

May 8, 2025

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Senator Omar Fateh
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Dear Conference Committee Members:

On behalf of The Hope Center for Student Basic Needs (“The Hope Center”) at Temple University, I would like to express our strong support for the **Minnesota Student Parent Support Initiative**. The State Legislature should restore the full \$6 million in biennial funding to this timely and urgently needed program.

Nationally, nearly one-in-five undergraduate and nearly one-in-four graduate students are parenting a dependent child while enrolled in classes, representing nearly four million students.¹ In Minnesota, nearly a quarter (23%) of students are parents. Parenting students earn grades comparable to non-parenting students but complete college at much lower rates, reflecting non-academic challenges that often undermine student success.²

According to the 2023-24 Hope Center Student Basic Needs Survey, 74% of parenting students reported experiencing food insecurity, housing insecurity, or homelessness—a rate 19 percentage points higher than non-parenting students.³ Additionally, nearly 1 in 5 parenting students reported that they had missed class due to childcare issues three or more times in the previous academic term while 43% of parenting students who stopped out and subsequently re-enrolled in college reported that one of their reasons for leaving was due to childcare and/or other caregiving responsibilities.

In the first year of funding, Minnesota Student Parent Support Initiative grants have provided critical support to pregnant and parenting students by creating and/or expanding campus-based child care and increasing access to community-based providers at a time when many students struggle to afford these services.

Ensuring continued state funding to address the shortage of child care for parenting students will help more students complete a degree or credential and enter the workforce at a time when federal resources are woefully insufficient, and as institutions of higher education face steep cuts to existing federal programs. In Minnesota, just 12 percent of federal Child Care Development

¹ Author calculations from U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, National Postsecondary Student Aid Study: 2020.

² Anderson, A. & Green, A (December 2022). [Roadmap for change to support pregnant and parenting students](#). Urban Institute.

³ The Hope Center for Student Basic Needs. (2025, February). [2023-2024 Student Basic Needs Survey Report](#).

Fund resources support parents enrolled in education and training activities.⁴ Without federal support, colleges have found on-campus child care challenging to sustain. Despite increased need, the number of child care centers at public colleges have declined in recent decades.⁵ Ensuring institutions and students have sustained funding for child care funding is critical to parenting student success.

The initiative also allows institutions to provide a range of essential services and basic needs to students, including mental and physical health care, well-child visits, child development activities, parenting student support groups, academic advising, and emergency funds. Allowing institutions to tailor services to their students' needs will further Minnesota's goals to improve student success while offering institutions the flexibility to use state funding effectively.

Finally, the initiative reflects the fierce commitment to supporting parenting students shared by the Minnesota Office of Higher Education and other state agencies, institutions, and stakeholders. Ensuring the basic needs security of all students in higher education requires collaboration across government and between public and private sectors, especially for pregnant and parenting students who must navigate multiple services.

The Minnesota Student Parent Support Initiative represents a significant step forward in addressing the needs of students whose daily struggles are rarely appreciated. Supporting pregnant and parenting students and their children is a wise and timely investment in student success and economic growth. The Hope Center therefore encourages the Legislature to restore the full \$6 million in biennial funding to this vital initiative.

Sincerely,



Dr. Anne E. Lundquist
Director and Assistant Professor
The Hope Center for Student Basic Needs

cc: Senator Aric Putnam
Senator Zach Duckworth
Representative Kristin Robbins
Representative Nathan Coulter
Governor Tim Walz
Commissioner Dennis Olson

⁴ U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. (2025, January). [*FY 2023 Preliminary Data Table 10 - Reasons for Receiving Care, Average Monthly Percentage of Families*](#).

⁵ The Hope Center for Student Basic Needs. (2023, February). [*Congress Needs to Address the Child Care Crisis for Parenting Students. Here's How*](#).