



STATE OF MICHIGAN
STATE BUDGET OFFICE
LANSING

GRETCHEN WHITMER
GOVERNOR

JENNIFER L. FLOOD
DIRECTOR

January 17, 2024

Dr. Michael Rice, Superintendent
Michigan Department of Education
608 W. Allegan Street
P.O. Box 30008
Lansing, Michigan 48909

Dear Dr. Rice:

As you know, reading and writing are among the most critical skills children need to learn. Literacy is the key to unlock a world of opportunities, imagination, and lifelong learning from reading a favorite book to applying for a good job to understanding how to stay healthy. Investing in our educators by funding literacy instructional best practices, including the science of reading, can have a profound impact on student literacy outcomes. For this reason, I am writing today to reinforce the urgent need to swiftly expend the \$140 million in literacy professional development dollars under section 35j of the FY24 education budget to local school districts.

Your letter to the legislature dated January 10, 2024, stated, "...the professional development of teachers of reading and teacher candidates in the science of reading, will help improve literacy in Michigan and by extension other educational outcomes as well." However, those very dollars that were signed into law are sitting idly in the Michigan Department of Education (MDE) instead of in the hands of those who can use them impactfully. That is unacceptable.

The governor signed the FY24 education budget in July 2023, with the hope of disbursing these funds to school districts and intermediate school districts much earlier in the 2023-24 school year. Six months later, the time has passed for the MDE to be in the planning stages of administering this grant; now is the time to act. Therefore, I urge you to expedite the \$140 million in literacy funding. As you know, my team stands ready and available to help the department get these dollars out the door in the most efficient manner possible. The future of our kids depends on your action today.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jennifer L. Flood".

Jennifer L. Flood
State Budget Director

Dr. Michael Rice, Superintendent
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cc: Senator Sarah Anthony, Senate Appropriations Chair
Representative Angela Witwer, House Appropriations Chair
House School Aid and Education Subcommittee
Senate Michigan Department of Education Subcommittee
Senate Pre K-12 Subcommittee
House Education Committee
Senate Education Committee
State Board of Education