Dear Student,

As you consider your options after high school, we encourage you to fill out the Free Application for Federal Student Aid, known as the FAFSA, in order to access grants, federal student loans, and work-study funds for college. Filling out the FAFSA is one of the most important steps students and their families can take to pay for college and is the key to unlocking college financial aid from federal, state, and local sources.

Eligible students who are unable to complete the FAFSA may still be able to access state financial aid at Massachusetts colleges by completing the Massachusetts Application for State Financial Aid (MASFA) instead.

Applying for financial aid helps keep college an option for the fall but does not commit you to enrolling. Fill out the FAFSA or MASFA as early as possible to maximize the aid you can receive.

There are resources available to help with this process, including the following:

1. **Go Higher** Go Higher is the Commonwealth's initiative to share information about access and affordability at public institutions of higher education in Massachusetts. Go Higher offers paths that make higher education more affordable–like free community college, free or affordable four-year degrees, career-connected scholarships, and more.

2. DESE, in collaboration with the Department of Higher Education and the Executive Office of Education, has identified **FAFSA resources that may be helpful**.

4. The Department of Higher Education's **Office of Student Financial Assistance** is the Commonwealth's "go to" on resources concerning student financial aid.

5. The federal government's **FAFSA website** includes **steps for families**, and entities such as the Massachusetts Educational Financing Authority (MEFA) provide **information** and continuing supports during the school year for educators, counselors, administrators, students and their families.

Fill out the FAFSA or MASFA as early as possible to maximize the aid you can receive!