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Introduction & Background
Introduction and Background

Michigan’s Action Plan for Literacy Excellence serves as a vision for educational leaders and stakeholders to support a P-20 system that will move Michigan to a Top 10 Education State in 10 years. This plan provides common goals and activities necessary for effective and efficient implementation of the strongest research-validated literacy practices for driving policy, professional learning, instruction, and literacy leadership.

This action plan includes objectives and strategies from Michigan’s “Top 10 in 10” Strategic Plan:\(^1\):

1. Provide every child access to an aligned, high-quality P-20 system from early childhood to postsecondary attainment - through multi-stakeholder collaboration with business and industry, labor, and higher education - to maximize lifetime learning and success.

2. Implement, with strong district and building leadership, high-quality instruction in every classroom through a highly coherent, child-centered instructional model where students meet their self-determined academic and personal goals to their highest potential.

3. Develop, support, and sustain a high-quality, prepared, and collaborative education workforce.

4. Reduce the impact of high-risk factors, including poverty, and provide equitable resources to meet the needs of all students to ensure that they have access to quality educational opportunities.

5. Ensure that parents/guardians are engaged and supported partners in their child’s education.

6. Create a strong alignment and partnership with job providers, community colleges, and higher education to assure a prepared and quality future workforce, and informed and responsible citizens.

7. Further develop an innovative and cohesive state agency that supports an aligned, coherent system at all levels.

Literacy is an essential priority in the Michigan Department of Education (MDE) Strategic Plan to be a Top 10 Education State in 10 years. Michigan has a legacy of literacy-driven initiatives and outcomes. In 1985, collaborative efforts by the MDE and Michigan educators produced Michigan’s Definition of Reading\(^2\), which became a foundation for expanding our view of literacy and providing instructional resources for educators. In 1998, Governor Engler released a Reading Plan for Michigan\(^3\), which provided READY kits for children and parents, and the Michigan Literacy Progress Profile (MLPP) to diagnose, record, and report the literacy progress of PreK through grade three students. In 2002, Michigan implemented the literacy principles outlined in the federal Reading First Program in eligible schools with highly trained teachers, coaches, and facilitators. Grade Level Content Expectations and High School Content Expectations\(^4\) were developed and adopted by the State Board of Education (SBE) as the curricular standards for Michigan with literacy domains at the forefront serving as expectations for Michigan student assessments in English Language Arts.

To further support teacher knowledge of


literacy skills, in 2007, the Michigan Legislature enrolled a law requiring the passage of a reading diagnostics course in order to obtain a Professional Teaching Certificate. In addition, the State Board of Education adopted sets of reading standards for all elementary and secondary teachers to support the Superintendent’s requirement for 6 credits of reading methods at the elementary level and 3 credits at the secondary level.

In May 2010, the Michigan Department of Education convened a group of 50 literacy experts from across the state to begin drafting the Michigan Comprehensive Statewide Literacy Plan (the MiLit Plan)\(^5\). The State Literacy Team incorporated 86 stakeholders, inclusive of educators, experts, and leaders knowledgeable of prekindergarten through grade-12 educators, public libraries, higher education, early childhood education, English Language Learners, students with disabilities, community and nonprofit organizations, as well as representation from multiple geographic regions throughout the state. The team produced the 2011 MiLit Plan, which served as guidance for the latest research-validated practices for ages birth to adult. This plan was aligned to new Michigan K-12 Standards for English Language Arts\(^6\), adopted by the State Board of Education in 2010.

Since the development of the MiLit Plan in 2011, literacy development and support has taken hold as top priority in Michigan’s education system. Michigan’s Action Plan for Literacy Excellence is based on the MiLit Plan and includes many enhanced components, such as:

- Updated literacy data
- An updated definition of literacy
- An updated goal and associated strategies aligned with Governor Snyder’s Third Grade Reading Workgroup Report, Michigan’s Third Grade Reading Law, and research-validated practices demonstrated to improve literacy outcomes
- An increased range and scope, inclusive of Michigan’s P-20 system, including families
- Alignment to current state-developed professional learning for literacy instruction
- Specific activities in support of objectives with established timelines

**Literacy Data**

According to the 2017 National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), 68% of Michigan’s students are not at or above proficient in reading in 4th grade and 66% of 8th grade students are not at or above proficient in reading. When we compare Michigan’s scores to other states on the same assessment, 27 states and jurisdictions performed higher than Michigan in 4th grade reading and 16 states and jurisdictions performed higher in 8th grade reading. Only 2 states and jurisdictions performed significantly lower in 4th grade reading and 12 states and jurisdictions performed significantly lower in 8th grade reading. Figure 1 demonstrates flat performance levels in reading achievement across the years. Table 1 illustrates the comparison of Michigan versus National NAEP reading scores in 4th and 8th grade reading.

