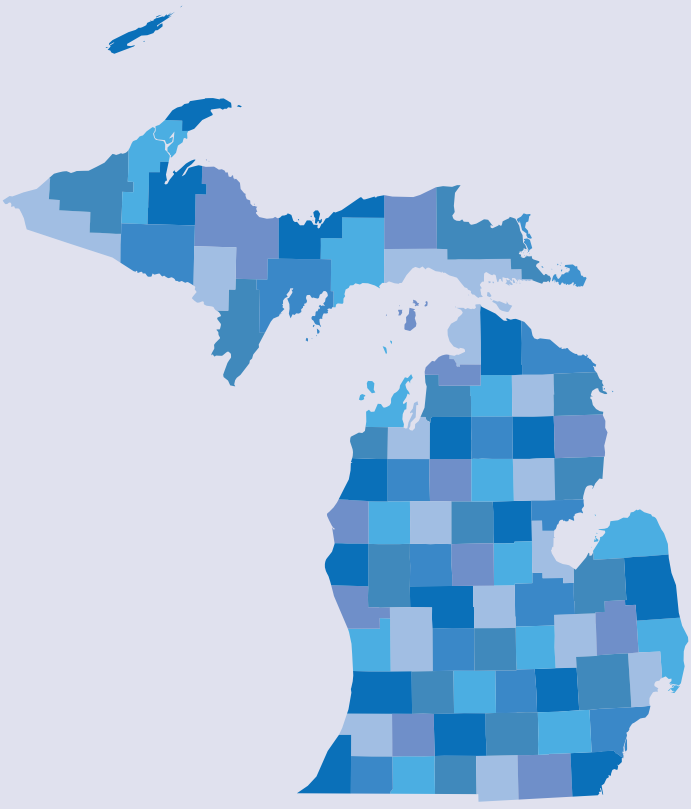
Michigan Department of Education

Office of Special Education

Directory and Overview

February 2026



MICHIGAN Department of Education

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Introduction

This document provides an overview of the Michigan Department of Education (MDE) Office of Special Education (OSE), including information about OSE responsibilities. Also included are primary contacts for each area of work, important updates, and resources to better support special education stakeholders.

MDE OSE's purpose is to ensure the civil rights of children with disabilities for a free appropriate public education (FAPE) in the least restrictive environment (LRE) are maintained, and the rights of children and families are protected. This support ranges from the federal to the local level and includes special education laws, programs, and services. Understanding the different safeguards and programs for students with disabilities will help special education stakeholders understand the role of OSE in this continuum of support.

The following is a brief overview of foundational information about the laws, offices, and safeguards for individuals with disabilities.

Laws, Regulations, and Rules

Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)

- The IDEA is a federal law. The IDEA is further supported by its regulations.
- The IDEA established two separate sets of services for different age segments:
  - **Part B:** Special education programs and services for children ages 3 through 21
  - **Part C:** Early intervention services for children birth to age 3
- Part B requires a **free appropriate public education** (FAPE) in the least restrictive environment (LRE) for children and students with disabilities. A FAPE in LRE is provided through special education programs and services.

Michigan Compiled Law (MCL)

- The MCL is the state's comprehensive set of laws, including Michigan education laws, such as the Revised School Code.
- The MCL mandates that special education services are provided from birth through age 25.
  - Federal funding for special education is for children and youth birth through age 21. Therefore, programs and services paid for by IDEA Part B funds or IDEA Part C funds serve children and youth birth through 21. Also, data used for federal reporting includes children and youth ages birth through 21.
  - The state and districts must use state and local funds to provide special education programs and services to eligible youth ages 22 through 25, as mandated by the MCL.

Michigan Administrative Rules for Special Education (MARSE)

- The MARSE are state rules promulgated by OSE through the process defined in the state's *Administrative Procedures Act*.
- The rules supplement and complement state and federal laws.

Introduction

Offices Outside of the OSE

Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP)

- OSEP is a program component of the U.S. Department of Education (USED), Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services (OSERS).
- OSEP produces the implementing regulations for the IDEA.
- OSEP provides guidance for state education agencies (such as MDE) and monitors states for compliance with the IDEA.

Office of Early Education, Division of Early Learning and Family Supports in the Department of Michigan Lifelong Education, Advancement, and Potential (MiLEAP)

- The Office of Early Education is part of the Michigan Department of Lifelong Education, Advancement, and Potential (MiLEAP) that provides programs and services for children from birth through 5 years of age and their families.
- The Office of Early Education coordinates and oversees Michigan's early childhood programs, including:
  - » ***Early On***, a program that provides services to children with developmental delays and disabilities from birth to age 3 and their families.
    - ◇ *Early On* is Michigan's early intervention system for implementing Part C of IDEA. *Early On* collaborates with OSE regarding special education requirements as defined in the *Michigan Administrative Rules for Special Education* for children from birth to age 3.

Federal Reporting and Monitoring

Indicators

- Indicators are the monitoring priorities developed by OSEP. The indicators are used for evaluating the success of services for Part B and Part C of the IDEA.
- OSEP developed 18 indicators for Part B for monitoring.
- OSEP developed 12 indicators for Part C for monitoring (for which MiLEAP is responsible).

State Performance Plan (SPP) and Annual Performance Report (APR)

- The IDEA requires that each state has an improvement plan for Part B and Part C.
  - » States create an improvement plan which are submitted in two SPPs: one for Part B and one for Part C. MiLEAP is responsible for Part C reporting.
- Data are annually collected from each school district and submitted to OSEP as statewide data in the APRs for Part B and Part C.
  - » The SPP/APR requires reporting of children and students ages 3 to 21 eligible under Part B of IDEA. Infants and Toddlers birth to three are reported under Part C of the SPP/APR. Michigan serves students to age 26, though students age 21 to age 26 are not required to be reported in the Part B SPP/APR.

Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC)

Teri Pettit
SEAC Facilitator
from MDE OSE
810-523-1411
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SEAC Web page

The Role of SEAC

The IDEA mandates states establish and maintain an advisory panel for the purpose of providing policy guidance with respect to special education and related services for children with disabilities. In Michigan, this panel is the Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC).

The mission of SEAC is to promote positive outcomes for all Michigan students with disabilities by:

- Gathering, sharing, and disseminating information at local, state and national levels;
- Communicating with a diverse group of stakeholders;
- Identifying unmet needs in special education;
- Collaborating with the Office of Special Education (OSE);
- Engaging with various offices in the Michigan Department of Education (MDE) seeking feedback and input; and
- Advising the State Board of Education (SBE) on matters related to special education.

SEAC members are appointed by the SBE. There are up to 33 members of SEAC who represent a diverse group of stakeholders (parents, administrators, service providers, advocates, and consumers) concerned with the education of all children, including students with disabilities.

Office of Special Education (OSE)

Michigan Department of Education (MDE)
608 W. Allegan Street
P.O. Box 30008
Lansing, MI 48909
MDE website
833-633-5788

Office of Special Education (OSE)
OSE website
517-241-7075
517-241-7142 (TTY)
1-888-320-8384 (Toll Free)

How OSE Supports Special Education in Michigan

MDE OSE provides the general supervision, administration, and funding of special education programs and services for eligible children and youth with disabilities from age 3 through age 25, in accordance with federal and state law.

OSEP created performance indicators to evaluate how well states implement the requirements of Part B and Part C of the IDEA. OSE is tasked with developing, implementing, and monitoring Michigan's improvement plans for each IDEA Part B indicator. MiLEAP is tasked with developing, implementing, and monitoring Michigan's improvement plan for each IDEA Part C indicators.

The improvement plan is developed with federal guidance and stakeholder input. The plan and the results for each indicator are annually reported to OSEP in the SPP/APR. The Part B SPP/APR is made publicly available on the OSE website and the Part C SPP/APR is made publicly available on the MiLEAP Early On website.

Though the IDEA Part B only governs special education programs and services for children and youth ages 3 through 21, Michigan Mandatory Special Education (MMSE) requires OSE to ensure the provision of special education and services for eligible children in Michigan from age 3 and youth ages 22 through 25, as required by state law.

OSE consists of four units:

- Administration
- Program Finance
- Program Accountability
- Performance Reporting

OSE also oversees MDE Resource for Blind/Low Vision and Deaf/Hard of Hearing, formerly MDE Low Incidence Outreach (LIO) and the Michigan School for the Deaf (MSD).

Administration Unit

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The Administration Unit provides leadership and oversight for several activities, as well as the entirety of OSE and its IDEA Grant Funded Initiatives. The unit also reports and responds to the State Board of Education, the state superintendent, the chief deputy superintendent, and the deputy superintendent.

State Systemic Improvement Plan (SSIP)

The SSIP is an indicator created by OSEP. The SSIP is part of OSEP's Results Driven Accountability (RDA) framework for monitoring.

From 2006 to 2013, OSEP monitored states on compliance indicators, which generally measure the ability to follow timelines and procedures. After introducing the RDA framework in 2014, OSEP also began monitoring student-level results to determine the extent to which states meet the requirements of the IDEA.

SSIP Contact

Kim St. Martin
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877-702-8600 ext. 4027

To support its emphasis on results, OSEP tasked states with developing an SSIP. To assess the SSIP's effectiveness, each state must address a measurable student-level outcome through the SSIP. This student-level outcome is known as the State Identified Measurable Result (SIMR). Improving the SIMR is an indication of the SSIP's effectiveness.

SSIP Reports

OSEP tasked states with implementing the SSIP. An SSIP report has been submitted annually with each year's SPP/APR.

OSEP website provides the SPPs/APRs with the SSIP reports.

Though the SSIP is a Part B indicator to measure results for children and youth with disabilities, Michigan is using this opportunity to develop the SSIP in a way to support the broader education system, including general education.

Aspects of the SSIP are integrated with other MDE initiatives and plans. OSE chose early literacy as its SIMR, in part to align with general education literacy efforts. Improving early literacy impacts all students, including students with disabilities.

Significant Disproportionality

Section 300.646 of the IDEA regulations requires states to monitor for significant disproportionality.

Significant disproportionality considers the over-representation of particular races or ethnicities among students with a disability. Significant disproportionality occurs when over-representation reaches a certain threshold within one of the monitoring areas.

Identification
Michigan monitors two areas of identification:

- Identification of students with a disability as compared to the overall student population.
- Identification of students within a particular eligibility category as compared to all students with a disability.

Educational Settings
Michigan monitors three areas of educational settings. Students in each setting are compared to all students with a disability:

- Placement in a general education setting for less than 80 percent of the day.
- Placement in a general education setting for less than 40 percent of the day.
- Placement of students in a separate school or residential facility.

Discipline
Michigan monitors five areas of discipline. For each area of discipline, students are compared to the overall student population:

- Expulsions plus out-of-school suspensions of 10 days or fewer.
- Expulsions plus out-of-school suspensions totaling more than 10 days.
- In-school suspensions of 10 days or fewer.
- In-school suspensions totaling more than 10 days.
- Disciplinary actions in total, including in-school and out-of-school suspensions, expulsions, removals by school personnel to an interim alternative education setting, and removals by a hearing officer.

