

Governor's Honors Program

Coordinator Handbook



2022

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Program Overview

The Georgia Governor's Honors Program (GHP) is a residential summer program for gifted and talented high school students who will be rising juniors and seniors during the program. The program offers instruction that is significantly different from the typical high school classroom and is designed to provide students with academic, cultural, and social enrichment to empower students to become the next generation of global critical thinkers, innovators and leaders.

GHP is held in midsummer (mid-June to mid-July) as a premier residential educational experience at Berry College in Rome, Georgia. Students attend classes in the mornings and afternoons in specific areas of study, and they participate in a wide variety of instructional, leadership and social opportunities every evening. Meals and lodging are provided by the program, with the only required/expected costs to the students being travel expenses to and from the interviews, a few basic school supplies, basics for their dorm rooms, and spending money as desired during the program. GHP provides each student \$25 for extra meals/other expenses.

Coordinator's Role

- Guide the selection process at the local level
- Follow guidelines in *Coordinator's Handbook* and *Description and Criteria*
- Share information as applicable
- Ensure fairness/equity in local selection process
- Provide support at the local level for administrators, counselors, teachers and students
- Align the local selection process with GHP's descriptions and criteria for areas of nominations
- Submit nominees through the GHP online system
- Guide semifinalists and finalists

Qualities/Characteristics of a GHP Student

The most important aspect of the selection process is identifying students who possess the characteristics to be successful in the summer program. Nominating teachers are almost always the most knowledgeable, but do not always understand the qualities of a GHP student.

The ideal candidate is not always the student with the best grades. GHP students are **passionate** about their intellectual and/or artistic pursuits.

GHP students:

- Can synthesize information and explore the “how’s” and “whys” of their disciplines to gain understanding that extends beyond classroom and teacher expectations.
- Develop interests in activities that foster cooperation, collaboration and humility.
- Demonstrate a willingness to challenge preconceived notions and understandings.
- Explore their area of nomination outside the classroom environment, often without prompting.
- Exhibit the social and emotional maturity necessary to function in intensive classroom and residential settings; and
- Can interact respectfully, cooperatively and appropriately with their peers, instructors, program staff and administrators.

These students share some common qualities that teachers do not always view as gifted/talented, or as a good fit for the program.

Common qualities of GHP students:

- Inquisitive
- Unusual capacity for processing information
- Think and learn rapidly
- Reason and synthesize well
- Heightened capacity to analyze and/or think abstractly
- Alert observer of others and texts (literature, film, etc.)
- Sometimes prefers adults’ company to peers’
- Easily bored and/or disengaged
- Often dislikes group work; prefers to “do it myself”
- Prone to procrastination and self-criticism, due to a desire for perfection

GHP Selection Process

The student selection process has several steps, the first of which varies by local school districts, state charter schools and independent schools (hereinafter referred to as “local districts”). Each local district may create its own process for choosing nominees to GHP.

Attending GHP is a privilege and not a right. As such, local district nominees should demonstrate creativity, superior ability in the nomination major, and the social and emotional maturity required to thrive in an intensive, residential setting for the entire four weeks of the program. Once the nominees have been selected at the local district level and submitted to [Trevor Cason](#) (by email before midnight, November 12), an email with details regarding the online application process will be sent to each student nominee (see GHP timeline for specific dates). The students, counselors, and recommending teachers will then complete the appropriate sections of the application according to the published GHP timeline.

Selecting Students at the Local Level:

While local districts may devise their own processes and procedures to select their nominees, all applicants must meet the requirements outlined in the GHP Course Description and Criteria.

Students should **not** be selected based on their gender, race, school, district or geographic area. The state selection process does not have a bias for juniors over sophomores, although local districts may choose to consider the students’ grade levels in their own selection processes.

The GHP [webpage](#) contains useful information to support the selection and nomination processes, some of which will provide information specifically for the nominees and their parents. Content will be updated throughout the year.

