

User Guide for High School Programs

FINANCIAL AID APPLICATION COMPLETION INITIATIVE (FAACI), ONE-CLICK COLLEGE ADMIT (OCCA), & STATE SCHOLAR PROGRAM (SSP)

Quick Links

GAP Access Portal

GAP Access Portal User Guide

Financial Aid Application Completion Initiative (FAACI) Main Page

One Click College Admit (OCCA) Main Page

State Scholar Program (SSP) Main Page

High School Data Collection Guidance for SSP and OCCA

ISAC
Illinois Student Assistance Commission

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GAP Access & Navigation

To access the Financial Aid Application Completion Initiative (FAACI), One-Click College Admit (OCCA), or State Scholar (SSP) programs, the user must first have an account to access the GAP Access Website.

Users must have the appropriate program privileges for all applicable programs to complete processes for any ISAC program. The GAP Access Primary Administrator of the institution is responsible for granting appropriate access to all users. A shortened explanation of this process is below. Please see the GAP Access User Guide for further guidance on granting program privileges, creating new accounts, and general usage tips for the wider GAP Access site.

The GAP Access portal is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Data processing takes place each day between the hours of 7 a.m. and 10 p.m. (CT). Data submitted after 10 p.m. will be processed and dated the following day. For example, sixth semester data submitted at 11 p.m. on Monday, August 18, would be processed and dated Tuesday, August 19.

Program Access & Privileges

To grant privileges to users, the Primary Administrator (typically the building principal for high schools) must log in to GAP Access**. If the Primary Administrator is locked out of their account or needs to create an administrator account, they must contact ISAC's Partner Services department** via phone or email.

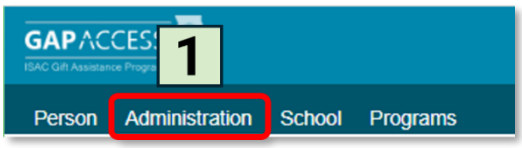
Partner Services

Phone: (866) 247-2172

Email: isac.partnerservices@illinois.gov

After logging in, the Primary Administrator can grant other school users access and privileges to each GAP access program.

Select the Administration tab at the top of the screen.

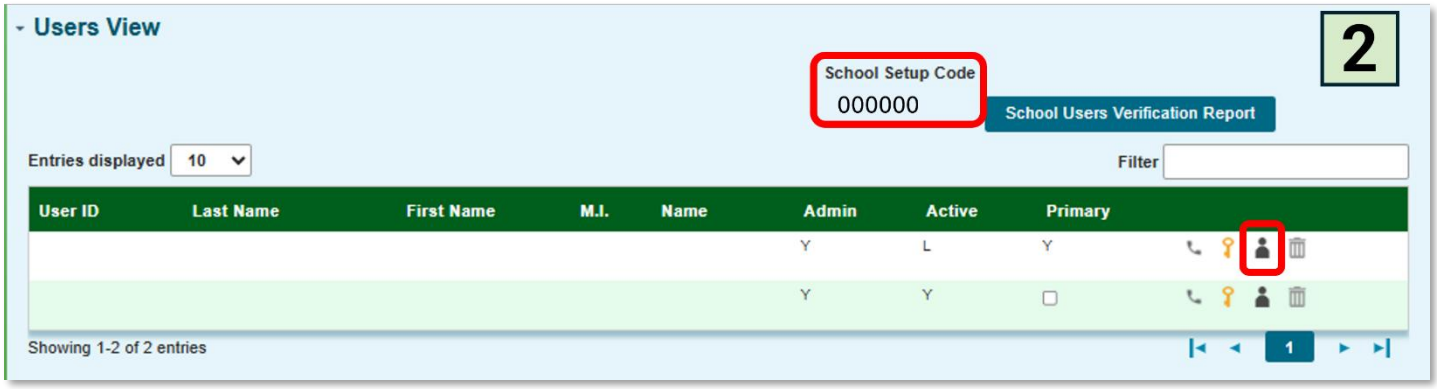


1. Under user administration, click the person icon next to the user that needs privileges granted.

    a. There are four helpful icons for user accounts including:

    - **Phone icon** –resets user's two-factor authentication.
    - **Key icon** – resets a user's password
    - **Person icon** – grants program privileges & access
    - **Trash icon** – deletes a user's account if no longer needed

Note: The School Setup Code that is required for creating new user accounts can also be found on this screen.



2. Under the **Program Privileges screen**, select the appropriate privilege for each program the user will need access to.

    a. **DA** – One-Click College Admit (OCCA)/Direct Admissions

    b. **FAFSA** – Financial Aid Application Completion Initiative (FAACI)

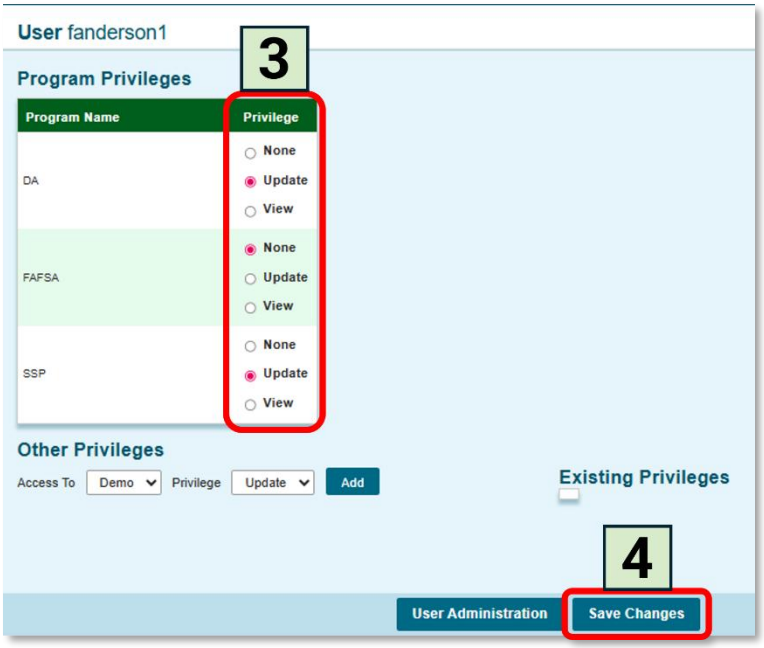
    c. **SSP** – State Scholar Program

        - The options include:

            - **None** – User cannot view or access the program

            - **Update** – User can change information and upload files to the program.

            - **View** – User can view information in the program but cannot edit detail or upload files.



3. After selecting the necessary privileges, click **Save Changes**.

    a. The User Administration button can be used to be taken back to the User Administration page to select a new user if needed.

Once a user has been granted update privileges for the appropriate program, the user can log in to GAP and select the desired program from the “Programs” drop-down menu.

Financial Aid Application Completion Initiative (FAACI)

Overview

The Financial Aid Application Completion Initiative, available through ISAC's Gift Assistance Program (GAP) Access Portal, helps Illinois high schools track their students' financial aid application progress for each academic year.

Schools can see which students have:

- Completed the FAFSA®
- Completed the Alternative Application for Illinois Financial Aid
- Submitted a Nonparticipation Form

Data Available:

Schools can access the following information:

- Student names
- Summary data for the entire student body
- Which students may qualify for MAP and the Federal Pell Grant Program
- Student Aid Index (SAI) ranges
- The colleges that students selected to receive their FAFSA information

How to Complete the Participation Agreement

When a new school is added to the FAFSA Initiative program, the Primary Administrator must review, certify, and agree to the terms of the Financial Aid Application Completion Participation Agreement and accept the FAFSA terms and conditions. The details of how to complete this are below.

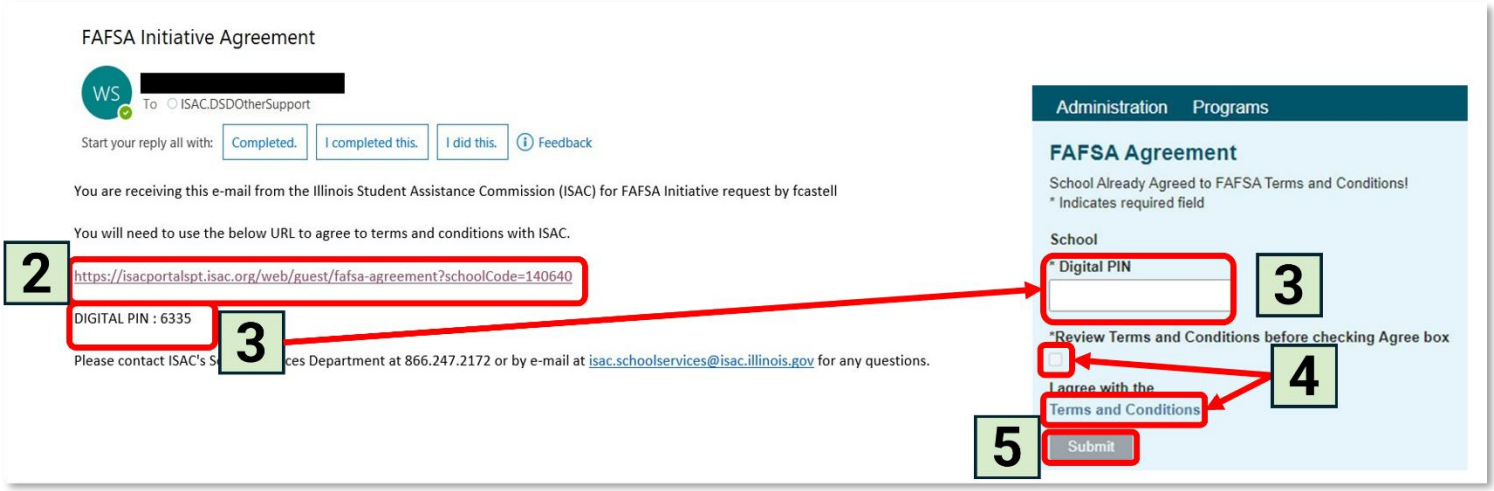
Skip this section if your Primary Administrator has already completed the Participation Agreement.

- Go to the **School Summary Screen** section for details on accessing the program.

If a Primary Administrator has not completed this step, no users at the school will be able to access the FAFSA Initiative program in GAP.

To accept the terms and conditions before accessing the program:

1. After a new Primary Administrator is added to the FAFSA Initiative program, a message indicating that terms and conditions must be acknowledged will appear on the screen.
    a. This also occurs if a Primary Administrator or ISAC representative attempts to give a user privileges for the FAFSA Initiative program.
2. The Primary Administrator will receive an email with a link to certify the Financial Aid Application Completion Agreement. (This link is sent to the email address provided during the user's initial account creation.) **Click the link.**
3. Enter the **Digital Pin** provided in the email you received from step 2 above.
4. Review the terms by clicking the **Terms and Conditions** blue link. Once you have read the terms, click "**I agree with the Terms and Conditions**."
5. Click **Submit**.
    a. You **will not** receive confirmation that the submission is complete.



6. The school will now have access to the FAFSA Initiative program and users can be given privileges for the program.
    a. You may need to log out and log back in to GAP before the FAFSA Initiative program appears in the **Programs tab.**

School Summary Screen

Overview

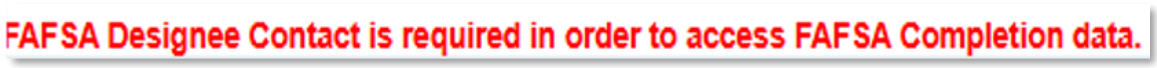
After logging into GAP and selecting the **FAFSA Initiative** program from the **Programs tab**, you can access the **School Summary Screen**.

This screen includes a brief overview of the school and provides links to view and update a variety of information including:

Update:

1. **FAFSA Designee**

    a. If a FAFSA Designee Contact is not on file an error message will display. **To access FAFSA Completion Data, a FAFSA Designee must be added**.

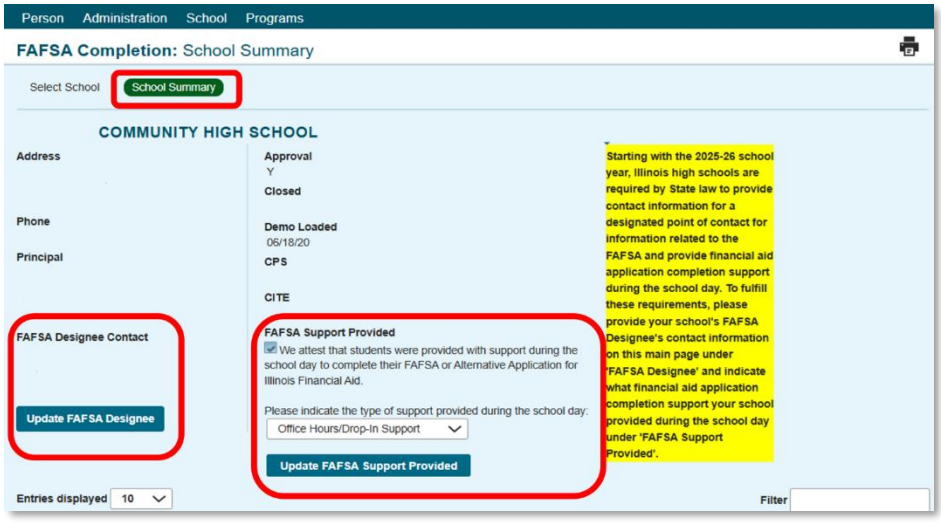


- **FAFSA Designees must be an employee of the school**.
- **ISACorps Members cannot be FAFSA Designees**. The school is responsible for maintaining the records within the program not ISACorps Members.

