

Tiger Times

Winter 2015



A NOTE FROM SCOTT THOMPSON, PRINCIPAL

Recently parents have received reports from the school on two important assessments – the Northwest Evaluation Association (NWEA) Measures of Academic Progress (MAP) tests from Fall, 2015, and for students currently in grade 4, the results from the Spring, 2015 administration of the new state test, the Smarter Balanced Assessment. We have sent home letters explaining the results to those receiving them, but I thought a general overview of school testing might help parents.

Standardized tests are designed for a particular purpose. Generally speaking, academic tests fall into two categories – formative tests and summative tests. Formative tests are intended to monitor learning along the way – to help students and teachers identify areas of strength and areas that are mastered and other areas that need more attention. They can be used to change the teaching/learning experience for the better, by addressing the needs of real students in real time.

NWEA MAP tests are used for this purpose. Similarly, we use another assessment, AIMSweb to measure student skills and learning (reading and math) against benchmarks for their grade and time of year. AIMSweb benchmark tests are very brief, and normally administered three times a year to measure progress.

Summative tests are intended to measure final learning outcomes against a standard. The SBAC tests are summative. As described at the DOE website, The 2015 SBAC tests, “set a new baseline for how students are performing in the state and are the first to measure New Hampshire’s students’ progress toward the academic goals identified in the state’s College- and Career-Ready Standards for mathematics and English language arts. This assessment will provide a more accurate snapshot of how students are performing on a path to success after high school.” SBAC tests are given in the spring, and measure end-of-year learning expectations for that grade level.

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DATES TO REMEMBER

Holiday Recess – No School
December 24 – January 1

Martin Luther King, Jr. Day – No School
January 18

2 Hour Delayed Opening
Wednesday, February 4

Winter Recess – No School
February 22 – 26

A NOTE FROM CONNIE FARO, ASSISTANT PRINCIPAL

Happy Holidays to all our families during this great festive season. Our school year is moving very quickly and like every year there is always a lot of activity at GMS. Our fall fourth grade Kickball Tournament was a great success. It is terrific to see the wonderful sportsmanship from our students. This year we had several students who joined a kickball team but had not played before. Through the careful “coaching” and encouragement from their team mates, these students became strong players and most importantly had lots of fun. I thank all parents for teaching their children the wonderful sportsmanship that they demonstrate in our team sports. Again this year we had 6 teams of 11 students on each team – The Pink Flying Sneakers, The Warriors, The Blazing Scorpions, Team Awesome, Kid Kickers, and Mustache Peanuts. The finals were played by the Kid Kickers and the Mustache Peanuts with the Kid Kickers taking home the championship with a score of 14 to 7.



Our 4th grade Student Council is off to a busy start. Our student council is made up of a boy and girl from each 4th grade classroom who are randomly chosen from those who applied. This year’s student council is made up of: **Katelyn Otis and Hunter Feely** from Mrs. Ashe’s class, **Brendon Saranich and Ashley O’Brien** from Mrs. Cohen’s class, **Noah Marcotte and Sophie Overbeck** from Mrs. Cullen Kent’s class, **Alex Kirby and Julia Morgan** from Mrs. Elliot’s class, and **Amelia Silver and Jack Kidwell** from Mrs. Leary’s class. The council elected

their officers the week after Thanksgiving. Our student council president this year is Jack Kidwell, Vice President is Alex Kirby, Secretary is Hunter Feely, and Treasurer is Brendon Saranich. The student council’s first job was to manage our annual food drive for the Litchfield Community. They collected and counted over 800 food items and toiletries. A great big thank you to them for doing a terrific job advertising, collecting, and organizing the items for pick up by the Campbell High Student Council.

To keep our students minds sharp we have begun “Riddle Wednesday.” Each Wednesday during morning announcements I read a riddle submitted to us by a student. The student body has 5 seconds to think of the answer before it is announced. Our first riddle was provided by Scott Hershberger, one of our third grade students:

“What do you get if you mix a vampire with a snowman?”

You can ask your child for the answer!

I hope you and your family enjoy our winter break. I know our students will come back ready to continue their learning since we have highly motivated and hard-working students!

