



Currents

The Bi-monthly Newsletter of the Genesee Community Charter School

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Communication is Key



This is it! You hold in your hand one of our most important vehicles for sharing our school with you. *Currents* is sent out every two months; this newsletter contains all the crucial information parents and community members need in order to understand and participate in the life of our school. Dates for deadlines, events, meetings, and exhibitions are announced. Expeditions are described, school policies are explained, and contact information is listed. *Currents* also provides clarification of our school's philosophy and an occasional commentary about educational issues.

Parent satisfaction at GCCS is very high. Last year, over 90% of our parents were satisfied or very satisfied with all aspects of the school. Our staff has found that when parents are *dissatisfied*, the root of the problem is usually a lack of communication. Communication is a responsibility shared by parents and school staff, and we must work together continually to build an open, trusting relationship.

School is a busy, multifaceted place and it's difficult for parents to understand all of its complexities with just the lean information children typically provide. A thorough read of each issue of *Currents* and a daily check in your child's backpack for fliers, announcements, and classroom newsletters will facilitate your connection with GCCS.

Written communication is vital, but nothing can replace face-to-face contact between parents and school staff. Please feel free to schedule conferences and visitations with your child's teachers or the School Leader.

Are you a parent new to GCCS? Back issues of *Currents* are available on our website at www.GCCSchool.org. Articles in these issues may fill in some of the gaps for you. But if in doubt, please ask. As our school grows (and ages), we may inadvertently neglect to fill you in on some basic information.

We're looking forward to a great year working in partnership with family and community members. Please stay in close touch so that together we may help your child grow and learn.

Come to Community Circle!

Need a boost in the middle of each week? Nothing will warm your heart and lift your spirits as much as our weekly Community Circle. Community Circle takes place each **Wednesday from 12:20-12:50**, usually in the Eisenhart Auditorium. Parents and friends are welcome! Community Circle brings our entire school together in song, movement, and celebration. Because the content of Community Circle depends upon what classes are studying at any given time, the agenda is carefully planned just a few days ahead. So, you will not receive a schedule of Community Circle topics in advance. However, parents will be notified if their children will be performing. Rest assured, regardless of the agenda, Community Circle is worth the effort to attend. Hope to see you there!



Family Association

Wine & Cheese

Welcome

Reception

(adults only)

Wednesday, September 15

6:30-8:00 p.m.

Back-to-School Supply List



We would greatly appreciate it if each student could donate the following items to his/her classroom community:

- ✓ 2 boxes of Puffs or Kleenex
- ✓ 2 bottles of Softsoap (pump kind)
- ✓ 1 box sandwich-sized zip-top bags
- ✓ 1 box gallon-sized zip-top bags
- ✓ 3 large packages graham crackers, animal crackers, goldfish crackers, or pretzels (we will request additional snacks throughout the year as the need arises)
- ✓ 1 dozen No. 2 pencils
- ✓ 1 box Dixie cups
- ✓ 3 glue sticks or bottles of Elmer's glue

Pencils and snacks present the greatest ongoing need for classrooms throughout the year, so if you have room in your shopping cart and wallet, please keep us in mind!

All donations are voluntary. Thank you so much for your generosity!

Playground Installation Hurray! All Adult Help Welcome

Saturday, September 11

9:00 a.m.

Meet on the Eisenhart Patio
Watch Backpack Mail
For more details

Did You Send in Extra Clothes for Your Child?



Please send in a complete change of clothing, including extra underclothes and socks, in a zip-top bag.

Accidents do happen! It may be mud, paint, milk, or another culprit, but the best remedy for your child is a quick change of clothing. Help your child move on with his or her day with a minimum of disruption, and send in extra clothing this week. Thank you!

Upcoming Dates To Remember



- Sept. 6: Labor Day, School is Closed
- Sept. 7: Grades 1-6 3:00 p.m. dismissal
Kindergarten half-day sessions
- Sept. 8: 1st Full Day for Kindergarten
Community Circle 12:20-12:50 p.m.
1:00 p.m. dismissal (Every
Wednesday)
- Sept. 11: Playground Installation
9:00 a.m. Eisenhart Patio
- Sept. 15: Family Association Adult Social
6:30 p.m. Ballroom
- Sept. 21: Board of Trustees Meeting
5:30 p.m. Cunningham House
- Sept. 23: Picture Day
- Oct. 4: Board of Trustees Meeting
5:30 p.m. Cunningham House
- Oct. 7: Curriculum Night
Family Association Info Night
See schedule on p. 8
- Oct. 8: Professional Development Day
No School for Students
- Oct. 11: Columbus Day
School is Closed
- Oct. 20: Family Association Meeting
6:30 p.m. Ballroom

