

## Background

Beginning in October of 2013 the Great Start Collaboratives (GSC), under section 32p of State School Aid, PA 60 of 2013, were required to convene a workgroup to serve as a school readiness advisory committee as required under section 32d and discuss the structure and strategies as part of their work plan and application. In addition, under section 32d of PA 60, each Great Start Readiness Program (GSRP) was required to participate in a multidistrict, multiagency, school readiness advisory committee that was convened as a workgroup of GSC. That committee was expected to annually review and make recommendations regarding the GSRP program components and include teachers, parents or guardians of program participants, and community, volunteer, and social service agencies and organizations, as applicable.

In addition, Governor Snyder outlined a single set of early childhood outcomes against which all public investments will be assessed:

- Children born healthy;
- Children healthy, thriving, and developmentally on track from birth to third grade;
- Children developmentally ready to succeed in school at the time of school entry; and
- Children prepared to succeed in fourth grade and beyond by reading proficiently by the end of third grade.

## Moving Ahead Together

For FY15, the language regarding the school readiness advisory committee has changed slightly, but continues as a work group of the Great Start Collaborative, as presented under sections 32d and 32p of PA 196 of 2014.

The requirement for a school readiness advisory committee is presented in the 32d section of Public Act 196 of 2014.

- Section 32d governs the Great Start Readiness Program (GSRP). This section requires that each Intermediate School District (ISD) participate in a school readiness advisory committee convened as a workgroup of the Great Start Collaborative (GSC). This section also details the involvement of classroom teachers, parents or guardians of program participants, and community, volunteer, and social service agencies and organizations. The committee will annually review and make recommendations regarding the GSRP program components. In addition the committee will make recommendations to the Great Start Collaborative regarding other community services designed to improve all children's school readiness.
- Section 32d also outlines the remaining GSRP components: (a) Participation in a collaborative recruitment and enrollment process to ensure that each child is enrolled in the program most appropriate to his or her needs and to maximize the



use of federal, state and local funds; (b) Age appropriate educational curriculum that is in compliance with the early childhood standards of quality for prekindergarten children adopted by the state board; (c) Nutritional services for all program participants supported by federal, state and local resources as applicable; (d) Physical and dental health and developmental screening services for all program participants; (e) Referral services for families of program participants to community social service agencies, including mental health services, as appropriate; (f) Active and continuous involvement of the parents or guardians of program participants; (g) A plan to conduct and report annual great start readiness program evaluations and continuous improvement plans using criteria approved by the department; (h) The school readiness advisory committee described above; (i) The ongoing articulation of the kindergarten and first grade programs offered by the program provider; and (j) Participation in the state's Great Start to Quality process with a rating of at least 3 stars.

The connection to the Great Start Collaborative workgroups is presented in the 32p section of Public Act 196 of 2014.

- Section 32p provides funding to ISDs or a consortium of ISDs to convene a local Great Start Collaborative (GSC) and Parent Coalition (GSPC). The goal of the local GSC and GSPC is to ensure the coordination and expansion of local early childhood infrastructure and programs that allow every child in the community to achieve the four early childhood outcomes. Each GSC is to convene workgroups to make recommendations about community services designed to achieve the early childhood outcomes and to ensure its local Great Start System includes supports for children birth through age 8.
- Section 32p also outlines the supports for children birth through age 8 included in each local Great Start system: (a) Physical Health, (b) Social-emotional health, (c) Family Supports and basic needs, (d) Parent Education and child advocacy, and (e) Early education and care.

### **School Readiness Committees**

The school readiness advisory committee provides an opportunity for people to meet, share information and provide guidance as outlined in Public Act 196 of 2014. It is important that each person's membership is valued, there is a clear purpose of membership and roles, and that common terms are established across programs. As you look to your work for FY15 and how you will locally implement the requirements in statute, the following items may help guide your thinking and answer the questions you might have:

1. Use and build upon the school readiness advisory committee structure that already exists.
  - a. GSRP has had a requirement for an advisory committee to review grant features for many years. Several of these advisory committees are already



- tyed to the local GSC and its workgroups. As long as that advisory committee includes the required members and addresses the required components, there is no need to make changes.
- b. Many GSCs already had a comprehensive workgroup focused on early education and care. Some may need to reformulate membership, or convene a sub-workgroup to address the topics required for GSRP as part of the school readiness committee requirement.
  - c. The focused attention on the connected advisory role built or strengthened in FY14 may serve as the ongoing structure and operation that meets current statutory expectations.
2. General responsibilities of the school readiness advisory committee, as a workgroup of the Great Start Collaborative include: meeting annually to review the GSRP program components and make recommendations, provide recommendations and input to the Great Start Collaborative regarding community services designed to improve all children's school readiness, ensuring the inclusion of supports for children birth through age 8 that reflect the 5 points of the star: physical health, social emotional health, family supports and basic needs, parent education and child advocacy, and early education and care. In addition, the group is most likely focused on Early Childhood Outcomes 3 and 4, yet have connection to Outcomes 1 and 2.
  3. The school readiness advisory committee is expected to be focused on school readiness in a broad sense throughout the local Great Start system, not overwhelmingly focused on GSRP. Reviewing K-3 data with infant-toddler data, the school readiness advisory committee can be involved in the process to determine the community based providers who will receive a contract for a portion of the local slot allocation as outlined in section 32d (11). Comprehensive preschool data analysis can help increase collaboration, determine the program most appropriate for the child's needs, and promote a unified vision. The required participants of the school readiness advisory committee can offer valuable guidance to all local programs focused on early childhood education from birth through 3<sup>rd</sup> grade. Program participants, staff, and administrators from local programs should be included in the school readiness advisory committee. As always, final decision-making rests with the entity that receives the funding for each program.
  4. The GSRP Early Childhood Contact from the ISD is expected to be an active member of the school readiness advisory committee, perhaps in a leadership role, and provide expertise on GSRP and best practices in early childhood education. The school readiness advisory committee will make recommendations on the required GSRP components and make recommendations to the GSC regarding other community services designed to improve all children's school readiness. As the GSRP grantee, the ISD is accountable for meeting all program requirements as laid out in legislation and through the GSRP Implementation Manual. Recommendations from the school readiness advisory committee should be given strong consideration by the ISD, while ensuring all GSRP requirements are met. Likewise, the ISD is the



fiduciary for the 32p Block Grant and must ensure that the statutory expectations for use of the funds are met. However, the ISD must also recognize that the educational system sits at the collaborative table as one contributor to the overall goals of supporting children and families.

As we move ahead together in the next year, please remember that there are supports available to assist you in implementing and navigating the requirements of the school readiness advisory committee, all children's school readiness and the local Great Start system work.

**Office of Great Start staff:**

**GSRP Consultants:**

Pat Sargent  
517-241-4741  
[sargentp@michigan.gov](mailto:sargentp@michigan.gov)

Blanche Deren  
517-241-4289  
[derenb@michigan.gov](mailto:derenb@michigan.gov)

Mischele McManus  
517-373-8664  
[mcmanusm@michigan.gov](mailto:mcmanusm@michigan.gov)

Heather Lucas  
517-373-4559  
[LucasH@michigan.gov](mailto:LucasH@michigan.gov)

**32p Block Grant contacts:**

Reneé DeMars-Johnson  
517-241-0162  
[demars-johnsonr@michigan.gov](mailto:demars-johnsonr@michigan.gov)

Rachel Mellema  
517-241-4766  
[mellemar@michigan.gov](mailto:mellemar@michigan.gov)

**Great Start Collaborative/Parent Coalition/Great Start Resource Center  
Technical Assistance, Early Childhood Investment Corporation:**

TA Helpline  
866-790-4900  
[greatstartta@ecic4kids.org](mailto:greatstartta@ecic4kids.org)

