



The Education Trust–West

[Date]

[Name of Board Members, Superintendent, and/or Principal]

[Address]

RE: Actions to Implement California's New Financial Aid Completion Policy at [High School/District Name]

Dear [name],

My name is [name] and I work at [high school/district]. I am writing to schedule a meeting regarding California's new Financial Aid Completion Policy and share evidence-based practices to increase financial aid completion rate in our [high school/district].

As of January 2022, there is a new financial aid application completion requirement for local educational agencies (high schools, school districts, county offices of education, and charter schools) to ensure that, beginning October 1, 2022, their seniors complete and submit the FAFSA or CADAA or opt-out. This new policy is critical for our students.

[Share a story about the current barriers students and families are experiencing with financial aid applications, and why increasing financial aid completion rates is important to you and your students.] Example: During the ongoing pandemic and economic recession students are uncertain about their future and whether they can afford college. Fewer of our high school seniors are filling out FAFSA and CADAA applications this year compared to last year [[find data here](#)]. Research finds a decline in FAFSA completion among low-income students, Native American students, Latinx students, and that Black students were most impacted and have seen the largest decline in FAFSA completion amidst the pandemic. A college degree provides economic opportunities for our students through higher average earnings, better benefits, wealth accumulation, ability to work from home, less vulnerability to job loss or unemployment, less impacted by the recession, and benefits from economic recoveries compared to workers without college degrees. Students who complete their FAFSA and CADAA applications are more likely to enroll directly in college and obtain a degree. Yet only 54% of California's high school seniors completed a financial aid application in 2019, and in our [high school or district [find data here](#)] complete their financial aid applications. Leaving nearly \$550 million in federal and state aid will remain left on the table that could go to our students to make college a reality.

Our [high school/district] graduation rates [[find graduation rates here](#)] and financial aid completion rates [[find data here](#)] can be improved by implementing promising practices and strategies that are helping to close equity gaps in financial aid completion rates by The Education Trust-West:

1. Prioritizing completion through policy,
2. Collecting and monitoring completion through policy,
3. Establishing and maintaining strong partnerships,
4. Building relationships and trust, and
5. Programming with students at the center.

I look forward to hearing back from you and supporting the success of our students by increasing financial aid completion rates.

Sincerely,
[Name]