



*College Guidance
and Preparation
for Students at
Home*

Veritas Classical Schools
12460 Crabapple Road, Suite 202-270
Alpharetta, Georgia 30004-6646
www.veritasschools.com
770-753-8941
vcs@veritasschools.com

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**This document is a compilation of materials gathered from multiple sources on the internet. Veritas Classical Schools does not endorse any of the sources. As always, we encourage parents and students to be discerning when viewing materials on the internet.*

Relevant Articles for Homeschool Students

We recommend that you read the following articles available online. These are great resources as you and your homeschool student prepare for the college.

New Study Shows Homeschoolers Succeeding in College

Released by the Home School Legal Defense Association – August 3, 2010

<http://www.hslda.org/docs/media/2010/201008030.asp>

What do Homeschoolers do after Graduation?

By Dr. Howard Richman – PA Homeschoolers Newsletter

<http://www.pahomeschoolers.com/newsletter/issue66.htm>

College Preparation for Homeschoolers

Published December 03, 2008 by Rachael A. Lund

www.associatedcontent.com

http://www.associatedcontent.com/article/1245649/college_preparation_for_homeschoolers.html?cat=4

Recommended Reading for College Admission

There are some wonderful books out there to help you choose a college and gain admission.

Here are just a few:

- *Colleges That Change Lives* by Loren Pope
- *Looking Beyond the Ivy League* by Loren Pope
- *The 100 Best Colleges For African-American Students* by Erlene B. Wilson
- *Winning the Heart of the College Admissions Dean* by Joyce Slayton Mitchell
- *Presenting Yourself Successfully to Colleges* by Howard and Matthew Greene

Words of wisdom to Students

- Be prepared for one of the busiest times of your life. The college admissions process can be hectic.
- Don't wait for the last minute to make college plans. The entire college admissions process can be a long one. Many months of planning and research must take place before the actual application is submitted. Give yourself plenty of time to make the best decision for you and your family. This decision should be based on your aptitude, needs, and interests. Remember, this unique decision will differ for each person. It may not be the right one for your friends and vice versa.
- Read through applications and instructions before completing any forms. Retain copies of all completed forms.
- Keep records of everything associated with the process: test score reports, information from colleges, and correspondence with colleges.
- Be aware of both school and college deadlines and be sure to file applications well in advance of the deadlines.

What To Do After High School

<i>College or University</i>	<i>Trade/ Technical School</i>	<i>Apprenticeship Programs</i>
<i>Community College</i>	<i>Military Training</i>	<i>Work</i>

Apprenticeship Programs

An apprentice is a person who is—

- at least 16 years old,
- being trained in a particular trade by a skilled worker under a planned program on the job,
- taking classroom instruction (through adult education, at a community college, or in regular school if in a part-time job), and
- in training anywhere from one to six years (depending upon the trade—averaging three to four years).

Some additional facts:

- Employment is based on supply and demand
- The person wanting an apprenticeship may apply to and have a contract with one of the following:
 - an employer in the trade
 - the association of employers
 - the joint apprenticeship committee
 - the organization of employees registered with the apprenticeship council

College/University

There are several types of colleges and universities. The internet is an invaluable resource for researching the best school to pursue your career interests.

Military Training

You can learn about your chances for success in the military by taking the Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery (ASVAB). This test is given at local high schools free of charge. Men and women may enlist in all branches of the military. Enlistment procedures are similar, but the services differ in length of enlistment and opportunities for specific training. Active military enlistments are available in the U.S. Army, Navy, Air Force, Marine Corps, and Coast Guard.

Trade and Technical Training

Over 10,000 private vocational schools teach a variety of job skills. Admission requirements for these schools vary, and the tuition ranges from approximately \$400 to over \$20,000, depending on the nature and length of the course. Vocational schools offer smaller class size. Their teachers and counselors will usually work closely with you to insure your successful completion of the training program. Most of these programs provide you with an externship in your field of study that can result in getting hired permanently, depending on your performance. Many schools also offer free job placement assistance, and some offer lifetime assistance. The classes and subjects that you will take are usually specific to the type of job training you are receiving. Some vocational training programs only offer a Certificate of Completion; however, many schools now offer Associate's and Bachelor's Degrees.

Work/Postsecondary Education

If you decide to get a job immediately after high school you should—

- develop some job-finding and job-keeping skills,
- talk to a counselor or a career information coordinator about job possibilities and/or visit the Georgia State Department of Employment and Training office,
- visit with a cooperative work experience teacher in your high school,
- visit your career and media centers,
- talk with employers about combining work and a part-time college program, and
- investigate career education courses that match your interests.

College Planning

Going to college is one of many options available to you as you pursue your career plans. In either case, a certain amount of planning is required. The high school plan that you make with your parents should reflect courses that meet college entrance requirements. The choices of your courses and the level of your courses should reflect your academic abilities, talents, and career interests. Certain courses act as gatekeepers for college entrance: algebra and geometry are two such courses. Aspiring to go to college can become a self-fulfilling prophecy. Education is important not only for its own sake, but people with more education have higher earnings within virtually all occupations. No matter what your postsecondary (after high school) goals are, planning is important. Graduation requirements are very specific and it is important to evaluate your curriculum plan regularly. You will need to review the requirements yearly with your parents to ensure that you are on track to graduate. Make sure that the choices you make this year will help you reach your career plans for after high school.

Decision Making Process

College decision making is serious business, but it is not life's ultimate moment. It is one of a long series of decisions that will help to define you as you move toward adulthood. A calm, businesslike approach with a dash of humor will serve you better than a frenzied, frantic, doomsday outlook. Actually, this should be fun! You are doing something positive for yourself, and you should enjoy it!

Now for a few hints to help you make this important decision:

1. Know yourself well—your strengths and weaknesses, your likes and dislikes, your hopes and dreams. Understand and accept the impact of your grades and test scores.
2. Research your options—the full range of postsecondary possibilities that may interest you. This aspect of decision making is worth the investment of your time and effort.
3. Consult the people who can help you evaluate the situation. These people may include parents, counselors, teachers, relatives, friends, college representatives, financial aid experts, etc. Useful information sometimes comes from unexpected sources.
4. Choose where you will apply and attend college. Every school choice involves both positive and negative factors. In the end, you will choose the available alternatives that (all things considered) seem to suit you best.

