

Libraries and Literacy: Making the Case for State Funding

SI 699: MSI LAKES Mastery Course - Authors: Ellie Franklin, Sofia Frumkin, Madeline Brookman

Background

Libraries are often thought of as **vital organizations** in our communities, but they **rarely receive appropriate funding** to make this happen. Despite the work of the Midwest Collaborative for Library Services (MCLS) and the EveryLibrary Institute, there remain **gaps in lobbying** that call for an **increase in state library funding** in Michigan.

Problem Statement

This project focuses on drawing a **connection between funding libraries**—including their materials, digital resources, and programs—and **improvements in literacy rates** and overall reading comprehension of the **communities they serve**. We aim to answer the question:

“Where do libraries complete Michigan’s existing literacy policy agenda?”

Goals

- ★ Gather information about literacy rates in Michigan.
- ★ Research the impact libraries (public, school, and academic) have on literacy and other forms of success, including reading, school outcomes, digital literacy, health, and lifelong success.
- ★ Summarize research into an annotated bibliography and narrate overarching findings in a white paper.

Research Process

Create a Michigan literacy profile
Covers literacy needs, gaps, and opportunities of Michigan residents using Michigan-specific data and national research.

Identify literacy domains

- Foundational & Reading Literacy
- Digital & Information Literacy
- Workforce & Economic Literacy
- Health & Civic Literacy

