

Grand Haven Area Public Schools Beacon

Spring 2020

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Board Meeting Schedule

Monday, March 9, 2020 @
Ferry/Voyager Elementary

Monday, May 4, 2020 @
Robinson Elementary

Monday, May 18, 2020 @
White Pines Intermediate School

Monday, June 1, 2020 @
Lake Hills Elementary

*All board meetings begin at
7:00 p.m. unless otherwise noted.*



Big Dreams Spark Here

by Andrew Ingall

On the evening of March 10, our elementary schools will be buzzing with the energy of Kindergarten Round-Up. New parents preparing to send their oldest children off to Young Fives or Kindergarten will probably have a million and one questions for the teachers and staff at their neighborhood school, while current GHAPS parents will probably be happy to reconnect with familiar faces. Nothing beats the excitement of preparing

to begin an educational journey — especially when it's a journey that holds such promise for our students.

In the following pages, I'm pleased to share just a taste of the GHAPS student and district accomplishments we experience every day. From day one, we encourage our students to dream big and give them the tools they need to accomplish their goals.

This means a commitment to continuous improvement, in everything from instructional techniques to the physical learning environment. It means providing creative experiences in and out of the classroom

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Andrew Ingall - Superintendent

and dedicated mentors who can help guide our students down the path to success. And it means celebrating our big "blue-ribbon" wins and recognizing the district-wide commitment to our core values, which is critical as we work toward **Success for All**.

What will our newest GHAPS students accomplish throughout their educational careers? That remains to be seen, but I am confident that our talented teachers and caring staff will fan the flames of curiosity in each student. •

Go Bucs!

Andrew Ingall, *Superintendent*
Grand Haven Area Public Schools



Buccaneers Raise The Bar

Getting involved in extracurricular activities can give students the boost they need to succeed in high school — and beyond. Several academic club programs have a longstanding history of success in preparing students for college: Science Olympiad, F.I.R.S.T. Robotics and DECA Club.

Science Olympiad is a premier science competition, providing rigorous, standards-based challenges to nearly 8,000 teams in all 50 states. GHAPS has hosted a middle and high school team since 1984 and mainly attracts students passionate about math, science and/or technology. Teammates compete in various scientific disciplines including earth science, biology, chemistry, physics and engineering.

“Science Olympiad exposes students to different areas of science, encourages them to think deeper, and allows them to see science in a new way,” says Mike

Reed, coach for 30 years. “Students in the program learn what they are passionate about and get to practice and compete as a team, which enables them to build solid friendships.”

Grand Haven High School’s F.I.R.S.T. Robotics team is in its 10th season and is comprised of 21 students, plus adult mentors. The organization’s mission is to inspire young people to be science and technology leaders by engaging them in exciting, mentor-based programs that build science, engineering, and technology skills.

“Most students who start the program, end up coming back year after year,” says Coach Chuck Priese. “I’ve heard reports back from graduated students saying how being on the robotics team helped them make a decision for college schooling and careers. And, while many students stay in the STEM fields, some figure out that it isn’t for them. Both are equally valuable.”

The Buc’n’Gears team has won many awards, and competes in state and world competitions. Students involved on the team put in many long hours during the season, in which they build a 150-pound robot from scratch in about seven weeks. Students leave the program with college-ready skills.

DECA Club prepares emerging leaders and entrepreneurs in marketing, finance, hospitality and management around the globe. Its competitive events contribute to every student being college and career ready when they graduate from high school. Established in 1947, DECA has been



offered at Grand Haven High School since the 1970s and is open to students in grades 9-12.

Thirty-nine students compete against other schools through a series of presentations and role-playing scored by judges. The club operates like a business and elects officers to fill team positions in marketing, membership, travel/events, outreach, secretary, treasurer, historian and digital/social media.

“Students receive real-world experience that will prepare them for that first major job interview,” says Coach Chad Jeltner. “Students learn how to run a business, collaborate and present their ideas in a creative manner, which are invaluable skills.”

Competition, commitment, collaboration and communication are at the core of these programs, and it’s clear why GHAPS students are at the epicenter when it comes to raising the bar outside the classroom. •



Individual Focus, National Accomplishments

There's no magic formula for student success. It takes hard work and commitment from teachers, staff, leadership, parents and of course, students themselves. In Grand Haven, we are consistent in our commitment to meeting students where they are, then helping them dream beyond today. This commitment is especially apparent in our elementary schools, all of which engage daily in innovative project-based learning, data-driven decision-making and a quest for continuous improvement.

While all our elementary schools offer excellent educational experiences for students, we'd like to provide a more in-depth look at our four National Blue Ribbon Schools: Griffin, Lake Hills, Peach Plains and Rosy Mound.

Each of these elementary schools was nominated as an Exemplary High Performing School by the Michigan Department of Education, which selects nominees based on schools' overall academic performance. From there, the U.S. Department of Education evaluates nominees' applications to select only the most exceptional schools to National Blue Ribbon honor.

