

January 31, 2024

SUBJECT: Statement of Support for Literacy for All Bills



Dear Michigan Legislators,

We are reaching out today in support of SB567, SB568, and HB5098, otherwise known as the Literacy for All Bills. 313Reads is a collective impact coalition of 70+ diverse partner organizations, united by a commitment to systems-level change in literacy equity. Our work is centered on aligned, coordinated efforts for grade level reading and literacy equity, including advocating for policies that support literacy and literacy educators.

Michigan's children need access to literacy instruction grounded in research-based practices and the science of reading. Michigan educators need greater access to training in effective literacy instruction. Our state is in the bottom tenth for 4th grade reading across the nation. **Our barriers to literacy success include: 1) the lack of early identification of students who need additional support in code-based reading instruction; and 2) educators' inconsistent access to teacher candidate training and professional development aligned with the science of reading instruction.**

The "Literacy for All" bills, which have historically had bipartisan support, would ensure access to an evidence-based screener that identifies students who are struggling with the foundational skills of reading. This would integrate with current law, assessments, and MTSS processes to ensure students have access to focused, evidence-based intervention and assessment. The bills would ensure that educators receive robust training in the science of reading and how to work with data to support readers, including identifying and supporting students who struggle with decoding text, as do students with dyslexia. **These bills would mean that we don't wait for children to fail, but identify ways to support them earlier in order to ensure reading success. These bills would mean we support teachers in having the tools they need to grow their impact.**

Access to high quality literacy instruction is critical to ending the racial equity gap in literacy. In the 2021-22 school year, 15% of Black third graders did not meet the benchmark to advance to fourth grade, as compared to 3.3% of their white peers¹. Often, these Black and Brown students, particularly those living in communities marginalized to the point of poverty, have experienced multiple barriers to accessing high quality literacy learning in school. Further amplifying this is the fact that our students in Detroit have historically had less access² than their suburban counterparts to certified teachers with training in research-based reading instruction.

It is urgent that these bills pass swiftly from your chamber to the governor's desk. Our community of students, literacy professionals, and families will be impacted by the outcome of these bills. By pushing for swift action on the "Literacy For All" bills, you are helping today's children and tomorrow's constituents access literacy support that will ensure their full, informed participation in our democracy. **Now is the time to act in support of Michigan's future.** Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

The Members of 313Reads: Detroit's Literacy Coalition; and Constituents

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¹ <https://detroit.chalkbeat.org/2022/9/1/23332895/michigan-third-grade-reading-retention-law-mstep>

² www.michigan.gov/-/media/Project/Websites/mde/2022/01/05/EPIC_Teacher_Workforce_Report_2021.pdf?rev=cff7cc85cdb447eb9c8de9af6e7652d0

Member Organizations

[313Reads: Detroit's Literacy Coalition](#)

[482Forward](#)

[Autism Alliance of Michigan](#)

[Black Male Educators Alliance](#)

[Broadside Lotus Press](#)

[Books for Kids](#)

[Center for Success Network](#)

[Central Detroit Christian](#)

[Detroit Book City](#)

[Detroit Institute for Children](#)

[Detroit Parent Network](#)

[Detroit Public Library](#)

[Developing K.I.D.S.](#)

[Making Spirits Bright](#)

[Michigan Parent, Advocate & Attorney Coalition](#)

[Teach Plus Michigan](#)

[Teen Hype](#)

[United Way for Southeastern Michigan](#)

[Urban Neighborhood Initiatives Detroit](#)

[The Youth Development Resource Center](#)

Constituents

Kaitlin Aleshire, Former School Counselor

Jessica Amey, Educator

Niki Beebani, Advocate

Christine A. Bell, Executive Director of Urban Neighborhood Initiatives Detroit

Kate Cohen, Advocate

Maria Dismondy, Executive Director of Making Spirits Bright

Heather Eckner, Advocate

Cindy Eggleton, Advocate

Imani Foster, 482Forward Communications & Research Director

Mary Franklin, Advocate

Jenna Friedman, Advocate

Cassandra Glinis, DPSCD educator

Maggie Hanna, Advocate

Janeice R. Haynes, Indie Bookstore Owner

Paige Hughart, Advocate

Dr. Curtis L. Lewis

Liz Lietz, Advocate

Jametta Lilly, CEO of Detroit Parent Network

Ben Locke, Advocate

Joy Lyman, Educator and Advocate

Laura Lyman, Advocate

Dr. Shelley McIntosh, Advocate

Andrea Meyer, Executive Director of Center for Success Network

Yvonne Mejias, Advocate

Christopher Rutherford President of Board of Directors, Broadside Lotus Press

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Dr. Leah van Belle, Advocate

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