

2026-27 School Year Portfolio of Professional Learning Opportunities



MAASE



lead. learn. grow. connect.

MAASE Colleagues,

Welcome to the 2026–27 MAASE Professional Learning Portfolio! We are pleased to share another year of high-quality learning opportunities designed to support special education leaders, educators, and partners across Michigan.

Over the past several years, MAASE has intentionally expanded beyond individual workshops and conferences to build a comprehensive professional learning system that supports leaders throughout every stage of their careers.



This portfolio reflects that evolution by organizing learning opportunities into four pathways: **Lead, Learn, Grow**, and **Connect**. Whether you are developing your leadership capacity, strengthening your technical expertise, building new skills, or connecting with colleagues across the state, MAASE offers meaningful learning designed to meet your needs.

This year, we continue to strengthen our established programs while introducing new opportunities that provide timely, relevant learning throughout the year. The new *Leadership Learning Lab* offers practical leadership strategies and collaborative problem-solving for special education leaders. Two new webinar series, the *Special Education Spotlight* and *Empowering Special Education Leaders with A.I.*, provide concise updates on emerging issues, innovative practices, and topics of immediate importance to the field. Together with our expanding portfolio of academies, a new Instructional Learning Network, conferences, and on-demand resources, these additions create even more ways for members to engage in professional growth.

We encourage you to explore this year's portfolio and create a learning pathway that aligns with your professional goals and the needs of your organization. Thank you for your continued partnership and commitment to improving outcomes for students with disabilities. We look forward to learning alongside you throughout the coming year as MAASE Leads and MAASE Learns.

Ben Hicks
Associate Executive Director of Training and Development

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Lead

Strong leadership creates lasting impact. MAASE professional learning empowers special education leaders to lead with confidence, inspire their teams, and drive meaningful change that improves outcomes for students, staff, and school communities.



Empowering Special Education Leaders with AI: Webinar Series

Date: Sep 28, Oct 26, Nov 30, Jan 25, Feb 22, Mar 29, Apr 26, May 31

Description: An 8-part virtual webinar series designed specifically for Michigan Association of Administrators of Special Education (MAASE). Leveraging the "snackable and stackable" modules from the Google AI Educator Series, these 1-hour sessions will equip special education administrators with the essential skills to safely and effectively integrate generative AI (such as Gemini and NotebookLM) into their daily workflows. Participants will move beyond basic foundational AI literacy to master advanced instructional design and administrative efficiency. Through live modeling and hands-on "sandbox" practice, administrators will learn to handle the "heavy lifting" of time-consuming tasks, such as synthesizing data and differentiating materials, giving them more time to focus on human connection and expert decision-making.



Leadership Coaching Preparation

Dates: October 29, 2026

Description: This training day will explore the core competencies, mindsets, and structures of effective leadership coaching. Participants will deepen their understanding of the distinctions between mentoring and coaching, engage in structured coaching conversations, and practice using tools such as coaching maps, strategic questioning, and reflective listening. By the end of the training, participants will be equipped with practical strategies to build leadership capacity, foster reflective practice, and support the growth of colleagues through purposeful coaching conversations.



Developing Inclusive Leaders

Date: Ongoing & Self-Paced

Description: This program builds leadership capacity in special education, equipping building-level administrators (principals, assistant principals, and deans) to create inclusive, equitable, and culturally responsive environments for all students. Developed on behalf of MAASE in partnership with MASSP, MEMSPA, and Western Michigan University, this professional learning opportunity is structured to match your needs and bandwidth through three customizable pathways:

- **Foundations:** A fully self-paced, on-demand option featuring online modules and downloads to strengthen your leadership foundation.
- **Advancing:** A comprehensive hybrid experience combining 10 self-paced online modules with 6 immersive in-person training sessions led by expert facilitators.
- **Transformational:** A deeper two-year pathway that integrates asynchronous units, in-person networking sessions, monthly one-on-one executive coaching through MEMSPA or MASSP, Western Michigan University graduate credits, and eligibility for an MDE Specialty-Inclusive Leadership certification enhancement.





