Happy Summer, Grand Blanc! We hope that all of our families are enjoying a well-deserved break after a successful 2023-2024 school year!

This school year was filled with tremendous accomplishments by our students, from the classroom to the community and the playing fields to the performance stage! We are all so very proud of our Bobcats’ “ Tradition of Excellence!” It’s obvious that it is alive and well across our school community!

As we enter year two of our 2023-28 Strategic Plan implementation, we once again look ahead to future election campaigns that will include three ballot initiatives. None of these elections will raise taxes for any Grand Blanc resident, but will once again provide a significant amount of funding for important initiatives in the district.

In January we will begin sharing more information about the next three-election campaign cycle. This will include the renewal of our Sinking Fund (warm, safe & dry), a request to re-commit to a Zero-Increase Bond, and a renewal of our Non-Homestead Millage (on businesses/rental properties.) The result of these elections, if successful, would keep Grand Blanc at the current level of 6.3 mills levied for Grand Blanc Community Schools. This number is right about in the middle of surrounding districts, and we feel it is a reasonable place to stay to keep moving forward without requesting any increase in taxes from taxpayers.

The next round of “Capital Improvements,” should the Zero-Increase Bond pass again, will focus on continued security upgrades, the restoration of the Perry Center building with the expansion of Early Childhood, a new GBHS Performing Arts facility, and the maintenance and improvement of our Technology infrastructure and equipment. The Strategic Plan that outlines district planning can be found at www.gbcs.org > Our District.

The Strategic Planning process was open to anyone who was interested in participating, and brought over 130 stakeholders from throughout the Grand Blanc community together to determine needs for the future of the district. The work consisted of roughly seven months of meetings, conducting research, having discussions, and writing plans.

Our district continues to benefit from the guidance of those planning teams and the support of the Grand Blanc Board of Education. Thank you for your continued support as we look forward to a bright and exciting future for our students!

To stay up to date with the latest news from GBCS, go to www.gbcs.org or follow us @gbcsbobcats!

New Pool at GBAC Dedicated to Craig Oldham
Former teacher and coach, Mr. Craig Oldham, devoted his entire career to helping grow and mentor the young people of the Grand Blanc Community.

As a 30-year science teacher, he stressed the importance of community, responsibility, and character, in addition to academic achievement, to thousands of students and student-athletes at Grand Blanc Schools.

Through an impressive 26 seasons, he was one of the most successful swim coaches in Genesee County history. He continued to mentor area swim coaches and teachers even into retirement.

Due to the high esteem in which his former swimmers, students, and coworkers hold Mr. Oldham to this day, they petitioned the Grand Blanc Board of Education to request the new GBHS pool be named in his honor.

The “Oldham Pool” was dedicated on May 28, 2024 at a small, private ceremony hosted by Dr. Alward and the Board of Education.
GBCS Administrators and the Grand Blanc School Board are constantly exploring new procedures and equipment to keep buildings safe and secure at Grand Blanc Community Schools. The City of Grand Blanc Police Department and the Grand Blanc Board of Education have taken an innovative step this year by approving a Police K9 unit. Detective Ryan Rouse, GBHS School Resource Officer, will now be a K9 Officer.

Detective Rouse recently invited staff and students to help rename the K9 that will join Grand Blanc Schools. Over 1200 votes were cast, resulting in the dog’s new name: Ace! Ace is a male German Short-Haired Pointer, a breed known for being playful, intelligent, and good with other dogs and children. With an acute sense of smell, Ace has been trained in weapons detection and tracking. He has completed over 150 hours of training through J & S K9, LLC, to prepare for this placement.

In preparation for Ace’s arrival, staff and families were surveyed to check for any serious canine allergies, and Detective Rouse’s office at GBHS now features an air purifier with a HEPA filter. The carpet in that area will be replaced with hard flooring, as well.

“The Grand Blanc City Police Department is ecstatic to add Ace to our staff. With their extensive training, Ace alongside Detective Rouse will be a great addition to the Grand Blanc Community Schools,” said City of Grand Blanc Police Chief, Brian Lipe. “I would like to thank the Grand Blanc Community Schools’ Board of Education and the Administration for making this happen. Their dedication and efforts to ensuring the safety of the students and staff has been second to none.”

Ace is being introduced gradually at the high school campus. He was recently spotted greeting people at the gate with Detective Rouse at GBHS Graduation on May 30. He will be fully on duty in the fall for the 2024-25 school year. Toward the end of the first marking period next year, Detective Rouse plans to start visiting our other buildings with Ace to introduce him to our younger students!

