



# The Weekly Wave

## Weekly GLA Family Newsletter

February 10, 2026

### STAFF SPOTLIGHT



#### Ms. Vicky - Culture Specialist

##### **Tell us one of your favorite memories from your time at GLA.**

One of my favorite moments at GLA is witnessing families build and straighten their bonds through shared experiences. A moment that truly stood out was at Family Fitness Night, where I had the opportunity to both compete alongside, and connect in a fun, exciting, and healthy environment. Seeing the joy, teamwork, and genuine connections being made makes that experience especially meaningful to me.

##### **What made you want to become a teacher (or what made you want to work in a school)?**

I was inspired to become a culture specialist because I love supporting children beyond

academics. I enjoy helping scholars feel seen, heard, and encouraged so they can grow not only as scholars, but as individuals.

##### **What keeps you coming back to GLA every day?**

What keeps me coming back to GLA is knowing that I'm a part of a community where showing up matters. I'm motivated by the opportunity to support our scholars and school, alongside a team that consistently supports and encourages me as well.

##### **Where are you originally from? (If Chicago, tell us what neighborhood!) What do you love about that place?**

I'm originally from the East Side of Chicago, where I was born & partially raised, and actually graduated from our neighborhood school Ninos Heroes. Those early years rooted me in community and culture in a way that has stayed with me. That said, I'm an Arizonian by heart. I spent most of my late adolescent years there, and it played a huge role in shaping who I am today. Like most Chicagoans though, "Summer time Chi" will always have my heart. It's more than a season, it's an atmosphere, an aesthetic, and an experience that words could never fully do justice.

##### **We all know teaching can be a stressful job! What's your favorite way to unwind?**

I enjoy reading as a way to unwind. When time allows, I like to visit Barnes & Noble, find a quiet space, and relax with a good book. It's a great way to decompress and step away from the stresses of the day.

**What are your hidden or surprising talents?**

I have a strong ability to observe, imitate, and recreate things accurately. I'm very hands-on and a big DIY enthusiast. I've successfully taught myself everything from home renovations to hair styling.

**What's your dream vacation?**

Belize- Zip lining through their lush rain forests and caves.

