

Student Parent Success: State Policy Solutions

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Student Parent Success: State Policy Solutions

A Landscape Scan

Nina Besser Doorley
Vice President for Policy and Strategic Initiatives





Who are Student Parents?

- More than one in five college students – over 22% of undergraduates – are parents.
- Of the 3.8 million parenting students, 2.7 million (70%) are mothers.
- The majority of mothers in college are single or unpartnered.
- The largest share of student parents (42%) are enrolled in community college.
- Student parents are more likely to be people of color; Black college students are the most likely to be parents.

What do we mean by “student parent state policy?”

- This project looks specifically at policies enacted by state government entities – governors offices, state agencies, state legislatures, state university systems.
- Student parents are diverse, hold a range of identities, and their needs and challenges are not monolithic.
- Student parents face many issues that are also experienced by other parents, or other students (e.g. housing, child care, cost of college)
- In this landscape scan, we looked at policies that specifically and deliberately target student parents, or the ability of parents to pursue educational goals.

Policy Action for Student Parents

- Data collection, analysis, and research
- Cost/affordability of post-secondary education
- Access to basic needs supports
- Availability and accessibility of child care





Looking ahead: Policy Options for States

- Improve data collection: better data enables better policy.
- Listen to student parents themselves.
- Consider both sides of the coin: support for institutions, but also ways to directly support students.
- Provide ample and multi-year funding to student parent programs.



Looking ahead: Policy Options for States, cont.

- Utilize 2Gen approaches to support entire families.
- Consider ways to better leverage federal investments.
- Invest in child care infrastructure, affordability, and accessibility.
- Make college financially accessible.



Coming soon from IWPR:

- Underwater: Student Mothers and Fathers Struggle to Support their Families and Pay off College Loans (April 2023)
- Factsheet on Black single mothers in college (May 2023)
- State Policy for Student Parent Success: A Landscape Scan of Enacted Policy Solutions (June 2023)

IWPR Resources on Student Parents

Reichlin Cruse, Lindsey, Tessa Holtzman, and Barbara Gault. 2019. "Parents in College by the Numbers." Institute for Women's Policy Research and Ascend at the Aspen Institute.

<https://iwpr.org/iwpr-issues/student-parent-success-initiative/parents-in-college-by-the-numbers/>.

Reichlin Cruse, Lindsey, Jessica Milli, Susana Contreras-Mendez, Tessa Holtzman, and Barbara Gault. 2019. *Investing in Single Mothers' Higher Education: National and State Estimates of the Costs and Benefits of Single Mothers' Educational Attainment to Individuals, Families, and Society*.

https://iwpr.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/R600_Investing-in-Single-Moms-National.pdf.

Reichlin Cruse, Lindsey, Lashawan Richburg-Hayes, Amanda Hare, and Susana Contreras-Mendes. 2021. "Evaluating the Role of Campus Child Care in Student Parent Success: Challenges and Opportunities for Rigorous Study." https://iwpr.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/10/Evaluating-the-Role-of-Campus-Child-Care_FINAL.pdf.

Reichlin Cruse, Lindsey and Chaunté White. 2021. "The Student Parent Equity Imperative: Guidance for the Biden-Harris Administration. Policy Brief# C496."

https://iwpr.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/04/Student-Parent-Equity-Imperative_final.pdf.

POLICY ACCELERATION PARTNERSHIPS

POSTSECONDARY SUCCESS FOR PARENTS INITIATIVE

The PSP Initiative has been a key driver in building a student parent movement – an expansive, nationally-coordinated effort to advance the development of innovative solutions that provide greater postsecondary access, affordability, and success for parents.

We focus on the more than four million student parents enrolled in postsecondary pathways – a group that should inform and strengthen higher education’s equity agenda.

We work with systems, institutions, and students who are parents to ensure families have access to the resources necessary to achieve their educational goals, ultimately advancing their family’s economic mobility and well-being.

