

Education Case Study

# GRAND RAPIDS PUBLIC SCHOOLS BECOMES FIRST SCHOOL DISTRICT IN MICHIGAN TO ‘RELEAF’ PAPER



Grand Rapids Public Schools (GRPS) is Michigan’s fifth largest public school district and the third largest employer in the City of Grand Rapids, serving nearly 17,000 students with 2,700 employees. As a school district home to an international base of students--representing 55 countries and 54 native languages--the global nature of PrintReleaf’s reforestation solution particularly resonates.

In addition to international representation and interests, eight of the 43 GRPS buildings are green-built and five are LEED certified; making GRPS a leader in the state and nation on green-built schools.

All GRPS buildings connected to the PrintReleaf Exchange (PRX) in July 2015 to prepare for the 2015-16 school year and as part of district-wide sustainability initiatives.

Quick Facts	
Industry:	Pre-K to Grade 12 Education
Location:	Grand Rapids, MI
Pages Printed Annually:	~36,000,000
Trees Planted Annually:	~4,320
Reforestation Projects:	Madagascar
Key Benefits:	Promotes student global awareness; Supplements Environmental Science education, Complements District-wide sustainability measures; Positions GRPS as a leader in green initiatives across the state of Michigan

## About PrintReleaf

Creating a global standard for sustainable paper consumption, PrintReleaf guarantees to reforest a customer’s paper consumption. The PrintReleaf Exchange [PRX] is a patented software platform that measures a customer’s paper consumption and automatically plants the equivalent number of trees across a global network of reforestation projects.

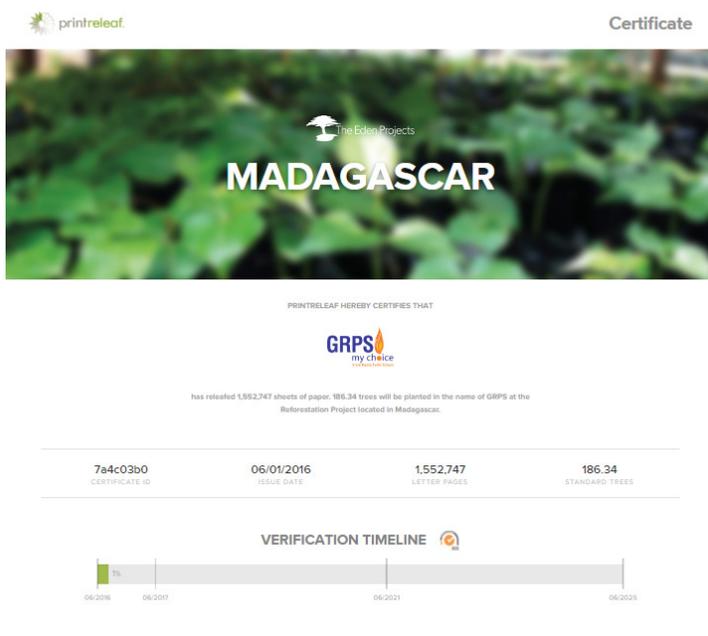
## The Challenge

In 2014, an energy audit was completed on 10 of the district's 43 buildings through the Rebuild Michigan program administered by the Michigan Department of Energy. The total cost of energy for all buildings in that year was nearly \$491k. Faced with state-wide cuts to public education funding, as well as the need to remain solvent, GRPS deepened its commitment to sustainable practices as a forward-thinking means of cost reduction.

## The Approach

With PrintReleaf, GRPS has a scalable solution that regularly transmits page count data into PrintReleaf's software platform where GRPS' paper footprint is represented in both monthly and lifetime values. Every month, PrintReleaf's platform automatically calculates and converts GRPS' paper consumption into equivalent forest impact. The equivalent biomass of the District's consumption, measured in trees, is then automatically planted into GRPS' chosen forest project; Madagascar.

PrintReleaf works with SGS International – a leading global measurement and verification company – as its certifying body to audit reforestation projects and ensure the accurate number of trees are planted and survive. Certificates and reporting are provided back to GRPS from within the PrintReleaf customer portal so that GRPS has ongoing tracking and visibility.



## The Impact

GRPS aptly chose Arbor Day to announce its commitment to 'releaf' all paper consumption. At the time of the announcement, PrintReleaf had already 'releafed' 3500 trees in the designated reforestation project locations.

Several students offered statements on the importance of trees in their own lives, especially as it relates to the harmful impact their generation will face caused by deforestation. As they read their statements to the media, it became clear that PrintReleaf provides a tangible way for students to learn about and support global reforestation projects.

Superintendent Teresa Weatherall Neal underscored the importance of the PrintReleaf partnership, as it supplements the overall sustainability initiatives that the District holds dear, stating, "GRPS is committed to green practices, both within our community and throughout the world. We look forward to monitoring the impact PrintReleaf has on reforestation."