

Postsecondary Options,
College Planning, and
Summer Steps

How to prepare for your
senior year



Learning Objectives



Walton's Counseling Department

Who is my school counselor?

How do I get information from the school counseling department?



Post-secondary Options

What options are available to me after graduating from Walton?



College Admissions Factors

What factors influence college admissions decisions?



Building a College List

How do I research colleges?

How do I build a college list?



Summer Steps

What can I do over the summer to prepare for my senior year?

What is the Postsecondary Options Packet and when is it due?

Walton School Counselors

School counselors are assigned to students based on last name, in alphabetical order.



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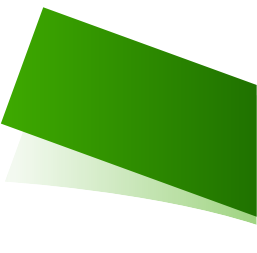
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Counseling

Additional Counseling Suite Staff Members



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Dr. Karen Schwartz
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School Counseling Website

The screenshot shows a web browser at the URL <https://www.cobbk12.org/walton/>. The top navigation bar is red with the 'COBB SCHOOLS' logo and links for 'LOGIN', 'TRANSLATE', 'FIND IT FAST', and font size controls. Below this is a blue header for 'WALTON HIGH SCHOOL' with a search bar and social media icons. A blue sidebar on the left contains a 'CLOSE' button and a list of menu items: 'Charter Document', 'Class Meeting Presentations', 'Counseling Department' (highlighted with a red arrow), 'Enrollment', 'Faculty/Staff', and 'Hours & Contact Information'. The main content area features a photo of a baseball team celebrating a 500th career win, with the text '500 CAREER WINS' on a banner.

This dark blue header features the 'WALTON COUNSELING' logo on the right, which consists of a tree inside a circle. Below the logo is a horizontal navigation menu with the following items: 'Home', 'Information', 'Class 2024', 'College Corner', 'Course Registration', 'Presentations', 'Summer School', and 'Resources'.

Walton High School Counseling Department

1590 Bill Murdock Road • Marietta, GA 30062
Tel: 770.578.3225 • Fax: 770-578-3227

[New Student Enrollment Information](#)

[Upcoming Events](#)

www.waltonhighcounseling.com

School Counseling Social Media

FOLLOW US ON OUR

SOCIAL
MEDIA



@waltonhighcounselors



@waltoncounselor



@waltonhighcounselors



@walton_counselors



Scan QR code to follow us on your preferred social media platform





Postsecondary Options

What options are available to me after graduating from Walton?



Military

- Consult recruiter for military opportunities
- Explore ROTC scholarships
- Take the ASVAB (offered at Walton every fall & spring)
- Military academy appointments are highly competitive

| | Websites | Military Academy |
|-------------|---|---|
| Air Force | www.af.mil and www.airforce.com | Air Force Academy www.usafa.af.mil |
| Army | www.army.mil and www.goarmy.com | West Point www.westpoint.edu |
| Coast Guard | www.uscg.mil and www.gocoastguard.com | US Coast Guard Academy www.uscga.edu |
| Marines | www.marines.mil and www.marines.com | Future Marines attend the US Naval Academy |
| Navy | www.navy.mil and www.navy.com | US Naval Academy www.usna.edu |

Postsecondary Options cont.

Gap Year



- Internship and community service opportunities
- Work/volunteer for a non-profit organization
- Travel
- Work/career exploration
- [Gap year fair information](#)

Direct to Work



- Take the [ASVAB](#) for career exploration
- Research careers on [O*NET OnLine](#)
- Enroll in certification programs
- The HOPE Grant covers certain technical college certificate & diploma programs

Postsecondary Educational Options



You can attend several types of schools or colleges after graduating high school

Specialty or Trade School

- Certificate or diploma
- Examples:
 - Atlanta School of Massage
 - Aviation Institute of Maintenance



