The Principal’s Piece

Dear GMCS Families and Friends,

We have been very busy with fun and exciting activities here at Gettysburg Montessori Charter School. We have had a PreK Story Night, Kindergarten registration and open house, a Montessori seminar, 6th Grade Transition Night, Read Across America activities and Agriculture Week! In April, we look forward to having the Mobile Agriculture Lab, Strawberry Hill trout release, 5K and Fun Run, another Montessori seminar, and taking the Pennsylvania System of School Assessment (PSSA).

Each year, our students in grades 3-6 take the PSSAs. This is required of us as a public school in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. The Pennsylvania Department of Education gives us a large window of dates to take these assessments, so, we have arranged to take them over an extended period, which allows us to spread them out and avoid test fatigue. This way we can pretty much keep our regular schedule. In fact, most of the sessions will take only an hour or so, each day! We do not want the PSSAs to cause our students any stress and that is why we approach them with excitement which includes a pep rally and we offer extra snack time, gum, and additional recess. The timeframe for the PSSA is April 15-May 3. This includes make-up days. They will be tested in Mathematics, English Language Arts, and 4th grade only will also be tested in Science.

In May, we look forward to our spring concerts, Career Day, another book swap, and Field Day. Furthermore, as you may know, we are planning on building an addition to our existing building and will remove the modular campus by July 2021. Our building committee has been meeting with our architects and we will soon have some designs to share with you all. This is a very exciting time for us!

Sincerely,
Faye Pleso, Med, PhD

From the Board

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 you can give, any involvement you are able to have - 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 at this crucial time of growth and building!

Volunteerism is an important part of the Montessori philosophy and we need all family members - parents, guardians, grandparents - to play a part in any way they can. We also need members of the community to serve on the Board, so if you know someone in the Gettysburg area who would be willing to volunteer, please let us know.

No special expertise or experience is necessary! No matter what your background, skills, or availability, there is a place for you on the Board! The Board is currently looking to fill a vacant seat and there may be several open seats for the 2019-2020 school year. Please email board@gettysburgmontessoricharter.org to find out how to become part of our amazing school’s governing body!

The Board continues to work closely with Dr. Pleso on our exciting building project. We Expect to have more fantastic news to share with the GMCS community very soon! We are in the process of drafting a budget for the 2019-20 schoolyear and welcome anyone interested to attend our next Board meeting on Thursday, April 25th at 6:00pm.
**Kindergarten**

**Mrs. Edmond & Mrs. Lawrence** - We can't believe that there are only a few months left of Kindergarten! We are so proud of the growth we have seen in our students and are excited to watch how they continue to develop for the remainder of the year!

In our Wonder Reading Units, we have been learning about various types of weather and how to be prepared for such weather. We started learning about animals, comparing attributes and matching baby animals to their parents. In honor of Agricultural Week, we learned how farms grow the healthy food we eat, as well as exploring plant life cycles and the parts of the plant.

Our Kindergarteners are working hard with phonemes (the sounds we hear in words), as we continue practice with reading and writing, identifying syllables, rhyming, and listening for the first and final sounds we hear in words. Also, remember to continue practicing those sight words!

During our Eureka math lessons, we have been working on addition stories and creating number bonds and number equations to match. Number bonds help students to identify the parts that make the whole. Recently, we have begun to explore subtraction with "take away" stories.

Kindergarten had fun celebrating Dr. Seuss's birthday during Read Across America week. A big thank you to Mr. George, from Adams County Libraries, for coming out and reading to the classes. Both kindergarten classrooms read Green Eggs and Ham and then got to make and eat the yummy treat! We then connected this activity to Writer's Workshop with "How To" writing.

We are excited to plan a field trip soon! Keep an eye out for the permission slip and opportunities to volunteer to chaperone.

