



The Howler

The Principal's Piece

Dear GMCS Families and Friends,

Our first quarter theme revolved around growth and success.

I am proud to announce a 15-point increase in our School Performance Profile, which demonstrates our academic performance! This is a tremendous success and it happened because of teamwork, dedication, determination, and best practices. It is important to note that we as a Montessori school are not fixated on summative assessments. However, since we are a Public Charter School, we must demonstrate to our authorizer and to Pennsylvania Department of Education that we offer high-quality, research-based education, and they determine that through our SPP score.

We are at an all-time high in student enrollments. We now are a school family of 200 students! Since the 2015/2016 school year, our enrollment has grown 35%!

This year, we are excited to offer Montessori seminars to inform and educate all about Montessori education! Our first one took place earlier this month and focused on "Raising Montessori Minded Kids". We have three more this school year and I hope you find time to attend at least one of these.

January 8: "Montessori Learning Styles"

January 24: "Difference Between Montessori and Traditional Public Schools: What We Are as a Blend"

April 11: "Montessori Core Principles and Philosophy"

Sincerely,

Faye Pleso, MEd, PhD



From the Board

Board Vacancies – Did You Know?

We are a Board made up of student family members and community volunteers all giving a little time each month to help keep the school growing and going strong. **We need your help!**

Any time that you can give, any involvement you are able to make – and your commitment can be flexible as the Board understands how busy our families and lives are – would help keep the school we all love moving in the right direction.

Volunteerism is a crucial part of the Montessori Philosophy and we need all family members – parents, guardians, grandparents – to play a part in any way they can.

No matter what your background, availability, or experience there is a place for you on the Board! The Board is currently looking to fill two positions. Please email board@gettysburgmontessoricharter.org to find out how to become part of our amazing school's governing body!



2017

Important Reminders:

- When writing a note to school, please include your child's First Name, Last Name & Date.
- Please be sure to check the lost and found, there are quite a few items there.
- As the weather starts to get colder, please be sure to dress your child appropriately for outdoor recess.

Dates to Remember:

- **Friday, November 3rd**
Movie Night, 6-8p Pete's Dragon
- **Sunday, November 5th**
BINGO 1-4pm
- **Thursday, November 9th**
12:00 Noon DISMISSAL
- **Friday, November 10th**
NO SCHOOL, Teacher
- **November 22nd-27th**
NO SCHOOL

Upcoming Board Meetings

GMCS Board meetings are open to the public and we encourage you to attend. Upcoming board meetings will be held at 888 Coleman Rd. at 7:00 pm on the following dates:

- Tuesday, November 28
- Tuesday, December 12
- Tuesday, January 30
- Tuesday, February 27
- Tuesday, March 27
- Tuesday, April 24
- Tuesday, May 29, 2018
- Tuesday, June 26, 2018
- Tuesday, July 31, 2018
- Tuesday, August 28, 2018

Classroom Updates

Kindergarten

Mrs. Edmond & Mrs. Lawrence - It has been an exciting start to our school year! We have been working hard on learning rules, routines, and procedures in our classroom. We have had some great discussions on our four Respect Rules: respect self, respect others, respect environment and respect materials. We continue to practice how to choose a work, place it on a rug, work with it gently, and return it to the right spot when finished. We are practicing how to be independent and make good choices during work time.

In Wonders Reading, we have been reading and discussing weekly topics, including what makes us special, families, what we can do (now that we are getting older), how to be a good friend, shapes, and bugs.

Our sight words so far are: I, can, the, we, see, like (please practice your sight words at home too!)

Letters of the week: Mm, Aa, Pp, Tt, Ss

In Eureka Math, we have learned to count, build, read, write, and find the hidden number partners within the numbers 1-10. We are beginning to explore the connections between these numbers with the phrases "1 more" and "1 less".

All students have enjoyed individualized lessons on Montessori works in math, language, science, geography, and practical life skills, based on their interests, readiness, and abilities.

