

# Special Education Center Programs

## 2022-2023 Impact Report



**Special Education  
Center Programs  
Kent ISD**



## A Message from Center Program Leadership

Kent ISD Center Programs is excited to share this Impact Report covering the 2022-23 school year. Our programs serve students from across Kent ISD's districts who have complex needs that require highly specialized services every day. We are privileged to witness and take part in the success our students achieve in the face of unique challenges.

We hope this report demonstrates just a small piece of the positive impact that our programs have on our students, their families, and the communities we serve and partner with. Inside, you will find both quantitative data and testimonials that speak to student skill attainment, family and staff satisfaction with our programs, and student outcomes.

Most importantly, we use the information presented within these pages to improve the student experience and overall quality of our programs. We hope this report showcases our strengths as well as areas for improvement.

Ultimately, we hope to be more accountable to all and make decisions based on the needs of our students and community. If you have questions or concerns about the contents of this report, please don't hesitate to contact us by phone at 616.363.8102 or email at [PaulDymowski@kentisd.org](mailto:PaulDymowski@kentisd.org).

Sincerely,

Paul Dymowski  
Director of Kent ISD Center Programs

Joanne Platt, DHH  
Debra Burkhardt, DHH Oral Deaf  
Brandi Czechowskyj, DHH Total Communication  
Keith Hutchins, KEC Oakleigh  
Jenni Wittenbach, KEC Oakleigh  
Kevin Zaszak, KEC Beltline  
Leah Farrell, KEC Beltline  
Renee Hordyk, Pine Grove Learning Center

Lisa Merritt, Lincoln School  
David Breen, Lincoln School  
Todd Jones, Lincoln Developmental Center  
Heather Sneider, Empower U  
John Kleff, Empower U  
Nic Bond, Empower U  
Bill Behrendt, Empower U

## About Center Programs

Kent ISD Center Programs provide specialized services to meet the needs of students with an Individual Education Program (IEP) who have complex needs. There are nine Center Programs for students from birth through age 26 who reside within the boundaries of Kent ISD's districts. Placement in programs is determined through the IEP process when the IEP team determines highly specialized services are required to meet a student's needs.

Kent ISD assumed operation of Center Programs in 2019. Total Communication joined Center Programs in fall of 2020, and Region 1 Transition Services (R1TS) joined in 2022 combining with our existing transition program and becoming Empower U.

**Vision:** Kent ISD Center Programs will empower and equip students with the strategies and skills needed to maximize their participation and independence and to ensure equitable access in school, community, career, and life.



### Center Program Locations

[KentISD.org/CenterProgramsMap](https://KentISD.org/CenterProgramsMap)

## About the Impact Report

This report for the 2022-23 school year contains data from our programs which serve students from kindergarten through age 26. Early childhood programs administered by Center Programs are not included in this report. Some metrics are consistent across programs, such as our staff and family survey data. The specialized nature of each program and the range of individual student needs means that metrics and outcomes for student learning vary by program.

Each program reports the following data where available:

- **Exit outcomes:** Exit outcomes vary by program based on age and student need but may include re-entering school in their home district, pursuing employment, earning a diploma or connecting with a community agency.
- **Core Skills Achievement:** Each program focuses on several core skills to prepare learners for their next step. Achievement may be reported by the proportion of students who are able to demonstrate core skills or have shown improvement over the school year.
- **Family and Staff Survey Data:** Items from 2023's staff and family surveys regarding perceived quality of student learning, community agency partnerships and school safety provide a snapshot of how some of our key stakeholders see our strengths and areas for improvement.

# Deaf & Hard of Hearing Oral Deaf Program

[KentISD.org/DHHOralDeaf](https://KentISD.org/DHHOralDeaf)  
4300 Costa NE  
Grand Rapids, MI 49525  
616.365.6170

The Oral Deaf program serves students from birth through grade 12 who are deaf or hard of hearing (DHH). Students learn the speech, listening and literacy skills to communicate independently, whether at home, in school or in social settings. Audiological services are also provided so that students have the resources or devices they need to best access sound, setting them up for greater success.