Requirements for Participation:

- Students shall be nominated to the state in only one area of nomination, by a qualified instructor, with the approval of the student and parent/legal guardian and following the local district nomination process. Qualified students may be nominated in consultation with their private teachers in subject areas the school does not offer (dance, piano, strings, etc.). Students nominated at the school level by more than one teacher should be allowed to choose the area in which they prefer to be nominated. Parents/legal guardians of home school students may serve as the nominating teacher.
- Students nominated for the 2021 program as sophomores who did not participate in the program last summer may be nominated for the 2022 program. This includes students who were selected as finalists in 2021 but voluntarily declined the opportunity to participate before last summer’s program began. Local coordinators should indicate this information on their nomination form/spreadsheet.

- Students shall participate in the GHP one time only, i.e., students who attended the 2021 program (**for any length of time**) as rising juniors may not be renominated for the 2022 program. Students whose offer/acceptance was revoked by GHP before the start of the program are disqualified from re-nomination.
- A transcript of each nominee's high school grades must be submitted electronically by the school counselor or administrative designee.
- A score on the PSAT, SAT or ACT is **ONLY required** for mathematics and science nominees. *Note: We recognize that the COVID-19 pandemic continues to make it difficult for students and parents to schedule/attend tests. If this is an issue for the nominee, please know that it will not count against them.* A paper copy (originals are not required) should be brought to the semifinalists' interview, if available.

All students must first be nominated by the local district and:

- Be a current sophomore or junior in a school that is located within the state of Georgia.
- Have the nomination originate with a qualified instructor in the area of nomination (or home school parent) and be approved by the student and parent/legal guardian.
- Have demonstrated high aptitude, social and emotional maturity, giftedness/talent, and sincere passion for their area of nomination.
- Commit to participation in the state level interviews as scheduled by GHP, if selected as a state semifinalist.
- Commit to participation in the program for **the entire four weeks of the program** if selected as a state finalist, **including opening and closing days**. Students are not permitted to arrive late or leave GHP early. Inability to meet the attendance requirement will result in disqualification for consideration, and, if selected for participation, **can result in dismissal** from the program. Exceptions to the attendance requirement will be rare, will be limited to true emergencies, and will require approval by the Governor's Honors Program Manager.

Program Limitations and Allotments:

- Local district coordinators should be aware that each area has its own numerical limitations based on the specific components of its discipline. (ex. The music department must limit its number of finalists by how many individuals are needed to round out a jazz ensemble, vocal choir, etc.) These limitations will determine exactly how many nominees can be accepted into the summer program for a specific nomination area. Therefore, nominators should give careful consideration to their internal selection processes.

Local District Allotments:

- Every local district receives an allotment of total nominations that may be used for any area of nomination based on its population of 10th and 11th graders from the previous year; therefore, allotments can change from year to year. Coordinators should keep an accurate list of nominated students based on their allotment.
- Each local district will be provided with their nomination allotment through a separate email.

Home School Students:

Home school students interested in participating in the GHP nomination process will be directed to the GHP coordinator of the local school systems in which they reside. The home school student's parent/legal guardian will submit a copy of their Declaration of Intent to Home School (DOI) to the local district to verify that the home school student is compliant with Georgia's home study law O.C.G.A. § 20-2-690. Upon verification, the student will be eligible for consideration for local nomination to the Governor's Honors Program. Each local district will receive a home school allotment based on district student population. Home school nominations within this allotment will NOT count against the system nomination totals. Home school allotments will be included in the total quota email to coordinators. Unused home school allotments **CANNOT** be used for local district nominations.

- Local nominations shall be conducted without regard to the public or home school enrollment status to provide a fair and equal opportunity for all nominees.
- **NOTE:** If the home school parent does not have a copy of their Declaration of Intent (DOI), they may contact the [Georgia Department of Education](#).

IMPORTANT!

