

FINAL REPORT TO THE ILLINOIS GENERAL ASSEMBLY

Ensuring Success in School Task Force

June 2010

Addressing the educational and related needs of children and youths who are parents, expectant parents, or survivors of domestic or sexual violence to ensure their ability to stay in school, stay safe, and successfully complete their education

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Ensuring Success in School Task Force Final Report to the Illinois General Assembly

Call to Action

Public Act 95-0558, enacted into law in 2007, required the Illinois State Board of Education to create the Ensuring Success in School Task Force.¹ This state-mandated task force was charged with developing policies, procedures, and protocols to be adopted by school districts for addressing the educational and related needs of elementary and secondary students who are parents, expectant parents, or survivors of domestic or sexual violence to ensure their ability to stay in school, stay safe while in school, and successfully complete their education.

The duties of the Task Force include

- examining thoroughly the barriers to school attendance, safety, and completion for children and youths who are parents, expectant parents, or victims of domestic or sexual violence;
- researching and identifying effective policies, protocols, and programs in Illinois and elsewhere;
- conducting meetings and public hearings in geographically diverse locations throughout Illinois to ensure the maximum input from area advocates and service providers, from local education agencies, and from children and youths and their parents or guardians;
- establishing and adhering to procedures and protocols to allow individuals to participate in the Task Force anonymously and confidentially;
- inviting the testimony of and conferring with experts on relevant topics; and
- submitting a report of the Task Force's findings on best practices and policies to the General Assembly.

Task Force Members

- Rep. Karen A. Yarbrough (Task Force Co-Chair)
- Dr. Sonya L. Whitaker, Educator (Task Force Co-Chair)
- Sen. Pamela J. Althoff
- Sen. Iris Y. Martinez
- Rep. Rosemary Mulligan
- Jacqueline A. Ferguson, Illinois Coalition Against Domestic Violence
- Sandy Brown-Winner, Quincy Area Network Against Domestic Abuse
- Denyse Snyder, Illinois Coalition Against Sexual Assault
- Kathy Kempke, YWCA of Metropolitan Chicago West Suburban Center
- Adam Avrushin, Chicago Child Care Society
- Mary Bragg, School Social Worker, Champaign
- Dr. Michael Schneider, School Psychologist, Quincy
- Dr. Duncan Sylvester, School Counselor, Quincy
- Lynn Kearney, Harlem Federation of Teachers, IFT

- Keisha Williams, Elgin Teachers Association, IEA
- Cynthia S. Woods, Illinois Association of School Boards
- Dr. Robert Machak, Principal, Northbrook
- Brian Samuels, Chicago Public Schools
- Mike Rohling, Southern Illinois Regional Social Services Inc.
- Wendy Pollack, Sargent Shriver National Center on Poverty Law
- Scott Rigg, Educational Support Program High School, Jacksonville
- JoLynn Tappe, Adams/Pike Regional Office of Prevention Effectiveness Services
- Dr. Rosella Wamser, St. Clair Regional Office of Education
- Student
- Student
- Dr. Linda L. Tomlinson, Assistant Superintendent, Illinois State Board of Education
- Doris Garrett, Illinois Department of Human Services, Bureau of Domestic and Sexual Violence Prevention
- Jaci Vaughn, Illinois Department of Healthcare and Family Services, Division of Medical Programs
- Cynthia Moreno, Illinois Department of Children & Family Services, Service Intervention
- Lynda Dautenhahn, Illinois Department of Public Health, Office of Health Promotion

Methodology

The Task Force held member meetings, often inviting experts to present relevant research and existing initiatives, and public hearings across Illinois to convene students, parents, advocates, educators, service providers, and legislators to discuss challenges faced by students who are parents, expectant parents, or survivors of domestic or sexual violence and develop policies that will help these students so that they stay in school, stay safe while in school, and complete their education. The Task Force collected written testimony as well as oral testimony heard at the public hearings.

The Task Force's findings and recommendations are informed by the data gathered from the expert presentations, public testimony, and a review of literature and other states' statutes. From around the state individuals who submitted public testimony were parenting adolescent students, student survivors of domestic or sexual violence, students' parents, service providers, counselors, advocates, and school personnel.

