



nassgap

national association of state student grant and aid programs
www.nassgap.org

Frank Ballmann, Director, Washington Office
202-721-1186 Frank@nassgap.org

**2013-14
Executive Committee**

President

Christine A. Zuzack
Pennsylvania Higher Education
Assistance Agency
1200 North 7th Street
Harrisburg, PA 17102-1444
(717) 720-2368
czuzack@pheaa.org

President-Elect

Diane Lindeman
Kansas Board of Regents
1000 S. W. Jackson Street
Suite 520
Topeka, Kansas 66612-1368
(785) 296-3517
dlindeman@ksbor.org

Past-President

J Ritchie Morrow
Nebraska Coordinating
Commission for Postsecondary
Education
140 N 8th Street, Suite 300
P.O. Box 95005
Lincoln, NE 68509-5005
(402) 471-0032
ritchie.morrow@nebraska.gov

Secretary

Philip Axelroth
Arkansas Department of Higher
Education
423 Main Street, Suite 400
Little Rock, AR 72201
(501) 371-2052
phil.axelroth@adhe.edu

Treasurer

David Hughes
Utah Higher Education
Assistance Authority
PO Box 145112
Salt Lake City, UT 84114
(801) 321-7220
dhughes@utahsbr.edu

Member-at-Large

Jennifer Rogers
Mississippi Office of Student
Financial Aid
3825 Ridgewood Road
Jackson, MS 39211-6453
(601) 432-6791
jrogers@mississippi.edu

Member-at-Large

Elizabeth McDuffie
North Carolina State Education
Assistance Authority
PO Box 13663
Research Triangle Park, NC
27709
(919) 248-4673
mcduffie@ncseaa.edu

**Comments on USDE Docket No.: ED-2013-ICCD-0125
Student Aid Internet Gateway (SAIG) Enrollment Document
September 18, 2013**

October 28, 2013

These comments are in reference to the new Participation Agreement between the U.S. Department of Education and State Grant Agencies that outlines the conditions under which the Department will permit disclosure of certain data received or generated by the Department concerning FSA applicants.

The current proposed regulations permit disclosure of information on Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) filers to Local Educational Agencies (LEAs). We applaud this effort to work with LEAs in promoting FAFSA completion.

However, the current proposal limits these disclosures to LEAs. Numerous private, parochial, charter, and cyber high schools could benefit from the receipt of this FAFSA information to promote college attendance among their senior classes. Limiting the outreach effort to only public institutions eliminates many students from these outreach efforts. States should have the flexibility to identify schools serving at-risk and first generation students that would benefit from this initiative.

There is no indication regarding the content requirements of the legal agreement that must be executed between the participating LEA and the State Grant Agency for disclosure of the FAFSA filers. For simplicity purposes, it would be beneficial for the U. S. Department of Education to issue such a document to ensure that all federal contingencies are addressed.

LEAs are not permitted to re-disclose the FAFSA filers information received from the State Grant Agency to a third party. However, many school districts work closely with a number of third party providers of college readiness activities and programs such as TRIO. Having the ability to share this information with these third parties would greatly enhance the collaboration among these entities in promoting students to apply for financial aid.

NASSGAP would be happy to discuss any of these features with USDE officials for further clarity. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Christine A. Zuzack
President
NASSGAP

Christine Zuzack, President
NASSGAP
PHEAA
1200 North 7th Street
Harrisburg, PA 17102-1444

Dear Ms. Zuzack:

Thank you for your comments on behalf of the National Association of State Student Grant and Aid Programs (NASSGAP) regarding the U.S. Department of Education's proposed changes to the *Student Aid Internet Gateway* (SAIG) Application for State Grant Agencies.

In your letter, you mentioned that the current proposal limits the disclosure of FAFSA Filing Status Information to LEAs and secondary schools, and that private, parochial, charter and cyber high schools could also benefit from such disclosure. In response we note that Part Two, Section C – Definitions, Item 9 of the SAIG Application provides the definition of a “Secondary School” which, in general, includes private, parochial, charter, or cyber high schools.

You also commented that there is no indication regarding the content requirements of the legal agreement that must be executed between a participating State Grant Agency and an LEA or secondary school for the disclosure of the FAFSA Filing Status Information. The Department recognizes that states may have different legal requirements for such agreements and, therefore we do not believe that a common form and format would be beneficial. We have included in the Application the minimum legal requirements for that agreement. Those requirements are outlined in Part Two, Section G – Disclosure of FAFSA Filing Status Information, Item 2.

Lastly, you noted that LEAs are not permitted to re-disclose FAFSA Filing Status Information received from a State Grant Agency to a third party, and that many school districts work closely with third-party providers of college readiness activities and related programs, such as the Department's TRIO programs. We understand that being able to share FAFSA Filing Status Information with these entities would greatly enhance collaboration between the LEA and these entities. Because of the requirements of the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) we are unable to allow re-disclosure by LEAs and secondary schools.

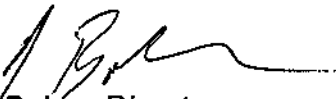
NASSGAP

Page 2

However, we will subsequently be identifying, as Designated Entities, certain Department of Education grantees (e.g., TRIO, GEAR UP) so that state grant agencies can disclose FAFSA Filing Status Information to these Designated Entities once a written agreement has been executed between the state agency and the entity.

Thank you again for your comments. We look forward to continuing our collaboration with NASSGAP on this effort.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'J. Baker', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Jeff Baker, Director
Policy Liaison and Implementation
Federal Student Aid
U.S. Department of Education