



# FAFSA Postsecondary Change Action Network September 21, 2021

**Say hello in the chat box...**

- Share your name, organization, and role

# Welcome

*In your small groups, share which Olympic athlete resonates with you today*

## Seeking balance



Simone Biles

Acknowledging stress to support yourself and team

## Picking myself up



Sifan Hassan, Ethiopia  
Long distance runner

Won gold after falling during the prelim heat

## Leaning on my team



USA Women's Volleyball

Despite injuries to key players, team won its first ever gold

## Learning from setbacks



USA Men's Basketball

After losing first two games, went undefeated to win gold

# Agenda

- Welcome
- L4L Theory of Action
- L4L Math Network Updates
- FAFSA Completion Initiative Planning
- Next Steps

# L4L's Theory of Action

## What we do:

### Mission:

To ensure that every child in our region becomes a thriving citizen who achieves success in school, career, and life

*...in an environment of sustained trust, learning, and momentum*

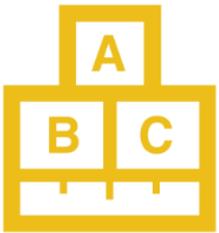
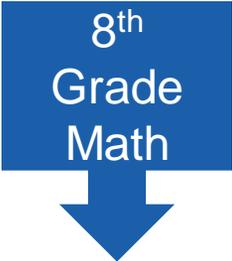
Engage partners

Create shared understanding [of data]

Amplify bright spots



# L4L Key Indicators



Kindergarten Readiness



3rd Grade Reading Proficiency



8th Grade Math Proficiency



High School Graduation



Post-Secondary Enrollment

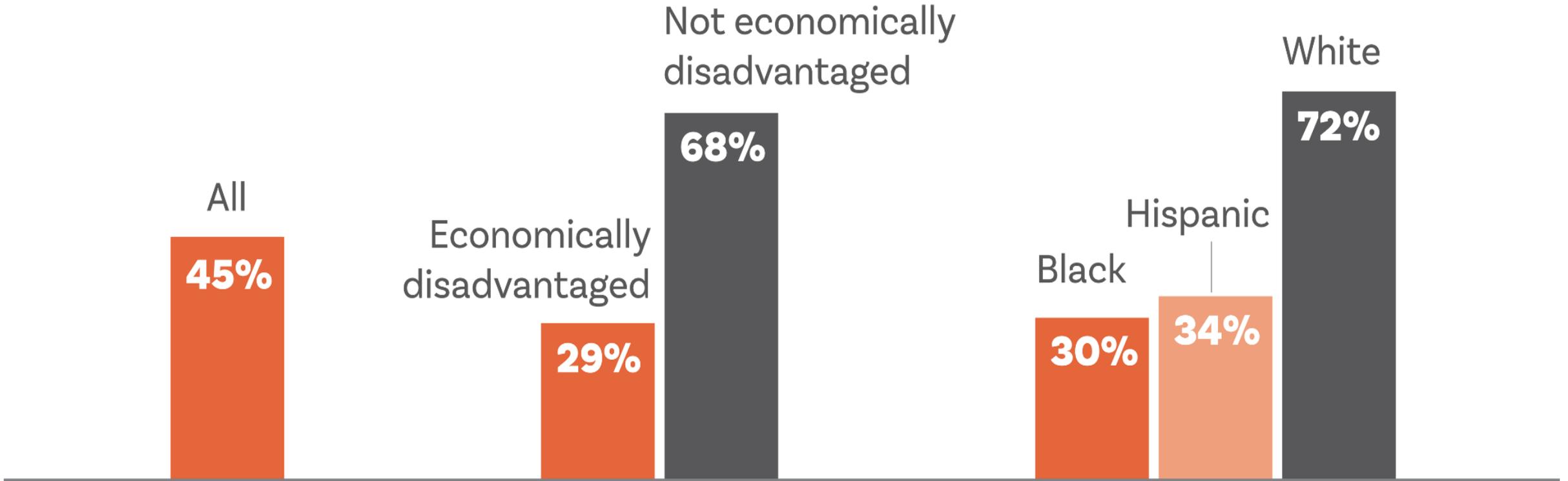


Post-Secondary Completion





# 8th Grade Math Proficiency



Percent of 8<sup>th</sup> grade students proficient and above in math (2019)

