



GEORGIA

Student Finance Commission

Student Grants and Loans • Georgia's HOPE Scholarship Programs • Health Profession Loans
Military Scholarships • Teacher Scholarships • Governor's Scholarships • Student Loan Guarantor

Sonny Perdue
GOVERNOR



Mark Miller
BOARD CHAIRMAN

Shelley C. Nickel
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

April 30, 2004

Dear Georgia High School Officials:

RE: Changes to the HOPE and Governor's Scholarship Programs

Thank you for your continued support of HOPE and the Governor's Scholarship programs. With your help, the Georgia Student Finance Commission (GSFC) is proud to administer these and other programs that provide financial assistance to Georgia's students pursuing postsecondary education. We thank you for all you do.

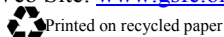
Actions taken during the 2004 Session of the Georgia General Assembly will impact both programs. You and your students need to be aware of the changes described below. In addition, there is information on a new Lottery-funded program, Early HOPE, which was created to assist students while still in high school. This program is similar to the current PSO program.

HOPE Scholarship Program Changes that Affect High Schools and High School Students:

- For students in the high school graduating **Class of 2007** who receive a college preparatory diploma, each grade for a student in attempted coursework in English, Mathematics, Science, Social Studies, and Foreign Language that would, if successfully completed, satisfy a core curriculum requirement for the college preparatory curriculum will be equated to a grade on a 4.0 scale. To be eligible for a HOPE Scholarship as a college freshman, these students must have at least a **3.0** grade point average on a 4.0 scale.
- For students in the high school graduating **Class of 2007** who receive a career/technical diploma, each grade for a student in attempted coursework in English, Mathematics, Science, and Social Studies that would, if successfully completed, satisfy a core curriculum requirement for the career/technical curriculum must be equated to a grade on a 4.0 scale. To be eligible for a HOPE Scholarship as a college freshman, these students must have at least a **3.2** grade point average on a 4.0 scale.
- Students who graduated as HOPE Scholars in 1993 through 2006 and have not received the HOPE Scholarship until **after** May 1, 2007, must also meet the new grade point average requirements.
- For students entering as college freshmen on **May 1, 2007** and after, the Georgia Student Finance Commission, rather than high schools, will calculate the grade point averages for purposes of the HOPE Scholarship. GSFC will utilize the local school system's grading scale and convert the grades to a 4.0 grade point average.

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- Grades for coursework that is classified as advanced placement or international baccalaureate will be weighted by the Georgia Student Finance Commission. Honors and other coursework will **not** be weighted.

HOPE Scholarship Program Changes that Affect Student Benefits or Eligibility in College or Technical College:

- For the 2004-2005 school year, the HOPE book allowance will remain in place. Depending on Lottery revenue in the future, the book allowance could be affected. Under that condition students who are Pell eligible will continue to receive the book allowance.
- Beginning with the 2004-2005 school year, the amount of the HOPE award for fees is capped at current levels.
- Effective with Fall term of 2004, there will be a cap on the hours students can receive the HOPE Grant to seek a technical certificate or diploma. **Students will be able to receive HOPE Grant payment for no more than 63 semester or 95 quarter hours, including hours for which a student received a HOPE Grant while still in high school.** HOPE Grant hours that students received in high school prior to Fall 2004 will not count towards the cap. For students in technical programs of study designed to require additional hours, the maximum cap will be 86 semester or 130 quarter hours of payment. In addition, an overall cap of 127 semester or 190 quarter hours of HOPE Grant plus HOPE Scholarship payment will be in place.
- Beginning with the Spring term of 2005, all full-time HOPE Scholarship recipients must have a cumulative college grade point average of at least a 3.0 at the end of each Spring term in order to renew their scholarship. Less than full-time college freshmen will have their grade point average checked after three terms, and thereafter at the end of each Spring term. The current check points of 30, 60, and 90 semester hours or 45, 90, and 135 quarter hours will continue.
- Half-time students (6-11 hours) attending private colleges will be eligible, starting with Fall term of 2004, for a HOPE Scholarship award of \$1,500 per academic year. Private college students must still be full-time (12 hours) in order to receive the Tuition Equalization Grant.

Governor's Scholarship Program:

- The maximum award amount for recipients of the Governor's Scholarship who will be attending college during the 2004-2005 school year will be **\$804** for two semesters or three quarters.
- Beginning with the high school graduating Class of 2005, the maximum number of Governor's Scholarship recipients will be limited to two per high school. **Only the Valedictorian and STAR Student for the Class of 2005 from each high school will be eligible for a Governor's Scholarship for the 2005-2006 school year.** Georgia Scholars and Salutatorians from the Class of 2005 and beyond will not be eligible for the Governor's Scholarship.
- The award amount for the Governor's Scholarship for the 2005-2006 school year has not yet been determined.

New Lottery-funded Program – Early HOPE:

- Effective Fall term 2004, students who are simultaneously attending high school and taking college degree-level courses from an eligible public or private college in Georgia will be eligible for a new Lottery-funded program. All hours paid for by this new program will be included in the 127 semester or 190 quarter hour HOPE Scholarship cap. PSO hours that students received in high school prior to Fall 2004 will not count towards the cap.
- The Postsecondary Options program, administered by the Georgia Department of Education has been eliminated.
- **More detailed information regarding this new program will be provided to you shortly.**

Please share this information with your students and their families. If you have any questions, please contact us at 1-800-505-GSFC.

Sincerely,



Shelley C. Nickel

SCN:mlc