GCCS Family Handbooks

Copies of the GCCS Family Handbook were sent home earlier this month. These handbooks explain our policies and procedures, which are designed to ensure the safety of our students and the smooth operation of the school. We greatly appreciate your compliance with these policies. Highlighted here are just a few:

Arrival and Dismissal

Arrival and dismissal procedures are designed to protect instructional time and keep our children safe.

Our school day begins at 8:00 a.m. Because we do not offer before-school care, it is important that families make arrangements for the timely arrival of their children. Students are not admitted to school until 8:00, and should not be left unattended outside the school prior to that time.

The school day ends at 3:00 p.m., except on Wednesdays, when school is dismissed at 1:00 p.m.

If you are picking up a student by car, please do not park in front of the school. You may wish to park in the adjacent lot and wait for your child outside on the Eisenhart patio. Parents are requested not to pick children up inside the school or to pull children out of line near the school entrance.

We are unable to provide adequate supervision for children after school hours. If you experience an emergency that prevents you from arriving at dismissal time, please call the school as soon as possible. Please understand that we cannot accommodate late pick-ups on a regular basis.

At the conclusion of Community Circle on Wednesdays, teachers will line up their students and exit through the Eisenhart Lobby. Teachers will walk classes past the patio on the way to the bus dismissal point. Parents are requested to use the side exit of the Eisenhart Auditorium and to meet their children on the patio.

Teachers take great care to dismiss children to the proper bus or adult caregiver. We are mindful of daily changes in families' after-school arrangements, and ask your cooperation in keeping us informed of those changes. Please inform teachers in writing on each day that your child will deviate from his or her usual routine.



Dress Code

Students attending GCCS do not wear uniforms, but we expect that students will be dressed responsibly and appropriately. This includes weather-appropriate clothing. We expect children to refrain from wearing tank tops, low-cut tops or tops with spaghetti straps, and cut-off shorts. Students must also refrain from wearing clothing that shows midriffs or underwear of any kind (including bra straps). We expect that t-shirts have no offensive language or graphics on them. Flip-flops, hats and sweatbands are also not permitted. Please provide your child with a modestly-sized over-the-shoulders (no wheels) backpack for carting schoolwork and communications to and from

Chaperones

Fieldwork to area museums, nature centers, and other sites are a critical part of our instructional program. Successful field studies require the participation of family members as chaperones. We welcome parents and family members 18 and older to join us on fieldwork. It is the primary responsibility of parent chaperones to supervise students and facilitate their learning and completion of note-taking while on field studies. For this reason, siblings are not permitted on field studies, and we ask that chaperones be prepared to participate in all field study activities and follow the directions of our teachers or guides. Classroom teachers will announce a need for chaperones in their newsletters or field study announcements. Serving as a chaperone counts towards the family service obligation.



Holidays and Special Events

We understand that children and families observe a variety of holidays and family celebrations. To be sensitive to all families and to devote more time to our learning expeditions, we will not celebrate holidays in school, nor have holiday-themed parties in our classrooms. Families wishing to observe birthdays may do so during lunch, in cooperation with classroom teachers. We respectfully request that only store-bought snack items be brought in for student birthdays. Please use the mail to deliver invitations to birthday parties.

Toys

Please help your child remember that toys, electronic games, and similar devices need to be left at home. Toys and electronics from home are not permitted in school.

Village to City

During this time period, we explore Rochester as it explodes from a small village to a booming city. The fertile land and the development of mills along the river allowed wheat to be grown locally and transformed into flour. By taming the land and the river, the settlers produced a surplus of flour. Students will learn the role of the Erie Canal in carrying the flour out of the area – resulting in a population and production boom that transformed Rochester from a small frontier town to “The Young Lion of the West.”

The curriculum of our Sixth Grade is slightly different from the local history-based curriculum of Kindergarten through Fifth Grade. By examining river communities around the world, Sixth Graders will explore issues of power, work, and environment this year. See p. 6 for a description of their first expedition.

