



KETTLE MORaine STATE FOREST WISCONSIN

Pushing the Boundaries of Learning in
Kettle Moraine Schools

Spring 2023



NEXT GENERATION
LEARNING
CHALLENGES



Kettle Moraine School District

Fast Facts

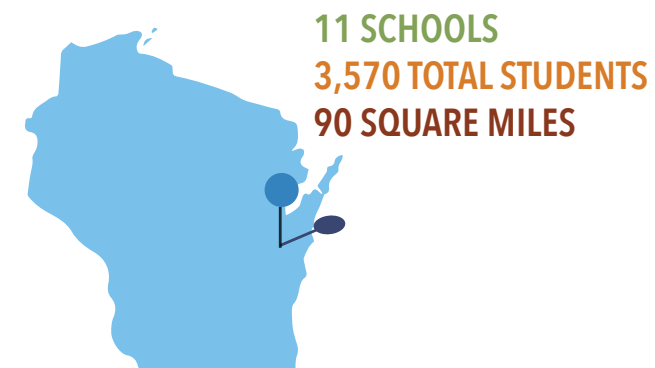
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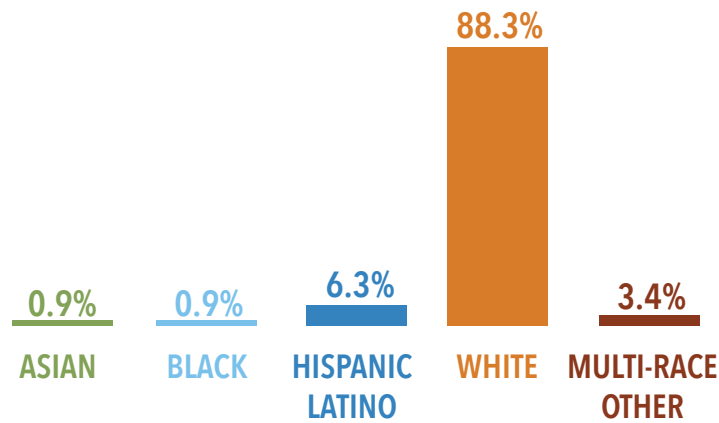


Recognized by the U.S. Department of Education as a Blue Ribbon District of Excellence featuring "Future Ready" schools.

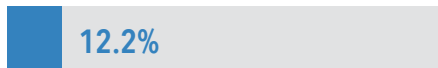


KETTLE MORaine SCHOOL DISTRICT
WAUKESHA COUNTY, WISCONSIN

STUDENT DEMOGRAPHICS



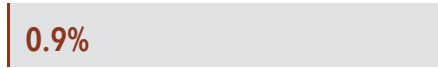
STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES



ECONOMICALLY DISADVANTAGED



ENGLISH LEARNERS



KM DISTRICT PERFORMANCE COMPARED WITH
WISCONSIN STATE AVERAGES

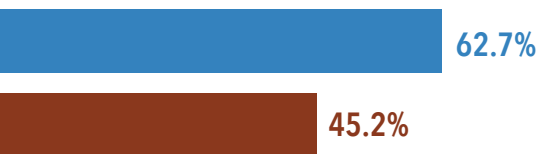
FOUR YEAR GRADUATION RATE



GRADUATES' AVERAGE ACT SCORE



INITIAL POSTSECONDARY ENROLLMENT



MISSION

To cultivate academic excellence, citizenship, and personal development

VISION

Learning Without Boundaries



"We use the word nimble a lot. You have to be pliable and not so rigid in the way that you approach education. You have to be willing to design and redesign on the fly. You have to be willing to throw out what you thought you were going to do, jump onto a meeting with admin or teachers at a moment's notice, and really think about what's best for students. Working in teams is not efficient, but it creates an amazing culture because everybody feels engaged in the work. Our Graduate Profile work is a prime example of that. The work was not efficient, but I predict that it's going to gain traction very easily because a lot of hands have been in it."

— Holly Myhre, Director of Secondary Education, Kettle Moraine School District

Kettle Moraine School District (KMSD or KM) gets its name from eastern Wisconsin's geography and geological history. The landscape of the Kettle Moraine, a region that stretches from Walworth County in the south to Kewaunee County in the north, is dotted with kettles—ponds and lakes formed when glaciers collided, calved, and melted over 15,000 years ago. Located in Waukesha County, the district encompasses farms, lakes, and beautiful rolling hills. Its boundaries contain 90 square miles, including several thousand acres of the Southern Unit of the Kettle Moraine State Forest.

The district's eleven schools serve 3,570 students from ten different cities, towns, and villages. Only half an hour's drive from the social, cultural, and educational opportunities offered by Milwaukee, Kettle Moraine is a desirable place to live. As described by Holly Myhre, the district's director of secondary education, "We are right smack in the middle of Milwaukee and Madison, with a lot of inland lakes, which is a draw for families. Because it's a really nice place to be," she adds, "people don't leave. They don't go to Florida—they retire here."

Holly notes that such low turnover, coupled with a hot housing market, creates a shortage of first homes for families, especially those with young children. This potential challenge to enrollment is offset, however, by Wisconsin's open enrollment process. As Laura Dahm, the director of elementary education for the district, explains, "It means that you can enroll into a district in which you are not a resident.

We pull students from our neighboring geographic districts, and sometimes from even 20 or 30 miles away. So we are schools of choice in that families can say, 'My resident district isn't offering something that I see in the repertoire of what Kettle Moraine is offering.'"

Kettle Moraine's palette of school offerings includes a surprising variety of high school options, all on the same campus. Learners and their families can choose the comprehensive Kettle Moraine High School (KMHS) or schools with a particular area of emphasis, like the career-focused High School of Health Sciences (KM HS²), KM Perform School for Arts & Performance, or KM Global, which highlights leadership and making an impact. New to the district is KM Connect Virtual Academy for Communication & Collaboration. This wide range of pathways contributes to Kettle Moraine's appeal for learners and their families. As Laura observes, "On average about two students come into our district for every one student that leaves our district through that open enrollment process."

Even with the choice to open enroll into or out of KMSD, the student population within the district is stable. According to Stephen Plum, the superintendent, "We've got something like a 93 percent non-attrition rate. If you start in KM, it's extremely likely that you'll graduate from KM." Stephen sees this as an advantage for supporting learners' development through multiple years and grades. "It's helpful when we track the different performance criteria for the Graduate Profile over time," he says.

KETTLE MORaine SCHOOL DISTRICT GRADUATE PROFILE

As a community and school district, we strive for each Kettle Moraine graduate to be a:

COMMUNICATOR
COLLABORATOR
CREATIVE & CRITICAL THINKER
CONTINUOUS LEARNER
SELF-DIRECTED & RESILIENT INDIVIDUAL
ENGAGED CITIZEN



Learning without Boundaries

ACADEMIC
EXCELLENCE

CITIZENSHIP

PERSONAL
DEVELOPMENT

CONTINUOUS LEARNER

- Takes ownership of learning, continuously pursuing and demonstrating knowledge and skills throughout life
- Understands how to apply learning to new situations and challenges
- Explores areas of interest for academic, career and personal success

COMMUNICATOR

- Communicates effectively in multiple ways - verbal, written, electronic and visual
- Shows purpose and thoughtfulness in communication
- Remains open to communicating with a variety of people, familiar and unfamiliar

COLLABORATOR

- Actively listens, empathizes and contributes thoughtful, meaningful ideas that support common goals
- Understands the importance of roles and responsibilities within a collaborative process/organization, and has the ability to lead formally and informally while collaborating
- Is flexible, open minded, confident and adaptable when working with and receiving feedback from others

CREATIVE & CRITICAL THINKER

- Reflects on past learning and experiences when faced with new situations and challenges
- Questions, reasons and weighs evidence to reach conclusions
- Innovates to solve problems

ENGAGED CITIZEN

- Demonstrates integrity and leadership through positively influencing outcomes
- Acknowledges, understands, interacts with and respects diverse individuals, perspectives and cultures
- Applies individual talents to serve others in the local and global community
- Understands how to make ethical, moral and financially responsible decisions

SELF-DIRECTED & RESILIENT INDIVIDUAL

- Maintains a positive work ethic and strives for self-improvement
- Understands how to manage time and priorities
- Sets short- and long-term goals for success
- Overcomes adversity through persistence, perseverance, self-advocacy and a growth mindset
- Reflects on one's decisions and actions, remaining flexible and open to new ideas

01 One Profile Serving Many Purposes

The Kettle Moraine Graduate Profile was adopted in 2016, and its six elements—along with the more specific language beneath each one—articulate the district's whole-person vision of success. Building on the Kettle Moraine School Board's longtime focus on the three pillars of academic excellence, citizenship, and personal development, it describes the kind of successful person the community needs and that district schools strive to nurture and develop.

