

SIXTH GRADE NEWS

Spring Has Sprung!

April 28, 2017

Although winter is definitely behind us, it feels as if the snowball of work has reached maximum acceleration and is careening downhill into the spring season. It is so easy to become distracted by the warmth outside, dreaming about what fun summer will bring, or even thinking about new schools next September but we first have to get through the spring. Sixth grade at GCCS is demanding, especially during the month of May.

We have been sharing updates on portfolio in the newsletter and through weekly reflections, but we want to underscore the importance of successful completion of all of the prompts going into scoring day on May 31st. We have set interim deadlines for drafts so we can provide our young authors with timely feedback – but if drafts are not submitted or if feedback is not taken, then students have to own the logical consequences of their efforts. To be clear, students have 25 minutes every morning to work on assignments during study hall and we devote time weekly to critique and revision, usually Fridays. The written reflections are meant to be independent. These are assessments of your child’s ability to use the writing process, manage time and resources, and reflect on their learning at GCCS. Naturally, each student is different and may require a bit more scaffolding, but the idea is to develop the capacity to grapple, put forth best effort, and revel in the earned success. Successful completion of both the written and oral presentation are the prerequisites for participation in our Passage Dinner on June 20th and we truly want every student and his/ her family to participate.

In addition to portfolio, our final product for our year of play needs to be completed and our first deadline is rapidly approaching. Members of the Spindler Family Foundation will be visiting with us May 8th to learn how their investment in the Cumming Nature Center playspace will be used. Our class will be working hard next week to prepare a brief presentation for our guests and then move forward with the formal site plans and documentation to be shared at our final exhibition night. As you can see, we have lots to do and no time to waste. May is a long month, but every shred of time is already spoken for. Check in periodically with your sixth grader about progress in portfolio and what supports might be needed to get through the last eight weeks of school!

Prepping for Passage



In addition to all of the academic demands of spring in sixth grade, students are already getting ready for Passage. In music they have begun practicing the music for the end of year ceremonies and soon dancers will begin working with Mrs. Johnson to choreograph movement to accompany the class song, “Wavin’ Flag.” Mrs. Schmitz has an ambitious arrangement for this piece of music and it is already beginning to come together and sounds amazing. In the visual arts, student are starting their art folios, mini-documentation panels that chronicle their work with Ms. Lockner. These will be used as part of the portfolio presentation. The arts are an important part of learning at GCCS and we can’t wait for you to see how it culminates at the end of the year.

We Are Crew

Earlier this week we had guests from School #58 visit to learn more about composting at GCCS as well as hear about how our expedition is going. In turn, they shared information about their expedition at Community Circle. It was great to see both groups of sixth graders (equally nervous and suspicious of one another) chat during lunch and mingle at recess. It was an opportunity for our students to practice a little Empathy & Caring, by playing host to another school and perhaps gaining a new found appreciation for their own school.



Spinning Out of Control



Like most tween fads, this one will fade away too, but for now the spinner fidget has become the distractor du jour. Maybe it's PTSD from all that bottle flipping, but we have discovered that most friends want, don't need, spinners to stay focused. In fact, they are contributing to disruptions during lessons. If your child does not have a plan already in place to use a fidget, then these toys should stay in backpacks or better yet, at home.



Don't forget!

- ✓ **Climate Control** - Recent warm days meant our air conditioning kicked on; please make sure your sixth grader has a sweatshirt/sweater to wear if s/he gets cold.
- ✓ **Bike Trains** - Spring bike trains will start up again on Wednesdays, beginning May 10th. Be on the lookout for Family Association news about the routes. Parents are welcome to ride with us, too!
- ✓ **Service Hours?** - Please be sure to check out the class webpage to learn about service opportunities in our community; 6th graders are responsible for completing 10 hours of service before the end of May.

Your Sixth Grade Team

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