Welcome & Introduction
Agenda

• Understanding the Importance of FAFSA Completion

• An Update from Federal Student Aid (FSA) and National College Attainment Network (NCAN)

• State Strategies for FAFSA Completion

• Panel and Q&A: Strategies in Action

• Summary
Understanding the Importance
The Importance of the FAFSA

Enrollment

90 percent of students who complete the FAFSA enroll directly in college after high school, compared to just 55 percent of non-completers.

Persistence

For every $1,000 in financial aid a student receives, the rate at which they persist in their coursework increases, on average, by four percentage points.

Attainment
FAFSA Narrows Enrollment Gaps

Postsecondary Enrollment Rates by FAFSA Completion and Income Quartile

Each year, over $3.4 billion in aid is left on the table. In North Carolina, over $100 million in Pell grants went unclaimed.
Key Barriers to FAFSA Completion

- Lack of Awareness
- Complexity of the Form
- Parental Mistrust and Misconceptions
Resources on the FAFSA from ESG

Accelerate Recovery: Double Down on FAFSA Completion

With families facing deep financial hardship due to the COVID-19 crisis, completing the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) is more important than ever. We know that, particularly during an economic downturn, a postsecondary degree or credential is key...

Wednesday, May 5, 2020

READ MORE
An Update from Federal Student Aid (FSA)

Ashley Harrington, Senior Advisor, US Department of Education
HI!
I’M GLAD YOU’RE HERE!

Bill DeBaun
Senior Director of
Data and Strategic Initiatives
NCAN
debaunb@ncan.org
## NCAN: WHO WE ARE, WHAT WE DO

NCAN PURSUES ITS MISSION BY BUILDING NETWORK CAPACITY, ADVOCATING FOR POLICY SOLUTIONS, AND SUPPORTING SYSTEMS CHANGE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Build network capacity</th>
<th><strong>Bolster</strong> the skills and competencies of college access and success leaders and practitioners through professional development, news from the field, data, and tools.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Advocate for policy solutions</td>
<td><strong>Advocate</strong> for equitable college completion rates by amplifying a range of policy solutions, mobilizing members, and leveraging student voice.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Support systems change</td>
<td><strong>Help</strong> school districts, higher education institutions, and other community stakeholders to adopt effective strategies for students.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
TALENT IS EVERYWHERE, BUT OPPORTUNITY IS NOT

Figure A. College Enrollment Rates in the First Fall after High School Graduation, Class of 2018, Public Non-Charter Schools

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Enrollment Rate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>High Poverty Schools</td>
<td>54%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low Poverty Schools</td>
<td>76%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low Income Schools</td>
<td>55%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Higher Income Schools</td>
<td>69%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High Minority Schools</td>
<td>58%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low Minority Schools</td>
<td>69%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Urban Schools</td>
<td>62%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Suburban Schools</td>
<td>67%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rural Schools</td>
<td>62%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
That’s especially true in the age of COVID

The high school class of 2020’s immediate fall postsecondary enrollment fell nearly 7%, but declines were inequitable. High schools with more students of color and students from low-income backgrounds saw larger decreases.

