



Connections

A Weekly Newsletter
for Grand Traverse Academy Families



September 11, 2020

Volume 21
Issue 1

Dates to remember

Wednesday, September 16 –School Pictures Taken
(school uniforms required)

Thursday, September 24 – School-Wide Fill the Pantry
Jeans Day

A message from Mr. Coneset

Welcome Back, GTA Families:

All of us at Grand Traverse Academy are so excited for an incredible 2020-21 school year! Although there are some differences in how we are able to operate, rest assured that we are still the best choice for all students to be safe, loved, and learning as they achieve excellence in character and academics. We appreciate your patience and understanding, from our spring closure to in-person learning, to the first week of a new school year.



We have spent quite a bit of our preparatory weeks welcoming new staff, delving more deeply into how Choice Theory can assist individuals as well as the GTA community through the COVID-19 situation, and preparing for some new protocols in order to open for in-person learning. Your children, as well as your partnership, have remained the focus of our decision-making processes – we are all in this together because we all want great things for our children, now and in the future. And now that we have the first week under our belts, please know that we have heard and appreciate your suggestions, as well as those from our staff, about how our modified afternoon carpool can continue to be tweaked to be as efficient as possible. **We are making changes that will be effective beginning Monday, September 14** that will improve the process for our parents while keeping our students as safe as possible while they await pickup. The detailed plan will be sent

to parents, so be sure to check your email box before Monday.

More than ever before, I am so very proud to be part of the GTA community, as I believe it is the most supportive, collaborative, and caring environment for us all. I look forward to continuing to improve on what we do better than any other school in the area: excellence in character and academics!

Peace,

Jim

P.S. We miss our students who have opted to start the school year with the Edgenuity online program. Be sure to join our [GTA Online Learners Facebook page](#) to stay connected.

Picture Day next week

School pictures for all students will be taken next Wednesday, September 16.



Uniforms are required on Picture Day, as school will be in session. Our dress code applies, including naturally occurring hair colors only and no face piercings other than the ears. For your convenience,

Timeless Image has provided two ways to preorder picture packages online to save time during photography: Either [visit their website](#) or scan the QR code above to place and pay for your order in advance. Order codes are 5820 for Preschool & Elementary and 6320 for Junior High & High School. **Students who are attending classes online** and want to have their picture taken are welcome to stop by any time between 9:00 am and 12:00 noon (Elementary – Small Gym, Secondary – Big Gym). Secondary students will also receive a student ID card. *Be sure that your children are wearing a uniform top or plain white dress shirt and follow our dress code for their picture.* Please call either office with questions.

Fill the Pantry Jeans Day planned

Did you know that GTA has a food pantry to provide lunches for less fortunate students (and those who occasionally forget their lunch at home)? It's time to fill it up for the

quarter and we welcome your help. **Thursday, September 24**, 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.

Elementary Choir and Band information

Band. An open invitation is extended to students interested in joining the Elementary Band (grades 5 & 6). Due to COVID-19 restrictions, we are unable to hold our annual instrument rental meeting with Marshall Music. However, parents of interested students may still rent a band instrument through the store by visiting their website and following the [step-by-step instructions](#). And for students who are not sure how to choose just the right band instrument, they have created a [helpful video](#) to aid in the decision-making process. Families are also welcome to purchase an instrument through the used marketplace. The deadline for having an Instrument and Standard of Excellence Book 1 Enhanced Version is September 21. A letter with details about beginning band has been distributed to 5th and 6th graders and is attached for your convenience.

Upper Elementary Choir (grades 4-6). Unfortunately, COVID-19 concerns have suspended the Upper Elementary Choir program during the first semester. We will review our decision prior to the semester end and communicate any changes to parents at that time.

Girls Take Action completes program

Girls Take Action is a running club for girls in grades 3-6 that is offered in the spring at GTA. Due to the COVID-19 shutdown, we did the teaching part of the program virtually and the girls ran on their own. We had a final run scheduled, but it was during the shutdown as well, so it was postponed until August 11. Eight young ladies come out to participate in the final event. They ran 2.1

miles, received their t-shirt and water bottle, and enjoyed a popsicle treat! All were grateful for the opportunity to be socially distanced, together! Many thanks to Middle Elementary teacher Courtney Kipke, for her continued leadership with this confidence-building program for girls.

