17. From your perspective, are there any policies and procedures that could be changed to make it easier to implement the program as intended [in this site/school?] Please describe.
    [PROBE: School district, MRC, AmeriCorps State/National]

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SATISFACTION WITH AMERICORPS MEMBERS AND MRC

We have a few questions about your satisfaction with the AmeriCorps Members and MRC's support for program implementation.

18. In your opinion, is the training provided by MRC to the AmeriCorps Member(s) sufficient? *[PROBE for intensity, quality]*

19. In your opinion, is there sufficient support for implementing the program? *[PROBE: Minnesota Reading Corps? Region or school district? Site/school? Other?]*

    a. Could any changes be made with to better support program implementation?

        i. Minnesota Reading Corps

        ii. Region or school district

        iii. Site/school

        iv. Other source of support

20. Is there anything you would change about the MRC program? YES NO *[PROBE: With the model? As implemented at this site/school? Need to adapt to the population?]*

    a. [IF YES] What?

RESULTS AND LESSONS LEARNED

As we conclude our interview, we would like to ask you about your perceptions about the effectiveness of the MRC program and what have been some of the key lessons learned.

21. Are you satisfied with the effectiveness of *literacy interventions [PreK]/tutoring services [K-3]* provided by the AmeriCorps Member(s)? YES NO

    i. [IF YES] What specifically?

    ii. [IF NO] What needs to be improved?

22. What kind of feedback have you received about the program:

    a. From teachers?

    b. From parents?

    c. From community members?

    d. In each case, what factors do you think contribute to this perception?

24. In your opinion, has MRC helped students better meet their reading proficiency targets? Why or why not?

25. What lessons have been learned about implementing the program at [name of site/school] that might be helpful to other sites/schools?

Thank you for your time. We appreciate it very much.

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Expiration Date: 9/30/2015

Process Evaluation of the Minnesota Reading Corps
Internal Coach

School Name:

Site Visitor Name:

Date:

Location:

Interviewee Name(s) and Title(s):

Introduction

Good morning/afternoon. My name is [INSERT NAME] and I am with [NORC at the University of Chicago/TIES]. We are working on behalf of the Corporation for National and Community Service to conduct a process evaluation of the Minnesota Reading Corps program to provide a thorough understanding of the operations and activities of the MRC as it is implemented in each school or institution. It will seek to determine if the actual activities and service are true to the intended model of the program, and to assess whether the actual process is likely to produce the intended outcomes and reach the intended target population.

This interview will address these topics and others as we seek to understand your project's processes and strategies and any aspects of your program that can be replicated in other AmeriCorps programs. The interview should take approximately 75 minutes. Your open and honest opinions are appreciated, but participation is voluntary and you may choose to skip any questions or end the interview at any time. Please also be advised that we will not share your answers with MRC or other school staff; however, we will be providing an evaluation report for each individual project to CNCS. While we will not use your name or any others in this report, and we will attempt to minimize the use of identifiable information, it may be possible for CNCS to identify you through your position or through other details that you share in your interview.

If you have questions about the study after this interview, please contact the Project Director, Carrie Markovitz, at 301-634-9388. If you have questions about your rights as a participant in this research project, please call the NORC Institutional Review Board Administrator at 866-309-0542.

Do you consent to participate in this discussion?

[IF YES, then proceed. IF NO, then terminate interview.]

I would like to record this interview in case my notes are not clear and comprehensive, and to make sure that we accurately report your responses. The recording will be shared only with the small team of researchers working on this study and will be deleted at the end of the project. Do you agree to have this interview recorded for note-taking purposes only?

[IF YES, then proceed. IF NO, then: "That's fine. Please be patient as I take notes."]

To begin, we would like to ask some background questions about your site/school. Then we would like learn about the process for selecting an AmeriCorps Member and the staffing and management of the MRC program. Other topics include your coaching responsibilities, alternative programs at your school, MRC program implementation and organizational support for AmeriCorps Members and the MRC program. Finally we would like to discuss facilitators and barriers to program implementation and conclude with learning about results of the MRC program and lessons learned while implementing it.

BACKGROUND

We are interested in learning about the process for developing and implementing the MRC program and hosting the AmeriCorps member at [name of site/school].

8. We understand that the program was implemented here at [name of site/school] in _____. Why did [name of site/school] apply for the program?

9. Who was involved in deciding to apply? Were you involved?

10. Did staff have any concerns about adhering to the MRC model as a condition for becoming an MRC site?

11. Were any school policies and procedures changed to support program implementation? If so, what were they?

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COACHING RESPONSIBILITIES

We would like to discuss your position as a coach in the program and the basic structure of the MRC program within your school.

12. How long have you been a staff member at [name of site/school]?

13. How long have you been an Internal Coach for MRC?

14. How did you become a coach for MRC?
    [PROBE: Did you volunteer? Why? Were you asked to be a coach by your principal? Hired? What attracted you?]

15. Are you a MN state-certified reading specialist? YES NO

    [If YES] Can you provide some details about what that involves?

16. [For PreK] How many AmeriCorps Members are you currently working with? _____
    a. Are they Professional or Community Corps?
    b. Are they full-time (40 hours) or part-time (20 hours) members? Both?

17. [For K-3] How many AmeriCorps Members are you currently working with?
    c. Are they full-time (40 hours) or part-time (20 hours) members? Both?

18. About how many AmeriCorps Members have you coached over the years?

AMERICORPS MEMBER SELECTION PROCESS

We are interested in learning about the process for selecting the AmeriCorps Member to serve at [name of site/school].

19. What was the school's role in this process?

20. Who was involved? [Identify by role/function]

21. What characteristics or qualities were you looking for in an AmeriCorps member?

22. Were any school policies and procedures changed to support hosting an AmeriCorps member? If so, what were they?

STAFFING/MANAGEMENT OF PROGRAM

23. Who is involved in program implementation? What are their roles?
    a. Principal
    b. Reading Corps Program Coordinator
    c. Classroom Teacher (s)
    d. External MRC Program Coordinator

24. How have Reading Corps staff and Master Coaches supporting you in implementing the program at your school? *[PROBE: planning, monitoring, training]*

25. How do all the parties involved in overseeing and implementing the program at [name of site/school] communicate?
    [PROBE: Internal Coach, Master Coach, Program Coordinator, Director/Principal].

STUDENTS

We would like to discuss the students served by the program. We ask that you consider the methods used to identify students in need of assistance, the types of students the program was designed to serve, and the extent to which this has been accomplished.

26. *Please describe the process of identifying students for literacy interventions/ tutoring.* [TARGETING STUDENTS]
    a. PreK How are students identified for Tier 2 or Tier 3 interventions?

    b. K-3 How do you determine which children will be assessed for tutoring assistance?

    c. Both PreK and K-3 How are they screened? What other risk factors do they have?

27. If there are multiple AmeriCorps Members serving at the site/school, please describe the process/criteria for matching students with tutors.

28. How are students, parents, and teachers notified of students' eligibility?

    a. Do you require parental permission in order to provide services? YES NO
    [If YES] What is the process for obtaining permission (passive or active consent)?

    b. Have any parents declined the offer to have his/her child tutored? YES NO
    [IF YES] How does the school handle these cases?

29. What are the desired student outcomes of the tutoring programs?
    a. Pre-K
    b. K-3

23. How do students feel about being tutored [K-3]?
    [PROBE: Enjoy it? Cooperative? Resistant to being tutored? Upset at being pulled out of class? Upset about having to do more work?]

24. Are students making progress to be on track to meet their spring target? YES NO
    a. [IF NO] Briefly explain.

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CORE CURRICULUM AND SUPPLEMENTAL INSTRUCTION

We would also like to discuss other programs your school uses for serving a similar population.

25. What is the core curriculum for literacy instruction at this site/school? Please describe.
    a. Pre-K

    b. K-3

26. What other supplemental program(s) is/are used in your site/school for students that are struggling? Please identify.

    a. How is/are it/they similar to or different from MRC?
       [PROBE: Eligibility criteria; Time on task; Types of interventions; Assessment processes; etc]

    b. How many students and what types of students are served by this/these other program(s)?

    c. Do you refer eligible students who cannot be tutored by MRC to another program? (If so, which one, and why?)

    d. [IF OUTSIDE THE SCHOOL] Have you worked with any of these other service providers before?

