



July 23, 2021

Greetings:

When students succeed, Ohio succeeds. But for far too many students, their future goals seem out of reach. Ohio's strategic plan for education, *Each Child, Our Future*, sets a goal in which each child is challenged to discover and learn, prepared to pursue a fulfilling post-high school path. The Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) can be a key to unlocking students' future paths, by helping to connect them with thousands of dollars in federal financial aid each year. Unfortunately, too many of Ohio's students do not complete the form.

COVID-19 has led to a dramatic decline in FAFSA completion rates, and as of July 2021, only 56.7 percent of Ohio's graduating seniors completed their FAFSA. Millions of dollars are left on the table, impacting students who continue to believe that postsecondary training and college are out of their reach.

In recognition of the important role FAFSA can play in a student's education, we are pleased to announce the new FAFSA 22 Funding Opportunity. **Through this opportunity, \$1.8 million dollars from Governor's Emergency Education Relief funds will be made available to college-and-credential-attainment-focused nonprofits and Educational Service Center organizations to increase FAFSA completion rates during the 2021-22 school year.** Please see the attached documents for more information and please share it throughout your community. Applications are due no later than Aug. 20, 2021.

We know that direct intervention with students works, even — perhaps especially — during these challenging times. The Ohio Department of Higher Education allocated more than \$1 million dollars across 25 recipients during the FAFSA 21 Funding Opportunity, designed to serve students this summer, and we have seen unprecedented outreach and support for students. A FAFSA 21 awardee in one region debuted a mobile FAFSA van, while another hosted more than 700 one-on-one advising sessions. As a result, we are beginning to see measurable outcomes with students.

Let's keep working together to put opportunity within reach for more students. Please share the attached FAFSA 22 document with your community and continue spreading the word about the importance of FAFSA. Thank you for being our partners. We appreciate all you do for students.

Sincerely,

Randy Gardner  
Chancellor

Paolo DeMaria  
State Superintendent