Data as a Flashlight:
Shining Light on the Basic Needs of Parenting Students
February 21, 2024
10:00 – 11:00 am
I. Welcome & Introductions
II. Parenting Students: Basic Needs & College Affordability
III. Student Panel and Question & Answers
IV. Next Steps & Close
Presenters

The Education Trust–West

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Our Mission

The Education Trust—West (Ed Trust—West) is committed to advancing policies and practices to dismantle the racial and economic barriers embedded in the California education system.

Through our research and advocacy, Ed Trust—West improves racial equity in education, engages diverse communities dedicated to education equity and justice, and increases political and public will to build an education system where students of color and multilingual learners, especially those experiencing poverty, will thrive.
Bold Policy and Advocacy Higher Ed Platform

- Equitable Placement and Completion
- Dual Enrollment
- Financial Aid Access & Reform
- Mental Health Supports
- Parenting Students
EdTrust–West Research & Advocacy

EdTrust–West Research & Advocacy

BLENT SPOT FROM THE FIELD: IDENTIFYING AND SUPPORTING STUDENT PARENTS AT FRESNO STATE

California State University, Fresno is home to over 25,000 students primarily from the city, both Hispanic Serving Institution (HSI), Asian American Native American Pacific Islander (AA/NAPI) students. An estimated 20% are raising one or more children age 18 or younger.

Trends in student and family demographics and research have shown that parents face unique challenges in balancing their education with family responsibilities. In response, Fresno State has developed a comprehensive approach to support student parents.

Student Parents Grant

While the CSU application process provides some financial support, there is no systematic approach in place to meet the needs of families after enrollment. The Fresno State Student Parents Grant was designed to address this gap by providing dedicated funding for student parents.

Recommendations

The COVID-19 pandemic has led to school closures and economic disruptions, and as a result, many marginalized students are experiencing increased stress and financial strain. The student-parent population is particularly vulnerable, and Innovative educational programs and partnerships are needed to support them. The Education Trust–West recommends that policymakers and educators work together to implement programs and strategies that support student parents, ensuring they have the resources and support they need to succeed in their education.

Campus can improve access and increase access to needed resources that target parenting and enrolled student programs by:

- Establishing dedicated institutional resources to help parents and students navigate campus
- Providing workshops, seminars, and support groups for student parents
- Creating partnerships with local organizations and community groups
- Ensuring that student parents have access to necessary resources and support

Parenting and student education are often intertwined, and resources for student parents are crucial in supporting their success.

South Gate: a new community college campus designed specifically for student parents

South Gate is an innovative model that addresses the unique needs of student parents by providing a supportive and accessible environment.

South Gate offers:

- Access to academic programs and support services
- Affordable housing options
- Childcare services
- Employment resources

South Gate is an example of a successful approach to supporting student parents and is a valuable example for other institutions to consider.

Conclusion

The student-parent population is a growing and important segment of the educational landscape. By addressing their unique needs and challenges, we can ensure that all students have the opportunity to succeed and thrive in higher education.
The California Alliance for Student Parent Success (The Alliance)

NEW RELEASE: THE ALLIANCE’S POLICY AGENDA

CALIFORNIA ALLIANCE FOR STUDENT PARENT SUCCESS

Mission

Through research, policy, advocacy, capacity building, and community engagement, the California Alliance for Student Parent Success supports the postsecondary success and comprehensive well-being of California student parents and their families.

Vision

We envision a California where higher education systems equitably support and empower student parents on their paths to earning meaningful credentials and securing gainful employment. The California Alliance for Student Parent Success commits to driving systems change and advocates for investing in resources and services that propel student parents and their families forward. We work to ensure that student parents and their families are recognized and supported, effectively bridging equity gaps and strengthening systems that will enable current and future generations to truly thrive.

While we use “student parent” for clarity, we recognize this population has many names, such as “parenting students” and “students with dependents,” and honor all students in this community.
What do we know about parenting students in California?

Demographics:
- 400,000+ undergraduate and graduate parenting students in California
- Black, Native American, and Pacific Islander students have higher rates of parenting compared to nonparenting peers

College completion:
- Parenting students earn higher grades than nonparenting students, but stop-out of school at higher rates

College affordability:
- Parenting students pay an average of $7,600 annually per child for child care and food costs—more than the annual full-time statewide tuition and fees at California Community Colleges and The California State University
Basic needs:

- 73% of parenting students are housing insecure compared to 48% of nonparenting students
- 79% of parenting students are food insecure compared to 66% of nonparenting students
- **Nationally,** 30% of parenting students experiencing basic needs insecurity work more than 30 hours per week, *exceeding the UC and CSU recommendation of working no more than 20 hours a week*
What don’t we know about parenting students in California?