Task Force Public Hearings

Date	City	Location
June 23, 2008	Quincy	Baldwin Intermediate School 3000 Main St. Quincy, IL 62301
August 6, 2008	Elgin	South Elgin High School 760 East Main St. South Elgin, IL 60177
September 11, 2008	Springfield	Springfield High School 101 South Lewis St. Springfield, IL 62704
October 14, 2008	Mount Vernon	Mount Vernon High School 320 South 7th St. Mount Vernon, IL 62864
February 2, 2009	Chicago	Chicago Foundation for Women 1 East Wacker Dr. Chicago, IL 60601

Addressing the Problem

Young people who are parents, expectant parents, or survivors of domestic or sexual violence face unique challenges as they try to meet school obligations while coping with pregnancy and parenting responsibilities or the stresses related to domestic and sexual violence—challenges that often interfere with their ability to have an education and reach their potential for educational development through the secondary level. With growing concern over the dropout and push-out crisis in Illinois, the Ensuring Success in School Task Force is focused on these factors that contribute to this crisis, but receive insufficient attention and disproportionately, though by no means exclusively, affect girls and young women.

Testimony collected by the Task Force from across Illinois indicates that students in our state are struggling to stay in school and maintain their safety both in the classroom and as they travel to and from school. Too often they face harassment, ridicule, and threats from peers and sometimes even school staff members when personal information about their situation is not kept confidential. And they encounter teachers, school officials, and administrators who fail to recognize their needs, to refer them to appropriate services and agencies, or to accommodate them in the classroom. Central to any effort to improve school protocol surrounding the needs of students who are parents, expectant parents, or survivors of domestic or sexual violence is prioritizing student safety and confidentiality.

Because these students have historically been stigmatized and discriminated against, Illinois policymakers and school staff members must understand and be sensitive to these children and youths' needs. Many of these students—and their parents—who would prefer to stay in school find that they are unable to and are pushed out or forced out because attending school has

become too difficult or unsafe. Some of these students find alternative programs to attend, others are forced into involuntary homeschooling, while others remain disconnected and do not complete their education. Ensuring that these students are treated with dignity and accorded the same rights and opportunities as their fellow students is fundamental to improving their chances of success in school and in their future lives.

Although there are federal and state laws that aim to safeguard the educational rights of students, these laws have not been effective in stemming the school dropout and push-out problem among children and youths who are expectant parents, parents, or survivors of domestic or sexual violence in Illinois. At the federal level, Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 prohibits discrimination in education on the basis of sex, including a ban on discrimination on the basis of marital or parental status. However, to our knowledge, courts have never interpreted Title IX and its regulations as requiring schools to offer specific protection or accommodations for survivors of domestic or sexual violence outside the school-based sexual harassment context.² The Constitution of the State of Illinois establishes the right to free public education through the secondary level for all people, states as a fundamental goal the educational development of all persons to the limits of their capacities, and prohibits discrimination in education on the basis of sex.³ Moreover, Illinois law mandates that “[n]o student shall be refused admission into or be excluded from any course of instruction offered in the common schools by reason of that person’s sex.”⁴ Sex equity regulations in Illinois further clarify that “[n]o student shall be discriminated against because of his or her actual or potential marital or parental status,” and “[n]o student shall be subjected to sexual intimidation or harassment by any school employee, by other students, or by the effect of any school policy or practice.”⁵ The issues central to this report—such as safety, nondiscrimination, and equal access to education—not only are required by federal law, state law, and the Illinois Constitution but also are central to the mission and goals of the Illinois State Board of Education.⁶ Despite this strong language in federal and state law, in Illinois students who are expectant and parenting and students who are survivors of domestic or sexual violence struggle to remain in school. These students need legal protections that specifically recognize their right to attend school and complete their education in a safe and encouraging learning environment.

As concern grows over the dropout crisis in Illinois, there is growing interest in the causes, such as the violence in our schools and on our streets, and the detrimental effect it has on the education of all children and youths. However, there has been little focus on domestic violence, sexual violence, and adolescent pregnancy and parenting issues that have particularly contributed to the academic failure of young women and girls. The Ensuring Success in School Task Force was created to help begin rectifying that omission.

