

Grand Haven Area Public Schools Beacon

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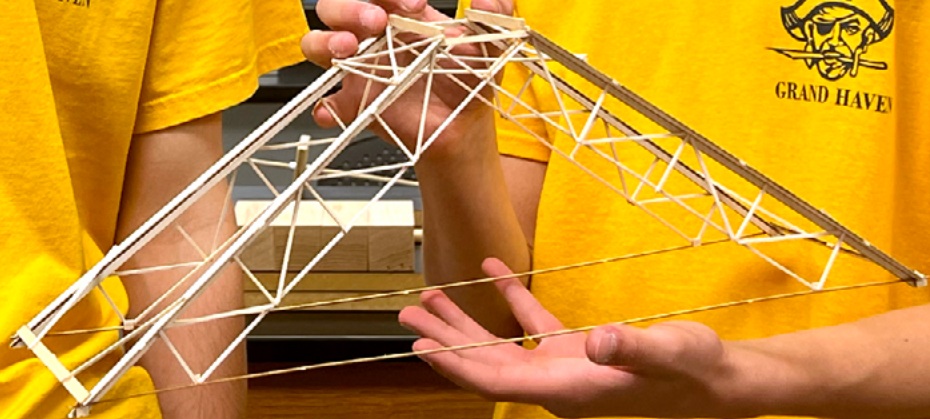


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Board Meeting Schedule

Monday, June 8, 2022 @ White Pines Intermediate School

Monday, July 18, 2022 @ Education Service Center

All board meetings begin at 7:00pm unless otherwise noted.



Superintendent's Message

by Scott Grimes

Success for All is our North Star. For most of us, navigating the past couple of years has been an experience like no other. I want to sincerely thank you for trusting GHAPS as we too had to make difficult decisions along the way. Student health and wellbeing continue to be at the forefront of every decision. They are necessary components of student learning and success, and our focus remains on Success For All. It is our North Star, because when you know where you're going, it's a whole lot easier to find your way there.

I am very proud and humbled by the resilience and dedication shown not only by our GHAPS teachers and staff, but also students, families and the Grand Haven community. It hasn't been easy, and there have been disruptions. But we've done well to stay on course and address any challenges head-on with creativity, energy and passion.

All of our schools were able to continue in-person instruction for the duration of the 2021-22 school year, which is an achievement in and of itself. We were also able to return to many events and activities that have made things feel a bit more 'back to normal.' I invite you to join me as we reflect on some of them and celebrate just some of our successes from this past school year.

As we near the end of the school year, there are many more celebrations to come. It's an exciting time, and I enjoy each and every one. The Class of 2022 will be our first in three years to enjoy more traditional versions of senior events, including prom and graduation.

In the coming pages, you'll meet just a few more of the hundreds of educators, community partners, organizations and businesses who are doing whatever it takes to support



Scott Grimes — Superintendent

success for every student. It is an honor and a privilege to work with them, along with countless others who are committed to ensuring that Grand Haven Area Public Schools continue to strive for excellence.



GRAND HAVEN
SCHOOLS FOUNDATION

Preschool scholarships are now available for the 2022-23 school year! Since 2005, the Grand Haven Schools Foundation (GHSF) has funded over 700 scholarships for children to attend GHAPS' preschool program.

To apply, visit ghsf.org/apply or call the GHAPS Child Services Department at 616.850.6825.

The GHSF is a nonprofit organization that supports education initiatives that increase school readiness and promote continued educational success throughout the preschool through fourth grade experience.

For more information visit www.ghsf.org.

39th Annual Excellence In Service Awards

Since the 1982-83 school year, the district's Excellence In Service Awards have honored teachers, staff and volunteers. They recognize and encourage superior performance and cultivate a continued expectation of excellence in Grand Haven Area Public Schools.

Grand Haven Area Public Schools honored five Excellence In Service Award winners on May 4, 2022 at its 39th annual event. For the first time, the presentation was pre-recorded and viewed simultaneously by schools throughout the district.

Recognizing their exceptional work and contributions, GHAPS is proud to honor this year's Excellence in Service Award winners.



Tarsha Barnett —
Social Worker,
Lakeshore Middle School

Social worker Tarsha Barnett works tirelessly to be an effective role model and positive influence to everyone she encounters. Ms. Barnett has a way of sharing her knowledge and experiences in a way that encourages others to grow and flourish. She is a fierce advocate who ensures everyone has a voice, is respected, and feels part of our community. Serving in a collaborative and engaging way, Ms. Barnett works passionately to find innovative ways to ensure Success For All.



