

# COUNSELOR CONNECTION

April 2019

## Applications open for pupil transportation scholarships

Applications are now being accepted for three pupil transportation scholarships that recipients can apply toward college costs for the 2019–2020 academic year. An applicant must be a senior at an Alabama public high school.

The scholarships are:

- [The Alabama School Transportation Association Conference Charles “Chuck” Poland Education Scholarship](#). The scholarship is a one-time, \$1,000 scholarship awarded to a public school student whose parent or guardian has been an active pupil transportation employee for the past three years. Eligible students must have a cumulative 3.0 GPA and are selected based on leadership, citizenship and service.
- [The Alabama School Transportation Association Conference Greg Ray Memorial Education Scholarship](#). The scholarship is a one-time, \$2,000 scholarship awarded to a deserving public school student whose parent or guardian has been an active pupil transportation employee for the past three years. Eligible students must have a cumulative 3.0 GPA and are selected based on leadership, citizenship, and service.
- [The Southeastern States Pupil Transportation Conference Student Scholarship](#). This year, the SESPTC Board has approved one \$2,500 scholarship to be awarded to a deserving student in each of 14 states in the Southeast. To qualify, the family must have had a gross taxable income less than \$75,000 for each of the past five tax years. A parent or guardian of the student must have been actively employed in public school transportation for the past five years.



Applications for all three scholarships are due no later than April 26. The award will be announced before May 31.

## Feedback sought on revision of Career and Technical Education Clusters

The Career and Technical Education State Courses of Study Committee is requesting written input from the public on revising standards for three career clusters for public schools in Alabama: agriculture, food and natural resources; law, public safety, corrections and security; and science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) .

The committees would like to receive written comments by April 26.

The Alabama Course of Study: Career and Technical Education career clusters and courses may be viewed [here](#). Select the tabs to view courses offered in each cluster.

Comments related to specific courses in each of these three clusters may be sent via forms located at the web addresses listed below.

Agriculture, food and natural resources:

<https://goo.gl/forms/MY80G93GNwvLM6C12>

Law, public safety, corrections and security:

<https://goo.gl/forms/WKGT0qZTelu6mWwE3>

STEM:

<https://goo.gl/forms/Ai2kPCJvOxf11Zte2>

For more information about input, contact Cathy Jones at [cjones01@alsde.edu](mailto:cjones01@alsde.edu) or (334) 694-4768.

## Report shows fewer Alabama college freshmen are having to take remedial courses

The Public Affairs Research Council of Alabama (PARCA) recently released a report that shows that fewer college freshmen need to take remedial courses to bring them up to the educational level needed to succeed in college.

The trend over the past several years shows the percentage of remedial classes taken dropped from 32 percent in 2013 to 28 percent in 2017. Remedial courses are taught in English and math, with both areas showing a significant downturn in Alabama.

In English classes, remedial rates have dropped from 17 percent in 2013 to 12 percent in 2017. In math, remedial courses were taken by 26 percent in 2013 and 24 percent in 2017.

State Superintendent of Education Dr. Eric Mackey said preparing high school graduates to face the rigor of college coursework is an essential indicator of a quality education. Mackey said the fact that families save money by not having to pay for remedial coursework, books and fees is an added benefit.

Another aspect of the PARCA report is that this dip in the need for remedial coursework happens to come at a time when high school graduation rates are at all-time highs.

The report can be found on the [PARCA website](#).

## What students need to know about interest rates

Students need to learn some basic facts about interest rates so they can make good choices when it comes to borrowing and investing.

One interest rate is simple, or nominal, interest. It's straightforward. If you borrow \$1,000 at 5 percent simple interest per year, you'll pay back \$1,050. If you deposit \$10,000 in your savings account at 3 percent interest per year, you'll have \$10,300 in your account at the end of the year.

After that, though, it can get more complicated.

Let's say you take out a \$100,000 mortgage at 5 percent. However, you have to pay \$5,000 in closing costs, which are added to the amount of the mortgage. That means you'll be paying interest on \$105,000. Your total interest costs are \$5,250. That means you're paying an annual percentage rate (APR) of 5.25 percent. Lenders are required to disclose the APR on any loans you take out.

On the savings side, let's say you invest \$10,000 at a 3 percent compound interest rate. With compound interest, you earn interest on the interest you've already earned. At the end of the year, you'll have \$10,304.16 in your savings account.



## Scholarship spotlight

### Southern Automotive Women's Forum Scholarship

**Eligibility:** Must:

- be a female high school senior, GED graduate or college student.
- be enrolled or be enrolling in an accredited college or university in Alabama or another southern state.
- be pursuing a degree in a science, technology, engineering, math or automotive field.
- be interested in or already be pursuing a career in an automotive-related field.
- be enrolled at least half time in at least 2 consecutive academic terms.
- maintain at least a 2.5 cumulative GPA and at least a 3.0 GPA in the major.

**Award:** Varies

**Number:** Varies

**Deadline:** June 1

**Apply online at:** <http://southernautomotivewomen.org/scholarship-application/>



## THE FINANCIAL AID OFFICE

Every school has a financial aid office, and you can turn to the staff there for help with paying for college. Not only do they put together your financial aid package, staff will explain the process to you and your parents, answer any questions you have and keep you posted on anything you need to do. On some campuses, the financial aid office will help you find a work-study job and handle your time-sheets so you get paid. It pays to stay in touch with the financial aid staff so you can avoid any surprises.

### Reminder:

Refile your FAFSA as soon as possible after October 1 every year to be eligible for federal, state and institutional aid.

To refile go to [fafsa.gov](https://fafsa.gov).

## YOUR FINANCIAL AID PACKAGE

Each college that accepts you as a student will prepare a financial aid package that shows the total cost of attendance (COA), your expected family contribution (EFC) and how much financial aid the school is offering.

You don't have to accept everything in the package. You can take the awards that are best for you. Take advantage of all the free financial aid you can get first — the grants and scholarships.

If you still need help, take the loans, but only borrow as much as you absolutely need. You don't want to have to pay back more money than necessary. Because you have a legal obligation to repay student loans, start a file and keep all the mail you receive about your loans — after you read it.

State and federal programs generally have limits on how much you can receive, but many schools have their own funds. If you really want to go to a particular school but the financial aid package isn't quite what you want, talk with someone in the financial aid office to see if you can qualify for more aid.

## Sample Award Letter

**Total Cost of Attendance: \$32,641**

Financial Aid Awards	Fall	Spring	Total	Accept	Reject
Pell Grant	\$1,800	\$1,800	\$3,600		
State Grant	\$2,432	\$2,432	\$4,864		
Scholarships	\$750	\$750	\$1,500		
Institutional Aid	\$5,000	\$5,000	\$10,000		
Sub. Loan	\$1,750	\$1,750	\$3,500		
Unsub. Loan	\$1,000	\$1,000	\$2,000		
<b>Total Award</b>	<b>\$12,732</b>	<b>\$12,732</b>	<b>\$25,464</b>		

### Difference

**\$7,177**

If all the aid was accepted, you or your family would need to pay \$7,177 out-of-pocket for the year and you would have \$5,500 in student loans that would have to be repaid plus interest.