Please do not notify students and their parents, or publicly release the names of nominees, until they have been verified by the GHP office. GHP office staff will notify all students by email after the nomination deadline (please refer to the timeline for exact dates).

Online Application System

The online system uses the student applicant's email address to create a student application account. Students **must** provide coordinators with **valid** email addresses to access the state-level application, and they must notify the GHP office if changes occur in their email addresses. Students **must** use an email account (such as free accounts from Google, Yahoo, etc.) that **belongs to the student** and not the parent/legal guardian. Parents/legal guardians **must** have a separate account in the online application system, due to parent/legal guardian-specific requirements.

- The first online application task of all state-level nominees is providing the name and email address of their primary parent/legal guardian. Completion of this task automatically triggers an email to the primary parent/legal guardian requesting permission for the student to apply at the state level.
- It is critical that all **local districts collect the email address of each student's primary parent/legal guardian**. GHP will notify both the student and primary parent/legal guardian of this process by email before the application is activated and before the student receives the application login information.
- **Students will not have full access to the GHP online application until permission is granted** in the parent/legal guardian section of the online application by their parent/legal guardian. It is critical that all primary correspondence occur directly between the students and the GHP office. Therefore, we also request that local districts provide mobile numbers (if available) for each student nominee and the primary parent/legal guardian. We will not share this information, as it will only be used internally to send text reminders/updates and/or to make direct contact when there is no response through email. GHP will share critical communications with the students, parents/legal guardians, and their local coordinators.

Application System Emails:

All students, parents/legal guardians, and local district coordinators must also ensure that their security system and filter for the email account has been adjusted to accept email from the online application system, especially if students will be required to use the school email domain. Coordinators will have access to a list of domains and URLs to [whitelist](#) through their information technology departments by accessing the Coordinator Webpage.

Student Responsibilities:

- Students track the status of their applications and acceptances via their online GHP accounts. Nominees are responsible for monitoring their accounts and contacting the

GHP office if the process seems to be delayed, or if there are questions about specific application requirements.

- GHP **does not** maintain an active social media (Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, etc.) presence for application or program information. Students, parents/legal guardians, and local district coordinators should **not** rely on social media sites for accurate information about the nomination and selection process. Any questions about the application and GHP should be directed to the GHP office. There will be no exceptions or special considerations to any part of the process due to misinformation students may receive through social media.

Application Process

Parent/Legal Guardian Permission:

- The students' first task is providing their primary parent's/legal guardian's name and email address. This will trigger an email sent directly to the parent/legal guardian requesting permission for the student to apply.
- Each student **must** receive permission from a parent/legal guardian to apply to the Governor's Honors Program. This permission must be granted through the online application. Students will **not** be able to move forward to any of the remaining sections of the application until a parent/legal guardian completes the permission section.
- Parents/legal guardians will be required to provide responses to several items through the online application, including parental/legal guardian preference concerning their rights to review recommendations. The GHP office does **not require** waivers to be granted and will not use any of the permission/waiver data to determine semifinalists. The parent/legal guardian waiver decision will be shared with recommenders in an email invitation from the application. Parents/legal guardians should be directed to make the decision they feel is appropriate for their child.
- Parents/legal guardians will also select potential times to attend the state-level interviews. Selecting a potential time does **not** mean that the student will be selected as a semifinalist. This task is designed to expedite the planning and communication process for the semifinalist announcement in January.
- Parents/legal guardians are strongly encouraged to monitor their child's application and acceptance processes.

Teacher Recommendation and Student Record:

- Each student must ask a teacher in his/her area of nomination to provide a recommendation. Students should think carefully about whom they will ask to complete this part of the process on their behalf. There is **no requirement** that the recommending teacher currently teaches the student or be currently employed at the student's school. Private instructors may also serve as recommending teachers.
- It is important that students discuss the recommendation requests with their teachers **before** submitting their names within the online application. The online application system immediately contacts the teacher and counselor/administrative designee by email after students submit their names and email addresses. It is best if the recommender anticipates this request.