AMERICORPS MEMBERS

Please tell us about the AmeriCorps Member(s).

27. What qualifications does/do the selected AmeriCorps Member(s) have?

28. We are interested in learning about how the AmeriCorps Members serving at [name of site/school] are trained in [name of intervention]. What kind of training does the AmeriCorps Member(s) receive from/by:

    a. MRC?

    b. [Name of site/school]?

    c. Literacy coach?

    d. Class-room teacher?

    e. Individual training?

29. In your opinion, does the training adequately prepare AmeriCorps Member to *provide literacy interventions [PreK]/tutor students [K-3]? [PROBE for intensity, quality]*

30. What is the role of the AmeriCorps Member at [school name]?
    [PROBE: Provide tutoring only; Recruit and /or train volunteers to support school-based literacy efforts (e.g., read with students during after-school time); Develop literacy resources for families; Coordinate literacy events for families; Other: _____]

MRC PROGRAM IMPLEMENTATION

We would like to learn more about how the interventions and tutoring actually occurs at [name of site/school] with [Pre-K; K-3] students.

31. Ask PreK only:
    a. What types of interventions are provided to Tier 2 and Tier 3 students? Briefly describe.
    b. Is tutoring provided one-on-one, in small groups? to the whole class? Do you agree that the AmeriCorps Member(s) contribute to a literacy rich environment? YES NO
        i. [IF YES] In what ways?
        ii. IF NO] Why not?

32. Ask K-3 only*:* When you started the school year were *only* students nearest to target performance receiving services? YES NO Don't Know

    a. [If NO] Who else was served?
    b. As the school year progressed did other students *performing below target* receive services? Please describe. *[PROBE: English Language Learners, Students with an Individualized Education Plan (IEP), Tier 3 students]*

33. We would like to know when the interventions/tutoring sessions are conducted.
    a. PreK How many days per week do students attend?
    [*PROBE: 5-days, 4-days, 3-days.]*
        i. Are literacy interventions provided each day?

    b. K-3 Are tutoring sessions provided each day?
    [PROBE: Daily, twice weekly, weekly, bi-weekly; day(s) of week; time of day]

34. What is the duration of the:
    a. PreK *Tier 2 or Tier 3 intervention?* _____
    b. K-3 *tutoring session?* _____

35. Does each of your targeted students receive the same number of :
    a. PreK *Tier 2 or Tier 3 interventions?* YES NO
        i. [IF YES] Is this an effective strategy?
        ii. [IF NO] How are these decisions made for each student and by whom?

    b. K-3 *tutoring sessions?* YES NO
        i. [IF YES] Is this an effective strategy?
        ii. [IF NO] How are these decisions made for each student and by whom?

36. Where do *Tier 2 or Tier 3 interventions* [PreK]/*tutoring sessions* [K-3] take place?
    Indicate place: _____

    a. [IF THE INTERVENTION IS PROVIDED TO THE WHOLE CLASS] Does the teacher stay in the classroom while the tutoring session is conducted?

    b. [IF THE STUDENTS ARE REMOVED FROM THE CLASSROOM]
        a. Where exactly does the tutoring take place?
        b. Is this place conducive to [one-on-one tutoring or small group sessions]?

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37. There are a number of literacy interventions that are used in the MRC model. Can you tell us how frequently you use the following interventions? Please refer to the list. *[Give Respondent the PreK or K-3 list]*

37a.	PreK Literacy Rich Daily Schedule	Never	Seldom	About half the time	Usually	Always	If used Always, Usually, or About half the time, why do you use this?	If used Never or Seldom why don't you use this?
	Arrival							
	Sign-in							
	Meal time							
	Daily Message *							
	Repeated Read Aloud * *Required for Educator Corps Teacher*							
	Tier 1 Small Group							
	Journal (weekly)							
	Choice Time (active learning)							
	Tier 2 or Tier 3 (interventions daily)							

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37b.	MRC K-3 Interventions	Never	Seldom	About half the time	Usually	Always	If used Always, Usually, or About half the time, why do you use this?	If used Never or Seldom why don't you use this?
	Letter/Sound Correspondence							
	Phoneme Blending							
	Phoneme Segmenting							
	Blending Words							
	Repeated Reading with Comprehension							
	Strategy Practice							
	Repeated Reading Chart							
	Newscaster Reading							
	Duet Reading							
	Pencil Tap							
	Stop / Go							
	Great Leaps							

38. Is any technology used during the tutoring session?

39. Who coordinates the time when students can:

    a. PreK *receive targeted interventions?*
    b. K-3 *tutoring scheduling?*

40. What kinds of assessments are done for each student?
    [PROBE: Progress Monitoring; Benchmarking]

    a. Who conducts the assessment?

41. What is the process for assessing whether the AmeriCorps Member is conducting the assessments and/or interventions or delivering the program components according to the MRC model? Please describe the process.

    a. Is each component implemented as intended?

42. How often do you meet with the AmeriCorps Member(s) for coaching sessions? _____

    a. What kinds of topics are addressed?
    [PROBE: Engagement, delivery of content, challenges, discipline]

    b. [Do you] provide additional training? If so, in what areas?

    c. How do you handle tutors that you determine require additional training?

42. Did you adapt the materials or processes provided by MRC in any way at [name of site/school]?
    YES NO

    [IF YES] How? Please describe. *[PROBE: Who was involved? Was the adaptation approved by the Master Coach? Was MRC involved? Did MRC approve the adaptation?]*

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ORGANIZATIONAL SUPPORT FOR AMERICORPS MEMBERS AND MRC PROGRAM

We are interested in how the AmeriCorps Member(s) fit in with the rest of the school staff. Also, we'd like to discuss the types of supports provided by MRC to your school and how your school communicates about the program to the community.

43. Do AmeriCorps Member(s) participate in staff meetings, parent-teacher conferences, teacher development sessions, etc?

44. What types of supports does the school staff provide the AmeriCorps Member(s)?
    [PROBE: Meetings with Internal Coach, participation in professional development activities, dedicated space, materials, etc.]

45. Have you ever asked to have an AmeriCorps Member(s) removed during the school year? *[PROBE: Details on circumstances, MRC's response, repercussions for school]*

46. What types of supports or services does MRC provide your site/school? How are these services delivered?

FACILITATORS AND BARRIERS TO PROGRAM IMPLEMENTATION

We would like to talk with you about what has worked well in implementing the program and where there may have been some challenges.

47. How well do you think the MRC program has been implemented at this site /school? Please explain.

48. What problems or challenges were encountered during implementation? How were they resolved?

49. Have changes in leadership or personnel occurred at [name of site/school]? YES NO

    [IF YES] What effect did these changes have?

50. From your perspective, do any *current* policies and procedures make it hard to implement the program as intended [in this site/school? In this class?] Please describe.
    [PROBE: School district, MRC, AmeriCorps State/National]

51. Is there sufficient organizational support for implementing the program? YES NO
    [PROBE: Minnesota Reading Corps? Region or school district? Site/school? Other?]
    b. [If NO] Could any changes be made with to better support program implementation?
        i. Minnesota Reading Corps
        ii. Region or school district
        iii. Site/school
        iv. Other

52. Is there anything you would change about the MRC program? YES NO
    [PROBE: With the model? As implemented at this site/school? Need to adapt to the population?

    b. [IF YES] What?

RESULTS AND LESSONS LEARNED

As we conclude our interview, we would like to ask you about your perceptions about the effectiveness of the MRC program and what have been some of the key lessons learned.

52. What kind of feedback have you received about the program:

    e. From teachers?

    f. From parents?

    g. From community members?

    h. In each case, what factors do you think contribute to this perception?

53. In your opinion, has MRC helped students better meet their reading proficiency targets? Why or why not?

54. What lessons have been learned about implementing the program at [name of site/school] that might be helpful to other sites/schools?

Thank you for your time. We appreciate it very much.

Note to Interviewer. Be sure to collect secondary documents:

- ✓ Marketing materials/brochures
- ✓ Parental consent forms
- ✓ Assessment forms
- ✓ Information on alternative programs
- ✓ Schedule template
- ✓ School demographics (,may be on website)

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Process Evaluation of the Minnesota Reading Corps
AmeriCorps Member

School Name:

Site Visitor Name:

Date:

Location:

Interviewee Name(s) and Title(s):

Introduction

Good morning/afternoon. My name is [INSERT NAME] and I am with [NORC at the University of Chicago/TIES]. We are working on behalf of the Corporation for National and Community Service to conduct a process evaluation of the Minnesota Reading Corps program to provide a thorough understanding of the operations and activities of the MRC as it is implemented in each PreK site or elementary school. It will seek to determine if the actual activities and service are true to the intended model of the program, and to assess whether the actual process is likely to produce the intended outcomes and reach the intended target population.

This interview will address these topics and others as we seek to understand your project's processes and strategies and any aspects of your program that can be replicated in other AmeriCorps programs. The interview should take approximately 45 minutes. Your open and honest opinions are appreciated, but participation is voluntary and you may choose to skip any questions or end the interview at any time. Please also be advised that we will be providing an evaluation report for each individual project to CNCS. While we will not use your name or any others in this report, and we will attempt to minimize the use of identifiable information, it may be possible for CNCS to identify you through your position or through other details that you share in your interview.

If you have questions about the study after this interview, please contact the Project Director, Carrie Markovitz, at 301-634-9388. If you have questions about your rights as a participant in this research project, please call the NORC Institutional Review Board Administrator at 866-309-0542.

Do you consent to participate in this discussion?

[IF YES, then proceed. IF NO, then terminate interview.]

I would like to record this interview in case my notes are not clear and comprehensive, and to make sure that we accurately report your responses. The recording will be shared only with the small team of researchers working on this study and will be deleted at the end of the project. Do you agree to have this interview recorded for note-taking purposes only?

[IF YES, then proceed. IF NO, then: "That's fine. Please be patient as I take notes."]

BACKGROUND

First, we would like to discuss your general experience serving as an AmeriCorps Member at [name of site/school].

1. Is this your first year serving as an AmeriCorps Member with MRC? YES NO

    a. [IF NO] How many years have you served as an MRC tutor? _____ years

        i. Have you always served at the same school? YES NO

        ii. Have you always served in the same position? YES NO

        iii. At which other schools have you served?

2. Are you full-time (40 hours) or part-time (20 hours) member? FT PT

3. Why did you decide to apply to be an AmeriCorps Member for MRC?

4. Please describe the process of applying and interviewing for the position.

    a. Once you applied, who did you interview with? (Principal, Internal Coach, Teacher, others)

    b. Did you already have any background in this area (new or retired teacher, previous tutor, etc.)?

5. What responsibilities do you have as an AmeriCorps Member at [name of site/school]?
   [PROBE: Provide tutoring only; Recruit and /or train volunteers to support school-based literacy efforts (e.g., read with students during after-school time); Develop literacy resources for families; Coordinate literacy events for families; Other: _____)]

6. Besides providing Reading Corps services during the school day, have you participated in other service activities outside of the school day to fulfill the hours requirement needed to successfully complete the program. *[PROBE: volunteering at the school or in the community to fulfill service hours requirement]*

    a. At the beginning of the school year did you have a plan for fulfilling the hours requirement needed to successfully complete your service, which may include hours outside of the school day? YES NO

    b. [IF YES] Did you share or discuss your plan with your Internal Coach or Program Coordinator?

TRAINING AND ORIENTATION

Please tell us about your training and orientation to [name of site/school].

7. Please describe the type of training you received to become an MRC tutor for [PreK;K-3] once you were accepted to the program.

8. Did you receive any additional training once placed in your current site/school? YES NO

    a. [IF YES] What kind of training did you receive? Was it from MRC, the school/site, or another source?

9. Is there additional training you wish you would have had before you started as a tutor?

10. How did the other school staff (director/principal, teachers, counselors) react to your addition to the site/school when you first began serving?

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MRC PROGRAM IMPLEMENTATION

We would like to learn more about how the interventions and tutoring actually occurs at [name of site/school] with [Pre-K; K-3] students.

11. Ask PreK only:
    a. What types of interventions are provided to Tier 2 and Tier 3 students? Briefly describe.
    b. Is tutoring provided one-on-one, in small groups? to the whole class? [DELIVERY METHOD]
    c. Do you feel that you contribute to making the environment more literacy-rich? YES NO
        i. [IF YES] In what ways?
        ii. [IF NO] Why not?

12. Ask K-3 only*:* When you started the school year were *only* students nearest to target performance receiving services? YES NO Don't Know

    c. [IF NO] As the school year progressed did other students *performing below target* receive services? Please describe. *[PROBE: English Language Learners, Students with an Individualized Education Plan (IEP), Tier 3 students]*

13. We would like to know when the *interventions/tutoring sessions* are conducted. [FREQUENCY]
    a. PreK How many days per week do students attend? [*PROBE: 5-days, 4-days, 3-days.]*
        i. Are literacy interventions provided each day?

    b. K-3 Are tutoring sessions provided each day? *[PROBE: Daily, twice weekly, weekly, bi-weekly; day(s) of week; time of day]*

14. What is the duration:
    a. PreK Tier 2 or Tier 3 intervention? _____
    b. K-3 tutoring session? _____

15. Does each of your targeted student receive the same number of:
    a. PreK Tier 2 or Tier 3 interventions? YES NO
        i. [IF YES] Is this an effective strategy?
        ii. [IF NO] How are these decisions made for each student and by whom? [DOSAGE]

    b. K-3 tutoring sessions for the same number of weeks? YES NO
        i. [IF YES] Is this an effective strategy?
        ii. [IF NO] How are these decisions made for each student and by whom? [DOSAGE]

16. Where do *Tier 2 or Tier 3 interventions* [PreK]/*tutoring sessions* [K-3] take place?
    Indicate place: _____

    c. [IF THE INTERVENTION IS PROVIDED TO THE WHOLE CLASS] Does the teacher stay in the classroom while the tutoring session is conducted?

    d. [IF THE STUDENTS ARE REMOVED FROM THE CLASSROOM]
        a. Where exactly does the tutoring take place?
        b. Is this place conducive to [one-on-one tutoring or small group sessions]?

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17. There are a number of literacy interventions that are used in the MRC model. Can you tell us how frequently you use the following interventions? Please refer to the list. *[Give Respondent the PreK or K-3 list]* [INTERVENTIONS]

17a.	PreK Literacy Rich Daily Schedule	Never	Seldom	About half the time	Usually	Always	If used Usually, Always, or About half the time, why do you use this?	If used Never or Seldom why don't you use this?
	Arrival							
	Sign-in							
	Meal time							
	Daily Message *							
	Repeated Read Aloud * *Required for Educator Corps Teacher*							
	Tier 1 Small Group							
	Journal (weekly)							
	Choice Time (active learning)							
	Tier 2 or Tier 3 (interventions daily)							

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17b.	MRC K-3 Interventions	Never	Seldom	About half the time	Usually	Always	If used Always, Usually, or About half the time, why do you use this?	If used Never or Seldom why don't you use this?
	Letter/Sound Correspondence							
	Phoneme Blending							
	Phoneme Segmenting							
	Blending Words							
	Repeated Reading with Comprehension							
	Strategy Practice							
	Repeated Reading Chart							
	Newscaster Reading							
	Duet Reading							
	Pencil Tap							
	Stop / Go							
	Great Leaps							

18. Is any technology used during the tutoring session?

19. Who coordinates:
a. PreK the time when students can receive targeted interventions?
b. K-3 tutoring scheduling?

20. What kinds of assessments are done for each student? *[PROBE: Progress Monitoring; Benchmarking]*

a. What is your role in monitoring student progress?

b. Where do you enter the data? *[PROBE: OnCorps; AIMS web]*

21. For students that require supplemental reading or literacy assistance:

a. Does the Internal Coach seek your input when making decisions about meeting the needs of individual children? YES NO

b. Do teachers or school counselors ask for your input in assessing the students you work with? YES NO

c. In your opinion, is your input valued?

