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ABSTRACT

Few researchers have studied the female dropout and too few dropout prevention programs are specifically designed to help girls complete high school. This paper describes programs and state policy initiatives that show promise in helping young women complete their education. They are used by schools and outside organizations to serve and encourage teenage girls with the following approaches: (1) academic encouragement; (2) activities to enhance self-esteem; (3) coordination of services for academic and non-academic needs; (4) bias-free interactions with teachers and administrators; and (5) encouragement to enter non-traditional courses and careers. Successful programs for each approach are described. Funds are needed to fully evaluate these programs so that the models can be shared among states and communities. There are a number of state policy initiatives which show promise in helping at risk students of both sexes. These include the following: (1) requiring accurate data collection on school completion by gender; (2) initiating collaboration between state agencies and private organizations; (3) creating incentives for schools to improve services; (4) imposing requirements that schools must meet in regard to at-risk youth; and (5) employing sanctions against districts or schools that fail to serve at-risk youth effectively. (VM)

WHAT'S PROMISING: NEW APPROACHES TO DROPOUT PREVENTION FOR GIRLS

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WHAT'S PROMISING:

NEW APPROACHES TO DROPOUT PREVENTION FOR GIRLS

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In the spring of 1987, the National Association of State Boards of Education (NASBE) published Female Dropouts: A New Perspective, a report that explored the reasons why girls drop out of school and the consequences they face. Few researchers have studied female dropout and too few dropout prevention programs have been specifically designed to help girls complete high school. The present paper describes programs and state policy initiatives that show promise in helping young women complete their education.

Little research or evaluation has been directed at promising programs that help girls complete high school and improve their future chances for academic and economic success. Such programs have traditionally served pregnant and parenting teens, since girls most often cite pregnancy or parenting as reasons for dropping out of school. Yet the majority of female dropouts, sixty percent, leave school for other reasons. Schools and "outside" organizations use a variety of approaches to help such girls, employing different strategies to provide:

- o academic encouragement,
- o counseling to improve female self-esteem,
- o coordination of services to meet girls' academic and non-academic needs,
- o bias-free interactions with teachers and administrators, and
- o encouragement for girls to enter non-traditional courses and careers.

There are ten specific recommendations for helping at-risk girls in this paper, and each is illustrated by describing programs using that approach. The programs originate from different sources: school personnel, school districts, private agencies and individuals, and state governments. Some have obtained enough funding to thoroughly document their success in helping girls complete school. Others lack the funds to expand or to undertake a formal evaluation; and, when forced to choose between program expansion or evaluation, program developers have chosen expansion. In the future, promising approaches need to be thoroughly evaluated and shared between states and communities.

There are a number of state policy initiatives that show promise in encouraging school retention. Descriptions of initiatives in six states -- Wisconsin, Oregon, North Carolina, Maryland, Illinois, and Massachusetts -- give an idea how policymakers can help at-risk youth of both sexes by:

- o requiring accurate data collection on school completion by gender,
- o initiating collaboration between state agencies and private organizations in program planning and implementation,

- o creating incentives for schools to improve services,
- o imposing requirements that schools must meet in regard to at-risk youth, and
- o employing sanctions against districts or schools that fail to serve at-risk youth effectively.

State governments and schools must work together to ensure that young men and women receive the academic and non-academic services they need to complete school. It is important that governors and state legislators support at-risk initiatives, since the education community, by itself, cannot command the necessary resources or media attention. But schools must reach into the wider community and work cooperatively with other agencies and youth-serving organizations to provide aid to students who will not finish school without help of different kinds -- health, counseling, access to day care, mentoring, and employment training, to name just a few. Schools will need to be more flexible and to re-think their structure to provide access to these services. To do less, just because it is difficult, is to withhold access to a better future to many of our youth.

WHAT'S PROMISING:
NEW APPROACHES TO DROPOUT PREVENTION FOR GIRLS

I. INTRODUCTION

This report is the second in a series of two papers on at-risk females and promising approaches to helping them stay in school. The first paper, Female Dropouts: A New Perspective, was published in the spring of 1987 and describes the particular causes and consequences of female dropout. What follows are recommendations for state and local action to address the problem. The paper is divided into five sections: this introduction, recommendations and programs, state policies and initiatives, conclusions, and an appendix.

Girls at risk

Every student should receive, at the minimum, a high school education; this is a societal goal. Because approximately twenty-five percent of secondary students drop out of school, we have not accomplished this goal. In some large urban and rural districts, the dropout rate exceeds fifty percent. High school dropouts are not randomly dispersed throughout the population; they are disproportionately poor, minority, and urban. Girls who have backgrounds that put them in one of these high-risk categories for dropout have especially formidable barriers to overcome. They face more serious academic and economic consequences ("Women", 1987; Fine and Roseberg, 1983; Eckstrom et al., 1986). Fewer will return and complete their high school education; more than half will end up in service jobs; and forty-nine percent of female dropouts who head families will live in poverty.

Many people equate female dropout with pregnancy, early parenthood, and marriage, though only about forty percent of girls leave school for these reasons. Still, pregnancy and parenting is the single most common reason given by girls who drop out, and most programs for at-risk girls address this population. These programs are important, since these students have been ignored too long. Many parenting girls leave school for the simple reason that they can't find affordable child care.

The majority of girls (sixty percent) drop out of school giving such reasons as "poor grades" or "school was not for me". Little research has been devoted to the evolution of these attitudes and problems, though evidence suggests that some aspects of schooling harm girls' self-esteem and independence (Female Dropouts: A New Perspective, 1987). The result is lowered academic and economic success. And any student with low self-esteem and low academic achievement is more likely to drop out of school (Eckstrom et al., 1986; Rumberger, 1986; Wehlage and Rutter, 1986).

Schools cannot directly affect factors such as poverty and the urban setting that are correlated with male and female dropout. But schools can -- and must -- correct educational inequities associated with gender.

The role of schools

Implementing new approaches will require schools to act upon the mission of universal public secondary education. Ideas about the appropriate mission of secondary schools have evolved as student populations have changed. In the 1980's, we are asking schools to socialize students, prepare them for citizenship in a democratic society, and equip them for post-secondary schooling and employment. In addition, we expect schools to carry out a social agenda: to provide equal opportunity through desegregation, assimilate immigrants, and compensate for the disadvantages students bring to school. Many students experience serious problems in the transition from elementary to secondary education. It is here that students increasingly fall behind academically and exhibit attitudes and behaviors that eventually lead to dropping out. For this reasons, this report concentrates on programs and policies aimed at students in grades 7-12.

In recent years, an increasing percentage of students belong to minority groups and are disadvantaged. Many come to school with problems that include illiterate parents, health problems, a lack of proficiency in the English language, cultural stereotypes, troubled or broken homes, a history of abuse, or poverty. Children with such disadvantages are often described as being "at-risk" of failing to complete high school. They often need an intensive, personal approach to resolve the academic, economic, and personal problems that interfere with their opportunity for school success.

The need to help at-risk students will change the way many schools function. Large student bodies and class sizes foster an impersonal environment; teachers and counselors often don't have the time to consider the personal problems students face, and some feel that it is not their job to do so. Yet, despite the complexity of the problem, schools and outside organizations are developing promising approaches for encouraging the success of high-risk students, some of which will be described in this paper.

The need for partnerships between schools and outside organizations

Schools can not and should not have to provide all the programs and services needed by at-risk females and males. Instead, they can work in partnership with other organizations such as health departments, social services agencies, employment and training institutions, and non-profit community-based organizations to obtain support for students either at the school site or through referrals. Such organizations are valuable resources to schools, as the following program descriptions will demonstrate.

II. PROMISING APPROACHES

This report will discuss promising strategies that school and non-school organizations are using to help girls complete school. There is no widespread, systematic, long-term evaluation of successful approaches to preventing female dropout. Most programs are relatively new and many lack the funds for a formal evaluation. We identified programs by contacting state boards of education, state departments of education, experts in dropout prevention, and individuals who are implementing programs. The programs listed below were selected to provide a range of options and to illustrate ideas in action.

