



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

James S. Alesi

Senator Alesi Encourages Students and Families to Complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid Early This Year

JAMES S. ALESI January 26, 2010

| ISSUE: **EDUCATION, CONTINUING EDUCATION, FINANCIAL AID**

January 25 to February 25 has been designated “New York State Student Financial Aid Awareness Month” by Governor David A. Paterson, marking a period during which the State will host a series of events to help New York’s students and families learn about the many financial aid opportunities available to help pay for college, and how to apply for them.

The NYS Higher Education Services Corporation (HESC), New York’s student financial aid agency, will spearhead a campaign entitled “Start Here Get There,” to inform and educate students and families about college financial aid and promote the completion of the most important tool in securing that aid, the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA).

High school seniors and their parents often start to worry this time of year about how they will pay for college, and if they will even have access. Through Student Financial Aid Awareness Month activities and events, you can learn about the many kinds of financial aid available and how to get it.

Senator Alesi noted, “Many students and families don’t realize that completing the FAFSA is the first step to obtaining assistance, and that it’s best to file the FAFSA as early as possible.

The reality is that there's money available to help pay for college and the FAFSA is the key that unlocks the door to it. It's important to take that first step and complete the FAFSA thoroughly — and early — and HESC is here to help.”

Families of college-bound students, as well as those currently attending college, should complete the FAFSA in January or February to have the best chance of garnering the financial aid for which they are qualified.

StartHereGetThere.org, a new HESC Web site, offers college and financial aid planning information, informative videos, helpful tips and tools, a step-by-step tutorial for completing the FAFSA, as well as a wealth of information about federal, state and college-sponsored aid, including grants, such as New York's Tuition Assistance Program (TAP), and other scholarships, loans and work study programs.

StartHereGetThere.org lists workshops, organized by geographic region of the State, including financial aid information sessions and “Complete the FAFSA” workshops staffed by financial aid administrators from colleges throughout the State.

Students and families with questions about the FAFSA may also call a special toll-free HESC hotline, 1-800-808-1790, available every Wednesday from Noon to 6 p.m. on the following dates: Jan. 27, Feb. 3, Feb. 10, Feb. 17 and Feb. 24.