



# FAFSA Challenge 2021-22

Informational Webinar  
September 29, 2021



# Session Overview

## Objectives

- Provide an introduction to the Connecticut FAFSA Challenge.
- Briefly share successes and learnings from the first year of the FAFSA Challenge in 2020-21.
- Launch the second year of the FAFSA Challenge and provide guidance for eligible schools and districts regarding next steps in the application process.

## Agenda

1. Introduction to the FAFSA Challenge
2. Year 1 Overview and Outcomes
3. 2021-22 Application Process
4. Next Steps and Q&A Section

Please feel welcome to drop any questions into the chat.



# FAFSA Overview

- The FAFSA is administered by the U.S. Department of Education's Office of Federal Student Aid; **CT students can receive up to ~\$20,000 in aid/year.**
- Students must complete the FAFSA to be **eligible for federal aid** (e.g., federal grants like Pell Grants, work study, loans, most college-based aid).
- The FAFSA **comes out in October** and is applicable of the following academic year. Schools often distribute aid on a first-come-first serve basis.
- **New state legislation** (PA 21-199) requires districts to adopt policies to improve FAFSA rates by July '22.



# FAFSA and Postsecondary Access

According to the National College Attainment Network, FAFSA completion **increases the likelihood of postsecondary enrollment by 84%.**



# Impetus for the Connecticut FAFSA Challenge



COVID-19 spotlighted disparities and opportunity gaps in our education system.

In 2021, **Connecticut's postsecondary enrollment rates dropped** by 3.5% and community colleges experienced a 15% decrease in enrollment.\*

In January 2020, year-over-year FAFSA completion rates were **down by 16%**.

# FAFSA Challenge Overview and Overarching Goals

The Connecticut FAFSA Challenge is designed to **spark and support local creativity** to increase FAFSA completion and improve postsecondary outcomes.

All CT districts are encourage to pursue FAFSA innovations and increase completion.

This year, **53 high schools from 25 districts may apply for additional resources** to continue or pilot new strategies to increase FAFSA completion during the 2021-2022 school year.

## 2021-2022 FAFSA Challenge Goals

**Improve Student Outcomes**



**Close Opportunity Gaps**



**Spark Innovation**



# 2020-21 FAFSA Completion Outcomes

## In CT FAFSA Challenge High Schools:

In 2020-21, FAFSA completion rates in CT FAFSA Challenge high schools increased by an average of 4 percentage points, and 42% of schools increased by 5+ points.



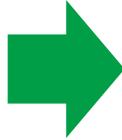
## In the United States:

In 2020-21, FAFSA completion rates across the country were down by 4 percentage points.

# Goal for 2021-22 FAFSA Challenge

**55%**

of Connecticut's  
**Class of 2021** completed  
the FAFSA by June 2021.



## Goals for 2021-22

- **A statewide completion goal of 60%**, or an increase of roughly 5 points from June 2021
- **90% of Challenge schools** will increase their FAFSA completion rates by 5 percentage points or more
- **Greater partnership and collaboration** between high schools, CBOs, and institutions of higher education

# Two Tiers of Support

Tier 1: Basic Support	Tier 2: Intensive Support
<p>Tier 1 provides resources for schools who need financial support to boost FAFSA completion rates but don't have the time or desire to participate in the more comprehensive Tier 2 program.</p> <p>In Tier 1, schools will receive:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>A modest microgrant</b>, scaled to senior class size</li><li>• <b>Access to aggregate and student-level data about FAFSA completion</b> (EdSight, Online Portal), empowering educators with information to then target student support.</li></ul>	<p><b>Tier 2 provides a larger set of resources</b> for schools who wish to commit more time to improving FAFSA completion, invest in their own professional development, and learn from other schools and experts.</p> <p>In Tier 2, schools will receive:</p>  <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>A larger microgrant</b>, scaled to senior class size</li><li>• <b>Participation in the FAFSA Challenge Community of Practice</b> (attendance required), where the RISE Network will hold monthly gatherings for school staff to collaborate and share successes, challenges, and promising practices</li><li>• <b>Training, in-person coaching, and professional development opportunities</b> for school staff in FAFSA completion</li><li>• <b>Access to aggregate and student-level data about FAFSA completion</b> (EdSight, Online Portal), empowering educators with information to then target student support.</li></ul>

# Public and Secure *EdSight* Portals

	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Public online data portal</li><li>● For all users</li> <li>● Aggregate data</li><li>● Suppression for small n sizes</li><li>● Interactive reports<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ Mostly tables</li><li>○ Filter and disaggregate</li><li>○ Export</li></ul></li></ul> <p><a href="https://edsight.ct.gov/">https://edsight.ct.gov/</a></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● <b>Secure</b> online data portal</li><li>● For designated users (school/district staff)</li><li>● Student-level data</li><li>● No suppression</li><li>● Interactive reports<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ Charts/Tables</li><li>○ Filter and Disaggregate</li><li>○ Export</li></ul></li></ul> <p><a href="https://secure-edsight.ct.gov/">https://secure-edsight.ct.gov/</a></p>

# How do I gain access to *EdSight Secure*?



Designated by  
Superintendent



LEA Security  
Manager  
creates  
account or  
assigns role



Wait one hour  
to login

Find your LEA Security Manager [here](#)

# FAFSA Data Dashboard in *EdSight* (Public)

The screenshot shows the EdSight website interface. At the top, the EdSight logo is accompanied by the tagline "INSIGHT INTO EDUCATION" and the Connecticut State Department of Education (CSDE) logo. Below this is a navigation bar with tabs for "EdSight Home", "Overview", "Students", "Educators", "Instruction", and "Performance". A sidebar on the left lists "Home" and "Related Links" including "Next Generation Accountability", "Profile and Performance Reports", "+/- Condition of Education", "Data Dictionary", "Data Suppression Guidelines", and "Related Links Crosswalk". The main content area features a "\*\*\*NEW\*\*\*" announcement for "2019-20 Expenditures" and a "Connecticut Report Cards" section. A prominent blue banner with a red oval highlights the link for the "Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA®) Data Dashboard". Below this banner is another blue banner for "Supporting Student Participation in 2020-21 Learning Models, Enrollment, and Attendance".

# FAFSA Data Dashboard in *EdSight* (Public)



## Connecticut Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA®) Completion Rates

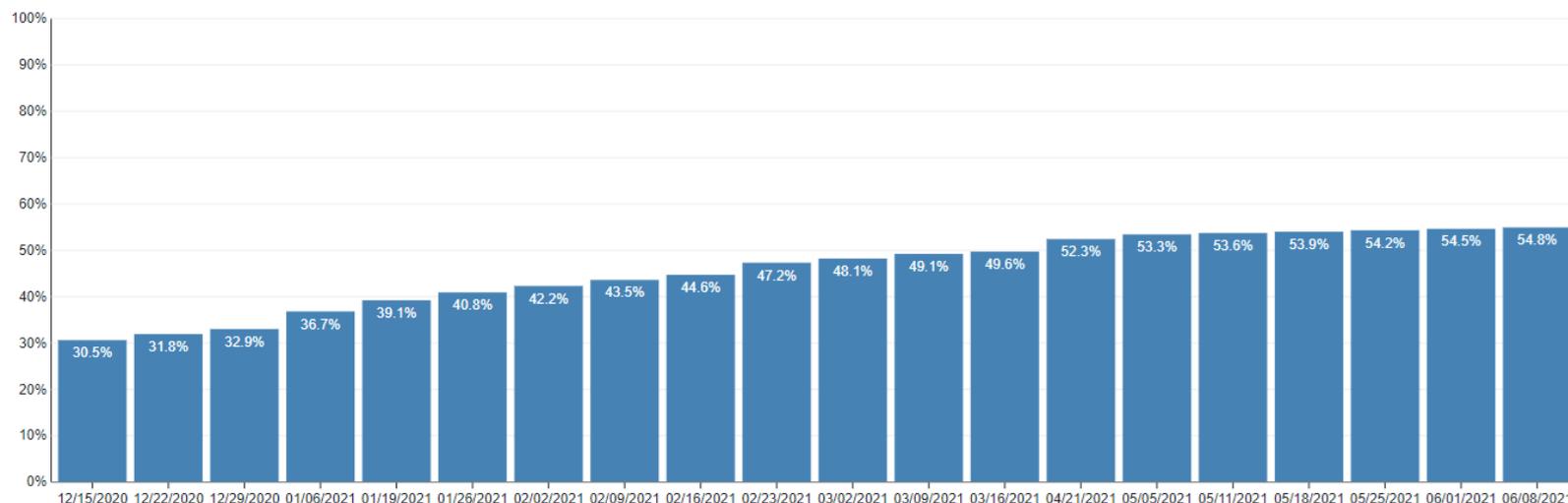
Completion of the [Free Application for Federal Student Aid \(FAFSA®\)](#) is an important step in the path to postsecondary education and is associated with higher rates of college enrollment. In addition to the data presented here, [FAFSA completion information and resources](#) are available for Connecticut schools and districts.

