



We are **KRESA**

Transforming Futures



24
25

Kalamazoo RESA

ANNUAL REPORT



CENTERS OF EXCELLENCE

Supporting Education Holistically

Each of KRESA’s Centers of Excellence represents a distinct category—or pillar—of our work, encompassing a wide range of supports tailored to meet the needs of learners, families, and educators.

 KALAMAZOO RESA

Early Childhood

Early Childhood: Providing foundational support for families and children ages 0–5 through early care and education programs, including free high-quality Pre-Kindergarten experiences.

 KALAMAZOO RESA

Career Connect

Career Connect: Preparing K-12 students and young adults for future careers with courses, coaching, work-based learning, and other programs.

 KALAMAZOO RESA

Special Education

Special Education: Specialized instruction and interventions that ensure an inclusive and accessible education for every learner’s individual needs.

 KALAMAZOO RESA

Educator Supports

Educator Supports: Offering professional development, coaching, and resources to empower educators and enhance classroom experiences.

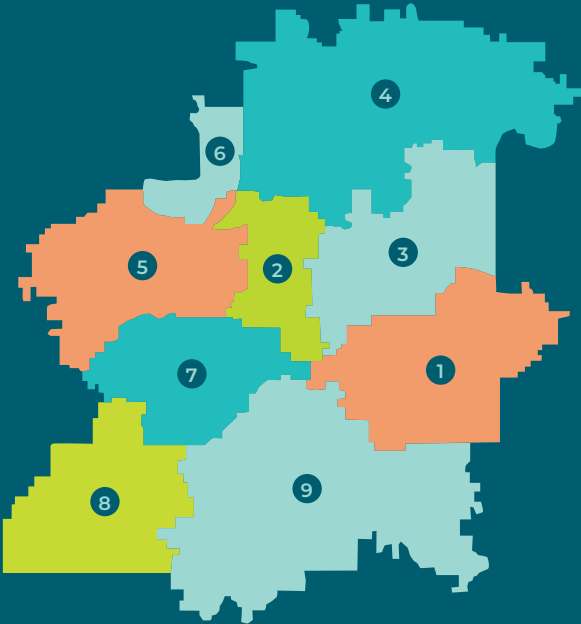
 KALAMAZOO RESA

Operational Supports

Operational Supports: Delivering essential services that keep schools running smoothly, including technology, transportation, business services, and communications.



- 1 Climax-Scotts
- 2 Comstock
- 3 Galesburg-Augusta
- 4 Gull Lake
- 5 Kalamazoo
- 6 Parchment
- 7 Portage
- 8 Schoolcraft
- 9 Vicksburg



CONSTITUENT DISTRICTS

- | | | |
|---------------------------------------|---------------------------------|--|
| ■ Climax-Scotts Community Schools | ■ Parchment School District | ■ Oakland Academy |
| ■ Comstock Public Schools | ■ Portage Public Schools | ■ Paramount Charter Academy |
| ■ Galesburg-Augusta Community Schools | ■ Schoolcraft Community Schools | ■ Youth Advancement Academy |
| ■ Gull Lake Community Schools | ■ Vicksburg Community Schools | ■ 18 Nonpublic Schools in Kalamazoo County |
| ■ Kalamazoo Public Schools | ■ Kalamazoo Covenant Academy | |

NON-DISCRIMINATION NOTICE

It is the policy of Kalamazoo Regional Educational Service Agency that no discriminatory practices based on gender/sex, sexual orientation, race, religion, height, weight, color, age, national origin, disability or any other status covered by federal, state or local law be allowed during any program, activity, service or in employment. The following positions at Kalamazoo RESA have been designated to handle inquiries regarding the nondiscrimination policy: Assistant Superintendent Meredith Lewis and Assistant Superintendent Mindy Miller. Contact information: (269) 250-9200, 1819 E. Milham Ave, Portage, MI 49002.

Board of Education

The Kalamazoo RESA Board of Education plays a vital role in driving our mission of transforming futures.



