



The Link Letter

School newsletter for the GRCDC community

5.1.2020

Keep Up With Us



[Link to the school's Google Calendar](#)

Upcoming Events

5/2 - Classroom Zoom Meeting:

- Ms. Parker Group 1, 10:00 AM
- Ms. Parker Group 2, 10:45 AM

5/4 - New content posted for Week 2 of Distance Learning, 7:00 AM

5/4 - Check for an email from your teacher with the Zoom meeting links for this week's online meetings.

5/4 - Classroom Zoom Meetings:

- Ms. Swartz, 11:00 AM
- Ms. Amash, 10:00 AM
- Mrs. Jana, 12:00 PM

5/5 - Para Office Hours today - see below for times

5/5- Classroom Zoom Meetings:

- Ms. Harmony, 9:00 AM
- Mrs. Ruth, 1:00 PM

Important Links

- [School Calendar](#)
- [Staff Email Contact List](#)
- [General Information](#)
- [Family & Student Guidebook](#)

5/6 - Classroom Zoom Meetings:

- Mrs. Memmott, 9:00 AM
- Mr. K, 9:00 AM

5/7 - Community Meeting on Demand
feat. Mr. K's class will be posted today

5/7 - Classroom Zoom Meetings:

- Ms. Hegarty, 2:00 PM
- Mrs. Trout, 1:00 PM
- Ms. Elly, 11:30 AM
- Ms. Lindsay, 12:00 PM

5/8 - Teacher Office Hours today - see
below for times

5/11 - Board Meeting - Virtual, 6:00 PM

- **Click here for the official posting** and
info on how to join the meeting.

Dear Families,

Congratulations! You made it through week 1 of Distance Learning! The shift from in person school, to out of school with optional enrichment, to more formal distance learning has been an enlightening process for all of us. We will continue to learn and grow throughout the weeks to come. It has been SO AMAZING to see many inspirational posts and pictures about what our students are doing! We will share those in the Link and on our website.

Our guiding principles during this time are to promote a love of learning, center on humanity, and serve families. What each child and each family needs is slightly different. We will continually work to hit the sweet spot of challenge and support for each child. We will regularly collect feedback and use that feedback to adjust our approach as needed. We also know that we need to be prepared for school to look different in August- and we don't know what that difference will be quite yet. It is likely that it will not be back to "business as usual" for some time and we will use the feedback that we gather in these next 6 weeks to also plan for the future.

One thing is for sure: our teachers and staff are working so hard and providing quality content we can be proud of! I have the benefit of having 2 school aged children at GR CDC and a school aged child in another district to be able to compare. I am so impressed by the work of our teachers and appreciative of the thoughtful approach they are taking. Even with that, this week has been a BIG adjustment for my children. If that is true for you, too,

remember to prioritize you and child's mental health and physical wellness first and foremost and grant yourself and your family grace in this time of adjustment.

A few things to keep in mind as we shift into formal distance learning:

- **Make a Schedule:** As much as possible, keep a predictable schedule for when you child will work on the different components of their Distance Learning Plan. Keep wake up, lunch, and bedtimes that are more similar to the school year during the week
- **Choose What is Important:** Give yourself and your child permission to pick and choose what is most important in their Learning Plan and focus there first: where were they struggling during the school year? Where were they receiving tier 2 or tier 3 interventions? You want to make sure you focus there and focus on that content during a time that is a "good time" for your child.
- **Access support:** ALL paras and ALL teachers have drop in office hours that parents and students can attend. Further, we can provide personalized support of a para through a simple request to a teacher and your child's teacher is just an email away if you need anything- even to talk through how this should look for your child.

We are here for you and we are ALL learning through this time together. We miss seeing you in person- THANK YOU for working so hard to connect virtually.

Respectfully yours,

Lisa Heyne

Connect With Us!

Now that we are not able to see each other in person, we want to make sure you have ways of communicating with us, ways to connect with the GRDC community, give feedback about distance learning and get or give help to/from our community. Here are a few surveys that will help us be able to connect with you:

- **Mutual Aid Request/Offer Survey** - Take this survey if you are seeking assistance or connection or if you want to offer assistance or connection.
- **Distance Learning feedback** - We want to know how the first week of distance learning went for your family. Too much content, not enough content, technical issues? Let us know.
- If you have feedback or concerns that are not covered by the surveys above, you can fill out the **Family Communication Survey**.