**1st & 2nd**

**Ms. Russo** - In our classroom we have been doing so many exciting things! Recently we began our animal research writings. Second grade students are working hard gathering and organizing facts on their favorite animal using the website National Geographic Kids! First grade students are choosing from a variety of animals, and have both read and watched short clips in small groups. Second grade students have become masters of two digit and even three digit addition and subtraction! First grade students recently finished their unit on measurement. We had so much fun measuring everything from glue sticks to our shoes using both centimeter cubes and paper clips. Students have reading groups daily and we have discovered so many stories. This week second grade students are reading about different cultures. Our first grade students will begin reading about alligators.

**Mr. Stare** - We have been hard at work in Room 10 during our third quarter. In 1st grade we have learned about several interesting topics in unit 3. We have learned about time and how to measure it, plants growing, folktales, life in the past versus life now, and how things get from the farm to our table. In unit 4 we have learned about different animal features, animals living together with people, what wild means, and insects. In 2nd grade unit 3, we learned about Earth's surface, the sky, ways people can help others, weather, and expressing ourselves. In unit 4, so far, we have learned about different places on Earth, Earth's changes, our culture making us special, and folktales about nature. Our class has also become a class of writers. We have written Animal Research Papers and Friendly Letters.

Both 1st and 2nd grade are still working hard to master addition and subtraction. In first grade, we are learning about number sentences, measurement in centimeters, and most recently that numbers are formed by groups of tens and ones. In second grade, we have covered the topics of addition and subtraction with regrouping in one place value as well as addition and subtraction with regrouping in multiple place values. We have also been continuing to solve our equations using multiple strategies that we have learned in math class this year. 2nd grade has also started working with repeated addition and the construction of arrays.

**3rd & 4th**

**Mrs. Jan & Mrs. Stough** - **ELA - 3rd Grade:** This quarter, students learned about important people from the past, making healthy choices, animal adaptations that help them survive in their environment, Earth and its neighbors, and flight. Students also focused on identifying characters, settings, important events, similarities and differences, cause and effect relationships, point of view, and the main idea of a text.

**4th Grade:** In quarter three, students learned about the importance of government, inventions and technology, agriculture, and ways science advances can be helpful or harmful. The fourth-grade class is also learning about astronomers and how they study wonders in the sky, such as stars, planets, comets, eclipses, and the Northern Lights. Students also focused on identifying point of view and cause and effect relationships in different text.

In **Science and Social Studies** we have recently finished a biome unit where students were able to partner up and research an animal from a biome that we learned about in North America. Students identified the biome, identified the needs of the animal, and where the animal fell on the food chain in terms of predator or prey. In quarter 4 students will be getting to take a closer look at the state that we live in with our Pennsylvania research project.

Next Quarter we will be taking our class field trip. Stay tuned for more information on the location and chaperone opportunities. We will also be wrapping up Bib’s Boundless Journey. Bib has almost visited everyone in room 10’s house. Bib has experienced so much with the students, he has gone to the park, the grocery store, and even a car dealership. He has eaten many, many snacks this school year. He even had the chance to play with the students in room 10 and their friends.

It’s hard to believe how much we have grown over the last 3 quarters. We can’t believe that we will be 2nd and 3rd graders soon.

**2nd & 3rd**

**Mrs. Bechtel** - Happy Spring! Students in the 2/3 classroom have been hard at work since coming back this New Year. In **ELA** we have completed Unit 3 in Wonders and are now working through Unit 4. We have been reading in our leveled readers books determining different genres and using graphic organizers to write a summary. In **Math**, 2nd grade is working in Eureka Module 2, creating number bonds and tape diagrams to solve word problems. We also learned the Arrow Way and place value charts to add and subtract when regrouping. In 3rd grade we are working in Eureka Module 3, solving word problems using multiplication and division. Both classes are working in WIN Groups to master concepts and computations.

We enjoyed a fun filled Ag week where the students dressed up as farmers and participated in different activities. Students were able to plant a seed and are now waiting for them to sprout. They also had the opportunity to pet a lamb, bunny and pig. We are currently hard at work writing letters to local farmers, thanking them for all that they do in providing food for us.

