

KCIS Connections

Kalamazoo Communities In Schools Newsletter

October 2008

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News In Brief

- KCIS is working with Milwood Magnet School to identify and develop partnerships with individuals and organizations that will support students and staff in learning about biotechnology. For more information, please attend a Meet & Greet at Milwood Magnet School on Tuesday, October 7 from 11:30 a.m. - 1:00 p.m., or contact Jennifer Clark at jclark@kcis.us or 337-1601 x213.
- KCIS will be presenting our current school-based health initiatives at the Healthy Michigan 2010 Public Health Conference on October 15-16. For more information on the health-related services offered to students through our community partners, visit www.kcis.us or contact Donna Carroll at dcarroll@kcis.us or 337-1601 x206.

From the Executive Director

by Pam Kingery, M.S.W., L.M.S.W., Executive Director of Kalamazoo Communities In Schools

There are many important priorities for the United States right now---our economy, housing, the environment, jobs, national security, foreign policy, energy independence. Education should also be among the things that we as citizens put at the top of our own lists and among the priorities of candidates for State and Federal office.

All over the United States, far too many of our children are dropping out of school and are not graduating with a high school diploma. It is estimated that 7,000 students drop out of school each school day in the United States. Sadly, Michigan and Kalamazoo are not exceptions. Too many students don't make it through high school in our community.

According to the U.S. Census Bureau, in 2005 the average annual income for a high school drop-out was \$17,299. The average for a high school graduate was \$26,933, for a person with an associate's degree was \$36,645, and for someone with a Bachelor's degree was \$52,671. We usually consider another person's income to be a private, personal matter. However, if all of the students who dropped out from the class of 2007 had graduated, our country's economy would have benefited from an additional \$29 billion in income over their collective lifetime. Likewise, high school graduates as a group: live longer; raise healthier, better educated children; are less likely to commit crimes; are less likely to rely on government health care or other services; are more likely to vote and volunteer in their communities; and contribute about \$60,000 more in taxes over a lifetime.¹

Baby boomers are beginning to retire. In the early 1950s, there were about 40 workers for every retiree. Current projections indicate that by 2025, there will be just 2 workers for every retiree. If that is the case, we need for every one of those workers to be well-educated and capable of competing effectively in the global economy. Our economy, our environment, our national security, our future energy needs, our relationships with other countries, and our very way of life will depend on our children, ALL of our children, being well-educated, capable of supporting themselves, their children, us, and our community.

In Kalamazoo, we are paving the way for the rest of the country---The Kalamazoo Promise® is making college education available and possible for all graduates of Kalamazoo Public Schools. Many of those students need our help to become college-ready in order to successfully use The Promise. They need vision exams and eyeglasses, they need tutors and mentors, they need counseling, they need after school programs, they need books and socks, shoes and underwear. They need us!

It is an exciting time to be a United States citizen. As you contemplate your priorities, remember how high education should be on your list and everyone else's. And remember how substantial the return on your investment in helping ALL of our kids get that education.

¹Alliance for Excellent Education, Issue Brief, October, 2007.

October First Fridays

Starting on the First Friday of October, KCIS is collecting donations of:



Mittens
Hats
Scarves
Winter Socks

Your donation will help KCIS ensure that KPS students have the clothing they need to stay warm this winter.

Where to Donate:
Items can be donated at the **KPS Admin Building** (1220 Howard) or at the following Kalamazoo area

National City branches:
Crosstown, Downtown, Gull Road, Oakland, W. Main, Stadium, or Oshtemo.

Corporate Involvement: There are many exciting ways for businesses to get involved in First Fridays---either through employee donation drives or friendly cross-company competitions.

For more information, please visit the "Give to KCIS" section of our website (www.kcis.us), or contact Brooke Nobis Buys at bnbuys@kcis.us or 337-1601 x209.

KCIS is Going Green!

Please consider the environment and sign up to receive this newsletter and other exciting KCIS promotions via e-mail. Submit your e-mail and request for e-copies to Brooke Nobis Buys at bnbuys@kcis.us, or through the "Contact Us" section of our website---www.kcis.us.



“Vital Signs” Checklists Available

KCIS received a grant from the Arcus Foundation Gay and Lesbian Fund to conduct an assessment of Kalamazoo Public School students’ social and emotional needs. Through this study, called “Vital Signs,” KCIS sought to better meet the critical needs of KPS students so that they could take advantage of The Kalamazoo Promise®. Many children and youth do not succeed academically because of unmet physical, social, and emotional needs.

Through the “Vital Signs” study, Checklists were created to provide information about what social emotional learning skills students should have acquired by the end of

each age range and what adults can do to support youths’ healthy development, issues that could arise during those time periods, and where students and parents can seek help in Kalamazoo. The Checklist booklets were based on the literature search conducted as part of the grant, local needs, and KPS’s Strategic Expectations that were established in March, 2008.

