

The Bridge Project: Strengthening K-16 Transition Policies

The Georgia Case: Phase II Report

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September, 2001

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Introduction

In Phase II of the Bridge Project, researchers¹ examined how well information about higher education, the standards and policies developed and implemented by Georgia institutions, is understood, interpreted, and acted upon by parents, students, as well as secondary school and district personnel. Phase II focuses on the following Bridge Project research questions:

What signals does the current array of policies send to students, parents, teachers, counselors and administrators about what is required to succeed at colleges and universities?

How is information about current statewide initiatives such as the Helping Outstanding Pupils Educationally (HOPE) Scholarship and the P-16 Councils disseminated and interpreted by stakeholders?

Georgia has experienced a boom in population over the last two decades. Increasingly, state agencies and programs must target their services and finances to meet changes in the population. Increases in the population of minority groups as well as a substantial increase in the number of professionals relocating to Georgia have created tension throughout the social fabric of the state. Suburban growth, for example, has expanded housing units beyond the confined boundaries of the Atlanta area in northern Georgia to southern areas. To address these tensions, lawmakers have targeted education as an important agency to improve. For example, Georgia has implemented a series of standardized criterion-referenced tests to assess student performance. Additionally, Georgia has used graduation tests to determine which students successfully met the academic requirements of the secondary system and are eligible to matriculate into the postsecondary system. Part of the secondary education reform efforts arose from the

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University System of Georgia (USG) increased minimum admissions requirements. The USG oversees all public postsecondary education in Georgia with the exception of the Technical schools, which are administered by the Department of Adult and Technical Education. These more rigorous standards forced the secondary education sector to upgrade its educational activities.

Another challenge faced in Georgia is the movement of talented secondary students out-of-state for postsecondary education. Former Governor Zell Miller and the Georgia State Finance Commission established the HOPE (Helping Outstanding Pupils Educationally) Scholarship, which is unique to Georgia. (See Phase I report for a full description of the HOPE Scholarship. A draft of this report is located at: <http://www.stanford.edu/group/bridgeproject/>.) It provides for Georgia students to receive full tuition, mandatory fees and a book allowance that can be used at any public college, university or technical institute in Georgia. If a student wishes to attend a private college or university the HOPE Scholarship will provide for \$3,000 annually. To be eligible, students must be a Georgia state resident, have a “B” average in high school and receive a “B” average in college.² It is important in this context because policy makers believe that the HOPE program will encourage talented students to remain in the state.

This report is organized into two major sections related to the data gathered from Georgia: The Hope Scholarship and Knowledge of Higher Education. Each section presents information related to the key issues under study as well as the results.

Study Site

Site Selection Methods

During Phase I, the investigators recruited schools to participate in Phase II of the study. First, schools the schools that were recruited serve high school students who will attend the State University of West Georgia (SWGA), Carrollton, GA, or the University

² Information taken from Georgia Student Finance Commission, Georgia’s Postsecondary Schools 1999-2000. As of summer 2001 the HOPE Scholarship criteria have changes. See <http://www.gsfc.org/> for a full description of these changes.

of Georgia (UGA), Athens, GA. Second, schools selected for recruitment were composed of a diverse group of students based on race/ethnicity and socioeconomic status. After the initial schools were selected for recruitment, a liaison person was used to contact school district superintendents and individual school principals. The superintendents enthusiastically supported this study. However, the individual principals were less enthused. Ultimately, the two schools chosen for data collection are both located in the UGA service area. Although both schools are close to Athens, they are also feeling the effects of metropolitan expansion from the Atlanta area. The liaison that conducted the recruitment is affiliated with the P-16 councils located in this region and was able to leverage these relationships to solicit participation in this study. The data gathered at these two schools represents one geographic location in Georgia that differs in demographics from other parts of the state. Both schools are rural with a majority of white students. One of the schools is enrolling more African American students than noted in previous years. However, many of the students represent low income families and help to put a face on the challenges low-income students face throughout the United States.

Demographics

The racial makeup of students across these sites indicates a larger percentage of white students live attend schools in these districts when compared across the state (see table 1). Furthermore, it appears that these students tend to maintain higher economic levels than does the remainder of the state. When we examine the percentage of students who have reduced/free lunches, we find that students across both schools represent a smaller proportion of poor students than in the state of Georgia.

Race/ethnicity. The racial makeup of Jackson County Comprehensive High School (JCCHS) remained consistent change throughout the 1990s. According to Department of Education data the percentage of white students at the school neared 91 percent during

the 1995/96 school year and has barely decreased to 90 percent. Similarly, all other ethnicities have changed only by one percentage point or less. In 2001, Asian/Pacific Islanders made up almost 2 percent, Black 6 percent, and Hispanic percent³. According to U.S. Census Bureau reports the population of Jackson County increased by 38.6 percent in the 1990s. The total county population as of 2000 was 41,589.⁴ The racial composition of the high school mirrors that of the county. The racial composition of Morgan County High School (MCHS), however, has changed over the past several years with increased percentages of African-American students compared to Caucasian students. These data are consistent between the school district and the county. The percentage of students receiving free or reduced lunch decreased from 1995 to 1999 from 37% to 31%.⁵ The U.S. Census Bureau reports a 20 percent increase in the county throughout the 1990s. The population of Morgan County is reported at 15,457.⁶

The data presented in Table 1 further illustrates school population differences between students in study sites as compared with students across Georgia. While Morgan County High School (MCHS) students are equal with state students on the college preparatory endorsement, Jackson County Comprehensive High School (JCCHS) fall below the state average. This is significant because the college preparatory endorsement reflects the number of college preparatory curriculum (CPC) units completed successfully by the students in the schools. The lack of the college preparatory endorsement on a high school graduate's diploma, limits the student's access

³ Data taken from <http://dbl.doe.k12.ga.us:2001>.

⁴ This information was taken from the U.S. Census Bureau website at <http://quickfacts.census.gov/qfd/states.html>

⁵ Data taken from High School II Improvement Plan, 1999, Southern Association of Colleges & Schools.

⁶ This information was taken from the U.S. Census Bureau website at: <http://quickfacts.census.gov/qfd/states.html>

to various postsecondary institutions. It serves as the cornerstone of admissions requirements and dictates the sectors for which students are admissions eligible. This assertion is supported by the percentage of graduates from the schools enrolled in Georgia public colleges and universities in which college enrollees from MCHS and JCCHS are lower than the state average.

Table 1
Selection Characteristics of Sampled High Schools

High School	% white	% reduced /free lunch	% Diplomas with College Prep Endorsement*	% Graduates enrolled at GA Public Colleges	% eligible for HOPE	11 th grade GHSGT% passing all competencies on first attempt
MCHS	64%	30%	68%	27%	45%	72%
JCHS	90%	29%	53%	30%	60%	74%
Statewide	55%	43%	68%	37%	58%	71%

Source: 1999-00 GA Public Education Report Card

Note: % Diplomas with College Prep Endorsement includes College Prep Diplomas and Diplomas with both College Prep and Vocational Endorsements.

In 1999-2000, the percentage of JCCHS students eligible for the HOPE scholarship exceeded that of the state eligibility. Conversely, the percentage of MCHS HOPE-eligible students was lower than the state average. The HOPE scholarship requires that students maintain a “B” average in high school and maintain Georgia residency. If students meet these requirements, they have the potential to earn the HOPE scholarship which covers the full cost of tuition and fees at Georgia public colleges, universities, and technical schools, or partial tuition and fees at a Georgia private institution. One of the purposes of the HOPE program is to increase the number of postsecondary students who remain in Georgia during college and after they graduate. These differences are interesting because fewer JCCHS students are awarded College

Preparatory Endorsed diplomas, thus, their eligibility for admissions to specific Georgia universities is limited by their academic readiness. Furthermore, students in the 11th grade begin taking the Georgia High School Graduation Test (GHS GT). Both schools in this study surpassed the state average in passing the test on the first attempt. Statistical analyses should provide more information about these two sites.

Data Collection

The data were collected in spring 2000. For this study, 9th and 11th grade teachers, parents, counselors, building administrators and students were asked to participate. Data were collected using several methods: parent surveys, student surveys, and individual and group interviews (e.g., focus groups). Table 2 summarizes the data collection methods across the two sites.

Parent Surveys. Parent surveys were distributed to 9th and 11th grade English teachers prior to our campus visits. Teachers asked students to take the surveys home to their parents and return the completed surveys to class. A pizza party for the classes with the highest number of returned surveys was used as an incentive to increase response rates. These surveys were used to gather information from the parents regarding their knowledge of higher education policies and practices. Parent perceptions of information they receive from the school, selected postsecondary institutions, and other institutions involved in disseminating and crafting college placement and admissions policies were also examined.

Student Surveys. Researchers administered student surveys in classrooms on-site. Consent forms attached to each parent survey enabled investigators to match the student survey with the survey completed by the parent. Student and parent surveys were then

matched and were assigned the same code number. These codes concealed the identities of the participants but allowed researchers to identify their school, class and grade level, and parental information with the student data collected. Overall, JCCHS yielded a response rate of 83 percent in 9th grade and 79 percent in 11th grade while the response rate for MCHS was 40 percent for 9th graders and 38 percent for 11th graders.

Individual and Group Interviews. Focus groups with students and interviews with teachers, counselors and administrators were additional data sources (see appendix for protocols). Teacher interviews were conducted with 9th and 11th grade English teachers.

Table 2: Data Collection Summary

	JCCHS	MCHS	TOTAL
<u>Parent Surveys</u>			
<u>Total =</u>	161 ⁷	88 ⁸	249
<u>Grade 9</u>	70	40	110
<u>Grade 11</u>	90	43	133
<u>Student Surveys</u>			
<u>Total =</u>	160	83	243
<u>Grade 9</u>	71	43	114
<u>Grade 11</u>	94	38	132
<u>Student Focus Groups</u>			
	32	27	59
<u>Focus Group #1</u>	<u>8 students</u>	<u>7 students</u>	<u>15</u>
<u>Focus Group #2</u>	<u>8 students</u>	<u>8 students</u>	<u>16</u>
<u>Focus Group #3</u>	<u>8 students</u>	<u>7 students</u>	<u>15</u>
<u>Focus Group #4</u>	<u>8 students</u>	<u>5 students</u>	<u>13</u>
<u>Teacher Interviews</u>	<u>5</u>	<u>3</u>	8
	<u>Teacher Interviews # 1,2</u>	<u>Teacher Interview #1</u>	
	<u>Teacher Interview #3</u>	<u>Teacher Interview #2</u>	
	<u>Teacher Interview # 4,5</u>	<u>Teacher Interview #3</u>	
<u>Counselors</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>
		<u>Counselor Interview #1</u>	
		<u>Counselor Interview #2</u>	
<u>Administrators</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>3</u>	
		<u>Vice Principal</u>	
		<u>Principal</u>	
		<u>Superintendent</u>	

⁷ Initial Count: some surveys were later categorized under different grade levels because even though 9th and 11th grade classes were surveyed, some students identified themselves as 10th or 12th graders.

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Note: Honors classes for English only met during the fall semester, which meant that distributing the consent forms and involving the students was difficult resulting in only two survey responses from honors students and only one of those students was able to participate in a focus group.

Results

This report focuses on how information is disseminated and interpreted by stakeholders (students, parents, as well as high school teachers, counselors, and administrators) regarding current statewide initiatives in Georgia such as the HOPE Scholarship and the P-16 Councils. An analysis of student, teacher and parent knowledge of higher education policies and practices related to admissions and placement is also of great importance and is discussed here.

SECTION I: The HOPE Scholarship

Understanding requirements. Students were asked to identify what they believe are the qualifications for receipt of the HOPE scholarship. Of the 8 items provided to respondents (see appendix for items), only two requirements (e.g., “Being a Georgia Resident” and “Graduating from High School with a ‘B’ Average”) were actual HOPE requirements. Of the entire group of students who answered these questions (N=254), 61.1 percent knew both requirements; 35.2 percent knew at least one requirement; and 3.7 percent did not know either requirement. When an across-site analysis was computed, differences emerged between student knowledge of the Georgia residency requirement (see table 3). A greater percentage of Morgan County High School (MCHS) students knew this particular HOPE requirement. This finding suggests that Morgan students are presented with more information about the HOPE requirements. Table one, which illustrates the characteristics of students across the two schools, indicates that fewer Morgan students are eligible for the HOPE scholarship than either Jackson students

or even those across Georgia. This implies that counselors, teachers, and administrators may provide students with more information about the HOPE requirements so that students could improve their grades and become eligible for the scholarship.

Table 3
Student Knowledge of HOPE Scholarship Requirements by School Site

	School (%)	
	MCHS (<u>N</u> =83)	JCCHS (<u>N</u> =171)
Georgia residency requirement*	78	65
Graduating from high school with 'B'		
Average	94	90
Students who knew both requirements**	75	59

* $\chi^2=4.72$, $df=1$, $p=.03$
** $\chi^2=5.99$, $df=1$, $p=.05$

When levels of socioeconomic status (low, middle, high) were compared, no statistically significant differences emerged across groups in their understanding of the HOPE scholarship requirements (see table 4 and figure 1). This lack of significance suggests that both the Georgia State Finance Commission and both secondary and postsecondary schools have aggressively explained the requirements of HOPE eligibility to students across SES categories. This is important because it demonstrates that lower SES students, who may believe they were denied access to postsecondary education because of financial reasons, now recognize that the HOPE program provides an opportunity for them to gain entry into technical schools, colleges, or universities (predicated on their academic performance both in high school and college). Only 5% of lower SES students were unaware of the HOPE requirements. This striking finding may

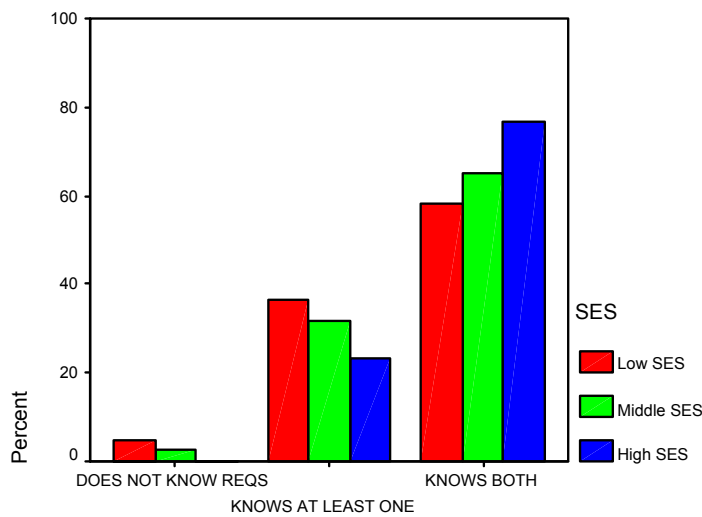
indicate the early program success for enabling poor students to find the fiscal means to participate in the postsecondary system.

Table 4
Knowledge of HOPE Scholarship Requirements by Socioeconomic Status

	SES (%)			
	Low SES (N=60)	Middle SES (N=75)	High SES (N=43)	Total (N=171)
Does not know requirements	5.0	2.7	0	2.8
Knows at least one	36.7	32.0	23.3	31.5
Knows both requirements	58.3	65.3	76.7	65.7

Not statistically significant

Figure 1. Student perceptions of HOPE Scholarship requirements by level of family socioeconomic status.



Student Perceptions of HOPE Scholarship Requirements

Parents also seem to understand at least one of the academic requirements necessary for students to receive the HOPE scholarship. An interesting finding emerged

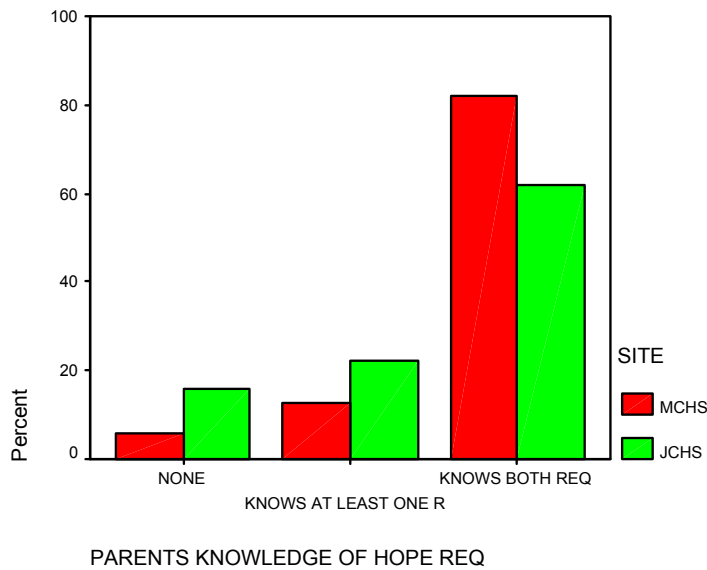
across schools, once again (see table 5 and figure 2). Similar to the students, parents at Morgan were more aware of at least one of the requirements than were parents at Jackson. However, when contrasted with students, more Jackson parents knew both requirements than did Morgan parents. As stated earlier, the differences were reversed for students. This finding suggests that although Morgan students may learn more about the HOPE requirements than the Jackson students, their parents do not appear to understand that both requirements must be fulfilled for their children to maintain HOPE eligibility. The communication of HOPE requirements to parents requires more attention.

Table 5
Parental Knowledge of HOPE Scholarship Requirements by School Site

	School (%)	
	MCHS (N=88)	JCCHS (N=171)
Georgia residency requirement*	83	66
Graduating from high school with 'B'		
Average	93	80
Students who knew both requirements**	28	41

* $\chi^2=7.59$, $df=1$, $p=.006$
** $\chi^2=8.17$, $df=1$, $p=.004$
*** $\chi^2=11.03$, $df=2$, $p=.014$

Figure 2. Parental perception of HOPE scholarship requirements across the two schools presented in this study.



Benefits of the HOPE Scholarship

While students appear to understand the requirements for earning the HOPE scholarship, they do not completely understand the benefits associated with it. One student commented,

It's not really worth it really. They don't pay for enough. They could at least pay all of it. Not as far as like, getting a dorm but they could pay for like, you can't tell me they don't make enough money through the lottery and stuff. But they could pay your way through college if you maintain the 'B' average. I don't believe they pay the whole thing, pretty much they don't.

Another student said,

It's not going to give you that much money but for some people any money will help. I'm one of those people.

HOPE provides full tuition and fees to a Georgia public college, university, or technical school and partial tuition to a Georgia private school. Students appear to understand the full tuition to a Georgia public college or university (59.8 percent)

however, only a third reported partial tuition for private Georgia institutions (30.3 percent). Two students discussed their interpretations of the HOPE benefits for public and private universities.

It gives you a lot more money if you go to a public school. I mean if you decide you want to go to a private college it helps some but like she said, any money's better than not getting it at all.

If you get HOPE, a lot of people can take the HOPE and get like a state college, almost completely paid for. But if you go to a private school they give you like \$1,000 a year.

Still, less than one third recognized that HOPE covers full tuition and fees to Georgia technical schools (26.4 percent). These percentages suggest that students associate the HOPE scholarship with four-year rather than two-year programs. Furthermore, it is possible that students do not necessarily view technical schools as viable alternatives to four-year institutions. Regardless of a student's intention to attend a four-year or two-year postsecondary school, a "B" average is still required for students to earn the HOPE scholarship regardless of the type of postsecondary opportunities they pursue. It is possible that the students represented across these two schools might not understand the relationship between academic performance and admissions to technical schools. Further research conducted across the state could provide important information about student perceptions of academic requirements for K-16 administrators and legislators.

Students appear to understand that the HOPE benefits do not include full tuition and fees to a private Georgia institution. Only 15.4 percent replied that this is one of the HOPE benefits. However, a more compelling result shows that only 18.9 percent of students surveyed believe that the HOPE scholarship guarantees admission to public

Georgia institutions, while 7.9 percent believe it guarantees admission to private Georgia colleges and universities. The following student comments allude to this misconception.

I didn't think I'd have a high enough average to go to college with the Hope Scholarship and ...we were going to take out a loan to send me to college [but] since I've gotten my average up it's going to help a lot.

This outcome is interesting because one of the tensions expressed by admissions directors in the Phase I study was that students and parents would misinterpret the HOPE benefits and believe that they could attend any Georgia institution of their choice based on the student's HOPE award. Admissions directors stated that parents (especially those with a history of attending Georgia institutions) would be angry with administrators because their children are not automatically granted admission. This expressed tension occurred simultaneously with the Board of Regents increase in the minimum academic requirements for admissions across the sectors.

