

Media Contact: Alexis Littlejohns
Email: a.littlejohns@watersfoundation.org
Phone: (520) 909-7343

For Immediate Release

W.K. Kellogg Foundation and Waters Foundation Partner in Service of Elementary Students and Communities

PITTSBURGH, Penn. – A world-leader in using systems thinking methodology to improve professional development and student success, Systems Thinking Group, on behalf of the Waters Foundation, is pleased to announce *The Systems Thinking in School Communities* grant, awarded by the W.K. Kellogg Foundation.

The partnership will bring systems thinking to several Alabama and Kentucky school districts to impact teaching and learning practices that build student achievement, prepare learners to tackle complex challenges and deliver lasting benefits for children. The districts participating include: Auburn City Schools (Auburn, AL); Lee County Schools (Opelika, AL); Lee County School District (Beattyville, KY); and Owsley County School District (Booneville, KY).

“We are thrilled to partner with the W.K. Kellogg Foundation and to work with the extraordinary educators and community leaders in these districts. Together, we have an opportunity to make a positive impact on the lives of 14,000 preK-6th grade students,” said Tracy Benson, President of the Waters Foundation.

The grant, which began on June 1, 2017 and will run through December 31, 2019, will seek to build the leadership skills of educators and community members. Each state will have two Waters Foundation facilitators (coaches) who will conduct initial planning with a district design team.

The plan will include systems thinking professional development and follow-up coaching and support for teacher, district leader and community leader cohorts. New cohorts will be added each year, along with a plan to build ongoing systems thinking capacity building and coaching through a “training of trainers” model.

“The coaching we do will be built around a set of research-based habits of systems thinking, a commonly understood vocabulary and palette of visual tools that can be applied to instruction and school and district leadership,” Benson said.

“The benefits of this initiative will go beyond the project timeframe. We envision our Alabama and Kentucky district and community partners supporting and sustaining capacity building that will benefit children for generations to come.”

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About the Waters Foundation

Systems thinking grew from the work of MIT professor Jay Forrester, who introduced engineer and entrepreneur Jim Waters to its concepts in the early 1980s. Soon after, Jim and his wife Faith, a former teacher, began focusing their foundation’s work on improving learning, teaching and schools through systems thinking. Since 1989, the Waters Foundation has brought systems thinking to more than 800 schools and 30,000+ educators. In that quarter-century, countless students have carried systems thinking from their classrooms to their communities and careers through Jim and Faith’s legacy and the continuing work of the Waters Foundation. For more information, visit www.watersfoundation.org.

About the W.K. Kellogg Foundation

The W.K. Kellogg Foundation (WKKF), founded in 1930 as an independent, private foundation by breakfast cereal pioneer, Will Keith Kellogg, is among the largest philanthropic foundations in the United States. Guided by the belief that all children should have an equal opportunity to thrive, WKKF works with communities to create conditions for vulnerable children so they can realize their full potential in school, work and life. The Kellogg Foundation is based in Battle Creek, Michigan, and works throughout the United States and internationally, as well as with sovereign tribes. Special emphasis is paid to priority places where there are high concentrations of poverty and where children face significant barriers to success. WKKF priority places in the U.S. are in Michigan, Mississippi, New Mexico and New Orleans; and internationally, are in Mexico and Haiti. For more information, visit www.wkkf.org.