Governor's Honors Program

2026

Course Descriptions
&
Selection Criteria

Glossary

GHP Coordinator: The individual tasked with officially submitting GHP nominations for state level consideration for the respective district or private/independent/state charter school.
Local Selection Process: Each public school district, independent school, state school and state charter may create its own process for choosing nominees for GHP. The selection criteria can vary depending on the district or school. GHP requires that the process be fair, equitable, and comply with any state or federal requirements for those with disabilities or seeking accommodations.
Nominating Educator: The educator (teacher, guidance counselor, or administrator) responsible for suggesting students for consideration in the local selection process.
Recommender: An individual selected by the nominee (not necessarily an educator) who is an unrelated adult that can strongly articulate the nominee's level of passion, skill, knowledge, and experience in their area of nomination, as required, in the application process.
State Level Applicants: Students who have accepted nomination and completed the application process.
State Level Nominees: Students nominated by their respective school districts, private/independent schools, or state charter schools for consideration to attend GHP.

What is the Governor's Honors Program (GHP)

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

Who is a GHP Student

A GHP caliber student is a current sophomore or junior that exhibits an undeniable level of passion in their preferred subject, and an appetite to learn on a deeper level that cannot always be fully satisfied in a high school classroom. GHP caliber students will find ways to study and explore their subjects independently from a classroom environment, at times despite a lack of resources.

Prospective GHP students should know that selection to the Governor's Honors Program is highly competitive. Students should have passion in the area of nomination, desire to attend GHP in the summer, willingness/ability to live in a residential setting for the full-length of the program, and the capacity to be fully engaged in the curriculum for the duration of the program. This is the minimum threshold for consideration for the program. The most successful student candidates additionally have the attributes, experiences, and skills outlined in the selection criteria provided for their area of nomination.

A successful GHP student will:

- Be inquisitive.
- Demonstrate a high capacity for processing information.
- Think and learn rapidly.
- Demonstrate a high capacity to analyze and/or think abstractly.
- Gravitate to more high-level conversations, not always available with peers.
- Demonstrate intensity and passion about his/her area of nomination.
- Develop interests in activities that foster cooperation and humility.
- Exhibit the social and emotional maturity to interact respectfully, cooperatively, and appropriately with peers, instructors, and program staff.

Guidance on Selecting GHP Nominees to the Governor's Honors Program

The Instructional Descriptions and Selection Criteria serve as guidance for GHP coordinators, nominating educators and students. The document includes a brief instructional description, and the criteria for each subject area. Coordinators and nominating educators should carefully consider this information as they select their student nominees. The Governor's Office of Student Achievement (GOSA) strives to promote equity and fairness in the selection process for GHP candidates. To aid that effort, GOSA strongly encourages GHP coordinators and nominating educators to review the selection criteria.

Prospective GHP students are evaluated in the context of their area of nomination. However, students are also evaluated in the context of the social and emotional maturity required to thrive in an intensive learning environment, and residential setting. Selected students are expected to, at all times, demonstrate integrity and respect for others during their participation in the program. This includes full participation in all aspects of the program and adherence to all rules, regulations, and expectations as set forth and interpreted by the GHP Office.

Selection Process

Step one (district/private school/state charter nomination to the state level): The local districts/private schools/state charters nominate their students based on local criteria. Each public school district, independent school, state school and state charter may create its own process for choosing nominees for GHP. The selection criteria can vary depending on the district or school. GHP requires that the process be fair, equitable, and comply with any state or federal requirements for those with disabilities or requesting accommodations.

Step two (students submit an online application): State level nominees (students nominated by district/independent school/state school/state charters) will be notified of their nomination by the GHP office and guided to an online application which will provide the specific criteria for areas of nomination. The application must include strong support from a recommender and official records verified by a school administrator. Each application must include all required components and should be fully completed. Incomplete applications will not be considered.

Step three (semifinalist invitation to the state level interview/audition): Students' applications will be scored by content area experts (educators and professionals) for each subject area. Semifinalists will be chosen in each area of nomination and invited to attend the state level interview/audition. The Semifinalist Event will take place on February 28 (All Areas except music) at Georgia Southern University and March 14 (Music), at Kennesaw State University. Interviews will include subject area and some non-academic questions. Depending

on their nomination area, a student may also participate in a performance task (written examination, oral examination, artistic demonstration/audition, debate simulation, etc.) during the semifinalist interview and audition. Specific instructions will be provided in advance for those invited to interview/audition.

Step four (finalist selection): Finalists (i.e., applicants who are offered admission to the summer program) will be notified via the application portal by the GHP office on March 20, 2026 and must formally accept or decline the offer via the application interface. The deadline to formally accept or decline the offer is April 3, 2026.

Nomination Areas

- Agricultural Research, Biotechnology, and Science
- Communicative Arts
- Computer Science
- Dance
- Engineering
    - Mechanical & Aerospace
    - Electrical & Computer
    - Civil
- Mathematics
- 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: Soprano, Alto, Tenor, Bass
    - Woodwind: Bassoon, Clarinet, Flute, Oboe, Saxophone
- Science
    - Biology/Environmental Science
    - Chemistry
    - Physics
- Social Studies
- Theatre
- Visual Arts
- World Languages
    - Chinese
    - French
    - German
    - Latin
    - Spanish

AGRICULTURAL RESEARCH, BIOTECHNOLOGY, AND SCIENCE

Summer Instructional Description:
The GHP Agricultural Research, Biotechnology, and Science Department is designed to provide a comprehensive contemporary program of research-based education for students interested in the agricultural sciences. The courses are modeled for students to learn about opportunities for research and analysis in agricultural sciences. Instruction is organized around ways people are likely to encounter environmental science, agricultural research, and biotechnology in a university setting. The curriculum introduces students to courses and laboratory experiences similar to sophomore/junior level college courses and includes a research project. Students gain knowledge through exploration of topics in soils, hydrology, forestry, natural resources, as well as biotechnology for plants, animals, and the environment. Students will also participate in intradisciplinary courses in chemistry, biology, and physics.

By the end of the program, students will have an increased understanding of the complex biological, physical, and socio-economic factors that shape agricultural systems and various professions in agriculture (e.g., the roles of a technician, researcher, food producer, etc.).

