

# Partners in Learning

Our Mission: Promote Innovation → Maximize Potential → Embrace Community

Spring 2017

## Inside This Issue:

Board of Education bulletin.....	p. 2
Gold Card spring calendar.....	p. 3
Strategic planning update.....	p. 5
Summer programs .....	p. 6
21st century pilot update.....	p. 7
GPFPE gala and award.....	p. 8

## Please be our guest

GPPSS invites you to explore our neighborhood schools through a personalized tour at your convenience. Simply contact any of our principals or call the Superintendent's Office at 313-432-3003.

## Distinguished Employees

The Board of Education annually recognizes our distinguished employees who go above and beyond to enhance the learning environment for our students. Please help us thank this year's class: Andrea Bolton (Pierce), Karen Cole (Mason), Barbara Davis (Maire), Ryan Francis (Mason), Janette High (Defer), Liz Michaels (North), Bryan Peterson (Administration Building), Jill Rotole (South), Rebecca Ruth (North), and Lisa Sickelsteel (Kerby).

## District rankings

Last fall we reported both high schools ranked in the top 5% of the nation according to the Washington Post, and South in the top 2% according to U.S. News. Recently, GPPSS was ranked #3 district in the state, our teachers were ranked #1, and all of our elementary schools placed in the top 10% according to Niche.com.



Local Rotarians have been using their lunch hour to support lunchtime enrichment activities at Poupard Elementary School.



## Promoting our amazing public schools

When I moved into this community I told every group I met that my door is always open. I mean that. And I have worked diligently visit community organizations, sharing the wonderful news about our school system. I have also actively invited our community into our schools.

I want to thank all of you who have attended a concert or sporting event, our open house, a PTO "friendraiser" or the GPFPE gala. Many of you have come to our Town Halls or volunteered with me in our schools. The photos above show local Rotarians at lunchtime enrichment. That is just one example of community investment. We could not experience the success we do without that support. I hope you realize how remarkable it is when several of our elementary schools have 100% participation in parent teacher conferences. Lines at middle and high school conferences may seem daunting when you are waiting to connect face to face with

the dedicated teachers who spend so much time with our youth, but that shows me you care.

The district does not take that support lightly. GPPSS is making a concerted effort to recognize those who help in many different ways. Based on input at Town Halls, GPPSS is also being more direct in asking for support from foundations and other organizations to continue to enhance our community and learning environment. Coupled with that, you will continue to see expanded transparency in budgeting and enhanced communication across the district.

I will continue to meet daily with people and groups to solve problems, gather insight from different perspectives, and share the wonderful things happening in our schools. Help us continue to improve and share what's right in public education.

— Dr. Gary C. Niehaus,  
Superintendent

# BOARD BULLETIN

Every January, the Grosse Pointe Public School Board of Education holds elections for all of its officers. I am pleased to announce our Vice President is Margaret Weertz, our Secretary is Cindy Pangborn, and our Treasurer is Judy Gafa. I am honored my colleagues have chosen me to be President. Along with Trustees Ahmed Ismail, Kathy Abke, and Christopher Profeta, we understand that the quality of our public schools is intrinsically tied to the health of our community, and we are prepared to tackle the challenges that the District faces and celebrate its many great accomplishments.

The Board's work focuses on these key areas: hiring and evaluating our superintendent, establishing and maintaining a balanced budget, and setting policy that furthers the District's vision and goals. Trust is an integral part of each aspect of this equation. Our community trusts the Board to reflect its values in the education of our students. Our Board trusts the superintendent, as well as his administration and staff, to carry out the day-to-day operations of the District in line with the District's goals and vision. This requires communication and transparency.

Over the coming year, you will continue to see transparency in our budget development process from establishing parameters in January to approving a balanced budget in June. You will see transparency in our policy meetings, and the way we publicly review and approve changes to remain current with state and federal legislation while protecting local control. You will also see transparency in our goals as we continue to implement, evaluate and refine our Strategic Plan.



Back Row:  
Cindy Pangborn, Brian Summerfield, Ahmed Ismail  
Front Row:  
Kathleen Abke, Judy Gafa, Margaret Weertz, Chris Profeta

*Photo courtesy of John Francis, Supervising Editor of The Tower*

As you may know, the Board adopted a District Strategic Plan in December of 2015, in support of our community's expectation of excellence in our public schools. I am proud to have been one of the 43 parents, students, staff, administrators and community members that worked together to develop this plan. We also adopted new vision and mission statements.

