New Superintendent Delivers First State of Our Schools

Responds to Listening Tour Input; Outlines Vision and Plan for Future

On January 4, 2012, 35+ year veteran GRPS employee and Creston High graduate Teresa Weatherall Neal was appointed interim Superintendent of Grand Rapids Public Schools. She announced her focus would be on the following seven areas:

- Strengthening and improving academic achievement
- Leadership and instructional development
- Customer service and school culture
- Internal and external relationships
- Student attendance and behavior
- Retention/recruitment of talented staff
- Overall accountability

Then she hit the streets with a comprehensive “listening tour” to gather feedback about what is working, what is not working, what are barriers, and what are solutions. More than 1,000 individuals participated in this process that included one-on-one, small group, and large community meetings and a survey.

On Saturday, March 10, 2012 at the Ottawa Hills High School auditorium, Superintendent Neal used her first “State of Our Schools” address to respond to the listening tour and outline the vision and plan for the future. The following is an overview of the speech highlights and main points.

Alignment of Initiatives: Based on the GRPS Five Year Strategic Plan and the results of the “listening tour,” work aggressively to align initiatives around one, single Academic Plan that will drive the work of the district. Operations and support services will all wrap

GRPS Still Accepting Applications for Centers of Innovation and Theme Schools

ROUND 3 DEADLINE - MAY 31ST

GRPS Theme Schools and Centers of Innovation are among the top performing, most popular school choices in the area. They are in high demand, strong performing, and frequently have waiting lists due to the large number of parents applying for their child to attend.

Seats are filling up quickly at the GRPS Theme Schools and Centers of Innovation as the first two rounds of selections have already been made. But it is not too late for your child! All you need to do is complete a Theme School/Center of Innovation application and return it to your child’s school or Student Services located at the Rev. Lyman S. Parks Administration Building at 1331 Franklin Ave. SE. The third round selection deadline is May 31st.

Applications in both English and Spanish are available at all GRPS schools, at the Student Services office, and online at www.grpublicschools.org.

See enclosed “Passport to the World” marketing brochure to learn more about GRPS Theme Schools and Centers of Innovation!
GRPS Headlines Around the District

Local Barbers Donate Haircuts to Students at Gerald R. Ford Middle

Three local, licensed barbers gave of their time and talents to provide hair cuts to over 55 Gerald R. Ford Middle School Students in December. The barbers were: Justin Stewart, Ernie’s Beauty & Barbershop; Aaron Satterfield, Head N Sole Barbershop; and Demarcus Baty, Designers Dug Out Barber Beauty & Spa.

Alger Students Meet Vice President Biden

Three students from Alger Middle School had the opportunity to meet Vice President Biden, when he spoke at American Seating. 6th grade students Cierra Barrera, Alan Meza, and Mikia Bullock attended the event with their teacher, Mrs. Kozak. Photo courtesy of The Grand Rapids Press.

MLK 6th Graders Participate in Science Fair

Sixth grade students at Martin Luther King, Jr. Leadership Academy had the opportunity to present their projects on plate tectonics to their families, students, teachers, and judges at a science fair in December. The students were assisted in project development by students from City High School.

AARP Highlights Experience Corps Tutors at GRPS

The Experience Corps was created to help older adults get involved in their communities and use their experience to help others. Currently, 2000 Experience Corps members tutor over 20,000 students throughout the country in reading. GRPS is the only school district in Michigan utilizing Experience Corps tutors. Read the AARP article at http://www.aarp.org/giving-back/volunteering/experience-corps/

GRPS Headlines - Continued on page 4

Reading Month Visit from Senator Hildenbrand

Senator Dave Hildenbrand visited and read to several GRPS classrooms during March is Reading Month.

Photographers Donate Photos to All GRPS Seniors

Local photographers Terry Johnston, Katy Batdorff, Seth Thompson, Tim Motley, Michael Cook, Mitch Ranger and Ryan Pavlich teamed up with Stellafly Social Media to form GRadPICS and provide all GRPS seniors with senior photos, free of charge. The photos were then posted on the GRadPICS Facebook page for students to download and use as needed.

Ottawa Hills HS Teacher Wins Education Award

Sharon Satterfield, Ottawa Hills High School special education teacher, was presented with the Hattie Beverly Education Award in January at the 30th annual Giants Awards and Banquet. This award is presented to an African American educator who has made great strides in the advancement of Grand Rapids’ educational systems.

Breakfast Poster Contest at SWCC

As part of the ongoing effort to promote eating breakfast to GRPS students, Alex Escamilla’s 8th grade class at Southwest Community Campus created promotional posters about the benefits of breakfast.

1st place (middle poster) went to Nataly Perez and Samaria Torres. 2nd place (right poster) went to Rudy Ramos and Rodolfo Sosa. 3rd place (left poster) was awarded to Daniella Puente and Araceli Rodriguez.
State of Our Schools
Continued from page 1

around and support the goals/initiatives of the Academic Plan with the focus on consistent quality teaching and learning in every classroom.

Parent and Community Engagement:
Setting high and clear expectations for parents and community partners; providing new and improved communications and services to help parents be informed and engaged in their child’s education. This includes promoting “vital behaviors”: affirmation of students, attendance, discipline/behavior, school work, help parents to be parents, and reading to students 20 minutes a day. A monthly parent newsletter will be sent home with important information and tips to support and engage parents.

Behavior-Discipline:
Strictly enforcing the Uniform Discipline Code in a “fair, firm, and consistent” manner to ensure there is a safe, healthy, and productive school culture for teaching and learning. Superintendent Neal is recruiting 200 volunteers to be “deputized” and in school to support students and staff.

Customer Service:
Implementing clear, consistent, and uniform customer service expectations and standards to ensure there is a positive culture.

Facilities:
Implementing the “warm, safe, and dry” facility improvement projects, with a new “local first” policy to support locally-owned Grand Rapids businesses. Thanks to the voters and taxpayers of Grand Rapids, GRPS will be investing $20 million over the next five years to tackle the most urgent projects including roofs, boilers, windows, etc.

Extras:
In addition to these major initiatives, Superintendent Neal outlined her responses to the top ten issues from the “listening tour.” Some actions will happen this school year while others are planned for next school year.
- Changing the blended learning rotation
- Eliminating the “H” grade
- Implementing initiatives to address school culture/climate issues (PBIS, strict enforcement of Uniform Discipline Code, customer service, etc.)
- Appointing new leadership to oversee high school scheduling
- Appointing new leadership to oversee hiring, recruiting, retaining talented staff

Listening Tour Results:

What’s Working:
- Institute for Learning (IFL) Instructional Reform Model
- Reading and Math Series
- Use of technology in learning
- Positive Behavior Intervention and Support (PBIS) initiative

What’s Not Working:
- Elective hubs
- Blending learning rotation
- “H” grades/weighted grades
- Lack of electives
- Absence of art/music
- High School scheduling
- Inconsistent use of Uniform Discipline Code
- Human Resources: Hiring, recruiting, and retaining
- Culture
- Lack of alignment of initiatives

You may watch the “State of Our Schools” address on Cable Channel 27, the district website at www.grpublicschools.org, or the district YouTube at www.youtube.com/grpsmychoice.

Bright futures are happening

Children grow up fast and their emotional health is very important. network180 may be able to help with services and support for mental health, substance use disorders, prevention, and developmental disabilities.

Please call the network180 Access Center during normal business hours to find out if you or someone you care about is eligible for services. A simple call can make a big difference.

Call toll free 1.800.749.7720
790 Fuller Avenue NE, Grand Rapids, MI
Please visit: www.network180.org
Mayor Heartwell Reads to Buchanan Students
Mayor George Heartwell visited Ms. Callahan’s Kindergarten class at Buchanan Elementary in January as part of the Mayor’s Book Club. He read the book Perfect Soup, which teaches a lesson about helping others and friendship. A copy of the book was also donated to the Buchanan library.

Kent Hills Teachers Rewarded
Walmart chose Kent Hills as this year’s recipient of its Teacher Recognition Program. Each teacher at the school received $50 to spend on classroom items. The school was nominated by a group of Kent Hills parents who work at Walmart. They stated that they, “have been very touched by everything you do for your students and would like to give a little something back.” Congratulations Kent Hills!

KEC Mayfield Student Praised for his Integrity in GR Press Column
Cory Johnson was featured in The Grand Rapids Press after he found $21 in a used purse he bought for his grandmother and chose to give the money back instead of keeping it. His act of integrity was praised in the article. Photo courtesy of The Grand Rapids Press.

CARE Ballet Performs “Romeo and Juliet” for GRPS Students
The Creative Arts Repertoire Ensemble (CARE) Ballet performed “Romeo and Juliet” for GRPS students on Friday, February 3 at St. Cecilia Music Center. There were two performances for GRPS students, which gave over 1,000 students the opportunity to experience a condensed, age appropriate version of this classic ballet.

Jesus Solis Named Supervisor of Fine Arts and Media
Jesus Solis was named Supervisor of Fine Arts and Media. Mr. Solis has been with the Grand Rapids Public Schools for more than ten years. He served as the principal of Burton Middle School for 5 years and was a consultant with the Michigan Department of Education for 11 years.

GRPS Students Advancing to State in Solo and Ensemble Festivals
Six students from Ottawa Hills High School competed in the Michigan Schools Vocal Music Association (MSVMA) Solo and Ensemble Festival and earned an adjudicated grade of “excellent,” which qualifies them to move on to the state competition, which will be held in April. Nine students from City High School’s Center for Instrumental and Vocal Performance Hub participated in the Michigan School Band and Orchestra Association (MSBOA) Solo and Ensemble Festival. Seven of those students are advancing to the state competition.

Alger Middle School Teacher Featured as FOX-17 Teacher of the Week
In January, Ms. Vanessa Allen, music teacher at Alger Middle School, was selected as a Fox 17 Teacher of the Week. Congratulations Ms. Allen!

