Governor’s Honors Program
Coordinator’s Handbook

2017
### 2017 Governor’s Honors Program Timeline

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>August 16, 2016</td>
<td>Information email to superintendents, independent heads of school and GHP coordinators</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>September 7, 2016</td>
<td>New school district level/independent school coordinator (less than 3 years of experience) training, 9:00 AM – 12:00 PM. GHP application session open all coordinators, 1:00 PM – 2:30 PM. Central Georgia Technical College, Warner Robbins, GA campus</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>September 9, 2016</td>
<td>2017 school district level/independent school Coordinator Handbook, Timeline, and Description/Criteria emailed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>November 16, 2016</td>
<td>Deadline for submission of 2017 GHP student nominations by independent schools, state charter schools, and districts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>November 18, 2016</td>
<td>Online application opens for student state level nominees</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>January 4, 2017</td>
<td>Deadline for completed student online applications, including all required documents and files</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>January 27, 2017</td>
<td>Notification of semi-finalists</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>February 3, 2017</td>
<td>Notification of semi-finalists’ interview/audition times</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>February 25, 2017</td>
<td>State level semi-finalists interviews: location TBD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March 31, 2017</td>
<td>Notification of 2017 finalists and alternates</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Date</td>
<td>Event Description</td>
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<tr>
<td>--------------------</td>
<td>---------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April 7, 2017</td>
<td>Deadline for finalists’ acceptance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April 12, 2017</td>
<td>Parents/legal guardians emailed online link to required student forms</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May 5, 2017</td>
<td>Deadline for parent/legal guardian online completion of required student forms</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May 19, 2017</td>
<td>Last day for GOSA to invite alternates</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June 18 – July 15, 2017</td>
<td>2017 Governor’s Honors Program at Berry College, Rome, GA</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The Georgia Governor’s Honors Program 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 that is designed to provide students with academic, cultural, and social enrichment necessary to become the next generation of global critical thinkers, innovators, and leaders.

GHP is held in mid-summer (mid-June to mid-July) as a premier residential educational experience on a college or university campus. 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 rooms are provided by the program with the only required/expected costs to the students being travel expenses to/from the interviews, a few basic school supplies, basics for their dorm rooms, and spending money as desired during the program.

**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 in academic or creative fields, superior ability in the area of nomination, and the social and emotional maturity required to thrive in an intensive, residential setting for the duration of the program. Once the nominees have been selected at the local district level and submitted to the GHP online application system, an email with details regarding the online application process will be sent to each student nominee. The students, coordinators, 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 its own process and procedures to select its nominees, all applicants must meet the minimum criteria established for state level participation in GHP.

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 consider the students’ grade levels in their selection processes.

The GHP webpage (http://gosa.georgia.gov/governors-honors-program) 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.

**Online Application:**

The online system uses the student applicant’s email address to create a student application account. Students **must** provide valid email addresses when creating and completing their online applications, 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 primary parent/legal guardian will receive an email requesting permission for the student to apply at the state level the same day students receive their email access to the online application. It is therefore critical that all local districts collect the email address of the primary parent/guardian. Students will not have full access to the GHP online application permission from their parent/legal guardian. It is absolutely critical that all primary correspondence occur directly between the students and the Governor’s Office of Student Achievement (GOSA). 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 to make direct contact when there is no response through email. GOSA will share critical communication with the students, parents/guardians and their local district coordinators.

All students, parents/guardians, and local district coordinators must also ensure that the security system and filter for the email account has been adjusted to accept email from Fluid Review, especially if students will be required to use the school email domain. Fluid Review suggests that districts share the following information with their IT departments: “**Whitelist**[1] the following mail server IP address: 72.55.140.81. **This IP can be used for both Fluid Review email whitelisting, and can be implemented within a client's mail server by their IT (if applicable). This will validate all emails being sent from Fluid Review’s server.**” Students and parents should also adjust the security filters in their own personal email accounts to accept email from IP address: 72.55.140.81 and ghp@gosa.georgia.gov. We will share any additional information provided to us by Fluid Review if/when it becomes available.

