

Board Report

Month: February 2026

Administrator: Angela Telfer, Executive Director for Special Education

Update:

Regional Special Education Collaboration and Least Restrictive Environment (LRE) Work

Regional Special Education Directors meet monthly with the KRESA Executive Director for Special Education and the KRESA Program Improvement and Accountability Director to align efforts and strengthen special education practices across the county. This year, the group has continued its focused work on **Least Restrictive Environment (LRE)** while reviewing **Michigan Department of Education–Office of Special Education (MDE-OSE) Guidance Document updates** to ensure shared understanding of how the guidance impacts daily practice in districts.

Directors are regularly informed of relevant **professional development opportunities**, including MAISA's *Creating Safe Learning Environments* series. **Portage Public Schools is participating in this series in partnership with Kalamazoo RESA.** Upon completion, both districts will have trained facilitators who can support implementation and provide training within their own districts and across other local districts, expanding regional capacity.

This year, the group also **developed and finalized countywide LRE processes for preschool-aged children**, strengthening consistency and clarity across early childhood programs using a data-based decision making process at IEP Team meetings. Additionally, **all Kalamazoo County special education guidance documents are now housed on the Kalamazoo RESA website** for administrator use. Additional guidance will be added as it is developed.

Finally, Kalamazoo RESA was recently **selected for Cohort 3 of the FAPE in the LRE Capacity Building and Improvement Effort**, beginning in **May of the 2026–27 school year**. As part of this initiative, MDE-OSE staff will conduct a four-day onsite visit to Kalamazoo RESA programs and local districts to assess current practices and provide targeted support as the county continues to strengthen systems that ensure students are educated in the least restrictive environment.





Why this matters: This coordinated work strengthens regional consistency, builds local capacity, and ensures that students with disabilities across Kalamazoo County are supported in inclusive environments aligned with state guidance and best practice.

Action Item:

None

Fiscal Impact:

None

Attachments:

None