2. **FAFSA Support Provided**

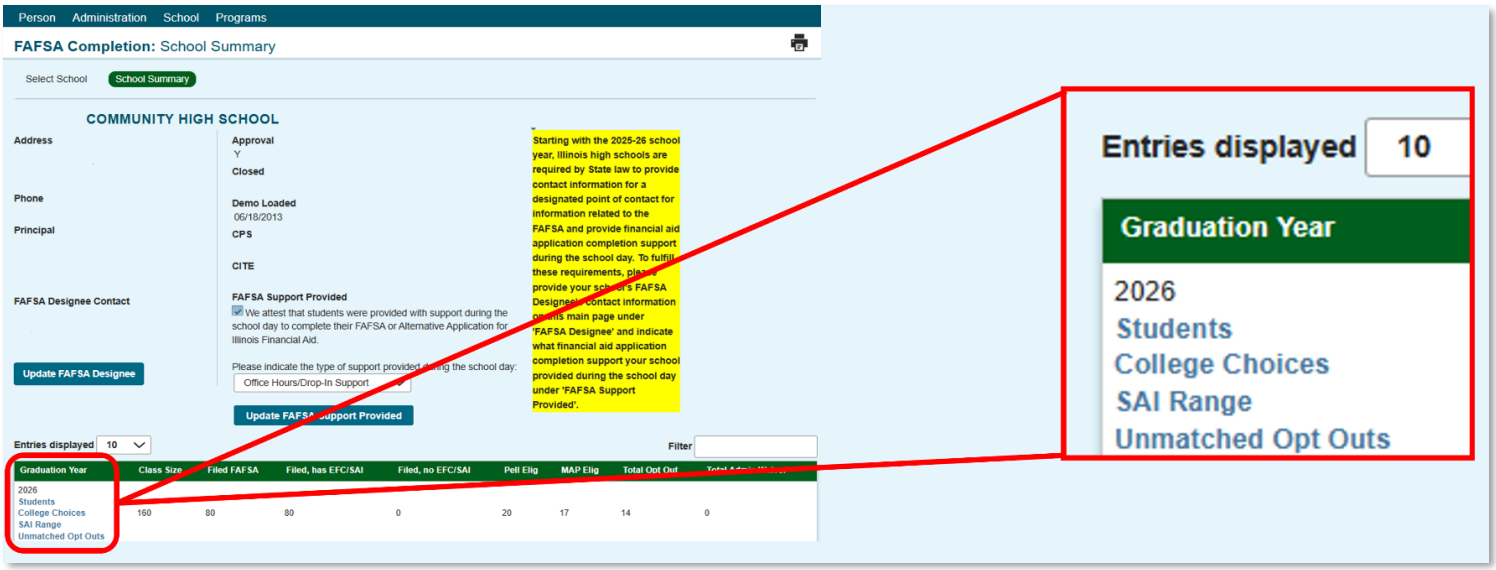
a. Click the checkbox to indicate that "We attest that students were provided with support during the school day to complete their FAFSA or Alternative Application for Illinois Financial Aid.

b. Use the Dropdown to select the type of support provided during the school day.



Detailed data for Graduation Year (Clickable links):

- Students
- College Choices
- SAI Ranges
- Unmatched Opt Out



FAFSA® Orientation Completed

This is a checkbox that is only available to be marked by ISAC users denoting the FAFSA Designee Contact has attended a FAFSA Orientation Training seminar/workshop

Updating a FAFSA® Designee



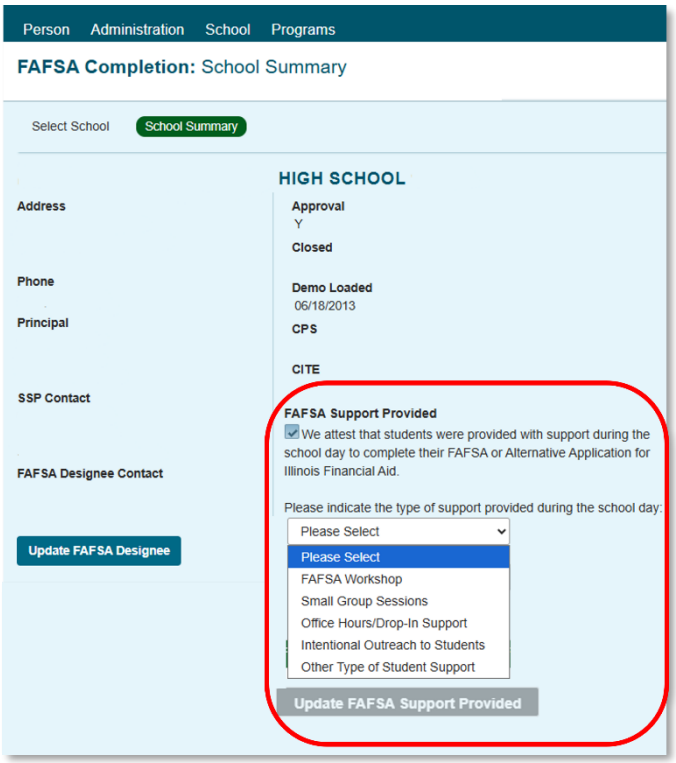
To add a FAFSA Designee:

1. From the **School Summary screen**, click the “Update FAFSA Designee” button.
2. Enter the required information:
    a. Contact Name (First and Last)
    b. Contact Phone Number
    c. Contact Email Address
3. Click save

Updating FAFSA® Support Provided Information

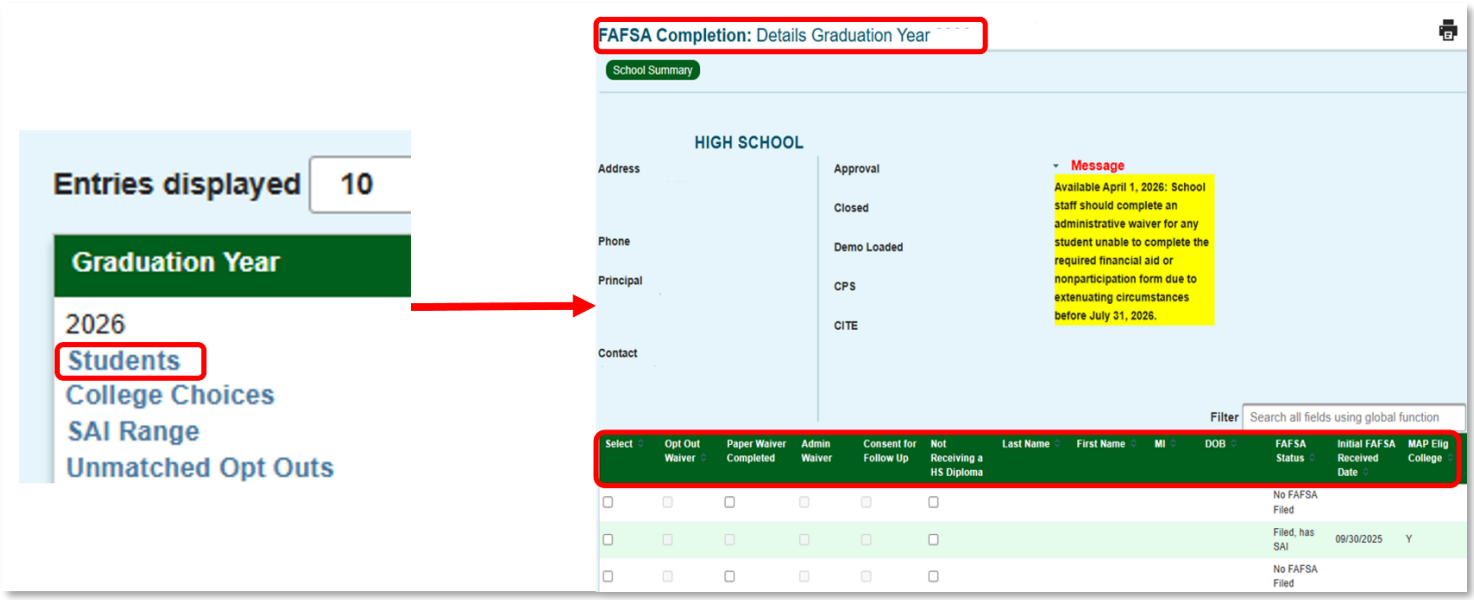
To update the FAFSA Support Provided, use the dropdown menu provided on the **School Summary screen**.

1. Read testament: "**We attest that students were provided with support during the school day to complete their FAFSA or Alternative Application for Illinois Financial Aid.**"
2. Once you have read and provided support, check the box.
3. Select one of the following types of support provided during the school day:
    a. FAFSA Workshop
    b. Small Group Sessions
    c. Office Hours/Drop-in Support
    d. Intentional Outreach to Students
    e. Other Type of Student Support
4. Click the Update FAFSA Support Provided button.



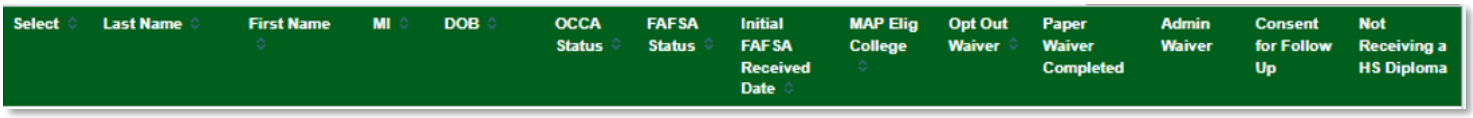
Details Graduation Year Screen

Navigate to blue menu items listed under the **Graduation Year** column on the **School Summary screen**. Click on **Students** to view the Student Details page. This page displays seniors with associated information status and potential MAP eligibility data.



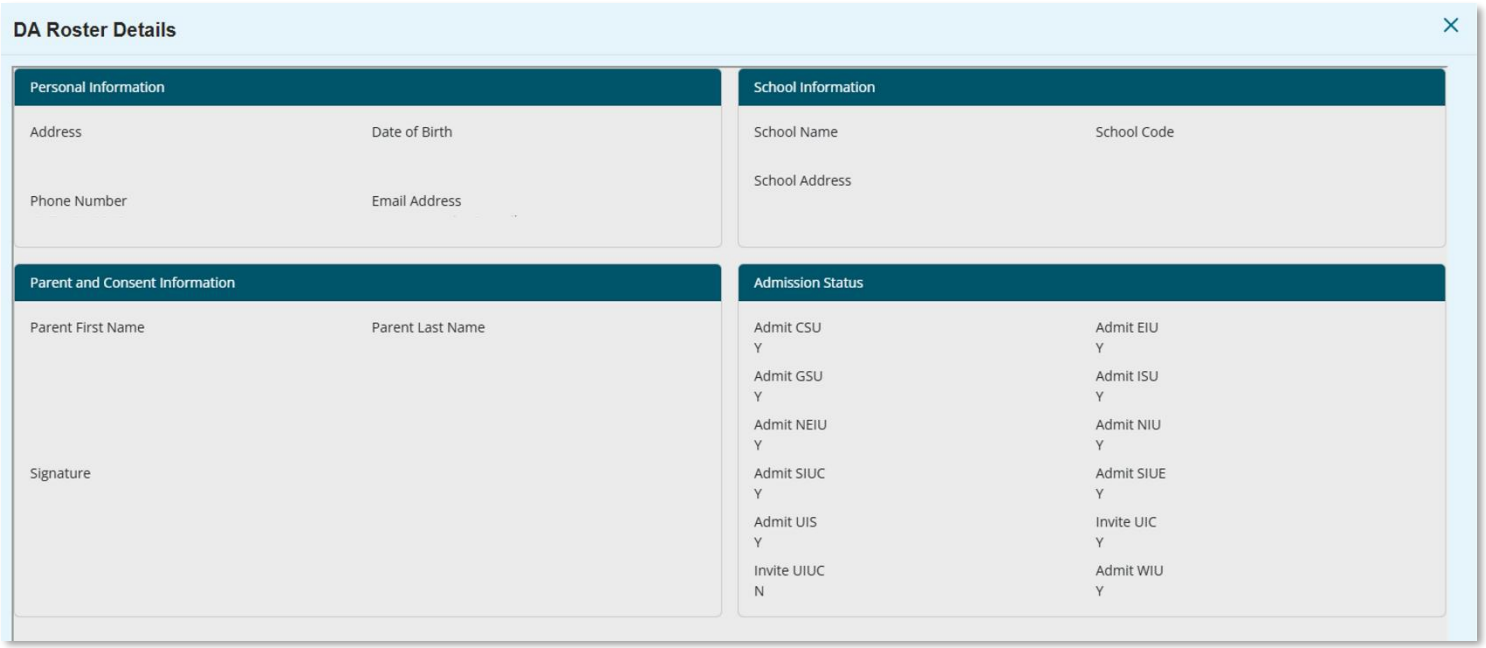
Columns

Below are the available columns from the **Details Graduation Year screen**:



- **Select** – used for the **Delete Selected** option.
- **Last Name** – Student's Last Name
- **First Name** – Student's First Name
- **MI** – Student's Middle Initial
- **DOB** – Student's Date of Birth

- **OCCA Status** – Displays a '**View**' link to be directed to the OCCA/DA program. The student's Personal Information, School Information, Parent and Consent Information, and Admission Status will be displayed.



- **FAFSA Status** – Student's filing and Student Aid Index (SAI) status based on the completion of a FAFSA or Alternative App.
    - Possible statuses for a student record:
        - **No FAFSA Filed** – Student did not file a FAFSA or Alternative App
        - **Filed, has SAI** – Student filed a FAFSA or Alternative App and a SAI was calculated.
        - **Filed, no SAI** (multiple meanings to status):
            - Student filed a FAFSA or Alternative App; however, some information was incomplete, or information provided prevented a SAI from being calculated.
            - Student filed a FAFSA and was given a **Provisional SAI** – "Students can indicate…they have unusual circumstances that prevent them from providing parental data…[the student submits the FAFSA and] do not include parental data, they will receive a provisional status as an independent student and a provisional SAI calculation."

