

Escambia County FAFSA Challenge
July 19, 2018
2018-2019 Project Planning

Escambia County FAFSA Challenge!

Meeting Purpose: Work group meeting to identify and prioritize 1 project toward our Bold Goal: 60% postsecondary attainment by 2025 (currently 40.9%)

Meeting Result:

- Use proposal-based decision-making to ...
- Vote as a group on ...
- 1 project with the potential for High Impact/Big Change

Agenda

2:00 pm.: Check-in, Do Now

2:05 p.m.: Welcome, overview of meeting purpose and meeting results

2:20 p.m.: Table discussion: 1st proposal pitches

2:40 p.m.: Table discussion: 2nd proposal pitches

3:00 p.m.: Decision-making matrix & ranking

3:15 p.m.: Team VOTE: Action & Next Steps

3:45 p.m.: Checkouts & Closing Commitments

Keep in Mind

- \$ 7,500 Higher Education Coordinating Council seed funds to launch challenge
- [FCAN FAFSA Toolkit best practices \(handout\)](#)
- What problem does your idea solve?
- How will you know?

In the room

- Bob Hoyt, Take Stock in Children
- Kim Stefansson, ECSD public relations
- Sharon Williams, Landrum HR
- Devin Simmons, Waterfront Rescue Mission
- Kailan Jones, PSC – CTE
- Deb Hooks, PSC – CTE
- LaTonya Wesley, UWF – DAE
- Rebecca Causey, PSC – EOC
- Angela Anderson, PSC – EOC
- Wanda Wood, PSC – EOC
- Ildi Hosman, Junior Achievement
- Michelle Horton, Complete Florida
- Allison Romer, Complete Florida
- Holly Busse, ECSD student services
- Katrina Madden, United Way
- Michael Bodenhausen, YMCA
- Belinda Todd, CareerSource Escarose
- Obi Kalu, PSC EOC
- Shana Gore, UWF financial aid

- Andrea Krieger, PSC Foundation
- Debbie Douma, PSC grants
- Brian Wyer, Gulf Coast African American Chamber

Do Now

FAFSA Completion

What will it take to create real change on this indicator in Escambia County?

Do Now Responses

- Educate to get students completing FAFSA earlier in the year
- Communicate with guidance counselors in the high school
- Ways to market incentives and engage/educate students and parents about purpose & benefit of FAFSA
- Share resources about FAFSA and other funding sources directly to adult learners returning to college; provide virtual online assistance
- Expand communications outreach to non-traditional students
- Communicate to parents the importance of completing FAFSA and how info is used
- Hoping to get some tips and new info re: FAFSA in Escambia County
- Easier access to FAFSA for parents/assistance with FAFSA
- What can we learn from Pensacola High school, West Florida High School and Northview?
- Who wants FAFSA Completion Rate to increase? Who is driving this effort - the state, federal government, financial institutions who might benefit from the loan?
- No FAFSA/no report card. First reporting period in senior year.
- Map out where FAFSA is being completed (most/least successfully)
- What are we doing already to educate high school students/parents?
- School graduation rate (almost 80%) factor in goal setting?
- What is the different between “submitted” and “completed?” What is missing?
- Increase benefits and understanding (personal & community) Goal: 1. increase pleasure 2. Avoid pain
- Better collaboration with Escambia County School District and guidance counselors to promote FAFSA completion. Work with education support center.
- More FAFSA days in target location/populations
- Listen to parents and student challenges
- Provider a mandatory training before graduation
- School district to require it for all seniors prior to graduation from high school

Essential Question

What Bold Steps Do You Choose?

First Round of Proposals: 19 **transition to first round of proposal-making*

First Round of Proposal Ideas

1. Incentives: pizza, gas cards, bus passes
2. FAFSA day/financial aid day for each high school where students/parents can receive help to file FAFSA applications
3. Utilize social media/texting/robo-calls, increasing communication regarding FAFSA deadline, screening, training, completion, form etc.
4. Communication: FAFSA toolkits to address different audiences. Where are the parents?
5. Fans with simple steps for filling out/expert & contact info
6. Create a fact sheet or process chart on how FAFSA helps and circulate to banks/tax preparers & VITA; VITA and survey of need for FAFSA assistance
7. Detail out how FAFSA helps skill, trade certificates
8. Community awareness, school push for FAFSA-Superintendent push; Meeting with high school principals and superintendent to get on board to help get students and parents involved with FAFSA completion
9. Specialist is needed to assist students with FAFSA
10. Point of contact on forms/flyer
11. Open computer lab/mobile FAFSA lab
12. Raffle for all students who fill out FAFSA with large prize
13. Mobile bus to community with computer to answer questions and complete FAFSA
14. Create eligibility to determine target student
15. Tell the story: testimonials matching target audiences
16. Flipped classroom style workshops; view webinar prior to FAFSA event
17. Build FAFSA completion in the high school/use in curriculum (ex: financial literacy)
18. How does FAFSA help? What does it mean to the avg. student?
19. What do the numbers/impact look like for those who go to college with or without FAFSA?

