



# FAFSA Postsecondary Change Action Network November 2, 2021

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

- Share your name, organization, and role

# Agenda

- Welcome
- L4L Theory of Action
- L4L Literacy Network Updates
- FAFSA Completion Initiative Updates
- Bellwether Postsec Enrollment Study – Preliminary Findings Discussion
- 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*

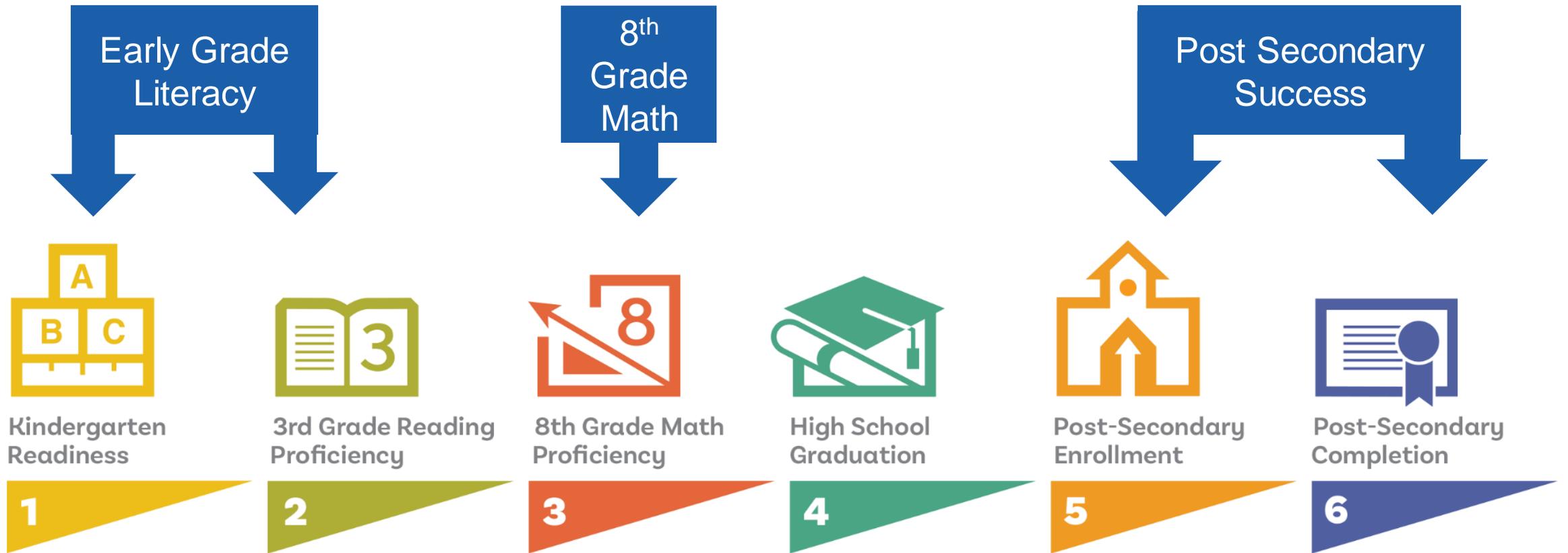
Engage partners

Create shared understanding [of data]

Amplify bright spots



# L4L Key Indicators

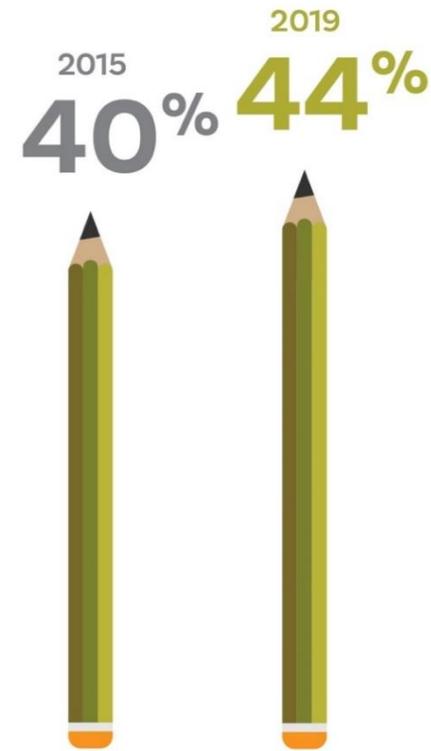




## 3rd Grade Reading Proficiency

44%

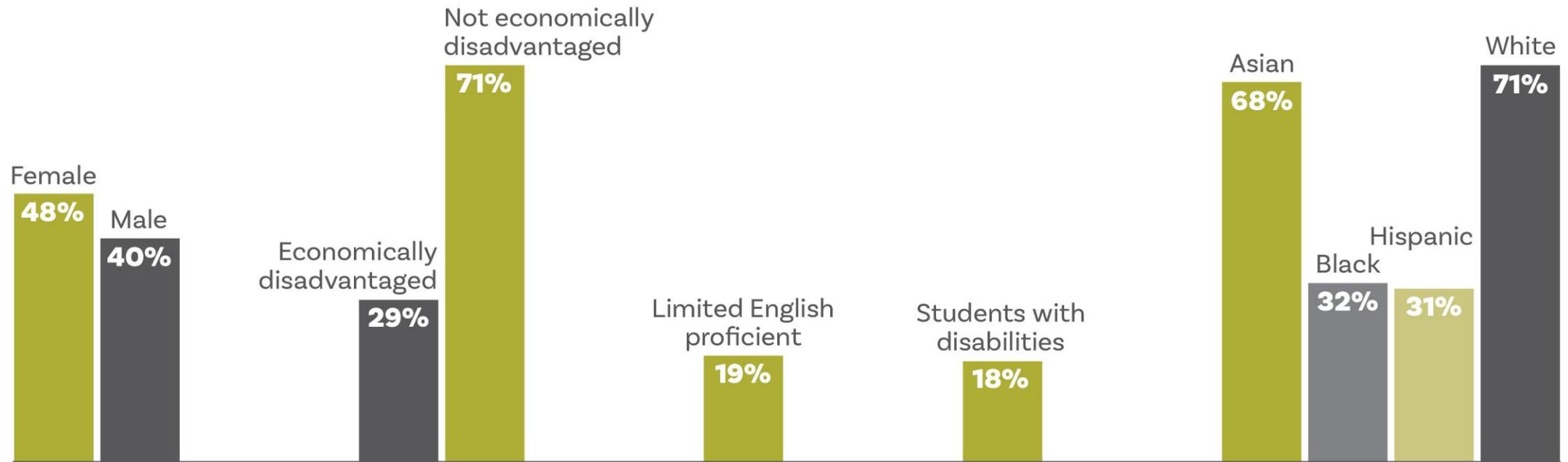
of children are reading  
proficiently by the  
end of third grade in 2019.





