Roadmap to Regional Literacy

A Foundation for College and Career Readiness

TALENT 2025
Setting a course.

We know that up until the third grade, students are learning to read. After that, they are reading to learn. So early literacy is a critical need in our effort to improve the level of education and skill in the region’s future workforce.

But the strategies to improve early literacy cannot be limited to elementary school. The problem is cyclical, and only a multi-level approach across all age groups – preschool through adults – can break that cycle.

- We need to target the preschool years because a third of young children in the U.S. arrive at kindergarten without the skills they need to succeed, and children who enter kindergarten without appropriate reading skills have a much higher chance of dropping out of school later in life.

- We need to target the grade school years because two-thirds of children who cannot read proficiently by fourth grade will end up in jail or on welfare.

- We need to target adults because research shows that children of low-literacy parents begin kindergarten significantly behind their peers, starting the cycle over again.

The causes of illiteracy are varied and complex, but some key issues rise to the top:

1. Need for high quality early literacy instruction in preschool programs
2. Inadequate early literacy training for teachers and principals
3. Households with low-literacy levels
4. Poverty

Strategies in this report address these and other causes to improve low-literacy levels throughout West Michigan and set tomorrow’s future workforce on a path to college and career readiness.
The Early Childhood Development and K-12 Education Working Groups have mapped out a plan to increase and improve early literacy in our region. Three areas have emerged where the need is greatest:

### Pre-Kindergarten

**GOAL**
Ensure every child in the Talent 2025 region enters kindergarten ready for school.

**STRATEGIES**
1. Use data-driven assessments
2. Build support for evidence-based, high quality preschool for at-risk children
3. Improve Pre-K instruction
4. Engage parents
5. Expand opportunities for Community Based Organizations

**EVIDENCED-BASED PROGRAMS AND INITIATIVES**

**Great Start Readiness Program**
Michigan’s Great Start Readiness Program (GSRP) targets 4-year-olds who may be at risk for educational failure, and research shows it is working.

Assessments for Kent County third-graders who participated in GSRP show a significant benefit in English and math scores compared to their peers who did not receive any early childhood programming.

**Reach Out and Read**
Pediatricians can also encourage early literacy through programs like Reach Out and Read, which provides families with 10 free books over the course of a child’s first five years. The program trains doctors and medical staff to talk with parents about the importance of reading aloud and engaging with their young children, including cuddling up to read together on a regular basis. They also demonstrate how best to look at books and talk about the stories with their children.

Research shows the program has a significant effect on parental behavior and attitudes toward reading aloud and results in improved language scores of the children who participate.

**General Education Leadership Network**
The General Education Leadership Network (GELN), a collaborative of the Michigan Association of Intermediate School Administrators, identified 10 essential practices for early literacy instruction that could be a statewide focus of professional development. The research-supported practices also align with the Reading Now Network and the Sound Reading Framework.

### Great Start Readiness Program (Preschool) - Longitudinal Data

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Performance Level</th>
<th>% State of MI All Students</th>
<th>% State of MI Economically Disadvantaged</th>
<th>% GSRP Students</th>
<th>% No Early Childhood Free/Reduced</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3rd Grade English Language Arts - M-STEP, Spring 2017</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advanced Proficient</td>
<td>22.1</td>
<td>11.3</td>
<td><strong>19.5</strong></td>
<td>10.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Proficient</td>
<td>22.0</td>
<td>17.8</td>
<td><strong>26.6</strong></td>
<td>16.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Partially Proficient</td>
<td>25.5</td>
<td>27.6</td>
<td><strong>29.3</strong></td>
<td>29.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not Proficient</td>
<td>30.4</td>
<td>43.4</td>
<td><strong>24.6</strong></td>
<td>42.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Passing</td>
<td>44.1</td>
<td>29.1</td>
<td><strong>46.1</strong></td>
<td>27.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3rd Grade Mathematics - M-STEP, Spring 2017</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advanced Proficient</td>
<td>22.1</td>
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</table>
Kindergarten to 3rd Grade

GOAL
Increase 3rd grade reading and writing proficiency in our region to at least 80% by 2025
• All students should show at least a year of growth for a year of education
• Students below grade level should show more than a year of growth for a year of education
  (excluding those diagnosed with a severe disability)

STRATEGIES
1. Implement the following evidenced-based strategies in every elementary school in West Michigan:
   • Clinical training or job-embedded training and sustained professional development for teachers and student teachers
   • Principal coaches
   • Research-based intervention
   • Robust classroom libraries
2. Align the curriculum of the region’s elementary education programs to evidenced-based leading practices
3. Advocate for a proven and effective assessment system that allows for national comparisons for all students
4. Support districts in developing programs and strategies to reverse summer reading loss
OBJECTIVES

Using the K-3rd Grade Strategies, we hope to achieve the following objectives focusing on three groups: priority students and schools with at least 80% of students receiving free or reduced lunch, the general student population at all schools, and teaching programs at colleges and universities.

1. Increase the number of Reading Now Network Lab Schools (RNN) from six to 12 by fall of 2018.
2. Increase the number of Sound Reading Framework Schools (SRF) from three to five by summer of 2018.
3. Align teacher preparation and credentialing with best practices in pedagogy.
4. Conduct a crosswalk between RNN, SRF, and MAISA GELN essential practices in literacy to determine if these programs can work simultaneously in a building.
5. Reallocate $500,000 in state funding to pilot a comprehensive early literacy framework that includes SRF and RNN by June 2018.
6. Recognize and support school districts that demonstrate fidelity to the MAISA GELN essential practices in literacy.
7. Strategically place undergraduate elementary education students in schools that are demonstrating high fidelity and measurable outcomes to evidenced-based early literacy practices.
8. Increase recruitment of minority students into undergraduate elementary programs.