When KM educators talk about the Graduate Profile, a common theme is preparing learners for future success in a changing world. Tricia Fetherston, lead counselor at KMHS, speaks to that purpose at the high school level: "As we're preparing students for their transition to the real world, continuing their education either on the job or through a formal program, the Graduate Profile helps define the skill sets. We talk about them with students all the time. We've had those conversations for years, but this helps define it. It paints a picture, not only for the student, but also for the community members and for parents."

According to Jill Gilbert, a KMHS English teacher and instructional coach, the Graduate Profile has prompted her to consider how education needs to shift in light of "the realities of the world we're sending students into and all the unknowns." Is the purpose of education, she asks, "this GPA at the end or are you a well-rounded individual who is

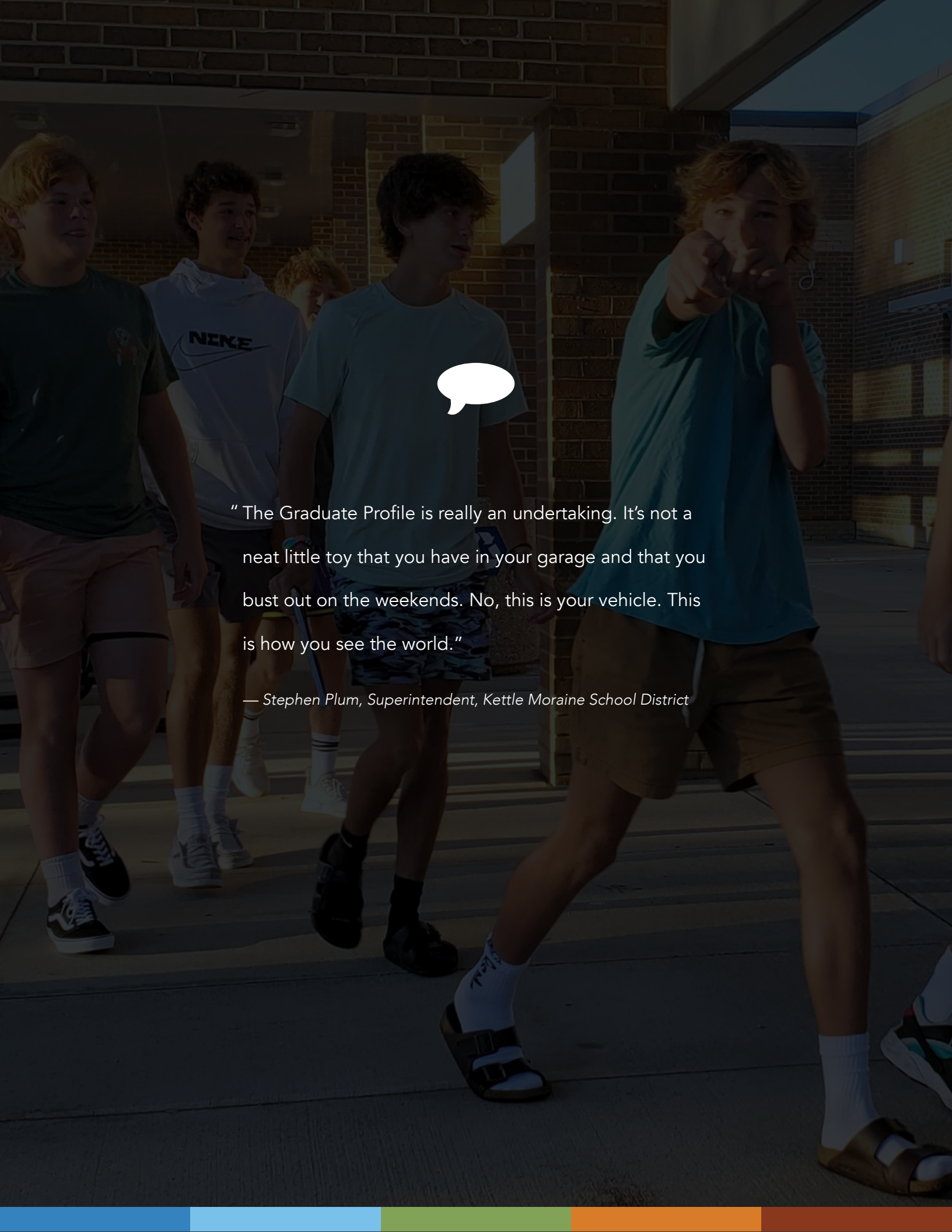
going to have success when you leave our walls? So the Graduate Profile for me has been about understanding—or maybe not totally understanding—those realities and what students really need to know."

For Zakarie "Zak" Lenski, a social studies educator at KM Global, the Graduate Profile serves as a guide and a reminder that the purpose of his teaching is to develop learners for success both in school and as adults. "The Graduate Profile allows us to focus our lessons. Whether it's academic or personal, it's less about the content driving us and more about how this content gets you closer to that model student," he says. "And by the time they leave here, the students have become a more adult version of themselves."



Hear KM Global learners Maddie Bruss and Jacob Hedgcock describe some of the learning experiences that are preparing them as leaders who are making an impact on their world.

This version of the Graduate Profile, from 2016, is currently being updated by the KM community to reflect its importance at all grade levels.



“ The Graduate Profile is really an undertaking. It’s not a neat little toy that you have in your garage and that you bust out on the weekends. No, this is your vehicle. This is how you see the world.”

— Stephen Plum, Superintendent, Kettle Moraine School District

Like many schools and districts that are redefining success, Kettle Moraine worked with diverse stakeholders to develop the district’s Graduate Profile. Stephen, who was the director of the High School of Health Sciences, KM HS², at the time, was part of the original Graduate Profile team. He notes that engaging with the community—including parents, students, and workforce partners like the [Waukesha County Business Alliance](#)—resulted in a rich, community-based definition of success, one that was based on a deep understanding of the community and what they want from their schools.

From his perspective as superintendent, he also identifies long-term benefits of community engagement around the Graduate Profile. The world has experienced a great deal of change since 2016 when the Graduate Profile was written. In a community with diverse perspectives on those changes, such challenges present for Stephen an opportunity to test the Graduate Profile. “It’s a good part of the

Graduate Profile story, because if this thing has any legs to it—any traction—then it’s going to withstand struggles and become a rallying point for all members in a diverse community.”

Many educators across the district refer to the Graduate Profile as a means of unifying the community, as well as shaping the learner experience. Holly notes, for example, that the Kettle Moraine district serves diverse communities, from rural to suburban. “Even though they’re located very tight together,” she says, “they’re all different kinds of communities, so that makes it challenging to have something that feels really unified.” Referring to the fact that people tend to stay in the Kettle Moraine area for their entire lives, she adds, “About 80 percent of the people who live within our community do not have students in our school district. So it’s really important for us to have a diverse group impact the work in order to capture what our community believes a graduate should be.”



Within the district community, the Graduate Profile provides a common vision across multiple school models. According to Laura, one of Kettle Moraine's unique features is its varied high school programs and learning pathways, from health sciences to performing arts. "What we needed to do to unify our community was to say that regardless of which path a student takes in one of these high school environments, this is the profile for Kettle Moraine School District," she says. "So while the learning experience through four years might look very different from student A to student B, these are the core outcomes that we hope to have."

Jill provides classroom examples of how the Graduate Profile can also serve as a foundation of shared understanding for addressing politically charged topics. As an instructional coach, she notes that some teachers have become wary of controversy in terms of the books they assign or the discussions they have in class. Jill's response is, "This is the time to pause and say, 'Here's a pillar of our Graduate Profile. Where and how do we see skills that we need to be successful in this discussion?'" At the end of the day, she says, "Regardless of perspective or position, we all need to be informed. We all need to be able to interact with people with different values and belief systems. The Graduate Profile has been especially valuable and helpful in our current climate."