The policy and procedural recommendations presented in this report offer strategies and solutions to issues that schools are already required to address. Task Force members are keenly aware of the difficult fiscal posture of our state, school districts, and human service providers. Many of the strategies and solutions offered can be accomplished at low or no cost; and, for the others, what is important is to begin taking the steps needed for proper implementation.

Developing Effective Responses to Meet Student Needs

While the state is taking some action to address the educational barriers faced by students who are parents, expectant parents, or survivors of domestic or sexual violence, the Task Force's findings indicate that these students need more resources and services than they are currently receiving to help them remain in school, stay safe, and succeed. However, greater funding for programs and services is not the only factor that will begin to ensure that these students have the opportunity to succeed in school. School districts must start to meet this chronic need effectively by immediately and efficiently redirecting their existing resources and establishing policies that recognize and are sensitive to the unique circumstances of this student population.

Ultimately the Task Force found that ad hoc approaches to the issues facing this student population are problematic: while some school districts are handling these issues in a sensitive manner, others are isolating students and unjustly preventing them from attaining their educational goals. In many stories heard by the Task Force, what determined whether the student was able to remain in school were the actions of a single school official or administrator. Clear, written policies and procedures should be implemented in all school districts to ensure that this student population is consistently treated in a fair manner.

Changes in law, policies, and procedures are needed to require schools to take proactive steps to support these students: intervening before these children and youths drop out is the most effective strategy to increase educational outcomes and promote healthy development. Actively supporting student success and personal development in our state's education system, and specifically in young women and girls' advancement throughout the system, is necessary to ensure equal opportunity for all students.⁷

Common Themes Heard at Task Force Public Hearings

At the public hearings the Task Force received testimony from students, parents of students, school personnel and administration, service providers, counselors, school nurses, social workers, advocates, and others concerned with supporting elementary and secondary school students who are parents, expectant parents, or survivors of domestic or sexual violence. The following list of topics heard at the public hearings is an overview of common problems, challenges, and concerns heard across the state:

- No integration of services among school districts and service providers in the community.
- The insufficiency of ad hoc responses to problems faced by this population of students and the lack of consistent and appropriate responses through written policies.
- The prevalence of homelessness among this population of students, and the need for schools to conduct better outreach and provide enhanced services to ensure that homeless students' rights under the McKinney-Vento Act, the Illinois Education for Homeless Children Act, and the Illinois State Board of Education policy on homeless education are upheld.
- The absence of a "go-to" staff member at each school who is trained (though not necessarily to the extent of being an expert) in issues facing survivors of violence or

parents or expectant parents among this population of students, who could give information and referrals to appropriate school- and community-based services, and who could educate students about their rights, including confidentiality policies.

- The lack of sufficient state and local funding to ensure that programs providing services to this population of students have the resources they need to be effective.
- School staff and administration have not received enhanced training on how to address the educational and related needs of this population of students in a sensitive manner, including training related to
 - issues of mandated reporting;
 - respecting student confidentiality and recognizing that students may not be able to inform their parents about their situation due to security concerns;
 - understanding the implications of and taking action to implement orders of protection and civil no-contact orders;
 - how to respond to student disclosures about being an expectant parent or survivor of domestic or sexual violence;
 - the impact of domestic, sexual, and teen dating violence on child and youth development and school performance;
 - cultural sensitivity training on issues of domestic and sexual violence and adolescent childbearing; and
 - overcoming language barriers to ensure student safety and well-being.
- Difficulties faced by counselors where school administrators refuse to provide private and confidential space for counseling sessions.
- Schools not respecting community-based social workers' and counselors' confidentiality requirements (i.e., pressuring them to reveal information about the students' counseling sessions or records).
- School administrators and teachers who disregard student survivors' confidentiality and healing process and require survivors to recount their experiences of violence repeatedly to school officials and teachers or testify at public school board meetings.
- In situations where a student who is a survivor of domestic or sexual violence attends the same school as the perpetrator, problems with schools addressing the accommodation needs of the survivor by placing the burden of change on the survivor rather than the perpetrator (i.e., requiring that the survivor change buses, classes, extracurricular activities).
- In cases where a survivor of domestic or sexual violence attends the same school as the perpetrator, the problem of schools relying on the findings of law enforcement and criminal and civil court to determine what action to take or whether action should be taken regarding school discipline for the perpetrator.
- In cases where survivors of domestic or sexual violence had engaged in some conduct that violated school policy (i.e., underage drinking or leaving school without permission) prior to the violence, problems with schools then punishing the survivors for their behavior, thereby reinforcing the shame and self-blame experienced by many survivors.
- The absence of schoolwide bullying prevention programs and education on domestic and sexual violence prevention.
- For students who are survivors of domestic or sexual violence, the lack of accommodations such as