Our statistical analyses included a comparison of racial/ethnic groups on the perceived benefits of HOPE. However, no statistical differences emerged between groups.

Motivation, Post-High School Intentions and the HOPE Scholarship

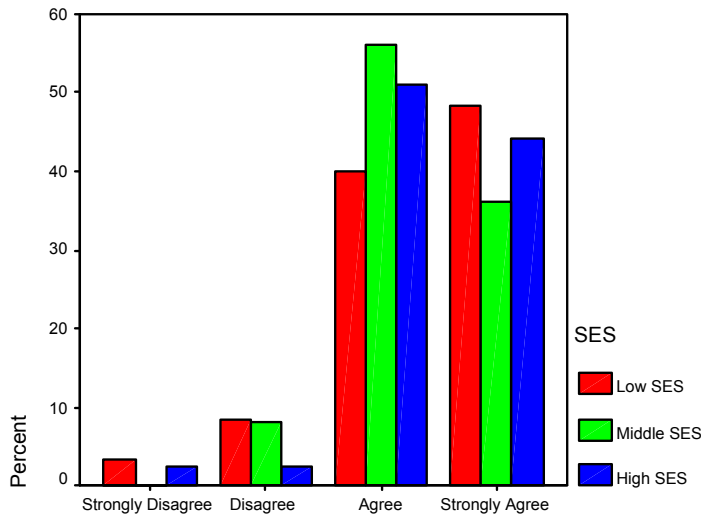
This section of the report identifies important characteristics associated with the availability of the HOPE scholarship. The analyses presented below illustrate the extent to which students believe the HOPE scholarship motivates them to succeed academically. Additionally, this section reports on important postsecondary considerations – plans to stay in Georgia if offered the HOPE scholarship, and plans to apply for the HOPE program.

Student Views. A critical component of the HOPE scholarship is its perceived effect on student academic performance. Students were asked if the availability of the HOPE scholarship motivates them to enhance their performance in school. Ninety-one percent of students sampled (N=251) report that they agree to strongly agree with the statement “The Hope Scholarship motivates me to do better in school.” This is important because it suggests that the promise of a college education encourages students to engage academically. Although not all students will choose to attend or complete a college degree, the benefits realized from their academic performance at this point in time may contribute to the overall health of the state.

A comparative analysis was conducted on HOPE as an academic performance motivator and level of socioeconomic status (see figure 3 and table 6. The lack of significant differences across socioeconomic status levels for the perceived effect of the HOPE scholarship on student performance, could indicate that individuals from lower SES backgrounds interpret the HOPE as an opportunity for them to afford college. Therefore, they become more motivated to perform academically because of the promise of college. Perhaps, the HOPE scholarship is serving to equalize access across economic strata. However, it is important to note that over 11 percent of low SES students suggest the HOPE does not contribute to their motivation to perform academically compared to 8 percent and 4 percent for middle and high SES students. This would suggest that either the HOPE scholarship does not affect student performance motivation or that lower-SES students have not yet fully realized the benefits HOPE provides to low income families.

We also examined gender differences on the motivating effects of HOPE and found no statistically significant differences between males and females.

Figure 3. The HOPE Scholarship as an academic performance motivator across low, middle, and high socioeconomic levels.



The HOPE Scholarship motivates me to do better in school.

Table 6. The HOPE scholarship effect on academic performance across socioeconomic status levels.

	SES		
	Low SES (N=60)	Middle SES (N=75)	High SES (N=43)
Strongly Disagree	3.3%	0	2.3
Disagree	8.3%	8.0%	2.3
Agree	40.0%	56.0%	51.2
Strongly Agree	48.3%	36.0%	44.2

Not statistically significant across SES levels.

Teacher views. An important contributor to the study is the research design used to compare student responses with those of the teachers who work with them, daily. The following data analyses present information gathered from teachers regarding the perceived effects of the HOPE scholarship on student academic performance.

Across the two sites, teacher perceptions of the HOPE scholarship are mixed. One teacher voiced strong support for HOPE and the obvious effects it has on students.

I think you see a lot more students realizing that they are going to be able to go to college, especially more at the advanced levels, I think you see that they are beginning to work a lot harder because they have that option out there. It's no longer that they know by sixth grade that mom and dad can't afford college, so I can't go. They realize, gee, there is a way that I can go if I work really hard. But I can do that if I can go to college. I think college is a lot more prevalent, especially when I was in school, more kids are saying, yes, I'm going to college, yes, I have a definitive goal in mind, I'm not just going to graduate high school and figure it out later.

Other remarks from teachers suggest that the HOPE scholarship motivates students to perform at their highest ability levels.

I've just seen an increased number of that thinking of college and being able to afford it and perhaps going on to [a four-year] university where they might have gone somewhere else first [like a two-year institution].

One teacher said, "I think it has motivated a lot of students, not just to get by." This is echoed by another who said,

...I think there are students who are middle of the road who would keep a little bit higher average so that they can get it [HOPE Scholarship].

The threat of losing the HOPE scholarship after one year does not deter teachers from supporting the program.

...even though a lot of students lose it after their freshman year, I think it does give a big incentive to go and try, even if it's a two year colleges. You can still try it out for two years and if you don't want to get an associates degree at least you have that versus nothing.

Results generated from Phase I of this project indicated a feat that students would become complacent about their academic performance because of the potential to lose

their HOPE award. However, some teachers believe that it still benefits students and the state if students even attend college for one year.

Not all teachers support the HOPE program. For example, one person said,

Well, usually those that aren't motivated to do even better are ... lackadaisical; they're going along for the ride. They have the capability and they have the intelligence but [education] is just not the top priority right now.

Others responded that the bar for academic performance is set so low that students who are not genuinely prepared to attend college, actually enroll. The problem arises when a student loses a HOPE award or even fails a postsecondary academic program. One teacher said she would like to study the proportion of students in her high school that qualify for HOPE, enroll in college, and lose the scholarship within the first year of attendance. Another teacher was more critical both of the HOPE scholarship and the institutions that admit inadequately prepared students.

It's filled our colleges full of kids that are not adequately prepared for college. But they admit them and then they put them in remedial classes and then they say, look at these kids you send us, they're not prepared for college... they're exploiting those children. They know they are not college material. They're taking their money. They're putting them in remedial classes and then when they don't have any more money, they say, 'oh, sorry, see ya.'

Perhaps, the HOPE scholarship encourages teachers to inflate grades so that students qualify for HOPE. Again, this fear arose during Phase I of the data collection. Some state level actors suggested that well-meaning teachers, pressured by the desire to encourage student success, would actually give students higher grades. However, when teachers were asked about the pressure associated with the HOPE scholarship on their

grading rubrics, consistently they responded that there was no pressure to grade differently. The following comment represents what the interviewed teachers said:

I've not had any pressure from a parent. I've had some in the past with athletes... but I haven't had any experience with the HOPE.

In a later section of this report, we provide descriptive data from students on where they get information related to college admissions. It is mentioned here because teachers' attitudes may contribute to the level of support and encouragement teachers provide to students to perform academically. For example, teachers who perceive that the HOPE scholarship increases grade inflation may discourage under-performing students from viewing the HOPE scholarship as a realistic goal. This study does not directly address this issues but it should be considered in future investigations.

School counselors' views. School counselors' perceptions of the HOPE scholarship effects on students are consistently positive across the two sites. A counselor at one of the high schools cited the financial rewards associated with the HOPE scholarship in the following comments:

The impact of that HOPE Scholarship has truly been remarkable. Kids are thinking more about college than they ever had because that myth about I can't afford college has been taken away a little bit...It's changed from not even a percentage [going to college] to 30 to 40% of the kids who go on. And that still means 60 to 70% right into the world of work but it's made a dramatic difference. Kids do have a change, a very, very much ingrained idea that you graduate from high school you go to work, or you go to the army. Not so anymore. Now it's tech school, two-year school, college. Big change.

Another counselor focused on student intentions to remain in Georgia.

...I think we have a lot more instate people, students not looking at out of state universities because of the HOPE Scholarship...I see a lot of

students looking instate, saying I'm going to UGA or I'm going to Georgia College or State University.

The same counselor stated that those students who decide to remain in Georgia because of HOPE availability are better-performing students. It is significant that school counselors' remarks about the HOPE scholarship are generally more positive than those of teachers. One plausible explanation for these differences lies in the types of relationships students share with school counselors and teachers. Unless students have disciplinary problems they are less likely to see the school counselor for any reason other than to get information about colleges and academic requirements. This experience contrasts sharply with teachers who encounter students at least twice per week if not on a daily basis. Teachers are more likely to encounter a broad range of academic performers whereas counselors may interact with the top and bottom 25 percent of the student population. These differences suggest that teachers and counselors need to confer more frequently with one another on the broader range of student performers. This could maximize the potentially positive effects of the HOPE scholarship on student motivation and, ultimately, student performance. These differences emerge strongly when administrators are included in the analysis.

One administrator interviewed for this study, discussed the pragmatic issues related to the HOPE scholarship (e.g., providing assistance primarily to middle income families). Students from lower income families need more funding than the HOPE Scholarship could provide. These students need money for housing, transportation, clothing and other basic expenses.

It pays tuition but it doesn't pay meals, it doesn't pay dorm rooms or housing. And of course these kids could work but... let's compare that

child's success with my child who's got their daddy's paycheck, you know, 'my money and my daughter go to the University of Georgia' have you seen that bumper sticker? You know what I'm saying, when there's not the financial support from the family, now [student's name] will probably have, he'll have several scholarships I imagine, and he may be able to make it but the concept, he still is not totally conceptualized to go to school.

The same administrator told a story about a low income student with a lot of potential who, even with a full scholarship, did not persevere in college.

I've seen this happen, I saw it happen to a student three years ago, who was an absolute brilliant musician. Extremely poor family, ... kid was kept in school by various teachers that sort of took him under their wing, they'd take turns, two or three times a year, taking him shopping to buy clothes so he'd fit in like everybody else. Folks, the chorus teacher supplied him with lots of assistance at this school. He got a full scholarship to a college for music and he went, came home three days later. The concept is not there, we've got to change that and we've got to somehow, and the reason, I talked with him, he said, well, he said, I had my books paid for, my tuition paid for, but he said, I had no car, no clothes I had a meal ticket but I had no way of living and doing the other stuff.

