

HOPE Longitudinal Study: Year 2 Results



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Executive Summary

The decision to attend college is a complex process that is affected by many converging factors. Family, friends, performance in high school, teachers, and school counselors all influence student expectations for attending college. The HOPE scholarship is just one of the many factors that play a role in student motivation to pursue higher education. HOPE may or may not directly affect expectations and actual school attendance, and whom HOPE affects and to what extent is not well understood.

The HOPE Longitudinal Study addresses these questions through two years of interviews with more than 500 middle and high school students and their parents from across the state. From their responses, the study has discovered important information about student expectations for higher education, their current educational experiences, the actions that they are taking to learn about postsecondary education, and their ability to pay for additional education, including:

- ◆ 89% of students anticipate four-year college attendance or education beyond that in their future;
- ◆ 81% of parents expect their children to attend a four-year college or to pursue education beyond that point;
- ◆ 21% of students have never talked to their parents about taking the SAT or ACT;
- ◆ 49% of students indicate that they will not be able to pursue higher education without financial aid or working;
- ◆ 33% of the students report that they have rarely or never discussed with their parents the family's ability to pay for education after high school;
- ◆ 93% of parents consider it important or *very important* that their children become eligible for HOPE; and
- ◆ 78% of students know the name of the HOPE Scholarship without prompting.

The study has also found several factors on which students differ significantly, based on their postsecondary educational expectations, including:

- ◆ students with expectations of attending a four-year college (or education beyond that point) are more likely to select the college prep track than students with lower educational expectations;
- ◆ relative to students with other postsecondary expectations, students with plans for four-year college have parents with significantly higher average frequencies of attending parent-teacher conferences, going to school events, and limiting activities on school nights;
- ◆ students with four-year college plans have more discussions with their parents, on average, about their grades, their educational plans after high school, and taking the SAT or ACT, than students with other educational expectations;
- ◆ compared to the other students, those with plans to attend college are more likely to have talked to their parents about financial aid information, have read information from their school, have read information from colleges, and have read information from the government; and
- ◆ student and parent knowledge of the HOPE program overall is significantly higher among those with expectations of four-year college than among students expecting to graduate from high school only or those expecting to attend a vocational or community college.

Background and Overview of Study

In 1993, the Georgia governor and General Assembly created the HOPE (Helping Outstanding Pupils Educationally) Scholarship program as an incentive for high school and college students to perform well in school. The scholarship provides tuition, fees, and a book allowance for Georgia students graduating from high school with a 3.0 grade point average (GPA), or "B" average, and attending a public technical institute, college, or university. HOPE recipients attending a private college or university within the state receive a scholarship of \$3,000 per year. Since its inception, the program has awarded approximately \$800 million in scholarships to Georgia students pursuing higher education in both public and private institutions.

While the HOPE program encourages both high school and college students to improve their academic performance, research has concentrated on the effects of the program on college performance. Research to date indicates that recipients of the HOPE Scholarship earn more credit hours and are more likely to stay in college than similar students who have not received the scholarship. The potential impact of the HOPE program on younger students has not been systematically investigated, however. The complexity of the decision to pursue higher education makes examining the potential impact of the HOPE program all the more difficult, but all the more necessary for discovering policy solutions that will encourage more students to pursue higher education in the future.

The Council for School Performance initiated the HOPE Longitudinal Study to examine the relationship between postsecondary expectations and the HOPE Scholarship. Using a probability sample of 13-, 14- and 15-year-old Georgia residents and their parents, Phase 1 of the study focused on measuring these individuals' knowledge of the HOPE program and on identifying what factors affect students' expectations of attending a 4-year college. In Phase 2, the study further examines the educational experiences of students, how those experiences differ among middle school (6th-8th grade) and high school (9th-12th grade) students, and the relationship between these experiences, their knowledge of the HOPE Scholarship, and their expectations for higher education.

Before examining the relationship between educational expectations and other factors, this report first provides general information about the participants in the study. The second part of the report describes student and parental educational expectations and how they differ between middle school and high school students. The third section of the report offers insight into parental involvement patterns, parent-student communication, and the steps that students are taking to explore the world of higher education. The fourth section of the report examines the ability to pay for higher education and student actions to learn about financial aid. The fifth section of the report presents the participants' knowledge of the HOPE Scholarship and how that knowledge has changed from Year 1 to Year 2 of the study. Finally, the last part of the report explores how the different factors concerning parents and students relate to student educational expectations.

Characteristics of the Study Participants

To examine the different aspects of educational experiences and their relationship to educational expectations, the HOPE Longitudinal Study surveys Georgia parents and their middle school and high school children about their current circumstances as well as their expectations for the future. The study began with a group of parents and their 13, 14, and 15-year-old children in Phase 1 and has followed 517 students and 555 parents for a second year in Phase 2.¹ The Phase 2 panel consists only of those parents and students who have participated in Year 1 and Year 2 of the study.

¹ The number of parents and students differs because some parents participated in the second year of the study, even if their children did not participate.