We will be looking for interesting guest speakers to come and present to the class throughout the year. If you have any special talents, or would like to talk about your job, please contact us!

If you would like to help in the classroom, with field trips, or at our classroom parties, you will need to complete 2 background check clearances. Please ask the main office for instructions for applying for these clearances.

Thank you for your support! -The Kindergarten Team

1st & 2nd

Ms. Cahill We have had a wonderful start to our school year! It is hard to believe it is the end of the first quarter! We have been hard at work learning the routines of the classroom exploring all the wondrous works!

In math, 1st grade has been working on embedding and decoding numbers, counting on, adding on, commutative properties of addition and word problem. Second grade has working addition and subtraction and measurement.

We are continuing with our Reading Wonders program. We are reviewing or introducing new high frequency words, (sight words), vocabulary, reviewing phonics skills, discussing the genre of the text we are reading, text features and story elements. We have also been working types of sentences and punctuation.

In science and social studies we learning about the continents. We have just finished up Africa and are working on North America. Our works are reflecting the study of these areas.

Fall is one of our favorite times of the year! In September had an apple day! We performed apple experiments, read about different kinds of apples and enjoyed apple sauce that we made in class.

We have also enjoyed making our scarecrow, which is currently working hard to raise money for the Gettysburg Soup kitchen!

Mrs. Johnson - It seems like the school year just started and here we are at the end of the first quarter. As we do every year, our first and second graders began the year learning the classroom expectations and routines, taking beginning of the year placement tests, and learning the many works we have on our classroom shelves.

This quarter we have also been practicing grace and courtesy within the classroom and our school. Grace and courtesy lessons involve role plays, group problem – solving lessons, and community meetings to prepare students for social interactions within their environment.

In social studies this year we are traveling the world within our classroom to explore the seven continents. Our first stop was the continent of Africa! Through teacher led lessons/activities, and independent study the students have been able to learn about the people, countries, landmarks, and animals. Our next stop is North America! In addition to our continent study, students have been able to explore the life cycles and parts of seasonal animals, and plants. Another highlight of this quarter was "APPLE DAY". We took the day to learn all about apples and even made applesauce. The kids loved making, smelling, and eating this delicious treat.



In math, first grade has been working on embedding and decomposing numbers, counting on, adding, the commutative property of addition, and word problems. In the not so distant future, we will begin to look at subtraction. Second graders have been busy diving into math as well. They have explored both addition and subtraction within 100 and measurement. Students have had the opportunity to explore nonstandard and standard (centimeters and meters) measurement. They seem to really be enjoying this unit!



We also began our Reading Wonders program. Each week we review or introduce new high frequency words (also known as sight words), vocabulary, review phonics skills, discuss the genre of the text we are reading, the text features, and story elements. Along with this, we have been working on types of sentences, punctuation, subjects and predicates, and combining sentences.

Mr. Stare - Our first quarter of the school year has been a whirl wind of excitement and learning. In our **1st grade** Language Arts class we have been learning all about what we do in school, the places we live, our pets, what we do with our friends, and how our bodies move. 1st graders have been also learning about how to count to 120, writing numbers, place value, and greater than and less than.

2nd Grade has been hard at work this school year as well. In Language Arts they have learned how friends depend on each other, how families around the world are alike and different, how a pet can be a friend, how we care for animals, and what happens when families work together. 2nd grade has also been rocking in math class. We have learned about hundreds, tens, and ones, skip counting, reading and writing numbers, and greater than, less than, and equal too.

This quarter we also learned about Scarecrows. We made a scarecrow to help raise money for the Adams County Homeless Shelter. We then researched the continent of Africa and did a comparison diagram between African Scarecrows and American Scarecrows. The students were really interested that African Scarecrows were made out of bones when American Scarecrows are made out of hay and sticks. We also read the fable The Fox and the Crow that depicts how sneaky crows can be and how we must be just as tricky to make sure that crows don't take our food. We learned that Scarecrows are our way to trick those pesky crows. We wrote about what we would scare if we were scarecrow, how we would scare it, and why we would scare it.

