

Great Start Collaborative – Hillsdale County Operating Guidelines

Vision:

To ensure every child in Hillsdale County is safe, healthy, and ready to succeed in school and in life.

Mission:

The purpose of the Hillsdale County Great Start is to assure a coordinated system of community resources to assist all Hillsdale County families in providing a great start for their children from birth through age five.

ARTICLE I: NAME

The name of this committee is the Hillsdale County Great Start Collaborative –hereafter referred to as the GSC.

ARTICLE II: AFFILIATION

Hillsdale County Great Start is under the direction and guidance of the Early Childhood Investment Corporation (ECIC) – ECIC is a public corporation to bring state and local leaders together on behalf of a better life for Michigan's youngest learners and their families.

ARTICLE III: PURPOSE

The purpose of this collaborative committee is to:

- A. Participate in the on-going process of making decisions about the nature and operation of early childhood-related programs and services in Hillsdale County.
- B. Assist the local Great Start Collaborative Coordinator in accomplishing early childhood-related tasks, goals and objectives to improve the local system.
- C. Assist in the development and implementation of a local Early Childhood Action Agenda.
- D. Initiate suggestions for local systems improvement.
- E. Encourage parent participation.
- F. Assist in recruiting volunteer efforts and local engagement, including philanthropic, faith-based, public and private support.

ARTICLE IV: MEMBERSHIP

Composition of the GSC will consist of the ECIC-prescribed agency members and/or their delegated alternate. The GSC will have a minimum of 20 public/private members including at least 4 Parent Leaders and 1 Parent Liaison.

- A. Required membership of the GSC will consist of one member (or a designee) from each of the following categories (unless otherwise indicated)::
1. Parents (will be at least 20% of the total membership=minimum 4 parents)
 2. Business Leader (e.g. a president of a local chamber of commerce, a director of workforce development or economic development for the county)
 3. Director of a philanthropic and/or charitable organization (e.g. United Way, Community Foundation, or a service organization)
 4. Director of a Faith-based community
 5. Director of organizations that provide services on behalf of minority populations in the county (at least two)
 6. The ISD Superintendent or ISD Executive Director
 7. Directors of the Community Health Agency, DHS, and community mental health
 8. Director of Local Hospital, health care system and/or managed care plan serving Hillsdale County
 9. Family/Juvenile Court
 10. Hillsdale County Early On Coordinator
 11. Director of parenting education or family support program not administered by ISD
 12. Director of Child Care Network
 13. Director of MSU Extension
 14. Director of Hillsdale County Head Start
 15. Director of a Hillsdale County GSRP
 16. Director of a Hillsdale County Licensed Child Care Center
 17. Director of a Hillsdale County Licensed Home Child Care Program
 18. A Principal from a local Elementary School
 19. An Elected Official
 20. Hillsdale County Law Enforcement
 21. Hillsdale County Public Library

ARTICLE V: EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

This organization shall democratically elect the following offices from membership of the Great Start Collaborative. If necessary, the Executive Committee may conduct any business not acted on at a regular scheduled meeting to respond to unforeseen deadlines such as, but not limited, to grant responses. The Executive Committee shall report any action taken at the next meeting.

1. They will hold these offices for one year with the opportunity to serve a second one year term based on membership vote. The voting Executive Committee members are as follows:
 - A. Chairperson
 - B. Vice-Chairperson
 - C. Past Chair (if applicable)
 - D. Two added representatives from the GSC

- E. Great Start Coordinator
- F. Parent Liaison

2. Duties of the Officers:

Hillsdale County Great Start Chairperson responsibilities:

- Aide Great Start Coordinator in preparation of monthly agenda with input from the membership during previous meetings
- Be prepared to conduct all meetings using good techniques of leadership
- Be a part of establishing sub-committees
- Assist in the recruitment of new members for the GSC
- Act as the spokesperson for the GSC when requested by the Great Start Coordinator
- Keep a positive, open communication standard during the GSC meetings and encourage members to do the same

Hillsdale County Great Start Vice-Chairperson responsibilities:

- Be prepared to preside at meetings in the absence of the Chairperson
- Inform others about the Collaborative in the community
- Assist in the recruitment of new members for the GSC

GSC Officer responsibilities:

- The total number of meetings scheduled annually will be between 6-8. Officers are encouraged to attend 90% of meetings scheduled. If an officer has two absences from GSC meetings the membership may review their position on the GSC Committee and re-elect if necessary.
- Officers will be elected by a majority vote of the members present and will take office immediately following the election at which they are elected.
- Officers will serve for a term of one year. No officer will be eligible to serve more than two consecutive terms.

ARTICLE VI: MEMBER RESPONSIBILITIES

- A. Members of the Great Start Collaborative, in cooperation with the Great Start Collaborative Coordinator, will determine, by majority, the frequency, location and time of meetings.
- B. Members will receive notification of meetings at least one week before the meeting is scheduled.
- C. Business decisions regarding the collaborative will be made by majority vote of those present at the collaborative meeting.
- D. The GSC will use the “one agency, one vote” rule as a guideline for voting purposes, with the exception of representatives from the same agency filling different categories of the membership list. If a member is unable to attend a meeting, a designee can vote on their agency’s behalf with prior approval from the Great Start Coordinator.

ARTICLE VII: COMMITTEES

Sub-Committees will be established as needed. Recommendations for additional committees should be submitted to the Great Start Collaborative Chair.

ARTICLE VIII: QUORUM

At least one-half of the voting members must be present to constitute a quorum.

ARTICLE IX: VOTING

Each collaborative agency will have one vote, unless representatives from the same agency fill different categories of the membership list. If an interested party sends more than one representative to a GSC meeting, and they do not fill different categories of the membership list, the voting representative must be identified. No representative shall cast a vote for more than one party at any meeting. Decisions will be made by a simple majority.

ARTICLE X: AMENDING OPERATING GUIDELINES

- A. These operating guidelines may be amended by a majority vote at any future GSC Board meeting. An annual review by the membership will be conducted.
- B. Any member may submit amendments to be introduced at a meeting and voted on at the next meeting.

ARTICLE XI: PROCEDURES

- A. Conflict Resolution:

The GSC values and encourages the infusion of new perspectives. The GSC recognizes that in collaborative decision-making, areas of conflict and disagreement may arise. The GSC believes that who is right or wrong is not of concern. The exchange of perspectives and points of view – not the selling of them – is the issue. Therefore, the GSC will address areas of conflict and disagreement by implementation of a Skillful Discussions model:

1. Areas of Conflict and Disagreement will be addressed within the GSC meeting by:
 - a. Exploring impasses.
 - 1) Identifying the areas of agreement.
 - 2) Clarifying the points of disagreement.
 - Exploring the Facts: What is the data and what does it tell us?

- Exploring Methods: How should we do what we need to do?
- Reviewing Goals: What is our objective?
- Reviewing Values: Why do we think it must be done a particular way? What do we, as the GSC, believe in?

- b. Reaching group consensus (defined as being able to support publicly the decision of the group even if full agreement isn't met) so that the GSC can move ahead.
 - c. Continuing to address the points of disagreement as the project develops.
2. When areas of conflict and disagreement cannot be resolved or impede the process within the GSC, the assistance of a consultant or mediator will be obtained.

B. Funding Decisions:

1. Whenever possible, all members will be notified when grant funds are available. This could be accomplished via email, faxing, special meetings and regularly scheduled meetings, time permitting.
2. When funds become available, the Executive Committee will meet to determine if the goals of the new funding fit with the GSC strategic plan.