



Washington Completes FAFSA Campaign Advisory Board

March 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 + March Focus

Objectives

- Share progress since last meeting
- Provide legislative session updates
- Facilitate strategy discussions
- Confirm next steps

March Focus

- Financial Aid Data
- Strategy Highlight
 - 1D Recognition Award
 - 3A FAFSA Portal
 - Financial aid outreach and coordination
- Advisory input on successes and challenges
- Update on “Your Future, Funded”



Goals: 2025 – 2026 Academic Year Campaign

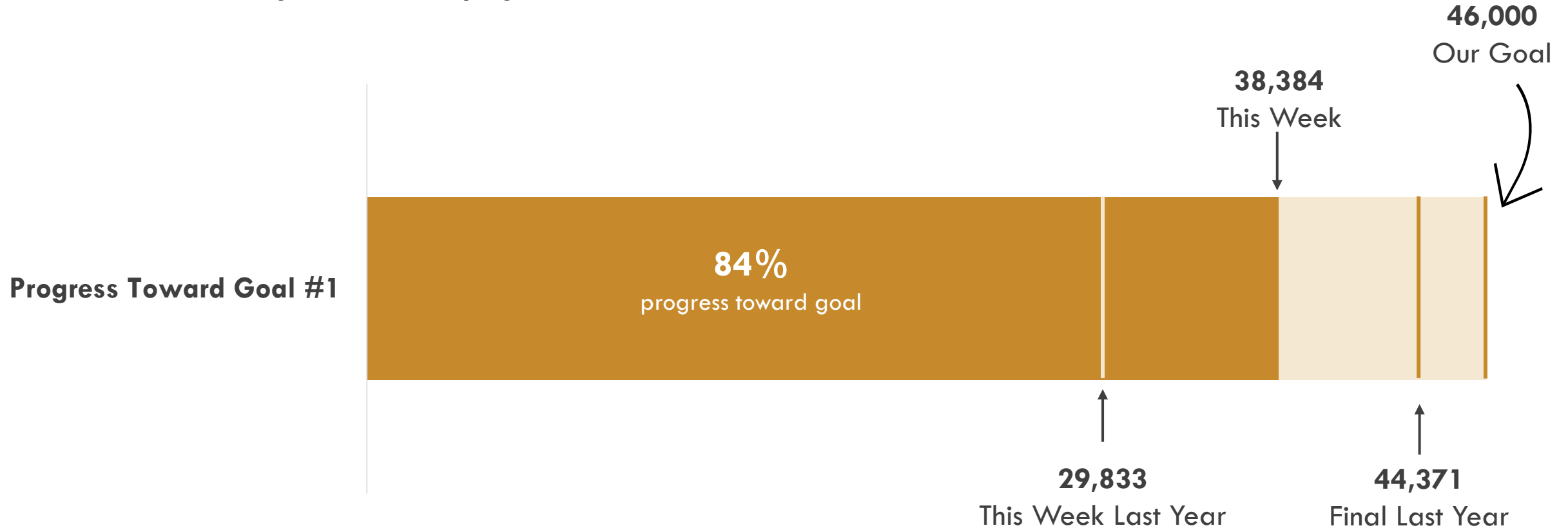
Our Goal: Increase financial aid completion across WA high school seniors	
I	Ensure 46,000 seniors complete the FAFSA or WASFA
II	Raise FRPL-eligible student completion by at 6% or more in at least 150 high schools
III	Close the gap in FAFSA completions between FRPL and non-FRPL students
IV	Reduce disparities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



Progress Towards Goal #1 (overall goal)

