

Ensuring Success in School Task Force's Report Released Meeting Set to Determine Next Steps

Newly released, the Ensuring Success in School Task Force's [final report to the Illinois General Assembly](#) focuses on barriers to school success and completion faced by elementary and secondary students who are parents, expectant parents, or survivors of domestic or sexual violence. The report recommends ways to ensure that these students can stay in school, stay safe while in school, and successfully complete their education.

Background

In 2003 a coalition of education, youth, and violence prevention advocates, led by the Sargent Shriver National Center on Poverty Law, came together to address the growing dropout and push-out crisis in Illinois. The coalition focused its attention on issues faced by students who are parents, expectant parents, and survivors of domestic or sexual violence, issues that contribute to the crisis of school noncompletion but receive insufficient attention and disproportionately, though by no means exclusively, affect young women and girls. The coalition drafted a bill to promote safety and school success and completion for these students, and this bill was introduced by Rep. Karen Yarbrough in 2005 and again in 2007. The legislation was enacted into law as [Public Act 95-0558](#) in 2007. The law created the Ensuring Success in School Task Force (and also mandated related training for school personnel). This task force was charged with examining the issues of safety and school success and completion and recommending countermeasures against barriers to school attendance, successful school performance and completion faced by students who are parents, expectant parents, or survivors of domestic or sexual violence.

The task force held five public hearings in 2008 and 2009 in Quincy, Elgin, Springfield, Mount Vernon, and Chicago. It collected written and oral testimony from students, parents, advocates, school personnel, and other service providers. It consulted with experts in the field and researched best practices and existing policies in Illinois and other states.

The Report

The Ensuring Success in School Task Force Final Report to the Illinois General Assembly is the final product of the task force's work and encompasses all of their findings and recommendations for how to support elementary and secondary students who are parents, expectant parents, or survivors of domestic or sexual violence. It was submitted to the Illinois General Assembly last June.

The report is available online [here](#). You can download the full report, or you can download individual components, such as the executive summary and the appendix, which contains an extensive annotated bibliography.

Next Steps

Now that the work of the Ensuring Success in School Task Force is complete, the Shriver Center will be convening a meeting of stakeholders to develop a strategic action plan based on the findings and recommendations of the report (and curriculum development for the mandated training) to continue the work of supporting students who are parents, expectant parents, or survivors of domestic or sexual violence. If you are interested in participating in the first meeting, which has been set for Tuesday, September 7, from 2:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m., or in future meetings, please contact Wendy Pollack at 312-368-3303 or wendypollack@povertylaw.org.

For more background information on the Ensuring Success in School Initiative, see [*The Ensuring Success in School Act: Promoting School Success and Safety for Young People Who Are Parents, Expectant Parents, or Victims of Domestic or Sexual Violence*](#). The full text of the legislation as originally introduced in 2005 is available at ilga.gov. You may also contact Wendy Pollack about the legislation and the Ensuring Success in School Initiative.

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