POLICY BRIEF

What Resources do Elementary Teachers Use for English Language Arts Instruction? The K-5 ELA Curriculum Landscape in Michigan

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INTRODUCTION

Policymakers, researchers, and reformers have increasingly looked to curriculum resources as a powerful lever for improving instruction. The appeal of curriculum policies is that curriculum can influence teachers' instruction and therefore student outcomes.[1] To that end, 17 states have policies dictating which kinds of curricula teachers may use, while 36 states provide guidance to districts regarding the selection of curricula.[2] The focus of this brief is on elementary English Language Arts (ELA) curricula. Elementary ELA curricula have re-entered the national spotlight following the adoption of early literacy policies in 41 states.[3] These policies are aimed at improving students' literacy achievement in the early grades and often require districts to use high-quality instructional resources—though the selection of those resources is often left up to districts. [4]

Given the importance of and attention to early literacy instruction, it may be surprising that many states provide little direction beyond the need for "high-quality" or "evidence-based" curricula to guide local districts' selection and use of ELA curricula. This reliance on local determination of curricula has its roots in the belief that local educators are the most expert in their own students' needs and should be able to select the curriculum resources that best align with those needs. But this localized strategy for curriculum selection often means that the curriculum resources that influence instruction differs from teacher to teacher within a school, from school to school within a district, and from district to district within a state.[5]

Adding to this variation are the many different curriculum resources available for elementary ELA instruction. Teachers might use one "comprehensive" or "core" ELA curriculum that claims to cover all ELA standards for that grade level. These curricula typically include a scope and sequence of content to cover (i.e., a guide for what teachers should cover and in what order), suggested lesson plans and daily activities, texts for students to read or for teachers to read aloud with students, workbooks, and assessments. Or teachers might use separate curriculum resources to cover different components of ELA instruction, such as one curriculum for writing instruction and another for phonics instruction. Teachers may also supplement these curricula further with resources they find and may purchase themselves, including online resources.[6] This means that districts and even teachers within districts may adopt and use multiple ELA curriculum resources.

Curricula vary in the extent to which they are "high-quality" or "evidence-based," as state policies or guidance often suggest they should be. Many of the most-used curricula on the market lack evidence on their efficacy in improving student outcomes. While curricula may claim to cover standards or include research-based practices, an entire curriculum is rarely tested in a randomized controlled trial before it becomes available for purchase or public use. Rather, studies of curriculum resources often examine specific grade levels or components of that curriculum.[7] Curricula that lack evidence of their effects on student outcomes are not necessarily low-quality; rather, there is not enough research to understand whether use of these resources support student learning. However, recent research focused on supplemental resources that teachers purchase or find online has found that these often are not high-quality, despite teachers rating them highly.[8]

Even when there are studies showing whether a particular curriculum resource is effective, it may be challenging for educators to obtain this information as doing so typically requires access to scholarly journals and studies located behind paywalls. To address some of this complexity, organizations such as the *What Works Clearinghouse*,[9] *Evidence for ESSA*,[10] and *EdReports*[11] have attempted to provide information about curriculum quality in various ways and to make this information freely available to the public and to educators. Yet the challenge remains that there are an enormous number of resources to be examined and curriculum editions change frequently, often in ways that fundamentally shift the content and strategies therein. The same curriculum authors or publishers also may offer several different products. Therefore, while these sites serve an important function, the absence of information on these websites does not necessarily mean that a curriculum is not effective or would not rank highly. Thus, while curriculum policies seem to be a promising lever for improving literacy instruction and eventual student outcomes, local educators are left with the challenging task of selecting their own curricula, often in the absence of research-based evidence.

In this brief, we examine elementary ELA curricula in one state: Michigan. Michigan is an important case study given the substantial and sustained attention to early literacy among policymakers and stakeholders within the state, as well as its contextual similarities to other states' early literacy and curriculum policies (see Year One Report for more historical context). Michigan passed the Read by Grade Three Law in 2016 in response to growing concerns about students' performance on state and national early literacy assessments. The Law intends to

improve teachers' literacy instruction and students' literacy achievement by the end of 3rd grade. While not a curriculum policy per se, the Law includes requirements that affect educators' selection of curriculum resources. The Law does not require the use of particular ELA curricula, but it does require that literacy instruction be "evidence-based" or "based in research and with proven efficacy," and that teachers should provide instruction in the "five major reading components": phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension.[12]

We examine how Michigan districts select and provide guidance on elementary ELA curriculum resources. We also look at the number and types of resources that teachers use and consistency in curriculum use within districts. In addition, we examine information about the most-used curricula provided by *What Works Clearinghouse*, *Evidence for ESSA*, and *EdReports* to determine how those organizations rate the curriculum resources Michigan teachers report using.

DATA AND METHODS

Data for this brief come from the Education Policy Innovation Collaborative's (EPIC) 2019-20 Read by Grade Three survey of Michigan educators. In spring 2020, EPIC surveyed Michigan K-5 teachers and district superintendents in traditional public and charter schools about their perceptions and implementation of the Read by Grade Three Law, including questions about literacy curricula in use and how curricula are selected.[13] This brief focuses on superintendents' responses about how their district selects literacy curricula and how literacy curricula changed because of the Read by Grade Three Law, as well as K-5 teachers' responses about the core ELA, writing, and phonics/spelling curriculum resources they use.[14] Table 1 shows the sample size and response rates for each group. The survey sample is largely representative of the target population of K-5 educators and superintendents with slight overrepresentation in educators who are: female, endorsed in ELA, and/or have five or fewer years of experience in their current district.

TABLE 1. Sample Size and Response Rates			
	Survey Sample	Target Population	Response Rate
K-5 Teachers	9,751	23,922	41%
District Superintendents	192	546	35%

Note: The K-5 teacher sample includes regular classroom teachers only. The district superintendent target population is lower than the total number of traditional public and charter school districts in the state (N=831) because in many charter school districts and small districts, the superintendent and principal roles are fulfilled by the same individual. In these cases, we directed survey respondents to take a separate survey designed for principals.

To determine how districts select curricula, we used superintendents' survey responses about who is involved in their districts' selection of literacy curricula and how they provide curriculum to teachers, as well as the extent to which they changed their literacy curriculum in response to the Read by Grade Three Law. We examined whether curricular change varied by demographic characteristics, including districts' ELA performance, socioeconomic status, and locale.[15] We tested whether differences between these groups were statistically significant using ordinary least squares regression analysis.

To understand the ELA curricula Michigan teachers are using, we calculated the total number of ELA curriculum resources teachers reported using in each category: core ELA, writing, and phonics/spelling. Teachers were given a list of possible curriculum resources on the survey and could also write in curriculum resources that were not listed. We combined resources if they were different editions of the same curriculum.[16] We also combined curricula that changed names for subsequent editions (e.g., *Core Knowledge Language Arts* curriculum also is published as *Amplify ELA*), as well as curriculum resources by the same author or author teams when we could not determine exactly which products from those authors were in use.

We ran descriptive analyses to identify the percentage of teachers using each curriculum across the three categories (core ELA, writing, and phonics/spelling) and identified the most-used curricula in each.[17] We also analyzed core ELA curriculum use within districts by focusing on the 308 districts in which at least 10 teachers responded to the survey. In these districts, we identified the most-used core ELA curricula (i.e., the core ELA curricula reported by the highest number of teachers in that district). Then, we calculated the percent of teachers who reported using that curriculum within the district as a measure of within-district consistency. We calculated descriptive statistics at the district level for within-district consistency and ran regressions to determine whether consistency varied by district ELA performance, socioeconomic status, or locale.

Lastly, we conducted a secondary analysis of the most-used core ELA curricula in Michigan by systematically searching open-access curriculum evaluation websites that are available to educators: the *What Works Clearinghouse*, *Evidence for ESSA*, and *EdReports*. *What Works Clearinghouse* and *Evidence for ESSA* both rate curricula based on evidence of their effectiveness from existing research studies. *EdReports* analyzes the content of curricula for its alignment to college and career readiness standards.

FINDINGS

All Districts Provide Guidance on Curriculum Selection

Figure 1 shows the ways in which superintendents reported guiding teachers on selecting literacy curriculum resources. All superintendents indicated that their district provides at least some guidance to teachers on literacy curriculum resources, suggesting that districts expect some consistency in teachers' use of curriculum resources from classroom to classroom. About 60% of districts mandate the use of particular curriculum resources in elementary classrooms, while 36% do not, though the superintendents in these latter districts still reported either providing or recommending literacy curricula.

FIGURE 1. District Guidance Surrounding Literacy Curricula

4.9%

36.0%   59.1%

■ Mandate   ■ Do Not Mandate
■ No Response
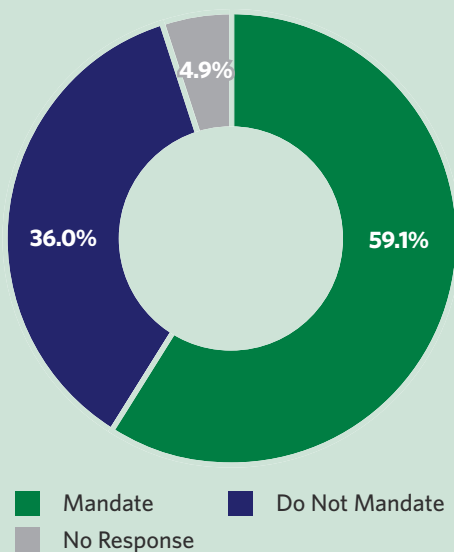
Note: Superintendents were asked, "In which of the following way(s) does your district/organization oversee the selection of literacy curricula? Please mark all that apply." The percentages displayed in the figure represent the percent of superintendents who selected that option. Five percent of superintendents did not respond to this question

Districts Involve Educator Teams
in Selecting Literacy Curricula

Most superintendents reported involving teams of educators to select their district's literacy curricula. As shown in Figure 2, over 80% reported involving school leaders (e.g., principals) and teachers, suggesting that districts consider what educators perceive would be useful in providing literacy instruction to their students. About two-thirds of superintendents also reported involving central office administrators or literacy coaches, while fewer involved the school board or Intermediate School District (ISD) administration.[18]

