

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

January 27, 2021

Contact: Kim Brown
Phone: 616.263.2390
Email: kim@kingmedianow.com
Website: KingMediaNow.com

K I N G M E D I A

1555 Watertower Place, Suite 200
East Lansing, MI 48823
517.333.2048

kingmedianow.com

Grand Haven Elementary Students Help Firefighters with Gear Efficiency

GRAND HAVEN, MI – Grand Haven elementary students had the opportunity to support their local heroes by partnering with the Grand Haven Township Fire Rescue to help with their gear efficiency. The collaboration was part of the district's "Homegrown" program, which combines design thinking and project-based learning, pairing students with local companies and organizations to solve real-life challenges related to their line of business.

Last semester, students from Peach Plains Elementary, Robinson Elementary and Rosy Mound Elementary were asked their driving question for the project: "How can Grand Haven Township Fire Rescue more efficiently dry their turnout gear after a fire?" From there, the students worked through the "creative sequence" stages, including observation, investigation, incubation, solution and validation, to come up with their solutions to present to the fire department.

"The district's Homegrown program focuses on elementary students and encouraging design thinking at an early age," said Andrew Ratke, GHAPS STEM teacher. "It takes project-based learning one step further. We foster deep thinking within our classrooms while nurturing business connections within our community. During this project I was honored to be a part of both aspects as the GHAPS Homegrown facilitator, but also as an on-call firefighter/EMT sharing information and experiences with the students to help them throughout the project."

Students researched what a firefighter's job require and how they currently dry turnout gear. Videos were filmed at the fire station to assist with investigation, including areas of the building, trucks and interviews with firefighters. Once students had a good understanding of the challenge, they brainstormed ideas and narrowed down solutions. To complete the project, students created prototypes of their solution and pitched them virtually. In total, the project was two weeks long and the majority was done virtually.

"From building the prototype to crafting solutions to pitching their ideas through Flipgrid videos, students enjoyed every aspect of the challenge," says Mary Larson, 1st grade teacher at Robinson Elementary. "Projects like this are not only fun, but help students build multiple skills in a purposeful, meaningful setting. This type of learning encourages all voices to be heard as they work their way through the solution process. Teachers and parents learn a lot as well. Problems or situations may be better solved by children as sometimes they're better at thinking outside the box."

Project-based learning programs like Homegrown provide students with exciting opportunities to develop and build their communication, problem solving and design skills at an early age. They learn how to process a problem and figure out the tools to find a solution. Through the program, GHAPS students have had the opportunity to work with multiple local businesses and organizations, including the City of Grand Haven, Health Pointe, Herman Miller, Tri-Cities Historical Museum and Williams & Works.

Grand Haven Area Public Schools 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.

###

For more information about this story, contact King Media at 616.263.2390.