West Hall High School



College Planning Guide

Dear Seniors,

This handbook was designed to provide you with the basic tools necessary to make well-informed decisions about your options after high school. Whether it is attending a 4 year college, a 2 year or technical institution, entering the military, or the full-time workforce, we want you to be knowledgeable about your choices.

This is an exciting time in your life and we hope that the information provided will decrease any anxiety you may have about your remaining time in high school as well as the college admissions process. Read through this planning guide carefully, and should questions arise, make an appointment to see your counselor.

Many different resources were used in compiling the information contained in this guide. A special thanks to College Board, GAFutures, and various high schools whose materials were incredibly helpful.

Sincerely,

Mrs. Diedrich (A-K); jessica.diedrich@hallco.org; (ext. 7262)

Mrs. Hughes (L-Z); erica.hughes@hallco.org; (ext. 7261)

Mrs. Herford (Graduation Coach); cindy.herford@hallco.org; (ext. 7238)

Important Information & Websites

- WHHS Website: http://whhs.hallco.org
- WHHS Senior Website:

http://westhallseniors.weebly.com/

- Senior Remind: text @wh-seniors to 81010
- Senior Twitter: @WestHallSeniors
- WHHS Counseling Canvas:
 https://hallco.instructure.com/courses/48947
- Counseling Twitter: @WHHSGuidance
- Counseling Instagram: @whhs_guidance
- WHHS Scholarships: tinyurl.com/WHHSscholarships



COLLEGE PLANNING CHECKLIST

Spring Semester (Junior Year)

- Start thinking about your future plans; take a career survey at www.gafutures.org
- Make a folder for all important college/career planning information. You'll need it!
- Register for the ACT at www.actstudent.org and/or the SAT at www.collegeboard.org.
- Study for the SAT and ACT. Purchase a study book or use free online resources.
- Check to see if schools you are interested in require the SAT Subject Tests.
- Attend a college/career fair. WHHS hosts a college/career fair in September. You can also check www.gaprobe.org for dates.
- Seek out internships or chances to "shadow" people in careers you are interested in.
- Visit www.bigfuture.collegeboard.org to search and compare schools.
- Use your Spring Break to take tours of colleges you are interested in!
- List 5 possible schools. Look at safe, reach, and stretch schools.

School Name/Website	Early	Regular	What appeals to me?	Special Information Needed.
	Decision	Admission	(Ex. Size, Location,	(Ex. Recommendations, etc)
	Deadline	Deadline	Majors)	

Summer (after Junior Year)

- o Plan College Visits. As a Senior, you are allowed to have 1 excused absence for visits.
- o Begin working on your resume or brag sheet.
- o Retake the ACT and/or SAT if you are not happy with your score.

Fall Semester (Senior Year)

- o Complete your applications (transcripts, test scores, recommendations, etc).
- o If you need recommendations, ask teachers and/or counselors (2 week notice)
- o Request transcripts
- o Send your SAT and/or ACT scores electronically.
- o Fill out the FAFSA for HOPE grant and scholarship at www.fafsa.ed.gov (October 1)

Spring Semester (Senior Year)

- o Apply for scholarships (through prospective college and outside funding).
- o Accept admissions
- o Fill out form to have your final transcript sent upon graduation (advisement).

COLLEGE APPLICATION PROCESS AT WHHS

Step 1 – Pay attention to deadlines: Early & Regular decision. Some deadlines are as early as mid-October.

Step 2 – Apply to colleges online using the college's website, GAfutures, Common Application or Coalition Application

Important information for college applications:

West Hall High School 5500 McEver Road Oakwood, GA 30566

Office Phone: (770) 967-9826 Office Fax: (770) 967-4864 CEEB School Code: 112300 School Website: whhs.hallco.org

Last names A-K	Last names L-Z
Jessica Diedrich	Erica Hughes
Jessica.diedrich@hallco.org, 770-967-9826	Erica.hughes@hallco.org, 770-967-9826

Step 3 – Personally have SAT/ACT scores sent directly from the issuing agency to the college you are applying to.