Guidance and Information

The business rules/procedures for calculating significant disproportionality and other information on significant disproportionality is on the OSE website.

Significant Disproportionality Contact

Jessica Brady

Performance Reporting Unit Supervisor

BradyJ@Michigan.gov
517-241-4414

Federal Requirements for Districts With Significant Disproportionality

34 CFR § 300.646(b)(1)
Review policies, procedures, and practices.

34 CFR § 300.646(b)(3)
Publicly report any policies, procedures, or practices that are changed.

34 CFR §300.646(b)(2)
Use 15 percent of Part B funds for Coordinated Early Intervening Services (CEIS).

Indicators vs. Significant Disproportionality

In addition to significant disproportionality, OSEP also uses indicators to monitor the disproportionate representation of racial/ethnic groups in identification and discipline.

Though similar to significant disproportionality, some different data are analyzed. Also, in the case of noncompliance, districts have a different set of requirements.

Administration

Assessment

The goal of statewide assessment is to provide all students with an opportunity to participate in the regular statewide assessment and demonstrate content they have learned. OSE works with the Office of Education Achievement and Accountability to support students with disabilities.

Assessment Contact

John Jaquith

Test Development Manager

Office of Education Achievement and Accountability

JaquithJ@Michigan.gov

517-335-1987

Because students with disabilities have a diverse array of instructional needs, the state offers a continuum of assessments to measure student learning.

The federal *Every Student Succeeds Act* (ESSA) allows states to offer an alternative assessment aligned with challenging state academic standards and alternate achievement standards (AA-AAS) for students with the most significant cognitive disabilities. MI-Access is Michigan's alternate assessment system and is designed for students with the most significant cognitive disabilities, and whose Individualized Education Program (IEP) Team has determined that general assessments, even with accommodations, are not appropriate. MI-Access satisfies the federal requirement that all students with disabilities be assessed at the state level.

MI-Access
MI-Access has three levels of testing, each for a different student population.

Functional Independence (FI): For students who have a significant cognitive disability and can access resources, strategies, and supports with limited assistance, and whose instruction is aligned closest to the "High" range of complexity for ELA and Mathematics Essential Elements.

Supported Independence (SI): For students who have a significant cognitive disability and require ongoing support in major life roles, and whose instruction is aligned closest to the "Medium" range of complexity for ELA and Mathematics Essential Elements.

Participation (P): For students who have a significant cognitive disability and require extensive ongoing support through adulthood, and whose instruction is aligned closest to the "Low" range of complexity for ELA and Mathematics Essential Elements.

Student Assessment Resources

The MDE Student Assessment website offers extensive resources and information on statewide assessments. The website includes information about alternate assessments and the Michigan Student Test of Educational Progress (M-STEP).

Administration

Michigan Medicaid School Services Program (SSP) Direct Service Claiming (DSC)

Districts serving students with disabilities are sometimes required to provide medical services. The Michigan Medicaid SSP program enables intermediate school districts (ISDs) under DSC to receive partial reimbursement for some of these services provided to Medicaid-eligible children and students. OSE is a partner with the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (MDHHS) for administering and overseeing this program.

Medicaid Contact

Dana Billings
Medicaid Consultant
BillingsD1@Michigan.gov
517-335-4521

The Medicaid SSP program provides partial reimbursement for direct health care and related services such as physical, occupational, and speech therapies. Partial reimbursement is also available for costs associated with Administrative Outreach services, such as providing families with information about Medicaid, helping families obtain application forms, and referring families to Medicaid providers.

Secondary Transition

All students face challenges when transitioning from school to post-school life. Transitioning for students with disabilities can be particularly challenging. The IDEA requires transition services and other supports throughout a student's academic career to prepare for post-school life. OSEP has indicators to monitor the implementation of transition services.

To prepare for life after school, students may need services from other agencies during their academic career. Services may include job trainings, work-based learning, community-based experiences, and health services. Because schools must help students access these services, interagency collaboration is vital for a successful transition.

Transition Contacts

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Monitoring and Technical Assistance
DortchS@Michigan.gov
517-335-0465

Jessica Brady
Performance Reporting Unit Supervisor
BradyJ@Michigan.gov
517-241-4414

Multiple agencies at the federal level developed the "2020 Federal Youth Transition Plan: A Federal Interagency Strategy" as a workgroup. As the state's lead agency for special education, OSE is working with other state agencies on a similar model. OSE is partnering with other state agencies on the Michigan Interagency Transition Team (MITT). The MITT is developing a framework for districts to use to ensure students across the state have access to needed transition support.

Administration

Child Find

States and districts are required to conduct child find activities as stated by the IDEA regulations in Part B (§ 300.111) and Part C (§§ 303.302 and 303.303). In accordance with the IDEA and state law, districts must identify, locate, and evaluate children and youth from birth through age 25 who may need early intervention services or special education services.

Early On Michigan, which is in the Department of MiLEAP, conducts statewide child find activities for Part C. This means identifying, locating, and evaluating finding children from birth to age 3 who may need early intervention services. *Early On* is responsible for the coordination and provision of early intervention services for eligible children.

Child Find Contact

Birth to age 3

Early On website

1-800-Early On

Ages 3 through 5

Build Up Michigan website

1-888-320-8384

(Michigan Special Education Information Line)

Some of these children may also be entitled to special education services, as mandated by Michigan law. *Early On* is responsible for identifying and providing services to children who are eligible for both early intervention services and special education services.

Part B child find requirements are for children and youth ages 3 through 21. School districts often use school-based activities to locate and identify school-aged children. OSE created Build Up Michigan to help locate and identify children ages 3 through 5 who are eligible for special education programs and services.

