

Connections

A WEEKLY NEWSLETTER FOR GRAND TRAVERSE ACADEMY FAMILIES

Dates to remember

Tuesday, August 22 – 7th Grade Ice Cream Social, 5:00-5:45 pm; 9th Grade Orientation, 6:00-6:45 pm

Wednesday, August 30 – Back-to-School Open House (preschool-grade 12), 1:00-7:00 pm

Monday, September 4 – NO SCHOOL, Labor Day

Tuesday, September 5 – First (Full) Day for All Students, Preschool through Grade 12

A message from the superintendent

Dear GTA Families,

Thank you for a fantastic school year, which has just flown by! It was October 1 that you officially and so graciously welcomed me into this new role. After 23 years at GTA as a volunteer, parent, teacher, principal and now superintendent, I can say with certainty that this has been my favorite one yet. Our students, staff and parents are simply the best and I get to experience it all – from preschool to 12th grade – and am so inspired. We appreciate your spreading the word about our school and the environment that contributes to our students achieving excellence in character and academics. Please continue to share your experience with friends and family over the summer; we will do our best to open the door for their children to attend GTA.

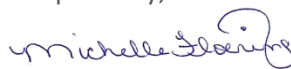
You may notice that “character” comes before “academics” in our mission statement. We believe that one’s character can be shaped by an environment that models exemplary behavior. Our students spend the majority of their days in school and develop character traits that can positively change the whole trajectory of their lives. Character is influenced by those we surround ourselves with, so modeling and reinforcing positive habits each day with our students has left lasting impressions within our community.

I would like to share an example that truly captures the essence of who we are: Our basketball team had been defeated at another school this year. It was a substantial loss and one that might have left heads hanging in discouragement, as the other team continued to press, even after a 30-point lead. However, after the game, two of our players noticed how disastrous the opposing school’s fans had left their bleachers and they watched as a custodian took pictures before starting the arduous task of cleaning up the mess. Our students took the time to help him clean the stands before heading home. When asked why they would do that, they said it was “just good sportsmanship.” That is character at its finest! We are so impressed with the quality of character that our students show, even when no one is watching and no accolades are to be gained.

As a testimony to the quality of our school, many of our alumni and former students have now enrolled their own children at Grand Traverse Academy and GTA graduates are now teaching in our classrooms. They still speak about “the GTA way” and how the foundation that was laid here helped them to recognize great character in others and to develop it themselves. They are still the first to say “good morning,” pick up trash from the floor – even when no one is looking – hold doors for each other and demonstrate kindness, and are teaching the next generation to do the same.

Our many accomplishments and significant improvements this year were only possible because of our dedicated families, teachers, support staff, office staff, maintenance staff, leaders and all those who are so deeply committed to our students. Have a wonderful summer and we will see you soon!

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Michelle Floering".

Michelle Floering
Superintendent

Summer office hours

Grand Traverse Academy will have office hours during summer break as follows: **Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays from 8:00 am-1:00 pm (closed July 4-6).** If you call outside of these hours, please leave a message and it will be returned the next day that the office is open. The office location will rotate depending on who is on duty; feel free to call us at (231) 995-0665 before stopping by so you know where to park conveniently. In addition, the **Secondary Office will be open during the same hours on June 19 and July 10** to greet students and accept payments for Summer School.



School uniform guidelines updated

Beginning with the 2023-24 school year, uniform pants and shorts (twill or chino fabric) may be purchased from any vendor, as well as our uniform suppliers ([EmbroidMe](#) and [French Toast Schoolbox](#)). As always, cargo-style, jeans, denim, leggings worn as pants, athletic/sweat pants, warm-ups and yoga pants are not permissible as uniforms. Uniform guidelines by grade level are attached to this newsletter. Please keep these guidelines in mind when purchasing at a store or second-hand.

EmbroidMe announces summer sales events

School has just dismissed for the summer but [EmbroidMe](#), our local uniform supplier, wants to help you get a head start on fall uniform purchases with two summer sales! Now through June 30, save 20 percent on *online purchases only* by using the code EARLYBIRD23 at checkout. From July 1-31 save 10 percent *either online or in the store* with the code SUMMERSALE23 at checkout.

