



North Carolina Governor's School

A Summer Program for Gifted and Talented High School Students

Family Overview

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

The Governor's School of North Carolina is the oldest statewide summer residential program for gifted and talented high school students in the nation. The program is administered by the State Board of Education and North Carolina Department of Public Instruction (NCDPI) through the Office of Advanced Learning & Gifted Education. Each summer, selected students are invited to Governor's School to help build a learning community during a four-week residential session. Students are encouraged to explore and ask questions, with the purpose of learning for its own sake and discovering new possibilities that complement their high school instruction, without the regular pressures of tests, scores, and grade point averages. The Governor's School emphasizes collaborative efforts in all disciplines. Students go through a local and state nomination process. Students are nominated locally at the district level or at the school level, if at a charter or non-public school. Each district/school has its own process to determine nominees for NCDPI at the state level.

AREAS OF POTENTIAL NOMINATION

The academic disciplines include:

- English
- Mathematics
- Natural Science
- Social Science
- Spanish

The arts disciplines include:

- Choral Music
- Dance
- Instrumental Music
- Theater
- Visual Art

HOST CAMPUSES

The Governor's School occurs on two college campuses during our four week session.

- **Governor's School East** is hosted by Meredith College in Raleigh, NC
- **Governor's School West** is hosted by Greensboro College in Greensboro, NC

COURSES

AREA I – Area I is the discipline in which students are nominated to attend Governor's School. Below is a summary description of the ten Area I disciplines. The emphasis in all disciplines is on contemporary texts, compositions, artistic expressions, issues, and ideas, and the theories that flow from them. Study in each Area I discipline emphasizes theory and application over the memorization of fact. Particular focus is dedicated to contemporary theories that stimulate innovative thought in a rapidly changing culture. Courses and activities are designed to promote student creativity and move students to question assumptions and explore unanswered questions. Area I classes meet twice per day, Monday through Friday, and once on Saturday. Students spend 70% of their instructional week in Area I.

- **CHORAL MUSIC** – (Mixed Choir at one campus; Treble Choir at one campus) – The choral music program explores the expression of the human experience and the connection to other arts and world events through choral music. The focus is on music of 20th and 21st century composers. Students also learn the finer points of choral singing – blend, diction, tone quality – and vocal technique in rehearsals and performances.
- **DANCE** – The dance program embraces and expresses 20th and 21st century theories through daily contemporary modern technique classes, a survey of recent pioneers, and the integration of self-expression and abstraction through improvisation, composition, and choreography.
- **ENGLISH** – The English program focuses on modern and postmodern fiction, poetry, and drama. Students are encouraged to read closely, imaginatively, analytically, and empathetically. Teachers incorporate creative and analytical writing workshops and immerse students in writing throughout the session.
- **INSTRUMENTAL MUSIC** (Orchestra at Governor's School West; Wind Ensemble/Band at Governor's School East) – The instrumental music program is focused on the study and performance of significant 20th and 21st century repertoire for orchestra (West) or wind ensemble (East), and the creation and performance of student

works. Students also study improvisation, composition, and technique.

- **MATHEMATICS** – The mathematics program strives to provide an atmosphere for students to independently and collaboratively contemplate and investigate problems that arise in contemporary mathematical fields. In addition, the program provides many opportunities for students to gain an appreciation for both mathematics and the work of mathematicians through student-faculty interaction, seminars, and guest lecturers.
- **NATURAL SCIENCE** – The natural science program investigates contemporary studies, methods, and topics of modern science by the use of interactive seminars, discussions, experiments, and group and individual problem solving. A variety of areas of natural science are explored through engaging lessons and projects.
- **SOCIAL SCIENCE** – The social science program examines major political, sociological, psychological, and anthropological concepts which have influenced the 20th and 21st centuries from theoretical and applied perspectives. Students are encouraged to see themselves as both individuals and participants in society, and combine classroom discussion with their personal experience in meaningful and analytical ways.
- **SPANISH** – The goal of Spanish is to expose students to contemporary thought, literature, music, art, and political trends in Spanish speaking countries. Spanish is the primary language spoken in class. Students nominated in Spanish must have completed at least three high school Spanish classes prior to attending GS or be a fluent Spanish speaker.
- **THEATER** – The goal of the theater program is to introduce young theater artists to contemporary and progressive theory, literature, and technique. Through a mixture of ensemble work, movement techniques, and writing, the holistic approach encourages the actor to become a well-rounded, life-long student of the theater.
- **VISUAL ARTS** – In the visual arts program, students study and practice visual expression consistent with current concepts and styles. Emphasis is placed on creative expression as students investigate and examine movements and theories in contemporary art, creating work both individually and collaboratively using a variety of materials.

