

Partners in Learning

Our Mission: Promote Innovation → Maximize Potential → Embrace Community

Spring 2021

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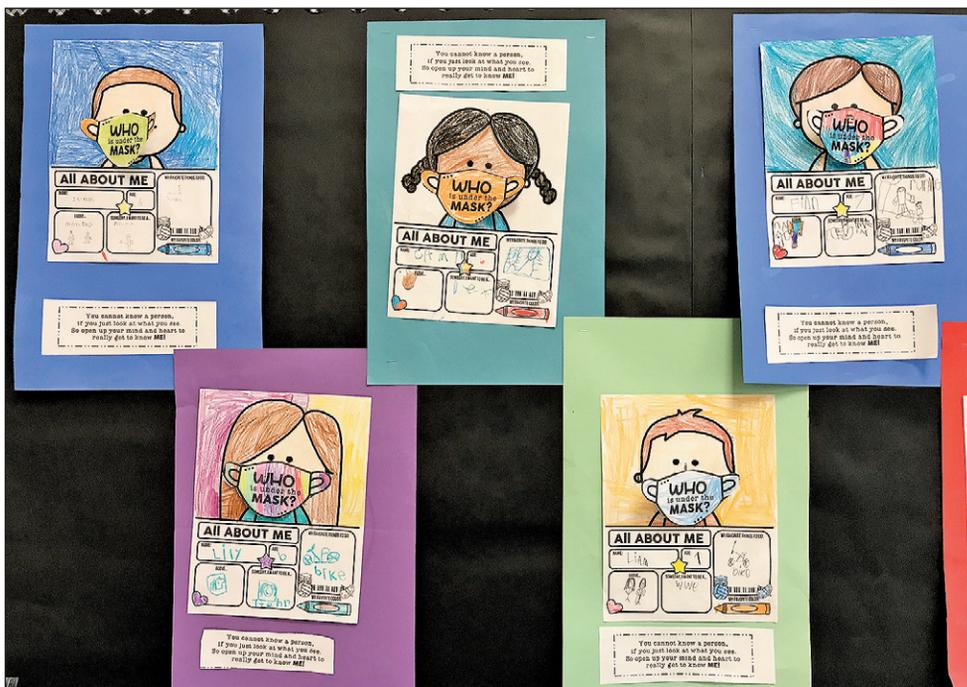
National Merit Semifinalists

Four GPPSS seniors were named semifinalists in the annual National Merit Scholarship Program. Students obtain this standing by scoring in the top 1% of U.S. high school students who took the Preliminary SAT. Benjamin Uram is from Grosse Pointe North. Eva McCord, Amanda Rigotti and Jacquelyn Wang are from Grosse Pointe South.

National Merit Commended scholars from South are Bridget Clark, Kathryn Ennis, Henry Greer, Alston Smith, Ian Swanson and Nicholas Vandenbrink. Commended scholars from North are Maya Goossen, Michael Hart and Victoria Treder.

Welcome Home

For families re-enrolling in the district (and those enrolling for the first time), simply visit our website gpschools.org/enrollment and begin the pre-enrollment process. Once completed, you'll make an appointment at our office (389 St. Clair, Grosse Pointe) at <https://calendly.com/gpverify> and our enrollment team will get your student(s) enrolled to begin now or for the 2021-22 school year. All forms can be found on our website and you can call the enrollment office with any questions: 313-432-3083 including making appointments outside office hours (8 a.m.-4 p.m. Monday-Thursday and 8 a.m.-3:30 p.m. Friday).



Monteith Elementary students posted these self-portraits so those in the other cohort could start forming connections before all returned face to face.

Learning must go on, and it has

A year ago, no educator in the country or world could have imagined the challenges that lay ahead. On Friday, March 13, 2020, educators throughout the Grosse Pointe Public School System engaged in one day's worth of professional development before diving into remote instruction for the remainder of the 2019-20 school year.

Here we are in the second semester of the 2020-21 school year and already we have pivoted from a remote opening in September, to hybrid learning for all grades in January, to a return to full-time in-person instruction in March. And all along the way our teachers, staff, parents and students have continued to pivot, adjust and learn.

Safety remains paramount, but so is maintaining our district's reputation for educational excellence.