Folk Singer Visits Shawnee Park Preschool
Carol Johnson, a Grand Rapids folk singer who has toured internationally, visited students at Shawnee Park Preschool. She was invited to Ms. Steffee’s classes as part of a grant entitled “Let’s Bee Friends.” Students from the hearing impaired program and two kindergarten classes also attended. Ms. Johnson did two performances for students. She played the guitar, keyboard, and banjo and sang about respect, friendship, love, cooperation, and self-esteem. The students had a great time learning her songs and singing and dancing along with Ms. Johnson.

Black History Program
Students from the Ottawa Hills High School Performing Arts Hub presented a city-wide Black History Program on February 22. The program featured singing, African dancing, drumming, poetry, and choral speaking.

Families in Schools of Hope Family Literacy Program Participate in MLK Day of Service
Families who participate in the Schools of Hope Family Literacy Program took part in the annual Martin Luther King, Jr. Day of Service at the Boys and Girls Club of Grand Rapids Youth Commonwealth. The families heard a presentation by the Red Cross on fire safety, which was prepared especially for English Language Learners. They also made sleeping mats using plastic grocery bags for earthquake victims and assembled “comfort kits” for local house fire victims.

Sibley Students Construct Wood Duck Boxes
Thirty 4th and 5th grade students from Sibley Elementary’s LOOP program worked with staff from Ducks Unlimited, the Kent County Parks Foundation, and students from Forest Hills Northern to create and install “duck boxes.” A duck box provides a safe habitat and helps create a local duck population.
Ottawa Hills Student Athletes Participate in National Signing Day

Ottawa Hills High School students Jalen Couch and Donte Carey signed letters of intent on National Signing Day. Jalen will be attending Ferris State University, where he will be playing football. Donte Carey will be attending Grand Valley State University, also to play football.

MLK Essay Contest Winners Presented with Awards at School Board Meeting

Jamarius McBride from Riverside Middle School was awarded the grand prize in this year’s Martin Luther King Jr. Day Essay Contest at a February Board meeting. The annual contest is sponsored by law firm Warner Norcross & Judd. First runner up Kevin O’Neil, second runner up Andruw Sandy, and 20 students receiving honorable mentions were also recognized. Warner Norcross & Judd’s Diversity Partner, Rodney Martin, was at the meeting to hand out the awards.

GRPS Awarded 32 Good Classroom Mini-Grants

The Grand Rapids Community Foundation awarded Grand Rapids Public Schools 32 Good Classroom Mini-Grants. The individual grants ranged from $800 to $5,000. In total, GRPS received over $100,000 in Mini-Grants.

Harrison Park Holds Attendance Bonanza Blast

On Count Day, Harrison Park held a special event to reward students who have had five or fewer absences since the start of school. Elementary students were treated to face painting, carnival style games, jump roping, hula hooping, a magician, and crafts. Middle school students enjoyed a DJ, henna tattoos, board games, cup stacking, and smoothies.

No One Dreams of Being a Dropout.

The vast majority of young students believe they will earn a diploma, but in reality, 25% drop out of high school each year in the WGVU service area alone. They will be robbed of promise, opportunity and a successful future.

The decision to leave school will also impact their communities, resulting in higher crime, unemployment and homelessness.

But it doesn’t have to be that way. WGVU Engage is part of American Graduate: Let’s Make It Happen, a public media initiative to address the high school dropout crisis, made possible by the Corporation for Public Broadcasting (CPB). With your support, we can help students stay on the path to graduation. And help our community address the economic and social effects of this crisis. Visit wgvu.org/graduate to learn more about their progress and how you can help.

If every city does its part, the future will look brighter than ever.

GRPS Highlights - Continued on page 15
Redefining the Classroom

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- www.finaid.org
- www.fafsa.ed.gov
- www.emark.com
- www.nacac.com
- www.collegenet.com
- www.collegereview.com

Non-Public Two-Year and Four-Year Colleges and Universities

Adrian College 800-877-2246 www.adrian.edu
Albion College 800-858-6770 www.albion.edu
Alma College 800-321-ALMA www.alma.edu
Andrews University 800-253-2874 www.andrews.edu
Aquinas College 800-678-9553 www.aquinas.edu
Ave Maria College 856-866-3030 www.avemaria.edu
Baker College of Auburn Hills 888-429-0410 www.baker.edu
Baker College of Cadillac 231-878-3100 www.baker.edu
Baker College of Flint 800-964-4299 www.baker.edu
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Baker College of Owosso 800-879-3797 www.baker.edu
Baker College of Port Huron 810-985-7000 www.baker.edu

Michigan Colleges & Universities

Public Four-Year Colleges and Universities

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Public Community Colleges

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- www.act.org
- www.collegeboard.org
- www.mivhs.org/courses/

Job Search:
- www.careerbuilder.com
- www.monster.com
- www.flipdog.com

NCAA Clearinghouse:
- www.eligibilitycenter.org

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College Search & Preparation, Financial Aid:
- www.collegeplanning.org
- www.petersons.com
- www.finaid.org
- www.fafsa.ed.gov
- www.emark.com
- www.nacac.com
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Dean Transportation is proud to serve the students of the Grand Rapids Public Schools and to be a partner with the Grand Rapids community.

