



Community innovation to mobilize Minnesota's social capital so every child is wired to read proficiently

STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

Minnesota's Rally to Read Big Hairy Audacious Goal (BHAG): Transform Minnesota to the state with the highest reading proficiency with the fewest racial inequities than any state and accomplish it with a “fierce urgency of now.”

Benchmarks of Success: Every child in Minnesota is wired to read by age 3 and reads proficiently at every grade level.

How? Launch Grassroots Community Reading Coalitions to mobilize support and establish community-based strategies to achieve the BHAG. These action-oriented grassroots coalitions will be led by parents, early childhood care providers, teachers, literacy experts, pediatricians, health care providers, faith communities, civic organizations, corporate CEOs, professional sports teams, nonprofit organizations, famous musicians, artists and actors, elected officials, state agencies, higher education institutional leaders and other influencers.

Initiate a Community Innovation Process to Mobilize Minnesota's Abundant Social Capital: Community Reading Coalitions, led by community members trained in a Community Innovation Process will examine the need within the community, increase collective understanding of the issue, generate ideas based on best practice, test and implement solutions, and monitor progress to achieve results. The Community Innovation Process is:

- Action oriented
- Focused on results – strategies that achieve the BHAG
- Infused with urgency
- Designed for targeted universalism
- Reflective and respectful of the community and is culturally curated
- Using trendline data of the general population and of subgroups who experience inequities
- Accountable to core measures of success
- Tapping the wisdom of community early childhood educators, teachers, and literacy experts
- Optimizing brain development from before birth to age 3
- Grounded in empirical best practices and informed by the science of reading, neuroscience, brain development, early childhood development, school readiness, and workplace readiness.
- Building on successful initiatives already operating in the community
- Not bogged down in cross agency bureaucracy, unfocused meetings or cumbersome decision-making processes

Build on what exists and what works: Map successful community-based science of reading programs, early childhood learning programs, organizations, and tutoring initiatives that currently exist. Scale up these efforts and innovate new approaches to augment the classroom reading education reforms of the MN Read Act. Tap the local expertise of teachers, early childhood care and education providers, pediatricians, medical professionals and those with keen insight into what works and what is needed to reach the goal.

Begin before birth to maximize the unprecedented brain development (80%) that occurs in the first 3 years of a child's life. A child's brain generates 100,000 new neurons each day. These neurons either get put to use or the child's brain prunes them – they wither and never return. Literacy skill development begins at birth.

What constitutes a “community” will be self-determined. Communities could be constituted based on:

