



# Panther Press

A publication of the Georgia Academy for the Blind

Friday, September 24th, 2021

*This institution is an equal opportunity provider*

**Dr. Cindy Gibson, Superintendent**

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**Georgia Academy for  
the Blind - GAB**



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**Mission Statement: The Georgia Academy for the Blind provides quality education services to Georgia's students with visual impairments and/or visual impairments in conjunction with other disabilities to prepare them to achieve their highest level of independence in transition to college and career readiness.**

## *Mark your Calendars*

**9/26 through 10/1 - Space Camp in Huntsville, Alabama  
(Look on GAB FB for pics & updates)**

**9/28 - Students who have submitted applications for Student Council will meet in the Media Center at break to arrange to have your speech aired on the news.**

**10/14 - Student Council Election**

**11/12 - Mrs. Holloway presents: *Veteran's Day Concert* in the Auditorium at 10:30 (Ensemble, Chorus, & Drums)**

**11/19 - Next School Council Meeting at 1:00pm on Zoom**

### **NEWS FROM THE EDITOR:**

**This newsletter is published by our Parent Mentor/Family Engagement Specialist, Jennifer Minter. Feel free to send your ideas, news, and resources in your community to her: [JMinter@doe.k12.ga.us](mailto:JMinter@doe.k12.ga.us) or call 478-262-3303.**

***Please remember to contact her if you've had a change in address, phone number and/or email!***

# A message from our Superintendent

Optimism is the faith that leads to achievement. Nothing can be done without hope and confidence.  
... Helen Keller

Dear students, parents/guardians/ and staff,

Thank you to those who were able to join us on Zoom for the School Council meeting last Friday. This is an opportunity to share ideas, know the latest of GAB and get questions or concerns addressed. We are as formal as we need to be for compliance, and as informal as we should be to invite open dialog and comfort. The Council would like to know if a different time or day would enable more to participate. Please share any ideas to Leslie O'Neill and Donna West, copresidents of the School Council. [leslie.oneill@ien.gatech.edu](mailto:leslie.oneill@ien.gatech.edu); [Donna.West@cushwake.com](mailto:Donna.West@cushwake.com)

**Also, the School Council will not meet in October but will reconvene at 1:00 p.m., on Friday, November 19, 2021, unless there is feedback for another time.**



Today, Friday, September 24, 7 students, 3 chaperones, and 3 bus drivers depart for Space Camp in Huntsville, AL, returning next Friday. Space Camp is a STEM week designed for student with visual impairment. Pictured is the pin that the GAB students designed featuring Blue Origin. One of the highlights of the week is that students swap pins with students from all over the nation and international. We can't wait to see the collections of pins that our students accumulate before the end of the week. We look forward to text and picture updates throughout the week.

An Overcomer she is!!! Paraprofessional, Mrs. Lashunda Jordan worked tirelessly during the time she was in treatment for brain cancer. She is the epitome of grace and beauty, an example to us all of healing and wholeness. The students and staff gathered in the halls of Hendricks to rejoice the GAB Way! What a White Rose celebration of a new beginning it was!!!! Finally, taking from the book *The Alchemist*---  
A Proclamation for Ms. Jordan:  
Your path was written in the omens, and there was no way you could go wrong. "Maktub!"  
It is written!

Enjoy a much-deserved break,  
and we look forward to Monday  
morning!

As ever,  
Cindy



## **Georgia Academy for the Blind**

### **Minutes School Council Friday, September 17, 2021, 1:00 p.m.**

The second School Council meeting of the 2021-2022 school year was called to order by Co-President, Leslie O'Neil at 1:00 p.m., on Friday, September 17, 2021.

Attendees virtual and onsite introduced themselves. Present were Leslie O'Neil, Co-president; Tyrene Neil, SPED Director; Shirley Wingfield, Parent; David Guest, GAB Teacher; Gloria Gardiner, GAB Teacher; Nathan Forrester, GAB IT; Jennifer Minter, Parent Mentor; Alicia Jackson, Assistant Principal; Cindy Gibson, Supt.; Brad Cavender, Parent; Jazzmein Kimbrough, Parent; Michael Collins, Parent; Jon Smith, Assistant Principal; Frank Reynolds, Residential Director

No visitors were present, and the minutes submitted by Alicia Jackson, Assistant Principal, were read by Cindy Gibson, Supt., and approved as read.

New Business included an announcement that the After School Program starts on Monday, September 20. ASP is a Title I program to support student achievement. Dawn Day is the Program Manager, and has communicated and coordinated with parents, students, and teachers. Cindy Gibson shared an update on the kitchen/dining hall roofing project that has been delayed and scheduled to start September 20, 2021, weather permitting. Cindy Gibson shared that the COVID report for this week is completely flat. She thanked everyone for their support of COVID mitigation recommendations. Tyrene Neil stated that she has placed 13 new student this year. Current enrollment is 91 students, and there are 3 in referral from one county. Alicia Jackson shared the success of our first Music Therapy sessions with the GCSU intern.