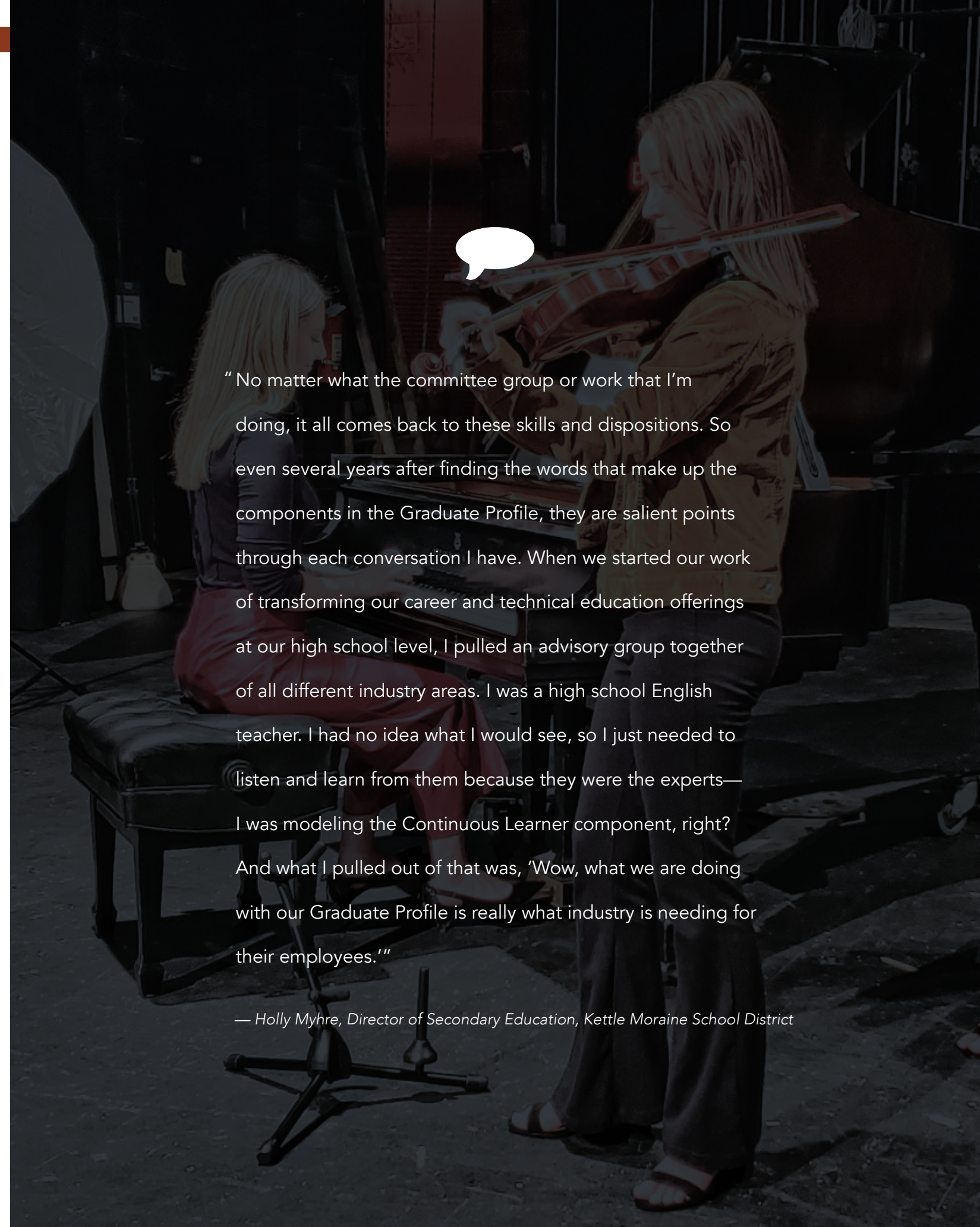
Stephen advises schools on the verge of designing a Graduate Profile to "get a community to build this thing together, especially with a business alliance or chamber that speaks to the qualities the business community needs." Having conversations about success skills like working with others, persistence, and being lifelong learners, he says, really speaks to people. "Parents will say, 'Oh, yeah, that happens all the time. I hired this guy, and it was just like that.' Now you are hearing their story of someone who may have met the Graduate Profile academically, but not in terms of their will and skill."

When those kinds of conversations happen, he says, the school system and the wider community are "like two gears working together. It's super effective. The Graduate Profile then becomes something more important than just window dressing or something that makes for a nice graduation speech but doesn't actually go anywhere."



"No matter what the committee group or work that I'm doing, it all comes back to these skills and dispositions. So even several years after finding the words that make up the components in the Graduate Profile, they are salient points through each conversation I have. When we started our work of transforming our career and technical education offerings at our high school level, I pulled an advisory group together of all different industry areas. I was a high school English teacher. I had no idea what I would see, so I just needed to listen and learn from them because they were the experts—I was modeling the Continuous Learner component, right? And what I pulled out of that was, 'Wow, what we are doing with our Graduate Profile is really what industry is needing for their employees.'"

— Holly Myhre, Director of Secondary Education, Kettle Moraine School District





02 Making the Graduate Profile Actionable

For Kettle Moraine's school leaders and educators at all levels, the Graduate Profile serves as a blueprint for designing the learning experience—shaping curriculum, instruction, and assessment. Although teaching and learning the Graduate Profile elements looks different for learners as they progress through the grade levels, Laura points out that developing these competencies is a focus from the very beginning of each learner's journey. "They don't just arrive at ninth grade and suddenly it's, 'Okay, here we go,' as if you could accomplish this in four years."

Given that the language of the Graduate Profile is challenging for children as young as three or four years old to understand and use, educators at Kettle Moraine's elementary schools have embraced the vocabulary of Arthur Costa and Bena Kallick's [Habits of Mind](#) framework. As Laura explains, educators identified focus areas within the 16 Habits of Mind that align well to the Graduate Profile but are more accessible to younger learners. According to her, key competencies at the elementary level are "things like striving for accuracy, thinking flexibly, managing impulsivity, and being a collaborator, an engaged citizen, and open to continuous learning. They're all attributes that we really work to bring to light in elementary that help give students vocabulary so that they can see themselves in our Graduate Profile as they grow through our system."

Since the Graduate Profile was adopted, Laura says, educators have "lived with this first

iteration and graphic. We have posters up in the classrooms and in the hallways to help our teachers become more comfortable and confident with that language. And it showed up through academic goal setting, and also goal setting around some of those citizenship and personal development attributes system wide." At the same time, she recalls, parents of elementary school students were asking, "How can we help with this? How can we see our student in this portrait of a graduate when they're just starting out at five, six, and seven years old?"

"While some of that work was organically happening behind the scenes," says Laura, Kettle Moraine educators saw a need to "extrapolate down this meaty thing that we want learners to be able to accomplish by twelfth grade for K-5 families and teachers and students to find relevance. So after living with the Graduate Profile for five or six years, we got to the point of saying, 'Okay, now we're ready for the 2.0 version.'"

In order to help build out the Graduate Profile so it could truly fulfill its purpose of shaping learning at all grade levels, Stephen says that Kettle Moraine leaders, educators, and community stakeholders engaged in a revisioning of the Graduate Profile starting in the fall of 2021. "The goal was to get K-12 exemplars of what the Graduate Profile actually looked like," he explains. "What does it mean to be a continuous learner for a third grader? What does it mean, in terms of look fors, for the graduate and beyond?"

Holly describes how the work to develop a K-12 continuum began with inviting the community in and asking their input into each element in the Graduate Profile. “We already had our components and the descriptors underneath, but we wanted to start to build a continuum so that we would be able to work with kids in their goal setting and help them to understand what they were working toward.” Using poster paper at tables throughout the room, a group of 90 staff and community members unpacked each component, she recalls, asking questions like, “What does that look like for a five-year-old? What does that look like in kindergarten through fifth, sixth through eighth, ninth through twelfth? And then postgraduate, what does that really look like?”

Organizers also asked groups to provide indicators and success criteria at each level. Laura illustrates using the Collaborator component as an example. “What does collaboration mean for a kindergarten, first,

and second grader? It means that they can cooperatively play with others. It means that they can receive negative feedback and be okay with it. It means they can be told no and be able to keep going about their day.”

Building on the input from that event, Kettle Moraine’s teaching and learning committee and subcommittees embarked on an iterative process that included repeating the exercise within individual schools and conducting rounds of feedback and revision. The result of this collaborative work is the Kettle Moraine [Graduate Profile Continuum](#), which categorizes each component of the profile into grade-appropriate skills. “It starts really small and then builds on that in language that is appropriate to each age level,” says Holly. Adds Laura, “Pulling the community together again, looking at it with our leadership eyes and then building it out into a continuum felt like a really good kind of Graduate Profile 2.0 work.”



This excerpt from the Kettle Moraine Graduate Profile Continuum describes and illustrates the district’s agreed-upon goals for student learning and adult support at different grade levels.



4K through Grade 2

Self-Directed & Resilient Individual

Learners strive to work hard and set goals in order to complete tasks independently, even when tasks are challenging.

Indicators

- **Maintains a positive work ethic and strives for self-improvement**
 - I don’t give up and keep trying to be successful while striving for accuracy.
- **Understands how to manage time and priorities**
 - I successfully follow directions with many steps in a focused and timely way.
- **Sets short and long term goals for success**
 - I understand when I’m working on something and when I’ve completed a goal.
 - I follow through on a goal from start to finish in a timely way.
- **Overcomes adversity through persistence, perseverance, self-advocacy and a growth mindset**
 - I know if I keep working at something, I can get better at it
 - I know when to ask for help
 - I consider different ways a problem can be solved.
- **Reflects on one’s decisions and actions, remaining flexible and open to new ideas**
 - I think about why I act/react the way I did in a situation.
 - I try new things and consider others’ ideas may benefit myself and those around me.