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Table 1
Michigan 2017 NAEP Scores for Reading in 4th and 8th Grade Compared to National Scores

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>2017 NAEP Reading Data</th>
<th>Average Michigan Score</th>
<th>Average National Score</th>
<th>Percent of Michigan Students At or Above Proficient Level</th>
<th>Percent of National Students At or Above Proficient Level</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Grade 4</td>
<td>218</td>
<td>221</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>35%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grade 8</td>
<td>265</td>
<td>265</td>
<td>34%</td>
<td>35%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 2
Michigan Students Meeting College and Career Readiness Benchmark (480) on SAT Evidence-Based Reading and Writing (2016)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Students Participating on the 2016 SAT for Reading and Writing</th>
<th>Mean Score</th>
<th>Met or Exceeded Benchmark</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>All</td>
<td>509.9</td>
<td>60.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>African American</td>
<td>445.1</td>
<td>30.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic of any Race</td>
<td>473.2</td>
<td>44.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>524.8</td>
<td>67.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Economically Disadvantaged</td>
<td>464.8</td>
<td>40.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English Language Learner</td>
<td>416.6</td>
<td>16.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students with Disabilities</td>
<td>413.5</td>
<td>15.7%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2 demonstrates 2017 SAT College and Career Readiness Data for Michigan students. According to the College Board, students with an SAT Evidence-Based Reading and Writing score that meets or exceeds the benchmark have a 75 percent chance of earning at least a C or better in first-semester, credit bearing college courses in history, literacy, social sciences, or writing classes. As shown in Table 2, just over 60 percent of all students are meeting that threshold in Michigan. Furthermore, a little over 30 percent of African American students are meeting the College Board’s College and Career Readiness Benchmark. English Language Learners and students with disabilities rank below that with around 15 percent meeting the mark. Michigan’s ability to grow into a Top 10 education state will be halted if all students are not given the opportunities needed to grow and flourish.

While we look to student outcome data, Michigan also must pay close attention to children engaging in school prior to kindergarten. Michigan does not provide universal preschool and children do not have to attend kindergarten. However, it is possible to track those students that are enrolled the number of children enrolled in early childhood special education, Early On, the Great Start Readiness Program (GSRP) and a blend of GSRP and Head Start. Figure 2 shows the MI School Data report of participation of Michigan kindergarteners in these programs.

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Figure 2 Percent of 2016-17 Kindergartener’s Participation in Michigan Early Childhood Programs

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Michigan Literacy Policy, Law, and Funding

Literacy by third grade is important for future outcomes. Annie E Casey Foundation reported that one in six children who are not reading proficiently in third grade do not graduate from high school on time, a rate four times greater than that of a proficient reader. A separate study by Sum, found correlations between adults without a high school diploma and labor market prospects. To support all students in graduating successfully, Michigan has prioritized reading proficiency as a top goal. In 2015, Governor Rick Snyder tasked a workgroup with the analysis of Michigan’s third grade reading and to suggest policy improvements. This group released the Third Grade Reading Workgroup Report to Governor Rick Snyder which recommended five key strategies that would ensure that every child received effective instruction and interventions, including:

1. Give every student research-validated diagnostic and screening instruments, instruction and interventions.
2. Provide every educator with training to use diagnostic-driven methods with knowledge and fidelity.
3. Give every parent the information and support needed to develop early literacy skills, to parent effectively, and to provide adequate home supports for every student.
4. Implement K-3 smart promotion to ensure struggling students succeed.
5. Provide Michigan with accurate data about how our students and schools are performing in growth and proficiency compared to other states, and an annual report on our progress toward the highest early reading proficiency in the nation.

To support the workgroup report, the legislature designated State Aid funds beginning in 2015-2016 to create a set of programs that support specific recommendations to ensure that all students have strong literacy skills by the time they exit third grade. In 2015 Michigan’s State Aid Budget included new supports for early literacy. Table 3 shows the fund distribution supporting early literacy recommendations of the Governor’s Third Grade Reading Workgroup. The allotted money included supports for the following:

- Adoption of a certification test to ensure that all newly certified elementary teachers have the skills to deliver evidence-based literacy instruction.
- Additional instructional time grants that support districts in providing extra supports for students who struggle in reading and other literacy skills.
- Intermediate School District (ISD) literacy coaches, who provide direct assistance to school districts and public school academies to address instructional needs to help these students.
- Assessment reimbursement grants to support districts in the use of screening and diagnostic tools to help identify specific student needs, so that they can receive targeted support.
- Professional learning funds to support the creation of a literacy coach network and resources for educators to learn and implement best practices to support all students, as well as students with specialized literacy learning needs, including English Learners, students with...

