



The Education Trust–West

**Board Resolution:
Establish Financial Aid for College Application Policy at [District]**

WHEREAS: California provides more than \$2 billion in state financial aid through the California State Aid Commission's Cal Grant program;

WHEREAS: More than half of California's K-12 students are economically disadvantaged and access to financial aid is essential for low-income students who wish to pursue a college education;

WHEREAS: However, only 54% of California's high school seniors completed a financial aid application in 2019;

WHEREAS: Leaving nearly \$550 million in federal and state aid will remain left on the table that could have made going to college a reality for students;

WHEREAS: The pandemic has led to an alarming decline in FAFSA completions and Fall 2020 undergraduate enrollment is down 5.4% in California;

WHEREAS: High schools with high concentration of low-income students, Native American students, Latinx students, and Black students were most impacted and have seen the largest decline in FAFSA completion amidst the pandemic;

WHEREAS: At **[District]** financial aid completion rates are [\[find data here\]](#);

WHEREAS: FAFSA completion is associated with an increased likelihood of immediately enrolling in postsecondary education after high school graduation, and students who fill out FAFSA have higher odds of persisting than their peers who do not file;

WHEREAS: When Val Verde Unified School District in California established financial aid application completion a graduation requirement in the first year of implementation alone Free Application for Federal Student/California Dream Act Application completion increased 14% points from 69% to 83% with no adverse impact on high school graduation rates;

WHEREAS: Establishing financial aid for college applications as a policy is low to no cost for high schools and districts;

WHEREAS: Research finds a college degree provides economic opportunities through higher average earnings, better benefits, wealth accumulation, ability to work from home, less vulnerability of job loss or unemployment, less impacted by the recession, and benefits from economic recoveries compared to workers without college degrees;

WHEREAS: The economic benefit of a college degree is partially impactful for low-income students and students of color to overcome economic and social inequities;

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED: That the Board of Education of **[city name]** Unified School District requires all high schools to ensure 12th grade pupils submit and complete a financial aid application (FAFSA, California Dream Act Application, or an opt-out waiver).

FURTHER BE IT RESOLVED: That the Board of Education of **[city name]** Unified School District and high school stakeholders track and monitor FAFSA and CADAA completion data, identify students who have not completed a financial aid application, and based on the collection of data adjust programs and the delivery of services to students with gaps in financial aid application completion rates;

FURTHER BE IT RESOLVED: That the Board of Education of **[city name]** Unified School District and high school stakeholders build relationships and trust with students and families;

FURTHER BE IT RESOLVED: That the Board of Education of **[city name]** Unified School District and high school stakeholders develop programming with students and families at the center by designing systems, tools, and events that provide information and advice responsive to the needs of diverse students and families. Moreover, develop programming to address barriers students and families are experiencing during the pandemic with submitting and completing their financial aid application;

FURTHER BE IT RESOLVED: That the Board of Education of **[city name]** Unified School District establish a systemic approach and coordinated efforts with district-level and school-level stakeholders, local Community Colleges, and community-based organizations working collectively with everyone throughout the educational system to increase financial aid completion rates.