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The Facilitator's Manual for

RYSE TO THE CHALLENGE: PARENTS SUPPORTING STUDENTS' ACADEMIC DEVELOPMENT

A GUIDEBOOK FOR PARENT EDUCATION:

- ❖ **Accelerating Academic Development**
- ❖ **Leading Parent Education Workshops**
- ❖ **Video Presentation for Parent Education**

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RYSE to the Challenge: Parents Supporting Students' Academic Development

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AN OVERVIEW OF RYSE

❖ Parents' RYSE: Our mission

Parents' Rockland Youth Supplementary Education program was created, over the years of 1996 and 1997, to address the needs of students of color through the concerted advocacy and support of parents and other family and community members. The members of RYSE believe that the enhancement of academic achievement for students of color (regardless of their current performance status) cannot depend solely upon the resources offered by most traditional school settings. Rather, we emphasize the central importance of parent and community involvement *in tandem* with traditional schooling in facilitating the academic achievement and personal development of our children.

❖ Empowering parents and communities as academic advocates

Many parents are not confident about their ability to communicate effectively with school officials on behalf of their children. Many parents of color have bad memories of school, and do not feel that the school personnel understand or care about the needs of their children. The workshop series outlined below will familiarize parents with terminology used by educators. It will provide them with information about what questions they should ask when communicating with school personnel about their child's progress. It will encourage participants to take actions on behalf of their children's academic success both in and outside of school.

Emphasis is placed on helping parents to understand the demands of schooling - what is expected of them and of their children. Since advocacy demands working with others, participants will learn how to use consensus as a model for decision-making. The workshop format is designed to demand cooperation and group interaction. Parents will develop skills for functioning in group situations and will develop the confidence to speak in front of others.

INSTRUCTIONS FOR FACILITATING A PARENT WORKSHOP SERIES

A workshop series can be implemented in any order, although it is recommended that the following sequence represents the most appropriate progression of group activities. In the information that follows, the workshop series is composed of six two-hour workshops (that follow the dinner provided to participants). Each workshop, in turn, is divided into seven components. During the first workshop, the facilitator should provide participants with a notebook that includes information such as: means for contacting program directors and workshop facilitators; the location of meeting places; the content, times, and dates of each workshop; a list of current participants and their telephone numbers; and a calendar of events of interest to students, parents, and the community-at-large. Participants should be instructed to bring the notebook to each workshop, at which time additional materials may be distributed. Furthermore, participants should be encouraged to use the notebook as a journal and save their notes and discussion materials for later review.

❖ Workshop Components

The following outline of the workshop components provideSa general overview of how each RYSE workshop may proceed.

Ground Rules. At the first meeting, a set of ground rules should be established by the facilitator and participants. The facilitator should ask the group: “What rules should we put in place to make this a positive experience for everyone?” Some examples of ground rules might include:

- ◆ Being on time and signing-in
- ◆ Not bringing children to workshops
- ◆ Not interrupting others while they are speaking
- ◆ No eating or drinking during the workshop
- ◆ Raising one’s hand if the person speaking is inaudible
- ◆ No one speaks a second time, if someone who has not spoken once wishes to speak

It is very important that ground rules are established by the group. The process of developing the ground rules is the first exercise in working with principles of consensus. Ground rules should be posted in the front of the room on a flip chart. Participants should be encouraged to remind each other of the ground rules when it is observed that someone is not adhering to them. Each session, the ground rules should reviewed and time should be set aside to discuss and modify rules if needed.

Community Bulletin Board. Each session, the facilitator should allot time to provide program announcements and offer information about community events. Participants should also be encouraged to participate in sharing information. This is an important aspect of the program because it strengthens the goal of enhancing community awareness and of developing responsibility. Participants should be encouraged to read the local newspapers and bring information about events that are occurring in the community.

Ice-Breaking Exercise. Each week after introductions and ground rules have been discussed, the facilitator should introduce an exercise that encourages group participation, conversation and builds a sense of community within the group. These exercises help to create a relaxed, safe environment where participants feel comfortable in discussing issues concerning the academic development of their children.

Homework Review. At the end of each session, the facilitator should give an assignment to participants. This is a very important component of the program. Parents need opportunities to implement the suggestions made during workshop sessions. The guiding rationale the Parents' RYSE program is that parents' practices of school involvement and supervision/support of their child's academic work at home will profoundly impact their child's life. Possible assignments are suggested for each session throughout this manual. [Note: At the first workshop meeting, there will not be a homework exercise to review.]

Skills Development. Each week, a hands-on experience is used to introduce a new parenting skill and lead into the workshop's discussion topic. Each exercise is designed to facilitate discussion about the workshop topic. A discussion of the exercises and the desired skills are included in the workshop descriptions to follow.

Discussion Session. Each meeting is centered around a topic relevant to students' academic success. A discussion format is used which encourages the use of brainstorming skills and builds upon the material addressed in the skills development component.

Review, Preview & Homework Assignment. At close of each workshop, the facilitator should allot a few minutes for review. A review of the workshop is important because:

- ◆ It helps participants to develop the habit of reviewing and reflecting upon meetings, workshops, and classes. By modeling the technique, participants become confident about using review techniques in their daily lives, and in helping their children to develop the skill of reviewing homework and classroom assignments.
- ◆ It serves as a vehicle for participants to make sure that they comprehend the workshop content.
- ◆ It helps the facilitator to know if the material was presented clearly or if a follow-up discussion is required.

The review component should not be limited to reviewing the material from that particular session. In other words, participants should be encouraged to share thoughts and experiences from previous meetings that have impacted their ability to participate in the academic success of their child. During the review time, participants may choose to complete an evaluation form as a means of soliciting ideas and suggestions to be explored in the future.

A preview of the coming workshop plants the seed for participants to think about relevant questions and to bring articles or other materials related to the next week's workshop topic. This is an important aspect of empowering the group and encouraging participants to take

responsibility for the direction of the workshop sessions. At this time, the facilitator will also give the homework assignment and explain the expectations for the upcoming session.

WORKSHOP I: Know Your School Community

1. Ground Rules

The facilitator explains that creating ground rules is an important aspect of developing a working relationship. The facilitator further explains that participants should create ground rules in their homes regarding homework and other academic matters. The workshop's ground rules will be posted in the front of the room each week and will be reviewed on a regular basis. The ground rules that each participant develops with children should be displayed at home and reviewed on a weekly basis.

2. Community Bulletin Board

At the first workshop, the facilitator explains the community bulletin board concept and encourages participants to bring information about local events to share with the group. The facilitator should take this opportunity to discuss the importance of being informed about community events and resources. Specifically, it is important to learn and share the names of individuals who have specific responsibilities in both the school(s) attended by the child(ren) and the local school districts.

3. Ice-Breaking Exercise

The following introductory exercise is developed to demonstrate the importance of teamwork, listening skills, and reviewing new information for retention:

- A. Participants' name tags are placed in a basket. Half of the name tags are picked from the basket by half of the participants. The person whose name has been chosen will be paired with the person who has chosen her/his name. The two partners will interview each other and each will record pertinent information about the other which will be reported to the whole group. Each interviewer has five minutes to solicit information from their partner. At the end of the ten-minute period, the team members will introduce each other to the entire group by sharing anecdotes about each other.
- B. At the end of the introductions, the facilitator should ask for feedback on the experience. Some questions might include:
 - ◆ Was it difficult to think of questions to ask when you were the interviewer?
 - ◆ Was it difficult to record information while at the same time listening?
 - ◆ What was it like to be asked questions about your personal life?
 - ◆ Were you clear about what you wanted to share about yourself and your family?
 - ◆ Was it easy to stand and speak to a group of strangers or was it a difficult experience?
- C. The facilitator explains that, over the course of the workshop series, participants will learn how to ask informed questions about their children at school, how to listen closely, give the necessary information in response to questions, and to develop the ability to speak confidently in large groups of people. According to the RYSE agenda, the ability to speak on behalf of children and fellow community members is an important aspect of effective advocacy.

4. Homework Review

Nothing to review in the first workshop.

5. Skills Development: Know Your Community

In order to advocate for children, it is necessary to know whom to contact about various school-related issues. It is also important that parents have an understanding of the policies that concern their child(ren)'s rights and welfare. This simple true and false and fill-in-the-blank questionnaire is designed to help participants evaluate their knowledge of school issues. Pass the form around and have participants answer the each of the statements and/or questions.

Exercise One: Know Your School Community & School Policies Questionnaire

True or False:

- ☐ A school official may search a student for weapons.
- ☐ With a teaching license or certificate, a teacher's aide may perform teaching duties.
- ☐ Standardized tests are given in grades 1 through 3.
- ☐ A student may be released during school hours for religious instruction.
- ☐ A school district may prescribe the way students must dress while attending school.
- ☐ Every school district must adopt and implement a disciplinary code.
- ☐ Either a vice principal or a principal may suspend a student for a period not to exceed five days.
- ☐ The School Board is made up of teachers from each school.
- ☐ The School Board is elected every year by residents of the community.
- ☐ A person eighteen (18) years or older may qualify for membership to the school board.
- ☐ You do not need to be a registered voter to vote in a school board election.
- ☐ The Parent Teachers' Association (PTA) is a group of parents who are elected by teachers in the school district.
- ☐ A parent, advocate or relative may enter the student's classroom at any time without notice.
- ☐ IEP are the initials for Initial Evaluation Program.

Fill in the blank:

_____ is the superintendent of the your school district.

6. Discussion Session

The answers to the true and false test should serve to begin a discussion about communities. The facilitator should comment about how individuals are connected to many different communities and ask participants to give examples of communities, for example:

- ◆ School communities
- ◆ Neighborhood communities
- ◆ Family
- ◆ Church

The facilitator should ask participants to describe communities in which they feel ownership and empowered to participate as well as three skills or activities that the parents do in each community to become empowered. The participants can list these communities, skills and practices in the grid format below.

Some examples might include:

School	Neighborhood	Family	
Understand what is expected			
Know people who teach my children			
Participate in activities			

7. Review, Preview & Homework Assignment

At this point, the facilitator might want to ask: “Do you remember the ground rules?” “Did we adhere to them?” During this discussion, the facilitator can refer to the rules written on the flip chart. In previewing the next workshop and as a homework assignment, the facilitator should (a) ask parents to think about three things they can do to empower their children and (b) remind participants to bring in information for about events in the community for the “community bulletin board” section of the meeting.

WORKSHOP II: Teachers as Allies

The facilitator should convene the group by reviewing the previous workshop material and stating that this workshop will focus on creating an alliance with teachers, counselors and administrators. During the last workshop, the group discussed communities, what communities look like when they are empowered, and when they are not. The facilitator should describe how this workshop will focus on the importance of parents actively cultivating relationships within the school community - and particularly with their child's teachers.

1. Ground Rules

The facilitator should ask if the participants would like to make any additions to or deletions from the ground rules. This gives participants an opportunity to speak in front of the group, to express opinions openly, and carry on discussions in a consensus model. The facilitator and participants can review the ground rules and decide if any changes are necessary. For example, imagine that one participant asks if she can eat during the session since she cannot arrive early enough to attend the dinner that is provided. The facilitator would then encourage a discussion of this request. Several possible solutions may be offered such as:

- ◆ If she can eat in the room, then everyone should be able to eat as well.
- ◆ Perhaps, a ten-minute break in the middle of the workshop would be appropriate for everyone, at which time, she could then eat. The facilitator or another participant can agree to save food for her.
- ◆ If there are no objections to a ten-minute break after the first hour, participants should agree that this break should not exceed ten minutes.

The facilitator should use the development of this discussion to explain the importance of cooperation, group conversation, and shared decision-making. For instance, in the above scenario when someone dared to express a concern, the needs of several other people may have been addressed as well. The facilitators should encourage participants to practice noting what concerns arise in various circumstances in their lives (e.g., in the home, at the workplace) that may be addressed similarly. Finally, participants should also be encouraged to take note of their concerns about the academic success of their children and to express these issues with their child(ren)'s teachers.

2. Community Bulletin Board

The facilitator should ask for announcements. This gives participants an opportunity to speak in front of the group, to share school, church and community events, and to begin cultivating a new sense of community within the workshop. The facilitator should also have some information to share.

3. Ice-Breaking Exercise: Getting to know you, knowing what you need

This exercise is effective in teaching participants how to ask informative questions, develop good

listening skills, and write pertinent notes while listening - a skill upon which many parents can improve. Additionally, this exercise helps to remind parents of the importance of respecting the personal values and needs of others.

The facilitator will develop a list of questions about personal values distribute this list to participants. The participants will choose partners and one person will do the first round of interviewing (and then interviewing process will be reversed). The interviewer's task is to ask the questions listed and listen for key information. For example, one question might read: "What are things you cannot do without?" The response may be: "I cannot do without going for a walk every day." The interviewer, in reporting this information to the group, should make inferences based on the responses of the interviewee. For example, in this case, the reporter might say, "My partner is most likely in good health because she walks every day."

4. Homework Review

The facilitator will ask participants to discuss what three things can be done to empower their children academically and within the school community? The facilitator should write responses on flip chart.

5. Skills Development

The following exercise is designed to demonstrate the difficulties that can occur in communication. The goal of the exercise is for the group to experience the difficulty of clear communication, for both the speaker and the listener. Communication skills are stressed in this workshop because positive and effective parent-teacher relationships depend upon productive interactions.

Exercise One: The Communication Puzzle

For this exercise, the facilitator will need copies of a simple puzzle. The facilitator will also need scarves to blindfold half of the participants.

- A. Half of the participants are asked to leave the room. The other participants are given puzzles consisting of four pieces. Each individual is instructed to put the puzzle together. At the end of the exercise, the facilitator should ask for comments. Participant responses may include such observations as:
 - ◆ Some people were able to do the exercise quickly while others struggled to finish the task.
 - ◆ Some people became frustrated when they did not finish quickly.
- B. Next, each member of Group One (those who had just assembled the puzzle) chooses a partner from Group Two (those outside the room), blindfolds her or him, and escorts their partner into the room. The task of the Group One partners is to use words to instruct the blindfolded persons to complete the puzzle. The object is to use directions effectively to help the blinded person put the puzzle together. Group One instructors cannot touch the puzzle pieces or the blinded participant. At the completion of the exercise, the facilitator should ask:
 - ◆ What did you notice about being an instructor?
 - ◆ What did you notice about listening to instructions when you were blindfolded?

Some possible responses include:

- ◆ It is very difficult to give good instructions.
- ◆ The tone of someone's voice can be intimidating.
- ◆ Listening carefully is difficult.
- ◆ It was a difficult for the instructors to sustain patience and give ongoing encouragement.

6. Discussion Topic: The teacher as an ally

At this point in the evening, several exercises have been done to demonstrate various aspects of communication. The process of doing the exercises is to introduce the topic of the teacher as an ally in the academic and social development of one's child(ren).

❖ Forging alliances with school staff members

The facilitator will describe that an ally is one person united with another in a common pursuit or purpose. In order to gain an ally, people must understand and agree upon each others' intentions and goals. This interactive communication process is how a relationship is developed. When a parent has made their concerns and desires clear and when an ally - in this case the teacher - has made clear what is needed in return, the precedent for a healthy relationship has been established. This is a similar process to setting ground rules. The facilitator should ask participants: "How often do you speak to your friends?" Some answers may include: "Every day," "Twice a day," or "Once a week," etc.

The facilitator should note that people generally keep in touch with friends on a regular basis, and in like fashion, the teacher is someone with whom parents should stay in touch on a regular basis. The facilitator will explain three easy ways for keeping in touch with teachers:

- ◆ **Telephoning.** A parent could make a quick call to say, "Hello, I'm Jamal Johnson's father and I'm checking to see if my child is doing his work regularly." The teacher receives the message that the parent is interested in the academic progress of her child. Next the father might state, "I think it would be helpful if we had a short phone conversation each week so that I make sure Jamal is doing all of his work." In this statement, the father has established what he needs in order to remain informed. At this time, the father and the teacher can determine a convenient time for a weekly call.
- ◆ **Note-writing.** Another form of communication is note writing. In a short note or letter, a parent can write a simple greeting, introduce her/himself as the parent of a particular student, and state their concerns. For example, a mother may write the following: "Could you please state my child's status in your class on this paper and send it home today? If there are any problems that you feel more comfortable discussing by phone, you can reach me between 4:00-5:00 p.m. this evening at this number..." Again, the mother has made her interests clear.
- ◆ **Face-to-face meetings.** These meetings are more difficult to arrange, but parents should make an effort to schedule at least two face-to-face meetings each year with their child(ren)'s teachers. Usually, there is a back-to-school night at which parents can meet all of their child(ren)'s

teachers. It is important that parents meet guidance counselors as well because, in middle school, this person will be a primary contact.

