

## Special Education: “The Most Rewarding Job”

**Kortney Behnke** knows exactly why she majored in special ed at MLC. Back in elementary school, she watched as a family in her church had to make difficult educational choices.

“They had multiple children with various special needs,” she says. “Some of the kids attended our WELS school, but the other kids had to attend local public schools because our WELS school didn’t have the resources needed to support them.”

That reality hit home hard. “It broke my heart to see kids who sat in the front pew of church every week not be able to receive the same Christian education that their siblings got. I decided to pursue special education through MLC because I wanted to work toward the goal of bringing the Word of God to all students, no matter their needs.”

Kortney knew she wanted more than just a bachelor’s in special ed, so she enrolled in MLC’s 4 + 1 Accelerated Master’s Program. As a junior, she started taking dual-credit courses, which counted toward both her undergraduate and her graduate degree. “MLC made it easy to start early,” she says, “and to save a lot of money.”

In May 2023, Kortney was assigned to teach special ed at Winnebago Lutheran Academy. As she navigated all the challenges of a first-year teacher and coach, she also finished her master’s courses online through MLC. Commencement Day in May 2024 found her back at MLC, graduating again—this time with her master’s degree.

Special ed programs like WLA’s are being developed at many WELS schools. That’s great news to Kortney because it means that families like the one she remembers from her church will be able to send all their children to a school where the good news of Jesus’ love is shared and taught every day.

Giving struggling students the support they need to be successful, connecting with them and their families in meaningful ways, and sharing the Word of God with them—all of that, Kortney says, makes teaching special ed “the most rewarding job.”



### MLC’s Accelerated 4+1 Special Education Master’s Program

MLC offers undergrads an accelerated master’s program in special education with learning disability (LD) licensure.

You can take dual-level courses that completely or partially fulfill both undergrad and graduate requirements.

When you graduate with your bachelor’s degree in special education, you’ll need just one more year to finish your master’s degree.

**2029: Graduate with your bachelor’s**  
**2030: Graduate with your master’s**

Here’s how it works:

- Complete **3** courses (*9 credits*) as an undergrad student
- Complete **3** courses (*9 credits*) partially as an undergrad student partially as a graduate student
- Complete **6** courses (*18 credits*) as a graduate student



**Save two years and \$4,000  
on your master’s degree!**