

# George Grant Mason School

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## Terlecky Talk

Dear Tuxedo Families,

A little over four weeks ago I attended a Board of Education meeting where I was to be appointed as principal of GGM. I was somewhat nervous and more than a little worried. Would people accept me? Would I be happy here? Am I making the correct decision? Well, a few short weeks later, and I confess I feel as if I am home. I am not sure how this happened so quickly, but this school has completely won me over. I feel as if I have been here for decades. People have been so kind, welcoming, and accepting. Thank you all for my warm welcome. As I have been telling everyone I know, Tuxedo is a gem, a hidden gem, and more people should be aware of how special this place truly is.

We celebrated Peace Day on September 21<sup>st</sup> and Mr. Stankiewicz led the effort by having his students create pinwheels with special decorations. These pinwheels were then placed on the hill outside. The music was provided by Mr. Stelmach, Mr. Chan, and several of their very talented students.

Unity Day was observed on October 21<sup>st</sup>. Everyone had orange on them somewhere, from tee shirts to socks and headbands. The school community came together to celebrate kindness, acceptance, and inclusion.

On October 29, we held our annual Halloween Parade around Circle Field. The costumes were creative and colorful and the children had a wonderful time!

A few reminders:

- If you need to come into the building, please fill out the Visitor Questionnaire on the district website.
- Please continue to reinforce the importance of washing hands frequently, wearing masks, and keeping distance between themselves and others.
- At this time, students are allowed to ride only their own bus.



## Upcoming Events

**November 2** Music Department Wreath Sale Ends

**November 3** PTO Meeting at Seven Lakes Station at 7:00 PM

**November 5** Quarter 1 Ends for Grade 5 (the end of Trimester 1 for PK-4 will be December 2)

**November 11** Veterans Day – School closed

**November 17** Board of Education Meeting at 7:00 PM

**November 18** Wreath pick-up in front of GFB

**November 25-26** Thanksgiving Recess – School closed



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## PTO on the Go

Thank you to everyone who came to our Back to School Carnival last month. It was a huge success and a welcome return to normal! Our next meeting is Wednesday, November 3rd at 7pm at Seven Lakes Station in Sloatsburg. We hope to see you there. Stay tuned for info on our next Board and Brush fundraiser, which is always a good time!

### **Pre-K: Mrs. Sayles**

Pre-K students have been working hard. In October, we studied nocturnal animals such as bats and owls. We read books about each animal and learned about them. We made our own owls and bats. We learned about their babies, their diets, and their habitats. We also predicted, then tested, whether our pumpkins sank or floated. Pre-K students have been learning our uppercase letters and sounds. We are already up to the letter G. We sky write the letters, practice the way to make it on paper, and repeat the letter sounds so we can really learn them! Overall, we have been learning and growing together as a Pre-K family.

### **Kindergarten: Mrs. Rush**

Now that the pumpkins are carved and gourds are being used for decorations, Kindergarten will be learning all about the life cycle of a pumpkin. Using the text, Pumpkin Jack, we will foster a deeper understanding of just how the life cycle of a pumpkin works from seed to possible Jack-O-Lanterns. We will use our math skills to count pumpkin seeds and our reading and writing skills to label and draw the life cycle of a pumpkin. Kindergarten will even get to take home pumpkin pulp and seeds and plant them in a garden if they choose and see if they can watch full life cycle take place in their own backyards.

### **First Grade: Mrs. Matthies**

Hi families! I cannot believe we are in the month of November! We have been busy the last couple of weeks! In reading, we continue to learn about the main character in a story and character traits. We will discuss how character traits are words that describe how someone is on the inside. Physical traits are how we describe a character from the outside. We have also been digging deeper into our reading by doing a preread and highlighting vocabulary words we may not understand. The words are discussed and then we do a second read with an understanding of those words. In math, we continue to learn subtraction. We are learning to subtract numbers over ten. It's a little tricky and sometimes it gets a little confusing, but we are getting better and better at it all the time. We are also learning to subtract using counters and cubes. The counters and the cubes help the friends build models for further visual and hands on reinforcement.