Topics of study have included, but are not limited to:

- Laboratory Techniques and Procedures Research Methodology
- Environmental Science and Stewardship Genetics in Agricultural Biotechnology
- Natural Resource and Conservation Management Plant and Animal Biotechnology Applications Soils and Hydrology
- Urban and Community Practices Energy Systems
- International Agriculture and Policy

Selection Criteria:
GHP Agricultural Research, Biotechnology, and Science nominees should have a high-level passion and curiosity, and knowledge/awareness of the current state of agriculture in terms of applied research and systematic approaches to the industry. Students are also expected to, at all times, demonstrate integrity and respect for others during their participation in the program. This includes full participation in all aspects of the program and adherence to all rules, regulations, and expectations as set forth and interpreted by GHP.

Interest Areas:
Participation in science fairs, clubs, etc., may support evidence of the skills found in a strong candidate, however a citation alone is not a sufficient demonstration of the selection criteria. Similarly, nominating educators are encouraged to nominate students they believe to be

passionate and knowledgeable in the sciences even if traditional forms of recognition are not present.

Academic Record:

- Strong academic record in agricultural science, with a focus in biotechnology, environmental science, and/or a directly related area.
- Involvement/experiences in agriculture above those associated with school-related requirements.

Skills:

- Understanding of environmental science, biotechnology, knowledge of the agriculture industry, including products, production, uses, and current issues.
- Ability to read and synthesize peer-reviewed research
- Research, laboratory experience, and safety skills.
- Capability to thrive in a group study environment and approach new agricultural science-based inquiries in a positive and receptive manner.

Semifinalist Expectations:

- Semifinalists in agriculture will participate in an individual interview showcasing interest in the subject. Students should be able to showcase prior experiences and ideas to expand research opportunities.
- Semifinalists may be provided pre-site and on-site peer-reviewed research articles related to current agricultural research. With these articles, students must synthesize a response to a given prompt for the writing/composition component of the interview process using the data and information provided.
- Strong candidates will exhibit sufficient preparation, a command of facts and knowledge, confidence in articulating the issue, impacts, and interest in the topic.

COMMUNICATIVE ARTS

Summer Instructional Description:
The GHP Communicative Arts department offers an intense exploration of the various components comprising the communicative arts. Specific content stretches beyond those topics found in the typical Georgia high school curriculum by exposing students to new and contemporary texts, more obscure classical texts, and teaching students new ways to interact with texts they may encounter in the future.

Courses are designed and taught by various instructors. Each week, an instructor teaches two "experiences," which consist of 10 -11 hours of seat time with reading and individual writing by each student after class hours.

Coursework involves student-led as well as instructor-led discussion, debate, journaling, collaborative creativity (e.g., improvisation, slam poetry, comedy, film study, documentary production), performance, and various modes of writing assignments. Students have opportunities to produce written or performative responses (personal, creative, and analytical) to the course texts. Students are encouraged to try many new styles of writing, composition, and read many new genres and forms.

By the end of each course experience, students should have achieved a new way of interacting with a text and understanding of the work's relationship to other texts and the world to which it belongs. Students expand their reading experience during the program, moving beyond contemporary popular fiction and school assignments. All finalists must communicate fluently in English prose writing.

Topics of study have included, but are not limited to:

- The study of post-structural critical theories and their application in the reading of a variety of texts.
- The study of the aspects of the English language, including linguistics.
- The study of literary ideologies including modernism and postmodernism.
- The study of the impact of race, class, and gender on literature and life.
- The composition and performance of literary works, including poems and plays.
- The examination of popular culture and the nature of media and media literacy.
- The extended analysis of nontraditional school literature, specific genre fiction, and film.
- The interdisciplinary nature of literature and art.

Selection Criteria:

Communicative Arts nominees should have passion for literature and be able to respond critically to literature and media as well as thrive in a discussion-oriented environment as an active participant; additionally, nominees may show an avid interest or pursuit in creative writing. Students are also expected to, at all times, demonstrate integrity and respect for others during their participation in the program. This includes full participation in all aspects of the program and adherence to all rules, regulations, and expectations as set forth and interpreted by GHP.

Interest Areas:

- Demonstrate interest in communicative arts through relevant extracurricular activities and pursuits (e.g., school newspaper, literary magazine, yearbook, theater, independent research, blogging, creative writing, and work and/or volunteer-related experiences).
- Students should genuinely enjoy discussion and exploration of various mediums of communication (e.g., theater, art, literature, film).
- Students should also express an interest or pursuit of various writing modes outside of the regular classroom experience or assignment--creative writing, whatever the form: poetry, playwriting, short stories, novels, etc., as well as expository writing beyond a typical advanced-level course essay. For example, a nominee may indicate a desire to become a journalist, novelist, playwright, or freelance writer as a profession (however, such an interest in writing as a profession is not a requirement).

Academic Record:

- Strong academic record within English language arts classrooms, including participating in discussions, collaborating with peers, and working independently. Communicative Arts students may not necessarily be the most vocal student in the classroom, but they are thoughtful and analytical in their contributions.
- Involvement/experiences within the communicative arts outside of the classroom is expected. This includes but is not limited to creative writing, film analysis, poetry, essays and non-fiction, song writing, journalism, public speaking. Students are also expected to read and interact with texts outside of the classroom.

Skills:

- Exposure to reading and writing beyond the classroom and “popular” fiction.
- Analytical and synthesis skills and willingness to explore various media of communication (e.g., theater, art, literature, film).
- Strong candidates will have an appreciation and knowledge for the literary canon and canonical authors. Students can and are eager to deal with unfamiliar and ambiguous

texts, and new formats and genres of “texts” through independent reading, shared reading, and full group discussions.
- Strong communication skills (writing, speaking, and listening) in student-led class or small group discussions.

Semifinalist Expectations

- Semifinalists in communicative arts will be provided with a reading period during which they will examine text excerpts selected by the GHP Communicative Arts Department and then participate in a group discussion with other communicative arts candidates to analyze and synthesize those texts.
- Semifinalists in communicative arts will also participate in an individual interview.

