



**2011-2012 PARENT INVOLVEMENT POLICY**

Revised November 14, 2011

**Our Vision**

GCA students will emerge as confident leaders in the 21<sup>st</sup> century global community through a holistic approach to 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 students by incorporating school and community/family partnerships coupled with a rigorous curriculum along with 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.

**Parental Involvement Program**

The goal of the Title I parental involvement program is to increase student achievement. GCA parents are actively involved and engaged in their child’s education on a daily basis. The “Parent Involvement Plan” below outlines the activities available to support parents. 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. These Title I standards, as well as the National PTA Standards are implemented at GCA and outlined below.

	<b>PTA National Standards for Family-School Partnerships</b>	<b>Title I Parent Involvement - Section 1118(e) Building Capacity for Involvement</b>	<b>GCA Implementation</b>
<b>1</b>	<b>Welcome All Families into the School Community</b> Families are active participants in the life of the school, and feel welcomed, valued, and connected to each other, to school staff, and to what students are learning and doing in class.	(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 (8) may pay reasonable and necessary expenses associated with local parental involvement activities (11) may adopt and implement model approaches to improving parental involvement	Initial Welcome Letter, GCA Website, Boosters: Parent Volunteers, Fundraising, Outings, Hospitality, Appreciation and Graduation Ceremonies, School Spirit, Room Parents

<p><b>2</b></p>	<p><b>Communicate Effectively</b> Families and school staff engage in regular, two-way, meaningful communication about student learning.</p>	<p>(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 (5) ensure that information related to school and parent programs, meetings, and other activities is sent to the parents of participating children in a format and, to the extent practicable, in a language the parents can understand (10) may arrange school meetings at a variety of times (11) may adopt and implement model approaches to improving parental involvement</p>	<p>Monthly Parent Newsletter, Teacher/Administration/Parent Kmails, Blackboard Connect Phone Messenger, Parent Meetings and Annual Survey, Learning Coach Support Resort and other Open Office Opportunities</p>
<p><b>3</b></p>	<p><b>Support Student Success</b> Families and school staff continuously collaborate to support students' learning and healthy development both at home and at school, and have regular opportunities to strengthen their knowledge and skills to do so effectively.</p>	<p>(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 parent resource centers, that encourage and support parents in more fully participating in the education of their children (4) Coordinate and integrate parent involvement programs and activities with other organizations such as ELL, Special Education, and other programs (7) provide necessary literacy training from funds received (8) Provide reasonable support for parent involvement activities as parents may request (11) may adopt and implement model approaches to improving parental involvement (14) provide such other reasonable support for parental involvement activities under this section as parents may request</p>	<p>Online Parent Resource Center, Parent University, Student Individual Learning Plan, Department Open Office and Training</p>

4	<p><b>Speaking up for Every Child</b> Families are empowered to be advocates for their own and other children, to ensure that students are treated fairly and have access to learning opportunities that will support their success.</p>	<p>(6) involve parents in the development of training for teachers, principals, and other educators to improve the effectiveness of such training (9) train parents to enhance the involvement of other parents (11) may adopt and implement model approaches to improving parental involvement</p>	<p>Parent Mentors: AIM, Special Education, ELL, EIP, ALP Parent Advisory Council, Title I Committee</p>
5	<p><b>Sharing Power</b> Families and school staff are equal partners in decisions that affect children and families and together inform, influence, and create policies, practices, and programs.</p>	<p>(6) involve parents in the development of training for teachers, principals, and other educators to improve the effectiveness of such training (11) may adopt and implement model approaches to improving parental involvement (12) establish a district-wide parent advisory council to provide advice on all matters related to parental involvement in programs supported under this section (14) provide such other reasonable support for parental involvement activities under this section as parents may request</p>	<p>Parent Advisory Council, Title I Committee, Odyssey Board, Annual Title I Survey and Meeting</p>
6	<p><b>Collaborating with the Community</b> Families and school staff collaborate with community members to connect students, families, and staff to expanded learning opportunities, community services, and civic participation.</p>	<p>(11) may adopt and implement model approaches to improving parental involvement (13) develop appropriate roles for community-based organizations and businesses in parent involvement activities</p>	<p>Boosters: Parent Volunteers, Fundraising, Outings, Hospitality, Appreciation and Graduation Ceremonies, School Spirit, Room Parents, Co-Ops, Connections with other agencies: 4-H, Girl/Boy Scouts, Beta Club, ROTC, K12 National Parent Meetings</p>

