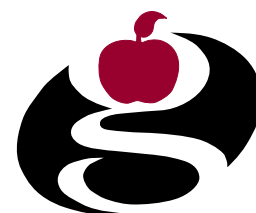




A publication of the Grandville Public Schools Board of Education



The Communicator



www.gpsbulldogs.org | NOVEMBER 2014

Welcoming Our New Teachers

One of the most important responsibilities we have and important decisions we make is the hiring of new staff to work alongside our students each day. For the sake of our students, we have a duty to find superstars, and we are confident these new teachers are off to a great start! They bring a mix of enthusiasm and experience, and it is always exciting to bring in new energy and ideas into our school district. This year's hires are undoubtedly very special.

Clockwise from top left:

Stephanie Johnson, intervention specialist at West. Ms. Johnson received her bachelor's degree from Aquinas.

Brittany Austin, K-6 ELL. Ms. Austin received her bachelor's degree from Grand Valley State University.

Ashlee Doornbos, world history at GHS. Ms. Doornbos received her bachelor's degree from Grand Valley State University.

Amanda Brondyke, autism classroom at GHS. Ms. Brondyke received her bachelor's degree from Grand Valley State University.

Joel Kleinsasser, math and Spanish at GHS. Mr. Kleinsasser received his bachelor's degree from Calvin College.

Eric Stiegel, special education/algebra and football coach at GHS. Mr. Stiegel received his bachelor's degree from Michigan State University.

Richard Clark, special education and baseball coach at GHS. Mr. Clark graduated from Central Michigan with his bachelor's degree.

Not shown: Nicole Dulmes, Spanish and ESL at GMS; Derek Johnson, elementary art; and Rachel Niewiada, elementary vocal music.



New District Website Unleashed

Times have changed, and so have we: You can now find us at www.gpsbulldogs.org. With its clean design, vivid colors and slideshows, the site is dynamic, much like the people and students of the district.

Because the content management system has constant feature enhancements and upgrades, the site won't become antiquated. It's mobile ready, and each school has its own site and calendar. When school is canceled or delayed, the district marquee will be updated, and announcements will be added under the "What's New?" area. Each school has a contact tab with the phone numbers you need. With the click of a button, you can email a teacher through each building's staff directory. If you get lost, our logo at the top will always lead you back to the homepage.

Throughout the year, we'll continuously add more content, photos, videos and forms so that information is available at your fingertips. We look forward to delivering the most engaging site possible!



From the Superintendent

HAPPY 50TH BIRTHDAY, GRANDVILLE MIDDLE SCHOOL!

As mentioned in our last newsletter, our middle school will experience a massive makeover when this school year adjourns. The project involves enhancing secure entry areas, relocating and expanding the cafeteria, constructing new large group instructional areas similar to the project rooms at Grandville High School, building a new kitchen, and then relocating the music classrooms to accommodate the new cafeteria space (please see the architectural rendering and floor plan on this page).

As I think of the improvements we are about to undertake at the middle school, I'm reminded that this month is the 50th anniversary of that school facility! On Thursday, October 29, 1964, Grandville High School, which is of course what the building was used for at that time, had its dedication ceremony.

The program from the ribbon-cutting ceremony indicates that the total contract cost for the 134,500 square foot high school came to \$1.6 million, but with the pool, furnishings, and site work the total was a little over \$2 million. The facility was originally intended to accommodate up to 1,200 students in grades 10-12, with the ability to expand at the southwest and southeast corners of the structure. Those additions were constructed later.

Looking at the yearbook from 1964-65, not much has really changed regarding the physical facility in the last 50 years. The aerial photo shown above provides a glimpse of the building and site under construction as it neared completion in 1964. Imagine: This school was built in the days prior to I-196 coming through town. Chicago Drive, in the distance within the aerial photograph, was the major route to downtown Grand Rapids. The driving loop in front of the school did not exist, only a sidewalk, and the southeast and southwest additions were not in the original structure. The bleachers at Davies Field were not even installed yet, and the homes behind the school on Aaron, Mohave, and Choctaw had not yet been developed.

The school structure has served us very well for the past 50 years, but it is time for an upgrade and some remodeling. We are confident that the additions and renovations we are preparing to make at the end of this school year will also stand the test of time and be something we are all proud of 50 years from now when the school celebrates its 100th anniversary.

