



Weekly GLA Family Newsletter
February 18, 2025

STAFF SPOTLIGHT



Ms. Jleese Williams - Dean of Culture and Climate

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

As the Dean of Culture and Climate at Great Lakes Academy, graduations are incredibly special to me. They're the culmination of everything we've worked for—not just academically, but in terms of building a strong, positive environment where students feel supported and empowered. It's not just about handing out diplomas; it's about watching these young people grow, not only in knowledge but in

character, leadership, and how they engage with each other and the world.

The work we do to create an inclusive, supportive culture really comes to life at graduation. You see the result of years of fostering relationships, addressing challenges, and helping students discover their best selves. It's one of those moments where you feel proud, not just of the students, but of the entire community we've built together. The feeling of seeing those connections, growth, and success—it's hard to beat.

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

I previously worked at a charter school for six years before moving back home to Chicago. I was looking for a community committed to excellence through growth, and I found that at GLA. From the moment I met with the HR consultant, I knew it was the right fit. It mirrored the mission and values of my previous school, but in an even stronger way. I always say I'd only work in a school I'd send my own child to, and between the culture and academic rigor, GLA truly became my work home.

What's your favorite thing to do in Chicago?

My favorite thing to do in Chicago is spending time on my brother's yacht on Lake Michigan while watching the fireworks and enjoying going to different restaurants, especially brunch spots.

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

Unwinding for me means spending time with my daughter, creating new memories

together, or binge-watching Law & Order: SVU or Chicago PD.

What's your dream vacation?

My dream vacation would be going to Bali or Aruba. Both offer stunning beaches, crystal-clear waters, and the perfect vibe for relaxation and adventure.

NEW ANNOUNCEMENTS

GLA Family BINGO Night

Join us for our first family event of 2025! Mark your calendars for Friday, February 21, 2025. Students must attend with a parent or guardian. See you there!

Come for an evening of GLA family, fun, food, and lots of prizes! We will even be offering school tours Scan the QR code
RSVP TODAY!

**FRIDAY,
FEBRUARY
21, 2025**

**5:00PM
-
7:00PM**

**8401 S. SAGINAW
AVE.
CHICAGO, IL
60617**

**MUST HAVE A PARENT
OR GUARDIAN PRESENT**

Wave Three After-School Enrichment Sign Ups: **NOW OPEN!**

Sign ups for Wave Three After-School Enrichment programming are open NOW: click [here](#).

WAVE THREE

After-School Enrichment
March 3rd - May 29th

MONDAY/WEDNESDAY

- K-2 Science Explorers w/ Ms. Gaines
- 3-5 HW Help w/ Ms. Brandi
- 4-8 iPad Pros w/ Ms. Vicky
- K-2 Pick Up A Book & Play w/ Ms. Pittman
- 4-8 Water Color w/ Mrs. Ford
- 4-8 Party Planners w/ Ms. Connor
- 3-4 Jr. Beacons w/ Coach P
- 4-8 Board Games w/ Ms. Hartman
- 6-8 Hair Academy w/ Ms. Hearst
- 3-8 Goddess Mentoring w/ Ms. Scott

TUESDAY/THURSDAY

- K-2 HW Help w/ Ms. Brandi
- 3-5 HW Help w/ Ms. Hartman
- 4-8 DIY Arts & Crafts w/ Ms. Connor
- K-5 GLA Dancers w/ Ms. Gaines
- 3-5 Girls on the Run w/ Mrs. Ford
- 5-8 GLA Intramurals w/ Coach P
- 3-5 Drama Free Drama Club w/ Ms. Stuckett

SIGN UP W/ MS. O'LEARY BY 02/25

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

- Wave Three: Monday, March 3rd - Thursday, May 29th

All programs will run 3:15-5:00 pm. **Cost: *\$175/each program/per wave** unless otherwise noted. Programs require 10 scholars enrolled in order to run. You may be asked to enroll in an alternative program in the event of low enrollment.

Please reach out to Caitlin O'Leary, coleary@glachicago.org with any questions!

Anti-Bullying Message

Parents, we have noticed an increase in harmful and inflammatory language use among our students, which can lead to bullying and hurtful behaviors. Language plays a vital role in shaping how students interact with each other, and fostering positive communication at home and school is key to creating a supportive environment.

We encourage you to help your child understand the impact of their words by modeling respectful language, setting clear expectations for kindness, and reinforcing the importance of empathy at home. It is our goal to teach students how to verbally express themselves without hurting others. At school, we are working to create an inclusive atmosphere, but we need your support. Together, we can guide students toward becoming more compassionate communicators, both at school and at home.

As always, students who repeatedly use language that is harmful to others in our community will be issued increasingly severe consequences according to our Student Code of Conduct. Additionally, parents will be invited to conference with school leaders to discuss how they will address the inappropriate language their students are using. Thank you for your partnership in this effort.

Parents: We Need Your Feedback!