Leadership Learning Lab

Date: Oct 21, Nov 18, Dec 16, Jan 20, Feb 17, Mar 24

Description: The MAASE Leadership Learning Lab is a 90 minute professional development offering designed to help special education administrators transition from traditional problem-solving to empowering their teams. Centered on the book *Unleashed: The Unapologetic Leader's Guide to Empowering Everyone Around You*, the curriculum spans six monthly sessions focused on essential themes like trust, belonging, strategy, and culture. Participants engage in leadership experiments and reflective journaling to actively apply new strategies within their organizations. The program concludes with a Leadership Impact Project, where attendees showcase sustainable systems they have implemented to foster distributed leadership. By replacing direct advice with inquiry-based conversations, the lab aims to reduce staff dependency and build healthier organizational cultures.



New Administrator Academy

Dates: Oct 14, Nov 11, Dec 9, Jan 13, Feb 10, Mar 10, Apr 14, May 12, Jun 9

Description: The MAASE New Administrator Academy is a year-long leadership development and mentoring program designed to support Michigan special education administrators during their first three years in the role.

Through structured learning, personalized mentorship, and collaboration with experienced practitioners, participants build the knowledge, confidence, and leadership skills needed to successfully navigate the complexities of special education administration.

Participants engage in practical learning aligned to the MDE Standards of Practice for Special Education Administrators, apply new learning to authentic leadership challenges, and learn from practicing administrators, content experts, and state and federal partners.



Learn

MAASE professional learning equips special education leaders with practical strategies, current research, and innovative solutions they can apply immediately. Every learning opportunity is designed to strengthen knowledge, build confidence, and support informed decision-making that improves outcomes for students.



Special Education Leadership & Accountability Summit

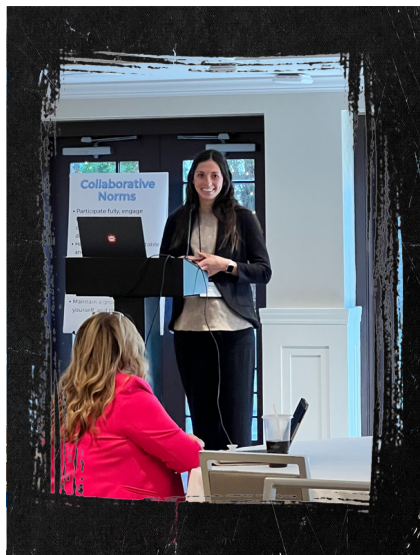
(formerly known as the TA/Monitors Conference)

L.E.A.D.ing for Results (*Leadership, Equity, Accountability, & Data*)

Date: December 7, 2026

Description: The Special Education Leadership & Accountability Summit brings together professionals who provide technical assistance and support continuous improvement in special education systems. Grounded in the principles of Leadership, Equity, Accountability, and Data, this event is designed for leaders at the district, ISD, and state levels who are committed to strengthening implementation and improving outcomes for students with disabilities.

Through engaging keynote presentations, interactive breakout sessions, and collaborative learning opportunities, participants will explore current priorities, emerging practices, and practical strategies that can be applied immediately within their organizations. Whether you're leading system improvement efforts, supporting compliance, or building local capacity, you'll leave with new insights, valuable connections, and actionable tools to advance high-quality special education services.





SLIP Conference

SLIP (Supervisors of **L**ow **I**ncidence **P**rograms) **C**onference

Dates: January 11-12, 2027

Description: Hosted by the Supervisors of Low Incidence Programs (SLIP) Community of Practice, the SLIP Winter Conference provides a dedicated learning experience for professionals who lead and support low incidence programs and center-based services. Designed for supervisors, administrators, and educational leaders, the conference offers practical strategies, current information, and opportunities to collaborate with colleagues from across Michigan. While the content is tailored to these specialized roles, all professionals with an interest in low incidence programming are welcome.

Participants will engage in timely learning sessions led by experienced practitioners and statewide experts, explore promising practices and emerging issues, and collaborate with peers to address common challenges. The conference emphasizes meaningful networking, shared problem-solving, and actionable learning that participants can immediately apply within their programs and districts.



advocacy. learning. leadership.



Special Education Spotlight: Webinar Series

Dates: Sep 17, Oct 1, Nov 5, Dec 3, Jan 7, Feb 4, Mar 4, Apr 8, May 6

Description: The Special Education Spotlight Series is a 60 minute monthly webinar series designed to keep educators and leaders informed about timely issues, emerging practices, and essential resources across the field of special education. Each session brings together experienced practitioners, statewide partners, and content experts to offer focused learning on topics such as instructional leadership, inclusive systems, finance, transition services, contracting, and artificial intelligence.

