



Special Education Report **April, 2025**

Natalie Fuller – Cyndi Geiger – Trisha Hassett– Mark Sly
Cheryl Granzo – Angela Miller – Ben Woolston – Kathy Foote

Administrators for Accountability & Program Improvement (C. Geiger, T. Hassett, M. Sly):

- The GSM team is nearing completion on an ISD General Supervision Manual. The team is also improving our general supervision process and creating plans for increasing collaboration with local districts around ISD goals as well as local district continuous improvement plans.
- The GSM team is continuing work on a B11: Child Find Corrective Action with LPS and B13: Transition Data Collection activities with all LEAs.
- The school psychology vacancy was filled by a contracted remote school psychologist with the support of an assessment proctor to support student transitions to the testing site. The teams have begun working together.
- Illuminate reports to improve supervision of student evaluations across the ISD have been created and shared with ISD supervisors and local district directors/coordinators.
- We have filled the position of DHH TC with a fully certified temporary part time person.
- We have started the process of compiling information regarding students who will require compensatory education. We have had two speech and language pathologists out for short FMLA leaves, thus requiring the ISD to make up for that lost instruction. This same requirement is in place for students who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing, receiving DHH TC services who did not receive instruction on their goals from the start of the year to March 21st.

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

- Our next family engagement activity is April 30th. It is our annual ASD Family Bowling Night. This is a very popular event every year, attracting families from all districts. Families will be able to enjoy bowling on their own lane and be served with pizza and pop. This event is paid for with money from our annual START grant.

Early Childhood Programs (C. Granzo):

Early On:

During the month of March, we received 33 referrals to the program. We have two staff members that are due to have babies in May. Thankfully in addition to our current staff a couple of retirees have agreed to come back a day or two over the summer to help fill in as we are required to provide services year round. We submitted all of the data for our findings to the state for review. One was related to a data error that the state noted was observed in another district.



DPIIL: 1961 children; 43 new children enrolled; 53 graduated and \$4500.00 cost for the month. The quilt raffle and sale raised over \$5000.00. We were very grateful to everyone that supported the program from making the quilts, purchases and/or making the quilts. This amount covers approximately one month of distribution.

Freedom Acres School Programs (A. Miller):

Program Updates: Celebrations & Challenges

- **De-escalation Training (DPPD Completion)**
 - 100% of program staff (SEI and SCI) completed de-escalation training for the 2024–25 school year.
 - The majority of SCI staff are trained in UKERU; most SEI staff have completed both UKERU and NCI training.
 - On April 2nd, Ashley Proctor (transitioned from SCI to SEI) and Natalie Fuller completed NCI training, including advanced NCI skills to support crisis response.
 - Our shared mission continues to center on individualized support in accordance with MCL - Section 380.1307h (Seclusion and Restraint Law), aiming to walk alongside our students without being a trauma trigger. Research continues to show that seclusion and restraint are not evidence-based interventions for behavioral change.
- **Power Outages & Recovery**
 - Power outages resulted in two school closures, presenting operational challenges.
 - Staff demonstrated exemplary teamwork, reopening with creative menu planning and emergency procurement of food items from Meijer.
 - Special appreciation to Jeff Duell for grilling in the rain to provide students with a tailgate lunch—an act that reflects our culture of care and adaptability.
- **SCI Summer Programming**
 - SCI team collaboratively developed summer themes and events for learners.



- Field trip challenges (due to medical staffing needs, transportation, and temperature regulation issues) are being addressed with on-site enrichment opportunities.
- Planned visits include farm animals and amphibian experiences to enhance student engagement and sensory exploration.

- **State Testing**

- State assessments began on March 27 with ACT WorkKeys.
- Significant progress continues with MSTEP and MI-ACCESS testing across eligible learners.

- **Planning for 2025–26 School Year**

- Preparations are underway, including updated documentation and school forms for SCI program release on July 1, 2025.

Staffing Update

- Freedom Acres is currently fully staffed.

Behavioral Data Update

- During the 2024–25 school year, the SEI (Severely Emotionally Impaired) program has approached behavioral episodes through a careful risk assessment framework, weighing the impact of intervention against the risk of inaction under the Seclusion and Restraint Law.
- Practices emphasize felt safety, trauma-informed responses, and safety for all. Staff debriefs after every behavioral episode.
- Data observed to date:
 - 15 seclusions
 - 2 restraints
 - 6 calls to non-emergency services
- Non-emergency services or law enforcement are contacted only after all trauma-informed strategies, NCI, Ukeru, and restorative practices have been exhausted and when safety is compromised at the highest level.



- There are currently charges pending in juvenile court for two instances of significant property destruction that exceeded what could reasonably be resolved by staff and student efforts.

Annual IEP Meeting Update

- Since September 5, a total of 39 IEP meetings have been conducted.
 - 38 of 39 meetings (97%) included parent/guardian participation, reflecting strong family engagement.
 - 20 of 39 meetings (51%) included participation from local special education directors.

Professional Development

- **POHI/SXI Lunch & Learn**
 - Next session: April 30, 11:30 AM – 12:30 PM
[Join via Google Meet](#)
- **POHI/SXI Board Member Engagement**
 - ISD tour scheduled for May 16, 2025, in preparation for the Biannual Statewide POHI/SXI Conference, to be hosted by Ionia ISD on April 20, 2026.

PI-OHI & Assistive Technology Department (K. Foote):

- Please welcome Keegan Kelley PI-OHI HCA Oakwood/Portland and Kassandra Furlong PI-OHI HCA Saranac EL to the PI-OHI team.
- The regional team for the Ionia ISD & Alt +Shift *AT Journey* will be meeting in April to discuss Assistive Technology guidelines. Test groups for the *AT Journey* will start with Westwood/Portland, Early On and the ASD program.

Transition Training Sites/MoCI Programs (M. Sly):

- No Report



Deaf & Hard of Hearing (C. Geiger)

- Christine Wilcox, a retired Early On instructor, has taken the position of part-time and temporary DHH TC. Christine will support students across Ionia County through June 2025. She started March 24th.
- Charity Last, our secondary DHH program teacher will assume the role of part time DHH program teacher, and part time DHH TC beginning in August 2025.
- The field trip scheduled for 4/2/24 will be rescheduled as a result of the school closure.
- The DHH program students are invited to attend Camp T in Greenville on May 29, 2025. Camp T provides the students with a fun-filled day of interaction with other students who are also deaf or hard of hearing, language building and teamwork activities at no cost!

Upcoming Events

- May 1st PAC Awards Banquet 5:30-7:30
- April 25th IM SAFE Luncheon
- April 21st Clark Hill Legal Workshop