As of March 16: Class of 2026 FAFSA & WASFA completion rate is 45%

29 out of 53 weeks to go until the campaign ends

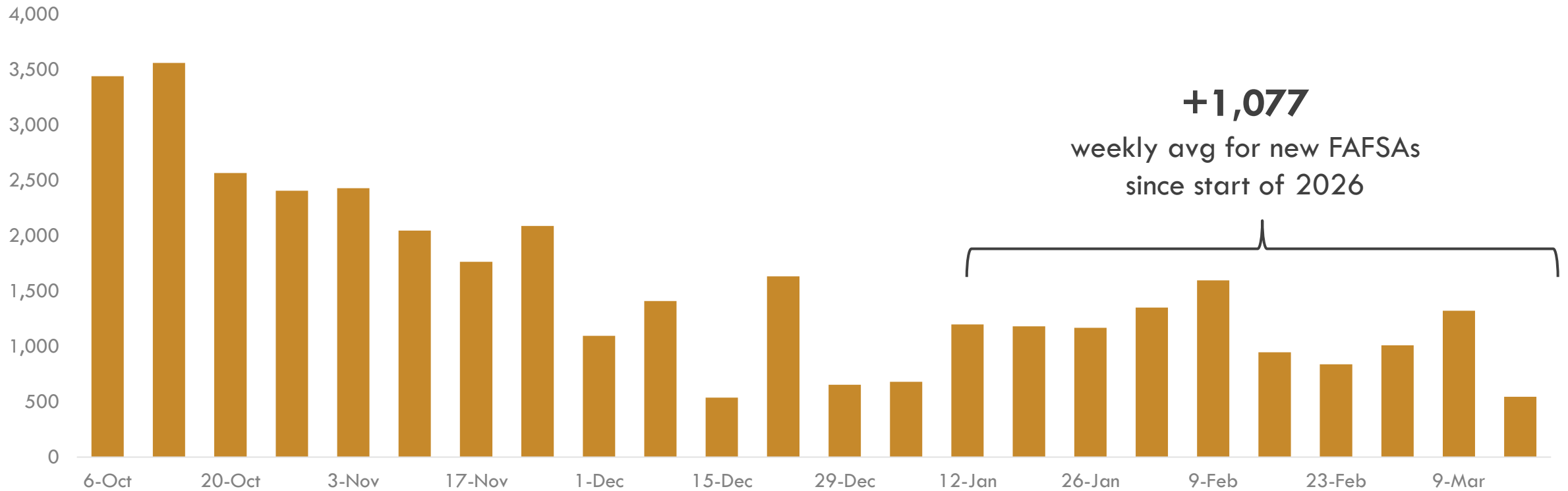




Progress Towards Goal #1

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

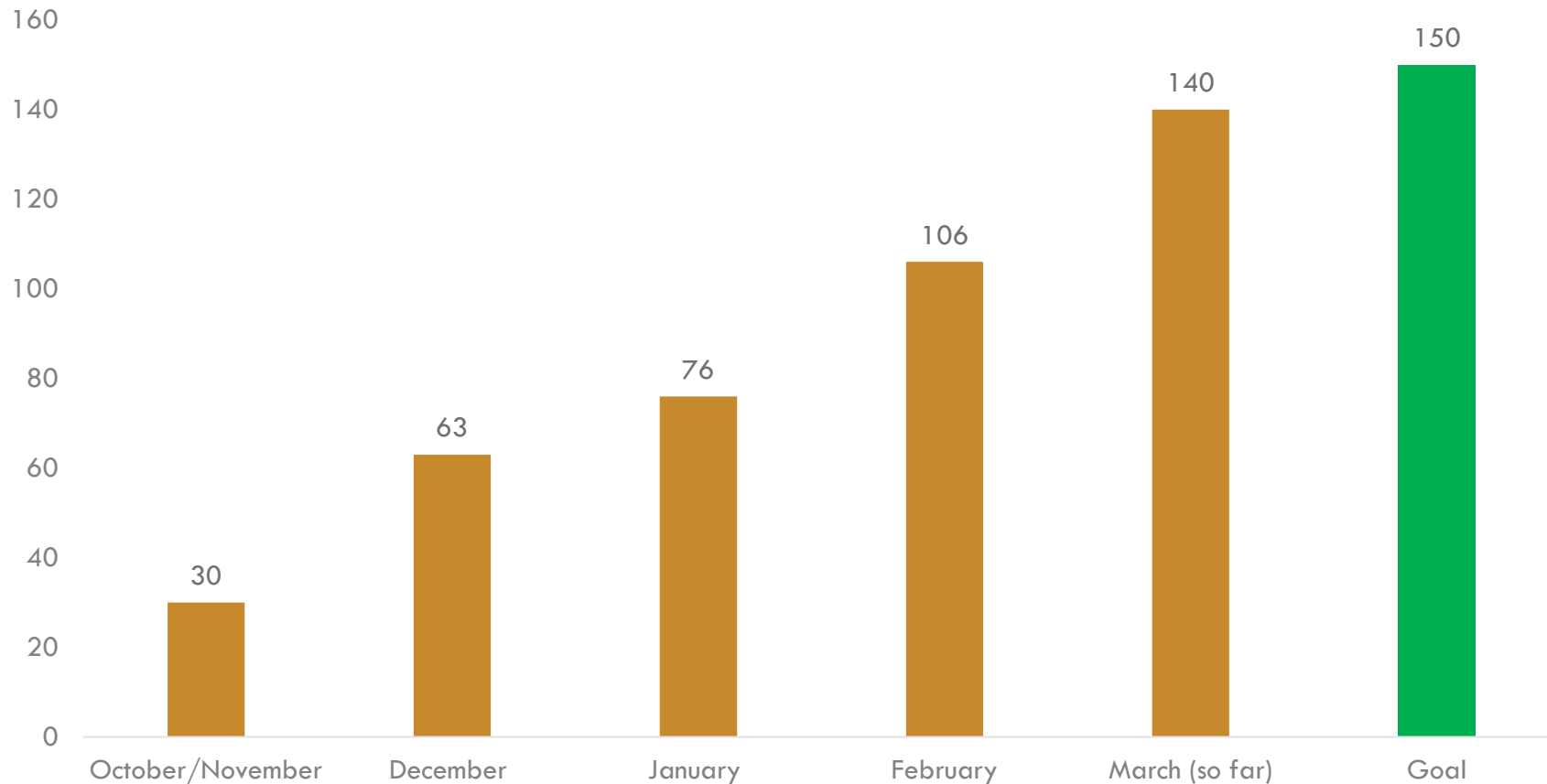
29 out of 53 weeks to go until the campaign ends





