



the POWER of SYSTEMS

Advancing prosperity for the nation by delivering on student success and tackling systemic inequities.

Goal

Components



INSTITUTE FOR
Systems
INNOVATION
& IMPROVEMENT



Systems
CENTER FOR
STATE POLICY



PARTNERSHIP FOR
FEDERAL
SUPPORT OF
Systems



LEARNING

System-wide support for flexible and responsive programs to meet the unique needs of each student.

- Focus on engagement and support of students, addressing their diverse learning and social needs.
- Promote the development, teaching, and assessment of equity-centered academic and experiential curricula across the system.
- Advance flexible pathways and shared degrees, credentials, courses, credits and support services across the system, both virtual and in-person.
- Implement multidirectional transfer frameworks that allow for the equitable and seamless movement of students and credits across campuses.
- Invest in technology to improve access, affordability and achievement.



TALENT

A civically engaged and globally competitive workforce that contributes to community vitality, economic development and knowledge creation.

- Foster strong system partnerships by implementing innovative practices that deepen employer and civic engagement, and recognize diverse learner and workforce needs.
- Develop statewide strategies to accommodate diverse student markets with multiple on-ramps to admission, alternative delivery mechanisms, and effective teaching methods.
- Champion and invest in new roles for full and part-time faculty and support staff to meet changing demographics, while functioning in a multi-campus system.
- Promote strategic partnerships to champion educator recruitment, preparation and renewal as a crucial resource throughout the entire student pipeline.
- Advance a learner pathway profile as a student-centered tool to help institutions and students communicate to stakeholders what they know and can do.



EQUITY

Just and accessible opportunities that empower all students through the removal of structural and systemic barriers.

- Commit publicly to comprehensive action to advance equity across the system.
- Advance concrete actions to increase inclusiveness and equity across systems through the implementation of the NASH Equity Action Framework.
- Strengthen seamless K-12 partnerships to increase learning opportunities for students and enhance teacher engagement to address the needs of underserved communities.
- Support system-level engagement to enhance inclusive community-based partnerships.
- Expand equitable access to broadband, open, and digital resources.



INVESTMENT

Collective resource sharing and efficiencies to reinvest in student success.

- Create a new system business model to target resources to achieve our goals.
- Reinvest funds to support evidence-based best practices for innovations at scale.
- Share assets, infrastructure, and services to reduce system costs, to be reinvested in student success, innovation, and equity efforts.
- Leverage facilities and other assets to advance local and state economic and community development.
- Advocate for federal and state reinvestment in public higher education.



SYSTEMNESS

Leveraging the power of public higher education systems to better serve students and society.

- Champion state and federal policies and a system-wide organizational culture that value equity, economies of scale, innovation and collaboration.
- Advance an organizational structure focused on outcomes, putting student and state needs at the center.
- Adapt continuous improvement strategies as a theory of change to drive the scale and impact potential of state systems.
- Strengthen system-level data analytics and report annually on progress to foster transparency, accountability, and strategic, actionable decision-making.
- Articulate and advocate broadly the value and public purpose of higher education.

Imperatives

welcome to



the

POWER of SYSTEMS

NASH

National Association
of System Heads

SYSTEMS EDUCATE **78%** OF AMERICA'S 4-YEAR PUBLIC COLLEGE STUDENTS

“System” is defined as a collection of public institutions that is governed by a single board and led by a system-wide CEO, whose scope of responsibility includes leadership of the multi-campus enterprise and may also include leadership of one of the campuses.