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10 Third Grade Reading Workgroup. (2015, June 3). *Third-grade reading workgroup report to Governor Rick Snyder*. 
disabilities, and other students who may struggle to demonstrate these skills.

• Various pilot programs for providing additional instructional time.

In 2016 Michigan passed the Section 1280f of Public Act 306, becoming the 17th state in the nation to pass a comprehensive K-3 reading policy. Michigan’s law to ensure that more students achieve a score of at least proficient on the English Language Arts portion of the third state assessment includes the following components:

• Use of assessment and parent notification to detect and monitor student literacy needs;

• Instruction and intervention supported by additional instructional time before, during, after school or in the summer months;

• Coaching and professional learning for teachers in literacy instruction; and

• Intervention and retention for students who continue to struggle in literacy.

Starting in the 2019-2020 school year, districts will uphold the law in determining whether third graders advance to the next grade. The law states that for students to progress to grade 4, they must demonstrate one of the following:

• A reading score less than one grade level behind on the grade 3 state English Language Arts assessment.

• A grade 3 reading level through an alternative standardized reading assessment.

• A grade 3 reading level through a pupil portfolio, as evidenced by demonstrating competency in all grade 3 English Language Arts standards.

Parents must be informed of their child’s possible retention. Parents may seek a “good cause” exemption. This exemption applies to students with disabilities, students for whom

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Table 3
State-Funded Programs Supporting Third-Grade Reading Outcomes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Professional Learning</td>
<td>$1.9 million</td>
<td>$1.9 million</td>
<td>No allocation, operating on carry-over</td>
<td>No allocation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Additional Instructional Time</td>
<td>$17.5 million</td>
<td>$17.5 million</td>
<td>$20.9 million</td>
<td>$19.9 million</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Early Literacy Coaches</td>
<td>$3 million (equal match required)</td>
<td>$3 million (equal match required)</td>
<td>$6 million (50% match required)</td>
<td>$7 million (50% match required)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assessment Reimbursement Grants</td>
<td>$4.5 million</td>
<td>$4.5 million</td>
<td>$4.5 million</td>
<td>$9.2 million</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher Certification Assessment</td>
<td>$500,000</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Michigan Education Corps Tutoring</td>
<td>$1 million</td>
<td>$1 million</td>
<td>$2.5 million</td>
<td>$2.5 million</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summer Reading Program Pilot</td>
<td>$500,000</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Multisensory Structured Language Pilot</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>$250,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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English is a second language, those previously retained despite receiving intensive reading assistance, and students who didn’t receive an appropriate individualized reading intervention in their previous district. Good cause exemptions may also be granted if the student has been continuously enrolled in the current district for less than two years and has not been provided with an appropriate Individual Reading Improvement Plan (IRIP). Good cause exemptions may be requested within 30 days of official parental notification and are reflected as being in the best interest of the student. This law ensures that all parties involved with a child’s education, inclusive of the Michigan Department of Education, schools, principals, literacy coaches, and families, are active in helping children achieve lifelong success in literacy.

**Definition of Literacy**

While recent Michigan policy and law address reading outcomes, we know that students’ abilities to demonstrate proficiency on assessments and in their lives depends deeply on skills and knowledge beyond decoding, word naming, and comprehension.

*Michigan’s English Language Arts (ELA) Standards*\(^{12}\) state that students who meet career and college ready expectations are able to, ”gather, comprehend, evaluate, synthesize, and report on information and ideas.” Literacy skills and knowledge involve a critical social dimension. An essential component of literacy versus reading is the interconnectedness and reciprocity between the areas of reading, writing, listening, speaking, and visually representing. A shared expertise in literacy knowledge and skills has the potential to meet most vital needs to “stimulate social, cultural, political, and economic participation, especially on the part of disadvantaged groups.” The bolded definition above updates and replaces Michigan’s 1984 definition of reading.