Virgil "Skip" Knowles
President



Lynne Cowart
Secretary



Randy VanAntwerp
Treasurer



Dave Webster
Vice President



James Devers
Trustee

Superintendent's Message

Dear Friends and Partners,

As we reflect on the 2024–2025 school year, one message rings true: We Are KRESA. This simple phrase captures the heart of who we are—a team united by a shared mission to transform the futures of learners in every corner of our community.

This year was a time of progress and unwavering commitment. We launched a bold new brand and redesigned our website to better connect with those we serve. We opened the Career Connect Campus, a cornerstone in our journey to reimagine Career and Technical Education for learners across our region. We expanded technology services to local districts and strengthened teacher coaching and professional development, ensuring educators have the tools and support they need to thrive.

We continued to provide critical support for our youngest learners through early childhood programs and delivered specialized services through special education initiatives. These programs remain at the heart of our commitment to equity and opportunity for every learner.

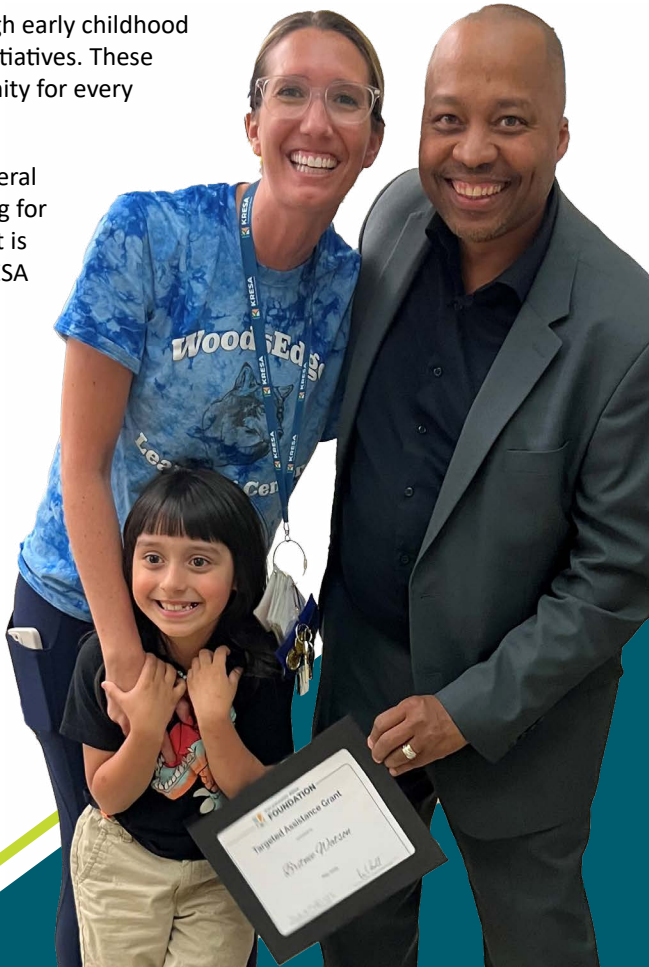
At the same time, we navigated significant uncertainty with state and federal budgets, including threats to Medicaid and potential reductions in funding for school breakfast and lunch programs. These challenges underscored what is at stake for students, families, and schools. Yet, through it all, We Are KRESA and we remained steadfast in our commitment to our mission—because that is what we do, and what we will always do.

None of this would be possible without the extraordinary efforts of our staff and the unwavering support of our community partners, especially our local school districts. Together, we are building opportunities that transform futures.

Thank you for joining us on this journey. The work ahead is vital, and we are honored to do it with you.

With gratitude,

Dr. Dedrick Martin
Superintendent, Kalamazoo RESA



Impact Highlights



558 students served in center-based special education programs (WoodsEdge, Transition Services, Valley Center) across all nine districts.

Special Education



1,437 children enrolled in Great Start Readiness Program (GSRP) and Head Start preschool programs countywide.