22. Does the Internal Coach conduct observations of you conducting interventions and /or assessments?
YES NO

a. How often does this occur?

b. Are there any other ways that your tutoring assistance is monitored or assessed?

23. How often do you meet with the Internal Coach for coaching sessions? _____
[COACHING]
a. What kinds of topics are addressed? *[PROBE: Engagement, delivery of content, challenges, discipline]*

b. Have you received additional training?
i. [IF YES] In what areas?

24. Were the materials or processes provided by MRC *adapted* in any way at [name of site/school]? YES NO

    [IF YES] Please describe. *[PROBE: Who was involved? Was the adaptation approved by the Master Coach? Was MRC involved? Did MRC approve the adaptation?]*

25. What types of supports or coaching do other school staff provide to you? *[PROBE: Advice, sharing professional development materials, etc.]*

26. Are you aware of any other efforts to tutor similar students at your school? YES NO

    a. [IF YES] Are you familiar with their tutoring program? Do you think the other program is similar to the MRC program? How or how not?*[PROBE: similar in tutoring materials, training, instruction, assessments?]*

27. Have you ever shared your tutoring materials or information you learned in your MRC training with other school staff or other non-MRC reading tutors? YES NO

    a. [IF YES] Do you know if they use the information you shared with them when working with students on reading?

28. Who determines whether a student no longer requires tutoring? How is this determination made?

29. FOR K-3 only Is it common for you to tutor students who graduated from the program, but then began to struggle with their reading and require more assistance? YES NO

    a. [IF YES] Do you use a different approach with repeat students than with new ones? Why or why not?

FACILITATORS AND BARRIERS TO PROGRAM IMPLEMENTATION

We would like to talk with you about what has worked well in implementing the program and where there may have been some challenges.

30. What has worked well in implementing the MRC model in this site/school?

31. What problems or challenges were encountered during implementation? How were they resolved?

32. From your perspective, do any *current* policies and procedures make it hard to implement the program as intended [in this site/school? In this class?] Please describe. *[PROBE: School district, MRC, AmeriCorps State/National]*

33. Is there sufficient organizational support for implementing the program? *[PROBE: Minnesota Reading Corps? Region or school district? Site/school? Other?]*

    c. Could any changes be made with to better support program implementation?
        i. Minnesota Reading Corps
        ii. Region or school district
        iii. Site/school
        iv. Other

34. Is there anything you would change about the MRC program? YES NO
    [PROBE: With the model? As implemented at this site/school? Need to adapt to the population? Being an AmeriCorps Member?]

    c. [IF YES] What?

RESULTS AND LESSONS LEARNED

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It is important for any evaluation that we understand your view of the relative effectiveness of the program and how you have benefited from serving with AmeriCorps. So we would like to ask you some questions about your opinions on the success of the MRC program at [name of site/school] and your experience.

35. In your opinion, is the program successful in helping students improve their literacy or reading skills? How have you determined this?

36. In your opinion, what is the most rewarding part of being an AmeriCorps Member in the MRC program?

37. In your opinion, what is the most challenging part of being an AmeriCorps Member in the MRC program?

38. What do you plan to do after you finish serving as an AmeriCorps Member for MRC?

39. Do you plan to serve in MRC next year? YES NO

40. Has participating in the MRC affected your plans for the future? If so, in what ways?*[PROBE: Volunteering, teaching, etc.]*

41. Do you have any advice about participating in the MRC program that might be helpful to other AmeriCorps Members? Or ServeMN?

Thank you for your time. We appreciate it very much.

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Process Evaluation of the Minnesota Reading Corps
Teacher

School Name:

Site Visitor Name:

Date:

Location:

Interviewee Name(s) and Title(s):

Introduction

Good morning/afternoon. My name is [INSERT NAME] and I am with [NORC at the University of Chicago/TIES]. We are working on behalf of the Corporation for National and Community Service to conduct a process evaluation of the Minnesota Reading Corps program to provide a thorough understanding of the operations and activities of the MRC as it is implemented in each PreK site or elementary school. It will seek to determine if the actual activities and service are true to the intended model of the program, and to assess whether the actual process is likely to produce the intended outcomes and reach the intended target population.

This interview will address these topics and others as we seek to understand your project's processes and strategies and any aspects of your program that can be replicated in other AmeriCorps programs. The interview should take approximately 45 minutes. Your open and honest opinions are appreciated, but participation is voluntary and you may choose to skip any questions or end the interview at any time. Please also be advised that we will be providing an evaluation report for each individual project to CNCS. While we will not use your name or any others in this report, and we will attempt to minimize the use of identifiable information, it may be possible for CNCS to identify you through your position or through other details that you share in your interview.

If you have questions about the study after this interview, please contact the Project Director, Carrie Markovitz, at 301-634-9388. If you have questions about your rights as a participant in this research project, please call the NORC Institutional Review Board Administrator at 866-309-0542.

Do you consent to participate in this discussion?

[IF YES, then proceed. IF NO, then terminate interview.]

I would like to record this interview in case my notes are not clear and comprehensive, and to make sure that we accurately report your responses. The recording will be shared only with the small team of researchers working on this study and will be deleted at the end of the project. Do you agree to have this interview recorded for note-taking purposes only?

[IF YES, then proceed. IF NO, then: "That's fine. Please be patient as I take notes."]

BACKGROUND

First we would like to ask a few background questions about your involvement in the MRC program and getting the program started at [name of site/school].

1. How long have you been a teacher at [site name/school name]?

2. When did students in your classroom begin receiving literacy support from the Reading Corps program?

3. How many MRC tutors have you had tutor your students? Over how many years?

4. Have you ever assisted in the selection of tutor(s) to serve at your school?
   YES NO

   [If YES] Please describe your input into the selection process.

5. Did any teachers, including yourself, have any concerns about adhering to the MRC model as a condition for becoming an MRC site?

6. Were any school policies and procedures changed to support program implementation?
   YES NO

   a. [IF YES] Please describe.

MRC PROGRAM IMPLEMENTATION: CLASSROOM-LEVEL

We are interested in how the MRC program model is being implemented in each classroom and the AmeriCorps Members' role in delivering the required program components.

To begin, from the form that was completed by the site/school in advance, Please confirm that::

PreK	K-3
● *_____ AmeriCorps Members are placed in your classroom. [Insert #]* ● *Literacy interventions are provided to: [Insert from form]* o *the WHOLE class.* o *just those students selected for Tier 2 and Tier 3 interventions.* ● *_____ Students are involved. [Insert #]*	● *_____ AmeriCorps Members works with students in your classroom. [Insert #]* ● *_____ Students receive tutoring for the school year [Insert #]*

7. What are the desired student outcomes of the tutoring programs?
   a. Pre-K
   b. K-3

8. How are parents notified of students' eligibility?

   c. Do you require parental permission in order to provide services? YES NO

      [If YES] What is the process for obtaining permission (passive or active consent)?

   d. Have any parents declined the offer to have his/her child tutored? YES NO
      [IF YES] How does the school handle these cases?

9. Please describe the process/criteria for matching students with tutors.

10. Has/Have the same AmeriCorps member(s) been working with the same students for the school year? YES NO

    a. [IF NO] Why? Did the AmeriCorps Member(s) drop out of the program? [ATTRITION]

11. What is the process for assessing whether the AmeriCorps Member is conducting the interventions and/or assessments and delivering the program components according to the MRC model? [IMPEMENTATION FIDELITY]
    b. Please describe the process.

c. Is each component implemented as intended?

12. Were the materials or processes provided by MRC *adapted* in any way at [name of site/school]? YES NO

    [IF YES] How? Please describe. *[PROBE: Who was involved? Was the adaptation approved by the Master Coach? Was MRC involved? Did MRC approve the adaptation?]*

13. Part of the MRC model is for the Internal Coach to meet with the AmeriCorps Member on a regular basis for assistance, coaching, and support. [IMPLEMETATION COMPONENT, COMMUNICATION]

    a. Do these meetings take place as planned? YES NO

    b. Do you ever take part in these meetings? YES NO
        i. [IF YES] What do you discuss (student progress, tutoring strategies, etc.)?

        ii. [IF NO] Why not?