G.M.C.S. had its first ever penny war this school year to raise money for

Classroom Updates

our RTII department. We were lucky enough to meet our goal as a school and we will receive a school wide extra recess. Room 10 was the winner of the Penny War Trophy because we raised the most money and we received the most points in the war. The students voted that they want to have lunch and watch a movie with Dr. Pleso and they wanted to have a PJ day. We were extremely proud of the hard work and donations that the students were able to give. The RTII department appreciated all of their donations.

PENNY WARS



We have been working diligently towards our first Stellar Stones award of the school year. The students are excited to get to pick what award they will get when they accomplish their goal! We have also begun an adventure journal with our classroom dragon Elliot. He has gone on four adventures this school year so far and they have been so much fun to hear about!

3rd & 4th

Mrs. Jan & Mrs. Stough - The students have been introduced to many types of genres, including; literature (fiction), realistic fiction, narrative non-fiction, informational text (nonfiction), expository, biographies, fantasy, and folktales.

The students have also been acquainted with reader's theatre and enjoy practicing reading with expression and performing for their classmates.

This quarter, **third grade** started practicing their multiplication and division skills. The **fourth graders** have reviewed and built upon adding and subtracting skills with regrouping, place value, and rounding. All students have been working on word problem strategies. We encourage all families to practice multiplication flashcards at home.

Along with daily curriculum, Montessori works have been introduced and reviewed for all subjects.

Our reading program does a wonderful job incorporating social studies and science topics. So far the students have read and learned about natural disasters, inventions, landmarks and memorials. The students have also learned about many historical/cultural figures.

This month the students really enjoyed creating a scarecrow to raise funds for different local charities. They also really enjoyed a presentation from Dubb's Karate.

5th & 6th

Ms. Jarvis & Miss. Rickell - Hello All! It is hard to believe first quarter has already come to an end. We have had a jam-packed start to our school year, and it has been a blast! Here is a recap of the many exciting things we have done.

ELA: We are off to a great start in ELA. We have just wrapped up Unit 1, and we are couple weeks into Unit 2. We've worked on many skills including main idea and key details, problem and solution, and compare and contrast. Students are also falling in love with the novels we are using this term. Fifth grade is reading Narnia's The Lion, The Witch, and The Wardrobe as a class. Sixth graders chose to read either Rules or The One and Only Ivan in small groups. It is very fun to watch their excitement throughout this reading experience.

Math: Our students have spent the first part of this year learning new skills and concepts through our Eureka math program. Everyone has worked on math fluency and explaining their thought processes. Fifth grade skills covered include: powers of ten, place value, reading and comparing decimals, and addition, subtraction, multiplication, and division of decimals. The sixth graders worked on exploring ratios and different techniques for solving ratio problems, and using charts, double number lines, and coordinate planes.

Social Studies: As many of you know, we were fortunate enough to start our year with the Artists in Residence program. We learned many different time period dances while also learning about history. Students also learned a great deal about respect for both themselves and for others in the form of their dance partners.

Science: We have started the Embryology unit through 4-H. We learned about the parts of the egg, fertile and infertile eggs, and the life cycle of a chick. Our chicks arrived two weeks ago, and they should be hatching about the time of conferences. If your family is interested in adding a few new, fuzzy members to your family, keep this project in mind!

Some things to look forward to next term include Biography Presentations, Market Day, the Farm Show field trip, and many seasonal activities.

MUSIC

Ms. Wojnarski - Music is the universal language!

Grades K-2 have been exploring songs about fall with apples, leaves and colors! The main musical concept is to keep a steady beat in quarter and eighth notes. We have also begun preparing for the winter concert which will feature songs about snowflakes and snowmen! 1st and 2nd have also learned a folk dance or two that have been really fun! We keep moving!

