

MEMORANDUM

TO: Arlington School Board

FROM: Family and Consumer Sciences Advisory Committee

DATE: February 9, 2011

SUBJECT: End-of-Year Report for 2010-2011

Background

The Family and Consumer Sciences Advisory Committee focuses on both the Family and Consumer Sciences (FACS) program and the Teenage Parenting Programs (TPP).

The FACS program is committed to a unique dual focus on work and family, empowering students to balance and fulfill individual, family, community, and work roles in a diverse global society.

FACS courses at the middle school level include Exploring FACS (6th grade), Teen Living (7th grade), Life Management Skills (8th Grade) and Taking Charge (8th grade). Topics include good money management, understanding friendships, working cooperatively with others, interpersonal and family relationships, preparing simple nutritious recipes, keeping food safe and work environments clean, hand sewing and operating a sewing machine, decision-making, and goal-setting. Taking Charge students participate in a parenting activity simulated through the use of a computerized doll.

High school FACS courses include Child Development and Parenting, Foods and Fitness, Interior and Fashion Design, and Teachers for Tomorrow at the comprehensive high schools and Early Childhood Education at the Career Center. Both Teachers for Tomorrow and Early Childhood Education II are dual enrolled courses so students earn college credit while still in high school.

The Even Start Family Literacy program, located at Barcroft Elementary School, is an intensive family literacy program administered by the FACS Office that serves low-literacy parents and their young children. Now in its 8th year, Arlington Even Start serves approximately 45 low-income families and their 65+ children, providing adult education, early childhood education, parenting education, and parent and child together activities. This year the Arlington Even Start program is the recipient of the Barbara Bush Foundation for Family Literacy grant.

The Teenage Parenting Programs include the Family Education Center for pregnant teens, Alternatives for Parenting Teens for young mothers and their children, and Outreach for Parenting Teens/Resource Mothers for pregnant and parenting teens not enrolled in school. Outreach/Resource Mothers provides home visits and health education during pregnancy and until the baby's 1st birthday plus assistance to enroll in school and/or assistance to stay in school. Educating young mothers and other adolescent pregnancy prevention initiatives have helped reduce the incidence of

adolescent pregnancy in Arlington (only 65 births to teens in 2009—see attached statistics).

The FACS Advisory Committee met at a different location each month during the 2010-2011 school year to tour the facilities, observe students in classes, and talk with teachers about the instructional program. Meetings were held at: Teenage Parenting Program at Reed School, Even Start Family Literacy at Barcroft Elementary, Jefferson Middle School, Washington-Lee High School, and Yorktown High School. Future meetings are scheduled for Kenmore Middle School and Williamsburg Middle School.

Examples of topics presented and discussed included:

- numbers of pregnant and parenting teens and children served by the teenage parenting programs (see attached chart)
- history and funding of the Even Start Family Literacy program, which is the largest Even Start program in VA
- the Barbara Bush Foundation for Family Literacy grant (new this year) which is \$65,000 to expand enrollment of families with infants and toddlers. This award is one of nine in the nation out of 450 applications. It is a one-time award.
- New FACS modular lab to be installed at Williamsburg Middle School
- Wakefield FACS space in the new building

We also discussed instances of concern, including:

- Lack of a school nurse at Reed School Teen Parenting Program due to a vacancy that has not been filled for 3 months
- Absence of Taking Charge class at Jefferson Middle School; concern that the Taking Charge class at Gunston is only available after school; and concern that Swanson Taking Charge classes have a much larger number of students per class than what is recommended by the program.
- Need for child care funds for teen mothers/students 18 and older who must pay on a sliding scale and as a result are more likely to drop out (childcare is fully subsidized for teen mothers who are 17 and younger)
- Lack of FACS courses of any kind at H-B Woodlawn

A recurring theme during our discussions was the importance of understanding that Family and Consumer Science classes often directly reinforce and support the learning in core subjects. For some students, the materials being learned in FACS classes are often a hook that students need to understand other courses, math, science and economics, for example. Given that contextual learning generally is more effective than remediation, FACS classes are ways to teach the core subjects and should be utilized when a student needs additional support in required subjects. The technical reading and real world application of concepts through hands-on activities reinforce critical thinking skills students need to be successful after high school.

In regard to the new financial literacy graduation requirement, many FACS teachers have recently completed additional financial education training and are ready and able to teach financial literacy. We believe that this teaching expertise should be utilized as APS implements the financial literacy graduation requirement.

The Committee has one significant concern for next year that was also recommended two years ago by two citizen advisory committees. It is critical to work with the fathers of babies born to adolescent mothers as we help prepare children to be successful in school and life.

Committee Members

Susan Browning, Chair
Sally Brady
Leslie Cameron
Susan Fraser
Cindy Gentsch
Martha Herrmann
Denise O'Rear

Nancy Pilchen
Sharon Tessman
Susanne Thevenet
Linda Wardle
Yvonne McIntire, ACI Liaison
Marilyn Faris Scholl, Staff Liaison

Recommendation

The FACS Advisory Committee only has one recommendation this year--that APS create and fund a full-time fatherhood specialist position for the Teenage Parenting Programs.

Rationale: Working with young fathers has been shown to increase the likelihood that they and the teen moms will stay in school which reduces the risk of subsequent adolescent pregnancies.¹ It has also been shown to help to establish legal paternity and decreases the incidence of family violence including child abuse.

The Young Fathers Program began in 1998-99 with a \$25,000 grant from the VA Fatherhood Campaign. Two men were hired on an hourly basis (10-12 hrs. per week) to assist the fathers of babies born to adolescent mothers enrolled in the Teenage Parenting Programs. They made phone calls and invited the young fathers to attend workshops on baby care, male/female communication, and resume writing. Through other small grants (Washington Forrest Foundation, Partners in Prevention, Access and Visitation), these 2 part-time, hourly positions continued for 4 years. Approximately 20 of the young fathers attended these workshops.

Beginning in 2002-2003 and running through the spring of 2007, the Young Fathers Program expanded through a large (\$1,450,000), 5-year federal demonstration grant, called the Caring Equation, from the Office of Adolescent Pregnancy Programs, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. During this 5-year period, nearly 100 young fathers per year participated in program activities. There were 310 different young fathers who were served.

¹Robbers, M.L. (2009). Facilitating fatherhood: A longitudinal examination of father involvement among young minority fathers. *Child and Adolescent Social Work Journal*, Vol. 26, p. 121-134.

The Caring Equation grant funded 2 full-time, salaried, male bilingual fatherhood specialists, two part-time hourly fatherhood specialists and 3 other salaried positions and program costs. The fatherhood specialists helped young fathers stay in school, enroll in GED or ESL classes and vocational training programs, and find employment. In addition, they assisted young father to establish paternity, comply with child visitation agreements, and make court appearances. The fatherhood specialist also provided counseling and mediation to improve communication to help prevent domestic and child abuse and provided numerous workshops to educate young fathers about their important role in raising a child. Caring Equation funds also allowed the teen parenting program to purchase two 7-passenger vans which were used to conduct home visits and transport clients to schools, medical appointments, job interviews, and the courts.

Marymount University professors evaluated the Caring Equation program and the published results demonstrated that this parenting program run by Arlington Public Schools had a positive and statistically significant impact on both adolescent mothers and the fathers of their babies.² Inappropriate expectations of children significantly decreased, empathy significantly increased, favorable attitudes toward the use of corporal punishment significantly decreased, role reversal significantly decreased, and power independence significantly decreased. Mothers learned more appropriate ways to relate to and treat their children and fathers participating in the program increased interaction time with their children. These last two criteria were ranked as the “most important type of parenting” in this study. These results were determined using pre and post-test instruments on which local data was compared with national data. (Please refer to articles for more details.) Based upon the results of the final evaluation, Marymount recommended that the Young Fathers Program be continued because the findings suggest “the Caring Equation is achieving success in relaying to fathers how important their participation in the child-rearing process is and how their participation is valued by both mother and child.” (Robbers, 2008)

When the Caring Equation grant ended in 2007, the Young Fathers Program became inactive resulting in a crucial gap in services to the fathers of babies born to adolescent mothers in Arlington. During the past 3 school years (2007-08, 2008-09, 2009-10) 75 adolescent fathers and 108 fathers older than 19 have been identified. A \$10,000 grant has been used to pay a consultant to conduct home visits and provide mediation to prevent domestic violence and/or child abuse. This grant has served 8 to 10 young fathers per year.

According to a February 2, 2011 article in the Arlington Connection, Arlington is experiencing a dramatic spike in domestic violence, and the trend is not limited to adults.³ A recent poll of the Family Violence Prevention Fund found an alarming number of incidents of teen dating violence. Almost half of American teenagers said they have been in a relationship in which they felt controlled, threatened or pressured to do things they did not want to do. Nearly one in three was a victim of sexual or physical

²Robbers, M.L. (2008). The caring equation: An intervention program for teenage mothers and their male partners. *Children and Schools*. Vol. 30, No. 1, p. 37-47.

³*Violence Behind Closed Doors: Domestic Abuse Statistics Skyrocket in Arlington as Economic Fears Linger* Michael Lee Pope, [The Arlington Connection](#), February 2, 2011

abuse, and nearly one in four has been victimized through technology. "Many teenagers are not equipped to handle serious relationships, nor are they usually prepared to properly respond when a relationship turns abusive," said Fran Inge, Director of the Virginia Family and Children's Trust Fund.

In sum, a fatherhood specialist would help prevent male high school dropouts, educate young fathers in their fathering roles, and provide additional support to vulnerable families and help prepare their children for school.

Budget Implications: One fatherhood specialist is estimated to cost \$85,000 (1.0 FTE plus benefits).

Pregnant/Parenting Students Served by Teenage Parenting Programs

	2008-2009	2009-2010	2010-2011 (as1/31/2011)
Pregnant & Parenting (P/P) Students attending at Reed School	69 (at Syphax)	65	53
P/P Students in other APS schools & programs including Even Start	33	25	30
P/P Students not in school but provided regular home visits via Outreach/Resource Mothers	30	19	6
Total Pregnant & Parenting Students	132	109	89
Infants & Children in APT Infant Care Centers	41	52	44
Total Students—mothers and babies (excluding infants of students not in school)	173	161	133
Additional Teenage Mothers monitored for 1 year per Jobs for VA Graduates grant	16	13	13
Grand Total	189	174	146

TEENAGE PREGNANCY STATISTICS IN ARLINGTON 1994-2009

		2009	2008	2007	2006	2005	2004	2003	2002	2001	2000	1999	1998	1997	1996	1995	1994
	Total:	102	129	116	130	133	175	148	170	212	210	229	239	239	250	278	314
Pregnancies	Under 15	3	3	3	2	1	3	6	6	4	5	4	1	4	7	5	13
	15-17	25	35	32	34	36	44	41	47	48	60	72	64	75	106	94	106
	18-19	74	91	81	94	96	128	101	117	160	145	153	174	160	137	179	195
Live Births	Total:	65	93	80	89	76	111	91	103	127	130	138	156	152	165	171	182
	Under 15	2	2	3	1	0	2	2	3	2	1	3	1	2	5	4	9
	15-17	18	30	23	27	19	29	26	30	35	47	47	35	48	74	65	63
	18-19	45	61	54	61	57	80	63	70	90	82	88	120	102	86	102	110
Induced Terminations	Total:	27	30	30	36	48	56	47	57	76	75	73	69	82	69	98	121
	Under 15	1	1	0	1	1	1	4	2	2	2	1	0	2	2	1	3
	15-17	5	4	6	6	14	12	12	12	10	12	20	22	24	27	27	42
	18-19	21	25	24	29	33	43	31	43	64	61	52	47	56	40	70	76
Natural Fetal Deaths	Total:	10	6	6	5	9	8	10	10	9	5	18	14	5	16	9	11
	Under 15	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	1
	15-17	2	1	3	1	3	3	3	5	3	1	5	7	3	5	2	1
	18-19	8	5	3	4	6	5	7	4	6	2	13	7	2	11	7	9

Source: Summary of Yearly Virginia Vital Statistics, Center for Health Statistics, Virginia Department of Health, Richmond, Virginia.
Website: www.vdh.virginia.gov