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Panther Press

A publication of the Georgia Academy for the Blind

July 19, 2019 Summer Edition 2

17 more days until the first day of school!!

Check out the back to school tips on page 4!

Dr. Cindy Gibson, Superintendent
2895 Vineville Avenue
Macon, GA 31204
478-751-6083
www.gabmacon.org



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. *Check out this student produced video featuring this Mission Statement:* <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IRrbhkGSe98>

A note from Sonya Milam

Dear GAB students, families and friends:

During post planning I said my goodbyes to the GAB faculty and staff and now I am sad to say goodbye to you. Sunday, August 4 will be my last day as your Parent Mentor. I have loved every minute of serving you over these past five and half years but now I must leave to pursue my goal of full time graduate school. My experiences at the Georgia Academy for the Blind and association with the Atlanta Area School for the Deaf and the Georgia School for the Deaf have brought me such great joy. I have loved seeing your children grow every day and knowing many of their families along the way. This journey has brought growth to me personally and professionally for which I am ever grateful and indebted.

I am thrilled that Jennifer Minter will be your new Parent Mentor. Everything I know about being a Parent Mentor I learned from her. She began July 1 and we've spent a lot of time together this summer. I have the upmost confidence that she will serve you well and will love this journey as much as I have. I trust you will warmly welcome her in the coming days! I look forward to seeing many of you and introducing you to my friend Jennifer on Sunday, August 4.

A note from Jennifer Minter

I joined the Georgia Parent Mentor Partnership in 2014 as Parent Mentor for Bibb County Schools. Taking on the position at GAB as the new Parent Mentor/Family Engagement Specialist is so exciting! No one could ever take Sonya's place, but hopefully I will soon become part of the family at GAB with students, staff and families.

Having my own daughter with Special Needs has given me so much experience in therapies, transitioning, advocating, and finding resources. My daughter, Winn Minter, has taught me to enjoy life's journey with her sense of humor, love for her family, and her interactions with her little brother. With all the challenges I have experienced from being Winn's Mom and advocate, I hope to give back to other families by helping them on their own exceptional path with their children.





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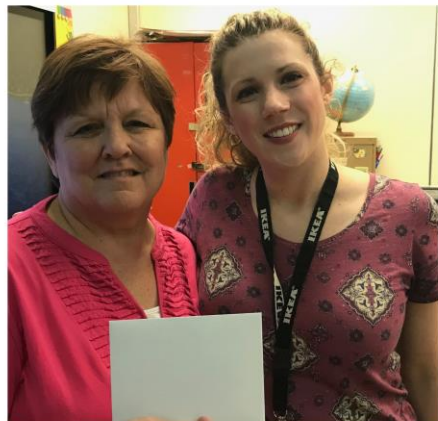
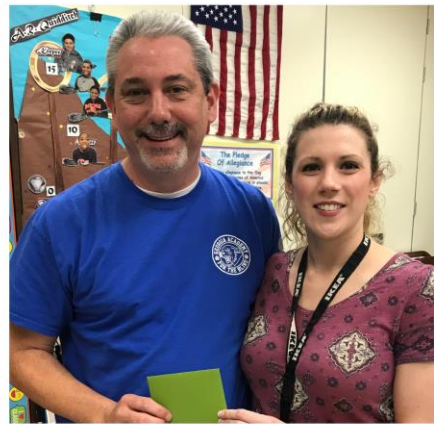


We met our goal this past year, help us earn money for our 2019-20 educational field trips by saving Box Tops and bringing them in in August! Click here for a list of participating products:

<https://ga02225912.schoolwires.net/site/handlers/filedownload.aspx?moduleinstanceid=22&dataid=186&FileName=BoxTopsParticipating-Products-Flyer-mar2015.pdf>

Post planning celebratory photos

Top to bottom, left to right: "King Coach Day" as we celebrated Coach Ivan Watkins retirement. Mr. Gene Collins was voted by his peers to be our 2019-20 Teacher of the Year. Ms. Teresa Vaughn our Physical Therapist was voted by her peers as our Related Service Provider of the year and Ms. Tiara Akridge, our lead housekeeper, was voted by her peers as our Support Personnel of the year. Each are shown with Ms. Lauren Eckman our chairperson for our Teacher of the Year program.



UPDATE - GAB Graduation is Wednesday, May 20, 2020!



Our top 6 favorite ideas for preparing for the new school year

Adapted from **Scholastic Parent**. For more information click on the Scholastic Parent website here: <https://www.scholastic.com/parents/school-success/school-life/back-to-school/10-teachers-tips-kick-starting-new-school-year.html>

1. **Sleep for school.** Setting up a regular bedtime and wake-up routine before school starts is a crucial step to prepare your child for class and a practical way to cut down on first-day stress. Practice, practice, practice!
2. **Look up to learning.** If your child is feeling a bit anxious about going back to school, keep a positive attitude. Recall the fun and exciting events, field trips, projects, and so on from years past, and show excitement about the opportunities for learning new things in the upcoming year. Share some stories of your own school days.
3. **Suit 'em up.** Shopping for school clothes with your child can be a fun way to give him/her some responsibility. Provide parameters, but allow him/her to pick out some of their own clothing, back packs, etc.
4. **Talk it out.** Asking your child about school is important. It shows that you value education. Try to avoid general questions, like "How was your day?" These will most likely produce one-word answers. Instead, be specific. For example, "Who did you play with today?" "What are you learning in math this week?" or "Which class did you enjoy most today?" These open-ended but specific questions will act as effective conversation-starters for your child to open up and talk more. For more on conversation starters, click here: <https://www.scholastic.com/parents/books-and-reading/raise-a-reader-blog/12-fun-ways-to-ask-how-was-your-day.html>
5. **Go farther.** Getting involved in school events is a critical aspect of showing support and enthusiasm for your child's learning experience. Participating in school activities is also a valuable way of connecting to the school community. You can learn a lot about the school by communicating with teachers and talking to fellow parents. Check out our Family Engagement Plan to learn more!
6. **Read, read, read.** Reading with your child is an invaluable way to spend quality time together.

