



# COUNCIL CONVERSATIONS

WASHINGTON STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT COUNCIL NEWSLETTER

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## Governor's Budget Increases Financial Aid, Invests in Washington Students

[Governor Jay Inslee's 2019-21 proposed budget](#) includes significant investments in education, including state financial aid.

The budget reshapes the [State Need Grant \(SNG\)](#) into a new Washington College Promise Scholarship. SNG boosts persistence and graduation rates, and its flexibility allows it to serve low-income students—both traditional school-age and returning adults—across a wide array of academic and vocational programs. However, current funding shortages left 18,000 eligible students unserved in the most recent year. The proposed Promise program would grow to cover all eligible students over three years.

The Governor's budget also enhances the [Washington State Opportunity Scholarship](#) for low- and middle-income students who have received their high school diploma or GED certificate in Washington and are pursuing a degree or certificate in approved fields such as STEM or health care. And it ensures that [College Bound Scholarship \(CBS\)](#) students who also receive the Opportunity Scholarship receive a full College Bound award.

CBS has a track record of success. In 2017, College Bound students graduated from high school at a rate 12 percentage points higher than eligible students who didn't sign up for the program. And in its recent report, [A Promise Fulfilled](#), the [Education Trust](#) recognized CBS as one of the country's most equitably designed early promise programs.

Expanding our state's financial aid opportunities will ensure everyone has the opportunity to attend and complete some form of college or training after high school. With investments in successful, high-impact programs, Governor Inslee's budget recognizes the importance of education to the future prosperity of our state.

## College Bound Scholarship Among Best College Promise Programs in Nation

Early promise programs aim to inspire all students to plan and prepare for college—and Washington has one of the best. Learn more in the Education Trust's report: [A Promise Fulfilled](#).

## Financial Aid Reminders

- [FAFSA](#) and [WASFA](#) financial aid applications for 2019-20 are open!
- 7th and 8th graders from low-income families may be eligible for the [College Bound Scholarship](#). Students can [sign up online](#) or talk to their school counselor for more information.

## WSAC Offers College Access and Support Materials in Multiple Languages

The [Washington Student Achievement Council \(WSAC\)](#) offers resources and materials translated into multiple languages. Counselors and others who support students can use these materials to assist students and families for whom English is not their primary language.

The “[What Is the College Bound Scholarship?](#)” flier is available in 11 languages. College Bound also offers a variety of materials in both English and Spanish, including brochures, posters, letter templates, and more. These materials can be downloaded from the College Bound [Resources for Counselors](#) page.

Washington GEAR UP provides a series of family newsletter templates that schools can customize for their students. The templates are pre-loaded with targeted college-readiness and financial aid information for grades 7 through 12. Schools can add a logo, event calendar, and contact information before distributing. GEAR UP also offers the *Family Guide: Supporting Your Child After High School*, as well as a college-planning checklist. These resources are available in English and seven other languages on the [GEAR UP website](#).

## Higher Education Leaders, Practitioners Convene in Support of Underrepresented Students

Campus leaders, counselors, nonprofit partners, and more gathered at UW Seattle last month to explore strategies to support students facing barriers to educational attainment.

WSAC hosted an [Adult Reengagement Summit](#) on November 28 focused on the unique needs of adult learners. The summit explored successful state and regional models for supporting adult students, as well as the importance of effective policies and affordability efforts.

On November 29, the fifth annual [Pave the Way Conference](#) provided an opportunity to learn about and discuss the challenges faced by Washington’s most disenfranchised and underrepresented student populations. Pave the Way featured 25 breakout sessions focused on strategies to advance equity, increase college readiness, and broaden access to higher education in Washington.

[Materials and presentations](#) from both events are available on WSAC’s website. For updates regarding next year’s Pave the Way conference, [subscribe to the event listserv](#).

## New National Scholarships Reward Students for College Planning Efforts

The [College Board](#) has introduced the [College Board Opportunity Scholarships](#), a first-of-its-kind national scholarship program. The program doesn’t require an essay or an application and doesn’t have a minimum GPA or SAT score requirement. Instead, it serves as a simple college planning guide that rewards students’ efforts and actions on their way to college.

The new program lays out six simple steps that all students can take to get into college, such as building a college list or improving their SAT scores. Completing each step will earn a chance for a scholarship; completing all six will earn students a chance to win \$40,000 for their college education.

The College Board Opportunity Scholarships are different from other scholarship programs because they’re about how much students grow, not how high they score. Students can sign up now at [CB.org/Opportunity](#).