“Pig” and “What if”, our Backpack Buddies, have been traveling home with the students for the weekend. We are very excited when they return to the classroom on Monday to hear the exciting adventures that they have had with our friends.

Our classroom is very excited about two upcoming field trips that our class will be taking. We will be going to Perrydell Farm and Dairy in April and Indian Echo Caverns in May. We have just sent away our Acrostic poems book and we are waiting for it to be published and sent back to our room. Our **3rd graders** are preparing for PSSA Testing in April and are nervous but also excited. This will be a new experience for them, but we have been prepping and preparing and we have assured them that they are going to do awesome!

Finally, we have just finished reading Charlotte's Web and will be doing a diorama as a project, so please look around for any shoeboxes that you may have to donate to our class. We are also very proud that we earned an award for being stellar students. Way to go Mrs. Bechtel’s 2/3 class!
Both classes: Other skills both grades continued to develop are comparing and contrasting themes/settings/plots and determining types of genres. During our guided reading groups, students are practicing asking and answering questions to demonstrate understanding of a text on their reading level. The students are also continuing to build their vocabulary as the school year progresses.

As we are coming toward the end of our school year, I am very proud to see the growth that the students have made this year!

Math - In Quarter 3, 3rd Grade students have completed the mid-module exam for Eureka Module 3 which focused on Multiplication and Division with Units of 0, 1, 6-9, and multiples of 10. Within the first half of this module, concepts such as the properties of multiplication and division, multiplication and division using units of 6, 7, and 8 have been explored. After students took the mid-module assessment on these concepts, we took a break from Eureka to further prepare for the upcoming P.S.S.A. for Mathematics. We have been utilizing a common core aligned test-prep booklet that gives students sample problems like what they will see on the actual test.

In Quarter 3, 4th Grade students have completed the mid-module exam for Eureka Module 3 which focused on Multi-Digit Multiplication and Division. Within the first half of this module, concepts such as multiplicative comparison word problems, multiplication by 10, 100, and 1,000, multiplication of up to four digits by single-digit numbers, and multiplication word problems were all explored. After completing the mid-module assessment, we took a break from Eureka to further prepare for the upcoming P.S.S.A. for Mathematics. We have been utilizing a common core aligned test-prep booklet that gives students sample problems like what they will be tested on.

Both classes have continued exploring computation and concepts and applications style problems through our W.I.N. program this quarter. W.I.N., which stands for “What I Need” is geared towards helping all students build upon previously learned concepts towards the mastery of required 3rd and 4th grade skills. The 3rd and 4th Grade students have really worked hard and have shown considerable growth on these skills! Their goal each week is to show 90% improvement or mastery on that week’s skill, after which they will earn a Math Award day where we play games or earn stones towards our next Stellar Stone Award day. We have enjoyed several of these days this quarter. As always, I applaud all their hard work and couldn’t be prouder of our 3rd and 4th grade mathematicians! I have no doubt they will ROCK the P.S.S.A’s in April!

5th & 6th

Mrs. Gulden & Mrs. Sauter - Quarter three has come to an end! We can’t believe it. This year is simply flying by! Check out what quarter three meant for fifth and sixth grade below:

ELA: The kids are moving right along with their novel studies. Sixth grade’s early focus was on Chains, a historical fiction novel. This had us taking a deeper look at slavery during the Revolutionary War from the eyes of a young girl. Students really seemed to enjoy this book and did a great job with the activities that went along with it. They recently began their newest novel, Percy Jackson and the Lightning Thief. They are absolutely rocking the materials that go along with this novel! It will be fun to continue throughout the beginning of quarter four.

