

FINANCIAL AID UPDATE

The window of opportunity for high school Seniors to file financial aid forms is near: January 1 through March 2, 2010. The first step is obtaining PIN numbers at www.fafsa.ed.gov; both the applicant and a parent need a PIN number. Step two is downloading a FAFSA worksheet from the same web site. You will want the 2010-2011 worksheet, which may not be available until shortly before the updated application debuts on January 1st. Apply for federal aid on-line, rather than calling to obtain a paper application. It can take the feds up to six weeks to process a paper application, compared to less than a week for the on-line application. Submit the FAFSA (Free Application for Federal Student Aid) towards the end of January, when you have paid your bills and have the least amount of money in your checking account.

Plan to attend a financial aid night if you have not dealt with the FAFSA before, or your family financial situation is complicated or changing. Our district financial aid night will be on January 6, 2010, 7:00 PM at College Park High School. NHS parents are also welcome to attend Las Lomas High School's event on January 20, 2010, 7:00 PM in their Theater. Both speakers are excellent. Families that need assistance with their 2009 tax returns, or translation services, should attend a *Cash for College* event. Several are scheduled locally in January and February; visit www.californiacashforcollege.org for details.

My mandatory Financial Aid Workshop during Study Session focuses on what a financial aid package consists of, and procedures for obtaining and submitting a **Cal Grant GPA Verification Form**. *It is imperative that Seniors complete and submit this form to me or to the Registrar during the month of January.* We will add the appropriate GPA and promptly return the form to the student to mail to the California Student Aid Commission. Purchase a Certificate of Mailing to prove that the form was mailed by March 2, 2010. Even if your son or daughter does not qualify for this grant, there are appeal procedures in place, should your family circumstances change during 2010. And community college-bound students should apply and put their awards "on hold" until they are ready to transfer to a 4-year college.

I will repeat my Financial Aid Workshop twice in January, during 1st period SSR and Study Session on January 8th and January 22nd. Seniors who attend the workshops may start bringing their **GPA Verification Forms** to me or the Registrar, during brunch, lunch, 6th period or after school, the following Mondays. Sign-up for the workshop in the College & Career Center, or e-mail me your student's name and preferred date of attendance.

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