March 18, 2019 KENT ISD SCHOOL BOARD WORK SESSION MINUTES

A work session of the School Board of said district was held in the Administrative Offices on the above date. The meeting was called to order by President Haidle at 9:02 am.

Members Present: Bajema, Drake, Haidle, Joseph and Rettig
Member Absent:

Kent ISD Staff Present: Superintendent Caniff, Assistant Superintendents Hagerty, Koehler, Smith, Sullivan, and Recording Secretary Conners; Directors Baine, Campbell, Dymowski, Finkel, Kaufman, Lovelady-Mitchell, Myers. Peraino and Stamas; Principals Bush, Graham, Hendry and Kiley; Sunil Joy and Ashley Karsten

Guest: Mike Washburn

President Haidle welcomed all staff and guests. Superintendent Caniff reviewed the 2018-19 organizational goals established last June. These goals include:

- KISA goals of kindergarten readiness, third grade reading proficiency, 8th grade math proficiency, and college and career readiness
- Provide Quality Leadership and Service and engage in Continuous Organizational Improvement/Growth (AdvancED Accreditation goals)
- Migration and Transition of Special Education Center Programs from GRPS to Kent ISD
- Maintain current culture during time of accelerated growth
- Development of Teacher Cadet Program
- Development of Welding Program
- Growth and support of new leadership in several key positions
- Expand Diversity, Equity and Inclusion training
- Continued emphasis on School Safety
- WAN Fiber Project

Assistant Superintendent Smith stated that the leadership changes in many programs have gone smoothly and resulted in improved staff morale and a focus on services and students. The Career Readiness Department recently completed a TRAC audit that is administered once every five years, and this went very well. He thanked Cary Stamas for his work on this audit. He also noted that Launch U will be adding Cohort 3 next year and the program continues to be a great success. He thanked Kristen Doneth for her leadership with Launch U.

Director Kelli Campbell gave a report on our early literacy efforts and the new coaching service delivery model. We currently have four full-time Early Literacy coaches. The new delivery model allows us to increase our capacity and offer services to any district in Kent County without hiring more coaches. MDE has visited Kent ISD to learn more about this structure and its success. Kelli is active with the General Education Leadership Network (GELN), which has developed EL “Essentials in
Action” standards for Pre-K, Birth-3, 4-5 and 6-12 grade students. They have identified 10 Essentials that are vital to improving literacy, and highlight quality teachers that are modeling these practices and achieving results.

The math coaches are in their second year of a blended coaching model. Coaches offer virtual coaching with a face-to-face meeting once a month. They are also collaborating with four universities and colleges to identify “Leaders of Tomorrow”. Currently 18 undergraduate students are in this program. The math team provides training and mentors this group with the goal of retaining talent here in West Michigan.

Principal Bush gave an overview of the Launch U program. We are currently accepting students for Cohort 3. Kristen Doneth is the new coordinator and collaborates closely with GRCC to offer Early-Middle college opportunities. The open house for Launch U was well attended.

The Kent Innovation High program continues to improve processes and reach out to local districts to offer Project Based Learning training opportunities. Over 80% of KIH Juniors opt in to KCTC programs. For the enrollment process, the shadowing experience is intentional and offers small projects so students can experience project based learning.

Director Dymowski gave an update on the Center Program Transition work. The consultant we hired to conduct the review of center programs, Beth Steenwyk, identified five pillars of Core Education Practices for students, which include:
1. Core Mission and Guiding Principals
2. Explicit Expectations of Staff Performance and Instructional Practices
3. Safe, Secure and Well-Maintained Environments
4. Essential Components of Education Practice (high-quality, coherent, evidence-based, consistent, professional development)
5. Continuous School Improvement

Director Dymowski is working with center program administrators on a plan to implement these five practices as these programs transition to Kent ISD. Dymowski also reviewed some of the major focus goals including early intervention, career readiness and professional development opportunities.

Principal Kiley stated that the KTC welding program offers a virtual lab and now includes training on a hot welding program as a follow up to the virtual program. Enrollment requests for the new program has been very strong and there is already a need for two instructors. He noted that KTC will be partnering with GSRP to open a GSRP model classroom at KTC next year, which will benefit KTC’s early childhood program whose students will get first-hand experience in a closely monitored early childhood setting. He stated that job placement and retention rates for the KTC programs are very strong and that the distance between the KCTC and the KTC programs keeps closing.

Principal Hendry gave a report on the services offered through MySchool@Kent. Mental health supports continue to be in place. Students can now get more a la cart online course offerings, giving them more flexibility and opportunities. MySchool@Kent helps improve local LEA graduation rates as these rates go back to and are reported by local districts. She stated how much she appreciated the inter-connectedness at Kent ISD between the various secondary programs.
Superintendent Caniff thanked the MySchool@Kent staff for working and providing sessions for students during winter break and during snow days to allow students to continue making academic progress.

Director Stamas gave a report on Career Readiness. He is representing our ISD as the Career Education Program District (CEPD) and serves on an MDE OCTE accountability committee. He noted that over half of CTE students within our ISD are not located on our campus but are in local district programs. There are currently 11 additional districts that are thinking about adding CTE programming next fall. He expressed appreciation to Sue Gardner for the work she’s done with assisting our local districts, noting that we have received much positive feedback from local administrators on the additional CTE support they have received from our office.

He reviewed the Michigan Career Development Model, a K-12 model recommended by MDE last December. The second round of the Marshall plan may help support our work to increase the talent pipeline and the capacity to credential students in various CTE programs.