**Defining Essential Instructional Practices for Literacy**

In alignment with the Governor’s Third Grade Reading Workgroup Report, Section 1280f of Public Act 306, and focused state literacy funding, the MDE is executing efforts to develop and implement a comprehensive statewide P-20\(^{13}\) literacy system that is essential to the seamless instruction and literacy outcomes of children birth through grade 12 and beyond. In 2016, to support students’ achievement in literacy, the Michigan Association of Intermediate School Administrators’ General Education Leadership Network (MAISA-GELN) Early Literacy Task Force developed and released *Essential Instructional Practices in Early Literacy for Grades Kindergarten through Third Grade*\(^{14}\), shortly followed by *Essential Instructional Practices in Early Literacy for Prekindergarten*\(^{15}\), and *Essential Instructional Practices in Early Literacy, Grades 4 to 5*\(^{16}\).

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\(^{16}\) Michigan Association of Intermediate School Administrators General Education Leadership Network Early Literacy
A similar document for Grades 6-12 will be piloted and a Birth to Age 3 document is being drafted. Accompanying documents were developed by MAISA-GELN to support and strengthen the Essential Instructional Practice documents, including the Essential School-Wide and Center-Wide Practices in Literacy\(^7\) and the Essential Coaching Practices in Literacy\(^8\). The purpose of these documents is to improve children’s literacy by identifying systemic and effective practices that can be implemented throughout the state. The action plan values the work of the Essentials documents, future direction of the MAISA-GELN efforts relative to these documents, and the coaching structures developed to support a stronger system of literacy for Michigan’s learners. These documents name and provide specific practices that, when implemented in every classroom in every day, provides Michigan with a minimum standard of care necessary for students’ literacy success. These documents provide a guide for growing Michigan teachers’ skills and knowledge.

### Professional Learning

**K-12 Teachers.** Supporting job embedded professional learning in effective literacy instruction for all teachers will be critical for success. Michigan cannot rely solely on improving pre-service preparation as most of our teachers are currently practicing. Michigan cannot rely on reading specialists or reading teachers as few of the state’s teachers have this degree or endorsement. Table 4 provides a breakdown of the number of teachers in the state.

MDE has established a desire to utilize a Whole-Child\(^9\) approach to literacy learning for all students and the improvement of quality instruction as described in the Essential Literacy Practices documents. We also must address the needs of current Michigan teachers. At the end of the 2017 school year, 98,481 teachers were assigned to teach K-12 students\(^20\). This includes general education and special education teachers and teachers of art, physical education, music, etc. Of those teachers, 62.6% have a Master’s degree or higher\(^21\); 3.20% of all K-12

### Table 4

**Experiences of Employed K-12 Michigan Teachers as of June 2017**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Total Teachers</th>
<th>98,481</th>
<th>100%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>First Year</td>
<td>3,151</td>
<td>3.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0-3 Years of Experience</td>
<td>9,454</td>
<td>9.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teachers with Reading Specialist Endorsement</td>
<td>1,576</td>
<td>1.16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teachers with Reading Teacher Endorsement</td>
<td>3,407</td>
<td>3.46%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Early Childhood Endorsement</td>
<td>26,984</td>
<td>27.4%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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teachers were first year teachers in a Michigan public school\textsuperscript{22}; and 9.6\% of the teachers were in their first three years of teaching\textsuperscript{23}. Some of these teachers may have previously taught out of state or in a private school. Overall, only a small percentage of Michigan teachers are newly entering classrooms. Michigan will work to align literacy programming for preservice teachers to the Essential Instructional Practices and also focus efforts on the professional learning of educators already in the field.

Schools rely on coaches and reading interventionists to support literacy learning of teachers and students. However, expertise in reading instruction and early childhood is lacking in Michigan. In 2016-2017, 1.16\% of employed K-12 teachers held a Reading Teacher endorsement and 3.46\% of K-12 teachers held a Reading Specialist endorsement\textsuperscript{24}. In addition, only about one quarter of K-3 teachers hold an Early Childhood endorsement (either Early Childhood Education Prekindergarten - Kindergarten, or Early Childhood Prekindergarten - General and Special Education)\textsuperscript{25}. This indicates that Michigan teachers can benefit from professional learning on the whole child model and literacy. Because these teachers are already in classrooms, job-embedded professional learning such as coaching and professional learning communities are necessary according to Michigan’s Professional Learning Policy\textsuperscript{26} and Michigan’s Professional Learning Standards\textsuperscript{27}.