Designed to be practical and accessible, the series provides strategies, tools, and connections that participants can apply within their own roles and organizations. Whether strengthening collaboration, navigating complex requirements, or exploring new approaches to leadership and decision-making, Special Education Spotlight helps professionals stay informed, responsive, and prepared to meet the evolving needs of students with disabilities.



Tuesday Professional Learning

Unraveling PA 146: Special Education Implications

Date: October 13, 2026

Presenters: MAASE Members, OSE and GELN representatives

Description: Michigan's PA 146 literacy and dyslexia legislation is creating significant changes for schools across the state, with important implications for special education systems, instructional practices, and student supports. Building on learning from the spring of 2026, this session will solidify the foundational understanding of the legislation and expand to consider the implications for students with disabilities. Participants will explore how the law intersects with IDEA, MTSS, literacy intervention systems, evaluation practices, and supports for students with disabilities as districts prepare for statewide implementation.



Tuesday Professional Learning Continued...

LRE and General Supervision- Prioritizing placement

Date: December 8, 2026

Presenters: MAASE Members from ISDs, LEAs, PSAs, & OSE representatives

Description: This learning experience will explore Least Restrictive Environment (LRE) through the lens of Michigan's General Supervision System and the state's current priority areas for improving outcomes for students with disabilities. During the morning general session, participants will examine the requirements and purpose of the General Supervision System, review this year's identified priorities, and discuss how districts can strengthen inclusive practices, compliance, and student outcomes through aligned systems and intentional leadership.

In the afternoon, participants will engage in breakout sessions organized around the four priority areas identified by MDE: Instructional Access and Inclusive Practices; LRE Decision-Making and IEP Team Integrity; Prevention, Discipline, and Tiered Supports; and Graduation. Attendees will leave with a stronger understanding of Michigan's expectations within the General Supervision System and practical ideas for strengthening inclusive systems and supports within their local districts.

Hot Topics in Special Education Law

Date: February 9, 2027

Presenters: Prominent special education attorneys

Description: This session will provide participants with timely updates and practical guidance on emerging "hot topics" in special education law and policy impacting schools across Michigan and beyond. Participants will explore recent legal decisions, regulatory updates, compliance trends, and evolving expectations related to IDEA, Section 504, discipline, evaluations, FAPE, manifestation determinations, parent engagement, and dispute resolution. The session will also examine how current state and federal developments may influence district policies, procedures, and day-to-day decision-making for special education leaders and teams.



Tuesday Professional Learning Continued...

Inclusive by Design: A Practical Guide to SDI, LRE, and Meaningful Access

Date: April 13, 2027

Presenters: Publication authors, MAASE members

Description: This session will provide participants with an early rollout of key concepts and practical guidance from MAASE's forthcoming publication, *Inclusive by Design: A Practical Guide to SDI, LRE, and Meaningful Access*. Grounded in IDEA requirements, Michigan Department of Education guidance, and current best practices, the publication focuses on strengthening understanding and implementation of specially designed instruction (SDI), Least Restrictive Environment (LRE), inclusive practices, and meaningful access for students with disabilities. Participants will explore core themes from the publication, including determining SDI within the IEP, aligning instruction to grade-level standards, strengthening inclusive systems, clarifying roles and responsibilities, and ensuring instructional practices lead to improved student outcomes.

Supporting Uncertified Staff - Laws, Rules, Regulations, and Best Practice

Date: June 15, 2027

Description: Join us for a virtual professional learning session focused on effectively supporting uncertified staff in special education settings. Participants will explore key requirements under IDEA, MARSE, and Michigan special education rules, while gaining a clearer understanding of roles, responsibilities, and compliance expectations. The session will also highlight practical strategies and best practices for supervision, training, and collaboration to ensure uncertified staff are supported in delivering high-quality services to students.



Grow

Leadership is a journey, and MAASE is committed to supporting growth at every stage. Our professional learning experiences challenge leaders to expand their skills, embrace new perspectives, and continue developing the expertise needed to lead with purpose and impact.



Paraeducator Trainer Conferences

Date: July 20, 2027

Description: Join us for an exciting opportunity to become a MAASE Paraeducator Trainer or expand your trainer credentials. This professional learning event is designed for current and aspiring paraeducator trainers, administrators, ancillary staff, and educational leaders committed to building and sustaining high-quality paraeducator workforce development programs.

Participants will receive early access to new curriculum, implementation resources, and trainer supports across six MAASE professional learning programs:

Bootcamp Level 1
Bootcamp Level 2
Early Childhood
Transportation
Transition
General Education Teacher Program (NEW!)

