



PICKENS HIGH SCHOOL

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Fall 2022

Dear Class of 2023 Seniors and Parent(s)/Guardian(s),

We celebrate the accomplishments of your Pickens High School Senior! As your student gets ready to graduate and embark on postsecondary plans, please be advised of the following information and guidance.

Enclosed are your senior's:

- *2022-2023 Pickens High School Senior Status Check* - this form tracks your student's progress toward graduation.
- *Transcript* - this transcript reflects your student's grades and credits as of August 2022.
- *Student's Schedule* – this document shows what the student's schedule is for the entire 2022-23 school year.

Please be mindful of the following information for our 2023 Seniors:

- **Class of 2023 Senior and Parent Information Night** – This information session is on Tuesday, 9/6, at 6pm in the PHS Performing Arts Center. If you are unable to attend, then please take the time to view the “Senior Presentation” accessible via the PHS Counseling webpage.
- **Senior Meetings** - Each school counselor will attempt to meet with all of our seniors this fall semester, either in person or digitally, to go over this information as well as to answer any questions about post-secondary plans.
- **Status Check Letters** - Listed on the attached status check form are the classes that your student must pass in order to both graduate on time and participate in the graduation ceremony at PHS on May 26, 2023.
- **Applying to College** - Each postsecondary school has its own set of requirements for admission. It is the student and family's responsibility to contact/research the school's admissions office to determine the admission requirements for the student's school of choice, including application deadlines for admission and financial aid, SAT/ACT requirements, recommendation letter requirements, etc. Students can apply to post-secondary schools directly through the college's website or by other means such as Common App. More information regarding this is available on the PHS Counseling Webpage.
- **GA FUTURES.ORG** - All seniors are expected to have a gafutures.org account to check their eligibility for financial aid, explore college and career information, and for postsecondary planning. **GA Futures is the entity that calculates all students' HOPE GPA's, not the student's school. Please note that a student's GA HOPE GPA and High School GPA are two different GPA's.** Information on how to create/access a student's GA Futures account is available via the PHS Counseling webpage. A student's HOPE GPA is one of the factors in deciding if a student qualifies for the HOPE Grant, HOPE Scholarship, and/or Zell Miller Scholarship. To review all of the requirements for these three scholarships, then please visit gafutures.org.
- **Rigor Requirement for HOPE GPA** - One of the eligibility requirements for the HOPE Scholarship and Zell Miller Scholarship for the Class of 2023 is completing four rigor courses. gafutures.org has a full list of HOPE eligibility requirements, including HOPE rigor courses.

- **Social Security Number and GAFUTURES.ORG** - The student's Social Security Number is required for participation in the HOPE Scholarship Program. It is the student's and family's responsibility to have the Social Security Number added to the school's transcript as well as to the GA Futures profile correctly, and to verify its accuracy. **Omission or error may result in the student losing eligibility for the HOPE Grant, HOPE Scholarship, and/or Zell Miller Scholarship.**
- **Transcript Requests** - Our PHS Counseling Secretary takes care of all transcript requests. Transcripts may be ordered by emailing: phstranscripts@pickenscountyschools.org with the student's full name, date of birth, expected graduation date, destination (college, military, employer, etc.) and method of delivery (GA Futures, USPS, email address, Common App, etc.). Directions on this process can be found on the PHS Counseling Webpage.
- **Requesting Where to Send Your Final Transcript in May 2023** - Please know that at the end of the school year, the PHS Counseling Team will send out a "Class of 2023 Final Transcript" Google form to the Class of 2023. **All graduating seniors planning on attending a post-secondary school will need to have a copy of their final transcript to their school of choice.** To help smoothly and accurately send your final transcript to your school of choice, then the graduating senior will have to complete this form; otherwise, the PHS Counseling Team will not know where to send your final transcript to. Please know that final transcripts are not available until at least June 23, 2023, but no later than June 30th. Please know that after June 30th, you can log into your gafutures.org account to request a transcript to be sent to any school in the state of Georgia. This is the preferred method after graduation as this tends to be the fastest and most efficient way for schools in Georgia to receive your transcript.
- **Early Exit Senior Opportunity** - Seniors interested in being an "Early Exit Senior" (for eligible seniors who meet all graduation requirements by the end of Dec. 2022 and wish not to take classes in the Spring 2023 semester) will need to schedule a meeting in December with his/her school counselor. Both the student and parent must attend this meeting and sign the "Early Exit Senior" paperwork. Please know that early exit seniors are not allowed to participate in Spring 2023 sports or clubs, but can still have the choice to attend prom and walk at the May 2023 PHS Graduation. Please know that if you plan on attending college classes in the Spring of 2023 as a high school graduate, then the counselors recommend that students do not do the "early exit senior" option and instead attend classes through Dual Enrollment as final transcripts for the Fall 2022 semester will not be available in time in January to meet financial aid if you are enrolling as a high school graduate in January of 2023.
- **Information on Graduation** - All graduation instructions and information regarding graduation will be emailed to the Class of 2023 to their school Gmail accounts in May of 2023. Graduation information will then be made public via social media around mid-May 2023.
- **Scholarships** - ALL local scholarships are listed on the PHS Counseling webpage. It is the student's responsibility to search these scholarship opportunities and apply for the ones that you feel you might qualify for. We encourage you to check the counseling webpage on a weekly basis to keep up with any new scholarship opportunities. Please know that local scholarships start becoming more available in January through May. The counseling works diligently to ensure that all directions, documents, and deadlines are posted on the PHS Counseling webpage. Everything needed to apply for the scholarships listed are accessible via the webpage.
- **FAFSA** - The FAFSA is open for all students and their families (it will require both) to complete from October 1st - June 30th of each year. This application must be completed for an individual to receive any form of financial aid (including the Pell Grant, HOPE Grant, HOPE Scholarship, and/or Zell Miller Scholarship). Please know that this application is a Federal Application and is not related to PHS. If you have questions about your application and/or need assistance, then you will have to contact the Federal Student Aid Department of the US Department of Education. Ways to call and/or contact them virtually are accessible on their webpage studentaid.gov and/or you can reference the information provided in the PHS Senior Information Packet.
- **School Email** - Please check your school email on a daily basis. This is where you will receive information about all things related to graduation, senior pictures, yearbooks, cap & gown orders, etc.

