

# NEWS<sup>2023</sup> LETTER

March

## *Executive Director Message*



**Coni Taslim, Ed.D.**  
G.A.P.S. Executive Director

Greetings, Students, Families, and Stakeholders of the Gary Community School Corporation! I am Dr. Coni Taslim (Töslēm), Executive Director of G.A.P.S., and I am excited to work together in fulfilling the mission of GAPS through programming, partnerships, and permanence. Students in the Gary community deserve the skills, resources, and opportunities needed to succeed in a rapidly changing and globally competitive world by discovering and pursuing educational and career aspirations. G.A.P.S. will connect alumni, businesses, and community stakeholders with students to promote successful academic, career, and life outcomes.

Not only was I raised and reside in Northwest Indiana, I have also served as an educator with over 20 years of experience in neighboring schools as a classroom teacher and administrator. I am also an alum of East Chicago Central High School, Purdue University Northwest, Calumet College of St. Joseph, and Indiana University Northwest. I received my doctorate degree in educational leadership from the University of St. Francis in Joliet, Illinois.

As a leader, I strive to build authentic relationships with all stakeholders to excel in ensuring all students receive opportunities that make them feel intelligent, valued, challenged, and socially and emotionally supported every day. Along with the G.A.P.S. board and staff, I will provide opportunities that maximize student achievement and professional development while cultivating and fostering a motivating, positive, safe, and stimulating learning environment.

I am a life-long learner who looks forward to utilizing my education and experience to ensure that the Gary community is one where all students thrive and excel on the path to future college graduation and/or successful careers. It is my pleasure to be united with the community to work together to meet the needs of all of our students and believe with a collaborative, passionate, team effort, we will establish a pathway of excellence for each and every student of Gary!



## WSLA/GAPS/JA Career Fair

The Career Fair at West Side Leadership Academy students was a huge success November 17-18, 2022. With 37 vendors in attendance, the event was buzzing with excitement and energy. To encourage interaction between students and vendors, a contest was held where vendors would sign off on a sheet that entered students in a raffle to win a gift card. This incentivized students to approach vendors and learn about different career opportunities.

The students were eager to participate in the contest and were seen approaching vendors with curiosity and enthusiasm. As they interacted with vendors, they learned about different career paths, the skills required for various jobs, and the education and training needed to pursue those careers. The positive feedback from vendors showed that students were engaged, asked thoughtful questions, and showed genuine interest in their work.

The feedback from students was equally positive, with many expressing gratitude for the opportunity to learn about different careers in a fun and interactive way. They appreciated the chance to ask questions and engage with professionals in various fields. Many also expressed surprise at the diversity of career opportunities available and how the event helped them become more aware of the opportunities that exist beyond their immediate environment.

Overall, the career fair provided a valuable learning experience for the students, and the contest added an element of fun and excitement to the event. The increased student awareness of career opportunities is sure to benefit them in their future endeavors.



### *Student Spotlight*

Congratulations to the following students for being recognized as **Student of the Month**: **Fred Buckhana, Jr.** (January), **Renya Adams** (January), and **Jaylin Murray** (February)!

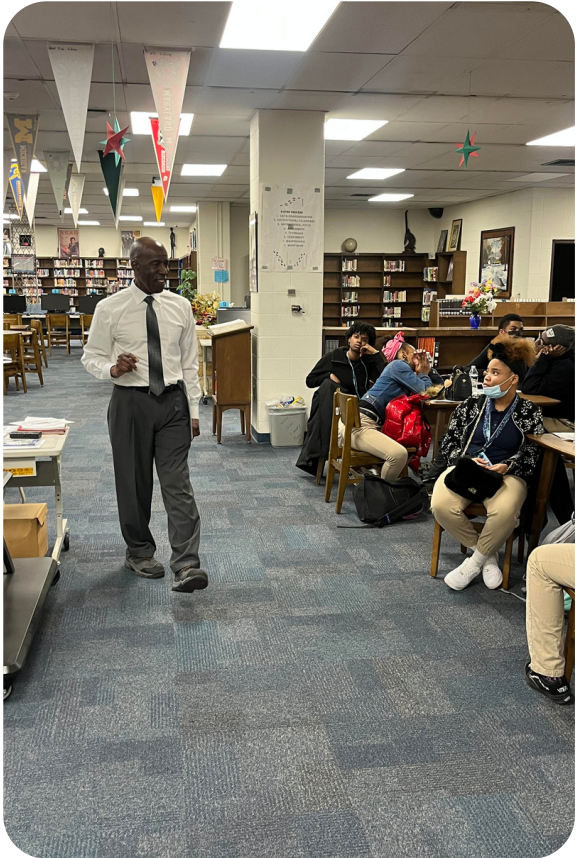


Congratulations to **Tierra Taylor, Makala Sangster, and Yasheica Sangster** for receiving their **Food Handler Certificate!**



# Women's History Month

Emma Hart Willard was a pioneer for women's education and women's rights to education. She founded the Troy Female Seminary in 1821, the first school in the United States exclusively for the education of women. At that time, women were often excluded from higher education and professional careers, and their opportunities for learning and personal growth were limited. The school provided young women with access to a quality education that was comparable to what was available to men, which was a rare and progressive idea during that era. The school challenged societal attitudes towards women's education and helped to pave the way for greater educational opportunities and advancements for women in the years to come. Today, the Troy Female Seminary, which later became the Emma Willard School, is still open and operating as a prestigious college preparatory school for girls in grades 9-12. It has a long and rich history of providing young women with a rigorous education and empowering them to become leaders in their fields.



# Career Readiness

Mr. Jerome Watkins was a recent facilitator of LAW CAMP with BOSS students. LAW CAMP is an intensive program designed to enhance interest in the study of law that may lead to careers in the legal profession. The program provides instruction and classes that are actually taught in law school. Here are three examples of careers that students can pursue after participating in a program like LAW CAMP:

**Corporate Lawyer:** Corporate lawyers provide legal advice to businesses on matters such as mergers and acquisitions, contracts, intellectual property, and regulatory compliance.

**Intellectual Property Lawyer:** As technology continues to advance, there is an increased demand for lawyers who specialize in intellectual property law.

**Immigration Lawyer:** Immigration law has become a particularly hot topic in recent years, and there is a high demand for lawyers who can help immigrants navigate the complex legal system. For more information about the program go to: [www.lawcampprogram.com](http://www.lawcampprogram.com).



# GAPS Calendar Of Events

DATE	CATEGORY	TOPIC
March 14, 2023	Job Readiness	Pharmaceutical Sales
March 15, 2023	Career Exploration	LAW Camp
March 29, 2023	SEL	A Happy Presentation
April 5, 2023	Career Exploration	Gary International Black Film Festival
April 19, 2023	Career Exploration	LAW Camp
April 20, 2023	Academic Support	GEARUP
April 25, 2023	SEL	A Happy Presentation
April 26, 2023	Career Exploration	Careers in the Park Services

## GAPS Programming

**\*High school students: please contact Ms. Peterson, [charity.peterson@gapsgary.org](mailto:charity.peterson@gapsgary.org) for more information on our [B.O.S.S.](#)**

**\*Program.3-8th students: please contact Ms. Spears, [laquinta.spears@gapsgary.org](mailto:laquinta.spears@gapsgary.org) for more information on our [L.I.T. Program.](#)**

## News Bytes

**GOP Education chair: 'Higher ed has never been held in such low esteem as it is now'**

**GOP bill mandating federal Parents Bill of Rights passed by U.S. House committee**

**Indiana students lose out on \$70M annually in college grants. This bill could help**

**Indiana House budget covers textbook fees at schools' expense**



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