

advocacy. learning. leadership.

MAASE

**MICHIGAN ASSOCIATION OF
ADMINISTRATORS OF SPECIAL EDUCATION**



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MAASE

leads



**MAASE Executive Director
Abby Cypher, CAE**

Our Road Map for Today

01

Who:
About
MAASE

02

What & Why:
Impact of 3
State Funded
Programs

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01

About MAASE

We envision an educational system that meets the needs of ALL students, ensuring that they achieve their full potential.

Our Mission

MAASE provides opportunities for **leadership development, collaboration, and advocacy.**

We do this in partnership with our members - to shape policies and practices to improve outcomes for students with disabilities.



900+ MAASE Members

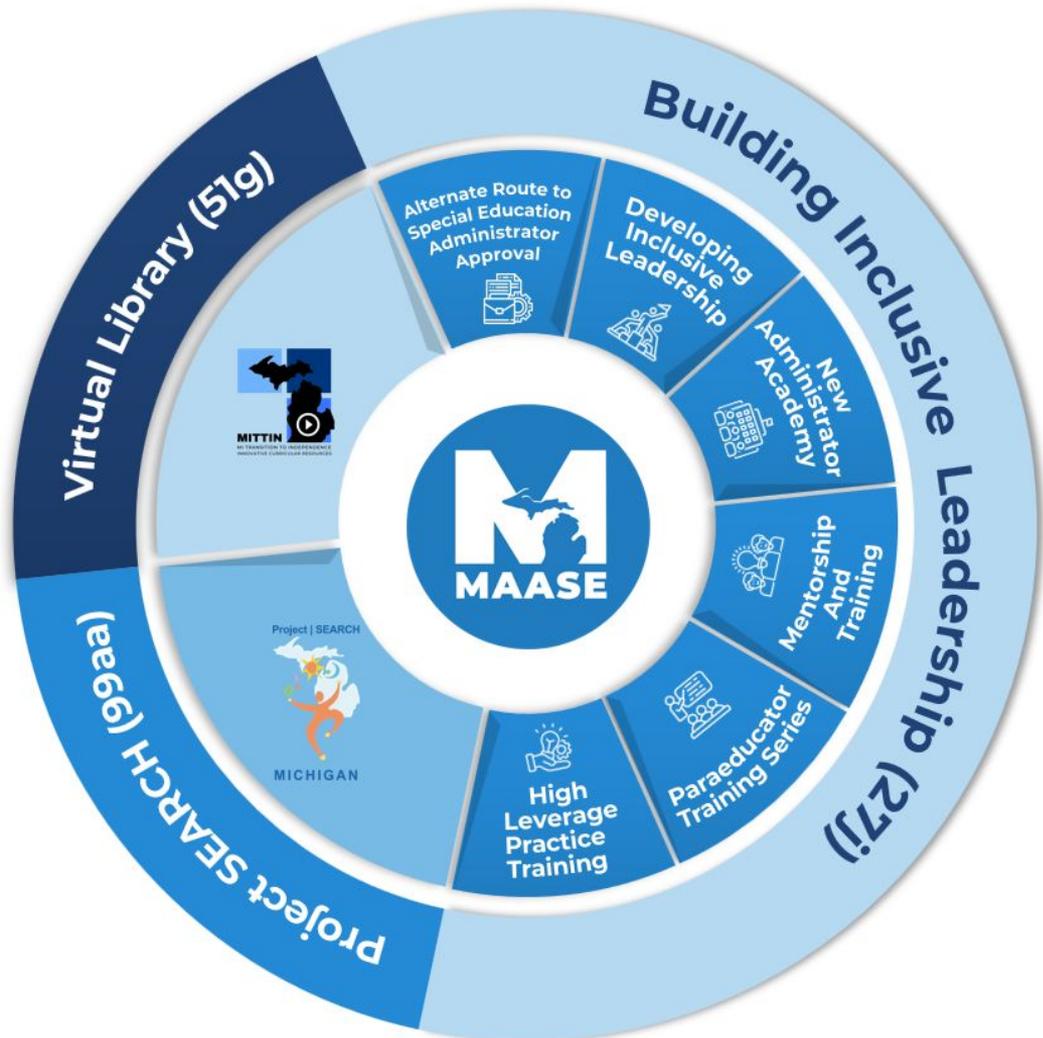
Where do our members work?

- Traditional Local Districts
- ISDs/ESAs
- Charter Schools
- Charter Authorizers
- Cyber Schools
- Non-public
- And More

What type of work do they do?

- Aspiring administrators
- Special education directors at both the local and ISD level
- Center program Principals
- Technical assistance providers
- Principals
- Superintendents





The House School Aid Budget directly impacts our ability to live into the vision and meet the needs of ALL students.



02

Impact of State Funded Programs

This work is about **educators empowering educators** with the knowledge and tools they need to create inclusive, equitable learning environments for ALL students.

“At the end of the day- it is about improving student outcomes.”

Project | SEARCH



Sarah Winslow
Statewide Project SEARCH
Director



Michael Zivsak
Statewide Project SEARCH
Director



What Is Project SEARCH?

Project SEARCH is a one-year internship program that helps young adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities transition from school to work through full workplace immersion, combining classroom learning with hands-on experience to prepare them for competitive, integrated employment.



Scan this code to view the official Project SEARCH flyer



Project SEARCH Works for Michigan



Project SEARCH Works For Michigan

Project SEARCH is more than just a school-to-work program—it's also an economic solution. By connecting Michigan businesses with trained workers, the program adds to the workforce, creates choices for families, and creates savings for communities.

