EPIC
Education Policy
Innovation Collaborative
RESEARCH WITH CONSEQUENCE

Michigan's Read by Grade Three Law: Year One Report

MARCH 2021

DISCLAIMER

The Education Policy Innovation Collaborative (EPIC) at Michigan State University is an independent, non-partisan research center that operates as the strategic research partner to the Michigan Department of Education (MDE) and the Center for Educational Performance and Information (CEPI). EPIC conducts original research using a variety of methods that include advanced statistical modeling, representative surveys, interviews, and case study approaches. This research result used data structured and maintained by the MERI-Michigan Education Data Center (MEDC). MEDC data is modified for analysis purposes using rules governed by MEDC and are not identical to those data collected and maintained by the Michigan Department of Education (MDE) and/or Michigan's Center for Educational Performance and Information (CEPI). Results, information, and opinions solely represent the analysis, information, and opinions of the author(s) and are not endorsed by and do not reflect the views or positions of, grantors, MDE and CEPI, or any employee thereof.

The research reported here was supported by the Institute of Education Sciences, U.S. Department of Education, through Grant R305H190004 to Michigan State University. The opinions expressed are those of the authors and do not represent views of the Institute or the U.S. Department of Education.

Michigan's Read by Grade Three Law: Year One Report

MARCH 2021

AUTHORS:

Katharine O. Strunk

Qiong Zhu

Meg Turner

Tanya S. Wright

Amy Cummings

Tara Kilbride

Joanne West

Craig De Voto

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The authors wish to acknowledge the many people who graciously gave of their time in support of this effort. We are grateful to the nearly 19,000 educators who participated in our surveys of teachers, principals, superintendents, and ISD Early Literacy Coaches during the spring of 2020 and to the many education stakeholders who spoke with us.

We are also indebted to a number of individuals who provided technical and research support for this study. From the Michigan Department of Education, we would like to thank Dr. Michael Rice, Sheila Alles, Dr. Venessa Keesler, Brandy Bugni, and Kellie Flaminio for their support and thoughtful feedback. We would also like to thank the many staff from the Center for Educational Performance and Information who assisted us with obtaining and understanding the administrative data, and in particular Tom Howell, Trina Anderson, Mike McGroarty, and Rod Bernosky. In addition, we learned a great deal from feedback and conversation with members of the Early Literacy Task Force, especially Naomi Norman, Susan Townsend, and Erin Brown, and with Dr. Nell Duke from the University of Michigan. As always, we appreciate our partners at the University of Michigan, and in particular Dr. Brian Jacob, for his thoughtful feedback on parts of our analyses. At Michigan State University, we thank Emily Hatch, Lori Bruner and Yujin Oh for their research assistance as well as Emily Mohr for her coordination and thoughtful suggestions and Michelle Huhn for formatting the text and graphics for the report. Finally, we thank Bridgette Redman for her work copy editing the report.

Lastly, the authors are grateful to U.S. Department of Education Institute for Education Sciences (R305H190004) and to the W.K. Kellogg Foundation and Michigan State University's College of Education for their generous financial support of the Education Policy Innovation Collaborative and this study.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

YEAR ONE REPORT: EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

i • Purpose of The Report
ii • Research Questions and Study Overview
ii • Key Findings
v • Policy Implications

SECTION ONE: INTRODUCTION

2 • Michigan's Read by Grade Three Law
4 • Purpose of This Report
5 • Section One Notes

SECTION TWO: DATA AND METHODS

7 • Introduction
10 • Description of Data and Methods
21 • Summary
22 • Section Two Notes

SECTION THREE: THE DEVELOPMENT AND PASSAGE OF THE READ BY GRADE THREE LAW

24 • Establishing the Rationale For the Law
28 • Development of the Law
31 • Supporting Early Implementation of the Law
35 • Section Three Notes

SECTION FOUR: HOW THE READ BY GRADE THREE LAW IS INTENDED TO WORK

37 • Theory of Change and The Evidence Informing it
50 • **Policymakers' Beliefs About the Law's Policy Levers**
54 • **Special Section A: How the Media Has Covered the Read by Grade Three Law**
56 • Special Section A Notes
58 • Summary
59 • Section Four Notes

SECTION FIVE: IMPLEMENTATION OF THE READ BY GRADE THREE LAW

61 • Introduction
61 • Understanding of the Law
65 • Literacy Instructional Supports For Educators
80 • **Special Section B: ISD Early Literacy Coaches**
80 • ISD Early Literacy Coaches' Qualifications
82 • Teachers' Perceptions of ISD Early Literacy Coaches
83 • How Do ISD Early Literacy Coaches Support Teachers?
89 • How Do ISD Early Literacy Coaches Support Schools?
90 • Special Section B Notes
97 • Monitoring, Remediation, and Retention
107 • **Special Section C: Resources Invested in the Read by Grade Three Law**
108 • Educators' Reported Time Costs
112 • Educators' Reported Financial Costs
114 • Special Section C Notes
115 • Stakeholders Faced Challenges Implementing the Law
130 • **Special Section D: Heterogenous Effects of the Read by Grade Three Law**
130 • Schools in Traditionally Underserved Districts Were More Likely to Implement Personnel Changes
131 • Students in Traditionally Underserved Districts Experienced Greater Gains in Third-Grade ELA Achievement
133 • Enrollment in Developmental Kindergarten Increased More Rapidly in Traditionally Underserved Districts
135 • Students With Disabilities Improve in Math Achievement, Possibly Due To Increase in Special Education Identification
137 • Summary
138 • Section Five Notes

SECTION SIX: EARLY EFFECTS OF THE LAW ON STUDENT AND TEACHER OUTCOMES

140 • Introduction
141 • Educators' Perspectives on the Law's Effects on Literacy Instruction and Practice
146 • Effects of the Law on Teacher Staffing and Retention
150 • Effects of the Law on Student Outcomes
161 • Summary
162 • Section Six Notes

SECTION SEVEN: COVID-19 AND THE FUTURE OF THE READ BY GRADE THREE LAW

164 • Introduction

164 • State COVID-19 Guidance on Third-Grade Reading Laws

166 • Educators Expressed Early Literacy Concerns and Challenges During Spring 2020

168 • The Role of ISD Early Literacy Coaches During COVID-19 School-Building Closures

170 • Looking Forward

172 • Summary

172 • Section Seven Notes

SECTION EIGHT: KEY TAKEAWAYS AND POLICY IMPLICATIONS

174 • Key Takeaways

177 • Policy Implications

178 • Section Eight Notes

KEY TERMS

Key Terms **179**

REFERENCES

References **180**

Appendix A-1. Percentage of K-3 Teachers Reporting Increased Time on Evidence-Based Literacy Instructional Practices **190**

APPENDICES

Appendix A-2. K-3 Teachers' Perceived Quality of Literacy Instruction and Adequacy of Literacy Resources **191**

Appendix B-1. Full Results of Table 6.1 **192**

Appendix B-2. Full Results of Table 6.2 **193**

Appendix B-3. Full Results of Table 6.3 **195**

Appendix B-4. ITS Analysis of Enrollment in Developmental Kindergarten Programs, by Age Group **196**

Appendix B-5. Full Results of Table 6.4 **197**

Appendix B-6. Full Results of Table 6.5 **199**

Appendix C-1. Full Results of Table D.1 **200**

Appendix C-2. Full Results of Table D.2 **201**

Appendix C-3. Full Results of Table D.3 **202**

Appendix C-4. Full Results of Table D.4 **203**

LIST OF FIGURES

FIGURE 2. Educators' Perceptions of the Read by Grade Three Law **iv**

FIGURE 3.1. Timeline of Michigan's Efforts to Improve Literacy **25**

FIGURE 3.2 Map of States with Third-Grade Reading Policies **27**

FIGURE 4.1. Policy-Implied Theory of Change: Read by Grade Three Law **38**

FIGURE 5.1. K-3 Teachers' Understanding of the Read by Grade Three Law **62**

FIGURE 5.2. Understanding of the Read by Grade Three Law, by Educator Roles **64**

FIGURE 5.3. Reported Topics of Literacy Professional Development Received, by Grade Range **66**

FIGURE 5.4. Reported Areas of Desired Additional Literacy Professional Development, by Grade Range **68**

FIGURE 5.5. How ISD Early Literacy Coaches Report Spending Their Time **69**

FIGURE 5.6. Reported Change in the Number of Literacy Coaches Since the Implementation of the Read by Grade Three Law **72**

FIGURE 5.7. Reported Access to One-on-One Literacy Coaching from Various Providers, by Grade Range **73**

FIGURE 5.8. Reported Increase in Literacy Coaches and K-3 Teachers Receiving One-on-One Literacy Coaching **75**

FIGURE 5.9. Reported Hours of One-on-One Literacy Coaching Received by K-3 Teachers **76**

FIGURE 5.10. Reported Access to Literacy Coaches and One-on-One Literacy Coaching **77**

FIGURE 5.11. Educators Reporting Receiving Other Literacy Professional Development from Various Providers **78**

FIGURE 5.12. Reported Hours of Other Literacy Professional Development Received by K-3 Teachers **79**

FIGURE B.1. K-3 Teachers' Perceptions of ISD Early Literacy Coaches **82**

FIGURE B.2. Ways Teachers Were Identified for Literacy Coaching **84**

FIGURE B.3. Formats of One-on-One Literacy Coaching **85**

FIGURE B.4. Areas of Instruction Emphasized in Literacy Professional Development **86**

FIGURE B.5. Types of Instruction Emphasized in Literacy Professional Development **88**

FIGURE B.6. ISD Early Literacy Coaches' Literacy Support to Schools **89**

FIGURE 5.13. Reported Engagement of Administrators in Literacy Professional Development **92**

FIGURE 5.14. K-3 Teachers' Reported Change in Time Spent on Evidence-Based Literacy Instructional Practices Since the Law's Implementation **94**

FIGURE 5.15. K-3 Teachers' Reported Change in Time Spent on Evidence-Based Writing Instructional Practices Since the Law's Implementation **95**

FIGURE 5.16. K-3 Teachers Reporting Increased Time on Evidence-Based Literacy Instructional Practices, by District ELA Performance **96**

FIGURE 5.17. Reported Time Teachers Spend Helping Students Prepare for and Take Literacy Standardized Assessments **98**

FIGURE 5.18. Reported Usefulness of Assessments in Planning Instruction **100**

FIGURE 5.19. Reported Provision of Literacy Supports **102**

FIGURE 5.20. Reported Usefulness of Literacy Supports **103**

FIGURE 5.21. Educators' Beliefs About Retention **104**

FIGURE 5.22.1 Districts' Plans for Third-Grade Retention Before the COVID-19 Pandemic **105**

FIGURE 5.22.2. How did Suspension of State Assessments and Retention Waivers Affect Districts' Plans for Third-Grade Retention? **106**

FIGURE 5.23. Educators' Perceptions of the Read by Grade Three Law **116**

FIGURE 5.24. Educators' Perceptions of Human-Capital Resources in Implementing the Law **117**

FIGURE 5.25. Educators' Perceptions of Fiscal Resources in Implementing the Law **119**

FIGURE 5.26. Educators' Perceptions of the Time to Implement the Law **124**

FIGURE 5.27. Reported Hindrances to Working as ISD Early Literacy Coaches **124**

FIGURE 5.28.1. K-3 Teachers Reported Family Engagement Activities **125**

FIGURE 5.28.2. Reported Family Engagement Activities by K-5 Principals and District Superintendents **126**

FIGURE 5.29. Educators' Perceptions of the Law and Family Engagement **127**

FIGURE 5.30. K-3 Teachers' Perceived Quality of Literacy Instruction and Adequacy of Literacy Resources, by Proportion of Economically Disadvantaged Students **129**

FIGURE D.1. Personnel Changes K-5 Principals Reported Initiating as a Result of the Read by Grade Three Law, by Subgroup **131**

FIGURE D.2. Likelihood of Students Retained in K-2 **134**

FIGURE 6.1.1. Teachers' Perceived Effects of One-on-One Literacy Coaching on Instruction **143**

FIGURE 6.1.2. Teachers' Perceived Effects of Other Literacy Professional Development on Instruction **144**

FIGURE 6.2. K-3 Teachers' Perceived Effects of ISD Early Literacy Coaches on Literacy Instruction **145**

FIGURE 6.3. Educators' Perceived Effects of the Read by Grade Three Law on Literacy Instruction **146**

FIGURE 6.4. Adjusted Trends in K-5 Teacher Mobility **147**

FIGURE 6.5. Reported Personnel Changes Initiated by K-5 Principals as a Result of the Read by Grade Three Law **149**

FIGURE 6.6. Educators' Perceived Effectiveness of the Law on Student Achievement **150**

FIGURE 6.7.1. Adjusted Trends of Student ELA Achievement **152**

FIGURE 6.7.2. Adjusted Trends of Student Math Achievement **153**

FIGURE 6.8. Adjusted Trends of Student Retention **156**

FIGURE 6.9. Adjusted Trends of Student Mobility **158**

FIGURE 6.10. Adjusted Trends of Special Education Placement **160**

FIGURE 7.1 Map of States' COVID-19 Guidance and Third-Grade Reading Policies **165**

FIGURE 7.2. Educators' Reported Concerns Over the Effect of COVID-19 **167**

FIGURE 7.3. Reported Activities of ISD Early Literacy Coaches, Pre- and Post-COVID-19 School-Building Closures **168**

FIGURE 7.4. Reported Challenges ISD Early Literacy Coaches Faced Providing One-on-One Literacy Coaching or Professional Development Remotely **169**

FIGURE 7.5. Extent to Which Various Supports Would be Helpful in Providing/Improving on Distance One-on-One Coaching or Professional Development **170**

LIST OF TABLES

TABLE 1. Data Sources ii

TABLE 2.1. Data Sources 8

TABLE 2.2 Research Questions 10

TABLE 2.3. Sample Size and Response Rates 15

TABLE 2.4. Sample Size and Response Rates, by Grade Range 15

TABLE 2.5.1. Comparisons Between Survey Samples and Target Populations, by Individual Characteristics 16

TABLE 2.5.2. Comparisons Between Survey Samples and Target Populations (District/ISD Characteristics) 18

TABLE 2.6. Sample Population Difference, by Grade Range 19

TABLE 3.1 Funding Streams Associated with the Read by Grade Three Law 31

TABLE 5.1. Reported Number of Literacy Coaches Working in Schools and Districts 71

TABLE C.1. Reported FTE Employed and Proportion of Time Devoted to Literacy Instruction and Read by Grade Three Implementation (District-Level) 109

TABLE C.2. Reported FTE Employed and Proportion of Time Devoted to Literacy Instruction and Read by Grade Three Implementation (School-Level) 110

TABLE C.3. Reported Percentage of District Budget Spent on Literacy and Read by Grade Three Implementation 113

TABLE C.4. Reported Funds Spent on Literacy Instruction and Read by Grade Three Implementation 114

TABLE 5.2. ISD Early Literacy Coach – Teacher Ratio, by ISD Size 118

TABLE D.1. Interrupted Time Series Analysis of Third Grade M-STEP ELA, by Subgroup 132

TABLE D.2. Interrupted Time Series Analysis of Enrollment in "Developmental Kindergarten," by Subgroup 133

TABLE D.3. Interrupted Time Series Analysis of Third Grade M-STEP Math, by Special Education Status **135**

TABLE D.4. Interrupted Time Series Analysis of Special Education Placement, by Subgroup **136**

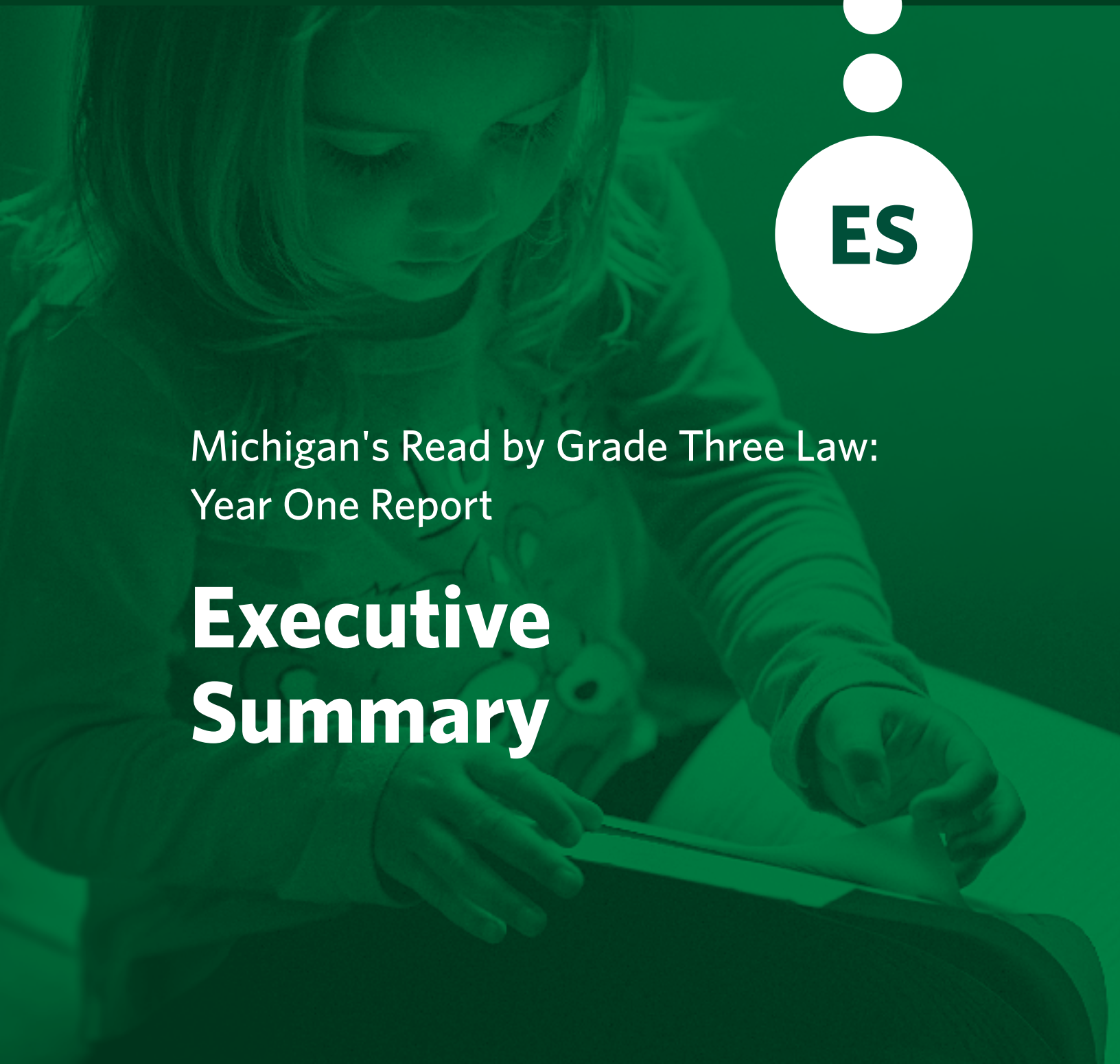
TABLE 6.1. Interrupted Time Series Analysis of K-5 Teacher Mobility **148**

TABLE 6.2. Interrupted Time Series Analysis of Student Achievement **154**

TABLE 6.3. Interrupted Time Series Analysis of Student Retention **156**

TABLE 6.4. Interrupted Time Series Analysis of Student Mobility **159**

TABLE 6.5. Interrupted Time Series Analysis of Special Education Placement **160**



ES

Michigan's Read by Grade Three Law:
Year One Report

Executive Summary

Education Policy
Innovation Collaborative
RESEARCH WITH CONSEQUENCE

March 2021

Year One Report:
Executive Summary

Katharine O. Strunk, Tanya S. Wright, Tara Kilbride, Qiong Zhu, Amy Cummings, Joanne West, Meg Turner, and Craig De Voto

Purpose of The Report

In 2016, the Michigan legislature passed the Read by Grade Three Law in response to growing concerns about literacy rates among Michigan students. The Read by Grade Three Law aims to improve early literacy outcomes for students across the state of Michigan through improved instruction, implementation of early monitoring and identification systems, required interventions for students identified as having a "reading deficiency" under the Law, and a requirement that students who do not meet a state standard for reading proficiency by the end of the third grade will be retained.

This is the first of five reports that will be released by the Education Policy Innovation Collaborative (EPIC) at Michigan State University (MSU), in collaboration with researchers from the University of Michigan, as part of a four-year evaluation of the implementation and efficacy of the Read by Grade Three Law. EPIC is the strategic partner to the **Michigan Department of Education (MDE)**, however as with all EPIC research, this evaluation and its results are independent of MDE and the conclusions and recommendations are EPIC's own.

The purpose of this first interim report is to provide an overview of how the Law was formed and intended to work, its early implementation through spring 2020, and its early effects on relevant outcomes for Michigan students and educators.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS AND STUDY OVERVIEW

This report focuses on four main research questions about the early implementation and effects of the Read by Grade Three Law:

1. How was the Read by Grade Three Law formed and intended to work?
2. How is the Read by Grade Three Law being implemented in Michigan? Does implementation vary across populations and places, and if so, why?
3. Is the Read by Grade Three Law meeting its goal to improve literacy achievement and attainment for Michigan students? For which students, if any, is the policy particularly successful?
4. Is the policy an efficient use of resources?

To gain insight into these questions from different perspectives and contexts, we employ a mixed-methods design that combines multiple sources of data (outlined in Table 1) and multiple methods of analysis. Interviews of state-level stakeholders provide context about the development of the Law. We join these data with surveys of teachers, principals, district superintendents, and Early Literacy Coaches to examine perceptions about the Law's implementation and early efficacy. To assess the early effects of the Law on a variety of student and teacher outcomes, we analyze longitudinal administrative records using an interrupted time series approach.

TABLE 1. Data Sources

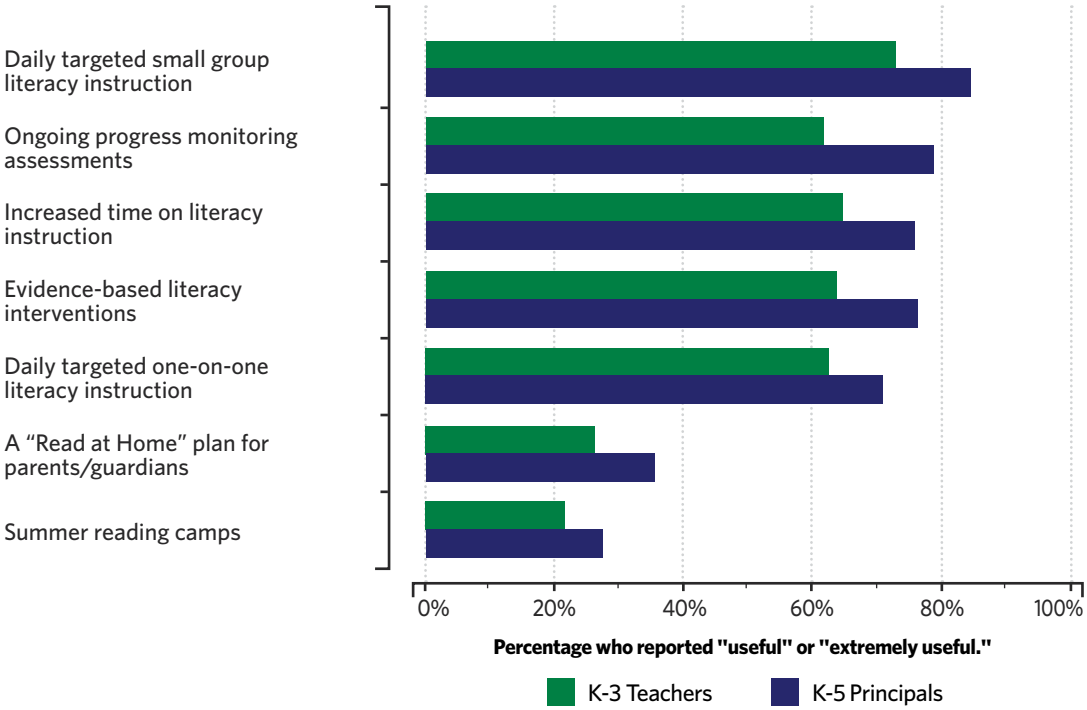
Data	Sample	Outcomes / Areas of Interest
Stakeholder interviews	11 state-level policymakers, 5 MDE personnel, and 8 external stakeholders	Formation, perceptions, and early implementation of the Law
Educator surveys	17,532 K-8 teachers, 928 K-8 principals, 192 district superintendents, and 33 ISD Early Literacy Coaches	Literacy instructional practice, professional learning, coaching, curricula, and interventions Understanding, perceptions, early implementation, and costs of the Law
State administrative records	4.7 million K-5 student-year observations and 209,000 K-5 teacher-year observations from 2012-13 through 2018-19	Student achievement, grade retention, special education placement, English learner program participation, student and educator mobility

KEY FINDINGS

Third-grade student achievement has improved and educators attribute gains to the literacy supports identified in the Law. ELA scores have increased each year since the Law was implemented, with students in traditionally underserved districts experiencing the greatest gains. Although we cannot definitively attribute these gains to the Law, educators report finding many of the Law's required interventions to be useful and effective in improving student literacy and achievement. As Figure 1 shows, most teachers and principals indicated that they (or the teachers

in their school) use daily targeted small group or one-on-one reading instruction, evidence-based literacy interventions, increased time spent on reading instruction, and ongoing progress monitoring assessments in their classrooms and find them to be useful.

FIGURE 1. Reported Usefulness of Literacy Interventions



Note: This figure combines results from multiple survey questions. Teachers and principals were asked, "To what extent are you (or the teachers in your school) using the following interventions when you work with students who are identified as having a 'reading deficiency'? If you use it, how useful is it in improving students' literacy?" Respondents who answered "Not at all" for using an intervention were instructed to leave the "usefulness" question blank. Source: EPIC survey of educators about the Read by Grade Three Law.

Fiscal and human capital constraints created barriers to hiring sufficient quantities of literacy coaches. State-level stakeholders cite the matching requirement for **ISD Early Literacy Coach** funding and a lack of available, qualified educators outside the extant supply of classroom teachers as factors contributing to this shortage. Administrators in districts with high predicted retention rates—those that could benefit the most from literacy coaching—were least likely to report an increase in the number of ISD Early Literacy Coaches working in their school or district since the Law passed.

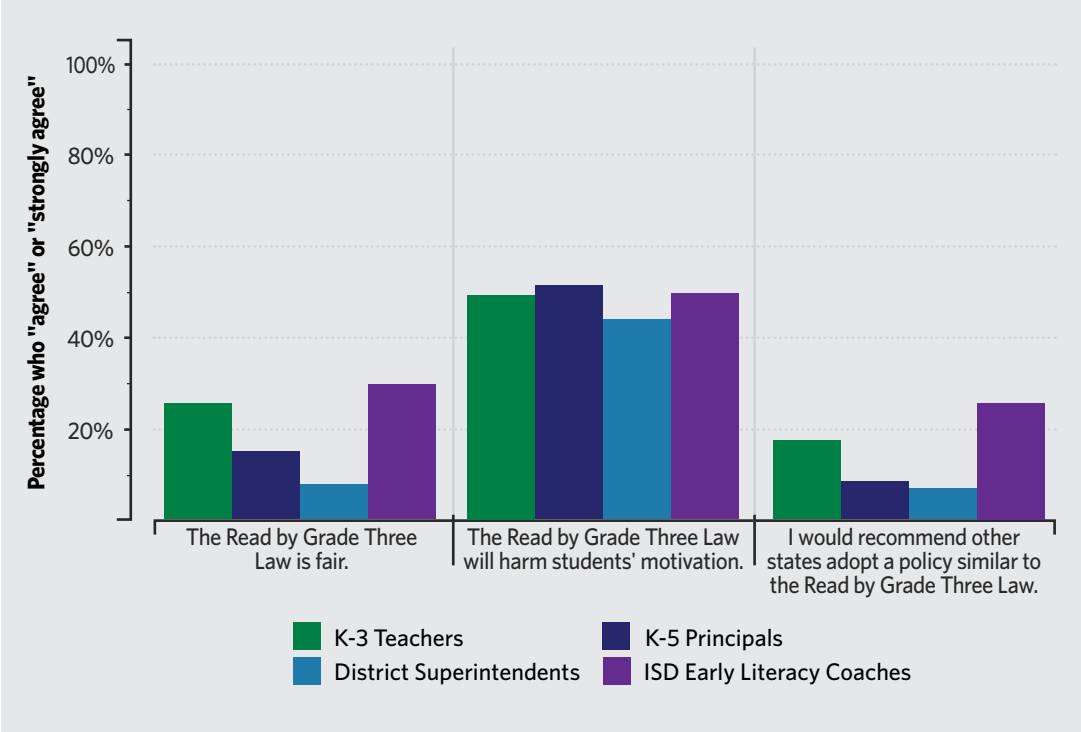
There were disparities in the availability and quality of literacy resources. Educators in districts with high predicted retention rates, low ELA performance, or higher proportions of economically disadvantaged students had less favorable perceptions of their schools' ability to recruit and retain high-quality teachers, availability of library resources, access to a variety of reading materials, and quality of literacy instruction for students with IEPs or **Section 504 Plans**.

The retention component of the Law remains particularly controversial. While the majority of state-level stakeholders we interviewed disliked retention, many perceived its inclusion to be a tool intended to ensure that schools took early literacy seriously. Others worried that retention

would inequitably and adversely affect students who already have been underserved by the public education system and could have long-term and adverse effects on retained students. The far majority of educators reported that the retention component of the Law caused stress in the school community, and few believe that retaining third grade students will improve student literacy. Accordingly, most district superintendents indicated that they planned to retain third-grade students only on a case-by-case basis, if at all.

Educators held negative perceptions of the Read by Grade Three Law. As Figure 2 shows, very few educators believed that the Law was fair or would recommend that other states adopt similar policies. Moreover, nearly half believed that the Law would harm students' motivation. Given the generally positive impressions educators held about the Law's required interventions other than retention, it seems likely that negative perceptions of the Law are driven by educators' dislike of the retention component.

FIGURE 2. Educators' Perceptions of the Read by Grade Three Law



Note: Teachers, principals, district superintendents, and ISD Early Literacy Coaches were asked, "To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements about the Read by Grade Three Law?" Source: EPIC survey of educators about the Read by Grade Three Law.

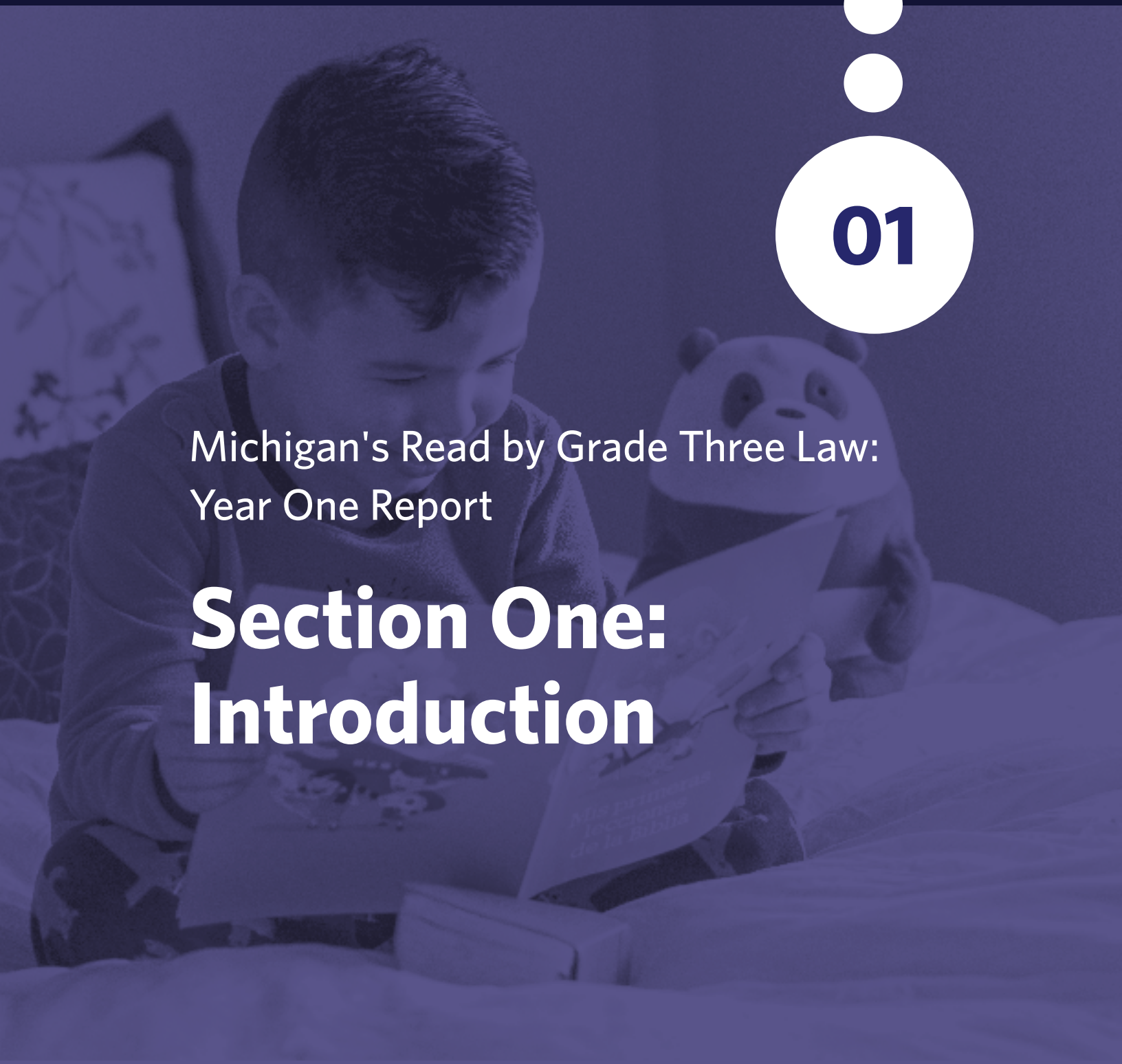
COVID-19 led to concerns about literacy instruction and disrupted the implementation of the Law. In light of the pandemic, the retention requirement of the Law was suspended for the 2019-20 school year, but all other components of the Law remained in place. Most educators expressed concern that their students would return to school behind in literacy, and that barriers would prevent them from accessing materials for literacy learning.

POLICY IMPLICATIONS

Continue to focus on evidence-based literacy interventions. In the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic, it will be more important than ever to provide resources to help K-3 teachers continue to implement evidence-based literacy supports. Moreover, given the disruption to K-12 schooling caused by the pandemic, policymakers may wish to consider again pausing on retention in the 2020-21 school year to help provide educators and students with the space to focus on literacy without fear of high-stakes consequences. In addition, given the controversy over retention that existed before the pandemic and that has only increased since March 2020, policymakers may want to re-evaluate the likely efficacy of retention as a central component of the state's early literacy policy.

Schools and districts need additional funding to help recruit and retain literacy coaches. Educators perceived literacy coaches to be effective, but data suggest that there are not enough of them to adequately serve all the teachers, schools, and districts who need them. State policymakers and ISD and district leaders should consider how to increase the number of literacy coaches and allocate these personnel to schools and teachers who need them the most. In doing so, it will be important to reflect upon how best to continue recruiting and training literacy coaches to increase the number without exacerbating the state's teacher shortage.

Funding and resources should be allocated in ways that attend to existing inequities in literacy supports and outcomes. Literacy resources—coaches and otherwise—have been inequitably distributed across districts and ISDs. Policymakers should consider ways to target resources and funding to traditionally underserved districts in which teachers and students can benefit the most from additional instructional supports and higher quality literacy resources.



01

Michigan's Read by Grade Three Law:
Year One Report

Section One: Introduction

Section One: Introduction

MICHIGAN'S READ BY GRADE THREE LAW

With Michigan early literacy ratings being a growing concern, the Michigan legislature responded with the Read by Grade Three Law in 2016. Their plan was to use several tools to improve early literacy outcomes in Michigan, including improved instruction, the use of early monitoring and identification systems, interventions for students with a "reading deficiency," and retention in third grade for those who do not meet state standards for grade-level reading. The Law uses a Multi-Tiered System of Support (MTSS), where improvements in literacy instruction are "Tier I" supports provided to *all* students, and early warning and identification systems are used to determine which students receive increasingly intensive "Tier II" and "Tier III" supports.

The legislated requirements for Tier I supports focus on instruction in five components of literacy: phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension. To assist teachers in incorporating instruction in these areas, the Law also mandates that **Intermediate School Districts (ISDs)/Regional Educational Service Agencies (RESAs)**[1] hire at least one literacy coach to support K-3 teachers by providing literacy professional development.

Additionally, the Law stipulates that educators must use a diagnostic assessment that the **Michigan Department of Education (MDE)** has approved to identify students who are at risk of not meeting third-grade reading proficiency standards and may benefit from additional, targeted interventions to improve literacy outcomes ("Tier II" and "Tier III" supports). These assessments must be administered to all K-3 students at least three times each academic year. Students who are identified for additional support must receive an **Individual Reading Improvement Plan (IRIP)** that includes supplemental reading instruction during the traditional school day and a "Read at Home" plan for parents, guardians, or caretakers to continue instruction outside of school.

MULTI-TIERED SYSTEM OF SUPPORTS (MTSS)

KEY COMPONENTS

Literacy Instructional Supports for Educators:

Provision of highly qualified literacy coaches

Teacher literacy professional development

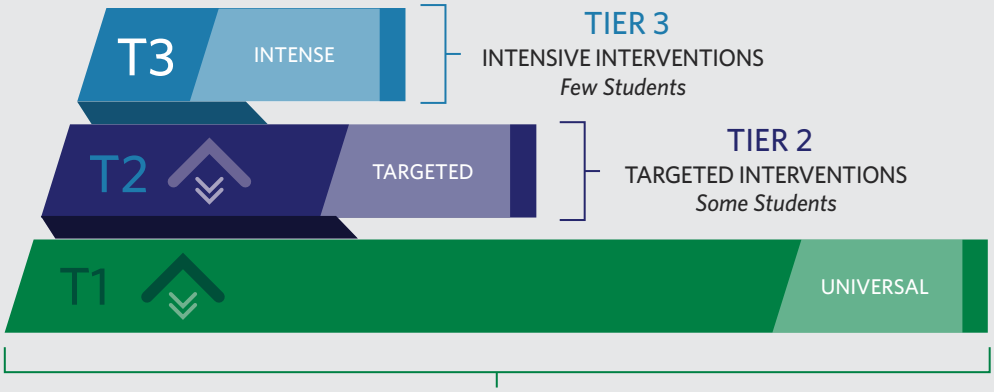
Adoption and dissemination of five "evidence-based" "major reading components"

Monitoring, Remediation & Retention:

Selection and use of valid, reliable K-3 diagnostic assessments

Early warning and identification

Frequent monitoring of literacy proficiency



Core instructional practice continues alongside targeted or intensive interventions.

T1

This core program ensures all students receive high-quality evidence-based instruction. Instruction incorporates fundamental academic curriculum that is aligned with state standards. Tier 1 supports focus on instruction in **five "evidence-based" "major reading components"**: phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension. High-quality instruction is supported under the Read by Grade Three Law through the **provision of highly qualified literacy coaches** and **teacher literacy professional development.**

T2

Tier 2 consists of literacy supports provided to students who show a need for additional help above and beyond what they receive in Tier 1. These students may be identified by their district's K-3 diagnostic assessment as having a "reading deficiency." Tier 2 supports under the Read by Grade Three Law may include **Individual Reading Improvement Plans (IRIPs), increased time on literacy instruction, one-on-one or small group instruction, summer support,** and **parental involvement.** This tier is designed to meet the needs of students who require additional supports and is intended as the provision of short-term interventions focused on remediation.

T3

Tier 3 consists of literacy supports provided to students who need more intense and individualized help than is offered in Tier 2. These supports may include similar interventions as in Tier 2 but delivered in a more intensive and targeted fashion. Students still unable to meet the cut score in the third-grade M-STEP ELA despite these supports are identified for **retention.**

Sources: Data collected from EPIC's RBG3 Theory of Change (Section 4), Michigan Department of Education (MDE) MiMTSS FAQ's https://www.michigan.gov/documents/mde/MiMTSS_FAQ_-_August_2020_-_lkd_1.27.21_714450_7.pdf and Wayne RESA MTSS Quick Guide https://resources.finalsite.net/images/v1568836530/resanet/drbszjpnchsgxle0u5cq/QuickguideforMTSSTheDistrictLevel.pdf

If these literacy supports alone do not provide sufficient support for a student to reach proficiency by third grade, districts are required to intensify their literacy supports. Under the Law, third graders who are at least a year below grade-level expectations on Michigan's **M-STEP** ELA examination are identified for retention. The Law requires the **Center for Educational Performance and Information (CEPI)** to notify parents or guardians of students identified for retention. Districts must then determine whether each of these students will be retained in third grade or granted a "**good cause exemption**" waiver and promoted to the fourth grade.

The Tier I, II, and III supports were implemented starting in the 2017-18 school year, with the Law (including its retention component) intended to take full effect in the 2019-20 school year. To support the rollout, MDE hired seven full-time employees to oversee implementation across the state. Additionally, Michigan allocated resources to hire and train **ISD Early Literacy Coaches**, as well as fund the development of free online modules focused on essential instructional practices in early literacy for coaches, administrators, and K-3 teachers. The state also pledged additional funds to help districts pay for required K-3 benchmark assessments, tutoring, and additional instructional time and intervention (School Aid Act, 2018).[2] Overall, the state spent $132.6 million between 2015-16 and 2018-19 (Michigan Department of Education, 2018). Districts also were able to divert previously earmarked state funds to support the new literacy interventions.

PURPOSE OF THIS REPORT

In the fall of 2019, the Education Policy Innovation Collaborative (EPIC) at Michigan State University (MSU), in collaboration with researchers from the University of Michigan, began a four-year evaluation of the implementation and efficacy of Michigan's Read by Grade Three Law (MCL 380.1280f). This is the first of five reports that the research team will release as the evaluation continues through the 2023-24 school year.

The purpose of this first interim report is to provide an overview of how the Law was formed and intended to work, its early implementation through spring 2020, and its early effects on relevant outcomes for Michigan students and educators. We combine rich longitudinal administrative data on students and teachers with results from surveys of educators, school- and district-level administrators, and ISD Early Literacy Coaches, as well as interviews with state-level stakeholders. We use these data to examine how the Read by Grade Three Law was implemented across Michigan and whether that process differed across populations and locations. We also explore early evidence as to whether the Law is meeting its goal to improve literacy achievement and attainment for Michigan students, and for what students, if any, the policy is particularly successful. Finally, we explore initial evidence as to whether the policy appears to be an effective use of education resources.

SECTION ONE NOTES

1 Hereafter, all references will only mention ISD as this is the more common term used among policymakers.

2 In 2018-19 School Aid Act, section 31(a) provides funds to support instructional programs and direct noninstructional services (e.g., tutor) for at-risk students for the purpose of ensuring that students are proficient in English language arts by the end of 3rd grade. Section 35(a)4 allocates funds to provide ISD Early Literacy Coaches which local ISDs are to match. Section 35(a)5 provides funding for additional instructional time for students in K-3 who have been identified as needing additional supports. Section 104d provides reimbursement to districts that purchase a computer-adaptive test, or that purchase one or more diagnostic or screening tools for K-3 students that are intended to increase reading proficiency by grade 4, or that purchase benchmark assessments for students in grades K-8.

02

Michigan's Read by Grade Three Law:
Year One Report

Section Two: Data and Methods

Section Two:
Data and Methods

INTRODUCTION

To evaluate both the implementation and efficacy of the Read by Grade Three Law, we use a multi-stage mixed-methods triangulation design (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011; Natasi, Hitchcock, Sarkar, Burkholder, Varjas, & Jayasena, 2007) that includes multiple types of data and multiple methods of analyses. As shown in Table 2.1, the first-year report uses seven sources of data:

- interviews with state-level stakeholders,
- surveys of teachers,
- surveys of principals,
- surveys of district superintendents,
- surveys of **Intermediate School District (ISD)/Regional Educational Service Agency (RESA)**[1] **Early Literacy Coaches**,
- student administrative records, and
- teacher administrative records.

In this first interim report, we focus on the formulation of the Read by Grade Three Law, its implementation through the 2019-20 school year, and early effects of the Law on relevant student and teacher outcomes through the 2018-19 school year. Interviews with state-level stakeholders, conducted in the fall of 2019, centered on stakeholders' involvement in and understanding of the formation and early implementation of the Law. Surveys administered to educators in the spring of 2020 asked about their perceptions of the Law, their experiences enacting literacy supports prescribed by the Law, and the costs of implementing the Law. In addition, administrative records enable us to track student and teacher outcomes from the 2012-13 school year through the 2018-19 school year to assess changes in trends that may be attributed to the early effects of the Read by Grade Three Law.

TABLE 2.1. Data Sources

Data	Outcomes / Areas of Interest	Source	Year(s)	Sample Size	Subgroups
State-level stakeholder interviews	Formation of the Law Perceptions of the Law and its implementation	Interviews conducted by EPIC researchers	2019-20	24 state-level stakeholders	11 policymakers 5 MDE policymakers/ program leads 8 external stakeholders (various organizations)
K-8 teacher surveys	Perceptions of experiences related to literacy instructional practice and literacy professional learning Understanding and perceptions of the Law and implementation Costs related to literacy and the Law (10% of participants)	EPIC-developed survey	Spring 2020	17,532 participants (32% response rate [RR]) K-3 ▪ n=9,286 ▪ RR=43% 4-5 ▪ n=3,332 RR=38% 6-8 ▪ n=4,916 ▪ RR=23%	Sub-analyses by: ▪ grade span ▪ sector ▪ district size ▪ districts' predicted retention rate ▪ districts' ELA performance, ▪ districts' proportions of economically disadvantaged students ▪ locale
K-8 principal surveys	Provision and responsibilities of literacy coaches, reading or literacy specialists/ interventionists Implementation of literacy professional development and interventions Understanding and perceptions of the Law and implementation Costs related to literacy and the Law (10% of participants)	EPIC-developed survey	Spring 2020	928 participants (35% RR) K-5 only ▪ n=584 RR=47% K-8 ▪ n=161 ▪ RR=21% 6-8 only ▪ n=183, ▪ RR=28%	Sub-analyses by: ▪ grade span ▪ sector ▪ school size ▪ districts' predicted retention rate, ▪ districts' ELA performance, ▪ districts' proportions of economically disadvantaged students ▪ locale
District superintendent surveys	Provision and responsibilities of literacy coaches, reading or literacy specialists/ interventionists Implementation of literacy interventions and curricula Understanding and perceptions of the Law and implementation Costs related to literacy and the Law	EPIC-developed survey	Spring 2020	192 participants (35% RR)	Sub-analyses by: ▪ sector ▪ district size ▪ districts' predicted retention rate, ▪ districts' ELA performance, ▪ districts' proportions of economically disadvantaged students ▪ locale

TABLE 2.1. Data Sources (continued)

Data	Outcomes / Areas of Interest	Source	Year(s)	Sample Size	Subgroups
ISD Early Literacy Coach survey	Qualifications Reported workload and time allocation Perceptions of support and training received Understanding and perceptions of the Law and implementation	EPIC-developed survey	Spring 2020	133 participants (88% RR)	Sub-analyses by: ▪ ISDs' predicted retention rate, ▪ ISD size
K-5 student administrative records	Math and ELA MEAP/M-STEP scores (grades 3-5) Grade retention (grades K-5) Mobility (grades K-5) Special education placement (grades K-5) English learner program participation (grades K-5) Student demographics	MDE and CEPI	2012-13 through 2018-19	4.7 million student-year observations (1.4 million unique students)	Sub-analyses by: ▪ grades ▪ race/ethnicity ▪ gender ▪ indicator of economically disadvantaged status ▪ indicator of students with disabilities ▪ indicator of English learners ▪ indicator of non-resident students ▪ school sector ▪ school Partnership status ▪ districts' predicted retention rate ▪ districts' ELA performance ▪ districts' proportions of economically disadvantaged students ▪ locale
K-5 teacher administrative records	Mobility and exit from Michigan public schools Teacher characteristics	MDE and CEPI	2012-13 through 2018-19	209,000 teacher-year observations (49,000 unique teachers)	Sub-analyses by: ▪ race/ethnicity ▪ gender ▪ educational ▪ attainment ▪ years of experience ▪ school sector ▪ school Partnership status ▪ districts' predicted retention rate ▪ districts' ELA performance ▪ districts' proportions of economically disadvantaged students ▪ locale

DESCRIPTION OF DATA AND METHODS

This report examines four research questions about the early implementation and effects of the Read by Grade Three Law. Table 2.2 identifies each of the research questions and the section of the report in which our findings are discussed. The remainder of this section outlines each data source and the methods used to analyze each.

TABLE 2.2 Research Questions

	Research Question	Report Section
1	How was the Read by Grade Three Law formed and intended to work?	Section Three: The Development and Passage of the Read by Grade Three Law Section Four: How the Read by Grade Three Law Is Intended to Work
2	How is the Read by Grade Three Law being implemented in Michigan? Does implementation vary across populations and places and, if so, why?	Section Five: Implementation of the Read by Grade Three Law
3	Does the Read by Grade Three Law improve the achievement and attainment of Michigan's students? Is there heterogeneity in this effect across populations and places?	Section Seven: Early Effects of the Law on Student and Teacher Outcomes Special Section D: Heterogenous Effects of the Read by Grade Three Law
4	Is this policy an effective use of resources?	Special Section C: Resources Invested in the Read by Grade Three Law

State Administrative Records on Students and Teachers

Data Sources

To assess the early effects of the Read by Grade Three Law on a variety of student and teacher outcomes, we use administrative records collected and maintained by the **Michigan Department (MDE)** and the **Center for Educational Performance and Information (CEPI)** for the 2012-13 through 2018-19 school years. We compare trends in outcomes of interest before and after the Law was passed to trace deviations from pre-Law trends in the three years of early implementation, during which many of the literacy initiatives began. The Law was passed in October 2016, so we define "pre-Law" cohorts as students and teachers between the 2012-13 and 2015-16 school years, and "post-Law" cohorts as those in the 2016-17 (one year post), 2017-18 (two years post), 2018-19 (three years post) school years.

Both student and teacher administrative datasets include general demographic information (e.g., race, ethnicity, gender) and school placement. Student data also include grade level, test scores on state standardized assessments, students with disabilities (i.e., students with an I**ndividualized Education Program [IEP]**) or students with academic supports (i.e., students with a **Section 504 Plan**), English learners (ELs), and economically disadvantaged students (defined in Michigan as students who are eligible for free or reduced-price lunch, are in households receiving food [SNAP] or cash [TANF] assistance, are homeless, are migrant, and/or are in foster care). Teacher data also include information about each educator's credentials, details of their assignment, and longevity in their current district. Records for the same student or teacher can be tracked longitudinally,

such that we are able to identify students who repeated a grade level, identify patterns of year-to-year mobility for both students and teachers, and estimate teachers' levels of experience.

For this report, we focus specifically on K-5 students and teachers. Although the Law only prescribes literacy supports for K-3 students, this report extends the population of interest to K-5 students for three reasons. First, later cohorts of fourth and fifth graders may have received literacy supports prescribed by the Law when they were in third grade. Second, schools and districts may be incentivized to increase their efforts in improving literacy instruction systemwide, which could benefit students in grades other than K-3. Finally, and alternatively, if schools or districts have redistributed personnel or financial resources to K-3 grades in anticipation of or response to the Law, this could impact outcomes for students in higher grades. Collectively, our sample includes approximately 4.7 million student-year observations over a seven-year period (1.4 million unique students) and 209,000 teacher-year observations (49,000 unique teachers).

Student Data

We examine trends in several student outcomes. Of primary interest is student achievement on statewide ELA assessments. Since K-2 students do not take the statewide assessment, we only include 3rd-5th grade students for achievement outcomes. As literacy skills are incorporated across content areas and improvements in literacy skills may help students learn math (e.g., Greene & Winters, 2004; Jacob & Lefgren, 2004; Schwerdt, West, & Winters, 2017; Winters & Greene, 2012), we examine trends in math achievement as well.

Michigan transitioned to a new assessment system, the Michigan Student Test of Educational Progress (**M-STEP**), beginning with the 2014-15 school year. Its predecessor, the **Michigan Educational Assessment Program (MEAP)**, was constructed and scaled differently from the M-STEP; as a result, we can only assess trends in ELA and math achievement from 2014-15 on. The M-STEP is scaled such that the proficiency cut-points for the third, fourth, and fifth grade assessments are always fixed at 1300, 1400, and 1500, respectively. We present our findings using both the M-STEP scale and using z-scores (standardized within grade and subject, with respect to the mean and standard deviation of the 2014-15 M-STEP). As we have a relatively short panel of student achievement on the M-STEP, we also include school-level average scores from MEAP and their trends in school years 2011-12 and 2013-14 in student achievement models to control for student prior achievement.

We also examine trends in grade retention, mobility, special education placement, and English learner participation for K-5 students. We define grade retention as the appearance of a student in the same grade level for two consecutive years in the data. For kindergarten students, we distinguish between the unplanned retention of students in a traditional single-year kindergarten setting and the participation of students in two-year Developmental Kindergarten programs (also called "Young 5's" or "Begindergarten"). We identify students as participating in Developmental Kindergarten if they were flagged as enrolling in such a program when they first entered the student administrative record and then remained in the kindergarten for the following year.

We generate indicators for student mobility if a student changes schools or districts from year to year, excluding "structural mobility" that occurs when students reach the terminal grade offered in a school or students move due to school closures. We consider two types of student mobility: within-district mobility (defined as students moving across schools within the same district) and out-of-

district mobility (defined as students moving across districts). Both grade retention and mobility measures are missing for the 2018-19 school year as student enrollment data for the 2019-20 school year data, which are necessary to detect change, are not yet available at the time of analysis.

In all analyses of student outcomes, we include various student- and school-level characteristics. Student-level covariates include age, gender, economically disadvantaged status, indicators of English learners, students with disabilities, and non-resident status.[2] School-level covariates include the size and demographic composition of the student body (i.e., the percentage of non-White students, the percentage of economically disadvantaged students, the percentage of students with disabilities, and the percentage of English learners).

Teacher Data

Our outcome of interest for teachers is year-to-year mobility. Specifically, we consider teacher transfers within the same district, between districts, and exits from the profession (which we capture when a teacher is no longer observed in a teaching position in the Michigan public school system in the subsequent school year). We focus on teachers of K-5 students.[3] In analyses for teacher mobility, we control for teacher race/ethnicity, gender, new teacher status (i.e., teachers within their first three years in the profession), educational attainment (i.e., whether they possess a master's degree or above), and the same set of school-level covariates included in models for student outcomes.

Analytic Strategy

We undertake three sets of analyses to evaluate any shifts in student and teacher outcomes that occurred during the early implementation of the Law. First, we examine adjusted trend lines for each outcome to visually inspect changes over time, after accounting for differences in student and school characteristics. We plot adjusted trends based on coefficients from a regression model in which a given outcome is regressed on indicators for each year (except the reference year) and the full set of individual- and school-level covariates discussed above, all centered at their means. This regression allows us to interpret the constant value as the mean outcome in the reference year and the coefficients on the year indicators as deviations from the reference year after adjusting for different sample characteristics across years.

Second, we employ an interrupted time series (ITS) approach to investigate whether there were shifts in trends in the post-Law period relative to the pre-Law period. The ITS model is commonly used in the context where a time series of a particular outcome of interest is "interrupted" by an intervention at a known point in time. In this case, the "interruption" is the passage of the Read by Grade Three Law in October of 2016. Intuitively, this approach uses observations in the pre-intervention period to establish an underlying trend, that is, the "expected" trend that would have continued into the post-intervention period in the absence of the intervention. By comparing the actual post-intervention trend with the "expected" trend, researchers can identify changes associated with the intervention. This technique allows us to isolate changes in student and teacher outcomes that predate the Law from changes that may be attributed to the Law's prescribed literacy interventions. Specifically, we estimate the following model:

$$y_{it}=\beta_0+\beta_1 Trend + \boldsymbol{T}_{t\geq 0}\boldsymbol{\tau} + \boldsymbol{X_{it}\Omega} + \lambda_d + \varepsilon_{it}$$

where, y_{it} represents the outcome of interest for a student or teacher, denoted i, in a school year t. $Trend$ is the time elapsed since 2015-16, the school year prior to the passage of the Law; $\boldsymbol{T}_{t\geq 0}$ is a

vector of indicators for each post-Law year (i.e., 2017-18, 2018-19, 2019-20). β_1 is interpreted as the change in outcome associated with a year increase (representing the underlying trend in the absence of the Law). For each of the yearly indicators in $T_{t\geq 0}, \tau$ is the year-specific deviation in y_{it} from pre-Law trends , and the estimates of these parameters are our primary focus. x_{it} is a vector of control variables. λ_d represents district fixed effects, and ε_{it} is the error term. We cluster robust standard errors at the district level.

In addition to overall trends for K-5 students, we examine how trends vary across subgroups of students based on gender, race/ethnicity, economic disadvantage, and indicators of English learners, students with disabilities, and "non-resident" students (students who do not live within the geographic boundaries of the district where they attend school); subgroups of schools based on sector (**traditional public school [TPS]** and charter[4]) and Partnership status[5]; and subgroups of districts. We classify districts into "low," "average," and "high" categories based on their predicted retention rate under the Read by Grade Three Law (measured as the percentage of third grade students that scored below 1252—the retention cut score—on the 2019 M-STEP ELA assessment), district aggregate ELA achievement for all 3rd-8th grade student standardized state assessments, and proportions of students who are classified as economically disadvantaged, depending on whether they fall in the bottom quartile, middle two quartiles, or top quartile of districts on each measure. In addition to these subgroups, we examine differences across urban, suburb or town, and rural districts.

ITS analyses can only be interpreted as the causal impact of the intervention under the assumption that any shifts in outcomes represented by $T_{t\geq 0}, \tau$ are due to the Read by Grade Three Law rather than to other policy or changes concurrent to $T_{t\geq 0}, \tau$. This assumption is unlikely to hold given that there have been major policy and contextual shifts occurring simultaneously with the passage and implementation of the Law. To get a better sense of the potential "impact" of the Law on our outcomes of interest, we compare trends across populations that should be similarly affected by other policy and contextual shifts but differentially affected by the Law. Doing so enables us to gain insight into the extent that the effects observed from the ITS analyses can be attributed to the Read by Grade Three Law. For example, if we observe shifts in outcomes due to the Law, we would expect greater changes in the outcomes in K-3 relative to those in 4th-5th grade. As the Law focuses on literacy skills, we might also expect greater changes in student ELA achievement than those in math achievement.

Educator Surveys

In the spring of 2020, we conducted surveys of teachers, principals, district superintendents, and ISD Early Literacy Coaches in both traditional public and charter schools[6] throughout the state of Michigan. We designed separate but overlapping survey instruments for teachers and principals working with K-5 and 6th-8th grade students.

These instruments included questions about literacy instruction and resources, one-on-one literacy coaching and other literacy professional development, family engagement, and perspectives and beliefs about the Read by Grade Three Law. All district superintendents and a random sample of ten percent of respondents to the teacher and principal surveys received an additional series of items regarding time and financial costs for implementing the Read by Grade Three Law.

Survey Development

EPIC generated original survey questions based on the Read by Grade Three Law's Theory of Change and adapted items from other surveys related to literacy instruction and similar literacy policies. We worked with literacy experts and sought feedback from external stakeholders and policymakers, including from MDE and the Michigan Association of Intermediate School Administrators (MAISA) General Education Leadership Network's (GELN) Early Literacy Task Force (ELTF) to refine the questions. Between two and four educators from each of the survey target populations piloted the survey and participated in a cognitive interview to help us further refine the instruments.

Survey Administration

EPIC administered the surveys online from February 19, 2020 through June 30, 2020.[7] We used multiple channels to contact eligible educators to invite them to participate in the survey, including through direct emails to teachers,[8] school and district administrators, and ISD Early Literacy Coaches.[9] We also promoted the survey through the EPIC website, Twitter, and several Michigan education associations, including the ELTF; the Michigan Education Association (MEA); the American Federation of Teachers (AFT); the Michigan Association of Public School Academies (MAPSA); the Michigan Association of School Administrators (MASA); and the Michigan Elementary and Middle School Principals Association (MEMSPA).

On May 6, 2020, we added a bank of questions to the survey to help state-level stakeholders understand how educators were responding as schools suspended face-to-face instruction due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Educators who had already completed the Read by Grade Three survey before May 6 received an email inviting them to participate in a follow-up mini-survey containing the COVID-19 questions, and those who had not yet completed the survey received this bank of questions at the end of the existing Read by Grade Three survey. In addition, as educators' experiences with literacy instruction and professional learning substantially changed as a result of COVID-19 and subsequent school-building closures, we added language to the beginning of our survey asking educators to answer all questions in the Read by Grade Three survey as they would have before the suspension of face-to-face instruction.

Estimated Target Population and Response Rates

Our estimated populations of K-8 principals and district superintendents are based on contact lists from the Educational Entity Master (EEM), a state database containing directory information about schools, school districts, and other educational entities in Michigan. For some charter schools and small districts, the same person is listed as both a school principal and a district superintendent; these individuals took the principal survey and we count them in the principal population only. For schools without a contact with the title "principal," we include the "lead administrator"[10] instead. The estimated population of ISD Early Literacy Coaches is based on a contact list the ELTF provided.

We estimate the total number of eligible teachers for the spring 2020 survey using state administrative records pertaining to the employment status, assignment, and credentials of school personnel from fall 2019; we include all educators who were actively employed in a teaching role in a TPS or charter school, working with general education students in at least one grade between

K-8 or non-general education students in a school that serves students within the K-8 range, and held a valid teaching license or long-term substitute teaching permit.

In total, 17,532 teachers, 928 principals, 192 district superintendents, and 133 ISD Early Literacy Coaches responded to the survey. The survey sample represents approximately 32% of eligible K-8 teachers, 35% of eligible K-8 principals and superintendents, and 88% of eligible ISD Early Literacy Coaches. The sample size and response rates for each target population are shown in Table 2.3.

TABLE 2.3. Sample Size and Response Rates

	Survey Sample	Target Population	Response Rate
TPS Teachers, K-8	15,404	48,414	32%
Charter Teachers, K-8	2,128	6,042	35%
TPS Principals, K-8	767	2,342	33%
Charter Principals, K-8	161	323	50%
TPS District Superintendents	155	458	34%
Charter District Superintendents	37	88	42%
ISD Early Literacy Coaches	133	151	88%

Note: The "teacher" survey sample and target population include specialists, interventionists, and long-term substitute teachers in addition to classroom teachers. TPS stands for traditional public school and ISD stands for Intermediate School District.

Table 2.4 disaggregates these response rates by grade range for classroom teachers and principals. As might be expected, given the Law's focus on K-3 students and in particular retention for third-grade students, response rates are substantially higher for K-3 teachers, and particularly third-grade teachers, than for other teachers. Middle school teachers (6^{th}-8^{th} grades) had the lowest response rate, at 23%. Similarly, the estimated response rate is much higher for principals whose school provides instruction in only K-5 than for principals whose school provides instruction in grades spanning K-8 or for middle-school principals.

TABLE 2.4. Sample Size and Response Rates, by Grade Range

	Survey Sample	Target Population	Response Rate
Classroom Teachers, K-3	7,110	16,662	43%
Classroom Teachers, 3rd Grade	1,771	3,647	49%
Classroom Teachers, 4-5	2,755	7,260	38%
Classroom Teachers, 6-8	4,075	17,762	23%
Principals, K-5 Only	584	1,247	47%
Principals, K-5 and 6-8	161	763	21%
Principals, 6-8 Only	183	655	28%

Note: The target population for K-3 classroom teachers include teachers who were assigned to a single grade in K-3 in Fall 2019 administrative records. The target population for 6^{th}-8^{th} grade classroom teachers is estimated by teachers who were assigned to any grade in 6^{th}-8^{th} and were not assigned to other grades in 2019 Fall administrative records. The target populations of principals by grade span are based on the actual grades in which schools provide instruction as reported in the Educational Entity Master.

Generalizability of the Survey Data and Survey Weights

To assess generalizability of the survey data, we compare a variety of individual and district/ISD characteristics of survey samples and target populations. As shown in Table 2.5.1, the following groups are slightly overrepresented in the survey sample: Administrators from charter schools/districts and who are Black/African American, and educators who are female, elementary certified, endorsed in ELA, and/or have five or fewer years of experience in their current district. There are no large differences between the ISD Early Literacy Coach survey sample and the target population.

Table 2.5.2 compares district- or ISD-level characteristics between survey samples and target populations. Administrators from charter districts, and educators from districts with high predicted retention rates, low ELA achievement, and high proportions of economically disadvantaged students are slightly overrepresented in the survey sample.

Table 2.6 summarizes the difference between survey samples and target populations for classroom teachers and principals broken down by grade range. Overall, our K-3 classroom teacher sample has greater generalizability than samples of classroom teachers in 4th-5th grade and 6th-8th grade. The classroom teachers in 6th-8th grade who are elementary certified and endorsed in ELA were more likely than other 6th-8th grade classroom teachers to participate in the Read by Grade Three survey.

Given these response rates and survey sample characteristics, we weight the survey responses to allow the results from our survey analysis to be representative of K-8 teachers and principals, district superintendents, and ISD Early Literacy Coaches in Michigan public schools across the state. We derive the analytical weights based on educators' age, gender, race/ethnicity, employment duration within their current districts (i.e., hired within past five years), certifications and endorsements (i.e., elementary certified, secondary certified, or holding an ELA/literacy/reading endorsement), and the sector of schools or districts (i.e., TPS or charter).

TABLE 2.5.1. Comparisons Between Survey Samples and Target Populations, by Individual Characteristics

	Sample	Population	Difference
Teachers			
Percent Female	87.5%	82.6%	4.8%
Percent Hired Within Past 5 Years	38.5%	34.8%	3.7%
Percent Black/African American	6.3%	5.7%	0.6%
Percent Hispanic	1.3%	1.4%	-0.1%
Percent Asian	0.8%	0.8%	-0.1%
Percent Other Non-White Ethnicity	1.6%	1.4%	0.2%
Percent Elementary Certified	83.3%	79.6%	3.7%
Percent Secondary Certified	16.7%	20.4%	-3.7%
Percent with ELA/Literacy/Reading Endorsement	38.2%	35.6%	2.6%

TABLE 2.5.1. Comparisons Between Survey Samples and Target Populations, by Individual Characteristics (continued)			
	Sample	**Population**	**Difference**
Principals			
Percent Female	63.8%	53.0%	10.7%
Percent Hired Within Past 5 Years	35.2%	29.8%	5.5%
Percent Black/African American	10.7%	13.6%	-2.9%
Percent Hispanic	1.4%	1.3%	0.1%
Percent Asian	0.3%	0.4%	-0.1%
Percent Other Non-White Ethnicity	1.5%	0.9%	0.6%
Percent Elementary Certified	71.0%	64.2%	6.8%
Percent Secondary Certified	28.8%	35.7%	-6.9%
Percent with ELA/Literacy/Reading Endorsement	33.6%	29.8%	3.8%
District Superintendents			
Percent Female	34.6%	26.6%	8.0%
Percent Hired Within Past 5 Years	38.2%	35.4%	2.8%
Percent Black/African American	5.2%	6.6%	-1.4%
Percent Hispanic	1.6%	0.6%	1.0%
Percent Asian	0.5%	0.2%	0.3%
Percent Other Non-White Ethnicity	1.6%	0.9%	0.6%
Percent Elementary Certified	50.0%	38.4%	11.6%
Percent Secondary Certified	50.7%	61.6%	-10.9%
Percent with ELA/Literacy/Reading Endorsement	29.6%	20.3%	9.4%
ISD Early Literacy Coaches			
Percent Female	100.0%	99.3%	0.7%
Percent Hired Within Past 5 Years	64.7%	62.7%	2.0%
Percent Black/African American	3.0%	3.3%	-0.3%
Percent Hispanic	1.5%	1.3%	0.2%
Percent Asian	1.5%	1.3%	0.2%
Percent Other Non-White Ethnicity	2.3%	2.0%	0.3%
Percent Elementary Certified	93.8%	94.5%	-0.7%
Percent Secondary Certified	6.2%	5.5%	0.7%
Percent with ELA/Literacy/Reading Endorsement	59.8%	58.4%	1.5%

Note: "Sample" and "Population" indicate the characteristics of survey samples and target populations, respectively. "Difference" indicates the difference between survey samples and target populations. The "hired within past 5 years" group includes individuals whose hire dates within their current districts are on or after June 30th, 2015. The "ELA/Literacy/Reading Endorsement" category includes all endorsements classified under "English Language Arts" by MDE: Communication Arts, English, English as a Second Language, Journalism, Language Arts, Reading, Reading Specialist, and Speech. Due to rounding, the values in the "difference" column may not always equal to the exact difference between "sample" and "population."

TABLE 2.5.2. Comparisons Between Survey Samples and Target Populations (District/ISD Characteristics)			
	Sample	**Population**	**Difference**
Teachers			
Percent Charter	11.7%	11.0%	0.7%
Percent Urban	23.2%	23.9%	-0.7%
Percent Suburb/Town	52.3%	54.8%	-2.4%
Percent Rural	24.5%	21.3%	3.2%
Percent Low Predicted Retention Rate	12.7%	12.8%	-0.2%
Percent High Predicted Retention Rate	22.3%	19.4%	2.9%
Percent Low M-STEP ELA Score	21.6%	18.5%	3.1%
Percent High M-STEP ELA Score	34.0%	40.9%	-6.8%
Percent High Economically Disadvantaged	18.7%	16.1%	2.5%
Percent Low Economically Disadvantaged	36.2%	42.3%	-6.1%
Principals			
Percent Charter	13.9%	6.2%	7.7%
Percent Urban	21.1%	24.4%	-3.2%
Percent Suburb/Town	51.6%	52.7%	-1.1%
Percent Rural	27.3%	23.0%	4.3%
Percent Low Predicted Retention Rate	14.9%	12.4%	2.4%
Percent High Predicted Retention Rate	24.2%	22.3%	1.9%
Percent Low M-STEP ELA Score	23.0%	21.7%	1.3%
Percent High M-STEP ELA Score	32.7%	37.5%	-4.7%
Percent High Economically Disadvantaged	19.4%	16.8%	2.5%
Percent Low Economically Disadvantaged	35.0%	38.1%	-3.1%
District Superintendents			
Percent Charter	19.7%	11.7%	7.9%
Percent Urban	11.2%	12.0%	-0.8%
Percent Suburb/Town	47.9%	47.1%	0.7%
Percent Rural	41.0%	40.9%	0.1%
Percent Low Predicted Retention Rate	24.7%	20.9%	3.8%
Percent High Predicted Retention Rate	19.2%	19.7%	-0.5%
Percent Low M-STEP ELA Score	18.0%	15.5%	2.5%
Percent High M-STEP ELA Score	27.9%	28.4%	-0.5%
Percent High Economically Disadvantaged	12.6%	12.8%	-0.3%
Percent Low Economically Disadvantaged	26.8%	29.3%	-2.5%
ISD Early Literacy Coaches			
Percent Low Predicted Retention Rate	17.4%	17.5%	-0.2%
Percent High Predicted Retention Rate	34.7%	34.3%	0.4%
Percent Low M-STEP ELA Score	28.1%	30.7%	-2.6%
Percent High M-STEP ELA Score	24.8%	24.8%	0.0%
Percent High Economically Disadvantaged	25.6%	27.7%	-2.1%
Percent Low Economically Disadvantaged	24.0%	22.6%	1.3%

Note: "Sample" and "Population" indicate the characteristics of survey samples and target populations, respectively. "Difference" indicates the difference between survey samples and target populations. Due to rounding, the values in the "difference" column may not always equal to the exact difference between "sample" and "population."

TABLE 2.6. Sample Population Difference, by Grade Range						
	Classroom Teachers			Principals		
	K-3	4-5	6-8	K-5 only	K-8	6-8 only
Individual Characteristics						
Percent Female	-0.6%	4.8%	8.0%	8.0%	7.5%	11.8%
Percent Hired Within Past 5 Years	5.7%	7.5%	4.1%	7.1%	5.9%	4.3%
Percent Black/African American	2.2%	3.0%	1.6%	-1.1%	-0.9%	-3.2%
Percent Hispanic	-0.1%	0.3%	-0.1%	-0.1%	0.5%	0.8%
Percent Asian	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	-0.2%	0.0%	0.2%
Percent Other Non-White Ethnicity	0.2%	0.3%	0.0%	0.4%	1.3%	0.5%
Percent Elementary Certified	-1.7%	0.2%	10.2%	2.0%	-0.4%	17.0%
Percent Secondary Certified	0.0%	0.0%	-0.6%	0.2%	-0.2%	1.7%
Percent with ELA/Literacy/Reading Endorsement	-1.5%	-0.8%	3.7%	4.1%	-1.6%	2.8%
District Characteristics						
Percent Charter	0.0%	1.5%	1.9%	4.5%	27.5%	5.5%
Percent Urban	3.2%	3.7%	2.5%	-2.8%	1.2%	-4.4%
Percent Suburb/Town	-4.8%	-6.7%	-2.8%	-5.1%	1.2%	-0.4%
Percent Rural	1.6%	3.0%	0.2%	7.8%	-2.4%	4.8%
Percent Low Predicted Retention Rate	-1.9%	-0.2%	-1.7%	1.4%	3.4%	1.5%
Percent High Predicted Retention Rate	6.6%	6.9%	4.7%	5.0%	7.1%	-2.5%
Percent Low M-STEP ELA Score	6.9%	7.4%	5.0%	3.7%	2.3%	1.2%
Percent High M-STEP ELA Score	-9.3%	-10.2%	-7.9%	-6.1%	-9.3%	-4.6%
Percent High Economically Disadvantaged	5.3%	6.3%	5.0%	2.5%	10.3%	2.3%
Percent Low Economically Disadvantaged	-8.7%	-8.4%	-7.8%	-3.6%	-8.7%	-5.5%

Note: Cells represent the difference between sample characteristics and population characteristics (Sample-Population).

Analytic Strategy

We assess overall patterns in weighted survey responses as well as differences in responses across subgroups. We first examine descriptive (weighted) frequencies of all of the responses, separated by survey respondent type (i.e., teachers, principals, district superintendents, and ISD Early Literacy Coaches) and grade span. We separate teacher respondents into three grade spans: K-3, 4th-5th, 6th-8th, and separate principal respondents into two groups: elementary school principals and middle school principals. The elementary group includes principals who reported serving any K-5 grade.

For most survey questions, we focus on responses from K-3 teachers and elementary school principals because they are the target of the Law. When relevant, we also analyze responses from higher grades as comparison groups and when there may be interesting spillover effects occurring for educators in later grade levels. We also link survey response data to district-level measures of the characteristics discussed above to examine how responses vary across districts with different resources and student needs.

A WALK-THROUGH OF READ BY GRADE THREE STAKEHOLDER INTERVIEWS

We conducted 24 semi-structured interviews with three key groups of stakeholders.

Interviews were conducted with 11 state-level policymakers and other state personnel who were involved in the Law's formation, its passage, or subsequent implementation.

In addition, we interviewed 5 MDE personnel who were key to the Law's implementation at the state level and 8 external stakeholders who were either involved in the Law's formation and/or its implementation.

Interviews lasted approximately 45-60 minutes and were transcribed verbatim by a third party. All transcripts were uploaded to Dedoose—a computer-assisted data analysis software—for analysis.

Interviews with State-Level Stakeholders

To better understand the formation and implementation of the Read by Grade Three Law, we conducted semi-structured interviews with three key groups of stakeholders in the fall of 2019 (n=24). We purposively selected individuals based on their involvement or role in implementing the Law. First, we interviewed state-level policymakers and other state personnel who were involved in the Law's formation, its passage, or subsequent implementation (n=11). Second, we interviewed Michigan Department of Education (MDE) personnel (n=5) who are key to the Law's implementation at the state level. Last, we interviewed external stakeholders (n=8). These individuals were selected because they or their organization were involved in the formation of the Law.

We used a different semi-structured interview protocol for each group. Our questions largely related to interviewees' association with the Law, including its formation (e.g., political drivers, intended goals, prescribed interventions), their perceptions (particularly regarding retention), and what challenges and successes transpired during its early implementation. It should be noted that these interviews were affected by the increased media attention and focus on the retention element of the Law at the time the interviews were conducted. We conducted these interviews in-person or via Zoom. Each interview lasted between 45 and 60 minutes and was audio-recorded. Recordings were transcribed by a third party and subsequently vetted by team members for accuracy. All transcripts were then uploaded to Dedoose—a computer-assisted qualitative data analysis software—for analysis.

We conducted analysis in three phases. First, we created an inductive set of 38 a priori codes. These codes were based on policy and organizational literature (e.g., sensemaking, problem framing, human/fiscal resources), as well as specific elements of the Law's formation, its prescribed interventions, and subsequent implementation. We then produced a codebook with agreed-upon definitions for each a priori code. One researcher coded each transcript (n=24), while another researcher coded a quarter of them to check for interrater reliability (n=6). During this process, four additional emergent codes were added to the set. These codes reflected core themes not captured in the original a priori codes (e.g. "local control" and "parent engagement"). Between both researchers, we coded a total of 912 excerpts in Dedoose.

The lead qualitative researcher then produced a long and short version of a summary memo. The long version tracked all quotes from particular stakeholder groups in relation to the coding scheme, whereas the short version unpacked crosscutting themes (e.g., inequity, local control, social promotion, and human/fiscal capital). To examine stakeholder group perceptions, we further separated these crosscutting themes by subgroups (i.e., policymakers, MDE, and external) and documented how many supported that particular perception.

Integrated Qualitative and Quantitative Data

Each data source and analytic technique discussed above separately provides us with answers to the research questions outlined in Table 2.2. We then integrate these sources of data, triangulating our findings and providing combined and deeper insights into the questions under study. First, we use interviews of state-level stakeholders to understand how the Read by Grade Three Law was formed and how it was intended to work. Second, we trace the Theory of Change and examine the extent to which each component of the Theory of Change was implemented with fidelity and whether and why this implementation varied across populations and places. Third, we triangulate stakeholder interviews with survey and administrative data to determine whether stakeholders within and outside of the school system believe the Law improved Michigan students' achievement and whether there were any heterogeneous effects across populations and places. Finally, we analyze educators' perceptions of the financial costs of implementing the Read by Grade Three Law and compare them with the perceptions of state-level stakeholders. For each question, we identify recurring themes across analyses, integrate various sources of evidence concerning the implementation and efficacy of the Law, and explain discrepancies in findings stemming from different data sources.

