

**A2 ACHIEVE COLLEGE RISK ASSESSMENT
AFTON BURNETT — AUBURN UNIVERSITY
Revised August 29, 2026**

OVERALL A2 ACHIEVE RISK RATING: REACH

More specifically: Auburn is a legitimate, attainable reach for you, but it is not a match school right now. I would put you in the **higher-risk portion of the Reach category with your current 25 ACT and current GPA**, but I would not move Auburn all the way to “extreme reach.” Several things in your application give you a real path to admission, particularly as an Alabama resident.

The biggest change from our previous assessment is simple: **Auburn First no longer gives you automatic admission.** That matters a lot.

WHAT CHANGED WITH AUBURN FIRST

Auburn's automatic admission requirements through Auburn First require an Alabama student to complete **all** of the following before senior year: at least a 3.33 Auburn University GPA, the required Auburn First coursework, at least a 50% score on Auburn's ALEKS math placement assessment, and at least a 3.5 high school GPA through junior year.

Because you did **not** complete the ALEKS requirement and did **not** reach the required Auburn First GPA, you do not qualify for automatic admission.

And Auburn is very explicit about this. Students must meet **all** of the requirements. Auburn specifically says that a student who does not meet the GPA requirement cannot receive automatic admission, and a student who does not meet the ALEKS requirement cannot receive automatic admission.

But there is an important distinction here. *Not completing the ALEKS does NOT mean Auburn's regular admissions office is going to treat you as though you failed an admissions math test.* The ALEKS requirement is specifically tied to the **Auburn First automatic-admission pathway**. You simply lost that pathway.

You now go into essentially the regular freshman applicant pool. Auburn confirms that students who do not obtain automatic admission through Auburn First can still apply through the regular freshman admission process. Auburn also specifically says that Auburn First coursework can still help demonstrate academic rigor during the regular admission review. That distinction is important.

YOUR NUMBERS VERSUS AUBURN

Your current profile is approximately:

Weighted GPA: 3.67

Unweighted GPA: 3.40

ACT Superscore: 25

Class rank: approximately 33

Alabama resident

For Fall 2025 entering Alabama residents, Auburn reports a middle 50% ACT range of **25–31**. The overall middle 50% GPA range was **3.87–4.33**. That tells us something very useful. **Your ACT is inside Auburn's range, barely.** A 25 sits at approximately the **bottom of the middle 50% range** for Auburn's Alabama residents. So a 25 isn't an automatic rejection score. But it isn't helping pull up a lower GPA, either.

Your GPA is the bigger admissions concern. At approximately a 3.67 weighted GPA, you are currently below Auburn's published 3.87 lower quartile boundary for the most recent entering class. This is the piece of your Auburn application that worries me most. And because your Auburn First GPA also fell below the 3.33 automatic-admission requirement, we don't have the argument we previously thought we had: "His high school GPA is below Auburn's typical range, but he has already demonstrated that he can succeed academically in Auburn University classes." We need to be much more careful making that argument now.

THE AUBURN FIRST GPA IS MORE IMPORTANT THAN THE ALEKS ISSUE

This is the part I would pay particular attention to. I am **far less concerned about the unfinished ALEKS than I am about the Auburn First GPA**. The ALEKS simply cost you automatic admission. The Auburn First grades are actual Auburn University grades. Auburn states that Auburn First classes appear on your Auburn transcript and that those grades become part of your Auburn University GPA. So admissions has evidence of how you performed in actual Auburn coursework.

That does not mean you can't get admitted. But from a risk-analysis standpoint, **we cannot count Auburn First as an unqualified admissions positive anymore**. Instead, I would characterize it this way:

- **Positive:** You challenged yourself by enrolling in actual Auburn University coursework while still in high school.
- **Concern:** Your cumulative performance wasn't high enough to meet Auburn First's 3.33 automatic-admission standard.

Those two facts can coexist.

WHERE YOUR APPLICATION GETS MUCH STRONGER

This is why I'm still calling Auburn a **Reach instead of an extreme reach**. Your transcript is not easy. You have taken AP, honors and substantial dual-enrollment coursework, including AP Biology, AP Computer Science, AP Environmental Science and multiple honors and college-level courses. Auburn specifically says it evaluates **course rigor, grade trends, AP/honors/dual-enrollment coursework, performance relative to opportunities at the student's high school, and academic area of interest**. That is good for you.

You also have something a lot of applicants with higher GPAs do not have: **a substantial body of real work experience**. You've worked in roofing and mitigation. You've worked at a Coca-Cola facility. You've worked at Robin Rents doing mechanical work, inside operations, customer service and cold calling. You have actual hands-on examples of diagnosing mechanical problems, repairing equipment and solving problems.

Then add four years of student council, bass fishing, athletics and roughly 100 hours of service, including significant Meals on Wheels service. That is not filler. Auburn's comprehensive review

specifically includes leadership, service, employment, summer activities, awards, personal growth and engagement. **That portion of your Auburn application is considerably stronger than your GPA suggests.** And that is where A2 needs to make the application work.

THE ACT IS NOW THE SINGLE FASTEST WAY TO CHANGE YOUR AUBURN RISK

If you stay at a **25**, I consider Auburn a reach. If we move that ACT to a **27**, I like the application considerably more. If you can get to a **28–29**, the entire academic argument changes. At 28, instead of being at the very bottom of Auburn's current Alabama-resident ACT range, you would be solidly within it. And Auburn superscores the ACT, so we don't need one magical test sitting. Auburn will use the best testing result for admission and scholarship consideration.