What do the Colleges Look For in a Student?

It helps to know something about how the admissions process works. Many colleges have more applicants than they have space, and thus the admissions committee must come up with the “right” freshman class.

Some colleges will collect more data than others about you. You will be sending information about yourself in your application. Your high school will mail your transcript and letters of recommendation at your request. The college admissions staff will look at all the relevant data that they have about you. They will make their decision based on that data.

First and foremost, the college admissions staff will evaluate your academic record. They will consider the difficulty and variety of the courses you took. They will note the grades you earned in various subjects and your cumulative grade point average (GPA). Your academic record is almost always the most important factor in college admissions. It is never too late to improve it. Senior-year grades are very important.

Standardized test scores—SAT, SAT Subject Test, ACT—are sometimes very important. Most students are quite used to standardized tests and have good test-taking skills. Before taking the test, some students familiarize themselves with the kinds of questions they will face and practice to improve their test-taking skills.

Counselor and teacher recommendations often are important factors. Some colleges do not ask for teacher recommendations, and a few do not require any recommendations. You should let certain teachers know about your activities, accomplishments, and aspirations—the kinds of things that will make a recommendation substantial. You should follow the college's instructions, if any, in choosing teachers to recommend you. If there are no such instructions, you should pick from among your academic subject teachers in 11th or 12th grade.

The application form that you submit may help or hurt your chances substantially. A sloppy, ill-composed application may end your candidacy at a given college. Your essay(s) should be written by you in your best prose—no grammatical, spelling, punctuation, or stylistic errors. This calls for careful drafting and editing before you submit the final copy.

Your nonacademic activities and accomplishments, both in school and out, sometimes bear upon college admissions. This tends to be the situation more often with selective colleges and with more notable achievements. Be sure that you let the colleges know about your participation in school clubs and activities, athletics, leadership roles, community service, notable achievements, and jobs—both volunteer and paid. Colleges look for well-rounded, motivated, energetic students. Intensive participation in a few activities or projects usually is more significant than lesser involvement in a larger number. Be specific and detailed about important activities. Sometimes college representatives express interest in a student because of talent in a certain area such as football, soccer, or a specific musical instrument. Please remember that such expressions of interest, while encouraging, do not amount to an offer of admission.

Notification about College Decisions

Each college to which you apply will send you a letter indicating that you have been accepted, denied admission, or placed on the waiting list.

For Early Decision candidates, notification will usually come in mid-December, concluding the application process for those who are accepted. For students who apply to schools using rolling admission, decisions may be made within a few weeks. For many students, April 15 is the date that decision letters are received.

Some of you, after you have heard from your colleges, must face a new, often difficult, decision. If more than one college has invited you to join them, you must decide which one is best for you. Many factors, frequently including financial aid offers, may influence your choice. Be sure to advise your counselor of your final decision so that final grades may be mailed to the college you have chosen.

- ❖ **Early Decision: Acceptance/denial/deferral**—If you are accepted under Early Decision, you should withdraw any applications that were submitted at other colleges. If you are not accepted under Early Decision, you will usually be reconsidered for admission later in the year. You should continue to look at other colleges. Once you determine that a college that has offered you admission is no longer a school you will attend, notify that college of your decision.
- ❖ **Acceptance**—Most schools will give you several weeks to make your final decision. Observe all deadlines for notifying the college of your decision. Most acceptances are contingent on satisfactory completion of senior course work. Be aware that acceptances have been rescinded because of failure to maintain college standards in the second semester. Notify the schools that have accepted you to let them know that you will not be attending that school.
- ❖ **Denial of admission**—If you are denied admission by all the schools to which you applied, consult with your counselor. Pursue other options including community or other colleges with open admission policies. Please do not become discouraged or give up. There are many excellent schools ready to meet your educational needs.
- ❖ **Waiting list**—Find out what waiting list status means at the particular school. Don't pin all your hopes on acceptance if you are on the waiting list at the school. Hold your place at a school where you have been accepted to safeguard your placement.

When it comes time for the final decision, after much prayer, go with your best instinct. In the end, the best choice is probably the college where you will feel most comfortable. Whatever your choice, you have the satisfaction of knowing that you have made it as wisely and as well as you could. We wish you every success in your college career!

College Tours

The Importance of the Campus Tour and visit

65% of students apply to a college because of the visit to the campus.

84% use the internet to research colleges and secondary education options

71% use the tour of the college to make their final decision

* Websites that may be helpful in gathering information about the college under consideration:

www.ratemyprofessor.com

www.campusdirt.com

10 Tips for Students and Parents

1. Do your research
 - a. Request print materials in advance and view online sources
 - b. Why are you visiting?
 - c. Have your questions prepared
2. Schedule a maximum of two colleges per day to visit
3. Know who to ask what questions – the student tour guide doesn't have all the answers
4. Cut your tour guide some slack, they are most likely sharing from a script and don't get paid much for their effort
5. Why do you want to sit in class?
 - Try to arrange a ten minute meeting with a relevant faculty member instead of sitting in on a class. This will give you a more authentic experience.
6. Experience the town and off-campus venues
7. Take pictures – it all starts to look the same after multiple campus visits
8. Experience the campus beyond the admissions tour
 - Strike up conversations with students and visit non-tour areas
9. Write down immediate impressions – good and bad
10. Have FUN!

College Campus Visit – Sample Questions

Resource: The First Academy Guidance Office, Orlando, FL

www.thefirstacademy.org

Questions to ask college students

- What are the more popular extracurricular activities (or ask specifically about the activity you are interested in)?
- Are you able to study in your dorm room?
- Do many students go home or away on weekends?
- Are professors accessible outside of class?
- Are campus jobs available?
- Were you able to register for all the classes you wanted?
- If you were to do it again, would you choose this college?
- Did you receive financial aid?
- What is the social life like at this school?
- Would you call this a Greek school?