COMPUTER SCIENCE

Summer Instructional Description:
The curriculum encompasses a wide range of relevant topics, such as knowledge-based artificial intelligence, principles of machine learning, and interdisciplinary applications across fields such as biology, biomedical engineering, and finance. We employ a multi-faceted learning approach, weaving together theoretical instruction, practical assignments, and collaborative project work.

Topics of study have included, but are not limited to:

- Gain a comprehensive understanding of computer science concepts and programming principles.
- Develop the ability to think algorithmically and resolve programming problems effectively (ex: through Big-O analysis).
- Learn how to design and implement complex, scalable computing systems.
- Acquire practical knowledge about machine learning, such as hyperparameter tuning, bias-variance tradeoff, algorithmic bias, different types of learning models, and model evaluation metrics.
- Learn best practices related to user experience (UX) design, machine learning modeling, and generative AI technologies.
- Master the essentials of environment setup and version control, including proficiency in tools such as Anaconda for package management and environment control, and GitHub for versioning and collaborative development.
- Understand how to efficiently use AI coding tools to generate, analyze, and optimize code, leading to a streamlined development process.

Selection Criteria:
Computer Science nominees should demonstrate innovative application of their knowledge outside of traditional school settings. Candidates should exhibit an ability to apply instructional material in creative and novel ways. This can be evidenced through projects informed by educational platforms like MOOCs, YouTube, Kaggle, Awwwards.com, and StackOverflow.

Please note that projects developed through corporate internships, partnerships, or replicas of existing Kaggle projects will not be considered valid demonstrations for this program. The program encourages and prioritizes originality and creativity in all project submissions. Students are required to submit a 5-minute video of their project, providing a link to their website and/or well documented codebase, along with links to resources used in the project's creation in the description area. The final interview will have applicants discussing details of their projects with

industry professionals, with extended conversations about design tradeoffs and problem-solving techniques.

Students are expected to uphold the highest standards of integrity and respect, in alignment with all rules, regulations, and expectations set by GHP.

Interest Areas:
Nominees should have a deep-seated interest in computer science, an attitude for self-motivated learning, and possess a passion for sharing their knowledge with others. Given the ever-evolving landscape of computer science, an ideal candidate should demonstrate an ongoing commitment to learning, extending beyond the confines of their high school curricula. Their enthusiasm should be evident in their pursuit of knowledge through diverse resources, demonstrating adaptability and a proactive attitude in this rapidly advancing field.

GHP recognizes that access to resources varies significantly among schools and considers this when evaluating applications. Nominees should exhibit innovative use and maximization of the resources available to them, and those who have shown resilience and ingenuity in overcoming resource limitations to achieve their computer science objectives.

Academic Record:

- It is important to recognize that computer science intuition does not exclusively come from the classroom, and as a result, a strong academic record is only preferred, not required.
- Prior coursework/experience related to computer science. This includes any programming language(s) and types of projects. Ideally, presented projects happen outside of the classroom. Students will not be penalized if their school doesn't offer computer science classes as long as a valid attempt is made to obtain the material through external sources: work experience, online classes, mentorship, etc.

Skills:

- Strong analytical background and willingness to learn new skills.
- High degree of determination; willing to work through a problem until a solution is obtained, even if it takes weeks.
- Able to work independently and within a group.
- Appreciation for a wide variety of programming languages and applications.
- *Keywords to consider when nominating: Distributed Systems, Systems Design, Algorithm analysis, AI-assisted coding and processing*

Semifinalist Expectations:

- Interviews will emphasize your thought process rather than just your knowledge base.
- Your portfolio should authentically represent your own work. We expect you to showcase projects that reflect your own ideas and efforts, rather than collaborative work, contributions to university research, or projects completed by others.
- Please note that research papers (preprints or published) will not be considered as part of the interview process.
- There is no need to prepare a resume.
- Projects utilizing AI/ML technologies do not confer any inherent advantage.
- Note: To ensure a fair and unbiased interview process, please refrain from discussing interview questions with fellow candidates, interacting with students from other disciplines, or sharing any details outside the designated interview rooms; doing so may disadvantage some candidates, so strict adherence to these guidelines is expected.

DANCE

Summer Instructional Description:
The GHP Dance department goals are defined through three main objectives:

- Instructional audition preparation for the dancer through various styles of dance.
- Personal interaction with a variety of educators, choreographers, and other dancers.
- Expansion of student ideas of what defines a dancer and awareness of individual goals.

Topics of study have included, but are not limited to:
Students participate in four categories to meet the dance program objectives and to expand their knowledge and technical level of dance, aesthetic judgment, definition of dance, and their interpersonal skills.

- Daily Technique Classes in ballet, pointe, modern, jazz, and improvisation are taught by faculty, guest educators and students.
- Choreography encourages students to develop their own artistic statements through improvisation and rehearsed performance pieces.
- Performance Skills are developed through daily rehearsals, open rehearsals, ballet lecture/demonstrations, improvisation, and concerts during the final week of the program.
- Dance History is presented through lecture/discussions, videos, films, student research, and presentations to the class of various dancers/choreographers.

Selection Criteria:
Dance nominees should have a firm ballet foundation, strong technique, and artistry in their primary style of dance, be self-driven, open-minded, and motivated to pursue a life in dance. Students are also expected to, at all times, demonstrate integrity and respect for others during their participation in the program. This includes full participation in all aspects of the program and adherence to all rules, regulations, and expectations as set forth and interpreted by GHP.

Interest Areas:

- Demonstrated interest in dance through relevant extracurricular activities, artistry, and knowledge of dance (e.g., participation in dance intensive camps, competition and convention training, master classes and dance performance clinics, independent study, and work and/or volunteer-related experiences).

Academic Record:
Strong academic record is preferred but not required.

Skills:

- Flexibility and at least two years of technical ballet training including barre, adagio, petite allegro, grand allegro.
- Students must be able to cope with a demanding practice and performance schedule. Finalists are expected to practice a minimum of four hours per day during instructional time with additional rehearsals in the evenings.
- Strong candidates will have a passion and willingness to explore a variety of approaches to dance. They will execute the following skills on both the right and left with superior technique: splits, double pirouette, leaps, leg extensions, arabesques, fouettés, a la seconde turns, developpe and body positions.