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<td>Cleary College</td>
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<td>College for Creative Studies</td>
<td>800-952-ARTS</td>
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<td>Concordia University</td>
<td>800-253-0680</td>
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<td>William Tyndale College</td>
<td>800-483-0707</td>
<td><a href="http://www.wiliamtyndale.net">www.wiliamtyndale.net</a></td>
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Summer of Success

Helping Students Stay on Track to Graduate

Is your child on track to graduate? Has your child failed one or more classes? Summer school can help!

GRPS is proud to offer a number of opportunities to support students so they can earn the necessary credits to graduate from high school on time.

The State of Michigan has strict graduation requirements that specify which courses are necessary to earn a high school diploma within four years. If a required core course is failed and not recovered, your child may not be eligible to be promoted to the next grade or graduate from high school unless the course is made up this summer.

If your child has failed or received a D in one or more classes, you should strongly consider enrolling in the Summer of Success program. If your child attends, Union, Ottawa, Alger, Ford, or Westwood, then they are eligible for the Summer of Adventure.

You can check your child’s academic status through the “Online Grade Book” at http://earth.grps.k12.mi.us or contact his/her school counselor.

To learn more about the Summer of Success and the Summer of Adventure, contact your school counselor.
Searching for Scholarships

Everyone needs money for college. While searching for it may seem illusive at times, take heart financial assistance is available. It takes a great deal of persistence to search for scholarship monies that are outside the realm of the state and federal governments and colleges and universities. However, possibilities exist for students who know what the search involves and how to maximize the potential for positive results.

Go the Traditional Route First
Upon acceptance to a college, check with the college admissions office about scholarships. Also, check with the college financial aid office for a comprehensive listing of all types of aid the institution has for its students including scholarships offered by the department of the student’s major field of study. Conduct a web search of private foundations as many of them exist for students who know what the potential for positive results. Scholarship Search Services

Scholarship Search Services
Searching for scholarships other than those awarded by the federal government, state government, or colleges and universities is typically a tedious process. It is up to the student to contact the sources sponsoring the scholarships, obtain the application, write the essay, gather the necessary letters of recommendation, and meet the application deadline. The following are tips for conducting a scholarship search:
- Start searching and apply early in their junior year of high school.
- Apply for the scholarships that most fit the student’s talents, skills, achievements, and interests.
- Be organized.
- Be mindful of deadlines and meet them.
- Write the required essay and have someone else read it for clarity and proofread it for grammar and punctuation.
- Follow the process through to completion.

Scholarship Search Web Sites
The following list represents a few of the potentially useful scholarship search web sites where students may conduct a scholarship search. Some of them use the same database of scholarship information, and some of them have links to other financial aid-related sites. Finally, students need to be aware that scholarship search services are business entities, and lending institutions sponsor many of them. Therefore, students may receive information from lending institutions regarding the types of loans they offer. Students are not obligated to respond to any of these notices. Start searching today and follow all the steps toward a successful outcome.

www.michigan.gov/studentaid
www.mappingyourfuture.org
www.uncf.org

Scholarship Opportunities

Plummer Letts Parks Leadership Fund
The Plummer Letts Parks Leadership Fund, under the leadership of Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity, Inc. Eta Nu Lambda chapter - Grand Rapids, Michigan, is looking to award scholarships(s) this year up to $1,000.00. For more information or an application, please contact your child’s counselor. Scholarship submissions are due by May 1, 2012 for consideration.

Inaugural VISIBLE® STUDENTS WITH VISION™ Scholarship
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JUMP START YOUR CAREER TODAY
Get qualified for careers in Health Care, Information Technology or Business.

Don’t waste another day when you could be preparing for a job you’ll love. Short term classes, fast track programs and flexible schedules make it easy to get started. Financial aid is available to those who qualify. But hurry, classes are filling up fast – call today!

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AT THE TOP OF OUR CLASS. Grand Valley is leading the way with professionally relevant academic programs, real-world research opportunities, and outstanding campus facilities. Plus, our students benefit from personalized instruction made possible by small class sizes and dedicated professors. It’s all part of our liberal education foundation that provides a great return on investment and makes Grand Valley a top choice in the Midwest and beyond. gvsu.edu/GRAND | (800) 748-0246

GRASP
Opportunities for Summer Learning

Looking for help to keep your child’s math and reading skills up for the summer? The Grand Rapids Academic Summer Program (GRASP) is the answer. GRASP is a nine-week summer correspondence program in reading and math – grades kindergarten through eighth – that seeks to help students retain skills learned during the school year.

Students complete one lesson a week and mail it in to the GRASP scoring center. Experienced staff members grade and record the lessons and return the results to the students. GRASP students earn medals and certificates for their efforts. We also have added online GRASP for grades 4-8. Parents can also enroll online by going to our website at www.grpublischools.org/grasp.

Grand Rapids public and parochial elementary schools will receive enrollment forms in April from their schools.

Interested parents may also purchase packets for their children from our location at Shawmut Hills Elementary School (2550 Burritt NW) during Open Enrollment Week June 6-8 from 8 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. Room 105.

Questions? Please call the GRASP office at 616-819-2545.