We have identifed the following factors as most likely to result in school retention gains for young women (Female Dropouts: A New Perspective, 1987):

1. Academic Encouragement The achievement of academic success is important not only for the obvious reason of acquiring knowledge, but because poor academic performance often results in feelings of frustration and failure, poor self-esteem, and the possibility of dropout. Girls with poor basic skills are five times more likely to become mothers before age 16 than those with average basic skills (Children's Defense Fund, 1986). And, girls who drop out face disturbing economic consequences; the average income of female dropouts is only 29 percent that of male graduates ("Women," 1987; Fine and Roseberg, 1983).

   It is essential, then, for schools to pay particular attention to encouraging the academic success of young women who are at risk of dropping out. We will examine two general methods for accomplishing this goal: instructional strategies that encourage cooperative learning, and remediation strategies for girls who are already in academic trouble.

2. Activities to Enhance Self-esteem Building the self-esteem of at-risk youth has long been recognized as an essential component in the effort to reduce dropout rates. But it is especially important to recognize the different needs of girls and boys in this regard. Young women must be able to transcend stereotypical roles as they form their identities and make life plans. For this reason, we will describe programs that provide non-traditional role models, counseling, and access to extra-curricular activities.

3. Coordination of Services for Academic and Non-academic Needs Students at risk of dropping out have a wide range of problems, making it difficult for any single school, school structure, or service program to deal effectively with them. Schools must process large numbers of students, and to do this most effectively they tend to limit their scope to general academics and the development of basic skills. Schools assume that other needs, such as social skills and personal development, will be at least partially covered by outside agencies (the church, the home, or other community organizations). High-risk

students, who need these support structures the most, are often the ones who remain separated from these "outside" services. This is particularly true of at-risk girls, who might be dealing with some (or all) of such varied difficulties as pregnancy and parenting, substance abuse, physical or sexual abuse at home, neglect, poverty, support of younger siblings, low grades, poor academic skills, and poor self-esteem. To help these students, schools must coordinate access to a broad spectrum of services and programs. Schools must also be flexible enough to allow students to use outside services.

4. Bias-free Interactions with Teachers and Administrators Despite progress made in the 1960's and 1970's toward the creation of classrooms free from gender and ethnic stereotyping, many problems remain. Teachers still show biases as they interact with students, organize their classroom, structure learning groups, discipline and evaluate students, and, in general, give more attention to boys than girls (though it is known that amount of attention is directly correlated to achievement). Problems remain, partially because they are subtle; teachers often don't recognize their own biases. However, research indicates that this differential treatment can be changed. After a three-year study of gender disparities in teacher/student interaction, Sadker and Sadker (1981) reported that "when teachers become aware of differences in the way they interact with male and female students and when they receive appropriate resources and training, they can become more equitable in their response patterns". Equality in the classroom is important for at-risk girls, ethnic groups, as well as all low-income and low-achieving students.

5. Encouragement to Enter Non-traditional Courses and Careers Despite gains in recent years, America's workforce of scientists and engineers is still less than five percent female. Even worse, high school girls are still finding themselves channeled into such traditionally female and comparatively low-paying vocational programs as secretarial help, medical assistance, nursing, or cosmotology. While girls and boys in elementary school show equal ability in math, boys out-perform girls in high school. Though the reasons behind this disparity are often subtle, they are pervasive, and certain patterns within schools emerge. For instance, girls within math classes are often treated differently. Teachers initiate more contacts with boys than with girls. Boys are told to "try harder," which assumes their ability, while girls are told, "well, at least you tried" (Campbell, 1986). There is still a general feeling at school and in many homes that math and science are "male" classes, attitudes that erode female self-confidence even before sex differences show up in test scores.

Girls still lack many of the necessary role models to encourage them to pursue careers in non-traditional fields. Mentoring and career awareness are closely tied. It is necessary, then, for schools to encourage everyone to be involved with mathematics and science, to analyze their courses and classroom techniques with a view toward equal

treatment, and to emphasize the links between math and careers. Many of the problems mentioned above, and the techniques for correcting them, are generally applicable to low income and minority groups.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ACTION

In the following section are ten recommendations for providing the services described above and descriptions of programs using that approach. The programs work in different ways -- some result from school district initiatives, others from the State, while others were developed by organizations outside the school that help young women as part of their mission. The efforts of all these institutions and individuals are valuable. Female dropout is a complex problem requiring a multitude of solutions.

The programs that we describe serve secondary school students because the transition from elementary to middle school is a time when students most often manifest symptoms of problems -- pregnancy, substance abuse, and truancy, for example -- that lead to dropout. This does not preclude the need to identify and assist at-risk children at an earlier age. Local districts and states need to establish comprehensive programs that identify at-risk students early and monitor their progress throughout the educational system.

Finally, the placement of programs into the following categories of "Recommendations" is sometimes arbitrary. Many programs are multi-dimensional and feature a variety of services; they fit under more than one category.

ACADEMIC ENCOURAGEMENT

Recommendation 1: Instructional strategies should incorporate the group activities and collaboration that complement female cognitive development.

Gender differences in cognitive orientation are well-documented, and schools traditionally cater to the cognitive orientation of (white) males (Gilligan, 1982; Smulyan, 1986). Girls often learn through cooperation with others, acknowledging each other's ideas and building upon them to find common meanings, while boys tend to be more competitive, working independently and defining themselves through differences with their peers (Smulyan, 1986). Most secondary teachers rely on a lecture format that elicits individual responses rather than encouraging cooperative efforts. Therefore, boys are reinforced in their methods of learning, while girls can be placed at a disadvantage (Smulyan, 1986). For this reason, it is important that classrooms incorporate cooperative learning strategies that better fit the model for female cognitive development.

The Johns Hopkins Team Learning Project In general, cooperative learning describes a method of instruction in which small groups of students of all performance levels work together toward a group goal. Students are responsible for their groupmates' learning as well as their own. The Johns Hopkins Team Learning Project has researched and developed a number of methods that incorporate team rewards, individual accountability, and equal opportunity for

success. "Team rewards" means that group success, not individual achievement, is praised. "Individual accountability" means that a groups' success depends on the success of each group member. Students tutor and help one another to prepare for quizzes or tournaments during which the students work on their own. "Equal opportunity for success" means that individual students contribute to the group score by improving their own past performance. This ensures that high, average, and low achievers are equally challenged to do their best, and every member's achievement is equally valued.

A general model for cooperative learning, called the Student Teams Achievement Divisions (STAD), was developed by the Johns Hopkins project. Students are assigned to four-member learning teams that are mixed in performance level, sex, and ethnicity. After the teacher presents a lesson, team members help one another master the material. Finally, all students take individual quizzes and may not help one another. Students' quiz scores are compared to their own past averages, and points are awarded based on how well students meet or exceed their own earlier performances. The Johns Hopkins project has developed variations, such as tournaments or games instead of quizzes, and has designed formats for specific subjects and individual learning rates.

There have been extensive research studies documenting the success of these learning strategies for all types of students. Results include improved academic achievement, and also more favorable attitudes toward school, increased cooperativeness, altruism, more positive intergroup relations, and increased feeling of individual control over school activities. Cooperative learning results in particularly high achievement gains for black and Hispanic students, and it is particularly helpful when girls are strongly pressured by their families or culture not to outperform boys. While the strategies themselves are gender-neutral, learning in a cooperative environment can enable young women to take a more active role in a setting that emphasizes both group effort and individual success without resorting to individual competition.

RECOMMENDATION 2: Girls who are having trouble academically should be provided with remedial instruction.

