



Virtual Spring Institute
Thursday, April 24 - Friday, April 25, 2025
Agenda

Cost:

\$250 for MACAE Members

\$300 for Non-Members

Description:

The Michigan Adult, Community & Alternative Education (MACAE) Association invites educators, community leaders, and program administrators to the 2025 Virtual Spring Institute. This conference will gather professionals dedicated to advancing adult education, workforce development, and community-based learning. Through a series of engaging workshops and presentations, attendees will gain valuable insights into best practices, emerging trends, and strategies to support adult learners in Michigan. The conference will focus on fostering innovative approaches to education, ensuring equitable access, and building stronger, more resilient communities.

This conference is open to all professionals in the field of adult, community, and alternative education. Participants will join sessions via Zoom. Presentations will be shared after the conference. Registered attendees can earn up to 10 SCECHs for attending the conference.

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Key:

Adult Basic Education/Literacy/Community Education 
Alternative Education 
English as a Second Language 
High School Equivalency/High School Completion 

Thursday, April 24, 2025:

8:30 - 8:50 a.m.

Welcome & Overview of Conference

8:50 - 9:50 a.m.

Keynote Address

Jonathan Tobar, Assistant Superintendent for Secondary Learning, Livingston ESA

10:00 - 11:00 a.m.

Breakout Session 1 (Choose One):

Talent Pipeline Management® (TPM) Strategies for Adult Education 

Michael D. Evans, Executive Director, Kalamazoo Literacy Council

Getting a job is a major motivation for many adult learners. This session will explore how adult education providers can partner with employers to create career pathways for adult learners and workers utilizing the Talent Pipeline Management (TPM) framework. This employer-led approach to talent development is being implemented across Michigan and throughout the country. Example applications of TPM, such as the Edison Early Childhood Education Career Pathway, will be shared along with plans to expand to other high-demand industry sectors in the region. Best practices to support workforce efforts and partnerships will also be shared.

Free Adult Literacy Resources and Where to Find Them 

Michelle Smith, Senior Membership and Program Services Manager

Join representatives from ProLiteracy & New Readers Press for an introduction to the many free resources offered and instructions on where to find them. There will also be a brief overview of exclusive resources for members, and the range of educational print and digital materials from New Readers Press.

Creating an Adult Education Student Advisory Council 

Laurie Dunn, Staff Advisory for Student Advisory Council, Troy Continuing Education and Katie Thompson, Troy Continuing Education

This session will walk you through the process of establishing a Student Advisory Council within an adult education program. Topics including program demographics, goals, student-led activities, marketing, recruitment, and more will be discussed. You'll learn how a Student Advisory Council can thrive and enhance the adult education experience.

GED Math for Non-Certified Math Teachers 

Wendy Gryzch, Coordinator, Romulus Adult Education

Last year, you joined us as we presented a most successful model for delivering GED preparation, particularly Math instruction. We also shared with you a wonderful way to track your data (Wendy is incredibly data-driven, and she has used her love of data to help grow her program immensely). We will briefly review those numbers and again share this proven data-tracking system, but then we are going to dive right back into some important Math lessons and show you how the calculator can shave minutes off the total time while also drastically improving test scores. And yes, we have the data to prove it!

11:10 a.m. - 12:10 p.m.

Breakout Session 2 (Choose One):

Introducing the All-New and NRS Approved TABE 13/14 and TABE CLAS-E, Forms C & D!

Mike Johnson, National Director, Data Recognition Corp

This session highlights for teachers and testing administrators the innovative features and updates of these assessments, designed to enhance adult education accuracy and effectiveness. Participants will gain an in-depth understanding of TABE 13 & 14, which comprehensively evaluates reading, mathematics, and language skills. Additionally, we will explore the TABE CLAS-E, focusing on assessing adult learners' English language proficiency in Reading, Listening, Writing and Speaking.

Active Listening: More Than Hearing

Tamara Hindes, Teacher, Michigan Works! Southeast

Do you really listen or are you merely hearing? Active listening is hard work and takes practice and training. You might even break a sweat. Learn why people don't listen and how to overcome barriers that may get in your way. Are you listening to understand or are you thinking of your reply? Do you know what your brain is doing when it should be listening? This interactive workshop will give you the skills you can use to improve your work and relationships.

Understanding and Overcoming Barriers to Adult Learner Motivation & Persistence Post-COVID

Trenia Patrick, Instructor and Advisor, Troy Continuing Education

This session explores the barriers that adult learners continue to face post-COVID and discusses emerging strategies for increasing motivation and persistence. Drawing from firsthand experience and the early stages of doctoral research, the session will provide practical tools and insights that educators can use to support student engagement and success in Adult Basic Education programs.