Please see your school’s Site Coordinators for copies of Student (“My Social-Emotional Growth”) and Parent (“My Child’s Social-Emotional Growth”) versions of these Checklists. These free booklets are available for the following age ranges:

Early Elementary
(grades 1 through 3)

Later Elementary
(grades 4 through 6)

Middle School
(grades 7 and 8)

Early High School
(grades 9 and 10)

Later High School
(grades 11 and 12)

For more information about the “Vital Signs” project, please visit www.kcis.us.



The Vital Signs study aims to assess the social and emotional needs of students.

Welcome KCIS Site Coordinators!

Arcadia

Gulnar Husain

Edison

Deb Yarbrough

King-Westwood

Jessica Chatman

Lincoln

Julia Dean

Kalamazoo Central

Deb Faling

Milwood Elementary

Renita Ellis

Milwood Magnet

Molly Appeldoorn

Woods Lake

Dee Dee Minor

Parkwood-Upjohn

Jody Sikkema

Spring Valley

Martha Serio

Kalamazoo Goes Back to School!

On September 2, KPS students started a new school year. Thanks to the generosity of local businesses and community members donating through the First Fridays program, students who were unable to afford new school supplies were given new notebooks, pencils, pens, backpacks, crayons, markers, rulers, binders, and much more! Thank you Kalamazoo, for making the first day of school an even more special occasion for so many students!

National City Employees Give 1,470 School Supplies to KCIS



National City donations were distributed to students at all KCIS school sites.

KCIS would like to thank the downtown branch of National City Bank for generously donating more than 1,470 school supplies for KPS students going back to school.

National City employees divided into four teams - reflecting the building’s four floors - and the teams competed to donate the most school supplies.

Donated items were quickly distributed by KCIS to students in need of school supplies as they started the new school year. The donations went a long way to meet the needs of KPS students.

In a dramatic last-minute race to the finish, the third-floor employees at National City won the contest. But, in the end, National City gave all employees a reward recognizing their generosity. After all, the students of KPS schools were the true winners in this challenge!

Omni Credit Union Donates Backpacks, School Supplies to KCIS

The team at Omni Credit Union generously donated 100 backpacks to KCIS for KPS children. Each of the backpacks was filled with a selection of back-to-school supplies, including notebooks, folders, pencils, crayons, and other important items to prepare students for the new school year.

Thank you, Omni Credit Union, for thinking of KPS students!



Omni Credit Union employees donated 100 backpacks filled with back-to-school supplies.

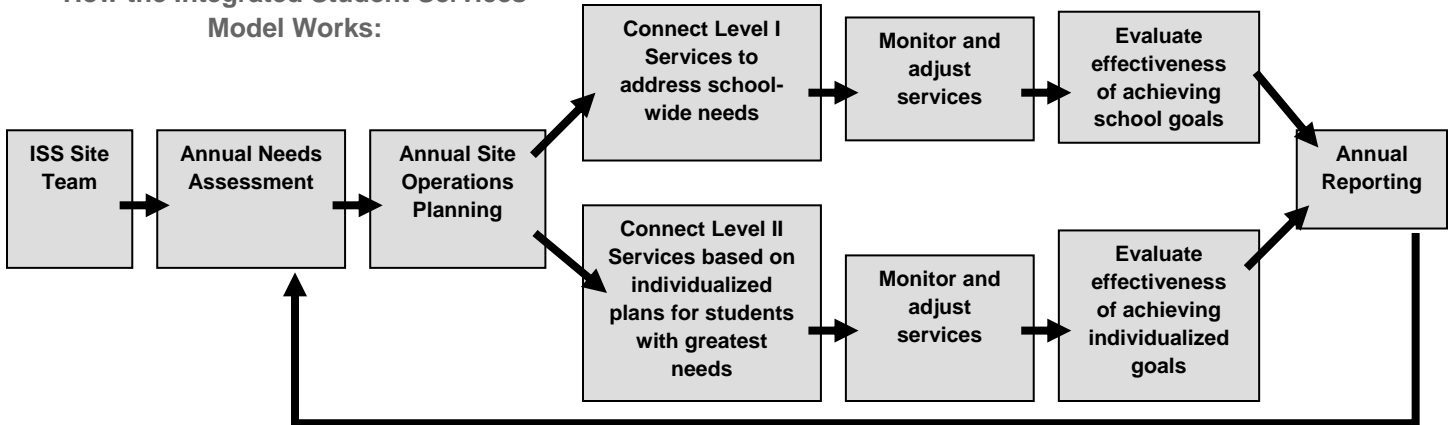
KCIS Implements Integrated Student Services Model

Kalamazoo Communities In Schools is implementing a new research-based Integrated Student Services (ISS) model for the 2008-09 school year. The model helps to ensure that KCIS programs and services meet the needs of schools and students.

