INNOVATION ACADEMY

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HS CEEB Code: 110387

2026-27 College Resource Guide

JUNIOR/SENIOR YEAR CHECKLIST

SPRING SEMESTER JUNIOR YEAR

- ◊ Explore summer activities that support your goals.
- ◊ Visit college campuses over Spring Break (virtual tours and fairs available on colleges' websites).
- ◊ Make sure you are registered for the correct courses based on graduation and specific college requirements. DO NOT overload yourself!
- ◊ Take the SAT/ACT. [Subject Test(s) if needed.]
- ◊ Register with the NCAA if pursuing an athletic scholarship at a Division 1 or 2 institution. Complete application at www.ncaa.org and send transcripts and test scores to NCAA.
- ◊ If applying to colleges over the summer or in early August, request an official final transcript before the end of the school year.
- ◊ Explore your interest in a college major and career: take the Strengths Explorer and Career Interest Profiler in Schoolinks under the Careers tab.
- ◊ Explore careers, ask questions, and discover career opportunities in your area and across the nation using the Schoolinks Career Center.
- ◊ Ask teachers and counselors for recommendations and provide them with materials and deadlines. Give all parties 10 school days to complete recommendations and forms.

HOPE, Financial Aid, & Apply to College Brochures

SCAN ME!
Scan QR Code for additional resources on the HOPE Scholarship, paying for college, FAFSA checklist, and more!
Or go to: https://gafutures.org/resources/student-resources/marketing-materials/

SUMMER BEFORE SENIOR YEAR

- ◊ Engage in activities that enhance your college and scholarship applications.
- ◊ Narrow down your college list.
- ◊ Start working on admissions essays.

FALL SEMESTER SENIOR YEAR

- ◊ Take charge in your extracurricular activities and continue to demonstrate leadership.
- ◊ Submit the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) which becomes available in December (the earlier, the better) at the Federal Student Aid website.
- ◊ Parents should prepare to complete the CSS/Profile® for financial aid as early as October if you plan on applying to private colleges.
- ◊ Order and send official ACT or SAT scores and your high school transcript to all the colleges you apply to.
- ◊ Submit all application materials before deadlines.
- ◊ Confirm materials have been received by colleges, including letters of recommendations and official scores by logging into the college's admissions portal or your common app portal.

SPRING SEMESTER SENIOR YEAR

- ◊ Apply to any additional colleges you're still considering.
- ◊ Continue to keep up your grades as you wait to hear decisions from schools.
- ◊ Apply for housing.
- ◊ Visit colleges to which you've been accepted if you still need help making a decision.
- ◊ Check financial aid award letters in April and consider appealing if you have not been awarded a fair amount by a particular college.
- ◊ Decide on a college and send the Enrollment Confirmation Docs to the college by the date specified.

COLLEGE ADMISSION TESTING

Typically most colleges require standardized test scores. SAT or ACT are both accepted by most colleges. Some colleges require the SAT subject test/s in addition to the SAT or ACT. **Use IA Code 110387 when registering to ensure that your score is sent to Innovation Academy.** ***SAT and ACT Fee waivers are available for qualified students. See your counselor.***

ACT | act.org

Test Date	Registration Deadline
Sept 19, 2026	September 1, 2026
Oct 17, 2026	Sept 11, 2026
Dec 12, 2026	Nov 6, 2026
Feb 27, 2027	Jan 22, 2027
Apr 10, 2027	Mar 5, 2027
Jun 12, 2027	May 7, 2027
July 10, 2027	June 4, 2027

SAT | collegeboard.org

Test Date	Registration Deadline
Aug 22, 2026	Aug 7, 2026
Sept 12, 2026	Sept 1, 2026
Oct 3, 2026	Sept 18, 2026
Nov 7, 2026	Oct 23, 2026
Dec 5, 2026	Nov 20, 2026
Mar 6, 2027	Feb 19, 2027
May 1, 2027	Apr 16, 2027
June 5, 2027	May 21, 2027

TEST PREPARATION

- **Khan Academy offers free personalized practice for the SAT. www.khanacademy.org/SAT**
- **Free ACT help through ACT.org. https://www.act.org/content/act/en/products-and-services/the-act/test-preparation/free-act-test-prep.html**
- **Free SAT and ACT test prep is available through Streamable Learning. To access the videos, go to Classlink> Safari Montage> Streamable Learning> Recordings> Choose ACT Prep or SAT Prep and Submit.**
- **The Atlanta-Fulton Public library offers free test prep. You must have an active AFPLS library card. You can find Peterson's Test Prep and Learning Express with Job and Career Accelerator at https://www.fulcolibrary.org/teen-subject/college-prep/.**

COLLEGE ADMISSIONS: WHAT IS RIGHT FOR ME?