Fifth grade began the quarter reading Bridge to Terabithia. Students buzzed through this book and had the opportunity to compare and contrast the book and the movie as a culminating activity. Many students liked the book best! We then moved into Hidden Figures. This nonfiction text allowed the students the opportunities to try to understand the social climate and space movement throughout the 1940s-1960s. The novel shared the story of the African American women who helped take America into space.

Math: We continue to explore new topics and skills in math class. Fifth grade has been working extremely hard in learning how to multiply larger digit numbers, working on long division, and multiplying and dividing with decimals. As the fourth quarter approaches, we will continue to learn how to perform all four mathematical operations with fractions. The sixth graders have been learning arithmetic operations including multiplication and division of fractions. They have also been studying rational numbers. In the fourth quarter the students will be learning expressions, equations, volume, and surface area.

Projects: Students finished their book projects that they worked on through the month of February and shared at the beginning of March. Upcoming: April 1st students will receive the information needed to complete the second Market Day project of the year. Students will have the entire month of April to research their country as well as create their poster and costume. Don’t forget their favorite part… they also get to make and share a food from their country with their friends the day of their presentation. Presentations will take place May 1st and 2nd.

Harry Potter Book Club: Our book club friends are working really hard to finish book 5, Harry Potter and the Order of the Phoenix this month. We will be moving into book 6 in the month of April. We are unsure of how much more we can squeeze in this year, but more information (and fun ideas) will be coming out to those participating in the book club and their families soon!

MUSIC NOTES

There’s singing in the air - spring is here! And that means concert time! We are having a country and western theme based on American music and dances. We will be doing circle dances and line dancing in both concerts. The K-2 concert is Tuesday, May 7th at 6:30 and the 3-6 (+Bechtel’s class) is Thursday, May 9th at 6:30. So encourage your family and friends to save the date and come out and join us for our square dancin’ party! I reckon we will see you soon!

ART

First through fourth grade students have been making faux stained-glass windows! We used transparency paper as our “glass” and drew our outlines with black Sharpie. Students then filled in their spaces with colored sharpies. We’ve also started making frames for our stained-glass so they will look nice when hung up in a window!

Fifth and sixth grade students are working on their final copies of their one-point perspective drawings. Some have already finished, but some students have chosen longer words to draw. Students were asked to pick a word to make three dimensional. After the drawing was complete, students were asked to color in their letters by using colored pencil. Some have used Sharpie to outline their letters for an outstanding effect!

At the end of April, we will be holding our 2nd Annual Recyclable Art Contest! Students are welcome to create a project made from recycled material. These projects will be on display during Earth day week! Last year we had about thirty entries. I am hoping we have even more exciting entries this year!

COUNSELOR’S CORNER

Things are in full swing in the counseling office. Classroom lessons on career have taken place from Kindergarten to 6th grade. The lessons focus on career interests and getting the students to identify their interest in a career. Other lessons will focus on skills and abilities in the work place and important characteristics to have while on the job. In addition to career lessons, Miss. Felicetti is looking for parents to speak about their job at the Career Café, which will take place in May. Please call or email Miss. Felicetti if you wish to share your career choice with the students. cfelicetti@gettysburgmontessoricharter.org
The following excerpt by Peg Rosen from understood.org, helps explain the MTSS model (formerly known as RTI) for both behavior and academics. The article is entitled “MTSS: What You Need To Know.”

“A multi-tier system of supports (MTSS) is a phrase you may hear about at school or from other parents. You may hear it called the MTSS framework, the MTSS process or the MTSS model.

No matter what it’s called, MTSS has a very important goal. It’s designed to help schools identify struggling students early and to intervene quickly.

MTSS is a framework that many schools use to provide targeted support to struggling students. It focuses on the “whole child.” MTSS supports academic growth and achievement, but it also supports many other areas. This includes behavior, social and emotional needs.

The multi-tiered supports are a huge part of MTSS. These tiers of support increase in intensity from one level to the next. For example, some kids receiving small-group interventions may need to “move up” to one-on-one help.”

