

Berkmar HS Film and Digital Arts Program

Communication Plan

Prepared by Sloan Roach and Laura Nurse, APR

Revised: 4/7/2021

Research:

Background

During the past decade, Georgia’s film industry has boomed, offering myriad career opportunities for young people in the state. The Georgia Department of Economic Development reports that the film industry had a \$9.5 billion impact on the state’s economy in 2018. The Motion Picture Association of America reports that the motion picture and television industry is responsible for more than 92,000 jobs in Georgia. A state tax credit was signed into law in 2008 giving productions up to a 30% tax break by filming in Georgia. With its temperate climate, great variety of locations, the world’s busiest airport, large crew base, and business-friendly focus, Georgia is now a leading destination in the world for filming. According to the Georgia Film Academy, “industry growth is projected to generate 40,000 jobs in Georgia over the next 18 months, with a \$2 billion investment. Television and film production jobs in Georgia pay an average salary of \$84,000.”

Gwinnett County Public Schools (GCPS) students need both academic and authentic work experiences to prepare for careers in this growing industry, with demand for specialists in lighting, film, sound, writing, staging, animation, and other digital technologies as well as on-camera talent such as actors and broadcast journalists. One of GCPS’ seven College and Career Academy schools, Berkmar HS (BHS) currently offers courses in the Audio-Video Technology and Film pathway as part of the school’s Media, Arts, and Communications Academy. BHS is located centrally in Gwinnett County, with close proximity to a number of film and digital arts organizations and other partners.

Current State

Facility—Renovation of existing facilities is underway. The renovation of Berkmar’s theatre offers a unique opportunity to create enhanced and unique facility spaces that will expand the scope of this program for students. The renovation of the BHS theatre space will include:

- A full-scale sound stage for film productions;
- Unique spaces for events such as countywide film festivals;
- Two screening auditoriums;
- A state-of-the-art post-production studio;
- Designated areas for set construction, props, make-up, and other equipment;
- Access to industry equipment; and
- Classrooms for allied courses such as screenwriting.

Program Design— Modified from the current Audio-Video Technology and Film pathway, Film and Digital Arts Program will be the flagship program within the school’s Media, Arts and Communications Academy. The program will engage students by combining a college-preparatory curriculum with film and production experiences. Students will have opportunities to work with industry professionals, and teachers will have film production training, from pre- to post-production. Areas of concentration include Television Broadcasting, Film

Production, Set Construction, and Animation and Digital Media. Future career opportunities include film director, producer, broadcast journalist, camera operator, grip, gaffer, film editor, set designer, carpenter, electrician, screenwriter, sound engineer, graphic designer, animation artist, special effects animator, game design artist, art director, and actor.

Students will learn film, stage, digital, and technical skills, which will prepare them for diverse postsecondary education and career opportunities. Industry apprenticeships, options for dual enrollment, and other work-based learning opportunities will support students as they transition to college and career and will provide benefits to the larger community. Film and Digital Arts Program will collaborate with allied programs at the school—including the Fine Arts and Architecture and Construction programs—particularly in the areas of acting, film scoring, set design, engineering, and construction of sets. Berkmar will launch the state pilot for a Dramatic Writing course for students with an interest in screenwriting. Students in the program will earn embedded industry credentials with the opportunity to pursue advanced courses and studies, including Advanced Placement (AP) credit, dual enrollment with postsecondary partners, and industry certifications.

Partners—The [Georgia Film Academy](#) (GFA) will be the primary partner for this program. A collaboration of the University System of Georgia and the Technical College System of Georgia, GFA was created by state leaders to meet educational and workforce needs for high-demand careers in the state’s film and digital entertainment industries. GFA provides certification programs, courses in film production, and internship opportunities for high school and postsecondary students. The academy also provides training to help educators understand the industry and better prepare film and production students for postsecondary and career opportunities. GFA’s direct-to-industry training is supported by industry trade unions and producers.

