

# GOVERNOR MOREHEAD SCHOOL FOR THE BLIND



OCTOBER 2020

Newsletter

## IMPORTANT MESSAGE FROM GMS SUPERINTENDENT:

October 7, 2020

Greeting Parents, Students, and Staff:

I would like to extend heartfelt admiration and praise to the Governor Morehead School (GMS) Community for the efforts put forth to ensure that our students are successfully engaging in remote learning at this time. The passionate efforts of GMS Educators, Staff, and Families have been evident daily. The collective efforts of our community continue to prove the value of academic rigor, social-emotional health, and access to expertise in the education of students with visual impairment.

Feedback from families has been positive about our remote learning and academic rigor, expanded core curriculum, and meal delivery. Their feedback regarding improvement cited increased social opportunities for students with additional programs introduced, special guest speakers for students, and restarting "Charger Connect" sessions. Also, the communication around schedules and different platforms such as Canvas, Microsoft Teams, and even email has been made clearer and the location of information within the systems clarified. Specific Safety Protocols and Procedures have been combined into a "GMS Strong, Safe School Toolkit" and is available on our website for your information and review.

I would also like to provide an update on the status of the GMS Remote Learning timeline. As we approach the end-of-the-first quarter, recent data collected by the North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS), has yielded that North Carolina has risen again to fifth in the nation with increasing numbers of COVID-19 cases, over 217,000, including 2,400+ in Burke County, 7,000+ in Durham County, 5,000+ in Pitt County, and 18,000+ in Wake County. More alarming is that there have been 146,000+ cases of clients and staff in the state's Residential Facilities.

The current information from Governor Roy Cooper and the Center for Disease Control guidance has provided an evidence-based decision regarding the continuation of Remote Learning into the second quarter. We will look at the data again in the middle of the quarter November 23, 2020, to develop a recommendation for the last half of the 2nd quarter. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me at [Barbria.bacon@esdb.dpi.nc.gov](mailto:Barbria.bacon@esdb.dpi.nc.gov) or 919-733-6382.

We appreciate your support and any feedback. Please continue to stay safe.

Barbria Bacon

School Director GMS  
Superintendent ESDB

## **FAMILY CONNECTION GROUP:**



Mr. David Oren, our School Psychologist, is gauging parent interest in a Family Connection Group. This group can meet monthly to share their remote learning experiences and ideas, provide group support and resources and increase their communication/ involvement with GMS.

Please let us know if this is something you may benefit from by completing this survey:

<https://forms.office.com/Pages/ResponsePage.aspx?id=YZyehLvwg026X0tTN2ZM94X4NpJnWnhBs0YnntAjAhBUMTFZUIRSVDNCTkpGSEJYV0NWRUpMVzdVWi4u>

## **PARENT COMMUNITY COMMITTEE (FORMALLY THE PTA)**

Mr. William Tubilleja, GMS's Orientation & Mobility Instructor is serving as the Parent Community Committee (PCC) Chair of the executive committee. Last school year the GMS PTA was formally dissolved and during the Spring and Summer, the transition began to form the new GMS PCC. His first task was naturally, to identify and ask others to serve on the executive committee. We are very happy to announce our new PCC Executive Committee.

Chair: William Tubilleja, GMS O&M Instructor

Vice-Chair: Laura Scott, GMS Parent

Treasurer: Karen Vick, GMS Parent

Assistant Secretary: Dana Pearce, GMS ELA Teacher

The PCC's early priorities include general membership recruitment, finalizing our organizational guidelines, fundraising, and coordinating a community event during this school year. Mr. William shared, "In a nutshell, it is our hope that together, the PCC Executive Committee and its members can build a strong foundation for future work with an emphasis on meeting the needs of students, their families, and our community".

A big thank you to each member of the PCC Executive Committee for their willingness to commit to this exciting endeavor. More information will be forthcoming as we move forward.

## **STUDENT SURVEY FOR THE LIBRARY**

GMS is updating our library resources and books that will support student learning and interests. This survey will help support what books are purchased for the library. Parents and families are welcome to complete this form on behalf of their child as well.