Immersive Real-World Training

- A partner business is the classroom.
- Interns gain essential job skills directly in the workplace.
- 85% of Michigan's graduates secured employment 25 hours per week, \$15/hr and in an integrated setting.



What Makes Project SEARCH Unique?

A Partner Business Is The Classroom.

Interns spend a full school year immersed in a business, rotating through three departments while building transferable and soft skills through real-world experience.

Creates & Tracks Outcomes.

In the form of employment, turning students into tax-payers and contributors to communities and the host businesses who often hire them.

It Is A Capstone Program.

Students who participate leave school in favor of work after the one-year program with support from Michigan Rehabilitation Services if needed.

What Makes Project SEARCH Different?



Public-Private Partnerships

Matches workforce needs with trained candidates.



Return on Investment

Over 58% program growth and 29% employment rate increase in 5 years.



Cost Effective Solution

Graduates contribute to Michigan's economy and reduce need on public assistance.



Partner Businesses Across Michigan





Partner Sites Across Michigan

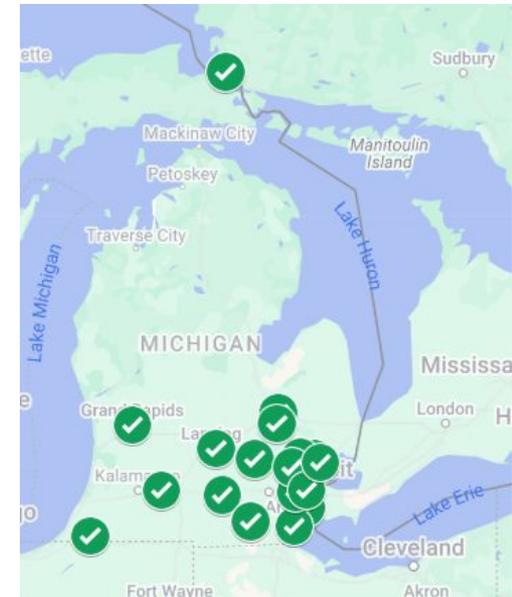
For the 2024–2025 school year, Michigan proudly hosts 19 active Project SEARCH sites, reflecting a statewide commitment to inclusive employment opportunities and the empowerment of all individuals to contribute meaningfully to their communities.

2022-2023

- Corewell Health, Royal Oak
- Corewell Health, Trenton
- Corewell Health, Wayne
- Genesee County Parks
- McLaren Oakland, Pontiac

2024-2025

- City of Sterling Heights
- Trinity Hospital, Howell
- Meijer, Burton (Genesee County)
- Corewell Health, Farmington





Project SEARCH Works For Michigan

Expanding Project SEARCH will save state funds, strengthen our talent pipeline and help young adults with disabilities become more independent. Continued funding is critical to meeting the growing demand and ensuring more families have the choice to participate.

Economic & Workforce Growth

- An expanded workforce contributes to Michigan's labor supply.
- Employed individuals reduce reliance on public assistance.
- Estimated 4-5x return on investment for local schools and communities.





The Impact Of Project SEARCH

Outcomes

- With funding, Michigan employment rate for graduates grew from 66% to 85%, vs. 19% nationwide for people with IDD
- Number of sites has grown 58% in 3 years
- Public program utilizers become taxpayers and spenders while contributing to communities

Business Partnerships & Solutions

- Provides reliable and trained supply of labor that adds value
- Increases discretionary income and purchasing power of interns/families
- Opportunity for tax incentives for companies that hire people with disabilities

Why Does Funding Matter?

Project | SEARCH



Expand public-private partnerships



Students contribute to the workforce as they find competitive, integrated employment



Local program control with clear, significant return on investment



Project SEARCH Needs Your Support

The demand is growing for innovation—let's ensure every student and family can choose this life-changing program.

Continue \$1.5M ongoing funding to expand choice and independence for Michigan's young adults with disabilities.



