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Washington Office of Superintendent of
PUBLIC INSTRUCTION
Chris Reykdal, Superintendent

k12.wa.us

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Due date: December 1, 2020
() Informational

BULLETIN NO. 080-20 OFFICE OF SYSTEM AND SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT

TO: Educational Service District Superintendents
School District Superintendents
School District Business Managers
High School Principals
High School Counselors

FROM: Chris Reykdal, Superintendent of Public Instruction

RE: New Financial Aid Advising Day Requirements

CONTACT: Kim Reykdal, Secondary School Counseling Program Supervisor
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PURPOSE/BACKGROUND

In 2020, the legislature established a new Financial Aid Advising Day (FAAD), as outlined in RCW 28A.230.310 and RCW 28A.300.815. The FAAD is an equity-centered opportunity for all districts with a high school to enhance their direct support of students' aspirations to attend college after high school, especially those students who have historically been underrepresented in postsecondary attainment. While correct that not all graduates need to attend college to reach their post-high school career goal, ensuring that all seniors know about financial aid opportunities and how to access them could inspire students to consider returning to college later in life as their career goals evolve.

Additional context for this new legislation stems from the current reality that Washington state rates second lowest nationally in completion rates for the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA). While our state is one of the few that also provides financial support for undocumented students through the Washington Application for State Financial Aid (WASFA), this aid program is also underutilized by eligible students.

Research has shown that increased completion of student aid applications in other states has led to increases in high school graduation and college matriculation, especially for students in underrepresented groups. Washington's new Financial Aid Advising Day (FAAD), in conjunction

with related High School and Beyond Plan (HSBP) requirements, can provide districts with a robust framework for improving Washington's low financial aid application completion rates and better supporting students' post-high school goals to attend college.

This bulletin provides a summary of the new Financial Aid Advising Day requirement and available state-level supports in place for implementation this fall. Additional information can be found in the Class of 2021 Graduation Pathways Toolkit and the High School and Beyond Plan template as posted in the "What's New" box on OSPI's [Graduation webpage](#).

FINANCIAL AID ADVISING DAY REQUIREMENTS

Beginning with the 2020–21 school year, within existing resources, all districts with a high school must provide both a FAAD and notification of financial aid opportunities to parents and guardians of any student entering the twelfth grade. Districts may choose to combine offering the FAAD with concurrently ensuring that all seniors have also completed the required financial aid component of their HSBP, as described in the Graduation Pathway's Toolkit.

NOTIFICATION TO PARENTS AND GUARDIANS

The annual notification of financial aid opportunities must include information regarding:

- The eligibility requirements of the Washington College Grant.
- The requirements of the financial aid advising day.
- The process for opting out of the financial aid advising day.
- Any community-based resources available to assist parents and guardians in understanding the requirements of and how to complete the free application for federal student aid and the Washington application for state financial aid.

FINANCIAL AID ADVISING DAY(S) REQUIREMENTS

A "financial aid advising day" means a day, or series of days, occurring by December 1st of each year that includes, but is not limited to, dedicated time during regular school hours for staff to:

- Provide information to twelfth grade students on the FAFSA, the WASFA, and the College Board's CSS profile applications.
- As appropriate and whenever possible, assist twelfth grade students in completing the appropriate application.
- In conjunction with the Washington Student Achievement Council (WSAC), distribute information on the Washington College Grant and demonstrate the use of the newly created college financial aid calculator.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION AND REQUIREMENTS

Districts may choose the date, or series of dates, during which to hold a FAAD.

The Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI), in collaboration with the Washington Student Achievement Council (WSAC), will assist districts in facilitating opportunities outside of

regular school hours for parents to take part in seminars on completing the FAFSA/WASFA. Whenever possible, districts shall provide spoken language interpreter services for limited English-speaking families.

Schools must allow students over the age of eighteen to opt out, and parents or guardians of students under the age of eighteen to opt their student out, of scheduled FAAD activities.

A student may not be penalized for failing to complete financial aid applications or for opting out of FAAD activities. Educational staff, including instructional, administrative, and counseling staff, may not be assessed or penalized on the basis of students' completion of financial aid forms or students' decisions to opt out.

In the administration of the FAAD, personally identifiable student or family information must be protected in accordance with state and federal privacy laws.

AVAILABLE STATE-LEVEL SUPPORTS

OSPI is collaborating with WSAC to provide resources, technical assistance and web-based supports to assist districts with providing this equity-enhancing college transition service to seniors and their families. WSAC's [12th Year Campaign website](#) has been redesigned to provide a comprehensive suite of resources, training and information to assist with this new endeavor. Within this legislation, school districts are encouraged to engage in WSAC's financial aid advising training, which is available on this webpage.

Additionally, the Washington State School Directors' Association (WSSDA), with assistance from OSPI and WSAC, has developed a new Model Policy 3535 and corresponding procedure for school board directors to consider for adoption.

INFORMATION AND ASSISTANCE

For questions regarding this bulletin, please contact Kim Reykdal, Secondary School Counseling Program Supervisor at 360-725-6168 or email kim.reykdal@k12.wa.us. The OSPI TTY number is 360-664-3631.

This bulletin is also available on the [Bulletins](#) page of the OSPI website.

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Dixie Grunenfelder

Director

K-12 Student Supports

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