

The Arc Michigan Education Committee
Meeting Minutes
May 1, 2025

The meeting came to order at: 10:05am.

Present: Debbie Whitford, Michelle Driscoll, Darlene Heard-Thomas, Hayley Cason Grobbel, Emily Henderson, Andrea Beachnau, Tina Miller, Sherry Kenworthy, Carl Hankins, Heba Takouz, Kim Faiman, and Maggie Kolk.

Approval of Meeting Minutes: Minutes were sent via email for members to review.

Governmental Affairs/Legislative Update:

Emily Henderson, Governmental Affairs Consultant and Lobbyist for Arc Michigan with McCall Hamilton.

Emily shared this link for the [Tracking Status Report](#) on Education Bills. It is a live link and can be bookmarked to check current status on bills of interest to the Arc MI Education Committee.

Things are slow in Lansing. Usually, budget negotiations are underway at this time. Unsure about federal funding and this is impacting the state moving forward. Other states are seeing changes in their federal funding. MI doesn't know what revenues will be. If there are changes to Medicaid, they will have to find money elsewhere. Should see a short term spending budget in next month or two.

Not much legislation has passed. Three acts have been signed by the governor. One bill to increase school funding is in negotiations but will likely not go anywhere as republicans want to cut funding. There is republican sponsored school safety legislation, but it probably won't be touched by democrats. Its focus is on increasing law enforcement in schools and says nothing about supporting students with disabilities or suspected disabilities.

SEAC Report Summary:

Heba Takouz, Arc Michigan SEAC Alternate Representative

Early Warning Intervention Monitoring System ([EWIMS](#))

EWIMS is a seven-step, data-driven, decision-making process that helps educators identify, monitor, and support students who show symptoms of risk of dropping out of high school. All steps must be followed for the process to work effectively.



Root Cause Analysis

- Step Four of the EWIMS process emphasizes the need to determine **WHY a student is flagged** for attendance, behavior, or course performance issues in order to address the real cause, not the symptom
- Step Five requires identifying and assigning **evidence-based** strategies and interventions to address the need(s)
- Step Six necessitates **monitoring** the implementation of the intervention and student progress

Research Base for EWIMS

- As early as the 6th, school-based factors can predict who will drop out.
- Attendance, behavior, and course performance are the strongest predictors of school dropout.
- These findings have been validated by state and district studies.
- A rigorous impact study found EWIMS to be a promising evidence-based strategy.
- After one year, EWIMS schools reduced chronic absences and course failure.

Response to Intervention (RTI)

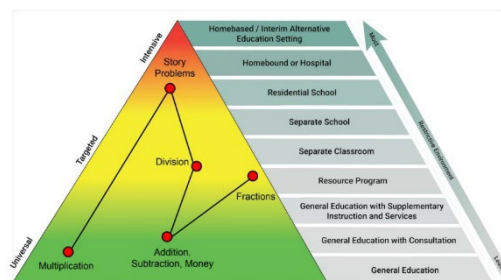
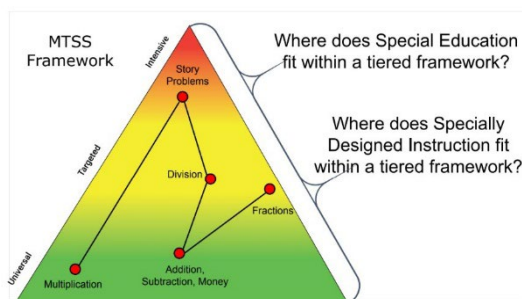
Classroom instruction should be high quality; therefore, ineffective instruction can be ruled out as the reason for inadequate academic performance.

- Effective use of curriculum and instructional procedures
- Skills are monitored to show adequate growth (responsiveness)
- Lack of progress supported with increasingly intensive interventions

IRIS Center

[Michigan Alliance for Families - RTI](#)

Multi-Tiered Systems of Support (MTSS) [MiMTSS Technical Assistance Center](#)



IEP Development Sequence

1. Identify student needs are agreed upon.
2. Measurable annual goals and short-term objectives are written.
3. Method for measurement and a reporting schedule have been established.
4. Special education, services, related services, supplementary aids and services and program modifications have been determined.
5. Placement decision is made based on data.

A student's IEP team must determine the "what" before the "where." To do otherwise would be a predetermination of placement.

Discussion:

The question was asked about who are members of the [Special Education Advisory Committee \(SEAC\)](#). Scroll to the bottom of the webpage for current membership.

Information for MAF Staff, Advocates, and Families document - Revision. This document is being updated to reflect these changes:

- Section 504 (Texas v. Kennedy)
- Current Colorado and DC OCR contact information
- Including link for [Telling Your Personal Story](#)

Michelle will contact OSE to request a Family Matters Fact Sheet be developed for Response to Intervention. Concerns were raised that RTI is supposed to be short term. Discussion about students who are falling behind, not improving with RTI, are never moved to an escalated level and students who receive intensive supports from special education school personnel but never evaluated for eligibility for special education services. Sherry will provide additional information to share with OSE.

Michelle will contact OSE to request a Family Matters Fact Sheet to be developed for Compensatory Education. Hayley will provide additional information to share with OSE.

It was shared by an advocate that the volume of referrals has been lower this spring than usual but that the fewer cases are more complex issues, taking more time to resolve.

Development of new Position Statements:

- [Arc Education Committee - Evaluation & Eligibility Working Document.docx](#)
 - Add your comments/ suggestions to this working document
- **Babies and Toddlers** (Child Find, Evaluation, Eligibility)

The next meeting is Thursday, June 5 from 10:00am-11:30am

Upcoming Monthly Meeting Dates: July and August meetings TBD.

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89082807363?pwd=LZTrSO1lhabmGKEs1isEKxndCxx8Fa.1>

Meeting ID: 890 8280 7363 / Passcode 299054

Adjournment: 11:30am

Respectfully Submitted,
Michelle Driscoll for Debbie Whitford