## MISSION



The Oral Deaf Program provides specialized instruction, in order to develop skills in listening and spoken language, so that every student may fully participate in academic and social opportunities within their school and community.



## CORE SKILLS



LISTENING & SPOKEN  
LANGUAGE



LITERACY



SELF-ADVOCACY



SPEECH

## OUR STUDENTS

**20** STUDENTS  
BIRTH-5 YEARS

**100** STUDENTS  
K-12

## STUDENT SUCCESS

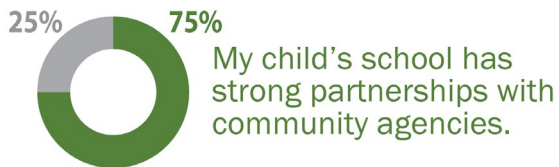
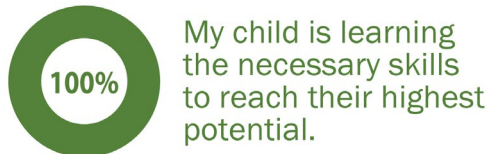
**4**  
STUDENTS EXITED  
THE PROGRAM

**4/4** STUDENTS EARNED A DIPLOMA

**2/4** STUDENTS ENROLLED IN POST-  
SECONDARY EDUCATION

**2/4** STUDENTS GAINED  
INDEPENDENT EMPLOYMENT

## OUR PARENTS SAY



■ Agree ■ Neutral

Results from Center Programs Family Survey, 10 Respondents

## OUR STAFF SAY



■ Agree ■ Disagree ■ Neutral

Results from Center Programs Staff Survey, 10 Respondents



*"My son had three amazing years at the center based program in the preschool classrooms. The staff was amazing, great about communicating what was going on in the classroom and how we could then continue that learning at home. Throughout the program he was able to catch up on his language milestones. The success was, he was ready for Kindergarten back at his home district. That's the accomplishment that this early intervention piece of supporting that language and listening skills really helped him to develop and be on track with his peers and join his typical classmates at his home district."*

- Amanda Schneider, Parent

# Deaf & Hard of Hearing Total Communication

[KentISD.org/DHHTotalCommunication](http://KentISD.org/DHHTotalCommunication)  
5461 Hunsberger Ave NE  
Grand Rapids, MI 49525  
616.361.3446

## CORE SKILLS



### COMMUNICATION

ASL, Spoken English or both



### ACADEMICS



### SELF-ADVOCACY



### SELF IDENTITY

Connection with deaf culture;  
Pride in oneself

The Total Communication Program serves students from birth through grade 12 who are deaf or hard of hearing (DHH). Staff here tailor their teaching to the unique abilities and needs of each student. To set students up for academic success, they may practice skills including American Sign Language (ASL), spoken English and other forms of nonverbal communication.

## MISSION



The Total Communication Program provides access and instruction in American Sign Language, spoken English, or a combination of both to ensure that every deaf and hard of hearing student develops a full language and can gain meaningful education.



*“The teachers and staff of my child’s school are always answering my questions and helping me with anything my family needs. This program has welcomed my child since day one with open arms. She has reached some of her goals in her IEP all thanks to her teachers.”*

- Survey Respondent

## STUDENT SUPPORTS

# 21

AMERICAN SIGN LANGUAGE  
INTERPRETERS

# 80%

AVERAGE TIME SPENT  
IN GENERAL EDUCATION  
CLASSES WITH  
INTERPRETERS

# 1

STUDENT EXITED  
THE PROGRAM

# 1/1

STUDENTS ENROLLED IN  
POST-SECONDARY EDUCATION



## OUR STUDENTS

# 20

 STUDENTS  
BIRTH-5 YEARS

# 56

 STUDENTS  
K-12

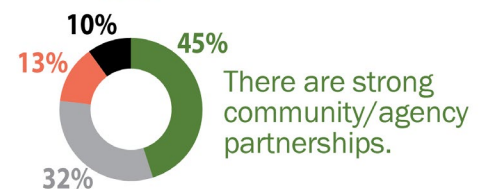
## OUR PARENTS SAY



Agree Disagree Neutral

Results from Center Programs Family Survey,  
11 Respondents

## OUR STAFF SAY



Agree Disagree Neutral Unsure

Results from Center Programs Staff Survey,  
30 Respondents

# Empower U

[KentISD.org/EmpowerU](http://KentISD.org/EmpowerU)