- **Initial FAFSA Received Date** – Initial date FAFSA or Alternative App was received by the FAFSA Processing System.
- **MAP Elig College**– Based on student's potential Monetary Award Program eligibility at any college listed by the student on the FAFSA or Alternative App.
    - Y (yes) or N (no)
- **Opt Out Waiver (Online FAFSA® Nonparticipation Form)** – Signifies an online Nonparticipation Form has been submitted for this student.
    - Completed online via the ISAC Student Portal.
    - Submitted by the student or parent.
        - If a student is at least 18 years-old, they can complete the form themselves.
        - If a student is under 18 years-old, a parent must complete this form on the student's behalf.
    - Note: Form must have an exact match to student's First Name, Last Name, DOB, and School to match the GAP Access record.
        - Successfully completed/filed Nonparticipation Forms with matching student data will appear immediately within the FAFSA Initiative program in GAP.
        - If items don't match, the checkbox will not populate, and form will need to be edited and resubmitted.
        - **If a student has accidentally input incorrect information on their waiver, the student must log back in to the ISAC student portal** and correct these errors.
            - These details can be updated by clicking the Manage Submission → Edit. Once the details have been updated, save and submit the form.
- **Paper Waiver Completed (Paper/Print of FAFSA® Nonparticipation Form)** – Signifies school has received a paper/print version of the Nonparticipation Form
    - **Requested by parents or students** via ISBE at fafsa@isbe.net

- **Only used if the student is an emancipated minor.**
- Students will give this document to the FAFSA Designee at their school for it to be inputted into the FAFSA Initiative GAP Access program.

To complete a paper waiver for a student:

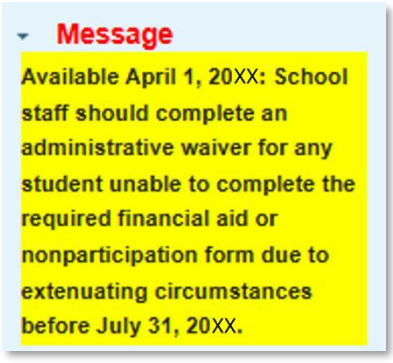
1. Click the **Paper Waiver Completed checkbox** for the appropriate student.
    - A blue checkbox will appear.
2. To confirm selection:
    - Click Paper Waiver Save Changes.
    - The student's "**Opt Out Waiver**" checkbox will now be populated.
    - If you do not click Paper Waiver Save Changes, the record will not be saved.

If Paper Waiver Completed checkbox has been saved in error:

1. Uncheck the **Paper Waiver Completed checkbox** box.
2. Click **Paper Waver Save Changes**.
    - If the only record is the Paper Waiver Completed (and now has been removed due to error), then the Opt Out Waiver box will also show as unchecked.
    - If there is a record submitted from the online Nonparticipation Form, the Opt Out Waiver will remain checked.



- **Admin Waiver** – Used to indicate that the school has completed "Good Faith Effort" to support the students in completing a financial aid application but due to unforeseen or extenuating circumstances, were unable to complete a financial aid application or the Nonparticipation Form.
- **Note**: If a student will not be graduating, the "Not Receiving a HS Diploma" option should be used instead. See below for instructions.
    - Availability of this feature opens April 1 at the end of each academic year.
    - Can be completed and saved by any GAP Access user with FAFSA Update privileges.
    - To complete an Admin Waiver:



1. Click the Admin Waiver checkbox next to the student who you will be submitting an Admin Waiver for.
2. A pop-up screen appears, requiring the school to fill in with information.
    - Attest to the Good Faith Effort clause by checking the box.
    - Optional: Enter student's email and phone number.

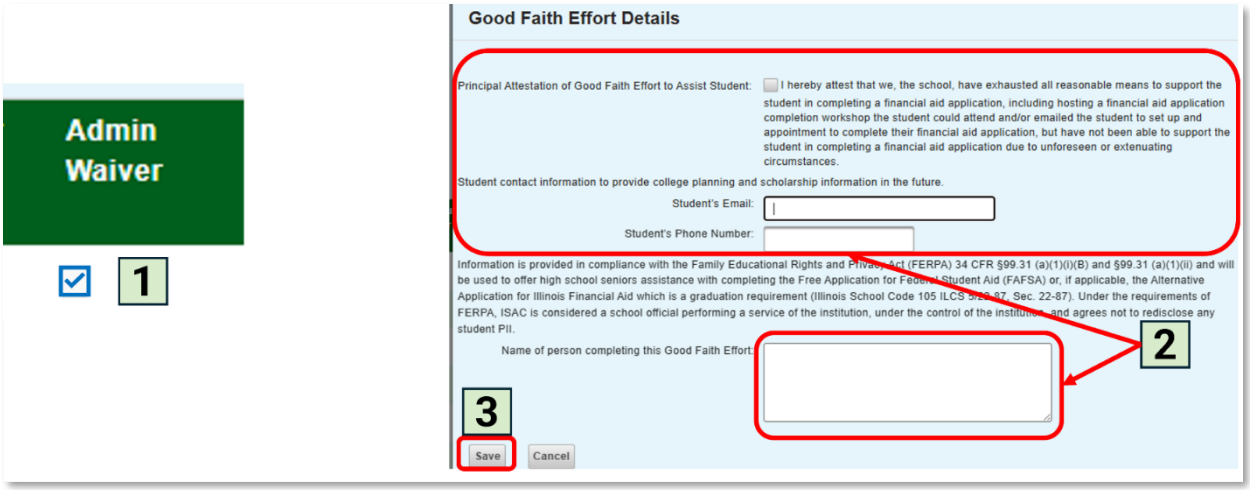
- Enter name of person completing this Good Faith Effort.

3. Select Save to save the information.

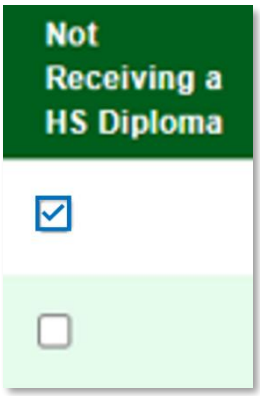
   - **Note**: Once saved, the Admin Waiver cannot be removed. It can be overridden by selecting the "Not Receiving a HS Diploma" box if applicable. See more information below.

   - Select Cancel if you do not want to save entered information.

4. Once completed and the information is saved, the system will recognize that the school successfully completed an Admin Waiver for this individual student.



- **Consent for Follow-Up** – Student consented to follow-up with ISAC
  - Option available when student is completing the Nonparticipation Form online.
- **Not Receiving a HS Diploma** – Selected by GAP Access school user if student will not be receiving a high school diploma this year.

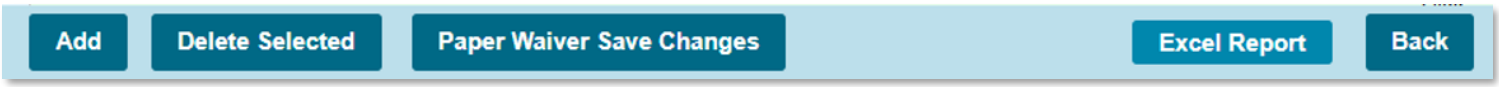


  - Click the box:
    - Examples for when to use this box:
      - ✓ Students who do not have enough credits or courses completed to graduate, thus will not be receiving a high school diploma.
      - ✓ Students are in special education program(s) who will receive a certificate of completion, rather than a high school diploma.

        - Click Save.
            - **Note**: If an Admin Waiver was filed before clicking this option, the "Not Receiving a HS Diploma" option will override the Admin Waiver.
    - If accidentally selected:
        - Simply uncheck the box.
        - Click Save.
    - When selected, **Opt Out Waiver and Consent for Follow Up boxes will become inactive** (i.e., grayed out)
        - **A Nonparticipation Form or financial aid application completion is not required**.

Additional Features

From the bottom of the **Financial Aid Application Completion: Details Graduation Year screen**, there are several additional features that allow the user to edit and manage the students that appear in the list.



Adding/Deleting a Student

Schools can add or delete students from their list as needed by following these steps:

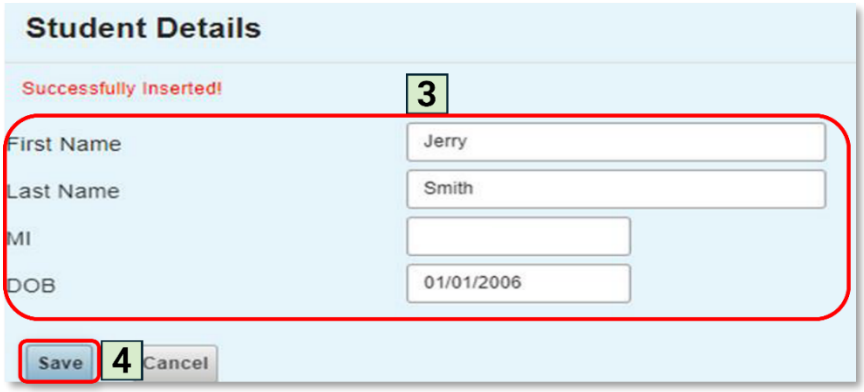
- Either add, delete, or adjustment functions make any change to FAFSA data itself.
    - Any change made in the FAFSA Initiative system is to the school's student list only.
    - Subsequently, FAFSA data is matched against the student list.
        - Adjusting demographic data could improve ability for the system to match a student record with a FAFSA or Alternative App.
- **NOTES:**
    - Add and Delete functions make immediate changes to school's student list.

- You may not see an immediate change in FAFSA Status, Initial FAFSA Received Date, and MAP Eligible Choice College fields.
- Typically, new FAFSA match data is available to schools weekly on Monday morning.

Add a Student

The **Add button** allows a new student record to be added to the list. To use the **Add** feature:

1. Click the **Add** button.
2. A data entry box will appear.
3. Enter the required student information:
   a. First Name
   b. Last Name
   c. Middle Initial (if applicable/not required)
   d. Date of Birth



4. Click **Save**. A message saying “Successfully Inserted” will appear.
   a. The student’s name will now appear in alphabetical order on the student list.

Delete Selected Students

The **Delete Selected button** allows for selected student records to be removed from the list.

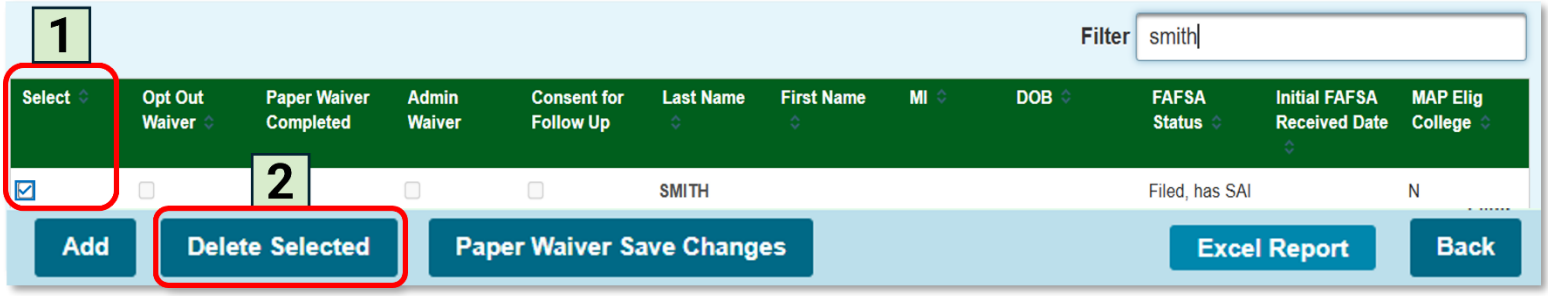
- **Do not delete** a student if they will receive a diploma from the school.
- This applies even if the student is currently attending another program or school within the district, such as:
  - An Alternative School
  - A specialized education program
  - Another district-operated school
- **The school that will issue the diploma is responsible for keeping the student on its roster**.
- **Students should only be deleted** if they transfer to another high school district.

- If a student **unenrolls from high school or withdraws to be homeschooled** and will not receive a diploma from the school, the student should be marked as: "**Not Receiving a HS Diploma**"

- Students who are temporarily placed at another school within the district for specialized services should remain attached to their "home" school for FAFSA/FAACI reporting purposes.

To use the **Delete Selected** feature:

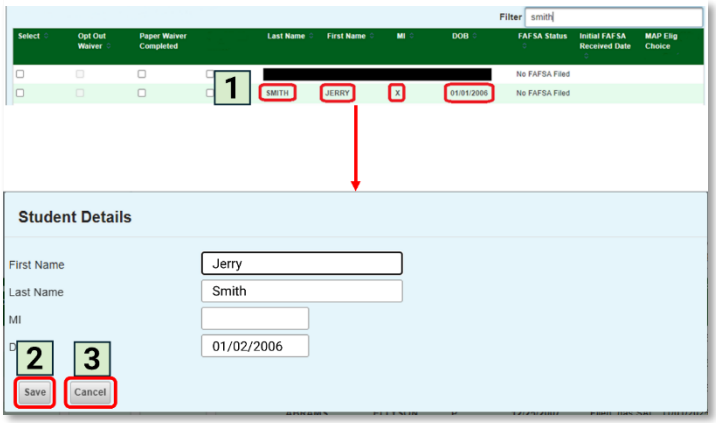
1. Select the student(s) to delete by checking the box in the **Select column**.
    a. It is highly recommended to delete one student at a time.
2. After you have selected the student record, click the Delete Selected button.
    a. **You will not get a warning** once you click the **Delete Selected** button.



Updating Student Demographic Information

Individual student information can be edited from the **Financial Aid Application Completion: Details Graduation Year screen**. To edit a student's demographic information:

1. Click on the student's details (i.e., last name, first name, MI, or DOB) and **Student Details** box will appear.
    - You will be able to edit the demographic information.
2. Click the **Save** button. A Successfully Updated message will display.
    - The adjusted record is now set for the student and will be used in the next match cycle.