Thanksgiving is right around the corner this month. As a result, we will be learning about Native

Americans of the northeast. We will discuss their customs, and how they lived two hundred years ago. We will also compare and contrast how they lived and how we live today. In science, we have been learning about the phases of the moon. We will continue to learn more about patterns in space. We will also learn about land formations on the earth and why they are there. It's going to be a busy November but a fun one!

### **Second Grade: Mrs. Blume**

Second graders have been busy settling in to their new routines and learning! November's newsletter will spotlight social studies. We have begun a study of different types of communities; urban, rural and suburban. This study will involve comparing and contrasting these communities and how each community meets the needs of the people who live in it, just like here in Tuxedo. The students will also be learning about their place in the world through map skills. We will be sending "flat travelers" to visit family and friends across the country just like the character in the book, *Flat Stanley*! We will plot the "flat travelers" whereabouts on our map and use those destinations to aid in our learning.

### **Third Grade: Mrs. Bock**

We have been very busy in third grade! In math, we are continuing our study of multiplication. The students have discussed the relationship between multiplication and repeated addition as well as equal groups and arrays. In ELA, we have continued to work with a variety of texts from Scholastic. We have been focusing on answering questions with text evidence, figurative language, as well as comparing and contrasting two different texts. In social studies, we are going to explore communities. In science, we are continuing to study the weather and atmosphere. My third graders have been doing an amazing job! Keep up the great work!

### **Third Grade: Ms. Valastro**

Ms. Valastro's third grade has had a busy start to the school year. We have been learning about place value in math and most recently entering the wonderful world of multiplication! We have also been learning about the geography of Planet Earth and where we are located when looking at a globe! As we continue to learn more and more we are truly amazed at just how vast our universe is! Perhaps our most exciting update is how we are spreading kindness in our classroom. We have created a spot in the classroom where we each have our own

kindness buckets. We have been filling these buckets with kind messages to one another on a daily basis. We plan to continue the kindness initiative throughout the school year and encourage one another in a positive manner! Lastly, we are looking forward to continuing on our journey of learning and discovery!

#### **Fourth Grade: Mrs. Rota**

Fourth Grade has worked very diligently in Math this year. Not only have we learned about place value and whole number operations, we just concluded our chapter on factors, multiples, and patterns. We began our whole number multiplication chapters (there are 3) on Monday. Our first chapter is multiplying by 1-digit numbers and the next one is 2-digit multiplication and then we will move into area and perimeter.

We have been working on character traits, summarizing, inferences, and context clues in ELA. We work on the standards as part of our whole group instruction, in small centers, and as part of our independent work time. The students are applying the skills to texts we read together and those they read on their own. The class just completed a writing piece where they applied their knowledge of character traits to themselves. Each student had to write a paragraph about themselves using character traits. We then took turns guessing the identity of the "character". We are also working on identifying the different types of sentences in grammar.

In science, we have been learning about adaptations and the students will soon begin an Animal Research project. Each student has chosen an animal to research. They will gather information and write a brief report. They are very excited to begin this project!

#### **Fifth Grade: Ms. Finrock**

Happy November! Our pumpkin painting was such a success! We are going to be moving into adding and subtracting decimals this month. This will be our first of three units on decimals. We have been reading novels in our small reading groups and focusing on working as a team, making inferences, and character traits as a whole class. In social studies, we are working on Early Explorers such as Samuel de Champlain, John Cabot, and Vasco da Gama. I have been very impressed by the students' reader's responses every week. It is wonderful to see

the connections they are making with the characters in their stories.

#### **Library: Mrs. Mui**

We are thrilled to be back in the GGM Library Media Center and circulating library books once again! Students in Pre-K through 5th grade have the opportunity to check out both print books from the Library Media Center and e-books and audiobooks through Sora. Sora can be accessed through ClassLink or by visiting the website at <https://soraapp.com/library/orangeulsterny>, then choosing Tuxedo UF School District from the drop down menu and finally, logging in with your child's Tuxedo Schools Google account. Link your public library card to your Sora account for access to even more e-book and audiobook options.

Not only are we checking out books during Digital Literacy, we are also working on finding media balance between our online and offline activities. Seeking healthy, balanced choices makes us upstanding digital citizens who recognize our responsibilities to ourselves, our community, and our world. Ask your child what media balance looks like and listen to what they have to share!

