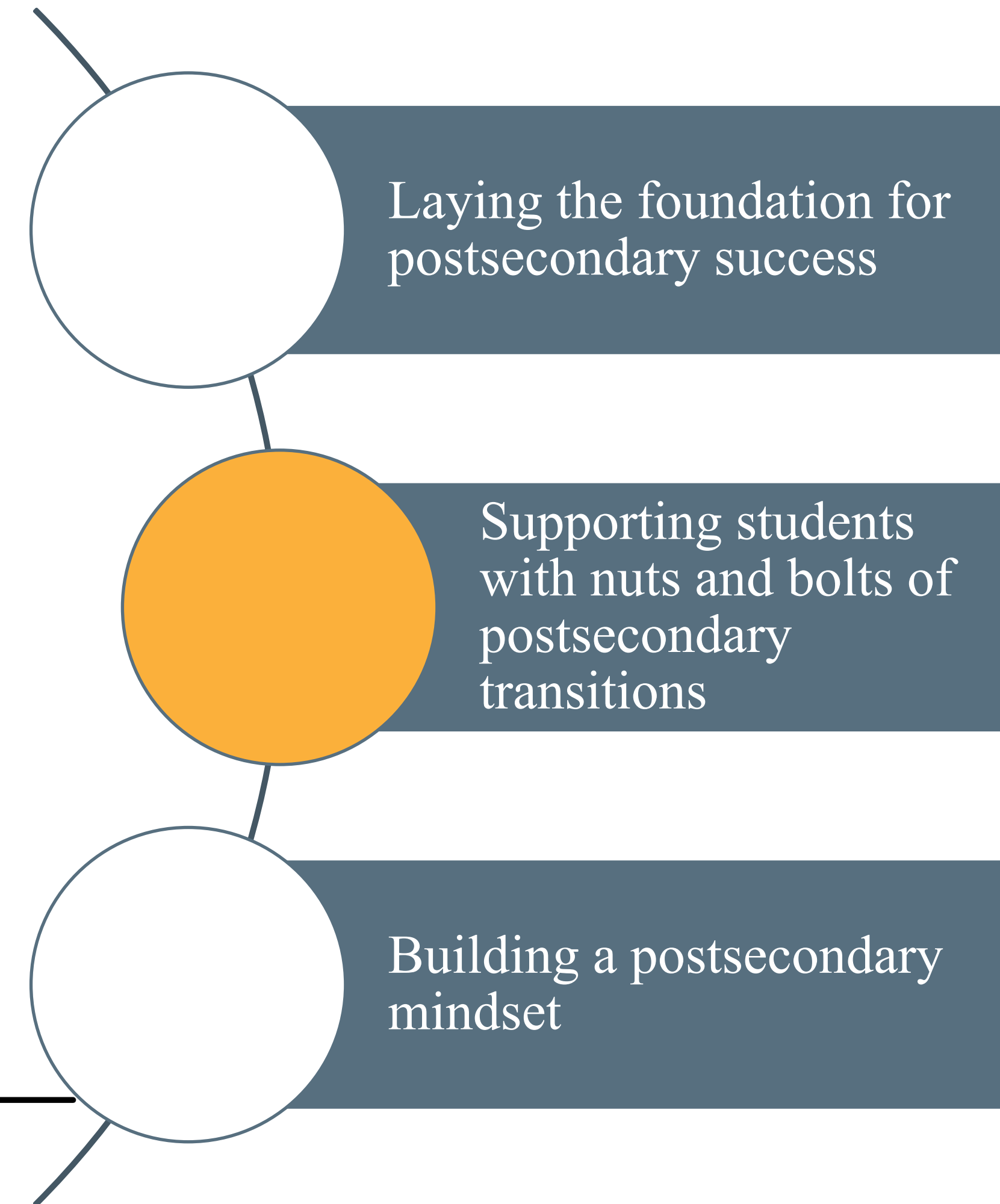# Supporting Students with the Nuts and Bolts of Postsecondary Transitions

Paving the Pathway to College and Careers
Training Series

Paving the pathway to college and careers

- Laying the foundation for postsecondary success
- Supporting students with nuts and bolts of postsecondary transitions
- Building a postsecondary mindset

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Agenda

- Welcome and overview
- Selection supports
- Application and assessment supports
- Financial supports
- Wrap-up and next steps

Meeting goals

- Provide an overview of **research-based strategies** related to the nuts and bolts of the postsecondary transition: **selection**, **application and assessment**, and **financial supports**.

- Walk away with at least one **strategy to try**.

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What kinds of nuts and bolts supports are needed?

Financial

Application & Assessment

Selection

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Selection supports

What do you think?

How do your students make decisions about where to apply to school?

Why do fit and match matter?

- Low-income, college-ready students are less likely to enroll in an institution that is a good match with their needs and interests.

- Students are more likely to persist in college if the institution is a good match, fitting their social, academic, and financial needs.
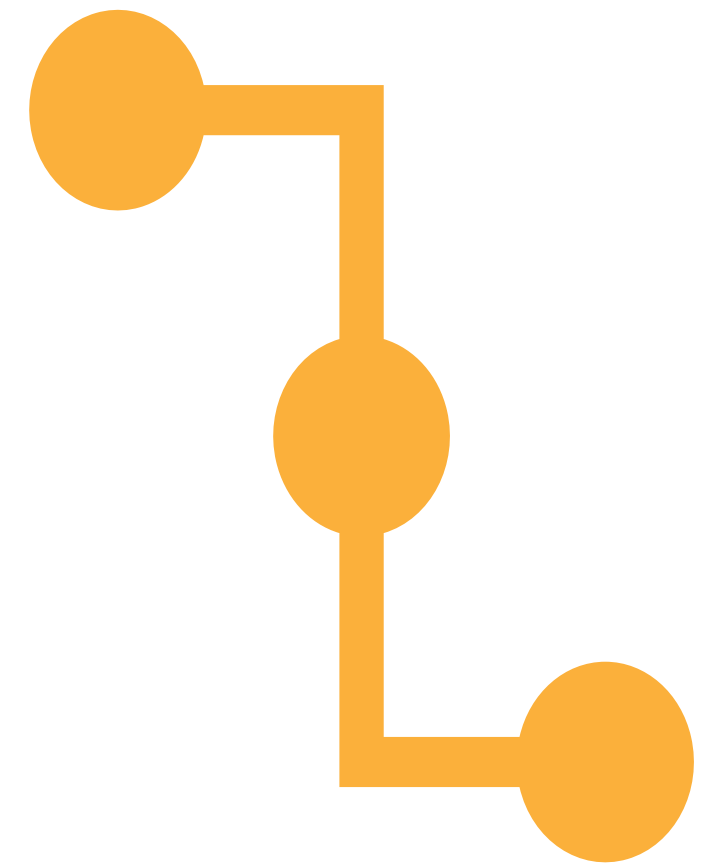
(Bowen et al., 2009; Light & Strayer, 2000)

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Supports for school selection

Assist students in their college search by:

- Helping students identify postsecondary programs that **match** their **qualifications**, **interests**, and **goals**.
- Encouraging students to apply to a **range** of programs: **safety**, **match**, **reach**.
- Sharing information on **net vs. sticker price**.

(Page & Scott-Clayton, 2016; Tierney, et al., 2009)

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Application and assessment supports

What do you think?

The biggest barrier to students completing their postsecondary applications is _____.

How can application and assessment supports encourage postsecondary enrollment?

- 57 percent of high-achieving, low-income students reported that the application process was somewhat of a challenge, and 10 percent said it was a major challenge.
- 90 percent of economically disadvantaged students do not enter college the first semester after high school, in part due to missing application deadlines.

(Corrigan; 2003; Giancola & Kahlenberg, 2016)

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Student-level supports for college applications

- Help students create an email account for the application process.
- Create clear timelines for the process and communicate deadlines.
- Seek application fee waivers.
- Support students with essays.
- Support requests for letters of recommendation.
- Assign staff to ensure student applications are complete and of sufficient quality.

(Page & Scott-Clayton, 2016; Tierney, et al., 2009)

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System-level supports for college applications

- Integrate application steps into course requirements (e.g., English classes to write essays; advisory to set a timeline).

- Hold postsecondary application weeks.

- Partner with college access organizations and/or postsecondary institutions.

(Page & Scott-Clayton, 2016; Tierney, et al., 2009)

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Supports for assessment preparation and completion

- Implement **universal school-day testing** policy.
- Offer assistance with **testing fee waivers**.
- Establish a **testing center** on your high school campus.
- **Communicate** testing schedule and timeline through:
  - Emails and phone blasts.
  - Information tables at athletic events.
- Help students prepare with:
  - **Training** on test-taking.
  - Exam preparation or **workshops** (including direct tutoring, ordering practice tests, or using training software).