### Percent Change in Immediate Fall Enrollments by High School Characteristics, Classes of 2019 and 2020

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Overall</th>
<th>High Poverty</th>
<th>Low Poverty</th>
<th>Low Income</th>
<th>Higher Income</th>
<th>High Minority</th>
<th>Low Minority</th>
<th>Urban</th>
<th>Rural</th>
<th>Suburban</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>-1.5%</td>
<td>-11.4%</td>
<td>-11.4%</td>
<td>-10.7%</td>
<td>-10.7%</td>
<td>-9.4%</td>
<td>-2.0%</td>
<td>-1.8%</td>
<td>-1.6%</td>
<td>-1.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-6.8%</td>
<td>-11.4%</td>
<td>-11.4%</td>
<td>-10.7%</td>
<td>-10.7%</td>
<td>-9.4%</td>
<td>-2.0%</td>
<td>-1.8%</td>
<td>-1.6%</td>
<td>-1.3%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
U.S. FAFSA COMPLETION IN 10 CHARTS
1. FAFSA COMPLETION AND IMMEDIATE COLLEGE ENROLLMENT ARE CLOSELY ASSOCIATED
2. This association is stronger at lower income levels.
3. NOT COMPLETING THE FAFSA LEAVES MONEY ON THE TABLE. THE CLASS OF 2021 HAD $3.75 BILLION GO UNCLAIMED.
5. BY PERCENT OF SENIORS COMPLETING, THE CLASS OF 2021 CYCLE WAS ALSO A MAJOR DECLINE
6. THE CLASS OF 2022 CYCLE FALTERED, ROSE, STALLED, AND IS NOW RISING AGAIN.
7. The class of 2022 is still not close to pre-pandemic FAFSA completion rates.
AFTER A ROUGH CLASS OF 2021 CYCLE, HIGH SCHOOLS SERVING UNDERREPRESENTED STUDENTS ARE BOUNCING BACK THIS YEAR

By School Income Level

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Income Level</th>
<th>Change in FAFSA Completion</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Low Income</td>
<td>6.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Higher Income</td>
<td>0.1%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

By Concentration of Students of Color

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Concentration of Students of Color</th>
<th>Change in FAFSA Completion</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>High Minority</td>
<td>5.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low Minority</td>
<td>-0.3%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
States with universal FAFSA policies are doing well; Texas’ gains are driving the Class of 2022 cycle.
10. FAFSA COMPLETION DOESN’T EXIST IN A VACUUM.

ECONOMIC CONDITIONS MATTER.

Source: Yardani Research
Questions?
State Strategies for FAFSA Completion

Moderated by:
Rachel Hirsch, National Governors Association (NGA)
Panelists

Cris Charbonneau
Director of Advocacy and Engagement at myFutureNC

Dr. Tireka Cobb
Field Outreach Services Director, Louisiana Office of Student Financial Assistance

Missy Ross
Associate Director Communications and Outreach at GEAR UP Kentucky

Nick Moore
Director of Alabama Governor’s Office of Education and Workforce Transformation
Panel Agenda

Best Practices for Success

High School Requirement
• State Examples: AL and LA
• Q&A

Campaign/Challenge
• State Example: KY
• Q&A

Data as a Strategy
• State Example: NC
• Q&A

Moderated Discussion and Q&A
Establish Partnerships

Action Steps

• Expand **partnerships** across state agencies, districts, college access organizations, higher education institutions, and local community organizations to lend volunteers, resources, and support.
• Leverage **near-peer** and **parent-to-parent** mentor models.

Examples

• **Texas** has “Go Centers” at higher education institutions to provide peer mentors at local high schools.
• **Grand Prairie Independent School District (TX)** developed a parent ambassador program.
Build Shared Ownership

Action Steps

• Identify a **cross-sector working group** that will regularly meet to monitor progress, coordinate activities, and make any necessary refinements to the statewide strategy in the long-term after the goal is set.

Examples

• **Tennessee** convened a cross-functional team, with representatives from the TN Higher Education Commission, TN Department of Education, tnAchieves, and the TN Student Assistance Corporation, to develop a FAFSA strategy. A cross-sector working group then met biweekly to assess progress.
Set a Goal

Action Steps

• Set **equity targets by race and income** and be explicit about them when writing about the goal and reporting on progress.
• **Localize the goal** by providing opportunities for local leaders to review their data, set interim goals, and develop action plans with concrete strategies for meeting them.

Examples

• **Hawaii** set a goal for 70% of high school seniors to complete the FAFSA by 2018 and 90% by 2020.
• **Rhode Island** set a statewide goal of 85%, with every high school having at least 70% of seniors complete the FAFSA.
• **North Carolina** set a FAFSA completion goal of 80% by 2030.
High School Requirement
High School Requirement

- Make completion of the FAFSA a **requirement** in order to graduate high school. Opting out is always an option, but different states have different **rules for opting out**.
- Create a **holistic strategy** where the requirement is a central piece of the overall approach.

