Newsletter
January 2013

Student Parent Success Initiative (SPSI) Update

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As always, please feel free to forward this e-mail to interested friends or colleagues, or to contact us to share updates or information relevant to student parents, advocates, and service providers around the country.

Some highlights from this month's update include:

- A new survey of student parents in development by the SPSI project;
- A new higher education commission report highlighting strategies for improving college graduation rates; and
- An overview of policy and budget implications for federal programs affecting student parents, spawned by the recent "fiscal cliff" agreement in Congress.

Activities and Publications of the Student Parent Success Initiative

- IWPR Vice President and Executive Director Barbara Gault presented "*Expanding College Opportunities for Young Mothers: Program Options and Strategies for Change*" at a Child Trends luncheon on January 9, 2013.
- In an effort to expand the body of knowledge about the experience of student parents in a college environment, the SPSI team, in collaboration with a team of outside researchers and other experts, is in the process of finalizing a survey instrument to be administered on college campuses to students with children. If you are interested in reviewing the draft instrument, or in fielding the survey on your campus, please contact Rhiana Gunn-Wright: gunn-wright@iwpr.org

Student Parents and Supports in the News

- To Raise Graduation Rate, Colleges Are Urged to Help a Changing Student Body, *The New York Times*, January 24, 2013. (See full report under "Research and Resources" below)
- Fatherhood and Academic Life, *Inside Higher Ed*, January 7, 2013.

- Interview with the Author: "Back to School: Why Everyone Deserves a Second Chance at Education," *The Washington Post*, January 9, 2013.
- Starting Over: Vets Face Confusion Using the GI Bill at State Schools, *USA Today*, January 1, 2013.
- High Schools Offer Day-Care Services for Teen Parents to Prevent Dropouts, *The Washington Post*, January 10, 2013.

Research and Resources

- An Open Letter to College and University Leaders: College Completion Must Be Our Priority, National Commission on Higher Education Attainment, January 24, 2013.
- Pew Report: Recent College Graduates are Well-Protected against the Worst Effects of the Recession, The Pew Charitable Trusts, January 9, 2013.
- Knocking at the College Door Report: Projections of High School Graduates, Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education, December 2012.
- Can Scholarships Alone Help Students Succeed?: Lessons from Two New York City Community Colleges, MDRC, November 2012.

Events and Funding Opportunities

- Registration is open for the NAPE's 2013 Professional Development Institute! *"Igniting Innovation: Access, Equity, and Diversity,"* April 15-18, 2013, in Arlington, VA. Early-bird registration ends February 22, and scholarships are available.
- 2013/2014 Generation HOPE scholarship applications are now being accepted. Deadline for submitting applications is April 1, 2013.

Legislative and Policy Round Up

- Early-Childhood Advocates Wary of Automatic Cuts, *Education Week*, January 8, 2013.
- "Fiscal Cliff" Legislation Contains Important Wins for Community College Students, The American Association of Community Colleges, January 2, 2013.

Student Parent Programs in the Spotlight

Family Scholar House in Louisville, Kentucky seeks to reduce poverty by giving single-parent students supports they need to earn a college degree. They do this by providing a comprehensive continuum of

services for both their student-parent participants and their children, including supportive housing, academic advising, family support services, children's programming, life skills workshops, financial literacy education for children and adults, mentoring, tutoring, and community referrals. The program currently provides housing to 175 families, distributed across three campus-based and one non-campus facility. In addition, 659 participating families are enrolled in the pre-residential program, receiving support services and participating in programming while awaiting available housing. In 2012, Family Scholar House served over 2,000 families.

Family Scholar House families are low-income and have typically experienced homelessness or unstable housing. The majority of families have experienced violence in the home, and are first generation college students , and many are even the first in their family to graduate high school. Recognizing that disadvantaged student parents face many obstacles in pursuing their educational and career goals, the Family Scholar House model works with each student parent to develop an individualized set of supports and services tailored to the needs of that particular family. Through Family Scholar House's programs, participants have earned 81 college degrees – and are on track to earn 40 additional degrees in Spring 2013 – and 20 children of participants have graduated from high school and continued on to post-secondary educational opportunities, most with scholarships.

About Us

The Student Parent Success Initiative (SPSI), a project of the Institute for Women's Policy Research, is designed to improve supports and services for student parents seeking postsecondary education.

Funded by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, SPSI serves to initiate new research, raise awareness on the need for student parent supports, and foster communication and collaboration among advocates, policymakers, educators, and practitioners.

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