

# Item 16

(Information Item)

Cal-SOAP program updates

---

**SUMMARY:**

This item provides an update on the progress of the California Student Opportunity and Access Program (Cal-SOAP) and how the program is evolving considering recent policy changes, such as the first year of implementation of the universal requirement around high school seniors applying for financial aid.

**RECOMMENDATION:**

This is an information item; no action required

**BACKGROUND:**

The California Student Opportunity and Access Program (Cal-SOAP) was created to increase accessibility of postsecondary educational opportunities for students who are from low-income families, first in their families to attend college, students who are from schools or geographic regions with documented low-eligibility or low college participation rates, and students who are homeless youth in various communities throughout California. Every year, Cal-SOAP consortia plan activities and services that support students in college access, admission, and financial aid completion. COVID-19 exacerbated the need to support students in completing financial aid applications and Cal-SOAP has been instrumental in supporting students and their families complete financial aid applications remotely and in-person.

This item provides an update on Cal-SOAP activities during the 2022-23 academic year and how consortia continue to adjust and innovate during the implementation of Commission's sponsored-bill, Senate Bill 737 (Limón), which requires Cal-SOAP projects to focus primarily on providing financial aid awareness and application assistance in addition to college preparation services to students and families. An overview of how the Cal-SOAP programs have been helping to lead local efforts as it relates to the implementation of Assembly Bill 469 (Reyes), in tandem with the Commission's "All In for FAFSA/CA Dream Act" Campaign will be provided. With financial aid completion rates at the forefront, this presentation will inform Commissioners of the on-the-ground realities of financial aid completion taking into account the new, universal approach to financial aid applications for high school seniors.

## California Student Aid Commission

Commission staff will also share updates related to the adoption of a Cal-SOAP wide database, known as Lacai, and how this data platform is helping to assess the effectiveness of the Cal-SOAP program. Presenters will also highlight examples of effective best practices developed by the projects to support districts, schools, students, and families for improving financial aid awareness and application completion efforts.

### **RESPONSIBLE PERSON(S):**

Michael Lemus, Outreach and Marketing Manager  
Policy and Public Affairs

Jake Brymner, Deputy Director  
Policy and Public Affairs Division

### **ATTACHMENT(S):**

Cal-SOAP presentation presented on March 9, 2023