



# Washington Completes FAFSA Campaign Advisory Board

May 12, 2026



# Advisory Board Overview

- Convened by the Governor's Office, led by WSAC
- Align and coordinate statewide FAFSA/WASFA completion efforts
- Strengthen implementation by sharing data, tools, and practices
- Identify barriers and recommend strategies to improve equitable access to financial aid



Governors Executive Order 2025  
<https://dub.link/EO2025>



# Objectives + May Focus

## Objectives

- Share progress since last meeting
- Review data progress toward goals
- Surface board insights on successes, barriers, and stuck points
- Learn from speaker's examples and discussion
- Confirm action items and next steps

## May Focus

- Financial Aid Data
- Update on Your Future, Funded
- Board roundtable on what has worked, where people got stuck, and barriers they are seeing
- Speakers and discussion
- Closing takeaways and action items



# Goals: 2025 – 2026 Academic Year Campaign

## Our Goal: Increase financial aid completion across WA high school seniors

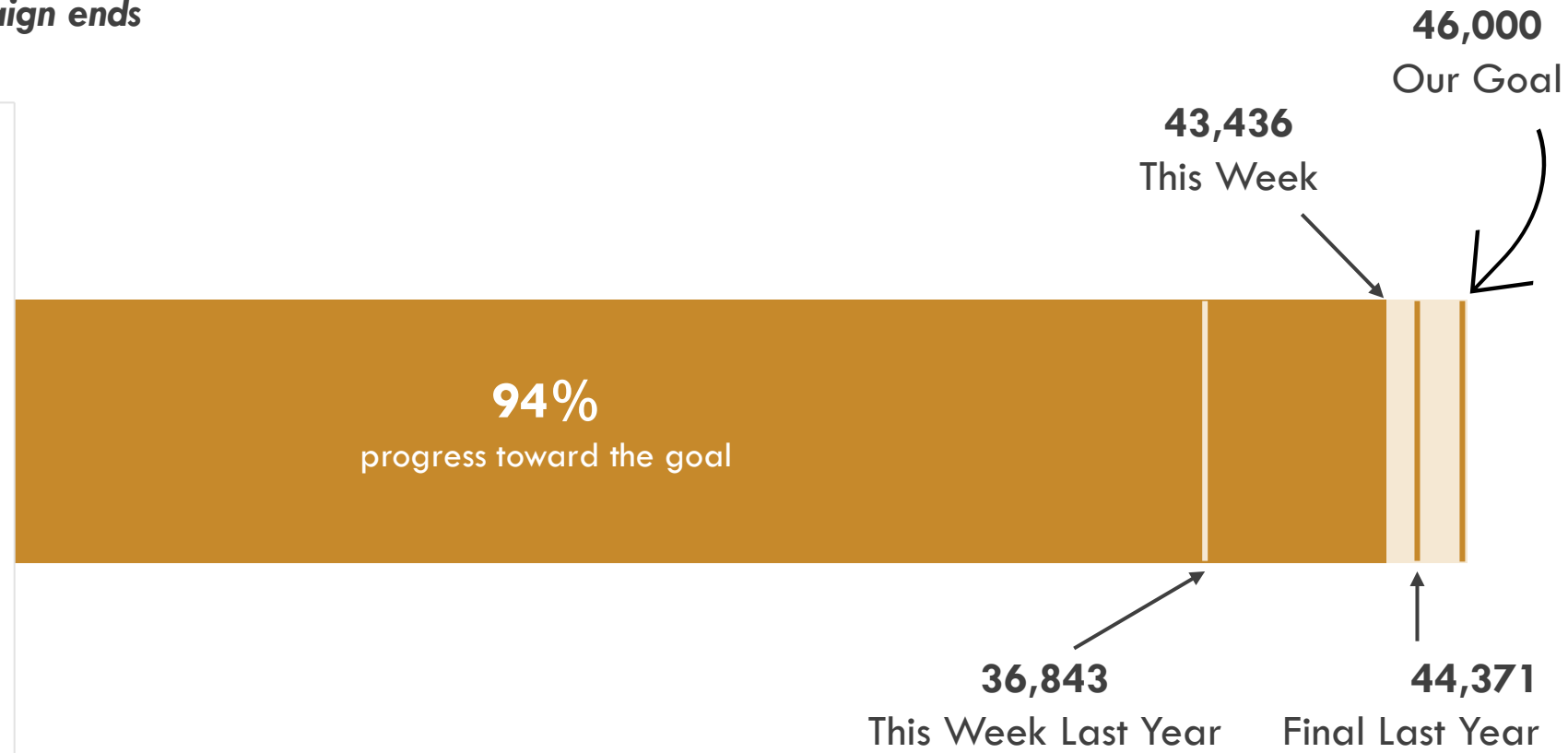
I	Ensure 46,000 seniors complete the FAFSA or WASFA
II	Raise FRPL-eligible student completion by at 6% or more in at least 150 high schools
III	Close the gap in FAFSA completions between FRPL and non-FRPL students
IV	Reduce disparities in FAFSA completion rates, especially among those from underrepresented racial/ethnic groups



# Progress Towards Goal #1 (overall goal)

**As of May 11: Class of 2026 FAFSA & WASFA completion rate is 50%**  
*21 out of 53 weeks to go until the campaign ends*