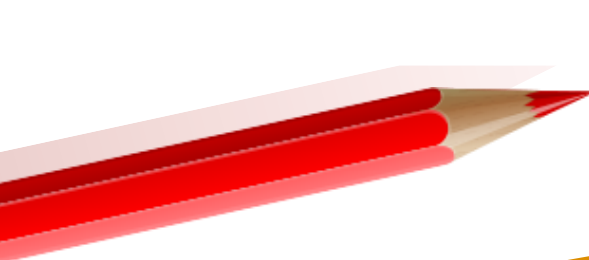
Community or Technical College

- Certificate, diploma, or associate's degree
- Examples:
 - Georgia Highlands College
 - Chattahoochee Technical College



4-Year College or University

- Bachelor's degree
- Examples:
 - The University of Georgia
 - Kennesaw State University



| | |
|--------------------------|--------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | ADMIT |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | DEFER |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | DENY |

College Admissions Factors

What factors influence college admissions decisions?



Factors in Colleges Admissions

- Extracurricular activities
- Essays
- Letters of recommendation

RIGOR/
QUALITY OF CLASSES

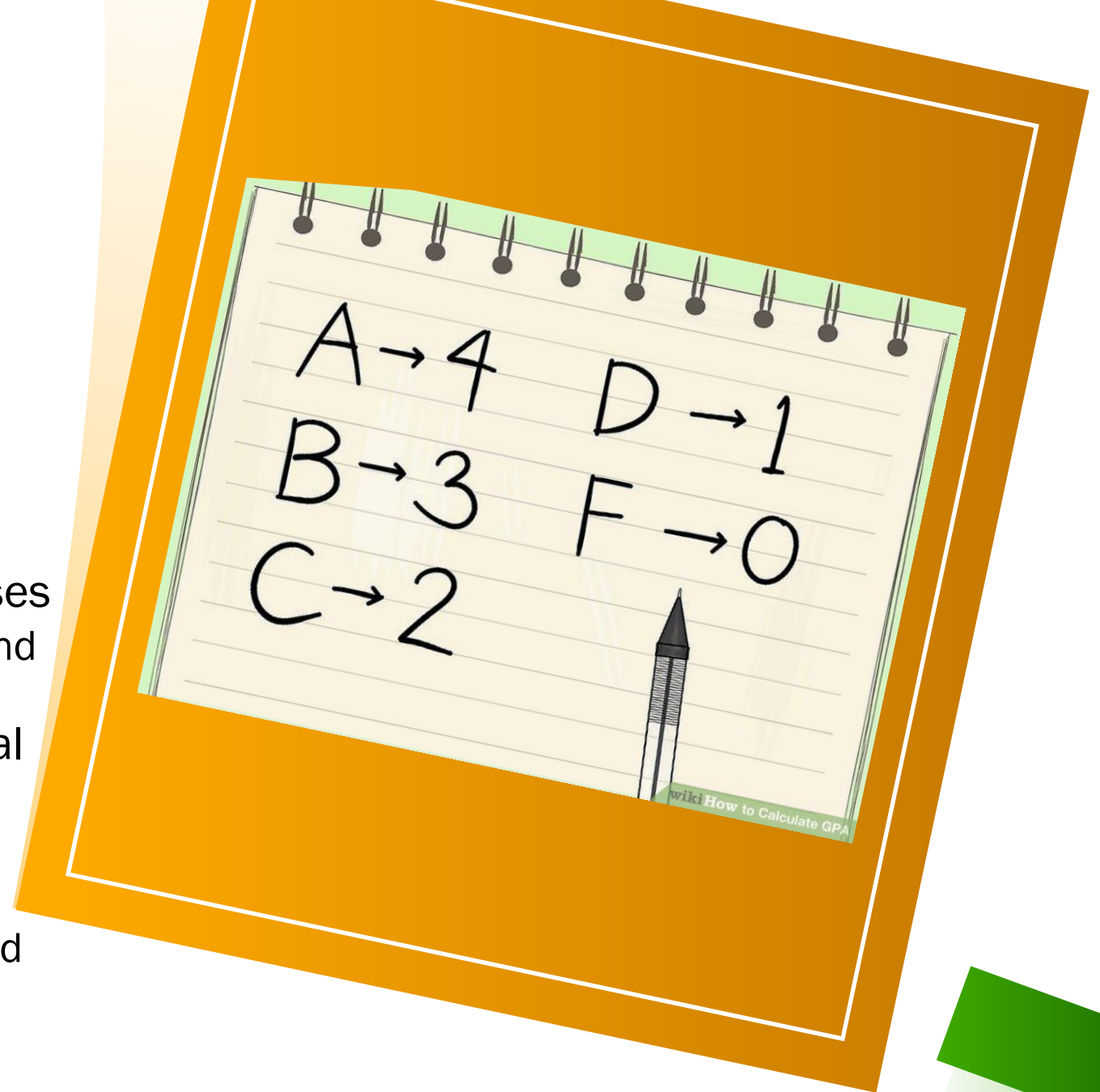
GRADES & GPA

TEST SCORES

How Colleges Calculate GPAs

Colleges use varying methods to calculate GPAs

- Typically recalculate GPAs from CORE classes
 - English, Math, Science, Social Studies, and World Language
- May or may not “weight” Honors, AP, or dual enrollment courses
 - Examples:
 - UGA only weights AP classes
 - Alabama and Auburn take Weighted GPA directly off Walton’s transcript
 - Univ of South Carolina weights Honors and AP courses the same



College Admissions Testing

What does “test optional” mean?

- Check college website for test optional status
- **ONLY** submit test scores that will enhance your overall application
 - Other application components may be weighted differently if you do not submit scores
- Upcoming testing dates:
 - SAT - www.collegeboard.org
 - May 2, 2026
 - June 6, 2026
 - ACT - www.act.org
 - June 13, 2026
 - July 11, 2026



College Admissions Essays Tips

Start early

Reflect on
personal
experiences

Be authentic

Focus on a
narrow topic

Follow
instructions

Edit and
revise

Seek
feedback

Proofread
carefully

Common App
essay prompts
are now
available!

Common App Essay Prompts



Here is the full set of essay prompts for 2026–2027. By releasing the prompts early, we hope to give students ample time for reflection and brainstorming. We recognize that some schools and organizations are beginning discussions with juniors and transfer students about college options. As you guide students through their planning, feel free to use our essay writing resource, available in both [English](#) and [Spanish](#), and our [video tutorial](#) breaking down each essay prompt. Students who wish to start exploring the application can create their account anytime. With [account rollover](#), Common App will retain students' responses to questions in 'My Common Application', including the personal essay, when the 2026-2027 application opens on August 1.

- Some students have a background, identity, interest, or talent that is so meaningful they believe their application would be incomplete without it. If this sounds like you, then please share your story.
- The lessons we take from obstacles we encounter can be fundamental to later success. Recount a time when you faced a challenge, setback, or failure. How did it affect you, and what did you learn from the experience?
- Reflect on a time when you questioned or challenged a belief or idea. What prompted your thinking? What was the outcome?
- Reflect on something that someone has done for you that has made you happy or thankful in a surprising way. How has this gratitude affected or motivated you?
- Discuss an accomplishment, event, or realization that sparked a period of personal growth and a new understanding of yourself or others.
- Describe a topic, idea, or concept you find so engaging that it makes you lose all track of time. Why does it captivate you? What or who do you turn to when you want to learn more?
- Share an essay on any topic of your choice. It can be one you've already written, one that responds to a different prompt, or one of your own design

Letters of Recommendation

***Not all colleges require letters of recommendation**

Teacher, Letter of Recommendation

- Verify whether the colleges you're applying to require or accept teacher letters of rec
- ONLY ask for letters from teachers if they are required or accepted
 - Personally request letters from teachers by **Sept. 1**
 - Choose at least one core academic teacher
 - Provide the Teacher Recommendation Form to each teacher
 - Download the Teacher Recommendation Form at www.waltonhighcounseling.com/class2027

Teacher Recommendation Information Form

This document should be TYPED and given to the teacher **by September 1st**. Be sure to request a recommendation in person before you give this document to the teacher.

NOTE: Not all colleges require a letter of recommendation.

