



Michigan Department of Education (MDE) Office of Special Education (OSE)

OSE Update

February 2026

What's New?

Alt+Shift

Save the date for the Alt+Shift Summer Retreat.

Implementation efforts in complex “dancing landscapes” can be exciting and full of promise. They can also lose traction when confronted with interconnected and dynamic challenges deeply rooted in the system. This puts outcomes in jeopardy and can reinforce systems that produce unsatisfactory or undesirable results.

Alt+Shift invites intermediate school district (ISD) and district implementation teams to Traverse City for two days of teamwork that confronts complex challenges, protects desired outcomes, and identifies potential steps to dance with the complexity.

- **Dates and times:** June 16 and 17, 2026, 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. each day
- **Location:** Hagerty Center, 715 E. Front Street, Traverse City, MI 49686
- **Audience:** ISD and district implementation teams, inclusive of an executive decision maker working on dynamic systemic barriers to implementation goals
- **Lodging:** Room block information coming soon
- **Registration:** [Be notified when registration opens.](#)

Medicaid School Services Program (SSP)

Since 1993, Michigan Intermediate School Districts (ISDs) have participated in a federal and state-funded Medicaid reimbursement program.

Regional Medicaid SSP Meetings

[Regional SPP meetings](#) are held in the fall and spring conference. Fall 2025 completed.

Public Consulting Group (PCG)

For more information on the SPL, Quarterly Reports, and/or the RMTS process, send emails to miaop@pcgus.com.



Community Health Automated Medicaid Processing System (CHAMPS)

For more information about [CHAMPS](#) or Medicaid reimbursement, contact Amy Kanter at KanterA@michigan.gov.

Behavioral Health State School Aid

- [31n School-Based Mental Health Services 2024-2025 Legislative Report](#)

Resources

- National Alliance for Medicaid in Education (NAME), Inc
- [Become a NAME Member](#)

Google Drive

Access to the drive is administered to the ISD Coordinators and Implementers who support their county's Medicaid SSP and/or provide oversight and training to local entities. Included in the Google Drive are resources that partners are currently utilizing, editing, and sharing with others in the field to help provide Quality Assurance and Compliance with Medicaid Policy.

Documents in Dropbox and Google may represent historical and outdated information and are **not meant to supersede current Medicaid Policy** and are **not vetted by MDHHS and/or MDE**. For questions about the drive or to update or remove staff members, please contact Dana Billings at BillingsD1@michigan.gov to forward the information to the coordinator in charge of the drive.

Michigan Alliance for Families (MAF)

- MAF staff support families through outreach and mentoring and by providing a wealth of printed and electronic information and resources throughout the year.
- MAF provides information through a wide variety of virtual learning opportunities with MAF staff and partner agencies; recorded videos; and courses that are free to families, educators, and caregivers. See our [upcoming events](#) on our website. View our previously recorded webinars on our [videos page](#).
- MAF has several new offering this year including Shaping IEPs with Student Strengths, College Planning with an IEP, From Puzzled to Prepared: Present Level for Preschool, and Planning for a Good Life Using Charting the Life Course Tools.
- MAF recently hired a parent mentor for the Genesee region. Orientation started at the beginning of February and will wrap up in four to six weeks.



