

Fact Sheet: Promoting Early Literacy in Michigan

We all can agree that children should be provided the supports they need to become literate by the end of the third grade. Most students who fail to reach this critical milestone fall further behind and often drop out before earning a high school diploma. Low-income students are at higher risk of low literacy skills than their peers from higher-income families and well-resourced schools.

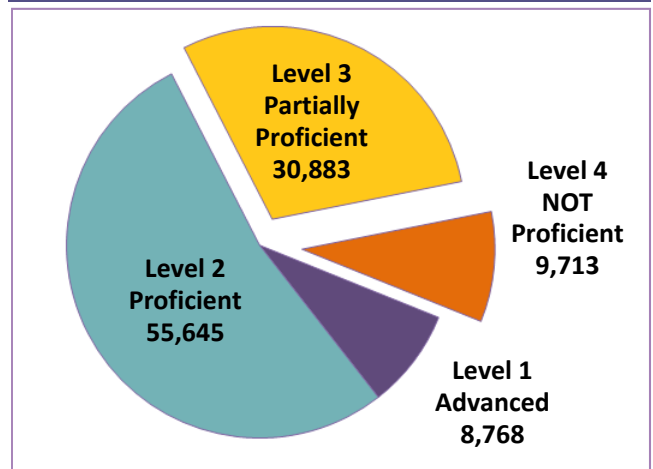
INVEST: States that have seen the most dramatic improvements in early literacy have made substantial investments in early interventions. Without additional funding, schools with large numbers of disadvantaged students are hampered in their efforts. For example, the substantial gains in reading proficiency among Florida students were aided by \$165 million to support reading specialists and summer programs.

CURRENT SITUATION IN MICHIGAN: Roughly 40,000 of the state's third-graders did not demonstrate proficiency in MEAP reading in 2013, and 10,000 of those had scores at the most elementary level (4)—NOT proficient.

State efforts must begin long before children reach the third grade or even kindergarten. The first three years of life provide a critical window of opportunity to improve the life chances of children.

EARLY INTERVENTION IS PREVENTION: Let's begin by strengthening existing systems for maternal and infant health, child lead poisoning prevention, early intervention for children with disabilities or developmental delays and improved access to subsidized high quality child care. Expanded access to preschool for 3-year-olds

Almost two of every five third-graders in Michigan did not demonstrate proficiency in reading on the state test.



Source: Michigan Department of Education, 2013 Grade 3 Reading MEAP

and dental care for Medicaid-eligible children would also enhance readiness.

POVERTY: The clear connection between poverty and academic achievement must be addressed. Raising the state Earned Income Tax Credit and strengthening family supports will improve achievement. Parents in low-wage jobs with minimal benefits need family-friendly policies at work and in government programs.

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