State assessment scores in Reading/English Language Arts and Math are key criteria, but our schools stand out because we truly embrace the goal of **Success for All**. From leadership opportunities in their schools to project-based learning in partnership with local businesses, our National Blue Ribbon Schools demonstrate a true commitment to student learning.

At Griffin Elementary, the school motto is *Be the Best Me I Can Be*. Griffin staff encourage students to gain a solid academic foundation and foster a genuine love of learning. One reason for Griffin's 2016 honor was the significant progress made in closing the achievement gap, which means the school is succeeding in efforts to help all students achieve more, regardless of their demographic group.

Just eight years ago, Lake Hills was identified as a Focus School by the State of Michigan, which meant it was part of the 10% of schools with the largest achievement gaps. Three years later, the school's efforts to close that gap earned Lake Hills the designation of Reward School, which recognizes schools who successfully close the achievement gap. Its 2018 National Blue Ribbon Schools Award further affirms Lake Hills' outstanding commitment to student success.

Rosy Mound Elementary, another 2018 honoree, gives all students the opportunity to develop leadership skills through their "Leader in Me" program. Built around service to others, these leadership opportunities include classroom roles, school committees, playground mentors, safety leaders and news crews. Though these leadership positions require students to give up free time, nearly half of all Rosy Mound students choose to participate.



Peach Plains Elementary was honored in 2019, thanks to its school-wide commitment to grow learners. Since 2015, staff at Peach Plains have been making an intentional effort to bring student achievement in line with that of schools with similar demographics. Small, consistent adjustments in math resulted in sustained changes, which led to measurable student growth. In 2016, Peach Plains partnered with the Reading Now Network and increased overall test scores by 15% within two years.

These are just a few examples of why four of our elementary schools have been named National Blue Ribbon Schools. And while each building has achieved significant success, they all agree that their work is far from complete. Every day presents a new opportunity to help students achieve more, and the entire district continues the important work of **Success for All**. •

2014 BOND UPDATE

Paving the Way for 21st Century Learning

Grand Haven Area Public Schools continues to make progress on the goals laid out in the 2014 Bond Proposals. With payments spread out over a ten-year period, improvements are being performed on schedule with Technology (\$18,577,000); Facilities and Equipment (\$10,600,000); and Safety and Security (\$6,323,000) as the primary buckets earmarked for the funds.

“Our exemplary commitment to quality education, technology, operations, transportation and safety have set very high standards in the education industry,” says Brian Wheeler, GHAPS Assistant Superintendent of Technology, Operations and Transportation. “For the district to be able to put 21st century tools into our teachers’ classrooms, the bond was necessary. GHAPS couldn’t have accomplished what we are doing without the bond issue.”

PROPOSAL 1

Proposal 1 provides 1:1 technology improvement in all district buildings; provides infrastructure resources for roof and bus replacements; safety and security upgrades; and student learning equipment.

Technology

- In 2014, classroom technology improvements were made (smart carts, white boards, projectors and equipment). In 2020 these items are nearing the end of their functional life cycle. Replacement is being planned at all elementary schools this summer and all secondary schools during summer 2021.
- In 2019-20, Google Chromebooks were replaced in grades 5-11. Every student in grades 3-12 have access to a Google Chromebook device, with

grades 5-12 being able to take the device home with them. The average lifespan is five years for equipment that stays in the classroom, and four years if it is taken home.

- In summer 2020, iPads will be replaced in grades Y5-2.
- The district resells the old technology and receives approximately 30 percent of the retail value. In addition to the money staying within the district, technology is diverted from landfills.
- New Cisco IP phone systems were added to all buildings to replace outdated analog phones.

Operations

- \$6M went toward roofing replacement on 13 buildings. Roofing is an ongoing issue and requires replacement approximately every 20 years.
- Concrete/asphalt work.
- Locker replacement at White Pines Intermediate.
- New fire alarm systems at Lakeshore Middle School and Griffin Elementary.
- Traffic flow improvements were made at Lakeshore Middle School.
- New locker and shower rooms were installed at Central High School.

Safety and Transportation

- Secure vestibules at Grand Haven High School and White Pines Elementary
- Public address updates (Y5-4)
- Purchased 26 new buses (the original goal was to replace 56 buses owned by the district over 10 years).

PROPOSAL 2

Proposal 2 allows for district-wide fencing, asbestos removal, improved traffic areas at Grand Haven High School

and Lakeshore Middle School, athletic improvements (including repurposing and expanding space) and arts improvements (including repurposing and expanding space).

Safety

- New fencing at schools and around playgrounds. All work has been completed with the exception of Robinson Elementary, due to a state road reroute. Robinson will be completed in 2021.
- Asbestos removal at Lakeshore Middle School.
- Improved traffic flow at Lakeshore Middle School. Improvements at Grand Haven High School will be completed summer 2020.

Athletic Improvements

- New weight room facility at Grand Haven High School, for use by 1,800 students. The facility is used by wellness classes, athletic teams and staff/faculty.
- Replacement of 11-year-old turf for football in 2020 and soccer in 2021.