FIGURE 2. Groups Involved in Literacy Curriculum Selection
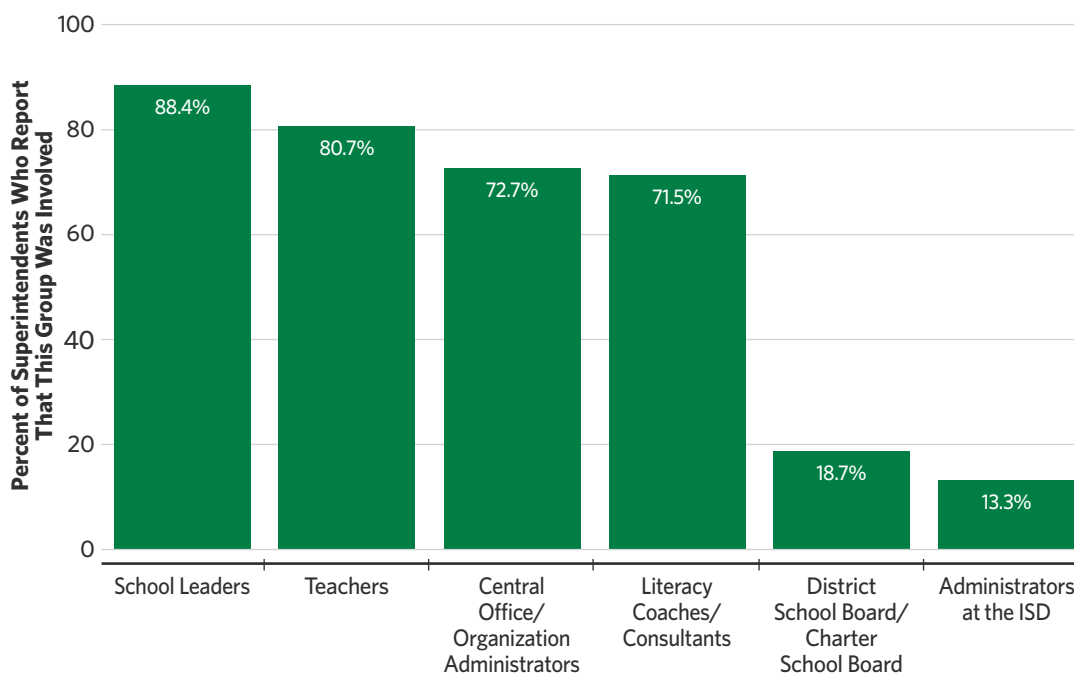
Note: Superintendents were asked, "Which of the following individuals or groups has responsibility for selecting literacy curricula in your district? Please mark all that apply." Five percent of superintendents did not respond to this question.

Districts Changed Their Elementary Literacy Curricula
in Response to the Read by Grade Three Law

The Law does not require districts to adopt particular curricula; however, it does require literacy instruction to be "evidence-based" and include the "five major reading components." Figure 3 shows that most superintendents (60%) reported changing their literacy curricula to a moderate or great extent in response to the Read by Grade Three Law. Districts may have adopted new curriculum resources to meet these requirements.

Historically underserved districts (i.e., low socioeconomic status, low ELA performance, rural) were most likely to change their literacy curricula in response to the Law. This may suggest that these districts' curricula are now more aligned with the Law than the curricula used in more advantaged

districts, or that more advantaged districts' previous curricula were already well-aligned with the Law's requirements. Nonetheless, these changes suggest that many teachers in Michigan have recently needed to learn to use new curriculum resources to support their literacy instruction.

FIGURE 3. Extent to Which Districts Changed Literacy Curricula Because of the Read by Grade Three Law
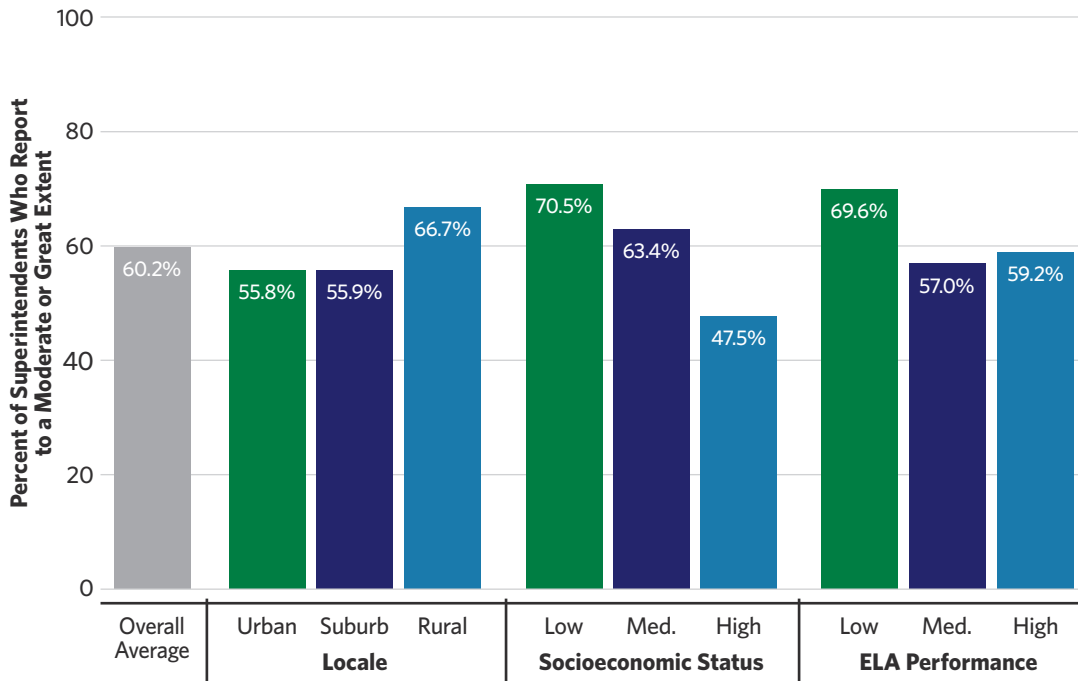
Note: Superintendents were asked, "To what extent has your district's literacy curricula changed as a result of the Read by Grade Three Law?" We categorized district socioeconomic status and ELA performance by quartile, where "Low" represents the bottom quartile of districts, "Medium" represents the middle two quartiles, and "High" represents the top quartile. Five percent of superintendents did not respond to this question.

Teachers Report Using Over 450 Different ELA Curriculum Resources

Michigan elementary teachers reported using a broad range of curriculum resources. In total, they reported using 464 different ELA curriculum resources to support their literacy instruction. This includes 170 different resources they used as core ELA curriculum and an additional 128 resources to support writing instruction and 166 to support phonics/spelling instruction. All curriculum resources used by at least 10 teachers are listed in Appendices A through C along with the number of teachers who reported using each resource.

