



Connections

A WEEKLY NEWSLETTER FOR GRAND TRAVERSE ACADEMY FAMILIES

Dates to remember

- **Thursday, April 14** – *Elementary Purple Up Day*
(see related story on page 2)
- **Friday, April 15** – *NO SCHOOL, Good Friday Holiday*
- **Tuesday, April 19** – *Family Council Meeting, 6:30 pm, Multipurpose Rooms 3 & 4*
- **Saturday, April 23** – *Mother-Son Bowling Party, 10:00 am-12:00 pm (registration form attached)*

Mother-son bowling event planned

Our semi-annual Mother-Son bowling party at Incredible Mo's is planned for **Saturday, April 23 from 10:00 am-12:00 pm**. GTA boys in preschool-grade 6 are invited to this fun event, accompanied by their mom, stepmom, guardian, grandma, aunt, etc. The \$15 cost per person includes one game of bowling with shoes, a \$5 arcade card, two slices of pizza and soda. A registration form is attached to this newsletter. If you have questions or wish to register via email, please contact Mrs. Dean at deanm@mygta.us.



Our character is showing!

On the Friday before Spring Break, GTA's National Honor Society had some leftover doughnuts to sell, so a 7th grader in Mr. Brutzman's Junior High STEAM Workshop decided to treat his entire class. What a generous demonstration of Caring for his fellow classmates!

It's prom season – tickets on sale now

The Class of 2023 is busy planning their 2022 prom, "The Enchanted Forest," open to all GTA juniors and seniors. This year's event will take place at Blue Bridge Event Center. Tickets are \$35 per person in the Secondary Office and include a photo booth and a DJ for dancing.



Please complete our Glasser Quality School Survey

Grand Traverse Academy was established in 2000, with the principles of Dr. William Glasser's Choice Theory® at its foundation, and was declared a Glasser Quality School in 2005. Choice Theory teaches us that healthy relationships are critical for learning and we do our best to foster them by recognizing and meeting each student's basic needs. Every spring, we survey our stakeholders to provide feedback on the current status of our school as it relates to Choice Theory. If you have not done so already, parents and staff members are invited to complete this [short questionnaire](#) and submit your responses by Friday, April 15. Thank you for your participation!

Elementary doughnut sales begin

The National Honor Society will be selling doughnuts to Elementary students on Friday mornings from 7:45-8:10 am in the Intention Room (at the entrance to the Elementary Wing). The cost is \$1 for several varieties.

Annual spring testing next week

Various state and federally mandated tests will be administered next week, designed to provide important information about our students' knowledge and their progress toward being career- and college-ready upon graduation. **Students in grades 3-7 will need headphones to take these tests.** If your child did not bring a pair to school in September, they can be purchased at local discount stores for \$10 or less. Elementary test dates will be determined and communicated by classroom teachers; Secondary tests will take place as follows:

	April 11	April 12	April 13	April 14
Grade 7		M-STEP	M-STEP	M-STEP
Grade 8	M-STEP	M-STEP	PSAT	M-STEP
Grade 9			PSAT	
Grade 10			PSAT	
Grade 11	M-STEP	M-STEP	SAT	WorkKeys

Important note: Although the Michigan Department of Education's goal of 95 percent participation in state assessments was waived last year due to COVID-19 restrictions, we are told that this is no longer the case for 2022 and **there is no acceptable way under state or federal law to allow a student opt-out of state assessments.** Please see the attached letter from the state superintendent for details.

Elementary to celebrate Purple Up! Day on April 14

April is the Month of the Military Child. Here at Grand



Traverse Academy, Elementary students are invited to celebrate their fellow military connected GTA

students on **Thursday, April 14** by wearing purple shirts. We will take this time to celebrate these amazing children for their selflessness and sacrifice as they serve our country as part of a military family. Why purple? Purple references the joint environment of the military, encompassing all service branches: Active Duty, Reserve, National Guard and Veterans. Purple combines each branch's colors into one: The Air Force, Navy and Coast Guard all use shades of blue, the Army uses green, and the Marines use red. Special Purple Up! t-shirts are [available here](#) for those interested in purchasing one.

GTA board opportunity

Grand Traverse Academy's mission is for all students to be safe, loved and learning as they achieve excellence in character and academics. If you have an interest in helping our school to achieve our mission, have 2-5 hours per month to devote to guiding our school, are a team player and will serve as a community ambassador for GTA, you might be a great candidate for our board of directors. The board is currently accepting applications for a member to replace one whose term will expire this year. The term will begin at the start of the 2022-23 school year. For more information or to apply, please contact board trustee Katherine McCulley at mcculleyk@mygta.us.