The program’s postsecondary partner, Georgia Gwinnett College, offers a bachelor’s degree in [Cinema and Media Arts Production](#). GGC film students are uniquely situated within a “camera-ready community” that embraces Georgia’s burgeoning film industry. The GGC program allows students to gain hands-on experience with current digital media equipment and media techniques, participate in rewarding internships that connect students with industry professionals, and attend courses tailored to their interests and skills in various areas of film and other media industries.

Program developers also will develop partnerships with film studios and other industry professionals in Georgia, and GCPS’ Broadcast and AV Media department (GCPS TV). The City of Lilburn and community developers will work with the school to engage community members and students in meaningful experiences, internships, and showcases related to the film industry.

Marketing and Communication— Communication and Media Relations is working with school and district staff to establish a branding package and standards as well as a communication plan. Marketing materials and a web page will be developed to support spring registration for the 2021-22 school year.

Timeline—Information sessions will be held in the spring as rising 9th graders and current students make decisions about their schedules for the coming year. The Film and Digital Arts program will launch for the 2021-22 school year.

Desired State

- A high level of awareness of and interest in Berkmar's Film and Digital Arts program in the Berkmar Cluster and among prospective partners.
- Program receives approximately 300 applicants, providing a firm foundation for the future of the program.
- Film and Digital Arts becomes a flagship program, with key partners and program enhancements that help to advance the work of the school and its students.
- The Film and Digital Arts program develops a strong reputation in education and industry circles and alumni are successful in their postsecondary and professional endeavors.

Potential issues

- Lack of interest and lower enrollment than anticipated
- Jealousy within other academies at the school or with other schools
- Impact of current health crisis on viability of program (restrictions on gatherings, performance, etc.).
- Issues with creating partnerships and setting up the necessary internships and externships and other supports that will be necessary to the school's success, particularly in light of COVID concerns and current disruption in the film community.
- Staffing and facility limitations (ex. set/prop area) due to growth
- Lack of assigned courses from the Department of Education that are specific to our program
- Need for cross-curricular engagement for students within the Academy model
- Student and parent language barriers (predominantly Spanish and Vietnamese)
- Transportation for students to internships, job opportunities, and dual enrollment
- Lack of vertical alignment starting in cluster elementary and middle schools
- Costs associated with equipment repairs

Key Messages:

- Film and Digital Arts will offer opportunities, access, and facilities beyond what's available elsewhere in the district.
- The state's growing status as an industry leader ensures long-term career opportunities for graduates.
- Film and Digital Arts will prepare students for a wide range of opportunities—both in front of and behind the camera.
- Through this program, BHS will help produce engaged, well-rounded, and productive members of the community who are successful after graduation.
- Strong partnerships between the school and [Georgia Film Academy](#) and [Georgia Gwinnett College](#) will serve as a bridge from a robust high school experience to postsecondary and professional opportunities.

Action (Goals):

- To develop a brand and brand identity for the Film and Digital Arts Program at Berkmar HS.
- To recruit and retain students for the enhanced program, particularly students from our feeder schools.
- To build a comprehensive Film and Digital Arts program in which a cohort of students can be served for all classes—core and electives—by a group of teachers who work exclusively with this program.
- To generate community interest and support for the program that results in positive partnerships that benefit students.
- To support our cluster middle schools in offering Carnegie unit opportunities in Film and digital arts.
- To support our cluster elementary school as they offer exposure opportunities for students in Film and digital arts.

Measurable Outcomes:

- Increase overall awareness regarding the Film and Digital Arts Program at Berkmar HS;
- Engage teachers, parents, and students in the Berkmar Cluster in discussions about the new program;
- Generate buy-in of teachers and parents, helping them understand the benefits for their students, school, and community;
- Provide a continuous flow of information about the program;
- Provide school leaders with tools so they can communicate about the program;
- Fully implement communication plan and gather feedback from stakeholders indicating that it has been instrumental in the successful launch of the Film and Digital Arts Program at Berkmar HS.
- Maintain post-graduation contact with program participants to follow progress in Film and digital arts industry.