3. Click **Cancel** to return to the **Financial Aid Application Completion: Details Graduation Year screen**.

Excel Report

To generate Excel report of the **Financial Aid Application Completion: Details Graduation Year screen's** table:

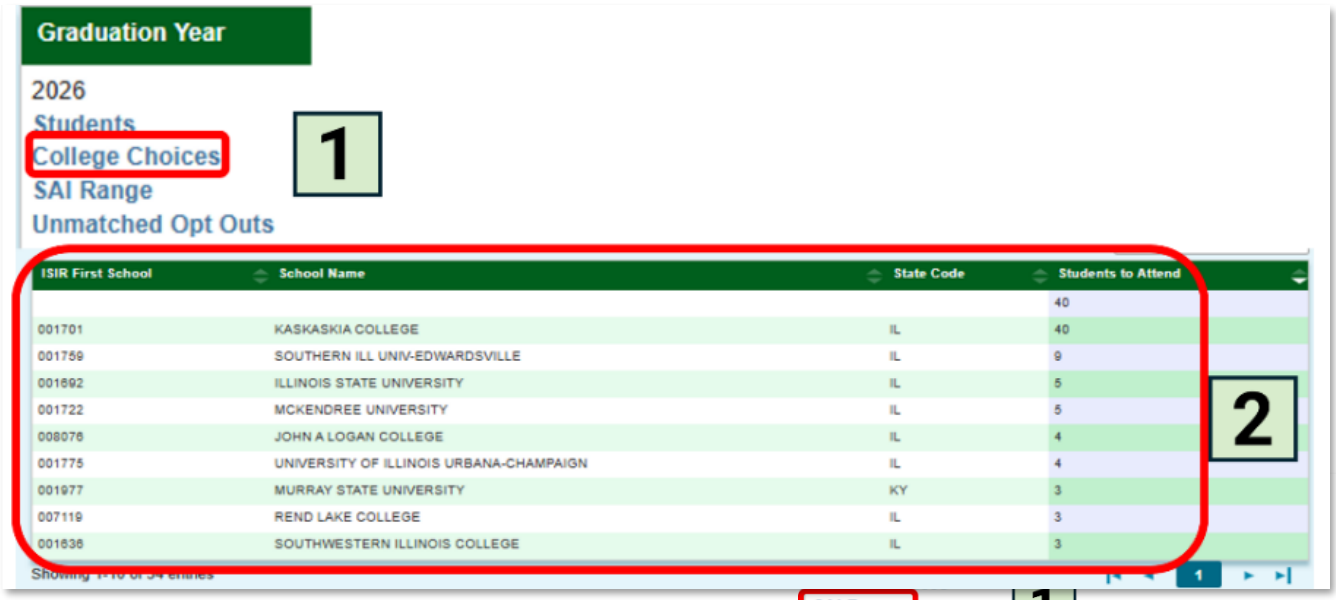
1. Click Excel Report button at the bottom of the screen.
   - Automatically downloads the report.
   - Allows data on Excel Report to be sorted as needed.

College Choices

To view the colleges designated as the first college on the student's financial aid application:

1. Click College Choices below the graduation year.
2. Colleges are listed based on the number of students indicating that college from highest to lowest number. The columns provide more information:
   a. **ISIR First School** – School listed first on the student's financial aid application.
   b. **School Name** – Name of college associated with the school code
   c. **State Code** – State abbreviation in which the school is located

d. **Students to Attend** – Number of your students designating that college as the first listed school on the students' financial aid application.





SAI Ranges

To view the ranges of students SAIs, from the School Summary **screen**:

1. Click the SAI Range below the graduation year.
2. Two columns can be viewed:
   a. SAI Range: Student Aid Index (SAI) Ranges
   b. Students in Range: Number of students in that SAI range.

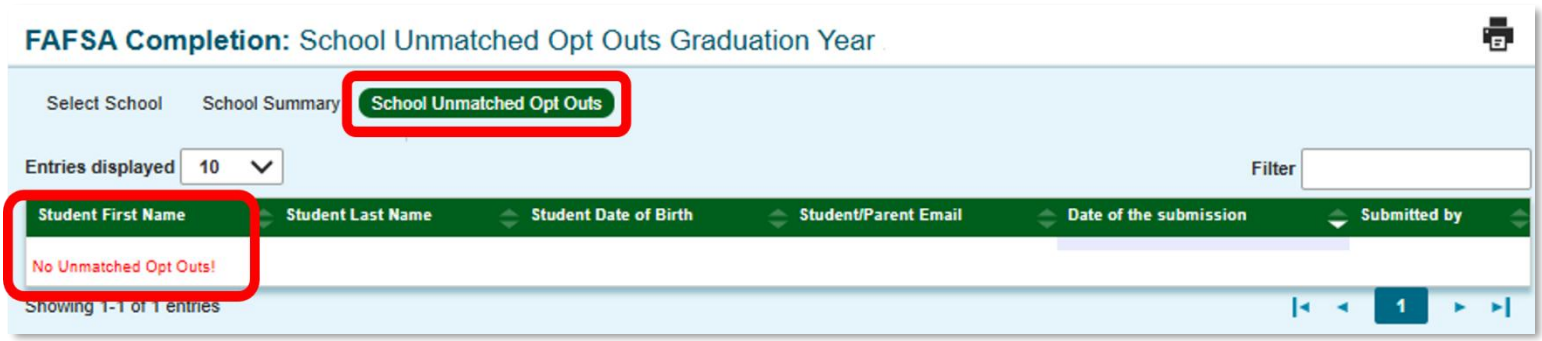
Unmatched Opt-Outs

This screen allows schools to view unmatched, online Nonparticipation Form submissions. To view this screen, click on the **School Unmatched Opt Outs tab**.

The information provided from this screen includes:

- Student's First Name
- Student's Last Name
- Student's Date of Birth
- Student or Parent Email
- Date of Submission
- Submitted by… (Student or Parent)

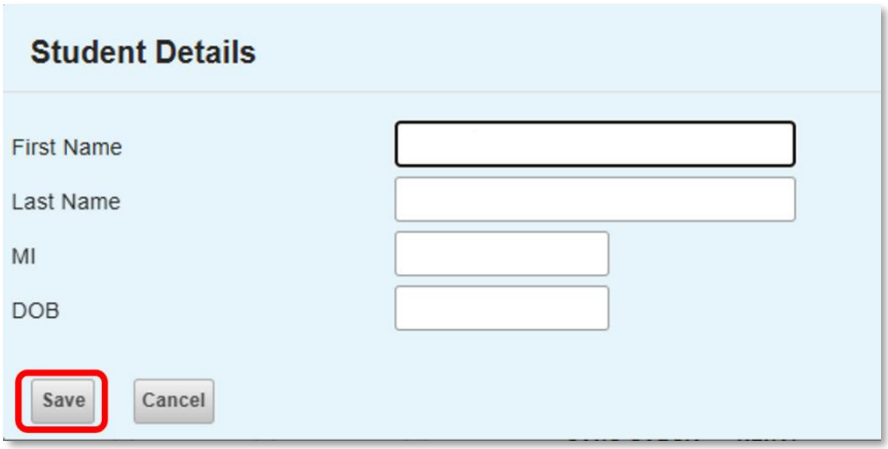
If there are no Unmated Opt-Outs, the following message will display: “**No Unmatched Opt Outs**”.



Editing Student Information

If the displayed information for a student is incorrect such as first name, last name and DOB, the school user can update the information via the Student’s Demographics on the Student Details page:

1. Click on the student’s name.
2. The **Student Details screen** will appear.
3. Update any needed information in the provided fields.
4. Click save.



Student Record Upload (for private schools only)

The student record upload process allows **private schools** to upload current list of seniors.

Required Student Data

- Last Name
- First Name
- Middle Initial
- Date of Birth

File Requirements

- Follow ISAC's prescribed file layout.
- Must contain entire senior class.

- Must not include a header.
- File must be formatted in any of the following options:
  - Microsoft Excel 2003 or above (XLS, XLSX, XLSS)
  - CSV (Comma Delimited)

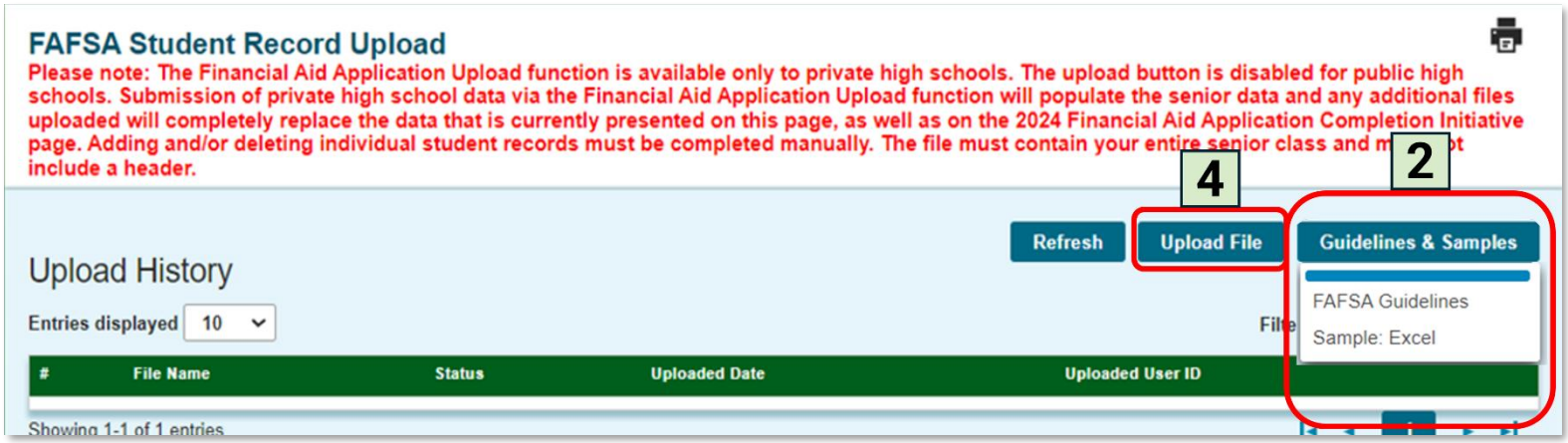
Important Notes

- Separate from the State Scholar Program File Upload process.
- Available **only to private high schools**.
- Public high schools receive senior data via the Illinois State Board of Education (upload is disabled).
- Uploading a file will:
  - Populate student data and match it with FAFSA/Alternative Application records (when available)
  - **Replace all previously uploaded data**

Uploading a File

1. Navigate to the **FAFSA Student Record Upload tab**.
2. **Guidelines & Samples** are available by clicking the dropdown on the right.
   - **FAFSA Guidelines**
     - After opening this window, you will see the format table and two options on the right to print or download an Excel spreadsheet with data fields in the appropriate order.
     - Files must be formatted in Microsoft Excel 2003 or above, or in CSV, and follow ISAC's file layout.
   - **Sample: Excel**
     - Will download an Excel file of sample data in the described format
3. Use the Excel Sample to format your student information that needs to be uploaded.

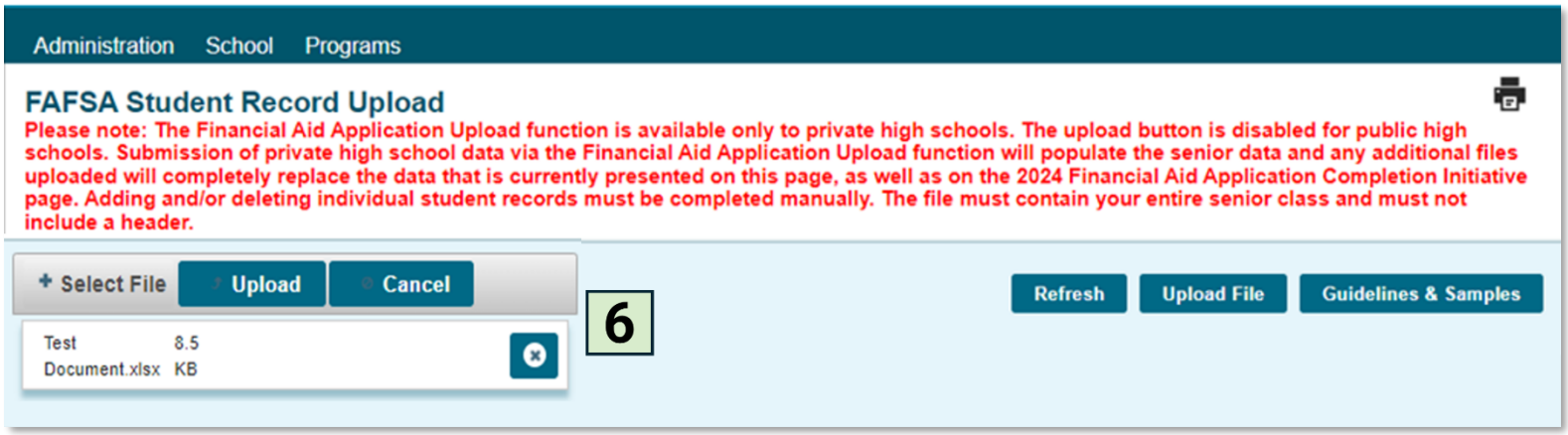
4. Click the **Upload File** button.



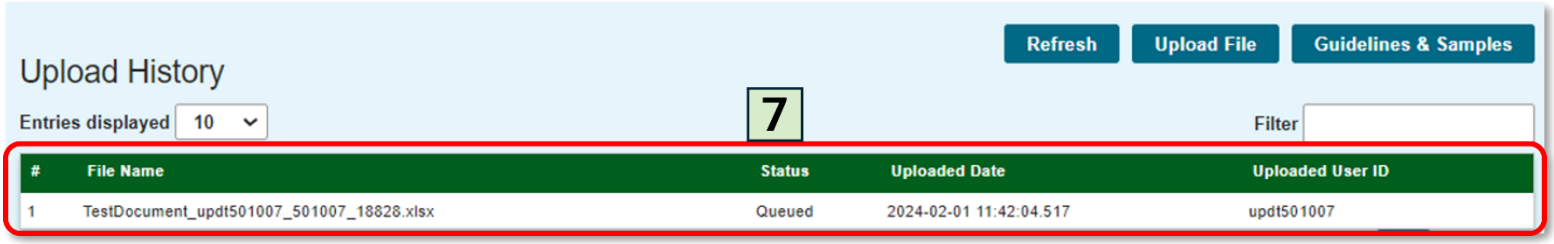
5. A dialog box will appear, prompting you to browse your computer to **Select File** to upload.