**Prekindergarten Teachers.** The landscape of Michigan’s early childhood teaching workforce is less-structured than our K-12. According to the Center for this Study of Child Care Employment\textsuperscript{28}, of Michigan’s 690,184 children ages 0-5, there are 26,370 members of the early childhood teaching workforce. In addition, educators of children also include individuals such as parents, families, and pediatricians. Reaching these individuals with the *Essential Instructional Practices for in Early Literacy, Prekindergarten* and the practices that will be included in the document being development for children birth to age three.


\textsuperscript{26} Michigan Department of Education. (2012). Michigan’s Professional Learning Policy. Lansing, MI: Authors.


Overview of Michigan’s Action Plan for Literacy Excellence
Overview of Michigan’s Action Plan for Literacy Excellence

Michigan’s Action Plan for Literacy Excellence addresses concrete technical assistance strategies, targeted continuous improvement, and monitoring activities aligned with the work of the Early Literacy Task Force’s Essential Instructional Practices in Early Literacy documents, the MDE Literacy Leadership Team, Michigan literacy-related policy, laws, and funding, and other essential efforts and resources to advance literacy skills, including pre-literacy skills, reading and writing, for ALL children in the P-20 educational system. The foundation of the plan is the Early Literacy Task Force’s Essential Instructional Practices in Early Literacy documents. These documents describe the experiences Michigan children and students should experience every day. These practices are the foundation of the literacy plan activities for stakeholders that include MDE, districts, schools, administrators, teachers, and families. **The objective of the plan is to ensure that every child develops strong literacy knowledge, skills, and dispositions.**

To capture the scope of work involved to ensure children have the experiences described in the Essential Instructional Practices in Literacy documents, the Early Literacy Task Force created a **Literacy Theory of Action.** Michigan’s Plan for Literacy Excellence has adopted the requirements of a structure of supports from the system to the student level:

If we have Literacy Instructional Essentials articulated and adopted at the system level, then we can align literacy policies, funding, and resources throughout the system. If we have aligned policies, funding, initiatives, and resources system wide, then we can develop literacy leaders at the state, regional and local levels. If we have statewide leadership capacity focused on literacy at the school and center level in an intentional, multi-year manner, then we can ensure quality professional learning is sustained through coaching. If teaching teams and individual teachers are supported by quality coaching, then we can strengthen instructional skills leading to high-quality instructional practices in every classroom, for every student, every day. If we have the core essential instructional practices occurring in every classroom, every day, then ALL students will further develop literacy knowledge, skills, and dispositions leading to improved reading achievement.

**Literacy Theory of Action**

- Align policies, funding, and resources
- Develop state, regional, local, literacy leaders
- Embed and sustain quality professional learning through coaching
- Develop teachers' instructional skills
- Implement quality practices in every classroom every day
- Every child develops strong literacy knowledge, skills, and dispositions

This theory of action requires a structure of supports from the system to the student level.

The objective of the Michigan’s Action Plan for Literacy Excellence is to ensure that every child develops strong literacy knowledge, skills, and dispositions. This objective will be achieved through three primary goals with associated opportunities and activities. Six strategies are incorporated into the three goals, aligned with the Theory of Action.

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Strategy 1: Align policies, funding, and resources toward greater literacy achievement
Strategy 2: Develop state, regional, and local literacy leaders
Strategy 3: Embed and sustain quality professional learning through coaching
Strategy 4: Develop educators’ instructional skills
Strategy 5: Implement quality practices in every classroom every day
Strategy 6: Engage families as partners in all aspects of literacy development
The primary goals of the action plan:
   Goal One: Align policies, funding, and resources toward greater literacy achievement
   Goal Two: Develop a statewide literacy leadership and learning network for families, coaches, educators, and administrators
   Goal Three: Support instructional skills of educators
Plan Goals and Activities
Plan Goals and Activities

Goal One: Align policies, funding, and resources toward greater literacy achievement

Michigan is committed to improve literacy achievement for its students. Legislators, educators, and literacy experts must align efforts in policy, funding, and resources to support the effort. While strategies at the system, classroom, and individual levels such as utilizing Multi-Tiered System of Supports, literacy interventions, and increasing time spent reading are effective in improving literacy performance, a broad, systemic effort to bridge research and policy is necessary. Intentional collaboration between the MDE, Intermediate School Districts, and partner organizations to communicate clear and common messages about education across the system and with communities and families.

