



Better Futures

Highlighting Impactful Library Partnerships
with MiLEAP



Today's Panelists

- ★ **Tewonia Alamu**, Family Engagement and Early Literacy Specialist, MiLEAP
AlamuT@Michigan.gov
- ★ **Dr. Michelle Cyrus**, Student Success Strategy Manager, MiLEAP
CyrusM@Michigan.gov
- ★ **Cathy Lancaster**, Youth Services Coordinator, Library of Michigan
LancasterC5@Michigan.gov

- ★ **Carolyn Beltz**, Family Engagement & Literacy Coordinator, MiFamily Engagement Center, Region 2
BeltzC@Charemisd.org
- ★ **Amy Monette**, Branch Manager, Traverse Area District Library
AMonette@TADL.org
- ★ **Becky LeBoeuf**, Head of Youth Services, Delta Township District Library
BLeBoeuf@DTD.L.org



Today's Agenda

- Introductions
- MiFamily Engagement Overview
- Libraries as Partners
- Michigan Reconnect Overview
- Discussion / Q&A





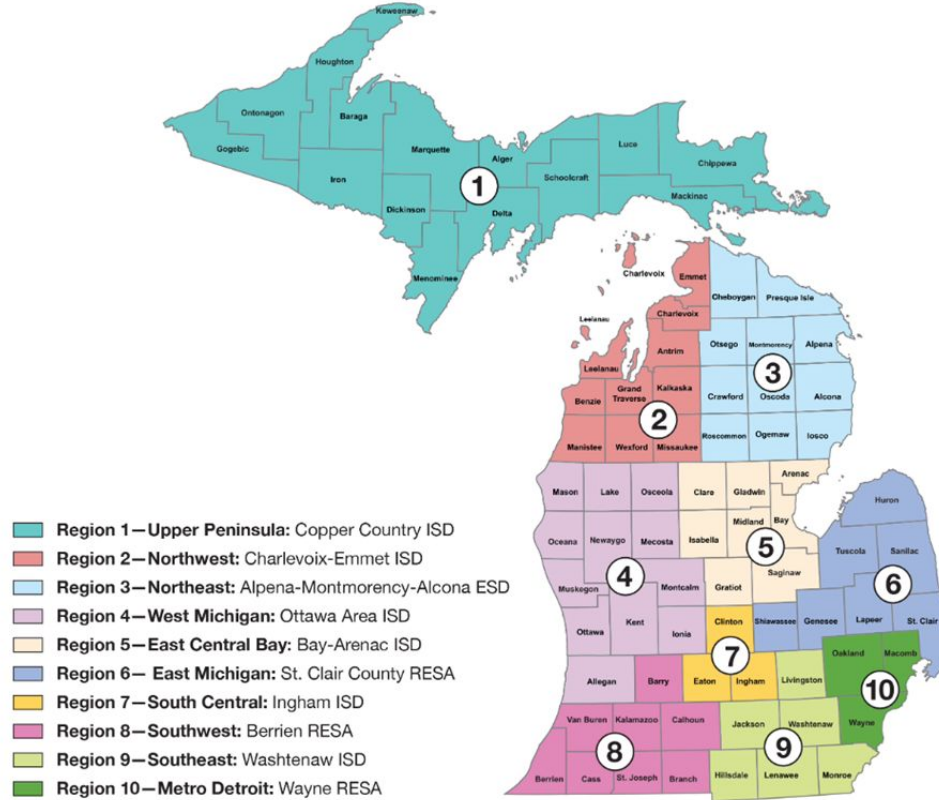
MiFamily Engagement Centers

- Aligned to the MiFamily Framework
- Currently Funded by Section 35i and 32p through September 30, 2027
- Development of a system of support, not a physical space, for P-20 family facing professionals
- Providing training, coaching, technical assistance, resource development, and regional initiatives
- Regional Coordinators and Coaches
- Two Focuses
 - Increasing Literacy by the end of Grade 5
 - Increasing Family Engagement P-20





