



TITLE I

Parent Handbook

2011-2012

Our Vision

GCA students will emerge as confident leaders in the 21st century global community through a holistic approach of rigorous academic standards, a commitment to individualized learning paths, and attention to the growth of each student as a civic-minded contributor both within their local communities and beyond.

Our Mission

The mission of the Georgia Cyber Academy is to provide an exemplary individualized and engaging educational experience for all students by incorporating school and community/family partnerships coupled with a rigorous curriculum within a data-driven and student-centered instructional model. Student success will be measured by valid and reliable assessment data, parent and student satisfaction, and continued institutional growth within the academic community.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

- Title I Office Staff
- Georgia Parent Information and Resource Center (PIRC)
- What Every Parent Should Know About – the No Child Left Behind Act
- Parent Notification to Parents of Students Attending Title I Schools
- Title I Parent Involvement Policy
- Complaint Procedures under the No Child Left Behind Act
- Notification of Rights under The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA)
- Protection of Pupil Rights Amendment (PPRA) – Annual Notice to Parents

Title I Program Personnel for 2011-2012

Lawanna Twaites	Manager /Title I Programs Ltwaites@gacyber.org	678-656-8052
Shirley Waldow	Family Engagement Coordinator K-8 – Parent Involvement Swaldow@gacyber.org	770-922-9774
Tim Melvin	Family Engagement Coordinator High School – Parent Involvement Tmelvin@gacyber.org	678-850-6556
Teren Jackson	Family Resource Coordinator Homeless Liaison Tjackson@gacyber.org	678-850-1550

OFFICE FAX: 404-684-8816

Georgia PIRC – Parent Information and Resource Center

Purpose: The purpose of the PIRC program, as established by the US Department of Education, is to help implement successful and effective parental involvement policies, programs, and activities that lead to improvements in student academic achievement and strengthen partnerships among parents, teachers, principals, administrators, and other school personnel in meeting the educational needs of children.

PIRC's State Challenge: *To empower, enable parents throughout the State of Georgia, to play ever more influential and personally meaningful roles in the education of their children.*

PIRC offers information about:

- School Transition**
- School Report Cards**
- Georgia Testing**
- Reading to Your Child**
- Helping Your Child Succeed in High School**
- Homework Help**
- Parent-Teacher Conferences**
- 100 Tips for Parents**
- PTAs and PTOs**
- NCLB**
- And much more....**

Visit the website: www.georgiapirc.net
Contact: Metro Atlanta Region
Communities in Schools of Georgia
600 West Peachtree Street, Suite 1200
Atlanta, GA 30308
Julie Hollis, Coordinator
jhollis@cisgeorgia.org
(800) 838-5784

Parent Notification to Parents of Students Attending Title I Schools

The Elementary and Secondary Act (ESEA) as reauthorized by the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 requires that parents be notified that they may request information about teacher qualifications. In compliance with the requirements of ESEA statute, GCA informs you, as a parent, that you may request information about the professional qualifications of your student's teacher(s). The following information may be requested:

- 1) Certification
- 2) College major/graduate certification or degree held by teacher
- 3) Qualifications of the paraprofessional, if paraprofessional services are provided

In addition, parents will be notified by the school when their child has been taught for four consecutive weeks by a teacher who is not highly qualified.

If you wish to request information concerning your child's teacher's qualifications, please contact Lawanna Twaites at: LTwaites@gacyber.org

NCLB 1111(h) (6)



PARENT INVOLVEMENT POLICY

CONNECTING OUR SCHOOL COMMUNITY

Revised May 2011

Consistent with section 1118 of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), GCA will put into operation programs, activities, and procedures for the involvement of parents. These activities will be planned and operated with meaningful consultation by parents of participating children.

Title I regulations state that school staff and parents must be involved in the planning, revision and monitoring of certain components of a Title I program. Annual surveys and parent meetings conducted in May elicit parent feedback of our programs, activities and parent involvement opportunities. Parents are invited via weekly newsletter and event calendar to the bi-monthly parent meeting also. Attendees at these parent meetings will assist in the review of data, Title I budget decisions, review and revision of parent involvement; school wide Title I and other school plans.

