Dear Class of 2027 Students and Parents/Guardians:

Congratulations! I am excited to work with you this year as you move toward young adulthood. Whether you are headed to work, college, the military, or another endeavor, I hope to support you during this year of transition.

This letter contains information that I hope will answer some common senior year questions. Most of this information (as well as this letter with links to the webpages mentioned throughout) is posted on our GOC Counseling webpage which can be found by clicking on the "Counseling" tab on the GOC homepage or by visiting https://gwinnettonline.gcpsk12.org/counseling/high-school-counseling directly.

Diploma Requirements

First, before you move on to your next step in life, you need to make sure you receive your high school diploma. The high school graduation requirements can be found under High School Planning here https://gwinnettonline.gcpsk12.org/counseling/high-school-counseling/high-school-planning.Your *Senior Application for Graduation* that outlines your remaining graduation requirements is included with this letter. Students must pass all classes required for graduation with a 70% or better in order to receive their diploma. Parents, you can keep up with your student's grades throughout the year by checking ParentVUE. The name listed on your diploma must match your legal name on your birth certificate. Double check that StudentVUE has your name spelled correctly.

College Admissions

To assist in your post-secondary planning, we have created a College and Career planning page (located in the Counseling tab or direct link: https://gwinnettonline.gcpsk12.org/counseling/high-school-counseling/college-and-career) that has information on college admissions, financial aid, and career readiness. If you are planning on attending college, I also suggest you visit the webpages of the colleges you want to apply to very early in your senior year (Seriously, now would be the best time to start!). Every college has different deadlines, and the application process is unique to each school. Our webpage gives you some general guidelines, but you are responsible for knowing the requirements of the schools you want to apply to. A good place to start is the college's "freshman class profile" or "admitted student profile." This is a summary of information on the students accepted at that particular college the previous year. You can compare your information (such as GPA and test scores) to those of the "average" student that was admitted to help determine whether a particular college is a good fit for you.

You are also encouraged to join us at GOC for our annual Apply to College Day in November (specific date TBD). Get free college application support and personalized assistance to help you complete your applications with confidence. Don't miss this opportunity to take the next big step toward your future!

SAT/ACT

The SAT and ACT are used to predict your ability to succeed in college and are part of your college application. Review individual college admission webpages to determine your options and note admission requirements. Certain scholarships may require SAT or ACT scores as well, so registering for these tests is encouraged. Technical colleges, including Gwinnett Tech, do not typically require the SAT or ACT. If necessary, these schools will have you take a placement test called the Accuplacer after you apply to the school. If you know you are going to a technical college, there is no need to take the SAT or ACT.

Fee waivers are available for students who are on free or reduced lunch. If you need one, please email GOCTesting@gcpsk12.org **at least** ten days prior to the registration deadline. If you need help registering for the SAT or ACT, let me know! We can schedule a registration help session that you can attend virtually.

It is important to know your college admission deadlines and schedule your SAT/ACT test at least six weeks prior to the admission deadline to ensure your scores arrive in time. Typically, you do not need to take both tests. Nearly all schools look only at your highest score on EITHER test. However, if you are applying to a very competitive college, you will likely want to try both tests since there is no way of predicting which one you will do better on.

SchooLinks

SchooLinks is a comprehensive website that helps you plan your next steps after high school with personalized tools for college and career readiness. You can explore colleges, manage your applications, track deadlines, and request transcripts or recommendation letters—all in one place. The platform also connects you to scholarships, financial aid resources, and career assessments that match your interests and goals. With built-in guidance tools and counselor support, SchooLinks makes your transition from high school to college or a career smoother and more organized. A SchooLinks student guide can be found here: https://docs.google.com/presentation/d/1Emw738BE2Wdylj8Avw6ByqEjJkB8ptQ15ZmDxDDg-TU/edit?usp=sharing

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GEORGIA MATCH

GEORGIA MATCH is a simple way for you to know where you are eligible for admission (to be admitted to college), based on your high school calculated HOPE grade point average (GPA) through 11th grade. Your GEORGIA MATCH colleges are on your GAfutures Student Dashboard.

The colleges and universities listed on the student's GEORGIA MATCH Dashboard represent a provisional acceptance only and does not guarantee acceptance to a college or university or a specific major/program of study. An official admissions status is determined by the college or university using their admission criteria and the student's final transcript and high school graduation status. You will still need to submit an application to colleges listed on your Student Dashboard. For more information on Georgia Match program visit https://www.gafutures.org/college-planning/georgia-match

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Transcript Requests

As you start completing college and scholarship applications, you will find that you will need to send your official transcript to the colleges you apply to. You may also need official transcripts for scholarship applications. A video tutorial of how to request your transcript via Georgia Futures for in state colleges and other transcript requests form can be found on the "Senior" page or direct link: https://gwinnettonline.gcpsk12.org/counseling/high-school-counseling/senior-information. You can also request your official transcript be sent to both in-state and out-of-state colleges via your SchoolLinks account.

Financial Aid/Scholarships

College can be affordable! An overview of financial aid is available on our webpage https://gwinnettonline.gcpsk12.org/counseling/financial-aidscholarships.The primary sources of financial aid for college are federal and state aid, school-based scholarships, and private scholarships. To apply for federal and state aid (including the HOPE and Zell Miller scholarship), you complete an application called the FAFSA. A link to the FAFSA and information on completing it are available on the webpage listed above. We also have links to several different scholarship search engines on our webpage. Deadlines vary widely, so just like with college admissions, make sure you are mindful of deadlines. If you are requesting recommendation letters for a scholarship or college application, it is important to ask your recommender several weeks in advance for a letter. To request a letter of recommendation from your counselor or one of your teachers, please complete the "Brag Sheet" found in SchooLinks under the "College Applications" tab. Notify your counselor via email regarding specifics of the letter you are requesting. Local Scholarship opportunities are also posted on this page. I suggest you check this site frequently throughout the year. Some of the scholarships posted here have very small applicant pools which increases your chances of receiving them.

Hope/Zell Miller Scholarships

The HOPE and Zell Miller scholarships are specific to Georgia residents and awarded based on your final HOPE GPA. The Georgia Student Finance Commission calculates HOPE GPAs based on academic courses taken while in high school. Your HOPE GPA is NOT the same as your GCPS GPA and it is not printed on your transcript. You can check your HOPE GPA on the Georgia Futures webpage: www.gafutures.org. GOC must have your social security number on file for you to be able to view your HOPE GPA and for you to be eligible for HOPE/ZELL funding. Please bring in a copy of your SS card to our Registrar Lea Anne

Cavanaugh if you are missing this required piece of information. You will be able to view your status on your Senior Application for Graduation when it is mailed to your home address during the month of October.

Senior Events and Communication

I hope your senior year is special! There are several events throughout the year that honor the Class of 2027. Please check the GOCOWLS newsletter published and emailed weekly. Make sure that you (parents included) are receiving and reading the newsletters. Announcements include important reminders regarding senior events, college visits, scholarship opportunities, and other senior-specific information. Archives of GOCOWLS can be found here https://gwinnettonline.gcpsk12.org/programs/full-time/student-services/gocowls.

Please feel free to contact your counselor throughout the year via email, text, or phone call. You can also set up an individual senior meeting at your request. Counselors look forward to working with you as you transition from high school to college, work, or other endeavors.

Sincerely,

GOC High School Counseling Team