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## College financial aid forms to get simpler

The Department of Education and Congress seem ready to take another swipe at a task they have struggled with for years: simplifying the befuddling form that 14 million students a year fill out to apply for federal financial aid for college. Education Secretary Margaret Spellings plans to announce today a new tool, to debut April 1, that will let students know before they graduate from high school how much aid to expect. Officials hope students who thought college was too expensive might reconsider, while others will see how much they'll have to cull from other sources before it's too late. Meanwhile, Democrats introduced legislation Tuesday in Congress that would allow students to apply early for aid and would create a two-page form, a simplified version of the Free Application for Federal Student Aid. The current version runs eight pages, including instructions and 101 questions.