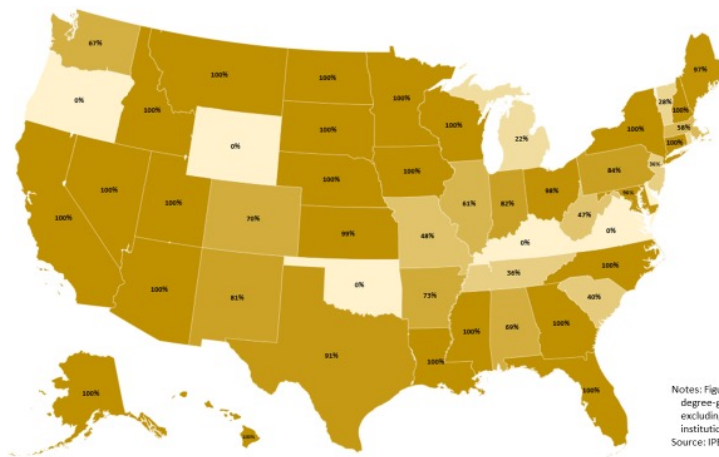
4 *out of* **5**

...underrepresented minority students in public four-year institutions are enrolled in systems.

...Pell grant recipients in public four-year institutions are enrolled in systems.

...postsecondary degrees and certificates awarded by public four-year institutions are awarded by institutions in systems.

Share of students enrolled in public 4-year institutions that are part of systems



Notes: Figures are for Title IV, degree-granting institutions, excluding federal and tribal institutions.
Source: IPEDS, NCHEMS.

NASH by the numbers

- 42** member systems
- 29** states represented
- 20** systems under recruitment
- 4** states don't have systems

WELCOME!

On behalf of the National Association of System Heads, we are thrilled that you are joining us as we move the Big ReThink and the development of Our Transformation Agenda for Public Higher Education Systems forward to a new milestone. We are thrilled to have launched the Power of Systems.

Over the past eighteen months, literally in the throes of the pandemic, we have held many conversations with key stakeholders within our state systems of higher education, including system heads, senior academic officers, chief financial officers, diversity-equity-inclusion officers, campus representatives, key partners, and supporters across the land. Our goal is nothing less than transforming the ways in which we address our commitment to student success and equitable access to recruitment, completion, and success. We are presenting not only the results of our discussions with a very clear idea of how this transformation would take shape, but how we can address the launch and sustainability of this initiative, in partnership with leading national organizations, and state and federal education leaders. The vision for this work is anchored in systemness and the potential for a network of systems to play a pivotal and decisive role in scaling and sustaining student success.

We know that we have much work to do going forward. We are now in focus, and we need your expert feedback on our plans and the role you can play in realizing such very bold expectations.

Together, systems of public higher education serve the largest mass of students attending college in this country, and within the states that fund these systems. We are at once a local asset and a national treasure. But what we really are is a major instrument for change to truly meet this country's commitment to underfunded communities, and the youth and adults who seek a better education, gainful careers, and a high quality of life. We believe we are that instrument for change, but we can't do it without you. Welcome to the journey!



Rebecca Martin
Executive Director
National Association of System Heads



Nancy Zimpher
Senior Fellow
National Association of System Heads

A MESSAGE FROM THE U.S. SECRETARY OF EDUCATION



Washington, D.C.

There is perhaps no challenge that is more important to securing our country's future than making sure that all children, youth, and adults are provided with equitable access to high-quality educational opportunities. As our nation heals and reemerges even stronger from the pandemic, we, as educators at every level, can and should be engaged in the work to reimagine what is possible to serve students of all ages. This is our moment.

Thank you to the National Association of System Heads for launching a new initiative to do just that – the Big ReThink.

Together, at the height of the pandemic, in many areas, educators led a necessary transition to remote and hybrid learning

to protect the health and safety of school communities. Amid our ongoing recovery from the pandemic, educators have been leading once more, as we always do, with our students' best interests at heart, by returning them to in-person learning, which we know is the most effective means of supporting their academic, social, and emotional well-being. Educators also have guided our communities to better access educational services and facilities and have extended the reach of healthcare and wraparound services to keep our communities healthy, safe, and well supported. However, we know that not everyone has been impacted in the same way by the pandemic and that the public health crisis has exacerbated long-standing inequities in our education system. We cannot go back to how things were before March 2020. We must move forward to an inclusive system of higher education that is a force for equity and upward mobility for all.

