



GMS TIGER TIMES

A NOTE FROM SCOTT THOMPSON, PRINCIPAL

You may have noticed that your children talk about learning math facts with automaticity – being able to recall the fact without having to recalculate or count. To understand the importance of this foundational skill, we often draw on the parallel model in reading. When a child is first learning to read, they learn letters and the sounds they make, spelling patterns (chunks), and eventually whole words and phrases. A fluent reader can process many words per minute without having to sound out any of them, because over time the letters, words and even whole phrases have found their way into their long term memory. We see the phrase *many words per minute*, and we read it at a glance. Learning letter sounds and spelling well allows us to focus on the meaning and intent of what we are reading, not just the difficult task of turning abstract symbols into sounds. Said differently, the ultimate goal of literacy is understanding written text, not just sounding out the words.

Likewise, numeracy is more than just basic math skills. Basic math facts are building blocks, and they should be learned to automaticity, so that the learner can use this knowledge in a larger context. Certainly a strong foundation in number sense is going to make a student better prepared for academic challenges like algebra, geometry, calculus, and scientific

courses. Thorough mastery of math facts and place value pave the way for us to confidently apply math knowledge to everyday life, to such things as time, money, problems in area or volume, probability, percentages, and understanding the significance of very large or very small numbers. Our students are familiar with online sources to help with math fact practice, particularly Xtramath.org., a web-based program that can be accessed from any online computer. Many students are also familiar with mathfactscafe.com. On this website, you can create worksheets for untimed practice.

On a very different note, I have a reminder about safety. Parents who pick up their children at 2:50 are reminded that there should be no automobile traffic in the bus loop while the buses are waiting to pick up students, from approximately 2:50 until 3:05. Also, I would ask parent to refrain from walking between buses parked in the loop – this is very dangerous. If you are a parent driver, it is best to park in the overflow lot nearest the soccer field at pick-up. That way, you will be able to walk back to your car on the sidewalk and get out of the lot before buses run. If you choose to use a spot near the school, we must ask you to wait for the buses to leave before moving your car. Thanks for your cooperation in this.

WINTER 2014

JULIE GREEN, EDITOR

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DATES TO REMEMBER

Holiday Recess

Wednesday, December 24 –
Sunday, January 4

PTO Meeting- Cafe

Monday, January 12 @ 6:30

No School- MLK Day

Monday, January 19

PTO Family Night and GMS Chorus to sing the National Anthem at the Monarch's Game

Friday, February 20

PTO Meeting- Cafe

Monday, February 16 @ 6:30

Winter Break

Monday, February 23 –
Friday, February 27

KINDERGARTEN TEAM

In math, we have been working on writing our numbers and counting to one hundred. We have been exploring different shapes. We are working on naming circles, triangles, rectangles, squares and hexagons. We will be starting to work on addition (Number +1, Number +10 and ways to make 10). We will be using our Cuisenaire Rods (colored rods that correspond to numbers 1-10) to help us learn our addition facts.



In language arts, the students have worked hard to associate each letter with their sounds. We use these sounds to make words. We are using popcorn words to write simple sentences. Please remember to read each night with your child!

Home/School Connections

HOME/SCHOOL CHALLENGE:

See if you can list five words that start with each letter of the alphabet. (Example, A – apple, alligator, B – ball, bat and boy.) will get a prize.

A NOTE FROM CONNIE FARO, ASSISTANT PRINCIPAL

Happy Holidays to all students, parents, and community members. We have had a busy and exciting fall and look forward to continuing our learning and growing throughout the year. Our fall fourth grade Kickball Tournament was a great success. Students looked forward to each game with excitement and enthusiasm. Their sportsmanship was absolutely outstanding. It was wonderful to hear how team members supported each other and helped out the students who had never played the game before, but gave it a try. We had 6 teams of 11 students on each team – The Fire Huskies, the South Salmons, The Selfies, The Kickball Kickers, The Mustache Minions, and The Bombers. Each team played for five weeks. The top four teams played in the semi finals and the Bombers and the Kickball Kickers made it to the finals which was played at recess on October 31. It was a very exciting and close game with the Kickball Kickers being the champions. The score was 7 to 6.

