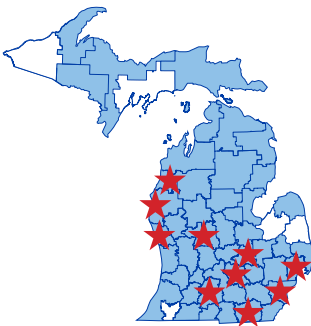




FAME Leads — A Case Study in State and Local Leadership

Active FAME
Lead Coaches: 11
www.FAMEMichigan.org



FAME Leads live and work across the state.

While it would be impossible to imagine FAME without its program director, Kim Young, those involved in FAME know the important and critical role played by the FAME Regional Lead Coaches (the “Leads”). They are the link between MDE and Michigan’s educators and, most importantly, Michigan’s students. It would be difficult to imagine the FAME program without the Leads; they are the local leaders of FAME. But who are these Leads? This is their story.

Formative Assessment for Michigan Educators (FAME) began in 2008 to address the Michigan Department of Education’s (MDE) goal to provide different approaches to promote student success with new state standards and the Michigan Merit curriculum. MDE partnered with Measured Progress to develop and implement the

FAME program. Kim Young and Ed Roeber have been the driving force behind the introduction and sustainment of FAME for over a decade.

Today, this initiative continues as a collaborative endeavor of the MDE and the Michigan Assessment Consortium (MAC). The MAC’s mission is to improve student learning and achievement through a coherent and balanced system of effective curriculum, assessment, and instruction. MAC’s role in FAME is to manage the program websites, coordinate trainings, create and maintain an extensive online library of resources, and conduct research on the FAME Coach and Learning Team professional learning model, studying its impact on teacher instructional practice and student learning.

By 2020, more than 1,000 FAME Coaches from across Michigan had been trained to lead FAME Learning Teams. In 2020-21, approximately 200 active Coaches and Learning Teams were working throughout Michigan.

“The formative assessment process is an essential part of a comprehensive assessment



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— Kim Young



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What is the role of the FAME Leads?

After attending their initial training (see FAME professional learning model on back page), FAME Learning Teams begin to meet regularly to engage in collaborative inquiry about how the formative assessment process can best be enacted in team members' classrooms. Most Learning Teams meet monthly on their own schedule for one to three hours. Typically, Learning Teams use the resources that the FAME program provides while at the same time setting the course for their learning that benefits the members of the Learning Team most.

In 2012, FAME director Kim Young added another layer of support for Michigan's FAME Coaches — FAME Regional Leads Coaches, or "Leads."

"In order to reach our objective of implementing the formative assessment process in every Michigan classroom, we needed to develop a group of local leaders to support this ambitious goal," Young said.

FAME Leads form a crucial connection between MDE and the FAME Coaches. The Leads are regional leaders among FAME Coaches who have learned about the formative assessment process at a deeper level of understanding and practice based on theoretical and practical approaches. They are committed to their own learning about the formative assessment process through study, and they work with recognized experts in the field.

FAME Leads learn first-hand through their work with FAME Coaches and Learning Team members, presenting ideas to Coaches and interacting with them periodically to support Coach work with their Learning Teams.

They also deepen their understanding of the formative assessment process through readings, webinars, observation of teachers in Michigan and elsewhere, and discussions with teachers throughout the country. Even after becoming a FAME Lead, many continue as a Coach of one or more Learning Teams. They like the collaborative learning and the exchange of ideas present in their Learning Team meetings.

Each Coach is assigned a Lead. Throughout the year, the Leads communicate with Coaches providing assistance and reminders about new activities and resources. The MAC R&D Team conducts periodic surveys of the Coaches and provides individual Coach and summary information about Coach activities and needs to each Lead. Coaches have a standing invitation to contact their Lead with any questions, comments, or concerns. Many Leads respond to Coach questions and follow up with them about individual questions and resources.

