



Connections

A WEEKLY NEWSLETTER FOR GRAND TRAVERSE ACADEMY FAMILIES

Dates to remember

Tuesday, September 12-Friday, October 6 – NWEA Testing Window

Wednesday, September 13 – School-Wide Picture Day (see details)

Thursday, September 14 – Fill the Pantry Jeans Day (see details)

Thursday, September 14 – TADL Bookmobile Day

Friday, September 15 – Elementary Choir Auditions, 12:15-2:15 pm, Choir Room (information attached)

Thursday, September 21 – Board of Directors Meeting, 6:00 pm, Lecture Hall

Monday-Friday, September 25-29 – Secondary Homecoming Week (watch for more information!)

Saturday, September 30 – High School Homecoming Dance (details coming soon!)

A note from Mrs. Floering

It is with great pleasure that we welcome you to Grand Traverse Academy's 24th year of providing excellence in character and academics! We have had an opportunity this week to get to know you and your family through classroom activities and carpool, and we love the character that we have seen.



It has been especially rewarding to hear our teachers' responses to their first week and how much they love their students. We adore our teachers too, and your kindness towards them and our staff through random acts of kindness has truly set the stage for another remarkable year.

Speaking of kindness, I want to personally thank our families for their patience during our first week of carpool. You were so gracious as we navigated our first rainstorm and kept all students safe. As you know, the process will get faster and better each week, and safety will always be our number one priority.

With that in mind, all exterior doors are kept locked during the school day. Please ring the buzzer outside the main doors and check in at the office if you need to visit. Now that we are into a routine, we ask that you utilize carpool or wait at the crosswalk before and after school rather than walking in for drop off and pick up, unless you need to come into the office. We have visitor tags for those times you may be coming into school as a volunteer.

Thank you for choosing Grand Traverse Academy. It has been my favorite place to be for 23 years – as a parent, teacher and administrator – and I hope you will feel the same.

Respectfully,

Michelle Floering
Superintendent

Carpool reminders

Thank you for your smiles and patience as you become accustomed to our carpool process. Please keep the following in mind to make it even more efficient, with safety as our top priority:

- In the morning, all parents are encouraged to use the carpool lanes vs. parking in the lot and walking children to the entrance. For safety reasons, Elementary children **may not** be dropped off in either parking lot by themselves.
- As you wait in the carpool lanes, take care not to block parking lot entrances/exits, as students, staff and other parents may be coming and going.

- In the afternoon, parents of high school students are encouraged to use the parking lot for pickup vs. going through the carpool lane. Park in a marked space vs. idling in the lot.
- When exiting at the front of the building, please do not cut through the parking lot to use it as an exit, as this can create a safety hazard.
- Please observe the posted speed limit on school grounds and watch for pedestrians.

With everyone's cooperation and understanding, we can continue to keep carpool smooth, efficient and safe for all. **Carpool procedures are attached to this newsletter for your convenience.**

Carpool help needed

A GTA dad is looking for someone to assist him with afternoon pick-up a couple of days a week. He lives on Pintail Drive, off of North Spider Lake Road. If you can help, please call Tom at (231) 218-1250.

Picture Day next week!

All preschool and K-12 students and staff will have school pictures taken on **Wednesday, September 13**. Online orders are highly encouraged to keep lines moving quickly and prevent errors. Simply scan the code below or visit the Timeless Image ordering site at <https://vando.imagequix.com/A9PRL9G>. Be sure to use the appropriate school code as follows:



Elementary: 5823

Secondary: 6323

Order forms were handed out at last week's Open House (and are available in either office) should you choose that option. Uniforms are required of all staff and K-12 students for school pictures.

Procedures for absences and late arrivals

The school day begins at 8:05 for Junior High and High School students and 8:15 am for Kindergarten and Elementary. Students should arrive at least five minutes in advance of their start time in order to get to class on time. If you arrive late, Elementary parents are asked to sign their children in at the office so that we can give them a late pass. Secondary students should stop in to the Secondary office for a pass; if a parent wishes to excuse a late arrival, they should call the

office at the number listed below. **If your child(ren) will be absent from school, please call the office (Elementary: 995-0665 or Secondary: 932-6038) as soon as possible to let us know.** Feel free to leave a voicemail message. Parents will be called to verify any absences that have not been called in. Thank you for your assistance in ensuring the safety of students at Grand Traverse Academy.