# Network identified factors limiting proficiency

**Access to Rigorous  
Courses**

**Gender Expectations**

**Racial Expectations**

**School Culture**

**Relevant Curriculum**

**Interventions for  
Struggling Learners**

**Teacher  
Effectiveness**

**Academic  
Preparation**

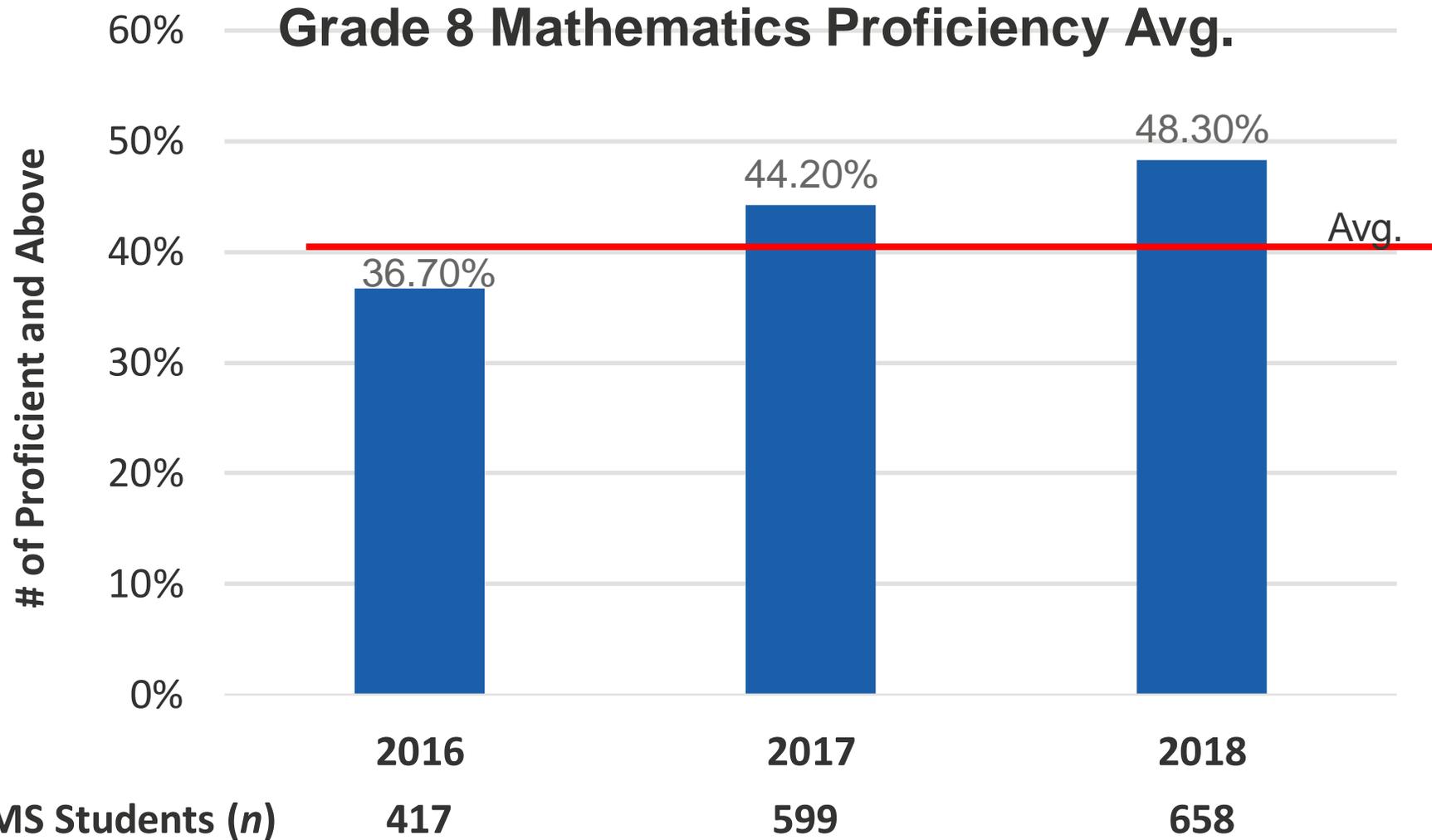
**Access to Appropriate  
Technology**

**Math Anxiety**

**Language and Literacy  
Skills**

**Use of Assessment  
Data**

# STEM Certification Proven Effectiveness



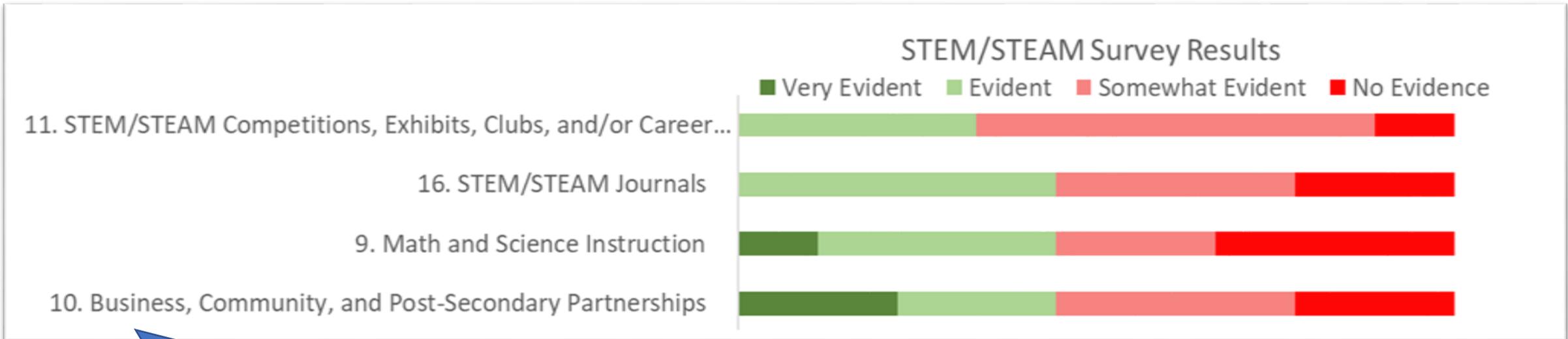
## Improving Outcomes

- GA middle schools holding STEM certification show positive gains in mathematics
- Scores increase over time



# Certification growth limited by real world connection

Surveyed the ~30 middle schools in progress to understand which certification criteria are the most challenging to achieve



Focus Area

# Science ATL is supporting middle schools to build external partnerships

THE ARTHUR M. BLANK  
FAMILY FOUNDATION

## Key Activities:

- **Connecting** schools with external partners
- **Coaching** the new relationships
- Developing **sustainability** of the partnership

# STEM Forward is Underway



engineers of ATLANTA SCIENCE FESTIVAL.

THE ARTHUR M. BLANK  
FAMILY FOUNDATION

## Progress to date:

- Three districts – 5 schools
- Schools commit (via MOU)
  - Create planning team
  - Weekly coaching
  - Bi-monthly cohort discussions
- School lead receives stipend

**Memorandum of Understanding**

Your school has been invited to participate in Science ATL's *STEM Forward* project in partnership with Learn4Life from July through December 2021. Through digital tools to facilitate partnerships, partner matching, and team coaching, this project will help schools form sustainable business partners in STEM in alignment with school needs, goals, and STEM/STEAM certification plans. The success of the community partnerships we help you develop is directly related to the school's level of support. We ask you to identify a STEM Lead who will work directly with our project manager to help your school identify, nurture, and build sustainable community partnerships. Your coach and project manager is Laura Bolsen, [info@stemforeverychild.com](mailto:info@stemforeverychild.com), 404-593-9201.

