

Preschool Inclusion

Michigan's Collective Action Plan



Collective Action Plan Designers

Approximately 50 participants representing diverse perspectives at all levels of the system from across the state participated in a rigorous process to generate a collective action plan.



Administrators

Family Members

Speech-Language Pathologists

Preschool Development Grant representative

MEMPSA

Technical Assistance Centers

Occupational Therapist

Private Providers

Superintendents

Social Worker

Health Care Professional (Pediatrician)

Advocacy Organizations

Teachers

Behavioral/ Mental Health

LEAs

Policy Experts

School Finance

ISDs

MDE

MAISA

Tribal/Indigenous

Adult self-advocate

Alliance for Michigan Families

MAASE

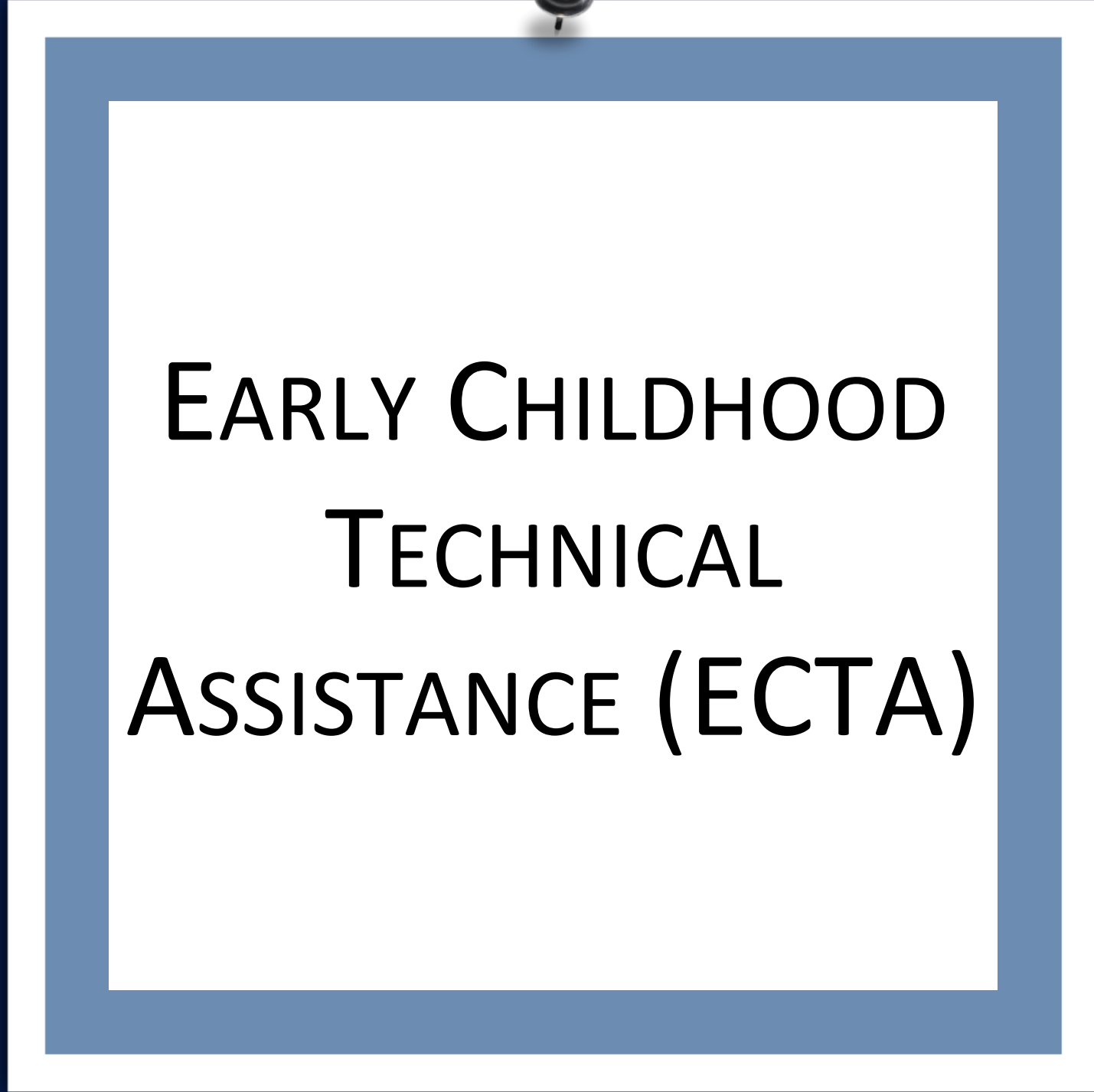
Special Education Instructional Leadership Network

