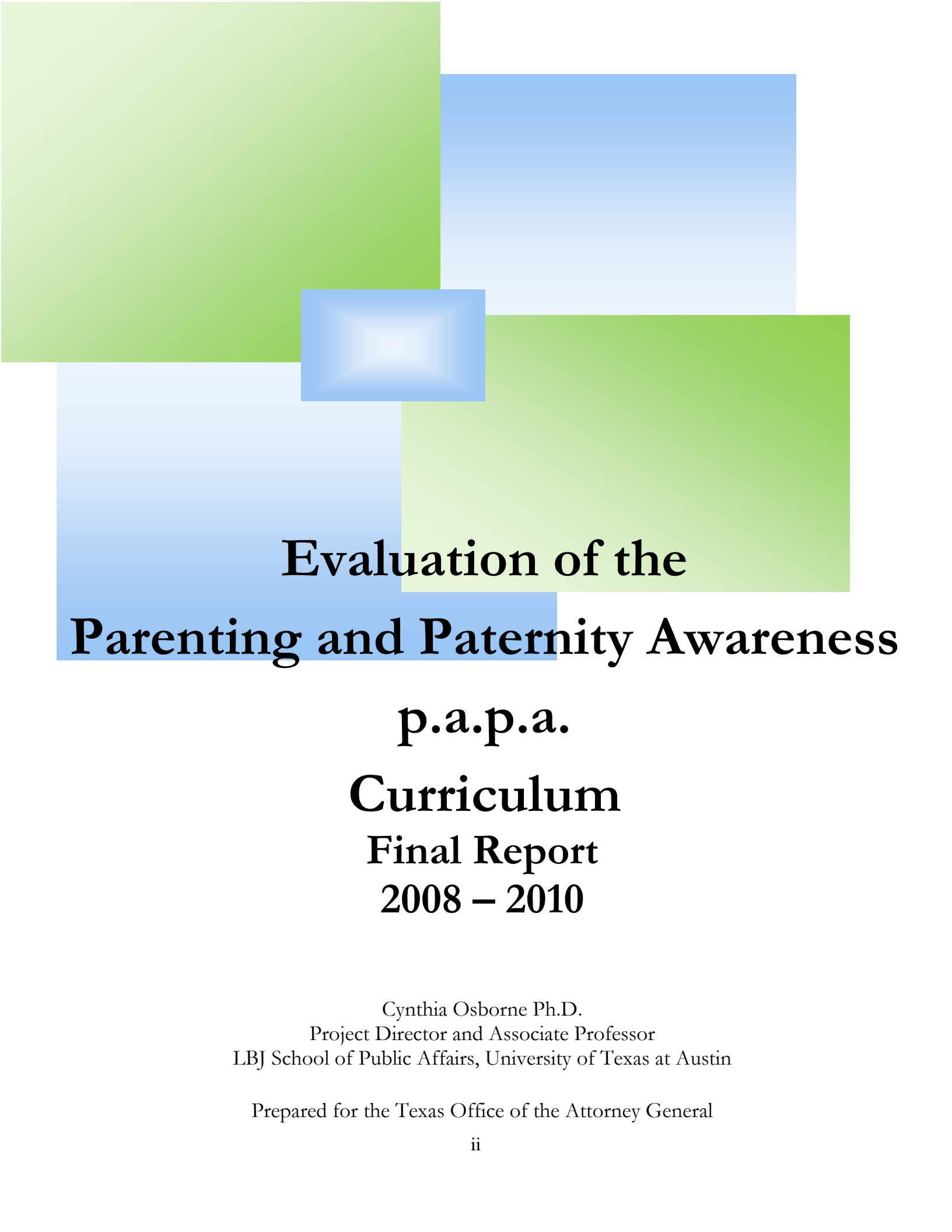


**Evaluation of the  
Parenting and Paternity Awareness  
p.a.p.a.  
Curriculum  
Final Report  
2008 - 2010**

Cynthia Osborne Ph.D.

LBJ School of Public Affairs  
University of Texas at Austin



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Project Director and Associate Professor  
LBJ School of Public Affairs, University of Texas at Austin

Prepared for the Texas Office of the Attorney General

# EVALUATION TEAM

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Jennifer Grance is the Project Manager of the **p.a.p.a.** evaluation. She has worked on the evaluation since 2008 and maintained contact with all of the sample schools and teachers. Ms. Grance has an AA in Early Childhood Education and Administration from Temple College. Prior to joining the **p.a.p.a.** evaluation team, Ms. Grance worked as a director of a child care center and with children with special needs in elementary schools.

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# **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

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# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

## BACKGROUND

Families in Texas are increasingly complex and less stable. The majority of Texas children will spend some portion of their childhood living without both of their biological or adoptive parents and increasingly this pattern begins at birth.

In 2008, over 40% of Texas children were born to unmarried parents and this trend is much more common for children born to mothers who are younger and racial or ethnic minorities. Indeed, 82% of children born to 18 to 19 year olds and 60% of children born to 20 to 24 year old mothers were born outside of marriage. Among Black children, 72% were born to an unmarried mother, and over half of Hispanic births were nonmarital.

Texas also faces the third highest teen pregnancy rate in the nation; a trend driven largely by the high rate of repeat teen pregnancies. Each day 146 babies are born to Texas teens, while another 201 teens become pregnant. Texas' rates are more than 50% higher than the national averages.

These trends have huge immediate and long-term public costs that show up in high school dropout rates, Medicaid and TANF expenditures, poverty rates, incarceration rates, lost tax revenue, and a rapidly expanding child support enforcement caseload. In 2004, the cost of teen childbearing to Texas taxpayers was approximately \$1 billion.

Most state child support agencies have responded to the increases in teen and nonmarital births with the traditional offer of paternity establishment and child support enforcement services *after* the birth of the child. The Child Support Division of the Texas Office of the Attorney General (OAG) has taken the innovative step of developing a number of educational and outreach efforts that reach youth and young adults *before* a pregnancy occurs.

The leading example of the OAG's efforts is the **Parenting and Paternity Awareness (p.a.p.a.) Curriculum**; p.a.p.a. is a school-based curriculum

that sends a strong message to adolescents on how to optimally sequence their lives: complete an education, choose a career, enter into a healthy marriage, and *then* begin having children.

The 14-hour curriculum is designed to teach students about the rights and responsibilities of parenthood and paternity establishment, the realities of having a child, and the elements of a healthy relationship.

As a result of legislation passed in 2007 in the 80<sup>th</sup> session of the Texas Legislature, the **p.a.p.a. Curriculum** is now a mandatory component of the state's health curriculum and is the first large scale effort in any state to educate students on parental responsibilities using child support and paternity as the basis for the program.

## EVALUATION

To determine the impact that the **p.a.p.a. Curriculum** has on students' knowledge and attitudes, as well as the level of support for the program from teachers and principals, the LBJ School of Public Affairs at the University of Texas at Austin conducted a two year, comprehensive evaluation of the program.

Between fall 2008 and spring 2010, complete data were gathered on 5,730 students from a representative sample of 47 Texas high schools. Students completed an online pre and post assessment that included 16 questions to test their knowledge about parenting, paternity establishment, and healthy relationships, and 28 questions to gauge their attitudes on the issues reflected in **p.a.p.a.** In addition, 75 students were interviewed via focus groups.

Information on the implementation of **p.a.p.a.** and teachers' fidelity to the curriculum was gleaned from surveys of 84 teachers and 66 principals across the state, as well as two online surveys of 858 teachers trained in **p.a.p.a.**

The results of the evaluation show that **p.a.p.a.** is addressing an unmet need for students and it is significantly improving students' knowledge and attitudes in areas that are unique to the **p.a.p.a. Curriculum**.

## KEY FINDINGS ON STUDENTS' KNOWLEDGE AND ATTITUDES

After exposure to p.a.p.a.:

**More students plan to delay childbearing until after marriage.** The number of students reporting they plan to have a child at an earlier age than they plan to get married declined by 21%.

One female student commented: "*[p.a.p.a.] made me realize more how much I want to wait and have a child when I'm older and ready for that kind of responsibility.*"

**Students' knowledge regarding the costs associated with being a parent increased.** The number of students who could correctly identify the average cost per month of raising a child in Texas increased by 62%, and the number who knew the percent of net income that a noncustodial parent generally pays in child support increased by 46%.

One male student claimed: "*[p.a.p.a.] was a great way of showing high schoolers how hard it is to raise a child financially. Since we're all full time high school students, the chance of having enough money to raise a human being on your own two feet is very unlikely.*"

**Students have greater knowledge of the legal issues that unmarried parents face.** After p.a.p.a., more than twice as many students knew that an unmarried biological father does NOT have the same legal rights and responsibilities as the biological mother, and the number who knew the legal methods to establishing paternity increased by 23%.

A female student wrote: "*They [p.a.p.a.] explained alot [sic] to me that i [sic] should have realized [sic] before i [sic] get pregnant. Like I did not know you had to fill out a [sic] aop form for the baby [sic] daddy to be the father.*"

**Students are more likely to value the importance of fathers' legal and social involvement.** Students were more likely to report that they would establish legal paternity if they have a child outside of marriage. In addition, more students agree that it is important for a child to have two actively involved parents, even if the parents do not live together.

A female student said: "*Knowing I can establish paternity if the situation ever calls for it is somewhat comforting, and I'd*

*want the father of my child to be an active part of his or her life.*"

**Students' overall level of knowledge increased by 12% between the pre and post assessments, and gains in knowledge were greatest on the issues that are most unique to the p.a.p.a. Curriculum.** Levels of student knowledge remained low, however, in several key areas, indicating the need for continued education.

**Students most at risk of becoming a teen parent demonstrated the greatest need for the curriculum.** White students and students in more advantaged schools scored significantly higher on the pre and post assessments. In addition, gains in knowledge were higher for White boys as compared to Black and Hispanic boys; whereas for girls, there were no significant differences in knowledge by race or ethnicity.

## TEACHER AND PRINCIPAL SUPPORT

**Teachers and principals overwhelmingly agree that the issues covered in p.a.p.a. are relevant and should be taught to their students prior to graduating high school.** Over 86% of teachers report that p.a.p.a. is relevant to their students, and over 81% believe that p.a.p.a. should be taught to all students prior to graduating high school.

**Principals consider p.a.p.a. to be 'reality based' and an important complement to other programs.** One principal commented, "*[Other] programs haven't been working with teens and this [p.a.p.a.] gives them a more realistic portrayal on teen pregnancy.*"

## TEACHER FIDELITY TO p.a.p.a.

**Most teachers modify the curriculum to fit their class schedules and existing health curriculum, and many teachers find the legal aspects of the curriculum too complex.** Approximately 7 in 10 teachers modified p.a.p.a. in some way, and nearly 25% of teachers did not teach aspects of the curriculum, such as how to establish paternity, that they deemed too complex for themselves and their students. Additional training and guidance are necessary for these teachers because student knowledge is lowest in the areas that are the least familiar to teachers.



# **FINAL REPORT**

## **2008 - 2010**

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## OVERVIEW

Families in Texas today are increasingly complex and less stable. The majority of Texas children will spend some portion of their childhood living without both of their biological or adoptive parents and increasingly this pattern begins at birth.

In 2008, over 40% of Texas children were born to unmarried parents and this trend is much more common for children born to mothers who are younger and racial or ethnic minorities. Indeed, 82% of children born to 18 to 19 year olds and 60% of children born to 20 to 24 year old mothers were born outside of marriage. Among Black children, 72% were born to an unmarried mother, and over half of Hispanic births were nonmarital.

Texas also faces the third highest teen pregnancy rate in the nation; this trend is driven largely by the high rate of repeat teen pregnancies. Each day 146 babies are born to Texas teens, while another 201 teens get pregnant. Texas' rates are more than 50% higher than the national averages.

These trends have huge immediate and long-term public costs that show up in high school dropout rates, Medicaid and TANF expenditures, poverty rates, incarceration rates, lost tax revenue, and a rapidly expanding child support enforcement caseload. In 2004, the cost of teen childbearing to Texas taxpayers was approximately \$1 billion.

