

## Letters from GGM

# GEORGE GRANT MASON SCHOOL

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### A Message from Dr. Jean-Paul

Dear GGM Parents and Families,

Welcome to 2024 at George Grant Mason Elementary School! I hope everyone was able to enjoy a wonderful winter break spending time with family and friends. We are excited to begin a new year and look forward to the fresh start in 2024!!!

We're thrilled to announce the official launch of our social-emotional learning initiative, the RULER program. During the first week of our return to school, our teachers will collaborate with students to develop our GGM School Charter. Every student will have a say in shaping the positive atmosphere for how they want to feel at school, then work together to agree upon behaviors that support those feelings. Following this activity, we will conduct a school-wide assembly where we'll re-introduce the mood meter, present our charter, and share more aspects of the program. Please stay on the lookout for more information and ideas where you can reinforce these concepts at home as well.

In our commitment to safety, we're in the process of enhancing our drop-off and pick-up procedures on campus. This effort aims to provide optimal security for our students and a more streamlined experience for families. Stay tuned for further updates as we work together to make George Grant Mason Elementary School an even more nurturing and secure environment for all.

Wishing you a wonderful start to the new year!

Sincerely,

Dr. Melissa Jean-Paul  
Principal

## Upcoming Events

**January 10** PTO Meeting at 7:30 pm – Upstairs at Characters

**January 15** Martin Luther King Day: School closed

**January 17**  
Board of Education Meeting at 7:00 pm

**January 19** Spirit Day: Inside/Out Day

**January 26** End of 2<sup>nd</sup> Quarter for Grade 5



**HAPPY NEW YEAR**  
**2024**

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

Pre-k had a festive December! We learned all about the different winter holidays. We had fun with our gingerbread theme and made gingerbread play dough made with real ginger! Pre-K had fun pretending to be bakers and creating gingerbread cookies. We read many different Gingerbread books and identified what was the same and different between each book. Pre-k had fun sharing which book was their favorite with their classmates. We decorated gingerbread people for our bulletin board using glitter and gems and shared each unique gingerbread with the class. We worked on identifying simple and complex shapes during a tree decorating craft and used our fine motor skills to cut each shape out. Pre-k worked on counting using a gingerbread ten frame on the Smartboard and had fun cheering each other on! We had a festive time with the December sensory table. The students loved exploring all of the holiday decorations and using bags and boxes to create gifts to share with their friends. We also added a camping center including a pretend crackling fire and marshmallows to roast! We look forward to learning all about winter and the animals that hibernate during the winter this month.



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

Kindergarten continues to grow and learn every single day! We are continuing to learn about the rules and expectations of the classroom, school, and our community. To start the New Year, the kindergarten students will continue working on using their fine motor skills, writing skills, and reading skills to create their own "My Five Senses" book. Students will look through magazines and cut out pictures of things they can feel, see, hear, smell, and taste. Kindergarteners are using their skills to identify pictures for which they use their senses, cut, glue, and to read the words in their books. We

sense that we are going to have a lot of fun learning about our senses and creating our very own books!

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

January will be filled with lots of fun activities. I cannot believe that we are starting 2024! There will be research papers, science inquiries, and even math games! In ELA will learn how to use words that make our writing fun and exciting. We will also learn how to revise and edit our work. First grade will learn to summarize a story using important details from the story. In math, we will be adding and subtracting two digit numbers. We will learn how to count numbers up to 120 using pictures and manipulatives that represent two and three digit numbers. In science, we are going to learn and discuss weather. This will include climate patterns and natural disasters such as tornados and hurricanes. In social studies, we will be reading about how some family members have similar traits and why. We will also discuss the idea of what a family needs and what a family may just want and the difference between the two. Cheers to a fun and exciting new year, families! Thank you for all you do!



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

Happy New Year! As reported in December, second graders are in the midst of a nonfiction study. They have already researched and taken notes about animal groups and habitats and they have explored nonfiction features, like captions, maps, photographs, glossaries, in order to understand how these parts of nonfiction help readers better understand a text. In January they will be going through the writer's process to create their very own animal adaptation book incorporating all that they have learned. We can't wait to share them with you all! Second graders continue their tri-weekly walk to the library and now prior to going the students generate a list of books