• SAT – <u>www.collegeboard.org</u>

ACT – <u>www.actstudent.org</u>

Step 4 – If required by the college, request counselor/teacher recommendations <u>at least</u> 2 weeks ahead of deadlines. Provide your counselor/teacher with a resume or come to the counseling office to pick up a brag sheet. A copy is included in this guide. Please check that your college requires the submission of electronic forms or if they prefer everything be mailed with your transcript packet.

Step 5 – Send your transcripts. Visit the Guidance Office to request a transcript. Counselors can send transcripts electronically for NCAA/NAIA and in-State colleges. If you are applying to an out-of-state school, you need to request a sealed copy from your counselor.

Step 6 – Beginning in October, you will be able to start completing your FAFSA (Federal Application for Student Aid). This form must be completed in order to apply for federal student aid (this includes loans, grants and work-study programs). Completing the FASFA is necessary for the HOPE/Zell Miller Scholarship. Begin your FAFSA by signing up for a FSA ID. The application is completed electronically on www.fafsa.ed.gov All documents needed are listed on the FAFSA website.

COLLEGE ENTRANCE EXAMS

ACT & SAT Information WHHS School Code: 112300

When you register, you may select up to 4 colleges to have your ACT or SAT scores sent to for free. If you don't request this at the time of registration, you will have to pay if you need official scores sent later. NCAA Requirement: Use the code "9999" to have your official scores sent directly to the NCAA/NAIA Eligibility Center.

If you receive <u>free or reduced lunch</u>, you qualify for a fee waiver. That means that you can take the SAT twice and the ACT twice during your high school career without charge. You may not use fee waivers to register late. See your counselor for a waiver.

SAT: www.collegeboard.org ACT: www.actstudent.org

Next Generation- formerly known as the ACCUPLACER-this test is used as a placement test for technical school. You need to apply to the school then register with the college to take the test.

TESTING PREPARATION

The SAT and ACT are important components of the college admissions process. Students who take time to study for these tests see positive results. You can study by taking a class, using internet resources, and/or reviewing with a test preparation book. It is highly recommended that you take a practice test prior to your testing date.

Below you will find a list of resources that will be beneficial for you:

Internet Resources: Many of these websites offer **free** tools.

- www.collegeboard.org
- www.actstudent.org
- www.khanacademy.com

Books: The list below is just a sample of available books. There are many other test prep books available. You can purchase these books online or at most bookstores. Look for the most recent.

- The Official SAT Study Guide with DVD
- The Real ACT Prep Guide
- The Princeton Review ACT/SAT
- Barron's ACT/SAT
- Kaplan ACT/SAT

Classes:

Jean DuPree: DuPreeCollegePrep.com

TYPES OF ADMISSIONS DECISIONS

The following are some of the most frequently mentioned admissions practices.

EARLY DECISION

Early decision allows a student to apply between October and mid-January for an early determination of admissibility. If accepted, the student is obligated to attend. The student may submit other applications during this period, but only one can be Early Decision. If accepted through the Early Decision program, the student must withdraw all other applications. Please keep in mind that if you apply for Early Decision and are accepted, *IT IS BINDING!*

EARLY ACTION

Early Action is a plan offered by a few schools that invites early applications, but does not require the student to attend if accepted. The application deadline is usually in early November. It allows the student to receive notice of admission, but is not binding. The student usually has until May 1st to inform the school of his/her decision.

DEFERRED DECISION

The college or university determines that more information is needed to make a final decision about a candidate's application. Often the decision is delayed until the second semester and/or new test scores are received.

ROLLING ADMISSIONS

The college will notify the applicant as soon as the application has been processed (usually four to six weeks) and the file is complete. It is to the student's advantage to apply early.

EXPLORING POST-SECONDARY OPTIONS

Remember that there are over 7,000 post-secondary options in the United States. You have MANY choices when it comes to higher education. What's next after high school? Even if you're unsure what path to take, you have to start planning now for your future. The same skills and knowledge needed to get into college are also necessary to get a good job.