While schools need to experiment with more ways of providing remedial instruction for all students, there are many times when at-risk girls require specialized attention. Sadker and Sadker (1981) found that "girls are more likely to be invisible members of the classroom. Teachers talk to them less, provide them with fewer directions, counsel them less, and give them fewer rewards." At-risk and problem boys often call attention to themselves, while at-risk girls may slip past unnoticed. Girls may hesitate to ask for help during or after class. Yet once they are in remediation programs, girls respond particularly well to the special attention they receive.

Summer Training and Education Program One promising approach to remediation is the Summer Training and Education Program (STEP), developed by Public/Private Ventures, a non-profit corporation. Its aim is to increase basic reading and math skills, address the "learning loss" that many disadvantaged students experience over the summer, and increase students' "life skills," including knowledge about substance abuse, ways to avoid pregnancy, and personal decision-

making. Though it is aimed at both male and female at-risk students, we are highlighting this program because it provides the special attention to which girls respond. In addition, its emphasis on decision-making and the consequences of sexual activity and pregnancy are especially pertinent to girls of this age and risk group.

STEP is a two-summer program that offers fourteen and fifteen year olds part-time employment, individual instruction in reading and math skills, and group instruction in Life Skills and Opportunities (LSO). The work experience (at least eighty hours) is funded by the federal Summer Youth Employment and Training Program. Students are also paid for the ninety hours they spend in remediation and the eighteen hours of LSO instruction. This offers a special incentive to most poor youth, whose highest priority during the summer is securing income. In addition, participants receive academic and other support services during the intervening school year.

Most importantly, STEP works. Comparisons of pre-program and post-program testing show that students were largely able to negate learning loss in reading and made actual gains in math. There was also significant impact on their knowledge of contraception, pregnancy, and sexually-related behavior. According to the STEP evaluation, the combination of work-experience, LSO training, and remedial instruction "may be crucial in providing the economic incentive and practical knowledge necessary for continued participation in regular schooling."

The Homework Hotline is another example of specialized remedial instruction. Organized by the Girl's Club of San Diego and funded by the State of California, this program is an extension of the Girl's Club overall comprehensive tutoring program. The Hotline provides academic aid via the telephone to members and non-members who cannot attend the Club's regular assistance program. Four tutors -- graduate students in various specializations at the University of California at San Diego -- are available during Hotline hours, each with access to the textbooks used by the San Diego County schools.

This program is very well received. School principals and counselors speak highly of the Hotline and its positive effect on students, especially in minority communities. More than fifty-five percent of the callers are Spanish-speaking students who are experiencing difficulty with their schoolwork because of the language barrier. In addition, the program is particularly good for girls whose families, for cultural reasons, do not allow them to leave home to participate in the normal after-school tutoring program.

Both the STEP program and Homework Hotline are administered by entities outside of the school, but work in conjunction with school programs. This kind of flexible cooperation is needed to more effectively provide young women with academic support.

ACTIVITIES TO ENHANCE SELF ESTEEM

RECOMMENDATION 3: Institutionalized mentor programs should provide girls with opportunities to identify with female role models who have non-traditional occupations.

To build self-esteem, young women must anticipate a positive future with opportunities for education, employment, and a career worth planning and preparing for. But at-risk girls from single-parent homes where the mother has dropped out or is uneducated or unemployable need role models to show them what they can become. This is especially important in the prevention of early pregnancies. When young women are already pregnant or parenting, mentoring programs can demonstrate possibilities beyond the cycle of unemployment, welfare, and inter-generational poverty. The following programs cover a range of mentoring possibilities both inside and outside the schools.

Applied Leadership Training for Youth, originated in 1977 by the Camp Fire Girls of Tuscon, Arizona, is a program that matches community volunteers with an adolescent, usually a girl, who is a status offender or is otherwise in trouble. The teen/adult pair work as co-leaders for Camp Fire Club meetings, which are typically located in minority or low-income sections of the city. The young women earn a small stipend for their work, improve leadership and planning skills, gain job experience, and strengthen their self-esteem by acting as role models for younger children. In addition, they meet twice a month with their co-leaders for social activities and informal counseling. The adults get to know the teenagers, act as mentors, and gauge the teens' progress and readiness for increased responsiblity.

This is a highly successful program that is operated completely outside the school system. The program's dropout rate is very low. The Camp Fire staff continually monitors the juvenile court records to see if program participants are referred to the court again. Only one student has ever been so referred.

School Age Mother The primary goal of the School Age Mother (SAM) in Beaver Dam, Wisconsin, is to keep pregnant and parenting students from dropping out. This program has changed over the years with the needs of the district. It began in 1977 by serving only the Beaver Damschool district; in 1981, it expanded to surrounding districts. This expansion worked to stabilize the program, maintaining a constant level of support despite demographic fluctuations. In 1985, the Beaver Dam district joined with the other school districts to offer a child care facility for school-age parents. Besides providing basic care for the babies, the Child Care Lab requires that mothers spend time in the lab with their infants, participate in group counseling, and become involved with the mentor program. The mentors are trained mothers who meet individually with the students for about three hours a month. Preliminary evaluations indicate that this relationship has helped the students develop their self-esteem, receive encouragement for personal growth, and have new experiences that provide insights into alternative lifestyles.

Students are also provided with a "pull-out" program (taking students out of their regular classroom) where they can earn credits toward graduation. Pregnant students attend the special program whenever they feel uncomfortable in regular classrooms, and they can stay for up to four months after the child is born or until the beginning of the new semester. The girls attend classes in the morning and use the afternoon for health care, private counseling, work experiences, or other special programs. They are eligible for special tutorial help and assistance from the school district's psychologist, school nurse, social worker, and vocational counselor.

RECOMMENDATION 4: Extracurricular activities should provide opportunities for girls to act as key participants rather than supportive elements to a male-dominated activity.

Extracurricular activities provide opportunities for students to develop new interests, knowledge, and skills in a variety of settings. In sports or as members of a debating team, students get the chance to challenge and improve themselves. Such programs should be substantive -- involving more than the waving of "pom-poms" at football games -- and accessible to both boys and girls. Although the enactment of Title IX increased the number of young women participating in after-school sports, many schools do not provide the same enthusiasm and support to girls' teams as they do to boys'.

Peer Power is a school-based program for at-risk junior high girls. Run by the Chicago Public Schools since 1984, it is currently located in eleven schools in communities that have high rates of adolescent pregnancy, infant mortality, and school dropout. Twenty girls from each school are randomly selected to participate in the program, and each school is staffed by a trained teacher, co-leader, and parent volunteer. Parental consent is required and parental involvement is strongly encouraged. The students meet once a week for two hours and participate in a program that has four major components: health awareness, life skills enrichment, life options exploration, and parental involvement.

The program's first hour, which is the last period of the school day, is primarily devoted to group guidance and counseling, including discussions on health, decison-making, self-esteem, parenting awareness, human development, alcohol and drug abuse, and career awareness. Community members sometimes address the group, and students talk about career development and selecting school courses. In the Life Options Exploration component, each student is required to do a Career Research Project in which they choose a career, research it, and report on that career. Students take field trips, and local professionals visit the project to provide information and mentoring.

The second hour, immediately after school, is principally used for extracurricular activities. Under the category of Life Skills Enrichment, students engage in creative projects, field trips, and the tutoring of other students. Students are encouraged to write plays, raps, or songs; they also make crafts such as quilts, dresses, jewelry, pottery, or needlepoint. In order to highlight these accomplishments, once a year all PEER groups invite the community and participating schools city-wide to a Prevention Showcase Program.

When the program was first initiated, participating students received small stipends based on the achievement of good school attendance and grades. The rationale for this approach was to provide motivation; few participating girls got weekly allowances or "reward money" at home. In addition, some students gave up after-school job hours to attend the program. Some community members, however, opposed what they felt was "paying children to go to school". Also, as the program expanded, this system of payment was too expensive to maintain. As a result, a new system provides all participants with rewards (e.g., game tickets or restaurant coupons) and also offers prizes such as calculators or watches for which students can compete. "Minigrants" of $250 are available at each school. Parents are encouraged to visit the project weekly and to participate in all activities. Parent activities include an initial orientation, monthly parent workshop sessions, quarterly parent/child workshop sessions, mother/daughter days, and materials for parents to use with their adolescents at home. Girls are given home activity sheets each week.

