



GREAT START COLLABORATIVE OF KENT COUNTY

Mission: To assure a coordinated system of community resources and supports to help all Kent County families provide a great start for their children from birth to age five.

Minutes

February 23, 2022, 1:30pm-3:00pm

Attendees

Members:

Parent Representatives: **Cara Sutcliffe, Fredericka Brown, Iris Gipson, Lana VanBuren, Ray Sutcliffe, Yolanda Johnson**
Maureen Hale (Chair), **Abby Bishop** (KCHD, WIC), **Alissa Finley** (Conductive Learning Center), **Alyssa Bryan** (Family Futures), **Angela Frier** (Conductive Learning Center), **Ashley Karsten** (KISD), **Barb Hawkins-Palmer** (KCHD), **Ben Brower** (D.A. Blodgett), **Bree Strayer** (Literacy Center of WM), **Chana Edmond-Verley** (Vibrant Futures), **Ellen Sawyer** (Comprehensive Therapy Center), **Emily Skavnak** (KCHD Nurse-Family Partnership), **Heather Walczewski** (YMCA), **Jameela Maun** (Healthy Homes), **Jayme Vosovic** (MLPP), **Jennifer Cottingham** (Easter Seals), **Joann Hoganson** (DHHS), **Kathie Hoffman** (Refugee Education Center, Hands Connected), **Kathleen Neumann** (GRCC), **Kayla Johns** (Corewell, MOMS), **Kristen Gietzen** (Arbor Circle), **Kristyn Bomberg** (WGVU), **Linda Pickett** (GVSU), **Maggie Lancaster** (Grand Rapids Children's Museum), **Mary Claire Meimers** (RN, DHHS Intern), **Pam Shoemaker** (Cherry Health), **Rebecca Boot** (Family Futures, Healthy Families America), **Sarah Wilson** (HealthNet), **Wendy Wheeler** (DHHS)

Staff:

Paula Brown, Tomarra Richardson, Shanequa Mosley, Melanie Medema

- Welcome and Introductions **Maureen Hale**
Approval of the minutes for December 15th – Approved

- DEI Activity **Joann Hoganson**
 - *The parable of the river of floating babies.* As a metaphor for a divided community, a river has 2 sides, and only 1 side offers families adequate prenatal care and housing, access to programs and services, a healthful environment, affordable/high-quality childcare, education, and activities, and safety and security. "Floating babies" are children suffering from lack of resources which the community attempts to rescue rather than address root causes. Call for action from the group as a whole to address community inequities.
 - i. Shared by Barb: <https://americadividedseries.com/> (narratives around inequality in education, housing, healthcare, labor, criminal justice, political system woven into an 8-story, 5-part series.)

- Legislative Update **Jayme Vosovic**
State Budget Overview
 - Governor's 2023-24 Budget Recommendation: \$79.4 billion
 - Leftover \$9 billion from last year spoken for
 - \$23.6B Education/financial aid
 - \$55.8 General Omnibus (all other state depts)
 - Federal aid=40% of state budget, 80% to health/human services
 - MDHHS=43.9, Education 12.9%, Public Safety 44.1
 - EITC increased from 6% to 30%
 - ECE
 - Not enough to fund equitable education (especially Special Ed)
 - Child Care Subsidy: maintains IE up to 200% FPL (\$55k/family of 4)
 - GSRP: increased eligibility to 300% FPL, add'l \$1.1M for Early On
 - Workforce: Child Care Educator Tax Credit: \$1k-\$4k refundable credits
 - \$10M Home Visitation expansion, \$4 DPIL enrollment

