

GRPS Calendar

Holiday Vacation

December 23 - January 3

School Choice Expo at SWCC

January 10 from 4 - 6pm

No School

January 16

Half days of school

January 18, 19, and 20

City Wide PAL meeting

January 19

Kindergarten Here I Come at GR Museum

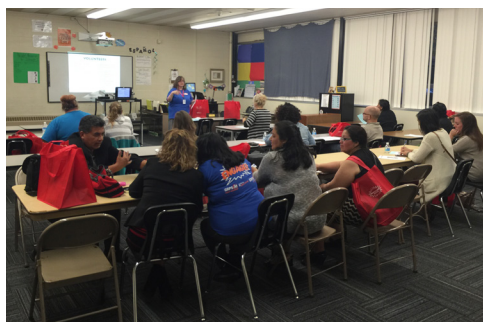
January 25 from 5:30-7:30pm

No School

February 6

Count Day

February 8



NEW AND IMPROVED WEBSITE

OUR PARENTS WEBSITE HAS BEEN IMPROVED WITH MANY ADDITIONAL RESOURCES TO HELP YOU HELP YOUR CHILD SUCCEED IN SCHOOL.

- Ever wonder what a successful school year looks like for your child? *Find help at parents.grps.org.*
- Ever wonder what your child's state test scores mean? Find help at parents.grps.org.
- Ever wonder what to do if your child doesn't meet the state's grade level requirements? *Find help at parents.grps.org.*
- Ever need literacy activities to keep your children busy? *Find help at parents.grps.org.*
- Ever need math game ideas? *Find help at parents.grps.org.*
- Ever need suggestions for good books for your children? *Find help at parents.grps.org.*

Helping your children succeed



Milestones is a collection of free online videos aimed at helping you understand your child's grade-level expectations. Milestones show students demonstrating what success looks like in reading, writing, and math, grade by grade. High school Milestones shows some real-world skills your student should know as well as the academic ones. Content provided by GreatSchools, a nonprofit organization that helps millions of parents get a great education for their children.

PARENT ENGAGEMENT KICK-OFF

Our Grand Rapids Public School parents are our Super Heroes. They turned out in mass to learn more about parent engagement at our kick-off on October 11 at Ottawa Hills High School. This year, for the first time, our annual kickoff was completely planned by parents. Everything was designed with the needs and desires of the parents in mind.

- Childcare was provided for over 125 children
- Facebook photos were taken with super heroes saving the city
- Spiderman, Superman and Batman made an appearance
- 550 box suppers and 50 pizzas were served
- 450 red "superpower parent" bags were given away
- 17 facilitators at 10 break-out sessions provided information to parents
- 28 vendors offered resources for parents
- 26 door prizes were distributed
- Over 50 parents and GRPS supporters volunteered their time to the event



If you attended the kick-off and resolved to get more involved by sharing information with other parents or by talking to your children about what you learned, we hope you are following through. If you have any questions or need support in any area of parent engagement, call your school PAL or call the Parent Engagement Office at 819-1977.

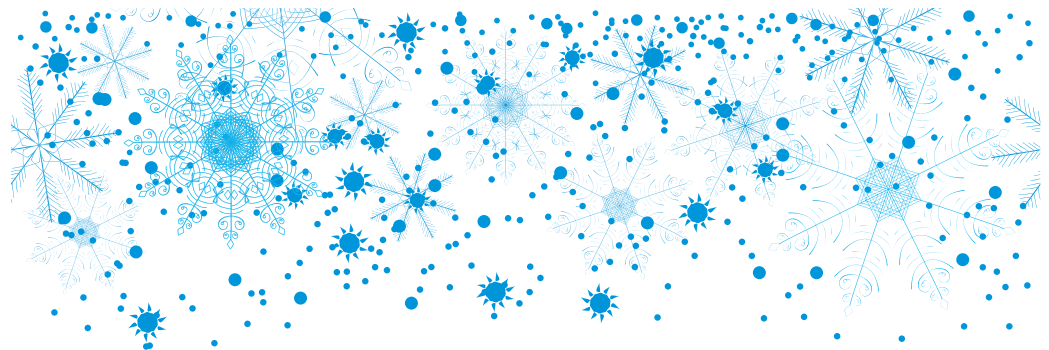
PARENT PRESS



WHAT CAN COMMUNITY PARTNERS DO?

Strong community partners can really change the atmosphere of the school and add many volunteers and resources to the school.

