

GMS TIGER TIMES

FALL/WINTER 2017



FULL DAY KINDERGARTEN PROPOSAL FOR GMS

SCOTT THOMPSON, PRINCIPAL

The proposed budget for the 2018-19 school year has been reviewed by the Superintendent and the School Board, and is currently under consideration by the Litchfield Budget Committee.

The highest priority for the new budget year is Full Day Kindergarten. If this proposal makes its way through the budget review process and voter approval, we intend to offer full day kindergarten beginning in September, 2018. It is actually the norm across the country and within NH for kindergarten programs to be full day. According to data from the National Center for Educational Statistics, "Among 3- to 5- year olds attending kindergarten, the percentage attending full-day programs increased from 60 percent in 2000 to 81 percent in 2015." Within NH, more than 75% of districts offered Full Day Kindergarten by 2015. Fourteen districts and charter schools all added full Day Kindergarten in 2015-16, the latest year for which these statistics are available at the DOE. Litchfield is one of the few districts in the state that does not currently offer a full day Kindergarten program.

Full day Kindergarten is supported, but not mandated by the state of NH. The passage of SB-191, the Kenos-Kinergarten bill, provides \$1100 in state aid for each student enrolled in a full day Kindergarten program, helping to reduce the final cost of the program for local communities. If the Kenos program is successful, the state

intends to increase funding for full day Kindergarten in the second year up to the same amount it pays toward the education of students in grades 1-12. Our budget proposal shows that most of the costs for full day Kindergarten will be offset by state aid, by anticipated enrollment increases if parents have a full day option, and by the reallocation of current human resources (teaching positions) at GMS and LMS.

We believe that full day Kindergarten is important. In their position on Early Childhood Education, the State Board of Education wrote (2011), "The benefits of positive early experiences build, one on top of another, as "skill begets skill." Early experiences literally shape how the brain gets built: a strong foundation in the early years increases the probability of positive outcomes. A weak foundation increases the odds of later difficulties. Remedial education, clinical treatment and other professional interventions are more costly and produce less desirable outcomes than the provision of nurturing, protective relationships and appropriate learning experiences earlier in life. It is more efficient, both biologically and economically, to get things right the first time than to try to fix them later."

Currently, our Kindergarten program is aligned with the NH half-day standard of 2.5 hours. We have high expectations for our students, and it is a real challenge to meet all of our students' needs in 2.5 hours. Our students

need time to learn and practice the demanding academic skills expected by our current curriculum and state guidelines. We also recognize that in a 'whole child' approach, they need time for music, art, physical education and library. They need time and access to learn the kind of technology skills that are appropriate to an academic setting. They need time and exposure to peers in both structured activities (such as morning meeting) and in free play to develop the social skills they will need throughout their school careers and in their adult lives. A full day is really a must to meet all these needs adequately. If you have questions about full day Kindergarten, please don't hesitate to reach out to me directly.

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KINDERGARTEN TEAM

Kindergarten is off to great start. We have been busy exploring science this fall. This quarter, we completed a unit on weather and learned how to be weather watcher. We have also been exploring the different kinds of weather in each season. Our trip to Wilson's Farm was a great success. We learned about the life cycle of a pumpkin, and took a tractor ride through the pumpkin patch and each child was able to pick their own pumpkin.

In math, we are working to identify numbers and how to form numbers 0-9. Students are also working on writing numbers (0-20). We have also been working on comparing groups of objects. The students have been using their math words to do this (equal, greater than or less than).



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. The list of popcorn words can be found on the back of the November homework calendar.

October was the first month for kindergarten homework. Each month you will receive a homework calendar and math packet. The math homework pages are a review of topics we have completed in class. Please complete what you can with your child, this should not be more than 10 minutes of work each day. This is a great opportunity to start good homework habits. Your child might like to have a special pencil box and notebook for home.

A NOTE FROM MAURA CLINTON-JONES, ASSISTANT PRINCIPAL

Students and staff are having a busy and productive fall here at GMS. Students have settled into the new school year and are busy with academics as well as extra-curricular activities. Staff members have participated in professional development about a number of topics, including resiliency. As we learn about helping students build resiliency it has been interesting to see the ways students demonstrate that skill each day.

Resiliency shows through in academics when students persevere in their effort. Some examples of this are recognizing letters, learning how to divide, and defining science vocabulary words. Goal-setting and achievement also builds resiliency. At the start of the school year students set goals around increasing their score on NWEA-MAP testing. Goal-setting is also apparent when students try to increase their sight word recognition and memorize the multiplication tables.

