



## Special Education Report August, 2025

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Cheryl Granzo – Angela Miller – Ben Woolston – Kathy Foote

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

- **General Supervision Grant Team Updates:**
  - The 24/25 GSSG grant report has been submitted to MDE.
  - The 24/25 GSSP grant application will be submitted by Aug 1st.
  - Every year, MDE evaluates how well ISDs are meeting the requirements of IDEA. This is the first year since 2020 that our ISD has met those requirements.
  - Special education directors from around the county will come together on August 7th for a day packed with learning and collaboration, focused on data analysis, LRE, improving leadership skills, and school culture.
  - Trisha and the GMS team have created district data portraits, which demonstrate a variety of results and outcomes, including graduation rates, reading and math proficiency, and behavioral data analysis.
- **Ancillary Team Updates and Upcoming Trainings:**
  - Opening day is on August 18th, when we will come together at Freedom Acres. Chase Milke will inspire us with *“The Science of Stress Resilience”*, focusing on the fact that we are all in this together.
  - Infinity's new user training will be on August 6th
  - Mentor Mentee training will be on August 6th
  - ISD administrators will attend the MAASE Summer Institute August 10th-13th.
  - Set to release new staff onboarding documents.
- **New Hires or Current Vacancies**
  - New Hire: Lisa Hervey: School Psychologist (ISD retire, rejoining the team)
  - New Hire: Abby Thelen: Behavior Coach
  - Current Vacancy: two school social worker positions
  - Current Vacancy: additional behavior coach position
  - Current Vacancy: interpreter for the DHH program

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

- No report



### **Early Childhood Programs (C. Granzo):**

- **Early On:** Staff have continued to work through the summer as we are required to provide services year round. We are working on the year-end report which will be available next month.
- **DPIL:**

Month	Total Number	New Children	Cost
June	1928	29	\$4357.33
July	1926	40	\$4411.57
August	1949	67	\$4539.33

We received an incredible gift of [\\$8000.00 from Jordan Manufacturing in Belding](#). We were able to get a tour of their facility, meet the employees and hear from the owner Justin Johnson why literacy is important to him as a business owner. It was truly an amazing experience.

### **Freedom Acres School Programs (A. Miller):**

#### **1. School Updates or Changes**

- **SCI HCA Vacancy:** We currently have a Health Care Aide (HCA) vacancy in the Severely Cognitively Impaired (SCI) program. Interviews are scheduled for July 30th.
- **Program Enrichment:** Students and staff enjoyed a visit to Bignall Farm on June 25th. Despite a light sprinkle of Michigan rain—graciously timed after the animals left—it was a joyful experience for all. On July 10th, the Alligator Sanctuary visited, offering tactile and engaging interactions with reptiles, captivating both students and staff.





● **Field Trip Accessibility:** Field trips present significant challenges for our student population due to the need for buses equipped with 30+ wheelchair slots and environments that are fully accessible.

## **2. New Hires or Current Vacancies**

● **Current Vacancy:** Health Care Aide (SCI Program) – Interviews scheduled for July 30th.

## **3. Highlights of Positive Work by Staff or Students**

● **Adapted Physical Education:** Emily Stall has provided two days of adapted PE instruction, and beginning July 22nd, instruction will be delivered in a temperature-regulated environment. This is critical for students who are medically unable to self-regulate temperature and face serious health risks in high heat. The newly installed air conditioning in the gym has been a tremendous support, deeply appreciated by families, staff, and students.

## **4. Initiatives or Grants in Progress**

- **Summer Learning:** Extended school year services have supported continued student growth in mobility, communication, whirlpools, and peer engagement.
- **Professional Development for 2025–26:** Upcoming PD includes MOVE training, attendance at the POHI/SXI Statewide Conference (hosted by Ionia ISD), NCI and Ukeru training, sessions on Motivation with Chase Mielke, Medicaid billing, Personal Curriculum, and Social Emotional Learning.

## **5. State-Level Work or Involvement**

- The building principal completed Advanced Adaptive Schools Training.
- Ionia ISD will host Ukeru training this September, drawing participants from across the state. New national trainers will also be on site for observation and support.

## **6. Past or Upcoming Events Showcasing Our Team/Programs**

- **Freedom Acres PTO:** Our energized PTO continues to support school-wide optimism! They have organized the Kona Ice Truck to visit on August 20th, providing two hours of icy fun to celebrate the return of all programs and staff to Freedom Acres.

## **7. Barrier or Challenge That Needs to Be Addressed**

- **Transportation for Field Trips:** Accessing field trip opportunities is limited by the availability of buses with sufficient wheelchair capacity and fully accessible venues. This remains a systemic



barrier to inclusive community experiences for our students.

## 8. Additional Suggestions or Notes for the Team

- Appreciation is extended to all staff supporting summer instruction and enrichment. Your flexibility, creativity, and commitment continue to make Freedom Acres a place of belonging and joy.

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

- PIOHI has the following vacancies due to student district changes: Ionia Middle School, Rather & Saranac El.
- Fall of 2025 Assistive Technology will be beginning the next phase with Alt + Shift and ISD partnership plan.

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

- **MOCI Programs:** No Updates
- **Transition Training Sites:**

The Independent Living Center (the House) will be having its annual yard sale in September.

The anticipated dates are set for September 4th - 5th.

Donations can be dropped off at 201 E. Main Street during school hours, beginning Monday, August 18th.





### **Deaf & Hard of Hearing (J. Pung)**

- Our team will meet together in early August to connect and plan for the upcoming year.
- Charity Last will serve as our DHH specialist, and Hannah Wilson will serve as our DHH teacher.
- LEAD-K (Language Equality and Acquisition for Deaf Children) : We received notification that we will be in a collaborative grant with Kent ISD and Montcalm LEAD K is a state law that comes into effect September 1. The legislation seeks to ensure that children who are DHH have a strong language foundation and are kindergarten-ready when they start school. It applies to children who are DHH and age 5 or younger. The focus of the grant will be on providing training and support to DHH teachers and relevant staff that work with DHH eligible children between birth and five years of age. You can learn more about LEAD K [here](#).

### **Upcoming Events**

Ionia Public Idea Exchange Professional Development-August 5

Ionia ISD New Staff Training-August 6

Special Education Directors County Retreat-August 7

Opening Day August 18-Speaker Chase Milke