Degree Programs:

- 1. **Certificate and Diploma Programs:** Usually a program you can finish in less than two years, sometimes one. These programs are very career-specific and lead to employment opportunities.
- 2. **Associate of Arts (A.A.) or Associate of Science (A.S.):** A degree awarded after completing a two-year college program.
- 3. **Bachelor of Arts (B.A.) or Bachelor of Science (B.S.):** A degree awarded after completing a four- or five-year college program.

Four-year universities and colleges offer B.A. or B.S. degrees.

- 1. Most four-year college students focus on coursework full time and work no more than part-time. Graduates from four-year colleges and universities are in greater demand by employers and generally earn more money than non-graduates. Tuition costs can be high and may include fees or living on-campus, but some financial aid is available for all students.
- 2. A common misconception is that you need to know what you want to do before going to college. On the contrary, college is a place to explore your interests and abilities in a multitude of new areas. Liberal Arts colleges, for example, encourage you to experiment in different fields before declaring a major. Most colleges require students to declare their major by the end of sophomore year. Students who do know what they want to major in can apply to that area of study from the very beginning. Undecided students can sample a variety of courses before concentrating.

Community/ Technical colleges generally require 2 years of coursework to earn a degree.

These schools are open to everyone, though a high school diploma or GED is usually required. They are relatively inexpensive and offer flexible class schedules. It is often possible to transfer to a four-year school to get a B.A. or B.S. after earning your Associate's degree.

U.S military provides training and money for education.

Options include enlistment, military academies and Reserve Officer Training Corps (ROTC programs). Many colleges and universities offer ROTC programs for one or more branches of the military. In addition to regular coursework, ROTC cadets take classes on military science and participate in physical and leadership training outside of the classroom. ROTC graduates can earn a B.A. or B.S., but most enter the military as an officer with a four-year active duty or eight-year inactive duty commitment after college.

Uncertain of which option to follow or which career path matches your interests and skills? We recommend that you use GAfutures or YouScience.

BUILDING A COLLEGE LIST

When building a college list it is important to consider the following characteristics:

- Campus Size/Student Population
- Location: City, Suburban, Rural
- Cost: Tuition, Financial Aid, Scholarships
- Programs and Majors Offered
- On-Campus Activities: Sports and Greek System

After you determine a college is an overall fit, it is generally a good rule to follow these guidelines when you are deciding where to apply:

Students should have on their list:

- One or two safety colleges: colleges to which they will almost certainly be admitted.
- **Some "matches":** colleges where their GPA, test scores, and other features look very similar to those of recent entering classes.
- A reach (or two): colleges where they meet the criteria for admission, but may not have the stellar qualifications of most first year students.

Ultimately, deciding how many schools to apply to is a family decision. However, counselors generally recommend to consider applying to one to two schools in each category.

QUESTIONS TO ASK ON A COLLEGE VISIT

The Basics

This list is meant to provide prospective students and parents with ideas of people to talk with during an on-campus visit, as well as important questions to ask them. Keep in mind that it is important to seek answers from a variety of students and college officials in order to get a well-rounded view of the college. A campus tour is the best place to ask questions! You get to see where classes are held and pick the brain of a current student - take advantage of it!

- Ask questions about things that are most important to you.
- Try to ask the same questions at each school you visit so that you have a point of comparison between the schools.
- Take a tour and interact with your guide. Ask him or her questions about student life and his or her personal experiences. It is important to get a first-hand student perspective on things. Also, tour guides love feedback!
- Take an unofficial copy of your high school transcript of your courses, grades and SAT and/or ACT scores.

Questions for Student Tour Guides (and other students):

Make these questions more focused on student life and personal experiences. If you need clarity on academic requirements, etc., do inquire about those things, but also ask the questions that aren't outlined in admissions materials - those that only a student could answer! For example, some of the most important questions to ask a student are these top 5:

- 1. Why did you choose this college?
- 2. What other schools did you consider?
- 3. What do you like most about this school?
- 4. What do you wish you could change?
- 5. Is there anything you know now that you wish you had known as a prospective student?

Residential life:

- Is on-campus housing required for first-year students?
- What are dorms like?
- Are students allowed to live off-campus? Is it difficult to find a place to live?
- What is the meal plan like?
- How is the food? Is it the same in every dining hall, or are there options?
- Are students allowed to have cars (what about first year students)? How is parking handled?