Examples

- **Louisiana** became the first state to require FAFSA completion as a part of high school graduation. **Alabama**’s state board of education approved a similar policy in 2021.
- **Colorado** implemented a hybrid model, in which state funds were available to support school districts that decided to make FAFSA completion a part of high school graduation requirements.
Alabama Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) Completion Project
• Alabama high school graduates leave approximately $47 million in federal grants on the table each year because they do not complete the FAFSA.

• 92 percent of students who complete the FAFSA enroll in postsecondary education the following fall term.

• On April 8, 2021, the Alabama State Board of Education, with the support of Governor Kay Ivey, approved a resolution requiring graduating seniors to complete the FAFSA, or opt out, effective with the May 2022 high school graduating class.

• The Alabama Workforce Council, the state’s blue ribbon industry panel, and Alabama Possible, an Alabama non-profit dedicated to postsecondary access and success, were key partners in the adoption of the FAFSA completion policy.
(21) The Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) – Access to Federal Student Aid.

(a) Effective with the 2021-2022 school year, the following requirements shall be fulfilled on behalf of the graduating senior as part of the graduating senior’s transition into postsecondary education, training, or the workforce:

1. Submit to the United States Department of Education a Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA); or

2. Certify a non-participation waiver, in writing, to the superintendent of the local education agency if the graduating senior chooses not to complete and submit FAFSA. Certification of the non-participation waiver may be completed by a parent, legal custodian, legal guardian, or a minor legally emancipated or of the legal age of majority.

(b) If a graduating senior is unable to fulfill the requirements of subsection (a), upon the recommendation of the school principal and school counselor, the superintendent of the local education agency may waive the graduating senior of the requirements of subsection (a).

(c) The local education agency shall provide students in Grades 11-12 and the students’ parents, legal custodians, or legal guardians reasonable support and assistance necessary to comply with subsection (a).
FAFSA Completion Portal

- In order to implement and optimize the impact of the State Board’s FAFSA Completion Graduation Policy, extensive upgrades into how the Alabama Commission on Higher Education (ACHE) assists students in this process were made.

- ACHE is a key partner because it is the only agency in the state authorized to connect to the federal FAFSA database and see individual data for all Alabama students.

- Governor Ivey dedicated Governor’s Emergency Education Relief (GEER) funds to develop the Alabama FAFSA Completion Portal.

URL: fafsa.ache.edu
FAFSA Completion

Accessibility. Affordability. Coordination.

2022 - 2023 Completion
Last Updated 3/5/2022

Students & Families

- # Cohort: 49,329
- Submitted: 46% (Total: 22,448)

Educators

- Complete: 42% (Total: 20,715)
- Incomplete: 4% (Total: 1,733)

Data & Graphs

- 42% Complete
- % Complete
- % Incomplete
- % Missing

Missing: 54% (Total: 26,881)
# School Top 10 Achievers

Modify your results

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student Count:</th>
<th>Academic Year:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>All School Sizes</td>
<td>2022-2023</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## Achievements:
- **Diamond**: 95%
- **Gold**: 85% - 94%
- **Silver**: 75% - 84%
- **Bronze**: 65% - 74%

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rank</th>
<th>School Name</th>
<th>Students</th>
<th>Completion Progress</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Sulligent School 380060</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>98%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Ramsay 1140720</td>
<td>196</td>
<td>92%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Sweet Water 460090</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>90%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Marengo 460060</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>89%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Geneva County 310020</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>87%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Hackleburg 470070</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>85%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Loveless Academic Magnet Program 510387</td>
<td>98</td>
<td>85%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Georgiana School 70085</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>84%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>West Limestone 420140</td>
<td>97</td>
<td>83%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Amelia L. Johnson 460010</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>81%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Process Flow Diagram