The Child Support Division of the Texas Office of the Attorney General (OAG) has been a national leader in a new, family-centered approach toward increasing the number of children who are supported emotionally and financially by both of their parents. This approach aims to increase father involvement and co-parenting, which will lead to an increase in a father's financial contributions and commitment to the child.

In addition, this approach aims to reduce the number of children who are born to parents who are not financially and emotionally prepared to have them, because each nonmarital birth is a potential child support case.

The **Parenting and Paternity Awareness (p.a.p.a.) Curriculum** tackles both of these aims and is one of the cornerstones of the OAG's efforts. **p.a.p.a.** is a high school curriculum that sends a strong message to adolescents on how to optimally sequence their lives: complete an education, choose a career, enter into a healthy marriage, and *then* begin having children.

The **p.a.p.a. Curriculum** is unique compared to other school-based curricula in that it focuses on the legal aspects of paternity establishment; the rights and responsibilities of custodial and noncustodial parents; the costs of raising a child, including child support obligations; the importance for children of having two actively involved parents, even if the parents are not married; and the elements of a healthy relationship, including the benefits of marriage.

The curriculum is comprised of 14 stand-alone units that can be taught in various intervals over the course of an academic semester, ranging from 14 school days to 14 weeks.

In 2007, the Texas legislature voted nearly unanimously to mandate that the **p.a.p.a. Curriculum** be taught to all Texas students in their health courses beginning in the fall of 2008. From 2008 - 2010 approximately 500,000 students received **p.a.p.a.** in their health class. Those numbers will inevitably decrease as the state no longer requires a health credit for graduation. Even so, the **p.a.p.a. Curriculum** is the first large scale effort in any state to educate students on parental responsibilities using child support and paternity as the basis for the program.

This report presents findings from a two year, comprehensive evaluation to determine the effect that the **p.a.p.a. Curriculum** has on students' knowledge and attitudes, as well as the support the program has from teachers and principals.

Overall, the findings show that students' knowledge increases significantly after exposure to the **p.a.p.a. Curriculum**, and that increases in knowledge are greatest in the content areas which are most unique to **p.a.p.a.** In addition, after **p.a.p.a.**, students are less likely to report that they want to have a child prior to marriage. Moreover, teachers and principals strongly support the goals of the **p.a.p.a. Curriculum**.

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# EVALUATION METHOD

The two primary goals of the evaluation were to:

1. Determine the impact that the **p.a.p.a. Curriculum** has on students' knowledge and attitudes.
2. Understand the level of support for the program from teachers and principals, as well as teachers' fidelity to the **p.a.p.a. Curriculum**.

## STUDENT EVALUATION

To measure changes in students' knowledge and attitudes, we surveyed 9,539 students from a representative sample of 50 Texas high schools. Students completed an online pre and post assessment that included 16 questions to test their knowledge about parenting, paternity establishment, and healthy relationships, and 28 questions that gauged their attitudes on the issues reflected in **p.a.p.a.** In addition, 75 students were interviewed via focus groups. Of these students, 14 were interviewed in both academic years to understand their ongoing opinions of **p.a.p.a.** and whether the curriculum had any effect on their behaviors.

Our goal was to develop a sample of students from 50 Texas high schools, randomly selected from the 1,440 high school campuses with a 9<sup>th</sup> grade across the state. To ensure our sample was representative of high school students in Texas and that it included a large sample of students most at risk of early parenting, we used a stratified random sampling strategy based on three campus criteria: limited English proficiency (LEP), economically disadvantaged (poor), and rural versus other geographic locale (rural). These characteristics are associated with differential levels of teen and nonmarital childbearing.

A campus is considered 'LEP' if more than 15.5% of the students on campus are LEP. This represents the top decile of all Texas high school campuses according to 2008 public data from the Texas Education Agency (TEA). A campus is considered 'poor' if 50% or more of the students on campus are eligible for free or reduced priced lunch. A campus is

considered 'rural' if designated as such by TEA. Using these criteria, 10.2% of Texas high school campuses are LEP, 49.9% are poor, and 46.1% are rural, although these are not mutually exclusive categories.

To generate our sample, we divided the 1,440 high school campuses into 8 mutually exclusive 'buckets' based on all possible combinations of the 3 criteria described above, and the possibility that a school fits none of the criteria (No Status). The distribution of the 1,440 campuses for the state, as well as for our desired sample of 50 campuses is provided in Table 1. Importantly, although the 'No Status' schools represent only 28% of high school campuses across the state, approximately 50% of Texas students are enrolled in these schools.

In fall 2008, we began recruiting schools to participate in the evaluation. We randomly selected the determined number of campuses from each 'bucket' to get to our desired total of 50 campuses to include in the study. For example, as indicated in Table 1, we randomly selected 4 campuses from the 110 high schools in Texas that are LEP and Poor; 1 campus from the 33 schools in the LEP + Poor + Rural 'bucket', and so on.

If a campus declined to participate in the evaluation, we included them in our attrition analysis and randomly 're-drew' from the same bucket to find a replacement campus. We continued with this same strategy as we approached principals, district administrators, and teachers to participate in the study to ensure that the appropriate number of campuses from each bucket was included.

Between fall 2008 and spring 2010, we collected information from 9,539 students in 50 Texas high schools. Of these students, 1,787 completed only a pretest, 1,712 completed only a post assessment, and 310 students did not have complete data on either assessment. Student attrition was based largely on teachers leaving the study or not teaching the **p.a.p.a. Curriculum** in the semester, rather than individual student attrition.

Our final evaluation sample includes 5,730 students from 47 high schools who took both the pre and post assessments (see Table 2).

**TABLE 1:**  
**DISTRIBUTION OF CAMPUSES BASED ON STRATIFIED RANDOM SAMPLING CRITERIA**

School Characteristics	# Campuses with a 9 <sup>th</sup> Grade in Texas	% of Total Desired <sup>a</sup>	# Campuses Sought for Evaluation	# Campuses Participating in Evaluation	% of Total Achieved <sup>b</sup>
LEP Only	2	0.14%	0	0	0
LEP + Rural (not Poor)	2	0.14%	0	0	0
LEP + Poor (not Rural)	110	7.64%	4	3	6.00%
LEP + Poor + Rural	33	2.29%	1	2	4.00%
Poor Only	264	18.33%	9	10	20.00%
Poor + Rural (not LEP)	311	21.60%	11	11	22.00%
Rural Only	318	22.08%	11	11	22.00%
No Status	400	27.78%	14	13	26.00%
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,440</b>	<b>100.00%</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>100.00%</b>

- a. The percent of the 50 campuses sought for the evaluation sample were based on the number of campuses in a respective 'bucket' relative to the total number of campuses with a 9<sup>th</sup> grade (1,440).
- b. The percent of campuses achieved represents the number of campuses in the final evaluation sample relative to the total number of 50 schools participating in the evaluation sample.

**TABLE 2:**  
**EVALUATION SAMPLE OF STUDENTS COMPLETING A PRE AND POST ASSESSMENT**

"Bucket" description	# of Participating Campuses <sup>a</sup>	# of Health Classes	# of Health Teachers	# of Students Completing Pre and Post	% of Students in Evaluation
LEP Only	0	0	0	0	0%
LEP + Rural (not Poor)	0	0	0	0	0%
LEP + Poor (not Rural)	3	39	5	453	7.91%
LEP + Poor + Rural	2	16	3	179	3.12%
Poor Only	10	94	16	1,254	21.88%
Poor + Rural (not LEP)	10	84	16	822	14.35%
Rural Only	10	54	16	627	10.94%
No Status	12	126	28	2,395	41.80%
<b>Total</b>	<b>47</b>	<b>413</b>	<b>84</b>	<b>5,730</b>	<b>100%</b>

- a. Three campuses participated in either the pre or post test, but did not have a class who completed both assessments in any semester. Not all campuses participated in all 4 semesters of the evaluation.

The schools in the evaluation sample are similar to high schools throughout the state with the exception that the schools in our sample are slightly more advantaged (less likely to be poor and have fewer minority students) than the average high school in Texas.

A description of the characteristics of the students included in the evaluation sample is included in Table 3. Approximately 51% of the participants in our evaluation are male and 49% are female.

In addition, about 37% of the sample is White, 9% is Black, 47% is Hispanic, and 6% identify their race or ethnicity as something other than White, Black, or Hispanic. This race/ethnic distribution is very similar to Texas state averages for high school students, with the exception that our sample is slightly under representative of Black students and over representative of White students.

The most common grade level of students in our sample is 9<sup>th</sup> grade, but more than half of the students are in 10<sup>th</sup> or 11<sup>th</sup> grade, and approximately 11% of the students in our sample are in their senior year. Very few students in the sample are in 7<sup>th</sup> or 8<sup>th</sup> grade.

**TABLE 3: CHARACTERISTICS OF STUDENTS IN THE EVALUATION SAMPLE (N = 5,730)**

Characteristic	n	% of Sample
<b>Gender</b>		
Male	2,918	50.92%
Female	2,812	49.08%
<b>Race/Ethnicity</b>		
White	2,139	37.33%
Black	518	9.04%
Hispanic	2,708	47.26%
Other	365	6.37%
<b>Grade Level</b>		
7 or 8	144	2.51%
9	2,106	36.75%
10	1,505	26.27%
11	1,317	22.98%
12	658	11.48%

The primary analytic strategy to determine changes in students' knowledge and attitudes was a pre-post test design. Teachers administered the online assessment prior to teaching **p.a.p.a.** to their students and administered a similar assessment after they finished teaching the **p.a.p.a. Curriculum**. We compared the pre and post scores on each question, accounting for teacher and school level effects.

The pre and post assessment technique is limited in that it cannot determine whether students retain the information they glean from a particular curriculum. Additionally, without a control group, we cannot fully determine if changes in student learning are the result of the curriculum per se or some other occurrence that co-occurs with the learning of the curriculum and that also influences student learning.

To provide greater context to the online assessments, we conducted focus groups with 75 students from four high schools. Within the sample, there were 38 female and 37 male students, and three-fourths of the students were either in 9<sup>th</sup> or 10<sup>th</sup> grade. We followed 14 students over time to determine changes in their behavior and retention of the **p.a.p.a. Curriculum**.

## TEACHER AND PRINCIPAL EVALUATION

To determine the level of support for the program from teachers and principals, as well as teachers' fidelity to the **p.a.p.a. Curriculum**, we conducted an implementation evaluation that included three strategies: 1) phone interviews with 66 principals; 2) an online pre and post survey of the 84 sample teachers; and 3) two online surveys of 858 teachers across the state who were trained in **p.a.p.a.**

For a more detailed description of our sample, sampling strategy, instruments of assessment, and attrition analysis, please contact the director of the evaluation, Cynthia Osborne, Ph.D.

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# STUDENT FINDINGS

## STUDENTS' PRIOR KNOWLEDGE

**The p.a.p.a. Curriculum provides valuable information to students that they do not receive elsewhere.** Although students have a high level of prior knowledge on many of the issues addressed in **p.a.p.a.**, prior knowledge is *lowest* in the areas that are most unique to the **p.a.p.a. Curriculum**.

On nine of the 16 knowledge-based questions, approximately 80% or more of students answered the questions correctly on the pre test (See Table 4), indicating a high level of prior knowledge on many of the issues covered in the **p.a.p.a. Curriculum**. For example:

- ❖ 92% of students answered correctly that when an infant cries, it is important to pick them up and comfort them, versus ignoring them, telling them to stop, or taking them to the doctor.
- ❖ 89% of students knew the correct definition of a custodial parent.

Student knowledge was high, but somewhat lower, on issues related to child support and paternity establishment. For example:

- ❖ 83% of students knew that a benefit of establishing paternity is that the father's name can go on the birth certificate.
- ❖ 81% of students knew that noncustodial parents must continue to pay child support, even if they do not get to see their child.