Today's Date: Click or tap here to enter text.
Teacher's Name: Click or tap here to enter text.
Student's Name: Click or tap here to enter text.
Student's Email: Click or tap here to enter text.
Student's Cell Phone: Click or tap here to enter text.
Year and Class, you had this teacher: Click or tap here to enter text.
First Deadline that requires this teacher recommendation: Click or tap here to enter text.

Major (including Undecided): Click or tap here to enter text.
Career (including Undecided): Click or tap here to enter text.

- 1) I am asking you to write a college recommendation letter because: Click or tap here to enter text.
- 2) The best piece of work (composition, research paper, lab, etc.) that I did for your class: Click or tap here to enter text.
- 3) My proudest moment in your classroom: Click or tap here to enter text.
- 4) My favorite memory of your class: Click or tap here to enter text.
- 5) The experience or specific assignment that challenged me the most in your class: Click or tap here to enter text.
- 6) I believe I grew in your class because: Click or tap here to enter text.
- 7) I would describe myself using the following words (two to three qualities or character traits): Click or tap here to enter text.
- 8) The characteristic I most want colleges to know about me: Click or tap here to enter text.
- 9) The following would be a helpful bit of information to include in my recommendation letter: Click or tap here to enter text.
- 10) My grade(s) in your class: _____ 1st semester and _____ 2nd semester. I made a _____ on the AP exam for this course (if applicable). I believe my grade in your class is/is not an accurate reflection of my work (why or why not): Click or tap here to enter text.

Counselor, Letter of Recommendation,
Information continued on next page

Postsecondary Options Packet

The Postsecondary Options Packet is part of your senior summer English assignments

- Email your Postsecondary Options Packet to your school counselor by **Monday, August 3rd**
- Counselors use the information you provide in the Postsecondary Options Packet when writing letters of recommendation
 - Be accurate
 - Provide very specific examples
 - The more information you provide, the better
- Download the Postsecondary Options Packet <https://www.waltonhighcounseling.com/class2027>

Post-Secondary Options Packet
Walton High School
1590 Bill Murdock Road
Marietta, Ga 30062
CEEB School Code: 111987

*****WHEN COMPLETED - email this packet directly to your School Counselor, due the 1st day of school*****

Name: Enter first and last name
Email: Enter email address
Cell Phone: Enter phone number.
Current Weighted GPA: Click or tap here to enter text.

Senior Year Classes:

| First Semester Classes | | Second Semester Classes (Tentative) | |
|----------------------------------|----------------------------------|-------------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| Click or tap here to enter text. | Click or tap here to enter text. | Click or tap here to enter text. | Click or tap here to enter text. |
| Click or tap here to enter text. | Click or tap here to enter text. | Click or tap here to enter text. | Click or tap here to enter text. |
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| Click or tap here to enter text. | Click or tap here to enter text. | Click or tap here to enter text. | Click or tap here to enter text. |

Teachers who know you well:

1. Teacher #1.
2. Teacher #2.
3. Teacher #3.

School Activities: (Ex. Clubs, teams, sports, performing arts)

| Name of group | Grade or age participated | Responsibilities or office held (if applies) |
|-------------------------------|---------------------------|--|
| Click to enter name of group. | Grade/age | Responsibilities |
| Click to enter name of group. | Grade/age | Responsibilities |
| Click to enter name of group. | Grade/age | Responsibilities |
| Click to enter name of group. | Grade/age | Responsibilities |
| Click to enter name of group. | Grade/age | Responsibilities |
| Click to enter name of group. | Grade/age | Responsibilities |
| Click to enter name of group. | Grade/age | Responsibilities |

Outside Activities: (Ex. church, community involvement, etc.)

| Name of group | Grade or age participated | Responsibilities (if applies) |
|-------------------------------|---------------------------|-------------------------------|
| Click to enter name of group. | Grade/age | Responsibilities |
| Click to enter name of group. | Grade/age | Responsibilities |
| Click to enter name of group. | Grade/age | Responsibilities |
| Click to enter name of group. | Grade/age | Responsibilities |



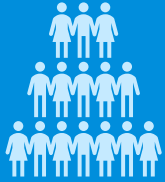
Building a College List

- How do I research colleges?
- How do I build a college list?