## Empower U North

1655 12 Mile Road NW, Sparta, MI 49345

616.802.3561

## Empower U Central

225 Mayfield Ave NE, Grand Rapids, MI 49503

616.410.4860

## Empower U South

3600 Byron Center Ave SW, Wyoming, MI 49519

616.410.4420

Empower U serves young adults ages 18-26 with a range of needs and prepares them for independent living, employment, and participation in their community. Thanks to many local partnerships, Empower U students have opportunities to practice the skills they learn and gain experience at real job sites throughout the area. Students are encouraged to advocate for themselves, plus they gain connections with community organizations which empower them to be as independent as possible.

## MISSION



Empower U, in partnership with our community, provides specialized instruction and opportunities specific to employment and independent living skills necessary for young adults to live a purposeful and productive life.



*"[My daughter's teacher] is very caring. She will call me with concerns for my daughter's safety or for her relationships etc. That's a step above and beyond. She does truly care."*

- Survey Respondent

## CORE SKILLS

*Metrics below report the percentage of students who could practice, use, or demonstrate the following skills by the end of the 22-23 school year.*



**ADULT LIVING SKILLS**

**75%**



**COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION**

**89%**



**EMPLOYABILITY**

**76%**



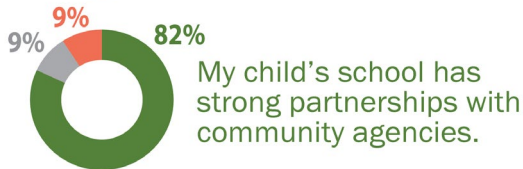
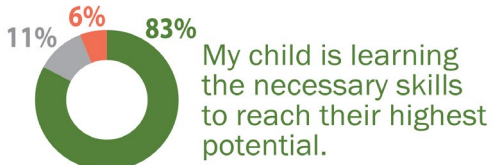
## OUR STUDENTS

**295** YOUNG ADULTS  
AGE 18-26

## STUDENT SUCCESS

**48** STUDENTS EXITED  
THE PROGRAM

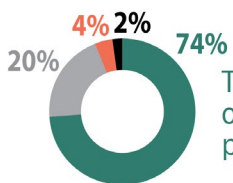
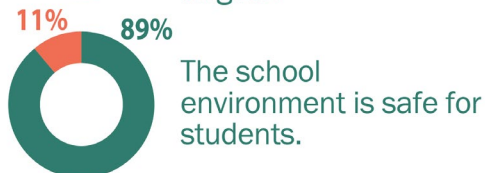
### OUR PARENTS SAY



■ Agree ■ Disagree ■ Neutral

Results from Center Programs Family Survey, 86 Respondents

### OUR STAFF SAY



■ Agree ■ Disagree ■ Neutral ■ Unsure

Results from Center Programs Staff Survey, 46 Respondents

**90%**  
EMPLOYED OR ENGAGED  
IN VOLUNTEER/  
COMMUNITY ACTIVITIES  
POST-EXIT

**20** INDEPENDENT EMPLOYMENT  
**15** SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT  
**13** VOLUNTEER/COMMUNITY  
INVOLVEMENT

**97%**  
CONNECTED TO AN  
AGENCY POST-EXIT

**47** CONNECTED AND ACTIVELY  
ENGAGED  
**1** NOT CONNECTED



*"This program is amazing. Our daughter has gained more than we could ever tell you, and we are so thankful. The staff is just the BEST! We are so glad that she has been a part of this program!"*

- Survey Respondent

# KEC Beltline

[KentISD.org/KECBeltline](http://KentISD.org/KECBeltline)  
1606 Leffingwell NE  
Grand Rapids, MI 49525  
616.410.4760