**PRINCIPAL'S CORNER**

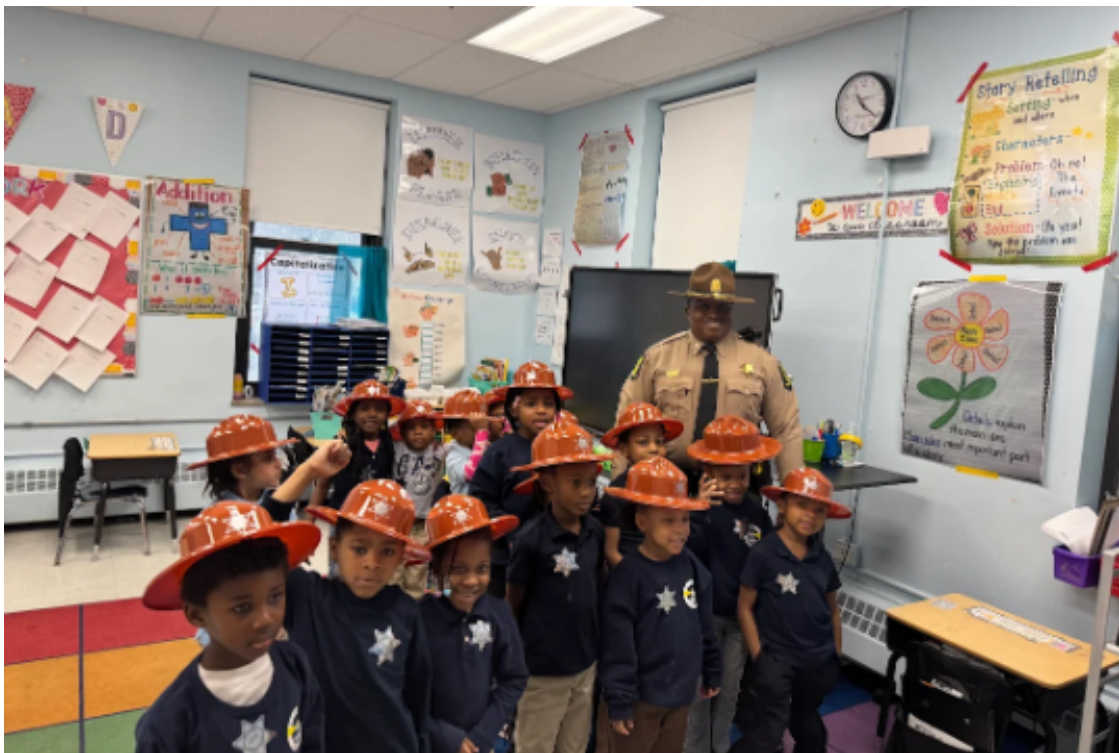


GLA excitedly hosted its fourth Annual Career Day this past Friday. Career Day is a powerful reminder of why academic growth matters, helping scholars connect their classroom learning to future possibilities and career paths.

Our school was buzzing as professionals from a wide range of industries shared their journeys and insights. We had professional visitors from the fashion industry, health care, education, technology, engineering, law enforcement, and more. Scholars asked thoughtful questions, explored new interests, and began envisioning their own futures. We were especially proud to welcome parents and families of GLA scholars as presenters, strengthening our school-community partnership. Thank you to our parents who volunteered their time!

We were also honored to have our Career Day featured on WGN Channel 9 News.

Career Day is one of my favorite days of the year, and we are grateful to everyone who helped make it such a success!



*Neil Miller*

Principal Miller

## NEW ANNOUNCEMENTS

### **Lost and Found Clean-Out – Collect Items by This Friday!**

Our Lost and Found is filling up! We encourage families to take a few moments to check for any missing jackets, sweaters, lunchboxes, or other personal items. Please be sure to collect all items by **Friday, February 13th**. After this date, any unclaimed items will be cleaned out and donated or discarded. Thank you for your support and for helping us keep our Lost and Found organized and manageable for everyone.

### **Inclement Weather Day - Calendar Change**

- Because we had to cancel school on Friday, January 23rd, we are turning a non-school day into a school day to meet the state minimum number of in-session school days.
- **Thursday, April 30th, which was originally scheduled as a Wellness Day, will now be a school day.**

### **Class of 2026 Graduation**

The Programs Team is excited to announce information regarding 8th Grade End of Year Events and 8th Grade Graduation! Please review the information below and mark your calendars.

*Great Lakes Academy* | **Class of 2026**  
**8th Grade Events**

**17  
APRIL**

during school hours  
scholars only

**Graduation Portraits\***

Scholars will take individual photos in their cap & gown, as well as a Class of 2026 photo. Families can access these photos online - printed photos for an additional cost.

**15  
MAY**

9:00am - 10:30am  
families invited

**HS Decision Day**

Each 8th grader will announce which high school they will be attending in the Fall. Families encouraged to attend - no ticket needed.

**26  
MAY - 29  
MAY**

overnight  
must meet requirements

**Atlanta Trip**

Scholars will travel to Atlanta, Georgia. Please reach out to Ms. Lifka for more information.

**01  
JUN - 05  
JUN**

during school hours  
scholars only

**Spirit Week**

Scholars will vote on spirit day themes, and days will be announced in May.

**02  
JUN**

11:00am - 1:00pm  
ticketed event

**Celebration Cruise\***

Celebrate with a cruise & lunch around Lake Michigan.

Adult tickets must be purchased (\$80) - 1 Adult Ticket per student until 04/01. After 04/01, additional tickets can be purchased on a first come, first serve basis until 04/29.

during school hours  
scholars only

**04  
JUN**

5:30pm - 7:00pm  
families invited

**Clap Out**

K-7 scholars will cheer on our 8th graders on their final walk through the halls of GLA!

**K-8th Lighthouse Awards Night**

Celebrate all of the accomplishments from this school year!

Families encouraged to attend - no ticket needed.

**05  
JUN**

4:00pm - 5:30pm  
ticketed event

**Graduation**

Eligible scholars will participate in the graduation ceremony.

Attendees 5 years old + must have a ticket. Tickets are limited to 4 guests.