Importantly, not all 170 resources that teachers reported using to support core ELA instruction are considered by their publishers to be a core ELA curriculum. Teachers listed professional texts, *Teachers Pay Teachers* lesson plans, and even assessment materials.[19] This indicates that teachers use and consider a broad range of resources to support their literacy instruction. Teachers may be using these other types of resources to supplement the curricula that their districts mandate or recommend.

Many Teachers Combine Multiple ELA Curriculum Resources

In addition to teachers across Michigan using many different ELA curriculum resources, the average individual teacher also reported using multiple ELA curriculum resources to support different parts of their literacy instruction. The average teacher reported using three different curriculum resources, including 1.5 core ELA curriculum resources, on average. While published core ELA curriculum resources are supposed to be comprehensive (i.e., provide instruction to meet *all* ELA standards for that grade level), elementary teachers in Michigan report using more than one resource for their core curriculum. Figure 4 shows that while about 45% of teachers reported using one core ELA curriculum, approximately as many reported using two or more.

FIGURE 4. Number of Core ELA Curriculum Resources Teachers Reported Using
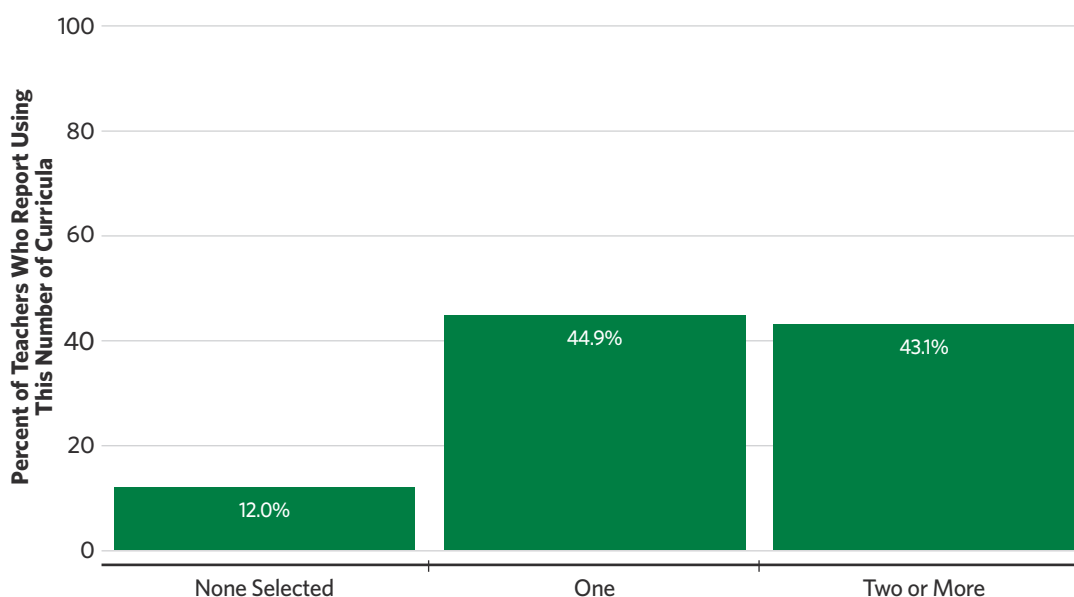
Percent of Teachers Who Report Using This Number of Curricula

- None Selected: 12.0%
- One: 44.9%
- Two or More: 43.1%

Note: Teachers were asked, "Which of the following English language arts (ELA) curricula do you use? Please mark all that apply." Teachers could also write in their curriculum if it was not listed. 12.01% of respondents did not answer this question. We combined curricula that were the same but different editions. See Appendix A for additional comprehensive ELA curricula teachers reported using.

The average teacher also reported using more than one additional curriculum resource in addition to their core ELA curricula. Sixty percent of teachers used at least one writing curriculum and 55% used at least one phonics/spelling curriculum. Figure 5 shows the overall combined number of writing and phonics/spelling curriculum resources that teachers reported using.

It is likely that teachers use a combination of curriculum resources to better support different parts of ELA instruction (e.g., if the core ELA curriculum provides limited guidance on phonics instruction, teachers/districts may supplement with an additional phonics resource). It is also possible that teachers use their professional judgement to select additional curriculum resources to better meet their students' instructional needs or interests. In addition, districts may be recommending multiple resources for teachers to use together to meet ELA standards rather than a single core curriculum product.

FIGURE 5. Number of Additional Curriculum Resources Teachers Reported Using
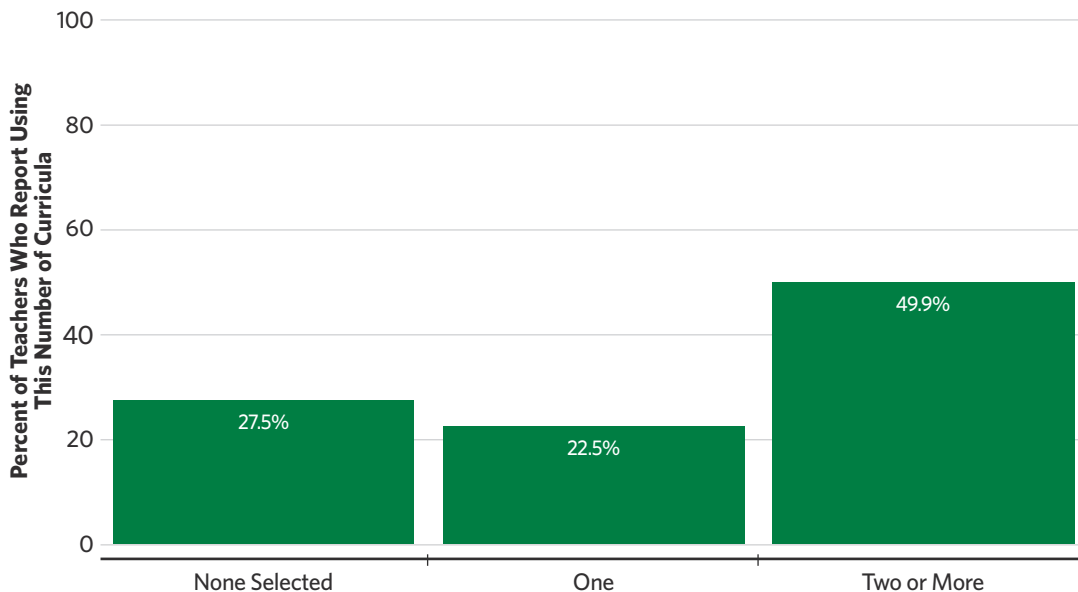
Note: This figure combines results from multiple survey questions. Teachers were asked, "If you use additional writing curricula, please mark all that you use," and, "If you use additional phonics/spelling curricula, please mark all that you use. Note that the response options are listed in alphabetical order." Teachers could also write in their curriculum if it was not listed. 27.55% of respondents did not select a writing curriculum and did not select a phonics/spelling curriculum.

Michigan Teachers Predominantly Use One of 10 Core ELA Curriculum Resources

The first two columns of Table 2 show the 10 core ELA curriculum resources teachers most often reported using and the percentage of teachers that reported using each. Only 14% of teachers did not use at least one of these 10 curricula. The most commonly used core ELA curriculum resources (used by 31% of teachers) were by Fountas & Pinnell.[20]

We also wanted to understand the percentage of districts in which each of these curriculum resources were most popular to determine whether their use was concentrated within a few districts or widespread across the state. The third column of Table 2 therefore shows the percentage of districts in which each curriculum resource was the most-used curriculum (i.e., the one that most of their teachers reported using). While nearly a third of teachers reported using Fountas & Pinnell resources, this was the most used curriculum in just 13% of districts. This suggests that rather than Fountas & Pinnell resources being popular across the state, they are used by a high percentage of teachers in a few districts. Another notable discrepancy is with *MoDEL Detroit/Expeditionary Learning/Learnzillion EL.* Six percent of teachers use *MoDEL Detroit/Expeditionary Learning/Learnzillion EL*, but these are the most used curriculum resources in just 1% of districts. This is largely because over 70% of teachers in Detroit Public Schools Community District (DPSCD) use *MoDEL Detroit* and DPSCD had the most teachers complete the survey.[21]

Lastly, Table 2 shows publisher information and how teachers can access each curriculum resource. About two thirds of teachers used core ELA curriculum resources that districts purchase from publishing companies and about one third use Open Education Resources that are free to download. One of the most-used resources, *MAISA Units of Study for Reading* (19%), is free to download. These are a set of curriculum resources created by the Michigan Association of Intermediate School Administrators (MAISA)—an organization of administrators and superintendents representing Michigan's ISDs.

TABLE 2. Most Used Core ELA Curriculum Resources				
Curriculum Name	**% of Teachers Using**	**% of Districts in Which This Was the Most Used Curriculum**	**Publisher**	**Ways to Access**
Fountas & Pinnell resources	31%	13%	Publishing company (Heinemann)	Available for purchase[22]
MAISA Units of Study for Reading	19%	18%	Oakland Schools Literacy	Free to download[23]
Units of Study for Teaching Reading	17%	13%	Publishing company (Heinemann)	Available for purchase[24]
Reading Street	11%	11%	Publishing company (Savvas)	Available for purchase[25]
Journeys	11%	10%	Publishing company (Houghton Mifflin Harcourt)	Available for purchase[26]
Jan Richardson resources	11%	6%	Publishing company (Scholastic)	Available for purchase[27]
Wonders	9%	13%	Publishing company (McGraw-Hill)	Available for purchase[28]
MoDEL Detroit[29]/ Expeditionary Learning/ Learnzillion EL	6%	1%	MoDEL Detroit: Detroit Public Schools Community District	Free to download[30]
			Expeditionary Learning: Open Up Resources	Free to download[31]
			Learnzillion EL: Imagine Learning	Through purchased subscription[32]
Core Knowledge Language Arts/Amplify CKLA	4%	3%	Core Knowledge Language Arts: Core Knowledge Foundation	Free to download[33]
			Amplify CKLA: Amplify Education, Inc.	Available for purchase[34]
EngageNY[35]	3%	1%	New York State Education Department	Free to download[36]

Note: Teachers were asked, "Which of the following English language arts (ELA) curricula do you use? Please mark all that apply. Note that the response options are listed in alphabetical order." Teachers could also write in their curriculum if it was not listed. 12.01% of respondents did not answer this question. We combined curricula that were the same but different editions. See Appendix A for additional comprehensive ELA curricula teachers reported using.

Teachers in the Same District Do Not Always Use the Same Curricula

All superintendents reported providing district-level guidance for ELA curricula, so we would expect teachers to largely use the same ELA curricula within districts. However, we find that on average, only 76% of teachers reported using their district's most-used curriculum. This finding did not differ by district ELA performance, socioeconomic status, or locale. Therefore, across a range of different types of districts, about a quarter of teachers were not using the curricula that were likely to have been mandated or recommended by their district. It is unclear whether this is because different schools within a district use different curriculum resources or because individual teachers independently choose to use different resources than those most-used in their district. Nonetheless, this finding suggests a lack of consistency in the instructional experience provided to children in different classrooms within districts.

Many Teachers Are Using Core ELA Curricula That Are Unrated or Poorly Rated for Their Alignment to Standards

Lastly, we examined *What Works Clearinghouse*, *Evidence for ESSA*, and *EdReports* ratings for the 10 most-used core ELA curriculum resources (see Table 3). These websites provide publicly available information that can be used as part of curriculum selection. It is important to note that we cannot determine from our data whether Michigan teachers are using the same editions that were rated on these websites, and in some cases, (e.g., *MoDEL Detroit),* the versions in use have been adapted from rated curricula.

