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GOVERNOR'S PRESS RELEASE ON SIGNING: Yes

FOLLOWING WERE PRINTED:

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REPORTS: No

HEARINGS: Yes

Committee meeting of Joint Committee on the Public Schools: "The Joint Committee on the Public Schools will meet to discuss high school students completing the financial aid application through the Higher Education Student Assistance Authority" June 9, 2023 <https://hdl.handle.net/10929/111859>

NEWSPAPER ARTICLES: No

CL/MM

P.L. 2023, CHAPTER 295, *approved January 16, 2024*
Assembly, No. 1181 (*Third Reprint*)

1 AN ACT concerning ³[graduation requirements for]³ high school
2 students ¹[and supplementing chapter 7C of Title 18A of the
3 New Jersey Statutes]^{1 3}and financial aid applications³.
4

5 BE IT ENACTED by the Senate and General Assembly of the State
6 of New Jersey:
7

8 1. a. Beginning with the ³[2022-2023] 2023-2024³ grade 11
9 class, ¹and for two school years thereafter,^{1 3}[the State Board of
10 Education shall require that the local graduation requirements
11 adopted by]³ a board of education or a board of trustees of a charter
12 school ³[include the requirement that] shall require³ a student¹, and
13 the student's parent or guardian, if applicable,^{1 3}to³ complete and
14 submit a financial aid application in a form prescribed by the
15 Higher Education Student Assistance Authority ¹as a prerequisite to
16 the student receiving a high school diploma from a public high
17 school or charter school unless a waiver is submitted to the school
18 district or charter school as set forth in subsection b. of this
19 section¹.

20 b. ³(1)³ A student shall be exempt from the ¹[graduation]¹
21 requirement ³in subsection a. of this section³ if the student ¹or the
22 student's parent or guardian¹ submits to the school district ¹or
23 charter school^{1 3}[:

24 (1)³ a ¹waiver¹ form signed by the parent or guardian, or by the
25 student if ¹[he] the student¹ is at least 18 years of age, requesting
26 the exemption ^{1 3}[of] from³ the requirement^{1 3}[: or]³ .³

27 (2) ¹[a form signed by the school counselor authorizing the
28 exemption for good cause as defined by the State board] ³[if] If³
29 the student is under 18 years of age and a form signed by the parent
30 or guardian cannot be reasonably obtained, the student's school
31 counselor may authorize the waiver as permitted by regulations
32 promulgated by the ²[Commissioner of Education¹] State Board of
33 Education pursuant to subsection h. of this section².

34 c. The ¹[Commissioner of Education] Executive Director of
35 the Higher Education Student Assistance Authority¹, in consultation
36 with the ¹[Executive Director of the Higher Education Student
37 Assistance Authority] Commissioner of Education¹, shall provide
38 ²[a list of]² resources for school districts, ³charter schools,³

EXPLANATION – Matter enclosed in bold-faced brackets [thus] in the above bill is not enacted and is intended to be omitted in the law.

Matter underlined thus is new matter.

Matter enclosed in superscript numerals has been adopted as follows:

¹Assembly AHI committee amendments adopted March 14, 2022.

²Assembly AED committee amendments adopted June 8, 2023.

³Senate SED committee amendments adopted November 27, 2023.

1 parents, and students that include instructions on how to complete a
2 financial aid application prescribed by the authority. ²The
3 resources shall include webinars, presentations, guidance
4 documents, and a list of available State and federal resources.² The
5 executive director of the authority shall make available such
6 resources as are necessary directly to school counselors or other
7 school employees ¹who assist students in completing the financial
8 aid application] who shall share the ³[information] resources³ with
9 students and with the students' parents or guardians¹.

10 d. Each school district ³and charter school³ shall annually
11 notify students and the parents or guardians of the requirement
12 established pursuant to this section.

13 e. ¹[The Department of Education shall verify which students
14 have met the requirement established pursuant to this section with
15 the authority. The department shall include that information in the
16 student's record.