EVIDENCED-BASED PROGRAMS AND INITIATIVES

Reading Now Network

The Reading Now Network (RNN), a collaborative effort by superintendents from 10 West Michigan counties, aims to ensure at least 80% of third-graders read proficiently regardless of demographics and that intervention strategies are systemically implemented for the other 20%.

Using literacy coaching for principals and teachers, a classroom library initiative and customized assistance, the network has lead to significant success. Teachers and administrators at RNN schools are embracing and implementing program recommendations.

While the program has been in place for less than two years, early results are promising. One partner school, Moon Elementary in Muskegon, essentially doubled its third grade reading proficiency from 8.8% to 17.5%, while surrounding schools saw their scores decline.

Sound Reading Framework

The Sound Reading Framework (SRF) supplies teachers in kindergarten through third grade with tools and strategies to meet each student’s literacy needs within a daily, 120-minute literacy block. SRF is in the third year of a pilot program at three Grand Rapids Public elementary schools.

A full evaluation of SRF will happen when the first kindergarten class finishes third grade, however, on average, SRF students are making more than a year’s worth of growth on assessments.

Reading Now Network - M-STEP 2017

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>3rd Grade Reading (ELA)</th>
<th>Spring 2016</th>
<th>Spring 2017</th>
<th>Change</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lakeside Elementary</td>
<td>23.6%</td>
<td>11.5%</td>
<td>-12.1%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Marquette Elementary</td>
<td>29.3%</td>
<td>25.4%</td>
<td>-3.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Moon Elementary</strong></td>
<td><strong>8.8%</strong></td>
<td><strong>17.5%</strong></td>
<td><strong>8.7%</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Muskegon District</td>
<td>17.8%</td>
<td>14.7%</td>
<td>-3.1%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Muskegon ISD</td>
<td>42.2%</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>-2.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Michigan</td>
<td>46%</td>
<td>44.1%</td>
<td>-1.9%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>3rd Grade Math</th>
<th>Spring 2016</th>
<th>Spring 2017</th>
<th>Change</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lakeside Elementary</td>
<td>22.2%</td>
<td>13.1%</td>
<td>-9.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>34.5%</td>
<td>32.4%</td>
<td>-2.1%</td>
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<td>Muskegon ISD</td>
<td>42.8%</td>
<td>40.3%</td>
<td>-2.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Michigan</td>
<td>45.2%</td>
<td>46.8%</td>
<td>1.6%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Fall to Winter 2016-2017

- Average Growth Points
- Percent of Proficient Students

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>K</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>K</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1st Grade</td>
<td>33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1st Grade</td>
<td>33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2nd Grade</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3rd Grade</td>
<td>39%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Adult Literacy**

**GOAL**
Have 95% of West Michigan adults aged 25+ secure a high school diploma or GED

**STRATEGIES**
1. Provide literacy assessments to current and prospective employees who might need assistance
2. Provide literacy training at your workplace
3. Help employees improve their English-language skills
4. Support family literacy programs
5. Encourage employees to become a literacy tutor

**EVIDENCED-BASED PROGRAMS AND INITIATIVES**

**Adult Basic Education Programs**
Forty percent of working low-skilled adults have earnings in the bottom fifth of income distribution in the U.S. Adult basic education (ABE) programs that are linked to employment or post-secondary education can help low-skilled adult learners advance along a career path and improve their employment and earnings. Examples of ABE programs in our area are the Literacy Center of West Michigan and Muskegon Reads.

**General Education Leadership Network**
The General Education Leadership Network (GELN), a collaborative of the Michigan Association of Intermediate School Administrators, identified 10 essential practices for early literacy instruction that are a statewide focus of professional development.

**K-3RD GRADE ESTIMATED COSTS**

**Reading Now Network**
- **Classroom Library Costs (1,500 books per classroom)**
  - Per classroom: $3,750 (assuming decent library)
  - Per classroom: $7,500 (complete classroom library)
  - Per school (K-3): $75,000 (20 classrooms, decent libraries in each)

**Literacy Coaching for Teachers**
- One coach per building: $85,000, annually

**Literacy Coaching for Principals**
- One coach per 15 principals: $85,000, annually

**Professional Development in Early Literacy Instruction and Assessment Best Practices**
- Per building: $5,000-$10,000

**Sound Reading Framework**
- Comprehensive program per building: $200,000

**Literacy Center of West Michigan**
Muskegon Reads

**40% of working low-skilled adults have earnings in the bottom fifth of income distribution in the U.S.**

**The Difference 100 Hours Can Make**
One hundred hours in adult basic literacy instruction can result in the following outcomes:
- Dramatic increase in income over time
- More likely to obtain a high school equivalency
- More likely to pursue post-secondary education

Workers who are interested, but don’t participate in learning activities, say major barriers are lack of time and money:
- Too busy at work: 24%
- Education was too expensive/could not afford it: 21%
- No time because of child care / family responsibilities: 16%
- Course or program was not at a convenient time: 14%
- Unplanned circumstances that prevented participation: 10%
- Other: 8%
- Lack of employer support: 6%
- Do not have prerequisites: 2%
About Talent 2025
Talent 2025 is a catalyst for enhancing the integrated talent development system for West Michigan. Composed of more than 100 CEOs from the region’s 13 counties, the organization strives to be a driving force for an ongoing supply of world-class talent by convening leaders and organizations who will help shape a thriving economy.