

**Michigan Interagency Coordinating Council (MICC)**  
***Early On*<sup>®</sup> Michigan**  
**(Part C of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act)**  
**Thursday, September 26, 2024**  
**9:30 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.**  
**Lake Michigan Room**  
**Michigan Library and Historical Center**  
**702 W. Kalamazoo Street**  
**Lansing, MI**

**Minutes**

**Members Present:** Synthia Britton, Kae Dubay, Monica Gaines, Cheryl Granzo, Nicole Hamp, Stephanie Hirschert-Walton, Beth Jenkins, Irma Lopez-Barajas, Salina Mann, Tami Mannes, Tori McIntosh, Amy Miilu, Susan Morningstar, Lisa Perugi, LaShorage Shaffer, Cara Sutcliffe

**Members Absent:** Nerita Adams-Spillers, Joe Clark, Andrea LaFramboise, Vicki Thomas

**Alternates Present:** LaSean Thompson, Jihan Young

**Staff Present:** Laura Goldthwait, Michele Harmala, Kelly Hurshe, Mark Kuipers, Sophia Lafayette-Lause, Cheryl Najm, Colleen O'Connor, Barb Schinderle, Janet Timbs

**Grantees Present:** Clinton County RESA Office of Innovative Projects:  
Christy Callahan, Jen Champagne,  
Jenny Koenigsknecht  
Michigan Alliance for Families  
Victoria Martinez  
Wayne State University (Evaluation Project):  
Charo Hulleza, Muhammad Moiz, Luna Xuan

**Guests:** Jocelin Bailey, Lindsay Galicki, Beth Kennedy, Meghan Shepard

**Call to Order:** Chairperson Lisa Perugi called the meeting to order at 9:30 a.m.

**Introductions:** Introductions were made and everyone was welcomed.

**Approval of Minutes:**

**A motion was made by Tami Mannes and supported by Cheryl Granzo to approve the minutes.**

**Motion carried.**

## **Approval of Agenda:**

**A motion was made by Irma Lopez-Barajas and supported by Stephanie Hirschert-Walton to approve the agenda. Motion carried.**

## **Worth Mentioning**

A recommendation came from the Parent Involvement Committee (PIC) to start each MICC meeting with an activity that keeps children and families at the heart of what we do, helps the MICC members, alternates, grantees, and staff get to know each other better, and allows others to understand the different perspectives that make up the MICC.

Mark Kuipers is the 619 coordinator for Michigan and is responsible for children ages three to five who have IEPs (preschool special education). He works closely with the *Early On* team and prior to this role he worked for Clinton County RESA (CCRESA). Mark has worked in the special education field for over 40 years. Through the years he has had many roles, including supervisor, teacher, and transition coordinator. Mark strives to be transparent and keep systems accessible to families. Mark is known for being passionate about the work he does, PreK for All, and will likely show up to work wearing a blue shirt.

## **Updates:**

### **Michigan Department of Lifelong Education, Advancement, and Potential (MiLEAP)**

As of July 1, the *Early On* grant is fully at MiLEAP. The infrastructure is still being built; however, new leadership is in place at MiLEAP.

Dr. Beverly Walker-Griffea is the director of MiLEAP. She previously served as the president of Mott Community College in Flint, Michigan, where she was the first female and first African American president in the college's history. She is a national leader in education policy and will bring a wealth of knowledge and expertise to MiLEAP.

Dr. Sophia Lafayette-Lause is the director of Great Start Readiness Program (GSRP), Early Childhood Special Education, and Family Services. She previously served as the executive director of early childhood at Wayne RESA.

### **State Systemic Improvement Plan (SSIP)**

Over the next several months, the work of the SSIP is going to change direction. Rather than starting a fifth cohort of new service areas this fall, the team decided to:

- Offer Pyramid Model training and Parent Child Interaction Observation (PCIO) training to the 25 service areas who have not yet participated in an SSIP cohort. These trainings will be conducted by Mary Mackrain and offered in the spring and fall of 2025.
- Three workgroups (Workforce, Families, and State Level Activities) were formed as a result of the Root Cause Analysis. The workgroups will meet over the next several months and provide recommendations around new activities

to implement with the next cohort with the purpose of improving social emotional outcomes.

- Continue supporting the 31 service areas who have participated in the SSIP cohorts. This will include monthly Community of Practice (CoP) calls with cohort 4 leads and CoPs three times a year with cohorts 1, 2, and 3. Office hours are provided monthly for all cohorts and technical assistance is provided as needed.