Use the report filters to update the bar chart and list table below. In addition, the following data files contain year-to-date and 2019-20 FAFSA completion data:

- [FAFSA Completion, 2020-2021](#)
- [FAFSA Completion, 2019-2020 \(as of May 7, 2020\)](#)

*Note: The FAFSA Completion report is an opt-in report. Data are not reported for districts that did not submit an opt-in form signed by district leadership.*

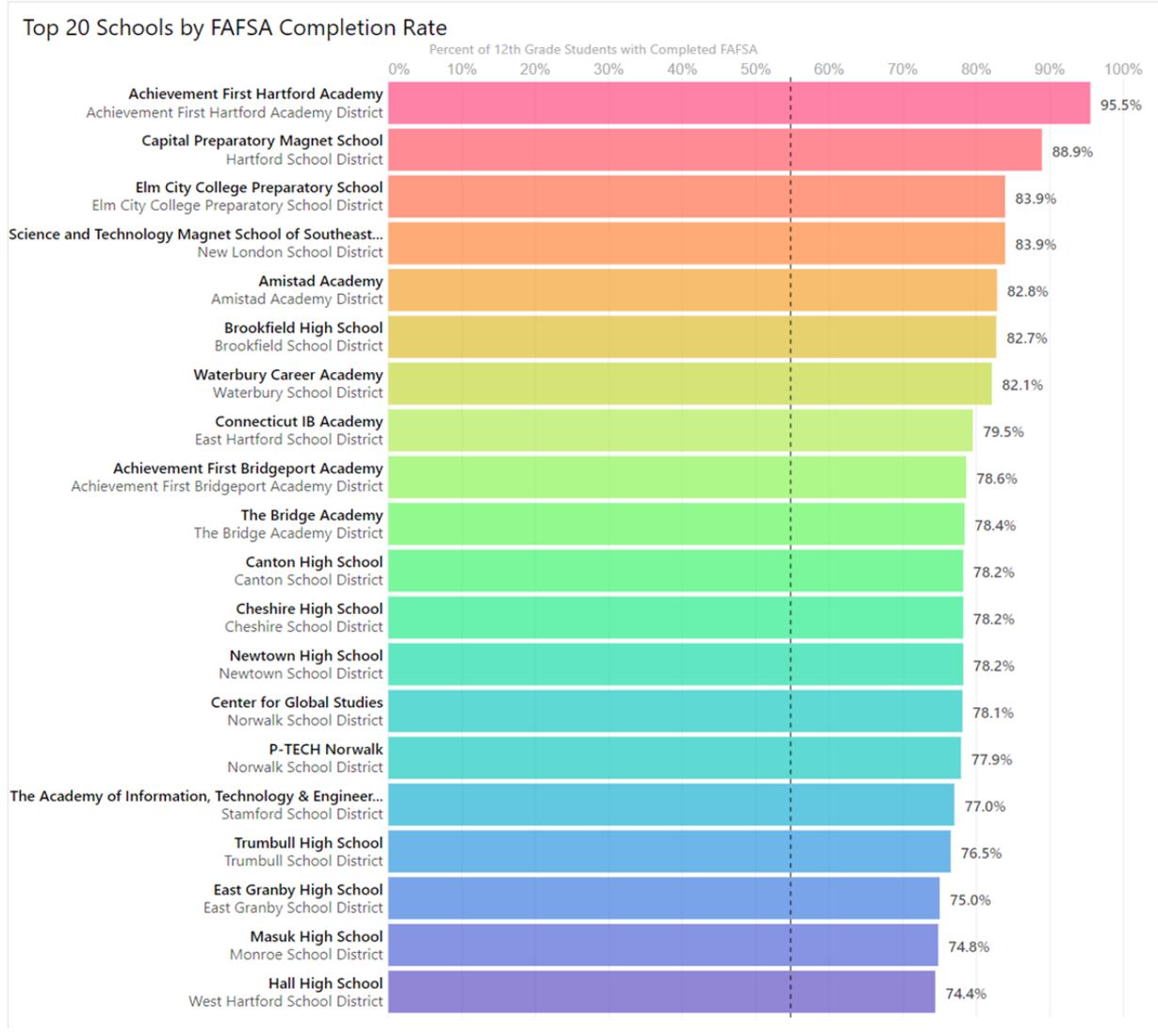
Statewide FAFSA Completion Rate



<https://edsight.ct.gov/relatedreports/FAFSACompletionReport.html>



# FAFSA Completion Report in *EdSight* (Public)



**Filters** [Clear Filters](#)

**District**  
  
 Filtering by district will update filter options for school.

**School**

**Alliance District**

**FAFSA Completion Challenge School**

**Percent High Needs At**

**Organization Type**

**Upload Date**

**Search**

# FAFSA Completion Report in *EdSight* (Public)

Showing 1 to 25 of 218 entries

Fix district sort

Export to CSV

School Name <span>↑↓</span>	Percent FAFSA Completion <span>↑↓</span>	Student Count <span>↑↓</span>	Percent High Needs <span>↑↓</span>	Alliance District <span>↑↓</span>	FAFSA Completion Challenge School <span>↑↓</span>
<b>Achievement First Bridgeport Academy District (2850013)</b>					
<span>⊖</span> Achievement First Bridgeport Academy	78.6%	56	55.8%	No	No
<b>Organization Type</b> Public Charter Schools					
<b>School Code</b> 2850113					
<b>Upload Date</b> 06/08/2021					
<b>Achievement First Hartford Academy District (2880013)</b>					
<span>⊕</span> Achievement First Hartford Academy	95.5%	44	67.6%	No	No
<b>Amistad Academy District (2790013)</b>					
<span>⊕</span> Amistad Academy	82.8%	64	66.0%	No	No
<b>Ansonia School District (0020011)</b>					
<span>⊕</span> Ansonia High School	51.1%	88	63.9%	Yes	Yes

# FAFSA Completion Report in *EdSight Secure*



INSIGHT INTO EDUCATION

Connecticut State Department of Education



**Students** **Educators**

Early Indication Tool (EIT)

EIT for Teachers  
Provides data from EIT and other sources in one exportable file. Data can be integrated with your existing district data management system or used with the provided [Data Lookup Tool \(instructions\)](#). Data from this tool can be shared with teachers in order to decrease the amount of time spent on formal assessment upon return to school.

