

BOARD OF EDUCATION

Dr. James Mangutz,
Board President

Nancy Persing,
Vice President

Jim Gendernalik,
Board Treasurer

Ian Faulkner,
Board Secretary

Trustees:
Anthony Bair
Alyssa Faulkner
Kara Mularz

ADMINISTRATION

Shawn Petri,
Superintendent

Melisa Akers, Director
of Special Education

Mike Evans, Director
of Career and Technical
Education

Dr. Katie Harris, Director
of Instructional Services

Katie Keith, Director of
Early Childhood

Kurt Loll,
Finance Director

Somer Quinlan,
Director of ROOC, Inc.

Jared Socia,
Director of Operations

To: Shawn Petri, Superintendent

From: Katie Keith, Director of Early Childhood

Date: March 2026

Subject: Early Childhood Update

COOR Community and Family Connection (formerly Great Start Collaborative)

On February 11, Gretchen Whitmer kicked off the Fiscal Year 2027 (FY27) budget season with the release of her Executive Budget proposal.

Since the loss of Section 32p funding, which previously supported the Great Start Collaboratives, many partners across the state have been working together to advocate for the restoration of early childhood infrastructure, supports, and resources for families. We are encouraged to see the following language included in the Governor's proposal:

To strengthen local early childhood infrastructure, the Executive Budget recommends a new \$30 million investment to establish regional "Early Learning Partnerships," which would provide:

- Central access points to early childhood services
- Family and community outreach to build awareness, trust, and referral networks
- Support for early identification of developmental delays
- Real-time data insights to improve services and systems

While additional details have not yet been released, we are hopeful that the essential work once carried out by the Great Start Collaboratives will be prioritized by both the Senate and House, resulting in new funding (under a different name) and strengthened support for families in FY27.

COOR Community and Family Connection are excited to be partnering with the 31n team and the CRCPC to announce that a Community Education Grant (MILP/CDC Funded) was received in the amount of \$7,000, to launch a Trauma/ Resilience Community Campaign to bring awareness to the effects of Trauma on our

families, children and community. “Resiliency Rising” Campaign will begin planning next week, if any of our Board Members would like to join the zoom meeting please reach out to Tammy Tyler 9899152752 tylert@coorisd.net. We are hopeful the campaign will rekindle the fire for ACES awareness and supports for those experiencing ACES.

Great Start to Quality

Our Family Child Care Network (FCCN) providers, comprised of 25 licensed home-based programs within the Gaylord, Lewiston, and Rogers City areas, have had some interesting professional development opportunities. In January they attended a training about learning through play and how important it is to have your space full of learning opportunities. They also had training on tax preparation.

Child care providers in our 11 county region had a chance to apply for a gardening mini grant. Providers can use the grant to purchase gardening tools, seeds, plants, structures for gardening, curriculum, and anything connected to gardening and nutrition. Seven of our providers have received the grant. They are in the following counties: Alpena, Iosco, Cheboygan, and Montmorency. These programs are excited to get growing this spring. Helen Shastal was asked to sit on the advisory board for the Michigan Farm to Early Care Network. They met once this month and are excited to bring gardening, nutrition, and physical activity to the forefront this spring for children and families.

<https://www.canr.msu.edu/michigan-farm-to-ece-network/>

Great Start Readiness Program

LAP B-K: The [second checkpoint for LAP B-K](#) has been completed and reviewed. Overall, staff like the assessment and really enjoy having more time with students. Every domain had growth in more students being proficient. Classrooms are currently collecting ongoing data for executive functioning, social emotional and self help. The next checkpoint starts in May.

COOR has received \$30,000 in grant dollars to fund and support the implementation of high-quality, evidence-based family (birth to 20) engagement opportunities and practices—focused on strengthening attendance, literacy, math, STEM—in collaboration with schools, community organizations, and childcare providers, and aligned to the [MDE Family Engagement Framework](#). The Early Childhood team is beginning the planning stages of the activities as all funds must be spent by September 30, 2027.