❖ **Dealing with difficult relationships and/or teachers who do not respond**

The facilitator should explain that when the teacher is not forthcoming about answering your calls or notes, parents will need to be prepared to continue to take action. When a teacher does not respond in a timely fashion - typically considered to be two days - a parent may consider contacting the principal or the guidance counselor. Again, with these staff members, parents should be clear about their concerns and how these are not being adequately addressed. A good practice to write a few notes before the phone call and to use them during conversation. Parents should carefully and calmly explain the situation, give dates in which they attempted to communicate with the teacher, and ask for specific information as to how a request will be met. The facilitator should recommend that participants might want to write a letter asking for a meeting with the teacher so that their requests are officially registered. Throughout this process, parents should be encouraged to continue to take notes and keep these notes in a secure place.

❖ **Meeting with a teacher**

The facilitator should ask the participants: “What should be considered when preparing for a meeting with a teacher?” Points that should be covered include:

- ◆ Prepare before the meeting - know your facts and be clear about the content of the meeting
- ◆ Do not take sides
- ◆ Stand your ground, be firm and courteous
- ◆ Do place blame and look for what teachers are doing well and build upon this
- ◆ Be a good listener
- ◆ Bring notes and write notes during the meeting

The facilitator should ask for two volunteers to come in front of the group for a short role-play session. One person will play the role of “the parent” and the other person will be “the teacher.” “The parent” has a list of questions ready for “the teacher” and asks them in a calm fashion. “The teacher” is vague and unclear. “The parent” struggles to get straight answers. At the end of the role-play, the group should discuss the role-play interaction. The facilitator may ask participants to give examples of difficulties that they have had while meeting with teachers and discuss ways to improve the relationship based on this workshop.

7. Review, Preview & Homework Assignment

Participants should reflect on what part of this workshop will be most helpful in preparing to meet with their child(ren)’s teacher(s). The facilitator should record these responses on the flip chart. As a homework assignment, the facilitator will instruct participants to make contact with the teacher or guidance counselor most likely to be an ally. Again, parents should take notes prior to the interaction, take notes during the conversation, and be prepared to share their experiences at the next session. For example, parents might ask themselves: “Do I feel that the teacher knew I was looking for an ally?” or “What evidence do I have that this teacher or counselor will be a reliable ally in my child’s academic development?”

WORKSHOP III: Perception & Power

1. Community bulletin board

The facilitator should encourage participants to share their knowledge of upcoming community activities and events and record them on the flip chart.

2. Ground rules

The facilitator will begin to see that the discussion of ground rules contributes to the development of good communication skills and builds trust among the group members. The group should review the rules and have several members explain the importance of specific ground rules. The group may decide to change the ground rules and, in this situation, the group practices the building of consensus. For example, some changes in ground rules might include:

- ◆ No repeating of workshop content for those who come late. They will have to speak to someone after the workshop is completed.
- ◆ Children should not interrupt the meeting – a parent whose child needs them will go to the child care room.

3. Ice-Breaker Exercise

All participants should be asked to silently review the past month. Each participant should share something “new and good” that happened in her/his life since the last meeting. That is, participants are asked to share something new and positive that happened (no matter how small). It is important to think of good things that happen in our lives and to celebrate them with others. After each person shares, the facilitator should lead the group in applauding. This sharing is an important assignment for the group. The purpose of this exercise is three-fold:

- ◆ It encourages participants to think of the good things in their lives
- ◆ It provides an opportunity for participants to speak in front of each other, to learn to project their voices, and to express themselves without fear.
- ◆ It serves as an introduction to the workshop topic of perception.

4. Homework Review

The facilitator will begin this review by reminding participants that they were asked to make an appointment to meet with one of their child’s teachers. The facilitator should ask the following questions: Did the parents take notes? Did the teacher seem to know that the parent was seeking to develop a positive relationship? What evidence was there to indicate that the teacher realized the parent’s intention? At least three participants should share their experiences. The facilitator may want to share the following examples to get the discussion going:

- ◆ “I was prepared for the meeting, I knew my facts, and I was able to stick to the topic at hand.”
- ◆ “My husband and I went together, although there was a moment of disagreement between us during the discussion, I decided that solidarity was the priority of the moment. We were more successful in advocating for our son when we presented a united front.”

- ◆ “I stayed relaxed, listened to what the teacher had to say, and took out my notes. This changed the way the teacher spoke to me. I was confident and the teacher responded to me differently than in past meetings.”
- ◆ “I was patient with the teacher. At one point she made an offensive comment about my daughter. I wanted to stay on the topic, so I did not get into an argument with her.”

5. Skills Development

Below are three exercises that provide insights into how misperceptions occur and how we can learn to deal with such frustrations. The goal of these exercises is to provide participants with an experience that demonstrates the frustration that children, and sometimes adults, encounter because of perception problems.

Exercise One: Count the F's

This exercise demonstrates the difficulty in seeing the obvious.

- A. The facilitator will present the following sentence on the flip chart and ask participants to count the number of F's they find in the sentence.

***FEATURE FILMS ARE THE RESULT OF YEARS OF SCIENTIFIC STUDY
COMBINED WITH THE EXPERIENCE OF YEARS.***

- B. After two minutes, the facilitator will ask participants how many F's they counted. It is common that there are several different answers to this problem. This simple exercise demonstrates that we do not always see what is right in front of our eyes and that people have different perceptions of the same situations.

Exercise Two: Add a column of numbers

This is an exercise to demonstrate the various ways people deal with the frustration of not understanding a lesson, or not hearing the directions.

- A. The facilitator rapidly calls out numbers for participants to write on a piece of paper. (For example, 16, 5, 49, 17, 2, 29, 105, 152.) Participants are asked to add the numbers. Again, typically there will exist variations in answers. Several will have the same answer, but it may be incorrect. They may realize they many of them misheard the same number.
- B. The facilitator should ask: How did you respond when you did not hear a number? Have participants share responses.

Exercise Three : Write your name on a piece of paper on your forehead

This is an exercise to show how confusing directions can be and how easily students (or we) can be disoriented.

- A. The facilitator will instruct participants take a piece of paper and place it on the forehead. With a crayon or marker, participants will write their names (without looking). In a few minutes, they are asked to look at the paper to see if they can decipher what they have written. Many participants may not be able to read their own names or comment about how disorienting it was to do the exercise.
- B. The facilitator should ask: "How did you react when you saw the way your name looked?" Some examples of participant answers might include:
 - ◆ I wanted to rip up my paper
 - ◆ I wanted to hit the teacher for not giving good instructions
 - ◆ I felt stupid
- C. The facilitator will explain that these exercises are used to illustrate the kind of predicaments students find themselves in during school, that is, situations in which they do not know how to navigate. It is important to understand why students are experiencing difficulties in school so that the appropriate actions can be taken to help the student succeed. Children cannot always speak for themselves and parents need to be a voice for their children. It is important that we understand how our child perceives the world and that we can communicate that perception clearly to other authorities, such as the teacher. In some cases, we may not be able to understand how our child perceives the world and, at this time, we may need to enlist professional assistance. Furthermore, it is also the case that teachers have misperceptions of parents and that parents do not understand teachers. Weekly communication helps to develop reciprocal understanding.

The above situations were chosen to exemplify that our perceptions effect the way we deal with situations. If we feel frustrated or stupid, it is difficult to communicate in a calm and effective manner. If we do not listen closely, we may not properly understand what is being said. The more we are able to develop good communication skills - which include both speaking and listening - the more effectively we will be able to make our needs clear and the more we will understand the needs and expectations of others.

Exercise Four: Role-Plays

Role-playing is an effective strategy for demonstrating the uses and abuses of power and perception. Through role-playing, participants develop public speaking skills, problem-solving skills, and recognize that any given issue is subject to multiple perspectives and interpretations.

- A. Two sample scenarios are listed below. The facilitator should ask for three volunteers to act out a role-play in front of the group. The roles and scenarios will be explained fully to the participant-actors.
- B. After the role-play is completed, each volunteer actor should describe their experiences in the particular role they played. The facilitator might ask: "What did it feel like to be the character and how did you feel the other two characters responded to you?" The facilitator should set a time limit for the role-play and responses. (Five minutes for the role-play and two minutes for responses is recommended.)
- C. Now the discussion should be open to the "audience" participants and the facilitator may write their responses on the flip chart.

Below are two role-play scenarios:

ROLE-PLAY SCENARIO #1:

The Parent Role:

Matthew is a tall, charming and articulate eleven year-old boy. He is on the junior varsity basketball team. All of his teachers adore him. He has been in the eighty percentile of his class. However, all of his grades for this marking period are marginal. You believe that the teachers are making a pet out of him and are not challenging him. You request a conference with them all.

Teacher "A" Role:

You think Matthew is a very smart boy. He is also a role model for the class. Since he is both an athlete and a relatively successful student, you want to be as encouraging as possible toward him.

Teacher "B" Role:

You think Matthew is a fairly good student, and a very good basketball player. You want to make sure that he does not fail, because failure disqualifies him from playing basketball, and you think this would be devastating to him.

ROLE-PLAY SCENARIO #2:

The Parent Role:

Kevin is your twelve year-old son in the seventh grade. His test scores in reading and math are borderline, but within grade levels. He falls asleep when he is not talking. His behavior has been disruptive to the class according to the teacher. You have just received his first semester report card and you are shocked at his low and failing grades. As Kevin's parent, you have requested a meeting with the teacher.

Teacher Role:

Kevin is doing poorly in your class. You indicated that his marks were low on the interim report. You remind the parent that she never called at that time to inquire about his grades. You think he should be in an after-school program, and you remind the parent that you sent a note two months ago to suggest that he join a new program.

Counselor Role:

You tell Kevin's mother that you have called three times and asked for a return call, but never received any response. Kevin has been in detention three times. Each time, a note was sent home for a signature. The counselor produces the notes, with mother's signature. The counselor is surprised that the mother is so shocked at her child's report.

7. Review, Preview & Homework Assignment:

The group should reflect upon the skills they discussed and developed during this workshop.

To preview the subject of the next workshop, the facilitator might ask the following questions and document the group's responses on the flip chart: "What are the most important parenting skills?" and "What might help you to feel like a more effective parent at home?"

As homework, the participants should be instructed to call another of their child(ren)'s teachers and request a meeting. As before, the parents should bring notes, take notes during the meeting, and be prepared to discuss their experiences with other participants at the next workshop.

WORKSHOP IV: Perceptions of Good Parenting

1. Community Bulletin Board

Discuss upcoming events in the community.

2. Ground Rules

Review the ground rules in a similar fashion as prior weeks.

3. Ice-Breaking Exercise: Use an adjective to describe your parenting

This exercise will help set the tone for the evening on “perceptions of good parenting.” The facilitator must be sure to carefully describe this exercise and provide a number of examples. Some people may not know precisely what the facilitator means by “an adjective.” To demonstrate the use of adjectives, the facilitator can think of a word that begins with the same letter as her/his name and describe why this is an accurate adjective. For example, “Kind Ken” [the children always know if they do well in school they can always expect some kind words from me] or “Correcting Cora” [when my children were little, I was always correcting their grammar]. It is important for the facilitator to model the exercise. Afterwards, have each participant choose an adjective that describes their parenting.

4. Homework Review

The facilitator will ask three participants to share their experience of meeting with a teacher and remind the speakers to share the experience of bringing notes, taking notes, and listening. The speakers should also discuss whether or not they feel confident that this interaction will lead to the development of a positive, long-term partnership?

Skills Development & Discussion Session: Working with consensus groups

The facilitator will remind the participants that, in past workshops, the group has discussed the importance of advocating for individual students; however, in this workshop, the focus will be on the importance of advocating as a group. The facilitator should describe how when one is advocating for one child and speaking to one or two teachers, it is fairly easy to find common ground. On the other hand, when one is advocating as a group and many opinions and concerns have to be considered, it can be a difficult process to come to common ground and to agree on a plan. In this workshop, a process for finding common ground with a group of individuals will be discussed. This process can be used in the home when trying to reach a family decision as well as when a group is deciding on how to take political action.

The following exercise combines both the skills development exercise and the discussion topic. It will give participants an opportunity to work at consensus-building while simultaneously discussing general parenting questions.

The objective of this exercise is threefold:

- ◆ Participants are involved in larger discussion groups
 - ◆ Participants work on controversial parenting issues
 - ◆ Listening and speaking skills are further developed
- A. The facilitator will divide the participants into four groups and give each group a discussion topic. Describe that each group needs to reach consensus on some aspect of the topic. [Make sure that the discussion topics are clearly written on chart paper in front of the groups.] The discussion topics are:
- ◆ A well-raised child is one who does not have to be told twice to do something
 - ◆ A teenager should be allowed to decide most things for him/herself
 - ◆ Character and honesty will tell in the long run and most people get what they deserve
 - ◆ Obedience and respect for authority are the most important virtues children should learn.
- B. The groups should consult for ten minutes to discuss the statement and write down points of agreement that emerge. Members of each group are then encouraged to discuss opposing points of view as well. After the consultation time is over, each group will present their consensus statement, that is, an aspect of the statement that everyone in the group agree upon. For example, with the first statement (A well-raised child is one who does not have to be told twice to do something), there could be much disagreement. Some participants may argue that a well-raised child only has to be told once what to do. Another person might argue that a well-raised child doesn't have to be told what to do. A third person may contend that a well-raised child should be argumentative and rebellious and will need to be told many times what to do. The only statement that the entire group agrees upon may be: "A well-raised child does not talk disrespectfully to the parents when being told what to do." The facilitator should record these new consensus statements on the flip chart.
- C. Next, the four groups are divided into two groups. Participants are once again asked to discuss the new group of statements for 10 minutes. For example, Group One's statement may be "A well-raised child does not talk disrespectfully to the parents when being told what to do." Group Two's statement may be "A teenager should be allowed to decide what they want to do with their free time within certain boundaries." These two groups place these new consensus statements (from the first round of discussion) on the table for discussion. The new groups can either agree on their given statement or modify it. For example, everyone in Group One may agree with the statement as it exists (i.e., A well-raised child does not talk disrespectfully to the parents when being told what to do). On the other hand, Group Two may need to modify their statement in order to reach consensus (e.g., A teenager should decide what they want to do in their free time, on Friday and Saturday nights).
- D. Next, all four groups are combined into one group. At this time, there should be one statement from each of the four original groups. The statements should be written on the flip chart for easy review. For example, the facilitator can remind the group that, from the four original

groups, the following consensus statements were generated: “A well-raised child does not talk disrespectfully to the parents when being told what to do;” “A teenager should decide what they want to do in their free time, on Friday and Saturday nights;” It seems that character and honesty should matter, but most of what young people see shows them that this is not so;” or “Respect for authority is a virtue children should learn from caring adults.” The statements should be discussed and at least one consensus statement should emerge from the entire workshop group.

- E. All of these statements may be agreed upon but it is more likely that, after a ten to fifteen minute discussion period, one statement will be agreed on and will emerge as the group’s consensus statement. For example everyone may agree with the following statement, “Respect for authority is a virtue children of all colors should receive from adults of all colors.”
- F. After this session, the facilitator should debrief the group by asking participants to comment on the process. The following questions are suggested: Did you feel that your opinions were heard? Was everyone listened to in each group? Did misperceptions prevent people from working together? Could you support the final statement publicly?

6. Review, Preview & Homework Assignment

The group should reflect upon the most difficult aspects of working with a large group of people and what are the advantages to working together? The facilitator should note these comments and summarize them with the aid of the flip chart.

The facilitator will explain that the next workshop will focus on community-based advocacy and that the consensus practices done in this workshop will be useful for the future discussion of school-related community action.

As a homework assignment, participants will attend a school-related function. The facilitator can suggest that participants call the school to inquire about School Board meetings, PTA meetings, etc. Participants should be prepared to discuss their experiences at these meetings during the next workshop.

WORKSHOP V: Parents as Advocates - Taking Action

1. Ground Rules

The group should review the ground rules as done in prior workshops.

2. Community Bulletin Board

The facilitator should ask participants to report on upcoming meetings or community events. Participants should also describe how they sought out or learned this information. Participants who were not able to do this research should describe their difficulties in accessing such information. The group can develop a list of information resources that are most likely to feature school-related and community events (e.g., particular newspapers, church or school newsletters, local television news segments, the internet, etc.)

3. Ice-Breaking Exercise : Something new and good in your community

This exercise will not only continue to build community within the program, but also encourage participants to think about their broader communities. Ask participants to share something positive that is happening in their neighborhood, church or school.