Each step of the way, administrators, teachers and staff worked together to find innovative ways to keep students engaged in this far from perfect educational environment. Their perseverance has paid off.

In these pages, you will read about classroom successes in our virtual and hybrid learning programs as well as strategies our staff contributed to in order to keep face-to-face learning as safe as possible.

Among the chaos of this unusual year, we also celebrate our victories. We always knew our teachers were great. They are after all the #1 teachers in Michigan according to Niche and our families. Today we applaud them as superheroes.

– Dr. Gary C. Niehaus,
Superintendent

BOARD BULLETIN

According to the Michigan Association of School Boards, the primary role of any school board includes:

1. Hiring and evaluating our superintendent,
2. Establishing and maintaining a balanced budget, and
3. Setting policy that furthers the district's vision and goals.

Superintendent Search

Our Board of Education has hired School Exec Connect to assist with the search for our next Superintendent. To date, they have set forth a transparent plan with dates to ensure we have our next leader when Dr. Niehaus retires in June.

As part of that plan, School Exec Connect has conducted a community survey, and held focus groups with teachers, parents, community members, business leaders, administrators, support staff and students. They asked each group for insight into what are the district's strengths and challenges, and what do they want to see in our next leader.

The next step will be to screen applicants and then involve additional members of our learning community in the interview process.

Budget Development

You will also see transparency in our budget development process, from establishing parameters as we do each winter, to approving a balanced budget as we do each June.

It is important to note we must by law have a balanced budget. We do. Our audit last fall was clean and unqualified. All budget and audit documents are clearly posted on the website or available by contacting the Superintendent's Office at 313-432-3003.



Joseph Herd



David Brumbaugh



Ahmed Ismail



Lisa Papas



Colleen Worden

These are the board members who were elected in November 2020. Profiles for each board member, including incumbents Margaret Weertz and Dr. Christopher Lee, are on the district website gpschools.org under the School Board dropdown. There you can also find the links to Watch the Meeting on Livestream and to access every board agenda and its supporting documents from their calendar. Click the date of the meeting, then agenda, and hyperlinks are there for each item.

Regarding bond planning and oversight specifically, there is a concise update on activities inserted in this newsletter. Please read it, share it with friends, and email questions to schoolboard@gpschools.org.

Policies that support the vision

Our focus remains on doing what is right for kids. Our role as elected leaders is to set the course. Our administration translates that direction into action items as you've seen with our response to COVID this past year. The district chose to start all students in remote learning this fall. In January, we started a hybrid return to face-to-face learning for those in the GP Traditional track. March 1 elementary students returned to face-to-face instruction, and March 15 (after this goes to print) GP Traditional students in grades 5-12 are scheduled to return. Families that chose OneGP Virtual will remain in remote instruction this school year.

Throughout remote and then hybrid learning, *connections* with students and safety remained our priorities.

This year has been a challenge. But our Board is working hard to model

civil discourse as we make decisions that impact our staff and students. We feel it is a distinct privilege and responsibility to set that tone of cooperation. I have every confidence our community will come together to ensure every student has the learning environment they need to be successful today and in the future.

- Joseph Herd, President
Grosse Pointe Board of Education

Board Meetings

These open meetings start at 7 p.m., and are held in the Brownell Middle School Multipurpose Room, 260 Chalfonte, unless noted. Meetings are also livestreamed and televised on Channel 20. Upcoming dates are:

- March 22
- April 12, 26
- May 10, 12
- June 14, 28

2021 Board of Education

President Joseph Herd
Vice President Margaret Weertz
Secretary Dr. Christopher Lee
Treasurer Colleen Worden
Trustee David Brumbaugh
Trustee Ahmed Ismail
Trustee Lisa Papas

GPPSS Return to Face to Face Plan



This photo was taken during a walkthrough conducted by administrators, teachers, support staff and parents using the 36-page CDC Schools Mitigation checklist.

All hands were on deck the week after Midwinter break to prepare the elementary school buildings for a return to full-time face-to-face learning on Monday, March 1.

Principals at each school completed a 36-page checklist from the Centers for Disease Control K-12 Schools COVID-19 Mitigation Toolkit. A representative group toured each building to review the list and determine its accuracy. Typically present on each tour were the principal, Deputy Superintendent Jon Dean or Amanda Matheson, the school secretary, several teachers, a member of the custodial staff, and a parent.