Therefore, all analysis in this report concerns only parents and students participating in both years.² Year 1 data on the Phase 2 panel are compared with information gathered from the same individuals in Year 2, to measure any changes over time.

Demographic Characteristics

Table 1 presents the general demographic characteristics of the Phase 2 participants. The majority of the parents participating are female, married, and, on average, have attended community college. The students are more evenly divided between males and females, and most of the student participants are concentrated in 8th, 9th, and 10th grades in this phase of the study.

Table 1. Demographic Characteristics for Phase 2 Panel

Parent Characteristics	
Female	81.2%
White	69.0%
African-American	28.0%
Household Income (average)	\$46,400
Highest Educational Achievement of Parents (average)	~ Attended Community College
Age (average)	42.4
Parents Who Are Married	75.0%
Families Who Own Their Home	81.3%
Length of Time in Home in Years (average)	13.31
Number of Children in Household (average)	2.34

Student Characteristics	
Female	57.6%
White	67.9%
African-American	27.3%
Age (average)	15.4
Grade Level of Student (average)	9.17
Distribution by Grade	
6th grade	.2%
7th grade	3.7%
8th grade	23.9%
9th grade	33.2%
10th grade	28.2%
11th grade	9.3%
12th grade	.8%

Academic Information

Table 2 presents the general academic characteristics of the Phase 2 participants. The majority of the students participating have B-level grade point averages (GPAs), have selected or plan to select the college prep track, and are taking or have taken algebra.³ In general, the students participating in the study appear to be on the appropriate path for pursuing postsecondary education at this stage in their educational careers.

² Table I in the "Participants" section of the Appendix offers more information on how the participants in Phase 1 compare to those in Phase 2.

³ In Georgia, high school students may opt for one of two tracks for their course selection: college prep or career/ technical (previously called vocational). For this study, students not yet in high school are asked in which course track they plan to take courses.

Table 2. Academic Characteristics of Students

Student Characteristics		
	Phase 2 Panel	
Age (average)	15.4	
Grade Level of Student (average)	9.17	
	Middle School Students	High School Students
Grade Point Average (GPA) (average)	3.19	3.13
Course Track Selection		
College Prep	86.7%	85.8%
Career/Technical/ Vocational	13.3%	14.2%
Have Completed or Are Taking Algebra	68.1%	91.1%

Students are categorized into middle or high school students according to their grade level in Year 2 of the study. For example, a student in 9th grade in Year 2 would be included in the "high school students" group here.

Expectations for Postsecondary Education

In addition to displaying some of the academic characteristics that are important to the pursuit of higher education, the students also express educational expectations toward that end. Student expectations for education after high school are measured through the question, "How far in school do you expect to go?" Expectations are grouped along a ten-point scale, where 1 represents *not finishing high school*, and 10 represents *completing an advanced degree*, such as a Ph.D. or professional degree. Parental expectations for the students are measured according to the same scale, as are the student perceptions of their parents' expectations.

To compare student and parent expectations, the groups are divided into 3 categories: (a) not finishing high school or graduating from high school; (b) attending or graduating from vocational or community college (usually a two-year program); and (c) attending or graduating from a four-year college, or completing a graduate program. As Table 3 depicts, the vast majority of both students and parents fall into the third category and anticipate attendance at a four-year college or education beyond that (7 or higher on the 10-point scale). Although the proportion of students with these expectations is consistently higher than that of parents, the differences are slight. The small gap between parental expectations and student perceptions of parental expectations suggests that students perceive that their parents expect more of their children than the parents actually do. From Year 1 to Year 2, parental expectations drop slightly for parents overall; these changes are significant.⁴ From Year 1 to Year 2, the small change in student expectations and in student perceptions of parental expectations is not statistically significant.

In Year 2, the differences between the expectations of middle school and high school students are not significant, except for the small difference between the groups regarding student perceptions of parental expectations. Middle school students perceive parental expectations to be slightly higher than do high school students. From Year 1 to Year 2, student expectations for middle school and high school students are increasing while those of their parents are decreasing.

While some parents and students envision the students obtaining even higher levels of education after high school, the largest percentage expect graduation from a 4-year college or university (8 on the 10-point scale) to be the end result of the students' educational experiences. While changes from Year 1 to Year 2 are slight, student expectations and parental expectations appear to be heading in opposite directions, as student expectations increase slightly (though not significantly) and their parents' expectations decline.

⁴ Statistically significant differences are noted.

Table 3. Phase 2 Panel Expectations for Postsecondary Education in Year 1 and Year 2

	Educational Expectations Group					
	High School Graduate or Not Finishing High School		Attending or Graduating from Community College or Technical School		Attending or Graduating from Four-Year College or Graduate School	
	Year 1	Year 2	Year 1	Year 2	Year 1	Year 2
Student expectations for themselves						
Total	4.7%	3.5%	7.8%	7.8%	87.4%	88.6%
Middle school students	5.7%	5.5%	7.8%	4.8%	86.5%	89.7%
High school students	4.3%	2.8%	7.8%	9.0%	87.8%	88.2%
Parental expectations for their children**						
Total	7.7%	11.8%	8.3%	7.0%	84.0%	81.2%
Middle school students*	9.3%	14.7%	5.3%	4.8%	85.5%	80.5%
High school students*	7.0%	10.6%	9.5%	7.9%	83.5%	81.5%
Student perceptions of their parents' expectations						
Total	6.8%	4.6%	5.3%	7.2%	88.0%	88.2%
Middle school students	5.0%	2.3%	4.5%	7.8%	90.5%	89.8%
High school students	7.4%	5.5%	5.6%	7.0%	87.0%	87.6%

Students are categorized into middle or high school students according to their grade level in Year 2 of the study. For example, a student in 9th grade in Year 2 would be included in the "high school students" group here.

*** denotes that the change from Year 1 to Year 2 is significant at the .05 level.*

** denotes that the change from Year 1 to Year 2 is significant at the .10 level.*

Parent and Student Actions Concerning School and Higher Education

While parent and student expectations overwhelmingly lean toward some form of higher education and particularly toward attendance at four-year colleges--both parents and students have additional steps to take along the pathway to enrollment and attendance at a higher education institution. Actions taken in middle school and high school can affect the ultimate decision to pursue higher education, so the HOPE Longitudinal Study has examined levels of parental involvement, student communication with parents, and student pursuit of information about higher education.

Parental Involvement in School Activities

The majority of parents participating in the survey report regularly involving themselves in their children’s school activities, although they are more likely to supervise children’s school activities from home than to contact teachers directly.⁵ In both years of the study, checking on children’s homework and attending school events are the most frequently cited involvement activities, with more than 80% of parents regularly or occasionally performing these actions. Other frequently cited ways of demonstrating involvement include helping with homework and limiting children’s privileges because of grades. Talking to teachers on the telephone and visiting their children’s classes are cited less often relative to other activities, although two-thirds of parents report regularly taking these actions. From Year 1 to Year 2, parental involvement has grown slightly in terms of restricting student

⁵ Information is based on parents' responses to a series of questions about the frequency of performing certain activities, such as checking their children's homework and talking to their children's teachers. Answers range on a scale from *regularly* to *not at all*. Students were questioned about these activities as well; students' answers generally mirrored those of their parents, although the percentages of parents reporting involvement were slightly higher for most of the variables.

activities. The proportion of parents reporting that they regularly or occasionally limit their children's activities on school night has risen from 75% to 88%.⁶

In addition to direct contact with teachers, parents also demonstrate involvement with school activities through participation in parent-teacher organizations. Parents are asked about participation in these organizations on a yes-or-no scale. About half of the parents participating in the survey report volunteering at school, belonging to a parent-teacher organization, and participating in organization activities—other than meetings. Parental involvement has remained fairly constant in these areas from Year 1 to Year 2, with the exception of a significant jump in the percentage of parents participating in parent-teacher organization activities—other than meetings. This proportion has increased from 52% to 57%.

Overall, the parents of middle school students appear to involve themselves with their children's school activities more frequently than the parents of high school kids.⁷ Middle school parents are more likely to attend conferences with teachers, speak to teachers on the telephone, and limit privileges because of grades. High school parents are more likely to limit children's activities on school nights, however. From Year 1 to Year 2, the proportion of middle school parents that limit privileges because of grades has grown from 67% to 81%, while the proportion of high school parents that limit activities on school nights has increased from 75% to 90%. The levels of involvement in parent-teacher organizations do not differ significantly between middle school and high school parents. Among high school parents, participation in parent-teacher organizations has increased significantly. From Year 1 to Year 2, the percentage of high school parents reporting participation in organization activities—other than meetings—has grown from 50% to 57%.

Overall, these survey data on parental involvement reveal that the majority of the parents participating in the survey are fairly involved with their children's school activities, although the level of involvement differs depending on the activity. Parents of middle school children appear to have more direct contact with their children's teachers than parents of high school students, while the restrictions used by both groups of parents have increased from Year 1 to Year 2. High school parents have increased their participation in parent-teacher organizations as well.

Student Communication with Parents about School

The majority of students report that they regularly or occasionally discuss school-related topics with their parents. Overall, students say that they discuss grades and school activities with their parents most frequently, but are less likely to talk about taking the SAT or ACT.⁸ More than half of the students also report that they regularly or occasionally talk to their parents about what they learn in school, their educational plans after high school, and their preferred careers. Furthermore, the percentages of students saying that they talk to their parents about these topics has increased significantly from Year 1 to Year 2 of this study. Discussions concerning the SAT or ACT—the topic least frequently discussed—have also increased; the percentage of students talking to parents regularly or occasionally about this topic has grown from 48% in Year 1 to 67% in Year 2. The proportion of students who have never talked with their parents about taking the SAT or ACT has decreased from 26% to 21%.

When students are divided into middle school and high school groupings, their communication patterns do not differ significantly over the two years of the study. Some of the differences that

⁶ Only statistically significant differences are reported.

⁷ Only statistically significant differences between the percentages of parents of middle schoolers and high schoolers are reported here.

