

# Mandatory Kindergarten Enrollment

Michigan Senate

Committee on Education

Dr. Sheryl Kennedy, Legislative Liaison

Michigan Department of Education

# Eight Goals

1. Expand early childhood learning opportunities
2. Improve early literacy achievement
3. Improve the health, safety, and wellness of all learners
4. Expand secondary learning opportunities for all students
5. Increase the percentage of all students who graduate from high school
6. Increase the percentage of adults with a post-secondary credential
7. Increase the numbers of certified teachers in areas of shortage
8. Provide adequate and equitable school funding



# Upstream and Downstream

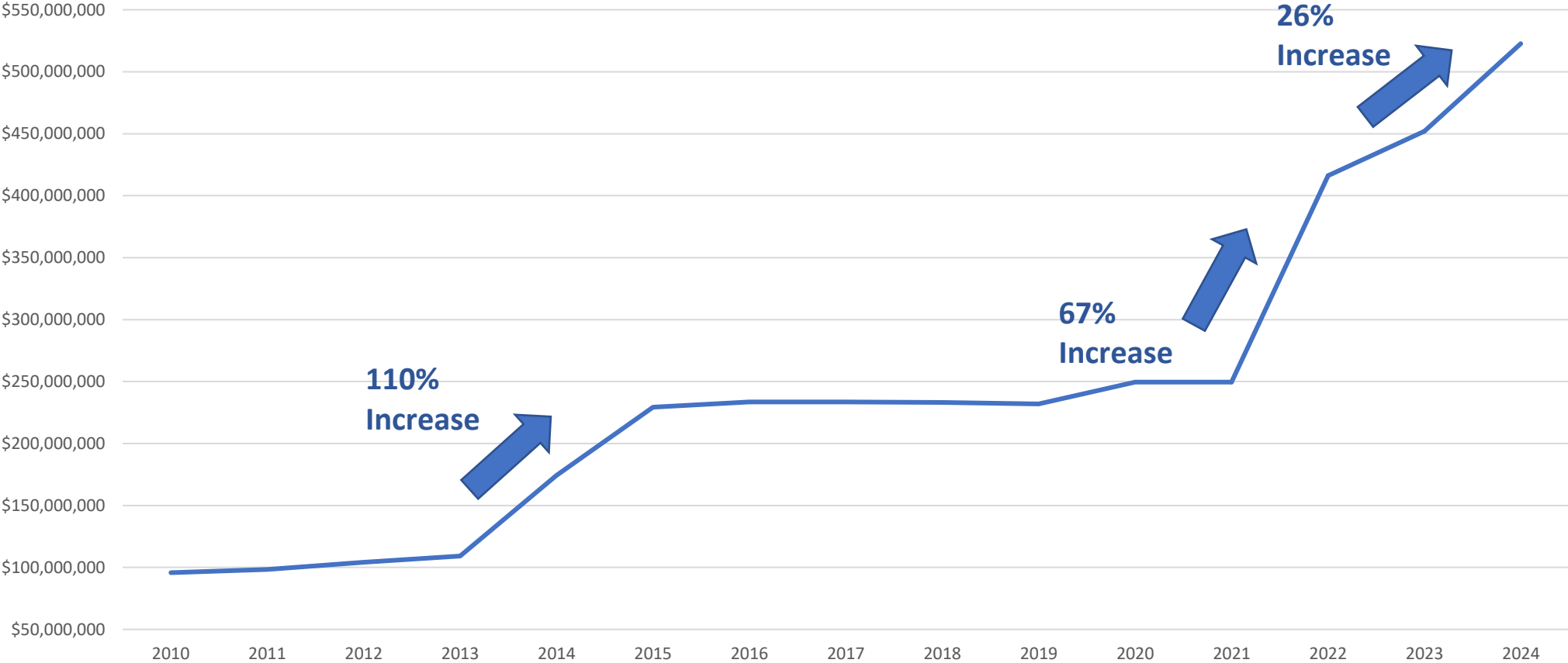
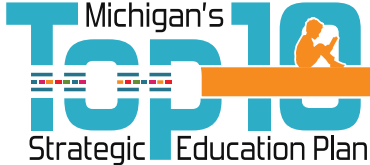
- The **developmental upstream** goals addressing the expansion of early childhood education and the improvement of early literacy (Goals 1 and 2) and health, safety, and wellness (Goal 3) **help drive all other downstream goals**, which include secondary school program expansion, graduation rates, and postsecondary credential rates (Goals 4, 5, and 6).



# Current Law

- Requires all public schools to offer kindergarten
- Kindergarten may be full or half day
- Students may enroll if they are five years old by September 1, or parents may sign a waiver, and enroll their child if the child's fifth birthday falls between September 2 and December 1
- Mandatory attendance is not required until a child turns 6, and a child may be enrolled in first grade at that time, regardless of readiness.

