



# PICKENS HIGH SCHOOL

## *Senior Packet*

---

Counseling Department

We are so excited for you and the journey you will embark on during your senior year at Pickens High School. This Senior Packet will assist you with getting prepared to apply for college, scholarships, jobs, and/or creating professional relationships with your teachers and counselors. Your school counselors are here to assist you as needed and wish you the best of luck this year!

Please check your student email daily for important information this year, and be sure to check the PHS Counseling Department webpage for resources and help with navigating the college and career development process.

We recommend that you check the PHS Counseling page on a weekly basis to stay up to date on any new scholarship (especially from January through April) and college visitation opportunities.

Be prepared to have conversations with your counselor and/or teachers about your transcript and classes and be prepared to fill out a Senior Information Sheet in order to request letters of recommendation.

This is the year to be a professional young adult getting ready to spread your Dragon wings!

# **PHS Counseling Department Contact Information**

A - F	Ms. Jana Champion	<a href="mailto:janachampion@pickenscountyschools.org">janachampion@pickenscountyschools.org</a>
G - O	Mrs. Elisha Wilson	<a href="mailto:elishawilson@pickenscountyschools.org">elishawilson@pickenscountyschools.org</a>
P - Z	Ms. Tara Joyce	<a href="mailto:tarajoyce@pickenscountyschools.org">tarajoyce@pickenscountyschools.org</a>
College & Career Coordinator, Dual Enrollment	Mr. Daniel Bell	<a href="mailto:danielbell@pickenscountyschools.org">danielbell@pickenscountyschools.org</a>
Counseling Department Secretary	Mrs. Randi Ray	<a href="mailto:randiray@pickenscountyschools.org">randiray@pickenscountyschools.org</a>
College & Career Secretary	Mrs. Kelly McClanahan	<a href="mailto:kellymcclanahan@pickenscountyschools.org">kellymcclanahan@pickenscountyschools.org</a>

# Senior Year Timeline

## August and September

- If you haven't done so already, then start looking at 3-5 colleges/schools that you are interested in attending. Get familiar with admissions requirements for the school(s) of your choice. This can differ from year to year. What is the SAT/ACT required score? What GPA is required for this college admission? What classes are required for me to enter this school? Know what your college is looking for and ensure that you meet your school's admissions requirements. Every college is different but all colleges have an admissions page on their website that will tell you what they require for you to apply. Please get familiar with your school of choice's admissions webpage.
- School Counselors will mail out **Senior Status Checks** during the fall semester of your senior year to help seniors and their families ensure that the senior is on track to graduate. Set up an appointment with your school counselor if you are at 20 or fewer credits and in danger of not graduating.
- Information regarding senior meetings will be provided in the Senior Status Check letters that are mailed home. **Senior meetings will begin after Fall Break.**
- If you plan to attend a college or university, **register for the SAT or ACT**. Please know that many scholarships require a SAT/ACT score as well. Make sure to select schools to have scores sent. Colleges only accept official SAT/ ACT scores from the testing agency:
  - [www.act.org](http://www.act.org)
  - [www.sat.org/register](http://www.sat.org/register)
- **Check student email daily and PHS Counseling Webpage weekly.** Your student email is where you will receive information regarding senior pictures, senior quotes, cap & gown orders, graduation, etc.
- **Begin to work on a resume-like document** (like the "Senior Information Sheet" provided in this packet) that lists your accomplishments, skills, and activities/clubs that you have participated in. Your Senior Information Sheet is the document that you will need to share with those who you ask to write a reference/recommendation letter for you. This document will be of great use to you when applying for jobs, colleges, scholarships, and/or asking for recommendation letters. Make sure to keep your original copy so that you are able to make copies to hand out.
- Utilize your Senior Information Sheet and/or a Resume as needed to **request recommendations from teachers and counselors**. It is a common courtesy to give your teachers/counselors at least two weeks to complete this task for you.
- Begin to **research scholarships** that apply to you and check the PHS Counseling Department web page regularly (at least on a weekly basis) to view local scholarships as they become available (local scholarships are available year-round but are heaviest from January through April).
- If you are planning to apply for **Early Action/ Decision** for your college of choice, then you need to prepare and submit those applications now.

## Mid-September and October

- Attend college Open Houses or online tours. **Research colleges.** If visiting a college in person, then pick up a “College Visitation Form” from the counseling suite to be excused for your college day visit. Seniors are allowed two excused College Visitation Days. Please turn in completed College Visit forms to the Front Office.
- School counselors will begin to meet with seniors after Fall Break. The senior will be called down by the school counselor to review graduation requirements and discuss post-secondary plans.
- See individual college websites and [www.gafutures.org](http://www.gafutures.org) for current **admissions requirements** for all Georgia schools and to begin the application process(es) for the school(s) you are interested in. It is a good idea to apply to 3-5 different schools.
- Research **financial aid** and begin the FAFSA process which is available beginning October 1st (see further information on the FAFSA in this packet). The FAFSA Application is open from October 1st - June 30th each year, but the sooner you apply the better!
- **Senior pictures** start during the summer but there are some dates that take place in August and September. Check your student email for information on signing up for your senior pictures through Cady Studios ([www.cady.com](http://www.cady.com)). More information is also available on the PHS Counseling webpage.
- Visit the PHS Counseling Department webpage and **check scholarship websites weekly.**
- For students in Advanced Placement (AP) classes, confirm with your teacher dates for **AP Exams** and how to register for them.

