

***Envisioning a  
New Conference  
in Michigan***



# Capture Reality





**Our Reality...**



**All Three Michigan  
Conferences are in Decline**

## **The Purpose of FMC Annual Conference Structure**

“...the annual conference is the organization at the regional level that joins societies into a network. The annual conference ensures that pastors and congregations are counseled and encouraged, identifies those who are being called into the ordained ministry and promotes and oversees church planting and evangelism.” BoD paragraph 5000

# History





# Early Formation of the Free Methodist Church in Michigan



# Early Formation of the Free Methodist Church in Michigan



- As more churches were multiplied, a new work in Coopersville, Michigan, was opened, which led to the establishment of the **North Michigan Conference** in 1876



# Early Formation of the Free Methodist Church in Michigan



- In the 1870's, there were 535 members who regarded themselves as Free Methodist Christ-followers living in the State of Ohio. New houses of worship had been constructed, and preachers appointed. So, at the 14th Annual session of the Michigan Conference held in Holland, Ohio, the decision was made to create the ***Ohio Conference***, which was organized in 1879.

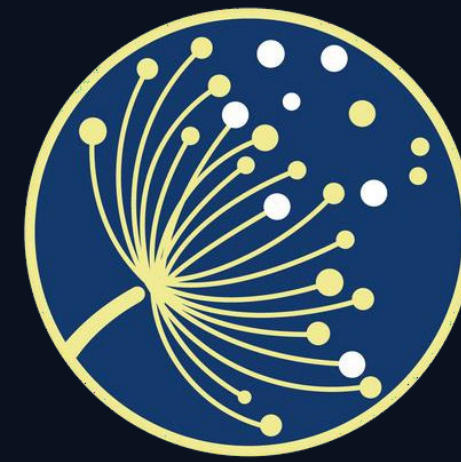


# Early Formation of the Free Methodist Church in Michigan



- Because of the continued rapid growth of churches, the Michigan Conference launched a new annual conference called the ***East Michigan Conference*** in 1884.

# Early Formation of the Free Methodist Church in Michigan



- Subsequently, the Michigan Conference was renamed the ***Southern Michigan Conference*** in 1960.



# Missional Advantages of a New Conference





**The formation of a new conference will grant us the ability to fulfill our mandate to strengthen pastoral formation and leadership development, release new leaders into the mission, multiply new congregations, and combine resources for greater Kingdom impact.**

# Strengthening pastoral formation and leadership development

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# Strengthening pastoral formation and leadership development



- Strengthens our ability to better resource pastoral leaders and local churches.
- Connects every pastoral leader through Regional Superintendents.



# Strengthening pastoral formation and leadership development



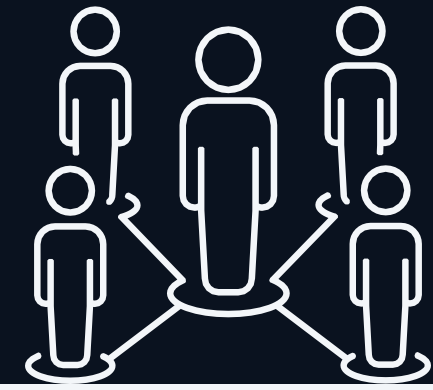
- Gives us a more balanced and aligned superintendent team to bless our pastors and strengthen churches.
- Increases overall morale and encouragement among our leaders – the rising tide raises all the ships.

# Releasing new leaders into the mission

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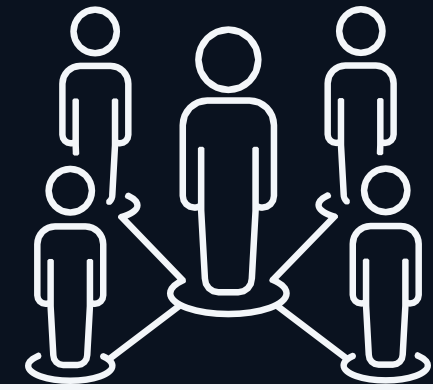
# Releasing new leaders into the mission



- Strengthens and enlarges our leadership pipeline.
- Offers more options and greater flexibility in appointing the right pastors to the right churches throughout a larger network.



