



# MICHIGAN LITERACY: From Lagging to Leading



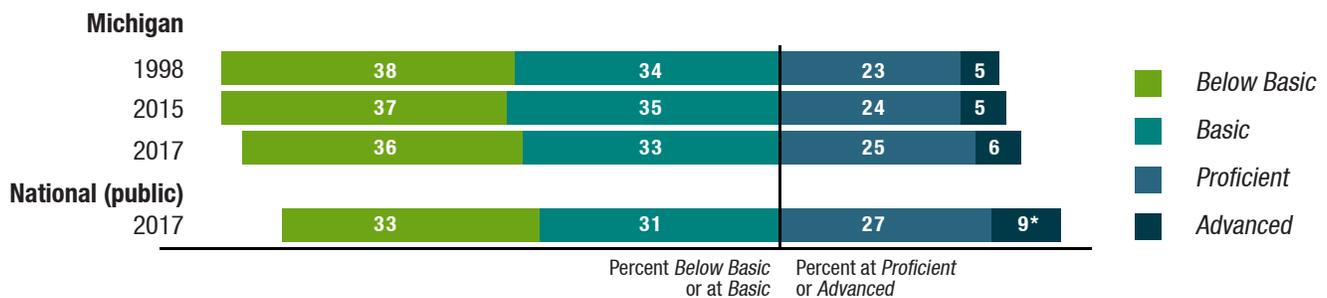
## High Alert

Michigan is facing a literacy crisis. For the past 14 years, while nearly all other states across the country made gains in their literacy performance for 4th graders, Michigan remained one of the lowest performing states, with minimal growth in literacy achievement. While there was a slight improvement over our 2015 NAEP scores (3% more students are at or above proficiency in 2017 as compared to 2015), Michigan still falls in the bottom 12 states in the nation. With only 32% of students at or above proficiency, we have a long way to go. The impact of this pattern in 4th grade is that more students struggle throughout school and many graduate without strong literacy skills. Roughly 20% of Michigan’s K-12 students are not proficient in their English Language Arts skills according to

state tests. With over 270,000 students ill-equipped in literacy, our state faces significant hurdles. Our young people are unprepared for the workforce, unprepared for college or career training, and unprepared to be productive citizens. It is estimated that the cost of illiteracy to U.S. businesses and taxpayers is approximately \$225 billion each year. While Michigan has made progress in creating infrastructure for research-based instructional practices in literacy and a culture of coaching around these practices, we need continued focus and funding for professional learning in literacy for all educators, an increased number of coaches to support high-quality instruction, and bold leadership efforts to change our trajectory and positively impact more children.

**As measured by the 2017 NAEP, 69% of our students are not proficient in 4th grade literacy, compared to 64% nationally.**

### Achievement-Level Percentages and Average Score Results



## Setting the Stage for Change

Michigan’s governor, legislators, business leaders, and educators recognize that literacy incompetence is one of the most pressing issues facing our state. Action steps taken include:

- The Read By Grade 3 law.
- Formation of the Governor’s PreK-12 Literacy Commission (2016 to present).

In 2015, the legislature allocated funds for early-literacy assessment reimbursement, professional development, coaching, and extended instructional time supports.

- The General Education Leadership Network (GELN), a committee affiliated with the Michigan Association of Intermediate School Administrators (MAISA), formed the Early Literacy Task Force (ELTF) in December 2015 and created the Essential

Instructional Practices in Early and Elementary Literacy documents, which provided instructional, coaching, and school-level guidance for practitioners and educational stakeholders.

- Since 2012-13, the regional Reading Now Network has demonstrated measurable impact on literacy achievement while focusing on data, leadership, instructional rounds, professional learning, and literacy coaching.
- The Michigan Department of Education revised the Michigan Literacy Plan and secured additional funding to escalate their professional learning efforts.

While these steps have provided the beginning of a focus on early literacy, the needed scope of work is much more expansive.

## The Journey to Excellence

How do we get there? It starts with solid early-childhood programs and supports. It grows with a Birth to Grade 12 education system that is committed to rigorous, quality instruction support by coaches and learning systems (for pre-service and practicing teachers). It depends on robust leadership that is skilled and adaptive at creating systems and supports for learners — and skilled at creating healthy learning communities.

**The first and most important steps have been taken and we need to build upon this foundation.**

### Literacy Theory of Action



### Phase 1: Laying the Groundwork

- The MAISA GELN ELTF was formed in December 2015, partnering with Michigan Virtual, MDE, RNN, researchers, Higher Ed, and other professional organizations.
- Legislators developed a strong policy supporting literacy achievement in October 2016 (the Read By Grade 3 Law).
- Governor Snyder established a Literacy Commission in late 2016.

### Phase 2: Establishing the Focus

#### Funding for Literacy Coaches:

- \$1 million awarded to the 56 ISDs collectively to develop and provide professional learning for coaches in 2016, 2017, and 2018. (\*Funding has not been determined for 2019).
- \$35,000 awarded to each of the 56 ISDs to hire a literacy coach, requiring each ISD to match in 2016. The first ISD coaches were hired in the fall of 2016 (average of 1 per ISD).
- \$75,000 awarded to each of the 56 ISDs to hire a literacy coach, requiring each ISD to contribute \$37,500 in 2017.