Grade 9 through Grade 12

Self-Directed & Resilient Individual

Learners can set and meet advantageous goals, reflect on growth and advocate for themselves.

Indicators

- **Maintains a positive work ethic and strives for self-improvement**
 - I take ownership of my learning.
 - I plan explicit steps towards improving physical and mental well-being.
- **Understands how to manage time and priorities**
 - I utilize a time management strategy to complete tasks in a timely manner.
- **Sets short and long term goals for success**
 - I set advantageous goals and efficiently prioritize tasks to meet my goals.
- **Overcomes adversity through persistence, perseverance, self-advocacy and a growth mindset**
 - I advocate for support in order to meet my goals.
 - I recognize the growth that comes through failure and apply the lessons learned in future goal attainment.
- **Reflects on one’s decisions and actions, remaining flexible and open to new ideas**
 - I seek and evaluate feedback from trusted sources, and apply feedback to meet my desired outcome.



03 Helping Learners Live the Graduate Profile

Kettle Moraine School District's tagline is "Learning Without Boundaries," and the relevance of this phrase proclaims itself throughout the schools' learning models. Taking the bold step of creating a broader definition of success like the Graduate Profile transcends the boundaries of traditional schooling, and district educators describe numerous ways that the Graduate Profile has helped to transform the learner experience ever since.

Personalization and Learner Agency

Although Kettle Moraine's commitment to personalized learning predates the Graduate Profile, educators point to shifts in practice that have come about in order to integrate these skills and competencies. For example, Jill describes how, as an English teacher, the Graduate Profile prompted her to rethink what personalized learning and goal setting were aiming for. "We've had a focus on personalization in our district for close to 15 years now," she observes, with goal setting as a key element. "The emphasis is on students, helping them understand where they're starting, where they want to go, and letting them have some ownership in that journey along the way."

According to Jill, applying the lens of the Graduate Profile provided a "spark that really took off for me. I saw that its

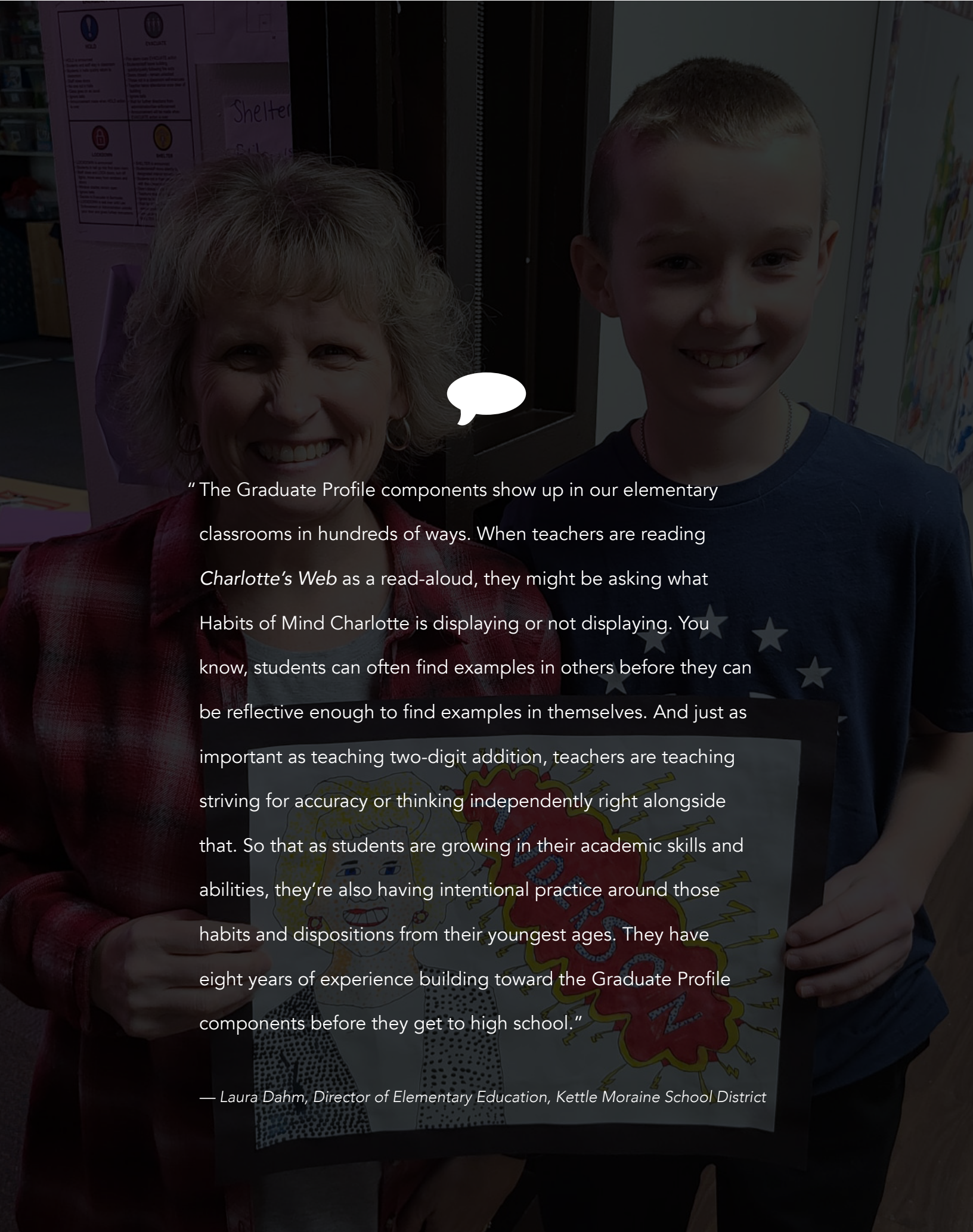
greatest value was taking a clear look at what the final product is and understanding the world we're putting students out into—that a lot of content mastery is Google. You can just look things up. The students had these grand goals for where they wanted to be, and I realized I wasn't preparing them."

Today Jill's work in her own teaching and as an instructional coach focuses on helping students "learn how to set a goal that matters, collect evidence that they've made some progress, and then make sure that we provide valuable and meaningful opportunities for students to reflect on that growth." In addition, she says, learners need to practice agency and experience the Graduate Profile components in all of their subjects.

"We do work around the Graduate Profile in Advisory," she explains, "and for a number of years, many kids felt it was an Advisory thing. That's where it lived." However, in her coaching, Jill builds on the work her colleagues have done with disciplinary literacy—applying the distinct lens of each

Recent work to iterate on the Graduate Profile included adopting a new brand that reflects the development of the skills and dispositions at all grade levels.





“The Graduate Profile components show up in our elementary classrooms in hundreds of ways. When teachers are reading *Charlotte’s Web* as a read-aloud, they might be asking what Habits of Mind Charlotte is displaying or not displaying. You know, students can often find examples in others before they can be reflective enough to find examples in themselves. And just as important as teaching two-digit addition, teachers are teaching striving for accuracy or thinking independently right alongside that. So that as students are growing in their academic skills and abilities, they’re also having intentional practice around those habits and dispositions from their youngest ages. They have eight years of experience building toward the Graduate Profile components before they get to high school.”

— Laura Dahm, Director of Elementary Education, Kettle Moraine School District

subject to broad skills like writing—to teaching the Graduate Profile elements. “It can’t just be an Advisory thing,” she argues. “We know that the Graduate Profile should live everywhere, but it has to live in specific areas before it can be everywhere.”

To support the Graduate Profile to “live” in the classrooms of the educators she coaches, Jill encourages teachers to integrate the skills as they plan their courses. According to Jill, she and her colleagues talk about the Graduate Profile and “very intentionally map the course—where and how we might focus on some of these indicators.” In the context of daily instruction, she says, agency and ownership require intentional practice, “something we’ve been wrestling with within the classroom.” A key instructional shift for educators, she says, is to ensure that “students truly understand what success could or would look like.” Instead of using success criteria determined solely by the teacher, Jill recommends presenting new learning more like this: “Here are the competencies that you need to master by the end of the class. Let’s work together to determine what success looks like.” Learners can then exercise agency in determining the path to reach success or the evidence they want to use to demonstrate learning.

Providing opportunities for learner agency and personalized goal setting around the Graduate Profile has also shaped the role of the counselor in Kettle Moraine schools. Tricia, the lead counselor at KMHS, for example, describes changes she has made in her conversations with learners about their futures.

Traditionally, during their junior year, learners and their parents have met with Tricia for an academic and career planning conference. In recent years, she reports, “a big part of that meeting is pulling some of those skill sets and doing goal setting specifically around the Graduate Profile.”