Between half and three-quarters of the students knew the correct answer to four additional questions on the pre test, indicating a moderate level of knowledge. In particular:

- ❖ 73% of students knew the warning signs of a potentially abusive relationship.
- ❖ 67% of students knew that noncustodial parents can have their driver's license suspended if they stop paying child support.

- ❖ 65% knew that young children are impacted by their parents' fighting.
- ❖ 59% answered correctly that giving a baby the father's last name is NOT a way to establish legal paternity.

Students had very low levels of prior knowledge on three of the 16 questions, specifically:

- ❖ 43% of students knew that a noncustodial parent generally has to pay 20% of net income in child support for one child.
- ❖ 26% of students knew when a child is born to unmarried parents the biological father does NOT automatically have the same legal rights and responsibilities as the biological mother.
- ❖ Only 17% of students correctly identified that the average additional cost per month for an adult to take care of a child in Texas is over \$700.

The issues on which students had moderate to low levels of prior knowledge are largely unique to **p.a.p.a.**, thus lower levels of prior knowledge in these areas suggest that the curriculum is addressing an unmet need.

**Risk factors influence students' level of prior knowledge.** Students who smoke, are younger, foreign born, born to unmarried parents, and who are currently involved in a romantic relationship have lower levels of prior knowledge on the issues addressed in the **p.a.p.a. Curriculum**.

## CHANGES IN STUDENTS' KNOWLEDGE

**After experiencing the p.a.p.a. Curriculum, students showed significant gains in knowledge.** On average, students scored 12% higher on the post assessment than they did on the pre test. The average student answered 69.6% of the knowledge-based questions correctly on the pre test, whereas the average score on the post test was 77.9%. Gains in knowledge from the pre to post assessment are equivalent to answering one additional question correctly.

**TABLE 4:**  
**CHANGES IN STUDENTS' KNOWLEDGE FROM PRE TO POST ASSESSMENT<sup>a</sup>**

	<b>% Correct Pre Test</b>	<b>% Correct Post Test</b>	<b>% Change Pre/Post</b>
When an infant cries, it is important to: (Pick up and comfort)	91.7	92.5	0.9*
For unmarried, separated, or divorced parents, the parent who has been given the legal right to decide where a child lives and has primary care of a child is called a: (Custodial Parent)	89.2	91.2	2.2*
Both the noncustodial and the custodial parents are legally responsible for supporting their child financially. (True)	87.3	88.1	0.9
A key factor in having a healthy, long-lasting relationship is: (Being able to manage and resolve conflict with each other)	85.7	86.7	1.2*
If parents separate or divorce, their children will benefit if they: (Work together as a team to keep the child out of arguments)	83.5	89.3	6.9*
One benefit of establishing paternity is that the father's name can go on the birth certificate. (True)	83.1	89.8	8.1*
In the state of Texas, only the mother can open a child support case at the Office of the Attorney General. (False)	81.6	85.4	4.7*
Noncustodial parents do not have to pay child support if they do not get to see their child. (False)	80.6	81.9	1.6*
A noncustodial parent who stops paying court-ordered child support can have his/her IRS tax refund or lottery winnings taken away or withheld. (True)	80.3	89.7	11.7*
Which of the following is a warning sign of a potentially abusive or violent relationship? (Jealous because he/she loves you so much)	73.2	79.7	8.9*
A noncustodial parent who stops paying court-ordered child support can have his/her driver's license suspended. (True)	67.4	84.4	25.2*
Young children aren't impacted by their parents' fighting because generally they don't understand what's going on with the conflict until they are in their teens. (False)	64.5	71.1	10.2*
There are three pathways to establish legal paternity for a child born to unmarried parents. Which of the following is NOT a pathway? (Give the baby the father's last name)	58.9	72.5	23.1*
In most cases, what percentage of the noncustodial parent's net income would be paid in child support for one child? (20%)	43.1	62.9	45.9*
When a child is born to unmarried parents, the biological father automatically has the same legal rights and responsibilities as the biological mother. (False)	25.9	53.1	105.0*
The average additional cost per month for an adult to take care of a child (childcare, diapers, food, housing, medical care, clothing) in the state of Texas is: (Over \$700 per month)	16.9	27.3	61.5*
<b>Average Score</b>	<b>69.6</b>	<b>77.9</b>	<b>11.9*</b>

a. Scores listed from highest to lowest correct response on pre test; \*Indicates post test and pre test scores differ significantly at the  $p < .05$  level. N=5,730.

Approximately 66% of students showed an increase in knowledge, and of these students, the average gain in knowledge was 24% (from 67% correct on the pre test to 83% on the post test). This gain in knowledge is equivalent to answering two additional questions correctly. About 16% of students had no change in their scores between the pre and post assessments; half of these students scored 75% or higher on both tests. Only 18% of students showed declines in knowledge.

**Gains in students' knowledge were greatest in content areas that are generally unique to the p.a.p.a. Curriculum.** Increases in knowledge were generally higher on questions relating to the legal aspects of paternity and child support; content areas that are largely unique to the **p.a.p.a. Curriculum** and areas in which students' prior knowledge was generally low. For example, after **p.a.p.a.**:

- ❖ More than twice as many students knew that at a child's birth an unmarried biological father does NOT have the same legal rights and responsibilities as an unmarried mother.
- ❖ The proportion of students who could correctly identify the average monthly cost to raise a child in Texas increased by 62%.
- ❖ The proportion of students who knew the percentage of net income that a noncustodial parent generally pays in child support for one child increased by 46%.
- ❖ An additional 25% of students knew that a noncustodial parent's driver's license can be suspended for failure to pay child support.
- ❖ There was a similar increase in the proportion of students who learned that giving a baby the father's surname is NOT a pathway to establishing legal paternity (23%).

**Although students' knowledge increased significantly in most content areas, student knowledge remained relatively low in key areas, indicating a continued need for the information offered in the curriculum.** For example, despite large gains in knowledge, after **p.a.p.a.**:

- ❖ Approximately 30% of students incorrectly noted that giving a baby the father's surname is a pathway to establishing legal paternity.
- ❖ Fewer than 3 out of 4 students knew that young children are negatively affected by their parents' fighting.
- ❖ Fewer than two-thirds of students knew the amount of the average child support obligation for a noncustodial parent.
- ❖ Approximately half of students knew that at a child's birth the unmarried biological father does not have the same legal rights and responsibilities as the biological mother.
- ❖ Only 27% of students could accurately identify the average monthly cost of raising a child.

#### **Students' characteristics influence gains in knowledge from the p.a.p.a. Curriculum.**

Students who smoke, are older, and those who have had difficulty getting their homework done have significantly lower gains in knowledge from the **p.a.p.a. Curriculum**.

#### **RACE AND ETHNIC DIFFERENCES**

**Prior knowledge on the issues discussed in p.a.p.a. was significantly higher among White students as compared to Black or Hispanic students.** The average score on the pre test was 74% for White students compared to 69% for Black students and 67% for Hispanic students. Black students had a significantly higher level of prior knowledge than Hispanic students (see Table 5).

**Gains in knowledge were significantly greater for White students as compared to Black and Hispanic students.** The average score on the pre/post assessment increased by 12.2% for White students compared to increases of 9.9% and 11.8% for Hispanic and Black students, respectively. These differences apply only to boys, however. Girls showed similar increases in knowledge, regardless of race or ethnicity, whereas Black and Hispanic boys had significantly smaller gains in knowledge relative to their White peers.

**TABLE 5:**  
**CHANGES IN STUDENTS' KNOWLEDGE BY SELECTED CHARACTERISTICS**

	% Correct Pre Test	% Correct Post Test	% Change Pre/Post
<b>Average Score</b>	<b>69.6</b>	<b>77.9</b>	<b>11.9*</b>
<b>School Characteristics</b>			
LEP, Rural, Poor	59.4	72.2	21.5*
Rural & Poor	66.5	76.9	15.6*
LEP & Poor	65.9	75.8	15.0*
Poor	68.2	74.5	9.2*
Rural	70.9	79.2	11.7*
Neither LEP, Poor, or Rural	72.5 <sup>a</sup>	80.4 <sup>b</sup>	10.9*
<b>Gender</b>			
Girls	71.9	80.0	11.3*
Boys	67.3 <sup>c</sup>	75.7 <sup>c</sup>	12.5*
<b>Race/Ethnicity</b>			
White	73.5 <sup>d</sup>	82.5 <sup>d</sup>	12.2*
Black	69.1 <sup>e</sup>	76.0	9.9*
Hispanic	66.9	74.8	11.8*
Other	68.4	77.2	12.9*

\*Indicates post test and pre test scores differ significantly at the  $p < .05$  level.

a. Schools that are neither LEP, poor, or rural score significantly higher than all other schools at the  $p < .05$  level.

b. Schools that are neither LEP, poor, or rural score significantly higher than all other schools at the  $p < .05$  level, with the exception that these schools have similar schools as rural only schools.

c. Boys' score is significantly lower than girls' at the  $p < .05$  level.

d. White students' scores are significantly higher than Black or Hispanic students' scores at the  $p < .05$  level.

e. Black students' scores are significantly higher than Hispanic students' scores at the  $p < .05$  level.

Overall, the results suggest that White students enter and exit the **p.a.p.a. Curriculum** with significantly higher levels of content knowledge than their Black or Hispanic peers. All race and ethnic groups demonstrate significant gains in knowledge, but the gains are smallest among Black and Hispanic males, and the level of pre knowledge is lowest among Hispanics.

### **GENDER DIFFERENCES**

**Female students have higher levels of pre and post knowledge on the issues addressed in p.a.p.a., however boys and girls demonstrate similar increases in knowledge.** On average, girls scored approximately 5 percentage points higher on the pre test and 4 percentage points higher on the post test. Boys' knowledge increased by 12.5% compared to 11.3% for girls, but these differences are not statistically significant (See Table 5).

**Gender differences are greater among Black and Hispanic students, as compared to White students.** For example, the average score on the post assessment was 73% for Black boys compared to 79% for Black girls. For Hispanic boys the average post test score was 73% compared to 77% for Hispanic girls. The corresponding numbers for White boys and girls, respectively, were 81% and 84%.

### **SCHOOL DIFFERENCES**

**More advantaged schools have significantly higher levels of prior knowledge.** These schools also have higher levels of post **p.a.p.a.** knowledge compared to most other types of schools. Gains in knowledge were similar across all school types, although schools characterized as LEP, rural, and poor demonstrated the greatest gains in knowledge.

### **TEEN PARENT DIFFERENCES**

**Students who were already teen parents when they were exposed to the p.a.p.a. Curriculum demonstrated lower levels of knowledge on both the pre and post assessments, as compared to students who were not parents.** Teen parents, however, showed greater gains in knowledge (17.5% v. 11.6%) as compared to non-parenting students. In the sample, 106 students (59 boys and 47 girls) had a

child at the time of the pre assessment; thirteen of the teen parents were married.

### **SEMESTER DIFFERENCES**

Students' gains in knowledge were greater in the first year of the implementation of **p.a.p.a.** (See Table 6). The decline in gains is driven more by an increase in prior knowledge rather than a decline in knowledge after exposure to **p.a.p.a.** The higher level of prior knowledge in subsequent semesters is influenced by an increase in teachers' experience teaching the **p.a.p.a. Curriculum**. It is also likely that there were 'spill-over' effects, meaning that students who are not in health classes learn about the issues covered in **p.a.p.a.** from their peers.

**TABLE 6:  
CHANGES IN STUDENTS' KNOWLEDGE  
BY SEMESTER**

	n	% Correct Pre Test	% Correct Post Test	% Change Pre/Post
Fall 08	980	67.9	79.4	16.9*
Spring 09	2,495	70.1	78.5	11.9*
Fall 09	1,206	69.2	76.0	9.8*
Spring 10	1,049	70.2	77.1	9.8*
<b>Total</b>	<b>5,730</b>	<b>69.6</b>	<b>77.9</b>	<b>11.9*</b>

\*Indicates post test and pre test scores differ significantly at the  $p < .05$  level.

Note: Gains for Fall 09 and Spring 10 are significantly lower than Fall 08 and Spring 09. Gains in Spring 09 are significantly lower than Fall 08.

