

NEW HEIGHTS

School-Based Support for Expectant and Parenting Students



Introduction

Overview

- New Heights first began in the 1990s with TANF in two DCPS high schools
- Office of Adolescent Health Pregnancy Assistance Fund (OAH PAF) funding allowed expansion to 11 additional DCPS schools and two charter schools (plus one special populations coordinator)

Program Goals

- Improve attendance
- Increase graduation rates
- Improve/maintain the health of these students and their children
- Prevent subsequent pregnancies
- Prepare students for higher education or joining the workforce



Program Components

- School-based coordinators provide supportive case management and assistance with accessing community resources
- Special Populations Coordinator provides support services to foster-care youth
- Educational workshops through a network of community partnerships
- Baby Bonus Bucks, an incentive program
- Youth development framework
- Collaborations with public and private organizations and resources at management and school-level
- Youth Advisory Council



New Heights provides education/training on a host of topics such as:

- Pre-natal Care
- Child Birth
- Parenting Skills
- Financial Literacy
- College Admissions
- Financial Aid
- Career Planning
- Health-Related Issues
- Love, Life & Relationships
- And much, much more!**

Findings

Program Objectives

- Program participants have higher attendance rates than their predicted attendance rate if they had not participated in New Heights
- Attain a 78% graduation rate for participating students
- 75% of participating students attend at least one reproductive health workshop
- 90% of the participating students do not become pregnant or a parent during the school year 2013-2014
- At least 50% of participants have a community-based or school-based case manager within six months of enrollment

Quantitative Evaluation Results

During the 2011-2012 school year:

- There were 561 active and 94 inactive (previously active) students in the program
- Students have indicated a high level of satisfaction with workshops and other core elements
- 80.3% of 12th grade students graduated at the end of the 2011-2012 school year
- Subsequent pregnancy rate for participants in the program was 1.2%, substantially lower than the 16% repeat pregnancy rate for DC
- Average daily attendance rates and in-seat attendance rates improved for the total participants by 6.8% and 3.8% respectively
- 48.5% of students enrolled for less than six months were assigned a case manager
- 60% of active students have completed a reproductive health workshop and nearly 70% have participated in any workshops



According to a survey done by the Peter Hart Research Associates in 2005 for the Gates Foundation, those who left school to care for a family member or because they became a parent were more likely than any group of dropouts "to say they would have worked harder if their schools had demanded more of them and provided the necessary support. Moreover, many pregnant students dropped out because they were 'unable to juggle' the demands of school and parenthood and seemed unaware of any assistance at their schools that might have helped them ease this burden" (NWLC 2007). There is a link between teen pregnancy prevention and dropout prevention, particularly because girls who get pregnant when they're teenagers are much less likely to graduate. They are also more likely to become pregnant if they drop out of school. Student fathers are also at risk of not completing high school or not being fully prepared for college and career upon high school graduation.

Number of Reported Live Births in Washington, DC

	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
Under 15 yrs	24	24	32	26	16
15 -19 years	997	1,051	1,082	1,031	951

In 2010, DC birth rate for women ages 15-19 years was **45.4** (per 1,000 women) and the US birth rate was **34.2**.

Conclusions

**Pregnancy Assistance Fund Program:
Grant # SP1AH000007-03-00**

Collaborative Partners:

- DC Department of Human Services (grantee)
- DC Public Schools
- Student Support Center
- University of the District of Columbia (evaluator)



A report issued by The National Women's Law Center (NWLC) in 2007 found that pregnancy and family responsibilities significantly influence students' ability to stay in school. Close to one-half of all female dropouts and one-third of all male dropouts say that becoming a parent played a role in their decision to leave school. The report went on to say that expectant and parenting students have been harmed by a lack of school support, active discouragement by school personnel, and inferior schools.

The New Heights program successfully addresses these challenges by providing a comprehensive and strengths-based youth development approach to services for expectant and parenting students, both mothers and fathers. The program is essential to the continued academic and personal success of a very vulnerable subset of the student population in Washington, DC.

References

1. <http://www.nwlc.org/sites/default/files/pdfs/TwoSidesofSameCoin.pdf>
2. Klerman, L. 2004. *Another Chance*. The National Campaign to Prevent Teen and Unplanned Pregnancy.