
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) There is established within the department
12 of education for administrative purposes a working group to
13 create a state plan to make FAFSA completion or an opt-out
14 waiver for FAFSA completion a statewide graduation requirement
15 by the 2022-2023 school year.

16 (b) The working group shall comprise the following
17 members:

18 (1) The chair of the house of representatives committee on
19 lower and higher education, or the chair's designee,
20 who shall serve as co-chair of the working group;



- 1 (2) The chair of the senate committee on education, or the
2 chair's designee, who shall serve as the co-chair of
3 the working group;
- 4 (3) The superintendent of education, or the
5 superintendent's designee;
- 6 (4) The chairperson of the board of education, or the
7 chairperson's designee;
- 8 (5) The president of the University of Hawaii, or the
9 president's designee;
- 10 (6) A representative from the University of Hawaii
11 community college system, to be selected by the vice
12 president for community colleges;
- 13 (7) The executive director of the Hawai'i P-20, or the
14 executive director's designee;
- 15 (8) A department of education complex area superintendent,
16 to be selected by the superintendent of education;
- 17 (9) A department of education principal, to be selected by
18 the superintendent of education;
- 19 (10) A department of education school counselor, to be
20 selected by the superintendent of education;



- 1 (11) A representative from the nonprofit sector, who shall
- 2 be invited to be a member of the working group by the
- 3 speaker of the house of representatives;
- 4 (12) A representative from the Hawaii Association for
- 5 College Admission Counseling, who shall be invited to
- 6 be a member of the working group by the president of
- 7 the senate;
- 8 (13) A representative from the philanthropic community, who
- 9 shall be invited to be a member of the working group
- 10 by the speaker of the house of representatives;
- 11 (14) A representative from the business community, who
- 12 shall be invited to be a member of the working group
- 13 by the president of the senate; and
- 14 (15) Other members as the working group deems necessary.
- 15 (c) The working group shall consider the following matters
- 16 in creating the state plan:
- 17 (1) Additional resources and supports needed and
- 18 available, including public-private partnerships, to
- 19 ensure successful implementation of the state plan;
- 20 (2) How to best ensure that the opt-out process from FAFSA
- 21 completion for parents is simple and unconditional;



- 1 (3) The feasibility of regional pilot programs by complex
2 area or island;
- 3 (4) How to best provide greater support for students
4 through the entire college application process,
5 including providing the necessary guidance for
6 students to actually enroll in college and be
7 successful once the FAFSA is completed;
- 8 (5) How to best protect family privacy, particularly for
9 undocumented families, and support schools to provide
10 hardship opt-out waivers on behalf of unresponsive
11 parents; and
- 12 (6) Any other issue the working group deems necessary.
- 13 (d) Members of the working group shall serve without
14 compensation but shall receive reimbursement for expenses,
15 including travel expenses, that are necessary for the
16 performance of their duties.
- 17 (e) The working group shall be exempt from part I of
18 chapter 92, Hawaii Revised Statutes; provided that the
19 department of education shall make available to the public the
20 minutes of all meetings of the working group on the department
21 of education's website.



1 (f) The department of education shall be responsible for
2 the administrative responsibilities of the working group,
3 including but not limited to preparing agendas and minutes,
4 organizing meetings, and reporting on the outcome and
5 recommendations of the working group.

6 (g) The working group shall submit a report of its
7 findings and recommendations to the legislature, the
8 superintendent of education, and all complex area
9 superintendents no later than twenty days prior to the convening
10 of the regular session of 2021.

11 SECTION 3. There is appropriated out of the general
12 revenues of the State of Hawaii the sum of \$ or so
13 much thereof as may be necessary for fiscal year 2020-2021 for
14 any expenses incurred by the working group established pursuant
15 to this Act.

16 The sum appropriated shall be expended by the department of
17 education for the purposes of this Act.

18 SECTION 4. This Act shall take effect on July 1, 2050.



Report Title:

FAFSA; Graduation Requirement; Working Group; Appropriation

Description:

Establishes a working group to create a state plan to make FAFSA completion a statewide graduation requirement and an opt-out waiver for FAFSA completion by the 2022-2023 school year. Appropriates funds. Takes effect on 7/1/2050. (HD1)

The summary description of legislation appearing on this page is for informational purposes only and is not legislation or evidence of legislative intent.