Our Student Council is up and running. Fourth graders who were interested in being on the Student Council completed an application. A boy and girl from each 4th grade classroom was chosen randomly to represent our school in this leadership organization. Our Student council members this year are:

Chloe Provencher Drew Hebert, Sofia Almeida , Devin,
Alexandra Biron, Michael MacDonald, Chris Corbett,
Morgan Starbird, Kristina Castellano, Nathan Kasprazak

Mrs. Robinson, our guidance counselor and myself are the advisors for this group. We had our first meeting last month and have come up with a lofty agenda. For example, our Student Council was instrumental in helping collect food for the annual food drive in which all three schools participate. We are planning a fund raiser during the winter months to raise money for charities. Election of officers will be coming up in January. The Council would like to have a spirit day as well and will participate in the fourth grade Recognition Day. We meet twice a month to share ideas and concerns that will continue to make GMS the great school that it is.

We have received some new equipment for the playground. Hula hoops seem to be a hot item this year as well as chalk. Our sleds are ready to go and have already been used the week after Thanksgiving. The students simply love the snow! I want to thank our lunch/recess monitors for the great job that they do keeping our students safe and entertained during lunch/recess. They are always offering wonderful suggestions for equipment that students will enjoy. Our playground is a busy place and we appreciate all that they do.

FIRST GRADE TEAM

All of our first graders continue to work hard each day! We are very proud of them! Our math classes are an exciting place to be. Each day, we practice our addition math facts. The children are beginning to learn their subtraction math facts too! We are using our Cuisenaire rods during many of our math lessons. The children are also enjoying their Math Journals!

During our Social Studies lessons, the children continued to learn about the different holidays celebrated throughout the year. In November, we read many books about the first Thanksgiving. During the month of December, the children are studying the holidays of Christmas, Hanukkah and Kwanzaa.

In Science, we have continued to learn about the four seasons. We are looking forward to starting our living and nonliving unit in January.

During our reading lessons, the children have learned all the short vowel sounds and are now working on the long vowel sounds. We continue to work on word families with each new story. Everyone enjoys our making words activities. Many interesting stories have been read during the past few months. Both Fantasy and Non-fiction stories seem to be favorite ones for a lot of our first graders. Don't forget the GMS Reading Team's motto: The more you read for fun, the better reader you become!

The Book Fair and the Holiday Store were both a big success. The children enjoyed the variety of books at the book fair and the many gift choices offered at the Holiday Store. Assemblies were plentiful in the past few months. The Litchfield Fire Department came to visit us during Fire Prevention Week. We all enjoyed the Veteran's Day Assembly and the Holiday Concert. We also had a visit from a member of the Harlem Wizards! The children loved the visit from Fungo at our reading assembly. They are very excited to take part in the Fisher Cats Reading Program.

The first grade team would like to thank the parents for the time they spent attending the November parent conferences. We would also like to thank all the families who have generously donated classroom supplies throughout the school year. They are very much appreciated!

THIRD GRADE TEAM

The third grade students have been having a lot of fun learning about multiplication. Please keep working with your child at home to help them master the multiplication facts. You can play games together or have them practice their facts on the computer, as well as use flash cards to work on mastery.

Upcoming reading stories will focus on the theme of friendship. Students will observe people growing and changing through their relationships with others. By reading about ways in which friends and family influence real people and fictional characters, students will recognize how people influence each other. Lessons will focus on sequencing the story, narrative elements, and prefixes and suffixes. We will also look at how readers often must figure out parts of a story, because the author leaves out details or doesn't fully explain

certain events. In this case, the reader must look for clues in the story, plus what they know from real life, to reach a conclusion about what is happening.

The third graders enjoyed a wonderful field trip to the Concord Museum in Concord, MA right before Thanksgiving. They learned about the ways that the colonists and the Native Americans interacted with each other. The way of life of each group was effected by the presence of the other. We will be wrapping up our social studies unit on the foundations of government before



SHOP WITH SCRIPT

Scrip fundraising is a no-selling program that enables families to raise money for their non-profit organization, GMS PTO. Scrip is just another way to pay for those everyday purchases using gift cards in place of cash, checks, and credit cards. You purchase gift cards from PTO at face value and your coordinator, Tiffeny Mackinnon, purchases them from Great Lakes Scrip Center at a reduced price. The difference is an instant rebate for the PTO. It's really that simple! To start shopping click on the link below for a printed list, or on the link to the web site.

