

Governor's Honors Program

The Governor's Honors Program is a six-week supplemental enrichment program held each summer for academically and artistically advanced high school students from around the state. The program is financed by the state of Georgia and hosted by Valdosta State University in Valdosta. Each year public and private schools nominate students for participation in the program.

The instructional disciplines included in the Governor's Honors Program are agriscience/biotechnology, communicative arts, dance, design, executive management, foreign language, mathematics, music, science, social studies, technology, theater, and visual arts. Students who are accepted to the program live on the campus of Valdosta State University. Following a full academic day, the students are offered enrichment activities until they retire for the evening.

In addition to a major area of study, students choose a minor area of study upon arrival to the program. Minor areas of study are offered in all major areas of study with additional options. In addition to academic interests, students participate in a variety of activities while in the program. Students have many opportunities for socializing with other program participants in both structured and unstructured settings.

To be eligible for nomination a student must have successfully completed the tenth or eleventh grade and must excel academically or artistically in at least one area. The student's teacher and guidance counselor must submit a nomination form, accompanied by the student's transcripts, recommendations, and other accolades. Once nominated by his or her school, a student must undergo a statewide screening and interview process. Students who interview or audition are then ranked according to records, nomination forms, and audition or interview information.

Instructors are selected through a process that is similar to the selection of students. The prospective instructor must complete an application, including at least three references. They must then outline a lesson plan that would be implemented in the classroom and would engage gifted learners for six weeks. Applicants are then interviewed by delegates from the Georgia Department of Education. Teachers who are selected for the program may be invited to return for subsequent summer sessions.

The Governor's Honors Program began in 1964 with 400 participants and was hosted at Wesleyan College in Macon. The program's success led to an increase in the number of students, to 600, and North Georgia College (later North Georgia College and State University) in Dahlonega became a cohost of the program. In 1980 Valdosta State University became a new host institution, and for several years participants were split between North Georgia and Valdosta State. Today, the program is consolidated in Valdosta. Curricular decisions are made by the state Department of Education.