Early Childhood Education

217 professional learning opportunities delivered county-wide

Educator Supports

3,293 educators participated in professional development sessions

Educator Supports

\$420,256.10 in estimated district cost savings from shared Southwest MiTech staffing

Operational Supports

2,938 high school students enrolled in Career Connect programs (CTE/EFA/EMC)

Career Connect

197 students served in KRESA Transition Services

Special Education

479 work-based learning experiences (internships/placements)

Career Connect
Special Education

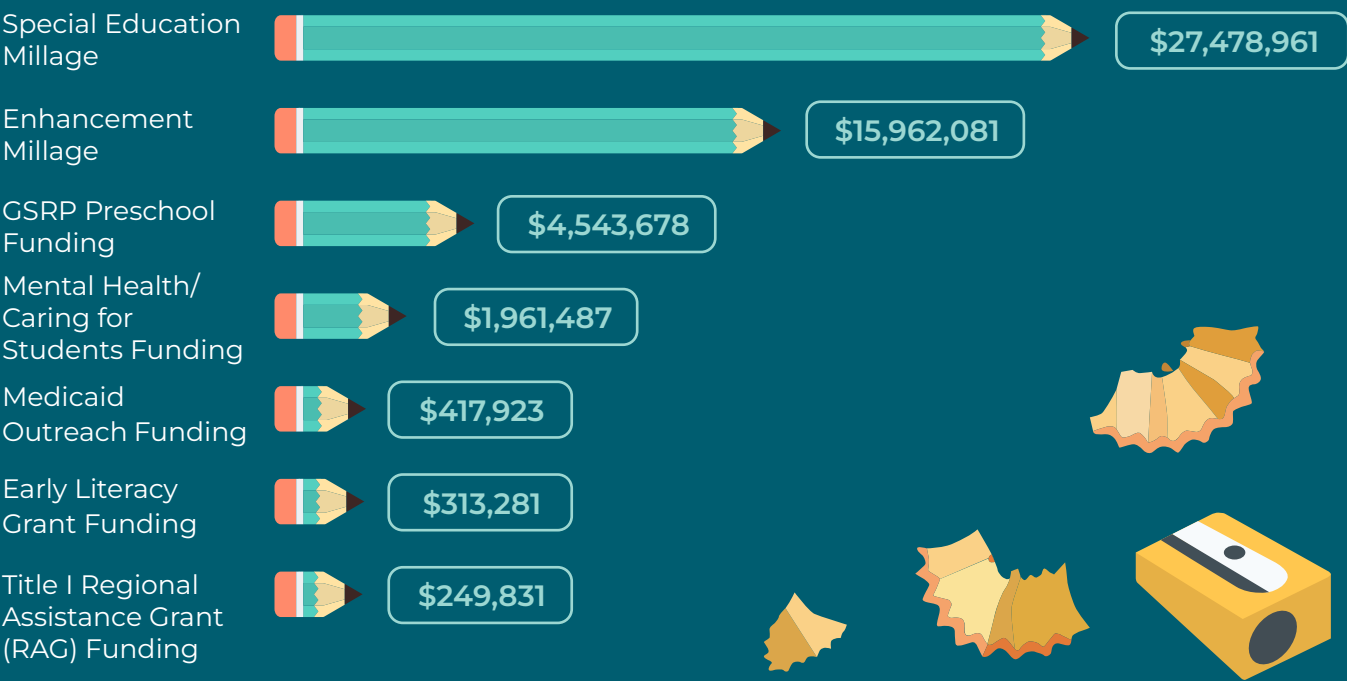


Maximizing Resources for Every District

Kalamazoo RESA's Business Office helps ensure critical resources reach classrooms by coordinating regional funding streams that support general education, special education, early learning, wellness, and targeted student supports across Kalamazoo County.

