



Weekly GLA Family Newsletter

September 2, 2025

A Special Note on Safety

At Great Lakes Academy, safety is our top priority. When you drop off your child, you are entrusting us with their care under *in loco parentis*, we act in the place of a parent for every child here. That means no single person's convenience can come before the safety of all.

In just the first weeks of school, we've already seen unsafe behaviors during dismissal. This cannot continue. Safety protocols are not optional, they are required. If violated, as school officials, we will take every step necessary to protect our scholars and all members of the GLA community.

Tragic events, from an elementary school shooting just last week to ongoing tensions with federal law enforcement in our community, remind us how important it is to be vigilant. On our campus, patience, respect, and cooperation keep every child safe.

Thank you for partnering with us in this responsibility.

Ebonie Durham
Executive Director

STAFF SPOTLIGHT



Ms. Walker - 8th Grade Math Teacher

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

My favorite memory, so far, has been meeting my students and their families during the Block Party. Becoming a part of a community so engaged and prioritizing their scholars' education has been more than inspiring.

Tell us one of your proudest teacher moments.

When my 6th grader, new to our school and country, who didn't speak English, yet, jumped 3 grade levels on his iReady Diagnostics by EOY. Without an MLL teacher, I was able to find and develop content to assist this student in persevering through his challenges. A goal that seemed impossible, became reality.

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

I had an awesome 6th grade teacher, Mrs. Hill, and an awesome 8th grade math teacher, Mrs. Herlitz. Oh, and my Mother who refused to let me become a Massage Therapist... lol.

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

Originally from the Austin Community, but I have lived all across the Chicagoland area and its surrounding suburbs.

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

Winning talent shows singing alongside my sister.

What are your hidden or surprising talents?

Singing and changing tires... lol.

What's your dream vacation?

An Overwater Bora Bora Bungalow Suite!

PRINCIPAL'S CORNER

Dear Families,

Great Lakes Academy is a school where incidents of physical and verbal aggression by students are uncommon, but it does still happen. However, staff, students, and families all want a school environment where these incidents **never happen** so that students always feel physically and emotionally safe. When these incidents do occur, we see trends that typically lead to escalating situations:

- Students touching other students in playful but unwanted ways (e.g. grabbing,

- hitting, pushing, pulling, kicking, etc.);
- Students gossiping or saying mean things about other students;
- Students having a disagreement or conflict with another student that leads to using physical aggression when confrontation occurs;

Each of these issues can be minimized by teaching students the appropriate ways to respond. At GLA, we understand this and we frequently message to students the following:

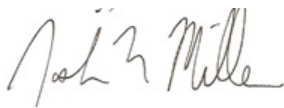
- We keep our hands and feet to ourselves.
- We say kind things to our peers.
- When we have a disagreement or conflict with a peer, we tell a staff member to help us resolve it.

Parents, especially those with students in K-3rd grade, it is crucial to teach students the importance of boundaries and physical space. Many of our younger students are still developing understandings of physical boundaries when interacting with others. We need families to support us by reinforcing the message of keeping our hands and feet to ourselves when we are at school. Additionally, students are developing awareness of their bodies in space. We often see younger students accidentally bump into other students because they are not paying attention to where they are going or they are still developing spatial awareness. Work with your children on paying attention to their surroundings in spaces with other people.

Just over a week ago, I spoke with our 5th-8th grade students about the expectations surrounding conflict and the appropriate ways to handle them. They are aware that any students that fail to abide by these rules will lose school privileges, such as incentive events, dress down days, and other fun. We also consistently message the expectations to our middle schoolers.

Parents, we need the support of our entire parent body to reinforce these messages. It will make an even healthier school culture for our student body, and help them continue their growth toward having healthy relationships as teenagers and adults.