Progress toward Goal #2

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

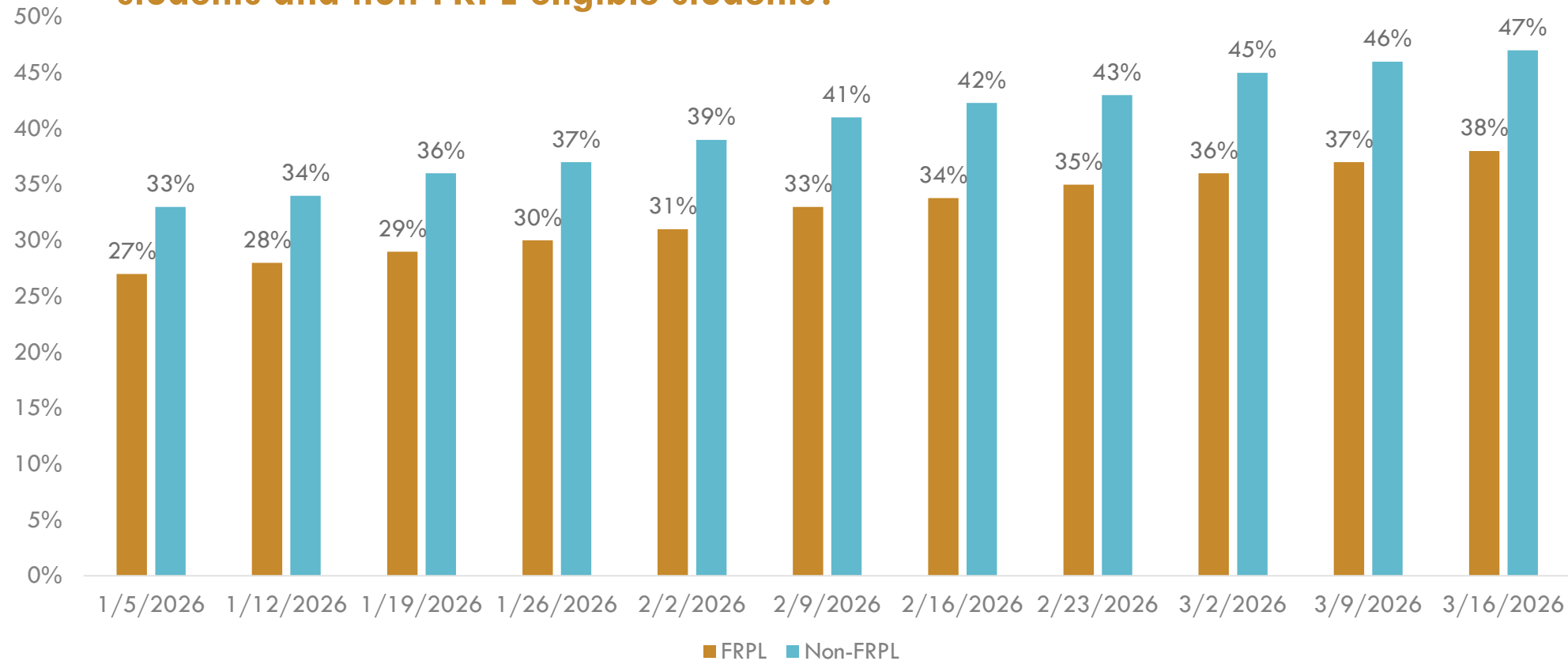


**We are 10 schools
away from meeting
this goal.**



Progress Toward Goal #3

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

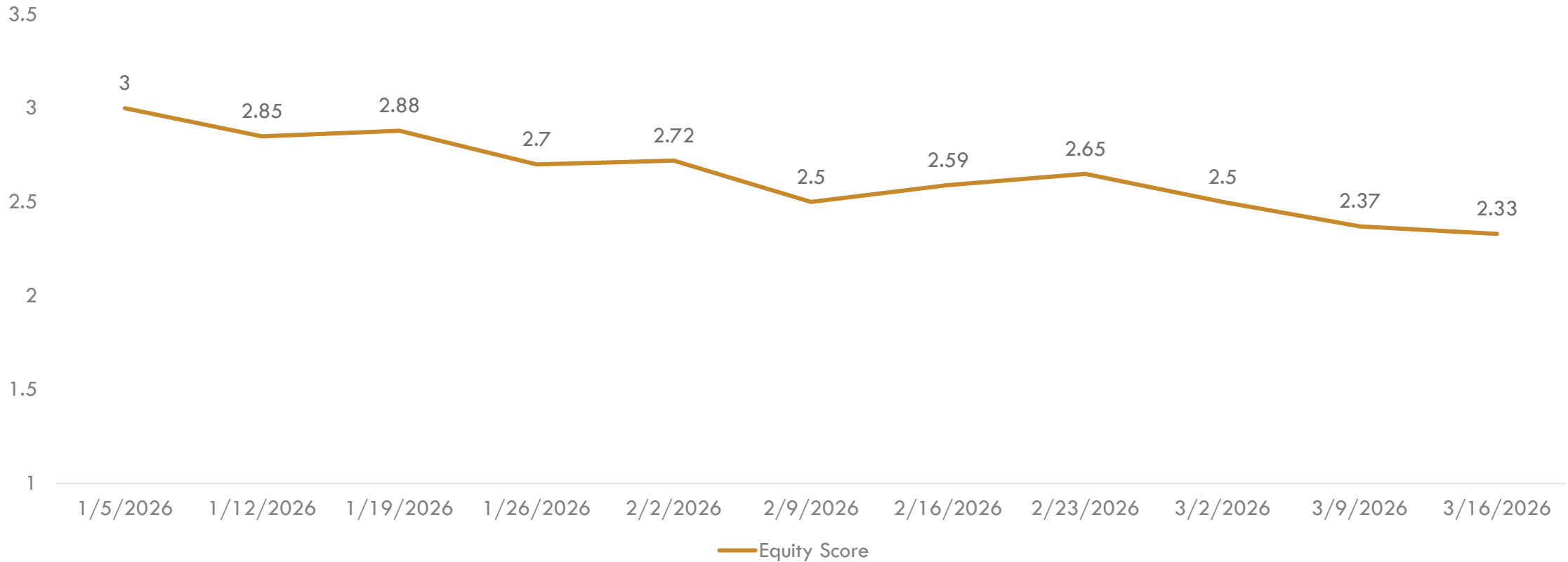


Gap widened from 6pp to 9pp since January



Progress toward Goal #4

By race/ethnicity, the Equity Gap Score is **2.33** – the group with the highest FAFSA completion has a rate that is just over two times the group with the lowest completion rate (**Asian 58%** vs. **NHPI 25%**)





Strategy Progress & Highlights: 1D – Washington's Annual Statewide College & Career Culture Recognition Program

What we've done and what we're seeing:

- Worked with the Association of Washington School Principals (AWSP).
- Guidance on how to best encourage and recognize schools who are building and support post-high school planning and college-going culture (inclusive of FAFSA completion).
- Self-nomination process with WSAC data (mirrors AWSP awards).
- Interest in this process, but a need to increase visibility.

How we're adjusting:

- Additional promotion via WSAC and partner communication channels.
- Dedicated website: wsac.wa.gov/ccr-recognition
- Extended nomination period through the end of June with recognition happening in early Fall.



Strategy Progress & Highlights: 3A – FAFSA Portal Update

What we're seeing:

- Solid engagement with districts and schools on renewing college access initiatives data-sharing agreements (DSA) which includes FAFSA and College Bound portal data.

254

Districts have a new DSA in place

How we're adjusting:

- Individualized calls to districts that haven't responded yet has been the most successful.
- Working with local and community partners as trusted messengers to support final DSA completion.

93%

Students statewide are in a district with an active portal user



Supporting Statewide Coordination Efforts

What we're seeing:

- Conversations in multiple arenas around the same issues, complexities, and brainstorming around possible solutions.
- WSAC leads several workgroups and convenings where these issues are raised.
 - Advisory Board.
 - Washington Financial Aid Training Workgroup (co-led by WSAC and SBCTC; formerly Aim Higher Washington Steering Committee).
 - Regional Trainings.
- While many barriers, issues, and intricacies vary regionally, there are similarities and benefits to connecting statewide to reduce duplication and inspire connectivity and learning.

How we're adjusting:

- Connecting with partners who have expressed these concerns, as there are possible convenings already being discussed by groups statewide.
- Joining a partnership effort for a virtual statewide FAFSA completion convening that brings together community partners, K-12 districts and schools, and higher education.
- Additional convening considerations:
 - Timing (kick off in the fall?)
 - Virtual, hybrid, in-person
 - How to bring in regionality but still provide opportunities for partners to learn from others in different corners of the state.



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 House (92-4) on Mar. 6; delivered to Gov. Ferguson on Mar. 12; awaiting signature

Note: The last day of the 2026 legislative session was Thursday, March 12.



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 February 17?
- What worked?
- Where did you or colleagues/networks get stuck?
- What barriers did you see or what did you hear?



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:

- **March 11:** 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

- **1,000 applications per week!**
- Every senior has at least one touchpoint 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



Your Future, Funded: <https://wsac.wa.gov/your-future-funded>

- 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.



outreach & initiatives » schools & partners » [your future funded](#)

YOUR FUTURE, FUNDED

Your Future, Funded: Financial Aid Completion Week

Your Future, Funded is designed to build momentum going into high school graduation. Together, we can ensure every senior has a touchpoint during the final months of school about financial aid and their next steps. WSAC is offering enhanced support to help schools get their students across the finish line to complete their FAFSA-WASFA.

The *Your Future, Funded* initiative advances Governor Ferguson's *Washington Completes FAFSA* campaign to increase financial aid application completion rates among high school seniors statewide. Led by the Washington Student Achievement Council (WSAC), this initiative will roll out during March and April, culminating with a dedicated financial aid completion week from April 20-24, 2026.

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.
2. **Access student-level information:** If you work specifically with seniors on financial aid applications, make sure you have access to the FAFSA portal by emailing FAFSA@wsac.wa.gov.
3. **Host events:** Organize events to share financial aid information and support application completion. [Publicize your events](#) on the statewide [financial aid events calendar](#). Or offer 1:1 appointments to support your students with their applications.
4. **Build excitement locally:** Use the ready-to-use activities and support ideas listed below to energize your community! Connect with partners to work together and get the message out.