⁸ This information is reported from the student perspective and is measured according to a scale ranging from *regularly* to *not at all*.

appeared in Year 1—middle school students discussed grades and school activities with their parents in higher frequencies than high school students did—are no longer statistically significant in Year 2. The majority of both groups report regular or occasional discussions with their parents about the aforementioned school-related topics, including grades, school activities, educational plans, and career inclinations. As with the students overall, smaller proportions of the middle school and high school students talk to their parents about taking the SAT or ACT than about the other topics.

The percentage of high school students talking about all of these school-related topics has increased significantly from Year 1 to Year 2 of the study. In Year 1, less than half of the high school students said that they talk to their parents regularly or occasionally about taking the SAT or ACT, but that percentage has jumped to 72% in Year 2. Middle school student discussions have not increased in all of the topic areas, but the percentage of middle schoolers talking about educational plans and career aspirations has grown significantly from Year 1 to Year 2.

This information shows that students regularly discuss school-related topics with their parents, especially their grades. While a smaller percentage of students talk about taking the SAT or ACT than other topics, a majority still report regularly or occasionally discussing this topic in Year 2. Among high school students, discussions with parents on school-related topics have increased from Year 1 to Year 2 of the study, as most of these students have moved from eighth and ninth grade into ninth and tenth grade.

Student Pursuit of Information on Higher Education

In addition to discussing school-related activities with their parents, students can talk to any number of individuals to learn more about colleges, vocational or technical schools, or community colleges. The survey data reveal that students are seeking information and want to learn about higher education.⁹ The most popular sources of information for learning more about postsecondary institutions are students' parents and their friends. Of the students surveyed, 86% say that they have talked with their parents and 76% have spoken with friends to learn more about institutions of higher education. Also 69% of the students say that they have read information from their schools, 57% have discussed education beyond high school with their teachers, and 44% have talked to guidance counselors.

Not surprisingly, high school students are much more likely than middle school students to have sought this information from multiple sources, and especially from their schools, from higher education institutions, and from the government. Almost three-fourths of high school students (71%) report reading information about postsecondary education from their schools, compared to 63% of middle schoolers.¹⁰ A majority (65%) of high schoolers have read information from higher education institutions, and 28% have read information from the government; in contrast, 44% of middle school students have sought information from higher education institutions and only 17% have read government materials on postsecondary institutions.

The process of seeking information about higher education represents an important part of learning about the necessary steps for attending a postsecondary institution, but the sources of information also matter. Naturally, the most common sources of information are those most familiar to students—parents and friends—but more students might benefit from talking to their guidance counselors and reading information from colleges at an earlier age. While some of the 88% of students expecting to attend a four-year college have already acquired the information necessary to achieve that goal, others might benefit from more structured guidance along the way.

⁹ Students were surveyed about their efforts to learn about higher education in Year 2 only.

¹⁰ All differences are statistically significant.

Preparing to Pay for Postsecondary Education

Expectations alone will not result in matriculation at a postsecondary institution. Other important steps must be taken--not the least of which involves financing. Determining how to finance higher education often occurs belatedly, however. Data collected in the HOPE Longitudinal survey reveals that students and parents in Georgia—the majority of whom appear to have high educational aspirations—may not be prepared to pay for higher education. In Year 2 of the study, about one-third of the students report that they have rarely or never discussed with their parents the family's ability to pay for education after high school.

The need for discussing educational financing is paramount, however, in preventing affordability from becoming an obstacle to higher education. In Year 2 of the study, 51% of the students indicate that they will not be able to pursue postsecondary education without financial aid and/ or working. At the same time, 72% of the parents believe that their children will have to work or will require financial aid to pay for education after high school. This differential between parent and student perceptions of affordability implies not only the need for increased communication between parents and students on this topic, but also that both parents and students need more information. Parents might be overestimating the cost of college, while students might be overestimating their parents' ability to help them with expenses.¹¹

Despite the need for increased communication within families, students have shown some initiative by seeking information about financial aid from different sources. While about one-third of the students report that they have never discussed with their parents the family's ability to pay for education after high school, more than 70% of the students say that they have talked to their parents to learn more about financial aid for education. Because these survey items are asked using different scales—one based on frequency of discussions, and the other based on yes-or-no answers—the answer might lie somewhere between the two. Students might also perceive talking about the family's ability to pay and financial aid as two distinct topics.

In addition to talking to their parents about financial aid, students have talked to teachers and guidance counselors, read information from their schools, and read information from higher education institutions. The percentages of students seeking information about financial aid has increased significantly in some of these "source" areas from Year 1 to Year 2. The proportions using financial aid information from their schools has jumped from 24% in Year 1 to 56% in Year 2. Similarly, the percentages of students utilizing guidance counselors, higher education institutions, the government, and institutional representatives have also grown.

High school students are more likely to seek information about financial aid from all of the sources except for parents, and appear to rely on written information more than middle school students.¹² In Year 2, 58% of high school students report reading information from their school about financial aid, compared to 49% of middle school students. Similarly, 47% of high school students have read information from colleges on financial aid, while only 33% of middle school students have done so. From Year 1 to Year 2 of the study, the percentage of students seeking financial aid information has increased significantly among both middle school and high school students, although high school students investigate all of the information sources with more frequency than middle school students.

