



# Currents

The Bi-monthly Newsletter of the Genesee Community Charter School

October 2009

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## The ABC's of Sitton Spelling

After a year of staff research into the science of spelling and consideration of a wide range of programs designed to teach children to spell, we finally selected the Sitton Spelling program for GCCS. We are in the early stages of implementation, and are finding the program to be a good match for our students' and teachers' needs.

The Sitton approach is very different from traditional spelling programs. Here are a few highlights:



The Sitton program assigns about 150 words per grade level based on the frequency of use in the English language. The most frequently used words are assigned to first grade, the next most frequently used words are assigned to second grade, and so on. These words are called "core words."



Students learn to spell core words through a variety of activities, but students are not given a list of words to memorize and be tested on each week. The words they are expected to learn are taught and assessed over and over again through all the grades, with words from earlier grade levels resurfacing repeatedly.



The program uses core words to teach spelling patterns and word parts. The program also incorporates instruction in grammar, usage, and language conventions and concepts.



Students are assigned "priority words" based on their spelling ability. These words are also called "no excuses words," and are expected to be spelled correctly in all student writing.



Spelling is assessed in a variety of ways. Random samples of student writing are checked for accuracy in the priority and core words that have been taught. Students complete regular sentence dictation assessments. Spelling is also assessed using a cloze (fill-in-the-blank) task and a proofreading task.

Come to Curriculum Night on October 8 to learn more about the spelling program and to see samples of student work.

## PREHISTORY EXHIBITION DATES

Thursday, November 12

5:45 p.m. – 1<sup>st</sup> Grade

7:00 p.m. – 6<sup>th</sup> Grade



Monday, November 16

5:45 p.m. – 4<sup>th</sup> Grade

Tuesday, November 17

5:45 p.m. – Kindergarten



Tuesday, December 1

5:45 p.m. – 2<sup>nd</sup> Grade

7:00 p.m. – 3<sup>rd</sup> Grade

5<sup>th</sup> Grade To Be Announced

Learn about...

## Green Cleaning

An Ecochick (that's really what they call themselves!) representing **Green Way** cleaning will talk about how she uses eco-friendly materials in her cleaning business. Come learn how to do the same in your home.

Thursday, Oct. 22, 6:30 – 8 p.m.

GCCS Fourth Grade Classroom

Babysitting available/\$2 per child.



Questions? Contact  
Diana Carter, program  
committee chair, at  
473-1187 or [blueloon@rochester.rr.com](mailto:blueloon@rochester.rr.com).

## Family Association Directory

### *Board of Trustees Representatives*

Diana Carter (473-1187, [blueloon@rochester.rr.com](mailto:blueloon@rochester.rr.com)),

LaShunda Echols-Smith (436-6219,  
[lashunda.smith@successfulpathways.com](mailto:lashunda.smith@successfulpathways.com))

Dan Bell (544-0577, [dbell@rochester.rr.com](mailto:dbell@rochester.rr.com))

### *Officers*

**Co-Chairs:** Nikki Hogan (621-8731, [nhogan13@hotmail.com](mailto:nhogan13@hotmail.com))  
Elvis Reyes (338-9012, [elvis.reyes@twcable.com](mailto:elvis.reyes@twcable.com))

**Secretary:** Rebecca Degro-Carbonel (266-8408,  
[becky273@hotmail.com](mailto:becky273@hotmail.com))

**Treasurer:** Andre Spenard (820-6639,  
[hammerheadconsulting@earthlink.net](mailto:hammerheadconsulting@earthlink.net))

### *Family Association Committee Chairs*

#### **Family Social Activities**

Volunteer Needed!

#### **Fund-Raising**

Maria Kast (288-8449, [mariatkast@gmail.com](mailto:mariatkast@gmail.com))

#### **Legislative Issues**

Paul Hansen (698-5051, [phansen14620@gmail.com](mailto:phansen14620@gmail.com))

#### **Outreach**

Kate Kressman-Kehoe (442-6942, [kressman@frontiernet.net](mailto:kressman@frontiernet.net))

#### **Program**

Diana Carter (473-1187, [blueloon@rochester.rr.com](mailto:blueloon@rochester.rr.com))

#### **Classroom Parent Volunteer Coordinators**

Wendy Walsh (244-4996, [wendyphoto@hotmail.com](mailto:wendyphoto@hotmail.com))

### *Classroom Parent Volunteer Coordinators*

#### **Kindergarten**

Nicole Meyer (482-2566, [nicolem@rochesterymca.org](mailto:nicolem@rochesterymca.org))

#### **First Grade**

Karen Braden (615-5200, [karen@mikaren.com](mailto:karen@mikaren.com))

#### **Second Grade**

Brenda Wonder (271-0294, [wondelveccchio@hotmail.com](mailto:wondelveccchio@hotmail.com))

#### **Third Grade**

Gale Lynch (454-3295, [galelynch@frontiernet.net](mailto:galelynch@frontiernet.net))

#### **Fourth Grade**

Denise Anderson (244-8202, [tommya31323@frontiernet.net](mailto:tommya31323@frontiernet.net))

#### **Fifth Grade**

Pam Black-Colton (244-5097, [pbcl4610@yahoo.com](mailto:pbcl4610@yahoo.com))

#### **Sixth Grade**

Eileen Wrona (734-1160, [enchantedrose garden@hotmail.com](mailto:enchantedrose garden@hotmail.com))