17 f. The Department of Education shall include the number of
18 students who have met the requirement established pursuant to this
19 section in the School Report Card issued pursuant to P.L.1995,
20 c.235 (C.18A:7E-1 et seq.).¹

21 No adverse action shall be taken by a board of education or a
22 board of trustees of a charter school against any student ³[who is
23 exempted] due to a student's receipt of an exemption³ from the
24 requirement to complete and submit a financial aid application
25 pursuant to subsection b. of this section.

26 f. Nothing in this act shall be construed as requiring school
27 counselors, or any other school employee, to assist students in
28 completing the financial aid application. Nothing in this act shall
29 be construed as creating a private right of action against the school
30 district ³, charter school,³ or the State upon compliance or
31 noncompliance with the provisions of this act.¹

32 ²g. The Executive Director of the Higher Education Student
33 Assistance Authority shall make the resources listed in subsection c.
34 of this section available to ³[public four year]³ institutions of
35 higher education in order to facilitate the delivery of technical
36 assistance to area high schools.

37 h. The State Board of Education shall adopt, pursuant to the
38 Administrative Procedure Act," P.L.1968, c.410 (C.52:14B-1 et
39 seq.), rules and regulations necessary to carry out the provisions of
40 this act.²

41 ³i. The executive director of the authority shall prepare and issue
42 to the Department of Education, and to the Legislature pursuant to
43 section 2 of P.L.1991, c.164 (C.52:14-19.1), a report that includes
44 the number of students that completed a financial aid form pursuant
45 to subsection a. of this section, as well as the number of waivers
46 submitted to school districts or charter schools pursuant to

A1181 [3R]

3

1 subsection b. of this section no later than three years following the
2 effective date of this act.³

3

4 2. This act shall take effect immediately.

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8

9 Requires high school students to complete financial aid
10 applications.

ASSEMBLY, No. 1181

STATE OF NEW JERSEY

220th LEGISLATURE

PRE-FILED FOR INTRODUCTION IN THE 2022 SESSION

Sponsored by:

Assemblywoman MILA M. JASEY

District 27 (Essex and Morris)

Assemblywoman BRITNEE N. TIMBERLAKE

District 34 (Essex and Passaic)

Assemblyman WILLIAM F. MOEN, JR.

District 5 (Camden and Gloucester)

Co-Sponsored by:

Assemblywomen Quijano, Reynolds-Jackson, Pintor Marin and McKnight

SYNOPSIS

Requires students to complete financial aid application as part of high school graduation requirements.

CURRENT VERSION OF TEXT

Introduced Pending Technical Review by Legislative Counsel.



(Sponsorship Updated As Of: 2/14/2022)

A1181 JASEY, TIMBERLAKE

2

1 AN ACT concerning graduation requirements for high school
2 students and supplementing chapter 7C of Title 18A of the New
3 Jersey Statutes.

4
5 **BE IT ENACTED** by the Senate and General Assembly of the State
6 of New Jersey:

7
8 1. a. Beginning with the 2022-2023 grade 11 class, the State
9 Board of Education shall require that the local graduation
10 requirements adopted by a board of education or a board of trustees
11 of a charter school include the requirement that a student complete
12 and submit a financial aid application in a form prescribed by the
13 Higher Education Student Assistance Authority.

14 b. A student shall be exempt from the graduation requirement
15 if the student submits to the school district:

16 (1) a form signed by the parent or guardian, or by the student if
17 he is at least 18 years of age, requesting the exemption; or

18 (2) a form signed by the school counselor authorizing the
19 exemption for good cause as defined by the State board.

20 c. The Commissioner of Education, in consultation with the
21 Executive Director of the Higher Education Student Assistance
22 Authority, shall provide a list of resources for school districts,
23 parents, and students that include instructions on how to complete a
24 financial aid application prescribed by the authority. The executive
25 director of the authority shall make available such resources as are
26 necessary directly to school counselors or other school employees
27 who assist students in completing the financial aid application.

28 d. Each school district shall annually notify students and the
29 parents or guardians of the requirement established pursuant to this
30 section.