There's an app for that!

If you haven't already downloaded our app, get it free



at the Apple Store (<https://apple.co/3bCRz87>) or on Google Play (<https://bit.ly/3h9NIX0>). You'll find quick access to staff contact information, PowerSchool, the event calendar and more – plus, you'll receive news and important notifications, such as snow days, right at your fingertips!

Find us on social media

Grand Traverse Academy has both a [public Facebook page](#) and a [private Facebook group](#) for parents who are looking for school-related carpool assistance or wish to buy or sell gently used uniform pieces. Please find and like our Grand Traverse Academy public page to keep up with events and news. When joining the private group, we ask that you provide the names and grades of your GTA children for safety and identification purposes and review and agree to the group rules for approval.

Open House activities a huge success

Many thanks to all who participated in our "recycled" uniform and pizza sales at last week's Back-to-School Open House. The **GTA Family Council** raised a whopping \$1,441 between the summer and Open House sales of gently used uniforms. Many thanks to **Becky Johansson and Kristin Boogaard**, who spearheaded this project, and those who donated uniforms, volunteered to sort and display the items or work at the event. All proceeds will come back to GTA in the way of student enrichment activities. A big thanks also to GTA parents **Troy and Sarah Hall**, owners of That'sa Pizza, who provided takeout pizza for our families that evening. They donated \$270 from their sales to our school, which will directly benefit our students.



Elementary Band and Elementary & Mustang Choir information

Beginning Band. All students in the 5th & 6th grades have the opportunity to join the Beginning Band. Students must have their instrument and the Standard of Excellence – Enhanced Edition music book by **Monday, September 18.**



Elementary Choir. Students in the 4th and 5th grades who are interested in joining the Elementary Choir must turn in a permission slip by **Wednesday, September 13.** Auditions for new members will take place on Friday, September 15. Returning members need not audition but do need a permission slip. Rehearsals begin on Monday, September 18 and continue on Mondays and Wednesdays from 7:40-8:10 am.

Mustang Choir. Students in grades 6-8 may join the Mustang Choir, with no audition necessary. A permission slip is required by **Friday, September 15.** Rehearsals begin on Tuesday, September 19 and continue on Tuesdays, Thursdays and Fridays from 7:30-8:00 am.

Detailed information about both choirs and the band (including instrumental rental/purchase procedures and a choir permission slip) are attached.

Fill the Pantry Jeans Day planned

Did you know that GTA has a food pantry? The purpose



is to provide lunches for less fortunate students (and those who occasionally forget to bring their school

lunch). It's time to fill it up for the quarter and we welcome your help. On **Thursday, September 14,** we're holding our first of five Fill the Pantry Jeans Days for all students and staff. School-appropriate jeans (no holes, rips or legging style) may be worn with uniform tops in exchange for a \$2 per person donation. We thank you for your assistance, which is always voluntary.

Authorization needed for all medication

As we begin the new school year, please know that



according to state law, we must have a physician's authorization in order to administer prescription medication to your children at school, and a parent's authorization for over-the-counter medications

(including herbal homeopathic remedies). *The only exception is over-the-counter cough drops, which students may carry with them at school as needed.* Authorization forms are available in either office and can be faxed to and from the doctor's office if necessary. Completed forms should be dropped off in the office *by a parent*, along with the labeled medication. Thank you for your understanding.

Family Council volunteers needed

The GTA Family Council, a group of parent volunteers, is looking for parents and guardians who are interested in lending a hand for various school activities throughout the year. Check out the attached flyer and add your name to the list (contact information is provided at the bottom). Many hands make light work!

Easy ways to raise funds for GTA

Save your Oleson's receipts, please! Do you shop at



Oleson's Food Markets? Did you know that your cash register receipts are worth money for our school? With the Oleson's

Community Share Program, you earn "Community Share Points" each time you shop (with the exception of alcohol purchases). One point equals one cent, so if you spend \$100 on groceries, you've earned \$1 for GTA! These points add up quickly. It's easy to participate – simply save your receipts and deposit them in the box just to the right of the Elementary Office door.