- excused absences—due to court visits, medical appointments, and counseling, among other reasons—when the student must miss school to take care of matters related to the domestic or sexual violence;
- allowing immediate school transfers for health and safety concerns;
- allowing changes in school schedules, classes, lockers;
- alternative learning environments including homebound instruction, local community colleges, and Internet courses;
- providing tutoring services and allowing students to make up missed schoolwork;
- safety planning;
- recognizing and implementing orders of protection and civil no-contact orders; and
- appropriate referrals to community-based service providers.
- For expectant and parenting students, the lack of accommodations such as
 - child care on school campus;
 - home visitation programs;
 - transportation to school, child care provider, medical provider;
 - alternative learning programs such as homebound instruction, local community colleges, and Internet courses;
 - assistance in securing income supports and health care;
 - excused absences when the student must miss school to take care of parenting responsibilities;
 - providing tutoring services and allowing students to make up missed schoolwork;
 - allowing school transfers to lessen the student’s burden of commuting between child care and school;
 - allowing pregnant students food and drink in class, a permanent hall pass for frequent bathroom trips, larger desks, excuse from strenuous activities (e.g., physical education), flexibility in dress code, parenting classes, and support groups;
 - flexible ways to return to school after childbirth and complete graduation requirements; and
 - appropriate referrals to community-based service providers.
- The failure of schools to recognize homebound instruction as an essential accommodation, but not the only feasible option for this population of students and not a rationalization for refusing to make appropriate in-school accommodations.
- The lack of support for young fathers and expectant fathers, who also need accommodations and encouragement to take an active prenatal and parenting role whenever possible.
- Missed class time for students who have to travel off-site to access services, such as domestic violence counseling, at schools that do not have adequate counseling services or do not connect students with providers who could come to the school and minimize missed class time.
- Barriers to education, such barriers including violence at school and home, bullying, and homelessness, especially faced by lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, and questioning children and youths.
- Addressing the major costs associated with school transfers and the need for tuition reciprocity and transportation assistance in situations of out-of-district transfers.

- The prevalence of poverty among this population of students and the unwelcoming nature of the school environment, which does little to ensure that students affected by poverty are able to remain in school.

Presenters at Task Force Meetings

Besides conducting public hearings, the Task Force convened a number of times to hear from experts about relevant research and existing initiatives.

On August 11, 2008, the Task Force heard from the Illinois Department of Human Services' Division of Community Health and Prevention about the department's existing programs and services that support the goals of the Ensuring Success in School Task Force. Among the program areas presented were

- domestic and sexual violence (Domestic Violence Victims Services, Sexual Assault Prevention, Partner Abuse Intervention Program);
- expectant and parenting teens (Teen Parent Services, the Responsible Parenting program, the Parents Too Soon program);
- teen pregnancy prevention (the Teen Pregnancy Prevention program, the Family Planning program);
- primary prevention in youth services (the Teen REACH program, Community Youth Services, the Substance Abuse Prevention program);
- crisis intervention in youth services (the Homeless Youth program, Comprehensive Community-Based Youth Services); and
- parenting and education (Healthy Families Illinois, Illinois Fatherhood Initiative), and school health centers.

