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# Navigating Scholarship and Parenthood: Supporting Young Student Parents in Higher Education

Findings From the Evaluation of the Generation Hope Scholar Program

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## Findings From the Evaluation of the Generation Hope Scholar Program

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# Introduction



**Source:** Scholar 2

Today, one in five college undergraduates is a parent, navigating the challenges of parenthood while managing the demands of higher education. Students who first became parents as adolescents face additional obstacles such as social stigma and economic challenges. This experience of being a student parent is not simply a barrier to overcome but can also be viewed as a motivator. Programming that meets the unique needs of students who became parents as adolescents is critical to supporting them and their children. This brief summarizes findings from an evaluation of the Generation Hope Scholar Program, a program designed to meet the unique needs of student parents.

Today, one in five college undergraduates is a parent, balancing the demands of coursework with their responsibilities at home (Anderson et al., 2024; Reichlin-Cruse, et al., 2019). Student parents come from all backgrounds and represent a broad spectrum of experiences and aspirations (Cornett, 2023). They face distinct challenges navigating higher education while parenting. Although research shows student parents complete college at lower rates than nonparenting students, they also outperform nonparenting peers in their first semester of college (DeMario, 2019; Sick et al., 2023).

For adolescent parents who transition into higher education, the challenges are often magnified, stemming from societal stigmas, economic constraints, and time poverty. Yet, their stories remain largely untold, with limited research shedding light on their resilience and determination. On the surface, the story of the adolescent student parent may not look promising with some research indicating less than 2 percent of teen mothers completing a college degree by age 30 (Shuger, 2012). Yet despite barriers, adolescent student parents exhibit remarkable perseverance. Many find their roles as caregivers more of a motivation to push through challenges, seeing education as a way to secure a better future for their families (Goodman et al., 2023; James, 2018). The experiences of being a student parent are not simply deficits or barriers to overcome. These complex experiences highlight the importance of specific types of support necessary to meet their specific needs, so their drive to succeed is supported.

The Generation Hope Scholar Program is designed to meet the unique needs of student parents who became parents before age 20. It was created to provide them and their children with opportunities to succeed. Over the last 15 years they have served student parents, called Scholars, and their children with holistic support to help them achieve educational and life goals.

In 2020, The Annie E. Casey Foundation (Foundation) partnered with Generation Hope and James Bell Associates (JBA/we) to conduct an evaluation of the Generation Hope Scholar Program, designed to understand how program services supported the lives of Scholars. This report summarizes the evaluation findings.

## Generation Hope Overview

Generation Hope is a nonprofit dedicated to supporting student parents in college through direct services, national advocacy, and research. Its Scholar Program sites in the Washington, D.C., region, Greater New Orleans area, and the Dallas-Fort Worth metroplex provide mentoring, tuition assistance, peer support, and wraparound services to college students who became parents as teens to help them earn their degrees.

In 2011, Generation Hope served its first cohort of seven student parents, called Scholars. In school year 2024, Generation Hope served 168 Scholars in the Washington, D.C., region (Maryland, Virginia, and Washington, D.C.). Generation Hope has continued to expand, now including the New Orleans and Dallas-Fort Worth regions. [To be eligible](#), student parents must be or have been an adolescent parent, currently 25 years old or younger at application, and actively involved in their child's life. They also need to be attending or planning to attend a nonprofit college and working toward an associate or bachelor's degree while taking at least six college credits per semester.

Generation Hope pairs each Scholar with a Hope Coach. The Hope Coach is a Generation Hope staff member who provides holistic case-management, helping Scholars navigate school responsibilities while parenting; access resources like tutoring, and childcare; and stay on track to graduation. Additionally, Generation Hope matches Scholars with a Mentor. Mentors are volunteers who provide Scholars with a caring, committed adult with whom the Scholar can share concerns, talk about both academic and personal challenges, and celebrate successes. Generation Hope also facilitates connections through family-friendly events and an annual conference. Student parents can remain in the Scholar Program for multiple years while they continue to work toward graduation.

This report focuses on the evaluation of Generation Hope's Scholar Program. In addition to the Scholar Program, Generation Hope offers other programs that support its mission of removing barriers to student-parent success. Next Generation Academy in Washington, D.C., provides two-generation support for both Scholars and their children, including home visits, parenting resources,

peer networking, and funding for childcare and enrichment—helping Scholars' children enter kindergarten at higher levels of school readiness. Through FamilyU, Generation Hope provides technical assistance to colleges and higher education institutions so they can better meet the needs of student parents. Generation Hope also provides technical assistance to institutions nationwide and works with student parents to advocate for policies that best support their success. The collective programming is aimed at achieving Generation Hope's vision that ["all adolescent parents and student parents, and their children, have every opportunity to succeed and are empowered to create a better future for themselves, our community, and our world."](#)

## Evaluation Overview

The evaluation of Generation Hope was designed to explore the experiences of Scholars enrolled in the Washington, D.C., Scholar Program. JBA worked with the Foundation, Generation Hope, and a Scholar Advisory Committee (SAC; see callout) to inform the direction and design of the mixed-methods study. JBA combined quantitative and qualitative data to understand how Scholar outcomes were associated with participation in Generation Hope services.

### Scholar Advisory Committee

The Scholar Advisory Committee (SAC) was composed of 12 Scholars who participated in Generation Hope and used their experiences as student parents to help shape all phases of the evaluation. Over the course of 2 years, SAC members partnered with the research team to ensure the evaluation accurately reflected the needs and realities of student parents. They reviewed recruitment materials, refined survey and interview questions, piloted data collection tools, and provided input on analytic priorities and dissemination products. SAC members also played an active role in interpreting findings and advising on how to present data in ways that honored student parent voices. In many cases, input from the Scholar Advisory Committee shifted the research team's perspective on the evaluation process and how information was communicated.

SAC members also participated in a consented focus group and the Student Parent Voice Project—sharing creative submissions like poetry, photos, and narratives that added depth and context. Many Scholars also helped facilitate SAC meetings and group discussions. SAC members were compensated for their time, insights, and leadership. Compensation covered their monthly participation, pre- and postwork activities, and additional roles such as cofacilitation. The deep and sustained involvement of the SAC strengthened the quality, relevance, and impact of the evaluation.