31 e. The Department of Education shall verify which students
32 have met the requirement established pursuant to this section with
33 the authority. The department shall include that information in the
34 student's record.

35 f. The Department of Education shall include the number of
36 students who have met the requirement established pursuant to this
37 section in the School Report Card issued pursuant to P.L.1995,
38 c.235 (C.18A:7E-1 et seq.).

39

40 2. This act shall take effect immediately.

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STATEMENT

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45 This bill provides that, beginning with the 2022-2023 grade 11
46 class, the State Board of Education will require that the local
47 graduation requirements adopted by a board of education or a board
48 of trustees of a charter school include the requirement that a student

A1181 JASEY, TIMBERLAKE

1 complete and submit a financial aid application in a form prescribed
2 by the Higher Education Student Assistance Authority. A student
3 will be exempt from the graduation requirement if the student
4 submits to the school district:

- 5 (1) a form signed by the parent or guardian, or by the student if
6 he is at least 18 years of age, requesting the exemption; or
- 7 (2) a form signed by the school counselor authorizing the
8 exemption for good cause as defined by the State board.

9 The Commissioner of Education, in consultation with the
10 Executive Director of the Higher Education Student Assistance
11 Authority, will provide a list of resources for school districts,
12 parents, and students that include instructions on how to complete a
13 financial aid application prescribed by the authority. The executive
14 director of the authority will make available such resources as are
15 necessary directly to school counselors or other school employees
16 who assist students in completing the financial aid application.

17 Each school district will annually notify students and the parents
18 or guardians of the requirement established by the bill. The
19 Department of Education will verify which students have met the
20 requirement established by the bill with the authority and will
21 include that information in the student's record. The department
22 will also include information on the number of students who have
23 met the requirement in the School Report Card issued under current
24 law.

ASSEMBLY HIGHER EDUCATION COMMITTEE

STATEMENT TO

ASSEMBLY, No. 1181

with committee amendments

STATE OF NEW JERSEY

DATED: MARCH 14, 2022

The Assembly Higher Education Committee reports favorably Assembly Bill No. 1181 with committee amendments.

As amended, this bill provides that, beginning with the 2022-2023 grade 11 class, and for two school years thereafter, the State Board of Education will require that the local graduation requirements adopted by a board of education or a board of trustees of a charter school include the requirement that a student, or the student's parent or guardian, if applicable, complete and submit a financial aid application in a form prescribed by the Higher Education Student Assistance Authority (HESAA) as a prerequisite to the student receiving a high school diploma unless a waiver is submitted to the school district or charter school. A student will be exempt from the requirement if the student, or the student's parent or guardian, submits to the school district or charter school:

(1) a waiver form signed by the parent or guardian, or by the student if the student is at least 18 years of age, requesting the exemption of the requirement; or

(2) if the student is under 18 years of age and a form signed by the parent or guardian cannot be reasonably obtained, the student's school counselor may authorize the waiver as permitted by regulations promulgated by the Commissioner of Education.

The Executive Director of HESAA, in consultation with the commissioner, will provide a list of resources for school districts, parents, and students that include instructions on how to complete a financial aid application prescribed by the authority. The executive director of the authority will make available such resources as are necessary directly to school counselors or other school employees who assist students in completing the financial aid application, who will share the information with students and with the students' parents or guardians.

Each school district will annually notify students and the parents or guardians of the requirement established by the bill.

This bill was pre-filed for introduction in the 2022-2023 session pending technical review. As reported, the bill includes the changes required by technical review, which has been performed.

COMMITTEE AMENDMENTS:

The committee amended the bill to:

- provide that the provisions of the bill will apply to the 2022-2023 grade 11 class, and for two school years thereafter;
- provide that the form will serve as a prerequisite to the student receiving a high school diploma from a public high school or charter school unless a waiver is submitted to the school district or charter school;
- provide that, if the student is under 18 years of age and a form signed by the parent or guardian cannot be reasonably obtained, a student will be exempt from the requirement if the student's school counselor authorizes the waiver as permitted by regulations promulgated by the Commissioner of Education;
- provide that the Executive Director of HESAA, in consultation with the commissioner, will provide a list of resources for school districts, parents, and students that include instructions on how to complete a financial aid application prescribed by the authority. The information is required to be shared with students and with the students' parents or guardians;
- specify that no adverse action is to be taken by a board of education or a board of trustees of a charter school against any student who is exempted from the requirement to complete and submit a financial aid application;
- provide that nothing in the bill will be construed as requiring school counselors, or any other school employee, to assist students in completing the financial aid application, and that nothing will be construed as creating a private right of action against the school district or State upon compliance or noncompliance;
- delete the requirement that DOE will verify which students have met the requirement; and
- delete the requirement that DOE will include information on the number of students who have met the requirement in the School Report Card issued under current law.

ASSEMBLY EDUCATION COMMITTEE

STATEMENT TO

[First Reprint]

ASSEMBLY, No. 1181

with committee amendments

STATE OF NEW JERSEY

DATED: JUNE 8, 2023

The Assembly Education committee reports favorably Assembly Bill No. 1181 (1R) with committee amendments.

The amended bill provides that, beginning with the 2022-2023 grade 11 class, and for two school years thereafter, the State Board of Education is to require that the local graduation requirements adopted by a board of education or a board of trustees of a charter school include the requirement that a student, or the student's parent or guardian, if applicable, complete and submit a financial aid application in a form prescribed by the Higher Education Student Assistance Authority (HESAA) as a prerequisite to the student receiving a high school diploma unless a waiver is submitted to the school district or charter school. A student is exempt from the requirement if the student, or the student's parent or guardian, submits to the school district or charter school:

(1) a waiver form signed by the parent or guardian, or by the student if the student is at least 18 years of age, requesting the exemption of the requirement; or

(2) if the student is under 18 years of age and a form signed by the parent or guardian cannot be reasonably obtained, the student's school counselor may authorize the waiver as permitted by regulations promulgated by the State Board of Education.

The amended bill directs the Executive Director of HESAA, in consultation with the commissioner, to provide resources for school districts, parents, and students that include instructions on how to complete a financial aid application prescribed by the authority. The resources are to include webinars, presentations, guidance documents, and a list of available State and federal resources. The executive director of the authority is to make available such resources as are necessary directly to school counselors or other school employees who are required to share the information with students and with the students' parents or guardians. The amended bill also directs HESSA to make the resources available to public four year institutions of higher education in order to facilitate the delivery of technical assistance to area high schools.

Each school district will annually notify students and the parents or guardians of the requirement established by the bill.

COMMITTEE AMENDMENTS:

The committee amended the bill to:

- Provide that the resources concerning completing a financial aid application prescribed by the authority will include webinars, presentations, guidance documents, and a list of available State and federal resources;
- Require the Executive Director of HESAA to make the resources available to public four year institutions of higher education in order to facilitate the delivery of technical assistance to area high schools;
- Provide that the State Board of Education will adopt rules and regulations necessary to carry out the provisions of the bill.

SENATE EDUCATION COMMITTEE

STATEMENT TO

[Second Reprint]

ASSEMBLY, No. 1181

with committee amendments

STATE OF NEW JERSEY

DATED: NOVEMBER 27, 2023

The Senate Education Committee favorably reports Assembly Bill No. 1181 (2R) with committee amendments.

The amended bill provides that, beginning with the 2023-2024 grade 11 class, and for two school years thereafter, a board of education or a board of trustees of a charter school will require a student, and the student's parent or guardian, if applicable, to complete and submit a financial aid application in a form prescribed by the Higher Education Student Assistance Authority (HESAA) as a prerequisite to the student receiving a high school diploma unless a waiver is submitted to the school district or charter school. A student is exempt from the requirement if the student, or the student's parent or guardian, submits to the school district or charter school a waiver form signed by the parent or guardian, or by the student if the student is at least 18 years of age, requesting the exemption from the requirement. If the student is under 18 years of age and a form signed by the parent or guardian cannot be reasonably obtained, the student's school counselor may authorize the waiver as permitted by regulations promulgated by the State Board of Education.