Our Vision: One GP – where everyone learns, every day  
Our Mission: Promote Innovation -> Maximize Potential -> Embrace Community

I encourage you to read through the Strategic Plan. It is posted on the front page of the district website and available in the superintendent's office. Then consider how you, as a community member, vested in the continued success of our public schools, can support our vision and mission.

An important focus lately has been the guiding principles that specifically speak to diversity, equity and inclusion. In February, the Diversity Plan that was developed out of the Strategic Plan was presented to the community at a diversity meeting and at a televised board meeting. On March 8th, the League of Women Voters held a public forum where our administration walked the community through the

District's Diversity Plan, and a prestigious panel of experts from the Office of Civil Rights, the local NAACP, Wayne County Regional Educational Service Agency, and Clark Hill PLC, were available to answer questions. All of those groups have been working with District staff and students to develop and implement the Diversity Plan to fulfill the District's vision and mission.

As our Strategic Plan states, "Together, we will promote innovation, maximize the potential, and embrace community." By embracing community, we ensure every student has the academic, problem solving, and social skills to be successful today and in their future.

*- Brian Summerfield, President  
Grosse Pointe Board of Education*

## Board Meetings

Meetings start at 7 p.m. in the Brownell Middle School Multipurpose Room, unless noted. Dates are:

- March 13
- April 10, 24
- May 8, 22
- June 12, 26
- July 10, 24
- August 14, 28
- September 11, 25
- October 9, 23
- November 13, 27
- December 11





Here is the finale from Brownell Middle School's rendition of *Cinderella*.

Photo courtesy of Todd Whitefleet

## Gold Card calendar demonstrates commitment to the arts

Free or reduced price admission to various athletic functions and dramatic and musical productions is our way of thanking local senior citizens for the support they have provided the school system. If you are 60 years of age or older, a resident of the district, and wish to obtain a Gold Card, please call 313-432-3003. Copies of the calendar are available at the Board Office, 389 St. Clair, Grosse Pointe, as well as at the public libraries and at SOC. Events are subject to change; please check the website for the latest information.

Date	Time	Event	Location
3/9-11	7:30 PM	North Musical "The Addams Family"	Performing Arts Center, 707 Vernier
3/11	1:00 PM	North Musical "The Addams Family"	Performing Arts Center
3/16	7:00 PM	North Instrumental Concert	Performing Arts Center
3/29	7:00 PM	North Vocal "Great Works" Concert	Assumption Church
4/12	7:00 PM	Parcells Pre-Festival Instrumental Concert	Parcells Auditorium
4/24	7:00 PM	Brownell Vocal Preview Concert	Brownell MPR
4/27-29	7:30 PM	South Musical "Hairspray"	Performing Arts Center
4/30	2:00 PM	South Musical "Hairspray"	Performing Arts Center
5/1	6:00 PM	Honors Band and Orchestra Concert	Brownell MPR
5/16-17	7:00 PM	North Spring Vocal Concert	Performing Arts Center
5/16	7:00 PM	South Instrumental Spring Concert	Brownell MPR
5/18	7:00 PM	Brownell Spring Instrumental Concert	Brownell MPR
5/18	7:00 PM	Pierce Spring Vocal Concert	Pierce Auditorium
5/24	7:00 PM	Pierce Spring Instrumental Concert	Pierce Auditorium
5/25-27	7:00 PM	South Choirs "Broadway" Concert	Performing Arts Center
5/31	7:00 PM	Brownell Spring Vocal Concert	Brownell MPR
6/1	7:00 PM	North Drama One Acts	Performing Arts Center
6/1	7:00 PM	Parcells Spring Vocal Concert	Parcells Auditorium
6/2	7:00 PM	North-South Outdoor Instrumental Concert	South Front Lawn
6/6	7:00 PM	Parcells Spring Instrumental Concert	Parcells Auditorium
6/6	7:00 PM	South Tri-M Concert	South Auditorium

\*Performing Arts Center (PAC) on North High School's campus, 707 Vernier. \*Brownell MPR is the multi-purpose room, 260 Chalfonte. Tickets for South events may be obtained at Posterity: A Gallery in the Village or online. North tickets may be purchased at Wild Birds.



## Spring Break 2017

To align with the Wayne, Oakland and Macomb County common calendars, GPPSS spring break 2017 was changed to the first week of April.