## November and December

- Males must register for the **Selective Service** when they turn 18 at [www.sss.gov](http://www.sss.gov)
- Begin preparing college applications for **regular admission.**
- Remember to complete a **Student Information Sheet** and request letters of recommendation from your teachers and counselors.
- Keep your grades up!
- If you applied for Early Decision or Action, you may receive notification of admission as early as December.

## January and February

- **Complete the FAFSA as soon as possible.** The FAFSA is available from October 1st through June 30th. Do not wait for acceptance letters from your schools before you complete the FAFSA. Completion of the FAFSA is a requirement in order to obtain the HOPE Grant, HOPE Scholarship, or the Zell Miller Scholarship.
- Follow up with colleges to be sure that your file is complete and that all materials have been received.
- Be looking at scholarships! Most local scholarships start to become available in January. Seniors are encouraged to check the PHS Counseling webpage weekly for updates.

## March and April

- Continue to search for and apply to scholarships.
- Keep your grades up!
- Check student email for details on **cap and gown delivery**.
- Check **student emails** and pay attention to **announcements**.
- Expect to receive regular decision admissions notifications from most schools the first week of April.
- **Check your FAFSA application.**

## May

- Check your PHS Gmail account daily for information regarding all things related to graduation.
- Take the **Advanced Placement exams** for any AP Subjects you have taken in high school. Make sure you send AP Scores and/ or any Dual Enrollment credits to your college. AP scores must be sent from [www.collegeboard.org](http://www.collegeboard.org) to the college you plan to attend.
- Remember you can also complete the HOPE/ Zell Miller Scholarship application by completing the **FAFSA**.
- You must **upload your SAT scores** to [www.gafutures.org](http://www.gafutures.org) when applying for the Zell Miller Scholarship.
- **Athletes:** If you are registered with the NCAA, you must request your final transcript to be released to them. If you are registered through NAIA, see your PHS counselor to request final transcripts.
- Plan to attend the **May Senior Meeting** for graduation details. Information about this meeting will come out early May.
- Make sure to put dates/times for **Mandatory Graduation Practice** on your calendar.
- **Requesting Where to Send Your Final Transcript in May** - Please know that at the end of the school year, the PHS Counseling Team will send out a “Final Transcript Request” Google form to the entire senior class. **All graduating seniors planning on attending a post-secondary school will need to have a copy of their final transcript to their school of choice.** To help smoothly and accurately send your final transcript to your school of choice, then the graduating senior will have to complete this form; otherwise, the PHS Counseling Team will not know where to send your final transcript to. Please know that final transcripts are not available until at least the middle of June but no later than June 30th. Please know that after June 30<sup>th</sup>, you can log into your [gafutures.org](http://gafutures.org) account to request a transcript to be sent to any school in the state of Georgia. This is the preferred method after graduation as this tends to be the fastest and most efficient way for schools in Georgia to receive your transcript.
- Celebrate!



## Creating and Using Your GA Futures Account

Creating your GA Futures account is a necessary step in the Dual Enrollment process, tracking your HOPE GPA (which differs from your high school GPA), requesting your transcript to be sent to colleges in Georgia, and it will also help you keep track of various tasks in your college application journey. For many colleges in Georgia, you can apply to college via your GA Futures account. You can login into GA Futures by visiting the website: <https://www.gafutures.org/>. Once you have created your GA Futures account, then please fill out your login information below so that you can reference it as needed. It is highly recommended that you use a personal email address instead of your PHS Gmail address as you will lose access to it once you graduate from PHS.

Student Username: \_\_\_\_\_ Password: \_\_\_\_\_

Email Used to Create the Account: \_\_\_\_\_

Below are the steps you can take in order to create your GA Futures account below:

Step 1:

The screenshot displays the GAfutures website interface. At the top, a banner reads "How to Create a GAfutures Account" with two instructions: "Follow link: <https://www.gafutures.org/> to locate beginning page." and "Click 'Create Account' tab at top of page." Below this, a browser window shows the website's navigation bar. A yellow arrow points to the "Create an Account" button, with the word "Click" written in red above it. The main content area features a large banner for the "2020-2021 Student Application for Dual Enrollment Funding" with a "Learn more" link. To the right, there are several smaller informational tiles. At the bottom, there are sections for "AWARD RECIPIENTS: THEIR STORIES" and "NEWS YOU CAN USE".

## Step 2:

**CREATE ACCOUNT**

GAfutures.org / Create Account

1 Step 1 2 Step 2 3 Step 3 Complete

Fields marked with \* are required.