“Best in the Midwest.”
– The Princeton Review

AT THE TOP OF OUR CLASS. Grand Valley is leading the way with professionally relevant academic programs, real-world research opportunities, and outstanding campus facilities. Plus, our students benefit from personalized instruction made possible by small class sizes and dedicated professors. It’s all part of our liberal education foundation that provides a great return on investment and makes Grand Valley a top choice in the Midwest and beyond. gvsu.edu/GRAND | (800) 748-0246

MindShare 2012  |  Tues., April 24
at DeVos Place

Visit www.grsaf.org or call (616) 988-5430
for more information

Brighter Together

GRAPHS HIGHLIGHTS
Center for Economicology Students Collaborate with Mayor

The 6th graders at the Center for Economicology are engaged in their curriculum of sustainability and recently had the opportunity to collaborate with the Mayor of Grand Rapids, George Heartwell, on a City of Grand Rapids sustainability initiative. The City of GR unveiled plans to install electric car charging stations throughout downtown to help promote electric car use in Grand Rapids. The 6th graders were able to meet with the Mayor for the big press release and share their learning with him. Each student wrote a research paper on the subject and the papers are displayed in City Hall! Students learned the importance of city policy and community initiatives in pushing our industries, population and culture toward sustainability.

Harrison Park Students Visit GVSU

Last fall, President Haas personally invited students from Harrison Park School to visit him at Grand Valley State University. In February, 12 student leaders from 6th through 8th grade took him up on that offer. They began their day at GVSU by meeting President Haas in his boardroom. He connected with the students by sharing personal information that helped them see that he grew up in a household not much different from most of their own. After meeting with President Haas, the students listened to a presentation by the admissions office and went on a scavenger hunt that ended at Fresh Food Company, where they were treated to lunch. Their visit was part of the Challenge Scholars program, which is funded by the Grand Rapids Community Foundation and prepares students for college by providing social and academic support from an early age. The Challenge Scholars program is currently at Harrison Park, and will be expanding to Westwood Middle School and Union High School.

“Fair, Firm, and Consistent”

Enforcement of School Discipline Code

Have you ever seen or read the GRPS Uniform Discipline Code, also known as the “Student Policy Handbook”? If not, it’s time to dust off that copy your child received or log on to the district website and download the handbook, because there is a renewed focus within GRPS on the strict enforcement of the school discipline code.

One of the top issues that emerged from Superintendent Neal’s “listening tour” was around discipline and behavior and the need for fair, firm, and consistent implementation of our Uniform Discipline Code.

“The district must establish and maintain clear expectations and high standards for all students and adults in order to achieve our desired academic outcomes,” said Teresa Weatherall Neal, Interim Superintendent. “I want to make it clear that disruptive behavior and disciplinary issues will no longer be tolerated. Students must know what is or is not acceptable behavior. And then we must enforce it.”

In order to ensure consistency and uniformity in implementation, the district is organizing professional development and training around the Uniform Discipline Code including in person and online training. The district is also organizing student and parent meetings to share information about expectations and the school code. Students, parents, staff, and volunteers are asked to give particular study to the state laws outlined in the Code of Conduct:

- PA 250 – Arson
- PA 250 – Criminal Sexual Conduct
- PA 250 – Dangerous Weapon
- PA 104 and PA 451 – Physical Assault
- PA 103 – Snap Suspensions
- PA 104 – Physical and Verbal Assault of Staff

A copy of the Uniform Discipline Code in English and Spanish is available for download on the home page of the district website at www.grpublicschools.org. A power point and training video is on the website’s video player and the district YouTube at www.youtube.com/grpsmychoice.
Make Summer Matter – Believe to Become Summer Learning Academy

College campus visits, adventurous outings, and fun field trips are in store for nearly 1,000 Grand Rapids Public Schools students who live in the “Hope Zones” and enroll in the I Believe I Become 2012 summer learning experiences. Check them out!

**Middle School Summer Learning Experience:** Students can choose their summer adventures to explore and expand experiences, including innovation, art, blogging, video creation, music making, stage production, science, sports, Craig’s Cruisers, water sports, college visits, amusement parks, and lots more.

**High School Summer Career Experience:** If students are interested in a career in health care, business, technology, science, education, human services, engineering, design and the arts, environment, finance, law, or psychology, then check this out for eight weeks this summer AND earn up to $900 while you learn!

**Additional Programs for Pre-K through 6th Grade:** Students can discover a world of opportunity, explore new ideas and experience the fun of learning new things like the Shedd Aquarium in Chicago or chocolate games! There are opportunities to earn rewards and prizes, make your own video, visit local colleges and a giant waterslide, and make friends that will last a lifetime of adventure!

To learn more or to obtain an enrollment form, visit www.ibelieveibecome.org or contact your school counselor. Some restrictions may apply.

6th Grade: Students can discover a world of opportunity, explore new ideas and experience the fun of learning new things like the Shedd Aquarium in Chicago or chocolate games! There are opportunities to earn rewards and prizes, make your own video, visit local colleges and a giant waterslide, and make friends that will last a lifetime of adventure!

To learn more or to obtain an enrollment form, visit www.ibelieveibecome.org or contact your school counselor. Some restrictions may apply.

