



# Phoenix High School at Sugarloaf Mills

A partnership of Gwinnett County Public Schools and Simon Youth Foundation

***Dedication Ceremony***  
***Thursday, October 18, 2018***  
***1 p.m.***

*In 1997, Phoenix HS, a non-traditional high school of Gwinnett County Public Schools (GCPS), moved to its new home... a former shopping center in Lawrenceville. Keeping that history in mind, it seems fitting that a new extension of the school is opening in an area mall.*

*Consistent with the school's motto— "We exist for students"—this unique program is designed to serve students who are committed to finishing their education but need additional support and/or are interested in working while they go to school. It is a great match for students who would benefit from having an option other than the traditional high school setting. The flexible hours, individualized learning, and real-world experiences engages students, encouraging them to finish high school.*

## **What is Phoenix High School at Sugarloaf Mills?**

Phoenix High School (HS) at Sugarloaf Mills is a unique program designed to serve students who are committed to finishing their education but need additional support and are interested in working while they go to school. This program is an extension of Gwinnett County Public Schools' (GCPS) very successful Phoenix High School. Located at Sugarloaf Mills off of I-85, this new program will offer unique work-based learning options for students. The Sugarloaf Mills program, which is the result of a partnership with Simon Youth Foundation, is designed to be small, allowing more individualized support for each student and supporting students as they transition to the workplace or to college.

## **I am not familiar with Phoenix HS. What is it, and why is Phoenix opening this new program?**

Phoenix HS opened in 1988 to provide a non-traditional high school setting for Gwinnett students who were struggling academically during their high school experience. While any GCPS high school student can attend Phoenix, it has helped a number of students who have fallen behind in their credits, dropped out, or have experienced life circumstances that had an impact on their educational progress. The location in Lawrenceville serves more than 500 full-time students and a number of part-time students working to get back on track. The program at Sugarloaf Mills is a perfect match for students who may be interested in attending Phoenix but want to attend school closer to home or may need the tailored education or work-based learning provided.

## **Phoenix HS at Sugarloaf Mills By the Numbers**

- 7,800** Amount of square footage the Phoenix program uses in the mall
- 95** The number of students currently enrolled
- 18** October 18 is the official opening of the facility
- 9** The number of faculty and support staff at this location
- 2** Partners— Simon Youth Foundation and Gwinnett County Public Schools— joined forces to offer this unique learning opportunity
- 1** Although SYF has 35 successful programs nationally, this is the first in Georgia

## **SYF** Simon Youth Foundation

**Phoenix HS at Sugarloaf Mills** is the result of an innovative partnership between GCPS and Simon Youth Foundation (SYF), a non-profit founded by the Simon Property Group, Inc. Simon Property Group builds malls around the country, with two Simon malls, including Sugarloaf Mills, located in Gwinnett.

SYF partners with public school districts across the nation to form alternative high schools that serve students who struggle to succeed in a traditional classroom environment, providing a flexible environment that emphasizes one-on-one learning opportunities. SYF provides the space and infrastructure (furniture, renovation of space, wiring, etc.) for this unique school setting within a Simon mall. The school district provides the curriculum, personnel, and technology for the program.

While the Sugarloaf Mills program is a first in Georgia, SYF currently has 35 successful programs around the nation. SYF provides extensive scholarship opportunities for students and grants for program improvements. And, SYF has formed partnerships with other corporations to provide work-based and other learning opportunities for students.

Since launching the first Simon Youth Academy in 1998, a total of 17,292 Academy students have earned diplomas, with a cumulative 90% graduation rate.

### **Does the program do anything “special” or different in terms of how it delivers instruction to students?**

The format is a blended online learning model that allows students to engage in both face-to-face and online instruction with significant personalized instruction for students. There is an emphasis on work-based learning opportunities and supporting students in their work experiences. The program’s students also will have an opportunity to earn a Microsoft Office Specialist certification which is a benefit in the workplace and in postsecondary settings. This is in line with the program’s overall goal of assisting students to develop and transition to postsecondary options or career opportunities.

### **Why would students be interested in completing their education at Phoenix HS at Sugarloaf Mills?**

This program is a great match for students who would benefit from having an option other than the traditional high school setting. Individualized learning and real-world experiences will engage students. And students who complete their high school diploma are more employable and have access to other life options which can have a positive impact on their lives.

### **How does the curriculum in this program differ from what is taught elsewhere?**

The curriculum— Gwinnett’s Academic Knowledge and Skills, or AKS— will be the same as what is taught at other Gwinnett high schools. However, the experience for participating students will be different. The smaller, more personalized teaching and learning environment and the work-based learning component will uniquely prepare students for college and career.

### **Who can attend Phoenix HS at Sugarloaf?**

As an extension of Phoenix HS, the program serves students from all over the county. Prospective students should have completed 11 high school credits and be at least 16 years old. Students who attend this program receive personalized support; however, the program does not offer special education classes or classes for students learning English.

### **What are the job prospects for participating students?**

One of the focus areas for this program is work-based learning. Through key partnerships with businesses within or close to the mall, students will be supported in their workplace experiences and as they transition to careers after high school. While working is not a requirement for students, we anticipate this option will be a bonus for students who need or want to work.

### **Are the graduation requirements the same for this program as they are for other Gwinnett high schools?**

Yes. Students will graduate with a GCPS diploma and must meet all graduation requirements just as they would at Phoenix HS or any other GCPS high school. Some students may earn additional certifications through their course of study. And graduates may qualify for scholarships from a dedicated Simon Youth Foundation program.

**Phoenix High School at Sugarloaf Mills**  
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