

**MIAMI-DADE COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS
OFFICE OF PROGRAM EVALUATION
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**EVALUATION OF THE
COPE CENTERS**

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Continuing Opportunities for Purposeful Education (COPE) Centers is an alternative education program that provides Miami-Dade County Public Schools (MDCPS) students, who are either pregnant or new to parenting, uninterrupted education and health related services. COPE students benefit during the critical period of pregnancy, birth and early parenting by receiving special health education, child-care training, post-partum information, family planning and access to community resources. COPE students also receive instruction related to academic course requirements as well as vocational counseling and training. The COPE Centers serve approximately 350 students in grades 7-12. The program operates two centers serving different areas of the county.

The COPE Centers evaluation was requested by the Office of Alternative Education and Dropout Prevention Programs in order to address five evaluation questions. The evaluation questions were investigated by analyzing the academic performance of three cohorts of COPE students and by surveying COPE students and teachers.

The specific evaluation questions posed and the accompanying results are as follow:

- 1. What is the rate of recidivism at the COPE Centers?** The results of a longitudinal analysis of school enrollment show that the number of girls who become pregnant a second time and who choose to remain, or re-enroll at COPE is small. The percentage of girls who re-enroll at COPE with a second pregnancy after attending COPE is less than 3 percent.
- 2. What percentage of COPE students remain in school or graduate from school?** The results of a longitudinal analysis of academic progress indicates that only a small percentage of COPE students graduate from high school. Less than one third of COPE students manage to stay in school and graduate. The numbers are even lower when the focus is on girls who become pregnant while in middle school; only ten percent of these COPE students graduate from high school.
- 3. What is the academic performance of COPE students before, during and after attending the COPE Centers?** The present results show that COPE students, as a group, score lower than the District in reading and math, as evidenced by 2004 FCAT-NRT scores. On the other hand, a longitudinal analysis of FCAT-NRT performance shows that the academic progress of COPE students does not differ greatly from that of the District population. The reading percentile ranking standing of COPE students declines slightly as they get older. Their math scores, on the other hand, tend to remain stable. The pattern of academic performance described above is observed even when comparing the students' test scores at COPE to those received at other schools, prior or after attending COPE.

4. What do COPE students think about services and academic instruction provided at the COPE Centers? According to the students' survey responses, most received parenting and family planning instruction while attending COPE and rated the instruction as average or better. Also, the vast majority of students believe that COPE helped them deal with their pregnancies and become better parents. Almost all students surveyed recommend COPE as a good educational choice for pregnant girls.

5. What do COPE teachers think about services and academic instruction provided at the COPE Centers? According to survey results, COPE teachers believe that they provide COPE students with information and services that will help them become responsible adults. Teachers also tend to be of the opinion that COPE students have special needs and requirements, some which are being addressed at the school. According to the COPE teachers, students are better off educationally and emotionally due to the school's influence. One of the comments made by teachers is that COPE students tend to have an excessive number of absences from school.

Based on the results of the present evaluation the following recommendations are made:

1. Develop programs and guidelines to improve attendance among COPE students.
2. Develop programs and guidelines to improve graduation rates among COPE students.
3. Develop programs and guidelines to decrease the drop-out rate among middle school COPE students.

EVALUATION OF THE COPE CENTERS

The State of Florida has a relatively high rate of teenage pregnancy. In the year 2000, Florida ranked 6th in the U.S. in teenage pregnancies among girls 15 to 19 years of age (Guttmacher, 2004). The good news is that teenage pregnancy rates have declined greatly during the past 10 years at the federal, state and local levels. Nationally, approximately 12 percent of teens ages 15-19 became pregnant in 1990 compared to 8 percent in the year 2000 (CDC, 2004). But a significant number of teenage pregnancies and child births still occur annually with all the implications for school age children that such developments entail. In 2001, Miami-Dade County teenagers, ages 13-19, had a total of 3,396 live births (The Ounce of Prevention Fund, 2001).