**Benefits of Participation:**

- Build or enhance a plan to engage business partners for STEM/STEAM certification based on needs assessment, asset maps, and goal setting
- Leverage Science ATL's network to gain 3 new community/corporate partnerships for your school
- 6 hours of coaching to enhance your partner engagement capacity
- Create a Partnership Plan to ensure sustainable engagement beyond this project timeline

**Expectations for School Participation:**  
*Please check to indicate that you agree to the following:*

- Select a representative from your school (academic coach/teacher/administrator) to be the lead STEM contact. A stipend will be provided by STEM for Every Child directly to the STEM Lead (\$300).
- Our STEM Lead is:  
    Karen Artis [name] 404-441-2978 [cell#]  
    karen.artis@clayton.k12.ga.us [email]

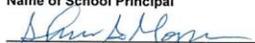
**The STEM Lead will be expected to:**

- Lead the school's team to identify corporate partnership needs, complete planning documents and activity log, and manage partner engagement.
- Attend a 1:1 virtual weekly check-in meeting for 15-30 minutes.
- Collaborate in a virtual bi-monthly meeting with other participating schools.
- Communicate in a timely manner if a weekly check-in meeting needs to be rescheduled.

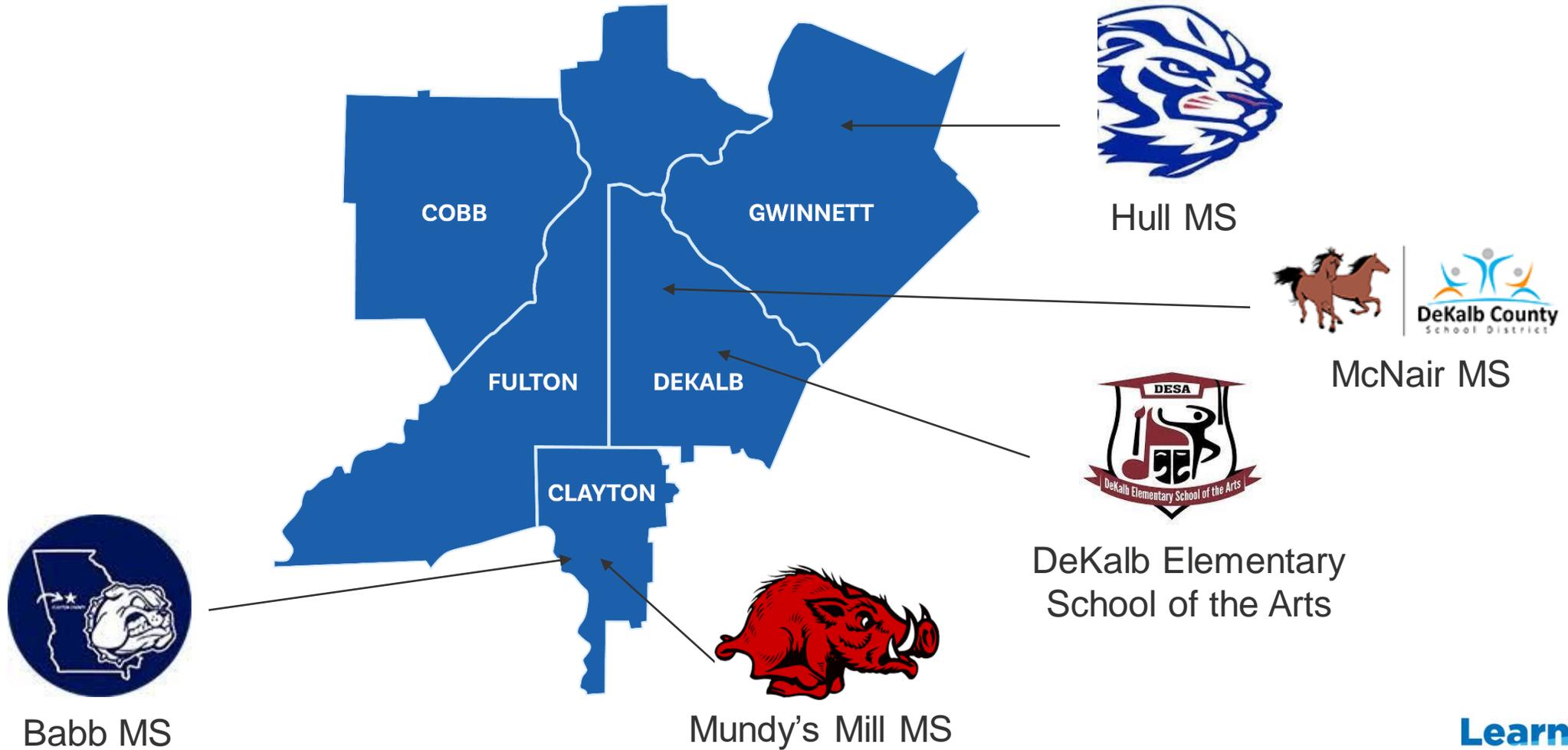
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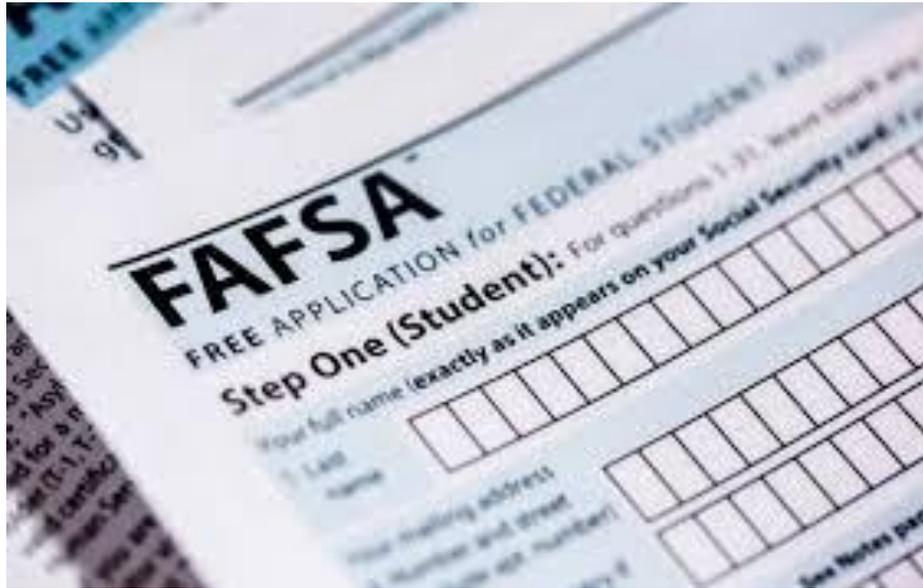
On behalf of Mundy's Mill Middle [school name], a school in Clayton County [school district], I agree to participate in *STEM Forward* from August 1 through December 17, 2021 and to meet the above mentioned goals and expectations.

