

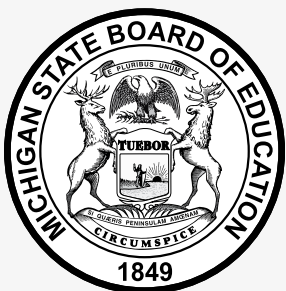


2024 Annual Report

Michigan Department of Education - Low Incidence Outreach

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State Board of Education

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 Michael F. Rice, Ph.D., State Superintendent

The Michigan Department of Education - Low Incidence Outreach is partially funded under the *Individuals with Disabilities Education Act* through the Michigan Department of Education Office of Special Education.

MESSAGE FROM THE DIRECTOR



The Michigan Department of Education – Low Incidence Outreach (MDE-LIO) has had a busy and rewarding year, offering more in-person events and recording virtual events for school personnel and families to watch on their own time. We continue to assist school personnel, meet with families, provide events and conferences, issue regular newsletters, and manage Camp Tuhsmeheeta (Camp T). As our event attendance has grown, we have also noticed more opportunities to better serve the field. In line with all of this, we have come to a decision on how our work will move forward.

When the Michigan School for the Blind became a statewide outreach project and was renamed to MDE-LIO in 2006, we took on the responsibility of providing outreach for deaf/hard of hearing (DHH) in addition to blind/low vision (BLV). Over the years, we have often been asked by parents, school personnel, and others what “low incidence outreach” means and what we do. This was an indication we may not be reaching our potential in meeting the needs of the students we serve, and we have come to a point where a reorganization is necessary.

As we move forward with our reorganization, we will be separating into two divisions and updating outdated language to reflect current terminology, such as using “blind/low vision” instead of “blind/visually impaired,” and replacing the word “support,” where appropriate, with more empowering language.

MDE-LIO will have two new names: the Michigan Department of Education Resource for Blind/Low Vision (MDE RBLV) and the Michigan Department of Education Resource for Deaf/Hard of Hearing (MDE RDHH).

Our name change and reorganization will be a long process, but we will begin transitioning throughout the year as we prepare to launch separate websites that will reflect the two entities. This change has been in the making for several years, and we are excited to move forward with the project.

