WELCOME TO GEORGIA CYBER ACADEMY MIDDLE SCHOOL

Our school has made tremendous strides over the years and will continue to be an innovator in the field of virtual education.

The Middle School overview is an attempt to provide critical information in a single resource. This guide will evolve as stakeholders suggest improvements and processes are refined; therefore, the most current version will be posted on our school website and emailed to families.

Our staff is ready to assist you in any way possible. Please contact the homeroom teacher should you have questions. For more information about our school, please visit us online at www.gacyber.org.

Have a great year at Georgia Cyber Academy Middle School!
SECTION I: GLOSSARY

PAGE 3
- Blackboard Collaborate (BBC)
- Blackboard Collaborate Launcher
- The BRIDGE Law
- Child Find Query (CFQ)
- Learner Conferences

PAGE 4
- Communications
- Grading Policy
- Class Connects

PAGE 5
- Individualized Learning Plan (ILP)
- Infinite Campus
- Instructional Cycle
- Testing Requirements

PAGE 6
- Late Work Policy
  - Attendance and Participation Policy
  - Support Sessions
  - Numeric Grading
  - Online Middle School (OMS)

PAGE 7
- Strong Start
- Withdrawals
- 2017-2018 Middle School Calendar

SECTION II: ABOUT GEORGIA CYBER ACADEMY

PAGE 8
- School Contact Information
- Vision
- Mission
- AdvancEd Certification

SECTION III: FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

PAGE 9, 10

SECTION IIII: LEADERSHIP

PAGE 11
- Administration
- Social Studies
- Mathematics
- Sciences
- Electives
- Special Education
- Language Arts
- Family Engagement
SECTION I: GLOSSARY

BLACKBOARD COLLABORATE (BBC) - An online collaboration tool available to teachers and students, which allows for synchronous class meetings where both can participate in two-way audio, text messaging, a shared whiteboard, polling, and more.

BLACKBOARD COLLABORATE LAUNCHER - A software application for that provides a convenient and reliable way to access your Class Connect sessions and recordings. Because the initial download may take some time, we recommend that you install the Launcher at least one day before scheduled sessions. Access BBC Launcher instructions here: Windows/Mac OS X.

CHILD FIND QUERY (CFQ) – A survey used to identify resources and supports which students may need during high school matriculation. During the welcome call from your student’s homeroom teacher you will be asked a series of questions to complete this query.

LEARNERS CONFERENCES -
Regular individual or group conferences with student’s homeroom teacher to provide support in areas such as: progress, class attendance, grades, areas of growth, etc.

THE BRIDGE LAW -
The BRIDGE (Building Resourceful Individuals to Develop Georgia’s Economy) Act, House Bill 400, was signed into law May 2010 to create an atmosphere motivating middle- and high-school students to learn because they see the relevance of education to their dreams and future plans. The implementation of the BRIDGE Act provides middle- and high-school students with career counseling and regularly-scheduled advisement to choose a focused plan of study.
SECTION I: GLOSSARY

COMMUNICATIONS—Teachers regularly contact students and learning coaches via email to communicate important information related to student progress. Students and learning coaches should check email several times throughout the day with a minimum of twice per day (1 time in the morning and 1 time before logging off.)

GRADING POLICY - Each team will provide a syllabus containing all content area information.

ASSESSMENTS & ELA WRITING ASSESSMENTS – 50%
Interim Assessments will be required in each content area. Exams will be standards-based and cover content taught and practiced through the Class Connect sessions and within the course. These can be found in USA Test Prep and should be completed in the assigned time. Teachers may also assign tickets out the door or mini assessments during class.

Students will also be given short response and/or extended writing pieces to which they will be graded in each of their courses.

COURSEWORK - 50%
Consistent and steady use of USA Test Prep in all subject areas is a critical component in preparing for the End Of Grade Testing. It will also provide frequent feedback for both the parent and teacher on how well the student is mastering the Georgia Performance Standards. USA Test Prep is also used for interim assessments for the content areas. Teachers will provide the instructions to accessing these assignments via the Class Connect classrooms and school email.

Students will follow the Instructional Plan provided by their content teacher within our new platform – Online Middle School!! Students will also participate in assignments to be completed within the live classroom and pre checks at the beginning of each instructional cycle.