Grades 3-6 have many wonderful opportunities in music this year! The 3-4 graders are playing recorder in music class, as well as learning to read the notes and rhythms. Several folk dances are also exciting to learn that reinforce the rhythms we are learning. The 5-6 graders have music class with a focus on notes and rhythms also, with an additional option to join a drama or drum class. These additional classes are above and beyond what we do in class. The drama class is preparing several short skits and a dance for the winter concert; and the drum class will be doing some rhythm activities accompanied by our boomwhackers (pitched tubes) that are really neat to play!

It is exciting to work with your children and we look forward to seeing all of their talent shine in the winter concert!

ART

I have enjoyed bringing the GMCS Art program to life! Our students have been creating some amazing Art projects and the final results are absolutely mind blowing! Kindergartners have spent time learning about lines and shapes, by tracing and drawing them, practicing their cutting skills and learning about placement while using glue! First through **sixth graders** have all finished their self portraits, which have turned out amazing! Beyond self portraits, **First and Second graders** have heard the story Where The Wild Things Are and created some really crazy monsters! They are now making some "chilling" fall pictures, which will be blowing their way through the mods soon! **Third through sixth grade** have just begun working on our collaboration project! They are using the monsters, created by our first and second graders, to make their own master pieces. They are currently making plans for their creations, in order to receive the supplies the need!

As the year continues on, I plan to have our students "travel the world", learning about different cultures. I have big plans for March, which is Youth Art Month! There will also be a huge contest opportunity coming in April! Good things are coming our way and I am really looking forward to them!!



SPECIAL EDUCATION

Thank you to the families who joined us on October 18, 2017, for our Parent Information Night. We had an amazing turn out and were provided with informative presentations covering the topics of RTI (Response to Intervention) and Executive Function Strategies (i.e. time management and organization strategies). Our next parent information night is still in the works, but we are hoping to offer topics in January with virtual viewing options. Please stay tuned for information regarding our next Parent Information Night!

Our processes for identifying students who may be eligible for special education services include, but are not limited to, Response to Intervention (RTI), Speech and Language screenings, Occupational Therapy screenings, teacher referrals, and parent requests. Gettysburg Montessori Charter School currently provides Learning Support services, Speech and Language services, Occupational Therapy services, Physical Therapy services and Deaf and Hard of Hearing services. Brochures reviewing the student identification process, the parents request for an evaluation process and additional topics are available to all parents and located on the green shelf in the lobby of our school. For further information, feel free to contact our Special Education Coordinator/Teacher, Rebeka Black, at becky@gettysburgmontessoricharter.org.

RtI

Response to Intervention (RtI) may sound complicated, but it's based on a fairly simple idea. Students in Kindergarten to twelfth grade are participants of the RtI program. The process starts in the classroom (what we call Tier 1), where students receive core instruction (Wonders for reading and Eureka for math). The teacher is keeping and gathering data on the student's performance within the classroom setting. Students performing below grade level may be referred by the classroom teacher for Tier 2 services. These services are performed by the RtI teacher in a small group setting, away from distractions of the regular classroom. Lessons last 30 minutes and students are met with every other day. If students make progress, they may move back to Tier 1, the classroom. If they are not making progress, they may be moved to Tier 3. Tier 3 means that the student will be met with every day for 30-40 minutes with only 1-3 students. RTI isn't a specific program or type of teaching. It's a proactive approach to measuring students' skills and using this data to decide which types of targeted teaching to use. The goal is for the school to intervene, or step in, before anyone falls really far behind.

We would like to thank everyone for participating in the Penny War. As a school we raised \$1,200!! We would like to congratulate Mr. Stare's class on winning in overall points and most amount of money. Thank you again for making this fundraiser successful! We are hoping to do it again next year!

