Welcome Interim Superintendent Dr. Ron Gorman

As of July 1, 2019, Dr. Ron Gorman has stepped in as interim superintendent of Grand Rapids Public Schools. Previously, Dr. Gorman was the Assistant Superintendent of Pre-K-12 Instructional Support. For more than two decades he has served the Grand Rapids Public Schools as an elementary teacher, a secondary teacher, a high school assistant principal, a high school athletic director, a K-8 principal, a high school principal, and the Executive Director of Secondary Schools.

“We have made tremendous gains under the leadership of Superintendent Teresa Weatherall Neal,” says Gorman. “I’m honored to serve our district during this time of transition. I will work tirelessly every day to ensure we continue to make transformational improvements.”

Dr. Gorman holds a Bachelor of Arts from Aquinas College, a Master of Educational Leadership from Michigan State University, and a Doctor of Philosophy in Educational Leadership from Western Michigan University. He has also attended professional education programs at Harvard Graduate School of Education and New York City Leadership Academy. In addition to his educational accomplishments, he proudly served eight years in the United States Army Reserves.

In support of former Superintendent Weatherall Neal’s Transformation Plan, Dr. Gorman collaborates with administrators, teachers, parents, and students to plan and facilitate research-based professional development opportunities that support quality instruction, school climate and culture, instructional leadership, assessment literacy, and high levels of student-achievement.

Dr. Gorman has dedicated his career to GRPS. He championed graduation rate improvement efforts which have led to a 26.29 percentage point increase in graduation rates from 2012 to 2018 (44.56% to 71.25%) and drop-out rate improvement efforts which decreased from a 22.60% drop-out rate in 2012 to 11.4% in 2018. Under his leadership, GRPS has seen an increase in college readiness and improvement on the Michigan Top-to-Bottom School Rankings list.

Dr. Gorman lives in Grand Rapids, Michigan with his wife Melissa Gorman, who is also an educator in the Grand Rapids Public Schools, and their two children who attend GRPS.
### 2019/2020 Academic Calendar

#### AUGUST 2019
- **Aug 20**: FIRST DAY OF SCHOOL
- **Aug 21-30**: NWEA/MAP K-8 Testing (grades 9-10 optional)
- **Aug 23**: NO SCHOOL
- **Aug 27**: First Day of Great Start Readiness Preschool
- **Aug 29**: Football Season Opener - Ottawa Hills v Union
- **Aug 30**: NO SCHOOL

#### SEPTEMBER 2019
- **Sep 2**: DISTRICT CLOSED - Labor Day
- **Sep 3-13**: NWEA/MAP K-8 Testing (grades 9-10 optional)
- **Sep 3**: First Day of LOOP Programming
- **Sep 20**: Union HS Homecoming Football Game
- **Sep 27**: Ottawa Hills HS Homecoming Football Game
- **Sep 28**: Union HS Cross Country Invitational

#### OCTOBER 2019
- **Oct 1**: FAFSA Application Opens (studentaid.gov/fafsa)
- **Oct 5**: Theme School/Ctrs of Innovation Application Opens
- **Oct 14-18**: PSAT 8/9
- **Oct 15**: GRCC Dual Enrollment Application Due (Winter)
- **Oct 16**: PSAT 10 and NMSQT 11
- **Oct 19**: Middle School XC Regional (@ GRPS University)
- **Oct 22**: Middle School Football Championship (@ Houseman)
- **Oct 24**: National Lights on After School
- **Oct 25**: End of 1st Marking Period
- **Oct 28**: Beginning of 2nd Marking Period
- **Oct 28**: NO SCHOOL, Records Flex; NO LOOP
- **Oct 29**: School Choice Expo & Family Harvest Festival (Gerald R. Ford Academic Center)

#### NOVEMBER 2019
- **Nov 1**: 1st Round College/University Application Deadline
- **Nov 5**: NO SCHOOL, NO LOOP - Professional Development
- **Nov 25-29**: NO LOOP Programming
- **Nov 27**: NO SCHOOL - Conference Exchange Day
- **Nov 28**: DISTRICT CLOSED - Thanksgiving, Turkey Trot
- **Nov 29**: DISTRICT CLOSED

#### DECEMBER 2019
- **Dec 1**: GR Community Foundation Scholarship Apps Open
- **Dec 14**: Holiday Basketball Tournament
- **Dec 20**: 1/2 Day - Students (am), Records Flex (pm) NO LOOP
- **Dec 23-31**: NO SCHOOL - Winter Break

#### JANUARY 2020
- **Jan 1-3**: NO SCHOOL - Winter Break
- **Jan 15-20**: NO LOOP Programming
- **Jan 15-17**: 1/2 Day - Secondary Exams (am), Records Flex (pm)
- **Jan 17**: End of 2nd Marking Period
- **Jan 18**: Floyd Mayweather Tournament
- **Jan 20**: NO SCHOOL, NO LOOP -Conference Exchange Day
- **Jan 21**: Beginning of 3rd Marking Period
- **Jan 21-31**: NWEA/MAP K-8 Testing (grades 9-10 optional)
- **Jan 23**: School Choice Expo & Winter Carnival

#### FEBRUARY 2020
- **Feb 1**: University HS Showcase
- **Feb 3-7**: NWEA/MAP K-8 Testing (grades 9-10 optional)
- **Feb 10-11**: Pre-MSBOA K-8 Testing (grades 9-10 optional)
- **Feb 12**: COUNT DAY
- **Feb 13-14**: Middle School Vocal Musical Festival
- **Feb 15**: GRCC Dual Enrollment Application Due (Summer)

#### MARCH 2020
- **Mar 1**: GR Community Foundation Scholarship Apps Due
- **Mar 6**: NO SCHOOL - Professional Development
- **Mar 7**: Middle School Wrestling Invitational (@ City)
- **Mar 18-19**: GRPS Non-MSBOA Music Festival
- **Mar 20**: End of 3rd Marking Period
- **Mar 23**: Beginning of 4th Marking Period

