

Westwood High School

SOAR Academy Application 2017-2018



This application is for students who will be entering the 9th grade in the fall of 2017. Please note that school choice or magnet acceptance is independent of SOAR Academy acceptance. Consideration of this application, including initial program acceptance, in no way supersedes Richland School District Two school choice assignments. SOAR Academy acceptance does NOT guarantee a student's ability to attend Westwood High School. Students must be cleared to attend Westwood High School (through residency or through choice or iRED magnet placement) prior to enrollment in SOAR Academy.

Students must enter SOAR Academy their freshmen year. The only exception to this is upperclassmen who transfer to Westwood after their freshmen year. Students transferring to Westwood as upperclassmen may also apply, but must be able to make up the membership criteria from previous years. Upperclassmen who have transferred to Westwood may apply for SOAR Academy, using this application, and their acceptance and program requirements will be considered on a case-by-case basis.

**Applications must be submitted in their entirety
by September 30, 2017 to be considered!**

SOAR (Scholars of Academic Rigor) Academy is Westwood High School's honors program - a small, dedicated community of students who are highly motivated to meet formidable academic challenges, to take risks, and to think deeply, critically and creatively. The Academy recognizes talent in all disciplines and encourages students to excel in areas of interest, strength and weakness.

Academy scholars complete College Board Advanced Placement courses, honors level courses, honors level elective courses, independent and original research, formal presentations for audiences at the university level, enrichment activities and community service. SOAR Academy emphasizes independent research and university level presentation, as well as enrichment activities, where students learn outside the confines of a traditional classroom or discipline. We feel this program combines the importance of academic rigor and performance with the best of independent intrinsic learning and exploring, all at a level beyond the typical high school experience.

The Academy not only enriches students' high school experience but also fosters their ability to compile an impressive resume of rigorous coursework and research, which will enhance college and scholarship applications. In addition, Academy students who successfully complete all components of the SOAR curriculum will have their program achievement printed on their transcripts. They will be invited, along with their families, to an exclusive banquet in their honor, where they will receive an Academy diploma. Academy graduates will also receive special recognition at Westwood High's graduation ceremony (including the wearing of a silver stole and identification in the graduation program).

What are the qualification criteria for SOAR Academy scholars?

SOAR Academy applicants are accepted into the program based on an academic history of talent and giftedness, apparent via standardized test scores, current course levels and grades earned therein, positive teacher recommendations, strong writing ability, and an enthusiastic desire to be a SOAR Academy Scholar.

Upon acceptance into SOAR Academy, scholars will:

- Successfully complete 2 or more Honors and/or AP level courses each year of high school. By graduation, scholars will complete at least six Honors level and at least two Advanced Placement level courses.
- Maintain a 3.5+ cumulative Grade Point Average (GPA) throughout high school.
- Participate in at least one SOAR Enrichment Activity each semester, for a total of at least 8 by graduation, and reflect on each of those experiences in writing. (Enrichment Activities are opportunities to learn outside of the classroom and may include guest lectures, concerts, art shows, college visits, and other learning experiences. A variety of activities will be offered to scholars each semester.)
- Successfully complete the SOAR Research Seminar courses as 10th graders and again as 11th graders. The course meets as a “late bird” class, with periodic meetings and independent study. Scholars in the course are expected to complete an original research project and compete in the National History Day contest.

The Application

The following pages contain the application for SOAR Academy. It is advised that students and parents review the application in its entirety first and be sure they understand each component. Various pages and components require student and parent action, including signatures, before they can be further attempted. The application components include:

- Student Applicant Demographic Information (pg. 3)
- Honor Commitments (pg. 4)
- Student Applicant Writing Sample (pg. 5)
- Two teacher recommendations (one must be the applicant’s English teacher) (pg. 6-11)

Please direct questions to SOAR Academy Director,

Ashley Auspelmyer (auspelmyer@richland2.org or 691-4049 Ext. 36107).

Please print this application and mail (or deliver) to:

Attn: Ashley Auspelmyer, SOAR Academy
Westwood High School
180 Turkey Farm Road
Blythewood, SC 29016

Deadline: September 30, 2017

***Demographic Information**

*Items marked with an asterisk are required and must be completed for the application to be considered.

