Dear Friends,

Five years ago, KConnect was founded out of a dream to convene groups of cross-sector leaders to affect measurable change in Kent County. Not only was “collective impact” new to the local landscape, but it was a new movement in the country. Armed with a vision of what we wanted to become, KConnect leaders began diving into the work of assembling workgroups, collecting data, and fostering community partnerships. Our goal? To reach a common agenda.

“Common agenda” is a term widely used in collective impact circles referring to a “common understanding of the problem and a joint approach to solving it through agreed upon actions.” While KConnect has always held a common understanding of the problem, we continued to work toward a joint approach in solving it. Until now.

KConnect is thrilled to announce that we have reached a full common agenda. We have 8 defined success measures, 27 key indicators, 1 global success measure, and numerous strategies currently in the pilot phase. We are well on our way to creating a long-term, lasting change for children and families in Kent County.

The work is far from finished. Needs and engagement must be assessed, ideas brought to life, and indicators measured to determine whether the targeted strategies are making a positive impact in the lives of those they are meant to serve. Pilots that are found to be successful must be scaled and implemented across Kent County as a whole.

As we reflect on the work over these past five years, we recognize that KConnect acts only as the convener and catalyst for this movement; it’s the community coming together to get the work done. Without their support, and the support of our generous funders, we would not have been able to reach this milestone. Let’s take this moment to celebrate how far we’ve come while we dream for the future where all children and families have an equitable path to economic prosperity in our community.

Sincerely,

Lynne Ferrell
Co-Chair
Board of Trustees

Virginia Vander Hart
Co-Chair
Board of Trustees

Pamela Parriott
President
KConnect

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Michelle Van Dyke
Heart of West Michigan United Way

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President

Mark Woltman
Associate Director

Kara Bilkert
Data and Outcomes Project Manager

Anissa Eddie
Pritzker Early Childhood Fellow

Katie Hop
Communications Manager

Megan Smith Jovanovic
Process Facilitator
KConnect is made up of a network of individuals and organizations that continue to move forward, challenge the status quo, and prioritize the interests of children and families above our own independent agendas. This includes workgroup members, supporters, funders, partners, the Board of Trustees, and the Accountability Partners Council (APC).

Our APC serves as the large convening space for all of KConnect’s network. It’s the only space where we bring ALL of our work together and get to think about it collectively.

It’s also the space where KConnect’s work gets shaped and refined in ways that none of us might imagine individually or even within our own singular workgroups.

We couldn’t do it without a network that supports our vision of ensuring all children in Kent County have a clear path to economic prosperity through quality education, family, and community supports. As a member of our collective, in any capacity, your participation is critical to moving this work forward – we couldn’t do it without YOU.
KConnect is data informed and operates under the philosophy that measuring is integral to determining whether we are making a positive impact on the systems in our community. We use quantitative and qualitative data that highlights inequalities in order to shift mental models, change power dynamics, and establish equitable policies in the community. Our Data and Capacity Workgroup helps guide our data strategy and development to ensure that we’re measuring what really matters. With data at the heart of the work we’re doing, we can effectively demonstrate the impact that we’re making in our community. It’s more than just numbers - it’s the thousands of children and young adults in our community that the work is impacting. It’s the newly pregnant mother, the preschooler, the middle school student, the high school graduate, the college graduate, and the business owner. It’s a passion for changing systems in order to change lives.

For more information about the data you see here, please visit http://tinyurl.com/KConnectReportCard.
As we celebrate our fifth year in existence, we’re proud to say we finally have a Common Agenda for children in Kent County. We have eight success measures spanning the prenatal to career continuum, which the team of original Steering Committee members worked hard to identify in those early days. Since then we have all endeavored to find the critical levers of change. We also have 27 levers that we believe will change our outcomes in a significant way if we get behind them. All of this is happening, not because of KConnect as an organization, but because of you, our extremely dedicated network that continues to move forward, challenge the status quo, and prioritize the interests of children and families above our own independent agendas.
The Birth Equity strategy is a two-part strategy that positively affects both the prenatal and career areas of our continuum.

