

Kent Intermediate School District

CARES Act Funding Request

Date of application: 10/6/2020

Organization name: Kent Intermediate School District

Contact person: Chris Glass, Director of Legislative Affairs
616.447.5689
ChrisGlass@kentisd.org

Address: 2930 Knapp NE
Grand Rapids, MI 49525

Purpose of Grant: The purpose of this grant request is to provide emergency funding for Kent County schools in response to, preparation for, and prevention of the coronavirus pandemic.

Project dates: 8/1/2020 - 12/30/2020

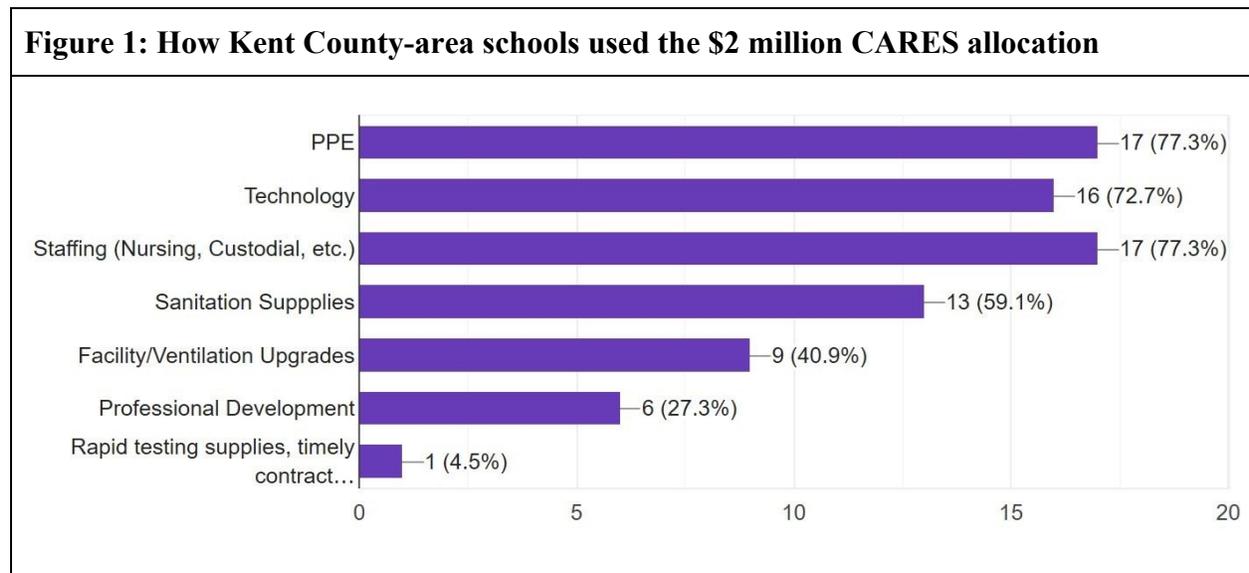
Amount Requested: **Updated Request: \$1 million**
Initial Allocation: \$2 million (August, 2020)

Geographic Area: Kent County

Updated Request:

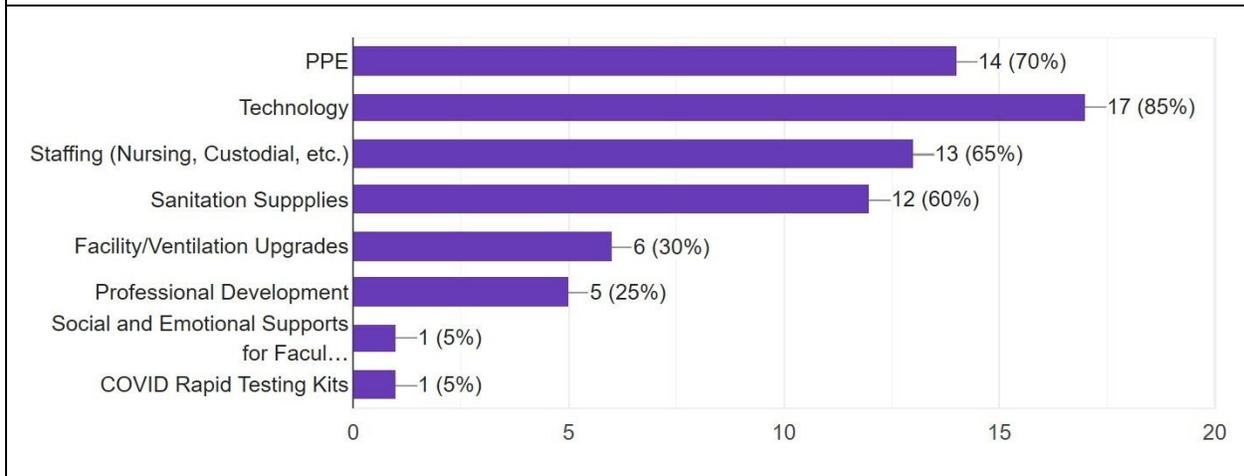
In July, school leaders from across Kent County requested CARES funds allocated to Kent County from the federal government. These resources were necessary to facilitate a safe reopening of schools. In August, the Kent County Board of Commissioners approved a \$2 million allocation to support schools.