Students can also build resiliency outside of academics. One notable example was during the fourth grade kickball season this fall. We had about fifty students playing kickball, some of whom had never played before. Sometimes students got upset with themselves or their team if they felt they weren't playing well. At these times it was great to see students encourage their teammates when they were down, as well as to watch the children persevere in the games. Resiliency was apparent when students and teams continued to give their all, even if their team was losing.

Other ways that students have shown resiliency outside of the classroom has been in their goal-setting and giving of themselves during the month of November. Students have been bringing in donations for the Litchfield Food Pantry and the Manchester Animal Shelter. The children have also participated in fundraising and Acts of Kindness for the PTO Raise Craze fundraiser, both in raising money as well as in completing Acts of Kindness.

The holiday season is upon us, which can be a joyous, and sometimes stressful, time. While it's wonderful to reconnect with friends and relatives as well as to participate in family traditions, sometimes the excitement and busy schedules are a challenge for children to navigate. Teaching children to take a break when they feel overwhelmed, as well as to care for themselves by getting enough sleep and eating well are ways that families can help children build resiliency, too.

I would like to thank all of our GMS families for all that you do to support our students and staff. Thank you for sharing you children with us.



SECOND GRADE TEAM

The second grade classes have had a wonderful start to their school year. Everyone is adjusting 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.

October was Fire Safety Month and we welcomed the Litchfield Fire Department. Does your family have a meeting spot in case of a fire?

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.

Thank you to the PTO for organizing an enrichment program for Grade 2. We are looking forward to the upcoming Japanese art of fish printing brought to us by the Children's Museum of NH.

Have a Wonderful Holiday Season!

BOX TOPS



Last year we raised about \$2,200. This year we hope to raise about \$3,000 in Box Tops! Each Box Top is worth \$0.10 so that is a total of 30,000 Box Tops!! Box Tops can be found on many popular items that many of us buy. Ask friends and relatives to join in and help us meet our 2017-2018 goal

Monthly collection sheets can be found & downloaded at www.boxtops4education.com or sent into school in baggies of 10 or 50. Remember to put your student's name and classroom on any submission.

Thank you in advance for your support. If you have any comments or questions feel free to email me at kellyasara@gmail.com

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! All of the children are enjoying our 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.

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 are using our 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 at home. We have all seen a tremendous improvement since the children walked into first grade at the end of August! Keep up the wonderful work!

For Science, we have been studying life cycles. Some of the life cycles we have been learning about are pumpkins and apples. The children have also been brainstorming the many different things we like to do in the fall. Everyone has been enjoying the numerous classroom activities associated with our science units!

During our Social Studies lessons, the children have been learning about different holidays. We have read stories about and discussed the journey Christopher Columbus took many years ago. The children learned all about the significance of Veteran's Day. Rules and responsibilities have been a major focus during the first quarter.

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!

The sixth graders have been visiting a couple times per month to read to our first graders. Our Halloween parties were enjoyed by all! The Litchfield Fire Department dropped by to teach us about fire safety. The children learned all about treating others the way you would like to be treated during our Tiger Program. Everyone was entertained by our very own GMS AOK Circus!

“Each day is full of choices. What choices will you make?”

As part of the district focus on reliance, the GMS Counseling program has been teaching and supporting the underlying skills that help students respond to situations in a resilient manner. Each month classroom lessons are focusing on a different skill. In September, students learned about choosing to be optimistic; in October, the choice was to accept the difference in others and show tolerance; and this month the focus is on choosing to accept oneself and others. This month the T.I.G.E.R. program from Plymouth State University presented two assemblies as well as individual workshops in grades 3 and 4 supporting these ideas. Their show “Let Your Star Shine” focused on:

Take action

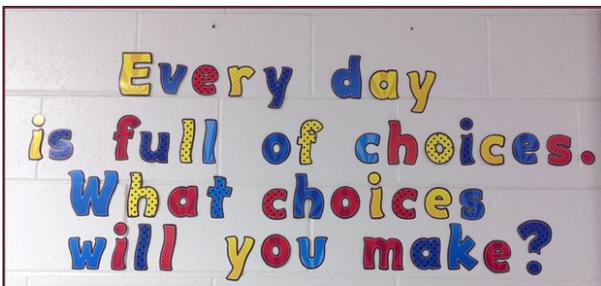
Include everyone

Give freely

Empathy

Respond with respect

Thank you to the PTO for your on-going support for this program.