Semifinalist Expectations:

- Semifinalists should arrive in good shape, free from injury or illness and ready to work hard in a fast-paced environment.
- Semifinalists are required to participate in a two-hour performance class and an individual interview.
- Semifinalists must wear appropriate attire to audition and do not need to bring a change of clothing for the interview portion.
- Female students must dress in a solid color leotard (black leotard preferred) and pink transition tights. Female semifinalists should bring pink ballet shoes and jazz shoes (No Pointe shoes). Male students must dress in black or white fitted shirt and black transition tights. Male semifinalists should bring black ballet shoes and jazz shoes. In every instance, hair should be securely fastened away from face and neck.

ENGINEERING

Summer Instructional Description:
GHP Engineering centers around two weeks of in-depth lessons typically not presented at the high school level. The last two weeks focus on working on an industry-oriented design project. While working on their projects, students will learn to conceptualize, design, prototype, and iterate to achieve the ideal engineering solution. Although students interview for only one of three concentrations, they will collaborate with peers within the other concentrations throughout the program and on the final project.

Students may be nominated in one of the following concentration areas:
Mechanical & Aerospace (MA)
Topics of study may include, but are not limited to:

- This subfield will work through the basic principles of engineering, including stress/strain, gear train design, thermodynamics, and fluids. Given the time, advanced topics such as combustion, FEA/CFD, vibrational analysis, and orbital mechanics will be taught. Projects encompassing those topics will challenge the students to make informed engineering decisions to rapidly design, build, test, and iterate to meet the objectives of the project.
- *Keywords to consider when nominating: Statics, Thermodynamics, Fluids, CAD, FEA, drones, RC planes, model rockets, Rapid prototyping, FRC Mechanical Design, Aerial flight teams*

Electrical and Computational (EC)
Topics of study may include, but are not limited to:

- This subfield will learn about the fundamentals of electrical and computer engineering. This subfield dives into the fundamentals of designing circuitry, hardware, and software solutions to problems. Topics taught include DC and digital circuit design, interpreting circuit diagrams, using microcontrollers and designing mechatronic systems. Students will learn concepts through lectures, apply the concepts through lab work and homework, and will be expected to apply the engineering design process to project prompts.
- *Keywords to consider when nominating: Electrical, Computers, Robotics, FRC Programming, FRC Electrical, Arduino, Raspberry Pi, Soldering, Electronics, Programming, Computer Vision*

Civil Engineering (CE)
Topics of study may include, but are not limited to:

- Through the instruction of fluid mechanics, strength of materials, and other fundamental engineering concepts, students will be able to address the common challenges that arise in the civil engineering domain. Topics covered will include incompressible flow, open channel flow, fluid system design, fluid and control systems, structural mechanics, and strength of materials. Students will be exposed to these topics through lectures and hands-on activities to apply those concepts. Examples of some projects include the design of retention ponds, dam structures, and bridges. Projects will encourage students to utilize math and science to solve problems rapidly while thoroughly thinking about the design from a holistic perspective.
- *Keywords to consider when nominating: Fluid mechanics, piping and pump systems, beam theory, strength of materials, dams, bridges, architecture, infrastructure, control systems, water resource management*

Selection Criteria:

Engineering nominees should demonstrate a high work ethic, creativity, and abstract thinking abilities. They should explore their curiosity in their school and off-time. Students are also expected to, at all times, demonstrate integrity, humbleness, and respect for others during their participation in the program. This includes full participation in all aspects of the program and adherence to all rules, regulations, and expectations as set forth and interpreted by GHP. All nominees should have experience beyond the classroom. Top candidates will be those who have projects they have completed outside of school.

Interest Areas:

Strong candidates will demonstrate an interest in engineering beyond the classroom through relevant extracurricular activities and pursuits (e.g., coding or programming, machining experience, involvement in the robotics club, competition team, and work and/or volunteer-related experiences). Candidates should see engineering applications throughout their daily life, and essentially: live, breathe, and eat engineering.

Academic Record:

- Strong academic record is preferred but not required. It is important to recognize that engineering intuition typically does not come from the classroom, and as a result, a strong academic record is only preferred, not required.
- Prior coursework/experience related to the subfield the applicant is applying to. This includes, but isn't limited to: mechatronics, electrical design, mechanical/aerospace engineering, architecture, robotics, and/or programming-related courses. Students will not be penalized if their school doesn't offer those classes as long as a valid attempt is made to obtain the material through external sources: work experience, online classes,

mentorship, etc.

Skills:

- For MA and CE: Computer-aided design (CAD) skills are a requirement for any engineer in the 21st century.
    - If your school doesn't offer CAD class/license, open a free Onshape account, watch some videos, and learn this critical skill.
- For EC: Circuit design and experience are a requirement for any engineer in the 21st century.
    - If your school doesn't offer circuit design, open a free TinkerCAD or CircuitLab account and watch online videos/tutorials to learn this critical skill.
- Genuine interest and endless motivation to learn.
- Willingness and capability to work in a team setting. You are expected to be an engaging and eager team member, regardless of who you are working with.
- Ability to work in a fast-paced and stressful environment to meet project deadlines.
- Ability to set a project schedule and work to accomplish objectives.
- Strong candidates will have project management, problem-solving, design, and research experience to develop a product/engineering solution.

Semifinalist Expectations:

- Semifinalists in Engineering will participate in a group task, an individual task, and an individual interview.
- The Group Task will consist of groups of 3-5 students. Each group will be given an engineering activity to solve. The "solving" of this problem is second to the critical thinking and group dynamics that students will show in a collaborative environment. The group will be observed by 1-2 observers. While each student selects a specific concentration when applying, students are exposed to each concentration/ field of engineering during the summer and are expected to openly and actively participate in that learning.
- For MA and CE: The individual task will challenge individuals to prototype designs based on a prompt provided to them.
- For EC: The circuit challenge will challenge individuals to prototype circuits with a range of elements given to them.
- The individual interview will focus on engineering choices, behavioral questions, teamwork dynamics, and an engineer's role in society. The expectation is that you will **not** bring a portfolio or resume.
- Semifinalists should anticipate being on-site for at least 120-150 minutes.

