



MARQUETTE-ALGER RESA
SERVING SUPERIOR SCHOOLS

2026–2029 Strategic Plan



Get Connected

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About Us

Marquette-Alger Regional Education Service Agency (Marquette-Alger RESA) is one of 56 regional education service agencies (also known as intermediate schools districts) established by Michigan law in 1962. Marquette-Alger RESA employs approximately 200 staff members and serves both Marquette and Alger counties, supporting twelve local public school districts and one public school academy, encompassing approximately 9,000 students.

Executive Summary

With the previous Marquette-Alger RESA Strategic Plan set to expire at the end of 2025, the Leadership Team began initiating the development of a new Strategic Plan — one that would reflect the evolving educational landscape of our region and reaffirm the organization's commitment to providing high-quality services to the learners and educators we serve. With that charge in mind, a comprehensive planning process was launched in 2025.

Throughout the development of this plan, our Leadership Team engaged in a collaborative process, working with stakeholders to establish a clear and unified direction for the organization. Draft frameworks were subsequently shared with our agency staff members and local school district administrators within our service area, whose feedback played a critical role in shaping and refining the plan's priorities, language, and goals. This iterative process ensured that the Strategic Plan addresses the needs of our students, families, districts and partners, while reflecting the collective voice and professional insight of those closest to the work.

The 2026-2029 Strategic Plan builds upon Marquette-Alger RESA's recently revised mission and vision statements, establishing updated strategic goals and priorities that will guide the organization's efforts over the next four years. It is intended to serve as a transparent, living document — providing direction for board members, staff, and community stakeholders alike. To support this commitment to transparency and accountability, a brief annual progress report will be produced each year to communicate progress of the strategic plan's goals.

The final Strategic Plan was approved by the Marquette-Alger RESA Board of Education on March 23, 2026, and stands as a foundational document for the organization moving forward.

A sincere thank you is owed to every individual who contributed to this process, dedicating significant thought and time to building this plan from the ground up through honest and thoughtful collaboration and feedback.

Together, we move forward with a shared commitment to advancing equitable, meaningful opportunities for every learner across Marquette and Alger Counties.

Greg Nyen, EdD
Superintendent

Guiding Principles

Mission

Supporting educational opportunities through advocacy, collaboration, and innovation.

Vision

Marquette-Alger RESA fosters the conditions and support for all learners to become successful, productive, and responsible.



Goal 1: Student Success and Readiness

Focus on foundational academics, future career paths, and inclusive learning spaces.

- **Priority 1: Build Foundational Literacy, Math, and Technology Skills.** Help students across the region master literacy, math, and technology by using data to guide instruction and professional development.
- **Priority 2: Strengthen Early Childhood Education (ECE).** Improve Early Childhood Education systems for children from birth through age 8 by strengthening connections with families and using proven, inclusive approaches.
- **Priority 3: Expand Career, Technical, and Transition Programs.** Expand fair access to Career & Technical Education (CTE) and create programs that support students with disabilities, ages 19–26, to build skills for independent living and employment.
- **Priority 4: Advance Technology and Artificial Intelligence (AI) Skills.** Establish Marquette-Alger RESA as a trusted partner for bringing responsible technology use and AI literacy into classrooms to prepare students for new technologies.
- **Priority 5: Establish RESA-Run Special Education Programs.** Co-develop RESA-run special education programs within local school buildings to fill staffing gaps, support inclusion, and allow students to attend their neighborhood schools while meeting Least Restrictive Environment (LRE) requirements.



Goal 2: Integrated Support Systems and Wellbeing

Build stronger systems for student care, safety, and belonging through behavior and mental health support.

- **Priority 1: Implement Multi-Tiered System of Support (MTSS).** Partner with all local school districts to put MTSS with fidelity into practice by improving team structures and building leadership skills through professional learning.
- **Priority 2: Grow the Superior Shores Program.** Expand the Superior Shores Therapeutic Day Treatment program to serve more students and a wider age range, combining therapy with classroom learning to support student growth.
- **Priority 3: Create Student Behavior Support Teams.** Create regional behavior support teams that offer school staff expert guidance, timely interventions, and resources for handling complex student behaviors.
- **Priority 4: Strengthen Mental Health and Crisis Response.** Improve regional mental health services and crisis response by offering yearly Behavioral Threat Assessment & Management (BTAM) training and strengthening early intervention support for students in need.
- **Priority 5: Use Data to Improve Services.** Use data to keep improving services and update how students are evaluated for special education — including Specific Learning Disability (SLD) and Speech or Language Impairment (SLI) — so the process is fair and consistent across all districts.



Goal 3: Strategic Partnerships and Community Impact

Connect community partners to share resources and close gaps in public education.

- **Priority 1: Build Regional Partnerships and Advocacy.** Build strong partnerships with school districts, nonprofits, and colleges/universities to speak with one voice on education issues across the region.
- **Priority 2: Guide and Support Family Involvement.** Help support families by connecting them with mental health resources and helping them understand how to navigate school systems and special education services.
- **Priority 3: Connect Schools and Local Employers.** Work with local businesses to match career programs with regional job needs through hands-on learning, internships, and teamwork between school districts and colleges/universities.
- **Priority 4: Coordinate Community Resources.** Organize community resources and share data to help remove barriers to student success like housing, food access, and mental health needs.