To assist teenage mothers attending school, the Miami-Dade County Public Schools (MDCPS) developed the Continuing Education for Purposeful Education (COPE) Centers. The COPE Centers provide an alternative education program for MDCPS students who are either pregnant or new to parenting. These students receive access to an uninterrupted education and health related services. COPE students benefit during the critical period of pregnancy, birth and early parenting by receiving special health education, child-care training, post-partum information, family planning and access to community resources. COPE students also receive instruction related to academic course requirements as well as vocational counseling and training. The program operates two centers, COPE-North and COPE-South, that serve the different areas of the county.

The COPE Centers serve approximately 350 students in grades 6-12. Most of the students, about 90%, are at the senior high level (grades 9-12). Students return to their home schools approximately one year after they enter the program. The basic goals of the COPE Centers are: 1) to assist pregnant students and those who have recently become parents so that they can remain in school, and 2) to provide family planning to the students. Family planning includes instruction in parenting skills and information to help reduce recidivism.

The COPE Centers evaluation was requested by the Office of Alternative Education and Dropout Prevention Programs in order to address the following questions:

1. What is the rate of recidivism at the COPE Centers?
2. What percentage of COPE students remain in school or graduate from school?
3. What is the academic performance of COPE students before, during and after attending the COPE centers?
4. What do COPE students think about services and academic instruction provided at the COPE Centers?
5. What do COPE teachers think about services and academic instruction provided at the COPE Centers?

METHOD OF EVALUATION

The evaluation questions posed in the present report are addressed by analyzing the academic performance of three cohorts of COPE students and by surveying COPE students and teachers.

Evaluation Question 1. What is the rate of recidivism at the COPE Centers? . The first evaluation question was addressed by selecting a cohort of students enrolled in the COPE Centers (both North and South) at the beginning of the 1998-99 school year and following their progress to the end of the 2003-04 school year (Cohort 1). At the start of the 1998-99 school year the youngest COPE students (i.e., 7th graders) would have been in their early teens (12 to 14 years of age) and in 2003-04 these same students, except for two, would have been eligible for graduation and in their late teens (17 to 19 years of age). There were 476 students in grades 6-12 enrolled at the COPE Centers during the 1998-1999 school year. A total of 251 student were enrolled at COPE north and 225 students were enrolled at D.M. Wallace COPE South. The grade distribution for the Cohort 1 group is described in Table 1.

Recidivism is defined as enrolling in a COPE Center for a second time during the time period of 1998 through 2004. Teachers surveyed were also asked to indicate what percentage of students re-enroll in COPE.

Table 1. Distribution of Cohort 1 COPE students by grade level

| Number/ Ratio of Students | Grade Level | | | | | | | Total |
|---------------------------------|-------------|----|----|-----|-----|----|----|-------|
| | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 | |
| n | 2 | 12 | 30 | 150 | 117 | 96 | 69 | 476 |
| % | 1 | 3 | 6 | 32 | 25 | 20 | 15 | 100 |

Evaluation Question 2. What percentage of COPE students remain in school or graduate from school? The second evaluation question also followed Cohort 1 students enrolled at the COPE Centers during the 1998-99 school year through to the end of the 2003-04 school year. At the start of the 1998-99 school year the youngest COPE students would have been in the 7th grade and thus eligible for graduation in 2003-04 (i.e., in the 12th grade), if proceeding at a normal rate through the system. The percentage of students in this cohort who graduated (among those eligible), who remained in school, and who left the school system (as indicated by withdrawal codes) were calculated.

Evaluation Question 3. What is the academic performance of COPE students before, during and after attending the COPE centers? The third evaluation question relied on two additional cohorts of students. Three separate analyses were conducted. First, a cohort of grade 7 to 10 students enrolled at COPE during the 2003-2004 school year was selected (Cohort 2). Analysis 1: The 2004 NRT reading and math percentile standing of students while at COPE was examined. Analysis 2: The 2004 Stanford-9 (NRT) reading and math percentile standing of Cohort 2 students was compared to their own NRT percentile standings two years prior to that date (2002 NRT), while they were attending a school other than COPE.

For the third analysis, a separate cohort of grade 6 through 8 students enrolled at COPE during the 2001-2002 school year was selected (Cohort 3). Analysis 3: The 2002 Stanford-9 (NRT) reading and math percentile standing of Cohort 3 students was compared to their own NRT percentile standing two years later (2004 NRT) while they were attending a school other than COPE.