#### APRIL 2020
- **Apr 2**: NO LOOP Programming
- **Apr 3-10**: NO SCHOOL - Spring Break
- **Apr 13-30**: M-STEP 5/8/11 Testing
- **Apr 13-30**: MI-Access 3-8/11 Testing
- **Apr 14**: SAT Initial Test Date
- **Apr 14**: PSAT 8/9/10 (grade 8 initial test date)
- **Apr 14-16**: PSAT 8/9/10 (grade 9-10 initial test date)
- **Apr 15**: WorkKeys Initial Test Date
- **Apr 15**: GRCC Dual Enrollment Applications Due (Fall)
- **Apr 15-21**: PSAT 8/9/10 Make-Up
- **Apr 20-30**: NWEA/MAP K-10 Testing
- **Apr 28**: SAT Make-Up
- **Apr 28**: City-Wide Art Show Public Reception - GRPS Elem.
- **Apr 28-29**: PSAT 8/9/10 Make-Up
- **Apr 29**: WorkKeys Make-Up
- **Apr 29**: City-Wide Art Show Public Reception - GRPS Secondary and Shared Time

#### MAY 2020
- **May 1**: Preschool, Here I Come
- **May 1-8**: M-STEP 5/8/11 Testing
- **May 1-15**: NWEA/MAP K-10 Testing
- **May 4-29**: M-STEP 3/4/6/7 Testing
- **May 4-29**: MI-Acces 3-8/11 Testing
- **May 6**: Last Day for Great Start Readiness Preschool
- **May 21**: Last Day of LOOP Programming
- **May 22**: 1/2 Day - Students (am), Records Flex (pm)
- **May 25**: NO SCHOOL - Memorial Day

#### JUNE 2020
- **Jun 1-3**: 1/2 Day - Secondary Exams (am), Records Flex (pm)
- **Jun 3**: End of 4th Marking Period
- **Jun 3**: LAST DAY OF SCHOOL

**Get the most up to date information, join our newsletter on grps.org**
## Asbestos Notice

Asbestos is a general name for a group of naturally occurring minerals composed of small fibers. These fibers are very strong and resistant to heat and chemicals. The mere presence of asbestos in a building does not mean that the health of the building occupants is endangered. When left intact and undisturbed, asbestos-containing materials do not pose a health risk to building occupants. There is, however, potential for exposure when the material becomes damaged or disturbed. Because of these problems associated with asbestos exposure, the Asbestos Hazard Emergency Act, or AHERA emphasizes that asbestos in school buildings must appropriately managed.

The Grand Rapids Public Schools has an asbestos management plan that addresses contact persons, training, inspections, response actions, operation and maintenance activities, periodic surveillance, cleaning, disclosure efforts and school building areas containing asbestos. Any person may review the management plan at the Grand Rapids Public School’s Facilities Management Department, 900 Union, Grand Rapids, Michigan 49503, during regular business house (8:00 am to 4:00 pm). Plans may also be found on the district’ website at www.grps.org/facilities-asbestos-info.

Alternatively, any person may request a copy of the plan by writing the Grand Rapids Public Schools Facilities Management Department, 900 Union, Grand Rapids, Michigan 49503. There is a cost involved in reproducing the document of approximately 10 cents per page. The Grand Rapids Public Schools will send a copy out of the management plan within 5 business days of receiving the request.

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### 2019/2020 Bell Schedule

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SCHOOL</th>
<th>DROP OFF/ BREAKFAST</th>
<th>AM BELL</th>
<th>PM BELL</th>
<th>1/2 DAY BELL</th>
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<tr>
<td>Aberdeen School (PK-8)</td>
<td>8:10</td>
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<td>11:40</td>
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<td>Alger Middle (6-8)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Blandford School (6)</td>
<td>7:50</td>
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<tr>
<td>Brookside Elementary (PK-5)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Buchanan Elementary (PK-5)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Burton Elementary (PK-5)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Burton Middle (6-8)</td>
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<tr>
<td>CA Frost Environmental Science Academy (K-5)</td>
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<tr>
<td>CA Frost Environmental Science Academy (6-11)</td>
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<td>Campus Elementary (PK-5)</td>
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<td>Center for Economiology (6)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cesar E. Chavez Elementary (PK-5)</td>
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<td>City High Middle School (7-12)</td>
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<td>Colt Creative Arts Academy (PK-5)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Congress Elementary (PK-5)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dickinson Academy (PK-8)</td>
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<tr>
<td>East Leonard Elementary (PK-5)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Gerald R. Ford Academic Center (PK-5)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Grand Rapids Learning Center (9-12)</td>
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<td>Grand Rapids Montessori (PK-6)</td>
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<td>Grand Rapids Montessori (7-12)</td>
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<td>Grand Rapids Public Museum Middle (6-8)</td>
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<td>Grand Rapids Public Museum High (9-10)</td>
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<tr>
<td>GR University Prep Academy (6-7)</td>
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<td>GR University Prep Academy (8-12)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Innovation Central (PK-5)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ken-O-Sha Park Elementary (PK-5)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Kent Hills Elementary (PK-5)</td>
<td>8:10</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

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## 2019/2020 Orientation, Registration, Open House, and Ice Cream Social Schedule