PHYSICAL EDUCATION/HEALTH

Mr. Woodward - Over the past marking period in PE, students in lower elementary have been working on mastering locomotor skills and spatial awareness using a variety of games. Students in **upper elementary** have been continuing to improve upon their soccer skills as well as offensive and defensive strategies in flying disc related activities. Over the course of the next marking period, **grades K through 2nd grade** will be learning throwing and catching fundamentals through an assortment of stations. Towards the end of the marking period, we will move on to parachute games which is always a student favorite. **Grades 3rd through 6th** will be moving on to kickball and community games that promote kicking and catching skills as well as cardiovascular endurance. Later on in the marking period, they will be moving on to Magic Club which is a self progression and achievement unit that highlights throwing and catching skills.

In 3rd through 6th grade health, students will be finishing up their unit on nutrition and move on to topics such as the body systems and why they are important. **K through 2nd grade** finished up their 5 senses unit and are currently learning all about nutrition and healthy eating. I am ecstatic to be apart of the GMCS family and look forward to the upcoming school year in PE and health. I can't wait to share my passion for health and physical fitness with our students here at GMCS!

HEALTH NEWS

Nurse Adrian - Over-all, I'm pleased with the healthy start of our school year. Yes, we've had a few bouts of illnesses; but, they affected fewer classes and were short-lived. I've been preparing a health report for the state. As a whole, our friends are healthier on multiple measurements than the state average. Good job, families!!

We are partnering with Family First Health to provide dental screenings OPEN to all STUDENTS. Pennsylvania law mandates school dental exams for Kindergarten, 3rd, and new to PA, students. A report from your private/family dentist is the most common way to meet this obligation. A school contracted exam is economical, meets screening compliance, AND includes diagnostic and preventative care. Please note that there is no out-of-pocket cost to the school or the family for these services. I'll be sending forms for participation, consent, and insurance. The screenings will begin after the New Year.

We are grateful for donated health supplies. Needed items: various sizes of band aids [no waterproof or sheer please], tissues, paper towels, wet wipes, disinfectant wipes, generic/brand or dye-free children OTC medicines: Cold/Cough & Cold/Sore Throat Syrups, liquid Benadryl, chewable and liquid: Ibuprofen & Acetaminophen, and cough drops. Please, contact me for supplies like: 70% alcohol, non-sterile 2x2 & 4x4 gauze, saline eye drops, cotton balls, thermometer probe covers, and children pants. Thanks for your help.

Enjoy a healthy, safe, and pleasant autumn.

COUNSELOR'S CORNER

Greetings from the counselor's corner! It has been a great year so far at GMCS! I've enjoyed seeing all of the familiar faces and getting to meet the new friends who have joined our school. Classroom lessons so far this year have been focused around friendship, bullying, and we are beginning to talk about Growth Mindset. This year we are spotlighting students who are being positive behavior leaders within their classrooms. Each week, classroom teachers chose one student who has been a positive role model. Those students' names are read on our announcements Friday morning. It's great to be able to acknowledge all of the positive behavior we are seeing! We continue to participate in Bucket Filler Bingo. "Bucket Fillers", showing kindness, and making other's feel good inside; when we fill someone else's bucket, our bucket gets filled also! Our school's goal is to fill everyone's buckets. Our teachers and staff are constantly on the lookout for bucket filling friends. When a bucket filler is spotted, that friend is given a bucket filler note to place in our school's bucket. Each week, I draw out 8 bucket fillers; these friends get to pick a number for our bingo board. When we get bingo, the whole school earns a special activity (extra recess, a movie) to celebrate our bucket filling behavior!

Attendance Fast Facts!

- A note is required for EVERY absence in order for the absence to be excused. Please have your child's name (first and last), as well as the date of the absence on the note.**
- If the student is absent THREE (3) days in a row, a doctor's note is required for the absence to be excused.
- If a student leaves school early or comes in late due to an appointment, a note from the doctor/place of the appointment is required for the time away to be excused.
- Tardiness adds up! The amount of time a student is tardy, adds up to days of unexcused absence. Unless a doctor/appointment note is provided
- The state gives students TEN (10) days of absence each year. After the tenth absence, a doctor's note is required for any additional absences during that school year.



** Child's name (first and last), as well as the date is required on ALL notes written to the school, transportation changes, appointments, etc.