EdReports provided evidence on specific editions of seven of the 10 most-used curricula. *EdReports* rated editions of two of the most-used ELA curricula in Michigan as not meeting expectations for text quality, text complexity, or alignment to standards (*Fountas and Pinnell Classroom* [2020 edition] and *Units of Study for Teaching Reading* [2018 edition]—shaded purple in Table 3) and rated another two as meeting expectations in some of these areas (*Reading Street* [2013 edition] and *Journeys* [2017 edition]—shaded blue). *EdReports* provided high ratings to three of the 10 most-used curricula (*Wonders* [2017 edition]; *EL Education K-5 Language Arts* [2017 edition]; *Learnzillion EL Education K-5 Language Arts* [2019 edition]—shaded green). Only about a fifth of teachers reported using these highly rated curriculum resources, and we cannot determine if these teachers use the edition that was rated.

On *What Works Clearinghouse,* which consolidates research studies of curriculum effectiveness, we found no information on nine of the 10 most-used core ELA curricula. We found information about one Fountas and Pinnell resource Michigan teachers mentioned, but it was studied as a Tier 2 small-group intervention and not as a core curriculum. *Evidence for ESSA,* which also looks for research on curriculum effectiveness, showed positive effects from research on an older version of *Journeys* from 2012.

Overall, there is limited information about the 10 core ELA curriculum resources Michigan teachers most often reported using and, notably, many teachers report using materials that do not meet or only partly meet standards according to *EdReport*s.

TABLE 3. Ratings of Top 10 Most-Used Core ELA Resources			
Curriculum Name	**What Works Clearinghouse**	**Evidence for ESSA**	**EdReports**
Fountas & Pinnell resources	Only provided information about *Leveled Literacy Intervention* (tested as a Tier 2 intervention, not as a core curriculum)	Only provided information about *Leveled Literacy Intervention* (tested as a Tier 2 intervention, not as a core curriculum)	*Fountas and Pinnell Classroom* 2020 Edition does not meet expectations for text quality, text complexity, or alignment to standards
MAISA Units of Study for Reading	Not rated	Not rated	Not rated
Units of Study for Teaching Reading	Not rated	Not rated	2018 Edition does not meet expectations for text quality, text complexity, or alignment to standards
Reading Street	Not rated	Not rated	2013 Edition meets expectations for text quality, does not meet expectations for alignment to standards
Journeys	Not rated	Strong positive effect (2012 Edition)	2017 Edition meets expectations for text quality and building knowledge, does not meet expectations for alignment to standards
Jan Richardson resources	Not rated	Not rated	Not rated
Wonders	Not rated	Not rated	2017 Edition meets expectations
MoDEL Detroit/ Expeditionary Learning/ Learnzillion EL	Not rated	Not rated	*EL Education K-5 Language Arts* 2017 Edition; *Learnzillion EL Education K-5 Language Arts* 2019 Edition meets expectations
Core Knowledge Language Arts/Amplify CKLA	Not rated	Not rated	*Core Knowledge Language Arts* 2015 Edition meets expectations
EngageNY	Not rated	Not rated	Not rated

RECOMMENDATIONS

Districts Should Evaluate Their ELA Curricula and Replace With Evidence-Based Resources When Necessary

The range of literacy curriculum resources that Michigan elementary teachers reported using, as well as the fact that only three quarters of teachers reported using the most-used curriculum in their district, suggests that children may have inconsistent or inequitable literacy learning experiences from classroom to classroom within a district. Research studies and other reviews of curriculum suggest that not all literacy curricula incorporate effective instructional practices for literacy, and many teachers in Michigan are using curricula that have not been rated as well-aligned with ELA standards.[37]

While no ELA curriculum is perfect, districts should carefully examine the resources teachers in that district are using to determine whether these resources are (1) aligned with research on literacy instruction, (2) address ELA standards, and (3) recommend instructional strategies that are appropriate for a given age group or grade level. When curriculum resources do not meet these criteria, they should be replaced with evidence-based resources. Districts should also consider the range of different resources they are mandating or recommending teachers use to understand the specific contribution of each curriculum resource to their literacy curriculum.

Support Districts in Selecting Curriculum Resources

Most Michigan superintendents reported involving a range of educators in their district's curriculum selection process, including school leaders, teachers, central office administrators, and literacy coaches. Including a range of stakeholders is common across states and allows educators to have agency in selecting curricula they believe will be effective and appropriate for their population of students. However, including many stakeholders does not guarantee the selection of high-quality resources if these stakeholders lack information about curriculum quality.

The state can play an important role in providing guidance and support for curriculum decision-makers to help them make informed decisions and be critical consumers of literacy curriculum resources.[38] For instance, the MDE could work with groups like the MAISA Early Literacy Task Force to offer professional development on curriculum selection and adoption or provide a common rubric for evaluating the quality of curricula that are in use or being considered for adoption.[39] A rubric could help decision-makers narrow down their options by guiding them through a process for examining the alignment of the curriculum content with research on literacy instruction. The federal Institute for Education Sciences (IES) has published a rubric for districts and administrators that nationally recognized literacy researchers created.[40] The state could adopt or recommend the use of this rubric. Alternatively, Michigan might create its own rubric aligned to research-based instructional practices (e.g., aligned to *The Essential Instructional Practices in Early Literacy: K-3*).

