



TALENTFIRST

Vision. Insights. Solutions.

EARLY LITERACY

Reading proficiently by 3rd grade is essential for student success & the quality of West Michigan's future workforce.



42% of 3rd graders are proficient/advanced on M-STEP for English Language Arts



Michigan's national ranking fell from 32nd in 2019 to 43rd in 2022 for 4th grade reading



48% of Michigan teachers report using reading programs that are not backed by science.



Less than 15% of teachers report receiving evidence-based coaching from their ISD.

School districts need support from parents, school board leadership, and the community to transform the way we prepare future generations to navigate life, postsecondary education & employment.

Recommendations for Systemic Change

- ☐ Schools evaluate reading curriculum & replace it with evidence-based curricula if not already present.
- ☐ Provide professional development for teachers to review & implement new literacy instructional practices.
- ☐ Ensure school leaders provide high-quality literacy coaching that is aligned to research-supported instructional practices.
- ☐ Adopt leading practices for early literacy grounded in the Science of Reading.
- ☐ Expand literacy instruction time through after school learning, summer school & research-proven tutoring programs.
- ☐ Encourage parents & community members to contact district leaders & school board members to ask questions & drive solutions to improve reading proficiency.

LEARN MORE

The following resources are provided to equip parents, school boards, and community members with the research and information to ask pertinent questions to drive change needed in early literacy and improve student outcomes.

[Sold a Story Podcast | How Teaching Kids to Read Went So Wrong](#)

Scientists have known for decades how children learn to read but many schools are ignoring the research. They buy teacher training and books rooted in a disproven idea. In this podcast, Emily Hanford investigates four authors and a publishing company that have made millions selling an idea proven wrong by cognitive scientists decades ago



[Research-Backed Strategies to Address Michigan's Education Crisis | Ed Trust-Midwest](#)

New 2023 State of Michigan Education Report projects the state will remain in the bottom 10th for 4th grade reading by 2030; data show Michigan's students dropped to 43rd nationally in 4th Grade Reading while Black students dropped to bottom five



[How Do Kids Learn to Read? What Science Says | Education Week](#)

The debate on how to teach early reading has raged for a century. But for the last few decades, the cognitive science has been clear: Teaching young kids how to crack the code—teaching systematic phonics—is the most reliable way to make sure that they learn how to read words.



[Most Popular Reading Programs Aren't Backed by Science | Education Week](#)

In a nationally representative survey, the top core instructional materials teachers report using diverge from evidence-based practices for teaching reading or supporting struggling students.



[How Policymakers Can Foster Early Literacy | Nell K. Duke](#)

Professor Nell Duke is a literacy researcher who focuses on early literacy, policy, and practice. This article highlights that policymakers, including those on state boards of education, have an important role to play in improving early reading.