In future years, we will employ an iterative approach to our work, relying on findings from our separate and combined data sources to inform ongoing data collection and analysis in later years of the study. This kind of multi-stage mixed-methods framework is appropriate for longitudinal studies that strive to evaluate a policy's design, implementation, and near- and longer-term outcomes (Natasi, Hitchcock, Sarkar, Burkholder, Varjas, & Jayasena, 2007).

SUMMARY

In this first year of the study, we employ a convergent mixed-methods design to integrate and triangulate analyses from interviews of state-level stakeholders, responses to statewide educator surveys, and longitudinal state administrative data. In particular, we use state longitudinal student and teacher datasets in ITS models to assess the relationship between the passage and implementation of the Read by Grade Three Law and various student and educator outcomes of interest. We analyze data collected from surveys of teachers, principals, district superintendents, and ISD Early Literacy Coaches to better understand the implementation of the Law and respondents' perceptions of its efficacy and usefulness. We join these data with interviews of 24 state-level policymakers and stakeholders, which provide context for the development of the Law and high-level perceptions of implementation and efficacy. Using results from the analyses of these data, we are able to gain an initial understanding of the multi-level implementation of the Read by Grade Three Law and near-term student and teacher outcomes.

SECTION TWO NOTES

1 Hereafter, all references will only mention ISD as this is the more common term used among policymakers.

2 Sections 105 and 105c of Michigan's State School Aid Act establish Schools of Choice programs allowing traditional public school districts to offer enrollment to non-resident students. In the 2018-19 school year, 99% of districts had at least one non-resident student enrolled and 15% of students attended traditional public schools outside their resident districts.

3 We ascertain teacher grade assignment based on an indicator provided in the state administrative records. However, some teachers with an assignment in K-5 appear to be employed in schools that do not primarily serve those grades (i.e., less than five percent of enrollment is in kindergarten through fifth grade). As these schools (e.g., middle schools) likely face a different level of pressure from the Law, we excluded teachers from these schools regardless of their grade assignment.

4 In Michigan, public school academies are publicly funded schools that operate independent of a traditional school district, often referred to as charter schools. We refer to these schools as "charter schools" as that is the more commonly used term.

5 Under Michigan's Partnership Model, the state's lowest-performing schools are identified for school turnaround interventions and the districts that operate these schools ("Partnership districts") enter into a Partnership Agreement to improve student outcomes in the identified schools ("Partnership schools").

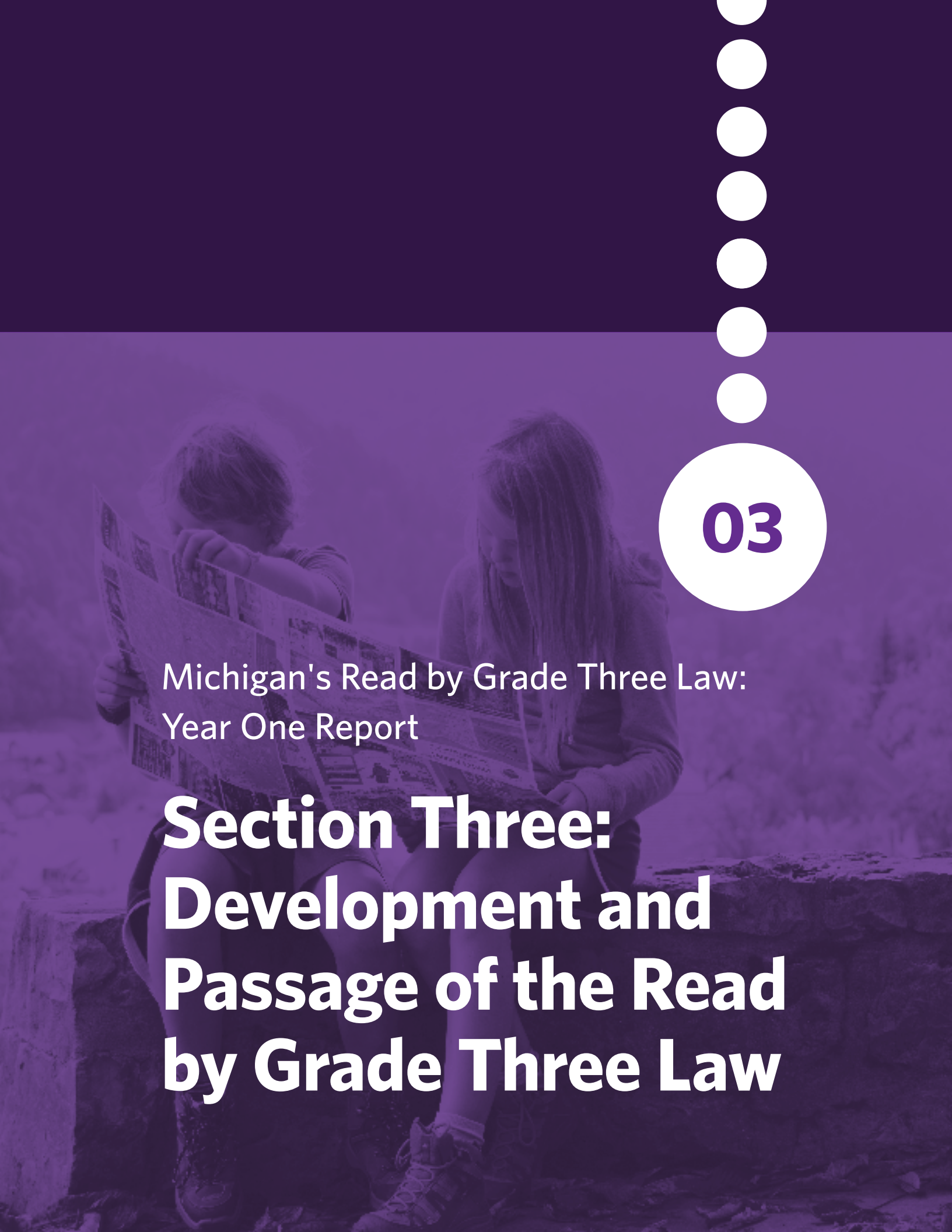
6 For charter schools, we surveyed the listed superintendent or director of a charter school district, educational services provider (ESP), charter management organization (CMO), or educational management organization (EMO).

7 The survey administration window was extended because of COVID-19 and the subsequent school-building closures.

8 Although there is no database of district-provided e-mail addresses for all teachers in the state, MDE provided teachers' personal e-mail addresses associated with their accounts in the Michigan Online Educator Certification System (MOECS). About 94 percent of educators who were actively employed in fall 2019 had an e-mail address listed in their MOECS account. The remaining six percent are educators whose teaching licenses do not require renewal through the MOECS system (i.e., these licenses are no longer issued but are still valid for educators who hold them). Although MOECS contains email addresses for the vast majority of educators, the usefulness of these email addresses is unclear as they may be out-of-date and/or personal emails that educators do not check on a regular basis.

9 We worked with the ELTF to obtain contact information for all coaches funded at least in part through the 35a(4) ISD Early Literacy Coach Grant. This group was difficult to identify because there is no centralized database or reporting of individuals working in this role. Further, staffing transitions from hiring or resignations made it challenging to capture the group as a whole and contact them. As such, we relied on ISD leadership self-reports of which members of their staff should be surveyed and to provide their contact information, as well as requesting that they remove those that were no longer in the role from our contact list.

10 Each entity is required to designate a "lead administrator" whose title and contact information appears in the EEM; the lead administrator of a district is typically the superintendent and the lead administrator of a school is typically the principal. Entities have the option to include contact information for other key personnel in addition to the lead administrator but are not required to do so.



03

Michigan's Read by Grade Three Law: Year One Report

Section Three: Development and Passage of the Read by Grade Three Law

Section Three:
The Development and Passage of the Read by Grade Three Law

The larger context around literacy and literacy instruction in Michigan provides an important background for the study of the development and implementation of the Read by Grade Three Law. In what follows, we outline the rationale laid out by stakeholders and others for the need for a policy to address early literacy in Michigan and trace the history of literacy policy in the state. We also chronicle the development, passage, and implementation of Michigan's Read by Grade Three Law.

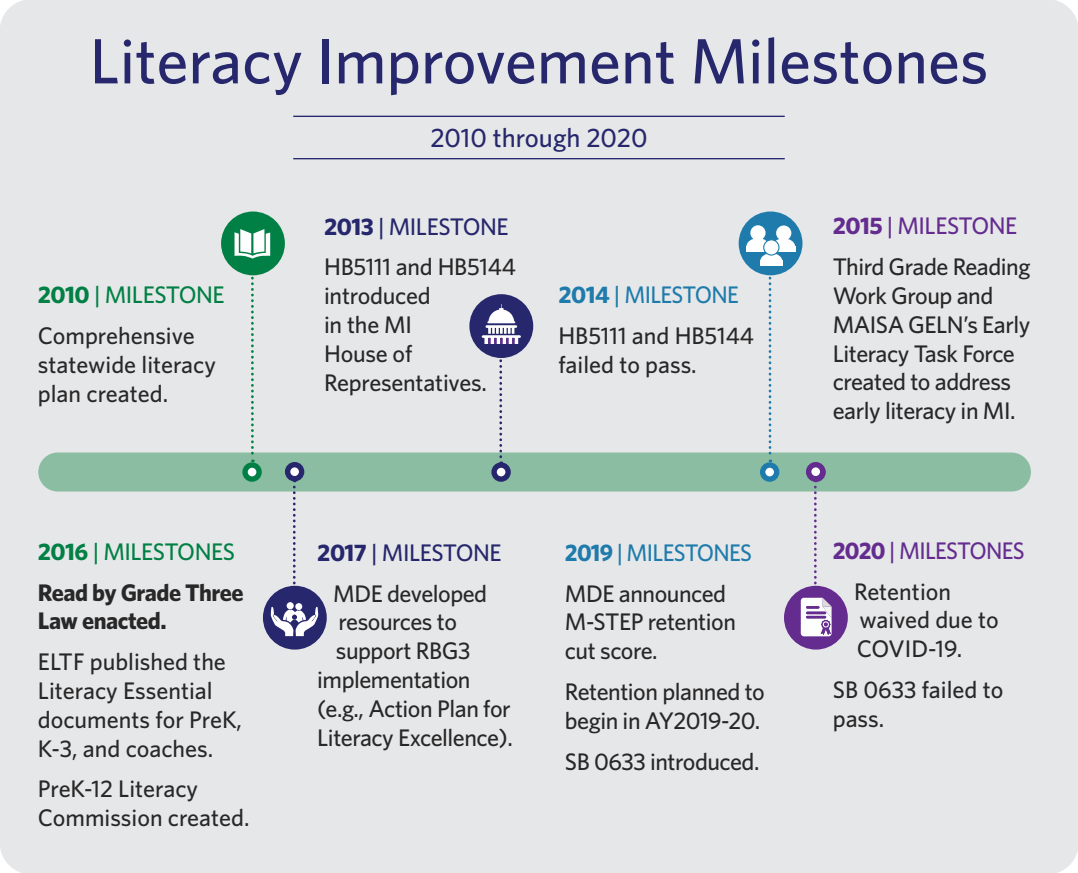
ESTABLISHING THE RATIONALE FOR THE LAW

Three main factors led to the development of the Read by Grade Three Law: Michigan's continued low performance on the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) reading assessment relative to other states, even as state and federal policies had been focusing on improving early literacy; an increased national focus on early literacy and on state policies such as Florida's Just Read, Florida! that had seeming success improving young students' performance on literacy standardized assessments; and a deep concern over the effects on both individual citizens and the larger economy if students were not better prepared in literacy.

Increased Attention to Literacy but Little Progress

Early literacy had long been a focus of Michigan education policy when the Read by Grade Three Law passed in 2016. Nearly 20 years before, in 1998, the **Michigan Department of Education (MDE)** worked with early childhood and literacy experts to develop the Read, Educate, and Develop Youth (R.E.A.D.Y.) program to support families with at-home literacy practices by providing preschool and early elementary students with educational literacy kits, including child development videos, children's books, and learning activities (MDE, 2010a). Four years later, in 2002, Michigan received funding under the Reading First Program, a federal education program authorized under the No Child Left Behind Act. The state used these federal funds to launch several initiatives intended to improve early literacy instruction and outcomes through scientifically based programs and practices. This included professional development and coaching for teachers to improve their practice in reading instruction and in diagnosing early reading difficulties (MDE, 2017; Stevens, 2002).

FIGURE 3.1. Timeline of Michigan's Efforts to Improve Literacy



Even with this increased attention to early literacy, Michigan's average fourth-grade reading score on the NAEP remained virtually unchanged, ranging from 218 to 220 in every NAEP fourth-grade reading assessment between 2002 and 2011. At the same time, Michigan's ranking relative to other states fell from 27th in 2002 to 35th in 2011 (NAEP State Profiles, 2020). In response, in 2011,

Michigan policymakers brought together 50 literacy experts and 86 educators to develop the five-year Michigan Comprehensive Statewide Literacy Plan (MiLit Plan), which was intended to support literacy achievement from birth to adulthood by promoting high-quality standards for instruction and assessment, building teacher and literacy leader expertise, and creating the MiLit Virtual Network—which involved collaboration between regional teams working on the MiLit Plan (MDE, 2011).

In addition to the state-wide activity around early literacy, there were also regional efforts across the state centered on improving early literacy instruction. In 2012, 20 superintendents from West Michigan school districts created the Reading Now Network with the aim of improving early literacy and student achievement across all grade levels. As part of these efforts, the Reading Now Network districts studied a set of West Michigan schools that were outperforming other schools in reading on the **Michigan Educational Assessment Program (MEAP)** and began to adopt changes to literacy instruction based on what they learned from these high-performing schools. The Reading Now network emphasized instructional rounds, professional learning, and literacy coaching (MDE, 2017).

Even with increased attention to early literacy, Michigan's average fourth-grade reading score on the NAEP remained virtually unchanged.

Nonetheless, by 2013, Michigan ranked 38th among all states in NAEP fourth-grade reading. Of policymakers we interviewed, over a third (4 out of 11) felt that Michigan's lagging NAEP scores created a sense of urgency to improve literacy performance in the state. As one state-level staff member stated:

> *We were really alarmed by finding out that Michigan was actually going backwards on its NAEP scores. We were one of the few states actually going negative [in national ranking] as you looked over the years, and that caused a lot of concern, which is what I think got the initiative started.*

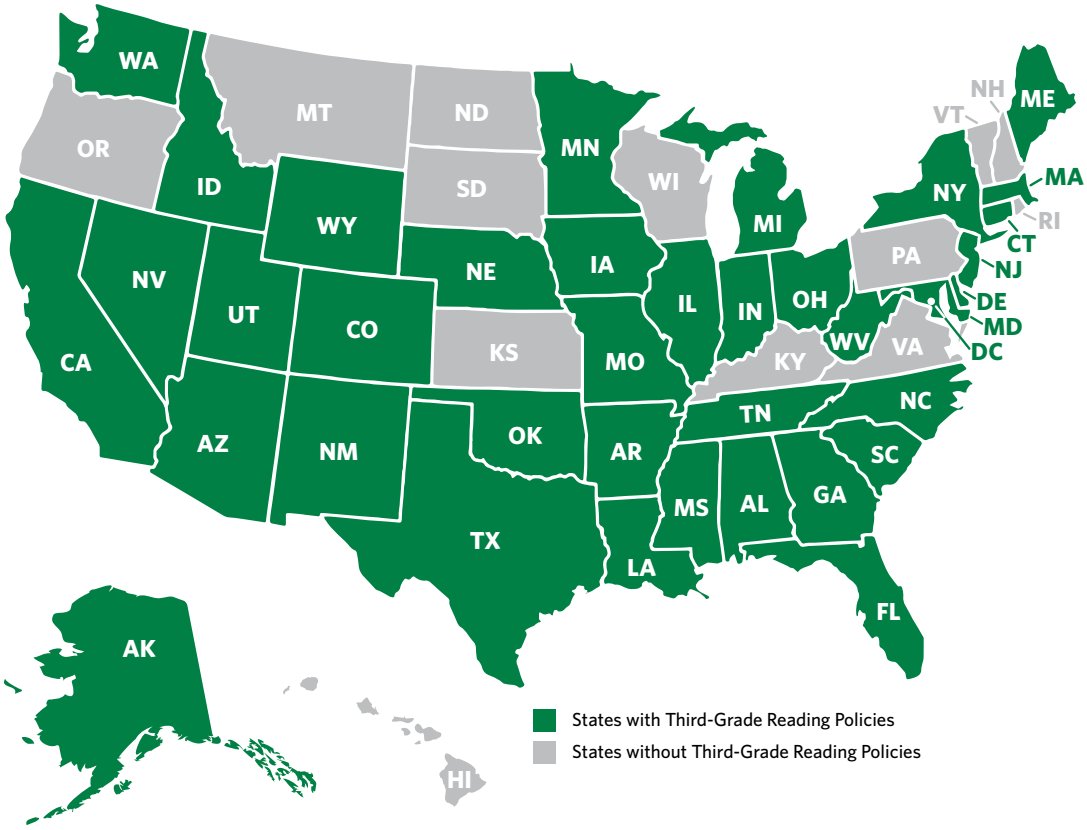
National Focus on Early Literacy and the Seeming Success of Just Read, Florida!

Michigan has not been alone in its focus on early literacy; many other states had been similarly working to improve literacy skills and performance for their youngest students. The most well-known of these efforts was Just Read, Florida!, enacted in 2002 by Florida's then-Governor Jeb Bush. The two-pronged Just Read, Florida! provided hundreds of millions of dollars in federal and state school funding to support literacy coaches and instructional interventions while instituting a test-based retention policy.[1] Approximately $12 million dollars of Just Read, Florida! funding was initially allocated to pay for Florida's reading coaches in 2002 (Marsh, McCombs, Lockwood, Martorell, Gershwin, Naftel, Le, Shea, Barney, Crego, 2008). Under this statewide initiative, Florida steadily increased its fourth-grade reading score on NAEP, and therefore its national ranking from 31st in 2002 to 8th in 2013. However, due to the multiple facets of the policy, it is unclear which aspect drove this improvement and some research finds that the retention portion of the law did not result in improvements in reading achievement (Duke, Moje, & Palincsar, 2014).

Separate from the Florida policy, early literacy was gaining national attention as an important policy concern. In 2013, the National Governors Association prioritized third-grade reading proficiency in its education policy agenda, urging states to enact research-based policies to improve literacy rates among young children (Lovejoy, Szekely, Wat, Rowland, Laine, & Moore, 2013).

The Florida policy's seeming success and the increased national attention on early literacy led to the proliferation of third-grade literacy policies across the nation. Policymakers from many states, including Michigan, cited Florida's policy as a model when crafting their own legislation. By 2020, 37 states and the District of Columbia had adopted policies similar in whole or part to Just Read, Florida! These policies variously prescribed interventions to support early literacy efforts and/or instituted test-based promotion policies by which third graders must score above a certain level on the state standardized literacy test to progress to the fourth grade (Cummings & Turner, 2020). Figure 3.2 depicts which states have implemented third grade reading policies as of fall 2020.

FIGURE 3.2 Map of States with Third-Grade Reading Policies



The impact of the Florida policy on Michigan's adoption of the Read by Grade Three Law was clearly laid out in our stakeholder interviews. Forty-five percent (5/11) of Michigan policymakers we interviewed noted the relationship between Florida's retention-based model and the Read by Grade Three Law. For instance, one policymaker involved in the creation of the Law told us, "*Florida had done [retention]...So, we were trying to play catch-up...In the back of our mind, we all had, whatever Florida had done, we're gonna pretty much try and follow. You know?*"

Concerns about the Effects of Low Levels of Literacy Proficiency on Students and Michigan's Economy

Michigan policymakers voiced multiple concerns about the potential effect of Michigan students' failure to read and write. In particular, they worried about what would happen to individual students if they were unable to read at grade level. One Republican policymaker with whom we spoke stated:

> *Now, what is the cruelest thing that we have done as a society with somebody who complied with the system, did every single thing that they were told to do and they can't read? Even though they did everything they were told to do, have a high school diploma so they can check a box on their employment application, but they probably can't keep the job 'cause they can't read a basic word construction. That's, unfortunately, our society.*

Others were concerned about Michigan's economic and civic well-being if students graduated without sufficient literacy skills. One policymaker said:

> *[We want] to make sure that kids are able to read on a level so that you don't have—you don't want kids to graduate from school and not be able to read. That does not make them productive adults, productive members of society. You want to make sure they can read, and you want to make sure they can read early enough to be able to do the work.*

DEVELOPMENT OF THE LAW

In this context, two bills about early literacy were introduced in the Michigan House of Representatives in 2013. The first, House Bill (HB) 5111, was introduced in October 2013 by then-Representative Amanda Price. HB 5111 called for the mandatory retention of third graders identified as having a "**reading deficiency**," defined as any student who did not achieve a score of at least "proficient" in reading on the state assessment (Michigan Legislature House Bill 5111, 2013). One month later, in November 2013, then-Representative Thomas Stallworth introduced HB 5144, which included provisions for supports to improve reading proficiency such as reading intervention programs and family support at home. HB 5144 also contained support for students who had experienced an "early literacy delay,"[2] intensive intervention programs for K-2 students, and parents' or legal guardians' engagement in assisting their children at home. Further, under HB 5144, students who enrolled in summer school programs would be given the opportunity to retake the third-grade reading assessment before enrolling in fourth grade (Michigan Legislature House Bill 5144, 2013).

Although both bills failed to pass, they surfaced disagreements about what policies and supports should be implemented to improve early literacy in Michigan. Some retention advocates pointed to Florida's success (Naeyaert, 2014). As one former policymaker discussed, "*You saw the [NAEP] results in Florida go from out of 10 to a top 10 state. If they could do that, we could do it. They would say*

that one of their big criterion was retention." On the other hand, critics of retention argued that solid literacy supports would be necessary and sufficient. For example, in February 2014, University of Michigan professors Nell Duke, Elizabeth Moje, and Annemarie Palincsar (2014) posted "Three International Reading Association [IRA] Literacy Research Panel Members Comment on Michigan House Bill 5111" to the International Literacy Association blog. In their post, they argued that the state should focus on research-backed strategies such as investing in teacher preparation and professional development rather than mandatory retention.

With discord over the approach, then-Governor Richard Snyder established a bipartisan Third-Grade Reading Working Group in 2015. Chaired by then-Representative John Kennedy, this group of seven policymakers (five Republicans and two Democrats) met weekly over the course of four months (Price & Stallworth, 2019). They invited various experts and interest groups to speak, including the Foundation for Excellence in Education (Excel*inEd)*, the foundation founded by Jeb Bush to improve education policy across states, which according to others privy to the Working Group played a significant role in the provisions drafted for the Law. As one statewide literacy leader told us:

> *At least half of them [i.e. provisions] landed in there because of [Name] at ExcelinEd, and the work they did in Florida because that was the team that was consulted, and the boilerplate language, I think, came from them. Our legislators are very involved with that group, so I know that's where it came from…I do think ExcelinEd as a national group has had a lot of influence here.*

Ultimately, the Third-Grade Reading Working Group were responsible for most of the provisions (including retention and coaching) that were included in the Read by Grade Three Law. In June of 2015, the Third-Grade Reading Working Group provided five recommendations for strategies to improve early literacy in Michigan, including:

- the use of research-based diagnostic and screening instruments, instruction, and interventions necessary for student success;
- the provision of training on the use of diagnostic-driven methods for educators;
- the provision of information and support to parents to develop early literacy skills;
- the implementation of smart promotion in K-3; and
- the provision of accurate data about how Michigan students and schools are performing in growth and proficiency compared to other states (Price, 2017).

Indeed, the Working Group believed that, if the state implemented their recommendations, Michigan could become the highest ranked state in early reading proficiency by 2025 (Kennedy, Hansen, Pavlov, Hopgood, Price, Kelly, Zemke, Roberts, Jameson, Ackerman, McPhee, & Sawher, 2015). To support their recommendation, the legislature funded Early Literacy Grants (i.e., Section 35a of School Aid Fund) in 2015–16. The Early Literacy Grants financed a series of programs that were intended to improve Michigan students' literacy skills by the end of third grade (further discussed below) (MDE, 2017).

In July of 2016, then-Governor Snyder also created the PreK-12 Literacy Commission. The Commission analyzed third grade reading proficiency trends based on NAEP scores and made recommendations for improving literacy teaching and learning across the state (Kennedy et al., 2015). However, this Commission was not focused on developing a new early literacy policy. Rather, they were focused on improving early literacy more generally, as one member with whom we spoke shared, *"We're not super-fixated on the Law...We're talkin' about the ins and outs of how to implement the good [early literacy] work."*

Michigan became the 17th state with a comprehensive K-3 reading policy.

Based on the collective efforts that came out of the Working Group and PreK-12 Literacy Commission, then-Representative Price introduced HB 4822, which was passed by the Michigan legislature on October 6, 2016 as Public Act 306. This later come to be known as the Read by Grade Three Law. With its passage, Michigan became the 17th state with a "comprehensive K-3 reading policy" (MDE, 2017). The Law included both retention and literacy instructional supports for students—combining elements from failed HB 5111 and 5144 as well as parts of the recommendations from the Working Group and the Commission—including:

- valid and reliable screening, formative, and diagnostic reading assessment systems;
- the development of **Individual Reading Improvement Plans (IRIPs)** to support student literacy attainment;
- literacy coaches' roles in supporting teachers' enhanced literacy instruction;
- differentiated professional development for teachers; and
- reading intervention programs.

The Law also required that, beginning with the 2019–20 academic year, all third graders found to be one grade level behind on the ELA portion of the **M-STEP** (Michigan's statewide standardized assessment),[3] an alternative assessment, or a student portfolio, would be retained in third grade. However, the Law also included five **good cause exemptions** that allow students identified for retention to be promoted under certain conditions (Michigan Legislature House Bill 4822, 2016). These exemptions may be granted if a student has:

- an **Individualized Education Program (IEP)** or **Section 504 Plan**;
- limited English proficiency, having received less than three years of instruction in an English learner (EL) program;
- received intensive reading intervention for two or more years, and been previously retained in kindergarten, first, or second grade;
- been enrolled in the current school for less than two years and evidence that the student was not given an appropriate IRIP by their previous school district; or
- parent or legal guardian has requested a good cause exemption within 30 days after receiving retention notification from the **Center for Educational Performance and Information (CEPI)**, and the superintendent determines that the good cause exemption is in the best interests of the pupil.

SUPPORTING EARLY IMPLEMENTATION OF THE LAW

The initial implementation of the Read by Grade Three Law focused on providing funding and additional resources to support the Law and identifying personnel with capacity and expertise to allow for successful implementation. At the same time, implementers needed to move forward on necessary details such as determining the M-STEP cut-point for retention and establishing the process and timeline for retention decisions. In the remainder of this section, we provide the ways Michigan officials supported the initial implementation of the Read by Grade Three Law up through the end of the 2019-20 school year.

Funding the Law

The Read by Grade Three Law is commonly associated with three main funding streams: **35(a)4**, **35(a)5**, and **35(a)9**.[4] Each of these funding streams is intended to pay for a different intervention prescribed in the Law: 35(a)4 allocates funds to provide **Intermediate School District (ISD)/ Regional Educational Service Agency (RESA)**[5] **Early Literacy Coaches** which was matched by local ISDs through the 2018-19 fiscal year; 35(a)5 provides funding for additional instructional time for preK-3 students who have been identified as needing additional supports;[6] and 35(a)9, which is no longer funded as of the 2020-21 fiscal year, supported summer reading programs for third-grade students who scored below proficiency on the ELA portion of the M-STEP. A more detailed account of how much money was allocated through these funding streams and other state funds by fiscal year can be found in Table 3.1.

TABLE 3.1 Funding Streams Associated with the Read by Grade Three Law

	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21
35(a)4 or ISD Early Literacy Coach Grant	$3 million	$6 million	$7 million	$31.5 million	$31.5 million
35(a)5 or Additional Instructional Time Grant	$17.5 million	$20.9 million	$19.9 million	$19.9 million	$19.9 million
35(a)7 or Literacy Essentials Professional Learning Grant	--	--	$1 million	$1 million	$4 million
35(a)8 or Summer School Reading Pilot Program	--	--	$500,000		
35(a)9 or Summer School Reading Program	--	--	--	$5 million	Program closed

Source: Michigan Department of Education, 2020j.

As a part of Governor Gretchen Whitmer's State of the State address in 2019, she pledged to triple the funding for ISD Early Literacy Coaches (French, 2019). Through the use of line-item vetoes, Governor Whitmer allocated $31.5 million in 2019-20 fiscal year to support the hiring of ISD Early Literacy Coaches, with each ISD eligible to receive $112,500 per coach from MDE (MDE, 2020). These funds can be spent on salary, benefits, and materials the coach uses.

However, while the funding under 35(a)4, 35(a)5, and 35(a)9 is most directly tied to the Read by Grade Three Law, additional funds have been made available to help support the implementation

of the Law. Expenses associated with the Read by Grade Three Law include new K-3 assessments, tutoring, and other interventions (e.g., IRIPs and Read at Home Plans). Resources, like 35(a)7, also pay for training institutes for literacy coaches, as well as the development of free online modules focused on essential instructional practices in early literacy for literacy coaches, administrators, and K-3 teachers (www.literacyessentials.org). The 2020-21 allocation for Early Literacy Grants, excluding 35(a)4 and 35(a)5, to cover such costs totals $10.52 million.

In addition, the state has allocated $1 million per year for MDE to oversee implementation of the intervention, which in part pays for a team of seven full-time employees dedicated to managing the Law's state-level implementation. In total, the state funded the intervention at approximately $132.6 million over the 2015-16 through 2018-19 school years (MDE, 2018). Districts are also able to redirect other state funds to support their literacy interventions at their discretion.

In September 2020, MDE was awarded a $16 million Michigan Comprehensive Literacy State Development Grant from the U.S. Department of Education to support literacy in high-needs school districts throughout the state. These monies will be disseminated to up to five districts, selected by the MDE, to assist them in creating and implementing local comprehensive literacy plans (MDE, 2020k). While not part of the Read by Grade Three Law, this grant will shape the context in which Read by Grade Three is implemented.

Resources and Capacity-Building to Enable Implementation

Michigan's education leaders understood that in addition to funding, they needed to create materials and resources to assist districts in implementing the Law. Some efforts to provide structures and resources to improve early literacy were already underway before the Law was passed. For instance, the Michigan Association of Intermediate School Administrators (MAISA) General Education Leadership Network (GELN)—a group of ISD senior- and assistant superintendent-level officials—created the Early Literacy Task Force (ELTF) in 2015. The ELTF is a group of national and Michigan-based experts, educators, and stakeholders dedicated to improving early literacy in Michigan by establishing a coherent set of research-supported literacy instructional practices for the state (ELTF, 2016). The ELTF collaborated with representatives from ISDs, MDE, universities, and school administrator organizations to develop a set of research-supported instructional practices known as the Literacy Essentials. In March 2016, before the passage of the Read by Grade Three Law, the ELTF published the first Literacy Essentials documents: "Essential Instructional Practices in Early Literacy: K-3" and "Essential Instructional Practices in Early Literacy: Prekindergarten." These documents and other Essential Instructional Practices developed later were used for professional development related to the Law but were not prescribed in the Law and in fact were created in parallel to it.

Other resources were developed specifically to support the implementation of the Read by Grade Three Law. For instance, in 2017, MDE released Michigan's Action Plan for Literacy Excellence, which included three primary goals:

1. aligning policies, funding, and resources for improving literacy achievement;
2. developing statewide literacy leader networks; and
3. enhancing instructional skills (MDE, 2017).

MDE adapted the ELTF's Essentials documents to create the "Literacy Theory of Action" and "Essential Instructional Practices in Early Literacy" as the foundation of this plan. This plan also replaced Michigan's 1984 definition of reading[7] by more broadly defining literacy as "the ability to read, view, listen, write, speak, and visually represent to comprehend and to communicate meaning in various settings through oral, written, visual, and digital forms of expression" (MDE, 2017).

Because the Read by Grade Three Law required schools and districts to generate IRIPs for K-3 students with "reading deficiencies," in January 2017, the Michigan Elementary and Middle School Principals Association (MEMSPA) published "Michigan's Student Individual Reading Improvement Plan Companion." This resource provided guidance on the use of IRIPs by supporting educators' capacity for understanding effective literacy instruction and providing explicit support to students with IRIPs (MEMSPA, 2017).

Given the central importance of ISD Early Literacy Coaches in the implementation of the Law, in 2016, the ELTF published the "Essential Coaching Practices for Elementary Literacy" to help clarify coaches' roles. In addition, the ELTF published documents for teachers in later grades whose literacy practices were not directly outlined in the Read by Grade Three Law (MDE, 2019). As one member of the ELTF told us:

> *One of the key motivating forces for the Early Literacy Task Force to convene was to work on the job description [for ISD Early Literacy Coaches] and not just the job description to post the job, but like, what will these people be doing and what are their qualifications.*

The Essentials documents have been widely used in professional learning and professional development for educators across the state. To support the continued provision of professional learning and training on the Essentials in 2018-19 and 2019-20, MAISA received $1 million through the Literacy Essentials Professional Grant.

In 2019, leading up to the time that the retention component of the Read by Grade Three Law was intended to go into effect, MDE developed and disseminated the "Parent Awareness Toolkit" and "Read by Grade Three Guide" to enhance public understanding and support districts' implementation of the Law. (MDE, 2019a) Digital resources in multiple languages are listed on MDE's website to help parents understand the process for requesting a **good cause exemption** and support their child's at-home reading.

Determining the Retention Cut Point

Because the Law required retention only for students who scored "at least a grade level below" third-grade proficiency on the M-STEP but did not designate what that meant in terms of the score, experts at MDE needed to determine the cut score on the M-STEP. To do so, MDE gathered a committee of 11 educators. In July 2018, this committee recommended a cut score based on the Michigan Content Standards and M-STEP test items. The recommendation was then discussed in three subsequent meetings with Michigan literacy officials, reading coaches, interventionists, and stakeholders between July and December 2018 (MDE, 2019). One MDE staff member involved in the process recounted:

> *We spent a lot of time in 2018 especially working through some standards, setting a process and trying to figure out how we might be able to use the assessment system we have around English language arts as the identification tool that the Law was looking for.*

In the spring of 2019, MDE announced that the M-STEP third grade ELA test threshold for retention was 1252 or below. Third graders scoring below this point would be identified for retention beginning in the 2019–20 academic year (Chambers, 2019).

Pushback Against the Law

Throughout the implementation process, there have been varied reactions to the Law, especially during the 2019–20 academic year, the first year in which retention was intended to go into effect. In particular, several policymakers rallied against the retention component of the Law. In November 2019, Democratic Senator Dayna Polehanki submitted Senate Bill (SB) 0633, which would have removed retention but kept in place the early literacy interventions. SB 0633 failed to pass by the end of the 2019-20 legislative session.

In December 2019, State Senate Majority Leader Mike Shirkey and Speaker of the House Lee Chatfield noted that the Republican leadership in the House and Senate were open to amending the Law (Oosting, Beggin, & French, 2019). The next month, in her 2020 State of the State address, Governor Whitmer unveiled an initiative to help students identified as having a "reading deficiency" avoid retention by educating parents about good cause exemptions (French, 2020a).

There has also been pushback at the local level. Some Michigan district superintendents have been vocal about their opposition to the Law, stating that they will use the good cause exemptions as a means of preventing the retention of any third graders, even those scoring below the M-STEP cut point (French, 2020b; Slagter, 2019).

Nonetheless, with no legislative changes made to the retention aspect of the Law, MDE issued guidance to ISDs in February 2020 on how to implement retention based on third grade M-STEP scores from the 2019-20 school year and how to communicate about the possibility of retention with students' guardians (MDE, 2020l). Of course, individual or state-wide decisions about retention ended up being subsumed by the larger crisis overtaking the country in 2020—the COVID-19 pandemic. Because the M-STEP was not administered in the spring of 2020, there were no test scores from which to identify students for retention, and the retention component of the Law was postponed until the resumption of the standardized testing.

SECTION THREE NOTES

1 Despite multiple attempts to find the actual amount that Florida originally allocated to this law, we were unable to reconcile any one number given state budgets, federal allocations, other research on the Just Read, Florida! policy, and personal correspondence. As a result, we cannot provide any more specificity in these estimates.

2 HB 5144 used the term "early literacy delay," but did not provide a definition of this term. HB 5144 can be found online at http://legislature.mi.gov/(S(zovz5ccooubig3gyho4gsveb))/documents/2013-2014/billintroduced/House/pdf/2013-HIB-5144.pdf

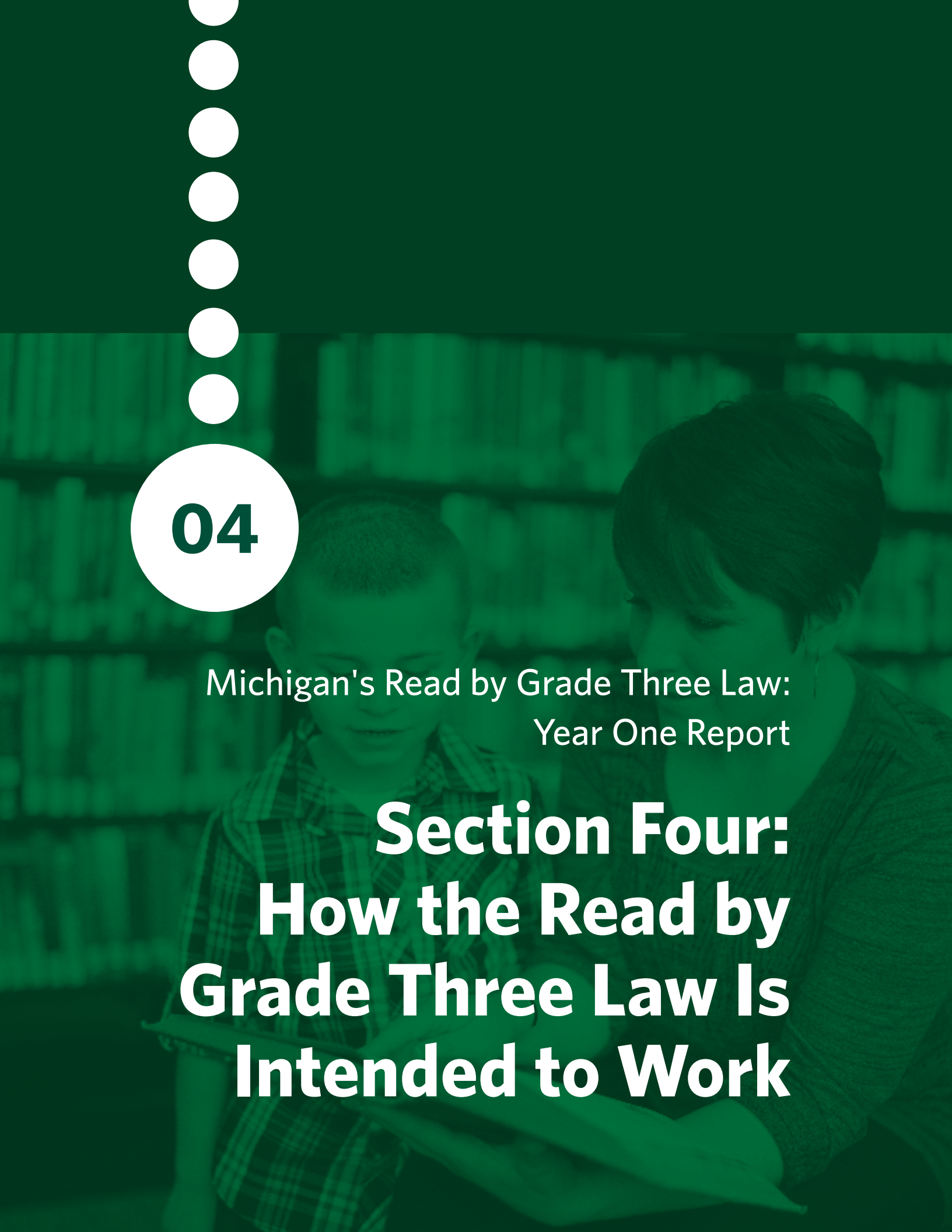
3 Since the M-STEP ELA's performance level of "not proficient" does not accurately indicate that the student is one grade level behind, an independent cut score was necessary for measuring literacy in response to the Law.

4 It is important to note that funding streams under Section 35 and 35a predate the passage of the Read by Grade Three Law and were being used to fund the Early Literacy Initiative.

5 Hereafter, all references will only mention ISD as this is the more common term policymakers use.

6 It is important to note that prior to the 2020-21 fiscal year Section 35a(5) only applied to K-3 students but now includes preK students as well.

7 In 1985, MDE and the Michigan Reading Association amended the Michigan Definition of Reading to define reading as "the process of constructing meaning through the dynamic interaction among the reader's existing knowledge, the information suggested by the written language, and the context of the reading situation" (Michigan State Board of Education, 2002, p. 2).



04

Michigan's Read by Grade Three Law:
Year One Report

Section Four: How the Read by Grade Three Law Is Intended to Work

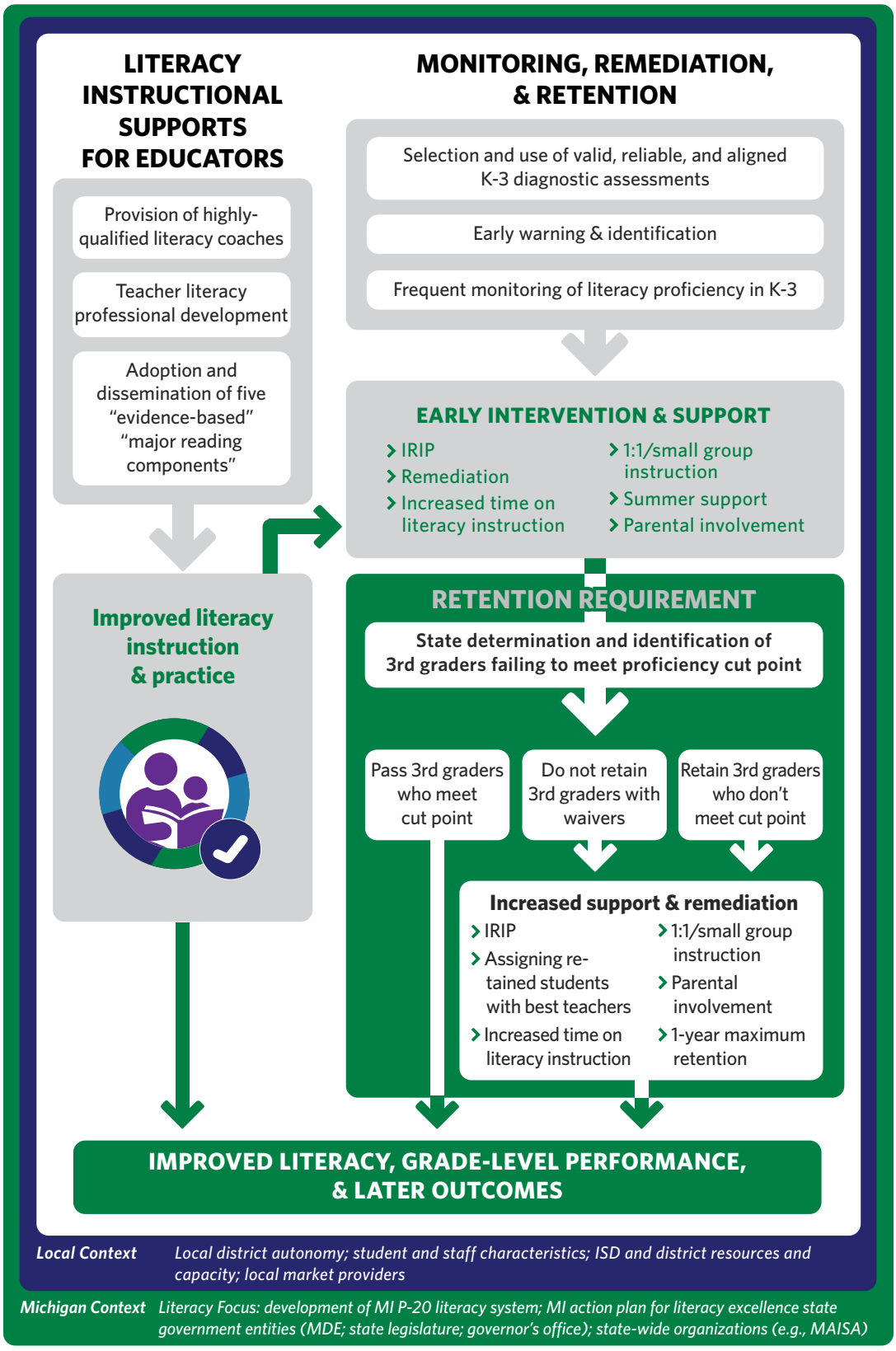
Section Four:
How the Read by Grade Three Law Is Intended to Work

THEORY OF CHANGE AND THE EVIDENCE INFORMING IT

This section addresses the basic but fundamental question: How was the Read by Grade Three Law intended to work? To answer this question, the section describes the Law's unified Theory of Change and the evidence supporting it. Our aim is to better understand the mechanisms of the Law and how they are expected to work together, which is a necessary step to evaluate the effect of these early literacy reforms in Michigan.

The Theory of Change on which the Law is based is grounded in the idea that state support and early intervention, coupled with the threat of third-grade retention, will increase student and teacher effort and improve literacy outcomes. For students who need additional assistance beyond early literacy supports to meet third-grade proficiency standards, retention will, in theory, allow for the extra time and instruction necessary to read on grade level (Roderick, Nagaoka, & Allensworth, 2005). Together with the **Michigan Department of Education (MDE)** and other state-level stakeholders involved in the development and implementation of the Law, EPIC developed a Theory of Change to reflect the intended logic underlying the Read by Grade Three Law, displayed in Figure 4.1.

FIGURE 4.1. Policy-Implied Theory of Change: Read by Grade Three Law



The policy codified in the Law includes requirements for districts, **Intermediate School Districts (ISDs)/Regional Educational Services Agencies (RESAs)**,[1] and the two state agencies assigned to its administration (MDE and the **Center for Educational Performance and Information [CEPI]**). These requirements are represented in the gray and white boxes at the top of Figure 4.1.

These requirements are grouped into two main categories (represented by the two vertical pathways in Figure 4.1): **literacy instructional supports for educators** and **monitoring, remediation and retention** of K-3 students. The first category, **literacy instructional supports for educators**, focuses on providing professional development for teachers. The purpose of this professional development is to ensure that classroom teachers are providing high-quality instruction based on research and best practice to all students. In alignment with the Law's use of Multi-Tiered Systems of Support (MTSS), this is to support "Tier 1" classroom instruction. The second category, **monitoring, remediation and retention**, relies on educators use of screeners and diagnostic assessments to identify and monitor student needs and provide increasingly intensive remediation to students who are reading below grade-level expectations ("Tier 2" and "Tier 3" intervention). Schools and districts began employing these tiered supports for educators and students under the Law after it was passed in 2016. The full Law, including the retention component, was intended to go into effect by the end of the 2019-20 school year. For a full timeline of the formation and implementation of the Read by Grade Three Law, see Section Three.

Literacy Instructional Supports for Educators

This first set of legislated requirements under the Read by Grade Three Law is aimed at improving literacy instruction and learning statewide for all K-3 students, independent of student reading proficiency status (Tier I). This component of the Theory of Change, represented in the upper-left-hand section of Figure 4.1, is comprised of three elements: the **provision of highly qualified literacy coaches**, **teacher literacy professional development**, and the **adoption and dissemination of five "evidence-based" "major reading components."** The legislation codifies perceived best practice in reading instruction, identifying five evidence-based components of effective literacy instruction: phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension (National Reading Panel, 2000). The legislation also mandates that districts provide teachers with literacy coaching and other literacy professional development aligned to these "best practices."

Together, these elements of the reform are intended to improve all Michigan K-3 classroom teachers' literacy instruction and practice, which should in turn enable teachers and schools to provide early literacy intervention and support to improve student literacy and grade-level performance. Moreover, extant research suggests that there has been a need for this kind of improved literacy instruction in Michigan elementary schools (Wright & Neuman, 2014).

Provision of Highly Qualified Literacy Coaches

To assist teachers in implementing these instructional practices, the state provides funding to ISDs to help them hire at least one early literacy coach who is then tasked with working with districts and educators within that ISD. These coaches are commonly referred to as **ISD Early Literacy Coaches** and are provided for under section 35a(4) (i.e., Early Literacy Coaching Grant) of the State School Aid Act. ISD Early Literacy Coaches provide ongoing professional development to K-3 teachers. As described in Section Three, the Read by Grade Three Law draws on a model implemented in Florida, which aims to improve student outcomes by changing teacher practice using coaches.

The existing research on literacy coaching indicates that when coaching is implemented with fidelity, it may be an effective mechanism through which to improve teachers' instruction and therefore student reading achievement (Blachowicz, Obrochta, & Fogelberg, 2005; Elish-Piper & L'Allier, 2011; Lockwood, McCombs, & Marsh, 2010; Matsumura, Garnier, Correnti, Junker & Bickel, 2010; Vanderburg & Stephens, 2010). One of the most-studied coaching programs took place under Reading First—a grant program the U.S. Department of Education administered under No Child Left Behind that allocated funding in part to hire literacy coaches to support K-3 reading achievement (U.S. Department of Education, 2014). Evaluations of the relationship between Reading First coaching and instruction find that teachers who work with coaches implement new, effective instructional approaches in their classrooms, including small-group work, read-alouds, and classroom management (Coburn & Woulfin, 2012; Walpole, McKenna, Uribe-Zarain, & Lamitina, 2010). Other studies exploring smaller-scale coaching initiatives similarly find that coaching leads to an increased likelihood that teachers adopt instructional practices such as integrating authentic assessments, basing instructional decisions on professional literature, and creating a more student-centered curriculum; and that they more frequently implement particular components of literacy instruction, including phonological awareness, print concepts, writing skills, and comprehension (McCollum, Hemmeter, & Hsieh, 2011; Pomerantz & Pierce, 2013; Sailors & Price, 2015; Vanderburg & Stephens, 2010).

Literacy coaching may be an effective mechanism to improve teachers' instruction and student reading achievement.

Teachers who have worked with literacy coaches report improvements in their own instruction. Steckel (2011), in case studies of two literacy coaches working in urban elementary schools, finds that participants attribute improvements in their reading and writing instruction to the influence of the literacy coaches with whom they work. Not all coaches are equally effective, however; Marsh, McCombs, and Martorell (2012) find that certain characteristics of literacy coaches, including years of coaching experience, are significantly associated with teachers' perceived improvements in instruction in Florida middle schools.

Research suggests that coaching also improves student achievement. Kraft, Blazar, and Hogan (2018), in a meta-analysis of 60 empirical studies that use causal research designs to examine the effects of coaching (primarily early literacy coaching), find positive effects on teachers' instruction and student achievement. However, they find that larger programs have lesser effects than smaller programs, suggesting that scaling up coaching may be a challenge. This last point is particularly salient to a state-wide reform like Michigan's.

Other researchers also find positive effects of literacy coaching on the literacy achievement of students whose teachers receive the coaching (Biancarosa, Bryk, & Dexter, 2010; Lockwood, McCombs, & Marsh, 2010; Matsumura, Garnier, & Spybrook, 2013; Sailors & Price, 2015), and these effects appear to persist over time (Biancarosa et al., 2010).

Several factors may mediate the effectiveness of coaching. For example, multiple studies find a positive correlation between the amount of time literacy coaches spend working with teachers

and student reading achievement (Bean, Draper, Hall, Vandermolen, & Zigmond, 2010; Elish-Piper & L'Allier, 2010; 2011). Other research, however, finds that the students of teachers who received more frequent one-on-one coaching perform worse on Florida's reading achievement test (Marsh, McCombs, & Martorell, 2010). However, this work does not isolate a causal link between coaching frequency and student outcomes, and the authors note that this was particularly the case in schools where teachers reported a high frequency of one-on-one coaching but a low frequency of reviewing assessment data with coaches. These schools tended to have lower reading achievement overall, suggesting that teachers who received more one-on-one coaching taught lower-performing classes of students from the outset.

Particular coaching activities have also been found to be associated with positive reading achievement outcomes, including reviewing assessment data with teachers, providing data support to teachers, conferencing, administering assessments, modeling, observing, and coaching on comprehension (Elish-Piper & L'Allier, 2010; 2011; Marsh, McCombs, Lockwood, Martorell, Gershwin, Naftel, Le, Shea, Barney, & Crego, 2008; Marsh et al., 2010).

While literacy coaching generally appears to be a promising mechanism by which to improve teachers' instruction and student achievement, not enough is known about the potential impacts of literacy coaches operating under early literacy laws, as Florida is the only state in which substantial research on the effect of coaches under these policies has been conducted. Furthermore, although Michigan's coaching model is based on Florida's, many central elements of the policy differ. Michigan devotes fewer resources to literacy coaches, and as a result provides fewer coaches per school or district. Further, coaches are not designated to specific schools or districts, but rather to ISDs, which provide specialized supports to Michigan's districts. This lessens both the availability of coaches for many schools and districts, but also potentially the alignment between coaches and the needs of specific schools and districts.

Teacher Literacy Professional Development

The Read by Grade Three Law also calls for other teacher literacy professional development in addition to literacy coaching. Other forms of literacy professional development have been associated with improved instruction. Several small-scale studies on literacy professional development find it to be associated with changes in teachers' instruction (Putman, Smith, & Cassady, 2009), including the implementation of more systematic, coherent, challenging, integrated (Kennedy, 2010), and evidence-based (Kennedy & Shiel, 2011) instruction, as well as increased efficacy to address students' literacy challenges (Kennedy, 2010; Kennedy & Shiel, 2011) and improved literacy content knowledge (Porche, Pallante, & Snow, 2012).

Larger-scale studies show that the content of the professional development teachers receive is related to instructional and achievement outcomes. For instance, Reed (2009), synthesizing the literature on professional development and teachers' ensuing implementation of literacy strategies, finds that professional development that responds to teachers' needs can improve instruction. Further, Correnti (2007), in analyzing daily logs from over 75,000 lessons from nearly 2,000 classrooms across more than 100 schools, finds that changes in teachers' practice occur in the areas that are emphasized in the professional development they receive. Fisher, Lapp, Flood, and Moore (2006) further find that teachers who receive professional development on using assessment data to inform instruction become more effective at identifying and administering

assessments and interpreting their results to help plan for instruction, in turn leading to increased achievement for their students when compared with a control group. However, it is important to note that two of these three studies (Reed, 2009; Fisher et al., 2006) focus on secondary school teachers, so it is unclear how these findings may apply in elementary schools.

Several studies also find that literacy professional development for elementary and middle school teachers improves students' reading achievement (Fisher, Frey, & Nelson, 2012; Kennedy, 2010; Kennedy & Shiel, 2011; Porche et al., 2012; Putman et al., 2009; Reed, 2015). Basma and Savage (2018), in a review of meta-analyses on the effect of professional development on reading achievement, find an overall positive effect of professional development on student literacy outcomes. Specifically, they cite evidence in high-quality studies that there are positive effects from short-term professional development while noting that there is a lack of similar studies on the effects of long-term professional development on student achievement.

The final element that is intended to improve K-3 classroom teachers' literacy instruction is the implementation of "five major reading components."

In general, the literature on literacy professional development shows promising results, but the large quantity of small-scale studies and scarcity of the use of causal methods make it difficult to draw definitive conclusions. Further, as with literacy coaching, the effectiveness of professional development interventions as a part of a larger state literacy policy is underexplored. However, some studies have compared the effect of combined literacy coaching and professional development to professional development alone. The results from these studies suggest that professional development in addition to coaching may be more effective than professional development alone at improving teachers' instruction (Cantrell & Hughes, 2008; Neuman & Cunningham, 2009) and student reading achievement (Carlisle & Berebitsky, 2011; Neuman & Wright, 2010; Phillips, Nichols, Rupley, Paige, & Rasinski, 2016).

Adoption and Dissemination of "Evidence-Based" "Five Major Reading Components"

The final element of the Theory of Change that is intended to improve K-3 classroom teachers' literacy instruction is the requirement that Michigan schools implement "five major reading components" in literacy instruction: phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and text comprehension. These "five major reading components" have been supported by research.[2] In 2000, the National Reading Panel conducted a systematic literature review and meta-analysis on instruction to address various literacy knowledge and skills and their effects on student achievement. They find that, overall, instruction on phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and text comprehension improve student achievement.

However, the Law leaves out many evidence-based components of literacy instruction that are also important for teaching young learners critical literacy skills. The International Reading Association (2002) highlights 10 evidence-based literacy instructional practices (earlier outlined by Gambrell & Mazzoni [1999, p.14]) that overlap with but go beyond the five components included in the Read by Grade Three Law, such as knowledge building and writing. The Michigan K-12 Standards for ELA

also require instruction beyond these five components, including instruction on writing, listening, and speaking (Michigan Department of Education, 2010).

Further, not all research shows positive effects of such "evidence-based" reading practices (Greenwood, Tapia, Abbott, & Walton, 2003; Jacob, 2017). Perhaps most notably, a large-scale impact study of Reading First, which focuses on instruction in the same five areas as those recommended by the Read by Grade Three Law, finds that while Reading First had a positive, statistically significant effect on the amount of instructional time spent on these elements of reading, it had mixed effects on student reading achievement, positively affecting first grade students' decoding skills but leading to no statistically significant gains in reading comprehension test scores for students in 1st-3rd grade (Gamse, Jacob, Horst, Boulay, & Unlu, 2008).

Monitoring, Remediation, and Retention

Under the Read by Grade Three Law, schools must also frequently monitor K-3 students' reading proficiency to identify students who are not meeting grade-level expectations in reading. Districts are to **select and use valid, reliable, and aligned K-3 diagnostic assessments** for screening and **frequently monitoring literacy proficiency in grades K-3**. These assessments are used for **early warning and identification** purposes to determine which students are identified as having a "**reading deficiency**" as defined in the Read by Grade Three Law. As shown in Figure 4.1, these students will receive more intensive Tier II and III supports, including **early intervention and support**, and those who do not meet the state-determined cut score on the **M-STEP** at the end of third grade will be retained.

Monitoring

Under the Read by Grade Three Law, districts must diagnose K-3 students with "reading deficiencies" based on one of a list of state-approved screening, formative, and diagnostic assessments. Districts are to use these assessment results to inform instruction and intervention services for students and monitor students' progress toward a "growth target" in reading, as described in the Law.

Selection and use of valid, reliable, and aligned K-3 diagnostic assessments. In a report on third-grade reading policies, Rose and Schimke (2012) stress the importance of early identification of students who need reading support. They outline key decisions states must make regarding early identification, including at which grade levels to assess students; who should select these assessments (e.g., the state, local school districts); whether the assessments are formative, summative, or both; how frequently to administer assessments; and whether they are required or recommended (Rose & Schimke, 2012). In Michigan, educators must assess K-3 students for "reading deficiencies" at least three times per year, with the first assessment occurring within 30 days of the beginning of the school year. MDE has created a list of 35 approved assessments from which districts can select.

Early warning and identification. The literature generally supports the use of assessments to aid in the early identification of students who need additional reading support (Catts, Fey, Zhang, & Tomblin, 2001; Catts, Nielsen, Bridges, Liu, & Bontempo, 2013; Elbro & Scarborough, 2004; Hurford, Johnston, Nepote, Hampton, Moore, Neal, Mueller, McGeorge, Huff, Awad, Tatro, Juliano, & Huffman, 1994; Hurford, Schauf, Blaich, Moore, & Bunce, 1994a). In addition, research

suggests that providing interventions based on these assessment results can improve students' reading skills (Fuchs & Fuchs, 2001; 2011; Hurford et al., 1994; Vaughn, Wanzek, Woodruff, & Linan-Thompson, 2007).

However, there are challenges with early identification. To target interventions to students who need them most, diagnostic assessments must accurately identify students who are at risk of being retained. The little research that exists about the use of diagnostic assessments as a component of early literacy policies suggests that the most commonly used assessments are not necessarily effective at identifying students who may need supports (Koon, Foorman, & Galloway, 2020). However, the evidence is more promising for state-developed assessments that measure the same standards and with the same difficulty as end-of-year state tests (Koon et al., 2020; Invernizzi, Justice, Landrum, & Booker, 2004). This suggests that while diagnostic assessments may not accurately identify students in need of literacy supports more generally, educators may be able to better identify such students by developing their own diagnostic assessments that are aligned to the standards and difficulty of the state test. Some studies have also found that using multiple measures or a combination of screening tools can increase diagnostic accuracy (Elbro & Scarborough, 2004; Felton, 1992; Klingbell, McComas, Burns, & Helman, 2015).

Under the Law, districts must diagnose K-3 students with "reading deficiencies" based on one of a list of state-approved screening, formative, and diagnostic assessments.

Frequent monitoring of literacy proficiency in K-3. In addition to identifying "reading deficiencies," the Law also requires that districts use the diagnostic assessments to frequently monitor K-3 students' progress in literacy proficiency. Research supports the use of progress monitoring for identifying students in need of intervention, (Deno, 2003; Fuchs & Fuchs, 2001; 2011; Good, Simmons, & Kame'enui, 2009; Safer & Fleischman, 2005), predicting future assessment performance (Deno, 2003; Fuchs & Fuchs, 2011; Good et al., 2001; Safer & Fleischman, 2005), and improving student achievement (Fuchs & Fuchs, 2001; 2011). However, whether this progress monitoring can take place depends on the effectiveness of the diagnostic assessments in accurately identifying students who need supports. Further, it will be important for educators to be trained in administering assessments with fidelity, as well as how to interpret the results and use them to improve student learning.

Early Intervention and Support

Students who are identified as having a "reading deficiency" by their district's diagnostic assessment are to receive increasingly intensive Tier II and III interventions, including **Individual Reading Improvement Plans (IRIPs)** that contain evidence-based interventions, such as **remediation**, **increased time on literacy instruction**, **one-on-one or small group instruction**, **summer support**, and **parental involvement**.

Individual Reading Improvement Plans (IRIPs). The Law requires that teachers, principals, and parents/legal guardians create the IRIP, which describes the interventions the individual student will receive to remediate their "reading deficiency." The district must provide the student with the interventions outlined in the IRIP until the student is no longer identified as having a "reading deficiency."

Remediation. Prior studies find positive effects of remediation on students' reading assessment scores (e.g., Downing, Williams, & Holden, 2009; Gittelman & Feingold, 1983). However, these studies focus on specific types of remediation (e.g., phonetic decoding; Gittelman & Feingold, 1983) and specific populations of students (e.g., high-risk public school students; Downing, et al., 2009), so it is unclear how generalizable the findings are to other populations and types of remediation. There is some promising literature on the durability of these effects. Blachman and colleagues (2014) find that students who are randomly assigned to a remediation treatment maintain an advantage over control group students in a subset of reading skills a decade later and find some evidence that the students who receive remediation are less likely to receive special education services and more likely to complete high school and post-secondary education, though these differences are not statistically significant.

Increased time on literacy instruction. IRIPs also provide for additional dedicated time for students in evidence-based reading instruction and intervention. Studies using rigorous methods such as regression discontinuity (Figlio, Holden, & Ozek, 2018) and random assignment (Gunn, Biglan, Smolkowski, & Ary, 2000; Gunn, Smolkowski, Biglan, & Black, 2002; Gunn, Smolkowski, Biglan, Black, & Blair, 2005) find positive effects of additional literacy instruction on reading outcomes, in particular for economically disadvantaged and at-risk students (Linan-Thompson & Hickman-Davis, 2002; Harn, Linan-Thompson, & Roberts, 2008). In addition, Gunn and colleagues (2000; 2002; 2005) find that positive effects on multiple measures of reading skill persist one and two years after the intervention concludes.

Notably, additional instruction may be more beneficial in improving some components of reading than others. McIntyre and colleagues (2010) compare the reading achievement of first and second graders who receive daily supplemental reading instruction to those who do not and found that those who receive supplemental instruction have higher scores for reading comprehension but not for phonics.

One-on-one/small group instruction. IRIPs may also require students to receive small group or one-on-one literacy instruction. Most research on this kind of individualized instruction suggests that it is effective in improving students' reading outcomes (Begeny & Martens, 2006; Fuchs, Compton, Fuchs, Bryant, & Davis, 2008; Kamps, Abbott, Greenwood, Wills, Veerkamp, & Kaufman, 2008; Rashotte, MacPhee, & Torgesen, 2001; Vadasy, Sanders, Peyton, & Jenkins, 2002). Specifically, students who do not respond to other interventions may respond to one-on-one tutoring (McMaster, Fuchs, Fuchs, & Compton, 2005), supporting its use as part of a tiered intervention system. However, the research is not uniformly conclusive; some studies have found a negligible effect of one-on-one or small-group instruction on reading outcomes (Balu, Zhu, Doolittle, Schiller, Jenkins, & Gersten, 2008; Kerins, Trotter, & Schoenbrodt, 2010) and others show that one-on-one tutoring may be more effective in first grade than in second grade and that there is little gained by a second consecutive year of tutoring (Vadasy et al., 2002).

Notably, O'Connor, Fulmer, Harty, and Bell (2005), in examining a tiered intervention system similar to that imposed by the Read by Grade Three Law (e.g., teacher professional development, ongoing progress monitoring, and small-group or one-on-one reading intervention for K-3 students), find that together these interventions lead to improvement in reading outcomes—especially for students in high-risk categories. Further, they find that incidence of reading disabilities by the end of third grade had declined (O'Connor et al., 2005). This suggests that combining small group and one-on-one interventions with other literacy interventions, as the Read by Grade Three Law requires, may be effective in improving reading achievement in the early grades.

Summer support. Under the Read by Grade Three Law, districts must also provide students with supplemental evidence-based reading intervention outside of school time, which may include summer. Long periods away from school have been shown to lead to learning loss in literacy (e.g., Quinn & Polikoff, 2017). This is particularly true for economically disadvantaged students and schools that serve high proportions of economically disadvantaged students (Atteberry & McEachin, 2020; Augustine, McCombs, Pane, Schwartz, Schweig, McEachin, & Siler-Evans, 2016; Gershenson, 2013), and these effects accrue over time (Atteberry & McEachin, 2020). Academically focused programs offered during the summer can mediate or ameliorate academic losses, especially for economically disadvantaged students. In particular, such programs have been shown to reduce summer learning loss and improve the literacy skills of low-performing children (Borman, Benson, & Overman, 2005; Borman, Goetz, & Dowling, 2009; Chaplin & Capizzano, 2006). Other research, however, suggests that what makes summer reading interventions effective is not necessarily that they improve students' reading achievement, but rather that they prevent students' reading achievement from declining (Christodoulou, Cyr, Murtagh, Chang, Lin, Guarino, Hook, & Gabrieli, 2015; McDaniel, McLeod, Carter, & Robinson, 2017).

Other research is mixed on the effects of summer interventions. Retained students in Chicago and New York City who participated in a summer intervention experienced modest positive effects on reading achievement (Jacob & Lefgren, 2004; Mariano & Martorell, 2013), while research on two different summer interventions in North Carolina yielded opposite results. Weiss and colleagues (2018), in examining the effect of an optional summer reading program under the state's Read to Achieve third-grade reading policy, find no significant difference in reading scores between students who participate in the program and those who do not. However, Albee, Smith, Arnold, and Dennis (2019) find that North Carolina 1st-3rd grade students who participate in a different three-year summer reading intervention retain at least 30% to 67% more reading ability than students who do not participate—suggesting that summer support may be more effective when it is implemented over multiple years.

Kim and colleagues have also conducted a number of experimental studies that find positive effects of summer reading interventions on elementary students' reading outcomes (e.g., Guryan, Kim, & Quinn, 2014; Kim, 2006; 2007; Kim, Guryan, White, Quinn, Capotosto, & Kingston, 2016; Kim & White, 2008)—particularly when they are paired with supports like oral reading and comprehension scaffolding (Kim & White, 2008) and especially for students in schools that serve high proportions of economically disadvantaged students (Kim et al., 2016), students of color, readers who are less fluent, and students who report having less than 50 books at home (Kim, 2006).

Parental involvement. Lastly, the Law recommends that IRIPs include a "Read at Home" plan that includes parent, guardian, or care-provider training workshops and regular home reading. Research

documents the effectiveness of such programs in improving students' literacy achievement; two meta-analyses find positive effects of parental involvement in literacy interventions on students' reading-achievement gains (Sénéchal & Young, 2008; Van Steensel, McElvany, Kurvers, & Herppich, 2011). However, some modes of parental involvement lead to greater gains than others. For instance, students whose parents tutor them in specific literacy skills with activities (e.g., practice exercises) make greater literacy achievement gains than students whose parents simply read books or listen to their children read (Sénéchal & Young, 2008). Van Steensel and colleagues (2011), in their meta-analysis, find smaller but still statistically significant effects of parent involvement on student achievement but conclude that there is a need for more qualitative research on how these programs are implemented. A subsequent review of descriptive and intervention studies of family involvement in literacy finds that, collectively, the evidence generally supports a positive link between family involvement and literacy skills (Van Voorhis, Maier, Epstein, & Lloyd, 2013).

Retention

The Read by Grade Three Law stipulates that students who score more than one grade level behind in reading proficiency at the end of third grade (as measured by the state's third-grade M-STEP ELA assessment) will be identified for retention. MDE determined that a score of 1252 or below would indicate that a student is more than one grade level behind in reading. EPIC, using 2018-19 third-grade M-STEP ELA results to estimate the percentage of tested students who may be retained by scoring 1252 or below, finds that, depending on how many students receive **good cause exemptions**, between two percent and four percent of third graders may be retained (EPIC, 2020). Under the Law, CEPI is required to send notifications to parents or guardians of these students via certified mail. Any such student is subject to retention unless they receive a waiver from the district superintendent. However, due to the suspension of face-to-face instruction because of COVID-19 and the subsequent waiver of state assessments, the retention requirement under the Law was also waived for the 2019-20 school year.

ELA M-STEP SCORES 1252 OR BELOW INDICATE A STUDENT IS MORE THAN ONE GRADE LEVEL BEHIND IN READING

MDE determined that a score of 1252 or below would indicate that a student is more than one grade level behind in reading.

EPIC, using 2018-19 third-grade M-STEP ELA results to estimate the percentage of tested students who may be retained by scoring 1252 or below, finds that, depending on how many students receive good cause exemptions, between two percent and four percent of third graders may be retained (EPIC, 2020).

Parents or teachers initiate requests for waivers. Waivers are granted if a student demonstrates grade-level proficiency through an alternate assessment or merits a "good cause exemption." Under the Law, students are eligible for a good cause exemption if they have an **Individualized Education Program (IEP)** or **Section 504 Plan**; are limited English proficient with less than three years of instruction in an English learner (EL) program; received intensive reading intervention for two or more years, and were retained in kindergarten, first, or second grade; or have been enrolled in their current school for less than two years and there is evidence that they were not provided with an appropriate IRIP. Families, legal guardians, or school/district staff can also request good cause exemptions in an appropriate timeframe for students who have been identified with a "reading deficiency" if it is determined that the exemption is in the best interest of the student.

Students who receive an exemption must have intensive reading intervention until the district can show there is no longer a "reading deficiency."

As **Figure 4.1** depicts, the Read by Grade Three Law prescribes Tier II and III interventions for retained students that are similar to those required for K-3 students identified as having a "reading deficiency." In addition, retained students must be assigned to a highly effective teacher in their retention year. "Highly effective" is defined as a reading teacher determined to be highly effective in their evaluation, the highest evaluated third-grade teacher in the school, or a reading specialist. To speed student progression, retained third graders must also be taught fourth-grade material in all other subjects so that they can rejoin their class as soon as they meet the literacy standards.

Effects of retention on academic outcomes. There is only mixed evidence to support retention as a mechanism for improving learning. Several recent studies have examined effects of test-based retention policies by using clearly defined retention-eligibility criteria to generate credible control groups (Greene & Winters, 2007; Jacob & Lefgren, 2004; 2009; Mariano & Martorell, 2013; Roderick & Nagaoka, 2005; Schwerdt, West, & Winters, 2017; Weiss et al., 2018). Most of these studies find positive short-term effects (i.e., in the years immediately following retention) of retention on student reading achievement in Chicago, New York, and Florida (Greene & Winters, 2004; 2006; 2007; Schwerdt, West, & Winters, 2017; Jacob & Lefgren, 2004; Mariano & Martorell, 2013). However, in North Carolina, there were no reading gains for retained students following retention in third grade (Weiss, Stallings, & Porder, 2018).

There is some evidence that third-grade retention has academic benefits beyond reading achievement. For example, retained third graders obtained higher math achievement scores and high school GPAs (Greene & Winters, 2004; Jacob & Lefgren, 2004; Schwerdt et al., 2017; Winters & Greene, 2012) and enroll in fewer remedial courses in high school (Schwerdt et al., 2017). On the other hand, retention policies have also led to negative high school outcomes, including reduced credit accumulation, a decreased likelihood of taking state high school exit exams and completing state graduation requirements, and an increased likelihood of dropping out (Eren, Depew, & Barnes, 2017; Mariano, Martorell, & Berglund, 2018).

Effects of retention on non-academic outcomes. Critics of test-based promotion policies commonly argue that retained students may be stigmatized and face significant challenges to social-emotional development (e.g., Jimerson, 2001). Existing research finds inconsistent effects of retention on social-emotional and behavioral adjustment. Meta-analyses of retention studies indicate that retained students show lower levels of social-emotional adjustment relative to promoted students (Holmes, 1989; Jimerson, 2001). However, there is some evidence that retention has a positive effect on children's perceived school belonging and academic self-efficacy (Hong & Yu, 2008; Wu, West, & Hughes, 2010; Mariano, Kirby, Crego, & Setodji, 2009). Recent evaluations of test-based retention policies have studied the effect of retention on disciplinary incidents, suspensions, and juvenile crime (Eren et al, 2017; Ozek, 2015; Mariano et al., 2018). While Florida's retention policy has increased the likelihood of disciplinary incidents and suspensions among retained students in the short run (Ozek, 2015), the retention policy in New York City had no significant effect on suspensions (Mariano et al., 2018) and Louisiana's policy decreased the probability of a student being convicted of a juvenile crime (Eren et al, 2017).

Threat of retention. As indicated in the Theory of Change, retention policies are not only intended to affect the students who are retained but also to encourage changes in adult behavior that lead to improved student performance so that ultimately fewer students are retained. While only a few studies have examined the effect of this "threat" (i.e., possibility) of retention, evidence suggests a limited positive effect on student achievement. Roderick, Jacob, and Bryk (2002) study achievement growth in promotional gate grades (i.e., third, sixth, eighth grades) for Chicago's retention policy and find positive effects on reading and math growth for students in sixth and eighth grades, but not for those in third grade. In a further analysis of Chicago's policy, Jacob (2005) finds that the threat of retention does not affect student achievement on a low-stakes test or in subjects that were not used for promotion decisions, which suggests that the improved student achievement in Roderick et al. (2002) may be driven by test-specific skills.

More recently, Perrault and Winters (2020) examine third-grade retention policies in Florida and Arizona and find that the threat of retention in third grade leads to a significant increase in reading scores for third-grade students before the retention decision compared to other grades in the same school. This suggests that educators make changes to their instruction to improve students' literacy such that fewer students are identified for retention. In New York City, Mariano, Kirby, Crego, and Setodji (2009) compare students subject to the retention policy to students in the same grade in the previous year who were not treated by the policy. Similar to the Read by Grade Three Law, students subject to the New York City retention policy are also identified for additional support services intended to remediate their learning difficulties before they would need to be retained. They find that under the retention policy, students who receive these supports perform much better in the year before retention than they would have in the absence of the policy. This suggests that the threat of retention, coupled with support services (as in the Read by Grade Three Law) improved students' academic performance in New York City.

Exemptions to retention. Another key component of Michigan's Read by Grade Three Law is the use of good cause exemptions. Other states with retention laws have also incorporated such exemptions. In Florida, only 54% of third-grade students in 2002-03 who scored below the threshold for promotion were actually retained, 25% met the criteria for one or more of the exemption categories, and the rest were promoted without specific exemption information listed (Greene & Winters, 2009). Students whose mothers have higher levels of education have been found to be more likely to be promoted under such exemptions (LiCalsi, Ozek, & Figlio, 2019). Prior research also suggests that being awarded an exemption and promoted may not increase student proficiency. Students who receive an exemption, on average, have smaller test score gains two years later than those who are retained (Greene & Winters, 2009).

Assigning retained students to the best teachers. Following the Theory of Change, districts are required to assign students who are not proficient by the end of third grade to a "highly effective" reading teacher during their retention year. Research shows that assignment to a high-quality teacher is associated with higher student achievement (e.g., Chetty, Friedman, & Rockoff, 2014; Clotfelter, Ladd, & Vigdor, 2007; Goldhaber, 2007; Harris, 2011; Rivkin, Hanushek, & Kain, 2005) and future educational and earnings outcomes (Chetty, Friedman, & Rockoff, 2011). However, there is little research that focuses on the implications of assigning students who have been retained under early literacy policies to high-quality teachers.