Roxanne Balfour
MDE-LIO Director

MEET THE TEAM

BLV CONSULTANTS



JOHANNA BRUTVAN
BLV Education Consultant



SARA CRUCHELOW
BLV Education Consultant



AMANDA ENGLISH
BLV Education Consultant



PAT LOVE-SYPHO
BLV Education Consultant



AMY SHEPHERD
BLV Parent Liaison

DHH CONSULTANTS



KELLY DUNHAM
DHH Education Consultant



JOHN KIRSH
DHH Education Consultant



AMANDA SCHNEIDER
DHH Education Consultant

CAMP T



JASON BARNES
Camp T Maintenance Lead



PATTI ENSING
Camp T Office Coordinator



LEANNE MERREN
Camp T Assistant



MATT POLZIN
Camp T Consultant



JILL TEEGARDIN
Camp T Director



TIM NIELSEN
Maintenance Assistant

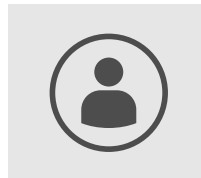
MANAGEMENT



ELIZABETH FLORES
DHH Project Manager



BRENDA MAHONEY
Events Manager



PAMELA MCGINISTER
Business Manager

INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS CENTER



ROBERT BEATON
Braille Production Coordinator



KARRIE BOWEN
IMC Assistant



KELLY FROST
IMC Assistant



SARAH OBERLIN
APH Coordinator

COMMUNICATIONS



RORY GOODINE
Graphic Designer



KAITLIN SHOPE
Communications Specialist

SUPPORT



JORDAN JACKSON
Business Technician



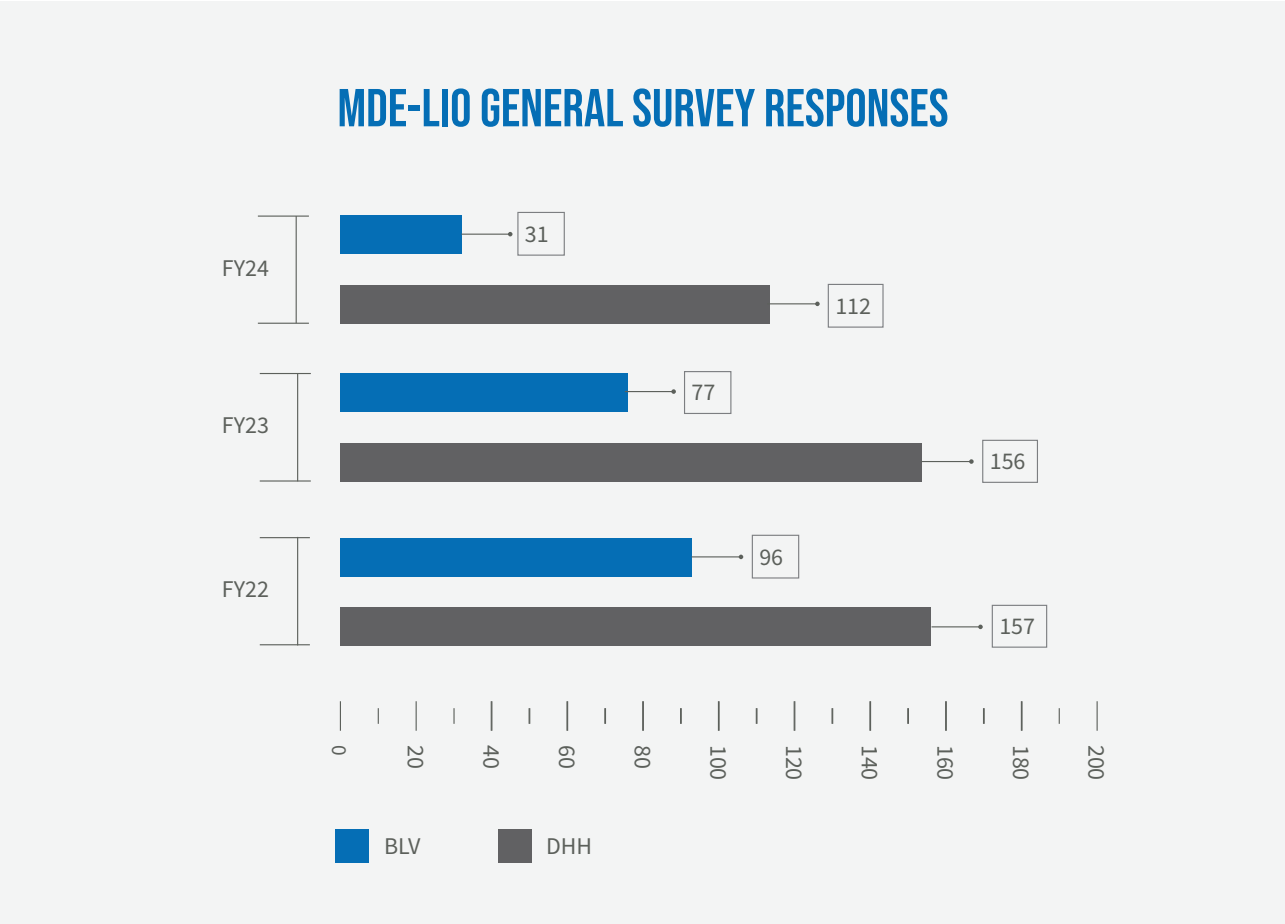
HEATHER JEFFREY
Secretary

SURVEYS AND FEEDBACK

Feedback from the field plays a large role in shaping the events we offer at MDE-LIO. Each year, we send out surveys asking school personnel, parents, and students what information they need to know and what they would like us to offer in the coming year. We receive dozens of valuable responses that let us know which types of events to plan, as well as important topics to cover.

We also gather feedback informally at events. For example, a parent attended a family event and commented on what she learned about her son's capabilities. The parent then suggested offering an orientation and mobility (O&M) workshop for families to understand what students learn about O&M, as well as its importance.

With the parent's input, we developed a one-day O&M workshop for families in June 2024. During the event, we worked with adult family members and students separately, teaching the students basic O&M skills and then empowering them to teach those skills to their families. This approach helps families better understand and foster their children's abilities.



DOCUMENT UPDATES

NEW MICHIGAN MANDATED SPECIAL EDUCATION GUIDANCE DOCUMENT

In April 2024, the Michigan Department of Education Office of Special Education and Michigan Department of Lifelong Education, Advancement and Potential (MiLEAP) in collaboration with MDE-LIO, released [Guidance for the Determination of Eligibility for Michigan Mandatory Special Education for Infants and Toddlers, Birth to Age Three, Visual Impairment Including Blindness](https://bit.ly/MMSEVI2024) (bit.ly/MMSEVI2024). This document provides guidance for the determination of Michigan Mandatory Special Education (MMSE) eligibility for infants and toddlers, ages birth to three, who are visually impaired, including blindness, as defined by R 340.1708 of the *Michigan Administrative Rules for Special Education*.

The intended audience for this guidance includes, but is not limited to:

- Part C personnel (including special education personnel) considering a referral of an infant or toddler
- Multidisciplinary evaluation team (MET) members
- Individualized family service plan (IFSP) team members, including a parent or guardian and administrators

This document serves to clarify the eligibility process to ensure:

- appropriate determination of eligibility within this category
- consistent practice among school districts within and across counties
- compliance with Michigan special education law and administrative rules
- implementation of best practices

In a concerted effort to improve educational outcomes for infants and toddlers who are blind/low vision (BLV), a diverse group of professionals from various sectors came together to address the unique needs of this population. Through their collaboration, 22 experts, including teachers of students who are BLV, supervisors in BLV and early childhood education, as well as parents and representatives from university and state organizations, contributed their time and expertise to create a comprehensive guidance document aimed at improving services for children, ages birth to three, who are BLV.

The guidance document combines best practices, research-based strategies, and expert insights to assist local school districts, early childhood programs, and other service providers. The collaborative team carefully considered a wide range of factors—from sensory development to social and emotional learning—to create a framework that aligns with the unique developmental needs of infants and toddlers who are BLV.

This document is part of an ongoing effort to enhance the educational landscape for children who are BLV. It adds to a growing collection of eligibility area guidance documents designed to assist local educators and service providers in creating inclusive, supportive environments for all children. As this resource reaches more professionals and organizations, its impact will continue to grow, ensuring that children who are BLV receive the early intervention services they need to achieve their full potential.

LEAD-K

Language Equality and Acquisition for Deaf Kids (LEAD-K) is a national effort to provide language acquisition resources for parents and guardians of young children who are deaf or hard of hearing (DHH). In December 2022, Governor Gretchen Whitmer signed Michigan's LEAD-K bill into law as Public Act 256 (PA 256). The legislation seeks to ensure that children who are DHH have a strong language foundation and are kindergarten-ready when they start school.

MDE-LIO has been given the oversight and funding to carry out the requirements of the legislation. PA 256 mandates an advisory committee, including defined roles, to ensure the development of resources aligned with the requirements of the legislation. The advisory committee and other invested partners met for the first time in February 2024. Meetings continued through the spring with review of the legislative intent, anticipated outcomes, and invested partner perspectives.

The current phase of the work involves action teams, small groups that are assigned a specific focus and tasks related to the larger effort. Action teams are providing regular updates to the advisory committee and invested partners as meetings continue into 2025. The parent resource will be available by August 2025.



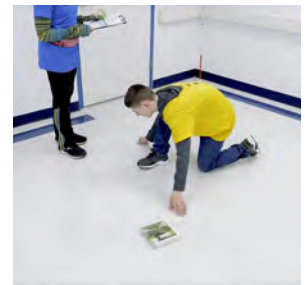
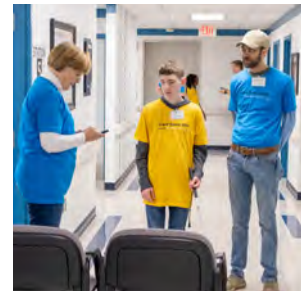
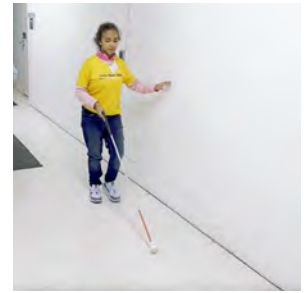
Learn more about this important work at mdelio.org.