–Connie Faro

ONE LAST THING:

Just a reminder that the weather is getting colder and our playground is especially cold since there are no trees to block the biting wind. Please be sure that your children are dressed for the cold weather. For them to play in the snow (if it ever comes) we require students to have snow pants, gloves, jacket, boots, and a hat.

Thanks so much for your help in keeping our students comfortable outside.

A NOTE FROM SCOTT THOMPSON CONTINUED

The DOE website also points out that, “Participating Smarter Balanced states agree that while no single assessment can give a complete picture of student achievement, annual assessments, when combined with student grades and teacher reports, can provide important information to families about their child’s progress and areas for improvement and help guide teachers in daily instructional planning...” This is consistent with a long-held standard of triangulation in testing interpretation. We recognize that one bad (or very good!) day of testing may be misleading, so schools look for patterns across multiple tests to verify whether a student is performing at the expected level. We also consider daily classroom performance and teacher-administered academic assessments to try to develop a comprehensive picture of a student’s progress in meeting learning goals.

The assessments we use give us information about individual students, for sure, but they also let us see trends across grade levels. This helps us look at the school program for areas that may need improvement or change. For example, the 2015 Smarter Balanced results told us that in both grade 3 and grade 4, fractions were an area of relative weakness. We can use this information to plan instructional focus, lesson sequence, and lesson timing. In the case of fractions, we recognize that the units on fractions were taught late in the year, after the testing. Our new math program includes fractions earlier in the year, so we anticipate better results this year.

SHOP WITH SCRIP

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](#). 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
A Service of Great Lakes Scrip Center®

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 20 by 100% of our second graders!

In Reading, we have been hard at work learning comprehension skills and strategies for both fiction and non-fiction reading. When reading informational texts with your child, it would be helpful to discuss ‘text and graphic features’, such as bold print, headings, diagrams, and photographs. This helps the reader gather and find information. Through our reading we’ve learned about animal homes,

super storms, and jellyfish, and integrated this new learning into writing informational paragraphs.

We had a special visit in November from the New England Aquarium! Thank you PTO! We learned about the different habitats found along New England beaches, such as rocky, sandy, salt marshes, and tidepools. We learned how animals adapt to living in these habitats, and were able to touch and observe live animals!

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, a jacket, and snowpants and boots when it starts snowing. Also, it would be helpful if these items were labeled with your child’s name.

Happy Holidays!

33ND ANNUAL SCARECROW JAMBOREE

VICKY MANGO

The 33rd Annual Scarecrow Jamboree was held on Friday, October 30, 2015. An amazing 109 students participated! We had a total of 72 scarecrow entries on display for judging. This year the forty-nine 3rd grade students and sixty 4th grade students that participated really did an excellent job on their scarecrows. The 58 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. Sibona's classrooms. All of the students that 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.



TEAMS CATEGORY:

1st Place:
Jack Bourque & Anthony LaPlante
"Purple Minions"

2nd Place:
Madison Bruner & Josie Macdonald
"Grimm Readers"

3rd Place:
Madden Ashe & Logan Barka
"Vader on Vacation"

4th Place:
LeAnn Ramos
"Woodstock Stadium"
Sam Stoddard & Sofia McPherson
"Velma Cullen-Kent"

5th Place:
Haley Swanson & Julia Morgan
"Floating Florence"

6th Place:
Kendall Reynolds & Jayden Sweeney
"One eyed, One horned, flying purple people eater"





INDIVIDUALS CATEGORY:

1st Place:
Piper Odum
"Sleep Watching"

2nd Place:
"Maria"

3rd Place:
Alana Tavares
"Wicked Witch"

4th Place:
Isabella Romano
"Corn dog Connie"

5th Place:
Gabby Pearl
"Alice in Zombie Land"

Jack LaRose
"Hair"

6th Place:
Jacob Jordan
"Snow Miser"

Joey Allen
"Scarecrow Selfie"



FOURTH GRADE TEAM

Second quarter is almost done here in 4th grade! Each class is hard at work exploring new topics and participating in fun, educational programs.



