

**Memorandum of Understanding
between
First Steps, the Great Start Collaborative of Kent County,
and the Kent Intermediate School District**

This Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) sets forth the terms and understanding between First Steps (FS), the Great Start Collaborative of Kent County (GSC), and the Kent Intermediate School District (Kent ISD) regarding activities related to the development, implementation and evaluation of a comprehensive early childhood system.

I. Background

FS, the GSC, and the Kent ISD share common priorities and interests in the development of a comprehensive and integrated early childhood system, including but not limited to:

- service coordination and alignment through implementation of a countywide plan for services to children and families;
- systems improvement by allocating and expanding resources and implementing public policies to improve the quality of life for children and families in Kent County;
- accountability through evaluation of all activities, including both short- and long-term outcomes.

These organizations realize that by forming a strategic partnership they can avoid duplication of efforts and capitalize on the individual strengths of each.

II. Purpose

The purpose of this MOU is to memorialize the fiduciary relationship between FS, the GSC and the Kent ISD.

III. Roles and Responsibilities

A. First Steps will:

- Provide fiscal services to the GSC by serving as the designated legal corporate entity and by accounting for all GSC funds through separate cost centers and in accordance with Generally Accepted Accounting Principles. The fiduciary relationship will begin on October 1, 2009, the start of the 2010 Fiscal Year.
- Serve as employer of record, providing compensation and benefits, to all staff members funded through the GSC. GSC staff shall be afforded the same benefits as other FS staff members. FS assumes no direct funding responsibility for the staff and activities of the GSC.
- Provide space, use of equipment, and office support.

- Certify to the Kent ISD that the GSC has adhered to its budget, annual Early Childhood Action Agenda, and other contractual obligations with the Early Childhood Investment Corporation.
- Recognize the superintendent of the Kent ISD or a designee as a full voting member of the FS Commission.
- Recognize the chair of the GSC or a designee as a full voting member of the FS Commission.
- Report annually (or more often if requested) to the Kent Intermediate Superintendents Association.

B. The Great Start Collaborative will:

- Decide how to allocate the GSC budget and, to the extent possible, align resources to advance the early childhood plan.
- Establish an annual Early Childhood Action Agenda that aligns with the community's early childhood systems building work.
- Adhere to all other contractual obligations with the Early Childhood Investment Corporation.
- Recognize the superintendent of the Kent ISD or a designee as a member of the GSC.
- Recognize a representative of FS as a member of the GSC.
- Reimburse FS for the appropriate costs of providing fiduciary services, such as but not limited to occupancy costs, insurance, payroll administration, personnel and benefits administration, evaluation, and technical support.

C. The Kent Intermediate School District will:

- Receive the GSC grant from the Early Childhood Investment Corporation and forward the funds to FS.
- Approve the annual GSC budget and Early Childhood Action Agenda.
- Adhere to all contractual obligations with the Early Childhood Investment Corporation.
- Appoint the superintendent or another designee to serve as a full voting member on the FS Commission.
- Appoint the superintendent or another designee to serve as a member of the GSC.
- Provide a forum to share information with the Kent Intermediate Superintendents Association and the Kent Intermediate Association of School Boards about the development, implementation, and evaluation of the early childhood system.

D. Hiring and Evaluation

- The executive director of FS, after conferring with the chair of the GSC, shall hire, evaluate, and determine the conditions of employment of the GSC Coordinator and the Communications Director. The GSC Coordinator, after conferring with the chair of the GSC and executive director of FS, shall hire, evaluate, and determine the conditions of employment of all other staff funded through the GSC.

IV. Joint Review

The chair or co-chairs of FS, one or more staff from FS, the chair of the GSC, one or more staff from the GSC, the superintendent of the Kent ISD, and one or more staff from the Kent ISD will meet to review and evaluate the effectiveness of this relationship. The meeting will occur no less than once a year and more often if needed.

V. Funding

Nothing in this MOU shall be deemed a financial obligation of the Kent ISD, FS or the GSC.

VI. Duration

This MOU is at-will and may be modified by mutual consent of authorized representatives of each of the signing organizations. In the absence of a mutual agreement to continue this strategic partnership, this MOU shall end on December 31, 2011.

VII. Signatures / Date

Ben Emdin, President
First Steps

Date

Lynne Ferrell, Chair
Great Start Collaborative of Kent County

Date

Kevin Konarska, Superintendent
Kent Intermediate School District

Date

***This MOU was signed and dated by all parties in August 2009.