*Student Name: _____

*Student Address: _____

*Student Email: _____

*Student Phone: _____

*Parent/Guardian Contact

Name: _____
Relationship to student: _____
Email: _____
Phone: _____
Address (if different from student): _____

Parent/Guardian Contact 2

Name: _____
Relationship to student: _____
Email: _____
Phone: _____
Address (if different from student): _____

*Student's Current Middle School: _____

*Student's current core courses and available grades:

Core Subject Area	Specific Course/Level	S1 Grade	S2 Grade
English			
History			
Math			
Science			

***Honor Commitments**

Student Name (please print): _____

To the student:

Have you ever been dismissed, suspended, placed on probation, or received other serious disciplinary sanctions or consequences? (Please note: After School Detention, alone, is not considered a serious disciplinary sanction that needs to be addressed in this application)

Yes No

(If yes, please provide a full explanation on a separate piece and paper and include it with this application)

Students, please read and initial each statement below to indicate your agreement with and your acknowledgement of SOAR Academy expectations:

_____ On my honor, I have neither given nor received unauthorized assistance on this assignment. I understand that any violation of the RSD2 honor code will result in academic and disciplinary action.

_____ The effort and response to the writing prompt is solely mine, the student applicant's, and is in no way plagiarized.

_____ I give the SOAR Academy director and Westwood administration my permission to access and review my past and current academic records, including standardized test scores, in accordance with the selection process.

_____ I give the SOAR Academy director and Westwood administration my permission to contact my current and past teachers in accordance with the selection process. (Please note: Teacher recommendations are already being provided with this application. Therefore, it is not SOAR Academy's policy to contact teachers further, unless deemed necessary on a case-by-case basis).

_____ I wish to be considered for admission into the SOAR Academy, and I understand the commitments and expectations of membership.

Parents/Guardians, please read the statement below and sign to indicate your agreement with and your acknowledgement of SOAR Academy expectations:

I acknowledge that through this application process my student is seeking membership in Westwood High School's honors program, SOAR Academy. I authorize the SOAR Academy director and Westwood administration to access my student's school records as a necessary part of the application and selection process. Furthermore, I understand that portions of this application are confidential, and I will not seek to access confidential recommendation and evaluation materials.

Parent Name (please print): _____

Parent Signature: _____ Date: _____

***Writing Sample**

Student Name (please print): _____

Students, please respond to the following writing prompt on a separate piece of paper and include your response with this application. Your response should be typed in MLA format (ask your teacher or Google it if you are unfamiliar with MLA format guidelines) and a minimum of 500 words.

Please note: While it is appropriate to ask a teacher or parent to help you review your writing prior to submission, ultimately, the ideas, word choice, structure and style of this writing should be predominantly your own work.

***Prompt:** Evaluate your strengths and weaknesses and the impact these qualities have had on your academic career.

***English Teacher Recommendation**

Instructions for Students:

Explain briefly what SOAR Academy is and ask your English teacher ahead of time if he or she would consider recommending you for the program. If your teacher would like to recommend you, write your name on this page, and read and sign the relevant confidentiality statement. Have your parent or legal guardian also read and sign the appropriate confidentiality statement. Put your first and last name on the outside of an envelope. Give this recommendation form (pg. 6-8 of this application) and the envelope to your teacher and agree upon a date when you can pick up the completed recommendation. (Make sure you leave yourself enough time to submit it with the rest of your application by the deadline).

Student Name (please print): _____

I acknowledge that I waive any right to receive, review, or read the confidential teacher recommendation I have requested, whether in my possession or in the possession of the recommending teacher or SOAR Academy.

Student Signature: _____ Date: _____

Parent/Guardian:

I acknowledge that I waive any right to receive, review, or read the confidential teacher recommendation my student has requested, whether in possession of the recommending teacher, the student applicant, or SOAR Academy.

Parent Name (please print): _____

Parent Signature: _____ Date: _____

Instructions for English Teachers:

Please ensure that the student and parent have signed the confidentiality agreements above before moving forward with your recommendation. After you have completed this recommendation, please place it in the envelope provided by the student and seal. Please sign your name over the seal, so it is clear that your recommendation is confidential. The student will retrieve the sealed envelope from you and will include it with his or her application.

We recognize that completing student recommendations takes valuable time, and this is an important consideration in the application process. We thank you very much for your honest feedback of this student!

SOAR Academy is Westwood High School's honors program. SOAR students are academically gifted and mature. They are independent and intrinsically motivated. They display a strong work ethic as well as honorable behavior. SOAR students stand out amongst their peers.

Teacher Name: _____

Teacher Email/Phone: _____

Please complete the recommendation on the following pages, which asks you to compare the student applicant named above to his or her honors level peers. Then return to this page and sign the statement below. Thank you!

The following recommendation reflects my honest and careful assessment of the student named above.

Teacher Signature: _____ Date: _____

Please rate the student applicant as compared to his or her honors level peers.