The GMS Enrollment code for the website is [4CCEELDA22168](https://www.greatlakescrip.com). You are welcome to share this with friends and family so they can shop for us too! If you have any questions, or need additional information, please contact Tiffeny Mackinnon at tiffenymackinnon@yahoo.com

[shopwithscrip.com](https://www.shopwithscrip.com)
A Service of Great Lakes Scrip Center®

the holiday break. Students have been learning about the American Revolution, the founding documents of our country, the 3 Branches of Government, and many of the important people of that time period. After the break, we will begin our science unit on magnets and electricity. This is always a favorite unit of third graders, as there are so many fun experiments performed in class.

On December 23rd, the third grade classes will be having their holiday celebrations. You will find them busily constructing gingerbread houses, having treats, and socializing with their friends. Many thanks to all the parents for helping to make this day a great success.

The third grade team would like to wish each family a very happy holiday season and a healthy and safe year ahead. We are very grateful for your constant support.

32ND ANNUAL SCARECROW JAMBOREE

VICKY MANGO

The 32nd Annual Scarecrow Jamboree was held on Friday, October 31, 2014. An amazing 127 students participated! We had a total of 87 scarecrow entries on display for judging. This year the 55 3rd grade students and 72 4th grade students that participated really did an excellent job on their scarecrows. The 66 voters had a very difficult time with choosing their favorites. There were two stand out classrooms with HIGH level of participation and they won pizza parties. Congratulations to Mrs. Cullen-Kent & Mrs. Ancil's classrooms. All of the students who entered the jamboree were also treated to

an ice cream social in Nov. To all the students who entered the jamboree THANK YOU! Because of you and your creativity we all were able to enjoy our Halloween parties at GMS that much more! The Scarecrow Jamboree is a tradition that is special not only to the 3rd & 4th grade students but to the community, as we have many members of the teaching staff that have participated in the event, and members of our community that can recall their when they were participants in the jamboree. Thank you all who make this tradition possible and keep the tradition going for years to come.





REPRESENTING GMS

HARLEM WIZARD VS. LITCHFIELD LONGSHOTS

Fun times were had by everyone at the game. Our own Mrs. Ashe, Mrs. Leary and Mrs. Cohen had fun playing against David Paul of the Harlem Wizards.



SECOND GRADE TEAM

The GMS second graders have been working hard and should be very proud of themselves! In math, we have been busy learning strategies for addition and subtraction of 2-digit numbers, using mental math as well as the more traditional regrouping method for finding sums and differences. Thank you, parents, for continuing to work on math fact memorization. You are helping us reach our goal of mastery of the addition and subtraction facts to 10 by 100% of our second graders!

In reading, we have been enjoying a variety of selections from our unit entitled "Our World". We've read plays, realistic fiction, and non-fiction, with plants and seeds as a common theme. We've integrated our new learning into writing, where we continued to write narratives and informational paragraphs. We also integrated this new learning into a science unit, learning about plants: their life cycles and the resources they provide for people.

In social studies, we wrapped-up our unit on Native Americans. We learned about five regions of our country (Northeast woodlands, the Southeast woodlands, plains, desert southwest, and Pacific Northwest), and how the land, weather, and resources affected the daily lives of Native Americans who lived there.

As a friendly reminder, please remember to send your child to school with appropriate outdoor gear for recess. This includes a hat, gloves or mittens, jacket, snowpants, and boots. Also, it would be helpful if these items were labeled with your child's name.

Lastly, we are always in need of tissues for the classroom. Any donations are greatly appreciated!