MiFamily Engagement Centers



MiFamily

Engagement Centers

1 UP- Kelly Sager
ksager@maresa.org

2 Northwest- Carolyn Beltz
beltzc@charemysd.org

3 Northeast- Jean Kowalski
kowalskij@amaesd.org

4 Western- Angela Brigham
abrigham@oaisd.org

5 Central- TBD

6 Eastern- Megan Noel
noel.megan@sccresa.org

7 South Central- Autumn Hart
autumn.hart@inghamisd.org

8 Southwest- Kristen Chism
Kristen.chism@kresa.org

9 Southeast- Kimirah Vincent
kvincent@washtenawisd.org

10 Metro Detroit- Melissa Wilson
WilsonM@resa.net

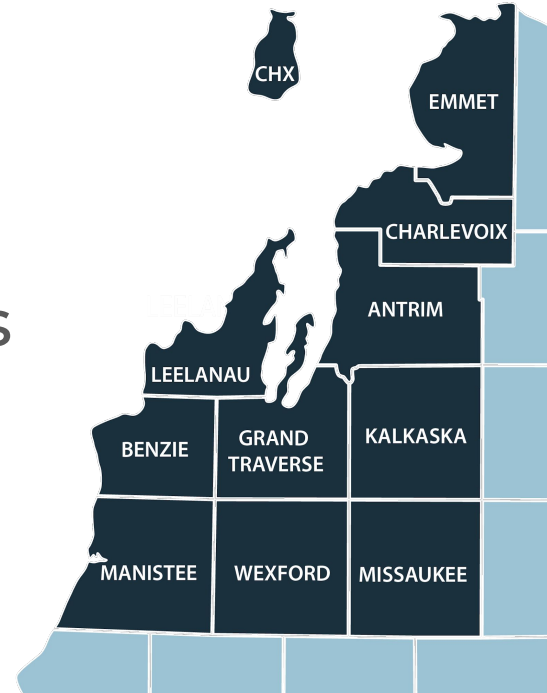


Libraries as Partners in Family Engagement

Libraries are trusted spaces for:

- Building relationships
- Supporting literacy and learning
- Connecting families & communities

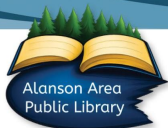
Relationships make engagement meaningful.





Library Partnerships in Action

MiFamily
Engagement Centers
Region 2



For kids ages 0-5
and their parents!

Love and Literacy

Join us for a special event focused on
stories, play, and connection!

Parents and caregivers of children ages 0-5: Bring your kids (and their siblings!) to this fun, free event at the Alanson Area Public Library on July 10, 2026!

You are the most important factor!

Parents and caregivers are the key ingredient in building a strong foundation for their child's language and literacy milestones. **Children just need you!** Whether your child is a newborn or a busy preschooler, you will walk away from this event with simple, playful practices for building literacy that work in the rhythm of a busy home.

Together, we will:

- Turn everyday moments into rich learning experiences.
- Foster a love of reading through shared book experiences.
- Create a warm, literacy-rich environment in your home!



Featured presenter: Patti Loper

We are thrilled to welcome Patti Loper, an early childhood and literacy expert with over 30 years of experience as a classroom teacher, literacy coach, and educational leader. Patti is incredibly passionate about helping families engage in activities that promote children's development, and she can't wait to share practical, stress-free ideas with you! She has master's degrees in both early childhood education and educational leadership.



Event details

Friday, July 10, 2026

10:30 a.m.-noon

Alanson Area Public Library: 7631 Burr Ave.

Register today at
bit.ly/LOVELITERACY
or by scanning the QR code



This event is **FREE!**
Free book to keep!
Snacks & crafts included.



Let's Make Summer Reading Fun!

Looking for ways to keep your child learning while school is out?
Come learn creative ways to build reading skills all summer long!

- ✦ Discover simple, fun activities to support reading at home
- ✦ Explore hands-on "make & take" ideas
- ✦ Learn how to turn everyday moments into learning opportunities
- ✦ Perfect for families with young children

This is a **FREE** event and snack will be provided!
Let's keep those young minds growing all summer!

MON, MAY 18TH | 3:45 - 5:00 PM

MANISTEE ISD
772 E. Parkdale Ave
Manistee, MI

Presented by:

MiFamily
Engagement Centers
REGION 2



Questions? Contact Carolyn Beltz,
MiFamily Engagement Center Region 2 Coordinator
at (231) 308-0304 or beltzc@charemsd.org.