Provide Teachers with Professional Development to Implement New Curriculum Resources

There is mounting evidence that professional development and high-quality curriculum resources can improve teachers' instructional practices—but that teachers don't always get the professional development they need to support curriculum implementation.[41] Most superintendents reported that their district changed their literacy curriculum since the adoption of Michigan's Read by Grade Three Law, which means many teachers are learning to use new curriculum resources. To ensure that new resources are implemented in ways that support high-quality literacy instruction, qualified providers should give teachers ongoing professional development. Professional development should focus on supporting teachers who are implementing new curriculum resources using practices that align with research on effective literacy instruction.

ENDNOTES

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9. https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/

10. https://education.jhu.edu/2020/02/evidence-for-essa/

11. https://www.edreports.org/

12. Michigan Legislature, House Bill 4822, Act no. 306. (2016). https://www.legislature.mi.gov/documents/2015-2016/publicact/pdf/2016-PA-0306.pdf

13. 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).

14. K-5 teachers were asked to reply to three optional, mark-all-that-apply questions about what curriculum they used for their core ELA instruction, writing instruction, and phonics and/or spelling instruction. They were also presented with "Other (write in)" as a response option if their curriculum was not listed on the survey. Some teachers selected multiple curricula in the same category (e.g., one respondent selected four core ELA curricula). Others selected multiple versions of the same curricula (e.g., Expeditionary Learning and MoDEL—Detroit's adopted and enhanced version of Expeditionary Learning). To avoid overrepresentation of these curricula, we either selected the data we knew the district was using (i.e., a DPCSD teacher selected multiple versions of Expeditionary Learning, so we changed the selection to the district-adopted MoDEL curriculum) or by selecting the newer version of the curricula when two different versions were selected. We then cleaned the write-in data by creating new variables for curricula that teachers wrote in many times (i.e., over 10 respondents) and deleting other selections with responses such as "I am a specials teacher and do not teach ELA." Multiple selections affected a small subset of teacher responses, however, and write-in data totaling more than 10 responses created quite a few new variables (over 10 in some curriculum categories).

ENDNOTES *(continued)*

15   We categorized districts' socioeconomic status and ELA performance by quartile, where "Low" represents the bottom quartile of districts, "Medium" represents the middle two quartiles, and "High" represents the top quartile. ELA performance is measured by the district's 2018-19 average ELA M-STEP performance. Socioeconomic status is measured by the district's proportion of economically disadvantaged students, with "High" socioeconomic status indicating that the district has the lowest proportion of economically disadvantaged students.

16   While different editions may include different content, we did not ask teachers to provide the publication dates for their curricula and therefore could not accurately differentiate by curriculum edition.

17   We then created dummy variables to represent the presence or absence of a given top 10 ELA variable. To assess the percentages of teachers that chose a particular curriculum, we created a variable representing the number of curricula chosen by teachers within the ELA, writing, and phonics categories. We combined those separate variables to create one variable for total curricula chosen (ELA, phonics, and writing), and one variable for total supplementary curricula chosen (phonics and handwriting).

18   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. All references will only mention ISD as this is the more common term used among policymakers.

19   *Teachers Pay Teachers* is a website where teachers can post, sell, and purchase original educational materials, including lesson plans, activities, workbooks, and classroom decorations.

20   Note that these are referred to as "Fountas and Pinnell resources" because teachers typically referred to these by the authors' names and not to the specific curriculum resource.

21   While DPSCD had the largest number of teachers complete the survey, the proportion of DPSCD teachers who completed the survey is representative of the proportion of K-5 teachers in the state who teach in DPSCD.

22.   Fountas and Pinnell resources represent a variety of Fountas and Pinnell curriculum materials that teachers reported using connected with these authors. Published by Heinemann, https://www.heinemann.com/collection/fp.

23.   Published by Oakland Schools Literacy, retrieved from: https://oaklandk12-public.rubiconatlas.org/Atlas/Browse/View/Calendars

24.   Published by Heinemann, https://www.heinemann.com/products/e07729.aspx

25.   Formerly published by Scott Foresman, now this curriculum is published by Savvas as *MyView*, https://www.savvas.com/index.cfm?locator=PS186j

26.   Published by Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, https://www.hmhco.com/programs/journeys#about

27.   Jan Richardson resources represent a variety of curriculum materials teachers reported using connected with this author. Published by Scholastic, https://shop.scholastic.com/teachers-ecommerce/teacher/shops/jan-richardson.html

28.   Published by McGraw-Hill, https://www.mheducation.com/prek-12/program/wonders-2020/MKTSP-BGA07M0.html?page=1&sortby=title&order=asc&bu=seg

29.   *MoDEL Detroit* is an adaptation of the *Expeditionary Learning* curriculum that is provided as an open education resource by Detroit Public Schools Community District (DPSCD). This curriculum is still *Expeditionary Learning* but has additional components like slide decks, videos, and other materials created through district partnerships and funding through the Skillman Foundation, aimed to cut down on teacher preparation time for lessons and increase support for teacher implementation of the curriculum.

30.   Detroit Public Schools Community District, https://www.detroitk12.org/modeldetroit

31.   Published by Open Up Resources, https://curriculum.eleducation.org/?_ga=2.207968016.303810564.1645191044-679391092.1645191044

32.   Published by LearnZillion, now Imagine Learning, https://learnzillion.com/wikis/75116-english-language-arts

33.   Published by the Core Knowledge Foundation, https://www.coreknowledge.org/curriculum/download-curriculum/

34.   Published by Amplify Education, Inc., https://amplify.com/programs/amplify-core-knowledge-language-arts/

ENDNOTES *(continued)*

35. *EngageNY* is an open education resource from the New York State Education Department that is a combination of two other rated curricula: *Core Knowledge Language Arts* for grades Kindergarten through Second Grade and *Expeditionary Learning* for students in 3rd-5th grade.