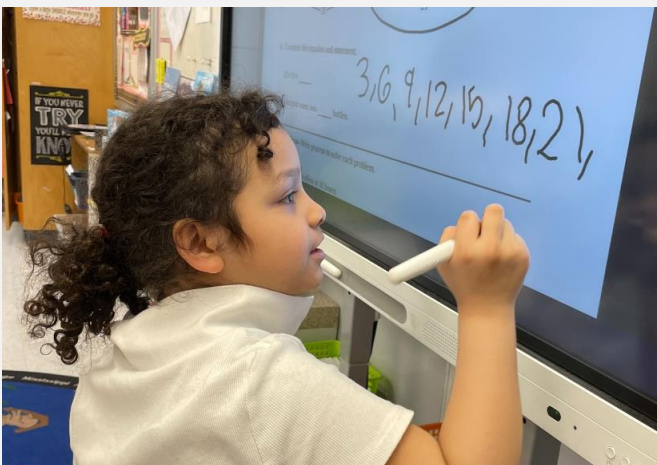
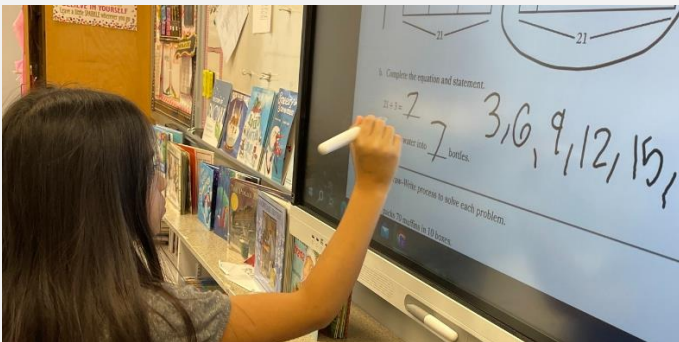


or topics that they want to look for when we get there. This really gets them thinking about books, their own interests and themselves as learners.



### Third Grade: Ms. Caligiuri

Happy New Year! This month, in third grade, we will continue our folktale unit in ELA. In math, we will continue working on multiplication and division word problems. We will also begin the area unit. In social studies, we will start talking about Ancient Egypt. In science, we will continue the forces and motion unit. Keep up the hard work, third graders!



### Fourth Grade: Mrs. Rota

Happy New Year! The school year is just flying by! Fourth Grade continues to learn and explore a variety of different topics. In math we will begin to dig into division over the course of the month. If time allows, we might even start fractions. The students have done a great job with their skills so far! In ELA/SS we have read a variety of different texts (both fiction and nonfiction) as we continue work on key skills like comparing & contrasting, making inferences, using context clues, etc. We will continue to read varied texts to further strengthen and develop our reading skills. We will also work on our writing, responding to questions and writing an extended response. Finally, in science, we will dive into energy and circuits. We have much to learn about and look forward to.







### **Fifth Grade: Ms. Stack**

Happy New Year! I hope you had a wonderful break and holiday season filled with joy and laughter. We're diving into 2024 with enthusiasm and a focus on academic growth in fifth grade. In math, our students are embarking on an exciting journey with decimals, honing their skills in operations and understanding the intricacies of decimal places. We're also delving into the world of estimating products, a crucial skill that builds a strong foundation for more complex mathematical concepts. In social studies, we've just launched a captivating new unit that explores historical events and cultures, sparking curiosity and critical thinking. Simultaneously, in English Language Arts (ELA), we're fostering the ability to compare and contrast nonfiction texts, allowing students to analyze different perspectives and deepen their comprehension skills. We're looking forward to a fantastic semester of growth, learning, and exploration!



### **Fifth Grade: Ms. Valastro**

Fifth grade is starting the new year off right as we explore the world of multiplying and dividing decimals! In social studies, we are learning about the ancient civilizations of Mesoamerica! We are finishing up our novel study & moving on to practicing identifying reading concepts & working with figurative language in ELA! We are also continuing to work on our social emotional learning through understanding how we want to feel throughout the day here at school. We are also learning how to positively identify and deal with our emotions, and making use of our mood meters daily! We are excited for our journey to continue into the new year here in grade 5!



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

Fifth Grade STEM students will be taking on the challenge to complete the largest LEGO set by piece count, the LEGO Art World Map. The students have been carefully following the pattern of tiny plastic dots on their base plates to recreate the continents, oceans and seas of the world. Both fifth grade classes have been working on this project and will complete it by connecting the base plates together with Lego supports. This collaborative project helps us focus on team building and collaboration skills. We are excited to display the 11,695 piece set once it is completed.

### Music: Ms. Cienki

Hello, parents, and Happy New Year! I hope everyone had a restful break. When coming back to music, we are continuing forward! Kindergarten and 1st grade are going to work on learning quarter and eighth notes, as well as high versus low notes. 2nd grade is going to start working on solfege and sight-reading. Both 3rd and 5th grade are going to work on their recorder skills, and 4th grade is going to start learning the ukulele! If anyone would like more information, please check out my website. Thank you!



### Spanish: Ms. Brusseler

¡Feliz Enero! This month in our Spanish class, we continued to grow as Spanish speakers and writers! We continued our focus on personal pronouns in fifth grade, as well as working with weather and seasons in third and fourth grade! I am super proud of how hard working everyone has been, and I am looking forward to continuing this hard work in January! Feliz año nuevo!