Total funding administered
to constituent districts

\$50,927,242



Total Funding by District

- Climax-Scotts Community Schools
\$1,073,809
- Comstock Public Schools
\$4,413,473
- Galesburg-Augusta Community Schools
\$2,826,025
- Gull Lake Community Schools
\$4,496,873
- Kalamazoo Public Schools
\$19,379,244
- Parchment School District
\$2,577,114
- Portage Public Schools
\$11,338,099
- Schoolcraft Community Schools
\$1,580,821
- Vicksburg Community Schools
\$3,241,784





We Are Early Childhood



“

KRESA has made it possible for my granddaughter to attend Pre-K to learn how to develop in a social setting with children her own age. We thank you for this much needed program to children that may not have another option due to financial situations in the home.

Current Head Start family

Head Start

Engaging Parents as Partners

Strong family engagement is at the heart of our work, and we are intentional about creating meaningful opportunities for parents to have a voice in our program.

Through the Head Start Policy Council and Parent Committee meetings, families are invited to actively participate in decision-making, share feedback, and help guide the direction of our services. To ensure these opportunities are accessible to all families, we remove common barriers to participation by providing meals and childcare during meetings. This allows parents to fully engage, connect with one another, and focus on the discussions without added stress.

This year, our commitment to parent leadership extended beyond our local community. In the spring, we were proud to support one of our parents in attending the Michigan Head Start Association Conference. This experience offered the opportunity to learn alongside Head Start professionals from across the state, gain new insights, and bring valuable perspectives back to our program.

By creating welcoming spaces, supporting parent leadership, and investing in families' voices, we continue to strengthen the partnerships that are essential to the success of our children and communities.

90%

of students had a **Fall (1st) Family Partnership meeting**, where Family Advocates and families meet to collaborate, set goals, and share resources.

77%

of students had a **Spring (2nd) Family Partnership meeting**, where Family Advocates and families follow up on goal setting and plan for how to support the student's upcoming transition.

711 home visits were conducted by Head Start Family Advocates



Learning Labs: Improving Classroom Practice to Support Young Learners

Learning Labs are an instructional model that supports educators in collaboratively strengthening their teaching practices.

Through focused study of a specific content area, hands-on classroom observation, teacher interviews, reflection, and ongoing coaching, educators engage as learners—not evaluators.

Stacy Kambestad, KRESA Head Start/GSRP’s Instructional Coach, was trained in Learning Labs through the Michigan Association of Intermediate School Administrators (MAISA) in October 2023 by the authors of Principal Labs and has since facilitated 8 Learning Labs across Kalamazoo County. Mikel Villaire, KRESA Educator Supports Math Consultant, and Jill Hile, KRESA Early Childhood Special Education’s (ECSE) Instructional Coach, have also supported facilitation as content experts. To ensure meaningful reflection and individualized support, Learning Labs are limited to 12 participants and have included Classroom Aides, Associate Teachers, Lead Teachers, Head Start Site Supervisors, and GSRP Early Childhood Specialists.

Within Kalamazoo RESA Head Start and GSRP, Learning Labs have been tailored to varying levels of staff experience and focus on developmentally appropriate practices, GOLD assessment connections, visual icons, STaR, Mathematical Cognitive Practices, and the Essential Instructional Practices in Early Mathematics. The impact has extended beyond Kalamazoo, with an Early Childhood Specialist from Montcalm Area ISD also participating to implement Learning Labs for GSRP staff in their county.



Great Start Readiness Program (GSRP)

Professional Learning Opportunities

In collaboration with Kalamazoo County Ready 4s (KCR4s) and the Head Start Program, the GSRP Early Childhood Specialists provided tailored training and professional development opportunities based on data to align with programmatic goals, state requirements, individualized professional growth plans, and the Early Childhood Standards of Quality to increase student outcomes and school readiness.

138
professional development training hours
provided to early childhood educators,
program directors and administrators.

1,049
practice-based
coaching sessions

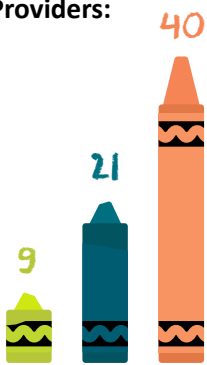
Of the coaching sessions, the top focus areas are as follows:

■ Student Engagement:	192 sessions	■ Small Group:	126 sessions
■ Behavior Management:	139 sessions	■ Whole Group:	98 sessions
■ Literacy:	126 sessions	■ Language:	73 sessions

The Great Start Readiness Program (GSRP) funded high-quality prekindergarten experiences for **1,139 children*** within 28 program providers at 49 site locations and 75 classrooms across Kalamazoo County.