6. Confirm the file you want to use and click **Upload**.

    - If not, click **Cancel** or delete it from the dialog box.



7. Once the file upload is completed successfully, the file will appear with a **"Upload Complete"** status and no further action is required.



File Status: Upload Complete

- File passed all validation checks
- Student list is available in the FAFSA Completion section of GAP Access
- Students will be included in the next matching cycle
- Match results update weekly (Mondays)
- Any changes after upload must be made manually

Tips

- If your file will not upload, check that the file follows the required format.
    - Do **not** use any punctuation i.e., periods, apostrophe, dashes.
    - Do **not** password protect file.
    - For help, contact ISAC Partner Services
        - **Phone:** 866-247-2172
        - **Email:** isac.partnerservices@illinois.gov

Troubleshooting: Common Reasons FAFSA® Data Not Showing as Filed

- Timing of submission of FAFSA
    - Newest FAFSA matches are available every Monday morning.
        - **Example**: if a student filed their application on Monday afternoon, the FAFSA will not appear until the following Monday.
- Student's demographic data does not match
    - Common no-match name discrepancies:
        - Switching first and last names
        - Student filed wrong year FAFSA.
        - Student list may not show a middle initial, but FAFSA filed used a middle initial
        - Student does not show name suffix (e.g., II, Jr., Sr.), but FAFSA filed used a name suffix
        - Student filed FAFSA using a name suffix as part of the first or last name
        - Student has a hyphenated last name.
            - ✓ Confirm FAFSA was filed using the hyphenated name.
            - ✓ Check if a space was used between name and hyphen.
    - Inconsistent Date of Birth (DOB)
    - Incorrect high school name
        - E.g., if school's name is City High School but the FAFSA filed used West Campus High School, this could cause a no-match

For help, contact ISAC Partner Services

- **Phone:** 866-247-2172
- **Email:** isac.partnerservices@illinois.gov

One-Click College Admit (OCCA)

Overview

One Click College Admit (OCCA) is a State of Illinois Direct Admissions (DA) program that offers direct admission to participating Illinois public universities based solely on GPA.

High school seniors and community college transfer students can opt in to OCCA, which serves as their application for general admission—no separate application, fees, essays, or recommendation letters are required.

Students who meet a university's GPA requirement will receive admission offers (typically in September) along with instructions to respond through the Common App. To enroll, students simply act on their offer in the Common App and provide any additional required information such as uploading transcripts, answering supplemental questions, and/or creating an account with the desired college.

Community college students who opt in will automatically receive admission offers once they complete 30 transferable credit hours, provided they meet GPA requirements and plan to finish their associate degree before transferring.

Student Data Upload

At the end of each school year **between late spring and July 1**, schools must upload student data to automatically enroll students into the OCCA program. For information and steps on how this is completed, see the Uploading Student Data to SSP & OCCA section of this document.

- Schools must wait until after the end of the spring term before submitting data. Data collection must close **on July 1** to allow sufficient time for OCCA data matching and other program processes to occur during the summer.
- Following the data collection deadline of July 1, ISAC will communicate information – about any high schools that have not submitted data – to the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) for assistance with follow-up.
- Chicago Public Schools Central Office can continue to coordinate with ISAC's Program Services team on their data collection process.

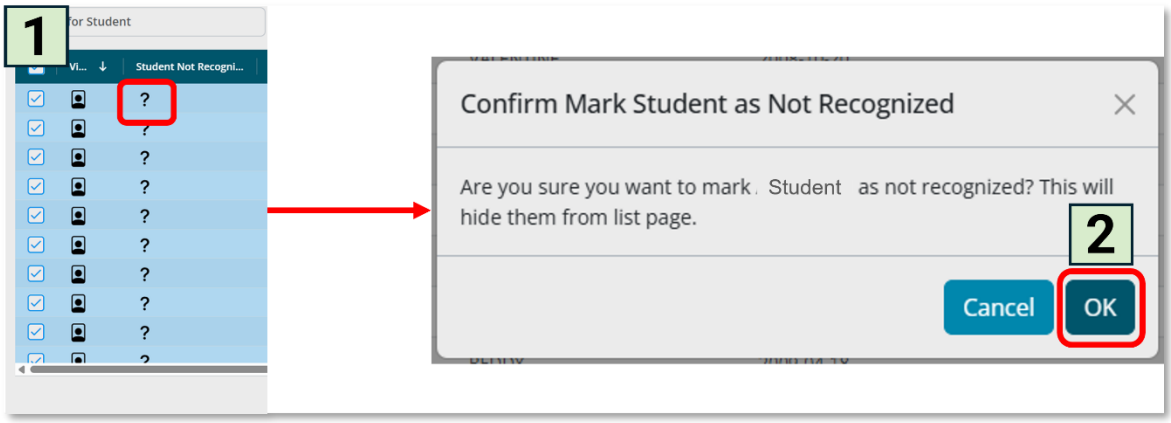
List Screen

The **List screen** is the home screen that is viewed within the OCCA program. From this screen, schools can view their students that have opted in to the program. The list can be sorted to show Opt-Ins only or to Show Not Recognized Only (see Student Not Recognized Column section below for more information).

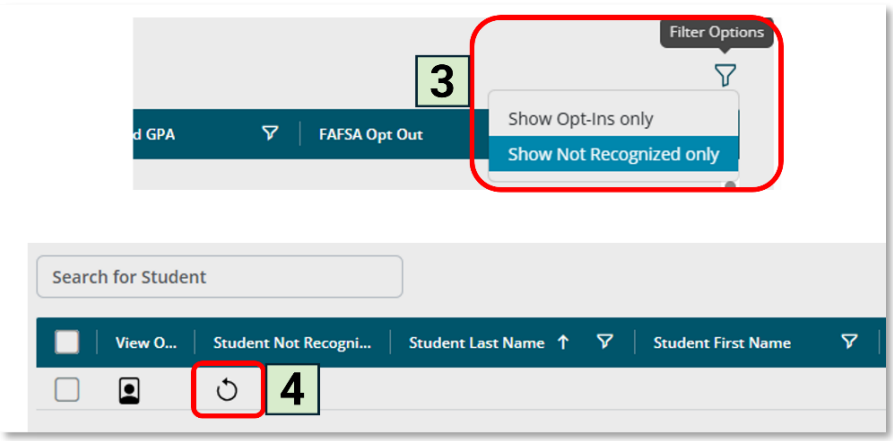
Student Not Recognized Column

Within the student Opt-in list for the program is one interactive column: “Student Not Recognized”. This allows the school to identify potential students that should not appear on their list. To mark a student as not recognized and remove them from your Opt-in list, do the following:

1. Click on the question mark next to the name of the student.
2. A pop-up will appear confirming to mark the student as not recognized
    a. **OK** – will mark the student as not recognized and remove them from the view list
    b. **Cancel** – will not mark the student as not recognized and the student will remain visible on the Opt-in list.



3. If a student is accidentally marked as “Not Recognized” they can be reinstated to the Opt-in list by using the filter options on the right side of the screen and selecting “Show Not Recognized only”.
4. To reinstate a student as recognized, simply click the undo back-arrow button. This will move the student back to the Opt-In list.



State Scholar Program (SSP)

Overview

The State Scholar Program (SSP) file uploading is accessed through the GAP Access Portal. Users must have the correct program privileges assigned to them by their Primary Administrator to update SSP information. For more information on assigning program privileges and creating user accounts see the GAP Access User Guide.

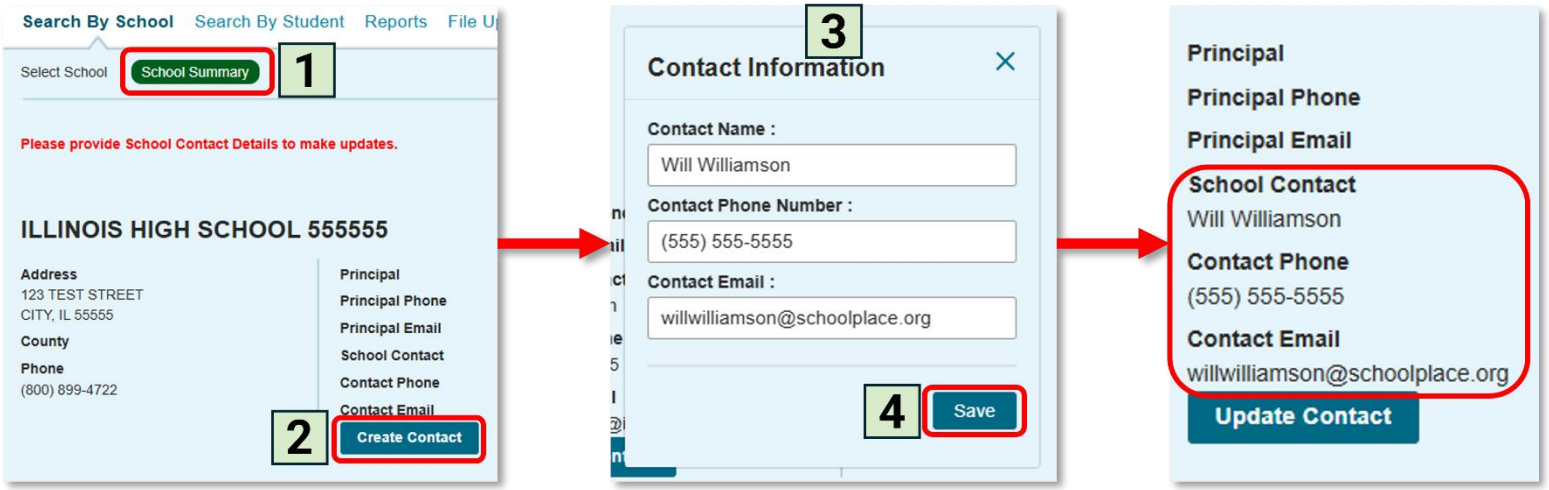
After logging in to GAP, the SSP program can be accessed from the **Programs tab**. This will take you to the **School screen** where you can view general information about current and past state scholar years.

SSP Contact

Each school must also designate a user as the SSP contact. This user will receive email updates and communication about SSP such as file upload errors & notices of when reports are available for viewing.

To update the SSP contact:

1. Select the **School Summary screen**.
2. Click the "**Create Contact**" button or the "**Update Contact**" button. "Create Contact" only appears if there is no SSP contact on file.
3. Enter the Contacts Name, Phone Number, and Email address.
4. Click "**Save**" to complete. The entered SSP contact information should now appear on the **School Summary** screen.



School Specific Data

After logging in to GAP and selecting the State Scholar Program (**SSP/OCCA**) from the **Programs tab**, the **School Summary screen** will appear. Users will not be able to upload sixth semester data until the SSP contacts have been updated and the **high school profile fields have been completed.**

From this screen, the following must be entered:

1. **Sixth Semester Class Size** – this is the class size at the end of the sixth semester (end of junior year). Students that are not within the student cohort for graduation should not be included in the Class size.

    a. You must provide data for the entire class of juniors at your high school, even if a student does not appear to meet SSP eligibility criteria. A student that does not meet the eligibility for SSP may still qualify for direct admission into Illinois public institutions through OCCA.

2. **Unweighted GPA Scale** – enter the highest GPA value for the school's unweighted GPA scale. This does not have to be on a 4.0 scale. Use your school's unweighted GPA scale.

3. **Does School Rank?**

    a. Y (yes)

    b. N (no)

        - **If a school ranks, the students' unweighted ranks must be reported**.

        - ISAC does not require both unweighted rank and GPA. GPA must be provided for all students. Rank is only provided if a school indicates they are a ranking school. If a school does not rank, the column should be zeroed out (see the SSP & OCCA Excel File Layout & Specifications Table for more information).

4. **Is Weighted GPA Available?**

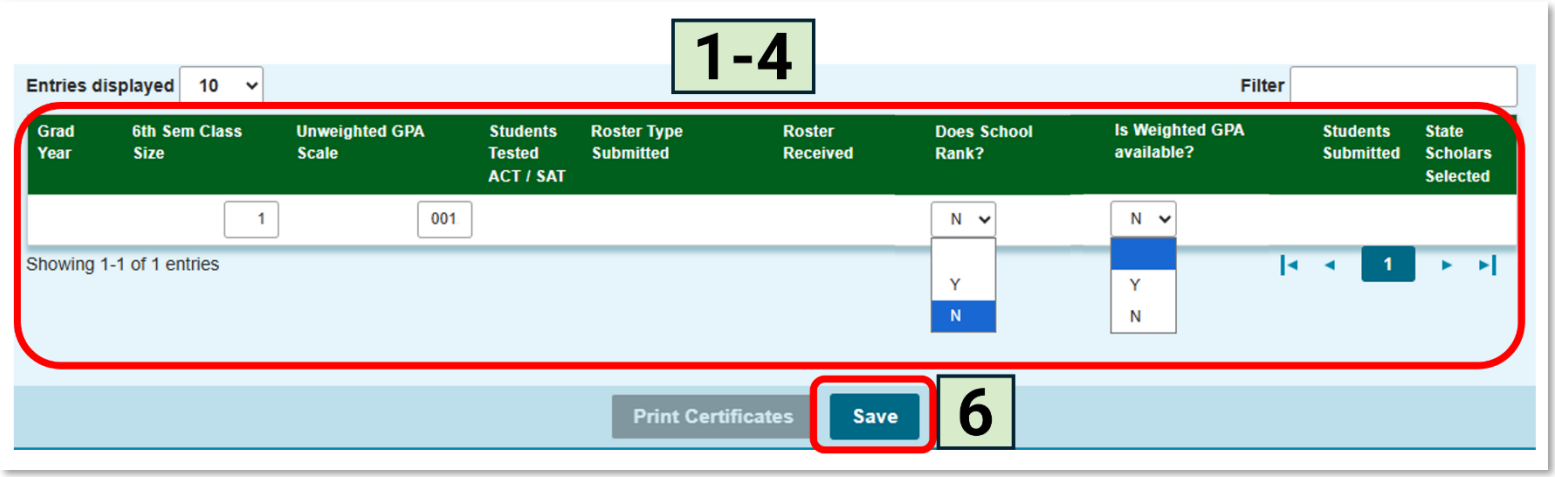
    b. Y (yes)

    c. N (no)

5. Double check that the listed Primary Administrator and SSP contact information on the **State Scholar and One Click Admit: School Summary** screen is correct, and update if necessary.

a. When a file is validated with or without errors, an email will be sent to the Primary Administrator and the school contact upon completion of the validation.