## Progress Toward Goal #1

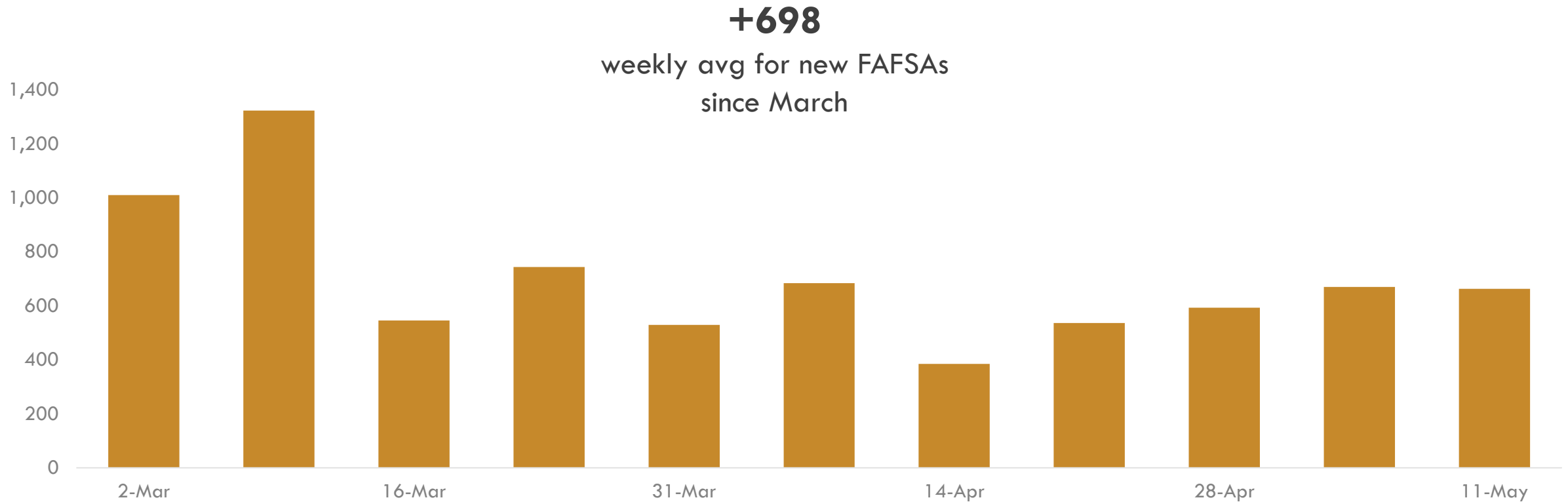




# Progress Towards Goal #1

**Going Forward: How can we maintain at least 1,000 new FAFSAs each week?**

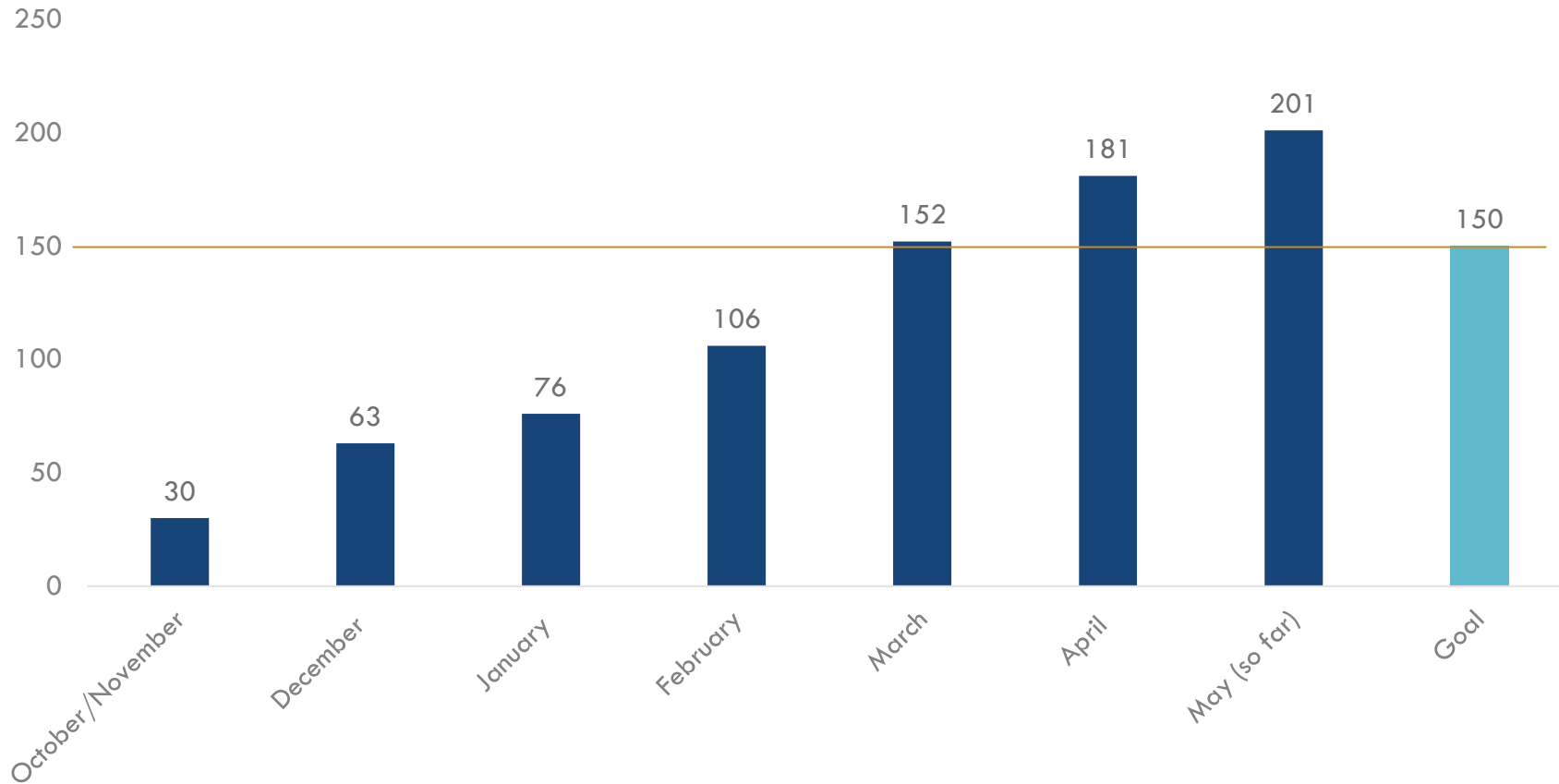
*21 out of 53 weeks to go until the campaign ends*





