



Gaston Early College HIGH SCHOOL

Frequently Asked Questions

1. What is Gaston Early College High School?

Gaston Early College High School (GECHS) is one of the twelve 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 Gaston Early College High School, you can count on saving money! The average cost to attend a community college and receive an Associates Degree is \$5,056 plus fees and books. After graduating from a traditional high school and enrolling in a public North Carolina university, students would pay an average cost of up to \$9,000+ a year on tuition and fees alone.

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

GECHS students will take their first college class in the 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 and Gaston Early College of Medical Sciences). 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 8:15 a.m. Classes begin at 9:00 a.m. School dismisses each day at 3:45 p.m.



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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 (GECHS) creates its own school calendar based on the 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. GECHS partners with Highland School of Technology (HST) to manage our own fleet of GCS buses. Students needing bus transportation will be picked up from their home and dropped off at their home each day. Unique to GECHS and HST bus transportation is the fact that our drivers transport students to and from all feeder area schools, so bus transportation usually takes a bit longer in the mornings and afternoons than at the neighborhood schools that are only servicing one feeder area.

13. What traditional varsity sports does GECHS offer?

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

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

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

15. Are traditional GCS lunches served, or does my student have to bring his/her own lunch?

Hot lunches are brought over each day from GCS Nutrition Services 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 cafeteria area.



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16. How does my child qualify for the lottery?

An application must be completed and [submitted to Scribbles](#) by March 3, 2023. For the 2023 application year, students must:

- reside in Gaston County (along with their parent/legal guardian)
- have scored a level 3 or higher on the 7th grade Reading EOG assessment
- have scored a level 3 or higher on the 7th grade Math EOG assessment
- have a 7th grade overall “C” or 70 minimum average for final grades
- have an 8th grade overall “C” or 70 minimum average based upon first semester performance
- have good standing in conduct for the 7th grade
- have good standing in attendance for the 7th grade (medical exceptions are considered)
- ****Non-Gaston County Schools applicants must submit the following:**
 - 7th grade final report card
 - 7th grade standardized test scores administered at the applicant’s school
 - 7th grade attendance records
 - 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 Teacher Resource Center](#)).
 - Complete and return the [Discipline Information Request](#) to Gaston Early College High School prior to March 3, 2023.



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17. Once my child is initially accepted via the lottery, what must happen next in order for him/her to attend Gaston Early College High School?

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

- *maintain residency in Gaston County (along with their parent/legal guardian)*
- *have scored a level 3 or higher on the 8th grade Reading EOG*
- *have scored a level 3 or higher on the 8th grade Math EOG or the 8th grade Math I EOC*
- *have an 8th grade overall "C" or 70 minimum average for final grades*
- *have good standing in conduct for 8th grade*
- *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.*

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.



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19. If I apply to Gaston Early College does that mean I cannot apply for Highland School of Technology or a different [GCS Choice School/Academy](#) as well?

No, you can still apply to other choice schools while also applying to GECHS.

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

There is 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.

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

Students do not choose one or the other, they work towards both simultaneously.

*The purpose of the early college program is to allow students the opportunity to gain an Associates Degree from Gaston College **AND** a High School Diploma from Gaston Early College High School. Many of the college classes are considered dual credit classes (meaning that these college classes also work towards the students' credit hours for high school graduation).*

22. Does GECHS 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 Club, Fitness Club, Disney Imagineers' Club, Student Council, Prom Club, Coffee Shop Club, Adulting 101 Club, and Technology/Gaming 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.