

**NEWTON
HIGH SCHOOL
COUNSELING OFFICE**



**Senior Survival
Guide**

For Students and Their Families

2011-2012

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Dear Newton High School Senior:

Welcome to your senior year! The counseling office is excited to be able to serve you in your final year of secondary school. Making it to your senior year is exciting, but this is a busy year that requires a lot of responsibility and work on your part. It will all be worth it, though, when you walk across that stage at graduation in May! We are here to help you make that goal a reality, so be sure to make use of the resources available to you.

Our office consists of several support staff that will assist you with your educational, social, and emotional needs. Our services include individual counseling, college and financial aid advisement, career counseling, academic advising, and much more.

This 'survival' packet is intended to help guide you and your family through some important aspects of your senior year. Please read through the entire packet. There is a lot of important information included, but try not to get overwhelmed. We are here to help you with any questions you may have or any additional information you may need.

Your high school career is $\frac{3}{4}$ of the way complete, but that remaining $\frac{1}{4}$ is perhaps the most important portion. Let's work together to make your senior year a successful one. We are excited about the Class of 2012, and we look forward to working with you this year. **GO RAMS!!**

Sincerely,

The Newton High School Counseling Office

The Newton High School Counseling Office

Staff Directory
2011-2012



<p>Mrs. Christy Sedlacek, Counselor Last Names A-Dan (770) 787 2250 x 5568 sedlacek.christy@newton.k12.ga.us</p>	<p>Dr. Francene Breakfield, Counselor Last Names Dar-Holl (770) 787 2250 x 5529 breakfield.francene@newton.k12.ga.us</p>
<p>Ms. Rita Hector, Counselor Last Names Holm-Minn (770) 787 2250 x 5528 hector.rita@newton.k12.ga.us</p>	<p>Dr. Mitzi Cagle, Counselor Last Names Mint-Simm (770) 787 2250 x 5527 cagle.mitzi@newton.k12.ga.us</p>
<p>Ms. Veronica Bridges, Counselor Last Names Sims-Z (770) 787 2250 x 5530 bridges.veronica@newton.k12.ga.us</p>	<p>Mrs. Valarie Brown Registrar (770) 787 2250 x 5519 brown.valarie@newton.k12.ga.us</p>
<p>Mrs. Stephanie Curtis SSC Secretary and Attendance Clerk (770) 787 2250 x 5525 curtis.stephanie@newton.k12.ga.us</p>	<p>Mrs. Serafina Sicurella Records Clerk (770) 787 2250 x 5515 sicurella.serafina@newton.k12.ga.us</p>

2011-2012 IMPORTANT DATES FOR NEWTON H.S. SENIORS

August 12	Registration Deadline for September ACT
August 15	Mandatory Meeting for Dual Enrolled/MOWR Students, 2:00
August 22	Georgia Perimeter Classes Start for DE/MOWR Students
September 1	Senior Assembly NHS @ 9:00 AM
September 7	Newton County PROBE College Fair, AHS 5:30-7:30
September 9	Registration Deadline for October SAT
September 10	ACT at EHS
September 16	Registration Deadline for October ACT
September 20	****Senior Parent Meeting @ 6:30PM
October 1	SAT @ NHS
October 7	Registration Deadline for November SAT
October 22	ACT
October 25	GA Work Ready Test
November 4	Registration Deadline for December ACT
November 5	SAT
November 8	Registration Deadline for December SAT
Nov 11-18	Georgia Apply to College Week Events
December 3	SAT
December 10	ACT at EHS
December 20	Registration Deadline for January SAT
January 13	Registration Deadline for February ACT
January 24	***County Financial Aid Night 6:30PM (Parents and Students)
January 26	ASVAB Test
January 28	SAT
January 17	Financial Aid/FAFSA Workshop presented by GSFC, 6:30
February 11	ACT
March 9	Registration Deadline for April ACT
April 6	Registration Deadline for May SAT
April 14	ACT
April 20	Prom @ Westin
May 1	College Acceptance Letters and Scholarship Offers Due for Recognition
May 2	Registration Deadline for June ACT
May 5	SAT @ NHS
May 7	AP Chemistry
May 9	Senior Honors Night 6:30 PM
May 8	Registration Deadline for June SAT
May 9	AP Calculus
May 10	AP Literature and AP Latin
May 11	AP US History, AP European History and AP Art
May 14	AP Biology
May 15	AP Government
May 16	AP Language
May 17	AP Economics
May 23	Last Day of School
May 26	Graduation
June 2	SAT
June 9	ACT

APPOINTMENT PROCEDURES

Students are assigned a counselor by last name at NHS. To schedule an appointment, students can sign in at Ms. Curtis' desk in the counseling office reception area. A counselor will respond to your request. Please indicate if it is an emergency situation.

ATTENDANCE

Attendance is imperative to earn credit. Students may not miss more than five (5) unexcused absences in each course to earn credit for the course. For questions concerning attendance, contact Ms. Stephanie Curtis. Please refer to your student handbook for specific attendance information.

CERTIFICATE OF ATTENDANCE

Students may request a Certificate of Attendance from Ms. Curtis by completing the request form located in the counseling office. Requests are completed on specific days each week. If your child needs the ADAP card, contact Ms. Sicurella in the student service center at 770-787-2250 ext 5515.

CLASS RANK & GRADE POINT AVERAGE (GPA)

Senior class rank is determined by seven semesters ending with the first semester of senior year. Class rank is based on a weighted grade point average. Many colleges and scholarship programs prefer to look at unweighted grade point averages. To determine your unweighted GPA, total quality points are divided by the total number of courses attempted. If you have taken Advanced Placement courses, you should be aware that your grade had 10 points added to it. For an unweighted GPA, you should calculate those AP grades with the 10 points removed. Many students get confused about what it means to have a true 4.0 GPA. Simply stated, a student with a 4.0 GPA has never earned any grade below an 'A' on all high school coursework.

Quality Points Scale

Course Grade	A	B	C	D	F
Quality Points	4	3	2	1	0

Example

Course	Weighted Grade	Weighted Quality Point	Unweighted Grade	Unweighted Quality Point
AP British Lit.	100	4	90	4
AP Calculus	80	3	70	2
Spanish II	85	3	85	3
P.E.	100	4	100	4
		Weighted GPA = 3.5		Unweighted GPA = 3.25

COLLEGE VISITS

It is very important to visit colleges you are interested in attending. It is not recommended to make up your mind to attend a college based solely on the website, or what your friends think of it. You will be living at the college you choose to attend for quite a while, so you should be sure you are pleased with the campus and the town where the college is located.

Each senior is allotted two college visits during their senior year. If you have all A's and B's during your first semester of your senior year, you will be granted an additional college visit during the second semester. See the secretary in the counseling office for the forms. The form must be signed by a college official and turned back in within three days of the college visit.

GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS

All students entering high school the 2008-2009 school year are required to earn 26 units to graduate. Students must earn credit for specific courses. To walk at graduation, students must have earned 26 units and have passed all five portions of the GHS GT or EOCT equivalent.

Each senior will have a senior evaluation during first semester to evaluate their courses. Students may also earn "distinction" which is defined as earning 28 hours with two additional course electives taken are academic electives or fine arts. Distinction also requires the student to have an overall core GPA of 85.

All students must complete four units of English, four units of Social Studies, four units of Math, four units of Science, one Physical Ed/Health course, and three CTAE, Fine Art or Foreign Language courses. Students interested in entering college are encouraged to complete two credits of Foreign Language in the same language.

HONOR GRADUATE

Honor graduates are defined as students who have earned an overall GPA of 90 for the first seven semesters of their high school career. Honor graduates earn the privilege of wearing a gold honor stole at graduation and are recognized at Honors Night. If a student earns an 89.9, the GPA is not rounded to 90 and the student is not an honor graduate.

HOPE GPA

HOPE eligibility is determined by the Georgia Student Finance Commission. To qualify for the HOPE scholarship, students must be a U.S. citizen or meet the eligible non-citizen requirements. Students must also meet HOPE's Georgia residency requirements. Students must earn a 3.0 cumulative GPA on *all attempted* core curriculum coursework. Please note that HOPE requirements are set by the state of Georgia and are subject to change. The most current HOPE information is available online through www.gacollege411.org.

Seniors apply for the HOPE scholarship in two ways. Students may apply directly through GaCollege411. Students apply at the same time they complete their FAFSA form.

The HOPE Scholarship is for two and four year public college or universities in the State of Georgia. The program currently covers tuition at 90% or 100% depending on GPA and test scores. It does **NOT** cover room and board. It is not transferable to colleges outside of Georgia. It covers a small portion of private school tuition (\$3,500) in the State of Georgia.

The HOPE Grant may be used at Georgia Technical Colleges and is not connected to the student's GPA. Both the HOPE Grant and the HOPE Scholarship have a limited amount of combined hours (127) available to students.

LETTERS OF RECOMMENDATION

Many colleges and scholarships require letters of recommendation from your school counselor or a teacher. Some schools have a specific form for a counselor or teacher to complete, while others just require a letter. Be sure to give your counselor or teacher ample preparation time. A good rule of thumb is to request the letter a *minimum of 10 days* before it is needed. This 10-day period should not include holidays or weekends. To write a good, thorough recommendation, counselors and teachers need a copy of your high school resume. Your counselor or teacher may know you well at school, but have no idea of the activities you participate in after or outside of school. Please review the sample resume for an example.

SCHOLARSHIPS & FINANCIAL AID

Scholarship information is available for seniors on the NCSS website and lists state and national scholarships. Check the college you intend to apply to for their available scholarships and criteria. Parental employers often have scholarships available to employee children. Local scholarships become available in January. The scholarship contact and criteria will be on the NCSS website. The deadline is usually February 1st. Submitting information to scholarship organizations by deadlines is extremely important. Plan to attend the financial aid workshop to learn more about other forms of financial aid. Contact the college and speak to a financial aid advisor at the collegiate level. Visit Georgia Student Finance Commission website at www.gsfc.org. Most legitimate scholarships will NOT ask you for money. One website many students find helpful is www.fastweb.com.

TRANSCRIPTS

Senior students and families may request transcripts from Mrs. Serafina Sicurella. Contact with the counselor is not necessary. **ALL** transcripts are submitted by Mrs. Sicurella. A form is available in the counseling office to complete to request transcripts. Make sure and request any transcripts you need well before the deadline for your school or scholarship program. If you request a transcript too close to a deadline, you will be required to mail it yourself. If you are attending a Georgia university or college, please use your gacollege411 to request your transcript electronically.

At graduation practice, the final transcript request form will be completed. Final high school transcripts are not available until after you have completed high school. Once transcripts are available, Mrs. Sicurella will mail the final transcript to the school as indicated on the request form completed at graduation practice. Transcripts are typically ready and mailed to colleges or other organizations during the second week of June. A request form is available in the appendix.

Recommended College and Career Testing Timeline

NINTH GRADE:

End Of Course Tests (EOCT) are given in Biology, Ninth Grade Literature, and Math I

TENTH GRADE:

Fall: PSAT (needed for Governor's Honors nominations)

EOCT: American Literature, Math II, and Physical Science

ELEVENTH GRADE:

Fall: PSAT (for college bound juniors)

Armed Services Aptitude Battery (ASVAB—for juniors who sign up)

Georgia High School Graduation Test (Writing)

Spring: Georgia High School Graduation Test (English, Math, Science, Social Studies)

ACT/SAT (college bound juniors—second semester)

* Students planning to attend two-year colleges or technical colleges should consult with that institution and the program which they are entering to see if testing is necessary.

EOCT: US History

TWELFTH GRADE:

Fall: ACT/SAT (for college bound students planning to attend four-year schools)

ASVAB (for seniors who sign up)

EOCT: Economics

Georgia High School Graduation Test

The Georgia High School Graduation Test is one of the requirements for earning a high school diploma in the state of Georgia. This test is curriculum based, focusing on the parts of the curriculum for grades 9-12. Students are tested in five content areas: English/Language Arts, writing, mathematics, social studies, and science. The tests emphasize critical thinking skills and test content beyond the level of basic competence in the five areas. Students will have five opportunities to take the tests, if necessary, before the end of their twelfth grade year. The first opportunity is the writing assessment in the fall of the junior year. In March of the junior year, students will take the English, math, social studies, and science tests. Students not passing all five exams by the end of their junior year will have four more opportunities before graduation to take exams that they have not passed. A student must pass all five sections of this test in order to receive a diploma from and participate in graduation ceremonies for all Newton County high schools. A student may also substitute a passing score from one of the content area End of Course Tests in lieu of a passing score on the corresponding section of the GHSGT.

COLLEGE ADMISSION TESTING SCHEDULE 2011-2012

ACT Test Dates	Regular Registration Postmark Deadline	Late Registration Postmark Deadline <small>*add additional \$ to test fee</small>
September 10, 2011	August 12, 2011	August 26, 2011
October 22, 2011	September 16, 2011	September 30, 2011
December 10, 2011	November 4, 2011	November 18, 2011
February 11, 2012	January 13, 2012	January 20, 2012
April 14, 2012	March 9, 2012	March 23, 2012
June 9, 2012	May 2, 2012	May 18, 2012

Regular registration fee = \$34.00 Regular test plus writing test = \$49.50

Most colleges require the writing test

Check your registration booklet for the most convenient test center

SAT Test Dates	Regular Registration Postmark Deadline	Late Registration Postmark Deadline <small>*add additional \$ to test fee</small>
October 1, 2011	September 9, 2011	September 21, 2011
November 5, 2011	October 7, 2011	October 21, 2011
December 3, 2011	November 8, 2011	November 20, 2011
January 28, 2012	December 20, 2011	January 13, 2012
May 5, 2012	April 6, 2012	April 20, 2012
June 2, 2012	May 8, 2012	May 22, 2012

Regular registration fee: \$49.00

Check your registration booklet for the most convenient test center

To register online:

ACT = www.actstudent.org

SAT = www.collegeboard.com

SAT vs. ACT: How do the Tests Compare?

What are the differences between the SAT and ACT? They are both standardized tests and factor into the college admissions process. To learn about the differences between the two tests and how they compare, take a look at the chart below.

	SAT	ACT
When is it administered?	Seven times per year	Six times per year
What is the test structure?	Ten-section exam: Three Critical Reading, three Math, three Writing, and one Experimental. The Experimental section is masked to look like a regular section.	Four-section exam: English, Math, Reading, and Science Reasoning. An Experimental section is added to tests on certain dates only, and is clearly experimental.
What is the test content?	Math: up to 9th grade basic geometry and Algebra II. Science: none. Reading: sentence completions, short and long critical reading passages, reading comprehension. Writing: an essay, and questions testing grammar, usage, and word choice.	Math: up to trigonometry. Science: charts, experiments. Reading: four passages, one each of Prose Fiction, Social Science, Humanities, and Natural Science. English: stresses grammar. Writing: though listed as optional, most colleges require this portion of the test.
Is there a penalty for wrong answers?	Yes	No
How is the test scored?	200-800 per section, added together for a combined score. A 2400 is the highest possible combined score.	1-36 for each subject, averaged for a composite score. A 36 is the highest possible composite score.
Are all scores sent to schools?	Yes. If a student requests a score report be sent to specific colleges, the report will include the scores the student received on every SAT taken.	No. There is a "Score Choice" option. Students can choose which schools will receive their scores AND which scores the schools will see.
Are there other uses for the exams?	Scholarship purposes.	Scholarship purposes. Certain statewide testing programs.
Best time to register?	At least six weeks before the test date	At least four weeks before the test date
Need more information?	Educational Testing Service (ETS) www.ets.org The College Board (866) 756-7346 www.collegeboard.com	ACT, Inc.: (319) 337-1270 www.actstudent.org

WHAT DOES THIS SCORE MEAN???

Score comparisons between ACT composites, SAT I composites with writing, and SAT I composites without writing.

This chart is an estimate based on current and previous information

ACT Composite	SAT I New Score (Writing)	SAT I Old Score (No writing)
15	1060	740
17	1210	830
19	1350	910
20	1410	950
21	1500	990
22	1530	1030
23	1590	1070
24	1650	1110
25	1700	1140
26	1760	1180
27	1820	1220
28	1860	1260
29	1920	1300
30	1980	1340
31	2040	1380
32	2130	1420
33	2190	1470
34	2260	1520
35	2340	1580
36	2400	1600

Sources: 1) College Board, Data Extrapolated; 2) ACT concordance study

ACT/SAT TEST PREPARATION RESOURCES

Prepared 2008-2009

Prices and availability may have changed since form was published.

BOOKS

ACT

Kaplan ACT, 2008 Edition w/CD Rom—Kaplan, \$32.00
Cracking the ACT, 2007 Edition—Princeton Review, \$19.95
Procrastinator's Guide to the ACT 2007—Kaplan, \$16.00
The Real ACT Prep Guide—actstudent.org, \$19.95

SAT

SAT/ACT/PSAT 2007 Platinum Edition w/CD Rom—Kaplan, \$49.99
Barron's SAT 2400: Aiming for the Perfect Score—Barron's, \$16.99
Cracking the SAT, 2007 Edition—The Princeton Review, \$19.95
Cracking the SAT, 2007 Edition w/DVD—The Princeton Review, \$33.95
Kaplan SAT, 2008 Edition: Premier Program w/CD Rom—Kaplan, \$35.00
The Official SAT Study Guide—CollegeBoard, \$19.95
11 Practice Tests for the SAT/PSAT, 2007—The Princeton Review, \$19.95

ONLINE COURSES/STUDY

ACT/SAT

ACT Online Prep—actstudent.org, \$19.95 for one year
ACT Online Course—Kaplan, \$299.00
SAT Online Course—Kaplan, \$399.00
Gacollege411.org—free ACT/SAT test preparation
The Official SAT Online Course—CollegeBoard ***offered free by the state of Georgia—visit <http://www.doe.k12.ga.us>**

This handout is not intended to endorse any particular product or company. Please use your judgment as you research and purchase any test preparation resources. There are many products available on the market, so please pick out the one that best suits your needs and study habits. Also, check with the school and county library for materials. This is not an exhaustive list.

GUIDE TO THE UNIVERSITY SYSTEM OF GEORGIA ADMISSION STANDARDS

The University System of Georgia's College Preparatory Curriculum (CPC)

The University System of Georgia requires that students complete the CPC to ensure that they are able to succeed at the college level.

The CPC Consists of 17 Carnegie Units*

4 Carnegie Units	College Preparatory English
4 Carnegie Units	College Preparatory Mathematics
4 Carnegie Units	College Preparatory Science
3 Carnegie Units	College Preparatory Social Science
2 Carnegie Units	Foreign Language (2 units of same language)

* A Carnegie Unit is a full academic year of credit. Your high school guidance counselor can tell you which high school courses will count toward completion of the college preparatory curriculum.

University System of Georgia Four-Year University Freshman Comparisons

Colleges and Universities	Average SAT Verbal	Average ACT Math	Average Freshman HS GPA
Research Universities	603	620	3.59
Georgia Institute of Technology	641	687	3.72
Georgia State University	540	545	3.31
University of Georgia	615	622	3.65
Regional Universities	535	536	3.07
Georgia Southern University	546	552	3.08
Valdosta State University	518	511	3.05
State Universities	513	507	3.04
Albany State University	460	455	2.93
Armstrong Atlantic State University	515	506	3.07
Augusta State University	492	487	2.85
Clayton College & State University	498	487	2.91
Columbus State University	507	496	2.99
Fort Valley State University	453	448	2.84
Georgia College & State University	562	558	3.20
Georgia Southwestern State University	498	498	3.17
Kennesaw State University	535	532	3.18
North Georgia College & State University	546	533	3.30
Savannah State University	439	437	2.84
Southern Polytechnic State University	550	574	3.17
State University of West Georgia	515	506	2.97

University System of Georgia Four-Year University
Minimum Testing Admission Requirements*

Colleges and Universities	SAT Critical Reading	SAT Math	ACT English	ACT Math
Research Universities				
Georgia Institute of Technology	590-680	650-730	25-30	27-31
Georgia State University	430	400	17	17
University of Georgia	1150-1310 (Combined CR and Math)		24-30 (Overall Composite)	
Regional Universities				
Georgia Southern University	1000 (Combined CR and Math)		21 (Overall Composite)	
Valdosta State University	440	410	18	17
State Universities				
Albany State University	430	400	18	16
Armstrong Atlantic State University	460	430	19	18
Augusta State University	430	400	17	17
Clayton College & State University	430	400	17	17
Columbus State University	490	460	20	19
Fort Valley State University	430	400	17	17
Georgia College & State University	1050-1180 (Combined CR and Math)		23-26 (Overall Composite)	
Georgia Southwestern State University	430	400	17	17
Kennesaw State University	490	460	20	19
North Georgia College & State University	1020-1100 (Combined CR and Math)		22-24 (Overall Composite)	
Savannah State University	430	400	17	17
Southern Polytechnic State University	500	500	21	21
State University of West Georgia	430	410	17	17

Effective Fall semester 2011, colleges including two year colleges shall require one of the following: test scores and minimum Freshmen Index criteria or minimum high school GPA and placement testing. The Freshmen Index is: $FI = 500 \times (\text{GPA}) + \text{SAT Verbal/Critical Reading} + \text{SAT Math}$ or $FI = 500 \times (\text{GPA}) + (\text{ACT Composite} \times 42) + 88$.

The minimum FI required for admission to a: research university (ex: UGA) is 2500; regional university (ex: Georgia College & State University) is 2040; state university (ex: North Georgia College) is 1940; or state of two-year college (ex: Georgia Perimeter College) is 1830. In addition to the FI, students must have a minimum SAT verbal score of 430 and Math score of 400 (or their ACT equivalents) for admission. Students without these minimum scores but with SAT scores of at least 330 Verbal and 310 math may be considered for admission to a two year college, but will be required to exempt or exit learning support in the areas of deficiency.

Currently, the two-year colleges of the University System of Georgia do NOT require ACT or SAT scores for admission. If you choose to take the ACT or SAT and meet certain scores, you may exempt certain placement testing requirements.

Admission requirements change from year to year. Please be sure to check your school's website for any updates to the requirements. Some schools do not post minimum requirements; in that case a middle 50% range is given. Due to increasing competitiveness, schools do not guarantee admission even if minimum requirements are met. For more information, look at averages for four-year universities given on the preceding page.

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SCHOLARSHIP PREPARATION TIPS

- Start Early! There are many scholarship opportunities available throughout high school, especially during your senior year.
- Study hard to raise your GPA. Scholarship committees are interested in proof that a student has worked hard in high school.
- Work on test-taking tips and strategies. Scholarship committees often require high ACT or SAT scores.
- Get involved! Extracurricular activities are important in the eyes of scholarship committees.
- Many scholarships are either based solely on a student's community service record, or community service plays a major role in whether or not a student receives a scholarship.
- Work on your high school resume. Most scholarship committees require that you turn one in with your application.
- Make sure that you have a few teachers you can count on to write letters of recommendation for you. Quite a few scholarships require at least one letter of recommendation.
- If you begin to feel overwhelmed, see if a parent can help you fill out basic information on scholarship applications.
- Work on your writing skills. Many scholarships have an essay requirement. Also, don't think you have to write a unique essay for each scholarship. Many have similar topics, and you can cut and paste essays to fit your needs.

Sample Resume

John Doe

111 Main Street
Covington, GA 30014
(678) 555-1212
doe.john@aol.com

Life Goals:

After high school, I plan to participate in a college ROTC program while pursuing a major in international studies. After completing my military service, I would like to go to law school and eventually practice international law.

Accomplishments and Awards:

President of Student Council, 2007
Treasurer of Student Council, 2006
President of Junior Class, 2006
Governor's Honors Program, Social Studies, 2005
Air Force Academy Summer Program, 2005
Eagle Scout, 2004
Boy's State Program, 2004

School Activities:

Captain of the Football Team, 2007
Football Team, Running Back, 2004-2007
Student Council, 2004-2007
Secretary of Interact, 2007
Interact Club, 2004-2007
Yearbook Editor, 2007
Yearbook Staff, 2004-2007

Community/Church Activities:

The Boy Scouts of America, 12 years
First United Methodist Church, President of UMYF
First United Methodist Church, Youth Council, 2003-2007
Keep Covington Clean, Volunteer, 2003-2007
Washington Street Community Center, Volunteer, 2004-2007

Work Activities:

The Rockdale Citizen Publishing Company, June 2006 to present
Advertising Layout Assistant, approximately 25 hours per week
McDonald's, September 2005-June 2006
Drive-Through Crew, approximately 15 hours per week

COMPLETING THE COUNTDOWN TO COLLEGE!

Checklist for 12th Graders

General Time Frame	College Admissions & Career Planning	Testing	Financial Planning
AUGUST—SEPTEMBER	<p>*Think about what you want out of college and use GCIS, www.gcis.peachnet.edu, and http://www.gacollege411.org/ for research. Ask your counselor for the GCIS password so that you can use it at home.</p> <p>*Review your graduation status with your counselor by the end of August.</p> <p>*Check with the colleges you are considering for their admissions procedures and deadlines. Be sure to ask which admissions tests are required.</p> <p>Tip—Never limit your college choices to just one school. You should always do research on at least two or three schools in case your first choice doesn't work out.</p> <p>*Most colleges prefer that you apply online through their website or www.gacollege411.org</p> <p>Tip—Applications and catalogs are available in your college/career center, online on the college web site, and at PROBE fairs.</p> <p>Tip—Be sure to request transcripts, recommendations, etc. at least two weeks before application deadlines.</p> <p>*Select two teachers and another adult not related to you and request general letters of recommendation to use now and later. Letter guidelines are available from your college advisor.</p> <p>*Arrange campus visits and interviews if recommended.</p> <p>*Assume a leadership role in the extracurricular activities in which you participate.</p> <p>*Attend Newton County's PROBE fair at Alcovy High School</p>	<p>*Check with all colleges you are considering and ask what their testing preferences are.</p> <p>*Register for ACT or SAT online courses as needed. A list of other test preparation sources is on your school's website.</p> <p>Tip—Check the college admission test schedule for all registration deadlines for ACT and SAT tests.</p> <p>Tip—Consider purchasing various test preparation software. http://www.kaplan.com</p> <p>*Be sure to keep up your grades. Your GPA will play a strong role in whether or not you are accepted into a competitive college.</p> <p>*Now that college admissions tests have required or optional writing elements, be sure to practice your writing skills. If you struggle in this area, ask a teacher for extra help.</p>	<p>*Update your high school resume.</p> <p>Tip—check out the National Association of Student Financial Aid Administrators website: www.nasfaa.org</p> <p>*Check the HOPE website, http://www.gsfc.org/HOPE/Index.cfm, for requirements that will apply to your graduating class. Make sure you stay on track!</p> <p>*Good sources on scholarships and financial aid are: GCIS, http://www.gacollege411.org, FastWeb.com, http://www.collegeanswer.com, and http://www.fafsa.ed.gov</p> <p>Tip—avoid scholarship scams. If you are asked for money, or if something seems too good to be true, it may be questionable. Check http://www.ftc.gov/bcp/conline/edcams/scholarship/ for answers to your questions.</p> <p>*Discover how the military can help pay for college through ROTC scholarships, academy appointments, or educational benefits for enlisting. Check www.myfuture.com for information.</p> <p>*Research cooperative education at colleges you are interested in attending. This is a great way to pay for your college education while gaining relevant work experience at the same time.</p> <p>*Athletes—complete and mail the NCAA student release form. Check with your student records office or your coach for this form. http://www.naaclearinghouse.net is also a good resource.</p>
OCTOBER	<p>*Continue your college research and/or application process.</p> <p>*Be aware first round early decision/early action deadlines can be as early as mid-October, many college-specific scholarships have October deadlines, and some ROTC scholarships have application due dates before November 1.</p> <p>*Give your counselor any school reports that must be filled out.</p>	<p>*Continue studying for the ACT and SAT, and sign up for any online courses you might need.</p>	<p>*Write or email college financial aid offices for financial aid information from the specific colleges in which you are interested.</p> <p>IMPORTANT: Always let your counselor know about any scholarship offers you have received.</p> <p>*Register for the CSS PROFILE if you are interested in private schools which require it.</p>

