

# WINDER-BARROW HIGH SCHOOL



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**POSTSECONDARY  
PLANNING GUIDE**

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## INTRODUCTION

Dear WBHS Junior and Seniors,

High school in the lens of COVID-19 has changed dramatically. In-person or digital learning, has provided challenges across the board to students, parents and school staff. This handbook has been designed to equip you with the tools necessary to make well-informed decisions about post-secondary options after high school. Living in the world today we know information can change in an instant, so we ask that you read this information and make sure you keep in regular contact with your counselor and plan in advance to know the criteria needed for your plans after high school.

As a junior at Winder-Barrow, your thoughts will move towards a plan to complete your high school career and what are your next steps after graduation. As a senior, you are putting your plan to action and life beyond the halls of our school is quickly becoming a reality. This is an exciting time in your life and we hope that you will use this handbook as a guide during the decision-making process.

It is the hope of the Winder-Barrow Counseling Department that this handbook will take some of the anxiety and mystery out of the college admissions process and help you discover those colleges that will be a good fit for you. For many students, where to attend college will be the first major decision that you will make in your life. Read through this handbook carefully, and should questions arise, make an appointment to see your counselor.

Many different resources were used in compiling the information contained in this planning guide. Our office would like to thank CollegeBoard and GAFutures whose materials were incredibly helpful.

**The Winder-Barrow High School Counseling Department**

# COLLEGE AND CAREER PLANNING CHECKLIST

## Spring Semester Junior Year

- Start thinking about your future plans; take a career survey at [www.gafutures.org](http://www.gafutures.org). Utilize [collegeboard.roadtripnation.com](http://collegeboard.roadtripnation.com) and your YouScience results to develop a career road map.
- Make a binder for all important college/career planning information. You'll need it!
- Register for the ACT at [www.actstudent.org](http://www.actstudent.org) and/or the SAT at [www.collegeboard.org](http://www.collegeboard.org).
- Study for the ACT and SAT. Purchase a study book or use free online resources such as KHAN Academy [www.khanacademy.org/test-prep/sat](http://www.khanacademy.org/test-prep/sat).
- Check to see if schools you are interested in require the SAT Subject Tests.
- Attend a college fair. Check [www.nacacnet.org](http://www.nacacnet.org) or [www.gaprobe.org](http://www.gaprobe.org) for dates. You can also attend fairs electronically by visiting [www.collegeweeklive.com](http://www.collegeweeklive.com).
- Seek out internships or chances to "shadow" people in careers you are interested in.
- Visit [www.bigfuture.collegeboard.org](http://www.bigfuture.collegeboard.org) to search and compare schools.
- Use your Spring Break to take tours of colleges you are interested in!
- Develop a list of 5-8 possible schools. Look at safety, match, and reach schools.

## Summer before Senior Year

- Plan college visits. As a senior, you are allowed to have 1 excused absence per semester for visits; summer is also a great time to go to avoid missing school.
- Begin working on your resume or brag sheet. Resume Builder is available on [GAFutures.org](http://GAFutures.org).
- Retake the ACT and/or SAT if you are not happy with your score.
- Start to learn about financial aid with your family. Read the DOE's *Funding Your Education* and *Getting Financial Aid* by the College Board.
- Register with the NCAA Eligibility Center ([www.eligibilitycenter.org](http://www.eligibilitycenter.org)) if you plan to play college athletics at an NCAA school.

## Fall Semester (Senior Year)

- Meet with your school counselor to discuss your college choices and the college application process.
- Create a master list/calendar of admissions tests, college deadlines, and financial aid deadlines.
- Attend the Senior Info Night in August/September.
- Register to take the SAT, ACT, or Accuplacer if you have not yet taken it.
- If you need recommendations, ask teachers and counselors (**2 weeks notice**).
- Work on scholarship applications.
- Request transcripts for out-of-state schools or use [GAFutures.org](http://GAFutures.org) for in-state schools.
- Complete your applications and complete the FAFSA.
- Attend a FAFSA completion event.

## Spring Semester (Senior Year)

- Register to take an ASVAB test with a recruiter if necessary.
- Fill out the FAFSA if you did not in the fall for HOPE Grant and Scholarship at [www.fafsa.ed.gov](http://www.fafsa.ed.gov).
- Send test scores to any schools to which you are applying.
- Send final transcript to the college you have selected.

# COLLEGE APPLICATION PROCESS AT WBHS

**Step 1** – Research colleges for academic, financial and personal fit. Plan a college visit or complete a virtual tour. As a senior, you will have 1 excused absence per semester for college visits. To be excused for a college visit students must be signed off as in “good standing” by their teachers in each course. Please visit Ms. Long in the College and Career Resource Center for appropriate paperwork.

**Step 2** – Apply to colleges online using the college’s website, GAFutures or the Common Application. Take note of deadlines imposed by the college, and plan ahead. Be sure to complete the entire application as well as additional documents needed such as immunization records and lawful presence documentation. The documents needed will vary by school.

## Important information for college applications:

**Winder-Barrow High School**  
**272 N. Fifth Avenue**  
**Winder, GA 30680**

**Main Number:** (770) 867-4519

**Fax Number:** (770) 307-2919

**CEEB School Code:** 113275

**School Website:** <http://www.barrow.k12.ga.us/wbhs/>

**Counseling Website:** <https://www.barrow.k12.ga.us/schools/wbhs/counseling/index>

**Step 3** –It is your responsibility to have SAT/ACT scores sent directly from the testing agency to the college you are applying to. Make sure to plan ahead and keep in mind that it may take a few weeks for the college or scholarship agency to receive your scores. For technical schools, take the Accuplacer at the institution you plan to attend.

**Step 4** – If required by the college, request teacher recommendations *at least* 2 weeks ahead of deadlines. Provide your teacher with a resume or come to the counseling office to pick up a brag sheet. Please check if your college requires the submission of electronic forms or if they prefer everything be mailed with your transcript packet. **\*\*The teacher evaluations provided by the counseling office do not serve as the teacher recommendations that colleges are requesting. They serve only to help your counselor write your counseling recommendation letter.\*\***

**Step 5** – ONLY IF required by the college to have a counselor recommendation, you will need to fill out and return the following items found in the counseling office and on our website: 2 teacher evaluations and 1 brag sheet. **These items should be completed and returned at least 2 weeks ahead of your deadline.** Make sure to have a teacher fill out the evaluation that knows you and your strengths well, personally and academically. Make sure to fill out the brag sheet thoroughly and avoid acronyms and abbreviations. When you turn in your paperwork, tell your counselor how your recommendation needs to be sent and provide a web address or mailing address if needed.

**Step 6** – Send your transcripts. For **in-state schools**, you can send your transcripts by logging into your [www.gafutures.org](http://www.gafutures.org) account, select the "My GAFutures" tab, then select "My Transcript," then select the college(s) to which you are applying. If you are applying to **out-of-state schools or scholarships**, complete a transcript request with Ms. Casper in the Counseling Office. All transcripts are sent at no cost.

**Step 7** – Beginning December, you will need to complete your FAFSA (Free Application for Federal Student Aid). Begin your FAFSA by signing up for a FSA ID at [www.fsa.ed.gov](http://www.fsa.ed.gov). The application is completed electronically on [www.fafsa.ed.gov](http://www.fafsa.ed.gov). You will need W2's for you and your parents from the prior-prior year to complete the application. **All documents needed are listed on the FAFSA website.**

# TYPES OF ADMISSIONS DECISIONS

**The following are some of the most frequently mentioned admissions practices.**

## **Early Decision**

Early decision allows a student to apply between October and mid-January for an early determination of admissibility. If accepted, the student is obligated to attend. The student may submit other applications during this period, but only one can be Early Decision. If accepted through the Early Decision program, the student must withdraw all other applications. Please keep in mind that if you apply for Early Decision and are accepted, IT IS BINDING!

## **Early Action**

Early Action is a plan offered by a few schools that invites early applications, but does not require the student to attend if accepted. The application deadline is usually in early November. It allows the student to receive notice of admission, but is not binding. The student usually has until May 1<sup>st</sup> to inform the school of his/her decision.

