



## PARTNER PERSPECTIVE

Q & A with Kalamazoo RESA  
Superintendent Ron Fuller

*Ron Fuller, a member of The Learning Network's Executive Team, has been Superintendent of Kalamazoo RESA for the past five years, and will retire at the end of this school year after 39 years in public education. Fuller has led Kalamazoo RESA to a new level of cooperation, collaboration and cohesiveness with local and regional districts and educational partners in Southwest Michigan.*

### **FROM A COUNTYWIDE EDUCATIONAL PERSPECTIVE, WHAT DOES THE LEARNING NETWORK BRING TO THE PREKINDERGARTEN-12 LANDSCAPE THAT WASN'T ALREADY HERE?**

The Learning Network brings an unprecedented level of coordination of services to education and families in Kalamazoo County. This effort helps to focus agencies working on the perimeter of education, family services and youth development into a cohesive structure for youth.

### **WHAT KEY THING WOULD YOU LIKE EVERYONE TO KNOW ABOUT THE LEARNING NETWORK?**

I believe that the Learning Network will finally bring all child-centered organizations together to better serve the interests of our youth.

### **HOW LONG DOES IT TAKE FOR INITIATIVES LIKE THIS TO BEGIN HAVING AN IMPACT AT THE STUDENT OR FAMILY LEVEL?**

Coordination of services should have an immediate and positive impact for families and students. The impact on the education of our youth will take a longer period of time to show results.

### **LOOKING OUT FIVE OR 10 YEARS, HOW WILL EDUCATION IN KALAMAZOO COUNTY LOOK DIFFERENT BECAUSE OF THE LEARNING NETWORK?**

I envision a future where an umbrella of all student-centered services are housed under one roof and are readily available to school personnel. This concept originates from a community that cares deeply about its youth.

## THE LEARNING NETWORK OF GREATER KALAMAZOO

### **VISION**

The Learning Network of Greater Kalamazoo will be a unifying force to ensure that all children in the county will be ready for school, ready for post-secondary education, ready for a career and ready for the world.

### **MISSION**

The Learning Network of Greater Kalamazoo creates and sustains a culture of learning at home, in school, at work and throughout the community.

### **CORE VALUES**

- A collective vision around education and learning is key to community prosperity;
- Education is required to participate in a democratic society;
- The systems in our community that perpetuate inequities must be dismantled and reconstructed to prepare all children for success;
- Accountability and metrics are critical to measuring success; and
- Inclusion of those that have been marginalized builds stronger communities.

### **PRACTICES FOR EFFECTIVE ENGAGEMENT**

- Respect to build relationships.
- All are teachers and learners.
- Stay focused and curious.
- Allow for messiness that leads to learning.

# THE LEARNING NETWORK LAUNCHES WEBSITE

The Learning Network of Greater Kalamazoo launched its website in February and quickly had more than 200 visitors.

Meanwhile, social media supporting The Learning Network will launch in April and that —combined with this quarterly newsletter and news coverage — will increase community awareness. Additional outreach will happen through networking with Volunteer Kalamazoo and Facebook advertising.

“This website has already added a lot of value to our communications efforts,” says Felix Brooks, community investment officer at the Community Foundation and manager of The Learning Network. “The communications team will continue enhancing the site to meet the ever-changing needs of the network.”

One planned enhancement will be a section that displays The Learning Network scorecard, which will help the community track our progress.

The website launched with six active tabs allowing visitors to navigate to 10 web pages. Within a few weeks of the launch



there were nine links to a variety of news and information resources impacting the work of The Learning Network.

General information about The Learning Network includes sections on the vision, mission, core values, and practices for effective engagement.

The Get Involved tab includes phone and email contact information for how to volunteer with any of the action networks (currently Kindergarten Readiness, College and Career Readiness, and Adult Learning).

This section will grow as additional networks form. The Community Transformation and Structure tabs include lists of all of the Community Transformation Team partners, the Executive Team, and the Backbone Team.

Another important feature of the site is a section that provides visitors with options for giving to The Learning Network of Greater Kalamazoo Fund at the Kalamazoo Community Foundation — one of which is to give online.

We hope you will take some time today to visit [thelearningnetwork.org](http://thelearningnetwork.org).

**ICYMI** IN CASE YOU MISSED IT

Previous issues of this newsletter are available online at [thelearningnetwork.org/Ingrkresources](http://thelearningnetwork.org/Ingrkresources).



*Learning Network of Greater Kalamazoo Executive Committee Chair and Kalamazoo Community Foundation President/CEO Carrie Pickett-Erway (pictured here with Blaine Lam, Ron Kitchens and Cindy Rubel), represented The Learning Network in February at The Center for Michigan's "The Future of Education in Michigan" symposium at the Radisson Plaza Hotel at Kalamazoo Center.*

## ENGAGING THE COMMUNITY

The Learning Network of Greater Kalamazoo has been busy connecting with the community through meetings, interviews in the news media, and in one-on-one meetings.

The Learning Network was one of the initiatives featured at the February community meeting at the Radisson hosted by The Center for Michigan on the Future of Education in Michigan. The meeting drew hundreds of members of the business and education communities, in addition to a variety of nonprofit leaders and interested citizens.

The meeting, and the role of The Learning Network, received coverage in the Kalamazoo Gazette, MLive, News Channel 3, Second Wave, WKZO and in the business publication MiBiz. The local host for the meeting, on behalf of The Center for Michigan, was Blaine Lam, of Lam & Associates. Phil Power, chairman of The Center for Michigan, co-chaired the series of panel discussions with Kalamazoo Valley Community College President Marilyn Schlack.

Representing The Learning Network as chair of the executive committee, Carrie Pickett-Erway (president/CEO of the Kalamazoo Community Foundation) gave a presentation on the purpose and organization of The Learning Network featuring the works of the three action networks: Kindergarten Readiness led by Jacque Eatmon of the Great Start Collaborative at Kalamazoo RESA, College and Career

Readiness led by Brenda Pickett of the Kalamazoo Area College Access Network at Kalamazoo RESA, and Adult Learning, led by Michael Evans of the Kalamazoo Literacy Council housed at Goodwill Industries of Southwestern Michigan.

Pickett-Erway told the ballroom audience that The Learning Network was established "to be a generational initiative." Through this work, "the community is building a structure to increase educational outcomes" that extend beyond what has been achieved before in this community. Attendees also received a copy of the December issue of this newsletter.

Meanwhile, the last community meeting, held at Mt. Zion Baptist Church in December, drew about 100 participants who heard updates from the action networks' lead conveners. The Community Transformation Team met in January.

The Learning Network is also being featured in interviews on WKZO radio's The Lori Moore Show. Representing The Learning Network in February and March were Pickett-Erway, Evans and executive team member Janice Brown. In April, Eatmon and Pickett are scheduled to share about the work of the Kindergarten Readiness and College and Career Readiness action networks. Be sure to tune in to 590 AM at 7:50 a.m. on April 5 and April 19.

# HOW YOU CAN GET INVOLVED



If you want to play a part in transforming how, and how well, our community prepares everyone who lives in Kalamazoo County — from infants to senior citizens — for lifelong success, an excellent way to get involved is to join an Action Network.

Action Networks are groups of individuals, parents, students and practitioners working together to use data and a continuous improvement process to identify and implement practices that impact a community-level outcome.

Three action networks have been formed: Kindergarten Readiness, College and Career Readiness, and Adult Learning. To learn about joining one of these Action Networks, contact:

## Kindergarten Readiness

Jacque Eatmon | 269.250.9648 | [jeatmon@kresa.org](mailto:jeatmon@kresa.org)

## College and Career Readiness

Brenda Pickett | 269.250.9313 | [bpickett@kresa.org](mailto:bpickett@kresa.org)

## Adult Learning

Michael Evans | 269.382.0490 ext. 222 | [mevans@goodwillswmi.org](mailto:mevans@goodwillswmi.org)

# SAVE THE DATE: AUGUST 21

On Wednesday, Aug. 21, The Learning Network will host a workshop with Katherine Prince Grimsley, an authority on trends in K-12 American education and how communities can increase school readiness, success in school and career preparation. Grimsley, senior director for organizational development and foresight at KnowledgeWorks (Columbus, Ohio), helps communities see how they can shape the future of education through creative thinking and dynamic collaboration. Grimsley also will be the keynote speaker for the Kalamazoo Community Foundation's 2013 Community Meeting the evening before. Registration details for both events will be provided this summer.

## THE LEARNING NETWORK COMMUNITY TRANSFORMATION TEAM PARTNERS

### Students and Parents

TiAnna Harrison  
Alexia Jones  
Mollie Peterson

### Public | Private | Nonprofit Entities

Borgess  
Bronson  
Communities in Schools Kalamazoo  
Douglass Community Association  
Family Health Center \*  
Goodwill Industries of Southwestern Michigan \*  
Hispanic American Council  
iEval  
ISAAC  
City of Kalamazoo \*  
Kalamazoo College  
Kalamazoo Community Foundation \*  
Kalamazoo County  
Kalamazoo Community Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services \*  
The Kalamazoo Promise \*  
Kalamazoo Public Schools \*  
Kalamazoo Regional Chamber of Commerce  
Kalamazoo RESA \*  
Kalamazoo Valley Community College  
Kalamazoo Valley Habitat for Humanity  
LISC  
Metropolitan Kalamazoo Branch NAACP \*  
Michigan Department of Human Services  
Mt. Zion Baptist Church  
PNC Bank  
City of Portage  
Schupan & Sons  
Southwest Michigan First  
United Way of the Battle Creek and Kalamazoo Region \*  
W.E. Upjohn Institute \*  
Western Michigan University  
Welsh & Associates \*

\*Executive Team

## LEARN MORE

If you would like to learn more about The Learning Network of Greater Kalamazoo and how you can get involved, contact Felix Brooks Jr. at [fbrooks@kalfound.org](mailto:fbrooks@kalfound.org) or 269.381.4416.