

GREAT START



COLLABORATIVE

TRAVERSE BAY

Operating Guidelines

Collaboration is a mutually beneficial and well-defined relationship entered into by two or more organizations to achieve common goals. This includes a commitment to mutual relationships and goals; a jointly developed structure and shared responsibility; mutual authority and accountability for success; and sharing of resources and rewards.

Wilder Foundation, 2001

Great Start Collaborative of Traverse Bay

Operating Guidelines

I. Who We Are

The Great Start Collaborative of Traverse Bay (GSC) is the regional planning and decision-making body for the Great Start system, Michigan’s comprehensive early childhood system. The GSC includes the Great Start Parent Coalition (GSP), whose members are valued as a prominent and indispensable source of parent voice and leadership.

This GSC serves all families living, working, and/or attending school in communities within the boundaries of Traverse Bay Area Intermediate School District.

The GSC recognizes these early childhood system components:

- Pediatric & Family Health
- Social-Emotional Health
- Family Support
- Parent Leadership
- Early Care and Learning

The Office of Great Start provides these goals for all Great Start Collaboratives:

- 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;
- Children prepared to succeed in fourth grade and beyond by reading proficiently by the end of third grade.

Member of the GSC and GSP agree to work together to ensure that the children in our communities are healthy, ready to succeed and eager to learn; to support parents as the first and best teachers of their children; and to promote collaboration and partnership among agencies, businesses and organizations in working toward and sustaining an early childhood system that is accessible by all families in our region.

II. Vision

Michigan’s vision for our children is : “a coherent system of health and early learning that aligns, integrates and coordinates Michigan’s investments from prenatal to third grade...and a reputation as one of the best states in the country to raise a child.”¹

This Collaborative envisions a Great Start for every child in the Traverse Bay region—every child safe, healthy and eager to succeed in school and in life.

¹ *Great Start, Great Investment, Great Future: the plan for early learning and development in Michigan* accessed July 27, 2014 http://www.michigan.gov/documents/mde/1_Great_Start_-_Great_Investment_-_Great_Future_-_FINAL_422080_7.PDF

III. Mission

The mission of the GSC is to assure the development and delivery of a comprehensive, coordinated system of community resources and supports to assist all families in the Traverse Bay region in providing a great start for their children from birth through age eight.

IV. Purpose

The purpose of these guidelines is to establish an organizational and procedural framework for the GSC and its committees and workgroups.

V. Membership

Effective GSCs have a diverse stakeholder membership that is open to parents and caregivers, local and regional agencies and service providers, and community members representing economic, philanthropic, and faith-based organizations, the justice system, and elected officials². While participation in the GSC is open to any early childhood stakeholder or interested community member, members should be those agencies, organizations and individuals who are able to address the GSC's strategic outcomes.

Parents of children (aged 12 or younger) who represent the diversity of people living in the GSC service area must constitute at least 20 percent of the total membership.

For the purposes of parent representation, members attending as parents may not also represent an organization.

Other membership requirements:

- Parent members are to receive, in a timely manner, the same supports and resources available to non-parent members. This includes, at a minimum, financial reimbursement for expenses incurred as a member, and access to professional development and mentoring opportunities.
- Every attempt is made to ensure the rich diversity of the families living in this region and its communities is represented by parent membership.
- The members of the collaborative, with the exception of parents, must have sufficient authority to commit funds, staff, and other resources on behalf of their organization.
- A Memorandum of Understanding must be signed annually in order to vote.

In addition, the GSC may recruit, as circumstances require, such members as are needed to maintain at all times an adequate membership roster that represents the region and its communities, and that supports the work of the Collaborative as specified in its Strategic Plan. Members are selected by an informal process of referral to the Collaborative, followed by a brief interview and orientation with the prospective member to insure they meet requirements itemized above, and have sufficient understanding to commit to the mission of the Collaborative. Referrals for membership can be made by any collaborative member, the Coordinator, or other interested parties. Once selected for membership, the new prospective member must submit the signed

² A list of recommended members is provided by the Office of Great Start, and is based on the required members list previously published by the Early Childhood Investment Corporation as a part of the original grant approval process.

Memorandum of Understanding to the Coordinator. Updated membership lists will be provided to members as necessary at regularly scheduled meetings.

VI. Membership Categories

- Standing members are active in the work of the Collaborative; have a current, signed MOU on file; meet the attendance requirements and uphold the principles as stated in the MOU.
- Members-at-large bring with them varied and valuable input on discussions and should represent the diverse interests of the communities. They agree to uphold the mission and values of the GSC but are not required to sign the MOU, are not eligible to vote and are considered ex-officio. Their membership differs from the standing members in that:
 - a. they are not subject to attendance requirements
 - b. they are not counted in the membership total that applies to the 20% rule for parents

VII. Membership Responsibilities

It is crucial to the success of the GSC to have an active and engaged membership. Each Collaborative member is required to attend at least two of the five scheduled annual meetings. In the event a GSC member cannot attend a Collaborative meeting, s/he designates an alternative with the authority to vote on behalf of the member. The membership provides overall direction in the governance and operations of the Collaborative, appoints committees to undertake specific functions of the collaborative, and assures accountability for commitments made within the collaborative and the community.

