



Gaston Early College HIGH SCHOOL

Frequently Asked Questions

1. What is Gaston Early College High School?

Gaston Early College High School is one of the eleven public high schools within Gaston County Schools. As an early college, students who attend GECHS have the opportunity to graduate with their high school diploma and a free Associates Degree from Gaston College.

2. Where is Gaston Early College High School located?

Gaston Early College is located on the campus of Gaston College in Dallas, NC. We are housed in the Lena Sue Beam building (near the Myers Center).

3. How is Gaston Early College High School different from other GCS choice high schools?

GECHS offers a small, family atmosphere, providing students with the tools necessary for college readiness, future careers, and beyond. Students are placed in small classes with a great student-to-teacher ratio. Small classes allow teachers to better meet the needs of their students. All teachers act as mentors for students, building relationships that allow students to feel safe and accepted at school. We also offer a wide range of opportunities for students to get involved and become part of the culture that GECHS embodies. On Fridays we volunteer, participate in enrichment activities, and our seniors are involved in job shadowing experiences.

4. Gaston Early College High School is considered a [Cooperative Innovative High School](#). What does that mean?

Gaston Early College High School and other innovative high schools in NC are small public high schools, usually located on the campus of a university or community college, which expand students' opportunities for educational success through high-quality instructional programming.

5. What Associate Degree choices will my child have?

Students may choose from an Associate of Arts, Associate of Science, or Associate of Engineering. Degree pathways are usually decided at the end of the students' sophomore year.



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- 6. How much money, on average, will I save if my child is selected to attend Gaston Early College High School?**

If your child is selected to attend GECHS, you can count on saving money! The average cost to attend a community college and receive an Associates Degree is \$3,570.00 plus fees and books. After graduating from a traditional high school and heading to a public state university, you would most likely pay up to \$10,000 a year.

- 7. When do Gaston Early College High School students begin taking college classes?**

GECHS students will take their first college class Fall semester of their Freshman year.

- 8. Who can apply to Gaston Early College High School?**

If you are a current 8th grader that resides in Gaston County, you can apply. GECHS only accepts applications from prospective students during their 8th grade year.

- 9. How are students chosen to attend Gaston Early College High School?**

Students are chosen in a lottery. Incoming 9th grade classes are made up of a certain percentage of students from each GCS high school (excluding Highland School of Technology). Scribbles Software, the company GCS uses for choice-school lotteries, will conduct the lottery and notify students of their initial acceptance into Gaston Early College High School.

- 10. What time does school begin and end at Gaston Early College High School?**

Students may enter the building beginning at 8:15am. Classes begin at 9:00am. School dismisses each day at 3:45pm.



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11. Gaston County Schools and Gaston College have different calendars. Which one will my child follow?

Gaston Early College High School creates its own school calendar based on GCS and Gaston College calendars. All GECHS students are required to follow the Gaston Early College High School calendar.

12. Can students ride the bus?

Yes, each morning, their home high school will pick them up and take them to their home high school where they will share a shuttle bus with students from Highland School of Technology. The shuttle bus will then bring all GECHS students to school (after dropping the HST students off first). In the afternoons, students will be picked up by a school bus and transported directly home.

Parents may opt to drop their students off at the home high school every morning to catch the shuttle bus. There are special provisions made for bus riders on days that GECHS is in session and other GCS schools are closed so that all bus-riding students will still have access to GCS transportation in order to get to and from GECHS.

13. What traditional, varsity sports does GECHS offer?

GECHS does not offer traditional, varsity sports. There is, however, an active Sports Club that students can participate in.

14. Can students play traditional, varsity sports at their home high school?

Students are not eligible to play traditional, varsity sports or participate in extracurricular activities at their home high school.



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15. How does my child qualify for the lottery?