Principal Graham reviewed the two new programs for next year, the welding program and the Teacher Cadet Academy. Assistant Superintendent Smith praised Graham on his efforts to promote the work place culture of KCTC in keeping with the Gallup survey administered last year. Graham reviewed the ongoing work to affirm staff and improve security and safety. He stated that the growth at KIH and MySchool@Kent is directly impacting KCTC programs. We currently have about 150 students that stay on our campus all day. Work on the Ford Next Generation Learning project is also coming together.

Supervisor Ashley Karsten reviewed the GSRP early childhood programs. Opening a GSRP classroom on the KTC campus will allow students to earn nine GRCC credits and will provide a model classroom for teaching and instruction. Training in the Early Literacy “Essentials in Action” for preschool programs has been occurring for GSRP educators throughout the county. This will ensure alignment with kindergarten readiness expectations as measured by the new Kindergarten Readiness Assessment. The initial assessment shows that students involved in the GSRP and Bright Beginnings programs score significantly higher and are more likely to be ready to enter kindergarten. GSRP currently has 69 lead teachers serving over 2,000 students in local school districts. There are over 3,300 students being served countywide when including GSRP sections being delivered with Community Based Organizations. Staff turnover has been significantly lower this past year.

Kirsten Myers reported that the Special Education department administered a Comprehensive Needs Assessment involving local special education directors and shared the results with the PASE (parent) group. They plan to also send a survey to parents and use the results gathered and the Center Program Transition report to build a strategic plan and three-year goals that align with KISA goals and the five pillars of core educational practices. She discussed the 31n Mental Health funds and possible uses for these funds.

Director Finkel gave a report on the ongoing WAN Fiber project. Phase 1 is obtaining final permits and is close to going live within the next few weeks. Phase 2 is going well, the permitting is two-thirds completed and we hope to start to build the network this summer. Engineering work for Phase 3 will also start this summer. He reported that we have developed a new model of support
and currently have a regional technology director who is serving both Northview and Godfrey-Lee school districts.

Assistant Superintendent Sullivan provided an addendum to tonight’s board packet extending offers of employment to most current Center Program staff. She reviewed the processes followed before extending offers to almost 400 employees. We have received responses from all but 10 offers and have only had 11 offers not accepted. Many orientations are being set up to on-board these staff and there will be approximately 50 additional vacancies to post and fill. The HR department has been working closely with the Education Association on collective bargaining issues for new staff.

Director Lovelady-Mitchell reported on the National Equity Project workshops and the current Diversity, Equity and Inclusion workshops being offered. Superintendent Caniff stated that both Kent ISD and local superintendents are much more intentional about equity training and the impact it has on students. He was particularly proud of Director Lovelady-Mitchell’s leadership in organizing a conference to increase efforts to diversify the educator work force.

Assistant Superintendent Hagerty reviewed the impact that adding 400 Center Program staff will have on the organization. We will now run the second largest GSRP and Special Education Center Programs in the state and the third largest CTE program in the state. He reviewed improvements in campus safety and security and stated that we have four former law enforcement officers that serve on the safety committee.

Director Bain reported that the business office continues to hold bi-weekly meetings with HR and with GRPS to work out the logistics of absorbing 400 additional staff. Special Education funding guidelines can be very complex. He indicated that increased interest rates have allowed Kent ISD to improve interest earnings significantly over previous years.

Director Peraino stated that the Center Program transition would result in 200,000 additional square feet of building space to manage and renovate. They continue to develop sound processes to assure a smooth transition and ongoing maintenance. Director Finkel noted that the IT department is involved in the Center Program transition as well. Superintendent Caniff thanked Mike Hagerty for his leadership regarding the logistics of this complex transition.

Assistant Superintendent Koehler complimented Superintendent Caniff on his foresight to obtain an independent review of the Special Education Center programs. This has significantly reduced the amount of parent/staff complaints. He reported on the current work of the Grants and Development Department, the Truancy Department, and the West Michigan Talent Triangle (WMTT).

Director Kaufman provided an update on the School News Network and the work developing a new Kent ISD logo. School News Network has 30,000 weekly readers and has reached 300,000 page views. Surveys show that reader’s perceptions of surrounding districts have changed for the better.

Superintendent Caniff thanked Assistant Superintendent Koehler for his leadership with the School Finance Research Collaborative and his presentations to superintendents and various school
board associations throughout the state. He thanked Sunil Joy for his data analysis work that has supported all the reports given at this meeting.

Board members expressed their gratitude to all staff for their impressive work throughout the year. President Haidle commented on the complexity of this organization and was grateful that we are able to maintain the culture of Kent ISD during the Center Program transition. As we take on center programs, she asked if it was possible to report out the budget/finances of the Special Education Center Programs separately from Kent ISD. President Haidle also inquired about the current numbers of homeless children in Kent County and specific ways we are addressing their needs.

The board took a ten-minute recess at 11:10 a.m.

After returning from recess, Superintendent Caniff shared that the Oakland Schools Education Foundation, which is the entity that oversees the work being done with the School Funding Research Collaborative, has approached Kent ISD with a proposal to contract with us for a portion of Assistant Superintendent Ron Koehler’s time to serve as a consultant with them on this project until June 2019. Caniff expressed his support of this arrangement noting that Ron Koehler, too, is on board with this proposal. Caniff noted that Koehler is very effective in communicating the findings of the research and that he is a great choice to move the work of the SFRC forward. Depending on how the arrangement evolves, Caniff shared that this agreement could have implications into next fiscal year, too, and be extended as we move forward. After discussion, board members expressed support of this arrangement allowing OSEF to contract with Kent ISD for this work.

Upon motion of Member Drake, supported by Member Joseph, the meeting was adjourned at 11:38 a.m.

Minutes Approved: April 15, 2019

Andrea Haidle, President

Claudia Bajema, Secretary

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