

The Academic Coach



What is an academic coach?

Academic coaches will meet with REACH Scholars 1 time per month and work with students to increase academic success, performance and personal motivation. They do not usually work with actual academic content but strive to refine the student's academic skills, time management, organization, study skills and self-advocacy to ensure academic success and to encourage a smooth transition into college.

Upon graduation from high school, Scholars are awarded up to a \$10,000 scholarship. While over 50 public and private college are partnering with REACH, pledging to match, and in some cases, double match the scholarship, there may still be an unpaid balance. In an effort to minimize this financial barrier, the Academic Coach is also asked to assist scholars with exploring other means of funding by using the GAFutures.org financial planning tools as well as identifying local scholarship opportunities.

Middle School Coaching

Middle school students tend to struggle in 4 major categories: changing classes, acceptance, responsibility and organization. During the middle school transition, some students can also experience isolation and feel as though they are behind. Getting a handle on the following topics and learning the tools necessary to master them is critical to their success.

1. Organization
2. Time Management
3. Increasing Study Skills/Note Taking Skills
4. Developing Test Taking Strategies
5. Managing Papers and Projects
6. Improving Writing Skills
7. Communication and Social Skills
8. Increase Self-Confidence
9. Accountability and Self-Advocacy
10. Social Acceptance & Bullying
11. Goal Setting
12. Learning Styles
13. Activities and personal life

School counselors and educators are mandated to complete the following checklist for each 8th grade student enrolled in their middle school, per BRIDGE law. REACH Georgia is in line with all state standards as set by The State Department of Education.

- Explore at least three occupations and save the occupational information in their portfolios prior to the transitional parent/student conference or student led conference
- Complete an Individual Graduation Plan to utilize during the face-to-face transitional conference between middle and high school
- Introduce the "Dual Enrollment" program to each 8th grade public school student at the time the student is developing his or her individual graduation plan as required by O.C.G.A. 20-2-327 and to high school students by February 1 as required by O.C.G.A. 20-2-161.3(d) and State Board of Education Rule 160-4-2-.34(b).

High School Coaching

When students transition into high school, the pressure to succeed and gain acceptance into a college or university is heightened. Many students must now balance academics with their social, personal, athletic, and work life. By

increasing self-confidence and motivation, high school students learn to gain more control and satisfaction during this time. Getting a handle on the following topics and learning the tools necessary to master them is critical to their success.

1. Increasing Time Management Skills
2. Increasing Study Skills
3. Learning Note Taking Skills
4. Developing Self-Confidence & Communication Skills
5. Improving Writing Skills

Dual Enrollment

Georgia's Dual Enrollment program allows high school students (9th - 12th grade) to earn college credit while working on their high school diploma. The Dual Enrollment program covers tuition, mandatory fees and required textbooks.

Effective Fall term 2018, an eligible Dual Enrollment student may enroll and receive Dual Enrollment funding for a maximum of 15 semester or 12 quarter hours per term, regardless of the number of Eligible Postsecondary Institutions in which the student is enrolled.

The goal of Dual Enrollment is to increase college access and completion, and prepare students to enter the workforce with the skills they need to succeed.

For more information on the application process for Dual Enrollment, visit GAfutures.org.

Activities

Scholars that participate in the following activities prior to graduating from high school may find transitioning into college a lot smoother and may also be more successful at doing so. The Academic Coach should facilitate as many of these activities as possible.

Career Exploration

- Learn About Self (*Interest Profiler*)
- Career Assessment (*Aptitudes and Abilities*)
- Career Finder
- Have a Job Shadowing experience
- Schedule Informational Interviews
- Get involved in school related and extracurricular activities i.e. Beta Club, Band, sports, etc.
- Sign up to participate in Community Service activities
- Create an account on www.GAFutures.org (Grades 9-12)

Financial Planning

- One-on-One or Small Group Financial Aid Overview with Scholar and parent/guardian.
- One-on-One or Small Group FAFSA Completion Session (As early as October!) for Senior Scholars
- Scholarship Searches
- Utilize the www.GAFutures.org website resources

College Planning and Preparation

- Test Prep (SAT/ACT)
- Essay Prep
- Resume Building
- Postsecondary School Exploration
- Attend PROBE College Fairs
- Research Programs and Majors at colleges
- College application completion assistance
- College comparison activity to narrow college selection to 2-3 colleges
- Senior Scholars should consider connecting with a college student that attends their college of interest (Student Ambassador; Student Leadership)
- Senior Scholars should connect with college Admissions Rep. and Financial Aid Rep.
- Campus Tour/Virtual Campus Tour
- Attend College Information Session
- Attend a College Summer Program

Activities by Grade

The following chart lists highly recommended activities by grade that should be discussed with scholars during coaching sessions. The list serves as a guide to college readiness beginning as early as middle school. Academic coaches (AC) should reference the following topics in their conversations with scholars to assist the scholar with timely decision making and college preparation.

Q: Who should use the activity by grade list?

A: Academic coaches will find the list of college prep activities by grade very useful in their monthly discussions with their scholars. Mentors and parents of middle and secondary school scholars may also find this list helpful.

Q: How should the activity by grade list be used?

