



AUTISM ALLIANCE OF MICHIGAN PRESENTS

# MiNavigator

DECEMBER 2017

MiNavigator Newsletter Issue 14

Presented by Autism Alliance of Michigan  
[www.AAoMI.org](http://www.AAoMI.org)

Help. Hope. Answers. Today.



## SCHOOLS AND TRANSPARENCY

### Will Michigan have enough qualified teachers to staff all school classrooms in the near future?

Contributed by Richard Rockwell, Instructor, University of Detroit Mercy

The Michigan Department of Education released a report in September 2017, on Trends in Michigan Teacher Certification and Mobility. One finding was that there has been a significant decrease in the number of teacher certifications since 2004. Specifically, MDE reports that there were 9,665 teacher certifications in 2004 and only 3,696 in teacher certifications in 2016; a decrease of 62 percent. And while it is a fact that there has also been a decrease in the number of students in Michigan schools over this period, that decrease was only 14 percent. The trend in Michigan would indicate that there may come a time when supply will not meet demand. Unfortunately, for those needing special education services, that time is now.

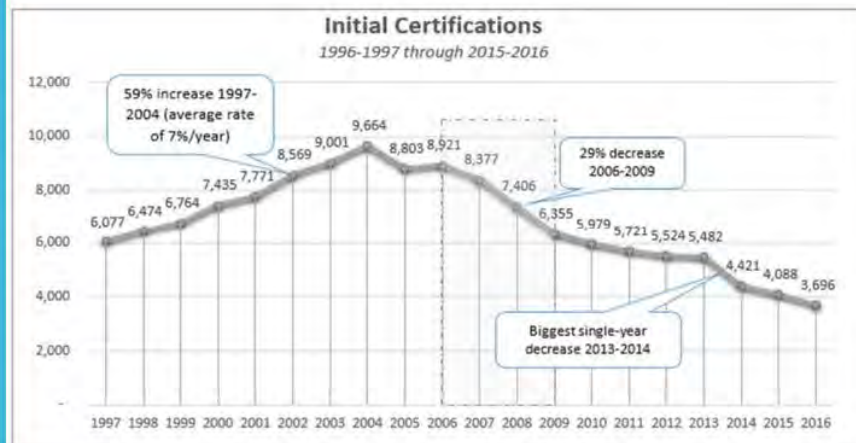
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The report cited shortages in areas that included special education, math and science, and career and technical education. The report tracked special education endorsements given by the State from the 2011-2012 school year to the 2015-2016 school year. The numbers indicated that there was a decrease in special education endorsements of 33 percent. The Detroit News reported on August 9, 2017, similar findings of critical shortages for certain subject areas which included special education. The need is now. If we are going to educate all our children, we are going to need to address this shortage of qualified teachers, specifically in special education. We must work together to find solutions to this shortage. We must speak up for this vulnerable population as we continue to make Michigan a Top 10 in 10 State.

### Total Michigan Initial Certificates Issued, 1997-2016



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### Endorsements in Common Shortage Areas, 2011-2012 through 2015-2016

Year	All Endorsements on Initial Certificates	Bilingual and ESL	CTE	Special Education	STEM
2011-2012	8,027	162	193	833	1,885
2012-2013	7,703	153	189	775	1,795
2013-2014	6,005	131	133	650	1,501
2014-2015	5,342	159	93	593	1,311
2015-2016	4,480	141	88	556	1,152
% Change	-44%	-12%	-54%	-33%	-39%

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# REVIEW OF EDUCATION FUNDING

**Contributed by Barbara Brish, Education Specialist, AAoM**

School funding is an extremely complex issue. Even those who work most closely with schools may struggle to understand funding at Federal, State, and Local levels. The outline below describes the Department of Education funding for special education, and the agencies receiving grant funds through the education system designed to support students with special learning needs. When evaluating the programs and services offered to a special education student, it is important to have a basic understanding of the funding in place to support that student and also any gaps for which local schools may be attempting to fill.

**Prior to 1994** – School funding was based on local (primarily) property tax with categorical aid for additional expenditures such as school readiness and special education.

**After 1994** – Funding is tied to each student in a district with the districts receiving a foundation allowance:

	1994	2009	2018
<b>Minimum</b>	\$4,200	\$7,316	\$7,631
<b>Basic</b>	\$5,000	\$8,489	\$8,289
<b>Maximum</b>	\$6,200	\$12,443	\$12,124

**(Maximum = dollars above the local mills)**

**Charter schools:** These are solely state funded. As charter schools do not have physical school boundaries/borders they do not levy mills for local revenue. Charter schools only receive a foundation allowance equal or lesser to the per pupil funding of the school district they are located in or the Public School Academy maximum foundation (\$7,316 for the 2017-2018 school year). They cannot receive debt millage in Michigan and must finance capital projects out of operating revenue. An example of capital projects would be: building additions, parking lots, building renovations.

## **Federal IDEA Grant Funds:**

**Part A:** General Provisions - definitions

**Part B:** Federal dollars for children with disabilities age 3-21

**Part C:** Federal dollars for early intervention services for infants and toddlers with disabilities and their families.