On September 8, 2008, the Task Force heard from Anne Studzinski, Colette Lueck, and Gene Griffin, members of the Illinois Childhood Trauma Coalition. Lueck, who is managing director of the Illinois Children's Mental Health Partnership (ICMHP), and Griffin, who is an assistant professor of psychiatry and behavioral sciences at Northwestern University and clinical director of the Illinois Childhood Trauma Coalition, presented about the dynamics of trauma from the perspective of the victim. Lueck discussed ICMHP's work with the Illinois State Board of Education to enhance mental health initiatives in school, including implementation of Social Emotional Learning Standards, expansion of the Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports program, and development of guidelines for school-community partnerships to promote access to appropriate services for optimal social and emotional development of children and youths. The presenters also spoke of the importance of promoting awareness of the need for prevention, early identification, and treatment of childhood trauma.

On October 6, 2008, the Task Force heard from Angie Kennedy, assistant professor of social work at Michigan State University, about her research on adolescent mothers' exposure to multiple forms of violence, including community violence, witnessed parental violence, physical abuse within the family, and partner violence. Kennedy also discussed the relationship between cumulative violence exposure and school outcomes for adolescent mothers.

Section 1: Consequences of the High School Dropout Crisis

- Illinois State Board of Education data show that Illinois high school girls had a graduation rate of 89.7 percent and high school boys a graduation rate of 84.5 percent in the 2008–2009 school year.⁸
- The Cumulative Promotion Index (CPI), which measures the probability that a freshman will graduate from high school in four years, was 74 percent in Illinois in 2008.
- The CPI also reveals gaps by race and gender: 84.5 percent of white female students and 85.5 percent of Asian female students, but only 62.4 percent of Hispanic female students and 58.1 percent of black female students, were expected in 2006 to graduate within four years. Similarly for males, 80.6 percent of whites and 86.2 percent of Asians, while only 49.4 percent of Hispanic and 43.3 percent of black male students, were expected to graduate.⁹
- In the 2008–2009 school year, 241 girls and 726 boys in Illinois were expelled from grades K–12. This is down from 684 girls and 2,334 boys in the 2007–2008 school year, and 1,006 girls and 2,445 boys in the 2006–2007 school year—a positive trend.¹⁰

High school completion is vital to an individual’s ability to become an economically and socially secure and independent adult. While high school dropout and graduation rates and the methodologies used to calculate them vary among states and among researchers, concern is widespread about the difficulties faced by high school dropouts.¹¹ The lack of a high school diploma limits dropouts’ opportunities to advance in their careers, earn a living wage, and achieve economic stability. Given that, out of any educational grouping, households headed by someone without a high school diploma are at the greatest risk of becoming poor, what is imperative is to promote high school completion for all Illinois youths.¹²

One in four girls in the United States does not graduate with a regular high school diploma in the standard, four-year period.¹³ However, the numbers are even worse for girls of color: half of Native American female students, four in ten black female students, and nearly four in ten Hispanic female students drop out of high school.¹⁴ In Illinois the most recent U.S. Census Bureau data show that 13.67 percent of younger adult women 18 to 24 and 17.68 percent of men in the same age group do not have high school diplomas.¹⁵

The high school dropout crisis has grave consequences at both private and public levels. The causal link between education and earned income is well documented in economics research: failure to graduate from high school translates into lower lifetime earnings and other reduced sources of market incomes. In turn, high school dropouts will impose a net fiscal burden on the rest of society because they will contribute far less in federal, state, and local taxes than they will receive in cash benefits, in-kind transfers, and correctional costs.¹⁶ Investing in Illinois’s students today promises to generate positive results for our future economy. One study calculated that effective educational interventions aimed toward increasing the graduation rate would produce, for the public purse, net economic benefits that are 2.5 times greater than the costs to establish such policies and programs.¹⁷ In Illinois more resources need to be directed toward programs for students who have dropped out: for every \$100 the state spends on enrolled high school students, only 59 cents is spent for students who drop out.¹⁸

In Illinois, while more young men than young women drop out of school before obtaining their high school diplomas and both women and men face more limited employment and earnings prospects than their better-educated peers, the negative impact of dropping out on lifetime earnings is more severe for women. Only 42 of every 100 Illinois adult females 18 to 64 lacking a high school diploma or a general education development (GED) certificate were employed in 2005, compared to 66 of every 100 male dropouts.¹⁹ Moreover, Illinois adult females lacking a high school diploma or GED in 2005 had a mean annual earning of \$8,472, compared to their male counterparts' mean annual earning of \$21,421. Illinois women without a high school diploma or GED had average lifetime earnings of \$398,000 in 2005, compared to their male peers' average lifetime earnings of \$1,007,000.²⁰ Female high school dropouts earned 45 percent less than female high school graduates, while male high school dropouts earned 29 percent less than male high school graduates.²¹ While women make less than men at all levels of education, the wage gap between men and women is the highest among high school dropouts.²²