NATIONALLY SPONSORED COMPETITIONS

CANE QUEST

MDE-LIO teamed up with Leader Dogs for the Blind to celebrate White Cane Day in an exciting and meaningful way by hosting the annual Michigan Regional Cane Quest. Cane Quest® is a challenging orientation and mobility (O&M) contest for students in grades 3-12, created by Braille Institute of America. Contestants demonstrated their skills at the various stations throughout the Leader Dogs for the Blind facility and in downtown Rochester. During the competition, parents participated in workshops while siblings spent time playing and learning how to be a human guide.

90
REGISTRANTS



BRaille CHALLENGE

In early 2024, students throughout the state participated in the ninth annual Michigan Regional Braille Challenge, hosted by MDE-LIO and partnering intermediate school districts. Students had a choice to take the challenge virtually, in person, or individually with a proctor. In total, 29 students competed in this year's Michigan Regional Braille Challenge. Parents and siblings attended family sessions, and many volunteers helped run the events, giving a total of 125 registrants.

Many students who competed in Braille Challenge for years have now graduated and are moving into adulthood. This year, we followed up with two former Michigan competitors, Julia LaGrand and Sarah Murphree, whose experiences highlight the power of braille literacy and the benefits of participating in this annual challenge. Read more: [Braille Challenge: Where Are They Now?](https://bit.ly/BC2024Article) (bit.ly/BC2024Article)



125
REGISTRANTS



MDE-LIO EVENTS

Fiscal Year 2024 proved to be an eventful year for MDE-LIO. The low incidence population we serve continues to engage in our activities designed to support their education journey in a variety of ways. With 95 events for students who are BLV and/or DHH, their families, and/or school personnel, we had the privilege of hosting more than 2,200 participants, averaging more than 24 individuals per event.

Student events included experiences in the areas of:

- braille
- camping and the outdoors
- early literacy
- financial literacy
- independent living skills
- orientation and mobility
- social skills

Events for school personnel focused on a variety of topics, including:

- access technology
- American Sign Language
- assessments
- braille transition
- independent living skills

Along with using online, in-person, recorded, and hybrid platforms for our events, we provided at-home kits for families to have fun and learn together in the convenience of their own home. In the coming years, we will continue to offer many learning opportunities in a variety of platforms on numerous topics important to students who are BLV and/or DHH, their families, and school personnel.



95
MDE-LIO
EVENTS

56
BLV
EVENTS

31
DHH
EVENTS

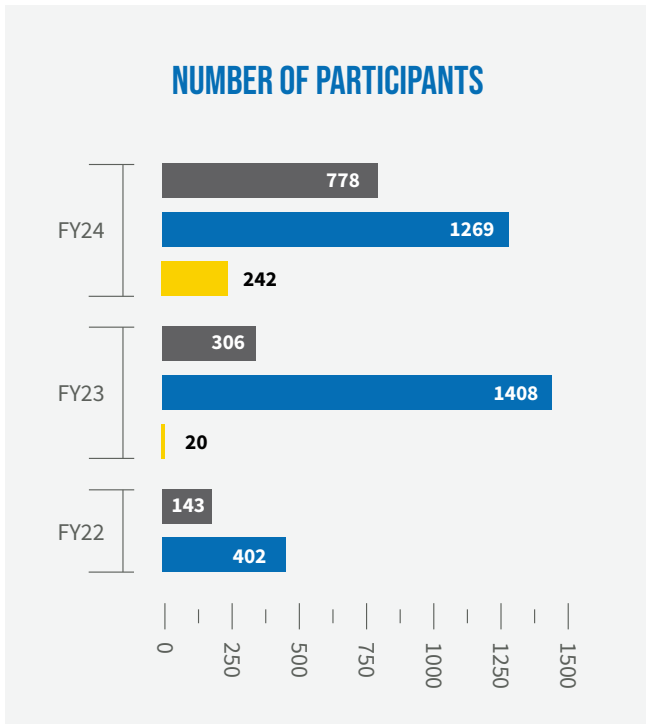
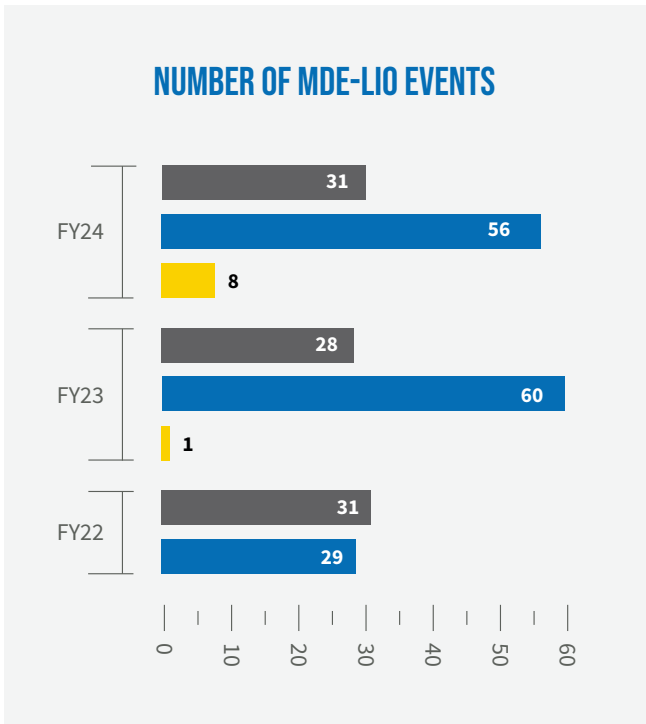
8
COMBINED
EVENTS

2,289
TOTAL EVENT
PARTICIPANTS

1,269
BLV EVENT
PARTICIPANTS

778
DHH EVENT
PARTICIPANTS

242
COMBINED
PARTICIPANTS



■ DHH ■ BLV ■ Combined

■ DHH ■ BLV ■ Combined

EVENTS FOR SCHOOL PERSONNEL

MDE-LIO offered many events to support school personnel working with students who are BLV and/or DHH. Online and in-person events included a variety of topics relevant to school personnel, including teachers, teacher consultants, paraprofessionals, and educational interpreters.