## **Deferred Decision**

The college or university determines that more information is needed to make a final decision about a candidate's application. Often the decision is delayed until the second semester and/or new test scores are received.

## **Rolling Admissions**

The college will notify the applicant as soon as the application has been processed (usually four to six weeks) and the file is complete. It is to the student's advantage to apply early.

## **Open Admissions**

Students are accepted after application completion (usually community colleges).

## **Deferred Admission**

Deferred Admission permits a student, once accepted, to postpone matriculation for one year in order to pursue other plans.

# EXPLORING POST-SECONDARY OPTIONS

Remember that there are over 7,000 post-secondary options in the United States. You have a lot of choices when it comes to higher education. Even if you're unsure what path to take, you have to start planning now for your future. The same skills and knowledge needed to get into college are also necessary to get a good job.

## Degree Programs:

1. **Certificate and Diploma Programs:** Usually a program you can finish in less than two years, sometimes one. These programs are very career-specific and lead to employment opportunities.
2. **Associate of Arts (A.A.) or Associate of Science (A.S.):** A degree awarded after completing a two-year college program.
3. **Bachelor of Arts (B.A.) or Bachelor of Science (B.S.):** A degree awarded after completing a four- or five-year college program.

## Four-year universities and colleges offer B.A. or B.S. degrees.

<https://www.usg.edu/student-affairs/assess/student-affairs/documents/USG-Admission-Requirements-2022.pdf>

1. Most four-year college students focus on coursework full time and work no more than part-time. Graduates from four-year colleges and universities are in greater demand by employers and generally earn more money than non-graduates. Tuition costs can be high and may include fees or living on-campus, but some financial aid is available for all students.
2. A common misconception is that you need to know what you want to do before going to college. On the contrary, college is a place to explore your interests and abilities in a multitude of new areas. Liberal Arts colleges, for example, encourage you to experiment in different fields before declaring a major. Most colleges require students to declare their major by the end of sophomore year. Students who do know what they want to major in can apply to that area of study from the very beginning. Undecided students can sample a variety of courses before concentrating.

## Community/Technical colleges generally require 2 years of coursework to earn a degree.

<https://www.tcsge.edu/find-a-college/>

These schools are open to everyone, though a high school diploma or GED is usually required. They are relatively inexpensive and offer flexible class schedules. It is often possible to transfer to a four-year school to get a B.A. or B.S. after earning your Associate's degree.

## U.S military provides training and money for education.

Options include enlistment, military academies and Reserve Officer Training Corps (ROTC programs). Many colleges and universities offer ROTC programs for one or more branches of the military. In addition to regular coursework, ROTC cadets take classes on military science and participate in physical and leadership training outside of the classroom. ROTC graduates can earn a B.A. or B.S., but most enter the military as an officer with a four-year active duty or eight-year inactive duty commitment after college.

## Uncertain of which option to follow or which career path matches your interests and skills?

We recommend that you use [gafutures.org](http://gafutures.org) or [bigfuture.collegeboard.org](http://bigfuture.collegeboard.org) to help you with this process. Also, please look at the Important Resources section of this guide for additional sources.

# BUILDING A COLLEGE LIST

**When building a college list it is important to consider the following characteristics:**

- Campus Size/Student Population
  - Location: City, Suburban, Rural
  - Cost: Tuition, Financial Aid, Scholarships
  - Programs and Majors Offered
  - On-Campus Activities: Sports and Greek System
- \*Check out this individual planning resource from GA Tech: [https://admission.gatech.edu/images/pdf/college\\_guide.pdf](https://admission.gatech.edu/images/pdf/college_guide.pdf)

**After you determine a college is an overall fit, it is generally a good rule to follow these guidelines when you are deciding where to apply. For up-to-date data on current admissions averages, please visit the college of your choice's website. Here is some helpful facts and figures on USG schools: <https://admission.gatech.edu/images/pdf/2021USGDataChart.pdf>**

- **One or two safety colleges:** colleges to which they will almost certainly be admitted.
- **Some “matches”:** colleges where their GPA, test scores, and other features look very similar to those of recent entering classes.
- **A reach (or two):** colleges where they meet the criteria for admission, but may not have the stellar qualifications of most first year students.

**Generally speaking, colleges fall into 6 admissions categories ranging from Most Competitive to Noncompetitive based on GPA, class rank, test scores, and the school’s acceptance rank. When making admissions decisions, many colleges take into consideration the applicant pool, rigor of curriculum, recommendations, special talents, leadership, essays, intellectual curiosity, and your level of interest.**

## Most Competitive Schools

**GPA Class Rank:** Typically accept students with an A average/are in the *top 10% of their class or higher*.

**Test Scores:** Median SAT of 655 to 800 on critical reading and math / 29 and above score on the ACT.

**Acceptance Rate:** Many admit only a small percentage (1% to 33%) of students who apply.

**Examples:** Duke, Brown, Harvard, Military Academies, Princeton, Stanford, Yale, Emory, Georgia Tech, Vanderbilt, UNC Chapel Hill

## Highly Competitive Schools

**GPA and Class Rank:** Look for students with *at least a B or B+ average in rigor high school classes*. Accept most of their students from the *top 10% to 35% of their high school class*.

**Test Scores:** Median SAT of 620 to 654 on SAT critical reading and math/ 27 to 28 composite on the ACT.

**Acceptance Rate:** Generally accept between 33% and 50% of their applicants.

**Examples:** University of Georgia, University of Florida, Furman, Oglethorpe, New York University, Boston University, Wake Forest, Spelman



### Very Competitive Schools

**GPA and Class Rank:** Look for students with at least a B- average and students that rank *in the top 35% to 50% of their class or higher*.

**Test Scores:** Median SAT of 572 to 620 on SAT critical reading and math / 23 to 27 composite on the ACT

**Acceptance Rate:** generally accept between 50% and 75% of their applicants

**Examples:** North Georgia, Georgia College, Georgia State University, Appalachian State University, University of Tennessee, University of Alabama, Clemson, Mercer, Berry

### Competitive Schools

**GPA and Class Rank:** Some require that students have at least a high school GPA of B- or better, although some state a minimum of C+ or C. They typically admit students *in the top 50% to 65% of their high school class or higher*.

**Test Scores:** Median SAT between 500 to 572 on critical reading and math / 21 and 23 composite on the ACT.

**Acceptance Rate:** generally accept 75% to 85% of their applicants.

**Examples:** Valdosta, Georgia Southern, Kennesaw State, West Georgia, Augusta State, Columbus State, Clayton State

### Less Competitive Schools

**GPA and Class Rank:** Admit students with averages below C who rank in the top 65% of their class. Usually a 2.0 Academic GPA is required.

**Test Scores:** The median freshman test scores are *below 500 SAT critical reading and math and below 21 on the ACT*.

**Acceptance Rate:** generally accept 85% or more of their applicants.

**Examples:** Georgia Gwinnett College, Savannah State, Reinhardt University, Life University, Middle GA State, Morehouse College

### Noncompetitive Schools

**GPA and Class Rank:** Only require evidence of graduation from high school or GED.

**Test Scores:** Some require that entrance exams be taken for placement purposes only.

**Acceptance Rate:** generally accept 98% or more of their applicants.

**Examples:** Gwinnett Tech, Lanier Tech, Athens Tech, Chattahoochee Tech



# ACT Dates



Test Date	Registration Deadline	Late Fee Registration Deadline
September 9, 2023	August 4	August 18
October 28, 2023	September 22	October 6
December 9, 2023	November 3	November 17
February 10, 2024	January 5	January 19
April 13, 2024	March 8	March 22
June 8, 2024	May 3	May 17
July 13, 2024	June 7	June 21

**\*If you qualify for free or reduced lunch this school year, see your counselor about a fee waiver before registering.**



# SAT Dates



Test Date	Registration Deadline	Late Fee Registration Deadline
Aug 26, 2023	July 28, 2023	August 15, 2023
Oct 7, 2023	Sep 7, 2023	Sep 26, 2023
Nov 4, 2023	Oct 5, 2023	Oct 24, 2023
Dec 2, 2023	Nov 2, 2023	Nov 21, 2023
March 9, 2024 (Digital)	Feb 23, 2024	Feb 27, 2024
May 4, 2024 (Digital)	April 19, 2024	April 23, 2024
June 1, 2024 (Digital)	May 16, 2024	May 21, 2024

**\*If you qualify for free or reduced lunch this school year, see your counselor about a fee waiver before registering.**

## TESTING INFORMATION: SAT vs. ACT

### **SAT** *WWW.COLLEGEBOARD.ORG*

#### **Basic Format:**

Math (1 section w/calculator, 1 without)  
Reading  
Writing and Language

#### **Philosophy:**

Aptitude: Rewards reasoning, meaning of words in context, & focus on knowledge for college/career readiness.

