

# FAQs about

# Phoenix HS at Sugarloaf Mills



## 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 have impacted their educational progress. The location in Lawrenceville serves over 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.

## Where will the program be located?

Phoenix High School at Sugarloaf Mills will be located at Sugarloaf Mills Mall, located at I-85 and Sugarloaf Parkway. The mall is centrally located in the county and is on the Gwinnett County Transit bus line.

## Will the program have an attendance zone?

No. As this is an extension of Phoenix HS, the program will take students from all over the county.

## Is the program open to high school students at all grade levels (9–12)?

While the program is open to students from across Gwinnett County, prospective students should have completed 11 high school credits and be at least 16 years old.

## How large will the enrollment be when the program opens? What is the program's capacity?

We anticipate opening with approximately 45 students in August of 2018. When operating at capacity, the program will serve more than 100 students. However, plans are to grow the enrollment slowly over several years to ensure success for participating students.

## Will transportation be provided to Phoenix HS at Sugarloaf Mills?

No. However, Gwinnett County Transit bus lines run to the mall and will provide easy access for students.

## Why has GCPS partnered with Simon Youth Foundation and why is the program located at a mall?

In the fall of 2016, Simon Mall business leaders approached GCPS about a partnership opportunity. The Simon Property Group, Inc., is a large business that builds malls throughout the United States. Gwinnett County is home to two Simon malls, including Sugarloaf Mills Mall located at I-85 and Sugarloaf Parkway. The Simon Youth Foundation (SYF) is a non-profit founded by the Simon Property Group, Inc. SYF partners with public school districts across the nation, providing the space and infrastructure (furniture, renovation of space, wiring, etc.) for a unique school setting within a Simon mall. The school district provides the curriculum and personnel for the program.

## What is the focus of this new program?

The focus of this program is on graduating students who have unique challenges or situations. Two key aspects of the program are the work-based learning opportunities and the support students will receive as they transition to postsecondary options or career opportunities.

## Will the school offer the traditional AKS curriculum?

In Gwinnett County Public Schools, the Academic Knowledge and Skills (commonly called the AKS) is a rigorous curriculum that prepares students for college and 21st century careers in a globally competitive future. Students who attend Phoenix High School at Sugarloaf Mills will learn and demonstrate mastery of the AKS just like other Gwinnett students, but they will experience the AKS in an innovative and transformational way.

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

The curriculum will be the same— Gwinnett’s AKS— 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.

## Are there any special physical features of the location of this program?

The space was designed to match the academic programs and needs of its students so it has several special features:

- Large, open, and flexible space (4,500 to 7,800 square feet) with non-traditional furniture to allow for different learning spaces within the larger room;
- Onsite access to technology for blended online classes; and
- Location of the program in Sugarloaf Mills Mall.

## Will the program have a cafeteria?

No, but students will have access to breakfast and/or lunch through a grab-n-go model offered through the district’s School Nutrition Program. Students also may choose eating options within the mall at their own expense.

## When can we tour the facility?

Once the building space opens, the district will hold a dedication and open house. After that time, tours will be provided periodically for guests and interested students.

## Is this program unique to Gwinnett or has it been successful in other places?

While the Sugarloaf Mills program is a first in Georgia, SYF currently has 30 successful programs around the nation. SYF also 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.

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

This program will be 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.

## 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.

## Will students earn special certificates or diplomas based on their coursework through this program?

The diploma earned by students will be a GCPS high school diploma from Phoenix HS. Some students may be able to earn additional certifications due to their course of study.

## Can a student attend Phoenix HS at Sugarloaf Mills part of the day and participate the rest of the day in programs at Maxwell HS of Technology?

Yes. This program is focused on preparing students for college and careers. Therefore, it is natural that some students will want to benefit from the many programs offered at Maxwell HS of Technology.

## What are the job prospects for students in this program?

One of the focus areas for this program is work-based learning. By forming 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.

## What sort of student will be most successful with this program? Students who:

- are working or are seeking work placement;
- interested or needing flexible hours for learning; and
- will engage with teachers in the learning process.

## Will the school offer services like ESOL, Gifted, Special Education, etc.?

Students who attend this program will receive personalized support but will not have access to specialized services like ESOL, Gifted, or Special Education classes.

## Are there any prerequisites or requirements students need to meet in order to be eligible to attend?

Students should have completed 11 high school credits and be at least 16 years old.

## How do I register to be a part of this program next school year?

For now, students can register at the main Phoenix campus, located at 501 Pike St. in Lawrenceville. Call 770-513-6862 with questions. After the program opens at Sugarloaf Mills, students may register at the mall.

## How can I learn more?

Visit [www.phoenixhs.org](http://www.phoenixhs.org) and click on the Phoenix at Sugarloaf button on the left.



A partnership of Gwinnett County Public Schools and Simon Youth Foundation