**First Name \***  
Enter first name  
First name is required

**Middle Initial**  
Middle initial

**Last Name \***  
Enter last name  
Last name is required

**Date of Birth \***  
mm/dd/yyyy  
DOB is required

**Email \***  
primary.email@example.com  
Email is required

**Reenter Email \***  
primary.email@example.com

**Alternate Email**  
alternate.email@example.com

**Reenter Alternate Email**  
alternate.email@example.com  
Reenter to confirm alternate email address

Previous Next

**Please use a personal student email account if possible. Place it in the "primary email" box. Pickens County Schools email can be used if no personal email is available, but some emails may not be received through the Pickens County Schools email system.**

**Choose "Year" first, then proceed with month and day.**

## Step 3:

**CREATE ACCOUNT**

1 Step 1 2 Step 2 3 Step 3 Complete

Fields marked with \* are required.

**Click on the radio button that best describes you \***

☒ I attend a Georgia public High School ☐ I attend a Georgia private or charter High School ☐ I attend a Georgia Home Study Program

☐ I attend a Georgia College or University ☐ Other Students ?

**Security Question 1 \***  
What is your city of birth? \*

**Answer \***  
Create your first security answer

**Security Question 2 \***  
What is your school mascot? \*

**Answer \***  
Create your second security answer

**Security Question 3 \***  
What is your year of birth? \*

**Answer \***  
Create your third security answer

Previous Next

**Choose questions that can be remembered for long periods of time, not questions that have answers that will change over time.**

Main Menu Resources Our Websites External Links Social Media



## Step 4:

The screenshot shows the GA Futures account creation page at step 4. The page has a progress bar at the top with four steps: Step 1, Step 2, Step 3, and Complete. Step 4 is the current step. The page contains various input fields for user information, including Username, Password, Reenter Password, School, Select Grade, Social Security Number, Reenter Social Security Number, Street, City, ZIP/Postal code, State/Province, Country, Contact Phone, Parent/Guardian Email, and Reenter Parent/Guardian Email. A yellow callout box on the left side of the page contains the following text: "Triple check all information on this page for accuracy. And confirm all spelling is correct. Incorrect or misspelled information can lead to problems later."

Please secure your Username and Password in a safe place so it can be readily accessed in the future.

## High School GPA vs. HOPE GPA

High schools do not have the ability to calculate students' HOPE GPA. The GSFC (Georgia Student Finance Commission) does this. PHS submits student transcripts to the GSFC twice each year, at the end of January and at the end of June. The GSFC then calculates all students' HOPE GPA in the state of Georgia. Thus, the overall cumulative GPA on a student's transcript from PHS **IS NOT THE SAME** as the student's HOPE GPA calculated by the GSFC. Please use your GAFutures account to keep track of your HOPE GPA that the GSFC calculates. Your HOPE GPA is calculated by the following by the GSFC:

- 1) Academic core courses only (English, math, science, social studies, and foreign language).
- 2) GSFC strips away all weights that high schools add for Honors, AP, and/or DE courses.
- 3) GSFC adds back 0.5 quality points up to a 4.0 for AP and DE only (not honors).

# SAT and ACT At-A-Glance Comparison



# SAT Dates and Deadlines 2023-2024

CEEB Code for PHS is 111695 and the School Site # is 11490

Register for the SAT at: [www.collegeboard.org](http://www.collegeboard.org)

SAT Date	Registration Deadline	Deadline for Changes, Regular Cancellation, and Late Registration
Aug 26, 2023	July 28, 2023	Aug 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
Mar 9, 2024 (digital)	Feb 23, 2024	Feb 27, 2024
May 4, 2024 (digital)	Apr 19, 2024	April 23, 2024
June 1, 2024 (digital)	May 16, 2024	May 21, 2024

# ACT Dates and Deadlines 2023-2024

Register for the ACT at: [www.act.org](http://www.act.org)

ACT Date	Registration Deadline	Late Registration Deadline	Standby Deadline, Photo Upload Deadline
Sep 9, 2023	Aug 4, 2023	Aug 18, 2023	Sep 1, 2023
Oct 28, 2023	Sep 22, 2023	Oct 6, 2023	Oct 20, 2023
Dec 9, 2023	Nov 3, 2023	Nov 17, 2023	Dec 1, 2023
Feb 10, 2024	Jan 5, 2024	Jan 19, 2024	Feb 2, 2024
Apr 13, 2024	Mar 8, 2024	Mar 22, 2024	Apr 5, 2024
June 8, 2024	May 3, 2024	May 17, 2024	May 31, 2024
July 13, 2024	June 7, 2024	June 21, 2024	July 5, 2024