FOURTH GRADE TEAM

The fourth graders enjoyed their recent field trip to Concord. We visited the State House and the New Hampshire History Museum. At the State House we sat in the oldest legislative meeting hall in the USA. Here our representatives make important decisions about NH laws. While we were there we spoke with two representatives from Litchfield. We also met a singing senator! Senator Avarad played guitar and sang a song he created about government. Some students then briefly saw Governor Hassan as she was on her way to an important meeting.



The NH History Museum was also interesting. Here we saw the old, wooden, gold eagle that sat atop the State House from 1818-1952. Did you know that



if an eagle's head faces left in a statue, it means we are ready for war? If the eagle head is facing right, it is a peaceful time. We also compared old photos of New Hampshire with current ones of the same landscape. We learned so much and had lots of fun!

In math the fourth graders will soon begin learning long multiplication and division. Practicing their multiplication and division facts at home will make this process easier. Some students have been

using Xtra Math at school. This is a free, online program to practice math facts. Please encourage your child to use this program at home as well.

The Tournament of Readers Program is well underway. We are so proud of the Tournament of Readers participants for giving their time to read and compete in the program. Reading these books will also count for reading books toward the New Hampshire Fishercats Reading Challenge. If the students read five books, they can earn two free tickets to a Fishercats baseball game. They will get to go on the field and hang out with the mascot, Fungo!

Finally, we would like to thank all the parents. We appreciate all you do in our partnership to make 4th grade a successful year for your child!

DONATIONS: tissues, disinfectant wipes, non-perishable snacks, pencils, eraser tops, Ziploc bags (gallon and sandwich sizes)

LIBRARY NEWS,

MELINA PREVEL-TURMEL, LIBRARY MEDIA SPECIALIST

The kindergarten classes have been listening to stories of how animals prepare for and survive the winter. These stories coincide with the themes that are being studied in the classroom.

The first grade classes have been working on alphabetical order as it pertains to finding books in the library. Our second grade classes have been also been focusing on alphabetical order so that they can become more independent with finding books in the Everyone and Fiction sections of the library. This skill will also help them with looking up words in a dictionary and will help them with our encyclopedia unit.

The third and fourth graders at GMS have been reviewing the fiction section. The third graders have also been working on a magazine assignment that includes how to use the Table of Contents. The fourth graders are going to be spending a great deal of time on the nonfiction section of the library including learning about the Dewey Decimal System of Classification.

Thank you to all of the people who volunteered to help out during the book fair. Some people worked more than one shift to make it happen! It is much appreciated! This fundraiser brought in slightly less than \$2,200 for the library to use to purchase materials and equipment for the students, parents and staff to use.



The PTO had donated up to \$4.00 per kindergartener so that each of those students could walk away with a book, which was wonderful!

Please help your child to remember his or her library book by looking at the school calendar to see which days there are library specials. If the book is placed in the backpack the night before, then the book will be returned on time and he or she will be able to check out a new book. Thank you for your assistance!

Another way that you can assist your child is to make sure that he/she is using a plastic bag to place library books in, which can prevent spills that happen in backpacks. Plastic bags were provided at the beginning of the year, but they can develop holes so it is good to check them on occasion. Large sealable bags would be even better! Other common ways that books are damaged is by dogs and younger siblings. Please help your child find a safe and consistent place to store the library books, which can also prevent them from being lost.

You can look up books with your child in advance to help him/her make good book choices during library time. The web site address is <http://library.litchfieldsd.org>. You might even find a book that you are interested in reading as a parent. Feel free to e-mail me with a request, and I can send the book home with your child or it can be picked up at the front office.

Supplies requested: Swiffer duster refills. unscented hand sanitizer

PTO NEWS

Thank you to all our volunteers! They have been busy with the following events and it's only mid-December!

Welcome Back Breakfast held on September 10th. Everyone enjoyed the great spread our volunteers donated!

Halloween Bash on October 24th was a great success with a fabulous DJ. The kids had a great time!

The Parent/Teacher dinner, salad and dessert bar were very well received and appreciated by the teachers during Parent/Teacher conferences in November.

The Veteran's Day Assembly was a wonderful display of patriotism by the students and staff of GMS to honor those Veteran's. Thanks to our volunteers, they had some yummy treats to snack on during the assembly.