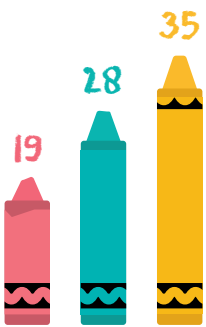
Local Education Agency Providers:

- 9 School Districts
- 21 Site Locations
- 40 Classrooms



Community-Based Organization Providers

- 19 School Districts
- 28 Site Locations
- 35 Classrooms



*1,139 included 249 students served in Head Start/GSRP blended classrooms

We Are Special Education



Isaac's Story: Finding Purpose Through Work, Music, and Community

When Isaac first began his Work-Based Learning (WBL) placement, through the KRESA Transition Services program, at Heritage Community of Kalamazoo during the 2024–2025 school year, he quickly became a bright spot in the building. He spent his days helping with laundry and, during lunchtime, filling the halls with the sound of piano music. What began as a simple routine soon grew into something much more meaningful.

Staff and residents noticed Isaac's musical talent, and over the summer he was invited to practice with the Heritage choir. By fall, he wasn't just rehearsing—he was performing. At the choir's fall concert, Isaac accompanied the group on two songs, blending his skills with theirs to create something truly special. One choir member even surprised him with a boutonniere for the performance, a small gesture that made him feel encouraged, valued, and celebrated.

Through his experience at Heritage, Isaac has gained more than job skills. He has built real relationships, discovered new ways to share his talents, and found a community that appreciates who he is—both as a worker and as a musician. This year, he continues working at Heritage with confidence, comfort, and a deeper connection to the people around him.

Isaac's journey is a reminder that WBL opens doors not only to employment, but also to connection and belonging.

It Started With Play

At the heart of our early childhood special education programs, something quiet but powerful has been growing—community. What began as a simple weekly opportunity for children to play has blossomed into a vibrant network of families who show up not just for their children, but for one another.

In the 2023–2024 school year, our playgroups welcomed an average of 6 children per session. But this year, participation more than doubled. In 2024–2025, an average of 15 children attended each playgroup. Those numbers tell a story of growth, trust, and the value families find in this space.

Parents speak of playgroup with a kind of affection usually reserved for old friends.

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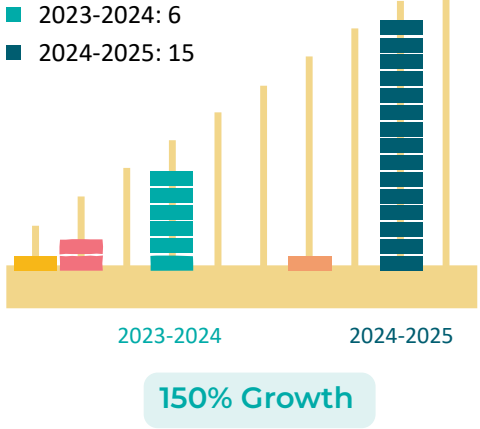
Parents come to form relationships. Everyone is welcoming and there is such a camaraderie. It’s a great way to meet new people who are going through the same things as you.

Parent — KRESA Playgroups

What happens inside these sessions extends far beyond circle time and sensory bins. Families don’t just meet at playgroups—they move through life together. They show up at the same library story hours, sign up for the same gymnastics classes, walk into the same schools on the first day of kindergarten. Playgroup becomes the spark that ignites a long-lasting community of supportive parents.

This is more than early learning. It’s building community.

