

# GATOR GAZETTE



Giffen Memorial Elementary School Newsletter

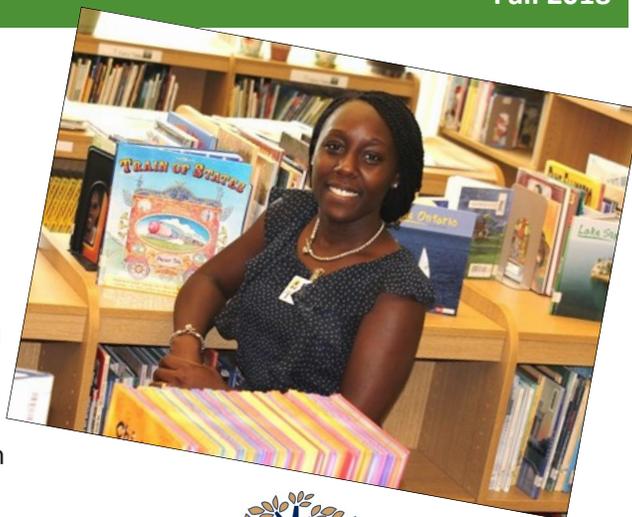
Fall 2018

## A note from Principal Brown ...

Have we already come to the end of the first quarter? Time flies when you are having fun. The school year got off to a fantastic start with our First Day Clap-In and the momentum has been going strong ever since. The month of November has teachers diving into our curriculum to provide rich instruction for your children. Our academic focus this year is to use student data to make instructional and social-

emotional decisions for your children as individuals. As we round out the end of the first quarter, you will notice that there is a new standards-based report card that will update you about your child's proficiency towards grade level standards.

We hope that you will join us on Nov. 21 for Parent-Teacher Conference Day to discuss your child's progress with his or her classroom teacher.



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## SAVE THE DATES!

### NOVEMBER

- 21 Parent-Teacher Conference Day, no school
- 22 Thanksgiving, no school
- 23 Thanksgiving break, no school
- 30 College Friday

### DECEMBER

- 7 First Friday music and art exhibit, Cathedral of All Saints, 6 p.m.
- 11 Winter Concert, 5:30 p.m.
- 12 PTA meeting, 8 a.m.
- 14 Picture Re-Take Day
- 19 Spelling Bee, 2:15 p.m.
- 21 College Friday
- 24-31 Holiday Recess, no school

### JANUARY

- 1 New Year's Day, no school
- 2 Back to school!

## READING BETWEEN THE LINES

### How our school is helping your child be a reader

Giffen reading teachers have been working hard to complete beginning-of-the-year assessments to help inform instruction of classroom teachers. These assessments are critical to our work to ensure that we are teaching students exactly what they need to know and building their reading skills for the next level.

Each day your child works on strategies to decode (read) words well and fluently; reads sight words (commonly used words found in text); reads, listens to and responds to grade-appropriate text; and expands his or her vocabulary

### What you can do to help your child be a better reader

- Read to and/or with your child 20 minutes a day at home
- Share stories, poems, recipes and/or articles
- Notice and read street signs aloud
- Visit your local branch of the Albany Public Library. The library closest to Giffen is the Howe Branch, 105 Schuyler St.

### PBIS trait for December: Compassion

Each month, PBIS assemblies introduce a character trait that the school will work on during the month. December's trait is compassion: sorrow for another person's suffering or troubles accompanied by an urge to help. At these assemblies, we recognize a student of the month, staff member of the month and parent of the month. We also will recognize positive student behavior through quarterly celebrations; our first was a dance party held on Nov. 16.

## New school pledge

We are Giffen.

We are safe.

We are respectful.

We are responsible.

We are committed to making sure everyone feels safe and welcome at all times.

We are confident and ready to overcome any obstacle.

We are powerful beyond measure and strive each day to work to our greatest potential.

We believe it is our responsibility to respect and positively represent our school community.

We believe we will be better today than yesterday and better tomorrow than we are today.

We believe that our best is yet to come because we are Giffen.

## Phys ed FITcorner

Here's a short workout students and parents can do together! If you need help with an exercise, ask your student. Have fun!

Stretch

10 jumping jacks

10 squats

10 mountain climbers

8 pushups

Stretch and rest

Repeat!

## WHO'S WHO AT GIFFEN

**Mrs. Brown**, principal • **Mr. Fox** and **Mr. Rogers**, assistant principals • **Mr. Johnson**, home school coordinator  
**Mr. Calderon** and **Ms. Torres**, social workers • **Mrs. Lein** and **Ms. Kirchgraber**, nurses

## MATH MATTERS

"Number Talks" are taking place all around Giffen this year.

Number Talks — short discussions teachers and students have about numbers — build confidence in math and allow all students to participate in learning. Numbers may be in the form of an equation or math model or shown with pictures. Every child has an opportunity to share his or her thinking about math. A Number Talk is wonderful to see in action. Be sure to ask your child about it!

Math is all around us. Below are some activities and questions for your child. He or she will be thinking about math without knowing it!

- Ask your kindergartener or first-grader to count something at home. This may be cans in the cabinet, napkins to be put on the table, plates to be put on the table, how many steps from one place to the next, etc.
- Ask any student from kindergarten-

grade 6 to guess how many people are in a stadium while watching a game on TV, how much groceries will cost, how long the turkey will need to cook if it is 10 pounds and has to cook 25 minutes a pound, how long it will take to walk or drive somewhere given the miles, distance, etc.

- Play cards. If you would like some ideas on how to use cards to play math games with your children, contact math coach Maureen Tricozzi at [mtricozzi@albany.k12.ny.us](mailto:mtricozzi@albany.k12.ny.us) or ask your child's teacher!



*Counting vegetables is a great way to learn!*

## Principal's message *(continued from front)*

Please be on the lookout for a number of enrichment opportunities, such as tutoring, Saturday Morning Basketball with Books, Chess Club and our GMES Scholars Program, just to name a few. We have also found funding for some family field trips, the first of which is *The Grinch* at Proctors in December. Please be sure to check student backpacks as we send more information. I look forward to seeing you all this month at one of our upcoming events or as always, feel free to just stop by.

Lastly, we have created a new Giffen Pledge with input from faculty, staff and students (*see the green box above, on the left.*) Please review and read it with your child. It truly encompasses who we strive to be to better ourselves, our building, and our community.