#### **Material Covered:**

Math up to Pre-Calculus  
Vocabulary  
Reading Comprehension  
Grammar/Editing  
Essay writing (Comprehension of text)

#### **Timing:**

3 hours

#### **Scoring:**

Each section is graded on a 200-800 scale, with a total range of 400 to 1600. 500 is the national average of each section. Scores range from 10-40 on test and cross-test scores, and components of the essay will each be reported on a 2-8 scale.

#### **Superscoring:**

Most schools will superscore the SAT, meaning they will take the best math and best evidence-based reading and writing score, even if they are from different sittings.

#### **Guessing Penalty:**

No, meaning a student should never leave an answer blank. Guess!

### **ACT** *WWW.ACTSTUDENT.ORG*

#### **Basic Format:**

Math (Calculator allowed on all questions)  
Reading  
English  
Science  
Optional Essay

#### **Philosophy:**

Achievement: Rewards hard work in school, general reasoning, and strong grasp of material. (No formulas given.)

#### **Material Covered:**

Math up to Trigonometry  
Reading Comprehension  
Grammar/Editing  
Science (critical thinking skills, not science knowledge)  
Essay writing (Evaluating/analyzing complex issues)

#### **Timing:**

2 hours 55 min. plus 40 min. for optional essay

#### **Scoring:**

Each subject is graded on a 1-36 scale. 21 is the national average in each. The four subject scores are averaged, and a composite score is reported on a 1-36 scale. The optional writing score is reported on a 2-12 scale and is not part of the composite score.

#### **Superscoring:**

More schools are beginning to superscore the ACT, but those who do not, they will take the highest composite score.

#### **Guessing Penalty:**

No, meaning a student should never leave an answer blank. Guess!

## 2018 Concordance Tables

**Table A1:** SAT Total to ACT Composite

SAT	ACT	SAT	ACT	SAT	ACT
1600	36	1250	26	910	16
*1590	36	*1240	26	900	16
1580	36	1230	26	*890	16
1570	36	1220	25	880	16
1560	35	*1210	25	870	15
1550	35	1200	25	860	15
*1540	35	1190	24	*850	15
1530	35	*1180	24	840	15
1520	34	1170	24	830	15
1510	34	1160	24	820	14
*1500	34	1150	23	810	14
1490	34	*1140	23	*800	14
1480	33	1130	23	790	14
1470	33	1120	22	780	14
*1460	33	*1110	22	770	13
1450	33	1100	22	*760	13
1440	32	1090	21	750	13
*1430	32	*1080	21	740	13
1420	32	1070	21	730	13
1410	31	1060	21	720	12
*1400	31	1050	20	*710	12
1390	31	*1040	20	700	12
1380	30	1030	20	690	12
*1370	30	1020	19	680	11
1360	30	*1010	19	*670	11
1350	29	1000	19	660	11
*1340	29	990	19	650	11
1330	29	980	18	640	10
1320	28	*970	18	*630	10
*1310	28	960	18	620	10
1300	28	950	17	610	9
1290	27	940	17	600	9
*1280	27	*930	17	*590	9
1270	27	920	17		
1260	27				

\*Use this SAT score when a single score point comparison is needed.

**Note:** Concordance tables for the ACT Composite were derived from concordances of the ACT sum score.

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**Table A2:** ACT Composite to SAT Total

ACT	SAT	SAT Range
36	1590	1570–1600
35	1540	1530–1560
34	1500	1490–1520
33	1460	1450–1480
32	1430	1420–1440
31	1400	1390–1410
30	1370	1360–1380
29	1340	1330–1350
28	1310	1300–1320
27	1280	1260–1290
26	1240	1230–1250
25	1210	1200–1220
24	1180	1160–1190
23	1140	1130–1150
22	1110	1100–1120
21	1080	1060–1090
20	1040	1030–1050
19	1010	990–1020
18	970	960–980
17	930	920–950
16	890	880–910
15	850	830–870
14	800	780–820
13	760	730–770
12	710	690–720
11	670	650–680
10	630	620–640
9	590	590–610

## TESTING PREPARATION

The SAT and ACT are important components of the college admissions process. Students who take time to study for these tests see positive results. You can study by taking a class, using internet resources, and/or reviewing with a test preparation book. It is highly recommended that you take a practice test prior to your testing date.

Below you will find a list of resources that will be beneficial for you:

**Internet Resources:** *Many of these websites offer free practice or live streaming. Check this link out for more info about the Digital SAT: <https://satsuite.collegeboard.org/digital/faq>*

- [www.act.org/content/act/en/products-and-services/the-act/test-preparation/free-act-test-prep.html](http://www.act.org/content/act/en/products-and-services/the-act/test-preparation/free-act-test-prep.html)
- [www.khanacademy.org/sat](http://www.khanacademy.org/sat)
- [www.princetonreview.com](http://www.princetonreview.com)
- [www.kaptest.com](http://www.kaptest.com)
- [www.prepfactory.com](http://www.prepfactory.com)
- [www.powerscore.com](http://www.powerscore.com)
- [www.eprep.com](http://www.eprep.com)
- [www.prepexpert.com](http://www.prepexpert.com)
- [www.eknowledge.com](http://www.eknowledge.com)
- [www.military.com/join-armed-forces/asvab](http://www.military.com/join-armed-forces/asvab)
- [official-asvab.com](http://official-asvab.com)
- <https://accuplacer.collegeboard.org/student/inside-the-test>

**Books:** *The list below is just a sample of available books. There are many other test prep books available. You can purchase these books online or at most bookstores.*

- *The Official SAT Study Guide, 2020 Edition* by The College Board
- *The Official ACT Prep Guide, 2020-2022* by ACT
- *SAT Prep Book: Kallis' SAT Pattern Strategy* by KALLIS
- *ACT Prep 2021* by Kaplan
- *SAT Prep Black Book, 2nd Edition* by M. Barrett & P. Barrett
- *ACT Prep Black Book, 2nd Edition* by M. Barrett & P. Barrett
- *Barron's SAT, 29th Edition* by S. Green and I. Wolf
- *Barron's ACT, 4th Edition* by B. Stewart

**Classes:** *Classes are available through in-person and online sessions.*

- C2 Education (Suwanee, Lilburn)
- Sylvan Learning (Snellville & Suwanee)
- Princeton Review (Atlanta)
- Kaplan (Snellville, Suwanee, Duluth)
- Mathnasium (Braselton)

# PAYING FOR COLLEGE

## **Breakdown of the Financial Aid Terminology:**

- **Scholarships:** An award that does not have to be repaid. Scholarships are generally granted based on an applicant meeting certain eligibility criteria.
- **Grants:** A grant is a financial award given to a student for the purposes of paying for all or part of college expense. A grant does not need to be repaid by the student.
- **Loans:** Financial Aid awards that the student or parent borrows from a lender, the school or other third party. Loans must be repaid by the borrower, usually with interest.
- **Work-study:** A work-study program allows a student to earn money by working part time during the school year as a component of their financial aid package. The jobs are usually on campus.

## **Sources of Financial Aid:**

- **Federal Government:** The federal government is the largest source of financial aid. Awards are based on financial need. Students fill out the Federal Application for Student Aid each year. Visit [www.fafsa.gov](http://www.fafsa.gov) for additional information.
- **Colleges and Universities:** Schools offer a wide variety of aid and scholarships to students. These awards are both merit-based and need-based. Students might need to complete an additional application for scholarships or it may be offered as part of the admissions process. Contact your school of interest for additional information.
- **Private Sources:** Churches, companies, and other organizations offer a variety of scholarships for students. Each organization has a specific set of qualification requirements. For additional information contact local organizations or visit scholarship search websites.

## **Georgia's Hope Program:**

- The **HOPE Scholarship** program is for students that are seeking a college degree and plan on attending college in Georgia. A 3.0 GPA in academic courses (Language Arts, Social Studies, Math, Science, and Foreign Language) is required after graduation. A part of your college tuition will be covered, usually about 85%. This amount will vary depending on projected lottery revenues and expenditures.
- The **HOPE Grant** program is for students seeking a technical certification or diploma, regardless of the student's high school grade point average or graduation date. This will cover about 80% of tuition at a Georgia public technical college or public college or university.
- The **Zell Miller Scholarship** program is for students who have demonstrated academic achievement and that are seeking a college degree in Georgia. To become eligible, a student must graduate with a 3.7 GPA in academic courses after graduation and a minimum score of 1200 on the SAT (EBRW and Math) or 26 on the ACT in one sitting.
- The **Zell Miller Grant** program is students working towards a certificate or diploma at a Georgia technical system or university system college. Full-time enrollment, nor a specific high school GPA is required, however, a minimum 3.5 cumulative postsecondary GPA, at the end of each term, is required in order to maintain eligibility.

**You can check your HOPE GPA using [www.gafutures.org](http://www.gafutures.org).**

# FREE APPLICATION FOR FEDERAL STUDENT AID (FAFSA)

AT THE END OF DECEMBER, FAMILIES WILL BE ABLE TO COMPLETE THIS FORM. THIS PROCESS CAN ASSIST WITH QUALIFYING FOR STATE & FEDERAL AID PROGRAMS - GRANTS, SCHOLARSHIPS, LOANS AND WORK STUDY OPPORTUNITIES.

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**WBHS FINANCIAL AID NIGHT**  
**FALL 2024**

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**WBHS FAFSA COMPLETION  
EVENT**  
**SPRING 2025**

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## FAFSA COMPLETION - FAFSA.GOV

Completed FSAIDs for student and parent is required, unless qualifying as unaccompanied youth

### Documents to remember to bring (if applicable):

Social Security Number  
Driver's License (if any)  
W-2 Forms for previous year  
Your 2023 Federal Income Tax  
Return (ie. IRS Form 1040)

Parent's 2023 Federal Income Tax Return  
Current Bank Statements  
Business/Investment Records  
Documentation as US resident/eligible  
Non-citizen (if any)





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## IMPORTANT RESOURCES

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### College Planning

<a href="http://www.gafutures.org">www.gafutures.org</a>	College Search, Scholarships, Career Assessments, HOPE GPA
<a href="http://www.bigfuture.collegeboard.org">www.bigfuture.collegeboard.org</a>	College and Career Exploration, Comparison, Scholarships
<a href="http://www.cappex.org">www.cappex.org</a>	College Search, Admission Chances, Scholarships
<a href="http://www.collegescorecard.ed.gov">www.collegescorecard.ed.gov</a>	College data, grad rates, debt information
<a href="http://www.commonapp.org">www.commonapp.org</a>	Common Application Forms
<a href="http://www.collegeview.com">www.collegeview.com</a>	College Search, Application Process, Financial Aid, Majors
<a href="http://www.campustour.com">www.campustour.com</a>	Virtual Campus Tour
<a href="http://www.usnews.com/rankings">www.usnews.com/rankings</a>	College and University Rankings
<a href="http://www.collegeconfidential.com">www.collegeconfidential.com</a>	College Search, Admissions, Paying for College
<a href="http://www.petersons.com">www.petersons.com</a>	Guide to Colleges and Universities
<a href="http://www.collegeweeklive.com">www.collegeweeklive.com</a>	College Search, Scholarships, Applications
<a href="http://www.usg.edu/information/prospective_students/">www.usg.edu/information/prospective_students/</a>	University System of GA College Search

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### Financial Aid and Scholarships

<a href="http://www.fafsa.ed.gov">www.fafsa.ed.gov</a>	Federal Application for Financial Aid
<a href="http://www.studentaid.ed.gov">www.studentaid.ed.gov</a>	Financial Aid Explanations
<a href="http://www.usg.edu/information/prospective_students">www.usg.edu/information/prospective_students</a>	Tuition, Fees, and Financial Aid
<a href="http://www.fastweb.com">www.fastweb.com</a>	Scholarship Search
<a href="http://www.myscholly.com">www.myscholly.com</a> (App available)	Scholarship Search
<a href="http://www.scholarships.com">www.scholarships.com</a>	Scholarship Search
<a href="http://www.studentscholarships.org">www.studentscholarships.org</a>	Scholarship Search, Career Information, College Search
<a href="http://www.bigfuture.collegeboard.org">www.bigfuture.collegeboard.org</a>	Scholarship Search

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### Academic Majors

<a href="http://www.youscience.com">www.youscience.com</a>	Majors, Careers, and Schools
<a href="http://www.collegemajors101.com">www.collegemajors101.com</a>	Major and Career Information
<a href="http://www.majors.admissions.uga.edu">www.majors.admissions.uga.edu</a>	College and Major Search, Test Prep
<a href="http://www.bigfuture.collegeboard.org">www.bigfuture.collegeboard.org</a>	Majors, Careers, Schools
<a href="http://www.usg.edu/information/prospective_students/">www.usg.edu/information/prospective_students/</a>	Degree and Major Search Tool for University System of GA Schools

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### Military Planning

*Students should be aware of the closest recruitment office near them, and look for recruiters outside the cafeteria throughout the school year.*

<a href="http://www.airforce.com">www.airforce.com</a>	3500 Gwinnett Pl Dr NW #14, Duluth, GA 30096 (770-418-9567)
<a href="http://www.goarmy.com">www.goarmy.com</a>	GA Square Mall, 3700 Atlanta Ave St 233, ATHENS, GA 30606 (706-546-6201)
<a href="http://www.marines.com">www.marines.com</a>	3320 Buford Dr NE #70, Buford, GA 30519 (770-831-1633)
<a href="http://www.navy.com">www.navy.com</a>	1154 Lawrenceville Hwy Suite 104A, Lawrenceville, GA 30045 (678-376-0169)

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### Career and Employment Planning

<a href="http://www.ajb.dni.us">www.ajb.dni.us</a>	America's Job Bank
<a href="http://www.careerpath.com">www.careerpath.com</a>	Career Information, Career and Personality Tests
<a href="http://www.dol.state.ga.us">www.dol.state.ga.us</a>	Georgia Dept. of Labor
<a href="http://www.onetcenter.org">www.onetcenter.org</a>	Occupational Information Network
<a href="http://www.myfuture.com">www.myfuture.com</a>	College, Career and Military Search

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# WINDER-BARROW HIGH SCHOOL COUNSELORS

## **CORY PEPPERS**

cory.peppers@barrow.k12.ga.us  
**Last Names A-D**

## **BETH ANN HAMILTON**

elizabeth.hamilton@barrow.k12.ga.us  
**Last Names E-L**

## **LACAVA ROSS**

lacava.ross@barrow.k12.ga.us  
**Last Names M-R**

## **LIA PETRICCIONE**

leonetta.petriccione@barrow.k12.ga.us  
**Last Names S-Z**

## **COUNSELING WEBSITE:**

<https://www.barrow.k12.ga.us/schools/wbhs/counseling>

### **To make an appointment (Students):**

- Go to the WBHS Counseling Website
- Click “Make an Appointment”
- Select your appointment type & counselor
- Select an available date & time
- Complete appointment information

### **To make a Records Request:**

Make an appointment like described above for the record you need or email [meredith.owens@barrow.k12.ga.us](mailto:meredith.owens@barrow.k12.ga.us).

### **To make an appointment (Parents):**

Contact your child’s counselor through phone or e-mail.