- Geography (including, schools, school districts, towns, regions etc.),
 - Demographic identity (including nationalities, ethnic groups, tribal nations,, faith communities, language of origin, gender, age),
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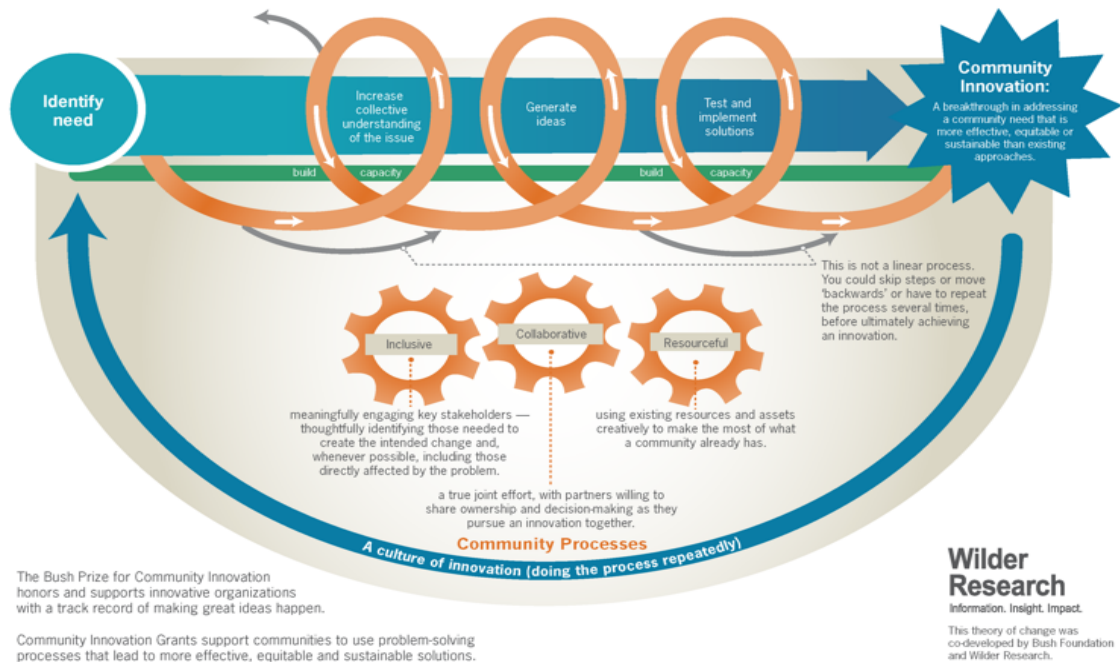
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- Participation in a program (including pre-school, child care, Early Childhood Family Education, Head Start, afterschool, Boys and Girls Clubs, etc.)

The Facilitated Community Innovation Process guides a community toward achieving the goal. The process explores:

- How is the community doing with reading proficiency?
 - Examine reading proficiency data trends for the entire community and subgroups who experience inequities.
- Explore “what is the story behind the data?”
 - How does the community interpret / understand what is going on?
 - What is contributing to these statistics?
- Who are the partners who have a role to play in achieving the BHAG?
- What works to improve reading scores?
 - How does empirical evidence inform our community strategies?
 - What strategies would work best in this community?
- Determine an action plan.
 - What are the three best ideas/strategies?
 - What are some low cost / no cost ideas?
- Establish how the community will measure progress. What are the benchmarks of success?

Community Innovation Process Graphic Description





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Minnesota's Rally to Read will collect measures of success from Community Literacy Coalitions, share best practices emerging from Community Literacy Coalitions and assure the resources necessary to accelerate achievement of the goal that every MN child reads proficiently.

Why? 500,000 K-12 students in Minnesota cannot read proficiently. While the problem crosses the socioeconomic strata of our state, it disproportionately impacts those living in pockets of poverty and in communities of Black, Indigenous and People of Color. MN has one of the worst racial reading gaps in the country. Teaching a child to read is one of the best strategies for improving racial equity in MN. It is the one civil rights disadvantage we know how to cure.

The Economic and Social Return on Investment: The consequences of a child not being wired to read by age 3 and able to read proficiently by 3rd grade are staggering. It erodes a child's self-esteem, confidence and triggers shame. For many it becomes a pipeline to prison. Children unable to read by grade three are more likely to get poor grades, be truant, drop out of school, end up in special education, have discipline problems, and enter the juvenile justice system. The ripple effect impacts the family, livelihood, community, health and has a toxic effect on the workplace and the economic engine of the state.

We either invest in literacy now, or pay for the consequences in the future. Economists, including our homegrown champion of early childhood education, Art Rolnick, former Senior VP and Director of Research at the Minneapolis Federal Reserve Bank has calculated an inflation adjusted 18% return on investment.



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WHO WE ARE

BOARD OF DIRECTORS



Gwen Aduke-Matthews

Vocal artist and Founding Board Member of NdCAD (Network for the Development of Children of African Descent)

Gwen is a singer, producer, songwriter, poet, vocal designer and coach who's performed nationally and internationally and has been twice inducted into the Minnesota Music Hall of Fame. Gwen was a founding board member of the Network for the Development of Children of African Descent.