# 3rd Grade Reading Proficiency

Percent of Students Proficient & Above Grade Level on 3rd Grade Reading

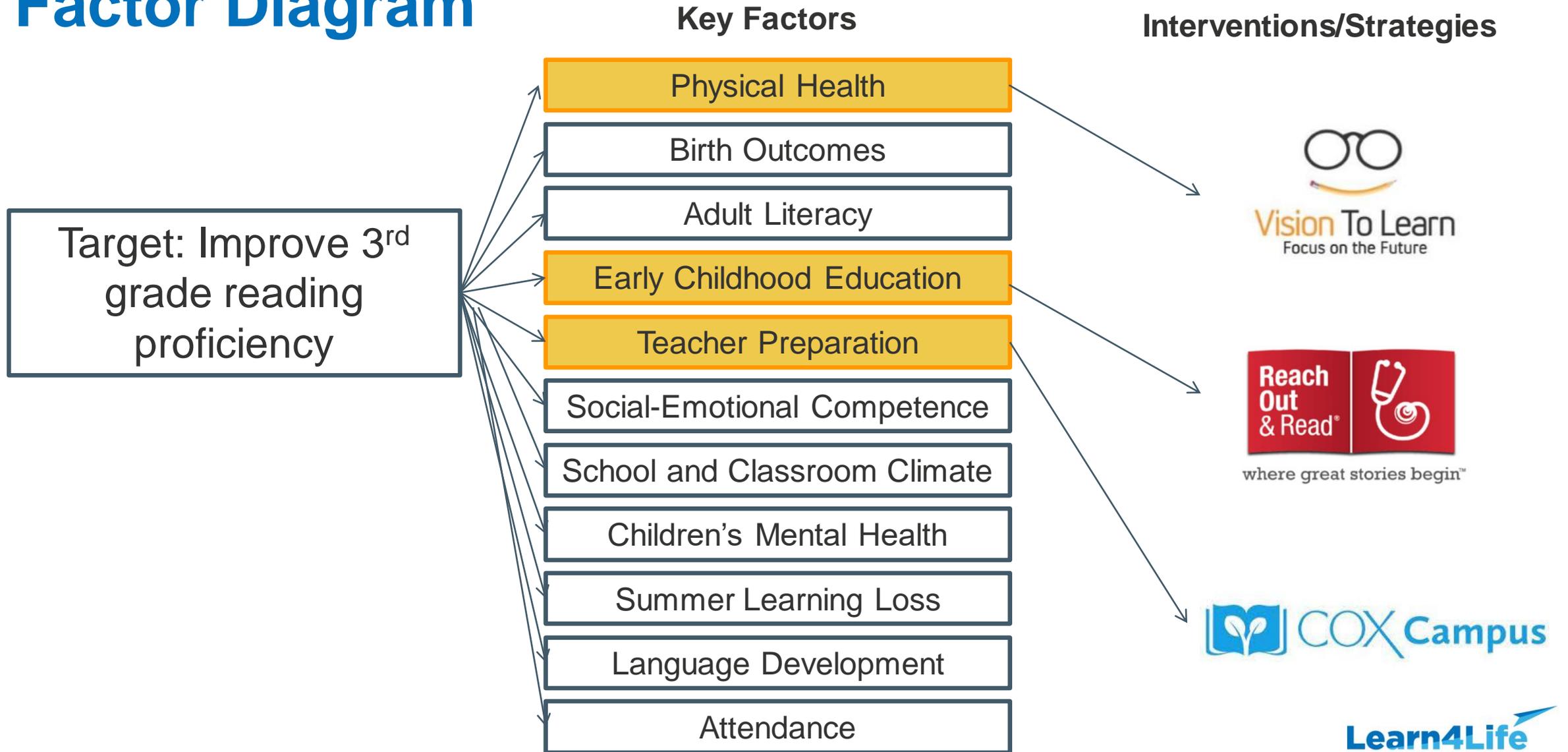


Source: GOSA, 2018-2019 Georgia Milestones End-of-Grade (EOG) Assessments (by grade)

# Third Grade Reading Proficiency Factors



# Factor Diagram



# L4L's First Early Literacy Bright Spots are Scaling



where great stories begin™



- Supporting Cobb and Marietta in depth
- Year-long courses free to everyone

- Increased connections to funders and expanded partnerships
- More children served

- Serving thousands more students in metro ATL
- Unmet demand: 5,000+

# L4L's Newest Bright Spots

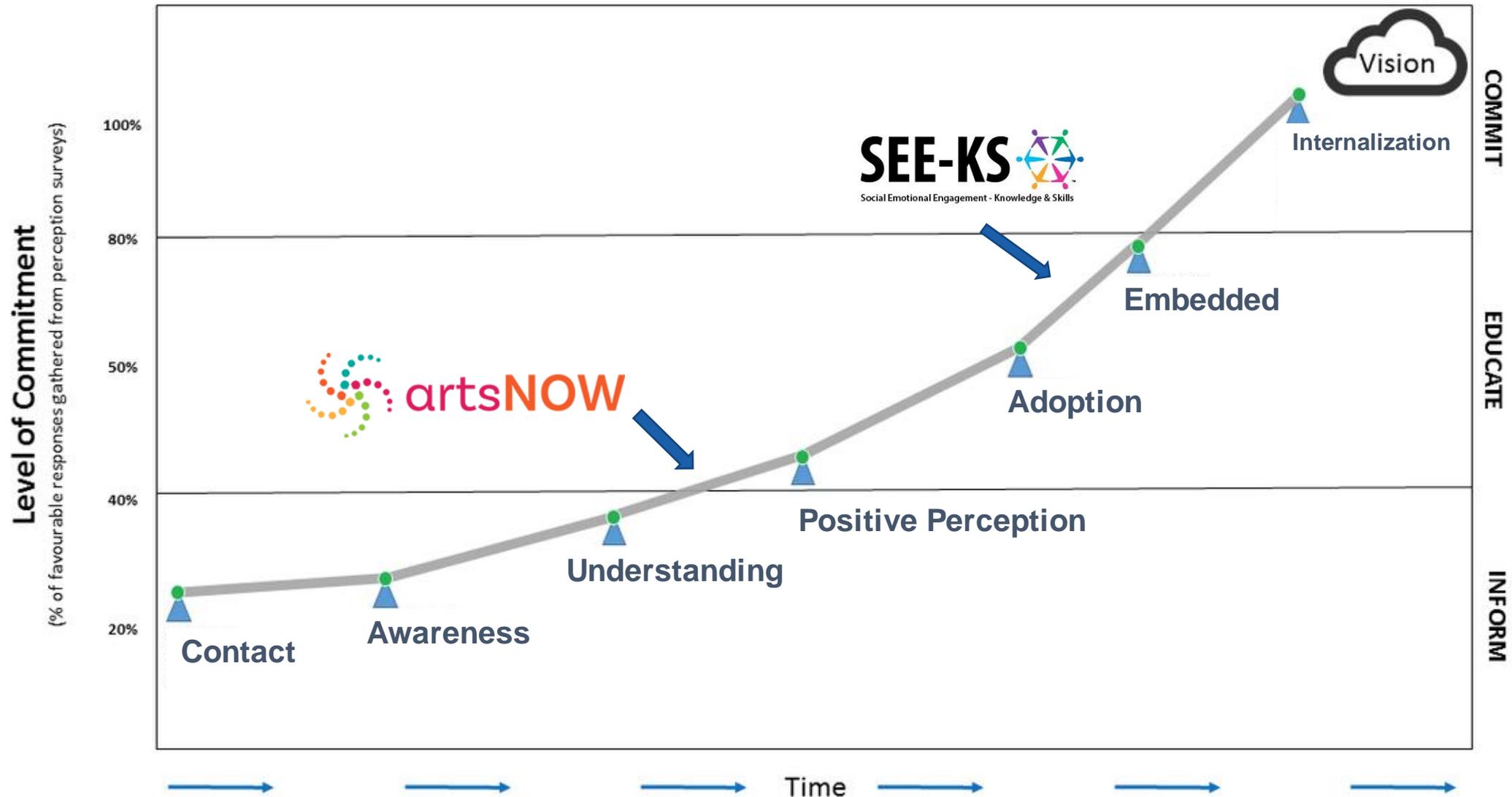


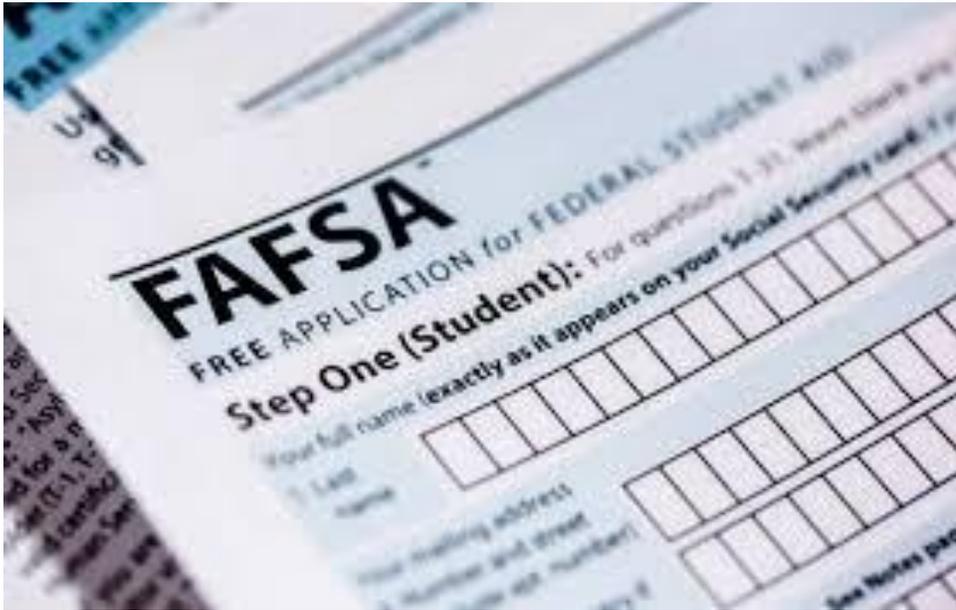
A professional learning organization that delivers resourceful and innovative strategies to engage students, equip teachers, and grow school communities for meaningful impact on the future.



A professional learning approach that provides freely accessible tools that equip educators to enhance students' social emotional engagement in the learning environment.

# In Progress: Moving up the Commitment Curve



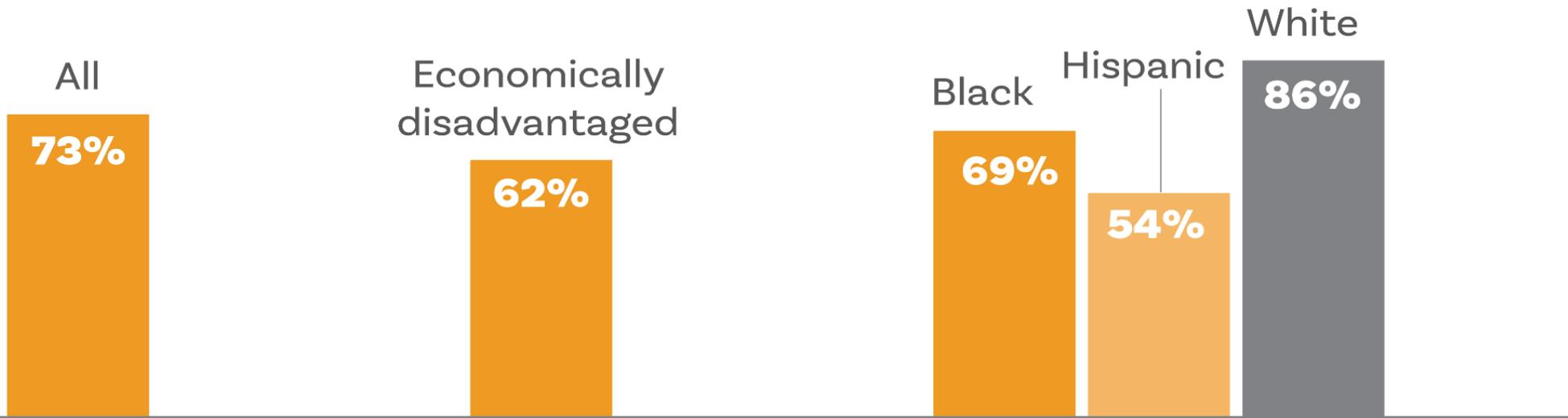


# FAFSA Completion Initiative Updates

## Fall, 2021



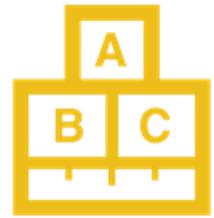
# Postsecondary Enrollment Gaps Exist



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

\*2017 High school graduates

# 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

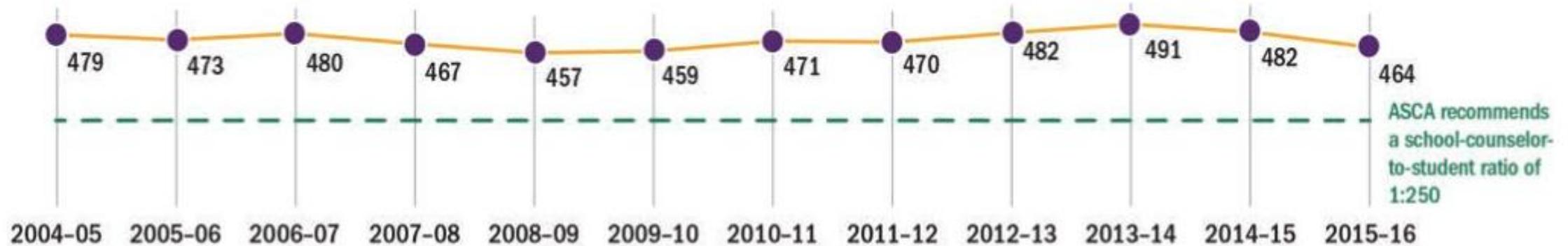
Completing the FAFSA increases postsecondary enrollment from 55% to 90%

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

# Georgia's counseling ratio is 1:466

School-Counselor-to-Student Ratio 2004-2016



***Georgia high school counselors spend on average, only 38 minutes per year on financial aid advising***

# \$3.4 billion

= average amount of financial aid  
left unclaimed each year

# College Bound FAFSA Initiative

**Goal:** to increase postsecondary success 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
- Staff virtual office hours
- Provide marketing materials and incentives

## Learn4Life Support

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- Incorporate insights from Postsec Network
- Cultivate district level support and buy-in
- Market events via social media and blogs
- Stakeholder engagement and outreach

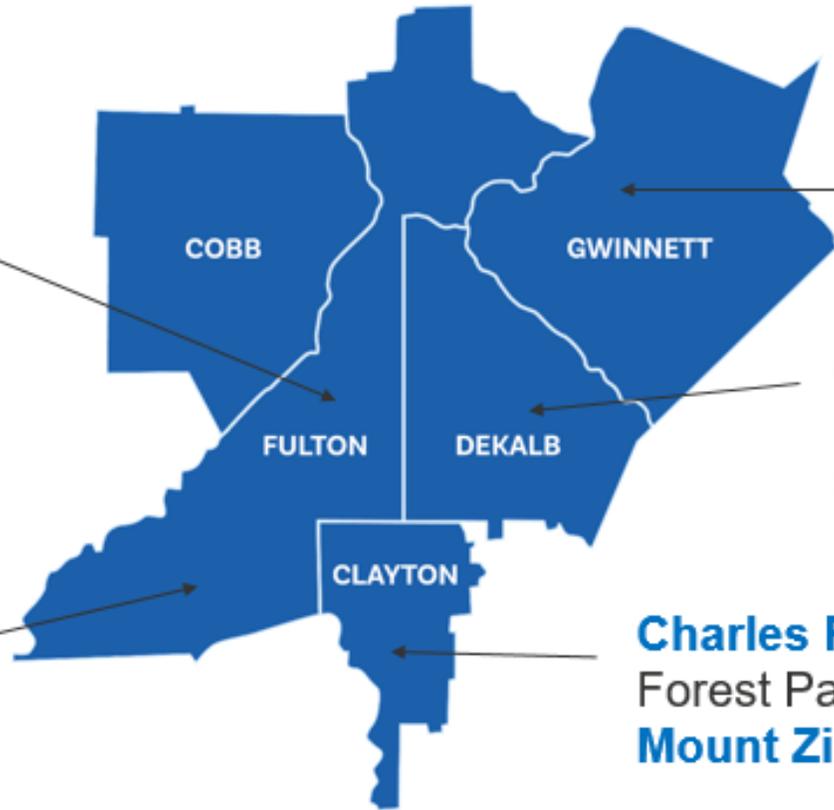


# Organizations engaged in collective impact

- Gladys S. Dennard Library, South Fulton
- University of North Georgia, Dept. of Financial Aid
- Georgia State University, Admissions
- OneGoal
- GEAR UP
- GA Student Finance Commission
- Usher's New Look
- College AIM
- Step Ahead Scholars
- GA Division of Family & Children Services



# 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 Average: **43%**
- Title I: **100%**

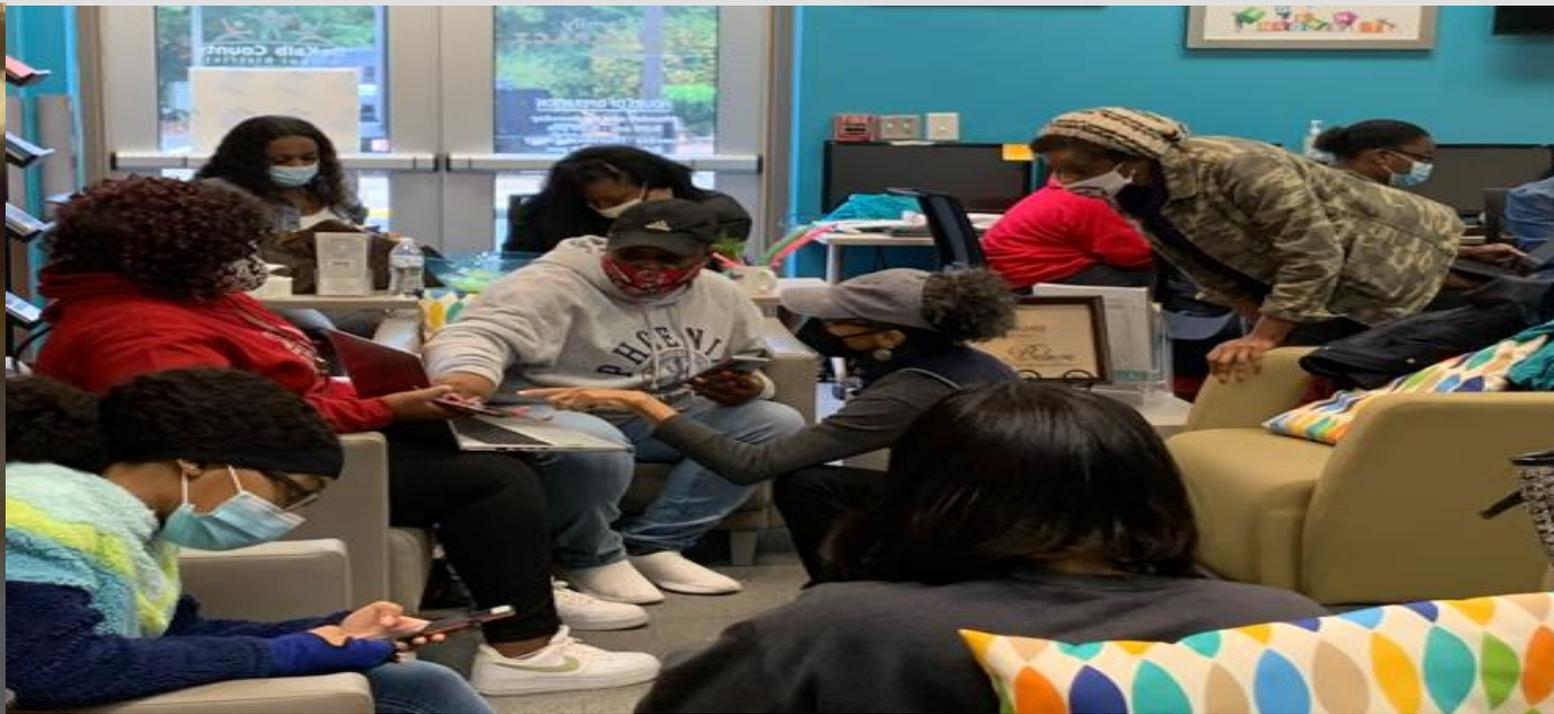


# School-Based Event Formats

Format	School
In-person school-day completion event w/ students	Tri-Cities Creekside
In-person evening completion event w/ students & parents	Banneker Mount Zion Shiloh
Virtual evening completion event w/ students & parents	Lakeside Forest Park Clarkston
Virtual evening financial aid workshops w/ parents leading up to in-person, school day completion event w/ students	Charles R. Drew
Virtual school-day completion event w/ students and same-day virtual evening completion event w/ parents	SW DeKalb







## Clayton County

**November 6, @10AM-1PM**

Tara Stadium Parking Lot  
1055 Battle Creek Rd.  
Jonesboro, GA

## Fulton County

**November 13, @10AM-1PM**

Banneker HS Parking Lot  
6015 Feldwood Rd.  
Atlanta, GA

# District-Wide Events



SCAN ME TO REGISTER  
OR CLICK [HERE](#)

## What should students bring?

- **A LAPTOP!**
- **FSA ID** (*theirs and a parent's, if possible*)
- **Social Security # or Alien Registration #**
- **2020 Tax Returns**
- **Record of Investments\***
- **Record of untaxed income\***
- **Bank Statements\***





# Postsecondary Enrollment Study

## Fall, 2021

# Pandemic affected postsecondary enrollment, but more detail is needed

## Goals of research study:

- Elevate the issue of postsecondary enrollment decline
- Lift up high performing schools to learn more about their successful practices
- Build momentum for deeper investigation into student lived experience

## Questions for research study:

- What are trends in FAFSA completion and postsecondary enrollment among students in metro Atlanta?
- How do trends compare with national trends and trends in similar regions?
- What factors may be impacting trends in student enrollment?

# How best to leverage the study?

- Adjust programming based on factors that contribute to disparities in postsecondary enrollment
- Adapt best practices to deliver better results for students and families
- Influence dialogue and policy around upward mobility in the state

# Postsecondary Enrollment Discussion

***Note:** Because Bellwether study is still underway, preliminary data shared during the CAN has been removed from this slide deck. However, synthesized discussion notes may be found in the following slides.*

# Discussion Questions

- How do these preliminary postsecondary enrollment and FAFSA completion #'s compare with what you are seeing?
- What factors are contributing to these #'s (i.e., counselor access, postsec ROI concerns, family circumstances, etc.)?
  - Why might metro Atlanta's FAFSA completion declines appear to be sharper than national declines?
  - Are specific subgroups being impacted more than/differently than others?
- What strategies or actions have been most effective/have yielded uncommon results?