English Learner (EL) Status Report

FAFSA Completion

Student Summary

Educators With Active Endorsements

# FAFSA Completion Report in *EdSight Secure*

## OVERVIEW

This report provides authorized users in districts that have executed a data use agreement with secure access to the **FAFSA Completion Status for currently enrolled Grade 12 students.**

## THE DATA TAB

The screenshot shows the EdSight Secure interface for the FAFSA Completion report. At the top, there is a navigation bar with the SAS logo and the text "SAS® Visual Analytics - Explore and Visualize". Below this is a header area with "Welcome to EdSight Secure!" and "FAFSA Completion". The main content area is titled "Sample School District" and includes a "FAFSA Completion Data" section with a "Resources" link. There are two dropdown menus for "School/Program" and "FAFSA Completion Status", both of which are annotated with a box labeled "Filters". Below these is a "Filter = School Name =" field. A "Date of Most Recent FAFSA Submission: Saturday, May 15, 2021" is displayed in an orange box. The "Student Search" section contains two input fields: "SASID Search" (with the placeholder "Enter SASID") and "Name Search" (with the placeholder "Enter Last Name"). Below the search fields is a table with the following columns: SASID, First Name, Middle Initial, Last Name, FAFSA Completed Status, School Name, District Name, FAFSA Submission Date, and Date of Most Recent FAFSA Processing. The table contains five rows of data. A box labeled "FAFSA Completion Status" is positioned over the "FAFSA Completed Status" column. A box labeled "Student-specific Dates" is positioned over the "FAFSA Submission Date" and "Date of Most Recent FAFSA Processing" columns. On the right side of the table, there is a menu with options: "Maximize view", "Save image", "Export data...", and "Print object...". A box labeled "Click here to view options to maximize, save, export, and print" points to this menu.

SASID	First Name	Middle Initial	Last Name	FAFSA Completed Status	School Name	District Name	FAFSA Submission Date	Date of Most Recent FAFSA Processing
0123456789	SAMPLE		STUDENT	Complete	Sample High School	Sample School District	October 21, 2020	October 21, 2020
0123456789	SAMPLE		STUDENT	Not Submitted	Sample High School	Sample School District		
0123456789	SAMPLE	J	STUDENT	Complete	Sample High School	Sample School District	November 5, 2020	November 5, 2020
0123456789	SAMPLE	G	STUDENT	Complete	Sample High School	Sample School District	November 11, 2020	November 11, 2020
0123456789	SAMPLE	M	STUDENT	Incomplete	Sample High School	Sample School District	February 2, 2021	February 2, 2021

# FAFSA Completion Report in *EdSight Secure*

## THE RESOURCES TAB

↳ | FAFSA Completion

FAFSA Completion Data

Resources

### Resources

[Free Application for Federal Student Aid \(FAFSA®\)](#)

[Why Invest in Increasing FAFSA Completion?](#)

[Research Projects: FAFSA Experiments](#)

### How-To Documents

[How to Use the FAFSA Completion Report](#)

[Edsight Secure Reports\\_Understanding and Creating Charts](#)

[EdSight Secure Introduction/FAQs](#)

# FAFSA Challenge Timeline

Activity:	Date:
Announcement of 2020-21 FAFSA Challenge winners	September 24, 2021
Call for 2021-22 proposals	September 24, 2021
Prospective applicant webinar	September 29, 2021
 Application deadline	October 18, 2021
Award notification	October 29, 2021
 Kickoff event (all Challenge participants invited)	November 2, 2021
Implementation period	November 2021-June 2022
Announcement of 2021-21 FAFSA Challenge winners	September 2022

# Application Overview

## One Application Per School with 5 Questions (300-Word Limit Per Question)

- 1. Use of Data:** What was your school's FAFSA completion rate in 2020-21 (use the [EdSight tool](#)? What are some of the root causes contributing to the data? How will your district use real-time [data posted on EdSight](#) during October 2021 through June 2022 to guide your FAFSA completion work?
- 1. Strategy and Commitment to Equity:** Describe how your school intends to use funds in order to raise FAFSA completion rates among high school seniors by at least 5 percentage points for the period of October 2021 through June 2022, compared to the Class of 2021. Explain how the school will use new resources to pursue new and innovative strategies, promote equity, and close opportunity gaps.
- 1. Implementation:** Summarize key implementation milestones in the fall, winter, and spring. Describe the school's capacity to implement new strategies.
- 1. Cross-Sector Collaboration:** Please identify all organizations that are collaborating in your school's FAFSA completion initiative and explain their role. High schools are strongly encouraged to partner with an outside organization.
- 1. [For Tier 2: Intensive Support Applicants Only]:** Please (1) explain why your school is interested in the more comprehensive set of resources provided in Tier 2 -- larger microgrants; monthly Community of Practice meetings with other Challenge schools; and professional development, training, and coaching opportunities on FAFSA completion -- and (2) provide the names and roles of 2-3 team members from your school who will participate in the recurring Community of Practice sessions.

