



Currents

The Bi-monthly Newsletter of the Genesee Community Charter School

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In School, On Time

We recently sent home a letter to clarify our attendance policy and to smooth out our attendance expectations and record-keeping procedures across the grade levels. Of utmost importance to our staff is that all our students have the best possible attendance and arrive promptly each day.

Good attendance in school is central to our design principle *The Responsibility for Learning*. Good attendance maximizes students' opportunities to grow academically and socially. Consistent and prompt attendance adds predictability and security to children's daily routines, which alleviates feelings of anxiety. Solid attendance also lays an important foundation for productive work habits that can last a lifetime.

There are some dicey mornings in which parents must make decisions about whether children are well enough to go to school. If your child has a little runny nose, slight cough, or mild headache, it may not be severe enough to warrant disruption of the important work your child needs to accomplish at school each day. However, if bodily fluids are where they don't belong (vomit, diarrhea), or your child has a fever above 99.5, it is advisable to keep your child home to recuperate. We'll be sure to let you know if we're experiencing widespread occurrences of an illness so that you know what might be heading your way. Last year, we had a terrible outbreak of the stomach flu and this year we have seen a lot of strep throat. We will send home notices via backpack mail or set the phone tree in motion when an illness is rampant.

Being in school on time is also important. Our school day begins for all children at 8:00 a.m. Children will be marked tardy if they arrive later than 8:15 a.m.

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Our Wonderful Playground

Our new playground is a dream! All of the pieces of equipment regularly receive an active workout by our students. Among the most popular are the spica twisters, the multi-spring seesaw, and the climbing wall. Our playground is shared with the RMSC preschool, and we have worked out a schedule to allow all of our children to take advantage of the space.

Because the preschool uses the playground between 2:50 and 3:30 each afternoon, we cannot open the playground to families who pick their children up from school. The exception is Wednesdays. Families who pick up their children after Community Circle on Wednesdays are welcome to use the playground until 2:50.

From the initial planning stages, the museum and school intended playground use to be restricted to GCCS and preschool students during the school year, and summer camp participants in the summer months. We sincerely apologize for any miscommunication that led our families to believe the playground would be open to the public. Due to issues of supervision, maintenance, security, and safety, the museum and school determined that the playground should remain private.

The museum facilities crew will install new fencing and a few benches this spring. We will plan a family work day early next school year to maintain the equipment and to spread additional woodcarpet if necessary. Once again, many thanks to the parents and community members who made our playground possible.

Mark Your Calendar

Family Association Picnic

Sunday, June 5, 2005

Maplewood YMCA

More Details to Come



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Please note that we have begun requiring written excuses for all absences and incidents of tardiness. The letter you received at home outlines the distinction between excused and unexcused absences.

We would also appreciate a phone call on each day of a child's absence. This helps us to alert the teachers and enables them to prepare make-up work when appropriate.

If you would like another copy of the letter that was sent home earlier this month, please

call the school. We will also include our clarified policy and procedures in next year's Family Handbook.

It is our hope that a clearer understanding of our attendance expectations and practices will help families in their daily planning and in communications with school staff. We greatly appreciate your support in helping students benefit from continuous, prompt attendance in school.

Sixth Graders Prepare to Leave Their Mark, Move On

It will be a tearful day when we say goodbye to our blossoming young adults in 6th Grade! This group was our first crew of third graders, and they have been the oldest students in our school as we expanded each year.

Sixth Graders are actively engaged in shaping memorable final months at GCCS. While they're looking forward to their middle school years, they're also reflecting back on their elementary school experiences.

A huge class project will allow 6th Graders to revisit our school's design principles while making a lasting contribution to the school. The class is working with sculptural artist Paul Knoblauch to design and create a beautiful steel bench (you may have seen his work – he has several benches around town and near his studio on University Avenue). The bench will incorporate shapes that symbolize the design principles and our school's emphasis on community. The class will create the design, do a small amount of the fabrication, and raise funds to pay for the project.