## CORE SKILLS



### SOCIAL/EMOTIONAL

- Coping Skills
- Self-Awareness
- Self-Management
- Social Awareness
- Relationship Skills
- Responsible Decision-Making



### ACADEMIC COMPETENCY



### EMPLOYABILITY



### INDEPENDENT LIVING

KEC Beltline serves students in 9th grade through age 26 who have significant emotional impairments and persistent behavioral concerns. Along with academics, students learn coping, self-management, and other behavioral skills, as well as employability and independent living skills. All of these help students earn either a Certificate of Completion or high school diploma, and prepare them for adulthood and the world of work.

## MISSION



KEC Beltline provides specialized instruction and services to students in order to educate and develop social-emotional and behavioral skills necessary to increase inclusion within their neighborhood schools and in the community.



# STUDENT SUCCESS

4

STUDENTS EXITED THE PROGRAM

4/4 STUDENTS EXITED WITH INDEPENDENT EMPLOYMENT

4/4 STUDENTS EXITED WITH LOCAL AGENCY CONNECTION



# OUR STUDENTS

50 STUDENTS GRADE 9-12

20 YOUNG ADULTS AGE 18-26

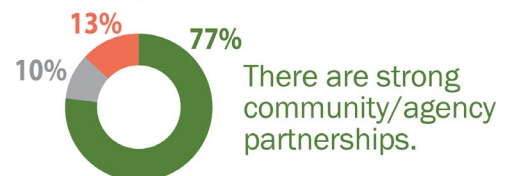
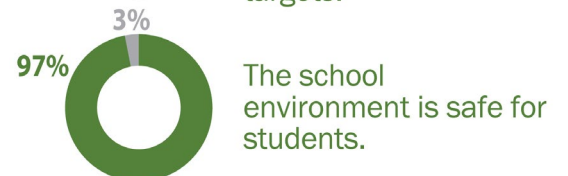
## OUR PARENTS SAY



■ Agree ■ Neutral

Results from Center Programs Family Survey, 10 Respondents

## OUR STAFF SAY



■ Agree ■ Disagree ■ Neutral

Results from Center Programs Staff Survey, 17 Respondents

“KEC Beltline staff has a positive vibe and the morale is great!”

- Survey Respondent

# KEC Oakleigh

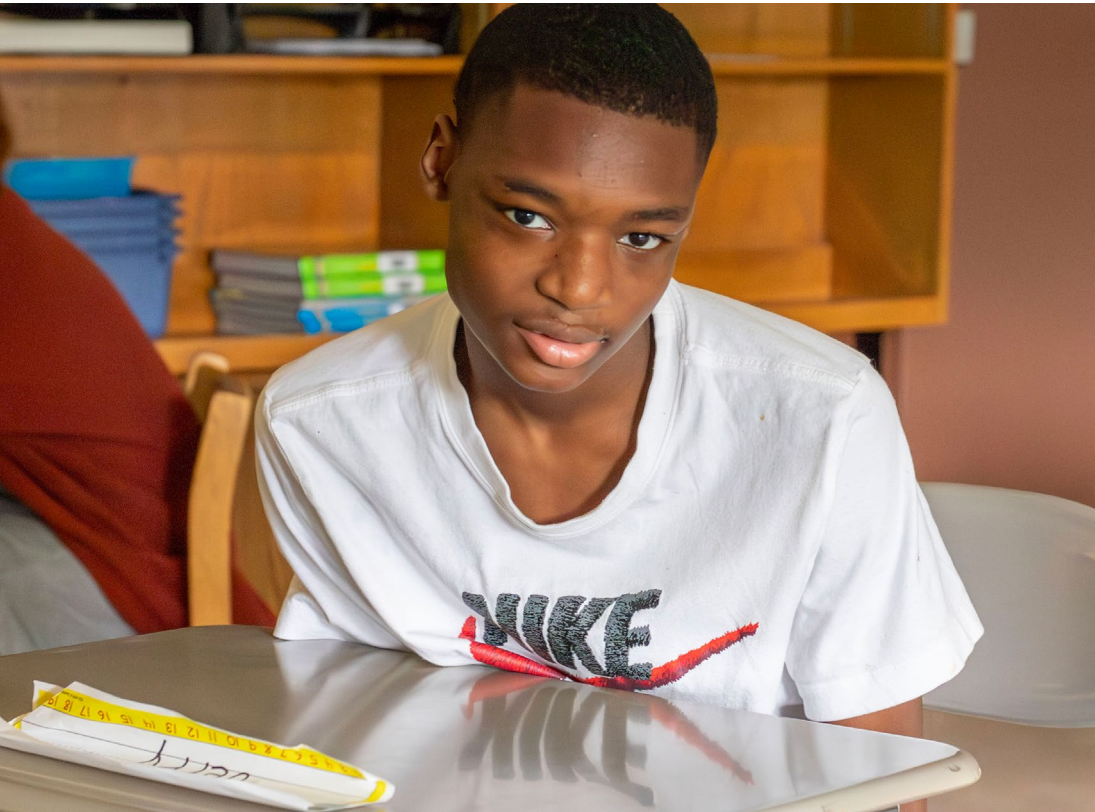
[KentISD.org/KECOakleigh](https://KentISD.org/KECOakleigh)  
2223 Gordon NW  
Grand Rapids, MI 49504  
616.410.4670