## Guiding Questions

The study focused on participant experiences and outcomes across three domains: progress toward graduation, supportive relationships, and parenting responsibilities. At the start of the evaluation design, the Foundation, Generation Hope, and JBA acknowledged that progress toward graduation would be a key outcome. During further discussions with Generation Hope and the SAC, measuring supportive relationships and how Scholars balance responsibilities emerged as additional factors for exploration. These discussions highlighted that pathways to graduation are not simply about grades or credits earned, but also about the roles of support and supportive relationships as prioritized in Generation Hope's approach.

With this background and collaborative input, JBA set out to answer the following questions:

- What is known generally about Scholars and their interactions with Generation Hope?
- How are Scholars making progress toward graduation?
- How do supportive relationships change for Scholars while in Generation Hope?
- How does Generation Hope support Scholars in balancing parenting responsibilities?

## Data Collection

With Generation Hope's assistance, JBA collected data from multiple sources in English and Spanish during the spring of 2024 (see appendix A for technical methodology). In addition to talking with Scholars, Hope Coaches and Mentors were interviewed to gather their perspectives. The data collection methods are described below.

- **Scholar survey (87 responses)** included 102 questions across seven sections: academic history, progress toward graduation, academic beliefs, supportive relationships, parenting responsibilities, experiences with Generation Hope, and demographic information. The survey included several existing validated measures and new questions developed specifically for the study.
- **Individual Scholar interviews (35 Scholars)** were semi-structured interviews with questions exploring key domains, including academic progress, social networks, parenting responsibilities, and the influence of systemic factors on experiences.
- **SAC focus group** (6 participants) included a series of questions to gather participant reactions to preliminary data.
- **Student Parent Voice Project** was a multimedia research project where SAC members created submissions centered around two themes: challenges (8 submissions) and motivation (6 submissions).

- **Group Hope Coach interviews (10 Hope Coaches)** were semi-structured and included questions exploring domains such as the Hope Coach role, relationships with Scholars, and the Mentor-Scholar relationship.
- **Group Mentor interviews (17 Mentors)** were semi-structured and included questions exploring building relationships with Scholars, supporting them, and their accomplishments.

As measures were being developed, we aligned quantitative and qualitative measures wherever possible to triangulate analyses across the different data types and use the most rigorous methods available.

## Findings

### What Is Known Generally About Scholars and Their Interactions With Generation Hope?

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*“My kiddos are my main motivation to go to college. They are my everything, and I want them to be proud of their mom and know that you can always achieve your goal as long as you have a positive mentality and you never give up.”*

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This sentiment resonated deeply with the Scholars engaged in Generation Hope, as 87 percent reported their children are a key motivating factor in their journey toward academic and personal success. Although they may face barriers, Scholars reflected that being a parent “lifts them up, not pulls them down,” and drives them to overcome challenges.

The study revealed a variety of Scholar backgrounds and experiences within the Generation Hope network. Scholars were on average just under 24 years old, and 95 percent surveyed were female. The participants were a diverse group: 43 percent Hispanic, Latino, or Spanish and 45 percent Black or African American. Many juggled responsibilities such as employment and raising children alongside their academic pursuits. Nearly a third (31 percent) surveyed were employed full time, and an additional 30 percent part time. Marital statuses varied, highlighting the individuality and unique circumstances of each Scholar.

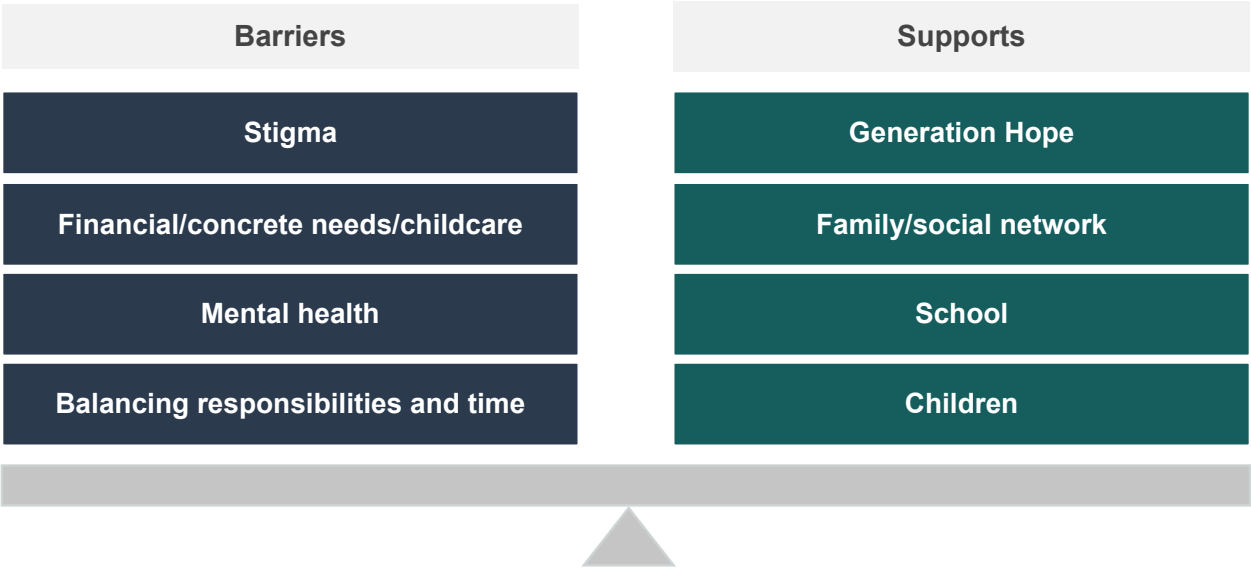


Source: Scholar 7



While Scholars face barriers such as financial strain, time constraints, and balancing multiple responsibilities, they also benefit from a strong ecosystem of support to navigate these challenges (see exhibit 1). Generation Hope plays a pivotal role within this ecosystem, offering extensive resources tailored to Scholar needs.

**Exhibit 1. Examples of Barriers and Supports**



Many Scholars were initially drawn to Generation Hope because it provided tuition assistance. Additional supports they expected or hoped to find were a supportive community that understood the needs of student parents and professional networking connections. As they became more familiar with Generation Hope, Scholars discovered the program exceeded their original expectations and expressed overall satisfaction with the resources they received. There were some mixed feelings about certain aspects, such as events and probation processes. In interviews, they openly discussed the various barriers and challenges they experienced as student parents but also raised ways in which Generation Hope supported them through these challenges.