DI is off and running. We compete in the Nashua Regionals on March 7, 2015.

Holiday Cheer is scheduled for December 19th. We are having an Italian theme with some fantastic dishes!

BOX TOPS

Clip Box Top Coupons from a variety of participating products such as Yoplait, Pillsbury, Betty Crocker, Scott, Kleenex, Hefty, etc. Then send them in with your child. You may use the collection sheets that are periodically sent home or put them in a sealed baggie with your child's name on it. Last year, we raised \$2300 thanks to parents sending in their box tops!



GUIDANCE PERSPECTIVE

JOCELYN ROBINSON, SCHOOL COUNSELOR

TARI SELIG, SCHOOL PSYCHOLOGIST

JAMES PHILLIPS, SCHOOL PSYCHOLOGIST INTERN

As mentioned in the fall issue of the Tiger Times, our ongoing theme for this school year is: Strive. Grow. Thrive! As a part of this theme, students in third and fourth grade have worked to complete a tree in the front hall. That tree represents goals that students are striving to achieve over the next few months. As the new year begins, students will be reviewing their goals, discussing if they are achieving them successfully or if there are any obstacles that need to be overcome. Whether or not they achieve their goals is secondary to the degree to which they strive to achieve them.

In January, we will be participating in the Great Kindness Challenge during the week of January 26-30. The Great Kindness Challenge is one week devoted to performing as many acts of kindness



as possible. Students and staff will be challenged to demonstrate multiple acts of kindness both at school and at home.

At home, there are simple things you can do to teach kindness:

- Model Kindness – demonstrate kindness in what you say and do to other.
- Acknowledge Kind Deeds – point out specific words and actions you hear and see and label them as kind.
- Talk about Differences – Talk about what makes someone unique. You may not agree with their differences, but teach your children to respect them.

We look forward to encouraging our students to be kind to each other, their community and to themselves.

We encourage you to contact us at school if you have any concerns regarding your child's success at GMS. As a team, we can help foster resilience, respect, hopefulness, and feeling valued!

A FABULOUS JOB WAS DONE BY THE GMS THIRD AND FOURTH GRADE CHORUS!

DAWN SULLIVAN

The chorus performed for the entire school on Monday December 8th to warm up for the big concert on December 9th. The chorus under the direction of Mrs LaBelle and with help from choreographer Mrs Labatt delighted parents and friends with some holiday songs. Mi Burrito Sabanero tested them with learning some spanish while moving to the beat. Nes Gadol Haya Sham was sung in Hebrew. Dance moves were put to Mr Santa. A trilogy of Frozen songs- Frozen Heart, Do You Want to Build a Snowman, and Let It Go topped off the night. This very large group of over 100 students did a great job! Happy Holidays!

GMS MUSIC DEPARTMENT CALENDAR, 2014-15

- **PTO FAMILY NIGHT AND GMS CHORUS TO SING NATIONAL ANTHEM AT MONARCH'S GAME**
Friday, February 20, 2015 at 7:00 pm at Verizon Center
- **DISTRICT FINE ARTS FESTIVAL: DRESS REHEARSAL** –
Tues. Mar. 17
during school day – TBA –
Chorus & Volunteer Recorders
- **BAND CONCERT** –
Tues. Mar. 17, 6:30pm
- **DISTRICT FINE ARTS FESTIVAL: CHORUS CONCERT** –
Thurs. Mar. 19, 6:30pm
All at Campbell High School
- **TENTATIVE SPRING ARTS: GRADES 2 –**
Wed. April 22, 9:30 am
- **GRADE 3 –**
Thurs. April 23, 9:30 am
- **Grade 1 –**
Thurs. April 23, 1:00 pm
- **SPECIAL FRIENDS DAY (GRADE 1 ONLY)**
Fri. April 24, 9:30 am
- **NOTE: MAY CHANGE DUE TO TESTING SCHEDULE**
- **GREAT EAST MUSIC FESTIVAL**
Fri. May 29, 2015
All day – Chorus only – TBA
- **4TH GRADE RECOGNITION DAY**
JUNE, TBA
All 4th Grade play recorders and sing – part of afternoon ceremony