



# EMPOWERED

empowering michigan education



IMPROVING LITERACY OUTCOMES FOR STUDENTS IN MICHIGAN

## Providing Adequate Learning Resources

**We do not provide every child in Michigan with the necessary tools for learning to read and write.** Those who visit both affluent and high-need schools in Michigan will notice a stark difference between the quality and abundance of books, magazines, and textbooks available, as well as an equally stark discrepancy in students' access to functioning computers and tablets with reliable internet connectivity.

Our failure to provide all Michigan children with the learning resources to develop their literacy skills has had serious consequences. There is a glaring disparity in the reading and

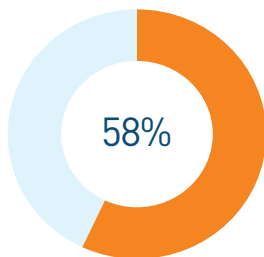
writing abilities of students of color compared to their white counterparts. A similar disparity exists for children from economically disadvantaged families compared to those who are not.<sup>1</sup>

Youth affected by poverty—a group disproportionately inclusive of minority students—are bright and capable, but we have denied them crucial literacy experiences and advantages, including the tools to engage in such learning.

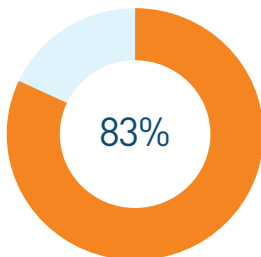
**We need to provide Michigan schools with sufficient learning resources, and then make sure that students have access to those resources, at school and at home. We must:**

### READING PROFICIENCY OF MICHIGAN FOURTH-GRADERS

*Outcomes from the 2013 Michigan Educational Assessment Program (MEAP).*



Students below the poverty level



Students above the poverty level

- **Set benchmarks** for minimum adequate learning resources for all schools.
- Require as part of accreditation and/or school turnaround plans an **audit of books and reading resources** available to students.
- **Fund resource grants** for all districts and schools not meeting minimum requirements for books, texts, technology, and related supports.
- **Ensure that students can borrow from school and take home textbooks** and a wide variety of interesting and age-appropriate reading material, particularly when they may not have access to reading materials at home or a nearby library.

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## 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

- Convene the State Literacy Panel for the purpose of guiding work on this recommendation.
- Allocate funding to the Michigan Department of Education (MDE) to provide resource grants to schools not meeting the minimum resource requirements.

### LEGISLATURE

- Charge the MDE and State School Reform/Redesign Office, universities, and intermediate and local school districts with collaborating on the determination of what constitutes minimum adequate learning resources.
- Appropriate funding to the MDE to provide resource grants to schools not meeting the minimum resource requirements.

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

- Collaborate to determine what constitutes minimum adequate learning resources and appropriate learning resources for students from a range of backgrounds and with a range of literacy learning needs and goals.
- Require an audit of books and other reading and writing resources available to students.
- Provide resource grants to schools not meeting minimum requirements.
- Require resource improvement proposals as part of School Improvement Plans (SIP).

### UNIVERSITIES AND TEACHER EDUCATION PROVIDERS

- Consult with the MDE/SRO to determine what constitutes minimum adequate learning resources for all schools.
- Consult with the MDE/SRO and ISDs and local districts to determine what constitutes appropriate learning resources for students from a range of backgrounds and with a range of literacy learning needs and goals.
- Assist local districts in enacting the audit of books and other reading/writing resources as mandated by the MDE/SRO.
- Serve as consultants to districts in preparing proposals that focus on resources shown to support literacy development (e.g., high-interest books rather than the latest untested computer program).
- Serve as consultants to districts in preparing portions of School Improvement Plans focus on resources shown to support literacy development (e.g., high-interest books rather than the latest untested computer program).

### INTERMEDIATE SCHOOL DISTRICTS

- Distribute resources equitably to the schools. *(Note that equitable distribution does not necessarily mean the same distribution; greater resources may be needed in some communities than others.)*
- Determine what constitutes appropriate learning resources for students from a range of backgrounds and with a range of literacy learning needs and goals.
- Assist local districts in enacting the audit of books and other reading/writing resources as mandated by the MDE/SRO.
- Support local school districts in preparing evidence-based proposals for the MDE/SRO resource grants.
- Support local school districts in preparing SIPs to include attention to allocating for literacy learning resources.

### LOCAL DISTRICTS AND SCHOOLS

- Distribute resources equitably to classrooms. *(Note that equitable distribution does not necessarily mean the same distribution; greater resources may be needed in some communities than others.)*
- Use resources appropriately.
- Carry out the audit of books and other reading/writing resources as mandated by the MDE/SRO and report results.
- Coordinate teacher-led committees to develop proposals.
- Integrate planning for resource needs into SIPs.

**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> Michigan Department of Education. [2013]. State demographic report. Michigan Educational Assessment Program (MEAP). Retrieved from [http://www.michigan.gov/documents/mde/Fall\\_2013\\_MEAP\\_State\\_Demographic\\_Report\\_448999\\_7.pdf](http://www.michigan.gov/documents/mde/Fall_2013_MEAP_State_Demographic_Report_448999_7.pdf).