



# THE GOVERNOR'S SCHOOL for SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY



## Prospective Student Pipeline Newsletter #9 *February 9, 2023*

The Prospective Student Pipeline is a virtual community for families who want to learn more about The Governor's School for Science and Technology (GSST). By subscribing to this newsletter, you'll get information about what's happening at GSST plus notifications of upcoming events for prospective students.

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### Director's Notes: Ms. Vikki Wismer

#### ***Reminder for 10th Graders: It's Time to Apply to Governor's School!***

The deadline to apply to Governor's School is February 28, so if you want to apply, don't delay. The application process shouldn't take more than a few minutes - our online application asks for some straightforward biographical information, plus the contact email

addresses for your current math and science teachers. Your school counselor and teachers do the rest. [Click here](#) to learn about the application process and apply.

### **Timeline for the Applications Process:**

*February 28:* Student online application forms due

*March 8:* Counselor forms and teacher recommendations due

*Mid-April:* Decision letters mailed to all applicants

*Late April:* Date for accepted applicants to accept or decline offer of admission

*Early May:* Virtual Open House for rising juniors who will be attending the school



### **GSST is More Than Advanced Courses**

If the mission of GSST could be boiled down to one sentence, it would be igniting a passion for STEM fields and providing students with the skills to succeed in them. Advanced courses and superlative faculty are two important pillars of this mission, but GSST is much more than that.

### **A Community of Learners:**

Our student body - drawn from nineteen high schools, constitutes one of the greatest strengths of our program. Collaboration is embedded in all our courses, enriching the classroom experience. Equally important, students often comment that they have "found their people" at GSST, and they routinely cite the social and academic interactions with their peers as one of the most rewarding aspects of their GSST experience.

### **Extracurricular Activities:**

- Scientific competitions: CNU Math contest; Coding competitions at VCU & UVA, Great Computer Challenge, and Code Quest Lockheed Martin; Science Bowl; Conrad Innovation Challenge in Aerospace & Aviation; SIMIODE Math Modeling Competition; Many science fairs
- STEM career interests: Girls Who Code, FIRST Robotics, Engineering Club, Py Club (Python Programming)
- Clubs centered on life at the school: Student Advisory Board, Yearbook

### **Guest Speakers:**

- Community and academic professionals, e.g. the Head of Computational Modeling and Data Analytics major at Virginia Tech
- GSST Alumnae in college/graduate school or engaged in STEM careers

### **Wrapping it Up: Why Attend Governor's School?**

- [Top Five Reasons to Attend Governor's School](#)
- [Video:](#) GSST Program Overview
- [School Profile:](#) Informational document about GSST sent to colleges with students' applications

## **College Planning Corner with Dr. Ellen Fithian**

### **Why Postponing College Planning Until**



## Junior Year Is a Mistake

For the average high school student, serious college planning doesn't begin until late in junior year. The family visits a few campuses over spring break and the student takes his first SAT in May or June. Then, in fall/winter of senior year the student submits an application to his favorite college and follows it up with a few more, finishing up sometime in January.

What's wrong with this scenario? Possibly nothing - for the average student who plans to apply to a small group of colleges, all of which have healthy acceptance rates. The application process is pretty straightforward and predictable for such students, but for a student aiming

for a top school, an honors program or merit scholarship, it's anything but; the timeline just described could result in a myriad of missed opportunities.

First, many colleges require students to submit their applications by mid-October or early November in order to be considered for honors programs and merit aid. Further, there's a lot to be said for applying either early decision or early action to at least one college. By applying early, you get your decision early (typically mid-December to mid-January), which can make for a pleasant senior winter.

Second, if a student is applying to colleges with low acceptance rates, it's a safe bet that the application will not consist of merely a transcript and test scores (for students who choose to submit them). To understand why that's the case, let's peek inside the admissions office at fictional Hallowed Halls University (HHU), an elite college with an acceptance rate of 20%. It's almost always the case at schools like this that far more than 20% of applicants are "qualified" - i.e. they meet or exceed the academic standards of the students already attending HHU. So how does the admissions office decide which of the "qualified applicants" to admit?

A common sense assumption might be that applicants' grades and test scores are fed into a formula that identifies the highest 20%, but such an assumption would generally be incorrect. It's not the goal of admission offices at such schools to reward the hardest working students, or even to assemble the brainiest class; their goal is typically to assemble a diverse, vibrant student body from among the qualified applicants. Colleges that are in the fortunate circumstance of having a surfeit of academic superstars often look to admit the students who will also spark debate in the classroom, enliven dinner conversations, play saxophone in the marching band, write offbeat poetry, quarterback the football team, and so on.

It would be difficult for colleges to predict which students are likely to fill those roles if the admissions office only had a student's transcript and test scores. That's why, as a general rule, the more competitive the college, the more information they'll want - things like a thorough summary of activities, teacher recommendations, and frequently multiple essays. Completing all of those application components takes a lot of time, which is the second reason why top students should have a working (if not final) college list by the end of junior year, so they can spend the summer working on applications and essays.

For the reasons described above, it's best if a top student is ready to begin submitting her first applications by mid-October/early November - which means that

families of high-achieving students 10th graders should start researching and visiting colleges now.

## Pathways Flight Academy: Learn to fly for free!

If you're interested in becoming a pilot or pursuing some other type of aviation career, It's hard to beat this opportunity, sponsored by a collaboration between Virginia Space Grant Consortium, Commonwealth of VA, Averett University, Rick Aviation, Aviation Adventures, and the Virginia Department of Aviation.

The goal of the program is to broaden the pipeline for commercial pilots, aviation technicians, and air traffic controllers. During the course of a twelve day residential program, students *"will undertake ground school and flight training that can culminate in their first solo flight at the end of the academy."*

**Who:** U.S. citizens and Virginia residents who are at least 16 years old, have a 3.0 or better GPA, and are capable of passing an FAA flight physical exam are eligible to apply.

**When:** June and July of 2023.

**Application Deadline: February 26th**

[Click here](#) for information.

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## Tell a Friend About the PSP! Everyone is Welcome!

If you know someone who might be interested in learning about The Governor's School, or who would benefit from any of the more general information provided here, please encourage him/her to subscribe by signing up on the **Prospective Student Pipeline** tab of our website.

**The Governor's School For Science & Technology**

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