



Panther Press

A publication of the Georgia Academy for the Blind

Friday, December 20, 2024

This institution is an equal opportunity provider.

2895 Vineville Ave.

Macon, GA



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Mark your Calendars

12/20 - Student Art Exhibition: *People, Places, & Things*, ART Sale

12/20 - Winter Concert Program in the Auditorium at 10:30AM,
"Twas the Night Before Christmas"

12/23 through 1/3 - **Holiday Break**

1/20 Martin Luther King Jr. Holiday

2/7 - School Council Meeting at 1:00pm

2/17 - Presidents' Day





Georgia Academy for the Blind

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www.gabmacon.org

Ms. Alicia Jackson, Superintendent

DECEMBER 19, 2024

Dear Parent or Guardian,

Georgia Academy for the Blind will take the new Georgia School Climate Survey this year. Each parent or guardian is invited to take the family version to answer questions about the current school or schools you have a child or children attending. **If two or more children attend the same school**, please only complete one survey for that school.

The survey measures what you think about how the school engages with families. Answers are not linked to names in any way. When typing answers, please do not give names or information that you do not want to share with this school. Data will be shared with school leaders to help improve the school and will be published on the GaDOE website.

Please help by sharing your honest opinion on this **22-question survey**. To take the survey, please click this link: <https://survey.gadoe.org/FM?sid=0A72513C>. You can also use your phone to complete the survey by clicking on the QR code attached to this newsletter.

If you have any questions about the survey, please contact our parent mentor, Jennifer Minter, at 478-751-6083 x1140 or jminter@doe.k12.ga.us.

Best regards,

Alicia M. Jackson, School-level Superintendent



**The
High
School
Hallway
“Home
for the
Holidays”
won
the
first
GAB
hall
deco-
rating
contest.**



Reading Resources

The National Federation of the Blind <https://nfb.org/>

As the oldest and largest nationwide organization of blind Americans, they can provide expert advice in multiple areas to blind people, their families, agencies for the blind, corporations, and the government. Please click on the link to find an affiliate near you so that you can connect with other parents/guardians of blind children.

National Braille Press <https://www.nbp.org/>

NBP empowers the blind and visually impaired with programs, materials, and technology supporting braille literacy and learning through touch. They promote literacy for blind children through outreach programs and we encourage the teaching of braille to blind children by providing age-appropriate braille reading and support materials for caregivers and educators. They promote braille literacy as an important employment and general living skill. They price the materials to be affordable and distribute them nationally and across the globe.

National Library Service www.loc.gov/nls/

The National Library Service for the Blind and Print Disabled (NLS), Library of Congress, administers a free national library program that provides braille and recorded materials to people who cannot see regular print or handle print materials. Books, magazines, and music scores are available.

Bookshare <https://www.bookshare.org/home>

Bookshare audiobooks and ebooks make reading easy. You can customize your reading experience with assistive reading features that remove reading barriers. And with over one million titles, you will find virtually any book for school, career, or leisure in one convenient place. Bookshare Reader is the free app that makes reading easy. Access millions of audiobooks and ebooks and customize your reading experience in ways that work for you.

Find a book and read online, or download it to a smartphone, tablet, or Alexa-enabled speaker today!

Learning Ally <https://learningally.org/>

Your child may struggle to read due to learning differences, but they are able to comprehend information way above their ability to decode words. With Learning Ally audio books for your family, they bridge this gap with human-read books. As a result, now struggling readers can access and absorb the classic books they want to read or need to read for school. The best audiobook app helps your kids, regardless of grade-level, thrive in the classroom and beyond.

Fostering Independence

Becoming a licensed driver is one of the greatest forms of independence and eagerly anticipated by high school students. While it may be a rite of passage for most teens, as we know, that is not the case for our students. One author states that “a visual impairment can raise feelings of deprivation and incompetence when a teenager cannot do everything his or her friends are doing.” This is why it is important to have open and honest discussions, both at home and school, about what teens face. For example, I do not look at it as just the responsibility of the orientation and mobility specialist to provide them with the skills necessary to travel and function independently. It is up to us as well to take any opportunity that arises on any of these issues and to make it a teachable moment. I encourage you to do the same at home. I believe we should reinforce the skills they learn in O&M. I think teaching across the curriculum applies to all courses, not just core classes. It is also my belief that parents should experience some O&M training as well just so they can get a glimpse of what their child experiences while navigating various environments.

Some solutions to this perceived barrier are O&M training, public transportation, consistent schedules of transportation, and finding alternative ways to commemorate the beginning of adulthood. At school, orientation and mobility training equips the students with the tools to travel without assistance. While at home, families of visually impaired students can take the young person to register to vote, they can arrange a trip to visit a friend, allow the teen to volunteer, run errands with you, or even shop independently. You can also make arrangements with friends who do drive.

The need for a driver’s license is not as great in an urban area because public transportation is available, however in a rural setting the teen may not have many, if any options for public transportation. In that case, if Ride Share services such as Uber or Lyft are available, a lesson in requesting a ride is another tool towards fostering independence. We can prepare students for independence without the ability to drive a car by giving them the O&M skills they need, by finding alternative ways to celebrate certain rites of passage, and by allowing them to be as independent as they can whenever possible. How can you assist your child with their travel skills and growing independence?

Katrina Thomas, M.Ed.

TVI, Georgia Academy of the Blind

38th Annual
**FESTIVAL
of
TREES**
Museum of Arts and Sciences

The 2024 Festival of Trees is the Museum of Arts and Sciences' largest annual fundraiser that represents three generations of investment in the Museum's educational programming. With generous support from our donors and volunteers throughout the festival activities, we can provide high-quality programming with affordable admission for families of Central Georgia. The Festival of Trees exhibition features over 60 beautiful Christmas trees decorated by local and regional designers. The exhibit is on display from November to January and can be viewed with regular museum admission.



Transition Planning for Autistic Students

Come learn about ITAP, Emory Autism Center's Transition Planning project, and how you can bring resources and our expertise to your families, teachers, and students

**Friday, February 14, 2025
11AM-12PM
via Zoom**

Register Here



**Presented by Matt,
Segall, Ph.D.
Emory Autism
Center**



25th
ANNIVERSARY
BRAILLE
CHALLENGE



**Braille
Challenge**

b^{*} Braille Institute



**Thursday, February 27, 2025 at
Georgia Academy for the Blind**

December

2024

Birthdays

D'Shaun	12/1	Kaiden	12/17
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Xander	12/4	D.J.	12/19
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Josh	12/5	Kalena	12/23
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Ja'Khari	12/7	Zariyah	12/25
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Will	12/7	Svet	12/27
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Nik	12/10	Jermaine	12/29
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James	12/31
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