

# GMS Newsletter

Fall 2016



Fall is upon us and it is a very busy time at GMS. Our students have transitioned nicely, and we are now into full school weeks providing continuity in our students' learning experiences. Our teaching staff is deeply involved and committed to providing the very best for our students. We continue to focus on our mission statement: *Griswold Middle School educates for excellence by empowering students to become compassionate, confident, creative and resourceful members of society.* Specifically, communication, critical thinking and creativity are at the forefront of our planning and integration into our everyday lessons. Students will be engaged in active problem solving, reading rigorous texts, using evidence to support their claims and completing performance tasks that require critical thinking.

We have instituted several great programs and changes at our middle school. Both our Advisory and Character programs are aligned to focus on specific character attributes as well as having students engaged in learning activities connected to that attribute. Each month we will recognize our "Kids of Character" and "Students of the Month." These students have distinguished themselves as it relates to the specific character attribute emphasized that month or have excelled academically on their team or in a specific class. Teachers will highlight our Pillars of Character in their classrooms throughout the year.

Our six, seven and eighth graders created Student Success Plans (SSP) at the beginning of the school year. SSP addresses goal setting, career investigation, the review of school expectations and learning how to create a positive learning environment where all students can be successful. Students reported that they loved learning more about themselves, their interests and discovering how they learn best. Helping our students to be successful in all areas is something we focus on at GMS.

Our 8th graders are actively working on their ExPO (Expeditionary Learning Opportunity) projects to create research topics and questions with their coaches. A reminder that this personalized project is a student driven learning opportunity that is the ultimate showcase of the skills that demonstrate our students' high school readiness. Please ask your student about their topic and research question. Once finalized, students will begin focused research. We will also be looking within the Griswold community for adults who have expertise in a specific area that a student is researching. All students are required to conduct an interview with an adult who is connected to their research question. We prefer that family members are not utilized in this part of the ExPO process. If you have expertise in an area and are interested in being interviewed, please contact my administrative assistant Terry Cholewa. All interviews need to be completed by the end of January.

A reminder to parents that we are "paperless" as much as possible by posting information on our website. Items such as the monthly school calendar, the weekly menu from our cafeteria, announcements from teams, etc. will be found on the GMS website and also posted in Wednesday Folders. In addition, progress reports and reports cards can also be accessed via PlusPortal. We no longer send home progress reports or report cards as this information can be accessed directly from the Portal. I will send a Connect Ed message to alert parents when report cards are available at the end of the marking periods. We encourage parents to check the website regularly for updates. If you do not have Internet access, please contact the school, and we will ensure that you receive these items.

We are off to a wonderful start, and we look forward to an outstanding year where all of our students can achieve success and enjoy learning. The purpose of this newsletter is to provide you with information about our middle school. As the year progresses, I will share important information and identify events that will be of interest to you. We look forward to seeing our parents in November (Nov. 16th and 17th) for parent/teacher conferences. You can expect to receive more information regarding that process as we get closer. Please let me know if my comments and any changes at our school are having a positive impact. I would love to hear from you at [mraynor@griswoldpublicschools.org](mailto:mraynor@griswoldpublicschools.org)

Best,  
Mrs. Raynor

**GMS SPIRIT WEEK IS COMING!!**  
October 24-October 28  
**RED RIBBON RALLY IS FRIDAY, 10/28.**



### **Important Information for 8<sup>th</sup> Grade Families**

On October 5<sup>th</sup>, all 8<sup>th</sup> grade students walked next door to visit Griswold High School. GHS hosted tours and an information session. Important information regarding programs at GHS was shared. On October 12<sup>th</sup>, grade 8 students heard presentations from the three local technical schools (Grasso, Ellis, and Norwich Tech) as well as Killingly's Agricultural Education program. Students will be able to sign up for info sessions concerning the Marine Science (Groton) and Science and Technology (New London) magnet schools which will be visiting in the upcoming weeks. Applications will be distributed to students who are interested in learning more. Please be aware of deadlines and note that all completed applications must be returned to Mrs. Scholl in the main office.

Please check your email as I sent out a flyer with some important dates as well as some useful information about choosing the right high school for your student. There is no application deadline for Griswold High School. In fact, all students will complete GHS course selections in March even if they plan on attending a different high school. Please feel free to call any time with questions and keep an eye out for info on a high school transition night in February!

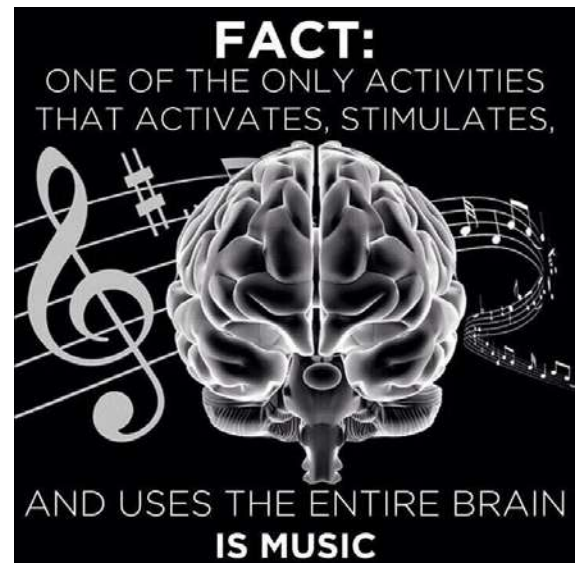
*Mrs. Scholl*  
GMS School Counselor



## **MUSIC NEWS**

The Music Department welcomes Ms. Richmond as our band director for grades 5 & 6. Ms. Richmond is also the GHS Director of Bands. In addition, we welcome Ms. Harrington as our new grades 7-8 band director, who is also busy teaching kindergarten music at GES.

Our 5th graders are very excited to begin an instrument! We are in the process of putting together an 80 member 5th grade beginner band! Elective music is new to fifth graders and we are very happy that 80% of students have elected to participate in band, orchestra and chorus (BOC). Mr. Kinsall is directing the grades 5-8 orchestra program while Mrs. Bocciarelli is teaching grades 5-6 general music and grades 5- 8 choirs.



We all are looking forward to an exciting school year, filled with the making of music and memories by all of our students! Please check out the '16-17 music calendar, which can be found weekly in the Wednesday folder, PlusPortals, and on the GPS website [www.griswold.k12.ct.us](http://www.griswold.k12.ct.us) .

# Exploratory News

The **Exploratory Team** is back in action with the addition of two new team members and many school-wide events. We welcome Mrs. Caitlin Valentine and Mrs. Christine Harrington into our GMS community. Mrs. Valentine is our new Physical Education teacher and Mrs. Harrington will be our 7-8 Band teacher.

In an effort to celebrate the International Day of Peace, September 21<sup>st</sup>, we kicked off the year with “Pinwheels for Peace”. Students in Advisory classes made colorful Pinwheels with peace words and statements and then displayed them on the front green. The Annual Drug Free Red Ribbon Rally is in the development stage, as Griswold Middle School’s first school-wide assembly of the year. Keep your eyes and ears out for information regarding “Spirit Week”, an Exploratory sponsored week that will be concluded by the rally! Also, we will host our second annual Veteran’s Day breakfast and Assembly so keep your eyes open for that information. Lastly, in November, we will have our annual “Walk Your Can a Mile” to donate cans to our local Food Pantry. We look forward to working with students in all four grades as the year progresses. Below is more information regarding exploratory classes.

<b>GMS EXPLORATORY STAFF</b>		
<u><b>WORLD LANGUAGE - SPANISH</b></u>  <b>Mrs. Smith</b>  <b>Mr. Moore</b>	<b>ART</b>  <b>Ms. Wraichette</b>	<b>TECHNOLOGY EDUCATION</b>  <b>Mr. Butremovic</b>
<u><b>MUSIC</b></u>  <b>Mrs. Bocciarelli – 5-6 Music, Chorus</b>  <b>Ms. Richmond – 5-6 Band</b>  <b>Mr. Kinsall – 5-8 Orchestra</b>  <b>Ms. Harrington – 7-8 Band</b>	<u><b>HEALTH</b></u>  <b>Mrs. Butremovic</b>	<u><b>PHYSICAL EDUCATION</b></u>  <b>Mrs. Valentine</b>  <b>Mr. Barclay</b>

**ART** - Students are getting creative in the Art Studio with choices in drawing, paper collage and paper sculpture, and now painting. They are developing craft with various materials, planning and envisioning their work and stretching and exploring with their unique ideas! Coming soon: the Sculpture/Construction and Fiber Centers!

**HEALTH** class is off to a great start! All grades are learning about The Five Aspects of Health Education and Wellness. October is **RED RIBBON DRUG FREE** awareness month and we are busy getting ready for the 19<sup>th</sup> annual Drug Free Rally on Oct 28<sup>th</sup>. Hope to see you at the Rally! Remind your student of our Healthy Habits!

**PHYSICAL EDUCATION** - 5<sup>TH</sup> grade PE classes just finished up with their “Invasion Games” unit which helped develop teamwork and communication skills as well as utilize offensive and defensive strategies. We are now transitioning into our Soccer unit.

6<sup>th</sup> grade PE is also playing “Invasion Games” while preparing for the Connecticut Physical Fitness Test later this month.

7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade PE classes are playing “Golden Snitch” outside. “Golden Snitch” is a game that works on teamwork, communication, and cooperation. Teams utilizes offensive and defensive strategies to achieve a common goal.

**SPANISH** - Mrs. Smith's classes are working on a Spanish-speaking country project in recognition of Hispanic Heritage Month which began on September 15 and will end on October 15th. Students will be conducting research on a specific country and will be exposed to a range of information including culture, notable landmarks, tourist attractions, and different forms of government.

**TECH-ED** - The 5<sup>th</sup> graders are learning the nuts and bolts of Microsoft Word. We are reinforcing their keyboarding skills from 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4th grade. Students are also learning word processing skills and using special effects. Soon students will put these skills to use and design a bedroom sign. The students have also started working with QuickCAD (technical drawing program). After learning the drawing commands, they will design a manufacturing Robot in QuickCAD. 5<sup>th</sup> grade students in Tech-Ed meet every other day for one Semester (approx. 45 days).

**TECH-ED** - The 6<sup>th</sup> graders are sharpening their keyboarding and word processing skill in Microsoft Word. They are designing cell phones in MS Word using shapes, patterns, text and special effects. Students have to figure out the cheapest cell phone plan and type a paragraph describing their phone and convincing consumers to purchase their design. 6<sup>th</sup> grade students in Tech-Ed meet every other day for one Semester (approx. 45 days).

**TECH-ED** - The 7<sup>th</sup> graders will be building balsa wood bridges. This is a STEM project and students will be learning science, technology, engineering and math principles along the way. So far, students have created bridge flyer in MS Word using borders, wordart, shapes, color, text and special effects. Now students are designing their bridge designs in QuickCAD. 7<sup>th</sup> grade students in Tech-Ed meet every other day for one Semester (approx. 45 days).

**TECH-ED** - The 8<sup>th</sup> graders are working in QuickCAD. Students are learning about the Drawing to Scale concept and drawing on the X and Y grid. Our scale is ½ inch = 1 foot. Using multiple drawing commands, students are designing their bedroom floor plans. Students had to put objects in their bedroom, space them accordingly and label them with the exact measurement with respect to the X and Y axis. 8<sup>th</sup> grade students in Tech-Ed meet every other day for one Trimester (approx. 30 days).





## ***5th Grade News***

### **Science:**

The fifth grade science students have continued to develop their skills using the scientific method. The first group of students have completed their first lab, the Electromagnet Lab, which includes: choosing a topic for investigation or purpose, researching key topics in their purpose, making a hypothesis, following a procedure for the experimental group and the control group, recoding data, analyzing their data, and writing a conclusion. Students' laboratory experiences will be scored using the State of Connecticut Curriculum-Embedded Laboratory Investigation Scoring Rubric. I am looking forward to working with the second group who began science on October 4<sup>th</sup>.

### **Social Studies:**

Students explored the cultural practices of indigenous peoples in New England and evaluated the impact of early settlements on indigenous people's way of life. Projects were developed around the following Native American Tribes: Mohegan, Wampanoag, Pequot, Nipmuc, Niantic, Narragansett, Pocumtuc, and Mohawk. Columbus Day was discussed and an essay was written.

### **Math:**

The school year has gotten off to a dynamite start! Mrs. Shea and Mr. Weldy continue to stress H.O.P.E. (Homework, Organization, Participation, and Effort). We are just finishing up our topic on Place Value and are moving on to Adding and Subtracting Decimals. It is very important that the students know their multiplication facts! Remember...Math COUNTS!

### **LA:**

In LA classes, we have been off to a very busy start! Students spent some time during the first couple days of school discussing the summer reading books they completed over vacation. After our summer reading discussions, we moved into an informative reading/writing unit. Both LA classes have been involved in research and utilizing online resources to find credible and reliable sources ([www.researchitct.org](http://www.researchitct.org)) that they will incorporate into their final paper for informative writing. In mid-late October, students will begin reading the first novel of the year, *Tuck Everlasting*. Please expect a spelling and vocabulary quiz every week. Spelling and vocabulary words will be sent home every Monday as well as posted on PlusPortals.





## Sixth Grade

In 6th grade math, we have been learning about positive and negative integers. We have learned that absolute value shows how far the integer is from zero on a number line. This can be useful when learning about the stock market. We are also plotting ordered pairs on the coordinate grid, which is a method to determine where an object or point is located and how far away it is from another object or point. So far, it has been a great start to 6th grade math class! --Written by 6th graders: Levi Astrella & Vienna Newman

In Language Arts students are using various texts to explore key concepts of reading literature and non-fiction. A strong focus is placed on citing text evidence to respond to text dependent questions. Students are then taking these skills and examining higher level ideas like theme and tone. We are getting excited to begin our second quarter unit on *Where the Red Fern Grows* by Wilson Rawls.

Students in Social Studies have been studying the five themes of geography and applying these concepts to the Central America/Caribbean region.

Grade 6 has the implementation of the Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS) by focusing its first unit on Engineering and Technology. In this unit, students developed a model soil tester in order to generate data for the modification of the proposed object, tool, and/or process so that an optimal design was achieved. The Sixth Graders analyzed the data from tests to determine similarities and differences among several design solutions. They identified the best characteristics of each and combined designs into a new solution to better meet the criteria for success. The NGSS call for a three-dimensional approach to K–12 science instruction. This represents a significant transition from previous state standards. A high-quality science education means that students will develop an in-depth understanding of content and develop key skills—communication, collaboration, inquiry, problem solving, and flexibility—that will serve them throughout their educational and professional lives. That’s why effective implementation demands a great deal of collaboration and patience among states, districts, schools, teachers, and students. Thoughtful and coordinated approaches to implementation will enable educators to inspire future generations of scientifically literate students. *That is the vision of the NGSS.*

([www.nextgenscience.org](http://www.nextgenscience.org))



### Language Arts News by Ms. Davis

In these beginning weeks of school, we have been working on integrating reading, writing, and listening skills to gain insight into the world around us. We are delving into non-fiction texts as a way to enrichen our understanding of fiction, focusing on central ideas and themes. Another focus has been looking at character traits of fictional characters and historical leaders by analyzing what they say, do, and how they treat others. As the weeks progress, we will shift the focus to finding correlations by determining cause and effect as well as conflict and resolution.



## A great start to the year for Grade 7

Students are now fully underway in their math class for the 2015-2016 school year! They spent September working with integers, including a performance task in which they balanced checkbooks. With the number systems unit wrapping up, students will soon be investigating algebraic expressions and equations.

This year 7th grade Social Studies will be World regions and Culture. Our text is My World Geography by Pearson. Students will have access to the online text and activities and there is a set of textbooks for the class to use and available during WEB. Students will began the year looking at Core Concepts including geography and elements of culture. This information or tools, will prepare and assist students for examining the selected regions of the world.

Our 7th grade LA classes are off to an exciting start! We have covered important skills such as summarizing, identifying the main idea, finding and explaining theme, as well as really reaching a deeper understanding of important narrative elements. Students have done a wonderful job applying these skills across both fiction and non-fiction texts. Students are currently wrapping up a unit on the short story *Suzy and Leah*, a story about two young girls growing up in the 1940's. Students soon learn how an author's perspective can alter the reader's experience. We are looking forward to beginning our first full novel, *A Long Walk to Water*. This story covers important topics such as journeys and survival, humanity, and understanding. With such a promising start to the year, we look forward to the next few months!

Students in Science started the year digging deeper into the steps of the scientific method. They then designed and executed their own lab using Gobstoppers and various liquids. After that, students ventured into the field of geology, studying plate tectonics and how what happens inside the earth affects the surface. They were able to correlate land formations with the locations of faults in the Earth's crust. The second rotation is just getting into science now and have these awesome learning opportunities ahead of them!

**Congratulations to the following GMS students who were named Students of the Month and Kids of Character during the month of September!**

### Students of the Month

Grade 8	Alyse Gilmore	Matthew Dingman
Grade 7	Ryan Fasula	Nathan Moore
Grade 6	Rileigh Williams	Laila Bakhshalizadeh
Grade 5	Delia Bousquet	Madison Brisson
Exploratory	Kaylee Gagnon	Kameron Prosser

### Kids of Character

Grade 8	Laura Garcia	Jordan Boling
Grade 7	Mason Bartlett	Noelle Christie
Grade 6	Conner Parks	Sage Messina
Grade 5	Justin Fargo	Faith Russell
Exploratory	Chance Walworth	Sophia Raposa



## 8<sup>th</sup> Grade

The students and teachers on the eighth grade team have been very busy so far this fall. Students have successfully completed benchmark testing in math and reading, and have also finished their first benchmark essay of the year. In addition, students spent an entire day in Student Success Planning workshops where they reflected on their academic and career goals, discussed their roles as citizens in our school and community, reflected on our school climate, and began bonding with fellow eighth graders in team building activities. As a team we've focused on character building through personal responsibility, perseverance and trustworthiness. We've been reinforcing the need to have a growth mindset in our approach to all our experiences, both academic and social.

We've been busy in classes as well. In Science, students have been working on developing scientific skills such as observation, inference, and utilizing evidence while being tasked with writing lab reports and summarizing current events science articles. Social Studies students are learning about the Constitution and the Bill of Rights and how each applies to their own lives. In Math classes, students are currently working on a Math lab where they are researching strange but true facts that will be tied into their scientific and standard notation unit. In Language Arts, we are in the middle of our short story unit, reviewing the elements of fiction, literary devices and beginning to write expository essays.

It may seem early, but planning for High School has already begun. In the upcoming weeks, students will begin to look at all the available options for their next step in education. Students will take a trip next door to tour and learn about all that Griswold High School has to offer. In addition, representatives from the area technical schools as well as Killingly Vo-Ag will be visiting and presenting to all eighth graders so that students can begin making choices about where to continue on after their time at GMS is complete.

We are also very excited that our students will be taking part in the Wacky Walk fundraiser on Thursday October 6<sup>th</sup>. All money raised through sponsorships and pledges will go directly towards helping to offset the costs of our 8<sup>th</sup> grade events (i.e. the end of year promotion dance, 8<sup>th</sup> grade trip, etc.). This should be a terrific event that will hopefully kick start the class into having a terrific fun-filled year. The top three fundraisers for the 8<sup>th</sup> grade class will have their Holiday Hill trip expenses paid in full. We are off to a great start and are looking forward to an exciting year of discovery and growth.

## GMS Reading News!



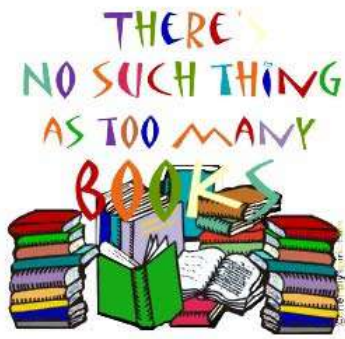
**Summer Reading was another big success for all grade levels.**

- \* 79 fifth graders read over the summer!
- \* 43 sixth graders read!
- \* 62 seventh graders read!
- \* 85 eighth graders read!
- \* 188 students read Social Studies books!