There should be as many paths to success as there are individuals to pursue them, enabling students from all walks of life to find their calling and gain the knowledge and skills to build rewarding careers, contribute to their communities, and secure prosperous lives for themselves and their families. But to fulfill education's promise as the "great equalizer," we must invest in our institutions and especially in our learners, ensuring that students of every background and circumstance have equal access to an excellent education.

Today, we turn our attention to lessons learned and the transformative changes that are necessary for public higher education systems

to close equity gaps for our students. We turn our attention to the vital work of building and maintaining ever more inclusive institutions. And we turn our attention to doing everything we can to best serve our students on their journey to credential completion and workforce success.



While I am not able to join you today, I am deeply encouraged by your work. I am so pleased that U.S. Under Secretary of Education James Kvaal will represent me at the launch of the Big ReThink. I am heartened that the transformation of public higher education systems across the country is underway. This is a very important moment for the country, for the future of higher education, and for the public will to improve the condition of our lives for generations to come.

With high expectations, I am,

Miguel A. Cardona, Ed.D.
U.S. Secretary of Education

THE POWER OF SYSTEMS

ADVANCING PROSPERITY FOR THE NATION

Big Idea

Components

Imperatives

We propose a network of systems, working collaboratively in improvement cycles to deliver impact in student success at scale, with particular emphases on the redress of inequities and the promotion of economic and social mobility.

The Institute for Systems Innovation & Improvement

The Redesign of State Infrastructure to Support the Power of Systems

The Federal Plan for Supporting the Power of Systems



LEARNING

System-wide support for flexible and responsive programs to meet the unique needs of each student.

- Focus on engagement and support of students, addressing their diverse learning and social needs.
- Promote the development, teaching, and assessment of equity-centered academic and experiential curricula across the system.
- Advance flexible pathways and shared degrees, credentials, courses, credits and support services across the system, both virtual and in-person.
- Implement multidirectional transfer frameworks that allow for the equitable and seamless movement of students and credits across campuses.
- Invest in technology to improve access, affordability and achievement.



TALENT

A civically engaged and globally competitive workforce that contributes to community vitality, economic development and knowledge creation.

- Foster strong system partnerships by implementing innovative practices that deepen employer and civic engagement, and recognize diverse learner and workforce needs.
- Develop statewide strategies to accommodate diverse student markets with multiple on-ramps to admission, alternative delivery mechanisms, and effective teaching methods.
- Champion and invest in new roles for full and part-time faculty and support staff to meet changing demographics, while functioning in a multi-campus system.
- Promote strategic partnerships to champion educator recruitment, preparation and renewal as a crucial resource throughout the entire student pipeline.
- Advance a learner pathway profile as a student-centered tool to help institutions and students communicate to stakeholders what they know and can do.



EQUITY

Just and accessible opportunities that empower all students through the removal of structural and systemic barriers.

- Commit publicly to comprehensive action to advance equity across the system.
- Advance concrete actions to increase inclusiveness and equity across systems through the implementation of the NASH Equity Action Framework.
- Strengthen seamless K-12 partnerships to increase learning opportunities for students and enhance teacher engagement to address the needs of underserved communities.
- Support system-level engagement to enhance inclusive community-based partnerships.
- Expand equitable access to broadband, open, and digital resources.



INVESTMENT

Collective resource sharing and efficiencies to reinvest in student success.

- Create a new system business model to target resources to achieve our goals.
- Reinvest funds to support evidence-based best practices for innovations at scale.
- Share assets, infrastructure, and services to reduce system costs, to be reinvested in student success, innovation, and equity efforts.
- Leverage facilities and other assets to advance local and state economic and community development.
- Advocate for federal and state reinvestment in public higher education.



SYSTEMNESS

Leveraging the power of public higher education systems to better serve students and society.