Extracurricular Activities and Student Life:

- Are there any special student traditions (academic, athletic, social, etc.)?
- What do you do on a typical weeknight on campus? How about a weekend night?
- What sports does the university offer at the varsity level or at the club/intramural level?
- How many students get involved in intramurals? Are there any exercise classes offered?
- What type of gym facilities are available and what type of access do non-athletes have to these facilities?
- Is there an additional cost to use facilities or participate in activities?
- Where are the most popular student "hangouts"? (Visit one of these places to see what it's like!)

Questions for Financial Aid Officers:

- Do you offer Academic Scholarships? If so, what are the scholarship award levels and the criteria for each level? Are students automatically considered or is there a separate application process? Do you offer other non-need-based scholarships? How do you apply for them?
- For need-based Financial Aid, do you require any additional financial information beyond what's on the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA)? If so, do you use the College Scholarship Service (CSS) Profile? Your own institutional form?

TYPES OF COLLEGES

Generally speaking, colleges fall into 6 admissions categories ranging from Most Competitive to Noncompetitive based on GPA, class rank, test scores, and the school's acceptance rank. When making admissions decisions, many colleges take into consideration the applicant pool, rigor of curriculum, recommendations, special talents, leadership, essays, intellectual curiosity, and your level of interest.

MOST COMPETITIVE SCHOOLS

GPA Class Rank: Typically accept students with an A average/are in the *top 10% of their class or higher*. **Test Scores:** Median SAT of 655 to 800 on critical reading and math / 29 and above score on the ACT.

Acceptance Rate: Many admit only a small percentage (1% to 33%) of students who apply.

Examples: Brown, Duke, Harvard, Military Academies, Princeton, Stanford, Yale, Emory, Vanderbilt

HIGHLY COMPETITIVE SCHOOLS

GPA and Class Rank: Look for students with at least a B or B+ average in rigor high school classes.

Accept most of their students from the top 10% to 35% of their high school class.

Test Scores: Median SAT of 620 to 654 on SAT critical reading and math/ 27 to 28 composite on the ACT.

Acceptance Rate: Generally accept between 33% and 50% of their applicants.

Examples: University of Georgia, Georgia Tech, Oglethorpe, New York University, Boston University, Wake Forest

VERY COMPETITIVE SCHOOLS

GPA and Class Rank: Look for students with at least a B- average and students that rank *in the top 35% to 50% of their class or higher.*

Test Scores: Median SAT of 572 to 620 on SAT critical reading and math / 23 to 27 composite on the ACT

Acceptance Rate: generally accept between 50% and 75% of their applicants

Examples: North Georgia, Georgia College, Georgia State University, Appalachian State University, University of Tennessee, University of Alabama, Clemson, Mercer, Berry

COMPETITIVE SCHOOLS

GPA and Class Rank: Some require that students have at least a high school GPA of B- or better, although some state a minimum of C+ or C. They typically admit students *in the top 50% to 65% of their high school class or higher.*

Test Scores: Median SAT between 500 to 572 on critical reading and math / 21 and 23 composite on the ACT.

Acceptance Rate: generally accept 75% to 85% of their applicants.

Examples: Valdosta, Georgia Southern, Kennesaw State, Auburn

LESS COMPETITIVE SCHOOLS

GPA and Class Rank: Admit students with averages below C who rank in the top 65% of their class. Usually a 2.0 Academic GPA is required.

Test Scores: The median freshman test scores are *below 500 SAT critical reading and math and below 21* on the ACT.

Acceptance Rate: generally accept 85% or more of their applicants.

Examples: Georgia Gwinnett College, West Georgia, Augusta State, Savannah State, Columbus State, Clayton State

NONCOMPETITIVE SCHOOLS

GPA and Class Rank: Only require evidence of graduation from high school or GED.

Test Scores: Some require that entrance exams be taken for placement purposes only.

Acceptance Rate: generally accept 98% or more of their applicants.