### **MICC Membership**

New appointments and reappointments have been made for three-year terms expiring in October 2027.

- Lisa Perugi, Wayne County, reappointed as chairperson and to represent public or private providers of early intervention services
- Tori McIntosh, Oakland County, reappointed to represent parents of infants or toddlers with disabilities
- LaShorage Shaffer, Oakland County, appointed to represent individuals involved in personnel preparation
- Nicole Hamp, Washtenaw County, appointed to represent other individuals selected by the governor

On November 1, 2024, the MICC will have two additional openings for:

- One individual representing public or private providers of early intervention services
- One legislative representative

### **Early On Conference**

The *Early On* conference, Ripples to Waves: The Power of Early Intervention will be held at the Grand Traverse Resort in Acme, Michigan. The preconference date is November 12, 2024, and the conference is November 13-14, 2024. Registration is now closed with 850 people registered for the conference and 500 registered for the pre-day conference. There is a waiting list.

Preconference: <https://eotta.ccesa.org/Event.php?id=4810>

Register for the conference: <https://eotta.ccesa.org/Event.php?id=4811>

### **Michigan State Plan**

The Michigan State Plan is being updated and restructured so that all the policies can be pulled out separately. The reasoning for this is so when one policy needs updating, the whole State Plan doesn't have to be rewritten. Janet Timbs would like input from the Council prior to it going out for public comment.

### **MICC meeting dates for 2025**

The Executive Committee proposed the following meeting dates for 2025:

Thursday, February 27, 2025

Thursday, May 22, 2025

Thursday, September 11, 2025

Thursday, December 4, 2025

**A motion was made by Tami Mannes and supported by LaShorage Shaffer to accept the MICC meeting dates for 2025.**

**Discussion.**

**Motion passed.**

**Formation of new Ad Hoc Committee:** Mission/vision and bylaw review, equity statement

The last time the bylaws were reviewed and updated was in 2021. It is time to review them. In addition, many states are including a statement around equity into their mission and vision statements, and members are interested in this.

The expectations for this ad hoc committee would be a year commitment. The charge would be to update the MICC and *Early On* vision and mission statements to include a piece around equity. After that work is complete, the bylaws would be updated, keeping with the same theme of equity.

Co-chairs, which would include a parent and professional partnership, would be ideal. Prior to this work, some pre work will take place including looking at MiLEAP's mission/vision/equity statements so they are aligned.

This work also includes updating the *Early On* mission and vision statements, so involvement from CCRESA is requested since there has been work done on the rebranding of *Early On*. The new *Early On* tagline is: Partnering to support your child's development birth to 3.

**A motion was made by Cara Sutcliffe and supported by Nikki Hamp to form a Mission/Vision and Bylaw Review Ad Hoc Committee.**

**Discussion:** A sign-up sheet was passed around the room and people were asked to participate.

The following members volunteered to be part of this work: Cara Sutcliffe, Nikki Hamp, LaSean Thompson, Salina Mann, Jenny Koenigsknecht, Janet Timbs, Jen Champagne, and Irma Lopez-Barajas. Barb Schinderle will staff the ad hoc committee and work with the members to get a first meeting date on the calendar.

**Motion passed.**

**Early On Diversity Equity and Inclusion (DEI) Study**

At the May MICC meeting, members learned about the Examination of the Michigan Part C System Through the Lens of DEI which was conducted by Wayne State University, in partnership with CCRESA, Office of Innovative Projects. The purpose of the study was to examine gaps, strengths, and barriers to DEI in the *Early On* system in order to develop action plans and implement strategies to assist local areas to close the gaps in DEI.

Existing data were analyzed and a focus group and survey were completed to learn from families who chose not to participate or left *Early On* after six months or less of service.

Gaps and barriers were discovered around race/ethnicity, income level, and geographic regions of the state for the following areas:

- initial Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP) meetings
- frequency of services
- length of services
- perceived helpfulness of service provider
- family outcomes
- child outcomes

The theme that emerged was that African American/Black children and families did not benefit from *Early On* at as high of a rate as White families. Some of the areas include:

- The *Early On* system completed statistically significantly fewer initial IFSP meetings with families who are African American/Black when compared to other groups.
- African American children received fewer *Early On* services, both in terms of frequency and length of services, when compared to White or Asian children.
- African American families perceived significantly lower levels of service provider's helpfulness compared to White families.
- African American families report experiencing lower levels of positive family impact as a result of their participation in *Early On*, when compared to White families.
- Positive child outcomes for African American children are consistently lower, compared to White families.