- Champion state and federal policies and a system-wide organizational culture that value equity, economies of scale, innovation and collaboration.
- Advance an organizational structure focused on outcomes, putting student and state needs at the center.
- Adapt continuous improvement strategies as a theory of change to drive the scale and impact potential of state systems.
- Strengthen system-level data analytics and report annually on progress to foster transparency, accountability, and strategic, actionable decision-making.
- Articulate and advocate broadly the value and public purpose of higher education.



ADVANCING PROSPERITY FOR THE NATION

The Moment.

We are in the midst of a crisis like no other American higher education and its students have ever faced, rooted in the devastation of the global pandemic, rising inequities and racial strife. The pandemic has reinforced the need for systemic reforms to the higher education sector in the United States to address deep inequality in our nation. From crisis is offered the opportunity to rethink, reimagine, and recommit American higher education to its transformational cause.

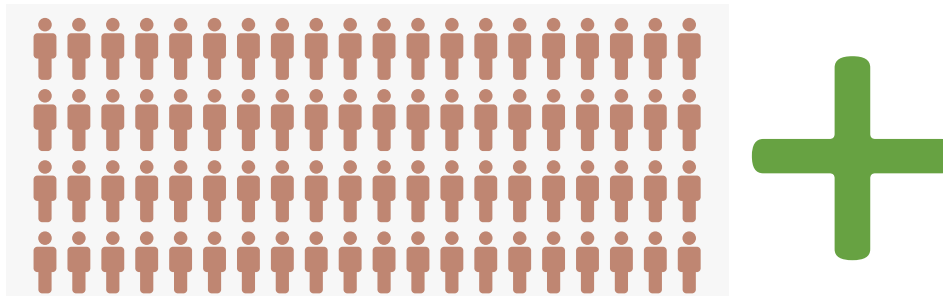
Through the National Association of System Heads (NASH), higher education system leaders have come together to author and adopt *The Power of Systems: Advancing Prosperity for the Nation*. With it, a network of systems is being created, working collaboratively in improvement cycles to deliver impact for student success at scale, with particular emphasis on the redress of inequities and the promotion of economic and social mobility for all. Our Agenda actualizes the power of “systemness:” moving beyond competition within and across systems and towards integrated services, shared academic programming and predictive data analytics in service to our students. It charts a compelling, collaborative vision for sustainable delivery of access, completion and success for all students, state by state, by 2030.

Such ambition calls for an entity comprehensive enough to carry the weight of transformation, individualized enough to serve the unique needs of the states they serve, and innovative enough to test and retest what works in propelling all students to a better life in service to our society. NASH stands for the inclusion of all 65 postsecondary systems which, together, educate approximately three-quarters of the nation’s students in public, four-year higher education and a significant proportion of students seeking two-year degrees. How these systems are organized—that is, multiple institutions operating with a single system governing board and chief executive—makes them particularly well-positioned to tackle issues critical to the future of their states.

In the immediacy of a global pandemic, higher education ‘turned on a dime,’ implementing the most comprehensive move from residential instruction to near 100% remote learning, and never really closing its doors. Like all of higher education, NASH took quick action. But in that moment, NASH also recognized that simultaneously, we needed to reflect on the longer term and the big picture—the really big picture. Thus began, 22 months ago, *The Big ReThink*; a process that required leveraging the collective assets of our constituent campuses to address some of the most significant challenges facing humankind – and imagining what a network of these systems could accomplish to not only improve education outcomes, but also significantly expand the health and prosperity of a nation by educating more students and educating them better.

The Call.

