

PARENT PRESS

FAMILIES, SCHOOLS & COMMUNITY PARTNERING TOGETHER FOR CHILDREN'S SUCCESS

Celebrating Parent Events

We continually hear about fantastic parent events at GRPS schools, but we think we are only scratching the surface. Schools are holding wonderful and creative parent and student events throughout the district. In order to celebrate these and provide support from the parent engagement office it is imperative that we accurately represent ALL the parent engagement and parent events that have occurred this year throughout GRPS. We have records of Parent Essentials, Title I events and Parent University Classes. If there are any other events that your school hosted PLEASE let us know. Email Jan Wilkins at wilkinsj@grps.org with the date of the event, school, general event purpose/agenda and number of people in attendance (sign-in sheets would be great, but not necessary). Thanks so much for your help.

BLOG AND SOCIAL MEDIA:



Our website's new blog section allows us to communicate more frequently with parents. Please visit our website for current updates and parent engagement events. Also check out the Parent Engagement Office's Facebook Page! Go to facebook.com/GRPSparents or search for "GRPS Parent Engagement." Like our page and keep up-to-date with updates and other useful information from our office.

ATTENDANCE CHALLENGE!

Many of our youngest students miss 10 percent of the school year - about 18 days a year or just two days every month. Chronic absenteeism in kindergarten, and even preK, can predict lower test scores, poor attendance and retention in later grades, especially if the problem persists for more than a year.

Kudos to the following schools that continue to reduce Chronic Absenteeism through the 3rd marking period:

- Dickinson
- East Leonard
- MLK Leadership Academy
- Riverside Middle
- Westwood Middle
- Union High School

April's Theme is: Keeping Pace at Grade Level and Preparing for Transitions

Transitioning from elementary school to middle school can be scary for students and parents. In middle school students change classes and have different teachers for each subject. The expectations for each teacher can be different. More homework is assigned and students are expected to be more responsible for their own belongings and homework assignments. Teachers and school personnel know how to help student with these nerves and how to increase their confidence. Parent University is offering 2 classes this spring to specifically help 5th grade parents and students prepare for the changes of middle school. One class is on Thursday, April 23 at Westwood Middle from 6-7pm and the other is at Cesar Chavez on Tuesday, May 19 from 6-7pm. Check our website for additional information and to sign-up.



Parent University Class Highlight: What classes would you like to see next year?

As we look ahead to planning our Fall semester of Parent University, let us know if there is a topic that you are interested in learning more about. Parent University classes cover a wide range of topics that fall into four content areas: Effective Parenting, Personal Growth and Development, Navigating the Educational System, and Health & Wellness. Contact us on our website at <https://parents.grps.edu/contact>.



ATTENDANCE CHALLENGE - STRIVE FOR LESS THAN FIVE

Stocking held an attendance challenge for the month of February. Every student to have perfect attendance with no absences or tardies for the entire month was invited to a celebratory dinner.

106 students completed the challenge! Sixty families enjoyed a lasagna dinner with certificate award presentation and raffles throughout the night. This was a collaborative effort with multiple community partners involved including Matthews House, Crossroads Church, City View Church, Westwood Community Church, Stockbridge Boiler Room, and Richmond Reformed Church with donations from Value City Linens and Walmart. This was an awesome celebration of attendance and a great example of a community working together to celebrate student success.



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PARENT VOLUNTEER BASE IS GROWING!

Hundreds of parents are now volunteering in our Grand Rapids Public Schools every day. These hard working, dedicated parents are the backbone of our schools. If you know of any of these hidden gems please forward their names and email addresses to the Parent Engagement Office so we can recognize and support their efforts.

NEXT PAL MEETING:

Thursday, May 14 is the end of the year event. More information to arrive in the mail.

PTCC GOALS:

The goals of the PTCC this year represent the goals of the district. They are to reduce chronic absenteeism, increase parent engagement and increase retention and recruitment of parents and students. Reflection for next PTCC meeting: What did you do this year to support these goals? How successful were you? Where can you improve? What would your school's goals be for next year?

MARK YOUR CALENDAR!

April 23 Transitioning to Middle School PU Class @ Westwood Middle 6-7pm

April 30 Challenge Scholars PU Class @ Westwood Middle 6:00-7:00pm

May 14 Creating a Pipeline to College @ GRUPA 5:00-6:00pm

May 14 Gang Prevention and Bullying PU Class @ Riverside Middle 6:30-7:00pm

Questions? Contact Us:

PAL OFFICE

Edna Stewart 819-3673 | Nicki Tardy 819-2157

PARENT ENGAGEMENT OFFICE

Emmanuel Armstrong 819-2036
Jan Wilkins 819-1977

COMMUNITY AND STUDENT AFFAIRS OFFICE

Mel Atkins & Esmeralda Garcia 819-2125

COLLEGE VALUE AND AFFORDABILITY

The March PAL meeting included a community conversation hosted by The Center for Michigan. The conversation topic was College Value and Affordability. Attendees were asked to voice their opinion on various questions of how tuition costs may be lowered, the importance of a college degree, and the current and future states of the job market. The Center for Michigan is a non-profit organization that encourages greater understanding and involvement in policy issues with methods such as community conversations. To learn more about The Center for Michigan or how you might become more involved in hosting a community conversation, visit their website at thecenterformichigan.net



PARENT TEACHER COMMUNITY COUNCIL - PTCC

Your PTCC membership should include your PAL, 2-3 other parents, 2-3 teachers, an administrator and several community partners. Reflection for next PTCC meeting: How are you doing? Are all the groups represented well? Does each group have a voice? Do you have monthly parent meetings? Do your parents receive information through principal presentations or Parent University classes? How can you improve parent engagement for next year?



KUDOS KORNER

KUDOS to Ms. Heethuis's first grade class at Kent Hills for raising their classroom's perfect attendance 11% in February to earn them a pizza party.

KUDOS TO OUR POWER PARENTS: Currently we have 27 power parents, 10 gold star power parents, and 3 parent leadership parents. All Power Parents will be honored at the May 18 GRPS Board meeting. Let's see which school can get the most power parents by May 14!

KUDOS to Coit Elementary for hosting an Art Night which included an exhibit and silent auction of student artwork, music, food, and a family art activity. What a creative parent/family event!

KUDOS to Nan Evans and Kent Hills for encouraging kids to come to school on Count Day by renting an IMAX screen! Students were able to watch age-appropriate movies about black history during the day and enjoy the movie "Oceans" with their families in the evening.