### **SUMMARY OF STUDENTS' KNOWLEDGE**

With regard to the content covered in the **p.a.p.a. Curriculum**, students who are most at risk of becoming a teen parent have lower levels of knowledge than their more advantaged peers. Gains in knowledge are relatively similar across students, regardless of their characteristics, indicating that the program is beneficial for all students. However, students at risk of early parenting may benefit more from additional information.

## STUDENTS' ATTITUDES PRIOR TO p.a.p.a.

Students generally held pro-social attitudes regarding family formation and parenting decisions prior to being exposed to p.a.p.a. For example (see Table 7), prior to p.a.p.a.:

- ❖ 85% of students agreed or strongly agreed that it is important for a child to have two actively involved parents, even if the parents do not live together.
- ❖ 82% of students reported that they would be sure that paternity is established if they were to have a child outside of marriage.
- ❖ Over 80% believed that they could NOT afford to raise a child as a teen.
- ❖ Three out of four students claimed that it was important to be married before having children.

Students' attitudes were more neutral with regard to cohabitation, divorce, and nonmarital childbearing. Indeed, students' attitudes are consistent with national trends showing greater acceptance of these life events. In particular:

- ❖ Most students think that living together before marriage is a good way to test a relationship.
- ❖ Approximately one-third of students claimed that divorce is almost always bad.
- ❖ Fewer than 60% of students think that having a baby while in high school would be 'one of the worst things that could happen.'
- ❖ Approximately one-third of students thought having a child while single would hurt their subsequent chances of marriage.

## CHANGES IN STUDENTS' ATTITUDES

Students' attitudes toward marriage and children changed significantly on some measures after exposure to the p.a.p.a. Curriculum. Following p.a.p.a.:

- ❖ More students agreed or strongly agreed that it is important to be married prior to having a child.
- ❖ A significantly higher number of students agreed that having children while single will hurt their chances of marriage in the future. Despite this increase, fewer than 40% of students believe that early childbearing will hinder their marriage chances.

Students' attitudes toward paternity establishment and father involvement became significantly more pro-social following p.a.p.a. These issues are generally not discussed in other elements of the health curriculum or other programs, indicating that the p.a.p.a. Curriculum likely influenced these attitudinal changes. Following p.a.p.a.:

- ❖ Students were significantly more likely to think that it is important for a child to have two actively involved parents, even if the parents do not live together.
- ❖ An additional 5% of students agreed that they would be certain to establish legal paternity if they had a child outside of marriage.

Students' attitudes regarding cohabitation and divorce were largely unaffected by p.a.p.a. Most students believe that living together prior to marriage is a good way to test a relationship, and fewer than 40% believe that divorce is almost always bad. These attitudes did not change following p.a.p.a.

## PROJECTED CHANGES IN STUDENTS' BEHAVIOR

More students plan to delay childbearing until after marriage. Students were asked the age at which they plan to have their first child and the age at which they plan to marry. After exposure to the p.a.p.a. Curriculum, fewer students want to have a child at an earlier age than they want to marry. This finding may have the strongest implications for longer-term behavioral changes.

**TABLE 7:**  
**CHANGES IN STUDENTS' ATTITUDES FROM PRE TO POST ASSESSMENT**  
**(Percent Responding Agree or Strongly Agree)**

	%	%	% Pt.
	Pre Test	Post Test	Difference
<i>How much would you say you agree with the following statements?</i>			
It is important that a child has two actively involved parents, even if his/her parents do not live together.	85.0	87.3	2.3*
If I have a child before I am married, I will do everything possible to make sure paternity is established.	81.8	87.0	5.2*
I'm confident I could NOT afford to raise a baby by myself as a teenager. <sup>a</sup>	80.8	78.5	-2.3*
It is important to be married before having children.	74.6	76.5	1.9*
Marriage usually DOES NOT change a relationship for the worse. <sup>a</sup>	70.7	68.4	-2.3*
Having a baby before I graduate high school would be one of the worst things that could happen to me.	55.9	56.1	0.2
Getting divorced is almost always bad.	39.1	37.0	-2.1
Having children while you are single hurts your chances of later getting married.	34.3	35.0	0.7*
Living together before marriage is NOT a good way to test your relationship. <sup>a</sup>	23.3	24.1	0.8

\*Indicates post test and pre test differ significantly at the  $p < .05$  level.

a. Question was recoded so that a higher score reflects a more socially desirable score.

- ❖ In the evaluation sample, 106 students (2%) had a child at the time of the pre assessment and 34 students were married (0.6%).
- ❖ The vast majority of students want to have a child (94%) and to get married (96%) in the future.
- ❖ At the pre assessment, most students want to get married between the ages of 20 to 24 (55%), and students are evenly split as to wanting to have a child between ages 20 to 24 (45%) and 25 to 29 (44%).
- ❖ On the pre assessment, 12.8% of students want to have a child at an earlier age than they plan to get married.
- ❖ On the post assessment, only 10.1% of students want a child at an earlier age than marriage, a significant reduction of 21%. If these students alter their behavior, this would lead to a substantial reduction in the number of young women having a nonmarital birth.
- ❖ Importantly, only 6% of students desire to have a child prior to the age of 20, even prior to **p.a.p.a.**, yet this number is similar after exposure to **p.a.p.a.**
- ❖ Interestingly, after exposure to **p.a.p.a.**, more students believe that they are somewhat likely to have a child prior to graduating high school (29% post **p.a.p.a.** compared to 26% prior to **p.a.p.a.**) This finding is more common among boys (33%) than girls (24%) and it is likely that students better understand that they are at-risk for early childbearing after being exposed to **p.a.p.a.**, rather than students having a stronger desire for a child.

**Many students do not get a strong message from their parents to delay childbearing until they are out of high school.** Prior to **p.a.p.a.**, 63% of students commented that their parents would be very disappointed in them if they had a child prior to graduating from high school. This number increased significantly to 65% following **p.a.p.a.**, yet one-third of students report that their

parents would NOT be very disappointed in them if they became pregnant while still in high school.

By contrast, 85% of teens report that their parents would be very disappointed in them if they did not graduate high school (both pre and post).

Approximately 54% of students report that their parents would be very disappointed in them if they did not graduate from college.

To the extent that parental expectations affect student behavior, parents need to send a stronger message to their teens regarding education and family formation. Indeed, fewer than half of students report talking about their future jobs and education with their parents, and even fewer discuss issues of avoiding early childbearing.

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## FOCUS GROUP FINDINGS

To gain a deeper insight into students' experiences with the **p.a.p.a. Curriculum**, we conducted nine focus groups with 75 students in four schools across the state. Four focus groups were conducted in spring 2009 and five were conducted in spring 2010. Two of the five focus groups in 2010 were follow-up focus groups to determine the extent to which students retained the information they learned in **p.a.p.a.** and whether it influenced their behavior over the course of a year.

### PURPOSE AND RELEVANCE OF **p.a.p.a.**

**Students believe the primary purpose of p.a.p.a. is to teach young people about the consequences of being a parent at an early age and to encourage young people to wait to have a baby until they are ready.**

A student from the Panhandle commented, “[**p.a.p.a.**] was an eye opener to me because I have big dreams for my future... I’m a big planner and I want things to be done a certain way and the people on the video said that everything changed and they couldn’t do anything they wanted to do anymore because it was all about their kids. They couldn’t go to college where they wanted to go, they had to move back home...just all of the expenses. It hits close to home when you have the same dreams.”

One student from the Rio Grande Valley said, “[**p.a.p.a.** makes you] aware about what could really happen...[the] people who have been through it tell you what will happen if you get pregnant at an early age.”

A participant in Central Texas stated, “[**p.a.p.a.**] shows you the lifestyle of being a young parent, your responsibilities, [the] things you can’t do. You can’t play football, you can’t go out with your friends. You have to be with that child 24-7. So you have no life really.”

A student from North Central Texas recalled, “[**p.a.p.a.** makes you understand the] reality of having a kid... it seems like it will be a lot of time and money. It would be really frustrating.”

A second participant from the Rio Grande Valley commented, “You don’t know what consequences go with [having a baby], and that program...makes you aware of what falls behind your mistake.”

Another student from Central Texas underscored her major take away from **p.a.p.a.**, “They [the teen parents in the videos] did a great job! They made me change my mind [from] somebody who wanted to be young and pregnant ...to someone who thinks [that] I want to be able to provide for my baby.”

A few students went further and asserted that **p.a.p.a.** was designed so that students would understand that children take a lot of commitment and are not something to have ‘just to be popular.’

One student from the Panhandle noted that the primary purpose of **p.a.p.a.** was for students to understand that children are “not only hard when you’re pregnant and they’re little, but they get harder and more expensive when they grow up.”

**Students claim that the topics covered in p.a.p.a. are highly relevant to their lives and that it is necessary to discuss these issues with adolescents.** Students overwhelmingly agreed that **p.a.p.a.** is important, necessary, and relevant. In each site, students commented that there was a high incidence of teen pregnancy and that too few students really understood the realities of being a young parent.

Two students from the Rio Grande Valley discussed the situation at their campus, “[It’s] amazing to see how many girls walk around with a baby.” The second participant added, “They take it so lightly, but they don’t know what’s coming to them.”

A student from North Central Texas commented, “There’s a growing problem around here, there are a lot of girls pregnant around our school. Most of them drop out.”

One participant from the Panhandle remarked on the need for the curriculum, “As many kids as we have pregnant now, [**p.a.p.a.**] shows them that you don’t really want to be pregnant at this time because of how much it’s going to cost you, and what you have to go through at this time just to have a kid.”

**Students were also convinced that boys needed information about parenting as much as girls.** Teen pregnancy is generally thought of as an issue regarding girls, and students appreciated that **p.a.p.a.** emphasizes the responsibilities and rights of boys who may be or become young parents as well.

### **INFORMATION UNIQUE TO p.a.p.a.**

Most of the participants had encountered some of the information provided in **p.a.p.a.** through personal experience or through other programs aimed at preventing unintended pregnancies among young people. Participants from all four schools, however, said they appreciated that **p.a.p.a.** provided greater detail on the impact of having a baby as a teen and provided new information on the legal aspects of childbearing and positive parenting skills.

**Many students had no previous understanding of the specifics of paying child support, how to establish paternity, and the associated benefits.** Students commented that **p.a.p.a.** provided new information on the legal issues surrounding single-parent households.

One student from the Rio Grande Valley remarked, *“Most of the [legal] information there was new for me because I didn’t know what would happen if the parent wasn’t there for me. I didn’t know...about the form you have to sign as the parent, that’s a lot of things you have to go through.”*

Another participant from the Panhandle asserted, *“I knew that you had to pay child support, but I didn’t know about percentages and that you had to pay medical care.”*

A student from North Central Texas recalled some of the benefits he learned about paternity establishment, *“[the AOP] acknowledges that [the] child is intertwined with the parents.”*

**Prior to p.a.p.a., students had very limited knowledge regarding the legal rights and responsibilities of fathers.**

One student from North Central Texas stated, *“I never thought about what happens when a guy gets one girl pregnant and then a lot of his money goes to pay for that*

*girl, and then if he goes out and has another kid, all the different... well it gets really complicated.”*

A student from the Rio Grande Valley noted, *“If it does happen to you, if you have a baby ...the legal rights you have if he denies the baby you can still get him to take a DNA test. You have assurances.”*

One participant in Central Texas described the situation, *“[Girls are] not aware of all the options they have, how they can get support, go to court, that he has to sign the AOP, so they’re just stuck.”*

Another participant from the Rio Grande Valley recalled what he learned about the legal aspects covered in **p.a.p.a.**, *“[with] child support, even if you get to see your kid or not you still have to pay and help support whichever parent is taking care of it.”*

### **PRIMARY MESSAGES RECEIVED FROM p.a.p.a.**

Students were asked to comment on the main points they learned from the **p.a.p.a. Curriculum** and/or what they remembered the most from **p.a.p.a.** **The majority of the comments centered around two themes: the realities of early parenting and relationship issues.**

These themes were consistent with the responses of the 5,730 students who completed the pre and post assessments. In the surveys, the top student responses with regard to the primary information they learned from the curriculum include: the realities of parenting (18%), the importance of paternal involvement (13%), the legal aspects of paternity establishment and child support (11%), and the elements of a healthy relationship (6%).