As amended, the bill directs the executive director of HESAA, in consultation with the Commissioner of Education, to provide resources for school districts, charter schools, parents, and students that include instructions on how to complete a financial aid application prescribed by the authority. The resources are to include webinars, presentations, guidance documents, and a list of available State and federal resources. The executive director of the authority is to make available such resources as are necessary directly to school counselors or other school employees who are required to share resources with students and with the students' parents or guardians. The amended bill also directs HESSA to make the resources available to institutions of higher education in order to facilitate the delivery of technical assistance to area high schools.

Under the amended bill, each school district and charter school will annually notify students and the parents or guardians of the requirement established by the bill. The amended bill also requires the

executive director of the authority to prepare and issue a report to the Department of Education, as well as to the Legislature, that includes the number of students that completed a financial aid form, as well as the number of waivers submitted to a school district or a charter school.

As amended and reported by the committee, Assembly Bill No. 1181 (2R) is identical to the Senate Committee Substitute for Senate Bill No. 2054, which was also reported by the committee on this date.

COMMITTEE AMENDMENTS:

The committee amended the bill to:

- provide that the provisions of the bill are required to begin with the 2023-2024 school year;
- specify that the provisions of the bill apply to charter schools;
- amend the title of the bill; and
- require that the executive director of the Higher Education Student Assistance Authority prepare and issue a report to the Department of Education and the Legislature, that includes the number of students that completed a financial aid form, as well as the number of waivers submitted to a school district or charter school.

SENATE, No. 2054

STATE OF NEW JERSEY 220th LEGISLATURE

INTRODUCED MARCH 3, 2022

Sponsored by:

Senator SHIRLEY K. TURNER

District 15 (Hunterdon and Mercer)

Senator ROBERT W. SINGER

District 30 (Monmouth and Ocean)

Co-Sponsored by:

Senator Cunningham

SYNOPSIS

Requires students to complete financial aid application as part of high school graduation requirements.

CURRENT VERSION OF TEXT

As introduced.



(Sponsorship Updated As Of: 3/14/2022)

1 AN ACT concerning graduation requirements for high school
2 students and supplementing chapter 7C of Title 18A of the New
3 Jersey Statutes.

4
5 **BE IT ENACTED** *by the Senate and General Assembly of the State*
6 *of New Jersey:*

7
8 1. a. Beginning with the 2022-2023 grade 11 class, the State
9 Board of Education shall require that the local graduation
10 requirements adopted by a board of education or a board of trustees
11 of a charter school include the requirement that a student complete
12 and submit a financial aid application in a form prescribed by the
13 Higher Education Student Assistance Authority.

14 b. A student shall be exempt from the graduation requirement
15 if the student submits to the school district:

16 (1) a form signed by the parent or guardian, or by the student if
17 he is at least 18 years of age, requesting the exemption; or

18 (2) a form signed by the school counselor authorizing the
19 exemption for good cause as defined by the State board.

20 c. The Commissioner of Education, in consultation with the
21 Executive Director of the Higher Education Student Assistance
22 Authority, shall provide a list of resources for school districts,
23 parents, and students that include instructions on how to complete a
24 financial aid application prescribed by the authority. The executive
25 director of the authority shall make available such resources as are
26 necessary directly to school counselors or other school employees
27 who assist students in completing the financial aid application.

28 d. Each school district shall annually notify students and the
29 parents or guardians of the requirement established pursuant to this
30 section.

31 e. The Department of Education shall verify which students
32 have met the requirement established pursuant to this section with
33 the authority. The department shall include that information in the
34 student's record.

35 f. The Department of Education shall include the number of
36 students who have met the requirement established pursuant to this
37 section in the School Report Card issued pursuant to P.L.1995,
38 c.235 (C.18A:7E-1 et seq.).

39
40 2. This act shall take effect immediately.

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43
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STATEMENT

45 This bill provides that, beginning with the 2022-2023 grade 11
46 class, the State Board of Education will require that the local
47 graduation requirements adopted by a board of education or a board
48 of trustees of a charter school include the requirement that a student

1 complete and submit a financial aid application in a form prescribed
2 by the Higher Education Student Assistance Authority. A student
3 will be exempt from the graduation requirement if the student
4 submits to the school district:

5 (1) a form signed by the parent or guardian, or by the student if
6 he is at least 18 years of age, requesting the exemption; or

7 (2) a form signed by the school counselor authorizing the
8 exemption for good cause as defined by the State board.

9 The Commissioner of Education, in consultation with the
10 Executive Director of the Higher Education Student Assistance
11 Authority, will provide a list of resources for school districts,
12 parents, and students that include instructions on how to complete a
13 financial aid application prescribed by the authority. The executive
14 director of the authority will make available such resources as are
15 necessary directly to school counselors or other school employees
16 who assist students in completing the financial aid application.

17 Each school district will annually notify students and the parents
18 or guardians of the requirement established by the bill. The
19 Department of Education will verify which students have met the
20 requirement established by the bill with the authority and will
21 include that information in the student's record. The department
22 will also include information on the number of students who have
23 met the requirement in the School Report Card issued under current
24 law.

SENATE EDUCATION COMMITTEE

STATEMENT TO

SENATE COMMITTEE SUBSTITUTE FOR SENATE, No. 2054

STATE OF NEW JERSEY

DATED: NOVEMBER 27, 2023

The Senate Education Committee favorably reports a Senate Committee Substitute for Senate Bill No. 2054.

The committee substitute provides that, beginning with the 2023-2024 grade 11 class, and for two school years thereafter, a board of education or a board of trustees of a charter school will require a student, and the student's parent or guardian, if applicable, to complete and submit a financial aid application in a form prescribed by the Higher Education Student Assistance Authority HESAA as a prerequisite to the student receiving a high school diploma unless a waiver is submitted to the school district or charter school. A student is exempt from the requirement if the student, or the student's parent or guardian, submits to the school district or charter school a waiver form signed by the parent or guardian, or by the student if the student is at least 18 years of age, requesting the exemption from the requirement. If the student is under 18 years of age and a form signed by the parent or guardian cannot be reasonably obtained, the student's school counselor may authorize the waiver as permitted by regulations promulgated by the State Board of Education.

The committee substitute directs the executive director of HESAA, in consultation with the Commissioner of Education, to provide resources for school districts, charter schools, parents, and students that include instructions on how to complete a financial aid application prescribed by the authority. The resources are to include webinars, presentations, guidance documents, and a list of available State and federal resources. The executive director of the authority is to make available such resources as are necessary directly to school counselors or other school employees who are required to share resources with students and with the students' parents or guardians. The committee substitute also directs HESSA to make the resources available to institutions of higher education in order to facilitate the delivery of technical assistance to area high schools.

Under the committee substitute, each school district and charter school will annually notify students and the parents or guardians of the requirement established by the bill. The committee substitute also requires the executive director of the authority to prepare and issue a report to the Department of Education, as well as to the Legislature,

that includes the number of students that completed a financial aid form, as well as the number of waivers submitted to a school district or a charter school.

As reported by the committee, the Senate Committee Substitute for Senate Bill No. 2054 is identical to Assembly Bill No. 1181 (2R), which as amended and reported by the committee on this date.

Governor Murphy Signs Legislation Requiring High School Students to Complete Financial Aid Applications

01/16/2024

TRENTON – Governor Phil Murphy today signed [A1181/S2054](#) to make the completion of a financial aid application form a prerequisite to graduation for public high school and charter school students in New Jersey. Beginning with the 2023-2024 11th grade class, and for two school years thereafter, students and their guardians will be required to complete and submit either the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) or the NJ Alternative Financial Aid Application, as guided by the Higher Education Student Assistance Authority (HESAA), in order to receive their high school diploma. The information on a student's financial aid application is used to notify them of any financial aid they are eligible to receive they pursue a postsecondary education.

The Executive Director of HESAA, in consultation with the Commissioner of Education, will be responsible for providing school districts, charter schools, parents, and students with instructions on how to complete the financial aid applications. This may include webinars, presentations, guidance documents, and a list of available state and federal resources.