‘Imagine A Dragon’ Show a Huge Success at Reid

The drama program participants at Reid Elementary stunned audiences again with their talents on stage. They performed the musical, “Imagine a Dragon” this March under the creative direction of elementary art teacher, Mrs. Wilkerson.

This year, the cast included a talented young student with Cerebral Palsy named Elliot. He was interviewed by ABC12 News’ Matt Barbour, along with his mom and Mrs. Wilkerson, about the musical and the various adaptations that were made to successfully welcome him as a cast member. Elliot’s positivity and enthusiasm are evident!

Elliot and the cast and crew did an amazing job, and the audience had a great time at the show.
Myers Elementary Named a National Blue Ribbon School

Families of Myers Elementary often refer to it as “the hidden gem” of Grand Blanc Schools, but in 2023, the curtain was pulled back on the elementary school that serves the northeast region of Grand Blanc. Principal, Betsy Kato, beloved by students and staff alike, was elated to find out her building was going to be recognized as one of the 11 total schools in Michigan and 313 public schools in the entire country awarded this honor last year.

Per the program’s website, “National Blue Ribbon School leaders not only articulate a vision of excellence and hold everyone to high standards, but they also stay close to the real action of teaching and learning. Data from many sources drive instruction and student support services to ensure every student is set up to succeed. Families, communities, and educators work together toward common goals.

Each year, the U.S. Department of Education honors the National Blue Ribbon Schools at an awards ceremony in Washington, D.C. at which each school receives a plaque and flag to signify its exemplary status.”

Mrs. Kato and Myers 3rd grade teacher, Mrs. Wilson, traveled to Washington D.C. to accept the award. Grand Blanc placed a banner over Saginaw St. in recognition, and the Board of Education honored staff at a dinner in celebration!

Grand Blanc’s elementary buildings all do a wonderful job of making school a safe, fun and productive educational environment.

GBCS Students Compete in Young Sharks at U of M - Flint!

The Young Sharks and Junior Sharks is a program for 3rd-8th grade students from the University of Michigan - Flint’s Office of Outreach, made possible with funding from the C.S. Mott Foundation. It provides an innovative and engaging entrepreneurship and economics curriculum that aligns lessons with state content standards in social studies - integrated with science, math, reading, language arts, and 21st-century career skills. Students are guided step-by-step from the ideation stage of a business to its launch, culminating in a business pitch presentation to their classmates.

Students develop skills associated with an entrepreneurial mindset, such as teamwork, problem-solving, persistence, risk-taking, creativity, and curiosity. They learn to be creative thinkers and develop a clear understanding of the steps to becoming an entrepreneur.

Teachers are provided with a complete set of lesson plans, student worksheets and activities, display boards, and training and support from UM-Flint facilitators. Students form teams that generate business ideas in one of four categories: inventions, services, performing arts, and visual arts.

Each team then creates a business pitch presentation and display board. Participating classrooms select one winning business team to compete in the pitch competition at U of M-Flint for chance to win prize money, and all participating student businesses display their presentation boards during that event. Almost 400 students from Mason Elementary, Brendel Elementary, Myers Elementary, Perry Innovation Center, and WMS participated in the Young/Junior Sharks this year.

GBCS student teams placing in the competition in the “Young Sharks” Division were:

- First Place: A World in One Bite (Perry Innovation Center: Mrs. Brock - Aalya, David, Gracelyn & Nick)
- Second Place: Grand Blanc Volleyball (Brendel Elementary: Ellie, Josie, Atif & Raegan)
- Third Place: The Pet Paw Wash (Myers Elementary: Mrs. Sieloff - Mason, Ivy & Maliya)

Placing in the Junior Sharks Division:

- First Place: Recycld (Perry Innovation Upper School: Mr. Vallimont - Paxon & Rhys)
- Second Place: Scan and Go (WMS: Mrs. Kipp - Allison, Lauryn, Cassidy & Jazlyn)
- Third Place: Mazeva (Perry Innovation Upper School: Mrs. Merrill - Maddy, Vanden & Zeina)

Thank you to the judges, U of M - Flint, the C.S. Mott Foundation, and our staff, for making this such a wonderful learning experience for participating students.

Reid Students Create Art to Encourage Animal Adoption

May is “Be Kind To Animals” month, and this May Reid 3rd graders put their whole hearts into an art project for the Humane Society of Genesee County under the supervision of retiring art teacher, Mrs. Wilkerson.

