



Montessori Moments

FALL 2020



The Principal's Piece

Dear GMCS Families and Friends,

We have successfully completed our first quarter of a hybrid educational model. We started our 20/21 school year cautiously by having a synchronous hybrid model and the option for full remote learning. Despite many technical obstacles, we established a solid routine for our students. We started back to 5 days in person learning during the week of November 9. We continue to offer a hybrid and a full remote option for those who prefer either of those options. We have updated our Health and Safety Plan to reflect any changes that have been made since August.

Every three years, Pennsylvania public schools create a Comprehensive Plan that outlines a plan for the next three years. Our Comprehensive Plan was submitted this fall and our areas of focus are implementing Heggerty Phonemic Awareness with fidelity, using Enhanced Core Reading Instruction, embedding Montessori Works into our reading and math curricula, and further Montessori, Eureka, and Zearn training and refreshers for our teachers.

Our building addition is finally underway! We are so excited and can see progress daily. We update our Facebook page weekly with photos of the progress so be sure to check them out. The final product will be a K-2nd wing, a 3rd-6th wing, a library, and an art room. This will be completed in the summer of 2021. What an exciting time to be a part of the Gettysburg Montessori Charter School family! Our motto this year is patience, flexibility, and teamwork!

Sincerely,
Faye Pleso, MEd, PhD

Assistant Principal News

Hello GMCS Families! My name is Christine Kirkpatrick and I am your new Assistant Principal. I have a degree in elementary education with a concentration in mathematics, a master's degree, an educational specialist degree, and am currently working on my dissertation towards the completion of my doctoral degree in educational leadership. I began my new role here at GMCS in June after working with math students this past spring. I have been working in education for over 20 years and am so excited to be part of all the wonderful changes happening this year. As your assistant principal I take an active role in facilitating the day-to-day requirements of instruction and student safety. I help plan and implement curriculum, help parents, teachers, and students with a variety of concerns, and communicate with community members about the vision of GMCS as well as assist with the new technology initiatives at GMCS.

This year we purchased Chromebooks for every student to use while enrolled at GMCS. Our Chromebooks allow students to access their teacher and classroom from any location there is an active WIFI connection. This allows families to choose either in-person learning, or distant learning based on their individual family preferences. I want to thank everyone for their ongoing grace and patience as we navigated our way through the unknowns of synchronous learning this fall. After a few weeks of troubleshooting we have been able to address most distant learning concerns, and continually strive to quickly address any new concerns that arise.

If you see me at arrival or dismissal, please introduce yourself! I am so excited to meet everyone over the next few months!

Christine Kirkpatrick Ed.S.

Dates to Remember:

- **Thanksgiving Break**
November 25th to November 30th
- **Winter Break**
December 23rd thru January 1st
- **MLK Day - No School**
January 18th
- **Presidents' Day - No School**
February 15th
- **Early Dismissal**
March 5th
- **No School**
March 19th
- **Spring Holiday**
April 2nd to 5th
- **Last day of school**
May 28th

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 6:00 pm on the following dates:

- Thursday, November 19, 2020
- Thursday, December 17, 2020
- Thursday, January 28, 2021
- Thursday, February 25, 2021
- Thursday, March 25, 2021
- Thursday, April 29, 2021
- Thursday, May 27, 2021
- Thursday, June 24, 2021
- Thursday, July 29, 2021
- Thursday, August 26, 2021



Classroom Updates

Kindergarten

Mrs. Donahue & 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.

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 and using our five senses and shapes. Our sight words so far are: I, can, the, we, see, like, to (please practice your sight words at home too!).

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

In Eureka Math, we have learned to count, build, read and write, and find the hidden partners within the numbers 1-10. We are beginning to explore connections between these numbers with the phrases "1 more" and "1 less". In our next module we will be exploring how to recognize and make shapes.

During the month of October, we learned about fire safety and started discussing various community helpers. In the month of November, we will continue to discuss safety and are excited for a police officer to come be a guest reader in our classroom.

The students had a great time during our Fall party. We painted pumpkins, played games and did crafts.

This quarter we worked on the 4 Montessori Respect Rules: respect self, respect others, respect environment and respect materials. Throughout the year we will continue to work on how to be independent workers and how to make good choices during work time.

Thank you for your support!
-Kindergarten Team

1st & 2nd

Mrs. Gebhart - Our first quarter in Room 7 has been lots of fun! And a learning curve...

We started with hybrid schedules and have currently changed over to being able to be in school everyday or being online everyday.