As high school dropouts are disproportionately affected by low employment rates and lifetime earnings, they are also plagued by poorer health and greater reliance on public benefits than high school graduates. A female high school dropout in Illinois was 140 times more likely than her peers with some postsecondary schooling to be dependent on the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) program for her economic subsistence in 2004.²³ Indeed, Illinois women who have dropped out of high school are overrepresented in the ranks of TANF recipients: adult women 18 to 44 lacking a high school diploma represented only 11 percent of the female population in that age group in Illinois in 2004, yet they accounted for 46 percent of all TANF recipients in the state; this makes them overrepresented by a multiple of 4 to 1.²⁴ Illinois adult high school dropouts were nearly twice as likely as high school graduates to report being in only fair or poor health and were more than four times as likely to report this than their counterparts with a bachelor's or more advanced degree.²⁵ These findings mirror the national trend that adults with lower levels of schooling are less likely to receive medical care, more likely to report poorer health, and much more likely to report physical or mental disabilities.²⁶

The following two sections are an examination of the policy needs of children and youths who are parents or expectant parents, and children and youths who are survivors of domestic or sexual violence. In each section we first present our findings, including relevant research on each topic and its implications for educational policy, the needs and concerns of this population of students as identified through the hearings and testimonials, and best practices from this or other states. We conclude each of these sections with a list of recommendations—that can be implemented immediately and others that can be implemented over time—to support adolescent parents and expectant parents and student survivors of domestic or sexual violence.

Section 2: Youths Who Are Parents or Expectant Parents

- Born to teens in 2007 were 18,314 babies, or 10.1 percent of total Illinois births.²⁷
- Illinois ranks twenty-first out of all states for teen birth rates, according to 2005 data.²⁸ The Illinois teen birth rate is 39.5 per 1,000 teens, just below the national rate of 41.9.²⁹
- Almost 60 percent of teens with a school-age pregnancy drop out between eighth and twelfth grades.³⁰
- Only 66 percent of teen mothers complete their high school education or receive a GED by age 22, compared to 94 percent for young women who had not given birth as a teen.³¹
- Diagnosed with postpartum depression were 8.1 percent of new mothers under 20 in Illinois in 2005.³²
- Of women under 20 in Illinois, 13.6 percent reported physical abuse by an ex-husband or ex-partner before and during pregnancy, and 14.2 percent reported physical abuse by a husband or partner before and during pregnancy.³³

Findings

Students who are parents or expectant parents often face an untenable choice between fulfilling their responsibilities to their children and their need to act responsibly before childbirth, on the one hand, and meeting school obligations, on the other hand. Nationwide 33 percent of female dropouts report that becoming a parent played a major role in their decision to leave school.³⁴ However, in this same report, students who left school to care for a family member or due to parenting responsibilities were the group of dropouts “most likely to say they would have worked harder if their schools had demanded more of them and provided the necessary support.”³⁵

Under Illinois law a number of policies prevent expectant and parenting students from obtaining the support they need to fulfill their duties as an expectant parent and parent and continue their education. For example, a student’s illness is a valid cause for absence from school but the student’s child’s illness may not be, and home instruction is available to pregnant students in Illinois only when a physician indicates that the student is medically unable to attend school, or following childbirth or a miscarriage.³⁶ Similarly policies should not dissuade young male expectant parents or parents from taking an active role in prenatal, childbirth, and parenting responsibilities, such as accompanying a pregnant girlfriend to a prenatal appointment. Appropriate school accommodations are needed to ensure that parenting and expectant adolescents have the resources they need to continue focusing on their academic development while they deal with a multitude of challenges related to their parenting responsibilities. In addition to providing services and referrals for adolescent mothers, schools should encourage young fathers to be accountable as parents by granting them appropriate accommodations at school.

