



## 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:

- An upcoming SPSI webinar highlighting HHS' Pregnancy Assistance Fund and grantees' work on behalf of student parents in postsecondary programs;
- New research on troubling enrollment trends at community colleges; and
- Federal policy changes allowing greater flexibility in the TANF work requirements.

## Activities and Publications of the Student Parent Success Initiative

- **SPSI will host a webinar on Wednesday, July 25<sup>th</sup> at 2:00 pm E.T.: "Federal Supports for Low-Income Student Parents: Spotlight on the Pregnancy Assistance Fund."** The webinar will feature state and local Pregnancy Assistance Fund grantees from Minnesota and Virginia and will focus on early program lessons and strategies used by grantees who work to encourage and support college education among young parents. For more information, and to register for the webinar, click [here](#).
- In advance of the webinar, IWPR published a [fact sheet](#) highlighting key features and design elements of the Pregnancy Assistance Fund operating in Minnesota and Virginia.

## Student Parents and Supports in the News

- ["Want to help teen moms? Enforce Title IX."](#) MSNBC, June 20, 2012.
- ["What's Driving College Costs Higher?"](#) NPR, June 26, 2012.
- ["Judge's Ruling on 'Gainful Employment' Gives Each Side Something to Cheer."](#) *Chronicle of Higher Education*, July 2, 2012.
- ["Great Expectations."](#) *MINNESOTA Magazine*, Summer 2012.

## Legislative and Policy Round Up

- **Congress reaches deal on student loan interest rates.** On June 29, as part of a larger package of legislation, Congress voted to extend the rate freeze on subsidized federal student loans for one year, preventing an increase from 3.4 percent to 6.8 percent that had been scheduled to go into effect on July 1. For more information, click [here](#).
- **U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) announces new state TANF waivers to encourage innovative approaches in workforce attachment.** On July 12, HHS announced a new opportunity for states to apply for waivers to the federal TANF work requirements, which would allow state officials to explore new and innovative approaches for helping recipients prepare for, find, and retain employment. For more information, click [here](#).

## Other Research and Resources

- [Recorded Webinar: Weighing the Evidence: A Conversation with Community College Presidents on Using Research to Support Student Success Outcomes](#), American Youth Policy Forum, May 18, 2012.
- [Recorded Webinar: Increasing College and Career Readiness through Dual Enrollment: Research, Policies, and Effective Practices](#), American Youth Policy Forum, June 8, 2012.
- [Closing the Door, Increasing the Gap: Who's not going to \(community\) college?](#) Center for the Future of Higher Education Policy, April 2012.
- [A Pregnancy Test for Schools: The Impact of Education Laws on Pregnant and Parenting Students](#), National Women's Law Center, June 18, 2012.
- [Higher Education: Improved Tax Information Could Help Families Pay for College](#), U.S. Government Accountability Office, May 18, 2012.

# Student Parent Programs in the Spotlight

## [Access and Success Program, St. Catherine University](#)

For almost 20 years, St. Catherine University, located in Minnesota's Minneapolis-St. Paul area, has offered dedicated programs and services to student parents enrolled in both its two-year or four-year undergraduate programs, as well both its day, evening, and night and weekend students. Known as Access and Success, is staffed by social workers and the program offers a variety of services and supports to student parents, including emergency loans and grants, child care and housing referrals, laptop loans, mentoring and peer support opportunities, even lactation rooms and child-friendly study areas. More recently, in an effort to reverse lower retention rates among student parents enrolled in daytime classes, the program rolled out an intensive case management program, Steps to Success. Steps to Success participants meet regularly with program staff to proactively address potential barriers to their academic success. They receive an incentive stipend/scholarship for agreeing to maintain a certain grade point average and participating in campus leadership activities. Last year, the program interacted with 60 percent, or approximately 500, of the student parents enrolled at St. Catherine's, which has a 79 percent retention rate for student parents overall. Moreover, program staff report positive early returns within the Steps to Success cohort, with participants graduating at a higher rate than the comparison group.

## 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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