

## Method of Proof and Reporting Guidance

Each district and charter school must require a method of proof that a student completed and submitted the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) or Texas Application for Student Financial Aid (TASFA).

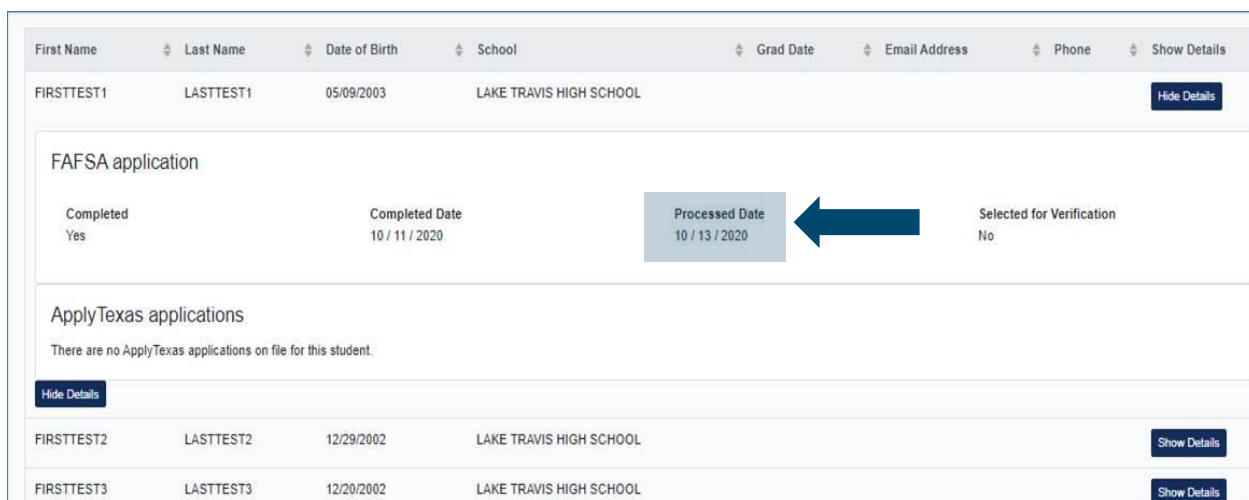
### FAFSA

To meet the definition of “complete and submit a FAFSA,” the student must populate all applicable sections of the form, submit the application, and the subsequent submission must not be rejected by the FAFSA Central Processing System. If key information is missing in the application, the student will receive an email from the U.S. Department of Education (USDE) asking them to correct the FAFSA form. A completed FAFSA will have all information necessary for processing and necessary to determine eligibility for federal, state, or other financial aid. A completed FAFSA is a successfully processed FAFSA.

Following completion and submission, some students may be selected for a ‘verification’ process. This process is to ensure accuracy of the information provided through the FAFSA. If a student is selected for verification, an institution of higher education will request additional documentation. To meet the high school financial aid application graduation requirement, a student does not have to demonstrate completion of the information verification process.

Although the graduation requirement has been met, counselors and advisers are encouraged to continue working with the student through the verification process to help the student to receive the financial aid for which they might be eligible.

The screenshot below from the ApplyTX Counselor Suite shows an example student who met the financial aid application graduation requirement.



First Name	Last Name	Date of Birth	School	Grad Date	Email Address	Phone	Show Details
FIRSTTEST1	LASTTEST1	05/09/2003	LAKE TRAVIS HIGH SCHOOL				Hide Details
<b>FAFSA application</b>							
Completed	Completed Date	Processed Date	Selected for Verification				
Yes	10 / 11 / 2020	10 / 13 / 2020	No				
<b>ApplyTexas applications</b>							
There are no ApplyTexas applications on file for this student.							
Hide Details							
FIRSTTEST2	LASTTEST2	12/29/2002	LAKE TRAVIS HIGH SCHOOL				Show Details
FIRSTTEST3	LASTTEST3	12/20/2002	LAKE TRAVIS HIGH SCHOOL				Show Details

FAFSA completion and submission may be confirmed through:

- Date represented in the “FAFSA Process date” field in ApplyTexas Counselor Suite FAFSA data; **or**
- Notification from USDE that demonstrates a student has completed and submitted a FAFSA, such as an email confirmation of submission; **or**

- Alternate proof of FAFSA completion that may be provided by a student based on the local policy developed by a district or charter school. Some examples may include:
  - Screenshot of FAFSA submission acknowledgement page
  - Financial aid award letter from an IHE
  - Other, as established by local policy

## TASFA

To meet the definition of “complete and submit a TASFA,” the student must populate all applicable sections of the form and submit the application to at least one Texas institution of their choice. The TASFA is suggested for students who are Texas residents who are not eligible to apply for federal financial aid through the FAFSA. The process for TASFA submission may differ for students based on the institution of their choice. Although there is an available PDF version of the [TASFA](#), an institution may have its own electronic form or paper form.

School districts and charter schools must develop a local policy for the method of proof that the student has completed a TASFA. Some examples may include:

- Acknowledgement of receipt from an IHE
- Copy of Signature page
- Screenshot of TASFA submission acknowledgement page (from those institutions that offer an electronic form)
- Other, as established by local policy

## Local Policy Considerations

### Documentation of Meeting Financial Aid Application Requirement

Standardizing the documentation or proof students will need to present to demonstrate financial aid application completion and submission will contribute toward practices being equitably applied throughout the district or charter school. In addition to what might constitute as ‘proof,’ local policy may address how such information is collected, stored, and used.

### Data Security

The method(s) of proof selected by the district or charter school may contain sensitive student and family information.

Districts and charter schools might want to consider which staff members should have access to information related to the financial aid application graduation requirement and for what purpose(s). Local policy might specifically address what information a counselor may and may not disclose to other district or charter school staff. In accordance with Texas Education Code 28.0256(d), the counselor may only indicate whether the student has complied with the requirement and may not indicate the manner in which the student complied, except as necessary for the district or school to comply with the rules adopted under Subsection (e) (2). It is recommended that any policy related to student data is reviewed for compliance with Federal Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA; 20 U.S.C. § 1232g; 34 CFR Part 99) and applicable state and local privacy laws.

## Required Reporting

Beginning with 12th grade students in the 2021-2022 school year, districts and charter schools will need to report for each graduate that they met the financial aid application graduation requirement. To track students' completion of the graduation requirement, the FINANCIAL-AID-APPLICATION-CODE (TE139) and the FINANCIAL-AID-APPLICATION-MET-DATE (TE140) data elements will need to be entered in the Texas Records Exchange (TREx) System. The 2021-2022 [TREx Data Standards](#) were published in July 2021.

The TSDS PEIMS Financial Aid Application Indicator data element (E1724) and code table will be updated for the fall submission in the 2022-2023 school year. The new data element will be reflected in the [TSDS Web-Enabled Data Standards](#) December 2021.

The following codes will be used to report students meeting the graduation requirement:

- 01 Financial application form completed
- 02 Exception filed

Note districts and charter schools are not asked what financial aid application form (i.e., the FAFSA or TASFA) was completed for code '01' nor are they asked what option was selected for the opt-out form for code '02.'