- Student applies for Federal financial aid using a FAFSA.
- ACHE compares/matches data using Colorado-developed software and produces a new searchable database of Alabama high school students who have submitted FAFSA applications.
- ACHE downloads Federal FAFSA data.
- Federal FAFSA Database.
- Authorized staff work with students.
- Federal Dept. of Education submits student data to ACHE.
- Schools and high schools access the database to view customizable reports on their school and the students in their school.
- ORACLE compares/matches data to see who has completed the FAFSA.
- ORACLE sends participation and status reports by schools and districts.
- ORACLE identifies and works to correct errors and assist with verifications.
- Feedback Loop.
- Repeat process as needed.
Alabama College and Career Exploration Tool (ACCET)

Key Features

• Career exploration and discovery for youth and adults

• Linked to Alabama Works! job portal

• Linked to the Credential Registry

• Linked to FAFSA application

• Prior learning assessments

• Digital resume

• Integrated WIOA case management system
Main Ingredients

1. Financial Aid Workgroup
2. Policy Implementation w/opt-out
3. Awareness & Support

Roux
NCAN FAFSA CHALLENGE GRANT
Directions for a Holistic Strategy

1. Data Integration & Dashboard
2. Listing of Organizations to Support
3. Comprehensive Calendar
4. Professional Development
5. Event Coupling & Awareness Campaigns
In May 2021, data from the National College Attainment Network (NCAN) FAFSA Tracker ranked Louisiana 1st in FAFSA completion for the third time!
Campaign/Challenge
Lead a **communications campaign** to spread awareness about the importance of the FAFSA, share key resources and deadlines, promote statewide goals and competitions, and address common misconceptions.

Consider launching a **competition** to incentivize local action.

- **Michigan** College Access Network led a statewide “College Cash Campaign,” which was supported by Governor Whitmer, featured a public leaderboard, and provided tiered incentives for both students and counselors.
- **Colorado** encouraged students to “Get Your Piece of the Pie,” and **Ohio** promoted their “3 to Get Ready” campaign.
FAF$A for the Future
Promotion & Family Engagement During a Pandemic

National Governors Association Action Lab | 3.8.22
Missy Brownson Ross, Assoc. Director, Communications & Outreach
Overview | GEAR UP Kentucky

• 7-year federal grant program
• Administered by CPE
• 12 school districts (+ 9 partner PSE institutions)
• High % of F/RPL
• Hybrid model
• VISION: Every student prepared for postsecondary education.
• Objective: Improve FAFSA completion rate.
  • % of 12th graders who complete and submit the FAFSA will increase cohort to cohort by 3 ppt.
New Challenges | New Solutions

- Sent email requesting participation to partners & statewide influencers
- Asked them to become champions
- Offered to:
  - Post TikToks from GUK account
  - Provide topic & content ideas
  - Assist with video editing
New Challenges | New Solutions

• Kicked off campaign with TikTok featuring Dr. Aaron Thompson, president of CPE
• Included link to video in participation requests

@gearupkentucky
New Challenges | New Solutions

- 24 TikToks created by champions, including:
  - Lt. Governor
  - Secretary of State
  - State representative
  - Multiple postsecondary institutions (inc. presidents)
  - Leaders of educational organizations
New Challenges | New Solutions

• Results:
  • TikTok: 8,062 views, 530 likes
  • Twitter: 64,250 impressions, 1,215 engagements
  • Media coverage
  • Increased awareness & buy-in from key statewide influencers
  • Videos that can be used for years to come
Old Challenge | New Solutions

• Text campaigns
• Virtual events
  • Engaged multiple partners
  • FB ads
• Total registrants = 265
• Total attendees = 118
• Recordings in English & Spanish

Paying for College 101
A free, virtual workshop for parents and caregivers

Wednesday, Nov. 17
7-8 p.m. ET

Preparing for someone in your care to attend college? If so, you won’t want to miss this special event, during which KHEAA outreach counselors will share information and answer your questions about paying for college. Topics include:

- FAFSA ★ Grants, Scholarships, Work Study & Loans
- State & Federal Financial Aid ★ KEES ★ AND MORE!

