Struggling young readers in Michigan will get more instructional help to reach levels of proficiency under a new law that also could keep some of them from entering fourth grade. Signed this fall by Gov. Rick Snyder, HB 4822 requires students to perform well enough on a standardized reading test in order to be promoted to fourth grade. However, the law does provide for some “good cause exemptions,” including if parents and school officials agree it is in the child’s best interests not to be held back.

The Michigan Department of Education will develop a way to screen and assess students in kindergarten through third grade. School districts must then develop individual reading improvement plans for every student who is falling behind. As part of those plans, local schools must bring in an early-literacy coach to provide training to teachers and instruction to students. (Michigan’s intermediate school districts will provide the coaches.)

Iowa, Ohio and Wisconsin are among the other Midwestern states where new reading laws have been passed in recent years. In Iowa, for example, struggling third-grade readers will have to take summer school in order to move on to fourth grade. (That state, too, offers some “good cause” exemptions.)

By:
Thursday, December 1, 2016 at 04:23 PM

Attachment

Stateline Midwest: November 2016 3.45 MB

Tags:
Michigan, Reading, Standardized Testing

Policy Area: Education, K-12 Education, Achievement Gaps

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