RECOMMENDATION 5: Counseling and related activities (when needed) should be available to enhance girls' self-esteem.

Support groups can also be a valuable tool in working with at-risk teenage girls. Such groups can foster cooperation, create a supportive atmosphere, and provide real assistance in meeting practical problems. Troubled girls, who often lack basic social and problem-solving skills, are helped to recognize their own problems and feelings. Through talking with others, they are able to gain perspective on who they are and what they would like to become.

The Discovery Links Project, run by Camp Fire, Inc., in Klamath Falls, Oregon, is a youth group that works with female adolescents aged eleven through sixteen who are having trouble in school. Many have experienced multiple detentions and low grades. At the beginning of group sessions, girls are presumed to be lacking in the skills necessary for forming relationships or thinking about themselves in constructive ways. But through discussions that focus on matters of high interest to the young adolescent -- the self and personal autonomy -- girls gradually gain competency in their ability to maintain focus, see cause and effect relationships, and to recognize and have empathy for expressions of anger, sadness, caring, and other emotions. As the students' thinking and response skills grow, group sessions focus on developing problem-solving skills.

The Discovery Links project holds youth group sessions that meet weekly outside of school and are structured like regular Camp Fire meetings (allowing participants to move easily into already-existing Camp Fire groups whenever they are ready). Parent groups familiarize adults with the problem-solving process so they can reinforce and support their daughters' behavior at home. There is an opportunity for girls who successfully complete the program to become co-leaders for other groups, enhancing their sense of usefulness and self-esteem. An advisory council, with representation from schools, the county juvenile department, local civic leaders, and the Camp Fire Board, develops resources, recruits volunteers, and coordinates this program with other services available

to students. This program has succeeded in a number of areas, producing a decrease in the number of detentions and an improvement in grades for participating students.

The Early Single Parenting Project was started in San Francisco in 1977 by two social workers who were single parents. It offers new single mothers of all ages a twelve-week structured support group. The goal is to provide a non-threatening environment in which they can gain emotional support, share practical experiences and survival strategies, form a lasting support system, and make single parenting a positive experience. After the program's initial success, the project staff met with representatives of many San Francisco organizations who wanted to develop or modify their own group support programs for teen parents. The project's replication afforded its originators an opportunity to observe their model in different settings.

Facilitators of teen support groups reported many benefits for the members, including a nurturing environment that helps build self-esteem, a support structure, and validation of their experience as parents. The group structure combines freedom with limits, paralleling the dual nature of many adolescents who simultaneously crave dependence and independence. Not all the teen parent support groups met with equal success, demonstrating that great care must be taken when adapting adult models for use by young people. Facilitators stress that groups must be flexible and emphasize a trusting relationship between teens and adult leaders. Other problems include time constraints when the group is structured as part of the school day, the need to require group sizes limited to five or six, and the mandatory (and sometimes reluctant) participation of some teens who are required to join a group in order to receive other services.

Think Again is a videotape designed to encourage young women to complete high school and is an excellent resource to incorporate into a larger prevention program. An accompanying booklet provides additional information on female dropout and guidance for presenting the videotape to teachers, administrators, counselors, and student groups.

The Rural Alternatives Institute, producer of the film, taped interviews with young women who describe, in personal terms, why they dropped out, the consequences, their regret, and their desire to return to school. These young women dropped out for a variety of reasons -- babies, marriage, peer pressure, family and social problems, and difficulties associated with minority status. They are shown in a variety of unrewarding jobs -- at a bingo hall, cafeteria, hardware store, and laundramat -- and all urge potential dropouts to "think again". Because the girls are ethnically mixed and discuss different motivations, the film is appropriate for a wide audience.

RECOMMENDATION 6: Parents should receive counseling/education on how to support their daughters education.

Counseling and education for parents is important; negative parental attitudes can defeat a program. Many projects discussed in this report have sought the cooperation and support of parents. The PEER program in the Chicago Public Schools, described above, encourages parents to participate in all project

activities. Workshops and other special events are held to educate parents and engage their interest. The Discovery Links program in Klamath Falls, Oregon, organizes parent groups with the purpose of enabling participants to support and reinforce the problem-solving skills their daughters are learning. Parental and parent/child counseling are also available when needed.

Two programs that will be described below emphasize parental involvement. The Family Learning Center in Leslie, Michigan, includes the extended family in counseling to build a supportive environment for teen parents. Ysleta Girls Count! in El Paso, Texas, holds a Parents Night to help parents collectively encourage their daughters' career aspirations.

COORDINATION OF SERVICES FOR ACADEMIC AND NONACADEMIC NEEDS

RECOMMENDATION 7: Schools must coordinate with outside agencies and organizations to provide students with access to needed services.

It is difficult for schools to meet the various needs of at-risk students. The Family Learning Center in Leslie, Michigan, is a comprehensive program for teen parents and is located in a rural environment where it is often difficult to find and coordinate services. The program, which serves seven rural school districts, offers public and mental health, social and legal services through county agencies, and continuing secondary education and job preparation -- all at one site. The primary goal is to keep teen parents and pregnant girls in school, while at the same time offering child care, family education, and vocational training. The teens' parents are involved in the program whenever possible, creating an intergenerational support system. The program works with teen fathers as well as teen mothers.

Since 1974 the Center has operated two mobile units that serve as alternative education sites on the Leslie High School campus. Students from the seven districts are picked up by mini-van or bus, and they are offered small classes, individualized schedules, job preparation, and counseling. The normal high school curriculum is used, with students attending regular classes whenever possible. The Center operates a day-care center, and specific times are set aside when the teen parents take responsibility for their children. Pregnant teens receive prenatal care, and the Center coordinates on-site and home visits by mental health nurses. The program makes every effort to relieve the stress and anxiety involved with teen parenting, thus reducing the possibility of child abuse and neglect.

Results from the Family Learning Center are significant and well-documented. Ninety percent of seniors graduate, a rate that is high not only for the area, but for the nation. The number of seventh to eleventh graders who enter the program and then remain in school is also over ninety percent. Program participants improve their grade point averages and also have fewer pregnancy-related health problems. Their infants have higher birth weights and fewer respiratory problems.

The larger community has shared in the benefits and responsibilities of the Family Learning Center. A Head Start program was started in Leslie, and Michigan State University interns are placed at the Center. Community residents regularly donate clothing, food, children's toys, and equipment to the Center; landlords tell the program about rental vacancies, employers give information about jobs, and the community newspaper prints positive articles about the Center. The Family Learning Center has become a model for programs in many other rural districts.

RECOMMENDATION 8: School environments must be flexible enough to accomodate students' individual learning and service needs.

As discussed above, at-risk students often need the kind of help that is not generally available at school. In addition, schools may need to be more flexible in order to assist at-risk students. A young woman who needs a partial schedule because she can't get a baby sitter until third period does not fit into a standard school schedule. Neither does a student who will be absent for final examinations because of her delivery date. And, neither does the young woman who stays home because she has a sick child. Most schools don't recognize such an absence as an excused one.

A School-based, Noncurricular Model for Pregnant and Parenting Teens was established in 1986 by the National Association of State Boards of Education (NASBE) and funded through the Departments of Health and Human Services and Labor. The project was designed to determine the effectiveness of a counselor/advocate who works in the school to provide students with access to the academic, health, employment, and other services they need to complete their education. The project is aimed at pregnant and parenting students and is being piloted in two schools in Milwaukee and Maryland.

The counselor/advocate identifies adolescents who need services and enrolls them in the program. Advocates establish case-management files, coordinate services referrals and academic services, work with school personnel to facilitate scheduling and other flexibility for students, and provide on-going help and moral support. A counselor/advocate can call students and inquire about absences, arrange alternative academic programs, ensure that students receive access to appropriate nutritional information and pre-natal care, and identify needed day care facilities.