Description of Activities to Align Policies, Funding, and Resources Toward Greater Literacy Achievement

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Planned Activities</th>
<th>Timeline</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Create collaborative partnerships with legislators to develop policies aligned to</td>
<td>January 2018</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>research.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Utilize community and state collaboratives for common messages and for leveraging</td>
<td>January 2019</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>supports to schools and families</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Create collaborative partners between regions and MDE staff to align school</td>
<td>January 2020</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>improvement needs around literacy to state and federal funding sources.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Create collaborative partnerships with legislators to develop policies aligned to research. The PreK-12 Literacy Commission was appointed by Governor Snyder in 2016. This group has created a strategic plan which outlines priority goals and actions that include the following:

1. Building awareness of literacy performance and current efforts to improve learning
2. Identifying ways to improve literacy practices
3. Advocating for bold systemic improvements
4. Equipping educational stakeholders with sound recommendations to inform their decisions

Members of the Commission include a former Michigan legislator and author of the reading law, representatives of community advocacy and literacy organizations, executive leadership from the Early Literacy Task Force, and ISD literacy leaders. In addition, an MDE literacy team member serves as the liaison to the group. This connection of key literacy stakeholders is important for linking the Governor’s, state department, and local region and district goals.

In addition to the key state leaders serving as members of the Commission, the Governor’s Senior Strategy Advisor for Education and Career Connections participates regularly in State Board Education meetings and provides an opportunity to communicate Michigan’s literacy efforts. This involvement provides direct and constant communication with the Governor’s

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office on issues that impact literacy policy and policy implementation.

Utilize community and state collaboratives for common messages and for leveraging supports to schools and families. The urgency is clear for literacy supports needed in Michigan and commitment across state collaboratives and communities is evident. By leveraging supports that are aligned to the goals outlined in this plan, Michigan can realize a collective impact of literacy efforts. Leaning on the Literacy Essentials across the P-20 continuum will provide common messaging and common understanding of literacy experiences that are effective for building and improving outcomes for students. Intentional sharing and engagement of the literacy tools available at the LiteracyEssentials.org website, such as the Literacy Essentials documents, and learning modules will allow Michigan literacy organizations and community groups concerned with literacy to be aligned with messages. This work has begun and will continue with partnership between Michigan Association of Intermediate School Administrators, Michigan Virtual, and MDE to purposefully market the website.

Create collaborative partners between regions and MDE staff to align school improvement needs around literacy to state and federal funding sources. Literacy success depends on high quality education systems. While the essential instructional practices provide guidance on the minimum experiences children need to have for literacy success, the *Essential School-Wide and Center-Wide Practices in Literacy* outlines the practices needed to create a system that fosters literacy. It is also important for our systems to align efforts at the state, local, and classroom level. To this end, efforts will continue to connect literacy law, policy, funding, and practice.

There are responsibilities at all levels to keep the funding opportunities and efforts aligned. The MDE will work internally to create an understanding of literacy connections and will work with ISDs, districts, and literacy partners to communicate potential funds, programs, and professional learning opportunities. This may be done by sharing time on agendas, keeping updated information on appropriate webpages, and linking between entities so that there are multiple entry points and channels developing resources for use by ISDs, districts, and literacy partners.
Goal Two: Develop statewide networks for literacy leaders

Michigan must ensure that all literacy leaders are equipped with knowledge within the Essential Instructional Practices for Literacy and the research that makes them efficient and effective to use. The Michigan Department of Education can leverage existing literacy networks and pull leaders together annually to collectively approach the goals of Michigan’s Action Plan for Literacy Excellence. Literacy leaders exist at all levels of the system and include policy-makers, higher education experts, administrators, literacy coaches, librarians, teachers, and families.

Description of Activities to Develop Statewide Networks for Literacy Leaders

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Planned Activities</th>
<th>Timeline</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Maintain a statewide coaching network.</td>
<td>October 2018</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Develop and maintain a family literacy support network.</td>
<td>January 2019</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Develop and maintain a statewide literacy leadership network</td>
<td>January 2019</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Maintain a statewide coaching network.

As documented in the *Essential School-Wide and Center-Wide Practices in Literacy: Prekindergarten and Elementary Grades*, and the *Essentials Coaching Practices for Elementary Literacy*, the support of administrators’ and teachers’ development requires job-embedded ongoing professional learning. After being introduced to new knowledge, skills, and dispositions, administrators and teachers need opportunities to practice and receive feedback as they employ new learning in schools, centers, and classrooms. Resources provided through an MDE grant were used through the 2017-18 school year to develop skills of ISD early literacy coaches and to create a sustainable system of resources. These resources included:

- Essential practices in literacy instruction, coaching, and school-wide and center-wide practices;
- MDE coaching model to define early literacy coaching across a continuum of criteria;
- Access to university researchers who are experts in the area of early literacy and access to researchers at the state and national levels who are experts in the area of elementary and secondary literacy;
- Professional learning opportunities and a network to provide ongoing support; and
- Print, video, and digital resources about effective literacy instruction, coaching, and leadership.