Taken together, both of these statements also allude to a need for other than financial support. A very hopeful and encouraging environment is an imperative factor contributing to the persistence of students who are the first in their family to go to college. The student mentioned in the above quote had this type of support in high school but this was not available in college. The notion that some students do not have the "concept" of what it means to go to college is another important element in student access and success. This conceptualizing process must begin when children are young.

Plans to apply for the HOPE scholarship. One of the goals of the HOPE scholarship is to encourage top academic performers to remain in Georgia. Table 6 illustrates the analysis compared honors students with non-honors students on intent to apply for the HOPE

scholarship. No statistically significant differences emerged between honors and non-honors students for this variable. However, the numbers of honors students who remain unsure of their intention to apply for the HOPE scholarship is higher than that of non-honors students and all 11th graders in the sample. These results might indicate that honors students, aware of their competitive standing as academic performers, may wait to see what other educational opportunities (e.g., full scholarship to an Ivy league college) before they commit to a HOPE scholarship application. However, the results are not alarming as the data indicate that two-thirds of honors students do intend to apply for the scholarship.

Table 6. Percentage of students who plan to apply for the HOPE scholarship

	Honors Students (N=91)	Non-Honors Students (N=146)	11 th Graders (N=127)
No	4.4	7.5	6.3
Yes	67	75.3	75.6
Not Sure	28.6	17.1	18.1

No statistical significance across honors/non-honors students.

The data also indicate that 91.2 percent of parents surveyed intend to have their 11th grade children apply for the HOPE scholarship compared to 8.8 percent who do not have this intention. There was no statistically significant difference across the two school sites in this study. A statistical comparison of student and parent intentions was not examined due to sampling problems.

Another aspect of the HOPE scholarship related to student intention is the relationship between HOPE availability and student decisions to remain in Georgia. This

is an important component for policy makers as they need to prepare for either increases or decreases in postsecondary attendance as a results of HOPE availability. The student comments generated from focus groups indicates that the HOPE scholarship's effect on attending Georgia institutions is mixed. An 11th grader remarked,

...if you get the HOPE Scholarship then you basically, you don't have to but you're basically going to have to go to a college in Georgia because it doesn't pay for anywhere else and if you want to go somewhere else you either have to get a scholarship or you have to pay for it yourself.

Other student comments reveal that the HOPE scholarship does not affect their choices of colleges or universities. For example, two students said,

I'm not going to use it. I'm going to San Diego State University.

No, [it does not motivate me], because I'm going to an out of state college so it doesn't apply.

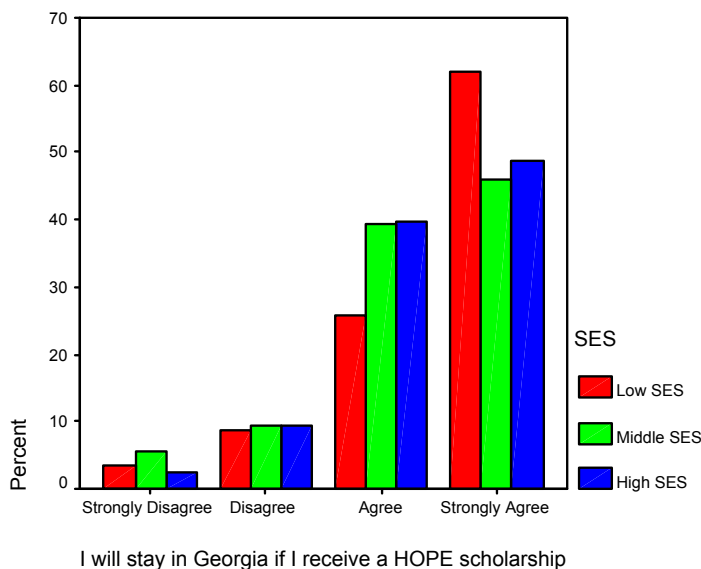
Still, some view the HOPE scholarship as a viable alternative if they do not gain acceptance to an out-of-state institution. An 11th grader told the researchers,

If you're not accepted to a college out of state that you wanted to go to then you can just, you have it to fall back on. If you get into a college in Georgia.

Figure 4 illustrates the differences between socioeconomic levels (low, middle, high) and intentions to remain in Georgia. The chi-square analysis did not yield statistically significant results. In this case, the lack of statistical significance provides important information helpful to those who study the effects of the HOPE scholarship on student decisions to remain in Georgia for college. For example, nearly 68 percent of students from low socioeconomic backgrounds report that they would remain in Georgia if they receive a HOPE scholarship compared to the 88.3 percent of high SES students who report the same. This finding raises the possibility that low-income students, who

could not afford the extra costs associated with out-of-state tuition, would choose to remain in Georgia for college. When you associate these figures with the motivation percentages discussed earlier, the findings suggest that the HOPE scholarship's influence on student performance may contribute to individual's decisions to apply for and attend college, in Georgia. This has substantial ramifications for Georgia. First, the HOPE scholarship could increase the proportion of Georgia residents who receive a postsecondary education. Second, although a greater proportion of low income Georgia students might choose to attend college, the state lottery supported HOPE scholarship removes a significant burden for other state funds to provide student financial aid for lower SES college students. Finally, the benefits realized from a more educated population with less state-supported financial aid will contribute to the overall economic, social, and cultural health of the state for years to come.

Figure 4. Student intentions to remain in Georgia if they receive a HOPE scholarship by low, middle, and high SES.

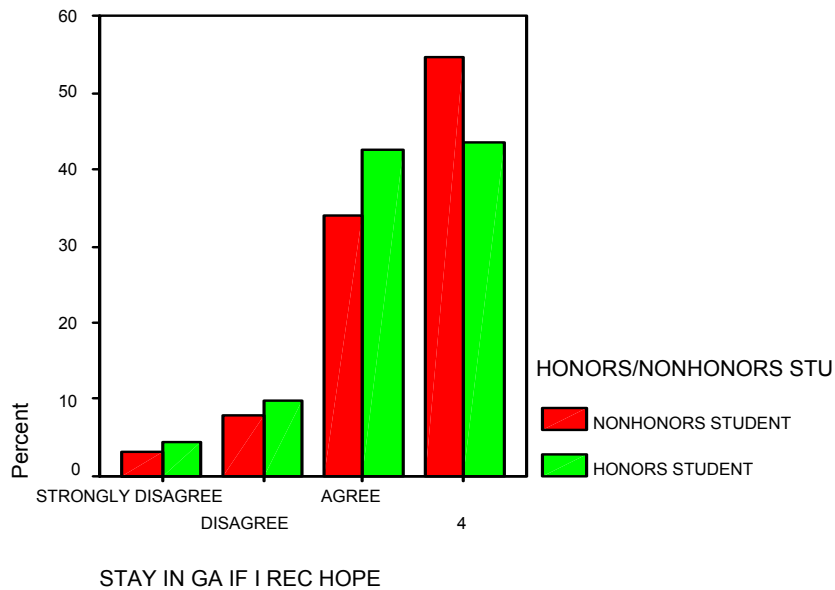


Furthermore, there were no statistically significant differences across racial/ethnic groups in relationship to remaining in Georgia upon award of the HOPE scholarship. Despite this, some interesting percentages emerged within African American and Latino groups when compared with whites. For example, 90.5 percent of African American and 87.5 percent of Latino students report that they will remain in Georgia if they receive the HOPE scholarship. This compares with 82.2 percent of whites who report the same thing. Despite the lack of statistical significance, these results indicate that minority students in Georgia tend to resemble majority students in their desires to attend a Georgia postsecondary institution. This is interesting because Georgia has a significant African American population and an increasingly influential and growing Latino population. These additional students, again, could use the HOPE scholarship rather than traditional state and federal financial assistance to cover tuition and expenses.

An important caveat about the HOPE scholarship concerns the perceived benefits afforded by HOPE. For example, lower SES and minority students might believe that the HOPE scholarship guarantees admission to either a Georgia public or private institution. This misconception could create tensions between parents who want a Georgia college education for their children and policy makers who may not have successfully communicated the actual benefits of the HOPE award to their constituents. However, the percentages presented in this report indicate that students indeed understand the requirements associated with the scholarship award. It would be crucial in future analyses of additional sites to examine the relationships between knowledge of the HOPE requirements and benefits with student desires to remain in Georgia for postsecondary education.

The survey did measure student interest levels in attending out-of-state colleges. Thus, it is not clear the extent that the HOPE scholarship encourages students who would normally leave the state, to remain in Georgia for college. However, an underlying assumption about the HOPE scholarship was that it would motivate the top performing students (those who traditionally attend college out-of-state) to remain in Georgia. The results do not provide statistically significant differences between honors and non-honors students in their intentions to remain in Georgia if they receive the HOPE scholarship. However, despite the lack of differences between groups, 80.5 percent of honors students surveyed, report that they will remain in Georgia if they earn the HOPE scholarship compared to the 14.1 percent of honors students who say they will not stay (see figure 5). We do not have earlier data that provides percentages of honors students who will stay or not stay in Georgia, dependent upon the HOPE scholarship. However, these findings are promising in that a significant majority of honors students intend to remain in Georgia. A cross-comparison of honors student admissions applications with these findings should provide additional information about the success of HOPE in keeping talented students in Georgia.

Figure 5. The percentages of students who will remain in Georgia if they receive a HOPE scholarship by honors/non-honors students.



No statistically significant differences emerged across sites when asked if students would remain in Georgia if they receive a HOPE scholarship. Of the total sample, 87.1 percent of students said they would stay in Georgia if they received a HOPE scholarship.

Students were provided choices on a 4-point likert scale (strongly disagree, disagree, agree, strongly agree). Half of the surveyed students (50.2 percent) strongly agreed with the statement “I will stay in Georgia if I receive a HOPE scholarship” while 36.9 percent agreed with the statement. This becomes more important for policy makers when we compared students who enrolled in honors courses with those who would not.

Implications about the HOPE Scholarship

The following bulleted items provide a summary of the main findings about the HOPE scholarship reported in this section.

- A majority of students and parents understand the academic requirements for a HOPE scholarship. However, a greater percentage of students at MCHS were aware of the requirements.

- No statistically significant differences between SES groups emerged on knowledge about the HOPE benefits. Furthermore, there were no statistically significant differences between males and females on this variable.
- There are mixed results in students' knowledge about HOPE scholarship benefits especially as it relates to private universities and technical colleges.
- Less than one-fifth of the students sampled believe that the HOPE scholarship guarantees admission to a Georgia public university.
- The effects of the HOPE scholarship on student motivation differ within and between groups – students and counselors are generally positive about the HOPE scholarship while both teachers and administrators view it as both a negative and a positive contribution to students.