KEC Oakleigh serves students in kindergarten through 8th grade who have significant emotional impairments and persistent behavioral concerns. Our expert staff ensure students continue academic learning while gaining coping skills, social awareness, and other behavior skills, all with the goal of helping students return to their local school.

## MISSION



KEC Oakleigh provides specialized instruction and services to students in order to educate and develop social-emotional and behavioral skills necessary to increase inclusion within their neighborhood schools and in the community.



## CORE SKILLS



### SOCIAL/EMOTIONAL

- Coping Skills
- Self-Awareness
- Self-Management
- Social Awareness
- Relationship Skills
- Responsible Decision-Making



### ACADEMIC COMPETENCY

*“Fantastic staff at KEC Oakleigh! Every single one of them!!!”*

- Survey Respondent

## OUR STUDENTS

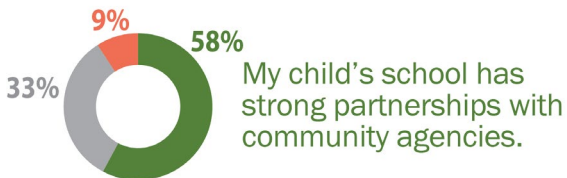
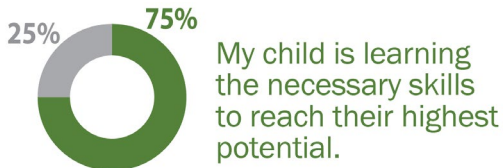
**48** STUDENTS  
K-8

## STUDENT SUCCESS

**10**

STUDENTS TRANSITIONED  
BACK TO LOCAL/REGIONAL  
PROGRAM

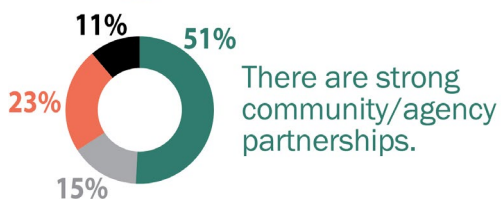
### OUR PARENTS SAY



■ Agree ■ Disagree ■ Neutral

Results from Center Programs Family Survey,  
12 Respondents

### OUR STAFF SAY



■ Agree ■ Disagree ■ Neutral ■ Unsure

Results from Center Programs Staff Survey,  
12 Respondents



*"The staff and administrators at KEC Oakleigh are very supportive and excellent at their jobs, in my opinion... I believe the entire staff has put in 100% plus to ensure my child receives the best education and social skills he is capable of learning and putting into practice."*

- Survey Respondent

# Lincoln Pines

Lincoln School  
[kentisd.org/LincolnSchool](http://kentisd.org/LincolnSchool)  
860 Crahen Road NE  
Grand Rapids, MI 49525  
616.410.4700