\*Optional, with purchase of Events Package

# 8th Grade END OF YEAR EVENTS PACKAGE\*



PAY BY APRIL 29TH VIA:



(773) 530-3040



PowerSchool  
Parent Portal

## \$100

### INCLUDED ITEMS:

- Class of 2026 T-Shirt
- Yard Sign
- Celebration Cruise Ticket - Scholar only
- Cap & Gown Portraits + Digital Access
- Graduation Day Photos + Digital Access

### OPTIONAL EVENT

- Celebration Cruise - Adult
  - \$60 per adult
  - 1 adult per student until April 1st
  - If more available - first come, first serve until April 29th
  - Transportation not included

\*Optional



# 8th Grade GRADUATION CAP & GOWNS



PAY BY APRIL 29TH VIA:



(773) 530-3040



PowerSchool  
Parent Portal

## \$20

- Cap, Gown, & Tassel
  - Delivered in April
  - Yours to take home

### GRADUATION TICKETS

- Pick up available May 4<sup>th</sup> - May 29<sup>th</sup>
- Guaranteed four tickets per scholar at no cost
- Need Extra Tickets?
  - Request additional tickets starting May 4<sup>th</sup> in email to Ms. O'Leary to be added to the waitlist ([coleary@glachicago.org](mailto:coleary@glachicago.org))

Reach out to Ms. O'Leary([coleary@glachicago.org](mailto:coleary@glachicago.org)) for any questions!

### Interested in sharing feedback on school meals or wellness?

Join us for our annual Wellness Committee & Menu Advisory Meetings during next week's PAC meeting!

- If you'd like to help shape our school's breakfast and lunch menus or provide input on our wellness policy, we'd love to hear from you.
- Both will be discussed during next week's PAC meeting: **Wednesday, 2/18, 5-6:30 pm at GLA.**
- We hope to see you there!

### Great Lakes Academy's Uniform Expectations

Recently, we have seen an increase in scholars arriving to school out of uniform, and we want to ensure families are aware of expectations and next steps. [Uniform Policy](#) can be found here. Repeated out-of-uniform violations will result in scholars being ineligible for incentive events and referral documentation.

# GENERAL ANNOUNCEMENTS

## **GLA Uniform Sale**

Great Lakes Academy is excited to announce a **Uniform Sale** going on **now till Friday, February 20!**

Select uniform pieces are on sale, including short sleeve shirts, long sleeve shirts, and crewneck sweaters. The more you buy, the more you save!

Please see attached flyer for more information.

All items are available in **youth and adult sizes**, and families may **mix and match colors and sizes**. Shop for all of your scholars and save!

You may shop:

- **On campus at GLA from 9:00 AM – 2:30 PM, or**
- **Online anytime - [CLICK HERE!](#)**

Please note: **Online orders placed Monday through Thursday will be ready for pick-up the following Wednesday.**

If you have any questions, contact the front office at **773-530-3040**.

# GREAT LAKES ACADEMY

## UNIFORM STORE



Purchase online or on campus  
(Hours: 9:00 AM-2:30 PM)

Mix & Match Colors & Sizes



Light Blue  
T-Shirt



Navy  
T-Shirt



Gray  
T-Shirt

### SHORT SLEEVE T-SHIRTS

1 FOR \$10

3 FOR \$24

5 FOR \$40

\*ORIGINALLY \$13/EACH

### LONG SLEEVE T-SHIRTS

1 FOR \$13

2 FOR \$22

4 FOR \$44

\*ORIGINALLY \$16/EACH



Grey Long Sleeve



Navy Long Sleeve

ALL ITEMS  
AVAILABLE  
IN YOUTH &  
ADULT  
SIZES



Navy Crewneck

### CREWNECK SWEATERS

1 FOR \$16

2 FOR \$30

3 FOR \$45

\*ORIGINALLY \$20/EACH

### 2026-27 Intent to Return

We are excited to announce that the **2026-27 Intent to Return form** is now available online! This replaces the paper forms used in past years.

To help us plan enrollment, **all families must complete an Intent to Return form for each currently enrolled student**, even if you do not plan to return.

**Intent to Return emails are sent weekly**, so please check your email for a **personalized snapchat link** and detailed instructions to complete the form.

All forms must be submitted **no later than Friday, March 6, 2026**.

If you need assistance, please contact **Ms. Thunherst** at 773-530-3040 or [sthunherst@glachicago.org](mailto:sthunherst@glachicago.org).