Collaborative Partnership to Deliver Adult Education

Chad Gibbs, Research and Education Manager, Michigan Works! Southeast and Janelle Spieth, Michigan Works! Southeast

Hillsdale Community Schools Adult Education program has collaborated with Michigan Works! Southeast to deliver comprehensive Adult Education programming. This presentation will explore the advantages, opportunities, collaborative power, and challenges that can happen when partnering Adult Education with local Michigan Works! associations.

12:10 - 12:50 p.m.

Lunch

12:50 - 1:50 p.m.

Breakout Session 3 (Choose One):

Let's Talk Digital Literacy Assessments

Jessi Pavey, Operations Manager, Kalamazoo Literacy Council

The MACAE Digital Skills Committee is looking for your input. We are looking into creating a digital skills assessment that would fit more in line with the growing digital skill needs of learners. Are you currently using a digital literacy assessment system? We want to know what you like most and least. Join us for a roundtable discussion and let your voice be heard.

Building Bridges: Leveraging Community Partnerships to Support Adult Education Learners

Heather Algrim, Director, Eaton RESA Adult Education

Adult learners face complex barriers that can impact their ability to persist and succeed in education. Transportation challenges, childcare responsibilities, financial constraints, health concerns, and a lack of wraparound services often make it difficult for students to engage fully in their learning journey. However, by forming strategic community partnerships, adult education programs can provide holistic support that empowers students both inside and outside the classroom.

This session will explore how adult education programs can collaborate with public transportation and community service agencies, libraries, college access networks, health departments, parenting support programs, Michigan Works! agencies, and more. Through real-world examples from Eaton RESA Adult Education, this presentation will highlight successful partnerships and provide practical strategies for educators looking to strengthen their community network. Participants will leave with actionable steps to forge relationships that enhance student success, improve retention, and create more inclusive learning environments.

Utilizing Canva in Your Classrooms & Programs (Part 1)

Tina Repp, Coordinator, Southgate's Atlas Online Program

Join us as we cover Canva basics, shared templates, creating certificates, and creating agenda slides, and most importantly, learn how to create these things in bulk! You will love how much time this will save, and you will be amazed at all Canva has to offer! Come to learn, laugh, and leave with immediate and exciting takeaways!

*Creating a free Canva account with your school email address is encouraged!

2:00 - 3:00 p.m.

Breakout Session 4 (Choose One):

Mi-Internship Prep

Vincent D'Ettorre, Teacher, Michigan Works! Southeast

Walkthrough of the creation & practice of: Mi-Internship Prep. A virtual WIOA Youth centered professional development program in partnership with Michigan Works to transition students into paid work experiences across 5 counties of Southeast MI.

Advantages of Implementing a Success and Retention Specialist in a Hybrid Adult Education Program

Chad Gibbs, Research and Education Manager, Michigan Works! Southeast and Janelle Speith, Michigan Works! Southeast

This presentation will highlight the positive impact and benefits our Adult Education program has experienced through the introduction of a Success and Retention Specialist. We will examine how this role has eased the workload for our teachers, reengaged students who had become disconnected, gathered critical program data, connected learners to essential services beyond education, and contributed to numerous other improvements in our program.

Utilizing Canva in Your Classrooms & Programs (Part 2)

Tina Repp, Coordinator, Southgate's Atlas Online Program

Join us as we cover even more that Canva has to offer! This time we will cover creating a letter, creating mailing labels, and creating (the coolest!) QR codes, and we will show you how to create all in bulk! We will also talk about how you can use AI to make Canva even cooler! And we will take all of your Canva-related questions :)

*You do not have to attend Part 1 in order to attend Part 2, but it will help. It will also help if you create your own Canva account beforehand.

Friday, April 25, 2025:

8:30 - 9:30 a.m.

Breakout Session 5 (Choose One):

Parent Literacy Together: A Multi-Generational Approach to Learning

Michael D. Evans, Executive Director, Kalamazoo Literacy Council

Parents are the first teachers of their children, and helping their children read is a critical part of parenting. This session will provide an overview of the multi-generational learning model that drives the Parent Literacy Together program developed by the Kalamazoo Literacy Council in collaboration with the Adult Education and Training Program at Goodwill Industries of Southwestern Michigan. The unique feature of this program is incorporating adult learning goals that correlate with College and Career Readiness Standards for adult education into family literacy activities. Examples that will be shared include lessons for weekly Parent Literacy Together classes, multi-generational learning strategies for interactive StoryWalk® exhibits and storytelling, and how this model will be applied to create curricular materials for parents and their families.