Kindergarten – Tools of the Trade

Kindergarten will begin its “Tools of the Trade” expedition by searching for answers to the question “Why do people make tools?” Students will explore the tools we use in the classroom, the tools people of today use to do work, and the tools their great great great grandparents used to do their jobs. Students will learn about how tools helped Rochester grow and how changes in tools over time have changed the way work is done.

Students will spend a great deal of time on the third floor of RMSC examining the tools of Early Rochester and comparing them to their modern counterparts. Their final project will be a presentation about these interesting tools from long ago.



Students will also pair up with a mentor to learn a new skill and to find out about a tool needed to perform that skill.

1st Grade – Work and Community



First Graders will learn about the early occupations in Rochester and the interdependence of people in a community. Students will find out what jobs are still in existence today and how that job has changed over time. Each student will choose an area of interest and become an apprentice to a community member who has that skill or job. Through interviews, field studies, and hands-on experiences, students will work toward presenting their occupation to our school community at a working Village Day.

Woven into this study of community of Early Rochester will be the building of our own classroom community and a study of communities in nature.

2nd Grade – Seeing Rochester in a Grain of Wheat – The Flour City

This will be the first of three expeditions in 2nd Grade that are connected by wheat. By the end of this first expedition, students will understand how Rochester’s first settlers changed this area from a small village to a thriving city.



Students will focus on the scientific method as it relates to botany and simple machines. They will investigate how wheat is transformed from seed to bread, and they will explore the role of simple machines in that transformation.

Fieldwork during this expedition will include visits to a local wheat farm, Brown’s Race, a local bakery, RMSC, and the Erie Canal. Students will tend a classroom garden in which they will grow their own crop of wheat.

The final product will include the making and sharing of bread, demonstrations of science learnings, and a celebration of wheat in the form of a Harvest Festival.

3rd Grade – Life on the Raging Canal



During our last expedition, we saw how the rise of the milling industry helped propel Rochester from a settlement to a bustling village. Now, as the Erie Canal connects Rochester to world, the village has become a city, and not just any city, but America's first "boomtown." How did the canal affect the lives of people in Rochester and other communities along the Erie? How did boats move along the canal? How did the "canawlers" support themselves?

Students will explore the introduction and role of the Erie Canal from the focus of the line boat, a canal vessel that transported both freight and passengers. We will examine the interdependence of the communities and workers on the canal and the physical science involved in the construction of and navigation on the canal. Through maps, primary source documents and songs, students will learn about the "canawlers," the people who earned their living on the canal, and how life along the canal has changed over time. Finally, students will create a performance that shares their knowledge of the canal, its contribution to New York and U.S. history, and the stories and music of the people who lived on and along its banks.

4th Grade – The Courage to Care

Fourth Grade's first expedition this year will examine a very rich, painful, and yet also inspiring time in our country's history. Through field studies, readings, and local experts, the class will explore the lives of such figures as Harriet Tubman, Frederick Douglass, Susan B. Anthony, and many others, whose courageous acts of service and words of inspiration led countless people to freedom. What does it mean to be free? How do people help each other? These are some of the questions that will be guiding our investigations of slavery, the Underground Railroad, and women's suffrage. The themes of service, courage, and inspiration will be explored as they relate to the expedition content as well as to our own classroom environment and character development.

5th Grade – Searching for Freedom

"Without struggle there can be no progress." --Frederick Douglass

Many pivotal events in the quest for freedom were rooted in Rochester. Prominent leaders in this movement lived and worked in Rochester and the surrounding area. Frederick Douglass, Susan B. Anthony, Harriet Tubman, and others worked as individuals and collaboratively in the search for freedom.

Fifth Graders will try to discover what it means to be free and how to empathize by taking on another's perspective. They will look at issues and events from different perspectives, as they did last year while studying the American Revolution. They will start this year where they left off – by studying the Triangle Trade and the history of slavery worldwide. With that background, students will conduct an in-depth study of Frederick Douglass, learning about the conditions of slavery in early America and his fight for freedom. In conjunction with RMSC, the class will create a Children's Guide to the new Frederick Douglass exhibit. Students will also create label copy for the Early Rochester exhibits from the perspective of Frederick Douglass.



6th Grade— Who Says So? Power, Politics, and Persuasion

What do sibling rivalry, board decisions made at the museum, the upcoming presidential election debates, and the limitation on formal protests about the Three Rivers Dam project in China have in common? These are some of the questions Sixth Graders will explore in our upcoming expedition that will focus on the forms and functions of power.