Sharra S. Morgan 7/8/2021  
Name of School Principal Date

  
Signature of School Principal

# STEM Forward Middle Schools



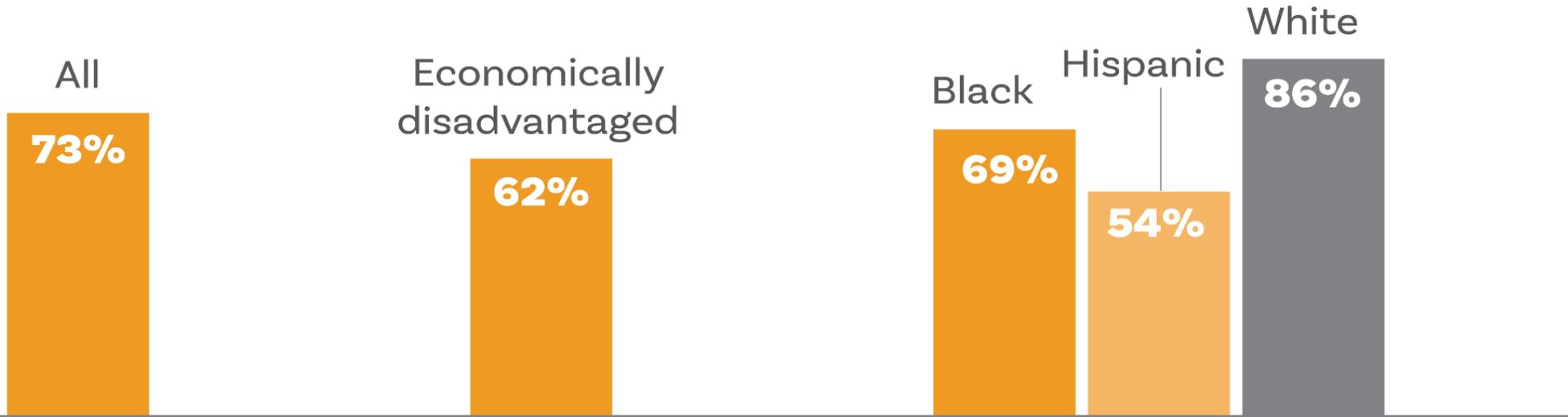


# FAFSA Completion Initiative Planning

Fall, 2021



# Postsecondary Enrollment Gaps Exist



Percent of students enrolling in a post-secondary institution within 16 months of graduation\*

\*2017 High school graduates

# Pandemic affected postsecondary enrollment, but more detail is needed

## Outstanding questions for research study:

- Which students (subgroups) are most impacted?
- What is the impact on postsecondary enrollment?
- How does metro Atlanta compare with similar regions?



# Study will analyze pandemic impact on postsecondary enrollment trends

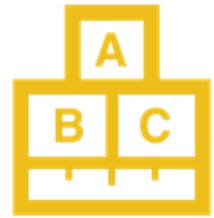
## Goals

- Elevate the issue of postsecondary enrollment decline (similar to K-12 “learning loss” study from last summer)
- Lift up high performing schools to learn more about their successful practices
- Build momentum for deeper investigation into student lived experience

# Elevating the Issue of Postsecondary Enrollment

L4L Goals	How might you use these study findings to inform your work?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Elevate the issue of postsecondary enrollment decline</li><li>• Lift up high performing schools to learn more about their successful practices</li></ul>	<p><b>Achieve ATL:</b> inform us of factors which may have contributed to disparities in postsec enrollment among our partner schools despite them using the same model, so we can adjust programming and find solutions</p> <p><b>DeKalb County School District/OneGoal:</b> inform us of ways Bright Spots (in metro Atlanta and elsewhere) have iterated to deliver better results in spite of the pandemic, so we can adapt their approach(es) to improve outcomes in other schools/organizations</p> <p><b>College AIM:</b> inform discussions with school districts when norming against regional data; inform how ESSER funds are spent; inform nonprofit MOUs with school districts</p> <p><b>Breakthrough ATL:</b> inform programming; development team can use in grant writing</p> <p><b>IBM:</b> inform discussions with colleges; inform programs (P-TECH)</p> <p><b>Atlanta Regional Commission:</b> inform dialogue and policy around upward mobility in the State.</p> <p><b>TSA:</b> inform innovations in programming – What’s working? What’s NOT working? What adjustments can we make?</p> <p><b>Colleges:</b> inform how to partner with school districts</p>

