



SPRING 2021

The Principal's Piece

Dear GMCS Families and Friends,

Our beautiful new building project is coming along, just as planned! Since our last newsletter, eciConstruction set the trusses, placed sheeting on the roof, and are nearly completed with the placement of the metal roof panels. They have installed skylights in the library and art room. The tracking system for the operable wall between two of our 5/6 classrooms is installed. The framers have completed the interior framing and drywall is going up. Spray foam insulation is in as well as the duct work. Exterior siding will begin next week! Hull's Electric has completed installing electrical cables through the studs and other framing and will be installing classroom lights once the spray foam is complete. Mann Plumbing has installed all the water supply and drainpipes through the studs and framing and they are currently working on the water main and insulating lines. The renovation of our existing building will begin in June and we expect the entire project will be completed by the end of July.

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 20th-30th, makeup days will be May 3rd-7th. They will be tested in Mathematics, English Language Arts, and 4th grade only will also be tested in Science. It is such a pleasure to continue to serve as CEO/Principal of Gettysburg Montessori Charter School. Thank you for all your support!

Sincerely,
Faye Pleso, MEd, PhD

Vice Principal News

We had some surprise virtual days this winter and everyone did a great job transitioning from in-person learning to virtual learning! Thank you teachers, students, and families for your ongoing commitment to continual learning. As we approach warmer months please remember that students are expected to be at school each day and that absences for long weekends and family trips must be pre-approved two weeks in advance by completing the appropriate forms and receiving approval from Dr. Pleso.

Parent teacher conferences are being scheduled for next month and although not mandatory, we would like to invite those who wish to know more about their child's ongoing progress to contact their child's teacher to schedule a virtual conference. If you would like to schedule a time to speak with your child's teacher but aren't sure what questions to ask, consider asking one or more of the following questions:

What are my child's strengths and weaknesses?

What challenges do they experience?

How can I support my child with their school work, academic growth, or social skills?

How can I help my child be more independent?

Are there any behaviors (both positive and negative) at school that you think I may not be seeing at home?

What is something you learned about my child this year that you would like to share with me.

Finally, some parents have asked if we are planning on having a summer school program this year and unfortunately the answer is no. Due to the new construction and renovations to the main building we will not be able to hold summer school this year.

Christine Kirkpatrick Ed.s.



Office Reminders:

HELPING HANDS COMMITTEE:

This year's Staff Appreciation Week is probably more well-deserved than ever before. The Helping Hands parent committee would like to thank everyone who is stepping up to ensure our students are staying healthy and safe, and continuing to learn, during COVID-19.

Staff Appreciation week is May 3-7, 2021. The committee is looking for donations to show our wonderful GMCS staff appreciation. If you would like to contribute, please contact the front office or email Nicole Norris @ nnorris@gettysburgmontessoricharter.org.

Our next meeting is
Tuesday, April 13 @ 6:00pm.

<https://zoom.us/j/97693169707?pwd=ZUVyYEVxWGhJQlR4VTl5MkZXSzNzDUT09>

Meeting ID: 976 9316 9707
Passcode: nSxGj8

GMCS SUMMER CAMP:

Due to construction and renovations at the school. GMCS will not be holding summer camp this year.

YEARBOOKS:

GMCS yearbooks can be purchased online @ order.pictures-r-us.com/yearbook/gmcs

Enter passcode (case sensitive)
gmcsyb2021.

Orders are due by **4/23/2021**

Dates to Remember:

- **April 23rd**
Yearbook Orders Due
- **May 3-7**
Staff Appreciation Week
- **May 28th**
Last day of school

Classroom Updates

Kindergarten

Mrs. Donahue & 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 virtually touring some local farms. We then were able to make our own homemade ice cream!

Our Kindergarteners are working hard with phonemes (the sounds we hear in words), identifying syllables, rhyming, and listening for the first, middle, and final sounds we hear in words. We continue practice with reading and writing, with a focus on Word Families (i.e. cat, sat, mat). Our kid writers are becoming more and more confident in writing complete sentences with "kid spelling", appropriate capitalization, spaces in between our words, and punctuation. Also, please remember to continue practicing those sight words with your child at home!

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. We have also started to explore subtraction with "take away" stories.

Kindergarten had fun celebrating Dr. Seuss's birthday during Read Across America week. Students enjoyed listening to the silly rhyming stories.

We have been enjoying the nicer weather and are excited to start learning more about plants and the life cycle of a butterfly. The kindergarten classes will get a special surprise soon, to help us learn more about butterflies.

1st & 2nd

Mrs. Gebhart - Our second quarter in Room 7 has been wonderful!

As we gained more students, our classroom has grown for the better!