In summary, the vast majority of students and parents expect college attendance in the future, and many of the students are taking actions to make that dream reality. Students' efforts to learn about colleges and to seek information about financial aid suggest that they are serious about their

¹¹ From Year 1 to Year 2, the perception of affordability did not change significantly for parents or for students, and did not differ significantly between middle school and high school parents and students in either year.

¹² All differences are statistically significant.

educational expectations. Parent and student discussions often include school-related topics, such as future education, but do not frequently center around the concrete means for pursuing higher education—such as entrance exams and affordability. A large gap still exists, however, between the percentage of students taking these actions—learning about postsecondary education and talking to their parents about paying for higher education—and the 88% of students expecting to attend a four-year college or pursue further education beyond that point. Talking about these issues with their parents does not guarantee that the students will complete all the necessary steps for higher education, but learning about parent-student discussions sheds light on how students obtain information about seeking education beyond the high school level. Increased communication about the family's ability to pay for college and additional contact with formal sources of information might decrease this gap somewhat and propel more students along the path to education beyond high school.

Knowledge of the HOPE Scholarship

As the survey data have shown, the percentages of students and parents anticipating higher education far exceed the proportion of students and parents that communicate about postsecondary education and how they will pay for it. Financial assistance programs—including both needs-based and merit-based aid—can compensate for gaps in financial planning, but only if students and parents have knowledge of those programs and meet their qualifications. One of the main purposes of the HOPE Scholarship program includes rewarding Georgia parents and students for their high educational expectations with this much-needed financial assistance. The HOPE Longitudinal survey examines the extent of student and parental knowledge of the HOPE program.

While these students have a few years before high school graduation and postsecondary education, learning about the benefits and requirements of the HOPE program *now* might affect their ultimate educational destination. To investigate the extent of knowledge of the HOPE program, parents and students are asked a series of questions about the HOPE Scholarship, including the name of the program, the requirements for receiving HOPE, and the benefits it provides. Interviewers asked respondents to provide this information without prompting.

As Table 4 shows, from Year 1 to Year 2, knowledge about the HOPE Scholarship program has increased in several areas among Phase 2 parents and students. The majority of parents and students know the name of the scholarship, and that percentage has grown significantly for both groups. In both years, the most frequently cited requirements for the scholarship continue to be that students must reside in Georgia and that students must earn a 3.0 GPA in their college prep track courses in high school. The best known benefit of the program is that the scholarship covers the cost of tuition. Knowledge in these three areas has increased significantly from Year 1 to Year 2.¹³

Parents in both years of the study have demonstrated more knowledge than students; presumably this gap occurs because parents have greater awareness of both public policy programs and of potential financial assistance for college. In fact, 86% of parents consider it important or very important for their child to be eligible for the HOPE Scholarship. The largest discrepancy between parents' knowledge and that of their children occurs in the "college tuition" area, with more than 60% of parents able to list this as a benefit of HOPE, compared to slightly more than 40% of the students. Another large difference between parents and students appeared in the "Georgia residency" category, suggesting perhaps that parents more easily realize the significance of residency as a requirement for receiving the HOPE Scholarship. Since the majority of the student respondents have not yet entered the final two years of high school, their knowledge of the financial aspects of a college education remains more limited than that of their parents.

¹³ These changes are statistically significant.

Table 4. Knowledge of the HOPE Program

Georgia offers a scholarship program for students who want to continue their education after high school. Do you know the name of this scholarship program?

Correct response	Parent Phase 2 Panel		Student Phase 2 Panel	
	Year 1	Year 2	Year 1	Year 2
Total	73.2%	86.4%	61.9%	77.9%
Middle school students	66.9%	79.2%	45.8%	63.2%
High school students	75.6%	89.2%	68.0%	83.6%

Can you name [any of] the requirements for qualifying for Georgia's HOPE Scholarship program?

Georgia residency	Parent Phase 2 Panel		Student Phase 2 Panel	
	Year 1	Year 2	Year 1	Year 2
Total	25.4%	40.5%	17.4%	25.0%
Middle school students	23.7%	40.0%	10.2%	25.1%
High school students	26.1%	40.7%	20.1%	24.9%
3.0 GPA for college track courses				
Total	62.7%	69.3%	50.1%	62.7%
Middle school students	57.8%	68.3%	36.4%	50.3%
High school students	64.5%	69.6%	55.4%	67.4%
3.2 GPA for other track courses				
Total	17.7%	4.2%	18.9%	4.9%
Middle school students	16.8%	1.3%	15.8%	3.3%
High school students	18.0%	5.3%	20.2%	5.5%
Enroll in postsecondary institution				
Total	10.4%	12.5%	9.8%	7.0%
Middle school students	9.1%	13.1%	4.6%	5.1%
High school students	10.9%	12.2%	11.7%	7.7%
Maintain 3.0 GPA while in college, university, or technical institute				
Total	23.7%	18.7%	18.9%	11.7%
Middle school students	20.8%	18.1%	12.9%	10.6%
High school students	24.9%	18.9%	21.1%	12.2%

Can you name [any of] the expenses covered by Georgia's HOPE Scholarship program?

