UPDATES

Office of Special Education – IDEA Grant Funded Initiatives
Michigan Department of Education
December 2015

WHAT's NEW?

Michigan Alliance for Families (MAF)

- Michigan Alliance for Families filled five parent mentor vacancies this fall. The MAF is happy to welcome the new parent mentors who began training and work in October and November. Vacancies in these regions have been filled: Genesee/Tuscola, Macomb, Eastern UP, northern-lower Michigan, and Kalamazoo.
- The MAF was awarded additional funding to increase the amount of advocacy services available for parents. The MAF contracts with nonprofit advocacy organizations throughout the state for free parent advocacy services.
- In October, the MAF began a new series of One-Day Regional Events. These learning opportunities are provided for parents, school personnel, and anyone interested in learning about the basic foundations of an individualized education program (IEP); the IEP process and procedures; and tools for resolving special education issues. The events are offered throughout the year in each region in the state. For more information go to our website at: www.michiganallianceforfamilies.org

Michigan's Integrated Behavior and Learning Support Initiative (MiBLSi)

- The 2016 Application for Participation in Michigan's Project for Promoting Positive School Climate is now available on the MiBLSi website (www.miblsi.org). This project works to develop local implementation capacity of positive behavior intervention and support (PBIS) at the intermediate school district (ISD) and local educational agency (LEA) level. Applications are due December 16.
- Last year MiBLSi supported more than 639 professional development events (approximately 3,800 hours) in the implementation and support of an integrated multi-tiered system of support (MTSS) model.
- There are currently 94 online MiBLSi learning modules posted to Michigan Virtual University's LearnPort website (www.learnport.org).
- Based on a capacity assessment (developed in partnership with the State Implementation and Scaling-up of Evidence-based Practice (SISEP) National Center), the longer ISDs/LEAs have been working with MiBLSi, the greater the capacity to support local implementation of MTSS.

Accessible Learning Environments (ALE)

The project:
- Changed its name to **Alt+Shift:** Rethink the possible. Realize potential. The new name captures the essence of the project's work, which is to encourage alternative instructional practices to address learner variability, requiring a shift in adult behaviors.
- Conducted Introductory Pragmatic Organization Dynamic Display (PODD) trainings in two intermediate school districts (ISDs) for 100 participants.

- Made three presentations during the AssisTechKnow conference at Kent ISD in Grand Rapids:
  - *Designing Your Learning Environment to Reach Every Student* (25 participants)
  - *Accessible Educational Materials: Beyond Bookshare, Making Your Classroom Materials Accessible* (25 participants)
  - *Strengthening Mathematics Instruction and Understanding for Students with Disabilities* (25 participants)
- Began conducting "bug-in-ear" coaching trials (coach watching remotely and providing feedback via an ear piece the teacher wears) for PODD implementation with weekly observations (ongoing until January).
- Made two presentations for parents on aided language input via PODD at the Traverse Bay Area ISD.
- Hosted a retreat for those who have been trained in advanced PODD methods to discuss support of PODD implementation on a regional basis.
- Presented on accessible learning environments that meet the needs of all learners for the Leaders in Policy Advocacy group.
- Continued work with the Computer Science Engineering and Information Technology (CSEIT) group on developing a needs assessment for usability testing.
- Began recruiting small districts or K-12 feeder systems to be sites for *Foundations of Math* usability testing in 2016 and 2017. Sites will benefit by having entire district or system trained, being able to offer the training regionally going forward, and gaining insight into their own capacity to implement and sustain new practices. If interested in being a usability testing site, contact Kate Fanelli at kate.fanelli@misquared.com
- Developed support for development of Tier 2 Elementary and Secondary resources based on *Foundations of Math* pedagogy.
- Hosted days 4 and 5 of *Foundations of Math* in Traverse City and Novi with 94 participants.
- Hosted a retreat for regional assistive technology contacts to develop action items around best practices in assistive technology implementation.
- Conducted two one-day, hands-on accessible document training sessions for MDE staff with a total of 42 participants.
- Hosted *Creating a Chrome Toolbox for Supporting Struggling Learners* training for 11 participants.

Statewide Autism Resources and Training (START)

- START's 2015-2016 Early Childhood, K-12, and Building Your Future Intensive Training Series are ongoing. For more information visit our website at: www.gvsu.edu/autismcenter
- START hosted statewide trainings in Peer to Peer Support and Self-Management in September and October. For information on START's future statewide events, please visit START's website at https://goo.gl/Bhi5NY.
- The 2015-2016 year is START's 15th year working with schools, community partners, and families to support students with Autism Spectrum Disorder. This celebration year will showcase the work of the Regional Collaborative Networks (RCN) and the growth and impact of START, and will look back at the beginning of the START Project.
- The START newsletter is available at http://www.gvsu.edu/autismcenter/start-connecting-newsletter-213.htm.

UPCOMING LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES

Accessible Learning Environments (ALE)

Visit www.mits.cenmi.org for more information on the upcoming events listed below:
- *Creating Accessible Documents*, Michigan Department of Education, Lansing, December 17.
- *Designing Accessible Educational Environments: Thoughtful Consideration of Student Needs Unit Two*, Tecumseh Public Schools, January 18.
- *Creating Accessible Documents*, Michigan Department of Education, Lansing, January 21.
- *Designing Accessible Educational Environments: Thoughtful Consideration of Student Needs Unit Three*, Tecumseh Public Schools, February 15.
- *Strengthening Mathematics Instruction and Understanding for Students with Disabilities* breakout session, Upper Peninsula Special Education Conference, Marquette, February 26.

Michigan Alliance for Families (MAF)

- A new Winter Webinar Series will begin in January 2016 (dates and topics to be announced). See website for more information. Webinars will be held on Thursdays from 12-1 p.m.
- Michigan Alliance for Families has several other upcoming learning opportunities around the state. Visit www.michiganallianceforfamilies.org/upcoming-events for more details.