

ConnectEDU

Connecting students, colleges, and employers

"It's great because we are saving money for our school and it's also cost-saving for our students, too."

Arlene Tierney
Director of Guidance
Ludlow High School, MA



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News

ConnectEdu Introduces The Winter Version of Connect!

Version 5.1 Provides Alternative Funding Sources for Students and Families

(Boston, MA)–February 15, 2008- Today, ConnectEdu, a leader in college and career planning solutions, has introduced the winter version of Connect! - its web-based solution for curriculum, college and career planning deployed in over 1,000 high schools nationwide. Available immediately for students, parents and counselors upon login, Connect! v5.1 is highlighted by innovative and timely tools for families to manage their college finances and for counselors to send electronic admissions documents to colleges.

Connect!'s College Finance Manager (CFM) has been redeveloped with enhancements that provide students and their families with access to alternative funding sources and a student loan marketplace that offers families, burdened by a struggling economy, with reduced rate loans. "As the marketplace continues to be affected by the lack of available credit, the subprime-mortgage crisis and the removal of subsidies to lenders, we are seeing student loan providers quickly abandon the student loan industry," said ConnectEdu President and Chief Executive Officer, Craig Powell. From nonprofit agencies to major state sponsored student loan programs, lenders are finding it too difficult to continue to underwrite student loans. "Never has the need for educating families about funding choices for education been more critical, in particular for students and families with the greatest need," said Powell.

For Students & Parents

Connect!'s College Finance Manager (CFM) has been redeveloped with enhancements to help families (1.) comprehend their colleges finances (2.) explore their options to pay for college and (3.) gain access to resources to meet their cost gap.

(1.) The CFM is an interactive tool that provides an education into financial aid, an often complicated process that challenges families who require assistance. Interactive tools, user-friendly movie tutorials and a library of authored articles are the framework to help students and parents become knowledgeable and informed throughout this process. The new version includes a useful college calculator to determine realistic cost of attendance plus a unique budgeting tool that integrates borrowing scenarios with career choices to help analyze future quality of life during repayment periods.

(2.) Once families understand their anticipated cost situation, the CFM provides an interactive guide to completing the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA). This comprehensive step-by-step tool results in an accurate worksheet that families can use to file their official application with the government. Once completed, the family can explore their options to pay for college.

(3.) In one online location, the CFM also provides families access to resources available for additional funding opportunities. A complete scholarship finder allows students to search for scholarships, both national and local, for which they may qualify based on their own search criteria as well as career and major preferences they have integrated into their student profile. Parents can also add recommended scholarships to the list based on their own searches. The scholarship details are provided as well as directions and direct links to apply for the opportunity.

The student loan marketplace is available to families who need to locate additional opportunities to meet their cost gap. The CFM provides choices for families to consider without having to leave the platform. Once a family identifies an appropriate choice, the student or parent can navigate outside Connect! to the loan company's application and begin a borrowing relationship with that organization. Throughout the year, families can return to Connect! to explore these expanding opportunities as their college financing situations change.

For Counselors

Connect! v5.1 brings counselors new features for the electronic delivery of transcripts to colleges. By request, a new data validator has been added so counselors can automatically verify that their data files have been properly formatted for direct upload into the Connect! platform. This allows for a quicker process in delivering electronic transcripts and letters of recommendation to colleges in the Connect! National Network™, a secure online community of students, parents, counselors, admissions officers and employers dedicated to seamless student transitions. Colleges in the network receive these electronic admissions documents from participating high schools to streamline the application process. In addition, automated verifications of receipt within Connect! also alleviate the stress often associated with college admissions process.

For more information on ConnectEdu, Connect! or joining the Connect! National Network™, call 888-887-8380 or visit: www.connectedu.net

About ConnectEdu, Inc.

ConnectEdu is the nation's leading technology firm dedicated to providing students, educators and employers with comprehensive solutions to successfully navigate education and employment transitions. ConnectEdu's mission is to democratize access to higher education and career opportunities for all students by empowering them and their advisors with the information, resources and collective bargaining power required to realize successful life-transitions.

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