Policymakers' Beliefs About the Law's Policy Levers

Policymakers included retention in the Read by Grade Three Law primarily to curb "social promotion," which is the practice of moving students on to the next grade level at the end of the school year regardless of whether they learn the material. In our interviews with state-level stakeholders, many did not agree with including a retention component in the Law. Across all stakeholder groups we interviewed, the majority of interviewees (17 of 24) expressed that they disliked retention because they believed it is not research-based, creates social harm for students, and becomes a fear-based policy tool in practice. This played out in interviews as a dilemma between social promotion versus social harm. As one policymaker pointed out:

> *I do know [retention is] a fear-based tool, it's a punitive tool, and I just see a lot of fear. I see parents who are afraid, kids who are afraid, teachers who are afraid...It's just another way to put the hammer down, I think, on schools. It's a fear-based tool and it's misguided.*

Overall, stakeholders with whom we spoke were particularly concerned about the potentially inequitable application of third-grade retention under the Law. Specifically, they worried that traditionally underserved districts and schools would have disproportionately high retention rates. As one policymaker expressed:

> *The number, based on the cut score that MDE produced, is a very small number in the grand scheme of things. [But] it is heavily concentrated in urban communities and the students of color, which does bother me a lot, and I think bothers most people.*

POLICYMAKERS' BELIEFS ABOUT THE LAW'S POLICY LEVERS

This sentiment was further echoed by an external stakeholder who told us:

> *I'm sincerely afraid that of the few thousand students that they'll identify with this cut score, that they will mainly be poor and minority students in high-risk districts. Double up on the harm. That's why I'm not saying it's done any good. I think it could do a lot of harm.*

While policymakers were clearly divided by party on retention, with all eight Republicans and no Democrats we interviewed supporting its inclusion in the Law, all policymakers agreed about the importance of improving early literacy and supported the inclusion of other interventions, in particular literacy coaching and IRIPs. It was the retention element as a high-stakes accountability measure that led to disagreement. As one former Republican policymaker affirmed, *"I think everybody understands that reading is an important thing. I think that's bipartisan. But I think it primarily came that retention was clearly a partisan thing."*

However, Republican policymakers expressed that they felt the need to include retention as a mechanism to ensure that schools took early literacy seriously. As one discussed:

> *Without that stick approach, that it just wasn't gonna work…The schools will not do anything unless there's some punitive measure. They're simply not gonna do anything different unless there's some punitive aspect to it. At least, that's been my experience 25 years in this…Schools, just, simply, will not do anything different unless they're forced to.*

Notwithstanding, they expressed that their intent was never to retain a lot of students. Rather, retention was meant as a "distant threat" to hold districts and schools more accountable:

> *We never in that discussion set out to say, we think that retention is a useful intervention for getting kids to read by third grade. That wasn't really the intention. It was more about having this distant threat out there that, if you guys [i.e., schools/districts] don't get serious and have this conversation, this is what happens.*

POLICYMAKERS' BELIEFS ABOUT THE LAW'S POLICY LEVERS

Given such partisan divide on retention, several good cause exemptions were eventually included in the Law. Democrats believed that these exemptions would help combat perceived social harm and equity issues. As one external stakeholder with whom we spoke pointed out:

> *I think there were a lot of [Democrat] legislators that were uncomfortable to hear the way it was first rolled out—like a pretty draconian approach at first which is gonna capture hundreds to thousands of kids…they didn't feel comfortable with that…We were able to work the system to say, 'I really don't feel comfortable with this part.' We were able to soften it up with good cause waivers in a number of cases.*

Such comments were corroborated by a Republican policymaker during the Law's adoption, who said:

> *We built in all kinds of exemptions and flexibilities like, if the kid goes to summer school and tests at a certain level, he can get promoted and so on and so forth, right? It was really, really soft because we weren't—we didn't view retention as intervention itself.*

Despite Democrats' concerns about the social harm retention may cause, a few nevertheless expressed that the Law has the potential to improve literacy outcomes in the state. As one Democrat said:

> *This Law exists, and was able to gain traction, because we are not doing what we need to do in public education…There's always winners and losers in this type of situation…[But] I believe that if we stick to [using] retention…we'll change practice, and we'll change outcomes. I think we're on to some great state messaging and some great ideas and got the most invested people rallying behind it. I think if we keep moving in that direction [under the Law], we're gonna see some changes.*

Thus, while Democratic policymakers did not necessarily support retention, they recognized that including it in the Read by Grade Three Law may lead to positive changes. Further, there were other elements of the Law that Democratic policymakers liked that made it worth supporting. As another shared:

POLICYMAKERS' BELIEFS ABOUT THE LAW'S POLICY LEVERS

> *I'm not a huge retention fan, but when you're in the minority in the legislature, you have to look at the overall bill. When you look at the many, many very big positives and the few negatives, especially after we got out a lot of the bigger negatives, I was willing to vote for the bill... such legislation is making the sausage and it's compromise.*

As for the other stakeholder groups (i.e., MDE, external stakeholders), like Democratic policymakers, they did not agree with including retention in the Law for similar reasons. First, they did not perceive retention as research-based. As one MDE staff member said:

> *The retention part, for the most part, when you look at research around retention, it's not something that's recommended for children. Are there cases where kids did better because they were retained? Yes, but then, if you follow long term, right, there's negative implications of that. I'm not sure what justifies that as a component of the Law.*

Further, they believed that research shows that retention can lead to negative outcomes for students:

> *Research doesn't support retention, so I totally disagree with that. There's not any research that says a child that's been retained is going to be successful. In fact, it's the opposite. They're more likely to be—drop out of school and so forth.*

Last, they were concerned that it would create fear in districts and schools:

> *Yes, literacy matters. Yes, we should be investing more. We do not agree with the retention provision...I'm not clear that the fear that the retention puts in motivates the right kind of change. I think it incentivizes people to try to game versus do deep change or look for a little thing—you know what I mean? I think it does provoke a reaction, but it's usually not the kind of high-quality reaction you want. It's more of a, 'How can we get around this? How can we avoid this?'*

Special Section A: How the Media Has Covered the Read by Grade Three Law

To better understand how the popular and trade press are covering the Read by Grade Three Law and early literacy in Michigan, we tracked its coverage in the media beginning in July 2019, around the time we began our evaluation of the Law.[1] We collected 299 articles as of November 2020.

Coverage of early literacy and the Read by Grade Three Law in Michigan came overwhelmingly from local outlets. Of the 299 articles, 252 (84%) were from local news outlets and the remaining 47 (16%) were from national sources. Just 33 articles (11%) came from education-specific trade outlets (e.g., Chalkbeat, Education Week), indicating that attention to the Law and early literacy has not been limited to those narrowly focused on education. Rather, this suggests that these topics are of general, broad-based interest to Michiganders.

One hundred and three articles (34%) provided direct coverage of the Read by Grade Three Law, while the remainder covered topics including early literacy more generally, the effects of COVID-19 on literacy instruction, and the Detroit "Right to Literacy" case. Of the 103 articles about the Law, there were 82 news articles and 21 opinion pieces. Just over half of the news articles offered a balanced perspective of the Law (54%), while 35% portrayed the Law negatively and 11% portrayed it positively. The 21 opinion editorials were more evenly split for and against, with 11 anti-Law and 10 pro-Law. Overwhelmingly, the negative portrayals of the Law—both news articles and opinion pieces—hinged on its retention component.

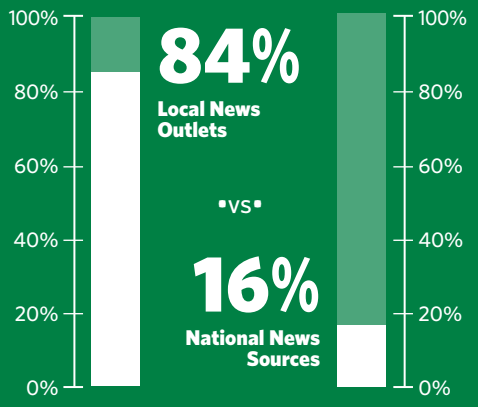
Media attention to the Read by Grade Three Law also varied over time, both quantitatively and qualitatively. The Law received heightened attention as students headed back to school in the fall of 2019, the year when the retention component of the Law was intended to go into effect. At this time, the media produced multiple informational pieces about the Law, as local outlets sought to inform readers about what their local district was doing to ensure that third graders would be reading proficiently by the end of the school year. Before school started in August, almost all coverage of the Read by Grade Three Law was balanced. By September, this was not the case: of the 17 news articles published that month, nine did not appear overtly for or against the Law, while seven portrayed the Law—particularly its retention component—negatively and just one positively. Also, news outlets began publishing opinion pieces about the Law, with three positive and three negative editorials in September 2019. By October, coverage tapered off but continued to portray the Law either negatively or without judgement.

This time period coincided with MDE's release of the 2018-19 M-STEP scores. Multiple state-wide media outlets provided a general overview of the results and local news sites focused on student performance in their local districts, with some using the results to predict how many students in their district might be retained under the Law following the 2019-20 assessment. Shortly after, in October, the National Assessment of Educational Progress released results from its 2019 assessment showing slight improvements in reading for Michigan's fourth graders—though media coverage pointed out that the state still ranks toward the bottom of all states in the nation and lags in reading proficiency relative to neighboring states.

In November 2019, State Senator Dayna Polehanki introduced Senate Bill 633, which would preserve all of the Read by Grade Three Law's interventions but remove its retention component (S.B. 633, 2019). Senator Polehanki wrote an opinion article in The Detroit News announcing the bill, but otherwise it did not garner much media attention at the time.

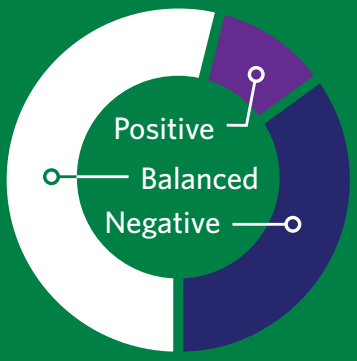
MEDIA COVERAGE SUGGESTS EARLY LITERACY IS A TOPIC OF GENERAL INTEREST

Of the 299 articles, 252 (84%) were from local news outlets and the remaining 47 (16%) were from national sources. Just 33 articles (11%) came from education-specific trade outlets (e.g., Chalkbeat, Education Week), indicating that attention to the Law and early| literacy was not limited to those narrowly focused on education.



Through the end of 2019, media attention to the Law and early literacy tapered off, with the exception of the time period after Governor Gretchen Whitmer approved $31.5 million in new funding to triple the number of literacy coaches provided under the Law. In addition, media activity picked back up in January 2020 following Governor Whitmer's State of the State address, in which she announced her administration's plan to partner with

philanthropic organizations to inform families about the exemptions available to them under the Read by Grade Three Law. The majority of coverage that month about the Law was negative, but by February 2020 became more balanced as news outlets published opinion pieces supporting and opposing this move.



NEWS ARTICLES OFFERED A BALANCED VIEW OF THE LAW

Of the 103 articles about the Law, just over half offered a balanced perspective of the Law (54%), while 35% portrayed the Law negatively and 11% portrayed it positively.

For the next two months, news outlets focused on the steps that districts were taking to make sure third graders would be ready for the M-STEP—including some districts that said they would do everything possible to ensure students would not be retained due to low test scores—until COVID-19 drastically shifted the narrative surrounding early literacy and the Read by Grade Three Law. The media covered issues from state leaders advocating for waivers to state testing, to the U.S. Department of Education's decision to grant such waivers, to Governor Whitmer's Executive Order waiving third-grade retention for 2019-20 under the Read by Grade Three Law. Throughout April, outlets published dozens of articles related to how educators were working to deliver instruction and interventions from a distance, including by delivering free books to students' homes and publishing video segments online to support families' at-home reading.

Adding to the flurry of media around this time was the ruling from the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Sixth Circuit that the U.S. Constitution includes a right to "a basic minimum education," breaking new legal ground and leading to coverage from a number of local and national outlets. Into May and June, most of the media attention focused on the aftermath of this ruling, including Governor Whitmer's settlement of the case and the court's decision to vacate its previous ruling so the full panel could hear the case. The case concluded in June with a federal appeals court's decision to dismiss the appeal, leaving no legal precedent for a constitutional right to literacy. Since then, there has been very little media attention on early literacy and the Law, with just 21 articles published between July 2020 and November 2020.

SPECIAL SECTION A NOTES

1 We created Google Alerts for phrases associated with the Law specifically and early literacy policy generally, including "early literacy," "literacy policy," "literacy retention," "Michigan literacy," "Michigan retention," "RBG3," "Read by Grade 3," and "Read by Grade Three."

Implementation of the Read by Grade Three Law and the Potential for Unintended Consequences

Although the Theory of Change upon which the Law relies has a clear logic, policies can only be as effective as their implementation. Several factors can influence implementation in ways that may lead the policy to be more or less effective than its designers hope. In particular, the local and state context will matter greatly for the ways in which outcomes may differ from similar interventions. In addition, individual educators respond to policy changes differently, and it follows that there is variation in the implementation of educational policies (Marsh, Bush-Mecenas, Strunk, Lincove, & Huguet, 2017).

Local and State Context

As we show in **Figure 4.1**, the Read by Grade Three Law—like all educational reforms—is nested within the broader **local and Michigan contexts**. Two factors may be particularly salient for the implementation of the Law: Governance structure and funding levels. Michigan is a local-control state, meaning local school districts have a relatively high degree of autonomy. Further, Michigan has relatively low levels of funding for K-12 education compared to other states (see Arsen, Delpier, & Nagel, 2019) and school funding is inequitably distributed across districts within the state (Augenblick, Palaich, & Associates, 2016). Both factors are important to consider in terms of Michigan's Read by Grade Three Law in that its implementation may vary from that of other states with similar policies and also between districts within the state. Additional features of Michigan's state context that affected the development of the Read by Grade Three Law are discussed in detail in Section Three.

LOCAL AND STATE CONTEXTS ARE IMPORTANT FACTORS IN THE LAW'S IMPLEMENTATION

Two factors may be particularly salient for the implementation of the Law: Governance structure and funding levels. Michigan is a local-control state, meaning local school districts have a relatively high degree of autonomy.

Both factors are important to consider in terms of Michigan's Read by Grade Three Law in that its implementation may vary from that of other states with similar policies and also between districts within the state.

Educator's Responses to the Policy

Teachers, support staff, coaches, and school and district administrators are critical players in policy implementation. Whether these individuals implement the Read by Grade Three Law as policymakers intended will affect the Law's efficacy in achieving its short-, medium-, and long-term goals. Policymakers generally assume that local actors understand and will implement the Law as policymakers intend (Spillane, 2009). However, research has shown that this is not always the case. Instead, individual educators interpret, adapt, and even transform policies based on their prior knowledge, beliefs, practices, and institutional contexts (e.g., Coburn, 2001; Cohen, 1990; Spillane, 1996, 1998, 2000).

Several factors may influence the implementation of an educational policy. First, local actors' beliefs about the policy's fairness and effectiveness will shape implementation (e.g., Spillane, 1996; Spillane, Reiser, & Gomez, 2006). Second, their understanding of the policy itself may affect implementation (e.g., Spillane, Reiser, & Reimer, 2002). Third, local capacity

for reform, including adequate funding, human capital, and infrastructure; competing priorities; and institutional leadership may affect the extent to which teachers, schools, and districts can implement the reform (e.g., Loeb & McEwan, 2006).

These details can have deep implications for policy efficacy, and differences in individual and local capacity may explain variation in the success of similar literacy policies in improving student achievement and other longer-term outcomes. For instance, the lack of positive achievement results stemming from North Carolina's literacy policy have been attributed to gaps between the policy and the realities of on-the-ground implementation, including a lack of pre-third-grade interventions, a broad definition of "proficiency" allowing for alternative testing and good cause exemptions, a shortage of high-quality teachers with whom remediated students may be placed, differences in local summer reading camps, and varying local capacity (Weiss et al., 2018). Similarly, achievement gains under Florida's retention policy may have depended on the reading program the district elected to implement (McGill-Franzen, Zmach, Solic, & Zeig, 2006) or on the implementation of the policy's literacy-coach component (Marsh et al., 2008; 2010). Administrators also express concerns about their ability to recruit and retain highly effective coaches (Marsh et al., 2008), leading to variations in the quality of coaches—with quality related to several outcomes, including the coach's perceived influence, their effect on teachers' instruction, and even reading outcomes (Marsh et al., 2008; 2012).

In addition, individual, local, and state context and choices can lead to unintended consequences of policies. For example, in Chicago, the increases in reading and math scores the district experienced after instituting its retention policy appear to have been driven by an increase in test-specific skills and student effort, along with teachers' strategic responses to the policy (Jacob, 2005). Teachers there spend significantly more time on test preparation and on the material covered on the test, which may result in a narrowing of the curriculum focused on basic skills (Roderick et al., 2005).

Ultimately, implementation is a key driver of policy outcomes. How educators are implementing the Read by Grade Three Law will be explored further in Section Five.

SUMMARY

This section addressed the question of how the Read by Grade Three Law was intended to work by describing the implied Theory of Change underlying the Law and the evidence supporting it. Generally, there is substantial research supporting the Theory of Change elements, but nuances in some of the findings as well as research on policy implementation indicate that how policymakers funded and designed the Read by Grade Three Law and how educators understood, perceived, and implemented the Law will matter for its effectiveness in improving teachers' instruction and students' literacy outcomes. Further, there is limited evidence on the effectiveness of some of the interventions outlined in the Theory of Change. While these interventions appear promising on their own, there are open questions about their efficacy when combined with tiered interventions to support students' literacy. The remainder of this report explores these questions further.

SECTION FOUR NOTES

1 Hereafter, all references will only mention ISD as this is the more common term used among policymakers.

2 As described in Section Three, the Early Literacy Task Force (ELTF) created the Literacy Essentials to establish a coherent set of research-supported instructional practices for the state. The Literacy Essentials go beyond the five practices outlined in the Law and build on the latest research on literacy instruction to provide a series of resources for Michigan educators.

05

Michigan's Read by Grade Three Law:
Year One Report

Section Five: Implementation of the Read by Grade Three Law

Section Five:
Implementation of the Read by Grade Three Law

INTRODUCTION

This section examines the implementation of the Law and assesses the factors that shaped local responses to the Law. In particular, we present findings about educators' understanding of the Law and their implementation of the various components of the Theory of Change. We discuss the literacy professional development that educators reported receiving from a range of providers, including one-on-one literacy coaching and other literacy professional development. We explore the various providers' implementation of evidence-based literacy instructional practices. We also assess how educators reported monitoring students' progress in literacy and providing literacy supports to students needing additional support, as well as stakeholders' perceptions of and plans for third-grade retention. We break down these findings by various subgroups, including districts' predicted retention rates, ELA performance, proportions of economically disadvantaged students, locale, and size. We reveal differences in implementation that may present equity concerns, with those most likely to benefit from literacy supports sometimes least likely to receive them. Nonetheless, we also find many instances where educators reported implementing the Law as it is intended and in ways that promise to support students' literacy instruction, including in traditionally underserved districts. We conclude this section with a discussion of the challenges that stakeholders reported facing in their implementation of the Read by Grade Three Law.

Our implementation analysis largely relies on the stakeholder interviews and educator surveys described in Section Two. These data enable us to understand stakeholders' and educators' reports of the implementation of the Read by Grade Three Law. We often focus on just K-3 teachers' responses as they are most affected by the Law and the most central to its implementation. The findings should be interpreted as perceptions of the Law's implementation.

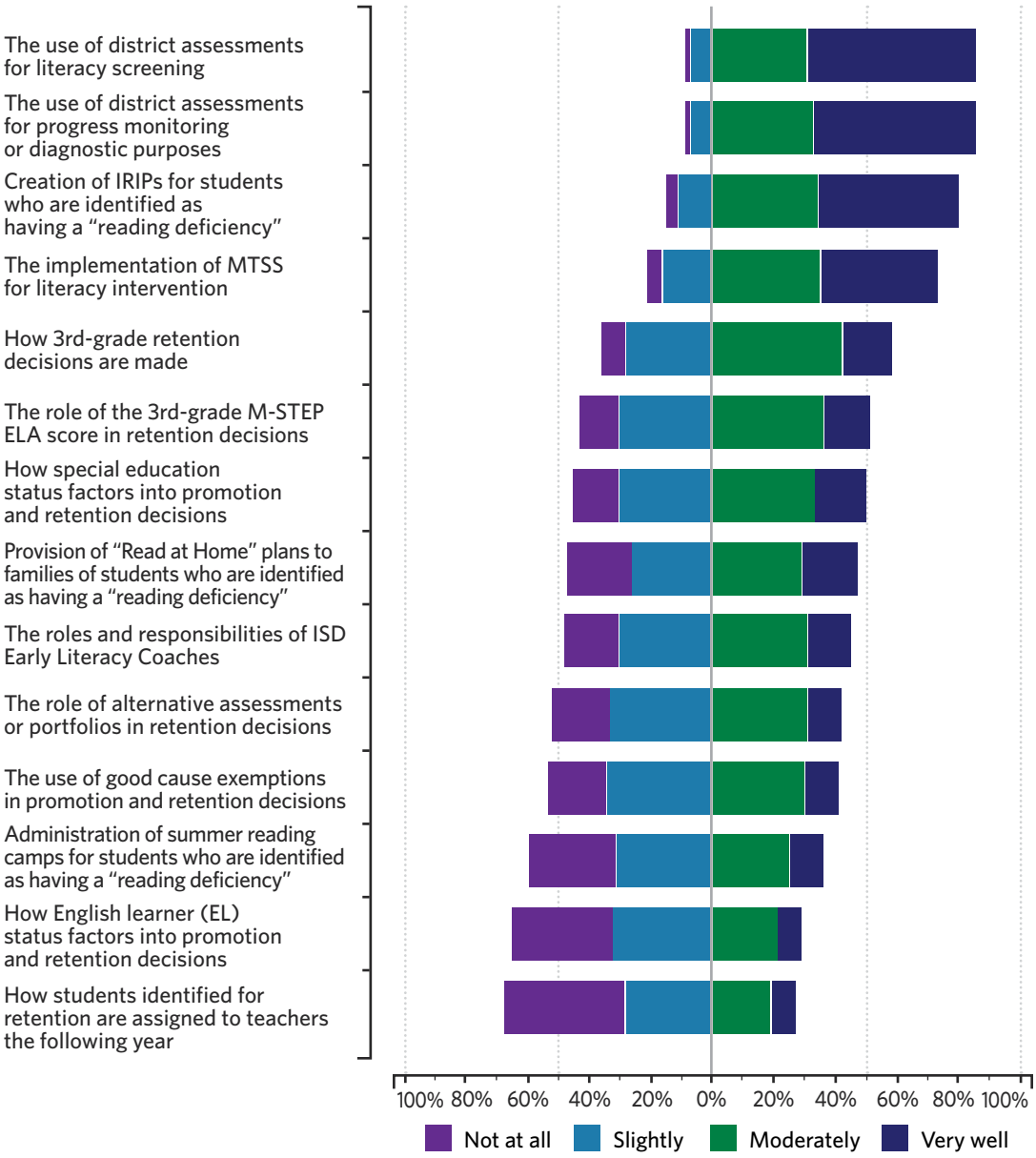
UNDERSTANDING OF THE LAW

The successful implementation of the Read by Grade Three Law hinges on educators' and administrators' understanding of the Law itself and how its specific elements are operationalized at the student level.

Teachers Expressed Mixed Understanding of the Law

Survey evidence suggests that educators understood some aspects of the Law fairly well, but others remained less clear. Figure 5.1 provides evidence about K-3 teachers' understanding of each specific element of the Law, ranked in order from the greatest reported understanding (percent of teachers who reported that they understood this aspect moderately or very well) to the least. More than 85% of K-3 teachers felt that they understood the use of district assessments for literacy screening and progress monitoring or diagnostic purposes fairly well. However, they were less clear on the use of high-stakes tests. Just over half responded that they had at least a moderate understanding of how retention decisions are made (58%) and the role of third-grade **M-STEP** scores (51%) in those decisions.

FIGURE 5.1. K-3 Teachers' Understanding of the Read by Grade Three Law



Note: Six percent did not respond. Teachers were asked, "How well do you understand the following aspects of the Read by Grade Three Law? Please mark one option for each row. If you are not familiar with the Read by Grade Three Law, please select 'not at all' on the items below." Source: EPIC survey of educators about the Read by Grade Three Law.

Teachers largely felt comfortable with planning for and providing services to students identified as having a "**reading deficiency**" under the Law. More than 70% of K-3 teachers felt they at least moderately understood the implementation of Multi-Tiered Systems of Support (MTSS) for literacy support and the creation of **Individual Reading Improvement Plans (IRIPs)**. However, other details of the Law were less clear. Teachers expressed relatively little understanding of how to administer summer reading camps for students with a "reading deficiency," and how students identified for retention would be assigned to teachers the following year. Only about half of teachers reported a clear understanding of "Read at Home" plans and the role of **ISD Early Literacy Coaches**, and they expressed varying levels of understanding about **good cause exemptions** in general and in particular for students with disabilities and English learners (ELs).

Overall, these data suggest that many teachers felt confident in their understanding of key elements of the Read by Grade Three Law, but a subset of teachers reported low levels of understanding of critical components of the Law. Some stakeholders with whom we spoke understood this challenge. For instance, one **Michigan Department of Education (MDE)** staff member told us, *"There's a sense that while some [teachers] understand the Law, others don't."*

Generally, 4th-5th grade teachers reported lower levels of understanding than K-3 teachers (see Figure 5.2). Given that they were for the most part only indirectly affected by the Law, it is not surprising that these educators were less clear about the Law and its specific details.

Administrators and ISD Early Literacy Coaches Reported a Stronger Understanding of the Law Than Did Teachers

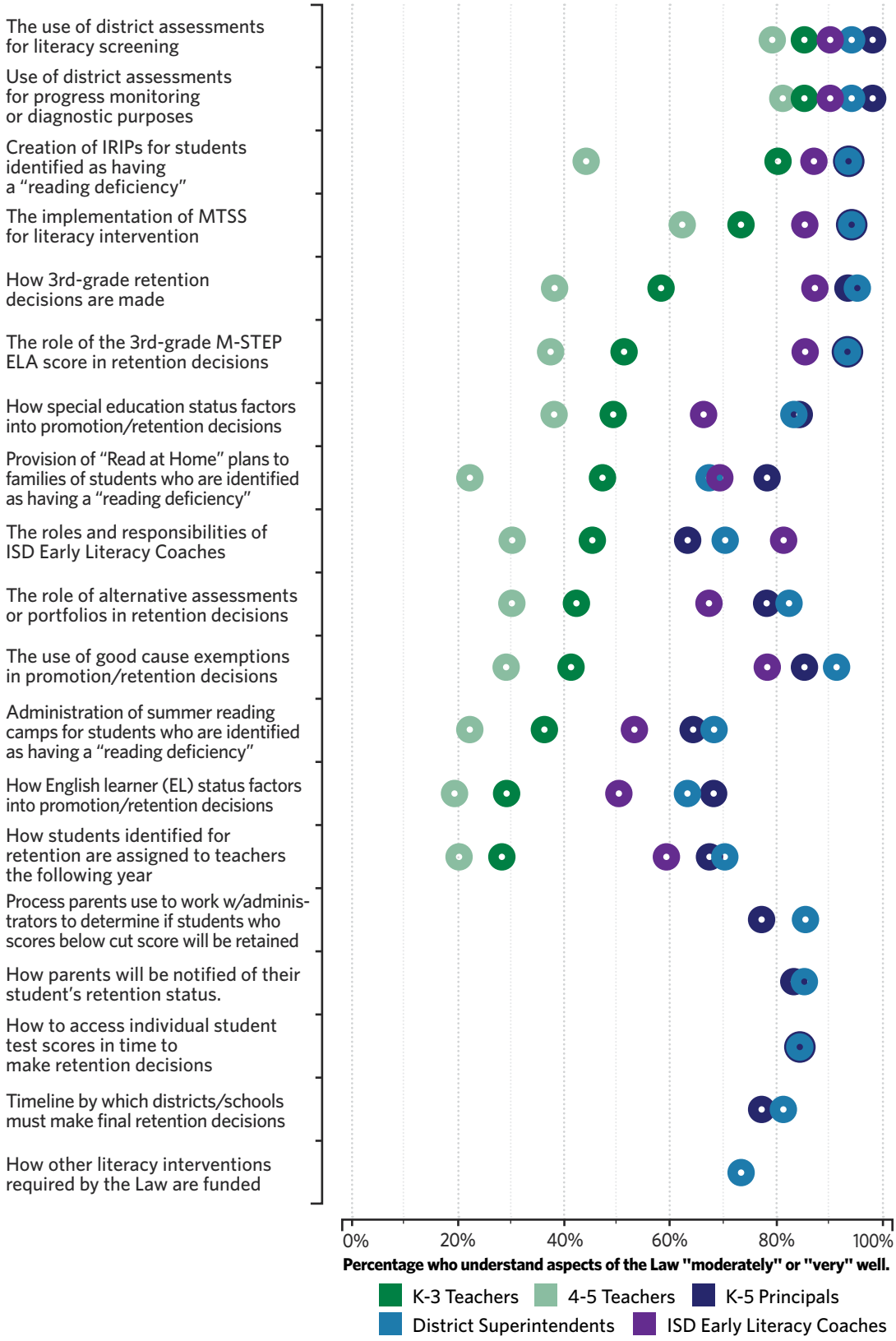
Figure 5.2 compares different groups of educators' reported understanding of various elements of the Law. Elementary school principals and district superintendents reported higher levels of understanding than teachers on nearly all aspects of the Law. For example, nearly all principals and district superintendents reported at least a moderate understanding of most of the critical elements of the Law, although fewer reported understanding the provision of "Read at Home" plans, summer reading camps, how English learner status factors into promotion and retention decisions, and teacher assignment for retained students. We also asked principals and district superintendents about several logistical elements of the Law, such as the process parents use to work with administrators to make retention decisions, parental notification of their child's retention status, and the time by which districts and schools must make final retention decisions. The vast majority (for the most part over 80%) of administrators reported understanding these process elements of the Law and their implementation.

ADMINISTRATORS REPORTED UNDERSTANDING ELEMENTS OF THE LAW

Principals and district superintendents were asked about several logistical elements of the Law, such as the process parents use to work with administrators to make retention decisions, parental notification of their child's retention status, and the time by which districts and schools must make final retention decisions.

The vast majority (for the most part over 80%) of administrators reported understanding these process elements of the Law and their implementation.

FIGURE 5.2. Understanding of the Read by Grade Three Law, by Educator Roles



Note: Respondents were asked, "How well do you understand the following aspects of the Read by Grade Three Law? Please mark one option for each row. If you are not familiar with the Read by Grade Three Law, please select 'Not at all' on the items below." Source: EPIC survey of educators about the Read by Grade Three Law.

ISD Early Literacy Coaches reported higher levels of understanding of the Law than teachers, but generally lower levels than administrators. Across all groups of educators, the least-understood components of the Law were the roles of alternative assessments or portfolios and English learners status in retention decisions, how students identified for retention would be assigned to teachers in the following year, and the administration of summer reading camps for students identified as having a "reading deficiency" under the Law.

LITERACY INSTRUCTIONAL SUPPORTS FOR EDUCATORS

The first set of legislative requirements under the Read by Grade Three Law is aimed at improving literacy instruction and learning statewide for all K-3 students. According to the Law's Theory of Change, improved literacy instruction is supported by literacy professional development, including the **provision of highly qualified literacy coaches**, **other literacy professional development**, and the **adoption and dissemination of five "evidence-based" "major reading components."**

To distinguish between the multiple forms of literacy professional development, we refer to professional development that does not include a one-on-one coaching mechanism (e.g., large-group professional development, professional learning communities, online courses, conferences) as "other literacy professional development," while "literacy professional development" refers to both one-on-one literacy coaching and other literacy professional development. In this subsection, we first provide an overview of the topics on which teachers reported receiving literacy professional development in general, and then examine the extent to which educators reported having access to one-on-one literacy coaching and other literacy professional development separately.

Forms of Literacy Professional Development

Figure 5.3 shows the topics on which teachers reported receiving literacy professional development. It was primarily focused on identifying and addressing students' unique literacy needs and using assessment data to inform instruction, both of which are critical to meeting the Law's stated goal of improving literacy instruction for all students. K-3 teachers less often reported receiving professional development to assist them in adapting teaching practices based on students' cultural and linguistic diversity and providing literacy instruction to students with **Individualized Education Programs (IEPs)** or **Section 504 Plans** and ELs. This is in line with expectations as the Law intended professional development to support Tier 1 instruction for all students.

THE LAW IS SUPPORTED BY MULTIPLE FORMS OF PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Improved literacy instruction is supported by literacy professional development which includes the provision of highly qualified literacy coaches and other professional development in literacy.

FIGURE 5.3. Reported Topics of Literacy Professional Development Received, by Grade Range

Note: Eight percent of K-3 teachers and 10% of 4th-5th grade teachers did not respond. Teachers were asked, "We would like to understand the literacy professional development you have received this school year. Please tell us on which of the following topics you have received literacy professional development and in what format: one-on-one literacy coaching from an ISD Early Literacy Coach/Consultant; one-on-one literacy coaching from another provider; or professional development, not including one-on-one literacy coaching. Please mark all that apply in each row."
Source: EPIC survey of educators about the Read by Grade Three Law.

There were few noticeable differences in the reported topics of literacy professional development K-3 and 4th-5th grade teachers received, with two exceptions. Compared to teachers in higher grade levels, K-3 teachers reported receiving professional development that focused more on implementing the various literacy supports outlined by the Read by Grade Three Law and the "Essential Instructional Practices in Early Literacy." Both disparities align with the intent of the Law and the teachers tasked with implementing it.

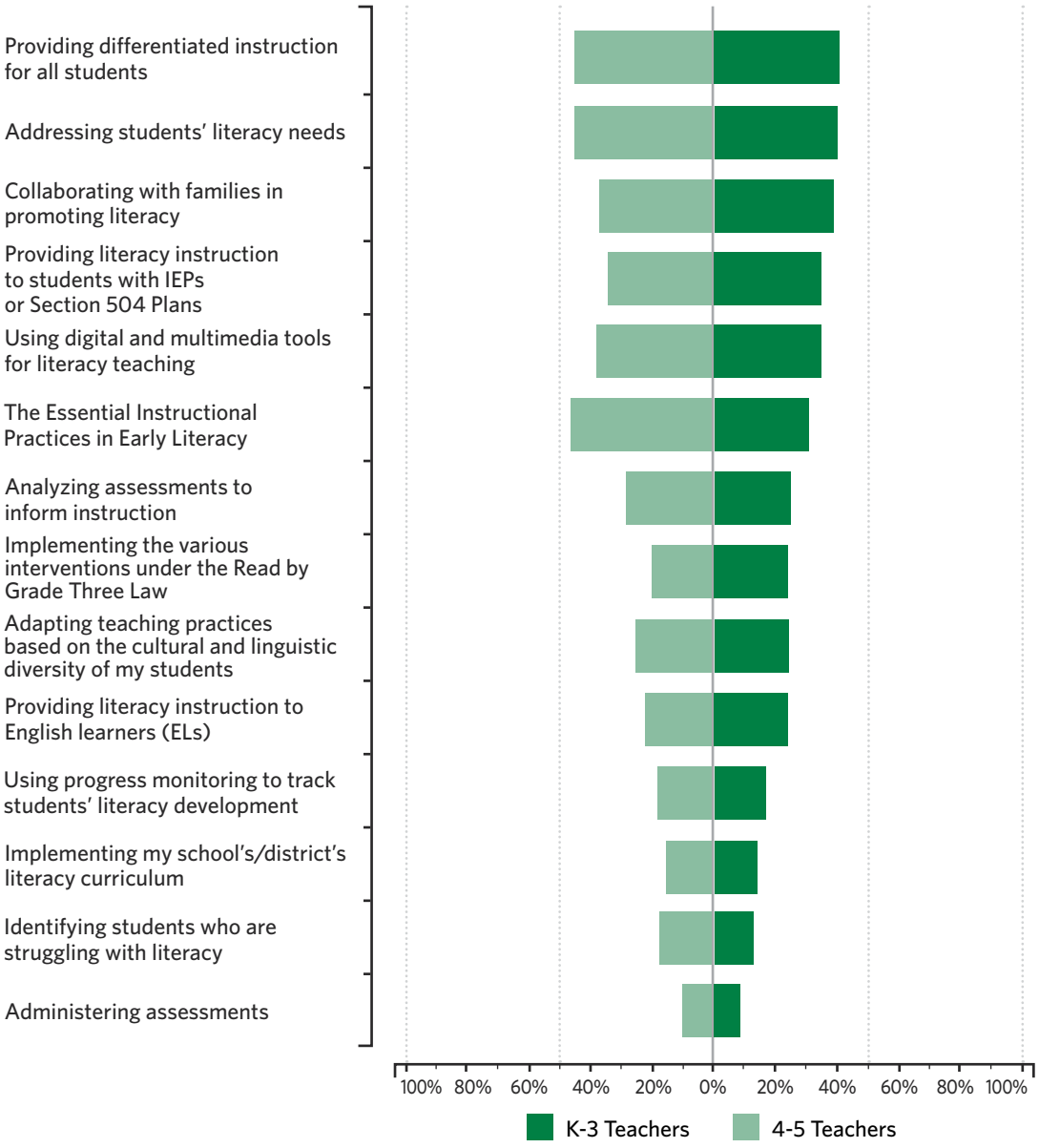
Teachers Wanted More Literacy Professional Development

While the areas in which teachers reported receiving literacy professional development appear targeted at meeting the Law's aims, they reported wanting additional professional development in some areas of the Law. As shown in Figure 5.4, K-3 teachers most often reported that they would like additional support in providing differentiated instruction for all students, addressing students' literacy needs, collaborating with families in promoting literacy, using digital and multimedia tools for literacy teaching, providing literacy instruction to students with IEPs or Section 504 Plans, and the "Essential Instructional Practices in Early Literacy: Grades K-3." The fact that there was overlap between some areas that teachers most often reported receiving literacy professional development and those in which they desired additional supports suggests that the literacy professional development that teachers received aligned with their professional learning goals. Many areas in which teachers wanted additional support also went beyond what is prescribed in the Law (e.g., providing literacy instruction to students with IEPs or Section 504 Plans, using digital and multimedia tools for literacy teaching). There were no significant differences between the areas in which K-3 and 4th-5th grade teachers desired additional literacy professional development (see Figure 5.4).

Provision of Highly Qualified Literacy Coaches

The Read by Grade Three Law provides funding to **Intermediate School Districts (ISDs)/ Regional Educational Service Agencies (RESAs)**[1] to help them hire at least one Early Literacy Coach who is then tasked with working with districts and teachers within that ISD. However, schools and districts may hire additional literacy coaches. We refer to school-based literacy coaches as those who are hired by the school or district to work with educators in a specific school, and district-based literacy coaches as those who are hired by a specific district to work with teachers in that district (i.e., they may work in multiple schools within a district).[2] Further, schools and districts may hire literacy specialists/interventionists (also known as reading specialists/interventionists) to support literacy instruction. These individuals work to improve literacy achievement in schools and districts by serving in various roles, including as coaches. We describe findings about individuals in each of these roles providing one-on-one literacy coaching. When referring to general findings about all types of coaches (including literacy specialists/interventionists), we use the term "literacy coaches." If a finding is specific to a certain group (e.g., "ISD Early Literacy Coaches," "district-based literacy coaches"), the group is referred to by name.

FIGURE 5.4. Reported Areas of Desired Additional Literacy Professional Development, by Grade Range



Note: Teachers were asked, "In which of the following areas would you like to receive additional literacy support (through either one-on-one literacy coaching or other professional development)? Please mark all that apply." Source: EPIC survey of educators about the Read by Grade Three Law.

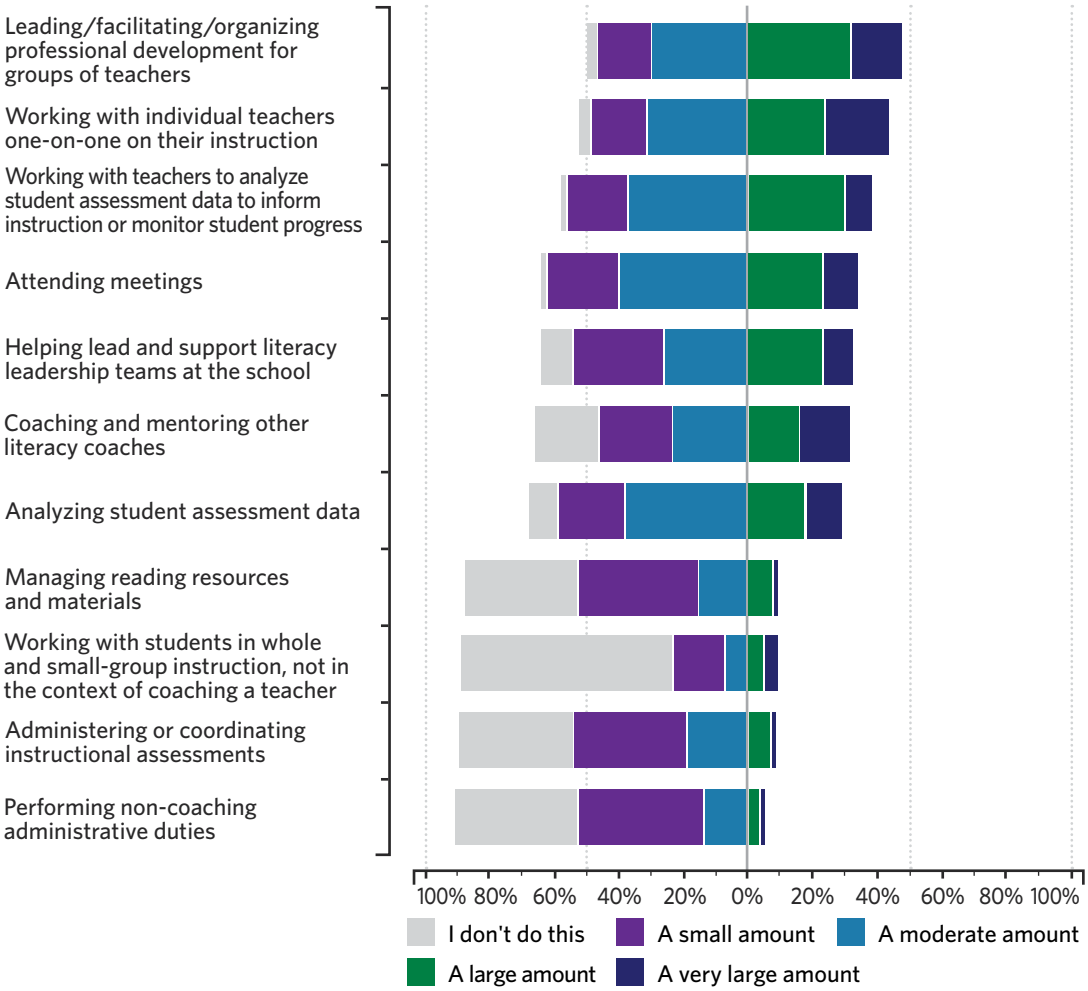
ISD Early Literacy Coaches Reported Fulfilling Their Responsibilities Outlined in the Law

The Read by Grade Three Law tasks ISD Early Literacy Coaches with multiple responsibilities. They are to support and provide initial and ongoing professional development to teachers in "the five major reading components" based on student performance data, administering and analyzing instructional assessments, providing differentiated instruction, using progress monitoring, and identifying and addressing "reading deficiencies." In addition, they are to model effective instructional strategies for teachers, train teachers in data analysis and using data to differentiate instruction, coach and mentor colleagues, work with teachers to ensure that evidence-based

reading programs are implemented with fidelity, train teachers to diagnose and address "reading deficiencies," work with teachers in applying evidence-based reading strategies in other content areas, help to lead and support reading leadership teams at the school, and model instruction for K-3 teachers in whole and small groups. Lastly, ISD Early Literacy Coaches are expected to work with students in whole and small-group instruction or tutoring in the context of modeling and coaching in or outside teachers' classrooms.[3]

Figure 5.5 shows how ISD Early Literacy Coaches reported spending their time. Overall, they spent their time on the activities prescribed to them under the Read by Grade Three Law. In particular, ISD Early Literacy Coaches reported spending a relatively large amount of time providing professional development and working with teachers one-on-one and a moderate amount of time working with teachers to analyze assessment data and attending meetings in which they receive professional development, learn about assessments, or learn about ISD priorities. However, they reported spending less time supporting literacy leadership teams at schools and coaching and mentoring other literacy coaches—each of which are responsibilities the Law designates to them.

FIGURE 5.5. How ISD Early Literacy Coaches Report Spending Their Time



Note: Between one percent to three percent did not respond to each question item. ISD Early Literacy Coaches were asked, "How much time do you spend on the following activities during a typical week in your role as an ISD Early Literacy Coach? Please mark one option for each row." Source: EPIC survey of educators about the Read by Grade Three Law.

They also reported spending time on activities beyond those outlined in the Law, including analyzing student assessment data, managing reading resources and materials, working with students in whole and small-group instruction (not in the context of coaching a teacher), and administering and coordinating assessments. Very few reported spending more than a small amount of time performing administrative duties—which is prohibited under the Law.

There Was Limited but Increasing Access to Literacy Coaches

Interview and survey data indicate that educators had limited access to literacy coaches, including the ISD Early Literacy Coaches the Read by Grade Three Law provides for. According to a list of ISD Early Literacy Coaches the Michigan Association of Intermediate School Administrators (MAISA) General Education Leadership Network's (GELN) Early Literacy Task Force (ELTF) provided us, as of spring 2020, out of a total of 57 ISDs, 19 had one ISD Early Literacy Coach, 17 had two, and 18 had more than two for the entire ISD.

ISD Early Literacy Coaches reported spending a relatively large amount of time providing professional development and working with teachers one-on-one.

State-level stakeholders with whom we spoke felt that these numbers were insufficient and created equity concerns. One external stakeholder remarked, *"It is almost impossible for an ISD with one coach to service the whole area that needs, so it's grossly inequitable."* Another external stakeholder said, *"When you get a reading coach or two reading coaches per Intermediate School District...It's almost ineffective because it would be too diluted to really provide significant value."*

Administrators' survey responses also indicate limited access to ISD Early Literacy Coaches. Table 5.1 shows the number of literacy coaches working in schools and districts as reported by elementary school principals and district superintendents. As shown in the first panel of the table, 33% of elementary school principals and 21% of district superintendents reported that they did not have any ISD Early Literacy Coaches working in their school or district, respectively. Meanwhile, 45% of elementary school principals and 49% of superintendents reported that there were only one or two. Just four percent of elementary school principals and 6% of district superintendents reported that they had more than two. Further, these numbers are likely an overstatement of the support that educators are receiving from ISD Early Literacy Coaches because they are working across multiple schools and districts.

Many elementary school principals and district superintendents similarly reported that they had no or limited access to school- or district-based literacy coaches. However, literacy specialists/interventionists appear to be more common, with just 16% of principals and 19% of district superintendents reporting that none worked in their schools or districts.[4]

The bottom two panels of Table 5.1 show whether administrators reported having access to any type of literacy coach. We show numbers both with and without literacy specialists/interventionists because not all literacy specialists/interventionists provide one-on-one literacy coaching to teachers, so grouping them with literacy coaches may overstate the coaching resources available

to teachers. Overall, regardless of the measure being used, almost all elementary school principals and district superintendents reported that they had access to some type of literacy coach.

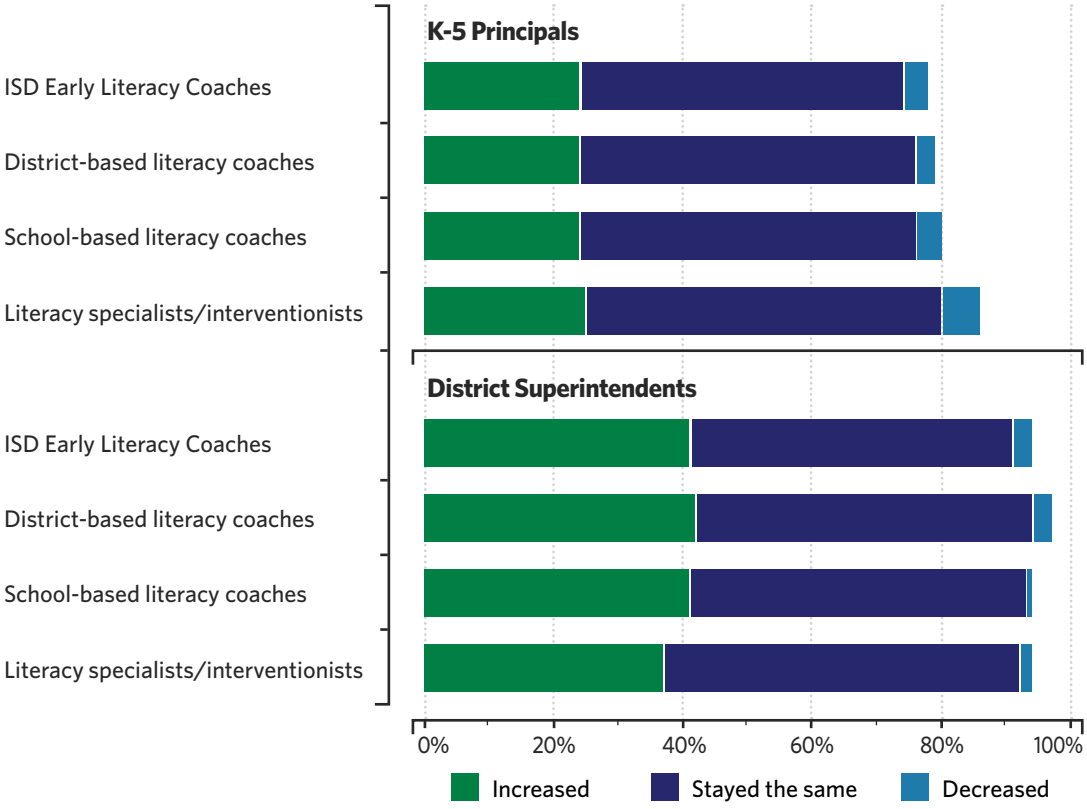
TABLE 5.1. Reported Number of Literacy Coaches Working in Schools and Districts

	K-5 Principals	District Superintendents
Number of ISD Early Literacy Coaches		
0	32.50%	21.30%
1-2	44.50%	49.20%
>=3	4.00%	5.60%
Did not respond	19.00%	23.90%
Number of District-Based Literacy Coaches		
0	38.40%	31.00%
1-2	36.20%	35.10%
>=3	6.90%	8.30%
Did not respond	18.50%	25.60%
Number of School-Based Literacy Coaches		
0	37.20%	30.70%
1-2	43.20%	33.00%
>=3	2.40%	9.70%
Did not respond	17.20%	26.70%
Number of Literacy Specialists/Interventionists		
0	16.30%	19.30%
1-2	53.60%	27.70%
>=3	14.00%	27.90%
Did not respond	16.00%	25.10%
Number of Any Literacy Coaches (Not Including Literacy Specialists/Interventionists)		
0	7.60%	4.30%
1-2	49.20%	33.40%
>=3	29.90%	41.40%
Did not respond	13.30%	20.80%
Number of Any Literacy Coaches (Including Literacy Specialists/Interventionists)		
0	1.90%	3.40%
1-2	29.20%	19.00%
>=3	56.60%	57.10%
Did not respond	12.30%	20.40%

Note: This table is based on survey questions in which elementary school principals and district superintendents were asked, "How many of the following personnel (i.e., ISD Early Literacy Coaches, district-based literacy coaches, school-based literacy coaches, and literacy specialists/interventionists) work in your school [district]? Please count as a person working in your school [district] if there is anyone of this staffing type working in your school [district] at all during the school year. If you do not know the exact number, please provide your best estimate." The number of any literacy coaches is the sum of each type of literacy coaches. Source: EPIC survey of educators about the Read by Grade Three Law.

Administrators indicated that their access to all types of literacy coaches either increased or stayed the same since the Read by Grade Three Law passed in 2016. Figure 5.6 shows that approximately a quarter of elementary school principals reported that the number of ISD Early Literacy Coaches, school- and district-based literacy coaches, and literacy specialists/interventionists increased since the passage of the Law. Half reported that the number of each of these individuals working in their school had not changed and very few reported a decrease. Responses from district superintendents show similar patterns. This suggests that, since the Law passed, the focus on literacy coaching—regardless of the funding source used to hire these coaches—as a mechanism to improve teachers' literacy instruction has increased somewhat. However, this increased access to literacy coaches was limited to a quarter of schools, indicating that literacy coaching is not as widespread as it could be or perhaps needs to be to replicate the positive results found in studies of the Florida policy.

FIGURE 5.6. Reported Change in the Number of Literacy Coaches Since the Implementation of the Read by Grade Three Law



Note: Principals and district superintendents were asked, "In this question, we are asking about the quantity of literacy coaches and specialists/interventionists working in your school/district, and how this has changed since the implementation of the Read by Grade Three Law in 2016. Please tell us: How has your school's/district's access to these personnel changed since the implementation of the Read by Grade Three Law? Please count as a person working in your school/district if there is anyone of this staffing type working in your school/district at all during the school year. If you do not know the exact numbers, please provide your best estimate." Source: EPIC survey of educators about the Read by Grade Three Law.

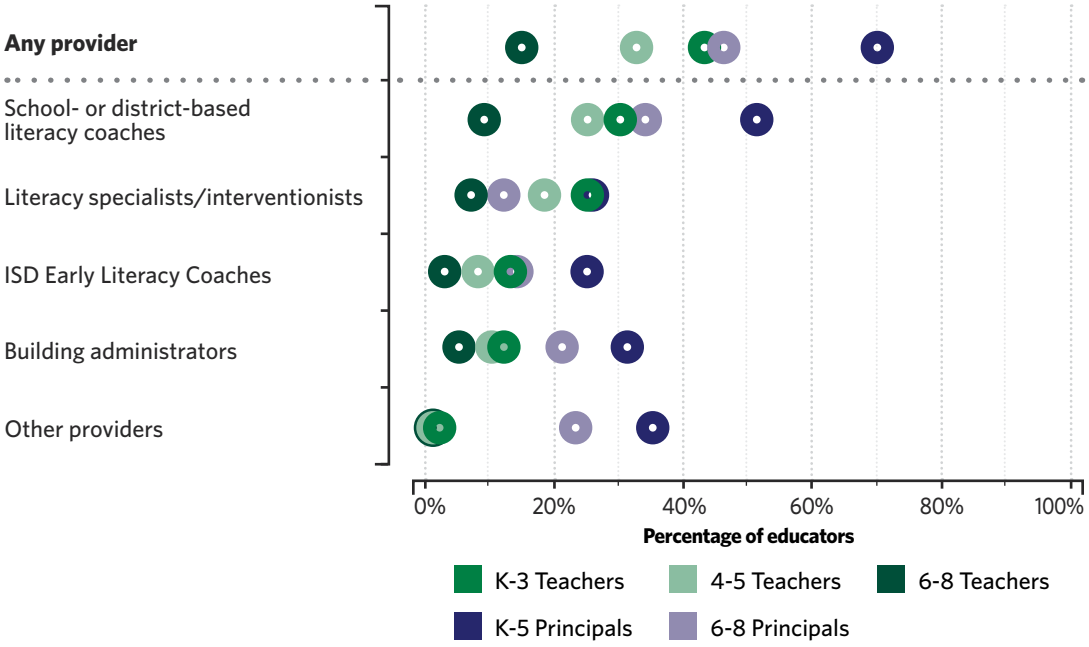
Few Teachers Received One-on-One Literacy Coaching from ISD Early Literacy Coaches

Figure 5.7 shows teachers' and principals' reported access to one-on-one literacy coaches. The green circles indicate the percentage of teachers that reported receiving one-on-one literacy coaching from a given provider, while the purple circles indicate the percentage of principals that reported that at least one teacher in their school received one-on-one literacy coaching from that provider. Forty-three percent of K-3 teachers reported receiving coaching from any provider. As we would expect given the focus of the Law, this was higher than the percentage of 4th-5th grade teachers (33%) and 6th-8th grade teachers (15%). Similarly, elementary school principals were more likely than middle school principals to report that their teachers had access to one-on-one literacy coaching from any provider (70% relative to 46%). The percentage of principals reporting that their teachers had access to one-on-one literacy coaching may be higher than that of teachers because principals believed teachers were getting more coaching than they actually were, or because principals were asked to indicate *whether* teachers in their school received one-on-one literacy coaching from each of these providers, as opposed to *how many* teachers received it.[5]

ELEMENTARY PRINCIPALS REPORTED MORE ACCESS TO LITERACY COACHES

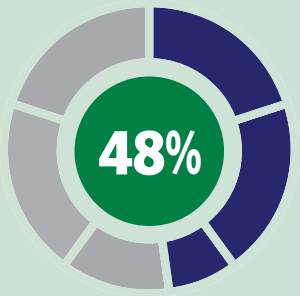
Elementary school principals were more likely than middle school principals to report that their teachers had access to one-on-one literacy coaching (70% relative to 46%).

FIGURE 5.7. Reported Access to One-on-One Literacy Coaching from Various Providers, by Grade Range



Note: This figure combines results from multiple questions. Teachers were asked, "Since the beginning of the school year, have you received one-on-one literacy coaching from any of the following providers? Please mark all that apply. If you did not receive literacy professional development from a specific kind of provider, please leave that row blank." Principals were asked, "Which of the following individuals provide one-on-one literacy coaching to the teachers in your school? Please mark all that apply." Source: EPIC survey of educators about the Read by Grade Three Law.

Very few teachers reported receiving one-on-one literacy coaching from an ISD Early Literacy Coach (13%); in fact, these coaches were among the least-reported providers. Instead, teachers and principals reported that they relied more on school- and district-based coaches, literacy specialists/interventionists, and even mentor/master teachers and building administrators than they did ISD Early Literacy Coaches. We also find that only 48% of K-3 teachers reported that they knew who the ISD Early Literacy Coach(es) was/were for their ISD, which suggests that these coaches have reached only a limited number of teachers. Interview data also suggest that very few teachers were receiving one-on-one literacy coaching from ISD Early Literacy Coaches. This is likely because there are so few ISD Early Literacy Coaches relative to the number of K-3 teachers in Michigan. According to one external stakeholder who works in an ISD, *"Do you realize our coaches are reaching about one percent of teachers in this state? That's crazy. You want data on that? That's very small number of teachers that we're able to impact."*



K-3 TEACHERS UNFAMILIAR WITH THEIR ISD EARLY LITERACY COACH

Only 48% of K-3 teachers reported that they knew who the ISD Early Literacy Coach(es) was/were for their ISD, which suggests that these coaches have reached only a limited number of teachers. Interview data also suggest that very few teachers were receiving one-on-one literacy coaching from ISD Early Literacy Coaches.

There Was Inequitable Access to Literacy Coaches Across Districts

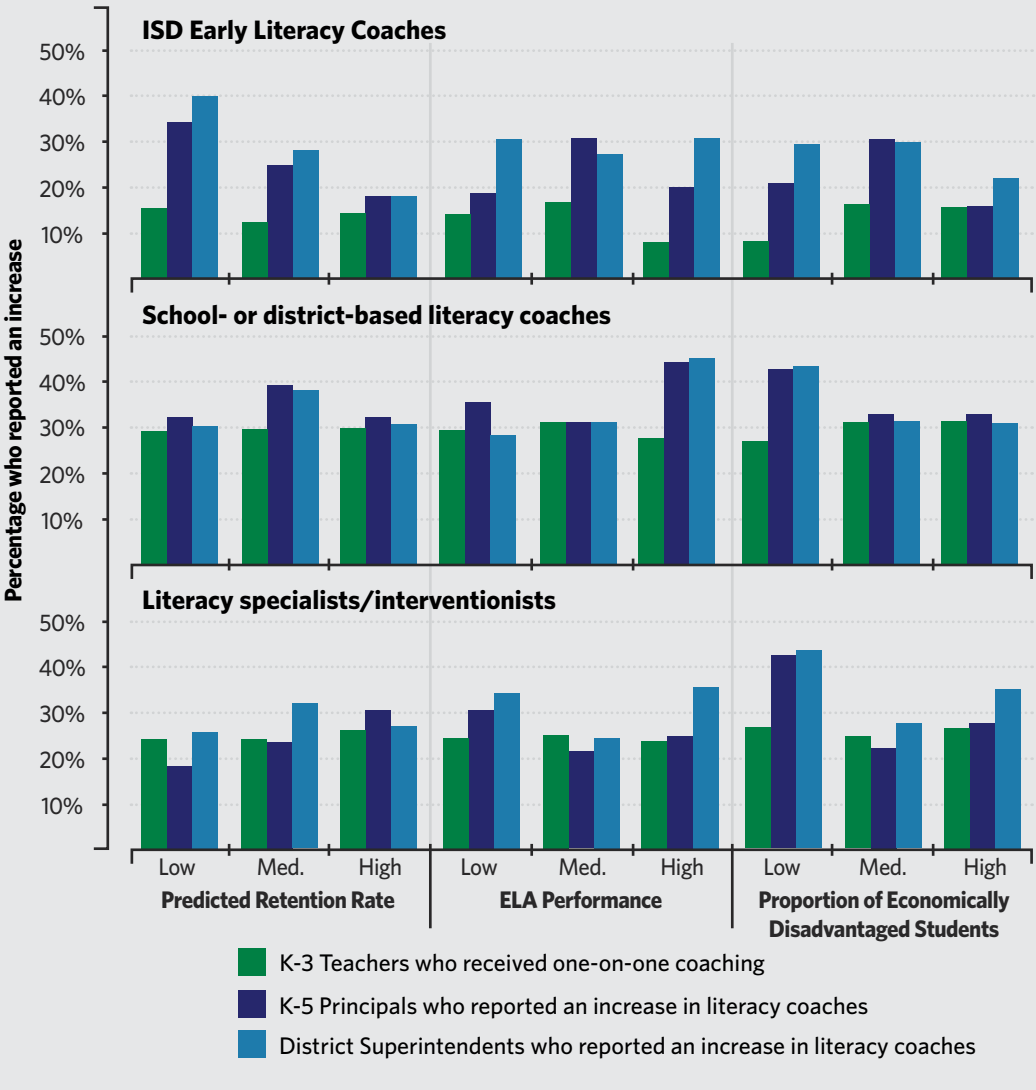
As described earlier, approximately a quarter of schools and districts appear to have gained coaches of all types since the Read by Grade Three Law passed. However, it does not appear that access to coaches increased in the schools and districts that could most benefit from them.

Figure 5.8 shows the reported gains in access to literacy coaches across districts with different predicted retention rates, ELA performance, and proportions of economically disadvantaged students. Elementary school principals and district superintendents in districts with high predicted retention rates were the least likely to report an increase in access to ISD Early Literacy Coaches since the Law passed—with those in districts with low predicted retention rates most likely to report an increase. Given that the Law intends for ISD Early Literacy Coaches to support Tier I instruction (with the ultimate goal of improving students' reading achievement such that fewer students are retained under the Law), we might instead expect that these coaches would be working in districts with higher predicted retention rates.

Similarly, principals and superintendents in districts with high ELA performance and low proportions of economically disadvantaged students were most likely to report an increase in school- or district-based literacy coaches, exacerbating the inequities in access to literacy coaches between more and less advantaged districts. One external stakeholder who worked in a district with a low proportion of economically disadvantaged students reinforced:

> *When the Law first came into effect, we had no coaches in my county...There was an instructional coach here and there, but we didn't have any literacy coaches. Now, every district [within the ISD] has coaches. [Since the Law's passage] we went from zero to, I think we're at about 28, 29, closer to 40 now. In fact, we're gonna do training in cognitive coaching coming up, and we're looking at about 85 registration, 85 people attending. There's a lot of—we've just done a big shift. That's what's happening here.*

FIGURE 5.8. Reported Increase in Literacy Coaches and K-3 Teachers Receiving One-on-One Literacy Coaching



Note: This figure combines results from multiple questions. Teachers were asked, "Since the beginning of the school year, have you received one-on-one literacy coaching from any of the following providers?" Principals and district superintendents were asked, "How has your school's/district's access to these personnel changed since the implementation of the Read by Grade Three Law?" K-5 principals or district superintendents who reported an increase in school- or district-based literacy coaches include those who reported an increase in the number of school literacy coaches and/or an increase in the number of district-based coaches. Source: EPIC survey of educators about the Read by Grade Three Law.

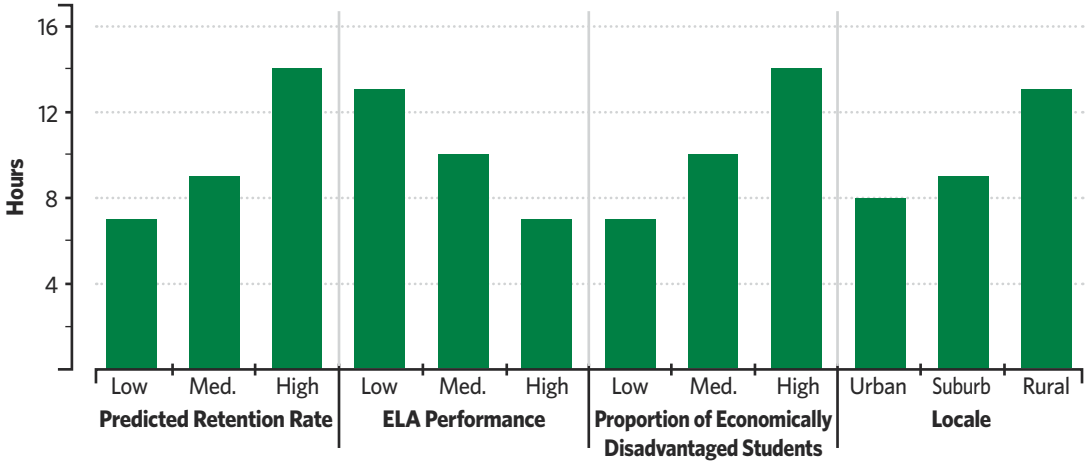
In other words, districts with the resources to hire district-based literacy coaches in addition to the ISD Early Literacy Coaches provided under the Law seem to have been doing so, while many of the traditionally underserved districts that could most benefit from additional literacy coaches have been less able to increase their access to them.

However, K-3 teachers' reported access to literacy coaches suggests a somewhat different story. Despite the increase in ISD Early Literacy Coaches working in districts where administrators report low predicted retention rates, teachers in these districts did not report greater access to ISD Early Literacy Coaches compared to their colleagues in other districts. In fact, teachers in districts with low or medium ELA performance, and high or medium proportions of economically disadvantaged students were more likely to report receiving one-on-one literacy coaching from ISD Early Literacy Coaches compared to their colleagues in the most advantaged groups. This may be because although the number of ISD Early Literacy Coaches available to teachers was similar across districts, ISD Early Literacy Coaches worked with more teachers in traditionally underserved districts. There is no noticeable difference in the percentage of teachers receiving one-on-one literacy coaching from other providers.

Teachers in Traditionally Underserved Districts Reported More Time Spent on One-on-One Literacy Coaching

Teachers in traditionally underserved districts reported not only receiving more access to ISD Early Literacy Coaches, but they also reported spending more time with coaches in one-on-one coaching. Since the beginning of the 2019-20 school year, K-3 teachers, on average, reported receiving approximately nine hours of one-on-one literacy coaching over the course of the school year by the time of the survey. Teachers working in districts with higher predicted retention rates, low ELA performance, high proportions of economically disadvantaged students, and urban districts reported spending more time on one-on-one literacy coaching than did other groups (see Figure 5.9).

FIGURE 5.9. Reported Hours of One-on-One Literacy Coaching Received by K-3 Teachers



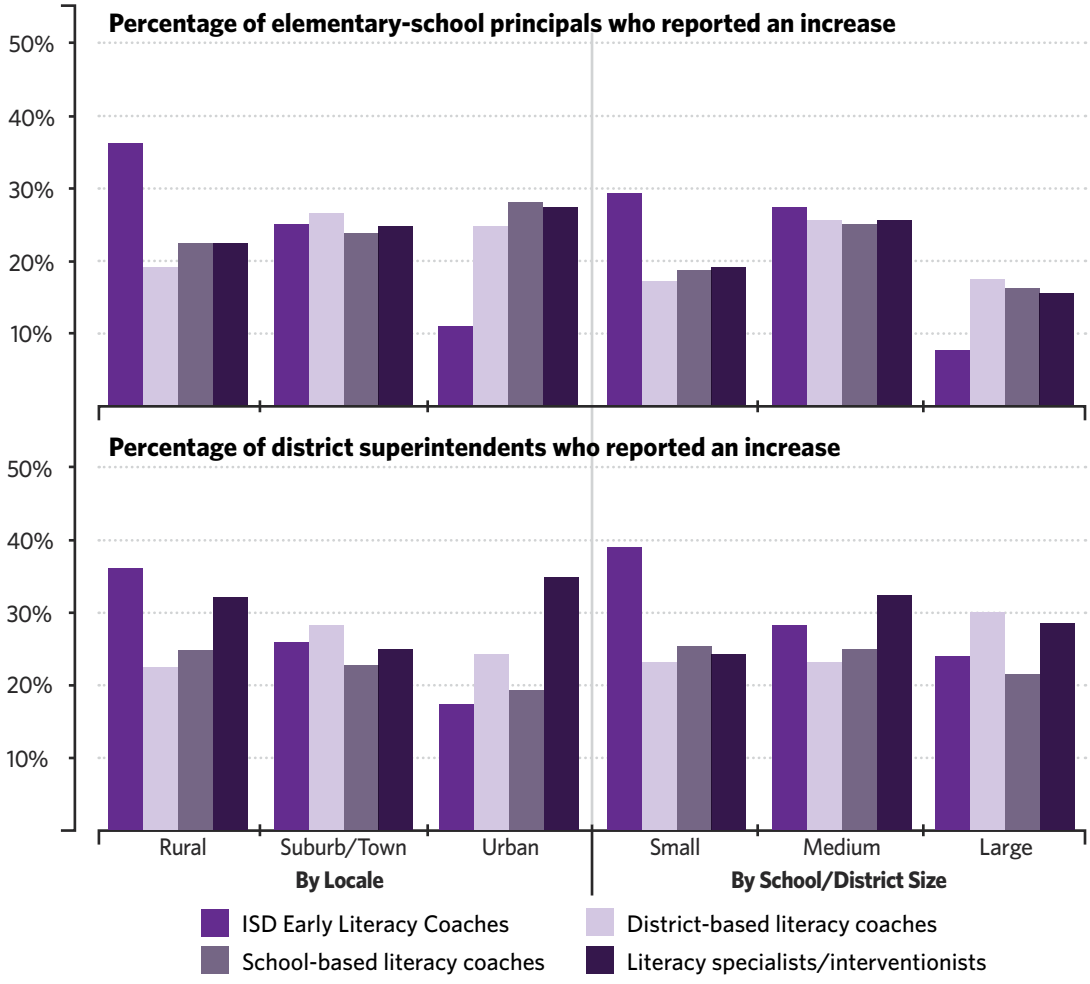
Note: Teachers who reported receiving one-on-one literacy coaching in the 2019-20 school year were asked, "Since the beginning of the school year, approximately how many hours of the one-on-one literacy coaching have you received?" Source: EPIC survey of educators about the Read by Grade Three Law.

Educators in Small and Rural Districts Reported Greater Access to ISD Early Literacy Coaches

As teachers' access to literacy coaches depends on how many coaches are available and how many teachers those coaches are expected and able to serve, we provide additional evidence about educators' reported access to literacy coaches broken down by locale and school/district size. Figure 5.10 shows that access to different types of literacy coaches varied by district size and

location. Elementary school principals and district superintendents in rural and smaller districts were more likely than their colleagues in urban and large districts to report increased access to ISD Early Literacy Coaches, but they were less likely to report this for other type of literacy coaches. Although we don't show it here, teachers in rural and small districts were also more likely to report receiving one-on-one literacy coaching from ISD Early Literacy Coaches, while those in urban districts were more likely to report receiving coaching from school- or district-based literacy coaches. This may be because ISD Early Literacy Coaches often work across multiple schools and districts, and it is easier to cover a larger number of small schools or districts than it is large schools or districts. Larger districts may have greater access to other types of literacy coaches because of the sheer quantity of teachers they have who need professional development or because they use their own human resources to compensate for the limited access to ISD Early Literacy Coaches.

FIGURE 5.10. Reported Access to Literacy Coaches and One-on-One Literacy Coaching



Note: Principals and district superintendents were asked, "How has your school's/district's access to these personnel changed since the implementation of the Read by Grade Three Law?" Principals' responses were broken down by school size and district superintendents' responses were broken down by district size. School/district size was measured by the number of students in grades K-8. Schools and districts were classified into "small," "medium," and "large" categories depending on whether they fall in the bottom quartile, middle two quartiles, or top quartile of the school/district size. Source: EPIC survey of educators about the Read by Grade Three Law.

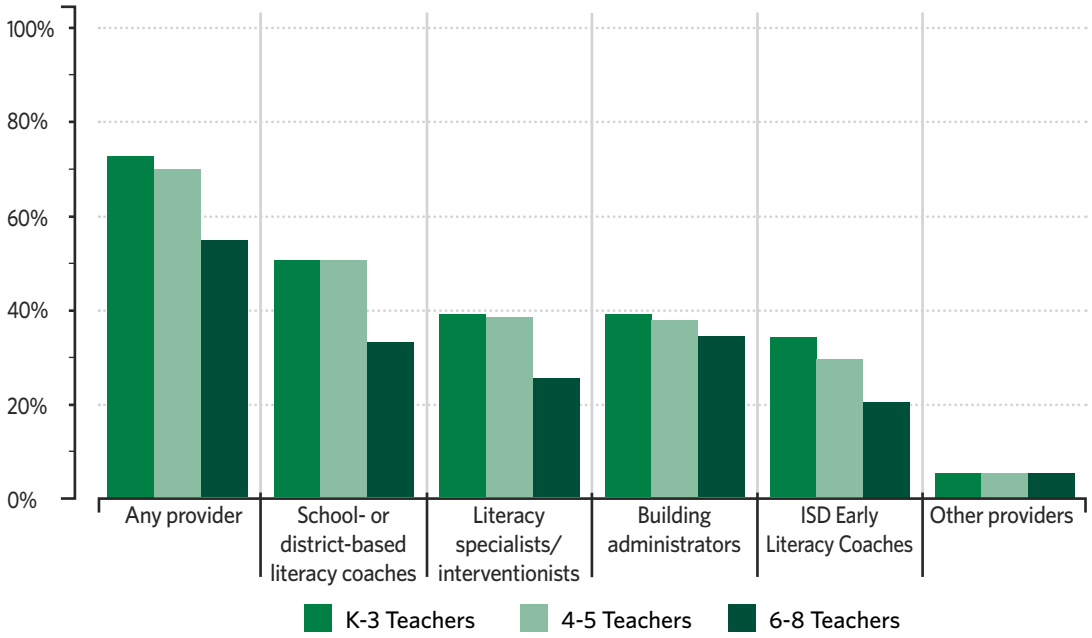
Other Literacy Professional Development

In addition to one-on-one literacy coaching, the Law stipulates that teachers should receive other literacy professional development. In this section, we discuss teachers' reported access to other literacy professional development and how it varied across districts.

Teachers Had Greater Access to Other Literacy Professional Development Than to One-on-One Literacy Coaching

Teachers were twice as likely to report receiving other literacy professional development as they were one-on-one literacy coaching. Figure 5.11 shows the percentage of K-3 teachers that reported receiving other literacy professional development from various providers. While 43% reported receiving one-on-one literacy coaching (as noted in **Figure 5.7**), nearly three-quarters reported receiving other literacy professional development.

FIGURE 5.11. Educators Reporting Receiving Other Literacy Professional Development from Various Providers



Note: Teachers were asked, "Since the beginning of the school year, have you received one-on-one literacy coaching or other professional development from any of the following providers? Please mark all that apply. If you did not receive literacy professional development from a specific kind of provider, please leave that row blank." Source: EPIC survey of educators about the Read by Grade Three Law.

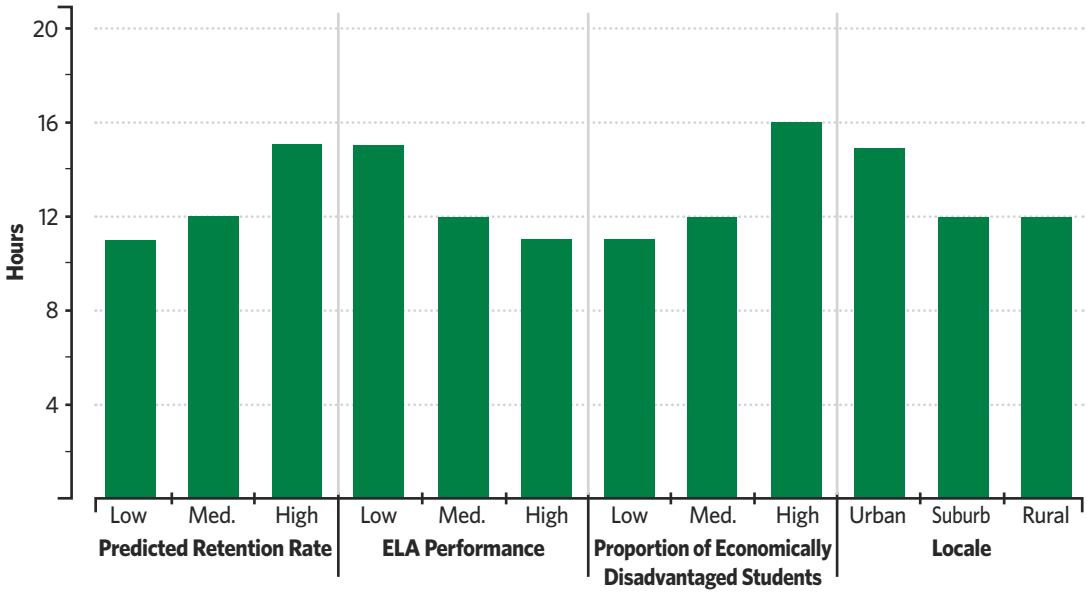
Similar to one-on-one literacy coaching, teachers were more likely to report receiving other literacy professional development from school- or district-based literacy coaches than from ISD Early Literacy Coaches, who were the least-reported provider. Teachers in higher grade levels were also less likely than K-3 teachers to report receiving other literacy professional development—which we would expect to see given the Law's focus. It was more common for

rural and small districts to receive other professional development by ISD Early Literacy Coaches, whereas urban and large districts were more likely to receive it from school- or district-based literacy coaches.

Other Literacy Professional Development Was Targeted to Schools and Teachers with Greatest Need

In addition to *whether* teachers received professional development, it is also important to understand the quality and duration of teachers' professional development. Figure 5.12 shows teachers' reports of the hours of other literacy professional development they received during the 2019-20 school year up to the point of survey administration. On average, K-3 teachers reported receiving 13 hours of other literacy professional development since the beginning of the 2019-20 school year.

FIGURE 5.12. Reported Hours of Other Literacy Professional Development Received by K-3 Teachers



Note: This figure combines results from multiple questions. Teachers who reported receiving one-on-one literacy coaching in the 2019-20 school year were asked, "Since the beginning of the school year, approximately how many hours of the one-on-one literacy coaching have you received?" Teachers who reported receiving other professional development in the 2019-20 school year were asked, "Since the beginning of the school year, about how many hours of the professional development (not including coaching) have you received?" Source: EPIC survey of educators about the Read by Grade Three Law.

Teachers working in districts with higher predicted retention rates, low ELA performance, high proportions of economically disadvantaged students, and urban districts reported spending more time on other literacy professional development than did other groups. Therefore, unlike access to one-on-one literacy coaching, other professional development appears to be targeted towards schools and teachers in the districts that may need the most assistance.

Special Section B: ISD Early Literacy Coaches

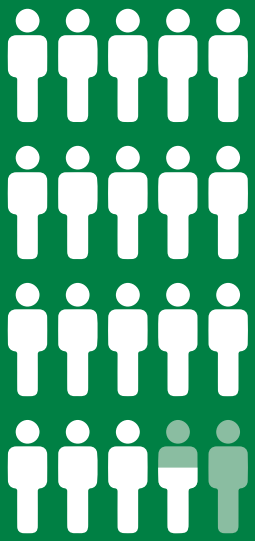
ISD EARLY LITERACY COACHES' QUALIFICATIONS

Among 133 ISD Early Literacy Coaches who responded to the survey, 74% reported being employed full-time as an ISD Early Literacy Coach and 26% reported being employed in this position less than full-time and working in other positions, such as an instructional coach (including as a literacy coach at a level other than ISD), reading or literacy specialist/interventionist, Title I coordinator, or ELA consultant/coordinator.

According to the Read by Grade Three Law, an ISD Early Literacy Coach must have a minimum of a bachelor's degree and advanced coursework in reading or have completed professional development in evidence-based literacy instructional strategies. The ISD Early Literacy Coaches who responded to our survey appear to generally meet these requirements, with nearly all reporting that they have a graduate degree. In addition, 58% of ISD Early Literacy Coaches reported majoring in literacy-focused elementary education for their bachelor's degree, and 41% reported having a graduate degree or having taken post-baccalaureate university coursework in either language and literacy or curriculum and teaching. In addition, approximately a quarter of ISD Early Literacy Coaches reported having an endorsement[1] in Early Childhood (24%), ELA (27%), or as a Reading Specialist (23%) added to their teaching certificate.

The Law also requires ISD Early Literacy Coaches to have experience as a classroom teacher. According to survey results, 93% of ISD Early Literacy Coaches reported that they had worked as a classroom teacher before becoming an ISD Early Literacy Coach. Most reported working as a lower elementary (i.e., K-3) classroom teacher (78%, on average 8.3 years), an upper elementary (i.e., 4th-5th) classroom teacher (43%, on average 3.4 years), and/or a middle school classroom teacher (31%, on average 1.9 years). Relatively few (eight percent) reported that they had experience as a high school classroom teacher (on average one year). Approximately 80% of ISD Early Literacy Coaches reported having experience as either a literacy specialist/interventionist (54%, on average 2.4 years) or an instructional coach (50%, on average 2.7 years). In particular, 40% said that they were a literacy coach (on average 2.4 years) before working as an ISD Early Literacy Coach. In addition, 13% of ISD Early Literacy Coaches reported they had worked as an administrator (on average 1 year), and 43% reported experiences in other instructional leadership roles (e.g., department chair, ELA consultant/coordinator, master teacher; on average 4.5 years).

82% of teachers agreed that the ISD Early Literacy Coach they worked with had a strong knowledge of evidence-based literacy instruction.



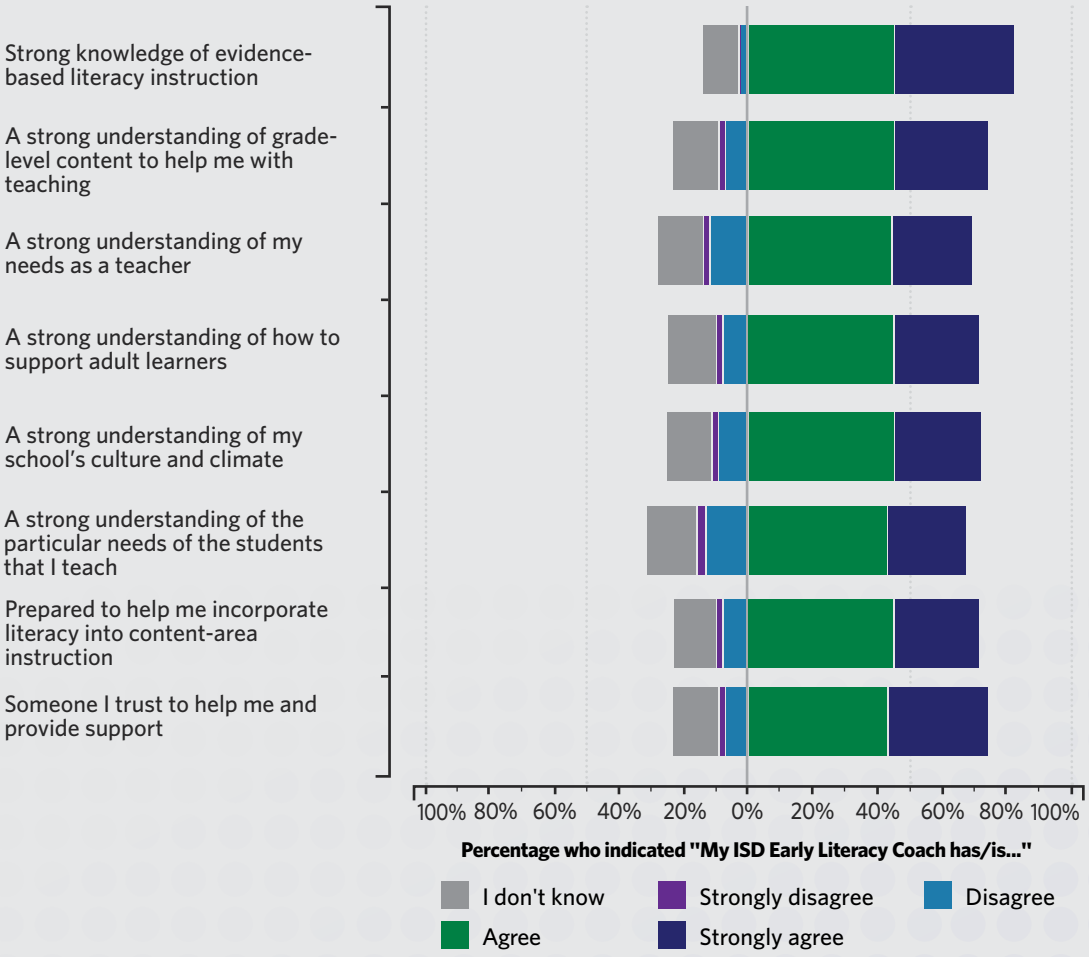
MANY ISD EARLY LITERACY COACHES ARE FORMER TEACHERS

93% of ISD Early Literacy Coaches reported that they had worked as a classroom teacher before becoming an ISD Early Literacy Coach. Most reported working as a lower elementary (i.e., K-3) classroom teacher (78%, on average 8.3 years), an upper elementary (i.e., 4th-5th) classroom teacher (43%, on average 3.4 years), and/or a middle school classroom teacher (31%, on average 1.9 years).

TEACHERS' PERCEPTIONS OF ISD EARLY LITERACY COACHES

Teachers perceived the ISD Early Literacy Coaches with whom they worked to be highly qualified and prepared for the position. As shown in Figure B.1, among K-3 teachers who reported receiving one-on-one literacy coaching or other literacy professional development from ISD Early Literacy Coaches, 82% agreed that the coach they worked with had a strong knowledge of evidence-based literacy instruction. Between 69% and 74% reported their ISD Early Literacy Coach had a strong understanding of: grade-level content; how to support adult learners; educators' needs; and the culture, climate, and needs of students at the schools to which they provide literacy support. Teachers also reported that their ISD Early Literacy Coach was prepared to help them incorporate literacy into content-area instruction and was someone they trust to help them and provide support.

FIGURE B.1. K-3 Teachers' Perceptions of ISD Early Literacy Coaches



Note: Teachers were asked, "Considering all of the different types of literacy support you have received (including one-on-one coaching) from the ISD Early Literacy Coach/Consultant, please indicate the extent to which you agree with the following statements. Please mark one option for each row." This question was administered only to K-3 teachers who indicated that they have worked with an ISD Early Literacy Coach in the 2019-20 school year. Source: EPIC survey of educators about the Read by Grade Three Law.

HOW DO ISD EARLY LITERACY COACHES SUPPORT TEACHERS?

ISD Early Literacy Coaches reported spending most of their time working with teachers on one-on-one literacy coaching and providing literacy professional development to groups of teachers. Here we provide a more thorough illustration of the nature of these services, including the frequency with which they provide literacy professional development, how teachers are identified for coaching, what formats are used for coaching, and which areas or types of instruction are emphasized in the supports ISD Early Literacy Coaches provide.

Frequency of One-on-One Literacy Coaching and Other Literacy Professional Development

Almost half of ISD Early Literacy Coaches reported that a typical coaching cycle with an individual teacher was between two and six weeks. Some ISD Early Literacy Coaches (20%) said it was between seven weeks and three months, while fewer reported that the cycle lasted a semester (3%) or a year (11%). For a typical coaching cycle, 50% of ISD Early Literacy Coaches reported meeting once a week, while 27% reported meeting a couple of times per month, and 5% reported meeting once a month. Eighteen percent reported that they met with the teacher as needed.

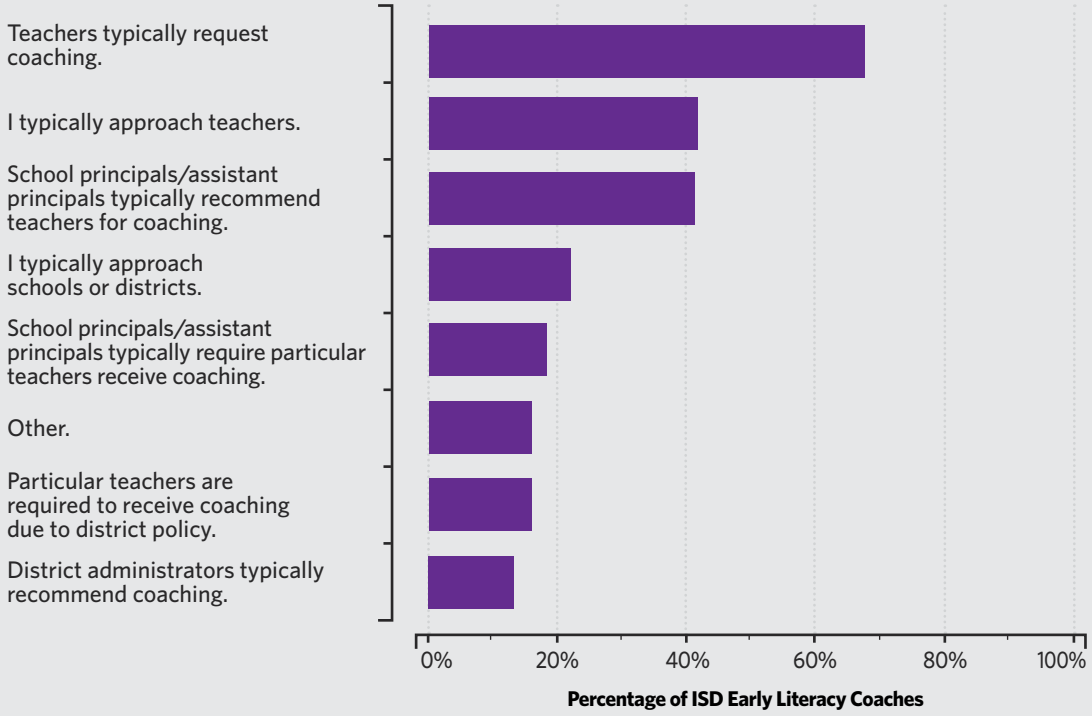
50% of ISD Early Literacy Coaches reported meeting with teachers once a week.

ISD Early Literacy Coaches also provided other professional development to teachers. Twenty-two percent reported that they planned or planned and delivered professional development about or more than once a week or as needed, and nearly one-third reported doing so a couple of times per month. One-fifth of ISD Early Literacy Coaches said they planned and/or provided professional development once a month, and only 7% did this once a semester.

How Teachers Are Identified for One-On-One Literacy Coaching

Figure B.2 presents the various ways teachers are identified for one-on-one literacy coaching as reported by ISD Early Literacy Coaches. ISD Early Literacy Coaches most often reported that teachers are identified for coaching through teacher requests (68%). Other typical identification mechanisms reported include ISD Early Literacy Coaches approaching teachers (42%) and building administrators recommending teachers for coaching (41%).

FIGURE B.2. Ways Teachers Were Identified for Literacy Coaching



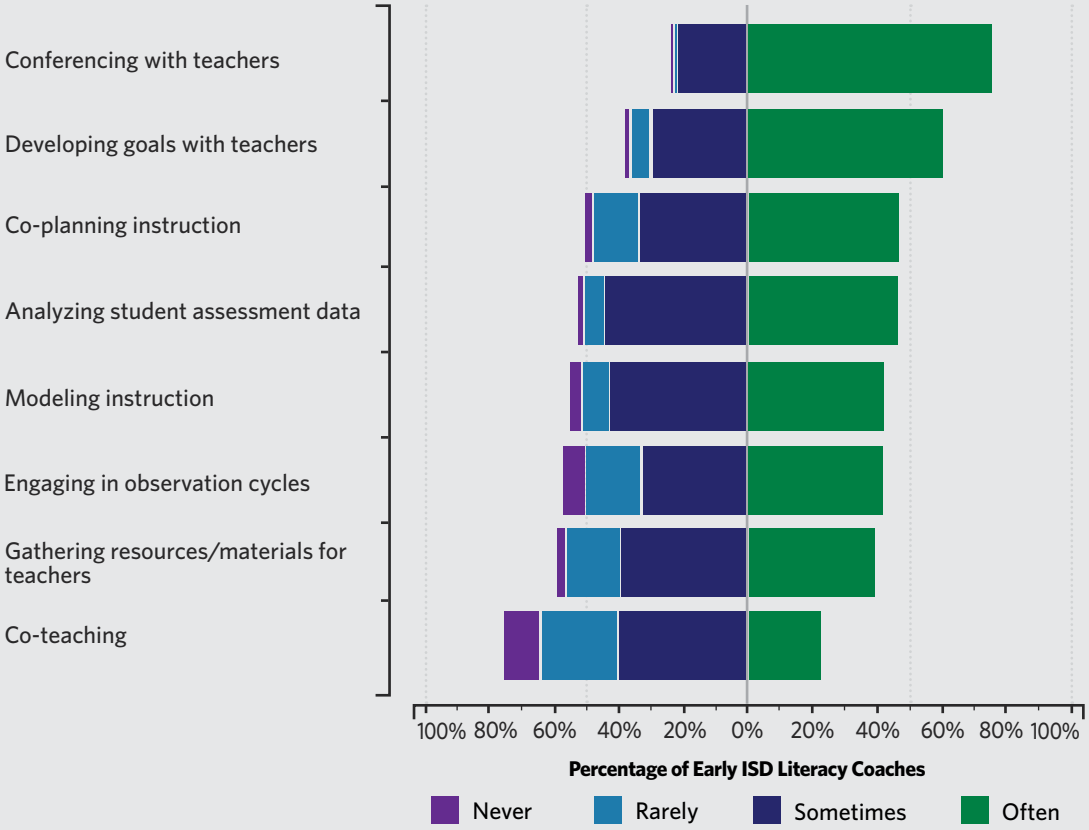
Note: One percent did not respond. ISD Early Literacy Coaches were asked, "How are teachers typically identified for literacy coaching? Please mark all that apply." Source: EPIC survey of educators about the Read by Grade Three Law.

Formats of One-On-One Literacy Coaching

When coaching individual teachers, the "Essential Coaching Practices for Elementary Literacy" recommends that coaches employ a core set of coaching activities, including conferencing, modeling, observing, and co-planning (Michigan Association of Intermediate School Administrators General Education Leadership Network Early Literacy Task Force, 2016). As shown in Figure B.3, ISD Early Literacy Coaches' reported coaching practices align well with these recommendations. Three-quarters of ISD Early Literacy Coaches reported "often" conferencing with teachers, and close to half reported "often" modeling instruction (42%), engaging in observation cycles (42%), and co-planning instruction with teachers (46%). ISD Early Literacy Coaches also frequently reported that they developed goals with teachers, analyzed student assessment data, and gathered resources or materials for teachers. It is worth noting that having coaches gather resources or materials for use in coaching differs from simply managing materials, and is more important because coaches are more likely to have access to, and knowledge of, materials that are aligned to research-based practices.

Three-quarters of ISD Early Literacy Coaches reported "often" conferencing with teachers.

FIGURE B.3. Formats of One-on-One Literacy Coaching

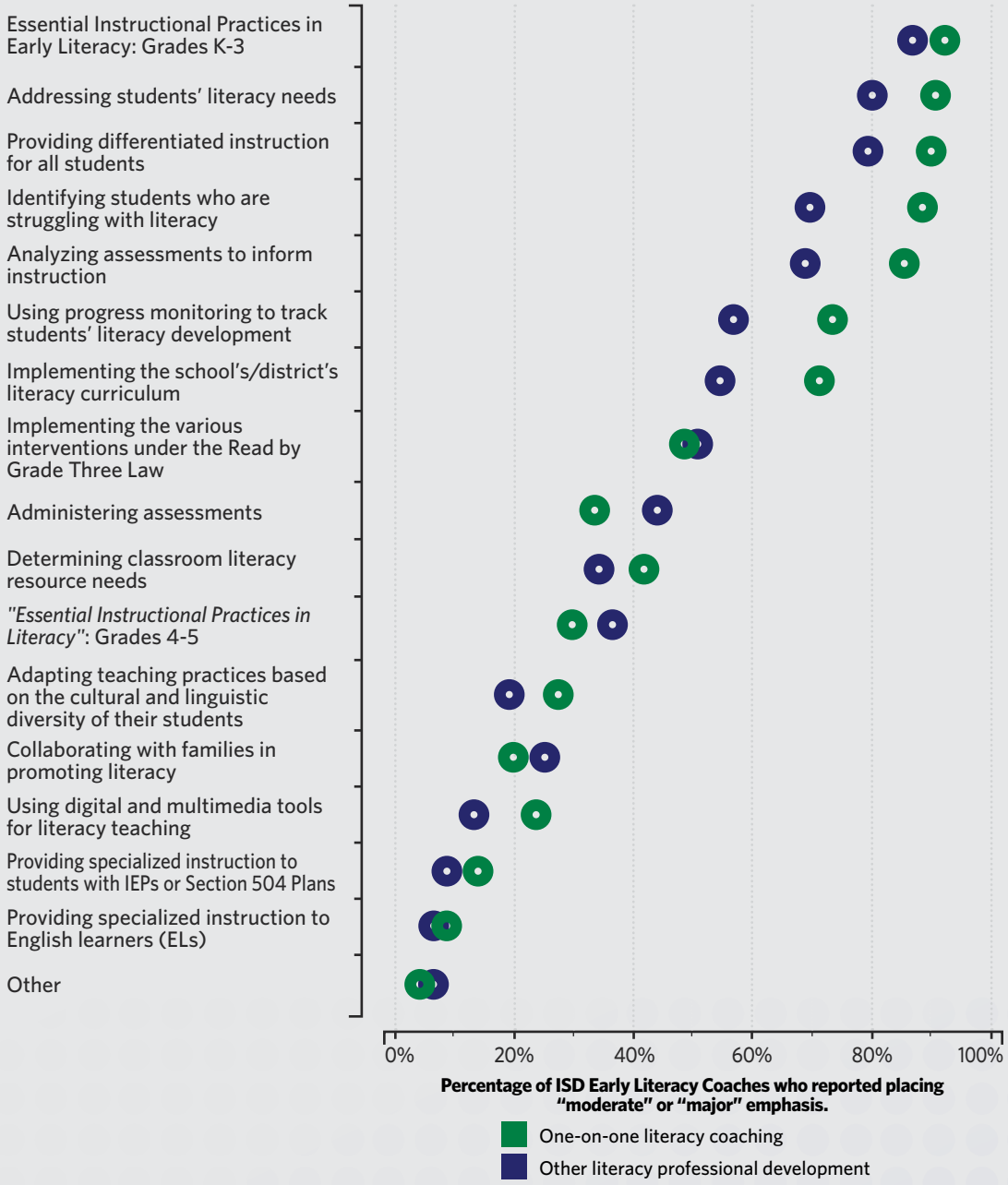


Note: Between one percent to three percent did not respond to each question item. ISD Early Literacy Coaches were asked, "Considering all the literacy coaching sessions you have had with teachers this year, how frequently have you provided literacy coaching to teachers using the following formats?" Source: EPIC survey of educators about the Read by Grade Three Law.

Areas of Instruction Emphasized in Literacy Professional Development

Under the Law, ISD Early Literacy Coaches are to support and provide initial and ongoing literacy professional development to teachers in "five major reading components": Administering and analyzing instructional assessments, providing differentiated instruction and intensive intervention, using progress monitoring, and identifying and addressing "reading deficiencies." Figure B.4 shows the percentage of ISD Early Literacy Coaches who reported placing moderate or major emphasis on various areas of instruction. Over half of ISD Early Literacy Coaches reported that they placed moderate or major emphasis on these areas in the one-on-one literacy coaching and other literacy professional development they provided to teachers. They reported placing comparable levels of emphasis on implementing the school's or district's literacy curricula and determining classroom literacy resource needs.

FIGURE B.4. Areas of Instruction Emphasized in Literacy Professional Development



Note: This figure combines results from multiple survey questions. ISD Early Literacy Coaches who indicated providing one-on-one literacy coaching to at least one teacher in the 2019-20 school year were asked, "Considering all the one-on-one literacy coaching sessions you have done with teachers this school year, please indicate how much emphasis you have placed on supporting the following areas of instruction." ISD Early Literacy Coaches who indicated providing other literacy professional development to at least one teacher in the 2019-20 school year were asked, "Considering all the literacy professional development (not including coaching) sessions you have done this school year, how much emphasis have you placed on supporting each of the following areas of instruction?" Source: EPIC survey of educators about the Read by Grade Three Law.

ISD Early Literacy Coaches reported placing the least emphasis on providing specialized instruction to English learners (ELs) and students with IEPs or Section 504 Plans. This may be because ISD Early Literacy Coaches are to provide Tier I instructional supports under the Law. They also reported putting less emphasis on collaborating with families to promote literacy, using digital and multimedia tools for literacy, and adapting teaching practices based on students' cultural and linguistic diversity. Although not listed in the Law, these are identified as standards for a high-quality literacy coach by the International Literacy Association, which is the leading research community in literacy education (International Literacy Association, 2018).

Comparing one-on-one literacy coaching and other literacy professional development, ISD Early Literacy Coaches reported placing greater emphasis in their one-on-one literacy coaching for most areas of instruction than they did in their other literacy professional development. This is likely because one-on-one coaching allows coaches to cater to the needs of individual teachers.

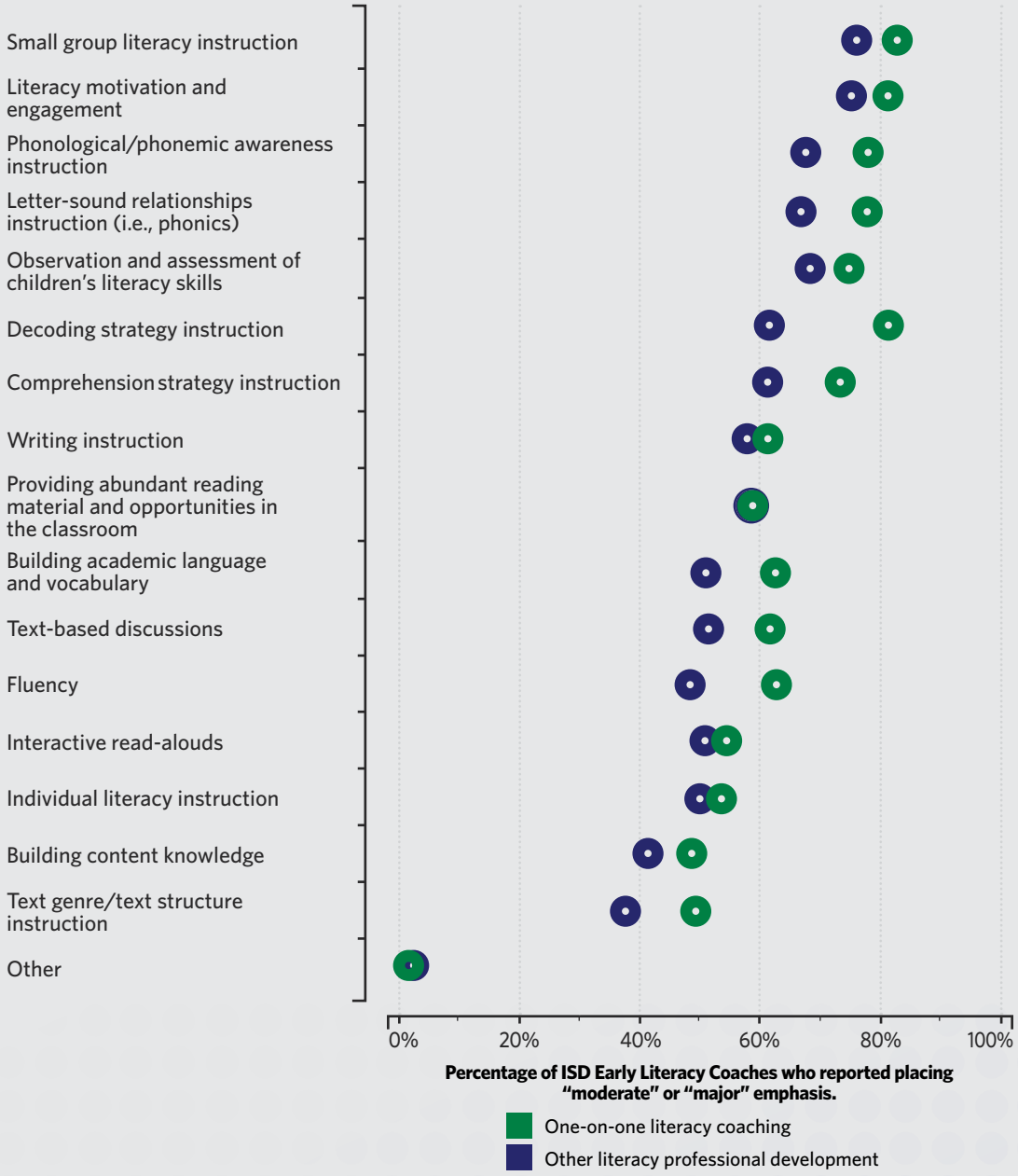
ISD Early Literacy Coaches placed greater emphasis in their one-on-one literacy coaching for most areas of instruction than they did in their other literacy professional development.

Topics Emphasized in Literacy Professional Development

As can be seen in Figure B.5, ISD Early Literacy Coaches generally reported placing moderate or major emphasis on all listed topics of instruction. Over half of ISD Early Literacy Coaches reported placing moderate or major emphasis on the "five major reading components" identified in the Law: phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension (including text genre/text structure instruction, instruction to build content knowledge, read-alouds, and discussions of texts). In addition, the majority of ISD Early Literacy Coaches reported placing moderate or major emphasis on small group literacy instruction and literacy motivation and engagement, which are also well-recognized effective practices in improving student learning (e.g., Baker, Lesaux, Jayanthi, Dimino, Proctor, Morris, Gersten, Haymond, Kieffer, Linan-Thompson, & Newman-Gonchar, 2014; Shanahan, Callison, Carriere, Duke, Pearson, Schatschneider, & Torgesen, 2010).

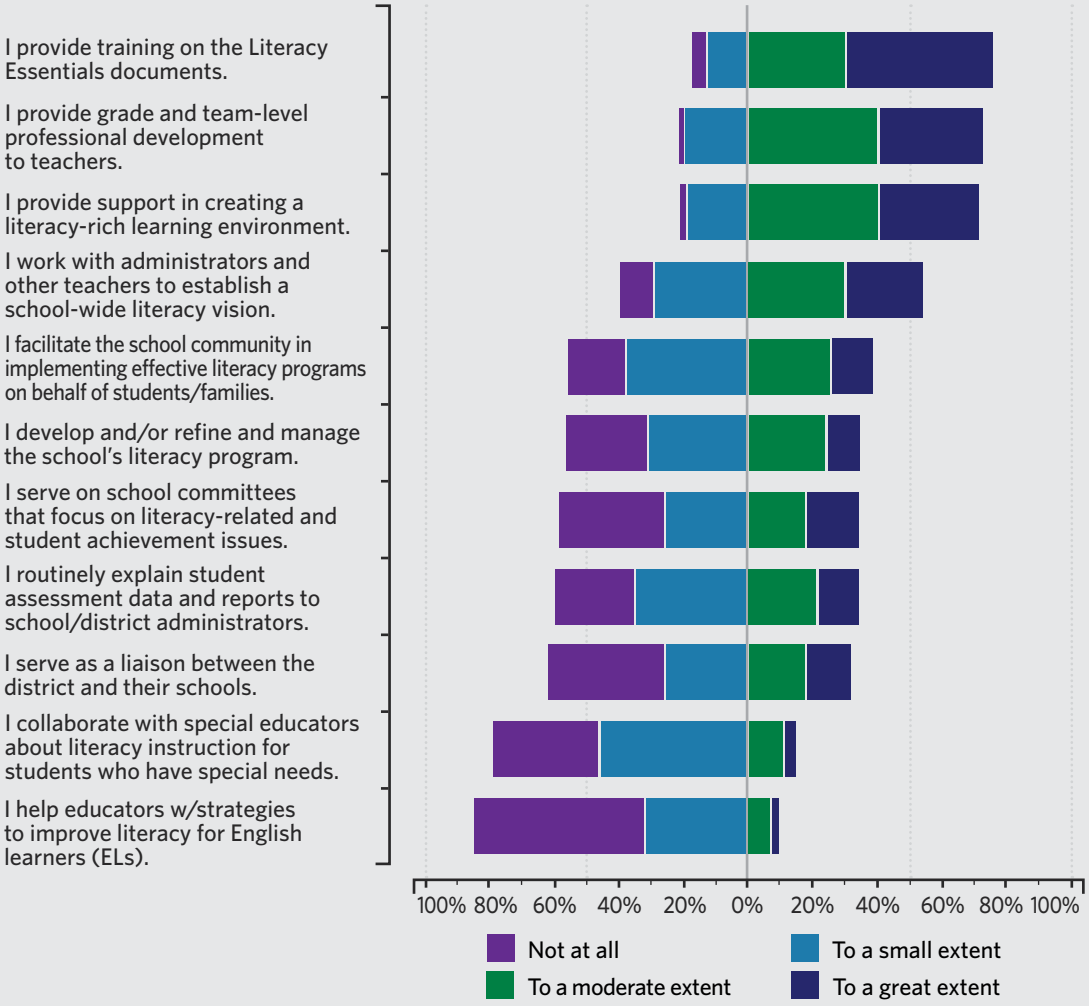
For all topics of instruction, ISD Early Literacy Coaches reported higher levels of emphasis in their one-on-one literacy coaching sessions than in their other literacy professional development (not including one-on-one coaching). In particular, they reported higher levels of attention to decoding strategy instruction, phonological/phonemic awareness, letter-sound relationships, comprehension strategy instruction, building academic language and vocabulary, text-based discussions, and text-genre/text structure instruction as opposed to in their professional development.

FIGURE B.5. Types of Instruction Emphasized in Literacy Professional Development



Note: This figure combines results from multiple survey questions. ISD Early Literacy Coaches who indicated providing one-on-one literacy coaching to at least one teacher in the 2019-20 school year were asked, "Considering all the literacy coaching sessions you have conducted with teachers this school year, how much emphasis have you placed on supporting each of the following types of instruction?" ISD Early Literacy Coaches who indicated providing other literacy professional development to at least one teacher in the 2019-20 school year were asked, "Considering all the literacy professional development (not including coaching) sessions you have planned, or planned and delivered, this school year, how much emphasis have you placed on supporting each of the following types of instruction?" Source: EPIC survey of educators about the Read by Grade Three Law.

FIGURE B.6. ISD Early Literacy Coaches' Literacy Support to Schools



Note: ISD Early Literacy Coaches were asked, "In thinking about the ways in which you support literacy instruction in schools, to what extent do you do each of the following?" Source: EPIC survey of educators about the Read by Grade Three Law.

HOW DO ISD EARLY LITERACY COACHES SUPPORT SCHOOLS?

According to the Read by Grade Three Law, ISD Early Literacy Coaches are to work with teachers and help lead and support literacy leadership teams in schools. As shown in Figure B.6, most ISD Early Literacy Coaches reported that they have provided training on the "Literacy Essentials," grade- and team-level professional development to teachers, and support in creating a literacy-rich learning environment to a moderate or a great extent. However, they were less likely to serve on school committees that focus on literacy-related and student achievement issues, work with administrators and other teachers

to establish a school-wide literacy vision, develop or manage the school's literacy program, serve as a liaison between the district and their schools, routinely explain student assessment data and reports to school/district administrators, and facilitate the school community in implementing effective literacy programs on behalf of students and families. This may be because the literacy coaching standards suggest that effective coaches spend most of their time supporting teachers in a coaching capacity (International Literacy Association, 2018). ISD Early Literacy Coaches also may not have sufficient time and capacity to work with school leaders given that they serve a large population of teachers in the ISD. It is also difficult for them to support all or many school leaders since they may be working with a large number of schools in the ISD.

SPECIAL SECTION B NOTES

1 An endorsement is a specialized certification that qualifies teachers to teach additional subjects, student populations, and/or grade levels.

The Role of Administrators in Literacy Professional Development

In addition to providing one-on-one literacy coaching and other literacy professional development from literacy coaches, the Read by Grade Three Law requires administrators to support teachers' literacy instruction. Here we describe the various ways in which principals and district superintendents reported being involved in this.

Administrators Facilitated Literacy Professional Development Under the Law

The Read by Grade Three Law requires principals to be involved in administering literacy professional development for teachers. Specifically, they are to target literacy professional development based on the reading development needs of students, differentiate literacy professional development based on student data, establish a collaborative system within the school to improve reading proficiency, and ensure that time is provided for teachers to meet for literacy professional development. Though superintendents have a more limited role under the Law, both groups reported being involved in developing, recommending, and providing literacy professional development.

Administrators reported that the professional development they facilitated focused on students' needs, literacy curricula, and assessment data—similar to the topics on which teachers reported receiving literacy professional development. Figure 5.13 shows how principals and district superintendents reported that they or their leadership teams facilitated literacy professional development for teachers. More than 60% of elementary school principals and 80% of district superintendents reported selecting literacy professional learning content based on students' needs, teachers' needs, and district or state priorities. They also reported focusing these activities on literacy curricula and instruction, as well as how to analyze and interpret student literacy assessment data. As anticipated under the Law, elementary school principals were much more likely than middle school principals to report that they or their literacy leadership teams developed or recommended literacy professional development activities. Further, district superintendents or their leadership teams were more likely than principals to report engaging in these activities even though the Law outlines more professional development requirements for principals.

Teachers agreed that their administrators were involved in facilitating professional development. As illustrated in **Figure 5.7**, 12% of K-3 teachers reported receiving one-on-one literacy coaching from building administrators (e.g., principals, assistant principals) and 39% reported receiving other professional development from these individuals (see **Figure 5.12**). This supports the idea that administrators were supplementing the literacy coaching that their teachers may or may not have been receiving from the district or ISD level—this time by providing coaching and support themselves.

ADMINISTRATOR-FACILITATED PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT FOCUSED ON SEVERAL KEY FACTORS

More than 60% of elementary school principals and 80% of district superintendents reported selecting literacy professional learning content based on students' needs, teachers' needs, and district or state priorities.

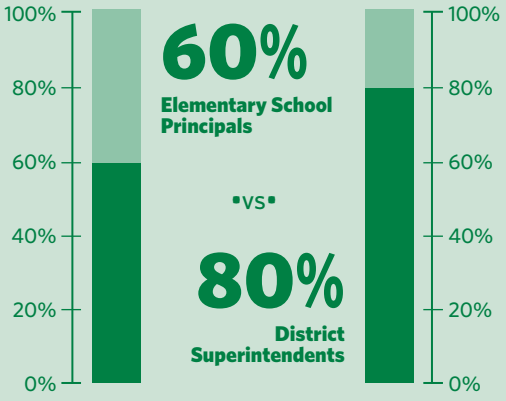


FIGURE 5.13. Reported Engagement of Administrators in Literacy Professional Development

*Note: Elementary school principals and district superintendents were asked, "To what extent do you and/or your literacy leadership team engage in each of the following activities? Please mark one option for each row." *Denotes items that were not asked of superintendents. Source: EPIC survey of educators about the Read by Grade Three Law.*

However, literacy professional development varied across districts. Superintendents in districts with high ELA performance and low proportions of economically disadvantaged students were more likely to report engaging in these activities than were their counterparts in traditionally underserved districts. Therefore, while administrators may have supplemented the professional development that their teachers were receiving from literacy coaches, this may have happened less in the schools and districts that were the most challenged.

Administrators Assumed Literacy Leadership Roles in Their Schools and Districts

Administrators' roles in supporting their teachers' literacy instruction went beyond facilitating professional development. They also assumed broader roles as literacy leaders in their schools and districts by developing a vision for literacy instruction, managing personnel, and selecting literacy curricula (see Figure 5.14).

Most elementary school principals and district superintendents reported developing a vision for literacy instruction in their schools or districts, respectively. Part of this involved making personnel decisions related to literacy. Principals reported observing and appraising teachers' literacy instruction, formally evaluating teachers' literacy instruction, meeting with teachers individually to discuss ways to improve their literacy instruction, and identifying teachers with strong literacy practices who could model instruction for other teachers. Importantly, principals in districts with high predicted retention rates, low ELA performance, high proportions of economically disadvantaged students, and urban districts were more likely to report meeting with teachers individually to discuss how to improve their literacy instruction than their counterparts in more advantaged districts, indicating increased focus on literacy leadership in districts that may struggle the most with literacy outcomes.

A majority of both principals and district superintendents also reported that they identified teachers who might serve as early literacy coaches, and this was particularly the case in districts with high predicted retention rates and in urban districts. Given that these districts also were among the least likely to report having access to ISD Early Literacy Coaches, this may indicate that administrators were actively working to fill gaps between needed and available literacy coaching.

Adoption and Dissemination of Five "Evidence-Based" "Major Reading Components"

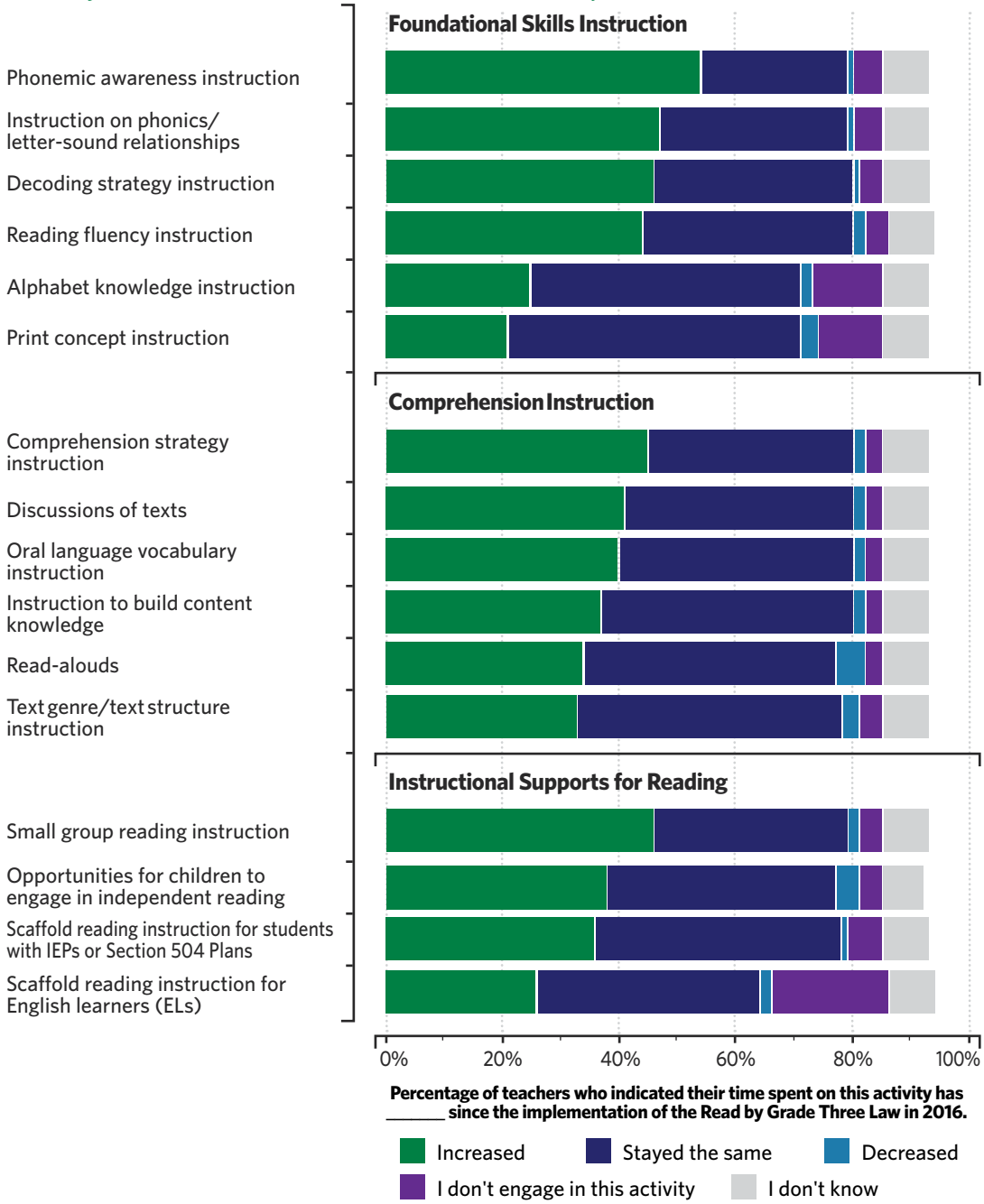
To improve literacy instruction and learning statewide for all K-3 students, the Law identifies five evidence-based components of effective literacy instruction: phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension. Here, we explore teachers' reported literacy instruction in these five components as well as other evidence-based literacy practices, and how this has changed since the Read by Grade Three Law passed.

A Vast Majority of Teachers Reported Implementing Evidence-Based Instructional Practices

Figure 5.14 shows K-3 teachers' reported change in the amount of time spent on various evidence-based literacy instructional practices since the Read by Grade Three Law passed. Most teachers reported that they were either already engaging in these activities, or that they increased the amount of time spent on them. Specifically, teachers reported that they increased the amount of time they spent on the five areas included in the Law: phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and text comprehension. They further reported addressing comprehension instruction in several ways that align with evidence-based recommendations for elementary school comprehension

instruction, including text genre/text structure instruction, instruction to build content knowledge, read-alouds, and discussions of texts (Shanahan, Callison, Carriere, Duke, Pearson, Schatschneider, & Torgesen, 2010). Teachers also frequently reported increasing the amount of time spent on small group reading instruction, a practice the Law specifically mentions.

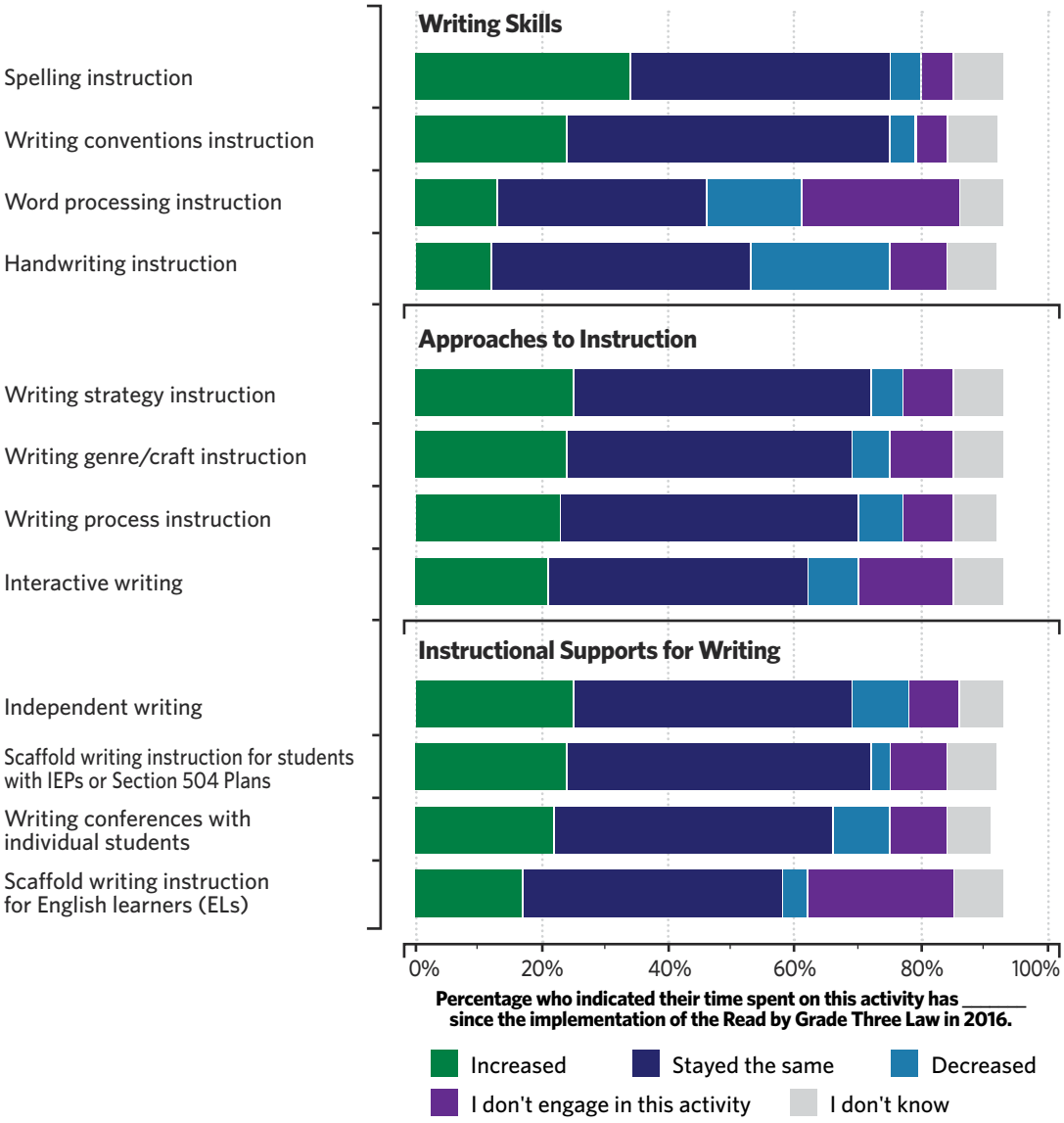
FIGURE 5.14. K-3 Teachers' Reported Change in Time Spent on Evidence-Based Literacy Instructional Practices Since the Law's Implementation



Note: Seven percent did not respond. Teachers were asked, "In this question, we are asking you about the kinds of reading instruction you engage in in a typical week and whether or not this has changed since the Read by Grade Three Law was implemented in 2016. Please consider all of the reading instruction you implement across your week." Source: EPIC survey of educators about the Read by Grade Three Law.

Research shows that writing instruction also supports students' literacy development (e.g., Graham & Hebert, 2010). Figure 5.15 shows K-3 teachers' reported change in the amount of time they spent on various evidence-based writing instructional practices since the Read by Grade Three Law passed. Similar to reading instruction, a majority of teachers reported that they were either already engaging in these activities or increased the amount of time they spent on them.

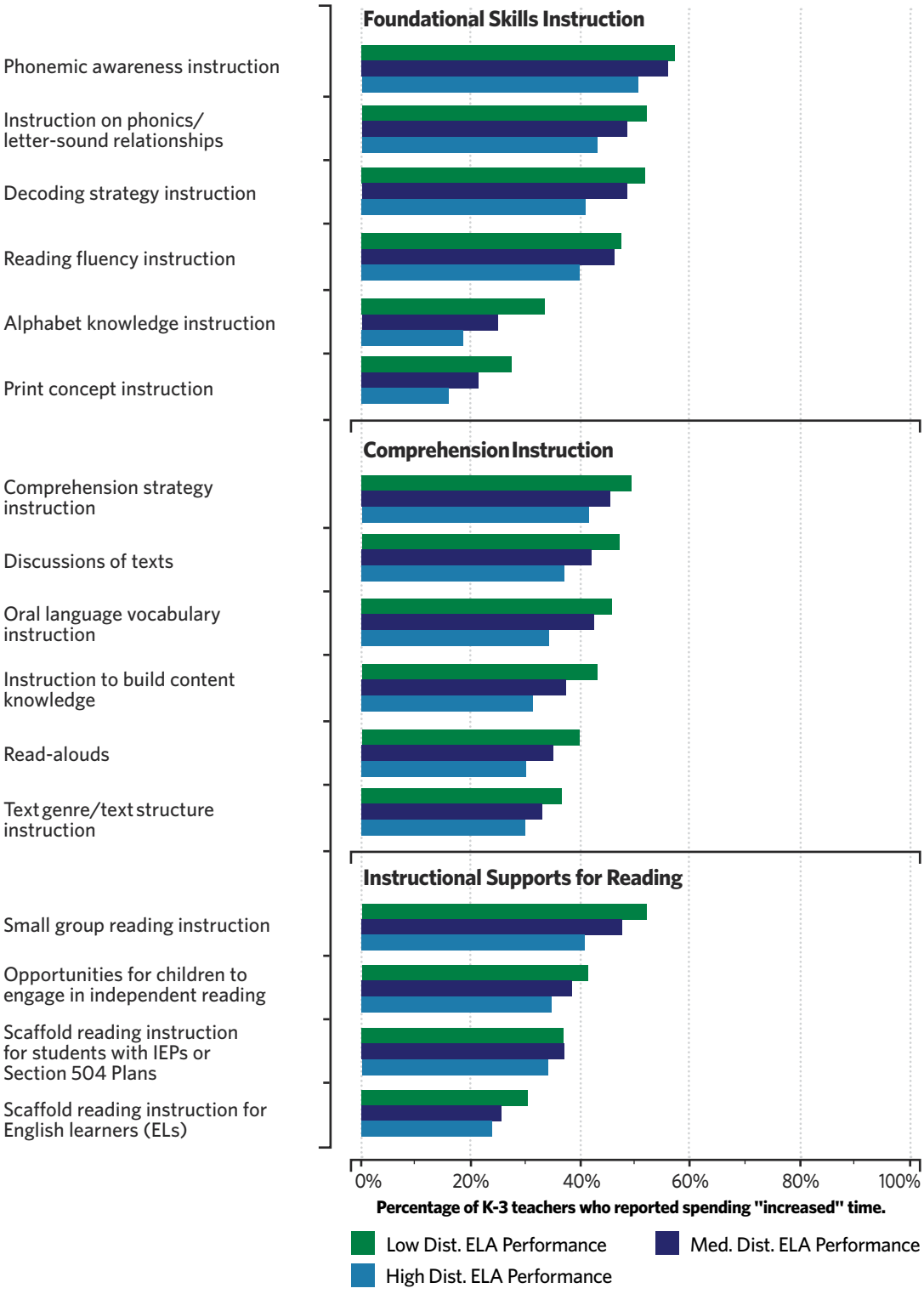
FIGURE 5.15. K-3 Teachers' Reported Change in Time Spent on Evidence-Based Writing Instructional Practices Since the Law's Implementation



Note: Between 7-8% did not respond to each question item. Teachers were asked, "In this question, we are asking you about the kinds of writing instruction you engage in in a typical week and whether or not this has changed since the Read by Grade Three Law was implemented in 2016. Please consider all of the writing instruction you implement across your week." Source: EPIC survey of educators about the Read by Grade Three Law.

As is shown in Figure 5.16 and Appendix A-1, across all the evidence-based instructional practices outlined above, K-3 teachers in traditionally underserved districts were more likely to report increased time spent on these activities since the Law's implementation than were teachers in other districts.

FIGURE 5.16. K-3 Teachers Reporting Increased Time on Evidence-Based Literacy Instructional Practices, by District ELA Performance



Note: Teachers were asked, "In this question, we are asking you about the kinds of reading instruction you engage in in a typical week and whether or not this has changed since the Read by Grade Three Law was implemented in 2016. Please consider all of the reading instruction you implement across your week." Source: EPIC survey of educators about the Read by Grade Three Law.

On the surface, it appears as though the Law is working to improve teachers' literacy instruction in the districts that could most benefit from implementing evidence-based instructional practices. However, we do not know how the increased time spent on these activities affected teachers' instruction in other subject areas, nor do we know how effectively they are implementing these evidence-based instructional practices—only that they are increasing the amount of time spent on them. Given that teachers have a finite amount of instructional time, it is important to consider the potential implications of increasing time on literacy instructional practices on the teaching of other subjects (e.g., Berliner, 2011).

MONITORING, REMEDIATION, AND RETENTION

As described in Section Four, the Law requires districts to select and use valid, reliable, and aligned diagnostic assessments to screen K-3 students for "reading deficiencies." Early warning and identification allow educators to provide students with literacy supports and remediation, including IRIPs, increased time on literacy instruction, one-on-one and small group instruction, summer support, and parental involvement. Should students fail to meet the proficiency cut score on the third-grade M-STEP ELA despite these supports, they are identified for retention and provided increased support and remediation.

Diagnosing, Screening, and Monitoring Students' Literacy Proficiency

Local Control over Assessments Created Transparency and Alignment Issues

In Michigan, education governance is highly localized. This means that details of the Law's implementation, including which diagnostic assessment to employ are left up to individual districts. District superintendents reported that they were not alone in selecting their district's diagnostic assessments; 90% indicated that other school administrators, literacy coaches, teachers, and central office administrators were involved in this process.

MDE representatives worried that local control over diagnostic assessments creates additional challenges related to the transparency of data and alignment of assessments across districts. One MDE staff member noted:

> *Schools are choosing their own local assessments and the state doesn't have access to those local assessment scores and what schools are choosing as their "deficiency" on those local assessments or other local, like, observational notes, local assignments, things like that—I don't know—it's hard to look at that from a state perspective if you've got so much variance.*

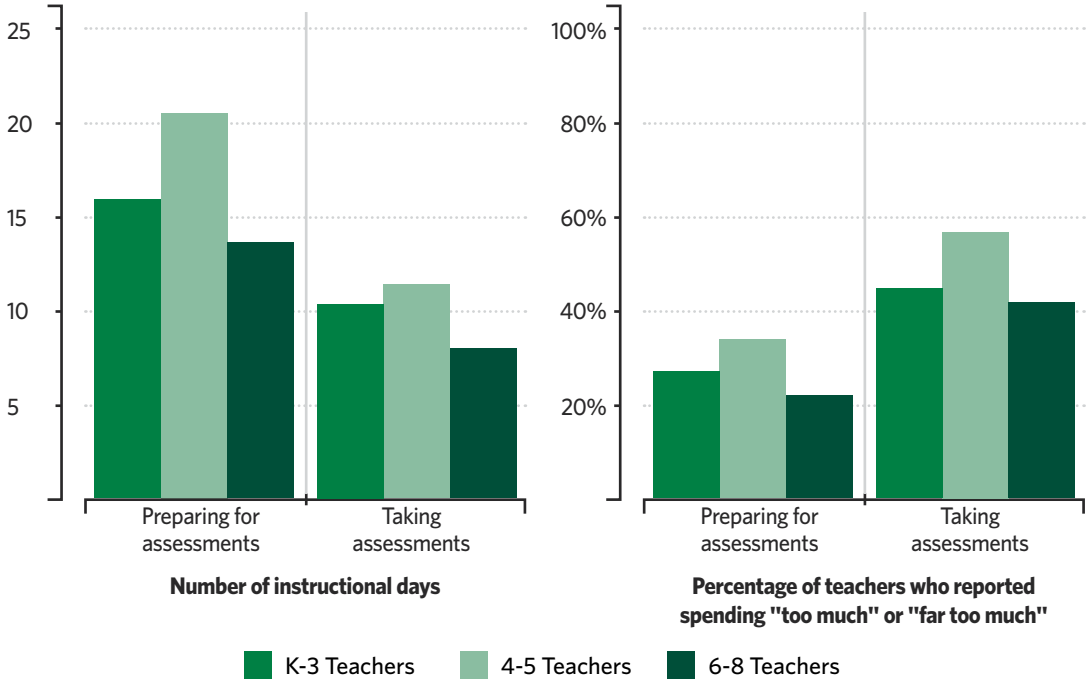
Even if MDE had access to local assessment scores, the variability in districts' diagnostic assessments makes it difficult to garner a statewide understanding of which students are being flagged for early warning and identification and how this may translate to the need for additional resources and, potentially, retention. In particular, not all diagnostic assessments identify students with a "reading deficiency" in the same way. The use of a wide variety of assessments across districts might lead to

differences in rates of student identification. This might cause over-identification in some districts, whereas in others, students who need literacy supports may not receive them.

Teachers Reported Spending More Than a Month of Instructional Time on Literacy Assessments, but Felt That This Was Appropriate

The diagnostic and progress monitoring assessment requirements, as well as summative tests via the ELA M-STEP, included in the Read by Grade Three Law inevitably take time out of teachers' instruction as they help their students prepare for and take these required tests. Figure 5.17 shows the amount of time teachers reported spending with their students preparing for and administering literacy standardized assessments, including both the M-STEP and diagnostic and progress monitoring assessments (e.g., NWEA, iReady). K-3 teachers, on average, reported that they and their students spent 16 instructional days preparing for these assessments and 10 days taking them. This amounts to 14% of the 180 required instructional days in the academic year. This is less time than 4th-5th grade teachers reported spending preparing for and taking these assessments, but more than 6th-8th grade teachers. This may be due to the state's additional end-of-year testing requirements for 5th graders, which are the most of any of grades 3-8 (MDE, 2020i).

FIGURE 5.17. Reported Time Teachers Spend Helping Students Prepare for and Take Literacy Standardized Assessments



Note: Teachers were asked, "In each year, about how many instructional days do you and your students spend preparing for and taking standardized assessments (e.g., M-STEP, NWEA, iReady)? Do you believe that you spend too much or too little time on these activities?" Source: EPIC survey of educators about the Read by Grade Three Law.

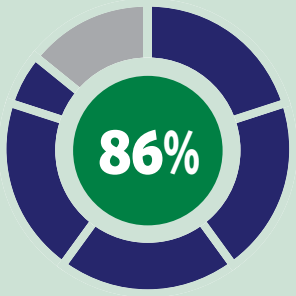
Despite the fact that teachers reported spending over a month of instructional time with their students to help them prepare for and take literacy standardized assessments, most did not perceive this to be too much time. In terms of preparing for these assessments, just 28% of K-3 teachers indicated that they spent too much or far too much time preparing for assessments, relative to 35% of 4th-5th grade and 23% of 6th-8th grade teachers. More teachers believed they

spent too much time on having their students *take* these assessments, with 46% of K-3 teachers indicating that they spent too much or far too much time taking assessments, and 57% of 4th-5th grade teachers and 43% of 6th-8th grade teachers noting the same.

Teachers in districts with high predicted retention rates, low ELA performance, high proportions of economically disadvantaged students, and urban districts reported spending much more time preparing for and somewhat more time taking literacy standardized assessments, but these teachers were not any more likely to report that they spent too much time on these activities. This may be because they feel that they need to spend more time preparing for these assessments for their students to perform well on them. However, this also means that they are directing more instructional time toward assessments than their counterparts in more advantaged districts. When working within the confines of the same amount of instructional time in a school year, this has implications for the learning opportunities in which students in these different types of districts are able to engage. If students in more underserved districts—those with lower achievement and more low-income students—spend more time preparing for and taking tests than do wealthier students in higher-achieving districts, then they likely spend less time learning content and benefiting from other instructional opportunities. This may be an unintended consequence of the Read by Grade Three Law or other high-stakes testing policies.

Teachers Perceived Non-Standardized Assessments to be More Useful for Planning Instruction

Though teachers generally did not believe that they spent too much time with their students preparing for and taking literacy standardized assessments, they did not find these assessments to be the most useful in helping them prepare for instruction. At the district level, superintendents reported that they worked to implement and maintain an assessment system that can inform literacy instruction, with 86% reporting that they engaged in implementing high-quality, evidence-based literacy assessments to at least a moderate extent. This was especially true for those in districts with higher ELA performance and lower proportions of economically disadvantaged students. Additionally, nearly 76% reported actively maintaining a comprehensive system for student literacy assessments that can inform instruction.



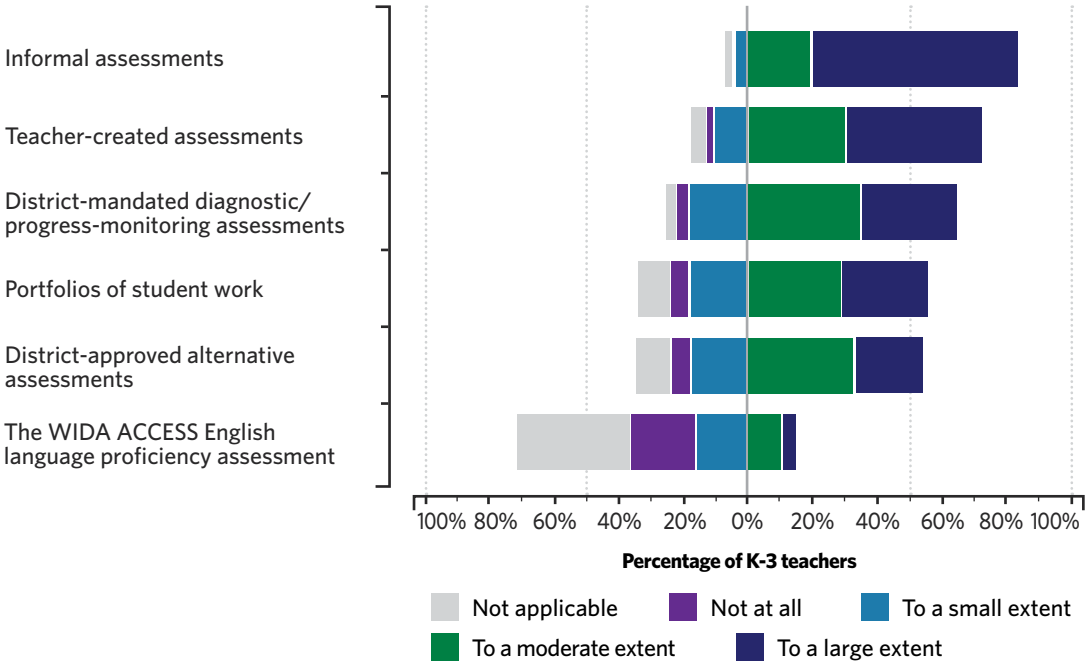
SUPERINTENDENTS IMPLEMENT AND MAINTAIN ASSESSMENT SYSTEMS

At the district level, superintendents reported that they worked to implement and maintain an assessment system that can inform literacy instruction, with 86% reporting that they engaged in implementing high-quality, evidence-based literacy assessments.

Despite district superintendents' efforts to create a standardized system of assessments to support teachers' instruction, teachers found other non-standardized assessments to be more useful in helping them plan for instruction. Figure 5.18 shows teachers' reported usefulness of various types of assessments. K-3 teachers most often indicated that informal assessments (e.g., running records, skill checklists, anecdotal notes, notes from reading conferences) were useful to a moderate or great extent in helping them plan for instruction, followed by teacher-created assessments. They less often perceived district-mandated or district-approved assessments as being this useful. This aligns with the Michigan Assessment Consortium's "Early Literacy

Assessment Systems that Support Learning" guide, which explains that different assessments are useful for different purposes, with formative (i.e., informal) assessments typically most useful for daily instructional decision making (Michigan Department of Education & Michigan Assessment Consortium, 2020).

FIGURE 5.18. Reported Usefulness of Assessments in Planning Instruction



Note: Nine percent did not respond. Teachers were asked, "To what extent are the following types of assessments useful in helping you to plan for instruction?" Source: EPIC survey of educators about the Read by Grade Three Law.

Early Intervention and Support

Students identified as having a "reading deficiency" under the Law's diagnostic and screening assessments are to be administered a range of literacy supports. These may include increased time on literacy instruction, ongoing progress monitoring assessments, daily targeted one-on-one or small group instruction, a "Read at Home" plan for parents/guardians, and summer reading camps. These supports are outlined in an IRIP that the teacher, principal, parent or legal guardian, and other relevant school personnel create for the student. The student is to receive the literacy supports outlined in their IRIP until they no longer have a "reading deficiency."

State-Level Stakeholders Perceived IRIPs as a Valuable Support, but Educators Were Less Certain

The stakeholders we interviewed expressed support for IRIPs as a literacy support under the Law, with four explicitly noting that they were supportive of them. As one external stakeholder shared:

> *I think the IRIPs are, weirdly, one of the best things that happened 'cause everybody's paying a lot more attention to what individual kids need, and having conversations with the adults, their parents, their guardians, about it. I think that's good.*

Another external stakeholder echoed this, noting:

> *I think one of the things that—the Individual Reading Improvement Plan—not a bad thing. We have a local district here who—every kid in their district gets an IRIP. There's an idea. Every kid has an individualized plan that involves working with the parents to support that plan, and that they're assessing students and altering their instruction along the way and measuring progress and holding a really high bar for achievement.*

District superintendents generally reported that their districts provided guidance in developing IRIPs. Seventy-three percent reported that they required all schools and teachers to use a district-created IRIP template and 24% reported recommending an IRIP template for schools and teachers to use. Further, 30% of district superintendents reported providing resources for schools and teachers to create IRIPs. Just one percent of superintendents reported that their district did not provide any guidance at all on creating IRIPs.

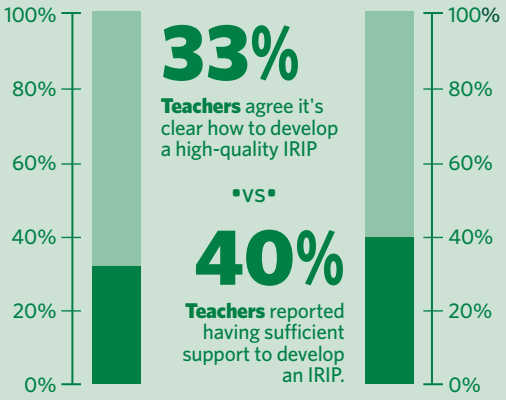
Nonetheless, educators and interviewees expressed that it was unclear how to develop a high-quality IRIP and questioned their efficacy in improving students' literacy achievement. Only a third of K-3 teachers agreed that it is clear how to develop a high-quality IRIP and 40% reported that they received sufficient support to do so. Teachers' uncertainty surrounding IRIPs may be due to the additional paperwork required to complete them, which creates an additional time burden that may detract from instruction. One stakeholder expressed that it may also be the result of uncertainty about what strategies would be useful to address students' specific needs:

> *One of the challenges of the Law is...their IRIPs, that they're required to think of strategies and interventions to support that child. I think we lack understanding what a quality... strategy might be, and so it would be really valuable to make sure that people understand and are able to choose a strategy that will really support that child's needs that is research-based and evidence-based, like we know it works, and I don't think we have that across the state, that knowledge of how to do that [for IRIPs].*

Educators were also skeptical about the ability of IRIPs to improve students' literacy outcomes. Just 37% of K-3 teachers, 43% of elementary school principals, and 57% of ISD Early Literacy Coaches agreed that creating an IRIP was an effective way to improve literacy for students who are identified as having a "reading deficiency." Although we did not ask educators why they

TEACHERS FIND IRIP DEVELOPMENT TO BE A CONFUSING PROCESS

A total of 73% of district superintendents reported that they required all schools and teachers to use a district-created IRIP template and 30% reported providing supports to help teachers create IRIPs. Only 33% of teachers agreed that it was clear how to develop a high-quality IRIP and 40% reported sufficient support to do so.



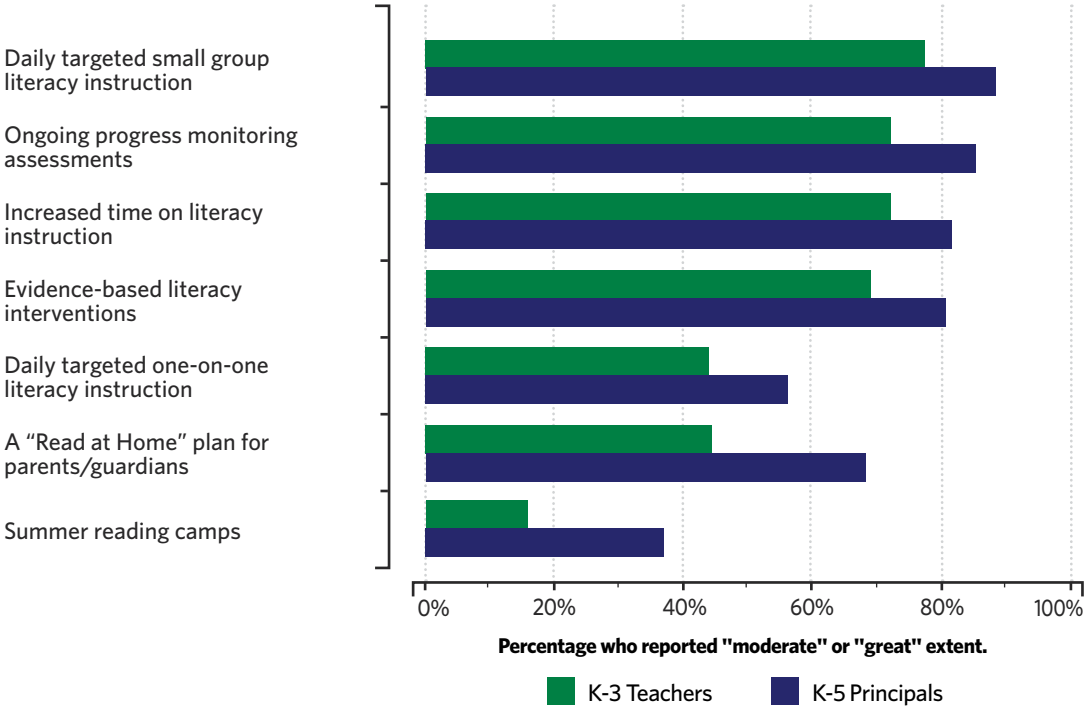
Teachers' uncertainty surrounding IRIPs may be due to the additional paperwork required to complete them, which creates an additional time burden that may detract from instruction.

did not perceive IRIPs to be an effective way to improve students' literacy outcomes, this may be because they do not believe the additional administrative burden the IRIP requires will benefit student learning. As described below, educators reported facing significant time constraints in implementing the Read by Grade Three Law, and this likely affected their perceptions about IRIPs.

Educators More Often Reported Implementing Literacy Supports That They Perceived as Useful

Educators reported varied use of the literacy supports the Law requires. Figure 5.19 shows the extent to which different groups of educators reported providing various literacy supports. K-3 teachers and elementary school principals most often reported providing daily targeted small group instruction to students with a "reading deficiency." This was closely followed by increased time on literacy instruction, ongoing progress monitoring assessments, and evidence-based literacy interventions. Educators were less likely to report providing "Read at Home" plans for parents/guardians including training workshops and regular home reading, daily targeted one-on-one literacy instruction, and summer reading camps.

FIGURE 5.19. Reported Provision of Literacy Supports

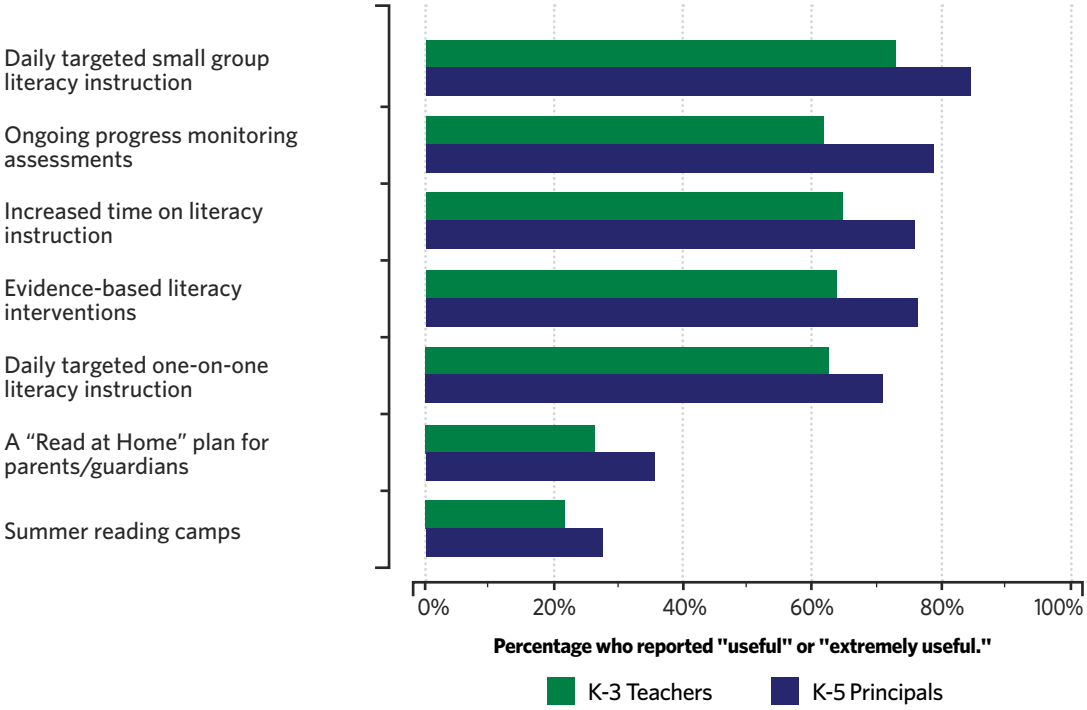


Note: This figure combines results from multiple survey questions. Teachers and principals were asked, "To what extent are you (or the teachers in your school) using the following interventions when you work with students who are identified as having a 'reading deficiency'?" Source: EPIC survey of educators about the Read by Grade Three Law.

These varying levels of implementation of the Law's different literacy supports may be partially attributed to educators' beliefs that some supports were more useful than others in improving students' literacy. Figure 5.20 depicts teachers' and principals' beliefs about the usefulness of various literacy supports for increasing students' literacy outcomes. Eighty-five percent of

elementary school principals reported that daily targeted small group literacy instruction was useful or extremely useful for students with a "reading deficiency." Seventy-nine percent said the same of ongoing progress monitoring assessments, and 76% of evidence-based literacy interventions and increased time on literacy instruction. By contrast, just 28% believed summer reading camps were useful and only 36% believed that "Read at Home" plans would be useful in improving student literacy. K-3 teachers agreed with principals about the usefulness of these literacy supports, but to a lesser extent. It is perhaps not surprising therefore that educators reported being less likely to implement the supports that they perceived as less useful. However, schools are also required to have MTSS systems in place, many of which predate the Read by Grade Three Law. These systems include supports like small group instruction, progress monitoring, and increased instructional time—literacy supports also included in the Law. Therefore, the fact that educators more often reported implementing these supports may also be because they were continuing supports that their schools already had in place.

FIGURE 5.20. Reported Usefulness of Literacy Supports



Note: This figure combines results from multiple survey questions. Teachers and principals were asked, "To what extent are you (or the teachers in your school) using the following interventions when you work with students who are identified as having a 'reading deficiency'? If you use it, how useful is it in improving students' literacy?" Respondents who answered "Not at all" for using an intervention were instructed to leave the "usefulness" question blank. Source: EPIC survey of educators about the Read by Grade Three Law.

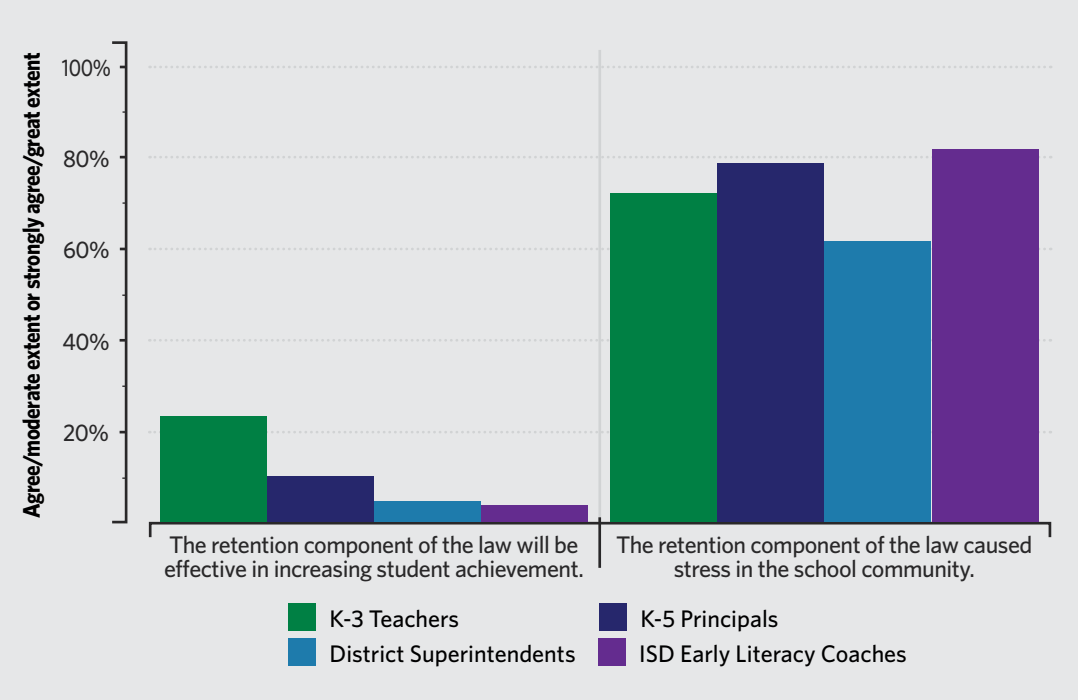
Retention

Educators Did Not Believe That Retention Will Improve Student Literacy

More than half of principals, district superintendents, and ISD Early Literacy Coaches indicated that they believed retention would not be at all effective in increasing student achievement. Just

28% of teachers responded that retention was an effective literacy support, with an additional 53% indicating that they believed it would be effective to at least a small extent. However, 72% of K-3 teachers, 78% of elementary school principals, 61% of district superintendents, and 82% of ISD Early Literacy Coaches reported that retention causes stress in the school community.

FIGURE 5.21. Educators' Beliefs About Retention



Note: This figure combines results from multiple survey questions. Teachers, principals, district superintendents, and ISD Early Literacy Coaches were asked, "Please indicate the extent to which you believe each of the following elements of the Read by Grade Three Law will be effective in increasing student achievement." and "To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements about the Read by Grade Three Law?" Source: EPIC survey of educators about the Read by Grade Three Law.

Most Districts Planned to Make Retention Decisions on a Case-by-Case Basis

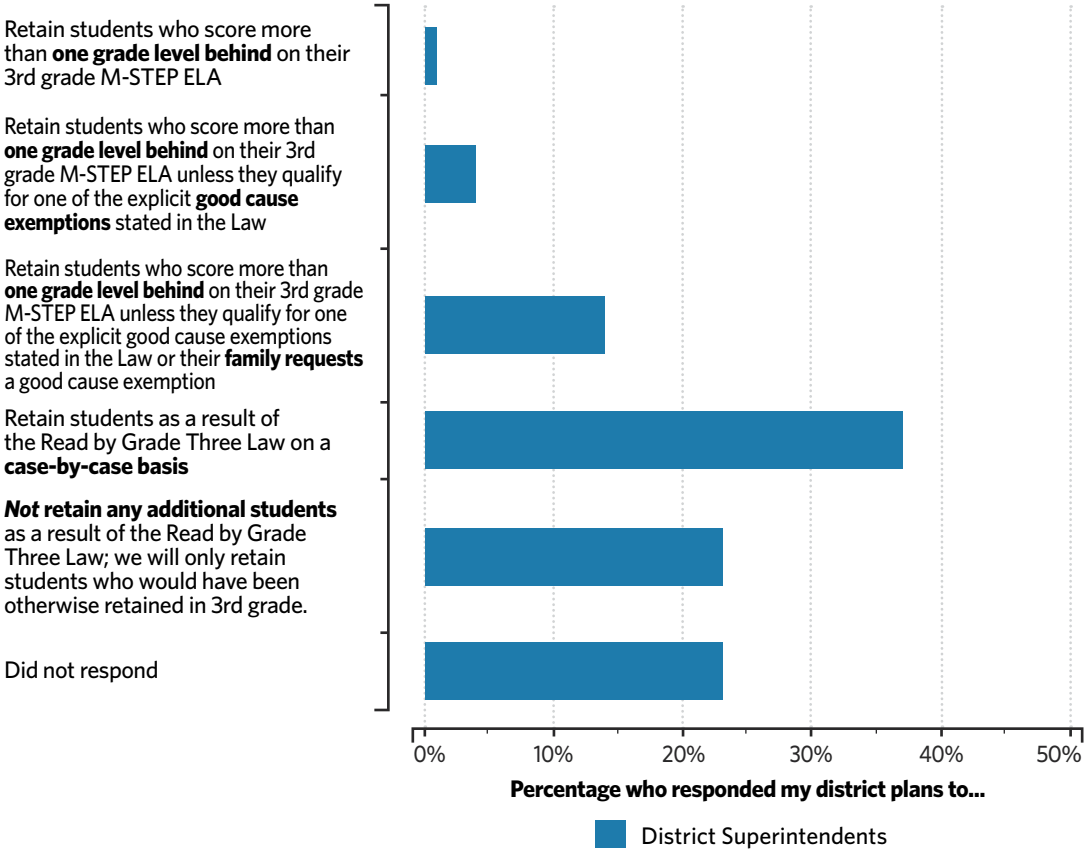
Given widespread doubt about the efficacy of retention, it is perhaps unsurprising that interview and survey data suggest that districts decided to implement this component of the Law to varying degrees. As one external stakeholder said:

> *We hear there are plenty of districts that suggest they're going to simply promote at parents' behests. If a parent wants their student moved to fourth grade, they move them to fourth grade. It'll just be the superintendent blessing, move them forward and that's the end of the story. Others have said they're gonna be very strict about it.*

District superintendents reported variation in how they planned to implement the retention component of the Law in their survey responses. They most commonly reported that their

districts planned to make retention decisions on a case-by-case basis, an intention that appears to have grown alongside spring 2020 COVID-19 school-building closures. Figure 5.22.1 shows districts' plans for third-grade retention before the COVID-19 pandemic, and Figure 5.22.2 shows their retention plans after the COVID-19-related school-building closures, suspension of state testing, and waiver of mandated retention under the Read by Grade Three Law (Executive Order 2020-65, April 2020). Before the COVID-19 school-building closures, 37% of district superintendents reported that they planned to make retention decisions on a case-by-case basis. Another 23% said that their district did not plan on retaining any additional students because of the Read by Grade Three Law; they only planned to retain those who would have otherwise been retained in third grade. Less often, district superintendents indicated that they planned on retaining any student who failed to meet the cut score on the M-STEP unless they qualified for a good cause exemption or their family requested a good cause exemption. No district superintendents said they planned to retain every student who failed to meet the cut score on the M-STEP; however, 23% of district superintendents did not respond to this question at all.

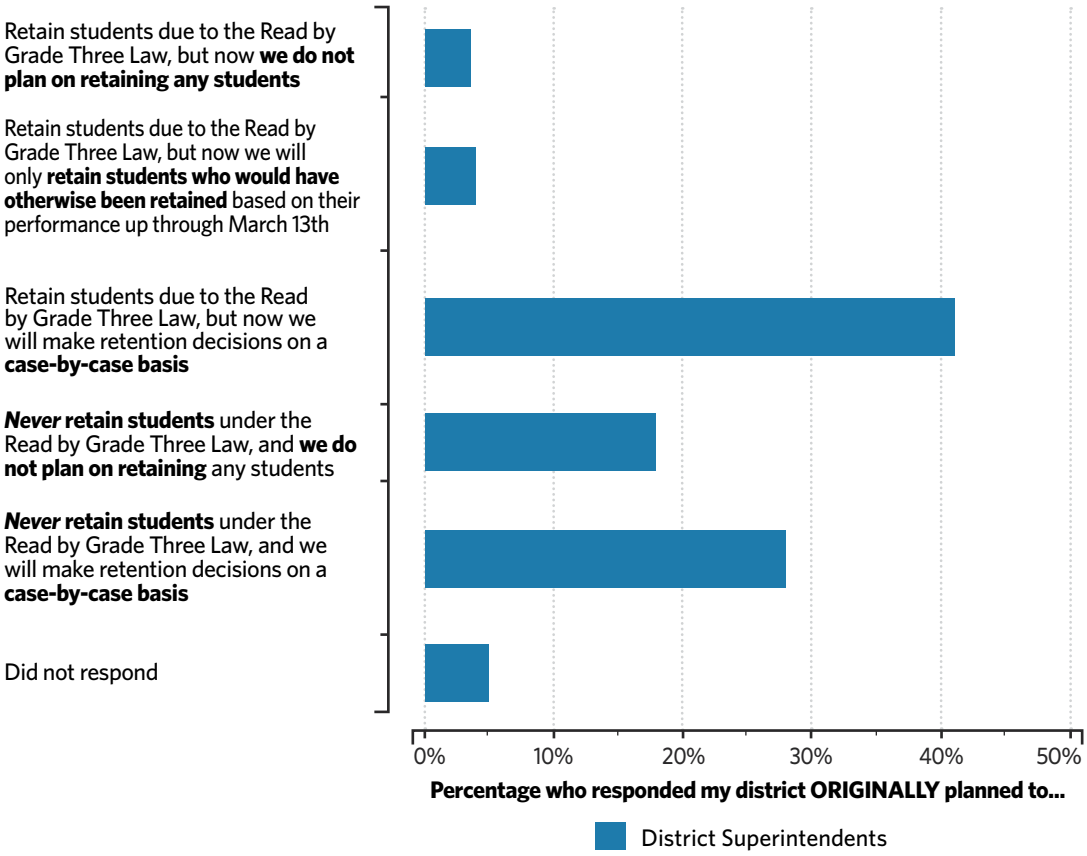
FIGURE 5.22.1 Districts' Plans for Third-Grade Retention Before the COVID-19 Pandemic



Note: District superintendents were asked, "Please select the statement that best reflects your district's plans for student retention under the Read by Grade Three Law." This table only includes responses before COVID-19 school-building closures on March 13, 2020. Source: EPIC survey of educators about the Read by Grade Three Law.

District superintendents' retention plans appear to have changed with COVID-19, becoming even more likely to make retention determinations on a case-by-case basis. When asked how their third-grade retention plans under the Law changed in light of the pandemic, 41% of superintendents reported that their district originally planned on retaining students due to the Read by Grade Three Law, but now would make retention decisions on a case-by-case basis, and an additional 28% reported that their district never intended to retain students under the Read by Grade Three Law but would now make retention decisions on a case-by-case basis.

FIGURE 5.22.2. How did Suspension of State Assessments and Retention Waivers Affect Districts' Plans for Third-Grade Retention?



Note: In the COVID-19 survey administered following the suspension of face-to-face instruction in spring 2020, district superintendents were asked, "Due to the suspension of face-to-face instruction because of COVID-19 and suspension of state assessments for the 2019-20 school year, the state is waiving the requirement that students will be retained based on the ELA M-STEP. How does this impact your district's plans for third-grade retention, if at all?" Source: EPIC survey of educators about the Read by Grade Three Law.

Special Section C: Resources Invested in the Read by Grade Three Law

Since passing it in the 2015-16 school year, the state has allocated funding to support the implementation of the Read by Grade Three Law. As with any intervention, it is important to understand the full costs of the Law to put into perspective any changes in outcomes of interest and assess whether the Law is an effective use of resources.

As we discuss throughout the report, while there were many interventions included in the full Read by Grade Three Law, the piece that received the most public attention was the retention component. While studies have shown that students may benefit from test-based promotion policies, policymakers have expressed concern that these benefits may not offset the high costs associated with retention. Rose and Schimke (2012) show that retaining students for an additional year of schooling costs an average of $10,297 per year per student. Eide & Goldhaber (2005) conducted a cost-benefit analysis of grade retention and find that, overall, the economic benefits of retention did not outweigh the costs. However, particular components of statewide literacy policies, specifically summer reading programs, have the potential to save states millions of dollars by remediating students before they would need to be retained (Reed, Cook, & Aloe, 2018).

Winters (2018) demonstrates two major limitations in previous cost-benefit analyses for test-based retention policies. First, prior assessments fail to incorporate the effect of student performance before the retention decision (i.e., the potential

benefits from the "threat of retention" for both retained and promoted students). Second, he posits that prior assessments may have overstated the cost of retention because they failed to account for the fact that many students retained under the policy would likely have otherwise been retained in a later grade. After adjusting for these two factors, Winters (2018) finds that the economic benefits of Florida's test-based promotion policy substantially exceed its costs to students and taxpayers, yielding net benefits of $649 million for the first third-grade cohort subject to the policy in 2002-03.

At this stage of our evaluation, the effects of retention and the threat of retention under the Read by Grade Three Law on student achievement are still unclear. Due to the suspension of state testing and retention requirements for the 2019-20 school year because of COVID-19, no students have yet been retained under the Law nor have any student assessment outcomes been observed under the direct and proximate threat of retention. We can, however, begin to assess the various costs required and allocated to implement the Read by Grade Three Law.

To understand these costs, we included in our educator surveys a series of questions about the time and financial resources associated with literacy-focused activities and the Law's implementation. These cost-effectiveness questions were administered to all district superintendents (n=192) and a random sample of 10% of K-8 teachers (n=1,753) and principals (n=92). We report responses of elementary teachers (n=1,261), elementary school principals (n=74), and district superintendents in this section.

EDUCATORS' REPORTED TIME COSTS

Educators' Reported Time on Literacy Activities and the Implementation of the Law

On average, superintendents reported that their districts employ about 71 full-time equivalent (FTE) staff in positions that contribute to literacy instruction and/or the implementation of the Read by Grade Three Law. Table C.1 provides a breakdown of these 71 total FTE staff by position. Column A shows that about three quarters of these staff consist of K-3 teachers (26 FTE, on average), 4th-5th grade teachers (14 FTE), and special education providers (14 FTE). The remaining quarter is comprised of literacy-focused aides or paraprofessionals (5 FTE), literacy specialists/interventionists (3 FTE), district literacy coaches (2 FTE), EL specialists (2 FTE), reading Title I teachers (2 FTE), ELA coordinators (1 FTE), a superintendent (1 FTE), other district administrators (e.g., assessment, literacy, curriculum; 1 FTE), and other employees (2 FTE).

Columns B and D show the average reported percentage of these employees' time that is devoted to the literacy activities or instruction, and how much of this literacy time is directly attributable to the implementation of the Read by Grade Three Law, respectively. Among all positions, superintendents reported that district literacy coaches, literacy

specialists/interventionists, reading Title I teachers, and literacy-focused aides/paraprofessionals devoted the greatest proportion of their time to literacy activities or instruction and the implementation of the Law. Finally, we calculate the number of FTEs devoted to literacy activities or instruction and the implementation of the Law based on the above percentages. In total, district superintendents reported that approximately 32 FTEs were devoted to literacy activities and instruction. Of these, nine FTEs were directly attributable to the implementation of the Law.

TABLE C.1. Reported FTE Employed and Proportion of Time Devoted to Literacy Instruction and Read by Grade Three Implementation (District-Level)

	Reported FTE the district employs	Reported percentage of these employees' time devoted to literacy activities/ instruction	Reported percentage of these employees' literacy time that is directly attributable to implementation of the Law	Reported percentage of employees' time devoted to implementation of the Law (B*C)	Reported FTE devoted to literacy activities/ instruction (A*B)	Reported FTE devoted to implementation of the Law (A*D)
	(A)	(B)	(C)	(D)	(E)	(F)
District Literacy Coaches	1.79	70.9%	45.4%	32.2%	1.27	0.58
ELA Coordinators	0.51	22.9%	12.3%	2.8%	0.12	0.01
Superintendent	1.00	10.4%	19.6%	2.0%	0.10	0.02
Other District Administrators	1.39	24.5%	22.6%	5.5%	0.34	0.08
Literacy Specialists/ Interventionists	2.59	70.5%	43.1%	30.4%	1.83	0.79
Special Education Providers	13.61	44.1%	25.0%	11.0%	6.00	1.50
English Learner Specialists	1.77	30.7%	13.0%	4.0%	0.54	0.07
K-3 Grade Teachers	25.79	44.6%	32.7%	14.6%	11.49	3.75
4th-5th Grade Teachers	13.57	40.6%	17.1%	6.9%	5.51	0.94
Reading Title I Teachers	1.65	67.4%	38.3%	25.8%	1.11	0.43
Literacy-Focused Aides/ Paraprofessionals	5.15	63.2%	38.2%	24.2%	3.26	1.24
Other Personnel	2.32	8.3%	5.6%	0.5%	0.19	0.01
Total	71.14				31.76	9.42

Note: Columns A-C are based on responses of district superintendents to the survey question, "We are interested in how many district/organization personnel are devoted to literacy activities in your district/organization. For each type of personnel listed in the rows below, please tell us A) How many full-time employees (FTEs) your district/ organization employs; B) Approximately the proportion of these personnel's time devoted to literacy activities and/ or instruction; C) How much of that time is spent to implement the Read by Grade Three Law." Columns D-F are calculated based on Columns A-C. Source: EPIC survey of educators about the Read by Grade Three Law.

TABLE C.2. Reported FTE Employed and Proportion of Time Devoted to Literacy Instruction and Read by Grade Three Implementation (School-Level)

	Reported FTE the district employs	Reported percentage of these employees' time devoted to literacy activities/ instruction	Reported percentage of these employees' literacy time that is directly attributable to implementation of the Law	Reported percentage of employees' time devoted to implementation of the Law (B*C)	Reported FTE devoted to literacy activities/ instruction (A*B)	Reported FTE devoted to implementation of the Law (A*D)
	(A)	(B)	(C)	(D)	(E)	(F)
School-Based Literacy Coaches	0.89	58.3%	37.3%	22%	0.52	0.33
ELA Coordinators	0.25	19.2%	15.2%	3%	0.05	0.04
Principal	1.05	30.5%	26.8%	8%	0.32	0.28
Other School Administrators	0.34	14.6%	9.4%	1%	0.05	0.03
Literacy Specialists/ Interventionists	0.98	69.0%	39.7%	27%	0.68	0.39
Special Education Providers	2.40	48.3%	26.1%	13%	1.16	0.63
English Learner Specialists	0.51	39.6%	20.8%	8%	0.20	0.11
K-3 Grade Teachers	9.27	48.9%	32.8%	16%	4.53	3.04
4th-5th Grade Teachers	4.43	43.5%	15.1%	7%	1.93	0.67
Reading Title I Teachers	0.92	56.1%	27.1%	15%	0.52	0.25
Literacy-Focused Aides/ Paraprofessionals	2.18	57.5%	31.8%	18%	1.25	0.69
Other Personnel	1.07	18.3%	18.4%	3%	0.20	0.20
Total	24.29				11.40	6.66

Note: Columns A-C are based on responses of principals to the survey question, "We are interested in how many school site personnel are devoted to literacy activities in your school. For each type of personnel listed in the rows below, please tell us A) How many full-time employees (FTEs) your school employs; B) Approximately the proportion of these personnel's time devoted to literacy activities and/or instruction; C) How much of that time is spent to implement the Read by Grade Three Law." Columns D-F are calculated based on Columns A-C. Source: EPIC survey of educators about the Read by Grade Three Law.

At the school level, elementary school principals who responded to the cost questions reported on average there were about 24 FTE staff working in literacy-relevant positions, although many positions were not devoted full time to this work. Indeed, principals reported that in their schools they had fewer than one school-based literacy coach, ELA coordinator, principal, other school administrator, literacy specialist/interventionist, EL specialist, reading Title 1 teacher, and "other personnel" working on issues related to literacy. In addition, elementary principals noted that just over one special education provider, on

average, worked full time on literacy, as did five K-3 teachers, two 4th-5th grade teachers, and one literacy-focused aide/paraprofessional (see Column E in Table C.2). Similar to the district level, elementary school principals reported that about 11 FTEs were devoted to literacy instruction and activities. Of these, seven FTEs were directly attributable to the implementation of the Law.

Elementary school principals reported on average there were about 24 FTE staff working in literacy-relevant positions at the school level.

District superintendents and elementary school principals also reported spending some of their own time on literacy-focused activities, including developing and researching literacy curricula or supports, determining which students need additional literacy support or Individual Reading Improvement Plans (IRIPs), communicating with families about literacy/the Read by Grade Three Law, and processing good cause exemptions. District superintendents reported spending 15% of their time on these activities and elementary principals reported spending 28% of their time on them. Moreover, superintendents in districts with higher predicted retention rates, lower ELA performance, higher proportions of economically disadvantaged students, and those working in urban districts reported spending the greatest proportions of their time on literacy-focused activities.

Educators' Reported Time on Family Engagement Activities

In addition to the literacy instruction students are receiving in school, the Law stipulates that educators engage with families to support student literacy learning at home. For example, the Law includes "Read at Home" plans as one of the literacy interventions that should be included in IRIPs for students identified as having a "reading deficiency" under the Law. On average, K-3 teachers who received the cost questions reported spending about five hours in a typical month on family engagement activities (e.g., sending home books, working with all families to create "Read at Home" plans, and providing family literacy workshops). This is about the same amount of time reported by 4th-5th grade teachers, and about two hours more than reported by 6th-8th grade teachers. Principals who received the cost questions generally reported spending fewer hours on family engagement activities than did teachers, with elementary principals reporting spending about four hours on these activities and middle-school principals reportedly spending about two hours in a typical month. District superintendents were also involved with family engagement activities, reporting an average, about three and a half hours in a typical month spent on these activities. Overall, educators in districts with high predicted retention rates, low ELA performance, high proportions of economically disadvantaged students, and urban districts reported spending more time on family engagement activities.

Educators' Reported Time on Summer Reading Camps or Programs

The Read by Grade Three Law also recommends summer reading camps or programs to support students who are identified as having a "reading deficiency." Such programs are given direct funding through 35(a)9. Ten percent of K-3 teachers and 6% of 4th-5th grade teachers who received the cost questions reported working over the summer in a summer reading program or camp that is intended to help students identified as having a "reading deficiency." Of these teachers, on average, 4th-5th grade teachers reported spending slightly more hours working in such programs (47.7) relative to K-3 teachers (42.4). Further, our subgroup analyses find that although the percentages of teachers that reported working in a summer reading camp were similar across subgroups, teachers in districts with high predicted retention rate, low ELA performance, high proportions of economically disadvantaged students, and rural districts reported spending more hours working in the summer reading camp.

REPORTED TIME SPENT ON LITERACY-FOCUSED ACTIVITIES

Elementary principals reported spending 28% of their own time on literacy-focused activities, including developing and researching literacy curricula or supports, determining which students need additional literacy support or IRIPs, communicating with families about literacy/the Read by Grade Three Law, and processing good cause exemptions.

EDUCATORS' REPORTED FINANCIAL COSTS

When it comes to financial costs, district superintendents reported on average that approximately 27% of their total district budget is spent on literacy resources and activities, with the highest proportions spent on facilities (e.g., classrooms, libraries; 5%), curricula (5%), and materials and supplies (4%), and the lowest proportions on family outreach and events (1%) and communications about the Law or literacy (1%). These numbers need to be interpreted with caution. Although we asked specifically about the proportion of the budget spent on literacy activities and instruction, district superintendents might not be able to differentiate the costs for literacy activities from the total costs; for instance, facilities, equipment, and technology are often used for instruction across subjects. Further, we asked district superintendents what proportion of each of these resources they spent as a direct result of the Read by Grade Three Law. District superintendents reported spending the highest proportion on communications about the Law/literacy and summer camps directly because of the Law. On average, about 5% of their total district budget was reportedly spent on literacy resources and activities as a direct result of the Read by Grade Three Law.

TABLE C.3. Reported Percentage of District Budget Spent on Literacy and Read by Grade Three Implementation			
	Percentage of total district budget spent on this activity or resource	Percentage of the amount in Column A that is spent because of the Law	Percentage of total district budget spent because of the Law (A*B)
	(A)	(B)	(C)
Assessments	3.6%	17.3%	0.6%
Professional Development	3.5%	18.1%	0.6%
Curricula	4.6%	19.6%	0.9%
Materials and Supplies	3.8%	17.1%	0.7%
Equipment and Technology	2.8%	12.0%	0.3%
Facilities	5.2%	7.7%	0.4%
Summer Camp/Programming	1.8%	23.3%	0.4%
Communications About the Law/Literacy	0.8%	35.5%	0.3%
Family Outreach and Events	1.1%	20.7%	0.2%
Total	27.3%		4.5%

Note: Columns A-B are based on district superintendent responses to the survey question, "Approximately what proportion of your total district budget is spent on the following literacy resources and activities? And approximately how much of these funds are being spent directly as a result of the implementation of the Read by Grade Three Law?" Column C is calculated based on Columns A-B. Responses that reported spending over 100% of their district budget on literacy resources and activities are excluded from the calculation. Source: EPIC survey of educators about the Read by Grade Three Law.

We also asked district superintendents and principals to report the total dollar amount their district or school spent on literacy resources and activities and how much of this was associated with the Read by Grade Three Law. We combined these data with student counts from state administrative records to determine the rate of spending per student enrolled. Because literacy instruction and the Law's implementation are more pertinent to elementary students, Table C.4 presents funds per K-5 student in addition to funds per pupil (i.e., K-12 student) for district spending. On average, district superintendents reported spending approximately $330 per pupil ($510 per elementary student) on literacy resources and activities to support literacy instruction. Approximately 60% of these funds (i.e., $198 per pupil or $306 per elementary student) were spent on activities and resources to support the implementation of and activities associated with the Law, including assessments, summer reading programs/camps, after-school initiatives, literacy curricula, and literacy instructional staff. Elementary principals reported spending approximately $194 per elementary student on literacy resources and activities to support literacy instruction.[1] They reported that approximately 61% of these funds (i.e., $118 per student) was spent on activities and resources to support the implementation of and activities associated with the Read by Grade Three Law.

TABLE C.4. Reported Funds Spent on Literacy Instruction and Read by Grade Three Implementation		
	District Superintendents	**K-5 Principals**
Reported spending on literacy activities and resources:		
Per Pupil (i.e., K-12 student)	$329.64	$184.89
Per K-5 Student	$509.74	$194.43
Percentage of spending on literacy activities and resources that is to support the implementation of the Law	60.4%	60.9%
Estimated spending on activities and resources to support the implementation of the Read by Grade Three Law:		
Per Pupil (i.e., K-12 student)	$199.07	$112.63
Per K-5 Student	$307.83	$118.45

Note: The per student spending is calculated based on the total spending reported by district superintendents and principals in survey questions "Approximately how much does your district/organization spend on literacy resources and activities to support literacy instruction in your district/organization? Approximately what proportion of these funds is spent on activities and resources to support the implementation of and activities associated with the Read by Grade Three Law? As you consider these expenditures, please keep in mind spending on all aspects of the Read by Grade Three Law, including assessments, summer reading programs/camps, after-school initiatives, literacy curriculum, literacy instructional staff, etc." Student counts that were used to calculate the per student spending are from 2018-19 fall student administrative records. Source: EPIC survey of educators about the Read by Grade Three Law and student administrative records.

SPECIAL SECTION C NOTES

1 Elementary school principals' reported per pupil spending is different from their reported per elementary student spending because respondents who responded to the elementary school principal survey may work in schools that serve both K-5 students and students in higher grades.

STAKEHOLDERS FACED CHALLENGES IMPLEMENTING THE LAW

As described in Section Four, implementation is a critical driver of any policy's success. However, as illustrated in this section, there were often gaps between the intended implementation of the Read by Grade Three Law's Theory of Change and how the Law was actually implemented. In analyzing interviewees' accounts of the Law alongside educators' survey responses, we identify several implementation challenges that may contribute to these gaps. These challenges will be important for policymakers and state-level officials to understand as they continue to support educators' implementation of the Read by Grade Three Law.

There Was a Disconnect Between Policymakers and Policy Implementers

State-level stakeholders identified challenges with implementing the Read by Grade Three Law as written, indicating that some components of the Law created logistical hurdles because lawmakers were unaware of critical details about the state assessment content and timeline. One major challenge MDE faced was identifying the appropriate cut score on the third-grade M-STEP ELA assessment. The Read by Grade Three Law requires a measure of "literacy proficiency" that was not available through the state's existing assessment. As one MDE staff member recounted:

> *The Law was written in a way that doesn't make sense. The people that wrote it and approved it didn't listen to the information and the guidance that the department was trying to educate them with. There's no reading score from the English language arts test so you can't in the same sentence say, 'Give me a reading score from an ELA test.' You can't do that... We had to try to figure out a way to make a square peg fit in a round hole. Basically...we went through a standard setting process with the English language arts test... [and] created a new set of performance level descriptors around what a student would look like that might be functioning a year behind.*

In other words, MDE faced two issues in defining a cut score. First, they needed to set a standard for *reading* based on an ELA assessment that is not intended to parse out a reading score separate from a holistic assessment of proficiency in ELA. Second, the existing proficiency-level cut scores on the M-STEP indicate whether a student has reached "grade-level proficiency," but there is no existing cut score for "one grade level below proficiency." Therefore, MDE needed to create a new cut score by which to identify students who are at least one grade level below proficiency.

MDE and **Center for Educational Performance and Information (CEPI)** staff were also concerned about the timeline for notifying families of their third-grader's potential retention status laid out in the Law. One MDE staff member told us:

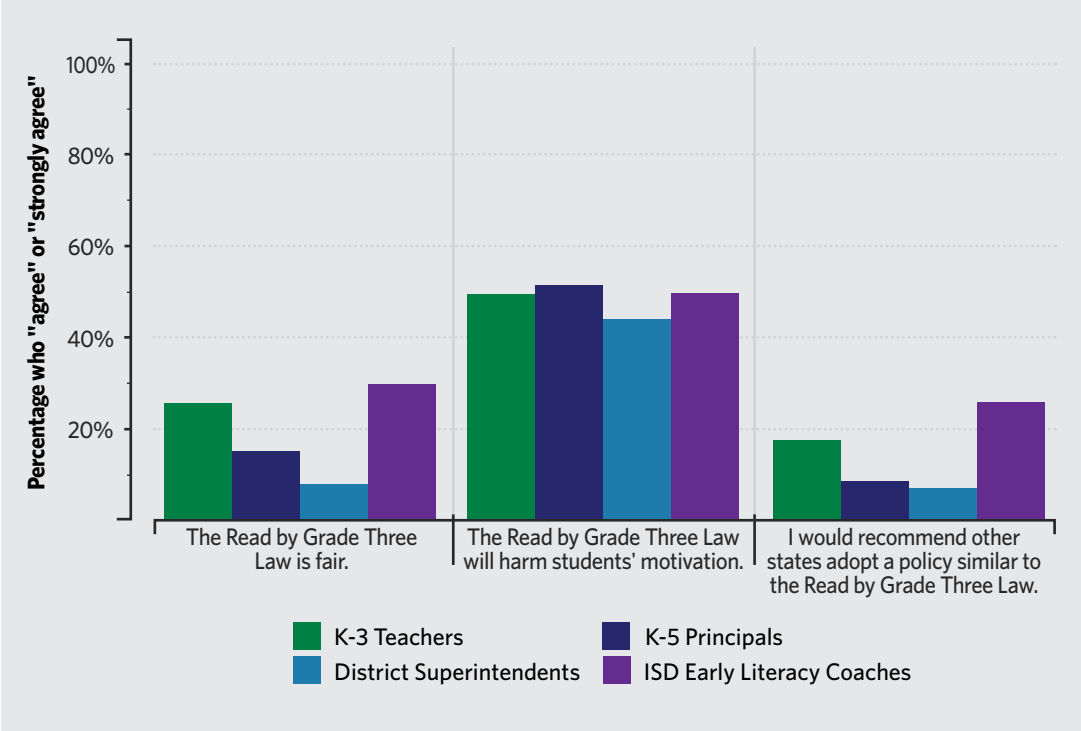
> *The timelines are not possible. It talks about identifying or sending information home to parents about students that might be retained based on their test score. Send those letters home by May 21st or whatever that date is. Well, testing's not done yet so how are we gonna send a letter home when the assessment's not done yet?... I mean we won't meet that date. We can't. We're gonna do the best we can and figure out some ways to hit the best timeline we can, but that's not gonna be possible.*

Ultimately, these challenges with identifying an appropriate retention cut score and notifying families about retention decisions within the timeline specified in the Law may have been the product of siloed policymaking. As one MDE staff member explained, *"We weren't involved in the development of the legislation or the review of the legislation, which sometimes we are. For this particular one we were not."* Ultimately, it appears that this lack of collaboration created logistical challenges for those tasked with implementing the Read by Grade Three Law at the state level.

Educators Had Negative Perceptions of the Law

As critical players in policy implementation, educators' beliefs about a policy's fairness and effectiveness will shape how they implement it. When it comes to the Read by Grade Three Law, educators harbored many negative perceptions, which may have affected the ways they implemented the Law and some of its features. Figure 5.23 shows the extent to which educators agreed with various statements about the Law. Just 25% of K-3 teachers, 15% of elementary school principals, 8% of district superintendents, and 29% of ISD Early Literacy Coaches believed that the Read by Grade Three Law is fair. Moreover, approximately half of teachers, principals, district superintendents, and ISD Early Literacy Coaches worried that the Law would harm students' motivation.

FIGURE 5.23. Educators' Perceptions of the Read by Grade Three Law



Note: Teachers, principals, district superintendents, and ISD Early Literacy Coaches were asked, "To what extent to you agree or disagree with the following statements about the Read by Grade Three Law?" Source: EPIC survey of educators about the Read by Grade Three Law.

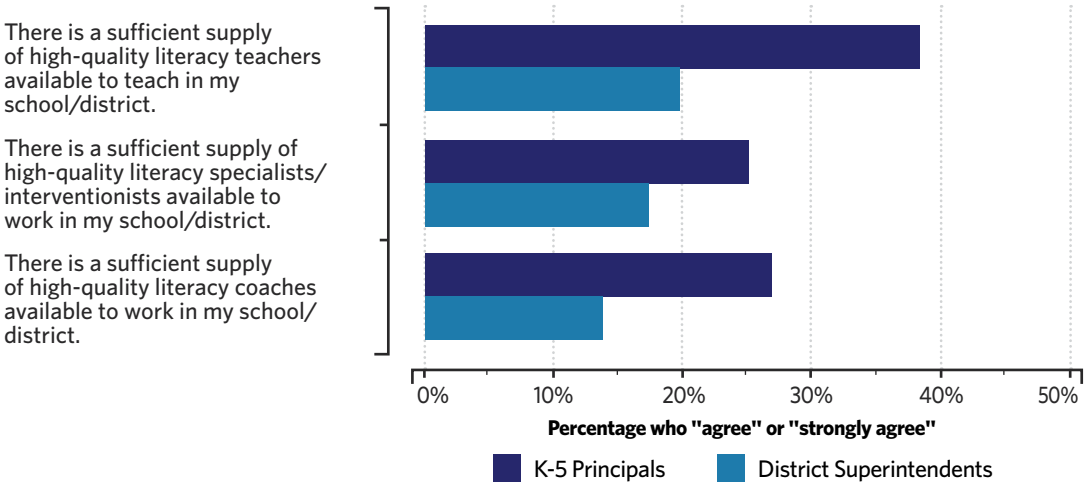
Tellingly, just 17% of K-3 teachers, 9% of elementary school principals, 7% of district superintendents, and 25% of ISD Early Literacy Coaches would recommend other states adopt a policy similar to the Read by Grade Three Law. If educators do not believe other places should

adopt a similar policy, they may be less motivated to implement that same policy in their own schools and districts. Previous research has found that early literacy policies have been more effective at improving student achievement when educators "buy in" to the policy (Barone, 2013). Survey evidence suggests that Michigan educators were not buying into the Read by Grade Three Law, which can pose significant challenges for the implementation and efficacy of the policy. However, it is possible that educators' perceptions of the Law were colored by their perceptions of retention. As reported in **Figure 5.20**, a majority of educators perceived most of the literacy supports prescribed under the Law as useful. Meanwhile, as noted in **Figure 5.21**, few educators perceived retention as effective and many agreed that it caused stress in their school community.

There Was a Shortage of Literacy Coaches

One of the central components of the Read by Grade Three Law is providing highly qualified literacy coaches to deliver instructional support to educators. As discussed, approximately a quarter of elementary school principals and district superintendents reported that the number of ISD Early Literacy Coaches, school- and district-based literacy coaches, and literacy specialists/interventionists increased since the passage of the Law. These findings are encouraging. However, even with this increased access, we find that the shortage of literacy coaches remains among the most significant challenges to successfully implementing the Law. Figure 5.24 shows educators' perceptions of human-capital resources in implementing the Read by Grade Three Law. Only 25% of elementary school principals and 18% of district superintendents agreed that there was a sufficient supply of high-quality literacy coaches available to work in their school or district. A similar percentage reported the same with respect to high-quality literacy specialists/interventionists.

FIGURE 5.24. Educators' Perceptions of Human-Capital Resources in Implementing the Law



Note: Ten percent of K-5 principals and 22% of district superintendents did not respond. Elementary school principals and district superintendents were asked, "To what extent do you agree with the following statements about you and your school's/district's ability to improve literacy instruction and/or implement the Read by Grade Three Law?" Source: EPIC survey of educators about the Read by Grade Three Law.

ISD Early Literacy Coaches' survey responses provide support for this concern; when asked about various hindrances to working as an ISD Early Literacy Coach, 37% agreed that the large number and geographic spread of teachers and coaches they were expected to support were a challenge to a moderate or great extent.

The shortage of ISD Early Literacy Coaches was more acute in larger ISDs than it was in smaller ISDs. Based on the list of ISD Early Literacy Coaches provided by the ELTF, the ratio of ISD Early Literacy Coaches to K-3 teachers for a large ISD was 1:487, while the ratio in a small ISD was 1:69. Similarly, ISD Early Literacy Coaches in large ISDs were expected to serve a much higher number of schools or districts than those in small ISDs. On average, each ISD Early Literacy Coach served 106 schools and 15 districts in a large ISD, relative to 25 schools and 6 districts in a small ISD.

TABLE 5.2. ISD Early Literacy Coach – Teacher Ratio, by ISD Size

	ISD Size		
	Small	**Medium**	**Large**
ISD Early Literacy Coach-to-K-3 teacher ratio	1:69	1:122	1:487
ISD Early Literacy Coach-to-school ratio	1:25	1: 35	1:106
ISD Early Literacy Coach-to-district ratio	1:6	1:6	1:15

Note: The K-3 teachers are defined as classroom teachers who were assigned to any grade kindergarten through third grade. ISD size was measured by the number of students in grades K-8. ISDs were classified into "small," "medium," and "large" categories depend on whether they fall in the bottom quartile, middle two quartiles, or top quartile of the ISD size. Source: The Michigan Association of Intermediate School Administrators (MAISA) General Education Leadership Network's (GELN) Early Literacy Task Force (ELTF), student and teacher administrative records.

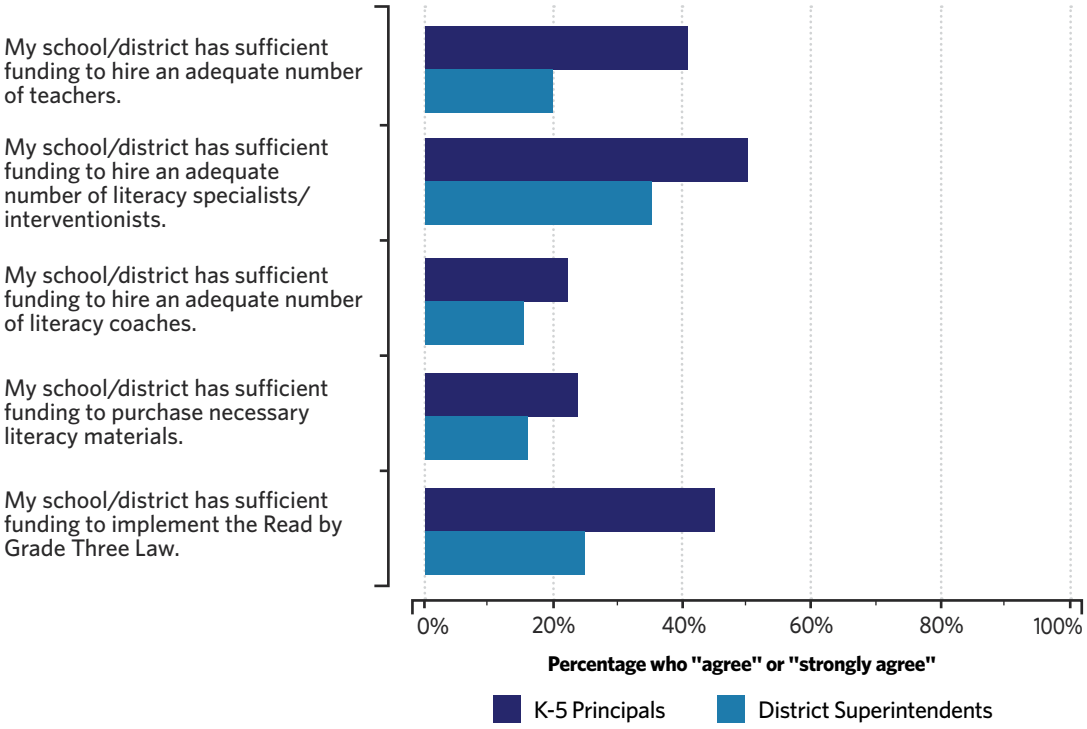
There are two components to this shortage of early literacy coaches and specialists. The first is that the Law provided only enough funding for 280 coaches[6], which is far lower than the amount allocated in the Florida law on which the Read by Grade Three Law is modeled. The second problem, however, may be even more difficult to overcome. A quarter of the stakeholders with whom we spoke perceived that, even at current funding levels, there was not a great enough supply of qualified coaches to meet the need for them under the Law. For instance, one former policymaker with whom we spoke said, *"We have such a talent problem in Michigan…Even if we paid for the correct amount of literacy coaching support, so that that was not a financial barrier, we don't have enough people to even fill the roles."* Addressing this may require providing teachers with training so they can become coaches or recruiting coaches from other states.

Fiscal Constraints Created Barriers to Hiring a Sufficient Number of Literacy Coaches

Although educators and stakeholders believed the Law as a whole was underfunded, this was particularly the case with respect to literacy coaching. Figure 5.25 displays educators' perceptions of fiscal resources in implementing the Read by Grade Three Law. In addition to fewer than half of elementary school principals and district superintendents agreeing that they had sufficient funding to implement the Read by Grade Three Law and purchase necessary literacy materials, it appears that financial constraints have exacerbated human capital challenges, particularly with literacy coaching.

Generally, elementary school principals and district superintendents who responded to our survey indicated that their schools or districts did not have sufficient funding to implement the Read by Grade Three Law (see Figure 5.25). They reported facing great challenges with funding to hire the literacy specialists/interventionists and literacy coaches they needed. Less than a quarter of elementary school principals and district superintendents said that their school or district had sufficient funding to hire an adequate number of literacy coaches or specialists/interventionists. Forty-five percent of principals and 25% of district superintendents agreed that they had sufficient funding to hire an adequate number of teachers.

FIGURE 5.25. Educators' Perceptions of Fiscal Resources in Implementing the Law



Note: Ten percent of K-5 principals and 22% of district superintendents did not respond. Elementary school principals and district superintendents were asked, "To what extent do you agree with the following statements about you and your school's/district's ability to improve literacy instruction and/or implement the Read by Grade Three Law?" Source: EPIC survey of educators about the Read by Grade Three Law.

The state-level stakeholders we interviewed agreed that the state is not spending enough money on literacy coaching. They often compared Michigan's Read by Grade Three Law to Florida's policy, but at the same time pointed out that Florida invested much more money in implementing its policy—particularly in literacy coaching. As one external stakeholder said:

> *We're nowhere in the ballpark of what Florida did...the point that I was—I would use that to try to articulate for folks how much a drop in the bucket what the legislature was allocating was and how far off we are as a state just how massively far off we are as a state in terms of the number of coaches that we have. To answer your question quite directly, no, I do not think that the coaching resources allocated were or are adequate to our population.*

Michigan Governor Gretchen Whitmer allocated funding through a series of line-item vetoes to triple the amount for early literacy coaches in 2019-20, but many expressed that this was still not enough financial support for this element of the Law. As one external stakeholder pointed out:

> *Then this year (2019-2020), Whitmer tripled the amount, so some ISDs also have opportunities based on the free and reduced [lunch] formula that they have to increase for more than one. Some have one. Some have two. It just depends on where they have fallen in the last couple years. Now they might be able to increase. What they didn't increase was the professional learning money. Now, if we triple our coaches, in a sense, 'cause we're going from 7 million to 21 million [dollars], we need to scale up the professional learning, but we don't have any extra money to do that.*

According to one external stakeholder involved in Michigan's literacy coaching system, the state requires far more money to implement this intervention:

> *What would we need? I actually have a spreadsheet of what I think we need. For coaches, we need at least 2,000 coaches in Michigan, official, honest-to-goodness—we got money coming in. They can afford to support these coaches just for early literacy. Not 100. Maybe we need $300 million a year for something like that… This year is $21 million, but last year it was $8 million. If $8 million buys you 100, not even that many. If you look at Florida, Florida spent a billion dollars, and we're spending 8 million dollars on coaches. You can't even wrap your head around it once you know what other states are spending, right?…They're gonna have to put money, more money behind things very strategically. If they want to hang onto this coaching as the strategy for learning, then we have to get much more savvy and have more coaching and more money put towards support and training of coaches so that they are really high quality. We need lawmakers to do that for sure.*

According to another stakeholder, the current funds will pay for only 270 coaches statewide (including the tripled funding), "*We've got $21 million in coaches, which we should be able to expand to about 270 statewide coaches, which is not nearly enough in terms of implementing [the] Law.*" As one former policymaker shared, *"When you get a reading coach or two reading coaches per Intermediate School District, then it's not alike [to Florida's reading law]. It's almost ineffective because it would be too diluted to really provide significant value."*

The Matching Requirement Exacerbated the Challenges Faced by ISDs with High Proportions of Economically Disadvantaged Students in Hiring Literacy Coaches

Exacerbating the overall insufficiency of the coaching intervention is ISDs' varying capacity to contribute the required resources to hire an ISD Early Literacy Coach. Between 2015-16 and 2018-19, ISDs were required to contribute at least 50% of the cost of an ISD Early Literacy Coach, with MDE contributing up to $37,500 in 2015-16 and 2016-17 (in theory one half of one coach's salary) and up to $75,000 in 2017-18 and 2018-19 (one half of two coaches' salaries). In other words, the ISD Early Literacy Coach component of the Law was a partially funded mandate. As one former policymaker summarized it:

> *The match wasn't high enough that the state provided. I think if there were any main failures of the legislation, it's that we didn't put the money behind it. I actually don't think that the legislation, the policy bill in itself is really that problematic...The problem that we've run into has been lack of adequate financial support, and also lack of talent to fill the [coaching] roles that are required.*

Interviewees were also concerned that the Law's matching component would privilege wealthier ISDs, while ISDs with fewer available resources would not be able to afford to put forth the money to hire a coach. Numerous interviewees across stakeholder groups (eight out of 24) discussed this issue. As one policymaker said, "*With the local-match component, it actually will incent more—higher-resource, more-affluent districts to take advantage of the literacy coaches more so than the districts that likely need them much more.*" This concern was supported by all five MDE staff members we interviewed. As one reiterated, "*The first year, some ISDs were like, 'I don't have 37.5 to match. What am I supposed to do?' Some of our smaller ISDs had more trouble, because they can't necessarily hire a full person.*"

Likely in response to these concerns, in 2019-20, Governor Whitmer eliminated the 50% matching requirement, and the department contributed up to $112,500 per ISD Early Literacy Coach.

ISD Early Literacy Coaches Lacked Prior Training

Interviewees were also concerned about a lack of prior training among these coaches. As one external stakeholder pointed out:

> *Most of our coaches don't have training in it. They don't have degrees in this, don't have a lot of experience. We have a lot of interesting data on how inexperienced our coaches are as a state. That's a really big issue, I think, statewide. That's the same thing for us here in [my] county. If the coaches aren't really skilled in the literacy practices and in coaching, it's not gonna work. We did a survey here in our county asking coaches what they saw as the role of coaching, how they would define their work and how they spend their time, and then we asked principals the same questions. What we learned was everybody's seeing it very differently, what their role is, what they are doing, what they should be doing, how it's defined. We have a challenge. I think we have a really, really great challenge, but it's exactly what you'd expect at this stage.*

If Michigan lacks a sufficient supply of experienced, high-quality literacy coaches, the problem is about more than funding levels to hire coaches; it is also about generating the training capacity and pipeline to staff vacant coaching roles with qualified educators. Currently, once coaches assume this role, they receive training required for all ISD Early Literacy Coaches. Nonetheless, fulfilling the coaching provision of the Law has been difficult as described by one external stakeholder, "*It's a challenge trying to implement things like coaching when you don't have [human] capacity... We have to grow it, and that patience of building people's capacity over time, you just don't turn it on. You have to grow it.*" This also suggests, however, that building educators' capacity and training them to be coaches could potentially be a positive long-term effect of the Law, if the state is able to fund capacity building.

Michigan's Teacher Shortage Posed a Challenge to the Effective Implementation of the Law

District Leaders Recruited Coaches from the Supply of Educators, Exacerbating Extant Teacher Shortages

Interviewees (six out of 24) and educators also expressed concerns about the complicated interplay between the need for more literacy coaches and Michigan's extant teacher shortage, which is especially a challenge in lower-resourced districts (e.g., Public Policy Associates, 2020). In discussing this shortage, one external stakeholder told us, "*We have a teacher shortage in the state. It's particularly acute in urban and rural communities, which is where we also need these coaches.*" Given that Michigan is experiencing a shortage of qualified teachers, especially in certain schools and districts across the state, recruiting coaches from among the population of teachers may further escalate the state's teacher shortage. As one external stakeholder confirmed, "*Probably the biggest challenge right now is just having sufficient numbers of people to be literacy coaches without cannibalizing the stock of people we need teaching.*" Survey results also suggest that superintendents did indeed recruit early literacy coaches from the stock of current teachers; 67% reported recruiting early literacy coaches from current educators in their district, and 34% reported recruiting coaches who are currently educators in other districts.

INTERVIEWEES FELT TEACHER SHORTAGE COULD AFFECT LITERACY COACH RECRUITMENT

Of those interviewed, 25% (six out of 24) expressed concerns about the complicated interplay between the need for more literacy coaches and Michigan's extant teacher shortage, which is especially a challenge in lower-resourced districts.

Survey results also suggest that superintendents did indeed recruit early literacy coaches from the stock of current teachers; 67% reported recruiting early literacy coaches from current educators in their district, and 34% reported recruiting coaches who are currently educators in other districts.

However, recruiting coaches from within the district may also be an effective way for districts to provide leadership opportunities and upward mobility in the profession for their most talented and effective literacy teachers. Further, it creates potential for districts to "grow their own" literacy coaching program, which may be especially effective if they have limited access to coaches from the ISD level—which appears to be the case. Nonetheless, transitioning educators from teaching to coaching roles requires that districts are able to replace those teachers with other effective teachers, which may pose a greater challenge in some districts than in others. As one policymaker told us, "W*e don't have enough [teacher] talent to then to handle the scale that we need for so many communities.*"

There Was a Heavy Reliance on Substitute Teachers, Particularly in Third Grade

Interviewees also explained that, due to the state's teacher shortage, there was a heavy reliance on substitute teachers. They believed that this problem was particularly acute in third grade. Interviewees said that teachers fear that the retention year may affect their career, with one external stakeholder lamenting:

We have empty third grade—we have full-time subs across the state. They can fill all these jobs except for third grade...People literally don't wanna be transferred into third grade, and if there is a vacancy and no one's transferred, they can't—when they're posting, they're not finding people to take it. That says something about the Law. People are looking at that as, 'I could adversely be affected by the outcomes that may or may not be my ability to educate these children,' and they're nervous. That's horrible, because now you've got a long-term sub who may or may not have an education degree at all, teaching these very vulnerable students, whose whole careers are based on what their outcomes will be at the end of the year and their ability to read or not read at grade level.

21% percent of all elementary school principals reported filling teaching vacancies with long-term substitutes.

Survey data support interviewees' concerns. Twenty-one percent of all elementary school principals reported that they filled teaching vacancies in their schools with long-term substitutes because of the Read by Grade Three Law.

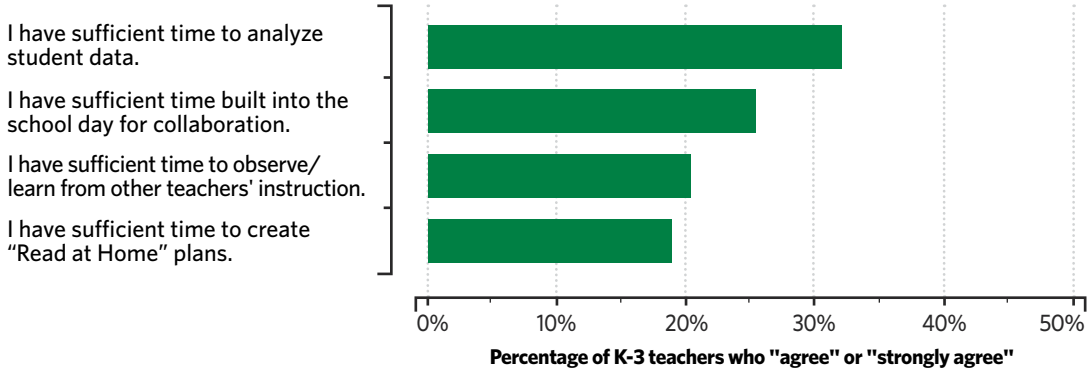
These human-capital shortages were even more concerning for educators in traditionally underserved districts. Principals in districts with high predicted retention rates (33%), low ELA performance (39%), high proportions of economically disadvantaged students (35%), and urban districts (29%) were much more likely to report filling teaching vacancies with long-term substitutes. Educators in districts with higher predicted retention rates, lower ELA performance, and higher proportions of economically disadvantaged students also reported having a greater shortage of literacy teachers, literacy coaches, and literacy specialists/interventionists. Stakeholders perceived these equity concerns to be exacerbated given that substitute teachers—who are employed to fill these shortages—tend not to be fully certified; but their students may still be retained in third grade. As one policymaker shared, "*Because of the teacher shortage, we are having a series of long-term subs from kindergarten to third grade. Is that fair, that they're gonna be held back when they never had a 'real' teacher?*"

Further, when asked to "grade" their school (i.e., from A to F) and district in a number of areas, both teachers and administrators in these districts gave lower grades for recruiting and retaining teachers than their peers in more advantaged districts.

Educators Faced Significant Time Constraints in Implementing the Law

Time constraints were also among the challenges that educators faced in implementing the Read by Grade Three Law. Figure 5.26 shows educators' perceptions of whether they had enough time to perform various activities under the Read by Grade Three Law. Less than a third of K-3 teachers reported having sufficient time to analyze student data, observe and learn from other teachers' literacy instruction, collaborate around literacy instruction, or create "Read at Home" plans for students with a "reading deficiency." This may help explain why educators rarely reported providing "Read at Home" plans to parents and/or guardians, as described above.

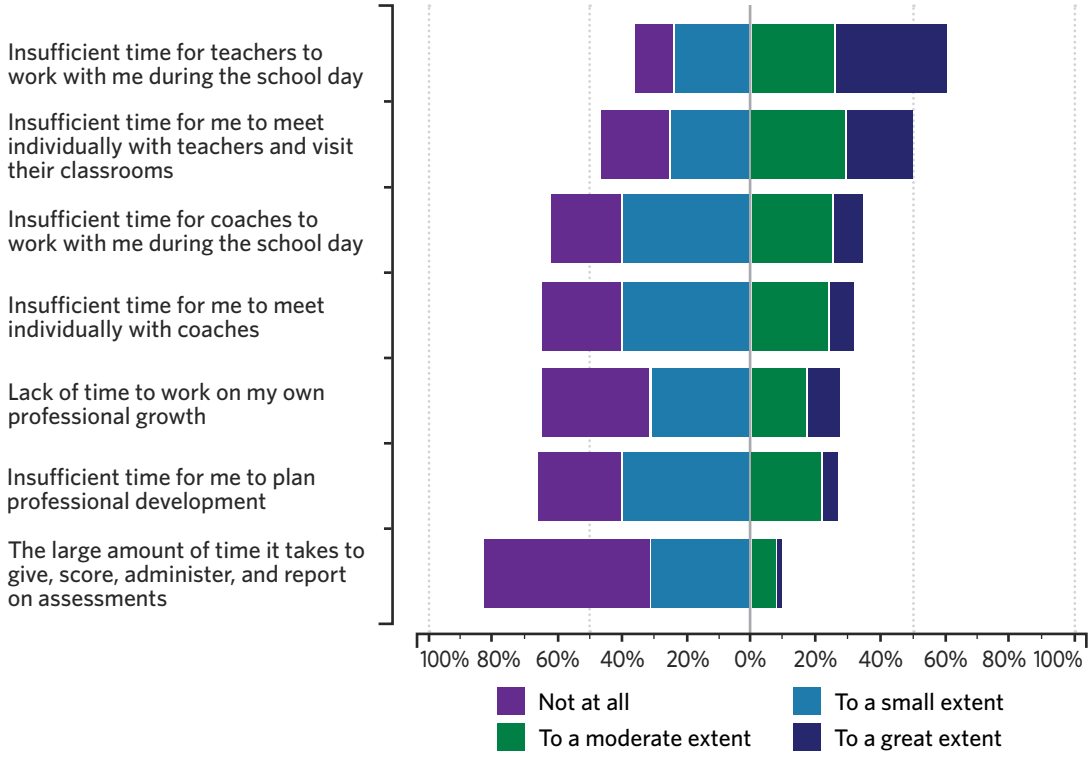
FIGURE 5.26. Educators' Perceptions of the Time to Implement the Law



Note: Educators were asked, "To what extent do you agree with the following statements about you and your school's ability to improve literacy instruction and/or implement the Read by Grade Three Law?" Source: EPIC survey of educators about the Read by Grade Three Law.

ISD Early Literacy Coaches also rated time constraints as one of the greatest hindrances to their work (see Figure 5.27). Sixty-one percent reported that insufficient time for teachers to work with them during the school day was a hindrance to a moderate or great extent. Forty-nine percent said there was insufficient time for them to meet individually with teachers and visit their classrooms, 35% said there was insufficient time for other coaches to work with them during the school day, and 27% reported that there was insufficient time for them to plan professional development activities.

FIGURE 5.27. Reported Hindrances to Working as ISD Early Literacy Coaches



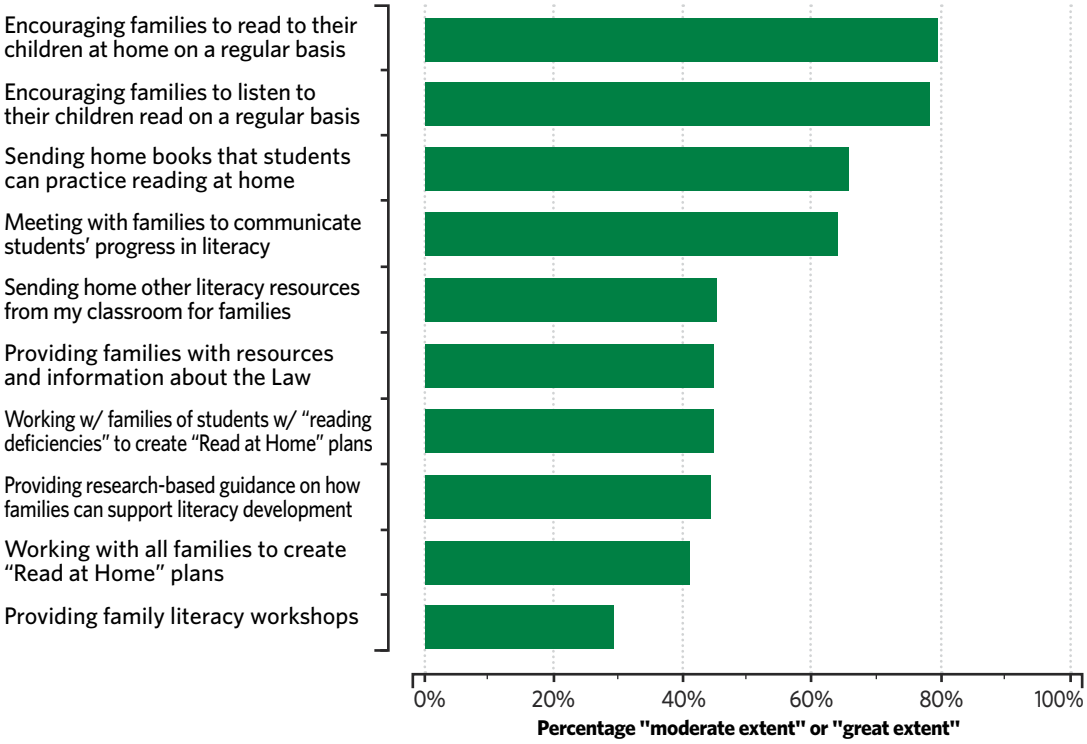
Note: Between 3-7% did not respond to each question item. ISD Early Literacy Coaches were asked, "To what extent is each of the following a hindrance to your work as an ISD Early Literacy Coach/Consultant?" Source: EPIC survey of educators about the Read by Grade Three Law.

As explained in Section Four, educators' capacity affects the extent to which they can implement a policy. Time is a valuable resource, especially for educators who are working within a finite number of instructional hours to balance teaching, coaching, other school responsibilities, and developing their own practice. Nonetheless, it is clear that the educators implementing the Read by Grade Three Law did not feel as though they had a sufficient amount of time to do so. The fact that they felt unable to analyze student data, collaborate with other educators, observe and learn from other teachers' instruction, and create useful "Read at Home" plans and resources for families will significantly hinder their ability to implement the Read by Grade Three Law effectively.

Families May Need Additional Support from Educators to Engage in Children's Literacy Development at Home

Another important component of the Read by Grade Three Law, mentioned by Governor Whitmer in her 2020 State of the State speech, is family and community engagement in the Law's implementation. Our survey responses indicate that although educators have increased their family engagement efforts since the Law was passed, families may not have the information and resources they need to support their children's literacy development at home.

FIGURE 5.28.1. K-3 Teachers Reported Family Engagement Activities

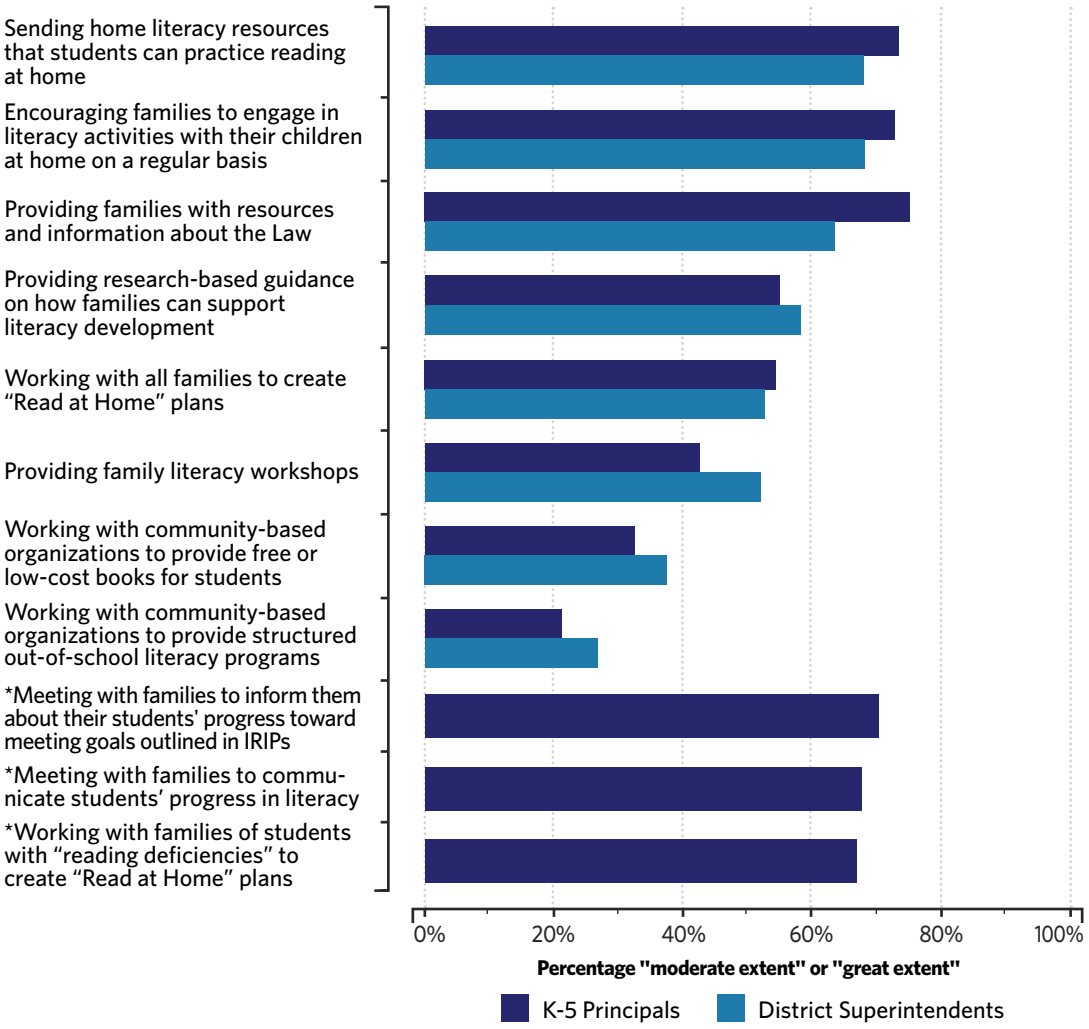


Note: Teachers were asked, "To what extent do you engage with families in each of the following ways?" Source: EPIC survey of educators about the Read by Grade Three Law.

Figures 5.28.1 and 5.28.2 show educators' reported engagement in a variety of family activities. A majority of K-3 teachers reported that they encouraged families to read to their children (79%) and listen to their children read on a regular basis (78%), and that they sent home books

(66%) and met with families to communicate students' progress in literacy (64%). Elementary school principals and district superintendents also reported sending literacy resources home and encouraging families to read with their children, but their engagement with families was also more directly aligned with fulfilling specific activities required by the Read by Grade Three Law. Approximately 75% of elementary school principals said that they provided families with resources and information about the Law, and about 60% reported meeting with families of students with a "reading deficiency" to communicate students' progress in IRIPs and to create "Read at Home" plans. Although it appears that educators took many steps to engage families in the Read by Grade Three Law, we cannot be certain of the extent to which families are carrying out these activities in the home or to which they perceive them as useful, as we did not survey parents and/or guardians.

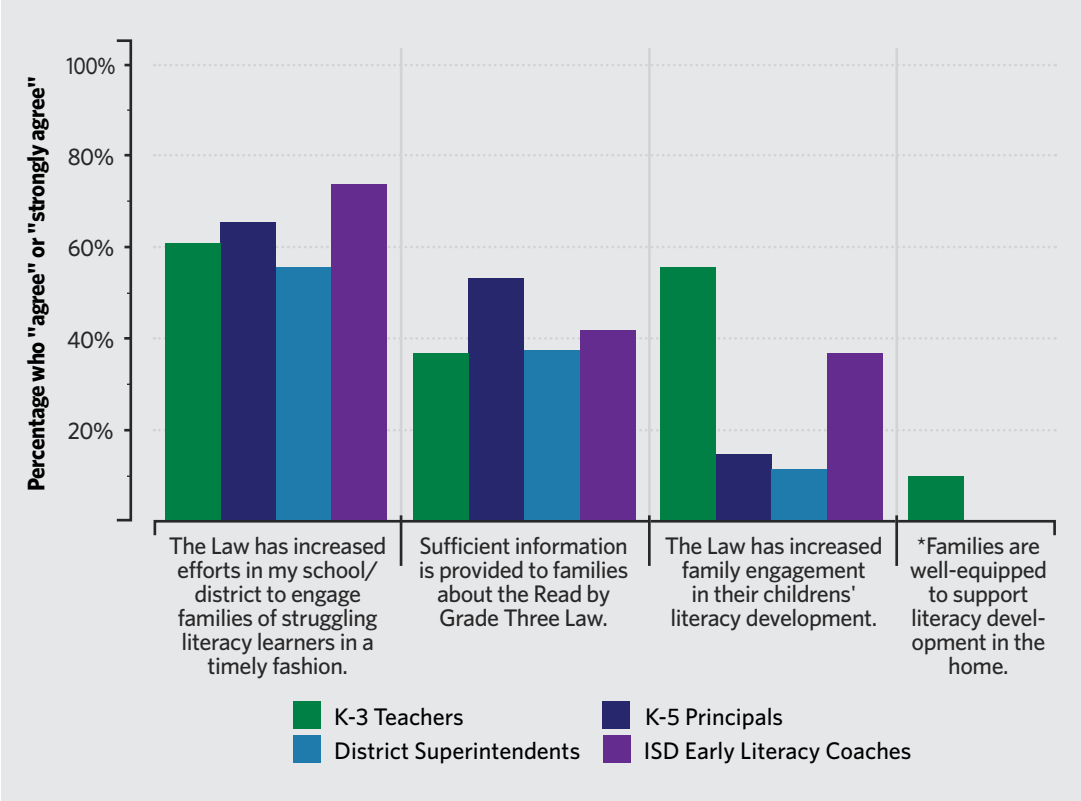
FIGURE 5.28.2. Reported Family Engagement Activities by K-5 Principals and District Superintendents



*Note: Principals and district superintendents were asked, "To what extent do you engage with families and communities in each of the following ways?" * Denotes items that were not asked of superintendents. Source: EPIC survey of educators about the Read by Grade Three Law.*

Educators reported disparate perceptions about whether family engagement efforts had increased because of the Read by Grade Three Law. Figure 5.29 shows that, while 56% of K-3 teachers agreed that the Law increased family engagement in their children's literacy development, only 15% of elementary school principals, 12% of district superintendents, and 37% of ISD Early Literacy Coaches reported that this was the case. However, all groups of educators generally agreed that the Law increased efforts in schools and districts to engage families of students identified as having a "reading deficiency" in a timely fashion, which suggests that educators' family engagement efforts may have targeted students with greater literacy needs.

FIGURE 5.29. Educators' Perceptions of the Law and Family Engagement



*Note: This figure combines results from multiple survey questions. Teachers were asked, "To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements about the Read by Grade Three Law?" and "To what extent do you agree with the following statements about your ability to improve your literacy instruction and/or implement the Read by Grade Three Law?" Principals and district superintendents were asked, "To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements about the Read by Grade Three Law? " and "To what extent do you agree with the following statements about you and your schools'/districts' ability to improve your literacy instruction and/or implement the Read by Grade Three Law?" * Denotes items that were asked only of teachers. Source: EPIC survey of educators about the Read by Grade Three Law.*

Despite these increased efforts, survey responses indicate that families still may have insufficient resources and information to allow them to meaningfully engage in their children's literacy development and to navigate the Law. Only 37% of K-3 teachers felt that the information provided to families about the Law was sufficient and 10% believed that families were well-equipped to

support literacy development in the home. Some educators also reported that resources from the state or their district were inadequate to help them communicate with families about the Law. Moreover, this lack of information about the Law and insufficient support for families may be a greater challenge for disadvantaged communities. As one MDE staff member shared with us, *"Predominantly, this Law adversely affects economically disadvantaged kids. Our communication vehicles and the people with whom we are communicating have a mismatch."*

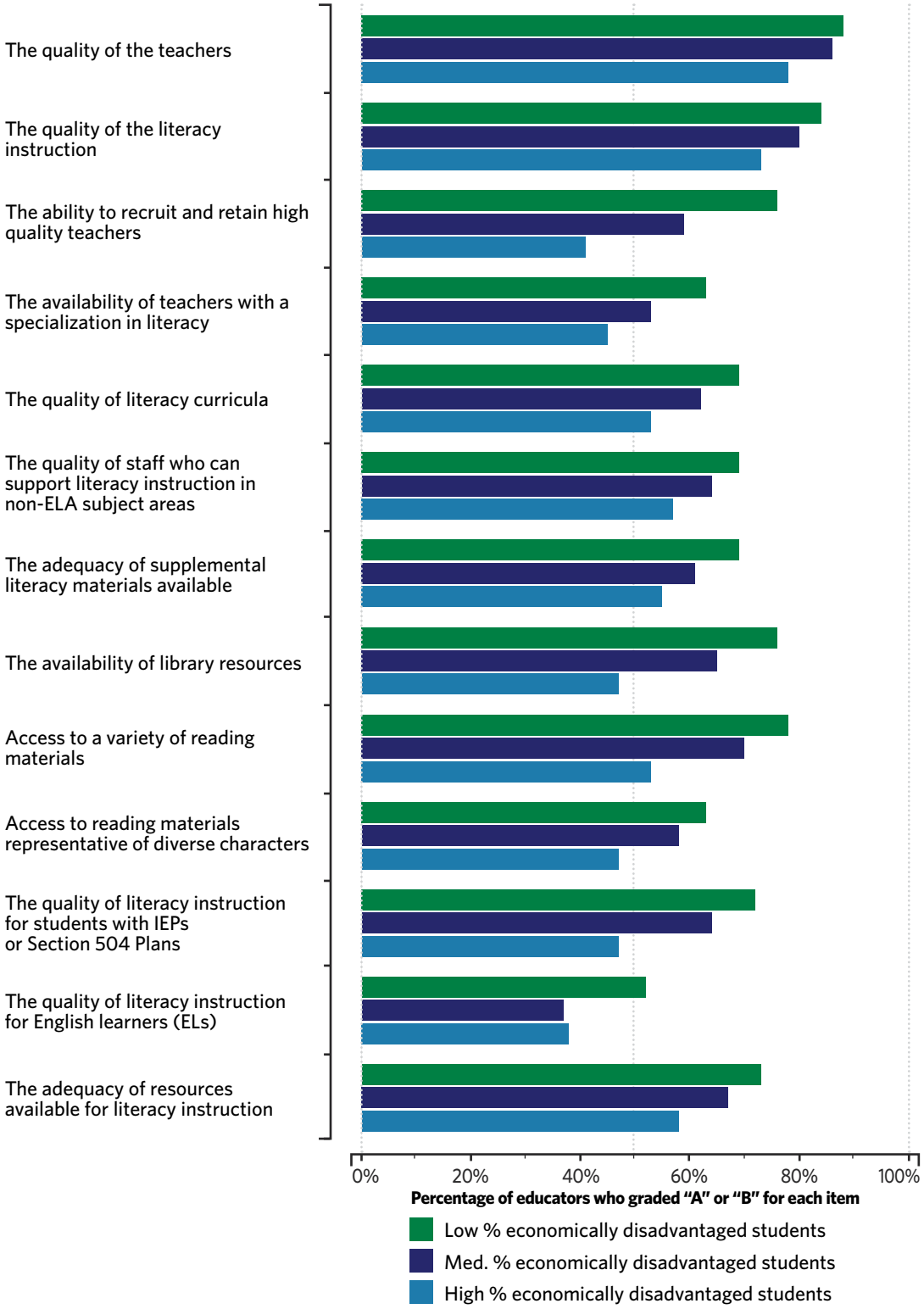
Principals' and superintendents' perceptions aligned with teachers', indicating a perceived inequitable access to resources to support quality literacy instruction and learning in traditionally underserved districts.

Disparities in Quality Literacy Resources and Instruction Challenged the Equitable Implementation of the Law

The successful implementation of the Read by Grade Three Law also relies on the quality of literacy instruction and curricula, the availability of high-quality literacy teachers, and access to various literacy resources. Our survey results suggest that educators in districts with high predicted retention rates, low ELA performance, and high proportions of economically disadvantaged students faced greater challenges in providing high-quality literacy instruction and adequate literacy resources to improve students' literacy learning. To illustrate, Figure 5.30 shows the percentage of K-3 teachers who gave a grade of "A" or "B" to various aspects of their school's literacy instruction and resources based on districts' proportions of economically disadvantaged students. Teachers in districts with high proportions of economically disadvantaged students generally graded each of these components of literacy lower than their counterparts in districts with low proportions of economically disadvantaged students. The gaps are particularly large for the ability to recruit and retain high-quality teachers, the availability of library resources, access to a variety of reading materials, and the quality of literacy instruction for students with IEPs or **Section 504 Plans**. We also find similar gaps between districts with high and low predicted retention rates and between districts with high and low ELA performance (See Appendix A-2).

Although not shown here, principals' and superintendents' perceptions aligned with teachers', indicating a perceived inequitable access to resources to support quality literacy instruction and learning in traditionally underserved districts. These disparities in the quality of the instruction and adequacy of the literacy resources complicate the implementation of the Law and exacerbate the concerns about equity in literacy instruction writ large and more specifically with respect to the Law.

FIGURE 5.30. K-3 Teachers' Perceived Quality of Literacy Instruction and Adequacy of Literacy Resources, by Proportion of Economically Disadvantaged Students



Note: Teachers were asked, "How would you grade each of the following in your school? Please assign a letter grade of A-F for each row." Bars show the percentage of educators in each subgroup who gave grades of "A" or "B" for each item. Source: EPIC survey of educators about the Read by Grade Three Law.

Special Section D: Heterogenous Effects of the Read by Grade Three Law

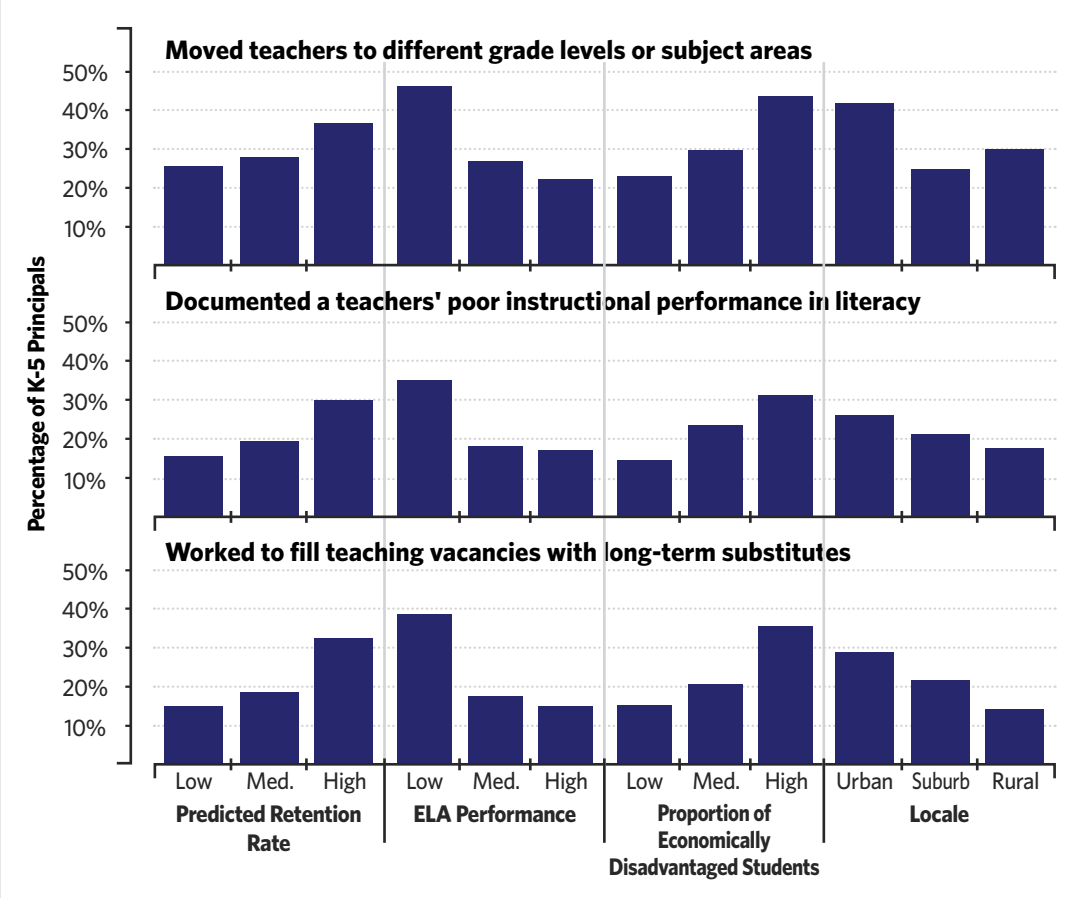
As with any policy, the Read by Grade Three Law has been implemented to varying degrees across populations and places, which can lead to differences in outcomes. In this special section, we examine heterogeneity in the Law's early effects across subgroups of districts.