Maire Principal Ryan Francis made it clear to his group at the outset of the tour that the goal wasn't to check off all items on the list as complete or fully in compliance.

"Our goal is 100 percent transparency," Francis said. "If it's a 'no,' it's a 'no.' If we can fix it, our goal is to fix it."

The focus of the toolkit was on mitigation strategies to prepare schools to open for in-person instruction and manage ongoing operations during COVID-19. The document notes that the use of the toolkit is voluntary, however, and is not intended to assess regulatory

compliance. It's up to school personnel to determine how often they need to revisit the materials as the situation and guidance for COVID-19 change.

"Maire Bears" are reminded to wear masks at the school entrance. Items on the checklist of mitigation strategies include availability and adherence to mask use, availability and adherence to social distancing, clearly visible cues to maintain social distancing, availability of hand hygiene supplies and opportunities for use, ventilation modification, and signage and messaging. There also was a checklist on screening, testing and preparing for when someone is sick; cleaning, ventilation and physical spaces; and mental health well-being and support.

With the exception of adherence to social distancing, participants agreed the same risk mitigation measures were in place for full-time face-to-face learning as during hybrid learning, when students attended in cohorts.

The question about three feet vs. six feet of social distancing was raised during a town hall for parents held on February 25.

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Preschool options

GPPSS continues its tuition-based preschool options. This includes: half-day preschool for 3-year-olds (2 days) and 4-year-olds (3 days); and full day preschool at sites across the district. GPPSS will add programs based on demand, while remaining cost-neutral to the balanced budget. Enrollment opened in January for 2021-22. Call 313-432-3809 for limited openings now.

Young Fives Kindergarten 4/9

Young Fives is an alternative for children whose parents feel they are not yet ready for a traditional kindergarten experience. The program will be at every elementary building next year if enrollment allows. The natural progression from Y5 is to kindergarten at their neighborhood school. Growing physically, intellectually, socially, and emotionally, while establishing a safe culture for learning, continues to be our focus. If you are interested in Young Fives, you must submit the online Young Fives Lottery Process form, and complete GPPSS enrollment and establish residency by **April 9**. The lottery will be conducted April 13. gpschools.org/Page/17390

Enroll in Kindergarten by 5/1

The GPPSS kindergarten program plays an essential role in introducing young children to the world of school. Our professional staff believes each student is unique, and is dedicated to providing appropriate and fun experiences and activities from which your child can learn, grow, and develop a love of learning. The day is a wonderful combination of large and small group activities, with opportunities for individual and buddy work. Music, physical movement and art activities are woven throughout the curriculum. Math and language arts activities are part of the daily routine. **Register by May 1** to guarantee placement in your home school.



Grosse Pointe Public School System Bond

Construction Progress Photos



GP South Mechanical Equipment Install



Parcells MS Renovated Auditorium



Parcells MS Life Skills Kitchen



New Corridor Clock/Alert System



Parcells MS New Auditorium Seating



Parcells MS New Lobby Carpet



Mobile A/V Monitor



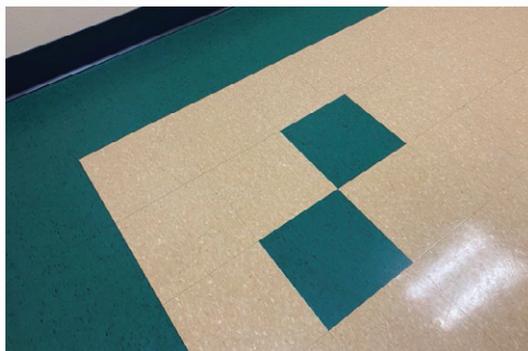
Parcells MS New Auditorium Speakers/Lighting



Parcells MS Renovated Library



Parcells MS Renovated Auditorium



Parcells MS New Floor Tile



Parcells MS New Classroom Storage

Program | February 2021 Dashboard Report



GP South Tunnel Repairs



GP South Tunnel Repairs



GP South Tunnel Repairs



GP South Tunnel Repairs

Proposed Bond Program Phasing

2019 Projects:

- South High School Track Replacement
- South High School Secured Vestibule
- Parcels MS Pool Equipment Replacement