Art Improvements

- Facility improvements for the choir, orchestra and band programs at Grand Haven High School. The music programs have expanded since the original school was built in 1997. Orchestra needed dedicated space, and a wall was knocked out of the band room. GHTV was relocated to the new weight room, which also expanded the size of the new orchestra room.
- Performing Arts Center face-lift at White Pines Intermediate School. •

Mentorships: Making an Impact on Student Success

Have you ever reflected back on your childhood and remember someone who made a positive impact on your life? Perhaps you remember a teacher who gave you words of encouragement, or a coach who gave you a pep talk and told you not to give up. Or maybe you remember an especially caring adult, who listened to you like you really mattered.

Having a mentor can provide an amazing boost to self-esteem and help impact success and achievement. Research shows students who are mentored increase their attendance and GPA, while decreasing behavioral issues.

According to mentoring.org, youth who meet regularly with a mentor are:

- 46 percent less likely than their peers to use illegal drugs
- 27 percent less likely to start drinking
- 52 percent less likely to skip a day of school
- 37 percent less likely to skip class
- 81 percent more likely to participate in sports or extracurricular activities
- 55 percent more likely to enroll in college

"Kids Hope USA mentors help students with whatever they may be struggling with, while providing them with consistency, stability and a caring nature."

And while mentors can be found everywhere at GHAPS — from the front office to the lunchroom — there are two intentional mentoring programs at GHAPS where students are matched with a qualified mentor. Central High School's mentoring program focuses on students in grades 9-12, while the Kids Hope USA mentoring program primarily serves students in grades K-5, with some mentors following their student through middle and high school.

Central High School's mentoring program was started six years ago by Program Director Cheryl O'Connor. "I saw a need to connect students with an extra, supportive adult in their life," says O'Connor. "Each match looks different, and some mentors assist with homework, while others work to keep students on track to graduation. Sometimes they just offer a listening, supportive ear."

Central High School's mentors receive a thorough background check and training. Mentors receive ongoing support via monthly lesson plans covering everything from goal setting to getting a job. Mentors meet one hour per week with each student.

With offices in Zeeland, Kids Hope USA is a nationwide network of public schools and church partners that provide inspiring mentor relationships to students.

Kids Hope USA provides training and support for church volunteers who work directly with the school's principal and staff to place mentors with students.

The Kids Hope USA mentoring model is designed to match students with mentors as early as kindergarten. However, students may be matched with a mentor all the way up to the 5th grade.



"Our students look forward to seeing their mentors who build great relationships with them," says Deb Mann, Principal at Griffin Elementary. "Kids Hope USA mentors help students with whatever they may be struggling with, while providing them with consistency, stability and a caring nature. The mentors create such a positive enhancement in the lives of the students."

According to mentoring.org, mentorship promotes positive social attitudes and relationships. Mentored youth tend to trust their parents more and communicate better with them. Many adults who were mentored in their youth are more likely to become a mentor themselves!

So, the next time you have an opportunity to interact with a student — even if only for a brief encounter, remember that you have the power to make a positive impact on their self-esteem and possibly even their future.

Kids Hope USA is always looking for more mentors. To learn more, visit kidshopeusa.org or call 616.546.3580. •

Literacy Lifts Student Accomplishment Levels

Early reading proficiency is one of the key indicators for students' future success.

Research indicates that improvements in literacy often lead to increased proficiency across all subjects — and throughout GHAPS, we demonstrate an ongoing commitment to improving early literacy, with exceptional results.

In 2016, Peach Plains Elementary began partnering with the Reading Now Network (RNN), a collective effort of superintendents, school boards and school districts throughout West Michigan. Through RNN, literacy experts came to Peach Plains and developed customized recommendations to help improve reading levels. These recommendations were all based on RNN's "Roots of Reading Success," which comprise five core elements common in schools where students' reading scores were outperforming similar schools.

At Peach Plains, the key areas of focus included identifying and incorporating literacy practices into every single lesson and using data to better inform intervention lessons and plans. Thanks to the hard work of Peach Plains

teachers, overall test scores for their students have increased by 15% over the past two years.

District-wide, students in kindergarten through 3rd grade are benefitting from Kids Read Now, a new program designed to reduce the "summer slide" in 2019. Through Kids Read Now, participating students received a total of 10,298 books over the summer, for an average of seven books per participant. They even got to select their own books, which increased the likelihood of consistent summer reading.

Thanks to Kids Read Now, nearly 65% of student participants were able to grow or maintain their reading level over the summer, setting them up for success throughout the school year. While outcomes for all ages were encouraging, the program was especially successful for students moving from kindergarten to 1st grade. On average, that age group



experienced no slide after reading at least six books through the program.

Of course, it takes a community commitment to strengthen our schools. Kids Read Now was fully funded by the Grand Haven Schools Foundation and a subsidy from the Michigan Department of Education.

Currently, only about 67% of all Michigan 3rd graders read at grade level. The State's goal is to reach 80%, and while Ottawa County already has some of the highest elementary literacy levels in Michigan, these programs show GHAPS' deep commitment to maximizing student success. •