

# Letters from GGM

## GEORGE GRANT MASON SCHOOL

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### A Message from Dr. Jean-Paul

The students and staff at George Grant Mason Elementary celebrated a wonderful return to school in 2024 by officially launching our Yale RULER SEL initiative. With the guidance of teachers, students began working collaboratively in their classrooms to brainstorm ideas for the GGM School Charter. Students learned the purpose of a school charter and what it would include. The charter allows everyone in a school community the chance to articulate how they want to feel at school, then work together to agree upon behaviors that support those feelings.

As a group, students decided on what needs to happen or change for those feelings to be consistently present. Each grade level chose words and phrases that best represented their class. From there, a small group of student ambassadors in grades 2 - 5 collaborated during a lunch period to synthesize these ideas and finalize the GGM School Charter.

On Friday, January 12, GGM staff and students held a kickoff assembly to review the mood meter, have an interactive read aloud using the story *The Way I Feel* and introduce and discuss the final version of the GGM School Charter. For the culminating assembly activity, each student created their own nametag and placed their signature on the charter pledging to do their best to support the GGM School Charter each and every day.

Please click on the link for SEL additional information so that we can work together at school and home to help students identify their feelings:

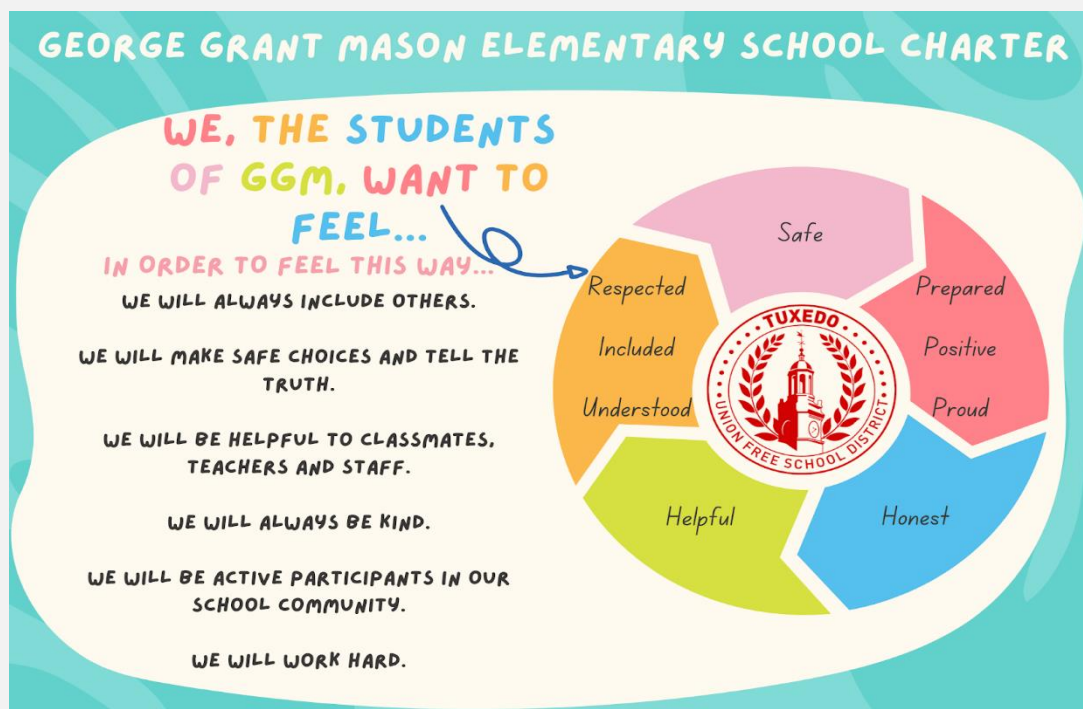


RULER  
Introduction.pdf



RULER Tools  
Overview.pdf

Please see the GGM School Charter below:



## Upcoming Events

### February 1 -16

Pick a Reading Partner (PARP) Program (Guest readers 2/5-2/16)

### February 7

Dr. Chung's visit for National Children's Dental Health Month (visiting Pre-K, Kindergarten, and First grade)

February 7 World Read Aloud Day – Masked Reader Challenge

February 13 Potato Character Contest due

February 14 Board of Education Meeting at 7:00 PM

February 15 PARP Reading logs due

February 16 Spirit Day: Decades Day

February 19-23 President's Week - School closed

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

Pre-k had a chilly and fun January! We made sure to squeeze a lot of movement breaks and dancing into our day to get our energy out when we could not go outside. Pre-k had fun playing winter freeze dance and even learned how to waddle like a penguin following a silly penguin dance shake break! We had "snow" much fun playing with our snow sensory table during centers and making our very own snow people and igloos. Pre-k really enjoyed our science experiment where we made Oobleck, a special mixture that is both a solid and a liquid. It was super messy, but we loved the different textures it created. We also practiced writing the letters in our name with a snowman name activity and traced our first initial with our snowy cotton balls that we decorated our classroom with. Pre-k learned all about clothing and labeled all types of clothes that we wear during the winter season. Pre-k used their fine motor skills to cut pictures of clothing out and sort them into warm weather and cold weather clothing categories. We also introduced hibernation and winter animals by reading the story "The Mitten" by Jan Brett and we worked together to sequence the story. Pre-k is looking forward to continuing our hibernation theme and making sweet projects for Valentine's Day this month!



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

It has been a cold, long winter in Tuxedo! Kindergarten students are learning all about the weather and how we adapt to the weather for each season. In science, Kindergarten will begin

learning all about hibernation. From snakes hibernating in burrows to turtles hibernating in mud, to bats hibernating in caves, students will learn why and how animals hibernate and what they do before they go to sleep for their long winter nap. Students will learn how this preparation of eating lots and lots of food helps keep the animal's bodies healthy during their winter nap so when the animals wake up in the spring, they are ready to eat and play! (We sure are ready to play in the spring weather too!) Kindergarten will use what they learn about animals hibernating in ELA. They will put together a book and share different facts about hibernating animals. Next time you see a GGM Kindergartener, be sure to ask him or her to tell you all about hibernation!

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

February will be filled with lots of fun activities. During this month in science we will be learning about the patterns of the seasons and space. We will study the planets and learn about the weather patterns on the planets. It's all very exciting! In math we are learning how to take apart and break down two digit numbers. We are learning how to add two digit numbers using tens and ones, and number lines. Additionally, we are comparing two digit numbers and using strategies that help us to understand which is the greater number, and which number is less. In ELA we are really focused on our reading comprehension. We will use strategies such as asking questions and retelling to summarize stories we have read in class. We will also compare genres such as realistic fiction and fiction. In social studies we are learning about saving money and goods and services. We are discussing different businesses that provide a service we have to pay for, such as buying food in a restaurant or going to the shoe store. We will compare what is a good and what is a service. Have a great February families, and thank you for all you do!

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

To support our learning about trees from earlier in the year, our focus will move to specifically maple trees. Students in second grade will be taking a field trip to the Hudson Highland Nature Museum to participate in a maple sugar tour. They will learn how to differentiate a sugar maple tree from other trees, how to tap the tree and the process of converting sap into syrup. The best time to get sap



from a sugar maple tree is between February and April and a chilly walk outside among the trees will do us all good this time of year!



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

Fourth Grade has been hard at work and the days are just flying by! In February, we will continue to explore nonfiction texts and work on our reading and writing skills. We are starting the month with an interesting read aloud, *Groundhog Gets a Say* (which is a fun nonfiction text), coupled with some activities for Groundhog Day. We have a variety of other fun and engaging nonfiction texts to read and discuss the month. We will review main idea and text features. Students will continue to develop their written response skills. Spelling and grammar continue to be a focus for us as well. In social studies, students will work on a research project to celebrate Black History Month. In math, we will wrap up division and start our unit on fractions. We are looking forward to not only learning about fractions, but also applying this knowledge in the real world. Students will learn about electricity and circuits in science. It is a fun unit! February is shaping up to be another exciting month in room 201!



#### **Third Grade: Ms. Caligiuri**

Third grade has been working hard so far this year! We have been reading different folktales in ELA and working with text structures. This month, students will continue to practice their skills using different text structures. In math, students will continue learning about shapes and areas. In social studies, we will continue to talk about Ancient Egypt. In science, students have been enjoying being hands-on with magnets! We will finish up the forces and motion unit this month.

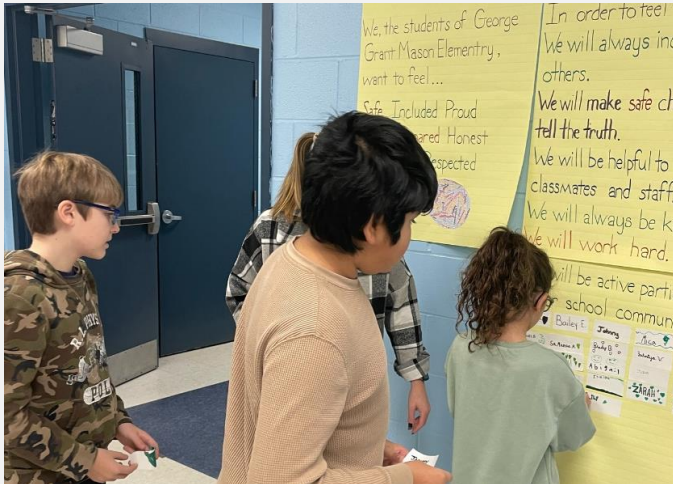


#### **Fifth Grade: Ms. Stack**

February brings an exciting wave of knowledge to our vibrant 5th-grade classroom! In our science journey, we're learning about Earth's systems and human impact. Math is abuzz with the warm welcome of decimals, as our students embrace the world of numbers with enthusiasm. Over in ELA, we're on an adventurous exploration of how authors



skillfully weave a sense of danger into their stories, keeping us on the edge of our seats. Meanwhile, our social studies odyssey is set to sail through the seas of European exploration. And as February unfolds its love-filled wings, we're gearing up for a sweet celebration of Valentine's Day, adding a sprinkle of joy to our academic journey.



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

The fifth grade continues to work hard in the new year. We are currently learning how to add and subtract fractions in math using different strategies to see how they relate to decimals. We are starting our science unit on Earth's systems and will be learning all about European Explorers in social studies. In ELA we are practicing writing skills with compare and contrast essays as they relate to information text. We will be choosing our next novel as well. We are excited to continue our social emotional learning this month with our Valentine's Day kindness activity!



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

In February, third and fourth grade students will be using their Chromebooks and Makey Makey kits. Makey Makey allows students to turn everyday objects into touchpads, opening the door to endless possibilities for interactive learning and exploration. From coding experiments to creating unique projects, students will embark on a hands-on journey that combines technology with imagination. One activity students will participate in is Human Conductive Circuit. Students will engage in a hands-on exploration of electrical conductivity by creating a human conductive circuit. Using Makey Makey, students can connect themselves to different objects, turning their bodies into interactive components. This activity not only teaches basic principles of circuitry but also encourages collaboration and teamwork as students work together to complete the circuit and to get various responses.



#### **Music: Ms. Cienki**

Hello, hello! This year is really flying by but music class is always going to stay the same. All grades have started our Spring Concert music and I can't wait for everyone to hear it. Pre-K is going to be learning about the sky and how it's loud and soft, like the land and ocean. First grade is going to start learning about phrasing and how phrasing is important in music. Third grade is going to work on their solfege and sight reading along with their recorder. For any other information, please check out my website, and I will have every grade in more detail. Enjoy February everyone!

### **Spanish: Ms. Brusseler**

¡Feliz Febrero! In January, our students have worked super hard to learn some new Spanish skills! Fifth graders began to create short sentences using personal pronouns and different Spanish verbs! Our third and fourth graders continued learning how to describe the weather and state all 4 seasons! I am so proud of how far my students have come and am so excited to see more growth!



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

On February 7, GGM will be celebrating World Read Aloud Day with a Masked Reader assembly, inspired by the singing competition show, The Masked Singer! Members of the GGM faculty and staff will read aloud some of their favorite books, with their faces hidden! Can students guess who is behind the pigeon, cat, bison, bird, dinosaur, and bear masks? February also marks the return of PARP (Pick a Reading Partner), organized by the PTO. Back this year are guest readers, the reading log challenge, and the widely successful potato book character contest! Please keep an eye out for more information from the PTO. We look forward to everyone's participation!

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

Just in time for Valentine's Day, my 2nd and 3rd graders are learning to read and spell "Heart Words", previously known as sight words. In the past, sight words were taught by having kids "memorize" them. Some sight words have tricky spellings and sounds, so it was believed that kids simply needed to memorize what they looked like. However, the research shows that children learn sight words more effectively when they learn how to sound them out! The research based Heart Word Method teaches students to sound out the parts of irregular words that do follow phonics rules. Students then only need to learn the small portion of the word that is the tricky part "by heart". For example, most of the word "what" is decodable - just the "a" sounding like /u/ is the part of the word

they need to learn by heart. I'm finding this method to be very effective in my classroom for both reading and spelling these former "tricky words". We will have a special "Heart Word" celebration on Valentine's Day!

