



Saint Paul's School

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Dear Parents,

The Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) for 2017-2018 is now available online. This will be the first time the form is available before January of your son's senior year. While some of you have experienced completing this cumbersome financial aid document, many of you will be doing so for the first time. To further accommodate your needs and to answer some of your questions, I have gathered the following information to help you better understand the purpose of the FAFSA and to help you maximize your son's opportunities for financial aid. If, however, you need further assistance, do not hesitate to call or email me. I can be reached at (985) 892-3200 x4117 or reneep@stpauls.com.

What is the FAFSA?

- The FAFSA asks for your family's financial aid information to determine your son's eligibility for financial aid. The document will determine your eligibility for grants (typically Pell Grants), student loans, and Federal Work-Study. **This document also serves as your son's application for TOPS funding.** Visit www.finaid.org OR www.studentaid.ed.gov for an in-depth look at your child's financial aid options.

What information will I need when I am ready to complete the FAFSA?

- Pin number if filing FAFSA on the web (you will need to request a pin—one for parent and one for student—before completing FAFSA)
- Your social security card and driver's license
- Your son's social security card and driver's license
- Alien Identification number if you are not a US citizen
- All W-2 forms
- 2015 income tax return **(this is new) FAFSA requires PPY (prior prior year tax information)**
- Records of other untaxed income received such as Social Security benefits, Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), or veteran's benefits
- Current bank statements and any records of stocks, bonds, and investments
- Business or farm records, if applicable

What if I just want to apply for TOPS? Do I need to complete the FAFSA?

- No. While I strongly encourage you to apply for other financial aid opportunities, you only need to complete the **TOPS application (available on-line only)** if your family will not qualify for federal grant aid. To make that determination, use the **Finaid's Financial Estimator Calculator** available on the web at www.finaid.org/calculators
- The TOPS on-line application can be found at the following website:
 - [TOPS online application 2017-2018](#)

In the event of a budget shortfall of funding for the TOPS Program, students who only complete the TOPS Application will be in the first group to be denied a TOPS award. This is why I recommend completing the FAFSA in lieu of the TOPS application.

When is the deadline for completing the FAFSA for TOPS?

- You may apply as early as October 1, 2016 (**new this year**)
- St. Paul's STRONGLY recommends completing the FAFSA by March 2017 of your son's senior year if he is planning to attend college during the 2017-2018 academic year.
- **For additional TOPS filing deadlines, please refer to this link: <http://www.osfa.state.la.us>**
- ANY FAFSA RECEIVED after October 29, 2018, WILL BE INELIGIBLE FOR TOPS (no semesters awarded).
- **YOU NEED TO VERIFY THE AID DEADLINE FOR THE INSTITUTION YOUR SON PLANS TO ATTEND. THE SCHOOL DEADLINE MAY BE MUCH EARLIER THAN THE DEADLINE FOR TOPS!**

****Please note: If your son has not yet met the ACT/SAT requirement for TOPS, he must do so by the April 8, 2017, (ACT) or March 11, 2017, (SAT) test date. If an initial qualifying ACT score is earned on the June 10, 2017, National Test date or an initial qualifying SAT score earned on the May 6, 2017, or June 3, 2017, exams it will be accepted, but your son will be penalized one semester (two quarters) of eligibility. Special tests taken before July 1, 2017, for students with disabilities will be accepted!****

Can I complete the document on the web?

- YES. You may complete the FAFSA online at <http://www.fafsa.ed.gov>.
- Benefits include:
 - Faster processing
 - Fewer errors
 - Immediate EFC (estimated family contribution) estimate
 - Ability to save and complete application at later date
 - Online receipt verification
 - Availability of the 2017-2018 IRS Data Retrieval Tool

****Please note: If you choose to complete the online version, you need to apply for FSA ID first, because you will need it when completing the FAFSA. You and your son will need to apply for FSA ID separately which will serve as your electronic signature when you begin completing the FAFSA.**

- To apply for your FSA ID, visit the [Department of Education's FSA site](#), and select "Create an FSA ID now"

What if I have questions, need to make corrections, or need to speak to a representative?

- If you need answers or to make corrections to your FAFSA, call the Federal Student Aid Information Center between 8:00 a.m. and 8:00 p.m. (Eastern Time), Monday through Friday. The number is (800) 4FED-AID (800-433-3243). Help is also available online at www.fafsa.ed.gov
- If you need to speak to someone regarding TOPS, please call (800) 259-5626 x1012 or visit their website at www.osfa.state.la.us.

If you have questions regarding any of this information, please do not hesitate to call or email me. Remember that I am here to help you.

Sincerely,

Renée Miller, M.Ed., NCC, NCSC
School Counselor and College Advisor
Counseling Department Chair

****This information will also be available on the Saint Paul's website under counseling. Click on the FAFSA link.**