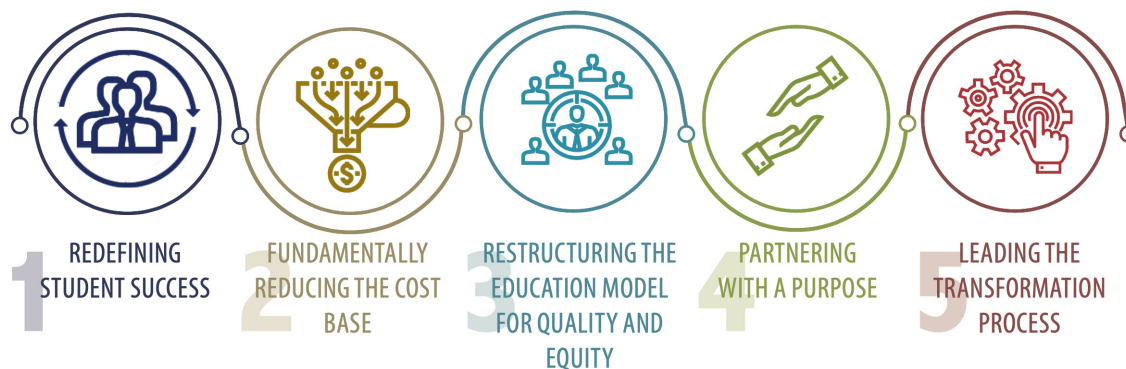
Some have opined that “process is the new program;” building upon a recognition that to achieve true collective impact requires that key stakeholders be deeply engaged in the process of transformational change. Ultimately in the work of higher education, the greatest measure of inclusion and success belongs to the students we serve. For state systems, that means millions of students across nearly 500 campuses, embedded across the fifty states. Students will be pivotal to the design, implementation, and ultimate success of this major reform effort. We commit to all decisions being informed by student voices. But we began by asking those who serve students to come together to reexamine our institutional fault lines and how we could better address the needs of the students of today and tomorrow. As such, NASH regularly convened member system heads and the senior academic, financial and diversity, equity and inclusion officers, into what became the “Group of 100,” to design a framework for transformation that would ultimately extend to campus heads, faculty, students and staff.



While this phase of our work will be fully launched in 2022, we have with us selected campus leaders who are already providing input. We have also begun to engage community partners, industry leaders, and philanthropic heads to launch the results of The Big ReThink. Further, over the course of the past year and a half, we have held multiple virtual webinars, meetings and discussion groups, convened on-going NASH improvement projects, framed our outcomes and strategies through the extensive work of design teams and issued several rounds of surveys to gain insights from key stakeholders.

The Agenda.

Nearly a decade ago, NASH began utilizing a collective impact approach to address its top priorities: improving student success and closing equity gaps. In the NASH approach, expertise is mobilized within participating systems and across partnerships with other organizations, creating a network or system of systems. By generating consensus around opportunities and challenges, and identifying potential solutions with a sound body of evidence, participating system leaders promote the effective organization of campuses that have assessed the value of adopting such innovations. Our focus is taking evidence-based practices to scale and sustainability, building on well-established programs with proven track records on individual campuses. The strategy focuses on organizing a group of like-minded systems and campuses that are ready to adopt an evidence-based approach, as it allows for early central coordination that can be quickly decentralized by working with coalitions of the willing. These efforts have emphasized the benefits to states that result from increasing student access and success in college, especially for low-income students and students from underserved communities. Issues of quality and equity have been paramount.



No stranger to levels of collective engagement, which has benefitted The Big ReThink immensely, the process articulated through rounds of consultation across systems has led us to the launch of The Power of Systems. Our joint effort is now focused on putting this plan into action. As such, our work will be organized around three mutually reinforcing components:

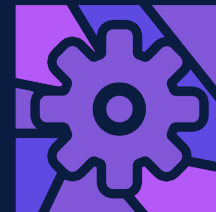
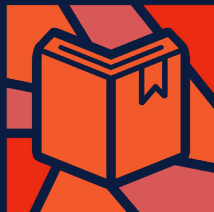
1
**The Institute for
 Systems Innovation
 and Improvement**