High School Transcript:

- GHP requires a school official to upload a transcript(s), via the GHP online application that covers all years of each student’s high school/secondary school education. The transcript(s) must include an explanation of the school's grading system and include grades from the most recent school term. Transcripts do not need to be official but must be uploaded by a counselor or administrative designee.

Standardized Test Scores (Mathematics or Science):

- Standardized test results (PSAT, SAT or ACT) are **ONLY** required for the areas of mathematics and science.
- Local counselors/administrative designees should enter scores directly into the student record form if they are available.
- A copy of the scores **must** be brought to the mathematics and science interview.
- **We recognize that the Covid-19 pandemic continues to make it difficult for students and parents/legal guardians to schedule/attend tests. If this is an issue for nominees, please know that it will not count against them.**

Student Application:

- All application tasks will be submitted in the online application system, WizeHive.
- The first tasks in the student application are providing contact information for their parent/legal guardian, recommending teacher and counselor/administrative designee.
- Students will then be prompted to complete their “student profile” and a short response section.
- The final task is separate and specific to each major/subject. For example, students nominated in social studies will provide a written response to one or more current issues, while a dance nominee will submit a short video of their dancing technique.
- Once the student applications have been completed and verified by the GHP office, they will be submitted to content area experts for review. Reviewers for each content area will use a scoring rubric to rate each application. Once all applications have been reviewed, the scores will be tabulated, and this process will generate a list of semifinalists to be invited to the state-level interviews.
- All students who submit an application in the online system will be recognized for their achievements as a GHP state-level nominee. Semifinalists will receive notice of an invitation to the state-level interview via their online application account in late January. GHP is not responsible for missed deadlines or failure to respond within required timelines for students who do not adequately monitor their email, online application accounts or the online application process.

Semifinalists Level

Notification:

Semifinalists are those students who have been selected to attend the state-level interviews. These students have been nominated by their local district, have successfully completed the application process, have had their online applications scored, and have obtained an application score that moves them to semifinalist status.

- Applications will be reviewed by college faculty, high school teachers and GHP staff. All decisions (invitation to interview, acceptance, etc.) are communicated via the student's online application account which is accessed directly by the nominee. Local district coordinators will be notified as well.
- Semifinalists will receive notice of an invitation to the state-level interview via their online application account in late January. GHP is not responsible for missed deadlines or failure to respond within required timelines for students who do not adequately monitor their email or online application accounts or the online application process.
- Parents/legal guardians of semifinalists (students who are selected to attend the state-level interviews) will have indicated interview time preferences in their original application. While every effort will be made to honor their first or second choice, in a few instances this may not be possible. GHP's goal is to ensure that families are provided with the ability to make the most appropriate plans for their individual situations and to allow students the time and rest needed to prepare for the actual interview event. GHP will notify semifinalists of their interview times via the students' online application accounts. It is the responsibility of the student and his/her parents/legal guardians to be aware of the specific assigned interview time.

Preparing Students for Interviews/Auditions:

Make sure that every semifinalist is aware of the GHP [webpage](#), where information will be posted as appropriate.

- Schools may support semifinalists by conducting mock interviews to give students experience before they participate in the actual GHP state-level interviews.
- Local district coordinators are advised to assist students in preparing for the state-level interviews by reviewing the interview day packet and then ensuring that students both read the interview/audition requirements and practice/rehearse.
- Coordinators are strongly advised to contact the GHP office with any questions or concerns.

Finalists and Alternates

Finalists:

Finalists are those students who have been selected to attend GHP. Finalists will be notified through their student account in the online application system on March 25, 2022, and will be provided with instructions to complete the acceptance process. **The deadline for acceptance (via the GHP online application site) is April 4, 2022.** Finalists who fail to complete the acceptance process by the deadline will forfeit their invitation to attend GHP. Students who decline their invitation (or miss the deadline) will be removed as a finalist, and the alternate with the highest score in that subject will be invited instead.

Coordinators will receive a list of their finalists and alternates, along with a generic press release, to be used at their discretion.

Alternates:

Alternates will be alerted of their status as an alternate on March 25, 2022. If a finalist does not accept or is unable to attend, the GHP office will contact the alternates on a rolling basis. No alternates will be invited after May 13, 2022.

Acceptance:

- It is the responsibility of the finalists (applicants who are offered admission to the summer program) to formally accept or decline the offer via their GHP online application account.
- The Acceptance Checklist, with specific information regarding GHP acceptance, will be available through the application resources' link.

Accepted Finalists:

- GHP will communicate directly with all accepted finalists and their primary parent/legal guardian.
- All deadlines must be met by students and parents/legal guardians.
- Students must have a current physical and **GHP medical form** completed.
- The legal agreement must be signed by both the student and a parent/legal guardian, and it must be notarized.
- Students must adhere to all rules while attending summer program.

GHP cannot be successful without the efforts of local coordinators, and we are extremely grateful to the coordinators, teachers, counselors, and administrators for their hard work and dedication to GHP. Do not hesitate to contact us if questions arise.

Mr. Richard Parmer
Governor's Honors Program Manager
Email: rparmer@gosa.ga.gov
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Mr. Trevor Cason
Innovative Programs Specialist
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Appendix A: GHP 2022 Timeline

| | |
|-------------------------|--|
| August 19, 2021 | Information email to superintendents, independent heads of school and GHP coordinators |
| August – November, 2021 | Local selection processes occur during this time. Note, nominee selection at the local level will include internal deadlines that differ from the state timeline. ** |
| November 12, 2021 | Deadline for submission of 2022 GHP student nominations by independent schools, state charter schools, and districts |
| November 15, 2021 | Online application opens for student state level nominees |
| January 3, 2022 | Deadline for completed student online applications, including all required documents and files |
| February 4, 2022 | Notification of semifinalists and interview/audition times |
| February 26, 2022 | State level semifinalists' interviews at Berry College, Rome, GA |
| March 25, 2022 | Notification of 2022 Finalists and Alternates |
| April 4, 2022 | Deadline for Finalists' acceptance |
| April 8, 2022 | Parents/legal guardians emailed online link to required student forms |
| April 22, 2022 | Deadline for parent/legal guardian online completion of required student forms |
| May 13, 2022 | Last day for GOSA to invite Alternates |
| June 19 – July 16, 2022 | 2022 Governor's Honors Program at Berry College, Rome, GA |

*Due to the ongoing global COVID-19 pandemic several scheduled events may be changed and/or rescheduled. GHP will communicate these changes as they are made.

**Contact your local coordinator to determine any relevant dates for nominee selection.

Appendix B: GHP 2022 Areas of Nomination

| | |
|--|------------------|
| Agricultural Research, Biotechnology & Science | Science* |
| Communicative Arts | Social Studies* |
| Dance** | Theatre |
| Engineering* | Visual Arts |
| Mathematics | World Languages* |
| Music* | |

*These areas of nomination have subcategories provided below.

** District coordinators may submit 2 male dance nominees without impacting allotment.

Engineering:

- Computer Programming
- Mechanical Design
- Mechanical and Electrical

Music:

- Brass: Euphonium, French Horn, Trombone, Trumpet, Tuba
- Jazz: Electric or Acoustic Bass, Drums, Guitar, Piano, Saxophone, Trombone, Trumpet, Vibraphone
- Percussion
- Piano
- Strings: Cello, String Bass, Viola, Violin
- Voice: Bass, Treble, Tenor
- Woodwind: Bassoon, Clarinet, Flute, Oboe, Saxophone

Science:

- Biology/Environmental Science
- Chemistry
- Physics

Social Studies:

- Economics
- Geography
- History
- Psychology
- Sociology

World Languages:

- Chinese
- French
- German
- Latin
- Spanish

Appendix C: Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

Q: What are some qualities of gifted students?