[https://forms.office.com/Pages/ResponsePage.aspx?id=YZyehLvwg026X0tTN2ZM9\\_UbVpOzV1ZAhaPEzxKn\\_dL5UMzUySTkzSVNPODQ4UVIWWURKWE0yWUdKTi4u](https://forms.office.com/Pages/ResponsePage.aspx?id=YZyehLvwg026X0tTN2ZM9_UbVpOzV1ZAhaPEzxKn_dL5UMzUySTkzSVNPODQ4UVIWWURKWE0yWUdKTi4u)

## **WELCOME MR. JOE GRAY, COMMUNITY EMPLOYMENT SPECIALIST:**

Please join me in welcoming Mr. Joseph Gray (officially) to our GMS team! Mr. Joe has been with GMS for the last few years as a volunteer, coach, and substitute teacher. He will now officially assume the Community Employment Specialist Position. We are very excited to have Mr. Joe work with our students in developing their career and job skills here on campus and in our community. Mr. Joe brings with him many ideas to get students more engaged in the community and to get the community engaged with us here at GMS. Mr. Joe is working on his Business Administration degree from Shaw University, worked at the Tennessee School for the Blind in the classrooms and as a coach, and worked in Raleigh with the community youth at the Poyner YMCA and Boys and Girls Club. Welcome Mr. Joe, we are very excited to have you in this position and with us here at GMS!

## UPDATE ON FACILITIES

John E. Ray Gymnasium floor has been refurbished and is sporting the Chargers new logo. This logo is an outline of a running royal blue horse with gold outline and the word "Chargers" in the middle. The gym floor is a light wood stain with bright goalball and basketball court lines. The logo was designed by Mr. Joe Gray, our new Community Employment Specialist at GMS. Mr. Watts, GMS physical education teacher, shares "A renewed floor gives opportunity for an individual to start afresh. Tell yourself everyday strength doesn't come from what you can do. It comes from overcoming the things you thought you couldn't."



Photo description: Gym floor with GMS new logo at center

## CHARGERS CONNECT

GMS offers a "Chargers Connect" every other week to provide students the opportunity to connect with guest, staff, and peers while we are remote. Our first session on September 21 hosted Davian Robison, a former GMS student and current master's student at Duke University. "Davian seeks out ways to inspire and never quit trying new things and pushing the boundary of inclusiveness." He shared his message and journey with students and staff and inspired "embrace your different. Embrace your failure. Embrace your hardship. Embrace your imperfection. Always be true to yourself and never quit."

Our latest Chargers Connect had us singing karaoke to our favorite songs. Students played the guessing game as staff gave them their best solo performances. Students requested their favorite songs and chuckled at staff created TIK-TOK videos showcasing their dancing talents. We look forward to our students joining us on our next Chargers Connect.

## PINKOUT 2020

On Wednesday, October 7, 2020 GMS was in a PinkOut. Students and staff sipped pink lemonade and ate pink popcorn. The celebration was incorporated in the ECC lesson plans. Additionally, GMS asked staff/students to wear PINK (including any throwback PINK OUT t-shirt) and to submit photos for a photo contest. The winning photo (voted on by the student body) will win a \$20 Chick Fil A gift card. It was a great day to bring awareness to a critical cause, one celebrated by Mrs. Wooten who is 10 years strong this year in her defeat of breast cancer!

Our Food Service team including Mr. Jonathan and Ms. Samantha used a special recipe to make homemade pink Rice Krispy treats. Mr. Clarence skillfully cut them into heart shapes and packaged them to be sent to students on the October 5 meal run.



Photo description: Left: Pink, heart-shaped Rice Krispy Treat. 2<sup>nd</sup> to left: Student in pink putting popcorn into microwave. Center Left: Student in pink popping popcorn on stove top. Right Center: Student in pink smiling as she mixes pink popcorn. Right: Individually wrapped Rice Krispy Treats