



Special Education Report October, 2026

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Administrators for Accountability & Program Improvement (T. Hassett, M. Sly, J. Pung):

- **General Supervision Grant Team Updates:**

- Lakewood Public Schools is implementing the action plan related to the state complaint.
- Belding Area School District is implementing the action plan related to the state complaint.
- The September ancillary staff professional learning was related to the dysregulation cycle and what adults can do to prevent and de-escalate behavior.
- District data portrait conversations were positive and engaging in all districts during the week of 9-28-26. Data analysis and discussions were collaborative and generated a variety of ideas for partnered continuous improvement. The GSM team will review meeting notes and develop a summary and proposed next steps for this school year as well as potential general supervision goals/strategies for 2027-2028 school year.
- A state complaint was filed against Ionia Public Schools. The family and the team will be engaging in mediation to work towards resolution. The GSM team will support the district if the investigation continues.
- A Coaching PLC to improve collaboration among all ISD staff engaged in coaching responsibilities, primarily Literacy Coaches and Engagement Consultants. This is a joint initiative between general education and special education focused on enhancing and improving the skills needed to coach adults.

- **Ancillary Team Updates and Upcoming Trainings:**

- The next ancillary staff meeting is scheduled for October 15. The topic is Special Education Legal Updates. It will be held in person at Steele Street Hall due to the ISD renovations.
- PLC meeting dates for all discipline groups will follow the ancillary staff meeting on October 15. PLCs will be engaged in more ISD, district, and student data analysis and reviews this year.
- The Engagement Consultants are hosting Data Collection Training on October 14.
- The first date Special Education PLC will be held on October 15th.

- **New Hires or Current Vacancies**

- Current Vacancies:



- Speech and Language Pathologist
- (2) School Social Workers
- New Hires:
 - Anticipated hire of Kivia Ashford in October - SSW (contracted)

Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) Program (B. Woolston):

- New hires
 - Issabell Barr - AEC Health Care Aide
 - Dani Boonstra - AEC Health Care Aide and Sub Teacher
 - Stephanie Reed - Twin Rivers Health Care Aide
 - Sarah Campbell - Twin Rivers ASD Teacher

Early Childhood Programs (C. Granzo)

- **Early On:** The program received the following referrals in the past few months.
July 33, August 20, September 24

The data specialist is working to try to get data in a format that would be able to submit for the upcoming count. The transition to Powerschool resulted in about 70% of our kids having the wrong school district which had to be manually corrected. We are seeing language, race and gender errors as well but we are correcting those as we go. Our biggest issue is that the Early On and special ed data is not flowing completely from Infinity. We are working with the tech department and seeking support from Berrin to help us get our data where it needs to be so we can review it and be ready to submit for the count.

Playgroups started in August, we will have approximately 15 children that we will be able to submit for partial FTE on. Butterflies were flying in Portland this week.



We posted for our early intervention position. We interviewed an OT who declined to do the second interview as she had only been in her current position for 6 months and decided to stay the course. We held a first interview for a SSW on Wednesday, she is from the east side of the state. She is coming to complete her second interview and shadow a team member on 10/2. We will still be seeking an OT to fill the role of Michele Pelc who will be retiring in December.



Preschool

Early childhood special education staff from Belding and Ionia participated in the ECSE PLC which is focusing on the START evidence based practices for preschool. The first session was on the Pyramid model which is a tiered, evidence-based framework designed to promote social-emotional competence and address challenging behaviors in children from birth to age five. All of the Belding ancillary staff participated and made plans to implement Tucker the Turtle into their classroom program. Two of the ECSE teachers requested coaching support from Carol, our ECSE Inclusion teacher and coach, to support specific practices in their classrooms. Carol is participating in the START Practiced Based coaching series which is an evidence based ongoing, job-embedded professional development framework where a coach supports a practitioner using a cyclical process within a collaborative partnership

