The Principal’s Piece

Dear GMCS Families and Friends,

Happy New Year! I want to thank you for all the support you give to our student activities by donating items or volunteering and for supporting us through fundraisers. We raised $2208 from our Yankee Candle sale and $718 from our Scholastic Book Fair. All money raised from fundraisers go toward student activities unless otherwise specified.

By now I am sure that you have seen our new report card design. We are all very pleased to use a more simplistic format to communicate your child’s academic progress, attendance, and advancement toward becoming lifelong learners.

I am happy to announce the hiring of our new School Counselor, Miss McKenna Hohman. She has a MEd in School Counseling, a BS in Psychology and she is a Nationally Certified Counselor. She will be working closely with Miss Love, who has been promoted to the Dean of Students position. Miss Love will work with Miss McKenna and I to ensure that all students demonstrate our Code of Conduct. Miss Love is our behavioral specialist and she will lead the effort to maintain our positive and caring school culture. She also will manage any parental concerns involving behavior or consequences of behavior.

Sincerely,
Faye Pleso, MEd, PhD

From the Board

Board Vacancies – Filled
The Board is thrilled to announce that Becky Uppercue and Lieucretia Swain have been nominated and approved to serve on the Board of Trustees. We are all incredibly grateful to them for volunteering to fill recent vacancies on the Board.

We will be looking for additional volunteers to serve on the Board this spring as at least one board member’s term is expiring. If you would like to get more involved at the school, please consider putting your name forward! You can email board@gettysburgmontessoricharter.org if you are interested or if you have any questions.

School Spirit Wear!

Did you miss your opportunity to get a GMCS t-shirt or sweatshirt earlier this year? Well, here is your second chance! GMCS will be running another School Spirit Wear campaign very soon. All funds raised from the t-shirt and sweatshirt sales will be used toward improving our school. Please be on the lookout for more information about how you can get your GMCS Spirit Wear!
We are continuing to travel the world within our Project. We learned that little people can do great things! We've had a great start to the New Year! Our Kindergarteners have experienced some exciting activities during quarter two. We visited the Mobile Agricultural Lab twice, to learn about both insects and the role farms play in providing food to the community. We also enjoyed learning about cultural stories and traditions associated with the celebration of a range of winter holidays. Our students were especially excited to construct gingerbread houses!

We are looking forward to celebrating our students' 100th day of school coming up soon!

Mrs. Edmond & Mrs. Lawrence - Our kindergarteners have experienced some exciting activities during quarter two. We visited the Mobile Agricultural Lab twice, to learn about both insects and the role farms play in providing food to the community. We also enjoyed learning about cultural stories and traditions associated with the celebration of a range of winter holidays. Our students were especially excited to construct gingerbread houses!

Mrs. Johnson - This year continues to fly by, as we have finished the second quarter and are quickly approaching the 100th day of school. Please keep an eye out for more information about upcoming 100th day of school events. Also, keep an eye out for our new report cards. Should you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to ask. Please make sure that you sign your child's report card and return it back to school.

Math: Both grades have been working hard as we make our way through our new Eureka Math program and I hope you are finding the parent tip sheets helpful. Our 1st grade friends continue to work on composing and decomposing numbers as well build fluency in both addition and subtraction. We have also practiced our counting on and making ten strategies as we have worked on solving word problems. Our 2nd grade friends have been just as busy as we have been exploring in module 3 the concepts of place value, counting, and comparison of numbers through 1000. We recently started module 4, where we will be adding and subtracting within 200 and solving word problems within 100. Keep up the hard work 1st and 2nd grade!

Reading: This quarter we began our small group reading lessons as we continued to work through our Reading Wonders program. During Unit 2, 1st grade learned about communities as they explored the genres of realistic fiction, fantasy, and non-fiction. We also practiced the comprehension skills of identifying: characters, setting, events, main ideas, and key details of a text. We recently began Unit 3, where we will learn about what can happen over time. 2nd graders are continuing to work hard in reading as we explore how animals play a part in the world around us and what we have learned about the world that surprises us. As we have explored these big ideas we have practiced the comprehension skills of identifying plot, main idea and key details, problem and solution, and author's purpose.

Cultural Studies: We are continuing to travel the world within our classroom as we learn about the people, plants, animals, countries, and other fun facts through teacher led lessons/activities and independent study. During quarter 2 we studied our very own continent, North America, and have recently traveled to Antarctica.

Reminder: Please make sure that your children are dressing appropriately for the weather. We will be going outside as weather permits and want to make sure that our children stay warm and healthy.

Mr. Stare - We've had hard at work in 1st and 2nd grade. We just finished our 2nd unit in our Language Arts curriculum. We learned about Jobs Around Town, Buildings, Our Community, Helping, and How to Use Maps in 1st Grade. In 2nd Grade we have learned about Animals in Nature, Animals in Stories, Animal Habitats, Baby Animals, and Animals in Poems.

We have been having fun Adding and Subtracting in Math Lessons. We are learning that there are many different ways to solve a problem and still come to the right answer. We have learned about number bonds, the Arrow Way, and Make 10 Equations. We have also been solving word problems with the help of Mine Craft C.U.B.E.S. We have been Circling the numbers, Underlining the question, Boxing the buzz word, Evaluating what strategy to use, and then Solving the problem. Mr. Stare has even started to let the students play a video game in class. We have been playing Prodigy, a math game that reviews what we've learned all year as we navigate around an imaginary world catching animal pets and battling other players to save the world. Mr. Stare has also been discussing confidence in Math Lessons. As a class we discussed how to build our confidence up by asking questions, volunteering to teach during lessons, and by paying attention when lessons are going on.

In the month of December our class elf Pepper came back to room 10. He brought Salt the reindeer back as well as a new Saint Bernard named Cinnamon. We were even lucky enough to be visited by a special Super Elf a couple of days in December. The students really enjoyed finding...
Pepper daily and seeing what kind of mischief he was getting into.

Elliot, the Dragon, has still been going on weekend adventures with the students as well. His journal is filling up with beautiful artwork and journal entries. Elliot has gone to a tea party, a birthday party, carved pumpkins, been to a teacher conference, and he even had a chance to ride the Polar Express. I wonder what new adventures Elliot will go on in 2018?

**3rd & 4th**

**Mrs. Jan & Mrs. Stough - What we’ve been working on…**

In Math, we are working on metric measurement, multi-step word problems, and multiplication skills. Practicing flashcards at home will help improve mastery in multiplication as this is an important skill that we’ll build off of as the year continues. This quarter in Language Arts, some of the concepts we continued to work on were distinguishing points of view, comparing and contrasting themes/settings/plots, and determining types of genres. Through our leveled reading groups, students are practicing asking and answering questions to demonstrate understanding of a text. The students are also continuing to build off their vocabulary and grammar knowledge as the school year progresses.

**What we're looking forward to…**

In Math, we will begin to explore more complex multiplication and division skills. In Language Arts, 3rd grade students will be reading about Earth and its neighbors. 4th grade students will be reading about important people from the past and ways science advances can be helpful or harmful.

**5th & 6th**

**Ms. Jarvis & Miss. Rickell - Quarter two has already come to an end!**

We are halfway through this year. We have done many things over the last few months. Check it out below!

**ELA:** In reading, students finished their first novel with much excitement. We also finished unit 2 of our Wonders activities for both grades. We have worked on many skills including theme, main idea and key detail, and author’s purpose. Grammar skills have also been a target of the term. Students have worked on appositives, prepositions, and subject-verb agreement just to name a few topics. We started our new novels this week and will continue them through quarter three alongside unit 3 of Wonders.

**Math:** Fifth grade has been working hard on learning different strategies to do multi-step multiplication problems and conversions of metric and customary measurements. Fifth grade will be moving into learning a variety of methods to do large division problems. In sixth grade, students have finished the study of ratios and percent. They will be moving into different operations involving fractions.

**Science:** This past quarter our students had the opportunity to explore science concepts in the Ag Lab. We did two different lessons, Corn to Plastic and Fungi Fun. Students learned about how corn can be used to make plastic, and how and why mushrooms are classified as fungus as well as their parts. In the classroom, we worked on the scientific method and carried out our Gummy Bear Experiment. Students enjoyed seeing how various liquid solutions affected the gummy bears. We also did a variety of STEM activities relating to the seasons.

**Social Studies:** This quarter students researched and studied Africa. Each student selected a country, completed research, and presented to their peers to help provide a more cohesive view of Africa as a continent. Research topics included culture, biomes, history, wildlife, and fun facts. The students did a fantastic job presenting (especially considering the crazy weather schedule we experienced)!

We have had a great second quarter and we are excited for all the adventures and learning third quarter will bring this year!

**ART**

Our students are learning some amazing things as they explore the world around them with their “artistic eye.” We’ve finished our collaboration project, kindergarten has learned how to recognize lines, basic and abstract shapes and patterns all around them, and now, they are learning about our colorful world!

Our older students are beginning their “travels” by stopping off in North America, to learn about some Native American tribes. 5th and 6th grade is learning about drawing three dimensional objects and will soon be creating their own landscape with their newly acquired knowledge.

The families in our district continue to be so wonderful! I now have a surplus built up, which will be used to buy replacement supplies this year and whatever is left will be added to next year’s budget. I could never have done it without all of you! Thank you for everything!

I grow to love my job more and more every day that I arrive at our wonderful school. I couldn’t imagine doing anything else!

**SPECIAL EDUCATION**

Our next parent information night is still in the works, but we are hoping to offer topics at the end of January/beginning of February 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 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.

