



March 20, 2017

John Robinson  
Principal & Executive Director  
robinsonj@grcdc.org

Sarah Cooper  
Pedagogista  
coopesar@grcdc.org

Rachel Harth  
Administrative Assistant  
harthrac@grcdc.org

# Link Letter

## Principally Speaking

### Great Job, Odyssey of the Mind

Congratulations to our families and staff involved in Odyssey of the Mind state finals this past weekend. We're proud of you and your efforts. We are looking forward to seeing the video you are creating!



### Family Team Fundraiser

Thanks to everyone who participated in the Family Team's fundraiser this past Sunday at Harmony Hall. We appreciate your support.

### Congratulations, Mrs. Kaser!

Our very own Mrs. Kaser, Discovery C, has a very exciting opportunity coming her way which she will move toward full-time starting this summer. She and her husband will be becoming part owners in a Kilwin's shop. Mrs. Kaser will be finishing the school year at GRCDC, but, after a difficult decision, she will not be with us teaching next school year. Her early notice helps us begin the search now for a qualified replacement. We are grateful for all she has done for the school, and wish her the very best in this next chapter!

### 2017-2018 Teacher Search

With Mrs. Kaser's news, we are looking for two teachers for next year. We will be looking for a diverse pool of candidates, and the very best candidates for our school. An updated posting will be out soon, and we will be taking advantage of this spring hiring season to find new teachers. Please do help us spread the word about our search, and let me know if you have any questions.

### Helping Children

I sometimes get questions about what families can do at home to help their student. Last week, I spoke about the resource MobyMax.com. This week I'd like to highlight helping children with a growth mindset. You support this by carefully choosing the words that are used when you praise your child. Every word parents say and action they perform sends a message to their children. These words and actions tell children how to think about themselves. Parents should always praise their child's effort instead of praising accomplishments.

For example, (instead of, "You are so smart,") you can say, "You work hard in school and it shows!" Another example, (instead of, "You always get good grades,") you can say, "When you put forth effort, it really shows in your grades!" By speaking in this way to children, and using tools like MobyMax, you support them all year long and during special times like the state testing we have next month.

(Source: **Mindsets in the Classroom**)

As always, Be Kind, Keep Discovering, and have a great week!

*Coach ☺*

John Robinson, Principal/Executive Director/Superintendent  
robinsonj@grcdc.org

## Family Team Corner

Thank you for your support at Harmony Hall yesterday for the GRCDC @ Harmony Hall fundraiser! It was wonderful to see so many familiar faces!

Our T-shirt sale is open all month long! If you need to place an order but don't have an order form, that's ok - just check in the Office or email us at grcdcfamilyteam@gmail. We take checks or you can pay with a Visa/Mastercard.

Please save the date for the GRCDC Family Dance, Saturday April 29th, 4-7 pm! It will be at school in the Gym. Details will be out soon!

Mark your calendars for the First Friday Food for our GRCDC Teachers & Staff for Friday, April 14th (later because of Spring Break). April's Theme is Salad Extravaganza!

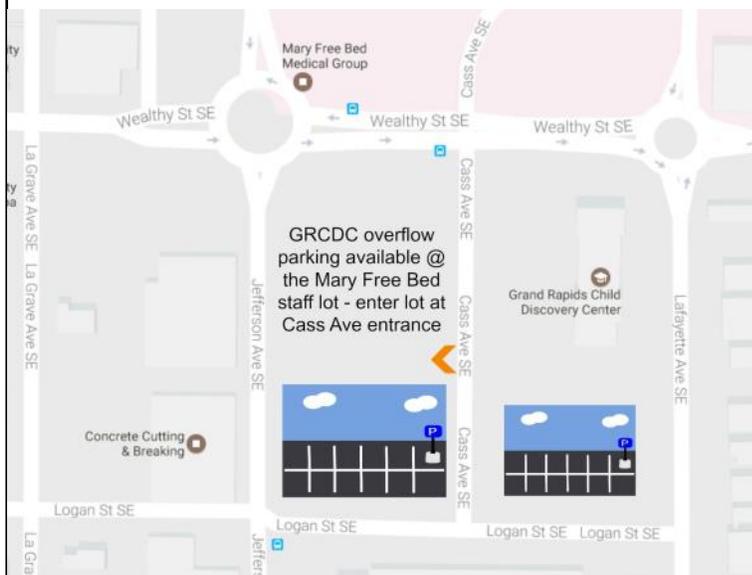
<http://signup.com/go/cwhj7w>

(Family Team Meeting Minutes will be available next week!)

## Portfolio Day is this Friday, March 24!

Do you know the time schedule for your child's portfolio session? If not, contact your teacher or the office. Remember, parents and students come to school together for 1 hour on portfolio day. That is the only hour of school your child will attend that day.

Overflow parking will be available at the Mary Free Bed staff lot. The electric arm gate will be raised so you may enter.



## Calendar

The calendar also available at [grcdc.org](http://grcdc.org)

2/27—3/30	Family Team T-Shirt Sale— Order form available here: <a href="http://bit.ly/2nm4m5l">http://bit.ly/2nm4m5l</a>
3/20	Girls on the Run M/F Team until 5:00 PM
3/21	Girls on the Run T/Th Team until 5:00 PM
3/22	Early Release Day, Dismissal at 1:10 PM
3/23	Girls on the Run T/Th Team until 5:00 PM Minecraft Club, 5:30—7:00 PM
3/24	Portfolio Day Parents attend with students for a 1 hour session
3/31— 4/7	Spring Break—NO SCHOOL
4/10—5/26	M-Step Testing Window for all grades—see article on page 2
4/14	First Friday Food: <a href="http://signup.com/go/cwhj7w">http://signup.com/go/cwhj7w</a>
4/29	Family Dance @ GRCDC, 4:00—7:00 PM

Please arrange for your child to arrive at school between 7:45—8:00 am. Please sign your child in at the office if arrival is after 8:05 am.

Dismissal is 3:15 pm M, T, Th, F and 1:10 pm on Wednesdays

## The Philosophy

Standardized test scores raise great debate among educators, families and policymakers, but remains a requirement of all public schools in Michigan. It is one way we can exemplify how our Reggio inspired approach can positively influence student achievement.

The **Michigan Student Test of Educational Progress or M-STEP** measures what children learn each year and alert schools to areas of great strength and growth. Test scores are currently broken down by groups of students among the same gender, race, special populations and economic status to diagnosis inequity within educational settings. As required by law, the MSTEP scores are tied to staff evaluations and are often required for some middle school admissions. They do measure what children know and results can help districts make strategic curriculum and instructional decisions. However, we also know that the test is a snapshot, one moment in time. The GRCDC imbeds other measures to see the whole child.

## How does this impact my child?

All K-5 children will be taking an online test between April 10-May 26, intentionally scheduled to spread out testing and prioritize morning sessions.

- ◇ Students in grades 3-5 will take **the M-STEP**, which measures proficiency within the Common Core curriculum, reports scores for individuals, groups and schools. The M-STEP writing and reading assessments are combined into one English language arts (ELA) score. Other MSTEP content areas included in the testing are math, science and social studies. Parents will receive a summary of their children's MSTEP proficiency in the summer or early fall.
- ◇ Our K-2 students will be taking the newer, **Early Literacy and Mathematics Benchmark Assessments**. It is intended to measure progress and reports individual scores to the school. It had a fall testing that provided a baseline for first and second graders. Leaders at the state see this type of progress testing having a more prominent role in school accountability in the future.

## How can I help my child?

At home you can join our preparations in two ways. First, we encourage you to offer emotional support as children take a test that may seem overwhelming, unfamiliar and rigorous. Staff brainstormed some ways you can help at home:

- ◇ Have pep talks about doing your best
- ◇ Talk about strategies for dealing with frustration
- ◇ Remind them it is okay to take breaks
- ◇ Try yoga at home
- ◇ Give children a note of support in their lunch or backpack
- ◇ Focus on taking your time to do your best vs. rushing to finish
- ◇ Discuss how the test went and allow for a little extra time to manage stress

**\*Testing Schedule 2017\***

- April 10-14:  
5th Grade English Language Arts
- April 17-21:  
4th Grade English Language Arts and Science  
5th Grade Social Studies
- April 24-28:  
4th Grade Math  
5th Grade Math
- May 1-5:  
1st and 3rd Grade English Language Arts  
4th Grade Math
- May 8-12:  
2nd Grade English Language Arts  
2nd and 3rd Grade Math
- May 15-19:  
Kindergarten Math and English Language Arts  
1st Grade Math
- May 22-26  
Make Up Testing Sessions

(all dates added to the school's Google Calendar)

**HOW MANY HOURS WILL MY CHILD SPEND TESTING THIS SPRING?**

- 5TH GRADE TESTS IN 3 CONTENT AREAS**  
English Language Arts, Social Studies & Math  
Approximate total hours spent testing over a 3 week period: 8 hours
- 4TH GRADE TESTS IN 3 CONTENT AREAS**  
English Language Arts, Science & Math  
Approximate total hours spent testing over a 3 week period: 6 hours
- 3RD GRADE TESTS IN 2 CONTENT AREAS**  
English Language Arts & Math  
Approximate total hours spent testing over a 2 week period: 4 hours
- K-2ND GRADES TEST IN 2 CONTENT AREAS**  
English Language Arts & Math  
Approximate total hours spent testing over a 2 week period (1 week for Kindergarten): 3 hours

Second, you can add to our efforts in familiarizing children with online testing by:

- ◇ Taking the [practice tests at home with your child](#)
- ◇ Practice using a desktop computer and mouse (left and right clicking)
- ◇ 3rd-5th graders need to capitalize letters, insert punctuation and type a paragraph response to reading, read and interpret a split screen, scroll on the screen in different ways, cut and paste, drag and drop and use tools like calculators, highlighters and digital sticky notes.

This can be very overwhelming for children, if they are not exposed to the technology. Though classrooms are working through sample test items, we encourage you to try them at home, if able. MSTEP and the Early Literacy and Mathematics Benchmark Assessment sample questions can be found at <https://wbte.drcedirect.com/MI/portals/mi/> and requires a Chrome browser.

As always, please help your child do his or her best by getting plenty of sleep, eating a healthy breakfast at home or school, following our attendance policy – make sure they are at school each day, all day and rescheduling appointments, if possible. Please let me know if you have questions!

Thank you for your support! Sarah Cooper, Pedagogista [coopesar@grcdc.org](mailto:coopesar@grcdc.org)

(The School Meals Menu can be found online this week: <http://bit.ly/2n6Y9fC>)

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