We are using the percent of babies born weight 5½ pounds or more as a proxy measure for healthy births. When looking at our local data, we see drastic disparities in birth outcomes. In 2016, Black babies were more than twice as likely to be born at a low birthweight compared to White babies. In fact, more than one if every seven babies born to Black/African American mothers in Kent County are considered low birthweight. The racial disparities in birth outcomes demonstrate that inequities exist from the very beginning of a child’s life in Kent County.

Research shows us that receiving doula services is directly connected to improved birth outcomes. Improving birth outcomes overall and closing the disparity gap helps to put a child on the path to economic prosperity from day one.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>RACE/Ethnicity</th>
<th>Low Birthweight Births (%)</th>
<th>Total Births</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ALL</td>
<td>7.7%</td>
<td>8,795</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ASIAN</td>
<td>8.7%</td>
<td>286</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BLACK</td>
<td>14.8%</td>
<td>1,131</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HISPANIC</td>
<td>7.1%</td>
<td>1,301</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WHITE</td>
<td>6.4%</td>
<td>6,733</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: [2016] Michigan Department of Health and Human Services
Not all Race/Ethnic categories are displayed in this chart.
DIVERSE TEACHERS

STRATEGY
Implement a four-part, 360° strategy in which the community will work collectively to inspire, train, recruit, and retain diverse teachers.

Goal: Increase the recruitment and retention of teachers of color to better reflect countywide race/ethnicity demographics.

This effort aligns with the KConnect mission because it demonstrates a commitment to creating quality education opportunities for students in Kent County through broad network collaboration. Working to strengthen the teacher pipeline while focusing on the recruitment and retention of diverse teachers is an example of utilizing targeted strategies to reach universal goals. It also contributes to increasing equitable outcomes by creating pathways to the teaching profession that prioritize people of color. This will help to cultivate inclusive school environments for staff and students resulting in improved school climate for all and more holistic career readiness preparation for students.

We know that it’s beneficial for all students to be surrounded by diverse people and perspectives. The benefits are often compounded for students of color who receive instruction from teachers who look like them. Our current teacher workforce in Kent County is not reflective of the diversity within our community. For example, 18% of the students are Latinx and 14% are Black. When including students who identify as Asian, two or more races and other, the student body in Kent County is about 41% students of color. However, 95% of our teaching staff are White. All students, including White students, benefit from having teachers of color because they bring distinctive knowledge, experiences, and role modeling to the student body as a whole. Research shows that students of color are more likely to do better in school, stay in school, and show interest in college if they have at least one teacher of color.

OUR 360° STRATEGY AIMS TO

INSPIRE
future teachers of color in college programs that are high quality and culturally responsive.

TRAIN
teachers of color to fill open teaching positions in Kent ISD schools.

RECRUIT
teachers of color to fill open teaching positions in Kent ISD schools.

RETAIN
teachers of color by ensuring the Kent ISD and the community are places where people from all backgrounds can find belonging.

DIVERSE TEACHING STAFF
(All Schools in Kent ISD)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>People of Color (Kent Co)</th>
<th>Teachers of Color</th>
<th>Percentage Gap</th>
<th>Number to Close Gap</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2014</td>
<td>1,466</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2015</td>
<td>1,515</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2016</td>
<td>1,498</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2017</td>
<td>1,538</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source(s): [2017] Center for Educational Performance and Information, [2017] U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 1 year estimates

Not all Race/Ethnic categories are displayed in this chart.
The NETWORK

Prenatal to 3rd Grade Workgroup
Develops strategies that address achievement gaps for children of color and those from low-income homes, beginning with prenatal education for parents and working toward 3rd grade reading proficiency.

Members
Matthew Beresford, Grand Rapids Public Schools
JaneAnn Benson, Grand Rapids Community College
Heather Boswell, First Steps Kent
Paula Brown, Great Start Collaborative

Birth Equity Strategy Team Members
Kira Baskin, Strong Beginnings
A Bump to Birth Doula Services
Heather Boswell, First Steps Kent
Kristina Donaldson, KD Coaching & Consulting
Stacey Figg, The Village Doula GR
Ashley Greenburg, First Steps Kent
Kendra Ippel, Local Midwife
Elana Mazuera, Local Doula
Wende Randall, Essential Needs Task Force
Tiffany Townsend, Gold Coast Doula
Ann Marie Valdez, First Steps Kent
Peggy Vandermeulen, Strong Beginnings

High School to Career Workgroup
Aligns the college and career system to create an environment where all residents have equitable pathways to success.

