Special Education Report
November, 2026

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Cheryl Granzo – Angela Miller – Ben Woolston**

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. The student-level state complaint has been completed and closed out.
    - Belding Area School District is implementing the action plan related to the state complaint.
    - The October ancillary staff professional learning hosted Jordan Bullinger from Clark Hill, who presented Special Education legal updates to the team.
    - The GSM team reviewed meeting notes from our district data profile meetings and developed a summary and proposed next steps for this school year, as well as potential general supervision goals/strategies for the 2027-2028 school year.
    - The state complaint that was filed against Ionia Public Schools was able to be resolved in mediation with IPS and the family.
    - Members from the GMS team, in collaboration with general education, presented information on Co-regulation at Portland's professional development day on November 3rd.

- **Ancillary Team Updates and Upcoming Trainings:**
    - The next ancillary staff meeting is scheduled for November 17th. Our presenter will be Kim Wiggens, who will share information on “Push-in to the Classroom! The Why and How for Related Service Providers & Caseload Management to provide Effective Push-Ins and Collaboration!” This session will be held virtually.
    - The Engagement Consultants are hosting Data Collection Training on October 14.
    - The first Special Education PLC was held on October 15th. We had staff attend from districts throughout the county. Our next meeting will be on December 10th; the topic will be improving supplemental aids and service documentation and implementation.
    - Engagement consultants are hosting Inclusion Coaches Session 2 on November 16 from 9-2:30 at the Ionia High School Learning Center.

- **New Hires or Current Vacancies**

    - Current Vacancies:
        - School Social Worker
        - Speech and Language Pathologist (filled with contracted staff)
        - School Social Worker (2 filled with contracted staff)
        - School Psychologists (2 filled with contracted staff)
    - New Hires:

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

- No Report

Early Childhood Programs (C. Granzo)

- **Early On:**
    - During the month of October, we received 28 referrals.
    - We were able to replace our OT (Michele Pelc) who will be retiring in December. The new OT's name is Brianna Rebe, she has her PHD and did her work in DIR. She has been working for the past 6 months in a clinic. We are excited for her to start. She will have a slow start for November and December and will go fulltime in January.
    - We are still seeking an additional staff member to add to our team.
    - We are working on the count–the transition from Skyward to PowerSchool has been challenging!!!

- **Preschool**
    - 1755 teachers are working to implement the processes we have put together
    - Teaming with gen ed partners has proven to be very challenging due to time and schedules
    - Moving to Genesee ISD for our pupil accounting has also proven to be a bit challenging but we are working through the issues and modifying as needed.
    - We have completed 2 of the START trainings.

- **DPIL**
    - Distribution for the month of October was 2064, 63 new children enrolled, $4817.58
    - We also received notice that we received a Community Impact Award of $4000.00 from The United Way of Central Michigan. This will cover almost one month of distribution. It has been several years since we have received an award from United Way as they were no longer offering competitive grant opportunities. Our UW joined with this Central Michigan division so we appreciate this funding opportunity.

- **Early Learning Partnership Grant**
  - This is the name of the new 32P grant. The focus of the grant is a little different than the previous GSC grant.
  - The intention is to have the state of Michigan become a Help Me Grow (HMG) state.
  - HMG, which is a national model, is a system designed to connect families with needed support. Access to developmental screenings and follow up with families to assure they are connected with the resource is required.
  - It is anticipated that the application will be coming out in November. The amount of funds will be the same as we received in the previous GSC grant.

Freedom Acres (A. Miller)

1. Play Inclusion Highlight: New Wheelchair Swing at Freedom Acres

- Bringing Play to All Learners: We are thrilled to announce that Freedom Acres has added a fully accessible wheelchair swing to our playground! All of our students will now get to enjoy a classic childhood staple—swinging—that is so often taken for granted.
- A Heartfelt Thank You: This incredible addition was made possible through the dedication and fundraising efforts of Emme's Avengers, a parent organization raising awareness and supporting research for Rett Syndrome. Their hard work put inclusion front and center for our school community.
- Innovative Recognition: PlayCore will be on-site to help celebrate the grand opening and capture photos of the swing in action. Because this design is a state-of-the-art innovation, Freedom Acres is one of only a few sites in the region to feature it.
- Cheers to Collaboration: A giant thank you to our phenomenal parents, engineers, and dedicated supporters who turned this dream into a reality for our students!

2. Staffing & Recruitment

- **Adaptive PE Teacher:** The position remains posted. We are currently reviewing one new candidate application. Hiring for this role remains strictly aligned with required grant reimbursement credentials to ensure complete regulatory compliance while securing high-quality instruction for our students.
- **Library & Support Staffing:** The library position remains vacant and actively open for recruitment. To strategically address multiple support gaps—including library coverage, current staff vacancies, and prescribed whirlpool services—we are in the process of recruiting and hiring a Health Care Assistant (HCA).

3. Professional Development & Training

Current Focus & Recent Highlights

- **Pediatric CPR & First Aid:** Materials and curriculum have been ordered specifically for classrooms serving ages 3–5.
- **Nonviolent Crisis Intervention (NCI):** Completed training on Friday, October 16, covering 50% of new staff. To accommodate limited substitute availability and current vacancies while maintaining classroom safety, remaining new staff, including the incoming SCI Health Care Assistant, will be trained in small, intentional cohorts once open positions are filled.

- **POHI-SXI Lunch & Learn Series:**
    - The inaugural session was held on Monday, October 26, featuring a presenter who bridged professional expertise with personal experience as a trainer, foster parent, and adoptive parent focusing on **Trust-Based Relational Intervention (TBRI)**. Additional free training opportunities around trauma, relational capacity, and attachment will be made available.
    - **Next Session:** Scheduled virtually for **December 3, 2026, from 11:30 AM – 12:30 PM**.
- **MAASE SEI Adjudicated Youth CoP:** The Community of Practice launched its revitalized series in October, delivering high-value behavioral and instructional resources during its opening meeting.

Future Professional Development & Safety Sequence (2027–28)
- **Ukeru Training:** Confirmed for **September 9–10, 2027**
- **CPI Training Roadmap:**
    - **September 13–16, 2027:** Standard CPI Nonviolent Crisis Intervention (NCI) training (without advanced physical skills) at Ionia ISD.
    - **September 2028:** CPI NCI **Advanced Physical Skills** training session hosted at Ionia ISD.

4. School Culture & De-Escalation
- **Benchmark Success:** We continue to maintain 0 suspensions, 0 restraints, and 0 seclusions for the 2026–27 school year to date.
- **Relational Capacity & Restorative Practices:**
    - Teaching staff are currently engaged in a Dr. Ross Greene book study to prepare for his presentation at the SLIP Conference in January 2027.
    - The Freedom Acres team is evaluating supplementary restorative practice tools to reinforce our core vision: *Kids do well if they can*, and our role is to foster safety, teach skill acquisition, and guide processes for repair and forgiveness.

5. IEP Meetings & Stakeholder Engagement
- **Annual Progress:** A total of 17 IEP meetings have been conducted for the 2026–27 school year to date.
- **Attendance Metrics:**
    - **Local Directors:** 71% overall attendance (12 of 17 meetings), highlighting strong momentum with 100% attendance across the last 8 consecutive meetings.
    - **Parent/Guardian Engagement:** 82% overall attendance (14 of 17 meetings).

6. Student Enrollment & Classroom Transitions
- **Program Admissions:**
    - **Severely Emotionally Impaired (SEI):** Stable with no enrollment changes over the past month.
    - **Severely Cognitively Impaired (SCI):** Welcomed **2 new students** into Stephanie Brown's classroom.
- **Classroom Balancing & Transition Planning:** Staff have evaluated caseload numbers and complex medical needs across classrooms. Rebalancing plans are now in their final stages to ensure optimal individualized care, safety, and instructional support for all students.

Transition Training Sites/MoCI Programs (M. Sly)

We received a bid on the House and are waiting for board approval of the official offer.

Deaf & Hard of Hearing (J. Pung)

- Educational Audiologist Support: Lauren Denti, from the University of Michigan Health, will be on leave starting at the end of November. We will continue to have educational audiologist support from a substitute during her leave.
- Professional Learning: This month, Hannah Wilson, DHH TC, attended the DAYC-2 training and the CASLLS training in October, both of which are programs we have here at the ISD to support our students with hearing impairments.

Upcoming Events

November 16, PAC Meeting with County Special Education Administrators
November 24, Ionia ISD Core Team Meeting with MDE