#### **Standing Reports:**

Parent Mentor, Jennifer Minter shared that we have not had a newsletter for 2 weeks because of illness. Today's edition and next week will feature Housekeeping Appreciation Week and the Space Camp STEM conference in Huntsville, AL, which will be attended by 7 students and 3 chaperones, September 24 through September 30.

**Teacher reports from Mr. Guest included praise from another teacher who said the students were excellent while she was on leave, and the students completed work cooperatively and reliably.**

**Parent reports included Parent, Michael Collins question about splitting cottage and day students at mealtime for location to eat. That was miscommunication, as all students eat in the GAB Café Petite. Parent, Brad Cavender shared his thanks for keeping the school open (onsite instruction). Parent, Shirley Wingfield shared all is going well.**

**Mr. Reynolds shared the Cottage Report stating that one new Residential Adviser had been hired, and the cottages are business as usual.**

**Dr. Gibson shared the Superintendent's Report which included the upcoming Space Camp trip and hiring of a groundskeeper and 2 paraprofessionals. There is a possibility of hiring additional paraprofessionals with CARES Act funds that the district may apportion to GAB.**

**There was discussion of ways to encourage more parents/guardians to attend. The October 15 meeting is canceled because it is a District professional learning day and GVEST. The next meeting will be Friday, November 19, 2021, at 1:00 p.m. In the meantime, Ms. Minter will pose the question to parents/guardians schoolwide to see if there is a better day or time that would enable additional family participation.**

**Respectfully submitted,**

**Cindy Gibson, Supt., GAB**

**Minutes for the August 20, 2021, meeting which were read on September 17, 2021, follow.**

# Community Outing for Project SEARCH

The Project SEARCH interns have been busy working on job acquisition skills and the soft skills necessary to present themselves in a professional manner. We recently took a trip to the mall to practice their new skill set, by asking for job applications. They also enjoyed lunch and had the opportunity to practice money management, dining etiquette, and calculating gratuity. We couldn't be prouder!

Jamison decided to ask if PetSmart was "accepting applications", after he tried to adopt a kitten, that is!

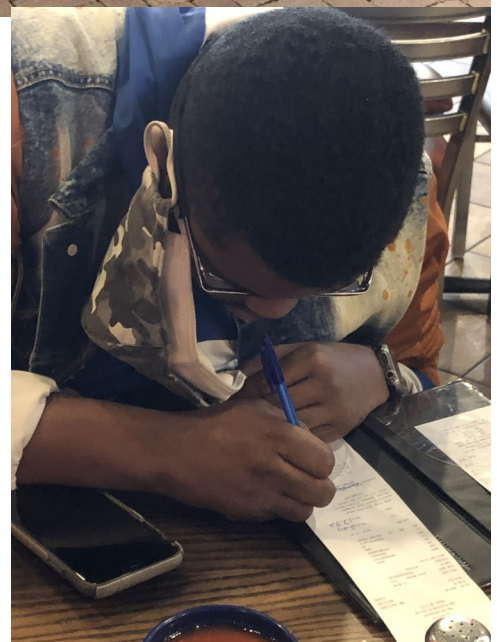
Chris got inspired while we were eating lunch and, without any prompts, asked for an application as well. Needless to say, Ms. Drinkard and I had goosebumps and were in tears! I must say that Chris was quite proud of himself too!

After we returned to GAB, the interns practiced filling out their applications and learning pertinent information required to do so.

The Project SEARCH team is just beginning our adventures. Please look for many more great accomplishments in the months to come!



**Jamison pictured on the left at Pet Smart getting an application.**



**Jamison pictured on the right signing his receipt for his meal. (Perfect handwriting)**



Chris was so proud of himself for taking the initiative to request an application for employment while eating lunch at La Parilla.



**Congratulations to Chris O'Neill for being nominated for a state-wide Career Technical Education Award. Chris is a second year dual-enrollment student with Hutchings College & Career Academy (HCCA). Every year Georgia's Lt. Governor, Geoff Duncan, hosts a Business & Education Summit. At the Summit, awards are given for the Student of the Year, College and Career Academy of the Year, and Business Partner of the Year. Dr. Cassandra Washington, CEO of HCCA, has selected Chris as the student to represent HCCA at this year's summit in October. How exciting for Chris to be nominated for this award! Your GAB Family hopes you "bring it on home", Chris!**



**Chris is pictured in front of a fabric mural of Hutchings logo, which is a Compass.**



# September Birthdays

9/2	Ja'Veon	9/10	Korey
9/7	Destiny R.	9/15	Trinity
9/7	Lucas	9/23	D.J.
9/9	Felix	9/25	Ryan
		9/27	Aubrey