Importance of Early Intervention and Supporting Positive Parenting Skills

Key to any effort to promote the retention of expectant and parenting students is a system that reaches out to adolescent parents before they drop out of school. Given that programs that aim to

prevent students from dropping out tend to have higher rates of student retention and better promote student self-sufficiency than programs that attempt to reenroll students who have spent significant amounts of time outside school, preventative measures should be prioritized.³⁷ Students also need an encouraging school environment where caring school staff members express belief in expectant and parenting students' abilities to succeed academically. A 2003 study found that in regular Chicago schools (not alternative schools) 26 percent of pregnant and parenting youths who had heard negative comments at school regarding their pregnancies heard such comments from teachers, and 5 percent heard such comments from principals.³⁸ School staff members need enhanced sensitivity training in the importance of maintaining positive interactions with all students, especially with those who are expectant or parenting.

Since children who are born to teenage parents are less likely than their peers to complete high school and more likely than their peers to become teen parents themselves, schools and communities should work to break this intergenerational cycle by strengthening early education and intervention programs.³⁹ Babies born to teens are at increased risk of low birth weight and associated health problems. Research also indicates that young parents (age 18–27) of young children (age 3–6) are the group most likely to report physically abusing their children.⁴⁰ Parenting classes for adolescent parents and developmentally appropriate child care and early education for children of adolescent parents are essential to promoting healthy child development within families. Children's participation in high-quality early care and education programs contributes to positive physical, cognitive, and social development and helps children prepare to succeed in school. Effective early education programs combine small class sizes, high adult-to-child ratios, highly skilled teachers, a language-rich environment, an age-appropriate curriculum, and positive and responsive interactions between staff members and children.⁴¹

Examining the Link Between Adolescent Pregnancy and Parenting and Exposure to Violence

While issues facing expectant and parenting adolescents and young survivors of domestic and sexual violence are being outlined separately in this report, extensive overlap exists between these two groups. Research suggests that many adolescent mothers come from families with a history of problems, including physical and sexual abuse, neglect, and domestic violence, and many adolescent mothers directly experienced childhood maltreatment.⁴² Although reports vary widely, as many as two-thirds of young women who become pregnant as teenagers experienced sexual or physical abuse at some point in their lives.⁴³

Members of the Task Force heard from Angie Kennedy, the aforementioned assistant professor of social work at Michigan State University, about her research on urban adolescent mothers' exposure to multiple forms of violence, including community violence, witnessed parental violence, physical abuse within the family, and partner violence.⁴⁴ Kennedy conducted a study with adolescent mothers regarding their violence exposure, school performance and participation, positive attitude to school, and social support. As violence exposure increases, Kennedy found, "school outcomes tend to worsen, with positive attitude toward school found to be a significant moderator of the effects of exposure to community violence on behavior problems in school."⁴⁵ Kennedy's findings indicate that cumulative violence exposure is a significant problem facing many pregnant and parenting adolescents and poses a severe barrier to school performance and participation.

Issues facing both expectant and parenting students and survivors of domestic or sexual violence should be viewed with the understanding that a significant link exists between the variables of adolescent pregnancy and parenting and exposure to violence:

- Pregnant adolescents report significantly higher rates of physical abuse than pregnant adult women.⁴⁶
- In 2008, of the teens who called the City of Chicago Domestic Violence Help Line, 39 percent had dependent children, and 15.5 percent reported being pregnant.⁴⁷
- Adolescent mothers living in poor urban neighborhoods face relatively high rates of community violence.⁴⁸
- With the highest rates of intimate violence being reported by lower-income, younger couples and lower-income parents reporting physically abusing their children at a rate almost double that of higher-income parents, adolescent mothers have a relatively high risk of exposure to violence in their family and intimate relationships.⁴⁹

When providing medical services to youths who are pregnant or parenting, medical practitioners have the opportunity to screen individuals and families for health and social risks, including exposure to violence. Routine hospital visits may present some of the limited times where battered individuals have the chance to access outside help. Medical practitioners should use this opportunity to educate teen parents about the impact of exposure to violence and refer them to services that prevent or treat emotional or behavioral problems that may result from exposure to violence.⁵⁰