1. Provide volunteers for parent events or current programs
2. Start and staff a new program in mentoring or tutoring
3. Provide PBIS or attendance incentives
4. Provide food for events
5. Sponsor a clothing or food drive
6. Donate Holiday baskets
7. Offer supplies at a discount
8. Sponsor an event
9. Provide speakers for parent events
10. Share or teach a skill to students
11. Advertise school events in their businesses
12. Help with grounds clean-up, painting and school beautification
13. Volunteer to read to students, help on playground or in lunchroom, etc.
14. Sit on the PTCC to help with decisions and planning
15. Provide job or intern positions
16. Teach a parenting class
17. Provide translators and interpreters
18. Connect to other resources and businesses



HOLIDAY ATTENDANCE CHALLENGE

- This holiday season, the best gift you can give your child is a good education. And the best place to get that education is in school. Every day. On time.
- Every year, absences spike in the weeks before and after winter break. It's time to break that cycle.
- We know it's tempting to extend your vacation by a few days on either side of the holiday.
- We recognize that holidays are an important time for reconnecting with families far away and exposing your children to your home and language, whether you grew up in another part of the United States or a different country.
- The costs of plane tickets often influence when you want to travel. But keep in mind the costs to your children's education if they miss too much school.
- Just a few missed days here and there, even if they're excused absences, can add up to too much lost learning time and put your child behind in school. This is as true in kindergarten as it is in high school.
- So make sure your child is in school every day, right up until vacation starts. Our teachers will be teaching, and our students will be learning. But it's harder to teach and it's harder to learn when too many students are absent.
- If missing school is unavoidable, talk to your children's teachers in advance to create a plan for making up missed work. But remember, a homework packet cannot make up for the interaction and learning that goes on in the classroom.
- So give your child the gift of attendance and help build a habit of attendance.



www.attendanceworks.org



PARENT PRESS

GREAT HOLIDAY GIFT IDEAS

Books always make great holiday gifts as they can be opened over and over again throughout the year. No matter how old children get, they still like to have books read to them. On our parents.grps.org website we now have book lists for children of all ages, abilities and interests. Check it out and you will find quality books for your children's gifts this year.

Board games also make great gifts for two reasons. For one, they can be played over and over again and make a great family time event. They teach academic skills without the children being aware in addition to learning how to take turns, how to count spaces correctly, and how to accept losing or winning graciously. Good options include Racko, Monopoly, Allowance, Battleship, Sorry, etc.



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 II 819-2125

PARENT TEACHER COMMUNITY COUNCIL (PTCC)

This is our 4th year of the PTCC mandate and the parent engagement office is committed to helping every school have a thriving PTCC this year. We would like schools to concentrate on two areas this year.

- First select an academic goal from the School Improvement Plan to focus on. Decide how the PTCC can help the school meet that goal. Do parents need more resources or information or do students need tutoring or access to online supports, etc?
- Secondly, make sure that the membership of the PTCC does indeed include parents, teachers or staff members and community partners. It is our hope that parents will be able to help take a leadership role in the decision making of the school so that ownership of the school follows.

Of course planning the monthly parent events and helping with attendance celebrations are always great PTCC activities.

SCHOOL PAGE ON GRPS.ORG WEBSITE

Each GRPS school has their own page on the grps.org website, providing useful information for parents: contact information for the school, breakfast and lunch menus, uniform policy, the school's calendar, the School Improvement Plan and Annual Report. This is a good reminder for schools to keep their calendar up to date. Suggested topics for the calendar include school vacations, conference dates, testing dates, PTCC and parent event dates, end of marking period dates and athletic schedules. It is easy to complete and maintain your website and lets parents have quick access to school events.



FACEBOOK.com/GRPSparents

It is becoming more and more common for schools to have their own Facebook account. It is a great place to advertise upcoming events and display pictures and comments about school events. Facebook is a wonderful way to advertise the fabulous things happening at your school and all of the Grand Rapids Public Schools. The Parent Engagement Office has a Facebook page as well. Please like us and visit us often so you are well informed about upcoming Parent University classes and other exciting parenting events.

KUDOS CORNER

Kudos to Burton Elementary for receiving a grant from Apple so that all students in Burton Elementary were treated to a red carpet reception on October 20 when they all received iPads.

Kudos to Buchanan Elementary for bringing the most parents to the Parent Engagement Kick-Off. They had to use a bus. Way to go Buchanan!

Kudos to Brookside, Campus, Riverside and Mulick Park for having the most events on their school calendars on the grps.org website.