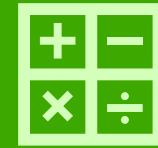


College Fit

Campus size
& location



Programs &
majors



**COLLEGE
FIT**



Cost



On-campus
activities

HOPE Scholarship

4-year public colleges & universities in Georgia (ex: UGA, KSU)

| | HOPE GPA | Rigor Courses | SAT/ACT Score (one sitting) | Approx. Tuition Coverage |
|-------------------------|----------|---------------|--------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| HOPE Scholarship | 3.0 | 4 | n/a | portion (changes yearly) |
| Zell Miller Scholarship | 3.7 | 4 | 1200 (SAT) 25 (ACT) | 100% |

Technical College System of Georgia (ex: Chatt Tech, Lanier Tech) Certificate or diploma programs

| | HOPE GPA | Rigor Courses | SAT/ACT Score | Approx. Tuition Coverage |
|--|----------|---------------|---------------|-----------------------------|
| HOPE Grant | n/a | n/a | n/a | portion (changes yearly) |
| Zell Miller Grant (3.5 college GPA) | n/a | n/a | n/a | 100% |

Selective College Scholarships

| School | Name of Scholarship | Website |
|---|------------------------------|---|
| Davidson College | Belk Scholarship | https://www.davidson.edu/admission-and-financial-aid/financial-aid/types-financial-aid/scholarships/nomination-scholarships/john-m-belk-scholarship |
| Indiana University | Wells Scholarship | https://wellsscholars.indiana.edu |
| Northeastern University | Torch Scholars Program | https://torch.northeastern.edu |
| <u>Bard College</u> <u>Boston University</u> <u>Brandeis University</u> <u>Carleton College</u> <u>The George Washington University</u> <u>Vanderbilt University</u> | Posse Foundation Scholarship | www.possefoundation.org and www.possefoundation.org/sites/atlanta |
| University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill | Morehead-Cain Scholarship | https://www.moreheadcain.org |
| University of Virginia | Jefferson Scholarship | https://www.jeffersonscholars.org |

Reach, Match, & Likely Schools

Reach schools

- Academic credentials fall below the school's range for the freshman class
- Apply to 1 – 2 schools

Match schools

- Academic credentials fall within or slightly higher than the school's range for the freshman class
- Apply to 2 – 3 schools

Likely schools

- Academic credentials are much higher than the typical range for their freshman class
- Apply to at least 1 school

Common App

What is the Common App?

- The Common App serves as a universal college admission application accepted by over 1000 colleges and universities
- Colleges and universities that accept the Common App:
 - www.commonapp.org/explore
- Common App essay prompts are **now available**
[Common App Essay Prompts 2026-2027 - Expert Admissions](#)
- Common App applications open **August 1**
 - <https://www.commonapp.org>