# Releasing new leaders into the mission



- Creates a larger, stronger network, attracting more pastoral candidates for future recruitment.
- Increases our ability to attract, appoint, and empower a rich diversity of new leaders, allowing us to reach new diverse populations of people, including next-generation leaders.

# Multiplying new congregations

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# Multiplying new congregations



- Will lead to a much-needed statewide multiplication vision. With six million unreached people in Michigan and many counties lacking a Free Methodist presence, our vision aims for geographic saturation of churches across cities and counties.



# Multiplying new congregations



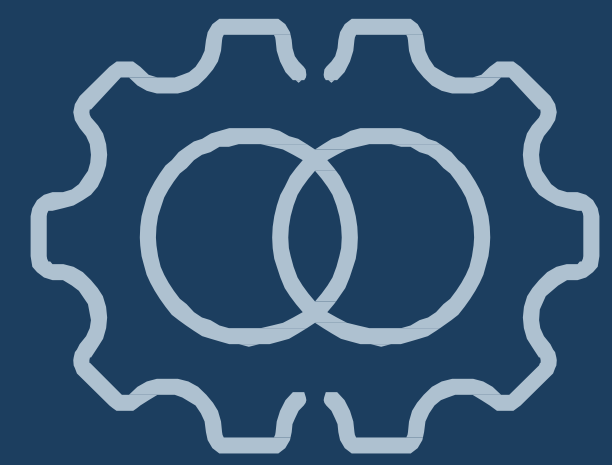
- Allows us the ability to form a new, stronger, and more adaptive missional strategy and church planting network to reach more people who are far from Jesus.
- Better steward our financial resources to fund a more comprehensive, focused, and robust multiplication plan.

Combining  
resources for a  
greater Kingdom  
impact

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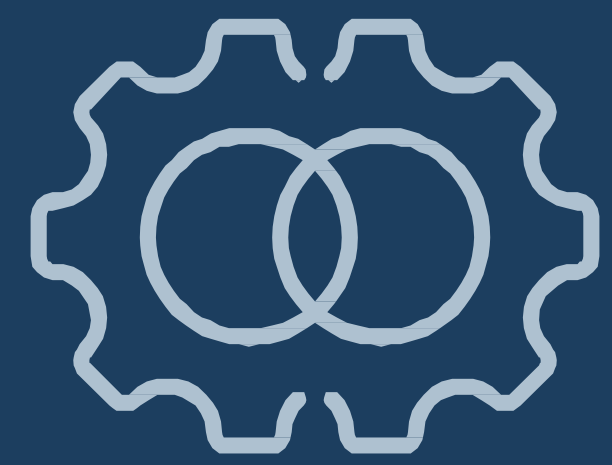
# Combining resources for a greater Kingdom impact



- Strengthens overall financial stewardship associated with the redundant operations each conference currently performs.
- Taps into the inherent genius within each conference. Each conference has specific strengths and weaknesses. We believe in the value of collective genius found within all three conferences being formed into one team.