Planning & Support Teams



STATE LEADERSHIP
TEAM

14 internal MDE partners who will be essential to internal policies and practices impacting preschool outcomes



EARLY CHILDHOOD
TECHNICAL
ASSISTANCE (ECTA)

ECTA is a national OSEP-funded center assisting Michigan in this effort



CORE
PLANNING
TEAM

8 internal MDE and external partners responsible for planning the strategic planning process, including ensuring the requisite variety of participants

Preschool Inclusion Collective Action Plan

We can, we must, and we will do better for our preschool children with disabilities and their families both in the short term and long term to ensure services are provided in high quality, equitable, and inclusive settings.



DEVELOPED BY THE COLLECTIVE WISDOM OF
PARTNERS ACROSS MICHIGAN



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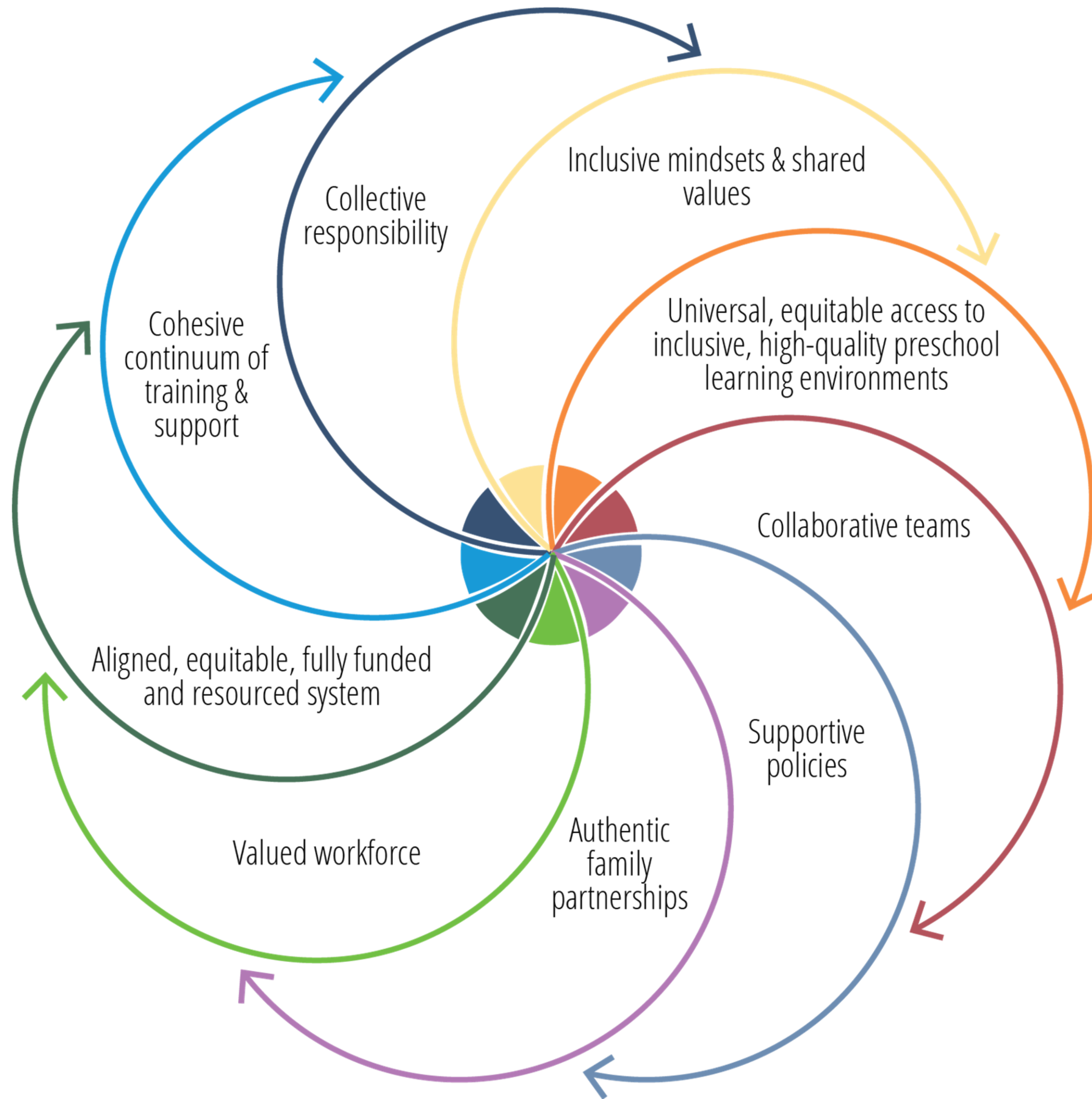
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The Preschool Inclusion Collective Action Plan



