

Don't just HOPE you're ready for the future... plan now!

HOPE eligibility requirements in this flyer reflect House Bill 326 (Preserving HOPE and Georgia Pre-K for Future Generations), passed in 2011. Talk to your counselor if you have other questions.

What are the requirements for earning a HOPE Scholarship or a Zell Miller scholarship?

To qualify for the HOPE Scholarship, a student must earn a minimum 3.0 cumulative grade point average in all academic classes in high school. Students must earn high school credit in advanced courses to qualify. HOPE recipients must be enrolled in an eligible postsecondary institution. They must meet Georgia residency requirements and be a U.S. citizen or an eligible non-citizen. Applicants must be registered for selective service, if applicable, and may not have a drug conviction or be in default on a school loan. In addition to meeting the requirements above, Zell Miller Scholars must be their high school's valedictorian or salutatorian, or earn a 3.7 high school GPA or higher and post, in one sitting, an SAT combined score of 1200 or higher in math and reading or an ACT score of 26 or higher.

What high school courses will count in determining HOPE eligibility?

All academic courses attempted in language arts, mathematics, science, social studies, and modern and classical languages, including both required and elective courses in these subjects, would count toward HOPE eligibility. If a student fails a class in a core subject, then retakes the class, both grades would be included in the student's HOPE grade point average. Students entering high school in 2011–12 and after are required to earn credit in rigorous high school coursework in order to qualify for the HOPE Scholarship. Students earning credit for courses in GCPS' standard sequence for math and science (as well as foreign language or college-level Advanced Placement or International Baccalaureate classes) would meet the HOPE rigor requirements. The Class of 2015 must earn at least two high-rigor credits, with three credits required for 2016 graduates, and four credits for those graduating in 2017.

Will an "80" average in academic classes qualify a high school student for the HOPE Scholarship?

No. Each individual course grade (expressed as a percentage) must be converted to a 4.0 scale, based on Gwinnett County Public Schools' grading scale. For instance, a 77% has a value of 2.0, an 88% converts to 3.0, and a 94% is a 4.0. See "The Choice Book," your "Student/Parent Handbook," or your transcript for Gwinnett's grading scale.

Are any high school classes given extra weighting?

For HOPE purposes only, grades in Advanced Placement (AP) and International Baccalaureate (IB) classes will be weighted in the following manner:

- Gwinnett students get a weight of 10 points added to their earned numerical grades in AP and IB courses for determining class rank and GPA for college applications.
- In determining HOPE Scholarship eligibility, the 10 points added by GCPS will be subtracted from the AP or IB numerical grade (for HOPE purposes only).
- For the HOPE average only, the "unweighted" numerical grade will be converted to a 4.0 scale, then .5 points will be added to the converted score. No grades higher than a 4.0 will be awarded.

Example: A student earns an 88 in AP Biology, and has a weighted numerical average of 98 with the 10 points. For determining class rank and GPA for college applications, the grade would be considered an "A" with a 98 numerical average and a 4.0 on the GCPS grading scale. For HOPE Scholarship eligibility only, the *unweighted* numerical average of 88, considered a "B," would be converted to a 3.0, then .5 would be added back for a 3.5. If the student had a 92 unweighted average (102 with the 10 points), the converted score would be a 4.0 both for class rank purposes and for HOPE purposes.



Who calculates the HOPE average and determines eligibility for the Scholarship?

The Georgia Student Finance Commission, a state agency, calculates HOPE averages based on transcript information provided by Gwinnett County Public Schools. The school system does **not** calculate HOPE averages.

Will the HOPE average be included on Gwinnett transcripts or report cards?

No. Because the HOPE average is not computed by GCPS, it will **not** appear on a student's transcript or report card.

How and when do families learn a student's HOPE eligibility status?

Students will **not** receive automatic or direct notification of their HOPE eligibility status. Students and/or their parents may sign on to www.GAcollge411.org and create a "My411 Student Account." The state generally makes HOPE eligibility available for graduating seniors through these personal accounts in mid-June. After the state posts HOPE eligibility information on GAcollge 411, families may contact the financial aid office of the college or postsecondary school the student is registered to attend in the summer or fall. Financial aid staff will have access to this information directly from the Georgia Student Finance Commission. Beginning in the summer of 2015, GCPS will make HOPE GPAs available to sophomores and juniors in the summer. Check with your local school to find out more.

What do students have to do to keep the HOPE Scholarship?

To keep the scholarship, college students must maintain a 3.0 GPA or higher during the semesters in which they reach 30-, 60-, and 90-hours of credit earned. A student who loses the scholarship by dropping below a 3.0 average has one year to regain the scholarship by bringing his or her GPA back to a 3.0. Students may regain the scholarship only one time. Zell Miller Scholars must maintain a 3.3 average in college. If the student falls below the required 3.3 GPA, but maintains a 3.0 or higher, the student remains eligible for the regular HOPE award. Only undergraduates are eligible for HOPE funds, up to 127 semester hours.

What does the HOPE Scholarship Program cover for eligible students?

Qualifying students may use HOPE award funds—the HOPE Scholarship and the Zell Miller Scholarship—toward tuition in degree-granting programs at *eligible* public, private, and for-profit colleges and universities in Georgia. A HOPE Grant may be used toward tuition for an *eligible* certificate or diploma program. The HOPE Scholarship Program is funded by the state lottery, and award amounts are adjusted annually based on lottery revenues.

Students attending *public* colleges or universities receive a HOPE award amount based on a per-hour rate at the institution he or she is attending. The money provided to HOPE Scholars varies, depending on the type of institution a student attends and the number of hours enrolled. *For instance, a HOPE Scholar carrying 15 hours at a research university with higher tuition would receive a larger award than a student taking 12 hours at a community college with lower tuition costs.* The per-hour rate is based on a projection of qualifying scholarship recipients and expected lottery revenues for the school year. Students may not use HOPE funds to pay for remedial or developmental courses, and have a seven-year window in which to use HOPE after high school graduation.

Typically, the HOPE Scholarship award covers the bulk of a student's tuition costs, but does not cover fees, books, room,

or board. That said, the HOPE Scholarship Program remains a significant source of college funding for many Georgia families.

The state's top students may qualify for the **full-tuition** Zell Miller Scholarship, reserved for high school valedictorians, salutatorians, and graduates with strong GPAs and test scores who plan to attend an *eligible public* college or university.

The *private* school award for both HOPE Scholars and Zell Miller Scholars is a set amount, regardless of hours enrolled.

Students qualifying for needs-based aid could qualify for a low-interest (1%) Student Access Loan (SAL), administered by the Georgia Student Finance Commission (GSFC). Find an application at www.GAcollge411.org. The SAL program provides interest rate and repayment incentives to those who complete their program of study within the designed program length, and students who work in designated public service sector jobs or in science, technology, engineering, or mathematics (STEM) fields after graduation. Contact GSFC with questions.

Questions? Call 1-800-505-GSFC (4732) or 770-724-9000 or check online at www.GAcollge411.org.