<p style="text-align: center;">NOVEMBER—DECEMBER</p>	<p>*Finalize the personal essay you will need for many college applications. Have a teacher proofread the essay when you are finished.</p> <p>*Keep records of all correspondence.</p> <p>*Attend sessions with college representatives who visit your school.</p> <p>Tip—with the implementation of the HOPE scholarship, admission standards at Georgia colleges have become much stricter.</p> <p>Example: UGA Admitted Student Profile 2009 Freshmen: 4,686 total; Avg. SAT score: 1263; Avg. GPA: 3.8 97 percent of in-state freshmen earned the HOPE Scholarship.</p>	<p>*Take the ASVAB. This exam provides helpful vocational aptitude feedback.</p> <p>*Take SAT II subject tests if they are required by your college.</p>	<p>*Continue working on a college financial plan with your parents. Avoid loans if possible.</p> <p>*Check with scholarship websites for updated scholarship reports.</p> <p>*Some ROTC applications and some military academy applications are due in December. Check dates for accuracy.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">JANUARY—MARCH</p>	<p>*Observe college deadlines for admissions, financial aid, testing, and housing.</p> <p>Tip—January 1 is the usual deadline for applying to many selective colleges.</p> <p>*Maintain good grades and continue to sign up for rigorous courses. Final acceptance depends on your final transcript.</p>	<p>*Read! Review the college bound reading list available on your school’s website.</p> <p>*Continue working to improve writing skills.</p>	<p>*Remember that most local scholarship applications are due in February – contact the local scholarship donor directly.</p> <p>*Attend the Newton County FAFSA seminar</p> <p>*Complete FAFSA, CSS PROFILE, and any other institutional financial aid forms. Each school in the state of Georgia sets their own financial aid deadline—check carefully!</p> <p>*Check your selective service status—this affects federal aid eligibility for males.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">APRIL—JUNE</p>	<p>*Most selective colleges announce admissions decisions in April. Make sure and reply by May.</p> <p>*Sign and return all required forms and deposits to colleges by the required deadlines.</p> <p>*At graduation practice, fill out a final transcript request for the college you are planning to attend.</p> <p>Tip—Writing thank you notes to people who have been helpful to you this year will establish contacts for your future.</p>	<p>*Advanced Placement Exams are given nationally in May in high schools. Be sure to have your scores sent to the college that you are most interested in attending.</p> <p>*Plan for a productive summer—freshman orientation, summer employment, or enroll for your college’s summer term.</p> <p>Tip—Don’t take the ACT or SAT too often. Scores may improve with the second and third tests and then begin to decline.</p>	<p>*Carefully review financial aid award notices from colleges. Call the financial aid office if you have any questions.</p> <p>*Compare the amount of money you will have left to pay at each college before making your final decision.</p> <p>*Notify aid offices in writing of your decision to accept or decline any offer you have received. Find out when school charges are due and pay them before the deadlines.</p> <p>Tip—Be wary of opening credit card accounts while in college. The debts you incur will affect your credit for many years.</p>

INTERNET RESOURCES FOR COLLEGE AND FINANCIAL AID

Please note: Internet sites listed were valid as of June 4, 2008

Scholarship Databases and Scholarship Searches

- FastWeb: www.fastweb.com Custom scholarship information and e-mail updates.
- The Financial Aid Information Page: www.finaid.org Described as a one-stop shop for financial aid information. Endorsed by the National Association of Student Financial Aid Administrators.
- Georgia Career Information System: www.gcic.peachnet.edu Allows students to search for scholarships by category. See counselor for password.
- Scholarships.com: www.scholarships.com Allows students to search for scholarship information
- College Board's Scholarship Search: www.collegeboard.com
- www.collegeanswer.com/index.jsp Sallie Mae's free, comprehensive going-to-college internet destination, where students and parents can learn about financial aid and search for scholarships. Rated best of its kind online by *Forbes* magazine.

Avoiding Scholarship Scams (Do NOT give out your SSN or pay any money for scholarship information without speaking with a counselor first)

- Federal Trade Commission: www.ftc.gov/bcp/online/edcams/scholarships
- FinAid's Scam Alert: www.finaid.org Provides links to press releases, documents, lists of suspicious companies, and other information to avoid being victimized.
- Better Business Bureau: www.bbb.org
- United States Postal inspection Service (USPIS): www.usps.gov/postalinspectors/fraud/welcome.htm

Student Athletes

- NCAA Guide for the College Bound Student Athlete: www.ncaa.org/library/general/cbsa/2007-08/2007-08_cbsa.pdf
- Applicant Clearinghouse registration: www.ncaaclearinghouse.net

Minority Students

- Black Excel College: www.blackexcel.org Admission and scholarship information.
- United Negro College Fund Participating Schools: www.uncf.org Scholarship search by major, classification, achievements, or state.
- The National Hispanic Scholarship Fund: www.hsf.net

Students with Disabilities

- National Council for Support of Disability Issues: www.ncsd.org
- Alexander Graham Bell Association for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing: www.agbell.org

Military

- My Future: www.myfuture.com The U.S. Armed Forces have collaborated on a Web site which has links to each service.
- Service Academies: West Point: www.usma.edu U.S. Naval Academy: www.usna.edu
U.S. Air Force Academy: www.usafa.edu

National Service/Job Corps

- AmeriCorps: www.americorps.org
- Job Corps: <http://jobcorps.dol.gov>

Cooperative Education

- National Commission for Cooperative Education: www.co-op.edu

Planning Ahead

- College Parents of America: www.collegeparents.org Information about saving for college.