44
EVENTS

1,021
PARTICIPANTS



NEW IN FY24: NAVEG TRAINING



The Neonatal Assessment Visual European Grid (NAVEG) is a validated visual screening tool that indicates neurological risk. The NAVEG testing battery includes an ocular visual component, a motor visual component related to ocular motor functions, and a perceptual visual component. This tool is not intrusive and can be easily administered by trained non-medical personnel. A score of six or higher indicates a possible risk.



Early visual skills are important precursors for sensory systems and overall learning development. Up to 33% of children who are BLV have cortical/cerebral visual impairment (CVI), but there is currently no functional screening for CVI in premature infants.



In FY24, Director of Research Cathy Smyth, PhD, and staff from the Anchor Center for Blind Children, trained a group of Michigan teachers who work directly with children, ages birth to three, who are BLV. In total, 18 teachers received the NAVEG training, and Michigan plans to train more teachers using the originally trained group. Children identified with visual concerns will be referred for an ophthalmological follow-up. Birth-to-three teacher consultants of the visually impaired (TCVIs), early support team members, and caregivers will work together to develop strategies through routine-based environmental adaptations in natural environments. This effort aligns with the most recent [Guidance for the Determination of Eligibility for Michigan Mandatory Special Education for Infants and Toddlers, Birth to Age Three, Visual Impairment Including Blindness](https://www.michigan.gov/mmsevi2024) (bit.ly/MMSEVI2024) to ensure consistent practice among school districts within and across counties, compliance with Michigan special education law and administrative rules, and implementation of best practices.



EVENTS FOR STUDENTS AND THEIR FAMILIES

Students and their families had many fun and engaging learning opportunities in the areas of literacy; science technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM); independent living skills; and financial literacy. Events included multi-night camps, weekend and one-day activities, and many online events, as well as at-home kits.

39
EVENTS

1,079
PARTICIPANTS



NEW IN FY24: LITTLE EXPLORERS

This year, MDE-LIO created the Little Explorers playgroup. Little Explorers is an opportunity for families with young children to experience the joy of connection by bringing their children to family events at Camp T. Young children who are BLV and/or DHH and their families enjoy a Saturday morning full of nature exploration and play. Each event has a theme centered around a book, and related activities offer a variety of accessible experiences for children.

Activities include songs, crafts, hands-on play, nature activities, snacks, and story time. Families are sent home with a copy of the book and additional activities they can use to continue to build connections through reading, language, and fun. Our Little Explorers programming is one way we have expanded to serve our youngest population and their families as they grow and learn.



WEBINAR SERIES

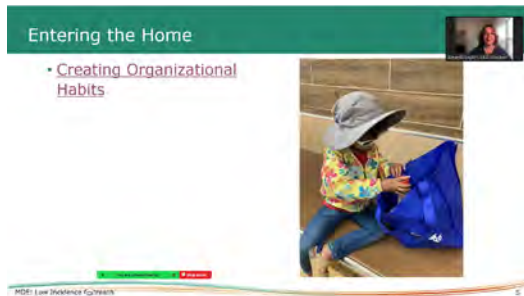
In FY24, MDE-LIO offered several webinar series on a variety of topics for students, families, and school personnel.

23

EVENTS

585

PARTICIPANTS



BLV:

- Parent Pop-Up Conversations
- Independent Living Skills Tips and Tricks
- CVI Conversations
- Talk Tech Tuesday
- Braille Tips and Strategies

DHH:

- LIVE with LIO
- DHH Spotlight
- DHH Classroom Connections
- Let's Get Together
- DHH Student Hangout

TALK TECH TUESDAY

Talk Tech Tuesday is an interactive webinar series that explores the latest trends, tools, and innovations in access technology (AT) for students who are BLV. This series was created more than two years ago for parents, school personnel, and anyone else who is eager to stay up to date on the latest AT products and tools.

Every other month, MDE-LIO's technology team uses step-by-step demonstrations, insights, and expert discussion to showcase a specific product or tool. Attendees say they find the series to be informative and helpful when making decisions regarding which AT devices to use with their students.

"I didn't know that AT like this existed. I'm new to the field and this was a really good resource for me to help others." – Talk Tech Tuesday survey response

COLLABORATIONS

MDE-LIO collaborates with several organizations to coordinate events, provide training, and ensure students receive resources. This year, MDE-LIO worked with the following organizations:

- Michigan Council of the Blind and Visually Impaired (MCBVI)
- Michigan Hands & Voices
- Seedlings Braille Books for Children
- Bureau of Services for Blind Persons (BSBP)
- Michigan Blind Athletic Association (MBAA)
- Grand Rapids Children's Museum
- DeafBlind Central (DB Central)
- Alt+Shift
- Leader Dogs for the Blind
- Braille Institute
- Michigan Association for Education and Rehabilitation of the Blind and Visually Impaired (MAER)
- Henry Ford Museum
- Frederik Meijer Gardens and Sculpture Park
- National Federation of the Blind (NFB)

13
BLV
PRESENTATIONS



13
DHH
PRESENTATIONS



3
COMBINED
PRESENTATIONS



PRESENTATIONS

In FY24, MDE-LIO staff shared their expertise at 29 events hosted by other organizations. They discussed a variety of topics related to the education of students who are BLV and/or DHH. Of these 29 collaborations, BLV and DHH topics were discussed at 13 events each. The other 3 events included topics for both.



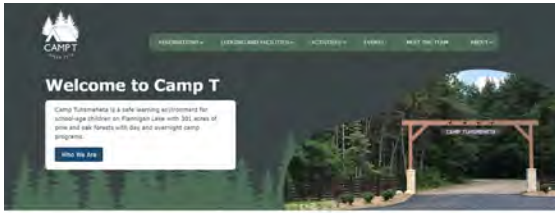
CAMP T HIGHLIGHTS

Fifty years ago, Camp Tuhsmeheeta (Camp T) began offering overnight camps. During the day, campers splashed in the cool water of Flannigan Lake and hiked along the many trails. In the evening, campers sang songs around the campfire before retreating to their tents under the stars, listening to barred owls calling and crickets chirping. As they awoke each morning to bird calls and the rising sun, campers felt a sense of accomplishment. Memories like these are still made today and will continue for generations to come.