Overall, these results provide some important information for all the players involved in the HOPE program. First, the requirements and benefits of HOPE scholarships need to be communicated in a standard way across all schools in Georgia. The statistically significant finding that students differ in their perceptions of HOPE suggests there is variability in the way teachers and counselors communicate the program to students. Perhaps, these results reflect the misconceptions teachers and counselors hold about the HOPE scholarship. This is a communication issue that could be rectified by the Georgia State Finance Commission and the local media outlets.

Second, an important finding concerns the comparison across stratified income groups. At least across these schools, no statistically significant differences emerge on knowledge of HOPE across income groups. This is important because it suggests that low income students are receiving similar information (e.g., regarding requirements and benefits) as middle and higher income students. This encourages students, who thought they could not attend college because of financial constraints, to set postsecondary options as realistic goals. This finding has a potentially significant impact on college admissions in Georgia.

Finally, motivation to perform academically is mixed, apparently dependent on the interactions between students and school professionals. This suggests that school personnel must establish clear means of communicating with one another about student performance. Students require consistent information from all school personnel. A lack of understanding about the roles each professional plays, reduces the overall effectiveness of administrators, counselors, and teachers. Therefore, a consistent program of professional interaction will benefit students.

SECTION II: Knowledge of Higher Education

Student perceptions of Admissions Requirements: State University of West Georgia (WGA) and University of Georgia (UGA).

The University System of Georgia (USG) implemented dramatic changes in the admissions requirements of Georgia postsecondary institutions. These changes included a raise in the academic standing of students who decide to attend Georgia colleges, universities, and technical schools. Phased in over a period of 5 years, the new requirements include higher SAT scores, increased numbers of college preparatory curriculum (CPC) units, and higher high school GPA's. Criteria are defined according to the institutional type for which students wish to apply. A complete breakdown of the requirements across sectors is presented in the Phase I report. Overall, all admissions are evaluated on the basis of a calculated Freshman Index. This Index equals the sum of the SAT verbal score + the sum of the SAT mathematics score + (high school GPA X 500). High school GPA is computed only on CPC units therefore the number of college preparatory classes students complete becomes a critical element of their GPA for college admissions. The University of Georgia requires a minimum Freshman Index of 2500

while the State University of West Georgia has a baseline level of 1940. However, just meeting the freshman index does not guarantee admission to either of these universities.

The survey tested students’ knowledge of what is important in admissions considerations. Students were presented with a list 16 items and asked to rate the importance (scale 0 – “Not Considered/not important” to 4 – “Single most important factor”) of each item in gaining admission to each institution. The percentages presented in table 8 represent the proportion of students who believed that SAT scores, high school GPA, and College preparatory requirements are “very important factors” for admissions. The results indicate that slightly over one-half of the students appear to know what is important to gain entry into WGA or UGA (see table 8).

Table 8. Student perceptions of the relative importance of specific criteria for admissions into WGA and UGA.

	WGA	UGA
SAT scores	50.4%	52.0%
High School GPA	55.8%	52.0%
CPC units	51.8%	53.1%

It appears that students understand the mix between these three factors. However, surprisingly more respondents identified high school GPA as a very important factor for admissions to WGA. It is unclear if students understand that GPA is computed on the CPC units taken by the student. We would expect to find equal numbers of individuals identifying CPC and GPA as equally important. This result suggests that students may not clearly understand the strong relationship between GPA and CPC units.

When the data were compared across the two high schools surveyed in Georgia, one interesting difference emerged: students at Morgan County High School were more likely to believe that GPA is a very important factor in admissions. For WGA admissions, 63 percent of Morgan students rated it as very important compared to 52.4 percent of Jackson students ($\chi^2=10.66$, 4(df), $p=.03$). Similar results were obtained for UGA admissions with 65.4 percent of Morgan students who rated GPA as very important compared to 45.5 percent of Jackson students ($\chi^2=11.66$, 4(df), $p=.04$). The findings suggest that Morgan students might encounter more teachers and counselors who impress upon them the importance of academic performance to gain college entry. The changes in college admissions requirements have created some confusion for students, parents, and teachers. The complexity of the admissions requirements – in terms of CPC requirements and the Freshman Index – spread across Georgia postsecondary education sectors presents problems for teachers. One teacher commented on this situation,

And one of the things, if I'm not mistaken about is, there's a freshmen index that will be used in 2001 in different universities and colleges will be having different expectations. I guess it's somewhat similar but in a different perspective. I'm not sure that I necessarily understand that fully and I know the students, and their parents don't.

This situation is especially problematic for new teachers, the recent graduates of Georgia universities. As one teacher indicated that the requirements for students differ from those needed when he entered college just a few years earlier.

I'm only a third year teacher so I feel like I have some experience, pretty recent, however I do know, being an advisor for students, that a lot, at least at the University of Georgia and I think throughout Georgia, the requirements in the way that they look at those will be done differently in the year 2001 and so I know that I'm probably not as familiar with some of those changes and how that will actually work as compared to when I entered.

It is important to note, however, that no differences emerged between school sites for the importance of SAT scores and CPC units. Again, this would suggest that students across both sites do not fully understand the relationship between CPC units and GPA.

TUITION ESTIMATES

Students were asked to provide their best guess estimates of tuition for one year at UGA and WGA. The respondents were told not to consider the cost of books, housing, food, or any additional expenses and limit their estimates only to the actual tuition cost. Students wrote in a specific amount of money. Tuition costs were overestimated for both UGA and WGA. Table 9 illustrates differences across socioeconomic levels and honors/non-honors students in their estimates. Although no statistical differences emerged between socioeconomic groups and honors or non-honors students, it is important to note that two-thirds of the students surveyed overestimated tuition costs. Furthermore, nearly half of the lower SES students estimate tuition costs in excess of five times the actual cost of tuition for both institutions. This finding suggests that lower SES students believe that they need to apply for every financial aid program available (including the HOPE scholarship) should they decide to participate in postsecondary education. As noted earlier in this report, a majority of lower SES students know at least one, and in most cases both, of the requirements for the HOPE scholarship. Furthermore, lower SES students report that the availability of the HOPE scholarship motivates them to perform academically while in high school. This is important because it suggests that a relationship emerges between the availability of the HOPE scholarship, the academic

effects of the HOPE scholarship on students' academic behaviors, and the perception of high tuition costs. Perhaps, lower SES students believe that the HOPE scholarship increases their financial access to postsecondary education. Further analysis of these results (across a larger sample) would provide evidence to determine if this assumption is accurate.

The data also show that students who take honors courses do not differ from those who do not in their estimates of tuition costs. However, for the University of Georgia, honors students are more likely to estimate tuition at twice to greater than five times the actual costs. It is possible that students take more honors courses because they realize that any form of financial aid (including the HOPE scholarship) is a competitive enterprise. Students may increase the numbers of advanced placement or honors courses taken to improve their GPA to position themselves as top performers. Because of limited analysis with this small sample, we cannot conclude that this is the case. Further research could shed light on this supposition.

Table 9

Student Estimates of Tuition by SES, Honors/Non Honors

	Socioeconomic Status			
	Low SES (n=55)	Middle SES (n=66)	High SES (n=41)	Total (n=162)
<hr/>				
<i>University of Georgia</i> (actual cost of tuition \$2414)				
% Within twice the actual cost (< \$4828)	20%	36.4%	26.8%	28.4%
% Between twice and five times the actual cost	32.7%	34.8%	31.7%	33.3%
% More than five times the actual cost (> 12, 070)	47.3%	28.8%	41.5%	38.3%
Not Statistically significant				
<hr/>				
<i>State University of West Georgia</i> (actual cost of tuition \$1808)				
% Within twice the actual cost (< \$3616)	16.7%	29.2%	25%	23.9%
% Between twice and five times the actual cost	29.6%	32.3%	30%	30.8%
% More than five times the actual cost (> 9040)	53.7%	38.5%	45%	45.3%
Not Statistically significant				
<hr/>				
	Honors/Non-Honors			
	Non-Honors (n=133)	Honors (n=88)	Total (n=221)	
<hr/>				
<i>University of Georgia</i> (actual cost of tuition \$2414)				
% Within twice the actual cost (< \$4828)	31.6%	23.9%		28.5%
% Between twice and five times the actual cost	28.6%	35.2%		31.2%
% More than five times the actual cost (> 12, 070)	39.8%	40.9%		40.3%
Not Statistically significant				
<hr/>				
<i>State University of West Georgia</i> (actual cost of tuition \$1808)				
% Within twice the actual cost (< \$3616)	24.2%	22.1%		23.4%
% Between twice and five times the actual cost	29.5%	27.9%		28.9%
% More than five times the actual cost (> 9040)	46.2%	50.0%		47.7%
Not Statistically significant				

Communicating College Admissions Information

The analyses presented thus far suggest that college information sources play a central role in student understanding of college academic requirements. This next set of analyses examines the sources 11th graders use to gather important information.

Respondents were provided with eleven potential sources of information. These analyses examine the frequency students talk with parents, counselors, and teachers about college admission requirements. These three sources were chosen because of their proximity to the student on a daily basis. Overall, the results show that students talk more with parents than they do with teachers, and high school guidance counselors (see table 10).

Table 10. The Frequency that 11th grade students talk with parents, teachers, and high school guidance counselors about college admissions.

	Source		
	Parents	Teachers	Counselors
Never	7.9%	26%	37%
1-2 times	30.7%	57.5%	49.6%
Many times	61.4%	16.5%	13.4%

Not tested for statistical significance

Although statistical comparisons across sources were not conducted, the percentages presented indicate some clear trends. It appears that students communicate more with parents, followed by teachers than they do with school counselors. Whereas students are more likely to talk frequently with their parents about college admission requirements, they will only talk to teachers and counselors once or twice. Furthermore, students appear less likely to never talk with their parents about college admissions than they are with teachers and counselors. It is important to note that students are less likely

to discuss college admissions requirements with counselors than they are with either parents or teachers.

When we compared honors/non-honors students' interactions with parents, counselors, and teachers, we found that honor students have more frequent interactions with teachers than do non-honors students. This is the only statistically significant difference found between honors and non-honors students (see table 11). Clearly, honors students are more likely to talk with their teachers at least once or twice, if not many times, about what they need to get admitted to college. This is not surprising since honors students are more likely to have greater contact with their high school teachers, overall.

