

Grand Haven Area Public Schools Beacon



Fall 2020

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Board Meeting Schedule

Monday, November 16, 2020

Monday, December 7, 2020

Monday, January 11, 2021

All board meetings will begin at 7:00 p.m. and held virtually from the Education Service Center unless otherwise noted.



All Hands On Deck

by Andrew Ingall

On March 4, 2020, we sent our first communication to GHAPS parents regarding COVID-19. At that time, Michigan had no confirmed cases of the virus and we couldn't have imagined that only a week later, we would be forced to readapt over and over as we implemented extra precautions, then canceled field trips and events, and ultimately closed our buildings beginning March 16.

We had no idea how long the closure would last. But we knew one thing for certain: we weren't going to put our commitment to **Success for All** on hold because we couldn't have students physically in our classrooms. Success requires continued learning,

Chromebooks and printed packets. Our team worked tirelessly to eliminate barriers like lack of home Internet service, often collaborating with community partners to meet the diverse needs of our students.

Learning wasn't the only thing that needed to continue, though: many GHAPS students rely on our food service program, and we had to find a way to get meals to them. By March 17, we had a week's worth of breakfasts and lunches available for pick-up at four locations throughout our community. Thanks to the flexibility of the State of Michigan, we were able to serve anyone under 18 – not just students who qualified for free or reduced lunch. One of our dedicated



Andrew Ingall — Superintendent

the entire summer and remains a priority today.

The challenges we had to overcome in the early days of the pandemic were almost unthinkable. We asked so much of our administrators, teachers and support staff — and they stepped up without hesitation. We will forever be grateful for their willingness to adapt, their creative problem-solving, and their selfless commitment to our students.

What started as a three-week closure lasted through the end of the school year, and while our buildings are open once more, life at GHAPS has certainly not returned to “normal.” But the same spirit that saw us through unheard-of challenges in the spring has persisted. Our district believes that **Success for All Takes Us All**, and in partnership with our families and the greater Grand Haven community, we are holding fast to this vision •



“The challenges we had to overcome in the early days of the pandemic were almost unthinkable. We asked so much of our administrators, teachers and support staff — and they stepped up without hesitation.”

and we dove right in to developing a “Learn from Home” program. We didn't wait — as of March 18, our teachers were providing instruction using a combination of school-issued

community partners, Love in Action, also offered weekend supplemental food and connected families to local food pantries. This focus on feeding our community continued throughout

Supporting Students and Staff for a Stronger Tomorrow

When we began 2020, no one would have imagined that we would be faced with a global pandemic. Yet GHAPS, along with districts across Michigan, were forced to meet it head on, making tough decisions for the remainder of 2020 and for the 2020-2021 school year in order to keep students, staff and the community safe. The GHAPS leadership team worked nonstop to develop effective plans under the unprecedented circumstances to support students and staff for a stronger tomorrow.

As part of the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act, an economic stimulus bill passed by the U.S. Congress in response to the economic fallout of COVID-19, GHAPS received \$2.1 million of the country's dedicated \$2.2 trillion to provide support to the district. The district also received \$100,000 grant from the Grand Haven Area Community Foundation's community relief fund, which is championed by community donations. In addition, Michigan ISD resources provided financial support.

With the help GHAPS received, the district made investments in high-quality virtual curriculum, technology, operations and safety.

Our teachers are the foundation to our children's educational success, and we must take care of them. As we continue to work towards **Success for All**, GHAPS is also investing in healthcare assistance for staff and are providing

COVID-19 RESPONSE

Virtual Curriculum

- Roadmaps curriculum from the University of Michigan for elementary students.
- Michigan Virtual University for secondary students
- Necessary textbooks to support the virtual curriculum

Operations

- Created a quarantine room at each school for students and staff who start showing symptoms during the school day. Rooms are equipped with Level Three surgical masks, N95 masks, hospital gowns and cleaning supplies.
- Additional staff have been added, including a quarantine supervisor for each quarantine room, custodial team members, nurses and long-term substitute teachers.