GCA builds capacity for strong parental involvement in order to ensure effective involvement of parents and to support a partnership among the school, parents and the community to improve student academic achievement, through the following activities

1. Assist parents in understanding the State's academic content standards, student academic achievement standards and academic assessments
2. Provide materials and training to help parents work with their children to improve their children's achievement, such as literacy training and using technology, to foster parent involvement
3. Educate school personnel, with the assistance of parents, in the value and utility of contributions of parents, how to reach, communicate and work with parents
4. Coordinate and integrate parent involvement programs and activities with other organizations such as ELL, Special Education, and other programs
5. Insure that information related to school and parent programs, meetings and other activities is sent to parents in a format and language that parents can understand
6. Provide reasonable support for parent involvement activities as parents may request.

We provide many opportunities to learn about our school. Visit www.k12.com/GCA for all event details!

- *In-person events:*
 - Information sessions...A representative from the school presents information about school policies and procedures. Q&A finishes the hour-long session.
 - Meet 'n Greets...Casual events for current and prospective families. Have an ice cream treat on us and learn about the school from a staff member and hands on parents at the event.
 - Q&A sessions...A new way to learn about GCA! Drop in to a location and ask questions about GCA. Information packets available.
 - Field Trips...Outings around the state that current and prospective families attend to socialize with their schoolmates. Some are just for fun; some are educational and hands on. All are welcome no matter where they are in the state. They are in different locations all over month to month.

- *Online information:*
 - Pre-recorded Information sessions
 - Live Online sessions

- *Parent Orientations* – All **newly enrolled families** are required to attend a Parent Orientation.
 - In-person sessions and online sessions (live and recorded) will be available for your convenience!

Parent Workshop Program

K12, Inc., GCA teachers and administrators will be leading parent workshops, a schedule of which will be released throughout the year. These sessions will take place through *Elluminate Live!*, a web-based meeting tool. We encourage all parents to attend and ask questions. We will also record these sessions for parents to listen to later.

Informal (Yahoo!) Discussion Boards

GCA parents may find the discussion boards through the Yahoo! groups to be fun and informative. These groups require membership (free) and are often moderated by a GCA parent. To join any group, just paste the link (see below) into your browser and you will be prompted to join. If you already have a Yahoo! account, you may use the same login to join these groups.

The GCAK12 Group provides resources for GCA families who live in Georgia with opportunities to attend/coordinate field trips, clubs and social events where students and families can get together near their homes: <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/GCAK12/>

The Georgia Cyber Academy Group discusses curriculum-specific and other academic issues regarding GCA and the K12 curriculum: <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/GeorgiaCyberAcademy/>

Disclaimer:

Yahoo! Groups are public venues and are not school sponsored and are not moderated by school staff or administration. Although some school staff and administration may be members and participate in the yahoo groups, GCA does not take responsibility for any information (or misinformation) given out by parents.

GCA Parent Booster Club

Mission Statement: The Booster Program is intended to foster local engagement through activities that promote leadership, school pride and outreach, and meaningful connections for families through the efforts of its parent based volunteer group. **Families will be given the opportunity to sign up for the Booster Club and indicate their interest in one or more of the following categories of participation:** **LEADERSHIP:** Possible activity could include advising school leadership, maintaining a folder and publishing a Booster Club newsletter. **SPIRIT:** Promoting school pride, teacher appreciation, and organizing spirit week activities. **NEW FAMILY CONNECTION:** Helping to welcome new families, moderate new family section, sending Booster Club info to new families. **FAMILY ACTIVITIES:** Sponsor clubs and groups and participate in building the community.

