

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.

Many Connecticut students, eligible for college, fail to complete the FAFSA each year, resulting in the loss of funds that could help support their postsecondary education.

The Board acknowledges that Connecticut has, for eligible school districts, implemented a FAFSA Completion Challenge (Challenge). This Challenge is based on the premise that FAFSA completion is strongly associated with postsecondary enrollment and outcomes. Students who complete the FAFSA, in greater numbers, attend college directly from high school in comparison to non-completers.

Therefore, the Board, through this policy, sets as a goal a District initiative to improve the completion rates for FAFSA among grade 12 students or students in District adult education programs. This goal aims to strengthen District efforts to improve postsecondary enrollment and student outcomes and to make it easier for students to attend postsecondary education.

District efforts to meet this initiative should spark and support local creativity to increase FAFSA completion and postsecondary enrollment rates. The Board directs the administration to develop plans to pilot and initiate new strategies to increase yearly student FAFSA completion rates. The Board may accept gifts, grants, and donations, including in-kind donations, to implement this policy.

As a currently SDE designated alliance district, (or as a previously designated alliance district) the Board will add to the list of goals that it includes in its application to the Commissioner of Education for alliance district funds the goal of implementing its policy to improve FAFSA completion rates by grade 12 and for adult education students.

Strategies

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

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Strategies (continued)

1. Design FAFSA completion initiatives according to the target population's needs. Low-income students, English-Language students, homeless students, foster youth, and first generational youth should be the center of this initiative.
2. Establish and maintain strong partnerships with as many stakeholders as possible, with multiple organizations to assist.
3. Make the completion process a component of graduation. Provide a parental opt-out so that no one is denied a diploma.
4. Incorporate financial aid training into the existing curriculum.
5. Provide individualized meeting between students and staff.
6. Collect and monitor appropriate data to identify which students are not completing applications and target extra support to them.
7. Build trusting relationships with parents and the community in order to ensure students and their families feel comfortable in filling out the forms.
8. Design systems, tools and events focusing on students who might otherwise not complete an application.
9. Provide a network of resources to support school counselors and teachers.
10. Start raising awareness about FAFSA early, prior to senior year.
11. Provide sufficient and easily accessible resources on district/school websites.
12. Offer school-day and evening support for students and their parents/guardians.
13. Create a FAFSA student/parent portal pertaining to FAFSA.
14. Use existing programs and forums, such as advisor periods, college and career planning seminars, parent meetings etc. to provide assistance.
15. Stress financial aid is for technical, two and four year schools.
16. Build a school or campus-based FAFSA team to monthly review data and discuss and implement strategies to reach students.
17. Partner with local postsecondary institutions.
18. Create a FAFSA phone assistance bank.

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.

Legal Reference: Connecticut General Statutes
P. A. 21-199 An Act Concerning Various Revisions and Additions to the Statutes Relating to Education and Workforce Development, Sect. 6, 7, 8.

Policy adopted:
cps 11/21

Community Relations

Booster Clubs and Parent Organizations

Booster Clubs/Parent Organizations

Parent organizations and booster clubs are invaluable resources to the District's schools. The Board of Education recognizes that parent organizations and extracurricular support groups, or "booster clubs" provide important support to District schools, and can be valuable means of stimulating community interest in the aims and activities of District schools. Support organizations may be defined in two ways:

1. an organization which is created to foster community support and provide resources for a particular sport or activity in the school or school system; or
2. an organization which is created to foster community support and raise funds for the school's general extracurricular program.

While parent organizations and booster clubs have no administrative authority and cannot determine District policy, the Board welcomes their suggestions and assistance.

Parent organizations and booster clubs are recognized by the Board of Education and permitted to use the District's name, a District school's name, or a District school's team name, or any logo attributable to the District provided they first receive the Superintendent or designee's express written consent. Consent to use one of the above-mentioned names or logos will generally be granted if the organization or club has bylaws containing the following:

1. The organization's or club's name and purpose, such as, to enhance students' educational experiences, to help meet educational needs of students, to provide extra athletic benefits to students, to assist specific sports teams or academic clubs through financial support, or to enrich extracurricular activities.
2. The rules and procedures under which it operates.
3. An agreement to adhere to all Board policies and administrative procedures.
4. A statement that membership is open and unrestricted, meaning that membership is open to parents/guardians of students enrolled in the school, district staff, and community members or an agreement not to engage in discrimination based on someone's innate characteristics or membership in a suspect classification.
5. A statement that the District is not, and will not be, responsible for the organization's or club's business or the conduct of its members.
6. An agreement to maintain and protect its own finances. The group must maintain bank, financial, and tax exempt status separate from the school or District. The organization will provide to the Board annually or upon request a complete set of financial records or detailed treasurer's report.
7. A recognition that money given to a school cannot be earmarked for any particular expense. Booster clubs may make recommendations, but cash or other valuable consideration must be given to the District to use at its discretion. The Board of Education's legal obligation to comply with Title IX by providing equal athletic opportunity for members of both genders will supersede an organization or club's recommendation.

Parents and other interested community members who wish to organize a parent organization or booster club for the purpose of supporting a specific school program or activity are encouraged to do so as long as the activities of such organizations do not interfere unduly with the total educational program or disrupt District operations in any way. To this end, parent organizations/booster club/support organizations must follow these guidelines:

1. be voluntary;
2. submit an activity schedule in advance to the Superintendent of Schools or his/her designee for prior approval. Any time a booster club uses the name of the District or any language suggesting that the District has endorsed, sponsored or otherwise approved of the club's activities, there must be prior approval by the Superintendent or his/her designee ([building administration](#));
3. seek advance approval for any use of school facilities and/or equipment and such use will comply with all policies and regulations established by the Board ([consider adding such as, but not limited to: Non-discrimination, Title IX, Safe Schools - alcohol and tobacco free schools, etc](#));
4. avoid interference with any previously approved student activity;
5. seek approval in advance of all fundraising activities by the Superintendent or building Principal;
6. understand and respect the authority of District employees in the administration of their duties; and

7. assume all financial responsibility for the booster club, including but not limited to the provision of adequate insurance coverage, as appropriate.

If a booster club wishes to make a contribution of money, service time or tangible property such as equipment or supplies, a representative of the organization should first meet with the [building administration](#) Superintendent or his/her designee. The Superintendent or his/her designee must identify the District's terms and conditions of accepting such gifts in concert with the District's policy pertaining to gifts, grants and bequests.

Booster club proposed plans, projects and other activities must be evaluated and promoted in light of their stated contribution to the academic as well as the extracurricular school programs.

Careful consideration should be given to the total value of the contribution to all students, and not just to specific student groups.

The Board retains final responsibility and authority on all activities which have an impact on students, school programs and/or school owned property.

Further, the Board recognizes its responsibility to ensure that equivalent benefits and services are provided to members of both sexes. Therefore, if booster clubs provide benefits, services or tangible property that assist only teams or programs of one gender, the Board shall ensure that teams or programs of the other gender receive equivalent benefits, services or tangible property. If a booster club provides benefits, services or tangible property which are greater than that which the District is capable of providing to the athletes or programs of the other gender, the administration shall take action, within policy parameters, to ensure equivalency for both sexes.

The Board of Education is responsible for providing funding for the safe and effective operation of the interscholastic sports program. There may be occasions when Board funding is unavailable to provide everything requested by a coach. All booster club donations must be approved by the Superintendent of Schools or his/her designee (Board of Education) in advance to ensure equity in all sports. "Necessary" expenditures must be provided by the Board of Education through its approved budget. Items that would be "nice" or "beneficial" to have are viewed as appropriate for booster club financial support. Any booster club purchase or expenditure must receive the approval of the team's head coach and the Athletic Director following the aforementioned approval by the Superintendent of Schools or his/her designee (Board of Education).

The Board reserves the right to revoke approval of any booster group if it is found that the group's operations and purposes are inconsistent with Board policies.

(cf. [1110.1](#) - Parental Involvement)

(cf. [1140](#) - Distribution of Materials by Students)

(cf. [1210](#) - School Community Associations)

(cf. 1323 - Gifts to Students)

(cf. [1330](#) - Use of School Facilities)

(cf. [3280](#) - Gifts, Grants and Bequests)

(cf. 3281 - School Fund Raising)

(cf. [3515](#) - Community Use of School Facilities)

Legal Reference: Title IX of the Educational Amendments of 1972, 20 U.S.C.A § 1681.

Policy adopted: