Instruction

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.

Beginning with classes graduating in 2027, 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.

Through this policy, the Board sets 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. To implement this policy the Board may accept gifts, grants, and donations, including in-kind donations.

Strategies

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

1. Design FAFSA completion initiatives according to 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 meeting between students and staff.
5. Collect and monitor appropriate data to identify which students are not completing applications and target extra support to them.

Instruction

FAFSA Completion Program

Strategies (continued)

6. Build trusting relationships with parents and the community in order to ensure students and their families feel comfortable in 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. Provide assistance through existing programs and forums, such as advisor periods, college and career planning seminars, parent meetings etc.
14. Stress financial aid is for technical, two and four year schools.
15. Build a school- or campus-based FAFSA team to review data monthly 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 of each high school within the District.

(cf. 6146 – Graduation Requirements)

Legal Reference: Connecticut General Statutes

Public Act 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 §319-320

Public Act 24-45 An Act Concerning Education Mandate Relief, School Discipline and Disconnected Youth §9

Policy adopted: February 3, 2025

REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. 14
Bethlehem and Woodbury, Connecticut