
December Newsletter

Guilderland Elementary School

Smarter – Kinder - Stronger

Dear Families,

I hope this somewhat belated newsletter finds you all enjoying the first snowfall of the season and getting ready for our upcoming holiday recess.

A school community is made up of all the people connected to the school; the students, parents and of course all of the teachers and support staff. I have always been proud to be a part of Guilderland Elementary School community. I believe that we have an exceptional community that supports one another and helps one another to become a little bit better each day.

With such a strong team it comes as little surprise that our staff become highly recruited for other positions in the district and beyond. One of these people is our very own Deb Sim. Mrs. Sim is the senior secretary in our office and it is no exaggeration to say that the work she does every day holds our school community together. With a kind grace, she makes sure our students know where they are going each day, she makes sure our staff members have whatever they need to be successful with the work they do, and she makes sure that I know where I am going from one minute to the next.

Mrs. Sim has recently accepted a new position in the district. Beginning on January 2nd, Mrs. Sim will be moving to the district offices where she will become the Secretary to the Superintendent. We will all miss Mrs. Sim and I suspect we will spend months figuring out all of the ways that she has made GES stronger. Over the next few weeks we will be seeking to find a successor to Mrs. Sim, not a replacement because, as a teacher recently told me, she is not replaceable. Look for an announcement on her successor in the coming weeks.

Please join me in congratulating Mrs. Sim and the example she set, each day making herself smarter, kinder and stronger.

Sincerely,

Allan



December 12

- 7:00pm Winter Concert pt. 1

December 13

- PTA Meeting **at 7:00pm**

December 14

- Lockdown Drill

December 18

- Building Cabinet

December 19

- Pointercounts Assembly
Sponsored by the PTA

December 23 – January 1

- Holiday Recess



Building Information



Tardiness Matters

We encourage every student to be on time each and every day. Any student arriving to school at 8:00 or later is considered tardy. More importantly, when your child arrives after 8:00 he or she is already behind in the work of the day. Teachers are working hard to make every minute of the day important and meaningful. That means every minute missed due to tardiness equals missed opportunities for your child.

From Mrs. Tangorre in the Math Room

Recently, I had the chance to visit a GES PTA meeting to share about how we implement math instruction and support at GES. I would like to thank the PTA for their time and their thoughtful comments and questions.



One of the things we discussed at the PTA meeting was ways that parents can support their students in their math learning. The easiest and most effective thing you can do to help is to support your student in memorizing their math facts. New York State Common Core Standards require that students be fluent with all single digit addition and subtraction facts by the end of second grade and with all single digit multiplication and division facts by the end of third grade. Research shows a strong correlation between students' memorization of math facts and students' math performance overall. Please support us and your child by helping them practice their math facts every day at home.

I would love to talk with any parents who were unable to attend the morning PTA meeting via email or phone any time. Please feel free to reach out with any questions to tangorre@guilderlandschools.net or call at 518-869-0293. If you would like more information

about math instruction or support at GES, you can always visit our district math website called The Math Zone at <http://mathzone.guilderlandschools.net/home>.

Building Cabinet

Building Cabinet is a shared decision-making group made up of teachers, support staff and parents who discuss issues and events at GES and help to make decisions that lead to a smooth operation of the building. We are now at full strength with the addition of two more parent members. Parent representatives for Building Cabinet are: Cheryl Barrell, Suzanne Cifarelli, and Amy Harbison,

At this month's meeting the group discussed; our internal dismissal times and procedures, the Weekend Servings program, and Recess options during the winter months.

Student Council - Hurricane Relief Fundraising

By Kamsi Akubuo

Did you know that our school adopted



Everglades Elementary in Collier County Florida? During hurricane Irma they lost their gym and library. Lots of their homes were damaged also. A parent of a 4th grader at GES that has family in that area told us about it. Can you believe that some people are living in tents or their cars!

GES has risen over \$900 to help Everglades Elementary. That is a lot of money, right? Also, the PTA purchased \$300 in books. We did this by doing school spirit days like hat day, stuffed animal day and dress like your favorite animal day. Gift cards will be purchased and sent to Everglades Elementary! Thank you for your support!

From the Library

We live in a world surrounded by technology, and we know that whatever field our children

choose to go into as adults, their ability to succeed will increasingly depend on understanding how technology works.

That's why our entire school is joining in on the largest learning event in history, **The Hour of Code**. For our third year, GES students are recognizing Computer Science Education Week (December 4-10) by taking part in a multi-age library Hour of Code activity. Students in grades 3 - 5 will be mentoring our primary students, as together they try some simple coding activities. More than 100 million students worldwide have already tried an Hour of Code, and we are excited to join them, as we practice these foundational 21st-century skills.

See <http://hourofcode.com/us> for details, and help spread the word.

Or watch - https://youtu.be/_iPLtP-jm8 to be inspired!

Keep learning alive for your child over the winter break

Your child looks at the calendar and imagines the joy of having free time for the whole winter school break. You look at the same blank squares on the calendar and have a mild moment of panic.

To keep from hearing "I'm bored" during your child's time off from school, here are some activities that will keep her learning:

Make a list of things your family can do together. With your child, look in the local paper or go online to find free events to attend and places to go. Are there museums in your area? Are there free concerts scheduled for this month? Does the public library have special story hours or performances?

Select a movie that is based on a book. After you and your child finish reading the book, watch the movie together. Discuss how the two are alike and how they are different.

Prepare food together. Nearly every culture has some special foods associated with the holiday

season. With your child, prepare foods you remember from your childhood. Share your memories. Or do some research and cook a dish you've never tried.

Encourage your child to learn more about the past and your family history by talking with grandparents, aunts, uncles—even you. Help



her come up with a list of questions to ask, such as, "What was school like for you when you were my age?" and "What trends were popular?" She can record the conversations, write them down, or just listen.

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Improve your child's recall by making facts meaningful

Drilling your child over and over isn't the most effective way to help him remember new facts. Instead, try connecting what he's studying to something meaningful.

Studies show that when new information is linked to something memorable, it's easier to retain. For instance, when your child is learning new words, his brain can digest the information in two ways: by repeating the sound of the word, or by focusing on its meaning. Although both approaches may work, emphasizing meaning leads to better overall recall.

To help your child absorb new facts:

Create a story. He might struggle to remember the first three U.S. presidents, but what if you turned the information into a wild tale? "One day, George Washington went to the park. He met John Adams by the swings. And later, the two bumped into Thomas Jefferson going down the slide." Suddenly, the presidents are put in a context he'll understand—and their order is laid out for him.

Focus on the bigger picture. Rather than having him simply repeat the fact that “Jupiter is the largest planet,” help your child tie it to something broader. “Everything about our solar system’s biggest planet is big. Jupiter’s ‘big red spot’ is even bigger than Earth.” Small facts stick better when they are illustrated in a wider way.

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Try word games to strengthen your child’s writing skills

Using proper grammar takes practice. If your child struggles with forming and punctuating sentences, turn writing into a game. Here are two fun activities to try:

Fill-in-the-blank game. Review the different parts of speech and write a story with missing words. For example: “The girl stepped on a ___ (noun).” Take turns filling in the blanks. You can help by saying things like, “A noun is a person, place or thing. I’ll choose the word pie!” Make the words as silly as you’d like. Then read the story aloud.

Punctuation game. Write a short story without punctuation. Then read it together. It’s challenging! This illustrates how important punctuation is for a sentence’s clarity. Now edit the story, adding punctuation that makes it easy (or funny) to read. Suggest that your child write a story for you to punctuate. Discuss why you chose—or didn’t choose—certain punctuation marks.

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From the PTA

Help-A-Family

Mary Zwagerman and volunteers from the PTA have been very busy shopping and wrapping gifts to support families in our own community to celebrate the holidays. Thank you to all of you who donated to this great service project and for those who have done the work. We need all of you to make this a success each year.



After-School Enrichments

Our Fall After-School Enrichments are in full swing this month and they are going very well. This month, we are offering Folk Art Fun, Lego We-Do Robotics, Yoga, and Fun with Slime. These enrichments are offered for two primary reasons: 1) to give our kids different opportunities right in our school that are convenient for you, and 2) as the



PTA's major fundraiser for the year so we do not have to sell "stuff." Thank you for your participation and we welcome your involvement as well. Do you have any talents that you could teach for four weeks to our students? Do you know of someone who might want to share their talents with us? We are always looking for helpers in our classes, too.