State-level Child Find Support

Birth to age 3

Early On: Public awareness program and support for early intervention services

Ages 3 through 5

Build Up Michigan: Public awareness program funded by OSE

Birth through 25

OSE: Monitors district practices, policies, and procedures

Join the Awareness Campaign

School districts and other agencies/service providers can help promote awareness. *Early On* and Build Up Michigan have free marketing materials for their partners to distribute.

Order materials online.

Administration

Personnel Approvals

Michigan law requires schools to hire and employ properly certified and endorsed teachers (MCL 380.1231 and 380.1233). In order to systematically address needed exceptions to law, the Michigan Department of Education (MDE) has established Administrative Rules in accordance with R 340.1783 of the *Michigan Administrative Rules for Special Education* (MARSE). A school district or nonpublic school may choose to utilize the alternate route through the approval process as defined in the Federal Regulation 34 C.F.R. §300.156 (c)(2) to employ an individual or teacher who does not hold the appropriate endorsement. This approval process is considered an alternative route in these federal regulations.

Personnel Approvals Contact

Dana Billings
Consultant
billingsd1@michigan.gov
517-335-2250

Districts must obtain special education personnel approvals from MDE for various special education personnel.

To process a Special Education Personnel Approval, districts must use the Michigan Online Education Certification System (MOECS). To gain access to MOECS, districts must submit a School District Security Agreement Form.

To receive approval, the candidate must meet a minimum set of criteria as stated in the MARSE and on the Special Education Personnel Approvals web page.

Personnel Approvals Resources

The OSE website provides resources for the MOECS and other information for personnel approvals.

Performance Reporting Unit

Jessica Brady
Unit Supervisor
517-241-4414
BradyJ@Michigan.gov

The Performance Reporting Unit coordinates the collection, verification, analysis, and reporting of special education student and personnel data for required state and federal reports. The unit also coordinates and provides technical assistance to ISDs and other stakeholder groups to improve outcomes for students with disabilities and ensure compliance with state and federal requirements.

SPP/APR Performance Indicators

Much of the Performance Reporting Unit work focuses on the data collection and reporting of the SPP/APR Performance Indicators. OSEP created the indicators to evaluate the success of the delivery of special education programs and services.

Results Indicators

Michigan sets measurable and rigorous targets with broad stakeholder input. Targets vary by indicator.

1. Graduation
2. Dropout
3. Statewide Assessment

4A. Suspension and Expulsion

5. Educational Environments: Ages 5 in Kindergarten and Ages 6 through 21
6. Preschool Environments: Ages 3 through 5 in preschool
7. Preschool Outcomes
8. Parent Involvement

14. Postsecondary Outcomes
15. Resolution Session Agreements
16. Mediation Agreements
17. State Systemic Improvement Plan (SSIP)

Compliance Indicators

OSEP sets targets of either zero percent or 100 percent.

4B. Suspension and Expulsion by Race/ Ethnicity

9. Disproportionate Representation: Child With a Disability
10. Disproportionate Representation: Eligibility Categories
11. Child Find (Evaluation Timelines)
12. Early Childhood Transition
13. Secondary Transition
18. General Supervision

Performance Reporting

SPP/APR

The IDEA requires states to develop a six-year SPP/APR for the implementation of Part B (special education services) and Part C (early intervention services) of the IDEA. The SPP/APR must be submitted to OSEP. The Performance Reporting Unit coordinates the development and submission of the Part B SPP/APR. MiLEAP coordinates the development and submission of the Part C SPP/APR.

SPP/APR Contact

Julie Treviño

Special Education Coordinator

TrevinoJ1@Michigan.gov

517-241-0497

The SPP/APR includes historical data and performance targets for 18 indicators. States must annually collect and submit data to OSEP for each indicator in the SPP/APR. OSEP then assigns a determination of how well a state is meeting the requirements of the IDEA. The determination levels are: meets requirements, needs assistance, needs intervention, or needs substantial intervention.

Find the SPP/APR

The OSEP website provides the SPP/APR reports.

Part B SPP History

2005: The original SPP included 20 indicators. Michigan set the state targets and strategies through the 2010-11 academic year. Periodic updates to the SPP were required.

2011: OSEP required a two-year extension for the SPP to cover the 2011-12 and 2012-13 academic years.

2013: OSEP required a new six-year plan with 17 indicators to go through the 2018-19 academic year.

2020: OSEP required resetting targets for all results indicators from the 2020-21 academic year through the 2025-26 academic year.

2023: OSEP created new Indicator 18: General Supervision.

SPP/APR Reporting Cycle

February: OSE submits the SPP/APR which includes data from the previous academic year (ending in June) and the performance plan for the upcoming academic year (beginning in July).

April: OSEP provides feedback. OSE makes revisions and resubmits the SPP/APR.

June: OSEP issues State Determinations

July-June: The ISDs and member districts submit data to the Michigan Student Data System (MSDS) or OSE over the course of the year which is reported in the following SPP/APR.

Performance Reporting

Public Reporting

ISDs and member districts submit data to MSDS or OSE for the SPP/APR Performance Indicators. Section 300.602 of the IDEA regulations requires states to report the local educational agency (LEA) level data to the public. In Michigan, for special education purposes, the LEA is the ISD.

This information provides ISDs and communities an opportunity to see strengths in their special education and early intervention programs and to identify areas of improvement.

As determined by OSEP, states must report on Indicators 1-14. For Indicators 1, 2, 4A, and 4B, there is a required one-year data lag.

View District-Level Data

The MI School Data website has special education data for ISDs and local school districts.