Communication Skills

Qualities	No basis for judgment	Poor	Below Average	Average (top 50%)	Good (top 25%)	Excellent (top 10%)	Remarkable (top 2%)
Oral expression							
Written expression (creative)							
Written expression (expository)							
Clarity of writing style							
Ability to consider audience							
Grammar/mechanics skills							
Organization of ideas							
Reading comprehension							
Overall facility with language (written and verbal)							

Academic Qualities

Qualities	No basis for judgment	Poor	Below Average	Average (top 50%)	Good (top 25%)	Excellent (top 10%)	Remarkable (top 2%)
Academic potential							
Academic achievement							
Intellectual curiosity							
Creativity							
Organization							
Motivation							
Perseverance and thoroughness							
Willingness to take intellectual risks							
Ability to work independently							
Ability to work in a group							
Ability to follow directions (written and verbal)							
Responds positively to constructive criticism							

Personal Qualities

Qualities	No basis for judgment	Poor	Below Average	Average (top 50%)	Good (top 25%)	Excellent (top 10%)	Remarkable (top 2%)
Honesty/Integrity							
Self-Discipline							
Leadership ability							
Maturity (relative to age)							
Reaction to setbacks							
Emotional stability							
Concern for others							
Sense of humor							
Is cooperative							
Takes pride in appearance							
Demonstrates appropriate energy level							
Respected by adults							
Respected by peers							

If this student submitted an assignment late it would probably be because the student:

- procrastinates strives for perfection of expression lost the rough draft
 has lots of other activities N/A; student's work is never late other (please explain)

Overall Recommendation

I recommend this student:	Not at All	With Reservation	Mildly	With Confidence	Enthusiastically
Academic ability & promise					
Character & personal promise					

Please use this space for any additional insights or comments: (Feel free to attach additional pages if necessary)

Please remember to sign the first page of this recommendation (pg. 6), and to include all pages of this recommendation (pg. 6-8) in the envelope provided by the student, seal, and sign over the seal.

Thank you!!

*** Teacher Recommendation**

Instructions for Students:

Explain briefly what SOAR Academy is and ask a teacher (of your choosing) ahead of time if he or she would consider recommending you for the program. If your teacher would like to recommend you, write your name on this page, and read and sign the relevant confidentiality statement. Have your parent or legal guardian also read and sign the appropriate confidentiality statement. Put your first and last name on the outside of an envelope. Give this recommendation form (pg. 9-11 of this application) and the envelope to your teacher and agree upon a date when you can pick up the completed recommendation. (Make sure you leave yourself enough time to submit it with the rest of your application by the deadline).

Student Name (please print): _____

I acknowledge that I waive any right to receive, review, or read the confidential teacher recommendation I have requested, whether in my possession or in the possession of the recommending teacher or SOAR Academy.

Student Signature: _____ Date: _____

Parent/Guardian:

I acknowledge that I waive any right to receive, review, or read the confidential teacher recommendation my student has requested, whether in possession of the recommending teacher, the student applicant, or SOAR Academy.

Parent Name (please print): _____

Parent Signature: _____ Date: _____

Instructions for Teachers:

Please ensure that the student and parent have signed the confidentiality agreements above before moving forward with your recommendation. After you have completed this recommendation, please place it in the envelope provided by the student and seal. Please sign your name over the seal, so it is clear that your recommendation is confidential. The student will retrieve the sealed envelope from you and will include it with his or her application. **We recognize that completing student recommendations takes valuable time, and this is an important consideration in the application process. We thank you very much for your honest feedback of this student!**

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Academic achievement							
Intellectual curiosity							
Creativity							
Organization							
Motivation							
Perseverance and thoroughness							
Willingness to take intellectual risks							
Ability to work independently							
Ability to work in a group							
Ability to follow directions (written and verbal)							
Responds positively to constructive criticism							

Personal Qualities

Qualities	No basis for judgment	Poor	Below Average	Average (top 50%)	Good (top 25%)	Excellent (top 10%)	Remarkable (top 2%)
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Self-Discipline							
Leadership ability							
Maturity (relative to age)							
Reaction to setbacks							
Emotional stability							
Concern for others							
Sense of humor							
Is cooperative							
Takes pride in appearance							
Demonstrates appropriate energy level							
Respected by adults							
Respected by peers							

How long have you known the student applicant and in what context?

If this student submitted an assignment late it would probably be because the student:

- procrastinates strives for perfection of expression lost the rough draft
 has lots of other activities N/A; student's work is never late other (please explain)

Overall Recommendation

I recommend this student:	Not at All	With Reservation	Mildly	With Confidence	Enthusiastically
Academic ability & promise					
Character & personal promise					

Please use this space for any additional insights or comments: (Feel free to attach additional pages if necessary)

Please remember to sign the first page of this recommendation (pg. 9), and to include all pages of this recommendation (pg. 9-11) in the envelope provided by the student, seal, and sign over the seal.

Thank you!!