



Reading and Writing Improvement

e-Newsletter of the CCSSO State Reading Network

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The Reading and Writing Improvement e-newsletter is a free publication from CCSSO focusing on efforts at the state and district level to strengthen the quality of reading and writing instruction and improve students' literacy skills, particularly in high-poverty, low-performing schools. The purpose of this newsletter is to provide links to recent reports, studies, legislative action, and news articles related to reading and writing instruction and student achievement.

To submit a news item, provide feedback, or subscribe/unsubscribe, contact Cindy Prince at cindyp@ccsso.org. If you are having problems reading this file, the PDF version of this newsletter is available at <http://www.ccsso.org/content/pdfs/RWNewsletterNov04.pdf>. The PDF version of the previous issue is available at <http://www.ccsso.org/content/pdfs/RWNewsletterOct04.pdf>.

SOME OF THE TOP STORIES

California asks U.S. Department of Education to waive reading and writing test requirements for English language learners in kindergarten and 1st grade

- Kolber, M. "[State seeks English-learner waiver.](#)" *Sacramento Bee*, November 13, 2004.
- Zehr, M.A. "[Tests of youngest English-learners spark controversy.](#)" *Education Week*, November 17, 2004.

ACT study finds that less than one-quarter of high school students are ready for college-level work in English, math, and science

- [Crisis at the Core: Preparing All Students for College and Work](#)
ACT, 2004, 56 pp.
- Arenson, K. "[Study of college readiness finds no progress in decade.](#)" *New York Times*, October 14, 2004.

Also:

- Arenson, K. "['Virtually no progress' seen in college readiness.](#)" *San Diego Union-Tribune/New York Times*, October 14, 2004.
- Arenson, K. "[ACT study pans college readiness.](#)" *St. Paul Pioneer Press/New York Times*, October 17, 2004.
- Cavanagh, S. "[Students ill-prepared for college, ACT warns.](#)" *Education Week*, October 20, 2004.

Similar results from new California exam show that roughly 4 out of 5 11th graders tested could not read and write well enough to succeed in college-level courses

- Bartindale, B. [“Test shows work needed.”](#) *The (San Jose) Mercury News*, October 14, 2004.
- Maxwell, L. A. [“High schoolers fall short, CSU learns.”](#) *Sacramento Bee*, October 14, 2004.
- Schevitz, T. [“Double dose of bad news for schools in California – NOT READY: Many of state’s high schoolers couldn’t handle college classes, test shows.”](#) *San Francisco Chronicle*, October 14, 2004.
- Bartindale, B. [“Exam tests students on college readiness.”](#) *The (San Jose) Mercury News*, November 2, 2004.

Kentucky moves to set minimum standard for English and math skills students need for college

- Biesk, J. [“Minimum skills for college weighed.”](#) *Lexington (Ky.) Herald-Leader*, November 5, 2004.
- Honawar, V. [“Kentucky seeks to improve college readiness.”](#) *Education Week*, November 17, 2004.

Colleges demanding better freshman writing skills

- Newbart, D. [“30 on ACT? Let’s see if you can write,”](#) *Chicago Sun-Times*, October 17, 2004.
- Rossi, R. [“Writing on deadline for college exams ‘freaking people out.’”](#) *Chicago Sun-Times*, October 17, 2004.
- Nevius, C.W. [“The fallout from testing on writing.”](#) *San Francisco Chronicle*, October 26, 2004.

FEDERAL UPDATE

- Viadero, D. [“Federal File: Research Commissioner.”](#) *Education Week*, November 3, 2004.

Early Reading First

- [Close-up: No Child Left Behind – Early Reading First](#)
U.S. Department of Education, *The Achiever*, 3(14), October 1, 2004

USDE’s Summer Reading Achievers Program

- U.S. Department of Education. [“South Dakota students praised for participating in summer reading program.”](#) Press release, October 1, 2004.
- U.S. Department of Education. [“Pittsburgh students praised for participating in summer reading program.”](#) Press release, October 15, 2004.

President's new education proposals

- The White House. [“Strengthening education and job training opportunities.”](#) Press release, September 2, 2004.

- **Literacy initiatives:**

“Improving Adult Literacy. The President proposed developing a comprehensive web-based literacy tool for adults, which would be made available in public libraries, community colleges, and at social service offices, including Head Start Centers and One-Stop job centers. This literacy tool will increase adult literacy across the U.S.”