Lincoln Developmental Center  
[kentisd.org/LincolnDevelopmentalCenter](http://kentisd.org/LincolnDevelopmentalCenter)  
862 Crahen Road NE  
Grand Rapids, MI 49525  
616.410.4800

Pine Grove Learning Center  
[kentisd.org/PineGrove](http://kentisd.org/PineGrove)  
2101 52nd Street  
Wyoming, MI 49519  
616-410-4900

## CORE SKILLS

Metrics below report percentage of students who improved in one or more domains associated with the core skill



COMMUNICATION  
**82%**



FUNCTIONAL ACADEMICS  
**80%**



ADAPTIVE BEHAVIOR  
**90%**



MOBILITY  
**70%**



ADULT LIVING SKILLS  
**92%**

Collectively called “Lincoln Pines,” Lincoln School, Lincoln Developmental Center and Pine Grove Learning Center serve students with severe multiple impairments, cognitive impairments and autism spectrum disorder in kindergarten through age 26. Students from the southwestern area of Kent ISD attend Pine Grove, and those in the north, central and east attend Lincoln Campus. In each school, students receive support and services to meet their individual needs in academics, mobility and more.

## MISSION



We educate students with complex needs by providing specialized instruction specific to the communication, academic, adaptive behavior, mobility, and adult living skills required to develop independence.



*“This is our first year at Lincoln Developmental Center. Our daughter’s teachers have gone above and beyond to make her school experience productive and peaceful. There is a good balance of variety and routine in her day, and the teachers are very good at communicating with me as the parent.”*

- Survey Respondent

# STUDENT SUCCESS

15

STUDENTS EXITED THE PROGRAM

13/15 STUDENTS WITH AGENCY CONNECTIONS

5

STUDENTS TRANSFERRED TO LOCAL DISTRICTS

## OUR STUDENTS

207 K-12 STUDENTS

104 STUDENTS WITH AUTISM

150 YOUNG ADULTS AGE 18-26

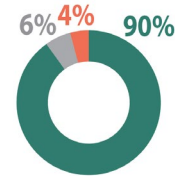
77 STUDENTS WITH COGNITIVE IMPAIRMENT (CI)

357 TOTAL STUDENTS

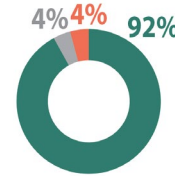
176 STUDENTS WITH SEVERE MULTIPLE IMPAIRMENTS (SXI)



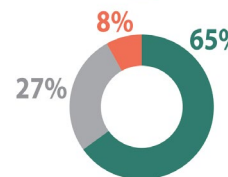
## OUR PARENTS SAY



My child is learning the necessary skills to reach their highest potential.



My child is safe at school.

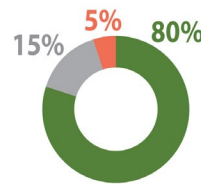


My child's school has strong partnerships with community agencies.

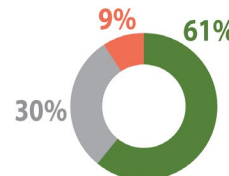
■ Agree ■ Disagree ■ Neutral

Results from Center Programs Family Survey, 67 Respondents

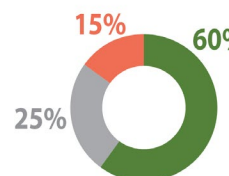
## OUR STAFF SAY



Students are learning what they need to be successful and curriculum has established learning targets.



The school environment is safe for students.



There are strong community/agency partnerships.

■ Agree ■ Disagree ■ Neutral

Results from Center Programs Staff Survey, 80 Respondents

*"This is our second year. In just that time, the list goes on and on of the things he can do or can do better. The collaborative relationship with the team here and home, as well as outside therapies has been great."*

- Lincoln Developmental Center Parent

**Special Education  
Center Programs  
Kent ISD**



2930 Knapp St NE  
Grand Rapids, MI 49525  
616.364.1333

[KentISD.org/CenterPrograms](http://KentISD.org/CenterPrograms)