PARENTS OFTEN ASK HOW THEY CAN HELP FOSTER RESILIENCE AT HOME. THE AMERICAN PSYCHOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION LISTS 10 GREAT TIPS:

1. Make connections

Teach your child how to make friends, including the skill of empathy, or feeling another's pain. Encourage your child to be a friend in order to get friends. Build a strong family network to support your child through his or her inevitable disappointments and hurts. At school, watch to make sure that one child is not being isolated. Connecting with people provides social support and strengthens resilience. Some find comfort in connecting with a higher power, whether through organized religion or privately and you may wish to introduce your child to your own traditions of worship.

2. Help your child by having him or her help others

Children who may feel helpless can be empowered by helping others. Engage your child in age-appropriate volunteer work, or ask for assistance yourself with some task that he or she can master. At school, brainstorm with children about ways they can help others.

3. Maintain a daily routine

Sticking to a routine can be comforting to children, especially younger children who crave structure in their lives. Encourage your child to develop his or her own routines.

4. Take a break

While it is important to stick to routines, endlessly worrying can be counter-productive. Teach your child how to focus on something besides what's worrying him. Be aware of what your child is exposed to that can be troubling, whether it be news, the Internet or overheard conversations, and make sure your child takes a break from those things if they trouble her. Although schools are being held accountable for performance on standardized tests, build in unstructured time during the school day to allow children to be creative.

5. Teach your child self-care

Make yourself a good example, and teach your child the importance of making time to eat properly, exercise and rest. Make sure your child has time to have fun, and make sure that your child hasn't scheduled every moment of his or her life with no "down time" to relax. Caring for oneself and even having fun will help your child stay balanced and better deal with stressful times.

6. Move toward your goals

Teach your child to set reasonable goals and then to move toward them one step at a time. Moving toward that goal — even if it's a tiny step — and receiving praise for doing so will focus your child on what he or she has accomplished rather than on what hasn't been accomplished, and can help build the resilience to move forward in the face of challenges. At school, break down large assignments into small, achievable goals for younger children, and for older children, acknowledge accomplishments on the way to larger goals.



7. Nurture a positive self-view

Help your child remember ways that he or she has successfully handled hardships in the past and then help him understand that these past challenges help him build the strength to handle future challenges. Help your child learn to trust himself to solve problems and make appropriate decisions. Teach your child to see the humor in life, and the ability to laugh at one's self. At school, help children see how their individual accomplishments contribute to the wellbeing of the class as a whole.

8. Keep things in perspective and maintain a hopeful outlook

Even when your child is facing very painful events, help him look at the situation in a broader context and keep a long-term perspective. Although your child may be too young to consider a long-term look on his own, help him or her see that there is a future beyond the current situation and that the future can be good. An optimistic and positive outlook enables your child to see the good things in life and keep going even in the hardest times. In school, use history to show that life moves on after bad events.

9. Look for opportunities for self-discovery

Tough times are often the times when children learn the most about themselves. Help your child take a look at how whatever he is facing can teach him "what he is made of." At school, consider leading discussions of what each student has learned after facing down a tough situation.

10. Accept that change is part of living

Change often can be scary for children and teens. Help your child see that change is part of life and new goals can replace goals that have become unattainable. In school, point out how students have changed as they moved up in grade levels and discuss how that change has had an impact on the students.

If you would like to learn more about what you can do, <https://www.livesinthebalance.org/parents-families>, is an outstanding website with many articles and webinars focusing on how to help children handle life's expectations successfully.



One Stop Holiday Shop

Friday, December 1
@ 6:00-9:00 in GMS Gym

Kids & Canvas

Wednesday, December 6 & 13
@ 3:00 - 4:15 in GMS Gym

Holiday Concert

Tuesday, December 12
@ 6:30 in GMS Gym

PTO Meeting- Cafe

Tuesday, December 19
@ 6:30 in GMS Cafe

No School- Holiday Recess

December 25 - January 1

THIRD GRADE TEAM

The third grade classes have been very busy learning many new things this fall. In reading they have been working on identifying the characters, setting, and plot of the story. They have also been hard at work comparing and contrasting two stories on the same topic, determining cause and effect relationships, and story sequence. 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.

The third grade students have been having a lot of fun learning about multiplication and division. The children have learned how to think of multiplication as groups of, how to draw arrays and bar diagrams to represent a problem, and how to break larger facts into smaller facts that they already know. 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.

Science lessons focused on the water cycle and what causes changes in the weather. The students learned about the various clouds, different types of precipitation, and how to use the clouds to predict the weather. They have also studied the different climates around the world, and how climate effects peoples' lives.