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SCHOOL</th>
<th>ORIENTATION</th>
<th>REGISTRATION</th>
<th>OPEN HOUSE</th>
<th>ICE CREAM SOCIALS</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Aberdeen</td>
<td>8/14, 6 - 8 PM</td>
<td>8/5 - 8/8, 9 AM - 3 PM</td>
<td>8/15, 5:30 - 7 PM</td>
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<td>Alger Middle</td>
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<td>Blandford School</td>
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<tr>
<td>Brookside Elementary</td>
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<td>Buchanan Elementary</td>
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<td>8/15, 4 - 6 PM</td>
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<tr>
<td>Burton Elementary</td>
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<td>8/12, 9 - 10 AM</td>
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<td>8/15, 5:30 - 7 PM</td>
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<tr>
<td>Burton Middle</td>
<td>8/15, 12 - 3 PM &amp; 4 - 7 PM (Make up)</td>
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<td>CA Frost Elementary</td>
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<td>CA Frost High/Middle</td>
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<td>Congress Elementary</td>
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<td>Dickinson Academy</td>
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<td>East Leonard Elementary</td>
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<td>Gerald R. Ford Academic Ctr.</td>
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<td>Innovation Central High School</td>
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<td>Ken-O-Sha Park Elementary</td>
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<tr>
<td>Kent Hills Elementary</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ottawa Hills High</td>
<td>8/15, 5:30 - 7 PM</td>
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## 2019/2020 Orientation, Registration, Open House, and Ice Cream Social Schedule (Cont.)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SCHOOL</th>
<th>ORIENTATION</th>
<th>REGISTRATION</th>
<th>OPEN HOUSE</th>
<th>ICE CREAM SOCIALS</th>
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<tr>
<td>Palmer Elementary</td>
<td>8/8, 10 AM - 2 PM</td>
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<td></td>
<td>8/12, 10 AM - 2 PM</td>
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<tr>
<td>Public Museum High School</td>
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<td>Public Museum Middle School</td>
<td>8/14, 3 PM (6th Grade)</td>
<td>8/14, 4 PM (7th/8th Grade)</td>
<td>8/14, 3 PM (6th Grade)</td>
<td>8/14, 4 PM (7th/8th Grade)</td>
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<td>Ridgemoor Park Montessori</td>
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<tr>
<td>Riverside Middle School</td>
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<td>8/14, 3:30 - 5 PM 8/14, 3:30 - 5 PM</td>
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<td>Shawmut Hills School</td>
<td>8/13, 6 - 7:30 PM (7th/8th Grade) 8/14, 5 - 6 PM (Kindergarten)</td>
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<td>8/14, 5 - 6:30 PM</td>
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<td>Sherwood Park Global Studies</td>
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<td>Academy</td>
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<td>Sibley Elementary</td>
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<td>Southwest Community Campus</td>
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<td>8/5-8/9, 9 - 11 AM &amp; 1 - 3 PM 8/13, 12:30 - 3:30 PM</td>
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<tr>
<td>Union High School</td>
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<td>Westwood Middle School</td>
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<td>9/9, 4:30 - 7:30 PM 9/13, 4 - 7 PM</td>
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<td>8/6, 10 AM - 12 PM &amp; 6 - 8 PM (6th Grade) 8/7, 10 AM - 12 PM &amp; 6 - 8 PM (7th Grade) 8/8, 10 AM - 12 PM &amp; 6 - 8 PM (8th Grade)</td>
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<td>8/13, 12 - 3 PM &amp; 4 - 7 PM (Make up)</td>
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<td>8/13, 12 - 3 PM &amp; 4 - 7 PM (Make up)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Zoo School</td>
<td>8/13, 6 - 8:30 PM</td>
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### Back to School Safety Tips

As we prepare our PreK-12 children for another school year, we need to be constantly thinking about their safety. This applies to their safety to and from school and while on school grounds.

Drivers must remain watchful. Children dart unexpectedly into traffic, often from between parked cars. Young pedestrians face a variety of dangers while walking to and from school.

Here are a few basic safety tips for your child to follow:

- **Mind all traffic signals and the crossing guard.**
- **Walk your bike through intersections.**
- **Walk with a buddy.**
- **Wear reflective material. It makes you more visible to street traffic.**

#### Safety tips for entering and exiting the school bus:

- **Have a safe place to wait for your bus, away from traffic and the street.**
- **Stay away from the bus until it comes to a complete stop.**
- **When being dropped off, exit the bus and walk ten steps away from the bus. Also, remember that the bus driver can see you best when you are away from the bus.**
- **Use the handrail to enter and exit the bus.**
- **Be aware of street traffic. Drivers are required to follow the rules of the road concerning school buses, but not all do. Protect yourself and watch out.**

#### Safe bicycling tips:

- **Always wear a helmet.**
- **Always ride on the right side of the road. Never ride against traffic.**
- **Ride single file. When passing other bikers or pedestrians, let them know your position by shouting out something like, "On your left!"**
- **Always check behind you before changing lanes.**
- **Watch out for dangerous things in the roadway. Litter, potholes, gravel and storm drains all can cause you to lose control.**
- **Stop at all stop signs and at all traffic lights. Be extra careful at crossroads.**
- **Always signal before making a left or right turn.**
- **Maintain control of your bike. Don’t swerve or make sudden turns.**
- **Use caution when riding next to parked cars to avoid injury from someone suddenly opening a car door in front of you.**
- **Listen for cars approaching from the side or behind you.**
- **Don’t follow a car too closely. You may be in the blind spot, where the driver cannot see you, and you may be unable to stop if the car comes to a sudden halt.**
- **Know your road signs and obey them.**
- **Always be prepared to stop.**
- **Wear brightly colored clothing.**
- **Don’t wear headphones, loose clothing or inappropriate shoes.**

These are only a few safety tips we want parents to remind their children of as they began to return to school. If we work together, we can continue to keep our children safe not only in school, but to and from school, as well.
A New Teacher With a Passion for the Classroom: ‘I Love Helping Kids’
Shrinking teacher pool doesn’t deter her dedication  By Charles Honey, Courtesy of School News Network

As she wrapped up her first full year as a teacher, Brittney DesLauries felt a bit buried in paperwork – report cards, progress reports, intervention plans for her students. But she also felt the same spark of enthusiasm that motivated her to be a teacher in the first place.

“I still love to be here,” DesLauries said at the end of a recent school day at East Leonard Elementary School. “There’s a little more exhaustion and the days seem longer, but I’m still super-excited.”

She’s also excited about the next school year, even after teaching her final day of this academic year last Friday. She’s already planning ways to improve her work as a special education resource teacher, in a split class of kindergartners and first-graders at East Leonard, a neighborhood pre-K-5 school of Grand Rapids Public Schools.

Of course, she’s also thinking about how to spend the coming summer. She will work part-time at a daycare and take a couple of road trips with her two sisters, including a week in Las Vegas.

But come mid-August she figures to be good and ready to resume doing the thing she wanted to do since childhood, when she would play teacher and tell her younger sisters to get their homework out.

“I just love seeing the tangibility of what I am doing every day,” said DesLauries, a cheerful 24-year-old who smiles easily and speaks thoughtfully. “Working with the kids, when you finally see the light bulb go off and they’re able to do something they weren’t able to do before. It’s so exciting, that thrill.”

