



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **Early Childhood Investment Corporation awards more than \$900,000 in ReImagine Early Years grants**

*Grants to foster bold thinking for long-term school success*

LANSING – The Early Childhood Investment Corp. (ECIC) has awarded \$928,233 in ReImagine Early Years grants to 11 school districts across the state to foster innovative P-8 (prenatal through age 8) educational reform.

ReImagine Early Years grant funds will be used to:

- Implement preschool or other early childhood programs to improve school readiness
- Improve student proficiency in core content areas
- Create continuity between early learning and elementary schools
- Create high quality learning environments in early grades

The grants, which were funded by the Kellogg Foundation, were targeted to school districts identified by the Michigan Department of Education last year as Project ReImagine sites. Project ReImagine is an effort to encourage innovative strategies using public and private partnerships to help change the way education is delivered in Michigan.

Schools or school districts receiving the grants are: Comstock Public Schools, Farwell Area Schools, Grand Rapids Public Schools, Ingham ISD, Lakeview Community Schools, Mason-Lake-Oceana ISD, N.I.C.E. Community School District, Oxford Community Schools, Saginaw ISD, Traverse Bay Area ISD, and University Preparatory Academy in Detroit.

“Making sure children have high quality early learning opportunities from birth through age 8 is crucial to their later success in school and in life,” said Jessica Gillard, director of early learning and innovation for the ECIC, a public/private initiative that is spurring investment in enhanced delivery of early childhood programs through system-building.

State Superintendent Mike Flanagan prioritized the focus on early childhood education as a key component for Project ReImagine applications. “We understand the value of providing children with quality learning well-before they toddle into kindergarten classrooms,” Flanagan said. “These grant funds will go a long way to help every school district realize that necessary shift.”

Michael Haynes, superintendent of the NICE Community School District in Ishpeming, said the grant is a “huge opportunity” for local families.

“The grant will enable our district to take initial steps toward the concept of ‘universal early childhood’ while recognizing that a high-quality pre-kindergarten education can occur anywhere,” Haynes said. “One of our goals is to provide a model for other districts to replicate as they engage in activities that strengthen families and prepare children for success in school.”

See attached for a full listing of grant amounts and what the money will be used for.

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*The Early Childhood Investment Corporation is a public/private initiative working to restructure Michigan’s investment in children from birth to five through state and local community efforts. For more information on ECIC and its efforts, visit <http://greatstartforkids.org/>.*