

AI PROGRAM

School Improvement Annual Report 2008-09

The mission of the Macomb Intermediate School District's Autistic Impaired (AI) Program is to promote learning for students with autism by providing instruction in an educational environment designed to develop independence in communication, social and community skills.

The Autistic Impaired (AI) Program provides quality educational opportunities in Macomb County for students with autism, ages 3 to 26. As of May 2009 we had 428 students at our 13 school sites. Our average daily attendance rate last year was 91%.

Status of School Improvement

Our school improvement team is made up of professionals, paraprofessionals, administrators and ancillary staff representing each of our sites. Staff provide input and gather data that is used to develop goals, design methods to reach goals and develop further plans for improving student outcomes. At our school improvement meetings we set the following goal related to our MI-Access data and mission. We also set objectives and created an action plan to reach the goal.

Goal: All students will increase their ability to communicate effectively.

This goal relates to helping students learn to convey their physical needs, thoughts, desires and feelings. Our objective this year was for students to request sensory and leisure activities more often. To help teachers work on this goal, we designed data sheets, instructional strategies and supports. During a professional development day, we discussed questions related to the goal. Then our school improvement committee designed an assessment teachers could use to report student progress. When pre-test results compiled before we implemented our strategies were compared to post-test results, students showed improvement. In addition, our MI-Access scores for English language arts among all grades averaged 64% this year, compared to 53% before implementing any of our instructional strategies aimed at helping students increase their ability to communicate effectively.

Curriculum

Our curriculum is individualized to teach skills in communication, social interaction, vocational, and recreational/leisure activities. The emphasis is on communication-based instructional activities; functional, age-appropriate skills for work and daily living; and academic instruction geared to the student's needs.

Addressing Unique Educational Needs (AUEN) and the *WEBSTER Outcome Based Curriculum* provide the framework of our elementary/middle school curriculum; the *Syracuse Community-Referenced Curriculum* guides our secondary/post-secondary curriculum.

Student Achievement

The nature and severity of the impairment that challenges our students requires a curriculum that focuses on communication and social skills, rather than traditional academics. The Individualized Education Plan (IEP) drives the specifics of the curriculum for our students and is a key component in establishing goals for them.

We measure a student's achievement on annual goals by using formal reviews, classroom observations and input from parents. Assessments, such as the *Brigance Diagnostic Inventory*, the *Psycho-Educational Profile for Autistic Children*, AUEN, *Systematic Assessment System-Autism*, and the *Syracuse Community Referenced Curriculum*, help us evaluate progress.

MI-Access is the statewide alternative assessment given to students for whom the MEAP, even with accommodations, is not appropriate. Our students participate in two of its forms—Supported Independence and Participation. Both cover English language arts (ELA), mathematics and science. The following table shows the results:

MI-Access—Supported Independence

Number assessed and percentage meeting or exceeding expectations

English Language Arts (ELA)															
		Grade 3		Grade 4		Grade 5		Grade 6		Grade 7		Grade 8		Grade 11	
Year	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	
2008	27	67%	18	67%	21	48%	13	62%	10	60%	18	83%	11	55%	
2007	23	70%	24	58%	16	50%	10	30%	21	57%	13	54%	12	50%	

Math															
		Grade 3		Grade 4		Grade 5		Grade 6		Grade 7		Grade 8		Grade 11	
Year	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	
2008	26	77%	18	67%	21	48%	13	77%	9	*	18	89%	11	73%	
2007	23	65%	24	58%	16	56%	10	80%	21	76%	13	62%	11	73%	

Science							
		Grade 5		Grade 8		Grade 11	
Year	#	%	#	%	#	%	
2008	21	43%	18	78%	11	73%	
2007	16	38%	13	54%	11	73%	

*The state does not provide data for a group when less than 10 students are assessed.

Staff Development

Our school improvement goal provides focus for our staff development efforts. Inservices for staff included a review of state guidelines on seclusion and restraint policies; how to align student goals to the *Michigan Curriculum Framework* standards and benchmarks using Extended Grade Level Content Expectations (EGLCEs); and implementing a writing program for students with moderate to severe autism spectrum disorder. First aid, CPR, computer file management, and Crisis Prevention Institute training were the focus of other sessions.

Fifty-one of our teachers are fully certified with an endorsement in autism.

Technology

Staff use technology in a wide variety of ways:

- to reinforce literacy and other academic skills;
- to help students learn problem-solving skills;
- to promote social interactions with students, peers and adults; and,
- to develop visual supports to assist students.

Computers, specialized software and a variety of voice output and writing devices are just a few of the items we use to help students reach their goals.

Parent Participation

Parents play an active and varied role in our students' education. This year 73% of them attended conferences and 85% attended annual IEP team meetings, contributing valuable information about their child. Many parents volunteered to help set up our holiday store and many more contributed gifts to it. They also attended an evening meeting on the topic of IEPs offered by our staff. Parents also participated in carnival day, field trips, special luncheons and other events.

Use of Community Resources

Students with autism learn best in the environment where the skills are most often used. Our community-based instruction (CBI) program provides students with the opportunity to do just that. Each week our students of all ages go on outings to neighborhood stores, restaurants, community and recreational facilities. CBI settings become the classroom for teaching skills, as well as for practicing skills learned in school. Older students receive on-the-job training to develop vocational skills leading to future job acquisition. We currently have 19 job sites throughout Macomb County.

Points of Pride

- 45 of our students also attended their local school district part of their day.
- 32 of our students attended culinary arts classes at the Warren Consolidated School District's Career Prep Center.
- The AI Program is a member of the *Statewide Autism Resources and Training (START)* as a member of the Lakeside Regional Collaborative Network.



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Macomb Autistic Impaired Program

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