

# Tiger Times

Fall 2015



## A NOTE FROM SCOTT THOMPSON, PRINCIPAL

As parents heard last month at Back-To-School night, we are using new instructional programs that are better aligned with our curriculum guides. After discussions with parents both at and after that event, I felt it appropriate to write about the process of curriculum revision and the relationship between curriculum goals and the adoption of instructional programs.

While from the parent perspective change may seem dramatic, most change in schools is a slow and deliberate process. In our district, as in most, teams of teachers work together to periodically review curriculum standards. Teachers had worked over several years (2011-14) to develop new curriculum guides for English/Language Arts and for Math, and the final versions were adopted by the School Board in January of 2014 (Math) and May of 2014 (English/Language Arts). A curriculum guide helps teachers and parents know what students should know and be able to do at the end of each

grade level. However, a curriculum guide is not an instructional program.

After a new curriculum is created, schools often find that old teaching materials no longer match newly adopted expectations for learning. In our school, teams of teachers worked with Dr. Heon, our Curriculum Coordinator in 2014-15 to review new instructional programs. They had workshops and trainings with several different publishers. After careful consideration, the committees recommended the adoption of enVision 2.0 for mathematics, K-5, the social studies text *My World* in grades K-3 and a different text, *My Home: New Hampshire* as the grade 4 textbook. We are also doing a pilot of Houghton Mifflin/Harcourt Journeys as our new reading program, grades K-5. A decision on whether to adopt Journeys permanently will be made in the spring of 2016.

I share all this to reassure parents that our new programs

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## DATES TO REMEMBER

**2 Hour Delayed Opening**  
Wednesday, October 28

**No School**  
November 11 - 13

**Parent Teacher Conferences**  
November 12 - 13

## KINDERGARTEN TEAM

We are off to a great start in kindergarten. We are excited for our trip to Wilson's Farm Stand to learn about the life cycle of a pumpkin. Each child will get to pick their own pumpkin. We will also take a hayride through the pumpkin patch.

In reading, kindergarten classes are working hard to name letters and the sounds that correspond. We are also reading new popcorn words (high frequency words) each week. Be sure to review these words with your children.



October is the first month for kindergarten homework. This is a great opportunity to start good homework habits. Your child might like to have a special pencil box for home.

In math, we are working to identify and write numbers (0-20).

### **KINDERGARTEN CHALLENGE:**

Mrs. Adamakos and Mrs. Sweetser are challenging the kindergarten class to bring back their completed calendar. Everyone who turns in a completed homework calendar will get a prize.

## A NOTE FROM CONNIE FARO, ASSISTANT PRINCIPAL

It's another exciting and busy year at GMS. It is a pleasure to be back working with the best elementary students and teaching staff in the granite state!

You may have heard your children talking about some new learning opportunities at GMS this year. These extended learning activities are a mix of academic and non-academic elements designed to maximize our students' success. The activities occur during the school day, and run for about 5-8 weeks. For our first and second graders who excel in either reading or math we are offering this year an enrichment period with our reading specialist or math tutor. First and second graders are invited to participate in these programs based on standardized test scores, and teacher recommendations. The first session should be starting soon.

Second graders are excited to participate in our computer club run by Mr. Turcotte, our computer teacher. He has designed this club for any second graders who would like to learn some basic programming or develop other technological skills. Second graders use one recess period a week to work with Mr. Turcotte and they are loving it.

Coming again this winter is our Math Dash Club for our third graders who enjoy competition and thinking with numbers. Students give up one recess a week for 4 weeks to compete in teams to solve a variety of math problems. All third graders are welcomed to participate.

We are currently in the middle of our kickball tournament. We have 6 teams of fourth graders playing kickball during their recess once a week for 5 weeks. At the end of the 5 weeks the teams with the highest scores will compete in the finals for the championship ribbons. We are having lots of fun & learning about good sportsmanship at the same time. Luckily, the weather has been very cooperative!



Our 4th grade student council will be starting up shortly. All 4th graders are encouraged to apply for a spot on the council. One boy and one girl from each fourth grade classroom are chosen randomly to be our school leaders and role models in our school community.

