



NC First in FAFSA Data Tracker: Cooperative Innovative High Schools (CIHS) FAQ

To help you use the [NC First in FAFSA Data Tracker](#), here are answers to frequently asked questions that have come up for CIHS students and educators:

Which students are counted in FAFSA completion numbers listed on the Tracker?

The Tracker includes data on the number of seniors who completed the FAFSA and these data are directly from the U.S. Department of Education Federal Student Aid (FSA). These data represent a subset of students FSA identified as "seniors" based on how these students answered questions in their FAFSA application. For example, students who answered they have attended college before may not be identified as high school seniors in the FSA data set, therefore not captured in the Tracker.

FSA notes that the following students are not included in the high school data:

- Students who report (incorrectly or otherwise) that they will receive anything other than a high school diploma.
- Students who have filed a FAFSA in a previous cycle, regardless of whether they attended college.
- Students who report that they will be anything but an incoming first-year undergraduate.

Note: This is not a comprehensive list. You can find a complete list of data details and assumptions on [the FAFSA completion website](#).

What data is used in the Tracker to determine how many seniors our school has?

This data is from the Principal Monthly Report (PMR) Enrollment for Month 2 from the [North Carolina Department of Public Instruction](#). Total seniors were determined based on the number of Grade 12 students in the school, except for schools where there are both Grade 12 and Grade 13 students.

For schools, typically Cooperative Innovative High Schools (CIHS) with students in Grade 12 and Grade 13, the Tracker includes the total number of seniors from both Grade 12 and Grade 13, except if the lead counselor indicated to use Grade 12 only OR Grade 13 only as the only grade with potential seniors.

Should the data I see for my school regarding the number of students and the number of FAFSAs submitted and completed match what I see on my school's *Finish the FAFSA* report?

Should the data I see in the First in FAFSA Tracker for my school regarding the number of students and the number of FAFSAs submitted and completed match what I see on my school's *Finish the FAFSA* report?

They should be similar, but they may not be identical. There are several reasons why the Tracker may **not** match the report in *Finish the FAFSA*.

- *Finish the FAFSA* identifies all grade 12 and 13 students as potential seniors using a name match, which may lead to larger senior class sizes reported than those identified as seniors based on student answers in their FAFSA application, then fed into the First in FAFSA Tracker (see question 4 above for more detail).
- *Finish the FAFSA* updates every business day, while the federal data in the Tracker updates weekly October through June. The data that populates from the federal data source, or the U.S. Department of Education Federal Student Aid, reflects FAFSA submissions and completions about one week prior to the release date, and this date is listed in the Tracker. Additionally, the First in FAFSA Tracker updates about 2 business days after the federal data release typically on Fridays.
- *Finish the FAFSA* is intended to help counselors assist specific seniors at their schools, rather than serve as a basis for comparison among schools. Therefore, the list of seniors in *Finish the FAFSA* is updated for the second semester to show any seniors at that school who were not there in the fall semester.
- Even if a school has fewer than five (5) FAFSA filers, the authorized school-based users of *Finish the FAFSA* will see the FAFSA completion status for those students listed in the report.

Which schools are missing from the North Carolina First in FAFSA Tracker?

The following schools were omitted from the NC First in FAFSA Tracker:

- All private schools
- Public schools with no enrollment data available
- Schools with less than five students who have completed the FAFSA will not be listed in the Tracker due to privacy reasons. Note: Once a school has more than five (5) FAFSA completions, their data will be included in the Tracker.

[Click here for the full NC First in FAFSA Tracker, About the Data FAQs](#)