Public Reporting Contacts

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Special Education Coordinator
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517-241-0497

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517-335-0394

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517-241-0786

Monitoring and Technical Assistance

The Monitoring and Technical Assistance team uses Catamaran as a tool to monitor ISDs performance on SPP/APR Performance Indicators. Catamaran is the system used to track activities and data related to IDEA and MARSE for MDE OSE. Catamaran is managed by OSE. Catamaran offers extensive resources for ISDs and member districts on a variety of topics to assist in improving student outcomes.

ISDs and member districts submit Part B data through the MSDS. The data is reflected back to the ISDs through Catamaran. The data is used to issue findings of noncompliance and to select ISDs for monitoring activities. The monitoring and technical assistance team may conduct and/or assist with ISD monitoring visits, whether on-site or virtual; assigns technical assistance providers; and explores opportunities for professional development and best practices.

Monitoring and Technical Assistance Contact

Jessica Brady
Unit Supervisor
BradyJ@Michigan.gov
517-241-4414

Websites
Catamaran
Technical Assistance

Program Accountability Unit

Chantel Mozden
Unit Supervisor
517-241-6299
MozdenC@Michigan.gov

The Program Accountability Unit develops and implements special education policy. Policy is developed to align with—and clarify—state and federal requirements. The unit also administers the state complaint and due process complaint processes.

Michigan Special Education Information Line

1-888-320-8384
MDE-OSE@Michigan.gov

The Program Accountability Unit manages a dedicated phone line and email that goes directly to OSE. The Michigan Special Education Information Line is staffed from 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. The information line has translation services available, including in American Sign Language, Arabic, and Spanish, to name a few.

The information line is available to all stakeholders and provides information and resources, and answers special education related questions. Any question that cannot be answered immediately will be researched and responded to as quickly as possible.

Michigan Administrative Rules for Special Education (MARSE)

The MARSE are state rules created to carry out the intent of the IDEA and the MCL. The rules help clarify or define requirements of state and federal laws.

OSE manages the rule promulgation process, which includes writing the rules with stakeholder input, obtaining public comment, and submission to the Joint Committee on Administrative Rules (JCAR).

MARSE Contact

Nancy Rotarius
Policy Coordinator
RotariusN@Michigan.gov
517-335-0448

Rule Promulgation Process

View the MARSE

A web version of the MARSE is available on the MDE OSE website.

Program Accountability

ISD Plans

The *Revised School Code*, 1976 PA 451, MCL 380.1711(1)(a) requires the development of an intermediate school district (ISD) plan for the delivery of special education programs and services. Part 7 of the MARSE (rules 340.1831 through 340.1839) outlines the requirements for the development, submission, and monitoring of ISD plans.

ISD Plans Contact

Nancy Rotarius
Policy Coordinator
RotariusN@Michigan.gov
517-335-0448

ISD plans provide information regarding the delivery system of special education programs and services for an ISD and its constituent LEAs. ISD plans are developed by each ISD with input from its LEAs and parent advisory committee. Each ISD submits its ISD plan to OSE for review. OSE will request any necessary changes as part of the review process. Once a plan meets the requirements, OSE recommends its approval to the state superintendent.

Find the ISD Plan Forms

ISD plan information is on the OSE website.

ISD plan forms are available through Catamaran.

Waivers and Deviations

Waivers

The *Revised School Code*, 1976 PA 451, MCL 380.1281(3) allows intermediate and local school districts to apply for a renewable, limited time waiver to an administrative rule. A district may request a waiver for certain rules in the MARSE if the district can meet the intent of the rule in a more effective, efficient, or economical manner or if the waiver is necessary to stimulate improved student performance. Waivers are granted by the state superintendent.

Waivers and Deviations Contact

Beth Cooke
Policy Consultant
CookeE@Michigan.gov
517-241-7134

Districts submit applications for waivers to OSE through Catamaran. Waivers may be granted for up to three years. Districts may request to renew expiring waivers by submitting a waiver renewal application.

Deviations

Rule 340.1734 of the MARSE details the procedure for districts requesting a deviation from a MARSE rule. Deviations are student specific and will be considered if sudden circumstances warrant the request; deviations may not be used to pre-plan programs and services or to contain costs.

Program Accountability

Waivers and Deviations continued

OSE reviews deviation requests and makes the final decision on whether to grant or deny the request. Deviations may only be granted through the end of the academic year in which they are requested and only when the best interest of students with disabilities affected by the deviation are served and good cause is shown. Deviations may only be granted from a MARSE rule, not to a requirement in a waiver or in an alternative program in an approved ISD Plan.

Find the Waiver and Deviation Forms

Waiver and deviation information is on the OSE website.

The waiver application and deviation request forms are available through Catamaran.

Dispute Resolution

Dispute resolution is needed when an individual or organization and a public agency disagree about an issue regarding the special education programs and services for an eligible student with a disability. The Program Accountability Unit supports a variety of dispute resolution methods.

Dispute Resolution Contact

Chantel Mozden
Unit Supervisor
MozdenC@Michigan.gov
517-241-6299

Collaborative Problem Solving
OSE encourages collaborative problem-solving methods. These methods are the most likely to preserve good relationships and avoid costly disputes. Collaborative methods include informal meetings between the parties, a facilitated IEP team meeting, and mediation.

Resources for Collaborative Problem Solving

The Special Education Mediation Services (SEMS) is an IDEA Grant Funded Initiative of OSE. SEMS has a network of trained, impartial facilitators and mediators. The facilitators and mediators are available to participate in meetings at no cost to districts and parents. SEMS also offers trainings on how to develop productive working relationships.

