

# YOUR FUTURE, YOUR CHOICE

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Charting the Path After  
High School

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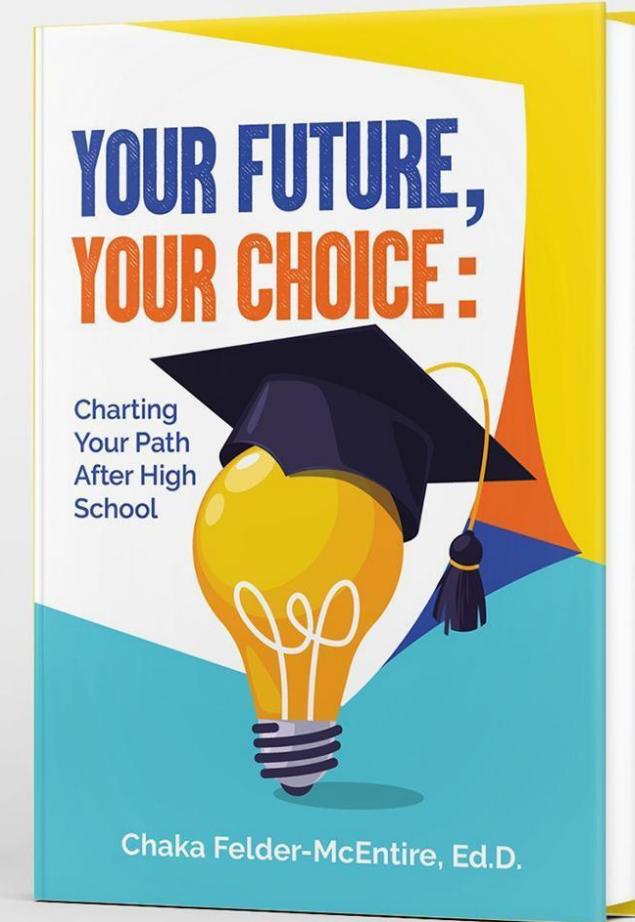
# EMPOWERING STUDENTS

## With College & Career Readiness Tools

Many students graduate without a clear plan for what comes next. *Your Future, Your Choice: Charting the Path After High School* equips educators, families, and students with practical, hands-on tools to navigate college and career decisions with confidence.

This interactive session integrates college access, financial literacy, and career exploration to help participants guide young people in identifying their “why,” building thoughtful college and career lists, and understanding **true affordability**.

Grounded in over 20 years of experience supporting first-generation and underserved youth, this session provides ready-to-use, culturally responsive strategies that make postsecondary planning engaging, relevant, and achievable—**one choice at a time**.



# The Challenge

National research shows that postsecondary planning disparities are driven by inconsistent advising, limited exposure to pathways, and gaps in financial literacy.

Students need structured support to:

- ✓ Clarify their interests, strengths, and long-term goals
- ✓ Explore aligned college and career pathways
- ✓ Understand affordability, financial aid, and loan implications
- ✓ Build confidence in navigating complex postsecondary systems

Sources: NCES, Lumina Foundation, NCAN

01.

Students are receiving less than 20 minutes of one-on-one college and career advising per year (ASCA).

02.

Research shows that first gen and low-income students often underestimate their abilities, overestimate college costs, and lack guidance on aligning their interests with viable a career pathway..

