



STATE OF MICHIGAN
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
LANSING



JENNIFER M. GRANHOLM
GOVERNOR

MICHAEL P. FLANAGAN
SUPERINTENDENT OF
PUBLIC INSTRUCTION

May 24, 2010

MEMORANDUM

TO: State Board of Education

FROM: Michael P. Flanagan, Chairman 

SUBJECT: Approval of Criteria for the Great Parents, Great Start Program Grants

The Great Parents, Great Start Program Grant is a state-funded parenting education program for parents of children birth to five years of age authorized through Section 32j of the State School Aid Act.

Research has shown a child's school readiness is significantly impacted by the care, nurturing, and attention to development provided by his/her parents. Parental involvement in children's education is an important predictor of children's success in school. The State Board of Education priorities to re-imagine the pre-K-12 educational system and to develop public/private partnerships are embedded in this State School Aid grant program. In line with these priorities, Section 32j of the State School Aid Act in 2003-2004 established a parenting initiative for families with children birth to five. The program, since its inception, has been administered through the intermediate school districts. It is anticipated that the legislation amending the State School Aid Act for 2010-2011 will allow for continuation of the current program.

It is expected that 2010-2011 State School Aid legislation will designate \$5,000,000 to be awarded through allocations to intermediate school districts. Districts may apply for an amount at least equal to 100 percent of their intermediate school district's 2009-2010 allocation. There is adequate funding for each intermediate school district to participate.

The purpose of this grant program will be fourfold: to improve school readiness, foster the maintenance of stable families, encourage early mathematics and reading literacy, and to reduce the need for special education services. Grantees will achieve the purposes by providing programming that will:

- encourage positive parenting skills;
- enhance parent-child interaction;

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- provide parents with information on child development from birth to age five;
- provide learning opportunities to promote intellectual, physical, and social growth; and
- promote access to needed community services through a community-school-home partnership.

It is recommended that the State Board of Education approve the criteria for the Great Parents, Great Start Program Grants as described in the Superintendent's memorandum dated May 24, 2010.

MICHIGAN
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Criteria for Great Parents, Great Start Program Grants

The State Board of Education has adopted as its Strategic Goal "Attain substantial and meaningful improvement in academic achievement for all students/children with primary emphasis on high priority schools and students."

To the extent possible, all grant criteria and grant awards will serve to further the above goal, and the Board's Vision and Principles of Universal Education.

PRIORITIES, POLICIES, AND PROGRAMS THAT THESE CRITERIA SUPPORT

The State Board of Education/Department of Education (SBE/MDE) has a priority to continue to reimagine the pre-K-12 educational system in Michigan that will lead to the State Board of Education's expectation for student achievement.

Section 32j builds upon Michigan Department of Education and local community experience with both the Great Parents, Great Start Program Grants (GP, GS) and the All Students Achieve Program – Parent Involvement and Education (ASAP-PIE) Grant program. Parenting education and involvement opportunities for families with children birth to five years of age residing within intermediate school districts across Michigan have been the focus of each of the funding streams. The ASAP-PIE program was funded at \$45 million annually for two years, with home visiting and other services occurring in 23 intermediate school districts from September 2001 through June 2003. The GP, GS program has been funded at \$3,326,000 annually for three years followed by \$5,000,000 annually for four years across 57 intermediate school districts to provide similar services on a smaller scale.

The GP, GS program grants are designed to serve all families having young children who wish to participate. Experience has shown that this approach reached numerous at-risk families who previously hadn't been identified for services and assisted these young families with positive parenting skills. Approximately half of all families served have been low income.

Experience has also revealed that young families, regardless of income, often lack knowledge regarding their children's development, including children's need for language stimulation and other cognitive and emotional opportunities. Linkage to community resources was invaluable, especially for depressed mothers and children who were found to have previously undetected developmental difficulties.

GP, GS services are developed so they align with, and are part of the broader local early childhood community collaborative plan. Many benefits have been gained from strengthening the coordination and collaboration between schools and communities.