Table 11
Frequency of 11th Graders Who Discussed Admission Requirements with parents, counselors, teachers.

	<u>Informants</u>								
	<i>Parents</i>			<i>Counselors</i>			<i>Teachers</i>		
	Never	Once or Twice	Many Times	Never	Once or Twice	Many Times	Never	Once or Twice	Many Times
<i>Honors Students</i>									
Non-honors	11.9%	29.9%	58.2%	41.8%	46.3%	11.9%	35.8%	49.3%	14.9%
Honors	3.3%	31.7%	65.0%	31.7%	53.3%	13.4%	15.0%	66.7%	18.3%

$\chi^2=7.17, 2 \text{ df}, p=.03$

We also examined differences in communication between parents, teachers, and counselors and levels of socioeconomic status, and race/ethnic background. There were no statistically significant differences across SES groups in their discussions with individuals about college admissions requirements. When students responded that they talk many times with their parents on college admissions, the data suggest that across low and middle SES groups students engage less frequently with their parents (68.8 percent, 62.2 percent, respectively) compared with high SES students (82.4 percent). However, neither group “never” discusses admissions with their parents. The SES groups are fairly evenly matched across teachers and counselors. The subject of those conversations remains unknown. We do not know, for example, if lower SES students converse with their parents about college costs while higher SES students talk to their parents about academic performance. This is an important distinction as it might enable administrators and legislators to understand the direct influence educational costs maintains on poorer students ability to participate in postsecondary education.

A further analysis examined differences between racial/ethnic groups’ discussions about college admissions requirements with parents, counselors, and teachers. The only statistically significant difference occurred across student interactions with counselors (see table 12). The data indicate that African American students are more likely to talk with counselors about admissions criteria at least once or twice when compared to others in the group. Furthermore, based on the limited numbers of individuals surveyed in this sample, only the Latinos and Asians talk with counselors about admissions requirements more frequently than others in the groups. A possible explanation for this phenomenon lies in Georgia’s court order to desegregate its postsecondary institutions. In Phase I we

learned that this has forced colleges and universities to improve their recruitment efforts for students of color across the state. It seems likely that the counselor would be the primary contact for admissions directors, counselors, and representatives. Therefore, it is not surprising to see students of color more frequently engaged in conversations with counselors about college admissions requirements. Further analyses should consider a broader distribution of the survey across racial/ethnic groups to determine if increased numbers of respondents will support the evidence provided in this study.

Table 12. 11th graders’ discussions about college admission requirements with counselors by race/ethnicity.

	Frequency of Counselor Contact		
	Never	Once/Twice	Many Times
Native American (n=1)	100%	0	0
African American (n=11)	27.3%	72.7%	0
White (n=73)	32.9%	54.8%	12.3%
Latino (n=4)	50%	25%	25%
Asian (n=2)	0	0	100%
Multiracial (n=1)	0	100%	0
Total (n=92)	32.6%	54.3%	13.0%

$\chi^2=19.93$, $df=10$, $p=.03$

Clearly, the data show that students do not get college admissions information from counselors. For example, at JCCHS, teachers advise students on their courses and college aspirations. Students are divided among the teachers into groups of 15 to 25

advisees. The same teacher will advise these groups from 10th to 12th grade. As one teacher describes it,

When we advise we have a little sheet telling us the requirements for the college bound [students], what the requirements are for the technical school or vocational...then we advise according to that sheet. We look at it and try to see where a student is going and then we meet individually with each of our students that we advise and their parents are invited to that so they can come, too.

Once a year each teacher runs a college information group in the library. Counselors attend the sessions to answer questions about college admissions requirements. Each student is allocated 20 minutes to discuss issues that pertain to college. The overall purpose of these special advising programs is to help college-bound high school students select appropriate classes for the upcoming school year. One 11th grader described the process:

We go over a list of all the classes that I've taken and compare that to the requirements of getting into college, like you have to have so many years of this class or so many years of this subject or something and they make sure you're on track for the next year. And then signing you up for the classes you'll need to take in order to get those requirements.

The college-advising structure at JCCHS places a difficult burden on teachers. Oftentimes, the school counseling office receives current information about college admissions requirements. This information is then supplied to the teachers. One teacher explained,

"I wish the counselors did it instead of us. It terrifies me and I think most teachers feel the same way that we just do not know enough to be doing all this advising with our little hour or hour and a half session and our notebooks and the way they [college requirements] change. I had rising seniors this year, I'm always really worried I'll miss something."

The counselor-to-student ratio at JCCHS is 1:400. However, since students are not assigned to counselors as they are for teachers, they can meet with any counselor of their own choosing. A counselor suggested, “you’d have to say that all three counselors have a case load of 1200 students.” Unfortunately, counselors advise students on many issues (teen pregnancy, conflict resolution, abuse cases, attendance cases, discipline matters) in addition to educational and career planning. What is even more problematic is that students must seek out counselors on their own rather than rely on regularly scheduled meetings as with teacher-advisors. This creates additional pressure for college-bound students, committed to their academic responsibilities. A student told us,

I think it would help if the counselors set aside time for college prep students to come into the office and talk to them about college and answer questions instead of us having to come to them and having make time for them because they, I don’t know if they know that we just don’t have time right now. You know, because in my trig class, if I was to miss a day... it’s over from there, you know?”

The situation at MCHS is similar to JCCHS with the same counselor-to-student ratio. However, school administrators responded to parent and student criticisms about the lack of adequate and useful college information. One administrator believes that state-level policies will provide relief for schools caught in this situation.

The governor is going to require that the guidance counselors spend five-sixths of their time in guidance and counseling next year. So the assistant principals are making arrangements to take over scheduling and that’s not a bad thing...the services weren’t getting to the students.

The Governor’s guidance requirements force building administrators to re-structure job tasks for counselors, teachers, and administrators. For example, the counselors’ guidance activities include financial aid and college admissions informational meetings for MCHS parents. The burden for testing and scheduling shifts from the counselor to other building administrators such as the assistant principal. However, teachers still play a

critical advising role for students – one that includes many tasks a counselor could perform. For example, MCHS students were paired with teachers to get to know them better. Teachers then worked with students in career planning and resume development. One of the students interviewed described the process:

They take all the kids and they divide them up into groups of ... 15 to 20 [students]... they just give each group to any random teacher and then the teacher's job is to discuss the topic for that particular month. It's just once a month for like, 30 minutes out of one day and some teachers care, some teachers participate in activities, and some don't, like mine.

Unlike the school counselors who advise the students that seek them out (or those referred for disciplinary issues), teachers must work with their assigned student groups. Oftentimes, a wide range of student skills and aspirations are represented in these groups. A teacher, frustrated with this design, described the advising process.

... in my particular advisement group I have probably 14 children, only 3 of which are college bound ... I'm lucky to even have them come to school on a regular basis ... it's not very productive in encouraging them to do this or do that or get involved with this essay contest or apply for this scholarship because most of the time I'm trying to keep order between the kids ... They see here, they see now and the three or four who might look into the future are almost overlooked in order to maintain and get accomplished something with the other 10 or 11.

Students remain responsive and positive about the process. One school counselor evaluated the process and remarked,

I did an evaluation [of the teacher advisement] ...I did read a few and a lot of students were positive about it and wanted more time in the advisement sessions.

Student and parent access to accurate and current college information remains problematic for the high schools represented in this study. The tensions arise from the

lack of understanding about the variable admissions policies and teachers' knowledge about student academic preparation for postsecondary education. Some students suggest that counselors should take a proactive role in dissemination of college requirements.

I think it would help if the counselors set aside time for college prep students to come into the office and talk to them about college and answer the questions instead of us having to come to them and having to make time for them because they, I don't know if they know that we just don't have time right now.

Still, other students would like exposure to college admissions representatives.

Student respondents provided two possible scenarios to make this happen.

Have the kids decide...if there's a list, a sign saying we're interested in certain colleges. Say that college showed up, they'd come and seek us out and talk to us aside. I think that would help.

I wish we could have...a field trip...one day you toured three or four colleges type of thing and then the next day you tour some more and come back down.

These student remarks contrast sharply with those of a building administrator who perceives universities as responsive to the schools' information needs:

We get a lot of direct contact with schools. Even those in the university system, every school may have a little difference [in entrance and exit requirements]...colleges have been very good about coming to our school when we want to have a college day...We have a lot of representatives, probably once a week there's some college recruiter on campus to see kids at lunch and ... they send a lot of materials to us ... we have a college center in our school where we try to keep all books and records and [colleges] send updated materials every year.

This particular administrator has provided an area that houses multiple sources of college information (printed materials, audio and video sources) for college-bound students, parents, and teachers. Despite the availability of resources, teachers still feel ill-equipped

to advise students about college requirements especially as they relate to the academic expectations held by postsecondary educators.

I would love to sit down and talk with, or get reports from college professors about what they're expecting in their English programs for different groups of kids, like for kids who are going into more of an engineering type field, kids who are going in, I would be very interested in finding out what the differences are as far as communication and, I mean, my whole emphasis is being able to write, being able to speak, being able to read and function in this world as a professional and I want to know what skills they're looking for at the college level from these kids. That's what I'd like to know. When I was teaching eighth grade I was constantly asked what was going on in high school level. It's very necessary to me to have that transitional element and to have that communication. And I don't right now but I would like that.

This frustration is echoed by other teachers and students and remains a critical tension for the population in these two schools. Colleges and universities provide information to students and parents but it is not always useful.

The brochures that I receive...the ones that I have they're like trying to pull you in, a lot of them scream money, we want your money and they write you a little letter and they try to make you feel all important with their little letter and they're like, yeah, you're of value to us, blah, blah, blah...I think more elaborate. If they are going to send you a letter, I know their job is to track people and find out more about it but...

Another, less cynical student, suggested that postsecondary institutions focus their information more specifically for students to understand their choices.

I think the brochures should be more elaborate and focus on ...information on that program you know.

Other students believe that visits from university people could eliminate some of the misconceptions about college requirements.

I would love to just take a day for UGA and have like, maybe a guidance counselor person...show me and explain a lot about the campus and not just the basic qualifications, application form, but so I could get a feel...I feel like it's pretty important for me...I know it's a lot of effort for the students as well but maybe...