**RtI**

We have made it to the middle of the year! If you are noticing your student is still struggling to read, take some time to look over these practical and easy strategies that might make all the difference:

1. Reading success is based on 5 factors: phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary and comprehension. Learn more about each factor to gain a better understanding of where exactly your child may be struggling.
2. Encourage kids to read anything—even if it isn’t a book. Magazines, comics or websites can engage children, and shows them that computers and iPads aren’t just for games.
3. Motivate by making connections to real-world outcomes so children realize reading is more than just a grade. For example, writing a letter to their favorite singer, or to grandma, allows young readers to find meaning in what they are doing.
4. Focus on what your child CAN do. Build on his/her strengths. For example, fold spelling into another activity that your child enjoys.
Mr. Woodward - Over the past few weeks, students in lower elementary PE have been working on jumping and landing as well as different "yard sports" such as Bocce ball, horseshoes, and corn hole. During the unit for jumping and landing, students worked in stations that practiced jumping for height and distance. In the upcoming weeks, we will be moving on to group games where students will be using teamwork and communication to participate in a variety of games.

In lower elementary health, students have been introduced to the importance of hand washing to prevent the spread of bacteria and germs. Students have also learned about fire and bicycle safety learning about what to do in case of fire emergencies and promising to wear helmets while riding their bicycles. Lower elementary health is beginning a unit on screen time and why it is important to stay physically active!

In upper elementary PE, students have been working on volleyball fundamentals as well as cooperative group games over the past few weeks. In volleyball, students are practicing skills such as the bump, set, and serve in a variety of activities. During our cooperative games unit, students worked in stations that practiced the fundamentals of "yard sports"; while participating in group games such as capture the flag and castle ball. In the upcoming weeks, students will be moving on to jump rope and hula hooping units.

In upper elementary health, students have just completed their unit on the nutrition where we had the opportunity to visually see how much sugar our body intakes on a daily basis! We have moved on to our personal health unit where students will be understanding peer pressure, conflict resolution, and sportsmanship. One activity in this unit was a short skit displaying how to use these skills effectively. At the end of the unit, students will have the knowledge and ability to resolve issues amongst themselves.

COUNSELOR’S CORNER

Greetings! My name is Ms. McKenna Hohman and I am very excited to be here with the staff and students of GMCS as the new School Counselor! I just moved to the area from Pittsburgh GO STEELERS!! I obtained my M.Ed. and my NCC at California University of PA and I am diligently working towards my LPC. Previously, I worked at Resolve Crisis Network as a Mobile Crisis Clinician in Allegheny County as part of Western Psychiatric Institute and Clinic. Specifically, I served the Child and Adolescent Crisis Treatment Intervention Services Program throughout Allegheny County schools, as well as the Adult Crisis Program.

I have many exciting plans in the works starting with Lunch Bunch groups, and class lessons tailored to the needs of the students. I look forward to meeting every student and strengthening their social, emotional, and academic well-being. Please feel free to reach out to me with any questions, concerns or further information at mhohman@gettysburgmontessoricharter.org

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.

HEALTH NEWS

Nurse Adrian - Happy New Year! I know, some friends and families have battled sharing illness from one member to another and THEN it starts again! I really am sympathetic. It is exhausting for the entire family. Some lower grades have shared illnesses but we have not had a school wide bout of same bug.

A couple of people have asked about hand hygiene, the school’s sanitation practices, or if there is a ‘bug’ going around. The school is cleaned daily. High traffic areas are sanitized multiple times a day. All staff daily attempt to model and encourage good hygiene practices. It is always good to question. They serve as reminders for vigilance and maintaining good habits.

Last year, I sent alerts when we had several students contract a particular childhood disease or illness. The last two times, I sent alerts; I later learned that most of the reported diagnosis’s [3 of 5] had been CHANGED by the doctor. Now, I am a bit shy about sending out health alerts. I would appreciate your feedback as to whether or not you want me to share health alerts and preferred method, one call message or note. Thanks

Last year I helped coordinate the playground build. This year’s project is investigating possible local grants for school projects. If you would like to help with grants such as: project planning, getting bids, or writing grants please contact me. Volunteers Welcome for this project, clinic office, or student screenings. Donations of first aid supplies, paper products, OTC medications, and larger size girls and boys pants are appreciated. I am grateful for your support and trust.

Stay healthy, happy, and safe.

WEATHER DELAYS AND CANCELLATION INFORMATION:

Please be aware of your home district transportation throughout the year. Please visit their website.

WEATHER DELAYS:

- If GMCS is on a delay and your home district is not…parents will have to provide transportation. YOUR DISTRICT BUS MAY PICK UP AT THE NORMAL TIME, BUT DO NOT PUT YOUR CHILD ON THE BUS, IF WE ARE ON A DELAY....NO ONE WILL BE AT THE SCHOOL!
- If your home district is on a delay, your home district will provide transportation at the delayed time and it will be excused. You are welcome to transport your child at regular time.

EARLY DISMISSAL:

- If GMCS is dismissing early and your home district is not dismissing at the same time…parents will have to provide transportation.
- If your home district is dismissing early, your district will provide transportation.
- Please make sure you are in contact with your home district if your child is using their transportation.

REMINDEERS:

- Please check our website for weather delays at www.gettysburgmontessoricharter.org
- Please do not call the school, during early dismissals with general questions
- Please wait for One Call Now and an email for updates or check our website.
- For specific transportation changes, EMAIL your child’s teacher and office.