Our first session of extended learning in the unified arts is underway. Our third and fourth graders have the opportunity this year to participate in an additional music, physical education, or fine

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## A NOTE FROM SCOTT THOMPSON CONTINUED

were thoughtfully chosen by our teachers to provide the best match with established curriculum expectations. The new standards are more rigorous. What this means in a nutshell is that the standards support conceptual understanding, procedural skill and fluency, and application of learning with roughly the same intensity. Our committees determined that the instructional programs we are using best met those curriculum goals.

We recognize that this can also be a challenge for parents. One assistance for parents is that our new programs come with online supports. Our teachers are currently working to create online accounts for students, so that they and their parents can access instructional tools, instructional games, and practice tools at home. We are working to put together a parent night focused on online support for math for later this month.

On another note, the results for the first administration of the Smarter Balanced assessments (from spring of 2015) are due to be released this fall. We look forward to studying the results, and sharing the results with parents. Also, we recently sent the results from May, 2015 NECAP Science tests to the middle school, so parents of fifth graders should be receiving the parent reports fairly soon.

I look forward to another year of partnership with teachers and parents to help our GMS students do their very best.

Scott Thompson

## A NOTE FROM CONNIE FARO CONTINUED

arts period once a week for 8 weeks. Some of the activities in which the students are participating are researching animals and plants native to our great state and showcasing what they learn in books they are making, learning to make games in physical education, or learning to play different instruments in music. We are in our 3rd week of this extended learning and so far kids are enjoying this new opportunity. All our special offerings are intended to inspire students and help them view everyday learning in a positive way.

When you get a chance, check out our new playground. During the summer the playground was repaved and new games were painted for all students to enjoy. Some new activities that our students are enjoying during recess are an alphabet maze and some lanes for running which have been a big hit! We have added another 4-square game since this is one of our more popular activities. There is also an area where students use chalk and their creativity to draw pictures, make up new games, and just have fun.

## BOX TOPS



Box Tops are a great and easy way to raise money for GMS! Last year we raised \$4,200. Each Box Top is worth \$0.10 so that is a total of 42,000 Box Tops!!

It is an easy way to help the school raise money for field trips and special enrichments for the students. When you find Box Tops on products you've purchased, clip the Box Top and send it in on a collection sheet or in baggies of 25.

Please be sure that all submissions are labeled with your child's first and last name and teacher's name.

Should you have any suggestions for other fun ways to drive the box top program, please feel free to contact the PTO fundraising coordinator. Thanks for all your support!

Thanks so much to all our parents and staff for their continued support. Working together for our children results in a truly great school! We hope as you enter our school on any given day that you sense our caring attitude, our strong leadership, and our high but realistic expectations for every student. We want you to know that we strive every day to make GMS a place where every student, staff, and parent want to be.

Connie Faro

# Math Connections

## GMS Math Tutors

Mrs. Margaret Parent & Mrs. Janine Ancil

### Math Homework HELP!!!

- Does your child ask for help with math homework?
- Do you look at the homework pages and wonder how to help?

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We would like to invite you to:

### How Can I Help with Math Homework Night!

Date: **October 21, 2015**

Time: **6:00-7:00 pm**

Place: **Gymnasium**

### SOME MATH IDEAS! Put Numbers in Order

- Have your child write two digit numbers on ten index cards. (Example: 27, 63, 51).
- Shuffle and pick three cards.
- Put the cards in order from greatest to least.
- Continue until all the cards have been picked.
- Shuffle and play again.
- Enrich by picking 4 cards or by using three digit numbers.

### Race to Zero: Grades 2-4

- The goal is to be the first player to reach zero.
- Players start with 100 on their paper.
- Roll a dice or use a spinner with numbers (you can borrow them from a game).
- Subtract that number from 100. (Ex:  $100-6=94$ )
- Continue taking turns. The first player to reach ZERO wins.
- Enrich by rolling 2 dice, find the sum, then subtract.



### Math Ideas: Grades K-2

- Have your child write the numbers 1-10 on separate index cards. Make two sets of cards.
- Shuffle the two sets of cards and place face down on a table. Draw two from the pile.
- Ask your child to add the two numbers.
- Continue until all the cards have been picked.
- Shuffle and play again.
- Enrich by drawing two numbers and subtracting them.