Questions to ask an Admissions Officer

- What are your most popular/distinguished programs?
- What type of student would be happy at this college?
- How many students will be in my first year courses? Are those courses taught by full-time faculty or by graduate assistants?
- Describe the college's resources for first-year students - computers, library, access to special equipment, such as in labs, etc.
- What kinds of work-study jobs are available?
- What are the midrange GPA & test scores of students accepted?
- Am I likely to be admitted? (Show your transcript & test scores)
- What percentage of students receive financial aid and what does the typical package provide?
- Are there academic/talent scholarships available?

Questions to ask yourself on campus

- Could I live in one of the dorm rooms I visit?
- Is there a campus ministry or a worship service I can attend?
- Are the buildings on campus in good shape?
- Are the computers and lab equipment plentiful and new?
- Are common areas of dorms comfortable and do the facilities meet demand?
- Are the grounds attractive?
- Is the campus close enough - or far enough away - from the city for me?
- How is it getting around campus?

Questions to ask yourself in the classroom

- Do students appear to be interested in the material?
- Do students participate in discussion?
- Do the students seem to have a relationship with the professor?
- Would I feel comfortable as a student in this setting?
- Is the material challenging enough for me?

To Schedule a College Visit:

- ✓ Call the college and let them know what date you plan to visit. They should receive your call at least two weeks prior to your visit. October is usually a busy month so phone well in advance. Phone numbers are available in any college handbook or the college website.
- ✓ Let the college know what major(s) and special interests you would like to pursue. Ask them to set up a visit with a professor or sit in on a class.
- ✓ Ask them what time you need to be there to receive a tour of their campus. Some schools have set times for tours- other schools are flexible.
- ✓ If you need financial assistance to pay for college, you will want to meet with someone in the financial aid office.
- ✓ If this is an institution that requires interviews, you will want to arrange for this to happen as well.
- ✓ If this institution does not require an interview, you may want to still stop in the admissions office and introduce yourself to the director of admissions or the representative for your region. Remember you want them to associate a name with a face.
- ✓ Many colleges assist families with overnight arrangements. If you need assistance, please ask. Friday and Saturday nights are usually NOT an option.
- ✓ Be sure to ask them what time you need to be on campus, where you need to go when you arrive, and how to reach any destination you are unsure of finding. Many colleges will send you a map with a confirmation letter prior to your visit.
- ✓ Arrange to meet with students and talk with them. They can give you the best perspective of a college.
- ✓ Eat in the cafeteria. It gives you not just a taste of the food but of the culture of the school.

Helpful hints:

- ✓ Be prompt.
- ✓ Dress appropriately. (You need not be in your Sunday best, but please do not wear your shortest shorts, worst jeans, or skimpiest of tops. If you do, you will be discussed and remembered in ways that will not be to your advantage.)
- ✓ Have your list of questions ready.
- ✓ Be prepared to talk about yourself and what is attracting you to the college.
- ✓ Pay attention on the visit. Imagine if you can actually see yourself fitting in the environment.
- ✓ Generate a list of questions about things that are important to you and that you need to know to choose a college. Take the list with you on every visit. Write the answers to the questions down. You will never remember all of the information later.
- ✓ Be prepared to ask questions and engage in conversation with the individuals with whom you come in contact.

CollegeBoard.org

The CollegeBoard.org website is an excellent tool for students who are pursuing college entrance. This site provides FREE online resources to help prepare for the PSAT and SAT. Be sure to check out these:

- Skills Feedback – Score Report Plus: This provides students, after they have taken the PSAT, with an online code to see score and the correct answers for the ones they got wrong on the test.
- Summary of Answers and Skills (SOAS)
- Student Action Plan for Grades 9-12
- Free Online SAT Test
- Sign up for the SAT “Question of the Day”

The Use and Purpose of the SAT – The SAT enables students to...

- See their own potential
- Demonstrate what they’ve learned and how well they can apply that knowledge
- Zero in on those colleges that offer the greatest opportunity for academic success

Writing is essential to college success. Writing measures the ability to organize and express ideas, develop and support the main idea, and use appropriate words and sentence structure.

College-Testing Programs

Standardized college admissions testing programs assume that you are able to read critically, write effectively, and demonstrate a sound background in mathematics. The tests measure knowledge and skills that have developed gradually as a result of both in-school and out-of-school experiences. You need to be able to think about logical relationships among words, read complex prose analytically, and have a good foundation in algebra and geometry.

To make the most of your high school years, consider the following:

- Take the pre-practice PSAT test given by most high schools to ninth or tenth graders.
- Take the PSAT test in Grade 9, especially if you are enrolled in geometry or above.
- Take the PSAT in Grade 10.
- Take the PSAT in Grade 11 in order to qualify for scholarship programs offered to high-scoring students.
- Take the SAT or ACT in the spring of the junior year, and repeat, if necessary. Take the test again in the fall in Grade 12, if warranted.
- Enroll in rigorous classes. Such classes prepare you for success on college admission tests. Take Honors and Advanced Placement courses and work diligently.
- Don’t hesitate to ask for help or information from your teachers.
- Remember that the best preparation for successful performance on any standardized college test is serious study, in and out of school, as well as **Reading**.
- Your value and worth as a person have no relationship to your SAT/ACT scores.

College Planning Sites

College Planning and Career Exploration Websites

College 411 is a website tool used to search for colleges, understand financial aid, and obtain Hope Scholarship information. The Peachnet website is a great tool for complete career and college planning. The site does require a username and password.

[College 411](#)

[GCIC Peachnet](#)

Christian Colleges

There are many options for those students who choose to continue their education in a Christian college. The Christian College Guide website lists Christian colleges, total enrollment, average cost of attendance, and financial aid options and planning.

[ChristianCollegeGuide.net](#)

College Financial Aid and Scholarship Assistance

Fastweb is one of the internet's largest free scholarship search engines. This website allows you to browse scholarships or pick from different criteria to narrow down your options. Before you can be considered for federal student financial aid, including Hope Scholarship, students must complete the FAFSA. The following link will guide you through the process.

[Fastweb](#)

[FAFSA](#)

[www.GACollege411.org](#)

College Athletics

Any student who plans to play college athletics at a NCAA Division I or Division II school is required to be "cleared" by the NCAA clearing house. Further rules and eligibility requirements within the NCAA can be found on the official NCAA website.