Getting to the Finish Line - HSE Math

Anne Heyt, Math Instructor, Sparta Adult Education

This session will focus on math concepts that can quickly help students improve their mathematical understanding for HSE assessments. We will cover math concepts listed as "high impact indicators" with a focus on instructional techniques to improve student understanding leading to higher test scores.

Unlocking School Success: Leveraging MI School Data Insights

Rob Barrett, Director of Programs/Pupil Accountant, Southgate Asher

Anyone with a MI School Data score will want to attend this extremely valuable session. Together, we will examine the different components of the scoring system, we will discuss what has the greatest impact on our scores, and finally what we should focus on to improve our scores. We will discuss best practices for CSI schools (making lemonade out of lemons!), and what many in Michigan are lobbying for. We have much to discuss! Come with your own MI School Data scores for an even more personal touch.

Corrections

Tony Stefanovski, Sales Executive, Orijin PBC, Nicole Hatch, MACAE Corrections Committee Chair, and Whitney Dettmer, Director, Iosco RESA

This session will discuss expanding educational opportunities through technology in Alpena County Jail in Partnership with IOSCO RESA.

9:40 - 10:40 a.m.

Breakout Session 6 (Choose One):

AE & Manufacturer Partnership - Assisting Temp Staff to Become Fully Hired Through HSE/HSC Credentialing

Catherine Ellis, Lead Teacher, Michigan Works! Southeast Adult Education and Tom Huscio, Supervisor - Technical Training Department, Michigan Automotive Compressor, Inc.
Looking to form a partnership with local employers and your Adult Education program? This session will cover the establishment, challenges, and current status of a partnership between Michigan Works! Southeast (MWSE) Adult Education and Michigan Automotive Compressor, Inc. (MACI). MWSE assists MACI temp staff in earning their GED or high school diploma onsite and online. Temp staff are then recommended for full-time employment at MACI. Since the start of the partnership in 2019, 30 students have earned their HSE/HSC credential. MACI also received MACAE'S "TrailBlazer of the Year" award in 2019.

Building Partnerships & Connections to Enhance Your Programming

Ted Kroll, Director of Adult and Alternative Education, Livingston ESA
Explore beliefs, behaviors and consequences around alternative and adult education programming, and how to usher in positive change through building partnerships in the community.

Getting to the Finish Line - Reading & Writing

Jenny Luzar, Adult Literacy Coach, Iosco RESA, Nicole Hatch, Iosco RESA, and Whitney Dettmer, Director of Adult Education, Iosco RESA
Join us for tips and tricks to get your adult learners to the finish line! This is hard work and heart work, and we'd love to share suggestions- and also tell you about some of our exciting new programs.

Engaging Strategies for Teaching Adult ESOL & Digital Literacy

Amy Cheadle, Digital Literacy and Learning Program Coordinator, Office of Global Michigan, Mariah Shafer, Outreach Director, Nonprofit Organization
This interactive presentation will equip educators with practical tools, strategies, and tips for teaching adult ESOL and digital literacy skills in engaging ways. Participants will explore hands-on activities, technology-driven learning approaches, and real-world applications to support adult learners in developing language and digital confidence. Through guided discussions and interactive demonstrations, attendees will leave with ready-to-use resources to enhance their instructional practices.

10:50 - 11:50 a.m.

Breakout Session 7 (Choose One):

Professional Emails Made Easy! Follow these Guidelines for a Better Life!

Renaë Gowen, Coordinator, Asher Schools
The session will discuss email etiquette, offering practical tips and strategies that can significantly improve email communication skills. These insights are designed to empower both educators and students, providing tools that can lead to more confident and effective email exchanges in both academic and professional settings.

Crossing the Finish Line - Visual Literacy

Joy Zug, Coordinator, Royal Oak Continuing Education
A challenge for some HSE test-takers is visual literacy. Visual Literacy skills are needed on all the sections of the test, but are mostly found in the science and social studies sections. New ways of looking at concepts required of HSE candidates will be shared and participants in this session will collaborate on ways to contextualize digital literacy for adult learners.

