



Washington Office of Superintendent of **PUBLIC INSTRUCTION**

South Kitsap FAFSA Completion Pilot

1. **Purpose:**

The proviso is designed to increase financial aid application completion rates for both the Free Application for Federal Student Aid [FAFSA] and Washington Application for Student Financial Aid [WASFA], especially for students and families who have historically been furthest from educational opportunity.

2. **Description of services provided:**

STEM Networks' support: West Sound STEM Network (WSSN) provided staff to facilitate this proviso work. Drawing on existing expertise and established network foundations, the WSSN supported Washington's nine other regional STEM networks to connect with a wide range of local education, community, and government leaders to implement strategies designed to increase financial aid application completion in communities with historically lower completion rates.

Student Services/Supports Provided:

- In-school and community-based partnerships to support the provision of the newly required Financial Aid Advising Day from Senate Bill 6141 (2020).
- Follow up support in Spring of 2022 to catalyze a "second push" utilizing school specific targeted support for FAFSA/WASFA completion
- FAFSA/WASFA completion events (lead and/or support)
- One-on-one support for school counselors and school staff to increase awareness and utilization of strategies to increase application completion.
- Dual language support for financial aid support events

School or District Services/Supports Provided:

- Identification and dissemination of existing resources and strategies as a foundation upon which to build new avenues for outreach and support
- Training for staff on financial aid options, creating a college-going culture, available staff and resource support via the Washington Student Achievement Council [WSAC], College Success Foundation [CSF], and area colleges, and the process for completing FAFSA/WASFA applications
- Data support for school districts to direct outreach efforts to students not yet engaged in application process or needing technical assistance
- Delivery of financial aid application completion strategies training.

3. Criteria for receiving services and/or grants:

The initial proviso was distributed to existing regional STEM networks identified as ideal partners who could utilize their existing community connections to assess regional and community-based needs, develop and implement strategies for increasing a college-going culture and financial aid application completion rates, and evaluate potential strategies for scope of impact and scalability to a statewide approach.

Beneficiaries in 2021-22 School Year:

Number of School Districts: 137
Number of Schools: 102
Number of Students: 22,575
Number of Educators: 212
Other: STEM Networks All 10 Regional STEM Networks

Number of OSPI staff associated with this funding (FTEs): 0

Number of contractors/other staff associated with this funding: 0

FY22 Funding: State Appropriation: \$250,000
Federal Appropriation: \$0
Other Fund Sources: \$0
TOTAL (FY22) \$250,000

4. Are federal or other funds contingent on state funding?

No

5. State funding history:

Fiscal Year	Amount Funded	Actual Expenditures
FY22	\$250,000	\$250,000
FY21	\$300,000	\$300,000

6. Number of beneficiaries (e.g., school districts, schools, students, educators, other) history:

Fiscal Year	Number of School Districts
FY22	137
FY21	Data not collected

7. **Programmatic changes since inception (if any)**

Based on Year 1 results and identification of best practices, support for districts focused on utilizing identified best practices and supporting districts/schools to: identify a financial aid completion champion, use the WSAC portal to ensure application completion, track completion data, and ensure building leader support.

8. **Evaluations of program/major findings:**

The WSSN staff leading the implementation of this proviso work collected data from all 10 regional STEM Networks that captured schools served and 'case studies' from regional STEM networks that highlight successful strategies for increasing financial aid application completion rates that were used in the region. The case studies, as well as four evidence-based 'foundational practices' that have been proven to positively impact financial aid application completion rates, are collected into a first draft of the FAFSA Application Completion Playbook. The Playbook was posted on the WSSN and WA-STEM websites to ensure statewide access to this resource. The Playbook is currently being updated with the Year 2 case studies and data. Targeted dissemination is September 2022.

9. **Major challenges faced by the program:**

The continued periodic COVID-related building closures, reduced student attendance, and acute staffing issues of many high schools, especially during the fall college and financial aid application completion period of the 2021-2022 school year, continued to make it challenging for school staff to support seniors in completing their college and financial aid applications.

Virtual FAFSA/WASFA application support opportunities were inconsistently facilitated across the state as schools and communities struggled to connect, especially in rural regions, and offer support within local safety regulations.

STEM Network partners had to maintain and attempt to expand connections with school staff and community leaders via mostly virtual/digital means, often without direct access to the people they were trying to serve.

10. **Future opportunities:**

In the 2021-23 omnibus bill [ESSB 5092, Sec. 522 (16)], an additional \$250,000 per year for both years of the biennium was appropriated for the continuation of this effort. The proviso Steering Committee is already working to improve staff understanding and implementation of the fall 2022 FAAD events as a prime strategy for increasing financial aid application completion rates.

The Playbook will also be updated annually to reflect additional lessons learned, new and promising strategies and regional approaches to improving the college-going culture in communities furthest from educational opportunity and successful strategies for improving financial aid application completion rates.

11. Statutory and/or budget language:

ESSB 5693, Sec. 522(16) - \$250,000 of the general fund—state appropriation for fiscal year 2022 and \$250,000 of the general fund—state appropriation for fiscal year 2023 are provided solely for the south Kitsap school district to codevelop a pilot strategy to increase completion rates for the free application for federal student aid (FAFSA).

12. Other relevant information:

With the inclusion of a financial aid information requirement in the High School and Beyond Plan (HSBP) via House Bill 1599 (2019) and the advent of the Financial Aid Advising Day (FAAD) requirement from Senate Bill 6141 (2020), there are systemic strategies being employed statewide to ensure students understand financial aid options and know how to access those fiscal supports. Time is needed to realize the impacts of these strategies, as well as the new auto-enrollment process for the College Bound Scholarship for students who qualify as low-income per Senate Bill 5321 (2021), which collectively should result in better postsecondary matriculation outcomes for all students.

13. Schools/districts receiving assistance:

See [OSPI's grantee list](#).

14. Program Contact Information:

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