

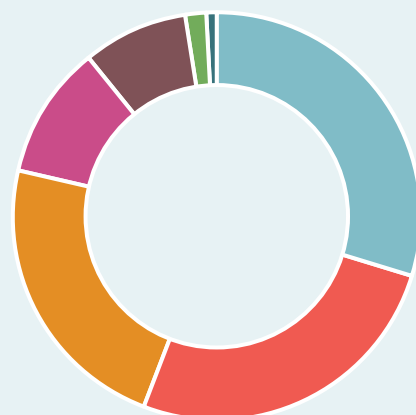
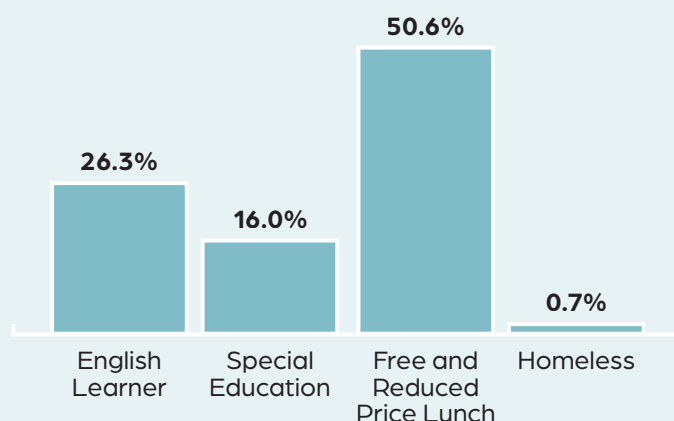
Literacy Best Practice *in Action*

A PROFILE OF **MONROE ELEMENTARY**

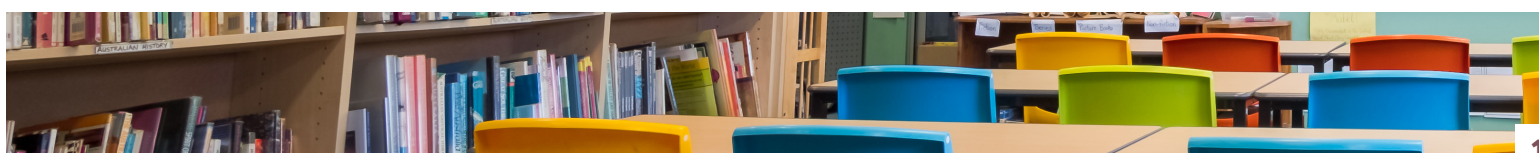
As schools in Minnesota begin to implement the sweeping changes required under the Read Act, many leaders are looking for guidance on making large shifts in literacy instruction, curriculum, and professional development. The school profiled here, Monroe Elementary in Anoka-Hennepin Public School District, can offer insights as it had already begun shifting to science of reading-based literacy instruction before the Read Act's passage. **Read on for insights from teachers, literacy coaches, administrators, and parents from Monroe on key changes and their takeaways.**

SCHOOL DEMOGRAPHICS

- Monroe Elementary School
- Brooklyn Park, Minnesota
- Anoka-Hennepin Public School District
- Serves pre-K through Grade 5
- Enrolled 539 students in 2024
- Math, Science, and Engineering Magnet School
- Majority Students of Color and/or Low-Income Households



Asian	29.9%
White	26.0%
Black	22.8%
Latino	10.6%
Multiracial	8.5%
American Indian	1.7%
Other Indigenous Peoples	0.6%



THE SEED FOR CHANGE

Monroe Elementary School began changing its approach to literacy after a staff member participated in a LETRS (Language Essentials for Teachers of Reading and Spelling) training from the Minnesota Department of Education in 2019. She said the training “flipped me over upside down” and made her question their literacy methods. She brought those thoughts to Monroe’s principal, who was supportive of shifting to evidence-based practices, and the school started with one second grade teacher using the Bridge2Read materials in 2021. In a short amount of time, that teacher saw significant student growth, causing her team to begin using Bridge2Read. Word spread as teachers collaborated and analyzed student data. By the end of the year, many teachers in grades K-3 began implementing Bridge2Read as part of their literacy block. Beginning in the 2022-23 school year, all K-3 instructors now use Bridge2Read in their foundational reading instruction.

THE CHALLENGES

- **“It’s hard to move a system.”** Even after seeing success in data from K-2 classrooms and a tremendous shift in the rigor of books being checked out from the school library, building buy-in for a district-wide shift to a new way of teaching has not been easy. Since this was a grassroots effort, the process for approving instructional materials needed to be revisited and that has taken time. While this is still a work in progress, Bridge2Read is being piloted at all 25 Anoka-Hennepin Elementary schools and administrators believe the demonstrable success in results in K-2 and other markers of student achievement are indicators that they are moving in the right direction.