Technology

- Hotspots for students who do not have Internet access
- Document cameras for remote teachers
- Additional device chargers

Safety

- More than 15,000 adult masks and 5,000 child masks
- Over 1,000 one-gallon jugs of hand sanitizer for classrooms
- Plexiglass to assist in social distancing
- Hundreds of surgical gloves and face shields
- COVID-19 cleaning supplies
- Athletics Department received kits for each sports team, which included cleaning supplies, PPE, thermometers and more.
- Music Department received a special PA system, masks designed for instrument playing, end of instrument covers and floor mats.

two free mental health support sessions. In addition, the district is making sure all teachers and school staff receive hazard pay.

GHAPS has not only made investments during these tough times but has saved money in areas. While other districts have had to purchase devices for students to use, GHAPS did not have to incur those costs as students have been using devices for learning for the

last five years. Students in Young Fives through 2nd grade use iPads, and 3rd through 12th graders use Chromebooks. This helped students and staff move seamlessly into virtual learning.

We are proud of our students, staff and community for their ongoing handling of COVID-19 with compassion and grace. We look forward to working together towards **Success for All**, making a stronger tomorrow for all! •

Heroes Wear Aprons

When you think of heroes you often think of those who are in the military, police officers, firefighters and healthcare workers. However, as access to food remains a need for many Grand Haven students and families, some of our GHAPS heroes wear aprons. Food service workers work tirelessly to prepare comprehensive food programs and meals to help students and their families daily. Since school originally moved to virtual learning in mid-March for the remainder of the school year due to COVID-19, GHAPS' food program has provided 155,442 meals, equaling 31,000 students served.

Thanks to the flexibility of the State of Michigan, GHAPS was able to provide five-day breakfast and lunch meal packs from mid-March through the end of the 2019-2020 school year to anyone under 18 years old, not just those who qualify for free or reduced lunch. From there the GHAPS Summer Food Program, which ran from June 11 until August 13, provided seven days' worth of breakfast and lunch for anyone age 18 and under whether they were a part of the GHAPS family or a fellow community member.

As the new school year began, five days' worth of breakfast and lunch have been available to anyone under 18 years old. In total, 3,119 community members have been supplied with meals, which include a protein, grain, fruit, vegetable and milk. Meal packs are still available for pick up every Wednesday at Grand Haven High School and White Pines Intermediate



GHAPS staff preparing meals. March 25, 2020.

School. The district is currently working towards providing seven-day meal packs, plus dinner and snack, which will hopefully be finalized by the end of November.

To get through these unprecedented times, we must work together. As a community, we have worked diligently with partners to make sure needs are met. Love in Action provides weekend supplemental food support to elementary school children and their families through their Backpack Blessings program. There have also been donation drop-off locations for community members to help provide food for local families in need by giving non-perishable goods.

We are incredibly proud of our food service workers for taking the lead in caring for and supporting our

community. We want to give you an extra serving of "thank yous" for always giving your best and for all you have done and continue to do daily. You are our heroes! •

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Students “Reimagine” the Future of Chinook Pier

GHHS students have been working hard alongside the City of Grand Haven and Williams & Works to help reinvent Chinook Pier as part of the city’s Beyond the Pier planning project. The collaborative effort is part of the district’s successful Homegrown program, bringing design-thinking and project-based learning to students by pairing them with local organizations and businesses to solve real-life design challenges.

In August, Student Senate members met and began thinking about their driving question for the project: “How can we reimagine Chinook Pier to attract and allow residents and tourists to enjoy the space year-round?” From there, nine groups of 9th through 12th grade students conducted research, brainstormed solutions and submitted presentations to Williams & Works. On October 15, the student groups presented their ideas and the top three were chosen for the next round.

“Working on projects like Chinook Pier, students are able to realize and see first-hand that their ideas and their work make a difference in our community”

“Youth input is extremely important for the entire community,” said Pat McGinnis, Grand Haven City Manager. “It’s an opportunity for them to see the results of their ideas take physical



form in their own communities. It also teaches them that building community does not happen in weeks or months, but years.”

This month, the final three groups will present their solutions to a larger community stakeholder committee, which will include the Grand Haven Chamber of Commerce, current and former business owners, a local family and more. The Beyond the Pier planning project is currently in the design and community input phase. Next summer, the space will include temporary waterfront fun such as lawn bowling and ping pong, with full project completion expected in 2022.