Students are also planning their Passage Reception, which will be held the evening of Tuesday, June 21. A 6th Grade crew has taken the lead in planning the celebration, designing invitations, coordinating a potluck supper, and

creating ways to honor each other and their teachers.

Our 6th Graders will be moving on to a variety of schools next year. Many of our students were accepted at School of the Arts. Several are heading to the International Baccalaureate program at East High School. Some will attend Wilson High School and others were accepted at Mercy High School. We will sincerely miss this wonderful group of young people, and wish them great success and happiness in their years beyond GCCS.

Today & Tomorrow Exhibitions

Kindergarten, 1st Grade, 3rd Grade

(note date change for 3rd Grade):

Wednesday, June 15, 2005, 6:00 – 8:00 p.m.

2nd and 6th Grades:

Thursday, June 16, 2005, 6:00 – 8:00 p.m.

4th and 5th Grades:

Monday, June 20, 2005, 6:00 – 8:00 p.m.

Eisenhart Auditorium
Specific Times and Locations
To Be Announced



*All students are
required to attend.*

Today & Tomorrow Expedition Highlights



Has your **Kindergartener or 3rd Grader** suddenly turned into a bird aficionado? Is she excitedly pointing out every winged creature she sees? Is he standing in the driveway each morning attempting a variety of bird calls? If so, it is with good reason. These classes are investigating the anatomy, life cycles, and habitats of birds. Their study has been enriched with multiple visits by guest experts and their feathered friends from Wild Wings. The guest experts introduce students to 3-4 birds each week, then students are given focused time to sketch their live bird models. So far, students have met a barn owl, golden eagle, horned owl, falcon, red-tail hawk and several other species. Their drawings are becoming increasingly skilled as they learn about beak, foot, and feather structures, body shapes, and other adaptations.

First Graders are plunging into the river – figuratively speaking. They’re exploring the river as a habitat to a wide range of flora and fauna. Each crew chose an animal on which to focus, and students are now creating cement sculptures of their animal. They visited the Memorial Art Gallery to view its collection of cement animal sculptures, and to note the techniques the artists used to show different animal coverings such as fur, feathers, and scales. Students will unveil their creations – and other expressions of their new understandings – on exhibition night.

Second Graders are becoming fish experts as they explore the life of Seth Green, a 19th century Rochester native who is considered the Father of Fish Culture. A highlight of this expedition was joining the Caledonia Fish Hatchery as it stocked area streams with trout. Students have visited the Fish Hatchery several times, and have seen the process of breeding fish conceived by Seth Green. It was a thrill for these students to participate in releasing young adult fish into the natural world.



The class’s fishy experiences will come in handy as they write and illustrate a picture book biography of Seth Green.

Fourth Graders are bringing their voices together in support of the charter school movement during Lobby Day in Albany. The New York Charter Schools Association is bringing this class to Albany to meet with legislators about the benefits of charter schools. Students are learning how community members take active roles in voicing their opinions and shaping public policy and legislation. They are also investigating hot issues related to education in our community. Lobby day will give these students an opportunity to practice being articulate, informed community activists.

Fifth Graders are supposed to argue! That’s why this class is learning how to construct a good argument backed by sufficient facts and voiced with appropriate tone and language. They are making multiple visits to the zoo and its neighborhoods to learn how community members feel about the Seneca Park Zoo expansion and its impact on the park and its environs. Math time has turned into a biology lesson as students explore the relationship between the volume of an elephant and the size of its ears. Students are capturing all their knowledge and opinions in an extensive HyperStudio program, introduced to them by our 2nd Grade experts.



Sixth Graders are heading off to the Motor City! The focus of their expedition is power and energy, which they are studying by examining the workings of automobile systems. Students will visit the Edsel Ford home, the Henry Ford Museum, the Rouge Assembly Plant, the “Science of Monster Trucks” exhibit at the Detroit Science Center, and the Motown Museum. Students will also visit with a General Motors design engineer and view the first “Cartunes on Parade” (similar to Rochester’s “Horses on Parade”). Students will unwind at the end of the day by romping in Dr. Wing’s parents’ backyard and picnicking at a lovely park on Lake St. Clair.