Tricia also refers to the value of the Graduate Profile—and in particular how it was developed—for academic advising and course selection. “I think many of our students get kind of stuck in, ‘Why do I have to take this class?’ or ‘Why do I have to do this?’ For the Graduate Profile, we worked with a lot of community partners at the college level and some of our local businesses about what they’re looking for in their employees. That helped us define success in a way that it becomes real for our students and gets them to focus on what is going to help them in that next step.”

KM Global has created a new role of “learning coach,” according to Andrea “Andi” Kornowski, the director of KM Global, in order to reflect a broader mandate for supporting learner success. Each student is assigned a learning coach, a teacher who helps guide their learning throughout high school. As Andi explains, “valuable conversations about the Graduate Profile within the learning coach

At KM Global, learning coaches meet with learners to assist in project development, provide individual support, and monitor progress toward their goals.



THE PEOPLE'S FLAG OF MILWAUKEE

Why Should It Be Adopted?

By Brady W.

"What are your opinions of the official Milwaukee Flag?"

A question many, possibly even Milwaukee citizens, may have trouble answering. Flags are often not noticeable things for many people, but certainly could be, and to vexillologists (those who study flags,) Milwaukee's flag has been one they have noticed for years. The North American Vexillological Association (NAVA), comprised of many experts in the study, have critiqued the flag for its overly complex design, and many other factors of basic flag design that the Milwaukee flag misses. Because of this, the design seems to resonate much less with the people, and by the adoption of a new, better flag, the people of Milwaukee could finally see a banner that accurately and effectively represents them.

Many vexillologists tend to agree the current Milwaukee flag is poorly designed. In a ranking list conducted by NAVA, the Milwaukee flag ranked 147/150 as one of the worst city flags. However, the three deemed worse have already been re-established and made official in their respective cities, resulting in Milwaukee's current flag dropping to the bottom of this ranking system. This is where the issue begins.

structure have been super helpful in terms of supporting students to look ahead. Where your typical advising conversations might talk about just your credit progress," she explains, "ours goes a little bit deeper to talk about not just how students are doing academically," but also to "have opportunities to explore their curiosities and things that they may be interested in for their postsecondary journey."

For Zak, in his role as a learning coach, an important tool to support these conversations is the [Personalized Learning Plan](#) (PLP). "We go into that personalized learning plan, and we actually plan out year by year. It's not just picking classes, but it's a great way for me to have conversations with kids about how they're thinking about their planning and to be purposeful, not flippant, with decisions." Zak encourages learners to ask themselves, "What are the classes going to do for my graduation progress, for my goals as a person, and as a student?" According to Zak, "That PLP allows us to have collaboration in setting up their plan. It gives them a bit of transparency, and it really helps them be engaged in their journey."

Another key role for learning coaches at KM Global is to support and mentor learners as they work on personalized, semester-long inquiry projects. These signature learning experiences provide opportunities for learners and their coaches to focus on Graduate Profile skills and dispositions—as well as content mastery—within the context of a major project driven by learner interests and goals.

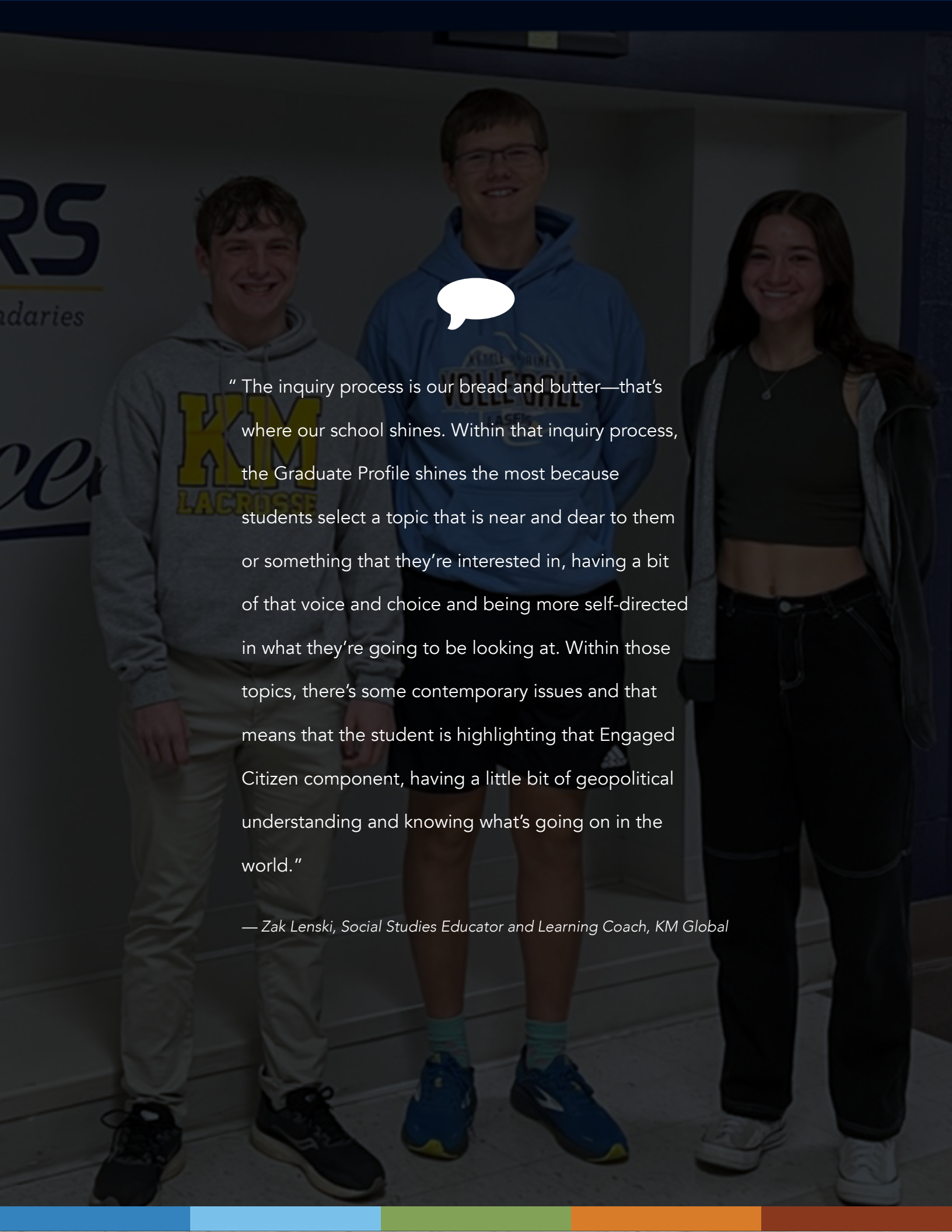
Inquiry Projects

According to Holly, learners at KM Global engage in an interdisciplinary inquiry project each semester at all high school grade levels. She describes them as a "really empowering" way of living the Graduate Profile, especially the skills and mindsets of citizenship. "Students learn how to create a thesis, defend it, and do something out in the world with it. It's a core tenet of the school to have some sort of impact out in the world—and that's part of the Engaged Citizen piece."

Laura, who often listens to the inquiry project defenses at the culmination of the semester, describes this signature experience for KM Global learners. "This is a student-driven inquiry project, where they are the ones that choose a topic based on their interests and passions." With the support of their learning coach, she says, learners identify a broad topic and narrow it into a defining question and from three to five central concepts to explore. Once the project is defined, the learner meets with a learning coach to identify the learning targets from multiple subject areas that the project will demonstrate. The project design, she says, "also incorporates multiple Graduate Profile components, such as Critical Thinker, Engaged Citizen, or Continuous Learner."

Over the course of the semester, Laura says, learners do research, connect with field experts, and have discussions with their peers

At KM Global, learners co-create a semester-long inquiry project that supports both academic learning and development of Graduate Profile components like Engaged Citizen. Here is the [magazine article](#) one learner created as part of an inquiry project about Milwaukee's flag.



" The inquiry process is our bread and butter—that's where our school shines. Within that inquiry process, the Graduate Profile shines the most because students select a topic that is near and dear to them or something that they're interested in, having a bit of that voice and choice and being more self-directed in what they're going to be looking at. Within those topics, there's some contemporary issues and that means that the student is highlighting that Engaged Citizen component, having a little bit of geopolitical understanding and knowing what's going on in the world."

— Zak Lenski, Social Studies Educator and Learning Coach, KM Global

around similar topics. The semester ends with an inquiry defense as well as a community showcase. Because the learners decide what topics to explore, the projects are as varied as they are. Zak gives a few examples from the current school year, such as researching the environmental and societal effects of spraying herbicides and pesticides, investigating alternative polymers in plastic production for better recyclability, and examining detrimental effects of early sports specialization on students and possible ways to mitigate them.