First Round Themes

- Marketing, outreach strategies and materials
 - Toolkits, fact sheets
 - Awareness
 - Incentives, raffles, giveaways (fans)
 - Special days/events
 - Storytelling
- FAFSA specialist: community-based position
- FAFSA mobile bus/lab
- VITA-FAFSA partnership
- Fact finding
 - Disaggregated data by high school
 - Survey
 - Eligibility – targeted approach to Pell-eligible but not completing
 - What's currently happening

Second Round of Proposals: 11 clustered into 4

Second Round of Proposal Ideas

1. **Public Relations Campaign:** must get school leadership endorsement and involvement. Leverage superintendent leadership to get the word out/ENDORSE the challenge, and include contact and resource information (local school, central office/district, community) in all communications
2. **Communications and Outreach**
 - FAQ: There is so much confusion around FAFSA.
 - Eligibility: Pell, federal loans, school awards and more; the fact that families can use the last two years' of taxes
 - Time sensitive: Opens October 1, but the earlier the better (for non-federal)
 - Accuracy: What you need to successfully complete the form
 - Stories: Need local success stories/testimonials to reach targeted population
 - Families: Strategic outreach and communication with parents and students. Meeting them where they are.
 - Handouts: Church fan with dedicated contact info (so you will know they got info from that marketing piece) (there is a model for this with evidence it works)
3. **Mobile FAFSA Lab** with a trained specialist; also FAFSA computer labs available with a trained specialist to help at select locations.
 - Take registration to the family
 - Increases awareness because it's "on the road"
 - Overcomes major access challenges
 - Can target multiple approaches: church, buses, community centers, schools)
4. **Eligibility Screening**
 - Short survey, will help ID those who would benefit from assistance with the application
 - Find ways to target who is *not* completing the FAFSA but is Pell-eligible

Second Round Themes

- Who's on board? Need blessing from the top and it will trickle down. This includes superintendent, high school principals, postsecondary teams, education advocates, trusted **leaders** such as coaches. Engage PTA.
- Need to overcome **technology** barriers
- Need to **target** approach:
 - Short survey of eligibility
 - Who are we targeting?
 - Who is doing what?
 - What works?
 - What's the population who's missing out?
- **Reach families and communities.** Take it on the road through mobile FAFSA lab and direct assistance.

Targeted approach | Second Round Proposals

- Who do we target without more data? Youth? Adults? Non-traditional? They often have children – should we incorporate a two-generation approach?
- Student voices at center, but who are those students (or potential students)?
- Prioritize outside-the-box thinking. This must be a creative, targeted approach with PR and real tools on the road. Develop information, training, tools
- Events? Do they work? Are they high impact? What works better - standalone events or FAFSA embedded in existing event
- County and community message: This is for us. This is for Escambia, our local families and students. It's not to win a state campaign, it's for our local community. We are building long-lasting partnerships.

Decision-Making Criteria

Ideas and proposal decisions

1. Make a proposal
2. Add to or make new proposal
3. Show thumbs
4. Build support
5. All thumbs up!

Closing comments about today's meeting – how did it go?

- Good info
- It's still a state campaign but I like the local approach
- Lots of ideas***
- Really well
- Productive***
- Good?? Not in education
- Decisions were made
- Know next steps
- We started with blank paper – and now we have targets
- 1st Achieve Escambia meeting – happy to be involved
- Lots already happening, we need to map it out
- Community channels are out there working in silos, we need to bring them in
- We built off each other and I learned a lot of info
- I'd like to engage more partners
- It's hard to sit and work through this; I like action but there's a lot to consider

NEXT STEPS

- **Next two weeks:** Kim will meet with the superintendent, high school director and guidance counselor supervisor to get their feedback and seek buy-in for the targeted ideas you all identified in Round 2

- **Thursday, August 16, 2-4 p.m.** - Full Career Readiness CAN meets at the downtown library, 2-4 p.m.

****Amy Bolick with the Florida College Access Network will attend this meeting to hear our ideas and provide feedback**

- **August 31:** Have our pilot action plan in place – have mobile FAFSA lab components in place
- **September:** Begin outreach/timed to back to school and financial aid nights
- **October 1:** Challenge officially launches!

POST-MEETING ANSWERS

- **Toolkit:** [HERE is the link to the FAFSA Challenge toolkit passed around at the meeting](#)
- **Can we get disaggregated FAFSA completion data?** I spoke with FCAN, and they said disaggregated FAFSA completion data at both the county and high school level is available **only if school boards** enter into data-sharing agreements with the state Department of Education. Two Florida counties have such agreements – Broward and Collier – and they have seen huge gains in FAFSA completion as a result of targeting their approach to Pell-eligible completion gaps.
Should we target high school seniors and/or adult non-traditional learners? According to FCAN, **BOTH**. While the [FAFSA dashboard](#) only includes high school seniors, that's only because there's no way to track adult learners right now. Another note on the dashboard: It only tracks students up to 19 years old who have never submitted a FAFSA before (so doesn't include TRIO, dual enrollment, etc).

Amy Bolick Prep Call

August 3, 2018 | 2 p.m.

2017: Washington and Northview Registered for Challenge

Washington did Decision Day and App Week also

Amy will bring stickers so they can do application stuff for students

2018: Goal – to have all seven high schools signed up

Incentives: gift cards as raffles and prizes (each completer gets ticket to prize)

Pizza

Effective strategies

- How can we get higher education involved?
- How can we get shared data on FAFSA?
- Clean up submitted vs. completed? Closing that gap is one of the quickest ways to increase FAFSA completion.
- Adult learners – multi-generational approach (work with parents and students at same time); and VITA/SNAP – incorporate FAFSA into adult services
- High impact – channel

FCAN Outcomes

- What resources folks need? On track with TA we're providing – webinar, cheat sheets?
- Get all high schools involved in FAFSA challenge
- Take on Decision Day and other initiatives
- Explore/brainstorm fourth initiative: Plan it Florida – starting in seventh grade to develop postsecondary plans (review early stage concept)