## Upcoming Dates To Remember



- Oct. 2: School Pictures Make-up Day  
 Oct. 8: Curriculum Night  
 Oct. 9: Professional Development Day  
 No School for Students  
 Oct. 12: Columbus Day  
 School is Closed  
 Oct. 14: Board of Trustees Meeting  
 5:30 p.m. Cunningham House  
 Oct. 17: Saturday Parent Work Day  
 9 a.m.-1 p.m.  
 Oct. 22: Family Association Program  
 Green Cleaning  
 6:30-8 p.m. Eisenhart Ballroom  
 Babysitting Available  
 Oct. 28-30: Site Seminar  
 Nov. 3: State Education Department  
 Parent Meeting  
 10:00 a.m. Eisenhart Ballroom  
 Nov. 5: Family Association Meeting  
 6:30-8 p.m. 6<sup>th</sup> Grade Classroom  
 Babysitting Available  
 Nov. 11: Professional Development Day  
 No School for Students  
 Board of Trustees Meeting  
 5:30 p.m. Cunningham House  
 Nov. 23-24: Professional Development Days  
 No School for Students  
 Nov. 25-27: Thanksgiving Recess  
 School is Closed  
 Dec. 3: Native American Storyteller  
 7:00 p.m. Eisenhart Auditorium  
 Dec. 9: Board of Trustees Meeting  
 5:30 p.m. Cunningham House  
 Dec. 10: Parent Teacher Conferences  
 11:30 a.m. Dismissal  
 Dec. 17: Family Association Potluck  
 Supper and Service Auction  
 6:00 p.m. Eisenhart Auditorium  
 Dec. 21-22: Professional Development Days  
 No School for Students  
 Dec. 23-31: Winter Recess  
 School is Closed

## MAP Testing Begins

Our first round of MAP testing is in progress. Every child in Grades 3-6 is taking this new computer-based assessment in Reading, Language Usage, and Mathematics three times each year.

MAP (Measures of Academic Progress) is a nationally-normed assessment. The tests are multiple-choice format and they are administered on the computer in our new Mac lab. Administration takes three sessions of about 60 minutes each.

While we prefer to keep testing to a minimum at GCCS, the MAP test has many advantages. We believe that the test will give us more timely and useful information than just the New York State exams.

The test provides us with a measure of children's reading and math performance that is independent of their grade level. As students take the test, the program selects the next question based on the level of previous right and wrong answers. As it proceeds, the program determines the level at which each child gets 50% of the items wrong and 50% of the items right. This point is converted into a score called a RIT score. This is considered to be the child's instructional level. Teachers receive scores immediately after the testing session ends.

RIT scores range from about 145 (Kindergarten) to about 235 (Grade 11). By monitoring the growth in the RIT scores, we can see which children are making adequate progress

each year, and we can identify when children reach a plateau that requires instructional intervention.

We are also able to use the scores as indicators of skills and concepts students understand, skills they are developing, and skills that may be academically challenging. This is helpful in selecting materials, planning lessons, and grouping students for targeted instruction.

Parents will receive a report on the testing results in each progress report. The report will provide parents with their child's scores as well as the national and school average. The report will also indicate areas of strength and weakness in children's academic performance.

We elected to administer the MAP test because it will provide us with one more piece of information to help us maximize instruction for each child. When combined with our most important source of information – teacher observations of student work – we gain a clearer picture of student learning and of our program's strengths and gaps.

Teachers will provide an overview of the MAP testing on Curriculum Night, October 8. You may also check out [www.nwea.org](http://www.nwea.org) and look for the "Students and Parents" tab on the lower right side of the screen. Please feel free to contact your child's teachers if you have questions about the testing process or about the report.



## WINTER WEATHER IS COMING! WILL YOUR CHILD BE PREPARED?



And the need for boots and warm outerwear will soon be upon us! Please be sure your child is equipped with boots, hats, mittens, and snowpants every day. We request that a hat and a spare pair of boots, mittens and snowpants be left at school for the winter season. Children need to be prepared for outdoor recess and field studies every day.

**Please send into school labeled with your child's name:**

- ✓ Boots
- ✓ Hats
- ✓ Mittens
- ✓ Snowpants



## Don't Forget Curriculum Night!

Thursday, October 8

5:30 – 7:00: Grades K, 1, 4, 5

7:15 – 8:45: Grades 2, 3, 6



Meet your child's teachers and other class parents



Discover more about classroom traditions and daily routines



Learn about your child's spelling program and the new MAP Testing Program



Find out what's happening in this year's expeditions

Please note: This is an adults-only event.

## Family Association Meeting

Thursday, November 5  
6:30 – 8:00 p.m.

Come Get Involved in the Family Association's Activities This Year

Babysitting Available  
Suggested Donation \$2.00/child

## Saturday Parent Work Day

**Saturday, October 17**  
**9:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.**

**COME HELP get OUR SCHOOL IN SHAPE FOR Site SEMINAR!**

**PLEASE BRING BUCKETS AND RAGS IF YOU HAVE THEM**

**(BABYSITTING PROVIDED)**

## State Education Department Finalizes Charter Renewal – Parents Invited to Participate

GCCS is in the final stages of its second charter renewal, which will renew the charter from 2010-2015.

Parents are invited to be a part of the process. A parent discussion will be held on Tuesday, November 3 at 10:00 a.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: Charter Renewal Parent Meeting  
When: Tuesday, November 3, 10:00 a.m.  
Where: Eisenhart Ballroom