14. From your perspective,
    b. PreK How are the students responding to the delivery of the Reading Corps interventions?
    c. K-3 How are the students in your classroom responding to the tutoring session?

15. How do students feel about being tutored [K-3]?
    [PROBE: Enjoy it? Cooperative? Resistant to being tutored? Upset at being pulled out of class? Upset about having to do more work?]

16. Are there any particular characteristics of the AmeriCorps Members that enhances or hinders their ability to work with children?

ORGANIZATIONAL SUPPORT FOR AMERICORPS MEMBERS AND MRC PROGRAM

We are interested in your observations of the AmeriCorps Member(s) and how s/he fit in with the rest of the school staff and the types of supports provided.

17. In your opinion, is the AmeriCorps Member sufficiently trained to serve as a literacy tutor?

    YES NO

a. [IF NO] Are there any areas where the training of AmeriCorps Member could be improved?

18. In your opinion, does the AmeriCorps Member receive adequate supervision from Minnesota Reading Corps program? From the Internal or Master Coach?

19. Are AmeriCorps Member(s) considered part of the school staff? Do they ever participate in staff meetings, parent-teacher conferences, teacher development sessions, etc?

20. What types of supports does the school staff provide the AmeriCorps Member(s)? *[PROBE: Meetings with Internal Coach, advice, sharing materials, etc.]*

21. Overall, are you satisfied with the *literacy interventions* [PreK]/*tutoring services* [K-3] provided by the AmeriCorps Member? YES NO

    a. [IF YES] What specifically?

    b. [IF NO] What needs to be improved?

FACILITATORS AND BARRIERS TO PROGRAM IMPLEMENTATION

We would like to talk with you about what has worked well in implementing the program and where there may have been some challenges.

22. How well do you think the MRC program has been implemented at this site /school? Please explain.

23. We would like to ask you about any challenges experienced in implementing the MRC model.
    a. Have you experienced any challenges *implementing* the literacy interventions in your classroom [PreK]/tutoring sessions with your students [K-3]? If so, what are they? How were they resolved?

    b. Have you experienced any challenges in *working with the AmeriCorps Member* in your classroom [PreK]/in your school [K-3]? Please explain. How were they resolved?

24. Is there anything you would change about the MRC program? YES NO *[PROBE: With the model? As implemented at this site/school? Need to adapt to the population?*
    d. [IF YES] What?

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RESULTS AND LESSONS LEARNED

As we conclude our interview, we would like to ask you about your perceptions about the effectiveness of the MRC program and what have been some of the key lessons learned.

25. In your opinion, has MRC helped students better meet their reading proficiency targets? Why or why not?

26. What lessons have been learned about implementing the program at [name of site/school] that might be helpful to other sites/schools?

Thank you for your time. We appreciate it very much.

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Teacher Focus Group Guide

Hello, I am _____ and this is _____. We are researchers from NORC at the [University of Chicago/TIES] and we are conducting an evaluation of Minnesota Reading Corps (MRC) for the Corporation for National and Community Service. As part of this evaluation, we are conducting focus groups with Pre-K and K-3 teachers who participate in the MRC program at [name of site/school] in order to find out more about your role in the MRC, how it is implemented at this [site/school], and your satisfaction with the program. The information we will gather in this session will help the Corporation strengthen the MRC program.

The information we gather is strictly confidential; you will not be identified by name in any reports. Participation is voluntary. You are not required to participate and you do not need to answer any question that you are not comfortable with. The focus group will last about 45 minutes. If you have questions about the study after this interview, please contact the Project Director, Carrie Markovitz, at 301-634-9388. If you have questions about your rights as a participant in this research project, please call the NORC Institutional Review Board Administrator at 866-309-0542.

OK. We are now ready to start. We would like for everyone to participate in the discussion, but you don't have to talk in any particular order.

First of all, please introduce yourselves. Let's go around the room ……Thank you.

I'd like to start by asking you some questions about how long have you been a teacher at [site name/school name], when you begin participating in the MRC program, and how many AmeriCorps Members are providing literacy interventions [PreK]/serving as literacy tutors [K-3] with your students.

1. Did you assist in the selection of tutor(s) to serve in your classroom? Please describe your input into the selection process.

2. Did you have any concerns about adhering to the MRC model as a condition for:
   a. PreK implementing the program in your classroom?
   b. K-3 students in your classroom to receive supplemental literacy support?"

3. Were any school policies and procedures changed to support program implementation?
   YES NO
   b. [IF YES] Please describe.

4. We have some questions that we would like you to consider about the AmeriCorps Members serving as a literacy tutor *in your classroom* [PreK]/*for students in your class* [K-3].
   a. Is the AmeriCorps Member sufficiently trained to serve as a literacy tutor? Are there any areas where the training of AmeriCorps Member(s) could be improved?

   b. Are there any particular characteristics of the AmeriCorps Member that enhances or hinders their ability to work with children?

   c. Does the AmeriCorps Member receive adequate supervision from the Minnesota Reading Corps program? From the Internal Coach?

   d. Are you satisfied with the effectiveness of *literacy interventions [PreK]/tutoring services [K-3]* provided by the AmeriCorps Member(s)? YES NO

      [IF YES] What specifically?

      [IF NO] What needs to be improved?

5. What types of supports do school staff provide the AmeriCorps Member(s)?
   [PROBE: Advice, sharing professional development materials, etc.]

6. How well do you think the MRC program has been implemented at this site /school? Please explain.

7. We would like to ask you about any challenges experienced in implementing the MRC model.
   a. Have you experienced any challenges implementing *literacy interventions in your classroom* [PreK]/*tutoring sessions with your students* [K-3]? If so, what are they? How were they resolved?

   b. Have you experienced any challenges in working with the AmeriCorps Member *in your classroom* [PreK]/*in your school* [K-3]? Please explain. How were they resolved?

8. Is there sufficient organizational support for implementing the program? *[PROBE: Minnesota Reading Corps? Region or school district? Site/school? Other?]*

9. In your opinion, has MRC helped students better meet their reading proficiency targets? Why or why not?

10. What lessons have been learned about implementing the program at [name of site/school] that might be helpful to other sites/schools?

Thank you for taking the time to participate in this focus group. You have given us a lot of good information about your experiences that, I am sure, will help strengthen the MRC program. Are there any questions before we end?

Appendix E:
Site Visit Report Summary

[NAME OF SITE/SCHOOL]
Site Visit Summary

Purpose: The Site Visit Summary will serve as a record of the Site Visit. It will be used to create 1-2 page highlights document that can be shared with each school visited as well as to conduct analyses across-sites.
Directions: Please follow the guidance provided under each topic heading. The summary should be completed within two weeks of the site visit. Each completed the summary should be about five pages long. Please date the summary in the footer.

Site Visit Team Members: Provide names of site visit team

Location and Facilities Visited: Identify name of school and location

Date(s) of Site Visit: Provide date

Type/Number of Staff Interviewed:

- Site/School Staff: Principal, Internal Coach, Teachers, [Indicate Other Staff]
- AmeriCorps Member(s)
- Master Coach

Observation(s) Conducted: Indicate the type of intervention(s) observed (e.g., Pencil Tap). Attach completed Observation(s) to the end of the document.

Site documentation/reports/plans gathered: List materials obtained on-site (e.g., literacy framework, scheduling matrix, etc.).

Items for Follow up: Identify where there are any gaps in the responses or where additional information is needed.

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1. BACKGROUND
   - Type of Program: Indicate whether PreK or K-3
   - Year Minnesota Reading Corps implemented: *Indicate school year*
   - Reason for applying for MRC: [See Background Principal Q1; Internal Coach Q1]
   - Number of AmeriCorps members since first implemented: *Provide date as school year (e.g. 2010-2011*)
   - Number of ACMs currently serving: Provide number. Indicate full time or part time
   - Role of ACMs at school [Internal Coach Q 30; ACM Q5, Q6]

2. CORE CURRICULUM FOR LITERACY INSTRUCTION

Provide 3-5 sentence description of the core curriculum used and any supplemental programs. Refer to the relevant questions in each protocol as noted.