In general, these analyses examined the percentile NRT standing of the students while at COPE and also compared their NRT percentile standings with those attained before and after attending COPE. Students selected for this analysis had to have been promoted each year and taken the Stanford-9 NRT all years included for each specific analysis. Students in specific grades were selected for each cohort because they were the only ones that had taken the NRT each year during the three year period. All percentile conversions were based on NRT mean scale scores. The results are presented by grade level.

Evaluation Question 4. What do COPE students think about services and academic instruction provided at the COPE Centers? All 342 students enrolled in the COPE Centers during the 2004-05 school year were surveyed in January of 2005. A questionnaire assessed the students' views of the COPE Centers' curriculum and other services (Appendix A1). A total of 248 Student Questionnaires were returned for a return rate of 73 %.

Evaluation Question 5. What do COPE teachers think about services and academic instruction provided at the COPE Centers? All 63 teachers and instructional personnel working at the COPE Centers during the 2004-05 school year were surveyed in January 2005. A questionnaire assessed the teachers' views of the curriculum and related educational topics at the COPE Centers (Appendix A2). A total of 45 Student Questionnaires were returned for a return rate of 72 %.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Evaluation Question 1. What is the rate of recidivism at the COPE Centers?

The school enrollment of Cohort 1 students enrolled at the COPE Centers in 1998-99 was tracked for periods of 2 and 3 years.

2 Year Track. Eight students who were enrolled in COPE in 1998-99 were enrolled in COPE in 2000-2001. All but 1 of the 8 students had continuously been enrolled at COPE during this period. It's not possible to determine whether the girls became pregnant a second time or simply chose to stay at COPE to receive services. Assuming all 8 girls were pregnant a second time and eliminating girls who might have graduated during the time period in question, i.e., girls in grades 11 and 12 in 1998-1999, the largest possible recidivism rate is 2.6%. That is, the ratio of eight girls to the population of girls in grades 7-10 in 1998-1999 (n = 311) is 2.6 percent.

3 Year Track. Five students who were enrolled in COPE in 1998-99 were enrolled in COPE in 2001-2002. All 5 students had continuously been enrolled at COPE during this period. It's not possible to determine whether the girls became pregnant a second time or simply chose to stay at COPE to receive services. Assuming all 5 girls were pregnant a second time and eliminating girls who might have graduated during the time period in question, i.e., girls in grades 10 through 12 in 1998-1999, the largest possible recidivism rate is 2.6%. That is, the ratio of five girls to the population of girls in grades 7-9 in 1998-1999 (n = 194) is 2.6 percent.

Teacher Survey. The majority of teachers were of the opinion that second pregnancies were not a common occurrence at COPE (see teacher comments in Appendix B1). When asked whether a significant number of students return to COPE with second pregnancies, 91 percent of teachers surveyed indicated that this was not the case. In fact, one teacher provided statistics for her school as follows, "of 221 students registered, only 3 have more than one child, representing 1.36% of the student population". This figure could include girls who did not enroll at COPE during their first pregnancy. Additionally, teachers pointed out that students sometimes choose to stay at COPE after giving birth to access day care, medical services and other supports provided by the school.

Summary. The number of girls who become pregnant a second time during or after attending COPE and who remain at or re-enroll at COPE appears to be small. The maximum percentage of girls who re-enroll at COPE with a second pregnancy after attending COPE is less than 3 percent. The exact percentage of recidivism was not measured but it is estimated to be closer to 1 or 2 percent.

Evaluation Question 2. What percentage of COPE students remain in school or graduate from school?

A longitudinal analysis of the District records of all students enrolled at COPE during the 1998-99 school was conducted. A tally was made of the last transaction code of COPE students across a five year period, 1998-99 through 2003-04. The results below present, for each of the five years, the percentage of COPE students who: a) were actively enrolled in MDCPS, b) had graduated from MDCPS and c) were inactive and assumed to have dropped-out of school. The results are first presented for all COPE students across grades. These same results are next disaggregated by school level: middle and senior high school grades.