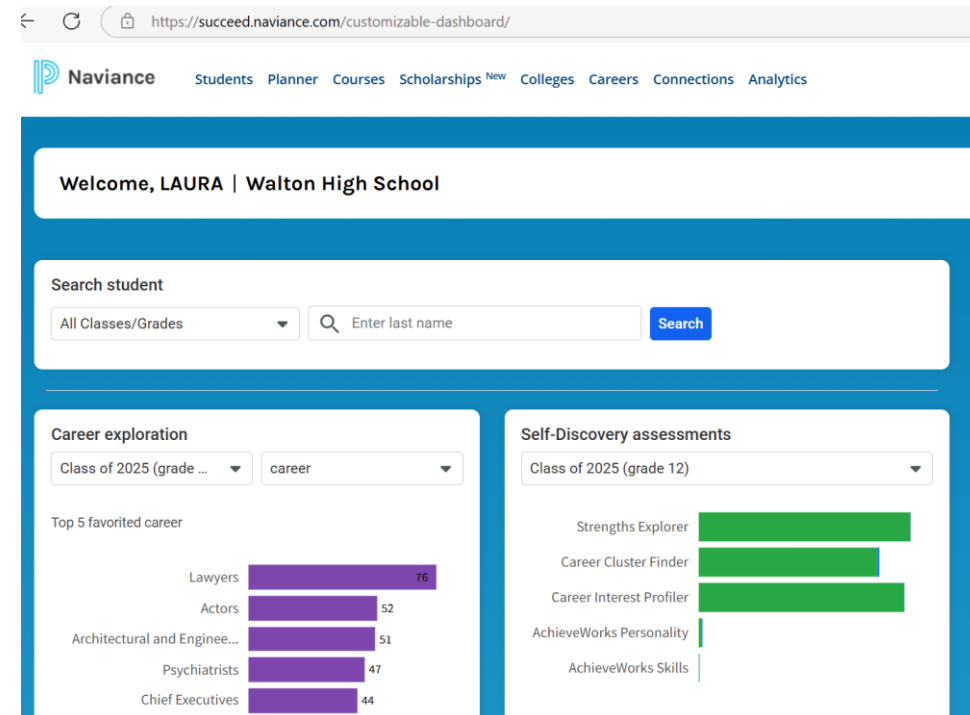


How to Use SuperMatch College Search in Naviance

- Located in Naviance
- Explore options and discover colleges that are a match with your academic profile and what you're looking for in a college experience

How to log into Naviance

1. Go to www.cobbk12.org/walton
2. Click on Find it Fast
3. Click on Naviance
4. You will automatically be logged in through Clever
5. Use your Office 365 login information to access Naviance from home



The screenshot displays the Naviance dashboard for a student named Laura at Walton High School. The dashboard includes a search bar for students, a career exploration section, and a self-discovery assessments section.

Search student

All Classes/Grades

Career exploration

Class of 2025 (grade ...)

Top 5 favored career

| Career | Count |
|-----------------------------|-------|
| Lawyers | 76 |
| Actors | 52 |
| Architectural and Engine... | 51 |
| Psychiatrists | 47 |
| Chief Executives | 44 |

Self-Discovery assessments

Class of 2025 (grade 12)

| Assessment | Progress |
|--------------------------|----------------------|
| Strengths Explorer | ████████████████████ |
| Career Cluster Finder | ██████████████████ |
| Career Interest Profiler | ██████████████████ |
| AchieveWorks Personality | ██████████████████ |
| AchieveWorks Skills | ██████████████████ |

www.cobbk12.org/walton
Find it fast - naviance

The screenshot shows a web browser at the URL <https://www.cobbk12.org/walton/>. The page header includes the COBB SCHOOLS logo and navigation links for LOGIN, TRANSLATE, and FIND IT FAST. A search bar is located on the right side of the header. A navigation menu is open, displaying a list of links. The 'Naviance' link is highlighted with a red arrow. A large red arrow points to the 'FIND IT FAST' dropdown menu in the browser's address bar. The background of the page features the Walton High School logo and the text 'WALTON HIGH SCHOOL' and '1590 Bill Murdock Road, Marietta, GA 30067'. At the bottom of the page, there is a red banner with the text 'Registration Information' and '2024-2025 School Year'.

| | |
|--------------------------|----------------------|
| 2025 Graduation | Enroll Your Student |
| Bus Numbers & Routes | Family Info Guide |
| Cobb Digital Library | GoFan Tickets |
| Cobb Shield | Grades & Attendance |
| CTLS Learn | Lunch Menus |
| CTLS Support | Make Online Payments |
| Digital Textbooks | Naviance |
| District Strategic Plan | Yearbook Information |
| Employment Opportunities | |

How to Use SuperMatch College Search



1. Select **Colleges**
2. Select **SuperMatch College Search** under **Find Your Fit**
3. Select **Select Criteria To Start**
4. Continue refining your search by selecting **Choose Fit Criteria** at the top
5. Sort your criteria into the **Must Have** and **Nice to Have**
6. Select **Pin To Compare** colleges on your results list
7. Select **Favorite** to add colleges you are interested and want to learn more about
8. Select **Save Search** and name the search
9. Select **Colleges** and **Colleges I'm Thinking About** to research about the colleges on your favorites list
10. Repeat the above steps to start a new search or edit a saved search

8 selected criteria
To refine your results, use the arrows to move your criteria into the "Must Have" and "Nice to Have" boxes.

