

**Missouri Education News**  
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**Reading Across the Nation**

*Reading Across the Nation* is designed as a resource for policymakers and professionals who are working to optimize the early language and literacy experiences of young children. By presenting “reading snapshots” for each state, with comparative rankings on literacy indicators, this chartbook will be a useful tool for policy makers and program planners as they consider how to make investments in the early years to enhance literacy and language development. The charts provide detailed state by state information about whether parents are meeting the basic recommendation of daily reading aloud to their children.

Data on frequency of reading to young children are from the National Survey of Children’s Health (2003), in which families of a nationally representative sample of children were interviewed by telephone about early childhood routines (US Department of Health and Human Services, 2005). For each state, data are also presented on fourth grade reading performance from the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) (2005). Reach Out and Read (ROR) National Center data (2007) and US census data (2000) are used to derive proportions of young children ages 0-5 years in each state who are served by ROR, both in the general population and for those families living in or near poverty. Data are also presented on the ratio of young children to libraries for each state.

***The Problem:*** Children entering school not ready to learn

Up to one-third of American children enter kindergarten lacking at least some of the skills needed for a successful learning experience. For too many children, the preschool years have left them without the language skills necessary for literacy acquisition. When children are poor readers by the end of first grade, they are likely to remain so in fourth grade. Interventions in the early years that promote language development are powerful, cost-effective routes to improved school performance. The National Research Council’s Committee on the Prevention of Reading Difficulties in Young Children stated that most reading difficulties can be prevented by promoting language and literacy development. Snow CE, Burns S, Griffin P (Eds) (1998)

***The Solution:*** Parents reading aloud

Parents reading frequently to their children provide language and literacy skills that help children learn to read. Helping children to prepare for the challenge of learning to read before school entry is better than helping them catch up later. Reading aloud is the single most important activity for building the knowledge required for eventual success in reading. Early language skills, the foundation for later reading ability, are based primarily on language exposure and human interaction – parents and other adults talking to young children. The more words parents use when speaking to an

eight-month-old infant, the greater the size of the child's vocabulary at age three. Many children from low-income families hear fewer **4**

Missouri. Report: <http://healthychild.ucla.edu/ROR/States/Missouri.pdf>

The full text is available at

<http://www.ruraledu.org/site/apps/nl/content.asp?c=beJMIZOC1rH&b=3508831&ct=4537855>

### **Five Public Schools Win “Blue Ribbon” Honors**

Five public elementary schools in Missouri have been honored as “No Child Left Behind - Blue Ribbon Schools” by the U.S. Department of Education:

- Brennan Woods Elementary School, Northwest R-I School District
- Conway Elementary School, Ladue School District
- Bessie Ellison Elementary School, St. Joseph School District
- Jefferson Elementary School, Farmington School District
- Westchester Elementary School, Kirkwood School District

The Missouri schools are among 287 outstanding elementary schools that were recognized this week (October 2) by Secretary of Education Margaret Spellings.

To qualify for the prestigious national award, schools must: have at least 40 percent of their students from disadvantaged backgrounds and make dramatic gains in academic performance; or score in the top 10 percent on their respective state tests. In addition, schools must meet the adequate yearly progress (AYP) goals defined by each state for academic achievement in reading and math.

Missouri has produced a bumper crop of young leaders this year, with high school students from across the state serving as national leaders in three student organizations.

## **Young Missourians Provide National Leadership for Student Career Organizations**

Levi Rash (<http://www.fcclainc.org/content/levi-rash/>) was selected Vice President of Membership for the national Family, Career and Community Leaders of America (FCCLA) organization during its annual conference in Orlando, FL., in July. Rash is a senior at South Shelby High School, Shelbina, Mo.

The National FCCLA has more than 230,000 members in middle school and high school. Missouri FCCLA is the fifth largest chapter with 13,700 members. Membership categories include Comprehensive and Occupational. Comprehensive members emphasize a variety of Family and Consumer Sciences Education classes in their plans of study. Occupational members are enrolled in educational programs that prepare them for paid employment in a specific Family and Consumer Sciences-related career.

Michael Miller (mailto:[fblatreas@fbla.org](mailto:fblatreas@fbla.org)) is a senior at Carl Junction High School in Missouri. Miller joined Future Business Leaders of America (FBLA) as a freshman and has competed in district and state business events. After an unsuccessful campaign as a state treasurer candidate, he ran for the national office and won. Most of Miller's time is dedicated to FBLA and its members at the local, district, state and national level. His primary responsibility as treasurer is to oversee national officer travel and compile reports. He is a key contact for four states (Missouri, Nebraska, New Hampshire and Pennsylvania) and works closely with the state chapters. Outside of FBLA, Miller is involved in the National Honor Society, Freshman Mentoring Program, student council, and his local youth group.

Future Business Leaders of America-Phi Beta Lambda, Inc. is a national organization that serves over 225,000 high school, college, and professional members. Missouri FBLA is a state association of FBLA-PBL with 15,442 members in 403 chapters across the state, the second largest chapter in the nation. The FBLA-PBL brings business and education together in a positive working relationship through innovative leadership and career development programs. Co-curricular

activities include career exploration, civic service, economic education, and fostering entrepreneurship.

## **Public Charter Schools Increase Market Share—Kansas City and St. Louis Highly Ranked**

*Public charter schools are growing in both "market share" and educational impact in an increasing number of American communities, according to two analyses ([http://www.publiccharters.org/UserFiles/File/Marketshare Press Release.pdf](http://www.publiccharters.org/UserFiles/File/Marketshare%20Press%20Release.pdf)) released by the National Alliance for Public Charter Schools.*

### **“Top 10” Communities**

The Alliance’s annual “Top 10” study identifies communities with the largest percentages of public school students enrolled in public charter schools. This year’s analysis, which examined 2006-2007 enrollment data in communities with at least 10,000 public school students, found New Orleans again heading the list with 57% of students enrolled in charter schools. A total of twenty-nine communities occupy this year’s “Top 10” list (with many ties in percentages); that compares to 19 a year ago. Eight communities had at least 1/5th of their public school students in public charter schools, an increase from six in the 2005-2006 school year.

The “Top 10” communities are:

1. 57%: New Orleans, LA 14,822 11,343 26,165
2. 27% : Southfield, MI, Dayton, OH. Washington, DC
3. 23%: Pontiac, MI, Youngstown, OH
4. 20%: Detroit, MI, Kansas City, MO
5. 18%: Toledo, OH 18%
6. 17%: Chula Vista, CA, Cleveland, OH, Cincinnati, OH, Milwaukee, WI
7. 16%: Buffalo, NY, Dearborn, MI
8. 15% Oakland, CA, Brighton, CO, Albany, NY, St. Louis, MO
9. 14%: Minneapolis, MN

10. 13%: Camden, NJ, St. Paul, MN, Philadelphia, PA, Columbus, OH, Vista, CA, Saginaw, MI, Mohave County, AZ, Napa Valley, CA. Appleton, WI

The full "Top 10" report is available at

**<http://publiccharters.org/content/publication/detail/2869/>**.