ATTRACT

PREPARE

RETAIN

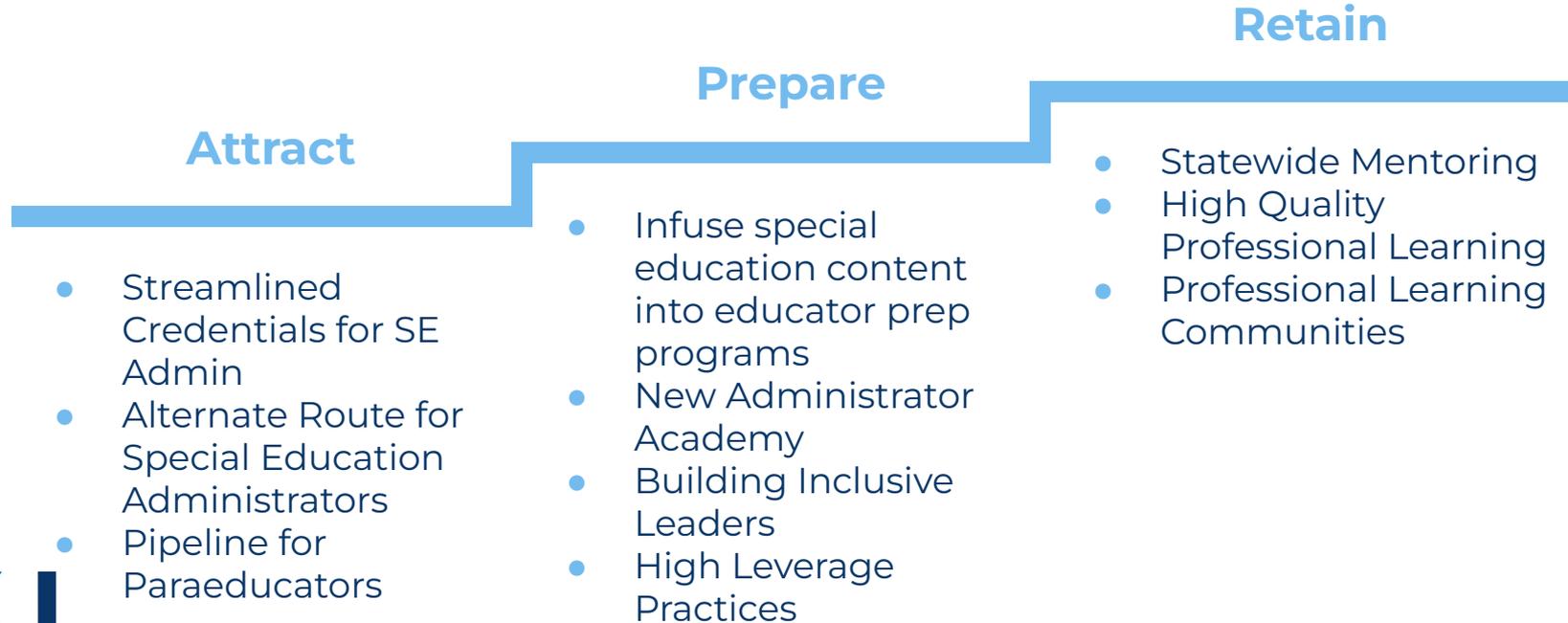


OPTIMISE

OPENING THE PIPELINE OF TALENT
INTO MICHIGAN'S SPECIAL EDUCATION

ENERGY INTO ACTION

OPTIMISE: Recommendations from the Field





Ben Hicks
MAASE Associate Executive
Director, Ben Hicks



leads



Cheryl-Marie Manson
MAASE Project Manager

Developing Inclusive Leaders

Deana Tuczek, St. Clair RESA

Sue Toth, South Lyon Community Schools



Launched January 2025

What Is The Developing Inclusive Leaders Program?

The "Developing Inclusive Leaders" program is a comprehensive training program aimed at building-level principals and administrators.

It focuses on enhancing leadership skills in special education, equipping school leaders with the knowledge and strategies to create equitable, culturally responsive, and inclusive environments for ALL students.



Developing Inclusive Leaders

To meet the evolving needs of educational leaders across Michigan, we've designed a suite of professional learning options that balance flexibility, accessibility, and impact.

Current In-State Offerings:

- 2 Year Pathway leading to an Endorsement
- Hybrid Model
- Partnership with MASSP and MEMSPA

Out-Of-State Revenue Potential:

- Individual Access to On-Demand Modules
- District/ISD Package: Modules plus facilitation guides
- Technical assistance/consultation on professional learning delivery



Michigan Association of
Secondary School Principals



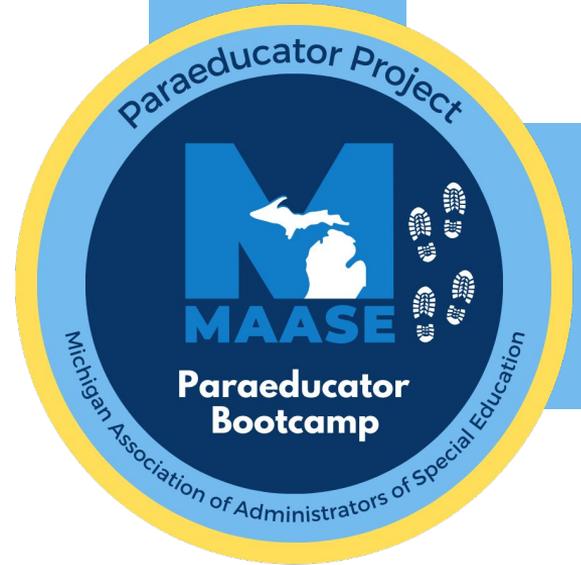
MEMSPA
MICHIGAN ELEMENTARY & MIDDLE
SCHOOL PRINCIPALS ASSOCIATION

3 Types Of Program Offerings

Benefits:	Foundations	Advancing	Transformation
On Demand Modules	●	●	●
Digital Downloads	●	●	●
Guidebooks		●	●
Reference Materials		●	●
Six In-Person Events		●	●
Coaching & Mentoring			●
University Credit			●
MDE Enhancement			●

