

W.K. Kellogg Foundation grants Detroit Public Schools Community District \$3 million to scale district's renewed commitment to empower parents and families

The grant will serve as funding for DPSCD's Parent Academy, the Kindergarten Transition Program, and the Parent Teacher Home Visits Program

DETROIT, March 21, 2018 – Detroit Public Schools Community District (DPSCD) announced today at a press conference at Davison Elementary and Middle School that in partnership with the Detroit Public Schools Foundation, the W.K. Kellogg Foundation has granted the district \$3 million to fund resources and tools for programs that will empower parents and families to better serve students.

“Our commitment to rebuild the district must include the empowerment of our parents and families to be consistent and stronger advocates for their children’s education at scale,” said Dr. Nikolai Vitti, Superintendent of Detroit Public Schools Community District. “As a district, we must own that process and be leaders citywide to develop parent leaders. The Parent Academy, the Kindergarten Transition Program, and the Parent Teacher Home Visit Program provide vehicles for everyone to get in while the district drives the process to accomplishing that goal. The district is incredibly thankful for this grant, which will directly and indirectly affect thousands of students across our communities. The partnership with W.K. Kellogg is a clear vote of confidence that the district is moving in the right direction and allows our operating budget to invest directly in the classroom while we initially build the systems with grant funds to engage our parents across the district and city.”

According to a Wayne State University Center for Urban Studies 2014 report, Detroit has the smallest percentage of two-parent households with children, and the city has the highest percentage of family households with children under 18 led by single mothers in Southeast Michigan. With this data, the Detroit Public Schools Foundation and the W.K. Kellogg Foundation set out to partner on the District’s Parent Academy and Parent Teacher Home Visit Program (PTHVP). These programs are research-based and not experiments or pilots.

“Our commitment of \$25 million in grants related to the Hope Starts Here Community Framework is both a catalyst for change and a public challenge on behalf of Detroit’s children,” said La June Montgomery Tabron, W.K. Kellogg Foundation President and CEO. “This is the first of those awards and it centers on two things Detroit children need in order to achieve success in school – ongoing community engagement and strong partnerships across sectors.” Children are at the heart of everything we do at the Kellogg Foundation. We are proud to be part of this effort and many other endeavors that envision a future in which all children thrive.”

The Parent Academy will promote parental involvement and support for student and family success. This will be identified through Parent Interest Surveys, which will align opportunities and resources identified as needs by nearly 6,000 survey participants. Due to the W.K. Kellogg grant, Parent Academy and PTHVP will be at no-cost to parents. The Parent Academy will incorporate a variety of classes, trainings, and workshops offered in schools, libraries, community centers and faith-based institutions across Detroit – serving an expected 7,000 parents and caregivers.

The PTHVP will reach 60 schools in DPSCD to increase academic performance and decrease attendance issues. This program will engage teachers and building staff during non-school hours in the student’s home. This program provides students with one-on-one guidance while engaging parents. The teacher, parents and student will be able to discuss goals for the student, and teachers will provide tools and strategies parents can use to bolster their child's performance.

Additionally, a component of the Parent Academy is Kindergarten Bootcamp, a transition program serving DPSCD’s early childhood development, which will operate during the summer months. The program prepares pre-kindergarten students and their parents to successfully enter kindergarten.

Support and learning will be provided to parents on literacy, kindergarten academic expectations, and how to engage children at home. Classes will be guided by early learning specialists, giving parents the opportunity to learn and practice kindergarten-readiness skills as often as possible. With best practices taken from Phoenix Public Library's Kindergarten Bootcamp, the kindergarten transition portion of this program will better prepare students and parents for school. DPSCD is expecting to serve 900 pre-kindergarten children in the upcoming academic year.

“This grant from the W.K. Kellogg Foundation will ensure that no child suffers due to lack of enhanced education support,” said Sharlonda Buckman, Senior Executive Director, Office of Parent and Community Engagement at DPSCD. “As the leader of this program I am eager to see each program come to fruition and how the programs will help students thrive in their educational journey.”

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About Detroit Public Schools Community District

Detroit Public Schools Community District (DPSCD) is the state’s largest public education system located in Detroit. It is governed by a locally-elected, seven-member board with Dr. Nikolai Vitti serving as superintendent. The District’s mission is to provide every student with a beneficial and rightful educational experience, preparing students to be career and college ready, and qualified to compete in the global market. The District has 106 schools and educates 50,000 children.

About the W.K. Kellogg Foundation

The W.K. Kellogg Foundation (WKKF), founded in 1930 as an independent, private foundation by breakfast cereal pioneer, Will Keith Kellogg, is among the largest philanthropic foundations in the United States. Guided by the belief that all children should have an equal opportunity to thrive, WKKF works with communities to create conditions for vulnerable children so they can realize their full potential in school, work and life.

The Kellogg Foundation is based in Battle Creek, Michigan, and works throughout the United States and internationally, as well as with sovereign tribes. Special emphasis is paid to priority places where there are high concentrations of poverty and where children face significant barriers to success. WKKF priority places in the U.S. are in Michigan, Mississippi, New Mexico and New Orleans; and internationally, are in Mexico and Haiti.