4. Homework Review

Each participant will share how s/he found out about a school-related meeting that s/he attended. Those who attended a meeting should describe the people in attendance, the purpose of the meeting and the participant's perceptions of the meeting. The facilitator might inquire: "Was a consensus model being used to facilitate the meeting?" and "Did you actively participate?"

5. Skills Development

The facilitator will distribute the hand-out, "Blocks to Creative Problem Solving."

A. Participants should be divided into a few groups and asked to read the hand-out which is about excuses. The participants will be given a dual charge to:

- ◆ Determine the most commonly used excuse
- ◆ Add an excuse that is missing from the original list

B. At the end of the fifteen-minute discussion, a representative from each group shares the work of the group. A list of most commonly used excuses is recorded on the flip chart. Some examples include:

- ◆ We tried that before
- ◆ We can't do that, we don't have the authority
- ◆ We don't have the time

- C. Next, the facilitator should write on the flip chart another list of the most creative and original excuses generated by each group.

6. Discussion : Taking Action

It is clear from the hand-out and the additional excuses written on the chart paper that there are many excuses that prevent necessary action from taking place in an organization or in a family. Being an advocate means taking action. It entails overcoming excuses such as “Oh, I’m too tired,” “I don’t have enough time,” or “No one will help me.”

- A. The group should discuss the most common excuses and ask themselves how many times have they used one of these excuses and how many times have they heard their children using these excuses.
- B. The participants should divide into groups of four or five people and share an action that he/she feels confident to take on behalf of a student. The facilitator should stress that no action is too small and yet each action must be related to improving the academic success of a child.
- C. Each group writes down the actions that individuals are going to take. The groups reconvene and a member of each group is asked to read all of the actions. Record the actions on the flip chart and encourage applause after each sharing. Some actions may include:
- ◆ Take my child to the library every Saturday to get a book and read it with her/him every night for five to fifteen minutes
 - ◆ Call my child’s math teacher once a week
 - ◆ Go to the monthly School Board meeting
 - ◆ Join the local PTA

7. Review, Preview & Homework Assignment:

The participants should reflect on the excuses that were discussed during the discussion and share strategies to avoid using them (e.g., making a pact with an “advocacy buddy”, developing time-management skills, etc.)

As a homework assignment, each participant will accomplish whatever academic and/or school-related action that s/he indicated during the “Taking Action” discussion. Everyone is to take some sort of action and should be prepared to report these activities and the results at the next workshop.

WORKSHOP VI: Program Review Session

This final session provides an opportunity for participants to review and evaluate the workshop series. It is also the time to have a closing celebration. The facilitator will need a blank greeting card for each participant and either a packet of seeds or a plant for each member of the group. The facilitator may also wish to provide each participant with a certificate of achievement.

At this meeting, it will be important for the facilitator use the flip chart as often as possible. Writing down conclusions and points in the last session will help participants remember the most important information learned in the workshop. These comments will help the facilitator to evaluate the efficacy of the workshop series.

1. Ground Rules

The group should review ground rules generated throughout the workshop series discuss how the ground rules contributed to the organization and structure of the meetings. The facilitator should ask if the rules have been consistently adhered to and whether the participants can draw any connections between ground rules in the workshop and possible ground rules in their homes. The facilitator should remind the group that the clearer our expectations are made for our children, the clearer their understandings will be of their roles as students and family members. When children step outside the ground rules, it is time to review them. Ground rules could be reviewed regularly at home as they were in the workshop setting.

2. Community Bulletin Board

Participants should organize and arrange for a final ceremony (including a date and time) and responsibilities should be distributed amongst the group members.

3. Ice-Breaking Exercise: One little thought

Each participant should reflect on all the workshops and then focus on one thought that has stayed with and influenced her/him. Each member will share these reflections and the facilitator will record each thought on the flip chart.

4. Homework

The facilitator should retrieve the flip charts that recorded the members' actions to be taken and have participants report on their activities. If anyone presents an excuse for not accomplishing their task, encourage the group to offer helpful suggestions to avoid these hindrances in the future.

5. Discussion/Skills Development

The facilitator should give each participant a blank card and ask them to write a note to a friend inviting them to participate in a RYSE parent workshop. The participants should read their notes out loud.

Exercise One: Becoming better parents and advocates

This exercise will help participants to reflect on the skills that s/he has developed over the course of the workshop series and how s/he has gained confidence in certain aspects of parenting and school-related advocacy.

- A. The facilitator will divide the participants into three groups. Each member of a group is then to create a list of the most helpful aspects of the workshop series. The list will be divided into two sections. In the first section, the participant will list activities and/or discussions that helped her/him as a parent in the home. In the second section, the participant will list the activities and/or discussions that helped her/him to be a more effective advocate in the school.
- B. After five minutes, each individual in the group will share their list with the other group members. Each group will then choose three items that they want to share with the entire group. The groups will reconvene and a spokesperson from each group will share and discuss the three observations with the rest of the participants.

Exercise Two: Workshop Review

- A. The facilitator will divide the group into five groups (one representing each previous workshop). Each group will review the main ideas from that particular session and how the information helped to promote students' academic success.
- B. Next, each group will decide upon two important items from the workshop under consideration. The groups must work with consensus to determine what will be presented to the entire group. The workshops to be assigned are:
 - ◆ Group I: Ground Rules and Consensus
 - ◆ Group II: Teachers as Allies
 - ◆ Group III: Power and Perception
 - ◆ Group IV: Perceptions of Good Parenting - Working Together
 - ◆ Group V: Parents as Advocates - Taking Action

Review: Closing Thoughts & Looking Toward the Future

- A. The facilitator will request that each participant share a closing thought about the workshop series and their hopes for the child(ren)'s academic growth in the future. The parent should also indicate how s/he plans to specifically contribute to this development. For example, the following aspirations were presented at the final workshop session of one RYSE group:
 - ◆ A parent shared that she was joining the PTA as a result of participating in the program. This represented her way of taking action.
 - ◆ A parent shared that she would like to be involved in the recruitment process for the next workshop series and that she would like to participate as an assistant to the group facilitators.

She stated that it was her goal to be a workshop facilitator in two years

- B. After each participant speaks, the facilitator will present her/him with a packet of seeds or a plant as a symbol of new growth. At this time, certificates of achievement may also be given to each participant. [If possible, the facilitator might make a positive statement about the contributions or strengths of each participant.]
- C. The facilitator should be prepared to make some closing statements about the political, cultural, or existential meanings that the RYSE program has in her/his perspective and the elaborate on the importance of education and academic achievement as a means of broadening the opportunities of in our children's futures and bolstering the well-being of our communities at large, etc.

The Manual to Accompany the Video Series **RYSE TO THE CHALLENGE:** **Parents Supporting Student Success**

❖ Introduction to the History and Mission of RYSE

The video series, *RYSE to the Challenge: Parents Supporting Student Success*, was inspired by the activities and experiences of the individuals who participated in the Parents for Rockland Youth Supplementary Education Program (RYSE). The program, known as Parents' RYSE or simply RYSE, took place in Rockland County, New York in 1996 and 1997, and was created to help parents of color improve the academic and personal performance of their middle school children. More specifically, the program sought to improve the success of low-status students of color by strengthening the capacity and support of their parents and communities.

The program consisted of facilitated parent workshops, informal meetings among parents, and outings to cultural centers and colleges. The aim of each activity was to empower parents by providing knowledge and techniques to be used in the home, the school setting, and their broader communities. In addition to the curriculum and educational services for parents, RYSE provided supplementary education services for the children of these families. These services were modeled after those generally available to more affluent families and students.

Several studies show that when families are involved in the education of their children, their children achieve higher grades and test scores, have better school attendance, complete their homework, demonstrate more positive attitudes towards school, graduate in higher rates, and have greater enrollment in higher education. The aim of the RYSE program and this video series is to demonstrate how parents can involve themselves in the education of their children by being advocates in the school setting, supporting extracurricular activities, and creating nurturing learning environments in the home.

The parents and facilitators who participated the program, as well as the school administrators, teachers, and students interviewed in the videos, all hope that the experience of allowing the RYSE program into your life is an informative, highly motivating experience. Whether the videos are viewed with a group or in the comfort of one's home, the voices of the individuals and groups in the videos should provide useful ideas for supporting the academic and social success of students.

❖ **The Program Manual: Notes to the Facilitator**

This manual accompanies the three-part documentary series, *RYSE to the Challenge: Parents Supporting Student Success*. The series was created so that parents can get together in homes, schools, churches, workplaces, and libraries to share the experiences of intellectual and social support that RYSE parents often spoke about during and after they participated in the RYSE Program. A parent at home can also view the videos if work or family responsibilities keep them from attending regular meetings.

This manual is designed to assist an individual who chooses to be a “facilitator” in the parent workshop setting. This manual includes lists of materials that will be needed for each session, suggestions for discussion topics, and examples of exercises that can be used to accompany sections of each video.

The video series is designed with bulleted sections where the video can be stopped so that the content can be reviewed, discussed, and expanded upon. Each video is 27 minutes long. Discussion time during and after the viewing of each video can be facilitated within 30 minutes to one hour, depending upon the number of participants involved, the degree to which each bulleted section is discussed, and the number of exercises you decide to initiate. The titles of the videos are as follows:

- ◆ **Video One: *Parents as Advocates***
- ◆ **Video Two: *Parents as Teacher***
- ◆ **Video Three: *Parents as Parents***

The Facilitator's Role

The role of the facilitator is of great significance. It is important for the facilitator to be well-prepared and, above all, to appreciate and respect each participant in the group. Functions of the facilitator include:

- ◆ Coordinating the group's creation of ground rules
- ◆ Providing materials for workshop content
- ◆ Acting as a process guide and making procedural suggestions
- ◆ Focusing the energy of the group on a common task
- ◆ Encouraging the full involvement of all participants in discussions and activities
- ◆ Distributing evaluation forms

Gathering a Group to Participate in Viewing the Video Series

The first tasks that you, as a facilitator, will need to accomplish is to (a) organize a group of interested parents, (b) find a place to view the video series, and (c) decide upon a meeting time. The best way to gather a group together to experience the *RYSE to the Challenge* video series is to contact neighborhood friends, colleagues from work, and parents in the classes of your children. You may want to ask people to bring food to the meetings on a rotating basis. Other sources that you might contact in order to solicit participants are local churches, libraries, or local community organizations such as the NAACP, The Urban League, and various sororities and fraternal organizations.

If it is possible to find an apartment or a home for the meetings, our experience suggests that this will provide a comfortable environment for the event. If you choose this option, make sure that you know how many people comfortably can be accommodated and do not overextend invitations. If a private home is not an option, you may want to contact a local library, community center, school, or church. These kinds of organizations are likely to make arrangements with you at no cost.

Evenings are convenient times for working parents; however, childcare can still present a problem. If you are having the meeting in a private home, you will most likely not be able to accommodate children. If you are having the meeting at a local community center, participants may agree to split the cost of a childcare provider to attend to the children. If you are facilitating the series at work, your employer may agree to provide a space and television and VCR for your group. If you choose this option, it would be a good idea to write an article in a local newspaper acknowledging the support of your employer in this community activity. Another possibility for facilitating the series is to hold meetings on Sunday after church services. In this case, you may be able to arrange for the use of a space for childcare while parents attend the sessions.

Video One: *Parents as Advocates*

The documentary series begins with *Parents as Advocates*, a video that addresses critical issues concerning the role of parents as effective supporters and spokespersons for children. The video discusses parental advocacy as it relates to larger parenting responsibilities and specific strategies for safeguarding the rights and needs of students. This video explains the reasons that advocacy is necessary and provides practical suggestions for developing skills that parents can practice to positively enhance their influence upon their child(ren)'s academic experiences within and outside the school setting. The video also stresses the importance of learning how to work with groups interested in acting on behalf of students.

❖ **Materials for this workshop**

The facilitator will need to make sure that the following materials are on hand:

- ◆ Flip chart & chart papers
- ◆ Writing paper and pencils for all participants
- ◆ Exercise materials and evaluation forms

❖ **Video sections & bulleted points**

The first bulleted section in the video provides an overview of the video and reads as follows:

- ◆ The historically poor relationship between parents of color and school
- ◆ What parent advocacy means
- ◆ Knowing what to do at home to support your child
- ◆ Knowing what kinds of questions to ask of teachers and school administrators
- ◆ Knowing how to engage in political activity
- ◆ The importance of parent support activities such as parent workshops and cottage meetings
- ◆ The expectations schools should have of parents
- ◆ The expectations parents should have of schools

The next bulleted section explains the structure of the RYSE workshop series. It should be noted that this format may be used during the viewing of the video series. The two (on-screen) bulleted sections read as follows:

❖ **Workshop Structure:**

- ◆ A community bulletin board
- ◆ An ice-breaking exercise
- ◆ Skills development (For example, how to prepare to meet a teacher or school official)
- ◆ A general discussion topic
- ◆ A review of lessons learned from the workshop
- ◆ A preview of the next workshop

❖ **RYSE Parent Advocacy workshops included the following topics:**

- ◆ Knowing your school community
- ◆ Recognizing that teachers and administrators can be allies
- ◆ Working with consensus
- ◆ Knowing your rights as a parent
- ◆ Taking action as an advocate

The above two bulleted sections provide participants with a picture of the structure and content of the Parents RYSE workshops. Throughout the video series, these components will be referenced by the parents and students interviewed in the video.

The next bulleted section focuses on the importance of developing positive relationships with school personnel. This is often difficult for parents of color, many of whom had bad experiences in school when they were children. These parents often feel outnumbered at the school, misunderstood and intimidated by the people who are responsible for their child's education. It is important to discuss all of these issues and to find ways to overcome the obstacles that keep parents from attending school functions and maintaining consistent relationships with their child(ren)'s teachers. Below are the on-screen bulleted suggestions to parents:

- ◆ Think of and write down questions before your meeting
- ◆ Bring a friend or colleague
- ◆ Recommend that meetings take place in a neutral location
- ◆ Take notes during the meeting

[STOP THE VIDEO HERE]

As a facilitator, ask parents to share their experiences of conferences with teachers and administrators. Did any parents use any of these techniques during their meeting? Which of these techniques proved most helpful? What other strategies have parents used for effectively meeting with teachers? Using the flip chart, add to the list that was presented in the video.

❖ **Group Exercises**

Exercise One: Brainstorming

As a facilitator, initiate the following writing and discussion exercise with participants:

- A. Instruct participants to write down questions that they think would be appropriate to ask their child(ren)'s teacher during a parent-teacher conference and share these questions with a partner.
- B. Instruct participants to write down questions that they would want to ask an administrator during a meeting about their child(ren)'s behavior in school and share these questions with a partner.

- C. Instruct participants to write down questions that they would want to ask their child(ren)'s guidance counselor during a meeting and share them with a partner.
- D. As a facilitator, begin a discussion about the questions and the process of writing the questions down.

Exercise Two: Role-Playing

If time allows, a second exercise could be initiated. This role-playing activity provides parents with an opportunity to practice asking their questions. In the video, the importance of using role-play as a technique to develop confidence through practice is discussed. Role-playing not only provides opportunities for anticipating situations that will arise during conferences and meetings, but also strengthens the social cohesion of the group viewing the videos. The role-play exercise works in the following way:

- A. One partner plays the role of the teacher, administrator, or guidance counselor while the other partner plays the role of the parent. The parent asks the questions previously generated during the brainstorming session.
- B. In review of the exercise, the facilitator should return to the flip chart and ask participants to discuss the advantages and disadvantages of the previously suggested tactics and techniques.

[CONTINUE THE VIDEO HERE]

The next bulleted section for review and discussion focuses on what schools expect of parents and what parents should expect of schools. The on-screen bullets indicate that parent should:

- ♦ Go to school functions
- ♦ Read letters and flyers that are sent home
- ♦ Call the school if troubles at home may impact student work and behavior
- ♦ Know you child's teachers and guidance counselors

[STOP THE VIDEO HERE]

❖ Discussion Topics

As a facilitator, ask parents to add to this list in a similar fashion to the previous brainstorming exercise. You should write down these additional responsibilities on the flip chart for the group to review. Additionally, you should:

- ♦ Have each parent rate her-/himself (perhaps on a scale from one to ten) regarding her/his school participation
- ♦ Explain to parents that it is important to make and maintain contact with the school
- ♦ Encourage parents to make a telephone call to the school to arrange a meeting with either a teacher, guidance counselor, or the principal
- ♦ Remind parents to take a list of questions and to take notes during the meeting

Next, review the list of what parents should expect of schools. Ask parents to add to the list that is presented in the video and write down their answers on the flip chart. The on-screen bullets indicate that parents should expect schools to:

- ◆ Provide your child with a quality education
- ◆ Provide information about your rights as a parent
- ◆ Be receptive to your questions
- ◆ Be accommodating of your visits to the school
- ◆ Be in contact with you about your child's progress

As the facilitator, ask parents to establish an arrangement for contacting the teacher, guidance counselor, or principal on a regular basis. This contact can either be by phone or by letter. Encourage parents to visit their child's classes during their meeting at the school.

❖ **Closing the First Video Viewing Session**

This concludes the first video in the series. Ask parents to reflect on the most meaningful information or ideas they gleaned from viewing the video. Remind parents to set up a meeting with a school official.

You should establish a time for the viewing of the second video, *Parents as Teachers*, with the participants.

Distribute the evaluation survey that is provided to participants. This survey will provide useful information for you as a facilitator and for future viewing sessions.

Video Two: *Parents as Teachers*

The second video in the series addresses the need for parents to participate in their child's life as a teacher, that is, encouraging and facilitating educational experiences outside of school. It is well documented that academically successful students are involved in extracurricular activities that contribute to their ability to perform successfully in school. These activities include vacations, trips to cultural centers, libraries, and tutoring. The video provides examples of activities that parents initiate with their children and stresses the importance of developing a keen sense of the specific needs of each individual child in a family. Each child in a family has a particular learning style and has academic strengths and weaknesses. It is important for parents to identify these needs and to find ways to support the academic development of each child. For example, one child may need a mentor, while another may need help with reading. This second video focuses on the kinds of activities that parents should provide for their children and suggests ways to access such resources in their community.

❖ **Materials for the workshop**

As the facilitator, you will want to bring a library schedule, a local newspaper, and several flyers about local events. You may also want to prepare a resource telephone list which provides the phone number of the local library, the school guidance counselor, the local community-based organizations, and the local community college. Additionally, you will need:

- ◆ A flip-chart
- ◆ Index cards
- ◆ Evaluation forms

As the first on-screen bullets indicate, *Parents as Teachers* highlights the importance of:

- ◆ Visits to Libraries and Cultural Centers
- ◆ Visits to Colleges and Exposure to College Life
- ◆ Mentors and Positive Role Models
- ◆ Recognizing Learning Styles and Finding Mentors

The second set of bullets provides suggestions for finding out about community activities and services in your area. The on-screen bullets read:

- ◆ Check the Local Newspapers and Community Bulletin Boards for Upcoming Events
- ◆ Visit the Public Library on a Regular Basis
- ◆ Attend Events Regardless of Racial Make-up
- ◆ Use Community-based Organizations as a Resource
- ◆ Plan Special Outings to Places of Cultural Importance

[STOP THE VIDEO HERE]

As the facilitator, begin a conversation about this section. Ask how many participants take their children to the library on a regular basis. Ask how many read the local paper to see what cultural events are happening in the area.

❖ Group Exercises

The facilitator should initiate the following exercise with participants. This exercise helps parents to learn how to access information more effectively. For this exercise, you will need to bring several flyers about local events, a local newspaper, and a library schedule.

- A. Divide the group into three groups. Give one group the newspapers, one group the flyers, and one group local library schedules.
- B. Ask each group to review the content of the information they have and to compile an information list. The list should include time, place, cost, and a brief summary of the events.
- C. Have each group report their findings to the entire group. After all groups have reported, facilitate a discussion about available events that are appropriate for families.
- D. At this point, the facilitator should ask: What are some reasons that could prevent you from attending one of these functions? Make a list of the problems that people have. Write the list on the flip chart.
- E. Next, review the list and ask: How could these problems be addressed to make it possible to go to an event? Allow the group to brainstorm solutions. At the end of the brainstorming session review the material with participants and encourage them to read the newspaper to find interesting events for their children, and to take their child to the library one time in the week.
- F. You may also want to discuss how to access local resources in more detail with parents. Suggest that the school guidance counselor is a good resource to contact regarding events and programs that are available for students in the local community. Another resource is the local community college and the local library.

[CONTINUE THE VIDEO HERE]

The next section in the video contains details the importance of exposing children to college and college life and encouraging children's expectations to attend college. In the review section, on-screen bullets read:

- ◆ Visit Local Community and Four Year Colleges
- ◆ Speak with College Counselors About Entrance Requirements
- ◆ Find Out About CAT and SAT Prep Programs
- ◆ Find Out About What Programs Exist At Your Child's School
- ◆ Plan a Special Trip to a Historically Black College or University

[STOP THE VIDEO HERE]

❖ **Discussion Topic: Anticipating college life**

As the facilitator, explain that conversations about college are important. In families where student traditionally attend college there are visits from college friends, stories about college life and reference to things that were learned in college. In families where college experiences are not part of general conversations, it is important to begin to discuss the importance of college, even if no one in the family has attended college. The more that children hear references to college the more they will know that it is an attainable goal for them. The more parents do to encourage their children to think of college as a goal, the more likely their children will anticipate going in the future. In the video, viewers will see that the RYSE students were positively influenced by their trips to colleges.

As facilitator, you should ask participants how many of them discuss college with their children. Ask how many have ever attended a function at the local community college with their children. Review the importance of meeting with school guidance counselors to make sure that your children are taking courses that will prepare them for college. Ask if participants would like to organize a cottage meeting with a school guidance counselor. Brainstorm about how such a meeting could occur.

[CONTINUE THE VIDEO HERE]

The next section of the video looks at the importance of role models, mentors, and community organizations. The segment includes the following information:

- ◆ Looking for Positive Role Models and Mentors in the Community
- ◆ Remembering That Role Models and Mentors Can be of College Age
- ◆ Seeking out Community Organizations that Work with Children and Teens
- ◆ Remembering that You are Your Child's Most Important Role Model

[STOP THE VIDEO HERE]

❖ **Group Exercise**

As the facilitator, initiate the following exercise with participants:

- A. Distribute index cards to the participants.
- B. Ask each participant to think of a neighbor, relative, classmate or friend who could be contacted to provide special assistance to his or her child in some area.
- C. Ask each participant to write a note to her-/himself with a plan for contacting this individual and arranging a meeting with her/his child.

[CONTINUE THE VIDEO HERE]

The next section in the video discusses learning styles, tutoring and the importance of friendship in children's lives. As the facilitator, you will want to ask parents to consider the importance of tutoring. As stated in the video, tutoring is often available through the school. Encourage parents to contact the school to see what opportunities are available for their children. Remind parents that every child needs help in at least one subject. There is no stigma attached to getting help. Some of the smartest students in any school are receiving regular help in one or more of their courses. In the review section, bullets read:

- ◆ Children Have Different Learning Styles
- ◆ Tutoring Need Not be Expensive
- ◆ Community Members Often Make Wonderful Friends and Tutors

❖ **Closing the Second Video Viewing Session**

This concludes the second video in the series. As the facilitator, ask parents to discuss the most useful information and ideas in this video. Provide time for parents to share their concerns and insights. Remind parents that the final video, entitled *Parents as Parents*, will be shown and establish a date for the viewing.

Distribute the evaluation survey that is provided to participants. This survey will provide useful information for you as a facilitator and for future viewing sessions.

Video Three: *Parents as Parents*

The third video in the documentary series addresses critical issues concerning *Parents as Parents*. The atmosphere that is created in the home, together with the attitudes demonstrated by parents about learning, have a strong influence on children. It is important to provide support to children and at the same time to expect that children meet family standards. By providing children with structure, appropriate discipline, praise, and love, parents create an environment that supports learning and develops self-esteem. There are many aspects of the home that can be structured to support academic development. For example, students in the video speak about how important it is for parents to show an interest in their work. Students also emphasize the importance of having trusting relationships while at the same time relationships that help give the students direction and limits. These directions and limits should be age-appropriate.

Parents live very busy lives and are often tired at the end of the day. Children are very sensitive to this fact, as reflected in this video. Parents need to make time for their children no matter how busy they are. Children need parents to be supportive and to understand how difficult it is to be a child, especially a child of color in our society. The critical importance of parenting is that it is not only a source of nurturing and security, but also a source of acculturation. What is emphasized in the home with regard to academic success will have a profound impact on how a child develops. The third video highlights the importance of:

- ◆ Creating Good Parent-Child Communication
- ◆ Creating a Nurturing Environment for Study
- ◆ Parent Role-Modeling

The second set of bullets provides information about parenting skills, including:

- ◆ Being Open and Receptive to Your Child
- ◆ Being Consistent With Discipline and Encouragement
- ◆ Never Punish in Anger-Punish to Teacher
- ◆ Adjust Expectation According to Age
- ◆ Remember to Praise Your Child

[STOP THE VIDEO HERE]

❖ Group Exercise One

As the facilitator, divide participants into groups of three. Ask groups to do a variety of role-playing exercises. The group should have five minutes to work together. Below are possible scenarios:

Group One: One participant is a child and the other is a parent. The parent is asking the child about homework. The child begins with, "Oh, I don't have any homework." The parent responds in an appropriate way to initiate a discussion about school activities. The third member of the group should provide feedback at the end of the five minutes.

Group Two: One participant is a parent preparing for a daily reading time when the parent and the child read together for fifteen minutes. The other participant is the child who would rather watch television than read. The third member of the group should provide feedback at the end of the five minutes.

Group Three: One participant is a parent who has just found out that her child has not done homework for two weeks and is in danger of failing a class in school. The other participant is the child. What is an appropriate parent response if the child is 7 years old, and if the child is 13 years old? The third member of the group should provide feedback at the end of the five minutes.

Group Four: One participant is a parent who just found out that two of her/his children left the house while he/she was at the store. One child is twelve and the other is seven. How would you speak to the seven year-old and how would you speak to the twelve year old? What are the consequences for the two children? Two participants are the children. The forth participant should provide feedback at the end of the five minutes.

Group Five: One participant is a parent who just found out that her child received a passing grade in a class in school, but the child is not performing to expectations. One participant is the child. The third member of the group should provide feedback at the end of the five minutes.

At the end of the role-playing and feedback sessions, ask various groups to share perceptions of the experience. As the facilitator, write parent perceptions on the flip chart and review the important points (points such as the importance of reading, doing homework, giving praise, and providing appropriate sanctions when expectations are not met).

[CONTINUE THE VIDEO HERE]

The next bulleted section reviews information about creating a nurturing environment in the home. The on-screen display reads:

- ◆ Arranging a Place in the Home for Study
- ◆ Creating a Plan or Schedule for Homework
- ◆ Encouraging Your Children to “Teach Back” or Explain Their Work to You
- ◆ Reviewing and Correcting Your Child’s Homework
- ◆ Being Conscious of How You Offer Help

[STOP THE VIDEO HERE]

❖ Group Exercise Two

As the facilitator, the following exercise can be initiated with participants. The exercise is to demonstrate how parents can be useful resources to one another. Parents who find the tasks in the bullets above easy to facilitate with their children will share strategies with parents who find the same task difficult. Each participant should respond to one question.

- A. Point to the first bullet and ask: Who has managed to arrange a study space in your home? and Who needs help to arrange a study space in your home? Those who respond should form a group.
- B. Point to the second bullet and ask: Who has created a homework plan that you are willing to share with others? and Who has difficulty creating a homework plan? Those who respond should form a group.

- C. Point to the third bullet and ask: Who is good at asking children to explain homework? and Who needs help developing techniques for asking children to explain homework? Those who respond should form a group.
- D. Point to the fourth bullet and ask: Who feels confident and less confident about developing techniques for reviewing your child's homework? Those who respond should form a group.
- E. At this point, all participants should be in a group. Allow the groups to work together for ten to fifteen minutes. At the end of that time, ask for groups to share important information with the whole group. As the facilitator, write the information down on flip chart and summarize for participants.

[CONTINUE THE VIDEO HERE]

The final set of on-screen bullets is a review of parental responsibilities, including:

- ◆ Making sure mixed messages are not being sent
- ◆ Reading to and in front of your child
- ◆ Having books and magazines around the house
- ◆ Remembering that role models are also trusted friends

[STOP THE VIDEO HERE]

As a facilitator, ask participants to choose one of these responsibilities to focus on for a month at home. Have participants share their choices and brainstorm strategies for implementing various activities in the home.

❖ Closing the final video viewing session

This concludes the third video in the series. As the facilitator, provide time for any closing comments. Distribute the evaluation survey that is provided to participants. This survey will provide useful information for you as a facilitator and for future viewing sessions.

NATIONAL INVITATIONAL CONFERENCE ON SUPPLEMENTARY EDUCATION

October 14-15, 1998

A national invitational conference entitled, "Supplementary Education" was held on October 14-15, 1998 in Washington, DC. The conference was cosponsored by the Laboratory for Student Success and the National Task Force on Minority High Achievement of The College Board. Participants included educators, policymakers, business leaders, and founders of supplementary education programs.

October 14, 1998

Welcome and Opening Remarks

The conference began on the morning of October 15, 1998 with welcoming remarks from Dr. Margaret C. Wang, Executive Director of the Laboratory for Student Success (LSS) and Dr. Edmund W. Gordon, Co-Chair of the National Task Force on Minority High Achievement of the College Board and John M. Musser Professor Emeritus of Psychology at Yale University. Both thanked participants for taking time out of their busy schedules to attend. They stated that they hoped the conference would prove helpful to participants in launching a national initiative to identify solutions for the under-productivity in academic achievement of able and gifted African-American, Hispanic American, and Native American students through supplementary education programs to improve student achievement.

Dr. Wang and Dr. Gordon outlined the three key objectives of the National Task Force on Minority High Achievement of The College Board and LSS in hosting this invitational conference:

- to identify programs and strategies in current school reform efforts that show promise for reversing the under-productivity of ethnic minority students, in particular African-American, Hispanic American, and Native American students;
- to identify programs and strategies in higher education that are directed at enhancing the academic achievement of minority students; and
- to study the current conditions surrounding, and the effects of, supplementary education as a factor influencing the academic achievement of minority students.

Dr. Wang noted that through the broader institutionalization of supplementary education services we seek, more equitably, to provide some of the human development capital that is naturally available to children from better advantaged homes. She charged panelists with the development of next steps for addressing effective implementation of supplementary educational programs to foster high achievement among children of minority backgrounds.

Dr. Gordon noted that it is the presence of family environmental supports for academic achievement that may explain the association between family status and student achievement. He stated that this conference would focus on the use of public schools for providing and supplementing those educational services with the additional services which are deemed to be necessary to the adequate education of children.

Keynote Speech

Dr. Gordon introduced the conference keynote speaker, Richard M. Wolf, Professor Psychology and Education at Teachers College, Columbia University. Dr. Gordon lauded Dr. Wolf's leadership in researching the relationship between the quality of family environmental supports and educational achievement, and praised his ongoing study of how environmental variables influenced the development of human characteristics, especially intelligence and academic achievement.

Dr. Wolf began his keynote presentation by stating that every 25 years since 1869 there has been a major outbreak in the controversy over the effects of heredity versus environment on the development of intelligence and other human characteristics. He predicted that the next outbreak will be in 2019, allowing time for further examination of the issue.

Dr. Wolf described the six environmental variables that make a difference in education as:

1. Press for academic achievement
2. Language models in the home
3. Academic guidance provided in the home
4. Activeness of the family
5. Intellectuality in the home
6. Work habits in the family

He noted that each environmental variable can be further divided into several environmental process characteristics that give meaning to the environmental variables, and presented evidence supporting the efficacy of the variables.

Dr. Wolf also provided correlations obtained between the environmental ratings and scholastic achievement as measured by the Metropolitan Achievement Tests and the Iowa Tests of Educational Development. A four-year follow-up study of the same students showed that the environmental information, obtained at grade 5, correlated +.75 with academic achievement on the Iowa Tests of Educational Development four years later at grade 9. In short, a measure of the home environment at grade 5 was a highly accurate predictor of academic achievement four years later. A number of replications of this study have served to confirm these results.

Other environmental process characteristics considered important for the attainment of educational goals included the use of periodical literature, library, and other facilities; the preparation and planning for the attainment of educational goals; and opportunities for thinking and imagination in daily activities. Dr. Wolf gave specific examples of each of these process characteristics that show the kinds of variables that not only support but also promote academic achievement.

Dr. Wolf concluded his keynote address by stating that the role of the home environment in increasing children's academic achievement is clear and that there is ample evidence to support this. The challenge at this time is how we can make use of this information.