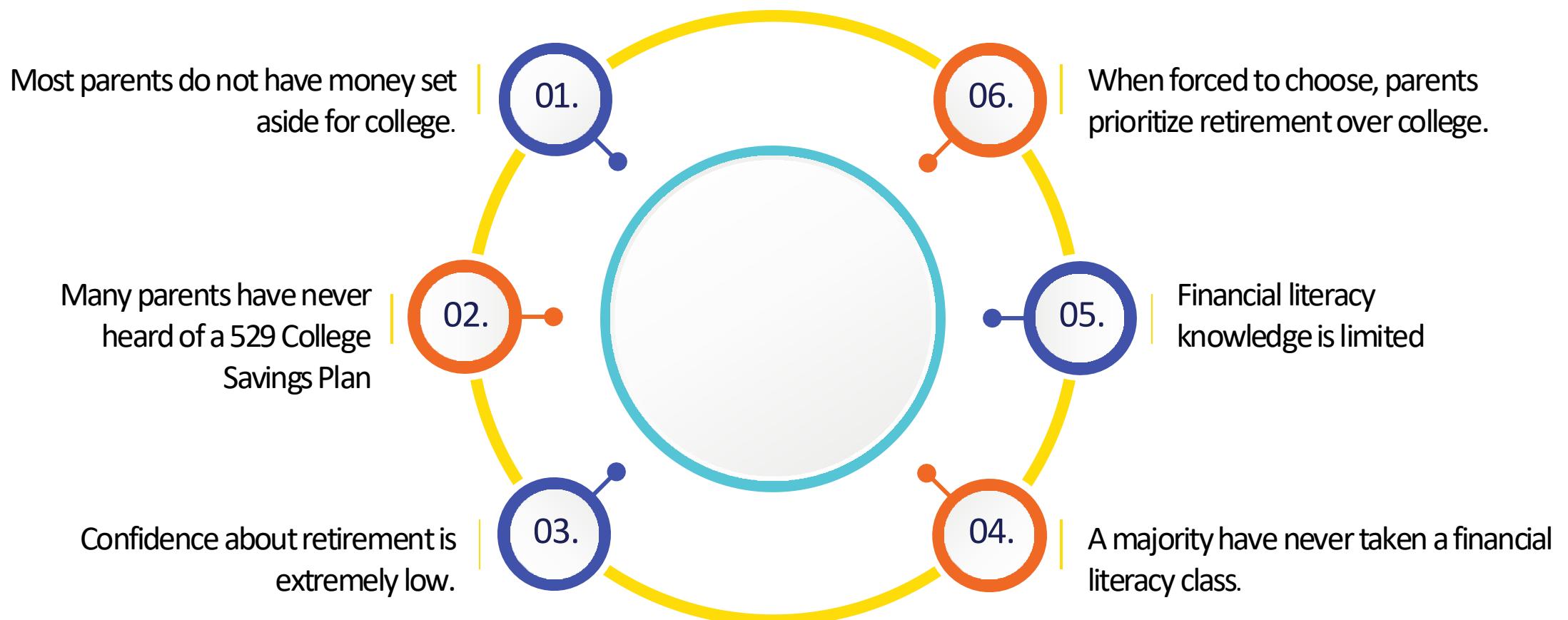
03.

Nearly 40% of students rule out colleges because they believe the cost is too high; without knowing about grants, scholarships or net-price.



# Parent Financial Literacy

## What our data shows



# PARENT FINANCIAL LITERACY SNAPSHOT

## LIMITED COLLEGE SAVINGS & AWARENESS

- 68.5% have no money saved for college
- 44.4% have never heard of CHET 529

## LOW FINANCIAL CONFIDENCE

- Only 5.6% feel very confident about retirement
- 66.7% not confident in banking, credit, savings
- 64.8% never taken a financial literacy class

## STRONG DESIRE TO LEARN MORE

- Budgeting (82.7%)
- Saving for college (71.2%)
- Understanding credit & debt (44.2%)

*Data Collection: 2025 Higher Heights Parent Financial Readiness Survey*

# THE SOLUTION

Provide a structured, equity-focused framework for college & career planning. Equi educates and families with practical advising tools. Strengthen student self-awareness, goal-setting and pathway exploration. Increase access to financial literacy and affordability guidance.

## RESULTS

- Higher FAFSA completion & reduced summer melt.
- Stronger clarity around majors & career interests
- Increased scholarship awards and on-time college enrollment
- More engaged families and better post-secondary decision-making

Higher Heights has supported 10,000+ students and secured over \$800M in scholarships

## KEY LEARNINGS AND INSIGHTS.

Students succeed when they understand their "why"

Early exposure to careers improves college completion

Clear affordability tools reduce undermatching

Culturally responsive advising increases engagement & persistence



# TODAY'S OBJECTIVE

01.