Our top Readers for each grade level are: **Grade 5:** Sydney Mullen (21 books), **Grade 6:** Kuranda Ruggiero (26 books), **Grade 7:** Sydney Hart, **Grade 8:** Angelie Caron (18 books)

Congratulations to all of our Summer Readers! Pay attention to the Friday morning announcements when we will announce our raffle winners.





## LIBRARY NEWS

The GMS library has been buzzing with activity since the first day of school! Students are excited about the new books we purchased over the summer and have been coming to the library with their language arts classes to find independent reading books. Ms. McCandless is also working with teachers to teach essential research skills for class projects, including teaching students how to navigate the databases at [researchitct.org](http://researchitct.org). We are looking forward to the fall Book Fair the week of November 14, which is always a big fundraiser for the library. Any parents interested in volunteering in the library or helping with fundraising should contact Ms. McCandless.

## HEALTH ROOM NEWS

**A reminder to sixth grade parents: A physical is required to enter the 7<sup>th</sup> grade.** Along with the required physical, students will need to show verification of having chicken pox or two vaccinations of Varicella, a second MMR, and have started the Hep B series. along with Tdap and Meningococcal Vaccines.

Physicals and immunization must be **completed by August 25, 2017** just prior to your child entering the seventh grade. Please make every effort to comply with these state requirements PRIOR to the school year starting. The school nurse needs to have the blue form and required immunizations for each 7<sup>th</sup> grader. If families are not in compliance, those students may be delayed in beginning their 7<sup>th</sup> grade year.



Getting your child to school on-time, every day, unless they are sick, is something that you can do to ensure your child has a chance to succeed in school. While others can help, you are the bottom line.

([www.attendanceworks.org](http://www.attendanceworks.org))

## OCTOBER

MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY
3	4	5	6 8 <sup>th</sup> grade Wacky Walk	7 PD Day
10 No School	11 BOE Meeting, GMS Library	12	13 PTO Meeting, 3:45	14 <b>WIPD</b> Grade 5 & 6 Fun Night, sponsored by PTO, 5 – 7 pm
17	18	19 8 <sup>th</sup> grade Parent Meeting, 6-7 pm, Rm 2139	20	21
24 GMS Spirit Week begins  BOE Meeting, GMS Library, 6	25	26	27	28  <b>RED RIBBON RALLY</b>
31 Halloween 				

## NOVEMBER

MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY
	1	2  Picture Retakes	3	4 Gr. 7 & 8 Dance, sponsored by the PTO, 6-8 pm
7	8 PD DAY No Students Election Day 	9 QV Festival Concert, 7 pm	10 Veteran's Day Assembly	11 No School  Veteran's Day
14 Book Fair  BOE Meeting, GMS Library, 6	15	16 Early Dismissal  Parent/Teacher Conferences	17 Early Dismissal Book Fair Evening Hrs. Parent/Teacher Conferences	18  Walk Your Can A Mile
21	22	23 Early Dismissal	24 No School Happy Thanksgiving	25 No School
28 BOE Meeting, GMS Library, 6	29	30		



### **October**

**Oct. 7-** PD Day, No Students  
**Oct. 14 – WEAR IT PINK DAY**  
**Oct. 14-** Gr. 5 & 6 Fun Night, sponsored by the GMS PTO  
**Saturday, Oct. 22-** 4<sup>th</sup> Annual Spooktopia at Veteran's Park.  
**Oct. 24-28-** Spirit Week  
**Oct. 28-** Red Ribbon Rally

### **November**

**Nov. 2-** Picture Retakes  
**Nov. 4-** Gr. 7 & 8 Dance, sponsored by the GMS PTO  
**Nov. 8-** PD Day, No Students  
**Nov. 9-** QV Festival (Gr. 8th by nomination), 7 pm, Putnam MS  
**Nov. 10-** Veteran's Day Assembly  
**Nov. 11-** No School  
**Nov. 14-17-** GMS Book Fair  
**Nov. 16 & 17-** Parent/Teacher Conferences  
**Nov. 17-** Book Fair Evening hours, 2:30 – 7 pm.  
**Nov. 23-** ½ Day  
**Nov. 24 & 25-** No School, Thanksgiving Break

For more details be sure to check out the GMS Calendar on the GPS website at [www.griswold.k12.ct.us](http://www.griswold.k12.ct.us)