Ideal Features

1. Inclusive Mindsets and Shared Values

A belief that all children have a fundamental right to an inclusive preschool environment as the standard, rather than as the default, is critical to achieving the goal of a high-quality, comprehensive, and equitable preschool system. Placement must not be based on a child's skills or special education labels. Program rules must be reexamined and, as appropriate, challenged to ensure promotion of inclusive practices. It is the responsibility of the system to ensure every environment is ready to meet the needs of each child. All individuals who make placement decisions will consider the best interest of the child above all else.

2. Free, Universal, and Equitable Access to Inclusive, High-quality Early Care and Education Settings

Developmentally appropriate, inclusive early care and education settings create opportunities for all 3- and 4-year-old children to be more sensitive, caring, and welcoming of diverse peers. Free, universal, and equitable access to high-quality early care and education settings must be designed with an inclusive mindset. This access will enable a more effective process across the state to identify and respond to the greatest number of children with unmet needs early in their development.

3. Collaborative Teams

Successful inclusion requires intentional and effective collaboration and teaming. Capitalizing on the collective wisdom of the team, multiple disciplines (general and special educators, occupational therapists, speech-language pathologists, etc.) take responsibility for co-planning and delivering differentiated instruction, collecting and analyzing data, and ensuring the environment is ready to support the whole child effectively.

4. Supportive Policies

Local, state, and federal policies must be child-centered, aligned, and focused on ensuring preschool environments are ready to support all children, regardless of ability, with structures in place to ensure accountability and the commitment to universal, inclusive, and equitable practices (as outlined above) are preserved.

5. Authentic Family Partnerships

Families are a child's first teacher and must be equal partners in their child's educational journey. Trust and respect are foundational to the partnership, honoring cultural norms and the voice of the family. Training and coaching are provided to families and staff on how to effectively partner through a variety of methods and environments. Partnerships strengthen skills, empower families to be engaged in their child's development, and improve child outcomes.

6. Cohesive Continuum of Training and Support

The goal of a high-quality, comprehensive, and equitable preschool system with an emphasis on full inclusion of children with disabilities demands a robust pre-service program as well as an integrated and aligned professional learning system with ongoing coaching to prioritize implementation of evidence-based practices. Cross-sector strategies must be developed and put in place that recognize and fully accept the diversity in the population as well as address the specific needs for support when behavioral or developmental issues arise.

7. Valued Workforce

Early childhood educators must be honored, respected, well compensated professionals who are guaranteed the resources, training, and support necessary to create environments and provide instruction that meet the needs of every child.

8. Aligned, Equitable, Fully Funded and Resourced System

Financial investment in the future of our youngest learners is a must. Fully-funded universal preschool should be the standard, with every early care setting having equitable and necessary resources to ensure high-quality, inclusive environments ready to meet the needs of all children.