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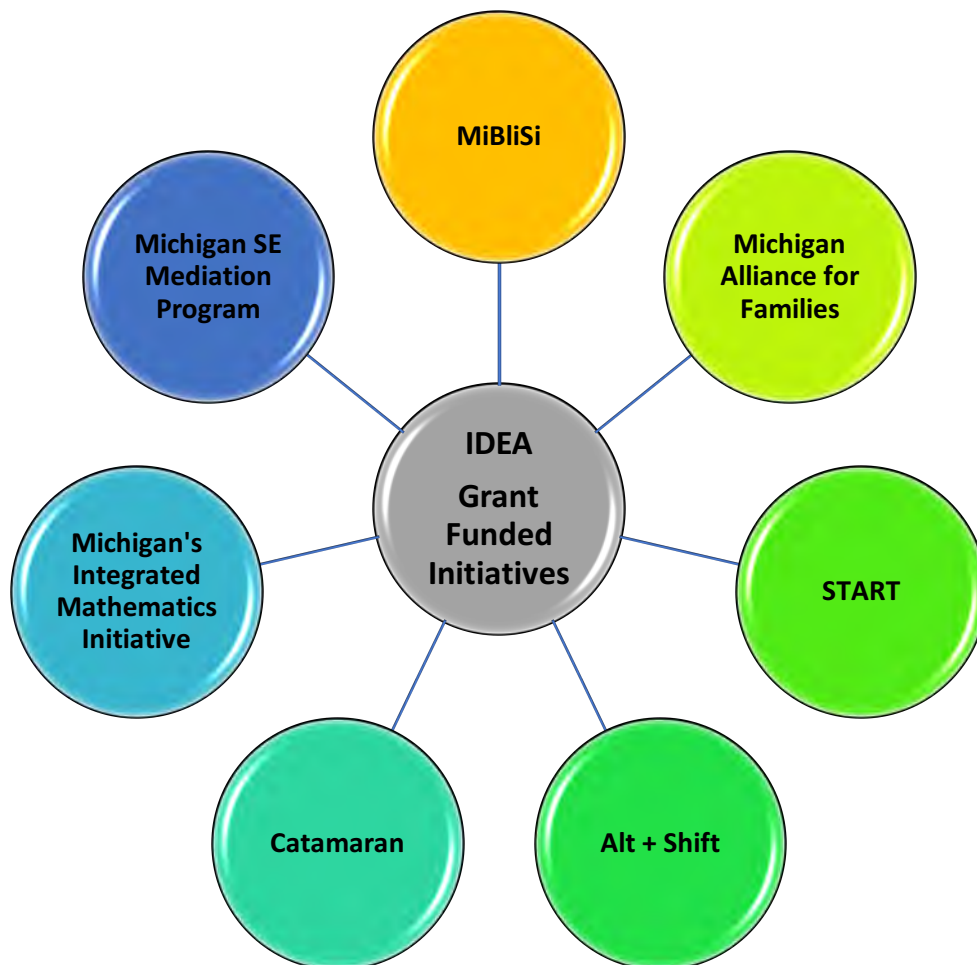




**Part D:** Grants for personnel preparation and development (special education teachers, regular education teachers, administrators, related services personnel, paraprofessionals, early intervention personnel serving infants, toddlers, preschoolers, or children with disabilities).

**Michigan** - Individuals with Disabilities Education Act funding: 28.6138% reimbursement based on two counts (October and February); calculation is based on the Full Time Equivalent hours in the IEP. Districts are reimbursed after the costs have been accrued.

Special education funds for the most severely disabled students are raised through special education millages. Each county determines how the programs for the most severely disabled students will be run. Some counties operate the programs while in other counties the programs are run by local school districts within the county.



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Michigan Department of Education established the above noted initiatives to support special education in the State of Michigan. The grant funded initiatives provide support by; (1) providing professional development and training; (2) implementing proven programs in schools; (3) producing or loaning materials for students; and (4) disseminating critical guidance and information.

Michigan Integrated Behavior and Learning Support Initiative (**MiBLSi**) helps districts implement an integrated behavior and reading Multi-Tiered System of Support (MTSS) in schools.

**Michigan Alliance for Families:** Regional sites that offer individual support, mentoring, and learning opportunities for parents.

**Michigan Special Education Mediation Program:** Provides free training and neutral facilitators to assist with individualized family service plan (IFSP) and IEP team meetings, and resolution sessions.

**Statewide Autism Resources and Training (START):** Supports the education and transition needs of students with autism.

**Alt+Shift:** Encompasses Michigan's Integrated Mathematics initiative, offers professional learning, including training and technical assistance.

**Catamaran:** Systems used for tracking activities and data related to the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) and the Michigan Administrative Rules for Special Education (MARSE) for the Michigan Department of Education Offices of Special Education (OSE) and Great Start.

**Michigan's Integrated Mathematics Initiative:** Assists the state in creating a cohesive and collaborative system of support and professional development among existing mathematics resources.







