

## **FAFSA Completion Program**

The Board of Education (Board) recognizes that college, for many students, continues to be an important pathway that helps to provide students with the necessary skills for work and for lifelong learning. In addition, research has indicated the students who complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) are more likely to attend college with financial aid. While students in the K-8 schools will not be filling out FAFSA forms, this mandated policy is included in the school's policy manual to inform and educate parents about the FAFSA process.

In compliance with Public Act 23-204 sections 319-320, beginning with classes graduating in 2025, graduating students must have completed a Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA), completed and submitted to a public institution of higher education an application for institutional financial aid for students without legal immigration status, or completed a waiver, on a form prescribed by the Connecticut State Department of Education (CSDE) signed by the student's parent/legal guardian or by the student if 18 years of age or older.

A principal, school counselor, teacher, or other certified educator may complete the waiver on behalf of any student if the certified educator affirms that they have made a good faith effort to contact the parent/legal guardian or student about the completion of the application.

The Board, through this policy, sets as a goal of ensuring 100% compliance for the FAFSA completion rates among grade 12 students or students in District adult education programs. This goal aims to ensure District efforts to improve postsecondary enrollment and student outcomes and to make it easier for students to attend postsecondary education.

The Board directs the administration to develop plans to initiate new strategies for 100% yearly student FAFSA completion rates. The Board may accept gifts, grants, and donations, including in-kind donations, to implement this policy.

## **Strategies**

The Board believes this goal of 100% FAFSA completion rates can be obtained utilizing, but not limited to, the following strategies/considerations:

1. Design FAFSA completion initiatives according to the target population's needs.
2. Establish and maintain strong partnerships with as many stakeholders as possible, with multiple organizations to assist.
3. Incorporate financial aid training into the existing curriculum.
4. Provide individualized meetings between students and staff.
5. Collect and monitor appropriate data to identify which students are not completing applications and target extra support to them.

6. Build trusting relationships with parents and the community in order to ensure students and their families feel comfortable filling out the forms.
7. Design systems, tools and events focusing on students who might otherwise not complete an application.
8. Provide a network of resources to support school counselors and teachers.
9. Raise awareness about FAFSA, prior to senior year.
10. Provide sufficient and easily accessible resources on district/school websites.
11. Offer school-day and evening support for students and their parents/guardians.
12. Create a FAFSA student/parent portal pertaining to FAFSA.
13. Use existing programs and forums, such as advisor periods, college and career planning seminars, parent meetings, etc. to provide assistance.
14. Stress financial aid is for technical, two and four year schools.
15. Build a school or campus-based FAFSA team to monthly review data and discuss and implement strategies to reach students.
16. Partner with local postsecondary institutions.

As required, the Board will publish and make available on the District website the annual FAFSA student completion rate for the graduating class.

Legal Reference: Connecticut General Statutes

P. A. 21-199 An Act Concerning Various Revisions and Additions to the Statutes Relating to Education and Workforce Development, Sect. 6, 7, 8.

Public Act 23-204 An Act Concerning the State Budget for the Biennium Ending June 30, 2025, and Making Appropriations Therefor, And Provisions Related to Revenue and Other Items Implementing the State Budget Sections 319-320

Adopted: June 11, 2024

NORTH CANAAN BOARD OF EDUCATION  
North Canaan, Connecticut