- **Senior Information Packet** – Please visit the PHS Counseling webpage to download and review the Class of 2023 Senior Information Packet. This packet contains useful information and resources for you and your family regarding your senior year and post-secondary planning.
- **Senior Information Sheet** – Please visit the PHS Counseling webpage to download a copy of this document, fill it out, and save a copy for yourself. The document is meant to be used in place of a resume or to help you build one as resumes are often required when applying for post-secondary schools, jobs, and/or scholarships. This document can also be given as a helpful tool to those who you ask to write you a reference/recommendation letter. **PLEASE KEEP YOUR ORIGINAL COPY AND THEN MAKE COPIES TO HAND OUT FOR APPLICATIONS/RECOMMENDERS.**
- **Senior Presentation** – Please visit the PHS Counseling webpage to download and review this incredibly resourceful presentation. Make sure to download this resource as a “power-point” presentation and not as “Google Slides.” If downloaded in “power-point” presentation mode, then you will be able to access the “microphone” icon in the lower right-hand corner of each slide and listen to the audio that accompanies each slide.
- **Senior Pictures** – Senior pictures are done through Cady Studios. Please visit home.cady.com/seniors/ to schedule your portrait session for your Class of 2023 senior pictures. If you need any further assistance, then please call Cady Studios at 678-722-3449. Please know that in order for a senior to appear in the 2023 PHS Draca yearbook, he/she must have a photo made with Cady Studios. Cady will be on campus on September 13th and October 4th to photograph seniors only. Seniors and/or their parents should schedule appointments for those days and arrive in the old gym five minutes ahead of appointments. Appointments may also be made on other dates; however, travel to Cady Studios will be necessary. Cady provides drapes for young ladies and tux tops for young gentlemen. Hair, make-up, and jewelry should be taken care of ahead of the appointment. A \$30 sitting fee is due at the time of photography for all seniors. This fee covers special processing for senior photos and touch-ups to photos when necessary.
- **Cap and Gown Orders** – Cap and gown orders are done through Jostens. A representative from Jostens will meet with the senior class during the school day on October 19th. After this date, seniors and their families will be able to place their cap & gown orders online. The link will be accessible via the PHS Counseling webpage.
- Seniors and their families have the following resources available to assist them in preparation for graduation and post-secondary options, including:
 - PHS Counseling Webpage (accessible by visiting the PHS webpage and then clicking on the “counseling” tab at the top of the webpage)
 - GAFutures.org
 - PHS Counseling Department

Please do not hesitate to contact us with questions about graduation or post-secondary planning. We are very excited for each and every one of you!

Best Wishes,

PHS Counseling Department