

May 1, 2019

  [LivingstonESA.org](http://LivingstonESA.org)



From Dr. Michael Hubert, Livingston ESA Superintendent

### **Legislative Changes**

There has been a significant amount of activity in Lansing centered around education laws. Following are a few of the key changes that are being contemplated:

**State Education Budget:** The [Senate has now released their budget recommendation](#) which has a number of differences from the Governor's budget recommendation. The two key differences as they relate to the Agency are the reimbursement rates for qualified costs of special education and the funding for ESA General operations ("Section 81"). The Governor recommended a 4% increase in the reimbursement rate for qualified costs of special education and a 3.5% increase in Section 81. The Senate did not recommend any increase in the reimbursement rate for qualified cost of special education but did provide one-time funding for capital expenditures related to special education. The Senate also recommended a 1% increase in Section 81. The next step in the process is to hear the budget recommendation from the House of Representatives and then the process of getting to consensus begins. I am not expecting to hear any resolution on the state budget until near when we begin the next school year.

**Waiver of state-emergency-declared snow days:** A bill was nearly enacted that would waive state-emergency-declared snow days but political maneuvering ensued. Many media outlets have reported that a snow day forgiveness law has passed. While it passed the senate, a procedural snafu has delayed it. The bill was denied immediate effect and that renders the bill moot.

**Educator Evaluations:** A bill was passed that would allow for the student growth portion of educator and administrator evaluations to move downward to 25% for this year only and is expected to be signed into law. This will set a new minimum for this year but districts will still be able to continue at a percentage higher than the minimum which I expect will happen in certain instances since this is a change only for this year and the year is nearly complete.

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# SPECIAL EDUCATION

## LIPSA Professional Learning

From Doug Haseley

It is hard to believe, but we are in the final “push” of the year with respect to the majority of our LIPSA professional learning endeavors. It has truly been an outstanding year of new learning and collaboration while embracing the true nature of collective efficacy. Ultimately, professional learning plays a critical role in supporting the understanding and delivery of high quality special education services to the children and families that we serve.

One professional learning initiative that has truly provided meaningful support to our newest staff members is the LESA/LIPSA Coaching Program. This year truly started out with a bang as we began with 48-LIPSA staff (Coaches and Protégés) participating in the program. Over the course of the year, a great deal of time and energy was focused on intentional lesson planning, specially designed instruction, data collection, and analyzing/reflecting on results. Along this journey, Coaches and Protégés were exposed to a variety of High Leverage Practices as well as advances in technology that enabled them to truly reflect on the impact of their instruction or intervention.

One particular piece of technology utilized throughout the year was the [SWIVL](#). The SWIVL is a video robot that enables staff to record video to review and reflect on their own professional practice. The use of technology such as the SWIVL is particularly beneficial due to the fact that providers cannot possibly remember and observe every aspect of the environment while providing direct instruction. When asked how the SWIVL benefited Protégés directly, one person noted, “I was able to observe things that I never would have seen if I didn’t take the video using the Swivl. The Swivl is great for helping to collect data as well!”



We are in the midst of completing our final coaching cycle and preparing for the very last session of Coaches and Protégés in June. We anticipate that approximately 14-Protégés will be exiting the program well equipped to engage in professional practice leading to educational excellence.

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# EARLY CHILDHOOD

## The Magic Of Reading Aloud With Young Children



From Sean LaRosa

Reading aloud to infants and young children is a gift with benefits that last long after the experience has ended. When you snuggle and bond with the baby or young child on your lap they are able to hear your warm and loving voice as you point out pictures and name what you are pointing to. Sharing a book is an experience that helps a young child's brain to make important connections, laying the foundation for learning to read. Just because a baby is not talking, doesn't mean he/she isn't learning! When an adult shares a book with a baby or young child he/she is learning that printed words have meaning and this is laying important groundwork for learning to read. Amazing things happen in a child's brain when adults read with them! Being read to is a whole brain experience. When hearing a story describing the smell of freshly baked brownies, the part of the brain that processes smells is activated.

Researchers have found that reading activates the brain in much the same way the brain is activated when making sense of the world around us. Reading aloud to babies and children helps to develop important cognitive and social emotional skills. The benefits of cuddling up on a parent or caregiver's lap helps babies and young children to feel safe and secure and builds their brain for learning!

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# SECONDARY OPTIONS

## Award from SET SEG recognizes the Education Project

From Michelle Radcliffe

For the third year in a row, the Livingston Educational Service Agency has been recognized for an outstanding program by SET SEG.

The SET SEG Foundation, partnering with the Michigan Association of School Boards, awarded \$2,500 to TEN educational programs within Michigan public schools and ISDs to continue their positive influence on their students and community.

The LESA Education Project, which supports foster care and homeless youth, was one of the ten programs recognized because of the dedication and leadership of Candice Olrich, Student Services Specialist and McKinney-Vento Grant Coordinator. Candice described the importance of providing an equitable educational experience for students who may otherwise miss the opportunities that their peers have.



Students receive support through the program to participate in school functions such as athletics, field trips and extracurricular activities and other academic and basic need support.

