

# High School

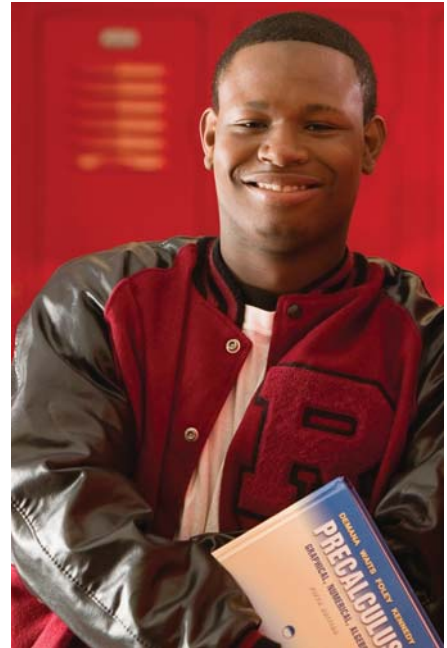
## A PARENT'S GUIDE

### What to know (and do) if your child is in high school.

Ah, high school. Football games. Prom. And tons of tests. For a lot of parents (and students), high school can seem like a blur of exams, all with funny names (PSAT, SAT, ACT, EOCT, GHSGT, etc). Don't despair, though – it's all manageable, as long as you're organized.

During high school, you'll want to ask for your child's schedule each semester so you'll know what classes your child is taking. At the end of every semester be sure to get a transcript to help keep track of your child's grade point average and attendance records. Set aside time and a place for homework and always ask if all homework assignments are completed before going to school. Finally, make SURE your kid goes to school every day. At this stage, math and science courses are tougher, which makes it easier to fall behind.

No matter what your child's plans are, encourage him or her to keep taking math and science during senior year. It will prove to be a lifelong advantage.



#### + TERMS YOU NEED TO KNOW:

##### **Accel Program**

Allows eligible enrolled high school students to earn postsecondary and Carnegie Unit credit while jointly enrolled at a high school and a college, university, or technical institution in the state of Georgia.

##### **ACT – American College Testing**

An alternative to the SAT. (This test measures what the student has actually learned, whereas the SAT is more about capability and comprehension – reasoning, verbal abilities, etc.)

##### **AYP – Adequate Yearly Progress (Reports)**

An online report on how well the state, each school, and school district are meeting federal education requirements.

##### **ESOL – English for Speakers of Other Languages**

For students whose first language is not English.

##### **FAFSA – Free Application for Federal Student Aid**

A standard form you and your child will need to fill out to apply for financial aid. You'll need to have your taxes done to complete this form, so file early the year your child is in 12th grade.

##### **GHSGT – Georgia High School Graduation Test**

This five-section test is given for the first time in the 11th grade. Students must pass all five sections to graduate. If a student fails the GHSGT, but meets all the other criteria for graduation, they may be eligible for a Certificate or Special Education Diploma. Students in these categories may retake the GHSGT as many times as needed to qualify for a diploma.

##### **GPS – Georgia Performance Standards**

The new version of Georgia's curriculum. (GPS will be phased in between 2004-2008 and will incorporate more performance standards.)

##### **HOPE – Helping Outstanding Pupils Educationally**

Georgia scholarship program that gives B students an almost-free ride at any of Georgia's public colleges, universities, or technical colleges.

##### **NCLB – No Child Left Behind**

The most recent authorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, which is the principal federal law affecting K-12 educators. It requires that all children be assessed each year in order to show adequate yearly progress in reading and mathematics.

##### **PSAT – Preliminary Scholastic Assessment Test**

Preliminary assessment test that all students take in 10th grade, even if they're not considering college. (For college students, the PSAT is important – it's considered a qualifying test for National Merit Scholarships.)

##### **SAT – Scholastic Assessment Test**

Standardized test that's a major factor in college admissions (taken junior and senior year).

## First things first: high school dates and deadlines.

### + 9th Grade

At the end of the year, all students will have to take End-of-Course Tests (EOCT). Check with teachers about how to prepare. (These tests count for 15% of your child's grade!) Your child should also start studying for the PSAT, which he or she will take next year. You can find information about the PSAT and the SAT at your local library or online at [www.collegeboard.com](http://www.collegeboard.com).

### + 10th Grade

All students – college bound or not – should take the PSAT (Preliminary Scholastic Assessment Test) in the fall. The PSAT is free and it counts for certain awards and scholarships. You can find practice tests for the PSAT and SAT at [www.testprepreview.com/psat\\_practice.htm](http://www.testprepreview.com/psat_practice.htm).

This is also the year to start researching colleges and scholarships. (Your school counselor can help with both.) Pay special attention to courses required for college admission; some classes that aren't required for high school graduation are required for admission to more selective colleges.

