



The Weekly Wave

Weekly GLA Family Newsletter

February 3, 2026

STAFF SPOTLIGHT



Yana Long - Director of Engagement

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

My favorite memory has to be this year's Fall Jamboree. The petting zoo and pony rides created moments of pure joy. Seeing the smiles, laughter, and excitement made it truly unforgettable.

Tell us one of your proudest teacher moments.

My proudest moment is always graduation. It's the reward for the hard work, perseverance, and dedication of our students, families, and staff.

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

My path into education happened naturally. What started as babysitting and working as a day camp counselor grew into a purpose driven career.

What keeps you coming back to GLA every day?

I show up every day because GLA is filled with people who are aligned, committed, and driven by one goal to be great for our students.

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

South Suburbs

What's your favorite memory from elementary/middle school?

My favorite high school memory was going to Disney World to compete in a cheer competition.

What's your favorite thing to do in Chicago?

I love live music on the beach.

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

Scroll TikTok

What's your dream vacation?

Maldives

PRINCIPAL'S CORNER



Parents frequently ask us how they can support their scholar at home with the “new math” that schools teach. While math instruction may look different than it did years ago, there is still an important place for a little “old-school” math in fact fluency practice at home!

Math fact fluency means that students are able to quickly and accurately recall basic math facts. Each grade level has specific math fact expectations that students should master by the end of the school year. For example, by the end of Kindergarten, students should know single digit addition and subtraction for numbers up to 5. They should also be able to complete 15 problems within 1 minute. K-4th grade homerooms should have received a letter detailing math fact fluency expectations, along with a set of paper math fact cards for practice.

Math fact fluency is important because it is the foundation for more complex areas of math, such as solving word problems and applying higher-level concepts. When students know their facts automatically, they can focus their thinking on reasoning and problem-solving rather than calculation.

We encourage parents to practice math facts regularly at home with their students. Even short, consistent practice can make a big difference. Please reach out if you are still in need of cards or have questions about math fact fluency expectations and practice. Third grade families: we have just received a new batch of math fact cards. Parents who are interested in receiving this new set should please reach out to Ms. Murphy.

Student learning is strongest when school and home work together. Thank you for your continued partnership and support in helping our scholars build strong math foundations!

Principal Miller

NEW 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

Sale

Purchase online or on campus
(Hours: 9:00 AM - 2:30 PM)
Mix & Match Colors & Sizes

SHORT SLEEVE T-SHIRTS
1 FOR \$10
3 FOR \$24
5 FOR \$40
*ORIGINALLY \$13/EACH

Light Blue T-Shirt Navy T-Shirt Gray T-Shirt

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 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.*

GENERAL ANNOUNCEMENTS

 **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!



Lost and Found Clean-Out – Collect Items by Feb. 13

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.

Join Kids First Chicago and S.T.A.R.R Community for a Meet & Greet

Join Kids First Chicago for a relaxed in-person meet & greet on February 6th, from 4- 6 p.m., where you can chat directly with your local school board representatives. It's a great chance to ask questions, share your ideas, and get involved in our community's education! Come hang out with us at the Shine Bright Community Center, 8560 S Cottage Grove Ave, & enjoy some good conversation, and connect with neighbors who care about our schools. This family-friendly event will feature food and music. See you there!

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SOUTH SIDE, MEET YOUR CHICAGO SCHOOL BOARD MEMBERS



Join Kids First Chicago and S.T.A.R.R Community for a Meet & Greet with School Board Representatives in your region. Be a part of the collective power improving our neighborhood schools.



Jessica Biggs
District 6B



Dr. Ángel L. Vélez
District 9A



Therese Boyle
District 9B



Dr. Che "Rhymefest" Smith
District 10A

Parents and Community, bring your voice and expertise to the table! Students, help shape your education! This family-friendly event will feature food, music, and a chance to directly engage with your local school board members.

Register Here



FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 6TH
SHINE BRIGHT COMMUNITY CENTER
8560 S COTTAGE GROVE AVE, CHICAGO, IL 60619
4PM-7PM



**KIDS FIRST
CHICAGO**



Visit kidsfirstchicago.org/events for more events

CONOZCA A LOS MIEMBROS DE LA JUNTA DE EDUCACIÓN DE CHICAGO DEL LADO SUR



Únase a Kids First Chicago y S.T.A.R.R Community para conocer y saludar a los representantes de la Junta de Educación de su región. Sea parte del poder colectivo que mejora las escuelas de nuestro vecindario.



Jessica Biggs
Distrito 6B



Dr. Ángel L. Vélez
Distrito 9A



Therese Boyle
Distrito 9B



Dr. Che "Rhymefest" Smith
Distrito 10A

¡Padres y miembros de la comunidad, aporten su voz y experiencia! ¡Estudiantes, ayuden a dar forma a su educación! Este evento familiar ofrecerá comida, música y la oportunidad de interactuar directamente con sus miembros locales de la Junta de Educación.

Regístrese aquí



VIERNES 6 DE FEBRERO
CENTRO COMUNITARIO SHINE BRIGHT
8560 S COTTAGE GROVE AVE, CHICAGO, IL 60619
4PM-7PM



**KIDS FIRST
CHICAGO**



Visite kidsfirstchicago.org/events para más eventos

GLA Student Voice Committee

Congratulations to GLA's Charter Student Voice Committee participants on becoming the founding members of the district's first Charter Student Voice Committee! We had a great first meeting filled with thoughtful ideas and enthusiastic discussion. Our Student Voice Committee will give students a meaningful platform to contribute their perspectives, help guide school initiatives, and shape GLA. **We still have 4 spots available for 5th-8th grade students.** If your child is interested, please encourage them to apply [here](#) and attend our next meeting on February 6th.



Introducing STUDENT VOICE COMMITTEE

Join the Student Voice Committee!
We have four spots still available for 5th-8th students. This is a great opportunity to help shape the GLA experience and share ideas that strengthen our school community.

**Join us for our next meeting on Friday,
February 6th, 2pm - 3pm**

APPLY BY FEB 6TH



[HTTPS://TINYURL.COM/GLASVC](https://tinyurl.com/GLASVC)

Contact Ms. Durham for more information at edurham@glachicago.org

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!

GLA's Race to 10 Attendance Initiative started on August 25th. In four months, we have awarded three homerooms with a field trip of their choice and have had six parent raffle winners. **Purdue** visited Up Your Alley for Esports, **Illinois** took a trip to Navy Pier's Winter Wonderfest, and **Howard** visited Ninja Kidz Action Park.

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



Laps Completed					
100% Attendance Days					
10					
9	🚗				
8	🚗				
7	🚗	🚗	🚗	🚗	
6	🚗	🚗	🚗	🚗	🚗
5	🚗	🚗	🚗	🚗	🚗
4	🚗	🚗	🚗	🚗	🚗
3	🚗	🚗	🚗	🚗	🚗
2	🚗	🚗	🚗	🚗	🚗
1	🚗	🚗	🚗	🚗	🚗
	Purdue	UIC	FAMU	Princeton	Illinois

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 2 - February 27, 2026

2 Black History Month → JV and Varsity Boys Basketball AWAY @ Chicago Lab, 4:30 & 5:30 pm	3	4	5 100th Day of School! NJHS Induction Ceremony, 6:00 pm	6 Career Day
9	10	11	12	13 Rescheduled: K-4th Sneaker Ball, 4:00-6:00 pm 8th Grade: GoCPS High School Results Round 1 Release
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

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Great Lakes Academy Charter School | 8401 S. Saginaw Ave | Chicago, IL 60617 US

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