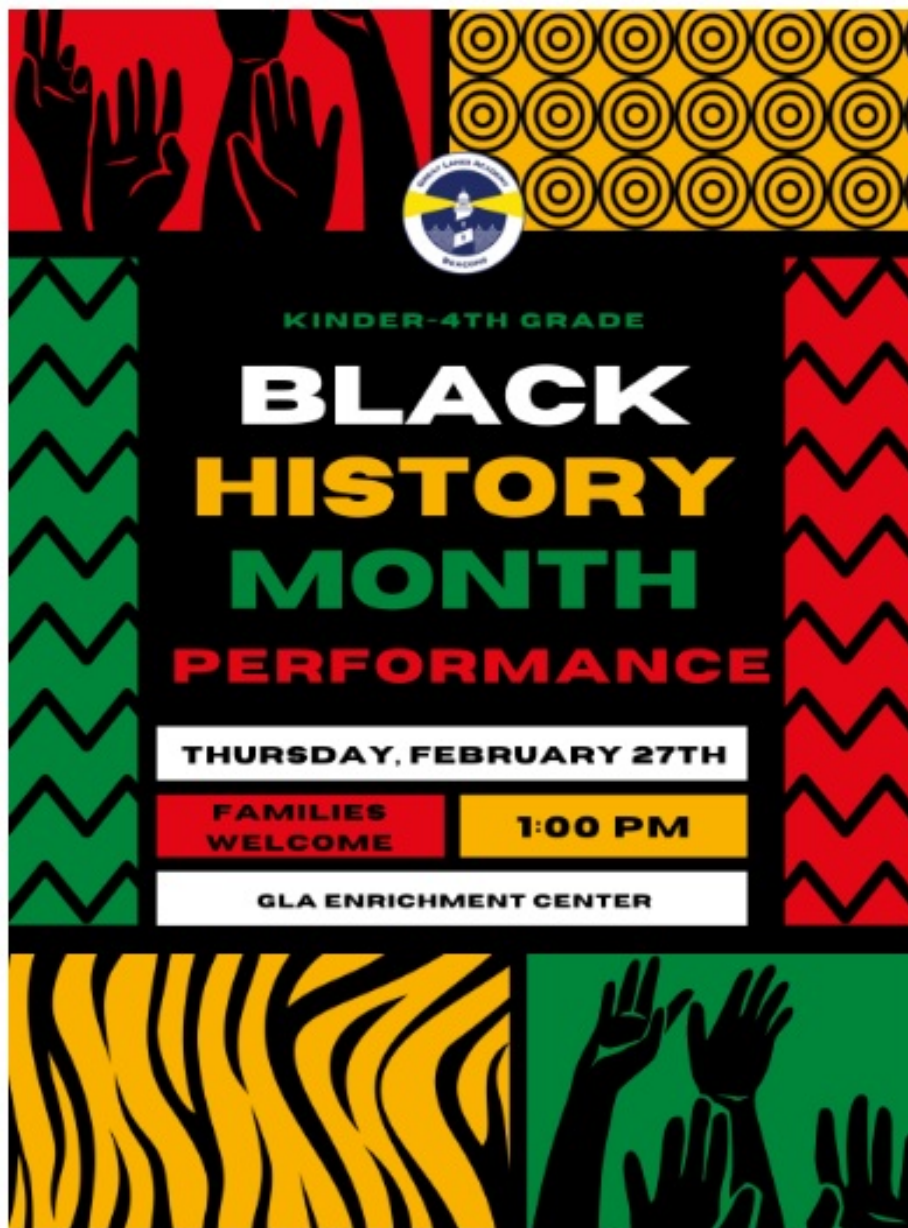
Your voice matters! Help us continue building a thriving school community by sharing your thoughts in our brief survey. It only takes a few minutes, but your feedback makes a big impact!

<https://www.weeklypossip.com/surveys/survey-20250121-72d4?position=1>

If you've not yet done so, please click the link above to take the survey before Friday, February 14th. Thank you for partnering with us to support all students!

K-4 Black History Month Performance

Join us on Thursday, February 27th at 1pm for the K-4 Black History Month Performance! Each K-4 homeroom will be practicing all month long to showcase their performance to families!



GENERAL ANNOUNCEMENTS

School Calendar Change

- Since we had to cancel school due to cold weather on Tuesday, January 28th, we must make up a day of school as we have the minimum number of attendance days required by the state.
- We have changed the “Wellness Day” scheduled for May 1st to a student attendance day. Though it is a Thursday, we will follow a Friday schedule with a 1:50 dismissal. **We will only run after-care until 4:00 pm this day. There will be no athletics or enrichment.**
- **The following day, Friday, May 2nd will remain a “Wellness Day.”**
- **Please plan to have your students here on Thursday, May 1st.**

Intent to Return 2025-26

- To help us plan our enrollment for the 2024-25 school year, we ask all families to confirm if their scholar(s) will be returning to Great Lakes Academy next year by filling out our annual Intent to Return Form.
- **This year, the form will be completed online in the platform “Powerschool Enrollment”.**

- You should have received an email with instructions; if you have any questions, please contact the front office at 773-530-3040.

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

February 17 - March 14, 2025

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
17 Presidents' Day, No School	18 Staff PD, No School	19 GLA Community Conversation, 8 am	20	21 Family BINGO Night, 5:00-7:00 pm
24 Fire Drill #3	25 IA#3- 3rd Grade	26 IA#3- 3rd Grade Boys Basketball HOME vs. Betty Shabazz, JV (4 pm) and Varsity (6 pm) HOME Cheer game, 4:00-7:00 pm	27 K-4th Black History Month Performances, 1:00 pm	28 HOME Boys Basketball Game (JV & Varsity) vs. CJA, 4:00 pm
3	4	5	6 IA #3 (4th-8th grade)	7 IA #3 (4th-8th grade) 2025-2026 Intent to Return Due Pre-K Prom, 5:30-7:30 pm
10 5Essentials Survey	11 5Essentials Survey IA#3 (4th Grade) Parent Advocacy Meeting, 4:30 pm	12 IA#3 (4th Grade)	13 End of Q3- Report Card Distribution	14 Parent Teacher Conferences 8th Grade GoCPS: High School Results Released

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