### Spring Sports Sign-Ups

Spring sports will be starting with Co-ed Track on 2/19, girls & boys flag football will be starting 3/9!

If you would like to sign your student-athlete up for either sport click [here](#). The participation fee for each sport is \$150 per student-athlete.

If you have any questions or concerns please reach out to Coach P (tperez@glachicago.org).

#### **K-4th Black History Month Performance**

Join us on Thursday, February 26th from 1:30-2:30pm for the Kinder-4th Grade Black History Month Performance. Each K-4 homeroom will be practicing all month long to showcase their performance to families!

**BLACK  
HISTORY  
MONTH  
PERFORMANCE**

**KINDER-FOURTH GRADE**  
**FEB. 26TH**      **1:30-2:30 PM**  
**FAMILIES WELCOME**

*\*Note: Early Dismissals will be unavailable until all performances are complete & scholars return to classrooms.*

**Great Lakes Academy Spirit Wear Sale!**

Stock up on your favorite **Great Lakes Academy** spirit wear and **save big**—the more you buy, the more you save!

● **Buy More, Save More!**

- **Save 15%** when you buy **2 items**
- **Save 20%** when you buy **3 items**
- **SAVE 25%** when you buy **4 items**

✨ Use code **SPIRIT766** at checkout to unlock your discount.

**FREE SHIPPING** on orders of **\$85 or more!**

**Please Note:** Items purchased through **1st Place Spirit Wear** are **spirit wear only** and are **not uniform-approved pieces**.

Shop tees, hoodies, hats, accessories, and more—perfect for the whole family!

**Shop now:** <https://1stplace.sale/115856>

**Sale ends 2/15 — don't miss out!**

**GREAT LAKES ACADEMY**  
OFFICIAL SPIRIT WEAR STORE

**BUY MORE. SAVE MORE!**  
Stock up on official spirit wear and save up to **25%**

4+ items → **25% OFF**  
3 items → **20% OFF**  
2 items → **15% OFF**

**BUILD YOUR BUNDLE**

SHOP NOW USE CODE: SPIRIT766

**FREE Shipping on orders over \$85**  
**SHOP AT: 1STPLACE.SALE/115856**

**1ST PLACE**  
Spiritwear

**RESCHEDULED: SNEAKER BALL 02/13**

The Kindergarten-4th Grade Sneaker Ball has been rescheduled to Friday, February 13th from 4:00-6:00pm. In addition, the marking period for attendance and behavior requirements has been updated. Please review the new marking period below:

- Marking Period: 02/02-02/12
  - 0 Referrals
  - < or = 2 Resets
  - < or = 3 Absences to School

- A Guardian (18+) is required to attend the event with the scholar
- Ineligible notifications will be sent out Thursday, February 12th EOD to scholars & their families

**K-4TH** *Limited Edition*

# SNEAKER BALL

**UPDATE**



FRIDAY  
**FEB 13**  
4:00-6:00 PM

## **Requirements**

**0 Referrals**      < **3 Absences to School**  
< **2 Resets**      **Guardian (18+) at Event**

**Marking Period: 02/02-02/12**

**CANDY BAR & PRIZE RAFFLE!**



## **Spread the Word: GLA Spring Open House**

Families, help us share the news! Great Lakes Academy will host our **Spring Open House on Tuesday, March 3rd, from 5:00-7:00 PM**. This is a chance for prospective families to tour our campus, meet our staff, and see why GLA is one of the top schools in Illinois. Additionally, applications are now open for the 2026-27 school year. Any applications completed by Wednesday, March 18th will be eligible for the March 19th lottery.



GREAT LAKES ACADEMY



2026-2027

# OPEN HOUSE

*Our mission is to empower children today to change the world tomorrow.*



**Tuesday,  
March 3, 2026**

**5pm-7pm**

8401 S. Saginaw Ave.  
Chicago, IL 60617

- ✓ Tour the school
- ✓ Meet staff
- ✓ Learn about our academic, enrichment and student support
- ✓ Ask questions



For more info:

**773-530-3040**



Visit us:

**[www.glachicago.org](http://www.glachicago.org)**

**2026-27 Applications are now open!**

**You're invited: Great Lakes Academy Kindergarten Prom**

Calling our future and current scholars! Celebrate with us on Saturday, March 7th as we create a magical day for our Pre-K AND current Kindergarten stars! Put on your best formal fit and walk the red carpet like the royalty you are! Dancing, memories, and unforgettable moments await. [RSVP](#) today and let's make it a day to remember.