First graders needed for Cherry Festival

Calling all 2022-23 first graders: Be a part of the fun at this year's Cherry Festival by joining Prince Joel and Princess Emma on the Grand Traverse Academy float! School floats participate in the Community Royale Parade on



Thursday, July 6 at 6:30 pm and the Cherry Royale Parade on **Saturday, July 8 at 11:15 am**. Parents may contact Stephanie Diephouse at (231)-649-8268 or Leah

Rasmussen at (248) 660-3309 to sign up or for more information. They would love to have a good-sized group of students there to represent our school!

Join our Carpool & Uniform Exchange Facebook page today!

As you begin making plans this summer for the 2023-24 school year, we encourage you to join our [special Facebook page](#) designed to help GTA parents share rides to and from school, find transportation for Career Tech and dual enrolled students, and buy and sell gently used uniforms. We only ask that you be kind and courteous, respect everyone's privacy, refrain from promotions or spam and please stay on the topic.

Last call for Huffman Basketball Camp

Don't forget that the Huffman Basketball Skills Camp takes place at Grand Traverse Academy next week! The camp is open to boys and girls in grades 7-12 on **Monday, June 19-Friday, June 23**. Trevor Huffman, a native of Petoskey, is Kent State University's all-time leading scorer, a 13-year overseas player and head coach, NBA point guard and an innovative skills trainer who holds camps around the state. For details and registration information, visit the [camp sign-up site](#).

New school hours reminder for 2023-24

Just a reminder that the start times for preschool and elementary students have been updated, starting with the 2023-24 school year, as follows:

	Monday-Thursday	Friday
Preschool (Mornings)	8:15 am-12:00 pm	8:15-11:45 am
Preschool (Full Days)	8:15 am-3:15 pm	8:15-11:45 am
Grades K-6	8:15 am-3:35 pm	8:15 am-12:00 pm
Grades 7-8	8:05 am-3:30 pm	8:05 am-12:10 pm
Grades 9-12	8:05 am-3:25 pm	8:05 am-12:10 pm

Important immunization reminder

Please be aware that certain immunizations are required for entry into school, while the meningococcal conjugate vaccine and a DTaP booster are given at ages 11-12. Please check with your health care provider to be sure that your children's immunizations are up to date. If you have opted against any of the required

vaccines, please contact the health department to receive a current, certified State of Michigan waiver form, or your health care provider for a medical contraindication form. We ask that either a copy of the appropriate form or current immunization record be provided to us by the end of July.

Vote daily through July 30 for Simply the Best!

Nominations are closed and voting has begun for the Record-Eagle's Simply the Best 2023. Grand Traverse Academy is in the running for Best School and Best Workplace, and



several of our teachers have been nominated for Best Teacher. If you are so inclined, we invite you to visit <https://www.record-eagle.com/simplythebest> and cast your votes in support of our school. Best School and Best Teacher can be found under the Children, Family & Education category. **Note: You may vote for an individual or organization once per day through July 30.** Winners will be announced in September.

Summer tutors available

Each summer, some of our teachers are available to tutor students who may need a little extra help in a subject or two or don't want to lose ground over the summer. Fees and locations are to be arranged between parents and teachers. Be sure to watch this space, as more may be added as the end of the school year approaches.



Ben Whipple - bwhips@gmail.com

GTA School Wide Guest Teacher
Math (except calculus) for Grades 5-12
English Language Arts for Grades 7-12

Mason Thomas - thomasm@mygta.us

GTA Upper Elementary Teacher
Math & Reading Tutoring for Grades K-6

Elise Ballinger - ballingere@mygta.us

Certified Teacher/GTA Reading Interventionist
Reading Tutoring for Grades K-4

Important summer events for incoming 7th and 9th graders

An ice cream social for incoming 7th graders is planned for **Tuesday, August 22 from 5:00-5:45 pm**. This event will include fun activities with classmates, class schedule distribution and locker combination practice to prepare for the first day of school. From **6:00-6:45 pm on the same evening**, incoming 9th graders and their parents should plan to attend an orientation session that will provide important information about high school. Watch for more information to follow via email and RSVP with the number attending to hsoffice@mygta.us so that we may plan accordingly.