Each school district involved with the NASBE project has established a problem-solving group responsible for on-going project operation and policy. Composed of school district officials and community agency representatives, this group forms the network of referral services. The counselor/advocate periodically reports to the group and relies upon its members to provide assistance or influence with schools and agencies. The group will ultimately form a link with state policymakers regarding appropriate programs and policies for pregnant and parenting students.

The NASBE model is a relatively low-cost option for providing services to pregnant and parenting students. Data is still being gathered for a formal evaluation, but preliminary results show that most of the faculty and teachers

are familiar with the program, like it, and feel that it is working. At the Wisconsin school, seventy-four percent of participating students earned enough credits to progress to the next grade level, and only one participating student (out of thirty-eight) dropped out of school, giving it a ninety-seven percent retention rate. At the Maryland school, one-hundred nineteen students used program services and the retention rate was ninety-three percent.

BIAS-FREE INTERACTIONS WITH TEACHERS AND ADMINISTRATORS

RECOMMENDATION 9: Adequate teacher training must be available to promote student-teacher interactions that are free of sex and race biases.

Gender/Ethnic Expectations and Student Achievement (GESA) is a program to help teachers become aware of and improve student/teacher interaction patterns, especially regarding gender equity. Developed by Dolores Grayson and first piloted in Los Angeles in 1983, it currently operates in thirty-eight states. The underlying assumption is that only through equitable treatment will the needs and potential of all students be served. The program consists of five "workshop-observation-feedback" units; each unit lasts about a month. Units are based on the five major areas of gender disparity: instructional interaction, classroom grouping and organization, classroom control, enhancing self-esteem, and the evaluation of student performance. The three-hour workshop sessions take place after school with groups of twenty to thirty-six teachers. Participants break into clusters of four, and over the next month, each teacher observes and is observed by the other three in a classroom setting. The observers code, by gender, the teacher-student interactions studied at each workshop.

A field evaluation of this program took place in Los Angeles in 1984, and a formal validation study was undertaken in 1985-1986. Higher achievement gains in reading and mathematics were attained by students of GESA-trained teachers. Pre- and post-training observations revealed that although teachers still favored boys with more attention, they did so to a much lesser extent. Participating teachers reported an increase in non-stereotyped interactions, materials, and activities. There are also indications that the program has generic benefits; it not only decreased disparity between genders, but also between ethnic groups and students of differing abilities and socio-economic status.

Expanding Staff Potential in High Technology (ESP) helps educators understand Title IX and how to implement it. Seminars, run by the Alabama Department of Education and Wallace State Community College, introduce and explain two manuals. The Legal Framework Guide provides laws and related legislation to assist personnel in understanding and implementing Title IX. The Curriculum Guide is a collection of ideas, activities, and resources designed to help educators provide students with: an understanding of the historical, current, and future perspectives of men, women, and work; an understanding of themselves, their own interests, skills, and abilities; and student career planning, which considers a broad range of potential jobs and access routes. By the end of the seminar, participants have developed plans for their own schools or districts to resist sex stereotyping, to counsel students into non-traditional careers, and to recruit local business and industrial personnel to serve as role models.

ENCOURAGEMENT TO ENTER NONTRADITIONAL COURSES AND CAREERS

RECOMMENDATION 10: Girls must be encouraged to explore various career options, including preparation for non-traditional careers.

It isn't easy for a young woman to enter a career field that has been traditionally considered "male", and many girls don't even consider doing so. Young girls limit their options as they opt out of science and mathematics courses, and are therefore unable to train for a number of jobs, both traditional and non-traditional. The programs described under this and the following recommendation help young adults think about and prepare for a range of future options.

Ysleta Girls Count! is a school district program to assist middle school girls who have already demonstrated proficiency in mathematics. The project is located El Paso, Texas, a city that is relatively poor and about eighty percent Hispanic. Its purpose is to help participants: (1) take more math classes, (2) significantly increase their PSAT mathematics scores, and (3) reduce their anxiety about mathematics. Students -- a minority of whom are at-risk or disadvantaged because of drug abuse, disruptive homes, or poor school attendance -- attend a week-long summer seminar in creative mathematical concepts and visit potential career sites such as universities, hospitals, and banks. Mentoring and parent education are important elements of the program, since many participating girls have been discouraged from outperforming boys. Parent education helps parents collectively support the concept of female achievement. In the school year that follows the summer seminar, participating girls meet with mentors, visit the mentors' job site, and complete a group project. After the year-long program, the project staff tracks participants to make sure that they are guided into advanced courses in secondary school. The business community, universities, and the media have all encouraged and supported this Ysleta Independent School District program. The Ysleta program is a fine example of how a school district, in cooperation with the community, can encourage young women to enroll and excell in non-traditional courses.

Choices is one aspect of the Girl's Club's four-pronged approach to teen pregnancy prevention. The program is based on the philosophy that across cultural groups, young women with higher eduation and career aspirations are less likely to become teen parents (Chilman, 1980). Girl's Club leaders in Santa Barbera, California, developed the Choices curriculum, and it was subsequently adopted in the curriculum of the Santa Barbera school system in 1981-82. Published as Choices: A Teen Woman's Journal of Self-Awareness and Personal Planning, the curriculum is now used in schools and Girl's Clubs across the country.

Choices takes the reader through the process of planning for the future and presents a realistic appraisal of the emotional, financial, and social implications of early child-bearing. Participants in the course must visualize their life from the present to the age of sixty; they prepare rigorous personal and family budgets for the lives they'd like to lead. In the process, they develop a set of personal goals and objectives and an individual plan to reach them.

The programs's objectives are to increase:

- o knowledge about available careers, salaries associated with those careers, and the income required to support oneself in adult life,
- o knowledge about a woman's present and future roles in the labor force and in family life,
- o knowledge about the economic, social, emotional, and physical aspects of childbearing,
- o self-esteem and self-reliance,
- o positive attitudes about non-traditional careers, and
- o skills in the areas of decision-making, formation of values, development of personal goals and objectives, assertiveness, identification of aptitudes and interests, family planning, and career research.

The program has no formal evaluation; instead, program users evaluate its effectiveness according to the goals they have set. For example, school administrators evaluate the program according to the participants' final grades.

The Choices Initiative in Wisconsin was established to stimulate collaboration among Wisconsin agencies to address the issues of sexual abuse, pregnancy, education, vocational education, and academic under-preparation -- issues that were identified as interdependent problems by a special advisory committee on the female adolescent. The interagency collaboration was established by the Wisconsin Women's Council, a state agency established by the legislature in 1983 to improve the status of women in Wisconsin. Among its many activities, the Council conducts state agency dialogues, sponsors conferences, identifies barriers to women in education and the workforce, and maintains an inventory of state and national women's associations.

The interagency committee -- consisting of social service agencies, schools, job training resources, advocacy groups, civic organizations, and the Departments of Public Instruction, Health & Human Services, and Industry, Labor, and Human Relations -- encourages communities to develop programs to help young women. A Choices Conference was held in May of 1985 to provide technical assistance to communities. Three demonstration projects (rural, urban, and suburban) were established to help meet the objectives listed above. Each demonstration site used the Girl's Club's Choices curriculum and other strategies based on the particular problems in that locale. A mid-cized city, where single parents living in poverty was the biggest problem, used a media campaign and public forums to build support for the Choices concept. In Milwaukee, where the primary problem is student pregnancy, individual student plans, student support groups, and a community task force were formed. At the rural site, where the single biggest problem is the dropout of Native American girls, a variety of approaches helped girls prepare for decision-making, non-traditional careers, and their future roles as workers and family members.

Evaluations show that the project is generally meeting its goals of school retention and continued project participation by students. It has been strongly supported by the State Superintendent of Education, and the Governor has proposed that it be institutionalized in the Wisconsin Department of Health and Social Services.