To illustrate the depth and range of these interdisciplinary projects, Laura unpacks a recent inquiry project defense she observed, from a ninth grade learner: "The student gave a 30-35 minute oral defense. She was talking about the difference between nature versus nurture using a criminology lens—looking at serial killers. So she was earning history targets through some criminal justice experience. She also had a focus on psychology targets. She presented an infographic to compare and contrast nature versus nurture and then created a magazine as her final project. So she had writing and of course technical reading and research throughout the entire project."

As part of the defense experience, Laura adds, learners also answer questions from a panel of educators. For example, she says, panelists might lean in and say, "Show me evidence of this learning target towards this credit." Reflecting on her own high school education,

Laura observes, "When I think about myself as a freshman, I was a pretty good student, but I could not give a 35-minute presentation—with me solely talking—to a panel of three teachers. We are very much raising the rigor in terms of putting kids in a more real-world experience of what a post-high school career might look like."

According to Holly, inquiry projects also support learners to develop and demonstrate the agency and ownership of the Self-Directed and Resilient Learner component of the Graduate Profile. "One of the things we really work on and emphasize is that our learners are the architects of their learning experiences. When they pick out the learning targets or the competencies that they are earning for their inquiry project, they take a look at their learning journey and consider, 'Where am I on my learning journey? Where do I need credit and how might I get there?'"



Real-World Learning and Impact

In addition to seeking out experts as part of their inquiry and research projects, Kettle Moraine learners engage in a wide range of learning experiences that help bridge the gap between the world of school and the world outside. Through expert guest speakers, internships, job shadows, community service, field experiences, and even international travel, KMSD schools, in Andi’s words, “provide numerous learning opportunities that align with components within the Graduate Profile.”

In some cases, these experiences are part of a structured and career-focused partnership. For example, KM HS^2 partners with ProHealth Care, Lake Country Fire & Rescue, Aurora Medical Center - Summit, and the Medical College of Wisconsin to provide hands-on experience and outreach for students on the high school campus and also through field study and service in preparation for careers in health care.

Given KM Global’s focus on leadership and impact, that high school features community service among its many field experiences. According to Andi, service learning is a graduation requirement, and it supports all learners “to discover who you are as a learner and leader while also having an impact in both your local and global community. These opportunities really emphasize the Engaged

Citizen component of the Graduate Profile. This is an area where we’re really strong. It’s who we are.”

Zak notes that volunteer work in the community is built into the schedule and is a regular part of the learner experience at KM Global. “Every other Wednesday, our students get out into the community and they make an impact. They have to do a project that benefits somebody else before they graduate here,” he explains. “It’s an opportunity to really learn about the things around them and where they fit into that puzzle.”

Andi points to some examples, including volunteering in the library, tutoring middle school learners, facilitating playground activities at the elementary schools, and working at the local Habitat for Humanity ReStore shop or on ecological restoration at the state park. Service is also an essential part of KM Global’s international travel program. For example, Zak describes how KM Global learners who travel to nations like Haiti, Peru, Costa Rica, England, France, and Austria not only experience the history and culture but also work with younger kids on leadership or co-facilitate fundraisers for school or playground equipment.

Real-world learning is also spotlighted in subject-area projects, like the mock trial

project Zak features in one of his courses. “I love law. There are great skills students can learn while exploring our judicial system,” he explains. “So I reached out to the state bar of Iowa and they had a middle school case I thought was pretty interesting. Now students have a six-week crash course during one of our seminar offerings. They learn about the court proceedings and affidavits, direct examination, cross examination, opening and closing statements. They learn about the judicial code of conduct. In week six we do a mock trial case, with students acting as lawyers and witnesses. We’ve gone to Marquette Law School to use their practice trial court. Getting into a courtroom dressed for the part makes it a bit more real life.”



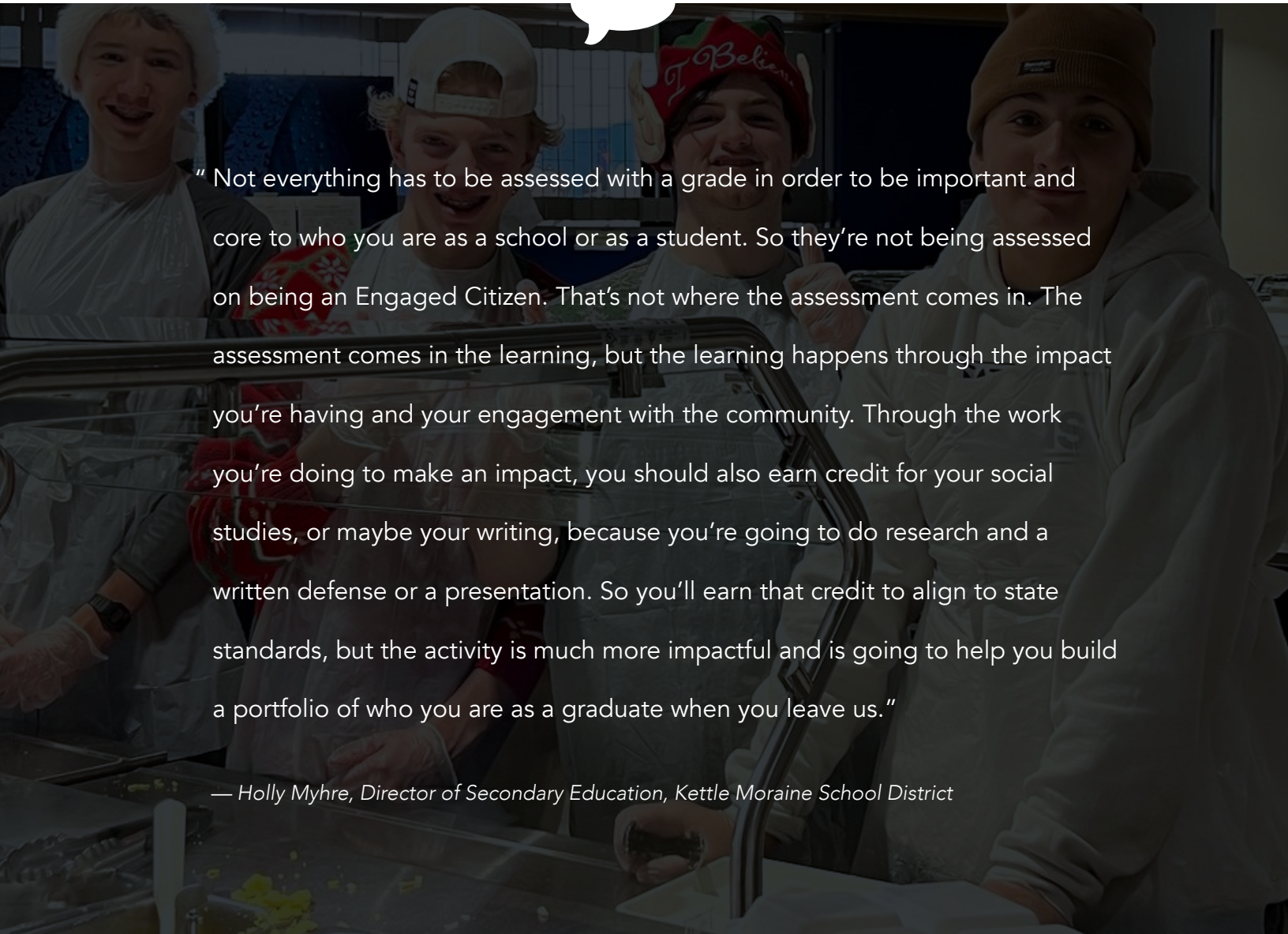
Learners at KM Global develop the skills and mindsets of an Engaged Citizen through service projects in the community.

Learner-Centered, Evidence-Based Assessment

The ways learners in Kettle Moraine schools are assessed mirrors the authentic, whole-person learning they experience. Jill puts it very succinctly: “Because any information they need is at their fingertips, we don’t need to have kids memorizing things. So, in general, we don’t need to have multiple choice tests.” Instead, she says, when it comes to assessment, “Our big word is evidence. Whether it is based

academically or around the Graduate Profile, students should have some evidence” of their learning and growth.

According to Jill, collecting and reflecting on evidence of learning builds upon learner goal-setting, a major focus of professional development in recent years. Creating goals with learners is essential, she says, “because



“ Not everything has to be assessed with a grade in order to be important and core to who you are as a school or as a student. So they’re not being assessed on being an Engaged Citizen. That’s not where the assessment comes in. The assessment comes in the learning, but the learning happens through the impact you’re having and your engagement with the community. Through the work you’re doing to make an impact, you should also earn credit for your social studies, or maybe your writing, because you’re going to do research and a written defense or a presentation. So you’ll earn that credit to align to state standards, but the activity is much more impactful and is going to help you build a portfolio of who you are as a graduate when you leave us.”

— Holly Myhre, Director of Secondary Education, Kettle Moraine School District

we can’t set goals for kids. We all know what happens with a goal that we don’t care about. So we’re really trying to have students start with manageable goals.”