In addition to their Area I classes, every student attends Area II and Area III. These courses contribute toward a unique and rewarding experience, which sets Governor's School's program apart from other intensive programs. Each Area II and Area III course comprises a diverse group of students from nearly every Area I discipline, promoting a richness of perspectives that helps in collaborative topic exploration. Each Area II and Area III class meets three times per week.

AREA II – Area II is an 'Applied Philosophy' course that asks students to apply critical, creative, and philosophical thinking and concepts as they explore current issues and events. Students are asked to reflect and pursue their own learning and investigate the very nature of thought and of the mind. Ultimately, Area II provides the students with a set of intellectual tools with which they may consider their academic and artistic endeavors, as well as their personal ideas, in a more thoughtful light. Area II accounts for ~15% of a student's instructional week.

AREA III – Area III, often referred to as 'Self and Society,' is a course where students learn to examine and articulate their opinions and listen to the perspectives of others. Through this exchange, students become aware of a wide range of differing viewpoints and explore their own perspectives with new insights. The tools that Area III provides are a more thoughtful consideration of others' experiences and a deeper understanding of their own. Area III discussions add to the Governor's School learning process by relating the overall curriculum to students' lives. Area III also accounts for ~15% of a student's instructional week.

ATTENDANCE AND VISITATION EXPECTATIONS

- Governor's School is a fully-immersive experience with a rich schedule of events and time for students to interact and learn from each other. Classes are held Monday-Saturday. Sunday is flexible with time for students to attend optional sessions and engage with their community or have personal time. Students are expected to remain on campus during all days of the session, including weekends, with the exception of optional Sunday check-out.
 - There will be opportunities for parents to check out their students on Sundays for a short period of time. Visitation is optional, and students cannot be signed out overnight. We offer programs and activities on Sundays for students who remain on campus.
- All students are required to attend the entire program. Students will not be excused to attend school, family, or community events such as camps, competitions, reunions, etc.
- Students may be excused for medical or family emergencies that may arise. Such requests may only be submitted after the student selection process. Students may also be excused for religious observances.
- Students are not permitted to enroll or expect to participate in other activities, such as online courses or athletic training, during the Governor's School session.

CAMPUS RULES AND EXPECTATIONS

- Governor's School is an ambitious residential program for high school students that provides them with an

- unique, immersive academic and social experience on a college campus.
- There are a number of rules and regulations associated with residential life for high school students on a college campus.
- The specific rules will be shared through a Student Handbook and a Site Specific Details document, which include the [Governor's School Honor Code](#). During the session, if a student violates the Honor Code or other campus rules and expectations, they may be sent home for the remainder of the session.

FOOD AND LODGING

- Students are housed in the residence halls of our two host campuses. Students are randomly assigned to campuses and roommates.
- Student meals are provided in the dining halls of our two campuses. Meal times are scheduled to allow all students access during breaks in their class schedules. The dining hall staff of each campus works with Governor's School students and families to address individual needs.

STUDENT ELIGIBILITY

To apply for Governor's School, a student must:

- Be a North Carolina resident. Exchange students are not eligible. Any student attending a North Carolina federal high school, regardless of residency, is eligible.
- Attend a North Carolina public or non-public school, and
- Be enrolled in Grade 11 at the time of nomination. Exceptions are made to allow for students in Grades 10 and 11 to be nominated in Dance, Choral Music, and Instrumental Music.
- Students applying in Spanish must have completed at least three high school Spanish courses prior to attending GS or be a fluent or native Spanish speaker.

*To be eligible to apply to the NC Governor's School, a student must meet **at least one** of the criteria listed below:*

- Cumulative unweighted GPA of 3.25 or higher;
or
- Cumulative weighted GPA of 3.5 or higher;
or
- Score of 4 or higher on an NC End of Course assessment;
or
- Score of 3 or higher on an Advanced Placement exam;
or
- Grade of B or higher in a Career College Promise course on the Comprehensive Articulation Agreement, or a University Course;
or
- Minimum composite score of 19 on the Pre-ACT/ACT or a minimum score of 1010 on the PSAT/SAT;
or
- Minimum score of 90th percentile on aptitude assessment (composite or subtest).

TUITION AND FEES

- Governor's School is funded by the NC General Assembly through the NC Department of Public Instruction. However, there are additional funds needed to provide this 4-week residential program.
- There is a tuition cost of \$600 per student. Districts and schools are responsible for sending payment for this tuition; however, they have flexibility on how they choose to collect tuition funds. Schools and districts will inform students and families about tuition processes after selection letters are distributed.
- The North Carolina Governor's School Foundation (NCGSF), a generous partner, is committed to ensuring that every selected student can attend Governor's School. NCGSF offers need-based scholarship opportunities for families. More details will follow after selections are announced in March 2026.
- Families are responsible for transportation costs to and from the campuses. Many students also choose to bring some spending money to use during the program.

