



Muskegon Business Leader Talent Update & Engagement Event

June 8, 2022
7:30 AM – 8:30 AM

Attendance:

Aaron Maike – Baker College
Larry Hines – Hines Corporation
Kim Andres – JSJ Corporation
Park Kersman – Lorin Industries
Gary Allore – Trinity Health
John Selmon – Muskegon Community College
Dale Nesbary – Muskegon Community College
Mark White – Shape Corp.
Debra Ramos – Shape Corp.
Kevin Stotts – Talent First
Shannan Graham – Talent First
Lisa Hungerford – Talent First

Brad Playford – Ava Sure
Brent McCarthy – Choice One Bank
Lisa Sabourin – Employers Assoc.
Wes Eklund – Fleet Engineers
Camille Jourdan – Michigan's Adven.
Steve Olson – Northern Michigan Tool

Meeting Highlights

Gary Allore:

Gary led introductions of everyone present for the breakfast and explained that he and Mercy Health are engaged because they need all kinds of talent and Talent First is very effective presenting to solutions to address the education and workforce needs of Muskegon County and the region.

INTRODUCTION TO TALENT 2025

Kevin Stotts

Kevin announced our recent name change from Talent 2025 to Talent First. This represents who we are, what our focus is as well as our Mission and Vision for the future.

Five Year Goals and Strategies:

- 1.) Education – Improve the quality of education for all students and prepare them for career success
- 2.) Workforce Development – Make our adult education and training efforts the best in the nation in meeting the goals of individuals and employers
- 3.) Employer Engagement – Advance leading practices by employers to attract, retain, and develop the best talent in the nation.

Statistics to note:

- The labor force participation rate has been declining since 2000. The decline has been shown in all every age group, except those 55+.
- Labor Force Participation regarding SNAP benefits: 62.7% of the variation in participation is explained by the increased SNAP benefits provided to individuals and families during the pandemic
- Over 700k Michigan residents lack a high school diploma or GED equivalent
- 25k or 3.6% of population in need is enrolled in Adult Education programming

Talent First will be hosting a Talent Solutions Series beginning in August and running through December. This is an opportunity to connect with an expected 300+ business leaders in West Michigan as we examine key strategies for success:

- Employer Branding
- Building a diverse & inclusive workforce
- Hiring attitude, training for skills
- Upskilling your workforce
- Embracing automation & AI
- Establishing talent pipelines

Lisa Hungerford

Lisa leads several working groups at Talent First relating to Early Childhood, K-12 and Higher Education. We use research to understand the challenges and barriers within the education system, and set benchmarks for data comparing Muskegon, West Michigan and Statewide data.

Statistics to note:

- Recent years have shown declining K-12 enrollment across the state
- Reading proficiency rates gradually dropped in Muskegon but not significantly through the State
 - -8.7% Muskegon ISD
 - -1.7 West Michigan
 - -7.2 Statewide
- Math proficiency rates were rising pre-Covid, but learning loss is evident
 - Muskegon ISD: +12.3 Pre-Covid / -7.5% Covid Loss
 - West Michigan: +4.2% Pre-Covid / -5.0% Covid Loss
 - Statewide: +9.3% Pre-Covid / -5.4% Covid Loss
- College readiness remained unchanged since the pandemic, demonstrates long term progress Sharp rise in graduation rates in Muskegon compared to West Michigan and the State

One of our strategies is to help local school districts shift to Competency Based Education, a more effective method of student learning with a personalized, flexible approach to meet the needs of individual students. It is skills based, tied to real world problems so students can find relevance in their coursework that results in higher academic achievement. There is also a focus on career exploration for students. Focusing on how we can build a pipeline and awareness of the jobs, skills and abilities of those in West Michigan and the region.