Guide students in identifying their personal "why"

02.

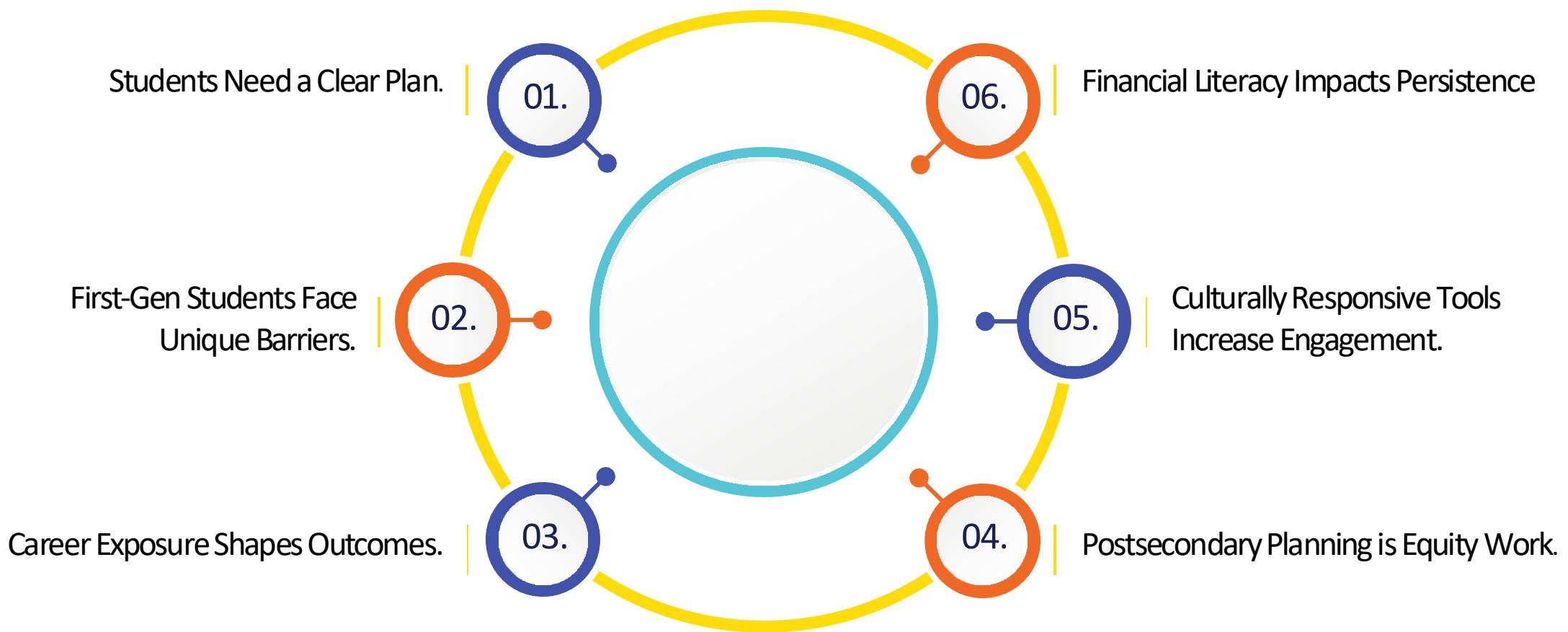
Introducing tools for accessing affordability.

03.

Use hands-on strategies rooted in more than 20 years of proven practice.

# WHY THIS WORK MATTERS

Building Equitable Pathways for all Students





# RELEVANT STUDENT EXPERIENCES



# FAMILY EXPERIENCES



# STUDENT VOICE



# Your Future, Your Choice

## CURRICULUM FRAMEWORK

Identity & Purpose ("Your Why")



College Search & Requirements.



Application Steps & Next Moves.



Exploring Majors and Careers.



Affordability & Financial Literacy.