For more information, please contact Ms. Householder and Mrs. Hedrich. Together, we can assure our students are given the necessary tools to succeed.

SPECIAL EDUCATION

During the week of April 1st, GMCS will be participating in Special Education Compliance Monitoring for Continuous Improvement.

Our processes for identifying students who may be eligible for special education services include, but are not limited to, Response to Intervention and Instruction (RTII), 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.

RECENT EVENTS:

During the week of March 18th to 22nd, the GMCS students participated in Ag Literacy Week in a variety of activities sponsored by the Pennsylvania Farm Bureau. Volunteer readers with various agriculture backgrounds came and read “Right This Very Minute” to each class. Students then participated in an activity related to the book. The last day of Ag Literacy week was comprised of rotations where students planted seeds, visited with animals, studied maps related to agriculture, and explored sensory bins consisting of different grains.

We would like to thank the following businesses/people for their donations: Cashman's ACE Hardware of East Berlin; Jarvis Landscaping of New Chester; Chris and Teresa Aulthouse of Taneytown, MD; Carolyn McGraw from 4-H Extension; Earl and Deb Stock of New Oxford; and Liberty View Creamery of Littlestown. We would also like to thank the various readers and parent volunteers who helped make this week a success!

UPCOMING EVENTS:

MOBILE AG LAB: Students will be participating with the Mobile Ag Lab April 8th through 11th. If you are interested in volunteering to help with this event, please contact Becky Black at: becky@gettysburgmontessoricharter.org.

DANCING THROUGH HISTORY: Did you ever want to learn how to dance the tango? Or learn the Foxtrot? We are pleased to offer an opportunity for our students and their families to learn a variety of dances with a FREE program called Dancing Through History. Lessons will be taught by local artists, Jef Savage and Nancy Walker, of Danza Antiqua. Please join us for these lessons from 3:30 to 4:30 on May 15, 17, and 22 in the GMCS gymnasium. Hope to see you there!

PHYSICAL EDUCATION/HEALTH

Mr. Woodward - K-6th Health- Having just celebrated heart health month in February we learned all about the heart and heart health. Jump Rope for Heart concluded the month’s activities. All classes are wrapping up their Stages of Life unit in Health class and we will be moving into our Personal Health and Safety unit.

K-6th PE- Students and staff had a great time at our Jump Rope for Heart assembly. As a school we raised nearly $1,000, thank you for your help! During the winter we worked on our fine motor skills introducing manipulatives to practice various tasks. For the remainder of the school year in PE, we will be tying up any loose ends before introducing our Outdoor Spring units, and Cooperative activities.

May 29th, will be GMCS field day so please mark your calendars. If you would like to attend and volunteer please let me know via email. This is such a big day for the students as it marks the pinnacle of the school year.

HEALTH NEWS

Nurse Adrian - School Health Spotlights

- I enjoyed a venture into the world of classroom teaching. I presented a short lesson on germs that make us ill, how they spread and how we can defeat them with hand washing, good hygiene habits, and cleanliness.
- I found a great website teaching kids how to swallow pills. The University of Calgary’s Professor Bonnie Kaplan and her students have worked with hundreds of children and adults to develop a new way to learn how to swallow pills using different head postures. Visit their website detailing their methodology and findings: https://research4kids.ucalgary.ca/pillswallowing. They have posted a You tube video showing the methods with children https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NUzRGIx79k4

- School Dentist visit postponed until May 8th. Please contact me by phone or email to take advantage of this opportunity for dental cleaning. ANY Kindergartner or Third Grader who have not turned in the mandated Dental Report will have visual dental screen performed.

- Donations are always welcome; current needs for the health clinic: Chewable Tablets of Tylenol/Acetaminophen or Motrin/Ibuprofen & boxes of Band-Aids.

- We received a generous clothing donation from the Masons. They’ve become loaner clothes for spills, muddy falls, and other accidents. Please clean & return.

Have a Healthy and Happy Spring!