## **CAREER RESOURCE CENTER/**

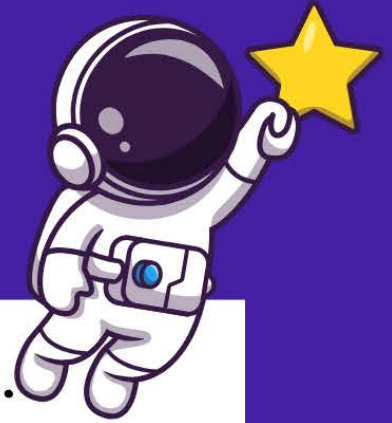
### **ASSISTANT PRINCIPAL:**

#### **DANIEL BENNETT**

[daniel.bennett@barrow.k12.ga.us](mailto:daniel.bennett@barrow.k12.ga.us)

(Dual Enrollment, AP Exams & Scholarships)

# CLASS OF 2025 FALL 2024

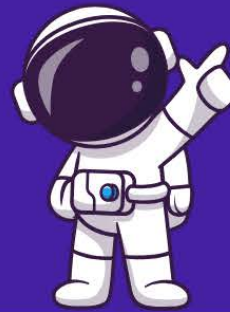


You've had your Junior Meeting.  
We'll meet again to make sure your year is headed  
for a stellar start senior year!



We'll answer questions about the SAT/ACT?  
What are the test dates?  
Are you eligible for a waiver?

## SENIOR MEETINGS

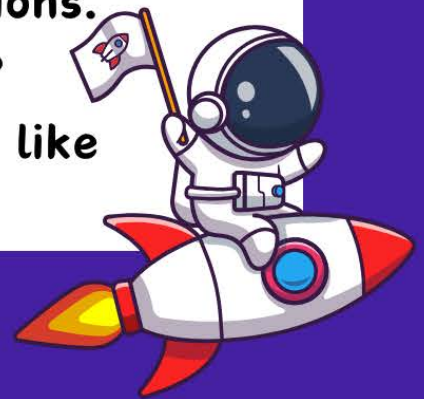



Discuss your post-secondary plans with your  
counselor!

Have enough credits to graduate?  
What's your HOPE GPA?



We'll discuss college applications.  
Do you need a brag sheet?  
What are deadlines and things like  
common app?





# APPLY TO COLLEGE *Week*

COMING SOON...

**NOVEMBER 2024**

- Week-long activities to encourage & excite students about applying to college, free applications & games too
- College Admissions Panel and Former Student Panel to learn more about college experience
- Apply to College & Financial Aid Days to assist with the process

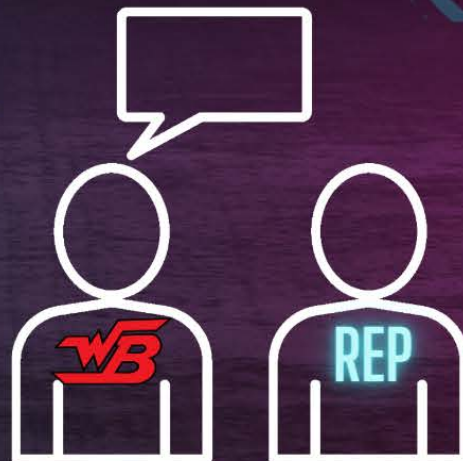
# PROBE COLLEGE FAIR

This event is for juniors and seniors. Dress to impress and have questions ready. There are usually over 50+ reps here to meet with students.

September-October  
2024  
WBHS Gym (Top)



UNIVERSITY





# DUAL ENROLLMENT



## WHAT IS IT?

*Dual Enrollment is a program that provides funding for students enrolled at eligible high schools to take approved college-level coursework for credit toward both high school and college graduation requirements.*

## NEXT STEP?

- ✓ Deadline: March 1
- ✓ Must email Mr. Bennett: [daniel.bennett@barrow.k12.ga.us](mailto:daniel.bennett@barrow.k12.ga.us)

**DUAL  
ENROLLMENT**  
BARROW COUNTY SCHOOL SYSTEM

*Want to earn class credit and leave school early?*

# **2024-25 Work-Based Learning**

**Application Pick-Up & Submission in WBL Office  
Room 6.202**

**DEADLINE to turn in WBL application:  
March 29th, 2024 (fall semester/full year)  
October 21st, 2024 (Spring 2025)**

**\*\*A completed application does not guarantee admission to the program. \*\***

**\*\*Students must meet all requirements before being accepted into WBL.\*\***

**\*\*Students in a job that aligns with their pathway will be given first preference\*\***

## **Student Admission Requirements:**

- 16 years old or older
- Junior or Senior in good academic standing and on-track for graduation
  - Good attendance & Good discipline record
  - Possess a valid driver's license
- Provide and maintain dependable transportation from/to school and work site
  - Secure and maintain a valid student parking permit
  - Receive 2 acceptable recommendations from teachers
  - Have room on schedule for elective class(es)

**As with any class, WBL classes have limited capacity. Applications turned in past the deadline or after classes are full will be put on a waitlist for acceptance into the program. Students will be added to the waitlist in the order in which their application is received.**

# College Planning Checklist

Soph Yr

- Take the PSAT and/or Pre-ACT (if available).**  
If offered at your school, take them!
- Begin researching colleges online.**  
You don't need to start making your college list—but familiarize yourself with what traits make colleges different (e.g. class size, academic majors).
- Talk to your parents about paying for college.**  
Check out the **FSA Estimator** for an estimate of what your financial aid package might eventually be.
- Draft your high school résumé. (See info here)**  
Include your GPA, activities, and accomplishments.
- Line up your (online) summer plans.**  
Consider online courses or fully-remote internships.

Jr Fall

- Take your practice standardized test, and decide on ACT vs. SAT.**  
Take the PSAT in October. Decide whether the SAT or ACT highlights your strengths more. (Note: Some colleges won't require test scores, so you might get to choose "neither.")
- Begin your scholarship search.**  
As busy as junior year seems, it gets even crazier senior year! So start applying for scholarships now. Get a personalized scholarship list by signing up for **Going Merry**. (It's free!)
- Keep involved, and begin to lead.**  
Try to gain leadership roles in your extracurricular, sports, or community service activities. If you haven't joined any student clubs, now is the time!
- Evaluate post-secondary education options.**  
Choose between: vocational-technical school, career college, two-year community college, four-year university/college, or military college.
- College athletics (if applicable)**  
To play Division I or II sports in college, start the certification process. Check that your courses meet NCAA curriculum requirements.

Jr Winter

- Register for the SAT/ACT and begin studying for it (if applicable)**  
After registering, start studying. You can take free official **practice SAT tests here**, or **practice ACT tests here**. Also ask your counselor how to request test fee waivers if you are lower-income.
- Continue applying for scholarships.**  
There are deadlines throughout the year.
- Research college majors and careers.**  
Knowing what you want to study can help you choose the rest of your high school classes, narrow down colleges (to ones with your intended major), and write your college essays next year.
- Learn about colleges & their affordability.**  
Check out college websites, and download (or request mailed) catalogs. Try to get a sense of what matters to you in a college (for example: size, location, cost, sports, religious affiliation). Use **Going Merry's** college comparison tool.

Jr Spring

- Ask for Letters of Recommendation (LORs).**  
Most schools require 1-2 teacher LORs; some allow more. **Here's some advice** on deciding whom to ask and what info to give them.
- Create a target college long-list.**  
This should include a longer list of 15-20 schools that you'll slim down later. Make sure to include a mix of reach, match, and safety schools—and think about college affordability from the beginning. Use Net Price Calculators, or check out financial aid information on [Going Merry](#).
- Line up your summer plans.**  
This might be a job, internship, course, or summer camp. (Want to corona-proof your summer plans? Consider taking accredited online courses.)
- Continue applying for scholarships.**  
Need essay inspiration? Read **examples of winning essays**, and then apply for scholarships yourself.