Beth Bolhuis —
Grade 2 Teacher,
Peach Plains Elementary

Second-grade teacher Beth Bolhuis goes above and beyond to form strong relationships with students, staff and parents. A humble and selfless colleague, her superpower is helping others recognize and build upon their unique gifts. A big-hearted cheerleader, Ms. Bolhuis is always there to empower and support her students and colleagues. Whether being someone's lunch partner or providing groceries for a family or need, Ms. Bolhuis is always lifting up those she encounters. Devoted and hardworking, Ms. Bolhuis comes to work every day with a big smile and a heart full of love – ready to serve those around her.



Roger Glass —
Science Teacher,
GHHS

It is obvious that high school science teacher Roger Glass loves his job. With humor and hands-on activities, Mr. Glass engages students in a safe, fun, inclusive and exciting learning environment. Sought by students and staff alike, Mr. Glass loves lifting spirits and helping to organize events. Mr. Glass is an out-of-the-box thinker who isn't afraid to ask the hard questions and provide honest feedback. His love for plants and biology, as well as his interactions with others, have a lasting positive impact on his students and colleagues alike.



Rita Way —
Secretary to the Athletic Director,
GHHS

Rita Way, secretary to the athletic director, does many things behind the scenes, seeing no task as being too small for her full attention. Ms. Way is highly organized and efficient, dedicated to making sure GHAPS athletics run like a well-oiled machine. Full of kindness and dedication, Ms. Way is the complete package. Her calming presence makes everyone feel welcomed, heard, and assured that their needs are being met. A true example of "one family, one team, one Grand Haven," Ms. Way proactively implements solutions that provide simplicity and safety to coaches, student athletes and their families.



Abby Teasley —
Migrant Recruiter,
GHAPS

Abby Teasley, migrant recruiter, has an incredible gift for establishing quality relationships and ensuring her students have what they need to be successful. Ms. Teasley holds high expectations matched by empathy, kindness and compassion. Her attention to detail has been lauded by representatives at the state level. You'll often find Ms. Teasley working early and staying late to ensure families' needs are met. Ms. Teasley's students are assured equal opportunities and are able to be active participants regardless of barriers. Ms. Teasley is beloved throughout GHAPS, the migrant community, and among area businesses and organizations.

The district also presented the Spirit of Grand Haven Area Public Schools award to Randy Poel. A lifelong GHAPS supporter, Poel has positively impacted countless lives with decades of service to GHAPS athletics, spearheading efforts to equip athletic facilities with automatic electronic defibrillator units, and as the county's first DARE officer. •

Stellar in STEM

Careers in science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) are thriving and growing, and offer great opportunities for students and their future careers. Students passionate about STEM subjects are also encouraged to participate in experiences beyond the traditional classroom. GHAPS supports this through extracurricular activities, fairs, clubs and competitive teams – like Science Olympiad and FIRST Robotics.

The Bucs have a longstanding tradition of Science Olympiad excellence, and this season was no exception as teams from Grand Haven High School, White Pines Intermediate and Lakeshore Middle School continued to demonstrate their science prowess. Mike Reed, with 25 years as head coach under his belt, was able to help his teams prepare for something they hadn't seen in three years: live competition.

The Science Olympiad Invitational at Allendale High School resulted in a second-place finish for the high school team, while Lakeshore and White Pines Intermediate captured first and fourth places in their division. With a short list of things to polish before the regional event, Coach Reed set to work with his students to make a couple of easy corrections.

On March 19, the three Grand Haven teams returned to the Region 12 Championship event hosted by Grand Valley State University. GHHS claimed the Regional Championship title – its 28th since its first win in 1986. Lakeshore and White Pines earned first and fourth place, respectively, in the middle school



Focus, adaptability and teamwork are key during FIRST robotics events.

division. All three teams advanced to the April 30 State Finals competition at Michigan State University.

At the state contest, GHHS competed against 40 teams and medaled in 19 of 23 events, including first place medals in the Bridge, Ornithology and Rocks and Minerals events. The performance earned the team its 18th State Championship. Lakeshore took 4th and White Pines 8th out of 34 teams in the middle school division.

The Bucs competed at the 38th Annual Science Olympiad National Tournament hosted virtually by Caltech on Saturday May 14. They are eagerly awaiting the results which will be released Wednesday, May 18.

Also in STEM, the high school's FIRST Robotics team, Buc-n-Gears, remains a serious state contender. The team was one of 160 schools, out of a field of 460, to qualify for the April State Tournament

where their performance in the Ford Division qualified the team for national competition.

Coach Chuck Priese began coaching FIRST Robotics at GHHS in 2011 when his daughter was a student. "Students come out of this with so much hands-on skill and ability they can take with them into the job world," explains Priese, who is proud of the way his students persevered, seeding 15th out of 40 teams and making it through to the state's semi-final round.

