



Washington Completes FAFSA Campaign Advisory Board

February 17, 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 + February Focus

Objectives

- Share progress since last meeting
- 2026 legislative session updates
- Refine “Finish your financial aid app week”
- Confirm next steps

February Focus

- Financial Aid Data
- Strategy Highlight
 - 2A Priority School Microgrants
 - 3B Governors Letter
 - 50 School/District Outreach Plan
- Advisory input on successes and challenges
- Discuss and plan for “Finish your financial aid app week”



Goals: 2025 – 2026 Academic Year Campaign

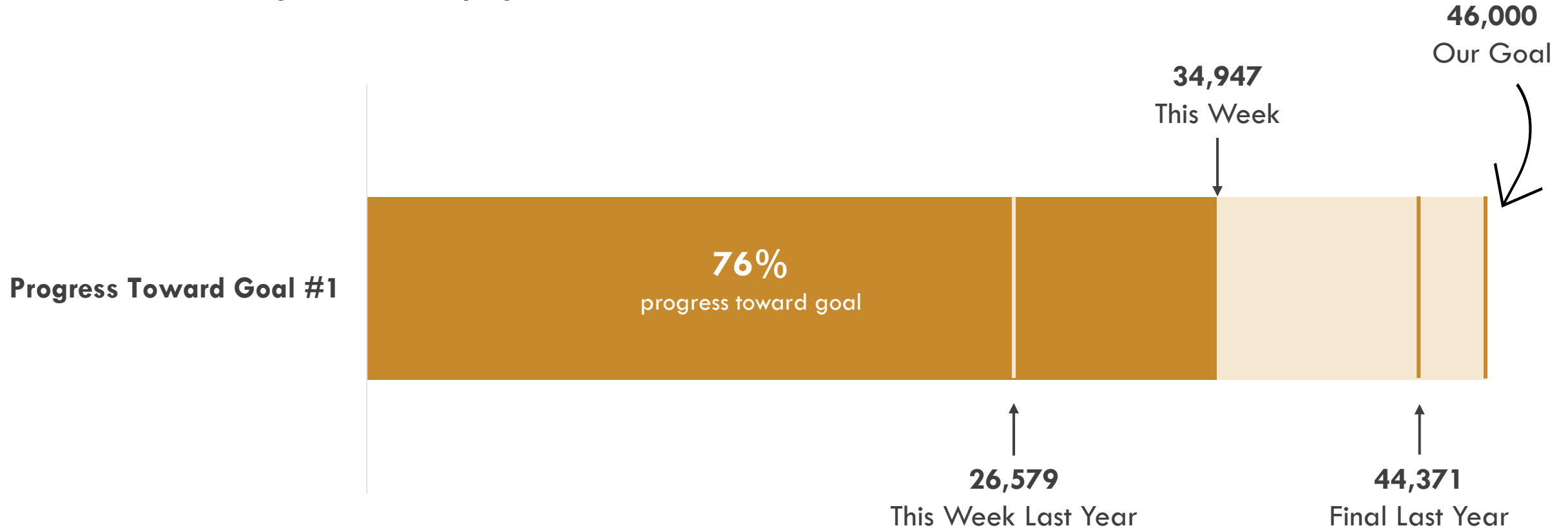
Our Goal: Increase financial aid completion across WA high school seniors

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 February 16: Class of 2026 FAFSA & WASFA completion rate is 40%
33 out of 53 weeks to go until the campaign ends

