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Governor Wolf: We Must Support Single Parents in Post-Secondary Education

Dallas, PA – Governor Tom Wolf today visited Misericordia University’s Ruth Matthews Bourger Women with Children Program to outline [his bold budget plan](#) to create the strongest workforce in the nation. The governor’s Statewide Workforce, Education, and Accountability Program (SWEAP) will provide opportunities for Pennsylvanians from birth to retirement, including \$5 million in funding to support single parents in post-secondary education. Governor Wolf was joined by Representative Karen Boback, a Misericordia alumna.

“We all know that Pennsylvania’s economic future depends on a well-educated and highly-trained workforce,” Governor Wolf said. “The Bourger Women with Children Program at Misericordia empowers single moms by providing the opportunity to complete a college degree, creating brighter futures for themselves and for their children. This program is a model for how to remove the roadblocks to higher education and make a college degree a reality.”

The governor unveiled SWEAP in his 2019-20 budget on Tuesday to provide opportunities for Pennsylvanians from birth to retirement. The plan expands access to early childhood education, increases investments in schools, and partners with the private sector.

Governor Wolf’s SWEAP plan would:

- Provide \$5 million in support services via Parent Pathways, so low-income parents get the education and training they need for better jobs.
- Invest in high-quality child care and reduce waiting lists so parents can work.
- Expand home-visiting programs for at-risk pregnant women, infants and toddlers.
- Make sure kids are in school by age 6 and stay until age 18, and their teachers earn at least \$45,000 per year.
- Connect teachers with businesses so classrooms are preparing students for today’s workforce.
- Expand PAsmart with additional investments in apprenticeships and Continuing Technical Education.
- Provide one-time grants for community college students who are working in Pennsylvania.

The governor will also create the Keystone Economic Development and Workforce Command Center to bring together government, schools and industry like never before. The departments

of Community and Economic Development, Labor & Industry (L&I), and State will work with external leaders including Chamber of Business and Industry President Gene Barr, and AFL-CIO President Rick Bloomingdale. The governor wants to find innovative solutions that close the skills gap and rapidly meet the needs of employers.

While at Misericordia, the governor and elected officials toured the Women with Children Program's Moffett House – one of three campus housing locations for program participants. He met with women in the program and learned more about how it is helping them manage their college careers while still having time to focus on being a mother.

"Initiatives such as the Bourger Women with Children Program illustrate what a small and innovative university can do to heighten personal aspirations, enhance career prospects and improve the quality of life for families," says Thomas J. Botzman, Ph.D., president, Misericordia University. "I wish to congratulate the staff and students of the Bourger Women with Children program as well as its visionary founder, Sister Jean Messaros, RSM, vice president of Mission Integration, for inspiring Governor Wolf's visit today and for modeling best practices that have the potential to benefit many others. I also express our gratitude to Governor Wolf for his focus on student success and opportunity."

"With almost two decades of experience, there is nothing theoretical about this program," Senator Lisa Baker said. "State officials were obviously much impressed by what they saw and heard when they visited last year.

"Using education to lift women out of poverty is worthy and constructive, providing them with skills, self-respect, and the opportunity to advance themselves on their merits. There is measurable success to see. Graduates pay testament to how it enabled them to transform their lives, and equally important, to boost the prospects of their kids. In many cases, graduation is merely a beginning. These individuals continue on paths of educational and professional development."

"It gives me great pride, as a two-time graduate of Misericordia, to see the school recognized and held up as an example of what is possible," Representative Karen Boback said. "Being mentioned in Tuesday's budget address gives the university much-needed publicity for their program, which Gov. Wolf will now use as a model that can and should be duplicated across the Commonwealth and country."

"These strong, dedicated women are truly inspirational in their commitment to their education and their families," Gov. Wolf said. "I see Misericordia as a model program for the rest of the state and one we hope to replicate with our Parent Pathways funding to help even more parents find the path to educational and career success."

Find more on the Misericordia Women with Children Program [here](#).

Learn more about Gov. Wolf's 2019-29 budget at budget.pa.gov.

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