# Postsec Network is focused on FAFSA completion



Kindergarten  
Readiness

1



3rd Grade Reading  
Proficiency

2



8th Grade Math  
Proficiency

3



High School  
Graduation

4



Post-Secondary  
Enrollment

5



Post-Secondary  
Completion

6

Key Indicators



# FAFSA is critical for postsecondary success



Post-Secondary Enrollment



Post-Secondary Completion



Post-Secondary Completion

Completing the FAFSA increases postsecondary enrollment from 55% to 90%

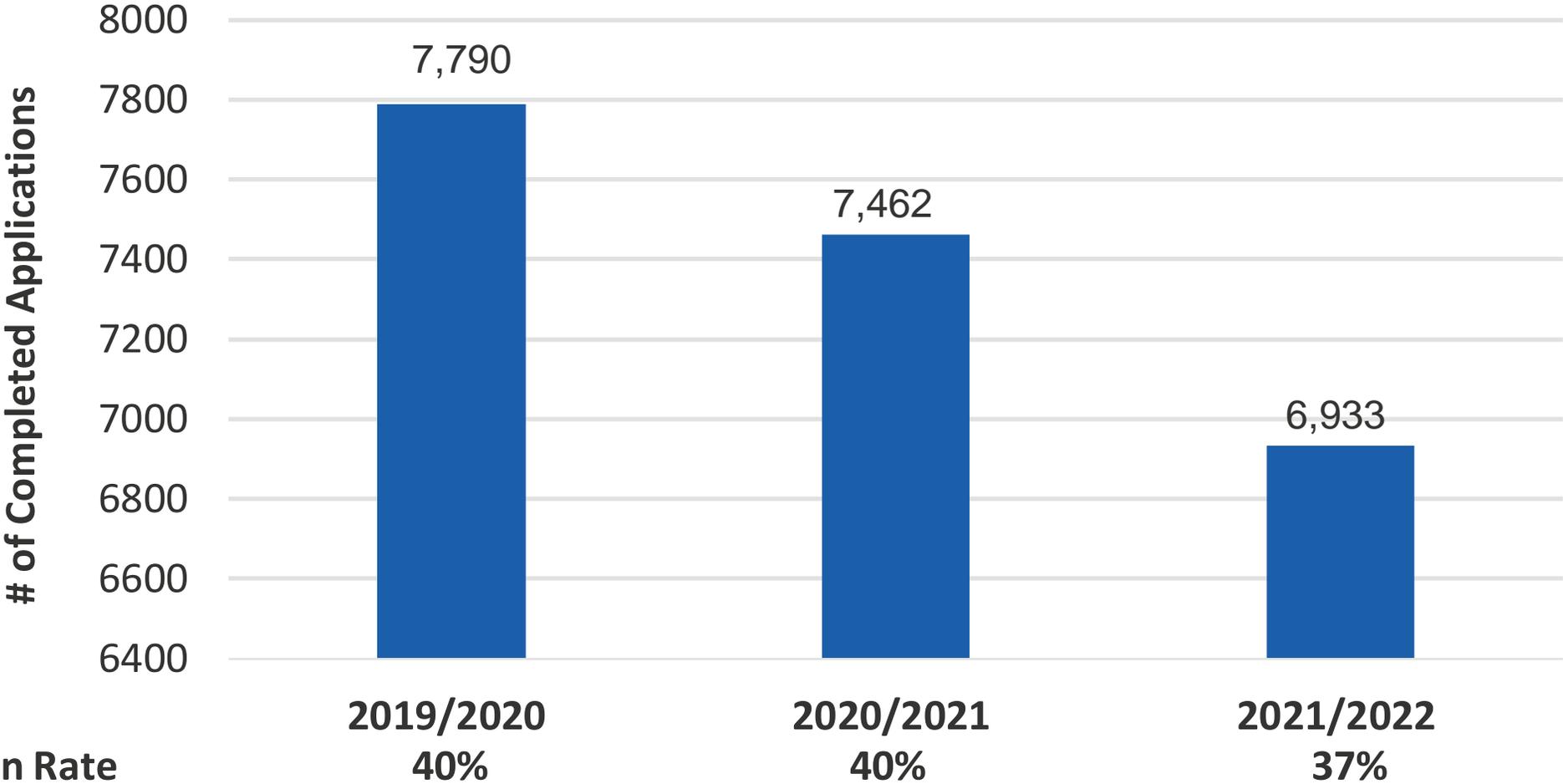
Every additional \$1,000 in financial aid increases postsecondary persistence rates by 4%

GA public university graduates earn on average \$850,000 more over the course of their careers than GA students w/ HS diploma alone, and add \$2M to State's GDP

# 250,000

fewer students nationally applied  
for FAFSA since the start of the  
pandemic

# FAFSA Completion in Title I High Schools in L4L Region



\*\*each cycle reflects the number of completed applications through the month of April



# District Postsec Leaders Appreciate Support

*Interviews among all metro district leaders revealed common themes*

Student/family engagement  
is biggest challenge

FAFSA driven at school-  
level

FAFSA expertise is limited  
at schools

*District staff uniformly excited about external supports to supplement their work.*

# Metro Atlanta 2021 FAFSA Initiative



**Goal:** to increase postsecondary enrollment and completion by improving FAFSA completion across metro Atlanta

## United Way & The Scholarship Academy Services

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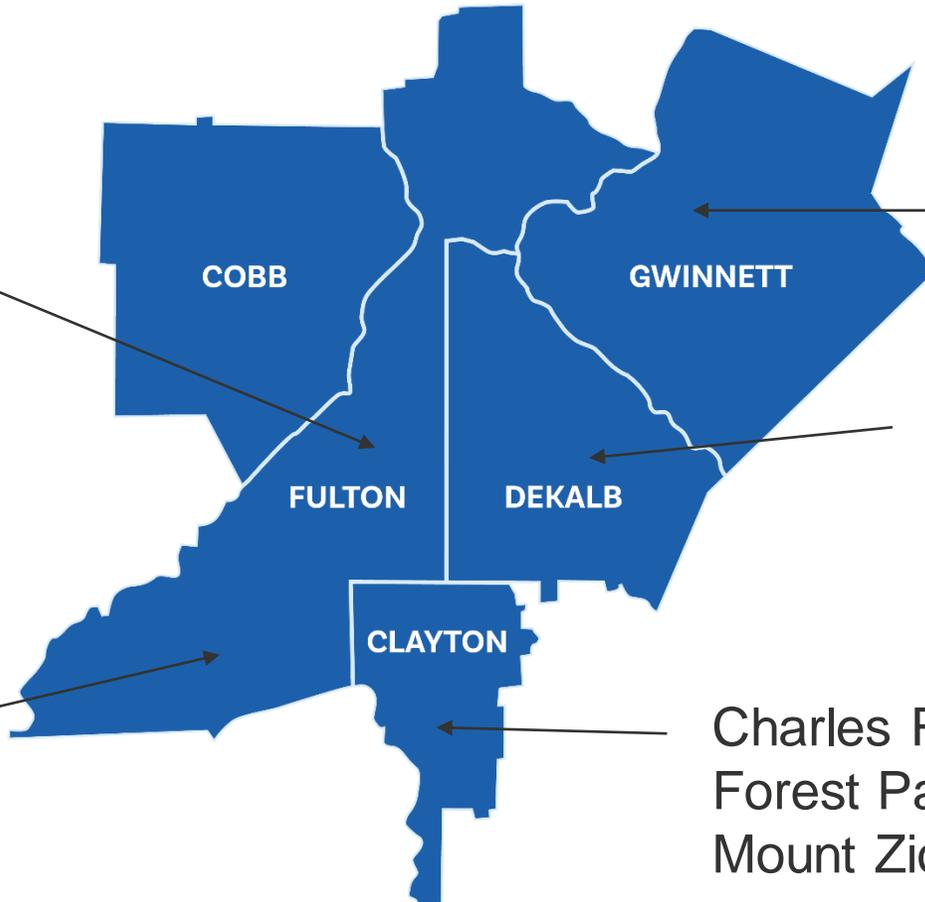
- Train volunteers to work with students to complete FAFSA
- Host completion events and office hours
- Provide marketing materials and incentives