Must Have

- X Athletics [1]
- X Campus Surroundings [2]
- X Cost < \$60000
- X Greek Life
- X Organizations and Clubs [2]

Nice to Have

- X Location [9]
- X Master's [1]
- X Internships and Co-ops

Your Results Your results include 0 institutions that are both an academic match and also match all the criteria selected above.

| | Fit Score | Academic Match | Highlights | Cost | Pick what to see |
|--|-------------|---|--|--|------------------------------------|
| University of Miami Coral Gables, FL, Suburb near Large City 4 year, Private nonprofit ★ PINNED ♥ FAVORITE | 84% Why? | Average You GPA 3.8 N/A SAT 1390 N/A ACT 32 N/A <small>To determine if you're an academic match for this institution, enter your GPA and/or standardized test scores.</small> | Photos/Videos on Profile Program Spotlights Virtual Tour | Tuition & Fees \$47,040 Room & Board \$13,666 | Customize what you see category at |
| Faulkner University Montgomery, AL, Suburb near Large City 4 year, Private nonprofit, Churches of Christ ★ PINNED ♥ FAVORITED | 77% Why? | Average You GPA 2 N/A SAT 1000 N/A ACT 20.5 N/A <small>To determine if you're an academic match for this institution, enter your GPA and/or standardized test scores.</small> | No Highlights Available | Tuition & Fees \$19,160 Room & Board \$7,400 | Customize what you see category at |



How to Research Colleges

1. Select **Colleges**
2. Select **Colleges I'm Thinking About**
3. Select the college you want to research
4. Review the college's general information in **Overview**
5. Scroll down to see how your GPA and test scores compare with others who have applied to the college
6. Continue researching the college by selecting **Studies, Student Life, Admissions, and Costs**
7. To learn even more about the college, return to **Colleges I'm Thinking About**
8. Select **More**
9. Select **Scattergram** to view Walton's Application History, Acceptance Rate, Application Requirements, Recommended Courses, Application Factors, and Application Information
10. Select **Communicate** if you would like to send a message to the admission office



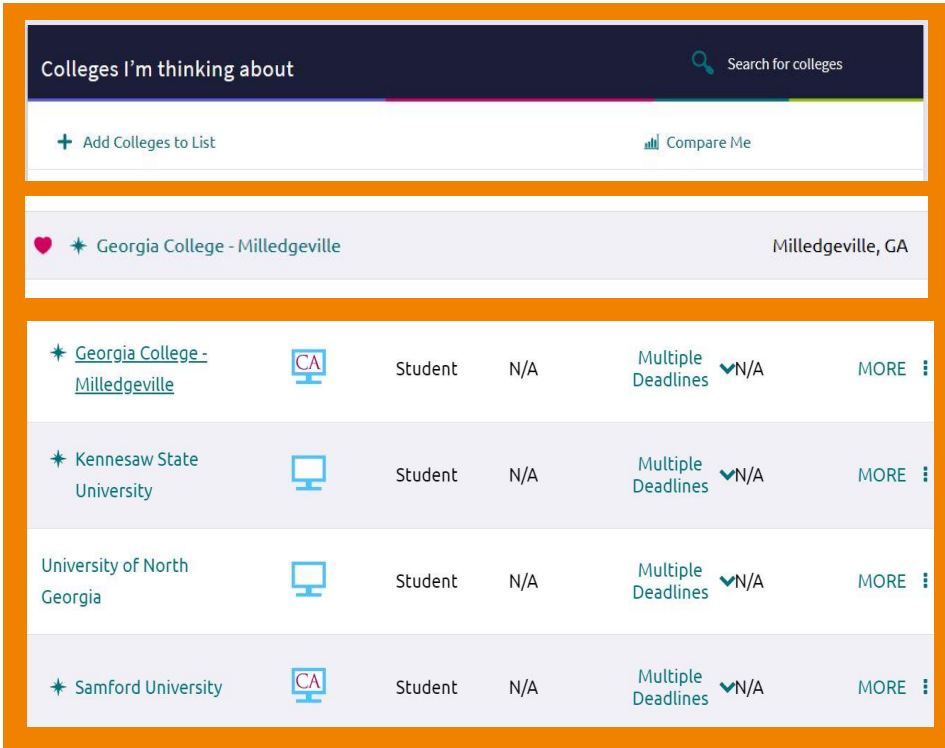
How to Add "Colleges I'm Thinking About"