**JUNE 18 - JULY 26, 2012**

**Middle School Highlights:**
- Field Trip Adventures to Chicago, Detroit, and other exciting destinations
- African Safari, Gun Powder Empires, Science on Wheels, & more!
- Course Recovery

**Sessions:** Monday – Thursday
Breakfast: 7:30 a.m. to 8:00 a.m. | Session: 8:00 a.m. to 12:00 Noon

**High School Highlights:**
- College/University Exploration Visits
- Academic Acceleration
- Field Trip Adventures to Chicago, Detroit, and other exciting destinations

**Sessions:** Monday – Thursday
Breakfast: 7:30 a.m. – 8:00 a.m. | Lunch: 11:00 a.m. – 11:45 a.m. | Session 1: 8:00 a.m. – 11:00 a.m. | Session 2: 11:45 a.m. – 2:45 p.m.

**Contact Your School Counselor for More Details Today!**

**IMPORTANT:** Your child may be eligible for the “Believe to Become Summer Learning Academy.” Ask your child’s counselor if he/she is eligible. If your child is eligible, you MUST complete BOTH the Summer of Exploration & Adventure Registration Form AND the Believe to Become 2012 High/Middle School Summer Learning Academy Pre-Registration. A packet of information and registration forms are available through your child’s counselor.

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For many people, it’s simply a briefcase. For Clark Hill attorneys and our staff of professionals, it represents a toolkit of diverse resources, integrated networks, and talented teams—all focused on anticipating and responding to your needs in an ever-changing world.

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800.949.3124 | clarkhill.com
GRPS Receives Grant to Expand Summer Food Program to 5,300 recipients

GRPS Nutrition Services Director Paul Baumgartner announced at a press conference the expansion of a pilot program that provides families in Grand Rapids with an additional $60 per month in food benefits in June, July, and August. The program was created to provide low-income families with additional help in obtaining nutritious foods for their children in the summer months, when they are not in school, to reduce summer hunger and improve food security. The program is funded by a grant from the US Department of Agriculture (USDA). In 2011, GRPS selected 2,500 students to receive the additional benefits based on a random lottery. In order to be placed in the lottery, students had to be eligible for free or reduced lunch, and their parent had to return a consent form. In 2012, that number will grow to 5,300. A letter and consent form explaining the program was sent to eligible families. Families who wished to be considered for the program had to return the consent form to their child’s school. Students who were enrolled in the program last year and still meet eligibility requirements will remain in it for this summer, as long as they returned the consent form by the deadline. The additional students will once again be selected via a random lottery system. Families that are selected will be notified in May. Additional grants from the USDA will extend the program to other Michigan school districts, including Bay-Arenac Intermediate School District; Clare-Gladwin Regional Education Service District; Midland County Education Service Agency, and Tuscola Intermediate School District. Michigan and Texas were the only two states chosen by the USDA to test the WIC modeled program. Three other states are testing new food stamp and bridge card systems for the USDA.

Students Create Sugarbush Salad

Each spring, the students at the Blandford Environmental Education Program (BEEP) take part in an annual tradition. They gather around a Sugar Maple tree (or as they call it, a sugarbush) and learn how to collect the sap that the Sugar Maple tree has stored through the winter. Once the sugary sap has been gathered, BEEP students then process the sap by boiling it to create the end-product, Blandford Maple Syrup.

While on a tour at the Grand Rapids Public Schools Nutrition Services Center, BEEP students were given an opportunity to create a school lunch of their choice. The students developed a very creative salad using an ingredient they are very familiar with – maple syrup! With the focus on incorporating this seasonal ingredient, the students decided to feature a salad topped with maple syrup-glazed chicken, calling it Sugarbush Salad. The salad was served for lunch on March 14th with a Maple Syrup on Saturday, March 24, 2012 from 9:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m. for the annual Sugarbush Festival.

Sugarbush Maple Glaze Recipe

**INGREDIENTS**

- Apple juice 2 cups
- Maple syrup 1 cup
- Pumpkin pie spice ½ tsp.
- Dijon mustard 2 tsp.
- Chicken, diced 1 lb.
- Chicken, diced
- Chicken, diced
- Chicken, diced

**DIRECTIONS**

- Preheat oven to 350°.
- In a saucepan on medium-high heat, boil apple juice until it is reduced by half.
- Add maple syrup and continue to boil for 5 minutes.
- Turn off heat and stir in pumpkin pie spice and Dijon mustard.
- Coat chicken with maple glaze and bake at 350° for 20 minutes or until chicken is no longer pink.
- Serve maple-glazed chicken over a bed of fresh salad greens or hot whole-grain rice. Yields 6-8 servings

Grand Re-Opening June 5, 2012 at 3 p.m.

The Paul I. Phillips gym at 415 Franklin SE will open once again for after-school and other youth programs in our community.
All throughout the city, the Grand Rapids School District has included a variety of playgrounds alongside their schools for school and community use. Many of the playgrounds were updated during the previous 2004 Bond Construction and others are slated for remodel due to the generous donations of community partners and State of Michigan grant awards.

All GRPS school playgrounds must meet State regulations and undergo annual inspections by the GRPS Facilities and Operations Department. The State of Michigan safety standards for playgrounds continue to change and improve the safety of play areas for the community’s children.

