

Not going to lie, this is not one of the most exciting reads our department will share with you this year. However, it could be the most important information that we want to share with all parents and current high school regarding financial aid. The College Counseling Department is here for you! Here's what you need to know going into October.

The Federal Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) opens this Saturday, October 1, 2022, for current seniors and their parents. The FAFSA is the financial aid form the federal government uses to determine the estimated family contribution (EFC). It is necessary for accessing financial aid such as grants, federal student loans, and work-study funds. Current seniors and parents are encouraged to complete this form for FALL 2023 – applying sooner is better to qualify for as much financial aid as possible.

You should NEVER pay to complete the FAFSA. Always complete the FAFSA on: [studentaid.gov](https://studentaid.gov).

Sidenote - If you have already started the FAFSA, you have been filling out the incorrect school year and need to wait until Saturday, October 1, to apply for the 2023-2024 school year.

However, you can go ahead and request a FSA ID now, one for the student and one parent now so you both are ready. The FSA ID serves as an electronic signature.

Here are four quick things you need to know about financial aid:

Get an idea of what college might really cost – Check out the Net Price Calculator on college websites to determine the college's estimated net price for you – the cost of attending a college minus grants and scholarships you might receive.

You have to apply to qualify for aid – One thing is for sure, if you don't fill out financial aid applications, you won't get any aid\*. Even if you think you may not qualify, we still encourage families of seniors to complete the FAFSA at least for the upcoming freshman year.

\*Typically, this does not include Academic Scholarships. However, it does depend on each school's policies.

The FAFSA is the place to start for high school seniors and it's free - It is highly recommended you use the IRS retrieval tool because it's the easiest way to provide your tax data for the 2021 year, it's the best way of ensuring that your FAFSA has accurate tax information, and you won't need to provide a copy of the IRS Tax Return Transcript to your college.

More aid is out there – Once you have completed the FAFSA, you should apply for these types of aid: financial aid, including institutional scholarships at the colleges you are applying to/accepted to & private scholarships you are eligible for. Some great scholarship resources include Unigo, GaFutures, JVL Counseling, Going Merry, Big Futures, and College Board Opportunity Scholarships.

Check out GWA's Scholarship Page -

<https://sites.google.com/view/gwascholarships/home>

Always remember to research scholarships available through the colleges to which you are applying. Be mindful of posted deadlines.

Check with your parents and family members about scholarships offered through their places of employment.

This is a living document. We update material regularly as programs and deadlines change. If any links are not functional or you would like to share a scholarship opportunity that is not listed, please contact Mrs. Nabors.

Whether you/your soon to be graduate decides to stay in-state or head out of state next fall, we will have ALL George Walton Academy seniors complete the HOPE/Zell application in February for the GSFC to have on file for any schools in the state of Georgia.

Scholarship or Financial Aid questions? Email Mrs. Nabors at

[lnabors@gwa.com](mailto:lnabors@gwa.com).