



#046-21

Commonwealth of Virginia
Virginia Department of Education
Superintendent's Memo #046-21

DATE: February 19, 2021
TO: Division Superintendents
FROM: James F. Lane, Ed.D., Superintendent of Public Instruction
SUBJECT: **Financial Aid Awareness Month - Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA)**

February is Financial Aid Awareness Month. The U.S. Department of Education's Office of Federal Student Aid (FSA) provides more than \$120 billion in financial aid to help pay for college or career school each year.

In this time of widespread financial need, the Virginia Department of Education asks that each school division and high school in Virginia develops a plan to ensure that every high school senior submits the [Free Application for Federal Student Aid](#) (FAFSA®) which can help defray, and in some cases, completely cover the costs of their postsecondary education. FSA has made it easier than ever for students and families to [access resources available on their digital platform](#). These resources can assist them in filing a FAFSA through a computer, tablet, or mobile phone. **This year is even more important to ask your students to complete this application because Virginia is seeing a significant decline in applications versus prior years.**

Virginia schools may employ various strategies to promote the FAFSA® among high school seniors through informational campaigns (social media, newsletters, and email distributions), individual student counseling, and by implementing the Financing Education after High School section within the curriculum of a student's Economics and Personal Finance class.

Throughout the month of February, @SCHEVnews has been tweeting videos from Virginia college financial aid experts sharing their financial aid tips, mistakes they see in the process,

questions they get from students and parents, as well as helpful resources. State Council for Higher Education in Virginia's (SCHEV) financial aid resources can be accessed on their [Financial Aid February 2021](#) webpage.

The Office of FSA recently launched the [Financial Aid Toolkit](#) to assist school counselors with understanding the basics of federal student aid, providing informational resources, providing suggested messages for social media and email outreach, and to help find additional training opportunities. In addition, the [Virginia Education Wizard](#) provides information regarding the steps to completing the FAFSA® which includes a video tutorial.

The Office of FSA provides current-year public school division [FAFSA® submission data](#) by high school.

For more information

For more information, please visit the [Federal Student Aid](#) website.

JFL/MFB/oml