Students track the status of their applications and acceptances via their online FluidReview accounts. Nominees are responsible for monitoring their accounts and contacting the GOSA office if the process seems to be delayed, or if there are questions about specific application

[1] Spam filters that come with email clients have both whitelists and blacklists of senders and keywords to look for in emails. If a spam filter keeps a whitelist, mail from the listed email addresses, domains, and/or IP address will always be allowed.
requirements. GOSA does not maintain a social media (Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, etc.) presence. Students, parents/guardians, and local district coordinators should not rely on social media sites for accurate information about the nomination 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 received through social media. Parents and guardians are strongly encouraged to monitor their child’s application and acceptance processes.

Once the student applications have been received in the GHP office, they will be submitted to content area experts for review. Part of the online application process will include student submission of a task which is specific to the major/discipline. For example, students nominated in communicative arts will each submit an essay, while a dance nominee will submit a short video of his or her dancing technique. 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 semi-finalists 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, and will be awarded certificates for being nominated to the state level competition.

Semi-finalists will receive notice of an invitation to the state level interview via their online application account in late January. GOSA is not responsible for delays in enrollment, 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.

Application Process:

Parent/Legal Guardian Permission:

- 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.

- Parents will be required to complete several tasks through the online application, including parental preference concerning their rights to review recommendations. GOSA/GHP office does not require waivers to be granted and will not use any of the permission/waiver data to determine semi-finalists. The parent/legal guardian waiver decision will be shared with recommenders in an email invitation from the application. Parents should be directed to make the decision they feel is necessary for their child.
- Parents will also select potential times to attend the state level interviews. Selecting a potential time does not mean the student will be selected as a semi-finalist. This task is designed to expedite the planning and communication process for the semi-finalist announcement in January.

**Recommendation**

- Each student must ask a teacher in his/her area of nomination to provide a personal recommendation. Students should think carefully about whom they will ask to complete this part of the process on their behalf. The recommending teacher does not have to currently teach 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 is anticipating this request.

**High School Transcript**

- GHP requires a school official to upload a transcript(s), via Fluid Review, 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**

Standardized test results (PSAT, SAT or ACT) are **ONLY** required for **semi-finalists** in the areas of **mathematics and science**. A copy of the scores **must** be brought to the mathematics and science interviews, but **are not required to be uploaded into the online application**.

**Semi-finalists Notification**

- Applications will be reviewed by college faculty, high school teachers, and GHP program 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.
- Parents/legal guardians of semi-finalists, students who are selected to attend the state level interviews, will have indicated interview time preferences in their original application, and every effort will be made to honor their first or second choice. In a few instances this may not be possible. GOSA’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. GOSA will notify semi-finalists of their interview dates and times via the student’s online application account. It is the responsibility of the student and their parents/legal guardians to be aware of the student’s interview time.

Acceptance Materials

- It is the responsibility of the finalists; applicants who are offered admission to the summer program, to formally accept or decline the offer via the application interface. The Acceptance Checklist, with specific information regarding GHP acceptance, will be communicated via email and will also be made available through the application interface.

Summary of Student Application and Acceptance Process *(private school students follow the same process once nominated by their schools)*

1. Submit an application for nomination, via the GHP online application, which includes:
   - Parent/legal guardian tasks, including permission to apply
   - Academic Information (student profile, short essays)
   - GHP required task for specific nomination area
   - One teacher recommendation from a teacher in the area of nomination (does not have to be a current teacher)
   - Counselor or administrative designee verification

2. Home School Verification Form *(Home School Students ONLY)*

Requirements for Participation:

- Students shall be nominated to the state in only one subject area, by the subject area instructor, with the approval of the student and parent/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 choose the area in which they prefer to be nominated. Parents of home school students may serve as the recommending instructor.
• Students nominated for the 2016 program as sophomores who did not participate in the program last summer may be nominated for the 2017 program. This includes students who were selected as finalists in 2016 but voluntarily declined the opportunity to participate last summer. Local coordinators should indicate this information on their nomination form.

• Students shall participate in the GHP one time only, i.e., students who attended the 2016 program (for any length of time) as rising juniors may not be re-nominated for the 2017 program.

• A transcript of each nominee’s high school grades must be submitted electronically by the appropriate school official.

• A score on the PSAT, SAT or ACT is **ONLY required** for mathematics and science semi-finalists. A paper copy (originals are not required) must be brought to the semi-finalist’s interview.

**All students must first be nominated by the local district/independent school and:**

• Be a current sophomore or junior in a school that is located within the state of Georgia.

• Have the nomination originate with the subject area teacher and approved (or home school parent) by the student and parent/guardian.

• Have demonstrated high aptitude, social and emotional maturity, giftedness, and interest in the area of nomination.

• Commit to participation in the state level interviews as scheduled by GOSA, if selected as a state semi-finalist.

• Commit to participation in the program for the entire 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 GHP Program Manager.
Areas of Nomination:

Agricultural Science          Science
Communicative Arts           Social Studies
**Dance**                     Theatre
*Engineering*                 Visual Arts
Mathematics                   *World Languages
*Music

*These areas of nomination have the following subcategories.

** Two dance finalists’ slots will be designated to male dancers.

Engineering:
Design, Mechatronics, Software Engineering

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

World Languages:
French, German, Latin, Mandarin Chinese, and Spanish

Program Limitations and Quotas:

Local district coordinators should be aware that each area has its own numerical limitations based on the specific components of its discipline. Music, for example, must limit its finalists to the specific size of each performance group. Therefore, nominators should give careful consideration to their internal selection processes.
Quota Nominees:

Every local district receives a quota 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, quotas can change from year to year. Coordinators should keep an accurate list of nominated students based on their school/district quotas.

Each local district/independent school will be provided with their nomination quota through a separate email.

Home School Students:

Home school students interested in participating in the GHP nomination process will be directed to the local district coordinator of the local school systems in which they reside. The home school student’s parent/guardian will submit a copy of his/her 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 quota based on district student population. Home school nominations within this quota will NOT count against the system nomination totals. Home school quotas will be included in the total quota email to coordinators. Unused home school quotas CANNOT be used for 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 constituents.

NOTE: If the parent does not have a copy of their DOI, he or she may contact the Georgia Department of Education. http://www.gadoe.org/Curriculum-Instruction-and-Assessment/Pages/Home-Schools.aspx

Entering Nominees into the 2017 GHP Online System:

Each coordinator will receive a link to the GHP online application system and specific instructions to enter their student nominees.

Coordinators will be provided with specific instructions to check the status of student online applications following the close of the nomination process.

IMPORTANT!
Please do not notify students and their parents, or publicly release the names of nominees, until they have been verified by the Governor’s Office of Student Achievement. GHP office staff will notify all students by email after the nomination deadline. Local district coordinators will be notified when student notification emails are released.
Semi-finalists:

Semi-finalists 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 semi-finalist status.

Preparing Students for Interviews:

Make sure that every semi-finalist is aware of the GHP webpage, where information will be posted as appropriate. (http://gosa.georgia.gov/governors-honors-program) To support semi-finalists, those students who are selected to attend the GHP state-level interviews, coordinators may conduct 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 ensuring students practice and rehearse. Coordinators are strongly advised to ask questions to the GOSA office, where there are questions or concerns.

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 no later than March 31, 2017, and will be provided with instructions to complete the acceptance process. The deadline for acceptance is April 7, 2017. The acceptance form will be an online document. Finalists will be provided with a link to the document.

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

Alternate Process:

Alternates will be alerted of their status as an alternate on March 31, 2017. 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 19, 2017.

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

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Appendix:

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
- Reasons and synthesizes well
- Heightened capacity to analyze and/or think abstractly
- Alert observer of others and texts (literature, film, etc.)
- Sometimes prefers adult 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 (regardless of public/home school) are directed to contact their local district GHP coordinators for assistance. Home school parents/students should contact the public school to 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 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 quota?
**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 quota 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) or someone involved in a home school consortium.

**Q:** Can we request to view the student’s application scores if they are not chosen as a semi-finalist?

**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 of 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 on-line 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, and general school supplies, etc. There is no charge for use of any of the recreational facilities, libraries, 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 they are provided with constructive feedback by the instructors 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 students meet the criteria for the subject area, they are welcome 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. Unfortunately, the program is unable to allow students leave the program to attend other summer activities.

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 is best for each individual student. 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 of these characteristics are typically students who matriculate through the four-week program successfully.