Statement on equitable funding from Kent ISD
Superintendent Ron Koehler
Realizing the vision of Proposal A – equal funding for all schools – is a milestone to be celebrated, as there were massive inequities in funding when Proposal A was adopted. Two landmark studies released in the past five years – the School Finance Research Collaborative report, and Michigan School Finance at a Crossroads – help us understand this watershed moment is one step on the journey to better outcomes for all students.

The SFRC report helped us better understand why Michigan’s students score so low on standardized assessments, because the supports necessary for teachers and students to succeed – social workers, school counselors, school psychologists and others – are not deployed in Michigan schools as they are in other states. The Michigan School Finance at a Crossroads Report helped us understand why: Michigan was last in the nation in new investment in public education for the 25 years following the passage of Proposal A.

These reports helped us construct a new vision, one of equity, not equality. Each student has different abilities and different needs. We need to celebrate and support all. Some students need additional support to master concepts that others immediately understand. All can learn, but some need more time on task or other forms of support to ensure they are healthy and ready to learn.

Equal funding is a laudable milestone. Now it’s time to allocate funds equitably, giving the economically disadvantaged, English Language Learners and special education students the resources necessary to help them achieve proficiency on the core content all students need to be successful in school, in life and in their careers.