The ISS Model has proven to be successful in improving reading and math scores, decreasing the dropout rate, and increasing the graduation rate. For instance, in a high school approximately the size of Kalamazoo Central, implementing the ISS Model would result in 58 more students staying in school and 77 more students graduating on time with a regular diploma.

The ISS Model works on two different levels, enabling KCIS to evaluate and address both school-wide needs as well as those of individual students. KCIS's stakeholders' response to the ISS model has been overwhelmingly positive. Stay tuned for further updates as the school year progresses.

How the Integrated Student Services Model Works:



Health Education at Parkwood-Upjohn



Parkwood-Upjohn students learn about health and wellness at the PUE Open House on September 16.

Students and families attending Parkwood Upjohn's Open House on September 16th had a fun lesson in health as well as an introduction to new teachers and the new school year. The Children's Hospital at Bronson transformed the gym into a multi-station Heart Health Fair for the evening.

As families entered the gym they started off on a safe footing by navigating a pedestrian crossing mat with signs staffed by Deb Carpenter and student nurses courtesy of Bronson's Safe Kids. Children were given a sheet that was stamped by health educators at each of the stations they visited, learning about the amount of sugar

in the beverages they consume, the sound of a healthy heart, fun exercise ideas, how to recognize asthma triggers, and how prisms work in the eye. Many of the stations had educational handouts and fun incentives for follow-up activities such as jump ropes, hackey sac balls, and Frisbees. When the cards were completed, showing that a student had visited ten learning stations, they were able to take their completed card to a check out station and receive a prize.

Kalamazoo Communities In Schools Site Coordinator Jody Sikkema, who helped coordinate the event, was impressed by the number of families attending the Open House and the

enthusiasm of the kids showing their parents around. "We always get a good turnout for Open House," Jody said, "but I was pleased to see so many families there this year."

The exercise incentives seemed to have an immediate payoff – as the Open House ended, instead of everyone heading home right away the playground outside was full of parents and kids jumping rope, throwing Frisbees, and having fun together.

Thank you to Deb Carpenter from Bronson's Safe Kids for bringing such a well organized and family oriented health fair to Parkwood Upjohn!

Volunteer with KCIS!

Back to school time means volunteers are needed! KCIS volunteers work on a wide variety of projects — including tutoring or mentoring a child, leading a Guys Read book club, or packing bags of food for students to take home over the weekend. For more information, contact Coco Cook at 337-1601 x218, or visit our website at www.kcis.us.



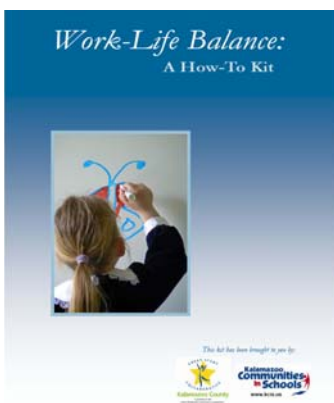
125 W. Exchange Place
Kalamazoo, MI 49007
Ph: 269-337-1601
Fax: 269-385-5806

We're on the Web!

www.kcis.us

KCIS connects critical community resources to schools in the Kalamazoo Public Schools system in order to help them succeed in school and in life.

Engaging Families and Embracing Work-Life Balance



"Work-Life Balance: A How-To Kit" encourages parents to be involved in their child's education.

"Work-Life Balance: A How-To Kit" was conceived from a series of focus groups that Kalamazoo Communities In Schools Board members conducted with more than forty Kalamazoo area business people. The participants were given a series of open-ended questions to gauge their perceptions of the impact of K-12 education in Kalamazoo County's business/economic development.

The Kalamazoo Promise®, a scholarship that funds a college education for graduates of the Kalamazoo Public Schools, has fueled the region's interest in education and affirms the conclusions of the business focus groups:

- K-12 education is critical in preparing members of the workforce.
- K-12 education is a key factor to recruit and attract employees and employers to the area.

- Schools are the foundation of the community.
- Good schools are an important factor in quality of life.
- K-12 schools are essential to economic vitality and economic development.

These business leaders urged a stronger connection between business and education. A number of participants expressed an understanding that the schools "can't do it all".

During the same time period, the Great Start Collaborative identified a goal of conveying common community expectations for parents of young children to improve school readiness. The goals of increasing community support for strong parenting and forging a strong connection between business and education, resulted in the development of "Work-Life Balance: A How-To Kit".

The Kit includes a bound booklet of local business testimonials, policies, and resources related to the creation of a work culture that embraces work-life balance. Additionally, the Kit has current national resources as well as documents to post in a work break area.

The goal is that businesses will find the Kit responsive to their needs as employers. At the same time, hopefully the businesses will use the Kit to identify specific ways that they can strengthen the role of parents in their children's education and help our community contribute to stronger academic achievement for the children of their employees and others.

For more information on "Work-Life Balance: A How-To Kit", please contact Brooke Nobis Buys at Kalamazoo Communities In Schools. bnbuys@kcis.us or 269-337-1601 x 209.