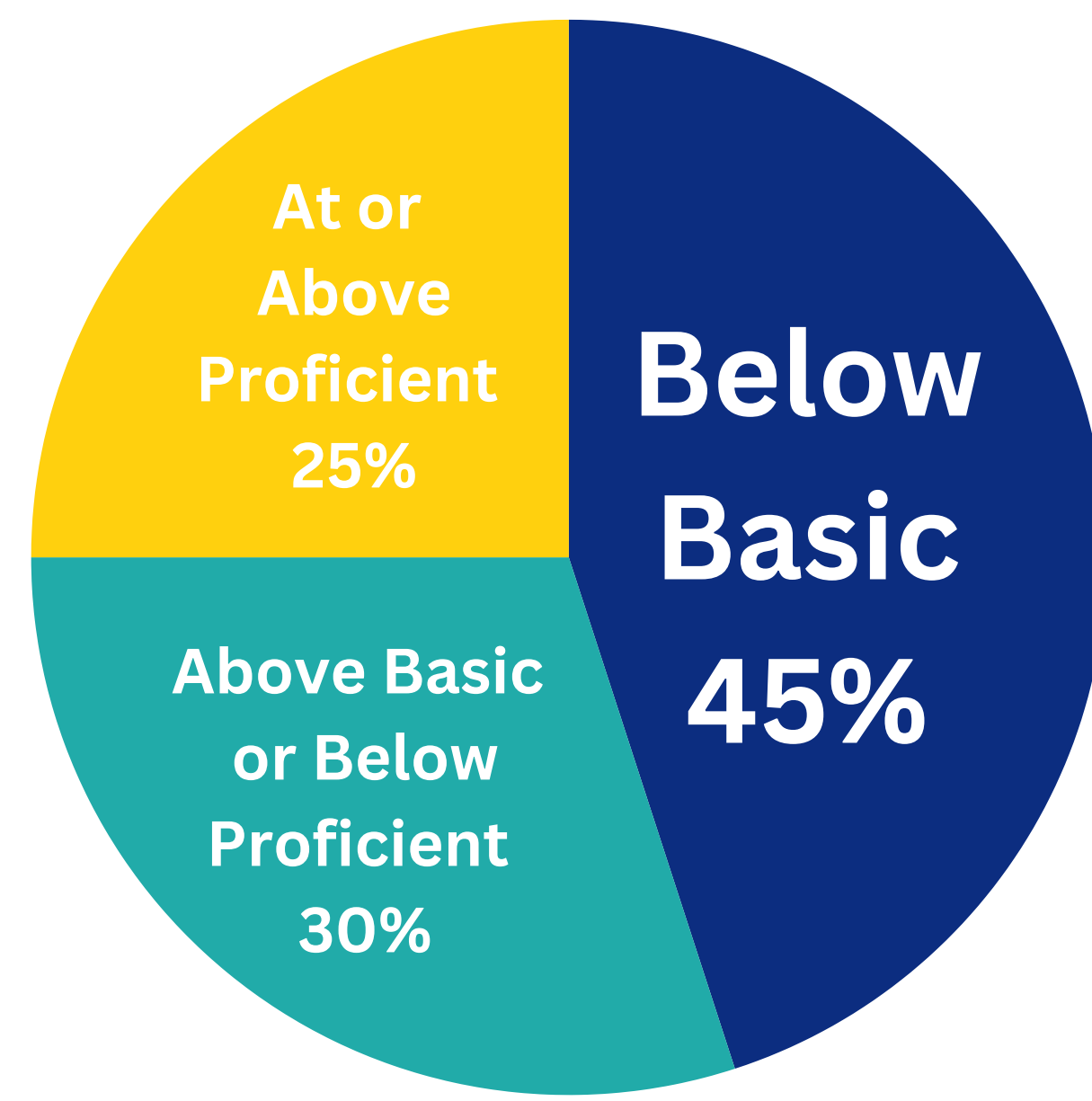


Name library contributions

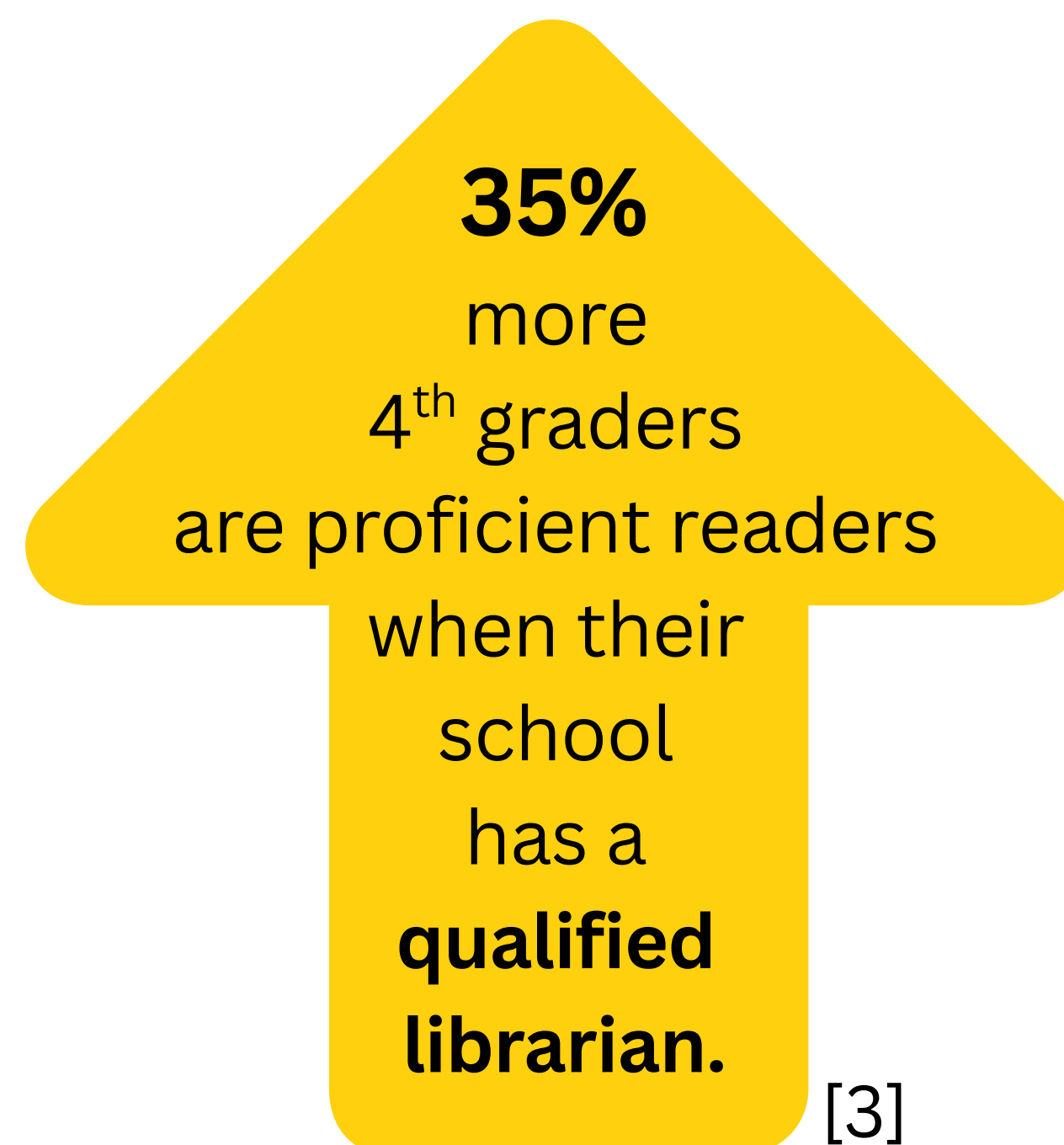
Identify the positive impacts of library programs such as summer reading, literacy programs, digital skills support, information literacy, and more.



