



Great Minds Parent Academy 2026

Program-At-a-Glance

9:00 - 9:15 am	Check-in
9:15 - 9:45 am	Welcome and Opening (B1)
9:50 - 10:20 am	Session 1 1. Dyslexia and The Reading Brain (B1) 2. The Emotional Side of Learning Differences (Y1) 3. ADHD 101 (Y2)
10:25 - 10:55 am	Session 2 1. What Is Executive Functioning? (B1) 2. Who Are Twice Exceptional Learners? (Y1) 3. Fostering Self-Advocacy Through Accommodations (Y2)
11:00 - 11:30 am	Session 3 1. A Long-Term View: Student, Parent, and Alumni Panel (B1) 2. Supporting Your Child at Home (Y1) 3. When School is Hard, What Comes Next? (Y2)
11:35 am - 12:00 pm	Closing (B1)
12:00 pm	Child Pick-Up (B2 and G2)



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Program Descriptions

SESSION 1 (9:50 - 10:20 AM)

1. Dyslexia and The Reading Brain

Why is learning to read so difficult for some kids? Why does it not just come naturally like it does for other kids? Introduction into what neuroscience tells us about how children learn to read, and what that means for supporting students with dyslexia.

Location: Blue 1

Presenter: Ryan Masa, *Head of School*

2. The Emotional Side of Learning Differences

Learning differences affect more than academics—they can shape all parts of their lives. Children often expend tremendous, unseen energy keeping up or hiding what is difficult, while parents wrestle with when to push, support, or step back. This session explores what may lie beneath behaviors such as avoidance, perfectionism, and shutting down, while offering practical strategies to build accountability, and independence. Parents will leave with greater insight into their child—and themselves—and tools to help their child become a more confident, capable learner.

Location: Yellow 1

Presenter: Sungalina Lee, *K-8 Principal*

3. ADHD 101

Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) often compounds the challenges of learning differences. This workshop unpacks what truly drives ADHD—spoiler alert: it's not just attention and hyperactivity—and how it affects classroom learning. Designed for parents asking '*Is ADHD real?*' or '*Why can my child focus on video games but not homework?*', this session provides essential insights to better understand and support your learner.

Location: Yellow 2

Presenter: Peggy Brandt, *K-8 Counselor*

SESSION 2 (10:25 - 10:55 AM)

1. What Is Executive Functioning?

Why can a bright, capable child know exactly what to do but struggle to get started, stay organized, manage time, or finish the task? Executive functioning skills are the brain's "management system," helping us plan, prioritize, regulate attention and emotions, remember what we need, and follow through.

In this session, we'll unpack what executive functioning looks like in everyday school and home life, explore why these skills can be especially challenging for students with dyslexia, ADHD, and other learning differences, and share practical, strengths-based ways adults can provide support. Parents will leave with a clearer understanding of the "why" behind common struggles and a few strategies they can begin using right away.

Location: Blue 1

Presenter: Santiago Sere, *K-8 Curriculum Specialist*

2. Who Are Twice Exceptional Learners?

How can a child be gifted while also having a learning difference like dyslexia? Because the strengths and challenges of twice-exceptional (2e) students often mask one another, understanding their learner profile is essential. This session will explain who 2e learners are and what makes their profile so unique.

Location: Yellow 1

Presenter: Elisa Mizota, *K-8 Curriculum Specialist*

3. Fostering Self-Advocacy Through Accommodations

Explore how accommodations can help your child access learning while also building the skills they need to advocate for themselves in high school and college. In this session, families will learn how to talk with their child about accommodations and build confidence and independence in requesting and using appropriate support.

Location: Yellow 2

Presenter: Laura Ashley Young, *High School Dean of Academics*

SESSION 3 (11:00 - 11:30 AM)

1. A Long-Term View: Student, Parent, and Alumni Panel

For families navigating dyslexia, language-based learning differences, or twice-exceptional (2e) giftedness, the school journey can feel like a constant battle. Join us for an intimate panel featuring parents who have lived the frustration, current students who are thriving in our classrooms, and graduates who have successfully taken their unique brains into higher education and the workforce.

Location: Blue 1

Presenter: Nikki Hamai Sakai, *High School Principal*

2. Supporting Your Child at Home

When it comes to supporting your child at home, you may wonder what kind of support is actually helpful. This session will share practical strategies to support reading and learning at home while also building confidence and independence.

Location: Yellow 1

Presenter: Tiana Lee, *Director of Professional and Curriculum Development*

3. When School is Hard, What Comes Next?

Intended for families at the start of their journey of discovery, this session will help families understand what is typical, what may signal a deeper challenge, and what to do next. Recognize signs to watch for, ask questions to deepen your understanding, and learn when additional support may be needed. We'll also share places to turn for guidance, evaluation, and next steps.

Location: Yellow 2

Presenter: Sandi Tadaki, *Assistant Head of School and Director of Admissions*