School districts will annually notify students and their parents or guardians of this requirement. Students and their families may submit a waiver requesting an exemption from this requirement.

"There are many state and federal resources available to graduating high school students to help make a college education more affordable," **said Governor Murphy**. "Without fill out important applications, students could unknowingly be leaving money on the table that could have enabled them to pursue higher education. Ensuring high school students understand their options is paramount to our goal of making a college degree more attainable for New Jersey residents."

"Under Governor Murphy's leadership, our state has taken significant steps to make postsecondary education more affordable for New Jersey students," **said HESAA Executive Director David J. Socolow**. "HESAA is dedicated to helping students access valuable state, federal, and institutional grants and scholarships. Only by completing a financial aid application can students and their families understand the true net costs of options to further their education and achieve upward social and economic mobility. As New Jersey joins a growing list of states that require high school seniors to apply for financial aid before graduation, our students will be better able to make well-informed decisions."

"The introduction of legislation mandating the completion and submission of a financial aid application is a commendable move towards fostering equal opportunities in education," **Dr. Angelica Allen-McMillan, Acting Commissioner of Education**. "Recognizing the pivotal role financial aid plays in unlocking the doors to higher education for students, this requirement ensures a streamlined process through the Higher Education Student Assistance Authority. This legislation continues to reinforce our commitment to providing comprehensive support for students and their families. I believe this legislation will contribute significantly to bridging the gap in access to higher education and empowering students on their academic journeys."

The primary sponsors of this legislation are Senator Shirley Turner and former Assemblywoman Mila Jasey. Additional sponsors include Senator Robert Singer, then-Assemblywoman now-Senator Britnee Timberlake, and Assemblyman Bill Moen.

"Many high schoolers are quick to dismiss college as out of reach based on the price tag alone, without considering the financial assistance that may be available," **said Senator Shirley Turner**. "By requiring students to complete financial aid applications, our goal is not only to help reduce overall student loan debt, but to also open up pathways for college trade school that will allow students to earn a higher income in the future to better support themselves. I look forward to seeing the impact this legislation has, especially on our low and middle-income students."

"The student financial aid crisis is growing by the minute and students applying to colleges need all the assistance they can get," **said Senator Robert Singer**. "When students receive more money through grants and scholarships, it helps them avoid taking on excessive loans that can take decades to repay. This requirement will help make applying to college less strenuous and ensure that students are more knowledgeable about the financial aid that is available to them."

"College costs can be daunting, but financial aid is available. Yet studies have shown that students across the country miss out on receiving that money because they have failed to fill out financial aid applications," **said former Assemblywoman Mila Jasey**. "With this bill, we'll make sure students have the support they need to understand and properly fill out their applications."

"A lack of education as it relates to financial literacy can often create a big hurdle navigating financial aid forms and platforms for students. This can make the difference and stand in the way of them going to college," **said Senator and former Assemblywoman Britnee Timberlake**. "Low and moderate income students can't receive Pell Grants and other need-based aid without submitting financial aid applications. Getting those forms properly filled out could prove to be the difference for a student who wants and deserves to continue their education but is unable to pay all of the college expenses."

"As someone who personally knows the benefit of completing a FAFSA application to advance one's education, I believe that we need to give students as many tools as possible to help them further their education," **said Assemblyman Bill Moen**. "Requiring them to fill out financial aid forms in school, and providing resources to them and their parents, could be a game changer for students who want to continue their education but need financial aid in order to do that."

HESAA currently assists many students and families in completing the application process and will be expanding the support available to families and school communities upon implementation of this new requirement. High schools are encouraged to enter into a data-sharing [agreement](#) with HESAA to receive information about the completion status of each 12th grade student's financial aid application to more effectively provide individualized reminders and support to those that have not yet filled it out. For more information about the upcoming FAFSA and NJ Alternative Financial Aid Application for NJ Dreamers, visit: <https://www.hesaa.org/Pages/financialaidhub.aspx>.