Grades 6-12. The records indicate that at the end of the 5-year period, in 2003-2004, none of the COPE students were enrolled in MDCPS. During this period a total of 6% of the students transferred to other schools outside MDCPS. Among the remaining students, 27% were able to graduate by obtaining either a standard diploma, a special diploma or a certificate of completion. The remaining 73% of COPE students dropped-out of school (Table 2).

Table 2. Status and graduation rates of 1998-99 COPE students, grades 6-12, across a five year period.

| Student Status | School Year | | | | | |
|----------------|-------------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| | 98-99 | 99-00 | 00-01 | 01-02 | 02-03 | 03-04 |
| Active | 100% | 26% | 10% | 4% | 1% | 0 |
| Graduated | 0 | 20% | 24% | 26% | 26% | 27% |
| Inactive/D.O. | 0 | 54% | 66% | 70% | 73% | 73% |
| Total* | 476 | 451 | 450 | 448 | 447 | 447 |

*Excludes students who transferred either to schools outside the county or private schools. Includes two 6th grade students. D.O. signifies dropped-out.

Grades 6-8. At the end of the 5-year period, in 2003-2004, none of the COPE middle grade students were enrolled in MDCPS. Anywhere from 9% to 18% of the students, depending on the year, transferred to schools outside MDCPS. Among the remaining students, 10% were able to graduate by obtaining either a standard diploma, a special diploma or a certificate of completion. The remaining 90% of COPE middle grade students dropped-out of school by period's end (Table 3).

Table 3. Status and graduation rates of 1998-99 COPE students, grades 6-8, across a five year period.

| Student Status | School Year | | | | | |
|----------------|-------------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| | 98-99 | 99-00 | 00-01 | 01-02 | 02-03 | 03-04 |
| Active | 100% | 44% | 35% | 23% | 10% | 0 |
| Graduated | 0 | 0 | 0 | 2% | 10% | 10% |
| Inactive/D.O. | 0 | 56% | 65% | 75% | 80% | 90% |
| Total* | 44 | 36 | 40 | 40 | 40 | 39 |

*Excludes students who transferred either to schools outside the county or private schools. Includes two 6th grade students. D.O. signifies dropped-out.

Grade 9-12. In 2003-04, after five years, none of the COPE senior high students were enrolled in MDCPS. Approximately 5 to 6% of the students, depending on the year, transferred to schools outside MDCPS. Among the remaining students, 28% were able to graduate by obtaining either a standard diploma, a special diploma or a certificate of completion. The remaining 72% of COPE senior high students dropped-out of school by the end 2002-03 school year (Table 4).

Table 4. Status and graduation rates of 1998-99 COPE students, grades 9-12, across a five year period.

| Student Status | School Year | | | | | |
|----------------|-------------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| | 98-99 | 99-00 | 00-01 | 01-02 | 02-03 | 03-04 |
| Active | 100% | 24% | 8% | 2% | 0 | 0 |
| Graduated | 0 | 22% | 26% | 28% | 28% | 28% |
| Inactive/D.O. | 0 | 54% | 66% | 70% | 72% | 72% |
| Total* | 432 | 410 | 410 | 408 | 407 | 408 |

*Excludes students who transferred either to schools outside the county or private schools. D.O. signifies dropped-out.

Summary. The number of COPE students who drop out of school is high, approaching three-fourths of all girls attending the schools. Less than one third of COPE students manage to stay in school and graduate. The numbers are more extreme when the focus is on girls who become pregnant while in middle school. Only ten percent of middle school COPE students graduate from high school and 90 percent drop-out of school.

Evaluation Question 3. What is the academic performance of COPE students before, during and after attending the COPE centers?

Current FCAT-NRT performance. The FCAT-NRT results of students enrolled at the two COPE centers during the 2003-04 school year were examined. A total of 123 COPE students had scores on both the 2004 FCAT-NRT reading and math tests. The mean reading and math scale scores were converted into normative percentile standings for each grade level.

The results show that COPE students were scoring in the 20th to 29th percentile range in reading and in the 28th to 39th percentile range in math, depending on grade level. These averages are lower than the District averages when compare by grade level (Table 5) .