# College Planning Checklist

Summer

## College Applications Prep

- Continue researching colleges.**  
Continue looking at college websites. Do virtual tours (e.g. via **YouVisit**) and join online information sessions. Some colleges are also making online interviews available with admissions officers.
- Take the ACT/SAT (if applicable)**  
This will give you time to re-take the test in the Fall if you're unhappy with your scores.
- Start your college app spreadsheet.**  
Get organized! Note application deadlines, questions and essay prompts, costs, and average stats for admitted students to gauge your chances. Also write down any requirements for merit scholarships to give yourself clear targets for your senior year.
- Draft your main college essay(s).**  
Many colleges are on the Common App, meaning you can choose any of their prompts for your main **personal statement**. Aim to have your first draft ready before senior year starts.

## Financial Aid & Scholarships

- Get ready for the FAFSA® (the federal financial aid form).**  
Although the FAFSA® form only opens in October, you can get your FSA ID (that is, your username) and password ahead of time. You can also begin gathering other documents you need, like your parents' tax returns.
- Learn more about financial aid.**  
Once senior year rolls around, you'll be focused on college apps. Get up to speed on the financial aid process now, so you don't accidentally miss deadlines! Psst - **This guide** might help.
- Continue applying for scholarships.**  
Students sometimes forget about scholarships during the summer, which means there's usually less competition to actually win! **Apply here.**
- Military ROTC scholarships (if applicable)**  
If you're interested in an ROTC scholarship, begin the process now.

## Fall

- Take standardized tests (if applicable)**  
(Re-)take the SAT/ACT, SAT subject tests, and AP Tests. Or consider **test-optional colleges**.
- Apply early (or to UC/Cal State system).**  
Most early decision/action deadlines are in November. UC and Cal State apps are due Nov 30.
- Complete all your financial aid forms.**  
Submit your FAFSA® (on **fafsa.gov** or via the more **user-friendly version on Going Merry**) and your **state's financial aid form** (if there is one). Some colleges also require the CSS Profile or a college-specific form. And don't forget about **external scholarships!**

## Winter

- Apply for colleges Regular Decision,**  
Popular deadlines are Jan 1, Jan 15, and Mar 1, though some schools have rolling deadlines.
- Hear back from any EA/ED applications.**  
If you applied early action/decision, you'll likely get your admissions decision and financial aid offer.

## Spring

- Hear back and decide on your college!**  
Get your RD admissions decisions--and decide which college you'll attend.
- Provide additional documentation (if required)**  
If relevant, submit your final high school transcript and your official test scores.
- Evaluate your financial aid offer(s).**  
Compare offers, and possibly write an **appeals letter** to request additional financial aid.
- Come up with a plan for any financial gaps.**  
This may include a summer job, student loans, or **scholarships**.

Senior Year

# College Planning Checklist for Parents



## SUMMER

### Get your (and your child's) FSA ID ready

Even before the FAFSA® opens in October, you can **create your FSA ID** (that is, your username) and password set up ahead of time. Both the child and 1 parent will need your own FSA IDs, and each of you will need to "sign" your FAFSA® form digitally using your FSA IDs. Sometimes the government takes up to 2 weeks to approve your FSA ID because they need to check your details against the Social Security Administration files, so it's best to do this in advance!

### Prep your FAFSA® documents

Gather documents you'll need to fill out your FAFSA® form, including your tax documents (usually 1040 and W-2s, and if applicable, Schedule, 1, 2, 3, and K-1), your child's and the parent(s)' SSNs, and your child's college list. (On the FAFSA®, you'll be able to add up to 10 colleges to automatically send the FAFSA® information to. These colleges can then provide you with your financial aid award, based on the FAFSA®.

### Create your (cost-conscious) "college list" (child to complete)

We recommend asking your child to consider not only the college vibe and the admissions (e.g. what they need to prep, whether they might get in), but also financial concerns (e.g. checking out **the Department of Education's College Scorecard**, to see what the Cost of Attendance is). It's better (and less heartbreaking) to get a child to take a college off their list at this point, vs. needing to coax them away from choosing that college in the spring, once they've been admitted but the college turns out to be too expensive.

### Consider opening a College Savings Account (529)

If you think it's too late to open a 529 savings account, think again! There are **multiple tax benefits** that you (and your child) can take advantage of, regardless of when the account is started.

## FALL

### Create college application deadline spreadsheet (child to complete)

Get organized! Have your child write down each college in a row, and then make the columns: application deadlines, **essay prompts**, standardized test requirements, and letters of recommendation requirements. This way, they can make sure they prepare everything they need for each college.

### Ask for letters of recommendation (child to complete)

Make sure your child asks for any **letters of recommendation** they need. We recommend that your child also provide any recommenders with more information about themselves (with a "**brag sheet**"), to help the teachers/coaches write better letters.

### Take standardized tests (child to complete if applicable)

Take (or retake) the SAT/ACT and AP tests. Or consider **test-optional colleges**.

# College Planning Checklist for Parents

## FALL (continued)

**Submit early decision / early action applications** (child to complete if applicable)

Most early application deadlines are in November. "Early decision" means your child agrees to attend that school if they are admitted. "Early action" is just an early application (so they're free to decline their admission later on). [Here's more information](#) on applying early.

**Apply to UC / Cal State schools** (child to complete if applicable)

These applications are due on November 30, earlier than most college apps.

**File your FAFSA®**

Submit your FAFSA® (on [fafsa.gov](https://fafsa.gov) or via the more user-friendly **FAFSA® Made Easier** on Going Merry). For lower-income families, this might unlock federal grants (like the Pell Grant), as well as opening you up to receive federal (lower-interest) loans, work-study (paid student work), and college-endowed scholarships (many of which are given based on the FAFSA®, even if you don't qualify for federal grants). The FAFSA® opens each year on October 1, and some aid is first-come, first-served, so fill out the form ASAP.

**Research & apply for state financial aid or specialty grants**

Many states offer financial aid, particularly for students staying in-state for college. Application processes and deadlines vary by state, so look yours up! (On average, students get about \$1500 in state aid.)

**Check for college-specific supplemental financial aid or scholarship applications**

Some colleges require additional financial aid applications, beyond the FAFSA®. For many private universities, this includes [the CSS Profile](#). Other colleges have their own financial aid forms, or have separate applications for certain merit scholarships (these might require separate essays, etc).

**Search for community foundations with scholarships programs**

Most parts of the U.S. are served by 1 or several regional "community foundations" that run scholarship programs for students residing in their coverage area. These scholarships tend to change every year because are dependent on donations raised, so they often don't show up in scholarship search engine websites. So it's best to simply Google for "{your city name} + community foundation with scholarships". You can also usually find them by going to Going Merry's search and toggling the local scholarships filter ([direct link here](#)).

## WINTER

**Hear back from any Early Action / Early Decision applications**

If your child applied early action/decision to any colleges, your family will likely get your admissions decision and financial aid offer sometime in December.

**Submit Regular Decision applications** (child to complete)

Popular deadlines are December 31, Jan 1, and Jan 15. There are also a smaller batch of schools with March 1 deadlines, and some schools have rolling deadlines through to summer.

# College Planning Checklist for Parents

## WINTER (continued)

### Search for external, third-party scholarships

External, third-party scholarships are nonprofits or companies offering scholarships to students, which can usually be spent at any college. Awards usually range from \$500 to full tuition, and there are deadlines throughout the year. However, "scholarship season" (when most deadlines are) is usually during the 3 months of December, January, and February. Fill out the student section of **your Going Merry profile**, and then **check out your Matched Scholarships** to see scholarships your child is definitely eligible for.

### Check your eligibility for Going Merry Concierge

For selected families, Going Merry is offering a free Concierge program designed to help parents maximize their financial aid, through one-on-one guidance with a financial aid expert. Interested? **Fill out this form**, and we'll check to see if you're a good fit.

## SPRING

### Hear back from Regular Decision colleges, and compare your options

Usually in March/April, your family will hear back from your college applications, and get to decide which college to attend. Remember to carefully evaluate them based on what kind of college/academic experience you want, as well as what the various financial aid offer(s) are. We recommend using **Going Merry's College Cost Insights** tool to compare options. And for more background information, **here's how to read/understand your financial aid award**.