Consulting, coaching, and collaboration

The responsibilities of a FAME Lead fall into three main categories — consulting, coaching, and collaboration. **Consulting** could be explained as their administrative function. Leads monitor their assigned Coaches and remind them about important events, trainings, and other activities that require their attention. For new Coaches, it begins with reminders to register for the Launching into Learning designed to kick-start their journey with FAME and learning about the formative assessment process. Throughout the school year, Leads check in with Coaches to offer assistance and reminders about available resources. The information collected periodically by the MAC FAME R&D Team provides additional information to the Leads.

Leads also ensure Coaches take advantage of a very important area of support, the **Adaptive Schools** and **Cognitive CoachingSM** training provided by the Thinking Collaborative. This valuable experience improves their work with their FAME Learning Teams and with individual

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team members. Historically, the quality and utility of this training has received much positive feedback over the years.

FAME Leads support **collaboration** — between Coach and Learning Team members, other educators, students, administrators, parents, and the community as a whole. Leads work with their Coaches to be resources, cheerleaders, or sounding boards — whatever is required to provide assistance and move forward their learning about and the use of the formative assessment process.

The FAME Lead — diverse experiences with a common goal

FAME Leads' professional experiences are unique and diverse, bringing an extraordinary collection of talents to the FAME program. While this creates a combination of different personalities and skill sets, there are a number of characteristics and qualities that *all* FAME Leads possess.

Probably the most important is a burning **passion** for their students' learning and providing all possible opportunities for them to succeed. They **appreciate the power of the formative assessment process** to be a major initiative that helps *all* students succeed. They approach the formative assessment process with knowledge and experience, but they continue to have their "rookie" **drive to learn more** themselves.

Each FAME Lead, past and present, started the same way — as a FAME participant. Some started as Learning Team members, and others began immediately in the role of a FAME Coach. It is interesting to note that most FAME Leads continue to be directly involved in either coaching

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Becoming a FAME Lead happens by invitation based on observations and input from MDE, MAC, and other FAME Leads. New FAME Leads are provided direction as they assume new roles in working with their assigned allotment of Coaches. They are also expected to work in the planning and facilitation of the professional learning opportunity. Some of the current FAME Leads are also working with Thinking Collaborative to become Cognitive CoachingSM Trainers. They experience an ongoing process of learning, communicating, sharing, and planning with the primary purpose of helping Michigan educators become more efficient in their use of the formative assessment process in their classroom and helping Michigan students.

FAME Leads have represented educators in all content areas and grade levels (elementary, secondary, and college). Some are classroom teachers, and others have special assignments within a school district. FAME Leads include administrators and people working out of central or regional offices. There are even some Leads on special assignment with the State and working on other initiatives. FAME Leads have been with FAME for an average of 10 years, some since the beginning of the program in 2008. This indicates a strong commitment to formative assessment and the impact it has on student learning.

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Reflections on being a FAME Lead

Here is what some of the present and past FAME Leads say about their work:



Alecia Hoppa, Area Leader, MI Excel Statewide Field Team; Educator on Loan from Muskegon Area ISD

Alecia has been with FAME since 2010 as a Coach and a Lead. She believes that formative assessment is a key component to increasing student achievement. She appreciates FAME's 10-year history of consistent support for teachers and Learning Teams as they explore and work to implement the formative assessment process in their classrooms.

“Being a FAME Lead has been one of the most powerful professional learning experiences of my career. During my time as a Lead, I have taken Cognitive Coaching and Advanced Cognitive Coaching, Adaptive Schools, Self-Directed Evaluation Conversations and Using Data to Mediate Groups. I have also had an opportunity to learn (in a face-to-face setting and through their written work) from Rick Stiggins, Margaret Heritage, James Pelligrino, Jane Ellison, Carolee Hayes, Bob Garmston, and Bruce Wellman. Besides all of this being really powerful learning, through our FAME meetings and retreats we continuously circle back to and use all of this learning.”



LeeAnn Moore, MI Excel Facilitators, MI Excel Statewide Field Team

LeeAnne has been with FAME since 2009 as a member of a Learning Team, a Coach, and a Lead. She is presently working at becoming a trainer for the Thinking Collaborative. Her commitment to FAME is supported by research that shows the formative assessment process to be a proven strategy to make a significant difference in the achievement of students. She believes the process enhances the pace of learning as well as creates students who are intrinsic learners who care more about learning than scores and grades.