MATHEMATICS

Summer Instructional Description:
The GHP Mathematics department broadens students' exposure to various branches of mathematics. Courses are tailored to reflect the diversity of both students and mathematics and offer challenges to students within their knowledge base. Topics range from computer programming to proof-oriented courses to application-oriented courses but are all concentrated on techniques of problem solving.

Coursework involves small group work, large group work, cooperative projects, and individual effort. Students solve problems in cooperative, collaborative efforts, explain solutions to one another, present their research, and formulate new problems. Students also can develop a research project addressing a mathematics question of their own choosing.

By the end of the program, students will have an increased understanding of the breadth of mathematics, awareness of the place of mathematics in their world, and the ability and confidence to attempt previously unknown or difficult problems.

Topics of study have included, but are not limited to:

- Programming
- Polynomials
- Complex number
- Computer science nuggets
- Number theory, graph theory, set theory
- Sequences and series
- Mathematical challenges
- Weird math
- Problem-solving
- Cryptology
- Counting is Fun (arrangements and permutations)
- Proof techniques
- Algebra matrix analysis

Selection Criteria:
Mathematics nominees should have an intense interest in mathematics, be highly inquisitive, and enjoy learning new mathematical concepts and applications. Students are also expected to, at all times, demonstrate integrity and respect for others during their participation in the

program. This includes full participation in all aspects of the program and adherence to all rules, regulations, and expectations as set forth and interpreted by GHP.

Interest Areas:

- Strong candidates will demonstrate interest in mathematics beyond the classroom through relevant extracurricular activities and pursuits (e.g., math club, academic team, Mu Alpha Theta, independent study, and work and/or volunteer-related experiences).
- Prior coursework in geometry, algebra, and/or trigonometry is recommended. Advanced level courses can be beneficial in preparation for the summer program but are not required.

Academic Record:

- Strong candidates typically possess a minimum 3.5 GPA and have scored in the 80th percentile or higher on at least one standardized exam (PSAT, SAT, or ACT); however, other candidates who have a curiosity and/or passion for mathematics should also be considered.

Skills:

- Strong analytical skills, determination, and curiosity about real-world mathematics applications.
- Ability to reason creatively and independently.
- Appreciation for a wide variety of mathematics.

Semifinalist Expectations:

- Mathematics semifinalists will participate in an individual interview and are evaluated on a variety of factors, inclusive of, but not limited to, interest, ability, and desire to learn.
- Specific interview criteria will be provided after semifinalists have been notified.

MUSIC

Summer Instructional Description:
The GHP Music department consists of seven areas – brass, jazz, percussion, piano, strings, vocal, and woodwinds. The curriculum is performance oriented and emphasizes ensemble skills. Ensembles range in size from duets and trios to large groups such as string and full orchestra, wind ensemble, and mixed choir. Students interested in GHP music must excel in their performance medium.

Students learn about elements of musical theory, analysis, criticism, history, practice, creation, synthesis, and aesthetics in an artistic and supportive environment. They are afforded several recital and concert opportunities to display the results of their studies. Students can participate in a rotation of enrichment courses designed to expose each student to different facets within the field of music, including conducting, music theory, music technology, music history, music in film, as well as music in practice. Students also participate in performance-based final projects.

Topics of study have included, but are not limited to:

- Practicing/rehearsing individually and in ensembles directed by students and/or faculty.
- Performing in both formal and informal settings.
- Co-developing projects with other subject areas (music and dance, music and art, etc.).
- Analyzing and critiquing music repertoire from antiquity to the present day.
- Attending concerts presented by other students.
- Engaging in creation of music through improvisation and composition.

By the end of the program, students will have established a basis for understanding how to study, prepare, and perform music in a variety of styles and settings. They will be familiar with standard literature for their voice or instrument, be able to demonstrate in performance the historical context and formal structure in the standard literature of each period and will have increased skills in tone production and technique needed to perform this progressive literature to at a well above average level.

Selection Criteria:
Music nominees should be motivated to improve their performance technique, musical abilities, and hone their self-reflective criticism to prepare for a collegiate program of study. Students are also expected to, at all times, demonstrate integrity and respect for others at all times during their participation in the program. This includes full participation in all aspects of the program and adherence to all rules, regulations, and expectations as set forth and interpreted by GHP.

Interest Areas:

- Visible evidence of motivation and curiosity that drives their interest in participating in musical opportunities outside of the regular school day. (e.g., youth orchestra, youth band, jazz band, garage band, ensemble, glee club, chorus, etc.).
- Interest in learning about music in a more in-depth manner than the average student.
- A strive for improvement, willingness to try something new or different, and response to instruction, criticism, praise, and adversity.

Academic Record:

- Strong academic record is preferred. Student should have completed prior coursework or be currently enrolled in at least one music ensemble (or have received sufficient instruction) for consideration as a finalist.

Skills:

- Strong instrument/vocal performance skills
- Experience playing in groups as well as solo
- Sight-reading ability
- Ability to cope with a demanding practice and performance schedule
- Ability to work toward independent mastery in a short time frame
- Comfortable working with others in group environments and can adequately and honestly self-assess
- Vocal music nominees must:
    - Possess the prerequisite vocal skills to be selected for participation in honors choruses (all-state, district, or a school chorus)
    - Have a solid foundation of vocal technique, performance, and sight-reading skills at an above average level

Semifinalist Expectations:

- Semifinalists must be able to articulate their goals, can play their selection well above average, and can sight-read with excellent technique.
- Semifinalists should be able to be specific about constructive criticism, techniques, and topics they have learned in music class and/or lessons and be able to self-identify areas for growth in their performance and technique.

SCIENCE

Summer Instructional Description:
The GHP Science department provides experiences that challenge students in the areas of critical thinking, scientific research, experimental design and application, and technical communication. The curriculum introduces students to courses and laboratory experiences like those encountered by college students taking sophomore/junior level courses and includes a comprehensive, student-focused research project.