2020 Projects:

- South High School Phase I
- Parcels Middle School
- Defer Elementary School
- Ferry Elementary School
- Monteith Elementary School

2021 Projects:

- South High School Phase II
- North High School Phase I
- Brownell Middle School Phase I
- Richard Elementary School
- Maire Elementary School

2022 Projects:

- North High School Phase II
- Brownell Middle School Phase II
- Pierce Middle School
- Kerby Elementary School
- Mason Elementary School
- Barnes Pre-K

Notable Current and Future Activities

January 2021 Activities:

- Bids due for Richard Elementary
- January Board of Education Facilities Committee Project Update
- Bond Oversight Committee meeting to discuss Richard, Brownell and GP North
- Board of Education Recommendation – Brownell MS, GP North HS GMP first read

February 2021 Activities:

- February Board of Education Facilities Committee Project Update
- Board of Education Recommendation – Brownell MS, GP North HS select trades second read
- Board of Education Recommendation – Richard ES first read
- Board of Education Recommendation – Richard ES second read
- Board of Education – Spring break abatement projects – first read
- Issue Move Management RFP
- Issue 2021 Roofing Projects RFP
- Bond Oversight Committee Project Updates

March 2021 Activities:

- March Board of Education Facilities Committee Project Update
- Board of Education - Spring break abatement projects –second read
- Board of Education – GP North HVAC/Piping/Elect recommendation
- Board of Education Recommendation – Move Management Firm(s)
- Board of Education Recommendation – 2021 Roofing Contractor(s)
- Issue 2021 Summer Project Abatement RFP

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Project Find and Child Find

If your child age birth to six years is experiencing developmental delays, or if you suspect your school-age child has a disability affecting his or her academic performance, notify your child's teacher, counselor, or principal or contact Stefanie Hayes, Director of Student Services at 313/432-3856.

Student Leadership Day

Congratulations to Lucy Gabel, Aliana Ritter, and Isabella Rondini who participated in the 2021 Student Leadership Day February 25th. These students were nominated by Brownell's Mrs. Corden for exemplifying leadership and advocacy for change in their community and school. They have been active members within Brownell's National Junior Honor Society, and continued to lead service opportunities and projects during these difficult times. During the leadership conference, they interacted with 7th & 8th grade students across the United States.

DAR Essay Contest Winners

The Louisa St. Clair Chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution is pleased to announce the winners of their 2020-21 American History Essay Contests:

6th Grade

1st – Makenzie Waterson, Brownell Middle School

2nd – Lydia Prysak, Brownell

3rd – Robert Warner, Brownell
Honorary – Jack Leonard, Brownell & Phoebe Caine, Pierce

7th Grade

1st – Lauren Euper, Brownell

2nd – Lorelei Carr, Brownell

3rd – Genevieve Hardy, Parcels

8th Grade

1st – Isabella Rondini, Brownell

2nd – Mikala Smolen, Brownell

3rd Place – Aliana Ritter, Brownell

Makenzie Waterson was chosen to represent 6th grade at the virtual State Awards Day April 13.

Summer Programs



Six sessions of Safety Town will be offered this summer. Watch gpschools.org/summer for updates and enrollment information on all GPPSS summer programs.

GPPSS will be providing a wide variety of summer learning opportunities this year. In addition to our regular favorites, GPPSS conducted a parent survey that garnered 768 responses on topics they felt their student would benefit from if offered in two-week bursts. The idea is to target specific learning objectives while being flexible with family plans over the break. This is one of many strategies to address concerns about learning loss during the COVID response.

Updates on all summer programs will be posted on our website at <https://gpschools.org/summer> as specific in-

formation becomes available. Look for these and other programs soon:

- Camp O'Fun
- Camp Invention Connect
- Grosse Pointe Summer Choir
- Summer Learning Program (traditional summer school for credit)
- Safety Town
- NEW 2-week Summer Learning Bursts
- Summer Music Festival
- Summer Music Theater Workshop
- North Summer Sports Camps
- South Summer Sports Camps

We're looking forward to a summer full of enrichment in GPPSS!

One GP Virtual & Why Test? in *School Pointes*

Teachers share Virtual Success

Remote learning may have received bad press nationally during the pandemic, but Sara Delgado, OneGP Virtual launch coordinator, had good news to share at the 2/22 Board of Education meeting. Delgado said, "I have over 80 staff members in the district that I have been given the pleasure to collaborate with this year, as well as over 1,100 of our own students, who have been doing amazing things in our virtual school."