FAMILY DIRECTORY, EVENTS, CLUBS, AND OUTINGS

Family Directory

The family directory is accessed through the OLS. This secure directory allows parents to find other parents by location, student grade levels, special interests, and more. Parents may search by name and other information in a parent profile. The new directory is automatically updated as a parent's status changes, such as moving across town or changing an e-mail address. There is an online opt-in/out capability on the OLS so parents can easily include or exclude themselves from the directory.

School Events

Various school events will be announced regularly through teachers, school leadership, and on our online school calendar at www.k12.com/GCA.

GCA Special Interest Student Clubs

Student Clubs will be offered to students in order to enhance their complete educational experience at GCA. These clubs will facilitate student socialization, community, and in some cases, service. Clubs will be sponsored by GCA teachers who will welcome parent participation as well. Teachers will provide a more detailed list along with contact information as the school year progresses. More clubs may be added as interests arise. Suggestions are always welcome.

GCA recommends that students participate in no more than 1-2 clubs at a time to ensure that students are able to participate fully in the club. Any materials or supplies (outside of supplied curriculum) needed for the club are the responsibility of the family and will not be provided by K12 or GCA. Participation in

clubs can be counted towards attendance time. Ask the club leader which subject(s) the time can be logged under.

GCA Outings

GCA teachers and the K12 Community Manager arrange a variety of special outings for students and families throughout the school year. You are encouraged to attend *any* outing happening in your area or outside of your area. You are not limited to attending only your homeroom teacher's outings. While attendance is not required for students/parents, these special outings provide wonderful opportunities to meet teachers, make new friends, and talk with fellow parents about school. Parents are responsible for the cost of transportation and any other fees if applicable. The fees are often negotiated and reduced for our school. Time spent on an outing can be counted as attendance in the related subject or under the Supplemental Activities category... For example, a trip to a science museum can count as attendance time in science. All outings are posted on the GCA online calendar of events. Any student may attend any outing he or she wishes by submitting an RSVP, if required, to the teacher listed in the outing information. Parents, or adults whom they specify, are responsible for supervising children at all times during an outing. Siblings and friends are welcome to attend as well. Each teacher hosting the outing must have a Liability Release Agreement from each student at the site of the event. All attending children must bring a signed and completed Liability Release Agreement if the teacher does not have one or one will be provided to complete at the event.

Complaint Procedures under the Elementary and Secondary Education Act

A. Grounds for a Complaint

Any individual, organization, or agency (“complainant”) may file a complaint with Georgia Cyber Academy (GCA) if that individual, organization, or agency believes and alleges that GCA is violating a Federal statute or regulation that applies to a program under the Elementary and Secondary Education Act as reauthorized by the No Child Left Behind Act. The complaint must allege a violation that occurred not more than one (1) year prior to the date the complaint is received, unless a longer period is reasonable because the violation is considered systemic or ongoing.

B. Federal Programs for Which Complaints Can Be Filed

1. Title I, Part A: Improving Basic Programs Operated by Local Educational Agencies
2. Title I, Part B, Subpart 3: Even Start Family Literacy
3. Title I, Part C: Education of Migrant Children
4. Title I, Part D: Prevention and Intervention Programs for Children and Youth Who Are Neglected, Delinquent, or At-Risk
5. Title I, Part F: Comprehensive School Reform
6. Title II, Part A: Teacher and Principal Training and Recruiting Fund
7. Title II, Part D: Enhancing Education Through Technology
8. Title III, Part A: English Language Acquisition, Language Enhancement, and Academic Achievement
9. Title IV, Part A, Subpart 1: Safe and Drug Free Schools and Communities
10. Title IV, Part A, Subpart 2: Community Service Grants
11. Title IV, Part B: 21st Century Community Learning Centers
12. Title V, Part A: Innovative Programs
13. Title VI, Part A, Subpart 1, Section 6111: State Assessment Program
14. Title VI, Part A, Subpart 1, Section 6112: Enhanced Assessment Instruments Competitive Grant Program
15. Title VI, Part B, Subpart 2: Rural and Low-Income Schools
16. Title IX, Part E, Subpart 1, Section 9503: Complaint Process for Participation of Private School Children