**Learn about GCA**

Visit [www.k12.com/GCA](http://www.k12.com/GCA) for all event details. Parents have an opportunity to learn about the structure of GCA and the K12 curriculum on the website and at a variety of events.

- **In-person events:**
  - Information sessions...A representative from the school presents information about school policies and procedures. Q&A finishes up 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 also hands on parents at the event. Information packets available.
  - Field Trips...Outings around the state that current and prospective families attend to socialize with their school mates. 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.
  - Online sessions (live and recorded) will be available for your convenience!
  - All families have access to the new S.O.S (Secrets of Success) website also (see p. 5 for more information)

### **Parent University**

K12, Inc., GCA staff and experienced learning coaches will be leading online parent workshops throughout the year. We encourage all parents to attend and ask questions. We will also record these sessions for parents to listen to at a later date. Trainings and workshops will include:

- Components and requirements of a Title I schoolwide program
- National education goals and Georgia Performance Standards
- State and local assessments
- Monitoring your child's progress and strategies to improve performance
- How to participate in the decisions related to the education of your child
- Literacy and technology training
- Mentorships among Limited English Proficiency (LEP) parents and parents of students with disabilities

### **Forms in Multiple Languages**

*All GCA communications are available in multiple languages.* Please contact your child's homeroom teacher for more information. The school uses the state provided language forms found through Transact: [www.transact.com](http://www.transact.com).

### **McKinney-Vento (Homeless) Act and Migrant Education**

GCA participates in the education of homeless students by providing specific support and supplies to help with their education. A "homeless" student is any student who lacks a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence. This could mean that a child is sharing the housing of other persons due to loss of housing or economic hardship, is living in motels, etc. due to the lack of alternative accommodations, is living in emergency or transitional shelters, or is awaiting foster care placement.

If you are currently experiencing homelessness and are in need of assistance, please contact our McKinney-Vento (Homeless) liaison, Teren Jackson. She can be reached at (404) 684-8824 ext. 128.

### **Migrant Education Program (MEP)**

GCA also participates in the Migrant Education Program. Migrant students in GCA are also provided additional support and supplies to help with their education. GCA receives the names of migrant students from the MEP regional office.

### **Parental Information and Resource Center (PIRC)**

The state of Georgia has established a Parental Involvement Resource Center (PIRC), which exists in five regional offices. The PIRC was established to provide training, information and support to parents and assist schools in the implementation of successful and effective parent involvement policies, programs and activities that lead to improvement in student achievement; as well as strengthen partnerships among parents, teachers, students, principals, other school personnel and the community.

Parents are encouraged to contact their regional PIRC office and visit their website for more information on training and support. The PIRC contact information is below:

## **Georgia PIRC State Office**

600 West Peachtree Street, Suite 1200, Atlanta, GA 30308

Julie Hollis [jhollis@cisgeorgia.org](mailto:jhollis@cisgeorgia.org)

(800) 838-5784 (800) 838-5784

[www.georgiapirc.net](http://www.georgiapirc.net)

## **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 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 log-in to join these groups.

### **Facebook link - to connect with other GCA families**

<http://www.facebook.com/GeorgiaCyberAcademy>

**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**

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. Boosters conduct fundraisers for the school, secure parent volunteers for outings and annual testing throughout the state, and lead student clubs. Boosters in the 12 Georgia regions also plan outings in their area and offer a list of resources for families.

GCA Boosters and the Local Development / Community Relations Manager develop relationships with community-based organizations and businesses who can partner with GCA families across the state to promote educational opportunities for students. They partner with restaurants, museums, playhouses, aquariums, parks, etc. weekly to provide opportunities for GCA families to connect with each other and take advantage of what the great state of Georgia has to offer. Parent outing (and other) suggestions are always welcome. These outings are posted weekly to the GCA Event Calendar.