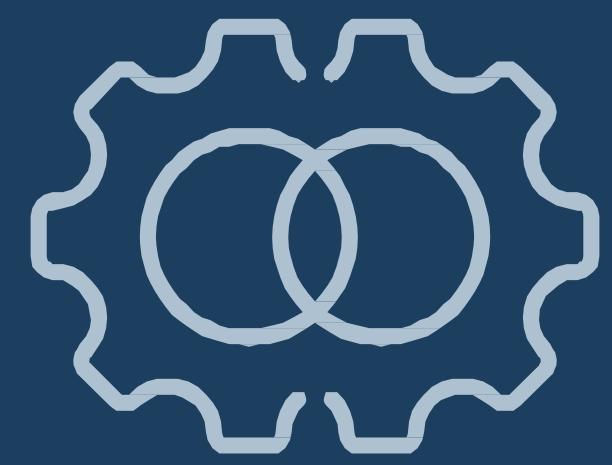


# Combining resources for a greater Kingdom impact



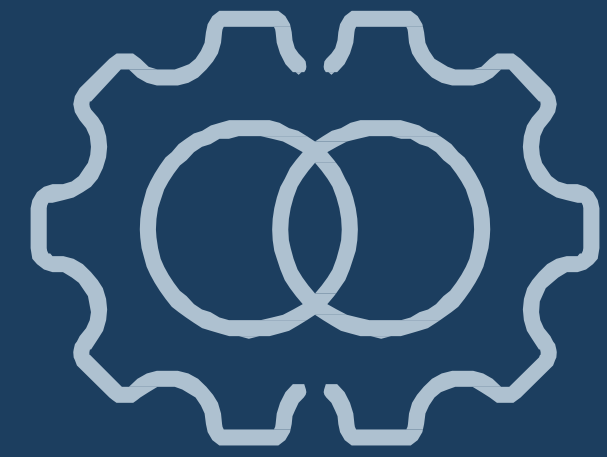
- Increases collaboration whereby we can accomplish more together. This would remove barriers to sharing best practices, systems, and structures, which would, in turn, strengthen the whole.
- Helps fill current gaps in leadership, resourcing, and multiplication across the three conferences. No single conference or superintendent can do it all—but a well-resourced team can.

# Combining resources for a greater Kingdom impact



- With critical human and financial resources, a team-based leadership model aligns more fully with the New Testament vision. An apostolic superintendent, supported by a five-fold team, can drive mission, develop leaders, and care for pastors, directly benefiting the local church.
- Shift frees us from past ineffective practices and sets a new Kingdom trajectory—focused on the health and multiplication of leaders and churches. Spiritually alive, disciple-making churches will multiply leaders, ministries, and churches, supported by a forward-moving structure.

# Combining resources for a greater Kingdom impact



- We believe that a new conference grants us the opportunity to create a strategic “intervention point” that will address and remediate the ongoing decline taking place across all three conferences in our state.



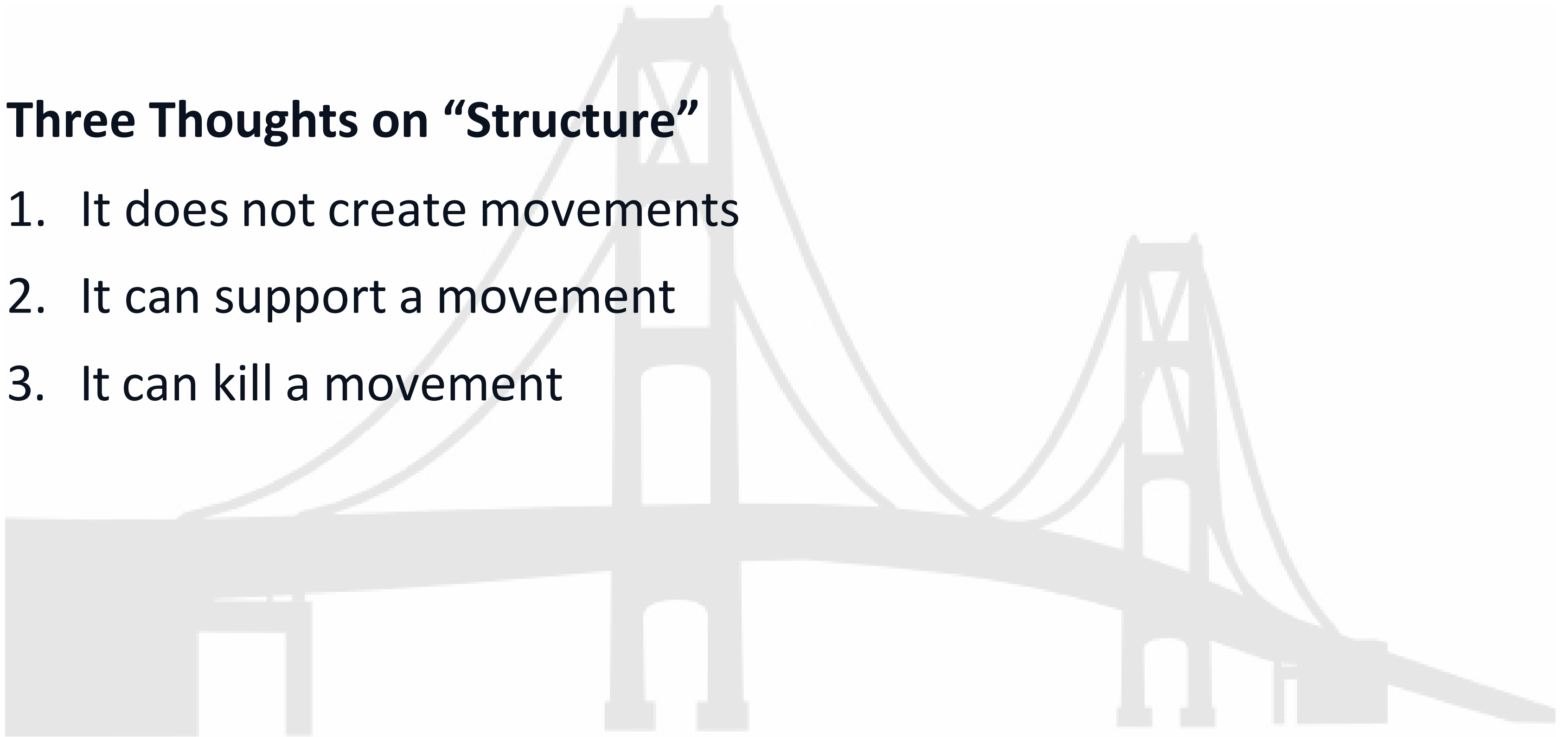
# Envisioning a New Conference Structure