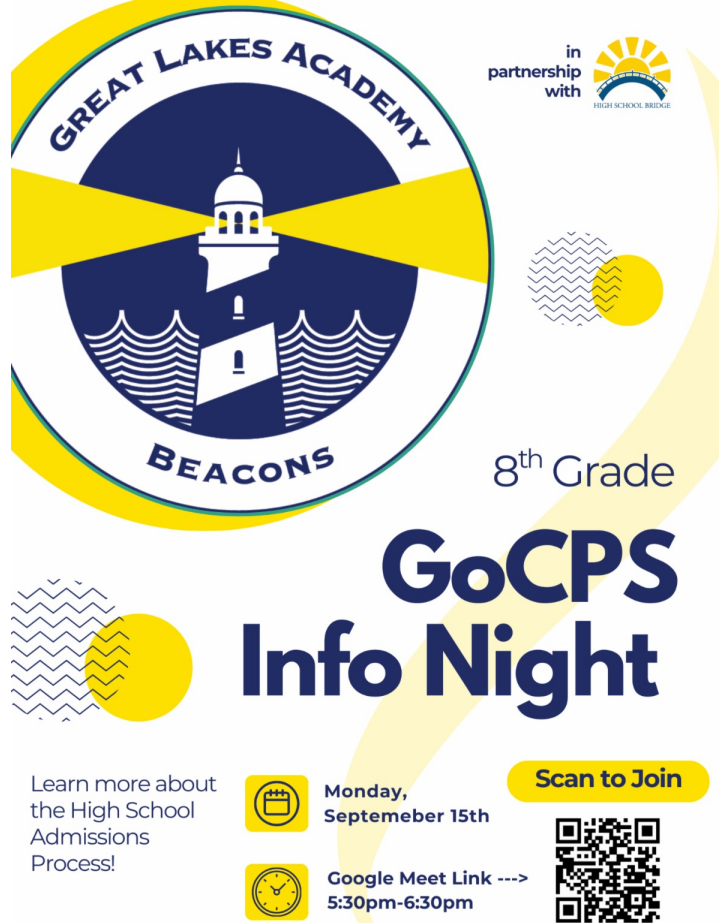
With Gratitude,



Principal Miller

NEW ANNOUNCEMENTS

[GoCPS 8th Grade Virtual Family Night](#)



Learn more about the High School Admissions process and GoCPS on Monday, September 15th from 5:30pm-6:30pm.

Virtual 8th Grade GoCPS Family Night
Monday, September 15 · 5:30 – 6:30pm
Time zone: America/Chicago
Google Meet joining info
Video call link: <https://meet.google.com/wrv-aswq-pen>
Or dial: (US) +1 319-505-8287 PIN: 242 872 575#

Please reach out to Ms. O'Leary, coleary@glachicago.org, for any questions.

Asbestos Operations and Management Plan

GLA keeps a copy of the school's Asbestos Operations and Management plan on file. For more information, see [this letter](#). If you would like to review this plan or have any questions, please contact the front office.

GENERAL ANNOUNCEMENTS

Ageless EyeCare Visit – September 3rd & 4th!

Ageless EyeCare will be visiting GLA on **Wednesday, September 3rd, and Thursday, September 4th** to provide vision services for our scholars.

Please note that **only students with completed consent forms will be eligible to be seen.**

If you have not yet signed up your scholar and would like them to participate, you may visit the GLA front office to complete a consent form.

For questions or additional information, please contact: **Sheree Thunherst** at

Race to 10 is On!

We're excited to launch our Race to 10 Attendance Challenge. 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. Let's work together to make every day count! Attendance matters!



We are excited to kick off

Race to 10

**the homeroom that achieves
100% attendance 10 times wins
a FREE field trip & 2 raffled
parent gas/Uber gift cards.**

Family Curriculum Night

Join us on Friday, September 12, 2025, from 2:30–4:30 PM for Family Curriculum Night! Families will meet teachers, explore our mission, and learn more about GLA's curriculum and programs. We look forward to seeing you there!



2025-26 5th - 8th Grade Parents

All 5th–8th grade scholars must bring their Yondr pouch to school daily. This is required for entry. Phones, watches, and earbuds must be placed in the pouch each day. Scholars without a pouch will receive a deduction. After 5 times, a \$25 fee will be charged to their account. Thank you for helping us maintain a focused, phone-free environment.

GLA Spirit Wear is Here!

We're excited to announce the launch of our very first GLA Spirit Wear Website! Show off your GLA pride with our unique collection of spirit wear.

⚠ Please note: This is not for purchasing uniforms.

NOTE: This is spirit wear only and if worn during the school day will be considered out of uniform for scholars.

Sale Dates: Now through **September 16, 2025**

Special Offer: Use code **SCHOOL25** at checkout for **25% off all merchandise**

Bonus: Enjoy **FREE shipping** on orders of **\$75 or more** – delivered right to your door!

[Click here to shop now!](#)

Or scan the QR code on the flyer to start shopping.

We're thrilled to finally offer spirit wear to our GLA families – don't miss out on this exciting opportunity!

Please reach out to Sheree Thunherst, sthunherst@glachicago.org, with any questions.



GLA Uniform T-Shirts – Order Now!

We're excited to offer GLA uniform t-shirts for sale! In addition to the GLA polos available in the front office, you can now order:

- Short Sleeve Uniform T-Shirts – \$13
- Long Sleeve Uniform T-Shirts – \$16

How to Order:

Please refer to the order form for available t-shirt options and sizing.

Don't miss out—pre-order now to make sure your scholar is fully prepared for the school year!

[Uniform Pre-order](#)

Please reach out to Sheree Thunherst, sthunherst@glachicago.org, with any questions.

GLA Polos Now Available!

GLA polos are now available for purchase at the GLA front office for just \$16 each. Available colors include light blue, navy, and yellow.

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**Sept 1 - Sept 26, 2025**

1 Suicide Awareness Month → Labor Day- Building Closed	2 ARC IRLA Assessments (new students)	3 ARC IRLA Assessments (new students) Ageless Eyecare	4 ARC IRLA Assessments (new students) Ageless Eyecare	5 ARC IRLA Assessments (new students)
8	9	10	11	12 Family Curriculum Night, 2:30-4:30 pm
15 Hispanic Heritage Month → Virtual 8th Grade GoCPS Family Night, 5:30 pm	16	17 Parent Advocacy Committee (PAC) Meeting, 5:00-6:30 pm	18	19
22	23 8th Grade GoCPS Application Opens	24 Comer Pediatric Medical Van Visit	25	26 Staff PD, No Classes

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