- ❖ Description of core curriculum: [Internal Coach Q 25]
- ❖ Description of supplemental programs: [Internal Coach Q 26; AmeriCorps Member Q5, Q6, Q26]

3. STUDENTS SERVED BY MRC INTERVENTIONS

   Provide 3-5 sentences for each topic area below. Refer to the relevant questions in each protocol as noted.

   - Process for screening and identifying students for literacy tutoring: [Internal Coach Q 19; AmeriCorps Member Q4] *Indicate PreK or K-3*

- Process for matching students and tutors: [Internal Coach Q 20; Teacher Q9]
- Notification to parents and teachers of students' eligibility: [Internal Coach Q 21; Teacher Q8
- Desired outcomes of tutoring: [Principal Q12; Internal Coach Q 22; Teacher Q7]
- Student's receptivity to tutoring: [Principal Q13; Internal Coach Q 23; Teacher Q13, Q14]
  Insert quote from student [Source: Observation Tool]
- Student progress to meet spring targets: [Principal Q24; Internal Coach Q 24; Teacher Q29]

4. MRC IMPLEMENTATION HIGHLIGHTS

Fill in the table and refer to the relevant questions in each protocol as noted below. Use one-word responses or short phrases (e.g., daily, monthly fidelity observations conducted by Internal Coach). If the Internal Coach and Literacy Coach have divergent responses make note of that in the table and in the "Items for Follow-Up on page 1.

PreK Interventions		
Types of interventions provided to Tier 2 and Tier 3 students	[Internal Coach Q 31; ACM Q11]	
Number of days per week students attend	[Internal Coach Q 33a; ACM Q13]	
Duration of Tier 2 or Tier 3 interventions	[Internal Coach Q 34; ACM Q14]	
Intervention dosage	[Internal Coach Q 35; ACM Q15]	
Location of Tier 2 and Tier 3 interventions	[Internal Coach Q 36a; ACM Q16]	
PreK Literacy Intervention Delivery: *Modes and Frequency* [Internal Coach Q 37a; ACM Q117a]	Most Used	Never or Seldom Used
Use of technology in intervention	[Internal Coach Q 38; ACM Q18]	
Scheduling and coordination	[Internal Coach Q 39; ACM Q19]	
Student Assessments: *Type and Frequency*	[Internal Coach Q 40; ACM Q20]	
Implementation fidelity	[Internal Coach Q 41; ACM Q22]	
Adaptations to MRC protocols	[Internal Coach Q 42; ACM Q24; Teacher Q12]	

K-3 Interventions		
Students targeted for Tier 2 interventions	[Internal Coach Q 32; ACM Q12]	
Frequency of intervention	[Internal Coach Q 33b; ACM Q13]	
Duration of tutoring session	[Internal Coach Q 34; ACM Q14]	
Intervention dosage	[Internal Coach Q 35b; ACM Q15]	
Location of tutoring session	[Internal Coach Q 36b; ACM Q16]	
K-3 Literacy Intervention Delivery: *Modes and Frequency* [Internal Coach Q 37b; ACM Q17b]	Most Used	Never or Seldom Used
Use of technology in intervention	[Internal Coach Q 38;] ACM Q18]	
Scheduling and coordination	[Internal Coach Q 39; ACM Q19]	
Student Assessments: *Type and Frequency*	[Internal Coach Q 40; ACM Q20]	
Student exit process and repeaters	[ACM Q28, Q29]	
Implementation fidelity	[Internal Coach Q 41; ACM Q22]	
Adaptations to MRC protocols	[Internal Coach Q 42; ACM Q24; Teacher Q12]	

5. KEY COMPONENTS DRIVING SUCCESSFUL IMPLEMENTATION [38]

For each sub-topic below, provide a brief 2-4 sentence description. Refer to the relevant questions in each protocol as noted. If any respondents have divergent responses make note.

[38] Metz, A., Blase, K. & Bowie, L. (October 2007). *Implementing evidence-based practices: Six "drivers" of success.* Washington, DC: Child Trends.

- Literacy tutor recruitment and selection
  - AmeriCorps literacy tutor selection process: [Principal Q5; Internal Coach Q12, Q13; Teacher Q4]
  - Qualities sought in AmeriCorps literacy tutor: [Principal Q6; Internal Coach Q14, Q27]
  - Role of site/school in selection process: [Principal Q5; Internal Coach Q 11-12; Teacher Q4]

- Pre-service or in-service training
  - Training provided: [Principal Q18; Internal Coach Q28; AmeriCorps Q7, Q8, Q9]
    - Minnesota Reading Corps
    - Site/School
    - Literacy Coach
    - Teachers
    - Individual Training
  - Perceptions of training quality, intensity, and effectiveness for literacy tutors: [Principal Q18; Internal Coach Q 29; AmeriCorps Q9; Teacher Q21]
  - Unmet training needs or areas where additional training would be helpful: [ACM Q8, Q9]

- Coaching and supervision of AmeriCorps literacy tutor
  - Coaching [Internal Coach Q 42; ACM 22; Q23; Teacher Q13]
    - Frequency of coaching
    - Topics addressed
    - Delivery of additional training
  - Perceptions of adequate supervision of AmeriCorps Literacy Tutor [Principal Q9, Q10; Teacher Q22]

Internal Coach Snapshot
[Internal Coach Q 5-11]

- Qualifications
- Whether MN state certified reading specialist
- Number of years staff member at site/school:
- Number of years coaching at site/school:
- Number of ACMs coached over time
- Number of ACMs coached current year

- School support
  - MRC implementation roles [Principal Q9; Internal Coach Q4, Q16]
  - School policies and procedures changed to support:
    - Program implementation [Principal Q4; Internal Coach Q4; Teach Q6]
    - ACM hosting [Principal Q7; Internal Coach Q15]
  - Integration of AmeriCorps Member into site/school environment [Principal Q16; Internal Coach Q43; ACM Q10; Teacher Q22]
  - Support provided by:
  - Site/school for hosting AmeriCorps member [Internal Coach Q44; ACM Q25; Teacher Q24]
  - Minnesota Reading Corps [Principal Q10, Q19; Internal Coach Q46, Q17; ACM Q33]
  - Master Coaches [Principal Q19; Internal Coach Q 17]
  - Other [Principal Q19; Internal Coach 17]
- System level partnerships [39]

[39] Per Metz, Blasé & Bowie October 2007, "systems-level partnerships refer to the development of partnerships *within the immediate and broader systems* to ensure the availability of the financial, organizational, and human resources that are required to support practitioners' work. Partnerships *within the immediate system* refer to individuals or organizations that have a direct impact on service delivery (e.g., service providers), while partners *in the broader system* may include funders, policy makers, or other community organizations that support a program, but are not directly involved in service delivery. Examples of activities related to the development of systems-level partnerships to support implementation and frontline practice include: Conducting fundraising activities to support the ongoing implementation of the evidence-based practice or program; Collaborating with other out-of-school time programs to enhance program participation and ensure the seamless delivery of services; Promoting meaningful engagement of parents and family members to identify barriers and spurs to participation, as well to garner

- *Indicate whether additional supports are provided by external sources such as the school district, community volunteers, local civic organizations. Refer to questions above. Not all schools will have identified additional sources of support.*

- Assessment of student and literacy tutor performance
  - Student Assessments: *Type and Frequency* [Internal Coach Q 40; ACM Q20]
    - PreK
    - K-3
  - Implementation Fidelity [Internal Coach Q 41; ACM Q22: Teacher 11]

6. FACILITATORS AND CHALLENGES

Some content analysis of responses will be necessary in this section. For each bulleted area below—facilitators, challenges, suggestions for improvement— identify common themes/concerns and note in parentheses whether this was noted by the Principal, Internal Coach, Teacher, or AmeriCorps Member [(e.g., finding space for tutoring (Principal, Teacher)]. Create sub-bullets. If needed, provide additional detail (2-3 sentences to explain circumstances).

