



## Flanagan chooses Susan Broman to lead the new Office of Great Start

**Contact:** Martin Ackley, Director of Communications (517) 241-4395

**Agency:** Education

November 28, 2011

LANSING - State Superintendent of Public Instruction Mike Flanagan has chosen Susan Broman to lead the new Office of Great Start.

"Susan is the type of leader we need to establish and build this pivotal office," Flanagan said. "Quality early childhood development is the foundation for successful learning and opportunity in every child's life."

Housed within the Michigan Department of Education (MDE), the Office of Great Start was created by Governor Rick Snyder through Executive Order 2011-8 on June 29, 2011 to consolidate and coordinate a variety of early childhood development and learning programs and funding streams that had been fragmented across state government.

Improving early childhood development and creating the Office of Great Start were major focuses of the Governor's Special Message on Education delivered to the state legislature in April 2011. Focusing greater attention and access to pre-kindergarten education also is a major priority of the State Board of Education.

As director of the office, Broman will be a Deputy Superintendent at MDE and report directly to Flanagan.

"This is an exciting and unique opportunity," Broman said. "We now have a focal point for early childhood development in state government that aligns all of the services to bring about better outcomes for kids."

"We have all of the pieces in place and are positioned to take the ball and run," she added. "We have a governor and state superintendent who truly understand that early childhood development is important, and understand the return on investment we receive by investing in quality early childhood programs."

Broman will help develop a new and more comprehensive culture between early child care and traditional education systems and groups.

"We need to move the function of day care from being seen as just babysitting and child care to being early learning," Broman said. "Increasing the quality of early child care will help ensure that all kids, especially low-income kids, are ready to succeed in kindergarten."

Broman has been president of the Steelcase Foundation since 1996. The Grand Rapids-based philanthropic foundation focuses on the areas of human service, health, education, community development, the arts and the environment -- giving particular concern to people who are disadvantaged, disabled, young and elderly as they attempt to improve the quality of their lives.

She has a strong history of working collaboratively on early childhood issues. She currently chairs the Kent County Family Children Coordinating Council; co-chaired the "Early Matters" early childhood initiative for the Council of Michigan Foundations; was past chairperson of the Early Childhood Investment Corporation's board of directors; was one of the creators of the First Steps Commission in Kent County; and was integral in "Ready to Succeed," an early proponent of early childhood learning in

Michigan.