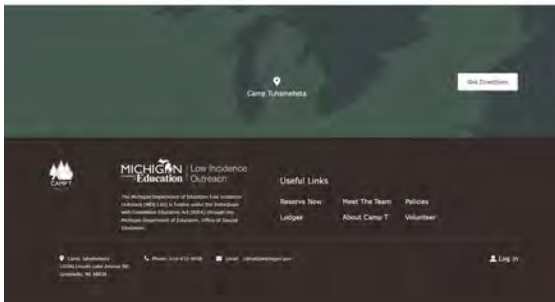
I often think about how many campers have passed through Camp T's gates over the past 50 years. I have heard many stories from former campers and staff about how Camp T has made a difference in their lives. Camp T has provided security for campers and has helped boost their confidence. Lessons have been learned, skills have been mastered, and countless memories have been made. Lifelong friendships have also formed.

The past 50 years have brought new programs, buildings, and experiences to Camp T. Campers experience waterfront activities, a challenge course, a climbing tower, a recreation center, a sports field, a dining hall, and a new science and nature center. Over the next 50 years, Camp T will continue to be an outdoor education and recreation destination for students around Michigan. Here's to 50 more years!

Jill Teegardin
Camp T Director



Activities



WEBSITE UPDATE

In FY24, we began redesigning the Camp T website. MDE-LIO and the Center for Educational Networking have been hard at work on this project for several months. Our goal is to offer a more intuitive, accessible, and seamless browsing experience with a fresh design. The homepage will provide more information and include a live feed from the Camp T Instagram page.

The new site is progressing well, and we are currently working on a fully revamped reservation system.

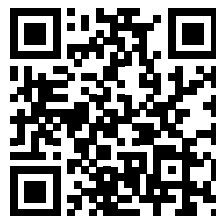
The updated reservation system will feature payment integration and a new pricing structure.

Users will be able to:

- create accounts for a streamlined reservation experience
- make changes to their reservation prior to final payment
- select camp activities they want to enjoy
- select which meals will be provided



2024 ANNUAL REPORT



Learn more about this year's Camp T programs and updates:

bit.ly/CampTReport2024

MDELIO.ORG

40,826

UNIQUE VISITORS

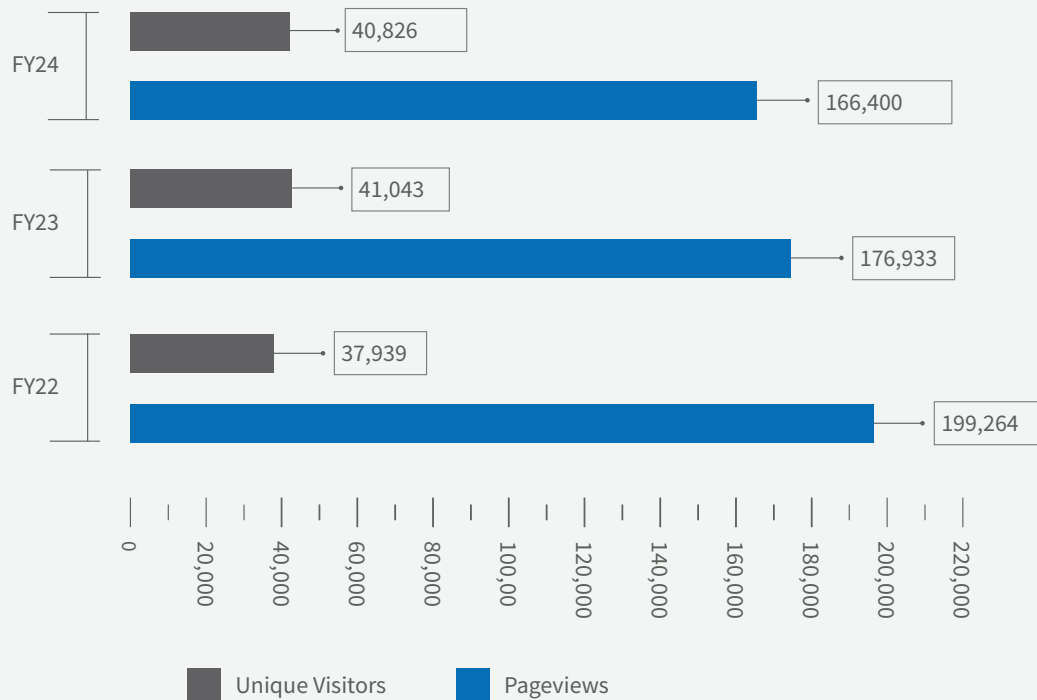
The total number of unique individuals who visited the site.

166,400

TOTAL PAGEVIEWS

The total number of pages visitors viewed on mdelio.org.

MDELIO.ORG UNIQUE VISITORS AND PAGEVIEWS



SOCIAL MEDIA

FACEBOOK

On Facebook, we share information about upcoming events, new resources, fun features, and information from other organizations. We also share short videos featuring tips, resources, and news.

 facebook.com/mdelio.social

1,210

FOLLOWERS

The number of people who “follow” us and see our posts in their news feed.

6,251

PAGE VISITS

The total number of times Facebook users visited our page in the past year.

INSTAGRAM

Our Instagram account launched in October 2023. This page is dedicated to showcasing Camp T, which is managed by MDE-LIO. We share photos from recent events, share behind-the-scenes features, and more.

 instagram.com/campt.social

66

FOLLOWERS

The number of people who “follow” us and see our posts in their news feed.

235

POSTS

The total number of posts on our Instagram page.

YOUTUBE

On YouTube, we share informational videos on parent education, access technology, assessments, and more. We also share recorded webinars and promotional videos for upcoming events.

 youtube.com/mdelio.social

14,049

IMPRESSIONS

The number of times a thumbnail from one of our videos is displayed to YouTube viewers.

987

CHANNEL VIEWS

The number of times YouTube users watched our videos over the past year.