The Job Corps is a training and employment program administered by the U.S. Department of Labor to better prepare disadvantaged youth to either get and hold jobs, further their education or training, or enter the Armed Forces. Major corporations, nonprofit organizations, and government agencies manage and operate over 100 Job Corps centers nationwide. Enrollees are youth between the ages of sixteen and twenty-one who are impoverished and unemployed and have volunteered for the program. They are typically relocated to residential centers for an intense program offering a range of services that are fifty percent basic education and fifty percent vocational skills training. Each enrollee is tested and screened to assess skills, aptitudes, and interests; based on those results, an individualized development plan is developed for each corpsmember. Enrollees progress through the program at their own pace; competition is de-emphasized and individual growth is encouraged. As corpsmembers complete vocational training, they are assigned to work experience programs where they apply their new skills and knowledge to a job for a period of four to six weeks. In the residential center, corpsmembers participate in meetings and group counseling sessions, and are responsible for helping maintain their own belongings and the center. Each member's progress is evaluated on an on-going basis, formally and informally. Upon graduation, members are helped to find jobs, apartments, and meet other needs.

In 1985, of the 63,020 youth enrolled in Job Corps, thirty-one point eight percent were female. According to a 1982 evaluation, there were differential impacts by sex. Females without children tended to have larger gains in earnings, education, health, and reduction in welfare; males were more likely to have entered into military service or reduced unemployment benefits. Females with children before or after Job Corps showed little gain. The same report showed that former corpsmembers had increases in employment, earnings, high school diplomas or equivalent degrees, college attendance, better health, and a reduction in the receipt of financial welfare assistance.

Promising programs and the state role

In the following section, we will discuss state action to support programs such as the ones listed above. It is important that governors and state legislatures support at-risk initiatives, because the education community cannot, by itself, command the necessary resources or media attention. Successful programs to prevent dropout are collective endeavors. Governors, legislatures, state boards of education, state departments of education, and others can provide the resources, technical assistance, and policies that encourage (or require) the kinds of approaches we have described.

III. PROMISING POLICY DEVELOPMENT

There are a number of state policy initiatives that show promise in encouraging school retention. Most such initiatives are aimed at at-risk students generally, although some specifically highlight pregnant and parenting teenagers. States are most likely to enact policies aimed at at-risk youth of both sexes. We believe that policymakers who plan dropout prevention initiatives must be aware of the particular problems that prevent some girls from finishing high school. State policy initiatives should reflect an emphasis on helping young women, providing blueprints for local school districts and schools to follow. States can:

- o Focus attention on at-risk youth by requiring accurate data on school completion by gender and releasing such data by district and school. This can be a powerful mechanism; it defines the problem, as well as holding schools and districts publicly accountable.

- o Initiate collaboration between state agencies and organizations in program planning and implementation.

- o Create incentives for schools to improve services for at-risk youth by recognizing outstanding school district and school achievements and publicizing their success; providing additional funds so districts and schools can address th problem; providing technical assistance so successful ideas can be shared; and permitting greater flexibility (e.g., releasing them from certain state requirements and regulations if they have met state goals).

- o Impose requirements that schools must: provide alternative teaching methods for youth who are behind grade level; reduce student/teacher ratios; and provide youth with access to a variety of services to address student health, emotional, social, and employment needs.

- o Employ sanctions against districts or schools that fail to serve at-risk youth effectively by requiring schools and districts with unacceptably high dropout rates or unacceptably low student achievement levels to submit specific plans for improvement; putting districts and schools on notice and sending in state teams when sufficient progress has not been demonstrated; and withholding state accreditation when the local board fails to comply with state standards.

The following state initiatives illustrate different approaches to dropout prevention. In each example we have described implications for girls.

WISCONSIN

The most comprehensive state approach to dropout prevention is provided by the 1985 Wisconsin Act 29. This act defines at-risk children, requires every school board to identify such children annually in each district, and requires each board to develop a plan for effective programming. "Children at-risk" are defined as being behind their age or grade level in mathematics, reading, or in the number of credits attained. In addition, such students are, or have been, any of the following:

- a school dropout,
- a student with twenty or more unexcused absences during the previous school year,
- an deliquent who has been found guilty by the judicial system of an offense, or
- a parent.

All school districts with fifty or more dropouts, or a dropout rate exceeding five percent for the previous school year, must submit plans for improvement to the State Superintendent of Schools. An annual report must follow with information on attendance, retention, and high school graduation rates for students enrolled in at-risk programs.

Wisconsin's initiative is worth noting because it's comprehensive, requires accurate data collection at the school level, requires a reporting process to the State, and includes incentive money to help school districts improve. The State Department of Education published Children At Risk: A Resource and Planning Guide to help local schools and districts understand the legislative requirements and to provide suggestions for fulfilling it. District school boards are required to appoint a "children at risk" coordinator to oversee implementation and report to the Department of Public Instruction. The Planning Guide includes descriptions of exemplary programs at the secondary level.

The legislation took effect in August of 1985. After one year of implementation (according to a Department of Public Instruction staff person), eighty-seven percent of the school districts had participated in a one-day in-service training session about implementing the legislation. In addition, the legislation had a "ripple effect" on social legislation. Major social programs are being adjusted to work in conjunction with the at-risk legislation. First, the already-existing Job Training and Partnership Act (JTPA) was required to use at-risk definitions consistent with the legislative definition. Second, the state's Welfare Reform package cited this legislation and incoporated requirements that Aid for Dependent Children (AFDC) school-age parents (or recipients of AFDC parents) must be enrolled as full-time students to receive benefits.

Implications for girls

Unlike most states, Wisconsin requires accurate data collection disaggregated by race and sex. In addition, teen parents who are behind grade level or not making

sufficient academic progress are automatically classified as "at-risk" and targeted for assistance. As a result, more attention will be paid to identifying and providing programs for school-age parents. In addition, the Choices program mentioned above was a state initiative aimed specifically at at-risk girls.

OREGON

In 1983, Oregon's Governor appointed a Youth Coordinating Council to be administered by the State Department of Education. The Council consists of fourteen members drawn from a variety of agencies, particularly education, the juvenile justice system, and employment. Its mission is to:

- examine policies and programs serving at-risk youth,
- draft policy and budget recommendations for the state of Oregon,
- use available funds to develop exemplary at-risk programs, and
- work for the adoption of these programs throughout the state.

School dropouts, potential dropouts, youth offenders, teen parents, and minority youth have been the focus of Council efforts.

The Council has, thusfar, funded nine major demonstrations. For example, Project Success in Eugene provides intensive counseling to small groups of high school students who are potential dropouts. The project helps students find jobs and obtain services -- job permits, medical exams, financial aid for interview clothing, personal counseling, and access to alternative education programs at community colleges. One part of the alternative education is a Student On-Leave program that permits students to take a one-time, one semester leave of absence during high school to explore career options. This kind of project illustrates Oregon's efforts to provide comprehensive youth programs that involve a variety of public and private agencies.

Another Council-funded project, The Young Parents Program in Albany, Oregon, helps pregnant young women aged fourteen through twenty-one to find and keep jobs. Students who need academic credits enroll in the local community college, with transportation and day care provided. Students also work at the day care center to learn parenting skills.

Implications for Girls

Because of its independent status, the Council has less traditional ties to state agencies and might be freer to try non-traditional approaches to helping at-risk girls. In 1987, the Council contracted a detailed statewide study of dropouts disaggregated by sex. The findings indicated that of a twenty-five percent state dropout rate, fifty-three percent were boys and forty-six percent were girls.