See "Promising Practices" brief.

See buddy list on CSDE website

# Promising Practices



Platt High School, Meriden  
FAFSA Taskforce



Synergy High School, East Hartford  
MCC Partnership + Incentives



# FAFSA Challenge Buddy List

Organization	Contact Name	Contact Email	Community(s) Served
Albertus Magnus College	Michelle Cochran	mcochran@albertus.edu	New Haven
Central Connecticut State University	Gladys Colon	colon_gla@ccsu.edu	New Britain
Connecticut State Community College (all campuses)	Tamika Davis	tdavis@commnet.edu	<b>Statewide</b>
CONNTAC- Educational Opportunity Center	Cecilia Nugent	cnugent@conntacinc.org	<b>Statewide</b>
Eastern Connecticut State University	Chris Dorsey	dorseyc@easternct.edu	Greater Windham area
Fairfield University	Diana M Draper	ddraper@fairfield.edu	<b>Statewide</b>
Goodwin University	Bonnie Soltz-Knowlton	BKnowlton@goodwin.edu	East Hartford
Hartford Promise	Yahaira Escribano	yescribano@hartfordpromise.org	Hartford
Higher Edge	Katie Hallisey	katie@higheredge.org	New London, Willimantic, Windham
Higher Heights Youth Empowerment Programs, Inc.	Aliyah Brogdon	aliyah@higherheightsyouth.org	Greater New Haven, Fairfield County, Hartford
...	...	...	...

See <https://portal.ct.gov/SDE/Performance/FAFSA-Completion> for a full list of FAFSA Challenge buddies!

# 2021-22 FAFSA Challenge Awards



Awards will help schools continue their FAFSA completion work during the 2022-23 school year.

Eligibility	Award Category	Prize
CT FAFSA Challenge High Schools	<b>Governor’s Award:</b> Awarded to a FAFSA Challenge school that showed the largest percentage point growth from previous year ( <b>small, medium, and large schools</b> )	\$5,000* + certificate
	<b>Commissioner’s Award:</b> Awarded to a FAFSA Challenge school that showed the highest FAFSA completion rate at end of school year ( <b>small, medium, and large schools</b> )	\$5,000* + certificate
	<b>Monthly Awards:</b> Awarded to a FAFSA Challenge school that showed the highest month-to-month growth in FAFSA completion rates	Recognition on CSDE website
All Other High Schools	<b>Governor’s Award:</b> Awarded to school that showed the largest percentage point growth from previous year (small, medium, and large schools)	Governor’s certificate
	<b>Commissioner’s Award:</b> Awarded to school that showed the highest FAFSA completion rate at end of school year (small, medium, and large schools)	Commissioner’s certificate
	<b>Monthly Awards:</b> Awarded to school that showed the highest month-to-month growth in FAFSA completion rates	Recognition on CSDE website
All Schools	<b>Challenge Award:</b> Awarded to schools that boost FAFSA completion rates by at least 5 percentage points	Recognition on CSDE website
	<b>Bronze, Silver, and Gold Awards:</b> Awarded to schools that meet certain FAFSA completion thresholds (70%, 75% and 80% of students)	Recognition on CSDE website

# Next Steps and Q&A

## Questions?



### Next Steps

- Access the application and webinar at <https://portal.ct.gov/SDE/Performance/FAFSA-Completion>
- Complete and submit the application by Monday, October 18, 2021
- Hold November 2, 2021 at 2:30 PM for a virtual kickoff event for Challenge participants
- Additional questions? Please contact John at [john.scianimanico@ct.gov](mailto:john.scianimanico@ct.gov)