Learn more about MiFamily Region 2, which includes Char-Em ISD: <https://bit.ly/MiFamilyRegion2>



Building on What's Already There

- **Mini-Grants:** Support locally developed ideas.
- **Professional Learning:** Strengthen family engagement practices.
- **Collaboration:** Connect with schools, families, and community organizations.

What are families telling you, and what could we build together?

Hero's Quest: A Percy Jackson Wellness Games for Kingsley (Region 2)



- Popular, literature-based IP to do the heavy lifting, as well as some competition.
- Framework of the 5 Pillars of Wellness: physical, emotional, social, intellectual, and environmental.
- Mini-Grant was flexible!

Hero's Quest

Weekly Wednesdays in June and July, all-age "campers" will carry the torch for Camp Half-Blood or Camp Jupiter with engaging activities, games, and introduction to community resources!



VS



- June 18, 10:30 a.m. - Boxing with Zach Brayton
- June 25, 10:30 a.m. - Cardio Drumming
- July 9, 10:30 a.m. - Introduction to Sword Fighting with Grand Traverse Historical Weapons Guild
- July 16, 10:30 a.m. - Yoga in the Park with Megan Hall
- July 23, 10:30 a.m. - Family Yoga with Taea Alandt



What We Learned, How We Pivoted

- We invited 17 regional partners, which meant about 8-12 each week.
- Make the partners part of the fun, make caregivers a captive audience!
- Scavenger hunts, summer camp games were the biggest hits.

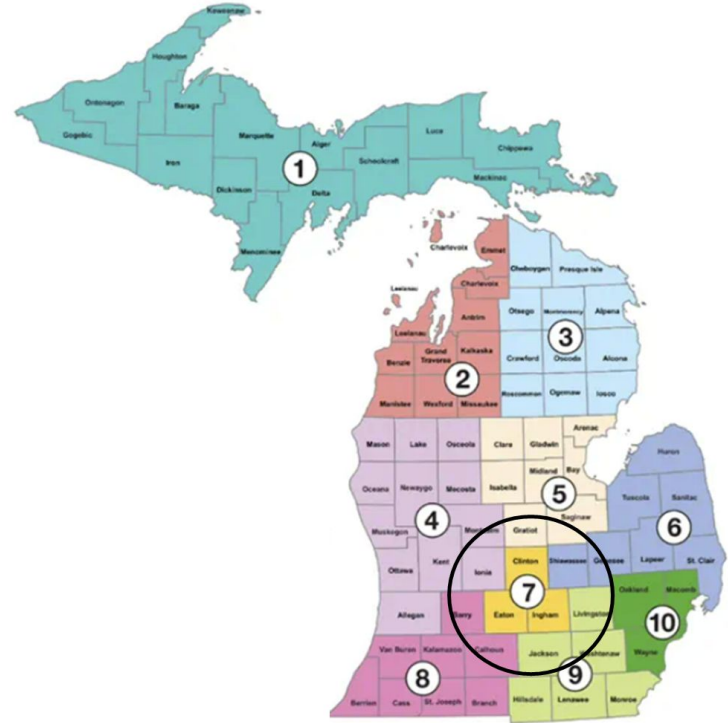


Family Engagement - Region 7

Clinton, Eaton & Ingham counties
Greater Lansing area

Partnership Activities -
Delta Township District Library

- Steering Committee
- Regional Collaboration
- Family Literacy Celebration Event
- Professional Development
- Connecting with Educators
- Support for Family Literacy Workshops



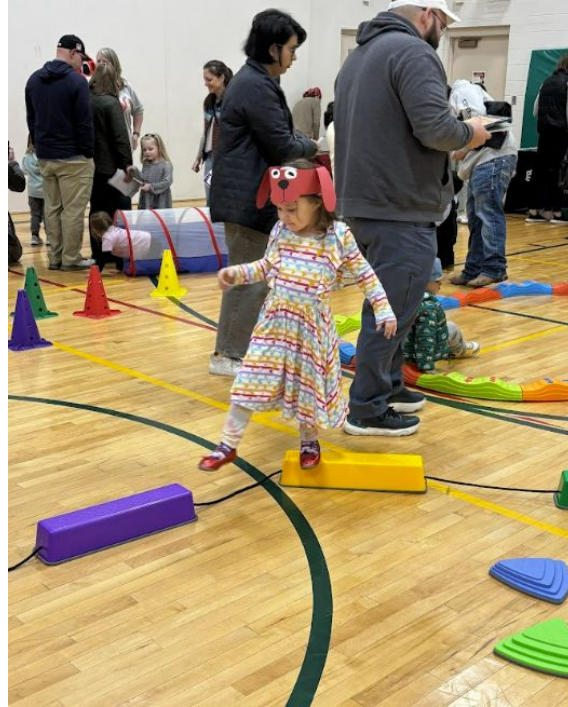
Regional Collaboration: Early Childhood Literacy Coalition