### **REALITIES OF EARLY PARENTING**

**Many students thought p.a.p.a. provided a clear picture of the amount of time it takes to care for a baby.** Students agreed that a baby would have a dramatic [mostly negative] effect on their life.

A student in North Central Texas noted, *“The time it takes to care for a child... [I] knew that it would be a lot, but [p.a.p.a.] really helped [me] to understand how much.”*

A student from North Central Texas remarked, *“If you don’t have a kid, you’re going to have more time to spend with your friends, you can study, you’re free.”*

One student from the Rio Grande Valley stated, *“You don’t really have time for yourself anymore because you have someone else to take care of. So it’s not all about you anymore, it’s simply about the child.”*

**Students said the stories from the videos helped them to realize that young parents have to sacrifice their way of life for a new baby.**

The participants in Central Texas said that they appreciated the stories because it made them think about their own priorities and the resources a person needs to raise a child.

A participant in Central Texas remarked, *“I think about all the goals that I want to reach, having a kid [now] would just ruin everything.”*

Participants revealed that **p.a.p.a.** taught them about the responsibilities of having a child and how much teenagers give up once they become parents. Several students remarked that these themes made them think more critically about their own future.

A student from the Rio Grande Valley stated, *“You lose a lot of opportunities for school, college, and experiencing new things because you have somebody else to take care of.”*

Another participant from the Panhandle added, *“I want to go far in sports and I don’t want a kid to take that away from me.”*

A student in the Central Texas focus group said, *“[p.a.p.a.] made me think about all of the stuff I need to have done before I have a baby. A lot of people struggle with a house...you need to set back money for things, a lot of money because you’re going to need a lot of stuff. As a teenager, you can’t really set back that much.”*

**Students regularly commented that they were surprised to learn about the financial costs to care for a child.** Participants felt overwhelmed by the expected costs of raising a child. Most students from the four campuses acknowledged that they had not previously thought of specific financial aspects such as day care, health care, and child support.

Two students from the Panhandle relayed their thoughts, *“[It’s] striking info about how much stuff costs and how hard it is for those people being interviewed to raise a child on their own.”*

Another added, *“Especially like child support and the health care. Kids are expensive and it’s hard to take care of them.”*

A third participant from the Panhandle elaborated, *“I knew it was expensive, but when they started talking about child support... it is a lot. I knew you’d have to buy diapers and stuff, but then with the child support... a job, and be in school. It’s a lot to handle at this age.”*

Another student from the Panhandle stated, *“We learned about how you have to pay child support and the percentages for how many kids you have. You will have no money after you pay child support.”*

**The participants in the focus groups were also concerned about the support that they would need from their own parents and how that would impact their relationship with them.** A participant from Central Texas commented, *“Even if you have parents there to support you, you’re not going to want to live off your parents for such a long time.”*

**Students emphasized that the program helped to dissuade young people from having a baby for the ‘wrong’ reasons.** The participants widely believe that most teens do not think about the long-term effects of having a child and that **p.a.p.a.** provides valuable information about the real consequences of being a young parent.

A student in Central Texas provided a good summary of why he thought **p.a.p.a.** was important, *“I never thought of the pros and cons of what could have happened because I always wanted to have a child at a young age, cause I’d get to spend more time with my child, so that I can enjoy them more in my life. But after [p.a.p.a.] I’m waiting ‘til my 30’s. I never thought of all of those negative things. I just thought, get a job and support your baby, but now...you have to be emotionally ready.”*

Another participant from the Rio Grande Valley concluded, *“[I] knew it was there but never really paid much attention to it. [Teen parenting] had been brought up a few times, but never to the extent. This helped us realize the*

*greatness of this, how serious it is. Because a lot of people just blow it off.*

*It just makes you realize 'oh this is a big thing'. You've got to make sure this is really, really what you want."*

**Students reported that p.a.p.a. helped them to recognize the difficulty in providing a solid foundation for a child while they are minors.**

The participants discussed that most teenagers are not mature enough to handle the responsibilities of a baby and agreed that the curriculum made them think about their own timeframe for having a child.

A student from Central Texas noted, *"Being a teenager is mostly hard enough because you're going through the changes of life, but having a kid and dealing with those changes puts more pressure on you."*

One student from the Rio Grande Valley remarked, *"The responsibility of controlling yourself is hard enough, but then having a kid to go along with it is kind of impossible."*

A participant from North Central Texas commented, *"It pretty much ruins your life [when you're young]. I need more time to get my life in order before I can have a kid."*

Another participant in Central Texas delved further into the need to plan for a baby, *"You have to be economically ready, mentally ready, [and] emotionally ready. [You have to] be ready to support [the] kid and know what you're doing."*

**Several students mentioned that boys and girls have different views on early parenting. Many students asserted that teenage girls become pregnant to fill an emotional void in their lives.**

The participants believed that some girls become pregnant to get attention from friends and family, maintain a shaky relationship with a boyfriend, or to *'feel loved.'*

A participant from Central Texas elaborated on the point, *"You look at the kids who are pregnant and how their parents are, it's like their parents aren't giving them attention. I think that's why they get [pregnant]...they want to have babies so they can change; so that they can try to be better, but they're not educated."*

Another student from the Panhandle remarked, *"Some girls think, 'I want to be with you forever, have a*

*baby', because supposedly having a baby will bring you closer."*The students felt this was a mistake, especially because they thought that boys *'live for the moment'* and this could lead to *'some problems'* in the future.

The participants contrasted the views of girls who become pregnant to fill a void with the views of boys. Many of the students, especially the boys, asserted that most teenage boys do not want a child as a teenager, and are not thinking about the long-term consequences of having a child before engaging in sexual activity.

A student in Central Texas commented on how young men perceive unplanned pregnancy, *"It is really not that easy, when you walk around school, guys don't really think of that. They just think of 'bitting it and quitting it'...they don't think about the consequences of what could happen."*

## **RELATIONSHIP ISSUES**

**Students reported that p.a.p.a.'s focus on building positive relationships helped them to identify the negative impact a baby can have on a relationship and to understand how parental relationships affect children both emotionally and physically.** Participants expressed that it was unlikely that most teen relationships would last and that the separation would negatively impact the child. Students reported that **p.a.p.a.** had provided them with greater knowledge on the importance of building stable, long-term relationships before having a child.

A student from the Panhandle reflected, *"Everyone thinks that when they get pregnant that their relationship is just going to stay together, that it will get better, but it won't; it gets harder and they don't usually stay together."*

One participant in Central Texas commented, *"It gets frustrating, even when you're boyfriend and girlfriend, when you argue and stuff, you're going to argue even more when the baby is born."*

Two students from North Central Texas discussed what they learned from **p.a.p.a.**, *"Don't have a kid out of wedlock. If you have a child out of wedlock you're going to have a lot more problems, and a possibility of you two splitting [is] like 4 to 5 times higher versus having a*

*kid when you're married. You're going to have better communication and everything."*

Another student added, "...*make sure you have a stable marriage first. The videos talk a lot about how the couples, if you're not married, it may not work out as well.*"

Students also appreciated that **p.a.p.a.** discussed the importance of both parents being involved in a child's life, even if the parents are not romantically involved. A participant who already has children expressed that this aspect of the curriculum resonated with him. He reflected on the difficulties of raising children with someone he is no longer romantically involved with, *"It's a struggle but it's not the kids' fault, it ours. It's tough, but at the same time I love my kids."*

## SELECTED STUDENT COMMENTS

Students who completed the pre and post assessments also shared the primary message they gleaned from their experience with the **p.a.p.a. Curriculum**. Below is a representative sample of their written responses:

### On parenting:

- ❖ *"You learn alot [sic] about parenthood. You learn how to take care of [your] children."*
- ❖ *"It tells you [about] the things how to take care of the child and to tell how to get acknowledgement of paternity [sic]."*

### On relationship violence:

- ❖ *"I, personally, liked how it goes into detail about how to avoid abusive relationships, and how it tells you what to look out for."*
- ❖ *"They made me aware that children get affected when their parents argue. Also that your kids should always come first."*

### On paternity establishment:

- ❖ *"[I learned] that the father's name can not [sic] [always] go on the birth certificate."*

- ❖ *"It talked alot [sic] about establishing paternity for your child. I didn't know what paternity meant until **p.a.p.a.**"*
- ❖ *"Knowing I can establish paternity if the situation ever calls for it is somewhat comforting, and I'd want the father of my child to be an active part of his or her life."*

### On the financial realities of parenting:

- ❖ *"It takes like half the money you make if you're working... it gets expensive!"*
- ❖ *"**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."*

## EFFECTIVENESS OF p.a.p.a.

Most students in the focus groups thought **p.a.p.a.** would influence their subsequent behavior and decisions. Students had difficulty expressing exactly what they would do differently with regards to their behavior, but many students said that *'it's just with you,'* and that **p.a.p.a.** will make them *'think first.'*

Students from the Rio Grande Valley and Central Texas were more likely to believe that the **p.a.p.a. Curriculum** will change students' behavior, and agreed it had a positive impact on how they thought about planning for a baby.

One student from the Rio Grande Valley commented about the effect the program had on him, *"You're going to think twice before you do something that you're going to regret."*

Some students remained skeptical that the program would prevent teenagers from having children at a young age. Although participants consistently claimed that the **p.a.p.a. Curriculum** was important, students from two of the campuses were convinced that the program would have little effect in changing the behavior of students, particularly those who are already sexually active.

One student from the North Central high school remarked, *"[I] think that it is important, but it's not going to work. Teenagers will have sex."*

One student from the Panhandle asserted, *"You can tell them and they can understand, but they're going to do what they want."*

In further discussion, the participants from both of these campuses decided that **p.a.p.a.** may influence student behavior by making students act more carefully; a participant from the Panhandle elaborated, *"[The information] will be in the back of their heads; they're still going to do it, but they will have it in the back of their heads."*

**p.a.p.a. is very helpful to students who are currently young parents, and they believe that it would have made a difference in their decision to get pregnant if they had been exposed to p.a.p.a.** Five of the focus group participants were parents, thus we cannot draw strong conclusions, but these students all commented that **p.a.p.a.** informed them of information that they had not previously been aware of. In addition, they wished they had discussed the issues in **p.a.p.a.** prior to becoming pregnant.

**A female parent said:** *"I like that it informed me on a way to make sure that the father of my child is established, by when having my child make sure that he signs the AOP!"*

## **LONG-TERM EFFECTS OF p.a.p.a.**

To determine whether the information students gleaned from **p.a.p.a.** resonated and if it influenced student behavior, we re-interviewed 14 students in spring 2010 who were interviewed in spring 2009.

To measure knowledge retention, the students also re-took the assessment. The number of students who completed this exercise is too small to draw large conclusions, but the results are suggestive.

**Students' retention of the specific legal aspects they learned in p.a.p.a. is quite low.** On average, the students' scores on the follow-up assessment were similar to the average pre test scores. In subsequent discussions, however, it was evident that although many students could not recall specific facts, they were more familiar with the concepts than they were prior to being exposed to **p.a.p.a.**

**In the students' opinion, remembering the specific facts was not very important. They stated that p.a.p.a. 'was still with [them].'**

Having been exposed to the curriculum *'made them think,'* about their decisions and they believed that it influenced their behavior. Students claimed that they could find the factual information when they needed it, but that before **p.a.p.a.** they would not have known where to look for it.

**Students commented that p.a.p.a. influenced their behavior over the prior year by making them more aware of the consequences of early parenting.** One male student privately shared a particularly poignant story: his girlfriend was convinced that they should have a baby because most of their friends were young parents. He stated that having **p.a.p.a.** provided him with the information he needed to convince himself and his girlfriend that they should wait.