Paraeducator Bootcamp

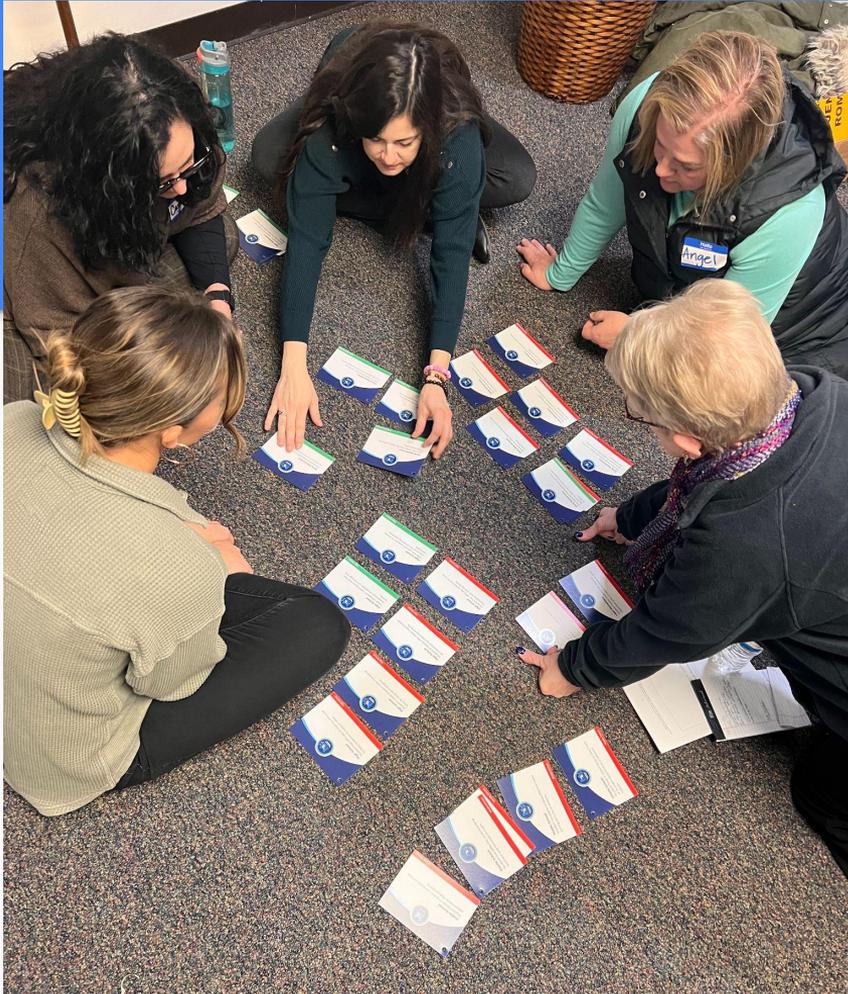
Karlie Parker, Muskegon ISD

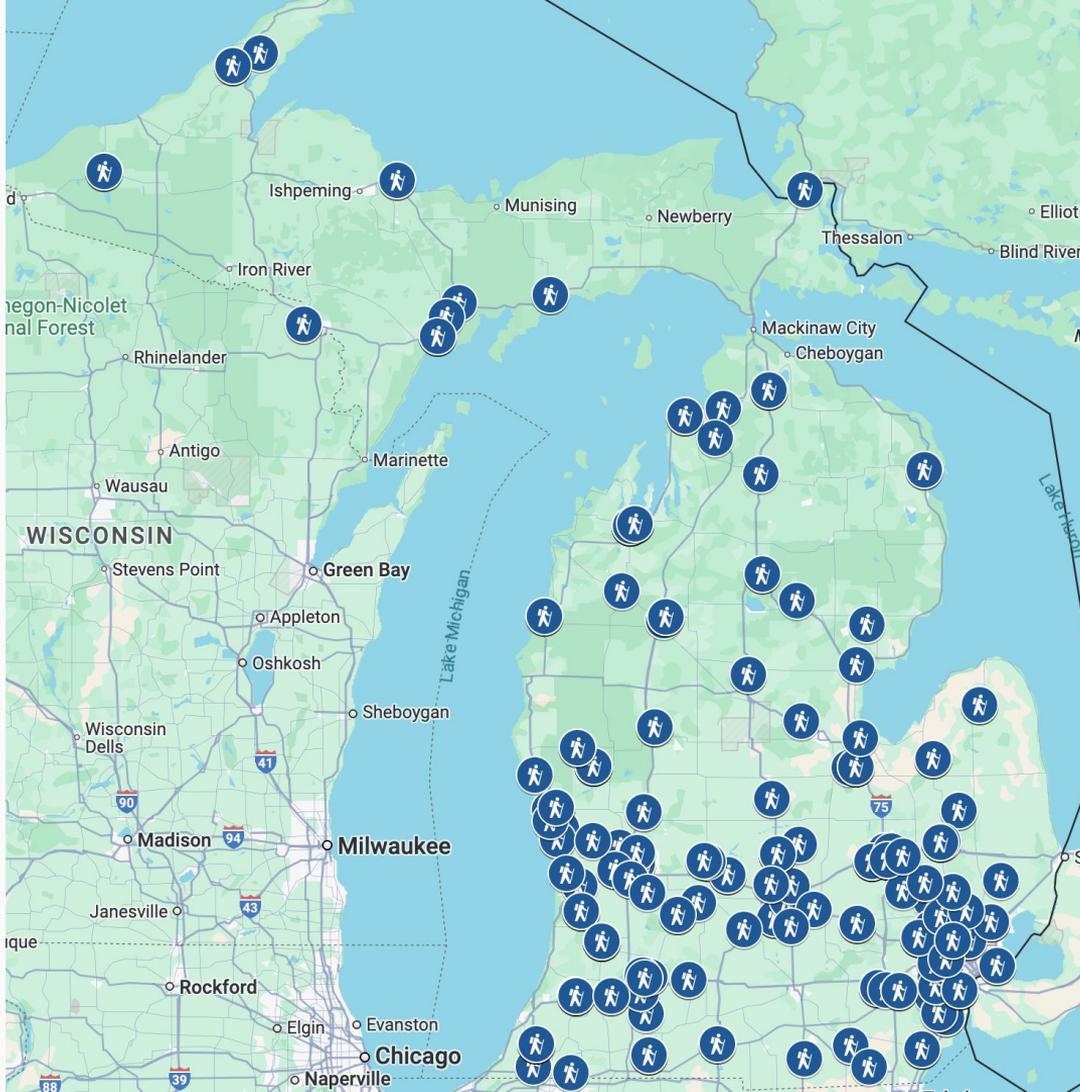


Launched January 2025



Building Capacity by Establishing Trainers



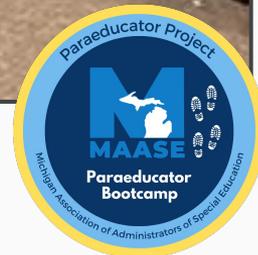


Paraeducator Bootcamp
Trainers throughout
Michigan

385
Trainers



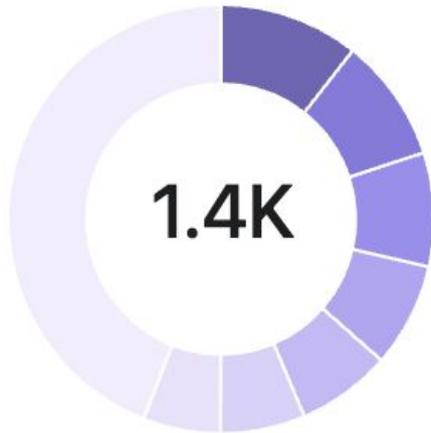
Holly Area Schools Paraeducators



Trained Paraeducators



Number of Paras Trained by ISD



- Van Buren ISD: 148 Estimated # ...
- Charlevoix-Emmet: 131 Estimate...
- Wexford-Missaukee ISD: 120 Esti...
- Kalamazoo RESA: 110 Estimated ...
- Clare-Gladwin RESD: 100 Estimat...
- Berrien ISD: 90 Estimated # of Pa...
- West Shore Educational Service ...
- Other: 615 Estimated # of Partici
+ more



CTE Programs - Pipeline for Paraeducators

Early Entry to Career Pathways

By using the MAASE Paraeducator Bootcamp curriculum, Career and Technical Education (CTE) programs introduce high school students to the field of special education.