2
**The Redesign of State
 Infrastructure to Support
 the Power of Systems**

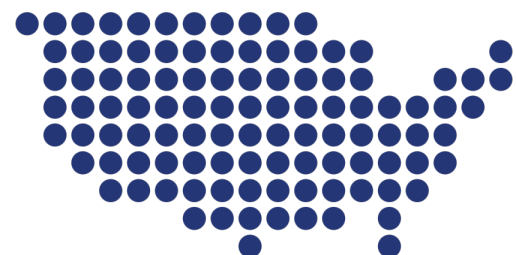
3
**The Federal Plan for
 Supporting the
 Power of Systems**

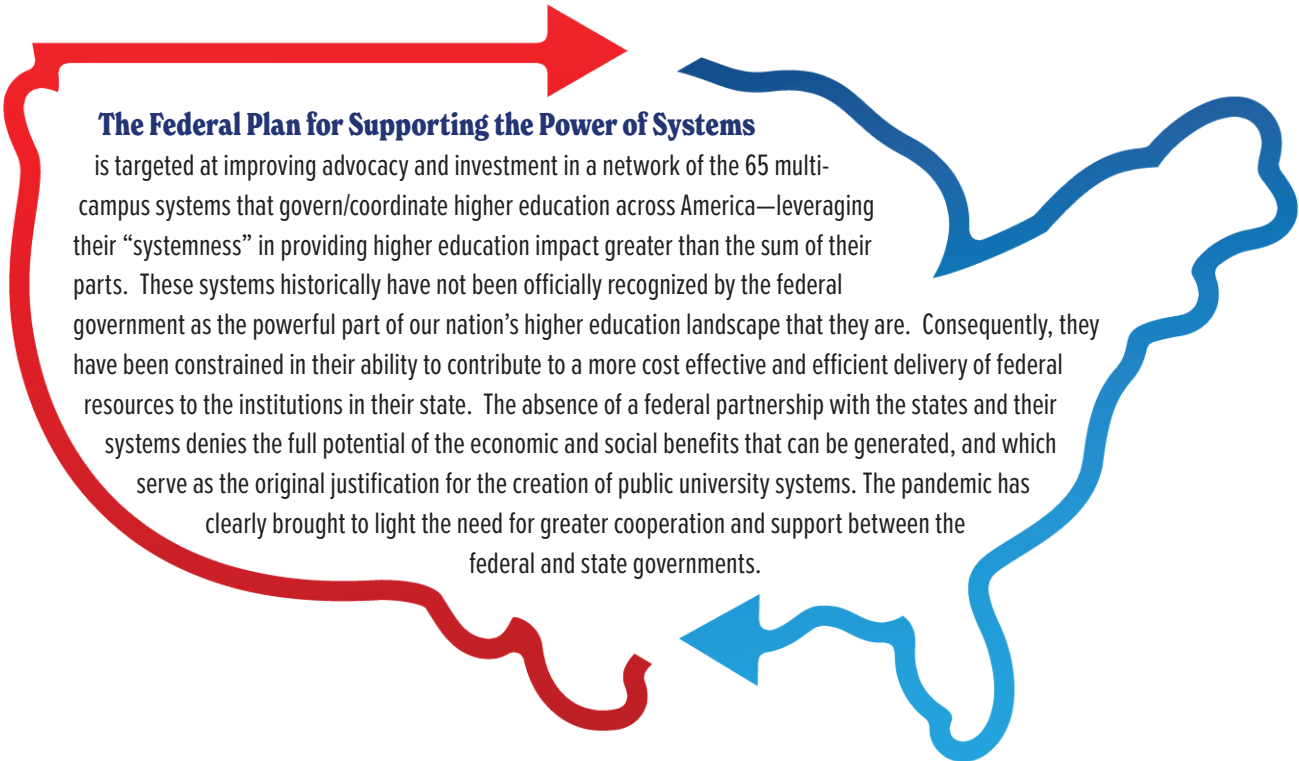
The Institute for Systems Innovation & Improvement will coalesce the power of our nation’s public systems to expand and achieve student access, completion and success at scale and toward sustainability by 2030. The Institute will work with groups of systems to implement the strategies emanating from the Big ReThink process in support of five key imperatives:

- **Learning:** System-wide support for flexible and responsive programs to meet the unique needs of each student.
- **Talent:** A civically engaged and globally competitive workforce that contributes to community vitality, economic development and knowledge creation.
- **Equity:** Just and accessible opportunities that empower all students through the removal of structural and systemic barriers.
- **Investment:** Collective resource sharing and efficiencies to reinvest in student success.
- **Systemness:** Leveraging the power of public higher education systems to better serve students and society.