### Library: Mrs. Mui

The excitement of the new year brings along with it the Caldecott Medal winner! The Caldecott Medal is named after illustrator Randall Caldecott and is awarded to the most distinguished children's picture book by the American Library Association for Library Service to Children. Our Kindergarteners and First Graders will act as members of the Caldecott Award Selection Committee by closely evaluating illustrations of possible candidates in order to predict this year's winner. This year's Mock Caldecott titles include *Big* written and illustrated by Vashti Harrison, *Once Upon a Book* illustrated by Grace Lin and written by Grace Lin and Kate Messner, *If I Was a Horse* written and illustrated by Sophie Blackall, and *Evergreen* written and illustrated by Matthew Cordell.

### Multi-Subject: Mrs. Donnelly

If it is January, there must be snow in the forecast for Tuxedo, which means it is also time for . . . Snow Pancakes! This delicious winter treat was an old family favorite from Holland where children gather freshly fallen snow to add to pancakes. As snow falls through the sky, it gathers naturally occurring ammonia, which helps leaven (rise) the pancakes.

Cooking is also a great way to teach measurement and fraction skills, as well as following directions. This tradition has become a Donnelly Family favorite. Just be sure to use ONLY FRESHLY FALLEN SNOW because the ammonia quickly evaporates. ENJOY!

#### Snow Pancake Recipe

2 cups of flour  
1-tablespoon baking powder  
½ teaspoon of salt  
1 tablespoon white sugar  
2 eggs well beaten  
1-½ cups of milk

Secret Ingredient: 1-1/2 cups fresh snow

- In a large bowl mix and sift the flour, baking powder, salt, and sugar together.
- Combine the eggs and milk in another bowl.
- Slowly add the milk and egg mixture to the dry ingredients.
- Stir well and set aside. The batter will be thick.
- Next, grease your griddle and get it good and hot.
- When the griddle is hot, quickly go outdoors and scoop up fresh snow.
- Fold in 1-½ cups of new snow and mix well.
- Cook the pancakes as usual.



### **Math Specialist: Mrs. Rocklin**

Happy New Year to Everyone! I hope this year brings everyone joy and health. As for AIS we are working on addition and subtraction within 20 in the lower grades. We are also working on place value within 100 being able to use this in order to add larger numbers and use the straight algorithm. The upper grades are working on division with two by two numbers moving onto two by three digit division. 4th and 5th grade are working on partial products within 1,000 for multiplication and division. We will then take those partial products and add them up to find the product and quotient. We will also use the straight algorithm to check our work. As always we are working hard towards our individual goals and making progress every day! Keep up the good work!

### **Reading Specialist: Mrs. Sayles**

January may bring cold weather, but we will be cozying up with good books in the Reading Room. Students will also be reading about winter, snow, and arctic animals. We will continue to look for text evidence as we answer questions. Students will be encouraged to make their writing more exciting by choosing synonyms for words we use a lot in our writing. For example, using the word "stumble" instead of fall.

### **Physical Education: Mr. Bilozorov**

Get ready for an action-packed January at our school! We're gearing up for an exciting basketball unit that spans across all grades, from our energetic Pre-K kiddos to the spirited 5th graders. The court will be buzzing with laughter, teamwork, and skill development as everyone gets a chance to showcase their hoop dreams. But that's not all—our 4th and 5th graders are in for a treat as we kick off the intramural sports program. Stay tuned for details on how to sign up and be part of the thrilling sports adventure ahead. January is shaping up to be a slam dunk of a month!

### **Art: Mr. Stankiewicz**

As we reflect and finish the year in the visual arts studio, students in 5th grade are finishing their hot cocoa mugs. They are learning about slab building techniques, along with scoring, adding slip, and joining seams to add to their artwork. These will be

bisque fired and then glazed in January. While 4th grade is finishing their Landscape Collages, they will be building in clay in January. 2nd and 3rd grades are finishing their Pharaoh-cious Portraits, using crayons and colored pencils with lots of gold like the ancient Egyptians were studying. They will add one of their Hieroglyphic name prints to this. Students in kindergarten and first grade learned that artist Mary Blair brought colorful designs to Disney's movies, such as Cinderella and Peter Pan, and they added colorful designs to their Mary Blair castles. They mixed the primary and secondary colors together to create colors of their own. One of the pre-K projects, shown here, involved, painting, using markers and sewing with the yarn to create a framed snowman picture in the hopes of seeing snow during our break.

### **PTO on the Go**

Happy New Year! Thank you to everyone who came out to our Paint and Sip Event at Hudson Valley Wine Cellars. It was a fun way to kick off the holiday season. It was a busy time of year for the PTO: we sold Holiday Grams to GGM and GFB and spread holiday cheer to our teachers and staff by gifting them a new Keurig, electric kettle and sweet treats. Congratulations to the Pre-K class for the most participation in our Membership Drive. We are grateful for your support and look forward to exciting events, including a Sky Zone night and a painting party for kids in 2024!