[NCAA Clearing House](#)

[NCAA](#)

Military Academies

Air Force	West Point	Navy	Coast Guard	Merchant Marines
www.usafa.edu	www.usma.edu	www.usna.edu	www.uscg.org	www.usmma.edu
1-800-423-8723	1-800-872-2769	1-800-872-6289	1-877-669-8724	1-866-546-4778
ROTC (Army)	AFROTC (Air Force)		NROTC (Navy)	
www.armyrotc.com	www.afrotc.com		www.nrotc.com	
1-800-USA-ROTC	1-800-522-0033		1-800-NAV-ROTC	

Resource: North Cobb Christian School Website – [www.ncchristian.org](#), Brian Long – Guidance Counselor

Colleges – A Place to Start...

List of colleges that have reputations for being “homeschool student” friendly...

Name:	Website:
Abraham Baldwin Agricultural College	ABAC.edu
Atlanta Christian College	ACC.edu
Berry College	Berry.edu
Bob Jones University	BJU.edu
Bryan College	Bryan.edu
Columbia International University	CIU.edu
Covenant College	Covenant.edu
Dayspring Bible College	DayspringBibleCollege.edu
Elim Bible Institute	Elim.edu
Everest Institute	Everest.edu
Georgia Perimeter College	GPC.edu
Holy Spirit College	HolySpiritCollege.org
Jacksonville State University	JSU.edu
Kennesaw State University	Kennesaw.edu
Liberty University	Liberty.edu
Pensacola Christian College	PCCInfo.com
Reinhardt University	Reinhardt.edu
Shorter University	Shorter.edu
Tennessee Temple University	TNTemple.edu
The Savannah College of Art and Design	SCAD.edu
Truett-McConnell College	Truett.edu
University of Nebraska-Lincoln	UNL.edu

High School Definitions

In high school, certain terms and their meanings might be confusing. The following listing will help you understand some of the high school jargon.

High school credits—All subjects in high school are taught by semester. The semester or final grade is a compilation of the quarterly grades and the final exam. A passing final grade in a semester course earns a 0.5 credit. A total of 22 credits in required and elective subjects is needed to earn a high school diploma. Other graduation requirements also apply.

Transcript—A transcript is a record of all courses taken in high school, the level of the courses, and the final grade earned in each course. Usually, colleges and employers want to review a student transcript before accepting a student in a college or a job.

Grade Point Average (GPA)—Each final grade earned signifies points. An “A” is 4 points, “B” is 3 points, “C” is 2 points, “D” is 1 point, and an “F” is 0 points. The sum of the final grade points divided by the number of courses determines the cumulative grade point average (GPA).

High School Diploma—A diploma is a degree issued to a student who has successfully met the subject, credit, and other requirements issued by the state and county boards of education, met the attendance requirements, and passed the required courses listed by the Georgia Accrediting Commission (GAC).

College Terms - Understanding Admissions Programs

Colleges and universities use various admissions programs. Although these programs differ widely in specifics, some of them require that you do considerable planning well before your senior year.

Types of admissions programs are as follows:

Early decision—a plan in which students apply in November or December and learn of the decision on their application during December or January. This plan is suggested only for students who are academically strong and know that they want to attend a particular college. Early-decision candidates who are accepted are required to withdraw their application to other colleges and agree to matriculate at the college that accepts them. Students should not apply to more than one early-decision program and should understand clearly the commitment they are making.

Early action—a policy in which students are not required to accept admission or withdraw other applications if accepted. Early action is offered by highly selective institutions.

Rolling admissions—a policy in which a decision is made on your application almost immediately. Usually, within four to six weeks after your file is complete, you can expect to receive notice of the action taken. Sometimes institutions, such as University of Georgia, will establish a series of application deadlines and decision-notification dates.

Very common, but without a distinctive name, is the practice of many colleges that requires all applications by a deadline date. Then, on a set date, usually months later in the spring, the college notifies all candidates of their decisions.

Early admission—a program in which a college allows high school students to enroll before they graduate from high school. Admissions standards are more stringent for early admission.

Open admission—a policy which allows virtually all applicants to be accepted.

Midyear admission—an option allowing certain candidates to start classes in the second semester rather than in the fall.

Concurrent enrollment—a program in which currently enrolled high school students are permitted to take a course or courses at the college.

Middle School College Checklist

6th Grade Checklist

Work hard to maintain "A" and "B" grades in all your classes.

Research advanced classes such as Algebra I, Geometry, and foreign language classes.

Read as much as you can. This skill is invaluable.

If your community has college fairs, have your parents attend with you. This is your opportunity to find out more information about college and university requirements, ask specific questions of the college representatives about college entrance exams, requirements, and costs.

7th Grade Checklist

If your community has them, continue to attend college fairs.

Bring your parents with you so that they can find out more information about the schools that interest you.

Keep up your grades, maintaining "A" and "B" grades in all your classes especially in Algebra I and II, Geometry, English and foreign language classes.

Keep reading to build your vocabulary, comprehension and English grammar.

Participate in academic enrichment programs offered at your school and through local colleges and universities.

8th Grade Checklist

Meet with your parents to begin discussing your college plans and make sure you are enrolled in classes that will prepare you for success in college.

Develop a four year plan of classes you will need to take in high school to prepare you for college. Most colleges require four years of English, History, Math, Science and at least two years of a foreign language.

Check in with your school regularly to inquire how well you are progressing in the academic classes needed for college.

Continue to maintain "A's" and "B's" in your classes.

Attend college fairs in your community.

9th Grade College Checklist

This is the year you need to start getting ready for college. The best way to prepare is to take college preparatory courses now.

- Take the most challenging courses possible. They're worth it!
- Start thinking about your dream career. Collect information in a file.
- Talk to your parents and school about creating a college admissions plan. Create a four-year plan that will guide you in taking the right courses in your field of interest and also fulfill the requirements of the college you want to pursue.
- Apply for a social security number, if you do not already have one.
- Talk to your parents about saving for college. Save money now to pay for school later.
- Talk to your parents about financial aid and start researching options online.
- Get active in extracurricular activities and volunteer for community service projects in your field of interest. Not only is it good for others, it's good for you – and, it will look great on your college application. More than school matters to most colleges!
- Scope out summer enrichment programs that focus on a particular subject, such as science or math.
- Grades are one of the top things universities consider. Earn the best you can! Your grades will play a big part in which college you can get into and the scholarships you can earn.

10th Grade College Checklist

Applying for college is just two years away. Continue taking college preparatory courses to be ready for college-level work.

- Discuss your future dreams with your parents and set goals to achieve them.
- Plan to take the Preliminary Scholastic Aptitude Test (PSAT). It is the key to some scholarships.
- Read, read, read. Work on your writing skills.
- Learn about current affairs. Keep on top of world news.
- Keep your grades up. Strive to get into Advanced Placement (AP) classes to earn college credit.
- Take part in summer enrichment programs and special workshops that focus on a particular subject, such as science or math.
- Update your record of activities and/or community service projects, including recent accomplishments and awards
- Start planning the extracurricular activities you want to be involved in next year.
- Think about finding the right college for you. Look at schools offering programs in your field of study or satisfy your personal goals.
- Prepare for the Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT) by taking the PSAT. While community colleges do not require the SAT, it's still a good idea to take the test to keep your options open.
- Begin researching financial aid options. Find out what you need to be able to apply for scholarships.

11th Grade College Checklist

It's only one more year until you begin the college application process. Keep making progress on being prepared.

- Seek out your parents for information and advice. Discuss where you want to go to college with your parents.
- Take the most challenging courses possible and sign up for summer enrichment programs.
- Earn college credit in high school by taking Advanced Placement (AP) and Dual-enrollment college courses.
- Take the Preliminary Scholastic Aptitude Test (PSAT), usually held in October.
- Expand your extracurricular activities. Look for work or internships in fields that interest you.
- Attend college nights, college fairs, and other informative events in your community.
- Take the required SAT or ACT if you plan to attend a university.
- List ten schools you would like to attend and request catalogs, admission requirements, applications, and financial aid information. Research the colleges in more depth. Call, write or email each school for more information (i.e. admission requirements, degrees offered, cost of attendance and campus life.)
- Make a list of important deadlines for college admission and financial aid applications.
- Visit several of your top college choices to get a feel for which school is right for you. If you can't visit in person, find out if the college has a virtual tour online.

Thinking About College

A Questionnaire for 11th Graders about Their College Priorities

Directions:

- Review the categories
- Fill in the blanks with check marks under **Definitely**, **Maybe** or **Doubtful** for each choice under each category.
- **Rank** (in the left hand column under **RANK**) from 1 (**most important**) to 10 (**least important**) for each of the ten categories. Use **ALL** numbers 1 – 10 in your ranking.

RANK	Categories	Definitely	Maybe	Doubtful
	1. Undergraduate Enrollment			
	Extra Large (over 20,000 students)			
	Large (8,000 – 20,000 students)			
	Medium (3,000 – 8,000 students)			
	Small (less than 1,000 students)			
	2. Location			
	Georgia			
	Southeast (FL, AL, MS, SC, NC, KY, TN)			
	Any particular state(s) in the Southeast?			
	Middle Atlantic (D.C., CA, DE, PE, NJ)			
	Any particular state(s) in the mid-Atlantic?			
	Northeast (NY, CN, RI, MA, VT, NH)			
	Any particular state(s) in the Northeast?			
	Midwest (IL, MI, WI, OH, IN, IA, MO, MN)			
	Far West (CO, CA, OR, WA, TX, AZ)			
	Other			

RANK	Categories	Definitely	Maybe	Doubtful
	3. Campus Setting			
	Urban area			
	Easy access to a major metropolitan area			
	Suburban area			
	Medium-size city			
	Small town			
	Rural area			
	4. Degree of Difficulty			
	Extremely challenging			
	Very challenging			
	Moderately challenging			
	Minimally challenging			
	5. Type			
	Public			
	Private			
	Affiliated with a religion or denomination?			
	Primarily an undergraduate school?			
	A school with a large graduate enrollment?			
	6. Students/Housing/Social Life			
	Significant ethnic diversity?			
	A strong fraternity/sorority system?			
	Most students live on campus all 4 years?			

RANK	Categories	Definitely	Maybe	Doubtful
	7. Cost			
	Do you believe your family will be eligible for financial aid?			
	Is it likely you'll have a job to help pay for college?			
	Do you plan to seek merit scholarships?			
	8. Academic Programs			
	What subject(s) <i>might</i> you major in?			
	Are you considering any specific academic program?			
	What career ideas do you have at this point?			
	9. Other Priorities			
	What activities or programs will be important to you?			
	Athletics {indicate which sport(s)}			
	Semester or year abroad?			
	Other:			

Colleges that you are considering applying to:

Junior Year Calendar

August

Meet with your access advisor or guidance counselor to make sure your coursework and grades are on track

Keep in mind that colleges look at how you spend your free time - get involved!

December

Learn about advanced placement (AP) classes available at your school.

Investigate whether the SAT or ACT is the better test option for the schools you are interested in attending.

Keep your grades up and be sure to enroll in classes that challenge you and demonstrate your strengths.

April

Enroll in an ACT or SAT practice program.

Apply for summer jobs to gain business experience and build up your savings for college.

Continue to visit college campuses and take the time to speak with both the admissions and financial aid reps.

September

Enroll in a PSAT practice program. A good score could net you a National Merit Scholarship.

Visit mycollegepreparations.com to identify schools you may be interested in attending.

Take the Early Math Placement Test.

January

Schedule visits to colleges you want to investigate while they are in session.

Attend financial aid nights in your community.

Evaluate your finances and research aid sources to get an idea of your likely education costs.

May

Work with your counselor to finalize your senior schedule to make sure you will meet college admissions requirements.

Take the ACT and or SAT (Reasoning and Subject) exam.

Take the advanced placement (AP) test while the information is fresh in your mind.

October

Attend college fairs in your community.

Take the PSAT - remember to take your calculator,

Start searching for scholarship opportunities using the free search tool at studentloanfunding.com.

February

Meet with admissions and financial aid reps at schools you visit.

Pick up books on funding your education and finding scholarships.

Write practice application essays and ask your teachers to review them.

June

Work and volunteer to gain experience, build leadership skills and demonstrate depth to college admissions reps. Talk with alumni and students attending schools that interest you.

Complete the EFC calculator on studentloanfunding.com to find out how much your family may have to contribute to your education expenses.

November

Visit college web sites to take virtual tours of the campuses.

Develop relationships with teachers and others who may write letters of recommendation to colleges.

Take advantage of skill assessment tools to identify a potential career path and major.

March

Register for the SAT (Reasoning and Subject) and/or ACT test. You can take the test multiple times.

Start to build a resume for summer job applications, college admissions and scholarship applications.

Research potential careers and their education requirements at careerinfonet.com

July

Read widely and practice math skills to help you hone your skills for the fall SAT. Narrow the list of colleges you are investigating to about 10. Request catalogs and admissions packets.

Compare your test scores and GPA's to those desired by the colleges you want to attend.

12th Grade College Checklist

It's time to apply to colleges you would like to attend and to make sure you're ready for college-level work.

- **Review your class schedule with your parents and school** to ensure you meet all college-preparatory requirements.
- **Earn college credit in high school** by taking Advanced Placement (AP) and Dual enrollment courses.
- If you are not satisfied with your SAT and ACT scores, retake them.
- **Attend college nights, college fairs,** and other informative events.
- Narrow your college choices to the three or four you like best and keep track of your findings. **Begin the college application process in September.** Apply for admission to your top three or four college choices. Keep photocopies of everything you send out.
- **Keep track** of all your deadlines for applications, tests, and financial aid.
- Ask teachers, employers, clergy or other significant adults for **letters of recommendation** you may need.
- **Submit admissions** applications no later than December. Call to verify that the college or university received your documents. As the **counselor about scholarship opportunities** and fill out every scholarship application possible.
- **Get a Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA)** at www.fafsa.ed.gov, or by phone at 1-800-4-FED-AID. **Complete and submit** the received materials. **Check with your FAFSA as soon as possible after January 1.** The sooner you submit it, the better your chances for getting a good financial aid package.
- **Respond promptly** to any requests for any additional information from colleges or financial aid offices. Evaluate **financial aid** offers carefully.
- **Decide** which college you'll attend and send in any forms or deposits by the deadline. Some colleges will require you to get health clearances.
- **Write to the college you have chosen to let them know you plan to attend.** Write to other colleges that have accepted you to let them know of your decision so they can offer admission to another student. It is your responsibility to notify colleges that you are declining admission.
- **Sign and return** your college's financial aid offer, noting the parts you accept and those you decline.
- **Finalize college-housing arrangements,** if you plan to live on campus.
- **Seek an academic advisor** at the college or university you will be attending, then register early.
- **Take part in summer orientation programs** for incoming freshman.
- Request that your school send your final grade **transcript** to your college.

Senior Year Calendar

August

Develop a calendar of the application, scholarship and financial aid deadlines you need to meet.

Meet with your access advisor or guidance counselor to make sure you are enrolled in the courses required for college admission.

Register to take the SAT and/or ACT.

December

Register for a PIN at www.fafsa.ed.gov to enable you to apply for financial aid.

Search for private scholarships and grants. Check with employers and local organizations. Compile end of year financial records for financial aid applications.

April

Decide which college you will attend and forward your deposit by May 1.

Notify the schools you will not be attending. Submit scholarship acceptance forms by May 1.

September

Enroll in an ACT or SAT practice program.

Meet with college admissions reps when they visit your school.

Ask teachers, high school counselors, employers and other for letters of recommendation for your admissions applications.

January

Complete your taxes as soon as possible to support your financial aid applications.

Submit your completed Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) online at www.fafsa.ed.gov.

Fill out school-specific financial aid forms by the deadlines specified.

May

Stay on top of important deadlines at your chosen college (housing, financial aid, enrollment, etc.).

Take Advanced Placement (AP) exams. If you were awarded student loans choose a low cost lender.

October

Draft your application essays. Ask teachers to review them.

Submit college applications for early admission consideration.

Take the ACT and/or SAT exam.

February

College decisions start arriving.

Respond quickly to college requests for additional information.

Your Student Aid Report (SAR) will arrive within four weeks of submitting your FAFSA.

June

Ensure your high school forwards your final transcript to your chosen college.

Make plans to attend college orientation.

Work and save to build your college spending account.

November

Male students over 17 must register with the selective service to be eligible for federal and state aid.

Submit college admission applications to at least three schools by Dec. 1.

Keep a file for all the paperwork you submit to each college.

March

You will begin receiving financial aid award letters from colleges at which you've been accepted.

Create a comparison of the attributes of the schools you are interested in attending - including the financial aid received and the net cost.

Apply for a summer job.

July

Send thank you notes to everyone who helped you get accepted to college.

Visit www.collegeanswer.com to find tips for college freshmen and download a packing checklist.

The Benefits of Extracurricular Activities & Volunteer Service

Colleges Care

The good news is that colleges pay attention to your life both inside and outside the classroom. Yes, your academics probably come first, but your activities reveal a great deal about you, such as:

- ❖ How you've made a meaningful contribution to something
- ❖ What your non-academic interests are
- ❖ Whether you can maintain a long-term commitment
- ❖ Whether you can manage your time and priorities
- ❖ What diversity you'd bring to the student body

Maintaining a Balance

Keep in mind, colleges are not interested in seeing you "do it all."

Colleges don't have a checklist of requirements when it comes to extracurriculars—they want to see your individuality—and your consistent commitment.

Haven't Gotten Involved Yet?

Lots of school, community, and religious organizations give you chances to explore your interests and talents. If you haven't felt drawn into something yet, there's no shortage of opportunities for you to explore.

Work Experience

Work experience—paid or volunteer, year-round or summer—can help you identify career interests and goals, gain work experience, and apply classroom learning to the real world. It's also a great way to earn money for college, of course. Consider arranging for an internship or to shadow someone at his or her job.

Community Service

You can also gain skills and experience through volunteer work, such as by tutoring elementary school kids or spending time at a local hospital.

Reasons to Volunteer

Gain Valuable Life Experiences and Skills

Whether you build houses for the homeless or mail flyers for a local politician, you'll experience the real world through hands-on work. You can use this experience to explore your major or career interests.

Meet Interesting People

Volunteering brings together a variety of people. Both the recipients of your volunteer efforts and your co-workers can be rich sources of insight. For example, maybe you'll learn about the legal profession from a former lawyer you visit at a convalescent center.

Send a Signal to Colleges

Colleges pay attention to your life inside and outside the classroom. Your extracurricular activities reveal a great deal about you, such as what your interests are, whether you can manage your priorities and maintain a long-term commitment, what diversity you'd bring to the student body, and how you've made a meaningful contribution to something.

Rights and Responsibilities

Rights

- ❖ When you are offered admission you have the right to wait to respond to an offer of admission and/or financial aid until May 1st. (This does not include Early Decision candidates) Colleges that request commitments to offers of admission prior to May 1, must clearly offer you the opportunity to request (in writing) an extension until May 1. They must grant you an extension and your request may not jeopardize your status for admission and/or financial aid.
- ❖ If you are placed on a Wait List you have the right to be notified of that placement by the college or university. They should provide a history that describes the number of students on the wait list, the number offered admission, and the availability of financial aid and housing. Waitlist candidates are individuals who have been deemed “acceptable” by the admissions committee but who are not fully “accepted” when other students are notified on or around April 1, the traditional notification deadline for accept, deny, and waitlist. Individuals may or may not be taken from the waitlist at a later date, which is largely determined by the college or university filling their new freshman class with the first round of accept letters. If a college foresees that it could fall any number of students short in filling their freshman class, they may, at that point, accept some or many of the students from the wait list.

Responsibilities

- ❖ Before you apply, you have the responsibility to research and understand the policies and procedures of each college or university regarding application fees, financial aid, scholarships, and housing. You should also be sure of each school’s policy regarding deposits, which you may be required to make before you enroll.
- ❖ It is your responsibility to accurately and thoroughly complete all material that is required for an application, and submit your application on or before the published deadlines (please allow the office 2 weeks to work on your application).
- ❖ It is your responsibility to arrange for college visits, get applications, schedule interviews and register for the SAT and ACT. It is your responsibility to send official copies of your SAT/ACT scores to each college.
- ❖ It is your responsibility to withdraw applications to other colleges when you receive an Early Decision acceptance.
- ❖ It is your responsibility once you receive your admission decisions to notify each college or university whether you are accepting or rejecting its offer. You should make these notifications as soon as you’ve made a final decision, but no later than June 1. Please remember that there may be students on a waitlist waiting to hear from that school.

Transcript and Application

After you have made a list of colleges that attract you, narrow the list, be careful to include some college(s) where your credentials indicate that you have an excellent chance for admission. Your final slate, probably no more than four or five choices, should be only those colleges that you would be genuinely pleased to attend.

Contact the colleges months before the deadline for information and an application. After you receive the materials from the colleges, you will be ready to take an important step—completing the college application.

Your part: Complete the application

Completing the application is an important job. Set aside sufficient time to do this. Many colleges and universities are now requiring students to complete the application process online. Follow these suggestions:

- ❖ Read the application thoroughly before you begin. Make a photocopy and do a run-through. When you fill it out, be neat. Type or write legibly—no smudges or blots.
- ❖ Answer all questions directly, clearly, and accurately. Seek help if you are not sure how to respond. Don't hesitate to use extra paper if you do not find enough space on the application. Follow directions.
- ❖ If an essay is required, make sure that it is thoughtful and technically correct and that it says what you really mean. Make a rough copy before you write it on the form if that is required. Be sure to check the grammar, style, spelling, punctuation, and mechanics. Remember that this is an opportunity to impress the college in a personal way.
- ❖ Be sure that the application is mailed to the college well before the deadline. These deadlines are very early if you are applying for Early Decision or Early Action.

The school's part: Secondary school reports

- ❖ Every college requires its applicants to have a transcript submitted by the high school. When requested, your high school will send a record of your grades through the end of junior year, a list of your courses in progress, and your grade point average. High schools also include a school profile containing factual data about the school and some of the exceptional courses that it offers.
- ❖ Know and observe the time deadlines and procedures your school follows for submitting transcript requests. Give the school all forms and requests well before the college deadlines. Remember, the school has many other student transcript requests to process. Allow sufficient lead time to meet your deadline.
- ❖ Many colleges require a school report form to be completed by the school or counselor. Put your name and other information on the form and give it to the guidance counselor.
- ❖ If the college requires that the school reports be attached to your part of the application, be sure to complete all of your part before turning it in to the school office. Include also any checks or other required sections so that the entire application may be processed.
- ❖ At midyear, first-semester senior year grades are requested by colleges. Contact your counselor to find out your school's procedure for releasing this information.

Letters of recommendation

Besides the school recommendation, many colleges also require other letters of recommendation, usually from teachers. Be sure to follow any guidelines that the college has about the selection of teachers to write the letters. When the choice is up to you, pick a teacher who knows you well and with whom you feel comfortable. Remember that writing recommendations is a difficult, time-consuming task. Approach the teacher in a polite, friendly manner. Make sure that you make the request long before any deadlines. Give the teacher any special forms the college or your high school may have for recommendations. Be sure to give the teacher a stamped envelope, addressed to the college's admissions office. Follow up with a verbal or written thank you when the teacher has sent the recommendation. It is generally not helpful to submit letters of recommendation that are not requested by the college.

Adapted from resource: Montgomery County Public Schools, "Getting Ready: Career/College Planning Guide for 11th Grade Students"

Financial Aid, Scholarships, and Awards

All seniors who are pursuing postsecondary education, whether college or private career school, should consider applying for financial aid. Talk with a financial aid officer at each college to which you apply. Their expertise is free. Funds for colleges are available, regardless of academic, social, or financial background.

There are many sources of financial aid—cooperative education, merit-based, special-interest and community scholarships, athletic, fine arts, grants and minority scholarships, Academic Common Market, and many others.

- ❖ Grants are awards of money that you do not have to pay back.
- ❖ Work-study gives you the chance to work and earn the money you need.
- ❖ Loans are borrowed money which you must repay with interest.

There are many websites and search terms that are valuable sources of information about financial aid. Here are a few of them:

- General Financial Aid Information
- Scholarship Search Engines
- Minority Student Scholarships
- State of Georgia College Planning Funds
- Georgia State Financial Aid
- Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) www.fafsa.ed.gov
- FAFSA Forecaster (Student Aid Estimator) www.fafsa4caster.ed.gov
- Federal Pell Grant studentaid.ed.gov
- Federal TEACH Grant studentaid.ed.gov
- Federal Supplemental Educational Opportunity Grant studentaid.ed.gov
- Federal Academic Competitiveness Grant studentaid.ed.gov
- Federal National SMART Grant studentaid.ed.gov
- Federal Campus-Based Aid studentaid.ed.gov
- Federal Stafford Loans studentaid.ed.gov
- Federal Plus Loans (Parent Loans) studentaid.ed.gov

If one source of aid is denied, try another source. Keep trying and pay attention to deadlines. Remember that successful people share the quality of persistence.

Federal Grants, Work Study, and Loans

Federal Pell Grant—an award to help undergraduates pay for their education after high school. Unlike loans, grants based on demonstrated financial need do not have to be repaid.

Federal Supplemental Educational Opportunity Grants (FSEOG)—FSEOG offers grants, Federal Work Study (FWS) offers jobs, and Perkins provides loans. They all have some elements in common. You can go to school less than half time and still be eligible to receive aid. There is a limited amount of money available. Eligibility depends on financial need and availability of funds.

Federal Perkins Loan—a low-interest loan to help you pay for your education after high school. These loans are for both undergraduate and graduate students and are made through a school's financial aid office. Your school is your lender. You must repay this loan.

Federal Stafford Loan—low-interest loans made by a lender such as a bank, credit union, or savings and loan association. Sometimes a school acts as a lender. You must repay this loan. There are two types of Federal

Stafford Loans—subsidized, for students who have demonstrated financial need, and unsubsidized, for those who do not have demonstrated financial need.

PLUS Loans—loans made to parents who want to borrow money to help pay for their children’s education. This loan provides additional funds for educational expenses and, like Federal Stafford loans, are made by a lender such as a bank, credit union, or savings and loan association. Ask at your bank about PLUS loans.

Financial Aid Application Process

Complete the necessary financial aid forms

To initiate the financial aid process, you and your parents will possibly submit one or a combination of the following applications:

- The Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA)
- College Scholarship Service (CSS) Financial Aid PROFILE
- State applications
- Institutional applications
- Private scholarship applications

The FAFSA, also available in Spanish, is a confidential document used to collect information for determining a student’s need for financial aid. You submit the FAFSA to a central processing service, which makes an estimate of your family’s financial ability to contribute to the costs of education beyond high school. This estimate and a copy of the FAFSA are forwarded, at your request, to the Federal Pell Grant Program, state scholarship and grant programs, and financial aid officers at the colleges or other postsecondary institutions you specify on the form.

Some colleges or programs require students to complete the CSS/PROFILE. Check in the college and career center to determine which forms are required by the colleges you choose. While the FAFSA is processed at no cost to the student, there is a fee associated with PROFILE.

Some colleges also require applicants to submit their own institutional financial aid application in order to be considered for financial assistance. Check the application instructions carefully. To verify the information on the FAFSA, individual institutions may require a copy of parents’ current 1040 tax form.

For state scholarships, unless otherwise specified, the completed FAFSA must be mailed on or before March 1, but not before January 1 of the student’s senior year. FAFSA forms are available in the college and career centers, usually in mid-December.

Applying for Aid Online

You can get an estimate of your eligibility for federal student aid by working with the FAFSA4Caster at www.fafsa4caster.ed.gov/. You can complete and submit a FAFSA online at www.fafsa.ed.gov. Finally, you can submit the CSS Profile application online at profileonline.collegeboard.com/prf/index.jsp.

Resource: Montgomery County Public Schools, “Getting Ready: Career/College Planning Guide for 11th Grade Students”

College, Financial Aid, and Scholarship Information Resources

(Veritas does not take responsibility for any pop-ups or advertisements)

College Information

www.collegeboard.com

www.collegenet.com

www.nces.ed.gov/ipeds/cool (links to college home pages)

www.princetonreview.com/college

www.petersons.com

www.collegeview.com

www.eCampusTours.com

Financial Aid and Scholarship Information

www.fastweb.com

www.finaid.org

www.students.gov

www.irs.gov (tax relief information)

www.ed.gov/finaid.html

www.srnexpress.com

www.studentaid.ed.gov

www.fafsa.ed.gov (FAFSA on the web)

Resource: The First Academy Guidance Handbook, Orlando, FL

www.thefirstacademy.org

Acknowledgements

We gratefully acknowledge the contributions from the following online resources:

North Cobb Christian School, Guidance Handbook

Marietta, GA

The First Academy, Guidance Handbook

Orlando, FL

Montgomery County Public Schools

Rockville, MD

Keeping Records

Use these charts, or ones like them, to help you keep track of your application status.

Test Score Record

Test	Date Taken	Score	Date Taken	Score
PSAT				
SAT				
SAT Subject Tests				
ACT				

College Applications

College Name: _____

College Name: _____

City/St: _____

City/St: _____

Have You...	Yes/No	Date	Have You...	Yes/No	Date
Requested Application			Requested Application		
Received Application			Received Application		
Mailed Completed Application			Mailed Completed Application		
Requested High School Transcript			Requested High School Transcript		
Sent SAT Test Scores			Sent SAT Test Scores		
Sent ACT Test Scores			Sent ACT Test Scores		
Secured letters of recommendation			Secured letters of recommendation		
Names of Individuals			Names of Individuals		
Requested Financial Aid			Requested Financial Aid		
Requested Scholarship Forms			Requested Scholarship Forms		
Mailed Completed Scholarship Forms			Mailed Completed Scholarship Forms		

*Make multiple copies of this page and complete for each college that you have applied for admission.