There is also still an immediate opportunity. The next national ACT is **September 19, 2026**. As of today, August 29, late registration remains available through **September 1**. Initial paper scores are scheduled for release beginning October 6. **I would absolutely have Afton take that ACT if at all possible.**

I WOULD ALSO CHANGE OUR APPLICATION TIMING STRATEGY

Previously, with Auburn First automatic admission in play, there was very little reason to be cautious. Now there is. Auburn's Fall 2027 Early Action rounds are:

- **September 15 — Round 1**
- **October 15 — Round 2**
- **November 15 — Round 3**
- **December 1 — Final Early Action Round**
- **February 1 — Regular Decision**

My target for you would be ROUND 2 — OCTOBER 15.

I don't think there is enough strategic value in racing to September 15 with a 25 simply to say we applied in Round 1. I'd rather spend September doing three things:

- **Improve the ACT.**
- **Make the Auburn application excellent.**
- **Make sure your senior-year academic performance starts strong.**

A September 19 ACT theoretically gives us an October 6 initial score release, although Auburn warns that official score transmission can take time. If the September ACT doesn't move enough or official scores cannot reach Auburn in time, **Round 3 on November 15 remains perfectly acceptable.**

I do want you in an **Early Action round**, however. Auburn says students must have a complete file during Early Action to receive scholarship consideration, with December 1 being the final EA deadline.

MY A2 ACHIEVE RISK BREAKDOWN

Academic GPA — HIGH RISK

This is the weakest part of the Auburn application. A 3.67 weighted GPA is below Auburn's recent 3.87–4.33 middle 50%.

ACT — MODERATE/HIGH RISK AT 25

You are technically inside Auburn's Alabama-resident middle 50%, but at the very bottom. The ACT isn't killing the application, but it isn't currently compensating for the GPA.

Course Rigor — STRONG

AP + honors + dual enrollment + actual Auburn coursework is a meaningful strength.

Auburn First — MIXED

Participation is still valuable. It demonstrates willingness to take difficult college work and creates a legitimate connection to Auburn. But the previous **automatic-admission advantage is gone**, and the Auburn GPA prevents me from labeling Auburn First as an entirely positive academic indicator.

Work Experience — VERY STRONG

This may be one of the most distinctive parts of the application. Your work history is unusually substantive for a high-school student.

Leadership/Activities — STRONG

Four years of student council plus employment, fishing, athletics and other involvement creates breadth without looking manufactured for college admissions.

Service — STRONG

Approximately 100 hours, including substantial Meals on Wheels involvement, is meaningful.

Alabama Residency — POSITIVE

Auburn explicitly notes its land-grant mission to serve Alabama residents when describing its admissions review.

Personal Story/Application Potential — STRONG

You have a much better story than “3.67 GPA/25 ACT student.” You are mechanical, practical and hands-on. You solve actual problems. You work. You have held responsibilities adults normally hold. You have taken challenging classes. You have made some mistakes, figured some things out and matured. That is the applicant I want Auburn to see.

ONE THING I WOULD NOT DO

I would **not try to explain away Auburn First** unless there is a legitimate circumstance that actually needs explanation. We do **not** want to create an essay that essentially says: “I almost qualified for automatic admission but didn't.” That draws the reader directly toward the weakest piece of the file. Instead, Auburn First belongs in the larger academic story: **You deliberately challenged yourself with actual Auburn University coursework while still attending high school.** We let the transcript speak for itself.

If Auburn later defers you, that changes. Historically, Auburn's deferral process allows students to add new test scores, midyear grades, activities information, recommendations and a supporting statement. That would give us another opportunity to advocate strategically.

WHAT WOULD CHANGE MY RISK RATING?

This is where Afton's situation becomes encouraging.

25 ACT + approximately 3.67 weighted GPA → REACH

27 ACT + strong first-semester senior grades → REACH, but much more competitive

28–29 ACT + strong senior grades → LOWER REACH / approaching competitive territory for an Alabama resident

30+ ACT + strong senior performance → significantly stronger Auburn case

I'm deliberately **not assigning percentage odds**, because Auburn itself says each year's applicants compete against that year's pool, and a precise percentage for an individual student would be false precision.

A2 ACHIEVE BOTTOM LINE FOR AFTON

Afton, I want to revise something I told you earlier. **Auburn First does not give us the safety net I initially thought it did.** Because you didn't meet the Auburn First GPA requirement and didn't complete the required ALEKS assessment, **you are not automatically admitted to Auburn.** You have to win admission through Auburn's regular freshman process. That makes Auburn a **Reach school for you.** But I do **not** think you should interpret that as “Auburn probably isn't happening.” I think you are a very interesting Auburn applicant whose numbers are somewhat weaker than the typical admitted student's numbers. Those are two different things.

Your 25 ACT is already within Auburn's Alabama-resident range. Your high school rigor is strong. You are an Alabama student. Your employment history is unusually impressive. You have leadership and service. You have actual Auburn coursework. And you have a real, believable reason for wanting Auburn. So our strategy changes. **We are no longer relying on Auburn First to get you into Auburn. We are going to build an application that gets you into Auburn despite not earning Auburn First automatic admission.**

And right now, the highest-value move I can make for you is very clear: **Get that ACT up.** I'd like to see you **late-register for the September 19 ACT before September 1, prepare specifically for the sections that can move your superscore up, build Auburn during September, and target the October 15 Early Action round if the score timing works.**

I would also consider Auburn important enough that **we build the Common App/Auburn application around your hands-on work, mechanical problem-solving, maturity and actual responsibility rather than trying to make him look like the 4.2-GPA applicant your aren't.** That is where I think your application can become compelling.