### Appeal for more financial aid

You can sometimes negotiate with colleges to get more financial aid, by initiating what's called an "appeal" process. Remember to do this ASAP, ideally kicking off the process way before the decision/deposit deadline (usually May 1). **Here's more information (including an appeal letter template)**.

### Decide on a college and make a deposit

Most colleges require you to formally accept your admissions by May 1 and make a financial deposit (partial payment of the tuition bill), to confirm your spot.

### Provide additional documentation (child to complete if required)

Some schools require you to submit your final high school transcript and final/official test scores.

### Accept some or all financial aid

From what's offered in your child's college's financial aid award letter, you can choose to accept some or all of it. In general, you'll probably want to accept 100% of the scholarships/grants and work-study, and probably 100% of the Federal Direct loans (these are lower-interest). You may choose to accept OR reject Federal Parent PLUS loans (which are usually market-rate, so may be higher or lower price than what you can get on the private loan market). Not sure what any of this means? **Brush up on the types of financial aid here**.

# College Planning Checklist for Parents

## SPRING (continued)

### Assess your financial gaps

Use the [Going Merry budget tool](#) to calculate your "financial gap," or how much additional money you'll need to be able to afford college. Remember to budget for "indirect" costs like textbooks, lab fees, transport (gas, or trips home during breaks), dorm room costs (like bedding, lamps, etc), and stationery/equipment (notebooks, laptop, etc).

### Discuss as a family who will pay for what, during college

We've heard parents run into issues when there were differing expectations on who would pay for what. Sit down with your child and go through [this list of college costs](#), to make it clear who's responsible for each.

### Start researching and comparing private loan options

Many families need to rely on private student loans to fill their financial gap. Make sure you shop around for the best price (lowest interest rate) and most flexible terms (e.g. payments during college, "grace period" after college). Most reputable lenders will also allow you to do a risk-free "rate check" (like [this one](#)) to get an interest rate estimate, without filling out a formal loan application and without impacting your credit.

If you're not sure where to start, or want to help your child understand how loans work, [check out our informational resources here](#).

### Look into alternative college financing options, like HELOCs

A home equity line of credit, also known as a HELOC, can be a relatively low-interest way for homeowners to pay for college compared to traditional student loan debt. HELOCs aren't for everyone, but if you're a homeowner with good credit (620+), steady income, low debt-to-income ratio (40% or less), and 15-20% equity built-up in your home, this could be a good, flexible option for your family. You can quickly see how much HELOC coverage you're eligible for without impacting your credit and many lenders ([like this one](#)) have dedicated experts to help you understand your options. If you want to learn more, check out our [informational resources here](#).

### Email your college about work-study (child to complete)

If your family qualified for [work-study](#), email your financial aid office to understand how students might find or apply for work-study jobs. Sometimes there's a web portal or job listing site.

### Review the Smart Start Financial Toolkit with your child

College is the first time most students will manage their money, and families have a whole host of new financial decisions they need to make. Earnest's free [Smart Start Financial Toolkit](#) provides all of the essential services and considerations you and your student will need for college. This kit breaks down essential tools students and families can use to get ready for college with three simple categories: Financial Basics, Safety, and Emergency.



Looking for more college planning tools?

Get started now at [GoingMerry.com](https://www.GoingMerry.com)

# GET THE MOST OUT OF A CAMPUS VISIT IN 6 STEPS

## 1 DECIDE WHERE AND HOW

See if your school arranges group trips to colleges or if you could get a group of friends together and visit the campus. A family trip is another option and allows you to involve your family in the process.

## 2 PREPARE FOR YOUR VISIT

Before you set out, get a map of the college campus and pick out places of interest. Call the college's admission office to schedule a guided tour of the campus.

## 3 TAKE YOUR OWN TOUR

Just wandering around the campus on your own or with friends can be the best way to get a feel for what a college is like.

## 4 EXPLORE THE FACILITIES

Finding the spots on campus where students gather or asking a student where the best place to eat can give you a feel for the character of the college. Visit the library and check out the gym or theater. Ask an admission officer if you can tour a dorm and a classroom.

## 5 MAKE CONNECTIONS

Talk to current students. Ask the students at the next table or sitting nearby what they like best about the college.

## 6 TAKE NOTES

During your visit, write down some notes about your experience. What did you see that excited you? Are there aspects of the college that you don't like? If so, what are they?

## Questions to Ask During Your Visit:

### ASK TOUR GUIDES/STUDENTS

- What are the best reasons to go to this college?
- What's it like to go from high school to college?
- What do you do in your free time? On the weekends?
- What do you love about this college?
- What do you wish you could change about this college?
- Why did you choose this college?
- What is it like to live here?
- What does the college do to promote student involvement in campus groups, extracurricular activities, or volunteerism?

### ASK PROFESSORS

- What are the best reasons to go to this college?
- Can a student be mentored by professors, graduate students, or upperclassmen?
- How are professors rated by the college? Does the college think mentoring and meetings for project guidance are important?
- How does the college help students have access to professors outside class? Do professors join students for lunch, help with community service groups, or guide student organizations?
- How many students do research or other kinds of projects for a semester or more?

### ASK FINANCIAL AID OFFICE

- How much has your total college cost for each student risen in the past year?
- How much do your students usually owe in loans when they graduate?
- What is the average income of graduates who had the same major that interests me?
- Will my costs go up when your tuition goes up, or can we use the same tuition rate I started with so I'll know the costs for four years? What should I expect in terms of increases in living expenses?
- How many students usually graduate in the major that interests me? How long do these students usually take to get their degrees? In what ways does the college help students graduate in four years?

# College Exploration Worksheet



**Audience:** Grades 9–11 **Purpose:** To develop college research and assessment skills **Materials:** Computer lab or college information books

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**Name of College:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Location of College:**  Small town  Urban/city  
 Suburban  Rural  
 Other: \_\_\_\_\_

**Type of College:**  Two-year  Four-year  
 Public  Private

**Type of Classroom:**  Lecture  
 Small seminars  
 Independent study  
 Other: \_\_\_\_\_

**Instructors:**  Full-time faculty  
 Part-time faculty  
 Graduate student  
teaching assistants

**Financial assistance (type of financial aid, average financial aid package, average student graduation indebtedness):** \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Size of the college:** \_\_\_\_\_  
*Total*  
\_\_\_\_\_  
*Undergraduate*      *Graduate*  
\_\_\_\_\_  
*Commuters*      *Residential*

**Benefits of the location (activities, etc.):** \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Student body makeup:** \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Special academic programs:** \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Residential housing:** \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Academic support services:** \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Noteworthy alumni:** \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Special opportunities (internships, study abroad):** \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Why might you recommend this college to a friend?**  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Career services:** \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_





# 11th Grade Student Checklist

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- Regularly review your GAfutures Dashboard. Start your year by looking over the **Plan&Pay4CollegeGA 11th grade** letter and check your HOPE GPA.
- Meet with your school counselor to make sure you are on track to graduate and meet all necessary requirements for graduation, academic rigor and college admissions and investigate dual enrollment options.
- Continue to explore career options, how much education you'll need and the earning potential.
- Continue to research colleges and what you should look for to make sure you find a good fit. Talk to your parents about your choices, and ask them to help you clarify goals and priorities.
- Go to a PROBE College Fair. If your school has a financial aid night, be sure to attend.
- Review your family's financial situation and make sure you're planning for the cost of college appropriately. Visit the College Money Matters section and net price calculators on [GAfutures.org](http://GAfutures.org) for suggestions. The comparison tool at [consumerfinance.gov](http://consumerfinance.gov) is another helpful resource to compare college costs and financial aid offers.
- Consider opening a 529 College Saving Plan – it's never too late to begin saving for college.
- Take the PSAT/NMSQT to qualify for scholarships and programs associated with the National Merit Scholarship Program.
- Register for and take exams like the SAT and the ACT for college admission. Check for free test prep classes in your area.
- Start drafting essays to use for scholarships and college admissions applications.
- Search for scholarships you may be eligible for to help pay for college on GAfutures, as well as through your school counselor, community, family and friends. Ask your parents if their employer offers scholarships for the children of employees.
- Schedule campus visits or contact colleges you are interested in attending to request information about financial aid, admission requirements, applications and deadlines.



