



### **For Immediate Release**

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## **Gina Rios-Smith Named Michigan ACTE Teacher Educator of the Year**

Gina Rios-Smith, Instructor of Educational Careers at the Wilson Talent Center was recently named the 2024 Michigan Association of Career & Technical Education (MI ACTE) Teacher Educator of the Year. Rios-Smith received her award on January 28, 2025 at the Michigan Career Education Conference in Grand Rapids. The award honors outstanding individuals and organizations that demonstrate excellence in advancing Career & Technical Education in Michigan.

The Educational Careers program is a two-year program for high school juniors and seniors who have an interest in a future career in education. Students may be interested in working with young children at an early education center or the traditional K-12 school system. Students have the opportunity to earn a state certification (Michigan Youth Development Associate, MI-YDA) and/or national certification (Child Development Associate, CDA) by successfully completing the program. In addition, there is an early college option with the program to earn up to an associate degree at no cost to the student.

“Gina’s passion for the curriculum she teaches and for her students does not go unnoticed,” states Joe Wenzel, Principal at the WTC. “We appreciate the MI ACTE acknowledging the work she has done in developing this program in hopes of building a pipeline of future educators for many years to come. As a career & technical education teacher, she is preparing students for their next steps in life and making sure they have multiple options to succeed. In addition, the relationships she has built with local school districts and childcare centers provide her students impactful, real-world, hands-on experiences,” Wenzel also noted.

The Michigan Association for Career & Technical Education (MI ACTE) is dedicated to providing leadership in developing an educated, prepared and competitive workforce. MI ACTE represents educators, administrators and professionals committed to advancing CTE programs that empower students and contribute to Michigan’s economic growth.



The Wilson Talent Center, operated by Ingham Intermediate School District, offers career and technical education programs for high school juniors and seniors who reside in Dansville, East Lansing, Haslett, Holt, Leslie, Mason, Okemos, Stockbridge, Waverly, Webberville and Williamston. Applications are also accepted from Lansing School District, Fowlerville Community Schools and Eaton and Clinton County Schools. For more information, visit [Wilson Talent Center](http://www.inghamisd.org/wtc) (www.inghamisd.org/wtc).

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