



STATE OF MICHIGAN
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
LANSING

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MEMORANDUM

DATE: September 13, 2018

TO: Local and Intermediate School District Superintendents
Public School Academy Directors

FROM: Dr. Scott M. Koenigs knecht, Deputy Superintendent P-20 System and Student Transitions 

SUBJECT: Curriculum Approval Process for the Great Start Readiness Program

Since 1985, the Michigan Department of Education (MDE), Office of Great Start (OGS), has worked closely with providers across the state to ensure the state offers a high-quality learning experience to all children participating in the Great Start Readiness Program (GSRP). As the program has improved and evolved, the field and MDE have worked together to maintain essential markers of quality. The field is constantly learning and innovating, and the list of state-approved curricula needs to be updated regularly to align with best practices and state standards. This work contributes to Michigan's Top 10 in 10 Goal 1 and specifically Strategy 1.2: Expand access to quality publicly-funded preschool for all four-year-olds by 2020 and three-year-olds by 2025.

According to [Public Act 265 of 2018, Section 32d\(23\) states:](#)

The department shall implement a process to evaluate and approve age-appropriate educational curricula that are in compliance with the early childhood standards of quality for prekindergarten children adopted by the state board.

MDE's Office of Great Start partnered with Public Sector Consultants (PSC) to interview stakeholders for the development of a curriculum approval process.

PSC interviewed 13 stakeholders representing diverse perspectives including: state government, intermediate school districts (ISDs), curriculum vendors, and national experts. Stakeholder's feedback through this interview process stressed the importance of the following:

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- Clear/transparent process
- Appeals process
- Process conducted regularly
- outcome communicated to the vendor/field in a timely manner
- Review based on a robust rubric based on standards (specifically, the MI State Board of Education Early Childhood Standards of Quality for Prekindergarten)
- Qualified reviewers
- Allows for an opportunity to pilot for curricula not able to be fully approved

In addition, MDE/OGS has determined that all GSRP curricula must support the Essential Instructional Practices in Early Literacy (Pre-K), as developed by the General Education Leadership Network of the Michigan Association of Intermediate School Administrators.

PSC worked with MDE/OGS to update and revise its current curriculum approval process to ensure that it reflects all the identified elements from the stakeholder interviews. A revised OGS Curriculum Approval Process for the Great Start Readiness Program document, rubric, and supporting resources were finalized and the process will be implemented starting in September 2018 and will be completed by March 2019. These can be found at the GSRP website www.michigan.gov/gsrp. These approval process documents do not apply to supplemental curricula, which are intended to augment a comprehensive curriculum, generally in a specific content area.

Michigan's rubric was developed based on surveying of other state education departments of their curriculum review rubrics and processes through the National Association of Early Childhood Specialists network in 2015. This resulted in a review and follow up communication with 16 states to create Michigan's rubric.

The rubric includes four major areas:

- Valid research: Is the curriculum grounded in sound theory and research?
- Evaluation results: What evidence exists that the curriculum is effective?
- Professional development: How does the curriculum support educators' professional learning?
- Developmental appropriateness: Is the curriculum developmentally appropriate for four-year-olds?

A Curriculum Review Committee (CRC) was created to review, score, and approve GSRP curriculum. The CRC is a team of early childhood experts appointed by the MDE Deputy Superintendent for P-20 System and Student Transitions. The committee is charged with reviewing, scoring and approving GSRP curriculum applications.

For questions about this process, please contact Pat Sargent, GSRP Manager, at sargentp@michigan.gov or 517-241-4741.

cc: Michigan Education Alliance