# Overall GSRP Funding



Actual

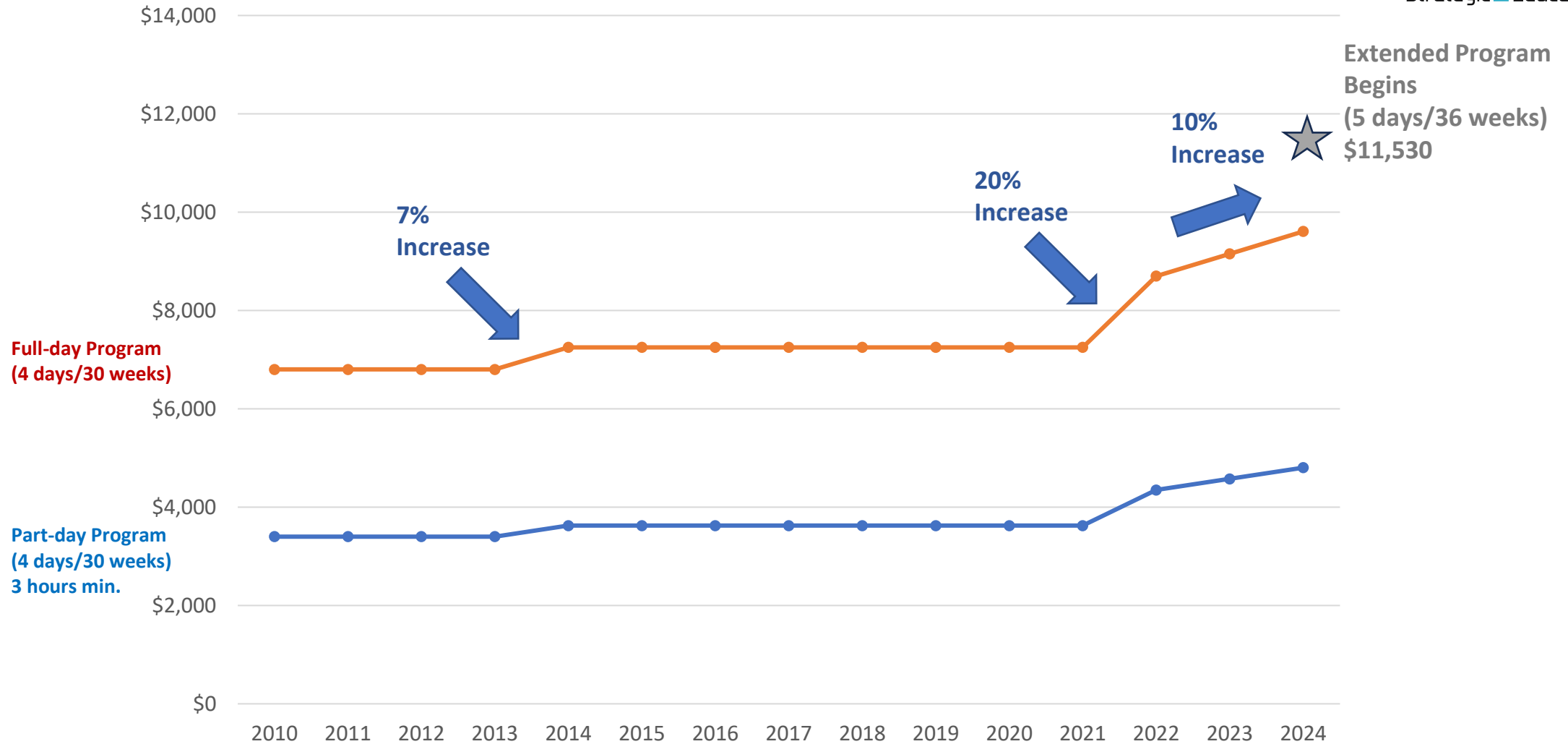
FY21 - \$249,600,000

FY23 - \$452,120,000

FY22 - \$416,120,000

FY24 - \$522,720,000

# GSRP Per Child Funding



# State Comparisons

- Currently 17 States and the District of Columbia require kindergarten enrollment
- Michigan's Great Start Readiness Program (GSRP) pre-school has been tied for the top ranked in the country for the last half decade, we should continue that leadership role once four-year-olds turn five and enter kindergarten.

# What this bill does and doesn't do...

- This bill does not require kindergarten enrollment in a public school. Demonstrated enrollment in private, parochial, charter, or home school meets the requirement of this bill
- This bill does not require a full day enrollment in kindergarten.
- This bill does require that all children who are five years old on September 1 are enrolled in some form of schooling at that time.



# Thoughts to consider

- We have no way of knowing how many children are currently not enrolled in kindergarten
- Although parents can still seek a waiver to enroll a child with a later birthday in kindergarten, we highly recommend that parents seek a readiness screening from the school they will be attending and discuss this choice with the school administrator and teacher.
- We hope that as we move toward universal access to preschool, this will become the preferred route for four-year-olds
- MDE is waiting for confirmation from the U.S. Department of Education that Title I funds can still be used for funding our kindergarten classrooms. Initial communications have been promising, and we expect a response soon.

## In summary

- MDE feels strongly that every child should be participating in a kindergarten experience once they turn five.
- MDE feels strongly that our GSRP preschool is better aligned for four-year-olds, and provides better life outcomes.
- MDE hopes that this bill is the beginning of a new educational culture in Michigan that believes education typically begins at four in preschool, and every 5-year-old should be enrolled in a kindergarten program.

# Thank you! Questions?

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