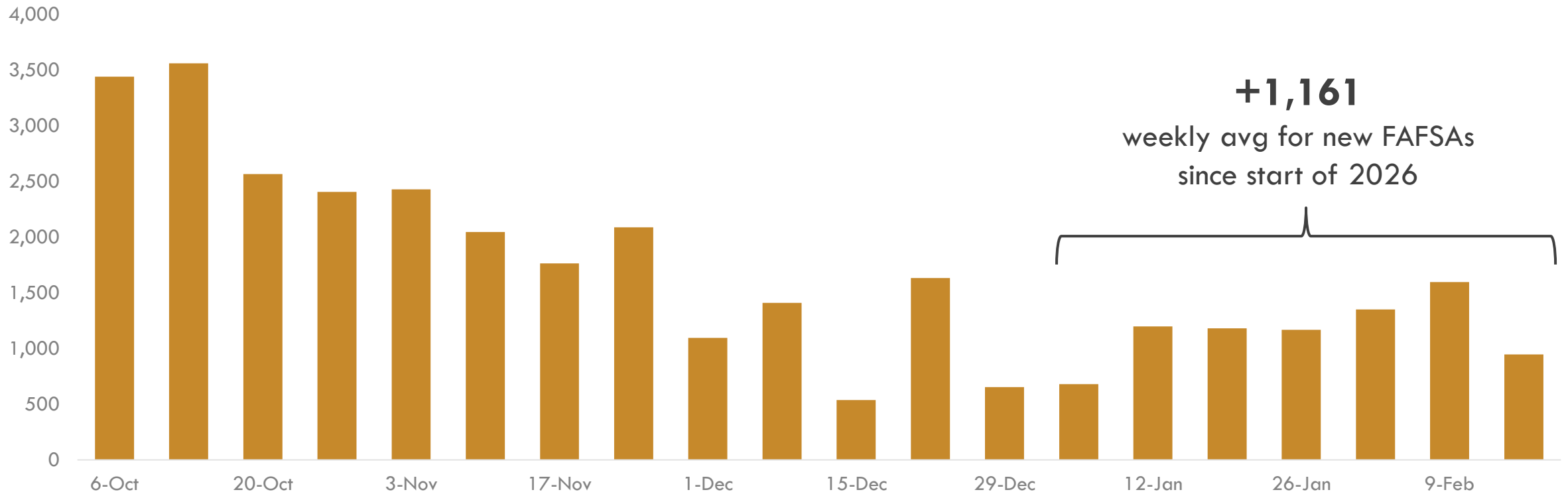




Progress Towards Goal #1

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

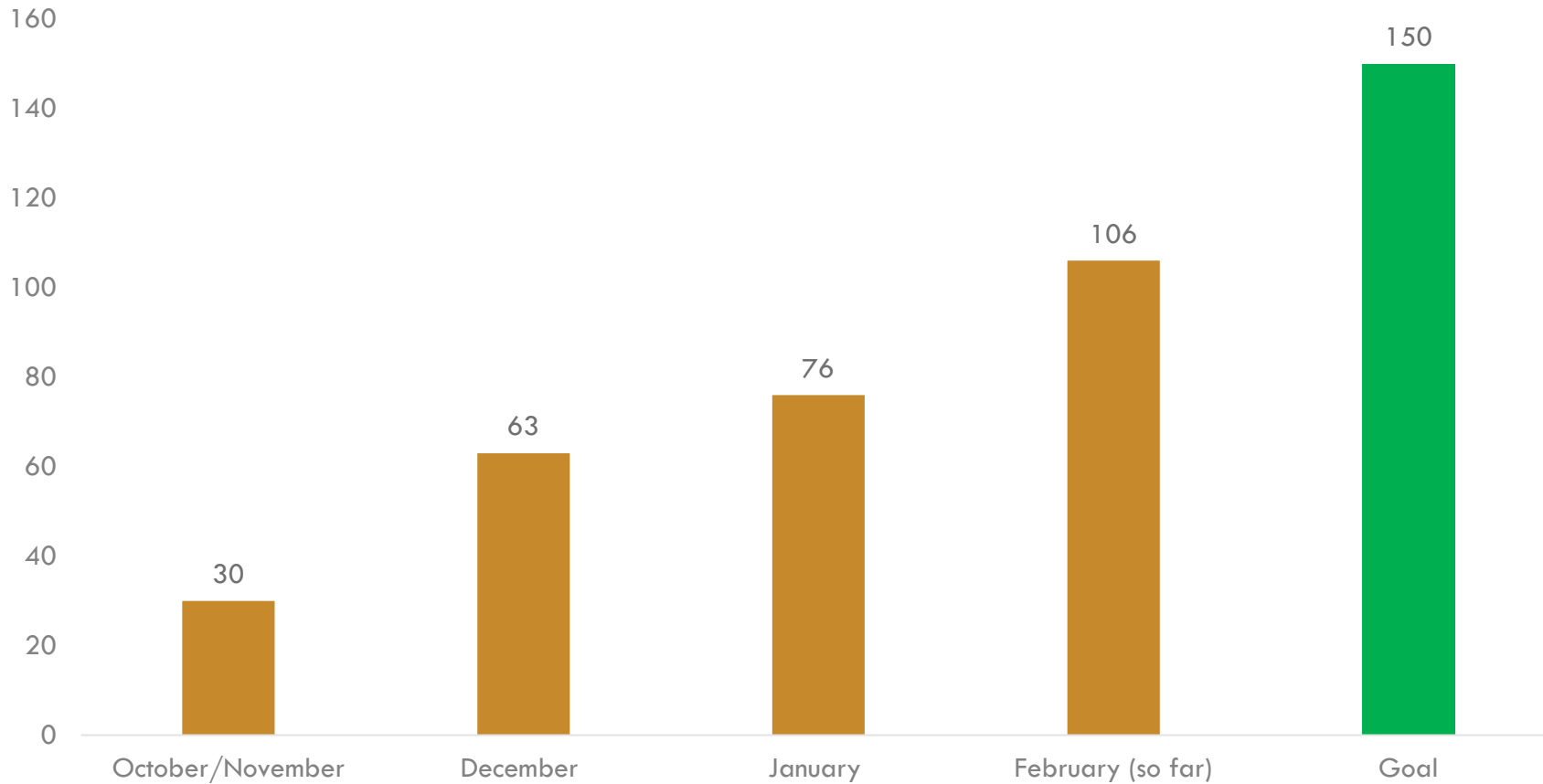
33 out of 53 weeks to go until the campaign ends