School Board Member Elections

Due to changes made in election law a few years ago, board of education elections now occur during the even-year November general election cycle. Grandville school board members serve six-year terms beginning with January 1st following the November election.

On Tuesday, November 4, four candidates will be on the ballot for three seats on the board of education. Incumbents Barb Palmer and Rob Blitchok will be on the ballot along with Mike Moll and Bob Persky. I encourage you to read more about these individuals on the following page.

Meanwhile, I would like to thank outgoing board member Dean Vredevoogd for his service on the board. Mr. Vredevoogd has worked tirelessly during his tenure on the board to make Grandville a better place for our children and our community. His governance, vision, and dedication are greatly appreciated!

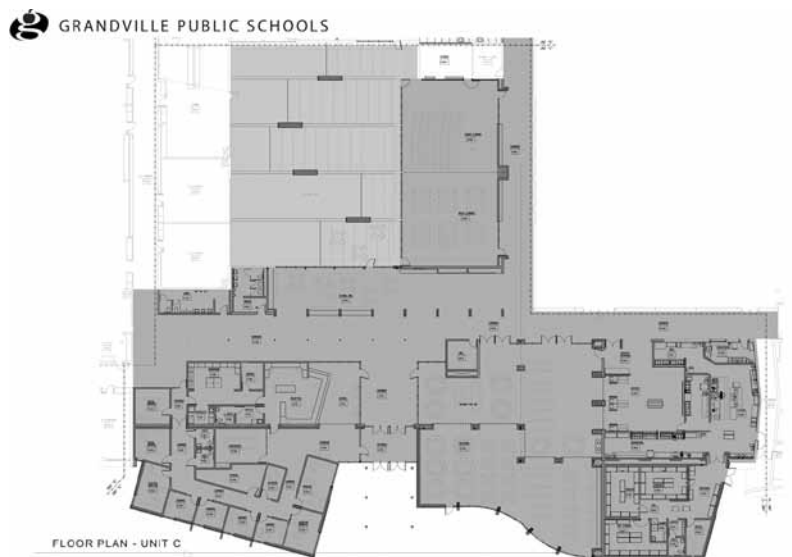


Aerial photo, 1964



EAST EXTERIOR ADDITION [CAFETERIA + ADMINISTRATION] - NORTHEAST VIEW

GMS conceptual design



GMS floor plan

A handwritten signature in black ink, belonging to Ron Caniff, the Superintendent. The signature is stylized and fluid, written in a cursive-like script.

Ron Caniff
Superintendent

Board of Education Election

From a field of four candidates, voters will select three members for the Grandville School Board in November's general election. Each position is for a six-year term that will end in 2020. Please review the responses that each candidate provided especially for this issue of *The Communicator*, and please remember to vote on Tuesday, Nov. 4. As a driving force behind the district, board members play a critical role in the direction of Grandville Public Schools; we are grateful for each candidate's willingness to serve.

**Indicates incumbent.*

Robert J. Blitchok*

Why are you interested in continuing to serve on the board?

The Grandville school district is outstanding, and I want to continue to be a leader in the district. I have a vested interest in ensuring that our district provides a great educational experience for students. I have four children attending Grandville schools and my wife Julie and I are products of Grandville schools. I believe that Grandville is a wonderful place to live and raise a family, and our strong school district is at the heart of this great community. To put it simply, I love Grandville!



What qualities would you bring to the board?

With a broad work background in education and finance, I have the experience and skills necessary to make sound policy and financial decisions for our district. My educational background is broad as well. I have a BA from the University of Michigan, an MBA from Western Michigan University, and a Juris Doctor from Wayne State University Law School. I am an experienced educator and administrator, and I bring a students-first focus. It has been an honor to serve the Grandville community as a school board member, and I hope to continue in this role.

Michael Moll

Why are you interested in serving on the board?

I am very interested in serving on the Grandville Board of Education for two reasons. First, I have three children in the district (12-year-old daughter, 10-year-old son, and an 8-year-old daughter) and I am very vested in regard to their education and the education of all the Grandville children. Second, I assisted in the last bond millage and was really satisfied with the community spirit and want to continue in making Grandville the best district possible.



