

# Kent School Services Network

## Removing Barriers to Learning

Kent School Services Network delivers health and human services to families on-site at schools so that teachers can teach and students can focus on learning.

Children in our schools face numerous challenges due to poverty and its accompanying social problems, such as family instability, unmet physical and mental health needs, parental unemployment, child abuse and neglect, and substance abuse. As a result of these problems, more and more of our schools find their resources pulled from classroom instruction and directed instead at these challenges.

Kent School Services Network (KSSN) was created to address the dismal rates of academic achievement in many local schools. At each KSSN school, there is a community school coordinator to connect students and their families to on-site health, dental and counseling services, as well as other services such as tutoring or mentoring. A mental health clinician is available to address mental health and prevention needs of students and their families, and a Department of Human Services caseworker helps families access basic needs such as financial assistance, food subsidy, housing, transportation and employment. Nurses and health aides provide medical services and promote preventive tactics.

Absenteeism has become a critical focus for KSSN. Attendance patterns as early as kindergarten are predictors of continuing attendance, and eventual graduation rates. Initial findings on KSSN's impact include:

- Chronic absenteeism (absent 10-19.9% of all possible school days) declined in half of the schools.
- Extreme chronic absenteeism (absent 20% or more of possible days) decreased in the majority of schools.

### This is Community Leadership

Since its inception in 2006, the Community Foundation has championed KSSN and invested over 1.8 million in its success. Beginning in just eight schools, the program has grown to cover 18 buildings and continues to expand. Its substantial impact on academic achievement in our public schools continues to grow.

### Ways You Can Help

To help ensure the success of this grant you may give to address any of the needs listed below. Please call Kent Schools Service Network at 616.550.2587 to learn more.

- Attendance Incentive Fund - for small gifts and treats to celebrate perfect attendance \$750
- Office Supplies - for gift cards to office supply stores for paper, white boards and markers, and resource boards for community brochures. \$1,000
- Child Care Fund and volunteers - to cover reimbursement for child care at parent meetings and school programs, or volunteers for child care. \$500

### Grant Facts

Organization: Kent Intermediate School District

Grant amount: \$150,000

Grant purpose: To coordinate school district, human service and health resources in order to provide on-site support to make sure students have the necessary emotional, social, and mental resources to reach their full potential.

No. served: 13,500 students

To ensure the Community Foundation can make grants like this one in the future, please consider a gift to the Fund for Academic Achievement. Please call 616.454.1751 to learn the benefits of Community Foundation giving and how gifts can be made.



Grand Rapids

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