Visit	***Call***
SEMS website	1-833-KIDS1ST 1-833-543-7178

Special Education Mediation Services

Program Accountability

Dispute Resolution continued

State Complaints

An individual or organization may file a state complaint to allege that a public agency has violated a requirement of state or federal special education law. A single complaint may contain multiple issues.

The Program Accountability Unit assigns state complaints to case managers who conduct an investigation. Investigations conclude with a final decision from MDE. A final decision includes a determination of a violation or no violation for each issue. In the event of a violation, MDE issues a corrective action.

State Complaint Contact

Shannon Hinman
Complaint Coordinator
HinmanS@Michigan.gov
517-355-1662

Due Process Hearings

A parent or public agency may submit a request for a due process hearing to resolve a disagreement about the identification, evaluation, eligibility, educational placement, or manifestation determination of a student, or a disagreement regarding the provision of a free appropriate public education (FAPE) for a student under the IDEA.

Due Process Hearings Contact

Bethanie Eggleston
EgglestonB1@Michigan.gov
517-241-7078

The formal request must be submitted to OSE and the other party (or parties). OSE forwards the request to the Michigan Office of Administrative Hearings and Rules (MOAHR), which assigns the case to an administrative law judge (ALJ), and a due process hearing date is set.

At the conclusion of the due process hearing, the ALJ makes a decision that must be carried out by the public agency. The public agency must provide proof of compliance with the ALJ decision and order.

Resources for Dispute Resolution

The OSE website provides information and other resources for dispute resolution options, including model forms for requesting a state complaint or a due process hearing.

Program Finance Unit

Sean McLaughlin
Unit Supervisor
517-241-4386
McLaughlinS@Michigan.gov

The Program Finance Unit provides oversight for state aid and federal funding structures for special education programs and services. The unit ensures that federal grants and state aid reimbursements are effectively administered.

Michigan receives funds from the federal government under Part B of the IDEA for the delivery of special education programs and services to students with disabilities ages 3 through 21. The state distributes a large portion of the funds to ISDs in accordance with a federally required formula.

Special Education Flowthrough Grant

Section 611, 34 CFR 300.705, subpart G of the IDEA requires states to provide Special Education Flowthrough Grants to its districts. Grants are funded by IDEA Part B. Michigan awards grants to ISDs to use the funds for ensuring the provision of a free appropriate public education (FAPE), which includes special education programs and services.

Grants are awarded annually. Each ISD submits an application, which includes a budget for expenditures. Grant applications are submitted to OSE by July 1 of each year using the Next Generation Grant, Application and Cash Management System (NexSys).

An estimated amount of funds is announced in the spring. A final amount is released in the summer. The allocation of funds is determined in the following manner:

- A base allocation of funds is equal to what the ISD received in 1999 under IDEA § 611(d).
- Eighty-five percent of the remaining funds are distributed to ISDs based on the number of children enrolled in public and private schools in each ISD's jurisdiction.
- The other fifteen percent of the remaining funds are distributed to ISDs based on the number of children who are eligible for free lunch.

The period of obligation of a Special Education Flowthrough Grant is 27 months, starting July 1.

July 1 (month 1): OSE awards the grant to the ISD with an effective date of July 1.

September 30 (month 27): The grant award obligation period ends. Any unspent funds must be returned to the federal government.

November 29 (month 29): The ISD submits a Final Expenditure Report (FER) in the NexSys by this due date.

Program Finance

General Supervision System Grant

Using IDEA Part B funds, Michigan established the General Supervision System Grant. The grant provides funding to support ISD development and implementation of a General Supervision System that will, in part, support improvement efforts and build capacity within its local districts to fulfill the ISD's responsibilities under the IDEA to ensure the provision of a FAPE for all students with an IEP.

Grants are awarded annually. Each ISD submits an application which includes a plan for development and implementation of a General Supervision System that identifies a priority area, timelines and activities, progress on the development and implementation of the General Supervision System, data, and an appropriate budget. Grant applications are submitted to OSE by August 1 of each year using the following systems: Plans are submitted using Catamaran and the budget and staff special education credentials are submitted using NexSys.

The period of obligation of the General Supervision Grant is 12 months, starting July 1.

July 1 (month 1): OSE awards the grant to the ISD on August 1 with an effective date of July 1.

May 28 (month 11): The ISD submits a final narrative report through Catamaran.

June 30 (month 12): The grant ends. Unused funds, if any, are no longer available to use.

August 29: The ISD submits a FER through CMS.

Program Fiscal Oversight

Federal IDEA Part B grants and special education state aid cost reports for reimbursement are subject to federal and state monitoring requirements. The Program Finance Unit monitors special education state aid cost reports and federal IDEA Part B grants are managed appropriately by utilizing a comprehensive application process, targeted technical assistance, risk-based compliance assessment model and Program Fiscal Reviews (PFR).

Fiscal Monitor Contact

To Be Determined

Fiscal Compliance Requirements

Fiscal compliance requirement links are available on the OSE website.

Program Finance

Program Fiscal Oversight continued

Technical Assistance
Technical assistance is an integral part of the Program Finance Unit to ensure subrecipients are educated regarding fiscal compliance requirements of IDEA Part B, allowability of expenditures within their specific grant award, and applicable MARSE rules. Although a risk assessment serves as the basis to formulate technical assistance needs, targeted presentations to groups or on a one-to-one basis are on-going throughout the year.

Single Audit Finding Review
MDE Office of Audits actively tracks and reviews external audit reports as required by the Single Audit Act. Through a coordinated effort with MDE's Office of Audits, program finance monitors receive, review, and ensure districts/entities take timely and appropriate action on all deficiencies relating to special education. As required a management decision is then issued by the Program Finance manager finalizing the review.