Table 5. Percentile standing of COPE and District students on 2004 FCAT-NRT reading and mathematics

| 2004 FCAT-NRT Test | Grade Level | | | |
|--------------------------|--------------|---------------|---------------|----------------|
| | 7 (n = 8) | 8 (n = 12) | 9 (n = 46) | 10 (n = 71) |
| Reading | 29th | 21st | 21st | 20th |
| District | 47th | 49th | 34th | 34th |
| Mathematics | 30th | 30th | 39th | 28th |
| District | 55th | 56th | 57th | 55th |

FCAT-NRT performance prior to attending COPE. The FCAT-NRT results of students enrolled at the COPE centers during the 2003-04 school year were compared to their FCAT-NRT scores two years earlier while attending an MDCPS school other than COPE. To be include in the analysis the students had to have taken the reading and math portions of the FCAT-NRT in both 2002 and 2004. The results are presented in normative percentiles, by grade level, for students in grades 8 thorough10 in the school year 2003-04 (Table 6).

The results show that, for the most part, COPE students’ normative standing in reading decreased between 2002 and 2004. In three of four grade levels examined the reading percentile standings of students decreased across the two year period and in one grade level the percentile score remained constant. On the other hand, some improvement was observed in math performance. In two of four grade levels examined the math percentile standings of students increased across the two year period.

Table 6. COPE students' 2002 and 2004 FCAT-NRT percentile ranking: The 2002 results while not attending COPE and 2004 results while attending COPE

| 2003-04 Grade | n | Reading | | Mathematics | |
|------------------|----|------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|
| | | 2002 | 2004 | 2002 | 2004 |
| 7 | 6 | 28 th | 17 th | 28 th | 26 th |
| 8 | 11 | 19 th | 19 th | 16 th | 28 th |
| 9 | 33 | 31 st | 23 rd | 38 th | 40 th |
| 10 | 56 | 28 th | 20 th | 40 th | 28 th |

FCAT-NRT performance subsequent to attending COPE. Only nine students enrolled in COPE in 2002 were enrolled in MDCPS two years later at a school other than COPE and had a complete set of FCAT-NRT test scores. The results for this small group of students are displayed in Table 7. The results are similar to those presented in the previous section with two of three grade levels exhibiting declining reading scores and one of three grade levels exhibiting declining math performances after leaving COPE and moving to a regular school.

Table 7. COPE students' 2002 and 2004 FCAT-NRT percentile ranking: The 2002 results while attending COPE and 2004 results while not attending COPE

| 2003-04 Grade | n | Reading | | Mathematics | |
|------------------|---|------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|
| | | 2002 | 2004 | 2002 | 2004 |
| 8 | 3 | 22 th | 15 th | 31 th | 40 th |
| 9 | 3 | 32 st | 26 rd | 29 th | 29 th |
| 10 | 3 | 26 th | 33 th | 28 th | 20 th |

Summary. Some of the students who attend COPE are troubled youths from disadvantaged backgrounds. The 2004 FCAT-NRT scores of COPE students reflect this reality and shows them underperforming relative to similar grade students in the District. The performance of COPE students also declined across the two year prior to pregnancy, particularly in the area of reading. The students' math scores tend to hold up better through the two year period of analysis, even after the students enrolled in COPE and underwent the stresses of teenage pregnancy and child rearing.

Evaluation Question 4. What do COPE students think about services and academic instruction provided at the COPE Centers?

All students enrolled in COPE during the 2004-05 school year were surveyed. A total of 248 COPE students returned completed Student Questionnaires, for a return rate of 73 percent. The majority of students who completed the questionnaires were Black (62%) and the rest were Hispanic (35%) or White/Other (3%). The students were in grades 7 through 12. According to the students' responses, approximately half had attended COPE the previous year (49%).

The Student Questionnaire included a series of questions about the type and quality of instruction the students had received while attending COPE. Most students surveyed (92%) indicated that they had received instruction in parenting skills while attending COPE. Among students who received parenting skills instruction, most rated the quality of that instruction as either excellent (58%) or average (39%) with only two percent rating it as poor.