A: While there is no set list of qualities, most gifted students tend to exhibit one or more of the following attributes:

- Inquisitive
- High level of language ability
- Unusual capacity for processing information
- Think and learn rapidly
- Reason and synthesize well
- Heightened capacity to analyze and/or think abstractly
- Alert observer of others and texts (literature, film, etc.)
- Sometimes prefers adults' company to peers'
- Easily bored and/or disengaged
- Often dislikes group work; prefers to "do it myself"
- Prone to procrastination and self-criticism due to a desire for perfection

Q: How will home school students know whom to contact for assistance?

A: All interested students and parents/legal guardians (regardless of public/home school) are directed to contact their local district GHP coordinators for assistance. Home school parents/students/legal guardians should contact the public school which they would attend for nomination information.

Q: Are local district GHP coordinators responsible for recruiting home school students?

A: No. GOSA notifies home school community groups. That stated, once a home school student or parent/legal guardian contacts the local district GHP coordinator, it becomes the coordinator's responsibility to assist the student in the same manner that would be provided to public school students.

Q: Does the number of home school students affect my nomination allotment?

A: Only if the number of home school nominees exceeds the home school allotment provided by GOSA.

Q: Will home school students take away nominations from public school students?

A: Only if the number of home school nominees exceeds the home school allotment provided by GOSA.

Q: Who is the “Nominating teacher” for a home school student?

A: The nominating teacher is the individual who serves as the student’s primary instructor for the subject area of nomination. This may be the nominee’s parent(s)/legal guardian, or someone involved in a home school consortium.

Q: Can we request the student’s application scores if they are not chosen as a semifinalist?

A: Applications are holistically evaluated by GHP content area experts and faculty/staff according to a pre-determined rubric. Due to the extremely large volume of student applications, this process is not intended to provide individual student feedback or suggestions for improvement. All scores by the review panel are final and are not subject to appeal. To protect student confidentiality, GOSA does not maintain or archive student scores for an extended period.

Q: Can a local district send an alternate if the original nominee declines to participate in the state-level interview?

A: No, local districts are not allowed to substitute students once the online application opens.

Q: If a student is selected to attend GHP, does he or she have to pay tuition?

A: No, there is no charge for tuition, room, board or classroom materials. Participants will be responsible only for transportation to and from GHP and for any personal expenses, such as snacks, laundry detergent, general school supplies, etc. There is no charge for use of any of the recreational facilities, libraries, washers/dryers, or attendance at special events held during the summer program.

Q: Are students provided grades or academic credit for attending GHP?

A: No, students are provided with an intensive academic environment without the pressure of grades. Students are encouraged to become increasingly self-motivated throughout the program, and instructors provide constructive feedback that is designed to guide future studies and development. All students who successfully complete the program receive a certificate of merit.

Q: Can students with disabilities apply?

A: Yes, if the student meets the criteria for the subject area, they are encouraged to apply.

Q: Since GHP may conflict with other summer activities, what should a student who is selected do if there is a conflict?

A: Students will need to make a choice regarding the summer activities they wish to pursue. GHP requires commitment to participate in the program for **the entire four weeks of the program** if selected as a state finalist, **including opening and closing days**. Students are not permitted to arrive late or leave GHP early.

Q: What qualities or criteria should we stress for our school/district-level GHP nomination process?

A: Schools and districts will need to make their decisions based on what they deem best for their students. Due to the intensive academic and collaborative nature of the program, students who are most successful tend to display intellectual curiosity, significant academic or artistic talent, comfort in small and large group settings, and the emotional maturity to participate in a residential setting. Students who possess all these characteristics are typically students who matriculate through the four-week program successfully.