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Contact – Kari Basson, Kettering City Schools Community Relations

kari.basson@ketteringschools.org

(937) 499-1458

Board of Education Approves Historic MOU Surrounding Future of Kettering’s D.L. Barnes Building

KETTERING, OH – [August 5, 2025] – Following the signing by the Kettering Board of Education of a Memorandum of Understanding at its meeting Tuesday night, the Kettering City School District is pleased to announce a groundbreaking partnership that will see the historic Barnes Building rehabilitated and renovated at absolutely no cost to Kettering City School District taxpayers. This innovative collaboration, a first of its kind, brings together the Kettering City Schools, the Schiewetz Foundation, the City of Kettering, and COhatch to create a lasting benefit for the Kettering community and the broader Miami Valley region for years to come.

"It's rare to have the opportunity to collaborate on a project of this magnitude, and we are thrilled about this partnership and the incredible transformation of the Barnes Building," said Kettering City Manager Matt Greeson. "This project represents everything we strive for in Kettering – preserving our heritage, working together with the schools and other community partners, all while fostering innovation and economic growth. COhatch will provide our entrepreneurs and business owners with the resources and collaborative environment they need to succeed, while ensuring this historic landmark continues to serve our community for generations to come."

This unique and pilot-worthy initiative will transform the iconic Barnes Building – a community landmark since 1929 – without placing any financial burden on school district taxpayers. The project safeguards the district's resources, allowing it to remain focused on educational purposes, while retaining ownership of and oversight over the building and its programming and usage.

"The Kettering City School District extends its profound gratitude to the Schiewetz Foundation for its

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Kettering Schools

Barnes MOU

August 5, 2025

Page 2

broad-minded outlook, exceptional generosity, and unwavering commitment to the preservation of the Barnes Building,” said Mark Martin, President of the Kettering Board of Education, adding that the Foundation’s dedication ensures this historic landmark will be revitalized and serve the community for generations to come, all while safeguarding the interests of the Kettering Schools and its taxpayers.

“We are pleased to help transform the landmark Barnes Building. We are especially proud to be partners with the City of Kettering, the School District, and COhatch in helping preserve this wonderful asset,” said Rick Schwartz, Schiewetz Foundation President, and Amy Kress, the Foundation’s Grants Manager, in a joint statement. “Importantly, the revival of Barnes will provide a place where community groups, families, and individuals can gather, where local entrepreneurs can thrive and strengthen our economy, and as home for the Kettering School District with refreshed and rejuvenated administrative offices at no cost to school district taxpayers. Future generations of students will have both a creative and functional place to help them find their calling. Our Foundation is proud to be a lead donor in this endeavor and will continue to seek needed, additional financial support from other donors as we move forward.”

Notes Matt Davis, CEO and co-founder of COhatch, “This is the kind of story every community wants – saving a historic building, preserving its legacy and turning it into something new and meaningful for the next generation. The Barnes Building means a lot to the people of Kettering, and we are grateful to stand alongside the School District, the City, and the to help make this happen.”

This collaborative effort between the school district, the city, a visionary foundation and a business partner dedicated to improving communities through the repurposing of local buildings, exemplifies a shared vision for historical preservation, economic development, and community enrichment for Kettering and the entire Miami Valley.