[Filing Supports](#) | [Toolkits & Resources](#) | [Communications Coordination with Partners](#)

FAFSA Completion League Standings & Leaderboard

Looking for a way to motivate your students? WSAC's [FAFSA Completion League Standings](#) let you compare your school's FAFSA completion with your sports rivals!

For schools that participate in the WIAA (Washington Interscholastic Activities Association), this leaderboard offers a way to view school-level FAFSA filing rates for schools in the same WIAA league.

Who's in first place this week...? Inspire some friendly competition and challenge other local schools by posting your progress on social media!

Looking for a way to motivate your students?
How about a little friendly competition?
FAFSA Completion League Standings



COLLEGE ACCESS INITIATIVES CONTACT

Reach out to the College Access Initiatives team at: cas@wsac.wa.gov

Financial Aid Events

12th Year Campaign Sign up

Financial Aid Resources

Plan Your Future Juniors & Seniors

Order Financial Aid Materials



Your Future, Funded: <https://wsac.wa.gov/your-future-funded>

Filing Supports

- Virtual financial aid night for students and parents (April 22 and 23).
- FAFSA completion portal access and supports.
- Limited 1:1 appointments for students facing unusual circumstances.
- Financial aid event calendar – make sure your event is listed!
- Training and signing up to volunteer at an event.



Your Future, Funded: <https://wsac.wa.gov/your-future-funded>

Toolkits and Resources

- Community Call to Action! Providing resources to support financial aid filing without having to recreate the wheel.
- Toolkit, FAQ guide, family guide, message templates, and activity suggestions.
- Quick start guide for the week of activities.
- Bilingual financial aid 101 deck.

If resources in additional languages are needed, reach out to cas@wsac.wa.gov



Your Future, Funded: <https://wsac.wa.gov/your-future-funded>

Communications and Coordination with Partners

- WSAC's communications calendar to foster alignment.
- Plug-and-play social media content and graphics.
- Data resources to get to know your community's data.



FAFSA Completion League Standings and Leaderboard

Friendly Competition

- Dashboard data.
- Highlighting schools on a weekly basis that are seeing FAFSA completion success on WSAC's social media.

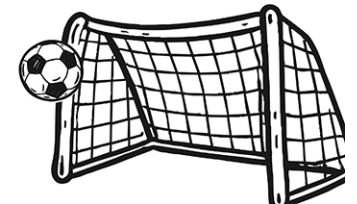


Looking for a way to motivate your students?

How about a little friendly competition?



FAFSA Completion League Standings





Your Future, Funded Communications and Outreach

Be on the lookout for ...

- Weekly WSAC social media posts highlighting featured schools and their FAFSA completion success.
- Bi-weekly newsletters with focused messaging to community and school partners.
- Bi-weekly student and family emails and text messages.
- Governor's Office support.
 - Ex: letters and videos.

Outreach plans:

- Specific schools we want to connect with and offer supports through *Your Future, Funded*.
- WSAC staff will be doing outreach and hopefully others outside of WSAC.



Roundtable Discussion: Plugging Into *Your Future, Funded!*

Are there any refinements you would suggest to the campaign?

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 the *Your Future, Funded* efforts

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???



Commitments From Advisory Board Members

- *Your Future, Funded!* outreach and support efforts
- Between now and April 21, 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
- Recommend a guest speaker to highlight bright spots or shed light on issues.
 - Share with Sarah Weiss sarahwe@wsac.wa.gov by **April 1**.



Key Takeaways

- We are 84% of the way toward meeting our goal, yet disparities remain.
- Partnerships are helping get schools access to the FAFSA portal – data that can help them prioritize and support students directly.
- Spreading the word will help promote college-going recognition efforts.
- 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.
- **Inaugural *Your Future, Funded* efforts: It takes a state!**
- Support from Advisory Board members.



Community Voices

- Open floor for guests and partners to share



Meeting Cadence

Next meeting: Tuesday, April 21, 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: April 21, 2026 (2-4 PM) Virtual
- Materials will be shared approximately one to two weeks in advance
- wsac.wa.gov/wa-completes-fafsa-advisory-board
- wsac.wa.gov/your-future-funded
- Please contact Sarah Weiss at sarahwe@wsac.wa.gov