

Contact: Matt Gillard, President and CEO, Michigan's Children
(517) 485-3500 (office)
(517) 488-9129 (cell)

Immediate Release

News Release

Wyoming Families to Host Candidate Forum for Office-Seekers in the 28th, 29th State Senate and 75th, 76th, and 77th State House Districts on Oct. 22 at Wyoming Community Ed

Wyoming, Mich. – In a departure from typical election-year forums, Michigan's Children will host a forum for candidates running in the **28th State Senate, the 29th State Senate and 75th State House, 76th State House, and 77th State House districts on Monday, October 22, 2018** with adult learners posing questions of keen importance to their experiences.

"This is a great way for candidates to interact with their constituents and for students to be civically engaged," said Patrick Brown, a MACAE spokesperson. The intent of the forum is to help office-seekers develop a deeper understanding of the challenges facing today's families, and after the election, to develop helpful contacts with families and agencies in their districts.

Panelists will be drawn from sponsoring partners -- Wyoming Community Education, the Kent ISD, and the Michigan Association of Community and Adult Education. The forum is scheduled for **9:30 am – 11:00 am** at the **Wyoming Community Education offices, 3600 Byron Center Ave., Wyoming**. Candidates will be given equal time to answer questions.

"Unfortunately, our state currently fails many of its citizens," said Matt Gillard, President and CEO of Michigan's Children, a Lansing-based public policy and advocacy group. "Data in the annual Kids Count reports shows us that 13% of all births in Kent County between 2013 and 2015 were to moms without a high school diploma or GED. Elected officials must be able to listen to the youth and families in their community who want solutions to the issues they face."

The Wyoming forum is one in a series sponsored by Michigan's Children, a statewide advocacy and public policy organization, and 25 other nonprofits and agencies. Others in Bay City, Lansing, Rochester, Fremont, Holland, Novi, Jackson and Kalamazoo will explore issues including the **state's child care system, juvenile justice, family stability** including economic struggles, **childhood trauma and toxic stress, adult and child literacy**, improvements in **K-12 education**, and **access to mental health services**.

"Michigan ranks at or near the bottom third of states in a range of child well-being indicators, from low reading and math test scores to rising abuse and neglect rates to the sixth-highest rate of children living in high-poverty neighborhoods in the country," Gillard said. "For this to turn around, we desperately need informed office-seekers to hear from the kids and families they want to serve and to understand there are strong policy solutions in each of these areas."

Michigan's Children is the only statewide, independent voice working to ensure that public policies are made in the best interest of children, from cradle to career, and their families.



The Kent ISD Adult Education Program is committed to providing comprehensive support that is responsive to the educational needs of the adult learner. Our goal is to provide each student with an academic program of excellence in a learner-centered, cohesive, and supportive environment. Participants will encounter a program of integrated services that extends beyond the classroom in providing opportunities for career readiness, professional advancement, citizenship, family literacy, and more. We provide classes in English as a Second Language, High School Equivalency, and Adult Basic Education.



For over 30 years, the Michigan Association of Adult & Community Education (MACAE), has represented the administrators, teachers and supporters of Community Education in the State of Michigan. MACAE believes in building resilient communities around strong, adult, alternative and community education programming. We provide professional development resources, networking opportunities and legislative awareness to support practitioners. We ensure that our program participants will be taught, trained and tooled for success in the 21st century!