



**HB 4822 (Price) – K-3 Reading & Early Literacy
GLEP Testimony – House Education Committee – September 10, 2015**

- Good Morning, Chairman Price and members of the House Education Committee. Let me start by thanking the Chair for her leadership on this issue, both last session and in the current session.
- From Kindergarten through 3rd grade, students are learning to read, and beginning in 4th grade students begin reading to learn.
- Over 90% of proficient 3rd grade readers are likely to graduate high school, while only 30% of those not proficient are likely to graduate.
- Improving early literacy is one of the most important issues in K-12 education, and more than 35 states have developed comprehensive K-3 reading programs. Michigan Superintendent Brian Whiston said in his first podcast – just yesterday – how important 3rd grade reading is for the state.
- Despite a \$4 billion annual investment in K-3 education, nearly one-third of Michigan's 3rd grade students are not proficient readers. Worse, reading proficiency here has been steadily declining for the past 12 years while reading proficiency in nearly every other state has been on the rise.
- A workgroup of key legislative and administration stakeholders, chaired by John Kennedy, met for months this year to review options, examine strategies and make specific recommendations to improve early literacy. HB 4822 is a result of this bi-cameral, bi-partisan and dual-branch workgroup.
- This bill will improve early literacy by focusing on early annual screening; parental notification and participation; targeted strategies and tutoring for struggling readers; and intensive intervention for those students reading dramatically behind grade level.
- These bills include the ability for students to re-take the state assessment and participate in summer reading camps, along with "good cause" exemptions which include passing an alternative assessment; demonstrating proficiency through a student portfolio of work; students with an IEP or disability; and English Language Learners.
- This approach led to a 50% reduction in 3rd grade illiteracy within 5 years when adopted elsewhere. We can have that same success in Michigan!!
- The FY '16 School Aid Budget includes an increase of \$100 million for "at-risk" students and targeted support and interventions to improve early literacy. Passage of this bill is critical to having these funds invested properly.
- We strongly support HB 4822 because it will improve academic outcomes for students and we urge this committee and the full House of Representatives to pass this bill at your earliest opportunity. I'd be happy to take any questions at this time.

Supporting quality choices in public education.