

Welcome back to school for the 2012-2013 school year, the big year, Senior year. For most students and their parents the beginning of any new school year is an exciting time filled with preparations and laced with anxious anticipation of what the new year may bring. These feelings may be doubly high for you now as the realities of Senior year take hold. After all, this is the year of milestones: final courses, Senior pictures, caps and gowns, the last home ball game, the Prom, the very last final exam, a stage and a diploma are all on the horizon. The excitement is building. They're feeling it, and if you're a parent of a Senior, you're feeling it too. We can see all of this coming and we know it's going to be a busy, fantastic year!

Even though the 2012-2013 academic year is just beginning, having Seniors forces us to see beyond May to the Future, which is suddenly so close at hand. While our first impulse may be to let our students relax and enjoy the year we know that Senior year serves as a critical linking year between the public school life our students have known and the next chapter of life yet to come. That is why it is necessary to encourage them to continue to work diligently and to strive to achieve. In amongst their other activities and assignments, it is critical that our Seniors give particular attention, energy and effort to the most important assignment of all – setting the stage for their future. Whether your Senior intends to head to a 2 yr. college, a 4 year college, a technical or training program, the military or directly into the workforce after high school there are many steps s/he should begin (or continue?) taking now in order to move towards that goal. Fortunately, though s/he must certainly take major responsibility and the lead on all of this, this is not a task they must undertake alone. With your help and encouragement, the assistance of the Guidance Office staff, and the support of friends, family and community members your student can enjoy his/her Senior year while successfully preparing for life after high school.

The following members of the Guidance Office at Galax High School are happy to offer information, support and assistance as your Senior continues to explore options, makes decisions and moves towards his/her goals. We may be reached in person in the Guidance Office, by telephone #(276) 236-2991, and by e-mail (see addresses below) . In keeping with GHS's push to utilize technology more we hope to also become accessible on Facebook and on Gagle later this fall.

Cris Jackson, School Counselor - works primarily with Juniors and Seniors. Assists with academic, career, social, personal and other issues. cynthiajackson@gcps.k12.va.us

Pat Burkholder, Career Coach – provides college and career planning assistance part-time. Particularly knowledgeable about Wytheville CC and other VA Community Colleges.
PBurkholder@wcc.vccs.edu

Emily Ricketts, Family & Consumer Sciences Instructor and a licensed school counselor, providing support to students part –time . Will assist with some senior activities and college/career planning and preparation. emilyricketts@gcps.k12.va.us

Patty Smith, Guidance Secretary - Provides support in the Guidance office. Maintains records, distributes, organizes and receives scholarships, prepares transcripts, etc...
pattysmith@gcps.k12.va.us

Dr. Patricia Sebens, Director of Guidance – works primarily with 8-10th grades and testing coordination. Provides additional support and assistance to Juniors and Seniors as needed.
patriciasebens@gcps.k12.va.us

A few examples of ways we can assist Seniors:

Career/college exploration and planning	College applications
Link to Military recruiters	Standardized Testing information (SAT/ACT)
Scholarship information	Financial aid for college
Federal Application for Student Aid (FAFSA)	College/Career Fair
Workshops and presentations	

Things your student should be doing now:

Get organized! Pull together information about achievements, activities, interests and goals.

Identify and narrow down college/career options.

Gather documentation needed for applications, FAFSA, scholarships, admissions etc... including Social Security card or alien registration number, birth certificate, immunization records, and financial information

Identify people who may serve as references and ask them asap.

Preparing for his/her Senior interview with the School Counselor.

Helpful Websites your student should make good use of:

Virginia Wizard : college and career exploration :	www.vawizard.org
Federal Application for Student Aid:	www.fafsa.ed.gov
State Council of Higher Education for Virginia:	www.schev.edu
SAT homepage, information, practice questions... :	www.sat.org
College Board homepage:	http://www.collegeboard.org
ACT college admissions exam home page:	http://www.actstudent.org
High Five Scholarship website:	www.HighFiveScholarships.com