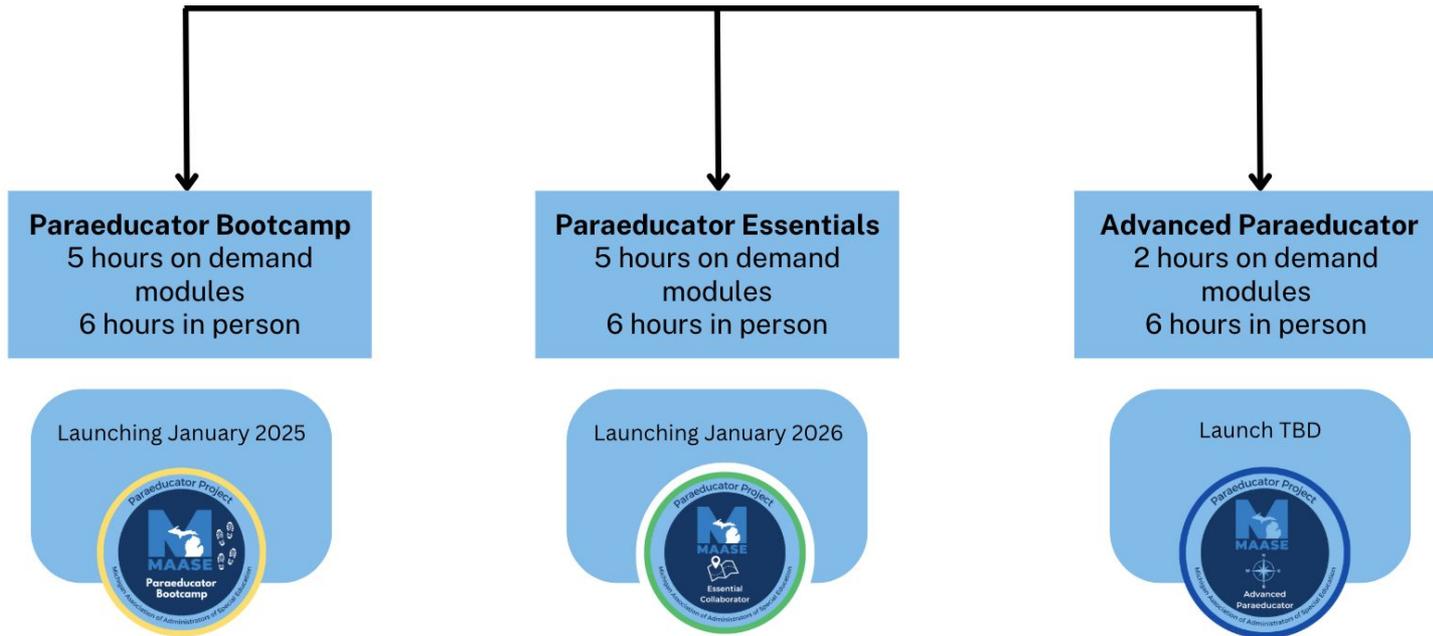
Workforce Pipeline Strategy

This program is a proactive solution to Michigan's paraeducator shortage—engaging students early, equipping them with foundational skills, and creating a pipeline into the profession.

OPTIMISE-Recommended

OPTIMISE highlighted CTE involvement as critical to sustaining long-term solutions and diversifying the paraeducator talent pool across the state.

MAASE Paraeducator Learning Series





Future Focus: RBT Pathway Expansion

Strategic Next Step in Workforce Development

Building on the success of the Paraeducator Bootcamp, MAASE is exploring the integration of Registered Behavior Technician (RBT) training to enhance behavioral support capacity across Michigan schools.

Backed by OPTIMISE Recommendations

OPTIMISE emphasized the need for specialized pathways, including behavior support, to meet the increasing demand for skilled paraeducators and improve outcomes for students with intensive behavioral needs.



