



The Education Trust–West

Public Comment:

Establish Financial Aid for College Application Policy at [District]

Instructions: Public comment is an opportunity to share the importance of focusing on financial aid completion rates with board members who oversee the district's high schools. Public comments are typically two minutes.

Public Comment Example:

- Hello, my name is [name], and I work at [high school in the district].
- As of January 2022, there is a new financial aid application completion requirement in California for local educational agencies (high schools, school districts, county offices of education, and charter schools). LEAs must ensure that their high school seniors complete and submit the FAFSA, CADAA, or an opt-out waiver, beginning October 1, 2022.
- To align with California's financial aid completion policy. I urge you to adopt the board resolution to require our [high school/district] to make a financial aid application (i.e., completion of the FAFSA, California Dream Act Application, or an opt-out waiver) a requirement.
- **[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:** 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], only X% complete financial aid applications. This leaves \$550 million in federal and state aid on the table that could go to our students to make college a reality.
- Our [high school/district] could increase financial aid completion rates and support our students by adopting a board resolution to make financial aid applications (FAFSA, California Dream Act Application, or an opt-out waiver) a requirement at our [high school/district].
- This board resolution will have little to no cost for [high school/district name] and will significantly benefit the [number of students in our high school/district].
- When Val Verde Unified School District in California established financial aid application completion as a graduation requirement in the first year of implementation alone, Free Application for Federal Student/California Dream Act Application completion increased by 14 percentage points from 69% to 83%, with no adverse impact on high school graduation rates.
- Your decision to adopt this board resolution will leave a legacy in our [high school/district] and help close gaps in financial aid completion and college-going rates.
- Thank you.