Grand Rapids Public Schools also partners with the City of Grand Rapids to provide outdoor community parks. A number of the school parks areas are maintained by the City and Schools, according to a long standing Joint Use Agreement.

This article would not be complete without a huge “Thank You” to the hundreds of community volunteers that join in every year to spruce up our playgrounds and outdoor sites. Get out this summer, and show your appreciation of everyone’s hard work, by enjoying one of the 37 neighborhood school playgrounds, playfields, or parks.

Student Advancement Foundation Supports GRPS Elementary Fitness Programs

The Grand Rapids Student Advancement Foundation (SAF) hopes more elementary school students will have the opportunity to get moving and be active as a result of its latest partnership with Grand Rapids Public Schools (GRPS). The SAF’s board of directors approved funds to support elementary fitness through basketball, track, and cross country programs for all GRPS elementary schools.

The funds will cover student participation fees, t-shirts, insurance, and event staff. In addition, the fee for families to attend the sporting events will be reduced or eliminated. The track and cross country program will be available for students in Kindergarten through 5th grade, while basketball will be available to students in 3rd through 5th grades.

In describing the program’s focus and objectives, Kurt Johnson, Director of K-12 Athletics, said, “This provides opportunities for younger students to engage in regular sessions of physical activity beyond the P.E. class time that can be interest-driven.”

SAF Executive Director Susan Heartwell said, “Physical wellness is one of the SAF’s five impact areas because of how important it is to children’s overall health, which in turn affects academic achievement. This program aligns perfectly with our goal: to get children active and keep them healthy.”

More information on the programs, including enrollment information and dates, is available at each elementary school.

The Libraries & Laptops program provides a laptop for you to use at one of 5 libraries in Grand Rapids: Main, Seymour, Van Belkum, West Leonard, and Yankee Clipper. Check out www.grpl.org for hours and locations.

It’s easy to get started! You just need your valid GRPS student ID card and the library staff can help you sign in.

For more info email Alyssa at alyssa@grsaf.org

The Grand Rapids Student Advancement Foundation

Attention GRPS Students!!
You’ve Got Access!!

Brought to You By:

The Grand Rapids Public Schools
Spring Sports

High School – All High School sports started on March 12, 2012.
  – Baseball
  – Girls Soccer
  – Girls Tennis
  – Boys Golf
  – Softball
  – Track

Middle School – All Middle School spring sports begin on April 9th, 2012
  – Baseball*
  – Softball*
  – Girls Soccer*
  – Track
  – Coed Soccer (K-8 schools only)

*Base middle schools only

Family of School Meetings

May 6th 2012 - Parent Meeting for Union Family of Schools in Union Auditorium
May 16th 2012 - Parent Meeting for Creston Family of Schools in Creston Auditorium
May 16th 2012 - Parent Meeting for Ottawa Hills Family of Schools in Ottawa Hills Auditorium

For schedules and additional information go to www.grpublicschools.org/athletics

Spring Sports

Special Events Calendar
April 14th 2012 – Bob Eubanks Track Invitational at Housman Field
May 12th 2012 – 18th Annual Redhawk Golf Outing – A Fun 4 Person Scramble - For more information contact the Union Athletic Office at 819-3168
May 12th 2012– Mickey Stanley Baseball and Softball Tournament 9 a.m.
May 22nd 2012 – West Michigan Meet of Champions at Housman Field
June 2nd 2012 – MHSAA Division 2 - Track State Final

Free Admission for all spectators, so bring the whole family.

Sportsmanship Corner

As a spectator of interscholastic athletics, please consider the time and effort that each of these young participants have put forth to represent his/her school. 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!

Any parents, family or community member interested in volunteering your time to support GRPS student athletes, please contact the volunteer office at 819-2131. This spring, we will gladly use assistance with elementary track and Mileage Club. Please be aware you will need to fill out our volunteer application before assisting with any programs.

Calling all Volunteers

GRPS Offers Great After-School Programs

A C A D E M I C S

The LOOP program extends beyond the school day with additional academic support for students.
  • Strengthens concepts and ideas in the classroom
  • Engages students with elements of “disguised learning”
  • Exposes students to new and exciting opportunities after school
  • Connects with District initiatives in Math and Literacy
  • Offers fun Fall and Summer activities including:
    • Field trips
    • Music
    • Arts
    • Service learning
    • Life skills
    • Sewing
    • Cooking
  
LOOP academics are available, but not limited to 3 days per week during programming and led primarily by certified teaching staff.

A T H L E T I C S

LOOP partners with the GRPS athletic department to enhance the middle school athletic experience.
  • Provides academic support to middle school athletes
  • Offers fun Fall and Summer activities including:
    • Swimming
    • Field trips
    • Sports
    • Health and fitness

A C A D E M I C S

LOFT is a new high school program that offers academic support for teens and opportunities for college and career exploration.
  • Prepares students for the ACT and other standardized tests
  • Gives students access to a variety of community vendors and partners for an enriched career and educational experience
  • Fosters essential life skills through community involvement

A N D R E M E M B E R . . .

