



# *Currents* Reopening Edition

The Bi-monthly Newsletter of the Genesee Community Charter School  
an EL Education School

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## *Reopening Safely*

Welcome Back! We know this is an uneasy beginning to our 20<sup>th</sup> year at GCCS. The GCCS staff and Reopening Task Force have been working very hard this summer to prepare for our first days of school. This edition of *Currents* is meant to inform you all of important information you need to know to have a successful start!

### Topics covered in this issue:

- Upcoming Events
- Virtual Learner Expectations and Attendance
- Family Engagement Opportunities
- Arrival, Dismissal, and Food Service Procedures
- COVID-19 Prevention Tips

## **CHROMEBOOKS FOR EVERYONE**



Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, GCCS considered many strategies to have a successful year. One of the first priorities for the GCCS Board of Trustees was to ensure that all GCCS students had what they needed to be successful during remote learning. Therefore, the Board approved funds to equip the entire student body with chromebooks this year.

During GCCS Orientation Days and Trial Days, all families will pick up their chromebook and will need to sign a Chromebook Commitment form explaining how to care for the device and expectations for usage. Please read this form before using the chromebook at home. Teachers will be sharing tutorial videos to help you and your child become comfortable with using it. Even if you have your own personal device for remote learning, we suggest that your child is familiar with this device as it has the applications students need for their remote instructional program this year.

## **The GCCS Diversity Committee – Rebooted!**

A racial equity discussion group has been meeting bi-weekly since June 1st, spurred by the national and local movements to end racial injustice, and a desire to understand our complicity with systemic racism and white supremacy at the individual, interpersonal, and school-wide levels. As a group, we determined the following purpose for this discussion group:

### **Purpose:**

As a community, we are holding ourselves accountable to understanding how racism is perpetuated in our interactions, and to call out our biases with curiosity and a desire to do better.

Each time we met, we often discussed how these discussions can lead to action and how we can continue this important work into the school year. Therefore, the racial equity discussion group will merge with the GCCS Diversity Committee to take action.

We hope you will consider joining this committee of staff and families this year working in partnership to identify our community's strengths and challenges in combating systemic racism and cultural exclusion. We only ask that you be willing to remain open to new ideas, and to educate yourself as you go along, understanding that this work is a journey of lifelong learning. Join us virtually on Sept. 17<sup>th</sup> for our next meeting!

## GCCS Family Association

*The purpose of the Family Association (FA) is to promote community and connections among the GCCS families and to provide support and assistance to the school and school leader. All parents and guardians of children currently enrolled in GCCS are members of the FA. The FA Officers work closely with the school to meet these goals and recruit additional parents/guardians to assist in important roles like room parents, event planning, and fundraising.*

## Family Association Directory

### Board of Trustees Representatives

Tasha Stevens (973-568-8757, [tashaystevens@gmail.com](mailto:tashaystevens@gmail.com))

Jessica Wanner (970-379-6045, [jessiewinterhalt@hotmail.com](mailto:jessiewinterhalt@hotmail.com))

Traci Terrance (585-766-9863, [traci.terrance@gmail.com](mailto:traci.terrance@gmail.com))

### Family Association Officers

**Co-Chairs:** Laura Ballou (330-3489, [laurajballou@gmail.com](mailto:laurajballou@gmail.com));

Jennifer West (461-9179, [jenniferwestphd@gmail.com](mailto:jenniferwestphd@gmail.com))

**Secretary:** Kyrra Branch (347-645-9403, [pecan282@gmail.com](mailto:pecan282@gmail.com))

**Treasurer:** Jen Gaffey-Link (760-4234, [jgaflink@gmail.com](mailto:jgaflink@gmail.com))

**The Family Association is seeking Classroom Co-Room Parents and volunteers to coordinate virtual gatherings. Please use the link below to tell the FA how you can help!**

<https://forms.gle/ypafLD2YKy9Y7MQm6>

## Upcoming Dates To Remember



- Sept 2: GCCS Orientation Day
- Sept. 3: GCCS Orientation Day
- Sept. 4: Cohort B Trial Day (no bus transportation) – Cohort A and virtual learners will have assignments to do at home.
- Sept. 7: Labor Day (No School)
- Sept. 8: Cohort A Trial Day (no bus transportation) – Cohort B and virtual learners will have assignments to do at home.
- Sept. 9: Virtual Opening Ceremony at 11:00 a.m.
- Sept. 9: GCCS Board of Trustees Meeting at 5:30 p.m.
- Sept. 10: First Full Day for Cohort B (in person)
- First Full Day for Cohort A and virtual learners (remotely)
- First day for bus transportation
- Sept. 14: First Full Day for Cohort A (in person)
- First Full Day for Cohort B (remotely)
- Bus transportation continues
- Sept. 15: Virtual New Family Reception 6:30 – 7:30 p.m.
- Sept. 17: Picture Day for Cohort B (including Cohort B virtual learners)
- Sept. 17: Diversity Committee Meeting (virtual)
- Sept. 21: Picture Day for Cohort A (including Cohort A virtual learners)
- Sept. 22: Virtual Curriculum Night
- Oct. 8: Virtual Family Association Fall Meeting, 7:00 – 8:00 p.m.
- Oct. 9: Professional Development Day
- No School for Students
- Oct. 12: Columbus Day, School is Closed
- Oct. 14: GCCS Board of Trustees Meeting at 5:30 p.m.

