

p.a.p.a. Parenting and Paternity Awareness Curriculum

Background

HB 2176, passed by the 80th Texas Legislature, directed the State Board of Education (SBOE) to work with the Office of the Attorney General (OAG) to develop a parenting and paternity awareness program for mandatory use by school districts in the high school health curriculum beginning the school year of 2008-2009. The bill specified the topics that the program must address, including parenting skills and responsibilities, child support and other legal rights and responsibilities that come with parenthood, healthy relationship skills, and skills relating to the prevention of family violence.

The OAG worked closely with members of the SBOE to revise existing OAG curriculum materials and in March 2008, the State Board of Education adopted the OAG's **p.a.p.a.** curriculum to fulfill the requirements of HB 2176. **p.a.p.a.** is an evidence-based curriculum that teaches the benefits of sequencing parenthood after a student has completed his/her education, started a career, and is in a stable, committed relationship (preferably marriage). The curriculum includes interactive lessons on the financial costs of parenting, legal responsibilities of parenthood including child support, healthy relationship skills, impact of parenting relationships on children, and prevention of family violence. **p.a.p.a.** is designed to not take time away from core academic curriculum, as all 14 sessions of **p.a.p.a.** are linked to existing curriculum requirements in the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS) for Health.

The goal of **p.a.p.a.** is to promote **responsible parenthood**, a basic understanding of **paternity and child support laws**, positive **involvement of fathers**, and the formation of **strong, stable families**.

Implementation

Following Texas Administrative Code (TAC) rule and curriculum adoption by the State Board of Education, the OAG produced all curriculum materials (teacher guide, student workbook, and companion video) and developed the professional in-service training to prepare teachers to use the **p.a.p.a.** materials. As of July 2011, 5900 educators have attended **p.a.p.a.** training sessions conducted by OAG staff. The on-site, six-hour training provides an overview of the **p.a.p.a.** curriculum, explanation of the critical legal issues addressed in the curriculum, and the background training to effectively use it with students. The OAG has provided 150 on-site trainings for local school districts and regional Educational Service Centers (ESC).

The training, all curriculum materials, and content enrichment resources (family violence prevention, healthy relationship/marriage, co-parenting, and father involvement guides) are provided free of charge to educators. In addition, the Texas Attorney General's website allows educators, parents, and students to browse the curriculum, download videos, and find answers to frequently-asked questions about the program. Educators may also access additional materials developed by the OAG for the classroom, including pre/post tests, session review materials, and supplemental classroom presentations. For on-going program enrichment, the OAG sends frequent email updates to trained educators addressing implementation questions and soliciting feedback.

The implementation of the **p.a.p.a.** curriculum and training initiative has been a collaboration between the Office of the Attorney General, the Department of State Health Services – School Health

Network, the State Board of Education, the Texas Education Agency, Educational Service Centers, and the Texas Council on Family Violence.

Evaluation

From 2008 through 2010, the LBJ School of Public Affairs at the University of Texas at Austin conducted a multi-school, multi-year evaluation of the implementation of the **p.a.p.a.** curriculum and students' outcomes. Specifically, the goals of the evaluation were to:

1. Determine the impact that exposure to the p.a.p.a. curriculum has on students' knowledge and attitudes regarding parenting, paternity establishment, and healthy relationships.
2. Assess p.a.p.a. curriculum use by teachers to track fidelity to the curriculum and adaptations used in implementation.
3. Examine the support for p.a.p.a. among collaborating state agencies, school districts, regional service centers, and other interested community and faith-based organizations.

"[p.a.p.a.] made me change my mind [from] somebody who wanted to be young and pregnant...to someone who thinks I want to be able to provide for my baby." - Female student

"p.a.p.a. helped me realize how expensive a baby can [be], and how tough it can be to go to school, work and support your child all at the same time." - Male student

The final phase of the evaluation was completed in August 2010, and the findings are available through the OAG or through Dr. Cynthia Osborne at the LBJ School of Public Affairs. Highlights from this final evaluation report include:

- 4 out of 5 teachers believe that **p.a.p.a.** is relevant and should be taught to all students before graduation.
- 9 out of 10 teachers believe the on-site training provided by the OAG adequately prepared them to teach **p.a.p.a.**
- After **p.a.p.a.**, 21% more students report that they plan to delay childbearing until after marriage.
- After **p.a.p.a.**, 71% increase in students' knowledge regarding additional cost to raise a child each month.

For additional information regarding the **p.a.p.a.** curriculum and training, contact Michael Hayes, Deputy for Family Initiatives - Office of the Attorney General at

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