POLICY ACCELERATION PARTNERSHIPS

Ascend awarded grants to six public sector entities to work in partnership with key stakeholders such as peer agencies, community-based organizations, philanthropy, and employers to build and improve policies and programs that support postsecondary attainment among parents, including single mothers.

Grantees received \$150,000 and technical assistance to accelerate current partnership efforts in their jurisdictions aimed to support student parents and their families, by increasing access to supports like early childhood education, housing, health care, and other supports that increase postsecondary access and success for parents.

Insight Policy Research was added as an evaluation partner to assist sites in deciphering learnings and developing logic models to understand their impact.

SITES SELECTED



LONG BEACH, CO

Established a fund and/or individual escrow accounts that provide guaranteed income to single mothers that are in school or training



COLORADO

Community College of Aurora has hired and onboarded a Student Parent Navigator dedicated to providing support and community development for student parents and their children; Navigator also has a leadership role as a liaison to Colorado Community College System and coordinator of all student parent advocacy activities statewide



PENNSYLVANIA

PA Department of Human Services worked with holistic models that address the needs of parents and children together and successfully leverage partnerships with community and college leaders to offer sustainable solutions to the barriers often facing families experiencing economic challenges.



RHODE ISLAND

RI Department of Human Services strengthened partnership with the Dunamis Synergy collaborative to utilize student parent leaders to inform and advance a statewide 2-Gen young parent policy agenda and create a clear and comprehensive pathway to policy reform



MINNESOTA

MN Office of Higher Education (OHE) has a full-time Whole Family & Student Parent Coordinator at the Office of Higher Education who oversees planning, research and development for student parent initiatives on college campuses in Minnesota; OHE now leads Minnesota Student Parent Alliance with partners including Raise the Barr and other state actors



GEORGIA

Georgia Department of Early Care and Learning and the Technical College System of Georgia were able to implement and strengthen several aligned programs and activities that expanded the state's 2Gen framework

State Policy Solutions for Student Parent Success

Elisabetta Kasfir, Deputy Commissioner, Federal Programs

Bentley Ponder, Deputy Commissioner, Quality Innovations and Partnerships

April 26, 2023



**Georgia Dept
of Early Care
and Learning**

BRIGHT FROM THE START

Georgia Department of Early Care and Learning

DECAL Includes

- Licensing and regulation
- Childcare and Parent Services (CAPS)
- Quality Rated
- Georgia's Pre-K
- Nutrition services
- Other quality initiatives, pd development programs, and grants

CAPS

- Georgia's child care subsidy program
- Assists working families with low incomes with the cost of child care
- Must be in a priority group and meet eligibility requirements



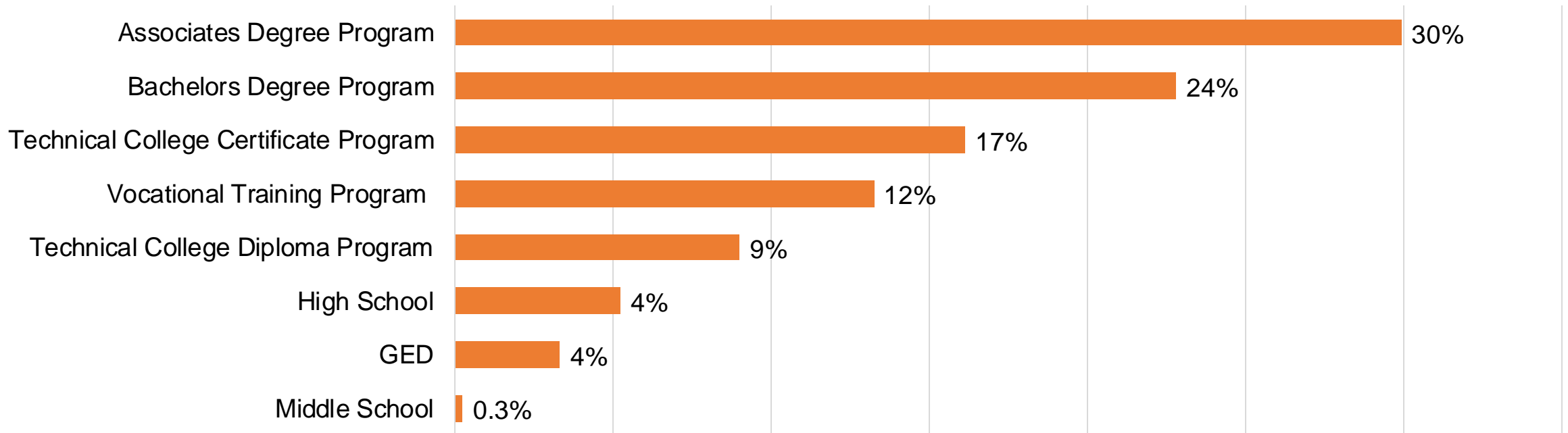
CAPS Student Parent Priority Group

- Added May 1, 2022
- Supports student parents by providing greater access to high quality child care so they can further their education or training
- Received approximately 12,000 applications in student parent priority group; 17% of all applications since May 1



Student Parents with CAPS

8% of all CAPS parents are student parents enrolled in an education or training program. Of those parents, they are pursuing the following programs:



Working for Student Parents in Minnesota

Miriam Cullimore

Student Parent & Whole Family Coordinator

Policy Acceleration Partnership

- Created and hired the Student Parent & Whole Family Coordinator position within the MN Office of Higher Education
 - Dedicated, full-time position at the state level
- Formation of Minnesota Student Parent Alliance
 - Partnership and coordination efforts with 8 different partner organizations
- Held 3 Convenings in Fall 2022
 - Over 100 participants registered for three-part webinar series
 - 38-60 participants attended each session
 - 7-10 student parent participants at each session

Policy Acceleration Partnership

- Key Findings:
 - Lack of communication from institutions to student parents about available resources and services on campus
 - There is state policy in place, but direct outreach is not happening consistently
 - Lack of accurate data available, inconsistent data collection
 - Seeking ways to capture student parent data alongside basic needs data
 - Bringing together several student basic needs working groups
 - MN Office of Higher Education, in partnership with Minnesota State colleges and universities, is participating in a technical assistance program to develop a data collection procedure and survey

Policy Acceleration Partnership

- Key Findings:
 - Consistent funding stream for student parent support at the institutional level
 - MN Office of Higher Education, in partnership with the MN Dept. of Health, is pursuing ongoing funding for student parent support in the state budget
 - Would fund up to 15 institutions to provide supportive services for student parents and their families
 - Financial aid
 - Emergency grants
 - Expanded access to childcare
 - Well-child checks and other health/wellbeing services
 - Navigation and referral services for basic needs support
 - Proposal was adopted as a funding priority by the Governor and is awaiting final approval from the MN Legislature