A: The academic coach may use the following list as a conversation starter during coaching sessions with their scholar and as a way to track student progress towards college entry.

Q: What is the activity by grade list?

A: A list of highly recommended activities by grade, starting with middle school, created to help students prepare academically and financially for education beyond high school.

Q: When should a coach refer to the checklist?

A: Each academic coaching session is an ideal time for the coach to reference the checklist beginning at the start of every school year. The mentor and parent may join the conversation to reiterate the importance of certain milestones.

8 th Grade	9 th Grade	10 th Grade	11 th Grade	12 th Grade
The AC should encourage scholar to maintain good grades.	The AC should discuss AP courses with the scholar.	The AC should discuss colleges and their admissions requirements with the scholar.	The AC should encourage the scholar to take the PSAT/NMSQT and Discuss the “Dual Enrollment” program.	After its Oct. 1 st release, the AC should remind the scholar to complete and submit their FAFSA at fafsa.gov
The AC should encourage the scholar to take challenging and interesting classes. Introduce the “Dual Enrollment” program to scholars.	The AC should encourage the scholar to research careers that are of interest.	The AC should encourage the scholar to take the PSAT or the PreACT.	The AC should assist the scholar with registering and taking the SAT, ACT and/or COMPASS test in advance.	The AC should assist the scholar with registering and taking the SAT, ACT and/or COMPASS test in advance if they haven’t don’t so already. The scholar should check with your colleges of choice to see what they require.
The AC should encourage the scholar to visit www.kids.gov to learn about jobs and to find fun online games.	The AC should encourage the scholar to make a list of their awards, honors, extracurricular activities, and paid or volunteer work.	The AC should recommend that the scholar works, volunteers or takes a summer course.	The AC should assist the scholar with searching for scholarships at GAFutures.org .	The AC should assist the scholar with completing college applications; paying close attention to deadlines.
The AC should encourage scholars to	The AC should encourage the scholar to	The AC should research and encourage	Summer before 12 th grade, the AC should	The AC should assist with ensuring that

think about going to college in the future and discussing their thoughts and ideas with their REACH Mentor, Academic Coach and other adults. The scholar should ask them about their job and what education they needed for it.	consider participating in academic enrichment programs, summer workshops and STEM activities.	scholars to attend career information fairs and events.	assist scholar with creating a username and password and FSA ID at StudentAID.gov/fsaid.	counselors submit all required documents by the deadline (i.e transcript and letters of recommendation) to the colleges which the scholar is applying.
The AC should encourage the scholar to read a lot.	The AC should assist the scholar with creating an account on GAFutures.org	The AC should encourage scholar to research majors that might be a good match with your interests and goals.	Summer before 12 th grade, the AC should help the scholar narrow their list of colleges and help to coordinate visits to them.	The AC should encourage the scholar to visit colleges that have invited them to enroll and assist with scheduling the visit.
The AC should help the scholar begin to develop strong study habits.	Discuss the “Dual Enrollment” program.	The AC should work with the scholar to learn the differences between grants, loans, work-study, and scholarships.	Summer before 12 th grade, the AC should encourage the scholar to contact colleges and request information and admissions applications.	The AC should assist the scholar with comparing colleges that they have an interest in.
The AC should encourage the scholar to become involved in school-or community-based activities that let them explore their interests and learn new things.		Discuss the “Dual Enrollment” program.	The AC should discuss with the scholar whether they should apply under a college’s early decision or early action program.	
*The AC should consider encouraging the scholar to create a REACH Scholar portfolio.	*The AC should remind the scholar to add to the REACH Scholar portfolio.	*The AC should remind the scholar to add to the REACH Scholar portfolio.	*The AC should remind the scholar to add to the REACH Scholar portfolio.	*The AC should encourage the scholar to utilize the REACH portfolio in the college application process.

*REACH Scholar Portfolio

Portfolios are a great way to engage and involve scholars in their educational growth journey. It can provide structure for involving students in extracurricular and college readiness activities and serve as a visual model for showcasing their accomplishments. While developing and maintaining a REACH Scholar portfolio is optional, it is a viable activity that should be considered for measuring student progress.

Below you will find sample portfolio sections that can be added to a folder, 3 ring binder or saved in an electronic format.

Career Exploration

- GAFutures.org registration information (Grades 9-12)
- Career Interest Profile Results
- Job Shadowing Experiences
- Informational Interviews
- Sample Job Applications

College Planning

- College Research and Comparison Exercise
- College brochures
- Financial aid resources

Transcripts

- Academic transcripts
- Professional Resume
- Writing Samples

Goals

- Short Term Goals (*Annual*)
- Long Term Goals (*Annual*)
- Consider developing goals in the following areas: Education, Work, Spiritual, Relationship, Health/Fitness, Art/Music/Creativity, Study Skills

Extracurricular Activities

- Community Service - List any experiences and activities that you have participated in
- Sports - List sports teams that you have joined and positions
- Clubs/Organizations - List organizations that you have joined and positions held for each

Letters of Recommendation & Awards

- Awards/Certificates
- Character and Academic letters of recommendation

Journal

- Note College and career thoughts and ideas
- Note Mentoring experiences