Sustainability Plan

- **Curriculum Seat Licenses (Tailored for Educational Roles):**
Includes modular access, full learning packages with SCECHs, professional licensure (badging & CEC membership), and specialized pricing for CTE and Higher Ed
- **Consumable Products**
- **Annual Trainer Conference & Institutional Engagement**

**Projected Program Revenue to Reinforce & Sustain Systemwide Impact:
\$500,000+ reinvested into Michigan's special education workforce development**

High Leverage Practice Training

Kirsten Myers, Kent ISD



Launching Fall 2025

Building a Stronger Teaching Workforce with High-Leverage Practices

Initial Funding:

A small portion of Section 27j is helping launch this work—but **more investment is needed** to expand and sustain it statewide.

The Goal: Elevating instructional practice to transform student outcomes.

Build a **statewide training program** that equips teachers and school leaders with **practical, hands-on tools**—especially to support students with disabilities.



Why It Matters: Strategic Benefits for Districts

- **Fills a Statewide Gap:** No existing models deliver consistent, practice-based training for special education
- **Supports New Teachers:** Structured modeling and reflection reduce cognitive overload
- **Strengthens Retention:** Collegial networks, mentorship, and clear feedback loops foster job satisfaction
- **Boosts Student Outcomes:** When teachers apply HLPs with fidelity, engagement, learning, and achievement rise—especially for students with disabilities
- **Builds Capacity:** Teams develop local expertise to scale and sustain improvement



Alternate Route to Special Education Administrator Approval

Michelle Proulx, Lapeer ISD

Launched January 2025



Replacing the traditional approach with a new alternative pathway!



HORIZON^{+SE}
Leadership Academy

Candidates Receive:

- School Administrator Certificate
 - With Central Office Endorsement
- Special Education Supervisor or Director Approval



HORIZON^{+SE}
Leadership Academy

Immediate Benefits

- Cost-effective - \$12,500 for the full program
- Flexible and convenient - in-person or virtual options
- Integrated professionals - special education and general education
- Essential content delivery



MASA
Michigan Association of
Superintendents & Administrators

Cohort 1 (Jan 2025 - Aug 2026):

29 Special Education personnel pursuing approval- on scholarship

MAASE Members creating and delivering special education content



New Administrator Academy

Chelsea Korzecki, Saginaw ISD

Launched August 2024

Purpose of the Academy

The MAASE New Administrator Academy is a support structure that allows opportunities for:

- Newly employed Michigan special education administrators to explore and implement the skills needed for success in the position
 - Support for real-world application of Professional Leadership Standards
- Mentorship with experienced, practicing administrators who are members of MAASE
- Exploration of relevant content with support from “in the field” special education administrators, identified professionals with content specific knowledge, or state/federal staff.



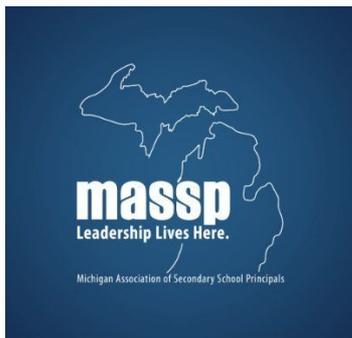
Our why:

A recent survey indicated that approximately 50% of MAASE members were new to special education administration over a 2 year period.

Well over half of our current membership is age eligible for retirement.



All of this work done in partnership with:





Kristine Gullen
MITTIN Project Manager



Virtual Library: MITTIN

Derek Cooley, Godwin Heights Public Schools



Launched Fall 2021

MITTIN Module Topics & Resources

Safety and Independence at Home

- Clean Flat Surfaces
- Clean the Bedroom
- Put Away Groceries
- Use a Microwave
- Use an Oven
- Use a Stove
- Sweeping
- Mopping
- Taking out the Trash Bins
- Selecting Appropriate Clothing
- Recycling
- Change a Light Bulb

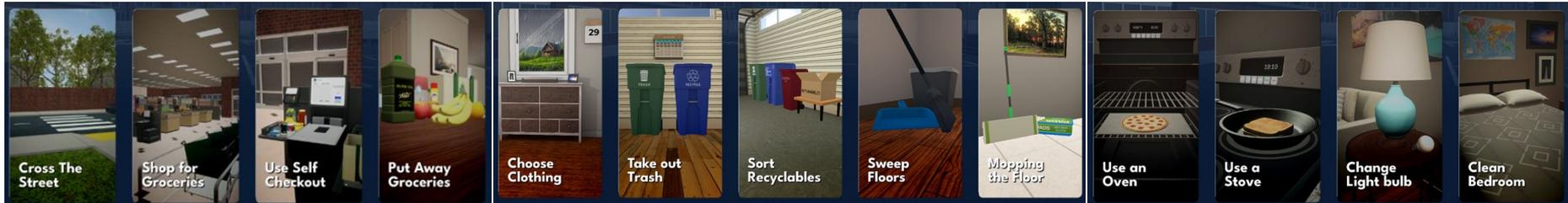
Safety and Independence in the Community

- Cross the Street
- Shop for Groceries
- Walk Through a Parking Lot
- Use Self-Checkout

