



West Essex Regional School District Guidance Department

New Graduation Requirement for the Class of 2026 & 2027

October 21, 2025

Dear Parents & Guardians of the % 2026,

In January 2024, Governor Murphy signed a law ([P.L. 2023, c.295](#)) requiring each graduating high school senior to complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) **OR** submit a signed waiver in order to receive a high school diploma. This new graduation requirement will be for the Class of 2025, 2026, and 2027.

The FAFSA gives students access to the largest source of financial aid to pay for college or vocational school. Through completing the FAFSA, students can be considered for federal financial aid, including Pell grants, work-study programs, and loans. In addition, many states and colleges, as well as some private financial aid providers, use FAFSA information to determine students' eligibility for aid.

If a student/guardian wants to request an exemption from this graduation requirement, a waiver must be submitted to the West Essex High School Guidance Department. [Link to the WEHS FAFSA Graduation Requirement Waiver Form.](#)

Submitting this form does not prohibit a student from submitting a FAFSA or New Jersey Alternative Financial Aid Application.

Important Dates:

The WEHS FAFSA Information Parent Night is **October 23, 2025**. (Virtual)

The FAFSA 2026-2027 Form is Now Available. [FAFSA: usa.gov/fafsa](https://fafsa.usa.gov/fafsa)

The FAFSA should be completed by **May 1, 2026** to ensure graduation/diploma.

The Higher Education Student Assistance Authority (HESAA) has provided instructions and resources such as webinars, presentations, and guidance documents to help assist students and guardians to meet this requirement. This program will be keeping track of which students/guardians submit the FAFSA and will inform WEHS of FAFSA submissions.

Resource Videos:

[Click this Link: Who is a contributor on the FAFSA form?](#)

[Click this Link: Create and Access Your StudentAid.gov account](#)

[Click this Link: Access FAFSA Application Deadlines](#)

[Click this Link: Other FAFSA Resources](#)