School leaders across the county were very appreciative of the initial allocation. The resources are being put to great use to keep students and staff safe. A survey of the traditional school districts across Kent County along with Grand Rapids Christian Schools and the Dioceses of Grand Rapids Catholic Schools found that 77 percent used these funds for PPE or Staffing. This followed closely by technology, with 73 percent of districts responding that they used funds in this manner (*see figure 1*). :



As we work towards continuing to make sure districts have the resources to keep schools safe, we asked school leaders if there were additional needs that are still going unmet. Over 85 percent cited additional technology needs, along with 70 percent still citing PPE as among their top needs (*see figure 2*). :

Figure 2: Additional COVID-19 related needs for Kent County-area school districts



Kent County-area schools have worked in close collaboration with the Kent County Health Department to make sure we're implementing the best possible mitigation strategies to prevent viral spread. We have also been transparent in our efforts to keep the broader community informed through the development of a [COVID-19 District Dashboard](#). Despite our efforts to date, positive cases have continued to emerge in schools throughout the county. National [research](#) demonstrates that continued disruptions due to COVID-19 will only put our students behind in regards to their academic learning..

Given the need that still exists, we are requesting an additional \$1 million in CARES funds from Kent County. These resources are vital in supporting our students and staff navigate the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic.

We understand there are a number of priorities the county will need to consider with the remaining funds. We appreciate your consideration of this request and once again thank you for your prior support.

Application Narrative:

Statement of Need - Schools are facing an unprecedented challenge in meeting continued health and safety needs due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The Association of School Business Officials International and AASA/School Superintendents Association recently conducted an analysis of costs for an average school district with 3,659 students, eight buildings, 183 classrooms, 329

staff members and 40 buses, transporting at 25 percent capacity and found the cost for opening up completely under new safety guidelines could amount to \$1,778,139 per district. The average student enrollment for a district in Kent County is higher than the size cited for their analysis (4,620 students). While Kent County schools received additional CARES Act funding, these funds were allocated based on Title I, Part A funding formula, which varies across districts, and are insufficient to meet the needs for every district. The state allocated additional CARES funding to the tune of \$350 per pupil, but this funding largely backfilled a \$175 per student reduction happening simultaneously. Schools are now left with additional needs that exceed the amount of funding received to date. Resources dedicated for teaching and learning are being redirected to cover these unmet needs.

The AASA study calculates an average per pupil reopening cost of just shy of \$486 per student based on anticipated costs. While each district will create their own plan based on existing resources and remaining unmet needs, the following represents typical costs a district/school faces.

Health monitoring, cleaning and disinfecting:

- Hand sanitizers for students in classrooms—\$39,517
- Electrostatic disinfectant sprayers—\$33,600
- Deep cleaning of a school after a confirmed Covid-19 case—\$26,000
- Disinfectant wipes for classrooms—\$16,833
- No-touch thermometer (one per school)—\$640
- Oximeter (one per school)—\$360
- Additional staff to carry out health and safety protocols

Staffing:

- Custodial staff for increased cleaning and disinfecting of schools and buses—\$448,000
- Ensuring that every public school has at least one nurse (full-time or part-time)—\$400,000
- Ensuring one aide per bus to screen student temperatures before boarding—\$384,000

Personal Protective Equipment:

- Disposable masks for students who do not bring masks from home (an estimated 30% of students)—\$148,190
- Daily disposable masks for in-school staff—\$44,415
- Gloves for custodial staff (5 pairs a day for 2 custodians per school)—\$1,440

Providing transportation and childcare:

Resume before- and after-school childcare programs (with social distancing and cleaning protocols)—\$168,750

Fog machines and cleaner for buses—\$55,860

Hand sanitizer for buses—\$10,534

Kent County schools are operating using the MI Safe Schools Roadmap as their operational guide for the 2020-21 school year. The MI Safe Schools Roadmap includes requirements and recommendations for multiple scenarios, based on the status of the COVID-19 outbreak. These scenarios include:

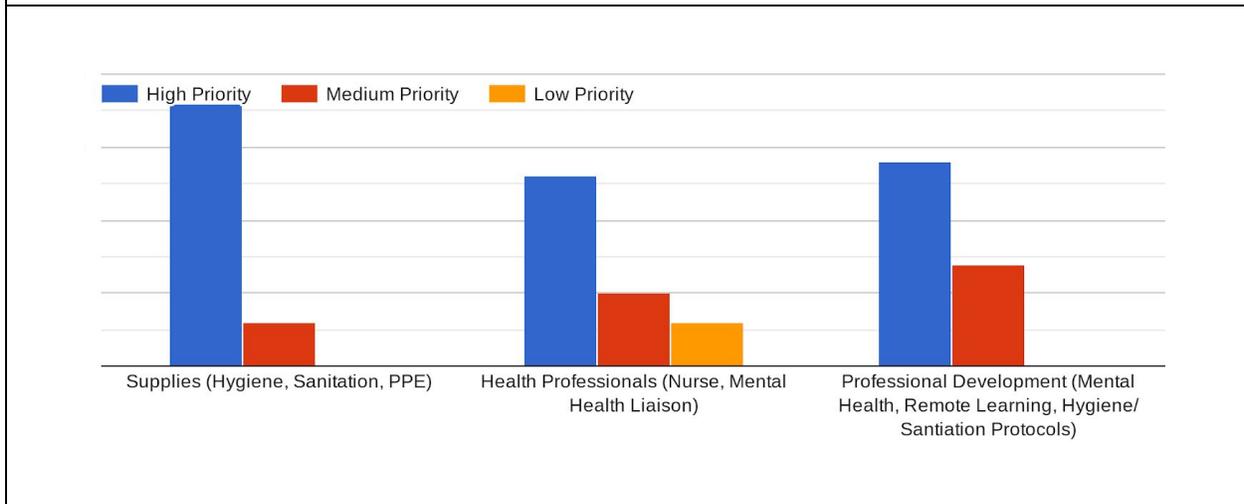
- Schools open for in-person instruction with minimal required safety protocols (MI Safe Start Phase 6).
- Schools open for in-person instruction with moderate required and implementation of strongly recommended safety protocols (MI Safe Start Phase 5).
- Schools open for in-person instruction with more stringent required safety protocols (MI Safe Start Phase 4).
- Schools do not open for in-person instruction and instruction is provided remotely (MI Safe Start Phases 1-3).

Due to budget uncertainties, the fact that additional federal aid for schools has yet to be secured, and that school is already underway, Kent ISD is seeking funding support to be distributed on a per pupil basis to assist districts with ongoing needs. While this is a fraction of the estimated \$486 per pupil rate cited in the AASA study, this funding will have an immediate impact on Kent County schools' ability to mitigate the spread of COVID-19 and to keep our staff and students safe.

Kent County currently falls within Region 2, which is in Phase 4 of the MI Safe Schools Roadmap. With the recent escalation of the Grand Rapids area to the ["D" level](#), it is likely that in-person instruction, if permitted, will require stringent safety protocols. The MI Safe Schools Roadmap includes three categories of safety protocols -- Required, Strongly Recommended, and Recommended.

Following the release of the MI Safe Schools Roadmap, Kent ISD administered a survey of local superintendents, asking specific questions regarding each districts' needs in the implementation of Required and Strongly Recommended protocols. Overall, districts ranked the need for Supplies (Hygiene, Sanitation, PPE) as the highest priority, closely followed by Professional Development, and additional Health Professionals staffing (*see figure 3*).

Figure 3: Districts' Priorities for CARES funding



In the category of Supplies (Hygiene, Sanitation, PPE) districts identified Face Coverings (masks, face shields), Handwashing Stations, Thermometers, and Signage as a priority, with 85% - 95% of districts indicating these items were an unfunded reopening need. In the category of Professional Development, districts identified topics on Remote Learning, Mental Health/Trauma Informed Practices, and Hygiene/Sanitation Protocols as a priority, with 62% - 81% of districts indicating these trainings were an unfunded reopening need. Lastly, in the category of Health Professionals, School Nurses and School-based Mental Health Liaisons were identified as a priority, with two-thirds (66.7%) of districts responding that these positions were an unfunded reopening need.

This data is aligned to the priority areas outlined in the MI Safe Schools Roadmap. In Phase 4 -- the first phase that allows for in-person instruction to take place -- districts must adhere to stringent safety protocols. All students, preK through 12th grade, are required to wear face coverings while on a bus or in unavoidable shared spaces (e.g. hallway, restroom). All students are required to wear face coverings in the classroom. All teachers and staff, no matter their grade level or setting, are required to wear facial coverings. These requirements have been reinforced by an Emergency Order issued by the Department of Health and Human Services.

Under the category of Hygiene, districts are required to provide adequate supplies of soap, hand sanitizer, paper towels, tissues, and signs reinforcing proper handwashing techniques. Professional development for staff is also specifically identified in the MI Safe Schools Roadmap in all phases of the reopening plan. In addition to training on Distance/Remote Learning topics, it is “strongly recommended” that districts provide professional development in social-emotional learning, trauma-informed best practices, and self-care to promote holistic wellness.

Additional staffing of health professionals would help address several requirements and recommendations from the MI Safe Schools Roadmap as well, including rapid identification and referral for physical and mental health related needs, the identification of a qualified staff member in each building to coordinate response efforts, and the implementation of CDC guidelines in the event of a confirmed COVID-19 case..

Grant Request - Kent ISD is coordinating an additional grant request of \$1 million from Kent County's CARES Act allocation to assist local districts -- including area public charter schools and parochial schools -- with ongoing COVID-19 related costs.