"The competitions are intense, and require the kids to put in about 160 hours of meeting time in the six weeks leading to the event," says Priese. "Gracious professionalism, cooperation, communication skills, strategy and maintaining a business atmosphere," are among the valuable lessons his students benefit from, "But it's the thrill of the sport that draws them in," he says. •

Therapy Pups Make Ruff Days a Little Brighter

Positive, nurturing classrooms and a vibrant sense of belonging go a long way to set the stage for learning in GHAPS schools. But whether you're an adult or a first-grader, the outside world can be scary sometimes. Even before the pandemic, social, emotional, behavioral and mental health services in our schools were critical in addressing rising needs. Woven throughout district initiatives, these programs, events, activities and services are making a huge impact on student learning and success.

As educators, we know that students are most available to learn when their psychological and safety needs are being met. Throughout the district, you'll find that schools have been remarkably innovative and compassionate in finding ways to wholistically support students, and one another, during difficult times. A concerted focus on growth mindset, calming jars and mindfulness lessons, 'safe spaces' in classrooms and even emotional support animals are just a few examples.

"So many kids were struggling with anxiety, big emotions, trouble transitioning," shares Amy Polston, first-grade teacher at Rosy Mound Elementary. "I saw the benefits that therapy dogs brought to my previous school, and when I approached Principal Blanding he was incredibly supportive."

Polston sought out Emmy, a golden retriever puppy, who was chosen for her lovely temperament. As a puppy, a lot of



Emmy is a calming and supportive presence in Polston's classroom.

her training was about play, meeting new people, experiencing new things and basic obedience. When Emmy was one, Polston applied for a grant that enabled her to work alongside a professional trainer to prepare Emmy with the skills required for certification.

Emmy, who celebrates her fourth birthday on May 19, is now a beloved member of the Rosy Mound staff along with her colleague Porter, a black lab. Dakota, also a golden retriever, is on duty at White Pines Intermediate, and social worker Kristi Rob is working with a new dog in training at Central High School.

Emmy's work day starts bright and early as she welcomes students to school each day. Her favorite part of the day, readers workshop, is next. "She loves when the kids snuggle up and read to her. Kids who are less comfortable reading in front

of adults are at ease with her," explains Polston. She helps with writing too. "When they're sitting next to Emmy their attitude and work ethic shifts."

Emmy is a huge support to staff, too. "The impact that she's had not only on the students but adults as well is incredible. Everyone just loves her," shares Polston. Some of Emmy's other duties include attending staff meetings, lunch and recess. When Emmy needs a break, she visits Polston's classroom office and enjoys a snooze on her dog bed, a drink of water and a snack (if she's not too full from lunch duty).

Even after a hard day's work, Emmy still has plenty of energy and loves living her best dog life. "She goes for a hike every day, plays with other dogs. She is part of our family," shares Polston. •

Making Connections

Our West Michigan community is vibrant with agriculture, from grain crops to berries bursting with flavor. And, many of our neighbors are among one of Michigan's largest migrant communities. A vital part of our GHAPS family, the district is dedicated to making sure these families and their young learners feel at home and supported.

Infusing diversity, equity, inclusion and belonging (DEIB) practices into our school culture is a critical piece of Success for All. One of GHAPS' champions in this area is Abby Teasley, who was recently recognized by West Michigan Works! with the 2021 Beverly A. Drake Essential Service Award for "going above and beyond" in her role as a front-line worker assisting migrant families. In her role as GHAPS' home liaison and migrant recruiter, Teasley works to make connections between families and important resources including school and daycare programs, food, housing and health care.



Each summer, the GHAPS team makes sure children from migrant families enjoy hands-on lessons, fun activities and balanced meals.



For our migrant students, the GHAPS community is a home away from home.

Growing up in the Ottawa County migrant program, Teasley finds that her experiences have helped her relate to other migrant families. "I remember more than 20 years ago when we came to Grand Haven, there were few Hispanic families in the area," recalls Teasley. "I am proud of how far the community has come. Collaborations make it work. I'm thankful."

Planning is now underway for the community's second-annual Welcoming event, which will be held at Grand Haven's Hope Church on June 30. Building on last year's success, dozens of community partners will be available to connect with migrant families, facilitate access to resources, and enjoy food and activities.

Making sure migrant students enroll in summer school programs is another focus area for Teasley, who sees the opportunity to address educational gaps, support English language learners, and create a sense of community among students. "These kids are so resilient. New places, new friends every time. They're amazing," shares Teasley. "I do this work because it's my passion. It's truly an honor and it goes both ways; I am blessed by them as well." •