Conference highlights include the launch of the new General Education Teacher Program, updated Level 2 learning modules, new enhancement packs, onboarding sessions for first-time trainers, update sessions for returning trainers, implementation best practices, and opportunities to collaborate with MAASE partners and colleagues from across Michigan. All content is aligned with the Council for Exceptional Children's (CEC) Core Competencies and High-Leverage Practices, ensuring trainers are equipped to deliver meaningful, evidence-based professional learning in their local districts and ISDs.





MAASE Instructional Network

Dates: Sep 17, Oct 15, Nov 19, Dec 17, Jan 21, Feb 18, Mar 18, Apr 15, May 20, Jun 17

Description: The MAASE Instructional Network is a statewide professional learning community designed for special education teachers, consultants, coaches, coordinators, and administrators who are committed to strengthening instructional practice and improving outcomes for students with disabilities.

Through engaging monthly virtual sessions, participants connect with colleagues and statewide experts to explore evidence-based instructional practices, Specially Designed Instruction (SDI), High-Leverage Practices (HLPs), Essential Instructional Practices, dyslexia supports, and other emerging topics shaping special education. Together, we'll connect statewide initiatives, share strategies, and build the knowledge and confidence needed to improve instruction for every learner.

Designed with busy educators in mind, each 90 minute session will provide practical strategies, valuable resources, and meaningful connections that support your work.





Adaptive Schools Foundation Seminar

Dates: September 28-29, 2026 and March 15-16, 2027

Presenter: Ben Hicks

Description: The Adaptive Schools Foundation Seminar presents a productive, practical set of ideas and tools to develop collaborative groups to become effective and better equipped to resolve complex student learning issues. The work of the Adaptive Schools Seminars is to develop the resources and capacities of the organization and of individuals to cohesively respond to the changing needs of students and society. In this four-day Adaptive Schools Training, participants will develop:

- An increased capacity to initiate, develop and sustain high-functioning groups
- New lenses for diagnosing the stages and phases of group development
- An expanded repertoire of practical facilitation tools
- An understanding of when and how to engage groups in dialogue and discussion, the limitations, forms and values of each
- Skills to move groups beyond consensus to common focus
- Ways to value and use dissension, argument and conflict
- Strategies for keeping group members on track, on topic, energized and resourceful





The Focused Leader Retreat

Designing a Life You Love Retreat

Date: November 20, 2026

Presenters: Abby Cypher & Cheryl-Marie Manson

Description: Step away from the daily grind and join us for a transformative one-day retreat inspired by the LifeFocus philosophy. Set in a comfortable loft environment, this immersive experience is designed to help you gain clarity, re-center your priorities, and create a personalized roadmap for your future.

What to Expect

- **Life Focus Sessions:** Engage in guided, interactive, hands on activities that help you delve into your core values, articulate your purpose, and design a clear, actionable life plan. Drawing inspiration from the proven LifeFocus system, you'll gain the clarity and momentum to steer your future with confidence.
- **Inspiring Loft Setting:** This unique meeting space offers the perfect environment to disconnect from the noise of everyday life. The peaceful ambiance encourages self-reflection, deep connection, and renewed inspiration.

Why Attend?

- **Clarity & Direction:** Transform confusion into a clear vision for your future. The day's sessions are designed to help you pinpoint what truly matters and to outline actionable steps for a fulfilling life - setting goals for years to come.
- **Mind-Body Renewal:** With balanced activities that nurture both your inner self and your outer well-being, you'll leave the retreat feeling energized and empowered.
- **Community Connection:** Connect with like-minded individuals who are also committed to intentional living. Share insights, experiences, and the journey toward a more purposeful life.

Join us for a day of deep personal discovery and intentional planning. Rediscover your purpose, refine your life focus, and set the stage for a future that excites you. Design your future - one intentional step at a time.



RBT Training Program

Registered Behavior Technician (RBT) & Behavior Technician (BT) Training Program

Dates: Rolling Enrollment

Description: The MAASE Registered Behavior Technician (RBT) & Behavior Technician (BT) Training Program provides Michigan schools with a standardized, sustainable pathway for developing highly qualified staff to support students with behavioral needs. Designed for paraeducators, behavior support staff, and school personnel, participants may choose to complete the program as professional learning to support their daily work or continue toward Registered Behavior Technician (RBT) certification while meeting BACB requirements.

The comprehensive 40 hour learning pathway combines self-paced online learning, practical application, and BCBA-supported supervision to build knowledge and skills in evidence-based behavior support practices.