A Growing Gap

Young teachers like her filled with the thrill of teaching are badly needed these days. In Michigan, the number of students enrolled in college teacher-preparation programs fell by about 70 percent between 2008-09 and 2016-17, according to Title II of the U.S. Higher Education Act. Superintendents reported teacher shortages around the state last fall, including a shortfall of 41 in GRPS.

East Leonard, however, saw a youth influx this year. DesLauries is one of eight teachers there, among 11 total, who have been teaching for three years or fewer. Five of them are first-year teachers. The young hires were a result of retirements, a teacher leaving the profession and a resignation, said Principal Adam Rusticus.

DesLauries said she was not deterred by the prospect of high stress, inadequate pay and lack of public respect that have plagued her profession in recent years. She always loved school as a student, and was drawn to special education “so people who struggle in school, love school,” she said. “That’s my goal is that my kids love school.”

Her routine is demanding: typically arriving by 7:15 a.m., teaching until 3:30 p.m., staying until 5 or 5:30 and planning her lessons for the week on Sundays. But she is determined not to follow the burnout trend of 44 percent of those who have been teaching for three years or fewer. Five of them are first-year teachers. The young hires were a result of retirements, a teacher leaving the profession and a resignation, said Principal Adam Rusticus.

DesLauries is a special education teacher at East Leonard Elementary, said she is already excited about resuming teaching next fall.

Confirming her Calling

Her principal agrees.

“Brittney is a self-motivated, compassionate, and patient teacher,” Rusticus said by email. “She perseveres through the barriers and hurdles that all first-year educators encounter. We are lucky to have found Ms. DesLauries, and every school strives to have teachers like her!”

Rusticus hired DesLauries as a long-term substitute in February 2018, then as a staff teacher that April. Though it was her first teaching job, she’d spent plenty of time in classrooms as part of her degree program at Grand Valley State University, including four student-teaching posts in Grand Rapids, Grand Haven and Muskegon.

Though she had occasional doubts if she was cut out for this, she said, “The more I was in the classroom, the more I was sure that, yes, this is where I’m meant to be. This is what I want to do for the rest of my life.”

Her class this year consisted of six students in kindergarten or first grade, who had emotional, cognitive or physical impairments but the potential to be mainstreamed into general-education classes. They spent part of their days in her classroom and part in the next-door kindergarten of Lindsey Kaiser. Over the course of the year, some transitioned into general education classes either full- or half-time.

Brittney DesLauries teaches her kindergartners and first-graders about letter sounds during story time.

Brittney DesLauries, a special education teacher at East Leonard Elementary, said she is already excited about resuming teaching next fall.
A Typical Day

One morning this semester, DesLauries worked more or less nonstop from 8:30 to 11:30 a.m., teaching her “friends,” as she calls them, not only their A-B-C’s but how to mind their P’s and Q’s and, when needed, tying their shoes.

Helped by child care worker Angel Smeets, she covered the classic kindergarten basics: A is for apple; B says buh; here’s how you draw a D (“big line down, big curve”); let’s dance to a video about patterns; let’s have story time on the carpet.

She also tended to her students’ special needs, such as gently guiding a boy through a roller mechanism to calm his overstimulated senses. She constantly strove to keep them on task with a steady mix of praise and admonishment.

“Why do we come to school?” she asked them at an antsy moment. “We are here to learn, so let’s get to learning, everyone.”

“I love it when you do school,” she told a girl having an especially bad day. “It makes me so happy.”

After they left for lunch and recess, DesLauries said one-on-one attention can help students calm down and turn it around.

“I just want all my kids to know, you can be doing whatever … but I still love you and I still care about you.”

Over the year, she saw students make big gains both in their work and their behavior. She got excited seeing a boy recognize the word “the” for the first time. And the girl having the very, very bad day has come very, very far, she said: “Those things just fill me with such joy.”

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Are Your Kids Falling Short On Nutrients They Need?

Maybe. One out of two kids ages nine and up aren’t getting enough calcium, vitamin D and potassium*. These nutrients are critical for kids’ growth.

THE GOOD NEWS? Real dairy milk is a great way for kids to get their bone-building nutrients including high-quality protein. Plus, they love the taste!

3 SERVINGS OF REAL DAIRY MILK A DAY (2.5 SERVINGS FOR KIDS AGES 4 TO 8).

Visit www.MilkMeansMore.org for recipes and inspiration to add more dairy to your family meals.

Serve milk at meal times to ensure children get the vital nutrients they need.

Add milk to a smoothie as an easy way to add protein to breakfast or a snack (8g protein/8oz serving).

When making oatmeal, swap out water for milk. When you make old-fashioned oatmeal with milk instead of water, you add 8g of high-quality protein, plus eight additional nutrients.

Use it to make creamier macaroni and cheese. It’s a wholesome, simple ingredient that’s already the foundation of many meals kids love.
The Grand Rapids Student Advancement Foundation Celebrates Student Collaboration

The Grand Rapids Student Advancement Foundation (GRSAF) exists to ensure ALL Grand Rapids Public Schools (GRPS) students are afforded every opportunity to succeed. So, when a community-wide initiative led by two students shows up in the form of a grant proposal, the Foundation listens and celebrates!

Wanting an opportunity to teach her students at every level the art of preparing a grant proposal, the principal of Ridgemoor Park Montessori, Julie Reyers, guided students Bella and Naomi through the experience. Truly a community project, these Ridgemoor Park E2 students collaborated with their peers, prepared a proposal and submitted it to the newly renamed Teresa Weatherall Neal Principals Discretionary Fund (TWNPDF) requesting funds to improve an outdoor learning environment.

Previously known as the Principals Discretionary Fund, the TWNPDF is a designated fund which allows principals to determine what needs can be remedied quickly such as broken eyeglasses, outgrown school uniforms, winter attire and more. It’s also a flexible fund in which principals can request dollars be applied to help promote positive behavior initiatives, end-of-year celebrations or in this case an outdoor improvement project.