**Facing Stigma**

“[My professor in virtual class] was very strong about having your camera on and stuff like that. And I explained several times that . . . if I go off camera, it's not because I want to be off camera. It's because I have to breastfeed my baby. And every time I would turn off my camera, she would repeat the same thing, ‘If your cameras aren't on, your attendance won't be counted.’”

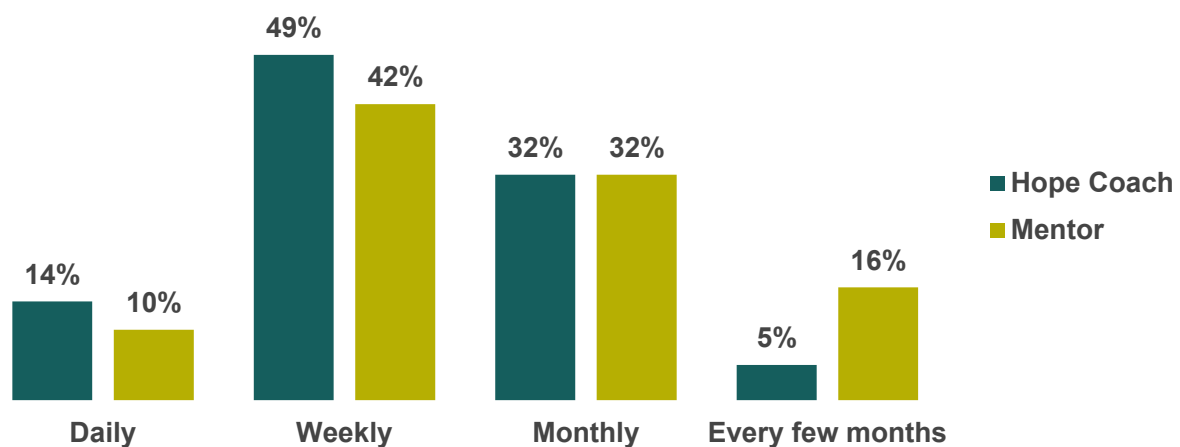
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*“I do suffer from anxiety and depression, and I've been vocal with the team . . . I'm seeing [a therapist] through Generation Hope. . . . As soon as I became a Scholar, I got acquainted with her, and I've been getting services ever since. And there have been many times where emergencies have come up, like mental health, and I've been able to get help with that.”*

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An important aspect of Scholars' interactions with Generation Hope is the consistent and open communication they maintain with Hope Coaches and Mentors. Frequent communication serves as a critical factor in keeping Scholars on track and enabling them to stay organized and engaged in Generation Hope and school. Most Scholars (63 percent) reported communicating with their Hope Coaches at least weekly (see exhibit 2). Over 50 percent communicated with their Mentors weekly or more. Hope Coaches and Mentors also reflected on the importance of communication as an important motivator to keep Scholars going, recognizing that even a simple text can help to remind a Scholar, “There’s a light at the end of the tunnel when you are balancing all those things.” Through this partnership, Scholars can access resources and build connections that inspire their progress and perseverance.

### Exhibit 2. Communication With Hope Coaches and Mentors



Overall, Scholars reported Generation Hope fosters a nonjudgmental environment where they feel heard and supported. Scholars appreciated the extensive career resources and networking opportunities, which provided valuable professional connections. In addition to Generation Hope, Scholars lean on their family and social networks to navigate the challenges of balancing their student and parent roles. Ultimately, Scholars are motivated by their children to graduate, achieve personal growth, and advance their careers.

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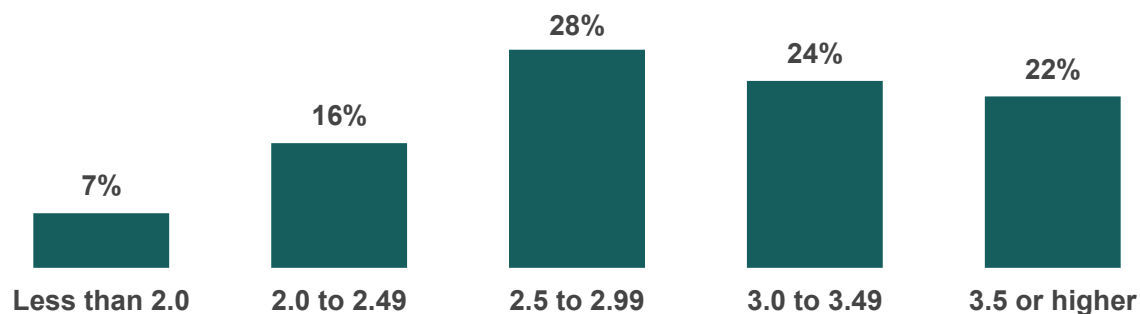
*“My decision to complete college is driven by a desire for self-improvement and empowerment. By obtaining a degree, I aim to unlock better career opportunities, enhance my quality of life, and ultimately provide a solid foundation for my daughters' future.”*

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## How Are Scholars Making Progress Toward Graduation?

Scholars made significant strides toward achieving their graduation goals, demonstrating both academic success and personal resilience. Nearly half maintained a grade point average (GPA) of 3.0 or higher (see exhibit 3). They also reported on their understanding of the credits required to graduate within their individual programs, with 62 percent knowing how many credits were required to graduate, emphasizing their focus and understanding of the path ahead. Additionally, 83 percent had declared a major: nursing (18 percent), criminal justice (14 percent), and psychology (8 percent) being the most common.

### Exhibit 3. Scholar-Reported Current Cumulative GPA



Continuing enrollment was another key indicator of persistence with 87 percent planning to enroll the following semester and 8 percent graduating.