Connect With Your Teacher & Para

Don't forget that you can join your child's teacher and paraprofessional via Zoom each week. Paras will be hosting office hours every Tuesday. The first 15 minutes of the para office hours are dedicated to questions about math content and the second 15 minutes is dedicated to questions about literacy content. Teachers will be hosting office hours every Friday. Each week, a link to the Office Hours Zoom Meeting will be emailed to you on Monday. The days and times of the office hours for each grade level are listed below:

Para Office Hours:

Every Tuesday @
Kindergarten: 9:00 AM
1st Grade: 9:30 AM
2nd Grade: 10:00 AM
3rd Grade: 10:30 AM
4th Grade: 11:00 AM
5th Grade: 11:30 AM

Teacher Office Hours:

Every Friday @
Kindergarten: 12:30 PM
1st Grade: 12:00 PM
2nd Grade: 11:30 AM
3rd Grade: 11:00 AM
4th Grade: 10:30 AM
5th Grade: 10:00 AM

Community Meeting

Community Meeting will be recorded and available on demand. We will release a new video every other Thursday. The next Community Meeting will feature Mr. K's class and will be [posted here on Thursday, May 7th](#). If you want to check out the meeting from last week, April 23rd, [here is the link for you to participate!](#)

Central Office Updates

- **5th Grade Celebration:** We are planning to have a virtual celebration for the 5th grade students. We will not let this school year pass without honoring their accomplishment and acknowledging this significant passage from elementary school to middle school. More details to come.
- **Access to items @ GRCDC:** We know many of your students have things at the building that you want to pick up, personal items, 5th grade portfolios, studio work, etc. We are planning to set aside time for this, hopefully in June. This can only happen once the Stay at Home order is lifted as teachers will need time to organize these items before families come to the building. Stay tuned for details.
- **Chromebook Return:** If you are borrowing a Chromebook from the school for distance learning it will need to be turned back in after school ends on June 5th. We will most likely combine the Chromebook return with the days we have the building open for families to pick up items as mentioned in the bullet above. So again, stay tuned for further details.
- **2020-2021 Calendar:** The tentative first day will be **Monday, August 17th** with Orientation taking place on **August 13th from 2:00 - 6:00 PM**.

Orientation is required for all students, returning and new. As the situation around COVID-19 is still uncertain, these dates are subject to change.

- **Summer Curriculum Option:** GRPS is offering a 9 week program in reading and math for grades K-8. The program helps students retain skills learned during the past school year and helps to prevent summer learning loss. The cost is \$38 for one subject or \$68 for both math and reading, per child. If you would like to purchase this program, please register at <http://grasp.grps.org/>. This program would begin on June 8th.

Social Emotional Learning

In the coming week, we will seek to go within ourselves to discover our inner critic. We will be talking about positive and negative self-talk. You might have heard that it takes approximately five positive interactions to make up for a single negative interaction in a relationship. You may be surprised and intrigued to find out that the same is true for our inner selves. One moment of negative self-talk needs about five instances of positive self-talk to neutralize the damage that we do to our inner selves.

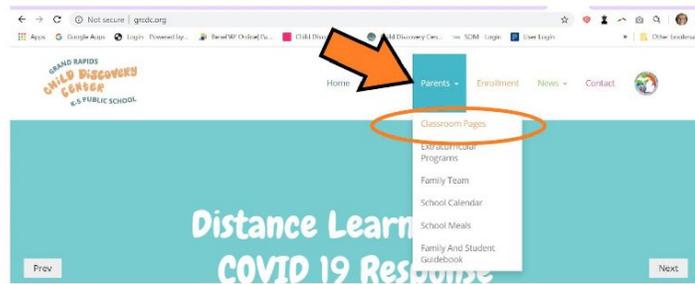
In past lessons, we've learned the fascinating truth that our brains are literally "wired." And thankfully, they can be re-wired, with much effort and intention. These truths play a central role in our dive into the world of self-talk.

Distance Learning Information

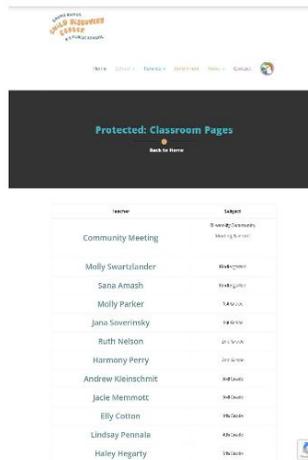
- Every Monday at 7am, new mini lesson videos and assignments from your child's teacher will be available on our website www.grcdc.org.
- If your child didn't finish content from the prior week, that is ok! You can still access it from a link in the teacher's message at the top of the page, if needed.
- To access the content, please follow these steps:

How to access the videos and assignments from your child's teacher (will be live on 4/27/2020)

1. Navigate to grcdc.org
2. Click on "Parents" then "Classroom Pages"



3. Scroll to find your teacher's name and click. You will also access Community Meeting content from this page as well.



We are dedicated to your child's success! We know that there will be some bumps in the road as we move to this new digital format. If you are having technical issues or are struggling with the content, please reach out! Start with your child's teacher. If there is a technical problem that they can't solve, they will escalate your problem to someone who can help.

