



The Weekly Wave

Weekly GLA Family Newsletter

January 27, 2026

STAFF SPOTLIGHT



Shirl Henry - Reading Interventionist

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

As a child, school was a refuge for me. The consistency and structure made me feel safe. My teachers were supportive and kind. I loved reading and writing, so having access to our school and classroom libraries was wonderful. I want that for my students. I want to share my love of reading. I want to teach students to read with purpose and understanding so that they can enjoy it. I want to show them that a good book could take them to other worlds and far-away places where they can learn about different cultures and schools of thought.

What keeps you coming back to GLA every

day?

What keeps me coming back to GLA every day are students! As a former middle school teacher, having the opportunity to work with primary grades has been enlightening. I'm happy when students learn a new reading or decoding skill because their esteem and confidence rises. As an interventionist, I get to work with students who learn differently. I love helping students discover what works best for them. That's why I come to GLA every day.

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

One of my favorite memories from school was being part of the academic team. It was a small team of the highest achieving students in my middle school. We were pulled out of class daily to learn and practice advanced work in multiple subjects. The work was challenging, but it pushed me to work harder. Our club sponsor would often bring us pizza and treats to snack on while we worked. We competed in scholastic competitions against other schools, and I made lifelong friends. Being in that group made me feel special.

What's your favorite thing to do in Chicago?

In Chicago, I love to dine at a trendy restaurant then go see a live music or theater performance. I live in Indiana now, so my favorite thing to do there is hike. There are many trails there. I also spend a lot of time walking along the beach and watching the sun set.

What are your hidden or surprising talents?

I'm a pretty good cook. I can make anything from a mouthwatering pan-seared ribeye steak with sautéed mushrooms, to chicken tikka-masala, to homemade ice cream!

What's your dream vacation?

My dream vacation is to backpack across Europe.

PRINCIPAL'S CORNER



Parents please join us for Family Curriculum Night on Friday, January 30th from 2:30-4:30pm. You will have the opportunity to connect with your child's teachers, explore their classroom, and participate in fun activities with your student. You will also have the chance to see what students have been working on and get a preview of what's ahead for this semester.

Come out to learn more about how to best support your student through their academic journey and have a little fun with the GLA community. You can find more information below in the Weekly Wave. We hope to see you there!



Ashley Miller

Principal Miller

NEW 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!

● ● ●

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

GENERAL ANNOUNCEMENTS

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

Family Curriculum Night



Family Curriculum

NIGHT

Join us for an exciting evening of hands-on learning and family fun! Explore what your child is learning through interactive activities like math challenges, literacy games, science experiments, and creative projects. Connect with teachers and enter to win raffle prizes throughout the night!

JAN. 30, 2026

FRI

2:30P-4:30P

Refreshments will be served
from 2:10-2:30

SEE YOU THERE!

Career Day at GLA

Great Lakes Academy's Career day is Friday, February 6th from 8:30 am-11am. Scholars will have the chance to meet real-world professionals, ask meaningful questions, and see firsthand the possibilities their futures can hold. Our future is calling, and our scholars need you to show up for them! Your presence helps our students dream bigger, stay motivated, and understand the many paths available to them as they grow.

If you are interested in participating as a Career Day presenter, please RSVP here by Friday, 1/23: <https://forms.gle/9xrdpPg7N1Um8AMp7>



Great Lakes Academy

OUR FUTURE IS CALLING!

SHOW UP FOR THEM!



Friday, February 6, 2026
8:30am - 11:00am

Join us for Career Day at Great Lakes Academy on Friday, February 6, 2026! We're bringing real world careers to our kids. Come inspire the next generation. Complete the attached form to RSVP by January 23, 2026.

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!

Culture & Climate Incentives

JANUARY

BEACON DASH PASS

BE GREAT

Jeopardy LIVE!

Eligibility Window: January 6 - January 28, 2026

HOW TO QUALIFY:

- ✓ Less than 3 absences (Excused or Unexcused)
- ✓ Less than 2 referrals
- ✓ Less than 3 resets
- ✓ Less than 3 uniform violations

QUALIFY & EARN A CHANCE TO WIN THESE AWESOME PRIZES!

\$50 ADDED TO YOUR PAYCHECK!

Dress Down PASS!

FREE SNACK!

GAME SHOW FUN! ELA • MATH • SPORTS • ENTERTAINMENT

WORK HARD. BE GREAT!

Gratitude • Respect • Excellence • Accountability • Truthfulness

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** spent today at 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 January 12th. 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	Illinois	Princeton

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

January 26 - February 20, 2026

26	27	28	29	30 K-8th Family Curriculum Night 2:30 - 4:30 PM
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

Follow Us on Social Media!



Share This Email



Share This Email



Share This Email

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

[Unsubscribe](#) | [Update Profile](#) | [Constant Contact Data Notice](#)



Try email marketing for free today!