Tuition	Parent Phase 2 Panel		Student Phase 2 Panel	
	Year 1	Year 2	Year 1	Year 2
Total	60.8%	64.6%	41.5%	43.0%
Middle school students	51.8%	59.5%	30.4%	34.1%
High school students	64.3%	66.5%	45.8%	46.4%
Required Fees				
Total	16.6%	15.0%	14.1%	11.9%
Middle school students	11.5%	16.5%	9.2%	11.0%
High school students	18.5%	14.4%	16.0%	12.2%
Book Allowance				
Total	51.5%	50.3%	35.0%	32.1%
Middle school students	44.8%	40.4%	22.2%	22.9%
High school students	54.1%	54.1%	39.9%	35.6%

Percentages reflect the proportions of the Phase 2 panel in both Year 1 and Year 2. The Phase 2 panel consists only of students and parents that participated in both years of the study.

While knowledge of the HOPE program in three areas—Georgia residency, 3.0 GPA, and tuition benefit—has increased from Year 1 to Year 2, the percentages of respondents supplying correct answers decreased for the other requirements and benefits, indicating that knowledge may fluctuate from year to year.¹⁴ For example, the proportion of respondents citing the 3.2 GPA in non-college track courses as a requirement for the scholarship dropped substantially from Year 1 to Year 2. This change in knowledge recall might have resulted in ongoing changes to the HOPE program requirements in conjunction with course track requirements in the Georgia educational system. Apparently, some of the students and parents who recalled more specific program requirements or benefits in Year 1 simply could not recall those details in Year 2.

High school students demonstrate significantly higher levels of HOPE knowledge than middle schoolers. From Year 1 to Year 2, the changes in knowledge for high school and middle school students reflect those of students overall. Both groups of students have increased their knowledge of the program's name, the residency requirement and the 3.0 requirement. These positive changes in knowledge occur among both sets of parents as well.

Relationship between Other Factors and Educational Expectations

Having examined different factors about parents and students in the study--their expectations for education after high school, their current circumstances, how they plan to pay for higher education, and their knowledge of the HOPE Scholarship--this part of the report investigates the relationship between these factors and educational expectations. While no causal relationship can be established between expectations and these different factors, clear differences occur between students when grouped according to educational expectations.

Student Expectations of Going to College--Phase 1 Analysis

In the analysis from Phase 1 of the study, expectations were split into two categories: (a) not going to a four-year college (1-6 on the 10-point scale) and (b) going to a four-year college (7-10 on the 10-point scale). A logistic regression model calculated the probability that a student would expect to attend college and what factors would most affect this probability.¹⁵ That analysis revealed that the students' academic circumstances and the students' parents are the most significant influences on student expectations for attending a four-year college.

Parents affect student expectations both indirectly—through the parents' own educational experience—and directly—through the parents' expectations for their children and through discussions about the future. Parents with higher levels of education are more likely to have children who expect to go to college. Similarly, the higher the level of parental expectations and the more the students perceived that they discuss the future with their parents, the higher the probability that the students would have expectations of going to college.

Student scholastic characteristics also influence college expectations significantly. Two of the most important factors that determine acceptance to a 4-year college—academic achievement and course selection—affect expectations positively. Students with a higher GPA and students selecting "college track" courses are more likely to foresee college attendance in their future.¹⁶ Personal characteristics of students, such as their sex or race, did not impact the likelihood that they would expect to attend

¹⁴ In almost all cases, these declines were statistically significant.

¹⁵ Using this model, the marginal means were estimated; the marginal means indicate the percentage change in the probability of going to a four-year college for every one-unit change in the explanatory variable.

¹⁶ In Georgia, high school students may opt for one of two tracks for their course selection: college prep or career/ technical (previously called vocational). For this study, students not yet in high school are asked in which course track they plan to take courses.

college. The indirect influence of these characteristics on students' academic achievement and course selection should not be discounted, however.

According to the analysis from Phase 1, the variables related to knowledge of the HOPE Scholarship and to other aspects of the program do not appear to affect student expectations for attending college directly. Continuing to examine the relationship between the variety of factors and educational expectations sheds more light on this relationship, however.

Student Expectations and Other Factors--Phase 2 Analysis

In Phase 2, the study examines the differences between student experiences and circumstances, depending on educational expectations. This analysis divides educational expectations into 3 categories: (a) not finishing high school or graduating from high school; (b) attending or graduating from vocational or community college (a two-year program); and (c) attending or graduating from a four-year college, or completing a graduate program. Using ANOVA, the study identifies the significant variables on which the three educational expectation groups differ.¹⁷ This analysis utilizes *variables* from both years of the study but includes *data* only for those parents and students participating in the study in both years.