Progress toward Goal #2

Cumulative Count of Schools Meeting 6% FRPL FAFSA Completion Goal

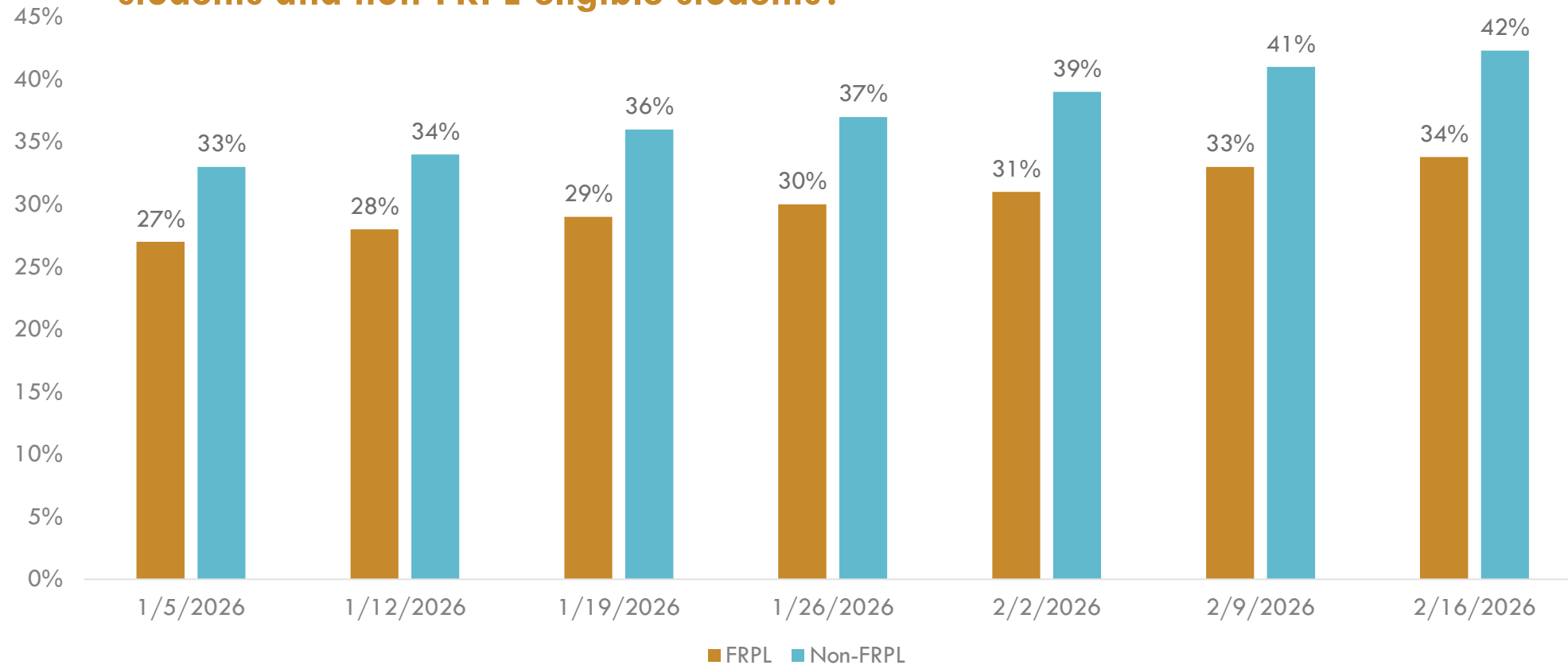


**We are 44 schools
away from meeting
this goal.**



Progress Toward Goal #3

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

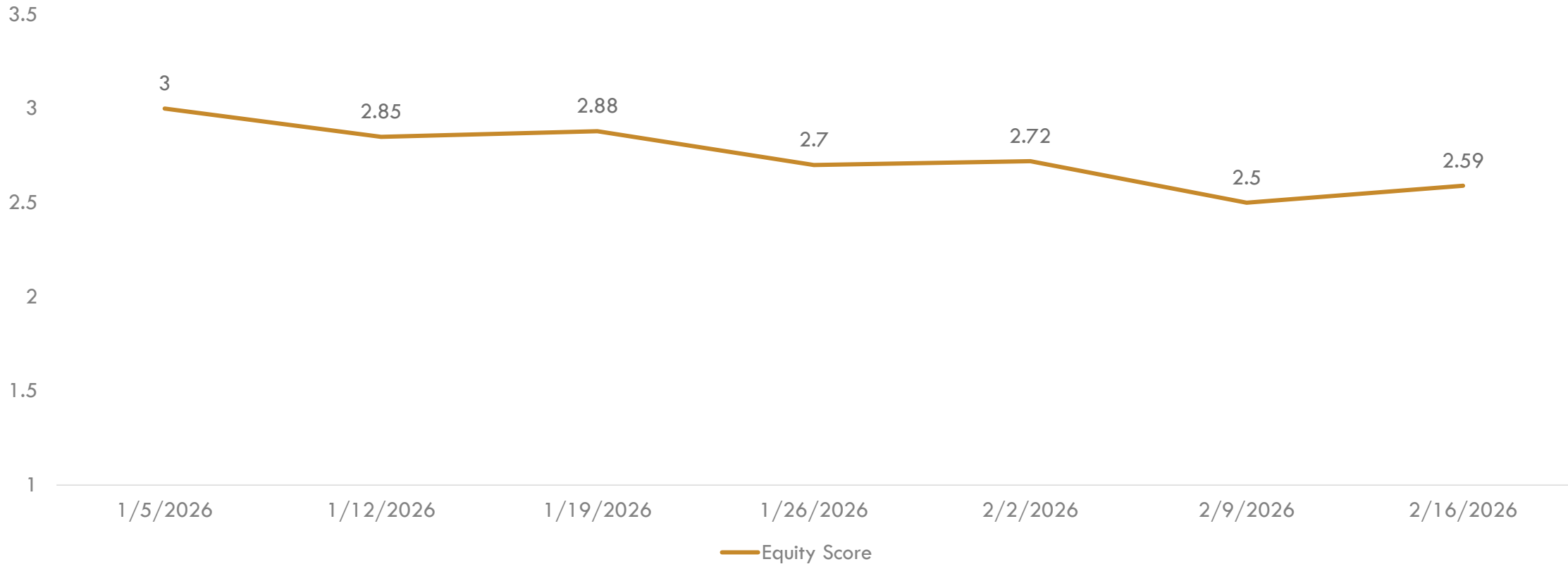


Gap widened from 6pp to 8pp since January



Progress toward Goal #4

By race/ethnicity, the Equity Gap Score is **2.59** – the group with the highest FAFSA completion has a rate that is just over two and half times the group with the lowest completion rate (**Asian 52%** vs. **NHPI 20%**)





Strategy Progress & Highlights: 2A - Priority Schools

What we're seeing:

- 25 microgrants have been awarded; schools actively implementing – some since the fall
- Early progress toward 6% increase in FRPL completion, especially at smaller schools with targeted supports
- Schools are adapting funds creatively to meet local needs

How we're adjusting:

- Targeting midyear check-ins to focus on strategies for addressing FRPL and equity gaps
- Exploring additional funding to expand tribal school participation
- Increasing in-person support where it can accelerate impact

Priority School	Efforts
Eastmont High School	Teamed up with Wenatchee Valley College
Deer Park High School	Set targets: 65% FASFA completion and 100% senior 1:1 consultations
Highline High School	Provided language access & 1:1 completion support
Yelm High School	Ran a multi-session FA event (~150 attendees) with follow-up support



Strategy Progress & Highlights: 3B – Governors Letter

What we're seeing:

A governor-branded touch is most effective when it lands at a moment when seniors are making final decisions. There is still a meaningful group of seniors who have yet to file an application and who may assume financial aid is only a 4-year college, its complicated, or they won't qualify.

How we're adjusting:

- Shifting the governor's letter to May to preserve a stronger "last chance" moment.
- Sending a postcard in February from the governor and WSAC to the 51K seniors who haven't filed yet



Strategy Progress & Highlights: 3C – Trusted Messengers

What we're seeing:

A new report is showing us which schools are trending behind last year's FAFSA completion pace by specific date ranges and other key metrics.

How we're adjusting:

Instead of leading with another email, we'll make personal connections with these schools.

We will use all WSAC teams and other state and community leaders to make a direct outreach and open doors, then connect schools to the right support and resources.



2026 Legislative Session: Update on Relevant Bills

Bill Number (Sponsor)	Description	Current Status
<u>SB 5841</u> (Sen. Boehnke)	Requires financial aid completion data from WSAC to be integrated into OSPI's High School and Beyond Plan	Passed by Senate (49-0) on Feb. 11 ; scheduled for public hearing in House Education Cmte. on Feb. 18
<u>HB 2132</u> (Rep. Leavitt)	Limits disclosure and retention of personally identifying information related to the WASFA	Heard in the House Approps. Cmte. on Feb. 2; did not advance

Note: Bills must pass out of their house of origin (House or Senate) by the end of today, Feb. 17.



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 January 20?
- What worked?
- Where did you or colleagues/networks get stuck?
- What barriers did you see or what did you hear?