CLASS CONNECT SESSIONS - Due to the complexity of middle school concepts, it is imperative that students attend Live Class Connect sessions consistently. Recordings are also provided of each live class. Without the direct instruction and concept reinforcement from a content teacher, it is difficult for students to master middle school concepts. Teachers will also provide recordings, virtual labs, and other virtual reinforcement to help students understand the middle school concepts.

Advisement – Advisements are areas that are required and are graded based on completion. For example, Performance Learning Assessment completion and conference attendance.
INDIVIDUALIZED LEARNING PLAN (ILP) - A collaborative planning experience between students, learning coaches and homeroom teachers working together as a team. The team charts student progress toward academic goals, monitors progress toward graduation, and determines the resources and tools needed for a successful middle school experience.

INFINITE CAMPUS - Infinite Campus is used for mid-semester and final grade reporting, transcript and Individualized Learning Plan (ILP) data. Parents can access the Infinite Campus parent portal by following these directions to create an account. You can also view this helpful step-by-step video. Contact the homeroom teacher should you need assistance.

INSTRUCTIONAL CYCLE - A six week instructional window that ends with a Benchmark assessment. Benchmark assessments will be administered during the following windows.
- #1 – October 10-17, 2017
- #2 – December 6-13, 2017
- #3 – February 5-12, 2017
- #4 – March 26– April 9, 2017
- #5 – April 23-27, 2017

TESTING REQUIREMENTS
GCA students are required to attend state required testing. All students in grades 3-8 will take the Georgia Milestones End Of Grade in April. A change for 2017 – 18 is 6th and 7th graders will only take Language Arts and Math Milestones. 8th graders will take Language Arts, Math, Science, and Social Studies Milestones. If a student does not attend required testing (with exception of a medical excuse), the student may be withdrawn from GCA.

TEST PREPARATION
GCA students have access to Internet-based resources to prepare for state mandated testing. These include: Course work, USA Test Prep, and other resources.
STRONG START - The Strong Start program is required for all new Georgia Cyber Academy families. The purpose of the Strong Start program is to help families get started and be successful with their virtual school experience. For more information, visit the Strong Start website: gca.k12start.com

WITHDRAWALS - If you intend to withdraw, please fill out the Parental Notice of Student Intent to Withdraw form and inform the homeroom teacher.

August 10-12, 2016: First Days of School for New Students (Orientation)
August 15, 2016: First Day of School Returning Students
September 5, 2016: Labor Day (school closed)
September 6, 2016: GAA Main Administration Begins
October 10, 2016: Columbus Day (School Holiday)
October 19, 2016: PSAT (Preliminary SAT)
November 21 – 25, 2016: Thanksgiving Break (School closed)
December 9-13, 2016: Interim Assessment #3 (Final Exam) review sessions
December 12-16, 2016: GA Milestones Winter End of Course Assessments
December 13, 2016: No new assignments will be assigned with the exception of Interim Assessment #3 (Final Exam).
December 14-18, 2016: Interim Assessment #3 (Final Exam) window
December 20, 2016: End First Semester

January 13, 2017: First Semester Report Card
January 16, 2017: Martin Luther King Day (school closed)
January 17, 2017: ACCESS for ELL Begins
February 20, 2017: Presidents’ Day (School closed)
February 28, 2017: ASVAB (Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery)
March 14, 2017: ACCESS for ELL Ends
March 24, 2017: GAA Main Administration Ends
April 3 – 7, 2017: Spring Break (School closed)
April 24-28, 2017: independent final exam review for seniors/EOC review for 9th – 11th graders
May 1-5, 2017: GA Milestones End of Course
May 12, 2017: Senior Assignment Deadline
May 26, 2017: Last Day of School
June 2, 2017: Senior Honors Day Program
June 3, 2017: Graduation
SECTION I: GLOSSARY

LATE WORK POLICY - All assignments/progress should be completed within the allotted time to meet progress and performance goals. 1st semester work is due by Jan 4 at 11:59. Missing assignments may be accepted late at the discretion of the teacher. More details will be shared in the syllabus.