“I would have to say the personal connections and friendships I have made from being a FAME Lead are probably the most significant aspect of being a Lead, for me. The times we have spent together at Lead Retreats, Lead Meetings, and the FAME tour out west have all garnered stories of learning and friendship. We have our own stories and in-jokes (like how we can all recite a certain Seinfeld clip word for word). We've celebrated colleagues joining us and those who have left us. It's a group I look forward to spending time with every time we get together because I know that I will laugh, and I will think, and I will be heard and regarded as an equal.”



Kristy Walters, Formative Assessment Coach, Corunna Public Schools

Kristy has been with FAME since 2011 as a Coach and a Lead. She is also working on becoming a Thinking Collaborative trainer. Kristy believes that formative assessment is a learning and instruction game-changer. She has found that teachers who embrace the formative assessment process work smarter, not harder.

“As a FAME lead, I have had opportunities to work alongside Michigan educators who are as passionate about the formative assessment process as I am. When we get together, there is great collaborative dialogue and many different opinions. Because of the leadership and structure of the group, there is a freedom and encouragement for all team members to share their thinking, perspectives, and experiences. This group firmly believes that more and greater things can be accomplished with a team than can be accomplished with one person.”

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Miriam Sailers, FAME Lead from 2014-2019

During her years as a FAME Lead, Miriam brought an entirely different perspective to FAME as a university professor of education.

“As I learned and grew in my knowledge of formative assessment, I was not only able to be a support to my Coaches, but was also able to include this knowledge in my preparation of future teachers. Among the highlights of my involvement was the opportunity to work together with educators from all of the state of Michigan in meaningful ways. Not only were we learning, but we were also practicing what we were learning. I saw that using formative assessment as a leadership model for our work is so powerful.”

It is evident by these comments from present and past FAME Leads that the work and the study has left an indelible impact on them as educators. The collaboration among the FAME Leads has provided a strong foundation and network to support educators with the formative assessment process throughout Michigan. They appreciate the opportunity it has presented and the impact it has had on others.

What does this mean for a FAME Coach?

There are times when FAME Coaches may feel isolated. They have been presented with information, strategies, and resources about the formative assessment process. There may be a comfort level when attending the Launch, participating in Coach training sessions, and engaging through webinars and conference calls. Once this contact — personal or virtual — has ended, it is the Coach, working on his or her own, who is planning the work to be done

with their Learning Team. They are the ones who the others will look to for direction and meeting facilitation.

It is reassuring for Coaches to know they are not isolated. There is someone who is just a phone call or e-mail away. Someone who knows about the formative assessment process. Someone who knows what it is like to be a Coach and to plan and facilitate a Learning Team meeting. There is someone who knows how to navigate through the resources and find what is needed. Most importantly, it is someone who welcomes the communication, for they want to help.

The goal of the FAME Lead is to be there to help a Coach in any way possible. All a Coach has to do is reach out to their Lead and contact them. As one Coach explained, “I appreciated the reflecting conversation we had that helped me plan the next meeting. I will reach out again when that support is needed.”

About FAME Case Studies

The FAME Research and Development Team members **Denny Chandler**, **Tara Kintz**, and **John Lane**, led by **Ed Roeber**, connect FAME participants to best practice and a growing set of formative assessment resources. They gather detailed information on FAME approaches with the potential to be replicated in districts across

Michigan. The FAME Project will share these stories through online resources, publications and media platforms. **To inquire about how your FAME Learning Team can be featured in a future case study, contact dtchandler@fuse.net.**

Editor: Linda Wacyk, Communications Management – Michigan Assessment Consortium; lwacyk@michiganassessmentconsortium.org

About FAME

[Formative Assessment for Michigan Educators \(FAME\)](#) is a joint effort by the Michigan Department of Education (MDE) and the Michigan Assessment Consortium. FAME is designed to reach all Michigan teachers and administrators with training in formative assessment. When applied to classroom instructional practice, the formative assessment process can become a vital part of improving teacher practice and positively impacting student achievement. In fact, the formative assessment process used by students and teachers in an effective and intentional manner connects to several Guiding Principles in [Michigan's Top 10 Strategic Education Plan](#).