## GPPSS swim programs

GPPSS continues to offer swimming and aquatic classes for all ages. You can register online at [www.gpschools.org](http://www.gpschools.org) or call 313-432-3084 for details.

## Family Center partnership

GPPSS continues to partner with The Family Center to provide programming ranging from “Getting Ready for Kindergarten” to “A Mindfulness Approach to Parenting.” Visit [familycenterweb.org](http://familycenterweb.org) or call 313-432-3832 for details.

## Curriculum review matrix

The Educational Programs Leadership Council (EPLC) is a collaborative group of teachers, administrators, parents, community members, and students. Organization of the EPLC process involves a systematic flow of ideas, discussion, and action to present and future curricular and instructional needs. Recommendations of each review team go through EPLC before Board approval. Each curricular area is in one of these phases:

- 1) Study: Current curricula are assessed. Best practices and technologies in the field are researched, investigated and discussed. *ELA, Lifeskills, Drama, Multi-Tiered Systems of Support (MTSS)*
- 2) Construction of goals/objectives and programs: Subject area goals, objectives and standards are written and aligned. Units of study, instructional resources, and model assessments are determined. Pilot materials are established and implemented. *Math, Science, Art, Counseling, PE, Tech, TV*
- 3) Implementation *Social Studies*
- 4 & 5) Maintenance

# We are #OneGP



Dr. & Mrs. Cotton were thanked by the CFOs of the South Maker Space.



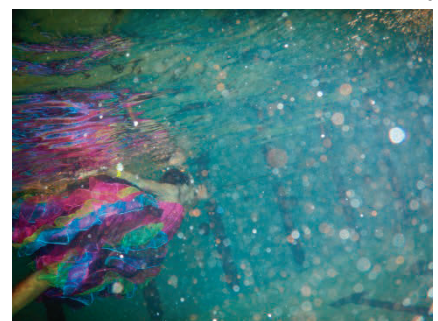
The Raymond & Jane Cracchiolo Foundation supported the South Commercial Foods Program  
Photos above courtesy of John Francis



Every one of the public safety departments assisted with our evacuation drills. Here they helped the students at Barnes.



Students like these from Ferry represent our district at competitions ranging from Destination Imagination to Robotics to Solar Car.



Students in choir, band, orchestra, pep band and jazz band share their talent in concerts, competitions and events. These are students from Pierce Middle School.

# Ten facts about our GPPSS budget

District officials are often asked to explain the complicated world of school funding. Here are 10 facts about school budgets that you can help share at little league games, the barber shop and the line at the grocery store.

**1** By law, the district is required to publish and present a balanced budget by June 30th each year.

**2** Budget development begins in earnest this time of year with parameters set by the Board of Education that the administration uses to develop the proposed budget.

**3** Working documents are shared at each month's televised board meeting on Comcast 20/902 and livestreamed on our website under the School Board dropdown - click *Watch a Board Meeting* for archives.

**4** GPPSS encourages community feedback. Ideas are welcome at [budget@gpschools.org](mailto:budget@gpschools.org), at board meetings, at Town Halls, or by contacting Deputy Superintendent Lisa Abbey.

**5** Since Proposal A passed in the early 1990s, school property taxes no longer stay in GPPSS but go to the state and are redistributed back to districts on a per pupil basis. That is why student count days in October and February are so critical.

**6** If we do not pass the local Hold Harmless and Non-Homestead millages (which we typically do by

a 70-30 margin) we would lose approximately 25% of our budget.

**7** Our audit reports are exceptional; we continue to receive

unqualified opinions (the best possible) to our financial reports.

**8** Roughly 8 of every 10 dollars or 80%

of our budget is focused on employee costs.

**9** Over 25% of our employee costs go to the state mandated retirement system (MPSERS).

**10** Fund equity is one indicator of the financial health of a school district. Simply stated, fund equity represents the excess of a district's assets over its liabilities. Generally, the more equity a district has, the less short-term borrowing a district has to do for cash flow purposes. It is the goal of the Board of Education to maintain a fund equity of not less than 10% of the General Fund Budget.

Look for more budget information in our next district newsletter and on our website using the directions above. Printed documents are also available in the superintendent's office upon request.