The fourth graders enjoyed their recent fieldtrip 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. We also got to see where our governor, Maggie Hassan, works. The NH History Museum was also exciting. We saw the original gold eagle that stood on the top of the state



house, as well as portraits of royal governors and a rare Revolutionary War flag. Looking at New Hampshire artifacts from the past taught us so much!

Mr. Jon Nute, a New Hampshire forester, visited the 4th graders at GMS for an on-site field trip. He took us on a nature walk and taught us all about the trees of New Hampshire. Did you know that NH is the 2nd most forested state in the USA? We have 74 different species of trees here! We loved learning about the nature around us!



In math the fourth graders have begun learning long multiplication and will soon be on to long division. Please encourage your child to practice their multiplication and division facts at home to 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. We cannot wait for the final tournament in early February!

The Granite State Fit Kids program is beginning in January! This is a seven week program designed by a Nashua doctor to teach the students about how their body works as well as about being healthy and making healthy choices. Each week the students will engage in hands-on activities to help learn and motivate. Each student will keep a log of the daily exercise they do. We hope the program motivates our students to be active and make healthy choices throughout the entire year.



Finally, we would like to thank the room parents for planning our wonderful Halloween parties. Also, a big thank you to the parents who sent in goodies that day. The students had a fun time and are looking forward to the next party!



DONATIONS:

tissues, disinfectant wipes,
non-perishable snacks,
pencils, pencil top erasers

KINDERGARTEN TEAM

We are off to a great start in math, we continue to work on counting and number formation. We have also been working on counting sets of objects. Identifying which number is greater than and which is less than is a very important skill for number sense and classifying objects into sets.

In language arts, we have been using our new program Journeys, the students have worked hard to associate each letter with its sounds. We use these sounds to make words. We are using popcorn words to write and illustrate simple sentences. Please remember to read each night with your child!



We have begun to explore a unit on “The Gingerbread Man”. We have read several versions of the story and are comparing and contrasting the characters and setting of each story.

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.

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 information in books, dictionaries, encyclopedias and other reference materials.

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 (how it is organized and how to find books in numerical order.)

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 \$2,000 for the library to use to purchase materials and equipment for the students, parents and staff to use and \$816.00 to purchase books from Scholastic. 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!

SUPPLIES REQUESTED:

Swiffer duster refills.
unscented hand sanitizer,
tissues, disinfecting wipes

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.

GUIDANCE PERSPECTIVES

Connect the Dots to Thrive in School and Beyond

JOCELYN ROBINSON, SCHOOL COUNSELOR

TARI SELIG, SCHOOL PSYCHOLOGIST

SAMANTHA BROADHEAD, SCHOOL PSYCHOLOGIST INTERN



In our first Guidance Perspectives, we started with the statement that ‘all children have the potential for greatness and success.’ During this school year we have been working with students helping them to ‘connect the dots’ focusing on optimism, persistence, flexibility, kindness, respect, reliance and empathy.

As parents you can encourage your children 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. There are many ways families can help children connect the dots and thrive.

We encourage you to contact us either by phone or email. You can do so through the school webpage or by calling us at 424-5931.

WAYS FAMILIES CAN HELP CHILDREN CONNECT THE DOTS AND THRIVE

1. Encourage your child to set goals and to map out a plan for achieving.
2. Help your child internalize a sense that he can achieve by reinforcing the skills already developed and encouraging him to try new challenges.
3. Help your child identify his strengths and interests and learn new skills.
4. Emphasize that learning and growing requires trying new things and that success comes from small steps to a long-term goal.
5. Help her work through setbacks or lack of self-confidence by helping to identify negative thoughts that may suggest concerns about her ability to be successful. As a parent, you can help children see what the small steps are and how persisting and overcoming obstacles is a part of succeeding. Help her realize that setbacks are not permanent or all-encompassing.
6. Praise attempts as well as success and make sure that you focus on the effort put into the success.
7. Create an environment at home that allows your child to explore building (blocks, helping with projects, and more), drawing (crayons, finger paints, paper), and music (on the radio, with children’s instruments, or through formal training).
8. Model perseverance and problem solving when faced with challenges or difficulties.
9. Demonstrate, through your own behaviors, how to identify and achieve long-term goals by thinking aloud, creating a pathway of short-term goals, and using problem solving and decision making skills along the way.
10. Help your child develop positive relationships with peers and adults and model respectful, caring behaviors with others.
11. Encourage your child to participate in community activities that may help her develop positive behaviors, such as being thankful and having gratitude. In particular, volunteer activities may encourage the development of positive behaviors.
12. Participate in community events or encourage your child to participate in extra-curricular activities in the community to increase her connectedness with community members, including other children and adults alike. This will increase your child’s well-being, achievement, and also create a sense of community, safety, and security amongst adults and children.
13. Seek out support systems available in the community to help your child learn new skills and thrive, such as tutoring or mentoring programs.
14. Consider learning more about Positive Psychology, and what enables children or individuals to thrive (www.positivepsychology.org/books).