ATTENDANCE AND PARTICIPATION POLICY - As a member of a public school, all absences must be approved by your homeroom teacher. Students may not miss more than 10 days of school. If a student is absent on a school day and does not log attendance and record completed assignments, it is the student and learning coach’s responsibility to complete all missed work upon his/her return to school. If a student is absent on a project due date, the excused absence must be classified as an excused absence to avoid a late assignment point deduction. It is also recommended that the student and learning coach consult the teacher to be sure progress goals are up to date and on track for the school year. It is a learning coach’s responsibility to log in attendance each day. Not logging in attendance consistently will result in truancy issues.

STATE LAWS require MS students to complete:
- 990 hours per year
  - MINIMUM 5.5 hours per day in Academic subjects
  - 30 minutes per day in PE, Health, supplemental etc.
- 180 Days (If a student is absent, email your teacher a Dr.’s note.)
- 60 Hours of PE (Planned by LC)
- 30 Hours of Health (Planned by LC)

SUPPORT SESSIONS - Live, small group or 1:1 help sessions taught using Blackboard Collaborate. What I Need (W.I.N) sessions are designed to provide students with additional practice and specific standards based feedback.

NUMERIC GRADING - Final grades are reported numerically based on the following grading scale:
- A  90 -100
- B   80-89
- C  70 – 79
- F   50 – 69

ONLINE MIDDLE SCHOOL (OMS) - The K12 Online Middle School empowers students to manage their time and stay on top of their assignments:
- Students will experience a state-of-the-art online classroom featuring a school homepage with everything they need to be successful, right at their fingertips
- Powerful school calendars, class plans, and news allow schools and teachers to share important dates and information and help students know what they should be working on each day.
- A variety of built-in and easy-to-access progress tools that help students know where they are in courses, how they’re doing, and what they need to focus on to be successful.
- Click here to view a video about the Online Middle School.
Homeroom teachers are the first line of communication for all questions and concerns.

VISION - Georgia Cyber Academy provides and supports an interactive virtual learning environment to support individualized and differentiated student-centered educational experiences serving students from kindergarten through the 12th grade.

MISSION - Georgia Cyber Academy envisions a learning environment where students are empowered—through the collaborative partnership of its students, parents, learning coaches, teachers, and administrators—to successfully reach their full academic potential and emerge career or college ready, and prepared to assume roles as positive contributors to society.

ADVANCED CERTIFICATION - In January 2012, AdvancED and the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Accreditation and School Improvement (SACS CASI) approved Georgia Cyber Academy as meeting the AdvancED standards for quality schools. Accreditation provides reciprocity of credits, courses, and grade level placements between schools and universities around the world; it also validates the equivalency of diplomas and certificates to other accredited schools and universities. Furthermore, accreditation ensures a consistent level of quality in a network of participating schools that is valued by the public and by colleges and universities. The AdvancED accreditation process validates a school’s quality through onsite reviews conducted by trained, professional evaluators.

AdvancED certification recognizes that Georgia Cyber Academy has demonstrated to the international academic community that it effectively advances the quality of the educational experiences it provides to its students and is in compliance with the standards of the organization. Please review the 2016 – 2017 Georgia Cyber Academy Student Handbook and complete the
SECTION III: Frequently Asked Questions

What if I am having trouble with my login?
K12 Customer Service and Tech Support can assist you if your homeroom teacher is unable. Their number is 1-866-512-2273 or view help resources at http://help.k12.com/; they are open 24/7!

Do I have to have a student account set up for my child?
Yes, the student log in will not have answer keys or teacher guides. Each student should have his or her own account that he or she actively uses each day. Students must use their own accounts to log into the Class Connect sessions.

What should I do when I have a question?
Contact your teacher via email. Office hours are from 8am until 4pm, Monday through Friday. You may call your teacher as well. Also, K12 Customer Service is available at: http://help.k12.com/

I hear so much about the OLS, OMS, and USA Test Prep. What are these?

OLS-Online school- where you will access your attendance
OMS-Online Middle School- where you will access Science, Math, and ELA courses and other information
USA Test Prep - USA Test Prep is an online resource to help students understand the Georgia standards and prepare them for the Milestones EOG.

There is so much to do; do I really need to read everything my teacher sends me?
YES, YES, and YES!!! Your teacher emails need-to-know information, and it is very important that you open it each day and read each email. Remember, we are a virtual school, so emails take the place of those face to face reminders. Emails are the teacher’s first point of contact.