# Question #1

Discussion Question	Notes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• How do these <u>preliminary</u> postsecondary enrollment and FAFSA completion #'s compare with what you are seeing?</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• #'s align with what is happening on the ground in DeKalb</li><li>• Similar trends in APS, although enrollment seems to be rebounding</li><li>• YOY FAFSA completion in the state of GA is down 19% (FAFSA Tracker)</li></ul>

# Question #2

Discussion Question	Notes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• What factors are contributing to these #s (i.e., counselor access, postsec ROI concerns, family circumstances, etc.)?<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Why might metro Atlanta's FAFSA completion declines <u>appear to be sharper</u> than national declines?</li><li>• Are specific subgroups being impacted more than/differently than others?</li></ul></li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Decentralized education system in metro ATL creates disparate outcomes from district to district.</li><li>• FAFSA completion is not tied to school evaluation system in GA (CCRPI)</li><li>• States like TN, IL, LA, etc. have mandatory FAFSA policies. GA does not</li><li>• GA's restrictive policies have created a barrier to postsec access for many undocumented students and mixed immigration status families in metro Atlanta</li><li>• School-based FAFSA support has been disrupted due to high staff turnover, COVID-related absences, and competing priorities i.e., addressing learning loss, providing classroom coverage, upholding COVID safety protocols, SEL, case management, crisis intervention, self-care, etc. Without support, the complex FAFSA form seems more complex, especially for low-income and 1<sup>st</sup> gen students</li><li>• Many students are graduating without being academically prepared to pursue postsec education, and/or they are not paired with viable post secondary options that are the appropriate match</li></ul>

# Question #2 (cont'd)

## Discussion Question

- What factors are contributing to these #s (i.e., counselor access, postsec ROI concerns, family circumstances, etc.)?
  - Why might metro Atlanta's FAFSA completion declines appear to be sharper than national declines?
  - Are specific subgroups being impacted more than/differently than others?

## Notes

- Enrollment may be impacted by increases in wages for entry level jobs due to staffing shortages during the pandemic
- Enrollment may be impacted by students who feel financial pressure to earn income for their families during the pandemic
- Seamless enrollment may be impacted by students taking a gap year during the pandemic in hopes of having a traditional college experience in the near future. Students who are enrolled in college virtually are also having difficulty persisting because of their desire for a more traditional college experience
- Online fatigue. Even with increases in access to technology and WIFI, supporting students with FAFSA or postsec enrollment is a challenge because many are tired of interacting through screens.
- Homelessness. Increases in homelessness during the pandemic may have compromised access to students and therefore, impeded the ability to offer support with FAFSA or advisement on postsecondary options
- How are non-traditional students (not HS seniors) being impacted? This is a subgroup that is not discussed enough.

# Question #3

Discussion Question	Notes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• What strategies or actions have been most effective/have yielded uncommon results?</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Long-term support for students and families to establish deep relationships and build trust</li><li>• Invest entire school communities (all stakeholders) in FAFSA through education and through training. Cultivate a college-going culture and emphasize the importance of FAFSA in improving access, reducing debt, and building a stronger financial future</li><li>• Start the message around financial aid in 9<sup>th</sup> grade or earlier, and reinforce the message from year to year.</li><li>• Improve FAFSA outcomes within and across districts by sharing a unified message about the importance of FAFSA, and sharing basic facts that would make application process easier for students and families i.e., FSA ID, correct tax forms, stipulations/provisions for undocumented students, independent students, or other subgroups.</li><li>• Continue to advocate for a simplified FAFSA form. Students will be able to take advantage of FAFSA Simplification Act provisions starting Oct. 1, 2023.</li></ul>

# Next Steps

- Register to volunteer for a FAFSA event at [United Way College Bound website](#)
- Visit [fafsaisthekey.com](#) to learn more about upcoming FAFSA completion events
- Support TSA's 'Why FAFSA' Campaign.
  - Submit a 15-30s clip to [Jeremy@scholarshipacademy.org](mailto:Jeremy@scholarshipacademy.org)
- Attend L4L's Annual State of Education Event
  - Thursday, November 18, 2-3pm
- Attend the next CAN meeting:
  - Tuesday, December 21, 1-2pm
- In the chat box (optional)...
  - Share any resources you'd like to be shared with this network in the follow up email