When you add colleges to the "Colleges I'm Thinking About" list, you will

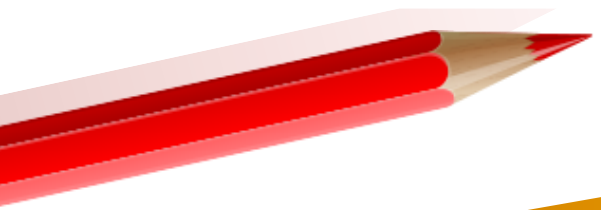
- Receive email updates with information about these colleges
- Receive notifications when these colleges visit Walton

1. Select **Colleges**
2. Select **♥Colleges I'm Thinking About**
3. Select **+Add Colleges to List**
4. Search for college by name, state, or key word
5. Click on the **♥** icon next to the college

Note: You will not be able to add "Colleges I'm Applying To" until mid-August



| Colleges I'm thinking about | | | | | | |
|---|--|------------|-----|--------------------|------|--------|
| + Add Colleges to List | | Compare Me | | | | |
| ♥ * Georgia College - Milledgeville Milledgeville, GA | | | | | | |
| * Georgia College - Milledgeville | | Student | N/A | Multiple Deadlines | ▼N/A | MORE ⋮ |
| * Kennesaw State University | | Student | N/A | Multiple Deadlines | ▼N/A | MORE ⋮ |
| University of North Georgia | | Student | N/A | Multiple Deadlines | ▼N/A | MORE ⋮ |
| * Samford University | | Student | N/A | Multiple Deadlines | ▼N/A | MORE ⋮ |



Summer Steps

- What can I do over the summer to prepare for my senior year?
- What is the Postsecondary Options Packet?



Summer Steps Checklist



- **REVIEW**
today's
PowerPoint
presentation

- **RESEARCH**
postsecondary
options (gap
year, military,
workforce,
trade schools,
colleges)

- **DECIDE**
which post-
secondary option
is right for you

- **REGISTER**
for the SAT or
ACT (if needed)

Summer Steps Checklist



5

- **DRAFT**
Common App essays if applying to Common App schools

6

- **COMPLETE**
Postsecondary Options Packet and email it to your school counselor by **August 3**

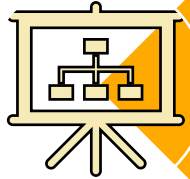
7

- **OPTIONAL**
complete the Teacher Recommendation Form (**due Sept 1st**) for each teacher you will ask to write a letter of rec (2 max)

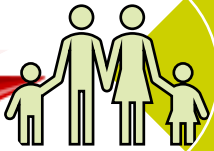
8

- **OPTIONAL**
register for the [NCAA Eligibility Center](#) if you plan to play sports at a D1 or D2 college

Upcoming Events for Senior Year (dates TBD)



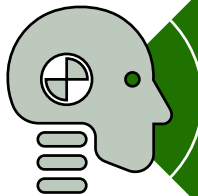
Postsecondary Presentation for all Senior English classes



Senior Family Night



Financial Aid Night



ASVAB test

Class of 2027 Website

www.waltonhighcounseling.com/class2027

- Downloadable PDFs
 - PowerPoint of presentation
 - Summer Steps Checklist
 - “How To...” Guide
 - Postsecondary Options Packet
 - Teacher Recommendation Form
- Detailed Summer Steps
 - Naviance college tools
 - SuperMatch College Search
 - How to research colleges
 - How to add “Colleges I’m Thinking About”
 - SAT & ACT registration & dates
 - Common App schools & essay prompts
- Upcoming Fall Events





For more info, visit
[www.waltonhighcounseling.com/
class2027](http://www.waltonhighcounseling.com/class2027)

Have a great summer!