Program Fiscal Review (PFR)
Program finance monitors perform PFR monitoring activities for special education federal grants and reimbursable state aid costs reported. These monitoring reviews focus on compliance with federal and state programmatic and fiscal requirements in relation to expenditures. Reviews may be done in the form of a desk and/or on-site review and incorporate a collaboration of program and fiscal.

Federal Requirements for Pass-through Entities

2 CFR § 300.332(c)
Evaluate each subrecipient's risk of noncompliance.

2 CFR § 300.332(e)
Monitor activities of subrecipient.

2 CFR § 300.332(e)(3)
Issue management decision on audit findings.

2 CFR § 300.332(f)(1)
Provide subrecipients with training and technical assistance.

2 CFR § 300.332(f)(2)
Perform on-site reviews of subrecipients program.

PFR's are targeted to risk areas and may include:

- An organization's policies, processes, and procedures ensuring proper management of the grant award, including its accounting, procurement, contracting, and equipment management.
- Verification that federal and state grant expenditures are allowable and allocable to the grant award and have been allocated properly to the appropriate cost category during the performance period.
- Review expenditures are supported with appropriate documentation.

Laws and Regulations

Federal and state laws and regulation links are available on the OSE website.

IDEA Part B Fiscal Requirements

Maintenance of State Financial Support (34 CFR § 300.163)
The requirement that the state may not reduce the amount of financial support for special education and related services for children with disabilities below the amount of that support for the preceding fiscal year.

Local School District Maintenance of Effort (LEA) (34 CFR §§ 300.163-300.205)
The requirement that an LEA cannot use the IDEA Part B funds to reduce their level of expenditures for the education of children with disabilities made by the LEA from local or local and state funds below the level of those expenditures for the preceding fiscal year.

Excess Cost (34 CFR § 300.16 & 34 CFR § 300.202(B))
The requirement that the IDEA Part B funds are provided to support the excess costs of special education.

Proportionate Share (34 CFR § 300.133)
The requirement that an LEA is required to reserve a proportionate amount of their special education flowthrough allocation (section 611 ages 3-21) and their preschool allocation (section 619 ages 3-5) to provide special education and related services to parentally-placed private school children with disabilities.

Coordinated Early Intervening Services (CEIS) (34 CFR § 300.226)
The provision that an LEA may reserve up to 15 percent of their Part B funds, less any amount reduced by the LEA for the LEA Maintenance of Effort Adjustment (34 CFR § 300.205), to develop and implement coordinated early intervening services for students in kindergarten through grade 12 (with a particular emphasis on students in kindergarten through grade three) who are not currently identified as needing special education or related services, but who need additional academic and behavioral support to succeed in a general education environment.

LEAs identified as having significant disproportionality are required to reserve the maximum amount (15 percent) of funds under § 300.226 to provide comprehensive coordinated early intervening services to serve children in the LEA, particularly, but not exclusively, children in those groups that were significantly overidentified.

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

Roxanne Balfour
Director
517-897-4138
BalfourR@Michigan.gov

MDE RBLV and RDHH are partially funded through OSE. The projects provide consultation, training, and resources to families and educational teams serving students who are blind or have low vision (BLV) and/or deaf or hard of hearing (DHH).

MDE RBLV and RDHH also have direct oversight of Camp Tuhsmeheta (Camp T), located in Greenville, MI. Camp T is a 300-acre outdoor education facility that provides year-round programming for students who are BLV and Michigan groups with an educational focus for school-age children.

MDE RBLV and RDHH Contact

Main line
517-241-7083

MDE RBLV and RDHH website

Visit the MDE RBLV and RDHH website for information on all services and programs available. MDE RBLV and RDHH services include:

- Consultation
- Classes/workshops/conferences
- Professional development
- Braille and large print books
- American Printing House for the Blind (APH) materials

Michigan School for the Deaf (MSD)

Rebecca McIntyre
Assistant Director
MDE OSE
517-335-0457
McIntyreR1@Michigan.gov

Jessica Contreras
Head of School
810-397-2264
ContrerasJ2@Michigan.gov

MSD is a State of Michigan residential Deaf and hard of hearing school operated by MDE. MSD was established by the Michigan legislature in 1848 and is located in Flint. Students are referred to the school by their local school district, and placement is determined by an IEP team. Students who attend MSD receive a bi-lingual and bi-cultural education, rich in American sign language (ASL) and written English, as well as academic and, for some students, residential support services.