“Striving Readers Initiative. The President has proposed a new \$100 million Striving Readers Initiative making available competitive grants to develop, implement, and evaluate effective reading interventions for middle or high school students reading significantly below grade level. This program complements the President's Reading First state grants program, which provides comprehensive, scientifically based reading instruction for children in kindergarten through third grade. The proposal provides funds to approximately 50 to 100 school districts for reading intervention programs to help middle and high school students catch up to their peers in reading.”

STATE UPDATE

Arizona

- ❖ **High school exit exam**

- Madrid, O. [“AIMS test obstructing special-ed students.”](#) *Arizona Republic*, October 27, 2004.

California

- ❖ **Reading achievement**

- Associated Press. [“Thousands of California schools could face federal sanctions.”](#) *San Francisco Chronicle*, October 13, 2004.
- Helfand, D., & Smith, D. [“1,200 schools in state could face federal penalties.”](#) *Los Angeles Times*, October 13, 2004.
- Asimov, N. [“California schools put in program for failing academic standards.”](#) *San Francisco Chronicle*, October 14, 2004.
- Chavez, E. [“More state schools fall short of goals.”](#) *Sacramento Bee*, October 14, 2004.
- Coleman, J. [“Half of California schools miss state academic targets.”](#) *San Diego Union-Tribune*, October 28, 2004.
- Burrell, J. [“School progress slows statewide.”](#) *Contra Costa Times*, October 29, 2004.
- Hull, D., Slonaker, L., & Palmer, G. [“Most schools miss test improvement goals.”](#) *The (San Jose) Mercury News*, October 29, 2004.
- Sturrock, C., & Knight, H. [“Test scores rise again – but at slower pace; Bay mirrors state on Academic Performance Index.”](#) *San Francisco Chronicle*, October 29, 2004.

Colorado

- Yettick, H. [“Schools struggle with mandate.”](#) *Rocky Mountain News*, November 2, 2004.

Hawaii

- Shapiro, T. [“‘Failing’ hardly means it’s bad.”](#) *Honolulu Advertiser*, October 28, 2004.

Illinois

- Banchemo, S., & Little, D. [“Schools pass, but law fails districts.”](#) *Chicago Tribune*, November 12, 2004.

Iowa

- Boone, D. [“Fewer schools get warnings.”](#) *DesMoines Register*, November 1, 2004.
- Jerousek, M. [“Reading, math skills in Iowa fall short.”](#) *DesMoines Register*, November 18, 2004.

Kansas

- Hall Blobaum, M. [“Kansas students show progress on state tests.”](#) *Kansas City Star*, October 13, 2004.

Louisiana

- Thevenot, B. [“Public schools progressing as planned.”](#) *The (New Orleans) Times-Picayune*, October 26, 2004.

Maryland

- Mui, Y. Q. [“Md. warns schools to raise test scores.”](#) *Washington Post*, October 13, 2004.

Massachusetts❖ **Writing instruction**

- Stockton, P. [“The paper route.”](#) *Boston Globe*, October 31, 2004.

❖ **High school exit exam**

- Buote, B. [“Seeking a path to MCAS success.”](#) *Boston Globe*, November 11, 2004.

Michigan❖ **Reading achievement**

- Heath, B., & Hornbeck, M. [“MEAP scores up across area.”](#) *Detroit News*, October 15, 2004.
- Editorial. [“MEAP scores rise but thousands left behind.”](#) *Detroit News*, October 18, 2004.
- MacDonald, C. [“More Mich. high schools fail.”](#) *Detroit News*, November 5, 2004.

❖ **High school exit exam**

- Heinlein, G. [“Michigan to revise 11th-grade MEAP.”](#) *Detroit News*, November 11, 2004.
- Higgins, L. [“Senate votes to toss high school MEAP.”](#) *Detroit Free Press*, November 11, 2004.

Minnesota

- Draper, N. [“New standards open new books in Minnesota schools.”](#) *The (Minneapolis) Star Tribune*, November 15, 2004.

Missouri

- Bower, C., & Howard, T. "[State's goals elude many schools.](#)" *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, November 4, 2004.
- Smith, D. "[Schools fall short of state criteria.](#)" *Kansas City Star*, November 5, 2004.