Examples: Georgia Perimeter, Gwinnett Tech, Lanier Tech, Athens Tech, Chattahoochee Tech

TIPS FOR WRITING COLLEGE APPLICATION ESSAYS

- 1. Be concise-admissions officers must read thousands of essays
- 2. Be honest-do not inflate achievements or accomplishments
- 3. Be an individual-how can you distinguish yourself from other applicants to the college?
- 4. Be coherent-do not try to cover your life story with one essay; a college application is a "snapshot" not the entire story
- 5. Be accurate-spelling, punctuation, etc. (proofread)
- 6. Be vivid-provide details in order to be relatable
- 7. Be likeable-how well do you communicate with others?
- 8. Be smart-do not just state your intended major, but elaborate on why the subject intrigues you to continue pursuing it

TIPS FOR WRITING AN ACADEMIC RESUME

- Name, address, email, phone number.
- Education information. This includes the name and address of the high school, GPA, and class rank. College courses can also go in this section, if the student has taken any.
- Activities. These can be in or out of school—for example, marching band, intramural basketball, or youth group at the student's church. Especially important are any leadership roles the student has taken in these groups.
- Other experience. A part-time job, participation in a walk for cancer awareness, or contribution to a science fair are all pertinent details.
- Accolades. Academic awards or awards in extracurricular competition—state wrestling champion or member of the top-ranking marching band in the region, for example.
- References. Names and phone numbers of teachers, coaches, employers, or internship directors don't necessarily have to go on the resume, but it's good to have these people lined up in advance.
- Anything else that makes you "shine." A resume is the one chance a student will have to
 tell college recruiters everything they need to know. If something makes the student
 unique and interesting, by all means include it. Fluency in a foreign language or
 proficiency in advanced computer programs may qualify here. A word of caution,
 however: Don't go overboard. The resume should contain only what a specific school
 will want to know.

PAYING FOR COLLEGE

Breakdown of the Financial Aid Terminology:

- **Scholarships:** An award that does not have to be repaid. Scholarships are generally granted based on an applicant meeting certain eligibility criteria.
- **Grants:** A grant is a financial award given to a student for the purposes of paying for all or part of college expense. A grant does not need to be repaid by the student.
- **Loans:** Financial Aid awards that the student or parent borrows from a lender, the school or other third party. Loans must be repaid by the borrower, usually with interest.
- **Work-study:** A work-study program allows a student to earn money by working part time during the school year as a component of their financial aid package. The jobs are usually on campus.

Sources of Financial Aid:

- **Federal Government:** The federal government is the largest source of financial aid. Awards are based on financial need. Students fill out the Federal Application for Student Aid each year. Visit www.fafsa.gov for additional information.
- Colleges and Universities: Schools offer a wide variety of aid and scholarships to students. These awards are both merit-based and need-based. Students might need to complete an additional application for scholarships or it may be offered as part of the admissions process. Contact your school of interest for additional information.
- **Private Sources:** Churches, companies, and other organizations offer a variety of scholarships for students. Each organization has a specific set of qualification requirements. For additional information contact local organizations or visit scholarship search websites.

Georgia's Hope Program:

- The HOPE Scholarship program is for students that are seeking a college degree and plan on attending college in Georgia. A 3.0 GPA in academic courses (Language Arts, Social Studies, Math, Science, and Foreign Language) is required and 4 rigor courses. A part of your college tuition will be covered. This amount will vary depending on projected lottery revenues and expenditures. A SSN is required for processing.
- The **HOPE Grant** program is for students seeking a technical certification or diploma, regardless of the student's high school grade point average or graduation date. This will cover a certain percentage of tuition at a Georgia public technical college or public college or university.
- The **Zell Miller Scholarship** program is for students who have demonstrated academic achievement and that are seeking a college degree in Georgia. To become eligible, a student must graduate with a 3.70 GPA in academic courses and a minimum score of 1200 on the SAT (Critical Reading and Math, one sitting) or 26 on the ACT in one sitting and 4 rigor courses.

You can check your HOPE GPA using www.gafutures.org.