LIBRARY MANAGEMENT SYSTEM (LMS)

SYSTEM UPDATES

Throughout FY24, MDE-LIO worked on improvements to the staff interface and user experience in partnership with the Center for Educational Networking (CEN). The focus was updating the backend interface to a standard layout that is easier to maintain.

The updated theme provides a more simplified layout with less clutter. CEN also added new features to the high-ticket request system and continued to apply bug fixes.

Most of the theme update has been completed and the remaining pages will be updated in FY25.

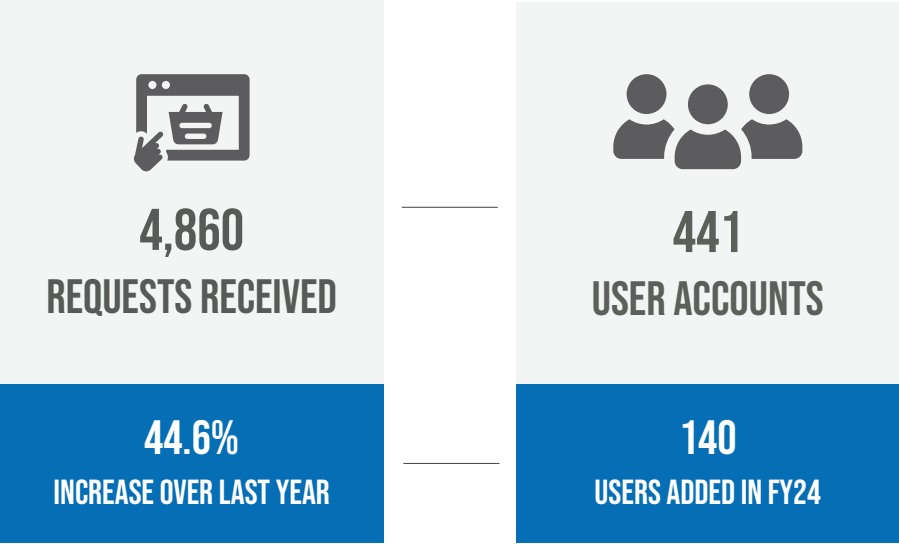
IMPROVEMENT EXAMPLES

- 1** A new color scheme creates a unified design throughout the entire backend system.
- 2** Each page has customized filter options for quick access to the most commonly needed filters.
- 3** A new menu system hides unused filters to reduce clutter while still providing advance search options.
- 4** Each page has a custom table layout so only relevant information is displayed.
- 5** The Copy and Main Record pages were combined into a single table for quicker access to information.

The screenshot displays the LMS Books page. At the top, there is a header with 'LMS' and 'Books'. A blue callout '1' points to a '+ Add' button. Below the header is a 'Filters' section with three input fields for 'IMC ID', 'Item Name', and 'ISBN'. A blue callout '2' points to the 'IMC ID' field, and a blue callout '3' points to the 'Apply' button. Below the filters is a table of book records. A blue callout '4' points to the table header, and a blue callout '5' points to the table body. The table has columns for 'IMC ID', 'Item Type', 'Item Name', 'ISBN', 'Format', and 'Copy State'. The table contains several rows of book records, including titles like 'Bridges in Mathematics, Grade 1, Student Book', 'A Christmas Carol', 'Charlie and the Chocolate Factory', 'Beezus and Ramona', 'Disney's Beauty And The Beast', and 'The Riddle of the Red Purse'.

IMC ID	Item Type	Item Name	ISBN	Format	Copy State
94061	Book Copy	Bridges in Mathematics, Grade 1, Student Book	ISBN 10: 1602627886 ISBN 13: 9781602627888	Braille	Active
94976	Book Copy	A Christmas Carol	ISBN 10: 1843650630 ISBN 13: 9781843650638	Braille	Active
94971	Main Record	A Christmas Carol	ISBN 10: 1843650630 ISBN 13: 9781843650638		
94986	Book Copy	Charlie and the Chocolate Factory	ISBN 10: 0375815260 ISBN 13: 9780375815263	Braille	Active
94981	Main Record	Charlie and the Chocolate Factory	ISBN 10: 0375815260 ISBN 13: 9780375815263		
94950	Book Copy	Beezus and Ramona	ISBN 10: 0590118285 ISBN 13: 9780590118286	Braille	Active
94951	Book Copy	Disney's Beauty And The Beast	ISBN 10: 0562820516	Braille	Active
94946	Book Copy	The Riddle of the Red Purse	ISBN 10: 0440475341 ISBN 13: 9780440475347	Braille	Active

GROWTH OF THE LMS



896

REQUESTS FOR BOOKS

Books include textbooks, leisure reading books, resource library books, and braille.

35

REQUESTS FOR BUDDING SEEDLINGS

Budding Seedlings books are for early readers. These books were donated by Seedlings Braille Books for Children.

428

REQUESTS FOR EQUIPMENT

Equipment includes access technology, braille writers, and electronics.

3,501

REQUESTS FOR PRODUCTS

Products include a variety of educational materials offered by the American Printing House for the Blind.