ISD and district coaches will continue to participate in quarterly professional learning sessions and engage in monthly online meetings to support growth of their coaching abilities. Coaches also have access to an online hub for networking and sharing. The continued professional learning from the MDE includes access to university researchers who are experts in literacy as well as support from a project manager and project coordinator who oversee the professional learning and provide ongoing support. The MDE has also hired two Early Literacy Coaching Consultants to support the coaching network. Creating a network of coaches has proven to be supportive in the statewide literacy initiative and efforts to expand the network are underway. The expanded coaching network will include early childhood specialists as well as coaches who will be supporting implementation and professional learning of the *Essential Instructional Practices in Early Literacy for Grades Kindergarten through Third Grade* and the *Essential Instructional Practices for Prekindergarten*. 
Michigan’s reading law required Michigan to develop or recommend a coaching model. The MDE convened an action team including internal and external partners with the essential expertise to develop a literacy coaching model including the following:

- Integrate the Pre-K and K-3 Essential Instructional Practices for Early Literacy as a foundational piece of the Coaching Model;
- Specify what activities the Literacy Coach can and cannot perform, utilizing evidence-based best practices;
- Determine how to best integrate the professional learning modules being developed by Michigan Virtual; and
- Recommend the best approach toward deploying the Literacy Coaching Model throughout each educational level within the State.

The model is aligned to the Essential Coaching Practices in Elementary Literacy and is incorporated into the Essential Coaching Training Modules. These four modules are available at LiteracyEssentials.org and describe a set of research-supported literacy coaching practice to guide coaches in their work with teachers. It is recommended that ISDs and Districts align their coaching practices to the model to ensure that coaching is aligned to research-validated practices. These modules were created by EduPaths in collaboration with the Early Literacy Task Force.

Literacy instructional modules for educators are created by Michigan Virtual (MV). MV is working collaboratively with the producers of the Essential Instructional Practices (MAISA-GELN and the Early Literacy Task Force and researchers). The modules will include a rich library of video instruction segments that demonstrate teachers implementing strategies aligned to each of the ten key practices described in the *Essential Instructional Practices in Early Literacy for Grades Kindergarten through Third Grade* and the *Essential Instructional Practices for Prekindergarten*. Content is research-validated, and the resources ensure knowledge and skill development in the effective literacy practices outlined in the documents. It is a goal to continue development of literacy modules aligned to Essential Instructional Practices documents across the full range of age and grade levels. It is also recommended that modules be created to support administrators in understanding building implementation of literacy.

**Develop a family literacy support network.** Families engaging in language and literacy interactions with their children can support the development of language and literacy skills for their children. A family literacy support network will strive to increase literacy outcomes of children and families. The network will be developed by and accessible to families.

**Develop and Maintain a Literacy Leadership Network.** Literacy grant funds supported a one-day Administrators workshop focused on the Essential School-wide and Center-wide practices in Literacy. The professional learning session targeted leadership teams interested in supporting literacy at the organizational level. The MDE worked with partners to offer a second cohort of training. Attendees will be engaged in ongoing learning around the content through the creation of an administrator network. The efforts of the literacy plan will continue workshop supports for administrative literacy leadership. In addition, this goal will encourage expansion towards a leadership network that includes administrators, teacher leaders, and those educators and individuals supporting professional learning and advocacy of literacy in the state of Michigan.
Goal Three: Support instructional skills

Michigan’s current and potential education workforce deserve continuous support to grow their instructional skills in literacy. Michigan will be able to leverage the continuum of essential instructional practices in literacy for this effort. Michigan can provide current educators with opportunities gain knowledge of the practices through increased access to literacy experts who are equipped with the knowledge of the essentials. Efforts to define a workforce pathway across the early childhood continuum from birth to third grade will provide educators with clear options for growing in their practice and committing to educator careers. Furthermore, updating educator preparation certification processes and tools will tighten pre-service programming and bring current literacy instructional practices to potential educators.

