



school of the arts

@ CENTRAL GWINNETT HIGH SCHOOL

Frequently Asked Questions for Families

What is the School of the Arts @ Central Gwinnett High School?

The School of the Arts @ Central Gwinnett High School or SOTA is a school within a school, offering a rigorous, college preparatory curriculum that combines required coursework with expanded fine arts classes and arts-related internships and work experiences at a pre-professional and professional level. Areas of concentration will include the performing arts (music, theatre, dance), visual arts, and technology for the arts. Unique industry partnerships will be available for students in each focus area.

Why focus on the arts?

Artistically talented students will thrive and grow as artists and performers at SOTA. With a focused, pre-professional program, SOTA will prepare students for college and careers in the arts and related fields. And, these are opportunities that students can find right here in Georgia where the creative industries are a \$62.5 billion industry, employing more than 200,000 artists, actors, and administrative staff.

How is this school different from regular high schools and other GCPS theme schools?

The School of the Arts @ Central Gwinnett High School is a “school within a school,” not a separate high school. SOTA will have a designated assistant principal who is part of the Central Gwinnett administrative team. The program will offer a broad range of fine arts courses with a Conservatory program (audition/portfolio required) and a Fellows program (no admission requirements).

Where is the School of the Arts?

The program will be located at Central Gwinnett High School (564 W. Crogan St. in Lawrenceville). SOTA’s 31,000-square-foot, state-of-the-art facility will open in August 2021.

Who can attend SOTA?

The School of the Arts will serve the students of Central Gwinnett High School as well as students from across the district who are eligible for permissive transfer. Transfer students may audition to attend SOTA as a Conservatory

student or they may attend SOTA in the Fellows program (no audition required). In its opening year, SOTA will accept rising 9th and 10th graders.

What fine arts programs will be available?

SOTA Conservatory: This focused, pre-professional program is for students who plan to pursue their artistic vision at the college level and/or as a career. Conservatory students will declare a fine arts major to concentrate their studies, taking a minimum of four fine arts courses per year, and will spend 20 hours per week in their arts program of study. The five SOTA Conservatory Programs are Art and Design, Dance, Music Technology and Audio Production, Theatre, and Voice. Conservatory students may complete core courses online in order to maximize fine arts courses. *Admission by audition/portfolio submission, permissive transfers permitted.*

SOTA Fellows: Designed for students with a strong interest in the arts, the Fellows program offers expanded elective course opportunities in creative writing, music (Percussion, Strings, Woodwinds), and theatre. Students may take online and blended courses to open their schedule for fine arts classes. *No admission criteria, permissive transfers permitted.*

Will transportation be provided?

Transportation to the School of the Arts will be provided for students who live in the Central Gwinnett Cluster attendance zone. Students admitted to the School of the Arts from outside of the cluster must provide their own transportation.

Which middle schools will feed the program?

Moore and Jordan middle schools are the feeder schools for Central Gwinnett High School. However, the School of the Arts is open to students across the district. Students must audition or present a portfolio of work to be admitted to the Conservatory program. Students attending from outside the Central Gwinnett Cluster must be eligible for permissive transfer. Learn more about the transfer process on the SOTA website.



Will the school offer Gwinnett's curriculum?

Yes. SOTA students will learn and demonstrate mastery of Gwinnett County Public Schools' Academic Knowledge and Skills (AKS) curriculum, and participate in expanded fine arts classes, internships, and work experiences at a pre-professional and professional level. Individualized learning plans will ensure that students meet their academic and artistic goals.

How will the curriculum at the school differ from what is taught elsewhere?

Conservatory students will have the option to take core classes online and in-person. Students will take a minimum of four fine arts courses per year, and have the opportunity to complete core courses online, leaving more time for fine arts courses. Conservatory students in each area of study will meet together each day for vocal or physical warm-ups and daily focus.

What are the features of the new fine arts building?

All fine arts programs will be located in the new building, with separate and dedicated entrances to the fine arts space. The building will include:

- A black box theatre for flexible staging and small-audience performances;
- New visual arts classrooms and computer art lab;
- New and expanded band, orchestra, chorus, music technology, and recording studio facilities;
- Dance studio space;
- Unique and specialized private lesson and studio space; and
- Expanded performance, rehearsal, and storage spaces.

What are prerequisites or requirements?

All Central Gwinnett High School students have access to the new space, whether they want to take one fine arts course, pursue a fine arts pathway in a specific discipline area, participate in the Fellows program, or audition for the Conservatory.

Acceptance to the SOTA Conservatory is based on audition/portfolio and is open to students zoned to any GCPS high school. Applicants must:

- Complete an application;
- Submit two letters of recommendation; and
- Take part in an interview, and participate in an audition or submit a portfolio in the desired arts discipline.

Can SOTA students participate in sports/extracurricular activities?

Accepting admission to SOTA is both an instructional commitment and an extracurricular time commitment. With rehearsals, exhibits, and performances, students will be unlikely to have the time to participate in additional activities at CGHS (their home school while at SOTA). SOTA students will have the opportunity to participate in arts-related clubs and organizations.

Will the school offer instruction for English learners (EL), gifted classes, special education services, etc.?

Yes, the program will serve students who are eligible for EL, special education, and gifted services.

Will students who attend earn special certificates or diplomas based on their coursework?

All students who complete a fine arts pathway of three courses in one area of concentration are eligible to graduate with a Fine Arts Diploma Seal awarded by SOTA and the Georgia Department of Education. Conservatory students will complete an arts-related internship and/or have the opportunity to perform or work backstage in professional productions with local theatres and arts organizations. Students in the Music Technology and Audio Production programs will be eligible to earn industry certifications.

What college majors will a student be prepared for after graduating from SOTA?

SOTA graduates will be prepared for a wide range of performing and fine arts college majors leading to the ever-growing creative industries market. However, because students will learn the AKS curriculum, they will be ready for any college major they wish to pursue.

What if students are unsure about plans after high school and whether they'll pursue a career in the arts?

Students in this program will be prepared for whatever they decide to do after graduation. Creating personal learning plans for our student artists will ensure that they will get the most out of their experience at the School of the Arts.

How can I learn more?

For more information, email Principal Shane Orr at Shane.Orr@gcpsk12.org or visit our website at gcpsk12.org/SOTA.



The School of the Arts @ Central Gwinnett High School is designed to nurture the talent, determination, and skill of the artist, providing students with the experience and education to pursue their passion at the college and professional level.