LIBRARY SERVICES



896
BOOK
REQUESTS

10%
INCREASE



3,501
PRODUCT
REQUESTS

6%
DECREASE



428
EQUIPMENT
REQUESTS

30%
INCREASE



35
BUDDING SEEDLINGS
REQUESTS

133%
INCREASE



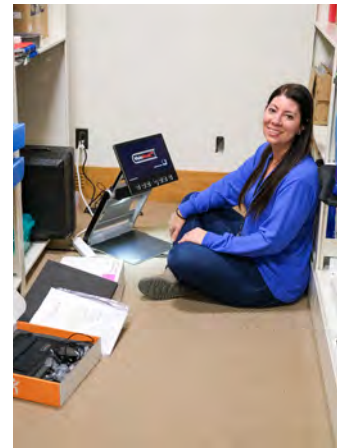
757
ITEMS ORDERED
FROM APH

73%
INCREASE

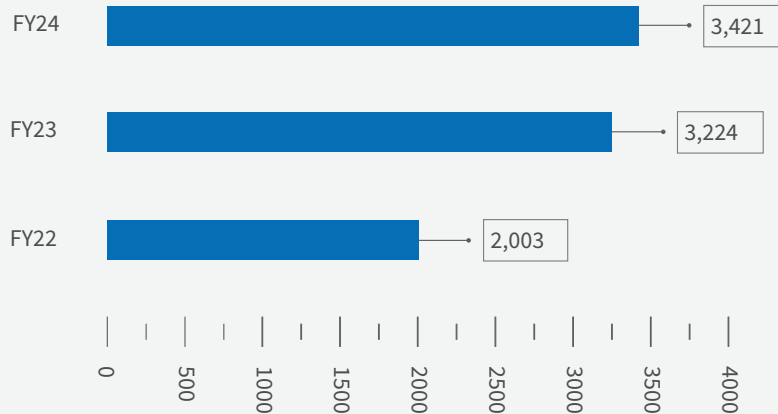


3,421
ITEMS LOANED
FROM MDE-LIO

6%
INCREASE



NUMBER OF ITEMS LOANED PER YEAR





\$1,382,097
VALUE OF ITEMS
LOANED

30%
INCREASE

THE VALUE OF THE LOAN LIBRARY

In FY24, MDE-LIO loaned materials with a value of \$1,382,097. The loan library allowed MDE-LIO to purchase more items using Federal Quota funds allotted to the state of Michigan. The library continues to add value for students in Michigan by providing a statewide network of shared educational materials.

ACCESS TECHNOLOGY



MDE-LIO saw a 30% increase in requests for access technology (AT) equipment in FY24. AT equipment includes refreshable braille displays, magnifiers, distance viewers, tablets, and more.

The American Printing House for the Blind (APH) released a revolutionary new device in FY24 called the Monarch. The device is a graphing calculator, library, and braille all in one. The 10-line, 32-cell refreshable display allows it to display tactile graphics for graphs, maps, and other educational images.

The Monarch provides access to numerous digital libraries and is a first-of-its kind accessible computer. However, AT devices come with a steep price tag. A single Monarch costs \$14,900. MDE-LIO was able to acquire eight of them using Federal Quota funds, and we are excited to start getting them out to the field.



APH ANNUAL CENSUS

In January 2024, APH made an important update to the Federal Quota census. Students could qualify under the *Individuals with Disabilities Education Act* (IDEA) definition of blindness: an impairment in vision, that, even with correction, adversely affects a child's educational performance. As a result of this expanded eligibility, student registration increased from 1,509 students in FY23 to 1,907 students in FY24.

This year, Michigan was allotted \$673,984.48 to purchase items from APH. MDE-LIO manages these funds, which can be used to purchase books, products, and equipment such as the new Monarch refreshable braille and tactile graphics device.

