

Key Points and Questions around Early Literacy Instruction

The following discussion points and questions have been developed to help you engage with local school boards, educators and leaders about the literacy performance and instructional practices at your school.

Discussion Points:

- Mastering literacy in early elementary is essential for our students if they are to graduate high school college and career ready.
- In national testing, Michigan lags more than half of the states in reading proficiency. Results from our state's standardized test, M-STEP, are no more encouraging: In 2022, just 41.6% of third-graders statewide scored proficient or better.
- A review of our district's 2022 academic performance on the 3rd Grade M-STEP assessment shows opportunity for improvement. We need to discuss solutions to ensure all students are reading proficiently by grade three.

Questions to Ask:

- What literacy coaching and professional development have your teachers received that have positively impacted student outcomes? What is being done with those strategies that are not increasing student's reading proficiency?
- What reading programs and assessments are you currently using? What changes have you seen in student outcomes with these reading programs? What percentage of the students in your district are proficient in these various assessments?
- Has the district evaluated its reading curriculum to ensure it is aligned with the findings from the Science of Reading? If you have, are you seeing an increase of students who are reading at grade level? If not, are you evaluating what is not working and adjusting instructional practices?
- What classrooms or schools in your district have higher levels of proficiency than typical? What are they doing differently in their literacy instruction? Are you evaluating their practices to model in other classrooms? If you're not sure, would you ask some questions to find out?
- What things are you considering doing differently to move the needle in your district? How can I help? Have you listened to the podcast Sold a Story? If not, I'd like to send it to you then schedule a time that we can talk about it so I can get your thoughts and input.

Note: Each school district's website lists their Board of Education office numbers, board member's contact information, meeting dates, meeting minutes and policy documents.