Upcoming Elementary music events announced



Our K-6 students have been busy practicing for several spring performances. Be sure to mark your calendars for the following events:

Grades 3-4 Spring Sing

Monday, April 18 - Small Gym

6:00 pm - Bostick, Cherup, Wilson

7:00 pm - Drost, Kipke, Olsen, Winowiecki

Grades 1-2 Spring Sing

Tuesday, April 19 - Small Gym

6:00 pm - Bohrer, Flores, Hamrick

7:00 pm - Dennis, Gorton, Howery, Rogers

Elementary Band

Friday, May 6 - Big Gym

11:00 am - All Elementary Band Students

Elementary Choir plus Mustang & Chamber Choirs

Friday May 20 - 6:00 pm, Big Gym

Young Explorers "Informance"

Friday, May 27 - 11:00 am, Small Gym

Students' tips for success in junior high

Mr. Kinney's 7th grade advisory had a recent assignment of writing a letter to current 6th graders, providing advice that might help these incoming junior high students adjust to their new "position." They all did a fantastic job but one stood out as something we definitely wanted to share! Find it attached to this newsletter.

Will your children return to GTA in the fall?

Though current GTA students do not need to reapply to attend Grand Traverse Academy during subsequent school years, we do wish to know if your children will be returning in the fall as we plan for next year. Parents of current students are asked to complete our [Intent to Return Survey](#) and submit it at your earliest convenience. If you have a child who will be entering kindergarten in the fall, or will be transferring to GTA from another school, an [enrollment application](#) must be completed. Questions may be directed to Amy Truesdell at truesdella@mygta.us or 932-6900.

Absences or late arrivals

If your child will be late for school or absent for the day, please notify the office by 8:30 am. Parents will be called to verify any unexcused absences after that time.

Elementary 995-0665 / Secondary 932-6038

GTA Family Council corner

Next meeting date set. The next regular meeting of Grand Traverse Academy's Family Council is planned for **Tuesday, April 19 from 6:30-7:30 pm in Multipurpose Rooms 3 & 4.** Items for discussion include Read-A-Thon Success, Family Movie Night and Staff & Teacher Appreciation Week. They hope to see you there!

Fund raising opportunity continues. Purchase a Mirror Image Car Wash & Detailing single basic wash coupon for \$7 or a book of five for \$35. Full-service interior & exterior washes are available for \$25 each or \$125 for a book of five. Profits will support the GTA Family Council's efforts throughout the school year. Follow this link to purchase: [GTA FC CAR WASH](#) or contact Kristin Boogaard at (616) 328-4646 or kristinboogaard@gmail.com.

👉 Reminder: Be sure to join the Facebook group, **GTA Family Council**, to stay connected and keep up to date with all the amazing service opportunities.

Important carpool reminders

Parents and other carpool drivers are asked to please remember the following when picking up and dropping off students:

South parking lot. Parents picking up their elementary children in the south lot after school are reminded to *please meet them at the crosswalk and walk them to your car.* We have had a lot of children attempt to dart across the driveway as soon as they see their parent's car – while other cars are driving through the carpool lane – which is a huge safety hazard. Please help us to keep our students safe by asking them to wait for you to retrieve them if you use the lot.

North carpool. Parents dropping off children at the north entrance in the morning are reminded to *please use the carpool lanes instead of using the parking lot to unload.* The lot is busy with pedestrians in the morning, including student drivers, who may not always be

watching for non-parking traffic traveling through the lot. The carpool lanes are a very quick and efficient way to transport children to and from school.

Mighty Mustangs Preschool enrolling now

Grand Traverse Academy's Mighty Mustangs Preschool



is a licensed, tuition-based program created especially for 3-5-year-olds. Through fun, hands-on activities, children develop the confidence,

creativity and critical thinking skills that prepare them for success in kindergarten and beyond. Full- and half-day sessions are available and parents may choose two, three or five mornings or days per week. For more information or to apply for enrollment, visit the Mighty Mustangs [Preschool webpage](#). And feel free to share this information with other parents of preschool-aged children!

Student health screenings important

One of our goals at GTA is for students and staff to stay healthy. It continues to be so important for parents to screen for illness **before** bringing your children to school, especially for COVID symptoms, and keeping them home if necessary – both in their best interest and for the protection and safety of others. Screening for COVID-19 symptoms daily before leaving for school is helpful in keeping our GTA community healthy. Please check for the following and keep children home with any of these symptoms: *fever of 100.4 degrees or higher, sore throat, new uncontrolled cough, new absence of taste or smell, diarrhea, vomiting, abdominal pain or new onset of a severe headache (especially with a fever).* Please keep children home with any of these symptoms. **This is especially important on returning from break, particularly if your family has done any traveling.** The Grand Traverse County Health Department screening protocol is attached for your convenience. Please screen your children and follow the protocol if any symptoms are noted. Thank you!