- American Council on Education financial aid guide for students/parents: www.collegeispossible.org
- www.ed.gov/thinkcollege This U.S. Department of education web site has special sections for parents whose children have not yet entered high school.
- State 529 Savings Plans: <http://www.gacollege411.org/GACollegeSavingsPlan/default.asp>
- Upromise college savings plan: www.upromise.com

Applying for Financial Aid

- FAFSA on-line: www.fafsa.ed.gov
- CSS PROFILE: <http://profileonline.collegeboard.com> PROFILE registration and Q & A (for exclusive private schools only)

On-Line Financial Aid Updates

- HOPE Scholarship and other Georgia Student Aid Programs: www.gacollege411.org
Make sure to check changes to the HOPE program effective for the CLASS OF 2007 and beyond
- National Association of Student Financial Aid Administrators: www.nasfaa.org

College Information, Applications, and Career Planning

- www.usg.edu Information on all of the University System of Georgia schools.
- www.gacollege411.org A comprehensive web site designed by the University System of Georgia to provide students with college admissions, career and financial aid information, and on-line applications.
- www.princetonreview.com Provides over 5000 current school profiles, 700 online applications, as well as a career quiz and information on career and technical programs.
- <http://nces.ed.gov/collegenavigator/> A basic look at more than 9000 schools by the U.S. Dept. of Education
- www.scholarstuff.com Provides links to home pages of colleges around the world.
- Petersons Undergraduate Study: www.petersons.com/ugchannel
- The Campus Tours Index: www.campustours.com Has interactive tours of colleges across the U.S.
- College View: www.collegeview.com Has virtual tours and electronic applications.
- U.S. News Online: www.usnews.com Provides rankings and information about money/jobs/colleges.
- Mapping Your Future: <http://mappingyourfuture.org/> Provides information and services on career planning, college selection, and financial aid. The site is sponsored by guaranty agencies who administer the Federal Family Educational Loan Program.
- Careers and Colleges: www.careersandcolleges.com Has a virtual guidance counselor section
- Bureau of Labor Statistics: <http://stats.bls.gov>
- Community Colleges: www.aacc.nche.edu
- Women's Colleges: www.univsource.com/womens.htm
- www.commonapp.org Allows you to complete and submit the Common Application completely over the internet.

STUDY ABROAD

- Studyabroad.com Search by country, language, or subject

Make sure to check the websites of all schools that you are interested in for information on admissions, scholarships, financial aid, degree programs, and much more

Updated 2008-2009

Narrowing Your College Choices

Finding the right college can be a difficult decision. One bit of advice is to research more than one school. Some students have their hearts set on a specific school. There is nothing wrong with that...unless you are not accepted to that school. Then what choice are you left with? With some careful research and planning, it is not hard to find colleges that will appeal to you. The following are some examples of areas you might want to look into when considering your college choices.

Academic Reputation

What is the school's general reputation?
What is the reputation of your major?

Curriculum or Program

Is my intended major available? Is there a strong liberal arts program?

Academic Support Services

Are special services such as tutoring available? What services do you need?

Class Size and Teaching Approach

How big are the classes? Do professors keep regular office hours? Are classes taught by professors or teaching assistants?

Affiliation of Institution

Public, Private, Religious, Vocational, Two-year, Four-year, Single-sex, Co-Ed, Military, Technical

Academic Facilities

Computer/Science labs, facilities, library

Retention, Graduation, & Placement Rates

What percentage of students return for their sophomore year? What is the graduation rate of entering students? What percentage of students is placed in jobs in their field? What percentage of students go on to graduate/professional school?

Size of Undergraduate Student Body

Ranges from less than 500 to 15,000 Plus

Location

Anywhere in U.S., multi-state region,
in state, immediate area (75—100
miles), commuting area, or foreign country

College Setting

Small, Medium or Large City
Suburban, Small town or Rural

Campus Environment

Is the campus community lively and spirited? Are people I meet on campus friendly? Is the faculty accessible? Is there a diverse student population? How present is security on campus? Is undergraduate housing comfortable? How is the food?

Activities

Sports, Community/religious activities, Social opportunities, Cultural activities, Greek Life

Costs

Costs of tuition, room, and board

Availability of grants/scholarships

Availability of loans

Availability of part-time jobs/campus jobs

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Important:

- Make sure you apply to more than one college. It is a general rule to apply to three schools: a dream school, a school you would like to attend, and a school where you feel sure you will be admitted.
- Not all colleges require essays, teacher recommendations, and/or counselor recommendations. Check each school's requirements carefully.
- Each school's records clerk handles transcript requests. You can pick up a form from her. Final high school transcripts are not available until you have graduated from high school. Final high school transcript request forms are filled out at graduation practice. These transcripts are typically mailed during the second week of June.
- Even if your ACT/SAT scores are on your transcript, most colleges do not consider those scores to be official. Most colleges across Georgia and the nation require your test scores to be sent directly from the testing center. It is up to you to request those scores to be sent to each college where you plan to apply.
- Make sure you fill out a FAFSA form. Each college in the state of Georgia sets its own financial aid deadline, so be sure to meet your school's deadline. The FAFSA form is the application for federal grants, federal student loans, the federal work study program, and Georgia's HOPE scholarship program.
- Once you have mailed your applications, each college will send you information about whether you have been accepted, financial aid, housing fees, orientation sessions, and any other details that should be taken care of before you enroll.