Average number of children per playgroup session:



KRESA Special Education by the Numbers

388
preschool evaluations
completed by the
PrePrimary Evaluation Team

420
hearing evaluations/
screenings completed
through Audiology Services

183
students received
Deaf/Hard of Hearing
or Blind and Low-Vision
Services

542
infants and toddlers/
families served through
Early On early intervention

180
students served at
WoodsEdge Learning
Center

197
young adults served in
KRESA Transition Services

1,581
home visits conducted
through Seeds for Success

49
students served at the
Juvenile Home Schools

32
students received services
at Valley Center

We Are Career Connect



New Career Connect Campus connecting students to opportunity

After years of planning, community investment, and local input, Kalamazoo RESA proudly opened the Career Connect Campus. Our Grand Opening Celebration on May 22, 2025, welcomed around 2,000 people to celebrate this major milestone in education.

The campus is the direct result of the dedicated Career and Technical Education (CTE) millage approved by local voters in 2019. It was specifically built to prepare students for high-demand, well-paying careers, featuring cutting-edge labs, flexible classrooms, and extensive opportunities for hands-on learning.

Countywide CTE at a Glance

Serves more than
1,300
students

Offers
22 courses
taught **twice**
daily

17
instructional
studios

22
specialized
instructional
labs

“ This campus reflects our community’s commitment to education and workforce development, and it will benefit students, families, and local businesses for years to come.

Eric Stewart — KRESA Assistant Superintendent
for Career and Talent Development

Community partners are essential to Career Connect providing real-world expertise, internships, and other hands-on experiences that help students explore and prepare for future careers. Thank you to our founding investors for their commitment to our students and for investing in the future of career learning.

Career Connect Founding Investors

- 4 Flutes Machining
- Cummins Inc
- Honor Credit Union
- Kaiser Aluminum
- Landscape Forms
- Peregrine Company
- Parker Hannifin
- Stryker
- Zack Bishop
- Zeigler Auto Group

From integrated work-based learning to aligned Early/Middle College programs, CTE equips young people with the skills and credentials that create a competitive advantage in the world of work.

1,106
Career & Technical
Education (CTE) and
Early/Middle College
(EMC) credentials
earned

192
students enrolled
in EMC

In and Out-Of-School Supports

Programs:

- 2Gen
- CareerNOW
- Career Awareness & Exploration (CAE)
- Education ReConnection
- Career Coaching
- MyCITY
- Work-Based Learning



These Career Connect programs give learners career development experiences and opportunities focused on building their self-awareness, option awareness, skill development, and career pathway plans.

“

The career coaching program changed my life for the better. My coach Rachel guided me every step of the way to becoming a CNA—from building confidence to working toward getting certified.

Tarra Hough — Career Coaching participant

“

I learned a lot about different trades, I had fun on the industry tours, and the interviews. All the guest speakers were great as well. There was a lot that I didn't know before, such as the different unions and companies. I learned all of that thanks to [the CareerNOW] program.

Kris Stamp — CareerNOW Skilled Trades program participant

“

During the two sessions I was in the program, MyCITY has given me many choices to help me dive into career options and learn skills that I otherwise would not have even known about.

Anonymous MyCITY participant

Breaking the Mold for Arts Education

Our Education for the Arts (EFA) program was recognized with the Arts Schools Network 2024 Arts Innovation Award for making a positive difference in the lives of the students, community, and breaking the mold in arts education.

EFA is a program arm of Career Connect dedicated to making arts education a learning and teaching priority. Our innovation is demonstrated by the structure and programming of EFA, including:

Excellence in the Arts
High School program

Professional Artists and
Cooperating Educators (PACE)

Alternative Arts Initiative

EFA Presents!

Aesthetic Education

Scholarship and grant
opportunities

“

The arts build essential thinking skills, create belonging and confidence, and are important in identity formation. At EFA, we are honored to partner with outstanding school educators to bring high-quality arts experiences to students across Kalamazoo County.

Kate Yancho — EFA Administrator



EFA by the Numbers

16

high school EFA classes
currently offered

589

students enrolled in
EFA courses

Our EFA team went to Washington D.C. to receive their reward at the Awards Ceremony during the Arts Schools Network 2024 Annual Conference.