YouTube Access: In order to access the instructional videos, your child will need to use the regular YouTube app, not YouTube Kids. We are unable to get permission to post our instructional videos on YouTube kids. Please be aware that families may want to ensure that students do not search or explore other content on YouTube, as much of the content on the open channel app may be inappropriate for children. Children should only use the app to access their learning videos. If you have questions, please let us know.

If you click on a link and get a page that says "Refused to connect", there is a workaround for this issue. *We believe we have fixed this issue, but will leave these instructions just in case*

Please follow these steps:

1. Place the cursor over the link.
2. Right click on the mouse or double tap on a touchpad (depending on the kind of tech that you have)
3. Select the option to open the link in a new window or tab.
4. Go to the new window or tab to watch the video.

Community Resources



Pandemic EBT Program

Families with children who received free or reduced-cost lunches at school qualify for new program

The Pandemic Electronic Benefit Transfer Program (P-EBT) provides temporary funding to address emergency food needs for families affected by the pandemic.

P-EBT food assistance benefits will go to Michigan families with students ages 5-18 that are eligible for free or reduced-price school meals. This includes families currently receiving Food Assistance Program benefits, as well as those not currently enrolled in the program. No application is necessary for eligible families to receive P-EBT benefits.



Families currently receiving Food Assistance Program (FAP) benefits will receive additional benefits on their Bridge Card:

Eligible families currently receiving food assistance benefits will be issued additional benefits directly on their Bridge Card. These additional food assistance benefits can be used the same way as families would typically use their Bridge Card to purchase food items. P-EBT benefits can also be used to participate in the Double Up Food Bucks program.

- **March and April combined benefits: \$193.80 per eligible student** will be loaded on the family's Bridge Card **by the end of April.**
- **May and June combined benefits: \$182.40 per eligible student** will be loaded on the family's Bridge Card on a later date. Issuance schedule for these benefits still to be announced.

Families not currently receiving Food Assistance Program (FAP) benefits will receive an EBT card in the mail:



Eligible families not currently receiving food assistance benefits will receive in the mail a pre-loaded Electronic Benefits Transaction (EBT) card issued under the name of the oldest student in the household. Benefits for all eligible school-aged children in the home will be loaded onto this one EBT card. Prior to receiving the card, families will get a letter from MDHHS describing how to use their EBT card, how to set up their PIN, and other information about food assistance benefits. This EBT card can be used to purchase food items only, in-person, at any SNAP retailer. The P-EBT card may look different from the Bridge Card, but the card and benefits can be used the same way as the Bridge Card.

- **March and April combined benefits:** Families will receive an EBT card in the mail **by the end of the first week in May.** The card will come pre-loaded with **\$193.80 per eligible student.**
- **May and June combined benefits: \$182.40 per eligible student** will be loaded on the family's EBT card on a later date. Issuance schedule for these benefits still to be announced.



Material produced by the Food Bank Council of Michigan, with information provided by the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services.

This institution is an equal opportunity provider.

Stronger Than COVID: Ideas for Families

This week we are bringing some great ideas found on the Kids for Peace website. During this challenging time, many students are looking for ways that they can help, brought to you by **Kids for Peace**.

- Sing a happy song! Go curbside caroling with your family; create a music video and share far and wide; sing from your window like the **Italians**, or simply sing along with the radio.
- List all the things that make you happy.
- Send **Peaceful Pen Pal letters** to other kids in the USA. Sign up **here**. We already have youth in all 50 states participating!
- Create an entry for the "I Am Powerful" Kids for Peace Book "Contest." This will be our 5th book. **Flier & Book Entry Form**.
- Write and mail a card through our **Loving Letters for Grandfriends** project. Send cheer to a senior citizen who can no longer receive visitors due to the COVID-19 situation. **Learn More & Sign Up**
- Hold gratitude circles at dinnertime.
- Call or FaceTime friends, Grandparents, or Grandfriends just to say hello.
- Make up a poem with a positive message.
- Write positive messages on Post-It Notes and place on mirrors in your house.
- Make Peace Rocks. Paint rocks with kind words and place them around town to delight your neighbors.

Need Some Narwhal Gear?

Get your Narwhal Gear anytime by visiting:
<https://www.byfred.co/collections/grcdc/>

During the school year, the gear will be delivered to school at no extra charge.
A \$5 shipping fee will be charged for summer orders

Children's Crisis Response

This is a service that provides free crisis intervention service for those through age 20 who live in Kent County. The counselors can help in person or over the phone who can help to resolve behavioral or emotional crises wherever help is needed including;

- Suicide and self harm concerns
- Angry or out of control behavior
- Family conflict

Please call 616.333.1000 to get help now.

Grand Rapids Child Discovery Center
616.450.0330
grcdc.org