WHY IT’S WORKING

Interviewees highlighted several themes around why the new approach to literacy is showing success:

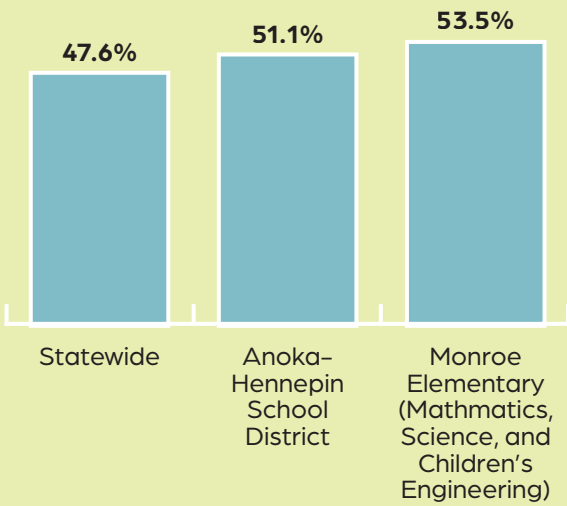
- **Collaboration and trust between teachers and administrators.** All interviewees mentioned the collaborative nature of this change. Rather than it being a top-down decision, there is a clear culture of teamwork between administrators and teachers.
 - All teachers receive coaching, anywhere from twice a month to 3 times a week, depending on their experience with the curriculum.
 - When teachers see their colleagues doing something new that is effective, it “spreads like wildfire” and they want the same progress for their own students. The teacher who piloted Bridge2Read at Monroe said that if she had to stop using this curriculum, she would quit. Her passion for and results from this curriculum motivated other teachers to adopt it.
 - Parent interviewees report that this comes through to them. There is a clear culture of teamwork and community, and “the help is always there.”
- **Structured, sequential, and repetitive nature of evidence-based curriculum.** Students know what to expect and come to rely on the routine.
 - Several teachers mentioned that the repetition and structure builds confidence in their students. One said “they’re not afraid to try because they know the pattern.”
 - Teachers point to the routine of starting every day with 30 minutes of phonics is “comforting” for their students and if they ever miss a day, students will ask about it.
 - Every teacher interviewed said they’ve never seen gains like this before, and parents with older children who attended other schools reported a substantial difference in their children’s confidence and skills, which they attributed to both the curriculum and the culture at Monroe.

THE RESULTS

School-wide implementation of the Bridge2Read curriculum began just two years ago, with only one year of state test data available. Still, assessment data show early signs of progress:

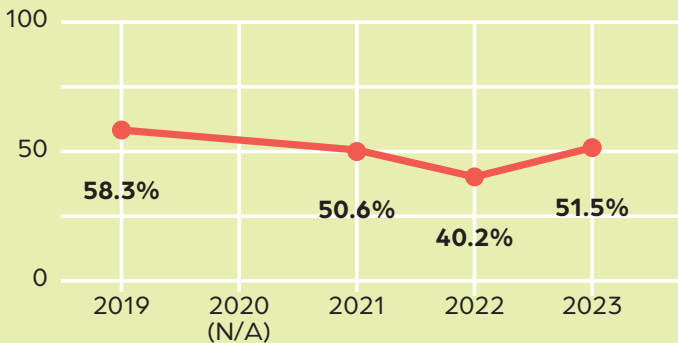
2023 MCA Reading Proficiency

- ▶ Students at Monroe are scored higher than the state and district average in MCA reading for 2023.



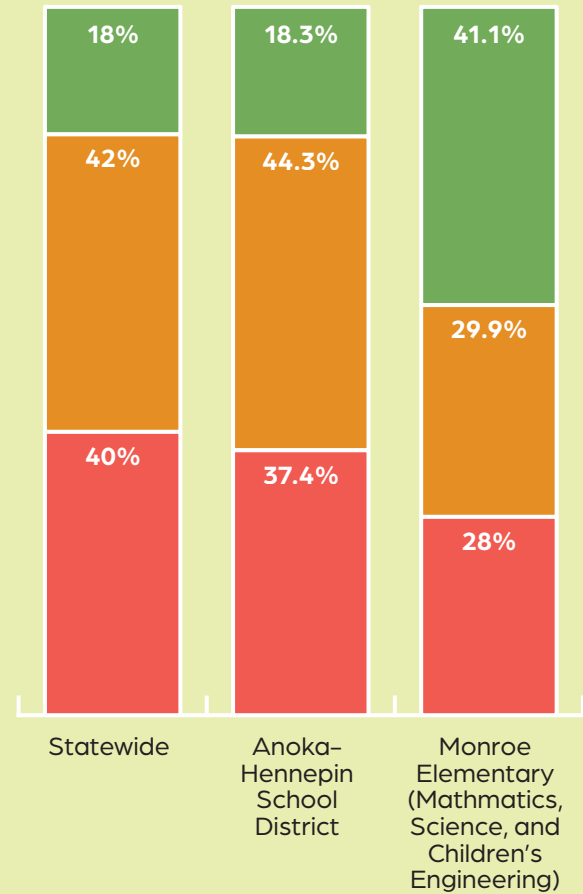
Students Meeting Reading Standards Over Time

- ▶ Trendlines over time show that Monroe students are starting to recover from COVID-19 learning loss. While MCA reading scores are not at pre-pandemic levels, they jumped over 10 percentage points between 2022 and 2023.