Prepaid milk passes available

Milk is available for all students to purchase for lunch. The cost for K-12 is still just 10¢ per half-pint of white or chocolate. Families interested in prepaying for the year may purchase a milk pass, *good for one half-pint per day*, in either office, at a cost of just \$14.60. Milk delivery begins on Monday, September 14.

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 and 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.

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 to 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 and resulted in over \$1,000 in earnings last year, even though the school year was cut short. It's easy to participate – simply save your receipts and place them in the collection box inside the Elementary entrance (to the right of the office door).

Box Tops for Education. If you're familiar with the Box



SEE THIS...
SCAN
YOUR RECEIPT

Tops for Education coupons found on many grocery items, you may have noticed

something new: Now you can earn cash for our school in a whole new way. A new [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! You may still find the traditional Box Tops coupons on certain items, which can still be brought in to either office, but be sure to download the app now to take advantage of this easy way to earn free money for GTA!

Procedures for absences and late arrival

The school day begins at 8:05 for Junior High students, 8:10 am for High School, 8:30 am for Kindergarten and for 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 tardy pass. Secondary students should go directly to class, unless their parents accompany them into the office to excuse their tardy. **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 voice mail message if the offices haven't opened yet. 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!

Michigan immunization law compliance

As you may be aware, a change to the immunization law in Michigan took effect on January 1, 2015. Waivers are still allowed but must be signed every year by the child's physician, in the case of a medical waiver, or the health department for non-medical waivers. According to the law, children without signed waivers whose immunizations are not up to date and on file in the office must be excluded from attending school. More information is available in the Elementary office.

Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act

All parents and guardians of students under 18 have the right, pursuant to the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 (FERPA), to examine the official records, files and data of the school district which pertain to their student. Procedures for examination and hearings to challenge anything in the record may be made available upon request.

Notice of nondiscrimination

Grand Traverse Academy is committed to equal opportunity and does not discriminate on the basis of age, race, color, religion, sex, handicapping conditions or national origin, including limited English proficiency. No person is excluded from participation in, denied the benefits of, or otherwise subjected to unlawful discrimination on such basis under any educational program of student activity or of any employment.

Any inquiries or complaints regarding discrimination or equal access (Title II, Title VI, and VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Title IX) may be directed to the superintendent, Grand Traverse Academy, or Section 504/Americans with Disabilities Act Coordinator and will be dealt with promptly and in accordance with law.

Pesticide advisory to parents/guardians

State of Michigan law requires that schools and daycare centers that may apply pesticides on school or daycare property must provide an annual advisory to parents or guardians of students attending the facility.

Please be advised that Grand Traverse Academy utilizes an Integrated Pest management (IPM) approach to control pests. IPM is a pest management system that utilizes all suitable techniques in a total pest management system with the intent of preventing pests from reaching unacceptable levels or to reduce an existing population to an acceptable level. Pest management techniques emphasize sanitation, pest exclusion and biological controls. One of the objectives of using an IPM approach is to reduce or eliminate the need for chemical applications of pesticides. However, certain situations may require the need for pesticides to be utilized.

As required by State of Michigan law, you will receive advance notice regarding the non-emergency application of a pesticide such as an insecticide,

fungicide or herbicide, *other than a bait or gel formulation*, that is made to the school grounds or buildings during this school year. In certain emergencies, such as the infestation of stinging insects, pesticides may be applied without prior notice to prevent injury to students, but you will be notified following any such application.

Advance notification of pesticide applications *other than a bait or gel formulation*, will be given by at least two methods. The first method will be by posting at the main entrance to the school, which is located at 1245 Hammond Road East, Traverse City, MI 49686. The second method will be by posting on the school's website.

Please be advised that parents or guardians of children attending the school are entitled to receive the advance notice of a pesticide application, *other than a bait or gel formulation*, by first class United States mail postmarked at least three days before the pesticide application, if they so request. If you prefer to receive the notification by first class mail, please contact the school office. Please be advised that parents or guardians of children attending the school may review the school's Integrated Pest Management program and records of any pesticide application request.

Annual report available

Grand Traverse Academy's most recent Annual Education Report is available in the Transparency Reporting section of the school website, www.mygta.us. Just click on the State of Michigan logo and then scroll down to Annual Education Report.