## Partners in Learning, page 5

### Art shows coming soon

South's Art Show is March 22-25 in the South Multi-Purpose Room. Wednesday-Friday: 8 a.m.-4 p.m. and 5-8 p.m. Saturday: 10-2 p.m. Awards Night: Friday 7-8 p.m.

North's Art Show will be May 15-17 in the lobby of the Christian A. Fenton Performing Arts Center, 707 Vernier. Monday-Tuesday 8 a.m.-4 p.m. and 5-8 p.m. Wednesday 8 a.m.-4 p.m. Awards Night: Tuesday

### College Night 3/27 at South

This year it will be at Grosse Pointe South, 11 Grosse Pointe Boulevard, 6-8 p.m. on Monday, March 27. Come meet representatives from colleges and universities. Ask questions and narrow down your search.

### Annual survey opens soon

Per board policy, the district conducts an annual customer satisfaction survey. Please watch for its announcement and take a few moments to use that online survey as another method of communication with our district. Thank you.

### Project Find and Child Find

If your child age birth to six years is experiencing developmental delays, "Don't worry, but don't wait." Contact Stefanie Hayes, Director of Student Services at 313-432-3856. 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 call 313-432-3856.

### Graduation Dates

Graduation for the class of 2017 will be held at 6:30 p.m.: South - Wednesday, June 14, on South's front lawn North - Thursday, June 15, Guido Regelbrugge Soccer Field



## Partners in Learning, page 6

### Come to Safety Town

Safety Town was created to equip our young learners entering kindergarten and first grade for a lifetime of safe living. Your Safety Town camper will be educated in traffic, bicycle, home, water and fire safety, as well as litter prevention and recycling.

Parents are encouraged to also get involved. An informational meeting will be offered once during each two-week session where parents learn safety tips to help their child get the most out of their Safety Town experience. Families can choose morning (9-11:30 a.m.) or afternoon (12:30-3 p.m.) sessions for \$165. Four summer sessions are offered. Visit our website or call 313-432-3009 for details.

### Explore Camp O' Fun

Located at Ferry Elementary (748 Roslyn, GPW), GPPSS summer day camp runs for 10 weeks, from 7:15 a.m.-6:15 p.m., Monday-Friday. You can come once a week, for one week or for the whole summer. It includes fantastic events, field trips, and daily activity options including swimming! Three smaller camps run alongside each another:

- **Cubhouse** is for campers entering kindergarten. Guided by counselors, campers enjoy art, science, sports and more in addition to our all camp events and field trips. We also offer a built-in story/rest time.
- **Playhouse** is geared for 1st-3rd graders who chose from a variety of hands-on, age-appropriate activities in sports, arts, and sciences that promote team building and creative exploration, and that foster a sense of independence.
- **Clubhouse** is designed with 4th grade-middle school campers in mind. Campers select daily activities from a series of sessions that encourage skill-based development, team work and decision-making. Call 313-432-3009 for details.

## Summer learning and fun

Watch [www.gpschools.org](http://www.gpschools.org) for information on summer school and camps. Details are in development now. Cost TBD if not listed.

### Musical Theatre Workshop

Dates:

- June 19-23: 9 a.m.-12:30 p.m.
- June 26-27: 9 a.m.-1 p.m.
- June 28-29: 9 a.m.-2 p.m.
- June 30: 10 a.m. & 7 p.m. shows

Place: Brownell Middle School

Contact: [Heather.Albrecht@gpschools.org](mailto:Heather.Albrecht@gpschools.org) and Michelle Stackpoole

Description: Students will participate in a musical production program that promotes positive risk taking, self-discipline, and teamwork. Students learn aspects of musical theater including: dance, drama, music, script exploration and character development.

### Camp Invention

Dates: June 26-June 30

Place: Brownell Middle School

Cost: \$260

Grades: entering 1st-6th

Register: [www.campinvention.org](http://www.campinvention.org)

Contact: [Molly.Collins@gpschools.org](mailto:Molly.Collins@gpschools.org) or call 800-968-4332

Description: Create the ultimate Spy Gadget Alarm Box to keep treasures secure; fling, fly, and float through high-energy air battles while using physics; prepare a new planet for human habitation; explore patents, hear how to launch a business, and present products to mock investors; think on your feet in high-energy games, and more!

### GP Summer Music Festival

Dates: July 10-21

Time: Mon.-Fri., 9 a.m.-12 noon

Place: Brownell Middle School

Contact: James Gross

Description: Open to all currently enrolled GPPSS Band and Orchestra students in grades 5-8, this exciting and affordable local program

provides an opportunity for students to further develop their instrumental music skills. Extension courses to Band & Orchestra include Jazz Band and Fiddling.

### Grosse Pointe Summer Choir

Dates: August 14-18

Time: Monday-Thursday 8 a.m.-12 noon, Friday 8 a.m.-2 p.m.

Concerts: 6 & 8 p.m., Friday

Place: Brownell Middle School

Grades: 4-12

Contact: Carolyn Gross

Description: 25th annual GP Summer Choir provides opportunity to further develop singing skills in a fun and challenging week of choral rehearsals. Our guest conductor is Tesfa Wondemagegnehu from the Minneapolis Public Radio.

### Elementary Summer Learning

Dates: July 10-August 4, registration and details online after spring break

Grades: Entering K-6

Location: Richard Elementary

Cost: varies, see district website

Contact: Andrea Lappin

Description: Sample elementary courses have included: FUNdamentals of Reading, Math Building Blocks, Art Exploration, and Junior Scientists. Sixth grade courses include: advanced math prep, and step-up courses in reading, math, and study skills. Shuttle offered to and from Camp O' Fun.

### Secondary Summer School

Dates: July 10-August 4, registration and details online after spring break

Location: North High School

Cost: varies, see district website

Contact: Geoffrey Young

Description: Looking for credit recovery, credit enhancement, or summer enrichment? Visit the Summer Learning Programs link on the Grosse Pointe Public Schools web site for more information.

# 21st Century pilot classrooms in action

Our mission as set forth in the strategic plan is to promote innovation, maximize potential and embrace community. The goal is to prepare students for future success in college or the workplace. Within our strategic plan, the district was asked to create a blueprint for future ready classrooms. Feedback from surveys, town halls and the strategic planning process asked us to listen to our community and ask teachers what tools complement and enhance our strong, local curriculum.

So this fall we piloted three 21st Century Classrooms at Kerby, Maire and Mason Elementary Schools. Future pilots will run at our middle and high schools. For these classrooms, staff worked with colleagues and vendors to identify furniture and equipment to test in *our* schools with *our* curriculum and *our* highly qualified staff. Students are testing:

- desks and chairs that facilitate



group work, as in today's colleges and workplaces

- additional smart boards
- carts of chrome books and iPads used for everything from writing blogs to math testing – providing instant scores for teachers to adjust assignments and work groups to appropriately challenge each student
- mixed in with the textbooks and traditional learning tools you see across the district.

Teachers, parents and community members have been encouraged to visit these classrooms during open houses, conferences and by appointment. This is a pilot. The district needs to explore what works here for specific age groups, before adjusting the long-term budget to meet the needs of today's students.

## Are you green with envy?

In response to parent and community requests, the Grosse Pointe Public School System is participating in a district-wide fundraiser with Local Motion Green at the Ecology Center to place plastic recycling bins on each ball field and school property. Schools are receiving matching donations through a grant from the Worthington Family Foundation, bringing the cost per school bin down to \$200.

Local businesses interested in sponsoring a bin can do so for \$500 (no matching funds are available) and in return will have their logo placed on the bin. The bins are estimated to last 10 years.

You can give online at [www.gpschools.org](http://www.gpschools.org). Under the *Parents/Community*

tab in the burgundy bar click *Green Team* for the online form and specify the school you'd like to donate to, or call 313-432-3007 for details. All donations support our Michigan Green School efforts.



The Louisa St. Clair Chapter, Daughters of the American Revolution, sponsored a bin at South High School. Peggy King Scully, Regent, is pictured with their bin in the Student Commons (former pool).

## Partners in Learning, page 7

### Kindergarten: enroll now

If you missed Kindergarten Info night at each local elementary school you can watch the video on our website (click Kindergarten in the far right column). Please establish residency by April 24 for Kindergarten (April 13 for Young Fives) to participate in a welcome to Kindergarten activity at your school May 2. Call 313-432-3083 with questions. More info is online.

### Young Fives continues

Young Fives is an alternative for children whose parents feel they are not yet ready for a traditional kindergarten experience. This district program is housed at Defer, Mason, and Poupard. The natural progression from Young Fives is to Kindergarten at their neighborhood school. Growing physically, intellectually, socially, and emotionally, while establishing a safe culture for learning at a developmentally appropriate pace, continues to be our focus. Enroll through the district residency office by April 13 to be in the Young Fives lottery.