Since the May meeting, the state has been working to close the gaps and the following activities have taken place.

- ❖ Roll out plan- statewide webinar
- ❖ Pre-day session at the *Early On* conference and possibly a poster session
- ❖ The Essentials of *Early On*, sixth module on culturally responsive practices in *Early On*, including but not limited to, the topic of implicit bias will be launched at the *Early On* conference.
- ❖ The DEI data dashboard- the Center for Educational Performance and Information (CEPI) has all the data needed and is working to have the dashboard completed in the next two weeks.
- ❖ The EOT&TA team has started examining the Diversity Informed Tenets of Infant Mental Health and how the tenets relate to training, technical assistance, self-awareness, and interactions with others.
- ❖ There is a strong commitment for advancing equity embedded within the public awareness work.

MICC members shared some actions that they could take to address the gaps, which include:

Stephanie Hirchert-Walton asked if there could be a better connection with MDHHS around referrals for homelessness, substance abuse, and foster care, and reaching the family?

Cheryl Granzo shared that the person who makes the referral often doesn't work for the family and the ISD must do detective work to find out who that person is. That is the hard part, you get the referral, but the ongoing worker isn't the investigator.

Tami Mannes mentioned safety is an issue for personnel. Trust is also an issue because of many factors, it may not be there between the parent and the service provider. One comment shared was that most of the service providers are White. As a service area, you need space to think through and promote DEI so all families have access. What supports are available to get at broader problem solving together?

Christy Callahan shared that in the DEI workplan they proposed professional learning including a CoP cohort with ongoing support.

Jen Champagne mentioned the doula initiative (<https://www.michigan.gov/mdhhs/keep-mi-healthy/maternal-and-infant-health/mdhhs-doula-initiative>) which could help with trust issues.

LaShorage Shafer reflected on the data that show scheduling and timing is a problem. Could there be a pilot done in a service area that offered evening hours once a week so families can make it to their IFSP meetings? Some service providers in the room shared that their ISD does offer meetings outside of the 9-5 timeframe.

LaShorage let everyone know about a webinar scheduled for October 1, 2024, from 4:30-6:00 pm on personnel shortages in special education and how to recruit more staff: <https://specialedshortages.org/>

Cara Sutcliffe suggested an extra pathway for families to attend their IFSP meetings, such as someone close to the family, an aunt/uncle or friend, could step in for the parents and attend the meetings.

Nikki Hamp brought up the topic of eligibility. Could having two tiers of eligibility lead to some of our DEI issues? She mentioned there are often incorrect diagnoses for Black and brown children. Also, it makes sense that Black families would report lower levels of helpfulness of their providers since they are receiving less services. Why are children receiving less services? What are we missing? Tami Mannes agreed that our bifurcated system leads to inequities and gave the example of how some ISDs have zero children eligible for special education and other ISDs have 90 percent of children eligible for special education. Children aren't getting the same services because there aren't protections across the state that are uniform.

Jocelin Bailey, early intervention coordinator from Kalamazoo RESA was curious about digging into family and child outcomes data. Charo Hulleza shared Kalamazoo RESA's data with Jocelin after the meeting.

### **Sharing information from the field**

This is Joe Clark's and Cheryl Granzo's last meeting. Lisa Perugi thanked them for serving on the MICC.

Muzna Sarwar was selected for this year's Celena Barnes Family Leadership Award. Muzna is from Wayne County and was selected from among eight nominees. Muzna has served on the Wayne LICC since 2019 and has contributed to Wayne County's public awareness work, updating their mission and vision, reviewed their child outcome data, and contributes to their LICC parent group. She is a parent guide with the Michigan Hands and Voices, Guide by Your Side Program, is an advocate for hearing screenings for all children in *Early On*, and presented at the Families Matter Conference to support awareness of *Early On*.

Beth Kennedy presented in Wayne County about DeafBlind Central, and they will be added to the Central Registry.

Tami Mannes was pleased to share that Ottawa ISD hired a teacher for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing.

Janet Timbs shared that MiLEAP's *Early On* team has begun fall monitoring. The focus is on General Supervision and implementation of IFSPs.

Cheryl Granzo shared that Ionia ISD served 40 more children within the past year. Furthermore, Cheryl asked for another staff member in order to maintain weekly *Early On* visits for families, and she received another FTE from special education. When she talks to her peers, they are experiencing the same issues. *Early On* needs more Section 54d funding, but special education needs to chip in too.

**Public Comment: None**

**Adjourn:**

**A motion to adjourn was made by Irma Lopez-Barajas.**

**Motion carried.**