

MARESA

Model best practices for our local school districts

Assist community partners in promoting economic and community development

Renew focus on the value of technology in student learning

Enhance instruction through quality teacher training

Save money and resources for our local districts

Advocate for quality education for ALL students

1) What is Marquette-Alger Regional Educational Service Agency (MARESA)?

MARESA is one of 56 regional educational service agencies created by Michigan law in 1962 to help local school districts provide high-quality education for their students while maximizing district resources. MARESA does this in a variety of ways including coordinating specialized programs and offering shared services.

2) What does MARESA do?

Since 1962, MARESA has worked behind the scenes with its member school districts—**collectively and individually**—to help meet the needs of their students, parents, support staff, teachers, administrators and board members. At MARESA, we are increasing achievement, supporting diverse communities and developing efficiencies. We do this by:

- providing local school districts with school improvement consultation, assessment services and curriculum and instruction assistance to support improved student achievement.
- offering the latest workshops, seminars and classes for teachers, administrators, transportation department staff, bus drivers, secretaries, board members, other school staff and parents, featuring up-to-date technologies, techniques and methods.
- providing consultant assistance, research assistance and resources including journals, books, curriculum materials, Internet access, videotapes, digital videodisks, computer software and assistive technology.
- coordinating programs and services that are too expensive for a single school district to operate or that are very specialized and serve only a few students, including direct educational services for youth/adults with special needs from birth through age 26.
- performing regulatory functions on behalf of the Michigan Department of Education including pupil accounting and special education monitoring and compliance.

3) Who does MARESA serve?

MARESA is located in the city and in the county of Marquette, Michigan. As its name indicates, it serves both Marquette and Alger counties, their twelve (12) constituent local public school districts, one (1) public school academy and three (3) private schools for a total of approximately 9,800 students. MARESA's team of employees serves about 1100 public school employees in 26 buildings and more than 110 school board members. This two-county region is nearly 2,800 geographic square miles with districts to the east, west, south and north, many of which are a one to two hour drive from the city of Marquette. These two centrally located counties are among the largest and most sparsely populated counties in the state of Michigan.

4) What programs/services does MARESA offer?

MARESA provides these teaching and learning services:

- Assessment services and technical support
- Career Pathways/Career and Technical Education program coordination
- Court involved youth education
- Early On parenting and school readiness support
- Grants and development assistance
- Homeless and foster care education assistance
- Information resources and teacher training
- Multi-media and technology training
- Programs that include students with disabilities in general education
- Regional Educational Media Services for schools in Marquette and Alger counties
- School improvement assistance
- Special education coordination and consultation

- Special education programs and support services for students who have disabilities and developmental delays
- Staff development coordination and services
- Support/information for families with children who have special needs
- Teacher consultants for students with autism, physical, hearing and visual impairments
- Teleconferences (administrative and instructional)
- Teaching and learning leadership
- Workshops, seminars and classes for school and agency staff.

MARESA also provides these services:

- Administrator assistance to local school district programs
- Business services support to public schools and public school academies
- Child Find Program for special education
- Cooperative purchasing programs for school supplies and busses
- Directory of countywide educational services and statistics
- Home schooling information
- Property transfer requests and school district boundary information
- Pupil accounting audits, consulting and assistance

5) Why does MARESA support professional development activities?

- As an education leader, it is essential for MARESA staff and leadership to remain current in the field of education. This is done largely through participation in national, state and local professional development activities. Participation often includes sharing MARESA's innovative and best-practice programs with other educators via presentations at national, state and local conferences.
- MARESA encourages and supports on-going, appropriate, professional development for its leaders and employees because MARESA is most often the preferred provider of professional development for the schools it serves.

Note: MARESA has board policy and guidelines covering participation in state and national continuing education, conferences and workshops and related reimbursement. MARESA's internal controls and review procedures ensure that board policies are strictly enforced. MARESA's supervisors, business office staff and auditors serve as three separate check points to ensure that any reimbursements are in line with board policy.

6) How is MARESA accountable to customers and the community?