Nevada

- Associated Press. "[Nevada finds 37 percent of public schools failing 'no child.'](#)" *San Francisco Chronicle*, October 25, 2004.
- Ryan, C. "[37 percent of Nevada schools miss standards.](#)" *Las Vegas Sun*, October 25, 2004.

North Carolina

- Silberman, T. "[Board won't adjust sixth-grade test scores.](#)" *The (Raleigh, N.C.) News & Observer*, November 5, 2004.

Pennsylvania

- Hardy, D. "[Rule changes aided school progress.](#)" *Philadelphia Inquirer*, October 28, 2004.

Rhode Island

- Rhode Island Department of Education. "[R.I. students make significant gains on 2004 state assessments.](#)" News release, October 25, 2004.
- Associated Press. "[State education officials develop common curriculum.](#)" *Boston Globe*, November 8, 2004.

South Dakota

- South Dakota Department of Education. "[2004 state report card shows steady progress statewide.](#)" Press release, August 9, 2004.
- South Dakota Department of Education. "[Students' writing 'proficient' at grade nine.](#)" Press release, n.d.
- South Dakota Department of Education. "[SD Board of Education adopts revised reading and communication standards; Schools to use for 04-05 school year.](#)" Press release, n.d.

Utah

- Toomer-Cook, J., & Erickson, T. "[More Utah schools meeting federal law.](#)" *The (Salt Lake City) Deseret Morning News*, November 2, 2004.

Vermont

- Marx, C. R. "[Vt. students' scores better; gaps remain.](#)" *Rutland Herald*, October 19, 2004.

Virginia❖ **High school exit exam**

- Helderman, R. S. "[Graduation rate in Va. is steady with SOLs.](#)" *Washington Post*, October 19, 2004.

- Ress, D. "[Graduation rates hold steady in Va.](#)," *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, October 19, 2004.
- Sampson, Z. C. "[Class of '04 graduates 94 percent of students.](#)" *Washington Post*, October 19, 2004.
- Ress, D. "[Diplomas requiring SOLs drop.](#)" *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, October 21, 2004.

Washington

❖ *High school exit exam*

- Trotter, A. "[Washington state may narrow its proficiency targets.](#)" *Education Week*, October 20, 2004.
- Roberts, G. "[Panel pulls back on lowering WASL scores needed to graduate.](#)" *Seattle Post-Intelligencer*, November 9, 2004.
- Shaw, L. "[Panel fails to reach agreement on WASL.](#)" *Seattle Times*, November 9, 2004.

West Virginia

- Associated Press. "[53 W. Va. counties fail NCLB: No Child Left Behind requires whole county to meet guides.](#)" *The (Morgantown, W.V.) Dominion Post*, October 8, 2004.

LOCAL UPDATE

Atlanta area

- Reinolds, C. "[Students' promotion may hinge on classes.](#)" *Atlanta Journal-Constitution*, November 4, 2004.

Baltimore

- Rosen, J. "[Poring over city's adult literacy problem.](#)" *Baltimore Sun*, October 13, 2004.

Boston area

- Dietz, R. "[Celeb athletes tote books to sell students on reading.](#)" *Boston Herald*, November 18, 2004.

Buffalo area

- Barak, T. "[In the running for a record.](#)" *Education Week*, October 20, 2004.

Chicago area

- *Chicago Sun-Times* staff. "[Dominican, CPS team up to recruit, train new librarians.](#)" *Chicago Sun-Times*, November 9, 2004.

Des Moines, Iowa

- Vipond, B. "[Dogs become kids' reading buddies.](#)" *Des Moines Register*, October 26, 2004.
- Lavia Byrd, L. "[Reading Recovery.](#)" *Des Moines Register*, November 12, 2004.
- Pieper, L. "[Program lets families use school library after hours.](#)" *Des Moines Register*, November 18, 2004.

- Pieper, L. [“King Academy program raises money, encourages students, families to read.”](#) *Des Moines Register*, November 18, 2004.

Detroit

- Pratt, C., Walsh-Sarnecki, P, & Turk, V. [“In state takeover, student scores lag,”](#) *Detroit Free Press*, October 16, 2004.

