

FutureMakers Coalition

STUDENT VOICE SUMMIT 2023

Student Voice Summit Report

A diverse group of forty-six high school students from Charlotte, Collier, Hendry, and Lee Counties attended our annual Student Voice Summit this year. At the event, students were highly engaged in explaining the challenges and barriers that make post-secondary attainment difficult while also discussing possible ways to overcome these challenges. This report is to document their reactions and to better understand their points of view based on their life experiences.

Students started their day by looking at data about graduation rates, FASFA completion rates, common wages and cost of living. They were asked to write reflections about the data.

Students recognized that continuing education past high school would increase their chances for higher wage jobs. One student commented, "the further the education the more opportunities."

After this, students went to a series of break-out sessions: Problems, Solutions, School-Life

Balance, FAFSA, and Careers. Discussions were rich and students had thoughtful and genuine questions for the facilitators.

After the break-out sessions, students gathered for lunch and prize drawings. Feedback from students and adults was overwhelmingly positive. It was a great day for all of the FutureMakers.

**We Are The
ONES**
We've Been
Waiting For

Student concerns in order of importance:

1. Finances
2. Mental Health
3. Time-Management
4. College
5. Career
6. Home Life
7. High School Needs



What students are talking about:

How can schools and counselors help?

Students want:

- More career and technical college exploratory options including field trips, internships, service hours, and work based learning.
- A computer dashboard to show them their progress towards graduation requirements.
- To learn “real life” skills and financial literacy.
- More one-on-one support.
- More time in school to do school work and work on college and scholarship applications.
- To learn more about college and career options earlier in high school.

Financial Aid and Scholarships

Students want:

- More access to and awareness of financial aid and scholarships.
- A better understanding of FAFSA and the college application process.

School-Life Balance

Students want:

- More resources for their parents.
- Parents, teachers, and administrators to be more patient and understanding of the demands on their time.

Mental Health

Students want:

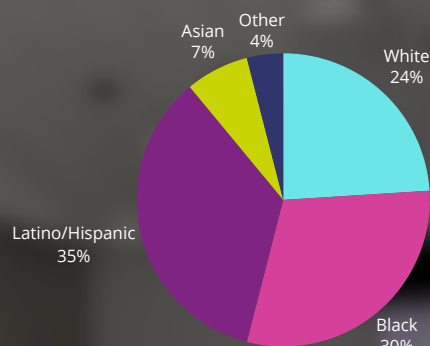
- Help with time-management and sustaining motivation.
- School staff and parents to better understand the signs and symptoms of mental health issues.
- Mental health support but do not think the current initiatives are authentic.

Barriers to Post-Secondary Attainment

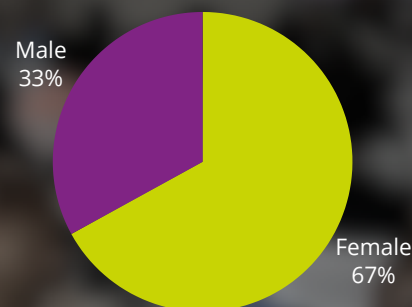
- Affordability/finances
- Time management
- Understanding the application process, SAT, ACT, and GPA needed

These statements are not ranked in any particular order

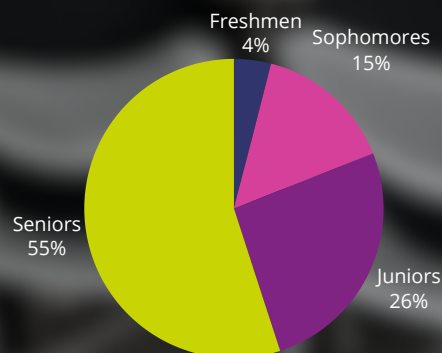
Student Race/Ethnicity



Student Gender



Student Grade Levels



56% of students said they want to stay in or return to SWFL after post-secondary