APPLICATION SUMMARY

- The selection process for the NC Governor's School is two phases: local and state. Students must first be

nominated from their local district, charter or non-public school before they can be considered at the state level. There is no process for self-nomination.

- Typically, the state-level receives approximately 1,800 applications and selects around 800 students to attend. Being nominated to the state level is already a significant achievement of which students and parents should be proud.
- Selection decisions from the NC Governor's School office are final. There is no appeals process.
- Students who are invited to attend should take their decision and commitment to attend seriously. Withdrawals, especially close to the start of the program, can prevent other students from having the opportunity to attend.

HOW DO I APPLY?

- **STEP ONE:** Contact your school/school counselor regarding eligibility and local application/nomination processes and deadlines.
- **STEP TWO:** Complete and turn in the Student Application at your local school, not to the NC Governor's School office. Download the application form from the Governor's School website (<https://go.ncdpi.gov/NCGovSchool>) and complete it electronically. Please note that the use of AI is prohibited. The application is composed of the sections detailed below:
 - **Basic Information & Nomination Discipline:** Double check that all information is accurate and spelled correctly.
 - **Essay and Discipline-Specific Task:** All students will answer one essay question. Students applying in one of the academic areas will have a second essay to complete, each in response to a prompt specific to their discipline. Students applying in one of the arts areas will complete an audition for their area of nomination. Students applying in Spanish will complete a second essay and a speaking component.
 - **Personal Readiness:** This form is where you list your recent school/community activities and awards and reflect on those that are most important to you. It is also where you describe what makes you ready for a summer residential experience in a collaborative learning community.
 - **Student and Parent/Guardian Attestation:** The student and a parent or guardian will sign to verify statements, including that they have read and understood the information provided in this Family Overview.
- **STEP THREE:** Obtain two Recommendations. Review the official Recommendation Form from the Governor's School website and ask adults who can attest to your academic/arts strengths, personal character, and readiness for the Governor's School experience to complete the form on your behalf. These adults will need to complete the recommendation electronically and submit the completed form to your Governor's School Coordinator.
 - Family members may not complete, read, nor submit recommendations.
 - *At least one recommendation must be from one of your high school teachers in your nominated discipline.* If a nomination-discipline teacher is not available, choose another teacher.
 - The second recommendation can be from another teacher, a school counselor or administrator, or an out-of-school instructor, coach, or community leader who knows you well enough to complete the form accurately.
 - Recommenders are to download the Recommendation Form from the Governor's School website and complete it electronically.
 - Upon completion, the recommender should send it electronically directly to the appropriate local school official, NOT to the NC Governor's School office. Neither the student nor their parents/guardians can view completed recommendations.
 - Only two Recommendation Forms will be accepted. No other documents (e.g., substitute letters, additional recommendations, etc.) will be accepted.
- **STEP FOUR:** Follow up with your district GS Coordinator or school counselor to ensure all materials are submitted. The school will add your official high school transcript to your application materials.

TIMELINE 2025 - 2026

- **September 2025:** Applications are released to Governor's School Coordinators and posted to the Governor's School website: <https://go.ncdpi.gov/NCGovSchool>
- **November-December 2025:** Local deadlines for local selection process. Check with your school counselor in the Fall for the dates of this deadline.
- **Early March 2026:** Selection notifications are sent to Governor's School Coordinators to distribute.

- **Late March 2026:** Selected students will notify the NC Department of Public Instruction of their decision to accept or decline the invitation to attend the NC Governor's School.
- **June 21, 2026 (*Tentative Date:)** Students arrive for the first day of the NC Governor's School Session.
- **July 18, 2026 (*Tentative Date):** Final day of the NC Governor's School Session.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS:

- **Can I apply in more than one Area?** No, students can only apply in one discipline. We encourage students to choose a subject area that they enjoy studying.
- **Can I change my Area I?** No, just as students can only apply in one subject area, students also cannot change their Area I.
- **If I attend Governor's School, can I leave campus to attend a conference or competition?** No, students who choose to attend Governor's School commit to attending the entire session. Absences are not permitted for conferences, competitions, performances, sports camps/practices, or other planned events.
- **If I am not selected, is there an appeals process?** No, selection decisions are final. Being nominated is a high honor and one that students can be proud to share on college applications, but the NC Governor's School office does not reconsider selection decisions.
- **Can I receive feedback on my application?** No, the Governor's School office does not provide feedback or disclose information about students' applications or recommendations at any point in the application or selection process.

For further information, contact your local Governor's School Coordinator or school counselor. Also, please visit the North Carolina Governor's School website, <https://go.ncdpi.gov/NCGovSchool>.



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North Carolina Governor's School
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