Minneapolis

- Brandt, S. [“Minneapolis schools chief shares achievement plan,”](#) *The (Minneapolis) Star Tribune*, October 27, 2004.

New Orleans area

- Barbier, S. [“Performance in 6 of 12 schools is up, report says,”](#) *The (New Orleans) Times-Picayune*, October 26, 2004.
- Rasheed, A. [“Most N.O. schools show some gain in overall scores,”](#) *The (New Orleans) Times-Picayune*, October 26, 2004.
- Waller, M. [“Struggling school seeks to raise students’ sights,”](#) *The (New Orleans) Times-Picayune*, November 11, 2004.

New York City

- Herszenhorn, D. [“City to restore 25 libraries in schools by Fall 2006,”](#) *New York Times*, November 9, 2004.
- Hu, W. [“Saturday classes begin for 5th graders at risk,”](#) *New York Times*, November 7, 2004.

Philadelphia area

- Russ, V. [“Parents floored by library’s basement ‘dumping.’”](#) *Philadelphia Daily News*, November 12, 2004.
- Dean, M. [“Mini library to replace real ones,”](#) *Philadelphia Daily News*, November 18, 2004.

Portland area

- Lopez, L. [“Reading, writing, ‘rithmetic... and more reading,”](#) *The Oregonian*, October 28, 2004.

Sacramento area

- Wiener, J. [“Schools miss targets for improvement,”](#) *Sacramento Bee*, October 31, 2004.

San Francisco Bay Area

- Sturrock, C. [“Book clubs with attitude: District embraces method that fosters critical reading,”](#) *San Francisco Chronicle*, October 26, 2004.

Seattle area

- Thompson, L. [“Rural districts put to the test,”](#) *Seattle Times*, November 17, 2004.

Tampa

- Zink, J. [“Tampa employees get paid time to mentor kids,”](#) *St. Petersburg Times*, October 27, 2004.

READING RESEARCH AND POLICY

- Letter to the editor. [“More on how to produce lifelong reading habits.”](#) *Education Week*, October 20, 2004.
- *Education Week’s* Live Chat transcript: [G. Reid Lyon on Evidence-Based Reading Policy](#), October 28, 2004.
- Langland, C. [“Provocative report issued at dyslexia conference.”](#) *Philadelphia Inquirer*, November 5, 2004.

STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

- Madrid, O. [“AIMS test obstructing special-ed students.”](#) *Arizona Republic*, October 27, 2004.
- Alphonso, C. [“Paggers offer deaf students independence, literacy skills.”](#) *The (Toronto) Globe and Mail*, November 3, 2004, A20.

ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS

- Hannah-Jones, N. [“Spanish studies might boost Latinos’ English skills.”](#) *The (Raleigh, N.C.) News & Observer*, October 13, 2004.
- Lopez, L. [“Native language classes aim to ease transition to English.”](#) *The Oregonian*, October 21, 2004.

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Also:
 - Strauss, V. [“Kindergarteners seeing less playtime.”](#) *Arizona Republic/Washington Post*, October 29, 2004.
 - Strauss, V. [“Full-time kindergartens see less play, more work.”](#) *Detroit News/Washington Post*, October 31, 2004.
- Jan, T., & Tench, M. [“Boston kindergartners to receive report cards.”](#) *Boston Globe*, November 10, 2004.
- Jacobson, L. [“Preschool uses innovative methods to teach math and language.”](#) *Education Week*, November 17, 2004.

ADOLESCENT LITERACY

- Manzo, K.K. [“Reading researchers outline elements needed to achieve adolescent literacy.”](#) *Education Week*, October 20, 2004.
- Thompson, L. [“Schools take teens back to 2 of the R’s,”](#) *Seattle Times*, October 27, 2004.
- National Center for Family Literacy. [“National Center for Family Literacy receives planning grant from Carnegie Corporation of New York: Adolescent literacy is focus of grant.”](#) Press release, September 23, 2004.

PROGRAMS THAT PROVIDE FREE BOOKS TO CHILDREN

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- National Center for Family Literacy. "[The National Center for Family Literacy partners with StudyDog to teach low-income children to read.](#)" Press release, October 26, 2004.