Students may be nominated in one of the following concentration areas:

- Biology/Environmental Science
- Chemistry
- Physics

Students will focus a portion of the day in classes specific to their nominated concentration of study, strengthening their laboratory skills and critical thinking skills. Students also work collaboratively on various small projects and presentations as well as their culminating research project, employing the concepts, methods, and techniques learned in the program.
All students are encouraged to move beyond what they already know, or have accomplished, and to explore new, unknown territories of thought and investigation. Primary investigations will be confined to topics pre-selected by the staff for which the required equipment, resources, and supplies are available.

Topics of study have included, but are not limited to:

In Class Topics

- Microbiology/Epidemiology
- Human anatomy and functional morphology
- Ecological systems and biodiversity
- Chemical interactions and reaction mechanisms
- Solution dynamics and applications
- Chemical production and preservation—the degradation and stabilization of biological and synthetic materials
- Environmental chemistry and sustainability

Research Topics

- Nature and scope of scientific investigation
- Designing and conducting interdisciplinary experiments
- Laboratory techniques and safety practices
- Data collection, statistical analysis, and visualization
- Ethics in scientific research and publications
- Use of technology and software in scientific analysis (e.g., spreadsheets, coding tools)
- Reading and interpreting peer-reviewed scientific articles

- Applied Physics Problem Solving: using mathematics and models to analyze real-world phenomena
- Quantum Physics: The Future Applications of Physics Research
- Geology: rock cycle, plate tectonics, and earth materials
- Natural hazards and geoscience in societal context—human impact on earth systems
- Science in Film and Literature: Analysis of Scientific Accuracy, Themes, and Influence
- Science communication in social media and public discourse
- Misconceptions and misinformation in popular science
- Evaluating experimental design, validity, and significance
- Introduction to meta-analysis and review writing
- Writing scientific papers (abstract, introduction, methods, results, discussion)
- Proposal development, mentor feedback, and revision strategies
- Creating effective visual data (charts, graphs, infographics)
- o Presenting research through posters, talks, and digital media

Selection Criteria:

Science nominees should demonstrate academic excellence in the sciences, ask original questions, be able to analyze data, develop reasonable scientific explanations, and thoroughly communicate scientific investigations and information clearly. Students are also expected to, at all times, demonstrate integrity and respect for others during their participation in the program. This includes full participation in all aspects of the program and adherence to all rules, regulations, and expectations as set forth and interpreted by GHP.

Note: *Although participation in science fairs, clubs, etc., may support evidence of the skills found in a strong candidate, a citation alone is not a sufficient demonstration of the selection criteria. Similarly, nominating educators are encouraged to nominate students they believe to be passionate about, knowledgeable in, and have a personal connection to the sciences despite the lack of traditional forms of recognition.*

Interest Areas:

- Demonstrate genuine curiosity of the natural world and related phenomenon observed in the laboratory and beyond.
- Have a desire to take part in research opportunities that will expand current knowledge and positivity impact the scientific community.

- Strong candidates utilize classroom material and apply research skills to current events and topics as extensions of their learning.
- Strong candidates have demonstrated interest in the subject area beyond the classroom through relevant extracurricular activities and pursuits or exhibition of a unique personal passion and strong motivation toward excellence in their area of nomination.

Academic Record:

- Prior coursework in at least one semester or one academic year of biology, chemistry, environmental science, or physics is required.
- Advanced level courses can be beneficial in preparation for the summer but are not required.
- Strong candidates demonstrate academic excellence in the sciences, possessing clear understanding of vocabulary, concepts, theories, and principles of biology, chemistry, and physics.

Skills:

- Capability to thrive in a self-directed group study environment and approaching new science-based inquiries in a positive and receptive manner to resolve a problem.
- Desire and ability to work effectively in team settings.
- Adaptability and flexibility to cope with and overcome obstacles to arrive at a resolution.

Semifinalist Expectations:

- Semifinalists are assessed on their interest in science and ability to make connections based on evidence, analytical reasoning, prior knowledge, and relevant investigations/research.
- Semifinalists participate in a group data analysis session followed by an individual interview.
- Strong candidates excel in interpreting graphs, analyzing data, and making inferences to draw conclusions and can discuss their findings during the interview portion. They can also convey knowledge and/or awareness of current scientific and technologically related topics, discoveries, and research.
- Strong candidates express interest in conducting student-led scientific research and possess the curiosity to design original research questions across multiple fields of science.

SOCIAL STUDIES

Summer Instructional Description:

The GHP Social Studies department includes multiple social science disciplines and emphasizes creating and analyzing responses and solutions to global, political, and social issues, as well as various national and international crises. Courses are designed and taught by various instructors. The course topics are selected by each instructor with the following guidelines: topics typically not covered in the Georgia high school social studies curriculum and/or topics that are barely touched upon by the Georgia high school social studies curriculum. Instructors are encouraged to consider simulations, Socratic style discussions, role playing, debates, and similar activities.

Activities students engage in include historical research, role playing, small and large group work, simulations, debates, projects, and writing activities. Students must become adept at quick, in-depth research and how to use it in various activities. They are often taught to effectively debate various viewpoints, enabling them to stretch and approach issues or concerns from different perspectives in order to consider multiple solutions/responses to an existing situation.

By the end of the program, students will be able to confidently articulate, support, and illustrate an academic or political point with both peers and adults.

Topics of study have included, but are not limited to:

- American Political Systems and Civic Engagement
- International Relations and Geopolitical Conflicts
- History and Studies of Social Movements
- Economics, Market Structures, and Global Trade
- Legal Systems and Ethics in Society

Selection Criteria:

Social Studies nominees should have a strong desire to learn about the relationships among individuals, institutions, and society. They should enjoy learning about politics and government, understanding various viewpoints, and becoming a responsible consumer of information. They are open-minded, inquisitive, creative, and respectful. Students are also expected to, at all times, demonstrate integrity and respect for others during their participation in the program. This includes full participation in all aspects of the program and adherence to all rules, regulations, and expectations as set forth and interpreted by GHP.

Interest Areas:

- Demonstrate interest in the topics beyond classroom curriculum and assignments through relevant extracurricular activities and pursuits (e.g., Model United Nations, debate team, history day or social studies competitions, mock legislature, mock trial, and work and/or volunteer-related experiences).