An application must be completed and [submitted to Scribbles](#) by February 28, 2021. For the 2021 application year, students must:

- students must reside in Gaston County at the time of the lottery.*
- have scored a level 3 (or higher) in reading and a level 3 (or higher) in math on their 6th grade EOGs.*
- have a 7th grade overall "C" or 70 minimum average based upon 1st semester performance only*
- have good standing in conduct for 7th grade.*
- have good standing in attendance for 7th grade (medical exceptions are considered).*
- have 7th grade **AND** 8th grade iReady Diagnostic Assessments (Beginning of-Year **AND** Middle-of-Year Tests) in Reading and Math at a "Early Grade Level" or higher score.*

***Non-Gaston County Schools applicants must submit the following:*

- 7th grade final report card and 7th grade standardized test scores administered at the applicant's school.*
- 8th grade first semester report card and attendance records.*
- For acceptance into the lottery, applicants must also complete an 8th grade iReady Diagnostic Assessment (Middle-of-Year Tests) in Reading and Math and be proficient at a "Early Grade Level" or higher score (this assessment will be given at the Gaston County Schools [Office of Student Assignment](#))*

16. Once my child is initially accepted via the lottery, what must happen next in order for him/her to attend GECHS?

Students must meet these criteria to receive final acceptance or to remain on the waiting list:

- student and parent/legal guardian must maintain residency in Gaston County.*
- have scored a level 3 (or higher) on the 8th grade Math EOG or the 8th grade Math I EOC.*
- have scored a level 3 (or higher) on the 8th grade Reading EOG.*
- have an 8th grade overall "C" or 70 minimum average based upon 1st semester performance only.*
- have good standing in conduct for 8th grade.*



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-have good standing in attendance for 8th grade (medical exceptions are considered).

***Non-Gaston County Schools applicants must submit the 8th grade final report card **and** 8th grade standardized test scores administered at the applicant's school.*

- *Applicants should provide proof of nationally standardized achievement tests administered annually to assess grammar, reading, spelling, and mathematics.*
 - *If such standardized achievement test results are unavailable, applicants must make arrangements with the desired choice school to take a released NC EOG for reading and math assessment at the 8th grade level designed to assess the applicant's academic qualifications.*

17. Is there a cafeteria, or does my student have to bring his/her own lunch?

Hot lunches are brought over each day from Highland School of Technology by GECHS's dedicated cafeteria staff. The lunch menu is the same as all other GCS high schools. In addition, your student is welcome to bring a lunch if desired. Microwaves are available for use in the dining area.

18. If one of my children already attends Gaston Early College does that mean my other children will automatically get in if we apply?

GECHS does not have a sibling policy. Each child will need to qualify, submit an application, and be selected by the GECHS lottery.

19. If I apply to Gaston Early College does that mean I cannot apply for Highland or a different Choice Academy as well?

No, you can still apply to other choice schools.

20. Does my child have to go all 5 years or can they finish in 4?

There is presently an option of four year plans for the Associate of Arts or Associate of Science degree. If your child would like to do the Associate of Engineering that is only offered on a five year track.



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- 21. Does my child have to pursue an Associate Degree if they come to Gaston Early College or can they choose to just get a High School Diploma?**

The purpose of the early college program is to allow students the opportunity to gain an Associate Degree from Gaston College AND a High School Diploma from Gaston County Schools. Many of our classes are considered for dual credit (meaning that some college classes also work towards the students' credit hours for high school graduation). Students do not choose one or the other, they work towards both simultaneously.

- 22. Do you offer band, chorus, or clubs?**

We do not offer band or chorus like a traditional high school does. However, we do have a wide range of clubs to participate in. Our clubs are generated each year based on student interest. Currently we offer a Sports Club, Performing Arts, Fitness Club, Disney Imagineers Club, Student Government Association, Prom Club, Lorax Club, Singing Club, Coding Club, and Book Club.

- 23. Are all your students identified as AIG?**

Our students come from many diverse backgrounds. While we do have AIG identified students, we also have many students who are not AIG. A student does NOT need to be AIG in order to be successful at GECHS.