Students were also asked if they had received family planning instruction while attending COPE. Three-fourths of students surveyed (75%) indicated that they had received instruction in family planning while attending COPE. Among students who received family planning instruction, most rated the quality of that instruction as either excellent (51%) or average (48%) with only one percent rating it as poor.

Students were asked to rate the difficulty level of their regular curriculum classes at COPE as compared to that of schools previously attended. Approximately half of surveyed students reported the difficulty level of classes at COPE the same as that of previously attended schools (51%). About one-third of students (33%) thought that COPE classes were easier. A small percentage of students rated COPE classes more difficult as compared to previously attended schools (17%).

The great majority of surveyed students (93%) were confident that they would become, or were already, good parents. A small percentage (7%) were only "somewhat" confident with regards to their parenting skills. Students were also asked to indicate how confident they were in their ability to avoid future unwanted pregnancies. Most students (71%) expressed extreme confidence in this regard. About one-fourth of the students (26%) were "somewhat" confident while a small percentage of students (2%) indicated that they were "not at all" confident that they would be able to avoid unwanted pregnancies in the future.

When asked about the impact the COPE Center had exerted on them, most students (89%) indicated that attending COPE had helped them deal with their pregnancy. Most of the students were also of the opinion that attending COPE had helped them become better parents (83%). The vast majority of the students surveyed (95%) stated that they would recommend the COPE Center to other girls who became pregnant.

A total of 72 percent of COPE students responding to the survey wrote open-ended comments. The students most often mentioned that the school had been supportive during their pregnancy and that it had allowed them to continue their education. Other students liked the small class sizes and the information and assistance they received during their pregnancy, such as parenting skills instruction and nursery care. A few students complained about the food. Mostly they were of the opinion that pregnant girls need to eat more than normal students and that the amount of food served to them for lunch was insufficient. Many of the students recommended the school as a good place for pregnant girls (see Appendix B2 for a listing of the students' open-ended comments).

Summary. Students, for the most part, received parenting and family planning instruction while attending the COPE Centers and students tended to rate the instruction as average or better. The students were, for the most part, confident about their ability to be good parents. Students were less confident in their ability to avoid future unwanted pregnancies with close to one third of students indicating some uncertainty about being able to avoid future unwanted pregnancies. Most students found the level of education at COPE to be equivalent or harder than at their previous school but one-third of students found the education at COPE to be less rigorous when compared to their previous school. The vast majority of students believed that COPE had helped them deal with their pregnancies and also had helped them become better parents. Almost all students recommended COPE as a good educational choice for other pregnant girls.

Evaluation Question 5. What do COPE teachers think about services and academic instruction provided at the COPE Centers?

All teachers and instructional personnel working at COPE during the 2004-05 school year were surveyed. A total of 45 teachers returned completed Teacher Questionnaires, for a return rate of 72 percent. According to the survey responses, the average COPE teacher was experienced and had taught at COPE for many years. The average number of years COPE teachers had taught in MDCPS was 18. The average number of years the teachers had taught at COPE was 8. The results of the teacher survey are displayed in Table 8.

Almost all teachers surveyed agreed that students are adequately instructed in the areas of family planning (100%) and parenting skills (98%). Most teachers (89%) were also of the opinion that the curriculum at COPE was as rigorous as that found at regular schools. A few teachers wrote comments explaining that students attending COPE often have behavioral problems, attendance deficiencies, poor motivation and/or weak family support and that these factors negatively affect their education (see Appendix B1, Question #5).

The majority of teachers indicated that the school (87%) and region administration (74%) had been sufficiently supportive during the year. Teachers did raise various administration-related issues in their write-in comments. One teacher thought that more assistance was needed in encouraging student attendance. According to the teachers, students are often absent during pregnancy because they report that they feel sick and they are absent after pregnancy because their children are sick. These and other concerns are displayed verbatim in Appendix B1, Questions #6 & 7.

Only a small ratio of teachers (9%) reported second pregnancies as being common among COPE students. Many comments were made in the write-in section of the Teacher Questionnaire, all refuting that large numbers of students tend to return to COPE with second pregnancies (see Appendix B1, Question #8)

Approximately half of teachers surveyed (46%) indicated that COPE students need additional support beyond the COPE curriculum to become sexually responsible adults. Teachers wrote various comments; most indicating that, although COPE provided students with the necessary information to make good sexual/parenting decisions, other factors come into play that are beyond the school's control (see Appendix B1, Question 9).