Rolling Cycle: admissions decisions are usually made within 6 weeks of submitting the application. No specific deadlines.

Early Action/Admission/Notification: receive a decision earlier than the standard response date BUT are NOT required to accept the admission offer or make a deposit prior to May 1.

Early Decision: **BINDING CONTRACT**–commit to enroll at the college if admitted and offered a satisfactory financial aid package. Application deadlines are usually in November to December with a mid-to-late December notification. You can only apply to one Early Decision school.

Regular Decision: receive a decision at the standard response date.

A NOTE ON ATHLETICS

- Seniors must have 17.0 credits when school starts in August to be eligible for fall sports, per GHSA rules.
- There are specific requirements for each Division if you hope to be NCAA eligible in college.
- See https://www.ncaa.org/student-athletes/future to register and for more information.
- Request a transcript be sent to NCAA at the end of junior year by going to www.gafutures.org.
- NCAA #853204

*Counselors do not make recommendations or advise on course selection regarding NCAA eligibility.

Source: Princeton Review, College Board , Applerouth, NCAA, Naviance and ACT.org

SCHOLARSHIPS AND FINANCIAL AID



HOPE, Zell Miller, HOPE Grant and Zell Miller Grant

Student Social Security Number needs to be filed with the school.

Georgia's HOPE Scholarship is available to Georgia residents who have demonstrated academic achievement. The scholarship provides money to assist students with their educational costs of attending a HOPE eligible college in Georgia. See details on eligibility and award amounts **www.gafutures.org.**

HOPE Scholarship

3.0 HOPE GPA at the time of graduation as calculated by GAFutures. *GPA is not rounded up.* ***Four Rigor courses required.*** Awards portion of standard tuition.

Zell Miller Scholarship

3.7 HOPE GPA and a 1200 (CR+M) on the SAT on a single testing or 26 Composite on the ACT. ***Four Rigor courses required.*** Awards full standard rate of tuition.

HOPE Grant and Zell Miller Grant

No high school GPA requirement. This program is for students seeking a technical certificate or diploma.

A student's High School HOPE Scholarship GPA Calculation is not the same as his or her high school GPA. Grades earned in 9th through 12th grade in core content areas along with some career tech courses are included and converted to a 4.0 scale. *Courses taken in middle school for high school credit are not included in GPA and do not count toward rigor requirements.*
*The 7 points awarded for honors, AP and college courses are removed.
*Numeric grades are converted to a 4.0 scale.
*For AP and college courses where the unweighted grade is a "B" or 3.0 or a "C" or 2.0 points, an additional 0.5 weight is added.

Details on HOPE GPA calculations and individual HOPE GPA can be found by logging into www.gafutures.org.

FAQ

Q: Do I have to pay for scholarship searches? How can I search for scholarships?

A: You should never have to pay for scholarship searches. Here are a few free recommended sites:

- Schoolinks through Classlink
- www.gafutures.org
- studentaid.gov Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA-HOPE Application)
- https://scholarshipamerica.org/students/browse-scholarships/

Q: How do I search for merit aid?

A: Each college will list their scholarships on their Financial Aid or Scholarship page. Scholarship deadlines are usually earlier than regular admissions deadlines. Check with each college to see their process for applying and their deadline. Also check www.meritaid.com.

ACADEMIC COMMON MARKET

A tuition-savings program for college students in the 15 SREB member states who want to pursue degrees that are not offered by their in-state institutions. Students can enroll in out-of-state institutions that offer their degree program and pay the in-state tuition rates.

For more information visit www.sreb.org/academic-common-market.