Students will start with an inward glance, considering when, where, and why they experience power (or its absence) – at home, at school, and in the community. They will extend the search as they interview and explore decision-makers and structures in the local community. The exploration will deepen as they examine the U.S. Constitution and begin to compare the political process in America with political systems in key river communities around the world. Research will be guided by questions about power, politics, and personal choice.

Students can look forward to a powerful experience as they begin to transition from the relative safety and comfort of GCCS to the uncharted waters of middle school.



Physical Expedition

During the study of this time period, students will be investigating and making connections with the classroom expeditions and physical expedition concepts.



Kindergarten students will be introduced to the importance of community and teamwork through cooperative games. Students will also develop skills of coordination, balance, body awareness, and appropriate use of sports equipment. In the creative movement component, students will explore the movement and quality of tools through elements such as time, flow, weight, and space.

First Grade will create a circus based on its role in Rochester during the 1800's. Students will learn skills such as juggling, tumbling, dance, and games played in the circus.

Second Grade develop skill in baseball while they explore baseball during the 1800's in Rochester. Additionally, students will create dances and look at the role dances played during this time period.

Third Grade will explore the importance of community as they will experience many crew and cooperative challenges. Students will also build on the importance of teamwork while developing skills necessary to learn baseball. Students will also study the human body and its movement as they study life on the Erie Canal.

Fourth Grade will play baseball, understand the rules of baseball, and how baseball was part of life during the 1800's. Students will also explore how the body can tell a story through movement and the power of self-expression.

Fifth Grade will look at Capoeira, a continuation from last expedition, and its connection to the Triangle Trade. Students will also play baseball and learn about its role during the 1800's. Fifth Grade will also explore the connection between poetry and movement.

Sixth Grade will explore the various sports present in the Olympics and the role the Olympics play in our world. Students will participate in Track and Field and basketball. Additionally, students will be looking at dance choreographers of our time who had great impact and were impacted by society and political conditions by learning their technique and witnessing their works.

Visual Arts

This fall in visual arts, the study of the dynamic growth of Rochester from a village to a thriving “Boom Town” will fuel our ideas. Our students will be visiting the Memorial Art Gallery and other sites to view paintings inspired by the rich history of New York in the 1800's. Artwork depicting landscapes, village scenes, the Erie Canal, and images from the Underground Railroad will inspire our own images in drawing and painting. As part of their expedition work, Kindergarten and First grade will be involved in “apprenticeships” much like the children in the 1800's. They will learn to draw from observation in order to illustrate the tools and methods of production used by people in early Rochester. Representing the landscape of the Erie Canal, wheat fields and mills of New York will be vital for Second and Third Grade expeditions. Our Fourth Grade students will create illustrations and collage to prepare for expedition work that will illuminate the accomplishments of Frederick Douglass and Harriet Tubman. Sixth Graders will be examining and creating images of social organization and symbols of power from our own community to those around the world.

Mark Your Calendar with Fall Exhibition Dates

Exhibitions are one of our most important means of sharing with parents and the community all that children have learned through the course of an expedition. Please remember that children are required to attend exhibition nights. Every student is needed to help the class perform at its best!

Dates for Village to City exhibitions are:

Kindergarten, 1st Grade: Monday, November 15

3rd and 5th Grades: Tuesday, November 16

2nd, 4th, and 6th Grades: Tuesday, November 30



Times and locations will be announced via classroom newsletters and backpack mail.



Problems with the bus?

If you have a question or concern about your child's bus transportation, please call the transportation office at 336-4000. The transportation folks will be able to help you with scheduling, routes, pick-up and drop off locations, and other issues.

RCSD Transportation Office
336-4000

Family Association
needs committee chairs
for its Babysitting Committee!
Please call Tracy Smith
at 544-0577

if you can fulfill this greatly needed role.

Also – a new parent member of
the GCCS Board of Trustees
will be elected October 20.
Watch backpack mail for details.

You're Invited to Learn More About Our
Instructional Program at Our Annual

Curriculum Night

Thursday, October 7

5:30-6:30 p.m. – Kindergarten, 1st Grade

6:45-7:45 p.m. – 2nd, 3rd Grades

8:00-9:00 p.m. – 4th, 5th, 6th Grades

All Evening: Family Association Information