And,

I've heard a lot of things about UGA...they're raising their qualifications and their SAT scores and the ratios and just odds and ends, basically, but I don't have...maybe I should just get a little bit more informed.

When students need clarification about college academic requirements and expectations, they often seek information from teachers. This situation raises problems because teachers complain that postsecondary institutions do not provide information about how former students perform in college courses. In fact, teachers are more likely to get this information from high school graduates. As one teacher said,

Occasionally I'll have students come back and talk with me and say...we didn't do so and so like you said we were going to. And I always say, I always try to preface anything I tell them, that it's going to depend on where you go and who you have, what they're going to require. ... I know about how many did just as well as they did when they were in high school, did better or did worse.

The depth of information gathered through the informal alumni visits depends upon the inquisitiveness of the teacher. One English teacher described how he interrogates returning students.

Students are very open when they come back about how they've done, especially with ... English classes. They are very quick to tell me, and I interrogate, what did you not have that you needed when you got there? What did you lack? What did you excel in? What did you feel like really, you understood in high school and you were able to work with it in college? And the kids were very open.

Another teacher reported the need to supplement what former students say with additional materials.

I may be not as intelligent on this issue as I should be but truly what I know and what I tell the kids about college is from common sense, from what I read, because I do read a good bit and I talk with kids who have gone to college, I talk a lot with kids. And I talk with kids who have gone to college and I relate their experiences and things that have happened with them so that at least I'm drawing from something that is real back to the kids. That's where I get my information-- I don't have any other information.

Interactions with former students provides valuable information for teachers in their own instructional practices.

The biggest thing is that they don't write enough in high school ... They have no idea how to put together a formal paper... their skills are very limited when it comes to correct grammar and punctuation. A lot of our kids take remedial classes.... And they think that that's normal. And I look at the intelligence level of these kids and I think that's not normal. They should be doing much better.

Another important information sources for teachers are student teachers. One teacher reported on what the value of the student teacher as a resource.

... the only interaction about what I teach has just been through the vehicle of the student teacher. You know, they say, the student teacher tells me what's going on in the college and how they're doing it now and then I talk to the student teacher about what we've been doing, what would you like to do and then we sort of work out, I mean, other than that in direct link, or whatever continuing education that I do, that's it.

Some teachers must rely on experiences with their own college-bound children to advise their high school students. One teacher said,

I feel reasonably comfortable with the university. I have a daughter who's a freshman this year and so we went through the books, you know, steps, problems, so I feel pretty comfortable...

The data indicate that teachers seek out a variety of information related to college: a) institution-specific admissions requirements; and, b) college performance by former students. Teachers get this information from materials produced by the institutions; current college experiences of former students; university student teachers; and their personal experiences with their own college-age children. Despite the multiple sources of information available to teachers, they still believe that they lack information – especially related to postsecondary academic expectations – to advise students, appropriately. The focus group and interview data yielded a series of workable recommendations to close this gap.

- Student interactions with college professors.

Teachers suggest that high school students could interact closely with the college community. A teacher briefly discussed an idea that has circulated through one school.

One of the things I would like to see happen in our county is, for senior level they get to go... out and visit some of the colleges and that kind of thing and get a shadowing type experience...I feel like they need to see that earlier on so that they can make some decisions, some good decisions early on and due to the fact that a lot of kids in our county don't pursue college, I think that if they kind of saw the atmosphere and found out a little bit more about what it's like... they might be turned on to it a little more. And I think if we did that early on that would help tremendously. Because most of the kids they've decided, had to decide by the time they're a senior, so. It's beneficial to them but I think more so to the freshmen.

- Teacher interactions with colleges.

Many of the teachers interviewed for this study graduated from college many years earlier. The distance between their first-hand college history and current student academic experiences is substantial. As one teacher suggested,

I think one thing that would be helpful, even at the middle school level, is some shadowing experiences where they [teachers] could go see what a college classroom is like.

- High school counselors should have more pertinent information from colleges.

The school counselor is often viewed as the college admissions expert. However, counselors may lack information related to specific academic expectations. One teacher recommended,

It would be probably helpful, and they can get this in the counseling office but different information from the schools so students could see, maybe, syllabus for different classes or you know, the syllabus is just an example. Some of those you can get on line but just to see what they're in for. Samples, sample work from different colleges. And that way they can go, and if they're interested, see what most freshmen are taking.

Teachers have proposed formalized mechanisms to communicate academic expectations to high school students. Students must still rely on teachers who seek out information. However, college-bound students supplement their data through informal networks: siblings and friends. These students rely on students who currently attend college for advice about their own college experiences. One student said,

I've got a bunch of friends in college and they just pretty much, you know, most freshmen make the same mistake, they go and they party too much and they flunk their first year. They just pretty much told me not to do that because they already did it.

Summary of College Admissions Findings

- Students have a basic understanding of college admissions requirements. However, they do not fully comprehend the role College Preparatory Curriculum (CPC) units play in their postsecondary education options.
- Students consistently overestimated the cost of attendance at UGA and WGA.
- Teachers increasingly play a disseminator role in helping students navigate the admissions process. Teachers, uncomfortable with this role, seek alternative information sources to fully inform students.
- Teachers, rather than counselors, are assigned student advising roles that require them to guide students through career and academic preparation programs.
- High schools maintain multiple sources of college information in a variety of platforms (print, audio, and video) that students, teachers, and parents can access.
- Students get college information through both formal (counselors and teachers) and informal (friends, siblings, parents) networks.

Implications

A clear disconnect has occurred between the types of information college admissions representatives share with high schools. Students, parents, teachers, counselors, and administrators need to grasp college admissions reports in the simplest terms. Furthermore, students and teachers need specific information related to academic outcomes. Teachers do not want to send under-prepared students to college. However, they need to know what professors in each of the disciplines expects of students who enter college classes. Furthermore, students and teachers want to know exactly what students do in college classrooms. These needs expand beyond the boundaries of college admissions officers who must determine the extent that high school graduates meet minimum college entry requirements. These data imply that high schools and universities should negotiate how they can increase the depth of their relationships with one another. College faculty complain that students are ill-prepared for college coursework yet high school teachers do not grasp what students need to know (regarding

specific course content) to succeed in college. It is not enough to rely on the college memories of high school teachers. Instead, a more concerted effort that aligns college and high school disciplines, and ultimately, curricular, would better serve college-bound students.

Conclusions

The Georgia case study report was organized in two overall sections: 1) what students and parents know about colleges; and, 2) where students and parents get their information. Two major issues arose: a) those that affect pragmatic decisions (admissions, costs, HOPE scholarship requirements and benefits, and other sources of financial aid); and, b) those that affect academic experiences (what students should know about the academic expectations of college professors).

A major goal of this research was to explore the links between pre-K-12 and higher education. The results suggest that communication of college admissions requirements, and tuition and financial aid information to potential students and parents appears bottle-necked inside the high schools that prepare students for college courses. Although administrators and counselors provide central college information centers within high schools, teachers and students do not feel that the information is helpful enough. However, it also appears that students do have a working understanding about college admissions requirements, although they need clarification regarding specific admissions issues. The central issue that emerged from this research is that students and teachers need to know what college professors expect of entering students and how the students subsequently perform. The depth of communications and relationships between high schools and colleges needs work. For example, college faculty need to become

involved with high school teachers so they can communicate to teachers what entering students should know within specific disciplines. Perhaps, this suggests that the high school curriculum for college-bound students needs a thorough re-examination and restructuring so that teachers can adequately prepare students for college coursework. Clearly, it is not enough to rely on college admissions offices to relay this information to teachers and prospective students.

These issues are especially salient in Georgia because of the availability of the HOPE scholarship. As noted in the interviews, teachers, counselors, and administrators were somewhat frustrated with the HOPE scholarship because of the potential for students to lose the benefit within their first year of college. These circumstances suggest that high school students are indeed inadequately prepared to attend college. Some argue that this situation reflects that teachers inflate grades so students can succeed. Teachers in this study did not feel pressured to increase student grades so that they would qualify for the HOPE scholarship. We argue that high school teachers, who lack information about the level of knowledge students need to succeed in college, are frustrated with a system that fails to communicate in a way that benefits students. Therefore, it is important that policy makers and administrators understand and confront these issues that affect students.

These findings represent two high schools in Georgia. Future research that explores these issues in greater depth should expand across the state and throughout the United States. The recent movement away from remedial offerings indicates that policy makers, unhappy with the inadequate academic preparation of entering college students, will no longer subsidize substandard education. Ultimately, it is the student who suffers

either through academic failure or increased expenditures to cover remedial costs. Policy makers and K-16 administrators need to consider student and parent needs as well as those of teachers and school counselors.

Appendix A: Data Collection

Jackson County Comprehensive High School Interviews

Date Interview

5/11	Teacher Interview #1: (English III)
5/11	Teacher Interview #2: (English III) (English I)
5/11	Teacher Interview #3: (English III) (English I)
5/11	Counselor #1
5/11	Focus Group #1: 8 students (11 th grade, Advanced) 3 (W) female, 5 (W) male
5/11	Focus Group #2: 8 students (11 th grade, Average) 2 (W) and 2 (AA) female, and 4 (W) male
5/11	Focus Group #3: 8 students (11 th grade, Advanced) 1 (AA) and 1 (W) female, 4 (W) and 2 (A) male
5/11	Focus Group #4: 8 students (11 th grade) 3 (W) female, 3 (W) male
5/11	Administrator

Surveys

(Initial Count- some surveys were later categorized under different grade levels because even though 9th and 11th grade classes were surveyed, some students identified themselves as 10th or 12th graders)

<u>Date</u>	<u>Class</u>	<u>Grade</u>	<u>Code</u>	<u># Students</u>	<u># Surveys (P/S)</u>
5/11	Eng. I Advanced	9	I	26	24/24
5/11	Eng. I Average	9	J	23	18/18
5/11	Eng. I Advanced	9	N	25	18/18
5/11	Eng. I Average	9	M	<u>16</u>	<u>15/15</u>
				90	75/75
					response rate = 83%
5/11	Eng. III Advanced	11	K	29	16/16
5/11	Eng. III Average	11	L	26	22/22
5/11	Eng. III Advanced	11	O	28	27/26
5/11	Eng. III Average	11	P	<u>25</u>	<u>21/21</u>
				108	86/85
					response rate = 79%
Total				198	161/160

