

SENIOR Newsletter



Grafton High School Class of 2027

September 2026

GHS Counseling Department

As you begin your senior year, remember that your school counselor is here to support you every step of the way. Whether you're planning to attend college, enter the workforce, or enlist in the military, we're here to help you navigate the process, explore your options, and stay on track for graduation. Don't hesitate to reach out with questions—we're excited to help you make the most of your final year and prepare for what comes next!

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Senior Meetings

School counselors will meet individually with seniors to discuss important topics such as remaining graduation requirements, application timelines, and planning for college, employment, or military service.

Counselors will begin Senior Meetings on September 16th. Students will receive a pass with their pre-scheduled Senior Meeting date and time. Parents and guardians are encouraged to attend; however, if they would like to be included, for planning purposes, they should notify their student's assigned school counselor by Monday, September 14th.

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Seniors, don't forget to check out SchoolLinks, our college and career readiness platform designed to help you prepare for life after graduation. SchoolLinks helps you discover your interests and strengths, explore careers and colleges, and build a personalized graduation plan that supports your individual goals. It's not just for students heading to college—it's for everyone planning their next steps. You'll also find assigned tasks in SchoolLinks to guide you along the way, so be sure to log in regularly. Plus, all college application materials and submissions will be managed through SchoolLinks, making it your central hub for post-secondary planning.

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ENROLLMENT

EMPLOYMENT

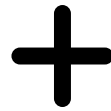
ENLISTMENT

ENROLLMENT



Whether you're heading to a 4-year university, a 2-year community college, or diving into hands-on training at a trade or technical school, there's a path that's right for you! Your post-graduation plans matter—and we're here to help you make them happen. Not sure where to start? We've broken it all down in this issue—check out the sections on college enrollment and career training programs to explore your options!

**common
app**



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When applying to 4-year college, students will use both Common App and SchoolLinks, and each platform plays a different but important role in the process:

Common App

Common App is where students complete and submit their college applications for participating colleges.

Through Common App, students will:

- Fill out their personal information, activities, and essay(s)
- Apply to multiple colleges with one account
- Submit college-specific supplements and application fees

SchoolLinks

SchoolLinks is the official platform used by our school for managing and supporting the college application process. Through SchoolLinks, students will:

- Request transcripts and letters of recommendation
- Track deadlines and submission status for each college
- Complete tasks assigned by their counselor
- Build and update their college list
- Access scholarship resources and career planning tools

How They Work Together

Students will complete their actual applications in Common App, but must link their Common App account to SchoolLinks to ensure schools receive all necessary supporting documents. Once linked, SchoolLinks becomes the hub where counselors and teachers send transcripts and recommendation letters, and where students can track what has been sent. By using both platforms correctly and staying on top of assigned tasks in SchoolLinks, students will be fully equipped to manage their college application process smoothly and efficiently. Let your school counselor know if you need help getting started!

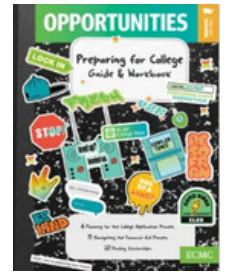


Use a Personal Email When Applying for College Applications

When applying to colleges, universities, and scholarships, be sure to use a personal email account—not your York County School Division (YCSD) email. YCSD may block messages from outside organizations, and you don't want to miss important updates. Additionally, you'll lose access to your YCSD email after graduation, so using a personal email address ensures you continue receiving communication throughout the application process and beyond.

OPPORTUNITIES

Explore your options with the Opportunities book — a free, easy-to-use guide packed with helpful information about planning and paying.



for college, career training, and more. From understanding financial aid to exploring different post-secondary paths, this resource is designed to help you make informed decisions about your future. Check out the digital version to start exploring your opportunities today!



Start your financial aid journey at [FAFSA.gov](https://fafsa.gov)—the official site for the Free Application for

Federal Student Aid. Completing the FAFSA is the first step to accessing federal grants, loans, and some scholarships.

In addition to FAFSA, be sure to research scholarships and grants offered by the colleges you're interested in. Each college or university has its own financial aid requirements, deadlines, and application processes—so it's important to visit their official financial aid websites and stay on top of all due dates.



When it comes to paying for college or career training, financial aid can come in several forms:

- Grants – Free money that doesn't need to be repaid (often based on financial need).
- Scholarships – Free money awarded for academics, talents, leadership, or other achievements.
- Work-Study – Part-time jobs (usually on campus) that help students earn money for expenses.
- Loans – Borrowed money that must be repaid with interest, often after graduation.

Explore all options—and prioritize grants and scholarships first!



Scholarships

Don't forget to use the Scholarship Matching tool in [SchoolLinks](#) to find scholarships that fit you. This tool connects you with local, state, and national scholarships based on your profile, interests, and goals. You can search, save, and apply—all in one place. New opportunities are added regularly, so be sure to check back often and stay ahead of the deadlines. Whether you're headed to a 4-year university, community college, or trade school, there's free money out there—let SchoolLinks help you find it!

For even more scholarship opportunities, explore other trusted platforms like [Scholarships.com](https://scholarships.com) and be sure to also visit the [GHS Counseling Scholarships](#) webpage for tips and additional resources to support your post-secondary plans!

SAT & ACT: What You Need to Know

Taking the [SAT](#) or [ACT](#) can open doors—even if you're applying to test-optional colleges. Many schools still consider scores for scholarships, course placement, or admissions—especially for competitive programs.



If you're planning to test, be mindful of registration deadlines!

- SAT: Upcoming test dates include September 12, October 3, November 7, and December 5
- ACT: Upcoming test dates include September 19, October 17, and December 12

Register early at sat.org or act.org to secure your spot at a local testing center. Not sure if your desired colleges require scores? Visit their admissions websites, SchoolLinks, or talk with your school counselor for guidance.

Letters of Recommendation



As you prepare your college and scholarship applications, be thoughtful and organized when asking for letters of recommendation. Give your teacher, counselor, or employer at least one month's notice—start with a polite in-person request, then follow up with a gentle reminder two weeks before your deadline, especially during the busy fall season.



Senior Information Sheet



Be sure to provide a copy of your completed Senior Information Sheet (required for GHS counselors) to help your recommender write a strong, personalized letter. Counselors cannot complete their portion of your applications without this form, so submit it as early as possible. A little planning goes a long way! The Senior Information Sheet will be emailed to students the week of September 8th.

College Reps Are Coming to GHS! Throughout the fall, admissions representatives from regional colleges and universities will be visiting GHS to share info, answer questions, and connect with students. This is a great opportunity to learn more about schools you're interested in—without leaving campus! Please check the Events in SchoolLinks to sign up for visits. Spots may be limited, so don't wait!



Thinking About Community College?

Community college is a smart, affordable path—especially with Virginia's Transfer (2+2) Program! You can complete two years at a community college, then transfer to a four-year university to finish your degree, saving time and money along the way.

In addition, many community colleges, including Virginia Peninsula Community College (VPCC), offer certificate programs in high-demand fields that can be completed in a year or less, helping you quickly gain skills and enter the workforce.



Explore your options at VPCC.edu, and talk to your school counselor to learn more about programs, transfer pathways, and how to get started!



Interested in Trade School or Workforce Training?

College isn't the only path after graduation—trade schools, apprenticeships, and workforce training programs offer hands-on learning and direct pathways into high-demand careers. Whether you're interested in skilled trades, healthcare, technology, or public service, there are great options across Virginia. Programs like apprenticeships combine paid on-the-job training with classroom instruction, while technical and career colleges offer certificates and credentials in fields like welding, HVAC, nursing, dental assisting, IT, and more—often in two years or less.

Explore Apprenticeship & Workforce Training and Health & Technical Career Colleges on the GHS Counseling page. Talk to your school counselor and check out Virginia's opportunities for career-ready graduates!

Community Service

Community service hours are not required for graduation, but they are recognized or required through certain honor societies and special YCSD programs. Be sure to check the YCSD Program of Studies for full details and submit your hours through the Community Service Log by Spring Break.



Want to Play College Sports?



If you're planning to play Division I or II college athletics, you must register with the NCAA Eligibility Center to ensure you meet academic and amateurism requirements, ideally by early senior year. Visit eligibilitycenter.org to get started, and talk with your school counselor if you have questions.



EMPLOYMENT



If you're heading straight into the workforce after high school, Virginia offers great opportunities to help you get started! The [Virginia Employment Commission](#) (VEC) is a valuable resource for job listings, training programs, and employment support.

Before you begin applying, make sure your resume is polished—use the [SchoolLinks](#) student profile and resume builder to create or update your resume. You can also use SchoolLinks to explore careers, connect with local employers through the Employer Showcase, and discover what jobs align with your strengths and interests.

As you explore job options, think about long-term potential—look for roles with opportunities to grow, and consider pursuing an internship to gain experience. Don't forget to meet with the [GHS Career Coach](#) for personalized guidance, and check out resources like [Virginia Career View](#) and [BigFuture](#) for more career exploration tools.

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**VIRGINIA
CAREERVIEW**

 **BigFuture**

Find a Career That Fits YOU!

Not sure what career is right for you? Start by exploring options that match your interests, strengths, and personality! Learn about the education, skills, salary, job outlook, and work environment for careers that align with who you are.

Use [SchoolLinks](#) to dive into the Career Center—where you can take assessments, explore job profiles, and even connect with opportunities locally and nationally—and check out the tools on the [GHS Counseling Career Exploration](#) webpage for interest, strengths, and personality assessments to help guide your path!

Exploring Careers? Take the ASVAB!

The [ASVAB](#) (Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery) isn't just for students interested in joining the military—it's also a great tool for career exploration. The results can help you identify your strengths and match them to a variety of career paths, both military and civilian.

GHS offers the ASVAB twice a year. The first test will be offered on November 6, 2026, with a second testing opportunity available in the spring. If you're interested in taking the ASVAB, be sure to sign up in SchoolLinks. It's a great way to learn more about yourself and your future options!

Preparing for Employment Starts **NOW**

Whether you're planning to work during or after high school, building strong employability skills—like communication, time management, and teamwork—is key to success. Learning how to navigate job searches, interviews, internships, and workplace relationships will set you apart.

Explore career-focused learning modules in [SchoolLinks](#), like the ones below, to strengthen these skills and get real-world ready. From writing a resume to preparing for interviews, SchoolLinks has the tools to help you feel confident and prepared for your next step!

Employability Skills

Jobs and Internships

Relationship Skills



If you're considering joining the military after graduation, there are countless opportunities to explore. The branches of the U.S. Armed Forces and National Guard offer access to hundreds of training schools and thousands of career paths—from engineering and healthcare to aviation and cybersecurity. This training, along with the leadership and discipline gained through service, can provide a strong advantage in the civilian job market.



U.S. Army



U.S. Navy



U.S. Marine Corps



U.S. Air Force



U.S. Space Force



U.S. Coast Guard

Each branch has its own enlistment qualifications, so it's important to connect with local recruiters or explore more online. Take a look at resources like [Careers in the Military](#) which offers insight into life in the service and helps you decide if it's the right path for you.

Take the ASVAB!

As we shared before, the ASVAB is a valuable tool for career exploration—but it's also a required step for those planning to enlist in the military. Your ASVAB scores help determine your eligibility for enlistment and which military jobs (MOS/AFSC/Rating) you qualify for, making it an important part of shaping your future in the armed services.

GHS offers the ASVAB twice a year—in November and again in the spring. Be sure to sign up in SchoolLinks to reserve a spot!



Meeting with a Recruiter Soon?

Be prepared! Before your meeting, check out “7 Must-Know Questions to Ask Your Recruiter” from [Military.com](#).

- Are the rumors true?
- What are the benefits?
- Should I enlist in the Reserves or go Active Duty?
- What are the disqualifiers?
- Does the military fit my ambitions?
- Will I have to go to war?
- Where can I do more research?

These questions will help you get the information you need to make an informed decision about your future in the military.

Looking Beyond Enlistment? Explore ROTC & Military Service Academies

If you're interested in serving your country but want to combine military training with a college education, consider applying to a [Military Service Academy](#) or enrolling in a [Corps of Cadets](#) or [ROTC](#) (Reserve Officers' Training Corps) program. ROTC programs are offered at many colleges and allow you to earn your degree while preparing to become a commissioned officer in the military—often with scholarship opportunities. Similarly, a Corps of Cadets is a structured, military-style leadership program within a college or university with scholarship and commissioning opportunities. U.S. Service Academies offer a fully funded college education in exchange for military service after graduation. Applying to most academies requires a [Congressional Nomination](#), a strong academic and leadership background, and a completed medical and physical fitness evaluation, so it is important to plan early!

Senior Checklist

Class of 2027: Your Path, Your Future!

There's no one-size-fits-all path, and your journey is uniquely yours. Be sure you're checking in regularly, using your resources, and taking action toward your goals. The checklist below will help you stay organized and ready—whatever your next step may be.

- ☐ Log into SchoolLinks
 - Explore career paths, colleges, military options, and scholarships
 - Use the Career Center, resume builder, and scholarship matching tools
- ☐ Meet with Your School Counselor
 - Review your graduation credits
 - Discuss your post-graduation plans (college, military, trade school, or work)
- ☐ Create a Plan that Fits You
 - Research colleges, apprenticeships, technical programs, or job opportunities
 - Check deadlines and application requirements for each path
- ☐ If Requesting Recommendations:
 - Ask teachers/counselors early and in person
 - Complete and share the Senior Information Sheet
 - Allow at least 2–4 weeks' notice
- ☐ College-Bound?
 - Build a balanced list of schools
 - Complete applications and track them in SchoolLinks
 - Request transcripts and send SAT/ACT scores if needed
- ☐ Joining the Workforce?
 - Build a resume using SchoolLinks
 - Search for jobs and internships
 - Explore career skills modules and meet with your Career Coach
- ☐ Military-Bound?
 - Research enlistment requirements and military careers
 - Consider taking the ASVAB
 - Connect with recruiters and explore ROTC or academies
- ☐ Search & Apply for Scholarships
 - Use SchoolLinks and Scholarships.com
 - Visit the GHS Counseling webpage for more opportunities
- ☐ Stay on Top of Your Grades & Self-Care
 - Finish strong academically
 - Make time for fun, reflection, and rest—it's your year to shine!



Don't Forget to Visit the GHS Counseling Webpage!

Your [GHS Counseling](#) webpage is a one-stop shop for important updates, resources, and tools to support you throughout senior year. Be sure to check back regularly for new announcements and opportunities!