We are working on meeting classroom expectations by following classroom rules, controlling our voices to a whisper, learning Montessori Works as well as trying our best. The excitement in the classroom is building as we had earned our first Stellar Stone Award! As a class, we voted for a Movie Day with PJs.

Our first research project on spiders and bats concluded on our 6th rotation week. With virtual books for research, we learned how to strengthen our skills in reading and writing. There were facts our teachers hadn't even known beforehand!

In **1st grade** Language Arts we have been studying many interesting topics. Essential questions included: how our bodies move, fun things we can do with our friends, sharing, and what makes pets special. In math, 1st graders have been learning how to count on from numbers other than 1, what it means to balance number sentences, adding doubles, and how subtraction and addition are connected.

2nd grade has been working hard as well. In Language Arts we have learned how friends depend on each other, what chores are and how families can work together, how a pet can be a friend, and how we care for animals. In 2nd grade math we have had a lot of fun measuring items in the classroom and comparing their lengths. Mrs. Gebhart even let us measure items in the classroom! Learning place values has also been discussed and we are diving into some really large numbers....even 1,000!

As our learning continues, we look forward to many more topics for the next quarter!

Mrs. Lansford - Our first quarter in Room 9 has been busy and exciting! It has started out much different than any other year. Our class is resilient, however, and have weathered the changes wonderfully!

We are working on meeting classroom expectations by doing our best work, whisper talking in class, raising our hands when we want to say something, and controlling our bodies. We have already earned TWO stellar stone awards and are working our way toward our third!

We have completed our first research project on spiders and bats. This topic brought out our squeamish side, but we persevered and learned a lot along the way. We have also completed a research project on animals and their habitats.

In **1st grade** Language Arts we have been studying many interesting topics. These include how our bodies move, fun things we can do with our friends, sharing, and what makes pets special. In math, 1st graders have been learning how to count on from numbers other than 1, what it means to balance number sentences, adding doubles, and how subtraction and addition are connected.

2nd grade has been working hard as well. In Language Arts we have learned how friends depend on each other, what chores are and how families can work together, how a pet can be a friend, and how we care for animals. In 2nd grade math we have had a lot of fun measuring items in the classroom and comparing their lengths, learning place values, and writing numbers using their number name, their expanded form and their standard form.

We are looking forward to next quarter and all it will bring!

Mr. Stare - Our first quarter of the school year has been a whirlwind 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.

Room 10 earned our first Stellar Stone Award of the year this quarter. We are still learning how to control our bodies, whisper talk in class, and raise our hands in class.

Room 10 has been stay safe and healthy this year. We have been social distancing in class, washing our hands, and wearing our masks. We have also learned about being flexible. We take one day at a time and do the best that we can do!

We are looking forward to our Animal Biome Research. We will be making a 1st Grade and a 2nd Grade book that has animals from the Tundra, Desert, Grasslands, and Forest. Each student will be able to bring a completed book home later next quarter.

3rd & 4th

Mrs. Bechtel, Ms. Dohler & Mrs. Taylor - We are excited to introduce two new teachers to our 3/4 team! Joining us is Ms. Dohler, who will be teaching ELA and Mrs. Taylor, who will be teaching Math. Mrs. Bechtel will continue to work with our students teaching Science and Social Studies. We would also like to welcome our new assistants, Mrs. Shetter, Mrs. Farris, and Mrs. Sanders to our team. They have been extremely helpful and a great addition to the 3/4 family! Having the students split for the core subjects allows time to focus on grade level standards, more time to meet the children's individual educational needs, and a more focused environment during core instruction.

Classroom Updates

What a whirlwind to the beginning of this school year! We have adapted our instruction to meet all the needs of our students through online instruction as well as offering some days in person instruction. We are excited to learn that we will be offering 5 days in person instruction and are looking forward to seeing our students in person!

This month the students are really enjoying Artist in Residence, learning about the Renaissance period. If you get a chance, ask your child about what they have learned so far and let them show you his or her expertise.

ELA

Ms. Dohler has been excited to join the 3/4 ELA classroom and has already seen the many skills that the students have gone over in the first quarter!

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

This quarter, third grade read about many different topics. Some topics include; lessons in stories, different traditions in other cultures, inventions, landmarks and memorials, and working together to solve problems. The fourth graders covered topics about how actions affect others, where good ideas come from, natural disasters, how science helps us understand how things work, starting a business to help others, and messages in stories. Both 3rd and 4th grade students have been practicing building reading comprehension by visualizing, making predictions, identifying the characters, setting, plot, problem and solution, main idea and key details of a text, and asking and answering questions.