- The Leaders in Policy Advocacy Series (LIPA) is a leadership development program for adults with developmental disabilities and parents of minor children with developmental disabilities. LIPA is accepting applications until February 28. More information can be found on our [LIPA page](#).
- Michigan Alliance for Families is excited to continue our work with Project Launch. Led by the PACER Center, this initiative is a collaboration between eight Parent Centers across the Midwest. Project Launch helps youth and young adults with disabilities reach their postsecondary education, employment, and independent living goals through training and assistance for youth, families, and professionals. This work is made possible with a grant from the Rehabilitative Services Administration (RSA) for the years 2025-2030. MAF developed a new learning opportunity, College Planning with an IEP. It will be offered on May 5, 2026.
- MAF continues to work with the Opening the Pipeline of Talent into Michigan's Special Education (OPTIMISE) core planning team, taskforce, and action teams. The goal is to build, support, and sustain a new education system that can enthusiastically attract, prepare, and retain an effective and diverse special education workforce to serve individuals across Michigan. OPTIMISE also has a newsletter. Sign up at the [OPTIMISE's Constant Contact Page](#).
- Our newsletter is a great way to stay up to date with Michigan Alliance for Families events and special education news. We recently reached a milestone of 10,000 subscribers and are so pleased that our information and resources are reaching so many families and professionals across the state. [Sign-up for our e-newsletter](#) to receive special education information, find out about our upcoming events, and connect with Michigan resources.

Michigan's MTSS Technical Assistance Center (MiMTSS TAC)

- The TA Center is collaborating with Office of Special Education staff on free appropriate public education (FAPE) in the least restrictive environment (LRE) to determine MTSS literacy/Social, Emotional, Behavioral Health (SEBH) training, coaching, and consultative supports.

Resource for Blind/Low Vision(RBLV) and Deaf/Hard of Hearing (DHH)

- We would like to welcome our new secretary for RBLV and RDHH, Jessica Fezzey! She comes to our unit from within the State of Michigan and worked for Portland Public Schools for many years. She is excited to return to the education field.
- Two of our education consultants, Johanna Brutvan and Kelly Dunham, will attend the 86th Annual Michigan Council for Exceptional Children Conference



on February 25. If you are attending the conference, be sure to stop by our vendor table!

- As we continue rebranding with our new names, our website will be redesigned. This year, we will launch separate websites for RBLV (rblv.org) and RDHH (rdhh.org). Stay tuned for more information.
- Follow us on social media! As part of our rebranding process, we are also updating our social media accounts:
 - New: [RDHH Facebook page](https://facebook.com/mderdhh.social) (facebook.com/mderdhh.social)
 - Renamed: [RBLV Facebook page](https://facebook.com/mderblv.social) (facebook.com/mderblv.social)
 - No change: [Camp Tuhsmeheta Instagram account](https://instagram.com/campt.social) (instagram.com/campt.social)
- Our *Michigan Communication Plan for Students Who Are DHH* document has been translated into American Sign Language (ASL), Spanish, and Arabic. This document is a tool that can be used to facilitate meaningful discussion around the unique language and communication needs of a student who is DHH. Learn more: [Communication Plan Document Now in ASL](https://bit.ly/CommPlanASL) (bit.ly/CommPlanASL)
- Language Equality and Acquisition for Deaf Kids (LEAD-K) information:
 - For early interventionists and school personnel: A LEAD-K Assessment Data training video will be available soon at rdhh.org. The video guides viewers through the procedures for submitting language assessment data of children who are DHH, ages 0-5.
 - Share with families: A LEAD-K parent resource website launched in 2025 for families of children, ages 0-5, who are DHH: [LEAD-K Michigan](https://michigan.gov/mde/resources/lead-k) (michigan.gov/mde/resources/lead-k)

Special Education Mediation Services (SEMS)

- The SEMS is pleased to announce that former program coordinator, Cheryl Levine, will join the statewide roster of mediators and facilitators.
- With the continued support of the Office of Special Education (OSE), SEMS staff are committed to making the transition as smooth as possible following Cheryl's retirement on December 25, 2026.
- Contact Information: 517-334-0034 or info@MiKids1st.org.
- Our first quarter (October 1-December 31, 2025) numbers include 309 intakes, 56 mediations (70 percent agreement rate), and 230 facilitations.