Research suggests having a mentor can support students in many ways, including persistence in school (Baier et al., 2016). In the survey, Scholars reported on their perceptions of having mentor support for academic pursuits related to college issues. When asked whom they considered when completing this mentoring scale, the most frequent responses were—

- Family member (64 percent)
- Hope Coach (53 percent)
- Friend (48 percent)
- Generation Hope Mentor (38 percent)

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*“My parents play a pivotal role in my pursuit of higher education. Witnessing their struggles due to limited educational opportunities has instilled in me a profound desire to fulfill their dreams through my own achievements. Their sacrifices serve . . . a constant reminder of the transformative power of education in breaking cycles of hardship and creating a brighter future for generations to come.”*

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A strong sense of academic self-efficacy was also evident among Scholars. On average, they expressed confidence in their abilities to overcome academic challenges and achieve their goals (see exhibit 4).<sup>1</sup>

#### **Exhibit 4. Average Score on Scholar-Reported Items Assessing Their Academic Self-Efficacy**



The SAC highlighted that mentor support helped them feel confident academically, which led to the exploration of the mentor relationship and academic self-efficacy. Mentor support was a key contributor to academic self-efficacy. Scholars who perceived higher levels of mentoring support also reported stronger confidence in their academic abilities.<sup>2</sup> Based on how the mentoring scale was administered, we cannot say the Hope Coach or Mentor solely influenced the perception of

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<sup>1</sup> Self-efficacy was measured by the General Academic Self-Efficacy Scale (GASE). See methodology for further information about the measure.

<sup>2</sup> Scores on The College Student Mentoring Scale were statistically significantly associated with predictor of the GASE ( $p < .001$ ), controlling for race/ethnicity, employment status, marital status, and years in Generation Hope.

mentoring support. But Scholars did report while they completed the scale, family and Hope Coaches were considered the most frequently. The SAC shared insights about this finding, suggesting since Scholars receive emotional support from family members, they likely considered them when answering questions related to this type of support. However, other descriptive information about who Scholars consider when they think of mentors indicates further exploration of the role of Hope Coaches and Mentors is warranted.

## How Do Supportive Relationships Change While Participating in Generation Hope?

Upon joining the program, Scholars gain access to two dedicated individuals— a Hope Coach and Mentor. Scholars rated the Hope Coach and Mentor as two of the top four individuals providing mentorship, suggesting that being part of Generation Hope expanded access to supportive mentor relationships related to college mentorship. Scholars, Hope Coaches, and Mentors recognized that developing connections takes time, which includes acknowledging differences in age, culture, and parenting status. It also involved finding similarities and focusing on Scholars' goals as ways to build meaningful relationships. Building relationships was also about ongoing communication. Scholars recognized that both Hope Coaches and Mentors initiated contact and provided emotional support and motivation. Frequent communication with Mentors was related to Scholars'



**Source:** Scholar 7

feelings of being supported. Those who engaged with their Mentors daily or weekly scored significantly higher across multiple measures of social support compared to those with less frequent interactions.<sup>3</sup> This underscores the importance of consistent, meaningful engagement in cultivating and maintaining robust relationships as participants in Generation Hope.

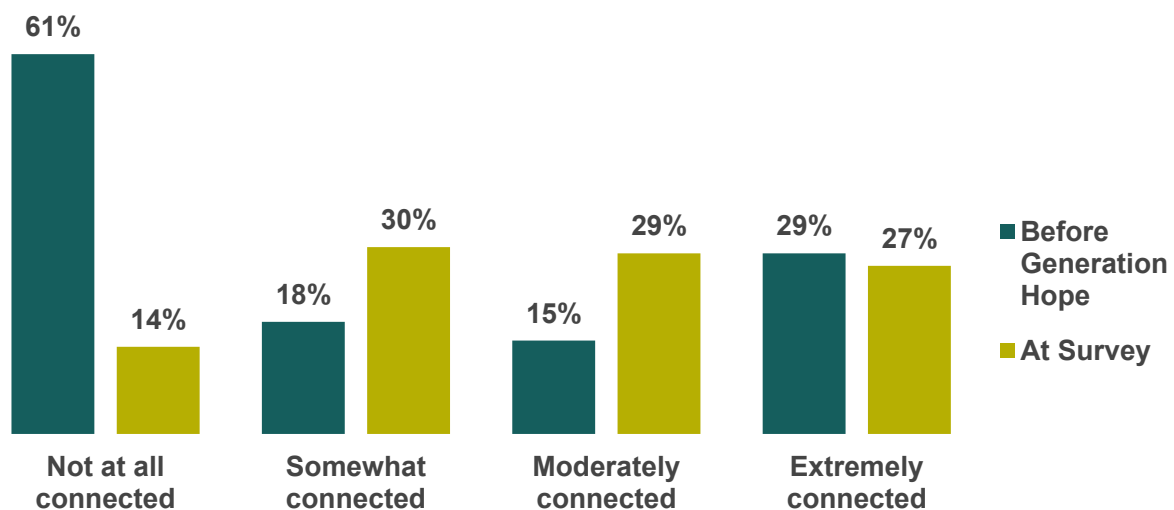
In interviews, Scholars reflected that they hoped to find a supportive community that understood the needs of student parents at Generation Hope. Survey results suggested while at Generation Hope, Scholars became less isolated. Before participating, 61 percent reported feeling not at all connected to other student parents. This figure decreased significantly to 14 percent at the time of the survey,

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<sup>3</sup> These measures include the Lubben Social Network Scale ( $p < .01$ ), the Academic Subject Knowledge Support Subscale of the College Student Mentoring Scale ( $p < .05$ ), and the Existence of a Role Model Subscale of the College Student Mentoring Scale ( $p < .05$ ).

suggesting participation in Generation Hope reduced feelings of isolation (see exhibit 5). Interview information provided a more nuanced insight into these social connections. Scholars' social networks varied, with some having many friends and connections, others with only a few close friends, and many reported being satisfied with their social networks. A few reported feeling isolated and longing for more connections, describing relationships with other students as "hit or miss" because connecting with students who are not parents could be difficult.

### Exhibit 5. Connections to Other Student Parents Before and During Generation Hope



When reflecting on connections with other student parents, Scholars acknowledged they may meet other participants at events, but not all Scholars attended. They reported a significant improvement in feelings of connectedness from before they enrolled to the time of the survey.<sup>4</sup> For those who had friendships with other Scholars, they maintained connections through a WhatsApp group or group text. They also noted relationships with other Scholars were sometimes less intense than other friendships because of busy schedules and distances. Together, survey and interview data show isolation in student parents is complex. Participating in Generation Hope appears to increase connections among Scholars and yet connecting with others across their multiple roles of parent, student, and others is layered.

<sup>4</sup> On average, Scholars reported feeling somewhat connected to other student-parents before Generation Hope and moderately connected to other student parents at the time of the survey. This is a statistically significant improvement in feelings of connectedness ( $p < .001$ ).