The Redesign of State Infrastructure to Support the Power of Systems is being developed explicitly for state public higher education leaders (board members, system leaders, campus leaders, policy makers and funders) as they assess and redesign state infrastructure (policies and the roles, functions and practices of systems) to maximize the power of those systems in service to their students, institutions and states. Systems are the prevailing model for state provision of public higher education. As such, they demonstrate a unique power to leverage innovation at “scale” in pursuit of the social, economic, and civic goals of their states. While systems have shown their value at many levels, their power to achieve state education goals has not been fully utilized due in large part to outmoded state and system policies, roles, functions and practices.





The Federal Plan for Supporting the Power of Systems

is targeted at improving advocacy and investment in a network of the 65 multi-campus systems that govern/coordinate higher education across America—leveraging their “systemness” in providing higher education impact greater than the sum of their parts. These systems historically have not been officially recognized by the federal government as the powerful part of our nation’s higher education landscape that they are. Consequently, they have been constrained in their ability to contribute to a more cost effective and efficient delivery of federal resources to the institutions in their state. The absence of a federal partnership with the states and their systems denies the full potential of the economic and social benefits that can be generated, and which serve as the original justification for the creation of public university systems. The pandemic has clearly brought to light the need for greater cooperation and support between the federal and state governments.

The Measure of Success.

The Power of Systems will focus an assessment of its impact on improving three key system level metrics:



CREDENTIAL COMPLETION



SOCIAL MOBILITY



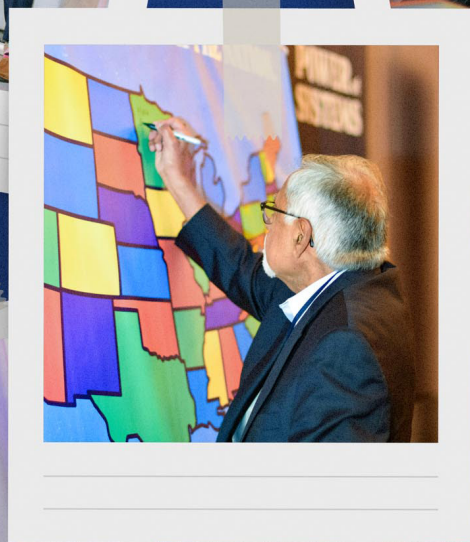
STUDENT LOAN DEBT REDUCTION

System level credential completion depends on a modernized completion metric that aims to capture the complexity of student completion patterns across institutions to account for the variability of student enrollment patterns. This includes shorter term credentials such as certificates and certifications as well as traditional associate and baccalaureate degrees. The system level social mobility impact metric aims to capture the impact of public higher education systems on student social mobility, with a focus on underrepresented minority and low-income students. This metric will track the movement of undergraduate completers between income quintiles based on annual earnings. The system student loan debt to earnings ratio aims to capture the relationship between student debt and the ability to repay based on student earnings. The ratio will track the percent of graduated with student loan debt in relation to their annual earnings.

The Journey.

Systems of public higher education serve the largest proportion of students attending college in this country, and within the states that fund these systems. We are at once a local asset and a national treasure. But what we really are is a major instrument for change to truly meet this country’s promise, and our commitment to underfunded communities, and the youth and adults who seek a better education, gainful careers, and a high quality of life. We believe we are that instrument for change. But we cannot do it without you.

Welcome to the Power of Systems.



the **POWER** of **SYSTEMS**

www.powerofsystems.org

#PowerofSystems

NASH

National Association
of System Heads