Each year, there are roughly 150-250 foster youth in Livingston County and 400 students considered homeless. Opportunities such as the SET SEG grant and award directly assist students in our county.

SET SEG and MASB presented the award to the agency at the board meeting on April 10<sup>th</sup>. They shared how moved they were when they reviewed the application and knew that this was a special program deserving of this award out of the 200 applications submitted.

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# COLLABORATION

## Autism and The World Wide Web

From Teresa Zigman and Alice Johnson

Over the years, the internet has become a vital tool in terms of communicating. For individuals with autism, the computer-mediated communication allows some of the social and communication barriers which contribute to the disability of autism to be broken down. Having an alternative method of communication allows those dealing with autism the ability to remove some of the anxiety of communicating with others.



The Internet has the ability to address the social isolation related to autism by improving the potential to find others who have similar experiences. It can allow a comfortable space that is more suited to an individual's communication style. It can also provide a sense of liberation by allowing them to communicate with peers on a more "equal" basis by providing more control and clarity in their communications with others. This then facilitates other positive opportunities in terms of education, employment and social inclusion.

To provide communication alternatives, we need to ensure that internet access is available to all areas in Livingston County. There are many rural areas within the County that have poor or no access. The Agency, in conjunction with Merit and many other public and private partners, are looking at ways of addressing our "digital divide" through a program called [Michigan Moonshot](#). The goal of this program is to ensure internet access in all areas in the State of Michigan. Expanding access will afford not only individuals with autism but all students additional communication avenues that can support their communication styles and enhance overall educational achievement.

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# PARENTS & COMMUNITY

## Adult Transition Services and Collaborative Partnerships

From Douglas Haseley

This is the time of year that many students prepare to graduate from high school and begin to chart a course for their post secondary vision beyond the traditional K-12 setting. For both students with and without a disability, this may include formal college, technical training, or immediate entry into the workforce. For some of our students with more intensive disability related needs, that did not participate in a course of study leading to a general education diploma, the Adult Transition Services (ATS) program at LESA represents the opportunity for them to continue to pursue their post secondary vision.

One important component of ATS is to create opportunities for students to seek independence within the community, which for some, could translate into competitive and/or customized employment. These efforts require strong collaboration between community based entities and LESA staff. One individual that truly embraces this work on behalf of LESA is Pleasanna Carter. For the past 2-years, Pleasanna has served in the capacity of our Work Study Coordinator. Over this time, she has worked with local businesses as well as Michigan Rehabilitative Services (MRS) to explore work sites that will open their doors to allow ATS students to gain valuable work experience. Part of this experience involves LESA staff and MRS completing a job assessment to help guide students in knowing what skills need to be refined in order to gain competitive and/or customized employment. When asked what is the most fulfilling aspect of her work Pleasanna noted, "It is incredible to see our students blossom and gain the confidence to secure a job."

As a result of collaborative efforts within the county, 15-students have been competitively employed over the last 2-years. This would not be possible without the amazing relationships between LESA and local businesses. The next time you are out and about, please consider extending a sincere thank you to the following:

ChemTrend, Tomato Brothers, CVS, Howell Custodial, AutoLab, A/F Wood Products, Baymont, First Impressions, Livingston County Courts, VGs, and Cleary University

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# LEADERSHIP - LOCAL DISTRICT

## May is Mental Health Awareness Month

By Doug Haseley

*"Mental pain is less dramatic than physical pain, but it is more common and also more hard to bear. The frequent attempt to conceal mental pain increases the burden: It is easier to say 'My tooth is aching' than to say 'My heart is broken'." CS Lewis.*



May is Mental Health Awareness Month. This is an important topic, especially in education, as we see more and more students struggling with mental health issues. In Dec 2018, then Gov. Rick Snyder signed legislation designating \$31.3 million for School Mental Health and Support Services within the K-12 budget. A 2017 MLive investigation explained the financial struggles school leaders were having trying to support a growing number of students battling various types of anxiety, depression, and behavior disorders. This doesn't even speak to the mental health needs of educators who are supporting students.

Mental Health America (MHA) highlights statistics indicating that 1 in 4 adults has a diagnosable mental health disorder. It is time for us to be proactive in our workplace to help combat this stark statistic. In the spirit of Mental Health Awareness Month, MHA offers a [toolkit](#) of ideas. The ideas outlined in the toolkit can truly serve as a mechanism to universally promote mental health. One idea is to increase humor.

Humor and laughter has been shown to reduce the risk of blood clots, heart conditions, and other stress-related diseases. Incorporating humor into your daily life improves your immune system, improves your mood, decreases anxiety, improves your interactions with others, and releases endorphins. Here are 5 quick tips for finding humor in your day:

- 1) Spend time with a young child - their antics are almost always good for a laugh!
- 2) Watch stand-up comedy
- 3) Spend 15 minutes online - comics, memes, videos...find what you can
- 4) Incorporate funny things into your environment. It could be a goofy photo; a page-a-day calendar; or a mug with a witty saying or cartoon
- 5) Reach out to someone who gets your sense of humor. Share the funny things that have happened to you recently or reminisce

If you need some help, Google humor....there is no shortage of videos to make you laugh!

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