CENSUS BY REGION

REGION 1

140 Students

REGION 2

367 Students

REGION 3

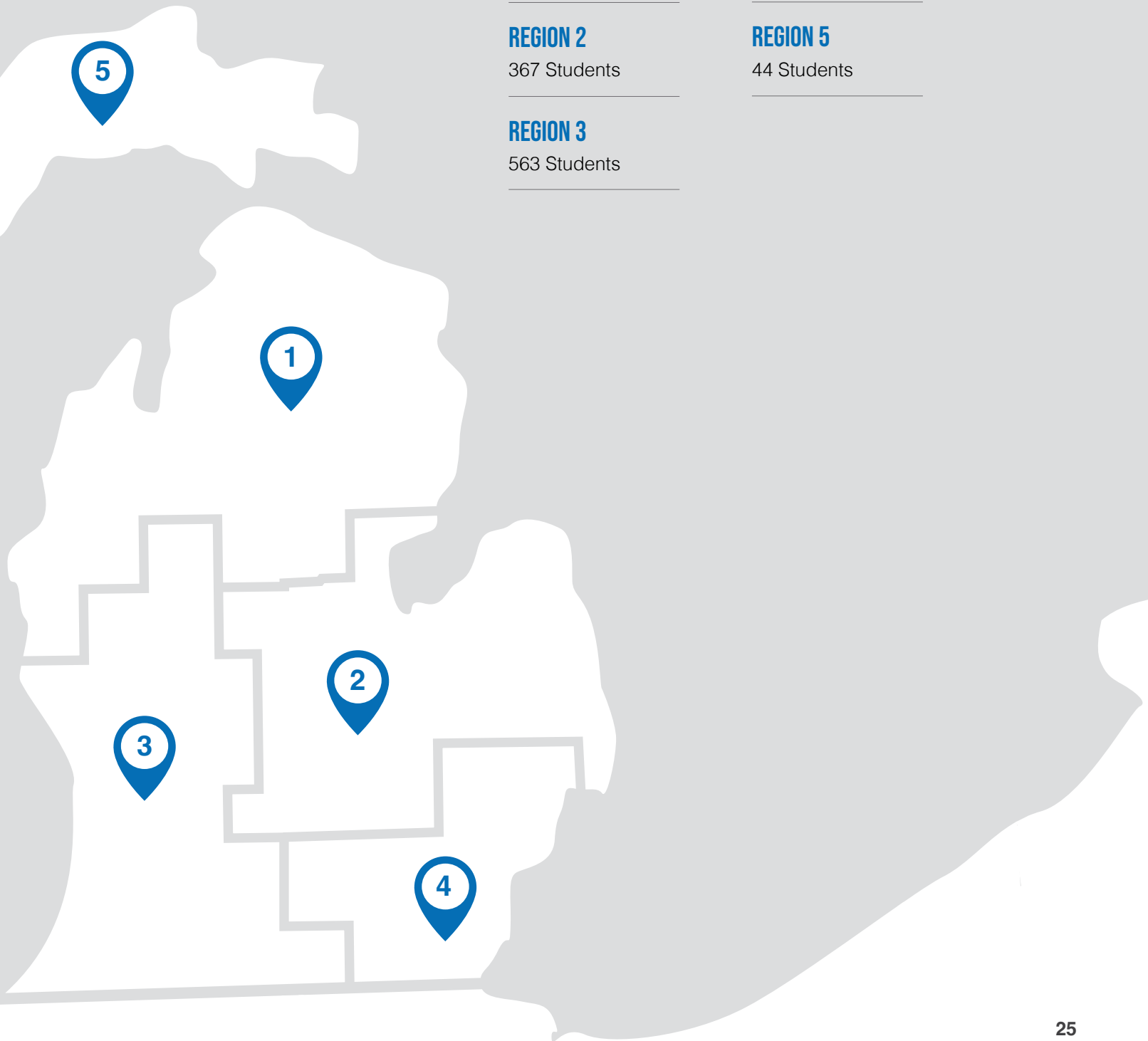
563 Students

REGION 4

792 Students

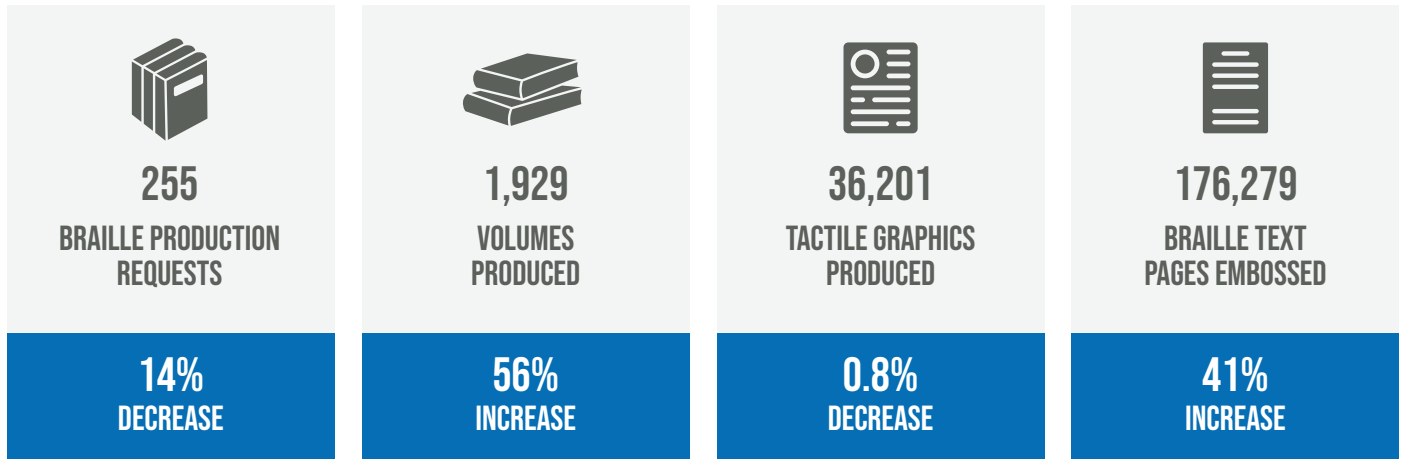
REGION 5

44 Students



PRODUCTION SERVICES

BRAILLE DATA



DIGITAL BRAILLE


In the past year, MDE-LIO has made huge strides in our efforts to create a more efficient and eco-friendly braille production process.

Since the advent of braille textbooks in the mid-19th century, a collage method of taping and gluing cardboard and strings to a piece of paper has been used to create tactile versions of visual concepts such as maps, graphs, and clocks. These master tactile graphics are then stored until they are needed, at which time they are paired with an oil-based sheet of plastic, heated to 300-plus degrees to melt the two together, and then peeled apart after having formed an identical replica in the plastic. These graphics form an integral part of textbooks, as they aid in teaching concepts such as measuring angles, telling time, reading graphs, and much more, for readers who are BLV. Some books, such as geometry textbooks, include thousands of tactile graphics. As you can imagine, this is a time-consuming process, both to create and to replicate.

As of 2024, we are excited to announce that we are digitally creating 100% of our tactile reproductions for students in Michigan, replacing the manual collage method by using the vector graphics editor CorelDRAW and embossing them with a state-of-the-art embosser on 100-pound paper. This process has eliminated the need for the oil-based plastic pages, decreasing our carbon footprint and minimizing the amount of space needed for their storage.


Digital tactile graphics are not only much more compact, but we also expect to be able to email them to teachers and students in the near future so they can be uploaded to refreshable braille display devices. This has certainly been a work in progress, but we are excited to be where we are in the process and look forward to further improving our efficiency.

ENLARGED PRINT DATA




231
REQUESTS

24%
INCREASE



37,330
PAGES PRINTED

18%
INCREASE



449
VOLUMES PRODUCED

72%
INCREASE



157
BOOKS PRODUCED

26%
INCREASE



TOP 10 STRATEGIC EDUCATION PLAN

When planning events, programs, and resources, we strive to align with the Michigan Department of Education's Top 10 Strategic Education Plan. Below are a few areas in which we worked toward these goals in FY24.

To **expand early childhood learning opportunities and improve early literacy achievement**, we began offering recurring storytime events at Camp Tuhsmeheeta for children ages 0-5 who are BLV or DHH and began shipping out free cortical visual impairment (CVI) book bags, including CVI-adapted early literacy books and flashcards for teachers and parents/guardians to use with students. We also continued the work of implementing Language Equality and Acquisition for Deaf Kids (LEAD-K) legislation in Michigan, including hosting meetings with leadership and committee members.

To **improve the health, safety, and wellness of learners**, we continued to host online social events for elementary, middle, and high school students who are DHH to connect with peers across Michigan. We also offered a workshop on best practices for providing meaningful sex education for students who are BLV, as well as independent living skills workshops that focused on home maintenance skills and safe food preparation practices.

To **increase the percentage of students who graduate from high school and expand secondary learning opportunities**, we started the MDE-LIO student advisory board to shape future BLV and DHH programming to meet the needs of secondary learners across the state. We also offered a virtual and in-person career workshop for high school students who are BLV, in which students learned about workplace skills and put them into action, and another workshop focused on financial literacy and volunteering. Both workshops were offered in partnership with the Bureau of Services for Blind Persons.

To **increase the number of certified teachers in BLV and DHH fields**, MDE-LIO continued to manage the Consortia for Teacher Preparation, partnering with out-of-state colleges and universities to help teachers in Michigan earn an endorsement to work with students who are BLV and/or DHH.





Low Incidence Outreach
702 W. Kalamazoo St.
Lansing, MI 48915
www.mdelio.org