



## Weekly GLA Family Newsletter

March 17, 2026

### STAFF SPOTLIGHT



**Ms. Blumberg - 2nd Grade Math Teacher  
& K-1 Cluster Lead**

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

One of my favorite GLA memories is an oldie but a goodie. During community celebrations, we used to compete for a whale named Gary when we said our classroom cheers each week. My homeroom had not won Gary yet, and we had been practicing our cheer every single day. We went into the gym, and my students cheered their hearts out. When we were handed Gary, everyone went crazy! It was so exciting to see our hard work and practice pay off! We enjoyed having Gary in our classroom, even if it was only for a few

weeks.

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

I've always wanted to be a teacher! I grew up as the oldest in my family, so I have always had my younger brother and cousins looking up to me. From the moment I could talk, all I wanted to do was teach them. As I grew up, I always wanted to be a teacher! My high school offered an awesome elective called Child Development where we learned about lesson planning, and then were able to work in the preschool that was in our building. I knew I was following the right career path then! I took that class all 3 years I was able to.

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

I am from the north suburbs of Chicago. I love the community that I grew up in, my high school was not very big so I was able to know almost everyone and we grew up together! I still keep in touch with a lot of people from high school, we recently had our 10 year reunion!

**What's your favorite thing to do in Chicago?**

When it is nice out, I love going on long walks along the lakefront or river walk! If I have the time, I bring a book and sit for a while reading. I also am a big foodie and I like to try new restaurants all of the time!

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

There are 2 things that help me escape from stressful days, a good book or an episode of reality TV! My goal this year is to read 60 books!

**What's your dream vacation?**

My current dream vacation is to go to Japan!

## PRINCIPAL'S CORNER

All 3rd-8th grade students will soon be participating in the Illinois Assessment of Readiness (IAR), our state assessment that measures grade-level standards in English Language Arts and Math. There will be testing each morning from Monday, April 6th to Thursday, April 9th.

With less than 30 days to go, our classrooms are buzzing with energy as we ramp up preparation and practice to help students feel confident and ready to shine! To make this time even more engaging and positive, we are hosting GLA Madness Spirit Week during the week of March 30th. This is a fun way for students to build confidence, reduce stress, and stay motivated as they prepare for testing.

Families, your support makes a big difference! We encourage you to help your child practice IAR skills at home in the coming weeks. Just as importantly, please ensure your student is present and on time each day of testing (no later than 8:00 AM) and gets a good night's sleep so they can feel focused and ready.

As always, thank you for partnering with us to support your child's success. Together, we can ensure that students are confidently tackling IAR testing!



Principal Miller

## NEW ANNOUNCEMENTS

 **State Testing is Coming Up!**

Spring state assessments are right around the corner. Mark your calendars:

- **IAR (ELA & Math, grades 3–8): April 6–9**
- **ISA (Science, grades 5 & 8): April 20–22**

**How to help your student prepare:**

- Keep up with attendance — every day of instruction counts
- Talk to your child about why doing their best matters
- Make sure they're getting enough sleep each night
- Ensure they arrive to school on time on test days
- Encourage a positive mindset — remind them of how hard they've worked!
- Practice on the Student Readiness Tools: [srt.testnav.com/psrt/psrt.html](http://srt.testnav.com/psrt/psrt.html)

Questions? Reach out to Meagan Johnson. ([mjohnson@glachicago.org](mailto:mjohnson@glachicago.org))

**Red Carpet Moments: Kindergarten Prom Featured on NBC 5 Chicago**


GLA recently hosted its annual Kindergarten Prom, welcoming kindergarten scholars, their families, and children from neighborhood preschools for an afternoon of celebration and community. We were thrilled that this important community event was featured on NBC 5 Chicago. Check it out [here!](#)

The event highlights the importance of community for our newest families and introduces prospective families to Great Lakes Academy's early learning program.

### **Slice the Price is Back at Great Lakes Academy!**

Get ready to save big while supporting our scholars! Great Lakes Academy is launching our *Slice the Price Card Fundraiser* with Domino's Pizza from March 31st – April 14th, and you don't want to miss it.

For just \$20, you'll receive a Slice the Price card that lets you buy one large pizza and get another FREE—with unlimited uses through December 31, 2026! It's perfect for family nights, parties, and quick dinners all year long.