SCHOOLS IN TRADITIONALLY UNDERSERVED DISTRICTS WERE MORE LIKELY TO IMPLEMENT PERSONNEL CHANGES

While most elementary school principals reported initiating personnel changes because of the Law, our subgroup analyses indicate that the types of changes varied across districts. As shown in Figure D.1, in districts with higher predicted retention rates, lower ELA performance, higher proportions of economically disadvantaged students, and in urban districts, principals were more likely to report moving teachers to different grade levels or subject areas, documenting a teacher's poor instructional performance in literacy, and filling teaching vacancies with long-term substitutes.

This could be because these districts serve students with greater literacy needs and face a greater threat from the retention component of the Law, possibly causing them to take more proactive staffing actions. Moreover, as discussed in Section Five, elementary school principals in these districts also reported experiencing greater shortages of teachers, literacy coaches, and specialists/interventionists; as well as a lack of fiscal resources to hire these professionals. Given these resource constraints, these districts may have been unable to hire additional personnel, instead implementing more rigorous teacher evaluations, redistributing teachers within schools, and hiring more long-term substitutes to fill vacancies.

FIGURE D.1. Personnel Changes K-5 Principals Reported Initiating as a Result of the Read by Grade Three Law, by Subgroup



Note: Principals were asked, "As a result of the Read by Grade Three Law, have you initiated any of the following personnel changes? Please mark all that apply." Source: EPIC survey of educators about the Read by Grade Three Law.

STUDENTS IN TRADITIONALLY UNDERSERVED DISTRICTS EXPERIENCED GREATER GAINS IN THIRD-GRADE ELA ACHIEVEMENT

In Section Six, we show that, overall, average third-grade ELA scores shift from a decreasing trend before the Law to a steadily increasing trend after. Table D.1 shows the ITS analysis of third grade ELA scores by district ELA performance (for 3rd-5th grade students) and locale. As shown in columns 1-3, although the trends of all three subgroups were similar, third graders in districts with low elementary ELA performance experienced greater gains in M-STEP ELA scores after the Law was passed relative to its pre-Law trend than did their peers in districts with higher ELA performance. Columns 4-6 show results broken down by district locales. Similarly, columns 4-6 show that third graders in urban districts experienced significant gains in M-STEP ELA scores after the Law was passed compared to its pre-Law trend. In contrast, third grade students in suburban and rural districts did not experience significant shifts in ELA scores.

TABLE D.1. Interrupted Time Series Analysis of Third Grade M-STEP ELA, by Subgroup						
	Subgroups by district ELA performance			Subgroups by district locale		
	Low	Medium	High	Urban	Suburban	Rural
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Outcome	Third Grade M-STEP ELA Standardized Scores					
Pre-Law Trend	-0.156***	-0.150***	-0.106***	-0.057***	-0.020+	0.000
	(0.019)	(0.015)	(0.016)	(0.015)	(0.011)	(0.009)
1 Year Post (2016-17)	0.149***	0.115***	0.052	0.042*	-0.010	-0.041**
	(0.025)	(0.019)	(0.022)	(0.017)	(0.012)	(0.015)
2 Years Post (2017-18)	0.330***	0.285***	0.180***	0.112***	0.024	-0.043+
	(0.044)	(0.036)	(0.039)	(0.032)	(0.024)	(0.026)
3 Years Post (2018-19)	0.506***	0.470***	0.312***	0.192***	0.065+	-0.019
	(0.062)	(0.051)	(0.053)	(0.192)	(0.035)	(0.035)
Test (Low=Medium / Urban=Suburban)						
1 Year Post		*			*	
2 Years Post		*			*	
3 Years Post		*			*	
Test (Medium=High / Suburban=Rural)						
1 Year Post		*				
2 Years Post		*			+	
3 Years Post		*			+	
Test (Low=High / Urban=Rural)						
1 Year Post		**			***	
2 Years Post		**			***	
3 Years Post		*			***	

*Note: Coefficients in this table are linear combinations of coefficients from a model modified from Equation 1 in Section Two by adding interaction terms between "Pre-Law Trend," "1 Year Post," "2 Years Post," "3 Years Post" and subgroup indicators. District ELA performance categories are defined using 3rd-5th grade students' M-STEP ELA scores in 2015-16 (i.e., the last year before the Law passed). Robust standard errors clustered at the district level. + p<0.1, * p<0.05, ** p<0.01, *** p<0.001. Models include a full set of covariates and district fixed effects. See Appendix C-1 for full model results. Source: Student administrative records.*

These disparate results may be due in part to how educators in these districts responded to the Law. Our survey results show that K-3 teachers in traditionally underserved districts were more likely than their colleagues in advantaged districts to report increasing the time they spent on evidence-based literacy instructional practices. Additionally, these teachers were more likely to perceive that the Law made them better at teaching literacy and enabled them to better identify and address students' literacy needs. Given these results, it is possible that the Law provides greater benefits to teachers in traditionally underserved districts, and in turn, leads to improved instruction in these districts and thus to larger increases in students' ELA achievement.

ENROLLMENT IN DEVELOPMENTAL KINDERGARTEN INCREASED MORE RAPIDLY IN TRADITIONALLY UNDERSERVED DISTRICTS

In Section Six, we also reported that there appeared to be a surge in the enrollment rate of planned kindergarten retention through Developmental Kindergarten programs in the years after the Law's passage. Our subgroup analyses indicate that this trend varies across districts. Table D.2 shows the ITS analysis of the enrollment rate of Developmental Kindergarten programs by subgroups based on districts' predicted retention rates, proportions of economically disadvantaged students, and locale.

TABLE D.2. Interrupted Time Series Analysis of Enrollment in "Developmental Kindergarten," by Subgroup

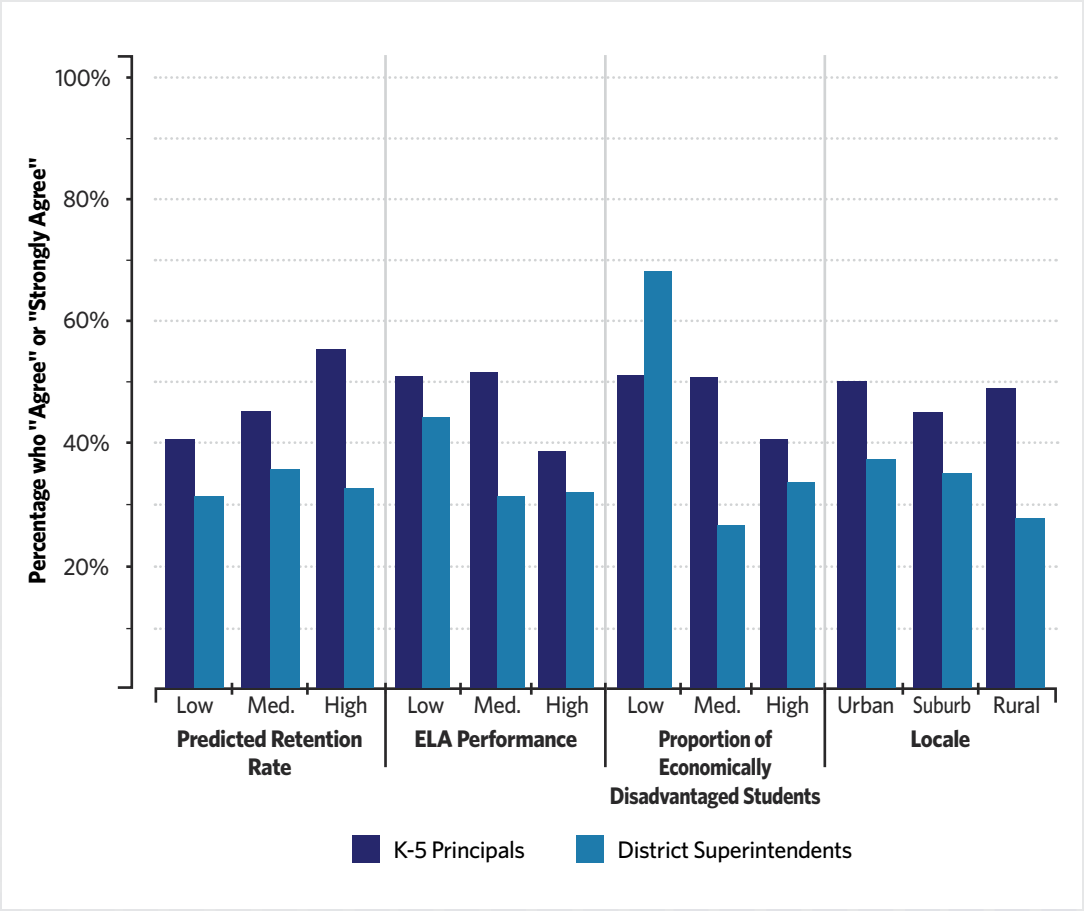
	Subgroups by district predicted retention rates			Subgroups by district proportions of economically disadvantaged students			Subgroups by district locale		
	Low	Med.	High	Low	Med.	High	Urban	Suburban	Rural
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)
Outcome	**Probability of Enrolling in a "Developmental Kindergarten" Program**								
Pre-Law Trend	0.018***	0.010***	0.002*	0.016***	0.007***	0.002+	0.003*	0.011***	0.014***
	(0.004)	(0.002)	(0.001)	(0.003)	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.002)	(0.002)	(0.003)
1 Year Post (2016-17)	-0.012	0.003	0.006+	-0.002	0.003	0.009*	0.009	0.003	-0.012+
	(0.009)	(0.004)	(0.003)	(0.006)	(0.004)	(0.004)	(0.007)	(0.004)	(0.006)
2 Years Post (2017-18)	-0.023*	0.016*	0.014**	-0.005	0.023***	0.016**	0.023**	0.013+	-0.013
	(0.012)	(0.007)	(0.005)	(0.010)	(0.007)	(0.006)	(0.008)	(0.007)	(0.010)
Test (Low=Medium / Urban=Suburban)									
1 Year Post									
2 Years Post		**			*				
Test (Medium=High / Suburban=Rural)									
1 Year Post								*	
2 Years Post								*	
Test (Low=High / Urban=Rural)									
1 Year Post		*						*	
2 Years Post		**			+			**	

*Note: Coefficients in this table are linear combinations of coefficients from a model modified from Equation 1 in Section Two by adding interaction terms between "Pre-Law Trend," "1 Year Post," "2 Years Post," and subgroup indicators. Robust standard errors clustered at the district level. + p<0.1, * p<0.05, ** p<0.01, *** p<0.001. Models include a full set of covariates and district fixed effects. See Appendix C-2 for full model results. Source: Student administrative records.*

Columns 1-3 suggest that while the rates of participation in Developmental Kindergarten in districts with low predicted third grade retention rates decrease in the years after the Law compared to the pre-Law trend, the rate for districts with medium and high predicted third grade retention rates performance increases more rapidly in the 2017-18 school year relative to their pre-Law trends. Similarly, the enrollment rate of Developmental Kindergarten programs increases at a faster rate after the Law's passage in districts with medium and high proportions of economically disadvantaged students, and in urban districts.

Survey analyses reaffirm these subgroup differences. Principals and superintendents in traditionally underserved districts were substantially more likely to agree that the Read by Grade Three Law increased the likelihood that students will be retained in grades K-2.

FIGURE D.2. Likelihood of Students Retained in K-2



Note: Principals and district superintendents were asked, "To what extent do you agree with the statement 'The Read by Grade Three Law has increased the likelihood that students will be retained in grades K-2." Source: EPIC survey of educators about the Read by Grade Three Law.

STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES IMPROVE IN MATH ACHIEVEMENT, POSSIBLY DUE TO INCREASE IN SPECIAL EDUCATION IDENTIFICATION

Table D.3 indicates that students with disabilities experienced greater gains in third-grade math scores after the Law's implementation than did students without disabilities. Given that students with disabilities are eligible for exemptions from the retention component of the Law and that the Read by Grade Three Law's Theory of Change is centered around improving literacy instruction for all students (i.e., Tier I instruction) rather than specifically targeting classified groups of students, it is difficult to attribute their achievement gains to the Law itself. However, it might be related to the increasing rates of students identified as having a disability in response to the Law.

TABLE D.3. Interrupted Time Series Analysis of Third Grade M-STEP Math, by Special Education Status

	Students without disabilities	Students with disabilities	Test (students without disabilities=students with disabilities)
	(1)	(2)	(3)
Outcome	**Third Grade M-STEP Math Standardized Scores**		
Pre-Law Trend	-0.174***	-0.115***	
	(0.016)	(0.008)	
1 Year Post (2016-17)	0.208***	0.156***	*
	(0.027)	(0.011)	
2 Years Post (2017-18)	0.345***	0.293***	*
	(0.031)	(0.020)	
3 Years Post (2018-19)	0.499***	0.446***	+
	(0.036)	(0.027)	

*Note: Coefficients in this table are linear combinations of coefficients from a model modified from Equation 1 in Section Two by adding interaction terms between "Pre-Law Trend," "1-Year Post," "2-Years Post," "3-Years Post" and subgroup indicators. Robust standard errors clustered at the district level. + p<0.1, * p<0.05, ** p<0.01, *** p<0.001. Models include a full set of covariates and district fixed effects. See Appendix C-3 for full model results. Source: Student administrative records.*

For example, there is some evidence that White students are more likely to be identified as having disabilities in the post-Law years relative to the pre-Law trend in first and second grade (see Table D.4). It is possible that more students, and more White students in particular, are identified as having disabilities to qualify for a good cause exemption. If this is

indeed a motivating factor, it is plausible that students with less severe disabilities who otherwise would not have received special education services or accommodations are being identified as having a disability at higher rates because of the Law. If these students differ substantially from those who would have been identified as having a disability regardless of the Law, the increases in achievement we observe may reflect a shift in the population more so than individual-level growth.

TABLE D.4. Interrupted Time Series Analysis of Special Education Placement, by Subgroup

	Kindergarten		Grade 1		Grade 2		Grade 3	
	Non-White	White	Non-White	White	Non-White	White	Non-White	White
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)
Outcome	**Probability of Being Identified as Student with a Disability**							
Pre-Law Trend	0.004***	0.003***	0.003***	0.002***	0.003***	0.001*	0.002**	0.002**
	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.001)
1 Year Post (2016-17)	0.003	0.005**	0.001	0.006**	0.004	0.003	0.003	0.005*
	(0.003)	(0.002)	(0.003)	(0.002)	(0.003)	(0.002)	(0.003)	(0.002)
2 Years Post (2017-18)	-0.002	-0.001	-0.003	0.006*	0.000	0.005+	0.001	-0.001
	(0.004)	(0.003)	(0.003)	(0.003)	(0.003)	(0.003)	(0.004)	(0.003)
3 Years Post (2018-19)	-0.002	0.002	0.000	0.006+	0.001	0.015***	0.000	0.007*
	(0.005)	(0.003)	(0.004)	(0.003)	(0.004)	(0.003)	(0.005)	(0.003)
Test (non-White=White)								
1 Year Post								
2 Years Post			*					
3 Years Post					*			

*Note: Coefficients in this table are linear combinations of coefficients from a model modified from Equation 1 in Section Two by adding interaction terms between "Pre-Law Trend," "1 Year Post," "2 Years Post," "3 Years Post" and subgroup indicators. Robust standard errors clustered at the district level. + p<0.1, * p<0.05, ** p<0.01, *** p<0.001. Models include a full set of covariates and district fixed effects. See Appendix C-4 for full model results. Source: Student administrative records.*

SUMMARY

This section has examined educators' understanding of the Read by Grade Three Law, how stakeholders have reported implementing the Law, and challenges that occurred during implementation. Our survey suggests that while administrators and ISD Early Literacy Coaches understood the Law fairly well, teachers generally were not clear on some critical components of the Law (e.g., retention, the role of ISD Early Literacy Coaches, and good cause exemptions).

Survey data suggests that while most schools and districts had access to some type of literacy coaches, many had no access to the ISD Early Literacy Coaches.

We then traced the Theory of Change to assess the fidelity of educators' implementation of the Law. The first set of legislative requirements under the Law provides literacy instructional support for all K-3 educators statewide. Central to this is providing highly qualified literacy coaches. Our survey data suggests that while most schools and districts had access to some type of literacy coaches, many had no access to the ISD Early Literacy Coaches. Similarly, teachers rarely reported receiving one-on-one literacy coaching from ISD Early Literacy Coaches, and instead relied on other literacy coaches at the school and district level. While access to coaches appears to have increased or stayed the same since the Law passed, there is some evidence of inequitable access across districts, particularly with regard to ISD Early Literacy Coaches and district-based coaches.

The second set of the Law's requirements pertains to monitoring, remediation, and retention. Our data show that educators were working to implement these elements of the Law, but there was variation across districts in important ways, and particularly in ways that may reflect and exacerbate existing inequities in students' access to effective literacy instruction.

Finally, we highlighted the challenges that stakeholders faced in implementing the Read by Grade Three Law, including the disconnect between policymakers and policy implementers, educators' negative perceptions of the Law, the shortage of literacy coaches, insufficient time for educators to implement the Law, insufficient support for families to engage in children's literacy development at home, and disparities in access to quality literacy resources. These factors limit stakeholders' capacity to implement the Law and will be important for policymakers to consider as they continue to support educators' implementation of the policy.

SECTION FIVE NOTES

1 Hereafter, all references will only mention ISD as this is the more common term used among policymakers.

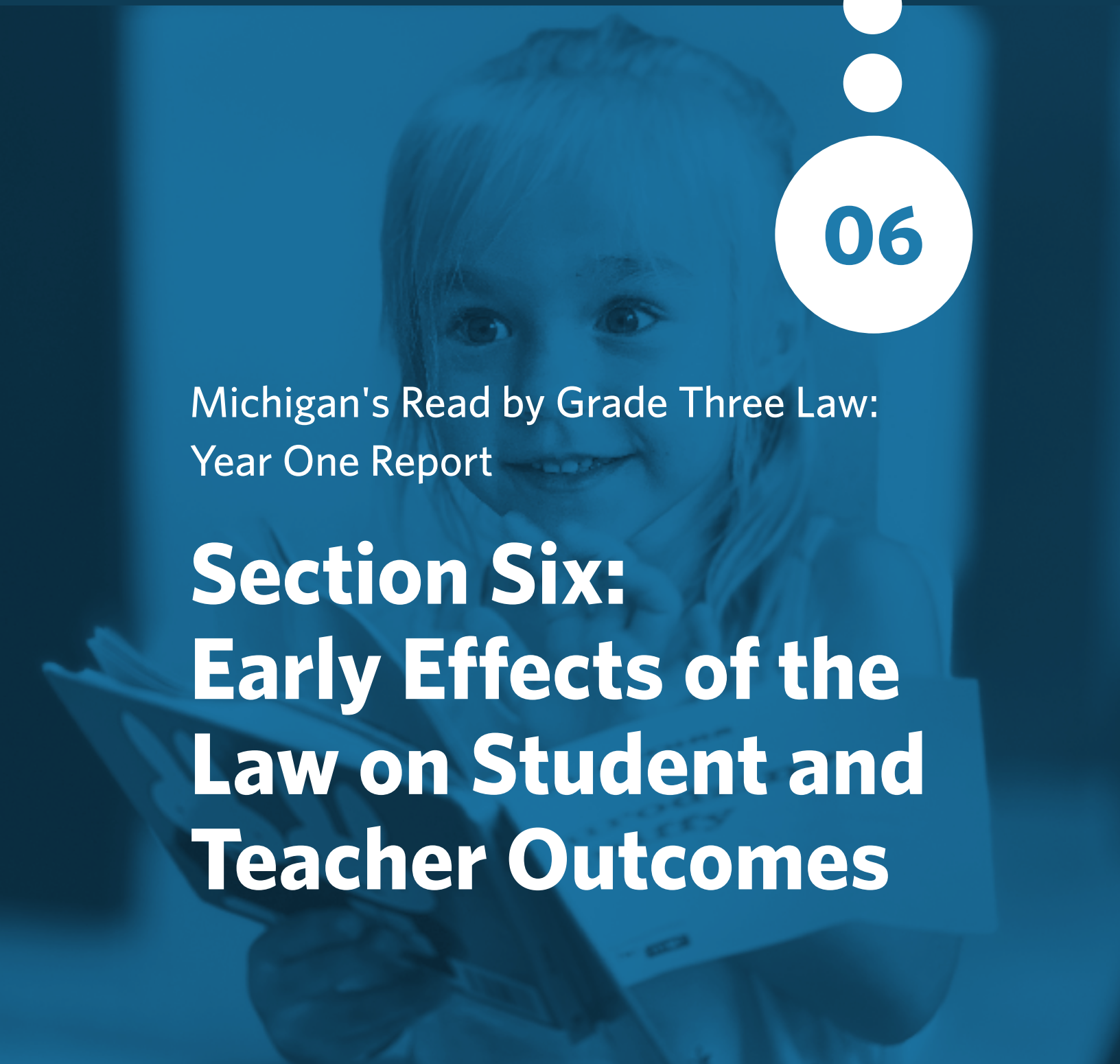
2 These definitions were not included in the surveys administered to educators, so it is possible that survey respondents interpreted the terms district-based literacy coaches and school-based literacy coaches differently.

3 ISD Early Literacy Coaches are also required to facilitate study groups, help to increase the instructional density to meet the needs of all students, and continue to increase their knowledge base in best practices in reading instruction and intervention, but we did not ask about these responsibilities directly in the survey because they were captured by other response options in the question (e.g., leading/facilitating/organizing professional development for groups of teachers; working with students in whole and small-group instruction, not in the context of coaching a teacher; attending meetings).

4 The percentage of principals reporting not having access to literacy specialists/interventionists is lower than that of district superintendents because 17 superintendents reported that they did not have access to any literacy specialists/interventionists at the district level, but principals in their district reported having at least one. This means that principals were hiring these providers at the school level, rather than using a district-based literacy specialist/interventionist.

5 Principals would select this answer if at least one teacher in their school received one-on-one literacy coaching from a given provider. Therefore, if the number of teachers in these schools who are receiving one-on-one literacy coaching is small, this would mean that principals' reported percentages are much higher than teachers—which is generally what we see in the survey data.

6 The 2019-20 Section 35a(4) of the State School Aid Act provided $31.5 million for early literacy coaches at ISDs, and the MDE provided $112,500 for each early literacy coach funded through Section 35a(4). Therefore, in theory, the Law provided funding for 280 early literacy coaches.



06

Michigan's Read by Grade Three Law:
Year One Report

Section Six: Early Effects of the Law on Student and Teacher Outcomes

Section Six: Early Effects of the Law on Student and Teacher Outcomes

INTRODUCTION

This section assesses the Law's early effects on literacy instruction, teacher staffing, and student outcomes. For each of these outcomes, we first focus on educators' perspectives about the Law and its associated literacy supports and then discuss changes in teacher and student outcomes as observed in administrative records. When relevant, we use interview data to help understand why changes may have happened and the implications of those changes. Because Michigan waived the retention requirement in 2019-20 after the U.S. Department of Education suspended state testing throughout the country, any effects discussed result from the non-retention elements of the Law: instructional support for educators; the monitoring and remediation supports for students; and the "threat" of retention, which, although paused for the third-grade cohort in the 2019-20 school year, existed before the pandemic and has been replaced by uncertainty during the 2020-21 school year.

EDUCATORS' PERSPECTIVES ON THE LAW'S EFFECTS ON LITERACY INSTRUCTION AND PRACTICE

State-Level Stakeholders Perceived That the Law Led to Increased Public and Policymaker Attention to Early Literacy, but Teachers Disagreed

Despite controversy over the retention component of the Law, state-level stakeholders generally believed that the Law renewed the Michigan public's and policymakers' focus on early literacy. Nine of the 13 state-level stakeholders (i.e., **Michigan Department of Education [MDE]**, policymakers, and other state-level actors) whom we interviewed believed that schools and districts were focusing more on early literacy as a result of the Law, which they saw as one of the Law's main goals. As one state-level actor shared with us:

> *I think it's drawn attention and visibility to the importance of literacy and helped to identify third grade or when you're about eight or nine years old as a really pivotal marker in your skill-building and skill development, so I think raising visibility about the issue and prioritization of the issue has been good.*

Notably, one policymaker we interviewed gave an example of a school making changes to improve literacy instruction and learning in response to the Read by Grade Three Law. They stated:

> *I remember, after we passed it, getting invited to a school in Detroit that was—I think had zero kids proficient in literacy...They invited [us] down there to see this great thing they were doing, and they are talking about...We have parents coming in to read. We have this new curriculum specialist coming in. We have weekly meetings, all staff meetings about literacy. We have letters going out to parents and whatnot. Someone asked, 'Why'd you do this?' They said, 'Because the state is gonna hold these kids back if they don't read.' I'm sitting there, I'm like, yeah, this is exactly what we wanted to happen, right? They saw this Law, and they went out and they did all of this stuff to prevent retention.*

This was corroborated by one stakeholder who also works with district leaders, who shared:

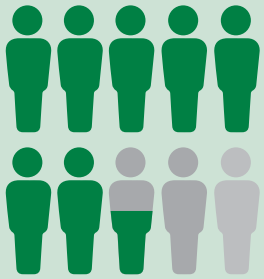
> *Well, I would say that [the Law] created an urgency that would not have otherwise been there, so that's a success. It got everyone's attention. That's a huge success. It allowed us to focus on the priority [of early literacy]. That's a success.*

However, educators who responded to our surveys were not as convinced and many disagreed that the Law was having this effect. While more than half of administrators and **ISD Early Literacy Coaches** agreed that the Law increased public and policymaker attention to early literacy, only a fifth of K-3 teachers believed this to be the case. This suggests that while many

state-level stakeholders believed that the Law provided an incentive for educators and others across the state to focus on literacy, the majority of educators "on the ground" did not believe this to be the case.

Teachers Perceived Literacy Professional Development to Be Effective in Improving Instructional Practice

Forty-three percent of K-3 teachers reported receiving one-on-one literacy coaching and 72% reported receiving other literacy professional development. While we cannot definitively assess whether more teachers received literacy professional development—coaching or otherwise—than before the Law's passage, many elementary school principals and district superintendents reported an increase in the number of literacy coaches and literacy specialists/interventionists working in their school or district since the Read by Grade Three Law was implemented.



A MAJORITY OF TEACHERS VIEWED PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT POSITIVELY

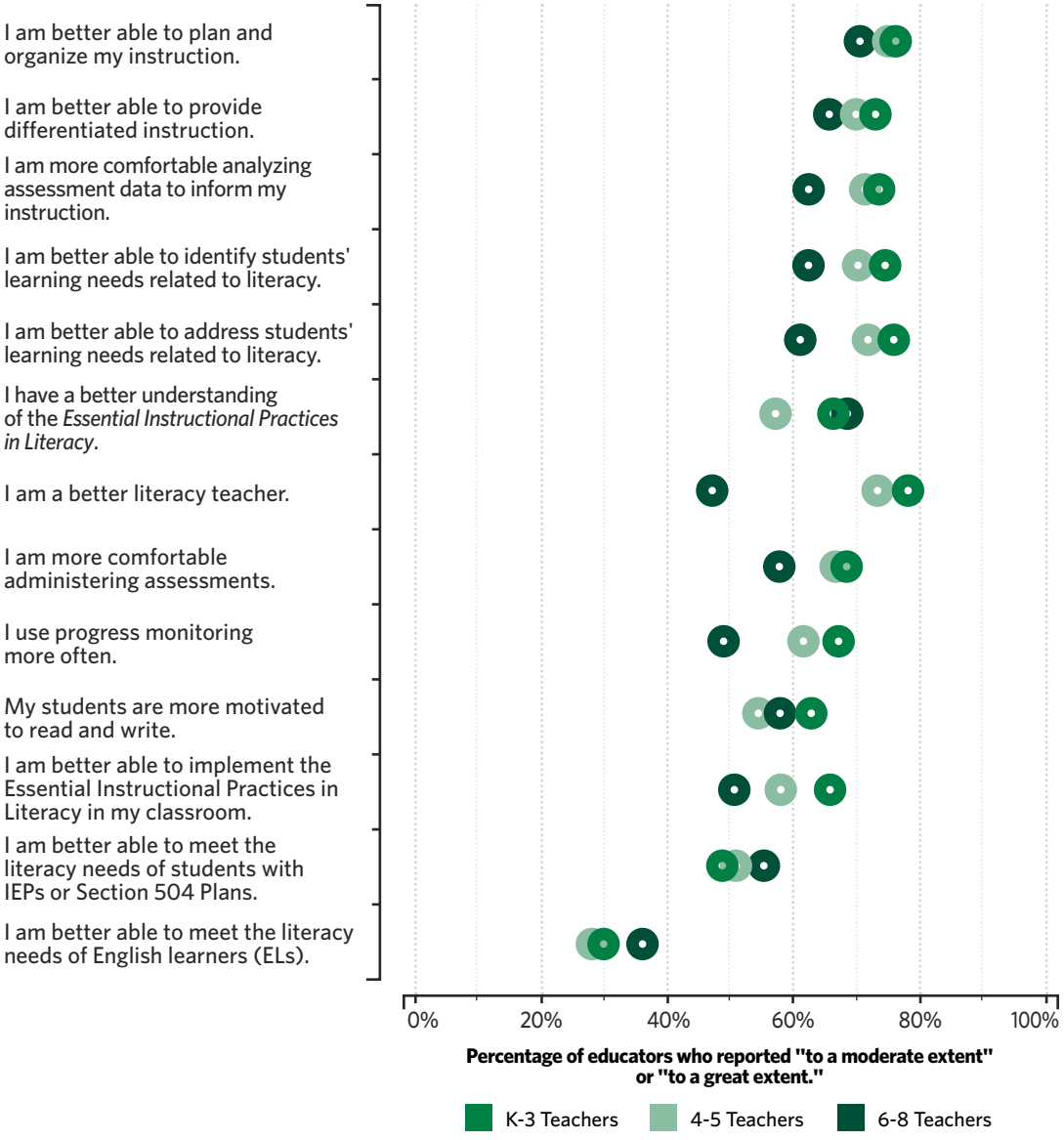
Teachers believed that their literacy professional development positively affected their instructional practice. Approximately three-quarters felt that they became better literacy teachers because of the one-on-one literacy coaching and other literacy professional development they received in the 2019-20 school year.

Teachers believed that their literacy professional development positively affected their instructional practice (see Figures 6.1.1 and 6.1.2). Approximately three-quarters felt that they became better literacy teachers because of the one-on-one literacy coaching and other literacy professional development they received in the 2019-20 school year. Two-thirds reported that they have a better understanding of the *"Essential Instructional Practices in Literacy"* and that they are better able to implement the "Essentials" in the classroom. Relatedly, they reported that their literacy professional development improved their ability to identify and address students' learning needs related to literacy, to provide differentiated instruction, and to plan and organize their instruction. In addition, teachers believed that their literacy professional development helped them to better integrate assessments into their instruction; most teachers reported using progress monitoring more often and have been more comfortable administering assessments and analyzing assessment data to inform their instruction.

Echoing findings from Section Five, teachers least often reported that they were better able to meet the literacy needs of English learners (ELs), which may be because most teachers do not have ELs in their classrooms.[1] Similarly, they were less likely to report that they are better at meeting the needs of students with **Individual Education Programs (IEPs)** or **Section 504 Plans**. Again, this may be because the Law, and its associated professional development, was not intended to target students with these kinds of special needs as much as it was intended to help teachers implement literacy best practices in general education classrooms.

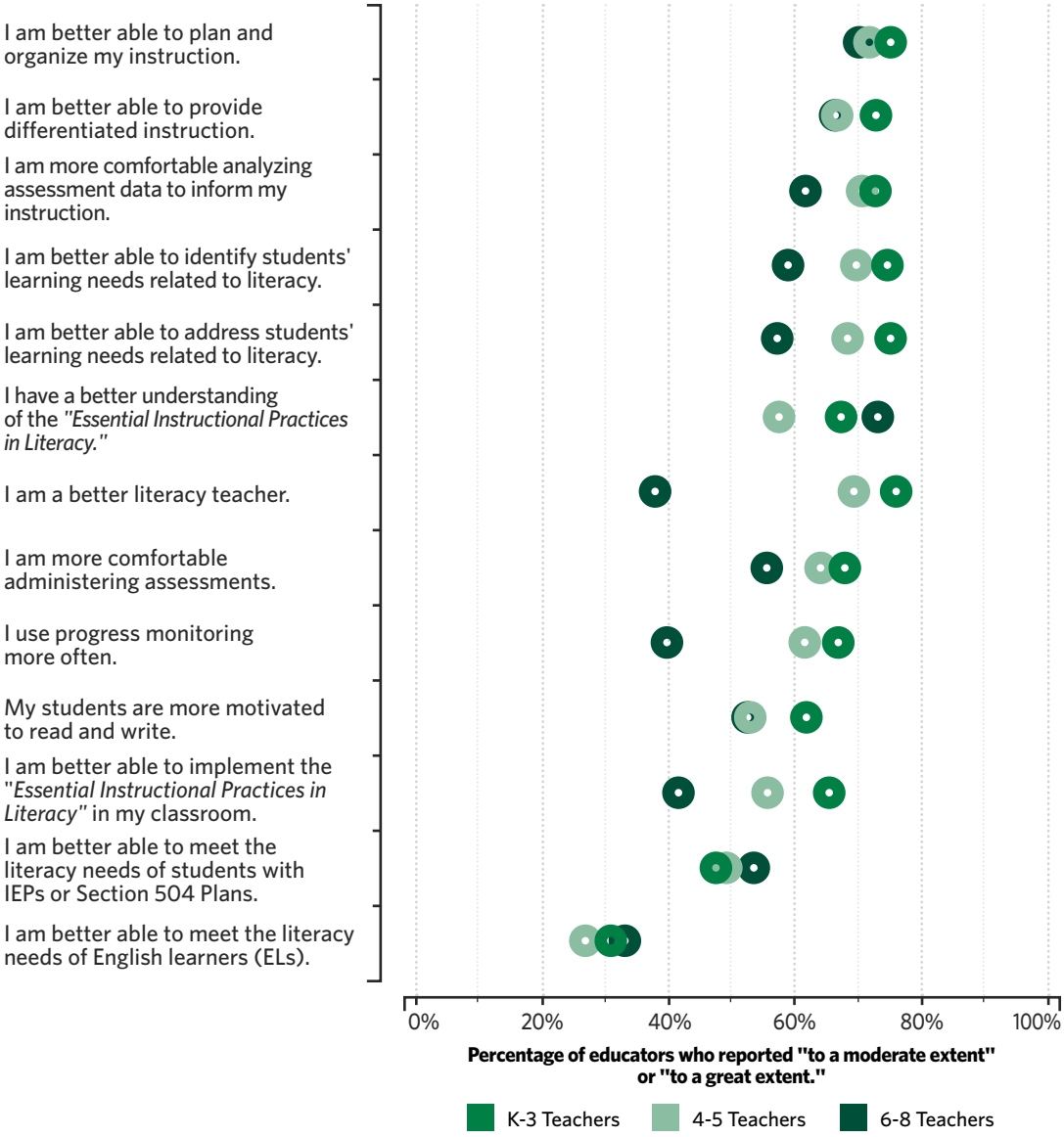
These patterns were similar for teachers in other grade levels, though elementary teachers were more likely than 6th-8th grade teachers to report becoming a better teacher because of the literacy professional development they received. This suggests that the teachers the Law intended to target—elementary teachers focused on early literacy development—perceived that the professional development they received helped to improve their literacy instruction.

FIGURE 6.1.1. Teachers' Perceived Effects of One-on-One Literacy Coaching on Instruction



Note: Figures 6.1.1 and 6.1.2 combine results from multiple survey questions. Teachers who reported receiving one-on-one literacy coaching in the 2019-20 school year were asked, "To what extent do you agree with the following statements about how the one-on-one literacy coaching (from any provider) you have received this school year has affected your literacy instruction?" Teachers who reported receiving other literacy professional development in the 2019-20 school year were asked, "To what extent do you agree with the following statements about how the literacy professional development (not including coaching) you have received this school year has affected your literacy instruction?" Source: EPIC survey of educators about the Read by Grade Three Law.

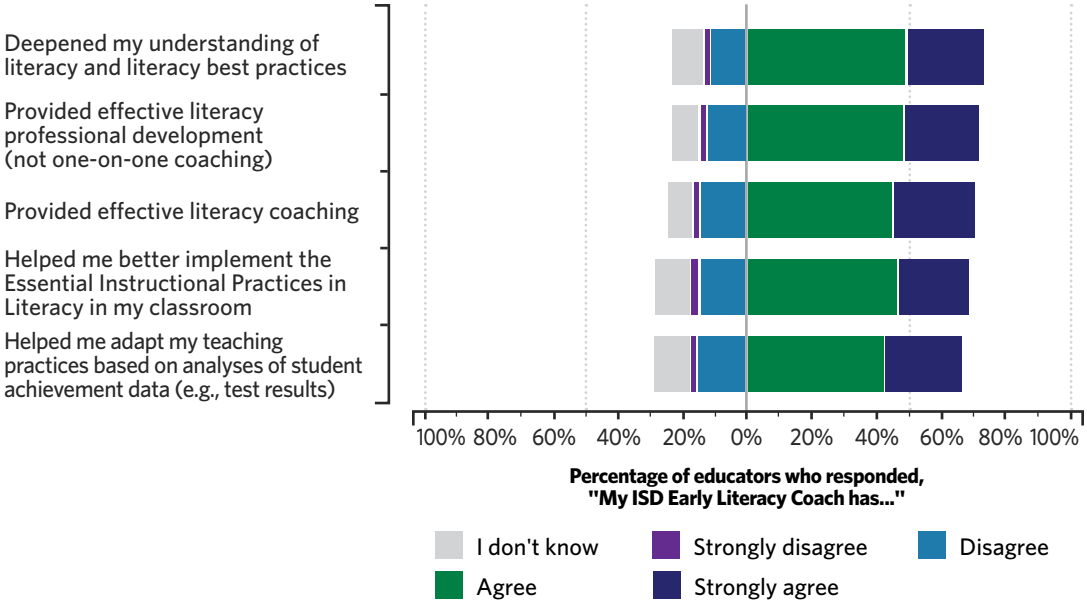
FIGURE 6.1.2. Teachers' Perceived Effects of Other Literacy Professional Development on Instruction



Note: Figures 6.1.1 and 6.1.2 combine results from multiple survey questions. Teachers who reported receiving one-on-one literacy coaching in the 2019-20 school year were asked, "To what extent do you agree with the following statements about how the one-on-one literacy coaching (from any provider) you have received this school year has affected your literacy instruction?" Teachers who reported receiving other literacy professional development in the 2019-20 school year were asked, "To what extent do you agree with the following statements about how the literacy professional development (not including coaching) you have received this school year has affected your literacy instruction?" Source: EPIC survey of educators about the Read by Grade Three Law.

In particular, K-3 teachers were very positive about their experiences working with ISD Early Literacy Coaches. As can be seen in Figure 6.2 the majority (65-75%) of teachers believed that their ISD Early Literacy Coach deepened their understanding of literacy and literacy best practices, provided effective literacy professional development and coaching, helped them better implement the *"Essential Instructional Practices in Literacy,"* and helped them adapt their teaching practices based on achievement data.

FIGURE 6.2. K-3 Teachers' Perceived Effects of ISD Early Literacy Coaches on Literacy Instruction



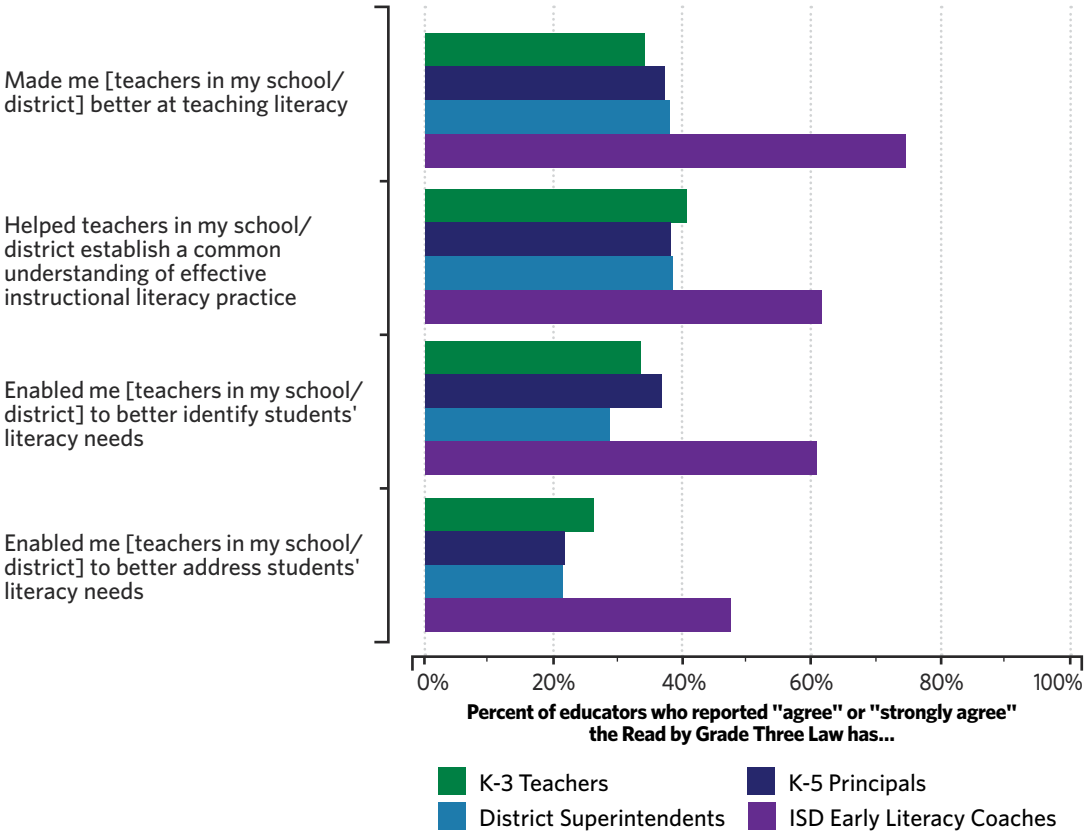
Note: Teachers were asked, "Considering all of the different types of literacy support you have received (including one-on-one coaching) from the ISD Early Literacy Coach/consultant, please indicate the extent to which you agree with the following statements. Please mark one option for each row." This question was only administered to K-3 teachers who indicated that they have worked with an ISD Early Literacy Coach in the 2019-20 school year. Source: EPIC survey of educators about the Read by Grade Three Law.

Educators Did Not Attribute Improved Literacy Instruction to the Law Itself

While educators reported positive effects of the literacy professional development they received, they were less likely to attribute improvements in literacy instruction to the Law more generally. As indicated in Figure 6.3, only 26% of K-3 teachers agreed that the Law has made them better at teaching literacy, and 33% reported that the Law has enabled them to better identify and address students' literacy needs. A somewhat higher percentage (40%) agreed that the Law has helped teachers in their school establish a common understanding of effective instructional practices in literacy. Elementary school principals' and district superintendents' perceptions are consistent with those of teachers. These results suggest that there may be particular elements of the Law (e.g., one-on-one literacy coaching, other literacy professional development) that educators perceive to be effective, but that educators' negative beliefs of other elements (e.g., retention) dilute the overall perceived impact of the Law. This may also be because teachers do not recognize literacy professional development as part of the Law or they tend to perceive the Law as only the "retention" component.

ISD Early Literacy Coaches, however, had more positive impressions about the Law's effect on teachers' literacy instruction, although fewer than half believed that the Law made teachers better at teaching literacy.

FIGURE 6.3. Educators' Perceived Effects of the Read by Grade Three Law on Literacy Instruction



Note: Educators were asked, "To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements about the Read by Grade Three Law?" Source: EPIC survey of educators about the Read by Grade Three Law.

EFFECTS OF THE LAW ON TEACHER STAFFING AND RETENTION

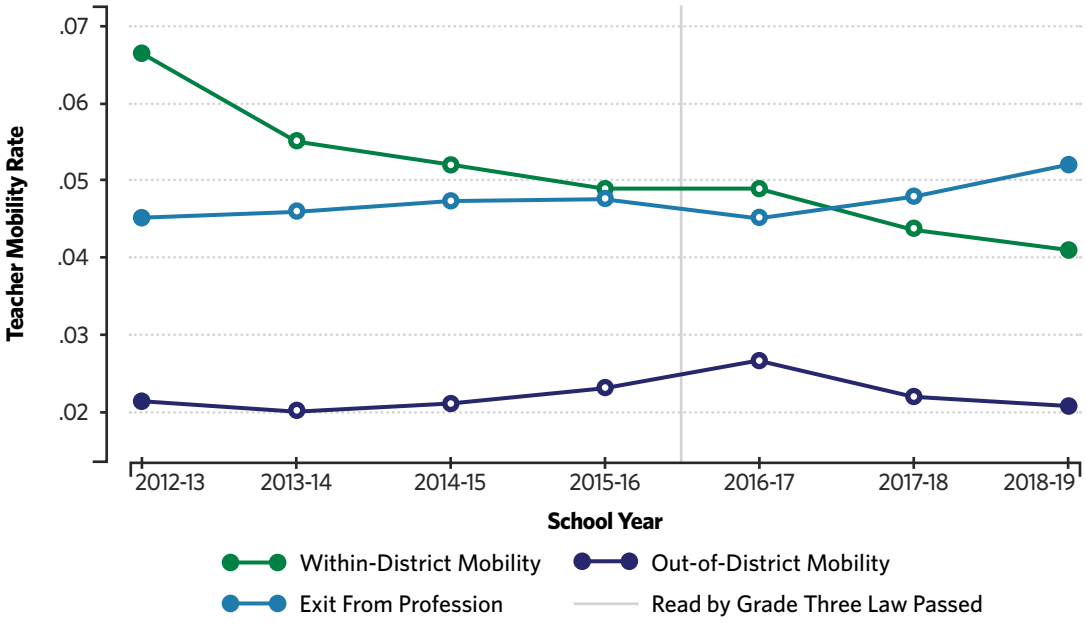
Teacher Mobility Remains Relatively Stable in the Years After the Law's Passage

As with any effort to improve educational outcomes, the success of the Read by Grade Three Law relies on an adequate supply of high-quality K-3 teachers. However, it is unclear if the Law—even in theory—will encourage teachers to teach in the early grades. On one hand, teachers may feel more satisfied in their roles if they feel that they are growing and benefiting from increased high-quality professional development and may therefore be less likely to leave their current position or leave the profession altogether. On the other hand, the Law, and especially the retention component, may create substantial stress for teachers, which could both discourage new teachers from entering the profession at all or choosing to teach in the early grades and potentially cause existing elementary teachers to leave their positions or the profession.

We focus our analysis on K-5 teachers and consider three types of teacher mobility: 1) transfer between schools in the same district, 2) transfer out of the district to other teaching jobs, and 3) exit from teaching in public schools in Michigan (proxied by exiting from the state's data system). As discussed in Section Two, we first provide descriptive evidence on the trends in teacher mobility. We plot adjusted trend lines to show the average changes in teacher mobility over time, controlling for individual- and school-level characteristics (e.g., race/ethnicity, gender, educational attainment, student compositions at the school). These adjusted trends help us to descriptively understand how teacher mobility rates have changed over the period of our study after removing sample differences across years.

Figure 6.4 depicts the adjusted trends in K-5 teacher mobility from the 2012-13 school year (four years before the passage of the Law) through the 2018-19 school year (three years after the passage of the Law, and the most recent year for which data were available at the time of analysis). Over this time period, the adjusted within-district mobility rate decreases from about 6.5% to about 4%. In contrast, the out-of-district transfer rate begins to drop in 2017-18 following a steady increase that peaks in 2016-17. The rate of exit from the teaching profession is relatively stable, increasing slightly in the period before the passage of the Law, and increasing more rapidly after the Law's implementation in 2016-17.

FIGURE 6.4. Adjusted Trends in K-5 Teacher Mobility



Note: The teacher mobility rates measure the proportions of teachers who transferred within districts, transferred out of districts, or existed from the teaching profession after a school year. The adjusted trends are derived from the regressions in which the teacher mobility indicators are regressed on year dummies (2012-13 as the reference year) and demeaned teacher- and school-level covariates discussed in Section Two. The adjusted transfer rates in the reference year are the constant value from the regressions and the rates in other years are the sum of the constant value and coefficients of the corresponding year dummies. Source: Teacher administrative records.

Although these adjusted trends are informative, they are descriptive in nature and cannot tell us whether the changes we observe after the Law deviate significantly from the existing trend before the Law's implementation. As explained in Section Two, we employ an interrupted time series (ITS) strategy to formally, though still descriptively, examine whether and to what extent rates of teacher mobility in the post-Law years significantly shift from their pre-Law trends.

Table 6.1 provides estimates from the ITS analyses of teacher mobility. The coefficients for "pre-Law trend" indicate the annual linear growth rate of each outcome in years before the Law was passed (i.e., 2012-13 through the 2015-16 school years). Coefficients for the post-Law year indicators (i.e., 1-year post, 2-years post, 3-years post) represent deviations from the pre-Law trend.

The results of the ITS analysis largely reflect the adjusted trends shown above. Column 1 shows that within-district transfers decrease at a rate of 0.5 percentage points per year before the Law passed, and there are no statistically significant shifts from this trend in any of the post-Law years. Column 2 shows that, although out-of-district transfers increase before the Law's passage (at a rate of 0.2 percentage points per year), teachers are 0.6 percentage points less likely to transfer out of the district in the third year after the Law was passed relative to the increasing trend before the Law's passage. Even though Figure 6.4 shows that exit rates from the profession appear to be increasing in the post-Law years, the ITS results in Column 3 indicate that this shift is not significant or large in magnitude relative to the positive pre-Law trend in rates of exit from teaching in the Michigan public school system.

TABLE 6.1. Interrupted Time Series Analysis of K-5 Teacher Mobility

	Transfer Within District	Transfer Out of District	Exit from Profession
	(1)	(2)	(3)
Pre-Law Trend	-0.005*	0.002***	-0.000
	(0.002)	(0.001)	(0.001)
1 Year Post (2016-17)	0.009	0.002	-0.001
	(0.006)	(0.002)	(0.002)
2 Years Post (2017-18)	0.006	-0.001	0.001
	(0.008)	(0.002)	(0.003)
3 Years Post (2018-19)	0.008	-0.006*	0.005
	(0.010)	(0.003)	(0.004)

*Note: Robust standard errors clustered at the district level. + p<0.1, * p<0.05, ** p<0.01, *** p<0.001. Models include a full set of covariates and district fixed effects. See Appendix B-1 for full model results.*

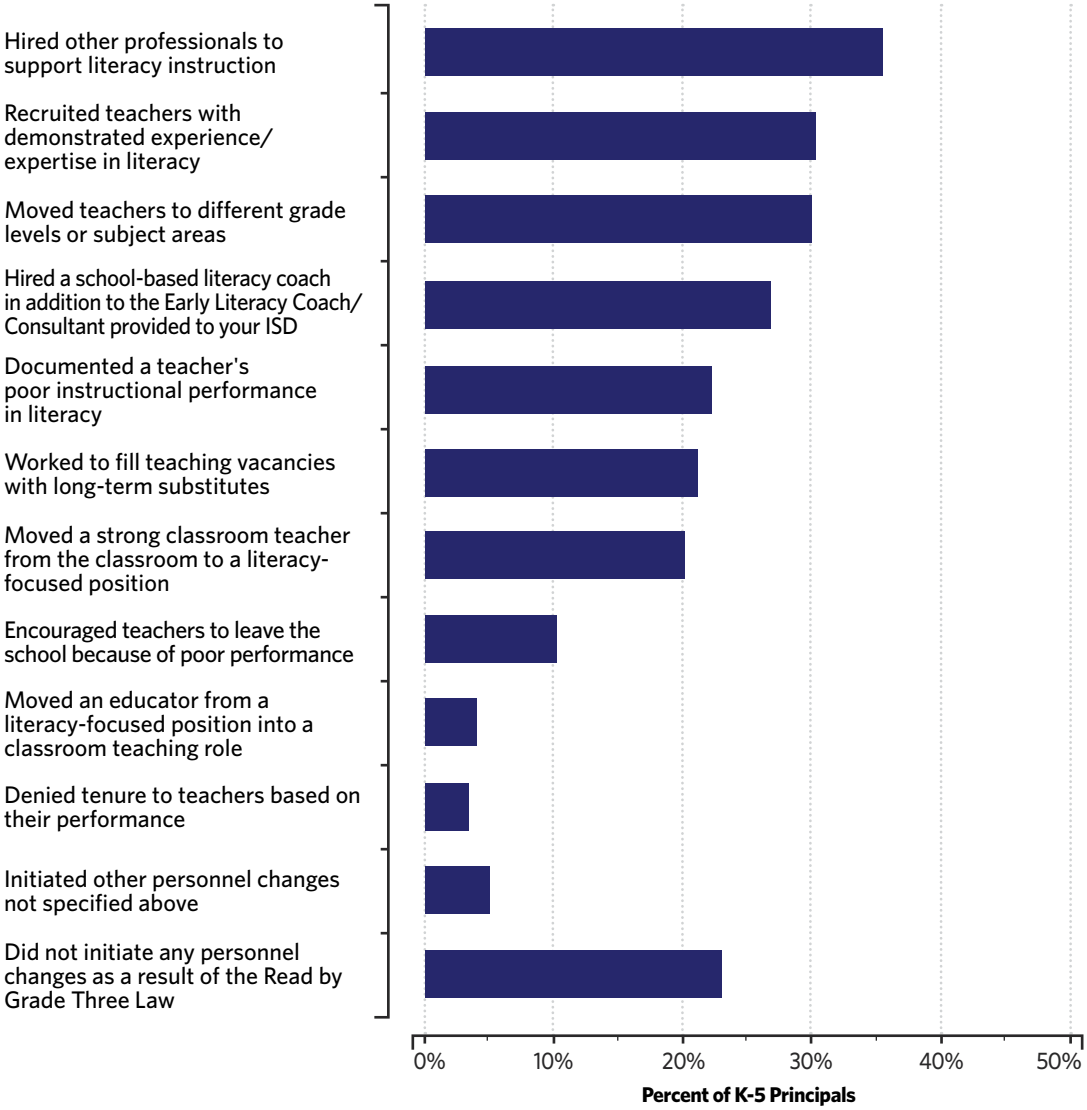
As discussed in Section Five, interview data suggested that schools and districts were facing teacher shortages, particularly in third grade. Thus, there may be more inter-grade teacher mobility within schools than we observe across schools and districts. As changes in a teacher's role within a school are not always observable in the administrative data, we turn to survey data to better understand within-school mobility and other personnel changes that principals initiated in response to the Law.

Elementary School Principals Reported Initiating Personnel Changes in Response to the Law

Most elementary school principals (72%) reported that they initiated some type of personnel change due to the Read by Grade Three Law. As Figure 6.5 shows, some of the most frequently reported personnel actions were exactly what was intended by the Law; principals reported hiring school-based literacy coaches (27%) and other professionals to support literacy instruction

(35%) and targeting hiring to recruit teachers with demonstrated experience or expertise in literacy (30%). Other personnel actions that resulted from the Law were less directly related to hiring new personnel who could help strengthen literacy instruction. For instance, nearly a third of principals reported moving teachers to different grade levels or subject areas, and approximately one-fifth of principals documented a teacher's poor instructional performance in literacy (22%), moved a strong classroom teacher from the classroom to a literacy-focused position (20%), and worked to fill teaching vacancies with long-term substitutes (21%). Nearly a quarter of elementary school principals reported that they did not initiate any personnel change as a result of the Read by Grade Three Law.

FIGURE 6.5. Reported Personnel Changes Initiated by K-5 Principals as a Result of the Read by Grade Three Law



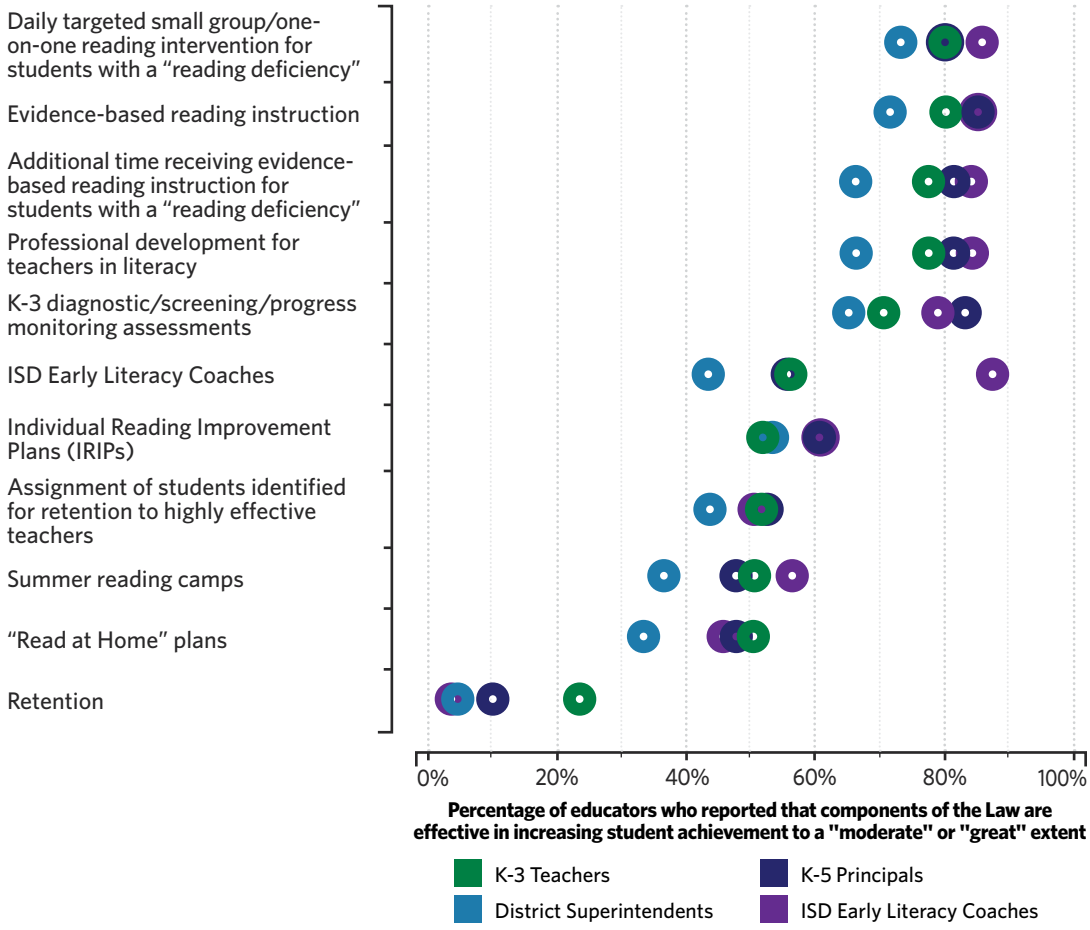
Note: Seven percent did not respond. Principals were asked, "As a result of the Read by Grade Three Law, have you initiated any of the following personnel changes? Please mark all that apply." Source: EPIC survey of educators about the Read by Grade Three Law.

EFFECTS OF THE LAW ON STUDENT OUTCOMES

Educators Believed That Literacy Supports Increased Student Achievement, But Were Skeptical about Retention

Before delving into analyses of outcome data to understand the early effects of the Law on student outcomes, we first review educators' beliefs about the efficacy of the Law on increasing student achievement. As shown in Figure 6.6, educators expressed optimism that all components of the Law *except retention* would positively affect student literacy achievement. While the majority of educators across groups believed that literacy supports (e.g., evidence-based reading instruction, literacy professional development) would be effective in increasing student achievement to a moderate or great extent, just 24% of K-3 teachers, 10% of elementary school principals, 5% of district superintendents, and 6% of ISD Early Literacy Coaches believed that retention would be effective toward the same goal. The disparity between K-3 teachers and their principals, superintendents, and coaches in their positive beliefs about retention is notable.

FIGURE 6.6. Educators' Perceived Effectiveness of the Law on Student Achievement



Note: This figure combines results from multiple survey questions. Educators were asked, "Please indicate the extent to which you believe each of the following elements of the Read by Grade Three Law will be effective in increasing student achievement." and "To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements about the Read by Grade Three Law?" Source: EPIC survey of educators about the Read by Grade Three Law.

In addition, educators tended to express less confidence in the effectiveness of several literacy supports outlined in the Law that were not as central to literacy instruction. In particular, fewer educators believed that "Read at Home" plans, summer reading camps, assignment of students identified for retention to highly effective teachers, and **Individual Reading Improvement Plans (IRIPs)** would be as helpful as the other literacy supports. As we might expect, ISD Early Literacy Coaches expressed greater confidence (87%) than other educators (44%-56%) in using ISD Early Literacy Coaches as a literacy support to provide instructional support for teachers and, in turn, to improve student achievement.

When asked to assess the effect of the Law in general, only about a quarter of educators agreed that it positively affected student literacy. This contrasts with educators' generally favorable views regarding the effectiveness of several specific elements of the Law, suggesting that perceptions of the Law's overall efficacy may be affected by educators' perceptions of retention, and positive views about some components seem to be outweighed by negative views on retention. Notably, however, the majority (60%) of ISD Early Literacy Coaches believed that the Law as a whole has positively affected student literacy.

A majority of ISD Early Literacy Coaches believed that the Law as a whole has positively affected student literacy.

Third-Grade Student Achievement Improves After the Law Passed

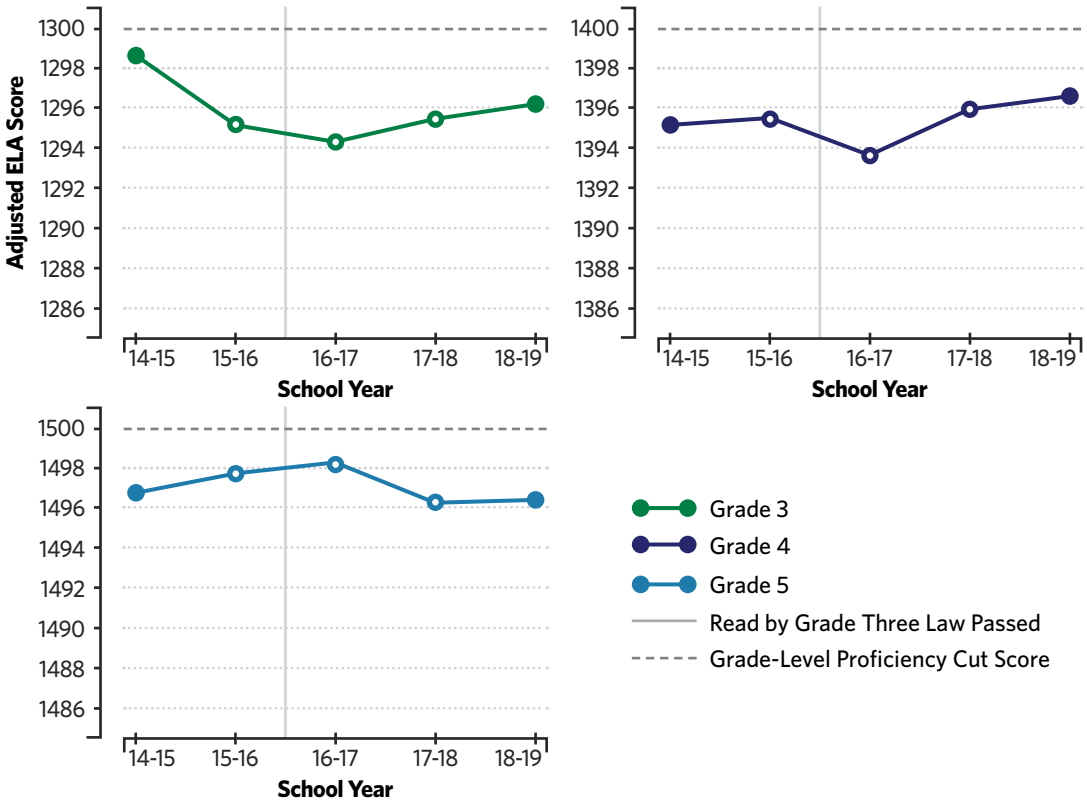
Figure 6.7.1 shows descriptive trends in third grade **M-STEP** ELA scaled scores between the 2014-15 and 2018-19 school years after adjusting for student and school characteristics. We also include analysis of 4th-5th grade student outcomes for comparison. As discussed in Section Two, although the Law only prescribes literacy supports for K-3 students, students in 4th-5th grade may also be affected by the Law because it is possible and even likely that they received prescribed literacy supports when they were in third grade. If this is the case, we might expect to see effects for 4th-5th grade students that start to emerge in the years after the effects on third-grade students. Also, 4th-5th grade students may benefit from the improved instruction if their schools and districts have made system-wide efforts to support literacy instruction. Thus, these comparisons may help to differentiate between effects of improved literacy instruction and effects of literacy supports specifically for K-3 students. Alternatively, achievement outcomes for 4th-5th grade students may be negatively affected if schools or districts have redistributed personnel or financial resources to grades K-3 in response to the Law.

Third-grade ELA scores, shown in Panel A of Figure 6.7.1, are just below the state cut-score for grade-level proficiency (1300) in 2014-15.[2] They decrease in the years before the Law was passed in 2016-17 and increase thereafter. However, these changes are fairly small, and the adjusted mean score remains within the score range for the "partially proficient" performance level (scaled scores between 1280 and 1299) across all five years.

As shown in panel B and C of Figure 6.7.1, fourth-grade ELA scores similarly decrease between the 2015-16 and 2016-17 school years, but then rebound in the following years. By contrast, ELA

scores for fifth graders increase over time but drop in the two years after the passage of the Law. As with third-grade achievement, adjusted mean scores for the fourth and fifth grades remain within the "partially proficient" score range (between 1383 and 1399 for fourth grade and between 1481 and 1499 for fifth grade) across all five years.

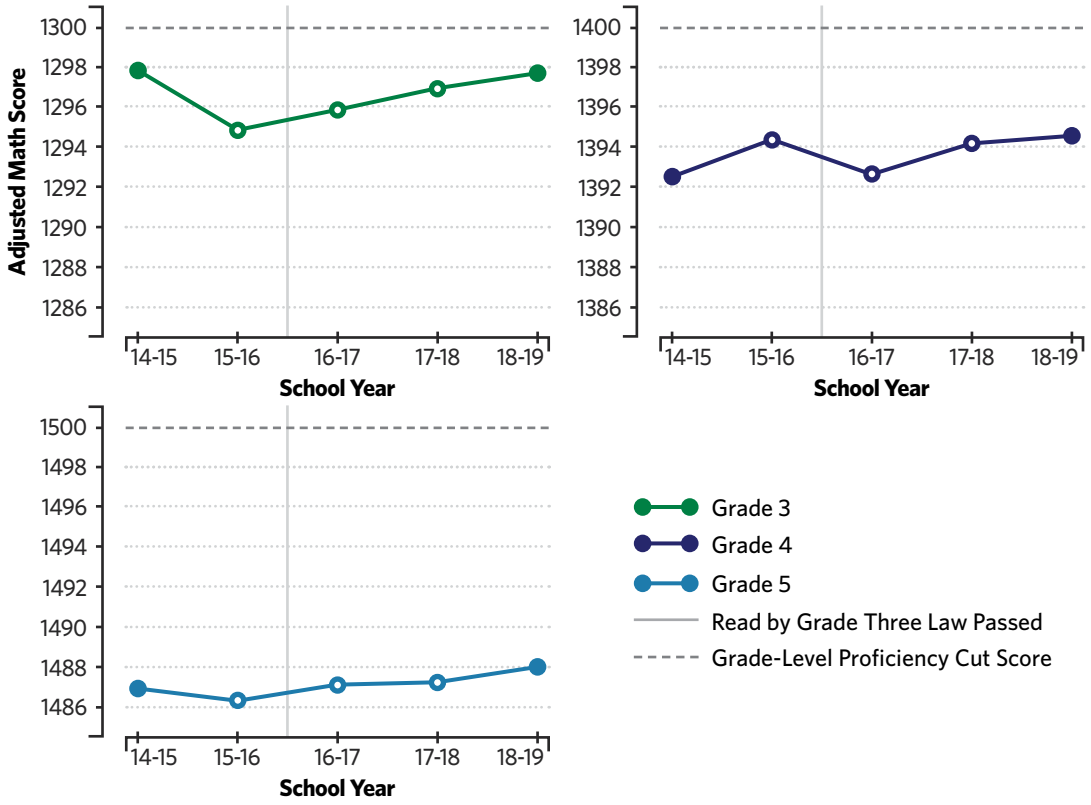
FIGURE 6.7.1. Adjusted Trends of Student ELA Achievement



Note: The adjusted trends are derived from the regressions in which the ELA M-STEP scores are regressed on year dummies (2012-13 as the reference year) and demeaned student- and school-level covariates discussed in Section Two. The adjusted ELA score in the reference year is the constant value from the regressions and the adjusted scores in other years are the sum of the constant value and coefficients of the corresponding year dummies. Dash lines indicates the state cut-score for grade-level proficiency. Source: Student administrative records.

We also examine adjusted trends in math achievement. Although math outcomes should be less directly affected by the Law, Schwerdt, West, and Winters (2017) find that the Florida policy on which the Read by Grade Three Law was based does have positive spillover effects on third-grade math. Because the Law does not specifically target instruction or achievement in math, these trends may also provide insight into changes affecting both math and ELA achievement that are unrelated to the Law. Figure 6.7.2 shows adjusted trends in M-STEP math scores for 3rd-5th grade students. We find that third-grade math outcomes increase in all the years post-reform. Fifth-grade math M-STEP scores also increase relative to the year of reform passage, although to a lesser extent. By the end of our panel, the fifth-grade math M-STEP scores are still 12 points lower than the proficient cut-point (i.e., 1500). Fourth-grade math M-STEP scores decrease in the year directly following the reform's passage, and then slowly increase over the following years.

FIGURE 6.7.2. Adjusted Trends of Student Math Achievement



Note: The adjusted trends are derived from the regressions in which the math M-STEP scores are regressed on year dummies (2012-13 as the reference year) and demeaned student- and school-level covariates discussed in Section Two. The adjusted math score in the reference year is the constant value from the regressions and the adjusted scores in other years are the sum of the constant value and coefficients of the corresponding year dummies. Dash lines indicates the state cut-score for grade-level proficiency. Source: Student administrative records.

More formally, we examine whether there are significant shifts in student achievement after the implementation of the Law, relative to pre-Law trends, using an ITS approach. Table 6.2 shows results from the ITS analyses. Columns 1-3 show coefficients from the model presented in Equation 1 in Section Two, where the units are standardized such that the year coefficients can be interpreted as the proportion of a standard deviation change in the outcome measure. Columns 4-6 are the average changes in the scaled scores. We show both units of measurement to demonstrate shifts in distribution associated with years after the Law's passage as well as changes in the actual M-STEP scores. The top panel of Table 6.2 provides results from models predicting ELA outcomes and the bottom panel shows results from models predicting math outcomes.

Column 1 of the top panel shows that third-grade ELA scores improve after the passage and during the early implementation of the Law beginning in 2016. Before the 2016-17 school year, the third-grade ELA standardized score decreased at a rate of 0.14 standard deviations per year. This decreasing trend appears to have been interrupted in the 2016-17 school year, just after the Law passed. Third-grade ELA scores increase significantly by 0.10, 0.26, and 0.42 standard deviations in the first, second, and third year of the Law's implementation, respectively. Models using M-STEP scaled scores (Column 4) show the same patterns.

TABLE 6.2. Interrupted Time Series Analysis of Student Achievement						
	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Outcome	**ELA M-STEP Standardized Score**			**ELA M-STEP Scaled Score**		
Pre-Law Trend	-0.135***	0.014	0.043***	-3.417***	0.353	1.066***
	(0.010)	(0.009)	(0.008)	(0.239)	(0.228)	(0.192)
1 Year Post (2016-17)	0.099***	-0.094***	-0.025*	2.490***	-2.370***	-0.618*
	(0.013)	(0.012)	(0.011)	(0.330)	(0.292)	(0.268)
2 Years Post (2017-18)	0.256***	-0.045*	-0.181***	6.457***	-1.149*	-4.519***
	(0.024)	(0.022)	(0.019)	(0.606)	(0.561)	(0.482)
3 Years Post (2018-19)	0.419***	-0.036	-0.214***	10.598***	-0.902	-5.356***
	(0.033)	(0.031)	(0.027)	(0.837)	(0.791)	(0.664)
Outcome	**Math M-STEP Standardized Score**			**Math M-STEP Scaled Score**		
Pre-Law Trend	-0.122***	0.073***	-0.022*	-3.052***	1.828***	-0.547*
	(0.008)	(0.009)	(0.009)	(0.191)	(0.214)	(0.235)
1 Year Post (2016-17)	0.163***	-0.147***	0.057***	4.053***	-3.658***	1.414***
	(0.011)	(0.012)	(0.015)	(0.280)	(0.290)	(0.360)
2 Years Post (2017-18)	0.304***	-0.186***	0.050*	7.570***	-4.635***	1.251*
	(0.020)	(0.021)	(0.023)	(0.495)	(0.511)	(0.559)
3 Years Post (2018-19)	0.458***	-0.250***	0.103**	11.427***	-6.230***	2.568**
	(0.027)	(0.029)	(0.035)	(0.675)	(0.731)	(0.861)

*Note: M-STEP standardized scores are standardized within grade and subject, with respect to the mean and standard deviation of the 2014-15 M-STEP. Robust standard errors clustered at the district level. + p<0.1, * p<0.05, ** p<0.01, *** p<0.001. Models include a full set of covariates and district fixed effects. See Appendix B-2 for full model results. Source: Student administrative records.*

Although we cannot be certain that the increase in student achievement after 2015-16 is a direct result of the Law, these findings may in part be explained by increased attention to literacy stemming from the Law, and in particular the required literacy professional development and literacy supports. This explanation aligns with findings from our survey analysis indicating that K-3 teachers increased their use of evidence-based instructional practices since the passage of the Law. While students and their families may have also increased their efforts in literacy to avoid retention, retention itself cannot explain the increase in achievement as the retention component of the Law was not scheduled to take place until the 2019-20 school year.[3]

As shown in the bottom panel of Table 6.2, third-grade math scores follow similar trends to third-grade ELA scores, significantly improving after the Law was enacted. This is consistent with findings from studies of the Florida third-grade literacy policy which found that students who were given literacy supports after being identified for retention based on reading test scores also experienced substantial gains in math achievement (Schwerdt et al., 2017; Perrault & Winters, 2020). Students'

improved reading skills may help them learn material in other subject areas or comprehend the math assessment. It is also possible that students who are struggling to learn receive more overall attention because of the Law, which may increase their learning across subjects. However, if it is the Law that increased student math scores, we would expect a smaller magnitude of increase for math than for ELA because the Law is directly aimed at improving literacy instruction. Rather, we observe slightly larger increases in math scores than in ELA, suggesting that there may be other confounding factors concurrent with the Law's implementation that contribute to the increase in math (and potentially ELA) scores.

Columns 2-3 and 5-6 show pre-Law trends and post-Law shifts in student achievement for 4th-5th grade students. There is some evidence that student achievement in higher grades, except for fifth-grade math, decreases in the post-Law years relative to their pre-Law trends. This reaffirms a concern state-level stakeholders raised that the focus on K-3 in the Law may have taken away resources from and negatively affected student achievement in higher grades. As one MDE staff member said:

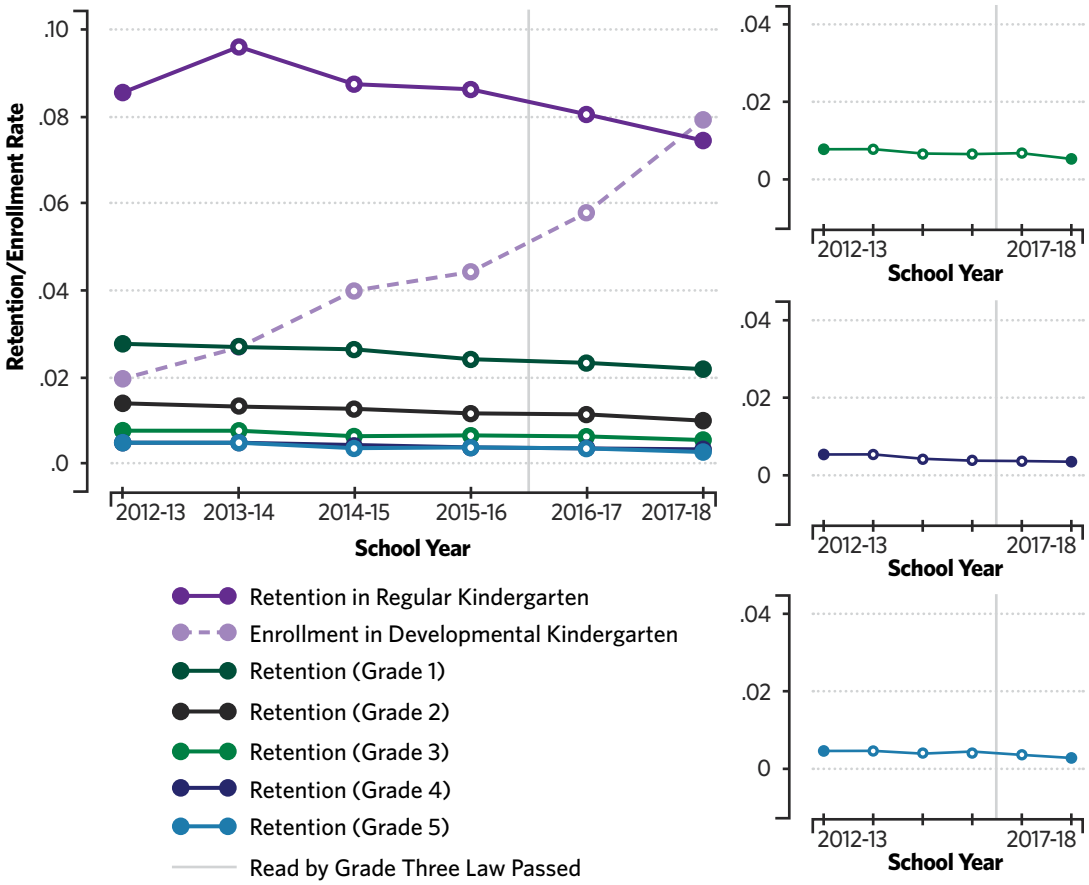
> *Even looking at early childhood and our early, early childhood experiences, our birth to age three, even, experiences, when you shine so much attention on this K-3 space, it loses the focus of those others. While in some ways it's nice to lift that up and have the reading focus, we're missing a whole bunch of other kids in doing that. If all the funding goes to K-3, there's not gonna be left over for those other spaces, and that's a problem...so their 4-8 or 4-12 scores being impacted in a negative way. While third grade is important, it's not the only grade that's important, and some people think the Law is only about third grade.*

Student Retention Rates Stay Stable

Of particular interest to an evaluation of the Read by Grade Three Law is another indicator of "student success": in-grade retention. On one hand, improved literacy instruction and student achievement may lead to a decrease in retention rates. On the other hand, under the Law, a student who has received intensive literacy supports for two or more years, and was previously retained in kindergarten, first, or second grade can be exempt from third-grade retention under a **good cause exemption**. In other words, under the Law, students may be retained in grades K-2 to avoid being retained in third grade—when the long-term social and emotional consequences may be greater (e.g., Hong & Yu, 2008; Ozek, 2015; Shepard, 1989). Our educator surveys indicate that 47% of elementary school principals and 33% of district superintendents agreed that the Law increased the likelihood that K-2 students would be retained.