Stopping the Spread: COVID Testing Why get tested? The short answer is it's the right thing to do, according to Phillip D. Levy, M.D., chief innovation

officer for Wayne Health and assistant vice president at Wayne State University. Testing is one of the strategies recommended by the CDC to help reduce the number of positive COVID-19 cases in the community. Dr. Levy was the guest at the school district's Feb. 24 virtual town hall on COVID testing for high school students, available on live-stream. He presented an overview of the GPPSS COVID testing plan before answering frequently asked questions.

Read the full articles in *School Pointes*. To subscribe contact Mary Anne Brush at brushm@gpschools.org or call 313-432-3029.

Face to Face Plan, continued

“The reality is when we return full face-to-face, we are not in most cases going to be able to maintain six feet social distancing,” Dean said. “What we do have are plans to mitigate risks.”

Mason Principal Roy Bishop and Kerby Principal Walter Fitzpatrick added that in their buildings, custodial staff removed as much furniture as possible in each classroom and teachers devised creative ways to maximize space for the additional number of students.

Masks and desk shields, stickers marking socially distant line-up spots, one-way stairwells, separate entrances for arrival and dismissal times, outdoor gym when possible and even students walking through the hallways with “Zombie” arms are all strategies in

place to maintain the goal of allowing as much separation as possible. Many of these safety measures were evident during the walk-through tours.



Even the Maire Bear gets reminded to cover his nose when he puts his mask on. Student compliance has been fantastic with masks as we all work to keep each other safe.

Desk shields add another layer of protection. These tri-fold partitions are light-weight and have handles so students can carry them with them from the classroom to specials.

Maire PTO President Jeff Mertz acknowledged the anxiety surrounding the decision to return to full-time face-to-face instruction. Safety, he stressed, is of the utmost importance to parents.

“I think they’re doing the best job they can,” he said. “It’s not perfect, but what more can we ask for? We’re very excited about the efforts being put in place to help keep our

kids and our teachers safe.”
More info on COVID Plan:
gpschools.org/Page/21425

New alumni group GPAFA formed

For 100 years, the Grosse Pointe Public School System has benefited from a sturdy local tax base, state financial support, and ample federal funding, making our school district the envy of our peers nationwide and the crown jewel in one of the healthiest and most robust communities in the state. Yet the future is not what it used to be.

Grosse Pointe Alumni & Friends was founded to be a leading pioneer of a mission we all share: ensuring the excellence and viability of our public school system, not only in the near term, but in perpetuity. Our vision is to partner with like-minded and similarly motivated foundations, parents, community members, alumni, students, volunteers, business owners, board



members, government officials, school employees, and residents of all of the Grosse Pointes to unite in our pride and passion for the longevity of our schools.

Our founding purpose is to create an alumni association and an endowment, the appropriately named “Generations Endowment Fund,” that invests in impactful, innovative programs and people that will deliver continued educational excellence for years and generations to come.

Grosse Pointe Alumni & Friends is an independent 501(c)(3) organization, a volunteer-led, mission-driven association unaffiliated with—but committed to supporting—the Grosse Pointe Public School System. Learn more about GPAFA <https://gpalumniandfriends.org/>.

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Scholar Athletes

Congratulations to GPPSS students Madeline Kohler (North) and Jacob Harris (South), recipients of the MHSAA/Farm Bureau Insurance Scholar-Athlete Award! Only 14 students from Class A schools across the state received this award, and we’re proud to have two from right here in GPPSS. Congratulations to our scholar-athletes!

I want more Good News

GPPSS is working hard to share more good news. Here are a few ways you can get regular updates on student and staff awards, new and continuing programs, and a glimpse inside the classrooms of the #1 teachers in Michigan (according to not only our parents but Niche).

Follow us on social media for daily updates:

- Facebook @GPPSS
- Twitter @GPSchools
- Instagram @gppschoools

Be sure to tag us on posts and invite us to co-host events so we can share your good news with our connections.

If you do not have a student in GPPSS currently, but would like to subscribe to our new weekly district newsletter, *School Pointes*, please contact Mary Anne Brush at brushm@gpschools.org or call 313-432-3029.