DPIL

As you are aware we lost our great Dolly Parton in August of this year. We are deeply saddened by this and are so proud and grateful that we are able to be a part of her legacy by participating as an affiliate of the Dolly Parton Imagination Library. We did receive some extra donations and enrollments during this period of time due to the awareness of the program. We tried to honor and participate in the "9/25 Dolly Day" but there is very little time to plan and organize any true events. I did create a post hourly and sometimes on the half hour posts on our Ionia Imagination Library facebook page. The posts started with some compelling literacy information and the others were posts that featured Dolly's nuggets of wisdom via her quotes. Distribution the past few months are as follow:

July \$5424.55 26 new kids; 40 graduates, 1972 total

August \$4638.17, 59 new and 47 graduates, 1978 total children

September \$4888.89, 129 new and 53 graduates a total of 2060 received books

Today (10/1), I learned that the Ionia Theatre was approached by Disney to see if they would play a re-release 9 to 5 for the large screen. This is apparently going to be done on 10/9. A percentage of the proceeds will be donated directly to our local program. It might be one day with 3 showings and potentially an added date the following week. As stated earlier, not much time to plan a coordinated event.

Freedom Acres (A. Miller)

Staffing & Recruitment

- **Adaptive PE Teacher:** Position remains posted with no viable candidates at this time. Due to grant reimbursement requirements, the candidate must meet exact, specific credentials.
- **Library Position:** Position remains vacant and actively open for recruitment.
- **SCI Teacher & HCA Hiring:** Freedom Acres welcomed new SCI Teacher, Cierra Newton, on September 25th. On her first day, she greeted learners, met staff, and assisted with interviews



for the open SCI HCA position. Makenze English accepted an offer on Monday, September 28th, and began her journey as an ISD employee. She has supported this classroom during our scheduled summer days and various vacancies in the SCI (Severely Cognitively Impaired) program.

Professional Development & Cost Efficiency

- **Ukeru Host Site & Savings:** Freedom Acres/Ionia ISD served as the host site for a two-day Ukeru Train-the-Trainer event (September 17–18), hosting 49 new trainers and 82 recertification participants. Hosting lowered overall expenses for Ionia ISD and local partner districts through shared participant costs.

Looking ahead, Ukeru training dates for September 2027 are set for September 9–10.

- **CPI Advanced Training:**
 - **Standard CPI (NCI) training without advanced skills is scheduled at Ionia ISD for September 13–16, 2027.**
 - Ionia ISD will host the CPI Nonviolent Crisis Intervention (NCI) Advanced Physical Skills training in September 2028.

School Culture & De-escalation

- **De-escalation Benchmarks:** Started the 2026–27 school year with **0 suspensions, 0 restraints, and 0 seclusions**. Staff are focused on building relational capacity and supporting student independence.

IEP Meetings & Stakeholder Engagement

- **IEP Progress:** IEP meetings have begun for the 2026–27 school year. A total of 10 IEP meetings have been conducted to date, with local directors attending 40% (4 of 10 meetings) and parents attending 80% (8 of 10 meetings).

Student Enrollment & Classroom Transitions

- **New Student Admissions:**
 - The SEI (Severely Emotionally Impaired) program welcomed a new student to Abby Bailey's classroom.
 - The SCI (Severely Cognitively Impaired) program welcomed a new student to Stephanie Brown's classroom.
- **Program Consideration:** An IEP is currently scheduled for a child aging out of Early On, and the SCI program will be one of the team's considerations.
- **Classroom Balancing:** As new students are welcomed, student numbers and complex medical needs are being carefully balanced across classrooms. Students will transition to new classrooms as needed to ensure all individual care and educational needs are met.



Transition Training Sites/MoCI Programs (M. Sly)

The House has officially been listed for sale. Hopefully we will have a quick sale so construction can begin at our new transition location.

Deaf & Hard of Hearing (J. Pung)

- No report

Upcoming Events

October 9, 2026; Early Childhood CoP

October 19, 2026; PAC Meeting-Adult Guardianship Presentation

October 28, 2026; Principal Palooza

November 3, 2026; County-Wide 504 Training-Portland Middle School