Creating an Engaging Workforce Literacy Course with the Help of Burlington

English

Jessi Pavey, Operations Manager, Kalamazoo Literacy Council and Louie Paras, Customer Manager, Burlington English

Workforce Literacy skills are a major goal for the learners we support, but coming up with a way to teach it can be difficult. The Kalamazoo Literacy Council has spent several years working to ensure that our learners get the best skill training possible, and the best includes the use of Burlington English. In this session you will learn how we have created a workforce program for all learners. You will be given the syllabus we use in our 6-week JOBS program and the opportunity to see how we utilize Google Classroom making it easy for individuals to learn anywhere, anytime.

Pre-Apprenticeship for Youth

Karyn Goven, Senior Director of Workforce Development, MiSide and Rocio Campos, Director of Education/Vocations/Superintendent, SER-Metro

This presentation focuses on pre-apprenticeship opportunities for youth ages 18-24, showcasing two programs that provide pathways into skilled trades careers. We will highlight how our programs equip participants with industry-specific training, hands-on experience, and job readiness skills to successfully transition into apprenticeships or employment.

Participants will gain insight into the benefits of pre-apprenticeships, including career exposure, skill development, and supportive services. The presentation will explore how the Integrated Education and Training (IET) model helps youth in an industry approved pre-apprenticeship program that helps support recruitment and retention.

11:50 - 12:20 p.m.

Lunch

12:20 - 1:20 p.m.

Keynote Address - How to Be a Better Leader: How & Why You Need to Prioritize Your Wellness

Kelsey Sanders, Founder, ThriveWell LLC

All leaders are busy, stressed, and being pulled in multiple directions at once. But great leaders don't use those as excuses to not take care of themselves. In fact, great leaders tend to have some of the best healthy habits because they know that you can't pour from an empty cup. It's time to make your wellness a daily priority—and it won't take hours a day to do so. Kelsey Sanders will share tips and tricks on how to realistically take care of yourself every day and how to inspire others to do the same.

1:30 - 2:30 p.m.

Breakout Session 8 (Choose One):

College & Career Connections

Patrick Brown, Director of Adult Student Attainment Strategy, Michigan College Access Network

Are you interested in helping your students explore future college and career opportunities? Consider joining MACAE and MCAN's College Level Examination Preparation (CLEP) Pilot Program. In this session you'll explore if your program is a fit to become a CLEP testing site and a program that can accelerate students to postsecondary. We will share resources that MACAE and MCAN and give you details for the next cohort launch time.

Creating Opportunities through Service: How Engaged & Supported Volunteers Improve Adult Education

Mariah Shafer, Outreach Director, Nonprofit Organization and Savanna Hamed, Volunteer and Engagement Coordinator, Nonprofit Organization, Margaret Tassaro, ESOL Director, Nonprofit Organization, and Tina Houghton, Assistant Director of MSU CCEL

Join a dynamic panel discussion exploring the profound impact volunteers have on Adult Education classrooms and students' lives. Featuring insights from a Mid-Michigan Non-Profit Volunteer Coordinator, the Assistant Director of the MSU Center for Community Engaged Learning, a program volunteer, and an adult student, this session will delve into key topics such as volunteer recruitment, engagement strategies, fostering collaboration, building trust, and measuring impact.

AI Power Hour: Using AI Ethically & Effectively in Adult Education

Maria "Kit" Fishell, Lead Career Coach | Training & Curriculum Specialist, OAISD M-TEC and ZAE

Unlock the power of AI to enhance your work in adult education-- while keeping human connection at the heart of learning! Whether you're teaching, guiding careers, or supporting students through social services or administrative roles, this session will equip you with practical strategies to use AI effectively and responsibly.

This session is designed for educators, administrative leaders, support staff, social workers, and career coaches. The session explores how AI can streamline tasks, personalize learning, and improve support for adult learners. You'll discover practical AI tools for lesson planning, case management, career coaching, and administrative workflows, while also gaining insights into best practices and ethical considerations. By the end of this session, you'll have a clearer understanding of how to integrate AI as a responsible, student-centered tool-- allowing you to focus on what truly matters: empowering and connecting with those you serve.

Creating Success: How to Make Special Education Partnerships in Adult and Alternative Education Thrive

Jessica Brancheau, Teacher Consultant, Southgate's Asher Alternative HS and Atlas Online Learning Program

In this session, we'll share practical strategies for fostering successful partnerships in special education within adult and alternative education settings. Learn how to build on and create new collaborations to create an inclusive, supportive, and thriving learning environment for all students. We'll highlight real-world examples and actionable tips to help you strengthen these partnerships and ensure everyone has the opportunity to succeed.

2:30 - 3:00 p.m.

Updates from the State Adult Education Office