Math

In Mrs. Taylor's 3/4 math class, students have been very busy. Third grade jumped right into multiplication and division and are learning quickly! They have become experts at skip counting.

Fourth grade started the year out with a lot of review, and are slowly building onto new topics like multiplying by 1,000 and converting and solving measurement problems. We all are becoming better mathematicians as we progress.

Science/ Social Studies/ Writing

Third and fourth grade have been very busy this year so far in Mrs. Bechtel's class! We started the year learning all about being a scientist and the wonders of science. We moved on to spiders and bats where the students completed their first project of the year. Next, we moved on to weather and climate. We finished the quarter studying the skeletal system.

Moving forward into the second quarter, the students voted for this year's science fair theme. At this time, results have not been revealed! We will learn more about the President and the White House. To finish out the second quarter, we will explore the first Thanksgiving and cultures from around the world.

5th & 6th

Mrs. Gulden & Mrs. Sauter - Well, what a start it has been! Odd and eventful, but also a learning opportunity for everyone involved. Teachers and students alike had to take a couple weeks to learn how to navigate and utilize Google Classrooms. As classes formally began, students worked on novels in ELA and a variety of math concepts during math calls. Fifth graders started the year with *The BFG* and have since moved into *Hidden Figures*. This book will continue into quarter two. Sixth graders read *Chains*, a historical fiction novel, and wrapped up with the end of the quarter. Quarter two will bring the start of *Almost Astronauts*. In math, fifth graders covered powers of ten, reading and writing decimals in multiple forms, and addition/subtraction/multiplication/division using decimals. The focus for sixth graders was all about ratios. Students learned how to identify ratios and used many strategies to create equivalent ratios. They have also learned how to create an equation as an introduction to pre-algebra.

As for science and social studies, we covered cells and the election process. Students also had the opportunity to research a person of interest while completing their Biography Projects. The next project will look into a country

of their choice during the Market Day Project that will be coming home immediately following Thanksgiving.

Artists in Residence was another great experience this quarter. Students did a fantastic job with the virtual format of these Civil War lessons and creating their own quilts. These were showcased at the Show and Tell event November 11th.

We are really looking forward to diving further into the year with the students in quarter 2!

MUSIC NOTES

Happy fall everyone! I'm super excited to be the new Music Teacher here at GMCS. The 1st Quarter has gone very well! We began the school year with talking about the Elements of Music in each class. Kindergarten and 1st/2nd Grade we have talked about Steady Beat, High/Low, Solfege, and Fast/Slow or Tempo. The students were introduced to a fun education music program called Chrome Music Lab. The students were able to play around with several sections in Chrome Music Lab to help create their own music. For 3rd/4th Grade and 5th/6th Grade we went over in detail what each Element of Music is. We have talked about Rhythm, Pitch, Tempo, Duration, and Intensity. The students were also introduced to Chrome Music Lab and were able to write their own music using the program. I'm looking forward to seeing how the next part of the year will go! Have a musical day! - Mr. Swiger



RTI

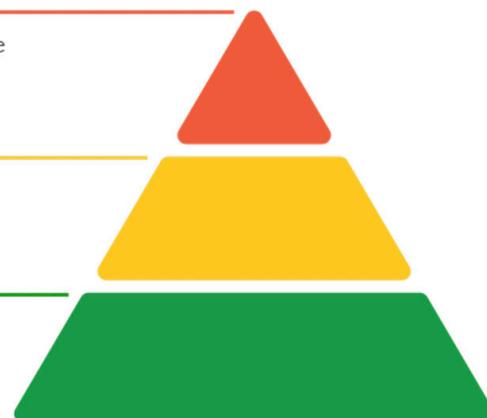
Response to Intervention (RTI) may sound complicated, but it is a fairly simple process. All students from elementary through high school participate in the RTI process. It starts in the classroom (what we call Tier 1), where students receive core instruction. Gettysburg Montessori Charter School uses Wonders to deliver our core reading instruction and Eureka for math. At Tier 1, the teacher gathers 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 are provided three to five days a week for approximately 30 minutes, based on individual student needs. 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 receive lessons every day for 30-40 minutes in an even smaller group setting. Depending on the growth of the student in this Tier, special education services may be recommended.

RTI is not a specific program or type of teaching. It is a proactive, data driven approach that measures students' skills to determine further instructional interventions. The RTI process is very fluid and students enter and exit tiers based on data supported needs. Through the RTI process we can identify students who are in need of additional support and provide the supports they need to be successful.