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

The groups have been working so hard to accomplish their goals and I couldn't be prouder. The lower grades will continue to work on adding numbers 1 through 10 and now subtracting numbers 1-10. We will look at how these numbers relate to one another and the strategies we can use to help us. In the upper grades, we will continue to work on word problems with two steps with complex multiplication and now division. The upper grades will work on estimating sums and differences of fractions. We will be working on this for the next few weeks and begin to use more complex numbers.

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

In February, we are working hard in the Reading Room. Will the groundhog see his shadow on February 2nd? We will predict and see if our predictions were right. Students will enjoy reading different fiction and nonfiction books about Groundhog's Day. Students will also be learning about the Lunar New Year and the year of the dragon. We will explore books celebrating the Lunar New Year and we will read to find out the animal that represents the year we were born. Students will also read to learn about influential African Americans. We will also read about presidents of the United States in honor of President's Day.

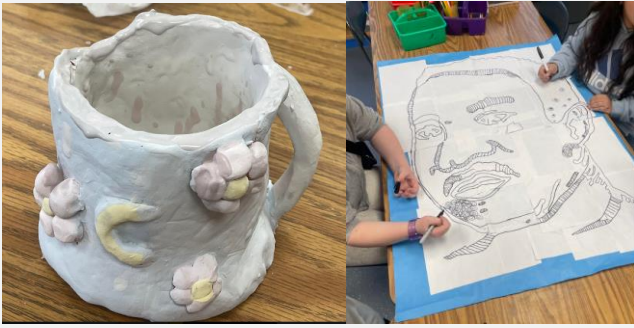
### **Physical Education: Mr. Bilozorov**

In February, our school is gearing up for a diverse array of activities aimed at fostering teamwork, skill-building, and recreational fun. Adventure education sessions will immerse students in collaborative challenges, honing their abilities to work seamlessly as a team. Meanwhile, bowling outings promise a mix of leisure and friendly competition for all. For our younger learners from Pre-K to 2nd grade, the focus turns to refining jumping rope skills and promoting coordination and physical activity.

Additionally, the launch of our intramural sports program for 3rd, 4th, and 5th graders heralds an exciting opportunity for budding athletes to engage in friendly matches within our school



community. Keep an eye out for details on how to sign up and get involved!



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

There will be NO 4th and 5th grade Art Club during the month of February. Most students are in the musical and I will be working on set design/construction with high school students.

During this past month, the Pre-K worked on various projects using pencil, collage, painting, and cutting. Kindergarten and first grade finished their Mary Blair Castle projects and have moved onto making Pinch Pot ceramic bowls. These will be fired and glazed in the coming month. Second and third graders finished their Pharaoh-cious Portraits, combining stencil work, coloring, cutting, printmaking with printing plates and learning about Egyptian symbols. All of the students, except for the pre-K have started sketchbooks, concentrating on the elements and principles of art!

The fourth and fifth grade students stopped their project for the week to create a Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. portrait out of individual pieces they had to copy and then put together like a puzzle. They learned much like any problem, if you break down a drawing into smaller, manageable pieces and connect them, you can come up with something good. They also learned about the differences between glazing ceramics and painting paper. They are excited to be able to use their mug creations to actually drink hot beverages. All glazes used are food safe! Thanks to the fourth and fifth grade students in the art club who helped out with painting some of the banners for the upcoming production of "High School Musical Jr."



### **Speech: Mrs. Bussard**

In February, Mrs. Bussard loves to help GGM celebrate National Children's Dental Health Month (NCDHM). She educates students about the role of their tongue and teeth in speech production as well as how to care for them. Mrs. Bussard organized fun and informational handouts for students as well as some special visitors to come to GGM. On February 7th, Dr. Se-A Chung (from Alpha & Omega Dental in Tuxedo) along with three interns from Tuxedo High School who also attend Orange Ulster BOCES Dental Assistant Program will join forces. Together, they will teach pre-k, kindergarten, and first-grade students about dental care through demonstrations. In addition, Dr. Chung will provide "goodie bags" containing informative materials, a timer, toothbrush, toothpaste, and floss to help encourage children to adopt strong dental habits early on.

### **PTO on the Go**

In an effort to make our meetings more accessible for all parents, we'll be trying out daytime PTO meetings with babysitting available. Stay tuned for more info! And be sure to stop by our table during the GGM spring musical on March 8th and 9th to purchase snacks and congratulatory flowers for our actors. Also, be on the lookout for sign up sheets for PARP (Pick a Reading Partner) this month. It's a wonderful opportunity to share your favorite book with the students at GGM. And finally, information will be coming home soon about our after school LEGO program, which begins on March 18th.