### GPPSS Preschool

The district expanded its tuition-based preschool options last year to include half-day preschool for 3-year-olds (2 days) and 4-year-olds (3 days) at Richard and Monteith. Full day preschool is now offered at Barnes, Ferry, Maire, Monteith and Trombly. GPPSS will add programs based on demand, while remaining cost-neutral to the district's balanced budget.

### Multi-Age Program

The district's Multi-age program for grades 1-3 is an intentional mix of various ages, readiness levels, learning styles and personalities with instruction flowing from the basis of continuous progress. Call 313-432-5003 to schedule a tour of the classroom housed at Trombly Elementary, 820 Beaconsfield.



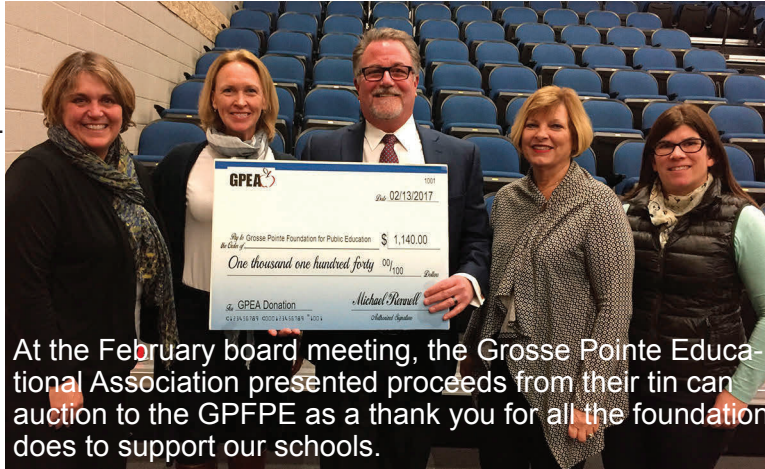
# GPFPE honored for excellence

The Grosse Pointe Foundation for Public Education (GPFPE) was awarded the Excellence in Nonprofit Activity Award from the Grosse

Pointe Chamber of Commerce. The award is part of the Pointer of Distinction Awards given at the chamber's annual Membership dinner in January.

Through the generosity of donors, the GPFPE has been able to give back more than \$2.5 million in grants to our Grosse Pointe public schools. These grants bring our community together to fund extraordinary educational programs for our children. Grant applications are due October 1 and March 1 of each year. To learn more about the Grosse Pointe Foundation for Public Education, call 313-432-3058 or visit [www.gpfpe.org](http://www.gpfpe.org).

Together we will continue *enriching, engaging and inspiring our future*. Thank you to all supporters and donors!



At the February board meeting, the Grosse Pointe Educational Association presented proceeds from their tin can auction to the GPFPE as a thank you for all the foundation does to support our schools.

## Please save the date



The GPFPE's Annual Spring Gala is set for Saturday, May 6th, 2017. If you'd like to be a Corporate Sponsor for the event, please contact Juli Rybicki at [rybicki4@gmail.com](mailto:rybicki4@gmail.com) or call the GPFPE office at 313-432-3058.

## Partners in Learning, page 8

### National Merit Finalists

GPPSS is honored that seven students have been named National Merit Finalists. From North we have Annelise M. Hofmann, Lindsey A. Hoshaw, and Adam J. Schreck. From South we have Jack C. Burgoyne, Kurt R. Huebner, David G. Scupholm, and Kara Semanison. With 1.6 million entrants each year based on their PSAT scores, finalists are among the top 1% in the nation.

### Register today

If you have a student entering our schools, please walk in to the enrollment office inside the administration building, 389 St. Clair, Grosse Pointe, 8 a.m.-4 p.m., Monday-Friday, or call 313-432-3083 to schedule an appointment outside those hours.

All forms are online at [www.gpschools.org](http://www.gpschools.org). To tour a GPPSS school call the school office or 313-432-3003.

*Note: All families with students entering kindergarten, sixth and ninth grades are required to verify their residency this summer before they can obtain their schedule. A list of required documents is online.*



### 2017 Board of Education

President Brian Summerfield  
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Secretary Cindy Pangborn  
Treasurer Judy Gafa  
Trustee Kathy Abke  
Trustee Ahmed Ismail  
Trustee Christopher Profeta

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