What you might be thinking: What was I thinking!? I can’t do this!
What you should be thinking: Yes, I can! After many collective years in the classroom, our teachers cannot think of 1 year where the first week of school went well and everything was perfect. You are doing something amazing that very few parents in the state of GA have done with their child and that is participate in a virtual public school. Pat yourself on the back just for trying something new and innovative.
SECTION III: Frequently Asked Questions

What is required?

• Attending and being an active participant in Class Connects (live is preferred, but recordings are acceptable) BEGINNING THE FIRST DAY OF SCHOOL – August 14th; check OLS/OMS CC schedule for times. Strong Start students will begin CCs once they have completed SS items and are released to a homeroom teacher.

• Attending and being an active participant in small group class connects, if invited by one or more of your content teacher(s) - WIN sessions

• Completing required lessons in OMS

• 4 Benchmark Assessments for each content – USA Test Prep and/or OMS

• Writing Assignments for ELA – OMS (other content writing assignments are within the 4 Benchmark Assessments)

• Attending at least 1 ILP (Individual Learning Plan) conferences facilitated by your homeroom teacher

• Reading emails daily

• Responding to emails, as needed

• Entering attendance each day for student(s)

• Completing The BRIDGE LAW plans (more details to come)

• Completing Performance Learning Assessments for ELA/Math in the Fall

• Attending 1 week of state testing – End of Grade/End of Course, which is face to face at a testing site (usually late April/early May)

There are some weekly open office support opportunities. NOTE: Check the GCA Event Calendar for specific times/dates/links. http://www.gacyber.org/gca-events-calendar.html

District Town Hall Meeting/Parent University - Join the MS Administration and our Family Engagement Coordinator once a month for an evening town hall discussing the current “hot topic(s)”. Check GCA Event calendar for the date/time/link.

Ask An Administrator – Join all directors and head of school for any question you may have. Check GCA Event calendar for date/time/link

What if I am really stressed and just need to call someone to vent?

Call your HR teacher. Every teacher gets stressed out and has bad days and days where they just feel overwhelmed. Sometimes you just need someone to share that with. That goes for students as well.

Where else can I go for help?
### SECTION III: LEADERSHIP

404-334-4790 – Ext 211 – General Middle School Voice Mail  
Your homeroom and/or content teachers are your best point of contacts

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Role</th>
<th>Extension</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rosie Lowndes</td>
<td>Middle School Principal</td>
<td>472</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alicia Kelley</td>
<td>Assistant Administrator – Special Programs</td>
<td>462</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Michelle Blackwell</td>
<td>Assistant Administrator - Systems</td>
<td>421</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gentry Lowe</td>
<td>Assistant Administrator – Academics</td>
<td>471</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adrienne Rhoads</td>
<td>6th Grade Lead Teacher</td>
<td>494</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leah Christian</td>
<td>6th Grade Lead Teacher</td>
<td>425</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Misty Kerr</td>
<td>7th Grade Lead Teacher</td>
<td>506</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jennifer Harper</td>
<td>7th Grade Lead Teacher</td>
<td>452</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rebekah Cooper</td>
<td>7th Grade Lead Teacher</td>
<td>849</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dana Barrett</td>
<td>8th Grade Lead Teacher</td>
<td>417</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ginny Weaver</td>
<td>8th Grade Lead Teacher</td>
<td>511</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kristi Jackson</td>
<td>8th Grade Lead Teacher</td>
<td>469</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shani Wilson</td>
<td>Special Education Lead Teacher</td>
<td>828</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kelly Thomas</td>
<td>Special Education Lead Teacher</td>
<td>503</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shay Locke</td>
<td>Counselor</td>
<td>470</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sherene Mueller</td>
<td>FASL Lead</td>
<td>660</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kelly Brooks</td>
<td>Math Chairperson</td>
<td>984</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rebecca Malmquist</td>
<td>Language Arts Chairperson</td>
<td>943</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Crystal Adams</td>
<td>Social Studies Chairperson</td>
<td>2064</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kim Lockhart</td>
<td>Science Chairperson</td>
<td>742</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Veronica Okpani</td>
<td>Family Engagement Coordinator</td>
<td>663</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>