

# Intermediate school districts are helping build\* a better Michigan

**N**ow, more than ever before, Michigan's intermediate school districts are ensuring high quality, equitable education. For 50 years, from the day the Legislature created them in 1962, Michigan's ISDs continue to:

- Save money and resources for K–12 districts by providing consolidated support services.
- Train teachers in the latest research-based methods.
- Pilot innovative programs that districts couldn't afford on their own.
- Coordinate special education and vocational education across their region.

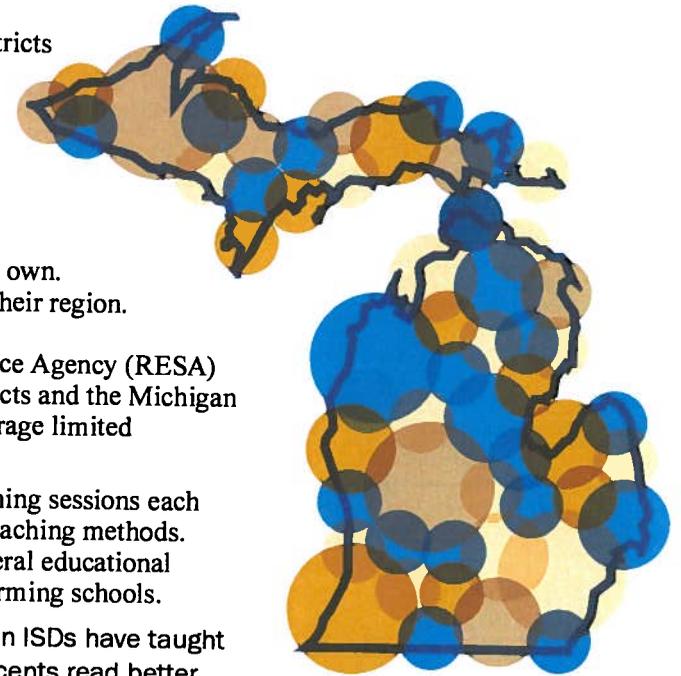
ISDs — which sometimes go by the name Regional Educational Service Agency (RESA) or Educational Service Agency (ESA) — work with local school districts and the Michigan Department of Education. They support student achievement and leverage limited resources in seven areas mandated by federal and/or state law:

- 1 Teaching and Learning:** ISDs offer literally thousands of training sessions each year to educators, keeping them up on the latest research and teaching methods. ISDs help member districts follow often-complex state and federal educational standards. ISDs are a tool the state uses to help its lowest-performing schools.

**For example:** Since 2006-07, two southeast Michigan ISDs have taught 1,594 teachers in 15 school districts to help adolescents read better. In one year alone, classrooms using this technique raised reading comprehension scores at 2 to 4 times the rate of a typical classroom. Up to 70% of all middle school and high school teachers in these two ISDs have received this training and ongoing support.

- 2 Specialized Student Services:** Local school districts depend on ISDs to meet ever-growing needs in Special Education, Career and Technical Education, Tech Prep, Career Preparation, Talent Development, online and digital courses, Math and Science Centers, Extended Day and Alternative Education programs, and Court-Involved Youth and Homeless Education programs.

**For example:** In 2010–11, the Homeless Education Program in one southeast Michigan ISD helped more than 1,300 homeless students stay in school and get help. Its work helped local districts keep the more than \$12 million they would have lost had those students dropped out.



Michigan's 56 ISDs cover the state, providing services to 1.6 million K–12 students. The benefit to students is beyond dollars and cents.

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 By saving our schools money, time and duplication of effort. Every day.

- 3 Early Childhood/Great Start:** ISDs are taking the lead in early childhood education to better ensure every child is safe, healthy and eager to succeed in school and in life. ISDs build local partnerships, share research and advocate for services for our youngest citizens.

**For example:** In the past five years, one west Michigan ISD helped drive a 16% decrease in the need for Special Education services in its area by focusing on additional preschool-age support and teacher training. Just last year, this meant a savings of about \$13 million, based on a 2,000-student drop in those needing extra services.

- 4 Administrative Services:** Quality, efficiency, and cost containment are the hallmark of ISDs. ISDs help districts share services in such areas as instruction, technology, transportation, business services, teacher training, and purchasing.

**For example:** In 2010-11, a southwest Michigan RESA saved local school districts nearly \$2 million in software and supply costs through its regional cooperative purchasing bid program. In that ISD, districts also saved another \$341,000 on technology licenses through the program.