If your child is not planning on a four-year college, he or she should still be paying close attention to which math and science classes will help with post-secondary plans. (Someone who plans on going into a technical field in the military, for instance, will need plenty of math and science.)

### + 11th Grade

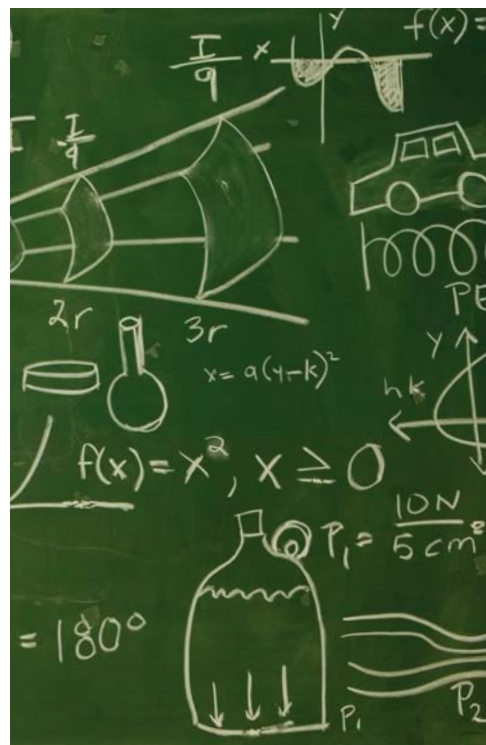
It's SAT time (for kids who are considering a four-year college). These students will take the SAT (Scholastic Assessment Test) for the first time in the spring. Talk to teachers about the best way to prepare and find out if there are any after-school tutorials available.

All students will have to take the Georgia High School Graduation Test (GHS GT) in the spring. The test has five sections, and students have to pass them ALL in order to graduate. The science section is the toughest, so check in with your child's science teacher to make sure he or she is ready. You can find study guides for the GHS GT at [www.usatestprep.com](http://www.usatestprep.com).

### + 12th Grade

In the fall, college-bound kids should apply for scholarships, submit college applications, and take the SAT again, if needed. March is the standard deadline for scholarship applications, but financial aid goes quickly, so it's a good idea to get your application in as soon as possible. Parents of kids going to college should file their tax returns early, because they will need them to fill out the FAFSA (Free Application for Federal Student Aid). You can find the FAFSA online at [www.fafsa.ed.gov](http://www.fafsa.ed.gov).

All students should be encouraged to take math and science senior year. It will improve your child's college years, job prospects, and job promotion opportunities, no matter what he or she has planned.



## Other hints for high school parents:

- + Make sure your child has transportation to study sessions, tutorials, and extracurricular activities. For working parents, that can be a challenge, so talk to your school if you need help. Teachers are resourceful – they may be able to help your child get to activities, even if you can't!
- + Check that homework is getting done. It's okay if the subject matter is unfamiliar to you; you can still make sure that assignments look complete and that textbooks are coming home every night.
- + Standardized test scores can be confusing. Ask your child's teacher what the results really mean and where it places your child in relation to his/her classmates.
- + If you have a learning-disabled student, ask your school about special testing programs. In many cases, learning-disabled students take the same tests as their classmates, but are given longer to complete them.
- + Ask your school about mentoring programs, ones in which individual teachers "adopt" students. This can be a great way for your child to get some extra help and motivation.
- + Help your child create an account on [www.GAcollge411.org](http://www.GAcollge411.org). In addition to providing basic information about tests and scholarships, this website also tracks grades and provides a roadmap for taking the right high school courses.
- + Congratulate yourself heartily at graduation. You should be proud. And so should your son or daughter.



## + MATH AND SCIENCE LINKS TO EXPLORE:

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### <http://public.doe.k12.ga.us>

Georgia Department of Education website. Online information for parents and students.

### [www.GAcollge411.org](http://www.GAcollge411.org)

Test and scholarship information, as well as grade tracking and course guidance.

### [www.georgiago.org](http://www.georgiago.org)

Information on helping kids stay in school and complete their education.

### [www.hotmath.com](http://www.hotmath.com)

Online access to textbooks and step-by-step help with real problems (subscription-based).

### [www.math.com](http://www.math.com)

Basic information and help with all levels of math.

### [www.kidsclick.com](http://www.kidsclick.com)

Educational software.

### [www.collegeboard.com](http://www.collegeboard.com)

Information on PSAT, SAT, and AP exams.

### [www.fafsa.ed.gov](http://www.fafsa.ed.gov)

Where to fill out and submit your FAFSA (Free Application for Federal Student Aid) online.

### <http://www.finaid.org>

Good general source of financial aid information.

### [www.testpreview.com](http://www.testpreview.com)

Practice tests for the PSAT, SAT, and others.