Understanding inclusion is not more expensive than having separate programs for children with disabilities, we must also ensure all funding and policies are aligned across all agencies to promote inclusive and collaborative preschool environments.

9. Collective Responsibility

We must be mindful of the need for cohesion and coherence across the entire educational system (Birth through K-12). In order to ensure high-quality and equitable opportunities, partnership with the broader community is essential. Foundational to the collaboration is mutual respect and shared responsibility, honoring the diverse perspectives of the community. Foundational to the collaboration is a broad understanding of three- and four-year-old development and mutual respect, honoring the diverse perspectives of the community.

Build a Universal Preschool System

ACTION 1: Build a universal preschool system that includes a cohesive & coherent approach to support inclusion in all preschool settings for children ages 3 to 4 (& early 5s).

- **LEADS:** Michigan Department of Education (MDE)/Michigan Department of Lifelong Education, Advancement, and Potential (MiLEAP)
- **PRIMARY PARTNERS:** Families, Local Districts, Intermediate School Districts & Partner Agencies

Improve Provider Preparation for Inclusion

ACTION 2: Invest in early childhood educators & providers to support the growing system.

- **LEADS:** MDE/MiLEAP & Educator Preparation Institutions
- **PRIMARY PARTNERS:** Local Districts, Intermediate School Districts. Education Associations, & Partner Agencies

Assess for High Quality Practices

ACTION 3: Establish measures to assess progress, information improvements, & hold each level of the system accountable for promoting & implementing high-quality, equitable, & inclusive practices.

- **LEADS:** MDE/MiLEAP & Education Associations
- **PRIMARY PARTNERS:** Local Districts, Intermediate School Districts & Partner Organizations & Agencies

Ensure Developmentally Appropriate Settings

ACTION 4: Develop a system to ensure all Early Care & Education Settings are developmentally appropriate &, through the use of Evidence-based Practices, are supportive of all learners & their individual needs regardless of special education eligibility.

- **LEADS:** MDE/MiLEAP, Intermediate School Districts, & Educational Associations (i.e. ECAN)
- **PRIMARY PARTNERS:** Local Districts, Private Providers, & Partner Agencies

Review & Revise Inclusion Policies, Regulations, & Funding

ACTION 5: Conduct a comprehensive cross-sector review of state & federal policies, funding structures, & professional learning continuum that influence inclusion in all preschool settings to identify barriers & propose recommendations that incentivize inclusive preschool practices.

- **LEADS:** MDE/MiLEAP, Intermediate School Districts & education associations
- **PRIMARY PARTNERS:** Early Childhood Technical Assistance (ECTA), Licensing & Regulatory Affairs LARA), & Partner Agencies

Implement a Marketing Strategy for Inclusion

ACTION 6: Develop & implement a comprehensive marketing strategy that will define inclusion & promote its benefits.

- **LEADS:** MDE/MiLEAP, & Educational Associations
- **PRIMARY PARTNERS:** Families, Local Districts, Intermediate School Districts & Partner Agencies (i.e. ECTA, MAF, EOTTA)

