



STATE OF MICHIGAN
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
LANSING

GRETCHEN WHITMER
GOVERNOR

MICHAEL F. RICE, Ph.D.
STATE SUPERINTENDENT

MEMORANDUM

DATE: February 20, 2020

TO: Local and Intermediate School District Superintendents
Public School Academy Directors

FROM: Dr. Scott M. Koenigs knecht, Deputy Superintendent P-20 System and Student Transitions 

SUBJECT: Fall 2020 Michigan Kindergarten Entry Observation (MKEO)/
Kindergarten Readiness Assessment (KRA) Statewide Sampling Method

Sections 32d(3) and 104(4) of Public Act 58 of 2019, commonly known as the State School Aid Act, have new provisions regarding the MKEO/KRA that affect all school districts beginning with the start of the 2020-21 school year. This memo is intended to provide clarifications regarding the provisions for planning and implementation purposes. The clarifications were reviewed by representatives from the Michigan Association of Intermediate School Administrators Early Childhood Administrators Network, Johns Hopkins University, and Michigan State University.

Section 32d(3), as it relates to the MKEO/KRA impact on children at kindergarten entry, focuses on the statewide evaluation of the Great Start Readiness Program (GSRP). Per statute, the "evaluation must include a comparative analysis of the relationship between great start readiness programs and performance on the kindergarten readiness assessment funded under section 104. The evaluation must use children wait-listed under this section for comparison, must include a determination of the specific great start readiness program in which the kindergarten students were enrolled and attended in the previous school year, and must analyze Michigan kindergarten entry observation tool scores for students taking the Michigan kindergarten entry observation tool each year and produce a report as required under section 104."

Michigan State University is the current statewide evaluator of GSRP, based on an open competitive grant process by the department, and will be conducting and reporting on this analysis.

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First clarification: Prior Care Field data within the MKEO/KRA is critical for the comparative analysis and reporting required under this legislative requirement. It is vital that sufficient effort is given to the validity and reliability of Prior Care Field data.

Section 104(4) focuses on the statewide implementation of the MKEO/KRA that will occur with the start of the 2020-21 school year. Per statute, “the department, in collaboration with all intermediate districts, shall ensure that the Michigan kindergarten entry observation tool is administered in each kindergarten classroom to either the full census of kindergarten pupils enrolled in the classroom or to a representative sample of not less than 35% of the total kindergarten pupils enrolled in each classroom. If a district elects to administer the Michigan kindergarten entry observation tool to a random sample of pupils within each classroom, the district’s intermediate district shall select the pupils who will receive the assessment based on the same random method. Beginning in 2020, the observation tool must be administered within 45 days after the start of the school year.”

In Section 104(4)(e)(i), “Kindergarten” includes a classroom for young 5-year-olds, commonly referred to as “young 5s” or “developmental kindergarten.”

Second clarification: The intent of the legislature to change the language to “45 days after the start of the school year”, meant **45 calendar days**. The latest possible day for MKEO/KRA administration in 2020 will be October 22, 2020.

With the MKEO/KRA implemented statewide beginning in 2020, a consistent methodology for sampling across all kindergarten classrooms is necessary for those districts that choose not to conduct full census of kindergarten pupils enrolled in the classroom. The consistent methodology is essential for the analysis of the data and for reliable reporting of the data, as prescribed under statute. An annual report will be submitted that reports on “the demonstrated readiness of kindergarten pupils statewide and the effectiveness of state and federal early childhood programs that are designed for school readiness under this state’s authority, including the great start readiness program and the great start readiness/Head Start blended program, as referenced under section 32d.”

In Section 104(4)(e)(ii), “Representative sample” means a sample capable of producing valid and reliable assessment information on all or major subgroups of kindergarten pupils in a district.

Third Clarification: As is periodically the case in the drafting of legislation, language conflicts arise, and clarification is required. There is a technical wording conflict within section 104(4)a in which the terms “representative sample” and “random method” are utilized for the same purpose/intent, although within the field of psychometrics, there are nuances between them. Given the legislative intent to link Section 104(4) with Section 32d (i.e., GSRP), and given the necessity for a consistent sampling method, **the following method must be implemented to achieve a statewide random sample**.

Starting with the 2020-21 school year, and within 45 calendar days of the start of the school year, the MKEO/KRA must be administered in one of the following two ways:

1. To **the full census** of kindergarten pupils enrolled in the classroom;

OR

2. With the "**systematic sampling**" method to reach a representative sample of not less than 35 percent of the total kindergarten pupils. All pupils on the classroom roster should be assigned a sequential number based on any ordering method*. The MKEO/KRA should be administered to **the first and last pupils on the list and pupils whose sequential numbers are multiples of three**. For example, for a classroom of 29 pupils, pupils with the following sequential numbers should be assessed: 1, 3, 6, 9, 12, 15, 18, 21, 24, 27, and 29.

When there is a state-approved special circumstance in which a selected pupil may not take the MKEO/KRA (e.g., children with severe cognitive and multiple impairments), the assessment should be given to the next pupil on the list (e.g., pupil #7 will be assessed as a replacement for #6, who has an exempt status).

*Allowing any ordering method to assign pupils with a sequential number ultimately increases the randomness of sampling at the state level.

For more information, please contact Richard Lower, Director, Office of Preschool and Out-of-School Time Learning at lowerR@michigan.gov.

cc: Michigan Education Alliance