## **Family Directory**

The family directory is accessed through the Online School (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](http://www.k12.com/gca)

## **GCA Special Interest Student Clubs**

Student Clubs are 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 are sponsored by GCA teachers and/or parents. A list of K12 clubs is also available on the bigthink (secure student/parent portal) and an updated club list is sent to families monthly.

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.

### **Parent Resource Center**

GCA and K12 provide a wealth of information and resources for parents on **thebigthink**<sup>12</sup> (parent resource portal provided in the Online School) titled "Schooling Effectively At Home". Topics include: parent training, child development, schooling children at home, working with multiple children, assessments and data interpretation, etc.

### **S.O.S. (Secrets of Success) Website <http://gca.k12start.com>**

Parents also have a new resource available on the S.O.S. website. This website provides parents everything they need to know to get started with GCA. Videos, recordings and instructions are posted to help parents understand how to maneuver the Online School, find calendar of events, find parent mentors, trainings, FAQ's and more.

### **Student Data and Assessment**

Individual teacher conferences are held quarterly for the purpose of reviewing individual student assessment data and interpreting the results. At these meetings, teachers will explain assessments used to measure student progress and the proficiency levels the students are expected to meet. Parents will have an opportunity to clarify questions about the curriculum, assessments or their child's progress. Teachers will provide timely responses to parent questions, suggestions and feedback.

### **Annual Parent Survey and Parent Meetings**

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. An annual parent survey and 2 annual parent meetings (fall and spring) elicit parent feedback of our programs, activities and parent involvement opportunities. Parents are invited to participate in the survey and annual meetings via kmail and the GCA event calendar. All parent meetings are recorded and links are posted on the GCA event calendar.

### **PARENT ADVISORY COUNCIL**

**Parent Engagement is an ongoing process that increases active participation, communication, and collaboration between parents, schools, and communities with the goal of educating the whole child to ensure student achievement and success.**

The research is clear that when schools and families support each other, students of all backgrounds and various abilities achieve at higher levels. As part of Title I, the Parent Advisory Committee will work in conjunction with the administrative team and faculty members at GCA to increase student achievement while educating the whole child.

### **What are the Roles and Responsibilities of Parent Advisory Council Members?**

- ❖ Maintain a school-wide perspective on issues;
- ❖ Regularly participate in council meetings;
- ❖ Participate in information and training programs;
- ❖ Act as a link between the Parent Advisory Council and the community;
- ❖ Encourage the participation of parents and others within the school community;

### **GCA parents on this committee will:**

- ❖ Provide input on ways to improve communication;
- ❖ Provide input into the School Improvement Plan and provide suggestions regarding implementation practices;
- ❖ Review results of annual school wide data;
- ❖ Review the school wide curriculum;
- ❖ Attend regular meetings (via Elluminate) to share suggestions and experiences with other parents and GCA faculty meetings;
- ❖ Review the components of the school wide Title I program;
- ❖ Participate in end of year assessments to evaluate the effectiveness of GCA parent involvement initiatives;
- ❖ Participate in the joint-development of the school-parent compact that outlines how parents will be responsible for supporting student learning;
- ❖ Participant in all needs assessment surveys;

### **Parent Advisory Council Meeting Dates**

\*Meeting links can be found on the GCA Event Calendar. Recordings will also be posted within 24 hours.

Monday:	November 14, 2011	-	10:00 a.m. - 11:00 a.m.
Monday:	January 9, 2012	-	10:00 a.m. - 11:00 a.m.
Monday:	March 12, 2012	-	10:00 a.m. - 11:00 a.m.
Monday:	May 14, 2012	-	10:00 a.m. - 11:00 a.m.
Monday:	June 18, 2012	-	10:00 a.m. - 11:00 a.m.