Goal 4: Advocacy, Influence, and Resource Mobilization

Lead efforts to move education forward and secure stable funding for key programs.

- **Priority 1: Lead on New Initiatives.** Help lead important education efforts at the state and national level. Stay ahead of state and national education changes and share best practices, information, and resources with regional leaders.
- **Priority 2: Secure Stable and Diverse Funding.** Secure long-term funding for CTE, ECE, Special Education, and Technology through local millages, grants, and outside partnerships so programs can grow and last.
- **Priority 3: Hire and Keep Skilled Staff.** Advocate for policies and use strategies to recruit and retain a skilled workforce including special education teachers, school psychologists, speech-language pathologists, Board Certified Behavior Analysts (BCBAs), and early childhood providers.
- **Priority 4: Build Community Support with Clear Communication.** Mobilize community support for education by sharing clear, data-backed messages that reach a wide audience and raise awareness of Marquette-Alger RESA partnerships.



Goal 5: Operational Excellence and Talent Development

Strengthen operations and develop staff to create conditions where all students can succeed.

- **Priority 1: Run an Efficient Organization.** Improve how the organization operates by aligning efforts, managing funds responsibly, and building better data systems and feedback processes to support lasting program improvement.
- **Priority 2: Provide Professional Learning and Coaching for Special Education Staff.** Launch a training program focused on special education, including a Paraprofessional Bootcamp and hands-on coaching for teachers and paraeducators in their daily work.
- **Priority 3: Grow Our Team and Culture.** Develop a diverse, skilled workforce through ongoing learning and improve internal communication to build a strong, team-focused, collaborative culture.
- **Priority 4: Protect Data and Strengthen Technology.** Improve data protection and technology systems by moving to the cloud, following security standards, and planning for disaster recovery.
- **Priority 5: Audit Agency Capacity & Resources.** Review staffing and resources each year to make sure the organization has what it needs to carry out its strategic priorities.



Glossary of Terms

- **Artificial Intelligence (AI):** Computer software designed to perform tasks that typically require human intelligence, such as recognizing patterns, learning from data, understanding language, making predictions, and solving complex problems.
- **Behavioral Threat Assessment & Management (BTAM):** A process to analyze and manage concerning behaviors to prevent targeted violence and ensure safety.
- **Board Certified Behavior Analysts (BCBAs):** Professionals who create and manage plans to improve behavior for individuals with autism or developmental disabilities.
- **Career & Technical Education (CTE):** Supports college and career readiness through programs that connect learning to real-world experiences. Through CTE, Work-Based Learning, and Middle College opportunities, students develop the technical, academic, and employability skills needed for postsecondary success and workforce participation.
- **Day Treatment:** A highly structured, short-term intensive clinical program for mental health providing six to eight hours of daily care, five days per week.
- **Disaster recovery:** An organization's ability to restore access and functionality to digital infrastructure after an event (natural disaster, cyberattack, etc.).
- **Early Childhood Education (ECE):** Supporting birth through age 8 (e.g., GSRP, Early On)
- **Internships:** Learning and interacting with employers and community professionals in real workplace settings through a 6–10 hour per week independent study aligned to a student's career pathway.
- **Least Restrictive Environment (LRE):** Keeping students with IEPs in the same classrooms as non-disabled peers as much as possible.
- **Millage:** Taxation used by local governments and school districts to fund public services.
- **Multi-Tiered System of Support (MTSS):** A framework that ensures all students receive the appropriate level of support and intervention to help them succeed.
- **Multi-Tiered System of Support (MTSS) with Fidelity:** Implement MTSS as intended, designed, and planned.
- **Neighborhood Schools:** The individual schools within a school district (Sandy Knoll, Bothwell Middle School, etc.).
- **Paraeducator:** A professional who works alongside teachers to provide instructional support and behavior management.
- **Paraprofessional Bootcamp:** A training series providing tools and skills for paraeducators.
- **Professional Learning:** Professional learning comprises a series of events designed for educators to build and apply instructional expertise in support of student learning, delivered through in-person, hybrid, and virtual platforms, both synchronously and asynchronously.
- **Regional Educational Service Agency (RESA):** An organization that supports public school districts within a designated area to provide specialized, cost-effective, and equitable services. (Also known as an Intermediate School District or ISD).
- **School Psychologists:** Professionals with expertise in mental health, learning, and behavior who help students experience success.
- **Special Education Teachers:** Professionals who work with students who have a wide range of learning, mental, emotional, and physical disabilities.
- **Specific Learning Disability (SLD):** A brain-based disorder that primarily affects reading, writing, and mathematical skills (dyslexia, dysgraphia, etc.).
- **Speech-language Pathologists:** A professional who diagnoses and treats communication disorders.
- **Speech or Language Impairment (SLI):** A communication disorder that interferes with the development of language skills in someone who has no hearing loss.
- **Student Behavior Support Team:** The team of educators supporting a student through MTSS intervention.
- **Superior Shores:** Marquette-Alger RESA's Special Education Day Treatment program. Students continue to work toward their academic competencies while also receiving therapy to address their mental and behavioral health needs.
- **Transition Programs:** The intentional and coordinated process of guiding students with disabilities that promotes movement from school to post-school activities such as college, vocational training, independent living, employment, and more.