MARESA has a multi-faceted accountability system including:

- A countywide special education plan that is reviewed and approved by local districts and the Michigan Department of Education
- A countywide Parent Advisory Committee that reviews the special education plan and meets regularly to discuss special education issues. Members are recommended by their district's board of education for appointment.
- The Marquette-Alger Association of School Boards
- The Marquette-Alger Superintendents' Roundtable
- The Marquette-Alger School Business Officials
- An Annual Budget Review
- The Special Education Administrators who meet monthly to ensure cooperative planning and effective, efficient and equitable service
- The building Principals and Counselors who meet monthly to learn and share best practices on school leadership and student achievement

- Individual Education Planning meetings that are held with parents and professionals to plan student programs
- Independent financial auditors who review MARESA's books annually
- The Michigan Department of Education (MDE) that monitors MARESA programs to ensure compliance with the law
- MDE state reports that are completed quarterly, annually or as required, e.g. Single Record Student Database, Student Head Counts, Financial, Information Data Base
- Advocacy groups and associations that are dedicated to ensuring that individuals with special needs receive appropriate services, e.g. Center for Independent Living

MARESA is also accountable under these State and Federal laws:

- Open Meetings Act
- Annual public budget hearings
- Freedom of Information Act
- School Code
- Individuals with Disabilities Education Act
- Michigan's Rules for Special Education and
- No Child Left Behind Act.

7) What is an ISD/RESA millage?

Under the law, ISDs can levy millages (taxes approved by voters) to help fund programs for general, special and vocational/technical education programs. They may also levy, with voter approval, an enhancement millage. MARESA is funded, in part, by millage that is levied for its general and special education programs, only.

The 2011-2012 millages for MARESA (with the Headlee rollback):

General Education 0.2048 (approved for 0.235 mill)

Special Education 2.0 (approved for 2.0 mills)

Total mills: 2.2048

MARESA receives a fraction of a mill to fund its general education services like school improvement, professional development, assessment services, curriculum support, and compliance with the No Child Left Behind Act. (See above.) The allocated or approved amount of 0.235 mill can be (and has been) decreased or rolled back under a provision in the law called the Headlee Amendment. MARESA also levies a millage to fund countywide special education services. (See above.) This millage, which is also subject to the Headlee Amendment, can be increased by a vote of the people. A vote of the Marquette and Alger counties electorate restored this millage to its original amount in 2010. It supports programming for nearly 1,800 students who receive special education services in the 12 local public school districts of AuTrain-Onota, Burt, Gwinn, Ishpeming, Marquette, Munising, Negaunee, NICE, Powell, Republic-Michigamme, Superior Central, and Wells and one public school academy, North Star Academy.

In Michigan, schools are required to provide special education services for children who need them from the time they are born through age 26, or until they graduate from high school. Some examples of the many special education services supported by the MARESA millage are:

- **Teacher consultants** who support children with learning needs such as: dyslexia, hearing or vision impairments or physical disabilities, autism, or other developmental disabilities.
- **Special education teachers** who are specially certified to address the learning needs of children with disabilities.
- **Assistive technology and specialized materials** to help students succeed in school.

- **Training for teachers** on the best instructional practices for children with disabilities.
 - **Speech, physical and occupational therapy** for children identified with these needs.
- Since most of the students receiving services attend classes in their local school districts, most of the revenue generated from the millage is given to the local schools. A portion goes toward services that are provided to students in centralized programs, including Transition classes on MARESA's campus and Goodwill Industries, and several other locations in the community.

8) Where are MARESA funds spent?

Revenues in 2011-2012 (pie chart), Expenditures in 2011-12 (pie chart)

9) How are MARESA Board members elected?

Members of MARESA's school board are elected biennially on the first Monday in June by a body of electors composed of one member from each constituent local school district board of education. MARESA Board members' terms are staggered. Each member serves a six-year term.

10) Who are the MARESA Board members?

The following are members of MARESA's 2013-14 Board of Education:

Virginia Paulson, President
Shelley Ovink, Vice President
Paula Saari, Treasurer
Steve Norman, Secretary
Tony Retaskie, Trustee
Barbara Hermann, Trustee
Julie Shaw, Trustee

11) Where can I get more information?

Call (906) 226-5100, or visit www.maresa.org.