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*“My identity is my kids. And that's part of why I'm struggling so much. Because I don't have a self outside of them right now . . . I don't have the time or the funds to find myself right now. So, it causes me to kind of isolate . . .”*

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Feeling understood as a student parent emerged as a key indicator of social support. Nearly a quarter of Scholars (24 percent) reported having people who often or always understand them as a student parent and another 35 percent felt they had someone who sometimes understood them as a student parent. Data revealed communication frequency with Hope Coaches played a pivotal role in enhancing this feeling of understanding. Scholars who interacted with their Hope Coaches daily or weekly reported statistically significantly higher levels of feeling understood compared to those who communicated monthly or less.

## **How Does Generation Hope Support Scholars in Balancing Parenting Responsibilities?**

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*“My biggest challenge in balancing family, school, and work is being an excellent student, an outstanding employee, and a caring parent all in the same day.”*

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During the planning stages, the SAC raised the issue of balancing parenting responsibilities with school as an outcome to explore. In all aspects of data collection, Scholars clearly identified balancing roles as students and parents as one of their biggest challenges. They reflected that this balancing act was often “exhausting” and left little time for self-care. It also led to feelings of guilt or pressure to excel in all roles. They also lifted up how Generation Hope played a crucial role in empowering Scholars to balance their parenting responsibilities while pursuing academic goals. Although many relied on external support from family and others outside of the program, Generation Hope provided them with targeted, personalized guidance through Hope Coaches and Mentors. Scholars frequently mentioned Hope Coaches and Mentors as essential support in navigating college-related challenges.

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*“That's one of the reasons I'm really happy that I have a Mentor. She kind of helps me prioritize things, which is really important, as in what deserves my full attention right now and what can be left for later.”*

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Hope Coaches and Mentors reflected how they saw Scholars balance various roles, responsibilities, and pressures and how their roles provided part of the needed support structure for Scholars. Scholars reported Hope Coaches and Mentors equipped them with practical strategies for prioritizing tasks, managing time effectively, and staying organized. These skills were invaluable in helping them juggle the demands of parenting, academics, and other responsibilities. Additionally, Generation Hope's consistent communication further reinforced their ability to stay organized and engaged in the program, creating a structured environment where they could manage the competing demands on time and energy. They also frequently mentioned Hope Coaches and Mentors as providing emotional support, motivation (e.g., setting goals, celebrating successes), academic support (e.g., tutoring), and connecting them to needed resources. Through this multifaceted support system, Generation Hope provided tools, guidance, and encouragement to help Scholars successfully balance their responsibilities and achieve their goals.

## Summary



**Source:** Scholar 8

Generation Hope supports a diverse group of Scholars. Of these, 87 percent reported their children as the key motivator for academic and personal success. They were also motivated to break cycles of intergenerational poverty and reach future career success. Despite barriers such as financial strain and time constraints, Scholars demonstrated resilience and progress, with nearly half maintaining a GPA of 3.0 or higher and 87 percent planning to re-enroll in school the following semester (with another 8 percent

anticipating graduating). Scholars balanced multiple roles—31 percent worked full time and 30 percent part time—while pursuing diverse majors like nursing and psychology. Time poverty—having limited time to manage parenting responsibilities, academic obligations, family commitments, employment and other responsibilities—has been noted in other research with young student parents, and it can contribute to dropout and slower academic progress (Reichlin-Cruse et al, 2020; Garcia & Huang, 2025). Programs like Generation Hope that can mitigate the stress of time poverty are important to student parent success.



Scholars recognized Generation Hope as critical to their on-going college success. It provided a robust ecosystem of support, including tuition assistance, career resources, and networking opportunities. Scholars frequently cited Hope Coaches and Mentors as critical to their journey, offering personalized guidance in time management, prioritization, and goal setting. Consistent communication with these mentors fostered organization and engagement, while the program also reduced feelings of isolation among student parents. This is consistent with other research showing case management, mentoring, academic, and financial support can help student parents navigate education and remain in school (Evans et al., 2017; Reichlin-Cruse et al., 2020; Garcia & Huang, 2025; Scrivener et al., 2015), Scholars recognized Generation Hope provided them with a wrap-around suite of services to meet their needs.

Scholars reported strengthened networks, increased confidence, and a sense of being understood reinforced their academic self-efficacy. Due to the nature of the study design, we cannot draw causal conclusions; but the relationships between services and support (particularly the supportive relationships with Hope Coaches and Mentors) and study outcomes show promising links. Future studies should include comparison groups so causal questions can be explored. Further study into Scholar mentorship networks before and after Generation Hope is also important to understand any direct relationships between services and network expansion.

The findings offer important insights into the lives of student parents who became parents in adolescence. Although there is growing research and recommendations for how colleges and universities can better support student parents in general (Goodman et al., 2023; Reichlin-Cruse, et al., 2021), this group of student parents has not been widely studied. Institutions and states can advance efforts to collect data about student parents to develop and inform policies tailored to the specific needs of their student parent population (Besser Doorley, et al., 2023). Scholars noted childcare needs. Due to their age, many Scholars' children were not yet in school, so infant-toddler and preschool childcare is particularly important to this population. Generation Hope, through its FamilyU work, is actively working with institutions of higher education to partner to improve services for student parents.

Overall, Generation Hope exceeds expectations by addressing Scholars' unique challenges, fostering connections, and inspiring perseverance through tailored support and resources. Scholars are juggling many roles and responsibilities, but their role as parents motivates them to succeed as students—lifting them up. Generation Hope is a key part of their support network, offering services to expand their social connections and help manage their roles.

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# Appendix

# Multiphase Evaluation of Generation Hope Methodology and Analysis

## Evaluation Overview

The evaluation of Generation Hope was designed to explore the experiences of Scholars enrolled in the Washington, D.C., Scholar Program. JBA worked with the Foundation, Generation Hope, and a Scholar Advisory Committee (SAC; see callout) to inform the direction and design of the mixed-methods study. JBA combined quantitative and qualitative data to understand how Scholar outcomes were associated with participation in Generation Hope services.