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## Three Thoughts on “Structure”

1. It does not create movements
2. It can support a movement
3. It can kill a movement



# Leadership Structure – Tentative Thoughts

## Central Team:

- 1 Lead Superintendent with 2 Assistant Superintendents
  - ❖ Multiplication
  - ❖ Pastoral Development
- Operations Director
- Admin support team
- BOA with equal representation from the three current conferences
- Central MEG Board



# Leadership Structure – Tentative Thoughts

## **Regional Teams:**

- Regional Superintendents
- Regional MEGs and MACs
- Multiplication Champions
- Cohorts- Bi/co-vocational, large church pastors, children and youth pastors, etc.

# Leadership Structure – Tentative Thoughts

**Every Region and/or Affinity group empowered to...**

- Plant and multiply churches
- Develop and credential new leaders
- Contextually collaborate
- Appoint pastors

**6 regions: 15-20 churches/region**

**Multiple Cohorts**

# Leadership Structure - Current Thinking

	One Michigan Budget	Pastoral Formation & Leadership Development	Releasing New Leaders	Multiplying Congregations	Combining Resources
<b>Income:</b>					
<b>Allocations</b>	\$ 814,000.00				
<b>LRG Foundation</b>	\$ 310,000.00				
<b>Investment Income</b>	\$ 200,000.00				
<b>Contributions</b>	\$ 10,000.00				
	<b>\$ 1,334,000.00</b>				
<b>Expenses</b>					
<b>Personnel:</b>	\$ 780,735.84	\$ 168,065.00	\$ 103,275.00	\$ 232,790.00	\$ 276,605.84
<b>Office &amp; Administration</b>	\$ 91,410.00	\$ 9,141.00	\$ 9,141.00	\$ 9,141.00	\$ 63,987.00
<b>Pastoral &amp; Local Church Development</b>	\$ 321,500.00	\$ 80,000.00	\$ 58,500.00	\$ 183,000.00	\$ -
<b>Conference &amp; Denominational Gatherings</b>	\$ 77,700.00	\$ 9,800.00	\$ 5,000.00	\$ 5,000.00	\$ 57,900.00
<b>Contingency</b>	\$ 62,654.16	\$ 6,265.42	\$ 6,265.42	\$ 6,256.42	\$ 43,857.91
	<b>\$ 1,334,000.00</b>	<b>\$ 273,271.42</b>	<b>\$ 182,181.42</b>	<b>\$ 436,187.42</b>	<b>\$ 442,350.75</b>

Projected Conference Allocations 7.6%



# Timeline



# Timeline -

## Consolidation of Michigan Annual Conferences into a **NEW ANNUAL CONFERENCE**

### **January 2024 – May 2024**

- Conversations with Bishop and Superintendents regarding the possibility, desirability, and feasibility of uniting into a new conference.