**Great Lakes Academy**

YOU ARE INVITED TO THE

# Kindergarten Prom

**For grades Pre-K- Kindergarten**

**Formal attire encouraged!**

**FREE**

**SATURDAY, March 7, 2026**

**12pm- 3pm**

**Great Lakes  
Academy**

**8401 S. Saginaw Ave**

**RSVP:**

**<https://bit.ly/3LjhGaE>**



### **PAC Meeting**

Families are invited to be part of the conversation at our next Parent Advocacy Committee meeting on February 18, 2026, from 5:00–6:30 PM. This is a space for parents and caregivers to share ideas, discuss needs, and advocate for resources that support our scholars and strengthen our school community. Attend in person or via Google Meet. Refreshments and childcare will be provided. Scan the QR code to join us!



Great Lakes Academy

# PARENT ADVOCACY COMMITTEE

The Parent Advocacy Committee is a space where families can use their voices to strengthen and support our school community. Together, we share ideas, discuss needs, and advocate for resources that help every child succeed. Join us to partner with Great Lakes Academy in shaping the best experience for our scholars.



February 18, 2026

All meetings start at 5pm-6:30pm.  
In person or Google Meet

Refreshments will be served & Child care provided!

### Race to 10 is On!

A huge congratulations to UIC for racing to 10 and winning Heat 4! They will be going on a free field trip of their choice. Also, congratulations to the two parents who won our gas raffle. Race 5 starts today, 2/10.

As a reminder, the first homeroom to achieve 100% attendance 10 times will win a free field trip. Parents will also have the chance to win raffled gas or Uber gift cards as an added bonus. Our fourth race started Friday, December 5th and all homerooms were reset to 0 days. The Race to 10 tracker shows our progress and highlights the top 5 homerooms as of February 3rd. Let's keep working together to make every day count! Attendance matters!



# RACE TO 10



Swim Classes

# DEEPLY ROOTED

*Where Culture Meets the Water*




## FREE Swim Classes


### SPRING 2026


Culturally affirming, beginner-friendly swim lessons for families in Chicago.





- Anticipated Start Dates:
- Wed, March 4 at 6PM (Adults 18+)
- Saturdays, March 7 at 11:20AM (Youth & Parent+Child)

 6-Week Program | South Side YMCA  
6330 S. Stony Island Ave, Chicago, IL

LEARN MORE & COMPLETE OUR INTEREST FORM 

LINK IN BIO | SPOTS LIMITED! 

 872-216-1276

 [theinfinitebloom.com](http://theinfinitebloom.com)  
[@TheInfiniteBloom](https://www.instagram.com/TheInfiniteBloom)

[TheInfiniteBloom1@gmail.com](mailto:TheInfiniteBloom1@gmail.com)

in partnership with



#### 2025-26 School Calendar

The 2025-26 school calendar has been posted to GLA's website. Please [view it here](#).

#### School Year Office Hours

Monday-Thursday, 7:30-4:30 pm

Friday, 7:30-2:00 pm

#### GLA Breakfast, Lunch, and Supper Menus

Click [here](#) to access (these are also linked on our website's [Parent and Student Resource Page](#))

# IMPORTANT UPCOMING DATES

## IMPORTANT UPCOMING DATES February 9 - March 6, 2026

|                                    |  |                                   |  |  |
|------------------------------------|--|-----------------------------------|--|--|
| 9                                  | 10   | 11                                | 12   | 13<br>Rescheduled:<br>K-4th Sneaker Ball,<br>4:00-6:00 pm<br><br>8th Grade: GoCPS<br>High School<br>Results Round 1<br>Release |
| 16<br>Presidents' Day<br>No School | 17   | 18                                | 19   | 20   |
| 23                                 | 24   | 25<br>Fire Evacuation<br>Drill #3 | 26<br>K-4th Black History<br>Month Performance,<br>1:30 pm | 27   |
| 2                                  | 3<br>Spring Open<br>House, 5:00-7:00<br>pm | 4                                 | 5  | 6<br>8th Grade: GoCPS<br>High School<br>Results Round 1<br>Acceptance Offer  |

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