Project-based learning programs like Homegrown provide students with exciting opportunities to develop their creativity, critical thinking, presentation skills and public speaking abilities. They learn how to process a

large problem and figure out the tools to find a solution.

“Seeing the solutions students come up with is just one of the wonderful things about Homegrown,” said Brian Williams, teacher and Student Senate advisor with GHAPS. “Working on projects like Chinook Pier, students are able to realize and see first-hand that their ideas and their work make a difference in our community, all while learning a skillset they are able to take with them and apply throughout their lives.”

GHAPS is committed to success for all students and strives to provide exemplary programs and opportunities, like the Beyond the Pier project, to meet the diverse needs of students. These types of programs show students that their ideas make a difference in the world around them and prepare them to influence their community as adults. •

Families Stay Connected

Prior to this year, virtual education in public schools was the exception rather than the rule. However, the COVID-19 pandemic made online instruction a necessity when buildings closed in March 2020. Even as we planned to resume in-person instruction for 2020-2021, we knew we would still need a strong virtual curriculum to educate students who were high risk as well as offer our families the choice to do what was best for them.

“We had a moral obligation to implement a high-quality digital curriculum, which we didn’t take lightly,” said Mary Jane Evink, GHAPS Executive Director of Instructional Services. “After much research, we chose Michigan Virtual for its rigor and credibility. We know it prepares students for the next grade level, advance placement tests, or postgraduate school. We also chose to have our own teachers support the new curriculum, as they reflect our district’s core values and set high standards for delivery of service.”

GHAPS families were given the option of in-person learning or virtual education, and about 25 percent of students are currently participating in Buccaneer Virtual. The students remain part of the

“We had a moral obligation to implement a high-quality digital curriculum, which we didn’t take lightly”



GHAPS family, with support available in food service, social-emotional wellness and special education services. They can also participate in school clubs and activities. GHAPS has worked actively to create a virtual program that will provide **Success for All**.

What school looks like

Buccaneer Virtual students learn using curriculum from Michigan Virtual or Roadmaps, depending on their grade level. Students complete asynchronous coursework daily, working towards academic outcomes that mirror a face-to-face learning environment. Teachers conduct morning check-ins with their classes as well as meet with students through live digital discussions two to three times each week to see how students are doing, provide feedback on assignments and give support for learning.

Community partnerships

GHAPS is a community of literacy and has been working with partners to show creative ways to encourage, endorse and support literacy for virtual students. One essential partnership has been with Loutit District Library. This year, Central High School and Lakeshore Middle School students were automatically issued a library card as a resource for their virtual education. Students can go into the library to check out books, digitally place books on hold for pick-up and use electronic resources from home.

Partnerships like this give students the opportunity to make the library part of their learning routine. GHAPS is working towards expanding the library collaboration to more schools next year.

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Families Stay Connected (continued)

Embracing virtual learning

The district acknowledges that online learning is not without its frustrations for parents, students and teachers. But Buccaneer Virtual families continue to demonstrate patience and perseverance with the new program. As students learn and work on lessons from home, parents have become second teachers, providing them with a supportive learning environment, checking in on their children's progress and regularly communicating with teachers.

The Taylor family chose Buccaneer Virtual for a variety of reasons. Their children were old enough to be independent with assistance and both

parents had flexible work schedules to support them as-needed. They also wanted to help reduce the number of students in the buildings in the interest of social distancing. And their kids, GHAPS 12th, 8th and 6th graders, are loving it! They have found balance and flexibility in virtual education. It has helped discover areas where they thrive and areas that need extra focus, which they may not have had the opportunity to identify in a traditional learning environment.

The Taylors, along with a small group of other Buccaneer Virtual families, formed a cohort for their 5th through 9th grade students. It not only

provides them an environment to discuss the lessons they are learning, but offers emotional support through these unprecedented times.

"GHAPS has made an impossible situation possible. These times have been hard for everyone, but we appreciated the choice to do what is best for our family," said Tricia Taylor, GHAPS parent. "Everyone is doing the best they can. GHAPS has been great — flexing on the go to meet student and family needs. And teachers have been heroes. We are proud to be a part of the GHAPS family!" •