- Perceptions on how well program was implemented [Principal Q14; Internal Coach Q47; ACM Q30; Teacher Q16, Q26]
- Challenges encountered [Principal Q3; Internal Coach Q48; ACM Q31, Q37; Teacher Q5, Q16, Q27]
  - Implementing the literacy interventions
  - Working with the literacy tutor
- Suggestions for improvement or changes [Principal Q20; Internal Coach Q52; ACM Q33a, Q34; Teacher Q28]

7. SERVICE AND THE MINNESOTA READING CORPS

For each sub-topic below, provide a brief 2-4 sentence description. Refer to the relevant questions in each protocol as noted. Insert quotes.

- Rewards of service [ACM Q36]
- Challenges of service [ACM Q37]
- Future Plans [ACM Q38-40]

8. RESULTS AND LESSONS LEARNED

For each sub-topic below, provide a brief 2-4 sentence description. Refer to the relevant questions in each protocol as noted. Identify particular Lessons Learned by respondent in parentheses to subsequent data aggregation (Principal, Internal Coach, Teacher, or AmeriCorps Member). Insert quotes.

- Satisfaction with literacy interventions (PreK)/tutoring services (K-3) [Principal Q21; Teacher Q25; ACM Q25]
- Perceptions of program impact [Principal Q4, Q22, Q24; Internal Coach Q52, Q53; ACM Q35; Teacher Q29]

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support and receive feedback; Conducting community outreach to garner support and awareness of the program; Using outside consultants and coaches to assist with ongoing training, mentoring, and technical assistance; and; and Reporting to funders and policy makers on program activities and outcomes."

- Lessons Learned [Principal Q25; Internal Coach Q54; ACM Q41; Teacher Q30; ACM Q40]

9. SITE VISITOR OBSERVATIONS

Record any observations/perceptions/concerns that you have about what was learned on the site visit (e.g., school atmosphere, conditions, etc.)

MINNESOTA READING CORPS K-3 LITERACY INTERVENTIONS: OBSERVATION TOOL			
School Name		*Date of Observation*	
Grade of Child Tutored	K 1st 2nd 3rd	*Child's gender* Boy Girl	
Identify intervention used:		*Identify materials used:*	
	Letter/Sound Correspondence		Reading Passage(s)
	Phoneme Blending		Timer
	Phoneme Segmenting		Clipboard and Marker (for Tutor)
	Blending Words		Chart to graph progress
	Repeated Reading with Comprehension		Crayons
	Strategy Practice		Stickers (other rewards)
	Repeated Reading Chart		Pencil
	Newscaster Reading		Tutor Log:
	Duet Reading		Other:
	Pencil Tap		Other:
	Stop / Go		Other:
	Great Leaps		Other:
Location of tutoring session and surrounding environment:		*Duration of session (in minutes):*	
In the space below, prepare a brief description of the intervention, including how the tutor and student greet each other, how they settle in into their routine, the instructions provided by the tutor, the tutor's comments on the student's performance, any comments made by the student about his/her performance or the intervention (e.g., "I'm going up,"" I want to do this again tomorrow", etc.) and the student's behavior (e.g., attentive, fidgety, on task, etc.). Once the intervention is completed, record any additional ways the tutor and student spent time together. Note that this observation is for descriptive purposes only.			

K-3 INTERVENTIONS

In each cell, indicate the frequency for each activity and indicate the respondent (Internal Coach=IC or AmeriCorps Member=ACM). Indicate verbatim responses to the questions.

MRC K-3 Interventions	Never	Seldom	About half the time	Usually	Always	If used Always, Usually, or About half the time, why do you use this?	If used Never or Seldom why don't you use this?
Letter/Sound Correspondence							
Phoneme Blending							
Phoneme Segmenting							
Blending Words							
Repeated Reading with Comprehension							
Strategy Practice							
Repeated Reading Chart							
Newscaster Reading							
Duet Reading							
Pencil Tap							
Stop / Go							
Great Leaps							

Appendix F:
Glossary

AIMline: A student's projected growth trajectory, measured from the most recent benchmark period to the next (e.g., fall to winter or winter to spring).

AIMSWeb: AIMSWeb is the web-based assessment tool used for progress monitoring and data management of all Minnesota Reading Corps K-3 students. The AIMSWeb assessments evaluate four critical literacy skills that are appropriate for specific K-3 grade levels and seasons: 1) letter naming fluency (Kindergarten), 2) letter sound fluency (1st Grade –Fall/Winter), 3) nonsense word fluency (1st Grade – Winter/Spring), and 4) oral reading fluency (2nd & 3rd Grades).

AmeriCorps: AmeriCorps is a national service program run by the Corporation for National and Community Service that engages members to serve at nonprofit organizations, public agencies and faith-based organizations nationwide. In exchange for their service, AmeriCorps members receive a modest living stipend and Education Award. Minnesota Reading Corps is the nation's largest state AmeriCorps program.

Benchmark: A standard score above which students are considered "on-track" for grade level achievement. MRC lists grade and season (I.e., fall, winter, spring) appropriate benchmark scores for each general outcome measure (i.e., AIMSWeb & IGIDI). Students' scores on benchmark assessments determine their eligibility for Minnesota Reading Corps services and serve as baseline data to determine students' improvements as a result of the program.

"Big Five": At the PreK level, the MRC program focuses on integrating the "Big Five" Early Literacy Predictors into all aspects of the daily classroom routine. The "Big Five" for preschool students include conversational skills, vocabulary and background knowledge, book and print rules, phonological awareness (i.e., rhyming and alliteration), and alphabetic knowledge.

CNCS: The Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS) is a federal agency that engages more than 4 million Americans in service through Senior Corps, AmeriCorps, and the Social Innovation Fund, and leads President Obama's national call to service initiative, United We Serve. CNCS is funding the primary federal funder of the Minnesota Reading Corps program, and is funding the current evaluation of the MRC.

Community Corps: Community Corps members are embedded in preschool classrooms and collaborate with the classroom's lead teacher to help develop children's early literacy skills to prepare for kindergarten. Community Corps members are responsible for enhancing the literacy-rich environment within the classroom, conducting Tier 2 and 3 interventions and conducting/ tracking progress monitoring for students.

Community-based PreK: Community-based PreK programs are run through community-based organizations such as community centers.

DIBELS: Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills (DIBELS) are a set of assessments used for universal screening and progress monitoring in grades K-6. DIBELS assessments help educators identify students who may need additional literacy instruction in order to become proficient readers. In the MRC program it is used by some schools as alternative assessment to AIMSWeb.

ELLCO: The Early Language & Literacy Classroom Observation (ELLCO) tool is used to assess five key elements of a classroom's literacy environment: classroom structure, curriculum, language environment, books and book reading, print and early writing. According to the ELLCO, a "Literacy Rich Classroom" is one that embeds literacy activities among daily routines.

Head Start: Head Start is a federal PreK program designed to promote school readiness for low-income pre-kindergarten students by enhancing their cognitive, social and emotional development. Through Head Start

programs, enrolled children and families can also receive health, nutrition and other social support programs depending on eligibility.

IGDI: The Individual Growth and Development Indicators (IGDI) is a set of standardized, individually administered assessments that are used to evaluate children's language and emergent literacy skills. IGDIs assess three key areas of emergent literacy: (1) Rhyming (Phonological Awareness); (2) Picture Naming (Vocabulary); and (3) Alliteration (Phonological Awareness).

Internal Coach: Individual rained by the Reading Corps to provide on-site literacy support and oversight to the MRC AmeriCorps member. Internal Coaches provide an on-site orientation for the MRC member, develop a daily schedule, assist in the implementation of literacy assessments, conduct integrity checks of the assessments and interventions, review student data and ensure the member is accurately reporting student data into AIMSWeb. The Internal Coach is a school employee, not a MRC member.

K-3: Kindergarten through 3rd grade

K-Focus: A Kindergarten-Focused Literacy program in which members provide an additional 20 minutes of tutoring every day to small groups of students, typically focused on letter sound fluency. Kindergarten students who are served by K-Focus members receive a total of 40 minutes of tutoring every day.