NORTH CAROLINA

North Carolina's dropout prevention effort began with a Z. Smith Reynolds Foundation grant to develop dropout demonstration programs. Just as three site

models were about to be implemented, a state dropout prevention fund was created by the General Assembly. This fund totalled fifteen million dollars for 1985-86, and twenty million for 1986-87, meaning that funds were available to every school district in North Carolina. Part of the fund established a State Office of Dropout Prevention in the State Department of Education. Model programs included planning, comprehensiveness, collaboration, and dropout prevention as an integral part of the entire school program. Model programs were used to test a variety of program elements, including an inter-agency advisory council for dropout prevention, an educator's committee for dropout prevention, a dropout prevention coordinator on the central office staff, and joint training for interagency council members and program administrators.

Most of the state dropout prevention fund was used to staff in-school suspension programs (eight million dollars) in thirty-six school districts. About four million dollars was used for counseling high-risk students in seventy-five districts. The latter program was targeted to pregnant and parenting students, low achievers, truants, discipline problems, and economically and socially disadvantaged students. Remaining funds were scattered among a number of smaller programs, such as extended school day programs for remediation, half-time job placement specialists for every high school in the state, transition programs for the handicapped to help them move into the work force, and special programs for high-risk students that targeted particular groups such as pregnant and parenting students, substance offenders, and juvenile offenders.

Worth noting is that the North Carolina Legislature recognized dropout as a serious problem, appropriated funds, and created a position in the Department of Public Instruction to provide technical assistance and support to all school districts in the state. The state is testing a variety of approaches to determine which are most effective.

Implications for Girls

School districts can access state funds to test initiatives aimed at keeping young women in school. In addition, the model programs took a leading role in testing methods of data collection to better identify the magnitude and nature of the state's dropout problem. At the end of each school month, schools with grades seven through twelve must submit a summary on dropouts to the Dropout Prevention Coordinator. The summary must include information about dropouts by sex, race, age, grade, socio-economic background, parental level of education, competency scores, retention, absenteeism, reasons for dropout, and future plans. After two years of experimentation, this method of data collection is being implemented throughout the state for the 1987-1988 school year. As a result, program planners should have a good idea about which girls are dropping out and why.

MARYLAND

Maryland has two, inter-related initiatives aimed at helping pregnant and parenting students.

The Inter-departmental Committee on Teen Pregnancy

In 1984, Maryland established an Inter-departmental Committee on Teen Pregnancy. Composed of program experts from the Departments of Health and Mental Hygeine, Employment and Economic Development, Human Resources, Education, the Office for Children and Youth, and the Juvenile Services Agency, the Committee's purposes are to:

- o promote cooperation at state and local levels in order to improve programs and services for at-risk, pregnant, and parenting teens,
- o plan and implement an annual statewide inter-agency conference on teen pregnancy and parenting, and
- o develop a state-wide network to facilitate communication and cooperation between state and local levels.

Each Committee agency donates staff time to carry out activities related to the purposes above; the non-profit Equality Center provides technical assistance and staff support. Though established by no formal legislation or inter-agency agreement, Committee members have been working together for four years and are engaged with the following types of activities:

- o Incentive grants. The Department of Health and Mental Hygeine provides money that is administered through the Department of Education. The Department provides grants of up to $2000 to local school districts if they form inter-agency committees on teen pregnancy. At this point, all twenty-four local school districts have received grants.
- o Statewide conferences, the fourth of which will be held in November of 1987. These conferences provide an opportunity for state personnel, local representatives, and child advocates to discuss programs, research, and issues related to teen pregnancy prevention and teen parenting.
- o The publication of an annual networking guide. The guide describes incentive grant projects and lists the key contact people in each school district from all agencies listed above.
- o A spring conference that provides training for program staff who work with teen pregnancy prevention and parenting programs.

Governor's Council on Adolescent Pregnancy

The Governor's Council acts as a complement to the above activities. Created by the State Legislature in 1986, it resulted from the findings of a previous task force on teen pregnancy prevention and parenting. This Council has one full-time staff person who meets regularly with the Governor's Cabinet. The group examines policy issues through four subcommittees:

- o Education, to examine school policies such as data collection, absenteesim, and ease of re-entry for former dropouts.

- o Legislative, to educate the legislature on policy issues related to teen pregnancy prevention and parenting.

- o Inter-agency, to advocate for more effective coordination.

- o Private Sector, to examine ways that the private sector can help provide services, such as job opportunities and assisting young mothers with day care payments.

There is a formal structure within the Council for communication with high-level state figures; there is also an informal structure through the subcommittees that uses the expertise of program staff to identify issues, concerns, and needed direction. This is an example of how an issue can be addressed through both formal and informal action. In addition, the issue of at-risk youth has received high visibility because of the Governor's support. In 1990, the Legislature will examine the work of the Council to determine whether modifications are necessary and whether to continue supporting it. The Council has been given enough time (four years) to determine which actions will be effective.

Implications for Girls

Both the state and local levels are active and, ideally, communicating and coordinating action so that pregnant and parenting teens can get the services they need. Available Maryland statistics offer no information about the specifics of dropout as they relate to girls. However, during the spring of 1987, the Department of Education appointed a statewide committee to develop a proposal to revamp the data collection methods used to produce education statistics. The committee's recommendations include: (1) new definitions for dropouts, graduates, and non-traditional graduates, and (2) means to analyze dropouts by sex, race, age, and urban or rural setting.

ILLINOIS

In 1983, the Illinois Governor's Office initiated a program called Parents Too Soon. Illnois has the highest infant mortality rate of any industrialized state, and the initiative was intended to reduce it. The Governor's Office gathered the ten state agencies that were addressing issues related to infant mortality and teen pregnancy:

- o State Board of Education

- o University of Illinois Crippled Children's Program

- o Department of Children and Family Sevices

- o Department of Public Aid

- o Department of Health

- o Governor's Planning Council on Developmental Disabilities

- o Department of Mental Health and Developmental Disabilities
- o Department of Employment Security
- o Department of Commerce and Community Affairs

The Governor's Office then allocated twelve million dollars in federal funds to Parents Too Soon -- a collaborative effort to reduce infant mortality and teen pregnancy . In addition to pooling funds for a common effort, the Parents Too Soon initiative uses common funds to coordinate public relations. The Governor's Office thus coordinated program activities while giving visibility to the project.

The State has awarded contracts for direct services to 130 community agencies. Major activities to date are:

- o Demonstration programs operated by the Department of Public Health. These programs provide young women with a range of services including pre-natal care, baby care, and job training opportunities.
- o Activities related to pregnancy prevention and parenting. These programs are operated by the Ounce of Prevention Fund, a private, non-profit organization.
- o A Young Parents Program that encourages school completion and job training for teen mothers.

In 1987, the Parents Too Soon initiative received a Ford Foundation Award as one of the ten most innovative programs in the country.

Implications for Girls

Parents Too Soon shows how a Governor's Office can coordinate the activities of ten agencies to promote common program goals, and at the same time give the whole endeavor status and visibility. A comprehensive set of activities have been undertaken to help teen mothers with health care, education, job training, and parenting.

MASSACHUSETTS

In 1985, Massachusetts passed an Education Reform Act establishing an Essential Skills Dropout Prevention Discretionary Grant Program. For 1987 (as of February, 1987), two and a half million dollars had been granted. Competitive grants are awarded to school districts that are trying to help students stay in school and graduate. Funding priority is given to school districts that: (1) have high concentrations of students from low income families, and (2) have high concentrations of students deficient in basic skills, and (3) have documented high dropout rates for the past three years. Grants are awarded for program expansion, as well as for the planning and creation of new programs. Funding is restricted to programs serving students in grades seven through twelve. Special

Remedial Program Grants are available for schools with high concentrations of students in grades one through nine who are failing basic skills tests.

Each participating school district must create a Dropout Prevention Advisory Council that is broadly representative of the community to oversee program development and implementation. Dropout prevention programs have included remediation and tutorial programs, counseling programs, work-study or cooperative education, involvement with parents and community groups, help for pregnant and parenting teenagers, and professional development for school personnel. In 1987, forty-eight school districts received funds.

Implications for Girls

The funding criteria for the program described permit wide lattitude in program design. Hence, it gives school districts an opportunity to develop new approaches to helping young women complete high school.