#### Leadership:

- Partners developed shared vision and goals.
- Literacy Commission developed their strategic plan.
- MAISA GELN ELTF developed a Theory of Action to accomplish and guide the work.
- MDE adopted a revised Michigan Literacy Plan.
- Partners developed a marketing/communication campaign.
- Leaders continued to advocate for established and ongoing funding.
- Efforts coordinated between Birth to Grade 12 literacy learning systems.

## Supporting literacy instruction improvement strategies:

MAISA/GELN Early Literacy Task Force Document	Online Modules, Videos, and Resources to Support Practitioners	Supportive Tools, Resources, and Videos	Organized State-Wide Professional Development	Organized and Supported Regional and Local Professional Development	Impact Data
<b>Essential Instructional Practices in Language and Emergent Literacy: Birth to Age 3</b> June 2019					
<b>Essential Instructional Practices in Early Literacy: Prekindergarten</b> March 2016					
<b>Essential Instructional Practices in Early Literacy: Grades K-3</b> March 2016					
<b>Essential Instructional Practices in Literacy: Grades 4-5</b> March 2018					
<b>Essential Instructional Practices in Disciplinary Literacy: Grades 6-12</b> May 2019					
<b>Essential Coaching Practices in Elementary Literacy</b> December 2016					
<b>Essential School-Wide and Center-Wide Practices in Literacy</b> January 2017					

= Fully Developed   = In Progress   = Yet to Come

- MDE established Michigan’s literacy coaching model.
- MAISA GELN ELTF established ongoing ISD quarterly networking meetings for coaches.
- MAISA GELN ELTF trained:
  - 125 ISD literacy coaches on the suite of Essential Instructional Practices (ISD literacy coaches now support district literacy coaches);
  - 571 district literacy coaches on the Essential Instructional Practices in Early Literacy: Grades K-3 through a partnership with MDE;
  - 167 GSRP early childhood specialists on the Essential Instructional Practices in Early Literacy: PreK;
  - 853 staff on the launch of the Essential Instructional Practices in Literacy: Grades 4-5, which included remote access;
- 266 PreK TOT staff on the Essential Instructional Practices in Early Literacy: PreK through a partnership with MDE;
- 128 ISD literacy coaches through intensive coaching institutes;
- 486 school leaders on the Essential Instructional Practices in Early Literacy: Grades K-3 and the Essential School-Wide and Center-Wide Practices in Literacy through an Administrator Institute; and
- 583 people (representing school teams) on the Essential Instructional Practices in Early Literacy: Grades K-3 and on developing professional learning plans for their schools with ongoing supports provided.

## Phase 3: Vision Statement Goals for 2025

### IF all stakeholders are committed to engaging in a strong literacy instruction model...

- All Birth to Grade 12 educators and stakeholders are utilizing the suite of Essential Instructional Practices.
- All teachers in Michigan have access to a highly trained and qualified literacy coach.
- All pre-service teachers enter the profession with skills and dispositions to support all learners.
- New professional standards for literacy at university and college programs are established.
- All literacy coaches in the state are supported with a robust coaches' network and professional learning opportunities.
- All coaches have opportunities to receive coaching certification.
- Research continues to drive the vision and work.
- Strong literacy leadership and school-level support, including:
  - all building principals and early childhood directors have been trained in the Essential School-Wide and Center-Wide Practices;
  - all school leaders (ISDs, Birth to Grade 12, Higher Ed) are collectively focused on Michigan's vision for all children to be proficient readers;
  - all schools and centers in Michigan have access to support when implementing instructional rounds focused on literacy (RNN and HIL Project model);
  - a strongly developed Birth to Grade 12 system that connects early learning to Grades K-12;
  - all educational groups work together in a unified way to meet the needs of Michigan's children;
  - the Essential Instructional Practices in Early and Elementary Literacy are used with a high degree of fidelity in every classroom, every day, with every child; and
  - as children develop, our literacy approaches expand along with them, so every teacher in every subject area is attending to the critical literacies within their discipline(s).

### THEN

- Every child makes at least one year of growth in their literacy skills each year, producing highly literate high school graduates.
- All children read at grade level after attending any Michigan school for multiple years.
- Michigan youth have strong reading comprehension and can communicate clearly through writing and speaking.

## Phase 4: Expectations Realized

### A new normal exists with institutionalized practices:

- Coaches are an integral part of literacy support.
- Coaches support and assist in improving teacher practices.
- Literacy leadership teams drive school-level literacy focus.
- Data and research support effective literacy practices.

### Systems of improvement and development of leaders and teachers are in place:

- Statewide literacy conferences occur on a regular basis.

- Coaching networks are formed, with ongoing professional learning.
- Teacher networks are formed, with ongoing professional learning.
- Administrators engage in ongoing professional learning.
- Birth to Age 3 and PreK programs engage in ongoing professional literacy learning and are an integral part of the P-20 system.
- Across districts, leadership learning teams engage in collaborative inquiry to focus on any emerging literacy challenges.

## Return on Investment

- More children enter Kindergarten ready for school.
- More students graduate from high school.
- Graduates are prepared for college and careers in Michigan-based companies.
- Michigan schools are producing strong, critical thinkers ready to lead in key positions.
- More third graders are literacy proficient and incarceration statistics drop.
- College classes have higher passing rates.
- A new generation of educators is attracted to the field, reducing the teacher and administrator shortage.

\*National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), 2015 & 2017 data