Our recent activity for Agriculture Literacy Week was making ice cream! We had a local farmer read a story to us during a power point presentation. We then continued our generosity to farmers by writing them thank you letters. Maybe we will even get a pen pal or two!

As a class, we were successful in earning our fourth Stellar Stone Award- the fun activity has yet to be determined but we know we will enjoy a little fun!

In 1st grade Language Arts we have been studying many interesting topics. We joined in with 2nd grade to complete a project for our hallway bulletin board, "We Have a Dream". This project was combined with our knowledge of Dr. Martin Luther King. The month of February was extra special with learning about the Presidential Election! Looking forward, we will work on our next writing activity of creating an animal out of recycled materials and writing a persuasive piece urging people to take care of the planet.

1st grade Math consists of mastering math facts, both addition and subtraction. We have dabbled in our skills for understanding the differences between open and closed shapes, attributes of shapes, and even learning some new names for 3D shapes!

2nd grade Math continues to progress with understanding arrays and the basic understanding of... multiplication! We will start a new module on Problem solving with length, money, and data.

We have tried to spend more time outside as the beautiful, spring weather has us dancing in our seats.

All in all, we are proud of how far we've come and are continuing to tell ourselves, "You can if you think you can"!

Mrs. Lansford - Room 9 has been working hard this quarter!

We are continuing to work on meeting classroom expectations every day. We have received so many compliments from visitors to our room. One very exciting thing that happened to our class was winning the door decorating contest! We won extra recess.

Even though this year has looked a little different, we still have enjoyed celebrating when we can. We exchanged cards with our classmates for Valentine's day. For St. Patrick's Day we made leprechaun traps, which we took home at the end of the day. Some of the students in our class even caught a pesky little leprechaun. Others saw evidence that a leprechaun visited their home and were curious about the trap but the leprechauns were too tricky to get caught!

In 1st grade Language Arts we have been learning about plants and how they grow, how life now is different than it was in the past, and how it is the same. We have also learned about how our food gets from the farm to our table. In 1st grade math we have been learning how to measure objects using different types of measuring tools. We have also learned that numbers can be made by using groups of ones and tens.

2nd grade has been working hard as well. In Language Arts we really enjoyed learning about the earth's surface and what causes it to change, the weather, and the different ways we can express ourselves. In 2nd grade math we studied how to add and subtract using regrouping strategies. We started learning the fundamentals of multiplication by creating arrays and using repeated addition.

We are looking forward to next quarter and are excited to see what it will bring!

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. Second grade has also started working with repeated addition and the construction of arrays as we dive into multiplication.

We just wrapped up this year's Ag Week by learning where our food comes from and by making our own homemade ice cream. We even were able to write letters to farms to ask questions and thank them for all of their hard work!

In quarter 4 students will be getting to take a closer look at the state that we live in with our Pennsylvania research project.

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.

3rd & 4th

Mrs. Bechtel, Ms. Dohler & Mrs. Taylor - Happy Spring! The 3/4 students were able to experience Artist in Residence again this quarter. This time around, Mr. Jeff and Ms. Nancy were able to teach them about Native Americans. Students have touched upon this topic in Science and Social Studies so the students were able to build on that knowledge in AIR. This time, students had

Classroom Updates

an activity to complete. The students actually weaved Navajo symbols. Many students completed their weaving in school, however due to time restrictions, many students took them home to complete. We encourage all students to continue with their weaving and complete them at home. We would like to share the finished art with Mr. Jeff and Ms. Nancy when we see them again. Ask your child to show them to you. The ones that have been completed are simply beautiful.

ELA:

Happy Spring Equinox! We are certainly welcoming the warmer weather and longer days this month has brought. In ELA, we continue to develop our proofreading skills, deepen our critical thinking and reasoning skills, expanding our vocabulary, and improving our fluency and reading comprehension.

In third grade, we have finished our unit on the concept of different ways to meet challenges. In this unit, students explored ideas of how we know when choices are good for us, how to use what we already know to help others, how others may inspire us to accomplish big feats, such as flying, and how animals adapt to meet the challenges in their habitats. We are now starting a new unit focusing on the concept of how we can take action to improve things around us every day!

In fourth grade, we have finished our unit on the concept of looking at how writers portray the same topic, whether it be about a certain animal, idea, or an accomplishment. This unit focused on the need for government, why we run for public office, how inventions make our lives better, how we explain things in the sky, and how others view success. We are now starting a new unit focusing on the concept of what helps us understand the world around us.

