

September 2026

Dear Education Leader:

We are the [Coalition for Pregnant and Parenting Students Advocacy](#). We join you in optimism for the school year just commenced. As you welcome your students' return to school, we ask you to be mindful that youth and adults who are pregnant and parenting are among your student populations. Your pregnant and parenting students have unique experiences and circumstances that can present barriers to their educational achievement. Yet you will find student parents among the most motivated to complete their education given the caregiver-provider roles they will assume or have assumed.

We issue this Open Letter, timed to coincide with National Student Parent Month, to elevate awareness that your districts, schools, centers, institutions, campuses, and educational programs and activities (hereafter “educational entities”) have both obligations and opportunities to ensure that pregnant and parenting students enroll, attend, and complete their educations. We urge you to take action now to protect these students' access to education.

Fully Adhere to Legal Rights of Student Parents

Preeminent among federal laws establishing education rights of pregnant students is Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 (20 U.S.C. §§ 1681–1688) and its corresponding regulation (34 C.F.R. Part 106). Among their provisions, Title IX makes it illegal to exclude students who may be, are, or have been pregnant from an educational program. This protection includes students' medical conditions related to pregnancy. Pregnant students also must have equal access to classes and activities. If the educational program has special services for students with temporary medical conditions, those same services must be offered to pregnant students. Educational programs must excuse absences due to pregnancy or childbirth for as long as the student's physician says is necessary. When students return to school, the educational program must allow them to return to the same academic and extracurricular status they had before leaving, and to make up missed educational work. This summary is non-exhaustive. Also, your state laws or district/institution policies may be more protective of pregnant and parenting students than Title IX. We recommend you confer with your entity's legal resources for full instruction.

The Coalition for Pregnant and Parenting Students Advocacy urges you to ensure that your educational entity and employees within it are, at minimum, following Title IX and other federal, state, and local requirements.

Implement Additional Reasonable Measures for Student Parents

Civil rights laws such as Title IX establish a baseline for protecting individuals. There is much more that educational entities can and should do to remove the obstacles that may impede

student parent participation and success in education. Among the additional reasonable measures widely recommended by student parents themselves and those of us who advocate with and learn from them:

- Specifically state in your published notices of nondiscrimination that sex discrimination includes discrimination based on sex stereotypes, sex characteristics, pregnancy or related conditions, sexual orientation, gender identity, and parental, family, caregiver, or marital status.
- Advise your entire student population and employees of their Title IX rights, the process for filing a complaint of discrimination, and the responsibilities of your entity's Title IX coordinator, and how to contact them. In doing so, name the specific Title IX rights for pregnant and parenting students, as this student group is likely unaware that pregnancy and pregnancy-related conditions fall within the law's scope.
- Ensure these students maintain or are restored to their enrolled status and to housing, financial assistance, scholarships, and other benefits coverage during medically necessary leave.
- Provide lactating students reasonable breaks and clean, private, and equipped non-bathroom spaces for expressing breastmilk or feedings, similar to what is already required for employees under the Fair Labor Standards Act and the PUMP for Nursing Mothers Act.
- Allow students and employees to express milk or breastfeed in places other than designated lactation spaces, if they wish.
- Ensure parenting and caregiving students have an affirmative right to reasonable modifications and medical leave on par with pregnant students.
- Establish a mechanism, such as an office or employee position(s), for assisting student parents in obtaining supportive services. Receipt of supportive services, such as childcare, nutrition assistance, healthcare, transportation, and legal aid, increases the likelihood of student parents completing their education.
- Ensure that pregnant or parenting student participation in any separate educational program or activity is voluntary, and that the separate program or activity is substantially equal in purpose, scope, and quality to those offered to students who are not pregnant or parenting or have pregnancy related conditions.

The Coalition for Pregnant and Parenting Students Advocacy observes that the reasonable measures identified above can be implemented rapidly. We urge you to get started.

Set Ambitious Institutional Goals for Supporting Student Parents

One of the greatest barriers to a student parent's completion of their education are socioeconomic conditions. Educational entities can help alleviate some of those obstacles.

Student parents most frequently cite lack of child care as a barrier to education completion—whether that be child care deserts, unaffordability of services, difficulty securing child care

financial assistance, or transportation and distance between the student's educational setting and their child's care arrangement.

It is essential that educational entities offer and arrange campus child care services for student parents. Access to child care on campus and in schools would simplify student parents' daily lives, saving time and expense on transportation, increasing parent's on-time arrival to classes, and facilitating parent-child bonding during breaks from learning. We recognize that establishing school-based child care is not without challenge. It requires space, financing, compliance with child care facility and personnel licensure, and more. But equal access to education is non-negotiable, and student parents should not be left behind. Educational entities should pursue school-based child care to remove this significant barrier to student parent educational success.

Second, educational entities that offer school-based housing must examine their inventories and policies to determine whether there is sufficient family housing. We understand that this requires space, financing, and compliance with housing requirements. But in order to ensure that student parents' access to education is protected, educational entities that already provide or arrange student housing should also accommodate students with children and their families.

If you would like to learn more about some of these policies, and the benefits they create for students, families, and schools, we encourage you to review the Coalition for Pregnant and Parenting Students Advocacy's Policy Toolkit. The [State Policy Toolkit for Supporting Pregnant, Postpartum, and Parenting Students](#) is designed to equip stakeholders to advocate for and enact robust policies that support pregnant, postpartum, and parenting students in every stage of their educational journey. While many of the recommendations are for state-level legislative action, the policies can also be implemented by educational institutions seeking to better support student parents.

The Coalition for Pregnant and Parenting Students Advocacy looks forward to celebrating your progress in ensuring that no student is left behind in their education just for being a parent.

Signed,

Coalition for Pregnant and Parenting Students Advocacy