

# Access/FAFSA Initiatives

Briefing for Council  
January 11, 2022



STATE COUNCIL OF HIGHER  
EDUCATION FOR VIRGINIA

# Roadmap

---

1. The problem we are facing
2. Current Access & FAFSA initiatives
  - Outreach
  - Professional development
  - Direct student service
3. Upcoming initiatives
4. Planned initiatives

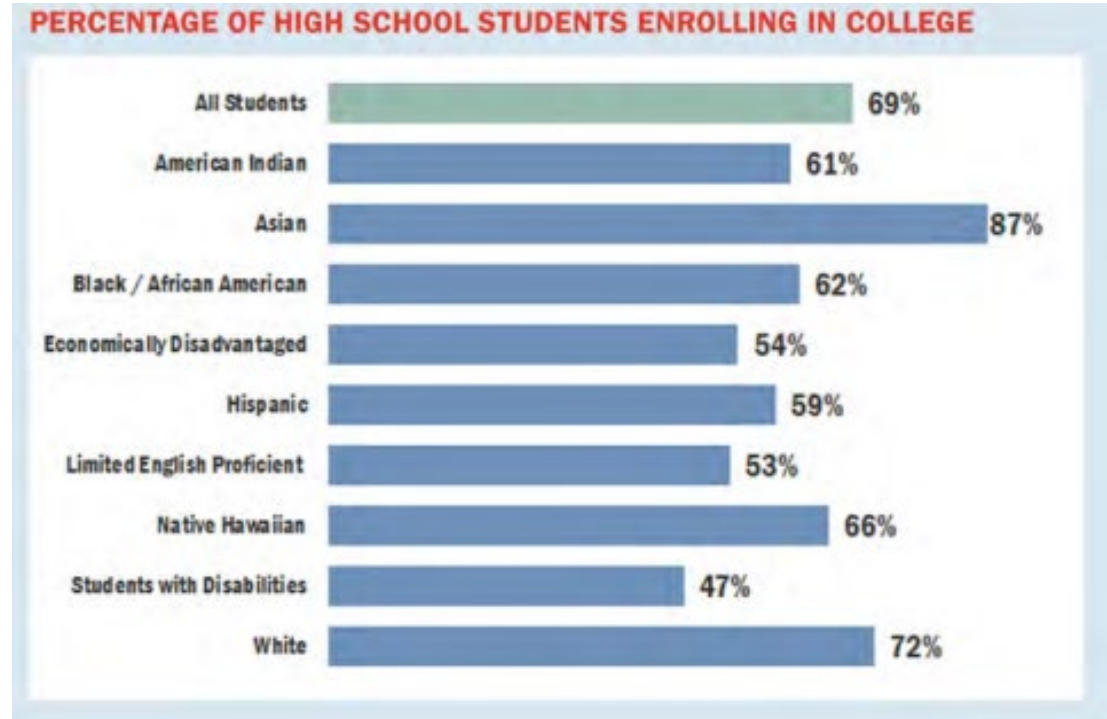
# The problem

---

- The Pathways to Opportunity Plan sets the goal to make Virginia the best state for education by 2030.
- Virginia's current enrollment trends, inequities among disadvantaged groups, and low FAFSA completion rates are an obstacle to becoming the best state for education.

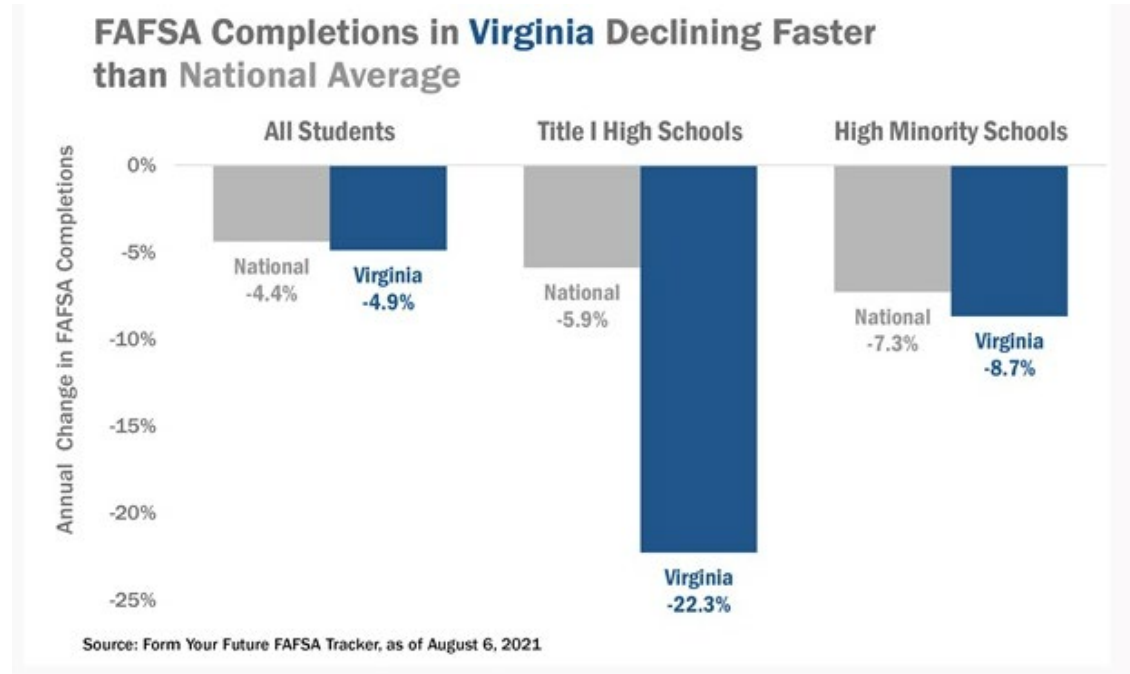
# The problem

- Every year **25,000** high school graduates do not enroll in postsecondary programs within sixteen months.
- Subgroups of students (**minority, low income, ELs, students with disabilities** ) participate in postsecondary programs at lower rates.



# The problem

- Only 59 percent of high school seniors completed the FAFSA in 2019, making Virginia 23rd in the nation.
- Title I high schools experienced a 22.3% drop in FAFSA completion in 2020 — the largest decline among any state



# Current initiatives - Access



## OUTREACH

- Creation of 1 -2-3 Go! Virginia's Steps to College in partnership with ECMC (2013 – present), including
  - College Nights in Virginia
  - Virginia College Application Week
  - Super FAFSA Project
  - Decision Day



# Current initiatives - Access

---



## PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

- Annual conference for access professionals - Virginia College Access Network ( VirginiaCAN ) conference



# Current initiatives - Access



## DIRECT STUDENT SERVICE

- Targeted focus for specific school divisions through GEAR UP Virginia (2000 -2006, 2006 -2012, 2014 -2021, 2021 -2028)
  - DE & AP (+18%)
  - Advanced Diploma (+11%)





# Current initiatives - FAFSA



## OUTREACH

- Super FAFSA Project – 90+ high schools participate each year in one or more hands-on FAFSA completion events (since 2002)



# Current initiatives - FAFSA

---



## PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

- FAFSA webinars - VASFAA financial aid experts from 2- and 4-year institutions present “FAFSA 10 1” and “All Things After FAFSA” to counselors and families



**BIOCOMPLEXITY  
INSTITUTE**

- FAFSA Dashboard – UVA’s Social & Decision Analytics division created a FAFSA dashboard detailing the percentage of high school senior class FAFSA completion (in aggregate)

<https://dspgtools.shinyapps.io/VA-FAFSA-app/>

# Current initiatives - FAFSA

---



## DIRECT STUDENT SERVICE

- Virtual 1-on-1 FAFSA Assistance
  - SCHEV & VirginiaCAN partnership
  - Access providers provide virtual 1-on-1 FAFSA assistance to families



# New initiatives underway or in progress

---

- **Access**

- Increased SCHEV's partnership with VDOE (through GPS/state funding)
- Awarded a \$24.7 million GEAR UP Virginia grant with new statewide focus (2021–2028)
- Establish(ed) a new partnership with VA529
- Develop and implement an Access Strategy Plan

- **FAFSA**

- FAFSA Block Party February 19, 2022 in Richmond

# Planned activities to improve access & completion

---

- **Access**

- Set an access and FAFSA completion goal – potentially align with VDOE accreditation measures
- Expand career & college advising to every high school with 50% or more free and reduced priced lunch

- **FAFSA**

- Establish a Governor's competition for FAFSA awareness
- Share student -level FAFSA data with high schools to better support completion efforts
- Support ongoing virtual FAFSA assistance
- Support parallel FAFSA system (VASA application)