Jendayi Berry

Artist for the Socially Conscious Disrupters / CEO, JBA Decorative

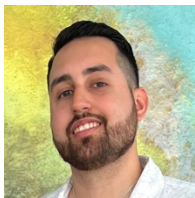
Jendayi's work sits at the cross-sections of art, storytelling, activism and innovation. He pulls from a wide array of inspirations and mediums to present paradigm shifts on topics focused on love, excellence, social justice and nature. He is passionate about literacy as an essential expression of cultural identity.



Dr. Stanley Brown, Ed.D,

Coordinator of Equity and Inclusion, Hopkins School District / Adjunct Professor at Hamline Univ.

Stanley's work strives to close the "opportunity gap" through conversations on the dynamics of race, culture, and ethnicity and its impact on academic success. He is an accomplished facilitator, trainer and professor.



Ricardo DeSantiago – Torres; M.Ed., M.A.

Assistant Principal Anderson United Middle School, Minneapolis Public Schools

Ricardo is committed to supporting diverse learning communities by fostering positive and dynamic learning environments that are student-centered. His specialty is teaching English as a second language. He recently completed a M.ED. in Educational Leadership and PK-12 Administrative Licensure Certificate.



Roslyn Harmon

Mayor Golden Valley Minnesota, Executive Director of Dispute Resolution Center

Roslyn serves as a mayor, ordained pastor, executive director, family and couples coach and educator. Regardless of the role, Roslyn is a healer with a deep understanding of restorative justice and the importance of having everyone feel they are seen, their voice heard and that they matter.



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Tim Munkeby

Published author, educator, advocate for early childhood education

After teaching in MN and Columbia, Tim founded a successful financial planning firm, lectured at universities and published several books. Tim is committed to making sure every child has a nurturing advocate. His writing pokes at systems that create injustices in hopes to inspire those who believe they can still make a difference to do so.



Eric Olson

Superintendent of Monticello School District

Eric's enthusiasm, credibility and deep commitment to the success of every student made him the ideal leader to champion the first prototype Rally to Read community. His call to action spurred an avalanche of community support. As Superintendent, he tirelessly works to develop student and employee leaders while building a culture of continuous improvement.



Neerja Singh

Hennepin County Area Manager, Children's Mental Health / Adjunct Professor at Univ. of St. Thomas / Bush Foundation Leadership Fellow

Neerja is an international champion of women's leadership and a behavioral health leader who advocates for those most impacted by policies and practices to have an active voice and power in making decisions. She believes in incorporating traditional and cultural sources of knowledge into decision-making.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR AND EX OFFICIO BOARD MEMBER



Tim Reardon

Tim is a seasoned executive, consultant and professor who aspires to accelerate opportunities to break the cycle of generational poverty and racial injustice in Minnesota. He brings a track record of creating authentic mutually respectful community relationships, implementing evidence-based strategies, building multi-sector partnerships/collaborations and inspiring people to give their time, talent and treasure for a worthy cause.



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LEGISLATIVE CO-AUTHORS FOR MINNESOTA'S RALLY TO READ APPROPRIATIONS BILL

Senator Kelly Morrison

Senator Jim Abeler

Representative Bianca Virnig

Representative Dave Pinto

Representative Mary Francis Clardy

Representative Maria Isa Perez-Vega

Former Representative Heather Edelson (*Current Hennepin County Commissioner*)

SUPPORTERS OF MN RALLY TO READ

Bernadeia Johnson

Former Superintendent Minneapolis
Public Schools

Barb Yates

Former Executive Director, Think Small

Todd Otis

Public Affairs Consultant, early
childhood advocate

Peter Hutchinson

Former Minneapolis Public Schools
Superintendent, Former Independence
Party Candidate for Governor of MN

Tom Horner

Public Affairs Consultant, Former
Independence Party Candidate for
Governor of MN