Literacy rich schedule: Members in the PreK program work to implement and support a standard instructional regime/schedule that focuses on the "Big Five" emergent literacy skills (conversation skills, vocabulary and background knowledge, book and print rules, phonological awareness-rhyming and alliteration, and alphabetic knowledge). Members assist the teaching team in implementing the literacy rich schedule and fostering a literacy rich classroom environment as defined by the Early Language and Literacy Classroom Observation (ELLCO), including name chart, theme-related books and props in five or more centers, sign-in area, writing center, word wall, etc.

Master Coach: Provides literacy coaching support to Internal Coaches and AmeriCorps members at multiple sites. The Master Coach schedules regular on-site visits to support and guide the site and its members it fulfilling the MRC program goals and ensures fidelity of implementation. The Master Coach provides training to members, conducts integrity checks, and reviews students' progress monitoring data. The Master Coach is an experienced literacy educator who serves as a consultant to MRC.

Member: A volunteer to who serves in the MRC AmeriCorps program. Member may refer to a volunteer in the K-3 program, or a PreK Educator Corps or Community Corps. Members deliver the one-on-one tutoring (PreK and K-3) and support implementation of the literacy rich schedule in MRC PreK classrooms. In recognition of their service, members receive a modest living stipend and Education Award.

MDE: Minnesota Department of Education.

MRC: The Minnesota Reading Corps (MRC) was started in 2003 to provide reading and literacy tutoring to children in PreK programs and students in kindergarten through third-grade. The goal of the program is to ensure that students become successful readers and meet reading proficiency targets by the end of the third grade. MRC engages AmeriCorps members to provide literacy enrichment and tutoring services to PreK students. AmeriCorps members serve as one-on-one tutors and provide research-based interventions to both PreK and K-3 students who are just below proficiency in reading. As of the 2012-2013 school year, more than 1,100 AmeriCorps members implemented the program in 652 schools or sites and 184 school districts across the state of Minnesota.

OnCorps: A web-based database that stores information about students receiving MRC services. The database records student demographic information, assessment data, the amount of tutoring services students received, and

other data such as: the number of books sent home, the number of times student's journals were completed, and family participation in MRC services

PreK: Preschool.

Educator Corps: Educator Corps members are current employees who are in a teaching position at the site. This member continues to fulfill their regular teaching responsibilities, but also incorporates specific MRC strategies in their instruction.

Program Coordinator: An employee of Minnesota Reading Corps, responsible for providing administrative oversight to the Minnesota Reading Corps program on a regional level, including member management, site management, and compliance with all AmeriCorps regulations. The Program Coordinator oversees regional recruitment efforts, works together with service sites in the interviewing, selection, and placement process for members.

Progress monitoring: A scientifically-based practice using weekly 1-minute reading tests to assess students' academic performance and evaluate the effectiveness of an intervention. Progress monitoring data helps teaching teams determine the effectiveness of interventions then make adjustments to instruction to ensure students reach their next benchmark target. For K-3, progress monitoring is conducted with all students receiving MRC tutoring each week by MRC members using 1-minute AIMSWeb tests. The scores are entered into AIMSWeb and used to create graphs that represent each student's progress relative to a specific intervention. For Pre-K, progress monitoring occurs monthly, for students receiving Tier 2 and 3 one-to-one intervention services.

RtI: Response to Intervention (RtI) is a practice of academic and behavior interventions designed to identify and provide early effective assistance to underperforming students. Research-based interventions are implemented and frequent progress monitoring is conducted to assess student response and progress. When students do not make progress, increasingly more intense interventions are introduced.

SEEDS: The SEEDS model is an interactive, skills-focused curriculum based on current research in early childhood education, child development, emergent literacy, and effective teaching. Seeds is a relationship-based professional development program that provides a map to help adults *intentionally* demonstrate behaviors throughout their daily interactions with children that enrich academic growth and promote social/emotional well-being. SEEDS interaction include the following elements: Sensitivity – Look, listen, and ask questions to become aware of each child's needs, thoughts, abilities and feelings; Encouragement – Use intentional affirmations and positive non-verbal communication to create a shared positive learning environment; Education – Embed the "Big 5" literacy skills in daily routines (vocabulary, conversation, phonological awareness, book and print rules, and letter knowledge); Development of Skills Through Doing – Help children explore their world through hands-on learning; Self-Image Support– Balance the SEEDS quality interactions to support a child's feeling of being respected and capable.

ServeMinnesota: State Commission on AmeriCorps programs in Minnesota and responsible in Minnesota Law for Minnesota Reading Corps.

Service hours: The required hours of service AmeriCorps members must complete in order to fulfill their 11 months of service to AmeriCorps, and in return receive a living allowance and an education award to pay for college or pay back student loans. All full time members, K-3, Community Corps, and Educator Corps, must complete 1700 hours of service. Part time members must complete 920 hours. Service hours can be fulfilled not only through members' time tutoring or working in the classroom, but also through participation in community and other school activities.

Summer Institute: A multi-day training program conducted over the summer to introduce new and old members, Internal Coaches, and Master Coaches to the Reading Corps program. The Institute consists of learning about the theories behind the program, the techniques used to implement the program, and the administrative components of

the program. Education experts train Members and Coaches on all aspects of the program, and also provide time for practicing the techniques and the interventions. The Institute is also the time when most members will meet their Internal and Master Coaches for the first time.

Tier 1-3: Tier 1, 2, and 3 are the three "tiers" of a tiered instructional process lying at the core of the RtI model. Student scores on general outcome measure (e.g., AIMSWeb or IGDI) referenced to specific benchmarks determine a student's tier placement. The instruction that is then provided to students is based upon their respective tiers. Tier 1 students, approximately 75-80% of the population, are at the "Universal Level" and benefit from the standard whole class core literacy curriculum. They do not require supplemental instruction. Students who score in Tier 2 range, 15-20%, are those whose assessment scores are below the expected levels of achievement (benchmark) and are at risk for academic failure but are still above levels considered to indicate a high risk for failure. Tier 2 students typically are eligible for supplemental small group instruction. Students whose scores place them into Tier 3, approximately 5-10% of students, are considered to be at high risk for academic failure. They are typically offered one-to-one supplemental interventions and individualized educational plans.

*Tier 1 Instruction: In PreK programs, this is instruction that students receive in the general education classroom. It includes Reading Corps directed intentional teaching with embedded and explicit instruction. In K-3 programs, this is considered the core literacy instruction provided in the classrooms for all students.

*Tier 2 Instruction: (PreK program term) Provides additional, more intense instruction to children identified as needing extra help in targeted skill areas. Tier 2 instruction is in addition to Tier 1 instruction.

*Tier 3 Instruction: (PreK program term) Provides the most intense intervention approach for children identified as needing extra help in a targeted skill area. Tier 3 instruction builds onto Tier 2 instruction by providing more individualized and intense instruction.

Process Assessment of the Minnesota Reading Corps

February 2013

The Corporation for National and Community Service

The mission of the Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS) is to improve lives, strengthen communities, and foster civic engagement through service and volunteering. CNCS, a federal agency, engages more than five million Americans in service through AmeriCorps, Senior Corps, the Social Innovation Fund, the Volunteer Generation Fund, and other programs, and leads the President's national call to service initiative, United We Serve. For more information, visit NationalService.gov.

Minnesota Reading Corps

Minnesota Reading Corps is a statewide literacy initiative of ServeMinnesota that blends the people power of AmeriCorps members with the science of how children learn to read. Trained AmeriCorps members provide individualized tutoring and proven interventions to those children who are at risk for not reading at grade level. Since 2003, Minnesota Reading Corps has helped more than 100,000 struggling readers, age 3 to grade 3, progress toward reading proficiency and the program has expanded into seven additional states and Washington, D.C. For more information, please visit MinnesotaReadingCorps.org.

NORC at the University of Chicago

NORC at the University of Chicago is an independent research organization headquartered in downtown Chicago with additional offices in the University of Chicago campus, the Washington, D.C. metro area, Atlanta, Boston, and San Francisco. With clients throughout the world, NORC collaborates with government agencies, foundations, education institutions, nonprofit organizations, and businesses to provide data and analysis that support informed decision making in key areas including health, education, crime, justice, and energy.

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