### **May 2024 -July 2024**

- Communication to, and agreement from leaders of the three conferences to dream together about forming a new conference.

# Timeline -

## Consolidation of Michigan Annual Conferences into a **NEW ANNUAL CONFERENCE**

### **July 2024 – December 2024**

- Regular meetings of the five Michigan Superintendents and Bishop Kaye Kolde to consider the appropriate vision, values, and structures for a new spirit-fueled movement combining resources to reengage in biblical, missional multiplication.



# Timeline -

## Consolidation of Michigan Annual Conferences into a **NEW ANNUAL CONFERENCE**

### **September 2024**

- Agreement among Superintendents and Bishop plan a Tri-Con event this summer. Each Conference having time and space for its Annual Conference meeting along with combined worship and resourcing for all.

### **October 2024**

- Special Sitting of Conference (Informational).

# Timeline -

## Consolidation of Michigan Annual Conferences into a **NEW ANNUAL CONFERENCE**

### **January 11, 2025**

- Joint meeting of Board Of Administrations from the three Michigan Annual Conferences to evaluate proposed plans and determine if this should move forward.

### **January 2025 - May 2025**

- Boards and Teams from the three conferences will continue collaboration toward the potential formation of a new conference.

# Timeline -

Consolidation of Michigan Annual Conferences into a  
**NEW ANNUAL CONFERENCE**

## **June 20-21, 2025**

Tri-Conference Gathering @ The Arbor Church, Spring Arbor

- Each conference votes whether to dissolve to form a new conference entity.



# Timeline -

## Consolidation of Michigan Annual Conferences into a **NEW ANNUAL CONFERENCE**

### **July 2025**

- Interim (transition) Board of Administration is formed with 1 lay and 1 clergy member from each Conference, along with Superintendents from all conferences.
- Current Conference BOA's start work to close and dissolve their respective conferences.

# Timeline -

Consolidation of Michigan Annual Conferences into a  
**NEW ANNUAL CONFERENCE**

## **July - December 2025**

- Current Superintendents continue leading their conference and give needed leadership to the new conference.
- New Lead Superintendent is nominated/elected.

# Timeline -

Consolidation of Michigan Annual Conferences into a  
**NEW ANNUAL CONFERENCE**

## **January 1, 2026**

- New Conference begins LEGALLY
- Current Supts continue serving where needed until AC26

# Timeline -

Consolidation of Michigan Annual Conferences into a  
**NEW ANNUAL CONFERENCE**

## **January - March 2026**

- New Lead Superintendent begins duties
- New Conference personnel identified: Asst. Superintendents, Ops Director, Admin Team
- Current conferences continue dissolution work



# Timeline -

Consolidation of Michigan Annual Conferences into a  
**NEW ANNUAL CONFERENCE**

## **March - June 2026**

- Supt forms new Leadership Team
- Regional MEG and MAC members nominated
- Regional Supts and Cohort Leaders identified
- Affinity groups formed

# Timeline -

Consolidation of Michigan Annual Conferences into a  
**NEW ANNUAL CONFERENCE**

## **June 2026 – Fully Formed Annual Conference Begins!**

- Current Annual Conferences have been DISSOLVED
- New BOA elected with staggered terms
- Regional MEG and MAC personnel elected
- Regional Supts introduced

# Tri-Con: The Vote



## **What are we voting on?**

- Not structure
- Not Timeline
- Not Budget
- Not Leaders

Tri-Con: The Vote



**Forming one NEW Michigan Conference**





What Was Helpful?

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What Questions Remain?

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New Conference  
in Michigan***