Conversations around goals with advisors and educators in every content area, Jill says, is a natural next step toward creating that body of evidence. She notes that “super-intentional, collaborative conversations” with teachers can support learners to identify strengths, progress, and areas for further growth. Adults can also ask questions like, “How do you know? What are you collecting as evidence?” For example, Jill notes that teachers will often include one of the Graduate Profile strands on a rubric and give feedback on it or ask learners, “How are we seeing these indicators of an Engaged Citizen? Where do you think you’re at and what’s your evidence?”

Such conversations, which start to take place before learners reach high school, provide the foundational skills and mindsets for creating a high school portfolio. This four-year record of learning features reflections and evidence of growth, including in the Graduate Profile components. In the context of chronicling four years of inquiry projects, Holly notes that “learners demonstrate competency through this large body of evidence and all of the pieces along the way. So not only are you showing me evidence, but you’re showing me growth in your depth of understanding. Your depth of knowledge is much higher than with a 100-point multiple choice

test.” To Holly, the thinking behind the shift in assessment is this: “If you allow it to be about the student and have them drive with their interests, they’re going to be much more highly engaged, and you’re going to be able to develop those Graduate Profile competencies or components alongside their content area work.”

Jill, Holly, and Laura all emphasize that learners are not graded on their achievement of Graduate Profile competencies. Jill explains, for example, that a rubric may include components from the profile, but teachers use it to frame feedback, not to assign a grade or generate a report. Laura explains that, by using a body of evidence, “We focus less on giving kids a score on those Graduate Profile elements, but instead really enriching their experience day to day, to be able to say, ‘What evidence can you show that you are a Continuous Learner? What evidence can you show that you are a Collaborator?’”

For Laura, a key part of working with learners to build that body of evidence, she says, is reframing mindsets around standardization. “For so long, we tried to benchmark and keep everything the same for kids—like every element must have three pieces of evidence.” This was a mistake, she argues, because, “For one student, two really rich pieces of evidence might be enough to say, ‘Yeah, you really are living and breathing this element.’ And for another student, it might be seven or eight pieces of evidence. If a student is doing that project defense and having a real-world impact on something that they’re passionate about and they’re demonstrating it there, we don’t need to make them do it two more times just to prove that they’ve done it.”



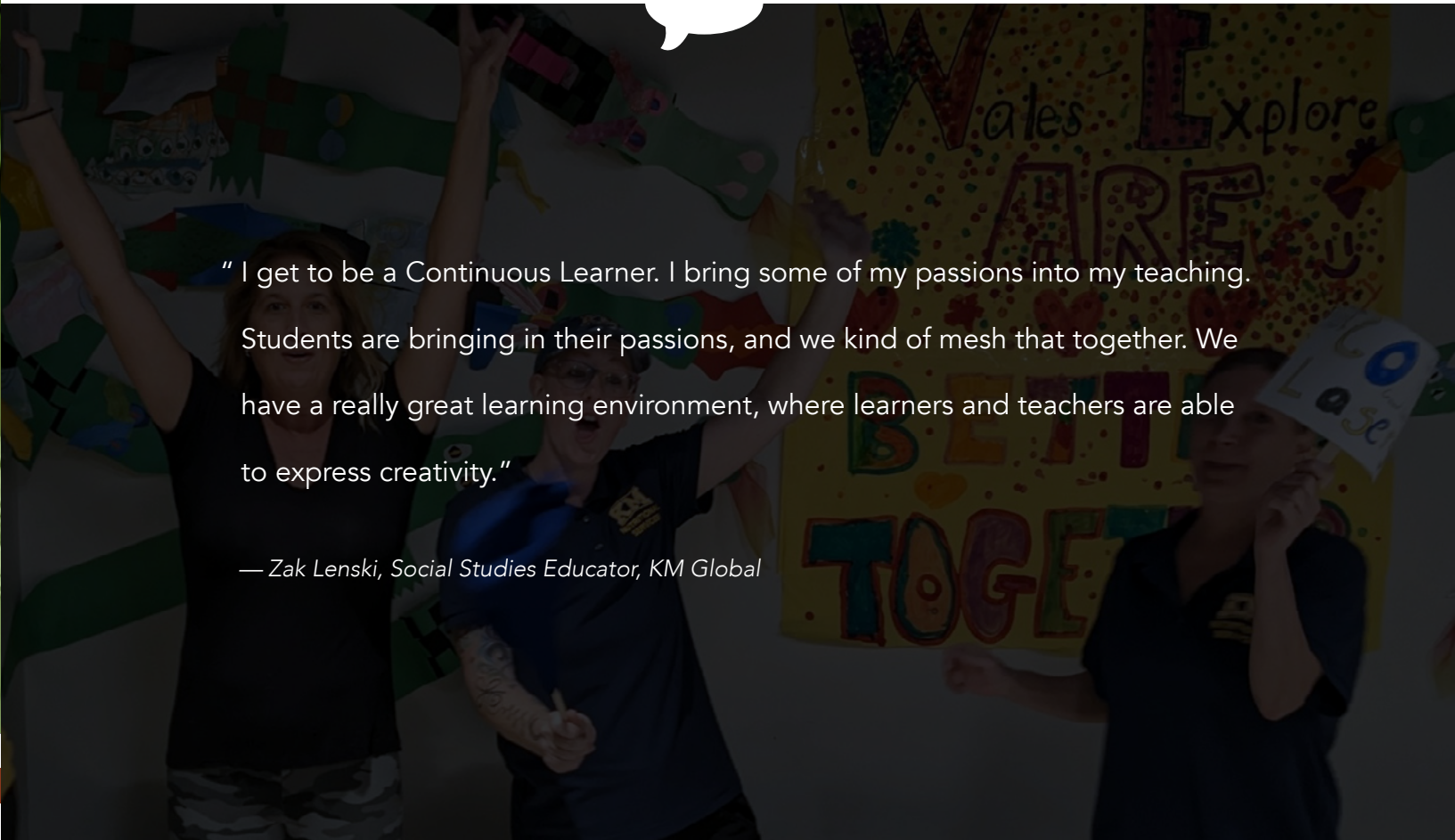
04 A Culture of Creativity and Continuous Improvement

When asked about the conditions that enable the kind of education transformation learners need in order to achieve the promise of the Graduate Profile, educators and leaders across the Kettle Moraine School District identify four interrelated aspects of their culture: creativity—to imagine new possibilities for learners and learning; flexibility—to shift from standardization to personalization; collaboration—to engage the best thinking of educators and community partners to redesign the learning experience; and agency—to empower people to take risks and make changes.

Kettle Moraine’s culture of creativity is one of the key reasons Zak was first drawn to KM Global. Six years ago, as a new educator, Zak applied to numerous high schools. Watching videos of learners’ projects on the high school’s website, Zak was struck by how powerful it was “to see what students were doing at the school as opposed to just what the standards are, which was what I was getting with a lot of the other interviews.” In contrast, during his interview at KM Global, he recalls, the principal asked him what he would want to teach that was not in social studies, his content area. “The creativity of that question just jumped out at me—how outside of the box they wanted this learning experience to be. And that’s what I’m all about.”

“ I get to be a Continuous Learner. I bring some of my passions into my teaching. Students are bringing in their passions, and we kind of mesh that together. We have a really great learning environment, where learners and teachers are able to express creativity.”

— Zak Lenski, Social Studies Educator, KM Global



Holly and Laura use the variety of high school programs sharing a single campus—each with a different daily schedule—as an example of the district’s flexibility and willingness to rethink traditional practice to meet the needs of learners. “It’s very messy,” says Holly, “because it’s not the same in any one environment.” However, she sees this situation as positive. “They all function differently. So that’s part of the structure. Believe it or not, it’s that messiness that allows for our different schools to have different approaches.”

According to Laura, being flexible begins with recognizing that there is no such thing as a perfect structure or a perfect bell schedule. “When you think historically about different high school schedules,” she says, “there are benefits and drawbacks” to each of them. For example, she observes, “The historical eight-block schedule perpetuates the idea that everything has to be taught in silos—that math and science or history and English aren’t related to each other. But then, in order to get longer blocks, 90 minutes is a really long time to be in one class. Post COVID, adults don’t even want to meet that long. You have to say that a structure that you’re living with now might be a solution for four or five years, but it might not be a forever solution.”

Kettle Moraine’s flexibility is evident in the contrast between the ways KM Global and HS^2 use the resource of time. At KM Global, says Holly, “They don’t move from math to social studies to science. That’s not the way

their day is organized. Sometimes they have a particular class they’re going to attend, but sometimes they have learning time to work on their inquiry project with their coach, who is moving from student to student and group to group—more of a facilitator of learning versus a lecturer. There are a lot of small groups and a lot of floating between.”