Members
Angie Barksdale, West Michigan Works
Mercedes Bargamian, Spectrum Health
Shawn Buttsma, Grand Valley State University
Suzanne Callahan, Davenport University
Tracie Coffman, W.K. Kellogg Foundation
Jonathan Klooster, City of Grand Rapids
Chad Patton, Literacy Center of West Michigan
Leanne Rhodes, West Michigan Center for Arts & Technology
Kevin Stotts, Talent 2025, Co-Chair
John VanEs, Grand Rapids Community College
Shayla Young, T2C Studio
Mirinda Yassi, The Source, Co-Chair

Data & Capacity Workgroup
Ensures that the Domain Workgroups have the data they need to make decisions, benchmark success, and promote continuous improvement.

Members
Mel Atkinson II, Grand Rapids Public Schools
Neil Carlson, Calvin College
Walter Deboer, Consultant
Amber Erickson, Kernan Consulting
Alan Henry, PNC Bank
Paul Iseely, Grand Valley State University
Julie Klausing, Great Lakes Health
Connect, Co-Chair
Pervel Martinez, The Right Place
Mark Maynard, Kent ISD
Dave Riley, The Right Place

Home & Family Stability Workgroup
Ensures children and families have the resources and stability they need to learn and thrive.

Members
Lisa Cudron, Family Promise
Chad Patton, Literacy Center West Michigan
Susan Cervantes, Kent County Community Action
Eleanor Moreno, The Other Way Ministries
Emily Schichtel, Heart of West Michigan United Way
Dave Bulkowski, Disability Advocates of Kent County
Sus Selton, Kent County Health Department
Wende Randall, Essential Needs Task Force

Equity & Inclusion and Community Engagement Workgroup
Guides all of our work through a framework for creating strategies that address the needs of all groups, with particular attention to those that are marginalized.

Members
Tequa Adams, Spectrum Health: Strong Foundations
Jamron Alexander, West Michigan Center for Arts + Technology
Brandie Arnold, Public Agency at WM CAT
Jesse Bernal, Grand Valley State University
Teresa Branson, Kent County Community Engagement
Guadalupe Estrada, Grand Rapids Community Foundation
Andre Fields, Grand Rapids Community College
Enid Gazdik, Arbor Circle
Vanessa Jimenez, Health Net of West Michigan
Joe Jones, Grand Rapids Urban League, Co-Chair

Home & Family Stability Workgroup
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Emily Schichtel, Heart of West Michigan United Way
Dave Bulkowski, Disability Advocates of Kent County
Sus Selton, Kent County Health Department
Wende Randall, Essential Needs Task Force

Policy & Advocacy Workgroup
Works to mobilize constituencies, through education and advocacy for policies affecting strategies and solutions.

Facilitators
Meg Binkiewicz, Innovatus Consulting
Paul Doyle, Inclusive Performance Strategies
Shavon Doyle-Holton, Inclusive Performance Strategies
Kris Ellund, Public Agency at WM CAT
DeDe Esque, Inclusive Performance Strategies
Kathy Grynn, Blue Sky Thinking
Danielle Veldman, Inclusive Performance Strategies
Adam Weiler, Public Agency at WM CAT

Consultants
Basic Policy Research Center for Social Research at Calvin College
Deanne Carbone, Design Consultant
Fat Bottom Brewhing

Funding Partners
Doug & Maria DeVos Foundation
Frey Foundation
Grand Rapids Community Foundation
Kent and Richard Wolters Foundation
Kendall Foundation
Richard and Helen DeVos Foundation
Seattle Foundation
Steckelase Foundation
WK Kellogg Foundation

Lead Convening Partners
Essential Needs Task Force
Expanded Learning Opportunities Network
First Steps Kent
Heart of West Michigan United Way
Kent Intermediate School District
Talent 2025
To College Through College
West Side Collaborative

State and National Partners
FSG
Michigan College Access Network
National Collaborative for Infants and Toddlers
National Equity Project
Strive Together
Tableau Foundation