### Scholar Advisory Committee

The Scholar Advisory Committee (SAC) was composed of 12 Scholars who participated in Generation Hope and used their experiences as student parents to help shape all phases of the evaluation. Over the course of 2 years, SAC members partnered with the research team to ensure the evaluation accurately reflected the needs and realities of student parents. They reviewed recruitment materials, refined survey and interview questions, piloted data collection tools, and provided input on analytic priorities and dissemination products. SAC members also played an active role in interpreting findings and advising on how to present data in ways that honored student parent voices. In many cases, input from the SAC shifted the research team's perspective on the evaluation process and how information was communicated.

## Methodology

This mixed-method research study combined both quantitative and qualitative data collection techniques, to provide a more holistic understanding of the experiences of student parents. By incorporating diverse sources such as administrative data, surveys, and interviews with several

informants, this study aimed to capitalize on the strengths of each method, enhancing the depth and breadth of insights gained. This allowed for a triangulation of findings and fostered a richer and more nuanced interpretation of the research questions.

## Guiding Questions

This study focused on the relationship between Generation Hope participation and outcomes across three main domains: progress towards graduation, supportive relationships, and parenting responsibilities. The study described outcomes for Scholars (within subjects). The study also explored questions that describe pathways where outcomes interact with one another, process questions such as those around dosage, and finally systems questions which explored how Scholar identity impacts their experiences, guiding research questions are provided in exhibit 1.

### Exhibit 1. Guiding Research Questions by Domain

Outcomes/ Domain	Research Question
Progress towards graduation	1. What progress on metrics towards graduation do Scholars make over the course of an academic year?
Supportive relationships	2. How do Scholars social networks change after program enrollment?
Parenting responsibilities	3. How do Generation Hope services and relationships support Scholars in navigating their parenting responsibilities?
Pathways	4. For Scholars, how are social support and parenting responsibilities related to progress toward graduation?
Process	5. How do services Scholars receive (e.g., dosage, amount of tutoring, engagement with Hope Coach and Mentor, participation in events) as part of Generation Hope relate to main outcomes? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Progress toward graduation</li> <li>b. Social support</li> <li>c. Parenting responsibilities</li> </ul> 6. How does fidelity to the Generation Hope model relate to Scholar outcomes?
Systems and identity	7. How are Scholars' experiences influenced by structural factors that relate to their identity as a student parent, race/ethnicity, or other aspects of their identity? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Experience as a Scholar</li> <li>b. Experience as a student</li> <li>c. Experience as a parent</li> </ul>

## Data Collection Overview

With Generation Hope's assistance, JBA collected data from multiple sources.

- **Administrative Data (163 Scholars)** included data from Generation Hope administrative data. JBA accessed data reports from Generation Hope's NewOrg data system and worked directly with Generation Hope to access existing data collected by Generation Hope staff.
- **Scholar survey (87 responses)** included 102 questions across seven sections: academic history, progress toward graduation, academic beliefs, supportive relationships, parenting responsibilities, experiences with Generation Hope, and demographic information. The survey included several existing validated measures and new questions developed specifically for the study.
- **Individual Scholar interviews (35 Scholars)** were semi-structured interviews with questions exploring key domains, including academic progress, social networks, parenting responsibilities, and the influence of systemic factors on experiences.
- **Group Hope Coach interviews (10 Hope Coaches)** were semi-structured and included questions exploring domains such as the Hope Coach role, relationships with Scholars, and the Mentor-Scholar relationship.
- **Group Mentor interviews (17 Mentors)** were semi-structured and included questions exploring building relationships with Scholars, supporting them, and their accomplishments.
- **Student Parent Voice Project** was a multimedia research project where SAC members created submissions centered around two themes: challenges (8 submissions) and motivation (6 submissions).
- **SAC focus group (6 participants)** included a series of questions to gather participant reactions to preliminary data.

As measures were being developed, we aligned quantitative and qualitative measures wherever possible to triangulate analyses across the different data types and use the most rigorous methods available.

## Participants

The primary participants in the study were Generation Hope Scholars. We also collected data from Generation Hope Mentors and Hope Coaches (see exhibit 2).

### Exhibit 2. Sample Information

Data Collection	Sample	Recruitment	Inclusion Criteria
Generation Hope Administrative Data	163 Scholars	N/A	We included all Scholars who had active status in at least both NewOrg and the Master Scholar List provided by Generation Hope.

Data Collection	Sample	Recruitment	Inclusion Criteria
Scholar Survey	87 Scholars	Invited to participate via programmatic emails and text messages.	Scholars who consented and completed the entire first section of survey. Of those who responded (119), 73.1 percent were included.
Individual Scholar Interviews	35 Scholars	Participants expressed interest when completing the Scholar survey.	Stratified selection across demographic criteria to ensure demographic diversity among those interviewed (e.g., race, gender, ethnicity, year in school, type of school).
Hope Coach Group Interviews	10 Hope Coaches	Invited to participate via programmatic emails.	Generation Hope Coaches who were present for group interviews.
Mentor Group Interviews	17 Mentors	Invited to participate via programmatic emails	Mentors who expressed interest and were able to attend a virtual group interview session.
Student Parent Voice Project	8 Scholars	Informed of the opportunity during a regularly scheduled SAC meeting	Participant in the SAC
SAC Focus Group	6 Scholars	Informed of the opportunity during a regularly scheduled SAC meeting	Participant in the SAC

From the NewOrg administrative data and documentation from Generation Hope, we identified a possible sample of 175 Scholars who participated in Generation Hope during the 2023-2024 program year. To determine the analytic sample, we included all Scholars who had active status in at least both NewOrg and the Master Scholar List provided by Generation Hope. This yielded an analytic sample of 163 Scholars.

We received 119 survey responses (115 from the English survey and 4 from the Spanish survey). After removing participants who did not consent ( $n = 2$ ); participants who did not answer any questions ( $n = 9$ ); duplicate responses as determined by having the same name, email address, and/or date of birth ( $n = 13$ ); and participants who did not complete the entire first section (questions 4-18;  $n = 8$ ), there were 87 survey responses (which is the maximum sample size on any given item). There were 77 participants who completed the entire survey, which is the sample size for multivariate analyses.



## Measures and Procedures

The team relied on various data sources to analyze specific research questions (see exhibit 3). Quantitative data included administrative data collected by Generation Hope (from the 2022-2023 and 2023-2024 academic year) and a Scholar web survey. The JBA team collected qualitative data through interviews with Scholars, Hope Coaches, Mentors, and a focus group with SAC members.

