



Press Release

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Michigan Receives \$16 Million Grant to Help Improve Student Reading Skills

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LANSING – The Michigan Department of Education (MDE) has received a \$16 million federal grant to help students improve their literacy skills, the department announced.

The Striving Readers Comprehensive Literacy grant from the U.S. Department of Education will provide \$16 million over the next five years to advance literacy skills, including pre-literacy skills, reading, and writing, for children from birth through grade 12, including limited English proficient students and students with disabilities.

"Literacy is the foundation of learning," said State Superintendent Dr. Michael Rice. "We've improved on the margins in our literacy results in the last few years. We need to continue to improve. It was Frederick Douglass, the long-time abolitionist and former slave, who once said, 'Once you learn to read, you will be forever free.' So it was in the 19th century when Douglass lived, so it continues to be in a different context today."

Dr. Rice said this federal grant is aligned with the state's goal to improve early literacy achievement, reconfirmed in the new [Top 10 Strategic Education Plan](#) by the State Board of Education in August.

MDE will use the grant to build upon an educational and professional development network between the state, and local and intermediate school districts to improve literacy for Michigan children. This partnership will provide a specific focus on high-needs school districts.

"I am enormously encouraged by this grant," Dr. Rice said. "We need to substantially improve how we do what we do in literacy for our children who have the least. This includes engaging children in literacy and engaging them in authors, topics, and books that capture their interests."

This grant will help create and implement local comprehensive literacy plans. The funds will be awarded through a competitive process to local school districts or other eligible entities.

Up to five local school districts will be selected for this project to improve literacy outcomes for students, including those who are economically disadvantaged, English language learners, and students with disabilities. In addition, the work of this grant-funded literacy partnership is expected to generate benefits for students in other districts across the state.

Information on the competitive application process, including an informational webinar, will be forthcoming.

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