Communication Strategies and Activities

General

- Develop logo and brand identity for the program. (By 11/20/20)
- Develop and share key messages with school leaders so that they can begin using them in the community. (By 11/20/20)
- Develop printed collateral materials for school leaders to use in the recruitment process—FAQs, sample schedule, marketing brochure, etc. (By 1/4/21, draft due 12/14/20)
- Develop printed collateral materials for school leaders to share with business and community leaders and potential partners. (By 1/4/21)
- Create a short “hype” video that is focused on raising awareness about the program that can be used in their communities. (By 1/4/21)
- Create Word and PowerPoint templates that use the logo/brand identity for use by the principal to discuss the program. (By 1/4/21)
- Develop sample messages for principal to use in community newsletters. (By 1/4/21)
- Build sample social media calendar for school to use in promoting the program on the school’s existing social media accounts, including sample posts and best practices. (We don’t see this as stand-alone accounts.) (By 1/4/21)
- Highlight CVs for staff (impressive industry credentials). (By 1/4/21)
- Create a robust web page for the program (part of the Berkmar website), ensuring that, as much as possible, content is on the page (for translation) rather than attached PDFs. (By 2/1/21)
- Produce signage/banner that can be displayed on building and fencing under construction. (By 5/3/21)

Students

- Host a Tik Tok contest for students.
- Use videos on announcements.
- Have series of follow-up email messages/graphics to send to students who have expressed interest.
- Develop “coming attractions” trailer— “Rated P for Patriots. This preview is intended for a Berkmar audience...”

Other Local School Activities

- Hold industry career fair with representatives from the various focus areas, similar to Career Connections. Invite current students and rising 9th graders.
- Hold a speaker series (possibly online) with industry professionals talking about the growth in the industry
- Host district Student Media Festival.
- Send ambassadors to perform and talk up program at articulation events at feeder middle schools.
- Host related summer camps for ES and MS students.
- Host related workshops for younger students during school breaks.

Partners

- Develop city-school programming to support and showcase student work.
- Recruit GCPS alums (not just Berkmar) in the film and television industry to provide messages about how a program like this can offer unique opportunities to prepare for and enter the field, using the messages in videos, graphics for print and web/social, etc.

Questions we need to be prepared to answer...

- **When will the program open?**
Berkmar High School's Film and Digital Arts Program will officially begin in August 2021.
- **What grades will be served?**
The Film and Digital Arts Program will serve students in grades 9-12. All 9th graders have the opportunity to explore all academies on campus.
- **Do you have to be in this academy and pursuing a pathway to be in these classes and use these facilities?**
The facilities will be used predominantly by Film and Digital Arts students who plan to complete the pathway.
- **What will be the focus of the program?**
The focus of the program is to offer in-depth opportunities for students that will lead to a wide variety of career options in the industry.
- **Do program teachers have special training, experience, etc.?**
The teachers assigned to the program have industry experience with formal educational training. They will participate in ongoing professional development for up-to-date and emerging strategies and equipment used in the industry.
- **What opportunities will program participants have?**
Program participants will have access to state-of-the-art, industry-recognized equipment and will work with industry professionals. Additionally, they will participate in internships and dual enrollment (earning both high school and college credit).
- **What are the job prospects for students who study in these areas?**
Future career opportunities include film director, producer, broadcast journalist, camera operator, grip, gaffer, film editor, set designer, carpenter, electrician, screenwriter, sound engineer, graphic designer, animation artist, special effects animator, game design artist, art director, and actor.
- **What types of college majors might interest graduates of this program?**
Students completing the program might be interested in pursuing a bachelor's degree in Design Production, Writing for Stage and Screen, Film, Cinema, etc.
- **Does a student have to be college-bound if they are interested in the program?**
No. Students simply need to be interested in the program. The skills learned in this program will prepare them to enter directly into the workforce.
- **Will the program develop special partnerships with postsecondary partners?**
The Georgia Film Academy (GFA) will be the primary partner for this program. A collaboration of the University System of Georgia and the Technical College System of Georgia, GFA was created by state leaders to meet educational and workforce needs for high-demand careers in the state's film and digital entertainment industries. We also will partner with Georgia Gwinnett College.
- **Is the program only open to Berkmar Cluster students?**
Currently, the program is offered only to students in the Berkmar Cluster.
- **Is any interested student eligible to transfer to Berkmar (permissive)?**
Currently, the program is offered only to students in the Berkmar Cluster.

