



## What Special Education Programs and Services are Available in Montcalm County?

Assisting students to make progress in the general curriculum is the role of every school educator, including special education staff. In Montcalm County, the local school districts, as well as the Montcalm Area Intermediate School District (MAISD), employ many staff who provide programs and services to children beginning at birth and ending at twenty-six years of age. Throughout Montcalm County schools, over 1,700 students are receiving special education services.

The provision of Special Education Programs and Services can be divided into two categories: those offered by local school districts and those offered through Montcalm Area Intermediate School District at the Seiter Education Center in Greenville or classrooms within the local school districts.

At local districts there are many supports including classroom programs and ancillary services. Those supports, in the form of classroom programs, include early childhood special education programs, resource rooms and classrooms for students with mild cognitive impairments. Special Education Services such as Speech and Language Pathologists and School Social Workers are also available through each local school district.

At the county level there are also a variety of supports for students with special needs. Beginning at birth, Early On and Parent Child Learning Group staff visit homes and offer playgroups to children and families up to three years of age. For children, three to six years of age, the Little People Land Early Childhood Special Education Program provides a preschool classroom. The Seiter Education Center in Greenville is a separate school for students with special needs. This school provides programs for students with the most significant special needs. For students from kindergarten to twelfth grade, the MAISD has classrooms within the Greenville and Central Montcalm School Districts for students with autism, moderate cognitive impairments, emotional impairments and hearing impairments. The MAISD also hosts a community based vocational and community living program called, Transition Plus Hometown Stanton for students with moderate cognitive impairments from eighteen to twenty-six years of age.

In addition to offering specific programs, the MAISD also employs many staff that provide services to assist students to make progress in the general curriculum. School nurses, school psychologists, teacher consultants (including those for students with autism, visual impairment, orientation and mobility needs), speech and language pathologists, school social workers, occupational therapists, occupational therapy assistants, physical therapists, physical therapy assistants and a transition coordinator help local district meet student needs.

The MAISD also offers special education transportation to each school within the ISD. Each day, our buses travel over 1,600 miles. That distance is equivalent to one bus driving from Greenville, MI to El Paso, TX. On our special needs buses we use many different types of equipment. Each bus is equipped with a bus lift, wheelchair tiedowns, individual student seatbelts as well as integrated car seats. A fully equipped bus costs \$140,000.

On May 6, 2014, each resident of a Montcalm County School District will be asked to vote on the proposed Special Education Millage. Special Education millage funds support each of the programs and services described in this article. Additional Special Education millage funds will allow school districts to provide programming for general and special education students. When Special Education is properly funded, General Education programs benefit because they do not have to supplement the cost of Special Education. Every School, Every Child, Vote!

For additional information, go to [www.montcalmkids.org](http://www.montcalmkids.org). Search Montcalm Kids on Facebook and Twitter.

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In a box:

Students with special needs are counted in October just as their typically developing peers are:

In October 2013, each District's count of students with special needs is below:

Carson City-Crystal -	84
Central Montcalm -	214
Greenville -	572
Lakeview -	181
Montabella -	126
Montcalm Area Intermediate School District -	223
Tri County -	292
Vestaburg -	<u>92</u>
	1,784

Students counted by disability area:

Cognitive Impairment	231	
Emotional Impairment		110
Hearing Impairment	17	
Otherwise Health Impairment		204

Visual Impairment	4	
Physical Impairment	16	
Speech and Language Impairment	450	
Early Childhood		
Developmental Delay	55	
Learning Disability	548	
Autism Spectrum Disorder	118	
Severe Multiple Impairment	27	
Traumatic Brain Injury		4