Not only are you getting an amazing deal, but every purchase directly supports our students and school programming. Stay tuned for ordering details—and get ready to grab your card and start saving (and sharing )!)



### **You're Invited: 11th Annual Be Great Benefit**

Please join us on Thursday, May 7th for the 11th Annual Be Great Benefit in support of Great Lakes Academy. Hosted from 6 - 9 pm at the Chicago History Museum, this exciting evening will bring together community leaders, supporters, and friends for a memorable night of fun and giving. Guests will enjoy access to the Chicago History Museum exhibits, open bar, dinner, and a silent auction all while supporting the continued success of Great Lakes Academy scholars. Tickets are \$250 and tables of 10 are \$2,500 and can be purchased here: <https://bit.ly/47ge4he>

Can't make it but still want to support our scholars? You can make a donation here: <https://glachicago.org/donate>

We hope you will join us for a great night in support of our scholars.



## GENERAL ANNOUNCEMENTS

[NJHS Candygrams](#)

**ShamROCK the IAR!**  
**NJHS Good Luck Candygrams**  
*Send a little luck before test day!*

NJHS is selling St. Patrick's Day Good Luck Candygrams to help build excitement and encouragement leading up to state testing!

**Each candygram includes:**

- Assorted themed candy
- Fun St. Patrick's Day stickers
- A "To/From" tag to personalize and give to a friend.

PRICING	WHO CAN BUY?	SALES DATES	DISTRIBUTION DATE
\$3 each 4 for \$10	All GLA students <b>K-8</b>	March 9th - March 20th	<b>April 3rd</b> (Friday of GLA Madness - just before Testing begins!)

**ALL PROCEEDS SUPPORT THE**  
**8th Grade Trip to Atlanta!**  
 Send luck. Support leadership.  
**♥ ShamROCK the IAR!**

#### 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.**

#### 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.

#### K-3rd Grade Spring Fest

Spring is in the air at Great Lakes Academy!

Join us for our **K-3 Spring Fest** on **Saturday, April 11, 2026 from 12PM-3PM** at 8401 S. Saginaw Ave. This family-friendly celebration will include music, snacks, fun, and games for our youngest scholars.

We can't wait to see our K-3 families come out, connect, and celebrate the season together. Be sure to RSVP using the QR code and mark your calendars for an afternoon full of springtime fun!



**Race to 10 is On!**

Our Race to 10 is heating up, and Heat 5 is very close to having a winner! Each day your student arrives at school and on time, their class moves one step closer to winning a free field trip of their choice. Attendance really makes a difference, so we encourage all families to help students be here every day and ready to learn.

Parents can win too! Families whose students participate will be entered into a parent raffle for two \$50 gas cards. Thank you for helping your student and their class stay in the race!



Laps Completed					
100% Attendance Days					
10					
9					
8	🚗				
7	🚗	🚗	🚗		
6	🚗	🚗	🚗	🚗	
5	🚗	🚗	🚗	🚗	🚗
4	🚗	🚗	🚗	🚗	🚗
3	🚗	🚗	🚗	🚗	🚗
2	🚗	🚗	🚗	🚗	🚗
1	🚗	🚗	🚗	🚗	🚗
	UIC	U Chicago	Purdue	Duke	MS

**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**

## March 16 - April 10, 2026

16 <b>Wellness Day, Building Closed</b>	17 <b>Staff PD, No School</b>	18 Q4 Begins	19 2026-27 Lottery	20
23 <b>Spring Break, Building Closed</b>	24 <b>Spring Break, Building Closed</b>	25 <b>Spring Break, Building Closed</b>	26 <b>Spring Break, Building Closed</b>	27 <b>Spring Break, Building Closed</b>
30 GLA Madness Staff & Student Spirit Week	31 GLA Madness Staff & Student Spirit Week	1 GLA Madness Staff & Student Spirit Week  Start of Month of Kindness, Autism Acceptance Month	2 GLA Madness Staff & Student Spirit Week	3 GLA Madness Staff & Student Spirit Week
6 IAR State Testing	7 IAR State Testing	8 IAR State Testing	9 IAR State Testing	10

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