



school of the arts

@ CENTRAL GWINNETT HIGH SCHOOL

Frequently Asked Questions for Prospective Students

*Do you have a passion for the arts? Whether you're obsessed with street dance or play an instrument, love recording or illustrate graphic novels, dream of art installations or write your own music, there's a new school opening where you can pursue your artistic vision, explore your creativity, and learn from industry professionals. **Whatever your creative passion, you can explore it at SOTA— the School of the Arts @ Central Gwinnett High School!***

What is SOTA?

The School of the Arts @ Central Gwinnett High School or SOTA is a school within a school. Students will take academic classes just like they would at any Gwinnett high school, but they also will explore their artistic interests with expanded fine arts classes and arts-related internships and work experiences at a pre-professional and professional level in performing arts, visual arts, and technology for the arts. ***Whatever your passion, whatever your vision, SOTA is your school.***

What makes SOTA different from fine arts programs at other schools?

SOTA will cater to students who want to focus their high school studies in the fine arts. SOTA students will have a non-traditional schedule allowing them to take more arts classes and dive deeper into their chosen field of study than they could with a traditional program.

SOTA students will work with industry professionals daily, be involved in professional-level performances, and exhibit their work for the public. With support from industry and the arts community, students will have unique internship and work opportunities and access to an extensive network of college recruiters, active industry professionals, and exhibiting artists.

Who can attend SOTA?

The School of the Arts will serve the students of Central Gwinnett High School as well as students from across the district who are eligible for permissive transfer. Transfer students may audition to attend SOTA as a Conservatory student or they may attend SOTA in the Fellows program (no audition required). Transfer students must provide their own transportation.

In its opening year, SOTA will accept rising 9th and 10th graders. After the first year, most students accepted to the Conservancy will be incoming freshmen. The program will serve students who are eligible for English Learner, special education, and gifted services.

What are my options?

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

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

What are prerequisites or requirements for SOTA?

All Central Gwinnett High School students have access to the new space, whether they want to take one fine arts course, pursue a fine arts pathway in a specific discipline area, take part in the Fellows program, or audition for the SOTA Conservatory. Students from around the district may audition for the Conservatory or may participate in the Fellows program without meeting any other requirements.

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

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

To remain in the program, students must meet yearly promotion requirements. Juried performances will take place at the end of each year to determine class placement for the next school year.



Who will teach SOTA classes?

SOTA teachers are professionals in their artistic field who know how to teach young artists. These teachers bring a wide variety of experiences to SOTA, including producing, directing, performing, creating, designing, and exhibiting their own work.

What would my schedule look like if I were in the Conservatory?

You'd have an individualized learning plan to make sure you get the most out of your SOTA experience. Conservatory students will have core academic classes at the beginning of the day followed by a diverse schedule of Conservatory classes in their arts focus. Students will take a minimum of four fine arts courses per year, and have the opportunity to complete core courses online, leaving more time for fine arts instruction. Conservatory students in each area of study will meet together every day for vocal or physical warm-ups or other daily focus activities. Conservatory students will spend 20 hours per week in their arts program of study.

What opportunities would I have for internships and work experiences?

Arts partnerships, arts-related internships, master classes with working professionals, and residencies will give Conservatory students the opportunity to learn from artists and performers in their field. SOTA has support from a number of arts and arts education organizations, including the Aurora Theatre, Atlanta Shakespeare Company, Kenny Leon's True Colors Theatre Company, Atlanta Opera, Georgia Gwinnett College, Savannah College of Art and Design (SCAD), Atlanta Institute of Music and Media, Kennesaw State University, Dance Canvas, The Hudgens Center for the Arts, and more.

How will I know if SOTA is right for me?

A successful SOTA student has a passion for his or her content area, is self-motivated, self-disciplined, and is willing to participate in afterschool rehearsals to create high-quality work/performances. SOTA students should enjoy working individually and collaboratively.

What are the facilities like and where are they located?

SOTA will be located at Central Gwinnett High School in Lawrenceville, just a mile from the county's only professional theatre and the brand-new Lawrenceville Performing Arts Center. Our 31,000-square-foot, state-of-the-art facility will open in August 2021. All fine arts programs at Central Gwinnett will be located in the new building, with separate and dedicated entrances to the fine arts space. The building will include:

- A black box theatre for flexible staging and small-audience performances;
- New visual arts classrooms and computer art lab;
- New and expanded band, orchestra, chorus, music technology, and recording studio facilities;

- Dance studio space;
- Unique and specialized private lesson and studio space; and
- Expanded performance, rehearsal, and storage spaces.

Can I play sports or join clubs?

Accepting admission to SOTA is both an instructional commitment and an extracurricular time commitment. With rehearsals, exhibits, and performances, students will be unlikely to have the time to participate in additional activities at CGHS (their home school while at SOTA). SOTA students will have the opportunity to participate in arts-related clubs and organizations such as National Art Honor Society, International Thespian Society, National Dance Honor Society for Dance Arts, Tri-M Music Honor Society, and more.

Can I earn special certificates or diplomas based on their coursework?

All students who complete a fine arts pathway of three courses in one area of concentration are eligible to graduate with a Fine Arts Diploma Seal awarded by SOTA and the Georgia Department of Education. Students in the Music Technology and Audio Production programs will be eligible to earn industry certifications.

Will SOTA prepare me for college studies or a career in the arts?

SOTA graduates will be prepared for a wide range of college majors in the arts and related fields as well as jobs in the ever-growing creative industries market. In fact, here in Georgia, the creative industries are a \$62.5 billion industry, employing more than 200,000 artists, actors, and administrative staff. However, because students will learn the AKS curriculum, they will be ready for any college major they wish to pursue.

I enjoy art, but I'm not sure I want to be a professional artist. Can I still attend SOTA?

Students in this program will be prepared for whatever they decide to do after graduation. With your personal learning plan, you will be working toward your own goals as an artist—whether you plan to pursue a career in the arts or create art for yourself.

How can I learn more?

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