Competency Based Education:

- Personalized and flexible learning
- Skills-based, rigorous, and relevant
- Increased student engagement & academic achievement
- Greater teacher satisfaction & less teacher burnout
- National support to develop a statewide framework

Career Exploration

- Career awareness and exposure to local industries, businesses, job opportunities and the training required

- High quality instruction through PBL and employer case studies with logical connections to academic standards
- Dynamic student portfolio of artifacts, soft skill development and technical competencies as opposed to a standardized transcript

PK4ALL UPDATE

Matt Cortez, Muskegon Public Schools Superintendent

PK4All – Establish a preschool program to offer preschools for all children in Muskegon County

Closing the gap:

2,100 children each year eligible for preschool programming
 -1,000 served by Great Start/Head Start readiness
 -400 enrolled in private schools
 =700 children in the gap un(der)served

Budget: \$500,000 has been raised, but only \$50,000 has been used. This is partially due to the use of Title 1 ESSER funds from the Federal Government. This allows the PK4A program to be extended for the third year of programming

20 of the 2022 students are enrolled in kindergarten and the remaining two families are completing paperwork. This will allow for 100% retention from preschool into kindergarten

Parents were surveyed at the end of the 2021-2022 school year and the program was rated 5 stars in a total of 8 different categories. A quote from a parent: Thank you for everything that you have been able to do with my child. His English has improved so much. He also loves to come to school. You are doing great things.” This solidifies literacy goals of the program.

The pilot program has proved that it can fill the gap to provide preschool programming to all students.

Certified teachers in early childhood increase achievement results

Q&A

Larry Hines: Any projections on what PK4A might look like moving forward?

The PK4A falls under the State daycare guidelines because the state doesn't have PreK guidelines. This regulation is for a total of 22 students and 1-2 teachers per classroom. The expectation for Fall of '22 would be two classrooms of 22 students and adding a third classroom in Muskegon Heights district. The long-term hope would be to continue to expand the program out of the pilot phase and continue to look at how it would be funded. For example, a 1 mil county wide millage increase would fund PK4A for all students.

What is the biggest challenge?

There are two considerations right now. Research has shown that certified teachers in the classroom increase achievement results. These positions have/need to be revised to reflect that, which will also change the pay structure. The aides in the classroom are also identified as

the paraprofessional role which has been challenging to fill in response to the rapid wage increases and demands.

What has the ISD's involvement been?

The ISD has been supportive and encouraging of this program. They have shared the GSRP curriculum so not to start from scratch. The hope is to max out GSRP and Head Start seats and optimize the PK4A program to continue to run long-term to meet the ongoing needs.

Would this program support virtual learners?

The gap that is found with virtual education is significant in 90% of kids. Physically being in the classroom, having the tools and resources and having access to a qualified and certified instruction is hard to duplicate virtually. During the pandemic, homeschooling program went from 5k up to 50k, and has since gone back down to around 5k. There is a small population of kids that virtual education works for.

What are the kindergarten readiness percentages?

The percentage of kids who are ready to learn is currently around 60-65%. However, Muskegon Public Schools has been trending upward with kindergarten enrollment

Are parents requesting their child be involved in this program?

Muskegon Public Schools have been advertising, using Kindergarten round-up as an advertisement, as well as word of mouth.

CLOSING COMMENTS

Mark White

Mark expressed thanks and appreciation to Matt Cortez for his leadership and work regarding the PK4A program. That program and piloting was seeded in a meeting 3 years ago just like this. As business leaders, and educators, we are addressing how we can address some of these challenges. None of this work would be possible without the core group and team willing to take on these challenges. This is one example of the work that we are trying to do as an organization.

In reference to Muskegon County, we have a small amount of business leaders representing our work. If you're not a member yet and are interested in getting involved, please reach out to Mark, Gary, or Kevin. Mark can attest that this is an action-oriented group and solutions focused. We are led by various business leaders and educators across the region.

Kevin Stotts

Kevin expressed a note of thanks and appreciation for the attendance, support, and encouragement from today's meeting. A couple examples of our work is provided. An article from Harvard Business Review, the Playbook, and Talent Strategy Shift documents.

Talent First brings together the K-12 leader, business leaders and various CEOs and we strive to work together to make the region more competitive. There is an intentional effort around

serving and supporting the needs around the region. We'd love to have more business leaders involved in our work and various needs.