
BOARD AGENDA ITEM

Information/Discussion _____
Future Action _____
Action ☒ X

Item: Request for additional classrooms/positions – Empower U

Submitted by: Paul Dymowski, Kirsten Myers

Date: May 4, 2023

Recommended by: Dave Rodgers

Board Meeting Date: May 15, 2023

RECOMMENDATION:

Additional classrooms (2) and positions (6):

- 2 Teachers – Empower U Central
- 4 Instructional Support Specialists – Empower U Central
- 2 Instructional Support Specialists – Empower U South

BACKGROUND:

- Empower U Central enrollment has increased from 290 students in May 2022, to 314 students in May 2023. Empower U staff have been working on enrollment for next school year. We received a few late requests from districts: i.e. GRPS Central High School had 10 students that were not on our list that now enrolled (new staff didn't refer earlier).

Working on Least Restricted Environments, we have 4 students from KEC Beltline that were ready to transition and 4 students from Lincoln School. Overall, we are seeing an increase in Autism and behavioral needs. Due to the increase in enrollment and complex needs of the students, we need 2 additional classrooms with Autism focus at Empower U Central next school year.

- Empower U South oversees our Project Search site at Corewell Health. We partner with Michigan Rehabilitation Services (MRS) to provide Instructional Support Specialists in the classroom. In the past Hope Network has supplied the Instructional Support Specialist through MRS. Due to staffing issues at Hope Network, they have not been able to provide staff consistently in the classroom, therefore, we have had long-term subs covering. MRS would like to partner with Kent ISD to provide the Instructional Support Specialists. With our cash match agreement, MRS would pay for 50-75% of these 2 new Kent ISD Instructional Support Specialist positions.