Statewide Autism Resources and Training (START) Project

- START has new [Info Sheets](#) available on a variety of topics. These brief resources address important and complex topics, such as mental health, communication, consent, relationships, family collaboration, and independence, in a clear and accessible way. Each Info Sheet is intended to promote informed decision-making, strengthen inclusive practices, and encourage thoughtful, respectful support.
- We are excited to introduce [Learning Bites!](#) **START's Learning Bites (or "Bites")** offer short, focused opportunities for professional learning that make it easy to grow your knowledge and skills on your own time. The Bites include a mix of videos, handouts, resources, and tools designed to support neuroaffirming and inclusive educational practices. Whether you have a few minutes or an hour, you can dive into a topic that meets your needs and apply what you learn right away.
- Celebrate 25 years of START with our **25th Anniversary START Speaker Series**. This virtual series brings together an engaging lineup of speakers who will share perspectives on diverse, meaningful topics that reflect our ongoing commitment to inclusion and empowerment for all students. [Learn more about the speaker series.](#)
- [START Connecting articles](#), supporting educators and families of students with autism spectrum disorder (ASD), are available on the START website. Currently, there are more than 6,000 subscribers. Anyone wishing to receive the updates can sign up on the [START website](#).
 - Recent articles:
 - [Introducing the Comprehensive Communication Supports and Strategies \(CCSS\) Webpage, Resources, and Training](#)
 - [Transition Planning: Early Childhood Through Adulthood for Autistic Students](#)
- Registration is open for the 25th Annual START Conference. The conference will be held on **May 4, 2026**, at the Lansing Center and will feature Shelley Moore, Ph.D., Elizabeth Biggs, Ph.D., and Mateo Moreno.

Upcoming Learning Opportunities

Alt+Shift

- [Foundations of Math for Leaders: A Preview and Partnership Opportunity](#)
 - **February 24, 2026** (10:00 a.m.-11:00 a.m.) – Virtual
- [Supporting Augmentative and Alternative Communication at Home](#)
 - **February 25, 2026** (noon -1:00 p.m.) – Virtual
 - In partnership with the Michigan Alliance for Families



- [Assistive Technology: What It Is and Why It Matters](#)
 - **March 13, 2026** (Noon-1:00 p.m.) – Virtual

Medicaid School Based Services (SBS) Program

Quarterly Medicaid SSP Implementer Meetings

Implementer meetings are presented quarterly for coordinators who support the Medicaid SSP. Implementer meetings for 2025-2026:

- March 10, 2026, 1:00 p.m.-3:00 p.m. Ingham
- June 9, 2026, 1:00 p.m.-3:00 p.m. Ingham

For more information, please contact Dana Billings at BillingsD1@michigan.gov.

Statewide Medicaid Training:

- [Spring Registration](#): Doherty Hotel, Clare, MI. Tuesday, March 3, 2026, 10:00 a.m.-3:00 p.m.

School Services Program Medicaid Conference

- [2026 Michigan Medicaid SPP Conference](#): Park Place, Traverse City April 14-15, 2026.

Michigan Alliance for Families (MAF)

Families and professionals can access our [on-demand webinars](#) at any time. Find more details on all learning opportunities on our [event page](#).

- [Leaders in Policy Advocacy \(LIPA\) Series](#)
 - 6 weekends between April 10-September 26, 2026
 - Applications accepted until February 28, 2026
- [Due Process Complaint and Hearing](#)
 - **February 11, 2026 (Noon-1:30 p.m.) – Virtual**
- [Navigating Early Childhood Special Education-Preschool](#)
 - **February 12, 2026 (9:30 a.m.-10:30 a.m.) – Virtual**
- [Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports](#)
 - **February 12, 2026 (Noon-1:30 p.m.) – Virtual**
- [Planning for a Good Life Using Charting the LifeCourse Tools](#)
 - **February 18, 2026** (4:30 p.m.-6:00 p.m.) – Virtual
- [From Puzzled to Prepared: Present Level for Preschool](#)
 - **February 19, 2026** (9:30 a.m.-10:30 a.m.) – Virtual
- [Intro to AAC & Resources](#)
 - **February 20, 2026** (12:00 p.m.-1:30 p.m.) – Virtual
- [Transition: Beyond IDEA](#)



