



Great Start Collaborative of Kent County Meeting Minutes

Date: December 12, 2024, 1:30-3:00 p.m.

Location: Zoom

Attendance

- General Members: Abby Bishop, Alisa Hofstee, Amari Fuller, Amber Jones, Amy Coon, Elyse Boardman, Kalicia Mohit, Karen Lezan, Kathryn Steiner, Ray Sutcliffe II, Kayla Johns, Lindsey VanDyke, Merin DeKruyter, Monique Vasquez, Pam Shoemaker, Penny Chamberlain, Renee Dunwell, Madelyn Olson, Barb Hawkins-Palmer, Bryana Hopkins, Elizabeth Zandstra, Wendy Wheeler, Cara Sutcliffe, Lacey Ahmed, Ashley Sturgis, Jaime Mueller, Kate Meaton, Marcy Steenstra, Rebecca Boot, Tequia Adams
- Executive Team Members: Joann Hoganson, Kristin Geitzen, MaDonna Princer, Maureen Hale, Ashley Karsten
- Staff Members: Paula Brown, Tomarra Richardson, Shanequa Mosley, Jourdan DeRidder

1. Welcome & Introductions

Participants introduced themselves, their role and connection to the work of the Great Start Collaborative.

2. Diversity Equity, Inclusion & Belonging Activity

Marcy Steenstra, WGVU, led the DEIB activity. The video [3 Tips for making your classroom more gender inclusive](#) was viewed by the group. The social identity wheel is included with the minutes.

3. Review Past Meeting Minutes

The past meeting minutes were approved.

4. Great Start Family Coalition Report

- GSFC Meetings

Date	Subject
12/12/24	Parent Café (<i>Cancelled Due to Weather</i>)
01/09/25	Advocacy Through Vision Boards
02/13/25	Managing Anger
03/13/25	Healthy Nutrition & WIC



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.

- GSFCC Parent Leaders
 - Please reach out to Shanequa at smosley@successstartsearly.org if your organization has parents that are interested in advocacy and leadership opportunities with the Great Start Collaborative.
- Diaper Drive
 - The Kent County Health Department & Goddard School hosted diaper drives in November. The final diaper count from those collected will be shared at the February GSC meeting.

5. FY 2025 GSC Workgroups

- Maureen discussed the various work groups within the Great Start Collaborative, including the School Readiness Advisory Committee, Social Emotional Health workgroup, and Nurturing Parent Power Group. She encouraged participants to consider joining these groups if they felt a connection to their work. Maureen also mentioned an ad hoc group forming to review marketing materials for the Pre-K for All initiative.
- Descriptions of the workgroups along with the co-chairs and current members were included in the December meeting attachments.
- [Workgroup Sign Up Link](#)

6. GSC Updates

- There was a mid-year budget modification for fiscal year 2024 to add additional funds to One County One Book and Nurturing Parent Power workgroup from the Dolly Parton Imagination Library funds.
- 15% carryover of funds is allowed. This total is \$73k. The carryover budget is due January 31st and will need to be fully expended by June 30th. The primary reason for the significant amount of carryover is due to having a staff position open for the year and \$7,900 returned to the GSC from local program funds that were underspent.
- Continue to share the [Family Liaison Position](#) with your networks.
- Member documents : Membership Agreement and Conflict of Interest Statement
 - Each organization will need to choose a designee (if applicable) along with the lead person.

7. Partner Announcements

- Please see the attached PDF with GSC Impact and Partner Celebrations for the year.
- Baby Scholars is enrolling for winter classes! Our website www.strongbeginningsgr.org.
- Early On provided the [Early Childhood Special Education Link](#).



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8. Call To Action

Action Item	Responsible Party	Due Date
Review and Sign Membership agreement & conflict of interest statement. Please ensure you select a designee, if applicable.	GSC Members	1/31/25
One on One meetings scheduled with GSC director and GSC members.	Paula Brown	Ongoing
Join one of the three GSC workgroups. Workgroup Sign Up Link	GSC Members	1/31/25

9. Adjourn

Upcoming Meetings:

GSC Executive Team: January 14th, 2:30pm-4pm (Zoom)

Nurturing Parent Power Workgroup: January 28th, 12:30am – 2:00pm (Zoom)

Social Emotional Health Workgroup: February 12th, 10:30am – 11:30am (Zoom)

GSC General Membership Meeting: February 27th, 1:30pm–3:00pm

MSU Extension | 770 Ball Ave NE | Grand Rapids, MI 49503

School Readiness Advisory Committee: February 28th, 10:00 am – 12:00pm

Location: TBD