

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

DATE: March 10, 2020

Contact: Coleen King

Phone: 517.333.2048

Email: coleen@kingmedianow.com

Website: KingMediaNow.com

**Grand Haven Schools Takes a Research-Based Approach to
Kindergarten Literacy**

GRAND HAVEN, MI – Early reading proficiency is one of the key indicators for students' future success. In kindergarten and young fives classrooms throughout Grand Haven Area Public Schools (GHAPS), teachers use research-based practices to create a language-rich environment that promotes literacy for their youngest learners.

"Students access language through conversation," explains Mary Jane Evink, Executive Director of Instructional Services. "We focus on making our classrooms joyful places to read and build community around shared experiences."

Classroom book boxes contain a wide selection of books for various reading levels, including many that are familiar favorites. Even before students can read, teachers encourage them to select books they know, then use the pictures to tell the story by memory. This approximation of reading builds confidence and encourages students to enjoy the process of storytelling.

Teachers also help students organize their own "reading play dates" in the classroom, which mimic adult book clubs. As students plan their reading activities, they also learn how to negotiate, be flexible and take turns with each other. Fostering this language-rich experience makes the process of planning the play dates just as crucial to literacy development as the actual reading activities themselves.

"Parents are often surprised how much collaboration goes into literacy," says Evink. "Our teachers intentionally incorporate conversation skills into literacy lessons and actively encourage developmental play among students."

Building literacy requires three separate curricula that all work together: reading, writing and phonics. In kindergarten, focused lessons are ten minutes or less so students can quickly begin activities. Students work in small groups and receive individual attention from their teachers.

GHAPS develops instructional practices for literacy based on the Michigan Association of Intermediate School Administrators (MAISA) General Education Leadership Network (GLEN). The recommended classroom practices were developed through extensive research by educational leaders.

[Grand Haven Area Public Schools](http://GrandHavenAreaPublicSchools.org) is a district of distinction for students in preschool through 12th 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.

###