Family Literacy Celebration



Family Literacy Celebration



Region 7 Professional Development

Spring 2026 Workshop

- Attendee: training in family engagement around literacy
- Service Provider: promote library services to educators

MiFamily Engagement Is *Essential* for Literacy!

Join some of Michigan's leading literacy experts at a two-day professional learning event to discover what really works when partnering with families around literacy!

This event is for providers, teachers, coaches, and any other professionals supporting the literacy development of children from birth through age 10!



Dr. Patricia Edwards, Ph.D.
Michigan State University



Annie Spear, M.Ed, MAT
Spear Educational Consulting, LLC

May 7 & 8, 2026
9:00 AM - 3:00 PM
Michigan State University,
Erickson Hall

- Learn literacy practices that work best at home and how to talk to families.
- Leave with tools and resources.
- Earn SCECHs or MiRegistry Credits.

MiFamily
Engagement Centers
Region 7

REGISTER HERE!

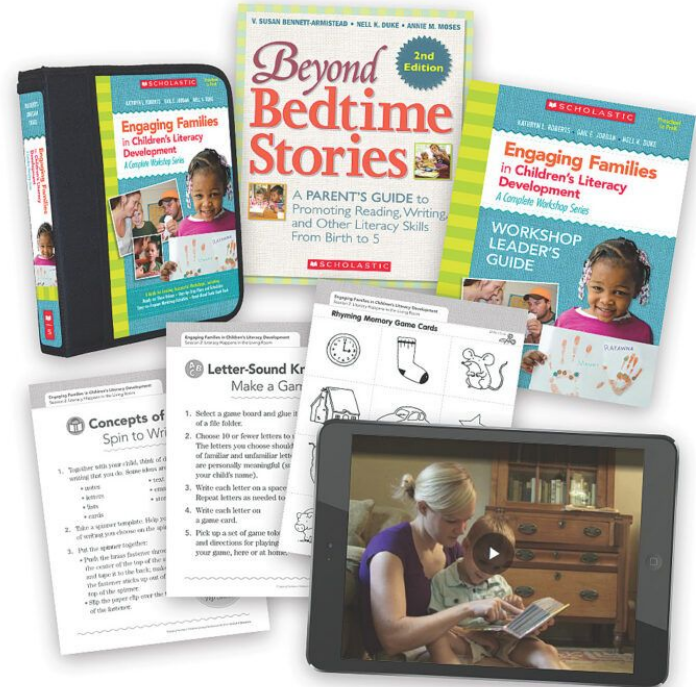
MILEAP
Michigan Department of Education
Education, Advancement, and Potential

PAID for by Mileap MiFamily Engagement Centers

Support for Family Literacy Workshops

Past & Future Activities

- Scholastic's Engaging Families in Children's Literacy Development
- Ready to Read Michigan



Michigan **RECONNECT**

Empowering Michigan Adults to
Return to College — Tuition Free



Why Michigan Reconnect?

A statewide investment in Michigan's workforce and families

The Challenge

- Michigan's 60x30 goal: 60% of residents with a post-secondary credential by 2030
- Significant skills gap across in-demand industries
- Nearly 1.8 million Michigan adults with some college but no degree
- Community college enrollment declined sharply during the pandemic
- Provide individual opportunities for Michiganders to follow their dreams to find better jobs

The Reconnect Response

- Tuition-free path to skills certificate and/or associate degree
- Open to adults age 21+
- Available to use at all Michigan community and tribal colleges
- Supported by dedicated Reconnect Navigators who guide students from application to completion



Who is Eligible?