What qualities would you bring to the board?

Integrity, honesty, leadership, and hopefully, a fresh perspective that builds consensus and teamwork. At the end of the day, it is all about the children, and that perspective is most important in my opinion.

Barbara Palmer*

Why are you interested in continuing to serve on the board?

I want to be involved with Grandville Public Schools. I'm drawn to the challenge of working to keep our schools the top-rated public school in Michigan. I believe a strong school builds a strong community. I want to be a part of that!



What qualities would you bring to the board?

Knowledge

I have been well prepared to do the job of school board trustee. I've acquired numerous hours of continuing education in topics ranging from school finance, laws and policies to responsibilities of the school district and its board members.

Leadership

Over my two terms, I've taken on leadership positions as an officer of the Board. I have seven years experience with the past two years as Board President. I've faced times of great concern and great pride and lead with the lens of what's best for our kids. I've built positive relationships with fellow board members and the Superintendent.

Approachable

I'm open to hearing from the district's families, students and staff members. I think it's an important quality to have when making policy and setting the strategic direction of the schools. It is open conversation and understanding that moves organizations forward.

I'm honored to have served with the wonderful people who represent the Grandville schools community.



Bob Persky

Why are you interested in serving on the board?

I taught in the Grandville School District for 25 years. My wife got her first and only teaching position with Grandville and retired after 31 years with the district. I want to give something back to the district and community for giving my family such a wonderful opportunity and career. Our son graduated from Grandville High School in 2003. He received a great education and had many opportunities to participate in extra and co-curricular activities.

I want to ensure that today's students and future students have the same opportunities that my son had. I want to help Grandville continue to move forward as we tackle issues such as keeping up with technology and making sound financial decisions while offering the best possible educational experience for our children.

What qualities would you bring to the board?

I have the time, energy, and flexibility needed to fulfill the duties required of a school board member. I'm passionate about the Grandville School District. I support our teachers, administrators, and support staff, and value their expertise and input. I understand the socio-economic issues and educational challenges facing Grandville's classroom teachers. I built lasting relationships with students, parents, and Grandville school employees during my 25 years as a Grandville band director.

Anatomy of an EMT

Grandville continues to be one of only a few districts in Michigan to offer emergency medical technician coursework. Student Lindsey LeQuia, pictured far left, had this to say about her recent dissection lesson: "The EMT students loved and appreciated this hands-on experience and working with lab partners on the heart and lung dissection of a pig! We discovered how to use different kinds of airways to ventilate patients, and we also cut open the heart to study the four chambers and the different valves."



We've Got M@il

"Mr. Blevins has been both a teacher and a coach to me for several years. I consider him to be a mentor and can only attempt to follow in his footsteps."

~Student Corey Kroll

"Not only does Mr. Dudka bring his enthusiasm and passion for teaching to the classroom every day, his letter of recommendation embodies this attitude and is the perfect missing puzzle piece to my otherwise incomplete college application."

~Student Ethan Lee

A Good Book Never Goes Out of Style

District-Wide Push to Foster the Love of Reading

Sixth-grade students at Cummings Elementary chose their first book of the year their very first day of reading class. Due to their classrooms being fully stocked with the latest and greatest reads for middle grade students, everyone was able to get what they wanted, even though the school's library wasn't open yet.



Mrs. Clark's reading zone

"What are you in the mood for?" asks Katie Clark, sixth-grade reading and writing workshop teacher. If a student doesn't know, she will ask them what their most recent favorite book or movie was to find them a book in their preferred genre. The sixth-grade team has committed to 30 minutes of self-selected reading each day; they call this time "Reading Zone." Students sprawl out on bean bags, bungee chairs, carpet squares and even kick up feet as they lean back in their chairs. For 30 minutes every day, they immerse themselves in their books. At home, they are also expected to read 30 minutes every weekday (which is their only reading homework). Students have a goal of reading 40 books each by the end of year. "I'm going to try for 40 books this year; I've already read three, and when I've finished 'Fault of Our Stars' soon, it'll be four!" stated Piper Buck, sixth-grade student from Brenda Travis' homeroom.