Academic Record:

- Strong academic records in social studies, political science, and/or civics focused courses is required. Advanced level courses can be beneficial in preparation for the summer but are not required.

Skills:

- Strong analytical skills and the ability to think and reason creatively and independently.
- Knowledgeable about current geopolitical topics, officials, policies, and viewpoints.

Semifinalist Expectations:

- Semifinalists will participate in 2 classroom simulations. Both will examine the semifinalist's knowledge and understanding of current issues, global concerns, and potential solutions. Topic areas and specific roles are assigned to semifinalists the day of the simulation.
- Semifinalists are evaluated on their research, preparation, flexibility, and ability to analyze and reason. A strong candidate will be confident and courteous.

THEATRE

Summer Instructional Description:
The GHP Theatre department introduces students to nontraditional approaches to character and ensemble development. The anticipated results are that the students will gain enriched acting skills, resources, and exhibit a deeper commitment to the process (not the product). Theatre coursework is conducted within an ensemble-oriented environment where students are encouraged to stretch themselves, take creative-choice risks and support others as they do the same. While the main focus of the program is acting, students will experience the integration of all functions of the theatrical process by identifying the connection between audience, actor, director, designer, writer, and stage crew. Students will try new approaches (followed by feedback from peers and instructors) and the hands-on experiences provided by public performances and other opportunities during the program.

Topics of study have included, but are not limited to:

- Playwriting and dramatic structure
- Performing Shakespearean text
- Acting the Song in musical theatre performance
- Viewpoints and actor movement
- Actor improvisation
- Speaking voice for the stage
- Fundamentals of directing
- Introduction to text analysis for dramatic interpretation

Selection Criteria:
Theatre nominees should have an open mind, the capacity and willingness to be a part of an ensemble, with the ability to lead and/or follow, and a passion and openness to explore a variety of approaches to acting and technical theater. Nominees also need to have a willingness to create, research and explore theater from different directions. Students are expected to, at all times, demonstrate integrity and respect for others during their participation in the program. This includes full participation in all aspects of the program and adherence to all rules, regulations, and expectations as set forth and interpreted by GHP.

Interest Areas:

- Genuine interest in theatre, preferably with a desire to continue their education in theatre or a related field. Demonstrated by pursuit of theatrical opportunities (e.g., acting, dance training or voice coaching, independent research, design or writing, and work-related or volunteer-related experiences).

Academic Record:

- Strong academic record is preferred but not required.

Skills:

- Superior level of character development, script analysis, movement and voice work, and clarity of communication.
- Intellectual curiosity in play structure, alternative performance styles, and theatrical history.
- Maturity to take constructive feedback to enhance performance skills and engage in thoughtful collaborative conversations.
- Ability to work in creative collaboration and willingness to participate in playwriting exercises.

Semifinalist Expectations:

- Group Interview
    - The students will discuss an assigned play with the theatre instructors. Focus will be on textual analysis, concept development and character analysis.
    - The Play title will be provided to the semifinalists well before auditions.
- Prepared Audition
    - The students will perform auditions from sides provided from the selected play. The expectation is that each student will have read the entire play and is prepared to make character choices during the audition.
- Students should dress neatly and comfortably (no torn jeans, flip-flops, or t-shirts).

VISUAL ARTS

Summer Instructional Description:
The GHP Visual Arts department is primarily studio oriented. Students are introduced to different media, techniques, styles, and conceptual ideas not typically presented in most Georgia high schools. New ideas and challenging concepts in the visual arts are essential parts of the instructional program. A spirit of experimentation and risk-taking is promoted by encouraging students to venture into unfamiliar territory.

During the first week of the program, students are introduced to ceramics, drawing, painting, design, sculpture, and mixed media through rotational courses. Instructors introduce areas to students at an entry-level and alter difficulty based on individual knowledge. Students also learn from visiting artists in an intense three-day workshop in which they experiment with new techniques and have an opportunity to interact with the artist one-on-one. Students continue working on projects started during the week of rotations and begin working on a new body of work based on concepts, styles, philosophies, or material exploration.

Each student develops a portfolio of artwork, demonstrating the breadth and depth of individual ideas, to be submitted for a juried exhibition. An independent judge will select student artwork for the exhibit. GHP students, under the supervision of the art instructors, will install all selected works in an art gallery. An art opening reception will be held for the GHP community to view and appreciate the students' art.

By the end of the program, students will be more aware of the wide variety of media, techniques, and concepts that make up the visual arts today. Students will have obtained a positive art experience that promotes visual expression free of prejudice, stereotypes, and preconceived notions of the visual arts. They will have had the opportunity to challenge, search, and question the idea of art.

Topics of study have included, but are not limited to:

- Drawing
- Painting
- Sculpture
- Design
- Mixed Media
- Encaustics
- Abstract Expressionist Painting
- LaserJet Transfers/Printmaking
- Installation Sculpture
- Stretcher Construction
- Introduction to Exhibition Selection Process
- Introduction to Exhibition Installation Process

Selection Criteria:

Visual arts nominees should have a strong desire to explore the various areas of visual arts. They possess superior drawing and creative skills, view every assignment as an opportunity, persevere through failure, and take artistic/creative risks to expand their skills in different media and styles of art. Students are also expected to, at all times, demonstrate integrity and respect for others during their participation in the program. This includes full participation in all aspects of the program and adherence to all rules, regulations, and expectations set forth and interpreted by GHP.

Interest Areas:

- Possess a sincere interest in visual arts demonstrated through relevant extracurricular activities and pursuits (e.g., sketchbook, web design, yearbook, photography, artist portfolio, independent study, illustrations or writing, and work and/or volunteer-related experiences).

Academic Record:

- A strong academic record is preferred but not required.
- Prior coursework in visual arts or art-related courses (e.g., drawing, painting, ceramics and sculpture, woodshop, photography) can be beneficial in preparation for the summer but is not required.

Skills:

- Superior artistic abilities and adequate knowledge of visual arts vocabulary, basic concepts, and techniques (e.g., color, shape, texture, scale, and major arts of painting, sculpture, and architecture).
- Problem-solving skills and willingness to experiment and extend concepts beyond the basic level.