Peachjar flyers

GPPSS has moved to online ADA compliant flyer distribution through Peachjar. Click the Peachjar icon on our website to set preferences. You can choose schools to receive flyers from, and they will be emailed to you. Nonprofit groups can economically upload their flyers also.

GPFPE continues to inspire our future

The Grosse Pointe Foundation for Public Education (GPFPE) announced \$30,270 in grants to the Grosse Pointe Public School System at the live-streamed meeting of the Board of Education December 14, 2020. The details of the 10 grants are outlined below:

- Dramatic Play Equipment (Kindergarten) Monteith (\$3,731) Funded through the Lois J. Warden Fund that has been established for important elementary programs within the school system. *Submitted by Natalie Bruveris, Theresa Comilla and Diane Richards*
- All Hands on Deck (Grade 3) Mason (\$406) Funded through the Lois J. Warden Fund. *Submitted by Caitlin Haigh*
- Integrating Literacy into the Maire Makerspace (Grades K-4) Maire (\$750) Funded through the Lois J. Warden Fund. *Submitted by Michelle Kramer*
- Instrumental Music PPE (Grades 5-12) Parcels, Brownell, Pierce, North and South (\$2,400) *Submitted by Tom Torrento*
- iPads to Interact with New Smart Board Software (Grades 5-8) Parcels, Brownell and Pierce (\$6,808) *Submitted by Ashley Golitko*
- Hands on Art (Grades 5-8) Parcels (\$403) *Submitted by Courtney Hughes*
- Chromebooks for Everyday Lessons and Growth (Post High School



Students) Community School (\$3,179) *Submitted by Ann Marie Bokatzian*

- Bring Out the Bass (Grades 5-12) Brownell, Parcels and North (\$8,000) *Submitted by Tom Torrento*
- New Vibraphone (Grades 9-12) South (\$3,993) *Submitted by Christopher Takis*
- Impairment Goggles (Grades 9-12) North (\$600) *Submitted by Sean McCarroll*

Save the Date

The GPFPE has scheduled a 2021 Spring Gala on Thursday, June 3, at the Grosse Pointe Yacht Club. Whether we celebrate in the beautiful ballroom or enjoy a socially-distanced summer night outdoors on the East Lawn overlooking Lake St. Clair, our goal to come together to raise funds for the schools remains the same. JT Mestdagh will once again serve as our Honorary Chair. JT has faced and overcome numerous physical challenges and learning disabilities to achieve success today as an entrepreneur, acclaimed author, and inspirational speaker. Our recurring event theme, “Be the Beacon,” highlights our leadership in providing support and promoting excellence for the students, teachers, district and the community.

To learn more or make a donation, visit gpfpe.org, follow us on Facebook, Instagram and Twitter @thegpfpe, or call 313-432-3058.

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GPPSS job postings

GPPSS is seeking qualified applicants for childcare, buildings and grounds, paraprofessionals, preschool, and substitutes. If interested, visit gpschools.org - Employment.

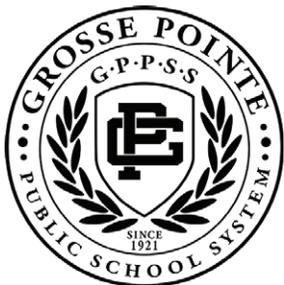
Save the Date

- Spring Break March 29-April 2
- Memorial Day May 31
- South Graduation June 9
- North Graduation June 10
- Last Day of School June 18

Healthy Grosse Pointe and Harper Woods

GPPSS is among 70 active members of HealthyGPHW.org, a community well-being initiative focusing on the health of all residents. The vision:

- Serve as a source for inspiring new projects, actions and collaborations in the community to improve the quality of life.
- Create and sustain a healthy community culture that educates, motivates and empowers residents to adopt and maintain healthy lifestyle behaviors.
- Promote the well-being of the whole person by empowering people with the knowledge, skills and spirit to take responsibility for personal, family and community health.



2021 Board of Education

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Secretary Dr. Christopher Lee
Treasurer Colleen Worden
Trustee David Brumbaugh
Trustee Ahmed Ismail
Trustee Lisa Papas
Dr. Gary C. Niehaus, Superintendent