



To: Board of Education

From: Lisa Nickel

Re: January Board Report

Date: 1/20/26

- The state of Michigan is conducting a Least Restrictive Environment audit on every county in the state over the course of 5 years. The week of February 9th brings the audit team to Washtenaw County. They will spend the first day meeting with WISD administration as well as touring some of the county wide programs. The second and third days will have them visiting the local districts and conducting interviews with general education teachers, special education staff and administrators. They will close out the week with a county wide debrief with superintendents and directors. Their goal is to determine where there might be gaps when it comes to ensuring that districts find the right balance of inclusion and individualized support to help students with disabilities make meaningful educational and social emotional progress. For more information please click [here](#).
- Testing season is almost upon us with the kick off being WIDA assessment for our multilingual students. That window opens January 27th and runs until April 4th. This assessment measures the English language proficiency in our students who have qualified as an English Learner. It is an annual assessment and does provide the data that determines if a student is still eligible as an English Learner as the state provides [entrance and exit protocols](#) for districts to follow.
- The next step in preparing for the spring testing season is to verify pre-id testing rosters from the state with our student lists in PowerSchool as well as build test sessions. Students who have a more significant impairment will take the [MI ACCESS assessment](#) instead of MSTEP. The state does have a [1% cap](#) on students taking the MI ACCESS and staff receive [training](#) each January in how to make the determination to have a student take an alternate assessment. All materials for MI ACCESS have been ordered and will arrive the week prior to Spring Break.
- The paraprofessional leadership group and myself are in the final planning stages for the February 9th professional development day. Topics will include - conflict resolution, using visuals, supporting communication, adapting/modifying assignments, and sensory support.

Respectfully,

Lisa Nickel, Director of Special Education and Early Childhood
Chelsea School District