6. Click "**Save**" to save edited information.



Selection Process

After processing data received from schools and ACT and SAT, ISAC designates scholars based on those who meet the eligibility criteria and the student must either:

1. Have an ISTS (Illinois Standard Test Score) at or above the 95th percentile on a college exam. These students are automatically designated as State Scholars.

   OR

2. Having an ISTS (Illinois Standard Test Score) below the 95th percentile but who have a WSS (weighted selection score) greater than or equal to the cutoff score are also designated as State Scholars. WSS is a combination of a student's Illinois Standard Test Score (ISTS) from the ACT or SAT test and the student's overall class rank that is converted into an Illinois Standard Rank Score (ISRS).

The WSS and the 95th percentile cutoffs on college entrance exams are established annually see the State Scholar program page for more information. In any academic year, approximately 10% of all Illinois high school graduates are named State Scholars. A WSS cutoff is determined by ISAC each year to yield this result.

Hand Calculating WSS (Weighted Selection Score)

To hand calculate a WSS score for a student, the following steps can be used:

1. Either use a student's ACT score or convert the students test score to calculate the Illinois Standard Test Score (ISTS)

    a. The SAT Reasoning Test: Evidence Based Reading & Writing Section Score + Math Section Score are added together and converted to the equivalent ACT Score. Refer to the official ACT-SAT Concordance Tables (Table A1: SAT Total to ACT Composite) to obtain the converted equivalent ACT Score.

    b. **Note: Students must take their ACT/SAT test during their junior year.**

    - **The testing period is from August 1 (start of the student's junior year) through June 30 (last date accepted) each year.**
    - **Tests completed on or after July 1 will not be considered** for Illinois State Scholar designation.

2. Convert the high school class rank to an Illinois Standard Rank Score (ISRS) by calculating the percentile of the class rank for each student using the formula below:

    a. $$Percentile = \left(\frac{Class\ Size - (Rank\ in\ Class - 0.5)}{Class\ Size}\right) x\ 100$$

Percentile	ISRS
99.75 – 99.99	**30**
99.54 – 99.74	**29**
99.19 – 99.53	**28**
98.62 – 99.18	**27**
97.73 – 98.61	**26**
96.42 – 97.72	**25**
94.53 – 96.41	**24**
91.93 – 94.52	**23**
88.50 – 91.92	**22**
84.14 – 88.49	**21**
78.82 – 88.49	**20**
72.58 – 78.81	**19**
65.55 – 72.57	**18**
57.94 – 65.54	**17**
50.00 – 57.93	**16**

- Example: The percentile for a student that is ranked 1 in a class of 11 students would be calculated as shown below.

$$\left(\frac{11 - (1 - 0.5)}{11}\right) x\ 100 = 95.45$$

    b. After calculating the student's percentile, use the table below to find the student's corresponding ISRS.

    Example: Using our same student from above, with a percentile of 95.45, this student would have an ISRS of 24.

3. Calculate the student's Weighted Selection Score (WSS) by adding the two scores calculated in steps 1 & 2.

    ISRS + ISTS = WSS

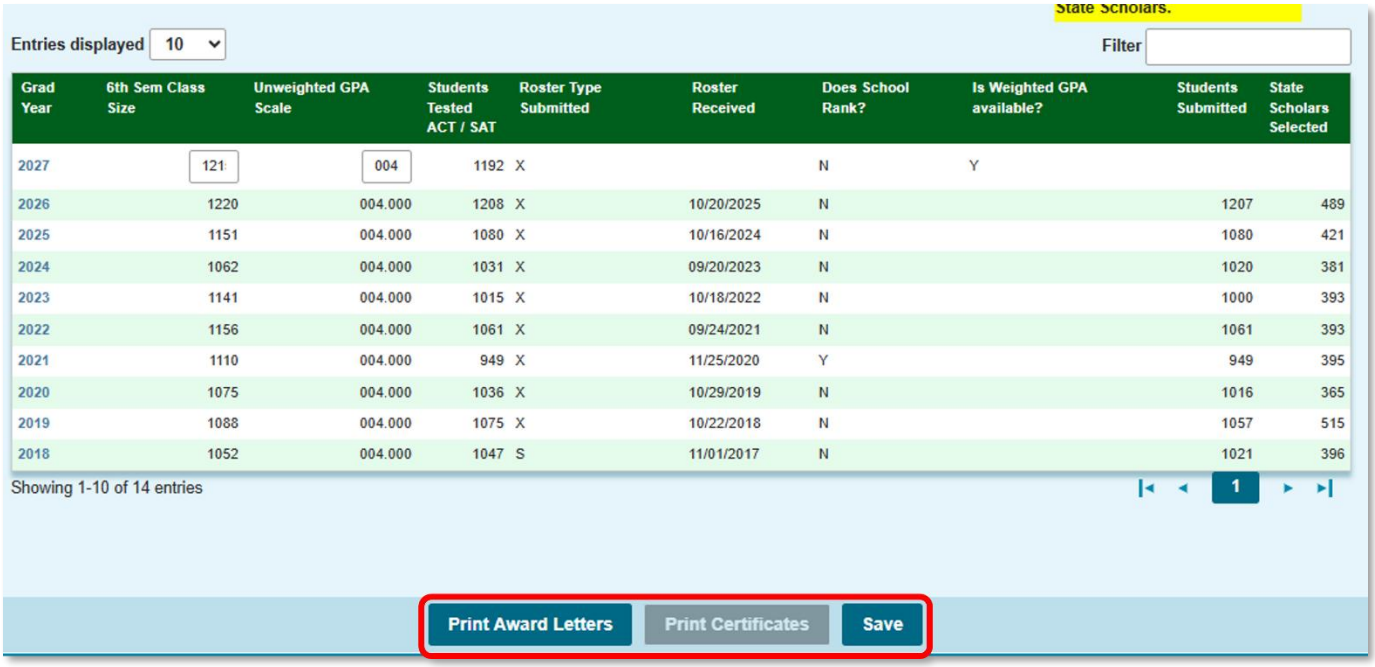
    a. **Example:**

    - Illinois Standard Test Score (ISTS) = 23 (from step 1)

- Illinois Standard Rank Score (ISRS) = 24 (from step 2)
- 23 + 24 = WSS of 47

Obtaining Certificates of Achievement

Starting the 2027-28 school year, schools are responsible for printing and distributing **Certificates of Achievement & Notification Letters to students.** ISAC will no longer be mailing letters to the schools. Both are available after awarding has taken place. To access these certificates and letters, log into the State Scholar program in GAP Access. At the bottom of the **School Summary** page a "**Print Certificates" and "Print Letters "**button will appear. If the button is greyed out, then then the school awarding process has not been completed.



Uploading Student Data to SSP & OCCA

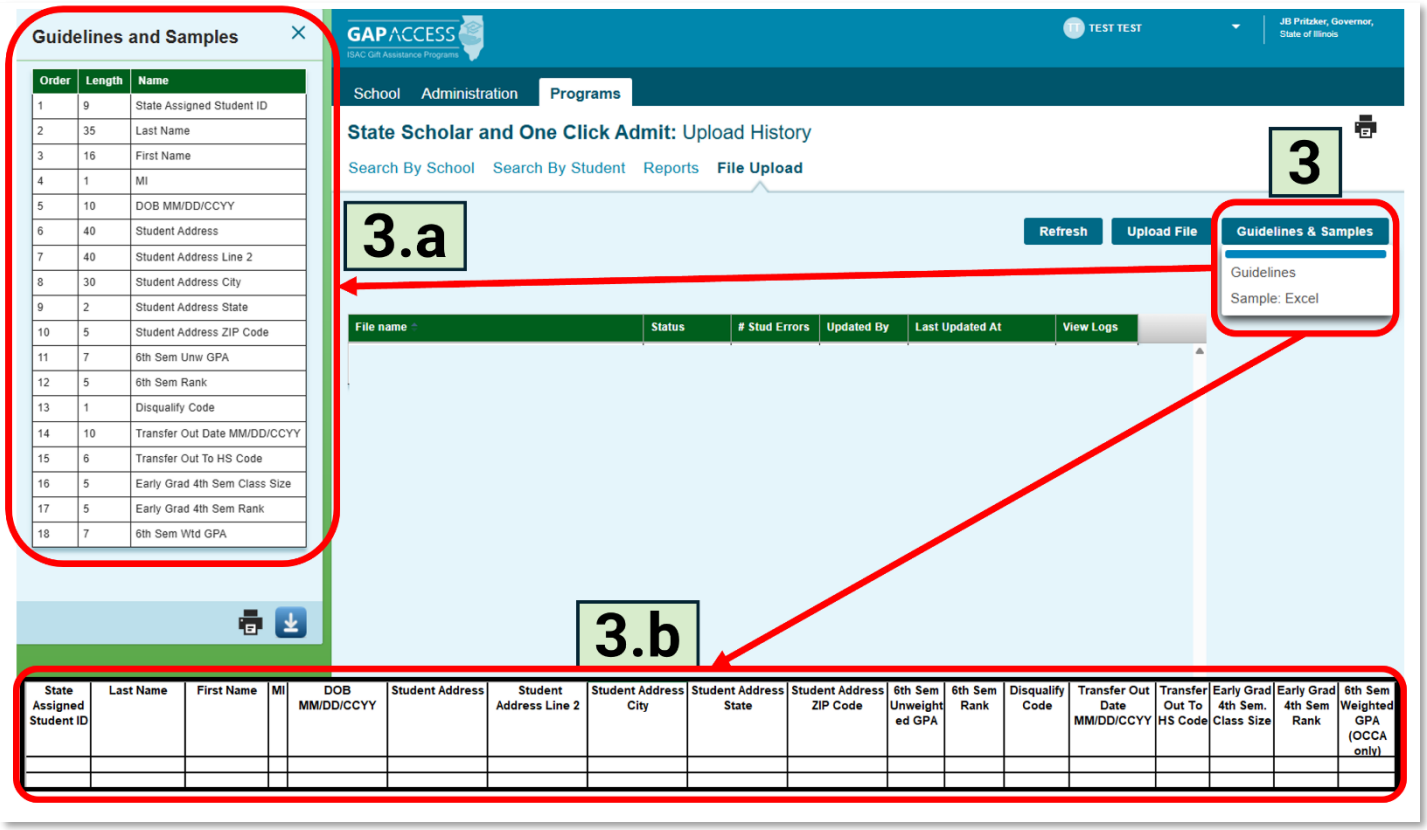
At the end of each school year **between late spring and July 1**, schools must upload student data to automatically enroll students into the OCCA program.

- Schools must wait until after the end of the spring term before submitting data. Data collection must close **on July 1** to allow sufficient time for OCCA data matching and other program processes to occur during the summer.
- Following the data collection deadline of July 1, ISAC will communicate information – about any high schools that have not submitted data – to the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) for assistance with follow-up.
- Chicago Public Schools Central Office can continue to coordinate with ISAC's Program Services team on their data collection process.

Schools must submit sixth semester student data for the State Scholar Program (SSP) and One-Click College Admit program (SSP/OCCA) electronically via the file upload process in the GAP Access Portal. This is completed by uploading an Excel file following ISAC's template.

To upload an Excel file, select the **File Upload tab** within the State Scholar program. When uploading sixth semester data using an Excel file, the file must be created according to State Scholar file specifications provided in this guide. To upload the required Excel file:

1. Log in to GAP Access and select the **SSP/OCCA** program from the **Programs** tab.
2. Click the **File Upload tab**.
3. Click the "**Guidelines & Samples**" button. Two options appear:
    a. **Guidelines** – displays the file layout for the data. A more detailed version of this quick reference is included in this guide in the SSP & OCCA Excel File Layout & Specifications Table section.
    b. **Sample: Excel** – provides an Excel sheet that can be downloaded with data fields in the appropriate locations.



4. Enter the data into the file. For details on what format to enter the data, see the SSP & OCCA Excel File Layout & Specifications Table section of this document.

