
A BILL FOR AN ACT

RELATING TO EDUCATION.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF HAWAII:

1 SECTION 1. The legislature finds that Hawaii left
2 \$10,000,000 in unclaimed federal Pell Grants on the table in
3 2018; enough to send roughly 2,500 students to a University of
4 Hawaii community college tuition-free. Nationally, nearly
5 \$2,600,000,000 in federal financial aid for higher education
6 went unused by high school graduates from the class of 2018 who
7 were eligible for a federal Pell Grant but did not complete the
8 Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA). When students
9 do not apply for FAFSA, many may revert to private student
10 loans, which often have high interest rates and lack the
11 consumer protections that federal student loans include.

12 The legislature further finds that in 2016, the State of
13 Louisiana began requiring students to fill out FAFSA because
14 more than half of high school seniors were not completing the
15 paperwork for FAFSA. Louisiana is now ranked first in the
16 nation for FAFSA completion, at eighty-two per cent completion.
17 Other states and districts, including California, Illinois,



1 Indiana, Texas, and Washington, D.C., have either passed or
2 considered a FAFSA completion requirement for school. In
3 Hawaii, the department of education has set a goal to have
4 ninety per cent of high school seniors complete FAFSA in the
5 2020 school year, although completion rates in the recent years
6 have remained closer to sixty per cent.

7 The purpose of this Act is to establish a working group to
8 create a state plan to make FAFSA completion or an opt-out
9 waiver for FAFSA completion a statewide graduation requirement
10 by the 2022-2023 school year.

11 SECTION 2. (a) The working group established within the
12 department of education dedicated to increasing awareness and
13 completion of FAFSA is additionally tasked with creating a state
14 plan to make FAFSA completion or an opt-out waiver for FAFSA
15 completion a statewide graduation requirement by the 2022-2023
16 school year.

17 (b) The working group shall:

18 (1) Include a member of the non-profit sector to provide a
19 community-based perspective;

20 (2) Take into consideration the needs of both:

21 (A) Public and private universities; and



- 1 (B) The philanthropic community;
- 2 (3) Consider additional resources and supports needed and
3 available, including public-private partnerships, to
4 ensure successful implementation of the state plan;
- 5 (4) How to best ensure that the opt-out process from FAFSA
6 completion for parents is simple and unconditional;
- 7 (5) The feasibility of regional pilot programs by complex
8 area or island;
- 9 (6) How to best provide greater support for students
10 through the entire college application process,
11 including providing the necessary guidance for
12 students to actually enroll in college and be
13 successful once the FAFSA is completed;
- 14 (7) How to best protect family privacy, particularly for
15 undocumented families, and support schools to provide
16 hardship opt-out waivers on behalf of unresponsive
17 parents; and
- 18 (8) Any other issue the working group deems necessary.
- 19 (c) Members of the working group shall serve without
20 compensation but shall receive reimbursement for expenses,



1 including travel expenses, that are necessary for the
2 performance of their duties.

3 (d) The working group shall be exempt from part I of
4 chapter 92, Hawaii Revised Statutes; provided that the
5 department of education shall make available to the public the
6 minutes of all meetings of the working group on the department
7 of education's website.

8 (e) The department of education shall be responsible for
9 the administrative support responsibilities of the working
10 group, including but not limited to preparing agendas and
11 minutes, organizing meetings, and reporting on the outcome and
12 recommendations of the working group.

13 (f) The working group shall submit a report of its
14 findings and recommendations to the legislature, the
15 superintendent of education, and all complex area
16 superintendents no later than twenty days prior to the convening
17 of the regular session of 2021.

18 SECTION 3. This Act shall take effect on July 1, 2020.



Report Title:

FAFSA; Graduation Requirement; Working Group

Description:

Requires the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) working group created by the Department of Education to develop a state plan to make completion of the FAFSA or an opt-out waiver a statewide graduation requirement by the 2022-2023 school year. (SD1)

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