On March 2, the whole school had the opportunity to participate in Read Across America day where students were encouraged to bring in their favorite books and dress up like their favorite Dr. Seuss character. Some of the costumes from 3/4 students were just phenomenal! Also within this month, we have a reading challenge sent home where students are challenged to read 10 Dr. Seuss books or chapters of another book, and have a parent sign off on them. Then they may return the paper to win a prize! Who knew reading could be so fun?!?! It truly brings joy to my heart to see so many students thrilled about reading and making it their own! I encourage all students to continue reading at home for a fun activity to keep practicing those critical reading skills.

Math:

The third quarter has been filled with fractions, fractions, fractions for both third and fourth grade! This has been a challenging and very rewarding topic to explore. Both grades showed resilience as we continued our lessons through several snow days and even "water" days! We will be moving on to decimals in fourth grade and graphing data in third grade. I encourage you to practice math facts at home with your children when you can! Math Facts are important because they form the building blocks for higher-level math concepts.

Science/Social Studies:

Wow! I cannot believe that we have just completed the third quarter! Students in both third and fourth grade have been very busy in Science and Social Studies. We ended our President unit with our big project where each student was assigned a President and created a President biography person. These projects were presented in front of their classmates. I was absolutely amazed with how well the students did. They were ROCKSTARS! The imagination and creativity each student showed was amazing! We have now moved on into our space unit and we are having a BLAST! We just completed studying the planets and are now learning about constellations and galaxies. Students will be able to create their very own constellation and name it in a STEM project using toothpicks and marshmallows. We have also explored moon phases and the students were able to do an Oreo cookie moon phase activity. The students really love any activity that involves yummy foods! Unfortunately we are unable to have a school-wide science fair. However, we are going to have a ¾ mini science fair in each class. The students voted during the election for our theme and majority ruled- create an invention of your own. These projects, along with their tri-fold poster, will be due April 12. Presentations will also begin the week of April 12. I am going to have the teachers at GMCS, excluding ¾ teachers, judge the inventions and there will be a 1st and 2nd place winner in both third and fourth grade. First place winners will receive 1 adult ticket and 1 child ticket

to the Maryland Science Center. Second place winners will receive a slime kit. All students will receive a lanyard medal for participating. I cannot wait to see what the students will create! We will finish out the school year studying our state, Pennsylvania, focusing on Harrisburg and Gettysburg, a quick plant unit, and will end with classifying and categorizing animals. We will also create another robot out of recyclables for Earth Day on April 22. Each student will be asked to start collecting items that they will want to use to create their robots.

5th & 6th

Mrs. Gulden & Mrs. Sauter - ELA: In ELA, 5th grade has wrapped up our study of Esperanza Rising. The students absolutely loved this novel, and I have never heard better discussion! We are beginning quarter four with The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe, another student favorite. In 6th grade, we are continuing to make our way through Percy Jackson and the Lightning Thief. This book allows us to take the time to study many different Greek myths and make connections with our novel.

Math: In the third quarter, 5th graders focussed heavily on fractions. Our class reviewed how to identify fractions, how to compare fractions, addition and subtraction of fractions and mixed numbers, and we learned about fractions greater than one/improper fractions. The students worked really hard this quarter to become fraction experts. In the fourth quarter, we will discuss multiplying and dividing fractions as well as characteristics of 2-dimensional shapes and volume of 3-dimensional figures. Sixth graders learned a lot of new concepts as well in the third quarter. They learned about integers and their opposites on a number line, rational numbers, absolute value, and graphing integers in the four quadrants on a coordinate plane. As we move into the final quarter, students will be learning about writing and solving expressions and equations as well as area, surface area, and volume.

Science: In science, we have discussed the states of matter and changes in matter. We are now moving into motion, including Newton's three laws.

Artists in Residence: We just finished a very brief Artists in Residence that allowed us to make up for what we missed last year. We studied Indigenous People and learned about 5 tribes that can be found within North America today. Students also had the opportunity to create a weaving tapestry.

Projects: Students are ending the term by turning in their book projects. They will also receive their second Market Day project at the start of quarter four. Students will have the month of April to complete this project!

MUSIC NOTES

Hello everyone! We have had a great third quarter! The students in all classes got to celebrate Valentine's Day and St. Patrick's Day. The students were able to participate in holiday themed music activities. At the beginning of the quarter all the students helped create the first ever Gettysburg Montessori Charter School - School Tune. It turned out amazing and the students/staff were very excited about the finished product.



Kindergarten learned more about musical elements. Students learned about Body Percussion, Music Videos, and Short/Long Sounds.

1/2 Grade learned more musical elements. Students learned about Short/Long Sounds, Solfege, and Music Videos.

3/4 Grade got to learn about the different musical genres. We talked about Classical, Jazz, and Rock Music. Students were able to learn about the history, the elements, and famous bands/composers of each genre.

5/6 Grade learned about Music History. The students got to learn how music has developed. We talked about the Baroque, Classical, Romantic, and Modern Eras. Students learned about the characteristics, the different composers, and famous works by the composers of each era.

Here is to our final quarter of the school year! - Mr. Swiger

ART

Kindergarten just finished making their self portraits recently! Each one is just as unique as the artist who made it! First and second grade students just finished learning about symmetry. They made imaginary bugs that had symmetry on their bodies and introduced pickle, blueberry, cat, heart and monster bugs to the world!

Third and fourth grade students recently learned how to make some optical illusion art. They got to make 3D snakes with only a pencil, paper and coloring supplies! I've never seen so many snakes at GMCS! In Fifth and sixth grade, we just finished an art history lesson on famous Pop-artist, Andy Warhol. We looked at some photos of his artwork, like the Campbell's soup cans and his diptychs, which were four squares with the same images and each one colored differently. Then, students got to make their own diptychs with their own ideas. Each square had to be the same image and each square had to be colored differently. Their ideas were so creative!

SPECIAL EDUCATION

Our processes for identifying students who may be eligible for special education services include, but are not limited to, Multi System of Tiered Support (MTSS) including 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 outside of the Special Education Coordinators office. For further information, feel free to contact our Special Education Coordinator, Rebeka Black, at becky@gettysburgmontessoricharter.org.

RTI

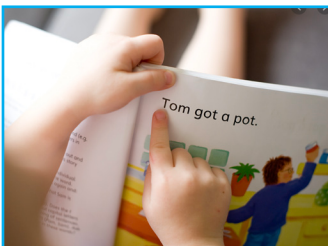
Developing Fluency in Reading and Math

Fluency in reading means having the ability to make your reading flow. In other words, you read like you talk. Here are some helpful strategies to follow in order to help students develop fluency.....

1. record students reading aloud and have them listen to it
2. have students use a ruler or finger to follow along in the text
3. have them read the same thing several times
4. pre-teach vocabulary
5. drill sight words
6. make use of a variety of books and materials
7. try different font and text sizes
8. create a stress-free environment

Fluency in math is about developing number sense and being able to recall mathematics facts and concepts without thinking the problem through. The answers come automatically. Some strategies to increase math fluency are as followed.....

1. practice math at the grocery store while buying items
2. use fractions while cooking or baking at home
3. keep math manipulatives on hand and engage during playtime
4. play family games that include math
5. build a daily or nightly routine that features frequent math practice



HEALTH NEWS

Happy Spring,

Here are a few non-Covid reminders: Kindergartners & 6th graders need physical exams; and Kindergartners, 3rd and 6th graders need dental exams. Please bring or fax reports to the nurse.

We've passed the one year anniversary of our fight against coronavirus. Please keep vigilant and practice social distancing, mask wearing, and good hygiene habits.

New innovations of masks and face shields are on the market. Some designs are not approved and do not provide protection. Remember the basics and be sure to keep masks and shields cleaned and replace as needed.

Best Protection



FACE MASKS

Effective styles may be disposable AKA medical or surgical masks or reusable cloth masks. Use fabric that's breathable, tightly woven, two or three layers thick (when held up to a light source-no light seen). Masks fit properly, when edges are snug around the nose, cheeks, and chin.



Do not use Masks with exhalation valves or vents. Do not use masks with large gaps around the face or chin. ** Students unable to wear masks due to sensory issues, poor compliance, medical or other identified reason**



FACE SHIELDS

Face shield need to cover ear to ear, forehead to 3" below chin, foam or padding provide comfort and prevents upward air flow.

DO NOT USE THESE STYLES. These shields do not protect your child or those around them. I was unable to find a good image of one shield that I've seen at school. The last picture is the closest. Basically the shield fits snugly under the chin, with a strap and loops over the ears; the shield is in front of the mouth and nose, facing upward.



Thank you for all you do and who you are.
Nurse Adrian

REMINDER TO IN-PERSON LEARNERS REGARDING ATTENDANCE

Students are expected to attend school in person unless they are sick, quarantining, have an appointment, or have a pre-approved trip form completed and on file with Dr. Pleso. All absences from school should be followed with a call to the office or note explaining the reason for the absence. Attending virtually in lieu of in-person learning is not permitted unless one of the above conditions applies. This does not apply to students attending 100% online.

Mckinney Vento Act:

Homelessness is not only living on the streets. If you are living in a shelter, motel, camper or doubling up with someone, you are considered homeless. We are here to help! Please reach out to us!

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 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!

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, April 29, 2021
- Thursday, May 27, 2021
- Thursday, June 24, 2021
- Thursday, July 29, 2021
- Thursday, August 26, 2021