Description of Activities to Support Instructional Skills

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Planned Activities</th>
<th>Timeline</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Support increased literacy knowledge for those educating children birth to grade 12 with clear expectations and guidance</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Support the education workforce with career pathways on a continuum from infant/toddler to third grade</td>
<td>January 2020</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Revise educator preparation, certification standards, and assessments for literacy</td>
<td>January 2020</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Support increased literacy knowledge for those educating children birth to grade 12 with clear expectations. Michigan is poised to create a full P-20 continuum of essential instructional practices for literacy. Completing the existing set of practices with a birth to age 3 and grades 6-12 editions will provide educators with clear expectations for research-validated practices that children and students should be exposed to daily. Defining these practices allows for specific supports in professional learning and funding.

In addition, Michigan can better ensure that the essential practices are being effectively and efficiently utilized with instructional coaching. Properly prepared coaches can offer support to parents and educators to use the practices. Michigan currently supports ISDs in funding early literacy coaches at the regional level. The plan recommends expanding the coaching program and network to serve families and students in the P-20 system, specifically implementing the Essential Instructional Practices. When research-validated literacy practices are well defined, policies, funding, and resources can be aligned to support greater literacy achievement.

Support the early childhood education workforce with pathways on a continuum from infant/toddler to third grade. The National Association of State Boards of Education (NASBE) awarded Michigan grants to support early care and education. The MDE has received $14,000 to be awarded over the 2016-2018 timeframe and $14,000 for 2018-2019. The MDE will work with partners and stakeholders to create a framework of core knowledge and competencies on a continuum for caregivers and educators of children ages birth through age 8. Once created, professional learning opportunities will be aligned to the framework. To allow for educators of children across age range and space to access this professional learning online, current and future websites will be created to be compatible, so users see the offerings as a continuum. To support use and expansion of the framework and professional learning system, the team will recommend policies and practices to educators and legislators.
Revise educator preparation, certification standards, and assessments for literacy. Current standards defining teacher knowledge and skills in providing literacy instruction were last updated in 2000. Preparation standards in early literacy instruction for all elementary teachers are currently being revised to provide greater depth of preparation in early literacy instruction. Once completed, teacher preparation program review and revision will occur, alongside licensure assessment development. Revision of standards for specialized endorsements for reading/literacy teachers for grade levels beyond the early elementary span, reading/literacy specialists, and school/central office administrators will follow this work.

As part of a certification restructure, foundational coursework for educator preparation programs are being developed to provide teachers at each of the grade bands knowledge and skills that demonstrate deep understanding of how children develop. This is especially critical for teachers of preschool through grade three. These instructors must learn about the science of early childhood development and gain experience in how to provide instruction in subjects such as early science, early literacy, and the building blocks of math. Additionally, prospective middle-level teachers must be prepared to understand all facets of young adolescents and their cognitive, physical, social, emotional, and moral/character development. Teachers should be prepared for content and practices appropriate for the grade level and subjects they teach.

Using the Assessment Literacy Standards, the MDE will collaborate with the Northwest Evaluation Association (NWEA) and the American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education (AACTE) to create strong clinical partnerships between early childhood programs, PreK-12 districts, and teacher preparation programs. Teacher candidates will be provided with hands-on practice in the use of assessment data. Professional development for practicing teachers and school and district leaders will support strong assessment practice and development of leadership around the use of evidence in improvement. Anticipated outcomes include increased student achievement, greater student self-confidence and motivation, and more deeply informed professional judgement on the part of educators. The purpose of the project is to implement grant funding, develop assessment systems and best practices, and interventions that ensure that children are reading at grade level by the end of grade 3. The results produced by these efforts are intended to ensure that Michigan is in the top 10 most improved states in grade 4 reading proficiency by the 2019 National Assessment of Educational Process (NAEP) and will be in the top 10 states overall in grade 4 reading proficiency by 2026.

Measures of Success

Alignment

To accomplish the objective of this plan in having every child develop strong literacy knowledge, skills, and dispositions, the literacy efforts across Michigan must be aligned. We will know we are on a path to success when Michigan’s Every Student Succeeds Act Plan, Top 10 in 10 Strategic Action Plan, this literacy plan, and our school, community, and professional organizations goals and actions align. The planned activities in this document point towards systemic alignment across our educations system needed for sustainable progress in literacy for our children.

Measures

Literacy growth is multi-faceted. For evidence of our goal, Michigan will look to rising summative state assessment, NAEP scores, and career and college readiness outcomes on the SAT. Additional indicators include those measures being tracked on Michigan’s Parent Dashboard for School Transparency. These measures include indicators on early learning, effective educators, engagement, equity, exit readiness, and efficacy.

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