BACKGROUND/PURPOSE OF GRANT

Competitive Formula New Continuation

Great Parents, Great Start is a state-funded parenting program for all Michigan families with children birth to five. This parenting program builds upon the knowledge and experience gained from the All Students Achieve Program – Parent Involvement and Education (ASAP-PIE) Grants, available in 2000-2003, and the first seven years (2003-2010) of the Great Parents, Great Start (GP, GS) Program Grants.

CRITERIA

Date criteria were last approved 6/13/06

Defined in Legislation Defined in Department's Approved Grant Application to the Funder Proposed by Staff

Allocations for the Great Parents, Great Start Program Grants will enable eligible districts to expand parenting education and involvement programs designed to improve school readiness, encourage early mathematics and reading, reduce the need for special education services, as well as foster the maintenance of stable families by encouraging positive parenting skills. Projects funded by the Great Parents, Great Start Program Grants must:

- demonstrate adequate collaboration with local entities involved in providing programs and services to children, birth to five years of age, and their parents;
- develop Great Parents, Great Start services so they align with, and are part of the broader local early childhood community collaborative plan;
- provide services to all parents with children age five or younger residing in the intermediate school district who choose to participate;
- provide a program that includes at least all of the following service components for parents:
 - information on the development of children from birth to age five.
 - methods to enhance parent-child interaction to promote social and emotional development of infants and toddlers and age-appropriate language, mathematics, and early reading skills.
 - examples of learning opportunities to promote intellectual, physical, and social growth of children birth to five years of age.
 - promotion of access to needed community services through a community-school-home partnership.
- scale parent services and intervention efforts to reflect the level of family risk by providing:
 - low intensity, universally available services to any interested family with children birth to five years of age, such as newsletters, book distributions, web-based resources, etc.
 - higher, more intensive face-to-face services, such as home visiting, play groups, etc., to families of higher risk.
- direct the majority of parent education and involvement services to families with children younger than four years of age;

- provide connections to quality preschool programs for families who have children three and four years of age;
- utilize current validated research-based methods and curriculum that match the populations with whom the district will be providing program components;
- provide higher risk families with referrals to community agencies to meet other needs, beyond parenting services;
- assure that staff providing parenting services possess proper early childhood training, including but not limited to academic credit in child development, early childhood education or equivalent or certification as a parent educator/home visitor focusing on parents of children birth to five years of age;
- provide balanced funding directed towards both universal and intensive services so that universal services do not deplete the majority of grant dollars;
- provide a cost-effective budget with no more than 10 percent administrative cost;
- include at least a 20 percent match from local public or private resources of which no more than one-half of the matching requirement is satisfied through in-kind services;
- establish measurable program goals and outcomes for the universal service component;
- establish measurable child and family outcomes related to overall school readiness and family stability for families receiving more intensive services;
- participate in a department-approved data collection and evaluation system, including use of selected data collection instruments;
- budget one half of one percent of the district's Great Parents, Great Start state funding towards a state evaluation to assess the effectiveness of GP, GS services; and
- spend out all previous years' Great Parents, Great Start funds prior to accessing the current year's grant funds for program service delivery.

ELIGIBLE APPLICANTS/TARGET POPULATION TO BE SERVED BY GRANT

Eligible applicants are intermediate school districts that propose to serve the grant's target population. The target population is all families with children age five or younger residing within the intermediate school district who choose to participate. Proposals must describe a method to reach all families with some universally available services, and a method to reach higher risk families with more intensive services.

TOTAL FUNDS AVAILABLE

\$5,000,000, pending legislative approval.

LEGISLATION

State Aid: Section 32j of Senate Bill 1163 identifies \$5,000,000 for 2010-2011 to be allocated to intermediate school districts. The amount available for allocations shall be at least equal to 100 percent of the intermediate school district's 2009-2010 payment under Section 32j of the State School Aid Act. Section 32j requires each intermediate school district funded under this Section to utilize the most current validated research-based methods and curriculum for providing the program.

OFFICE ADMINISTERING GRANT/PROGRAM CONTACT

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Program Contact: Colleen O'Connor 517-241-4291