Provide & Coordinate Professional Learning Opportunities & Coaching on Inclusion

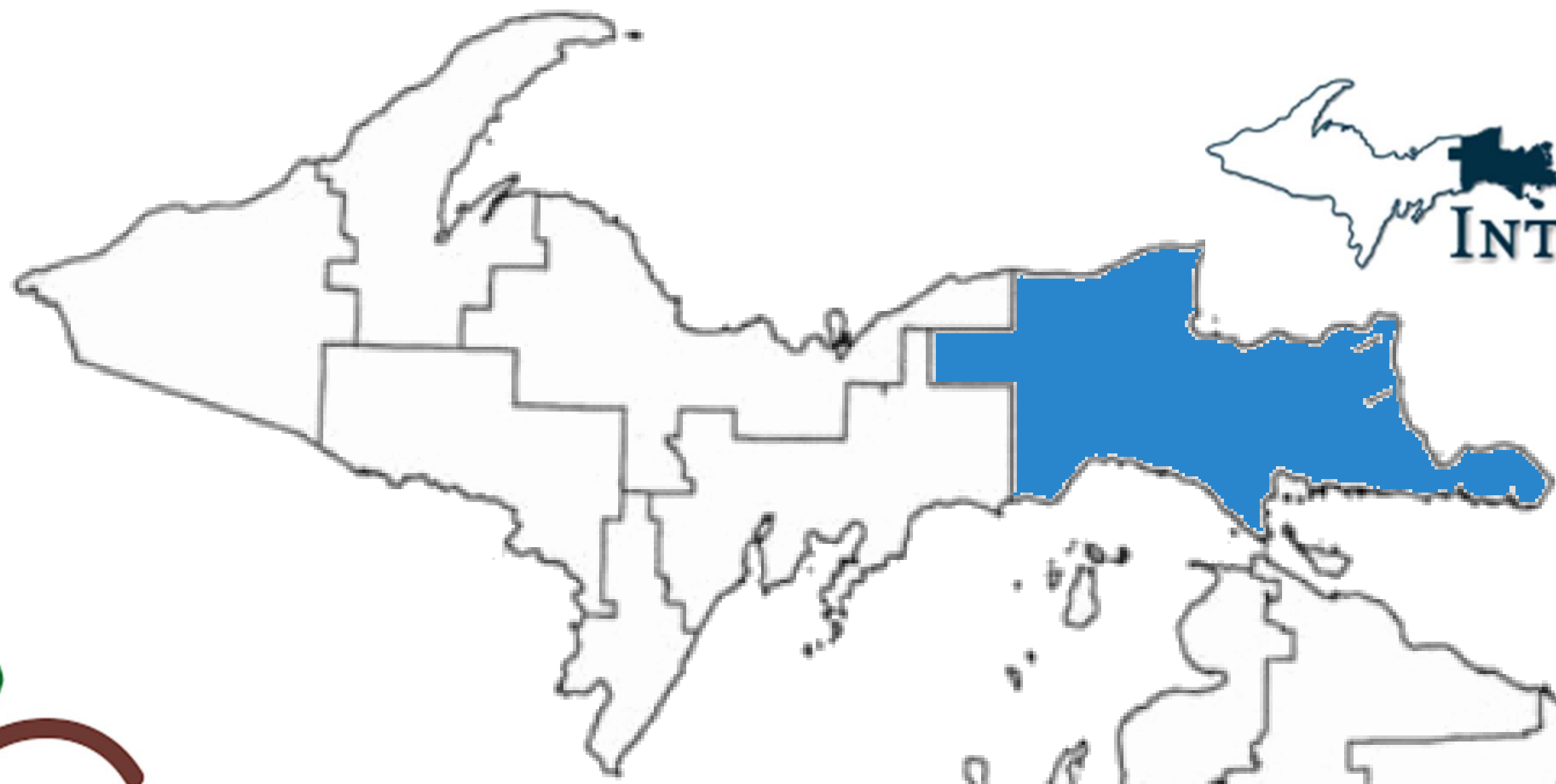
ACTION 7: Develop a coordinated, cross-sector approach to professional learning, technical assistance, & coaching to build capacity & sustain high-quality inclusive programs.

- **LEADS:** MDE/MiLEAP & Educational Associations
- **PRIMARY PARTNERS:** Families, Local Districts, Intermediate School Districts, Private Providers, & Partner Agencies (i.e. ECTA, EOTTA, MiMTSS)

