

# Frequently Asked Questions for Prospective Students

*Do you have a passion for the arts? There's a school 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! **Your Passion. Your Creativity. Your School.***



school of the arts  
@ CENTRAL GWINNETT HIGH SCHOOL

## What is SOTA?

School of the Arts @ Central Gwinnett High School (SOTA) is a school within a school. Students take academic classes just like they would at any Gwinnett high school, but they also explore their artistic interests with expanded fine arts classes, arts-related internships, and work experiences at a pre-professional and professional level. Students may study performing arts, visual arts, and technology for the arts.

## 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:** Students from anywhere in the district can come to CGHS as a SOTA Fellows student. SOTA Fellows students take between 3-4 fine arts courses of their choosing each year depending on their scheduling needs. Most of the courses are courses that can be taken in all high schools in GCPS. However, Fellows students are able to focus more heavily in these areas and get more comprehensive and well-rounded education and training. SOTA Fellows study either Dance, Music, Theatre, Visual Arts, or a combination of these.. *No admission criteria, permissive transfers permitted.*

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

SOTA caters to students who want to focus their high school studies in the fine arts. SOTA Fellows do not have to choose between arts subjects - they can explore them all! SOTA Conservatory students 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 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. All CGHS students have access to the new space, whether they want to take one fine arts course, pursue a fine arts pathway in a specific arts discipline, take part as a Fellows student, or audition for the SOTA Conservatory. Transfer students may audition to attend SOTA as a Conservatory student or they may attend as a Fellows student (no audition required). *Transfer students must provide their own transportation.*

Most students accepted to the Conservatory will be incoming freshmen. While some spots may open up in grades 10-12, this will be rare. The program will serve students who are eligible for English Learner, special education, and gifted services.

## What are prerequisites or requirements for SOTA?

Students from around the district may audition for the Conservatory or may apply to be a Fellows student.

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 may 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?**

Conservatory students take 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 will spend up to 20 hours per week in their arts program of study. Conservatory students will have required after-school rehearsal, programs, or activities. Conservatory students may not have time for other types of extracurricular activities depending on the unique needs of the program.

### **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 is 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 opened in August 2021. The building includes 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, new 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 may not have the time to participate in additional activities at CGHS (their home school while at SOTA) or outside of school. SOTA students 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 my 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 may 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 have a \$62.5 billion impact on our economy, employing more than 200,000 artists, actors, and administrative staff. However, because students will learn the GCPS 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. You will be working toward your own goals as an artist— whether you plan to pursue a career in the arts, create art for yourself, or patronize the arts!

### **How can I learn more?**

For more information, email SOTA Admissions at [SOTA.Admissions@gcpsk12.org](mailto:SOTA.Admissions@gcpsk12.org) or visit our website at [gcpsk12.org/SOTA](http://gcpsk12.org/SOTA)



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