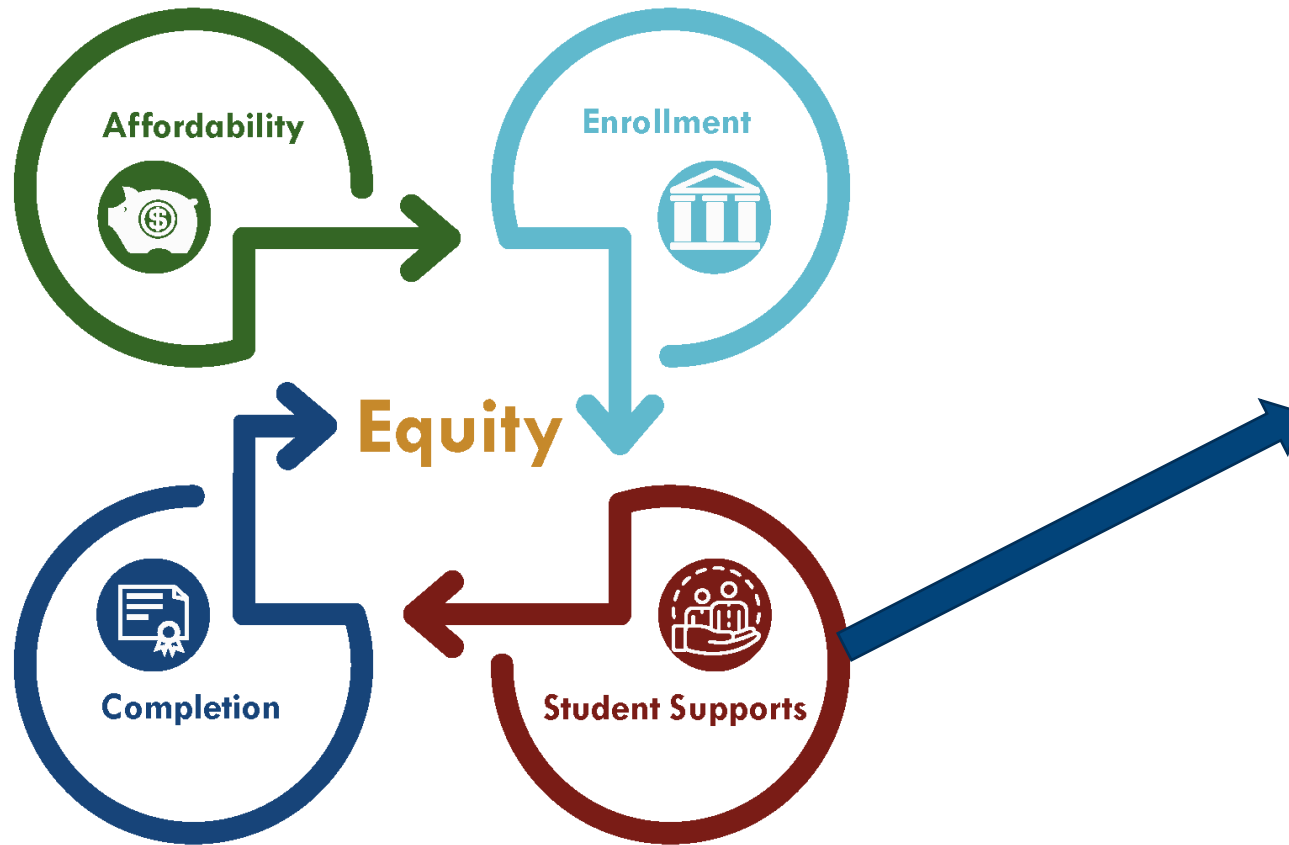
Basic Needs Security and Parenting Students

Washington Student Achievement Council

Ami Magisos Amim@wsac.wa.gov
<https://wsac.wa.gov/student-supports>



Everyone needs some kind of education beyond high school.



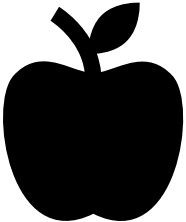
Access to basic needs should not be a barrier for Washington residents seeking a postsecondary credential.

Basic needs encompass access to **affordable housing, sufficient food, quality childcare, mental healthcare, and other needs.**

If we build an **affordable** and **supportive** educational environment, more Washingtonians will **enroll** in programs and **complete** credentials.



Basic Needs Security: Parenting Students



Food Insecurity
43.3% (+8 percentage points)



Housing Insecurity
51.7% (+17.5 percentage points)

Homelessness
15.1% (+4 percentage points)

Either: 61.1%
(+12 percentage points)

Both: 37.5%
(+14 percentage points)



2 in 3 unable to afford needed childcare
(71.1% CTCs / 57.3% baccalaureates)

Source: Washington Student Achievement Council <https://wsac.wa.gov/sites/default/files/2023.BasicNeedsReport.pdf>



Advances for Washington Parenting Students



Affordability

**Access to
Benefits**

**Basic Needs
Supports**



Directions for WA Parenting Student Support

Learning

- Increase understanding of all parenting students' needs and regional assets

Action Agenda

- Action agenda development
 - Remove barriers to existing resources
 - Identify and fill gaps

Partnerships

- Partnerships
 - "Fast Pass" to state financial aid with Head Start, Housing Authorities, etc.
 - Regional Challenge Grants