Mrs. Mahoney creates life-long readers

As part of a technique known as "Notice & Note," sixth-grade students are often found with a stack of sticky notes stuck on the inside cover of the books they are reading. "Students are learning to spot certain signposts of a story that help them to more deeply understand what they're reading," explains Clark. As students read, they might come to a point where an older, respected character talks to the younger main character; this is a "Words of the Wiser" moment. Students stop and take note to develop their deeper understanding of the story's theme or conflict, sticking that note on the page of their book to be incorporated in discussion and journal writing later.

Tweens aren't the only ones delving into reading in the district.

Ann Mahoney, GHS English teacher, says, "Continuing with the work done by middle school language arts teachers, many high school teachers are creating classroom libraries to encourage our high school students to read more. Our hope is to not only have the appropriate books for the reluctant readers but also to be able to provide challenging choices for our avid ones. In many classrooms, reading time is built into daily instruction, and we have seen a significant increase in library circulation. It is crucial our students read a great deal in order to not only be prepared for university level work but also to be life-long readers."

Probing the Past

Wanting to expose his students to a variety of reading genres, fourth-grade teacher Nathan Peltz recently introduced legends, medieval times and nonfiction text. After they used their Chromebooks to research knights and the Middle Ages, the children presented the information they learned to their classmates. Peltz made the topic interesting to all students, no matter their learning style, by presenting real chainmail armor to them. They also researched authentic heraldic symbols and created shields that represented each student's character traits.



Homecoming



Congrats to Caleb Pokora and Bella Buck, 2014 homecoming king and queen! Photo credit: Jenn Bellgraph



At the homecoming game, the RoboDawgs debuted a new robot with a cannon capable of launching foam footballs more than 300 feet.



GHS teachers Adam Lancto and Charlie Kleinheksel



GHS teachers Stephanie Swartz and Kara Doyle

Baseball Player Earns Northwestern Scholarship

Aspiring Major League Baseball player Jake Garbarino recently committed to play baseball at Northwestern University. The senior says, "I am very honored to have been offered a scholarship to play Big Ten baseball as a catcher at such a prestigious university."



"After playing 10 years of travel baseball for Diamonds Baseball, being a three-year varsity player and being academically focused in the honors program at GHS since I was a freshman, I had the qualifications needed to be considered as a baseball player. I am one of five new recruits they will be adding in 2015."

Jake drew inspiration from John Vander Wal, his long-time coach and a former MLB player. Vander Wal encouraged Jake to feel the "baseball dream," and now he hopes to show children they can achieve their goals, too.

The senior will major in business economics and hopes to own his own business after getting some experience in business finance.

We've Got
M@il

"Mrs. Swartz is always very helpful. She is very patient with me, even when I ask her a ton of questions! She makes me want to strive to be the best I can and incorporate Spanish in my every day life."

~Student Breanna Greiner

"Don't stress the small stuff!" I learned this quote from Mrs. LaRoche. She taught me to stay positive. She always knows what to say to make someone feel better. She always found the time to help me when I was confused. She invites me to help or do stuff with her. She makes me feel involved. She always has a smile on her face when the times are rough and tries to make others do the same by saying her special quote that makes me stay positive. She makes me feel that there's more to life than just being negative all the time. Ever since she told me that quote I've been a lot more positive towards school and my future. Mrs. LaRoche has inspired me the most."

~Student Darien Burgos

GHS Grad Shows at ArtPrize

Jim Lonergan graduated in 2008 from GHS, and since then, his career ambitions have come to fruition. Now working at an architectural firm in Chicago, he feels fortunate to have found a job in his field directly after graduating from the Illinois Institute of Technology in 2013. The icing on the cake is that he showed a piece entitled “Skyline in Red” at ArtPrize this month.

Lonergan has this to say about how he achieved his goals: “There were many teachers throughout my Grandville education that helped me out along the way. The technical drawing, computer drafting and art classes in high school were obviously helpful. But I’ve always enjoyed learning and I always appreciated the teachers who gave me room to explore and discover new things, whether that was new books in elementary school or the songs we played in band.”

His ArtPrize piece is originally from a photo he took at Ah-Nab-Awen Park. The architect says, “I’ve been experimenting with a number of images from multiple cities, including Chicago, where I reside. Part of my piece results from an interest in the different colors and textures that are found in an urban space. I then isolate the colors and textures and make separate layers on the image and work towards having multiple layers and a new sense of depth through layering on the picture.”