**Students want a follow-up course to p.a.p.a. to review the material and provide more forums for discussion on the issues that they believe are very important to their lives.**

## **BEST ELEMENTS OF p.a.p.a.**

Students appreciated that the **p.a.p.a. Curriculum used real examples of teen parents and valued the authenticity of the parents in the videos.** Students consistently agreed that the *'real'* experiences of the teen parents were especially valuable components of the **p.a.p.a. Curriculum.** The participants expressed that the authenticity of the videos allowed the students to easily relate to the parents' experiences and think critically about **p.a.p.a.'s** message.

A student from the Panhandle remarked, *"They tried to make it pertain to you and how it could really affect you and your own life, not just with random situations, but bringing out stuff that pertains to kids our age."*

A participant from the Rio Grande Valley recalled, *"The best things for me was the videos, I liked it because it shows you what's happening in the real world."*

One student from North Central Texas commented that prior to the program *"You didn't really think that this could happen to you, but [the parents from the videos]"*

*didn't think it would happen to them. It makes me know that it can happen."*

Another participant from the Panhandle noted, *"It almost makes you picture yourself in their shoes and how hard it would be for you in your own life to do that."*

**Many of the participants said they valued the balanced perspective of the parents from the videos.** Participants regularly commented that they appreciated **p.a.p.a.'s** positive message. Students reflected that the program was more realistic because it emphasized how difficult having a baby early was for the teen parents, but also demonstrated that it was not always *'the end of the world'* for the parents involved.

One student from North Central Texas noted, *"It was good because it wasn't all like it wasn't going to work out. Some of them managed to work it out... They talked about how to have healthy relationships, and how that could help in raising a child, even if you're a teen parent."*

**Students also reported that they liked the idea that p.a.p.a. stresses positive choices that can be applied to many scenarios beyond parenting.**

The participants related to **p.a.p.a.'s** message about making positive choices and identified other areas of their life where the curriculum is applicable.

Students linked the lessons of the curriculum to other difficult situations they may encounter (e.g. dealing with drugs or alcohol).

A student from the Rio Grande Valley summed up, *"It helps for life!"*

One participant in Central Texas commented, *"[p.a.p.a. gives] good advice to take with you while you're growing up – helps you say no to other people and things too."*

Another student in North Central Texas remarked, *"I liked the idea that [p.a.p.a.] influences more positive choices for people, [it] get[s] in your head and [you can] use it for everything. That one positive choice is going to lead to other things, like better grades."*

**Students highlighted the usefulness of the scenarios in the curriculum and appreciated the opportunity to have an in-depth discussion about these issues with their teachers and peers.** Participants from most of the campuses said the scenarios portrayed in the **p.a.p.a. Curriculum** and

structured in-class discussions helped them apply the situations faced by the parents from the videos to their own lives. This was particularly important to students attending schools with higher rates of teen pregnancy. Students regularly commented that these issues were often not discussed at home and expressed it was helpful to talk through these situations with an adult and peers in a thoughtful manner.

One participant from the Panhandle commented, *"In my class, we looked at the scenarios and we had a lot of open-ended discussion about them, and took it a little bit further about the scenarios and about what could happen. It helped us all think about the things rather than just sitting there listening to someone."*

## AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT

**Some participants suggested that p.a.p.a. could be taught in a more creative way to make the curriculum more interactive.** Although students appreciated the information provided in the **p.a.p.a. Curriculum**, students expressed that **p.a.p.a.** should include activities to make the program more interactive to help ensure that students retain the information.

Students were mindful that such activities should be developed to be sensitive to all students' needs and account for *'immature'* pupils.

These comments reflected the variety of teaching styles that the students experienced because other students commented that they felt **p.a.p.a.** provided a lot of opportunity for role playing and interactive exercises.

In this same vein, many students suggested that the videos should be updated to provide more information on the young parents' stories. They enjoyed the videos, but would like more in-depth stories. A minority of students commented that the young parents in the videos were *'too old'* and that it was difficult to relate to them.

**Students have mixed feelings about the volume of worksheets that followed the readings and videos.** A minority of focus group participants commented that the program was somewhat

repetitive and boring at times. The students noted that the information provided in the videos was also included in the worksheets.

One student from the Panhandle commented, “[The] paper work you have to do; the reading’s not bad, but having to answer all the questions after it, it’s not that hard to do, but it’s kind of aggravating after a while.”

Students who completed the pre and post tests were also asked to comment on areas of improvement and the most common responses were that **p.a.p.a.** was ‘boring,’ ‘too long,’ or ‘repetitive’ (14% of students).

**Overwhelmingly, the participants believed that some aspects of p.a.p.a. should be introduced to middle school students.** Focus group participants regularly commented that the program could be more effective at reducing teen and unplanned pregnancies in Texas if elements of the **p.a.p.a. Curriculum** were presented in the 8th grade. Students felt 8th grade pupils were mature enough to sensitively handle the curriculum’s more ‘emotional’ aspects.

However, students largely felt the legal and financial material should be reserved for students in high school. Students were clear to say that they thought **p.a.p.a.** should be taught in middle AND high school to ALL students.

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## TEACHER FINDINGS

To determine teachers’ implementation of and fidelity to the **p.a.p.a. Curriculum**, as well as their opinions regarding **p.a.p.a.**, we surveyed teachers who participated in the evaluation study and all teachers who were trained to teach **p.a.p.a.** The findings below are based on survey data from 84 teachers from the 47 sample schools and 858 teachers who completed an online survey and who taught **p.a.p.a.** between fall 2008 and spring 2010.

### SUPPORT FOR **p.a.p.a.**

**The p.a.p.a. Curriculum is unique in its emphasis on paternity establishment and father involvement.** Most teachers who have taught **p.a.p.a.** have previously taught about issues relating to child development (75%), healthy relationships (74%), relationship violence (65%), and the responsibilities of parenting (50%). By contrast, only 6% of teachers had previously taught about the legal aspects of paternity. This finding suggests that **p.a.p.a.** is filling an unmet curriculum need.

**Teachers overwhelmingly agree that the issues covered in p.a.p.a. are relevant and should be taught to their students prior to graduating high school.** For example:

- ❖ Over 85% of teachers believe that the **p.a.p.a. Curriculum** addresses issues that are relevant to their students. (See Table 8)
- ❖ More than 80% of teachers believe that all students should be taught **p.a.p.a.** prior to graduating from high school.
- ❖ The numbers are slightly higher among the 858 teachers who completed the online survey than the 84 sample teachers, although the responses are quite similar.

**Teachers are less likely to believe that the issues covered in p.a.p.a. will alter their students’ attitudes and behaviors.** Despite the high level of support for the curriculum, teachers are slightly less likely to believe that **p.a.p.a.** will influence their students’ *attitudes* or *behavior*. For example:

- ❖ Approximately 76% of teachers agree or strongly agree that **p.a.p.a.** will help their students make more responsible choices regarding parenting.
- ❖ Fewer teachers (66%) believe **p.a.p.a.** will change their students' choices with regard to delaying pregnancy.
- ❖ Again, teachers in the sample from the randomly selected schools are slightly less sanguine than the teachers who voluntarily completed the online surveys, but the results are similar.

**TABLE 8:  
TEACHERS' OPINIONS REGARDING THE  
RELEVANCE OF THE p.a.p.a.  
CURRICULUM  
(% Agree or Strongly Agree)**

The <b>p.a.p.a. Curriculum</b> addresses issues that are relevant to my students.	85.7%
All students should be taught <b>p.a.p.a.</b> before graduating.	81.1%
<b>p.a.p.a. will help my students:</b>	
Make more responsible choices about parenting.	75.8%
Recognize the signs of unhealthy dating relationships.	85.4%
Understand the characteristics of a healthy marriage.	82.2%
Make more responsible choices about delaying pregnancy.	66.4%

Responses from 858 **p.a.p.a.** teachers who completed an online survey. Results from the 84 sample teachers are statistically similar.

## FIDELITY TO THE CURRICULUM

Many teachers reported little difficulty in incorporating the **p.a.p.a. Curriculum** into their existing health curriculum.

- ❖ Almost two-thirds (64.9%) of the 47 sample teachers and 57% of the 858 teachers taught **p.a.p.a.** within 14 school days or less.

- ❖ 63.4% of all teachers agreed that the length of the **p.a.p.a. Curriculum** was appropriate.

**Most teachers modify the p.a.p.a. Curriculum to fit it into their class schedules and existing health curriculum.**

- ❖ Approximately 79% of sample teachers and 60% of all teachers reported that they modified the **p.a.p.a. Curriculum** and did not teach it exactly as it is written in the teacher's guide.

Those teachers who modified **p.a.p.a.** commented that the curriculum was too long to teach within the existing timeframe, and they reported condensing areas that overlapped with the existing health curriculum or shortening assignments. In addition, some teachers skipped sessions altogether because they could not fit the entire curriculum into their semester.

Other teachers reported that they modified the health curriculum to incorporate **p.a.p.a.** without any changes to **p.a.p.a.'s** content. While some of these teachers felt this was the most appropriate means of structuring the semester, others expressed concern over portions of the health curriculum that had to be eliminated to accommodate **p.a.p.a.**

Some teachers reported that the content in **p.a.p.a.** provided too much information for their age-level of students, and they modified **p.a.p.a.** to make it more appropriate.

- ❖ Almost 30% of teachers reported that the legal issues in **p.a.p.a.** are too complex for many of their students to understand.
- ❖ Approximately 11% of teachers reported that the social issues in **p.a.p.a.** are too sensitive for their students.

Teachers who reported these concerns were more likely to modify the curriculum.

## QUALITY OF THE CURRICULUM

Teachers generally think the quality of the curriculum is **high**. Of Texas teachers who have taught **p.a.p.a.:**

- ❖ 55% report that the overall quality of the curriculum is ‘good’ or ‘excellent’ (See Table 9).
- ❖ An additional 42.5% regard the curriculum as acceptable.
- ❖ The teachers report that the student work sheets, teacher’s guide, discussion questions, and the DVD are acceptable to excellent, with very few teachers rating them as unsatisfactory.

**TABLE 9:  
TEACHERS’ OPINIONS REGARDING THE  
QUALITY OF THE p.a.p.a. CURRICULUM  
(%)**

	U/NI	A	G/E
Student Worksheets	8.6	52.0	39.4
Teacher’s Guide	3.9	42.4	53.7
Discussion Questions	3.4	46.5	50.1
Video/DVD	10.2	37.9	51.9
Overall Quality of Curriculum	2.5	42.5	55.0

Results based on statewide teacher survey. N= 858.  
U/NI=Unacceptable or Needs Improvement; A=Acceptable;  
G/E=Good or Excellent

The three sessions that teachers in the statewide survey identified as containing the most important information for their students are *Establishing Paternity*, *Choosing Healthy Relationships*, and *What it Takes to Be a Parent*. The results are similar for the 84 teachers in the sample, with the exception that sample teachers reported that the *Benefits of Legal Fatherhood* is more important than *Choosing Healthy Relationships*.

By contrast, the sessions that teachers would like to see improved are *What Can You Expect?*, *Building Strong Families*, and *What’s in Your Future?* Teachers commented that these sessions were either too complex, repetitive, not engaging, or not as relevant to their students’ needs.

**Teachers appreciate the resources and support they have received from the OAG.**

- ❖ Almost 90% of the larger sample of teachers who completed the online survey thought the training workshops provided by the OAG adequately prepared them to teach the **p.a.p.a. Curriculum** and that they have the necessary resources and support to teach **p.a.p.a.**
- ❖ Additionally, over 80% of the teachers report that the monthly emails that the OAG sends to the trained teachers are a helpful resource.
- ❖ The teachers found the PowerPoint presentations and the interactive games the most useful in helping them teach.
- ❖ Over 60% of the teachers use the downloadable teaching resources from the **p.a.p.a.** website, however, over 11% of teachers did not know these resources existed.
- ❖ Approximately 7% of teachers use the Spanish language materials.
- ❖ The use of online materials by teachers increased from spring 2009 to spring 2010.