Most teachers (93%) thought that students benefitted significantly by attending COPE while pregnant as compared to staying at their regular school. Teachers wrote numerous comments that pointed to factors that help the students during their pregnancy and child birth such as the on-site clinic, on-site nursery, flexible attendance policies and home schooling immediately after pregnancy, smaller class sizes, lack of stairs to climb in the school. Others comments addressing this issue appear in Appendix B1 Question 9.

Summary. It is evident from survey results and comments, that COPE teachers are an experienced and dedicated lot who care about the plight of their students. They believe that they provide COPE students with information and services that will help them become responsible adults. Teachers also tend to be of the opinion that COPE students have special needs and requirements, some which are being addressed at the school. According to the COPE teachers, students are better off educationally and emotionally due to the school's influence.

Table 8. Results of teacher survey

| Teacher Questionnaire Items | Percent | |
|---|----------------|-----------------|
| | Agree | Disagree |
| At COPE students receive an adequate education in the area of parenting skills. | 98 | 2 |
| At COPE students receive an adequate education in the area of family planning. | 100 | 0 |
| The core curriculum education students receive at COPE is as rigorous as what they would get in a regular school. | 89 | 11 |
| The school administration provides COPE teachers with the necessary support to provide students with the education and assistance they need. | 87 | 13 |
| The region administration provides COPE teachers with the necessary support to provide students with the education and assistance they need. | 74 | 26 |
| A significant number of students return to COPE with second pregnancies. | 9 | 91 |
| To become sexually responsible young ladies and/or successful parents, students need assistance beyond what they get at the COPE Center. | 46 | 54 |
| Students are not significantly benefitted by attending the COPE Center as opposed to staying at their own school (while pregnant). | 7 | 93 |

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The present evaluation was initiated primarily for the purpose of ascertaining whether students are repeatedly becoming pregnant and re-enrolling or continuing their attendance at COPE. The results of a longitudinal analysis of student progression clearly indicate that this is not the case. Very few COPE students, less than three percent, undergo second pregnancies and enroll at the Centers. Therefore, fears that the COPE Centers are supporting numerous students who repeatedly become pregnant are unfounded.

A second reason for evaluating the COPE Centers was to examine the students' academic performance. The present results show that COPE students, as a group, score lower than the District in reading and math. This finding is to be expected given the differences in the two groups of students. That is, students attending the COPE Centers usually have a greater share of emotional and social problems than the student population at large, which in part explains why they attend COPE. On the other hand, the academic progress of COPE students who remain in school does not differ greatly from that of the District population. The reading performance of COPE students declines slightly as they get older, but so does that of the District student population. Their math scores, on the other hand, tend to remain stable. In summary, it appears that COPE Centers perform an adequate educational job while working with a challenging group of students.

A third reason for evaluating the COPE Centers was to examine the graduation rate of students. The results of a longitudinal analysis of academic progress indicates that only a small percentage of COPE students graduate from high school. This is particularly true if the student's pregnancy occurs during the middle school years. The results show that the great majority of middle school students enrolled at COPE eventually drop-out of school. Consequently, the need to motivate COPE students to remain at school is one area that needs to be addressed by school and District staff.

The survey responses of COPE students and teachers indicates that they consider the COPE Center environment educational and supportive of the students' needs. Some of the teachers' comments suggest that school attendance is difficult to enforce in a school setting filled with young pregnant girls. Given that attendance is the basic factor underlying school performance and graduation, one of the recommendations below addresses attendance. Specifically, it may prove useful to have school and District staff review and change, as necessary, attendance policies and procedures with the goal of generating improved attendance among COPE students.

Based on the results of the present evaluation the following recommendations are made:

1. Develop programs and guidelines to improve attendance among COPE students.
2. Develop programs and guidelines to improve graduation rates among COPE students.
3. Develop programs and guidelines to decrease the drop-out rate among middle school COPE students.

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