• Nutritious snacks and drinks are always provided.
• Transportation is provided to full time participants. (some restrictions may apply)
• LOOP and LOFT provide a safe environment supervised and structured by caring adults.

For more information or the nearest LOOP or LOFT location nearest you, please call 616.819.2165.
Continued from page 4

GRPS Highlights

**GRPS Headlines**

**Breakfast at Buchanan**

Given the overwhelming evidence that breakfast boosts brainpower, Evelyn Ortiz, Principal at Buchanan Elementary, has made it a personal mission to increase the number of students eating breakfast at her school every morning. Ms. Ortiz frequently takes time to stand outside the school and talk to parents about how economical it is to let their students eat at school.

**GRPS Students Make Valentines for Veterans**

Grand Valley State University students partnered with the GRPS Arts Department to work on a special project called “Valentines for Veterans.” The GVSU students collected donations of art supplies and brought them into three GRPS classrooms to help the students create and decorate valentines for veterans and overseas soldiers.

**French Students Visit City High Middle**

Twenty one French foreign exchange students spent Valentine’s Day at City High Middle School shadowing students as part of their annual exchange day. They observed the students in class, ate with them in the lunchroom, had a special dessert reception with students from City’s French classes, and played board games to work on conversing socially.

**Ottawa Hills JROTC Participates in Academic and Leadership Competition**

Students in Ottawa Hills High School’s JROTC program were chosen to advance to level II in the JROTC Leadership Symposium and Academic Bowl (JLAB). The team competed against 1,345 teams from around the world to advance to level II in an online competition, Zero Hour Threat.

**Sherwood Park Holds “Jump Into Healthy Fun” Event**

Sherwood Park held “Jump Into Healthy Fun” in February. Students made whole wheat English muffin pizzas, drank fruit smoothies, learned about healthy beverage choices, and talked about the importance of eating breakfast.

**Westwood Middle Performances**

In February, Westwood students put on two special performances. Mr. Pullion presented a Black History experience for the staff, students, and some of the parents from Westwood, which included the Ottawa Hills Choir, the Westwood Choir, singing, skits, dancing, speeches, and trivia. Ms. Isaacson led the Westwood Choir and Band in a concert for the 4th and 5th grade students from Shawmut Elementary.

**City High Student Recognized as Finalist in Essay Challenge**

Adrian Hernandez, a 10th grader at City High Middle, was chosen as a finalist in the President Gerald R. Ford Essay Challenge. This annual competition is open to West Michigan high school students. This year’s theme was “the meaning of leadership today.” Adrian’s essay was chosen out of more than 400 entries to be one of the 18 finalists. Congratulations Adrian!

**5th Graders Attend GR Symphony**

All GRPS 5th graders had the opportunity to attend a special performance at the Grand Rapids Symphony, where they were introduced to instrument families, the role of the conductor, and music from significant historical periods. Schools were encouraged to work with their art instructor to create art for a slide show during a pre-selected piece in the program.

**Students Develop Reading Skills Using Menus**

Ms. Sarge, a first grade teacher at Covell Elementary, has found an interesting way to help her students learn to read. She takes the monthly menu from nutrition services, enlarges it to 400% its normal size, and cuts apart the days. Each morning, the menu for the day is posted with syllable dots and vowel markings. Her class looks forward to reading the menu each day.

**The Ocean Doctor Visits Zoo School**

In early February, the Ocean Doctor, who has been a guest on shows like “60 Minutes” and “Good Morning America”, visited Zoo School as part of his trip to Grand Rapids to speak to the World Affairs Council of Western Michigan. He talked to students about how little of the ocean has been explored and what some of the big issues facing the oceans are. TV show 8 West came to the presentation and did a live segment from Zoo School.

**Riverside Staff Give Back**

Riverside Middle School staff served at the Trinity Community Kitchen on the Northwest side of Grand Rapids on February 16. A group of staff have volunteered twice per year for the last three years to serve dinner at the community kitchen, which serves a hot meal to people every Thursday night.
DTE Energy’s Home Energy Consultation program is now in your community to help you save energy and take control of your energy costs.

At no cost to you, our energy consultants will visit your home to provide a personalized energy assessment that will evaluate the energy efficiency of your home. The best part? You don’t have to dramatically change the way you live. Our consultants will make energy savings recommendations and discuss ways that can reduce energy use and help you lower your energy costs. They’ll also install the following FREE products*:

- **ENERGY STAR compact fluorescent light bulbs** – use 75 percent less energy than incandescent bulbs and can last 10 times longer

- **Water-saving faucet aerators for kitchen and bath** – Reduce water use without lowering water pressure

- **Water-saving showerheads** – Save one to three gallons of hot water per minute, which reduces water-heating costs by 30 percent

- **Water heater pipe wrap** – Reduce heat loss and increase water temperature in your pipes, which will save on water-heating costs

We're all looking for ways to not only better manage our household costs, but make a difference in our world. It's easy to do both by finding simple but effective ways to reduce the amount of energy and water we use.

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For more energy saving tips, visit: dteenergy.com/saveenergy

* Energy-saving products installed are dependent upon DTE Energy account type.