- 5 Developing Partnerships:** ISDs often are key partners in local economic development through their community ties with human service agencies, businesses, industry and colleges and universities. Those partnerships benefit our schools and students by readying them for 21st Century careers.

**For example:** A northern Michigan ISD and Northwest Michigan Works! provide employers, workers and job seekers a “one-stop” system for employment, education, and training services. The ISD also participates in the Michigan Works! system to help prepare young people for employment.

- 6 Technology Services:** ISDs are technology leaders in their region. ISDs often manage the area’s fiber network, provide Internet access, subsidize the cost of student assessment and management tools, obtain lower costs for computer software, provide Internet safety filters, purchase digital collections, promote online and digital learning options, and provide technical support.

**For example:** A mid-Michigan ISD maintains the online infrastructure and provides technical support to 16 local districts. Estimates indicate the arrangement saves each district up to \$200,000 a year if they were paying for this support individually. Additionally, the ISD has negotiated the use of more than 1,667 online courses and teacher-led digital curriculum for the benefit of more than 4,000 students statewide who have enrolled in more than 16,000 on-line courses in the last year.

- 7 Customized Services:** Each ISD customizes services to meet unique needs. Each ISD works with its local school districts to develop the mix of products and programs to maximize benefits for that area.

**For example:** More than a year ago, an east side school district asked its RESA to provide Special Education transportation. A comparative of cost from before and after the change calculated the RESA saved the district \$291,000 in one year alone.

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**THESE ARE ONLY A FEW** examples of how today’s ISDs serve urban, suburban and rural K–12 districts, enabling even the most challenged school to offer otherwise unavailable educational opportunities to its students. And, ISDs are being asked to do more for students, schools and communities every day. To learn more about the integral role of ISDs in education, [visit www.isd50.org](http://www.isd50.org), [www.gomaisa.org](http://www.gomaisa.org) or contact the Michigan Association of Intermediate School Administrators at (517) 327-5910.

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## **MAISA Legislative Committee Goals**

### **Legislative Year: 2013**

*MAISA will continue to work in concert with the Legislative Goals, Priorities and Platforms of MASA. The MAISA Legislative Committee also recognizes the unique issues related to ISDs and RESAs and therefore, recommends the following specific Legislative Goals for the 2012 year.*

1. Engage in the Michigan Education Finance Act of 2013 development process; develop recommendations and action plans.
2. Full funding of Section 81, including the restoration of disproportionate cuts taken by ISDs and in the School Aid Fund budget and future adjustments that are proportional to those made in the Foundation Grant given to local districts.
3. Maintain Special Education and Vocational Education Millage Equalization dollars.
4. Continue collaborative lobbying and education efforts seeking federal statutory rights to Medicaid reimbursement for health services provided to special needs students by ISD.
5. Promote legislation that advocates for appropriate controls, equality in funding, grant, and provider opportunity for online learning. Develop legislation that expands technology-infused and digital learning options using regional cooperatives.
6. Support implementation of the Michigan Department of Education block grant recommendations per school aid act in a timely manner. Promote an increase in funding and programming for Early Childhood programs.
7. Remove barriers to and maximize opportunities for additional ISD and LEA led shared service arrangements that are tailored to local and regional circumstances and are demonstrated to reduce costs and increase efficiencies, while preserving essential services for students.
8. Continue lobbying and education efforts in advocating ISD specific federal issues, i.e. Medicaid, ESEA, E-Rate and IDEA reauthorization.
9. Support the uncapping of all ISD millages (special education, vocational education and enhancement).
10. Support legislation that advances college and career readiness for students. Support the expansion of Early/Middle College options and dual enrollment including ISD and regional models.

11. Strengthen and develop relationships with advocates and associations whose missions and agendas overlap with MAISA, including encouraging our LEA partners to advocate for ISD/RESA funding.
12. Support legislation that advances online, blended, and virtual learning for ISDs.
13. Monitor LEA ability to meet maintenance of effort requirements and look for legislative solutions at the federal level.
14. Recover payments under best practices and work to insure that any similar scenario for funding include ISDs in the formula.
15. Preservation of Section 24 allocations for court placed students, restoration of 51a(8) allocation for FICA added cost for special education, and inclusion of ISDs in any effort to reduce retirement expenses.
16. Oppose any further reduction in funding including reduction of tax revenues without guaranteed full replacement.