Embarking on this new journey, Naomi and Bella wanted to make sure that whatever proposal they submitted would do the most good for their school. They began by asking their peers, their teachers and administration for ideas on where improvements were needed. As brains began to storm, and after several “community” meetings adjourned, a brilliant idea was proposed by a student named Tigist. It was determined that to gather as many perspectives and ideas as possible, a suggestion box would help yield the best results!

Strategically placed in a high traffic area within the school, the suggestion box quickly became filled with many concepts and ideas, coupled with artistic renderings and explanations. Each submission was considered and vetted. And what transpired is now known as the RPM Outdoor Beautification Project.

This student-led, community-wide Ridgemoor Park Montessori initiative was celebrated. Outfitted with kazoos, balloons and a big check, the GRSAF team excitedly descended on the school. As the team celebrated the school’s thoughtful proposal and acknowledged the hard work of all the students involved, a big check was presented accompanied by a roomful of cheers.

“It really was such a group effort all along the way,” said Julie Reyers, principal of Ridgemoor Park Montessori. “I think the overall success and the community coming together to achieve a common goal is the big takeaway.”

We couldn’t agree more.

When students are given an opportunity to connect, great things transpire. And without the dedicated support of a generous donor community, projects like this wouldn’t happen. It’s because of the generosity of many the Foundation can cultivate, empower and inspire students.

For more information on how you can make an impact, visit www.grsaf.org
Now Enrolling for World-Class Preschool!

If your child will be 4 years old on or before December 1, 2019 sign up today for free preschool at GRPS! GRPS’ world-class preschool programs provide students with the foundation for academic and social-emotional success!

Within our world-class preschool classrooms, students will have the opportunity to learn social-emotional, motor, cognitive, and academic skills in a developmentally appropriate play-based environment. Students focus on important Kindergarten readiness skills including letter recognition, letter-sound relationships, connecting numerals and quantities, and many more all through engaging, fun, hands-on activities!

GRPS’ world-class preschool program offers:

- Safe and convenient locations inside ALL GRPS elementary schools throughout the city
- Amazing teachers trained and certified in Early Childhood Education
- Field trips and monthly parent engagement events
- Classroom learning environments inclusive to meet the needs of all students
- Nutritious meals provided at no cost
- Transportation available to eligible families

Contact the Early Childhood office of Grand Rapids Public Schools at (616) 819-2111 to begin the enrollment process. You can also complete our online application at grps.org/earlychildhood.

Fund Newly Named for Retiring Superintendent Raises More Than $200K

By Charles Honey, Courtesy of School News Network

GRPS students who need new school uniforms, mended eyeglasses and other schooling essentials just got a big boost from a fund newly named in honor of their retiring superintendent.

The Teresa Weatherall Neal Principals Discretionary Fund was announced at the 16th annual MindShare celebration of the Grand Rapids Student Advancement Foundation. Doug DeVos, board co-chair of Amway and its former president for 16 years, announced more than $200,000 had been raised in Neal’s honor for the fund, previously known as the Principal’s Discretionary Fund.

Seeded with an initial gift from Amway in 2014, the fund has distributed approximately $100,000 since then. The new infusion added to $40,000 to its fund balance at the beginning of the school year. It may also be used for needs determined by principals, such as positive behavior initiatives and teacher training.

More than 575 community members witnessed the surprise announcement at MindShare in late April. The Grand Rapids Student Advancement Foundation is the fundraising partner of GRPS, granting more than $20 million since 2003.
Academy for Design & Construction Scholarship Fund Doubles Thanks to Wolverine Donation

On May 21, 2019, 11th grade students from Innovation Central High School’s Academy for Design & Construction (ADC) were invited, along with Lead Teacher Kyle Jelens, to represent the ADC at the Wolverine Global Sales Conference at 20 Monroe Live. During the conference, they met a number of professionals who work for the Wolverine brand and also had the opportunity to model Wolverine’s new line of work boots and apparel.

Wolverine surprised the ADC with a new step in their six-year partnership by announcing that the organization will match funding raised by the ADC scholarship committee for the 2018-19 school year. The scholarship fund, previously at $7,500 thanks to the annual Rewind to Recess fundraiser, now has a total revenue of $15,000 to support ADC students.

“We were all blown away,” says Jelens about the donation. “This is an exciting time to be a part of a theme school with college/career focused academies because of the nationwide labor shortage. We are preparing our students for their careers, and our partner companies in west Michigan show a tremendous amount of support.”

The scholarship fund helps students financially as they pursue vocational training, certifications, and college education. The fund also helps provide materials and equipment for ADC instructors. Wolverine is one of the major supporters of the ADC. The company makes annual donations of work boots, coats, hats, socks and shirts, which keeps students warm and protected while they build a full Habitat for Humanity House.

“We have been working with the Academy of Design & Construction for six years and we continue to partner together to shine light on the amazing career opportunities that exist within the industry,” says Todd Yates, president of the Wolverine brand. “We are thrilled to support this program that is literally teaching students how to build their own future. Supporting students in their future endeavors with this donation helps change lives and perceptions of careers in the industry.”

About Wolverine

Wolverine is a Michigan-based footwear and apparel company that has been making durable work boots with the highest-quality materials for more than 135 years. Committed to supporting those in the skilled trades, Wolverine’s Project Bootstrap program visits job sites and trade schools, donating work boots to those who build America’s houses, roads and valuable infrastructure. In 2018, they formed Team Wolverine to support individuals that personify the drive, grit and work ethic of those in the trades to help close the skills gap. For more information, visit www.wolverine.com.

Grand Rapids Public Schools and Rotary Club of Grand Rapids Celebrate 25 Years of Mentoring Program Success

Grand Rapids Public Schools (GRPS) and the Rotary Club of Grand Rapids (Rotary GR) are thrilled to be celebrating the success of a mentoring program established 25 years ago.

STRIVE (Students Taking a Renewed Interest in the Value of Education) is a one-on-one mentoring program offered by Rotary GR at Ottawa Hills and Union High Schools. Mentors and mentees meet weekly to discuss academics, everyday life and to prepare for the future. Mentors and mentees also participate in several volunteer projects and attend Rotary lunches together. Mentors also help students navigate career options and arrange job shadowing opportunities.

