



PHILIP D. MURPHY
Governor

TAHESHA L. WAY
Lt. Governor

State of New Jersey
HIGHER EDUCATION STUDENT ASSISTANCE AUTHORITY
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DAVID J. SOCOLOW
Executive Director

January 24, 2024

Dear Local Educational Agency Leads and Nonpublic School Administrators:

Recent legislation [signed](#) by Governor Phil Murphy requires that, beginning with graduating seniors in the class of 2025 and for two school years thereafter, students in public high schools and charter schools must complete either the Free Application for Federal Student Aid ([FAFSA[®]](#)) or the [New Jersey Alternative Financial Aid Application](#) as a condition of receiving a high school diploma, unless an opt-out waiver is completed according to the terms of P.L. 2023, c.295. School districts can provide a crucial service to students by working with the New Jersey Higher Education Student Assistance Authority (HESAA) to promote the filing of these vital applications for the current academic year, and to prepare for future year requirements, by establishing a [data-sharing agreement](#).

By completing either the [FAFSA[®]](#) or the [New Jersey Alternative Financial Aid Application](#), high school seniors can learn about the financial assistance options that can help cover the costs of pursuing a postsecondary degree or career training program. Additionally, authorized staff can become accustomed to monitoring and supporting students' financial aid application progress.

The data-sharing agreement allows HESAA to share limited information with participating district employees about students' financial aid application status. High schools can then use data to offer targeted support to students who have not yet filled out an application and encourage them to complete it.

Access to completion data is an efficient way to reach students in need of reminders and/or support – from [HESAA](#) or school counselors – in order to complete financial aid applications. Graduating students who do not file a financial aid application risk losing financial support and may choose not to pursue a degree if they believe they cannot afford it.

Please note, HESAA does not provide districts with *any* substantive or financial information from *any* individual student's application. Under the terms of the data-sharing agreement,

authorized school personnel from participating districts will only be informed regarding which 12th grade students have completed a financial aid application, and which have yet to do so.

Also, for the next several months, HESAA's information sharing of FAFSA completion progress by students in the high school class of 2024 will be delayed due to a current disruption in federal processing of the newly revised FAFSA form.

Any districts interested in participating should submit the following agreement <https://shorturl.at/ekrX2> to Jennifer Martin at Jennifer_martin@hesaa.org as soon as possible.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "David J. Socolow".

David J. Socolow

Executive Director

New Jersey Higher Education Student Assistance Authority