#### **STEM: Ms. Klimowich**

Fourth Grade STEM students have been busy tending to their plants that they have sprouted using our new hydroponics kit! The students placed their bean, pea and salad greens seeds into sponge pods that rest in small baskets in the tubs of the hydroponics kits. At the beginning of each class, students measure and observe their plants. Recently, the students needed to plan and build supports using K'Nex for the plants since they have grown so rapidly! The students used the Engineering Design Process to sketch their design and make improvements to their supports.

In November, the class will continue to explore plant growth using the hydroponics kit, however, this time we will use a different method to grow the plants. Instead of using sponge pods, the students will use CocoTek, which is an organic growing medium that quickly expands and absorbs water to support seed growth. Students will compare the growth of their first set of plants to the second set to see which grew faster.

#### **Physical Education: Mr. Brunner and Mr. Landro**

In the Pre-K to 2nd grade PE classes, the students have been working on their locomotor skills (skipping, galloping and sliding) along with a

variety of Tag games. The 3rd to 5th grade just completed a Soccer unit working on the skills of passing, trapping and shooting. This was followed by some competitive games.

### **ENL: Ms. Fowler**

Ms. Fowler has been busy getting to know her new English as a New Language (ENL) students. In honor of Hispanic Heritage Month, she created a bulletin board to highlight the areas around the world where our Spanish speaking students and their families come from. If you haven't seen the bulletin board in person, be sure to check it out on the school website!



### **Multi-Subject: Mrs. Donnelly**

This school year, I have combined my pandemic-created passion for fish-keeping with a fun project for my 3rd, 4<sup>th</sup>, and 5th grade students with a Project Based Learning (PBL) experience. PBL is a teaching method in which students learn by actively engaging in real-world, meaningful projects. The application of skills such as reading decoding, reading comprehension, writing, and math concepts to studying our classroom fish tank should help students retain the academic skills they learned previously.

One or two days a month, I set aside the time to focus on our fish aquarium project, weaving in the

academic skills we learned in the past month. So far, we studied the components of a planted freshwater fish tank: substrate (gravel), live plants, de-chlorinated water, a tank light, driftwood and rocks. After the water chemistry was "just right", we added 4 harlequin rasboras, which are very hardy freshwater fish.

Fish Tank News: we just had a baby . . . a baby corydora catfish, that is! I brought a fertilized egg from my home tank and a few days later, it hatched into a teeny-tiny baby, technically called a "fry". We will continue to observe the fry and learn even more about the fish life cycle and development in the month to come!

### **Music: Mr. Stelmach**

Welcome to the music corner. We have been having fun with various songs and activities in all grades and classes.

Here are some topics we have been learning:

- Keeping a steady beat
- Beat vs rhythm in songs
- Dynamics – loud and soft
- Tempo – speed of the music
- Reading basic rhythm notation

Each grade has been learning some of these through level-appropriate songs. We do sing every time we meet. We've also been playing with boomwhackers, rhythm sticks, egg shakers, and other classroom instruments. The older grades also worked on a rhythm exercise using names of their favorite Halloween candies.

Many on the fourth & fifth graders have also had a good start with their instrumental careers with the flute, clarinet, saxophone, trumpet, & percussion. They have learned four or five notes and will begin learning simple songs soon. If your child is learning a band instrument, please encourage them to practice, even if it is only 20 minutes 3-4 times a week. Obviously, the more they practice, the better they will become.



## Art: Mr. Stankiewicz

What a wonderful time to be back so the students can work on artwork in-person with hands-on projects using materials they may not have had at home! All the grades created emojis that now decorate, and brighten, the hallways. Students used different materials, depending upon their skill level, some using pre-cut pieces of facial features while others drew and colored original designs. Pre-K, K, 1<sup>st</sup>, and 2<sup>nd</sup> grades are concentrating on lines and shapes using a variety of materials including colored pencils, markers, and watercolors. The 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> grade got their hands dirty in clay making pinch pot forms. We turned these into pumpkins for fall or Jack-o-Lanterns for Halloween. 5<sup>th</sup> grade started projects using perspective. All classes will build upon the Elements and Principles of Art to create more technically advanced projects moving forward.