(Page & Scott-Clayton, 2016; Tierney, et al., 2009; Klasik, 2013)

Contact
the Nudge Hotline
for free assistance:
hotline@nudge4,org
434.233.0165 (phone)
434.233.0165 (SMS)

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Sample schedules

Exhibit 3. Example of a college entrance exam schedule

SAT Test Dates for 2008/09

Test Date	Test	Main Deadline	Late Fee Deadline	Nearby Test Locations
October 4, 2008	SAT I & II	September 9, 2008	September 16, 2008	High Schools A & B
November 1, 2008	SAT I & II	September 26, 2008	October 10, 2008	High Schools A & C
December 6, 2008	SAT I & II	November 4, 2008	November 18, 2008	High Schools B & C
January 24, 2009	SAT I & II	December 26, 2008	January 6, 2009	High Schools A & B
March 14, 2009	SAT I	February 10, 2009	February 24, 2009	High Schools A & C
May 2, 2009	SAT I & II	March 31, 2009	April 9, 2009	High Schools B & C
June 6, 2009	SAT I & II	May 5, 2009	May 15, 2009	High Schools A & B

ACT Test Dates for 2008/09

Test Date	Main Deadline	Late Fee Deadline	Nearby Test Locations
September 13, 2008	August 12, 2008	August 22, 2008	High Schools A & B
October 25, 3008	September 19, 2008	October 3, 2008	High Schools A & C
December 13, 2008	November 7, 2008	November 20, 2008	High Schools B & C
February 7, 2008	January 6, 2008	January 16, 2008	High Schools A & B
April 4, 2008	February 27, 2008	March 13, 2009	High Schools A & C
June 13, 2008	May 8, 2009	May 22, 2009	High Schools B & C

Source: Adapted from materials created by a National College Advising Corps program site.

Exhibit 5. Example of a college admissions timeline

April 2008
- ☐ Visit a college during spring vacation.

June 2008
- ☐ Ask teachers for letters of recommendation before summer vacation.
- ☐ Visit two colleges by the end of the month.

July 2008
- ☐ Brainstorm college essay topics.
- ☐ Visit two more colleges by the end of the month.

August 2008
- ☐ Obtain admission applications for colleges being considered.
- ☐ Write a rough draft of the college application essay.
- ☐ Search for college scholarships.

September 2008
- ☐ Complete a final draft of the college essay.
- ☐ Check in with the high school's College and Career Center on a regular basis.
- ☐ Request that high school transcripts be sent.

October 2008
- ☐ Complete college applications (or the Common Application, a general application form used by more than 150 independent colleges) by the end of the month.

November–December 2008
- ☐ Early action or early decision deadline for some colleges.
- ☐ Continue to search and apply for scholarships.

January 2009
- ☐ Application deadline for most colleges and universities (January 1 or 15).
- ☐ Contact colleges to make sure your application materials were received.
- ☐ Fill out the FAFSA (released January 1).

February 2009
- ☐ Complete the FAFSA prior to the deadline for most schools (February 1 or 15).
- ☐ Search for scholarships at the colleges you are considering.

March 2009
- ☐ Update FAFSA application, if needed.
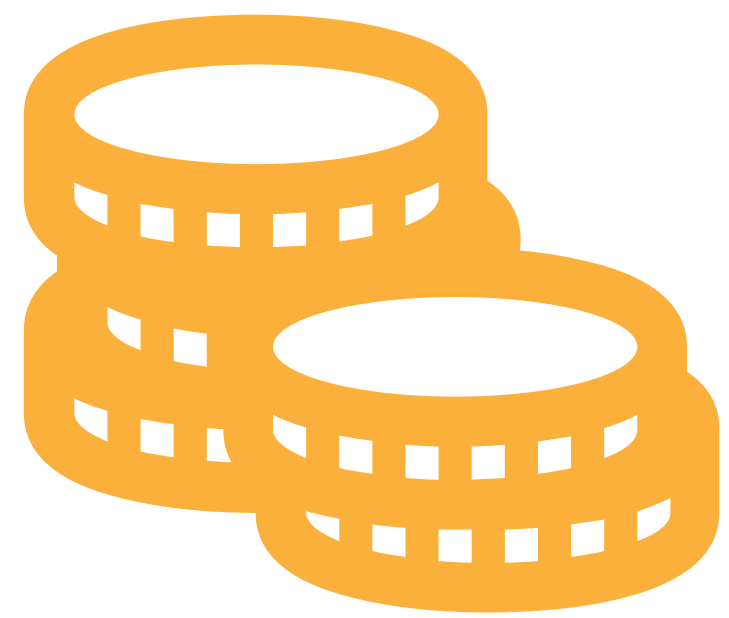- ☐ Receive college acceptance letters.

April 2009
- ☐ Attend open houses for colleges that offered admittance.

May 2009
- ☐ Select a college and send a deposit to the school.
- ☐ Request final high school transcripts be sent.

