

Read to Lead

What is Read to Lead?

Read to Lead is a comprehensive effort to make sure Wisconsin students have the most crucial skill they need to excel in life: the ability to read.

By fourth grade, children are no longer learning to read, but reading to learn. Those who struggle with reading at this age are already fighting an uphill battle.

In the spring of 2011, Governor Scott Walker convened the first meeting of the Read to Lead Task Force. This bipartisan team of teachers, legislators, researchers and advocates worked together to reach a consensus on ways to ensure all of our state's children learn to read so they can use reading to learn.

A Disturbing Trend

For years, Wisconsin ranked among the states with the best reading scores. However, over the past fifteen years, our state's performance relative to that of the nation has been especially troubling.

The results from the 2011 National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) 4th grade reading assessment show that while Wisconsin was once ranked among the very top states in the nation, we now rank somewhere in the middle of the pack. Specifically, Wisconsin ranked statistically below only Maine in 1994 with a scale score statistically higher than the national average. In 2011, Wisconsin ranks statistically below 15 states or jurisdictions. **Most striking is that Wisconsin's growth, or lack thereof, between 1994 and 2011 is statistically lower than that of 35 states or jurisdictions and above none.**

Together, the Task Force came up with a plan to identify children who are struggling with reading, and make sure they get the help they need.

The First Phase of the Plan Will:

- Strengthen requirements on literacy for teacher preparation programs
- Identify a reading specialist in every district and hold an annual summit
- Request that the Department of Children and Families strengthen YoungStar to include more specific early literacy criteria
- Phase in early screening beginning in kindergarten
- Form a public-private partnership to fund future initiatives

The Task Force sees this plan as just the beginning. Governor Walker and the members of the task force are committed to taking these and any other steps that may prove necessary to achieve the results we seek.