Using student administrative records, we identify students who repeated a grade level in each year. Figure 6.8 provides graphic evidence that retention rates largely remain stable over time. We also perform ITS analyses to test whether and to what extent student retention rates shift after the Law was enacted (see Table 6.3). We find that retention rates in 1st-5th grades slightly decrease relative to their trends in absence of the Law, but these changes are very minor (0.1 percentage point) and rarely statistically significant.

FIGURE 6.8. Adjusted Trends of Student Retention



Note: The retention rate measures the proportion of students who were retained after a given school year. The adjusted trends are derived from the regressions in which the student retention indicators are regressed on year dummies (2012-13 as the reference year) and demeaned student- and school-level covariates discussed in Section Two. The adjusted retention rate in the reference year is the constant value from the regressions and the adjusted retention rates in other years are the sum of the constant value and coefficients of the corresponding year dummies. The analytical sample of a given grade excludes students who have been retained in that grade before. Source: Student administrative records.

TABLE 6.3. Interrupted Time Series Analysis of Student Retention

	Probability of Enrolling in a Developmental Kindergarten Program		Probability of Being Retained in Grade				
	Kindergarten		Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)
Pre-Law Trend	0.009***	-0.000	0.000	-0.001*	-0.000**	-0.001***	-0.000**
	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.000)
1 Year Post (2016-17)	0.002	-0.007*	-0.001	0.000	0.001*	0.000	0.001+
	(0.003)	(0.003)	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.000)	(0.000)
2 Years Post (2017-18)	0.011*	-0.011*	-0.003	-0.000	0.001	0.001+	0.000
	(0.005)	(0.005)	(0.002)	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.001)

*Note: Robust standard errors clustered at the district level. + p<0.1, * p<0.05, ** p<0.01, *** p<0.001. Models include a full set of covariates and district fixed effects. See Appendix B-3 for full model results. Source: Student administrative records.*

Enrollment in Developmental Kindergarten Increases after the Law

For kindergarteners, we distinguish between the retention of students in a traditional single-year kindergarten setting and the participation of students in two-year Developmental Kindergarten programs (also called "Young 5's" or "Begindergarten"). We identify students as participating in Developmental Kindergarten programs if they were flagged as enrolling in such a program when they first entered the student administrative record and then enrolled in the kindergarten for the following year. Developmental Kindergarten programs and regular kindergarten are considered the same for state funding. Their classes usually follow a similar curriculum to traditional kindergarten, but at a slower pace spread over two years.

As Figure 6.8 shows, while the retention rate in a traditional kindergarten setting has been slowly decreasing since the 2013-14 school year, the rate of enrollment in Developmental Kindergarten has been growing rapidly during the same period. This reflects the expansion of Developmental Kindergarten programs in Michigan.

Table 6.3 confirms our graphical results. Developmental Kindergarten rates increase significantly between 2012-13 and 2017-18, and the rate of growth increases after the Law was passed. It is possible that schools and districts expanded Developmental Kindergarten programs to provide students with more time to learn literacy skills. A second possibility is that some schools and districts created or expanded Developmental Kindergarten programs with the intent of affording students "previously retained" status that allows them to be exempted from third-grade retention under the Law.[4] One policymaker shared with us:

> *Some schools…are using the first year of kindergarten, like a young 5's program as a kindergarten retention in order to avoid the third-grade retention because you can only be retained once. They're counting that, young 5's program as a routine kindergarten…*

Another factor that may contribute to the expansion of Developmental Kindergarten programs is the change in the minimum age requirement to enroll in kindergarten. A law (MCL 380.1147) enacted in the 2015-16 school year changed the kindergarten entry cut-off date such that students must be 5 years old by September 1st of the school year in which they plan on attending kindergarten, as opposed to December 1st under the previous law. This change may have caused parents of students who would have been eligible for kindergarten under the old law to enroll their children in Developmental Kindergarten programs rather than an extra year of pre-school or at-home care. When disaggregating the full sample by age group, we find that students who turned five between September 1st and December 1st of the school year were more likely to enroll in the Developmental Kindergarten in the second year after the Law were students who turned 5 before September 1st (see Appendix B-4), providing support for this hypothesis.

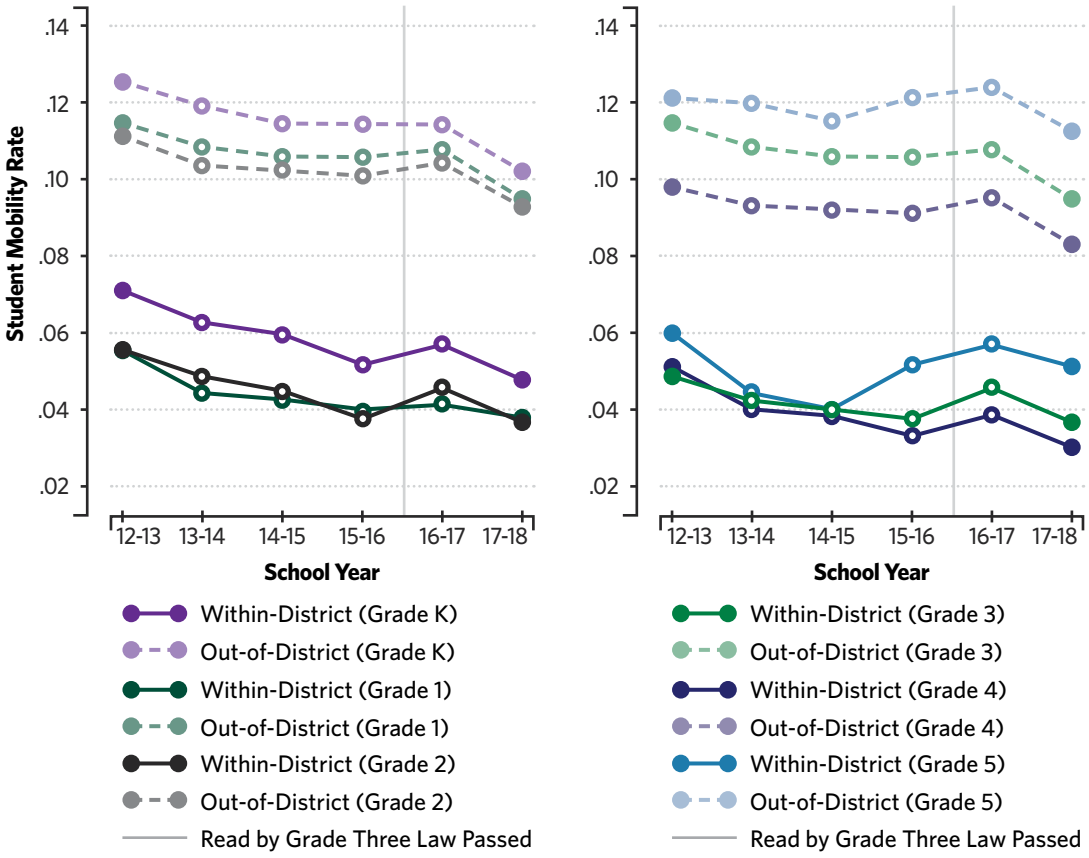
Student Mobility Slightly Increases in the First Year after the Passage of The Law

We may expect to see changes in student mobility in the early years of the reform if, for instance, some students move to schools or districts that provide more literacy supports or

other services perceived to help with literacy or avoid retention. We might also observe students strategically moving across districts to avoid being subject to third-grade retention under the Law because students who have moved prior to the year of retention and were not provided with an appropriate IRIP in their previous school district are eligible for good cause exemption waivers.

Here we consider two types of student mobility: movement within the same district and movement out of a student's current district. Movement within a district should not be affected by the Law, but it is conceivable that movement between districts is. Figure 6.9 shows descriptive trends in these two mobility indicators for K-5 students after adjusting for student and school characteristics. Overall, K-4 students' mobility (either moving within or across districts) slightly decreases over the course of the study with a small increase in the 2016-17 school year. Fifth-grade students experience a slight increase in mobility in both 2015-16 and 2016-17, but this begins to reverse, in line with students in other elementary grades, in 2017-18.

FIGURE 6.9. Adjusted Trends of Student Mobility



Note: The adjusted trends are derived from the regressions in which the student mobility indicators are regressed on year dummies (2012-13 as the reference year) and demeaned student- and school-level covariates discussed in Section Two. The adjusted mobility rate in the reference year is the constant value from the regressions and the adjusted mobility rates in other years are the sum of the constant value and coefficients of the corresponding year dummies. Source: Student administrative records.

Table 6.4 reports estimates from ITS analyses for student mobility. When compared to their pre-Law trends, probabilities of moving within a district and across districts slightly increase in the first year after the Law's implementation, with students in 1st-4th grade more likely to move out of district, and third-grade students more likely to move within a district. However, because the most recent second-grade cohort for whom we can observe mobility (i.e., second graders in the 2017-18 school year) are not subject to the retention policy that was scheduled to take effect in the 2019-20 school year, we are not able to directly test whether students are more likely to move across district one year prior to the third-grade retention to qualify for a good cause exemption.

TABLE 6.4. Interrupted Time Series Analysis of Student Mobility

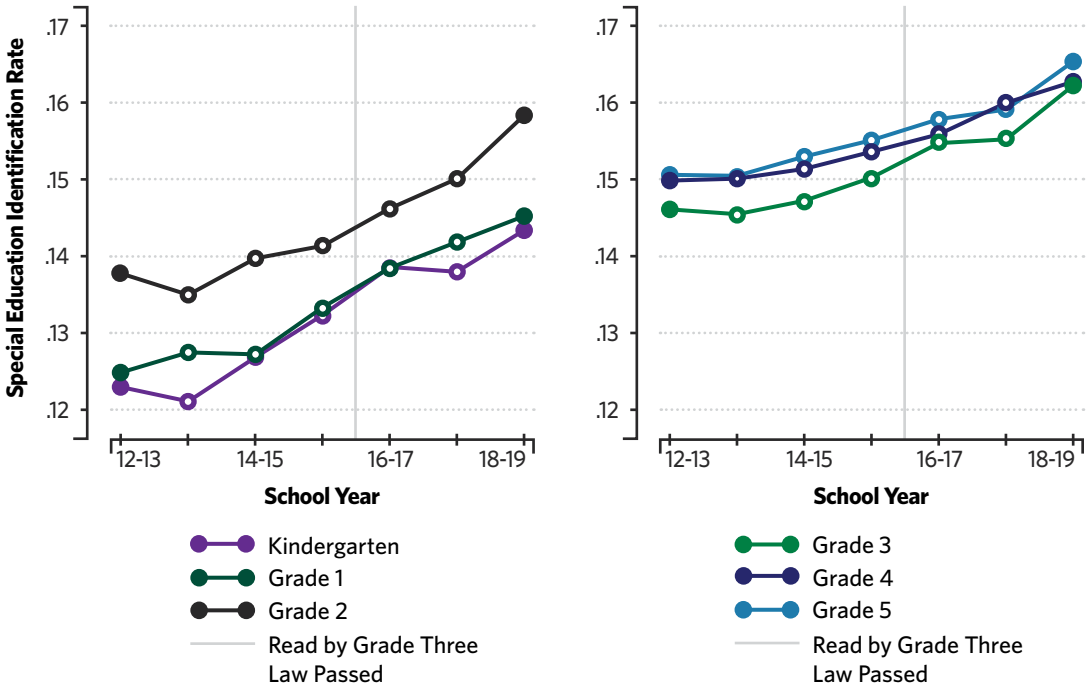
	Kindergarten	Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Outcome	**Probability of Moving Within the District**					
Pre-Law Trend	-0.004*	-0.002	-0.003+	-0.003+	-0.004*	0.002
	(0.002)	(0.002)	(0.002)	(0.001)	(0.002)	(0.003)
1 Year Post (2016-17)	0.010+	0.006	0.011+	0.012*	0.009	0.009
	(0.006)	(0.006)	(0.006)	(0.006)	(0.007)	(0.010)
2 Years Post (2017-18)	0.000	0.001	0.003	0.003	0.003	0.002
	(0.007)	(0.007)	(0.007)	(0.006)	(0.007)	(0.011)
Outcome	**Probability of Moving out of the District**					
Pre-Law Trend	-0.003***	-0.001*	-0.002**	-0.002*	-0.001*	0.000
	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.001)
1 Year Post (2016-17)	0.004+	0.005*	0.007*	0.006**	0.007**	0.005
	(0.002)	(0.003)	(0.003)	(0.002)	(0.003)	(0.004)
2 Years Post (2017-18)	-0.004	-0.005	-0.001	-0.003	-0.002	-0.005
	(0.003)	(0.003)	(0.003)	(0.003)	(0.003)	(0.005)

*Note: Robust standard errors clustered at the district level. + p<0.1, * p<0.05, ** p<0.01, *** p<0.001. Models include a full set of covariates and district fixed effects. See Appendix B-5 for full model results. Source: Student administrative records.*

K-3 Special Education Identification Rates Increase in the First Year After the Passage of the Law

Under the Law, students with disabilities (i.e., students with an Individualized Education Program [IEP]) or students with academic supports (i.e., students with a Section 504 Plan) can receive a good cause exemption if their IEP team or Section 504 coordinator decides it is in the best interest of the student to do so. As shown in Figure 6.10, the proportion of students with disabilities has been increasing during the period of study, especially for K-2 students.

FIGURE 6.10. Adjusted Trends of Special Education Placement



Note: The adjusted trends are derived from the regressions in which the special education identification rates are regressed on year dummies (2012-13 as the reference year) and demeaned student- and school-level covariates discussed in Section Two. The adjusted special education identification rate in the reference year is the constant value from the regressions and the adjusted identification rates in other years are the sum of the constant value and coefficients of the corresponding year dummies. Source: Student administrative records.

TABLE 6.5. Interrupted Time Series Analysis of Special Education Placement

	Grade K	Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Outcome	**Probability of Being Identified as Student with a Disability**					
Pre-Law Trend	0.004***	0.003***	0.002***	0.002***	0.002**	0.002***
	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.001)
1 Year Post (2016-17)	0.004*	0.004*	0.003*	0.004*	0.001	0.001
	(0.002)	(0.002)	(0.002)	(0.002)	(0.002)	(0.002)
2 Years Post (2017-18)	-0.001	0.003	0.004	0.000	-0.000	-0.004
	(0.003)	(0.002)	(0.002)	(0.002)	(0.003)	(0.002)
3 Years Post (2019-19)	0.001	0.004	0.010***	0.005*	0.001	-0.000
	(0.003)	(0.003)	(0.003)	(0.003)	(0.003)	(0.003)

*Note: Robust standard errors clustered at the district level. + p<0.1, * p<0.05, ** p<0.01, *** p<0.001. Models include a full set of covariates and district fixed effects. See Appendix B-6 for full model results. Source: Student administrative records.*

We also conduct ITS analyses to examine whether there are significant shifts in the rates of students with disabilities in K-5 after the Law was passed. As shown in Table 6.5, the rate of students with disabilities in K-3 increases more rapidly one year after the Law relative to its pre-Law trend. In addition, we find that greater proportions of second grade students receive special education services in the third year after the Law's passage (i.e., 2018-19), the year before retention was scheduled to take effect. This suggests that students may be more likely to be identified as students with disabilities to qualify for a good cause exemption, although of course we are unable to definitively say this is the case. Nonetheless, these results are similar to results from Chicago's test-based promotion policy, which suggest that teachers responded strategically to the policy in part by increasing special education placements (Jacob, 2005).

SUMMARY

This section described early changes observed during the first three years of the Law's implementation. In general, state-level stakeholders believed that the Law has increased the public's and policymakers' attention to early literacy, although many educators—particularly teachers—did not perceive this to be the case. Nonetheless, survey data indicated that teachers have increased their time on literacy instruction and engaged in more evidence-based practices in their literacy instruction since the implementation of the Law. Yet they tended to perceive that these changes were a result of specific components of the Law (e.g., one-on-one literacy coaching, other literacy professional development, ISD Early Literacy Coaches) rather than the Law itself—likely because of their strong association between the Law and its retention component.

We find little evidence that teacher mobility—whether transfers between schools within the same district, transfers to other districts, or exits from public school teaching in Michigan—has changed since the implementation of the Law. However, many elementary school principals reported that they moved teachers to different grade levels or subject areas in response to the Law, suggesting that there may be some within-school mobility occurring as principals work to provide students with enhanced literacy instruction.

Third-grade M-STEP ELA and math scores significantly improved in the post-Law implementation years, although it is not clear whether the Law itself caused these increases in student achievement. It is possible that teachers' increased access to literacy coaches and improved literacy instruction may in part explain student achievement gains. Other factors may also contribute to this. Finally, we find some suggestive evidence that the Law may have unintended consequences, including reduced focus on literacy in higher grade levels and the use of Developmental Kindergarten and special education programs to qualify students for good cause exemptions.

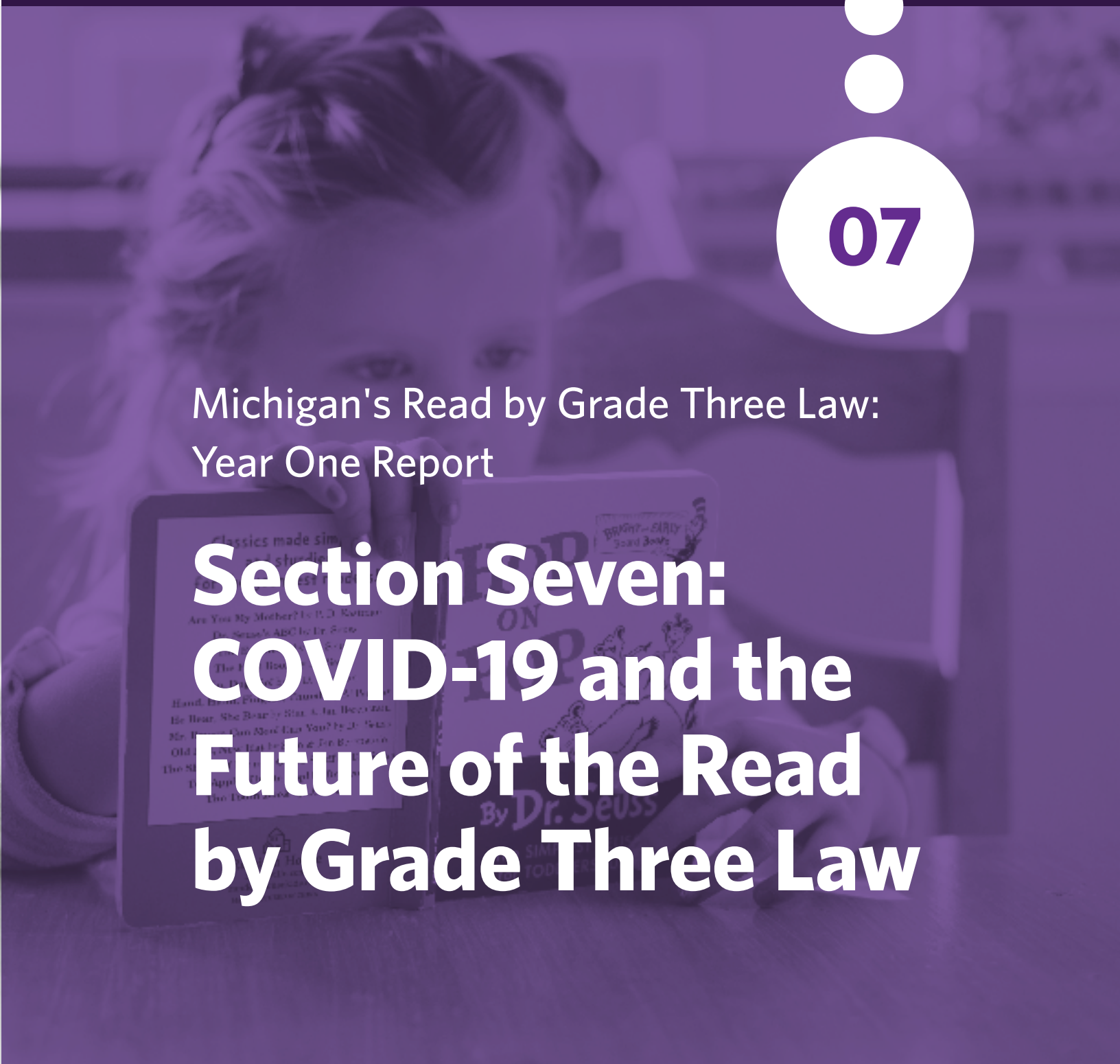
SECTION SIX NOTES

1 Only approximately 6% of students in the state are English learners. Fifty-four percent of districts and 60% of schools do not have a sufficient number of English learners to report data about this population on the public-facing MISchoolData website, meaning that there are fewer than 10 English learners total in the district or school.

2 M-STEP scale scores are calculated by statistically adjusting and converting "raw scores" (i.e., the combined point-values of items a student answered correctly) into a consistent, standardized scale. Established psychometric procedures are used to ensure that scale scores for a given grade level and content area have the same meaning across different years or test forms (Michigan Student Test of Educational Progress, 2019). The cut scores for each M-STEP performance level (Not Proficient, Partially Proficient, Proficient, and Advanced) remain the same across years.

3 The state kindergarten entry cut-off date changed in the 2015-16 year such that students who were previously required to be 5 years old by December 1st in the year in which they plan on attending kindergarten now must turn 5 by September 1st of the school year. Therefore, third-grade students in the 2018-19 may be slightly older than the third-grade cohorts in previous years. We include student age and its square terms in the ITS analysis of student achievement as additional control variables and find no significant changes in the coefficients of pre-Law trend and the post-Law year indicators. This suggests that the older age is not the dominating factor that explains the achievement gains we observe in Table 6.2.

4 We note that we could not find any document that explicitly states that Developmental Kindergarten will be viewed as retention in applying good cause exemptions.



07

Michigan's Read by Grade Three Law: Year One Report

Section Seven: COVID-19 and the Future of the Read by Grade Three Law

Section Seven:
COVID-19 and the Future of the Read by Grade Three Law

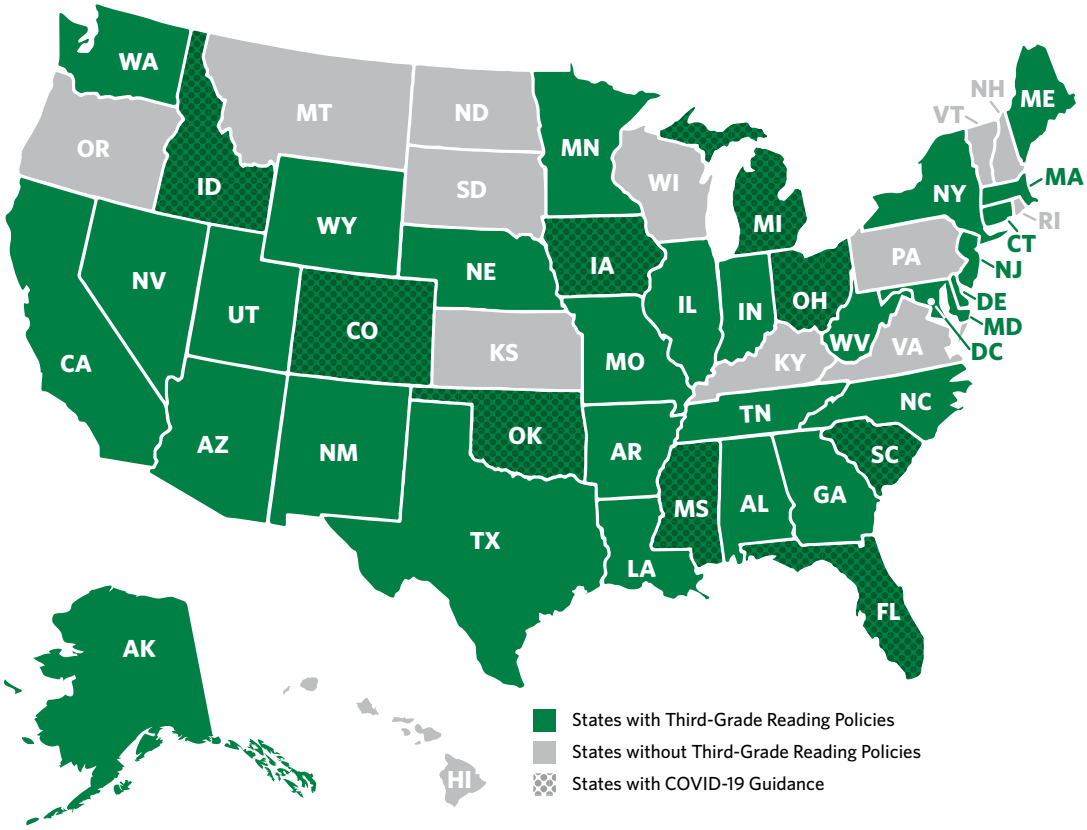
INTRODUCTION

The COVID-19 pandemic rapidly changed the landscape of education throughout the United States as school-building closures extended through the end of the 2019-20 school year and, in many places, well into the 2020-21 school year (Swaby, 2020). The abrupt shift to distance learning gave rise to new and growing concerns about student learning loss and widening achievement gaps (e.g., Cummings, Kilbride, Turner, Zhu, & Strunk, 2020; Kuhfeld & Tarasawa, 2020; Hamilton, Kaufman, & Diliberti, 2020), but also made the future of early literacy policies, including Michigan's Read by Grade Three Law, and the provision of literacy supports uncertain.

STATE COVID-19 GUIDANCE ON THIRD-GRADE READING LAWS

As of 2020, 37 states and the District of Columbia (D.C.) had early literacy policies that were similar in spirit or content to Michigan's Read by Grade Three Law. Thirty-four of these states plus D.C. mandated literacy supports intended to improve early literacy instruction and 17 states and D.C. required retention should students not meet specified benchmarks on state literacy assessments by the end of third grade. Despite this attention to literacy in both national and state policies, in the spring of 2020, as school buildings were shuttered and state end-of-year achievement tests were canceled, very few states set forth any guidance (e.g., recommendations, mandates) for schools and districts about the continuation or waiver of literacy supports and services prescribed in their third-grade reading laws. In fact, only nine of the 37 states and D.C. with third-grade reading policies (24%) issued any guidance on these topics in response to COVID-19.[1]

FIGURE 7.1 Map of States' COVID-19 Guidance and Third-Grade Reading Policies



Michigan was one of the nine states that did issue guidance about how to implement the Read by Grade Three Law during the pandemic. In the spring of 2020, Governor Gretchen Whitmer implemented several executive orders that pertained in whole or in part to K-12 education and associated policies during the COVID-19 pandemic. Executive Order No. 2020-05 mandated that all Michigan K-12 schools suspend face-to-face instruction beginning on March 16, 2020. On April 2, Governor Whitmer issued Executive Order No. 2020-35, extending the closure of all K-12 school buildings through the remainder of the 2019-20 school year and requiring districts to develop and submit Continuity of Learning (COL) plans to their **Intermediate School Districts (ISDs)/Regional Educational Service Agencies (RESAs)**[2] and the **Michigan Department of Education (MDE)** by April 28, 2020. These COL plans were to guide instruction and services for students for the remainder of the academic year (MDE, 2020a). In the same executive order, Governor Whitmer temporarily suspended the retention component of the Read by Grade Three Law that would have been based on the spring 2020 third-grade **M-STEP** scores—which the U.S. Department of Education waived on March 20, 2020 (U.S. Department of Education, 2020).

MDE provided additional detail to school districts about specifics of the Read by Grade Three Law's implementation during the period school buildings were closed to in-person instruction. On April 29, 2020, MDE issued guidance clarifying that "all other [non-retention] components of the [Read by Grade Three] Law" are to remain intact, including "the implementation of **Individual**

Reading Improvement Plans (IRIPs); monitoring of student progress; providing appropriate interventions; and supporting all students to build their literacy skills" (MDE, 2020b). MDE further noted that IRIPs should continue to address student progress through alternative forms of assessments and that schools should maintain contact with parents (MDE, 2020c). MDE also published "Supporting Summer Learning, Pandemic or Not" to guide districts' plans for summer reading programs for continuous distance learning (MDE, 2020e).

Michigan was one of only nine states that issued guidance about how to implement their early literacy laws during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Such guidance on Michigan's Read by Grade Three Law ensured continued early literacy services despite the transition to remote learning. However, although Executive Order 2020-35 outlined in detail the required and optional components of districts' COL plans (such as the district's plan for providing instruction and keeping students at the center of learning), none of the required or optional elements included anything specific to the continuation of Michigan's Read by Grade Three Law and its prescribed literacy supports (Executive Order No. 2020-35, 2020). Perhaps as a result, literacy-related services and supports were mentioned infrequently in the COL plans. Only 3% of plans addressed modifications or accommodations for students with a "**reading deficiency**" or students with an IRIP, and 2% of plans indicated that they would provide required supports for the same populations. More generally, only 4% of plans noted that they would provide non-instructional books (e.g., novels) to students during building closures.[3]

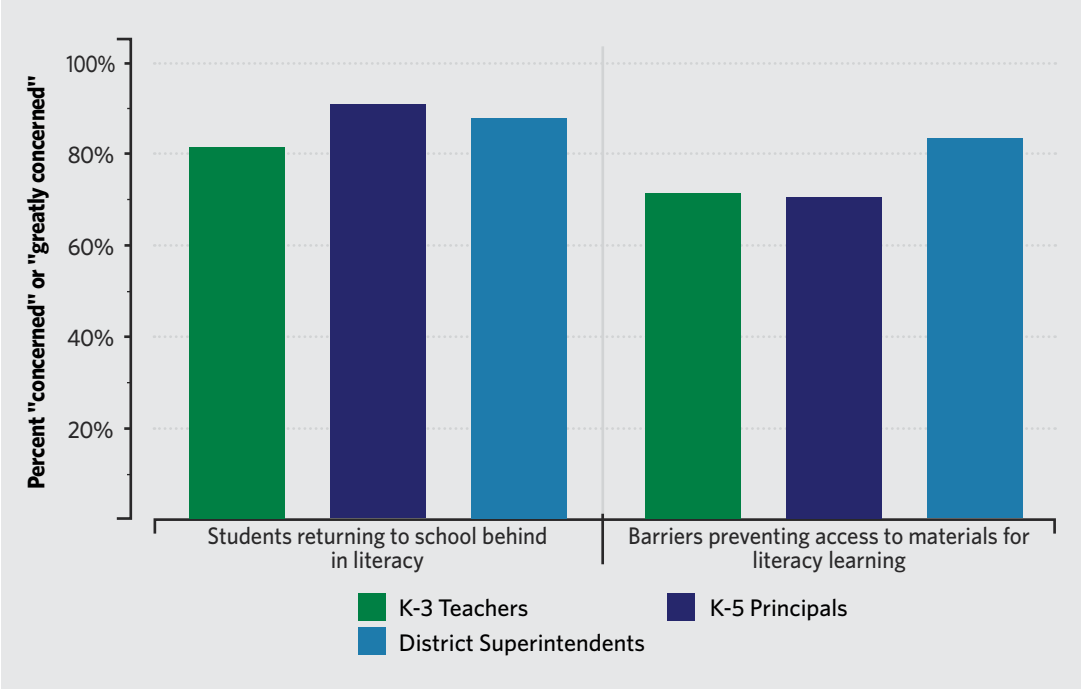
EDUCATORS EXPRESSED EARLY LITERACY CONCERNS AND CHALLENGES DURING SPRING 2020

As described in Section Two, we added a bank of COVID-19-related questions to our educator survey about the Read by Grade Three Law, including several about literacy instruction and services for students with a "reading deficiency" during school-building closures. Analyses of these survey responses show that, despite state guidance about the continued implementation of much of the Read by Grade Three Law, Michigan educators were concerned about and faced challenges related to literacy learning given the effect of COVID-19.

In particular, Michigan educators were worried that their students would return to school in fall 2020 behind in literacy; 92% of principals and 83% of teachers reported that they were either concerned or extremely concerned about this (Cummings, Kilbride, Turner, Zhu, & Strunk, 2020; see Figure 7.2).[4] This high level of concern was consistent across school districts with varying ELA performance, proportions of economically disadvantaged students, and access to broadband internet. Even though educators working with students in lower grades have the primary

responsibility for early literacy instruction and implementing the Read by Grade Three Law, high levels of concern about the effect of COVID-19 and related school-building closures on student literacy was also consistent across educators. Eighty-three percent of teachers, 92% of principals, and 88% of district superintendents expressed being concerned or extremely concerned about students returning to school behind in literacy.

FIGURE 7.2. Educators' Reported Concerns Over the Effect of COVID-19



Note: Teachers, principals, and district superintendents were asked, "How concerned are you about the following ways in which the extended suspension of face-to-face instruction due to COVID-19 may impact your students? Please mark one option for each row." Source: EPIC survey of educators about COVID-19.

Not only did educators express concern about students falling behind in literacy, but many were also concerned about barriers that could lead to such an outcome. Over 70% percent of teachers and principals reported being concerned or extremely concerned about barriers preventing access to materials for literacy learning (e.g., books, paper, pencils). This concern was elevated for district superintendents. While 40% of teachers and 35% of principals reported being extremely concerned about such barriers, half of district superintendents reported this level of concern, with an additional 34% reported feeling concerned.

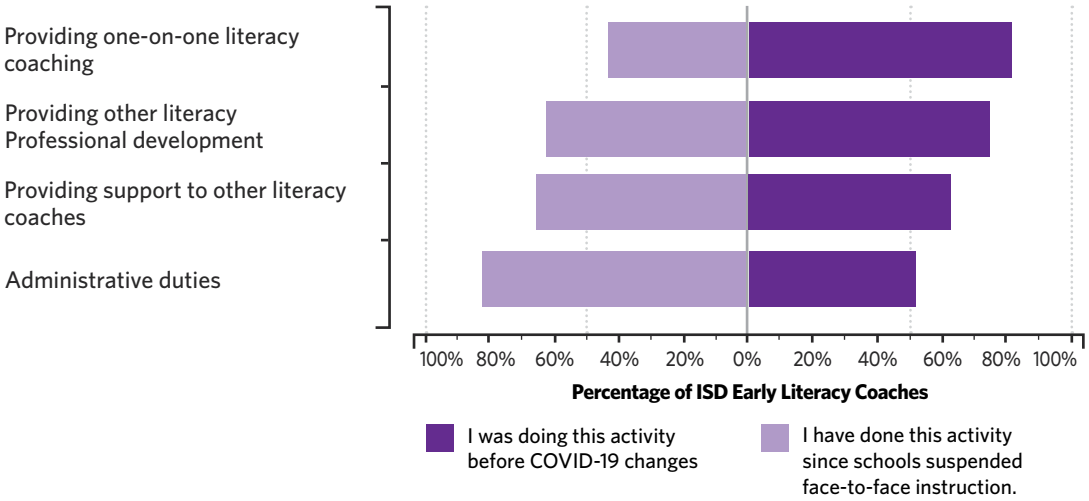
Teachers also reported facing challenges with continuing to provide access to literacy support services for students who receive such supports; 68% of teachers cited this as a challenge to either a moderate or great extent. Teachers' difficulties varied by grade range; elementary school teachers (72% of both K-3 and 4th-5th teachers) reported moderate or great challenges with providing continued access to literacy support services relative to 60% of their 6th-8th grade counterparts.

THE ROLE OF ISD EARLY LITERACY COACHES DURING COVID-19 SCHOOL-BUILDING CLOSURES

Like many others during the pandemic, the role of ISD Early Literacy Coaches changed dramatically given the shift to distance learning and a remote working environment. Before COVID-19, one-on-one literacy coaching was the most common activity in which ISD Early Literacy Coaches reported engaging (82%), and administrative duties were the least common (52%; see Figure 7.3). However, following the closure of school buildings, ISD Early Literacy Coaches most often reported performing administrative duties (e.g., developing learning plans at the ISD level, planning for the next school year, gathering resources for distance learning; 83%) and least often reported providing one-on-one literacy coaching (44%).

Notably, the ISD Early Literacy Coach role differed across intermediate school districts. ISD Early Literacy Coaches in ISDs with high predicted third-grade retention rates were far more likely to report engaging in one-on-one literacy coaching in the COVID-19 survey (80%) than were those in ISDs with low predicted third-grade retention rates (10%). However, those working in ISDs with higher ELA performance or lower proportions of economically disadvantaged students were also more likely to report providing one-on-one coaching since schools suspended face-to-face instruction, making it difficult to draw definitive conclusions about whether the educators who could most benefit from coaching continued to receive it in a distance learning environment.

FIGURE 7.3. Reported Activities of ISD Early Literacy Coaches, Pre- and Post-COVID-19 School-Building Closures



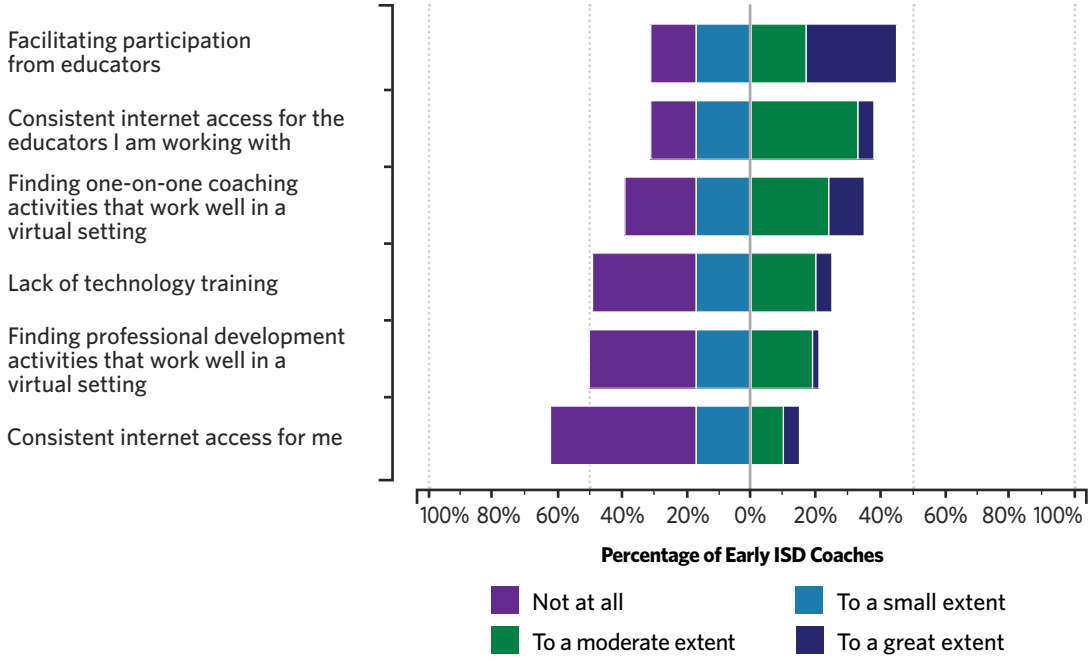
Note: ISD Early Literacy Coaches were asked, "Since schools have suspended face-to-face instruction due to COVID-19, how have you been spending most of your work hours in your role as an ISD Early Literacy Coach/ Consultant? How does this compare to your work before the COVID-19 changes? Please mark one response for each row and column." Source: EPIC survey of educators about COVID-19.

In addition to providing administrative support, ISD Early Literacy Coaches reported taking other steps to engage with educators during the COVID-19 school-building closures. They reported they most often sent electronic resources to educators (e.g., digital copies of lesson plans or activities; 54%), held virtual professional development sessions with teachers (44%) and other literacy

coaches (43%), and sent prepared videos or slideshows to educators (40%). ISD Early Literacy Coaches rarely reported providing physical resources to educators (e.g., hard copies of lesson plans or activities; 9%) or checked in on educators to ask about their wellbeing or what supports they needed (3%).

Similar to other educators, ISD Early Literacy Coaches reported experiencing challenges with engagement, internet access, and the transition to remote learning. However, instead of struggling to connect with students, ISD Early Literacy Coaches reported facing challenges to either a moderate or great extent when it came to facilitating participation from educators (45%), consistent internet access for educators they were working with (38%) and finding one-on-one coaching activities that worked well in a virtual environment (35%).

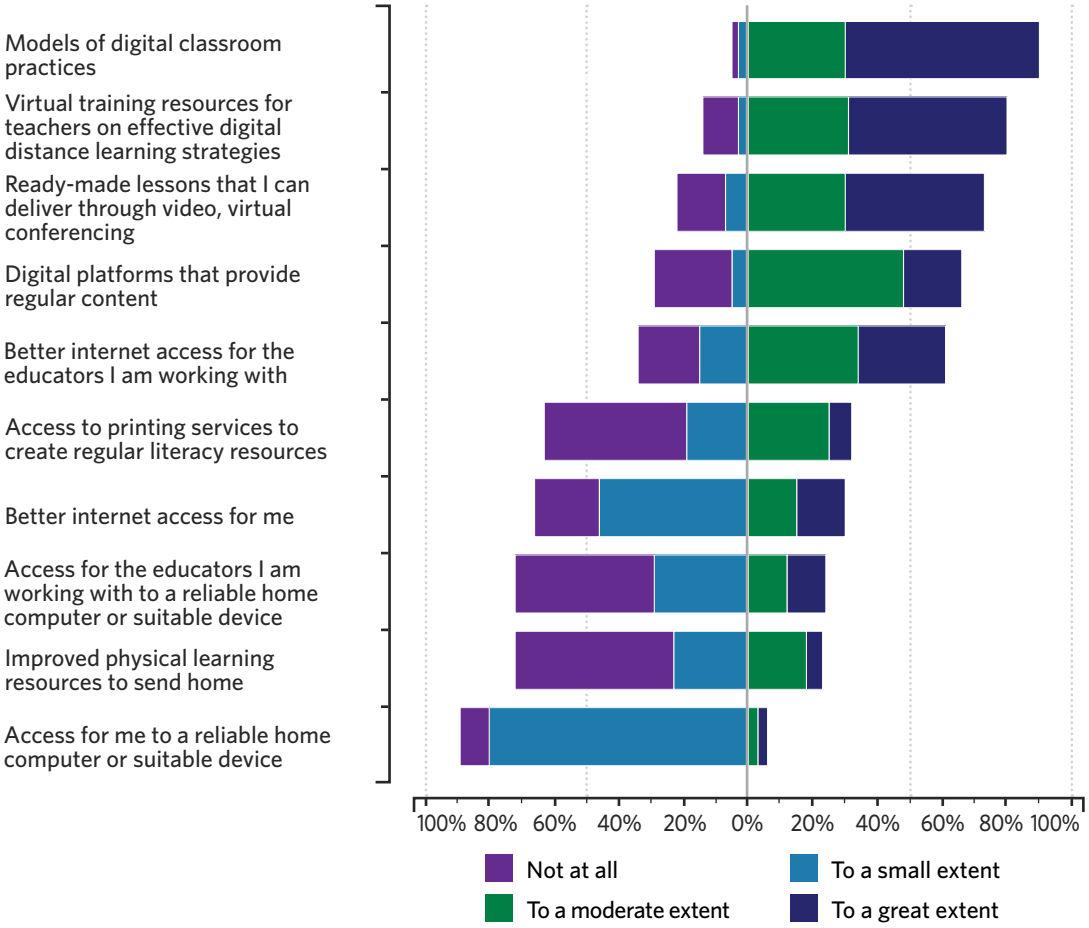
FIGURE 7.4. Reported Challenges ISD Early Literacy Coaches Faced Providing One-on-One Literacy Coaching or Professional Development Remotely



Note: ISD Early Literacy Coaches were asked, "To what extent are each of the following challenges you have experienced when providing literacy coaching or professional development remotely, or barriers that have prevented you from doing so? Please mark one option for each row." Source: EPIC survey of educators about COVID-19.

When asked about which supports would be helpful to ISD Early Literacy Coaches to enable them to provide or improve remote one-on-one literacy coaching or other literacy professional development (Figure 7.5), they most often noted models of digital classroom practices (90%), virtual training resources for teachers on effective digital distance learning strategies (e.g., YouTube videos, step-by-step instructions; 81%), ready-made lessons that they can deliver through video or virtual conferencing (e.g., Zoom; 74%), and better internet access for the educators with whom they were working (61%). Interestingly, these are similar to the supports that teachers said would be helpful in providing or improving on the distance instruction they were giving students—with the exception of internet access, which was one of the supports teachers least often indicated would be helpful.

FIGURE 7.5. Extent to Which Various Supports Would be Helpful in Providing/ Improving on Distance One-on-One Coaching or Professional Development



Note: ISD Early Literacy Coaches were asked, "To what extent would each of the following supports be helpful to either provide effective distance coaching or professional development or improve on the supports you are already providing? Please mark one option for each row." Source: EPIC survey of educators about COVID-19.

ISD Early Literacy Coaches less often reported that improved physical learning resources to send home (23%), access to a reliable home computer or suitable device for the educators with whom they were working (e.g., laptop, Chromebook, tablet; 23%), or access for themselves to such a device (7%) would be helpful in improving remote one-on-one literacy coaching or other literacy professional development.

LOOKING FORWARD

Ultimately, the effect of COVID-19 on early literacy in Michigan and nationally remains to be seen as school-building closures have continued into the 2020-21 school year in many places and instructional modality is largely left up to individual schools and districts. EPIC analyses have shown that 14% of Michigan districts offered only fully remote instruction in November 2020, and another 18% offered in-person instruction for only part of the week (i.e., a "hybrid" model). While 59% of districts offered students the option to learn in-person five days a week, districts

estimated that only 28% to 42% of students opted in to fully in-person learning across the state (Hopkins, Kilbride, & Strunk, 2020). It remains to be seen how literacy supports play out in this context, and how important aspects of the Read by Grade Three Law are implemented.

In particular, using state standardized assessments to identify students for third-grade retention is in question. Some Michigan superintendents have expressed a desire to suspend state M-STEP testing again in the 2020-21 school year, and State Superintendent Michael Rice along with State Board of Education President Casandra Ulbrich have twice asked the U.S. Department of Education for a testing waiver (Rice & Ulbrich, 2020; MDE, 2021). Although then-U.S. Secretary of Education Betsy Devos stated that Michigan should expect to administer federally required tests, including the M-STEP, this spring (DeVos, 2020; French, 2020), it is unclear how the incoming Secretary of Education Miguel Cardona will decide under a Biden administration. MDE has been clear that, unless this changes, educators should anticipate state end-of-year assessments to be in place in spring 2021 (MDE, 2020f). The retention component of the Read by Grade Three Law will depend in part on the administration of the third-grade M-STEP in spring 2021, as well as educators' and policymakers' beliefs about the reliability and validity of an assessment taken during or in the near aftermath of a pandemic and that may be administered remotely to some children.

Beyond retention, assessments play a critical role in the Law's implementation as educators must use diagnostic assessments to identify students who need extra support to improve their early literacy skills. The Michigan legislature passed a package of bills (HB 5911-5913) in August 2020 to revise Michigan school code to allow for the possibility of remote or hybrid learning as well as to require benchmark assessment measuring student proficiency in mathematics and reading (MDE, 2020). HB 5913 requires districts to include benchmark assessments in their reopening plans for the 2020-21 school year and to test K-8 students within the first 90 days of the 2020-21 school year (Michigan Legislature HB 5913, 2020). These benchmark assessments are designed to help educators determine all students' achievement levels and target instruction in the coming school year but cannot be used for the state accountability system. Under the legislation, districts must select one or more benchmark assessments aligned to state standards in reading and math and assure in their reopening plans that they will be administered to all K-8 students within the first nine weeks of school and again before the end of the school year to determine whether they are making meaningful progress toward meeting these standards (MDE, 2020g).

These benchmark assessments are in addition to the diagnostic assessments that districts must administer under the Read by Grade Three Law. MDE has also released guidance on how this "Return to Learn" legislation will affect the Read by Grade Three Law diagnostic assessment

A MAJORITY OF SCHOOLS OFFERED IN PERSON LEARNING, BUT STUDENT UPTAKE WAS LOW

Instructional modality was largely left up to individual schools and districts. EPIC analyses have shown that 14% of Michigan districts offered only fully remote instruction in November 2020, and another 18% offered in-person instruction for only part of the week (i.e., a "hybrid" model).

While 59% of districts offered students the option to learn in-person five days a week, districts estimated that only 28% to 42% of students opted in to fully in-person learning across the state.

requirements, stating that districts must conduct the mandatory diagnostic assessments within the first 30 days of the school year under the Read by Grade Three Law as usual, and that they must create an IRIP for students identified with a "reading deficiency" based on their results (MDE, 2020h). Further, districts are to use their assessment system under the Read by Grade Three Law to continually screen and diagnose K-3 students throughout the school year (MDE, 2020h). Ultimately, the state has made clear that the Read by Grade Three Law, including its retention and literacy supports components, are all still in place for the 2020-21 school year, whether students are learning in-person or at a distance.

SUMMARY

COVID-19 has had a dramatic effect on the day-to-day lives of nearly everyone, but its effect on providing K-12 education has been unprecedented. In the spring, school-building closures raised many questions but also presented teachers, principals, district superintendents, ISD Early Literacy Coaches, and policymakers with a new set of challenges with respect to K-12 education. Researchers have noted that it is especially difficult to provide young students with adequate or excellent literacy instruction remotely and/or given the substantial upheaval of the spring and fall 2020 semesters (Schwartz, 2020). In this section, we outlined how Michigan policymakers worked to keep early literacy and the implementation of Read by Grade Three-required literacy supports at the fore even during pandemic-related school-building closures. Nonetheless, we show that these school-building closures in spring 2020 exacerbated educators' long-standing concerns about early literacy development for their students and posed new challenges for educators.

SECTION SEVEN NOTES

1 For a more thorough discussion of the state's early literacy COVID-19 guidance, we refer readers to "COVID-19 and Third-Grade Reading Policies: An Analysis of State Guidance on Third-Grade Reading Policies in Response to COVID-19," which can be found online at https://epicedpolicy.org/covid-19-and-third-grade-reading-policies/.

2 Hereafter, all references will only mention ISD as this is the more common term used among policymakers.

3 EPIC researchers coded and analyzed the COL plans required by Executive Order 2020-35. For a more thorough discussion of how Michigan school districts planned to educate students in spring 2020, please see "How did Michigan School Districts Plan to Educate During COVID-19?: An Analysis of District Continuity of Learning Plans," which can be found online at: https://epicedpolicy.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/08/Continuity-of-Learning-Policy-Brief-1.pdf

4 For a more thorough discussion of how surveyed Michigan educators responded to COVID-19, we refer readers to "How did Michigan Educators Respond to the Suspension of Face-to-Face Instruction due to COVID-19? An Analysis of Educators' Responses to the 2020 EPIC COVID-19 Survey," which can be found online at https://epicedpolicy.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/08/RBG3-COVID-Survey-Policy-Brief.pdf.

08

Michigan's Read by Grade Three Law:
Year One Report

Section Eight: Key Takeaways and Policy Implications

Section Eight: Key Takeaways and Policy Implications

This report is the first of five in our multi-year evaluation of the implementation and efficacy of Michigan's Read by Grade Three Law. This evaluation includes analyses of interviews with state-level stakeholders; surveys of teachers, principals, district superintendents, and **Intermediate School Districts (ISDs)/Regional Educational Services Agencies (RESAs)**[1] Early Literacy Coaches; and student and teacher administrative records. The objectives of this first report are to provide an overview of how the Law was formed and intended to work, its early implementation through spring 2020, and its early effects on relevant outcomes for Michigan students and educators. In this final section, we outline key takeaways and consider the implications of these results for future policymaking.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

ELA and Math Achievement Has Improved Since the Law's Passage and Educators Attribute Gains to the Law's Literacy Supports

- Third-grade student achievement in both ELA and math has improved since the Read by Grade Three Law passed, with students in districts with the lowest elementary ELA achievement and in urban districts experiencing the greatest gains in third grade ELA achievement.
- Although we cannot definitively attribute achievement gains to the Read by Grade Three Law, educators expressed optimism that many of the literacy supports the Law requires would positively affect student achievement in literacy. In particular, they believed that daily targeted small group

or one-on-one reading interventions, evidence-based reading instruction, more time spent on reading instruction, literacy professional development for teachers, and diagnostic assessments and monitoring would increase student achievement.

- Educators perceived these same literacy supports to be useful for improving student literacy and reported being more likely to implement such supports. By contrast, fewer educators believed that "Read at Home" plans and summer reading camps or programs would improve literacy and were less likely to implement them.
- Furthermore, the vast majority of teachers reported implementing evidence-based instructional practices in their classrooms, and many teachers noted that they increased the amount of time spent on these activities since the Law's passage. Interestingly, given the results that achievement increased more in lower-achieving and urban districts, teachers in traditionally underserved districts were more likely to report increased time spent on these evidence-based instructional practices since the implementation of the Law than were teachers in other districts.

Teachers Perceived Literacy Professional Development to be Effective, Although There Was a Shortage of Literacy Coaches

- Teachers perceived literacy professional development to be effective in helping them improve their instructional practice, with three-quarters feeling that they became a better literacy teacher because of it. They reported that literacy professional development was most often focused on addressing students' literacy needs, identifying students who are struggling with literacy, analyzing assessments to inform instruction, and differentiating instruction. Nonetheless, teachers expressed a desire for additional support in areas of literacy instruction emphasized by the Law as well as topics that go beyond the Law's specified literacy supports.
- However, there appeared to be a shortage of literacy coaches available to work with K-3 teachers. Both educators and state-level stakeholders reported that there were relatively few literacy coaches in school buildings, including the ISD Early Literacy Coaches provided for under the Law. Forty-three percent of K-3 teachers reported receiving one-on-one literacy coaching, but just 13% reported that this came from an ISD Early Literacy Coach. State-level stakeholders ascribed this shortage to fiscal constraints, the matching requirement for ISD Early Literacy Coach funding, and lack of prior training. Michigan's teacher shortage may also have exacerbated the literacy coach shortage, as district leaders reported recruiting coaches from the extant supply of educators.

Access to Literacy Coaching and Literacy Resources Was Inequitable

- Although some administrators reported that the quantity of literacy coaches working in their school or district increased since the Law passed, this increased access appeared to be inequitably distributed across districts. Administrators in districts with high predicted retention rates—those that could benefit the most from literacy coaching—were least likely to report an increase in

access to ISD Early Literacy Coaches. These same districts are more likely to be larger, urban, and in lower-income communities, suggesting that they likely had fewer resources to put towards a sufficient number of coaches. ISD Early Literacy Coaches also reported that teachers were most often identified for one-on-one literacy coaching by requesting it, suggesting that those who could most benefit from coaching may not be receiving it.

- Educators in districts with high predicted retention rates, low ELA performance, and higher proportions of economically disadvantaged students faced greater challenges in providing high-quality literacy instruction and adequate literacy resources to improve students' literacy learning. Educators report particularly large gaps in the quality of resources for districts' ability to recruit and retain high-quality teachers, the availability of library resources, access to a variety of reading materials, and the quality of literacy instruction for students with **Individualized Education Programs (IEPs)** or **Section 504 Plans**.
- These disparities may exacerbate the ability of students in traditionally underserved districts to succeed in their literacy learning.

Student Retention Remains a Controversial Component of the Law

- State-level stakeholders were divided on the wisdom of including retention in the Read by Grade Three Law. While the majority of state-level stakeholders we interviewed disliked retention, many perceived its inclusion in the Law to be a tool intended to ensure that schools took early literacy seriously. Others, however, worried that retention would inequitably and adversely affect students who already have been underserved by public education and could have long term and adverse effects on retained students.
- The far majority of educators reported that the retention component of the Law caused stress in the school community. Moreover, relatively few educators believe that retaining third grade students would improve student literacy.
- Although the Law indicated that third grade students who did not reach the established cut-point on the ELA **M-STEP** should be retained unless they qualified for a **good cause exemption**, it did give superintendents the ultimate decision about which students to retain. Districts superintendents varied in how they planned to implement the retention component of the Law, but the majority of superintendents indicated that they would not retain any students or would decide on a case-by-case basis which third graders to retain.
- The retention component of the Law was intended to take effect based on third grade M-STEP scores from the spring of 2020. However, due to COVID-19, M-STEP testing did not occur in 2020 and as a result the retention component of the Read by Grade Three Law has been delayed. Student retention rates have stayed stable in the years since the Law was passed and leading up to the planned implementation of third grade retention. However, enrollment in Developmental Kindergarten programs has increased, particularly in urban districts and in districts with higher predicted retention rates and greater proportions of economically disadvantaged students.

- It is possible that enrollment has increased in Developmental Kindergarten programs in an effort to allow students to be granted a good cause exemption from third-grade retention under the Law. Alternately, it is feasible that the growth in Developmental Kindergarten for these groups of students and districts indicates an effort to improve student achievement before the high-stakes third grade year. Either way, principals and superintendents in traditionally underserved districts were substantially more likely than their colleagues in other districts to agree that the Law increased the likelihood that students would be retained before the third grade.

Educators Held Negative Perceptions of the Read by Grade Three Law

- Very few K-3 teachers, elementary principals, or district superintendents believed that the Read by Grade Three Law was fair, and nearly half of these three groups believed that the Law would harm students' motivation. Moreover, only 17% of K-3 teachers and less than 10% of elementary school principals and district superintendents said that they would recommend that other states adopt similar policies.

COVID-19 Led to Concerns about Literacy Instruction and Disrupted the Implementation of the Law

- Michigan was one of nine states to issue guidance on its third-grade reading policy during the COVID-19 pandemic in spring 2020. Michigan's guidance required that all Read by Grade Three Law components continue to be administered during school-building closures, with the exception of retention which was temporarily suspended due to the absence of state testing.
- Educators expressed concerns and challenges related to early literacy during the initial school-building closures in the spring of 2020, with a top concern being that students would return to school in fall 2020 behind in literacy.
- The role of ISD Early Literacy Coaches shifted dramatically during COVID-19 school-building closures. Before the pandemic, coaches most often reported providing one-on-one literacy coaching; after school buildings closed, they most often reported performing administrative duties.

POLICY IMPLICATIONS

Continue to Focus on Evidence-Based Literacy Supports

Student achievement in both ELA and math has increased since the passage of the Read by Grade Three Law in 2016, and educators credit many of the literacy supports identified by the Law for these improvements. In the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic, it will be more important than ever to provide resources to help K-3 teachers continue to implement evidence-based literacy supports, including funding, literacy materials, and high-quality literacy coaches. Moreover, given the disruption to K-12 schooling caused by the pandemic, policymakers may wish to consider again pausing on retention in the 2020-21 school year to help provide educators and students

with the space to focus on literacy without fear of high-stakes consequences. In addition, given the controversy over retention that existed before the pandemic and that has only increased since March 2020, policymakers may want to reevaluate the likely efficacy of retention as a central component of the state's early literacy policy.

Provide Additional Funding to Help Schools and Districts Recruit and Retain Literacy Coaches

Educators perceived literacy coaches to be effective, but data suggest that there are not enough of them to adequately serve all the teachers, schools, and districts who need them. State policymakers and ISD and district leaders should consider how to increase the number of literacy coaches and allocate these personnel to schools and teachers who need them the most. This may include increasing funding for this component of the Law to allow ISDs to hire and train additional coaches. In doing so, it will be important to reflect upon how best to continue recruiting and training literacy coaches without exacerbating the state's teacher shortage.

Allocate Funding and Resources in Ways that Attend to Existing Inequities in Literacy Supports and Outcomes

Literacy resources—literacy materials, coaches, and otherwise—have been inequitably distributed across districts. Policymakers should consider ways to target resources and funding to traditionally underserved districts in which teachers and students can benefit the most from additional instructional supports and higher quality literacy resources.

SECTION EIGHT NOTES

1 Hereafter, all references will only mention ISD as this is the more common term used among policymakers.

KEY TERMS

1. **CEPI (Center for Educational Performance and Information):** The Center for Educational Performance and Information collects and manages Michigan's educational administrative data such as records on the state's teachers, students, and facilities.
2. **Good cause exemptions:** Good cause exemptions are a provision in the Read by Grade Three Law whereby a student can be promoted if they meet one of the following exemptions: an Individualized Education Program (IEP) or Section 504 Plan; limited English proficiency, having received less than three years of instruction in an English learner (EL) program; received intensive reading intervention for two or more years, and been previously retained in kindergarten, first, or second grade; been enrolled in the current school for less than two years and evidence that the student was not given an appropriate Individual Reading Improvement Plan (IRIP) by their previous school district; or by a parent or legal guardian has requested a good cause exemption within 30 days after receiving retention notification from the Center for Educational Performance and Information (CEPI), and the superintendent determines that the good cause exemption is in the best interests of the pupil.
3. **IEP (Individualized Education Program):** An individualized education program (IEP) is a written document for students with disabilities ages 3 through 25 that outlines the student's educational needs and goals and any programs and services the intermediate school district (ISD) and/or its member district will provide to help the student make educational progress.
4. **IRIP (Individual Reading Improvement Plan):** As defined by Michigan's Read by Grade Three Law, an IRIP should be provided to K-3 students within 30 days of being identified as having a "reading deficiency." This should be created by the teacher, principal, and parent/guardian as well as any other relevant school personnel and outline the reading intervention services that the student should receive until they no longer have a "reading deficiency."
5. **ISD/RESA (Intermediate School District/Regional Educational Service Agency):** In Michigan, ISDs/RESAs are educational entities that operate between the Michigan Department of Education and local education agencies, often serving the local education agencies within a given county. Local education agencies can receive a range of services through their ISD.
6. **ISD (Intermediate School District) Early Literacy Coach:** An ISD Early Literacy Coach/Consultant is funded at least in part through 35a(4) Early Literacy Coach Grant). Responsibilities outlined under the Read by Grade Three Law include: providing initial and ongoing professional development to teachers on the five major reading components, administering and analyzing instructional assessments, providing differentiated instruction and intensive intervention, using progress monitoring, and identifying and addressing reading deficiency as well as coaching and mentoring colleagues, modeling effective instructional strategies, and working with teachers to apply evidence-based reading strategies and programs.
7. **MDE (Michigan Department of Education):** The Michigan Department of Education is Michigan's state education agency.
8. **MEAP (Michigan Educational Assessment Program):** MEAP is the Michigan Educational Assessment Program (MEAP), which was a suite of standardized assessments given to Michigan students and used by the state for school and district accountability. The MEAP was administered through the 2013-14 school year, after which it was replaced by a new assessment system.
9. **M-STEP (Michigan Student Test of Educational Progress):** A suite of assessments administered to Michigan's students since spring 2015. M-STEP is the assessment that the Michigan Department of Education uses for school and district accountability.
10. **Reading Deficiency:** As defined in Michigan's Read by Grade Three Law, a reading deficiency means scoring below grade level or being determined to be at risk of reading failure based on a screening assessment, diagnostic assessment, standardized summative assessment, or progress monitoring.
11. **Section 504 Plan:** A plan that lists the accommodations a school will provide (like audiobooks, note-taking aids, or extended time to complete tests) so that a student with a disability has equal access to the general education curriculum.
12. **TPS (Traditional Public School):** Traditional public school districts are special-purpose districts with geographic boundaries and a publicly elected governing board that receive public funds to operate schools.
13. **35(a)4 Funding:** 35(a)4 is a grant by the Michigan Legislature and administered by the Michigan Department of Education for the provision of ISD Early Literacy Coaches. ISDs must apply for the funding and, prior to the 2019-20 fiscal year, had to provide matching funds for at least 50% of the grant amount awarded to support the cost of the literacy coach.
14. **35(a)5 Funding:** 35(a)5 is a grant by the Michigan Legislature and administered by the Michigan Department of Education for additional instructional time to students in preK-3 who have been identified as needing additional supports and interventions in order to read at grade-level by the end of third grade.
15. **35(a)9 Funding:** 35(a)9 is a grant by the Michigan Legislature and administered by the Michigan Department of Education for the implementation of a summer school reading program for students in grade 3 who did not score proficient on the English language arts (ELA) portion of the M-STEP and for students in K-2 who are not reading at grade level.

REFERENCES

Albee, J.J., Smith, M.L., Arnold, J.M., & Dennis, L.B. (2019). Digging struggling students out of the summer reading slump. *The Reading Teacher, 73*(3), 291-299.

Arsen, D., Delpier, T., & Nagel, J. (2019). *Michigan school finance at the crossroads: A quarter century of state control.* Michigan State University Education Policy Report. Available at: https://education.msu.edu/ed-policy-phd/pdf/Michigan-School-Finance-at-the-Crossroads-A-Quarter-Center-of-State-Control.pdf

Augenblick, Palaich, & Associates. (2016). *Michigan education finance study.* Denver, CO: APA Consulting.

Atteberry, A., & McEachin, A. (2020). *School's out: The role of summers in understanding achievement disparities.* EdWorkingPaper: 20-82. Retrieved from Annenberg Institute at Brown University: https://doi.org/10.26300/2mam-bp02

Augustine, C.H., McCombs, J.S., Pane, J.F., Schwartz, H.L., Schweig, J., McEachin, A., & Siler-Evans, K. (2016). *Learning from summer: Effects of voluntary summer learning programs on low-income urban youth.* Santa Monica, CA: RAND Corporation.

Baker, S., Lesaux, N., Jayanthi, M., Dimino, J., Proctor, C. P., Morris, J., Gersten, R., Haymond, K., Kieffer, M. J., Linan-Thompson, S., & Newman-Gonchar, R. (2014). *Teaching academic content and literacy to English learners in elementary and middle school* (NCEE 2014-4012). Washington, DC: National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance (NCEE), Institute of Education Sciences, U.S. Department of Education. Retrieved from the NCEE website: http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/publications_reviews.aspx

Balu, R., Zhu, P., Doolittle, F., Schiller, E., Jenkins, J., & Gersten, R. (2015). *Evaluation of response to intervention practices for elementary school reading*. Washington, DC: Institute of Education Sciences.

Barone, D. (2013). Important revelations about school reform: Looking at and beyond Reading First. *School Effectiveness and School Improvement, 24*(4), 392-416.

Basma, B., & Savage, R. (2018). Teacher professional development and student literacy growth: A systematic review and meta-analysis. *Education Psychology Review, 30,* 457-481.

Bean, R.M., Draper, J.A., Hall, V., Vandermolen, J., & Zigmond, N. (2010). Coaches and coaching in Reading First schools: A reality check. *The Elementary School Journal, 111*(1).

Begeny, J.C., & Martens, B.K. (2006). Assisting low-performing readers with a group-based reading fluency intervention. *School Psychology Review, 35*(1), 91-107.

Berliner, D. (2011). Rational responses to high stakes testing: The case of curriculum narrowing and the harm that follows. *Cambridge Journal of Education, 41*(3), 287-302.

Biancarosa, G., Bryk, A.S., & Dexter, E.R. (2010). Assessing the value-added effects of literacy collaborative professional development on student learning. *The Elementary School Journal, 111*(1), 7-34.

Blachman, B.A., Schatschneider, C., Fletcher, J.M., Murray, M.S., Munger, K.A., & Vaughn, M.G. (2014). Intensive reading remediation in grade 2 or 3: Are there effects a decade later? *Journal of Educational Psychology, 106*(1), 46-57.

Blachowicz, C.L.Z., Obrochta, C., & Fogelberg, E. (2005). Literacy coaching for change. *Educational Leadership, 62*(6), 55-58.

Borman, G.D., Benson, J., & Overman, L.T. (2005). Families, schools, and summer learning. *The Elementary School Journal, 106*(2), 131-150.

Borman, G.D., Goetz, M., & Dowling, N.M. (2009). Halting the summer achievement slide: A randomized field trial of the KindergARTen summer camp. *Journal of Education for Students Placed at Risk, 14*(2), 133-147.

Cantrell, S.C., & Hughes, H.K. (2008). Teacher efficacy and content literacy implementation: An exploration of the effects of extended professional development with coaching. *Journal of Literacy Research, 40*(1), 95-127.

Carlisle, J.F., & Berebitsky, D. (2011). Literacy coaching as a component of professional development. *Reading and Writing, 24*, 773-800.

Catts, H.W., Fey, M.E., Zhang, X., & Tomblin, J.B. (2001). Estimating the risk of future reading difficulties in kindergarten children. *Language, Speech, and Hearing Services in Schools, 32*(1), 38-50.

Catts, H.W., Nielsen, D.C., Bridges, M.S., Liu, Y.S., & Bontempo, D.E. (2013). Early identification of reading disabilities within an RTI framework. *Journal of Learning Disabilities, 48*(3), 281-297.

Chambers, J. (2019, May 20). *Michigan eases measuring stick for third-grade reading ahead of retention rules*. The Detroit News. https://www.detroitnews.com/story/news/local/michigan/2019/05/17/michigan-eases-measuring-stick-third-grade-reading-ahead-of-retention-rules/3705374002/

REFERENCES *(continued)*

Chaplin, D., & Capizzano, J. (2006). *Impacts of a summer learning program: A random assignment study of Building Educated Leaders for Life (BELL).* Washington, DC: Urban Institute.

Chetty, R., Friedman, J.N., & Rockoff, J.E. (2011). *The long-term impacts of teachers: Teacher value-added and student outcomes in adulthood* (NBER Working Paper 17699). Cambridge, MA: National Bureau of Economic Research. Retrieved from the National Bureau of Economic Research. https://www.nber.org/papers/w17699

Chetty, R., Friedman, J.N., & Rockoff, J.E. (2014). Measuring the impacts of teachers I: Evaluating bias in teacher value-added estimates. *American Economic Review, 104*(9), 2593-2632.

Christodoulou, J.A., Cyr, A., Murtagh, J., Chang, P., Lin, J., Guarino, A.J., Hook, P., & Gabrieli, J.D.E. (2015). Impact of intensive summer reading intervention for children with reading disabilities and difficulties in early elementary school. *Journal of Learning Disabilities, 50*(2), 115-127.

Clotfelter, C.T., Ladd. H.F., & Vigdor, J.L. (2007). Teacher credentials and student achievement: Longitudinal analysis with student fixed effects. *Economics of Education Review, 26*(6), 673-682.

Coburn, C. E. (2001). Collective sensemaking about reading: How teachers mediate reading policy in their professional communities. *Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis*, *23*, 145–170.

Coburn, C.E., & Woulfin, S.L. (2012). Reading coaches and the relationship between policy and practice. *Reading Research Quarterly, 47*(1), 5-30.

Cohen, D. K. (1990). A revolution in one classroom: The case of Mrs. Oublier. *Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis*, *12*, 311–329.

Correnti, R. (2007). An empirical investigation of professional development effects on literacy instruction using daily logs. *Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis, 29*(4), 262-295.

Creswell, J.W., & Plano Clark, V.L. (2011). *Designing and conducting mixed methods research*. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications, Inc.

Cummings, A., Kilbride, T., Turner, M., Zhu, Q., & Strunk, K. (2020, August). *How did Michigan educators respond to the suspension of face-to-face instruction due to COVID-19? An analysis of educators' response to the 2020 EPIC COVID-19 survey.* Education Policy Innovation Collaborative. https://epicedpolicy.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/08/RBG3-COVID-Survey-Policy-Brief.pdf

Cummings, A., & Turner, M. (2020, October). *COVID-19 and third-grade reading policies: An analysis of state guidance on third-grade reading policies in response to COVID-19.* Education Policy Innovation Collaborative. https://epicedpolicy.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/RBG3-Reading-Policies-FINAL-10-29-20.pdf

Deno, S.L. (2003). Developments in curriculum-based measurement. *The Journal of Special Education, 37*(3), 184-192.

DeVos, B. (2020, September 3). *Letter to Chief State School Officers.* U.S. Department of Education, Washington, D.C.

Downing, J., Williams, J., & Holden, E.W. (2009). Evaluating the effectiveness of a reading remediation program in a public school setting. *Journal of Applied School Psychology, 25*(3), 27-285.

Duke, N., Moje, E., & Palincsar, A. (2014). *Three IRA literacy research panel members comment on Michigan House Bill 5111*. International Literacy Association. https://www.literacyworldwide.org/blog/literacy-now/2014/02/26/three-ira-literacy-research-panel-members-comment-on-michigan-house-bill-5111

Early Literacy Task Force. (2016). Essential instructional practices in early literacy: K-3. *General Education Leadership Network*. https://www.gomaisa.org/downloads/gelndocs/k-3_literacy_essentials.pdf

Eide, E.R., & Goldhaber, D.D. (2005). Grade retention: What are the costs and benefits? *Journal of Education Finance, 31*(2), 195-214.

Elbro, C., & Scarborough, H.S. (2004). Early identification. In T. Nunes & P. Bryant (Eds.), *Handbook of Children's Literacy*. Springer, Dordrecht.

Elish-Piper, L., & L'Allier, S. (2010). Exploring the relationship between literacy coaching and student reading achievement in grades K-1. *Literacy Research and Instruction, 49*(2), 162-174.

REFERENCES *(continued)*

Elish-Piper, L., & L'Allier, S. (2011). Examining the relationship between literacy coaching and student reading gains in grades K-3. *The Elementary School Journal, 112*(1), 83-106.

Education Policy Innovation Collaborative (EPIC). (2020, January 31). *2019 estimated Read by Grade Three retention rates* [PowerPoint slides]. EPIC. https://epicedpolicy.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/01/RBG3_cutpoint_analysis_-updated_1-30-20.pdf

Eren, O., Depew, B., & Barnes, S. (2017). Test-based promotion policies, dropping out, and juvenile crime. *Journal of Public Economics*, 153, 9–31.

Executive Order 2020-05, (2020, March 13). http://www.legislature.mi.gov/documents/2019-2020/executiveorder/pdf/2020-EO-05.pdf

Executive Order 2020-35, (2020, April 2). http://legislature.mi.gov/(S(vvqednsbukuowa2k4dpu15en))/documents/2019-2020/executiveorder/pdf/2020-EO-35.pdf

Executive Order 2020-65, (2020, April 30). http://legislature.mi.gov/(S(vvqednsbukuowa2k4dpu15en))/documents/2019-2020/executiveorder/pdf/2020-EO-65.pdf

Felton, R.H. (1992). Early identification of children at risk for reading disabilities. *Topics in Early Childhood Special Education, 12*(2), 212-229.

Figlio, D., Holden, K.L., & Ozek, U. (2018). Do students benefit from longer school days? Regression discontinuity evidence from Florida's additional hour of literacy instruction. *Economics of Education Review, 67*, 171-183.

Fisher, D., Frey, N., & Nelson, J. (2012). Literacy achievement through sustained professional development. *The Reading Teacher, 65*(8).

Fisher, D., Lapp, D., Flood, J., & Moore, K. (2006). Linking literacy teaching with assessment: A continuing professional development initiative for secondary schools. *Literacy, 40*(2).

French, R. (2019, March 5). Whitmer budget would triple literacy coaches to help Michigan students read. *Bridge*. https://www.bridgemi.com/talent-education/whitmer-budget-would-triple-literacy-coaches-help-michigan-students-read

French, R. (2020, September 4). Betsy DeVos: Michigan can expect standardized tests, despite COVID-19. *Bridge*. https://www.bridgemi.com/talent-education/betsy-devos-michigan-can-expect-standardized-tests-despite-covid-19

French, R. (2020a, January 29). Gov. Whitmer launching effort to undercut Michigan's third-grade reading law. *Bridge*. https://www.bridgemi.com/talent-education/gov-whitmer-launching-effort-undercut-michigans-third-grade-reading-law

French, R. (2020b, January 31). Michigan schools revolt: We won't flunk struggling third-grade readers. *Bridge*. https://www.bridgemi.com/talent-education/michigan-schools-revolt-we-wont-flunk-struggling-third-grade-readers

Fuchs, D., Compton, D.L., Fuchs, L.S., Bryant, J., & Davis, G.N. (2008). Making "secondary intervention" work in a three-tier responsiveness-to-intervention model: Findings from the first-grade longitudinal reading study of the National Research Center on Learning Disabilities. *Reading and Writing, 21*, 413-436.

Fuchs, L.S., & Fuchs, D. (2001). *What is scientifically-based research on progress monitoring?* New York: National Center on Student Progress Monitoring.

Fuchs, L.S., & Fuchs, D. (2011). *Using CBM for progress monitoring in reading*. New York: National Center on Student Progress Monitoring.

Gambrell, L.B., & Mazzoni, S.A. (1999). Principles of best practice: Finding the common ground. In L.B. Gambrell, L.M. Morrow, S.B. Neuman, & M. Pressley (Eds.) *Best Practices in Literacy Instruction* (pp. 11-21). New York: Guilford Press.

Gamse, B. C., Jacob, R. T., Horst, M., Boulay, B., & Unlu, F. (2008). *Reading First impact study: Final report*. Washington, DC: Institute of Education Sciences.

Gershenson, S. (2013). Do summer time-use gaps vary by socioeconomic status? *American Educational Research Journal, 50*(6), 1219-1248.

Gittelman, R., & Feingold, I. (1983). Children with reading disorders—I. Efficacy of reading remediation. *The Journal of Child Psychology and Psychiatry, 24*(2), 167-191.

Goldhaber, D. (2007). Everyone's doing it, but what does teacher testing tell us about teacher effectiveness? *Journal of Human Resources, 42*(4), 765-794.

Good, R.H., Simmons, D.C., & Kame'enui, E.J. (2001). The importance and decision-making utility of a continuum of fluency-based indicators of foundational reading skills for third-grade high-stakes outcomes. *Scientific Studies of Reading, 5*(3), 257-288.

REFERENCES *(continued)*

Graham, S., & Hebert, M.A. (2010). Writing to read: Evidence for how writing can improve reading. *A Carnegie Corporation Time to Act Report*. Washington, DC: Alliance for Excellent Education.

Greene, J.P., & Winters, M.A. (2004). *An evaluation of Florida's program to end social promotion*. New York, NY: Center for Civic Innovation at the Manhattan Institute.

Greene, J.P., & Winters, M.A. (2006). *Getting farther ahead by staying behind: A second-year evaluation of Florida's policy to end social promotion.* New York, NY: Center for Civic Innovation at the Manhattan Institute.

Greene, J.P., & Winters, M.A. (2007). Revisiting grade retention: An evaluation of Florida's test-based promotion policy. *Education Finance and Policy, 2*(4), 319-340.