### Exhibit 3. Research Questions, Data Sources, and Sample

Research Question	Data Source	Quantitative / Qualitative	Sample
1	Administrative data Survey Interviews Focus Group	Quantitative & Qualitative	Scholars SAC members
2	Survey Interviews Focus Group	Quantitative & Qualitative	Scholars SAC members
3	Survey Interviews Focus Group	Quantitative & Qualitative	Scholars SAC members
4	Survey Interviews Focus Group Student Parent Voice Project	Quantitative & Qualitative	Scholars SAC members
5	Administrative data Survey Interviews Focus Group	Quantitative & Qualitative	Scholars Hope Coaches Mentors SAC members
6	Administrative data Survey Interviews	Quantitative & Qualitative	Scholars Hope Coaches Mentors
7	Survey Interviews Focus Group Student Parent Voice Project	Quantitative & Qualitative	Scholars Hope Coaches Mentors SAC members

## Administrative Data

NewOrg provided additional raw data for the study. JBA saved these reports/data files to a secured location for cleaning and analysis. For data that could not be accessed through NewOrg, JBA provided Generation Hope access to a secure location where they could upload data. Generation Hope provided two additional internal datasets that were used to verify the analytic sample, but no variables from these datasets were added to the administrative data from NewOrg. Variables of interest included in the administrative data are detailed in Exhibit 3.

### Exhibit 4. NewOrg Administrative Data Details

Form	Variable/Indicator	Collection period	Entered by Whom	Study focus
Scholar intake survey	Race	Application	Scholar <sup>a</sup>	Descriptive information
	County of residence			
	Number of children			
	Family contribution			
	Affirmed gender			
	Preferred pronouns			
	School			
	Domestic violence			
	Housing			
	Foster care			
	First generation college student			
	Immigration status			
Education history event records	Semester GPA	Beginning of semester meeting	Hope Coach	Progress towards college graduation
	Number of credits enrolled in			
	Number of credits earned			

**Note:** <sup>a</sup> This may be updated by the Hope Coach if information changes (e.g., a scholar moves).

## Survey

In consultation with Generation Hope staff and the SAC, we developed a web-based survey.<sup>1</sup> The Scholar survey contained seven sections and included a total of 102 questions. Sections consisted of validated measures and original questions specific to the college student parent population (see Exhibit 5). Participants had the option to complete the survey in English or Spanish.

We administered the survey using Qualtrics, paying close attention to survey design best practices which promote strong response rates, including designing the survey to be mobile device friendly. The survey was pilot tested by the SAC, who provided a duration estimate (20-25 minutes) and feedback on a reasonable incentive for completion (\$40) reflective of both time and emotional burden.

### Exhibit 5. Survey Sections and Measures

Survey Section	Measure(s) used or developed
Academic history	Developed for the study
Progress toward graduation	Developed for the study
Academic beliefs	General Academic Self-Efficacy Scale (van Zyl et al., 2022)
Supportive relationships	Lubben Social Network Scale (Lubben, 1988; Luben et al., 2006) College Student Mentoring Scale (Crisp, 2009)
Parenting responsibilities	Work–Family Conflict and Enrichment scales (adapted, van Rhijn et al., 2018)
Experiences with Generation Hope (Scholars)	Developed for the study
Demographic information	Developed for the study

## Individual Interviews

Interviews were held in April and May 2024. Each Scholar received a \$50 honorarium for their participation. The interviews were conducted virtually via Zoom, lasting approximately 60 minutes, and were offered in both English and Spanish to accommodate participants' language preferences.

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<sup>1</sup> We initially intended to use a similar survey to gather data from a comparison group. However, after rigorous outreach attempts (through universities, snowball sampling through the SAC), we did not receive any comparison group responses.

The interview questions explored key domains, including academic progress, social networks, parenting responsibilities, and the influence of systemic factors on Scholar experiences. Protocols included priority questions and probes to encourage expansive responses across participants. Interviewers followed a structured consent process, informing Scholars of their rights, including the ability to withdraw or skip questions. With participants' approval, interviews were audio-recorded and transcribed verbatim to ensure accuracy and rigor in data analysis.

## **Group Interviews**

Group interviews for Hope Coaches were held in person, while those for Mentors were conducted virtually to accommodate their schedules. Semi-structured interview protocols were used to guide discussions, focusing on key areas such as progress toward graduation, supportive relationships, parenting challenges, and systemic influences.

The protocols were designed to allow flexibility, enabling facilitators to explore emergent themes that arose during the conversations. Mentors were thanked for their time with a \$25 donation to the Scholar Wish List. Hope Coaches participated during their regular work hours without additional incentives. This approach ensured robust engagement while respecting participants' contributions and availability.

## **SAC Student-Parent Voice Project and Focus Group**

In addition to their role as evaluation partners, the SAC had two opportunities to contribute data to the study. The first activity, the Student Parent Voice Project, aimed to provide additional context to survey and interview findings, amplify Scholars' lived experiences in meaningful ways.

Over a two-month period, Scholars participated in monthly activities guided by prompts focused on their dual roles as students and parents. They played an active role in shaping the project by selecting the topics for each month, determining how to address potential privacy concerns with the information shared, and identifying their desired audience. Scholars chose their preferred medium for responding to the prompts—such as poetry, photography, video, or narrative—and presented their submissions during regular monthly meetings.

During these meetings, Scholars collaboratively identified key themes from their submissions, acted as co-facilitators in discussions, and guided decisions about how their contributions would be incorporated into the evaluation.

The second opportunity SAC members had to contribute data to the study was through a focus group on preliminary study findings. During this focus group the research team shared preliminary findings and asked SAC members a series of questions to gather their reactions to this data.

# Analysis

The study utilized an iterative analysis process. Analyses were conducted by qualitative and quantitative teams. Teams regularly met to share preliminary findings and triangulate data. The analyses teams also identified two times to share data with Generation Hope and the SAC. The first collaboration was around preliminary data where groups shared their impressions of data and guided areas for further analyses, such as additional comparative analyses to conduct. The second session was in interpretation to understand the meaning behind study findings.

## Survey Data

### Missing Data

With the exception of planned missing due to display logic in which certain participants did not respond to questions based on responses to previous questions (e.g., participants who reported not yet having declared a major were not asked to write in their major), there was little to no item-level missingness. Missing data are reported by the survey section, measure, or item as appropriate in Exhibit 6.