College for Kids registration open

Northwestern Michigan College's summer College for Kids is back and registration opened this week. There are over 100 exciting and educational courses sure to please kids from ages 3-17, from Lights, Camera, LEGO® to America's Boating Course and everything in between! View the entire course catalog and [register here](#). Financial assistance is available from NMC.

Dad Jokes from Don



Did you know that the designers
of the Ferris Wheel and the
Merry-Go-Round never met?

They traveled in different circles.

Ongoing events

Elementary Pizza Days – Every other Wednesday, as follows: *March 23, April 13 & 27 and May 11 & 25 (order and pay by the preceding Monday using forms sent home on off weeks), \$1.50 per slice of pepperoni or cheese*

Secondary Pizza Days – *Every Thursday (order and pay on Tuesdays using forms provided in Advisory classrooms), \$1.50 per slice of cheese or pepperoni*

Secondary Bagel Sales – *Every Wednesday in Multipurpose Rooms 3 & 4, 7:40-8:00 am, \$2 each for several varieties*

Elementary Bagel Sales – *Every Wednesday in the Intention Room (at the entrance to the Elementary Wing), 7:45-8:10 am, \$2 each for several varieties*

Secondary Doughnut Sales – *Every Friday in Multipurpose Rooms 3 & 4, 7:40-8:00 am, \$1 each for several varieties*

Elementary Doughnut Sales – *Every Friday in the Intention Room (at the entrance to the Elementary Wing), 7:45-8:10 am, \$1 each for several varieties*

Fill the Pantry Jeans Day – *May 26*

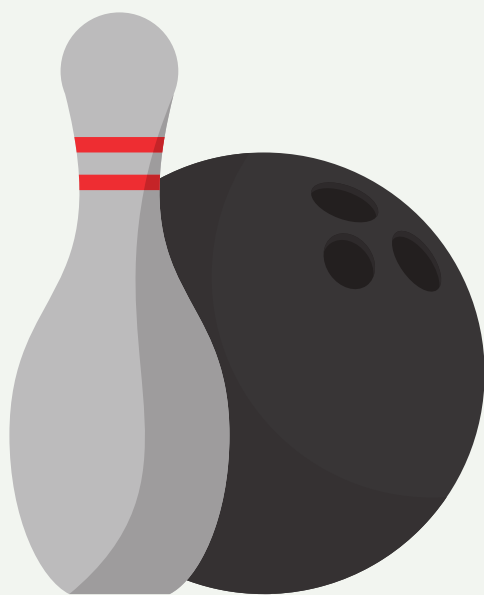


Mother-Son Event

Saturday, April 23, 2022

10:00 am-12:00 pm

at Incredible Mo's



**Just \$15 per person
includes:**

- 1 game of bowling and shoes
- \$5 arcade card
- 2 slices of pizza and soda

Please turn registration form into the office by Friday, April 15, 2022

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Name of Mother and Son (s)

Number of persons attending _____ x \$15.00= _____ Total



STATE OF MICHIGAN
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
LANSING

GRETCHEN WHITMER
GOVERNOR

MICHAEL F. RICE, Ph.D.
STATE SUPERINTENDENT

March 2022

Dear Parent/Guardian:

This spring, your school district will administer state tests designed to provide important information on student knowledge and their progress toward being career- and college-ready upon graduation. These tests are required by federal and state laws. Schools and districts use these test results for school improvement initiatives that benefit all students. The data gathered from this year's state assessments will help educators support students when they return to school in the fall and move forward with their education.

Students in grades 3-10 will participate in the following assessments:

- M-STEP English language arts (ELA) and mathematics (grades 3-7)
- PSAT 8/9 (grade 8)
- M-STEP science and social studies (grades 5 and 8)
- PSAT 8/9 (grade 9)
- PSAT 10 (grade 10)

Grade 11 students will participate in the Michigan Merit Examination (MME), which has three required components:

- SAT with Essay college entrance exam that also measures student knowledge on Michigan's ELA and mathematics standards
- ACT WorkKeys work skills assessment
- M-STEP science and social studies

We want your child's state testing experience to be as stress-free as possible. Your positive outlook will support your child's experience. State assessment results do not affect your student's grades in any way.

On average, a student will spend no more than three hours on M-STEP mathematics and ELA tests. Students in grades 5, 8, and 11 will spend an additional two hours on science and social studies testing.

While we support parents in making choices for their children, there is no acceptable way under state or federal law to allow an "opt-out" of state assessments. Last year, requirements for 95 percent participation in state assessments were waived by the U.S. Department of Education due to COVID-19 restrictions. However, this is no longer the case for 2022. Students who are not assessed this year will count against their school's required 95 percent participation rate, which will create an incomplete picture of their school's performance.