MORE INFO & REGISTRATION:  cpe.ky.gov/events/parentnight

Event brought to you by:

KHEAA  gear up Kentucky  CPE

Higher Education Matters
Let’s Chat!

Missy Brownson Ross
missy.ross@ky.gov
Data as a Strategy
Use Data

Action Steps

- Prioritize **outreach and training** to schools and districts to expand access and use of **student-level data**.
- **Increase visibility** of aggregate data by school and district to drive competition.
- **Disaggregate by student subgroup** to analyze equity gaps.

Examples

- **Get2College (MS)** manages a statewide data tracker, sends a monthly newsletter with aggregate data to counselors, and holds regular trainings with school leaders on how to leverage the data to target student supports.
North Carolina First in FAFSA

Strategies

- Set FAFSA Completion Goal
- Build Shared Ownership
- Spread Awareness
- Establish Partnerships
- Create Incentives
- Use Data

- NC First in FAFSA Collaborative
- NC First in FAFSA Challenge
- NC First in FAFSA Cash for College
- myFutureNC Attainment Dashboard
- FAFSA Tracker
- Finish the FAFSA Data Use Agreements

- FAFSA Completion Resources
- Latinx & Spanish Language Outreach
- FAFSA Drive into Your Future Events

- FAFSA Priority Districts
- Training & Dissemination Partners

- NC First in FAFSA
- Collaborative
- Cash for College
- FAFSA
- Tracker
- Finish the
2021-22 FAFSA Tracker

Weekly FAFSA Completion Rate as of February 4, 2022:
- Submitted: 222
- Completed: 197

25% of seniors have completed the FAFSA at this time.

Monthly FAFSA Completion Rate:
- 21-22 District Completion %
- 21-22 State Completion %
- 26-21 District Completion %
- 26-21 State Completion %

What percentage of seniors at each North Carolina High School have completed the FAFSA?
Students who complete the FAFSA are more likely to attend college.

Select a District:
- County:
- School Type:
- Senior Class Size (2021-2022):
- Low Income (%): (30%-12)
- Students at Center % (2021-2022):

FAFSA Comparisons - Example

2021-22 FAFSA Tracker

What percentage of seniors at each North Carolina High School have completed the FAFSA?
Students who complete the FAFSA are more likely to attend college.
FAFSA Comparisons - Tracker

FAFSA Completion Rate By School District (2/25/22)

FAFSA Network
Year 1: 42 districts
Year 2: 49 districts
FAFSA Completions
Year-over-Year Comparisons through June 30

NC FAFSA Tracker Data (Carolina Demography) differs from NCAN Tracker
- Public high school data only vs. all students
- Enrollment is based on PMR month 2 data (NCDPI) vs. projections
- Schools <5 completions are not captured and contribute a 0 to the numerator

80% FAFSA Completion Goal by 2030

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>NCAN Aug 31</th>
<th>NC Tracker Jun 30</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2018 - 19</td>
<td>60%</td>
<td>51.03%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2019 - 20</td>
<td>58%</td>
<td>52.67%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2020 - 21</td>
<td>57%</td>
<td>48.97%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2021 - 22</td>
<td>38.9%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Feb 25
### Questions to Consider

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>SHARED OWNERSHIP:</strong></th>
<th>How can you take advantage of the assets? What resources and tools can you share? Who might you connect with for thought leadership and advice? How might you collaborate on a joint effort?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>DATA:</strong></td>
<td>Does everyone who needs access to the data have it? What additional training or support might be needed to best leverage the data? What equity gaps might exist, and how can you begin to address them?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>OUTREACH AND SUPPORT:</strong></td>
<td>What are the biggest barriers your students face in completing the FAFSA? How has the COVID-19 pandemic exacerbated those challenges? How can you expand your outreach and communications? How can you expand your virtual supports?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>PARTNERSHIPS:</strong></td>
<td>What partnerships do you currently have? What additional partnerships might you establish to fill in any gaps in capacity? How might you leverage parents and students? How can you build upon and tailor the state’s FAFSA Frenzy efforts?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Moderated Discussion and Q&A
Summary