# Progress toward Goal #2

## Cumulative Count of Schools Meeting 6% Increase in FRPL FAFSA Completion Goal

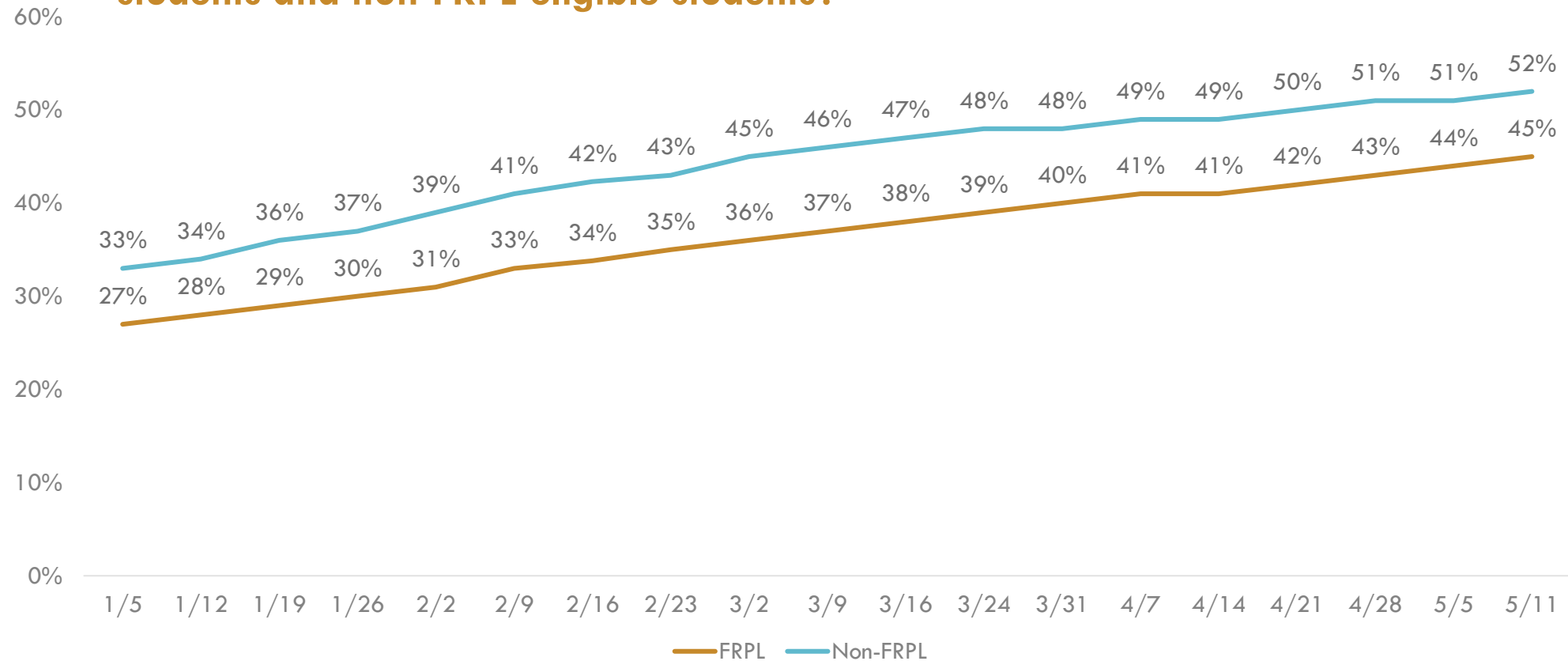


**We have met this goal!**



# Progress Toward Goal #3

**Going Forward: How can we eliminate the completion gap between FRPL-eligible students and non-FRPL-eligible students?**

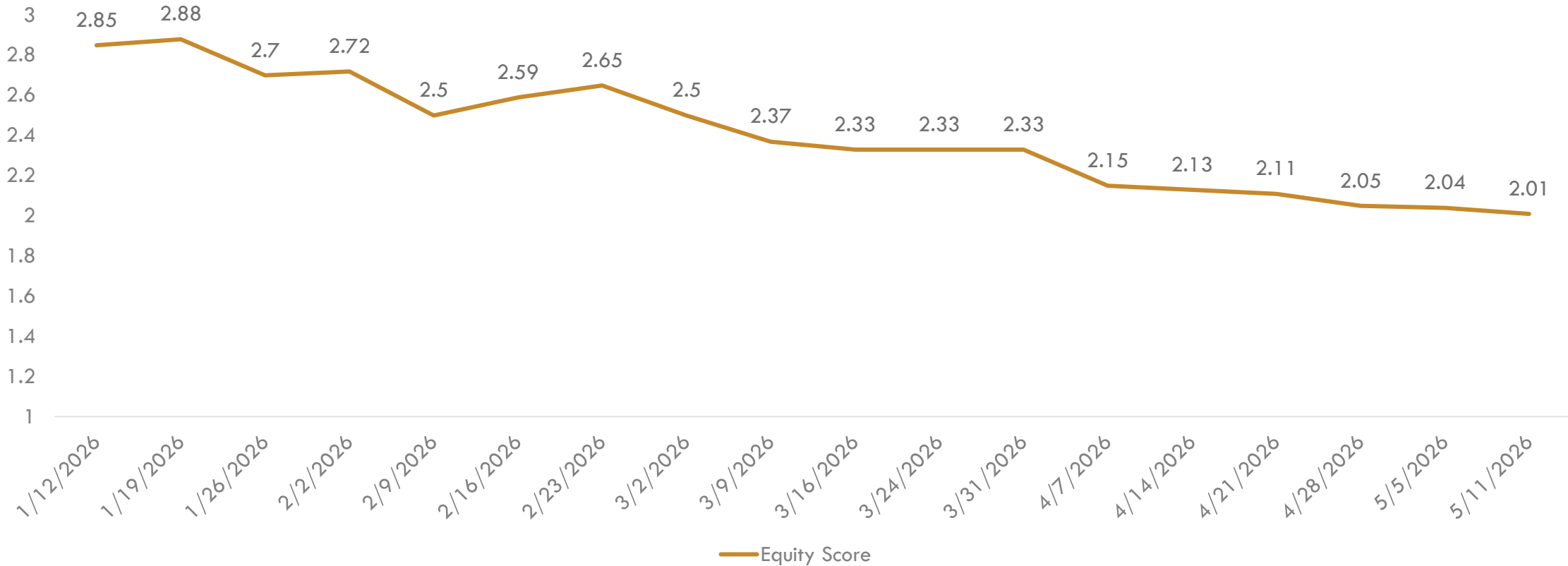


**Gap still above  
January but  
improved from  
9pp peak to  
about 7pp**



# Progress toward Goal #4

By race/ethnicity, the Equity Gap Score is 2.01 – the group with the highest FAFSA completion has a rate that is just over two times the group with the lowest completion rate (Asian 62% vs. NHPI 30%)





# Your Future, Funded: [wsac.wa.gov/your-future-funded](https://wsac.wa.gov/your-future-funded)

- **Keep going – it’s not too late to apply!**
- Specific engagement opportunities for schools and partners.
- Tabs with new resources, calendars, templates, and guides to support working with seniors and their families.
- Encourage use of the FAFSA dashboard and WIAA leaderboard and inspire friendly competition.
- Supporting/hosting events, outreach calls, and connecting schools to partners. →
- Social media, student, parent, educator communications. →
- KOMO interview. →

**YOUR FUTURE, FUNDED**

**Your Future, Funded**  
Financial Aid Completion Week  
April 20–24, 2026

**Your Future, Funded: Financial Aid Completion Week**

How can your school or organization get engaged?

1. **Track your data:** Use the [FAFSA completion dashboard](#) to monitor progress by district, school, region, and community.

**Filing Supports**

- Help get the word out about WSAC’s free, virtual [Financial Aid Completion Night \(PDF, 715.81 KB\)](#) event on April 22. Support is available in English and Spanish, and registration is open!
- Let families know there’s help available specifically for them at the [Financial Aid Night for Parents and Caregivers](#) on April 23. Support is available in English and Spanish, and registration is open!

**Communications Coordination with Partners**

- Check out WSAC’s [Your Future, Funded communications calendar \(PDF, 103.36 KB\)](#) for activities leading up to, and during the week of April 20. Coordinate, collaborate, and align with statewide messaging to educators, advocates, students, and families.
- Use and share plug-and-play [Your Future, Funded social media content and graphics](#) – please share broadly to your networks!



**Looking for a way to motivate your students?**

How about a little friendly competition?

**FAFSA Completion League Standings**



# Your Future, Funded: By the Numbers

	2023	2026	Difference	% Change
<b>Total Applications Completed During YFF Campaign Period</b>	3,596	4,223	+627 applications	+17%
<b>Percent of Seniors Completing an Application during YFF Campaign Period</b>	4.5%	4.9%	+0.4pp	+9%



# Your Future, Funded: By the Numbers

## Financial Aid Completion Rates – FAFSA or WASFA

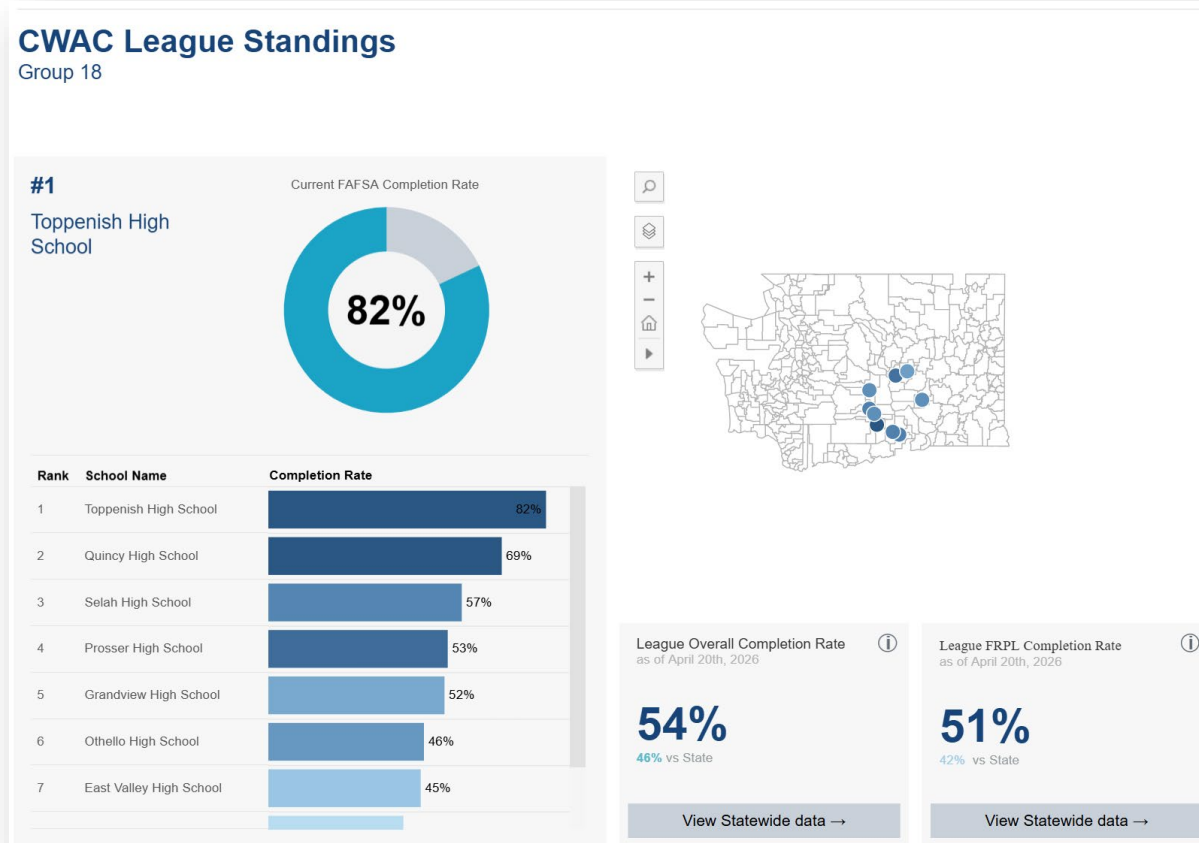
	2023	2026	Difference	% Change
<b>Full Campaign (Mar 10 – April 24)</b>	4.5%	4.9%	+.4pp	+9%
<b>April Only</b>	2.3%	2.7%	+.4pp	+16%
<b>Finish Your Financial Aid Week (April 20-24)</b>	0.6%	0.7%	+.1pp	+24%



# FAFSA Completion League Standings and Leaderboard

## Friendly Competition

- Dashboard data: [www.wsac.wa.gov/fafsa-completion](http://www.wsac.wa.gov/fafsa-completion)
- Highlighting schools on a weekly basis that are seeing FAFSA completion success on WSAC's social media.



Well done Toppenish High School! You and your community are helping students unlock funding for their future!

Toppenish High School's 82% FAFSA completion rate leads the CWAC WIAA FAFSA Completion League!

Keep the FAFSAs rolling in! Check out where your school stands with our FAFSA Dashboard: [wsac.wa.gov/fafsa-completion](http://wsac.wa.gov/fafsa-completion)

[#YourFutureFunded](#) [#WAcompletesFAFSA](#)  
[#WAedu Governor Bob Ferguson Washington](#)  
[Interscholastic Activities Association Association of Washington School Principals \(AWSP\)](#)  
[Toppenish High School Toppenish School District Heritage University Yakima Valley College Central Washington University](#) [See less](#)

### FAFSA Spotlight: Toppenish High School

**82%** completion rate

Your Future, Funded  
Financial Aid Completion Week  
April 20-24, 2026



# Advisory Board Members

**Collin Bannister**

- WSU - Pullman
- WA Student Assoc. President

**Geraldine  
Donovan**

- Seattle Preparatory School
- Sophomore

**Sienna Jarrard**

- UW-Bothell
- WA Student Assoc. Member

**Railey Lamb**

- Kennewick High School
- Junior

**Nashua Johnley**

- Toppenish High School
- Senior

**Sarah Everitt**

- Gonzaga University
- Dean of Student Financial Services

**Carol Garza**

- College Success Foundation
- Executive Director- Yakima

**Lilia Hueso**

- Moses Lake High School
- School Counselor

**Damien  
Pattenaude**

- Renton School District
- Superintendent

**Bish Paul**

- Gates Foundation
- Senior Program Officer

**Susan Rose**

- Quincy High School
- Assistant Principal

**Alyson Rotter**

- Olympic College
- Associate Dean-K-12 Partnerships

**Domanic  
Vanthom**

- WSU-Vancouver
- Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs

**Becky Wallace**

- OSPI
- Assistant Superintendent, Secondary Education and Pathway Preparation



## Roundtable Discussion – Follow-up From Last Month

- What have you tried or learned about since April 21?
- Did you engage with *Your Future, Funded?*
- What is working at this time of year?
- Where did you or colleagues/networks get stuck right now?
- What barriers did you see or what did you hear?



# Roundtable Discussion: It's Not Too Late!

## Ways to engage – what can you commit to? A few examples:

Forward the announcement email with a “personal nudge” to schools and communities in your networks and regions

Post on your social media channels (i.e., LinkedIn) or school/organization accounts

Make a call to a school or community partner about financial aid access – it's not too late!

Attend and/or promote a training. Connect your community to what's needed – additional training?

Volunteer at an event or speak about the importance of FAFSA/WASFA completion

**Discussion:** What else???



# Guest Speakers

- West Sound STEM Network and College Success Foundation
- Spokane Teachers Credit Union (STCU)



# Financial Aid: Building Pathways to Postsecondary

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PREP (Postsecondary Readiness and Enrollment on the Peninsulas)

May 12, 2026

# Snapshot

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## '24-'25 Program Highlights

- FAFSA completion increased among the Class of 2025 (48% vs. 37% in prior years)
- Launched the “It’s Not Too Late” campaign to support postsecondary enrollment and FAFSA completion
- Conducted 500+ one-on-one advising meetings, with financial aid as a key area of support
- Engaged 450+ students through college and career exploration trips

*While comparisons across years remain challenging due to FAFSA timeline changes, most districts are currently far outperforming prior years at this point in the cycle.*



# Program Overview

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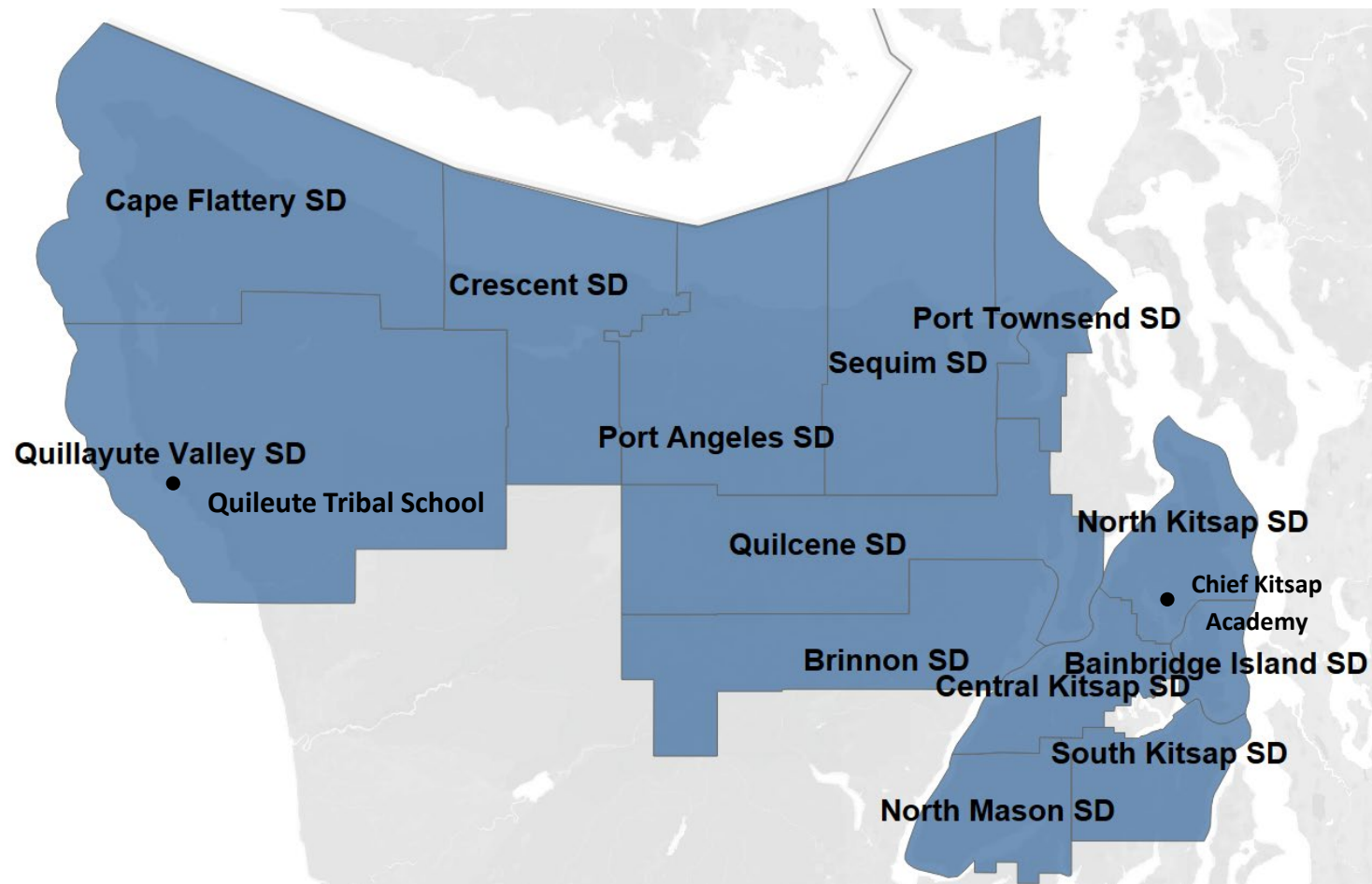
- Horizons Regional Partnership and Limitless funded by the Gates Foundation
- **Timeline:** Year 2 of participation in Horizons and Limitless
- **Lead Organization (Backbone):** West Sound STEM Network and **Core Leadership Organizations** College Success Foundation and Peninsula College
- **Key Partner Organizations:** Western Washington University, 15 districts, Industry & Community Partners
- **Key Focus Areas: Financial Aid Completion,** High quality advising, College & Career Exploration, and Dual Credit

“

It's support for college preparation on steroids. None of the things that we're doing are brand new, but all together, we're putting our arms around every high school junior and senior in our community and walking them through that whole college exploration, college funding, and college experience.

--*Dr. Suzy Ames,*  
*President, Peninsula College*

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“This grant has been a powerful catalyst for shared purpose and coordinated action.”

–Dr. Sabah Randhawa,  
President, Western Washington University

## Higher Education Partners



## School Districts





# Key Financial Aid Levers

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These strategies, when used together as a Network, enable this work:

- **Collaborative and regionally responsive strategies**
- **Leveraging Effective Strategies**
  - Know Your Data
  - Identify a Champion
  - Access and Use the Portal
  - Track Individual Student Completions
- **Data-driven decision making**
- **Re-envisioned financial aid events**
- **High quality advising**
- **Your Future, Funded**
  - WA Grant Regional campaigns



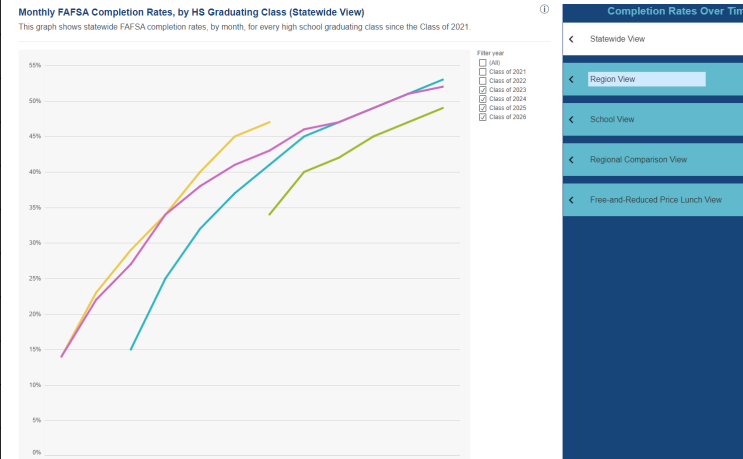
PREP district leaders convene to share best practices, collaborate, and strengthen support for student success.

# Key Financial Aid Levers

## Data-driven decision making

- Goal-setting by every district, regular revisiting and adjusting tactics
- Coaching around use of the WSAC data dashboard,
  - Month by month completion rates, compared by year, are most helpful

District	Goal FAFSA '24-'25	Current FAFSA '24-'25	Goal FAFSA '25-'26
Cape Flattery			
Crescent			
North Mason			
Port Angeles			
Port Townsend			
Quilcene			
Quileute Tribal			
Quillayute Valley			
Sequim			
Suquamish			
Bainbridge			
Central Kitsap			
North Kitsap			
South Kitsap			



DISTRICT	TOTAL NUMBER OF HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS
LAST YEAR'S FINANCIAL AID	FOCUS POPULATIONS FOR THIS YEAR
GOAL FOR THIS YEAR	
NOTES	PLAN TO INCLUDE: <b>WHO:</b>  <b>WHEN:</b>  <b>HOW:</b>  <b>WHERE:</b>  <b>METRICS:</b>

# Key Financial Aid Levers

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## Financial aid events

- Workshops
- Financial Aid, Food Trucks, and Your Future
  - Childcare available
  - Food truck on site
  - Private rooms available for families to speak to advisors
  - Scheduled to coincide with another popular campus event that already draws families to attend
  - Have career counselors and industry partners speak about career and postsecondary opportunities
- **Partnering** with schools, local community college and other community agencies on school-wide campaigns (i.e.: “It’s Not Too Late”) in Spring that support students who have not completed a financial aid application or finalized postsecondary plans



# Key Financial Aid Levers

## High-quality Advising

- Skilled navigators with both relational and subject matter expertise partnering with schools
- **Working closer with families:** Counselors called or met with parents/guardians various times and hosted events around what would work better for families to attend
- Teaching students to learn how to find and navigate within the FAFSA site. And **teaching students how to walk parents through creating an FSA ID and completing the parent portion of the applications.**



# Key Financial Aid Levers

## High-quality Advising

“

“I helped a parent and student that had errors and had been stuck for weeks/months at a parent teacher conference. The Dad was extremely grateful and relieved and said that it was the best thing to come out of the conference and made coming that night worth it. The daughter told me again next week.”