In Development for 2025

- Sorting and Doing Laundry
- Washing Dishes
- Cleaning the sink, shower & tub

.....With over 25 topics still to be developed





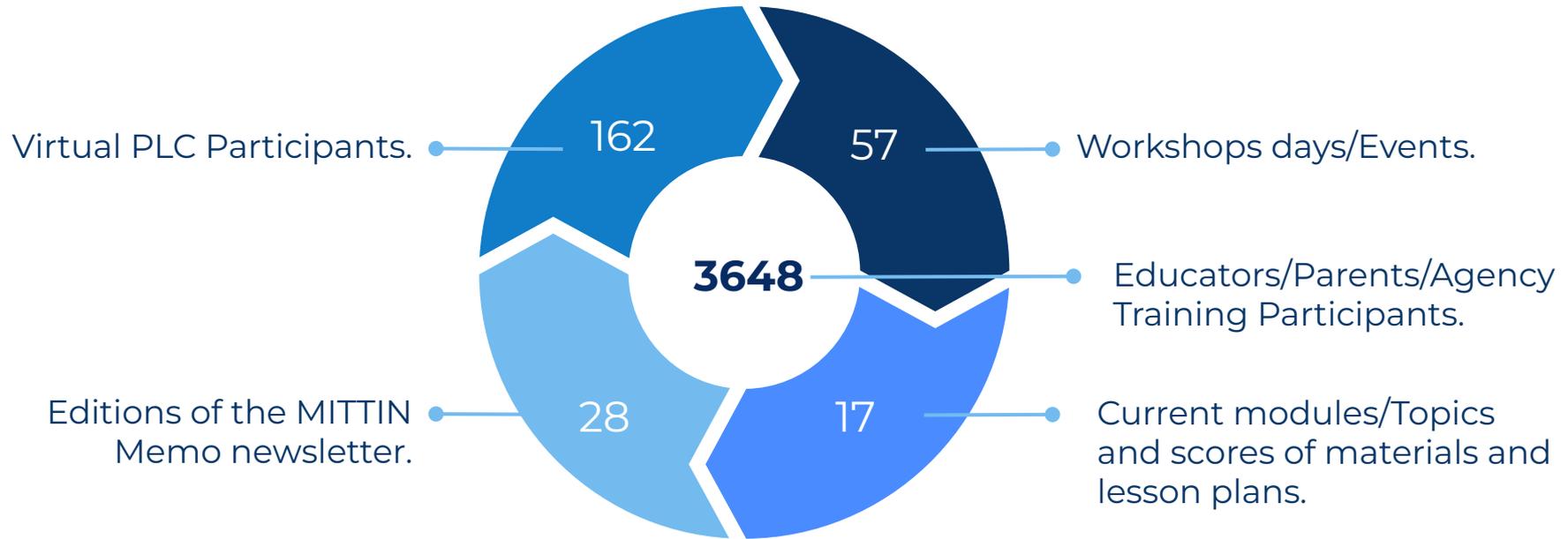
Section 51g: Our Charge

- Free virtual learning library
- Accessible on any device / location
- For schools, families and caregivers
- Safely practice and strengthen independent living skills
- Generalization of skills from
 - virtual to
 - supportive practice to
 - community engagement to
 - employment

Unexpected benefits

- Non-Profit/Public/Private partnership
- Virtual PLC / statewide connections
- Teacher created resources
- Research partners / empirical evidence
- MITTIN reach
- Teacher retention / Leadership

MITTIN Project Stats At A Glance



Data As Of May 2025

MITTIN In Action



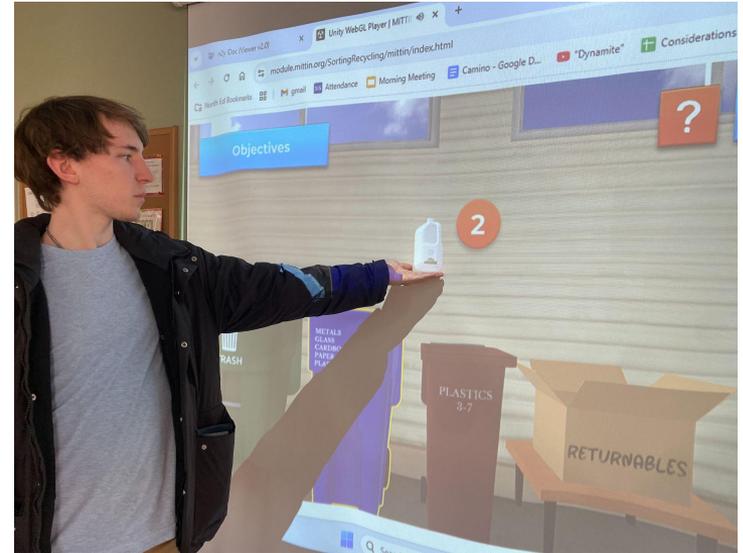
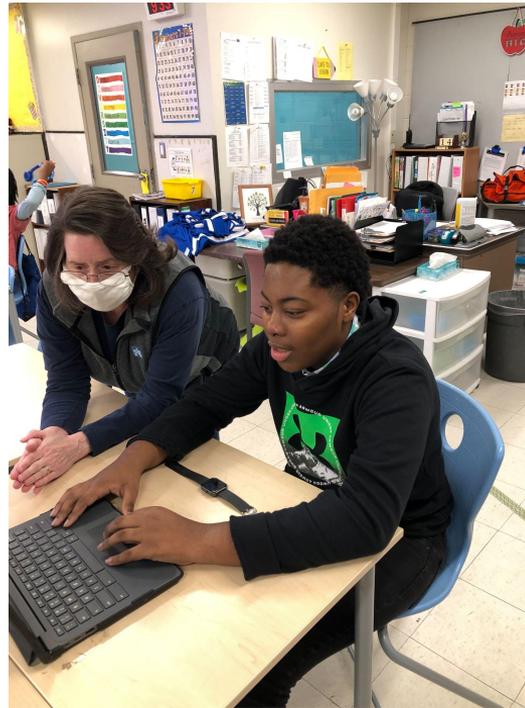
Post Secondary Program at the
Pied Piper School - Alpena, MI



MITTIN Accessibility



Ann Arbor Public Schools



Northwest Educational Services
Traverse City



Generalization: From 'Use a Stove' module to making a Grilled Cheese

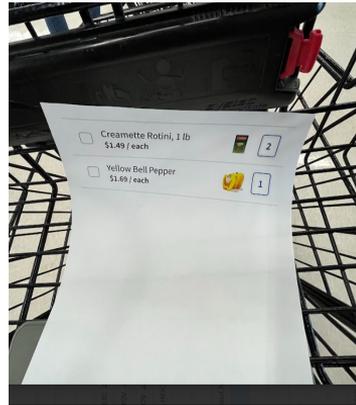


Shopping for Seniors



Shopping for Seniors is a twice a week shopping program the benefits students at the MAISD Craig Campus and senior residents at Jefferson Towers.

- Virtually practice how to shop for groceries, use a self checkout and put groceries away.
- Mondays & Wednesdays- obtain the lists; Tuesday & Thursday - shop, bag, pay, and deliver groceries to the residents
- Exploring employment opportunities both at the Senior Center and at the Grocery Store
- Through collaborations with the MITTIN Virtual PLCs now has NorthWest Education Services exploring a similar program



Muskegon Area ISD

MITTIN SELF CHECKOUT



Funding 51g - Virtual Library: MITTIN

\$3 million on-going SAF

Diversified Funding Exploration

- Out of State Sales
 - Web-based modules are launching, geofencing, sign in access
- Grant Exploration
 - Federal IES & EIR Grants - Currently on hold
 - Exploring foundation grants



MITTIN

MI TRANSITION TO INDEPENDENCE
INNOVATIVE CURRICULAR RESOURCES

MITTIN...From A Teacher's Perspective

“I've witnessed firsthand how students exposed to MITTIN have grown in all areas of daily living. And what's even more powerful? They've enjoyed the process.

They're not just learning life skills—they're living them in a safe space that builds confidence, independence, and joy.”

“It transforms uncertainty into opportunity—allowing users to practice, adapt, and ultimately succeed.

Through guided experiences and meaningful repetition, learners are not just prepared for the outside world—they're empowered to thrive in it.”

— **Barbara Simpson, Mixter Institute Lincoln Park, Michigan**



MITTIN...From An Educator's Perspective

“It offers an engaging and interactive approach to developing essential life skills in a safe environment, guiding students from foundational understanding to mastery.”

— Shannon DeLora, Muskegon Area ISD

“Educators are often limited in exposing students to real-world practice due to safety concerns, logistical constraints, and lack of access to community-based learning environments. MITTIN mitigates these barriers by offering a virtual alternative that promotes independence and skill acquisition.”

— Dr. Lois Vaughan-Hussain, PLC Facilitator



In Partnership & Collaboration With



Council for
Exceptional
Children



Public Policy
Associates



Great Lakes
Reality Labs



MICHIGAN STATE
UNIVERSITY



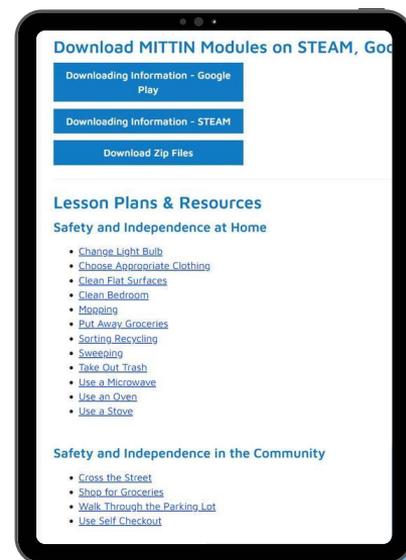
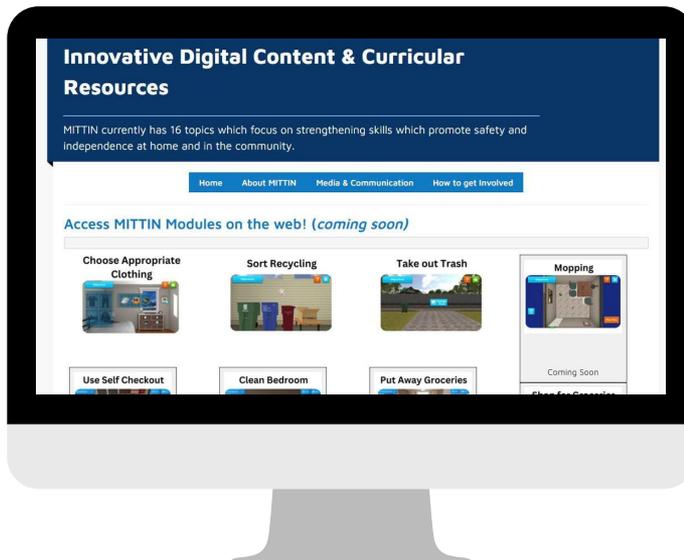
'Strengthening a Learner's Transition to Independence'

Welcome to the MITTIN Memo

Just this past week I was able to see the MITTIN booth and a presentation about MITTIN at the MAASE Summer Institute. It was fantastic! This was also an opportunity for over 770 educators from around the State of Michigan to learn about MITTIN. It was exciting to see districts, ISD and community agencies asking for implementation support and professional development to launch MITTIN resources with their teachers and students. If you are interested in learning more about MITTIN and how it can support your learner's transition to independence, visit our website: mittin.org.



Best Regards,
Dr. Derek Cooley,
MITTIN Committee Chair



Learn more at
mittin.org



What does it take to keep this work going?



99aa
Project
SEARCH



\$1.5 Million
Ongoing

51g
MITTIN



\$3 Million
Ongoing

27j
Building
Leadership



Building
Inclusive
Leadership



See You in
2026!

Questions



4



advocacy. learning. leadership.