IV. CONCLUSION

We have described a series of promising programs and policies to help young women complete high school. In order to ensure that these promising approaches are supported and expanded, local and state policymakers need to keep in mind the following agenda for action:

1. First and foremost, we need accurate information about the extent and nature of the dropout problem. This information is not currently available in most districts and states. We need to know how many students drop out of school, and we need that data disaggregated by race and sex. We need to know how many adolescent girls become pregnant and give birth. And, various agencies must have access to each other's information. Information must be coordinated between departments of education, health, social services, and employment.

2. We need good evaluative data on programs that appear promising. Equally important, such information needs to be shared between districts and states. There are many creative ideas about how to help young women finish school, as earlier descriptions in this paper show. Program providers at both the local and state levels have told us, however, that they feel they are reinventing the wheel. Communication networks need to be developed so that individuals in different states know what's promising and what's working.

3. Policymakers should take a close look at a promising feature of several programs described in this paper: the case-management approach. This approach, which comes from social work rather than education, suggests that an effective strategy for high-risk students is to have someone, well-known within the school, who keeps track of individual students who are at risk of school failure.

4. Schools need to take a leadership role in ensuring that young women and men have access to the necessary academic and support services to finish school. Schools must reach into the community in a variety of ways -- to enlist volunteer support for mentoring programs, and to cooperate with various youth-serving agencies in providing students with extra services (such as counseling, day care, health care, and employment training). Schools may need to provide many of these services directly to students, although not all these services need to be provided by school personnel.

5. Finally, we need to promote changes in school structure to enhance the likelihood that young women will stay in school and earn a diploma. This means that secondary schools need to become more flexible in addressing the needs of individual students. For example, in order to accomodate young women who are parents or who have other significant responsibilities that interfere with full-time school attendance, schools could be available at night, on weekends, and during the summer months. Schools can take an active role in job placement activities for students and ensure that such opportunities are bias-free. Schools can provide health care for students through outreach nurses or school-based clinics.

School personnel will have to learn new roles and responsibilities in terms of working with young people at risk. For example, teachers may assume some responsibility for identifying pregnant or parenting adolescents to appropriate personnel. At the same time, they need to be aware of the sensitivity and confidential nature of their information and behave accordingly.

Local and state policymakers can support the vision described within this paper in a number of ways. Incentives can be given to schools and school districts that are willing to try promising approaches. Educators can take the lead in proposing interagency agreements or legislative initiatives that support collaboration and coordination between various agencies. Local and state policymakers can grant schools and school districts increased flexibility in terms of complying with certain requirements or regulations as long as schools and districts are willing to be held accountable for agreed-upon outcomes.

Our goal is "schools that fit students", instead of requiring an increasingly diverse set of students to fit an antiquated structure. The result will be a more individualized education system, with attendant adults who have the skills and knowledge to help young women gain confidence, finish school, and pursue post-secondary education or obtain jobs commensurate with their interests and abilities.

V. APPENDIX

PROGRAMS

Instructional Strategies

The Johns Hopkins Team Learning Project
Robert E. Slavin
Center for Research on Elementary and Middle Schools
The Johns Hopkins University
3505 North Charles Street
Baltimore, MD 21218
(301) 338-8249

Remedial Instruction

Summer Training and Education Program (STEP)
Michael Bailin
Public/Private Ventures
399 Market Street
Philadelphia, PA 19106

The Homework Hotline
Lorraine Johnson
Education Coordinator
Girls Clubs of San Diego
606 South 30th Street
San Diego, CA 92113
(619) 233-7722

Mentor Programs

Applied Leadership Training for Youth
JoAnne Jones
Executive Director
Tuscon Area Council of Camp Fire, Inc.
2555 North Edith
Tuscon, AR 85716
(602) 325-6883

School Age Mother (SAM)
Emmet Weber
Curriculum and Personnel Manager
Unified School District
705 McKinley Street
Beaverdam, WI 53916
(414) 887-7131

Extracurricular Activities

Peer Power
Doris M. Williams
Chicago Public Schools
1819 West Pershing Road
Chicago, IL 60609
(312) 890-8299

Counseling

The Discovery Links Project
Susan Basden
1905 Oregon Avenue
Klamath Falls, OR 97601
(503) 884-4884

Early Single Parenting Project
Deborah Lee/Evelyn Jackson
1005 Market Street, #131
San Francisco, CA 94103
(415) 558-9493

Think Again
Dr. Ella Stotz
Rural Alternatives Institute
Box 163
Huron, SD 57350
(605) 352-7011

Parent Counseling

PEER(listed above)

Coordinated Services

The Family Learning Center
Jean Ekins
400 Kimbal Street,Portable No.7
Leslie Public Schools
Leslie, MI 49251
(517) 589-9102

School Environments

School-based, Non-curricular Model for Pregnant and Parenting Teens
Janice Earle
National Assiciation of State Boards of Education
701 North Fairfax Street, Suite 340
Alexandria, VA 22314
(703) 684-4000

Sex and Race Biases

Gender/Ethnic Expectations and Student Achievement (GESA)
Dolores A. Grayson
Project Manager
Educational Equity Center
Los Angeles County Office of Education
9300 East Imperial Highway, Room 246
Downey, CA 90242-2890
(213) 922-9611

Expanding Staff Potential in High Technology (ESP)
Letha G. Weaver
Project Director
ESP in High Technology
Wallace State Community College
Hanceville, AL 35077-9080
(205) 352-6403

Non-traditional Courses and Careers

Ysleta Girls Count!
Evelyn Bell
Ysleta ISD
9600 Sims Drive
El Paso, TX 79958
(915) 595-5680

Choices
Jane Quinn
Director of Program Services
Girls Clubs of America
205 Lexington Avenue
New York, NY 10016
(212) 689-3700

The Choices Initiative in Wisconsin
The Wisconsin Women's Council
30 West Mifflin Street
Suite 512
Milwaukee, WI 53702
(608) 266-2219

The Jobs Corps
Employment and Training Administration
U.S. Department of Labor
601 D Street, NW
Washington, DC 20213

STATE INITIATIVES

Wisconsin

Dennis Van den Heuvel
State Department of Education
125 South Webster Street
P.O. Box 7841
Madison, WI 53707
(608) 266-1723

Oregon

John Pendergrass
Youth Coordinating Council
Department of Education
700 Pringle Parkway,SE
Salem, OR 97310
(503) 378-3569

North Carolina

Anne Bryan
Dropout Prevention Coordinator
Department of Education
116 West Edenton Street
Raleigh, NC 27603-1712
(919) 733-5461

Maryland

Margaret Dunkle
Inter-departmental Committee on Teen Pregnancy
The Equality Center, Suite 250
220 I Street, NE
Washington, DC 20002
(202) 645-6706

Bronwyn Mayden
Executive Director
Governor's Council on Adolescent Pregnancy
1123 North Entaw Street, Room 201
Baltimore, MD 21201
(301) 333-7948

Massachusetts

Dan French
Essential Skills Dropout Prevention Discretionary Grant Program
Department of Education
1385 Hancock Street
Quincy, MA 02169
(617) 770-7580

Illinois

Tom Berkshire
Parents Too Soon
Office of the Governor
State House, Room 203
Springfield, IL 62706
(217) 728-4775

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NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF STATE BOARDS OF EDUCATION

State boards influence the educational direction in the state. State boards do not act alone: they interact with the chief state school officer, the legislature, the governor, local constituents, and state level associations of administrators, teachers, and school boards. Through their state level policy development and adoption process, and by virtue of their relationship with the state legislatures, state boards determine the tone, direction, and quality of education in their states.

Created in 1959 with an initial membership of eleven states, the National Association of State Boards of Education (NASBE) now has a membership composed of the state boards of education in 46 states and five U.S. territories. It is a dynamic and effective association representing these state boards of education as they seek to promote quality education in the states and to strengthen the tradition of lay control of American public schools.