



A Note from the Leadership Crew

Welcome to our first issue of Currents for the 2024-2025 school year.

Each month, you will receive a digital and hard copy of this school newsletter. In each issue, you will find information that will answer many questions you may have wondered and provide updates on different school happenings. Please read and keep it as reference for event dates, times, and contact information.

The front page will always have a small "table of contents" to let you know where to find this information.

Please reach out if you have any questions.

- Elizabeth Mascitti-Miller, Interim Executive Director
- Kemouy Bhalai, School Director - RMSC Campus
- Christine Farrell, School Director - FC Campus
- Chris Dolgos, Director of Curriculum & Instruction
- Maureen Milke, Director of Operations

IN THIS ISSUE

- Director’s Message and School Goals (p.2)
- Family Association Contacts and Calendar of Events (p.3)
- Staffing Updates (p.4)
- Back to School Reminders and Bell Times (p.5)
- Arrival & Dismissal Procedures , Curriculum Night & Medical Forms(p.6)
- Safety Drills (p.7)
- Curriculum, Transportation and Kindergarten (p.8)

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A Note from the School Director

Dear GCCS Families,

Welcome to the 2024-2025 school year where we are **Rooted and Growing**.

As we embark on this new year, we're excited to introduce several new staff members who bring fresh perspectives and enthusiasm to our team. While it's always bittersweet to say goodbye to valued colleagues, we are confident that these new additions to our staff Crew will contribute positively to our school community.

Both campuses are collaborating to refine and build new systems that will support students and increase achievement. Recognizing that every student learns differently, we are working intentionally on being responsive to their needs. Our Crew is working collaboratively to refine and reimagine who we are to ensure cohesion, coherence, and consistency. We will share more information with you throughout the year.

We look forward to the year starting and having our students return, who are the heartbeat of our organization. Thank you for entrusting us with your child(ren)'s education. We look forward to working together to support their growth and success throughout the year.

I can be reached at kbhalai@gccschool.org if you have any questions or concerns.

Kind Regards,

Ms. Kemouy Bhalai
kbhalai@gccschool.org
(585) 697.1960

School Targets - What are OUR FOCI?!

Target #1- Mastery of Knowledge & Skills (MKS)

- Students engage in reflection, self-assessment, goal setting and progress monitoring
- Students will score proficiently on the NYS assessments in 3rd-6th grade
- Supporting diverse learners through MTSS (multi-tiered system of supports)

Target #2 - Character

- Facilitating a culture of Crew
- Restorative Approach to address discipline and repair harm
- Focus on character traits and goal setting
- Use of MTSS to support SEL needs of students

Target #3 - High Quality Work (HQW)

- Design of purposeful learning experiences
- Continued focus on Arts Integration
- Incorporation of evidence based writing into each expedition

OUR MISSION

The *Genesee Community Charter School* provides a rich educational experience that values intellectual rigor, respect for diversity, and community responsibility. Our local history-based and globally-connected program immerses our diverse population of children in investigation and discovery, extensively using the cultural and natural resources of our community. We nurture children's natural abilities to be reflective questioners, articulate communicators, critical thinkers, and skilled problem solvers, enabling them to reach exemplary standards.



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 Director. All caregivers 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 caregivers to assist in important roles like room helpers, event planning, and fundraising

This year, we have new FA Officers shared between both campuses; their information is below.

Family Association Directory

GCCS Board of Trustees Representatives

- ❖ GCCS Family Representatives
 - Kiersten Blankley (kshinrock@gmail.com)
 - Benjamin Clarke (benjaminhclarke@yahoo.com)
- ❖ Alumni Family Representatives
 - Tasha Stevens (tashaystevens@gmail.com)

Family Association Officers

- ❖ **Chair:** Karla Carey (karlarae5@gmail.com)
- ❖ **Secretary:** Blake Crowley (blake.crowley@gmail.com)
- ❖ **Treasurer:** Isha Torres (iyt6977@gmail.com)

We will be reaching out soon for caregivers who want to serve as classroom volunteers. **We are also seeking a co-chair from our campus.**

GCCS Logogear: <https://gccs-fa.square.site>

To Contact the GCCS Family Association,
Email: GCCS_FA@GCCSchool.org

MARK THE DATES...