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Annual assessments provide information on how Michigan students perform and how well our schools and districts are teaching students compared to those in other communities, states, and nations. Assessment results help target support and resources to students and schools that need them most. The test results may also inform future state education programs and policies to help Michigan students catch up on learning that was delayed due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

You can find information about Michigan's state assessment system on our website, www.michigan.gov/oeaa. An excellent place to start is with the handout "Michigan's State Assessment System: What It Is, What It Means, and What It Offers." Additional information, including how to help your child prepare for M-STEP testing, is available at www.michigan.gov/mstep.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Michael F. Rice". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Michael F. Rice, Ph.D.
State Superintendent

Dear _____,

Welcome to seventh grade! I'm sure you'll have a blast in Mrs. Dix's advisory. Being in middle school might seem a little intimidating at first, but I assure you it's not. I wrote down a few tips that I could've used coming into seventh grade, I hope they'll be useful!

1) WEAR DEODORANT. You have gym everyday now. It'll come in handy, trust me.

2) Try your best to stay organized. It might be easy for the first few days, but it gets pretty hectic after around the first week. It's useful to have a good system down to organize all your papers. Teachers usually can give you extra copies, but it's much better to just not lose them in the first place.

3) Don't be afraid to ask for help when you need it. It's not embarrassing. I'm pretty sure you'd rather pass a class and ask a few questions rather than fail one because you were too nervous or embarrassed to speak up.

4) Make new friends. It sounds cheesy, I know. But, your best friend probably won't be in every class of yours. Class is a lot better if you have someone to talk and hang out with.

5) Do your best to avoid drama; and especially, PLEASE don't be the one causing it, for all of our sakes. Honestly, as far as I've seen, middle school has been less dramatic than elementary; please don't change that. Being distracted by pity and pointless miscommunications can really affect you.

6) Be nice to the teachers. I think we've already traumatized them enough. Seriously though, be respectful. It's fine to joke with them, but don't be flat-out rude.

7) Here's a few things about each of the teachers:

- Mrs. Dix forgets names A LOT during the beginning of school. But, that's fine because she'll probably give you candy for it.

- Profe has a serious obsession with diet Mtn. Dew. He calls it his "Profe go-go juice". He also really hates cats for some reason. He thinks they're going to take over the world one day.

- Mr. Brutzman may throw a flying squishy pig named Bruce at you, but it's normal; don't worry. It's a really fun class if you let it be. It can get pretty chaotic at times, but that's the best part.

- Mr. Van Patten is absolutely amazing. He might talk about how the deer are out to get him or about the best way to get away with a crime, but just remember that he's 65 million years old which makes him super wise. Just don't question it.

- Ms. Koteskey LOVES coffee. She's also pretty laid back. She might say you look like Shrek, but she means it with all good intentions (I think).

All in all, just have fun! Don't stress too much about it (also, the lockers really aren't that terrifying after a little while).

Student Screening

Screen your child for the following symptoms daily before they leave for school. Follow the directions below if your child displays symptoms or has been exposed.

Symptoms

- ☐ Temperature 100.4 degrees Fahrenheit or higher
- ☐ Sore throat
- ☐ New uncontrolled cough that causes difficulty breathing (for students with chronic allergic/asthmatic cough, a change in their cough from baseline)
- ☐ Diarrhea, vomiting, or abdominal pain
- ☐ New onset of severe headache, especially with a fever

Close Contact/Potential Exposure

In the past 14 days, has your child:

- ☐ Had close contact (within 6 feet of an infected person for at least 15 minutes) with a person with confirmed COVID-19; OR
- ☐ Had close contact (within 6 feet of an infected person for at least 15 minutes) with person under quarantine for possible exposure to COVID-19; OR
- ☐ Had a travel history

If the answer is **YES** to any of the **symptom** questions, keep your child(ren) home from school.

If the answer is **YES** to any symptoms question and **YES** to any close contact/potential exposure question, call the school as soon as possible to let them know the reason your child(ren) won't be there today. Call your healthcare provider right away. If you don't have one or cannot be seen, go to www.mi.gov/coronavirustest or call 2-1-1 to find a location to have your child(ren) tested for COVID-19.

If the answer is **YES** to any of the symptom questions, but **NO** to any close contact/potential exposure questions, your student may return based on the guidance for their symptoms (see "[Managing Communicable Diseases in Schools](#)"):

- Fever: at least 24 hours have passed with no fever, without the use of fever-reducing medications
- Sore throat: improvement (if strep throat: do not return until at least 2 doses of antibiotic have been taken);
- Cough/Shortness of breath: improvement
- Diarrhea, vomiting, abdominal pain: no diarrhea or vomiting for 24 hours
- Severe headache: improvement

DISCLAIMER: This screening tool is subject to change based on the latest information on COVID-19.

Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention; [Screening K-12 Students for Symptoms of COVID-19: Limitations and Considerations](#)