- **February 21, 2026** (9:30 a.m.-11:30 a.m.) – Virtual
- [Section 504 @ School What Parents Need to Know](#)
 - **February 24, 2026** (12:00 p.m.-1:00 p.m.) – Virtual
- [Supporting AAC @ Home](#)
 - **February 25, 2026** (12:00 p.m.-1:00 p.m.) – Virtual
- [Building Parent Leadership Skills in Early Childhood](#)
 - **February 26, 2026** (Four Thursdays from 9:30 a.m.-10:30 a.m.) – Virtual
- [Discipline Protections for Students with Disabilities](#)
 - **March 4, 2026** (9:30 a.m.-11:00 a.m.) – Virtual
- [How to Prepare for and Participate in Mediation or Facilitation](#)
 - **March 9, 2026** (9:30 a.m.-11:00 a.m.) – Virtual
- [IEP: A Closer Look](#)
 - **March 10, 2026** (9:30 a.m.-11:00 a.m.) – Virtual
- [FAPE in the LRE](#)
 - **March 11, 2026** (4:30 p.m.-6:00 p.m.) – Virtual
- [Assistive Technology: What It Is and Why It Matters](#)
 - March 13, 2026 (Noon-1:00 p.m.) – Virtual
- [Shaping IEPs with Student Strengths](#)
 - **March 16, 2026** (5:00 p.m.-6:00 p.m.) – Virtual
- [Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports](#)
 - **April 6, 2026** (6:30 p.m.-8:00 p.m.) – Virtual
- [Parent Advisory Committee: Best Practices](#)
 - **April 8, 2026** (4:30 p.m.-5:30 p.m.) – Virtual
- [Transition: What You Need to Know](#)
 - **April 9, 2026** (5:30 p.m.-7:30 p.m.) – Virtual

Michigan's MTSS Technical Assistance Center (MiMTSS TAC)

Looking for professional opportunities? Check out the [MiMTSS TA professional learning calendar of events](#). Do you want to know about new technical assistance center events so you can register? Request to be added to the TA Center listserv to receive email notifications regarding upcoming events by signing up through the [listserv signup page](#).

- [Dyslexia Summit](#)
 - **March 20, 2026** (8:30 a.m.-3:45 p.m.) – Virtual

Resource for Blind/Low Vision(RBLV) and Deaf/Hard of Hearing (RDHH)

- For more information on the events listed below, as well as other events offered by MDE RBLV and MDE RDHH, sign up for the [RBLV and RDHH email](#)



[list](http://bit.ly/BLV-DHH-Email-Signup) (bit.ly/BLV-DHH-Email-Signup) or visit [our event section](http://mdelio.org/events) (mdelio.org/events).

- Share with families: Save the date for upcoming events at Camp Tuhsmeheta!
 - **Camp T Little Explorers** (March 14) for families of children, ages 0-5, who are BLV or DHH
 - **Lead the Way Camp** (March 20-22) for students ages 12-17 who are BLV
 - **Family Camp: Race to Escape** (April 11-12) for school-age students who are BLV and their families
 - **Camp T Little Explorers** (May 9) for families of children, ages 0-5, who are BLV or DHH
- **O&M Assessment in Action** (March 13): Participants will review and practice indoor orientation and mobility (O&M) assessment for students who are in preschool through postsecondary. Explore O&M assessments, practice techniques for engaging students, and discuss methods for assessing body image, orientation, and additional indoor travel skills.
- **DHH Insights: Practical Strategies for Writing Effective IEP Goals** (March 10): Developing effective individualized education program (IEP) goals is critical for guiding instruction and monitoring student progress, yet the process can be challenging. This session will provide practical tools and tips for developing clear, measurable, and individualized goals that align with student needs and promote meaningful outcomes.

