

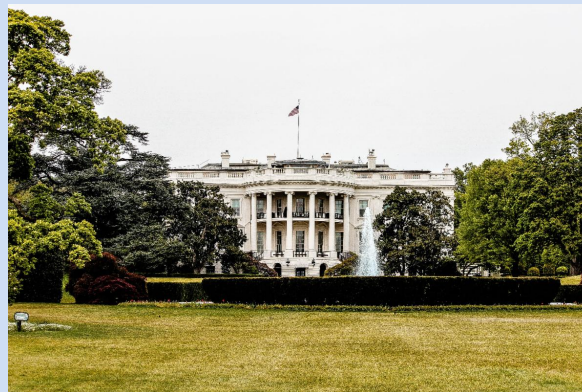


# TRANSITION POINTS

The Education Strategy Group Newsletter

## A Return to Leadership: Education Priorities for the Biden Administration

The election of Joe Biden as the 46th President of the United States offers a renewed opportunity for leadership and investment in our education and workforce systems at a pivotal moment in our nation's history. At a time when postsecondary degrees and credentials are more important than ever for economic success, enrollment rates are down at two- and four-year institutions across the country. The anxiety and financial uncertainty caused by COVID-



19 has turned the pipeline leak between high school and higher education into a gushing stream; nearly a third of students cancelled their plans to enroll in college this past year, and those rates were much higher for students of color. And while we expect out-of-work adults to turn to community colleges and other postsecondary institutions to upskill in the years ahead, those institutions are struggling to respond to the pandemic and make ends meet financially.

Education holds the key to economic revitalization and must play a central role in addressing systemic inequities. It will take vision, leadership, and investment to get things back on track.

The Biden administration has an opportunity to set the right tone. In a new commentary piece, ESG President and CEO Matt Gandal outlines five priority areas where leadership from the new administration will be key to our collective success. Stay tuned for additional pieces exploring each of these areas in greater depth over the coming weeks.

## A New Network for New Skills



On October 20, JP Morgan Chase announced that six U.S. cities – Boston, Columbus, Dallas, Indianapolis and Nashville, as well as previously-announced Denver – will receive career readiness investments as part of the firm's \$75 million global commitment to better prepare young people for the jobs of today and

tomorrow. These five-year philanthropic investments and policy solutions are part of both the firm's New Skills at Work initiative to prepare people for the future of work and their new \$30 billion commitment to advance racial equity and drive an inclusive economic recovery.

ESG is proud to be a lead partner on this groundbreaking initiative, building on our experience supporting similar efforts in other states and communities across the country. Collaborating with Advance CTE, ESG is coordinating the collective work of the New Skills network as well as providing coaching and technical assistance to the six sites. We are excited to offer thought partnership and boots-on-the-ground support to ensure that sites have the capacity to implement their ambitious plans for scaling career pathways and work-based learning, and building seamless

transitions into postsecondary and the workforce.

We recently [wrote](#) on our blog about the work that the network sites have already undertaken to assess their current career pathways and dig into inequities within their systems. The sites uncovered alarming gaps in the completion of high-quality pathways for students of color, which are only made worse by the pandemic. The network is now working to develop strategies to close equity gaps and propel more students to economic mobility in the years ahead.

## ESG Supports Hawai'i Effort to Identify Promising Credentials

Over the past several months, ESG partnered with the Promising Credentials project, an initiative of Hawai'i P-20 Partnerships for Education, Chamber of Commerce Hawai'i, Harold K.L. Castle Foundation, and Kamehameha Schools that aims to identify high-value certificates and credentials using Hawai'i labor market data and local employer insights. [Promising Credentials in Hawai'i](#), a first-of-its-kind analysis for the state, looks at whether the credentials students can earn are valuable to local employers. The project

identified 137 Promising Credentials that are associated with 274 in-demand, living-wage occupations throughout Hawai'i. Following the analysis and identification of these credentials, in-state partners are working together to identify strategies to ensure that students pursue credentials that will offer them real-world opportunity. Click [here](#) to read more about the work.



## Detroit Drives Degrees Unveils New Regional Talent Compact



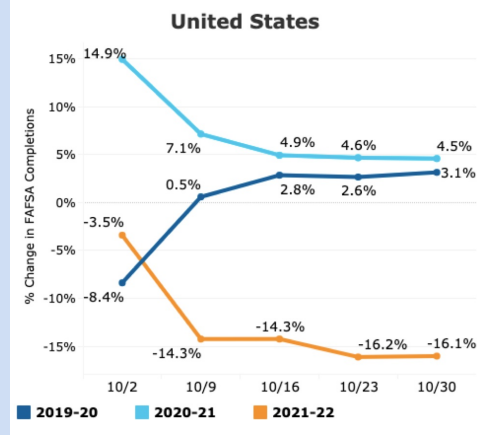
In early October, Detroit Drives Degrees (D3), the Detroit Regional Chamber's collective impact initiative, unveiled [The Detroit Regional Talent Compact](#), which brings together stakeholders from business, philanthropy, government, and K-12 and higher education to accomplish two goals: increase the postsecondary attainment rate to 60 percent and reduce the racial equity gap by

half by 2030. ESG was proud to support the Detroit Drives Degrees Leadership Council in the development of its concrete regional attainment and equity goals and its 2030 strategic plan. Learn more about D3's efforts [here](#), and watch a recording of the Compact virtual unveiling event [here](#).

## Track the New FAFSA Completion Cycle Online

The 2021-22 Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) cycle officially opened on October 1, and the National College Attainment Network (NCAN) released their new online [FAFSA completion tracker](#). The latest version offers a new [dashboard](#) for easy cycle-over-cycle comparison.

In the first month of available data, trends continue to be worrying. As of mid-October, FAFSA completion rates were down more than 14 percent overall compared with the same time last year. FAFSA completion rates are correlated with postsecondary enrollment intentions, and the crushing economic impact of the pandemic has meant that fewer students are enrolling - even at a time when postsecondary education and training is more important than ever. ESG shared a blog post last spring about new strategies to drive FAFSA completion amidst the pandemic, and published a comprehensive report on the importance of FAFSA completion at the beginning of 2020.



## From the Data Quality Campaign: Show Me the Data 2020



In October, the Data Quality Campaign released its fourth examination of report cards from all 50 states and the District of Columbia to see how well state leaders are using their most public-facing resource to empower the public with quality information. While the review was conducted in January 2020, DQC made the decision to postpone the release of this year's findings as the pandemic began and

leaders nationwide were rightfully focused elsewhere.

Several positive trends in data reporting emerged across the country. Forty-three states report student growth data on their report cards this year, up from 39 the previous year. Thirty-five states now include postsecondary enrollment data—the importance of which is discussed in ESG's *From Tails to Heads* report and an accompanying commentary piece co-authored with DQC—up from 24 the previous year. Despite these positive trends, challenges remain, particularly in the critically important area of data disaggregation. Twenty-six states are still missing at least one required student group in their displays of disaggregated student achievement data. While every state includes high school graduation rate data, 25 states do not include that information broken out by all of the federally-required student groups. Fully disaggregated data is crucial for helping educators and policymakers determine where to target supports and provide resources to close gaps.

Dig into DQC's findings in more detail here.

## ESG is Hiring!

We're looking for an Associate to support our work to improve students' postsecondary preparation and success and to better align education with the workforce. Click here to learn more and apply to join our team.

*Education Strategy Group is a mission-driven consulting firm that works with K-12, higher education, and workforce leaders to achieve greater impact. We work across sectors to move the needle on issues that are critical to improving student success and advancing equity.*

[Contact us](#) to learn more and work together