AUGUST:

- Aug 21: New Family Orientation (4:00 - 5:00pm)
- Aug 26: Open House (5:30 - 7:00pm)
Kindergarten Family Orientation (6:00 - 7:00pm)

Aug 28 – School Begins for 1st-6th grade on 8/28

**Aug 30: Kindergarten Screening
Dismissal at 12:45pm (No Buses)**

SEPTEMBER:

- Sept 2: NO SCHOOL - Labor Day**
- Sept 3: Kindergarten Students ½ Day Orientation
- Sept 4: No Buses**
- Sept 18: Volunteer & Chaperone Training
- Sept 23-26: 6th Grade Retreat
- Sept 25: Board of Trustees Meeting

OCTOBER:

- Oct 3: Curriculum Night (6:00 - 9:00pm)
- Oct 9: Volunteer & Chaperone Training
- Oct 14: NO SCHOOL - Indigenous People Day**
- Oct 18: Family Association Movie Night
- Oct 19: Volunteer & Chaperone Training
- Oct 25: Professional Development Day - No Students**
- Oct 30: Board of Trustees Meeting

Please use the link below to sign up for upcoming volunteer and chaperone training: [2024-25 Caregiver Chaperone & Volunteer Training](#)

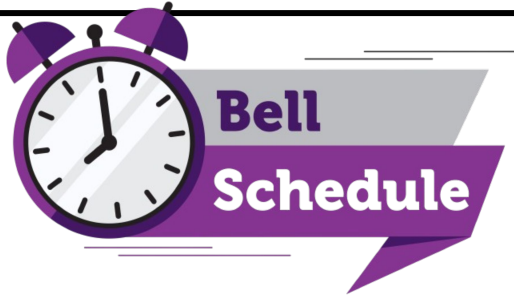
More details to come...

**SCHOOL
CALENDAR
EVENTS**

August 2024
Volume 24, Issue 1



School Times



Our times are below for Mondays, Tuesdays, Thursdays and Fridays:

School begins at 7:45am
School dismisses at 2:45pm

On Wednesdays (Early Dismissal Days):

School begins at 7:45am
School dismisses at 12:45pm

Community Circle takes place on Wednesdays from 12:10 - 12:45 pm. **The last Wednesday of each month, is a closed Community Circle, only for students; families should not attend on the last Wednesday.** However, families can attend the all other Wednesdays, unless notified differently.

Back-to-School Supplies

Please review the list of back to supplies for your child's grade in the Welcome Back letter. If you have any questions, please contact the school for information. The list provided below is for all students.

Each Student Needs:

- A complete change of clothing, including pants, shirt, underwear, socks, and sneakers. *Please place these items in a 1- or 2- gallon zip-top bag, labeled with your child's name.*
- 1 pair of headphones (**no earbuds**) labeled with your child's name
- A water bottle with your child's name
- 2 masks in your child's backpack

All classrooms will accept snack donations for hungry tummies! (Nut-free and serving approx. 33 students)

Large packages of graham crackers, animal crackers, goldfish, or pretzels. Please keep an eye on sugar content and look out for healthy-snack sign-ups sent out by Classroom Caregivers.

Classrooms also request donations of hand soap, boxes of tissues, and hand sanitizers.

Dress Code

Students should dress in a way that reflects and express their identity, but also allow them the ability and comfortability to learn and play as our days are filled with movement, exploration, and the natural world. GCCS students should wear shoes that allow them to play freely without risk of injury and therefore sneakers or close-toed shoes are recommended. As a school that embraces and welcomes all families, we will ask students to change if messaging on clothing implies or expresses harm to self or others through racism, discrimination, violence, or the use of illegal substances.

Religious, Medical, Gender Identity, and Disability Accommodations

GCCS will reasonably accommodate a student's religious beliefs, medical condition, gender identity, or disability by making exceptions to this policy. Students/families who need such an accommodation should contact the School Director.

Please select a modestly-sized backpack without wheels for your child due to safety and storage challenges.



Arrival & Dismissal Procedures for Safety

These are a few reminders of the arrival and dismissal procedures to help promote a smooth and safe transition.

Arrival

- Doors open at 7:35 a.m.
- Morning Car Drop Offs need to enter the campus from Oxford Street (the East Ave entrance is for the school bus). You may do a car drop off in front of the building.
- Children are marked tardy and must be signed in by a caregiver if they enter the classroom after 8:00 a.m. Please come to the GCCS door, ring the buzzer and proceed to the Main Office to sign your child(ren) in.
- Breakfast will be served from 7:45 – 8:15 a.m. However, breakfast will be available if a student is tardy.

Dismissal

- Students can only be picked up by the contact listed on the pick up authorization list.
- **If you are making changes to the dismissal plan, you must provide written notice or notify the office** (ex. bus change, early pickup, pick up by someone who is not on the authorization list, etc.).
- **We ask that caregivers use the Bear Garden or the back end of the Back 40 to check in with each other after pick up.** This helps the teachers and staff identify who is safely with their caregivers and who still needs to be picked up.
- Buses will collect children in front of the school building.
- Families picking up children will enter through the Oxford Street entrance, park in the Planetarium lot, and will pick up child(ren) from identified spots on the Back 40.

Caregiver drop-offs, **please be mindful of your speed** as you are doing drop off and pick up.

Join Us: GCCS Curriculum Night!

Thursday, October 3rd

6:00 - 7:15 pm for
Grades K, 1, 5, & 6

7:30 - 8:45 pm for
Grades 2, 3, & 4



Hear from teachers about what is in store for your GCCS student(s) and have a chance to get-to-know GCCS families and staff.

Medical Forms

All health-related forms are due at the school by **Monday, August 12th**. If you have not submitted these forms, please do so as soon as possible. **Remember that children cannot begin school without required immunizations.**

Currently, COVID-19 vaccinations are not required to attend school, but we do encourage vaccinations to continue supporting a healthy and safe environment.



Safety Drills

The safety of your child and all children in our schools as well as the safety of the school staff and support personnel is very important to us. In order to maintain a safe environment for our children to study and learn, it is necessary that we practice our emergency and crisis response plans by having drills designed to exercise our procedures.

Some of these drills include procedures we practice monthly, our fire drills for example, and some we practice only a few times during the year. We wanted you to be aware of the various drills so you can be prepared to discuss them with your child if the topic arises at home.

Education law mandates that a minimum of 12 drills must be held each school year, eight of which shall be held prior to December 1st. Students will participate in different drills throughout the year, with four of them being lockdown drills.

Please review the descriptions and purpose of different drills below.

<u>Fire Drill</u>	<u>Evacuation Drill</u>	<u>Lockdown Drill</u>
<p>Fire drills are required by Section 807 of the Education Law and are designed to ensure a quick and orderly evacuation of school buildings should we experience a real fire emergency. Fire drills follow a building-based evacuation procedure. We practice the evacuation process so all school employees know their respective duties and students know where to go.</p>	<p>During an "Evacuation Drill", students will be safely escorted along a designated evacuation route to one of our predetermined evacuation sites on campus. At the conclusion of the drill, all students will be escorted back to the school.</p>	<p>The purpose of the lockdown drill is to help students practice how to stay safe from any danger inside the building. During a lockdown drill, all perimeter doors to the school building as well as classroom and office doors will be locked and will remain locked until the "danger or issue" outside or inside the building is resolved. So that everyone may remain safe, <u>no one will be allowed to enter or leave the building/classroom.</u></p>

Students will also engage in a **school bus evacuation drill**, where students exit the bus upon their arrival to school to practice for an emergency evacuation. There will also be an **early dismissal drill**, where students are dismissed five minutes early (12:40 pm) so that transportation and families can discuss procedures in case the school has to close early due to inclement weather or another emergency reason. *More information will be sent closer to the early dismissal drill.*

These drills are not announced due to the need to keep it as realistic as possible. In the case of a real emergency, you will be notified. If you have any questions regarding any of these safety drills or other safety concerns, please contact the school office.

Some resources for talking to your child about these drills are:

- <https://tinyurl.com/SafetyResource1>
- <https://tinyurl.com/SafetyResource2>
- <https://tinyurl.com/SafetyResource3>



Curriculum

Expeditions

For the 2024-2025 school year, classes will focus on the following three time periods:

Village to City	City Grows	Today and Tomorrow
Canal - Civil War 1820 - 1865	Post Civil War – Pre-space exploration 1865 - 1960	Space Exploration – Future 1960 - Tomorrow
How did the village become a city? What were the successes and struggles?	How did industry and inventions make a difference in city life? How did people take responsibility for their community?	Where and how do plants and animals live? How do people keep the environment safe for every living thing?
Exhibition Night Hold Nov 12 - Nov 20, 2024	Exhibition Night Hold Mar 12 - Mar 20, 2025	Exhibition Night Hold Jun 10 - Jun 18, 2025

Math at GCCS

At GCCS, we use the Illustrative Math Curriculum, which has a problem solving approach. To access resources and gain a better idea of what your child(ren) will be learning throughout the year, review the following:

- <https://im.kendallhunt.com/>
- <https://tinyurl.com/IMOverviewGCCS>

Literacy at GCCS

At GCCS, we utilize the Science of Reading model, which centers the following components:

- Phonological Awareness
- Phonics & Word Recognition
- Fluency
- Vocabulary and Oral Language Comprehension
- Text Comprehension

Bus Transportation

You will receive notification regarding routes and times mid to late August. We currently do not have bus schedules and routes available.

As you know, the GCCS calendar differs from that of traditional districts. Due to our differing calendar, there may be days that transportation is not provided by your home district.

Days that there will be NO BUSING:

August 28th - dismissal at 12:45pm
 August 29th - dismissal at 12:45pm
 August 30th - dismissal at 12:45pm
 September 3rd - dismissal at 2:45pm
 September 4th - dismissal at 2:45pm



KINDER FAMILIES ONLY

For Kindergarten families, there are a few differences for the start of the school year:

- **August 28th - August 30th:** students attend for their screening; *sign up links are shared in the email*
- **September 3rd:** ½ day orientation; *sign up links are shared in the email*
- **September 4th:** Kindergarteners follow the regular schedule (*see pg. 5*)

Families are expected to stay during the screening and are responsible for transportation from August 28th-September 3rd.