We Are Educator Supports

KRESA continues its long history of supporting educators across the Greater Kalamazoo region through coaching, professional development, and consulting services. These essential supports ensure that educators have access to the latest resources and best practices available to deliver the highest quality education.

Our focus areas:

- Behavior
- Culture/Climate
- Continuous Improvement
- Engagement
- Curriculum Support
- Data & Assessment
- Literacy
- Mathematics
- Multilingual
- Science
- Social Studies
- STEM/REMC



The Behavior Specialists in KRESA Educator Supports have been incredibly supportive of our district teams when we have called upon them for behavioral supports. Their methods of collaboration and team work, along with their knowledge and expertise in all things behavior related, have helped us to implement new strategies and supports to improve student learning.

Vicksburg — Anonymous Social Worker

Regional Educational Service Agency (REMC-12W)

REMC 12W supports educators and students by providing free access to classroom technology, media resources, high-quality professional learning and also delivers cost-saving cooperative purchasing and reliable regional delivery services that help schools secure essential supplies and technology efficiently.

11 presentations on artificial intelligence and robotics

25 REMC courses were completed by educators

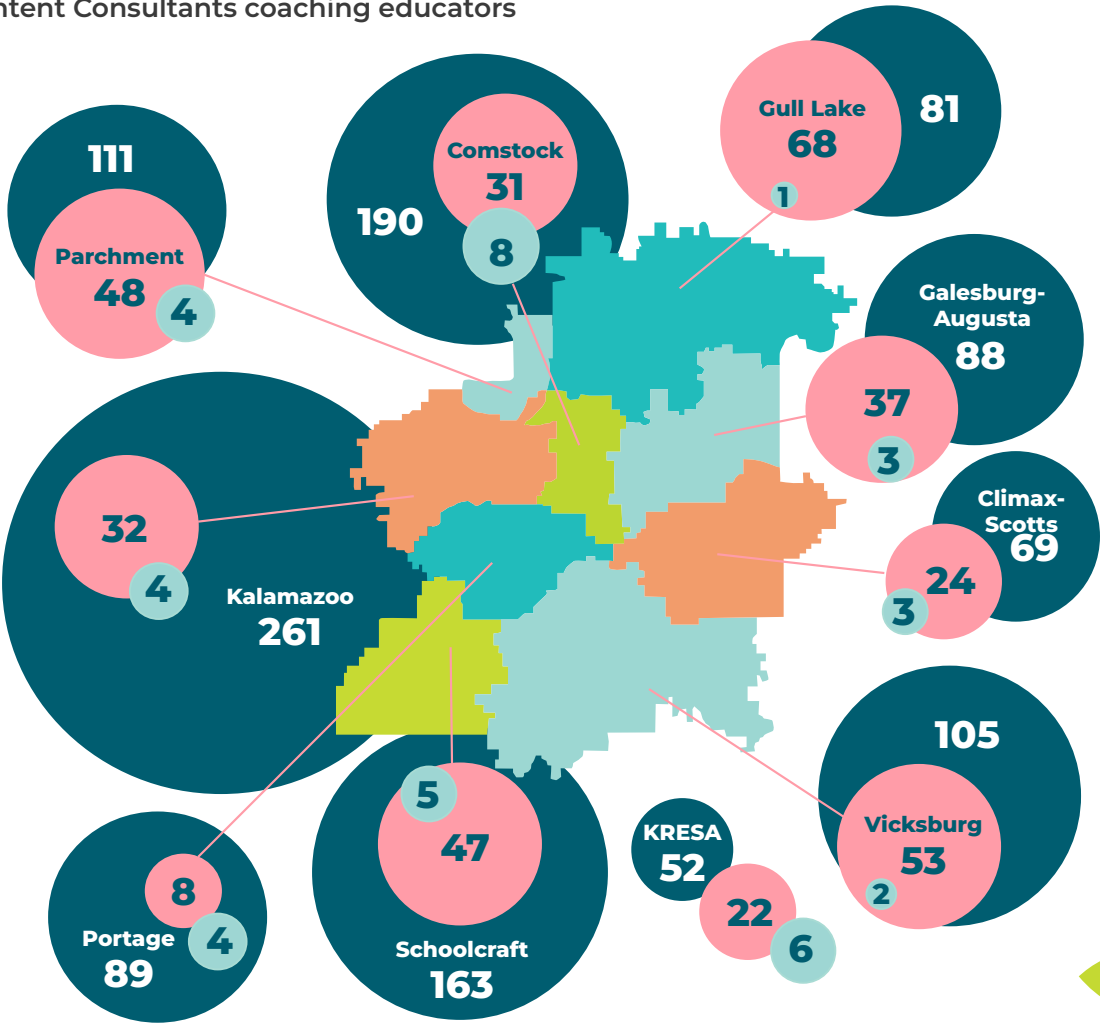
Districts saved **\$3,341,903** through REMC SAVE and **\$24,003** on REMC Delivery Services



