



## Building Capacity – Improving Outcomes

Michigan Department of Education (MDE) Office of Special Education  
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### MDE Mission

Support learning and learners.

### MDE Vision

Every learner in Michigan’s public schools will have an inspiring, engaging, and caring learning environment that fosters creative and critical thinkers who believe in their ability to positively influence Michigan and the world beyond.

### OSE Vision

In support of the Michigan Department of Education’s Mission, Vision, and Top 10 Strategic Education Plan, the Office of Special Education (OSE) believes the state education agency’s purpose is to ensure the civil rights of children with disabilities for a free and appropriate public education (FAPE) are maintained. We believe students with disabilities are to receive an effective education in their least restrictive environment (LRE), interacting with their typical peers, and accessing the general education curriculum. We believe this leads to meaningful outcomes where adults with disabilities have the opportunity to live independently, exert control and choice over their own lives, and fully participate in and contribute to their communities. When individuals with disabilities are able to accomplish these outcomes, they are integrated into the economic, political, social, and cultural mainstream of Michigan society. This entitlement is granted to students with disabilities by Congress and supported by the will of the people of the State of Michigan.

We believe in order to operationalize the intent of the *Individuals with Disabilities Education Act* (IDEA) and of Congress to improve student outcomes, the state education agency must support a system to build the capacity of schools, member districts, intermediate school districts (ISDs), and the OSE.

Meaningful outcomes occur when we all work with each other, for each other. The MDE OSE operationalizes these beliefs through the following actions:

- Being proactive and responsive to families and educators to strengthen processes and provide technical assistance specific to identified needs.
- Collecting high quality data on outcomes and on processes to engage in data-based decision- making.
- Continuously improving the knowledge and skills of both OSE staff and external stakeholders.
- Working in partnership with ISDs to support the development, enhancement, and alignment of the OSE and the ISD Systems of General Supervision.
- Supporting a healthy and effective System of General Supervision to ensure the intent and purposes of IDEA are achieved for students with disabilities.

Remember, “the value in our lives is not determined by what we do for ourselves. The value in our lives is determined by what we do for others” (Sinek, 2016). Special education is at its best in Michigan when we support the development of competencies in educators and the students we serve. Our true value as leaders and advocates is not measured solely by the work we do. Our true value is measured by the support we provide to educators and students with disabilities to achieve meaningful outcomes through the implementation of an aligned and effective System of General Supervision.

The purpose of this document is to describe the way we, the OSE, do our work. It is an evolving document, even as the OSE work evolves to ensure children and youth with disabilities in Michigan access and receive a FAPE.

## Reference

Sinek, S. (2016). Together is better: A little book of inspiration. NY: Portfolio/Penguin.