### **Title I Parent Committee**

The purpose of the Title I Committee is to ensure that all children have a fair, equal, significant opportunity to obtain a high-quality education through shared decision making and appropriate use of federal funds, ultimately impacting student achievement. All GCA parents are invited to participate in the planning, reviewing, and improvement of programs under Title I, including the school parental involvement policy, parent/teacher/student compact, and the joint development of the schoolwide program plan. All parent feedback (positive or negative) collected via meeting notes or surveys will be compiled and will be available at any time for review.

Annual Meeting	December 1, 2011	9:30 a.m.	*Meeting links are on the GCA Event Calendar
Title I Updates	February 9, 2012	9:30 a.m.	
Title I Updates	March 22, 2012	9:30 a.m.	
Year End Meeting	May 24, 2012	9:30 a.m.	
Data Review	June 21, 2012	9:30 a.m.	

If you are interested in serving on the Title I committee, please email the Title I director, Lawanna Twaites, at [LTwaites@gacyber.org](mailto:LTwaites@gacyber.org)

## **GET PLUGGED IN!**

### **BOOSTERS**

*Booster Club Registration (to help or just be informed of activities)*

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/gcabooster11>

### **BOOSTER / PARENT NEWS TEAM**

*Please email Shirley Waldow (K-8 Title I and Family Engagement Coordinator: [swaldow@gacber.org](mailto:swaldow@gacber.org) ) if you are interested in helping with the monthly newsletter.*

### **PARENT UNIVERSITY LEADER**

*Please email Shirley Waldow (K-8 Title I and Family Engagement Coordinator: [swaldow@gacyber.org](mailto:swaldow@gacyber.org) ) or Tim Melvin (HS Family Engagement Coordinator: [tmelvin@gacyber.org](mailto:tmelvin@gacyber.org) ) if you are interested in gathering and posting resources or serving as a parent trainer in the Parent University.*

### **PARENT MENTOR**

*Please email Shirley Waldow (K-8 Title I and Family Engagement Coordinator: [swaldow@gacyber.org](mailto:swaldow@gacyber.org) ) if you are interested in serving as a mentor.*

### **PARENT ADVISORY COUNCIL / TITLE I COMMITTEE**

*Please email Lawanna Twaites (Title I Director) if you are interested in serving on the PAC or Title I Committee. [ltwaites@gacyber.org](mailto:ltwaites@gacyber.org)*

## **2011-2012 GCA School-Parent-Student Compact**

Georgia Cyber Academy and the parents of the students participating in activities, services, and programs funded by Title I, Part A of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), agree that this compact outlines how the parents, entire school staff, and the students will share the responsibility for improved student academic achievement. This includes the means by which the school and parents will build and develop a partnership that will help children achieve the state's high standards.

### **School Responsibilities**

As a school wide Title I school, GCA will:

1. Provide instruction and academic support to assist all students in meeting the Georgia State Standards.
2. Provide student opportunities to practice grade level skills in a supportive, successful environment.
3. Provide parents reasonable access to staff.
  - Teachers will reply to phone or email messages within 24 hours.
  - Phone conferences can be arranged to address any student concerns
  - (The Title I Coordinator, Shirley Waldow, is also available for conferences. Her contact information is [swaldow@gacyber.org](mailto:swaldow@gacyber.org).)
4. Provide quarterly meetings to review the student's goals, progress and assessment results.

### **Parent Responsibilities**

We, as parents, will support our children's learning in the following ways:

- Monitor progress weekly and submit daily attendance
- Communicate any questions or concerns in a timely manner.
- Review and respond as appropriate to communication and resources offered by the school.
- Utilize parent training sessions for information on curriculum, instructional strategies and tips.
- Notify my teacher of any changes to email address, phone number, or mailing address.
- Insure that the student attends and completes all required testing.

### **Student Responsibilities**

We, as students, agree to share the responsibility to improve our academic achievement and meet Georgia's high standards.

Specifically, we will:

- Communicate with my parent/learning coach any questions or concerns related to the program so that help can be provided.
- Attend weekly required and optional Class Connect sessions.
- Attend conference calls or other meetings with my teacher.

By signing the last page of the school handbook you are acknowledging that you have read and understood the above School-Parent-Student Compact.