Box Tops for Education. Box Tops for Education offers




SEE THIS...
SCAN
YOUR RECEIPT

a way to support our school with the purchase of many grocery items: The [Box Tops mobile app](#) allows you to scan

store receipts, find participating products and instantly add Box Tops to our earnings online. No more clipping, taping onto collection sheets and dropping them off at school!

What do I do with this?

Elementary parents received a card that looks like this



(cut at dotted lines above, complete and hang from rear-view mirror during carpool)

Last Name

First Name

Teacher's Name (Elementary)

in Open House packets last week. They were also available for Secondary parents. If you are new to GTA, this is what we use to quickly and safely identify which students may be picked up by which car in the afternoon carpool line. Add your youngest student's first and last name and the name of their

teacher (for Elementary students only), cut at the dotted lines and hang from your rear-view mirror when you arrive for pick-up. Additional or replacement tags are available in the offices.

Safe driving clinics available for teens

Ford's "Driving Skills for Life" provides skills beyond those taught in traditional driver education courses, which are an important step in keeping everyone safe on the road. See the attached flyer for details. The closest location is in the Lansing area but might be worth the trip.

Have a question?

No question is too silly or trivial to ask! Here's where to go for a fast answer to general questions about all things GTA, like uniforms, school pictures, carpool procedures, school hours and more:

Elementary Office: (231) 995-0665

Secondary Office: (231) 932-6038

info@mygta.us

For answers to more specific questions, please refer to the [list on our website](#). We want to be sure that you know exactly where to go for accurate answers.

NWEA testing next week

Students in grades 7-10 will be administered the NWEA tests in math and reading during their math and English language arts classes on Monday and Tuesday of next week. NWEA tests measure growth and proficiency in school subject matter and provide insights to help with instruction. Be sure that students arrive at school promptly to avoid any possible delays or disruptions in testing.

Online payments available on GTA website

Parents are encouraged to use our convenient and secure [Pay Online feature](#) on the GTA website to purchase milk passes, pay athletics and materials fees, preschool tuition, Quality Care fees and more! Note that if you add an item to your bag and change your mind, you must continue to the checkout page to remove it from the shopping cart. Likewise, if you want to add another item to your bag, you must do so from the checkout page as well.

BATA Route 31 returns

Parents looking for a school transportation option may want to consider the seasonal Route 31 provided by BATA during the school year. The morning bus stops at Grand Traverse Academy at 8:00 am and picks students up at 3:53 pm. All arrangements and questions should be directed to the BATA dispatch office at (231) 941-2324. Detailed fliers are available in the Elementary Office or you may visit BATA's [student transportation page](#) for more information.

Fall Junior Curling sessions offered

The Traverse City Curling Club is offering curling



www.tccurling.org.

instruction for students in grades 6-12. Session one runs for six weeks, beginning on September 14, at a cost of \$125; session two lasts seven weeks for \$140 starting on October 29. For more information or to register, visit



2023-24 Carpool Procedures

School Hours

	Monday-Thursday	Friday
Elementary (K-6)	8:15 am-3:35 pm	8:15 am-12:00 pm
Junior High (7-8)	8:05 am-3:30 pm	8:05 am-12:10 pm
High School (9-12)	8:05 am-3:25 pm	8:05 am-12:10 pm

Morning Drop Off

	Monday-Friday	Location
Elementary (K-6)	7:45-8:10 am*	South Entrance (Hammond Road)
Junior High (7-8)	7:45-8:00 am	North Entrance (Three-Mile Road)
High School (9-12)	7:45-8:00 am	North Entrance (Three-Mile Road)

*K-6 students arriving before 7:45 am will need to be registered with Quality Care. At 7:45, students who have arrived early will be able to join their teacher in their classroom.