5. Save your updates. **Do not password protect the file.**

6. Submit that document via the SSP and One Click Admit system from the **File Upload tab.**

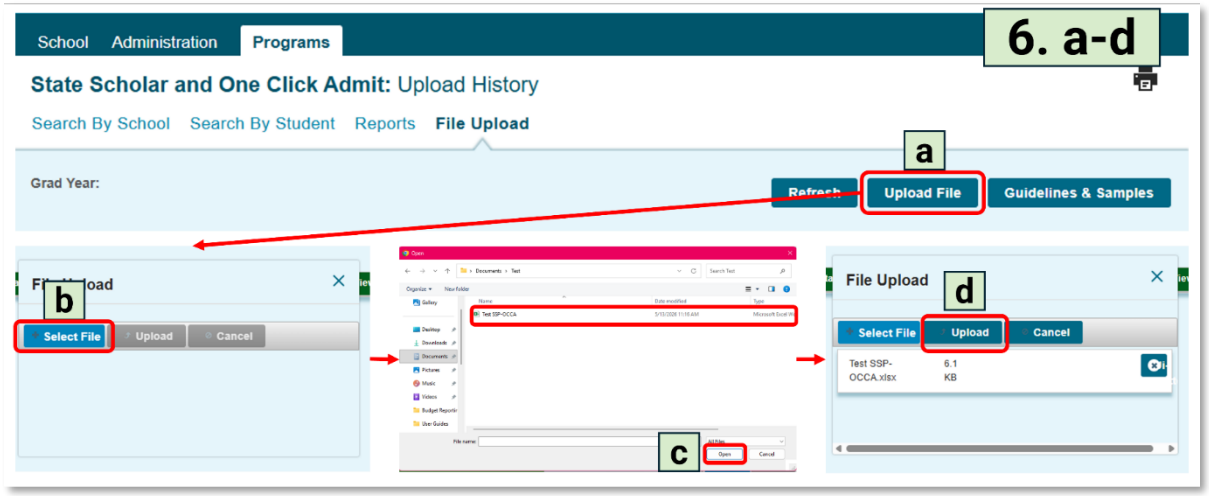
    a. Click the Upload File button.

    b. Click Select File.

    c. A File Explorer Pop-up will appear. Browse for the correct file and either double-click or click and select “Open” to load it into the SSP system.

    d. Once the file is selected, it will appear in the File Upload Pop-up. Click Upload.

        - The file will be uploaded, and the validation process will begin. This can take 5+ minutes to complete.



e. After waiting, to check if the file has been validated click the Refresh button. The file name will be modified after validation for ISAC processing.

- When the validation process is complete, the file (with status) will appear in the history section of the screen. Statuses include:

  - **Validation in Progress** – The file is being processed for Validation.

  - **Validated** – the file has no errors and is awaiting processing by ISAC. No further action is required.

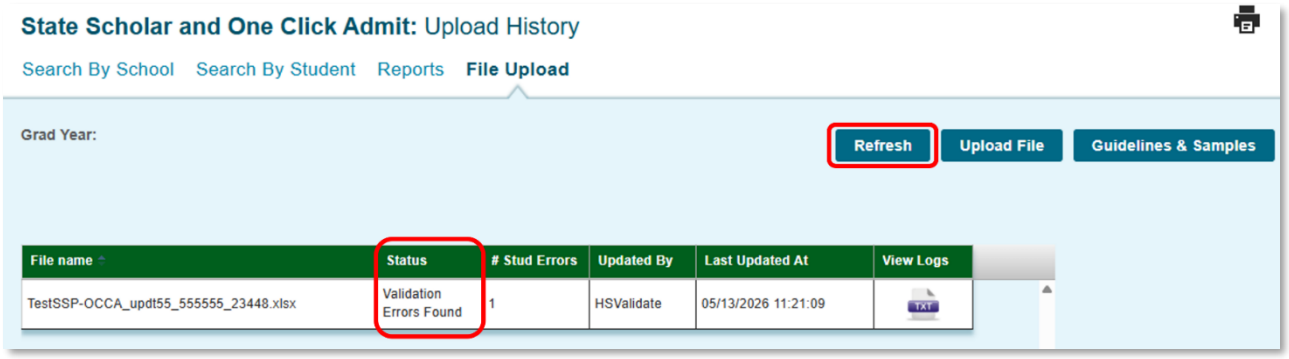
  - **Validation Errors Found** –Potential formatting error (See Formatting and Common Issues to resolve). This must be corrected before any students on the file is considered for state scholar.

a. To correct, an updated Excel file must be uploaded. There is no online editing function.

  - **Staging Error** – File cannot be read (See Formatting and Common Issues to resolve). This must be corrected before any students on the file is considered for state scholar.

  - **Promoted** – The file is in review by ISAC staff to determine awarding.

Troubleshooting Option 1: File Upload Issues

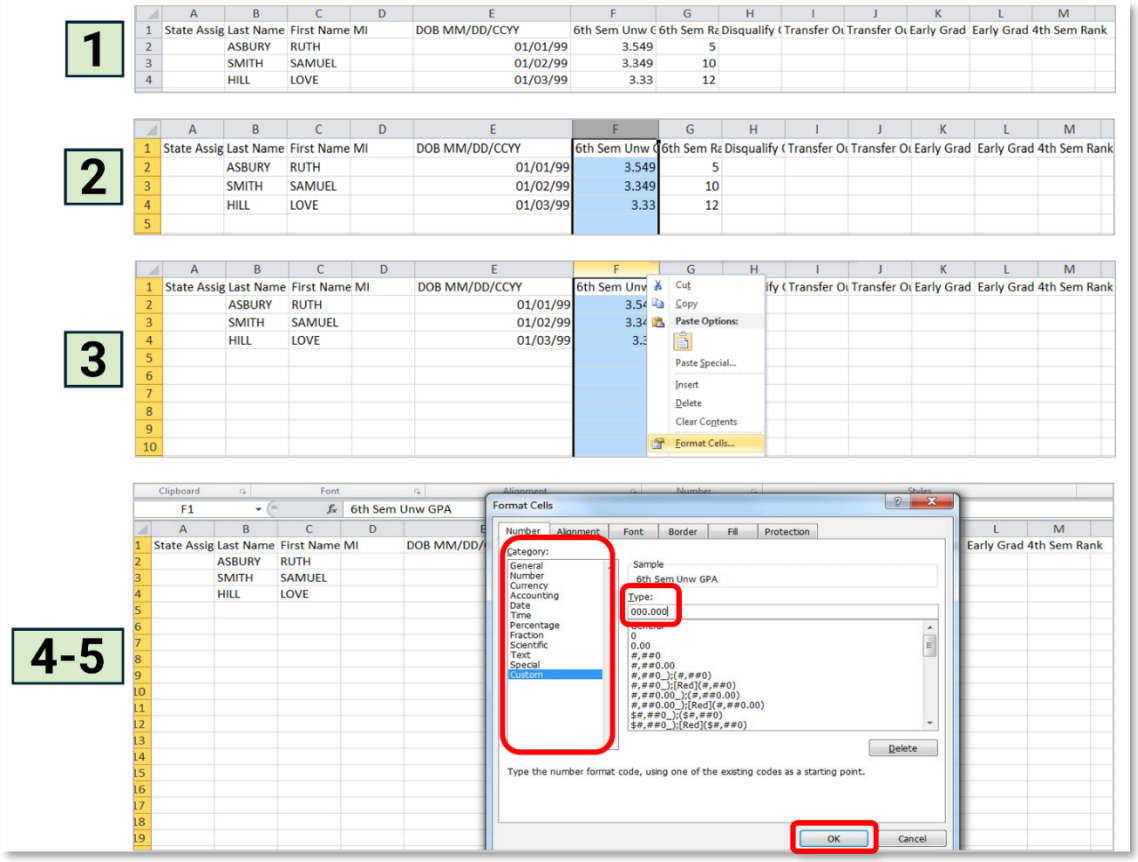


Formatting Tips

- **Use the correct file format**
    - Create the spreadsheet using the ISAC-required layout and **Microsoft Excel 2003 or newer**.
- **Follow data entry requirements**
    - Enter sixth semester data according to ISAC guidance (SSP & OCCA Excel File Layout & Specifications).
- **Required GPA format: 999.999**
    - 7 total characters
    - Decimal point in the 4th position
    - Three digits after the decimal
    - If your GPA format differs (e.g., 3.549)
    - Reformat the column to meet the required structure.

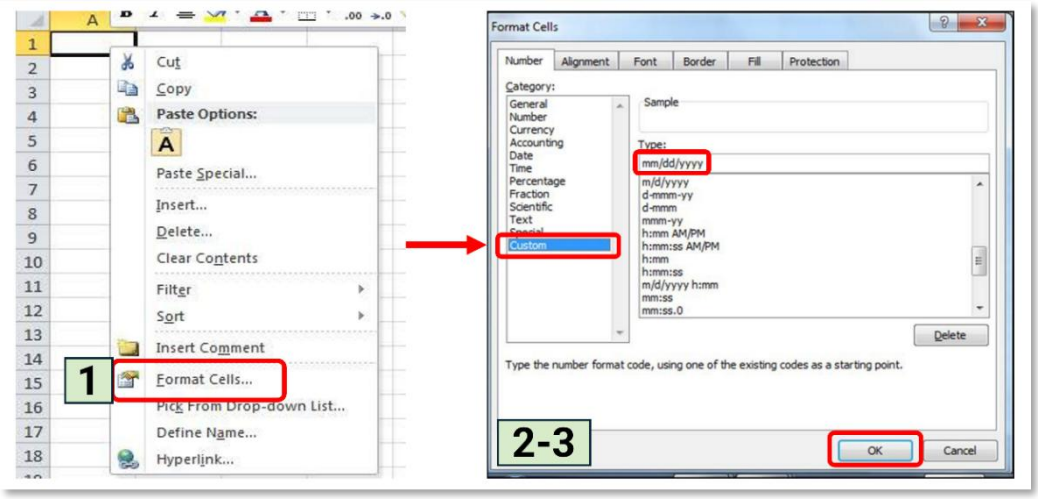
- **Preserve leading zeros**
    - Some fields require “zero fill” (e.g., 001755).
    - Since Excel removes leading zeros by default, format columns to retain them.

1. Populate the spreadsheet with student data.
2. To correct the formatting errors for the **sixth semester GPA**, click on column F to highlight the entire column.
3. Right click to bring up the menu and select “Format cells…”.
4. Select “**Custom**” under the **Category** column.



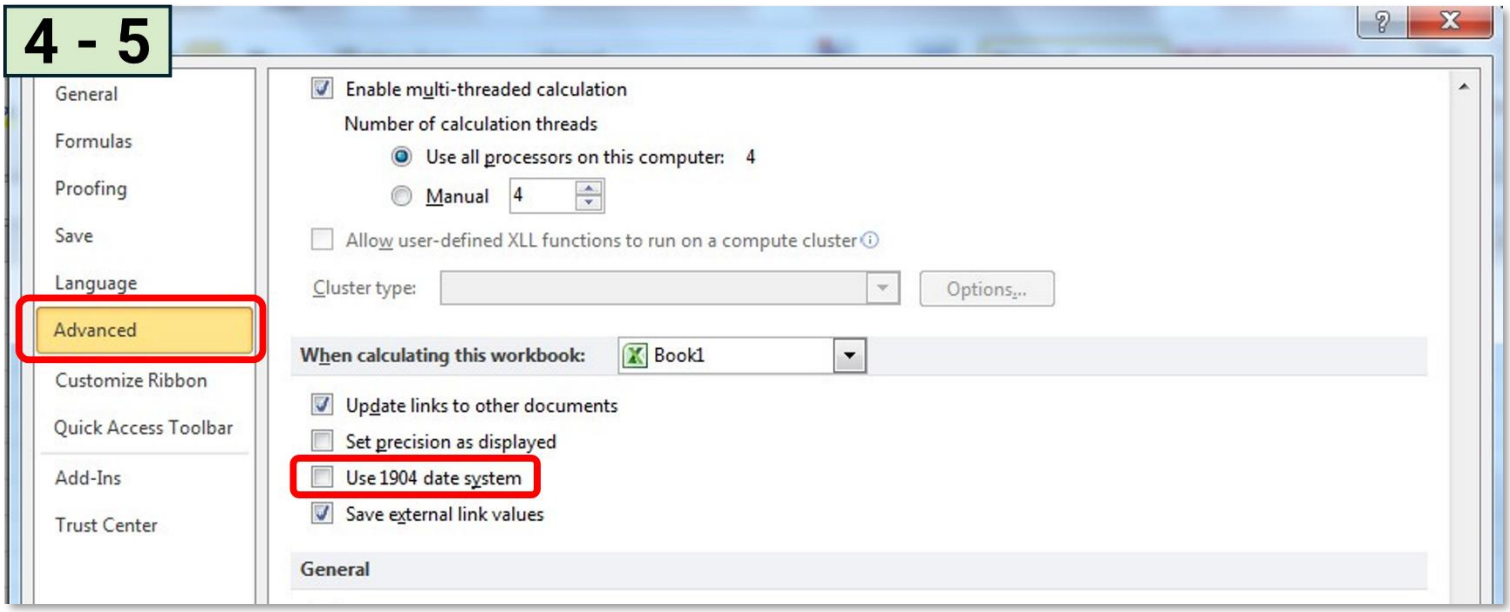
5. Then in the **Type** field (initially, some words or numbers may appear in the field) type 000.000 and click OK.
6. To format **Sixth Semester Rank** for lead zeros, use the same steps 1-4 to access the **Format Cells** pop-up.
7. Enter 00000 in the Type field.

- **Recommended to use ALL CAPS for text**
    - This will prevent inconsistencies when printing certificates as the case in which the names are uploaded will be reflected on the printable certificates later.
        - If a name is entered in all lowercase letters, the name will appear in all lowercase on the SSP certificate.
- **Header row (optional)**
    - A header row is not required. If used, it must be designated as a **header row** in Excel.
- **Do not protect the file**
    - Do not lock or protect the spreadsheet or its cells. Protected files cannot be processed and may be rejected as corrupted.
- **Formatting DOB Field**
    - DOB should be displayed as MM/DD/YYYY (Month/Date/Century Year)
        1. Right click on the appropriate cell and select "**Format Cells**…".
        2. Select "**Custom**" and find "**m/d/yyyy**"
        3. Type **mm/dd/yyyy** in the **Type** field and click "OK"



    - Mac Users may experience an issue with displaying DOB as MM/DD/YYYY. To resolve:

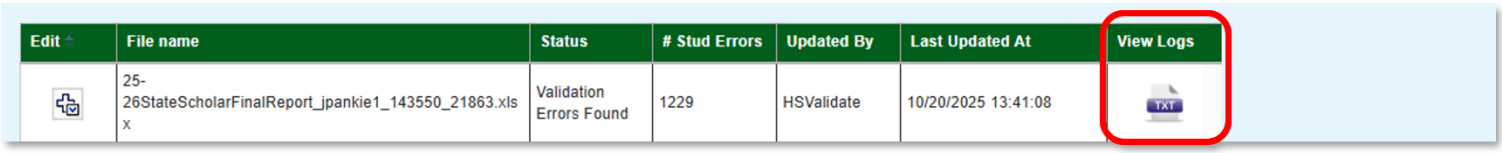
1. Open Excel & Click **File** at the top of the worksheet
2. Select “Option” from the “**File**” menu
3. Select “**Advanced**”
4. Under the heading “**When calculating this workbook**,” find “**Use 1904 date system**”
5. Uncheck the box next to “**Use 1904 date system**”
6. Save and exit the screen.