On the other hand, at KM HS^2, the health-sciences high school, says Holly, “Their primary objective is to get students lots of field experiences, such as partnering with Lake Country Fire & Rescue. If the student is interested in emergency services, their hours don’t match the school day. A lot of the day they’re at the firehouse. They’re doing all kinds of learning, but their writing and reading is technical, like reading manuals. It’s for English credit, but it’s adapted. It’s not as if they can come and sit in an English class every day. They might be gone for three weeks. But those same students, when they’re finished with their stint at the firehouse, might be sitting in AP Chemistry within an HS^2 classroom.”

“The reason it’s so messy,” says Holly, “is that we try really hard to build an experience and a schedule around each individual child, rather than using a factory model of bells and cells.

You have to be willing to have messy structures and to try a lot of things in order to figure out what works.” Laura adds, “You have to be able to live in that ambiguity to be able to move forward. Otherwise you’ll just stay in the same structure that you’ve always been in.”

KM Global Sample Schedule (9th Gr)

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday Blue	Wednesday Gold	Thursday	Friday
1	Concert Band*	Biology*	Concert Band*	Biology*	Concert Band*	Biology*
2	Seminar: Mock Trial	Inquiry	Flex Time	Flex Time	Seminar: Mock Trial	Inquiry
	Advisory	Advisory	Advisory	Advisory	Advisory	Advisory
	Lunch	Lunch	Lunch	Lunch	Lunch	Lunch
3	Inquiry	Seminar: Global Leadership	Workshop: English	Camp Leadervation Planning	Inquiry	Seminar: Global Leadership
4	Math Lab	Spanish I	Workshop: World Cultures	Lapham Peak Service	Math Lab	Spanish I

This sample schedule for a grade 9 learner at KM Global includes daily Advisory, coursework, and seminars, as well as time to work on semester-long inquiry projects and to engage in community service.

“ The most valuable structural piece that I think sets Kettle Moraine apart is our really flat and distributed leadership model. We have these pockets and environments in our charters that are able to move faster because they’re like tugboats and then we have got our big legacy high or environments where it’s not as easy to turn that quickly. But with our distributed leadership model, we do have people creating these pockets of innovation. You have leaders overseeing smaller groups; you have teams that have the power and authority to change quickly. Because none of this can be done without a little trial and error. People are always afraid, and don’t want to mess up. Well, you’re going to do that a lot if you really want to innovate in education. And you have to feel empowered to do that.”

— Jill Gilbert, English Teacher and Instructional Coach, Kettle Moraine High School

One aspect of Kettle Moraine School District that educators find most empowering is the approach to professional learning. Jill, who is both a classroom educator and an instructional coach, gives credit to the district's commitment to instructional coaching. "We shifted to that because we realized that we've got these pockets of great things happening all across the building, and we have incredible teachers. Instructional coaching has really allowed us to scale and leverage the strengths of the people in the building. I see my role as knowing what's happening in all the different parts of the school and making connections and opportunities for collaboration. Because, like anywhere else, we all think we're struggling with different problems, but they're really the same."

Andi agrees. "The embedded professional development through our instructional coaching model has been super important," she says, "because you always feel like you're supported and you have a thought partner in the work. You're not alone. So amongst your team, however you define your team, whether it be your content area team in departments or our KM Global team, we have each other to collaborate with and support one another."

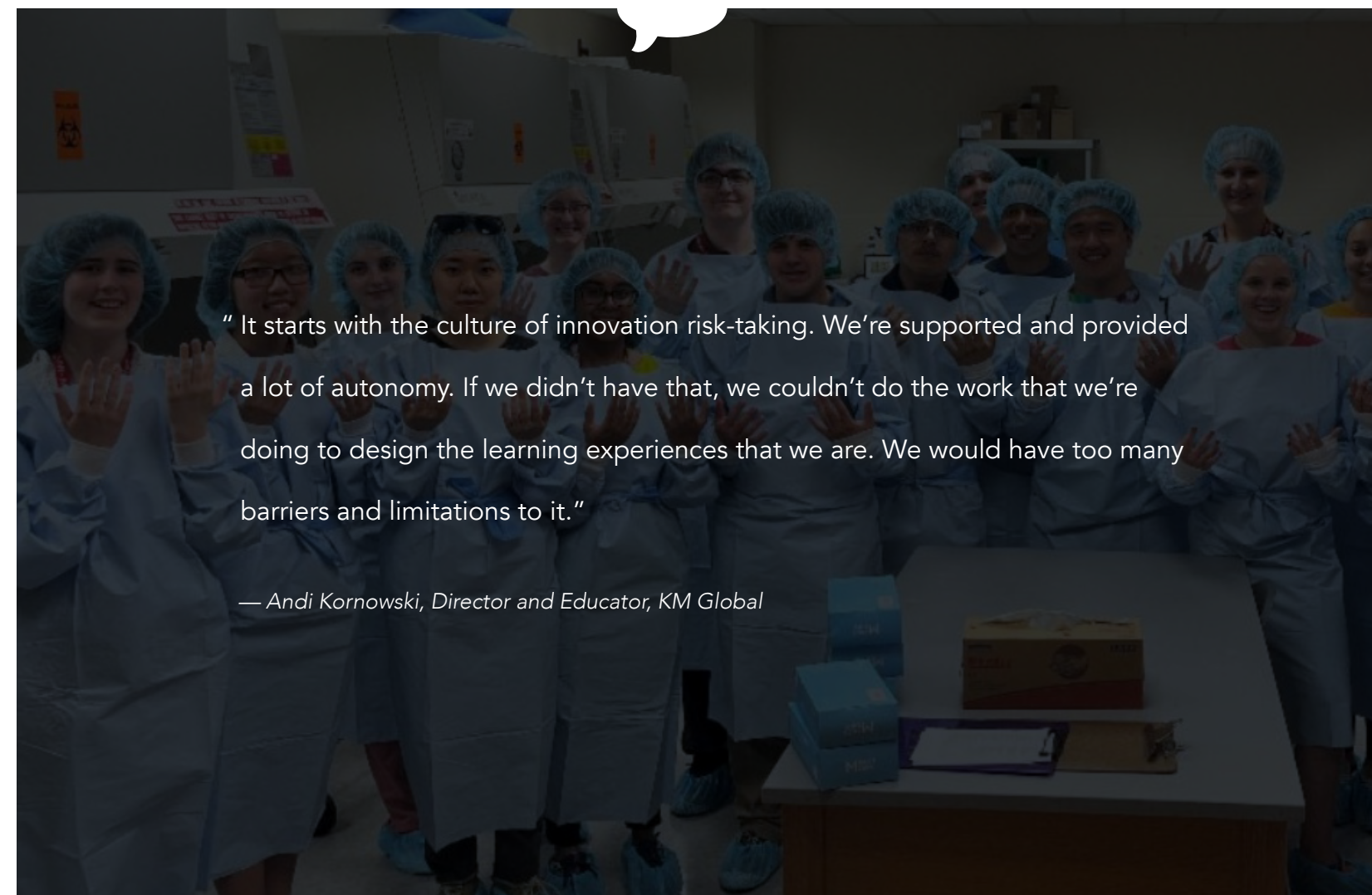
She also appreciates the personalized professional learning structure of micro-credentialing, which "provides teachers an opportunity to personalize their learning and explore things that they're interested and passionate about." For example, educators

have engaged in earning micro-credentials in blended learning, disciplinary literacy, and gamification of learning, as well as pursuing additional professional certifications or graduate degrees. Andi, who has facilitated many of these learning opportunities, believes that this kind of learner-centered professional development "is what truly leads to what happens in the classroom. If we didn't have that autonomy in our professional learning and we weren't able to explore the things that we were passionate about, I don't think that that would lead to the great learning experiences that we currently have in the classroom."



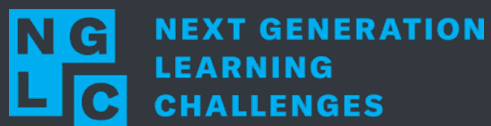
When Kettle Moraine educators describe their culture, they often talk about trust and autonomy. Jill says, "Honestly, it sounds corny, but what is really impactful is having leadership that believes in the same vision and is very supportive of trial and error and will back up the work I do."

Zak adds, "The trust that's given to the teachers is one of the biggest pieces for me. Within the education landscape right now, there's a lot of questions about transparency around what's being taught in the classroom. But I think our administration knows that we bounce ideas off of each other and they allow us to take things in directions that we think are necessary. That allows us to pivot, and I don't need to go through any red tape. I have all of the trust that I would need to do that." ■



"It starts with the culture of innovation risk-taking. We're supported and provided a lot of autonomy. If we didn't have that, we couldn't do the work that we're doing to design the learning experiences that we are. We would have too many barriers and limitations to it."

— Andi Kornowski, Director and Educator, KM Global



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