SAT

- Schevitz, T. "[Cell-phone lessons prompt students to prepare for SAT.](#)" *San Francisco Chronicle*, October 18, 2004.
- Mathews, J. "[Getting no SAT-isfaction.](#)" *Arizona Republic/Washington Post*, November 5, 2004.
- McGrath, C. "[The new SAT; writing to the test.](#)" *New York Times*, November 7, 2004.
- *Chicago Sun-Times* staff. "[New tests challenge students' concentration.](#)" *Chicago Sun-Times*, November 9, 2004.

PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT

- Winchester, D. "[Session gave parents reading tips for kids.](#)" *St. Petersburg Times*, October 13, 2004.
- Svan, J. "[Stars of PBS' kids' shows visit Pacific bases.](#)" *Stars and Stripes*, October 24, 2004.
- Ryman, A. "[Help your child learn to be a better speller.](#)" *Arizona Republic*, October 26, 2004.
- Snow Smith, C. "[Parents can do several things to foster reading.](#)" *St. Petersburg Times*, October 31, 2004.

RECENT BOOKS, ARTICLES, AND REPORTS

Reading First

- [NWREL Team Evaluates Reading First Programs](#)
Barton, R., *NW Report*, Sep-Oct 2004, 1 page

Curricula

- [Page Turner](#)
Manzo, K.K., *Teacher Magazine*, 16(2), November 1, 2004, pp. 9-10

Reading instruction

- [The Fourth-Grade Reading Classroom](#)
Coley, R. & Coleman, A., Educational Testing Service, September 2004, 32 pp.
- Bushweller, K. "[Reading study rates 4th grade instruction.](#)" *Education Week*, October 20, 2004.

Writing instruction

- [Teacher as Author: Modeling the Writing Process](#)
Polochanin, D., *Classroom Leadership*, 8(3), November 2004
- [A Writer's Notebook: Making Writing Come Alive](#)
Horn, M., *Classroom Leadership*, 8(3), November 2004

Reading achievement gap

- [Measured Progress](#)
Education Trust, October 2004, 8pp.
 - Mezzacappa, D. "[Schools improving, but slowly.](#)" *Philadelphia Inquirer*, October 15, 2004.
 - Ricketts, C. "[Study finds progress in reading, math, but results fall short of standards.](#)" *Seattle Times*, October 15, 2004.
 - Tench, M. "[Schools hit on minority progress.](#)" *Boston Globe*, October 15, 2004.
 - Ricketts, C. "[Report: Reading, math scores up.](#)" *Miami Herald*, October 15, 2004.
 - Associated Press. "[Elementary test scores on right track, study says.](#)" *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, October 15, 2004.
 - Ricketts, C. "[Elementary-level scores improving; Racial gap narrows in reading and math.](#)" *St. Paul Pioneer Press*, October 15, 2004.
 - Viadero, D. "[Report: States see test-score gains.](#)" *Education Week*, October 20, 2004.
 - Yettick, H. "[Schools' gains assailed.](#)" *Rocky Mountain News*, October 21, 2004.
- [Joseph and the Achievement Gap](#)
Groover, P., *Classroom Leadership*, 8(4), December 2004/January 2005

Libraries and student achievement

- [School Libraries Work!](#)
Scholastic Library Research Foundation Paper, 20 pp.
 - Bushweller, K. "[School libraries.](#)" *Education Week*, October 13, 2004.

Adolescent literacy

- [Practical Advice on Reading Across the Curriculum](#)
Reed, B., *Northwest Education*, 10(1), Fall 2004
- [The Two R's: Literacy Lessons for High School](#)
Barton, R., *Northwest Education*, 10(1), Fall 2004
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Biancarosa, G. & Snow, C., Alliance for Excellent Education, 2004, 53 pp.

The Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO) is a nonpartisan, nationwide, nonprofit organization of public officials who head departments of elementary and secondary education in the states, the District of Columbia, the Department of Defense Education Activity, and five U.S. extra-state jurisdictions. CCSSO provides leadership, advocacy, and technical assistance on the major educational issues. The Council seeks member consensus on major educational issues and expresses their views to civic and professional organizations, federal agencies, Congress, and the public.

Our mission statement: The Council of Chief State School Officers, through Leadership, Advocacy, and Service, assists chief state school officers and their organizations in achieving the vision of an American education system that enables all children to succeed in school, work, and life.

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