## Learn4Life Support

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- Incorporate insights from Postsec Network
- Cultivate district level support and mutual accountability via MOU
- Market events on social media and blogs
- Streamline school implementation process

# FAFSA Completion Phase I: 10 schools



Shiloh HS

Clarkston HS  
Lakeside HS  
SW DeKalb HS

Charles R. Drew HS  
Forest Park HS  
Mount Zion HS

Banneker HS  
Creekside HS  
Tri-Cities HS

## Phase 1 Schools

- FAFSA Completion Avg.: **43%**
- Title I: **100%**



# Discussion Groups

Team	Today's Question
<b>Connection Building</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• How can we strategically infuse/reinforce direct connection with students and families into our model to increase FAFSA completion?</li></ul>
<b>Measuring Effectiveness</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• What types of data should we collect to measure the effectiveness of Train the Trainer PD, and the effectiveness of marketing and outreach?</li></ul>
<b>Community Assets</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• How can we activate community assets to help recruit students and families to FAFSA events?</li></ul>

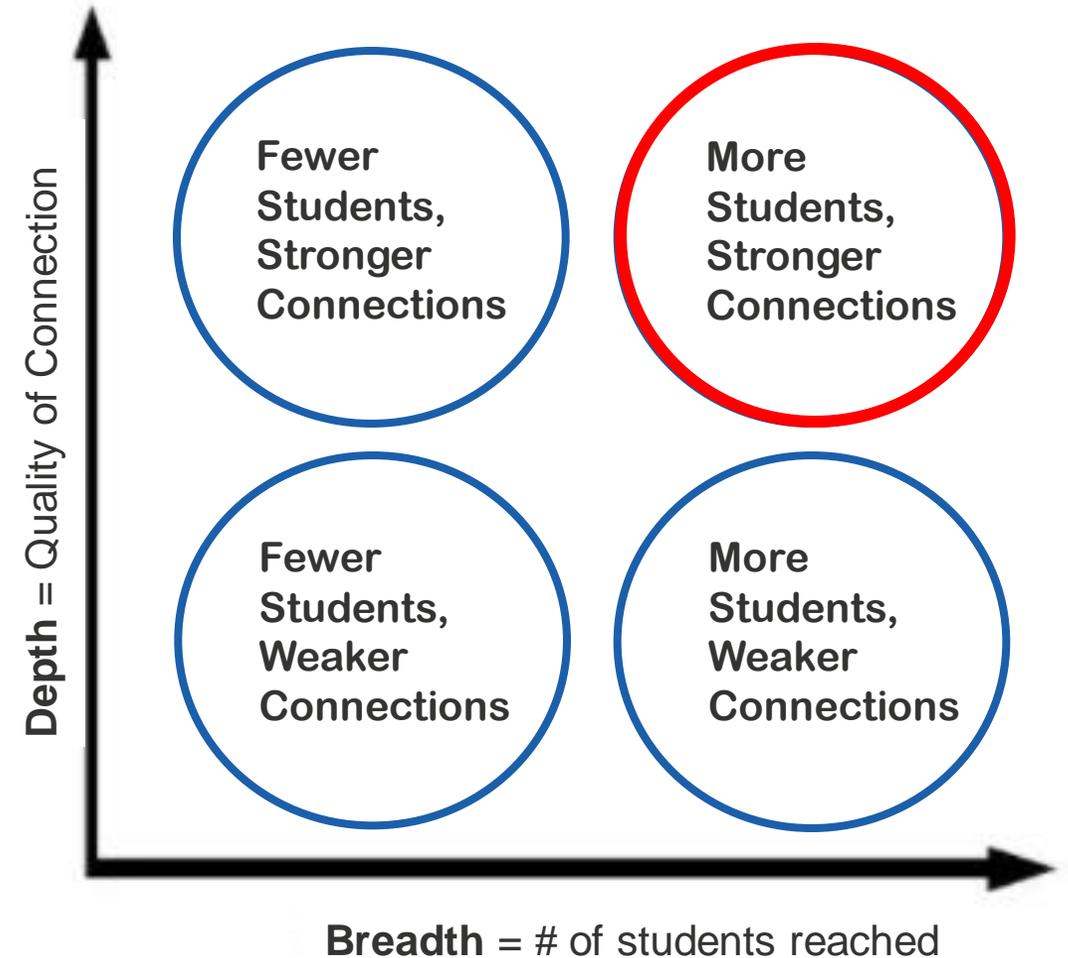
# Connection Building

**Key Question: How can we strategically infuse/reinforce direct connection with students and families into our model to increase FAFSA completion?**



# Connections Matter

- **Proven by Research** -The most effective strategy to increase FAFSA completion is personal one-on-one assistance or advising