C. Complaints Originating at the Local Level

As part of its Assurances within ESEA program grant applications and pursuant to Section 9306 of ESEA, an LEA accepting federal funds must have local written procedures for the receipt and resolution of complaints alleging violations of law in the administration of covered programs. Therefore, a complaint should not be filed with the Georgia Department of Education until every effort has been made to resolve through local written complaint procedures. If the complainant has tried to file a complaint with GCA to no avail, the complainant must provide the Georgia Department of Education written proof of their attempt to resolve the issue with GCA

D. Filing a Complaint

A complaint must be made in writing and signed by the complainant. The complaint must include the following:

1. A statement that GCA has violated a requirement of a Federal statute or regulation that applies to an applicable program;
2. The date on which the violation occurred;
3. The facts on which the statement is based and the specific requirement allegedly violated (include citation to the Federal statute or regulation);
4. A list of the names and telephone numbers of individuals who can provide additional information;
5. Whether a complaint has been filed with any other government agency, and if so, which agency;
6. Copies of all applicable documents supporting the complainant's position; and
7. The address of the complainant.

The complaint must be addressed to:

Mr. Matt Arkin, Head of Schools
Georgia Cyber Academy
503 Oak Place, Suite 540
Atlanta, GA 30349

E. Investigation of Complaint

Within ten (10) days of receipt of the complaint, Georgia Cyber Academy (GCA) will issue a Letter of Acknowledgement to the complainant that contains the following information:

1. The date GCA received the complaint;
2. How the complainant may provide additional information;
3. A statement of the ways in which GCA may investigate or address the complaint; and
4. Any other pertinent information.

If additional information or an investigation is necessary, GCA will have sixty (60) days from receipt of the information to complete the investigation and issue a Letter of Findings.

If the Letter of Findings indicates that a violation has been found, a timeline for corrective action will be included.

The sixty (60) day timeline may be extended if exceptional circumstances occur.
The Letter of Findings will be sent directly to the complainant, as well as the other parties involved.

F. Right of Appeal

If an individual, organization, or agency is aggrieved by the final decision of GCA, that individual, organization, or agency has the right to request review of the decision by the Georgia Department of Education.

For complaints filed pursuant to Section 9503 (20 U.S.C. 7883, complaint process for participation of private school children), a complainant may appeal to the Georgia Department of Education no later than thirty (30) days from the date on which the complainant receives the Letter of Findings. The appeal must be accompanied by a copy of the GCA's decision and include a complete statement of the reasons supporting the appeal.

Georgia Cyber Academy

Complaint Form for Federal Programs under the Elementary and Secondary Education Act as reauthorized by the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001

Please Print:

Name (Complainant):	
Mailing Address:	
Phone Number (Home):	
Phone Number (Work/Cell):	
Date on which violation occurred:	
Statement that the GCA has violated a requirement of a Federal statute or regulation that applies to an applicable program (include citation to the Federal statute or regulation) (attach additional sheets if necessary):	
The facts on which the statement is based and the specific requirement allegedly violated (attach additional sheets if necessary):	
List the names and telephone numbers of individuals who can provide additional information.	
Has a complaint been filed with any other government agency? If so, provide the name of agency.	
Please attach/enclose copies of all applicable documents supporting your position.	
Signature of Complainant:	Date:

Mail this form to:

Ms. Veronica Clemons, Business Operations Administrator
Georgia Cyber Academy
503 Oak Place, Suite 540
Atlanta, GA 30349

Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA)

Parents have certain rights with respect to student educational records pursuant to the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA). These rights transfer to the student when the student becomes an “Eligible Student” upon reaching the age of 18 or attending a school beyond the high school level. The rights of Parents and/or Eligible Students are summarized as follows:

- The right to inspect and review student educational records maintained by the school. A Parent or Eligible Student seeking to inspect and review educational records should submit a written request to the Principal of the school in which the student is enrolled or last attended.
- An opportunity to seek amendment of educational records alleged to be inaccurate, misleading, or otherwise in violation of the student’s privacy rights. In the event a parent/guardian wishes to challenge a student’s educational record, he or she can review Policy JR on the school district’s website.
- The right to notice of what information the school has designated as directory information and a reasonable time after such notice to inform the school that the designated information should not be released without prior consent. See the following section for information on the release of directory information.
- The right to consent to the disclosure of personally identifiable information contained in student educational records (other than directory information), except to the extent, FERPA authorizes disclosure without consent. Disclosures for which the consent of the Parent or Eligible Student is not required include the following:

(A) School Officials with a legitimate educational interest. A school official is any school employee or any contractor, consultant, volunteer, or other party to whom school system services or functions that would otherwise be performed by school employees has been outsourced or assigned. A legitimate educational interest is a need that arises out of a school official’s role in providing educational services, including instruction, evaluation, therapy, etc., to a student, or out of the performance of administrative, supervisory, clerical, or other responsibilities prescribed by the school system;

(B) to other school systems in which the student seeks or intends to enroll as long as the disclosure is for purposes related to the student’s enrollment or transfer;

(C) to specified officials for audit or evaluation purposes;

(D) in connection with the student’s application for financial aid;

(E) to state and local officials pursuant to State law;

(F) to organizations conducting studies on behalf of the school;

(G) to accrediting organizations;

(H) to parents of a dependent student as defined in section 152 of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986;

(I) to appropriate parties in connection with an emergency if knowledge of the information is necessary to protect the health or safety of the student or other persons; and

(J) in compliance with judicial order or pursuant to any lawfully issued subpoena when the educational agency makes reasonable effort to notify the Parent or Eligible Student in advance of the compliance. In limited circumstances, an order or subpoena may require the District to disclose information without notifying the Parent or Eligible Student.

A Parent or Eligible Student who believes his or her rights under FERPA may have been violated may file a complaint by writing the Family Policy Compliance Office. Complaints must contain specific allegations of fact giving reasonable cause to believe that a violation of FERPA occurred. Complaints should be addressed as follows:

**Family Policy Compliance Office
U.S. Department of Education
400 Maryland Avenue, SW
Washington, D.C. 20202-5920**

Privacy: Parents and Protection of Pupil Rights Amendment (PPRA)

The Protection of Pupil Rights Amendment affords Parents and Eligible Students rights and protections regarding instructional materials used in educational programs, surveys administered to students, and the conduct of certain physical examinations. The rights and protections established by the PPRA include:

- **Instructional Materials:** The Parent or Eligible Student has the right to inspect any instructional material used as part of the educational curriculum for the student; and
- **Surveys:** The Parent or Eligible Student has the right to inspect any survey created by a third party, prior to the administration or distribution of the survey and the right to opt the student out of participation in any such survey. In addition, before a student may be required to submit to a survey revealing “Protected Information,” the written consent of the Parent or the consent of the Eligible Student is required. Finally, a minor student may not volunteer to submit to a survey revealing “Protected Information” without providing the Parent of the student with prior written notice of the administration of the survey and an opportunity to opt out of the survey. “Protected Information” is information in the following categories:
 1. Political affiliations or beliefs of the student or student’s parent;
 2. Mental and psychological problems of the student or the student’s family;
 3. Sex behavior and attitudes;
 4. Illegal, anti-social, self-incriminating, and demeaning behavior;
 5. Critical appraisals of other individuals with whom respondents have close family relationships;
 6. Legally recognized privileged or analogous relationships, such as those of lawyers, physicians, and ministers;
 7. Income (other than that required by law to determine eligibility for participation in a program or for receiving financial assistance under such program); or
 8. Religious practices, affiliations, or beliefs of the student or parents.

A Parent or Eligible Student who believes his or her rights under PPRA may have been violated may file a complaint by writing the Family Policy Compliance Office. Complaints must contain specific allegations of fact giving reasonable cause to believe that a violation of PPRA occurred.