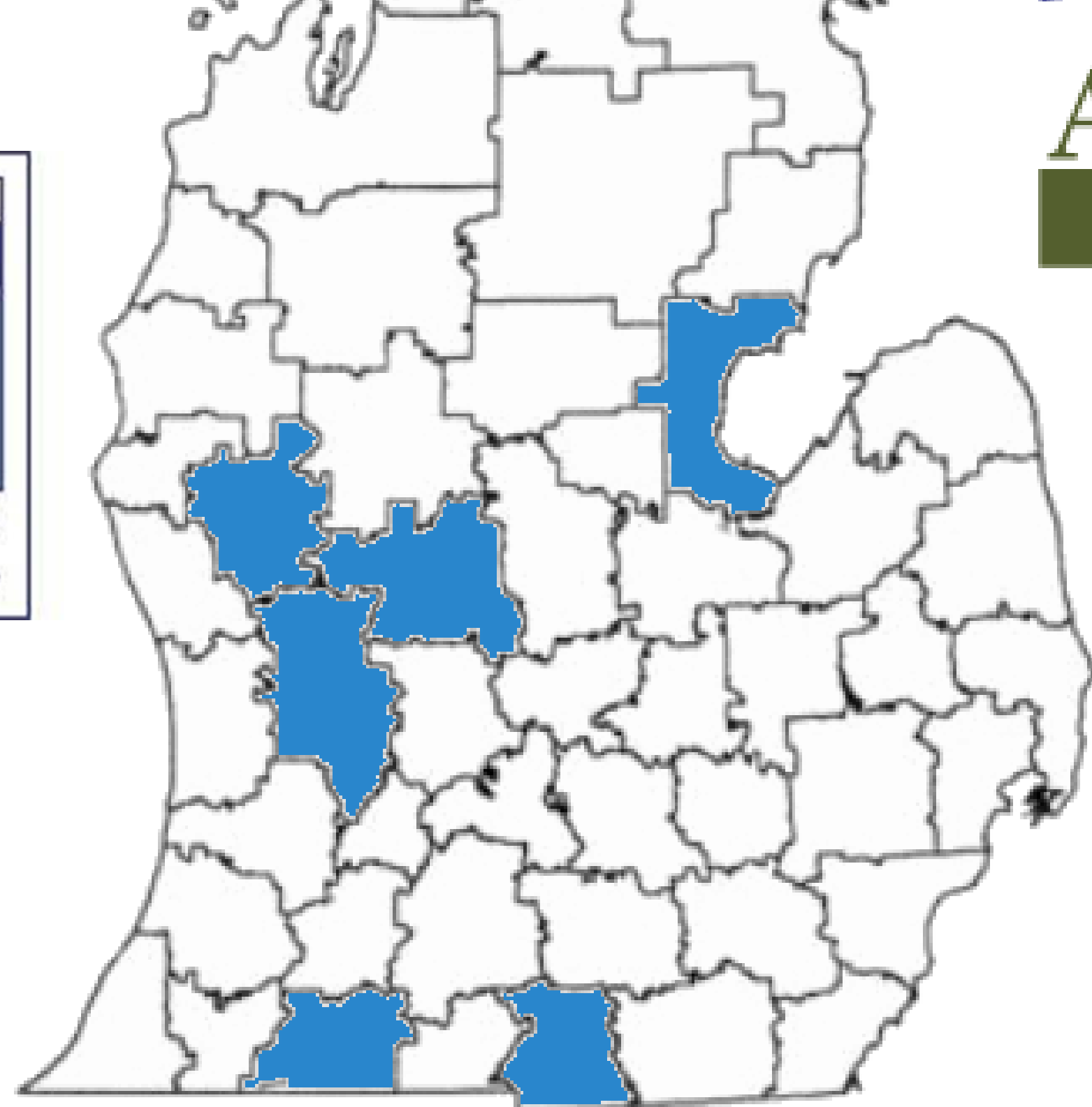


**Learning what
factors and
supports lead to or
prevent growth.**

Inclusion Builders



EASTERN UPPER PENINSULA
INTERMEDIATE SCHOOL DISTRICT



Practice-Based Coaching

- ✓ Supports teachers in implementing evidence-based practices
- ✓ Cyclical and Collaborative Process
- ✓ Coaching Cycle Components
 - Shared goals/Action Planning
 - Focused Observation
 - Reflection and Feedback
- ✓ Authentic embedding of practices





...More than Placement

“Young Children with disabilities
can experience low quality in
classes that are otherwise rated as
being of high quality”

-Wolrey, et al., 2000

Questions?

