



Weekly GLA Family Newsletter
February 17, 2026

PRINCIPAL'S CORNER



This past Friday Night, GLA hosted its 2nd Annual K-4th Sneaker Ball. Scholars came dressed to impress with their favorite sneakers for a night of fun. While academics always come first, we believe that experiences like the Sneaker Ball build community amongst our students and families and create memories that will last a lifetime. I personally enjoyed watching how much joy our students had dancing and playing with each other.

Thank you to Ms. O'Leary and Dr. Beck for organizing an amazing event for our students.



Ash Miller

Principal Miller

NEW ANNOUNCEMENTS

GLA Uniform Sale - Last Days to Stock Up and Save

Great Lakes Academy is excited to announce a **Uniform Sale** going on till this **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

Save Up to \$25 on GLA Spirit Wear + Free Shipping!

Now is the perfect time to stock up on **Great Lakes Academy spirit wear** and save BIG!

- 🎉 Save \$15 when you spend \$75
- 🎉 Save \$25 when you spend \$100
- 🛒 Use code: SPIRIT308 at checkout
- 🚚 PLUS get FREE shipping on orders over \$85!

Don't miss out — grab your hoodies, tees, hats, and more while this deal lasts!

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

Thank you for supporting Great Lakes Academy!

GREAT LAKES ACADEMY
OFFICIAL SPIRIT WEAR STORE



SAVE \$25 ON \$100
SPEND

SAVE \$15 ON \$75
SPEND



FREE Shipping on orders over \$85

SHOP NOW

SHOP AT: 1STPLACE.SALE/115856

Use Code: SPIRIT308

Wave Three - Sign Ups OPEN!

Wave Three Sign-Ups are now open, click here to enroll!

Wave Three

MONDAY, MARCH 2ND - THURSDAY, MAY 28TH

MONDAY/WEDNESDAY

K-2nd, Creative Arts	with Ms. Gaines
K-3rd, Build Your Own Book!	with Ms. Serini-T
2nd-5th, Homework Help	with Ms. Hartman
4th-8th, Goddess Mentoring	with Ms. Scott
4th-8th, HAWKS Mentoring	with Mr. Fain
4th-8th, T-Shirt Lab	with Ms. Starks
6th-8th, Homework Help	with Ms. Littleton
6th-8th, Advanced Art	with Ms. Paull

TUESDAY/THURSDAY

K-2nd, Homework Help	with Mrs. Montgomery
K-2nd, Science Explorers	with Ms. Gaines
3rd-5th, Girls on the Run	with Mrs. Ford
3rd-5th, Beacon Film Reviews	with Ms. Hawkins
3rd-5th, Handwriting Clarity	with Ms. Watson
4th-8th, Beacon FC	with Mr. Byars
4th-8th, Art of Beauty	with Ms. J Johnson
6th-8th, StrongHER Club	with Ms. Paull

SIGN UP BY 02/24

Programs meet twice weekly on Monday/Wednesday or Tuesday/Thursday only. If you want your scholar enrolled Monday-Thursday, you will have to sign them up for two programs on the respective days. If you want two days, you will need to sign them up for only one.

Programs will only run in one wave, unless renewed and new programs will be offered each wave where you will have to re-sign up. The waves are as follows:

- **Wave Three: Monday, March 2nd - Thursday, May 28th**

Sign ups will close on Tuesday, February 24th for Wave Three. You will be notified if you get into the program by Wednesday, February 25th via letter and email.

All programs will run 3:15-5:00 pm. Cost: \$175/each program/per wave unless offered by an external partner. These programs are marked accordingly* and are \$200.

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

Mental Health First Aid - Youth Blended Class

Youth Mental Health First Aid (YMHFA) is a training course for adults to help adolescents (ages 12-18) who are experiencing mental health challenges or are in crisis. The training teaches adults to recognize risk factors and warning signs, understand the unique challenges of youth mental health, and apply a five-step action plan to provide initial support and connect young people with professional help. After registering, you will be required to do about 2 hours of online prework consisting of watching videos and taking a short quiz on what you learned. The training will equip participants with the knowledge and tools to support better outcomes for youth experiencing mental health challenges.

- When: Saturday, Feb. 28th, from 9:00-2:00 at GLA
- Sign up here to attend for free by 2.23.26. Mental Health First Aid- Blended Youth_
- **Once you sign up, you will receive an email from Mental Health First Aid Connect to complete the 2-hour online pre-work.**
- **Questions: Contact Ms. Melissa, mstangl@glachicago.org**

Southside Literacy Fest

On Saturday, February 28, 2026, Gary Comer Youth Center is hosting *Lit Fest: Celebrating the Power of Black Literacy & Liberation* — a Black History Month celebration exploring the many forms of literacy that shape our lives today and reimagining it as more than just words on a page. Through immersive workshops, performances, and conversations, Lit Fest explores literacy as a pathway to self-expression, wellness, financial empowerment, digital fluency, and cultural preservation.

The event will feature keynote discussions, performances, interactive workshops, author talks, and family-friendly activities designed to inspire curiosity, creativity, and a lifelong love of learning. If you are interested in attending, you can RSVP here or using the QR code below.

1ST ANNUAL LITERACY FESTIVAL:



CELEBRATING THE POWER OF BLACK LITERACY & LIBERATION

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 28, 2026 | 10AM-4PM
GARY COMER YOUTH CENTER | 7200 S. INGLESIDE

FINANCE TECHNOLOGY
HEALTH EDUCATION




TRIO

GENERAL ANNOUNCEMENTS

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 4th - May 29th
- Guaranteed four tickets per scholar at no cost
- Need Extra Tickets?
 - Request additional tickets starting May 4th in email to Ms. O'Leary to be added to the waitlist (coleary@glachicago.org)

Reach out to Ms. O'Leary(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.

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 snapcode 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**.

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.*

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

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

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 16 - March 13, 2026

16 Presidents' Day No School	17	18	19	20
23	24	25 Fire Evacuation Drill #3	26 K-4th Black History Month Performance, 1:30 pm	27
2 Women's History Month →	3 Spring Open House, 5:00-7:00 pm	4	5	6 8th Grade: GoCPS High School Results Round 1 Acceptance Offer
9 ANet & Navigator IA#3 Assessments	10 ANet & Navigator IA#3 Assessments	11 ANet & Navigator IA#3 Assessments	12 ANet & Navigator IA#3 Assessments End of Quarter 3	13 No School, Parent Teacher Conferences

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