-WSSN STEM Specialist

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# Key Financial Aid Levers

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## Your Future, Funded

- WA Grant Regional campaigns
  - Social media posts
  - Events and support posted publicly

**FAFSA Spotlight:**  
**Neah Bay Junior/Senior  
High School**



**79%**  
completion  
rate



**Your Future, Funded**  
Financial Aid Completion Week  
**April 20–24, 2026**

OLYMPIC PENINSULA

Financial support  
for college or  
training

Trey K.  
Chief Kitsap Academy



Get help near you

WA Grant

# Your Future, Funded - Mariners Game



- More than 500 Washington students connected with financial aid experts
  - The PREP region brought students from two districts
- Non-profit organizations supporting access to secondary pathways were stationed around the concourse for students to learn about financial aid resources and career pathways
- 2 Home runs in the first two innings → clearly a good sign

# Financial Aid with a Purpose



Financial Aid does not exist in a vacuum. Students are motivated to apply for funding when they are excited for the opportunities it opens. Work that functions synergistically with financial aid:

1. College and Career Exposure
2. Dual Credit



# Dual Credit

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Strategies include:

- Focus groups
- Student, family, and staff surveys
- Sharing practices (e.g., more visible posters)
- Trainings

# Up Next

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- Expand College & Career Pathway Exploration
- Continue financial aid outreach momentum
- Expand & strengthen partnership network
- Create & expand data visualization and collaboration tools

# Thank you

Contact us

Dr. Kareen Borders  
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Dr. Mollee Shultz  
[shultz@skschools.org](mailto:shultz@skschools.org)

Tanner Zahrt  
[tzahrt@collegesuccessfoundation.org](mailto:tzahrt@collegesuccessfoundation.org)





# Questions for Advisory Board Discussion

- What is most intriguing to you about what you heard?
- What promising practices are most interesting to you? Why?
  - How do you see these being applicable in other use cases?
- What challenges resonated with you the most? Why?
  - What possible solutions do you think exist?



May. 2026

# STCU... OUR JOURNEY TO HELP STUDENTS COMPLETE FAFSA



May. 2026

Why STCU embarked upon the  
FAFSA completion effort-

What we have done and what we  
continue to do-

# STCU FAFSA TIMELINE

- Launch NW Established: STCU Partnership created
- 2022-2023: First FAFSA Season- STCU opens our branches to families and students.
- 2023-2024: STCU expanded to all markets for FAFSA completion
- 2024-2025: STCU pilots branch FAFSA appointments
- 2025-2026: STCU Partners: WSAC, KHQ Local News, 6 school districts
- 2026-2027: STCU partnering w/ Launch NW, MasterCard, KHQ for FAFSA Priceless Moments and year long FAFSA campaign

# FAFSA-

- STCU over 170 FAFSA Ambassadors
- Open to anyone – do not have to be a member
- All 52 branches have fully trained FAFSA Ambassadors
- Details on how to engage w STCU- [stcu.org/fafsa](http://stcu.org/fafsa)
- Key partnerships:
  - Launch NW
  - College Success Foundation
  - Communities in Schools
  - WSAC

# FAFSA

- Launch NW and STCU/WA TRUST BANK: Final Mile Scholarship
  - The incentive and reward for completing FAFSA
  - Raised \$90 M for scholarship endowment with goal of \$125 M
  - Awarded over 500 scholarships to date
  - Post high school opportunities
  - College Navigators
  - STCU- \$500K contribution to this overall effort

# FAFSA

- Hosted 38 FAFSA In Branch events
- Scheduled 47 STCU FAFSA On Line Appointments
- STCU has volunteered at 14 external FAFSA events
- 2025-2026 –
  - 272 families served and FAFSA completions

# FAFSA INSIGHTS

- Parent Engagement: What we are experiencing
- Student Engagement: Who are seeking help and reaching out
- Partner Opportunities and Strategies: How can we share this model and push out across the State of WA
- Lessons Learned:
  - The barriers
  - The tools

stcu



# Questions for Advisory Board Discussion

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- What promising practices are most interesting to you? Why?
  - How do you see these being applicable in other use cases?
- What challenges resonated with you the most? Why?
  - What possible solutions do you think exist?



# Commitments From Advisory Board Members

- Complete surveys and think about recommendations.
- Help drive increases in financial aid completion within your school, organization, and networks.
  - Share out WSAC resources – remind colleagues it’s not too late for students to apply!
  - Share back successes, challenges, and other learning opportunities
- Share broad ideas that could address the challenges discussed, and with increasing FAFSA/WASFA completion.
  - Share with Sarah Weiss [sarahwe@wsac.wa.gov](mailto:sarahwe@wsac.wa.gov)



## Key Takeaways

- We are still 6% away from meeting our goal, and disparities remain while weekly application totals are slowing.
- Amazing work is happening across our state, yet challenges remain.
- Coordination effort is key to maximizing limited resources and avoiding duplication.
- Focus on schools furthest away from their goals for FRPL-eligible students with leadership and partnership support.
- **It's Not Too Late: It takes a state – Let's keep going!**
- Support from Advisory Board members and planning for recommendations.



# Community Voices

- Open floor for guests and partners to share



# Moving Forward Together

- June 2 meeting 10am-1 pm: in-person in Olympia (hybrid if absolutely needed for AB, others), work session, recognition
  - Set of recommendations will be produced
  - Connect with Rubi Diaz about travel at [RubiD@wsac.wa.gov](mailto:RubiD@wsac.wa.gov) before **May 15!**
- Materials will be shared approximately one week in advance
- [wsac.wa.gov/wa-completes-fafsa-advisory-board](https://wsac.wa.gov/wa-completes-fafsa-advisory-board)
- [wsac.wa.gov/your-future-funded](https://wsac.wa.gov/your-future-funded)
- Please contact Sarah Weiss at [sarahwe@wsac.wa.gov](mailto:sarahwe@wsac.wa.gov)