THIRD GRADE TEAM

The third grade students have been having a lot of fun learning about multiplication and division. 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.

During the middle of December, we will be reading the book *Amos & Boris* by William Steig. It is about a wonderful friendship that develops between a mouse and a whale. Although the two animals have nothing in common, they become great friends. This is a wonderful life lesson for the children to learn. We will be discussing the question, "What makes a good friend?"

The third grade classes will be wrapping up our social studies unit on the foundations of government before 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. Next, 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.

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 also learning their subtraction math facts while making their fact families! We are using our Cuisenaire rods to help us learn our fact families. 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 will soon be working on the long vowel sounds. We continue to work on word families with each new story. Many interesting stories have been read during the past few months. Both Fantasy and Informational Text 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. The children also enjoyed a TIGER presentation. During this presentation, the children were taught how to treat people with respect.

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!

Happy Holidays!

PTO NEWS

We can't thank our volunteers enough for all that they have done so far this year to make all the wonderful events such a great success! A HUGE "Thank You" to all our volunteers!

It has been very busy since the school year has started. The events we have sponsored or assisted in thus far are:

- Welcome Back Teacher Breakfast on September 11th with an unbelievable spread!
- Halloween Bash on October 23rd with a fabulous DJ or was that Elvis!
- Veteran's Day Assembly on November 10th with a nice spread of baked goods, coffee and fruit. We heard from many of the Veterans thanking us for the spread as well as the amazing show of patriotism by our students and staff.
- Teacher Dinner on November 12th, the teachers and staff could not say enough about the amazing soups, salads and desserts.
- Babysitting on November 12th & 13th with Girl Scout Troop which parents expressed their gratitude for entertaining the kids.
- Holiday Craft Fair on December 4th which had a great turnout and raised nearly \$1,900 for GMS Enrichment programs!

All these events have been a great success and the teachers and parents have expressed their gratitude for everything our volunteers have done!

Upcoming PTO Sponsored events are:

- Holiday Cheer Event for Teachers (Around the World Theme) - December 18th
- Night at the Monarchs (GMS Chorus to sing) - Saturday, February 20th
- Bingo Night - March 11th (snow date of March 18)
- Mother Son Movie Night - April 15th
- Teacher Appreciation Week - May 2nd - 6th
- Screen Free Week - May 9th - 13th
- Father Daughter Dance- May 20th

If you would like to help out, in any way, please let us know!

Destination Imagination is off and running. We compete in the Kingston Regionals on March 12, 2016. We are all looking forward to supporting our DI teams and wishing them luck on solving their challenges and making it all the way to GLOBALS!!!!

Come and check out our PTO meetings. They are held on the 3rd Monday of each month (except when there is a holiday or end of year AND weather permitting of course) from 6:30 pm and usually run 30 minutes to 45 minutes. Come hear about all the exciting things going on. The schedule for the rest of the year is January 25th, February 15th, March 21st, April 18th, May 23rd, and June 13th.

Thanks and Happy Holidays to you all!

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 \$4,200 thanks to parents sending in their box tops!

SPECIAL EVENTS



Polar Express Movie Night- Campbell HS Auditorium

Monday, December 21
6pm - 8pm

PTO Night at the Monarch's GMS Chorus to sing at the Monarch's game- Verizon Center

Saturday,
February 20 @ 7:00



PTO MEETING

PTO Meeting- Cafe
Monday, January 25 @ 6:30

PTO Meeting- Cafe
Monday, February 15 @ 6:30