Senator Kelly Morrison

MN State Senate

Representative Mike Frieberg

MN State Representative

Councilperson Rebecca Noecker

City of St. Paul

Elliot James, PhD

Associate Professor of History, University
of Minnesota Morris

Tom Delaney, EdS School Psych

Minnesota Department of Education

Frank Forsberg

Forsberg Consulting

Greg Brolsma

Retired Chief of Police Fairmont Police
Dept. and Board member of Reach out
and Read MN

Monica Martin

Monticello Rotary Club and member of
Latinos Helping Latinos

Bill Svrluga

Founder and Executive Director of
Before Racism

Roger Sheldon

Emeritus Professor of Pediatrics
(Neonatal-Perinatal Medicine), The
University of Oklahoma College of
Medicine

Pat Mancini

Mancini's Char House

**Endorsed by the MN Character Council
(members include):**

Matt Bostrom

Founder/Consultant, Center for Values-
Based Initiatives

David Foster

Retired LTC, U.S. Army Recruiting
Battalion Minneapolis



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Michael Hartoonian

Professor (retired), Universities of
Minnesota and Wisconsin

Suwana Kirkland

Director, Dakota County Community
Corrections

Todd Leko

President, International Business
Development Council

Bill Mittlefehldt

Consultant, Cross Currents

Ambrose R. Russell

Founder/Executive Director, The Inner
Hero

Don Salverda

Leadership & Management Consultant

Barbara Shin

Education Equity Consultant

Stephen B. Young

Global Executive Director, Caux Round
Table

Deborah Yungner

Founder, ERBUS LifeGRID Technologies

TESTIMONIALS

"In St. Paul, we want every child to get critical early learning, so they can be wired to read by age 3 and reading proficiently by grade 3. Mobilizing communities to "Rally to Read" can help make that happen."

Councilperson Rebecca Noecker, St Paul City Council

"I'm pleased, happy and over the moon excited that the MN Rally to Read Community Innovation Forum in Monticello went well. It is an ambitious, yet doable goal when a community works together to achieve the highest reading proficiency with the fewest racial inequities. It is clear the community wants to own this challenge and wants to be a winning team. Moonshots are possible."

Bernadeia Johnson, former Superintendent of Minneapolis Public Schools

"The foundation for reading occurs in the first three years of life through exposure to language and books. Let's help all of our children be ready for success in school. The Minnesota Rally to Read can bring our communities together to do just that."

Todd Otis, Early Childhood Advocate

"MN Rally to Read's Community Innovation Action Planning Process is designed to mobilize Minnesota's unprecedented social capital to solve the problem that children aren't reading proficiently. It augments what schools are doing to incorporate the science of reading into classrooms that is now mandated by the MN Read Act. It recognizes 'it takes a village' to create proficient readers."

Tim Reardon, MN Rally to Read Facilitator

"I have been writing for years – articles, essays, editorials, even a novel (The Advocate) – regarding the positive impact of early childhood education not only on children but all of us. Yet changes seem



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to evolve at a snail's pace. Involving a community in a "Rally to Read," grass-roots movement will get the right people involved to make things happen: ensuring ALL kids in a community are "wired to read by 3," and more likely to "read proficiently at their grade level."

Tim Munkeby, Published author, educator, advocate for early childhood education

"The Minnesota Rally to Read offers a crucial element for ridding our state of the inability to read proficiently--which now affects nearly half of our school children at most grade levels. The crucial element is beginning at the beginning. Language learning begins in the first few weeks and months of life, and all later gains are built on knowing the meaning of many words before ever getting to "school". One cannot learn to decode and understand the written word if one does not know the spoken word. The MN Rally to Read starts at the start with parents, adds family and child care teachers, and using talking, playing, reading and singing, takes advantage of the fastest brain growth and fastest learning of our entire lives."

Roger Sheldon, Emeritus Professor of Pediatrics (Neonatal-Perinatal Medicine), The University of Oklahoma College of Medicine