Common Issues

To view a listing of the errors within a file:

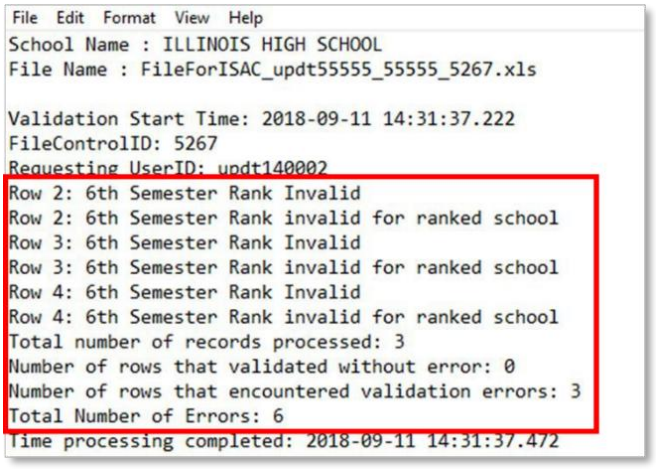
1. Go to the **File Upload tab**.
2. Click the **Text** icon in the **View Logs** column next to the file you wish to view errors for.
3. A report is generated that lists the errors for each row (student record). A total number of errors is also displayed.



Edit	File name	Status	# Stud Errors	Updated By	Last Updated At	View Logs
	25-26StateScholarFinalReport_jpankie1_143550_21863.xlsx	Validation Errors Found	1229	HSValidate	10/20/2025 13:41:08	TXT

Errors

1. **Validation Errors w/ no student errors found:**



   - This typically occurs when the number of submitted records on the file is greater than the reported sixth semester class size on the school screen.
   - Check the report by clicking the **Text icon** to open the report to confirm the error.
     - Issue with the file is listed in the report.
     - If the issue listed is “Number of Students Must be less than or equal to Class Size”:
       - Double check the **School screen** sixth semester class size.
       - Update if necessary.
       - Double-check the number of student records on file.
         - ✓ **Make sure the number of students on file is less than or equal to the number in the sixth semester class size.**

2. **Staging Error:**

   - File could not be decrypted or recognized.
     - A corrected file must be submitted.
     - While this is not the only reason for a file to fail for Staging Error, it is one of the possibilities.
     - ISAC requires Microsoft Excel 2003 or above to create the file.
       - If another software program is used to create the file (e.g. OpenOffice, Google Sheets, LibreOffice, WPS Office) the **file will most likely fail for Staging Error.**

3. **File Protected:**
    - Excel file is password protected.
        - A corrected file must be submitted.
    - If saved as a protected file (you will see “Enable Editing”) for your Excel file.
        - Save as and change name (e.g. SSP Class 2027 – 1).
        - Ensure it is not a protected file for upload success.
4. **File Error:**
    - File could not be uploaded.
        - A corrected file must be submitted.
        - File is not in the ISAC required format.
        - Upload speed is too slow for the file to upload properly. Try uploading from a different trusted network to see if this corrects the error.
5. **Validation Errors Found:**
    - Record has format errors.
        - A corrected file must be submitted.
        - Verify the data follows ISAC guidelines.
6. **Tips:**
    - Both columns (rank and unweighted GPA) must be formatted correctly.
    - Make sure file is in the specified format.
    - All files must be created using Microsoft Excel 2003 and above.

Correcting a Record After State Scholar Announcements

Note: After State Scholars have been announced, corrections to already-submitted data must be submitted to ISAC in writing using one of the following options:

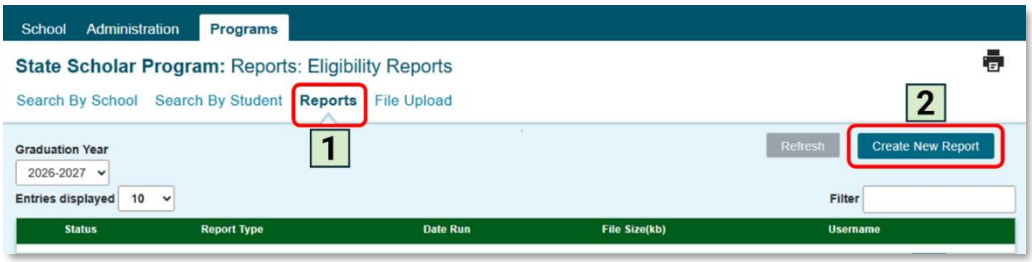
1. Fax: 847-831-8549
2. Email: isac.partnerservices@illinois.gov
3. Letter addressed to:

Illinois Student Assistance Commission
Attn: Partner Services
1755 Lake Cook Road
Deerfield, IL 60015-5209

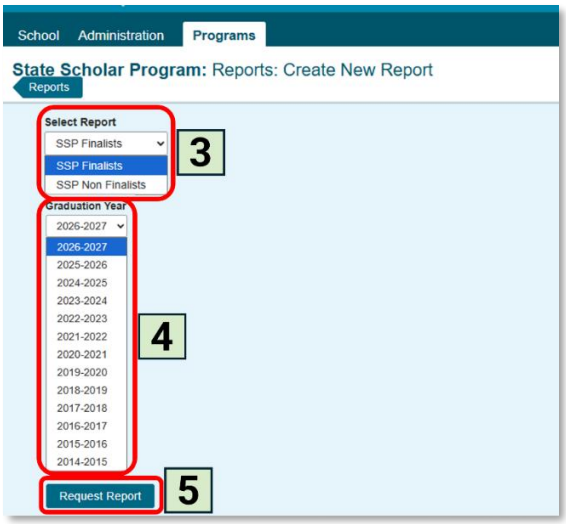
Reports

Reports can be generated from the **Reports tab** within the SSP system:

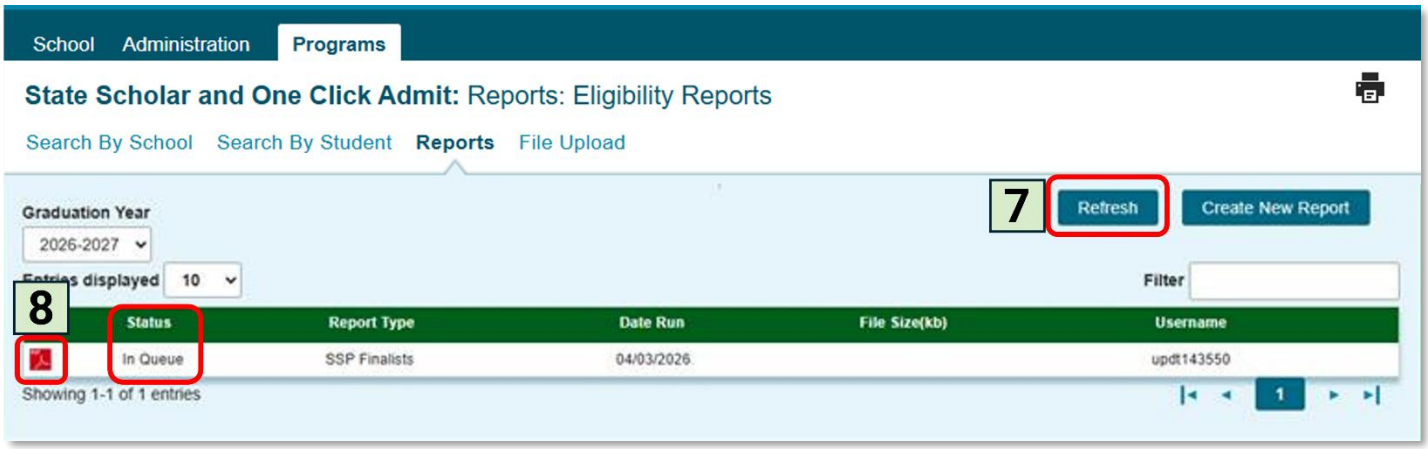
1. Click on the **Reports tab**.
2. Click on "**Create New Report**"



3. Select the type of report from the drop-down menu.
    a. SSP Finalists
    b. SSP non-finalists
4. Select the Graduation Year of the finalists.
5. Click "**Request Report**"
6. You will be taken back to the **Reports screen**, and the requested report will show in the reports list. The **Status Column** will show the requested report as **In Queue**.



7. Most reports take a few minutes to generate, hit the **Refresh** button to see the status of your requested report.
8. Once the report is available, click the **pdf icon** on the left side to access your report.



SSP & OCCA Excel File Layout & Specifications Table

In the chart below, the following codes are used to indicate whether a data element is required or not.

"Required?" Column Codes:

- **M** = Mandatory
- **R** = Highly Recommended
- **R*** = Populate with the rank of your students. If school does not Rank, Rank must be zeroed out for all students (00000).
- **R****= Field R is required for all students if the school is providing weighted GPA, otherwise it must be blank.
- **O** = Optional
- Note: Excel suppresses leading zeros (e.g., 001755 is 1755).
    - Format the columns to allow lead zeros to appear.
    - See the Troubleshooting section of this guide for assistance with formatting columns.

Guidance for Early Graduates

For students that graduate early, report the appropriate information:

- **4th Semester Class Size** – Number of students as of the end of the 4th semester prior to the student's graduation.
- **4th semester Rank** – Student's Rank in Class as of the end of the 4th semester prior to the student's graduation.
- **6th semester Rank** – for early grads, this must be **BLANK. Not 0**.
- **6th semester GPA** – must be filled out for OCCA but can be zeroed out as 000.000 if needed.
    - If a GPA is not submitted the student may not be able to receive OCCA applications.

Note: A file must contain less than 10% of early graduates. Otherwise, this may trigger an upload error.

Excel Column	Data Element	Description	Required?	Length	Data Type	Valid Format
A	State ID	Student State ID	O	9	Numeric	ISBE supplied 9-digit student identification number
B	Last Name	Student's Last Name	M	35	Alpha	1st position cannot be blank, #, or special character. Should not include a comma in the data. Recommended to use all capital letters to assure proper certificate printing. Case will be reflected on certificate printing.
C	First Name	Student's First Name	M	16	Alpha	1st position cannot be blank, #, or special character. Should not include a comma in the data. Recommended to use all capital letters to assure proper certificate printing. Case will be reflected on certificate printing.
D	Middle Initial	Student's Middle Initial	O	1	Alpha	1 Alpha
E	Date of Birth	Student's Date of Birth	M	10	Date	MM/DD/CCYY format. Valid Calendar Date.
F	Student Address	Street address & house number.	M	40	Alpha & Numeric	Up to 40 Alpha and Numeric Example: 100 W ELM ST (Do not include special characters such as a period.)
G	Student Address Line 2	Additional address information – apartment, suite, unit, etc.	O – If needed	40	Alpha & Numeric	Up to 40 Alpha and Numeric **Example**: APT 27 (Do not include special characters such as a period.)
H	Student Address City	City location of address.	M	30	Alpha	Up to 30 Alpha Example: Eldorado
I	Student Address State	State location of address.	M	2	Alpha	2 Alpha **Example**: IL
J	Student Address ZIP code	5-digit postal code.	M	5	Numeric	5 Numeric **Example**: 60087

Excel Column	Data Element	Description	Required?	Length	Data Type	Valid Format
K	6th Semester Unweighted GPA	Student's Unweighted Grade Point Average as of the end of the 6th semester. Early grads GPA must still be entered to be considered for OCCA.	M	7	Numeric – Zero Fill Front and End, decimal in position 4.	7-digit number; 3 positions after a decimal. > 0. **Examples**: 003.999, 004.250, 004.000, 099.891
L	6th Semester Rank	Student's Rank in Class as of the end of the 6th semester. If not using rank, the column should be zeroed out (00000). **Early grads must have a BLANK not a 0.**	R*	5	Numeric – Right Justify Zero Fill	5 – digit number. Should be < 6th Semester Class Size. **Example**: 1 = 00001.
M	Disqualify Code	Reason a student does not qualify for SSP	M – If applicable	1	Alpha	**E** – not a citizen or eligible non-citizen **F** – not a resident of IL as of end of 6th semester. **H** – not scheduled to graduate from HS by September of following year. **I** – already in college or graduated prior to start of the next academic year **O** – deceased Or Blank
N	Transfer Out Date	Date the student stopped attending your high school	R – If applicable	10	Date	MM/DD/CCYY format. Valid Calendar Date
O	Transfer Out To HS Code	6-digit ACT code of the High School the student is moving to (if known)	R – If applicable	6	Numeric	Complete 6-digit number
P	Early Grad 4th Sem. Class Size	Number of students as of the end of the 4th semester prior to the student's graduation	M – If applicable	5	Numeric – Right Justify Zero Fill	Up to 5-digit number. Must be greater than 0. Example: 234 = 00234
Q	Early Grad 4th Sem Rank	Student's Rank in Class as of the end of the 4th semester prior to the student's graduation	R – If applicable	5	Numeric – Right Justify Zero Fill	Up to 5-digit number. Should be <6th Semester Class Size. **Example**: 1 = 00001
R	6th Sem Weighted GPA (OCCA only)	Student's weighted 6th semester weighted GPA used for the direct admissions One Click College Admit program.	R**– If applicable	7	Numeric – Zero Fill Front and End, decimal in position 4.	7-digit number; 3 positions after a decimal. > 0. **Examples**: 003.999, 004.250, 004.000, 099.891