- **What happens if fewer than expected students opt for the program?**
Berkmar High School will review our methods for recruiting and make necessary adjustments.
- **What happens if more students than expected express interest?**
Berkmar High School will prioritize juniors and seniors and consider implementing an application process.
- **Where should students and their families go to get information about the program?**
Berkmar Cluster families can find information on GCPS and Berkmar High School websites and can reach out to the school for additional printed information.
- **Will there be community meetings about the new program?**
Berkmar High School will hold a community meeting in the spring of 2021 to advertise and provide necessary information.
- **How will MS students learn about this opportunity?**
Middle and elementary students in the cluster will have continuous exposure to the Film and Digital Arts program through advertisements and course offerings within their buildings. Students also will have workshop and summer camp opportunities.
- **How big will the program enrollment be?**
The program will serve approximately 300 to 450 students.
- **Will the program be open to students who use services like ESOL, Gifted, Special Education, etc.?**
The program will be available to all students in the Berkmar Cluster, including those who receive additional services.
- **Are there any pre-requisites or requirements students need to meet in order to be eligible to attend?**
The Film and Digital Arts program will have no pre-requisites for enrollment in the first course of the pathway.
- **Will students who attend earn any special certificates or diplomas based on their coursework?**
Students will have the opportunity to earn certification in industry-recognized software (AVID, Premiere Pro, etc.) along with possible college credit through dual enrollment.
- **Will students have the opportunity to earn complete Career Pathways and earn end-of-Pathway certification?**
Students will have the opportunity to earn certification in industry-recognized software (AVID, Premiere Pro, etc.) along with possible college credit through dual enrollment.
- **What sort of student will be most successful with this program?**
Students who are creative, innovative, and driven have the potential to be successful in the program. However, the industry provides a range of opportunities for students with various talents and gifts, so any student with an interest in the industry should consider the program.
- **Will the school offer dual enrollment opportunities?**
Students will have dual enrollment opportunities through Georgia Film Academy and Georgia Gwinnett College, earning both high school and college credit.
- **Can a student earn a two-year college degree in the program (with dual enrollment)?**
Not at this time. Neither Georgia Film Academy nor Georgia Gwinnett College offer a two-year Film degree.
- **Can students attend the program part of the day and participate the rest of the day in programs at Maxwell HS of Technology or Grayson HS' Technical Education Program?**
At this time, students will not have the opportunity to enroll in an additional technical program at an off campus site.

- **When can families and the community tour the facility?**

Guest can begin touring the facility in August 2021.

- **Are there any special features of this building?**

The renovation of the BHS theatre space will include the following features: A full-scale sound stage for film productions; unique spaces for events such as countywide film festivals; two screening auditoriums; a state-of-the-art, post-production studio; designated areas for set construction, props, make-up, and storage for other equipment; access to industry equipment; and classrooms for allied courses such as screenwriting.

- **What will be the student-to-teacher ratio?**

The ratio will match those of similar programs in the building aligned with state guidelines.

- **Will teachers have industry experience in their field?**

The teachers assigned to the program have industry experience with formal educational training. They will participate in ongoing professional development for up-to-date and emerging strategies and equipment used in the industry.