Each student picked a pet resident and created a pet portrait to hang on the animal’s kennel to help get them adopted. The adoptive family will get to take home the portrait! Mrs. Wilkerson said, “I have never seen students so engaged and invested in an art project as much as this one.”
Ryan Rabideau is the son of Timothy and Yanzhen Rabideau. He is graduating with a grade point average of 4.417. He plans to attend Kettering University to major in Electrical Engineering and pursue a career in the embedded systems concentration of the Electrical Engineering field. While Ryan was a student at Grand Blanc High School, he was a full scholarship winner for the Kettering STEM Olympiad, CAD and Electrical Section Leader of the GBHS Robotics team, selected as a First Robotics Competition (FRC) Dean’s List Semifinalist, and an Eagle Scout in Troop 106.

Madison Cox is the daughter of Tim and Katie Todd. She is graduating with a grade point average of 4.345. Isabella plans to attend the University of Virginia to major in Global Studies and then pursue a career in international relations. Madison plans to become a foreign service officer. While she was a student at Grand Blanc High School, Madison was a Leader of Model UN, National Honor Society member, a Cross Country Athlete, and a Two-Time recipient of GBHS Volunteer Recognition Award.

Isabella Todd is the daughter of Tim and Katie Todd. She is graduating with a grade point average of 4.345. Isabella plans to attend Northern Michigan University to study Environmental Science. While Isabella was a student at Grand Blanc High School, she was Vice President of the National Honors Society, member of the National Honor Society, and a Leader of Model UN, Girls’ Tennis Team, and Club Green.

Vincent Li is the son of Hang Li and Jinchai Weng. He is graduating with a grade point average of 4.333. Vincent plans to attend the University of Michigan - Ann Arbor and study Aerospace or Mechanical Engineering. He plans to work with aviation companies with a focus on airplane propulsion systems. While attending Grand Blanc High School he was Co-president of Asian Club, a member of National Honor Society, and an AP Scholar. Vincent also worked at his family’s business (China Jade), and volunteered with Easterseals.

Jacob Cooper is the son of Justin and Lisa Cooper. He is graduating with a grade point average of 4.318. Jacob plans on attending the University of Michigan - Ann Arbor to pursue a degree in Mathematics and a career in Software Development and Research-Level Mathematics. While attending Grand Blanc High School, Jacob was Captain of the Varsity Esports Rocket League Team, and a Software developer at Innovative Programming Systems.

CONGRATULATIONS CLASS OF 2024!

The Grand Blanc High School Class of 2024 (photographed by GBHS Yearbook above) graduated at Don Batchelor Field on May 30, 2024. 614 students received diplomas. It is a new tradition for graduating seniors to sign the Charlie Carmody Spirit Rock at the stadium entrance.
Evan Raybuck is the son of Richard and Angie Raybuck. He is graduating with a grade point average of 4.31. Evan plans to attend the University of Michigan - Ann Arbor to pursue a degree in Electrical or Aerospace Engineering and pursue a career in designing innovative technology for the next generation of autonomous vehicles. While a student at Grand Blanc High School, Evan was a member of National Honors Society, Asian Club, Varsity Soccer, and a National Merit Commended Scholar.

Taylor Lewis is the daughter of Brad and Heather Lewis. She is graduating with a grade point average of 4.304. Taylor plans to attend the University of Michigan - Ann Arbor to study Chemical Engineering and pursue a career in creating environmentally friendly chemical alternatives. While a student at Grand Blanc High School she participated in National Honor Society, Varsity Soccer, an AP Scholar with Distinction and a National Merit Commended Scholar.

Nour Almounajed is the daughter of Ghanem and Lina Almounajed. She is graduating with a grade point average of 4.285. Nour plans to attend the University of Michigan - Flint to study Molecular Biology and pursue a career in Emergency Medicine. While a student at Grand Blanc Nour participated in Asian Club, Muslim Student Association, and Health Occupation Students of America.

Ritika Patel is the daughter of Ketan and Parul Patel. She is graduating with a grade point average of 4.267. Ritika plans to attend the University of Michigan - Ann Arbor to pursue a degree in Business and then a career in Finance. While attending Grand Blanc High School Ritika was an active member of the National Honor Society and the Girls Varsity Soccer Team.


CLASS SONG: “Long Live” by Taylor Swift

CLASS COLORS: Black, White & Gold
Over $27,000 Raised for Special Olympics

There was amazing response this year - both in donations and in the participation of a large group of brave plungers - to the 2024 Polar Plunge to benefit Special Olympics of Michigan! The GBCS Unified team raised OVER $27,000 dollars! GBHS teacher, Phil Pickard, led the way again with over $5000 in donations alone, contributing to Grand Blanc Schools being the top-raising K-12 school in the entire state!

