

Discovering Our Gifts
Academy
at Lula Elementary

Due March 4, 2026

Application Packet
2026-2027

Student Name

School (Currently Enrolled)

Grade Level in 2025-2026

Introduction

The purpose of Discovering Our Gifts Academy (D.O.G. Academy) at Lula is to develop and respect the uniqueness of the learners with a well-structured, organized curriculum centering around connecting learners with opportunities to develop in-depth understanding while building on their previous knowledge. The use of 21st technology will allow the learner to enhance their understanding independently and collaboratively. Learners will be able to connect their lives and the world around them with structured content that maximizes the transfer of the learner's knowledge, understanding, and skills. The D.O.G. Academy concentrates on providing opportunities for all learners to gain understanding based on their individual learning needs and level through differentiated learning styles.

It is the goal of Lula Elementary to prepare students for success in all academic situations, including programs that encourage new ways of thinking and learning. The D.O.G. Academy seamlessly addresses the needs of students in a blended learning and project based environment through units based on Georgia standards.

The D.O.G. Academy will serve high achieving 3rd, 4th, and 5th grade students. Learners will have opportunities to learn, transfer, and apply their understanding of the content while developing research, technology, and inquiry skills. The students will have opportunities to learn how content connects and relates to other topics, disciplines, events, time, and cultures. The environment will allow the students to work independently, collaboratively, and through whole groups depending on the assignment, concept, needs, and delivery model. The students in the D.O.G. Academy will have experiences to allow them to become competitive 21st century learners.

Discovering Our Gifts Academy at Lula Application Process

Requirements to Apply

Any Hall County School District student in 2nd, 3rd, or 4th grade may apply. Parents of students who live outside the attendance zone must provide transportation for their children to and from school.

Application and Selection Procedure

1. Parents/Guardians and students complete a Student Application and submit it to Larrece Groover at Lula Elementary:
The Discovering Our Gifts Academy at Lula
Attn: Larrece Groover/larrece.groover@hallco.org
6130 Chattahoochee Street
Lula, GA 30554
2. Parents/Guardians of upcoming 3rd –5th grade, please ask two teachers to serve as references for the student. Provide your references with the information needed to acquire the confidential recommendation form.
3. Completed application packets will be reviewed by the D.O.G. Selection Committee. Students will be selected based on evidence from their applications, recommendations, performance assessments, and transcripts (test scores and report cards).
4. Committee decisions are final. Applicants not selected during the initial review will be placed on a waiting list and may be admitted to the academy if any selected students elect not to attend or are disqualified for any reason.

Criteria	Evidence/Documentation
<i>The student must:</i>	
Demonstrate advanced levels of knowledge, interest and aptitude.	Transcript Recommendations Application Performance Assessments
Exhibit outstanding communication skills	Transcript Recommendations Application Performance Assessments
Possess qualities associated with creativity, including curiosity, resourcefulness and a problem-solving disposition	Application Recommendations Performance Assessments
Be highly motivated to excel in his or her studies	Transcript Recommendations Application
Possess the maturity to work well independently and in small group settings	Transcript Recommendations Performance Assessments
Have consistent attendance and punctuality	Student Record

Discovering Our Gifts Academy at Lula Application Process

Application Checklist

(Please check off as each step is completed.)

- ___ 1. Complete all of the student and parent/guardian information in Parts I and II of the application packet.
- ___ 2. Complete the *Parent Questionnaire* and attach it to the application packet.
- ___ 3. Ask two teachers to complete short confidential recommendation forms, and, if they agree, give each teacher one of the half-page instruction sheets found on page 6 of this application packet. (Optional: Ask an individual who is not a teacher to submit a letter of recommendation. (See Section V on page 5 of this application packet.)
- ___ 4. Complete *Parent Assurances* (page 5).
- ___ 5. Sign and have your child sign the *Certification* statement on page 5.

Mail or deliver the complete application packet to Lula Elementary on or before March 4, 2026.

Discovering Our Gifts Academy Student Application

I. Student Information

Student Name: _____ Date of Birth: _____

Current School: _____ Student ID#: _____

Indicate area(s) of special interest: _____

Student's Computer Skills: Excellent Good Fair Limited

II. Parent/Guardian Information

Name(s): _____

Address: _____ City: _____ Zip: _____

Home Phone: _____ Cell Phone: _____

Daytime Phone: _____ Email: _____

III. Parent Questionnaire

Please answer the four questions below. All responses should be typed. Please print them and attach them to the application. Hand-written responses to these questions are accepted on an individual basis. Limit your responses to two pages total. Only two pages will be reviewed by the Selection Committee.

