

Jackson County Great Start Collaborative By Laws

Article I: Name

The name of this organization shall be the Jackson County Great Start Collaborative, sometimes referred to as GSC.

Article II: Vision Statement

A Great Start to ensure every child in Jackson County is safe, healthy, eager and ready to succeed in school and become contributing, productive members of an economically stable Jackson County.

Article III: Mission Statement

The purpose of Great Start is to assure a coordinated system of community resources and supports to help all Jackson County families provide a great start for their children from birth to age five.

Article IV: Guiding Principles / Values

- Child Focused
 - Focus will be on what is in the best interest of young children in Jackson County
- Collaboration and Systems Alignment
 - Shared leadership, responsibility, resources, and decision-making, each partner acting to benefit the whole system and its consumers
- Diversity, Cultural Competence in Family Structures
 - The GSC will reflect the diversity of Jackson County in social-economic status, ethnicity, age, sex, marital status, etc...
- Assessment and Data Accountability
 - Data driven, measurable results

Article V: Philosophy and goals of the Great Start Collaborative

The GSC supports the commitment of collaborative organizations to provide comprehensive and seamless services for young children and their families. Throughout its work the GSC will endeavor to strengthen and build upon existing successful supports, services and programs for young children.

The following goals, as outlined in the GSC Strategic Plan, will provide the focus for all GSC work:

- Community Awareness about the critical importance of child development, birth to five, is at a high level.
- Jackson County is a community that values children birth to age five.
- Children entering school in Jackson County are ready to learn.
- The infrastructure necessary to support and integrate the great start system is fully in place.

Article VI: Membership

Executive Committee:

Purpose: The purpose of the GSC Executive Committee is to assist the GSC by having the authority to:

- Review and make recommendations to the GSC regarding issues of funding
- Act as a sounding board for the GSC Coordinator, serving as a source of ready advice on executive decisions
- Report to GSC at each meeting on Executive and subcommittee activities
- Monitor GSC activities and staff issues
- Act on behalf of the GSC between meetings as necessary

The members of the GSC Executive Committee, with the exception of parents, must have sufficient authority to recommend funds, staff and other resources on behalf of their organization.

The GSC Executive Committee will be comprised of:

- GSC Coordinator (non-voting staff)
- Parent Liaison (1)
- GSC Co-Chairs (2)
- Philanthropic/Funding (2)
- Community Representative (1)
- Parents (3)
- Chairperson of each subcommittee (3)
- Early Care and Education (1)

All members of the Executive Committee must be active members of the Collaborative, regularly attending scheduled meetings. Meetings will be called as needed to address issues as they arise.

Responsibilities:

The members of the Executive Committee will be the governing body for the Great Start System in Jackson County. The GSC Executive Committee will have the authority to make decisions based on recommendations from the Collaborative body.

Great Start Collaborative Membership:

The following members are required by the Early Childhood Investment Corporation, (ECIC) to serve as voting members on the Jackson Great Start Collaborative.

- Parents (requirements defined below)
- Business Leaders
- Philanthropic and Charitable Organizations
- Faith Based Organizations
- Intermediate School District
- Organization that provides services on behalf of minority populations
- Elementary School Principal
- Local publicly funded health, mental health and human services agencies (DHS, local public health and community mental health)
- Managed care health plans and/or health care providers
- Family and juvenile court
- Early On and preschool special education
- Early care and education professional development providers, including 4C's
- Head Start
- Michigan School Readiness Program
- Child Care Providers
- The K-16 community, including LEA and community colleges
- Local policy makers or elected officials

Designees or representatives other than the assigned Collaborative members must be fully authorized to represent, make decisions and commitments and allocate resources on behalf of their organizations. If it is not possible for a required GSC member or their representative to be physically present at meetings, the Coordinator will ensure that the absent member receives information from the meeting and an opportunity to provide input. Other persons desiring to attend GSC meetings may do so, space permitting.

Collaborative Membership Requirements

Collaborative membership, in addition to ECIC requirements, is open to any person/group located in Jackson County, which is committed to the vision and mission of the GSC. Members of the Collaborative will be involved in guiding the work of the GSC by attending, and participating in, Collaborative meetings and serving on sub-committees convened to address the GSC's four main identified goals. Collaborative members will receive timely communication regarding activities of the GSC Executive Committee and will be invited to participate in any training opportunities, as well as, the opportunity to participate in focus groups and work groups to advance the work of the GSC and ECIC.

Parent Participants

Requirements:

Parents (birth, adoptive, foster, non-custodial or legal guardian) must: constitute at least 20 percent of the total required memberships of the GSC; be reflective of the ethnic and racial makeup of the community; and be parenting; children aged 12 or younger.

Parent Reimbursement Procedures:

Parent members of the GSC are to receive financial reimbursement for expenses incurred as a member and access to professional development and mentoring opportunities. Parent members of the GSC will receive a stipend for their participation in regularly scheduled meetings. Parents attending a sub-committee or other work group meeting to which they are assigned by the GSC will receive a \$25 gift card at the close of the meeting. Parents participating in regularly scheduled GSC meetings will receive a \$50 gift card at the close of the meeting.