### Exhibit 6. Missing Data on Scholar Survey Sections

Survey measure or section	Missing <i>n</i>	Missing %	Total valid <i>N</i>
<b>Academic History</b>	0	0	87
<b>Progress Toward Graduation</b>	1	1	86
<b>Academic Beliefs</b>			
General Academic Self-Efficacy Scale (GASE)	3	3	84
<b>Supportive Relationships</b>			
Lubben Social Network Scale	4	5	83
College Student Mentoring Scale (CSMS)	7	8	80
<b>Parenting Responsibilities</b>			
School-Family Conflict Scale	8	9	79
Before Generation Hope and now: connected to other student parents	8	9	79
Student parent experiences	9	10	78
<b>Experiences with Generation Hope</b>	9	10	78
<b>Demographics</b>	10	11	77

## Descriptive Analyses

We calculated descriptive statistics on all items (for individual questions, e.g., gender) or scales (for measures, e.g., School-Family Conflict Scale). These included percentages for each response option on categorical items and means and standard deviations on Likert scale or continuous numerical items. Percentages were reported as valid percents (percentage endorsing a response out of the total number of Scholars who answered the question). We also examined correlations between items and scales in each area of interest (progress toward graduation, academic beliefs, supportive relationships, and parenting responsibilities).

## Exploratory Analyses

Given the small sample size, lack of a comparison group, and cross-sectional nature of the Scholar survey, we limited the number of multivariate analyses to minimize the likelihood of type 1 error. Relatedly, we did not have sufficient sample size within all groups of interest to conduct subgroup analyses. We prioritized conducting additional analyses that were of particular interest to SAC, GH, and AECF. The feedback from these groups and analyses completed are shown in Exhibit 7.

### Exhibit 7. Scholar Survey Exploratory Analyses

Feedback	From whom	Analyses completed
Marital status findings	SAC	T-tests comparing Scholars who were single with those who were married or cohabitating on items and scales in each area of interest (progress toward graduation, academic beliefs, supportive relationships, and parenting responsibilities).
Do years in school/GH matter for progress toward graduation?	SAC	T-tests comparing Scholars who had been in Generation Hope for one year with those who had been in Generation Hope for two or more years on items and measures within progress toward graduation.
Taking a semester off for mental health reasons	SAC	None – the sample size of Scholars who reported ever taking a semester off for mental health reasons was too small ( $n = 17$ ) to conduct any subgroup analyses.
Supportive relationships and progress toward graduation	SAC	Regression analyses with measures of supportive relationships predicting progress toward graduation outcomes, controlling for Scholar demographic characteristics.
Communication with mentor/Hope Coach	SAC	T-tests comparing Scholars who had been in Generation Hope for one year with those who had been in Generation Hope for two or more years on communication frequency with mentor and Hope Coach.

Feedback	From whom	Analyses completed
Belonginess and connections	GH	T-tests comparing Scholars who had been in Generation Hope for one year with those who had been in Generation Hope for two or more years on items and measures within parenting responsibilities.
Belongingness and progress toward graduation and supportive relationships	Two-gen convening	Regression analyses with student parent experiences items predicting progress toward graduation and supportive relationships outcomes, controlling for Scholar demographic characteristics.
Mentoring – who	Two-gen convening	None – there were not sufficient sample sizes within each response category of who Scholars thought of most frequently when completing the CSMS.
Standardized measures	AECF	All descriptive and exploratory analyses were conducted on total and subscale scores of validated measures.

**Note.** AECF = Annie E. Casey Foundation. CSMS = College Student Mentoring Scale.

## Administrative Data

### Missing Data

Missing data are reported on the four variables of interest in the administrative data in Exhibit 8.

#### Exhibit 8. Missing Data on Administrative Data Variables

Variable (semester)	Missing <i>n</i>	Missing %	Total valid <i>N</i>
GPA (fall 2023)	81	50	82
GPA (spring 2024)	78	48	85
Number of credits registered for (fall 2023)	62	38	101
Number of credits registered for (spring 2024)	63	39	100
Passed all credits registered for (fall 2023)	72	44	91
Passed all credits registered for (spring 2024)	66	40	97
Passed at least 6 credits (fall 2023)	62	38	101
Passed at least 6 credits (spring 2024)	63	39	100

### Analyses

We calculated descriptive statistics for all variables within each semester. This included means and standard deviations for continuous variables (GPA and number of credits registered for) and

percentages for yes/no variables (passed all credits registered for and passed at least 6 credits). We also conducted t-tests on each variable to test statistically significant differences between the values for the fall 2023 and spring 2024 semesters.

## Interview Data

Qualitative data were analyzed using ATLAS.ti, following a structured coding process to identify themes and insights. The analysis began with question-level coding aligned with the research questions, allowing for a detailed exploration of key areas. This was followed by an iterative refinement process to develop broader, more comprehensive themes. Regular team discussions were held to address overlaps, ensure consistency, and refine the coding frameworks as necessary. After coding was complete, the team continued analysis by describing themes and identifying supporting quotes for inclusion in dissemination products.

To validate and contextualize the qualitative insights, findings were triangulated with survey data. Quality assurance was a priority throughout the study, with weekly team meetings providing a platform to address challenges in coding and maintain consistency across analyses. Transcripts were cleaned and de-identified to protect participant confidentiality. Additionally, feedback from SAC was integrated into both the research protocols and analysis, enhancing the rigor and relevance of the study.

The SAC focus group informed analyses by guiding priorities and identifying areas for future exploration. Scholars also identified priorities for dissemination products, ensuring that final products reflected their perspectives and addressed key issues relevant to their experiences.

## Student Parent Voice Project

The analysis of the Student Parent Voice Project utilized a participatory approach to identify key themes, patterns, and insights from Scholars' submissions. During monthly meetings, Scholars contributed to identifying themes from their submissions. These discussions provided a foundation for the research team to refine and synthesize the themes, which were subsequently presented back to the SAC for reflection and feedback.

The themes identified through the Student Parent Voice Project were cross-referenced with survey and interview data to enrich the study's overall findings. Throughout the analysis process, Scholars were consulted at every stage to ensure their contributions were authentically represented and to confirm their continued comfort with sharing their individual submissions with a wider audience.



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