



# EMPOWERED

empowering michigan education



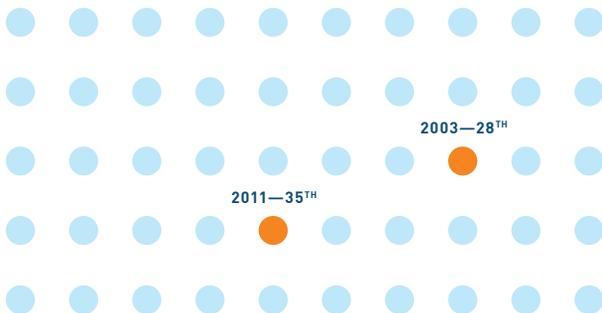
IMPROVING LITERACY OUTCOMES FOR STUDENTS IN MICHIGAN

## Leading Literacy Education at the State Level

**Our declining attention to literacy education in Michigan has impaired our children's futures.**

Michigan students once outperformed the national average, but today, the opposite is true. Among U.S. states, Michigan, between 2003 and 2011, fell from 28th to 35th place in rankings for the fourth-grade reading portion of the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP).

### MICHIGAN'S RANKING AMONG U.S. STATES



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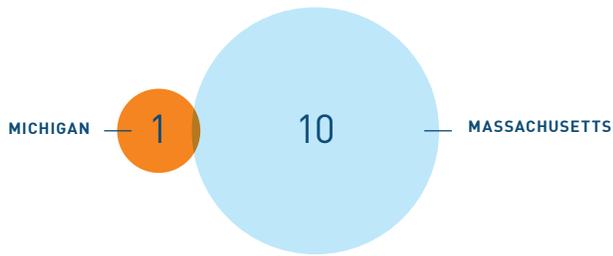
Michigan's decline in providing students with literacy skills can be seen across grade levels, and the results are far-reaching and devastating. According to *Bridge Magazine*, "[b]y most measures, Michigan is now among the bottom tier nationally in preparing its students for life after high school."

So severe and pervasive are the challenges facing Michigan that nothing short of coordinated action will be sufficient.

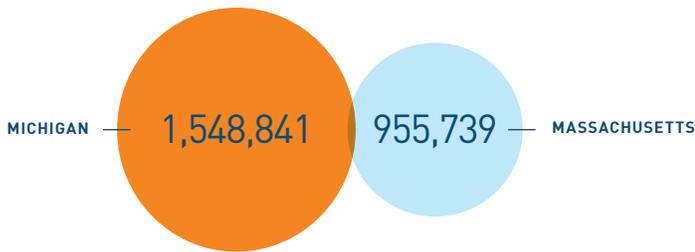
Unfortunately, the state-level leadership on literacy is absent, particularly in contrast to other relatively high-performing states.

For instance, the Michigan Department of Education (MDE) currently employs one person assigned to literacy issues. In contrast, Massachusetts employs ten such literacy experts, despite educating almost 39% fewer students than does Michigan.<sup>1</sup>

## MICHIGAN VS. MASSACHUSETTS



*Number of state level Department of Education employees assigned to literacy education*



*Number of elementary and secondary school students*

**We in Michigan need to strengthen the infrastructure that provides expertise and support for literacy education in schools. We must:**

- **Adopt and fund a Collective Impact framework** to coordinate the improvement of literacy outcomes particularly in Michigan's most vulnerable schools, with responsibility for the framework falling to a broad coalition of stakeholders.
- **Convene a State Literacy Advisory Panel** that meets a minimum of once per quarter to make specific, data-driven recommendations to the Collective Impact framework's stakeholders regarding the continuing improvement of literacy education.
- **Fund a team of literacy specialists** who work at the Michigan Department of Education and the State School Reform/Redesign Office to support high-quality literacy education for all Michigan schools, with particular responsibilities to high-need schools.

## WHO CAN HELP

*Here is how we, as a state, can take action to ensure a quality literacy education for all of our children.*

### GOVERNOR AND STATE BOARD

- Establish a State Literacy Advisory Panel, with membership specified later in this section, to lead state literacy work.

### LEGISLATURE

- Provide representatives of both parties to serve on the State Literacy Advisory Panel.
- Appropriate funding to fund a team of literacy specialists to work at the state level.

### MICHIGAN DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION AND THE SCHOOL REFORM/REDESIGN OFFICE

- Provide personnel responsible for literacy assessment and instruction for service on the State Literacy Advisory Panel.
- Recruit, hire and oversee a team of literacy specialists with qualifications described below.

### UNIVERSITIES AND TEACHER EDUCATION PROVIDERS

- Upon request, provide university faculty who are nationally recognized experts in literacy education for service on the State Literacy Advisory Panel.
- Be available to the team of literacy specialists to provide information about recent research on literacy education.

### INTERMEDIATE SCHOOL DISTRICTS AND LOCAL SCHOOLS

- Upon request, provide personnel who have demonstrated the ability to foster high levels of growth toward Michigan K-12 Standards in English Language Arts for service on the State Literacy Advisory Panel.
- MEmploy specialists to improve literacy education and outcomes.

**Want to learn more about what you can do?** Read the full report on *Improving Literacy Outcomes for Students in Michigan's Most Vulnerable Schools* at [aclumich.org](http://aclumich.org).

<sup>1</sup> National Center for Education Statistics. [n.d.]. State education data profiles. Common Core of Data (CCD). Institute of Education Sciences, U.S. Department of Education. Retrieved from <http://nces.ed.gov/ccd/>.