# 12th Grade Student Checklist

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## Fall Checklist

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- Sign into your student GAfutures account to review your status for the following: GSFAPP, ACT and/or SAT Score, Selective Service Registration and HOPE calculated GPA.
- Review your **Plan&Pay4CollegeGA 12th grade** letter found on your GAfutures Dashboard.
- Meet with your school counselor to make sure you're on track to fulfill all graduation, admissions and academic rigor requirements.
- If you haven't done so, take the necessary admissions tests – SAT, ACT or Accuplacer. Be sure to have your test scores send to GSFC (SAT-0472 or ACT-2225) by the deadline of high school graduation for the Zell Miller Scholarship Eligibility.
- November is Georgia Apply to College month where many colleges in Georgia will waive application fees. Ask your school counselor about College Application events at your high school or in your area.
- Ask your teachers and counselors to submit required documents (letters of recommendation) to your preferred colleges.
- Submit a request through your My GAfutures account for your high school to send your official transcript to any college you've applied to.
- The FAFSA will be available in December, begin this process now by creating an FSA ID for yourself, your parents, and any contributor to your FAFSA. GSFC will host FSA ID creation events in the Fall.
- Find out if your college requires the CSS/PROFILE, a supplemental financial aid form, in addition to the FAFSA.
- Stay involved in after-school activities and work hard all year. Your grades can still impact financial aid and scholarship eligibility.

## Spring Checklist

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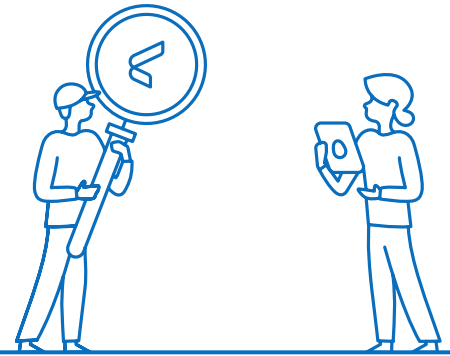
- Complete any additional scholarship applications. In addition to submitting the FAFSA, be sure to submit the GSFAPP to qualify for state aid like the HOPE Scholarship.
- Decision time! Review your college acceptances, compare financial aid offers and plan visits to where you have been accepted.
- Review your family's financial situation and make sure you're planning for the cost of college appropriately. Visit the College Money Matters section and net price calculators on [GAfutures.org](https://www.gafutures.org) for suggestions. The comparison tool at [consumerfinance.gov](https://www.consumerfinance.gov) is another helpful resource to compare college costs and financial aid offers.
- If you have questions about the aid being offered, contact that college's financial aid office.
- When you decide which college to attend, submit any required financial deposits, and confirm housing plans, freshman orientation dates and course registration. Also, notify the other colleges you were accepted to and withdraw your application.
- After you begin college, you will have access to your My College HOPE Profile allowing you to check your eligibility while in college.

# Vocabulary

When it comes to financial aid and planning for college, there are some key terms you should know to help you understand the process and make informed decisions.

- **529 Plan:** Tax-advantaged savings plan designed to encourage saving for future college expenses. Path2College is Georgia's 529 plan.
- **COA (Cost of Attendance):** Total cost of attending a college or university, including tuition, room and board, books, lab fees, transportation and basic living expenses.
- **Contributor:** Any individual required to provide signature and consent on the FAFSA form, including the student; the student's spouse; a biological or adoptive parent; or the parent's spouse (stepparent).
- **FAFSA (Free Application for Federal Student Aid):** Filling out a FAFSA is the first step in the financial aid process. To be eligible to receive federal financial aid, a student must complete a FAFSA.
- **FSA ID:** Provides access to Federal Student Aid's online systems and can serve as your legal signature. You must have an FSA ID to complete the FAFSA.
- **Grant:** Money given to students for their education that does not typically have to be repaid. Often based on need, grants may come from federal or state programs, or sometimes from private charitable organizations.
- **HOPE GPA:** Your HOPE GPA determines if you are academically eligible for the HOPE or Zell Miller Scholarship. It includes only grades earned in core subjects – English, math, science, social studies and foreign language. You can check your HOPE GPA beginning in 10th grade through your My GAfutures account.
- **Merit-based:** Financial aid based on academic, athletic or some other type of achievement.
- **Need-based:** Need-based financial aid is reserved for low-income students.
- **Pell Grant:** Federal program that provides need-based educational grants for low-income students. Pell Grants do not typically have to be repaid.
- **SAI (Student Aid Index):** A calculation of the amount of need-based financial aid a student is eligible to receive.
- **SAR (Student Aid Report):** Your SAR summarizes the information entered on your FAFSA form and shows the amount of your EFC.

Visit the College Planning section of GAfutures  
for additional information on preparing for college.



# What is Common App?

Common App is a non-profit college access organization that helps students apply to college every year. Common App's free college application tool is designed to make applying to college faster and easier. With Common App you only need to use one system to apply to multiple colleges and universities. There are two main parts you fill out: a set of common questions and each college's own specific questions. The best part is you only have to fill out the common questions one time!

Common App is a place for you to learn about the college admissions process, understand how to plan and apply to college, and discover all that different colleges have to offer. It's a hub of information that can guide you through each step of the application journey. It's a resource that connects you with financial aid and scholarship opportunities.

## Whatever questions you might have, we're here to help

**Application guides** to give you step-by-step instructions on completing your application.

A **college roadmap** designed to guide you toward your next destination — no matter where you start.

An **application dictionary** to help you understand the terminology related to college applications.

A **library of FAQs** to answer any question you may have, and a support team that's available **24/7/365**.

## What's next

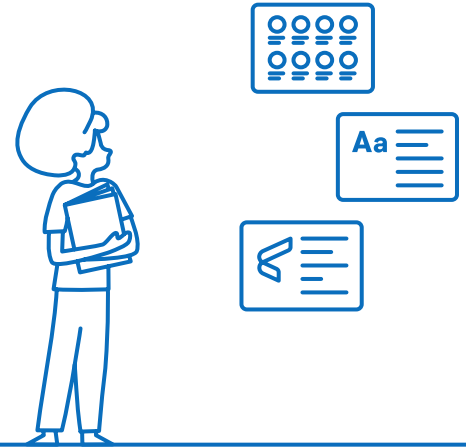
Visit [commonapp.org](https://commonapp.org) to see available resources, start exploring colleges, and create your Common App account.

### Common App at a glance

- More than 1,000 colleges and universities use Common App
- 300+ public colleges and universities
- 50+ international universities in 15+ countries
- 150+ Minority Serving Institutions
- 500+ without app fee
- 950+ Common App member colleges do not require ACT or SAT test scores

# How the first-year Common App works

A quickstart guide for students using the first-year Common App.



## 1 Add colleges

Get started by adding colleges to your list. You can find colleges to apply to in the College Search tab of your Common App account. The College Search tab also has information and links to help you research each college. More than 1,000 colleges use Common App! Go to [commonapp.org/explore](https://commonapp.org/explore) to start exploring.

## 2 Stay organized

Each college has its own set of specific requirements and supplements. When it comes to tracking this information and staying organized, we're here to help! Use the "Requirements Grid" and each college's "College Information" page to find this information.

To start your college application checklist, check out our "My College Requirements" worksheet at [commonapp.org/ready](https://commonapp.org/ready).

## 3 Complete and submit

Answering all the questions in the Common App tab is a great way to start your applications. For each college you will:

- Answer college specific questions
- Invite and manage recommenders
- Complete other supplements (if applicable)

After all these sections are complete, you are ready to submit your application! Submission is simple: review, pay (if applicable), and submit.

### How does my application get there?

When you submit we combine your responses from the Common App and college specific questions, as well as any supplements, into one form. Your counselor, teachers, and other recommenders complete their reports and evaluations separately.

As recommenders submit their forms, they will be sent to the college to be added to your application.