Semifinalist Expectations:

- Semifinalists in visual arts will participate in a two-part selection process including (1) a portfolio interview where they present their art and (2) a multiple-choice visual arts exam.
- Successful semifinalists only present their strongest artistic work, present a variety of art pieces, and meet the recommended number of pieces.

The minimum portfolio requirements include:

- Three (3) drawings
- Two (2) color works

- One (1) three-dimensional work

In addition to the minimum, semifinalists may select up to seven additional pieces of their strongest work (maximum of 13 pieces total).
Sketchbooks are welcomed and each will be counted as one piece of artwork (optional).
A maximum of two digital pieces may be presented, and each will be counted as one piece of artwork. Digital pieces are not a substitute for drawing or color requirements (optional).

The selections should demonstrate the student's understanding of composition and principles of design.

- Unity
- Balance
- Repetition
- Variety
- Emphasis
- Proportion
- Rhythm
- Figure-ground relationship
- Scale

WORLD LANGUAGES

Summer Instructional Description:
The GHP World Languages department provides an intensive daily immersion program where students will receive instruction, and research experiences in a targeted modern language (Chinese, French, German, or Spanish). Latin students will experience some daily usage in conversational Latin. Students will participate in supervised individual and group projects on a range of topics in the selected language. World Languages focuses on developing functional language proficiency, cultural fluency, and the confidence to communicate meaningfully in authentic situations. Learning is student-centered, interactive, and project-based, encouraging exploration of culture, literature, modern life vs historical, current events, art, food, philosophy, and more.

While all activities/study are conducted in the target modern language, speaking the language itself is **not** the only focus. At GHP, comprehensive fluency in the language is constantly reinforced through authentic, task-based activities that allow students opportunities to engage in meaningful and rich conversations. Potential nominees and their instructors should note that the goals of the world language program are to motivate students to become lifelong learners of the targeted language, demonstrate socio-cultural competence to allow them to communicate appropriately in various settings, and to gain additional knowledge of communities around the world where the language is spoken. Classes are suitable for students of all cultural backgrounds.

Only students who are both skilled in the target language and exhibit a desire/willingness to delve deeply into the target language's culture/history should apply for the world language program.

Topics of study have included, but are not limited to:

- Investigating the culture, society, history, literature, current events, and/or political systems in regions of the world where the target language is used as the primary form of communication.
- Participation in simulations, journaling, culturally related activities (e.g., Chinese tea ceremony), while also analyzing texts and films in the target language.

Selection Criteria:
World Language nominees should have an intense interest in the target language, be highly inquisitive, and enjoy learning about the cultural/historical aspects of the language. Nominees

should still be actively developing their proficiency in reading, writing, speaking, and understanding the language.

Note, the World Languages department is not just about who speaks the language fluently, it's about who is learning, who is curious, and who is willing to grow. If you are brave enough to speak even when you're not perfect, and motivated to learn in a deeper cultural context, you are the kind of student GHP was made for. We are looking for learners who aren't afraid to speak up, ask questions, get creative, and embrace the joy and complexity of language and culture.

If you are passionate about your target language, but still find that you struggle with fluency, comprehension, or cultural knowledge, and are eager to grow in a structured and immersive environment, GHP welcomes you.

Interest Areas:

- Displays sincere motivation to investigate the target language and explore historical and cultural aspects of countries where the target language is spoken.
- Presents evidence of study, reading or creative activities beyond the classroom.
- Demonstrates interest in the target language beyond the classroom through relevant extracurricular activities and pursuits (e.g., Junior Classical League, language or culture clubs, independent reading, independent study, academic competition team, summer programs, experiences with native speakers, and work and/or volunteer-related experiences).

Academic Record:

- Strong academic record is preferred and specific proficiency in the target language is required.
- At minimum, the student should be currently enrolled or have already taken the target language class at the second-year level.
- A strong candidate will possess an A average in the last three semesters of their target language class and be in good standing with the nominating educator and their World Language department (if applicable).
- The most successful World Languages candidates have typically completed or are enrolled in their target languages advanced level courses (if available to them).

Skills:

- Specific knowledge of the culture and history of target language speaking people (e.g., ancient Roman culture, sports, major works of art, literature, etc.)

- Comprehension of most face-to-face speech in the standard target modern language dialect when spoken at a normal rate with occasional repetition.
- Ability to fully participate in casual conversation with a somewhat intelligible accent in their target language (except for Latin).
- Collaboration, critical thinking, problem-solving, creativity, and adaptability.
- Ability to describe an event or personal experience in the target language with proper pronunciation and are comfortable with impromptu conversation and reasoning about everyday life, culture, and historic events related to the target language (except for Latin).
- Proficiency in comprehending and/or translating authentic, unadapted Latin text (for Latin only).

Semifinalist Expectations:

- All language students will be assessed on their ability to read, write, and pronounce their target language, as well as their passion and knowledge of the target language speaking culture.
- World language semifinalists will participate in an individual interview and are evaluated on a variety of factors, inclusive of, but not limited to, interest, ability, and desire to learn.

<u>French, German, and Spanish</u>

Chinese, French, German, and Spanish semifinalists will participate in an individual interview conducted in the target language and a writing sample in the targeted language. A portion of the interview may consist of oral language picture prompts or listening and reading comprehension exercises.

<u>Chinese</u>

Chinese semifinalists will participate in an individual and group interview conducted in the target language, a writing sample and reading passage in the targeted language.

<u>Latin</u>

Latin semifinalists will participate in an individual interview conducted in English. A portion of the interview may consist of picture identification, where students will be asked to identify and/or explain the cultural or historical significance of a set of pictures. The written examination will require students to read an authentic Latin passage from poets such as Ovid, Catullus, or Martial. Questions will be in short-answer form. Students will be asked to answer all questions in English. The tests will not use passages from the AP proscribed curriculum to avoid the bias of having just seen a text in AP class.

Students will also be asked to write about the impact the Classical world has on contemporary society. Then, students will choose either a translation or a composition exercise to further demonstrate their developing skills in Latin. Students do not have to be perfect to be considered a GHP applicant, but students should put forth their best effort!