

SENATE  
STATE OF MINNESOTA  
NINETY-THIRD SESSION

S.F. No. 1275

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DATE  
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Introduction and first reading  
Referred to Higher Education

OFFICIAL STATUS

1.1 A bill for an act  
1.2 relating to education; requiring high school students to complete the FAFSA or  
1.3 state financial aid application; requiring the commissioners of the Office of Higher  
1.4 Education and the Department of Education to establish a FAFSA working group;  
1.5 amending Minnesota Statutes 2022, section 120B.02, by adding a subdivision.

1.6 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF MINNESOTA:

1.7 Section 1. Minnesota Statutes 2022, section 120B.02, is amended by adding a subdivision  
1.8 to read:

1.9 Subd. 4. FAFSA requirement. (a) Beginning in the 2024-2025 school year, to graduate  
1.10 from high school, a high school student must complete one of the following requirements  
1.11 prior to graduation:

1.12 (1) complete and submit the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) form,  
1.13 or if the student is not eligible to complete a FAFSA form, an application for state financial  
1.14 aid; or

1.15 (2) using a form created by the Department of Education, file a signed waiver with the  
1.16 student's high school indicating that the parent or guardian of the student, or the student if  
1.17 the student is at least 18 years old or legally emancipated, understands what the FAFSA  
1.18 form or state financial aid application is and has chosen not to file an application.

1.19 (b) A high school principal or other person having administrative control of a high  
1.20 school, or a high school counselor, may waive the requirements under paragraph (a) if:

1.21 (1) the student is unable to fulfill either of the requirements due to extenuating  
1.22 circumstances, including circumstances related to the immigration status of the student or  
1.23 the student's family;

2.1 (2) the student has met all other graduation requirements; and

2.2 (3) the principal or high school counselor attests that the high school has made a good  
2.3 faith effort to assist the student or family in meeting either of the requirements.

2.4 (c) A high school counselor must encourage and assist high school seniors to complete  
2.5 and submit the FAFSA or state financial aid application.

2.6 **EFFECTIVE DATE.** This section is effective July 1, 2024.

2.7 **Sec. 2. FAFSA WORKING GROUP.**

2.8 (a) The Department of Education and Office of Higher Education must convene a working  
2.9 group of qualified stakeholders to develop resources under this section that help high schools  
2.10 and students meet the FAFSA or state financial aid graduation requirement under Minnesota  
2.11 Statutes, section 120B.02, subdivision 4. Stakeholders must include but are not limited to  
2.12 agencies or organizations working with the following populations of students:

2.13 (1) students from families with low income;

2.14 (2) minority students;

2.15 (3) students who are nonnative English speakers;

2.16 (4) unaccompanied youth;

2.17 (5) students experiencing homelessness; and

2.18 (6) students who have been or are currently in foster care.

2.19 (b) The working group must develop resources related to financial aid, completing  
2.20 financial aid applications, meeting the FAFSA or state financial aid graduation requirement  
2.21 under Minnesota Statutes, section 120B.02, subdivision 4, and assigning counselors in  
2.22 supporting students and their families through informational sessions and printed information.

2.23 The resources must include:

2.24 (1) a counselor toolkit with planning, training, outreach, and marketing materials that  
2.25 may be adopted and used to help students complete the FAFSA or state financial aid  
2.26 graduation requirement, including contact information for agencies and organizations that  
2.27 assist populations of students who may have difficulty completing the FAFSA or state  
2.28 financial aid application, and resources for students and families in multiple languages;

2.29 (2) a statewide outreach plan to educate students and families about the new graduation  
2.30 requirement;

3.1 (3) training for counselors and other school personnel who assist students with meeting  
 3.2 the FAFSA or state financial aid graduation requirement; and

3.3 (4) strategies to ensure that students and families from the following groups receive  
 3.4 information about the requirement in Minnesota Statutes, section 120B.02, subdivision 4:

3.5 (i) families with low income;

3.6 (ii) minority students and families;

3.7 (iii) nonnative English speakers;

3.8 (iv) unaccompanied youth;

3.9 (v) families experiencing homelessness; and

3.10 (vi) students who have been or are currently in foster care.

3.11 (c) The Office of Higher Education and Department of Education must collaborate to  
 3.12 make the resources developed by the working group accessible to school counselors  
 3.13 throughout Minnesota. The Department of Education must submit a report of the working  
 3.14 group to the chairs and ranking minority members of the legislative committees with  
 3.15 jurisdiction over kindergarten through grade 12 education and higher education by February  
 3.16 1, 2024, in accordance with Minnesota Statutes, section 3.195. The report must:

3.17 (1) identify the annual goal for the percentage of high school seniors completing the  
 3.18 FAFSA under Minnesota Statutes, section 136A.096;

3.19 (2) describe the working group's progress on developing the resources required under  
 3.20 this section;

3.21 (3) recommend any funding necessary to provide additional resources and supports to  
 3.22 school districts and charter schools, counselors, and students and their families to meet the  
 3.23 requirements of Minnesota Statutes, section 120B.02, subdivision 4; and

3.24 (4) include any other resources or information the working group deems appropriate.

3.25 **EFFECTIVE DATE.** This section is effective the day following final enactment.

3.26 **Sec. 3. APPROPRIATION; FAFSA OUTREACH EFFORTS.**

3.27 \$500,000 is appropriated in fiscal year 2024 from the general fund to the commissioner  
 3.28 of the Office of Higher Education for FAFSA outreach efforts. This is a onetime  
 3.29 appropriation. Of this amount:

4.1 (1) \$300,000 is for the commissioner of the Office of Higher Education, in collaboration  
4.2 with the FAFSA working group in section 2, to conduct an outreach effort to secondary  
4.3 schools to increase awareness of the universal FAFSA or state financial aid application  
4.4 requirements under section 1, and to assist in completing the FAFSA or state financial aid  
4.5 application; and

4.6 (2) \$200,000 is for grants to 501(c)(3) organizations to assist in outreach to students and  
4.7 families in completing the FAFSA or state financial aid application. The commissioner of  
4.8 the Office of Higher Education is required to create an application process and selection  
4.9 criteria for awarding the grants to 501(c)(3) organizations. Any funds remaining after the  
4.10 grant allocations may be used by the Office of Higher Education for FAFSA outreach efforts.