- Childcare: average cost, infant, MI: \$10, 861/year=19.0% median income, 54.1% minimum wage worker income, 49% typical childcare worker income
 - The younger the child, the lower the workforce earns
 - Childcare worker: \$23,990 – Elementary teacher: \$61,640
- “Weighted School Funding” Formula recommendations: \$458/pupil increase
- Students of colour more likely to be economically disadvantaged and attend high-poverty schools=3rd grade reading inequities
- Specific funds for academic success: MI Kids Back on Track/tutoring; Partnership districts; Math support; Before/After school programming
- Teacher recruitment, student mental health/school safety; Read by Grade Three
- Postsecondary ed: budget continues trend of diverting School Aid Funds for higher ed
- Expansion of Healthy Moms, Healthy Babies: waive 5-year waiting period for CHIP/Medicaid
- Healthy foods: Fully funds Double-Up Food Bucks program for 5 years, free school meals for all, \$160M for free breakfast and lunch to all public-school students
- Juvenile Justice Reform; Environmental Health Threat reduction; Improve Housing access; Rainy Day
- Will budget pass?
 - #s may change, some things may be removed. More likely to begin with greater consensus and remain more intact given Democratic representation.
- Bipartisan support over the years for early childcare: which are at risk, and which are strongest?
 - GSRP, Think Babies in good shape. Good support around EC. Tri-Share has support by some and not others. There will be multiple approaches.
- House and Senate appropriations committees meet at the same time February-April
 - Learn more at www.legislature.mi.gov
 - MLPP “Yeas & Nays” weekly roundup every Friday at 11:00am, Facebook Live

- Great Start Parent Coalition Report

Tomarra Richardson
Shanequa Mosely

- Grants

- \$2,500 Neighborhood Match Fund grant
- \$7,500 additional trusted advisor funds – to be used for One County One Book
- Community baby shower, 7.22.23 more details to come

- Upcoming Meetings & Events

- Parent Cafés and Parent Support Stations
- Partnering with ICCF: info on FB page

- Diaper Drive

- 2,000,000 diapers donated
- Will be a celebration – please reach out if you would like to participate

- COFI Overview

- Community Organizing & Family Issues
- 1995 Chicago trustees included Barak Obama focused on racial justice and community organizing
- Multistep process of training, leadership, action. Helps parents build leadership skills and advocacy voice for policy systems and change
- Phase 1: Self, Family, Team/Phase 2: Community Outreach, Action
- Brought to Kent County by Habitat for Humanity, Healthy Homes, trainers from Chicago, Micah Center, KSSN
- GSPC 3rd cohort in progress
 - 1 cohort has progressed through Phase II
 - No Phase III yet
 - 3 graduates went on to become trained facilitators
 - Significant time commitment 7 weeks+
 - + Team project of 3-6 months
 - Short, realistic goals
 - 2019 Literacy Event

- 2020 Family Virtual Fun Night
- 2021 Community Action Canvassing
- 2022 Town Hall
- Jameela and Healthy Homes looking forward to Phase II
- Community supports needed to provide resources and recruit parents in future
- Phase II will probably be late summer/fall
- GSPC needs more trained as Phase III facilitators in order to progress

- Nurturing Parent Power Workgroup

Chana Edmond-Verley

- How are our children situated? Ashley Karsten
 - GSRP data for language, literacy, and communication expectations: 60% **meet**, 17% **above**
- One County One Book
 - *If You Give A Pig A Party* by Laura Numeroff
 - March 8 at First CRC
 - 8,000 books to distribute
 - Leveraging change agents for literacy and equipping parents as change agents
 - Capitalize on early years of brain development
 - Reach out if your organization is interested in books
 - GRCM: 250 for summer programs
 - CTC: 100
 - Refugee Ed Center: 24
 - Literacy Center: 350
 - Dad's Count: 100
 - GSC needs volunteers to help sticker books: [Sign-Up Form](#)

- Small Group Sessions

- *Time constraint prevented this work today; GSC will request support from members at a future time.*

Upcoming Meetings:

GSC Executive Team: March 14, 2023, 2:30pm-4:00pm (Zoom)

April 11, 2023, 2:30pm-4:00pm (Zoom)

GSC Membership Meeting: April 27, 2023, 1:30pm-3:00pm (Location TBD)