**Because teachers have a limited background in the legal aspects of paternity establishment and child support, many do not feel confident in their ability to teach those subjects to students.**

- ❖ Fewer than half of teachers were very confident in their knowledge or expertise regarding paternity establishment.
- ❖ By contrast, 84% of teachers were very confident in their knowledge regarding healthy relationships, and 72% were very confident in their knowledge regarding child development.

Interviews with teachers reveal that teachers spend less time on subjects that they feel they lack confidence in, and the test results show that student knowledge is also low in these areas.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

Teachers made several suggestions as to how the OAG could provide additional support including on-going trainings, a speakers bank for classroom guests, interactive games, a PowerPoint presentation to

accompany each session, additional assessment tools (e.g. quizzes, graded work sheets), and updated and revised information about new legislative developments. The OAG has begun providing many of these resources as a result of preliminary feedback.

Teachers also suggested that printed workbooks for students would be valuable because it is difficult for teachers to photocopy all of the materials they need, and some teachers have limits on the number of copies they can make. The **p.a.p.a.** trainings are now emphasizing to teachers that they should increase the use of student projects and discussions rather than relying too heavily on the student handouts.

Teachers are interested in the availability of more interactive technologies to enhance the curriculum and provide more creative content to their students.

The teachers report that the legal aspects of paternity establishment are complex and that they need more information in these areas to feel more competent to teach **p.a.p.a.** Indeed, 22% of teachers reported that their students had questions about the curriculum that they were unable to answer. Teachers noted that these questions were mostly specific legal instances.

Limited teacher knowledge is associated with lower levels of student learning. In addition, teachers are more likely to eliminate elements of the curriculum that they are not confident in their ability to teach.

Identifying the few key issues that the OAG wants to ensure all students learn, and narrowing the focus of the trainings and curriculum to target these areas may increase teacher knowledge and student learning.

Additionally, the OAG is working to provide a resource for teachers that will provide more detail on the legal aspects of the curriculum, and the OAG continues to act as a valuable resource to teachers who have specific questions.

Although most teachers are successful, teachers find it very difficult to cover all of the **p.a.p.a. Curriculum**, and many comment that it is repetitive in some ways. Teachers are modifying the curriculum, which generally means shortening it.

To increase fidelity to the **p.a.p.a. Curriculum**, the OAG should identify areas in the curriculum that are

repetitive and highlight how each session is distinguished from all others. In addition, the OAG should identify areas of the curriculum that are complementary or similar to elements of the existing health curriculum. Helping teachers and principals understand how to incorporate **p.a.p.a.** into their existing health program will likely increase fidelity to the **p.a.p.a. Curriculum** across the state.

The OAG is beginning to modify their trainings to address the fact that many districts are beginning to teach **p.a.p.a.** to 8<sup>th</sup> grade students. The OAG may consider modifying the curriculum for various age group students; one for younger students that focuses primarily on healthy relationships and optimal sequencing behavior, and one for older students that focuses more heavily on the legal aspects of paternity establishment and the rights and responsibilities of early parenting.

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## PRINCIPAL FINDINGS

Between fall 2008 and spring 2010, we spoke with 66 principals to solicit their participation in the evaluation and to determine their opinions about **p.a.p.a.** Most principals admitted that they had not yet reviewed the curriculum, but all had reviewed a curriculum summary provided by the OAG, and many had spoken to their health teachers about the curriculum.

**Principals support the goals of p.a.p.a. and believe it is relevant to their students.** Overwhelmingly, principals laud **p.a.p.a.** They believe that the concepts covered in the curriculum are essential for their students to know prior to graduating high school, and they appreciate the balance **p.a.p.a.** provides between technical information regarding parental responsibilities and paternity establishment with discussions about making responsible choices.

Almost all principals understood that **p.a.p.a.** is NOT a ‘sex-ed’ curriculum. Most, however, commented that **p.a.p.a.** provided a valuable addition to their current ‘abstinence-only’ curricula. The principals consider **p.a.p.a.** to be ‘reality based’ and something that their students can relate to.

One principal of a large high school in the study commented, “I like that these topics will reach more students. I think this will help students think about responsibility and reality. Currently we have 62 girls who are pregnant in our school.”

Another principal said, “I am enthusiastic about it and feel like the program will be useful. It will enlighten them to make better decisions down the road. If it makes a difference for one student, it is worth it.”

**Principals have limited concerns regarding the content of the curriculum.** A few principals worried initially that the curriculum would ‘glamorize’ being pregnant, but these concerns were largely put to rest when they examined the curriculum and observed students in the classroom.

Several principals anticipated that their students’ parents would have concerns with the curriculum. All principals reported that the parents were either supportive of its content or that they had not heard

any parental feedback. No principal commented that parents had raised concerns.

**Principals have mixed feelings regarding the curriculum being mandatory, but demonstrate strong willingness to implement it.** Many principals were unaware that the curriculum was now a mandatory part of the health curriculum. The letter the OAG’s office sent about the evaluation study which indicated that the curriculum is mandatory was the first information that some had received about **p.a.p.a.** Most principals learned that this curriculum was to be offered in their health classes because of the training that their health teachers received.

Principals are not opposed to **p.a.p.a.** being taught in their schools, but some principals are concerned about an additional mandate. Principals from more advantaged schools showed the most concern for the mandate, and these principals were the least likely to feel that the curriculum was relevant to their students. Below are a few selected comments from principals who opposed the mandate:

*“It’s just one more thing that has to be done.”*

*“We are mandated to death and it should not be up to the schools to fix all of the social woes.”*

*“No administrators like another mandate to keep up with, but this is very important information for the kids to learn.”*

Many of the principals strongly supported the mandate and thought that making it mandatory is the only way to ensure that all children will receive it. One principal commented:

*“I have no problem with it being mandatory. Anything we can do to make kids more aware, we have got to do it!!! This is something schools have to do because there isn’t enough parental support on this issue. They need to be taught to think before acting.”*

In 2009, the Texas legislature deemed that a health course is no longer a state requirement for graduation. If health is taught in a school, **p.a.p.a.** is still required to be taught within health. Most principals report that their district will continue to offer health to their students, and many will require it at a local level. However, principals in more advantaged schools are less likely to report that their district will require

health for graduation, thus these students will be less likely to be exposed to the **p.a.p.a. Curriculum**.

**Principals have some concerns about how to incorporate p.a.p.a. into their existing schedules and curriculum.** Many high schools have begun using block scheduling, which means that their courses meet every other day for 90 minutes at a time. The **p.a.p.a. Curriculum** was designed for one hour periods, and thus some principals shared concerns about how their teachers would modify **p.a.p.a.** to accommodate this difference.

Principals also had concerns about how their health teachers would modify their existing curriculum to incorporate the additional 14 hours required by **p.a.p.a.** Most principals were not sure how their teachers would make this modification, but recognized parallels between **p.a.p.a.** and other elements of the existing health curriculum that could be replaced with the **p.a.p.a. Curriculum**.

**Health courses are increasingly being taught to 8<sup>th</sup> grade students because of full high school schedules.** Many principals noted that health is taught in the 8<sup>th</sup> grade in their district or that the district is moving in that direction. Most high schools still offer health, but as an elective course that students can take at any time throughout their high school tenure.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

The OAG has increased their communication with principals throughout the state, and increasingly principals are becoming more familiar with **p.a.p.a.**

To the extent possible, the OAG should provide guidance to the principals and districts on how to incorporate **p.a.p.a.** into the existing health curriculum.

The OAG should also provide clear suggestions on how to modify the curriculum for 8<sup>th</sup> grade students, and how to modify **p.a.p.a.** for block scheduling.

These measures will help to increase fidelity to the curriculum and allay most concerns principals have regarding the implementation of **p.a.p.a.**

Overall, principals are highly supportive of the **p.a.p.a. Curriculum**, but could use more guidance with regard to implementation.

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## SUMMARY

The **p.a.p.a. Curriculum** is an innovative and unique high school curriculum developed by the Child Support Division of the Texas Office of the Attorney General to teach adolescents about the rights, responsibilities, and realities of being a parent.

The curriculum has wide support from principals, teachers, and students who believe that it provides ‘*realistic*’ information to teens that educates them on the facts of being a parent and influences their attitudes toward marriage and childbearing.

The results of the evaluation showed that after exposure to the **p.a.p.a. Curriculum**, students were more likely to want to delay childbearing until after marriage and were more likely to value the importance of a father’s legal and social involvement.

In addition, students’ knowledge regarding the costs associated with being a parent increased and they had greater knowledge of the legal issues that unmarried parents face. Students’ overall level of knowledge increased by 12% between the pre and post assessments, and gains in knowledge were greatest on the issues that are most unique to the **p.a.p.a. Curriculum**. Although gains in knowledge were similar for most students, students most at risk of becoming a teen parent have the lowest level of knowledge prior to **p.a.p.a.** and demonstrate the greatest need for the curriculum.

Teachers and principals overwhelmingly agree that the issues covered in **p.a.p.a.** are relevant and should be taught to their students prior to graduating from high school. Principals are generally supportive of the mandate for the curriculum and consider **p.a.p.a.** to be ‘*reality based*’ and an important complement to other programs.

Although this evaluation cannot determine whether increases in students’ knowledge and attitudes regarding parenting, paternity establishment, and healthy relationships will lead to significant changes in students’ behavior, the **p.a.p.a. Curriculum** is a necessary first step toward affecting teens and may provide a valuable intervention to help teens make more responsible choices.

# Appendix:

## p.a.p.a.

### Pre and Post Assessment Results

#### Knowledge Based Questions

Pre %	Post %	
1. For unmarried, separated, or divorced parents, the parent who has been given the legal right to decide where a child lives and has primary care of a child is called a:		
7.9	6.6	Mother
89.2	91.2	<b>Custodial parent</b>
0.7	0.7	Father
2.1	1.4	Noncustodial parent
2. Both the noncustodial and the custodial parents are legally responsible for supporting their child financially.		
87.5	88.3	<b>True</b>
12.6	11.7	False
3. When a child is born to unmarried parents, the biological father automatically has the same legal rights and legal responsibilities as the biological mother.		
74.1	46.8	True
25.9	53.2	<b>False</b>
4. There are three pathways to establish legal paternity for a child born to unmarried parents. Which of the following is NOT a pathway?		
2.8	7.8	Fill out the Acknowledgement of Paternity (AOP) form
13.0	9.6	Go into the child support office and fill out an agreed paternity order
59.0	72.6	<b>Give the baby the father's last name</b>
15.0	9.9	File a paternity petition in court
5. One benefit of establishing paternity is that the father's name can go on the birth certificate.		
83.6	90.2	<b>True</b>
16.4	9.8	False
6. In the state of Texas, only the mother can open a child support case at the Office of the Attorney General.		
19.3	17.9	True
80.7	82.0	<b>False</b>

Pre %	Post %	
7. A noncustodial parent who stops paying court-ordered child support can have his/her driver's license suspended.		
67.6	84.5	<b>True</b>
32.4	15.5	False
8. In most cases, what percentage of the noncustodial parent's net income would be paid in child support for one child?		
20.8	15.4	10% of net income
43.2	63.0	<b>20% of net income</b>
24.1	13.9	30% of net income
11.9	7.7	40% of net income
9. Noncustodial parents do not have to pay child support if they do not get to see their child.		
18.1	14.4	True
81.9	85.6	<b>False</b>
10. A noncustodial parent who stops paying court-ordered child support can have his/her IRS tax refund or lottery winnings taken away or withheld.		
80.5	89.8	<b>True</b>
19.5	10.2	False
11. When an infant cries, it is important to:		
3.6	2.9	Ignore them so they don't get spoiled
91.8	92.6	<b>Pick them up and comfort them</b>
1.8	1.9	Tell the baby to stop crying
2.7	2.5	Take the baby to the doctor right away
12. The average additional cost per month for an adult to take care of a child (childcare, diapers, food, housing, medical care, clothing) in the state of Texas is:		
10.3	6.9	Under \$400 per month
72.7	65.8	Between \$400 and \$700 per month
16.9	27.4	<b>Over \$700 per month</b>

Pre %	Post %	
<b>13. If parents separate or divorce, their children will benefit if they:</b>		
85.2	90.7	<b>Work together as a team to keep their child out of the middle of arguments</b>
9.2	5.8	Make sure their children know what the other parent has done wrong
3.7	2.1	Compete to win their child's affection
1.9	1.5	Don't communicate with each other at all
<b>14. A key factor in having a healthy, long-lasting relationship is:</b>		
6.3	6.8	Trying never to argue with each other
3.5	2.4	Being very physically attracted to each other
4.4	3.9	Focusing all your time and energy on each other
85.9	86.9	<b>Being able to manage and resolve conflict with each other</b>
<b>15. Which of the following is a warning sign of a potentially abusive or violent relationship?</b>		
15.4	11.5	Your boyfriend or girlfriend feels hurt when you flirt with other people.
73.5	79.9	<b>Your boyfriend or girlfriend says that he/she is jealous and possessive of you because he/she loves you so much</b>
11.9	8.6	Your boyfriend or girlfriend wants to talk often about the problems in your relationship.
<b>16. Young children aren't impacted by their parents fighting because generally they don't understand what's going on with the conflict they are in their teens.</b>		
35.1	28.6	True
64.9	71.4	<b>False</b>

Correct answers are indicated in **bold** print.

