

Response to Don Severson

The following questions and concerns are submitted to you for your consideration regarding the "findings and recommendations" of the MMSD K-12 Literacy Program Evaluation report:

1. What findings and recommendations are there for 'year-around' literacy experiences to help mitigate 'losses' over the summer months in achievement gains during the traditional academic year?

Although "summer loss" was not a particular focus of discussion during the evaluation process, there are several ways in which the recommendations address reducing the impact of summer reading loss. These include:

- **Recommendation I – curricular consistency will provide for a more seamless connection with content and instruction in summer school, Saturday school (pending funding) and after school supports.**
- **Recommendation II – more explicit instruction focused in early grades will allow students to read for enjoyment at earlier ages.**
- **Recommendation III – a well-developed intervention plan will follow a student through summer school and into the following academic year**

2. What are the findings and recommendations regarding parental (significant adults in student's life) participation, training, evaluation and accountability in the literacy learning process?

Parental participation opportunities to support their children's enjoyment and achievement in literacy include:

- **Family Literacy Nights at various elementary schools and in collaboration with Madison School and Community Recreation.**
- **Town Hall Meetings that provide opportunities for families to share pros and cons of literacy practices at school and home.**
- **Literacy 24-7: Parent training for Spanish speaking families on how to promote literacy learning.**
- **Read Your Heart Out Day: This event builds positive family, community and school relationships with a literacy focus and supports both the family involvement and cultural relevance components of the Madison Metropolitan School District Strategic Plan.**
- **Tera Fortune: Professional development for parents about the Dual Language Immersion Program with a focus on bi-literacy throughout the content areas.**
- **MALDEF Curriculum Training: Nine-week training covering a variety of topics to assist parents in sharing the responsibility of student success and how to communicate effectively in schools.**
- **Regular column in Umoja Magazine: Forum to inform families and community members about educational issues through African American educators' expertise. Several columns have focused on literacy learning at home.**

Training is provided for parents on how to choose literature that:

- **Has positive images that leave lasting impressions**
- **Has accurate, factual information that is enjoyable to read**
- **Contains meaningful stories that reflect a range of cultural values and lifestyles**
- **Has clear and positive perspective for people of color in the 21st century**
- **Contains material that is self affirming**
- **Promotes positive literacy learning at home**

Evaluations of the Read Your Heart Out and Family Literacy Night were conducted by requesting that participating parents, staff, students and community members complete a survey about the success of the event and the effects on student achievement.

3. What are the consequential and remediation strategies for non-performance in meeting established achievement/teaching/support standards for students, staff and parents? What are the accompanying evaluation/assessment criteria?

A District Framework is nearing completion. This Framework will provide clear and consistent expectations and rubrics for all instructional staff and administrators. Improvement will be addressed through processes that include the School Improvement Plans and staff and administrator evaluations processes.

4. Please clarify the future of the Reading Recovery program.

MMSD proposes to maintain Reading Recovery teachers and teacher leaders as an intervention at grade 1. There are currently two Reading Recovery teacher leaders participating in a two-year professional development required to become Reading Recovery teacher leaders. One of these positions will be certified to support English Language Learners. The modifications proposed include: 1) targeting these highly skilled Reading Recovery teachers to specific students across schools based on district-wide data for 2011-12 and 2) integrating the skills of Reading Recovery staff into a comprehensive intervention plan along with skilled interventionists resulting in all elementary schools benefiting from grade 1 reading intervention.

5. How will the literacy learning process be integrated with the identification and development of Talented and Gifted (TAG) students?

The development of a balanced, comprehensive assessment system will result in teachers having more frequent and accurate student data available to tailor instruction. K-12 alignment uses tools such as Measures of Academic Progress (MAP) and Educational Planning and Assessment System (EPAS) are being implemented in Spring, 2011. The Response to Intervention model is based on evidence-based instruction and responds to students who need additional challenge and/or support.

6. What will be the 2010-2011 budgetary priorities and strategies for undertaking the literacy program and resources recommendations outlined in the report?

PreK-12 literacy will be a priority for the 2011-12 budget process. In addition to the prioritization of funding within our budget parameters, MMSD is in the process of writing a major grant (Investing in Innovation – i3) to support the recommendations of the literacy evaluation as a key strategy to close achievement gaps and improve literacy for all students to be ready for college and/or careers.