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## Grants Further Social and Emotional Training for 800+ GHAPS Staff

**GRAND HAVEN, MI** – Taking care of students is a top priority at Grand Haven Area Public Schools (GHAPS). GHAPS also recognizes the importance of taking care of its people—the staff on the front lines who interact with students on a daily basis. Now, thanks to two grants, GHAPS will provide ongoing training in resilience and trauma-informed practices to more than 800 staff members, beginning this month.

“Teachers cannot teach if they are not taken care of,” says Mary Jane Evink, Executive Director of Instructional Services. “Conversely, students cannot learn if teachers are not cared for. In our 2019 Annual Needs Assessment, the number one need as identified among our teachers was to become literate in trauma-informed instruction and to become better equipped in understanding the social and emotional health of our students and staff.”

GHAPS will implement a train-the-trainer model to teach all staff members within the district. The goal is to train a group of 4-6 individuals within each school building who will become experts, and they will then train and support other staff within their respective schools. “Educators will practice and learn the skills and protocol necessary to build a strategic plan for their buildings, with the goal of growing our practices and systems of support,” says Evink.

According to Evink, when adults take care of children with trauma, they carry some of that trauma with them. “We want to create a ‘ready-to-learn’ environment,” she says. “There is a compelling need to take care of adult staff. They are all struggling, too. Teachers, bus drivers, food service, custodians, among others. We want to make sure they bounce back from trauma stress.”

GHAPS applied for and was awarded a Michigan Department of Education Competitive Title II Grant in the amount of \$29,000, which will fund multiple days of training and coaching. Additionally, the Grand Haven Area Community Foundation provided \$12,000 to help sustain and support the program.

Resilience training will commence for the core group of educators February 12, 26 and March 3.

Grand Haven Area Public Schools is a district of distinction for students in preschool through 12<sup>th</sup> grade. With a goal of providing exceptional educational experiences, GHAPS is committed to success for all students and strives to provide exemplary programs and opportunities to meet the diverse needs of students.

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**For more information about this story, contact King Media at 517.333.2048.**