## Attitudinal Questions

Pre %	Post %	
<b><i>How much would you say you agree with the following statements?</i></b>		
<b>17. Living together before marriage is a good way to test your relationship.</b>		
11.6	12.1	1 (Strongly disagree)
11.7	11.9	2
26.9	27.9	3
23.2	20.5	4
26.6	27.5	5 (Strongly agree)
<b>18. It is important to be married before having children.</b>		
3.2	2.6	1 (Strongly disagree)
5.8	4.5	2
16.4	16.4	3
19.1	20.4	4
55.5	56.1	5 (Strongly agree)
<b>19. I'm confident I could afford to raise a baby by myself as a teenager.</b>		
60.8	57.0	1 (Strongly disagree)
19.9	21.5	2
11.3	13.9	3
3.8	3.9	4
4.1	3.6	5 (Strongly agree)
<b>20. If I have a child before I am married, I will do everything possible to make sure paternity is legally established for my child.</b>		
2.7	2.2	1 (Strongly disagree)
2.4	1.8	2
13.2	8.9	3
19.5	16.3	4
62.3	70.7	5 (Strongly agree)
<b>21. It is important that a child has two actively involved parents, even if his/her parents do not live together.</b>		
2.4	1.9	1 (Strongly disagree)
2.8	2.1	2
9.8	8.6	3
16.9	13.9	4
68.1	73.4	5 (Strongly agree)

Pre %	Post %	
<b>22. Having a baby before I graduate high school would be one of the worst things that could happen to me.</b>		
14.1	12.1	1 (Strongly disagree)
11.4	11.7	2
18.5	20.1	3
12.9	14.8	4
43.0	41.3	5 (Strongly agree)
<b>23. Having children while you are single hurts your chances of later getting married.</b>		
12.9	11.5	1 (Strongly disagree)
17.6	16.7	2
35.1	37.1	3
20.7	20.9	4
13.6	14.0	5 (Strongly agree)
<b>24. Getting divorced is almost always bad.</b>		
8.8	8.8	1 (Strongly disagree)
15.8	14.9	2
36.3	39.3	3
19.5	19.5	4
19.7	17.6	5 (Strongly agree)
<b>25. Marriage usually changes a relationship for the worse.</b>		
41.7	37.9	1 (Strongly disagree)
29.1	30.4	2
20.2	22.4	3
5.3	5.1	4
3.8	4.2	5 (Strongly agree)
<b>26. At what age do you want to have your first child?</b>		
1.9	1.9	Already have a child
1.1	0.8	17 or younger
4.7	3.9	18-19
41.6	38.0	20-24
40.6	44.7	25-29
4.4	5.5	30 or older
5.7	5.2	Do not plan on having a child

Pre %	Post %	
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***What do you think are the chances that each of the following things will happen to you?***

<b>27. I will graduate from high school</b>		
0.8	0.8	1 (Very unlikely)
0.7	0.7	2
2.5	2.9	3
5.9	5.9	4
90.1	89.8	5 (Very likely)
<b>28. I will have a child before I graduate from high school</b>		
74.4	71.1	1 (Very unlikely)
13.1	15.3	2
7.7	8.3	3
2.1	1.9	4
2.8	3.4	5 (Very likely)
<b>29. I will graduate from college</b>		
3.0	2.9	1 (Very unlikely)
3.2	2.8	2
11.9	12.1	3
19.6	19.7	4
62.3	62.5	5 (Very likely)
<b>30. At what age do you want to get married?</b>		
0.6	0.7	Already married
0.5	0.4	17 or younger
4.7	4.2	18-19
52.4	51.8	20-24
33.4	34.2	25-29
4.1	4.1	30 or older
4.3	4.7	Do not plan on getting married

Pre %	Post %	
<b><i>How much do agree with each of the following statements?</i></b>		
<b>31. My mother is involved in my life.</b>		
4.2	4.2	1 (Strongly disagree)
4.0	4.0	2
10.2	10.6	3
15.7	15.9	4
65.8	65.3	5 (Strongly agree)
<b>32. I like myself just the way I am.</b>		
1.9	2.2	1 (Strongly disagree)
3.9	3.6	2
14.2	14.2	3
27.5	27.6	4
52.5	52.4	5 (Strongly agree)
<b>33. My father is involved in my life.</b>		
15.0	15.4	1 (Strongly disagree)
8.7	8.4	2
13.6	13.7	3
15.6	15.4	4
47.2	47.1	5 (Strongly agree)
<b>34. Most of the adults I know seem to be in happy marriages.</b>		
7.5	6.3	1 (Strongly disagree)
14.7	13.1	2
35.5	36.0	3
25.8	26.4	4
16.6	18.2	5 (Strongly agree)
<b>35. I can talk to my parents about anything, even if I am having problems.</b>		
14.6	11.9	1 (Strongly disagree)
14.7	13.7	2
21.8	23.1	3
19.3	21.1	4
29.6	30.1	5 (Strongly agree)

Pre %	Post %	
<b><i>Thinking about the parent or adult that you feel most close to, on a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 is low and 5 is high, how disappointed would he or she be:</i></b>		
<b>36. If you did not graduate from high school?</b>		
2.5	2.3	1 (Not at all disappointed)
1.3	1.2	2
4.6	4.8	3
7.0	6.7	4
84.5	84.9	5 (Very disappointed)
<b>37. If you did not graduate from college?</b>		
4.3	4.1	1 (Not at all disappointed)
4.2	4.5	2
15.3	15.4	3
20.4	20.2	4
55.8	55.8	5 (Very disappointed)
<b>38. If you had a baby before you graduate from high school?</b>		
6.3	5.6	1 (Not at all disappointed)
5.4	4.9	2
13.9	13.9	3
11.5	11.2	4
62.8	64.4	5 (Very disappointed)

Pre %	Post %	
<b><i>On a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 is never and 5 is very often, how often do you and your parents talk about:</i></b>		
<b>39. Going to college</b>		
5.3	4.4	1 (Never)
7.4	6.6	2
21.5	20.7	3
26.5	27.5	4
39.4	40.8	5 (Very often)
<b>40. Drinking or drugs</b>		
22.2	20.3	1 (Never)
18.9	17.6	2
25.7	26.4	3
17.8	18.9	4
15.5	16.8	5 (Very often)
<b>41. How to avoid getting pregnant</b>		
23.1	19.7	1 (Never)
18.8	17.9	2
23.4	25.4	3
14.7	16.4	4
20.1	20.6	5 (Very often)
<b>42. Future plans for jobs or a career</b>		
3.3	3.1	1 (Never)
5.0	4.1	2
13.6	14.4	3
25.8	27.3	4
52.3	51.1	5 (Very often)

<b>43. Where, if anywhere, have you previously discussed dating or marriage issues? SELECT ALL THAT APPLY.*</b>		
74.3		At home
67.5		At school
26.7		At church
11.8		Somewhere else (please explain): _____
10.6		Have not discussed these issues before
<b>44. Where, if anywhere, have you previously discussed the realities of being a parent? SELECT ALL THAT APPLY.*</b>		
66.7		At home
62.2		At school
20.7		At church
7.4		Somewhere else (please explain): _____
14.7		Have not discussed these issues before

***Thinking about your three closest friends, as far as you know, how many would you say:***

<b>45. Smoke cigarettes?</b>		
52.1	53.9	None of them
37.4	37.2	A couple of them
3.9	3.3	All of them
6.6	5.7	I don't know
<b>46. Have had a child?</b>		
70.9	70.3	None of them
23.7	24.9	A couple of them
1.1	0.9	All of them
4.3	3.9	I don't know
<b>47. Plan to go to college?</b>		
3.1	3.5	None of them
34.2	34.7	A couple of them
54.0	53.5	All of them
8.7	8.4	I don't know
<b>48. Have been suspended from school in the past year?</b>		
63.1	62.1	None of them
25.1	25.9	A couple of them
3.4	3.5	All of them
8.4	8.5	I don't know

<b>49. Within the past two years, did you have trouble getting homework done on a regular basis?*</b>		
52.0	Yes	
48.0	No	
<b>50. Within the past two years, were you ever suspended from school?*</b>		
13.3	Yes	
86.7	No	

Pre %	Post %	
<b>51. Do you smoke?</b>		
4.7	5.1	Yes
10.7	9.9	Only sometimes
84.6	85.0	No
<b>52. Do you always wear a seatbelt in the car?</b>		
52.1	52.9	Yes, always
39.1	39.3	Usually
8.8	7.7	No, I often don't wear one

<b>53. How old are you?*</b>		
0.39	Younger than 13	
1.15	13	
14.4	14	
30.8	15	
27.3	16	
19.4	17	
6.6	18 or older	

<b>54. How would you describe your race and/or ethnicity?*</b>		
37.7	White or Caucasian	
9.1	Black or African American	
47.7	Hispanic or Latino/a	
2.8	Asian or Pacific Islander	
2.0	Native American	
0.6	Other - please describe: _____	

<b>55. Were you born in the United States?*</b>		
87.4	Yes	
12.6	No	

<b>56. Are your biological parents married to each other?*</b>	
56.1	Yes
43.9	No
<b>57. Who do you live with? (check all that apply)*</b>	
84.9	Mother (biological or adoptive)
59.1	Father (biological or adoptive)
3.3	Stepmother
11.0	Stepfather
6.8	Grandmother or grandfather
5.8	Another relative
1.8	Parent's girlfriend or boyfriend
6.4	Other -please explain: _____
<b>58. What language is usually spoken in your home?*</b>	
63.7	English
14.9	Spanish
3.8	Both Spanish and English
17.1	Other - please list: _____
<b>59. Were either of your parents born somewhere other than the United States?*</b>	
33.4	Yes
62.8	No
3.7	I don't know
<b>60. Were your parents married to each other before you were born?*</b>	
72.7	Yes
27.3	No
<b>61. What is the highest grade that your mother completed in school?*</b>	
19.5	Less than high school
24.4	Graduated from high school
16.4	Some college, but did not graduate
24.8	Graduated from college with a bachelor's degree (a B.A. or B.S. degree)
15.0	I don't know
<b>62. In the past year, how often did you attend religious services?*</b>	
32.6	Every week
21.4	A few times a month
7.3	About once a month
21.8	A few times a year
16.9	Never

63. Are you currently in a serious romantic relationship with someone (seeing someone/talking with someone) that might be called a boyfriend or girlfriend?*	
34.8	Yes
43.7	No
21.5	Sort of

\*Indicates the questions asked only on the pre test

## **Contact Information**

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**For more information on the Parenting and Paternity Awareness (p.a.p.a.) Curriculum,  
visit the OAG website: <http://www.oag.state.tx.us/cs/ofl/papa/>**