“We are proud of our long-standing partnership with GRPS. STRIVE is a hallmark of our Club and we will continue to invest time, energy and dollars into these wonderful students,” said Chelsea Dubey, Rotary GR President.

“One of the worst things we can do to our kids is start up an exciting new program, put in funding, begin to build relationships with students, and then walk away from it a year or two later,” said Dr. Ron Gorman, Grand Rapids Public Schools Assistant Superintendent of PreK-12 Instructional Support. “Our students deserve better than that. The Rotary Club of Grand Rapids and the STRIVE program have supported us for 25 years! Rotary GR and STRIVE have stayed with our students – and stuck by them year after year.”

“I want to serve as a model for young high-potential students of color who have ability, but may not have someone to guide them on their path to success. My mentee, Najee, has a strong academic record earning a 3.97 GPA with several AP classes. My influence in his life has been to help him set his sights higher than what is familiar and to become more comfortable with change and growth.”

-Arlene-Dean Gady, Director of Market Strategy, Erhardt Construction, STRIVE Mentor since 2018

“Being a mentor is an extension of what I do in my professional life as a college educator and administrator. I am passionate about youth and especially at-risk youth. My mentee, Mootayaw, is a high performing student at Ottawa Hills. She’s also attending GRCC to receive college credits before she graduates.”

-Dr. Linda Goulet, Department Chair, Marketing & Sport Management, Davenport University

STRIVE Mentor since 2010
Grand Rapids to Receive Grant from Outdoor Foundation to Get More Kids and Families Outside

Thrive Outside initiative brings together local organizations to make getting outside part of fabric of peoples’ lives by providing repeat experiences of fun, joy and learning outdoors for kids and families of all backgrounds.

Grand Rapids has been chosen as one of four communities in the Outdoor Foundation’s nationwide Thrive Outside Community Initiative. In Grand Rapids, the initiative will provide a multi-year capacity-building grant to strengthen partnerships between existing local organizations such as schools, Boys & Girls Clubs, YMCAs and nonprofit conservation and outdoor organizations that create repeat and reinforcing positive outdoor experiences for kids and families.

Fewer than 18 percent of Americans recreate outside once per week and fewer than 50 percent report getting outside even once per year, according to the Outdoor Foundation’s Outdoor Participation Report. Research also shows that outdoor activity participation does not mirror the overall demographics of our country. The core goal of the Thrive Outside Community investments is to create healthy individuals, communities, economies and environments by making the outdoors a habit for kids and families of all backgrounds.

“The City of Grand Rapids and Grand Rapids Public Schools have a dynamic partnership and joint commitment to environmental education, parks and schoolyard activation and sustainability,” said David Marguardt, the City’s parks and recreation director. “The Outdoor Foundation’s Thrive Outside Initiative is a perfect fit and remarkable opportunity for us to advance our mutually desired goals and outcomes. This award will kick-start a comprehensive outdoor program for Grand Rapids youth to connect with nature, play outdoors and serve as leaders in neighborhood and park projects that engage families and children.”

The grant allows Grand Rapids to build on the foundation set forth through the Connecting Children to Nature initiative and brings to scale through planning and partnerships a citywide effort to engage children in nature. Grand Rapids intends to engage kids of all ages with an emphasis on those in 5th through 12th grades. This investment leverages additional foundation support, and its opportune timing will pave the way for further public and private investment.

The Thrive Outside Grand Rapids Community will be led by Our Community’s Children – a partnership of the City of Grand Rapids and Grand Rapids Public Schools – the City’s Parks and Recreation Department and a close set of initial partners in the Grand Rapids Environmental Education Network, with more to come.

“We didn’t become an indoor species overnight, and the decline of outdoor activity in the United States is a problem that requires collaboration, funding and scale,” said Lise Aangeenbrug, Outdoor Foundation executive director.

“For a variety of reasons, the days when children were outside playing more than they were inside have passed – this has to change for the health of our children, families and communities. With this grant, we are helping to fuel an outdoor movement in and around Grand Rapids to bring back that connection by supporting local community partners to create a network focused on getting as many children and families as possible experiencing the outdoors in a positive way, so we don’t have anything to lose.

“Over the next decade, the Outdoor Foundation will connect and engage a diverse constituency of participants, advocates and volunteers in at least 32 cities, with the goal of getting 3 million people outside.”

The inaugural Thrive Outside Communities – Atlanta, Grand Rapids, San Diego and Oklahoma City – were chosen by the Outdoor Foundation’s board of directors based on written applications, location visits, in-person interviews and third-party consultant research. Each Thrive Outside Community grant requires the recipient community to provide a 1-to-1 funding match to ensure the long-term sustainability of the network. One backbone organization in each community will manage the grant and facilitate the work of the network partners.

The Outdoor Foundation’s Thrive Outside Communities would not be possible without generous support from The VF Foundation, REI, Patagonia, Thule and Wolverine World Wide, Inc. In order to grow the number of cities and regions that the Thrive Outside Communities Initiative is able to reach, the Outdoor Foundation is looking for additional funding partners in 2019. Please reach out to Michaela Gold (mgold@outdoorfoundation.org) for more information.

About Outdoor Foundation

The Outdoor Foundation, the philanthropic arm of Outdoor Industry Association, is a national 501(C)(3) nonprofit organization dedicated to getting people outside for their health, the health of communities and the health of the outdoor industry. Through community investment and groundbreaking research, the Outdoor Foundation works with many partners to get more people outside more often. Visit outdoorfoundation.org for more information.
Brother and Sister Work Hard for ‘A Better Future, a Better Life’

Siblings from Guatemala aspire to big dreams in America By Charles Honey; Courtesy of School News Network

Anyelin and Yustin Vasquez Lopez are well aware of the Guatemala they came from, the America they came to, and what it will take to succeed here.

It will take hard work, which is just what they put into graduate Union High School in May. They’re prepared to take on plenty more from here.

“We want a better future for all of us in our family,” said Anyelin, who came to Grand Rapids with her brother three years ago.

As the first in their family to graduate from high school, she and Yustin bear an added responsibility, she added: “I feel like I want to be better for them and for me.”

That’s why she worked about 35 hours a week packing car parts while pulling down A’s at Union and taking the certified nursing assistant program at the Kent Career Tech Center. It’s why Yustin worked as a full-time cook while also going to the Tech Center and taking honors courses at Union. Both are working full-time this summer, she at Controlled Plating Technologies, he at the Latin American restaurant Luna.

“I want a better future, a better life,” said Yustin, who plans to be an electrician and eventually start his own company. Anyelin is after a career as a pediatrician.

Both should attain their goals, given their work ethic and “a mindset in which they do not give up,” said Halima Ismail, who oversees the Union High Newcomers program for immigrant students. She’s seen them make great strides since arriving in 2016 with no English-speaking skills.

“I think they’re going to be very successful,” Ismail said. “They have learned how to interact and work within the American cultural system of education. Because they have a grit mindset, they will be lifelong learners.”

Leaving an ‘Unsafe’ Country

It was a dangerous life they left in Guatemala, where poverty, drug trafficking and gangs have prompted thousands of migrants to seek a better life in the United States. Their neighborhood in San Marcos was plagued daily by gang activity, they said.

“Every time in Guatemala when you go out, you feel unsafe,” Yustin said. “Sometimes you go to different places, but there are people (who) want to do something bad to you.”

Their mother, Janaly Lopez, unable to find work at home, had come to the U.S. eight years earlier. After living with their remarried father, they came to join her in the fall of 2016. Although she had a job when they arrived, she couldn’t work after a car accident last year left her badly injured. It was a hard time financially, Anyelin said, adding, “That’s why we started working.”

It was also hard to adjust to Grand Rapids without knowing English. Anyelin recalled being in line at a store when a woman asked her a question. When she was unable to respond, the woman yelled, “Why don’t you speak English?” Other times, she said, people would just ignore her.

“It was hard for us,” she said. “You came here to feel better, and you just feel even worse. You feel like you don’t fit in this country just because of the language.”

At first, they questioned whether they’d made the right move. Anyelin said she told her mother if things weren’t going to get better for her, “I want to go back.”

‘Intrinsically Motivated’

However, brother and sister applied themselves, studying English two hours a day in the library after school and learning academic foundations in the year-long Newcomers program. They showed tenacity and took ownership of their work, Ismail said, calling them “intrinsically motivated. They learned very quickly how and who to work with for support.”

They were also supported by their mother, who always attended parent-teacher conferences and came to special events celebrating their academic achievements, she added.

In time, the English got better and the learning came easier as they entered the regular academic program at Union. Still, their schedules were grueling. This year, Anyelin sometimes rose at 3 a.m. to do quizzes and homework before school. Yustin squeezed in his homework third hour and worked after school until 10 p.m. or later.

Both participated in the Yo Puedo organization for Latino youths. Yustin won academic awards for English-language learners, and Anyelin this spring was named student of the year in the certified nursing assistant program at the Tech Center. An accomplished artist, she designed a poster for the Yo Puedo youth conference, titled “The Power of Dreams.”

She and her brother are powered by their dreams, as they go from their graduation ceremony at Calvin College toward Grand Rapids Community College this fall.

Yustin will continue his studies to become an electrician, while Anyelin will pursue an associate degree in nursing with an eye to med school in the future. He wants to eventually employ family members with his own business. She wants to serve disadvantaged children as a doctor, both in the U.S. and, she hopes, one day in Guatemala.

“In many places, many people don’t have the money to pay for a doctor, and many children die because they don’t have the necessary treatment,” she said. “There is a lot of malnutrition and poverty.”
Outdoor Classroom, Natural Playscape Construction Begins at Plaster Creek Park

Improvements at Plaster Creek Family Park will connect Burton Elementary and Middle School students with nature through education and play

The City of Grand Rapids and Grand Rapids Public Schools celebrated the groundbreaking of an outdoor classroom and natural playscape at Plaster Creek Family Park. Students at Burton Elementary and Middle School helped create plans for The Nest and The Meadows to transform areas of the park with new nature and learning experiences.

“This project reaffirms our commitment to making sure that children in our community have access to the outdoors and public parks that serve as natural classrooms where they can appreciate their environment through hands-on learning,” Mayor Rosalynn Bliss said. “It also gets us closer to our goal of having a park within a 10-minute walk of every resident in our city.

The Nest will be an outdoor classroom with seating, raised planter beds for a vegetable garden, a rain garden, native meadow planting and community picnic area. The Meadows will feature a stump forest and log jam play feature made from local trees harvested and stored by the City’s Forestry Division. Other features of the project include accessible pathways, a picnic area with tables and grills, athletic field improvements and restroom improvements.

Six fifth-grade students helped shape the project by leading park audits and surveys and offering recommendations to the project team.

“It’s a community effort,” GRPS Superintendent Teresa Weatherall Neal said. “Burton students played an important role in this planning effort, and we are looking forward to bringing their ideas to life. This project is an example of how connecting children with nature can help develop future environmental stewards and leaders.”

The outdoor classroom and natural playscape fit in to the Connecting Children to Nature initiative, a dynamic partnership between the City and GRPS that is committed to environmental education, parks and schoolyard activation and sustainability. The partnership is leveraging additional public and private resources to maximize parks millage funding.

“This is the first project of its kind featuring nature play and it highlights our strong relationship with Grand Rapids Public Schools,” said David Marquardt, the City’s parks and recreation director. “We are grateful for the many great partnerships making this project a reality. We deeply appreciate the input we have received from community members, including students, parents, teachers and neighbors.”

Burton School is one of four sites in park-deficient areas of the city that will benefit from green schoolyard projects over the next three years. The benefits of green schoolyards go well beyond serving students. The spaces provide countless benefits to the health and wellness of the community and environment.

GRPS Chief of Staff Appointed to Michigan School Safety Commission

Grand Rapids Public Schools Chief of Staff and Executive Director of Public Safety & School Security, Larry Johnson, was appointed to the Michigan School Safety Commission by Governor Gretchen Whitmer on June 7, 2019.

Mr. Johnson will represent school administrators for a term expiring January 14, 2023.

The School Safety Commission reviews and makes recommendations to the office of school safety using model practices for determining school safety measures. The Commission was created by Act 548 of 2018 and requires the Governor to appoint the School Safety Task Force members appointed by Governor Rick Snyder under Executive Order No. 2018-05. These appointments are not subject to the advice and consent of the Senate.

“Mr. Johnson has a wealth of experience in school safety, which he shares with our local community, as well as several national organizations to help improve school safety and security around the country. On behalf of the Grand Rapids Public Schools, I want to congratulate him on this much-deserved appointment,” said Superintendent Teresa Weatherall Neal.

Mr. Johnson has been working for the Grand Rapids Public Schools Public Safety Department since 1997. He was a former police officer in Benton Harbor, MI; Lansing, MI; and Grand Rapids, MI. He is a retired Police Sergeant with the Grand Rapids Police Department, and currently serves as Vice President of the National Association of School Safety and Law Enforcement Officials.
WANT TO PARTICIPATE IN ATHLETICS?

You will need:
- A physical dated after April 15, 2019
- Cherry Health has health offices in the following schools that provide the opportunity for GRPS students to get physicals prior to the first day of practices.
  - Ottawa Hills High School: 776-5110
  - Innovation Central: 776-5120
  - Union High School: 791-6593
- Supplemental insurance for each season: $10 for high school and $3 for middle schools
- Fall middle school athletics will have physical nights in August. Dates, times, and location TBD.

Eligibility Rules:
- All students grade 6-12 MUST have achieved and maintain a minimum GPA of 2.0 prior to the official start of the season (including practices).
- You must also pass 66% of your classes before and during the season (Michigan High School Athletic Association).
- Students in grades K-5 must be in “good standings” at school with satisfactory attendance, grades and behavior. All students must be eligible to practice FIRST.
- Develop different skills that compliment other sports.
- Minimal sport burnout occurs when involved in multiple sports.
- Time management improves
- Athletics help to improve educational success
- Colleges and Universities like to see that you can be multi-faceted.

SPORTSMANSHIP

As a spectator of interscholastic athletics please respect the time and effort that these young participants have put forth to represent their schools. The purpose of all athletic activities is to provide positive learning experiences and opportunities for personal growth for the participants, coaches, officials and spectators.

Everyone who attends can – and is expected to – assist in the promotion and achievement of good sportsmanship by taking personal responsibility for keeping this contest at a high level of fair, clean and wholesome competition. Remember… SPORTSMANSHIP COUNTS!

GRPS ATHLETICS
Strong Minds, Future Champions

WANT TO PARTICIPATE IN ATHLETICS?

You will need:
- A physical dated after April 15, 2019
- Cherry Health has health offices in the following schools that provide the opportunity for GRPS students to get physicals prior to the first day of practices.
  - Ottawa Hills High School: 776-5110
  - Innovation Central: 776-5120
  - Union High School: 791-6593
- Supplemental insurance for each season: $10 for high school and $3 for middle schools
- Fall middle school athletics will have physical nights in August. Dates, times, and location TBD.

Eligibility Rules:
- All students grade 6-12 MUST have achieved and maintain a minimum GPA of 2.0 prior to the official start of the season (including practices).
- You must also pass 66% of your classes before and during the season (Michigan High School Athletic Association).
- Students in grades K-5 must be in “good standings” at school with satisfactory attendance, grades and behavior. All students must be eligible to practice FIRST.
- Develop different skills that compliment other sports.
- Minimal sport burnout occurs when involved in multiple sports.
- Time management improves
- Athletics help to improve educational success
- Colleges and Universities like to see that you can be multi-faceted.

SPORTSMANSHIP

As a spectator of interscholastic athletics please respect the time and effort that these young participants have put forth to represent their schools. The purpose of all athletic activities is to provide positive learning experiences and opportunities for personal growth for the participants, coaches, officials and spectators.

Everyone who attends can – and is expected to – assist in the promotion and achievement of good sportsmanship by taking personal responsibility for keeping this contest at a high level of fair, clean and wholesome competition. Remember… SPORTSMANSHIP COUNTS!

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ATTENTION ATHLETES:

IT'S THAT TIME OF YEAR AGAIN!

Sports Physicals

Innovation Central High School Health Center is now scheduling appointments for sports physicals.

Physicals received after April 15, 2019 will fulfill the requirement for next school year.

Call us at 616.776.5120 to schedule an appointment.

Cherry Health

Burton Health Center
is now scheduling appointments for sports physicals.

Physicals received after April 15, 2019 will fulfill the requirement for next school year.

Call us at 616.247.3638 to schedule an appointment.

Cherry Health

Union High School Health Center is now scheduling appointments for sports physicals.

Physicals received after April 15, 2019 will fulfill the requirement for next school year.

Call us at 616.791.6593 to schedule an appointment.

Cherry Health

Ottawa Hills High School Health Center is now scheduling appointments for sports physicals.

Physicals received after April 15, 2019 will fulfill the requirement for next school year.

Call us at 616.776.5110 to schedule an appointment.

Cherry Health
Restaurant Week GR
AUG 7-18

TASTE THE CITY
SABORES DE LA CIUDAD

Savor specially priced lunches, dinners or both at 70+ restaurants
- 2 courses for $15 per person
- 2 courses for $25 per person
- Chef’s Choice for $25+ per person – expect even more creative menus!

Comidas, cenas o ambas a precios especiales en más de 70 restaurantes
- Comida de dos tiempos por $15 por persona
- Comida de dos tiempos por $25 por persona
- Selección del chef por $25+ por persona: ¡Espera menús aún más creativos!

GRAND RAPIDS
RestaurantWeekGR.com

Major Sponsor
Patrocinador Principal

Samantha Gordon Food Service

Supporting Sponsors
Otros Patrocinadores

AHC Hospitality
Hobart

The Heart & Home Program.
UP TO $2,500 CLOSING COST ASSISTANCE FOR ELIGIBLE BORROWERS
All loans subject to approval and program guidelines.
To learn more, visit ChemicalBank.com or contact your local Mortgage Loan Officer at 616.588.7618.

BACK TO SCHOOL!
GET READY FOR ANOTHER GREAT YEAR AT GRPS! WE GO BACK TO SCHOOL ON TUESDAY, AUGUST 20!

8.20.19
GRPS
my choice
GRPS Public Schools