Tier III
Individualized intensive interventions

Tier II
Targeted small group interventions for at-risk students

Tier I
Whole class research-based core instruction



PHYSICAL EDUCATION/HEALTH

Hello everyone! My name is Alex Ruzbacki and I am so happy to be here at Gettysburg Montessori Charter School! I have recently been hired on as the Health and Physical Education teacher for your school.

I am originally from a small town in the Adirondack Park of upstate New York, the town being called Newcomb. I graduated high school in 2014 and have always been interested in athletics. I have a strong background playing varsity soccer, basketball, and baseball. I enrolled at Slippery Rock University after a year at a state school in New York and instantly found my passion was teaching. Health and Physical Education was a perfect fit for me!

I graduated from SRU in December of 2018 and was lucky enough to start teaching in January of 2019 at my high school alma mater, Newcomb Central School. I wore a lot of hats at this small preK-12 school, serving as athletic director, health and physical education teacher, as well as coaching various sports, from archery to basketball.

I recently married the love of my life Jaclyn and am beyond happy at this stage in my life. My marriage is what brings me to the area.

I am very grateful for the opportunity to work at GMCS with the wonderful students at this school. I look forward to doing my part in implementing a modern, standards based Health/PE program at this school that will help our students receive the most well-rounded education they possibly can.

FROM THE BOARD

Families, the school board would like to say thank you to the teachers and staff for all they do and have done over this past year to assist our families and students. We would also like to thank you for your flexibility as the school has worked to navigate through these unprecedented times. To that end, this is just a friendly reminder that all board meetings are open to our families and the public. We are open to and strongly encourage comments, concerns, and questions so that these can be addressed. Again thank you to all school staff and teachers for their work and our families for their support.

COUNSELOR'S CORNER

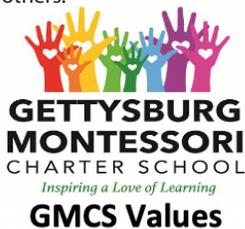
What we are learning about this month

Grade K-2

We are discussing how to express our feelings and emotions. Students will learn strategies for emotional regulation.

Grades 3-6

We are focusing on self-control and how to manage our emotions when interacting with others.



- Hands on learning environment
- Independent exploration
- Whole child learning
- Freedom within limits
- Grace and courtesy
- Family and community partnerships
- Self-regulation
- Mindfulness
- Intrinsic motivation
- Sensitivity, respect, and compassion.

FOOD SERVICES

As a response to the pandemic, GMCS Food Department made every effort to serve our students in the best way possible. We will continue to learn and study ways to offer the best service to our students. Our Montessori Philosophy is to care for the body and the soul's nutrition, we strive to extend this philosophy to our Food Department.

- USDA approved all students in Pennsylvania will receive free meals for the entire school year. In response to this we rapidly put together pick up and go meal packages to provide meals for all families enrolled in person or online. Our Lunch menu has been modified for different groups with the pre-package bags.
- Staff Training was provided for all that is involved in our food service. Our meal delivery prioritizes cleanliness for our students, whether in the classrooms or cafeteria setting. GMCS Cater has been our pattern for a couple of years and understands the importance of quality. Heather has been a ray of sunshine for our students with her kindness and care these unprecedented times.

OFFICE REMINDERS

COVID RESPONSE FORM

Families with children that are participating in our In-Person Learning Model:

- Please log in and locate the symptom checker form that must be completed each day before your child arrives at school.
- If you are having trouble logging in or viewing the COVID Response form, please email Rebecca/Nicole @ryurkanin@gettysburgmontessoricharter.org.

ATTENDANCE FAST FACTS!

- **If your child will be late, please call the office by 8:30 a.m.**
- A note is required for every student absence. Please email your absent and doctor's note to Attendance cfelicetti@gettysburgmontessoricharter.org If a student is out for 3 consecutive days, a Doctor's note is required.
- If a student has missed 10 days of school, cumulatively, a Doctor's note is required for every absence beyond the first 10 days.
- If a student leaves early, or comes in late due to an appointment, a Doctor's note is required for the appointment to be excused.

INFORMATION FOR CAR RIDERS

- Car riders can be dropped off at the black gate of the main building. between 8:00 am and 8:25 am.
- Car riders can be picked up at the black gate located between the main building and the modular between 2:50 pm and 3:30 pm.
- Your child will need to sign out at car rider dismissal.

WEATHER DELAY REMINDERS:

- 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 an email for updates or check our website.
- For specific transportation changes, **EMAIL** your child's teacher and the office. gettysburgmontessori@gmail.com