FAFSA

The Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) is the form that colleges use to award financial aid. Submitting it is your key to accessing grants, scholarships, work-study programs and student loans FAFSA opens in early fall and must be completed each year.

GFAPP

The Georgia Student Finance Application (GSFAPP) is the application used to apply for HOPE/Zell Miller Scholarships/Grants, Georgia Tuition Equalization Grant and the IPSE Grant.

CSS profile

The CSS PROFILE is required by many private colleges and universities to determine your eligibility for non-government financial aid, such as the institution's own grants, loans and scholarships. https://csspro-file.collegeboard.org/

Source: GSFC, Collegeboard, Academic Common Market

COLLEGE SELECTION PROCESS

1. **Begin by searching colleges that interest you. Some factors to consider include size, location, cost of attendance, major, student life, etc. Then, divide your choices into three categories by your chance of being admitted.**
   Applying to at least two schools in each category will help you avoid aiming your sights too low and missing out on a chance to get into a competitive program or aiming too high and not getting in anywhere at all. Remember to apply to four or more colleges minimum. *Sometimes safety schools can end up offering a hefty scholarship or acceptance into the Honors Program*.

Safety/Backup	Target/Good Fit	Dream/Reach
Greater than 60% chance of admission	30-60% chance of admission; you stand a competitive chance of getting in	Less than 30% chance of admission
Your Numeric Average/Test Scores are above average	Your academic record/test scores are in line with the average incoming class (compare with freshmen profile)	These are schools that present the toughest challenge in terms of admission selectivity and/or cost

2. **Use Schoolinks to search colleges and save the ones of interest in your Schoolinks account. (Fairtest.org is a site that lists colleges that are test optional.)**
3. **To explore your strengths and likes for a major and career, take the Strengths Explorer and Career Interest Profiler in Schoolinks under the Careers tab.**

The GPA Mystery

Each college calculates GPAs differently. We encourage students to contact colleges to ask which method of GPA calculation they utilize. **Students should always report their official weighted or unweighted numeric average found on their transcript. DO NOT recalculate your GPA unless directed by a college.**

Cumulative GPA

All classes listed on your high school transcript.

Core GPA

Only grades from English, Math, Science, Social Studies, and World Language areas are included.

Numeric Average

Fulton County calculates a numeric average out of 100 and provides a weighted and unweighted GPA (family choice to select one suited to college).

Rank

IA does not rank students.

Georgia Match

Georgia Match is a program implemented by the State of Georgia which matches Georgia students with Georgia schools. Students are sent a list of schools that they match with academically and will offer admission if the student applies. More information is available on GAFutures.

COLLEGE APPLICATION PROCESS

STEP 1: SUBMIT APPLICATION
Most colleges use the Common App, Black Common App, or Coalition App (SCOIR) as their application platform. Some still use their own application systems found on their websites. Some schools in the University System of Georgia offer an application process through the GAFutures.org website. Note any deadlines imposed by the college and plan ahead by four weeks or earlier.

STEP 2: SEND SAT/ACT SCORES
Order your SAT/ACT scores directly from the testing agency. **Plan ahead!** This can take a few weeks. For the SAT, visit www.collegeboard.org; ACT visit www.act.org.

STEP 3: TRANSCRIPT REQUESTS
If you are using Common App, Black Common App, or Coalition App, you do not need to request your transcript. Your counselor will receive a notification to upload your transcript. If you are applying through GAFutures, you can request your transcript directly through GAFutures. For any other official transcript requests, use ScribOrder. Go to https://www.counseling.fcsia.com/request-for-records for more information. **Students may request official transcripts for college or scholarship opportunities after Labor Day.** Transcripts need to be updated with summer classes.

STEP 4: REQUEST RECOMMENDATIONS *(if required)*
If the college you applied to requires a recommendation, adhere to the guidelines established by the college. Ask the teacher if s/he is able to write a recommendation for you. Teacher and counselor requests submitted through Common App generate an email that is sent to the recommender. Be sure to submit this request four weeks in advance. **If *the recommendation must be mailed,*** provide your teacher with a pre-stamped, pre-addressed envelope and allow at least four weeks notice ahead of deadlines.

The FCS IA process for managing recommendation requests is posted on our website each year.