Grant Funding Gives Opportunities to Host Uniquely Engaging Guests

West Middle School and Anderson/McGrath Elementary used grant funding dollars to bring dynamic personalities to Grand Blanc this year to speak to students with positive messages.

Flint's own Mama Sol captured the attention of students with her unique combination of spoken word and hip-hop in January. She delivered a strong message about decision making, surrounding oneself with good people, and using your gifts to make a difference in the world.

Charlie “The Spaniard” Brenneman visited Grand Blanc in March. The former Spanish Teacher turned UFC fighter and author, had a clear message for students during the assemblies:

- Overcome negative self-talk
- Effort and Attitude matter
- Do the RIGHT, hard thing, every time
- You have the choice how to get back up when life knocks you down!

Brenneman demonstrated some UFC moves with staff members. He was able to stay in town for most of the day, taking photos with students and his UFC belt, visiting McGrath, mingling and answering questions.

More recently, WMS hosted Jim “Basketball” Jones. McGrath Elementary fifth-graders were treated to a transition day surprise, as they got to learn from him during their tour of WMS in anticipation of moving up next year. Students learned about owning their actions, pausing before responding, and being kind to one another. Jones also spoke to WMS students and stuck around throughout the school day to talk to students and staff.

Mason Celebrates Mrs. Cornelison’s 50 Years of Teaching

After 50 years of teaching and finding new ways to engage students, Jan Cornelison found herself caught off-guard as she walked into the gym one afternoon. Mason Elementary staff and students put together a program honoring the veteran teacher's long history of excellence in education. Cornelison has taught thousands of students and many will tell you she was their favorite.

In celebration, Mason brought in former students dating back decades to the stage to represent Cornelison’s 50-year career. Some elected to speak about her memorable positive impact in their lives. It was telling just how enthusiastic past students were to take time from their current lives to show their appreciation. Among the former students, Mrs. Courneya, Principal of Grand Blanc’s McGrath and Anderson Elementary, was there to congratulate her. Cornelison was here in Grand Blanc to greet her as a coworker when she was hired to teach in 2006.

Mason PTO & staff also held a special breakfast in recognition of her 50 year anniversary.

She’s not done yet, though. Mrs. Cornelison will start her 51st year at Mason this fall and she is still finding new ways to excite classrooms of elementary students to learn!

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Eclipse Glasses Provided for Science and Safety

2024 provided a rare opportunity for young students to witness their first total solar eclipse. For multiple reasons, the district decided to purchase approved eclipse glasses for every student. The eclipse started at about 1:58 PM on April 8th and was completely wrapped up by about 4:27 PM, with Grand Blanc experiencing a view of almost 97% coverage at totality.

Safety was a concern due to the timing of the eclipse. It overlapped with most building dismissal times, causing concerns about students’ vision when going to get on buses or walking home. Additionally, having the students able to experience the event first-hand seemed like a ready-made science lesson.

The district left how the glasses were used up to the individual buildings. Many elementary students decorated paper plate masks to go around their glasses, incorporating art. Some buildings had classrooms or groups outside in shifts to see what was happening. Some teachers had questions prepared while some had students document what they witnessed for discussions.

Brendel Elementary had students outside all at once during the peak of totality. Brendel 5th Grade teacher Ericka Murdock told ABC 12 News, “I love watching the kids be able to engage in something that is new and exciting for them. And hopefully they’ll be able to take this memory because they’ll be grown-ups the next time this happens. Maybe they’ll be grown-ups with their own kids and they’ll look back and say ‘I remember when I was in elementary school and this is what we did.’” Local media stopped at several buildings to see what students were up to during the event.

Although the high school was dismissed at the front end of the viewing window, some students who were still there for after-school activities could be found with the glasses on taking in the eclipse, and some specifically stayed after school to view it as a group.

Indian Hill Students Present at Student Technology Showcase at State Capitol

Each year, the MACUL Student Technology Showcase takes place at the Michigan capitol so that lawmakers can see how technology is being used in schools across the state. Wednesday, December 6th, Indian Hill students were one of about 30 Michigan schools able to wow attendees with their technological skills, tools and knowledge. The event displayed projects combining science, mathematics, social studies and language arts with the latest digital tools. State Representative David Martin posted to his social media account, “These bright students from Indian Hill Elementary had a fantastic exhibit as part of the Student Technology Showcase at the Capitol today! Keep up the great work, and go Jaguars!