- **What professional development opportunities will be offered to program teachers?**

The teachers assigned to the program have industry experience with formal educational training. They will participate in ongoing professional development for up-to-date and emerging strategies and equipment used in the industry.

- **How will industry partners be recruited?**

Berkmar's program and Academy leaders will continuously seek opportunities to build relationships with industry professionals. Through these strategic connections, we plan to create partnerships.

- **What opportunities will students have to learn from industry professionals in their field of interest?**

Industry apprenticeships, options for dual enrollment, and other work-based learning opportunities will support students as they transition to college and career and will provide benefits to the larger community.

- **What partners are committed to supporting the program?**

Berkmar's Film and Digital Arts program already has received commitments of support from Georgia Gwinnett College, Georgia Film Academy, and the City of Lilburn.

- **Will the program offer internships for students? Externships for teachers?**

GFA will provide certification programs, courses in film production, and internship opportunities for our students. The academy also provides training to help educators understand the industry and better prepare film and production students for postsecondary and career opportunities.

- **What support does the program need?**

The Film and Digital Arts program will continue to need support from the district office, community stakeholders, and postsecondary institutions to ensure that we stay ahead of the trending needs of the film industry and better prepare students in the program for their future in the film industry.

- **How can an organization get involved?**

All organizations interested in supporting our program should contact John Tronolone, our Academy Coach, at John.Tronolone@gcpsk12.org.

- **How will the pandemic affect development of this program and potential partnerships?**

The pandemic will have the same impact on our program as it has on the entire school. Our teachers continue to improve instructional practices while supporting students in a concurrent learning environment. Our administration's continued focus on campus safety will have an impact on the gatherings needed to promote and advertise the new program. Supporting students who elect to be digital learners will create unique challenges with such a hands-on program.

Potential Taglines

- Focus on Film, Focus on the Future
- Reel Skills to Real World
- Reel to Real World
- From Reel to Real
- Making Reel Dreams Real
- Where your dreams become reel
- Reel Skills, Real Opportunities
- Focused on the Future of Filmmaking
- Focusing on the Future of Filmmaking
- Keeping the Future of Filmmaking in Focus
- Inspiring the Future of Filmmaking
- Future Filmmakers Start Here
- The Future of Filmmaking Begins Here
- Producing the Filmmakers of Tomorrow
- Focused on the Filmmakers of Tomorrow
- Lights, Camera, Action.....and YOU!
- Make. Believe.
- Dream it, Create it, Live it

Other Film-related Words and Phrases

- Focus
- Action
- Cut
- Take 1, Take 2, etc.
- Rush
- Premiere
- Red carpet
- Behind the scenes
- Creatives
- Studio
- Silver screen
- Fade to black
- Film set
- Ticket
- Drive-in
- Concession stand
- Box office
- Close-up
- Wide-angle
- Frame
- Cast
- Exposure
- Soundtrack
- Footage
- Feature
- Cinematic
- Green screen
- Genre
- Frame
- Lighting
- Mood
- Reel
- Time-lapse
- Angle
- Lens
- Camera shot
- Celluloid
- Digital
- Suspense
- CGI
- Filmmaker
- Homage
- Studio system
- Auteur
- Story arc
- Script
- Story
- Tone
- Scenery
- Stage properties
- Dub
- Clip
- Score
- Screen
- Trailer
- Indie
- Flick
- Screening
- In the can
- Subtitle
- Montage
- Blockbuster
- Character
- Star
- Release
- Epic
- Walk of fame
- Filmography
- Avatar
- Working title
- Festival
- Performance
- Role
- Out-take
- Remake
- Sequel
- Prequel
- Easter egg
- Plot
- Foreshadowing
- Epilogue
- Commercial success
- Critical success
- Critics
- Review
- Show business
- Scene
- Final cut

[Glossary of Film Terminology](#)