

# Kent Strategic Vision for Advancing STEM



## OVERVIEW

### BACKGROUND

Kent School District has a vision to produce graduates who are globally competitive learners through high quality academic, social and applied learning. Applied learning is an established priority of the district, particularly in high-demand Science Technology Engineering and Math (STEM) fields driving the local economy. Ensuring equitable access remains a concern and the Covid pandemic further limited opportunities for KSD students to experience real-world and hands-on contexts for academics and technical training. Simultaneously industry and community partners were experiencing their own challenges.

To respond to these converging needs, the City of Kent and Kent School District came together to engage local consulting firm Kinetic West utilizing American Rescue Plan Act funds to support development of a strategic vision for advancing STEM through Career & Technical Education (CTE), Career Connected Learning (CCL) opportunities, and partnerships. Development of the strategic vision leveraged extensive engagement of Kent School District leaders, educators, staff as well as community and industry partners and youth. A strategic vision and well-defined priorities help keep efforts across the district and the city organized, efficient, prioritized, and positioned to bring on-board more resources.

#### VISION

The new vision statement that is the foundation for the strategic priorities reads as follows:

*The Kent School District, the City of Kent, and community and industry partners will collaborate to provide Kent students high-quality, applied, and engaging STEM education at every grade level. This will ensure that each student is equipped for post-high school STEM pathways in the region and beyond that lead to living wage careers and a thriving community.*

### STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

The working team identified key criteria for selecting a narrowed set of impactful strategic priorities. All STEM priorities should:

- Increase equity, including equitable access across K-12, across Kent schools, and for all student populations
- Focus on making STEM engaging and hands-on
- Be sustainable
- Leverage partnerships
- Be scalable

The resulting system-building and programmatic strategic priorities to focus Kent's work to advance STEM education are outlined below. This strategic vision guides the work for the next five years (2023-2028).

## SYSTEM-BUILDING STRATEGIES

1. **Partner Management and Communications:** Build system to formalize and improve STEM partner management and communications.
  - Phase 1: Build and implement a process for partnership management and communications with a clear process, requirements, onboarding, and expectations for continued engagement.
    - Identify or hire a district-level staff person that oversees the KSD partnership experience from initial outreach/connection to ongoing engagement and school-partner relationships
    - Establish directory of STEM education and industry partners currently engaged with KSD
    - Identify data to be collected from partners to demonstrate progress and impact
  - Phase 2: Develop Communications Plan for sharing partner impact and available STEM and CCL partner opportunities with students, families, and educators.
2. **Data Tracking System:** Develop data tracking system for STEM and CCL activities and experiences.
  - Establish data collection processes and tools for measuring student participation and outcome measures in school-connected STEM and CCL activities.

## PROGRAMMATIC STRATEGIES

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### ALL GRADE LEVELS

3. **Industry Guest Speakers:** Establish career and industry “Speaker’s Bureau,” including creating a recruitment plan for engaging industry contacts and utilization process, to enable educators to access guest speakers to promote career awareness.
4. **STEM Student Clubs and Challenges:** Consistently offer and support STEM student clubs and challenges across the district at all schools (includes First Robotics Lego League, E-sports, etc.).

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### ELEMENTARY / MIDDLE SCHOOL

5. **STEM Lessons:** Identify specific STEM curriculum and lesson plans across elementary and middle school grade levels (K-8) aligned to state learning standards to support teachers to teach STEM, implement project-based learning, and integrate STEM career exploration into their classrooms.
6. **STEM Professional Development:** Provide relevant and impactful STEM PD to K-8 educators that is aligned with curriculum to prepare them to teach current STEM topics and career pathways, while providing a STEM option for meeting clock hour requirements.
7. **Middle School CTE Electives:** Offer CTE electives focused on high-demand industries across all middle schools that align to high school CTE pathways.

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### HIGH SCHOOL

8. **Core Plus:** Implement complete Core Plus Aerospace curriculum with fidelity to provide the knowledge, hands-on learning, and transferable skills needed to prepare students for high-wage jobs in aerospace.
9. **High School Career Connected Learning:** Expand high school career connected learning opportunities focusing on four key industries (aerospace/outer space, advanced manufacturing, IT, and healthcare) and career prep opportunities (pre-apprenticeships and internships).