**Plenary Session 1:
Supplementary Education Approaches: What Works**

Edwin LeMar Haynes, Director of the Center for the Revitalization of Urban Education at the National Education Association, began the first plenary session with a commendation to Dr. Wang and Dr. Gordon for their commitment to restore public confidence in public education. As chair of the first session, **Supplementary Education Approaches: What Works**, he introduced the panelists and their presentations. The panelists and a brief discussion of their presentations include:

- **Edmund T. Gordon, Professor of Anthropology at the University of Texas at Austin: *Reconciling Hegemonic and Subaltern Cultures in Supplementation***
- **Lenora B. Fulani, Director, Community Literacy Research Project: *Political Socialization as Supplemental Education: How Performing and Creating New Identities Helps Black Children Learn and Develop***
- **Alan Green, Professor, The Metro Center for Urban Education at New York University: *Peer-Based Strategies for Accelerating Academic Achievement***

In responding to these panel presentations, participants offered the following questions and observations:

- What is the impact on students of programs such as the All Stars, cooperative learning, and peer tutoring?
- *The ability of students to grow and develop through expanded options based on their mastery of experiences.* These supplementary education programs push students to perform beyond their current achievement levels by involving them in learning opportunities outside of school. They create an environment that results in high performance learning communities.
- How do individuals manage the task of social and emotional adjustment to reflect their culture?
- *The concept of parenting needs to be considered differently than it was 50 years ago.* Extended family members in the role of parents have great impact on the integrity and diversity of children as they become healthy and productive citizens.
- How are supplemental programs different from innovative programs?
- *Supplementary education is that system of education that exists outside the school and that includes formal and informal developmental facilitation and learning opportunities that are widespread in the lives of children whose parents are academically sophisticated and/or economically affluent.* Innovative programs are available through school resources that may not be ongoing or long-term, dependent upon funding.

Plenary Session 2: Supplementary Education Partnerships

Lorraine Costella, Superintendent, Kent City, MD Public Schools, began the second plenary session by noting the extraordinary achievements of the impressive panels of experts at this conference. As chair of **Plenary Session 2: Supplementary Education Partnerships**, she introduced the panelists and their presentations. The panelists and a brief discussion of their presentations include:

- **Deborah Bial, Founder, The Posse Foundation, Harvard University: *The Posse Program: Student Success on the College Campus***
- **Nicole Johnson, Interim Executive Director, LEAP, Yale University: *Leadership, Education, and Athletics in Partnership***
- **Patti Smith, School Designer, Expeditionary Learning Outward Bound: *Rockland Youth Supplementary Education Services***
- **Meg Campbell, Executive Director, Expeditionary Learning Outward Bound: *Outward Bound and Expeditionary Learning***

In responding to these panel presentations, participants offered the following questions and observations:

- How was the diversity of the Posse Program maintained?
- *The selection of students begins with teacher recommendations. Diversity has never been an issue since the program is flooded with recommendations.*
- What are the family connections made in each of these programs?
- *The concept of each of these programs is dependent upon parental support.*
The Posse Program participants partially attribute their success to the strong parenting they received at home.

LEAP counselors meet weekly with parents of students in the program to communicate their child's progress and what they are learning through the experience. Parent leadership trainings are offered to connect parents to schools and show them how they can make changes that will reduce the failure rate of students.

The video series *RYSE To The Challenge: Parents Supporting Student Success* was developed in response to needs expressed by parents for supplemental training to improve the academic success of their middle school children.

One of the design principles of Expeditionary Learning Outward Bound states that learning is fostered best in small groups where there is trust, sustained caring, and mutual respect among all members of the learning community, which includes parents. Counselors make sure there is a caring adult looking after the progress of each child.

The Community Literacy Research Project involves parents as observers of supplemental education through performing and creating new identities that help children learn and develop beyond their current level of achievement.

Lunch Session

Dennie Wolf, Professor of Education at Harvard University, summarized a paper on *Supplementary Education Through the Arts and Popular Culture*:

- There is evidence that education well conceived and fairly delivered can mediate the effects of poverty and low status;
- Education comes in many forms: kitchen table debates, Sunday school, choir rehearsals, community theaters and workplaces;
- Many such supplemental educational opportunities exist in communities;
- The constructive use of out-of-school time can have major effects on the life outcomes for young people.

Dr. Wolf reported on the interest of young people in being engaged and productive, rather than indifferent or bored, by describing interviews of young people from urban settings across the country. Specifically, these interviews examined students' answers to the request, "Tell me about the best piece of work that you have done?"

Dr. Wolf highlighted the benefits of high-quality, sustained supplementary education, using the above interviews, supplemented by those of young adults reflecting their histories of engagement, including the growing evidence that sustained engagement is key and that such engagement is most likely when there is active social support from peers and families.

Finally, based on an ongoing body of observations in different supplemental education programs, Dr. Wolf discussed a number of issues that need to be addressed if supplemental education is to have its promised effects:

- *The proportion of free or low-cost offerings that are fundamentally custodial, rather than educational.* This is a point that holds not just for after-school programs, but for the kinds of one-stop visits that many cultural organizations offer as their contribution. The danger is that supplemental education mirrors the inequities that plague in-school education.
- *How much of what is offered, is "unavailable."* In many cases, the lack of both material and social infrastructures (e.g., public transportation, safety, sheer access to knowledge about programs and support in applying) prevents families and children from taking up what is "offered."
- *How unsystematic supplementary education currently is.* While there are many program dollars "available" the net benefit for children is much less than it could be.

Next-Step Discussion by Work Groups

Following the luncheon address, participants broke into work groups to discuss issues that emerged from plenary sessions 1 and 2, and to develop next step recommendations for improving supplementary education programs. Key issues discussed during these work group sessions include:

Issues, aspects, dimensions, or problems relevant to supplementary education:

- The need to research parent education programs and public health initiatives in terms of supplementary education programs
- How to maintain the momentum, quality, and internal leadership of innovative initiatives in supplementary education
- The development of a uniform standardized measure of effectiveness to assess supplementary education programs
- The replication of community and parent-based organizations that work based on a needs assessment

Connections between the Comprehensive School Reform Demonstration (CSRD) Programs and supplementary education:

- Disadvantaged students are differentiated from students who are achieving and who are not from at-risk environments
- The relationship between public and private funding for supplementary education programs is defined
- Federal money set aside for CSRD programs is increasing
- Services that are located at school sites and are competitive are being contracted
- Learning opportunities using community-based organizations within the schools are offered

The development, discovery, and nurturance of talent should be given more and better attention:

- Curiosity is a talent that many children have which is discouraged in school
- Early training and school-based clubs are very helpful in the development of leadership
- Athletics creates peer groups, standards setting within the group, and teamwork

Inherent contradictions exist between support for schooling—especially public education—and promotion of supplementary education. These contradictions can be overcome if:

- Schools focus on the quality of teaching and learning to provide students with a holistic school experience
- Supplementary education and what supplementary education programs should accomplish are redefined
- Schools learn from best practices e.g., looping and block scheduling
- The tension and low level of collaboration between public schools and community-based organizations is resolved

- Schools gain access to alternative delivery systems and use of technology to train teachers and expose them to new ways to deliver instruction
- Supplementary education is used to combat teacher fatigue by exposing students to a variety of adults and potential mentors

Academic socialization and political socialization interventions can be complementary:

- When public schools are considered essential institutions in a democracy with limitations as to what they can accomplish through formal schooling
- When minority and poverty-level parents are able to access a wide range of opportunities, resources and services, not to supplant but, to supplement what they can get from schools, especially in cases of special needs students
- When these parents recognize that schooling is more effective when it builds upon an adequate base of human development capital, i.e., health, material resources, social networks, tacit knowledge about how schooling works, polity as reflected in a sense of membership, cultural versatility, models of relevant achievement in significant others, and the political socialization of parents and students
- When these resources are equally distributed among members of the society
- When, through the broader institutionalization of supplementary education services some of this human development capital is available to children from less-advantaged homes

Preview of Day 2 of the Conference

Dr. Edmund W. Gordon concluded the day with an overview of his paper entitled, *School Reform, Supplantation, and Supplementation in the Acceleration of Academic Achievement*. He defined supplementary education as a system of education that exists outside the school and includes the formal and informal developmental facilitation and learning opportunities that are so ubiquitous in the lives of children whose parents are academically sophisticated and/or economically affluent. This construct includes a variety of special efforts and resources that many parents direct to support the intellectual development of their children, independent of the quality of the schools that their children attend. Included in supplementary education are such experiences and resources as:

- Accelerated and targeted academic enrichment and tutorial support.
- Alternative forms and intensities of schooling.
- Mentoring, modeling and tutoring regarding intellectual competence, personal efficacy, resource utilization, and presentation of self.
- After school, summer, and weekend educational and personal developmental enrichment.
- Guidance, health, mental health, and nutritional services as needed.
- Socialization to high performance academic communities.
- Opportunities for community service and participation, as well as to be perceived as respected community member.
- Guided exposure to aspects of "high" culture, indigenous and popular cultures, and travel.
- Access to the social networks through which opportunities for participation and upward mobility are mediated.

October 15, 1998

**Plenary Session 3:
Supplementary Education Approaches: Focus on Academic Excellence**

Charles Tesconi, Dean of the School of Education, American University, began the third plenary session **Supplementary Education Approaches: Focus on Academic Excellence** by introducing the panelists and requesting interaction between panelists and conference attendees after each of their presentations. The panelists and a brief discussion of their presentations include:

- **JoAnn Manning, Associate Director, Laboratory for Student Success at Temple University Center for Research in Human Development and Education: *Community for Learning (CFL) Program***
- **Irving Hamer, New York City Board of Education: *Teaching and Learning Beyond the Classroom: A Bromide for High Achievement***

**Plenary Session 4:
Supplementary Education: Family/Peers as Educators**

Gregory Dennis, Program Officer, Office of Educational Resources and Improvement of the U. S. DOE, began the fourth plenary session **Supplementary Education: Family/Peers as Educators** by introducing the panelists and requesting participants share their reactions to presentations after all three panelists finished. The panelists and a brief discussion of their presentations include:

- **Maitrayee Bhattacharyya, Professor of Sociology, Princeton University: *Korean Supplementary Education in Los Angeles: Developing an Urban Economy and Increasing Family Resources That Support Academic Development Through Community Enterprise***
- **Stephanie Bell-Rose, Program Officer, The Mellon Foundation: *Family, Personal, and Social Characteristics of High Performance Learners***
- **Eugene Cota-Robles, Co-Chair of the National Task Force on Minority High Achievement of The College Board: *Human Diversity and Academic Excellence***

Lunch Session

Donald Stewart, President, The College Board delivered the lunch session address and focused on the role supplementary education can play, and in what form, regarding differences in teacher preparation and effectiveness, and access to challenging academic work.

He reported that recent research has begun to quantify the role of different teacher preparation more systematically. He then challenged conference participants to answer how supplementary education efforts such as parental support, advocacy, and research can help address the inequitable differences in teacher preparation and effectiveness.

Dr. Stewart highlighted the two distinct directions schools are taking regarding access to challenging academic work. EQUITY 2000 requires that all students to take algebra and geometry at the same level, yet the College Board has been working in curriculum enhancement with teachers from middle school through senior year to put in more challenging and responsive curriculum to develop critical thinking in their students, thereby increasing student access to rigorous courses.

Finally, in answer to the question of how supplementary education efforts can help address the inequitable access to challenging academic work, and develop the tools to promote practices of affirmative development in our educational systems, Dr. Stewart concluded that;

- we must not give up the public ends of education as supplementary in any way
- we must recognize supplementary education as central to advancing, in reality and not just rhetoric, higher academic achievement for more of our disadvantaged students.

Final Plenary Session: Next-Step Recommendations

Following the luncheon address, work group chairpersons discussed issues that emerged from the work group sessions, and reported next step-recommendations for improving supplementary education programs.

- Expand education programs, make supplementary education part of the culture of schooling
- Eliminate barriers to collaboration
- Do not use standardized tests as the sole indicator of student ability and future achievement
- Create education zones (similar to enterprise zones) and expand education beyond formal schools
- Create disposable time for parents so that they have more time with children, e.g., flexible work schedules, having schools in close proximity to major employers
- Provide supplementary education to low-income children, prior to them entering school, e.g., structured pre-K programs
- Look at children in middle to upper income school districts, especially non-Asian children of color, who also need supplementary education programs
- Build on the cultural capital that children bring with them, determine what they know and how they know it
- Be clear about needing to develop a bi-partisan approach to school reform

Closing Remarks

Participants stated that it was highly beneficial to learn from the impressive panels of experts at this conference. Many stated that they felt a sense of collegiality had developed in sharing

perspectives and goals. Others noted the difficulty in moving forward in translating the ideas presented at the conference into practice, such as:

- Consider performance assessment as an alternative to standardized tests
- Expose children living in poverty to high quality teaching—through, for example, distance learning
- Reproduce successful supplementary education models through local community implementation
- Mobilize support of health care and social services programs as providers of supplementary education through private, individual, and corporate philanthropic resources
- Involve organizations of people of color—NAACP, Urban League, Urban League, ASPIRA, that have their own education programs to embrace and support the genesis of supplemental education
- Recognize supplementary education as essential



Parents' RYSE

Rockland Youth Supplementary Education

Editorial Page

OUR VIEW

Saturday
February 17, 1996
Rockland
Journal-News

Parents rise to the occasion

Reinforcement group welcome

Educator Edmund Gordon helped organize Rockland's contingent to the Million Man March in Washington, D.C., last year, and now he's taking steps to bring to reality some of the hopes of those participants.

Gordon, a psychology professor affiliated with the City University of New York, fellow educators Ken and Cora Wilder and others are volunteering time to PARENTS RYSE (Rockland Youth Supplementary Education), a program set to begin Feb. 24 with 41 students in the fifth through eighth grades in the Nyack and East Ramapo school districts.

The project is being coordinated by The Conrad Lynn Brigade for Social Justice, a group formed by Rockland's Million Man marchers and named after the late famed civil rights lawyer. Planned curriculum includes writing workshops, math seminars and problem-solving sessions at no charge. In addition, parents are meeting to talk about their children's education.

Gordon notes that the primary goal is "to increase

the academic development and achievement of these children." Excellent. Such reinforcement is most welcome and can only assist teachers.

All Rockland school districts have committees consisting of parents and educators, formed to further dialogue and cooperation. The work by Gordon's group should complement those, if, as surely intended, the participants closely communicate with the schools, the primary source of the children's education.

Perhaps Gordon put his finger on the purpose of the group when he noted that the role parents play in their children's education is equal to that of the teacher. Yes, the teacher's greatest helper is a concerned parent who is willing to assist the learning process with reinforcement and courteous questions about a child's progress.

Much success to PARENTS RYSE.

FYI/Getting involved

For more information, call 354-5809.



Staff photo/Vincent DiSalvio

PARENT EDUCATION: Ken Wilder leads a seminar on helping parents take a more active role in their children's education at the Martin Luther King Jr. Center in Spring Valley. The seminar will be held once a month for the next six months.

Getting the most from school

New program teaches children and parents

by John W. Barry
Staff Writer

Edmund Gordon of Pomona continues to 'RYSE' to the challenge of helping his community.

Gordon, an organizer of Rockland's contingent to the Million Man March last year, has rounded up local participants to volunteer time to 'PARENTS RYSE' (Rockland Youth Supplementary Education), a program designed to help parents and their children get the most out of school.

Every Saturday morning for the next six months beginning Feb. 24, 41 students in the fifth through eighth grades from the Hack and East Ramapo school districts enrolled in RYSE will

To participate

For more information about programs starting later in the year, call 354-5809.

meet.

Gordon chose these districts because he and an associate assisting him with the project have strong ties to these two communities.

The program curriculum offers writing workshops, math seminars and problem-solving sessions at no charge.

But the learning doesn't stop there.

Parents of these students

met for the first time last week to talk about their children's education and will continue to meet once a month for the next six months.

Topics of discussion are scheduled to include any educational concerns parents might have and what their children are learning during their Saturday morning meetings. Parents will also learn how public schools operate and how to deal with teachers and administrators when problems arise.

Gordon, a psychology professor affiliated with the City University of New York and City College of New York, said the role parents play in their child's education is equal to that of the child's teacher.

"Our primary goal is to increase the academic development and achievement of these children," Gordon said. "At the same time, we want to better enable their parents to influence that process."

The project is being coordinated by The Conrad Lynn Brigade for Social Justice, a group formed by Rockland's Million Man Marchers. Gordon, a friend of the late civil rights lawyer for whom the group is named, said RYSE is one way to bring the ideals championed at the Million Man March back to Rockland.

Gordon made it clear, though, that families of all ethnic and religious backgrounds may join RYSE.

Program facilitator Ken

RYSE continues B3

RYSE challenges parents, kids to get more from school

RYSE

continued from B1

Wilder, who works for New York State United Teachers, a labor organization, said a major problem facing parents today is that some of them don't feel comfortable talking to educators.

"Many parents feel intimidated by the educational system," said Wilder, who along with his wife, Rockland Community College Dean of Arts and Sciences Cora Wilder, will be leading both the parent and student groups.

"I want these parents to learn

to look at teachers, principals and superintendents not only as a natural partner but also as a public servant. Some parents feel these people are matriarchs and patriarchs and find it difficult to relate to them because they are well-educated," Wilder said.

One of those parents, Johnsie Valdez of Nyack, said being a part of her child's education is very important.

"As a parent, I'm concerned about the education of my child because it's a very important part of her life," said Valdez, whose 12-year-old daughter Omega attends seventh grade at Nyack

'As a parent, I'm concerned about the education of my child because it's a very important part of her life.'

— Johnsie Valdez,
Nyack parent

Middle School. "I want to make sure my child doesn't read at a second-grade level."

Costs are being met by a

\$50,000 grant secured for the project by Gordon. Participants are scheduled to meet at the Martin Luther King Center in Spring Valley and the Nyack Center.

Fred Frelow, director of curriculum for Nyack Schools, said the goals of RYSE reflect a recent trend in education giving parents a larger role.

New York State recognized the need for increased parental involvement when it implemented the Compact for Learning in 1994, according to Frelow. That edict called for the creation of school committees

consisting of parents and educators to tackle problems facing local districts.

Frelow said all school districts in Rockland have organized such committees, which in Nyack Schools look into discipline problems and curriculum changes, among other issues. He said the work RYSE will be doing should complement the Compact for Learning nicely.

"We've got a lot of information about our students but we don't know everything about them," Frelow said. "This program will help us find things out about our students."

B section

Monday
February 5, 1996
Rockland
Journal-News

Activist's program emphasizes school

Edmund Gordon of Pomona continues to 'RYSE' to the challenge of helping his community. Gordon, an organizer of Rockland's contingent to the Million Man March last year, has rounded up local participants to volunteer time to 'PARENTS RYSE' — Rockland Youth Supplementary Education — a program designed to help parents and their children get the most out of school.

◆ Story, B1

❖ News RYSEing ❖

Volume 1 Issue 1

May

Winning at the Parenting Game a new book by Deloris Jordan

This is the first edition of the News RYSEing newsletter that you will receive on a monthly basis. The newsletter will include interviews with students and parents in the program, student work from the Saturday Academy, and stories of interest. This month's features will include the Stand for Children March in Washington, student work and a book review of "Family First: Winning the Parenting Game" by Deloris Jordan, mother of the famous Michael Jordan.

WINNING THE PARENTING GAME

"Parenting is never an easy job. It takes commitment, dedication, and a lot of hard work." Deloris Jordan writes in Family First: Winning the Parenting Game" (Harper Collins, \$18.) Below are the principles she believes helped her raise five well-adjusted children:

"BE THERE

There is no substitute for a parent's time. Make spending time with your kids and being involved in their schools a priority.

ACCEPT CHANGE

Parenting responsibilities change as children grow older. The humbling frustrating truth is that as much as you eventually learn by experience, you can never completely master parenthood because the job description keeps changing.



SHOW LOVE AND AFFECTION

It is not enough for us to love our children...The bigger challenge is to make sure they feel loved.

MAKE HOME A SAFE HAVEN

There is no way to win at the parenting game without teamwork. Rely on teachers, other parents, grandparents, doctors and religious institutions to help.

GIVE YOUR CHILDREN LASTING GIFTS OF CHARACTER

Concern for others, perseverance, integrity, confidence, moral values and spiritual faith are among the priceless gifts all parents should give their children."

(from the Rockland Journal News, May 14, 1996.)

VOICES FROM THE SATURDAY ACADEMY

It doesn't matter what color you are, you should always care for your children. You can be in the rocky mountains, but it is o.k. to still have your faith. You can be anything you want to be, it doesn't matter what color you are, it comes from the inside and the outside.

Middle Class

Lower class

It doesn't matter

Class is a state of mind.

If we stay together our happiness can sing for us.

We can teach each other

It doesn't matter how we teach

As long as we are teaching

We all have different ways of doing things.

Just because our skin is a different color Does not mean we can't be friends.

Please, Stop the Violence.

I don't want to be punished because I believe in different things.

I am afraid to die

Cause I do not want people to cry

For no apparent reason.

When thou thy name is not right

You don't come into the world just to make friends.

You come into the world to learn.

Take a walk in the world

And you can be free

If you look real hard, you might even see me.

People, families trying to make it.

Wild crowds, people screaming for what I do not know.

STAND FOR CHILDREN JUNE 1

On Saturday, June 1, 1996 tens of thousands of people of all ages will gather at the Linclon Memorial in Washington, D.C. to Stand for Children. This event, initiated by the Children's Defense Fund, will be a day of family and community renewal, celebration and commitment to children. Anyone who cares about children will have an opportunity to make that statement and ensure that no child is left behind. The schedule of the day is as follows:

9:00-12:00 Child, Youth and Family Forum

Interactive information and demonstration area where some of the 2000 endorsing organizations will distribute materials, sponsor activities (reading circles and sing-a-longs)

9:00-noon and 3:00-7:00 Youth Stage

Young people host a musical speak out demonstration. Teenagers and young adults will use music and dance to voice their concerns about the conditions for children growing up in America.

Noon Children's March

Thousands of children- Girl Scouts and Brownies, boys clubs, church choirs, young people who have beat the odds, children with disabilities and Parents' RYSE march to the Lincoln Memorial.

1:00- 3:00 Events

Interfaith service

Music expressing a commitment to children

A moment when all Americans are asked to Stand for Children



RYSE to D. C.

On Friday, May 31, at 6:30 a.m., parents and students will leave for Washington. We will journey to Howard University where we will tour the school and spend the night in the dormitories. On Saturday morning we will participate in the Stand for Children.

Bring food for the bus ride, a sleeping bag or bed roll, tooth brush, and a towel. You may want to bring spending money to buy souvenirs.

News RYSEing

Parents' RYSE

3 Cooper Morris Drive
Pomona, New York 10970

Bulk Rate
U.S. Postage
PAID
City, ST
Permit No. XXXX



Inside This Issue

Rockland County Legislature's Special Committee on Women's Issues
Harriet Cornell, Co-Chair
Ann O'Sullivan, Co-Chair

ROCKLAND'S YOUTH SPEAK UP

A report on local issues from the viewpoint of Rockland County youth
by the Child & Adolescent Issues Sub-Committee
with
the Rockland County Youth Council

June 3, 1997



THE LEGISLATURE OF ROCKLAND COUNTY

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HARRIET D. CORNELL
Co-Chair
Special Committee on Women's Issues
June 3, 1997

ANN C. O'SULLIVAN
Co-Chair
Special Committee on Women's Issues

Dear Friends:

The Rockland County Legislature's Special Committee on Women's Issues is pleased to present a report documenting a three-year project of its Child and Adolescent Issues Subcommittee. The committee recognized that young people needed to be involved in any process which involved identifying gaps in services intended to benefit them. It was the young people of the Rockland County Youth Council, a program of the Rockland County Youth Bureau, that became the heart of the project. With their enthusiastic participation, we were able to involve almost 400 students in 11 schools in identifying concerns and designing recommendations.

The ensuing report, based on Speak-Ups held in schools, gives a local perspective and validates national research which identifies the critical importance of early adolescence in physical, intellectual, social, emotional and moral development. It is apparent that few of us realize how difficult it is to be a young person today. Societal changes involving the family, loss of time spent with parents, the availability of drugs and alcohol create stresses unknown to earlier generations.

We concur with the groundbreaking report, *A Matter of Time: Risk and Opportunity in the Non-School Hours*, issued in 1992 by the Carnegie Corporation of New York, which concluded that young people cannot become mature adults without assistance. Those who receive family guidance, school encouragement and community support develop into responsible members of society. Many young people, however, do not have the necessary support system and are adrift.

Local, state and federal policies play a critical role in supporting or failing to support healthy adolescent development. It is our hope that local government will provide the leadership, the coordination and the necessary funding to improve delivery of comprehensive and integrated youth programs.

Very truly yours,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Harriet Cornell".

HARRIET CORNELL

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Ann O'Sullivan".

ANN O'SULLIVAN

Rockland County Legislature's Special Committee on Women's Issues
Harriet Cornell, Co-Chair
Ann O'Sullivan, Co-Chair

ROCKLAND'S YOUTH SPEAK UP

A Report from the Child & Adolescent Issues Sub-Committee
with
the Rockland County Youth Council
June 3, 1997

BACKGROUND

The Sub-Committee on Child and Adolescent Issues was formed by the Committee on Women's Issues on April 28, 1994, in order to identify gaps in services for youth in Rockland County, and to seek initiatives focused on prevention, service integration, and collaborative partnerships. Made up of representatives from the community who were concerned with child and adolescent issues, the committee undertook its task with the understanding that: (1) we needed to involve youth in the process of identifying the gaps in services that were intended to benefit them; (2) we needed the direct involvement of the schools in order to reach the youth; (3) we wanted to focus on a very specific task that was both "do-able" and could contribute new information.

We were joined by members of another Women's Issues subcommittee, the Community Response to Violence from 1995 to 1996 who wanted to find out if young people perceive violence as a serious concern in their lives.

In order to insure the greatest possible participation from both the schools and young people, the committees chose to collaborate with the Rockland County Youth Council. Established in 1971 under the auspices of the Rockland County Legislature, the Youth Council is a direct service program of the Rockland Youth Bureau. The program is open to all public and private high school and college students between the ages of 14 and 21, who are Rockland County residents. The primary mission of the Youth Council is to empower Rockland County's young people and create opportunities for their active involvement in the community.

YOUTH SPEAK-UPS

Both groups decided to pilot a program now known as "Speak-Ups", which would consist of a series of classroom forums in all eight school districts. The program would provide an opportunity for young people to examine those issues that present problems to Rockland youth and to articulate what they see as possible solutions. Youth Council members would facilitate each forum using a questionnaire, role playing, and open discussion. The Youth Council contracted with Cornell Cooperative Extension and the Mental Health Association to conduct a series of facilitation and role playing training for 8-10 members of the Youth Council during the winter of 1995, the spring of 1996, and the spring of 1997.

Four school districts agreed to participate in 1995; Speak-Ups were conducted in Clarkstown South High School, Nyack High School, Suffern High School and Pomona Junior High, involving 150 students. Youth Council member felt that using surveys and role play were very effective ways to initiate discussion about issues and needs. However, they reported that students seemed apathetic, expressing doubt that their opinions would be taken seriously. Council members were eager to continue Speak-Ups at all districts in order to get a countywide sample of students. They recommended concentrating on 9th and 10th grades, keeping classes small and targeting health classes for a heterogeneous group.

In 1996, at the request of the Committee a new group of Youth Council members expanded the questionnaire to inquire about solutions to fix problems and to identify factors which young people believe have the greatest effect in their lives. Speak-Ups were conducted at Haverstraw Middle School and Pomona Junior High with 87 additional students completing the revised survey. While the experience with younger students and the data gained were valuable, both Council and Committee members agreed that in the final year of the project we should return to high school students and attempt to have all districts participate. In March 1997 a third group of Council members conducted Speak-Ups in Pearl River, Nanuet, North Rockland, Spring Valley and Clarkstown North high schools. 159 students participated. Only Tappan Zee High School declined. Therefore views of TZ students are not represented in Speak-Up results.

SURVEY RESULTS

Surveys (Attachment 1) were distributed to all students prior to or during Speak-Up sessions. A total of 396 students completed them. Survey results for each of the project years are included as Attachment 2.

The schools where Speak-Ups were conducted in each of the three years are listed below. The top issues identified by students as "very serious" and the factors they rated as most influential in their lives are summarized below:

Schools:

1995	1996	1997
Nyack High Clarkstown South Suffern HS Pomona Jr. High	Haverstraw Middle Pomona Jr. High	Pearl River High Nanuet High North Rockland HS Clarkstown North HS Spring Valley HS

Most Serious Issues (% of all students who rated issue very serious):

1995	1996	1997
Substance abuse 57%	Racism 58%	Lack of things to do 70%
Lack of things to do 57%	Violence 54%	Substance abuse 55%
Competition: social, academic, athletic 51%	Family prob/divorce 54%	Competition- social academic, athletic 59%
Stereotyping 47%	Lack of things to do 52%	Physical appearance 49%
Teacher/parent expectations 41%	Physical appearance 50%	Teacher/parent expectations 47%
	Stereotyping 43%	
	T/P expectations 43%	

Positive Factors in Youth Life (% of all students who rated factor as having great effect):

1996	1997
Family support 73%	Family Support 66%
Parent communication 58%	Parent communication 60%
Other adults 55%	Peer influence 56%
Peer influence 48%	Extracurricular act. 56%

MAJOR ISSUES

Substance Abuse

Substance Abuse was identified as one of the six top issues in every school, in all three years of the survey. Five substances were identified: alcohol, pot, acid, cocaine and tobacco. **Alcohol** was consistently identified as the most serious issue affecting teen life by **all** the high school students. It was not, however, identified as the most serious issue by students in the two junior high schools. For the younger students, alcohol abuse was rated as less serious than issues such as violence, divorce and lack of things to do. One junior high school, in the second year, identified pot as the most serious issue, but that was not the case in the same school, in the third year.

Students commented frequently that drugs were easier to get than alcohol. "Substance abuse is the cheapest fun". They also tended to perceive the use of both drugs and alcohol as not a problem, "use does not mean abuse". "Pot is here but its not a problem - kids can handle it". However, they did state over and over again that when people have nothing to do, they get high, and "we got into trouble because we were bored". Parties with alcohol are seen as the primary weekend activity. Some students commented that about 80% of the kids drink. Not just at parties but alone at home. There was concern expressed that adults in the schools denied the extent of the problem.

Violence

Students rated violence as a serious issue in some of the schools, but not a serious issue in others. The difference between schools was considerable. In one high school, 50% of the respondents saw it as a serious issue, in another, 0%. Discussion during the Speak-Ups sometimes indicated that the perception of an incident as violent seemed to decrease with age, i.e. carrying a knife was "no big deal" in high school. The younger junior high school students were consistently more concerned about violence as an issue than the older high school students.

Students identified a connection between drugs and drinking and violence: "everyone here knows someone who does drugs or drinks too much, it's the root of a lot of violence". Violence was seen "worse in the Junior High - there they have gangs and stuff". Also: Conflict resolution - should start in the family or in the younger grades. It needs to be taught by parents. Starting in high school is too late; "you're not going to change our opinion". Other comments included, "instead of kicking kids out of school when they get into fights, they should try to help them with their problems". From one middle school student: "fighting is a way of resolving problems. You have to save face, if challenged you must fight". From a high school student, "a lot of fights start over stupid things - people talk about other people behind their backs and fights start. Rumors cause fights". In one high school no one admitted to feeling fear but all agreed that there is little sense of security in school. Another student commented that, "in our community we feel safe but when we're hanging around strangers, you don't know what to expect".

Lack of Things To Do in Rockland

Next to alcohol abuse, lack of things to do in Rockland consistently rated as one of the most serious issues affecting teen life. This was true for both high school and junior high school students, in all three years of the survey. Requests for organized spaces for teens, basketball courts and teen run centers like the Back Door Cafe at the Nyack Center were common in the Speak-Up discussion periods and comment sections. Some students rated this issue as more serious than alcohol abuse in their districts. Others, where more resources were available, rated it as a less serious issue. Between 33% and 42% of the students rated involvement in community organizations or activities, religious organizations, extra curricular activities, music, theater, and dance as having the "greatest positive effect" on teen life.

Transportation was a major factor in accessing things to do. Activities sought included basketball courts, roller rinks, and sports facilities. Students expressed dissatisfaction with limited alternatives: "Every Friday and Saturday nights it's Food Mart. It's sad but there's no place to go". "If you go to a parking lot the cops show up. We need to go to a place without the authorities harassing us". Teens also liked to be able to get outside of their own towns. "I see the same people every weekend. We want a place where kids from other schools go". Affordable activities, that were easy to get to and supervised by older teens, were suggested by all students.

Stereotyping and Racial Discrimination

Whether or not stereotyping and racial discrimination were seen as "very serious" problems seems to depend more on geography than on the age of students. In some communities, more than half of all students surveyed over the three years viewed these issues as very serious, while in other areas they are seen as serious by only a few students.

Comments arising during discussion periods reflected the divergence in viewpoints: "The more you talk about it the more you notice it". "I don't think about it but one time I went into the bathroom and there were signs like kill Jews . . .". "It's not widespread; it's kind of contained". "Teachers called me a wetback. I got school suspension because I got mad when he said that". "No one cares because we don't see it as a problem". "Racism is the biggest problem in this school". "People are scared of gays". "(There are) a lot of stereotypes in school".

Teacher and Parent Expectations

High expectations of students by teachers and parents alike was perceived as a serious problem by more than 40% of students across all age groups in each of the three years.

Pressure felt by young people was expressed in comments such as "I have no self esteem sometimes because my dad's really tough on me when my grades don't meet his expectations". "If they (teachers) have one of your siblings, they expect a lot of you". "We might not show it but inside we're hurting (when parents are never satisfied)". Several students felt parents were abusive when they don't do well.

Nevertheless, not all students see teacher and parent expectations in a negative light. In one classroom discussion comments like "My parents don't pressure me but I'm hard on myself". "My mom brought me here from the city so I could do better". "Parents don't pressure me but they do motivate me". and "Teachers are demanding sometimes. . . (but certain standards must be upheld" predominated.

Family Support

When asked to rate the impact of various positive factors in their lives, students overwhelmingly rated family support as having the greatest effect. Good communication with parents was also universally rated as having a great positive impact. Surprisingly, family factors weighed more heavily with these teenagers than did positive peer influence.

The importance of parents and other adults to young people was echoed throughout discussion sessions. Several young people feel neglected by their parents; others said that they do not have enough family time: "Parents work- I'm responsible for myself". "On weekends they try their best but they're tired - they need to rest". "No family communication- no one knows what's going on in each other's lives".

Many students described family problems: "My parents are divorced and it's an ongoing problem cause your parents don't like each other and every week I have to choose who to be with". "My sister runs away every day; my mom is crazy-I lock myself in my room or stay in school as much as possible". "If you come home drunk and your parents don't care, why should you stop?"

YOUTH SPEAK OUT ABOUT THE SPEAK-UPS

Committee members met jointly with the Youth Council after the final series of Speak-Ups. We knew that Council members who participated in Speak-Ups had a lot to tell about their experience, about what they had learned, and what they hoped to contribute through their hard work. They demonstrated the skit using the popular Ricki Lake talk-show format which they had developed to get students involved in meaningful dialog.

Attending the skit at the Youth Bureau was a poignant experience. Students seated in simple folding chairs, dressed in their daily outfits, shared dialogues as though they were real exchanges between teenagers. Powerfully acted out in groups of two, each pair provided food for thought for the audience as well as a stark reminder of what young people deal with on a daily basis.

The first pair:

Speaking of drinking- A drinker who hits his girlfriend, is confronted by another student who queries, "Why do you hit her? "I don't hurt her, man, I just keep her in line."

A second pair:

Talking about marijuana- 'It makes me a better guitarist, one very cool looking young man says. "Well its not too cool when you can't remember anything in class. Oh. Man the pot, makes me feel so creative, I can write the best music, who cares about math."

A third pair:

Addressing drug sales- "Johnny, how can you sell this stuff, your own brother overdosed." "It's not my fault man, they buy it." If they were right, they wouldn't buy it. "I just sell it, they don't have to buy. I have to make a living. I'm not flipping burgers and riding the bus, when I can be selling and riding in a jag."

What was inspiring about the skits was the real and chilling way the students addressed the stark realities of every day life, craftily expressing views on both sides of an issue, carefully leaving space for members of the audience to express their own views.

During follow-up interviews, members of the Youth Council shared thoughts on the experience:

"I have been a member of the Youth Council since freshman year and I'm a senior now," said one young woman.

Interviewer- "Tell me about the experience of preparing the skits".

"I learned that people have very different points of view than me and they react to things in ways I would never think of. That's what is exciting. Students surprise me, we all opened up to each other during the practices. There are kids that I am involved with there that I probably would not otherwise speak with. I enjoyed working with them. Racism is a concern of mine. I think about the way students treat each other when they walk down the halls at school. Sneers, sneers and more sneers.

Kids do not know each other, so they don't know what to say. They say nothing or something mean. The skits related to all the kids. Race didn't matter. Everyone has a friend with a drug or a drinking problem. As a matter of fact, most kids did not think that we were acting. They thought we were kids with the problems that we represented. We had to tell them we were really acting. That was good, because we were able to capture something real. The kids could relate to us. They opened up, talked about what they thought about drugs. They heard kids who looked like really tuff kids saying, 'I'm not getting high man'.

These kinds of interactions are what young people need. They need to talk about these social problems; not lectures from parents and teachers. Teachers seem so old, it is hard for kids to imagine that they can understand the things we are going through. It is different when kids your own age start asking questions and wondering about life.

I think the speak outs will help make people think before they become violent or do drugs. I think that kids will think about drugs differently since we were there."

Another voice of the Youth Council speaks out:

"I joined the Youth Council after seeing the skit. I liked what the students were doing, the message they were getting out in the community. Watching the skits made me laugh. Knowing the kids well, and listening to them with tuff parts. I was thinking listening to one kid, sounding like such a bad dude, this is really good. They told me it took three months to plan the skits, decide on the topics and agree on the dialogue. The goal was to get the students to react. It worked on me.

Role-playing was relaxing, not like power trips. We were peers. Lots of young people talking allows the atmosphere to get relaxed, we don't have to feel under so much pressure. The longer we talked the more relaxed it became. It is important to feel comfortable with different kinds of people.

It has been good to be involved. The Youth Council goes on trips together. We do work together. We were doing a tournament, got the flyers ready, packed them in envelopes, and sent out the mailing. We did the whole mailing ourselves and it felt good. It made me proud."

Interviewer: "What happens next for the Youth Council "

"We [Youth Council] need to address the problems that were so real to the students. We need to publicize the problems. The youth and the politicians have to have the courage to act. The students have to organize. The adults have to support the students. Many kids said that there is nothing to do in the county, and that if there was, there wouldn't be a way to get there. I think there should be more free daytime sports, not just for the champions, but for all the kids that want to play. They should open up the schools at night for dances and just to hang around. We need a relaxed environment. Kids talk when it is relaxed. That's what we were doing in the speak outs. The kids got relaxed, they felt safe. They think, 'well, I can say what I want here.' They should feel that way about places to hang around also. Our schools should be opened all the time."

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Rockland County Youth Council Speak-Ups have served as a testament to the potential that lies within young people to be problem solvers rather than problem makers. Through the Speak-Up project, Council members have demonstrated youth are not simply citizens in the making but are, in fact citizens in the present- capable of being leaders in the process of community development.

Children grow up in communities and the development of assets in young people is nurtured and shaped by the life of the community. We must approach youth development with the understanding that community consists of families, neighborhoods, religious institutions, schools, businesses, and government. Each of these players has a critical role in developing a vision of healthy community for all young people.

The recommendations which follow are not new. What students told us echoes recommendations found in other recent local reports and surveys, e.g. the County Executive's Crime Prevention Commission report and the Pride Survey and are consistent with the national research.

Parents

Over and over again, young people reminded us that family support remains the most important positive factor in their lives. Young people **want** more time with their families. They told us they need positive and relaxed interaction with parents and other important adults. Many said parents need to improve the ways they communicate with their children. Furthermore, students said that family support and values established by parents are the first and most effective line of defense against substance abuse, against delinquency, against stereotyping and racism. Parents can:

- Try to increase the time spent each day with their children. Just an additional ten minutes doing something you mutually enjoy or just asking about a hobby or interest will make a difference.
- Try new avenues of communication with their children. Simple techniques like "three praises for every criticism", or "easy listening" to your child's retelling of what happened in his day will foster greater understanding about each other.

Religious Institutions

Religious institutions often play a key role in the family's external support network, offering additional opportunities for positive interaction between parents and their children and other caring adults. Congregations can:

- Establish facilitated forums for open discussion and dialog where youth feel safe to say what they feel to parents and other adults without confrontation.

Schools

Schools can provide a unique environment for addressing many of the issues identified by young people in surveys and in Speak-Up discussions. Schools can:

- Increase use of school facilities for activities during non-school hours.
- Allow more opportunities for activities like Speak-Ups, encouraging youth to voice their concerns and suggestions.
- Encourage youth to participate more actively in finding solutions to youth issues.
- Increase tolerance by providing opportunities for youth to interact across geographic and cultural boundaries, e.g. exchange, or "twinning" programs with other school districts.
- Actively encourage students to participate in countywide teen leadership programs. Choose a broad representation of students with diverse leadership styles.
- Use high school students to go into middle and elementary schools as role models to tutor younger kids and show positive ways to deal with problems, e.g. conflict resolution, substance abuse, etc. (Note: Students caution sponsors to screen participants more carefully to assure that youth showcased as role models are credible representatives.)

Business

As recommendations from the Speak-Ups emerged, it became clear that Rockland's business community is a key player in addressing the issues youth have raised. Each local business can:

- Provide flexibility in work schedules to permit parents to become a little more involved in school day activities, e.g. to attend a child's recital, chaperone a school trip, join PTA.
- Support and fund youth programs like teen centers, RC Youth Council and Teen Leadership of Rockland programs.
- Join with government in supporting youth employment programs. Hire one young person for the summer or after-school year-round from the County's Youth Employment Program (Wages are partially paid by County funds.)
- Enable youth through scholarships to attend recreation programs in your community.

Media

Students told us they object to the negativity which seems to predominate in the media's coverage of youth issues. The media can:

- Increase coverage that highlights positive youth activities, success stories and youth contributions to their communities.

Towns and Villages

Rockland's communities provide the framework for positive youth development. Throughout Speak-Ups young people reiterated the lack of things to do as a major precipitant to alcohol and drug use.

- Develop community center youth programs which reflect the particular interests of young people in individual communities.
- Ask young people what activities they are interested in, involve them in planning and in operating programs to ensure that the programs and activities developed will be broadly used. A number of programs currently in place throughout the County have been very successful and can serve as good models.

County Government

Perhaps the most valuable lesson that we have learned as a result of Youth Speak-Ups is that young people themselves are an underutilized resource. They have shown us that they have a great deal to contribute and that are anxious to become involved as "citizens in the present", as problem solvers and in leadership roles. County government should continue a leadership role in youth development and:

- Support and fund youth programs like teen centers, the RC Youth Council, and Teen Leadership of Rockland programs.
- Address the transportation problem by evaluating routes and schedules to assure youth greater access to programs and activities. The County's Transportation Department should conduct surveys with teenagers to determine the greatest need for expanded routes, feasibility for reduced fares, etc.
- Serve as a model for family-friendly employee benefits and work schedules that enable parents to spend more time with their children.

A Final Note

The Rockland County Youth Council is but one example of the many programs, projects, and initiatives currently in place throughout the County which illustrate the tremendous impact that lies in integrating youth, community and civic development. Through the engagement and involvement of youth in all aspects of the community, young people are not only empowered but also develop a sense of belonging and contributing to the optimal development of their community.

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ROCKLAND COUNTY YOUTH COUNCIL - 1995 SPEAK UP FACILITATORS

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ROCKLAND COUNTY YOUTH COUNCIL - 1996 SPEAK UP FACILITATORS

Rachel Lerner
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ROCKLAND COUNTY YOUTH COUNCIL - 1997 SPEAK UP FACILITATORS

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Special thanks must be given to Garrick Alexis, student intern at the Rockland County Department of Social Services for compiling Speak-Up survey data and presenting the results.

1997 ROCKLAND COUNTY YOUTH COUNCIL MEMBERS

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Gloria Bruzzano
Francisco Caba
Nelson Castillo
Michael DeBonis
Angel Echevarria
Seth Ginsberg
Michelle James
Alexander Jimenez
Danny Kelleher
Michael Levin
Melissa Manne
Meghan McDonagh
Juan Ortiz
Lance Ramer
Lisandra Serrano
Betsaida Victora

Tameka Berbick
James Brief
David Burd
Daniela Cambetas
Christine Cuocolo
Michelle Dixon
Kenji Eurie
Meghan Holtzman
Sean Jamieson
Kevin Joseph
Rachael Lerner
Ariana Lopez
Jim McCafferty
Koffey Dawson
Jensy Peralta
Davis Torres
Jessica Wanamaker

PARTICIPATING SCHOOLS

Pomona Junior High School
Mr. David Brown, Principal
Ms. Ellen C. Jaffee
Ms. Jorie Sear
Ms. Sue Whyte

Clarkstown South High School
Mr. Gerald Bierker, Principal
Mr. Ken Glotzer

Nyack High School
Ms. Linda Green, Principal
Mr. David Ethe

Nanuet High School
Mr. John Burke, Principal
Ms. Barbara Stronczer

Haverstraw Middle School
Mr. Raymond Hagadorn, Principal
Ms. Louisa Kennard
Ms. Pat Baisley

Suffern High School
Mr. Jack Lorenz, Principal
Mr. Ron Gamma

Clarkstown North High School
Mr. Daniel Nicholson, Principal
Ms. Gail Mandel

Pearl River High School
Mr. Robert Nardella, Principal
Mr. Larry Ruderman

Spring Valley High School
Mr. Sydney Farber, Principal
Mr. Peter Talman

North Rockland High School
Mr. Dennis Hand, Principal
Ms. Caren Koslowksi

ATTACHMENTS

ISSUES AFFECTING TEEN LIFE

Attachment 1

Please check those that describe you:

☐ male/ ☐ female ☐ Caucasian ☐ Hispanic ☐ Asian ☐ African American ☐ Haitian ☐ Other

Is this a serious problem facing teens in your school? If yes, how serious? Rank from 0-5 with 0= no problem, 1=not serious and 5=very serious

substance abuse	0	1	2	3	4	5
alcohol	0	1	2	3	4	5
pot	0	1	2	3	4	5
acid	0	1	2	3	4	5
cocaine	0	1	2	3	4	5
tobacco	0	1	2	3	4	5
serious financial difficulties	0	1	2	3	4	5
teen pregnancy	0	1	2	3	4	5
HIV/AIDS-Sexually transmitted diseases	0	1	2	3	4	5
discrimination/prejudice						
gender discrimination	0	1	2	3	4	5
age discrimination	0	1	2	3	4	5
sexual preference	0	1	2	3	4	5
race	0	1	2	3	4	5
physical appearance	0	1	2	3	4	5
religion	0	1	2	3	4	5
violence	0	1	2	3	4	5
gangs	0	1	2	3	4	5
stereotyping	0	1	2	3	4	5
family problems	0	1	2	3	4	5
divorce	0	1	2	3	4	5
parental neglect	0	1	2	3	4	5
emotional/verbal abuse	0	1	2	3	4	5
physical abuse	0	1	2	3	4	5
teacher/parent expectations	0	1	2	3	4	5
competition: social/academic/athletic	0	1	2	3	4	5
depression/feelings of loneliness	0	1	2	3	4	5
lack of things to do in Rockland	0	1	2	3	4	5
Other: _____	0	1	2	3	4	5

What do you like about living in Rockland?

Comments: _____

Please rate these positive factors which you have in your own life from 0 to 5, with 0 = no effect and 5 = greatest effect.

☐ family support	☐ positive peer influence
☐ good parent communication	☐ involvement in music, theater, dance, arts
☐ other adults in your life	☐ involvement in school extracurricular activities
☐ parent involvement in school	☐ involvement in community organizations or activities
☐ parental monitoring	☐ involvement in a religious organization
☐ parental discipline	☐ positive school climate
☐ time at home	

Youth Speakups - Spring 1995 Rockland County Youth Council

ISSUES AFFECTING TEEN LIFE - SURVEY RESULTS

Clarkstown South High School - 41

Nyack High School - 36

Pomona Jr. High School - 26

Suffern High School - 47

Total # of Respondents - 150

Survey Question:

Is this a serious problem in your school?

	Not Serious		Very Serious	
	#	%*	#	%*
Substance Abuse	5	3%	86	57%
Alcohol	14	9%	102	68%
Pot	13	9%	93	62%
Acid	49	33%	36	24%
Cocaine	67	45%	34	23%
Tobacco	11	7%	87	58%
Serious Financial Difficulties	38	25%	34	23%
Teen Pregnancy	63	42%	29	19%
HIV/AIDS Sexually Transmitted Diseases	62	41%	29	19%
Discrimination				
Gender Discrimination	31	21%	33	22%
Age Discrimination	62	41%	18	12%
Sexual Orientation	53	35%	24	16%
Race	19	13%	50	33%
Physical Appearance	13	9%	58	39%
Violence	32	21%	36	24%
Gangs	69	46%	20	13%
Stereotyping	17	11%	71	47%
Family Problems	17	11%	48	32%
Divorce	16	11%	53	35%
Parental Neglect	30	20%	33	22%
Emotional/Verbal Abuse	17	11%	49	31%
Physical Abuse	31	21%	38	25%
Teacher/Parent Expectations	12	8%	61	41%
Competition: Social/Academic/Athletic	16	11%	76	51%
Depression/Feelings of Loneliness	14	9%	49	33%
Lack of things to do in Rockland	6	4%	85	57%

*Note: These percentages are based on the number of respondents who answered each question.

Youth Speakups - Spring 1996 Rockland County Youth Council

ISSUES AFFECTING TEEN LIFE - SURVEY RESULTS

Pomona Junior High - 32
Haverstraw Middle School - 55

Total # of Respondents - 87 (34-Male, 45-Female, 8-No Response)

Ethnicity: Hispanic-37 Caucasian-15 Asian-9 African American-7 Jamaican-3	Native American-1 Hispanic/African American-1 Caucasian/Hispanic-1 African American/Caucasian-1 African American/Puerto Rican-1	Jamaican/Puerto Rican-1 Native American/African American-1 Native American/Hispanic-1	No Response-8
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Survey Question:

Is this a serious problem in your school?

	Not Serious		Very Serious		No Response
	#	%*	#	%*	
Substance Abuse	33	40%	31	37%	5%
Alcohol	30	35%	35	41%	1%
Pot	39	47%	25	30%	5%
Acid	44	51%	21	24%	1%
Cocaine	39	46%	29	35%	3%
Tobacco	28	35%	28	35%	9%
Serious Financial Difficulties	20	24%	30	37%	6%
Teen Pregnancy	36	46%	23	29%	10%
HIV/AIDS-Sexually Transmitted Diseases	40	51%	26	33%	10%
Discrimination					
Gender Discrimination	26	32%	21	26%	6%
Age Discrimination	35	41%	28	33%	2%
Sexual Orientation	30	37%	29	35%	6%
Race	14	17%	49	58%	3%
Physical Appearance	15	19%	40	50%	8%
Religion	28	35%	25	32%	9%
Violence	24	30%	43	54%	8%
Gangs	31	37%	32	39%	5%
Stereotyping	25	30%	36	43%	3%
Family Problems	27	32%	32	38%	3%
Divorce	17	20%	45	54%	3%
Parental Neglect	25	31%	33	41%	7%
Emotional/Verbal Abuse	24	29%	34	40%	3%
Physical Abuse	24	29%	34	41%	6%
Teacher/Parent Expectations	26	31%	36	43%	5%
Competition: Social/Academic/Athletic	23	29%	32	41%	9%
Depression/Feelings of Loneliness	22	27%	34	41%	6%
Lack of things to do in Rockland	16	19%	43	52%	5%

*Note: These percentages are based on the number of respondents who answered each question.

Youth Speakups - Spring 1996 Rockland County Youth Council

ISSUES AFFECTING TEEN LIFE - SURVEY RESULTS

Survey Question:

If you were an adult how would you fix the problem that most concerns you? 44 Respondents

	#	Resp.*		#	Resp.*		#	Resp.*
I don't know.	5	(11%)	Educate!	1	(2%)	Become the parent.	1	(2%)
Nothing!	5	(11%)	Educate in cultural diversity.	1	(2%)	I would just fix it.	1	(2%)
Talk to someone I can trust.	4	(9%)	Build a basketball court.	1	(2%)	Keep my kids from bad kids.	1	(2%)
Talk to my child about it.	3	(7%)	Think, then work them out.	1	(2%)	I would change my life.	1	(2%)
Get kids to talk about it.	2	(5%)	Volunteer.	1	(2%)	County could help with money.	1	(2%)
Raise funds for the kids.	2	(5%)	Beat them like my own kid.	1	(2%)	Enforce punishment.	1	(2%)
Tell people right & wrong.	2	(5%)	Encourage kids to do right.	1	(2%)	Attn. to people who need it.	1	(2%)
Organize places for teens.	2	(5%)	I would stop and protest.	1	(2%)	Teen hotline to help out.	1	(2%)
Set up programs to help people.	2	(5%)	Nurses should give condoms.	1	(2%)			

Survey Question:

Please rate these positive factors which you have in your life.

	No Effect		Greatest Effect		No Response
	0-1	%*	4-5	%*	
Family Support	11	15%	54	73%	15%
Good parent communication	7	9%	43	58%	15%
Other adults in your life	12	16%	41	55%	15%
Parental involvement in school	20	27%	31	42%	15%
Parental monitoring	20	28%	30	42%	17%
Parental discipline	16	22%	31	42%	15%
Time at home	15	21%	31	42%	16%
Positive peer influence	22	31%	34	48%	18%
Involvement in music, theater, dance, arts	26	37%	30	42%	18%
Involvement in school extracurricular activities	24	34%	30	42%	18%
Involvement in community organizations or activities	31	44%	25	35%	18%
Involvement in a religious organization	26	36%	24	33%	17%
Positive school climate	25	35%	28	39%	17%

*Note: These percentages are based on the number of respondents who answered each question.

Youth Speakups - Spring 1997 **Rockland County Youth Council**

ISSUES AFFECTING TEEN LIFE - SURVEY RESULTS

High Schools	# of respondents				Ethnicity							
		Male	Female	No Resp.	Cauc.	Hispa.	Asian	African Amer.	Haitian	Native Amer.	Other	No Resp.
Pearl River	81	35	46	0	59	3	5	0	0	1	10	3
Nanuet	24	13	11	0	16	0	5	0	0	0	1	2
North Rockland	22	15	7	0	9	11	1	0	0	1	0	0
Clarkstown North	17	11	6	0	13	1	2	0	0	0	0	1
Spring Valley	15	8	7	0	6	1	0	1	3	0	3	1
Totals	159	82	77	0	103	16	13	1	3	2	14	7

Survey Question:

Is this a serious problem in your school?

	Not Serious		Very Serious		No Response
	#	%*	#	%*	
Substance Abuse	11	7%	87	55%	12%
Alcohol	11	7%	114	72%	0%
Pot	36	23%	60	38%	10%
Acid	84	53%	24	15%	6%
Cocaine	81	51%	38	24%	3%
Tobacco	15	9%	97	61%	3%
Serious Financial Difficulties	58	36%	25	16%	1%
Teen Pregnancy	100	63%	21	13%	1%
HIV/AIDS-Sexually Transmitted Diseases	95	60%	24	15%	3%
Discrimination					
Gender Discrimination	71	45%	16	10%	1%
Age Discrimination	88	55%	19	12%	1%
Sexual Orientation	56	35%	30	19%	4%
Race	35	22%	53	33%	0%
Physical Appearance	23	14%	78	49%	4%
Religion	64	40%	39	25%	5%
Violence	55	35%	37	23%	1%
Gangs	93	58%	16	10%	1%
Stereotyping	41	26%	50	31%	1%
Family Problems	22	14%	57	36%	1%
Divorce	27	17%	53	33%	1%
Parental Neglect	42	26%	34	21%	1%
Emotional/Verbal Abuse	29	18%	50	31%	1%
Physical Abuse	55	35%	30	19%	1%
Teacher/Parent Expectations	24	15%	74	47%	2%
Competition: Social/Academic/Athletic	16	10%	94	59%	0%
Depression/Feelings of Loneliness	27	17%	65	41%	2%
Lack of things to do in Rockland	12	8%	111	70%	3%

*Note: These percentages are based on the number of respondents who answered each question.

(over)

Youth Speakups - Spring 1997 Rockland County Youth Council

ISSUES AFFECTING TEEN LIFE - SURVEY RESULTS

Survey Question:

If you were an adult how would you fix the problem that most concerns you? 110 Respondents

Lack of things to do in Rockland. Setup recreational institutions or clubs.	16%	Students should base decisions on capabilities.	1%
Prevention. Parent interaction w/kids, educating and communicating.	9%	Get serious about the hockey team.	1%
I don't know. Problems always arise one after another. No one will listen.	6%	Vote for someone with similar views.	1%
Talk w/kids to keep them from feeling neglected and turning to drugs.	6%	Get kids off the street.	1%
Offer support, anonymous help lines or discussion groups.	3%	Let ignorant people ruin their own lives.	1%
Discrimination/prejudice, something must be done to prevent violence.	2%	Not going to wait till I'm an adult to fix problems.	1%
Try to do what I can.	2%	Check ID before selling alcohol to teens.	1%
Try to diminish stereotyping and pressures put on students.	1%	Kill everyone I dislike.	1%
Approach education with more interesting styles of teaching.	1%	Relocate.	1%
Propose more programs on drugs and more activities.	1%	Don't have time to answer this.	1%
Nothing you can do about alcohol, they will do what they want.	1%	This world is corrupt and will stay corrupt.	1%
Get rid of drugs in my community and get cops more involved.	1%	Band all assault weapons.	1%
Wait till I'm an adult to fix the problems.	1%	Make decisions based on the majority's opinions.	1%
Deal with it.	1%	Stop acting like you care, the problem goes much deeper.	1%

Survey Question:

Please rate these positive factors which you have in your life.

	No Effect		Greatest Effect		No Response
	#	%*	#	%*	
Family Support	10	6%	105	66%	7%
Good parent communication	14	9%	96	60%	7%
Other adults in your life	18	11%	72	45%	8%
Parental involvement in school	30	19%	54	34%	9%
Parental monitoring	27	17%	58	36%	9%
Parental discipline	16	10%	74	47%	9%
Time at home	29	18%	51	32%	8%
Positive peer influence	17	11%	89	56%	9%
Involvement in music, theater, dance, arts	52	33%	54	34%	8%
Involvement in school extracurricular activities	27	17%	89	56%	8%
Involvement in community organizations or activities	40	25%	55	35%	8%
Involvement in a religious organization	56	35%	41	26%	8%
Positive school climate	23	14%	72	45%	9%

*Note: These percentages are based on the number of respondents who answered each question.

...NEWS...NEWS...NEWS...

EAST RAMAPO

CENTRAL
SCHOOL
DISTRICT

• SENIOR HIGH SCHOOLS (GRADES 10-12): RAMAPO • SPRING VALLEY • JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOLS (GRADES 7-9): KAKIAT • POMONA • CHESTNUT RIDGE • INTERMEDIATE SCHOOLS (GRADES 4-6): COLTON • ELDORADO • ELMWOOD • HILLCREST • LIME KILN • PRIMARY SCHOOLS (GRADES K-3): FLEETWOOD • GRANDVIEW • HEMPSTEAD • MARGETTS • SUMMIT PARK • PREKINDERGARTEN

SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS • JASON P. FRIEDMAN • (914) 577-6011
INFORMATION OFFICER • BARRY GOLDBERG • (914) 577-6035

FOR RELEASE:

IMMEDIATE

DATE:

JUNE 12, 1998

EAST RAMAPO SCHOOLS ARE SITES FOR FILMING FOR PARENT EMPOWERMENT PROGRAM

East Ramapo goes Hollywood? Not exactly, but if you think you've seen any professional-looking photographers shooting footage around the district recently, you have!

The filming is part of a project to develop a series of parent empowerment workshops. The target audience is families with children in grades 6-8 who are in mainstream classes and who live in Spring Valley or Nyack.

Conceptualizing and developing the program have been Dr Edmund Gordon, Professor Emeritus of the John M. Musser Endowed Chair and of African-American Studies at Yale University; Johanna Gordon-McNeil, former director of Parents for Rockland Youth Supplementary Education (RYSE); Dr. Susan Gordon, pediatrician and East Ramapo Board trustee; and Patti Smith, project director.

The intent of this project is to strengthen the capacities of the families and parents of minority middle school students in support of their academic and personal development. It arises from Professor Gordon's research and conclusions that activities beyond school are needed to help low-status ethnic minority students succeed.

Set to begin in September, 1998, the program will include parent and family workshops, student tutorials, family field trips, cottage meetings, guidance services, the establishment of collaborative networks of support, and community service activities.

Co-sponsoring this project are several agencies, including East Ramapo, the Martin Luther King, Jr., Multi-Purpose Center, Rockland Community College, and the Nyack School District. Funding is provided by the Danforth Foundation and the East Ramapo and Nyack School Districts.

EAST RAMAPO — AN EXCELLENCE-IN-EDUCATION SCHOOL DISTRICT

105 South Madison Avenue • Spring Valley, NY 10977



The "RYSE To The Challenge" Video Series

Cicala Filmworks, a New York-based film & video production company, recently completed "RYSE To The Challenge: Parents Supporting Student Success," a three-part video series that showcases how parents of color can improve the academic success of their middle school children. The series employs lessons learned from Parents' RYSE (The Rockland Youth Supplementary Education Program), an initiative designed to empower parents of color, and their children, in Rockland County, New York. The series is comprised of:

Video I – "Parents as Advocates" – which looks at how parents can improve the education of their children by creating better relationships with teachers & school officials, and includes sections on:

- (a) The historically poor relationship between parents of color & schools
- (b) What parent advocacy means
- (c) The importance of parent workshops & support groups
- (d) Expectations schools have of parents & parents should have of schools

Video II – "Parents as Teachers" – which looks at how parents can't merely leave teaching to teachers, but must learn to view themselves as educators & provide a broad range of extracurricular activities for their youngsters. The video stresses the importance of:

- (a) Visits to libraries & cultural centers
- (b) Visits to colleges & exposure to college life
- (c) Mentors & role models
- (d) Recognizing different learning styles & finding tutors

Video III – "Parents as Parents" – which looks at what parents can do in the home setting to improve student success. The video highlights the importance of:

- (a) Creating positive parent-child communication
- (b) Creating a nurturing environment for study in the home
- (c) Parent role-modeling

Each video runs 28-minutes, and include interviews with parents, teachers, principals, students, Parents' RYSE program facilitators, James McBride (author of *The Color of Water*), as well as education experts such as Edmund W. Gordon, Ed.D. and Fred Frelow, Ph.D. A hands-on manual to accompany the video series is currently being written, and will be ready for distribution in the spring of 1999. For more information, or to order copies of the videos series, contact:

Cicala Filmworks
246 Fifth Ave, Suite 602
New York, New York 10001
Tel. 212.684.8665/Fax 212.684.8659
Email: cicala@mindspring.com

The "RYSE To The Challenge" series was made possible by a grant from The Danforth Foundation, and was executive produced by Edmund W. Gordon, Ed.D. & Patti Smith.

Clinton Library Transfer Form

Case #, if applicable	2013-0534-S	Accession #		
Collection/Record Group	Clinton Presidential Records	Series/Staff Member	Melanne Verveer	
Subgroup/Office of Origin	First Lady's Office	Subseries		
Folder Title	Parents' RYSE Rockland Youth Suppleme	OA/ID Number	14722	Box Number
Description of Item(s)	2 videotapes both by Cicala Filmworks, Inc. RYSE to the Challenge Parents Supporting Student Success Video 2 - Parents as Teachers (28 minutes) and Video 3 - Parents as Parents (28 minutes)			

Donor Information

Last Name:		First Name:		Middle Name:		Title:	
Affiliation:		Phone (Wk):		Phone (Hm):			
Street:		City:		State (or Country):		Zip:	

Transferred to:	Other
Other (Specify):	17929 (due to misfile)

Transfer Point	During Processing
New Location	

Transferred by:	Jason Kaplan
Received by:	

Date of Tranfer	9/24/2014
Date of Receipt	

Clinton Library Transfer Form

Case #, if applicable	2013-0534-S	Accession #		
Collection/Record Group	Clinton Presidential Records	Series/Staff Member	Melanne Verveer	
Subgroup/Office of Origin	First Lady's Office	Subseries		
Folder Title	Parents' RYSE Rockland Youth Suppleme	OA/ID Number	17929	Box Number
Description of Item(s)	2 Videotapes both by Cicala Filmworks, Inc. RYSE to the Challenge Parents Supporting Student Success Video 2 - Parents as Teachers (28 minutes) and Video 3 - Parents as Parents (28 minutes)			

Donor Information

Last Name:		First Name:		Middle Name:		Title:	
Affiliation:		Phone (Wk):		Phone (Hm):			
Street:		City:		State (or Country):		Zip:	

Transferred to:	Audio/Visual Department	Transfer Point	During Processing
Other (Specify):		New Location	
Transferred by:	Jason Kaplan	Date of Tranfer	9/24/2014
Received by:		Date of Receipt	