Afternoon Pick Up*

	Monday-Thursday	Friday	Location
Grades K-4	3:35-3:55 pm	12:00-12:15 pm	South Entrance (Hammond Road)
Grades 5-6**	3:35-3:55 pm	12:00-12:15 pm	North Entrance (Three-Mile Road)
Junior High (7-8)**	3:30-3:45 pm	12:10-12:25 pm	North Entrance (Three-Mile Road)
High School (9-12)***	3:25-3:35 pm	12:10-12:25 pm	North Entrance (Three-Mile Road)

*Older siblings/riders will always be picked up at the same location as the youngest student in the car.

**At the North Entrance, if your youngest rider is in grades 7-8, use the lane closest to the school. If your youngest rider is in grades 5-6, use the left lane.

***High School students may be picked up in the North parking lot.

Grand Traverse Academy Elementary Choir
2023-2024 AUDITIONS FOR NEW MEMBERS
Friday, September 15, 2022 from 12:15-2:00 pm
New members will be contacted with their audition time

CHOIR REHEARSALS

Elementary Choir: 4th and 5th graders meet Monday and Wednesday 7:40-8:10
All rehearsals take place in the choir room by the small gym
Rehearsals begin the week of September 18, 2023

ELEMENTARY CHOIR

The Elementary Choir is comprised of students in grades 4 and 5 who are looking for more opportunities to develop their voice in addition to their regular music or band class. The choir is a year long experience for students with two concerts, one in December and the other in May. Rehearsals for Elementary Choir will be held Monday and Wednesday mornings from 7:40-8:10. Students must be able to attend both weekly rehearsals in order to be a member of the choir and perform with us in the concerts. Students who have not been in the Elementary Choir before must complete an audition in September, no preparation is required.
*No audition is required for returning members.

Questions can be directed to Stephanie Diephouse by email, diephouses@mygta.us
or phone, 932-6034.

If you are interested in being a member of the Elementary Choir please complete the permission slip below.

Please Cut and Return to Mrs. Diephouse by Wednesday, September 13, 2023

Student Name

Grade

Classroom Teacher

Parent Name

Phone Number

Grand Traverse Academy Mustang Choir Information

CHOIR REHEARSALS

Mustang Choir: 6th, 7th and 8th graders meet Tuesday, Thursday, Friday 7:30-8:00

All rehearsals take place in the choir room by the small gym

Rehearsals begin Tuesday September 19, 2023

MUSTANG CHOIR

The Mustang Choir is composed of students in grades 6-8. Students in this ensemble will continue developing their vocal skills. Mustang Choir is a year long experience for students who are interested in continuing or expanding their singing opportunities. Rehearsals for Mustang Choir will be held Tuesday, Thursday, and Friday mornings before school to allow students to continue participating in band or other electives during the school day. Students must be able to attend the three weekly rehearsals in order to be a member of the choir and perform with us in the concerts. The Mustang Choir has 3 performances during the year that take place in December, March, and May. No audition is required for this choir, but those interested should return the permission slip.

Questions can be directed to Stephanie Diephouse by email, diephouses@mygta.us
or phone, 932-6034.

If you are interested in being a member of the Mustang Choir please complete the permission slip below.

Please Cut and Return to Mrs. Diephouse by Friday, September 15, 2023

Student Name

Grade

Advisory/Classroom Teacher

Parent Name

Phone Number



Hello 5th and 6th Grade Parents,

Welcome back to another exciting year for our Grand Traverse Academy band program! If your child was in the band last year we know that they are eager to continue participating. If you are brand new to our school this year and missed the opportunity to be fitted for an instrument, we would like to extend an invitation to your son/daughter to join the Elementary Band for the 2023-24 school year. All students in 5th and 6th grades have the opportunity to join the band at GTA.

We recommend that families consider renting an instrument from Marshall Music to help ensure that students are able to learn to play with a quality functional instrument. Instrument rental costs range from \$30-\$85 a month, depending on the instrument. More information about Marshall Music's rental program can be found on their website at www.marshallmusic.com/rentals. This program is rent-to-own, so each monthly payment is applied to the total cost of purchasing the instrument. If you decide to purchase a used instrument, it is wise to have it inspected by Marshall Music so that any repairs can be made before school starts.