Indian Hill students were able to host Rep. Martin during March is reading month, when he volunteered to be a guest reader!

GBHS Hope Squad Finishes First Year of Promoting Mental Health Awareness and Support

Hope Squad is a nationally recognized, student-led initiative aimed at fostering mental health awareness and student resilience through a peer-to-peer suicide prevention program. Students are supported by a team of staff members led by (Social/Emotional Learning) SEL Director, Betsy Kato. Mrs. Kato also serves as the principal at Myers Elementary. Kathleen Riek, Stephen Kennedy, and Anna Foltz are the Staff Advisors for Hope Squad, and are heavily supported by the GBHS Counseling Office.

The students of GBHS Hope Squad were nominated for membership by their fellow students. They meet regularly to discuss the warning signs of distress and train in the resources available to support mental well-being. Guided by the belief that every student deserves to feel supported and heard, these compassionate, trusted students serve as confidants and sources of encouragement, helping to bridge the gap between students and adults. They identify themselves by wearing Hope Squad lanyards and t-shirts/sweatshirts.

Less than a year in, three GBHS student Hope Squad members: Riley Jakeway; Ava Zagata, and Vaasu Patel, were selected to serve on the Hope Squad National Council! We are extremely proud of these students and their ambition to improve school culture on a broader scale.

GBHS Hope Squad’s implementation aligns with the district’s Strategic Plan and its ongoing efforts to create a positive and nurturing school environment where every student feels valued and supported. By empowering students to play an active role and provide peer support, GBCS hopes to increase empathy and resilience that will extend beyond the classroom walls.

Hope Squad will continue to engage in various activities and initiatives to promote mental health awareness and destigmatize mental health issues into the next school year. They will also work closely with school counselors, teachers, and administrators to ensure fellow students have access to the support and resources they need to thrive - academically, socially, and emotionally. Eventually, the SEL team plans to expand the Hope Squad model into the middle schools. We encourage students, parents, and community members to support Hope Squad and its mission.
Grand Blanc Parents as Teachers Receives Grant Funding

Grand Blanc Parents as Teachers is a program for parents and caregivers of children ages 0-5 who live within the GBCS district boundaries. The group facilitates fun and educational programming and provides exceptional resources and parental guidance.

A grant of $19,168 was recently approved for GB PAT by the Community Foundation of Greater Flint. This funding will allow GBCS to continue to provide developmental screening and the promotion of literacy and kindergarten readiness through the Parents as Teachers program free to parents and guardians! The grant was made possible by funding from:

- Helen Dennis Family Fund
- Grand Blanc Youth Initiative Program Fund
- Dr. Leonard and Mary Jane Dunworth Fund
- Grand Blanc Community Fund
- Kay L. O’Malia Fund

We appreciate the ability to start Grand Blanc children on the path to a successful education early, by partnering with families prior to registration for kindergarten.

EMS Hosts State Police to Talk Safe Technology Use

Michigan State Police were welcomed by a crowd of staff and middle school students as they discussed the best ways to stay safe online in the digital world. Topics discussed included social media, cyberbullying, teen suicide, and more.

After coming to speak directly to the students during the school day, state troopers addressed the community in a second discussion in the evening. Genesee Health Services was also in attendance to offer support and advice. Great information was provided to all.

Elementary Students Win Pizza from the Sheriff!

For March is Reading Month 2024, the Genesee County Sheriff announced the return of his ‘Pizza Party Spectacular Contest’, now in its third year. All elementary school students in Genesee County were invited to participate. The contest started on Monday, February 26 and ran through March 22.

Mason Elementary won a pizza party for first place in their category! The Mason principal, Mrs. James, will also receive a check for $1000. The pizza and prizes were complements of the Genesee County Sheriff’s office and Little Ceasars.

Sheriff Chris Swanson also visited Anderson Elementary to share the news that they had come out in second place in their category, and had also earned a pizza party. Coincidentally, the sheriff is not only a graduate of Grand Blanc, he is also an alum of Anderson Elementary, as well, so he was especially excited to share this news. Mrs. Courneya, Anderson principal, was very proud of the Anderson students.

All told, the contest documented that Genesee County students read over 2 MILLION pages in March, 2024. This was a great opportunity for our buildings to get students excited about reading! Thank you to Little Ceasars and the Genesee County Sheriff, Chris Swanson and his staff.