- What intersecting identities do they hold?
- What brought them to the institution?
- What are their academic pathways?
- What financial aid are they receiving?
- What institutional supports are needed?
- Do they have familial (chosen or otherwise) support?
- Do they know of helpful campus services? Are they accessing those services?
- Do they have supportive staff and faculty around them?
- Are they involved on campus?
- What are their academic outcomes?
- Do they feel welcome and at-home on campus?
Collecting data on student parents is a form of educational and racial justice.
Data: A Flashlight and a Key

Data helps make the invisible visible

Parenting students’ basic needs

Data unlocks resources for institutions and opens doors currently closed to students
AB 2881

A new law, passed in 2022, requires California State University and California Community Colleges to implement priority course enrollment for student parents starting this year (schools must have put a process in place by July 1, 2023).

• AB 2881 does not explicitly require data collection, but some data has to be collected to identify parenting students – an opportunity for progress on data collection and utilization.
The Greater Accessibility, Information, Notice, and Support (GAINS) for Student Parents Act would enhance financial aid access for student parents and require college campuses to collect and report information on student parent success.

- Require automatic financial aid cost of attendance adjustments for student parents
- Require institutions to uniformly collect and report data on student parents to system offices
- Share student parent data from higher education system offices with the Office of Cradle-to-Career Data
College Affordability
There is no state in which a student parent can work 10 hours per week at the minimum wage and afford both tuition and child care at a public college or university.
Accessing Financial Aid

Why is the #Allin4FinancialAid Policy important?

In Ed Trust—West’s *Hidden Figures* brief, we estimated that $550 million in federal and state aid could be left on the table if California schools and districts don’t do more to reduce racial equity gaps in financial aid completion rates. California ranks number one across the nation in unused aid, leaving the most Pell Grant dollars on the table due in part to low financial aid application completions. These funds are critical to enabling more students from low-income communities to access higher education or vocational certificates.

### Timeline: California Efforts to Increase Completion

- **2001**: BLU Educational Foundation launches local financial aid campaign to include college affordability and access in the Inland Empire.
- **2012**: Riverside County starts a Race to Submit challenge to increase the rate of completed financial aid applications.
- **2013**: The Education Trust West creates a dashboard to track FAFSA/CADAA completion across CA.
- **2017**: CSAC launches “Race to Submit” dashboard to track FAFSA/CADAA completion modeled after Riverside County’s successful dashboard.
- **2019**: First attempt at statewide universal FAFSA/CADAA, AB 367 (Reyes), fails short of votes needed to pass.
- **2021**: AB 469 (Reyes) passes, complementing the budget act to enact universal FAFSA/CADAA in CA. The budget act also establishes the California’s DRIVE data system and makes the CA College Guidance Initiative (CCGI) data informed tools free to all 6-12th grade students in CA.
- **2022**: SB 737 (Murri) modernizes Cal-SAGP to include financial aid applications support in it. The bill leads a coalition to pilot FAFSA/CADAA implementation at four Bay Area high schools.
- **2024**: AB 469 goes into effect.
- **2024**: CSAC Launches All In to provide resources to educators, students, and families. Financial Aid for All website launches first to support districts with AB469 implementation.
Opportunities to be seized

Cal Grant Reform

If funded, the Cal Grant Equity Framework will:

- Remove barriers for students who make an average income of $36,000 and currently don't have access to Cal Grant
- Streamline the Cal Grant programs into two programs
- Align eligibility with the federal Pell Grant
- **Expand access awards for foster youth and student parents to use for non-tuition expenses**
  - Grants like the Students with Dependent Children (SWDC) will reach more than 44,000 new student parents
- Enable more students to apply for CalFresh
Parenting Student Panel

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Student Parent, Mount San Antonio College

Lucerito Lopez
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Student Parent, University of California, Riverside
Parenting Student Panel Questions

1. What are the basic needs that you believe to be most critical for the success of parenting students in California?

2. What support services or policies have impacted your academic journey and well-being?

3. Looking forward, what are the areas where more work is needed to ensure that the basic needs of parenting students are met?
A special thank you to our funders: