

Fact Sheet: Pathway Schools Initiative

Education & Learning Program

Early Literacy

The goal of McKnight's early literacy focus area is to dramatically increase the percentage of successful 3rd-grade readers — especially among populations underserved in our schools — and to encourage evidence-based policies and practices that ensure their continued achievement. We have three strategies:

- We support the preparation, recruitment, retention, and continued development of effective teachers and leaders to serve students who need them most.
- We foster successful schools that marry high expectations with high support, promote the use of data, and encourage collaboration.
- We promote aligned pathways bridging PreK and K-12 to promote continuity and consistency for learners.



Mission

The McKnight Foundation, a Minnesota-based family foundation, seeks to improve the quality of life for present and future generations. We use all our resources to attend, unite, and empower those we serve.



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Overview

McKnight's Pathway Schools Initiative aims to develop successful third grade readers in our partner schools across the Twin Cities. McKnight works with five local district and charter schools, the University of Chicago's Urban Education Institute (UEI), and a team of evaluators at SRI International to achieve this goal through:

- Building a student pipeline from PreK-3rd grade that begins with high-quality, full-day early learning experiences and then aligns and integrates curriculum, instruction, and assessment from PreK-3rd grade to ensure that early learning gains are sustained and strengthened;
- Giving teachers meaningful data about student literacy development and providing job-embedded coaching and support to help them use that data and improve instructional practice; and
- Supporting and strengthening school leadership teams to create the conditions for sustained school improvement.

All of the Pathway Schools serve large numbers of Dual Language Learners. The initiative focuses specifically on supporting effective instructional practices for these students.

We invest significant resources in an ongoing external evaluation that informs and enables us to adapt our implementation efforts.

Implementation Tools

In addition to offering significant on-the-ground support in the form of coaching, professional development, and collaborative learning opportunities, we anchor our work in two evidence-based tools developed at UEI: the STEP literacy assessment and the 5Essentials Survey.



STEP is a rigorous, developmental literacy assessment — offered in English and Spanish — that describes student progress from PreK-3rd grade and introduces targeted interventions for students who need additional support.

The 5Essentials survey is based on **5Essentials** over 20 years of research from the University of Chicago, which demonstrates that schools strong in three of five essentials — effective leadership, collaborative teachers, ambitious instruction, involved families, and supportive environment — are 10 times more likely to improve student outcomes in reading and math than schools that are weak in three or more essentials. Based on teacher and student reports, the 5Essentials survey measures a school's strength in these areas.

The Pathway Schools

St. Paul Public Schools

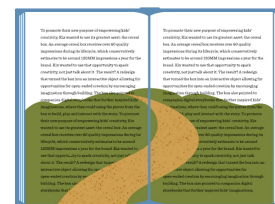
- Paula & Sheila Wellstone Elementary
- St. Paul Muisic Academy

Brooklyn Center Community Schools

- Earle Brown Elementary

Charter Schools

- Academia Cesar Chavez
- Community of Peace Academy



Learn more

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