Serving All Local Districts

Educators and support staff across Kalamazoo County continue to engage deeply with KRESA’s professional development offerings. This map highlights the distribution of Professional Learning participants by district, showcasing the widespread impact and reach of our services throughout the region.

- Professional Learning Sessions attended
- Educators receiving coaching
- Content Consultants coaching educators



3,293
educators attended
county-wide professional
learning sessions

2,247
coaching interactions
during the year

671
coaching partnerships
in the region



The KRESA Multilingual Learner Consultant is very communicative and provides invaluable resources and supports. She was proactive and professional in delivering building professional development. She promoted and developed CTE and vocational supports for students including creating key exposure to different career opportunities. She led collaborative groups and organized training for staff.

Kalamazoo — Anonymous Instructional Coach



My KRESA Literacy Coach is a wealth of knowledge and resources to support our students and our teachers. Her knowledge and consistency around the science of reading and utilizing high-impact and research based instructional practices that support learning for all students has impacted our district in a positive way!

Galesburg-Augusta — Anonymous Title I Interventionist



Talking to my KRESA coach every few weeks allowed me to really reflect on what I was doing well on and what I could improve on in all aspects of my teaching. She really gave me good points and things to work on and was so positive throughout every experience.

Comstock — Anonymous secondary content teacher



We Are Operational Supports

Southwest MiTech Receives Grant for Centralized Cloud Hosting

Kalamazoo RESA was awarded \$31,669,361 from the Michigan Department of Education as part of a statewide initiative aimed at consolidating technology services for school districts. This investment, secured through state funding (Section 12c of the 2023-24 School Aid Act), recognized KRESA's expertise in designing and promoting secure, cost-effective cloud-based data centers alongside four other Intermediate School Districts (ISDs).

Southwest MiTech, a technology collaboration led by KRESA, is using these funds to centralize school data hosting through cloud technology—which is a global network of servers that enables data storage and management over the Internet.

This centralized cloud solution, through the MiCloud initiative, aims to offer a secure and unified platform for all local school districts across Michigan. This initiative is designed to improve operational efficiency, lower costs, and ensure equitable access to cutting-edge technology for all public schools in the state.



Over the past decade, the KRESA technology team has become well-known across Michigan for leading the way in using and promoting cloud-based data centers. These modern data centers are more reliable, secure, and cost-effective. We're excited to help schools and ISDs in Michigan upgrade from their legacy data centers to new, cloud-based ones.

Brian Schupbach — Assistant Superintendent for Technology and Operations

Southwest MiTech provides end-to-end technology support for KRESA and area school districts, including IT helpdesk, networking, and technical solutions. We centralize key operational and administrative functions so that local districts and educators focus on students. Our approach is collaborative and customer service-oriented: we work with district leaders, staff, and community partners to ensure they have the tools, training, and assistance needed for efficient school operations.



\$32 Million
awarded by the Michigan
Department of Education



Engage with KRESA by following along with us and stay connected to our full story.



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1819 East Milham Avenue
Portage, MI 49002
(269) 250-9200
www.kresa.org

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