### Grades 3-4

- Draw 2 and multiply.

### Skip Counting with Money

- This activity will help your child recognize coins and their value. Skip counting reinforces multiplication facts.
- Collect some nickels, dimes, and quarters.
- Skip count by fives using nickels.
- Skip count by tens using dimes.
- Skip count by 25 using quarters.



## FIRST GRADE TEAM

We had a wonderful start to first grade. All the boys and girls have been working extremely hard each and every day. We are so proud of them! For Science, we have been studying the life cycles of the monarch butterfly, apple trees and pumpkins. The children have also been brainstorming the many different things we like to do in the fall. Everyone has been enjoying the many classroom activities associated with our science units!

During our Social Studies lessons, the children have been learning about holidays. We have read stories about and discussed the journey Christopher Columbus took many years ago. In the upcoming weeks, the children will be learning all about the significance of Veteran's Day.

Our math classes are filled with excitement! We use many different ways to practice our addition math facts every day. We are also learning our subtraction math facts. We will be starting to use Cuisenaire rods as one of our strategies to help us during our math lessons. Keep practicing those math facts at home!

The children have been working very hard on their correct letter and number formation. Keep practicing your printing using the D'Nealian writing method. We have all seen a tremendous improvement since the children walked into first grade at the end of August! Keep up the wonderful work!

All of the children are enjoying our new reading series. The students have been learning about different genres such as informational texts, realistic fiction, and fantasy. Everyone is also working hard distinguishing between the different vowel sounds and letter sounds.

All of our first graders belong to the "Go-Pher" Reading Club! The motto for the GMS Reading Team is "The more we read for fun, the better readers we become". They have challenged all of our first graders to read, or be read to, for at least 10 minutes a night for at least 15 days a month. At the end of each month, the children bring in their calendar showing which days they read and the Gopher will give them a prize for their accomplishments. Let's continue to read, read, and read!

## SECOND GRADE TEAM

The second grade classes have had a wonderful start to their new school year. Everyone has adjusted well to the second grade routines and expectations.

All of our students know that in order to become better readers they need to practice reading every day. We read each day in school. Please make every effort to read with your child and practice the weekly vocabulary words. This will make your child a more fluent reader.

Memorizing our addition and subtraction facts to 20 is another important part of Grade 2. At home, we encourage you to practice math flash cards or play

math board games. Using your computer and accessing web sites that practice facts can be fun too. If you have a smart phone or a tablet, there are now several apps that you can download to practice facts as well.

In Science this quarter, we are learning about Animal Classifications. We are studying characteristics of mammals, reptiles, amphibians, birds, and fish. We are currently learning about "my community and my country" in Social Studies. As you drive through our town of Litchfield, point out things that are important to our community like the fire department, the farms and the library.

Our heartfelt thanks go out to all the families that have generously donated classroom supplies to us. It is very much appreciated! As the cold weather approaches, please label your child's jackets and sweatshirts they wear to school. We don't want them to get lost. Lastly, if your child does not know how to tie their own shoes or zip their own jackets, this is a great skill to be working on. As boot and winter coat season approaches, it will be important for them to change their shoes and dress independently.

Have a Wonderful Fall Season!

## GUIDANCE PERSPECTIVE

### Connect the Dots to Thrive in School and Beyond

JOCELYN ROBINSON, SCHOOL COUNSELOR

TARI SELIG, SCHOOL PSYCHOLOGIST

SAMANTHA BROADHEAD,

SCHOOL PSYCHOLOGIST INTERN

All children have the potential for greatness and success. As parents and educators, we can help them realize their vast potential — achieving their goals, thriving in the face of adversity, solving problems, and continually growing as an individual – by helping them to “connect the dots” along the many pathways to success.

We can help students build upon their strengths, skills, interests, and abilities to connect the dots and thrive. This includes helping them identify and plan ways to accomplish short- and long- term goals, creating a safe and supportive environment, building positive relationships, and encouraging them to take on challenges and persevere when things get tough. Working together, we can help them connect the dots to promote their competence, achievement, and resiliency.