## How can we infuse/reinforce direct connection with students and families into our model to increase FAFSA completion?

Component	Component Description	Strategies to incorporate direct connection?
Kickoff Meeting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Meet school personnel</li> <li>Share goals and strategy of FAFSA initiative</li> <li>Discuss ways to leverage talent in bldg.</li> <li>Set completion goal</li> <li>Align calendars for FAFSA events</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Inquire about personnel on campus with strong relationships and leverage them to make introductions.</li> <li>Ask about ways we can augment established programming to connect with students and families and help spread the message about WHY FAFSA Matters</li> </ul>
School Visit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Meet stakeholders</li> <li>Schedule biweekly check-in cadence</li> <li>Preview event space &amp; tech</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Meet with student groups, parent groups, senior sponsors, etc. to determine ways they can partner in this work.</li> <li>Counselors can identify students who are already ahead of the curve with FAFSA completion (i.e., Posse Scholars) who may serve as influencers and ambassadors</li> </ul>
Biweekly Check-ins	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provide updates on progress</li> <li>Troubleshoot potential challenges</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Elevate voices of parents and students at planning meetings by sharing their insights or inviting them to the meetings to share their thoughts directly</li> </ul>
“Train the Trainer” FAFSA submission PD for participating volunteers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provide volunteers a general understanding of the application questions and answers</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Invite PTA and student leaders to participate in FAFSA training/workshops and encourage them to lead or contribute to parents sessions and/or advisement sessions on WHY FAFSA Matters, Common FAFSA Myths, etc.</li> </ul>

## How can we infuse/reinforce direct connection with students and families into our model to increase FAFSA completion?

Component	Component Description	Strategies to incorporate direct connection?
Marketing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Radio ads, social media posts, &amp; posters</li> <li>Distribution of flyers, stickers, &amp; bracelets</li> <li>Convos about WHY FAFSA matters</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Use similar approach as voting campaigns – set completion goals and use students to generate buzz.</li> <li>Give stickers when students complete FSA-ID or submit FAFSA, and have them take pictures that they can hashtag and post to generate buzz</li> <li>Leverage student ambassadors to market and recruit – distribute flyers at games, post messages to IG and social media, morning announcements, etc. Give them t-shirts so they stand out (Ask me about FAFSA!) and offer community service hours</li> </ul>
In-person FAFSA events	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>FAFSA completion events on school campuses, staffed by volunteers, school personnel, and College Bound</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Have students (juniors), siblings of seniors, and parents assist with event logistics and execution (i.e., greeters/ushers)</li> </ul>
Virtual FAFSA events	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>FAFSA completion events over Zoom, staffed by volunteers, school personnel, and College Bound</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Warmth, validation, and support during virtual calls is a great way for volunteers to connect with student and families</li> </ul>
Office hours	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1:1 FAFSA completion support for students and families</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Direct connection is inherent here. It's 1:1 personalized support. Volunteers making themselves available is a way to connect</li> </ul>
Incentives for completion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Raffle prizes to incentivize/reward students and families for attending events/submitting FAFSA</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Poll students and families for incentive ideas. If we can offer what they are interested in, it may encourage buy-in</li> <li>Give stickers when students complete FSA-ID or submit FAFSA, and have them take pictures that they can hashtag and post to generate buzz</li> </ul>
Other		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>DeKalb will have mobile units to bring FAFSA support directly to students and families</li> </ul>

# Measuring Effectiveness



**Key Question: Identifying data to measure the effectiveness of:**

- 1. Train the Trainer PD - in preparing volunteers to assist students with FAFSA completion**
- 2. Marketing and outreach - in attracting students and families to FAFSA events**

# Measuring Effectiveness of Training for Continuous Improvement

Train the Trainer PD Components	Data to be collected to measure effectiveness
Marketing of Trainings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• # of attendees (school based-staff vs non school-based staff)</li> <li>• How did you hear about the training?</li> </ul>
Overall effectiveness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• # of FAFSA submitted vs. # of FAFSA completed (w/ school-based and non school-based volunteers)</li> <li>• Avg. length of time and/or # of sessions to completion</li> <li>• # of students who will need 1:1 sessions to complete</li> <li>• # of training RSVPs vs. # of training attendees vs. # of trained volunteers who staff events or 1:1 office hours</li> <li>• # of hours volunteer volunteered, tracking over time, repeat business</li> </ul>
Line-by-line FAFSA submission training (eligibility requirements, common FAFSA mistakes, etc.)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pre and post-training perception survey – Was knowledge gained? Do you feel prepared to help w/ FAFSA completion?</li> </ul>
Day-of FAFSA event logistics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Exit ticket on logistics – were you prepared, did the event run smoothly, gaps in training?</li> <li>• Student/Parent perception – who helped you today (school-based volunteer or non-school based volunteer), did they have knowledge, were they prepared? Do you need to attend 1:1 office hours and why?</li> </ul>

# Measuring Effectiveness of Marketing/Outreach for Continuous Improvement

Marketing & Outreach Components	Data to be collected to measure effectiveness
Overall effectiveness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “How did you hear about this event?/What brings you here today?”</li> <li>• “How frequently did you hear this communication?”</li> <li>• # of students and parent RSVPs/participants in events</li> <li>• # of volunteers available to assist with FAFSA completion relative to # of attendees – where there enough?</li> <li>• Specific prompts about each item (did _____ motivate you to attend?)</li> </ul>
Marketing & Outreach Components	Data to be collected to measure effectiveness
<p>TV and Radio Ads</p> <p>Social Media Ads (FB, Instagram, &amp; Twitter)</p> <p>Street Marketing Team (3 reps per county)</p> <p>Incentives (gift cards &amp; laptops)</p> <p>Signage (posters, flyers, yard signs)</p> <p>FAFSA Themed Favors (stickers, buttons, bracelets)</p> <p>Targeted meetings w/ stakeholders (student groups, PTA, athletic coaches, etc.)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Social Media Ads analytics – # of impressions or engagements</li> <li>• Incentives - Were they high yield? Are there different incentives we should have considered?</li> <li>• # of seniors vs. # of RSVPs vs. # of attendees</li> <li>• Are people opting out? Why? (qualitative info)</li> </ul>

