



Currents

The Bi-monthly Newsletter of the Genesee Community Charter School

April 2008

Volume 7 No. 5

Establishing a New Tradition



GCCS is developing a new initiative for our sixth grade program – one that is designed to be an important rite of passage for our students as they move from elementary into middle school.

The initiative will involve the development of a Passage Portfolio and a Passage Presentation. Each component of the portfolio will give students an opportunity to reflect on their years at GCCS and on their growth academically, socially, and emotionally. The process will help them to gain a greater understanding of themselves as learners and members of a community. Students' preparation will culminate in a 45-minute presentation to a panel, during which they will highlight their accomplishments and share their challenges.

The components of the Passage Portfolio will include:

- ❖ **Letter of Introduction to the Community**
This component will require students to write a letter to the community that describes themselves as individuals and crew members. Students will share their assessment of their work habits, their areas for improvement, and their most significant accomplishments to date. Students will also explain in what ways they are prepared to be actively contributing members of their community as they move into adolescence and young adulthood.
- ❖ **Reflection on the History of Rochester**
GCCS's curriculum focuses on the social, economic, and natural history of the Rochester region, and this component requires students to reflect back on their previous expeditions. Students will write an essay that answers the question, "What do you think was the most important factor contributing to the development of Rochester?" Students may choose one of any of a

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Sixth Graders Plan to Leave Legacy in Art

We have a beautiful reminder of our first class of sixth graders – the colorful Paul Knoblauch bench that graces the courtyard outside the school's entrance. The class of 2006 worked with the artist to design the bench, and the class raised the funds to pay for it. The bench remains a tribute to the first students to "graduate" from GCCS, and to the design principles that shaped them.

Our current sixth grade bears the distinction of being the first class to go from kindergarten through sixth grade at GCCS. To commemorate this special status, the class is preparing to design and fund another piece of artwork to give the school.

Students have brainstormed a number of ideas and they are beginning conversations with four local artists to come up with preliminary designs. They are also launching "Parents Night Out" to raise money to pay for the project. Please help out our sixth graders by enjoying an adult night out while leaving your young children in our sixth graders' (and adult chaperones') care. All sixth grade babysitters have received Red Cross babysitting certification, and they're planning a range of fun activities to entertain the youngsters.

What: **Parent's Night Out**

When: April 5 – 6:30-9:30 p.m.

April 25 – 7:15 p.m.-conclusion of John McCutcheon Concert

May 3 – 6:30-9:30 p.m.

May 9 – 6:30-9:30 p.m.

Cost: \$15/one child, \$20/two children, \$25/three or more children

Where: GCCS classrooms

Family Association Directory

Board of Trustees Representatives

John Bernunzio (256-0722), Diana Carter (473-1187), Wendy Quarles (647-1667)

Officers

Co-Chairs: Jamine Wilson (256-1566), Bill Gargan (461-0855)

Secretary: Jane Cherin (473-3481)

Treasurer: Andre Spenard (820-6639)

Family Association Committee Chairs

Family Social Activities

John Quitter (787-0332)

Fund-Raising

Anne Punzi (242-8902)

Legislative Issues

Nevada Schickling (329-5751), Mark Watts (242-8902)

Outreach

Lorraine Schild (244-1161), Betsy Serapilio-Frank (654-5958)

Program

Diana Carter (473-1187), Hugh Brantley (328-3288)

Classroom Parent Volunteer Coordinators

Karen Braden (473-5303), Nikki Hogan (621-8731), Yvonne Villareale (473-9318)

Classroom Parent Volunteer Coordinators – Lead Parents

Kindergarten

Kate Kressman-Kehoe (442-6942)

First Grade

Wendy Walsh (244-4996)

Second Grade

Denise Anderson (244-8202)

Third Grade

Betsy Serapilio-Frank (654-5958)

Fourth Grade

Eileen Wrona (288-3273)

Fifth Grade

Yvonne Villareale (473-9318)

Sixth Grade

Jeanne Eckl (377-8957)



Upcoming Dates To Remember



- Apr. 5: Saturday Parent Work Day
Apr. 8: Family Association Meeting
6:30 p.m. Eisenhart Ballroom
Apr. 14-18: Spring Recess
School is Closed
Apr. 21: Board of Trustees Meeting
5:30 p.m. Cunningham House
Apr. 25: John McCutcheon Concert
7:30 p.m. Eisenhart Auditorium
Babysitting Available!
May 12: Board of Trustees Meeting
5:30 p.m. Cunningham House
May 13: Staff Appreciation Luncheon
12:00 p.m. Eisenhart Ballroom
May 20: Family Association Meeting
6:30 p.m. Eisenhart Basement
May 23: Professional Development Day
No School for Students
May 26: Memorial Day
School is Closed
May 28: Parent Satisfaction Survey Due
May 29: Comprehensive Review Parent
Meeting
12:00 p.m. Eisenhart Ballroom
June 9: Board of Trustees Meeting
5:30 p.m. Cunningham House
June 11-12: Sixth Grade Passage
Presentations
June 12: Parent-Teacher Conferences
11:30 a.m. Dismissal
June 15: Family Association Picnic

INDIANS/EXPLORERS/SETTLERS EXHIBITION DATES

WED., JUNE 4 – 6TH GRADE

MON., JUNE 9 – K, 2ND GRADE

TUES., JUNE 10 – 4TH & 5TH GRADES



WED., JUNE 11 – 1ST GRADE

THURS., JUNE 12 – 3RD GRADE

New Tradition (continued from p. 1)

number of factors, and then will explain how that person, event, social movement, or natural resource contributed to Rochester's growth.