To foster thriving students and a positive school climate, students will be engaging in activities throughout the year to promote flexibility, optimism, resilience, persistence, kindness, respect, and empathy through classroom lessons with Mrs. Robinson. All GMS students and staff cut out their handprints that are displayed on the front window, representing that we are all a part of this community. Flexibility, optimism, resilience, persistence, kindness, respect, and empathy are printed out and displayed on the front window connected to all of the student and staff handprints.

It has also been taught that these handprints in the front window demonstrate the idea of having an open mind (students have learned that their closed fist represents a closed mind and their open hand demonstrates an open mind). The next activity is Dot Day. This is based on the book, ‘The Dot’ by Peter Reynolds all students and staff at GMS have been talking about having an open-mind towards learning by saying ‘I can’, ‘I can get better’, and ‘I can try’. The book was read to every student and then they all colored and signed their own dot. These dots will be on display in the hallways of GMS.

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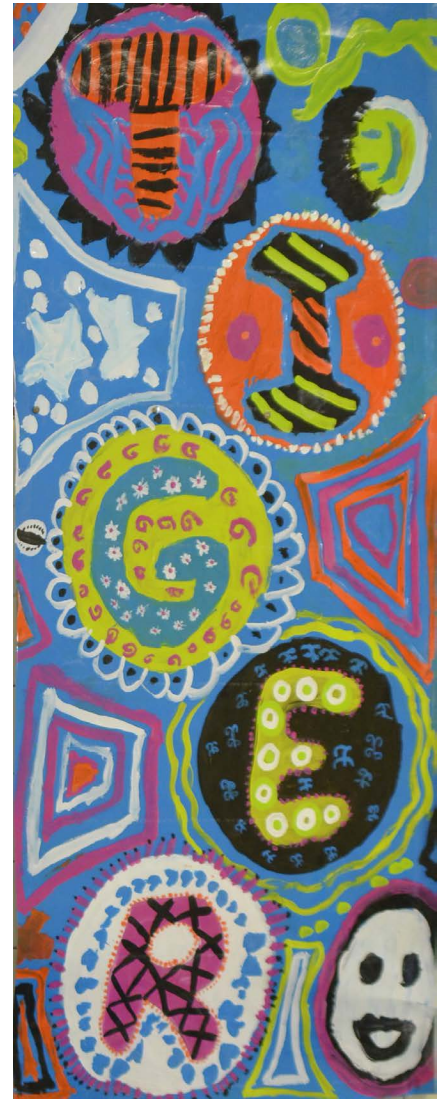
## GUIDANCE PERSPECTIVE CONTINUED

During the week of October 5-9 we will be reading announcements in the morning connected to having an optimistic view towards learning. Students with optimism are willing to put aside their fear and resistance to learn something new. On Dot Day we are encouraging all students to wear clothing with dots. In addition, students and staff will be participating in National School Psychology Awareness Week in November. The theme is “Connect the Dots and THRIVE.”

At Griffin Memorial School, the school counseling department includes Jocelyn Robinson (School Counselor), Tari Selig (School Psychologist) and Samantha Broadhead (doctoral intern in School Psychology). Together, we work as an integral part of the total educational program that helps to support the academic achievement of all students, as they prepare for the ever-changing world. The counseling department provides a comprehensive developmental school counseling program, and education, prevention, and intervention services. We apply expertise in mental health, learning, and behavior to

help children and youth succeed academically, socially, behaviorally, and emotionally. We offer whole class, small group and individual counseling to assist students be successful. We provide direct support and interventions to students, such as individualized learning and behavioral assessments to identify students’ strengths and needs, academic and behavioral interventions, counseling, and social skills training. We also consult with teachers, families, and other educators to improve support strategies and school-wide practices and policies.

Partner with us, Jocelyn Robinson, Tari Selig and Samantha Broadhead and together we can help your child to Connect the Dots and THRIVE! We look forward to working with students and families at Griffin Memorial School to encourage all children, whether at home or at school, to focus on their interests, strengths, and skills, identify pathways to “connect the dots” to reach goals, challenge themselves with new things, and persevere through difficult problems to reach their potential in school and in life.



## THIRD GRADE TEAM

The third grade classes have been very busy learning many new things. In reading we have been working on identifying the characters, setting, and plot of the story. The children have also been learning about character qualities and how to compare and contrast story details. The students have been practicing how to look up words in the dictionary and how some words can have multiple meanings. This is a skill you could help practice at home, when you come across a word your child does not know.

In math we have been learning about multiplication. This is one of the most important foundational skills taught in third grade. The children have learned how to form equal groups, skip count, draw arrays, and make bar diagrams to solve multiplication problems. Soon, it will be very important to begin working with your child to memorize the multiplication facts. Be on the lookout for more information from your child's teacher.

Social studies has found us learning about the three types of communities. The children seem to really enjoy living in a rural community like Litchfield, with all its open space for playing. We have also covered many mapping skills. Maybe your child can

help you plan out your family's next trip. Lastly, we looked at various landforms, climates, and the effect people have on the environment.

Our upcoming science lessons will be focusing on the water cycle and what causes changes in the weather. The students will learn about the three main cloud formations, different types of precipitation, and the instruments meteorologists use to forecast the weather. The students will be using their inquiry skills while performing various experiments.

We are looking forward to our Halloween parties and the Scarecrow Jamboree at the end of the month. All the classes have seen a presentation on how to make a scarecrow and get it ready for the Jamboree. This is always an exciting day at GMS!

The third grade team would like to thank the parents for all the help and guidance you give your children in completing their homework, studying for tests, and learning those math facts. Your partnership is very important to their success. It was great to meet so many of you at our curriculum night. We are looking forward to a great year working with your children.

## FOURTH GRADE TEAM

The fourth graders at GMS are off and running! We've been busy here in our classrooms and have a lot to look forward to this upcoming year.

Tournament of Readers, a fourth grade only reading club, is off to a great start. We have approximately 40 students participating this year! We are looking forward to two exciting activities coming up in the next months. A guest from the New Hampshire Historical Society will be visiting us to give a presentation about New Hampshire's Native Americans, the Abenaki. We look forward to seeing images and handling artifacts from the Abenaki tribe.

We also cannot wait for the annual Scarecrow Jamboree, being held on Friday, October 30th (registration in the GMS gym on Thursday, October 29th). What kinds of creative scarecrows will we see this year?

In fourth grade we have been busy working on our curriculum! In reading, we've been exploring our new Journey's reading series and enjoying the new stories. We've been working on place value, number sense, and addition and subtraction in math. In science, we've learned about plant and animal classification, life cycles, and heredity. Did you know that your dimples, freckles,

or ability to roll your tongue are traits that came from your family members? Lastly, narrative writing is up first for our fourth grade authors!

Finally, the fourth grade team would like to thank the parents for all their help in getting the students off to a great start. We appreciate all the classroom donations and the time you spent attending your child's Parent Information Night.

**REMINDER:** Report cards will go home Tuesday, November 10th.

Parent Teacher Conferences will be held November 12th and 13th.



# NEW GMS MUSIC ROOM



This year we have a Music Room for the GMS students -- Room 15! The students played a scavenger hunt the first class to find the items they never had before in Music when Mrs. LaBelle taught on cart from classroom to classroom. With the help of the district, there were new chairs, music stands, racks for them, a Music Works notation whiteboard, an early childhood easel, new cabinets to store drums, chorus, recorder and general music supplies, a new small instrument cabinet for percussion items (like triangles, tambourines, wood blocks, etc...), and an interactive whiteboard with a projector and speakers! Large Instruments that were kept in storage (unless brought to a class) are now easily available for student use, such as 2 floor drums, a tubano, several xylophones, 3 keyboards and bell sets. With our first Extended Learning Activity (Grade 3), we have an African drumming ensemble with the large drums, plus a djembe, 2 talking drums, and a smaller drum. The students are also using African shakers and a cowbell. And finally, because we have room to move, we've been doing more movement with music, such as "the twist", movement with scarves, singing games and circles, and friendship lines!

Mrs. LaBelle

GMS Music



*Labels for Education*® is a fun and easy program where families and member of the community work together towards a common goal — “earn Free Stuff” for their school!

By collection UPCs and sauce cups/beverage caps from over 2,500 participating products, our school earns points that help to supply equipment for the playground such as basketballs, jump ropes, footballs, sidewalk chalk and kick balls.

**Send in your LABELS FOR EDUCATION today!**

## PTO NEWS

Please join us for our monthly meetings, out next one is October 19 at 6:30pm in the School Cafeteria. We have lots of exciting things planned including the upcoming Halloween Bash on October 23th from 6-8pm.

If you are interested in volunteering for one of our events, please stop by the PTO bulletin board at the entrance of the school, to sign up and see what exciting things we have planned for the year.

Fundraising is in full swing. Thank you to all who participated in the Meadow Farms fundraiser or did a straight donation to the PTO. Scrip Gift Cards are also available to purchase, a portion of the purchase price comes back to the school at no extra cost to you. Keep this in mind as you start buying holiday gifts. These fundraisers help raise money to assist activities for the children such as field trips, cultral arts activities, Fun Family nights, and teacher appriciation.

Parent Teacher conferences are just around the corner in November and the PTO will be once again putting together a dinner for our teacher to enjoy. We will need volunteers to make different dishes and help to set up and clean up.

Be on the look out for Destination Imagination info coming home!

## *Nurse* *Notes*

Hello GMS Parents,

Thank you for allowing me to care for your children.

I would like to take this opportunity to remind all parents that “Flu Season” has already started in the region. Please have your children vaccinated with the influenza vaccine.

If your child should develop fever greater than 100, or has vomiting or diarrhea, please keep them home from school for 24 hours after fever and symptoms subside. If your child tests positive for Influenza or Strep, please call me at 424-5931 ext. 1108, and let

me know. We track such illness and this helps us know if students need an extra “eye on them” when they return to school.



All students should be reminded to cover their coughs and sneezes. I will begin hand washing/ cough and cover reminders in classes this week. Please help us to contain simple colds by reminding your children to cover cough, sneezes and wash their hands at home as well.

Water bottles and healthy snacks are always important to help keep your children healthy.

Just a reminder, if you child is on crutches, or has an injury requiring absence form PE or recess, a doctors note and call to the nurse or note is appreciated.

Lastly, our recess areas get very chilly during the colder season, so please have your students dress appropriately.

Thank you again for your cooperation in advance.

Stay healthy and happy,

SUSAN G SEABROOK, RNBS  
GMS SCHOOL NURSE

## LIBRARY NEWS

Once the children started back to school, they either reviewed or learned look up materials on the Internet-based library catalog (starting in grade two. Starting with first grade, they have been learning about where to find certain materials in the library, and the older students are working on finding those materials more independently. The kindergarten through grade three students have been enjoying the 2015 NH



Ladybug Picture Book Award Nominees as they have been read to them. After each

person votes for his/her favorite book, the votes will be tallied up throughout the state of New Hampshire, and the award-winning book will be announced by the end of this year. Fourth graders will be hearing book talks about the New

Hampshire Great Stone Face Awards. Since these are chapter books, the students are



encouraged to read these nominees on their own. If they choose to participate in this optional program, they will be able to vote for their favorite in April. The link to the list is found on the library page of the school website. Some of them can be found in audio or ebook



formats on the free New Hampshire downloadable book website <http://nh.lib.overdrive.com> as long as you have a NH public library card.

You can find more information on the library page of the school web site at

<http://gms.litchfieldsd.org/>

You can access the catalog from that page, and assist your children in making good book selection choices during library class!

Information about the book fair running **November 6th-13th** will be forthcoming in paper form and on the library web page.

MELINA PREVEL-TURMEL  
LIBRARY MEDIA SPECIALIST

## SPECIAL EVENTS

**PTO MEETING** PTO Meeting- Cafe  
Monday, October 19  
@ 6:30

Math HW Help- Gym  
October 21, 6:00-7:00

Halloween Bash-  
Gym  
October 23,  
6:00-8:00



Scarecrow Jamboree  
Friday, October 30



Book Fair- Library  
Friday, November  
6 - 13

PTO Meeting- Cafe  
Monday,  
November 16 @ 6:30