Students of the Month named

Congratulations to our last Students of the Month for the 2022-23 school year:

Elementary – Work Ethic

Emmie Geyer, kindergarten, is the daughter of



Kimberlee Dobek and Michael Geyer. Ms. Hartwig reports that *"Emmie displays incredible work ethic in all areas throughout the school day. She always takes her time to ensure she is producing quality work. Not only does she make sure she is working slowly enough to do her best, she also*

manages her time well enough to finish her work in a timely manner. I have been able to hang countless work samples of hers on our class 'Wow Wall.' Emmie inspires her classmates to work hard and do their best, and I am so grateful to be her teacher!"

Jack Nothstine, kindergarten, is the son of Kari and Kent



Nothstine. Ms. Johnson says that *"Jack is a kid of character. He comes to school ready to work and learn. He is a phenomenal illustrator and takes his time to include lots of detail, including labeling the tiniest of items. His sentences always match his words and he takes the time to make sure he has*

uses spacing and punctuation. I hardly ever ask him to stay focused because his work is important to him and he is proud of everything he turns in. Thank you, Jack, for being kid of character in our classroom!"

Myla Davids, grade 3, is the daughter of Heather and Chad Davids. Mrs. Craker states that *"Myla is a very hard worker. She arrives in class ready to learn and does her personal best in all her work. She encourages others to remain focused because she takes her learning opportunities seriously. She is also an advocate for her own learning by asking questions and for clarification when she needs extra support."*



Alex Pihlaja, grade 5, is the son of Kristy Wilkerson and Daniel Pihlaja. Mr. Alejandro writes that *"when Alex starts an assignment or project, he finishes it. Alex has great work ethic because he is continuously on task and engaged in the lesson. If Alex is confused or misunderstands a topic, he asks questions or works diligently to find the correct information. Alex takes his time doing assignments, is focused the whole time and completes his work with quality in mind. Alex is a great role model for what it mean to have good work ethic."*



Secondary – Professional Work Habits

Henry Courtright, grade 7, is the son of Christopher and Anna Courtright. Ms. Koteskey says that *"Henry not only excels in his preparedness and time management, he also showcases a positive attitude and exceptional communication skills when interacting with both peers and teachers."*



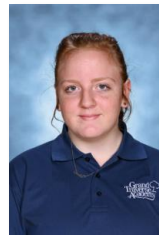
Lily Wilcoxon, grade 8, is the daughter of Paul and Sarah Wilcoxon. Ms. Myers reports that *"Lily is a stellar student. She comes to class every day on time, well-organized and prepared for the day's lesson. She is attentive, engaged, helpful, knowledgeable, eager to learn, and just as eager to have fun while learning. She produces consistently excellent work and doesn't let challenges stop her from diving into difficult tasks. I think we should clone her!"*



Isaac Whipple, grade 9, is the son of Janet Whipple and Ben Whipple. Ms. Ramsey states that *"Isaac is a model of professional work habits. He arrives early to class, works diligently and completes all of his assignments. I never have to worry about whether or not he is on task. If he has questions, he is sure to ask."*



Sadie Brown-Bannon, grade 10, is the daughter of Elizabeth Johnson and Andrew Bannon. Mr. Floering writes that *"Sadie is on time each day with her instrument, music and a pencil, prepares for each rehearsal to sound her best and is a joy to be around! If she is going to be away, she communicates well and in a timely manner. She is the consummate professional as a student."*



2023-24 School District Calendar published

We are excitedly planning for the 2023-24 school year and wanted to share with our families the calendar of school days, breaks, scheduled half days, etc. so that you may plan accordingly. The calendar is attached and may be found on the [GTA website](#) for future reference.

TADL Summer Reading Challenge begins

The Traverse Area District Library has announced the details of its annual [Summer Reading Challenge](#), open to all ages, and running from June 19-July 30. **A kickoff party is planned at the East Bay Branch on Three-Mile Road on June 20 from 11:00 am-1:00 pm.** Stop in to enjoy live music with Rebekah Jon, free sno-cones, games, snacks and prizes, as well as the TADL bookmobile! This is a free event for all ages.