View his piece in full color at artprize.org. Interested buyers may contact jimlonergan@gmail.com.



“Skyline in Red”

We've Got
M@il

A New Era in Education

The teachers of Grandville would like to sincerely thank the community for fulfilling the 1:1 initiative. In September, all K-3 students received iPads to use in the classroom. Pictured on right, Mrs. Madden’s second-grade students are working on place value on their iPads and finding new ways to extend their learning.



All of the iPads have apps that enhance the curriculum. Jason O’Callaghan, third-grade teacher at Century Park, rattled off examples of uses: “My class most recently used the iPads to take the MAP test, but we also use them for TenMarks math assignments and assessments, Raz-Kids guided reading, dice and calculator apps for math group work and topic research using Safari.”

Teachers are reporting higher levels of engagement because these tools allow students to instantly create presentations, defend their work, collaborate on projects, perform research and work at their own pace. During this time of transformation in the K-12 landscape, Grandville educators are thrilled to ensure all students have the skills necessary for the 21st century.

Department of Education Recognition

In September, the Michigan Department of Education notified Central Elementary and Century Park Learning Center that they have been identified as Reward schools. Because of their academic accomplishments, the state asked the principals of both elementary buildings to share the secrets behind their success with other schools across the state. Congratulations to both schools!

Principal Michelle Carter says, “Due to the collaborative culture at Central Elementary, we have been able to use a problem solving process to analyze data over the past five years to provide students the academic and behavioral supports needed to be successful.”

Volleyball Team Raises \$4000

Breast cancer has affected too many lives in Grandville, and with that knowledge, the GHS varsity volleyball players took aim at the disease. The team recently hosted Rockford for the second annual Dig Pink volleyball match benefiting the Side-Out Foundation. All proceeds from this special night helped support breast cancer research and grants to families dealing with breast cancer.



Donations were given by several area businesses, including Nimlok, Cookies by Design, Blackford Appraisal Services, Lake Michigan Credit Union, Champion Die Inc. and Plante Moran. In addition to business donations, the Grandville community bought Dig Pink shirts and offered donations at the game. GHS volleyball program members ran and organized the entire event; significant contributions were made by Peyton Stallings, Keilahna Castillo, Kara Antonini, Ashton Giffel and Madison Benton. In addition to raising \$4000, the team capped off the night by honoring 12 GHS teachers and staff members as part of its Teacher Appreciation Night.

“Mr. Inman and Mr. Tower have been great with the new College Writing class. The college application problem is a stress to many of us. Their help with this class has relieved a lot of that stress and made it seem more possible to accomplish our goals.”

~Student Alex Bischoff

Editor’s Note: Wondering what College Writing is? Mr. Tower explains, “It is the brainchild of GHS guidance counselor Lucas Inman. Lucas wanted a way to encourage some of our top students at GHS to apply to some of the most competitive colleges in the country, believing that our best students are just as good as the best students from other schools that are sending kids to Harvard, Notre Dame, and Stanford on a regular basis. The focus of the class is on helping those students, most of whom are high achieving and in the top of their class, write stand-out personal essays that will help them be noticed by top-tier universities.”

New Uniforms, New Show

The GHS marching band is premiering new uniforms this year. This project was two years in the making, and the uniforms went through countless changes before they were finalized. The new look is cutting edge and has many features that are new to uniform design. The students are proud to represent Grandville in them!

Along with a new year comes a new show, "Powerful Beyond Measure." From a young age, we all dream about being something grand when we grow up. The band shows how it is possible to rise above the naysayers and not only accomplish your goals, but also achieve them at a higher level than you ever imagined. The show begins with the voices of first-grade students from Grand View Elementary stating what they want to be when they grow up.

The band looks forward to competing in the state finals on Nov. 1. Contact Mr. Garcia or Ms. Foss at GHS for this season's performance details.



Girl Power

Back by popular demand, the GHS women's varsity leadership club recently hosted the third annual Girls Sports Day. To promote future sports participation, female athletes from GHS shared their favorite sports with 73 elementary-age girls. By the end of the day, these aspiring young athletes practiced 10 different varsity sports and found just the right one (or two or three!) for them. This event should give rise to a new generation of strong, capable leaders on the field.