36. Published by the New York State Education Department, https://www.engageny.org/

37. EdReports. (2020). *Summary of alignment & usability for Fountas & Pinnell Classroom | ELA.* Durham, North Carolina: EdReports; Schwartz, S. (2019, December 3). The most popular reading programs aren't backed by science. *EducationWeek.* Retrieved June 14, 2022 from https://www.edweek.org/teaching-learning/the-most-popular-reading-programs-arent-backed-by-science/2019/12;Adams, M.J., Fillmore, L.W., Goldenberg, C., Oakhill, J., Paige, D.D., Rasinski, T., Shanahan, T., . (2020, January). *Comparing reading research to program design: An examination of Teachers College Units of Study*. Student Achievement Partners; Wright, T. S., & Neuman, S. B. (2013, March). Vocabulary instruction in commonly used kindergarten core reading curricula. *The Elementary School Journal*, *113*(3), 386-408.

38   Vaughn, M., Scales, R. Q., Stevens, E. Y., Kline, S., Barrett-Tatum, J., Van Wig, A., Yoder, K. K., & Wellman, D. (2019, November). Understanding literacy adoption policies across contexts: A multi-state examination of literacy curriculum decision-making. *Journal of Curriculum Studies*, *53*(3), 333–352. https://doi.org/10.1080/00220272.2019.1683233

39   Chiefs for Change. (2021, April). *Incentivizing smart choices: How state procurement policies can promote the use of high-quality instructional materials.* Chiefs for Change. Retrieved May 27, 2021, from https://chiefsforchange.org/wp-con10t/uploads/2021/04/Incentivizing-Smart-Choices-How-State-Procurement-Policies-Can-Promote-the-Use-of-High-Quality-Instructional-Materials.pdf.

40   Foorman, B.R., Kosanovich, M., & Smith, K. (2017, January). Rubric for evaluating reading/language arts instructional materials for kindergarten to grade 5 (REL 2017–2019). 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 http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/edlabs.

41   EdReports. (2022, May). *State of the instructional materials market 2021: The availability and use of aligned materials.* Durham, North Carolina: EdReports.

APPENDICES

As is visible in Appendices A-C, teachers reported using an extremely broad range of curriculum resources to teach ELA. These include options the research team listed on the survey as well as many write-in responses. We include all curriculum resources that at least 10 teachers wrote in, even if we were not able to verify it or locate a published resource with that name. Therefore, some of the resources listed in the appendices are lesson plans, assessments, or other types of materials. Curriculum resources are listed in order from those that the highest number of teachers reported using to the lowest, and the number of teachers who reported using each is listed.

Appendix A. List of Core ELA Curricula Teachers Reported Using

Core ELA Curriculum Resource	Number of Teachers Using
Fountas & Pinnell resources	2,992
MAISA Units of Study	1,873
Units of Study for Teaching Reading	1,617
Jan Richardson resources	1,062
Reading Street	1,041
Journeys	1,037
Wonders	873
MoDEL Detroit	389
Core Knowledge Language Arts	385
EngageNY	311
Benchmark Advance	164
Amplify ELA	158
Expeditionary Learning	155
Houghton Mifflin Harcourt resources	82
Literacy Footprints	65
Treasures	61
Learnzillion EL	38
Heggerty Phonemic Awareness Curriculum	32
The Literacy CAFE System	32

Core ELA Curriculum Resource	Number of Teachers Using
District-created curriculum resources	31
Teacher-created curriculum resources	27
SRA Open Court Reading	25
Unlocking the Reading Code	18
i-Ready	17
Pearson resources	17
myView	16
Phonics First Reading and Spelling	14
ARC Core	13
Developmental Reading Assessment	13
Reading A-Z	13
Wit & Wisdom	13
Orton Gillingham	12
ReadWorks	12
Ready Common Core Reading	12
Scholastic Storyworks	12
Lexia Core 5	11
Reading Workshop	10
Superkids Reading Program	10

Appendix B. List of Writing Curricula Teachers Reported Using

Writing Curriculum Resource	Number of Teachers Using
Units of Study for Writing	2,261
MAISA Units of Study for Writing	2,196
6+1 Traits	937
Writing from Basal Reader	749
MoDEL Detroit	220
Step Up to Writing	210
Being a Writer	62
Benchmark Advance	62
Write from the Beginning	50
WriteWell	39
Journeys	38
Reading Wonders	37
Teacher-created curriculum resources	36
WriteSteps	34
District-created curriculum resources	31
Teachers Pay Teachers	31
Collins Writing Program	28
Houghton Mifflin Harcourt resources	27
Handwriting Without Tears	15
Writing Workshop	10

Appendix C. List of Phonics/Spelling Curricula Teachers Reported Using

Phonics/Spelling Curriculum Resource	Number of Teachers Using
Words Their Way	1,946
Fountas & Pinnell Phonics	1,055
Orton Gillingham	863
Units of Study for Phonics	511
Zoo Phonics	495
Evidence Based Literacy Instruction (EBLI)	376
Heggerty Phonemic Awareness Curriculum	248
Reading Mastery	168
Brainspring Phonics First	74
Benchmark resources	71
Unlocking the Reading Code	69
Reading Wonders	47
Rebecca Sitton resources	40
Phonics for Reading	33
Journeys	31
Enhanced Core Reading Instruction (ECRI)	24
Reading Street	22
Logic of English	18
Open Court Reading	18
REWARDS Reading Intervention	18
The Phonics Dance!	18
Houghton Mifflin Harcourt resources	17
Project READ	17
Wilson's Fundations	16
District-created curriculum resources	14
Teacher-created	14
VocabularySpellingCity	14
95 Phonics Skill Series	13
Jolly Phonics	13
Teachers Pay Teachers	13
Horizons Kindergarten Phonics & Reading Set	11
Fast Phonics	10

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