Michigan Reconnect is open to adults who meet the following:

 Must be at least 21 years of age

 Michigan resident for at least the previous year

 Have a high school diploma, GED or equivalent

 Have not yet earned an associate degree or higher

 Plan to enroll at a Michigan community or tribal college

 Pursuing a Pell-eligible associate degree or occupational skills certificate

 FAFSA completion required – Reconnect is a last dollar scholarship



Reconnect Navigator Support

Dedicated advisors guiding students from acceptance to graduation



Guide students through the college going process: documents, enrollment and financial aid



Help students explore degree plans and identify in-demand career pathways



Connect students to resources: childcare, transportation and other financial needs



Partner with liaisons at community colleges, Michigan Works!, and community organizations



Assigned by school at application – students are linked to a Navigator from day one





What Does Reconnect Cover?

Covered Costs

- 100% of in-district tuition
- Registration fees
- Mandatory course fees
- Contact hours

Renewal Requirements

- File FAFSA annually
- Maintain Michigan residency
- Earn at least 12 credits per academic year
- Maintain 2.0 GPA or higher/SAP

Michigan Reconnect allows up to 4 years!



Impact by the Numbers

Since the program launched in February 2021

260,000+

Michiganders have applied

94,000+

Students enrolled at
community colleges

19,700+

Credentials earned

38%

Adult enrollment boost at
community colleges

Michigan Reconnect is the largest program of its kind in state history. Launched bi-partisanly in 2021, it has become a national model for adult learner re-engagement.

An additional 6,000 Michiganders earned degrees through Futures for Frontliners, the predecessor program.



Reconnect Impact

Percentage of Students Earning 12+ Credits

All Students

44.6%

Reconnect
Students

52.1%

Non-Reconnect,
25+ Students

29.8%

Term-To-Term Persistence at Same IHE

All Students

55.5%

Reconnect
Students

66.7%

Non-Reconnect,
25+ Students

44.1%

Year-To-Year Retention at Same IHE

All Students

48.5%

Reconnect
Students

61.6%

Non-Reconnect,
25+ Students

41.2%

Source: [Reconnect Data Dashboard](#),
Data from the Center for Education
Performance and Information.
No other filters are applied.



The MiLEAP Reconnect Data Dashboard

94,000+ Reconnectors are currently enrolled

Two thirds of
those enrolled
are female

Three quarters
were under the
age of 35

Nearly half of
Reconnect
students earned
fewer than 12
credits in the
most recent
academic year

Reconnect
Dashboard



Michigan invests about \$2,500 for the average Reconnect



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Michigan Reconnect Graduates



16,818 Reconnect Graduate Records

- One year wage outcomes of 9,357
- Two-year outcomes of 4,778
- 71 percent female and 29 percent male
- 60% under the age of 35
- 79% earned associates
- 21% earned certificates

Michigan Reconnect allows up to 4 years!



Michigan Reconnect Graduates



The study compared how much Reconnectors earn one and two years after graduation compared to their wages before Reconnect.

One-year Median Wages

\$13,400 higher compared to pre-Reconnect wages



Michigan Reconnect Graduates



Year-two group median wages

- \$16,300 higher
- Overall increase of 48%
- 51% increase with degree graduates
- 37% increase with certificate graduates



Michigan Reconnect Graduates

Bachelor's Degrees

As of June 2025

761 Reconnector awardees earned a bachelor's degree





Michigan Reconnect Graduates

The employment rate for Reconnect graduates rose by over 12 percentage points.

Conservative estimates of Michigan income tax revenues from Reconnect graduates are about \$380 more in annual income tax than their pre-Reconnect taxes.

In seven years after graduation, Michigan will break even on its investment in the form of increased tax revenue from Reconnect graduates.





Michigan Reconnect Graduates

Key Finds

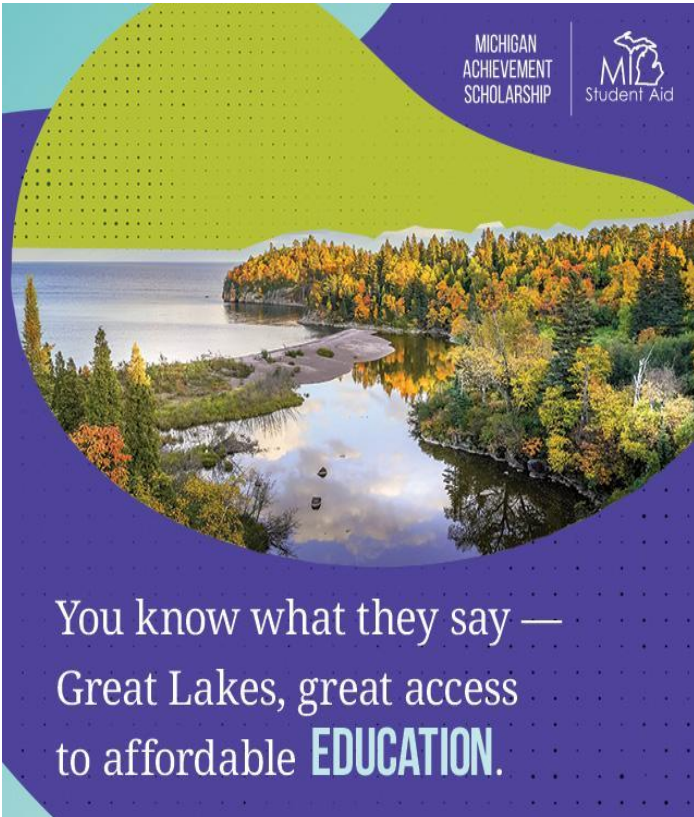
The employment rate for Reconnect graduates rose by over 12 percentage points.

One year after graduation, median wages for Reconnectors were \$13,400 greater, on average, compared to their previous wages and \$16,500 greater compared to peers with a high school diploma.

Reconnect graduates were more likely to participate in industries like healthcare and education, and some went on to further their education. Healthcare and business-related programs were the most popular.

The State of Michigan is estimated to recover its typical investment in a Reconnector seven years after their graduation through state income taxes on increased wages.

Michigan Achievement Scholarship

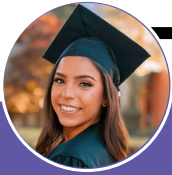


- Largest Michigan investment in higher education funding.
 - Full or partial funding can be awarded along with other State and Federal aid (such as the Pell Grant).
- Reduces student loan debt.
- Supports skills training and multiple types of college pathways.
- Details available at **michigan.gov/achievement**.



Choose Your Pathway

Michigan Achievement Scholarship



Community
College
Guarantee



Public or Private
University



Career
Training



Michigan Achievement Scholarship

Recent high school graduates who complete a FAFSA are eligible to:

Earn a skills certificate or associate degree at your local **community college**

- in-district tuition, mandatory fees and contact hours
- \$1,000 bonus for Pell eligible students

Earn up to \$5,500 per year at a **public, private or independent college/university**

- Up to 5 years or \$27,500 total
- Must have SAI of 30,000 or less

Earn up to \$2,000 per year for a career training program

- Up to 2 years or \$4,000 total



Eligibility Requirements

The eligibility for each Michigan Achievement Scholarship pathway is slightly different. However, all pathways require a student to:

Be a **Michigan resident** and a U.S. citizen, permanent resident, or approved refugee.

Be a recent **graduate** from **high school** (or its equivalent).

Enroll **full-time** as an undergraduate student at an eligible Michigan institution **within 15 months** of high school graduation or its equivalent.

Not be in **default** on a Federal student loan.

Questions?

We're here to help.

Apply or Learn More

michigan.gov/reconnect

sixtyby30@michigan.gov

Customer Care Center

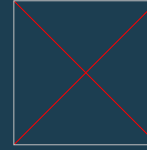
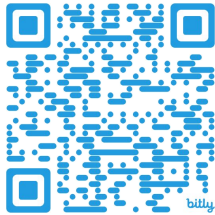
888-447-2687

Monday–Friday, 8 a.m. – 4:45 p.m.



Dr. Michelle Cyrus

Student Success Strategy Manager



Let's Connect

- Email:
cyrusm@michigan.gov
- Phone:
734-706-0222

Now, let's hear from YOU!

- If you're partnering with your **MiFamily Engagement Center**, share with us how you are doing so!
- How might you let your community know about the resources through **Michigan Reconnect**?
- Any "Ah-ha!" moments or "I wish..."?
- Questions?



Thank you!



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