Be aware that instruments that you find in "big box" stores and stores that are not music stores are not acceptable band instruments. In addition, any instrument that is green, blue, purple, red, or any other color other than natural metal or wood colors are frustrating for beginners because they were not designed to last. Also, if you find an instrument on eBay or the internet, please call or email one of us so we can help advise you on brands. Many of the inexpensive models on the internet are advertised as real student instruments; however, they do not work for students.

Students must have a band instrument and Standard of Excellence Book 1 by Monday September 18, 2023 in order to participate in the 2023-2024 Elementary Band program. Marshall Music will be delivering all rental instruments to the school and we will pass them out to students beginning on September 18, 2023 during their band class.

Please consider your options for an instrument and financially plan for it. We have just a few school owned instruments available in cases of financial hardship. However, we encourage families to work with their children and find areas to cut back to make purchasing an instrument possible. When a child is willing to work or sacrifice for it, they will usually take the privilege more seriously and you'll see great results!

**Advanced Band students will need their instrument on the first day of band for their class.
Check with their teacher for the band schedule.**

Please feel free to reach out to us with any questions you may have!

Musically yours,

Stephanie Diephouse, Elementary Band and Music
(231) 932-6034 or diephouses@mygta.us

Glenn Floering, Director of Bands
(231) 932-6031 or floeringg@mygta.us



Safe. Loved. Learning

GTA Family Council

WHO WE ARE: GTA Family Council is made up of all of the parents, guardians, and caregivers within the GTA Community. If you have a student at GTA, no need to “join” because you are already a part of Family Council!

OUR MISSION: To create opportunities for families to get to know each other, for our students to have fun outside of school with their peers, and for the wonderful teachers and staff of GTA to feel appreciated.

WHAT WE DO:

- “Family Fun” events such as the back to school picnic, a Fall fun event, movie nights, sledding, ice skating parties, etc.
- Conference night dinners for the teachers and staff
- Recycled uniform sales
- GTA staff holiday gift drive
- End of year staff luncheon
- Read-a-thon
- Gifts for staff birthdays, and more!

FAQ's:

- **Is there a minimum commitment level?** Absolutely not! Get involved if, when, and how you are able.
- **Do I have to attend meetings?** We have 2-3 meetings a year. If you can make it...great! It is a wonderful way to get to know other parents. If not, no worries. As long as you are signed up to receive emails, you will be in the know of what is coming up and ways you can get involved.
- **I don't have a lot of extra time so can my involvement really make a difference?** YES! We want you to be involved in any capacity that you are able. Even if you can't help, just by coming to the events and showing support, you are making a contribution.

CONTACT INFO: To get connected, simply send your name and email address to:

Kristin Boogaard kristinboogaard@gmail.com 616.328.4646



REGISTER TODAY!

Free Safe Teen Driving Clinics

Sept. 23-24, 2023

Michigan State Police Academy
7150 Harris Dr., Dimondale, MI

**Morning and afternoon sessions
(choose only one session)**



Scan QR code or visit drivingskillsforlife.com
and click on
"Hands-On Training"



"This was an incredibly memorable event
and life-changing experience! My daughter
started off with an 'attitude' about going and
getting up so early, yet she currently won't stop
talking about how cool it was! We both
learned a lot!"

~Kim Pope, parent participant

Training Teens, Saving Lives

Spend a half day with your teen at the free
Ford Driving Skills for Life clinic for newly
licensed or permitted drivers.



Now in its 20th year, Ford Driving Skills for Life
provides skills beyond those taught in traditional
drivers education courses and is an important
step in keeping everyone on the roads safer. Ford
Motor Company Fund, the philanthropic arm
of Ford, and the Governors Highway Safety
Association (GHSA) are hosting the event, which
pairs teen drivers with professional instructors,
focusing on mobility issues and important driving
skills, including:

- Hazard Recognition
- Vehicle Handling
- Speed and Space Management
- Reaction Time
- Avoiding the Dangers of Distracted and
Impaired Driving
- Safe Smart Mobility

The free training program is conducted on
a closed course. Vehicles used during the
training will be provided.

Questions? Email FordDSFL@Ford.com