IMPORTANT RESOURCES

	College Planning	
www.gafutures.org	College search, scholarships, career, HOPE GPA	
www.bigfuture.org	College Exploration, Comparison, Scholarships	
www.cappex.org	College Search, Admission Chances, Scholarships	
www.zinch.com	College Search, Scholarships	
www.commonapp.org	Common Application Forms	
www.collegeview.com	College Search, Application Process, Financial Aid, Majors	
www.campustour.com	Virtual Campus Tour	
www.usnews.com/rankings	College and University Rankings	
www.collegeconfidential.com	College Search, Admissions, Paying for College	
www.petersons.com	Guide to Colleges and Universities	
www.collegeweeklive.com	College Search, Scholarships, Applications	
Financi	al Aid and Scholarships	
www.fafsa.ed.gov	Federal Application for Financial Aid	
www.studentaid.ed.gov	Financial Aid Explanations	
www.finaid.com	Scholarships, Loans, Savings, Military Aid	
www.fastweb.com	Scholarship Search	
www.gocollege.com	Scholarships, Loans, Grants	
www.scholarships.com	Scholarship Search	
www.studentscholarships.org	Scholarship Search, Career Information, College Search	
	Academic Majors	
www.mymajors.com	Majors, Careers, and Schools	
www.collegemajors101.com	Major and Career Information	
www.princetonreview.com	College and Major Search, Test Prep	
Career a	nd Employment Planning	
www.ajb.dni.us	America's job bank	
www.careerpath.com	Career Information, Career and Personality Tests	
www.dol.state.ga.us	Georgia Dept. of Labor	
www.onetcenter.org	Occupational Information Network	
www.myfuture.com	College, Career and Military Search	
www.self-directed-search.com	Interest and Career Inventory	

MILITARY OPTIONS

Take the ASVAB: Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery Test

If you plan on joining the military one of the most important tests you will take before you enlist is the Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery test, also known as the ASVAB test. This test measures strengths and weaknesses and is usually a good indicator of what type of career path would suit your skills and interests.

Contact a Recruiter

Often, an armed forces recruiter will visit our school during lunchtime. Usually, these recruiters are members of the military whose main job is to find and recruit individuals into the military. If you're interested in exploring your military options, you'll need to set up a meeting with a recruiter to discussion your options and determine you if qualify to join the military.

Here is a list of our local recruiters:

United States Army (770) 532-1126

United States Air Force (770)532-8516

United States Marines (770) 536-9661

United States Navy (770)297-8872

Student Brag Sheet for College and Scholarship Recommendations

Your recommendation letter requests must be submitted to a counselor/teacher **at least 2 weeks in advance of the due date.** There can be no exceptions to this requirement.

Required Information						
Your Name:						
Your Personal Email Address:						
Your Grade in High School:						
WHHS Counselor Contact Information						
Last Names A – K Jessica Diedrich Jessica.diedrich@hallco.org	Last Names L – Z Erica Hughes Erica.hughes@hallco.org					
Your plans after high school (check all that apply):						
☐ 2 year college (to transfer to 4 year)	□ Work					
☐ 2 year college/technical program	☐ Military					
☐ 4 year college	☐ Other (please list):					
Colleges I am interested in:						
Possible college major (if pursuing college):						
Career fields I am interested in:						
List your EXTRACURRICULAR activities (sports, music, student clubs, religious, etc. Indicate if you held a leadership position in any of your listed activities). Honors And Awards (Ex: National Honor Society, grades 11-12)						
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List your paid WORK experience (Ex: Barnes and Noble Gainesville, GA 2016 – present, 15 hr per week)
List your most important VOLUNTEER experiences & what grade (Ex: Habitat for Humanity, gr 11-12)
List any ATHLETIC achievements (Ex: selected for all-county team grade 11-12, etc.)
OTHER (Ex: hobbies, travel, other significant involvement not listed above)
More About Me
Will you be the first in your family to attend college? ☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Not Attending College
List 3 adjectives that you believe describe you (Ex: determined):
If you had to list what your greatest strength is, what would it be?
List 3 adults (non-relatives) that know you well:
Of the above activities, honors, volunteer service experiences, work, etc which have been the most meaningful to you? Briefly explain.