# Community Assets

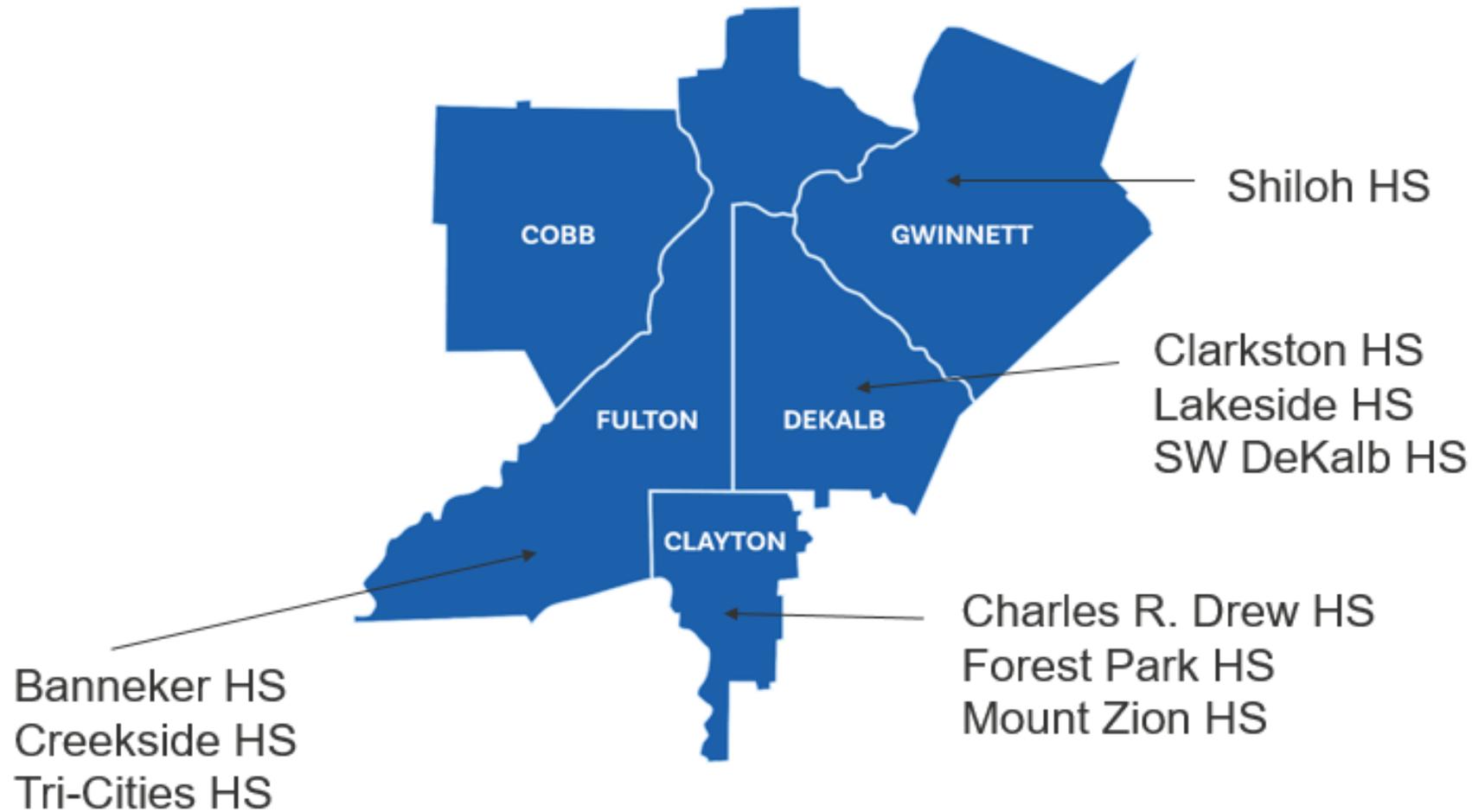
**Key Question: How can we activate community assets to help recruit students and families to FAFSA events?**

**Ideal community assets are orgs that are:**

- **Connected to students and families**
- **Invested in postsecondary success and outreach**
- **Open to partnership and collaboration**



# Location of Schools by District



# How can we activate community assets to help recruit students and families to FAFSA events?

## Orgs that serve districts/schools more broadly

- Fulton Schools College and Career Academy – students from across Fulton can go here for college/career development (near Banneker)
- ATL Metro College - works with South Fulton schools (especially Banneker and Creekside)
- YMCA & Boys and Girls Clubs
- @Promise Centers – do workforce development training and partner with Urban League

Schools	District	City	What orgs exist in the area?
Banneker	Fulton	Atlanta	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• NexGen Men &amp; Women</li><li>• 3DE</li></ul>
Creekside	Fulton	Fairburn	
Tri-Cities	Fulton	East Point	
Shiloh	Gwinnett	Snellville	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• GCPS</li><li>• Gwinnett Tech College</li></ul>

# How can we activate community assets to help recruit students and families to FAFSA events?

## Orgs that serve districts/schools more broadly

- Gear Up – partnership with TSA
- Greek orgs – DeKalb Alphas, Clayton Alphas – “Go to HS, Go to College” initiative
- NAACP
- 100 Black Men & 100 Black Women
- GA Hispanic Chamber of Commerce – have a youth summit
- New community center in Clayton, spearheaded by commissioner Felicia Franklin

Schools	District	City	What orgs exist in the area?
Charles Drew	Clayton	Riverdale	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Forest Park Ministers Association</li> <li>• House of Hope Church</li> </ul>
Forest Park	Clayton	Forest Park	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Clayton County Youth Services</li> </ul>
Mount Zion	Clayton	Jonesboro	
Clarkston	DeKalb	Clarkston	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• GA Piedmont Tech College</li> <li>• GA Perimeter College</li> </ul>
Lakeside	DeKalb	Atlanta	
SW DeKalb	DeKalb	Decatur	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• South DeKalb Improvement Association</li> </ul>

# Share out

Share out a key takeaway from your group's discussion

- Damian
- Sam
- Ken

***Others are welcome to share takeaways in the chat***

# Network Next Steps

- **Attend the next network meetings (1-2pm):**
  - Tuesday, November 2<sup>nd</sup>
- **Encourage high school counselors in your network to register for free FAFSA Training**
  - Wednesday, September 22<sup>nd</sup>
- **Register to volunteer for a FAFSA event at United Way College Bound website**
- **In the chat box (optional)...**
  - Share any resources you'd like to be shared with this network in the follow up email