# ACCESSING PUBLIC AND SCHOOL RECORDS

**Contributed by John F. Brower, JD, AAoM Education Law Consultant**

Have you ever wondered what your school district spends on special education? How much they receive in state funds to educate its students? If they have settled a lawsuit or had an adverse complaint decision from Office of Civil Rights or Michigan Department of Education? Perhaps you want to know the credentials and certification of your child's teachers? If so, with some limitations, the answer to your questions may be found in a Michigan Freedom of Information Act (MFOIA) request.

If you are looking for your own child's "educational records" that request should be made under the Federal Educational Records Privacy Act (FERPA). FERPA shields a student's educational records from disclosure to others except to the student's parents (if under 18) or the student if an adult. However, with some narrow exceptions, FERPA includes all "records" personally identifiable to the student such as test responses, teacher notes, discipline records, etc.

In terms of FOIA, these laws are sometimes called "sunshine law" as they are designed to allow citizens to know what documents public bodies, such as public schools, are using to make decisions. The MFOIA statute can be found on-line by starting your search at MCL 15.231 and continuing onto the other sections. While there are exceptions to what can be accessed by the public, they are broadly interpreted.

Basically, unless one of the exemptions apply, upon receipt of a written FOIA request to the FOIA Coordinator that sufficiently identifies the documents being sought, a public body then has five (5) business days to respond to the request. If they elect not to furnish the requested documents with their initial response they can request an additional ten (10) business day extension. If the document exists and access is denied, the person requesting the document can appeal to the Superintendent or take the dispute into the local Circuit Court.

cont.





A few cautions. In addition to access, copies can be requested. However, under both FOIA and FERPA, the public body can charge their incremental cost of copies. Of course, issues arise if some parents are charged and others are not. Under FOIA, but not FERPA, an agency can also charge the requester for the time involved to search for the documents and to separate exempt from non-exempt information. Exempt information include such things as student names, private information which generally would be a teacher's home address and telephone numbers, documents that are privileged under attorney-client, physician-patient and similar privileges, as well as medical records (See MCL 15.243).





# DECEMBER AT A GLANCE

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
					<b>1</b> - No More Sidelines Christmas Dance (Muskegon)	<b>2</b> - Camp Fish Tales Drop In Sessions (Pinconning) - ASWS Holiday Party (Spring Lake)
<b>3</b> - Santa Cares Events (Taylor, Roseville, Jackson, Ann Arbor, Flint, Livonia, Lansing, Harper Woods)	<b>4</b> - ASK Holiday Party (Grand Rapids)	<b>5</b> - The Early Start Denver Model Training (Ann Arbor) - Falconers-Wonderland of Lights (Lansing)	<b>6</b> - Jingle Bell Ball 2017 (White Lake) - Transition: Planning for High School and Beyond (Clinton Township)	<b>7</b> - Friends Night Out (Birmingham) - Christmas Dance (Sterling Heights)	<b>8</b> - Teen Night (Grand Haven)	<b>9</b> - Positive Behavior Supports and Discipline (Birch Run)
<b>10</b> - Sensory Friendly Sunday at Leslie Science & Nature Center (Ann Arbor) - Special Kids Santa (Livonia)	<b>11</b> - Nonviolent Crisis Intervention Training Program (Marquette)	<b>12</b> - Super Spark: All Access (Detroit) - Disability Network Oakland & Macomb Lunch & Learn (Troy)	<b>13</b> - Working together when we don't agree: Oakland Mediation (Pontiac)	<b>14</b> - Happy Holiday Dance (Midland)	<b>15</b> - Spartans Stores YMCA Family Hope Program (Wyoming)	<b>16</b> - The Fowler Center WEEKEND RESPITE CAMPS (Mayville) - Camp Zip Winter Cooking (Ann Arbor)
<b>17</b> - Sensory Friendly Quiet Santa Skate! (Grand Blanc)	<b>18</b> - MiWorks Outreach (Ypsilanti)	<b>19</b> - BWCIL Cooking Class (Port Huron)	<b>20</b> - Oaks Victory Village Outreach (Monroe)	<b>21</b> - Common Ground Legal Aid Clinic (Pontiac)	<b>22</b>	<b>23</b>
<b>24</b> - Rejoicing Spirits - no-shush worship service (Birmingham)	<b>25</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>27</b> - The Fowler Center Winter Camp (Mayville)	<b>28</b> - Almost New Year (Royal Oak)	<b>29</b>	<b>30</b>
<b>31</b>						

\*\* For more information on any of these events please contact MiNavigator line at 877.463.AAOM or Navigator@aaomi.org

## Calling Presenters and Vendors!

Autism Alliance is accepting applications to present at the 4th annual Navigating Autism Today Conference.

Date: Friday March 9th

Location: Wayne County Community College District -  
Ted Scott Campus - Belleville, MI

More information is available at [www.AAoMconference.org](http://www.AAoMconference.org) or by contacting [info@aaomi.org](mailto:info@aaomi.org)