1. **What are the gifts and talents that your child will bring to the Discovering Our Gifts Academy?** (Feel free to discuss not only academics, but also issues related to character, leadership, etc.)
2. **What have been your child's greatest challenges in school, and what has been done to help your child overcome those challenges?** (For example: particular learning difficulties, social/emotional issues, illness, stress)
3. **Please share some of your expectations in the following areas:**
 - a. **Academics**
 - b. **Connections/Enrichment**
 - c. **Athletics**
 - d. **Extracurricular activities**
4. **With what activities at your child's school have you been involved? In what D.O.G. Academy activities do you envision yourself participating?**

Discovering Our Gifts Academy Student Application

IV. References

Please ask two teachers to complete short confidential recommendation forms, which will be submitted electronically. One of the references must be a current regular classroom teacher. The other reference may be another current teacher (regular classroom, special area, SEARCH, etc.) or a former teacher. If they agree to serve as references, please give each teacher one of the half-page instruction sheets found on page 7 of this application packet.

Optional: You may ask one individual who is not a teacher (e.g., a scoutmaster, coach, church leader, etc.) to submit a letter of recommendation if you feel that this person has had opportunities to observe your child's interests, talents, work ethic, ability to work with others, etc., in ways that may not have been seen in school. This reference may not be a family member. The letter, which should not exceed one page in length, should be sent directly to Larrece Groover no later than **March 4, 2026**. (See address above. Letter may also be scanned and e-mailed to Larrece Groover at larrece.groover@hallco.org or faxed to 770-869-1961.)

V. Parent Assurances

- I grant permission for the *D.O.G. Academy* Selection Committee to request and review my child's complete academic and discipline records.
- If I live outside the attendance zone, I will provide transportation to and from school for my child to attend the D.O.G. Academy.
- I understand and will comply with the attendance requirements for this rigorous program which includes limited absences, tardies, and checkouts.
- I understand the technology requirements in blended learning.
- I understand the nature of the D.O.G. Academy curriculum and the variety of individual and/or small group activities available at the D.O.G. Academy requires students to exhibit more maturity and self-control than would be expected of elementary schoolers in a traditional setting. Therefore, if my child has persistent problems with behavior and/or motivation at the D.O.G. Academy, I understand that he/she will return to his/her home school or placed into a traditional classroom at Lula Elementary.

Parent/Legal Guardian Signature

Date

VI. Certification and Signature Page

I certify that the information contained in this application is true and complete to the best of my knowledge, and I understand that if selected for the D.O.G. Academy, falsified statements may be grounds for removal.

Student Name _____
(Print please)

Student Signature _____

Parent/Legal Guardian Name _____
(Print Please)

Parent/Legal Guardian Signature _____

Date _____

Discovering Our Gifts Academy Student Reference

Dear Colleague:

Thank you for agreeing to serve as a reference for _____, who is applying to The Discovering Our Gifts Academy (D.O.G. Academy). Your confidential ratings of this student's interests and aptitudes, creativity and personal responsibility will be submitted electronically. Please e-mail me at larrece.groover@hallco.org to request a recommendation form. I will then e-mail the short form to you, along with instructions for the completion and submission of the form. Your professional observations are very important as we attempt to select students who will thrive in the unique learning environment of the D.O.G. Academy. So, again, thank you for being an important part of the application process. **All references are due by March 4, 2026.**

Sincerely,

Larrece Groover
Discovering Our Gifts Academy
Lula Elementary School

Discovering Our Gifts Academy Student Reference

Dear Colleague:

Thank you for agreeing to serve as a reference for _____, who is applying to The Discovering Our Gifts Academy (D.O.G. Academy). Your confidential ratings of this student's interests and aptitudes, creativity and personal responsibility will be submitted electronically. Please e-mail me at larrece.groover@hallco.org to request a recommendation form. I will then e-mail the short form to you, along with instructions for the completion and submission of the form. Your professional observations are very important as we attempt to select students who will thrive in the unique learning environment of the D.O.G. Academy. So, again, thank you for being an important part of the application process. **All references are due by March 4, 2026.**

Sincerely,

Larrece Groover
Discovering Our Gifts Academy
Lula Elementary School