Academic Characteristics

In both Year 1 and Year 2, students with expectations of attending a four-year college are more likely to select or plan to select the college prep track than students in the two other expectations groupings. Students with college expectations have higher GPAs and are more likely to have completed or be taking Algebra than the other students. Table 5 reveals the differences between the three groups with regard to these academic characteristics.

Table 5. How Expectations Groups Differ Regarding Academic Characteristics All Students

	Educational Expectations Group		
	HS Graduate or Not Finishing High School	Attending or Graduating from Community College or Technical School	Attending or Graduating from Four-Year College or Graduate School
Track, Year 1***	.72	.50	.95
Track, Year 2***	.47	.31	.92
GPA, Year 2***	2.65	2.83	3.19
Taking or Have Taken Algebra, Year 1***	.44	.67	.77

Averages are presented for each group, based on a bivariate scale, where 1 indicates "yes" and 0 indicates "no." GPAs are based on a calculated average according to a four-point scale.

**** denotes that the change from Year 1 to Year 2 is significant at the .01 level*

*** denotes that the change from Year 1 to Year 2 is significant at the .05 level.*

** denotes that the change from Year 1 to Year 2 is significant at the .10 level.*

Parental Involvement and Student-Parent Communication

Significant differences exist in the levels of parental involvement and communication between students with educational expectations at the high school, vocational/ community college, and four-year college levels. Relative to the two other expectations groups, students with plans for four-year college have parents with higher average frequencies of attending parent-teacher conferences, going

¹⁷ Thus, while the evidence from Phase 1 reveals which factors increase the probability of student expectations falling into one of two categories--attending or not attending a four-year college--the analysis in Phase 2 instead shows what factors differ significantly according to student expectations (as measured in year 2) in three groups.

to school events, and limiting activities on school nights. Similarly, students with expectations of attending a four-year college have parents who belong to parent-teacher organizations, attend their meetings, and participate in their activities more frequently, on average, than the parents of students with expectations of high school or vocational/ community college programs. Students with plans for vocational or community college have parents who are more likely to check their children's homework more frequently than parents of the other two groups.

Higher average levels of parent-student communication appear related to educational expectations as well. Students with four-year college plans have more discussions with their parents, on average, about their grades, their educational plans after high school, and taking the SAT or ACT, than the other two groups of students. Table 6 summarizes the differences in parental involvement and student-parents communication, based on educational expectations.

Table 6. How Expectations Groups Differ Regarding Parental Involvement and Student-Parent Communication All Grade Levels

	Educational Expectations Group		
	High School Graduate or Not Finishing High School	Attending or Graduating from Community College or Technical School	Attending or Graduating from Four-Year College or Graduate School
Parental Factors			
Check Student's Homework, Year 2**	3.42	3.84	3.69
Attend School Events, Year 2***	2.57	2.99	3.39
Attend Parent-Teacher Conferences, Year 1**	2.87	2.61	3.04
Limit Activities on School Nights, Year 2**	3.46	3.40	3.59
Belong to Parent-Teacher Organizations PTO, Year 1***	.35	.34	.57
Attend PTO Meetings, Year 1**	.42	.58	.68
Participate in PTO Activities, Year 1*	.35	.41	.53
Student Factors			
Talk to Parents about Grades, Year 2**	3.28	3.39	3.57
Talk to Parents about Educational Plans after High School, Year 2**	3.14	3.19	3.42
Talk to Parents about Taking the SAT or ACT, Year 2***	2.13	2.49	2.85

Averages are presented for each group. For the first set of parental involvement factors and for the student communication factors, averages are based on a four-point scale measuring the frequency of performing each activity. For the PTO factors, averages are based on a bivariate scale, where 1 indicates "yes" and 0 indicates "no."

**** denotes that the change from Year 1 to Year 2 is significant at the .01 level*

*** denotes that the change from Year 1 to Year 2 is significant at the .05 level.*

** denotes that the change from Year 1 to Year 2 is significant at the .10 level.*

Paying for Higher Education

The three groups of students do not differ significantly according to their perception or their parents' perception of the family's ability to pay for college. They do seek information about financial aid differently, however. Compared to the other students, those with plans to attend college are more likely to have talked to their parents about financial aid information, read information from their school, read information from colleges, and read information from the government. In Year 1 of the study, students with plans to attend community college or vocational school were more likely to talk to a teacher about financial aid. In Year 2, however, those differences have changed, and the four-year college group is more likely to have talked to a teacher about financial aid. Table 7 summarizes these differences.

Table 7. How Expectations Groups Differ Regarding Paying for Higher Education All Students

	Educational Expectations Group		
	High School Graduate or Not Finishing High School	Attending or Graduating from Community College or Technical School	Attending or Graduating from Four-Year College or Graduate School
Talk to Parents about Financial Aid, Year 2***	.53	.51	.75
Read Information on Financial Aid from School, Year 2**	.38	.45	.58
Read Information on Financial Aid from the Government, Year 2*	.15	.09	.21
Talk to Friends about Financial Aid, Year 2*	.52	.43	.59
Talk to a College Representative, Yr. 1*	.00	.16	.08

Averages are presented for each group, based on a bivariate scale, where 1 indicates "yes" and 0 indicates "no."