Have a wonderful summer!

Grand Traverse Academy

School Uniforms by Grade Level

Uniform Pieces	Kindergarten/Elementary (Grades K-6)	Junior High (Grades 7 & 8)	High School (Grades 9-12)
May Be Purchased From Any Vendor			
Dress Shirts or Blouses	White (Oxford button-down or Peter Pan collar)	White (Oxford button-down or Peter Pan Collar)	White (Oxford button-down or Peter Pan Collar)
Turtlenecks (under uniform shirts, sweaters, vests or pullovers only)	White (long-sleeved)	White (long-sleeved)	White (long-sleeved)
T-Shirts (underneath uniform shirts only)	White or Light Blue	White or Cobalt Blue	White or Navy Blue
Physical Education Uniform	n/a	Optional for Junior High Shorts: Navy Blue Shirt: Plain Gray or GTA Spirit Wear (available at EmbroidMe, or periodically at GTA)	Shorts: Navy Blue Shirt: Plain Gray or GTA Spirit Wear (available at EmbroidMe, or periodically at GTA)
Pants, Shorts	Navy Blue	Navy Blue	Khaki
Must Be Purchased From Approved Vendors (French Toast Schoolbox, EmbroidMe)			
Polo Shirts with Logo	Light Blue	Cobalt Blue	Navy Blue
Skirts	Blue Gold Plaid (French Toast Schoolbox) or Navy Blue	Blue Gold Plaid (French Toast Schoolbox) or Navy Blue	Blue Gold Plaid (French Toast Schoolbox) or Khaki
Jumpers, Skorts	Blue Gold Plaid (French Toast Schoolbox) Navy Blue	n/a	n/a
Cardigan, V-Neck or Sweater Vest with Logo	Navy Blue	Navy Blue	Navy Blue
Fleece Full-Zip Vest, Quarter-Zip Pullover or Full-Zip Jacket with Logo	Navy Blue	Navy Blue	Navy Blue
Blazer	n/a	n/a	Navy Blue (French Toast Schoolbox)

- Pants shall fit properly at the waist, be hemmed to an appropriate length, and must not be overly baggy or tight.
- Men's dress shirts shall be tucked in.
- Not acceptable: Cargo-style pants or shorts; jeans; denim; leggings worn as pants; athletic/sweatpants; warm-ups and yoga pants.
- Shorts, jumpers, skirts, and skorts shall be no shorter than the top of the knee when standing for secondary students and within two inches of the knee for elementary students.
- Shorts for Secondary PE may have a white stripe down the side; the inseam may be no less than six inches in length.
- Shirts for Secondary PE may not be cut or altered in any way.
- Tights or leggings worn under skirts must be blue, gray or white.
- Shoes should be closed-toed, comfortable and without wheels
- Blazers, if worn, must be worn with a button-down oxford, not a polo shirt.
- Scarves and ties may only be worn with a white button-down shirt.
- Only naturally occurring hair colors are permitted.



2023-24 District Calendar

August	28	Teacher Professional Development Day
August	30	Open House (Preschool - Grade 12) 1:00-7:00 pm
September	4	No School - Labor Day
September	5	School Starts Grades K – 12
September	13	Picture Day K-12
October	17	Picture Retakes K-12
November	3	End of First Quarter
November	20	No School for Students - Teacher Professional Development Day
November	21-24	No School - Thanksgiving Break
December	22-29	No School - Holiday Break
January	1 & 2	No School - Holiday Break
January	3	School Resumes
January	3	Open Enrollment Period Begins
January	15	End of Second Quarter
January	17	Half Day - Secondary Students Only
January	17	Junior High Mini Schedule (6th graders)
January	18	Half Day for Students K-12
January	19	No School for Students - End of First Semester
February	19	No School - Winter Break
March	7	Open Enrollment Period Ends
March	8	Enrollment Lottery Drawing
March	22	End of the Third Quarter
March	25-29	No School - Spring Break
April	1	School Resumes
May	27	No School - Memorial Day
June	4	End of Fourth Quarter
June	6	Half Day - Secondary Students Only
June	7	Last (Half) Day for Students K-11
June	10-14	Snow Day Make Up Days