Source: Timeline adapted from materials created by a National College Advising Corps program site and an application timeline created by Sallie Mae at www.salliemae.com/before_college/students_plan/select_school/getting_in/understanding/application_timeline.htm.

Financial supports

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FAFSA completion matters

- **Completion rates** for graduating seniors **have risen** from 57.2 percent in the class of 2015 to 61.2 percent for the graduating class of 2019.

- **91.5 percent of students who complete the FAFSA** enroll in college in the fall, compared to **only 49.7 percent of students who do not** complete the FAFSA.

- Many students who do not complete the FAFSA would have qualified for federal Pell Grants. Estimates suggest **students are missing out on up to $2.6 billion in college funding**, with each student leaving behind an average of $4,000.

(Helhoski, 2018; NCAN, 2019)

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What do you think?

The biggest barrier to students completing their FAFSA application is _____.

Why don't students complete the FAFSA?

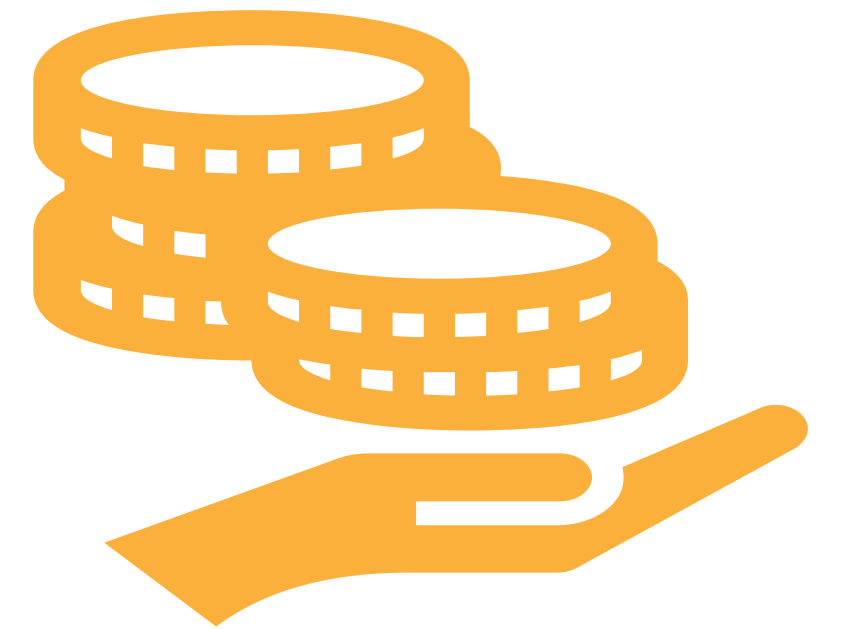- **Don't know about it**.
- It's **too long** and **too complicated**.
- **Fear** of the cost of college and student debt.
- **Believe they don't qualify** for funds.
- **Missed deadlines**.
- **Unwillingness to share personal information** with the government.

(Davidson, 2013; Hodara, 2017)

Families need information **and** personalized assistance with FAFSA

- Compared with participants who received no information, or received only information without additional supports, *participants who received information and personalized assistance had significant increases in FAFSA completion and college enrollment.*

- Early and accurate information has shown some evidence for improving FAFSA completion rates.

(Bettinger, et al., 2012; George-Jackson & Gast, 2016))

School-based activities to support FAFSA completion

- Provide detailed timelines for students and families.
- Implement in-class interventions.
- Build a school-based FAFSA team.
- Host FAFSA completion nights.
- Partner with local postsecondary institutions.
- Test small before going big.

(Black, 2016; Scholarship American, 2020)

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Using data to track and encourage FAFSA completion

- Use student and school-level data to know who's completed.
- Frequently monitor data.
- Track progress and impact of your interventions with data visuals (for example, charts).

(Black, 2016)

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FAFSA tracking resources

U.S. Department of Education's Federal Student Aid website

- Provides current state and school-level data about FAFSA submissions and completions, updated regularly.

- Schools can obtain student-level data on completion status, but must first enter into a data sharing agreement.

https://studentaid.ed.gov/sa/about/data-center/student/application-volume/fafsa-completion-high-school

Form your Future, sponsored by the National College Access Network

- Provides data displays that track change over time at the state, district, and city level.

https://formyourfuture.org/

Wrap-up and next steps

Question and answer

Continuing this journey

How can you use what we discussed today?

Develop an action plan

- In which area do you want to improve?
- What specific strategies or considerations from today's presentation do you want to employ?
  - Refer to the Strategies and Possible Applications section of the resource compilation for more ideas.
- What's your plan?
  - Identify next steps.
  - Assign responsible parties and due dates.
  - Track progress.