

California Student Aid Commission
Student Impact, Outreach and Communications Committee

Item 6

(Information Item)

Update on Cal-SOAP program and data implementation

SUMMARY:

This item provides an update on the California Student Opportunity and Access Program (Cal-SOAP) and data implementation project. Since 2020, the California Student Aid Commission (Commission) has worked on modernizing the Cal-SOAP and strengthening data collection strategies and tools driven by student outcomes.

RECOMMENDATION:

This is an information item; no action required.

BACKGROUND:

The California Student Opportunity and Access Program (Cal-SOAP or Consortium) has provided outreach services to students since 1978 with the purpose of increasing the number of high school graduates eligible to pursue postsecondary educational opportunities. Every year, Cal-SOAP's plan activities and services that support students in college admission, financial aid, tutoring and advising.

While many students qualify for some type of aid, the complexity of the process often discourages students from applying for financial aid. Financial aid is often a barrier for students, particularly for those historically underserved. As a Commission administered program, Cal-SOAP is uniquely positioned to provide financial aid outreach and services to support students who traditionally have not had access to postsecondary education. In recent years, the Commission has worked on modernizing Cal-SOAP, this includes introducing modern language to the governing statute, an in-depth program review of Cal-SOAP and new data implementation to measure clear outcomes.

Senate Bill 737 would update and modernize the functions and priorities of Cal-SOAP to primarily focus on financial aid awareness, including completion of the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) or the California Dream Act Application (CADAA). In addition, Senate Bill 737 supports the data and outcome reporting efforts for the Cal-SOAP.

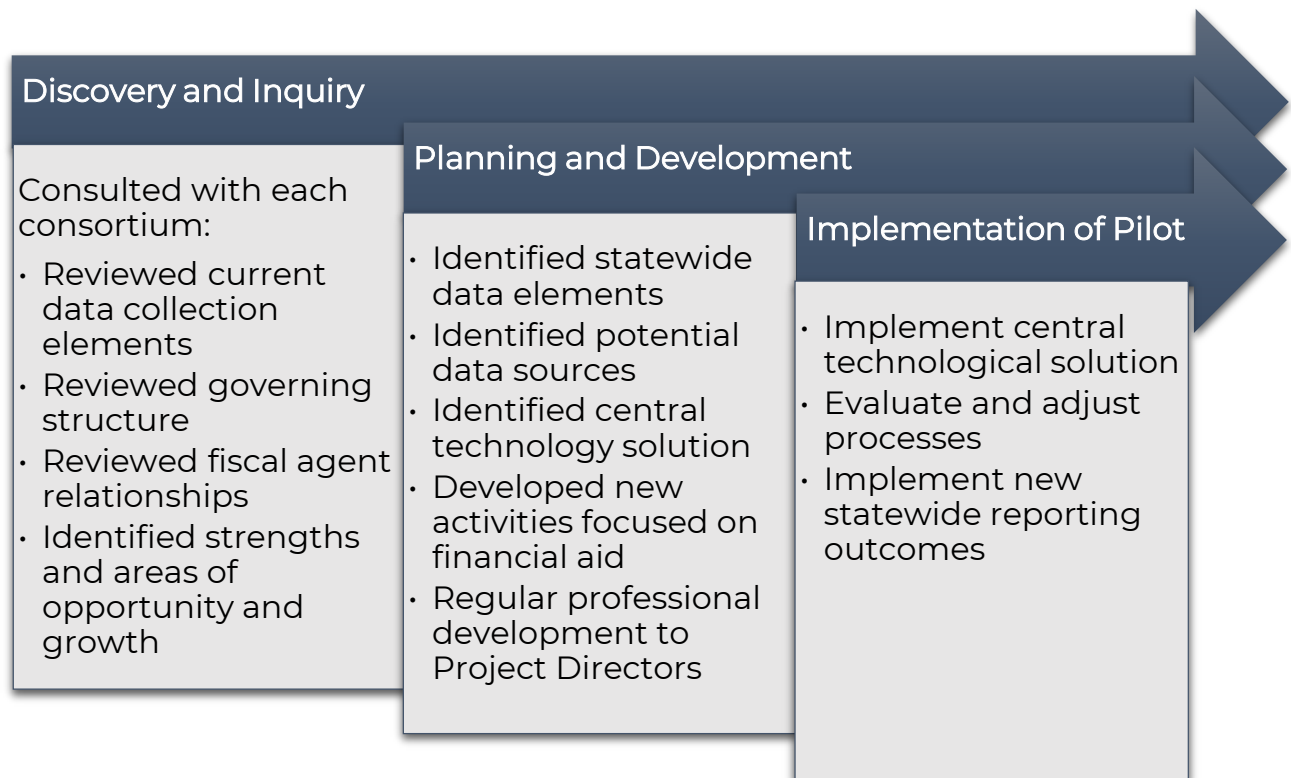
In late 2020, the Commission commenced work with WestEd, contractor and consultant, to review the program to identify a central technological solution and implement statewide data metrics and outcomes. The Commission, Cal-SOAP and WestEd, have made significant strides modernizing and building a system to collect

California Student Aid Commission

Student Impact, Outreach and Communications Committee

data outcomes. As described in diagram 1, the steps are outlined as follows: (1) completed the discovery and inquiry stage, (2) completed majority of the activities of the planning and development stage, (3) prepared for implementation of the pilot project. Although, we have made progress in modernizing Cal-SOAP, the Commission will continue to work with WestEd and the consortia to implement data collection strategies and pilot the identified central database in the 2021-2022 year for target launch date of 2022-2023 year.

Diagram 1



RESPONSIBLE PERSON(S):

Yesenia Castellón, Cal-SOAP Coordinator
Executive Office

ATTACHMENT(S):

Cal-SOAP Program and Date Update presentation presented on September 8, 2021