Findings



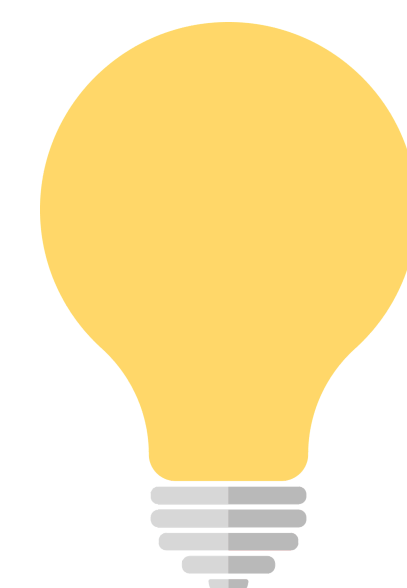
Fourth grade reading achievement levels in Michigan [1]



Children aged from birth to 5 who engaged in public library early-literacy programs significantly increased their childhood literacy behaviors. [4]



60% of public library nonusers feel that they're **able to get more knowledge at the library** than on their own. [5]



Reading and English scores **increased** when school libraries had **higher staff numbers**, were **open for more hours**, had **newer books**, and spent **more money on materials**. [6]

A 2006 study found that **diabetic patients who had higher levels of literacy had better glycemic control**. People with lower literacy rates are also less likely to take preventative health measures. [7]



Outcomes

Annotated Bibliography



White Paper



Community Impact

- 1 Our white paper demonstrates a connection between supporting libraries and improvements in literacy. This can be used to meet specific and relevant political goals in Michigan.

Governor Whitmer announced that the number one priority for the 2026-2027 proposed budget is literacy.

- 2 We assisted EveryLibrary with future endeavors to support Michigan libraries, using our sources and their existing framework of supporting library initiatives across the country.

Ex: Great Falls Public Library in Montana increased library services funding by 80% after their support

- 3 Our research supported our clients with initial data gathering and literature review, and allows them to easily incorporate future staff and project members on library and literacy initiatives in Michigan specifically.

The Midwest Collaborative for Library Services works with over 600 libraries in Michigan and Indiana

Acknowledgements: Scott Garrison from MCLS, John Chrastka from EveryLibrary, our amazing Professor Anthea Josias and GSI Yvette Ramirez, and Karen Downing, School of Education Librarian

Sources:

