STATE OF CONNECTICUT
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

To: Superintendents of Schools

From: John Frassinelli, Division Director, Office of Student Support Services
Ajit Gopalakrishnan, Chief Performance Officer

Date: October 26, 2026

Subject: Importance of FAFSA Completion and High School Graduation Requirements

Since 2019, the Connecticut State Department of Education (CSDE) has encouraged high schools to support their seniors to complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) or an alternative financial aid application for students without legal immigration status. The CSDE has supported this effort through mini-grants, a public FAFSA dashboard, as well as student-level FAFSA status through EdSight Secure. CSDE data illustrate that FAFSA completion is highly correlated with college enrollment, especially for students from low-income families. The FAFSA unlocks multiple streams of federal, state, and institutional aid for students, including free tuition at CT State, grants, loans, and work study.

Beginning with the high school graduating class of 2027, subsection (d) of Section 10-221a and Section 10-221z of the Connecticut General Statutes require that students complete the FAFSA, the alternative aid application, or a waiver form in order to graduate high school. The waiver (which is available in multiple languages) can be completed by a parent, guardian, or the student if they are 18 or emancipated. After March 15, a certified educator may also complete the waiver if they have made at least three good-faith attempts to contact the parent/guardian/student. The intent of this requirement is not to cause bureaucratic paperwork, but to emphasize the importance of FAFSA completion. The CSDE will not be collecting data regarding waivers but encourages districts to maintain them in local files.

For questions regarding EdSight Secure FAFSA data, please contact David Alexandro at David.Alexandro@ct.gov. For all other FAFSA questions, please contact Kim Traverso at Kimberly.Traverso@ct.gov.