# Additional SAT/ACT Information

- The CEEB (Testing) code for Pickens High School is 111695.
- The ACT and SAT are both acceptable tests for admission to colleges and universities worldwide.
- Many scholarships, including the HOPE/Zell Miller Scholarships, will require a SAT and/or ACT score(s).
- Needed for registration: Internet access, credit card or fee waiver, high school course details, and headshot photo.
- **Make sure to select the schools where you want to have your scores sent. You can send up to four free score reports to colleges everytime you register for the SAT.** This is the fastest way to send scores to colleges and scholarship programs - and there's no fee. If you're sending scores after you get them, there's a fee (unless you're using a fee waiver).
- **FEE WAIVERS** - Students who meet certain eligibility requirements may qualify for a fee waiver to cover the cost of the ACT or SAT exam. Fee waivers cover 2 free SATs, unlimited score reports to send to colleges, and waived college application fees at participating colleges. Please visit <https://collegereadiness.collegeboard.org/sat/register/fees/fee-waivers> to see if you qualify. Schools receive a limited number of fee waivers and they are **distributed on a first come first served basis** for those who qualify. If you believe you qualify, then please see your school counselor for more details as soon as possible.
- In January of 2021, the College Board announced the elimination of the SAT Essay and SAT subject Tests. These portions of the SAT were always optional, so the overall makeup of the General SAT remains the same.
- What is superscoring? Admission officers will consider your highest section scores from any test date. This varies by individual schools. **THIS DOES NOT APPLY FOR THE HOPE AND ZELL MILLER SCHOLARSHIPS.**
- The ACT Superscore is beneficial because it takes the average of the four best subject scores from each ACT test attempt and counts it as your final score.
- There is no penalty for guessing, so leave no blanks; answer every question!
- Please refer to each testing website [www.collegeboard.org](http://www.collegeboard.org) and [www.act.org](http://www.act.org) for further information.
- PHS does not have any access to student College Board and/or ACT accounts, only to be able to review scores once they are available. Thus, if you have problems registering for a test and/or issues with your account, then you will need to contact College Board and/or the ACT directly. Information on how to contact them can be found on their respective websites.
- Please visit the PHS Counseling webpage for more information and resources like practice testing links.

# Applying to College

College applications cost money. If you can narrow your selection down to three to five colleges, that is a common and manageable number. They should all be colleges you'd be happy to attend. It's good to apply to some colleges that are a bit of a stretch for you and some that you feel will likely admit you. However, most should feel like good, realistic matches. Below are some steps we recommend you take when applying to colleges:

1. Create your **gafutures.org** account now! Be sure to use a personal email address as your PHS student account will become inactive once you graduate. The website is: [www.gafutures.org](http://www.gafutures.org)
  - a. **This is your one-stop shop for applying to most Georgia schools.** It is an informative site for college, financial aid, career choice, and much more. This is also the site where students may check their HOPE GPA (you must have your Social Security number correctly on file with both GA Futures and PHS), **view and request your PHS transcript to be sent to colleges**, and apply for the HOPE & Zell Miller Scholarship/Grant if NOT completing the FAFSA.
  - b. If you don't know if you have an account, then please see your counselor. Do NOT create a second account! Please visit the PHS Counseling webpage to access step-by-step instructions on how to create a GAFutures account if you do not already have one.
  - c. When applying for your FAFSA, the application automatically applies you for all HOPE programs, including Zell Miller and HOPE/Zell Miller Grants.
2. There are multiple avenues in which you can apply to a college. You can apply through GA Futures, tools like Common App, and/or directly through the college itself. If you are applying directly through the college itself, then please know that every school has an admissions page on their website that will list all requirements and deadlines needed to apply to their school. It is your responsibility to research and know what the admission requirements are for the school(s) you are desiring to apply to.
3. You may also use Common App to apply to multiple colleges and universities nationwide with one application. Be sure to use a personal email address and not your PHS Gmail address. You can visit the website: [www.commonapp.org/](http://www.commonapp.org/) for more information on Common App. There are more resources on the PHS Counseling webpage regarding Common App.
4. If you have completed any Dual Enrollment courses during high school, then you need to request your Dual Enrollment college transcript to be sent to the college(s) to which you are applying.
  - a. i.e. If you earned DE credits at Chattahoochee Tech but you are going to attend UNG after high school, then you would need to send your Chattahoochee Tech transcripts to UNG.

*\*\*\*Please keep in mind, you do not have to complete an application in both GA Futures and CommonApp. It depends on the location of your school. If the school is in Georgia, then please know you can use GA Futures. If you are applying to multiple schools, in Georgia and out of state, then please know that you use CommonApp.*

Many colleges/universities make up the USG (University System of Georgia institution - see <https://www.usg.edu/> for list of schools).

# **Do You Need A Letter of Recommendation?**

Some colleges and many scholarship applications require a letter of recommendation from a teacher and/or school counselor as part of the admissions process. If you are applying to a college and/or scholarship that requires one or more letters of recommendation(s), then please see the helpful tips below to help ensure you receive a strong recommendation.

First and foremost, make sure to **ask well in advance of your deadlines (2-3 weeks minimum notice)**. Ask a teacher (or two) who knows you well and in whose class you excelled. The better relationship you have with your recommender, the more insightful your recommendation letter will be. It helps if the teacher is known to be a strong writer, too!

## **When Should You Ask?**

The first step in requesting a letter of recommendation involves **timing**. Each individual letter takes time and thought to do well. Teachers get inundated by the end of the semester, when they might be already busy getting exams scored and grades completed, not to mention spending time with friends and family over breaks and holidays. The same is true for your school counselors. Due to this, it is recommended that you ask your recommenders at least a month before your application deadlines. In some cases, even earlier is better. **At minimum, you should give your recommenders at least 2-3 weeks advance notice.**

Once you've figured out who you're asking and when, you'll want to frame your request in a positive way.

## **How Should You Ask?**

**It is always respectful to ask your recommender in person.** It is highly recommended that you ask for your recommendation face to face. Depending on your teacher and/or counselor's schedule, it may be appropriate to email them to set up an appointment or meeting. Asking for a letter of recommendation solely over email could be interpreted as impersonal and less mature, an impression you don't want to make in the mind of a recommender. Find time during a free period, after school, or whenever the teacher or counselor has free time to meet. The request may be short, but you still want to create space in case your teacher/counselor wants to further discuss your plans. Your teachers and school counselors are very used to being asked to write recommendation letters and most likely have a preference of what they are expecting from their students. Always be courteous and respectful of your recommenders' time.

## **What to Say**

While it can feel scary and vulnerable to ask a teacher or counselor for this favor, remember that teachers, especially ones that have juniors and seniors, **expect this**. Teachers write letters of recommendation for students every year and want to help you succeed and continue on in your education. Likewise, your counselor expects to write recommendation letters for all students on his or her caseload who are applying to college. The best way to calm your nerves and ensure the conversation goes smoothly is to **prepare what you'll say**. Keep it simple and polite. Something like this could work:

*"I really enjoyed your class. I've learned a lot from you and feel like you've gotten to know me well. I'm applying to college next year and would be really flattered if you could write me a strong letter of recommendation for my application(s)."*

If you've asked someone who knows you well and agrees to provide you with a letter of recommendation, then it's a good idea to share some further information with him/her. You can do this in the form of a resume or utilize the **PHS Senior Information Sheet**. At PHS, students are asked to use the enclosed (included in the back of this packet) **PHS Senior Information Sheet** if they do not have a resume already built. A copy of the PHS Senior Information Sheet is provided at the back of this Senior Packet. You can either print the form and fill it out by hand or make a copy of the electronic form to complete on your computer via the PHS Counseling website. Please feel free to use the PHS Senior Information Sheet as a means to build a resume for yourself for the future. **\*\*\*ALWAYS KEEP YOUR ORIGINAL "PHS SENIOR INFO SHEET" AND/OR RESUME; NEVER GIVE AWAY YOUR ONLY COPY BECAUSE YOU WILL NEED TO MAKE COPIES OF IT LATER ON.\*\*\***

In some high schools, especially big ones, students don't always get to know their counselors very well. If that's the case for you, then your **PHS Senior Information Sheet is especially important for sharing who you are**. If you're applying for early action or early decision to your college of choice, then you should let your counselor know at the very beginning of your senior year. Reference letters for college and scholarships are a big part of a counselor's job, and they can get especially busy with them around deadlines. **Ask your counselor early! Just like with your teachers, it's up to you to tell your counselor when your deadlines are and any special requirements they need to complete.**

## **Information to Give Your Recommenders**

Teachers and counselors need to know the **logistics**. When are your college deadlines? How do they submit the letter of recommendation? In most cases, your early decision deadlines will be in October and your regular decision deadlines will be in early January. Typically, writers **upload their recommendation letters** through the [Common Application](#). **It is recommended that you provide your teacher(s) and counselor with a copy of your PHS Senior Information Sheet**. This will help your recommenders add further dimension to your recommendation, as well as help differentiate you from other students they're writing about. **Go into your**

**recommendation letter request ready with your completed PHS Senior Information Sheet.** If your recommender agrees, then you can pass it over to them at that time.

## **Next Steps After Your Recommendation Request**

It's always a good idea to follow up with your recommenders at least a week before your deadlines with a polite reminder. In this reminder, you could **thank them again** for providing you with a letter of recommendation, express your excitement about your future plans, and invite them to contact you if they need any more information from you. If you word it this way, then it won't feel like you're asking why they haven't uploaded their letter yet (unless they have, in which case, thank them again!).

Some teachers will let you see your letter before submitting it and invite your revisions or feedback. This is totally up to the recommender, and not actually common in admissions procedures (usually letters are expected to be **confidential**). If your teacher doesn't offer to show it to you, then please don't pressure him/her to do so. This could indicate that you don't trust him/her to write a strong letter—and if that's the case, you should ask someone else, anyway.

Most letters will be **submitted online**, but in the rare case that your teacher wants to mail it, you should provide him/her with a pre-addressed, pre-stamped envelope. After all is written and submitted, write your recommenders a thank you note. Once the decisions start rolling in, let them know where you got in!





Complete the **Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA)** and find out what federal and state financial aid you may be eligible for to help pay for your college education. Parents will have to be involved with this process and have access to their tax information in order to successfully fill out the FAFSA.

The FAFSA may be completed as early as October 1st of your senior year. File early for the best chance of getting financial aid. You can submit the FAFSA until June 30th of the school year. Please know that you will complete the FAFSA every year that you attend a postsecondary school and then your college will notify you of what financial aid you will receive and qualify for.

### Create your FSA ID

- Go to [www.fsaaid.ed.gov](http://www.fsaaid.ed.gov) to create your FSA ID.
- Create a username and password then enter your email address. Please use a personal email address and not your PHS student email address.
- Enter your name, date of birth, Social Security number, contact information, and challenge questions and answers.
- Review your information and read and accept the terms and conditions.
- Confirm your email address using the secure code, which will be sent to the email address you entered when you created your FSA ID.
- Once you verify your email address, you can use it instead of your username to log in to complete your FAFSA. You can also use your FSA ID to sign your FAFSA right away.

### Below are the basic steps for completing the FAFSA.

Remember, the application is available October 1 for the following academic year. The earlier you submit it, the more opportunity you have to receive financial aid to help pay for your education after high school.

1. Go to [fafsa.gov](http://fafsa.gov) and login using your FSA ID. Applying online is quicker, easier and ensures your information will be saved for next year. Don't forget, you will need to fill out a FAFSA every school year to be eligible for federal funds.

2. Enter your personal information. Make sure everything you enter is exactly how it appears on official government documents.
3. Enter your financial information. The IRS Data Retrieval Tool can transfer your tax data to your application automatically. You should use income records for the tax year prior to the academic year you're applying for.
4. Choose up to 10 schools. Be sure to include schools you are seriously considering, whether you've applied or have been accepted yet. You will get an estimate of your financial aid eligibility.
5. Think you're finished? Double check. You can check the status immediately after submitting your FAFSA online. You'll receive a Student Aid Report (SAR) within three weeks from [FederalStudentAidFAFSA@cpsemail.ed.gov](mailto:FederalStudentAidFAFSA@cpsemail.ed.gov) or in the mail if you did not provide an email address. Check it to make sure there are no mistakes. If there are, follow the directions provided to correct and resubmit as soon as possible.

### **Items required for upcoming school year FAFSA completion:**

- **FSA ID for both student AND parent - see below\***
- Birthdates and SSNs for students and parents
- Month & year parent was married, separated, divorced or widowed
- Only biological parents are considered parents unless legal adoption has taken place.
- If biological or adoptive parents are no longer married to each other but are remarried, stepparents' information is also required.
- Permanent mailing address, phone, and personal email for students
- Previous Fiscal Year Tax Returns and W-2's for parents and student/spouse
  - This is advantageous for most students and their families because it allows for immediate use of the IRS Data Retrieval Tool to transfer financial information for eligible applicants, eliminates estimating income and tax information before taxes are filed, reduces the need to come back and update FAFSA form after filing taxes, and enables submitting a FAFSA form as early as October of the year before attending school.
- Previous Fiscal Years unemployment for parents if applicable
- Total assets for parents (stocks, bonds, cd's not in a retirement plan, rental property..)
- Child support received or paid for all children
- Benefits of SSI, SNAP (food stamps), Free Reduced Lunch, TANF, or WIC
- Students are considered dependent until age 24 unless they are married, serving in a US Military program other than for training purposes, providing more than ½ of financial support for their children, parents deceased since age 13, foster care/ward of the court since age 13, deemed potentially homeless

## How do I get an FSA ID?

- If required to use parent information, the parent will also need a FSA ID.
- Students will need their own mobile phone number and/or personal email address.
- Go to [www.studentaid.gov](http://www.studentaid.gov)
- Click on *Login/Create Account* at top; then Click on *Get Started* & follow the steps

**Important:** Keep a copy of your username and password. Write it below exactly how you create it.

Student Username: \_\_\_\_\_ Password: \_\_\_\_\_

Parent Username: \_\_\_\_\_ Password: \_\_\_\_\_

Additional information about financial aid: [www.studentaid.ed.gov/sa/resources](http://www.studentaid.ed.gov/sa/resources)

Please remember that completion of the FAFSA is done through an entity not connected to PHS. No one at PHS will be able to access your account and/or assist you with access to the FAFSA and/or your account. If you have any questions regarding your application and/or accessing your account, then please visit <https://studentaid.gov/help-center/contact> to view the multiple ways that you can contact Federal Student Aid as either a student or a parent.

# Scholarship Information

There are many ways to pay for college, and one of the best ways is to apply for scholarships. There are so many different types of scholarships, each containing different application criteria, that it can be confusing. Listed below is some good information on state, local, and private scholarships to help alleviate some of that confusion.

## Local Scholarship Opportunities

There will be multiple local scholarships available throughout the school year. As these local scholarships become available, they will be posted on the **PHS Counseling website under the “Scholarship” section**. All seniors and families are encouraged to check the **PHS Counseling website on a weekly basis** to stay informed on new scholarship opportunities as they become available. Once the deadline has passed, then the scholarship information will come off of the website.

## GA HOPE Scholarship

The Georgia HOPE Scholarship will pay a portion of standard tuition at a **four-year public institution**. For a private institution for a full-time student, HOPE will pay \$2,152 per semester or \$1,436 per quarter. Please know this information is subject to change in accordance with what the state funding dictates. For more information and the most up to date information on the HOPE Scholarship, visit [www.gafutures.org](http://www.gafutures.org).

The HOPE scholarship requires a **3.0 HOPE GPA** in core curriculum courses: English, math, science, foreign language, and social sciences. Students are required to complete four rigor classes and below is a list of the rigor courses offered at PHS:

ENGLISH	MATH	SOCIAL STUDIES
AP English Lang/Comp	Algebra II	AP US History
AP English Lang Comp 11	College Readiness Math	AP Microeconomics
AP English Lit Comp	Pre-Calculus	
	AP Calculus AB	
	AP Calculus BC	
	AP Statistics	

SCIENCE	ELECTIVES
AP Environmental Science	Spanish II
Chemistry	Spanish III
AP Chemistry	French II
AP Biology	French III
Forensic Science	AP Computer Science
Human Anatomy & Physiology	Game Design
Physics	AP Psychology
	AP European History

\*MOST **academic** degree level dual enrollment courses meet HOPE rigor requirements. Please verify courses with your school counselor or the College & Career Coordinator.

\*\*Please visit [gafutures.org](http://gafutures.org) for a complete list of rigor courses and HOPE eligibility requirements.

When attending a postsecondary institution, students must maintain a cumulative 3.0 GPA at designated checkpoints or risk losing the HOPE Scholarship. To determine your HOPE GPA, go to [www.gafutures.org](http://www.gafutures.org)

### GA HOPE Grant

For students who wish to enroll in a University System of Georgia (USG) **certificate** or **diploma** program, or a **Technical College System of Georgia (TCSG) school**, the HOPE Grant is an excellent option.

The HOPE Grant pays a portion of standard tuition, up to 15 credit hours - see [Gafutures](http://Gafutures) for award amounts.

There is no high school graduation requirement but when enrolled, students must maintain a 2.0 postsecondary GPA or higher at designated checkpoints (30/60 paid semester hours; 45/90 paid quarter hours). Students are only eligible to regain the HOPE grant once.

### Zell Miller Scholarship

The Zell Miller Scholarship is a merit-based award that pays full standard tuition at a **four-year public institution in the state of Georgia**. For a full-time student at a private institution, the scholarship will pay \$2,808 per semester and \$1,914 per quarter. For complete and the most up to date award amounts, see [www.gafutures.org](http://www.gafutures.org)

The Zell Miller Scholarship requires a **3.7 HOPE GPA** in core curriculum courses (see HOPE Scholarship) and a 1200 score on the combined SAT (Critical Reading and Math) or a 26 ACT composite score.

There are also the same **rigor requirements** as the HOPE Scholarship (see above).

When attending a postsecondary institution, students must maintain a cumulative 3.3 GPA at designated checkpoints or risk losing the Zell Miller Scholarship.

#### Zell Miller Eligibility:

Students who may be eligible for the Zell Miller Scholarship must meet the test eligibility requirements and have scores reported to the Georgia Student Finance Commission (GSFC).

- Zell Miller qualifying test scores: 1200 SAT (Critical Reading and Math) or 26 ACT Composite Score.

There are three ways to send your test scores to GSFC:

1. For students who have taken the SAT, an SAT score report can be submitted electronically by requesting that the scores be sent to the GSFC code 0472.
2. If you have taken the ACT, you will have to visit [www.act.org](http://www.act.org) and request an official copy of the scores sent to you. You should then follow the steps below to get the scores registered with the GSFC.
3. For either test, an official sealed copy of the score report can be mailed to the GSFC at:  
Georgia Student Finance Commission  
2082 East Exchange Pl.  
Tucker, GA, 30084
4. Or, a notarized copy of your official score report can be faxed to 770-724-9249 or emailed to [programadmin@gsfc.org](mailto:programadmin@gsfc.org) with a signed statement that certifies that “this is a true and exact copy of my original report.”

It is recommended that scores are sent electronically.

### Zell Miller Grant

For students who wish to enroll in a University System of Georgia (USG) **certificate** or **diploma** program, or a **Technical College System of Georgia (TCSG) school**, the Zell Miller Grant is an excellent option.

The Zell Miller Grant pays the full amount of standard tuition, up to 15 credit hours - see [www.GAfutures.org](http://www.GAfutures.org) for award amounts.

There is no high school graduation requirement and the first term is awarded retroactively after earning a 3.5 or higher post secondary GPA which must be maintained in order to keep the Grant.

### HOPE Career Grant

Students are eligible for the HOPE Career Grant if they are enrolled in certain high-demand **certificate** and **diploma programs** at USG or TCSG schools.

The HOPE Grant and Zell Miller Grant eligibility requirements apply. Awards are a fixed amount per term based on the program and number of hours enrolled.

Approved programs and award amounts available on [GAfutures.org](http://GAfutures.org).

# **Additional Scholarship Websites**

There are several websites that offer lists of scholarships for every type of student imaginable. See below for a list of some trusted databases for scholarships:

<https://pickenshigh.pickens.k12.ga.us/counseling/>

[www.studentaid.gov](http://www.studentaid.gov)

[www.scholarships.com](http://www.scholarships.com)

[www.finaid.org](http://www.finaid.org)

[www.studentscholarships.org](http://www.studentscholarships.org)

[www.fastweb.com](http://www.fastweb.com)

[www.careeronestop.org](http://www.careeronestop.org)

[www.niche.com](http://www.niche.com)

[www.goingmerry.com](http://www.goingmerry.com)

[www.cappex.com](http://www.cappex.com)

[www.petersons.com](http://www.petersons.com)

[www.unigo.com](http://www.unigo.com)

# PHS Senior Information Sheet

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Student ID: \_\_\_\_\_

Student Cell Phone #: \_\_\_\_\_

School Email Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Which of the following *best* describes your post-secondary plan upon graduation?

☐ Military    ☐ Technical College    ☐ Four-Year College    ☐ Workforce

If you are joining the military, which branch will you be joining?

☐ Coast Guard    ☐ Army    ☐ National Guard    ☐ Navy    ☐ Marines    ☐ Air Force

Colleges and/or other institutions to which you are applying:

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_

Are you applying for Early Decision (ED) or Early Action (EA)?    ☐ Yes    ☐ No

If so, to which institution are you applying for ED or EA? \_\_\_\_\_

Early Decision and/or Early Action Application Deadline: \_\_\_\_\_

Possible Major and/or Career Goal: \_\_\_\_\_

## **School Activities (Clubs, Sports, Performing Arts, etc.)**

Name of Group	Grade(s)	Office(s) Held/Comments
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____



### Community Activities (Church, Non-profit organizations, Volunteer Groups, etc.)

Name of Organization	Grade(s)	Office(s) Held/Comments
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

### Honors and Awards (awarded during grades 9-12)

Name of Organization	Grade(s)	Office(s) Held/Comments
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

### Work Experience

Employer	Grade(s)	Office(s) Held/Comments
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

Activities you hope to participate in while attending college: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Hobbies or Special Interests: \_\_\_\_\_

List 3 adjectives that describe you: \_\_\_\_\_

How would your friends describe you? \_\_\_\_\_

How would your parents describe you? \_\_\_\_\_

Tell about an obstacle that you have overcome: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

How do you define success? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

---

I believe I grew at PHS because: \_\_\_\_\_

---

---

Describe something you are proud of: \_\_\_\_\_

---

Have you received a disciplinary infraction in high school? If so, please explain what you have learned from the situation. \_\_\_\_\_

---

---

Three teachers who know you well:

1. \_\_\_\_\_ 2. \_\_\_\_\_ 3. \_\_\_\_\_

Is there any other information that is not reflected on your transcript that you would like an admissions officer to know?

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

# Useful Websites

<https://pickenshigh.pickens.k12.ga.us/counseling/> - Pickens High School Counseling Department Webpage

<https://pickenshigh.pickens.k12.ga.us/staff/college-and-career-coach/> - Pickens High School Dual Enrollment Information Page

[www.gafutures.org](http://www.gafutures.org) - A website from the Georgia Student Finance Commission. This site contains career, college, testing, and financial aid information for students and parents. We highly recommend you visit it!

[www.collegeboard.org](http://www.collegeboard.org) - An excellent website with a wealth of information on colleges, financial planning, SAT and ACT prep. and more.

[www.ncaaclearinghouse.net](http://www.ncaaclearinghouse.net) - All student athletes who plan to participate in college athletics must register at this website. There is a fee for this service.

[www.princetonreview.com](http://www.princetonreview.com) - Free, full-length practice SAT exams and college information

[www.kaptest.com](http://www.kaptest.com) - Test preparation as well as college information.

[www.finaid.org](http://www.finaid.org) - Scholarship search and financial aid information.

[www.bls.gov/ooh/](http://www.bls.gov/ooh/) - Occupational Outlook Handbook from the U.S. Department of Labor. Provides information on career fields, job search, internships, apprenticeships etc.

[www.doleta.gov/](http://www.doleta.gov/) - U.S. Department of Labor.

[www.chegg.com](http://www.chegg.com) - Excellent source for textbooks but also has services such as student tutoring and scholarships.

<https://nces.ed.gov/collegenavigator/> - Run by the National Center for Education Statistics, this website has a wealth of information on colleges, admissions, tuition, fees, and other statistics.

[www.fastweb.com](http://www.fastweb.com) - Scholarship search engine

<https://www.onetonline.org/> - Career Exploration and Aptitude Test

<https://www.apprenticeship.gov/apprenticeship-job-finder> - Search open apprenticeship job opportunities across the country.

# Notes