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## Advocating a Comprehensive Reading Program at the Secondary Level

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# Advocating a Comprehensive Reading Program at the Secondary Level

For too long of a period secondary reading has been the stepchild in the educational process, because when one speaks of reading, he/she is generally referring to elementary instruction. To support this accusation all one has to do is make a cursory examination of Michigan's past record in this area. For example, most reading programs that are funded by the state are K-8; very few are K-12 in scope. In fact, it was only two years ago that the state decided to mandate tenth grade assessment. How many high schools in the state do you know that assess reading performance for all secondary students on a regular basis? (This excludes the use of MEAP.)

Not only has the state been remiss in this area, but as research has shown, most local districts that have secondary reading programs operate them as isolated components in the curriculum. Given the ominous predictions for secondary schools over the next decade, it becomes extremely important that reading educators, principals, central office administrators, superintendents, parents, and all other interested individuals begin moving in a direction that will bring secondary reading out of the dark ages. Students in Michigan cannot afford to continue with the present pedagogical practices that are tantamount to benign neglect; these practices have been unsuccessful. For this reason, the Michigan Reading Association established, as one of its goals, the formulation of a position paper that would describe the various components of a model secondary reading program. The following paper outlines those views.

While instituting a comprehensive reading program at the secondary level may sound like an impossible task, given both declining enrollment and dwindling funds, middle, junior, and senior high school educators must begin taking bold steps. This position paper is designed to assist those individuals in the evaluation and implementation of a secondary program that will meet the reading needs of all secondary students.

We hope this paper will be widely disseminated and that it will become the rationale for expanding existing programs or implementing new ones. Additionally, we hope that it will be useful to those educators and parents who are interested in eliminating the traditional problems that confront many middle, junior, and senior high schools in Michigan.

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