Special Education Mediation Services (SEMS)

SEMS customizes training for schools and family serving agencies. Reach out if you are interested in what we have to offer by calling 517-334-0034, or visit the [SEMS website](http://SEMSwebsite).

SEMS collaborates with the Michigan Alliance for Families on numerous training events. See the [MAF upcoming training section](http://MAFupcomingtrainingsection) for more information.

- Collaborative Communication in Special Education Dispute Resolution
 - **February 19, 2026**
 - Breakout session at the [Michigan Transition Services Association Conference](http://MichiganTransitionServicesAssociationConference)
- How to Develop and Maintain Trust in School-Family Partnerships – Even with the Most Challenging Personalities 2.0



- **February 25, 2026** (1:00 p.m.-4:00 p.m.) – Amway Grand Plaza Hotel, Grand Rapids, MI
- Breakout session at the [Michigan Council for Exceptional Children Conference](#)
- Developing Trusting Relationships 2.0 – How to Nurture, Maintain, and Rebuild Broken Trust in School-Family Partnerships
 - **February 26, 2026** (3:30 p.m.-4:45 p.m.) – Novi, MI
 - Breakout session at the [Michigan Afterschool Partnership Conference](#)
- Developing Trusting Relationships 2.0 – How to Nurture, Maintain, and Rebuild Broken Trust in School-Family Partnerships
 - **April 10, 2026** – Marquette, MI
 - Breakout session at the [Michigan Association for the Education of Young Children](#)

Statewide Autism Resources and Training (START) Project

Visit the [START Trainings webpage](#) for upcoming training and training series schedules.

- [Increasing Academic Engagement](#)
 - **February 12, 2026** (8:00 a.m.-8:30 a.m. or 4:00 p.m.-4:30 p.m.) – Virtual
- [Preschool Life Skills \(PLS\) For All](#)
 - **February 20, 2026** (9:00 a.m.-11:00 a.m.) – Virtual
- [25th Anniversary START Speaker Series](#)
 - **March 3, 2026** (9:00 a.m.-11:00 a.m.) – Virtual
 - Featuring guest speaker Mike Marotta
- [Increasing Academic Engagement](#)
 - **March 5, 2026** (8:00 a.m.-8:30 a.m. or 4:00 p.m.-4:30 p.m.) – Virtual
- [Level Up Peer to Peer](#)
 - **March 6, 2026** (9:00 a.m.-3:30 p.m.) – Kellogg Center, East Lansing, MI
- [Toilet Training and Adaptive Skills in Early Childhood](#)
 - **March 6, 2026** (9:00 a.m.-11:00 a.m.) – Virtual
- [Behavior Escalation and Scripts](#)
 - **March 12 and 19, 2026** (1:00 p.m.-3:00 p.m.) – Virtual
 - Co-sponsored by START and the MiMTSS Technical Assistance Center
- [FAPE in the LRE](#)
 - **April 9, 2026** (9:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.) – Virtual
- [25th Anniversary START Speaker Series](#)
 - **April 15, 2026** (9:00 a.m. – 11:00 a.m.) – Virtual
 - Featuring Guest Speaker Amy Ursitti
- [Increasing Academic Engagement](#)



- Topic: Student Engagement: Planning Group and Partnership Activities to Optimize Shared
- **April 24, 2026** (8:00 - 8:30 a.m. OR 4:00 - 4:30 p.m.) – Virtual
- [25th Annual START Conference](#)
 - **May 4, 2026** (8:30 a.m.-3:30 p.m.) – Lansing Center, Lansing, MI
- [Building Strong Foundations: An Introduction to the Pyramid Model for Preschool Educators](#)
 - **May 8, 2026** (9:00 a.m. – 11:00 a.m.) – Virtual
- [Peer to Peer Lunch & Learn](#)
 - **May 13, 2026** (11:30 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.) – Virtual