January Action Items

What was accomplished (and continuous):

- Use Advisory Board members and partner networks as trusted messengers to spread materials
- Promote use of the FAFSA dashboard and WIAA leaderboard and offer a short training/webinar
- Help schools set simple goals using prior-year and current data

What is in progress:

- Outreach before April 20 with a clear promotion timeline/countdown.
- Provide a low-lift plan to reach every senior with at least one touchpoint that week (Next slides!)
- Offer activities, trainings, and events to support filing and “what’s next” for students – the menu!



Flow of the Year and How the Work Evolves

Fall/Winter:

Prepare and initial financial aid application efforts

Late Winter/Early Spring:

Keep building on momentum
Preparing higher need schools for success
Training and capacity building

Spring/End of Academic Year:

- **Week of March 2:** toolkits and resources published
- **Week of April 20:** big push to directly support students with their financial aid apps
 - **After April 20:** It's not too late messaging and final efforts



Spring Push to Complete Financial Aid Applications

Goal

- Every senior has at least one touch point and check-in
- Build off year-long efforts and culminate with a focused week
- Inaugural effort as part of the *Washington Completes FAFSA Campaign*

Why

- Still time for students to access financial aid at most institutions
- Timing is after spring breaks, but ahead of most HS graduation preparations

Who

- Students who are unsure about their plans or unaware of aid programs and opportunities
- Parents who need to complete their sections of the application



Key Pillars of Your *Future, Funded* — *Finish Financial Aid Week!* Week of April 20

Mobilize the Ecosystem

- Communicate shared commitment and urgency for all ecosystem partners through trusted messengers
- Equipping educators/advocates with training and readiness to provide direct student & family supports
- A communication toolkit built to raise awareness, align efforts and drive action

Ensure Individualized Support

- Direct outreach to students/families to "take action now" with concrete support options.
 - 1x1 appointments
 - Filing events
- Materials and resources for students and families
- Access to data for targeting outreach (FAFSA and College Bound)

Build School-Wide Energy

- Provide a flexible campaign toolkit of resources and activities schools and communities can adapt for their use.
- Ex: Ready-to-use communications materials (social media assets, slides, event materials), Celebration Wall, assemblies, setting daily goals, individualized outreach



Roundtable Discussion – *Your Future, Funded*

Question 1:

- Where do you see an opportunity for your organization/community to plug in and support?
- What adjustments would make the *Your Future, Funded* initiative more effective for the communities you serve and are a part of?

Question 2:

- What can YOU as an Advisory Board member do to make the *Your Future, Funded* initiative and April 20 week a success? Where can you assist?
- Ex: Sarah Everitt and WFAA (financial aid administrators)
- Ex: Susan Rose and AWSP (principals group)



Asks of Advisory Board Members

- Between now and March 17, help drive increases in financial aid completion within your school, organization, and networks.
 - Share out WSAC resources
 - Share back successes, challenges, and other learning opportunities
- Host or join a regional training in your area/online to support the work to increase filing statewide
- Your Future, Funded — Finish Financial Aid Week planning and support!



Key Takeaways

- We are 76% toward meeting our goal, yet disparities remain.
- Priority schools, and others, are being creative with their FAFSA/WASFA completion efforts. How can we support them?
- Focus on schools furthest away from their goals for FRPL-eligible students with leadership and partnership support
- Inaugural *Your Future, Funded* efforts: It takes a state
 - Key dates: **Week of March 2 and April 20**
- Support from Advisory Board members



Community Voices

- Open floor for guests and partners to share



Meeting Cadence

Next meeting: Tuesday, March 17, 2:00 – 4:00 P.M.

Between meetings:

- WSAC will send agenda prior to meeting
- Surface barriers and opportunities to increase completion
- Share key updates and WSAC resources with your network & bring back learnings
- Help shape statewide strategies, recognition of high performing schools and campaign adjustments



Moving Forward Together

- Next meeting: *March 17, 2026 (2-4 PM) Virtual*
- Materials will be shared approximately one to two weeks in advance
- wsac.wa.gov/wa-completes-fafsa-advisory-board
- Please contact Sarah Weiss at sarahwe@wsac.wa.gov