Alexis learns lacrosse



GMS parent Kelly Kreiss entered the Younkers Stomp Out Bullying Contest and won! She named GMS the recipient of a \$1000 check from the store. The money will help support anti-bullying education and "be nice."

Community Ed Swimming Pool Schedule Change

Due to construction and limited parking, the GHS swimming pool will no longer be open during our regular school day. Daytime swimming lessons, open swim/lap swim and aqua aerobics will be temporarily discontinued during our school day. However, a variety of pool programs will still be offered before and after school; check the Community Education section of gpsbulldogs.org for a link to the schedule. Thank you for your patience and understanding as we undergo construction. The programs will resume once construction is complete.

GHS Theatre Presents



Nov. 13-15 at 7 p.m.

Tickets: \$6 for students and seniors, \$8 for adults
Go to gpsbulldogs.org for ticket info.

Visit KDL!

The Grandville branch of the Kent District Library is located at 4055 Maple SW. Phone: 784-2007. www.kdl.org

Registration is required for most library programs.

Pokemon & Beyblades Club ages 6 & up
Wednesday, Nov. 5 at 6:30 p.m.

Thankful for You Day families

KDL is wrapping up nearly two years of our Happiness Project with a major celebration of the folks who most make us happy- our customers! Help us celebrate YOU with treats, fun, and crafts.
Friday, Nov. 21 at 3 p.m.

Teen Zone grades 6-12

Teen only fun for you and your friends at the library!
Every Thursday through Nov. 20 at 3 p.m.

Battle of the Books grades 5-8

BOB kicks off with information, registration, and the 2015 titles revealed.
Wednesday, Dec. 3 at 6:30 p.m.

Gingerbread House Making families

Wednesday, Dec. 10 at 6:30 p.m.

Countdown to Happy "Noon" Year families

We're giving kids an exciting way to ring in 2015 with a countdown, noisemakers, goodies and fun—at an hour that won't keep them up way past their bedtimes!
Wednesday, Dec. 31 at 11:30 a.m.



Save the date!

The Grandville Education Foundation
invites you to
come out for a night of food,
fun and entertainment
at the 14th annual
Taste of Grandville
Monday, March 2, 2015
at Grandville High School
5:30pm-8:00pm

We've Got
M@il

“Not only does Mrs. Waldie teach the curriculum, but she also teaches life lessons and skills through her actions. I believe I am a better person because she has been in my life.”

~Student Emileigh Lockard

Student Already Savvy Financial Planner

Showing unexpected maturity for his age, senior Alex Welscott is already starting to bank an emergency fund. He credits financial speaker Dave Ramsey and his GHS business teacher, John Schwalm, for teaching him everything he needs to know. (Schwalm denied being on par with Ramsey, but Alex quickly assured him that he was indeed.) Alex plans to major in business in college, and he is confident that if he starts following a finely honed financial plan now, he will become a millionaire.

After a recent presentation by Ramsey at Devos Hall, Alex came home and told his mom to cancel her plans to buy him a car. Why? It would be a financial mistake on her part, he reasoned.

The teen wrote a letter recently that went viral in Ramsey's corporate office. In the letter, the studious senior outlined the financial principles that resonated with him. Investing in mutual funds: check. Buying used vehicles instead of new and investing the savings: check. Setting aside money for giving, saving and spending: check. Living according to a written budget: check. And applying these strategies now instead of later: double check.

Schwalm, who also teaches at Davenport University, says Alex loves participating in Financial Freedom at GHS. Over the past seven years, 1,700 students have enjoyed this course at the high school for no charge. The program is almost identical to the adult business curriculum, which costs hundreds of dollars.



Alex and Mr. Schwalm

Newsletter Notes

This newsletter is printed on paper comprised of 70 – 80% eucalyptus pulp content and is manufactured as elementary chlorine free. Eucalyptus is a highly renewable wood source and the paper is completely recyclable. In addition, all inks used in printing are vegetable based.

The Communicator is a bimonthly newsletter. Suggestions for stories are welcome.

Email: news@gpsbulldogs.org