Our current social studies unit is on the early colonies, the American Revolution, some of our Founding Fathers, the documents that created our democracy and the foundation of our new country's government. Your young historians are doing a great job so far.

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 many of you at our curriculum night.

The teachers would also like to congratulate our students on the many acts of kindness they completed during the last few weeks! Let's keep this going throughout the coming months!

FOURTH GRADE TEAM

The fourth graders at GMS had a wonderful first quarter! We've been busy here in our classrooms and have lots more 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 32 students participating this year! The students are reading up to six chapter books and will participate in a team-style tournament in February. We are looking forward to two exciting activities coming up in the month. 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 will also be going on our field trip to the State House and the Museum of NH History in Concord.

In fourth grade we have been busy working on our curriculum! In reading, we've read some wonderful stories in many different genres! We covered realistic fiction, biography, informational text, a tall tale, and even a play! In math, we learned about place value and numbers to the millions place. We also covered addition and subtraction

and have moved on to multiplication. Remember to be practicing those multiplication facts to help when learning long multi-step multiplication! Finally in science, some classes have explored our changing earth, while others classes learned about the brain and plants and animals. Some students even dissected a real squid!

Lastly, the fourth grade team would like to thank the parents for all their help 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 and conferences.

Nurse Notes

Hello GMS Parents,

Since we have our Lions Club SureSight Vision Screening this month, Mr. Thompson and I thought it would be good to share information regarding school aged children's vision.

The Importance of vision screening for school aged children.

The American Optometric Association recommends all school aged children receive a comprehensive eye exam prior to entering first grade and annually thereafter.

As children advance in school, the demands on their visual abilities increase. Often the importance of a child's vision is overlooked. Children tend not to complain of their inability to see clearly.

Poor vision can affect learning, reading and sports. The ability to focus between near work and

distance work is constant in the classroom and while participating in sports. The student's focus adjusts between the white boards, books and computers throughout their day.

When particular visual skills are not present or poorly developed, learning may become difficult for children. Students can experience fatigue or decreased attention span if vision skills are not present.

If children have poor vision, they may have a lower level of comprehension of their school work. They may avoid reading or any near visual work completely. Poor vision may even affect self esteem in students.

I have found several articles of particular interest while researching childhood vision. Please see the link below for one excellent resource from the American Optometric Association. I think this information will help parents and teaching staff understand

the importance of annual vision screening.

<https://www.aoa.org/patients-and-public/resources-for-teachers/a-look-at-reading-and-vision>

Vision results from our SureSite screening on 11/16/17 will be sent home soon. I will review the results and mail referrals. If your student's results were within normal limits, they will go home with students.

Please call or email me with any questions or concerns regarding your children's vision. Many informative resources are available about children's vision. If you would like more information, please contact me or see your vision specialist for more detailed information.

Thank you for all your support.

SUSAN G SEABROOK, RN
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GMS was recognized as a Blue Ribbon School by the NHPIE at the Volunteer Celebration on October 25.

The Blue Ribbon Award recognizes the extraordinary efforts of school volunteers for the achievements realized during the previous school year.

Volunteers, thank you for all that you do for our school!



LIBRARY NEWS

Once the children started back to school, they either reviewed or learned how to 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. Grades one through four have been working on alphabetical order at their level to be able to find the books more independently.

The kindergarten through grade three students have been enjoying the ten 2017 New Hampshire 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 have heard book talks and trailers about the 2017-2018 New Hampshire Great Stone Face Book Award nominees. 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!

Thanks,

MELINA PREVEL-TURMEL
LIBRARY MEDIA SPECIALIST

PTO NEWS

Please join us for our monthly meetings, our next one is December 19 at 6:30pm in the School Cafeteria. We have lots of exciting things planned including the Trivia Night and wrapping up the successful fundraising of November and December.

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.

Raise Craise was a wonderful new fundraiser full of over 2,000 Acts of Kindness, Weepuls and a Circus Variety Show to bring it all to a close. Supporting our school is still happening through a variety of events such as the One Stop Holiday Shop (Dec 1) and Kids & Canvas (Dec 6 & 13). 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, cultural arts activities, Fun Family nights, and teacher appreciation.

Kids Holiday Store is preparing for a our students to have the opportunity to do their holiday shopping. Kids will be able to buy gifts for Mom, Dad, Siblings, Grandparents and pets without breaking the bank and everything is already wrapped. Classes will visit the Holiday store on December 18 & 19 with a backup/snow date of December 20th.

Thank you for all your support!