Overall response rate for this school was 81%

Morgan County High School

Interviews

Date	Interview
5/8	Teacher Interview #1: (9 th grade literature)
5/9	Teacher Interview #2: (9 th grade literature)
5/9	Teacher Interview #3: (11 th grade literature)
5/9	Counselor #1
5/9	Counselor #2
5/8	Focus Group #1: 7 students (11 th grade) 5 (W) female, 2 (W) male
5/8	Focus Group #2: 8 students (11 th grade) 5 (W) female, 1 (AA) and 2 (W) male
5/8	Focus Group #3: 7 students (11 th grade) 4 (AA) and 1 (W) female, 2 (W) male
5/9	Focus Group #4: 5 students (11 th grade) 5 (W) female
5/12	Superintendent
5/12	Principal
5/12	Vice Principal

Surveys

(Initial Count- some surveys were later categorized under different grade levels because even though 9th and 11th grade classes were surveyed, some students identified themselves as 10th or 12th graders)

Date	Class	Grade	# Students	# Surveys (P/S)
5/8	CPE	9	26	10/10
5/8	(1 st term)*	9	28	6/5
5/9	CPE	9	21	19/16
5/8	CPE	9	<u>19</u>	<u>6/7</u>
			94	41/38
				response rate = 40%
5/8	CPE	11	25	19/17
5/9	(Honors – 1 st term)*	11	18	2/3
5/9	(1 st term – 2 classes)*	11	25/27	7/6
5/9	CPE	11	<u>23</u>	<u>19/19</u>
			118	47/45
				response rate = 38%
Total			212	88/83

Table 2
SAT Scores

High School	Mean Combined SAT verbal and math scores
HS I	953
State	984

Source: 1999-00 GA Public Education Report Card

* Classes that met 1st term we surveyed in the Band room. These students were not meeting as a class during the spring semester when we visited High School II and so we had a much lower response rate.

Overall response rate for this school was 39%.

Appendix B: Student Survey Protocol

Hi. Introductions.

(Pass Out Surveys.)

We are from Arizona State University and are working with Stanford University to conduct a study called the Bridge Project. This project includes several states including Georgia. As part of the project, we are very interested in high school students and their future educational plans. A few weeks ago you received a parent survey and a parent consent form. For those of you who brought it back with a signed consent form, we are going to be passing out a copy of the student survey for you to fill out. We also need your consent for your participation. Please sign it if you would like to complete the survey.

The Bridge Project is also being conducted in California, Oregon, Illinois, Maryland and Texas. Hundreds of high school students like you are participating in this study. Your responses will be representing the state of Georgia. Your school wants to know what you know about college admissions so that you can inform them what more or different information you might need to make your decision about going to college.

Your perspective/opinion is very important to this work. Your results will go to people who make decisions about college admission and placement in Georgia. We want to hear from you the student.

I'll be here to answer questions on the survey so raise your hand if you have any questions while filling it out.

On question 11a if you are not taking a math class at this time please mark the last math class you took. You can also write notes to explain this.

The top copy of the student consent form is for you to keep. Please read and sign the **bottom consent** form and leave it stapled to the survey. Thank you.

Appendix C: Teacher Interview Protocol

Date: _____

Name of teacher: _____

High School: _____

Title of course: _____

Number of students in course:

Approximate ethnic/racial breakdown of class surveyed:

Approximate gender breakdown of class:

Other school responsibilities of this teacher:

Teacher's educational background:

Personal

Do students ask you about your own college experience? How much do you share?

Do you ever talk to students about preparing for college? If so, what types of conversations do you have with them?

Are they student-initiated or do you initiate them?

Knowledge about College

What is your level of familiarity regarding admission requirements and placement policies at the University of Georgia and State University of West Georgia?

High School Course Placement

Please describe the process through which students are placed into college prep classes (or honors)?

How are parents and student informed about placement procedures?

If students have not been in the college preparatory "curriculum path" previously, can they enter into college preparatory classes in high school?

Could you describe the differences, for example, between an honors 11th grade English class and a nonhonors 11th grade English class?

What do you think are the main reasons why some students are "college bound" and others don't seem to be?

Teacher Awareness

What types of information do teachers receive from the district regarding advising students about how to prepare for colleges. From the counselors or administrators at this high School ?

How much do you know/information do you receive about the content of placement exams for first-year courses at the University of Georgia? Does that affect your curriculum planning/development?

What do you think the effects of the recent reforms has been (*HOPE, Core Curriculum, P-16 Councils, Freshman Index)?

In your opinion how has the HOPE Scholarship influenced the college going activities of students at this school?

Describe the activities of the P-16 council in your district?

Do you receive any feedback from individual higher education institutions regarding how your former students are doing on placement exams and in college in general (graduation/attrition rates)?

- How is this information reported?
- How do you use the information?
- How is the information shared within the high school?

Is there information that you would like to receive that you currently do not receive?

*Hope Scholarship-tuition at GA public university if they keep a “B” average in HS /college

*Core Curriculum-adopted in '97, curriculum aligned to GA HS graduation test

*P-16 Councils-formed for discussion of alignment issues between k-12 and post secondary (1 state, 15 regional)

*Freshman Index-SAT/ACT scores and HS GPA calculated only on the 16 college prep units

Interaction

What types of interaction is there between high school teachers and representatives from the University of Georgia, from State University of West Georgia, from two-year institutions?

How might these interactions be more useful in communicating university expectations, policies, procedures, and programs to individuals within secondary schools?

How might those within K-12 become better informed about such policies?

In an ideal world, what should be the connections, or linkages, between K-12 and higher education?

Appendix D: Counselor/Administrator Protocol

Date: _____

Name of respondent: _____

High School : _____

How long have you been with the district? What are your current responsibilities?

College Preparation

Please describe the process through which students are placed into college prep classes (or honors)?

How are parents and student informed about placement procedures?

If students have not been in the college preparatory “curriculum path” previously, can they enter into college preparatory classes in high school?

Could you describe the differences, for example, between an honors 11th grade English class and a nonhonors 11th grade English class?

Could you describe the counseling facilities at this school, including the counseling facility, support staff, technology, books, etc.

At what point do counselors begin meeting with students to discuss college preparation (e.g. grade 9, 10, 11, 12)? Please describe those meetings.

How often and for how long do they meet with students throughout high school? Are parents present?

What goes on during such counseling sessions?

Types of Information

What types of information do teachers and counselors receive from your school district regarding advising students about how to prepare for college?

About placement exams?

What type of admissions information do you receive from the University of Georgia and State University of West Georgia? Community colleges?

Do those institutions send someone to your campus to discuss admissions information with school staff?

Do school staff go to those campuses to receive information or attend counselor sessions?

Is there any information that you would like to receive that you currently do not receive?

Administrators & Counselors

Please describe the process through which you or other individuals within your school are informed about any changes in state university policy.

Do the University of Georgia or State University of West Georgia or other colleges and universities provide information to your school regarding your students' collegiate success (e.g., numbers requiring remediation/development prior to matriculation into typical freshmen sequence, graduation and attrition rates, overall academic performance)?

- How is that information reported?
- How do you use the information?
- How is that information shared within the high school?

How do you inform parents or students about the HOPE Scholarship?

In your opinion how has the Hope Scholarship changed the college going activities of students in your school?

Administrators

What is the role of the P-16 councils in your district?

In your opinion, are K-12 educators given enough information regarding the admission and remediation/course placement, policies of state university institutions?

What might account for any gaps (between k-12 and post-secondary education) in knowledge?

What types of interaction are there among high school teachers/staff and individuals from the regional colleges, universities, the DOE, and other education entities? Please describe.

How might these interactions be more useful in communicating high school exit policies and university expectations, policies, procedures, and programs to individuals within secondary School s?

How might those within K-12 become better informed about such policies?

Appendix E: Role of Testing in the District

The role of testing in the school district and in the state is high priority. Schools are given an annual report card that assesses their performance on standardized tests and compares their performance to the rest of the state. The state of Georgia requires the Iowa Test of Basic Skills (ITBS) for grade levels 3, 5 and 8. Criterion Referenced Competency Tests (CRCT) are required in the areas of reading, English/Language arts and mathematics for 4,6, and 8th grade students.

All Georgia high school students are required to pass all the sections of the Georgia High School Graduation Tests which cover: English/Language Arts, Mathematics, Social Studies, and Science. The GHSGT are given to the students during their junior year.

High school students planning to go to college must also take the Scholastic Assessment Test or SAT. The Georgia High School Graduation Tests⁹ cover English, Mathematics, Social Studies, Science and Writing. This test was introduced in 1991 by the Georgia Assembly and has been gradually phased in between 1991 and 1998. A passing score on each of the sections is needed to receive a high school diploma, otherwise, if all other graduation requirements have been met, students may be eligible to receive a Certificate of Performance or a Special Education Diploma. Students attempt these tests for the first time in their junior year, the writing test in the fall and the other four content areas in the spring. Students have five opportunities to take each of the tests before the end of the 12th grade. Students in 11th grade begin taking the Georgia High School Graduation Tests (GHSGT). Statewide 71% of all 11th graders passed all sections on the first attempt. At JCCHS, 74% of the students passed all competencies on the first attempt.

The following table illustrates the results of the Georgia High School Graduation Test:

**Percent of Regular Program 11th graders passing the GHSGT on First
Administration in 1997-1998**

GHSGT	MCHS	State
English/Language Arts	94%	94%
Mathematics	89%	88%
Social Studies	69%	78%
Science	65%	74%
All competencies above	57%	68%
Writing	91%	92%

Source: Georgia State Department of Education School Report Cards 1997-1998

**Average SAT Scores,
based on students last test administration, 1997-1998**

	Number taking Test	Mean Verbal	Mean Math	Total
HS II	71	449	444	893
State	40894	482	479	961

Source: Georgia State Department of Education School Report Cards 1997-1998

⁹ This information is found at Georgia Department of Education website:
www.doe.k12.ga.us/sla/ret/ghsgtabout.html

The SAT and ACT dates are found on the school websites. The SAT is offered seven times a year and the ACT six. According to a recent Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS) report done by MCHS, almost 20% of the students took the ACT and almost 60% the SAT. Morgan County has seen an increase in these scores over the past several years. Data for this report was collected the week prior to their testing.

<i>Percentage of parents who attended a P-16 Council meeting:</i>	
Yes	4%
No response	82%
There is no P-16 Council near me	1%
(n=261)	