*Come learn about the 2020-21 instructional program*

*At Our Annual*

*Curriculum Night*

*Tuesday, September 22<sup>nd</sup>*



*This will be a live virtual event.*

*Stay tuned for information from school and your classroom teachers with more details.*



## Family Engagement Reimagined

GCCS believes that children learn best when schools and families work in partnership with each other. Families have many resources, strengths, and areas of expertise that enrich our instructional program. In addition, children whose families are involved in their education perform better academically and socially. During this unprecedented time, GCCS has ignited a stronger partnership with families to support their children's education both remotely and within our brick and mortar building. Additionally, GCCS families are collaborating to create a supportive community for one another to help each other during this time of need. In a world of isolation, social distancing, and virtual gatherings, we have learned to lean on each other in new ways. We look forward to witnessing an even stronger cohesive community this year!

## Chaperones and Volunteers

Typically, this is the time of year when we share chaperone and volunteer training dates. Since we will be limiting family access to the building and there will be fewer field studies, we are holding off on these trainings until mid-year. Families who are already volunteer and chaperone certified can participate in fall field studies as circumstances arise. Kindergarten families will receive more information about this in the coming weeks. Thank you for understanding.



## *GCCS Cares – A New Whole-School Private Facebook Page*



Two of GCCS's Character Traits are Compassion and Collaboration. These traits are ones that students develop during their time at GCCS but are also embodied in the community of families that make up GCCS. GCCS cares, and in that spirit, this Facebook page is designed to be a place where family members can share resources with each other as well as express needs that they may have. For example, if you hear about a community resource, such as childcare services, you can post it here. Or, if you have hand-me-down clothes that another family may benefit from you can use this page to tell others about it. Different needs will arise for each of us as well. This can be a place where you can ask for assistance with needs such as transportation, winter boots, hockey equipment, or even a desk for home learning. The GCCS Cares page will be moderated by both school personnel and parent volunteers. To join, search Facebook for "GCCS Cares" and request to join the group. It is our hope that having a place to share and care will be a way to strengthen our connections to each other!

In contrast to the GCCS Cares page, Class Facebook pages will serve as a site for class specific information, and community-building within the class. School wide announcements, FA event information and resources/community events that are age/grade specific will also be posted in the Class Facebook pages. Families can choose to belong to one or both Facebook groups.

## Arrival, Dismissal, Food Service, and Material Pick-up Procedures

GCCS School Days begin at 8:00 a.m. and end at 3:00 p.m. In order to maximize our instructional time, please adhere to the following procedures.

### Arrival:

- Buses will release students in front of the school building.
- Families dropping off children will **enter through Oxford or the East Avenue Planetarium entrance and line up on the driveway facing the school building.**
- GCCS staff will release students from cars after taking temperatures and collecting the COVID-19 screening question slip. **Please remain in your vehicles until a staff member arrives.**
- GCCS support staff will assist with escorting children into the building.
- Children are **marked tardy and must be signed in by a parent** if they **enter the classroom after 8:15 a.m.** Please come to the GCCS door and ring the buzzer. A staff member will check the student in at the door and they will be escorted to class.
- Breakfast will be served from 8:00 – 8:20 a.m. However, breakfast will be available if a student is tardy.

### Dismissal:

- Children who need to leave school early must be signed out. Parents should alert the school via email, written note, or phone call so we can prepare the student to leave. Parents should come to the GCCS door and ring the buzzer. A GCCS staff member will assist you in signing out at the door. Please avoid coming to school to sign children out between 2:30-3:00 p.m.
- Buses will collect children in front of the school building.
- Families picking up children will enter through the **East Avenue Planetarium entrance and line up along the sidewalk facing Oxford street.** Children will be released to cars. **Families should not leave their vehicles.**

### Food Service Procedures:

- Breakfast and lunch will be provided beginning this Friday, September 4<sup>th</sup>
- Menus are going home during GCCS Orientation Days and are due the week of September 7<sup>th</sup>.
- For **fully virtual and/or remote learners who order meals**, families will need to pick up at the GCCS front entrance between 11:30 and 1:30 on Tuesdays and Fridays. **This will begin September 15<sup>th</sup>.**

### Virtual Materials:

- If your family elected to learn virtually every day, classroom materials can be picked up Tuesdays and Fridays between 11:30 and 1:30 at the GCCS front entrance. Classroom teachers will let you know when this is needed.

## Embrace and Avoid (COVID-19 Prevention Tips)



Here are some of the COVID-19 prevention policies that will be important to know and go over with your child:

### Embrace: Face Coverings



Face coverings need to fully cover mouths and noses. The most effective face coverings are masks that are snug around the nose and chin.

All staff, students, and visitors must be wearing masks in the building at all times. They will also wear them during physical activities such as recess, music, and movement. Mask breaks will be provided when it is safe to do so.

*Avoid:* Gators and bandanas are not as effective and are not recommended. Masks with valves can release breath and therefore are not as effective.

### Embrace: COVID Screening Questions

For in-person instructional days, children need to bring a COVID screening question slip each day (filled out by caregivers). For example, if your child is in Cohort A, they should bring the signed question slip Monday and Tuesday. Staff who take temperatures will collect the question slips at arrival.

## A Note About Attendance...

Update

In the Spring, schools were given the autonomy to determine how to best take “attendance” virtually. We knew that many families had little time to determine how they could engage with our program. However, this fall, GCCS expects that all students will be able to attend to all tasks and adhere to the schedule provided by teachers both virtually and in-person. Teachers will document virtual task completion and participation as part of their attendance records. More information from teachers will follow soon.

### Welcome Christen Kelley to the GCCS Staff!

She will be our new Communications Coordinator and will be your point of contact regarding attendance. If you call the school, she will likely be the friendly voice you hear and she will also be calling to follow up regarding absences. Please email Christen if you have an attendance-related update:

[ckelley@gccschool.org](mailto:ckelley@gccschool.org).