

**New Jersey Financial Aid Application Graduation Requirement
Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)
September 5, 2024**

Question #1: How do school districts address students who transfer in or out of a district? Are we still accountable for this graduation requirement if a student leaves before the end of the school year?

Response: Each public school district and charter school is required to annually notify students and parents/guardians of this requirement. Upon release of the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) and New Jersey Alternative Financial Aid Application (NJAFSA), Local Education Agencies (LEAs) should be as proactive as possible and work with their students who are in their last year of high school to ensure that they meet this requirement. The date of submission for currently enrolled students must be between the FAFSA/NJAFSA open submission date and before the closing date. Please see [State Deadlines AY 23-24 \(hesaa.org\)](https://hesaa.org) for additional information.

Question #2: There are four different FAFSA/NJAFSA status outcomes that may be listed for a student: Complete, Incomplete, No Match and Partial Match. What status must a student be in for them to have satisfied this graduation requirement?

Response: The legislation states that, “a board of education or a board of trustees of a charter school shall require a student, and the student’s parent or guardian, if applicable, to complete and submit a financial aid application in a form prescribed by the Higher Education Student Assistance Authority...” Subsequently, filling out and submitting the form is sufficient.

Question #3: What is required by the school district to consider a student being compliant with this graduation requirement? Can a school district simply ask a parent (or an 18-year-old student) in a form if they have completed the FAFSA/NJAFSA?

Response: The guidance referenced in the NJDOE June 26, 2024 broadcast [memo](#) encourages LEA’s to enter into data sharing agreements with the Higher Education Student Assistance Authority (HESAA). LEAs are advised to maintain records for which students fulfill this graduation requirement by completing a financial aid application and which students are waived. Additional information regarding this may be addressed in the reporting mechanism the Department will be recommending through the NJ Standards Measurement and Resource for Teaching (NJSMART).

Question #4: Are electronic signatures acceptable on NJ Financial Aid Application Graduation Requirement Waiver Forms?

Response: Yes, they are acceptable. Many school districts already have Policy 9242, Use of Electronic Signatures, in place, which are used for most district forms, such as Genesis. If your school district has that policy, you should follow the procedures within the policy for electronic signatures.

Question #5: Can Child Study Team case managers for students receiving special education waive the FAFSA/NJAFSA requirement in Individualized Education Programs (IEPs), particularly for students who attend out of district placements?

Response: No, [P.L.2023, c.295](#) states that a waiver form can only be completed by a parent or guardian, or a student who is at least 18 years old. The student's school counselor may authorize the waiver if a student is under 18 years old, and a waiver form cannot be reasonably obtained from the parent or guardian.

Question #6: Are special education students required to complete the FAFSA/NJAFSA at the year 4 or year 5 mark, since some students stay and participate in educational programs up to 21 years of age?

Response: Students with IEPs, just like students without IEPs, should complete the FAFSA or NJAFSA during their last year in high school.

Question #7: Are approved private schools for the disabled that receive public school students from a local education agency (LEA) responsible for this graduation requirement?

Response: No, for a State-endorsed diploma, district boards of education shall develop, adopt, and implement local graduation requirements which includes requiring a student, and the student's parent or guardian, if applicable, to complete and submit a financial aid application as a prerequisite to the student receiving a high school diploma from a public high school or charter school, unless a waiver is submitted to the school district or charter school.

Question #8: Is the State offering any school or family training on FAFSA/NJAFSA completion, waivers and the new mandate?

Response: For additional information regarding the FAFSA, including completion instructions, FAQs, and deadlines, please see HESAA's [FAFSA webpage](#). For additional information regarding NJAFSA, please see [HESAA's website](#).