MSD Contact

Main line
V: 810-257-1400
VP: 810-515-8243

MSD website

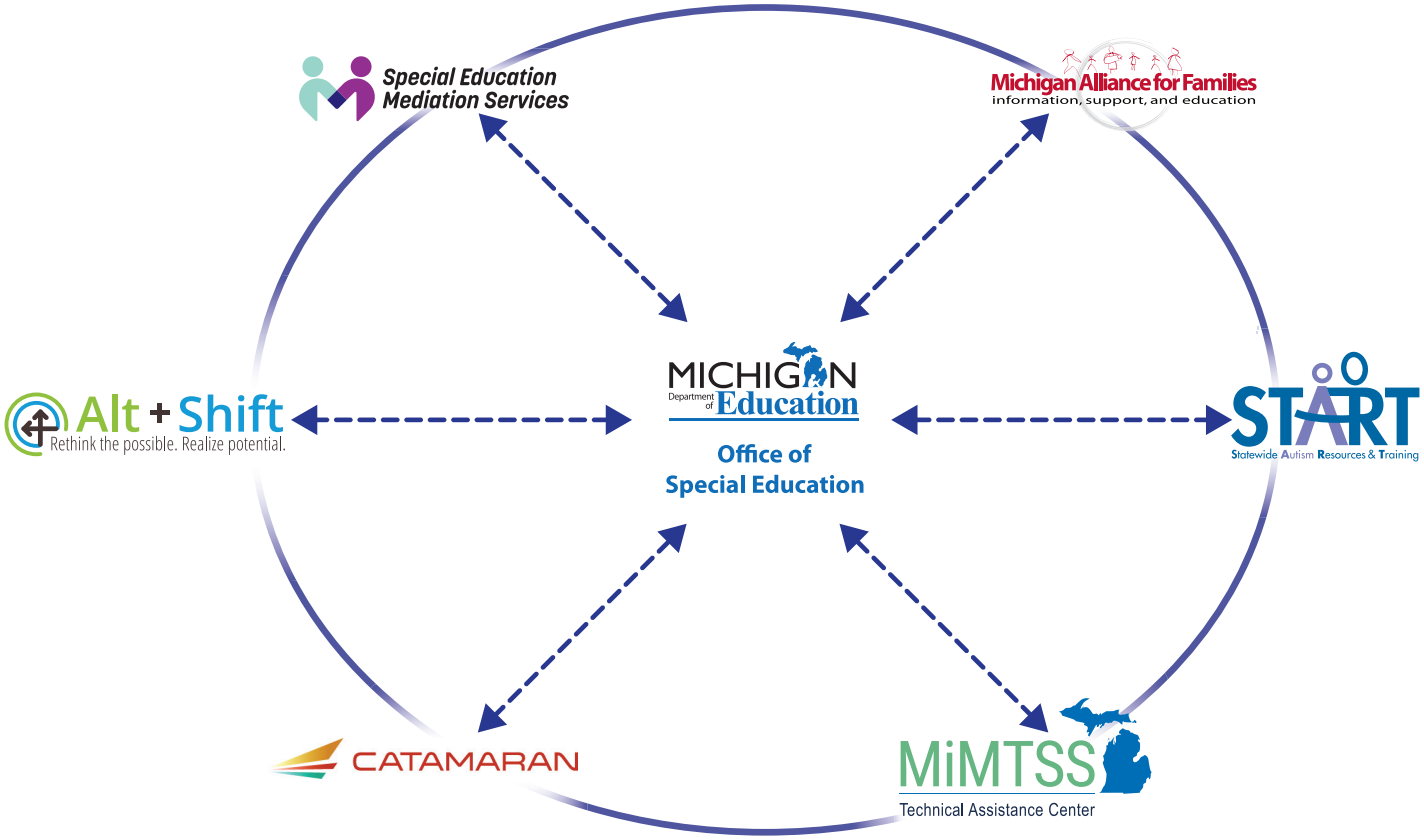
IDEA Grant Funded Initiatives (GFIs)

OSE established various IDEA GFIs to enhance its support for special education in Michigan. IDEA GFIs are funded by IDEA Part B and are awarded through OSE.

IDEA GFIs provide statewide assistance in advancing evidence-based practices to support diverse learners in their least restrictive environment. Each IDEA GFI addresses different needs identified through state or federal mandates and stakeholder-based concerns.

IDEA GFIs support a variety of stakeholders, including school districts and families of students with disabilities. Some examples of support include:

- Providing professional development and training.
- Implementing proven programs in schools.
- Producing or loaning materials for students.
- Disseminating critical guidance and information.



Alt+Shift

With a focus on collaboration and impact, Alt+Shift offers professional learning, including training, technical assistance, and co-constructed implementation planning, that strives to shift adult mindsets and provide alternative options to improve outcomes for every student.

Jeff Diedrich
Director
Jeff.Diedrich@gmail.com
517-488-5489

Alt+Shift website

Catamaran

Catamaran is the system used to track activities and data related to the IDEA and the MARSE for MDE OSE and MiLEAP. Catamaran is designed to support districts and service areas in meeting their obligations of the IDEA, MARSE, and state identified priorities. Catamaran is managed by OSE.

Jessica Brady
Performance Reporting Unit Supervisor
BradyJ@Michigan.gov
517-241-4414

Catamaran website

Catamaran Technical Assistance website

Michigan Alliance for Families

Michigan Alliance for Families works through regional sites that offer individual support, mentoring, and learning opportunities for parents of children with disabilities. Education partners and parent mentors are available to deliver supports and services to parents in their area.

Kanika Littleton

Project Director
Kanika@michiganallianceforfamilies.org

Michigan Alliance for Families website

Special Education Mediation Services (SEMS)

SEMS provides confidential mediation to help resolve disputes for any special education issue. If an agreement is reached, it is legally binding. SEMS also provides trained neutral parties to facilitate any special education meeting including IEPs, IFSPs, and resolution sessions. These trained individuals also provide workshops on special education related topics including collaboration and conflict resolution.

517-334-0034

Case Intake and Information

1-833-KIDS 1ST
1-833-543-7178

SEMS website

Michigan's Multi-Tiered System of Supports Technical Assistance Center (MiMTSS TA Center)

The MiMTSS TA Center partners with ISDs and LEAs to develop local capacity for the implementation of Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS). MTSS provides a framework for effective learning environments that promote successful outcomes for all students.

Kim St. Martin
Director
KStMartin@mimtss.org
877-702-8600 ext. 4027

MiMTSS Technical Assistance Center website

Statewide Autism Resources and Training (START)

The START Project provides evidence-based training, technical assistance, and resources to school-based teams that support students with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD). START is a statewide collaborative effort to make systems level changes to improve the educational programming and quality of life for students with ASD.

Amy Matthews
Director
MatthewA@gvsu.edu
616-331-3513

START website