2023 MCA Reading Progress

- ▶ Student progress from year-to-year was significantly higher at Monroe than the state and district MCA average.



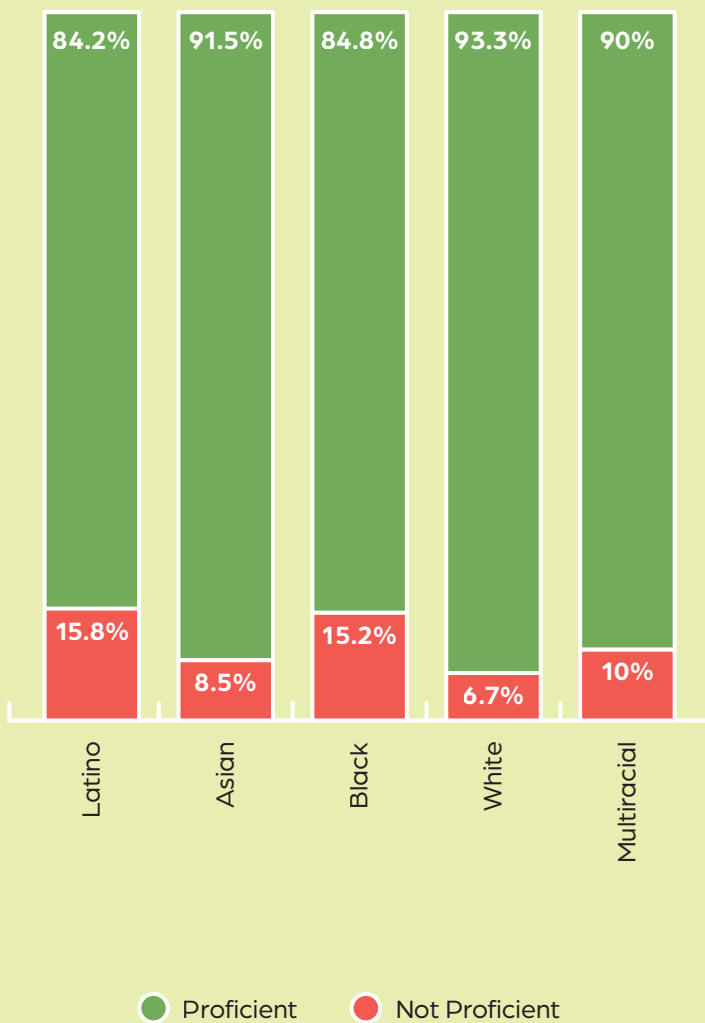
- Achievement Level Improved
- Achievement Level Maintained
- Achievement Level Decreased or Stayed "Does Not Meet Standards"

[MORE RESULTS](#) ▶

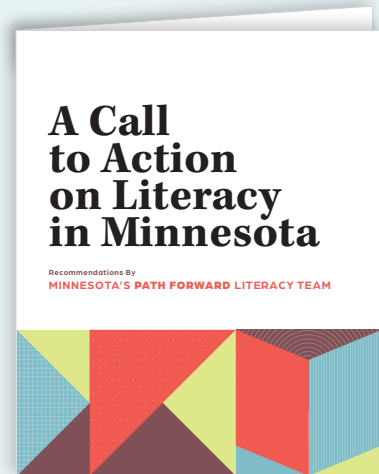
THE RESULTS (CONT'D)

FastBridge earlyReading Assessment for Kindergarten and First Grade

- ▶ Kindergarten and first grade Fastbridge EarlyReading screening from Spring 2024 shows 90% of students are reaching proficiency indicators.



Note: this data represents all students in kindergarten and first grade at Monroe, including English learners and special education students.



Learn more about the state of Minnesota's literacy education by reading **"A Call to Action on Literacy in Minnesota: Recommendations By Minnesota's Path Forward Literacy Team"**

To address Minnesota's current literacy crisis, literacy experts joined together to help identify the strengths and challenges of Minnesota's current system, break down the impacts of recently-passed legislation such as the Read Act, and outline a proposed action plan moving forward.



Read the Report
EdAlliesmn.org/research