“Formative assessment is a planned, ongoing process used by all students and teachers during learning and teaching to elicit and use evidence of student learning to improve student understanding of intended disciplinary learning outcomes and support students to become more self-directed learners.” (CCSSO SCASS, 2017)

FAME began in 2008 in order to address MDE’s goal to provide different approaches to reach high school students who were low achievers. MDE partnered with Measured Progress to develop and implement the FAME program. According to Kim Young, who directs FAME for MDE, *“The formative assessment process is an essential part of a comprehensive assessment system. By financially supporting and endorsing FAME, the Michigan Department of Education is sending a strong message of the importance of formative assessment.”*

Today, this initiative continues as a collaborative endeavor of the MDE and the Michigan Assessment Consortium (MAC). The mission of MAC is to improve student learning and achievement through a system of coherent curriculum, balanced assessment, and effective instruction. MAC’s role in FAME is to coordinate trainings, maintain an extensive online library of resources, and conduct research on professional development using the Coach and Learning Team model and its impact on teacher practice and student achievement.

By 2021, more than 900 FAME Coaches from across Michigan had been trained to lead FAME Learning Teams. In 2020-2021, 200 FAME Coaches were supporting teams of educators in a variety of learning modalities.

Kimberly Young, Michigan Department of Education Office of Educational Assessment and Accountability, has served as the FAME manager since 2006. Contact her at youngk1@michigan.gov.

“Working collaboratively, educators will learn, implement, and reflect on the formative assessment process in order to guide student learning and teachers’ instructional practices.”

FAME Project Goal

FAME professional learning model

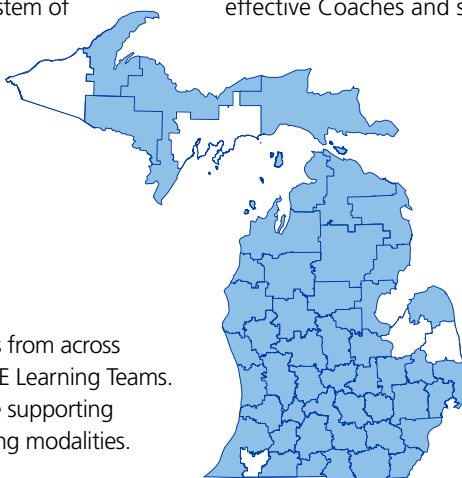
New FAME teams start in a similar manner. An individual learns about the FAME program from a conference presentation, a publication, or current FAME participant, and then shares it with others. A group of educators decides to become involved in FAME. One person agrees to take on the additional responsibilities of being a Coach, and then submits an application to the Michigan Department of Education (MDE) to form a new Learning Team. The number of new Learning Teams each year is influenced by available state and local finances and applicant location (MDE seeks to have active Learning Teams located throughout the state).

Once accepted, new Learning Teams are ready to start FAME training. Coaches complete their initial training via webinar and other learning sessions. In the fall, the Coach and Learning Team members participate in a session of *Formative Assessment: Launching into Learning*. This one-day training session provides information about the FAME program, the formative assessment process, and the Learning Team model. Teams complete the Launch prepared to begin their work.

Over time, Coaches have the opportunity to receive additional MDE-sponsored training — Cognitive Coaching Foundation Seminar® (Days 1-8) and Adaptive Schools Foundation Training® (Days 1-4). These trainings are critical in the development of effective Coaches and successful Learning Teams.

An additional layer of support is provided to each new and returning Coach through Regional Leads — former FAME Coaches who provide support for a group of Coaches. The Leads serve as a nearby resource person and valuable asset to Coaches, who learn — along with their Learning Teams — that they do not exist in isolation. Leads also schedule meetings with Coaches to provide a forum for the exchange of ideas.

Learn more at www.famemichigan.org.



Shaded areas illustrate the influence of FAME Teams and Coaches throughout Michigan.