



Great Start Readiness Program (GSRP) 2013-2014 Guidance on Per-Child Fee Schedules*

Public Act 60 of 2013 (the state School Aid Act) refined the focus of eligibility for the Great Start Readiness Program (GSRP), establishing that up to 10 percent of children enrolled throughout the Intermediate School District (ISD) region may be from families above 250% of the federal poverty level (FPL) with extreme risk for low educational achievement as determined by number or severity of GSRP risk factors. These families must be charged tuition calculated on a sliding scale, based on family income.

Sec. 32 d(13) An intermediate district or consortium of intermediate districts receiving funds under this section shall establish a sliding scale of tuition rates based upon household income for children participating in an eligible great start readiness program who live with families with a household income that is more than 250% of the federal poverty level to be used by all of its providers, as approved by the department. A grant recipient shall charge tuition according to that sliding scale of tuition rates on a uniform basis for any child who does not meet the income eligibility requirements under this section.

GSRP slots filled by over-income families are compensated at \$3,625 per Part-Day or \$7,250 per School-Day slot. In other words, the sliding scale fee is in addition to the funded slot amount provided by state school aid funds administered by the Michigan Department of Education (MDE). The sample scale provided with this document may be adopted or amended. Alternately, the ISD may create a sliding scale of tuition. The written process and the scale will be submitted for approval by MDE. The assigned consultant will provide technical assistance if the process requires modification and written approval if it is acceptable.

Please refer to the *GSRP Implementation Manual* and the *Participant Eligibility and Prioritization Flowchart* for additional information on prioritization for enrollment, determining family income and documenting risk factors. The family contribution is the amount, based on a percentage of the family's gross annual income, determined to be a reasonable amount a family should pay toward the cost of GSRP. The precalculated fee is a per-child fee, not a per-family fee. Tuition income and related expenditures will not be reported to MDE, but must be available for review upon request.

Policy

The following policies must be adhered to:

- A. Families whose income falls at or below 250% of FPL pay no tuition for GSRP.
- B. The ISD shall establish a fee schedule for families with incomes greater than 250% of the FPL not to exceed the per-slot allocation.
- C. The ISD shall implement one sliding scale of tuition for all of its GSRP subrecipients.

- D. Part-Day and School-Day GSRP shall charge tuition to enrolled families over 250% of the Federal Poverty Level and shall charge the GSRP fee only for the portion of the day supported by GSRP.
- E. Tuition fees from families must be expended within the fiscal year that they were collected.
- F. Tuition fees must be used to support the GSRP, as defined in the Budget Section of the *GSRP Implementation Manual*.
- G. All Head Start and GSRP policies and regulations are applied to the GSRP/Head Start blended slots, with the highest standard from either program adhered to. A Head Start program must not prescribe any fee schedule or otherwise provide for the charging of any fees for participation in the program (HSPS 1305.9). Therefore, children enrolled into the GSRP/Head Start Blend must not be charged tuition.
- H. In order to comply with Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) requirements for free appropriate public education (FAPE) and to comply with state law requiring special education services to start at birth, GSRP eligible children from over-income families who are enrolled and who also have an Individual Education Program (IEP) must not be charged tuition.
- I. Parents who pay tuition may not incur expenses for other portions of the program, such as meals or transportation.
- J. The number and severity of factors and local prioritization of factors contributing to educational risk must be incorporated into enrollment practices for over-income families. Documentation of the risk factors must be kept in each child's file.
- K. Late payment fees are permitted only to recoup collection costs.
- L. Income and tuition fees are calculated at the time of enrollment. During the academic year, if the family situation changes, families may request a re-calculation of income to determine a lower tuition.

ISD Responsibilities

- A. The ISD shall establish written policies and procedures for the implementation of this fee policy.
- B. An approvable plan will address educational risk, fees and information for families, including invoicing, collection practices and explanations to families about the reasons for tuition fees, and how confidentiality of family information is maintained.
- C. Annually updated copies of the tuition policies and procedures must be included in recruitment materials.
- D. The ISD shall require subrecipients to disseminate tuition policies to enrolled families and program staff, at least in their respective parent handbooks.
- E. Parents must be notified of any upcoming tuition policy-change 30 days prior to the date the change is to take place.
- F. The ISD shall ensure that the fee policy is adhered to by subrecipients.
- G. The ISD must adhere to all policies, above. The ISD has discretion with features such as:
 - a. Determining whether tuition payments are collected and retained at the subrecipient level or the ISD. When billing and procurement are the

- responsibility of the subrecipient, how tuition income is reported to the ISD;
 - b. Retention of a percentage of tuition income to cover accounting costs;
 - c. Invoicing, including payment schedule, how payments are made and receipt of payment;
 - d. Fee adjustment for advance payment;
 - e. Fee adjustment for two or more enrolled children, absence or hardship. ISDs may assist families in need with alternate funding, scholarships, service agreements, etc.;
 - f. Non-pay grace period and late fees;
 - g. Exclusion for non-payment. If exclusion is permitted, the policy must address strategies to prevent disenrollment, e.g., partnerships with service organizations such as Rotary and faith-based organizations as well as scholarships. The policy must also address the process to notify the family, staff, bus driver, and strategies to transition the child into the next setting;
 - h. Uses for tuition income, e.g., purchases related to program quality or child development goals, professional development, pooled for ISD distribution as enhanced funds; and
 - i. Who parents should call with questions.
- H. The ISD sliding fee scale and guidance will be reviewed annually as part of the ISD-wide advisory committee which operates as a workgroup of the local GSC.

* This document replaces the July 2013 document titled *Over-Income Enrollment and Establishing a Sliding Scale of Tuition*.