❖ **Reflection on the Elementary Years**

GCCS's program provides students with a range of opportunities designed to deepen their academic and social development. Students will write an essay that answers the question, "What part of your education at GCCS do you think contributed the most to your growth during your elementary years?" This component allows students to reflect upon the experiences they have had and the people they have worked with, and to consider how one of those contributed to their academic and social development.

❖ **Academic Portfolio**

Students will prepare an academic portfolio that includes work samples that demonstrate accomplishment of math, reading, writing, and expedition learning targets.

❖ **Myself as a Mathematician, Writer, Artist**

Students will reflect on their particular skills and approaches to mathematics, writing, and either visual arts, dance, or music. They will a brief description of their strengths, weaknesses, accomplishments, and dispositions in regards to each of these disciplines.

❖ **Metaphor**

Students will create a metaphor to represent their sixth grade year. The metaphor will become the centerpiece of students' passage

presentation; students will describe their journey through sixth grade and give examples of how the metaphor illustrates their experience.



Students will give a 45-minute presentation to a panel that includes at least one current classroom teacher, at least one former teacher, the School Leader or Curriculum Specialist, a Board member, parents, and a community member. At the conclusion of the presentation, the panel will determine if the student has adequately met the criteria of the passage, or if revisions are required. Students who fail the Passage will be given additional time during the summer to complete this requirement.

The Passage experience will require students to develop the discipline necessary to complete an independent long-term project and will engage students in writing significant, polished pieces. Students will stretch their creativity, reflection, and oral presentation skills. Most importantly, the Passage will give students an opportunity to take stock of their own strengths, accomplishments, and challenges in preparation for their middle school ventures.

Many Expeditionary Learning schools conduct Passage Presentations, and we have received extensive professional development in this area. We are pleased that this year's sixth graders will have a chance to experience this significant rite of passage before they leave us.

Upcoming Family Association Meetings & Events

Tuesday, April 8, 6:30-8 p.m. – Family Association Meeting

Tuesday, May 13, 12-1 p.m. – Staff Appreciation Luncheon

Tuesday, May 20, 6:30-8 p.m. – Family Association Meeting

Sunday, June 15, 1-5 p.m. – Family Association Picnic at Camp Arrowhead



Be on the Lookout for May's Parent Satisfaction Survey

This year's parent satisfaction survey will be sent out by mail AND by e-mail. Please complete the survey only **once per family**, and return it by the May 28th deadline.

The survey provides school staff with important feedback that shapes our focus areas and future initiatives.



Don't Miss an Unforgettable Evening of Entertainment
with world-renowned Singer, Songwriter, Storyteller

John McCutcheon

Friday, April 25, 2008, 7:30 p.m.,

Eisenhart Auditorium

Tickets \$18 in advance, \$20 at the door

Tickets available at RMSC reception desk

Or call 697-1942 9 a.m.—5 p.m. to order tickets



Support Two Efforts at Once!

Proceeds from the Concert will Help

Renovate the Eisenhart Basement Kitchen

Babysitting is Available

\$15/one child, \$20/two children, \$25/three or more children

Proceeds from Babysitting benefit the Sixth Grade GCCS Gift Project



State Education Department Conducts Comprehensive Review – Parents Invited to Participate

During the third year of the charter period, the State Education Department conducts a comprehensive review of the school's compliance with its charter. GCCS will be undergoing its review in May.

Parents are invited to be a part of the process. A parent discussion will be held on May 29 at 12:00 p.m. in the Eisenhart Ballroom. Join representatives from the State Education Department and provide them with your reflections about your child's experience at GCCS.

What: Comprehensive Review Parent Meeting
When: Thursday, May 29, 12:00 noon
Where: Eisenhart Ballroom
All Parents Welcome



Fourth and Fifth Graders Divide and Conquer

Fourth and Fifth Graders are heading off to explore the sites and people who were instrumental in the formation of our country. With a new twist on the organization of the field study, teachers didn't have to choose which colonial city – Boston or Philadelphia – would provide students with the richest experience. Each class has divided in half, so that half of fourth grade and half of fifth grade will go to Boston and the other halves will travel to Philadelphia. The classes will have many other opportunities to collaborate during the remainder of their expeditions, through book clubs, projects, and activities. Each class's final product will reflect the information students gathered in both cities. Look for some dramatic performances to come.