**** denotes that the change from Year 1 to Year 2 is significant at the .01 level*

*** denotes that the change from Year 1 to Year 2 is significant at the .05 level.*

** denotes that the change from Year 1 to Year 2 is significant at the .10 level.*

Knowledge of the HOPE Scholarship

Although no causal relationship can be established between educational expectations and the HOPE Scholarship, there are significant differences in the levels of knowledge of the program, depending on student expectations for education after high school. In both Year 1 and Year 2, student and parent knowledge of the HOPE program overall is higher among those with expectations of four-year college than for the other two student groups. Not surprisingly, student knowledge of HOPE requirements and benefits—including the Georgia residency requirement, the 3.0 GPA requirement, and the tuition benefit—is higher among the students with college expectations as well. Table 8 displays the differences in the average levels of knowledge of the HOPE Scholarship program, depending on educational expectations.

**Table 8. How Expectations Groups Differ Regarding Knowledge of the HOPE Scholarship
All Grade Levels**

	Educational Expectations Group		
	High School Graduate or Not Finishing High School	Attending or Graduating from Community College or Technical School	Attending or Graduating from Four-Year College or Graduate School
Parent Total Knowledge of HOPE Program, Year 1***	1.60	1.94	2.81
Parent Total Knowledge of HOPE Program, Year 2***	1.32	2.26	2.86
Student Total Knowledge of HOPE Program, Year 1***	.81	1.19	2.17
Student Total Knowledge of HOPE Program, Year 2***	1.22	.84	2.12
Student Knowledge of Georgia Residency Requirement, Year 2***	.09	.03	.28
Student Knowledge of 3.0 GPA Requirement, Yr. 2***	.34	.33	.67
Student Knowledge of Tuition Benefit, Year 2***	.30	.17	.46

Averages for Total Knowledge are based on an eight-point scale, summarizing the requirements and benefits of the HOPE program. Averages for the requirements and benefit are based on a bivariate scale, where 1 indicates knowledge of the correct answer.

**** denotes that the change from Year 1 to Year 2 is significant at the .01 level*

*** denotes that the change from Year 1 to Year 2 is significant at the .05 level.*

** denotes that the change from Year 1 to Year 2 is significant at the .10 level.*

While evidence of a significant relationship between the HOPE Scholarship and educational expectations by no means proves that more knowledge of the HOPE Scholarship causes higher educational expectations, this information does show that the difference in these levels of knowledge are not random. For a variety of reasons, students planning on attending a four-year institution know significantly more about the HOPE Scholarship. Thus, targeting HOPE Scholarship information toward students whose educational plans include vocational school and community college would not only alert those students to the benefits of HOPE that include these educational institutions, but might also open their eyes to the possibility of additional educational opportunities.

Appendix

Study Participants

When the Council began the study, a readily available database of students was not easily accessible, so the survey lab at the Applied Research Center contacted over 44,000 households throughout the state by telephone in order to locate and obtain the consent of 804 students and their parents to participate in Phase 1 of the study. For Phase 2, every reasonable attempt was made to contact these individuals again. Because some households had re-located and others refused to continue in the study, a reduced number—517 students and 555 parents of the original 804—were surveyed again. Table 5 in the text presents the general characteristics of the survey panel from Phase 2. Table I displays the characteristics of both panels participating in the study.

Table I. Characteristics Summary for HOPE Longitudinal Study Panel

	Parent	
	Phase 1 Panel	Phase 2 Panel
Female	79.6%	81.2%
White	66.0%	69.0%
African-American	30.3%	28.0%
Household Income (average)	\$43,500	\$46,400
Highest Educational Achievement of Parents (avg.)	~ Attended Community College	~ Attended Community College
Age (average)	41.5	42.4
Parents Who Are Married	72.4%	75.0%
Families Who Own Their Home	77.1%	81.3%
Length of Time in Home in Years (avg.)	13.26	13.31
Number of Children in Household (avg.)	2.35	2.34

	Student	
	Phase 1 Panel	Phase 2 Panel
Female	53.4%	57.6%
White	63.2%	67.9%
African-American	29.5%	27.3%
Age (average)	14.5	15.4
Grade Level of Student (average)	8.43	9.17
Distribution by Grade		
6th grade	1.9%	.2%
7th grade	18.3%	3.7%
8th grade	31.5%	23.9%
9th grade	33.0%	33.2%
10th grade	14.1%	28.2%
11th grade	1.1%	9.3%
12th grade		.8%

Percentages reflect the proportions of the entire survey panel for each year.

Weighting Methodology

From Phase 1 to Phase 2 of the HOPE Longitudinal Study, a large number of parents and students could not be located or refused to participate in the second year. Since attrition from the study did not occur randomly, parents and students with some characteristics were more likely to participate in the Phase 2 panel than others. To compensate for this attrition, the probability that any single individual would remain in the study was calculated. The inverse of this probability was used to weight every participant in Phase 2. Therefore, individuals with characteristics that were less likely to remain in the study received a high weighting, while those with characteristics that were more likely to remain in the study received a weighting close to 1.