



CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
TOM TORLAKSON, State Superintendent of Public Instruction

CALIFORNIA STUDENT AID COMMISSION
LUPITA CORTEZ ALCALÁ, Executive Director

February 21, 2017

Dear County and District Superintendents, Charter School Administrators, High School Principals, and High School Counselors:

**SPREAD THE WORD! CALIFORNIA DREAM ACT APPLICATION DEADLINE—MARCH 2
HELP UNDOCUMENTED STUDENTS RECEIVE FINANCIAL AID FOR COLLEGE**

The California Department of Education (CDE) and the California Student Aid Commission (CSAC) are hearing troubling reports that fear among undocumented students has kept many from filling out an application for the California Dream Act, which allows undocumented students to receive state financial aid. Applications for the California Dream Act are down significantly compared to the same time last year.

For that reason, we believe it is important for all educators to remind students and their parents about the importance of filling out a California Dream Act application, which could open the door to a college education for many deserving students, and to remind them of the deadline, which is **Thursday, March 2, 2017**.

Students need to be reassured that the CSAC will take all available legal precautions to protect this information. The information provided via the California Dream Act Application is used solely to determine eligibility for state financial aid and is not shared with any other governmental agency.

It is also important to let students, parents, and educators know that the California Dream Act is separate from the federal Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program so that there is no confusion about the two programs.

The CDE and CSAC understand that, in light of recent events, there could be confusion regarding the California Dream Act program, which allows certain undocumented and out-of-state students (“Dreamers”) to receive state financial aid while attending colleges in California. The California Dream Act is a state law, separate and distinct from the federal DACA program.

Regardless of what happens at the federal level, state financial aid for Dreamers remains legal in California. A Dreamer student does not need to be DACA-certified to be eligible for a public education or state financial aid. Losing DACA status will not affect state financial aid eligibility.

The opportunity represented by a college education in California is a pathway to success for Dreamers. We remain steadfast in our commitment to protecting students and families.

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The CDE and CSAC are proud to stand with Governor Brown, leaders of the State Legislature, multiple local governments, and our state's public and private colleges and universities in upholding the rights of California's Dreamer students.

Should you have any questions, please contact the California Student Aid Commission by phone at 916-464-8271 or the California Department of Education, College Preparation and Postsecondary Programs Office, Career and College Transition Division by phone at 916-323-6398.

More information on the California Dream Act, including Frequently Asked Questions for High School Counselors, is available on the California Dream Act Web page at http://www.csac.ca.gov/dream_act.asp.

The California Dream Act application is available on the CSAC California Dream Act Web page at <http://www.caldreamact.org/>.

For more information on DACA, please see the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services, DACA Web page at <https://www.uscis.gov/humanitarian/consideration-deferred-action-childhood-arrivals-daca>.

We strongly urge you to share this information with your schools, parents, and students as soon as possible.

Sincerely,



Tom Torlakson
State Superintendent of Public Instruction
California Department of Education



Lupita Cortez Alcalá
Executive Director
California Student Aid Commission

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