Roles & Responsibilities of Members:

- Understand the purpose of the GSC and agree to promote its mission and goals
- Participate in planning and decision-making
- Regular attendance at GSC meetings
- For organizational representatives, commit resources and make decisions on behalf of the organization
- Accept appointment to committees, and/or workgroups for specific tasks
- Provide guidance, resources, and support for committees and workgroups
- Provide statistical and other necessary information needed for the completion of community needs assessments and strategic planning
- Review progress and ensure coordination throughout the assessment and strategic planning process
- Assure accountability for commitments made within the GSC and the community
- Keep the Coordinator informed of any changes in membership, contact information, or availability of time and resources
- Participate in and/or provide for professional development and mentoring opportunities
- Actively and continuously promote the importance of early childhood investment to policy makers and opinion leaders in their communities and the State.

If a member fails to uphold these responsibilities, or behaves in a manner that is disruptive or prohibits the other members from fulfilling their duties and

responsibilities, s/he can be removed from the GSC by an act of the Executive Committee.

VIII. Officers

Elected/appointed officers of the GSC shall be the Co-Chairpersons.

Responsibilities of co-chairpersons are as follows:

- Preside at all meetings
- Consult with the Coordinator prior to meetings
- Provide a collaborative leadership style
- Appoint members to committees and workgroups as necessary
- Notify the Coordinator in advance if neither of the Co-Chairs will be present and able to preside at a scheduled meeting

IX. Terms of Office

The Superintendent of TBAISD is a permanent co-chair. The second co-chair shall be a member of the business community and shall represent both a personal and corporate commitment to early childhood. The business co-chair will serve a two year term, followed by a two year term as co-chair emeritus. If there becomes a permanent vacancy, a replacement will be elected/appointed at the next scheduled meeting.

X. Election/Appointment of the Business Co-Chair

The co-chair will be elected/appointed at the first scheduled meeting of the GSC, and biennially thereafter. A Governance Committee, made up of one representative from each of the counties, the Coordinator, and other members as needed, shall convene annually to review GSC procedures and, in alternate years, to vet and recommend to the GSC a new business co-chair. Any member of the Collaborative may recommend a candidate for the business co-chair to the committee. In the event that there are no candidates willing to fill the offices, the Executive Committee will appoint an officer as necessary to fill the vacancy.

XI. Staff Persons

A key decision that the GSC will make is the identification of the Coordinator for the local Great Start system. The Coordinator for the Great Start Collaborative will provide support for the development of shared leadership, ownership and capacity amongst all members of the collaborative. The Coordinator role is crucial to the accomplishment of tasks as outlined in the plan of work for the Great Start Collaborative. The Great Start Collaborative Coordinator position will be a 1.0 FTE dedicated staff for the Great Start Collaborative, and will be selected by the Executive Committee via a group interview process.

The role of Parent Liaison is equally crucial to accomplishing the tasks outlined in the work plan, and for ensuring that parent voice is well-represented at the GSC and that the investments made in parent leadership are equitable and support the growth of an informed confident parent constituency. The Parent Liaison position will be at a minimum 0.5 FTE dedicated staff for the Great Start Collaborative, and will be selected by the Executive Committee and Coordinator via a group interview process.

XII. Executive Team

The executive team is responsible for administrative oversight and executive decision-making on behalf of the GSC. The team is comprised at a minimum of 9 members, including the GSC Co-Chairpersons, the Director of TBAISD Early Childhood Services, the GSC Coordinator, the GSC Parent Liaison, a parent member, and GSC members representing child care, social services, and health. Membership by representatives of First Nation peoples is encouraged. Additional programs or service areas may be represented. The executive team should equitably represent the counties and constituents in the GSC service area.

Selection of the parent member

Parent voice is valued in all decision-making, and seat on the executive team is permanently reserved for a parent. Therefore, every effort should be made to include a parent on the committee. The parent member will serve a two-year term. A Nominating Committee, made up of one representative from each of the counties, the Coordinator, the Parent Liaison, and other members as needed, shall convene bi-annually in August to solicit nominations and recommend a parent candidate. Any member of the Collaborative may recommend a candidate for the parent seat to the committee. In the event that there is no parent willing to take the seat, the Executive Committee may ask the seated parent member to remain for up to an additional year. The parent member will receive a stipend for each meeting attended and is eligible to receive reimbursement for child care and travel expenses.

XIII. Standing Committees

From time to time the GSC may undertake specific tasks, and accomplishes the detailed work of these tasks via the use of committees and workgroups. When active, each standing committee will designate a chair and make meeting agenda and progress reports available for publication in the GSC electronic newsletter. The GSC and/or standing committees may form other sub-committees and/or workgroups as needed to fulfill specific tasks. The sub-committees and/or workgroups will make progress reports to the designated standing committee or to the GSC. Recommendations for additional committees should be submitted to the Great Start Collaborative co-chairs to be considered at the next regularly scheduled GSC meeting.

Committees may include any GSC members or community stakeholders who are deemed appropriate and necessary to the work of the GSC. Standing committees may include:

School Readiness Advisory Committee (required under the Great Start Readiness Program (GSRP) legislation)

Child & Family Wellbeing Committee

Early Care and Learning Committee

Parent Leadership

Family Support

Working Groups

Working groups as necessary to carry out the early childhood action agenda and any other work of the GSC. Membership in a working group is open to any interested community member. Working groups must report progress to the Coordinator at least every sixty days.

XIV. Meetings

The GSC will hold a minimum of 5 meetings per year at a time and place designated by the GSC. The GSC may add meetings as necessary in order to complete assigned tasks. Notice of meetings will be sent via e-mail at least one week prior to meetings. Agendas will be provided in advance of the meeting. Members without e-mail access will receive meeting notices via the U.S. mail.

The standing committees, and any sub-committees and/or workgroups shall be responsible for scheduling meetings that will accommodate the members of that committee or group, and of sufficient frequency and duration to complete the task assigned within the timeframes allotted. Any unforeseen issue that may cause a delay in completion of the assigned task shall be reported to the Coordinator immediately.

XV. Non-Attendance

When circumstances prevent executive-level members from participation in required GSC meetings, those members may appoint a high level administrative or managerial staff person to deliberate and make decisions in their absence, as long as the appointing executive attends at least two meetings per year. It is expected that the delegated attendee will report to the member on the business of the Collaborative on a regular and ongoing basis. A member's failure to attend meetings, or to send adequate representation, can be cause for removal from the GSC. Nothing in these guidelines would prevent the GSC from reinstating an individual or agency/organization membership based upon a review and recommendation from the Executive Committee.

XVI. Voting

The preferred decision making process of the GSC shall be consensus of all present. Consensus is defined as:

A decision, which every member of the group can support, even if the decision is not every member's preference.

If consensus cannot be obtained, decisions will be made by a simple majority of those members or approved designees in attendance. Each member or designee shall have one vote.

- The GSC Coordinator and Parent Liaison are non-voting members.
- At-large members may be present during voting, but may not vote.
- If expedited decisions need to be made between regularly scheduled meetings, simple-majority vote can be taken using phone or email.

When role call voting is required or requested, the names and votes of members or designees shall be recorded in the minutes.

Members or designees shall abstain from voting when the question to be voted upon directly or indirectly provides the member's organization with funding or services through a contractual relationship.

Members are expected to report any other issue that may constitute a conflict of interest. The membership will then determine through the rules above if a conflict does exist, and if so, the member will abstain from voting on the issue. Members will also excuse themselves from discussion regarding issues with which a conflict of interest exists.

Actions voted on by a majority of members or designees where a quorum³ is present shall constitute authorized actions of the GSC.

The members of the GSC approved by consensus that the Executive Committee may make decisions on behalf of the GSC to accept funds, support grant requests, or approve action when time is of the essence and it is not practical to poll the membership. Every effort will be made to include members in decision-making processes.

XVII. Conflict Resolution

Communications between members of the GSC shall be mutually respectful reflecting the shared vision and spirit of cooperation. In the event that a conflict should arise, it shall be handled in a respectful and discreet manner. Should a member have an issue or conflict that they are not able to address at a scheduled meeting, they may contact the Coordinator for resolution or referral to the Executive Committee. In the event that a member has a conflict or issue regarding the Coordinator, they may contact the Executive Committee directly. In the event that none of these procedures resolves the conflict or issue, the GSC Executive Committee may authorize the use of an outside mediator.

XVIII. Procedures and Amendments

These operational guidelines may be amended by a majority vote of the members of the GSC. At least one week prior to voting, GSC members will receive written notification of the proposed amendment and the meeting at which it will be considered.

These guidelines will be reviewed annually by the Coordinator and revised as needed to comply with relevant available documents as provided by the Office of Great Start or its appointee(s) as part of the grant award process. The revised guidelines will be reviewed and the GSC membership will vote on the adoption of the revised draft.

³ The number for a quorum has not been specified.