Article VII: Membership Expectations

1. Regularly attend GSC Meetings and subcommittee meetings as needed
2. The membership provides overall direction in identifying and prioritizing local planning and coordination issues.
3. It is the responsibility of the GSC members to commit to the purpose of the GSC, fulfill commitments made by the collaborative, support the work of the GSC, serve on focus and work groups as appropriate and participate in and support the functions of the collaborative.
4. Identify and utilize funding sources to implement services.
5. Additional duties as agreed to by the collaborative.

Members who miss two (2) consecutive meetings will be contacted to ascertain their interest in continued participation. The member organization may be asked to appoint another representative from the organization that can attend meetings regularly, who has the authority to represent the organization and will actively participate. Such action will be noted in the GSC's meeting minutes.

Agency/business/faith based representatives will be urged to designate a replacement from their group. If there is a vacancy for a parent representative, the Great Start Parent Coalition will recommend a coalition member to serve on the GSC.

Member Term of Service

There is no limit to the term of service for agency/business/faith based representatives. Parents can remain active as long as they meet the parent participant criteria stated above.

Article VIII: Meetings, Quorum, Voting Procedures and Finance

Frequency of Meetings

The Great Start Collaborative shall meet a minimum of six (6) times per year. Special meetings may be called by a Co-Chairperson or by a majority vote of the Executive Committee. Members shall be given three (3) day written notice of special meetings, including the date, time, meeting place and purpose of the meeting.

Notice of Regular Meetings

Notice of all regular meetings, including an agenda and minutes of the previous meetings shall be given to all members at least one week prior to the scheduled meeting date either via mail or email.

Parliamentary Procedures

Roberts Rules of Order, newly revised, shall govern the GSC in all cases to which they are applicable.

Quorum

A quorum shall consist of 50% of the Great Start Collaborative. If however, such members shall not be present, business shall be conducted and the Co-Chairperson(s) will decide if issues requiring action will be brought to vote.

Voting Rights

At each meeting of the GSC Executive Committee, each required representative present shall have one (1) vote. Agencies or organizations with more than one person in attendance shall receive one (1) vote. All issues which require a vote will be listed in the agenda and distributed to members at least one week before the meeting. The members may, by a majority vote, decide to take action on an item not previously listed on the agenda.

All issues requiring a vote will be, as time allows, reviewed by the Executive Committee and recommendations will be presented to the Collaborative for final approval.

Decision making by consensus shall guide actions of the meetings of the Collaborative unless otherwise noted. Consensus is defined as: A decision which every member of the group can support, even if the decision is not every member's preference.

Finances

The Jackson County Intermediate School District must be the fiscal agent for any ECIC funds from the state of Michigan. When a GSC project is jointly funded, one organization will be designated as the fiscal agent for the project. The Executive Committee will provide oversight to all financial aspects of the Great Start System.

Article IX: Leadership

The GS Collaborative members will elect two Co-Chairs, representing different sectors, biennially. Elections will occur at the regularly scheduled meeting in March. Co-Chairs can serve no more than two consecutive two year terms. Co-Chairs of the Great Start Collaborative are required members of the Executive Committee and are required to attend all Executive Committee Meetings where voting will take place.

Duties of Co-Chairs

- Review and approve agendas for Executive Committee and Collaborative meetings, preside at meetings, sign correspondence and letters of support, review and approve annual reports, establish and appoint members to committees and work groups.

Article X: Committees / Work Groups

- Standing sub-committees will consist of:
 - Community Awareness
 - Community Value
 - Ready to Learn
 - Executive Committee
 - The Executive Committee provides oversight to all sub-committees to ensure that measurable progress is being achieved.
 - Required reporting procedures will be defined by the Executive Committee. These procedures will be in written form and will be presented to each sub-committee

The purpose of the four sub-committees is to advance the work of the GSC Strategic Plan by implementing the strategies and obtaining the objectives outlined in the Early Childhood Action Agenda.

- Ad hoc committees will be appointed as needed by the Co-Chairs with approval of the Executive Committee.
- Affiliated Work Groups will be the Great Start Parent Coalition and the Coordinated School Health Council Subcommittee on Student Achievement/Early Childhood Development/Family/Community Involvement

ARTICLE XI: Amendments

The Executive Committee will address any amendments or revisions as needed. A draft will be presented to the Collaborative body for approval upon completion.

ARTICLE XII: Dispute/Impasse Procedure

The GSC values and encourages the sharing of ideas and new perspectives. It is recognized that in collaborative decision making, areas of conflict and disagreement may arise. These issues shall be addressed within the GSC by:

- 1) Exploring impasses.
 - a. Identifying the areas of agreement.
 - b. Clarifying the points of disagreement.
 1. Exploring the facts: What is the data and what does it tell us?
 2. Exploring Methods: How should we do what we need to do?
 3. Reviewing Goals: What is our objective?
 4. Reviewing Values: Why do we think it must be done a particular way, what do we, as the GSC, believe in?
 - c. Reaching group consensus so that the GSC can move ahead on the areas of agreement.
 - d. Continuing to address the points of disagreement as the project develops.
- 2) When areas of conflict and disagreement cannot be resolved or impede the progress within the GSC, the assistance of a mediator shall be obtained.