Greene, J.P., & Winters, M.A. (2009). The effects of exemptions to Florida's test-based promotion policy: Who is retained? Who benefits academically? *Economics of Education Review, 28*(1), 135-142.

Greenwood, C.R., Tapia, Y., Abbott, M., & Walton, C. (2003). A building-based case study of evidence-based literacy practices: Implementation, reading behavior, and growth in reading fluency, K-4. *The Journal of Special Education, 37*(2), 95-110.

Gunn, B., Biglan, A., Smolkowski, K., & Ary, D. (2000). The efficacy of supplemental instruction in decoding skills for Hispanic and non-Hispanic students in early elementary school. *The Journal of Special Education, 34*(2), 90-103.

Gunn, B., Smolkowski, K., Biglan, A., & Black, C. (2002). Supplemental instruction in decoding skills for Hispanic and non-Hispanic students in early elementary school: A follow-up. *The Journal of Special Education, 36*(2), 69-79.

Gunn, B., Smolkowski, K., Biglan, A., Black, C., & Blair, J. (2005). Fostering the development of reading skill through supplemental instruction: Results for Hispanic and non-Hispanic students. *The Journal of Special Education, 39*(2), 66-85.

Guryan, J., Kim, J.S., & Quinn, D.M. (2014). *Does reading during the summer build reading skills? Evidence from a randomized experiment in 463 classrooms* (NBER Working Paper 20689). Cambridge, MA: National Bureau of Economic Research. Retrieved from the National Bureau of Economic Research: https://www.nber.org/papers/w20689

Hamilton, L.S., Kaufman, J.H., & Diliberti, M. (2020). Teaching and leading through a pandemic: Key findings from the American Educator panels Spring 2020 COVID-19 surveys. *RAND.* https://www.rand.org/pubs/research_reports/RRA168-2.html

Harn, B. A., Linan-Thompson, S., & Roberts, G. (2008). Does additional instructional time make a difference for the most at-risk first graders? *Journal of Learning Disabilities*, *41*(2), 115–125.

Harris, D. (2011). *Value-added measures in education*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard Education Press.

Holmes, T. (1989). Grade level retention effects: A meta-analysis of research studies. In L. A. Shepard & M. L. Smith (Eds.), *Flunking Grades: Research and Policies on Retention*. Education Policy Perspectives (pp. 16–33). The Falmer Press.

Hong, G., & Yu, B. (2008). Effects of kindergarten retention on children's social-emotional development: An application of propensity score method to multivariate, multilevel data. *Developmental Psychology, 44*(2), 407.

Hopkins, B., Kilbride, T., & Strunk, K. (2020). Instructional delivery under Michigan District's extended Continuity of Learning plans. *Education Policy Innovation Collaborative (EPIC).* https://epicedpolicy.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/EPIC-ECOL-Report-November-2020.pdf

Hurford, D.P., Johnston, M., Nepote, P., Hampton, S., Moore, S., Neal, J., Mueller, A., McGeorge, K., Huff, L., Awad, A., Tatro, C., Juliano, C., & Huffman, D. (1994). Early identification and remediation of phonological-processing deficits in first-grade children at risk for reading disabilities. *Journal of Learning Disabilities, 27*(10), 647-659.

Hurford, D.P., Schauf, J. D., Blaich, T., Moore, K., & Bunce, L. (1994a). Early identification of children at risk for reading disabilities. *Journal of Learning Disabilities, 27*(6), 371-382.

International Reading Association. (2002). *What is evidence-based reading instruction?* Newark, DE: International Reading Association.

International Literacy Association. (2018). *Specialized literacy professionals matrix by roles*. https://www.literacyworldwide.org/docs/default-source/resource-documents/standards-appendix-A.pdf

Invernizzi, M., Justice, L., Landrum, T.J., & Booker, K. (2004). Early literacy screening in kindergarten: Widespread implementation in Virginia. *Journal of Literacy Research, 36*(4), 479-500.

REFERENCES *(continued)*

Jacob, B.A. (2005). Accountability, incentives and behavior: The impact of high-stakes testing in the Chicago Public Schools. *Journal of Public Economics, 89*, 761-796.

Jacob, B. (2017). When evidence is not enough: Findings from a randomized evaluation of Evidence-Based Literacy Instruction (EBLI). *Labour Economics, 45*, 5-16.

Jacob, B. A., & Lefgren, L. (2004). Remedial education and student achievement: A regression-discontinuity analysis. *The Review of Economics and Statistics*, *86*(1), 226–244.

Jacob, B.A., & Lefgren, L. (2009). The effect of grade retention on high school completion. *American Economic Journal: Applied Economics, 1*(3), 33-58.

Jimerson, S. R. (2001). Meta-analysis of grade retention research: Implications for practice in the 21st century. *School Psychology Review*, *30*(3), 420–437.

Kamps, D., Abbott, M., Greenwood, C., Wills, H., Veerkamp, M., & Kaufman, J. (2008). Effects of small-group reading instruction and curriculum differences for students most at risk in kindergarten: Two-year results for secondary- and tertiary-level interventions. *Journal of Learning Disabilities, 41*(2), 101-114.

Kennedy, E. (2010). Improving literacy achievement in a high-poverty school: Empowering classroom teachers through professional development. *Reading Research Quarterly, 45*(4).

Kennedy, E., & Shiel, G. (2011). Raising literacy levels with collaborative on-site professional development in an urban disadvantaged school. *The Reading Teacher, 63*(5).

Kennedy, J. C., Hansen, G., Pavlov, P., Hopgood, H., Price, A., Kelly, T., Zemke, A., Roberts, J., Jameson, R., Ackerman, D., McPhee, K., & Sawher, T. (2015). *Third-grade reading workgroup report to Governor Rick Snyder*. https://www.michigan.gov/documents/snyder/3rd_Grade_Reading_Workgroup_Report_490977_7.pdf

Kerins, M.R., Trotter, D., & Schoenbrodt, L. (2010). Effects of a tier 2 intervention on literacy measures: Lessons learned. *Child Language Teaching and Therapy, 26*(3), 287-302.

Kim, J.S. (2006). Effects of a voluntary summer reading intervention on reading achievement: Results from a randomized field trial. *Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis, 28*(4), 335-355.

Kim, J.S. (2007). The effects of a voluntary summer reading program on reading activities and reading achievement. *Journal of Educational Psychology, 99*(3), 505-515.

Kim, J.S., Guryan, J., White, T.G., Quinn, D.M., Capotosto, L., & Kingston, H.C. (2016). Delayed effects of a low-cost and large-scale summer reading intervention on elementary school children's reading comprehension. *Journal of Research on Educational Effectiveness, 9*(1), 1-22.

Kim, J.S., & White, T.G. (2008). Scaffolding voluntary summer reading for children in grades 3 to 5: An experimental study. *Scientific Studies of Reading, 12*(1).

Klingbell, D.A., McComas, J.J., Burns, M.K., & Helman, L. (2015). Comparison of predictive validity and diagnostic accuracy of screening measures of reading skills. *Psychology in the Schools, 52*(5), 500-514.

Koon, S., Foorman, B., & Galloway, T. (2020). *Identifying North Carolina students at risk of scoring below proficient in reading at the end of grade 3* (REL 2020-030). Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance, Regional Educational Laboratory Southeast. Retrieved from https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/edlabs/regions/southeast/pdf/REL_2020030.pdf

Kraft, M.A., Blazar, D., & Hogan, D. (2018). The effect of teacher coaching on instruction and achievement: A meta-analysis of the causal evidence. *Review of Educational Research, 88*(4), 547-588.

Kuhfeld, M. & Tarasawa, B. (2020, April). The COVID-19 slide: What summer learning loss can tell us about the potential impact of school closures on student academic achievement. *NWEA*. https://www.nwea.org/content/uploads/2020/05/Collaborative-Brief_Covid19-Slide-APR20.pdf

LiCalsi, C., Ozek, U., & Figlio, D. (2019). The uneven implementation of universal school policies: Maternal education and Florida's mandatory grade retention policy. *Education Finance and Policy, 14*(3), 383-413.

Linan-Thompson, S., & Hickman-Davis, P. (2002). Supplemental reading instruction for students at risk for reading disabilities: Improve reading 30 minutes at a time. *Learning Disabilities, 17*(4), 242-251.

Lockwood, J.R., McCombs, J.S., & Marsh, J. (2010). Linking reading coaches and student achievement: Evidence from Florida middle schools. *Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis, 32*(3), 372-388.

REFERENCES *(continued)*

Loeb, S., & McEwan, P. J. (2006). An economic approach to education policy implementation. In M.I. Honig (Ed.), *New Directions in Education Policy Implementation: Confronting Complexity* (pp. 169–186). Albany: The State University of New York Press.

Lovejoy, A., Szekely, A., Wat, A., Rowland, C., Laine, R., & Moore, D. (2013, October). *A Governor's Guide to Early Literacy: Getting all students reading by third grade.* National Governor's Association. https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED583168.pdf

Mariano, L. T., Kirby, S. N., Crego, A., & Setodji, C. M. (2009). Measuring the effect of supportive interventions on proximal-year student achievement. In J. S. McCombs, S. N. Kirby, & L. T. Mariano (Eds.), *Ending social promotion without leaving children behind: The case of New York City*. Santa Monica, CA: RAND Corporation. https://www.rand.org/pubs/monographs/MG894.html

Mariano, L. T., & Martorell, P. (2013). The academic effects of summer instruction and retention in New York City. *Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis, 35*(1), 96–117.

Mariano, L.T., Martorell, P., & Berglund, T. (2018). *The effects of grade retention on high school outcomes: Evidence from New York City schools.* Santa Monica, CA: RAND Corporation.

Marsh, J.A., Bush-Mecenas, S., Strunk, K.O., Lincove, J.A., & Huguet, A. (2017). Evaluating teachers in the Big Easy: How organizational context shapes policy responses in New Orleans. *Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis, 39*(4), 539-570.

Marsh, J. A., McCombs, J. S., Lockwood, J. R., Martorell, F., Gershwin, D., Naftel, S., Le, V., Shea, M., Barney, H., & Crego, A. (2008). *Supporting literacy across the Sunshine State: A study of Florida middle school reading coaches.* Santa Monica, CA: RAND Corporation.

Marsh, J.A., McCombs, J.S., & Martorell, F. (2010). How instructional coaches support data-driven decision making: Policy implementation and effects in Florida middle schools. *Educational Policy, 24*(6), 872-907.

Marsh, J.A., McCombs, J.S., & Martorell, F. (2012). Reading coach quality: Findings from Florida middle schools. *Literacy Research and Instruction, 51*(1), 1-26.

Matsumura, L. C., Garnier, H. E., Correnti, R., Junker, B., & Bickel, D.D.P. (2010). Investigating the effectiveness of a comprehensive literacy coaching program in schools with high teacher mobility. *The Elementary School Journal, 111*(1), 35–62.

Matsumura, L.C., Garnier, H.E., & Spybrook, J. (2013). Literacy coaching to improve student reading achievement: A multi-level mediation model. *Learning and Instruction, 25*, 35-48.

McCollum, J.A., Hemmeter, M.L., & Hsieh, W.Y. (2011). Coaching teachers for emergent literacy instruction using performance-based feedback. *Topics in Early Childhood Special Education, 33*(1), 28-37.

McDaniel, S.C., McLeod, R., Carter, C.L., & Robinson, C. (2017). Supplemental summer literacy instruction: Implications for preventing summer reading loss. *Reading Psychology, 38*(7).

McGill-Franzen, A., Zmach, C., Solic, K., & Zeig, J.L. (2006). The confluence of two policy mandates: Programs and third-grade retention in Florida. *The Elementary School Journal, 107*(1), 67-91.

McIntyre, E., Jones, D., Powers, S., Newsome, F., Petrosko, J., Powell, R., & Bright, K. (2010). Supplemental instruction in early reading: Does it matter for struggling readers? *The Journal of Educational Research, 99*(2), 99-107.

McMaster, K. L., Fuchs, D., Fuchs, L. S., & Compton, D. L. (2005). Responding to nonresponders: An experimental field trial of identification and intervention methods. *Exceptional Children, 71*(4), 445–463.

Michigan Association of Intermediate School Administrators General Education Leadership Network Early Literacy Task Force. (2016). *Essential coaching practices for elementary literacy*. Lansing, MI: Authors.

Michigan Department of Education. (2010). *Michigan K-12 standards: English language arts*. Lansing, MI: Michigan Department of Education. https://www.michigan.gov/documents/mde/MDE_ELA_Standards_599599_7.pdf

Michigan Department of Education. (2010a). *Read, Educate and Develop Youth (R.E.A.D.Y.) program*. Lansing, MI: Michigan Department of Education. https://www.michigan.gov/documents/Detailed_Overview_5-02_22112_7.pdf

Michigan Department of Education. (2011). *Michigan's statewide comprehensive literacy plan.* Lansing, MI: Michigan Department of Education. http://www.howellschools.com/UserFiles/Servers/Server_140557/File/Academics/Curriculum%20by%20Subject/ELA/MiLit%20Plan%20Single%201-30-12.pdf

REFERENCES *(continued)*

Michigan Department of Education. (2017). *Michigan's action plan for literacy excellence 2017–2020*. Lansing, MI: Michigan Department of Education. https://www.michigan.gov/documents/mde/MI_Action_Plan_Lit_Draft2_629757_7.pdf

Michigan Department of Education. (2018, July 25). Michigan literacy: The what and how of literacy. Presentation to the MDE DESS Leadership Retreat. Lansing, MI: Michigan Department of Education

Michigan Department of Education. (2019). *Michigan literacy: From lagging to leading.* Lansing, MI: Michigan Department of Education. https://www.michigan.gov/documents/mde/Lagging-to-Leading-080919_b_Finalized_663697_7.pdf

Michigan Department of Education. (2019a). *Read by grade three guide.* Lansing, MI: Michigan Department of Education. https://www.michigan.gov/documents/mde/Read_Grade_3_Guide_638247_7.pdf

Michigan Department of Education. (2020). *ISD Early Literacy Coach grant*. Lansing, MI: Michigan Department of Education. https://www.michigan.gov/mde/0,4615,7-140-28753_74161-367706--,00.html

Michigan Department of Education. (2020a). *Template for Continuity of Learning and COVID-19 plans.* Lansing, MI: Michigan Department of Education. https://www.michigan.gov/documents/mde/Template_for_Continuity_of_Learning_Plan__685766_7.pdf

Michigan Department of Education. (2020b). *Read by Grade Three Law update*. Lansing, MI: Michigan Department of Education. https://www.michigan.gov/documents/mde/RBG3_Law_Update_688895_7.pdf

Michigan Department of Education. (2020c). *Michigan Department of Education Individual Reading Improvement Plan (IRIP) FAQs.* Lansing, MI: Michigan Department of Education. https://www.michigan.gov/documents/mde/IRIP_FAQ_695647_7.pdf

Michigan Department of Education. (2020d). *Benchmark assessments for "Return to Learn" legislation (PA 149).* Lansing, MI: Michigan Department of Education. https://www.michigan.gov/mde/0,4615,7-140-22709_102327---,00.html

Michigan Department of Education. (2020e, May). *Supporting summer learning, pandemic or not.* Lansing, MI: Michigan Department of Education. https://www.michigan.gov/documents/mde/SupportingSummerLearning_691769_7.pdf

Michigan Department of Education. (2020f). *Return to learn webinar series.* Lansing, MI: Department of Education. https://www.michigan.gov/mde/0,4615,7-140-37818_53456-538648--,00.html

Michigan Department of Education. (2020g. August 21). *Benchmark assessments memo #COVID-19-095.* Lansing, MI: Michigan Department of Education. https://www.michigan.gov/documents/mde/Benchmark_Assessments_700077_7.pdf

Michigan Department of Education. (2020h, August 31). *2020-21 early literacy assessment guidance for learning at a distance memo #COVID-19-100.* Lansing, MI: Michigan Department of Education. https://www.michigan.gov/documents/mde/Early_Literacy_Assessment_Guidance_700883_7.pdf

Michigan Department of Education. (2020i, September 29). *Guide to state assessments.* Lansing, MI: Michigan Department of Education. https://www.michigan.gov/documents/mde/Guide_to_State_Assessments_622260_7.pdf

Michigan Department of Education. (2020j). *Michigan Early Literacy Grant Funds* [PowerPoint slides]. Lansing, MI: Michigan Department of Education.

Michigan Department of Education. (2020k). *Michigan receives $16 million grant to help improve student reading skills.* Lansing, MI: Michigan Department of Education. https://www.michigan.gov/som/0,4669,7-192-29939_34761-538651--,00.html#:~:text=The%20Striving%20Readers%20Comprehensive%20Literacy,English%20proficient%20students%20and%20students

Michigan Department of Education. (2020l). *Read by Grade Three—Communicating retention to guardians.* Lansing, MI: Michigan Department of Education. https://www.michigan.gov/documents/mde/021320_RBG3_Communicating_Retention_to_Parents_681082_7.pdf

Michigan Department of Education (2021, January 25). *Notice and request for public comment: Waiver of certain assessment and accountability requirements of the federal Every Student Succeeds Act – MEMO #COVID-19-153.* Lansing, MI: Michigan Department of Education. https://www.michigan.gov/documents/mde/ESSA_Waiver_Request_2021_713999_7.pdf

REFERENCES *(continued)*

Michigan Department of Education & Michigan Assessment Consortium. (2020). *Early literacy assessment systems that support learning: A guide to implementing and supporting district assessment systems.* Mason, MI: Michigan Assessment Consortium.

Michigan Elementary and Middle School Principals Association [MEMSPA] (2017). *Michigan's student Individual Reading Instruction Plan companion.* https://memspa.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/12/Michigan%E2%80%99s-Student-Individual-Reading-Instruction-Plan-Companion-Document-1-10-18.pdf

Michigan Legislature, House Bill 5111. (2013). http://www.legislature.mi.gov/documents/2013-2014/billintroduced/House/pdf/2013-HIB-5111.pdf

Michigan Legislature, House Bill 5144. (2013). https://www.legislature.mi.gov/documents/2013-2014/billintroduced/House/pdf/2013-HIB-5144.pdf

Michigan Legislature, House Bill 4822, Act no. 306. (2016). https://www.legislature.mi.gov/documents/2015-2016/publicact/pdf/2016-PA-0306.pdf

Michigan Legislature, House Bill 5913. (2020). http://legislature.mi.gov/(S(lh0lsei3mcu2220jfyunyzja))/documents/2019-2020/billenrolled/House/pdf/2020-HNB-5913.pdf

Michigan State Board of Education. (2002). *Certification standards for the preparation of all secondary teachers.* https://www.michigan.gov/documents/mde/Reading_Instruction_Secondary_Standards_557144_7.pdf

Michigan Student Test of Educational Progress. (2019). *Interpretive guide to M-STEP reports.* https://www.michigan.gov/documents/mde/2019_Interpretive_Guide_to_M-STEP_Reports_661956_7.pdf

NAEP State Profiles. (2020). The Nation's Report Card. https://www.nationsreportcard.gov/profiles/stateprofile/overview/MI?cti=PgTab_ScoreComparisons

Natasi, B.K., Hitchcock, J., Sarkar, S., Burkholder, G., Varjas, K., & Jayasena, A. (2007). Mixed methods in intervention research: Theory to adaptation. *Journal of Mixed Methods Research, 1*(2), 164-182.

Naeyaert, G. (2014, October 14). Third graders must have solid reading foundation to succeed later. *Bridge.* https://www.bridgemi.com/talent-education/third-graders-must-have-solid-reading-foundation-succeed-later

National Reading Panel. (2000). *Teaching children to read: An evidence-based assessment of the scientific research literature on reading and its implications for reading instruction*. National Reading Panel.

Neuman, S.B., & Cunningham, L. (2009). The impact of professional development and coaching on early language and literacy instructional practices. *American Educational Research Journal, 46*(2), 532-566.

Neuman, S., & Wright, T.S. (2010). Promoting language and literacy development for early childhood educators: A mixed-methods study of coursework and coaching. *The Elementary School Journal, 111*(1).

O'Connor, R.E., Fulmer, D., Harty, K.R., & Bell, K.M. (2005). Layers of reading intervention in kindergarten through third grade: Changes in teaching and student outcomes. *Journal of Reading Disabilities, 38*(5), 440-455.

Oosting, J., Beggin, R., & French, R. (2019, December 18). Mike Shirkey: I'm open to changing Michigan's third-grade reading law. *Bridge*. https://www.bridgemi.com/michigan-government/mike-shirkey-im-open-changing-michigans-third-grade-reading-law

Ozek, U. (2015). Hold back to move forward? Early grade retention and student misbehavior. *Education Finance and Policy*, *10*(3), 350–377.

Perrault, P., & Winters, M. A. (2020, July). *Test-based promotion and student performance in Florida and Arizona*. Manhattan Institute. https://www.manhattan-institute.org/student-retention-policies-impact-student-success

Phillips, D., Nichols, W.D., Rupley, W.H., Paige, D., & Rasinski, T.V. (2016). Efficacy of professional development: Extended use of focused coaching on guided reading instruction for teachers of grades one, two, and three. *International Research in Higher Education, 1*(2), 12-24.

Pomerantz, F., & Pierce, M. (2013). "When do we get to read?" Reading instruction and literacy coaching in a "failed" urban elementary school. *Reading Improvement, 50*(3).

Porche, M.V., Pallante, D.H., & Snow, C.E. (2012). Professional development for reading achievement: Results from the Collaborative Language and Literacy Instruction Project (CLIIP). *The Elementary School Journal, 112*(4), 649-671.

Price, A. (2017). Michigan PreK-12 literacy commission: An update. *Michigan Reading Journal*, *49*(3), Article 9. https://scholarworks.gvsu.edu/mrj/vol49/iss3/9

REFERENCES *(continued)*

Public Policy Associates. (2020). *Examining Michigan's education workforce: How to address the talent shortage facing Michigan's schools.* Lansing, MI: Public Policy Associates, Inc.

Putman, S.M., Smith, L.L., & Cassady, J.C. (2009). Promoting change through professional development: The place of teacher intentionality in reading instruction. *Literacy Research and Instruction, 48*(3), 207-220.

Quinn, D.M., & Polikoff, M. (2017). *Summer learning loss: What is it, and what can we do about it?* Washington, DC: Brookings.

Rashotte, C.A., MacPhee, K., & Torgesen, J.K. (2001). The effectiveness of a group reading instruction program with poor readers in multiple grades. *Learning Disability Quarterly, 24*(2), 119-134.

Reed, D.K. (2009). A synthesis of professional development on the implementation of literacy strategies for middle school content area teachers. *Research in Middle Level Education, 32*(10), 1-12.

Reed, D.K. (2015). A synthesis of professional development on the implementation of literacy strategies for middle school content area teachers. *Research in Middle Level Education, 32*(10), 1-12.

Reed, D.K., Cook, K.M., & Aloe, A.M. (2018). A cost-benefit analysis of summer reading programs implemented under state guidelines. *Educational Policy,* 1-25.

Rice, M.F., & Ulbrich, C. (2020, June 30). Letter to U.S. Secretary of Education Betsy DeVos. Lansing, MI: Michigan Department of Education. https://www.michigan.gov/documents/mde/Waiver_request_to_Sec._DeVos_695431_7.pdf

Rivkin, S.G., Hanushek, E.A., & Kain, J.F. (2005). Teachers, schools, and academic achievement. *Econometrica, 73*(2), 417-458.

Roderick, M., Jacob, B. A., & Bryk, A. S. (2002). The impact of high-stakes testing in Chicago on student achievement in promotional gate grades. *Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis, 42*(4), 333–357.

Roderick, M., & Nagaoka, J. (2005). Retention under Chicago's high-stakes testing program: Helpful, harmful, or harmless? *Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis, 27*(4), 309-340.

Roderick, M., Nagaoka, J., & Allensworth, E. (2005). Is the glass half full or mostly empty? Ending social promotion in Chicago. *Yearbook of the National Society for the Study of Education, 104*(2), 223-259.

Rose, S., & Schimke, K. (2012). *Third grade literacy policies: Identification, intervention, retention*. Denver, CO: Education Commission of the States.

Safer, N., & Fleischman, S. (2005). How student progress monitoring improves instruction. *Educational Leadership, 62*(5), 81-83.

Sailors, M., & Price, L. (2015). Support for the Improvement of Practices through Intensive Coaching (SIPIC): A model of coaching for improving reading instruction and reading achievement. *Teaching and Teacher Education, 45*, 115-127.

Schwartz, S. (2020, June 1). Early reading instruction takes a hit during COVID-19. *Education Week*. https://www.edweek.org/ew/articles/2020/06/01/early-reading-instruction-takes-a-hit-during.html

Schwerdt, G., West, M.R., & Winters, M.A. (2017). The effects of test-based retention on student outcomes over time: Regression discontinuity evidence from Florida. *Journal of Public Economics, 152*(C), 154-169.

School Aid Act. (2018, June). https://www.legislature.mi.gov/documents/2017-2018/publicact/pdf/2018-PA-0265.pdf

Senate Bill 633, 2019 Reg. Sess. (Mich. 2019). https://www.alverno.edu/media/alvernocollege/library/pdfs/apa7bill.pdf

Sénéchal, M., & Young, L. (2008). The effect of family literacy interventions on children's acquisition of reading from kindergarten to grade 3: A meta-analytic review. *Review of Educational Research, 78*(4), 880-907.

Shanahan, T., Callison, K., Carriere, C., Duke, N.K., Pearson, P.D., Schatschneider, C., & Torgesen, J. (2010). *Improving reading comprehension in kindergarten through 3rd grade: A practice guide* (NCEE 2010-4038). Washington, DC: National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance, Institute of Education Sciences, U.S. Department of Education. Retrieved from https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/PracticeGuides

Shepard, L.A. (1989). A review of research on kindergarten retention. In L.A. Shepard & M.L. Smith (Eds.), *Flunking grades: Research and policies on retention*. London: The Falmer Press.

Slagter, L. (2019, January 19). Ann Arbor Schools won't hold back struggling 3rd grade readers. *Advance Local Media*. https://www.mlive.com/news/ann-arbor/2017/05/ann_arbor_schools_3rd_grade_re.html

REFERENCES *(continued)*

Spillane, J. P. (1996). School districts matter: Local educational authorities and state instructional policy. *Educational Policy*, *10*(1), 63–87.

Spillane, J. P. (1998). A cognitive perspective on the role of the local education agency in implementing instructional policy: Accounting for local variability. *Educational Administration Quarterly*, *34*, 31–57.

Spillane, J. P. (2000). Cognition and policy implementation: District policy-makers and the reform of mathematics education. *Cognition and Instruction*, *18*, 141–179.

Spillane, J. P. (2009). *Standards deviation: How schools misunderstand education policy*. Boston, MA: Harvard University Press.

Spillane, J. P., Reiser, B. J., & Gomez, L. M. (2006). Policy implementation and cognition. In M. I. Honig (Ed.), *New directions in educational policy implementation: Confronting complexity* (pp. 47–64). Albany, NY: The State University of New York Press.

Spillane, J. P., Reiser, B. J., & Reimer, T. (2002). Policy implementation and cognition: Reframing and refocusing implementation research. *Review of Educational Research*, *72*(3), 387-431.

Steckel, B. (2011). Fulfilling the promise of literacy coaches in urban schools: What does it take to make an impact? *The Reading Teacher, 63*(1).

Stevens, F. (2002, January 8). *Michigan's Reading First executive summary*. Lansing, MI: Michigan Department of Education (MDE). Retrieved October 22, 2020, from https://www.michigan.gov/documents/Executive_Summary_of_RF_44895_7.pdf

Swaby, A. (2020, July 15). Texas officials scramble to provide school reopening guidelines with only weeks of summer left. *The Texas Tribune*. https://www.texastribune.org/2020/07/15/texas-schools-reopening-coronavirus/

U.S. Department of Education. (2014, May 5). *Reading First*. U.S. Department of Education. https://www2.ed.gov/programs/readingfirst/index.html

U.S. Department of Education. (2020, March 20). *Helping students adversely affected by school closures, Secretary DeVos announces broad flexibilities for states to cancel testing during national emergency*. U.S. Department of Education. https://www.ed.gov/news/press-releases/helping-students-adversely-affected-school-closures-secretary-devos-announces-broad-flexibilities-states-cancel-testing-during-national-emergency

Vadasy, P. F., Sanders, E. A., Peyton, J. A., & Jenkins, J. R. (2002). Timing and intensity of tutoring: A closer look at the conditions for effective early literacy tutoring. *Learning Disabilities Research and Practice*, *17*(4).

Van Steensel, R., McElvany, N., Kurvers, J., & Herppich, S. (2011). How effective are family literacy programs?: Results of a meta-analysis. *Review of Educational Research, 81*(1), 69-96.

Van Voorhis, F.L., Maier, M.F., Epstein, J.L., & Lloyd, C.M. (2013). *The impact of family involvement on the education of children ages 3 to 8.* Washington, DC: MDRC.

Vanderburg, M., & Stephens, D. (2010). The impact of literacy coaches: What teachers value and how teachers change. *The Elementary School Journal*, *111*(1), 141–163.

Vaughn, S., Wanzek, J., Woodruff, A. L., & Linan-Thompson, S. (2007). Prevention and early identification of students with reading disabilities. In D. Haager, J. Klingner, & S. Vaughn (Eds.), *Evidence-based reading practices for response to intervention* (pp. 11–27). Paul H. Brookes Publishing Co.

Vellutino, F. R., Scanlon, D. M., Small, S., & Fanuele, D. P. (2006). Response to intervention as a vehicle for distinguishing between children with and without reading disabilities: Evidence for the role of kindergarten and first-grade interventions. *Journal of Learning Disabilities*, *39*(2), 157–169.

Walpole, S., McKenna, M.C., Uribe-Zarain, X., & Lamitina, D. (2010). The relationships between coaching and instruction in the primary grades: Evidence from high-poverty schools. *The Elementary School Journal, 111*(1).

Weiss, S., Stallings, D. T., & Porter, S. (2018). *Is Read to Achieve making the grade? An assessment of North Carolina's elementary reading proficiency initiative*. Raleigh, NC: North Carolina State University.

Winters, M. A. (2018). *The costs and benefits of test-based promotion* (SSRN Scholarly Paper ID 3222671). Social Science Research Network. https://doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.3222671

Winters, M.A., & Greene, J.P. (2012). The medium-run effects of Florida's test-based promotion policy. *Education Finance and Policy, 7*(3), 305-330.

Wright, T. S., & Neuman, S. B. (2014). Paucity and disparity in kindergarten oral vocabulary instruction. *Journal of Literacy Research*, *46*(3), 330-357.

Wu, W., West, S. G., & Hughes, J. N. (2010). Effect of grade retention in first grade on psychosocial outcomes. *Journal of Educational Psychology, 102*(1), 135–152.

APPENDIX A-1. PERCENTAGE OF K-3 TEACHERS REPORTING INCREASED TIME ON EVIDENCE-BASED LITERACY INSTRUCTIONAL PRACTICES

	By predicted retention rate			By proportion of economically disadvantaged students			By locale		
	Low	Med.	High	Low	Med.	High	Urban	Suburb/ Town	Rural
Foundational Skills Instruction									
Print concept instruction	18%	20%	27%	16%	22%	31%	27%	19%	20%
Phonemic awareness instruction	51%	53%	59%	51%	55%	60%	57%	53%	55%
Alphabet knowledge instruction	19%	23%	35%	19%	25%	37%	32%	23%	23%
Instruction on phonics/letter-sound relationships	44%	46%	54%	43%	48%	54%	51%	46%	49%
Decoding strategy instruction	43%	45%	53%	41%	48%	54%	51%	44%	48%
Reading fluency instruction	44%	43%	49%	40%	46%	50%	48%	42%	47%
Comprehension Instruction									
Comprehension strategy instruction	44%	44%	48%	42%	45%	51%	49%	43%	46%
Oral language vocabulary instruction	37%	39%	46%	35%	43%	47%	45%	38%	41%
Text genre/text structure instruction	32%	32%	36%	30%	33%	39%	36%	31%	33%
Instruction to build content knowledge	35%	35%	43%	31%	38%	45%	41%	35%	36%
Read-alouds	33%	33%	41%	30%	34%	45%	38%	32%	35%
Discussions of texts	40%	40%	47%	38%	41%	50%	46%	39%	42%
Opportunities for children to engage in independent reading	38%	37%	42%	34%	39%	44%	42%	36%	40%
Small group reading instruction	45%	45%	53%	41%	48%	54%	51%	44%	48%
Scaffold reading instruction for English learners (ELs)	20%	26%	31%	24%	25%	33%	35%	24%	22%
Scaffold reading instruction for students with IEPs or Section 504 Plans	35%	36%	38%	34%	37%	38%	39%	34%	38%

Note: Teachers were asked, "In this question, we are asking you about the kinds of reading instruction you engage in in a typical week and whether or not this has changed since the Read by Grade Three Law was implemented in 2016. Please consider all of the reading instruction you implement across your week." Source: EPIC survey of educators about the Read by Grade Three Law.

APPENDIX A-2. K-3 TEACHERS' PERCEIVED QUALITY OF LITERACY INSTRUCTION AND ADEQUACY OF LITERACY RESOURCES

	By Predicted Retention Rate			By ELA Performance			By Locale		
	Low	Med.	High	Low	Med.	High	Urban	Suburb/ Town	Rural
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)
The quality of the teachers	87%	86%	82%	79%	87%	87%	81%	86%	88%
The quality of the literacy instruction	84%	82%	75%	73%	81%	84%	76%	82%	82%
The ability to recruit and retain high quality teachers	70%	66%	48%	42%	61%	76%	54%	65%	63%
The availability of teachers with a specialization in literacy	60%	58%	47%	43%	55%	64%	49%	59%	55%
The quality of literacy curricula	70%	65%	55%	53%	63%	69%	57%	65%	65%
The quality of staff who can support literacy instruction in non-ELA subject areas	69%	66%	59%	57%	65%	70%	60%	66%	67%
The adequacy of supplemental literacy materials available	68%	64%	56%	55%	61%	70%	59%	63%	65%
The availability of library resources	70%	70%	53%	50%	66%	76%	56%	69%	69%
Access to a variety of reading materials	74%	73%	58%	56%	71%	78%	62%	72%	74%
Access to reading materials representative of diverse characters	61%	60%	50%	49%	58%	63%	53%	59%	61%
The quality of literacy instruction for students with IEPs or Section 504 Plans	71%	67%	52%	49%	66%	72%	54%	66%	69%
The quality of literacy instruction for English learners (ELs)	36%	46%	37%	37%	39%	51%	45%	46%	32%
The adequacy of resources available for literacy instruction	71%	70%	59%	58%	68%	73%	61%	69%	70%

Note: Teachers were asked, "How would you grade each of the following in your school? Please assign a letter grade of A-F for each row." Cells contain the percentage of educators in each subgroup who graded "A" or "B" for each row. Source: EPIC survey of educators about the Read by Grade Three Law.

APPENDIX B-1. FULL RESULTS OF TABLE 6.1

Interrupted Time Series Analysis of K-5 Teacher Mobility			
	Transfer Within District	Transfer Out of District	Exit from Profession
	(1)	(2)	(3)
Pre-Law Trend	-0.005*	0.002***	-0.000
	(0.002)	(0.001)	(0.001)
1 Year Post	0.009	0.002	-0.001
	(0.006)	(0.002)	(0.002)
2 Years Post	0.006	-0.001	0.001
	(0.008)	(0.002)	(0.003)
3 Years Post	0.008	-0.006*	0.005
	(0.010)	(0.003)	(0.004)
Asian	-0.013+	0.007	0.029*
	(0.008)	(0.006)	(0.013)
Black	0.016***	-0.002	-0.039***
	(0.004)	(0.004)	(0.005)
Hispanic or Latino	-0.004	-0.000	-0.000
	(0.006)	(0.004)	(0.005)
Other Race(s)	0.005	0.009*	0.074***
	(0.004)	(0.003)	(0.013)
Female	-0.011***	-0.004***	-0.006***
	(0.002)	(0.001)	(0.002)
Age	-0.000	-0.001***	0.003***
	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.000)
Within First 3 Years in the Profession	0.008**	-0.013***	-0.011***
	(0.003)	(0.003)	(0.003)
Has a Master's Degree or Beyond	-0.007***	-0.006***	-0.023***
	(0.002)	(0.001)	(0.001)
School-level: % Non-White Students	0.061**	0.018***	0.007
	(0.020)	(0.005)	(0.009)
School-level: % Economically Disadvantaged Students	0.059***	0.002	0.015*
	(0.018)	(0.004)	(0.006)
School-level: % English Learners	-0.029+	-0.015**	-0.015**
	(0.017)	(0.005)	(0.005)
School-level: % Students with Disabilities	0.059	0.001	0.003
	(0.038)	(0.016)	(0.019)
Log of School Enrollment	-0.056***	-0.004**	-0.006**
	(0.007)	(0.002)	(0.002)
Constant	0.353***	0.075***	-0.056***
	(0.045)	(0.011)	(0.014)
Observations	**195,866**	**188,846**	**209,148**
R-squared	**0.045**	**0.109**	**0.044**
Adjusted R-squared	**0.041**	**0.105**	**0.040**

*Note: Robust standard errors clustered at the district level in parentheses. All models include district fixed effects. ***p<0.001, **p<0.01, * p<0.05,+ p<0.1*

APPENDIX B-2. FULL RESULTS OF TABLE 6.2

Interrupted Time Series Analysis of ELA Achievement						
	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Outcome	**ELA M-STEP Standardized Score**			**ELA M-STEP Scaled Score**		
Pre-Law Trend	-0.135***	0.014	0.043***	-3.417***	0.353	1.066***
	(0.010)	(0.009)	(0.008)	(0.239)	(0.228)	(0.192)
1 Year Post	0.099***	-0.094***	-0.025*	2.490***	-2.370***	-0.618*
	(0.013)	(0.012)	(0.011)	(0.330)	(0.292)	(0.268)
2 Years Post	0.256***	-0.045*	-0.181***	6.457***	-1.149*	-4.519***
	(0.024)	(0.022)	(0.019)	(0.606)	(0.561)	(0.482)
3 Years Post	0.419***	-0.036	-0.214***	10.598***	-0.902	-5.356***
	(0.033)	(0.031)	(0.027)	(0.837)	(0.791)	(0.664)
School-level MEAP Score Change Between 2012-13 and 2013-14	0.002**	0.000	-0.000	0.061**	0.001	-0.002
	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.021)	(0.019)	(0.024)
School-level Average MEAP Score Between 2012-13 and 2013-14	0.018***	0.018***	0.017***	0.451***	0.452***	0.434***
	(0.002)	(0.002)	(0.002)	(0.048)	(0.046)	(0.055)
Male	-0.139***	-0.150***	-0.188***	-3.517***	-3.810***	-4.714***
	(0.003)	(0.003)	(0.003)	(0.070)	(0.069)	(0.071)
Asian	0.243***	0.288***	0.318***	6.129***	7.303***	7.951***
	(0.019)	(0.017)	(0.017)	(0.484)	(0.430)	(0.425)
Black	-0.396***	-0.405***	-0.430***	-9.997***	-10.258***	-10.776***
	(0.013)	(0.012)	(0.013)	(0.331)	(0.309)	(0.312)
Hispanic or Latino	-0.090***	-0.039***	-0.026*	-2.266***	-0.997***	-0.645*
	(0.010)	(0.011)	(0.012)	(0.262)	(0.274)	(0.299)
Other Race(s)	-0.099***	-0.107***	-0.114***	-2.498***	-2.701***	-2.853***
	(0.007)	(0.008)	(0.008)	(0.186)	(0.190)	(0.204)
English Learner	-0.316***	-0.493***	-0.654***	-7.977***	-12.478***	-16.370***
	(0.018)	(0.027)	(0.032)	(0.465)	(0.676)	(0.808)
Economically Disadvantaged	-0.386***	-0.383***	-0.389***	-9.752***	-9.702***	-9.743***
	(0.007)	(0.007)	(0.008)	(0.188)	(0.186)	(0.198)
Student with a Disability	-0.589***	-0.664***	-0.752***	-14.892***	-16.827***	-18.819***
	(0.014)	(0.012)	(0.013)	(0.346)	(0.314)	(0.330)
Non-resident	-0.009	-0.011*	-0.013*	-0.218	-0.290*	-0.330*
	(0.006)	(0.006)	(0.006)	(0.152)	(0.147)	(0.140)
School-level: % Non-White Students	-0.058	-0.047	-0.052	-1.461	-1.184	-1.312
	(0.090)	(0.081)	(0.076)	(2.266)	(2.050)	(1.889)
School-level: % English Learners	0.273***	0.362***	0.439***	6.899***	9.179***	11.001***
	(0.052)	(0.065)	(0.056)	(1.320)	(1.6578)	(1.398)
School-level: % Economically Disadvantaged Students	-0.118	-0.090	-0.101	-2.990	-2.279	-2.518
	(0.085)	(0.076)	(0.084)	(2.159)	(1.933)	(2.099)
School-level: % Students with Disabilities	-0.317*	-0.234+	-0.265*	-7.999*	-5.939+	-6.641*
	(0.148)	(0.121)	(0.120)	(3.744)	(3.071)	(2.999)
Log of Student Enrollment	-0.051*	-0.062**	-0.043+	-1.301*	-1.583**	-1.067+
	(0.025)	(0.019)	(0.023)	(0.635)	(0.488)	(0.563)
Constant	-5.189***	-6.795***	-8.440***	1167.977***	1224.115***	1286.889***
	(0.707)	(0.828)	(1.251)	(17.869)	(20.980)	(31.321)
Observations	**498,245**	**500,864**	**501,331**	**498,245**	**500,864**	**501,331**
R-squared	**0.296**	**0.324**	**0.342**	**0.296**	**0.324**	**0.342**
Adjusted R-squared	**0.295**	**0.323**	**0.341**	**0.295**	**0.323**	**0.341**

*Note: Robust standard errors clustered at the district level in parentheses. All models include district fixed effects. ***p<0.001, **p<0.01, * p<0.05,+ p<0.1*

APPENDIX B-2. FULL RESULTS OF TABLE 6.2 *(continued)*

Interrupted Time Series Analysis of Math Achievement						
	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Outcome	**Math M-STEP Standardized Score**			**Math M-STEP Scaled Score**		
Pre-Law Trend	-0.122***	0.073***	-0.022*	-3.052***	1.828***	-0.547*
	(0.008)	(0.009)	(0.009)	(0.191)	(0.214)	(0.235)
1 Year Post	0.163***	-0.147***	0.057***	4.053***	-3.658***	1.414***
	(0.011)	(0.012)	(0.015)	(0.280)	(0.290)	(0.360)
2 Years Post	0.304***	-0.186***	0.050*	7.570***	-4.635***	1.251*
	(0.020)	(0.024)	(0.023)	(0.495)	(0.511)	(0.559)
3 Years Post	0.458***	-0.250***	0.103**	11.427***	-6.230***	2.568**
	(0.027)	(0.029)	(0.035)	(0.675)	(0.731)	(0.861)
School-level MEAP Score Change Between 2012-13 and 2013-14	0.003*	0.001	0.000	0.070*	0.018	0.010
	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.033)	(0.025)	(0.022)
School-level Average MEAP Score Between 2012-13 and 2013-14	0.016***	0.016***	0.012***	0.411***	0.399***	0.310***
	(0.002)	(0.002)	(0.001)	(0.055)	(0.048)	(0.031)
Male	0.134***	0.136***	0.118***	3.333***	3.386***	2.948***
	(0.005)	(0.006)	(0.006)	(0.135)	(0.141)	(0.140)
Asian	0.385***	0.399***	0.430***	9.594***	9.958***	10.700***
	(0.024)	(0.020)	(0.020)	(0.605)	(0.501)	(0.484)
Black	-0.462***	-0.470***	-0.504***	-11.522***	-11.721***	-12.545***
	(0.012)	(0.011)	(0.012)	(0.307)	(0.285)	(0.295)
Hispanic or Latino	-0.145***	-0.100***	-0.097***	-3.611***	-2.503***	-2.425***
	(0.009)	(0.011)	(0.012)	(0.230)	(0.264)	(0.293)
Other Race(s)	-0.142***	-0.145***	-0.162***	-3.532***	-3.624***	-4.023***
	(0.008)	(0.008)	(0.008)	(0.192)	(0.190)	(0.210)
English Learner	-0.226***	-0.396***	-0.503***	-5.626***	-9.874***	-12.506***
	(0.016)	(0.021)	(0.025)	(0.396)	(0.510)	(0.627)
Economically Disadvantaged	-0.397***	-0.359***	-0.374***	-9.893***	-8.965***	-9.317***
	(0.008)	(0.008)	(0.008)	(0.192)	(0.189)	(0.194)
Student with a Disability	-0.712***	-0.710***	-0.742***	-17.771***	-17.703***	-18.473***
	(0.013)	(0.012)	(0.017)	(0.332)	(0.298)	(0.421)
Non-resident	-0.022***	-0.017**	-0.027***	-0.558***	-0.422**	-0.662***
	(0.006)	(0.006)	(0.006)	(0.154)	(0.140)	(0.154)
School-level: % Non-White Students	-0.004	-0.002	-0.096	-0.108	-0.055	-2.393
	(0.106)	(0.079)	(0.082)	(2.635)	(1.978)	(2.027)
School-level: % English Learners	0.252***	0.298***	0.343***	6.284***	7.427***	8.525***
	(0.061)	(0.050)	(0.054)	(1.518)	(1.255)	(1.352)
School-level: % Economically Disadvantaged Students	-0.197+	-0.220**	-0.204*	-4.913+	-5.490**	-5.073*
	(0.104)	(0.075)	(0.080)	(2.603)	(1.865)	(1.979)
School-level: % Students with Disabilities	-0.531***	-0.452***	-0.421***	-13.253***	-11.279***	-10.487***
	(0.137)	(0.118)	(0.121)	(3.417)	(2.941)	(3.007)
Log of Student Enrollment	-0.062*	-0.069**	-0.065**	-1.538*	-1.733**	-1.625**
	(0.029)	(0.021)	(0.023)	(0.711)	(0.530)	(0.568)
Constant	-4.695***	-5.918***	-5.708***	1181.203***	1245.940***	1346.344***
	(0.834)	(0.856)	(0.732)	(20.795)	(21.358)	(18.206)
Observations	**499,593**	**501,998**	**502,316**	**499,593**	**501,998**	**502,316**
R-squared	**0.322**	**0.370**	**0.380**	**0.322**	**0.370**	**0.380**
Adjusted R-squared	**0.321**	**0.369**	**0.379**	**0.321**	**0.369**	**0.379**

*Note: Robust standard errors clustered at the district level in parentheses. All models include district fixed effects. ***p<0.001, **p<0.01, * p<0.05,+ p<0.1*

APPENDIX B-3. FULL RESULTS OF TABLE 6.3

Interrupted Time Series Analysis of Student Retention							
	Kindergarten		Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5
Probability of Enrolling in a Developmental Kindergarten Program							
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)
Pre-Law Trend	0.009***	-0.000	0.000	-0.001*	-0.000**	-0.001***	-0.000**
	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.000)
1 Year Post	0.002	-0.007*	-0.001	0.000	0.001*	0.000	0.001+
	(0.003)	(0.003)	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.000)	(0.000)
2 Years Post	0.011*	-0.011*	-0.003	-0.000	0.001	0.001+	0.000
	(0.005)	(0.005)	(0.002)	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.001)
Male	0.013***	0.025***	0.005***	0.002**	0.002*	0.001***	0.002***
	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.000)	(0.000)
Asian	-0.016***	-0.013***	-0.003*	-0.001	-0.000	0.000	-0.001
	(0.003)	(0.003)	(0.002)	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.000)	(0.000)
Black	-0.010***	-0.014***	0.002*	0.003***	0.002***	0.001	0.001
	(0.002)	(0.002)	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.001)
Hispanic or Latino	0.000	0.003	0.003**	0.002*	0.000	-0.001**	-0.001**
	(0.001)	(0.002)	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.000)	(0.000)
Other Race(s)	-0.003*	-0.004*	0.001	0.000	0.000	-0.000	-0.000
	(0.001)	(0.002)	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.000)	(0.000)
English Learner	-0.004*	-0.005+	0.002	0.001	0.001	0.001+	0.001*
	(0.002)	(0.003)	(0.002)	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.001)
Economically Disadvantaged	-0.003*	0.029***	0.015***	0.006***	0.003***	0.002***	0.002***
	(0.001)	(0.002)	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.000)
Student with a Disability	0.013***	0.065***	0.015***	0.005***	0.002***	0.001*	0.002***
	(0.002)	(0.003)	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.001)
Non-resident	0.002	0.006**	-0.001	-0.001	-0.001	-0.000	-0.000
	(0.002)	(0.002)	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.001)
School-level: % Non-White Students	-0.016	-0.024	-0.001	-0.003	0.002	0.002	0.002
	(0.019)	(0.015)	(0.009)	(0.005)	(0.003)	(0.002)	(0.002)
School-level: % English Learners	-0.011	0.001	-0.008	-0.001	-0.005+	-0.009*	-0.007*
	(0.013)	(0.011)	(0.006)	(0.003)	(0.003)	(0.004)	(0.003)
School-level: % Economically Disadvantaged Students	0.003	0.009	0.009	0.004	0.001	0.000	-0.001
	(0.017)	(0.017)	(0.008)	(0.005)	(0.003)	(0.002)	(0.002)
School-level: % Students with Disabilities	-0.004	-0.008	-0.008	0.014	0.006	0.010+	0.011**
	(0.037)	(0.042)	(0.010)	(0.009)	(0.007)	(0.006)	(0.003)
Log of Student Enrollment	-0.044*	-0.029*	-0.001	-0.001	-0.001	-0.001	0.000
	(0.021)	(0.013)	(0.003)	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.001)
Retained Before			-0.022***	-0.008***	-0.003*	-0.000	-0.002
			(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.002)	(0.004)
Constant	0.315*	0.231**	0.020	0.012+	0.005	0.006	-0.001
	(0.136)	(0.085)	(0.018)	(0.007)	(0.007)	(0.006)	(0.005)
Observations	**646,476**	**618,094**	**644,826**	**650,583**	**661,120**	**668,462**	**673,899**
R-squared	**0.148**	**0.088**	**0.033**	**0.024**	**0.023**	**0.022**	**0.022**
Adjusted R-squared	**0.147**	**0.087**	**0.031**	**0.023**	**0.022**	**0.021**	**0.021**

*Note: Robust standard errors clustered at the district level in parentheses. The analytical sample for each grade is limited to students who attended that grade at the first time. All models include district fixed effects. ***p<0.001, **p<0.01, * p<0.05,+ p<0.1*

APPENDIX B-4. ITS ANALYSIS OF ENROLLMENT IN DEVELOPMENTAL KINDERGARTEN PROGRAMS, BY AGE GROUP

Interrupted Time Series Analysis of Kindergarten Retention by Age Group					
	Becoming 5 years old between				
	Sept. 1 - Dec. 1	June 1- Sept.1	Mar. 1 - June 1	Jan. 1 - Mar. 1	Sept 1. - Dec. 1 (previous year)
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
Outcome	**Probability of Enrolling in a Developmental Kindergarten Program**				
Pre-Law Trend	0.033***	0.013***	0.002***	0.001*	0.001***
	(0.005)	(0.002)	(0.001)	(0.000)	(0.000)
1 Year Post	0.017	0.009+	0.003+	0.001	0.000
	(0.013)	(0.005)	(0.002)	(0.001)	(0.001)
2 Years Post	0.062**	0.023**	0.007**	0.001	-0.000
	(0.021)	(0.008)	(0.003)	(0.002)	(0.001)
Male	0.032***	0.031***	0.010***	0.003***	0.001**
	(0.003)	(0.003)	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.000)
Asian	-0.080***	-0.033***	-0.002	0.002	-0.001
	(0.010)	(0.007)	(0.002)	(0.002)	(0.001)
Black	-0.040***	-0.021***	-0.006***	-0.002+	-0.000
	(0.007)	(0.004)	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.001)
Hispanic or Latino	0.001	-0.004+	0.001	0.002	0.001
	(0.005)	(0.003)	(0.002)	(0.001)	(0.001)
Other Race(s)	-0.024***	-0.010***	0.000	0.001	0.001
	(0.006)	(0.002)	(0.002)	(0.001)	(0.002)
English Learner	-0.030***	-0.007*	-0.001	0.001	-0.000
	(0.008)	(0.003)	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.001)
Economically Disadvantaged	-0.025***	-0.007**	0.009***	0.006***	0.002***
	(0.004)	(0.002)	(0.002)	(0.001)	(0.001)
Student with a Disability	0.032***	0.029***	0.022***	0.014***	0.004***
	(0.005)	(0.003)	(0.003)	(0.002)	(0.001)
Non-resident	-0.000	0.002	0.000	-0.001	-0.001
	(0.005)	(0.003)	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.001)
School-level: % Non-White Students	-0.040	-0.025	0.006	0.001	0.000
	(0.063)	(0.025)	(0.007)	(0.005)	(0.003)
School-level: % English Learners	-0.020	-0.022	-0.001	-0.004	-0.000
	(0.031)	(0.020)	(0.007)	(0.003)	(0.002)
School-level: % Economically Disadvantaged Students	-0.065+	-0.003	-0.003	0.003	-0.001
	(0.038)	(0.022)	(0.009)	(0.004)	(0.003)
School-level: % Students with Disabilities	0.163+	0.015	0.014	-0.005	0.002
	(0.097)	(0.056)	(0.022)	(0.011)	(0.008)
Log of Student Enrollment	-0.046+	-0.050*	-0.021	-0.009	-0.005
	(0.026)	(0.024)	(0.015)	(0.008)	(0.004)
Constant	0.492**	0.377*	0.129	0.053	0.028
	(0.181)	(0.159)	(0.094)	(0.051)	(0.026)
Observations	**64,951**	**203,559**	**157,162**	**98,983**	**90,257**
R-squared	**0.450**	**0.256**	**0.114**	**0.070**	**0.038**
Adjusted R-squared	**0.443**	**0.253**	**0.110**	**0.062**	**0.029**

*Note: Robust standard errors clustered at the district level in parentheses. The analytical sample is limited to students who attended kindergarten at the first time. All models include district fixed effects. ***p<0.001, **p<0.01, * p<0.05,+ p<0.1*

APPENDIX B-5. FULL RESULTS OF TABLE 6.4

Interrupted Time Series Analysis of Student Mobility (Within-District)						
	Kindergarten	Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Outcome	**Probability of Moving Within District**					
Pre-Law Trend	-0.004*	-0.002	-0.003+	-0.003+	-0.004*	0.002
	(0.002)	(0.002)	(0.002)	(0.001)	(0.002)	(0.003)
1 Year Post	0.010+	0.006	0.011+	0.012*	0.009	0.009
	(0.006)	(0.006)	(0.006)	(0.006)	(0.007)	(0.010)
2 Years Post	0.000	0.001	0.003	0.003	0.003	0.002
	(0.007)	(0.007)	(0.007)	(0.006)	(0.007)	(0.011)
Male	0.005***	0.002***	0.002**	0.002**	0.001*	0.001
	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.001)
Asian	0.004	0.009**	0.019*	0.007+	0.004	-0.002
	(0.004)	(0.004)	(0.008)	(0.004)	(0.004)	(0.004)
Black	0.013***	0.017***	0.014***	0.014***	0.014***	0.004
	(0.003)	(0.003)	(0.003)	(0.003)	(0.003)	(0.004)
Hispanic or Latino	-0.005*	-0.005*	-0.006**	-0.005+	-0.006**	-0.008+
	(0.002)	(0.003)	(0.002)	(0.003)	(0.002)	(0.005)
Other Race(s)	0.005*	0.008***	0.007***	0.004*	0.002	0.001
	(0.002)	(0.002)	(0.002)	(0.002)	(0.002)	(0.002)
English Learner	-0.006+	-0.003	-0.007*	-0.003	-0.003	-0.015+
	(0.003)	(0.003)	(0.003)	(0.003)	(0.004)	(0.008)
Economically Disadvantaged	0.009***	0.012***	0.012***	0.009***	0.010***	0.002
	(0.002)	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.002)
Student with a Disability	0.016***	0.009***	0.010***	0.010***	0.008***	0.009
	(0.003)	(0.002)	(0.002)	(0.002)	(0.001)	(0.008)
Non-resident	-0.010*	-0.006	-0.009+	-0.008*	-0.009*	-0.012
	(0.004)	(0.004)	(0.005)	(0.004)	(0.004)	(0.008)
School-level: % Non-White Students	0.014	0.021	0.028	0.029	0.022	0.050
	(0.021)	(0.021)	(0.021)	(0.021)	(0.019)	(0.053)
School-level: % English Learners	-0.081***	-0.063*	-0.060*	-0.083**	-0.042+	-0.075
	(0.024)	(0.028)	(0.030)	(0.028)	(0.024)	(0.057)
School-level: % Economically Disadvantaged Students	0.111***	0.097***	0.096***	0.092***	0.093***	0.097*
	(0.027)	(0.022)	(0.022)	(0.020)	(0.022)	(0.041)
School-level: % Students with Disabilities	0.043	0.018	-0.014	-0.037	0.005	-0.007
	(0.046)	(0.024)	(0.025)	(0.031)	(0.025)	(0.052)
Log of Student Enrollment	-0.053***	-0.043***	-0.045***	-0.056***	-0.040***	-0.024
	(0.016)	(0.009)	(0.009)	(0.010)	(0.009)	(0.018)
Constant	0.301**	0.233***	0.250***	0.328***	0.216***	0.133
	(0.100)	(0.057)	(0.059)	(0.068)	(0.059)	(0.120)
Observations	**618,981**	**568,810**	**543,473**	**571,379**	**524,017**	**267,191**
R-squared	**0.087**	**0.083**	**0.092**	**0.137**	**0.124**	**0.277**
Adjusted R-squared	**0.086**	**0.082**	**0.091**	**0.135**	**0.123**	**0.275**

*Note: Robust standard errors clustered at the district level in parentheses. All models include district fixed effects. ***p<0.001, **p<0.01, * p<0.05*

APPENDIX B-5. FULL RESULTS OF TABLE 6.4 *(continued)*

Interrupted Time Series Analysis of Student Mobility (Cross-District)						
	Kindergarten	**Grade 1**	**Grade 2**	**Grade 3**	**Grade 4**	**Grade 5**
	(1)	**(2)**	**(3)**	**(4)**	**(5)**	**(6)**
Outcome	**Probability of Moving Out of District**					
Pre-Law Trend	-0.003***	-0.001*	-0.002**	-0.002*	-0.001*	0.000
	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.001)
1 Year Post	0.004+	0.005*	0.007*	0.006**	0.007**	0.005
	(0.002)	(0.003)	(0.003)	(0.002)	(0.003)	(0.004)
2 Years Post	-0.004	-0.005	-0.001	-0.003	-0.002	-0.005
	(0.003)	(0.003)	(0.003)	(0.003)	(0.003)	(0.005)
Male	0.002**	0.000	0.001	-0.001	-0.000	-0.001
	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.001)
Asian	0.013*	0.010	0.018**	0.009*	-0.002	0.003
	(0.006)	(0.006)	(0.006)	(0.005)	(0.004)	(0.008)
Black	0.010+	0.012*	0.014**	0.014**	0.007	-0.002
	(0.005)	(0.005)	(0.005)	(0.005)	(0.005)	(0.007)
Hispanic or Latino	-0.011**	-0.009*	-0.006	-0.008*	-0.010**	-0.018***
	(0.004)	(0.004)	(0.004)	(0.004)	(0.004)	(0.004)
Other Race(s)	0.018***	0.020***	0.022***	0.020***	0.017***	0.023***
	(0.003)	(0.003)	(0.003)	(0.003)	(0.003)	(0.005)
English Learner	-0.043***	-0.036***	-0.035***	-0.033***	-0.028***	-0.032***
	(0.004)	(0.004)	(0.004)	(0.004)	(0.003)	(0.006)
Economically Disadvantaged	0.058***	0.056***	0.053***	0.052***	0.049***	0.040***
	(0.002)	(0.002)	(0.002)	(0.002)	(0.002)	(0.002)
Student with a Disability	0.003	0.002	0.001	0.004+	0.004	0.002
	(0.002)	(0.003)	(0.003)	(0.003)	(0.002)	(0.003)
Non-resident	0.045***	0.034***	0.033***	0.032***	0.032***	0.043***
	(0.004)	(0.005)	(0.005)	(0.004)	(0.005)	(0.009)
School-level: % Non-White Students	0.036*	0.043**	0.033**	0.040**	0.022+	-0.006
	(0.015)	(0.016)	(0.012)	(0.013)	(0.013)	(0.027)
School-level: % English Learners	-0.068***	-0.071**	-0.058**	-0.058**	-0.062**	-0.076**
	(0.020)	(0.022)	(0.020)	(0.019)	(0.023)	(0.028)
School-level: % Economically Disadvantaged Students	0.084***	0.086***	0.072***	0.070***	0.066***	0.091***
	(0.016)	(0.016)	(0.014)	(0.013)	(0.015)	(0.027)
School-level: % Students with Disabilities	0.001	-0.045*	-0.028	-0.040+	-0.018	-0.031
	(0.020)	(0.022)	(0.025)	(0.022)	(0.025)	(0.040)
Log of Student Enrollment	-0.018***	-0.015**	-0.014***	-0.015***	-0.012**	-0.009
	(0.005)	(0.005)	(0.003)	(0.004)	(0.004)	(0.007)
Constant	0.134***	0.111***	0.112***	0.111***	0.100***	0.109*
	(0.033)	(0.031)	(0.021)	(0.025)	(0.028)	(0.048)
Observations	**657,798**	**607,802**	**578,095**	**605,815**	**554,184**	**287,501**
R-squared	**0.066**	**0.073**	**0.076**	**0.079**	**0.081**	**0.103**
Adjusted R-squared	**0.065**	**0.072**	**0.075**	**0.077**	**0.080**	**0.100**

*Note: Robust standard errors clustered at the district level in parentheses. All models include district fixed effects. ***p<0.001, **p<0.01, * p<0.05,+ p<0.1*

APPENDIX B-6. FULL RESULTS OF TABLE 6.5

Interrupted Time Series Analysis of Special Education Placement						
	Kindergarten	**Grade 1**	**Grade 2**	**Grade 3**	**Grade 4**	**Grade 5**
	(1)	**(2)**	**(3)**	**(4)**	**(5)**	**(6)**
Outcome	**Probability of Being Identified as Student with a Disability**					
Pre-Law Trend	0.004***	0.003***	0.002***	0.002***	0.002**	0.002***
	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.001)
1 Year Post	0.004*	0.004*	0.003*	0.004*	0.001	0.001
	(0.002)	(0.002)	(0.002)	(0.002)	(0.002)	(0.002)
2 Years Post	-0.001	0.003	0.004	0.000	-0.000	-0.004
	(0.003)	(0.002)	(0.002)	(0.002)	(0.003)	(0.002)
3 Years Post	0.001	0.004	0.010***	0.005*	0.001	-0.000
	(0.003)	(0.003)	(0.003)	(0.003)	(0.003)	(0.003)
Male	0.083***	0.088***	0.091***	0.091***	0.089***	0.085***
	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.002)	(0.002)
Asian	-0.018***	-0.031***	-0.042***	-0.052***	-0.062***	-0.073***
	(0.003)	(0.003)	(0.004)	(0.004)	(0.004)	(0.004)
Black	-0.013***	-0.013***	-0.011**	0.002	0.010**	0.016***
	(0.003)	(0.003)	(0.003)	(0.003)	(0.004)	(0.004)
Hispanic or Latino	-0.004	-0.004	-0.006+	-0.004	-0.008**	-0.016***
	(0.003)	(0.003)	(0.003)	(0.003)	(0.003)	(0.003)
Other Race(s)	-0.005*	-0.005*	-0.007**	-0.002	0.001	0.003
	(0.003)	(0.003)	(0.003)	(0.003)	(0.003)	(0.003)
English Learner	-0.044***	-0.041***	-0.042***	-0.035***	-0.012**	0.015**
	(0.003)	(0.004)	(0.004)	(0.004)	(0.004)	(0.006)
Economically Disadvantaged	0.057***	0.059***	0.067***	0.071***	0.075***	0.077***
	(0.002)	(0.003)	(0.002)	(0.003)	(0.003)	(0.003)
Non-resident	-0.012***	-0.003	0.003	0.006+	0.008*	0.009*
	(0.003)	(0.003)	(0.003)	(0.003)	(0.004)	(0.004)
School-level: % Non-White Students	-0.012	-0.010	-0.022	-0.037*	-0.037+	-0.025
	(0.016)	(0.014)	(0.015)	(0.016)	(0.020)	(0.024)
School-level: % English Learners	-0.027	-0.027	-0.038+	-0.050*	-0.084***	-0.107***
	(0.023)	(0.022)	(0.023)	(0.023)	(0.023)	(0.025)
School-level: % Economically Disadvantaged Students	0.038**	0.040**	0.044**	0.044***	0.048***	0.052***
	(0.012)	(0.012)	(0.014)	(0.013)	(0.014)	(0.016)
Log of Student Enrollment	-0.022***	-0.030***	-0.035***	-0.037***	-0.041***	-0.044***
	(0.004)	(0.006)	(0.006)	(0.007)	(0.009)	(0.009)
Constant	0.181***	0.226***	0.264***	0.290***	0.313***	0.328***
	(0.028)	(0.039)	(0.041)	(0.042)	(0.054)	(0.056)
Observations	**832,148**	**764,672**	**763,299**	**769,759**	**777,315**	**785,030**
R-squared	**0.037**	**0.038**	**0.039**	**0.038**	**0.038**	**0.037**
Adjusted R-squared	**0.036**	**0.036**	**0.038**	**0.037**	**0.037**	**0.036**

*Note: Robust standard errors clustered at the district level in parentheses. All models include district fixed effects. ***p<0.001, **p<0.01, * p<0.05,+ p<0.1*

APPENDIX C-1. FULL RESULTS OF TABLE D.1

Interrupted Time Series Analysis of Third Grade M-STEP ELA, by Subgroup		
Outcome	**Third Grade M-STEP ELA Standardized Score**	
	(1)	(2)
Pre-Law Trend	-0.150***	-0.020+
	(0.015)	(0.011)
1 Year Post	0.115***	-0.010
	(0.019)	(0.012)
2 Years Post	0.285***	0.024
	(0.036)	(0.024)
3 Years Post	0.470***	0.065+
	(0.051)	(0.035)
Pre-Law Trend *Low ELA Performance	-0.006	-0.037*
	(0.024)	(0.018)
Pre-Law Trend *High ELA Performance	0.044*	0.020
	(0.021)	(0.014)
1 Year Post*Low ELA Performance	0.034	
	(0.032)	
1 Year Post*High ELA Performance	-0.063*	
	(0.029)	
2 Years Post*Low ELA Performance	0.045	
	(0.058)	
2 Years Post*High ELA Performance	-0.105*	
	(0.052)	
3 Years Post*Low ELA Performance	0.036	
	(0.082)	
3 Years Post*High ELA Performance	-0.158*	
	(0.073)	
1 Year Post*Urban		0.052*
		(0.021)
1 Year Post*Rural		-0.031
		(0.019)
2 Years Post*Urban		0.089*
		(0.039)
2 Years Post*Rural		-0.066+
		(0.034)
3 Years Post*Urban		0.126*
		(0.056)
3 Years Post*Rural		-0.084+
		(0.048)
School-level MEAP Score Change Between 2012-13 and 2013-14	0.002**	0.000
	(0.001)	(0.000)
School-level Average MEAP Score Between 2012-13 and 2013-14	0.018***	0.000***
	(0.002)	(0.000)

Interrupted Time Series Analysis of Third Grade M-STEP ELA, by Subgroup *(continued)*		
Outcome	**Third Grade M-STEP ELA Standardized Score**	
	(1)	(2)
Male	-0.139***	-0.160***
	(0.003)	(0.002)
Asian	0.243***	0.305***
	(0.019)	(0.016)
Black	-0.396***	-0.417***
	(0.013)	(0.012)
Hispanic or Latino	-0.090***	-0.048***
	(0.010)	(0.010)
Other Race(s)	-0.099***	-0.106***
	(0.007)	(0.007)
English Learner	-0.316***	-0.487***
	(0.019)	(0.024)
Economically Disadvantaged	-0.386***	-0.386***
	(0.007)	(0.007)
Student with a Disability	-0.589***	-0.670***
	(0.014)	(0.013)
Non-resident	-0.008	-0.014*
	(0.006)	(0.007)
School-level: % Non-White Students	-0.057	-0.210*
	(0.090)	(0.093)
School-level: % English Learners	0.274***	0.314***
	(0.053)	(0.056)
School-level: % Economically Disadvantaged Students	-0.120	-0.535***
	(0.086)	(0.082)
School-level: % Students with Disabilities	-0.313*	-0.622***
	(0.148)	(0.124)
Log of Student Enrollment	-0.052*	-0.084***
	(0.025)	(0.019)
Constant	-5.186***	1.192***
	(0.706)	(0.125)
Observations	**498,191**	**1,500,310**
R-squared	**0.296**	**0.313**
Adjusted R-squared	**0.295**	**0.312**

*Note: Robust standard errors clustered at the district level in parentheses. All models include district fixed effects. The reference group in Column 1 is districts with medium ELA performance, and the reference group in Column 2 is Suburban/Town districts. ***p<0.001, **p<0.01, * p<0.05,+ p<0.1*

APPENDIX C-2. FULL RESULTS OF TABLE D.2

Interrupted Time Series Analysis of Planned Kindergarten Retention, by Subgroup			
Outcome	**Probability of Being Retained through a Developmental Kindergarten Program**		
	(1)	(2)	(3)
Pre-Law Trend	0.010***	0.007***	0.011***
	(0.002)	(0.001)	(0.002)
1 Year Post	0.003	0.003	0.003
	(0.004)	(0.004)	(0.004)
2 Years Post	0.016*	0.023***	0.013+
	(0.007)	(0.007)	(0.007)
Pre-Law Trend*Low Predicted Retention Rate	0.008+		
	(0.005)		
Pre-Law Trend*High Predicted Retention Rate	-0.008***		
	(0.002)		
1 Year Post*Low Predicted Retention Rate	-0.015		
	(0.010)		
1 Year Post*High Predicted Retention Rate	0.003		
	(0.005)		
2 Years Post*Low Predicted Retention Rate	-0.039**		
	(0.013)		
2 Years Post*High Predicted Retention Rate	-0.002		
	(0.009)		
Pre-Law Trend*Low Proportion of Econ. Dis. Students		0.009**	
		(0.003)	
Pre-Law Trend*High Proportion of Econ. Dis. Students		-0.004*	
		(0.002)	
1 Year Post*Low Proportion of Econ. Dis. Students		-0.005	
		(0.007)	
1 Year Post* High Proportion of Econ. Dis. Students		0.005	
		(0.006)	
2 Years Post*Low Proportion of Econ. Dis. Students		-0.028*	
		(0.012)	
2 Years Post*High Proportion of Econ. Dis. Students		-0.008	
		(0.009)	
Pre-Law Trend*Urban			-0.007**
			(0.003)
Pre-Law Trend*Rural			0.003
			(0.004)
1 Year Post*Urban			0.006
			(0.008)
1 Year Post*Rural			-0.015*
			(0.007)
2 Years Post*Urban			0.010
			(0.011)

Interrupted Time Series Analysis of Planned Kindergarten Retention, by Subgroup *(continued)*			
Outcome	**Probability of Being Retained through a Developmental Kindergarten Program**		
	(1)	(2)	(3)
2 Years Post*Rural			-0.026*
			(0.012)
Male	0.013***	0.013***	0.013***
	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.001)
Asian	-0.016***	-0.016***	-0.016***
	(0.003)	(0.003)	(0.003)
Black	-0.010***	-0.010***	-0.010***
	(0.002)	(0.002)	(0.002)
Hispanic or Latino	0.000	0.000	0.000
	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.001)
Other Race(s)	-0.003*	-0.003*	-0.003*
	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.001)
English Learner	-0.004*	-0.004*	-0.004*
	(0.002)	(0.002)	(0.002)
Economically Disadvantaged	-0.003*	-0.003*	-0.003*
	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.001)
Student with a Disability	0.013***	0.013***	0.013***
	(0.002)	(0.002)	(0.002)
Non-resident	0.002	0.002	0.002
	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.001)
School-level: % Non-White Students	-0.017	-0.015	-0.017
	(0.019)	(0.019)	(0.019)
School-level: % English Learners	-0.013	-0.013	-0.011
	(0.013)	(0.013)	(0.013)
School-level: % Economically Disadvantaged Students	0.004	0.005	0.003
	(0.017)	(0.017)	(0.017)
School-level: % Students with Disabilities	-0.007	-0.007	-0.007
	(0.037)	(0.036)	(0.037)
Log of Student Enrollment	-0.045*	-0.044*	-0.044*
	(0.021)	(0.021)	(0.021)
Constant	0.317*	0.316*	0.317*
	(0.137)	(0.137)	(0.136)
Observations	**641,334**	**641,353**	**645,994**
R-squared	**0.148**	**0.149**	**0.148**
Adjusted R-squared	**0.147**	**0.147**	**0.147**

*Note: Robust standard errors clustered at the district level in parentheses. All models include district fixed effects. The reference group in Column 1 is districts with medium predicted retention rates; the reference group in Column 2 is districts with medium proportions of economically disadvantaged students; and the reference group in Column 3 is Suburban/Town districts. ***p<0.001, **p<0.01, * p<0.05,+ p<0.1*

APPENDIX C-3. FULL RESULTS OF TABLE D.3

Interrupted Time Series Analysis of Third Grade M-STEP Math, by Special Education Status	
Outcome	**Third Grade M-STEP Math Standardized Score**
Pre-Law Trend	-0.115***
	(0.008)
Student with a Disability	-0.700***
	(0.014)
Pre-Law Trend*Student with a Disability	-0.060***
	(0.015)
1 Year Post	0.156***
	(0.011)
1 Year Post*Student with a Disability	0.052*
	(0.026)
2 Years Post	0.293***
	(0.020)
2 Years Post*Student with a Disability	0.083*
	(0.039)
3 Years Post	0.446***
	(0.027)
3 Years Post*Student with a Disability	0.100+
	(0.054)
Male	0.134***
	(0.005)
Asian	0.384***
	(0.024)
Black	-0.462***
	(0.012)
Hispanic or Latino	-0.145***
	(0.009)
Other Race(s)	-0.141***
	(0.008)

Interrupted Time Series Analysis of Third Grade M-STEP Math, by Special Education Status *(continued)*	
Outcome	**Third Grade M-STEP Math Standardized Score**
English Learner	-0.226***
	(0.016)
Economically Disadvantaged	-0.397***
	(0.008)
Non-resident	-0.022***
	(0.006)
School-level: % Non-White Students	-0.004
	(0.106)
School-level: % English Learners	0.252***
	(0.061)
School-level: % Economically Disadvantaged Students	-0.197+
	(0.105)
School-level: % Students with Disabilities	-0.529***
	(0.137)
Log of Student Enrollment	-0.062*
	(0.029)
School-level MEAP Score Change Between 2012-13 and 2013-14	0.003*
	(0.001)
School-level Average MEAP Score Between 2012-13 and 2013-14	0.016***
	(0.002)
Constant	-4.698***
	(0.834)
Observations	**499,593**
R-squared	**0.323**
Adjusted R-squared	**0.322**

*Note: Robust standard errors clustered at the district level in parentheses. All models include district fixed effects. ***p<0.001, **p<0.01, * p<0.05,+ p<0.1*

APPENDIX C-4. FULL RESULTS OF TABLE D.4

ITS Analysis of Special Education Placement with Interactions				
	Kindergarten	**Grade 1**	**Grade 2**	**Grade 3**
	(1)	**(2)**	**(3)**	**(4)**
Outcome	**Probability of Being Identified as Student with a Disability**			
Pre-Law Trend	0.004***	0.003***	0.003***	0.002**
	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.001)
White	0.008**	0.008**	0.010***	0.007*
	(0.003)	(0.003)	(0.003)	(0.003)
Pre-Law Trend*White	-0.001	-0.001	-0.002	-0.000
	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.001)
1 Year Post	0.003	0.001	0.004	0.003
	(0.003)	(0.003)	(0.003)	(0.003)
1 Year Post*White	0.003	0.005	-0.002	0.002
	(0.003)	(0.004)	(0.004)	(0.004)
2 Years Post	-0.002	-0.003	-0.000	0.000
	(0.004)	(0.003)	(0.003)	(0.004)
2 Years Post*White	0.002	0.009*	0.006	-0.001
	(0.005)	(0.004)	(0.004)	(0.005)
3 Years Post	-0.002	-0.000	0.001	0.000
	(0.005)	(0.004)	(0.004)	(0.005)
3 Years Post*White	0.004	0.006	0.013*	0.007
	(0.006)	(0.005)	(0.005)	(0.006)
Male	0.083***	0.088***	0.091***	0.091***
	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.001)
English Learner	-0.044***	-0.043***	-0.046***	-0.044***
	(0.003)	(0.003)	(0.003)	(0.003)
Economically Disadvantaged	0.057***	0.060***	0.069***	0.073***
	(0.002)	(0.003)	(0.002)	(0.003)
Non-resident	-0.012***	-0.003	0.003	0.006+
	(0.003)	(0.003)	(0.003)	(0.003)
School-level: % Non-White Students	-0.017	-0.016	-0.027+	-0.041**
	(0.017)	(0.014)	(0.015)	(0.015)
School-level: % English Learners	-0.022	-0.022	-0.035	-0.051*
	(0.025)	(0.025)	(0.025)	(0.023)
School-level: % Economically Disadvantaged Students	0.038**	0.041**	0.047***	0.050***
	(0.013)	(0.013)	(0.014)	(0.012)
School-level: % Students with Disabilities	-0.022***	-0.030***	-0.035***	-0.038***
	(0.004)	(0.006)	(0.006)	(0.007)
Log of Student Enrollment	0.174***	0.219***	0.254***	0.282***
	(0.029)	(0.040)	(0.042)	(0.042)
Observations	**832,148**	**764,672**	**763,299**	**769,759**
R-squared	**0.037**	**0.037**	**0.039**	**0.037**
Adjusted R-squared	**0.036**	**0.036**	**0.037**	**0.036**

*Note: Robust standard errors clustered at the district level in parentheses. All models include district fixed effects. ***p<0.001, **p<0.01, * p<0.05,+ p<0.1*

Education Policy Innovation Collaborative

MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY
236 Erickson Hall | 620 Farm Lane
East Lansing, MI 48824

(517) 884-0377
EPICedpolicy@msu.edu
www.EPICedpolicy.org