Program Highlights

- 40 hour structured training framework aligned to school implementation
- Pathways for both Behavior Technician (BT) credentialing and Registered Behavior Technician (RBT) certification
- BCBA-supported coaching and supervision framework
- Participant handbook, implementation guides, and district resources
- Progress monitoring and credential tracking tools
- Designed specifically for Michigan schools and aligned with BACB requirements

The MAASE RBT & BT Training Program helps districts strengthen their behavioral workforce, improve student outcomes, and build sustainable systems of support that increase staff confidence, credential attainment, and long-term workforce retention.



Connect

The strongest leaders never lead alone. MAASE events create meaningful opportunities to build relationships with colleagues, exchange ideas, and learn from a statewide network of special education professionals who understand the unique challenges and opportunities of the work.



Developing Leaders & General Membership Meetings

Dates: October 15, December 9, February 10, April 14, June 15

Description: The Developing Leaders experience is one of MAASE's most valued member benefits, providing a collaborative space for special education leaders to connect, problem-solve, and learn from one another. Designed around the real challenges members are facing, this interactive "Ed Camp" format allows participants to identify and explore the most pressing topics of practice through facilitated, small group, peer discussions. Participants choose the conversations most relevant to their work, exchange ideas and resources with colleagues from across the state, and leave with practical strategies they can implement immediately.

Following Developing Leaders, the General Membership Meeting keeps members informed and engaged with the work of the Association. Hear timely updates from the Michigan Department of Education Office of Special Education, MAASE leadership, and our Government Relations team while learning about current initiatives and opportunities to help shape the future of the organization. Continue the conversation over lunch by networking with colleagues or participating in one of MAASE's Communities of Practice or Committees.

For the most comprehensive experience, register for the All Access Ticket, which includes Tuesday Professional Learning, Developing Leaders, and the General Membership Meeting—two days of learning, collaboration, and leadership development designed specifically for Michigan special education leaders.



Michigan Special Education Legislative Summit

Dates: March 16-17, 2027

Description: Hosted by the MAASE Advocacy Committee, the Michigan Special Education Legislative Summit (MiSELS) equips special education leaders with the knowledge, confidence, and skills to effectively advocate for students with disabilities and the professionals who support them. Designed for both new and experienced advocates, this two-day experience provides participants with a deeper understanding of MAASE's legislative priorities, Michigan's policy landscape, and the legislative process.

Participants will learn directly from policy experts and legislative leaders, engage in discussions on current issues impacting special education, and prepare for meaningful conversations with state lawmakers. Through guided practice, networking opportunities, and team-based visits to legislative offices, attendees gain hands-on advocacy experience in a supportive environment. Whether you're attending for the first time or returning to strengthen your advocacy skills, MiSELS empowers you to build lasting relationships with policymakers and become a more effective voice for Michigan's students with disabilities.



The annual conference where learning, leading, growing, and connection is at it's best, together!

August 8-11, 2027

Each August, more than 800 special education leaders from across Michigan gather for MAASE Summer Institute, the Association's premier professional learning event. Grounded in MAASE's mission to advance leadership, collaboration, and advocacy, Summer Institute provides an opportunity to learn from leading experts, connect with colleagues, and prepare for the year ahead.

The 2027 Summer Institute will feature keynote speaker Lasada Phippen, along with timely updates from the Michigan Department of Education Office of Special Education, presentations from legal and national experts, and a wide variety of breakout sessions focused on today's most pressing topics in special education leadership. Participants will also enjoy meaningful networking opportunities, celebrations of excellence through MAASE's annual awards, and dedicated time to build professional relationships with colleagues from across the state.

Whether you are a new or experienced leader, you'll leave Summer Institute with fresh ideas, practical strategies, valuable connections, and renewed energy to lead your team and improve outcomes for students with disabilities.



Designed exclusively for MAASE members, the MAASE Community is an online forum that brings together special education leaders from across Michigan to share ideas, ask questions, exchange resources, and support one another.

Within the MAASE online platform, members can join Community of Practice (CoPs) discussion groups centered around shared roles, interests, or areas of expertise. These groups create opportunities for ongoing collaboration, allowing members to learn from one another, exchange best practices, solve challenges together, and build professional networks that extend well beyond MAASE events.

Whether you actively participate in discussions or simply access the wealth of shared knowledge, CoPs make it easy to stay connected, informed, and supported throughout the year.

Accessing the MAASE Community and CoPs is easy and quick. Simply go to “The MAASE Community” after logging in at maase.org. After logging in, you will see a list of CoPs, go ahead and click to join a few!

Current Communities of Practice

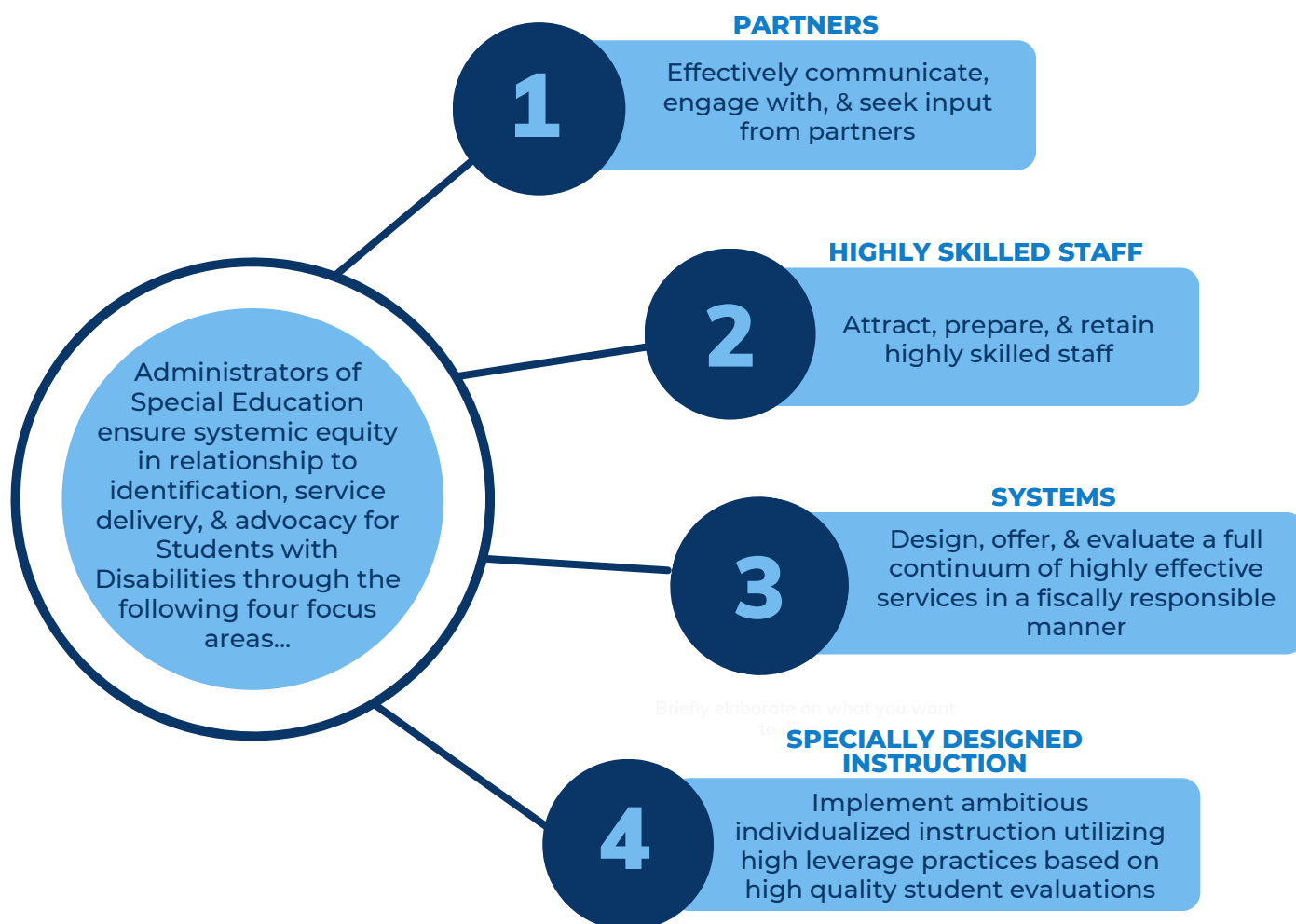
- Administrators of Deaf and Hard of Hearing
- Developing Implementers of General Supervision
- Early Childhood Program Administrators
- Educator Wellness
- ISD Collaborative
- Local District Administrators
- Mentor/Coach
- Retired Professionals
- Secondary Transition Administrators
- SEI/Adjudicated Youth Program Administrators
- Supervisors of Low Incidence Programs (SLIP)





Guiding Principles for Special Education Administrators

To ensure alignment among our various offerings, MAASE has identified the foundational body of knowledge necessary for Administrators of Special Education. The competencies below are what separate Administrators of Special Education from their General Education counterparts, essentially what is “special” about an Administrator of Special Education.



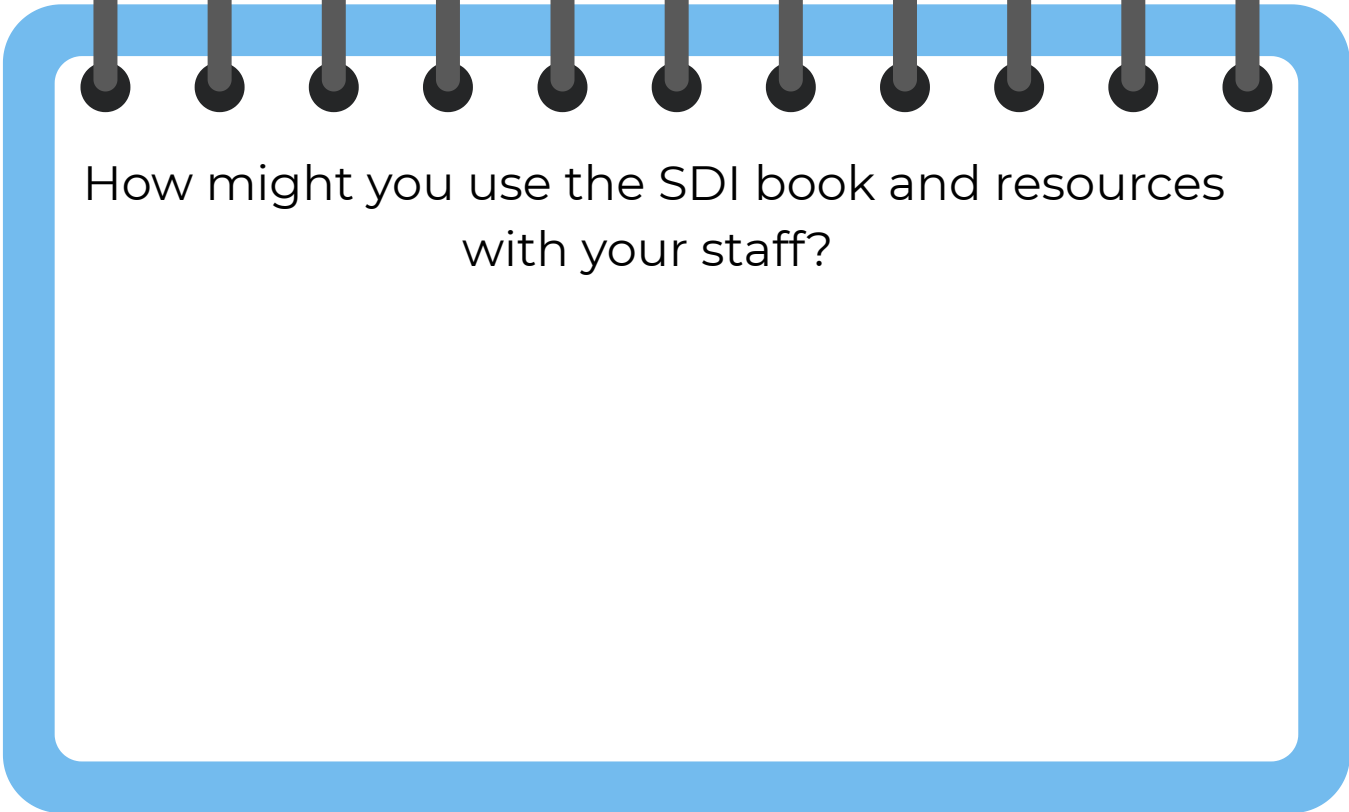
To learn more about the MAASE Guiding Principles and to access a self assessment tool, visit our website at <https://www.maase.org/about> or scan this code today!



SUMMER INSTITUTE NOTE TAKER

A graphic of a spiral-bound notebook with a light blue cover and a white page. The spiral binding is on the left side, represented by a series of black circles. The page is framed by a thick blue border.

What are you celebrating or looking forward to
this year?

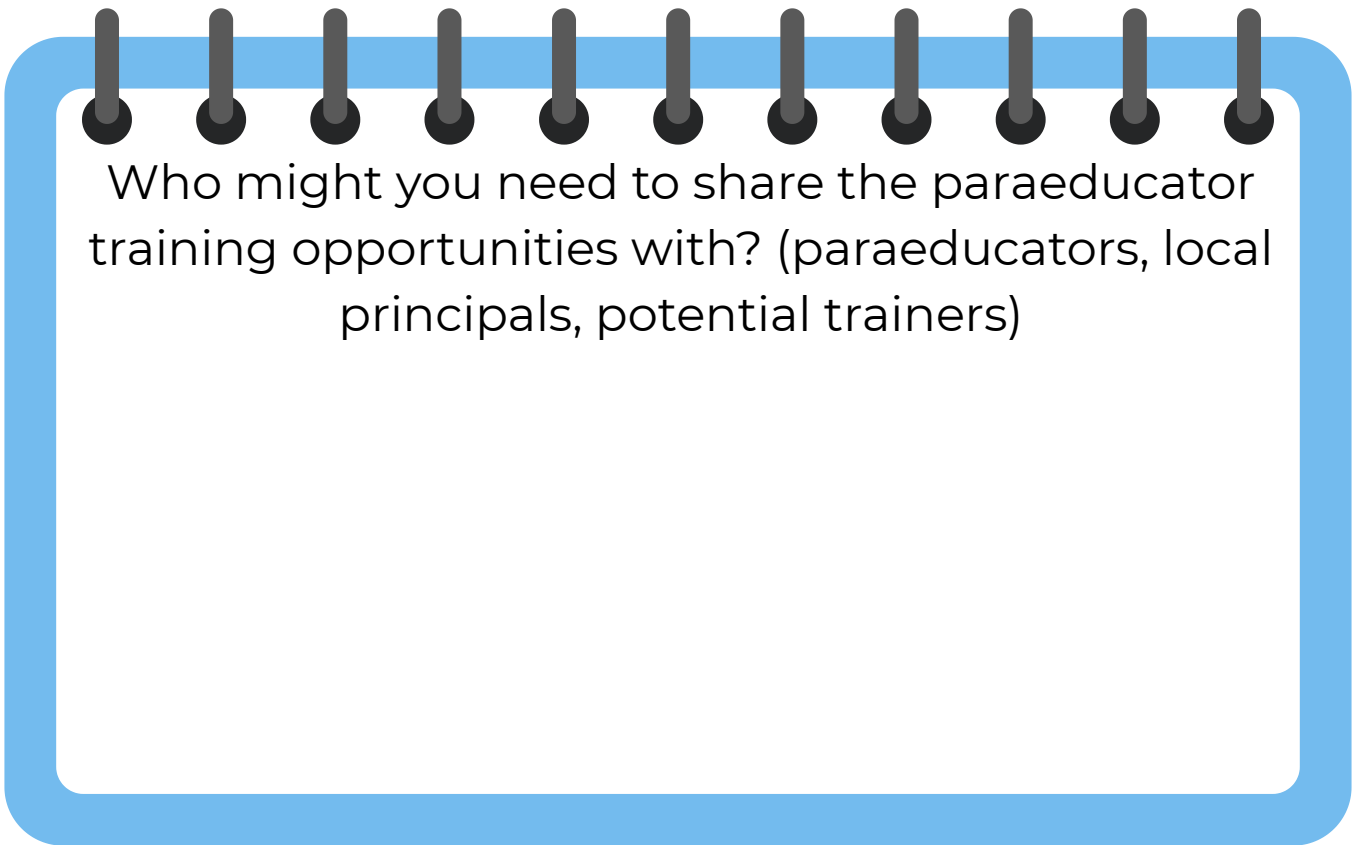
A graphic of a spiral-bound notebook with a light blue cover and a white page. The spiral binding is on the left side, represented by a series of black circles. The page is framed by a thick blue border.

How might you use the SDI book and resources
with your staff?

SUMMER INSTITUTE NOTE TAKER

A graphic of a spiral-bound notebook with a light blue cover and a white page. The spiral binding is on the left side, represented by a series of black circles and lines. The page is framed by a thick blue border.

Which new offering might you attend or share with others?

A graphic of a spiral-bound notebook with a light blue cover and a white page. The spiral binding is on the left side, represented by a series of black circles and lines. The page is framed by a thick blue border.

Who might you need to share the paraeducator training opportunities with? (paraeducators, local principals, potential trainers)