Student Needs

Expectant-Parenting and Parenting-Related Absences

Schools should recognize, and not punish, attention to prenatal care, childbirth, and acts of responsible parenting. When a young mother or father must stay home to care for a sick child or because child care arrangements fell through, the parent may miss a test or not be able to complete an assignment on time. Too many incomplete assignments, missed tests, or absences, even when excused, can jeopardize a young parent's good academic standing. Students who miss school in order to meet parenting duties should have their absence excused and should have access to home instruction, assistance from the school in making up missed work, and help from school- or community-based education and support services that are designed to help youths complete their education in a secure and encouraging environment. Under Illinois law a student's illness is a valid cause for absence from school but her child's illness may not be.⁵¹ The School Code should be amended to recognize the fulfillment of both female and male students' prenatal, childbirth, and parenting responsibilities (including, but not limited to, arranging child care, caring for the student's sick child, and attending prenatal appointments and medical appointments for the student's child) as a valid cause for absence.

Parenting or expectant students who must miss school to tend to prenatal, childbirth, and parenting duties need more than just an excused absence, however. In order to prevent these

students from falling behind in school, schools must adopt procedures to help their students make up their course work if they missed school to fulfill parenting obligations or because of their status as an expectant parent.⁵² While local school districts would have flexibility in the policy that they adopt, all schools should have, in place, policies that address this issue.

Homebound Instruction

When a parenting student's child is seriously ill or a student experiences complications with her pregnancy, the student may miss a significant amount of school. In such circumstances, home instruction is an important resource that allows students to keep up with their course work. Currently in Illinois home instruction is available to a pregnant student only when a physician indicates that the student is medically unable to attend school, or following childbirth or a miscarriage.⁵³ Young parents who miss school because they must care for a sick child should also be eligible for home instruction. Furthermore, Illinois law should be amended to prohibit schools from penalizing students in grading, course completion, grade-level advancement, or graduation solely on the basis of the students' absence from school while receiving home instruction, providing that the students comply with home instruction program requirements.⁵⁴ Finally, schools should not be permitted to misuse homebound instruction by viewing it as a means of getting around making accommodations at school. While homebound instruction is an essential resource for those students who cannot come to school, schools should recognize that making in-school accommodations keeps students from being forced to participate in homebound instruction and gives them the choice to participate in whichever educational setting best suits their needs.

School- and Community-Based Services and Accommodations

In working to balance parenting and school obligations successfully, students often need assistance from supportive services and programs. Schools should have the resources to meet expectant or parenting students' and their parents' or guardians' requests for information about or referrals to school- or community-based education and support services that are designed to help students meet Illinois learning standards in a safe, secure, and encouraging environment. While financial constraints may prevent some school districts from providing school-based services, this should not relieve school districts of the obligation to connect students with existing community resources through referrals. Schools should make accommodations so as to prioritize school stability for expectant and parenting students.

In order to facilitate the full participation of expectant and parenting students in school, the Task Force recommends that schools' accommodations for this purpose should provide equal access to educational programs and services and ensure students' safety, attendance, and academic progress. Pregnant students would benefit from schools being flexible in enforcing rules such as dress codes and uniform policies. Schools should also consider allowing pregnant students to have snacks and drinks in class and supplying them with larger desks as well as individual hall passes to allow them to use the restroom as needed. One of the greatest barriers to education facing parenting students is the lack of on-site child care at the students' schools. This accommodation is critical to helping parenting students stay in school. In situations where

schools cannot provide child care, they should help parenting students secure it by referrals to local service providers.

Designated Staff Liaisons to Assist Expectant and Parenting Students

The Task Force recommends that each school designate at least one staff point person who is trained to address in a confidential and sensitive manner the needs of youths who are expectant parents and parents. Schools do not need to hire new staff members to meet the purposes of this recommendation—financial strain should not preclude schools from offering this assistance to students. Schools should utilize their existing resources (i.e., have a teacher, counselor, social worker, or nurse take on these duties) to ensure that students who are parents or expectant parents have a point of contact on the school campus. Assigning liaisons for this population of children and youths effectively connects them with appropriate services. A good model is the federal law requirement that schools have homeless students’ liaisons in place. These liaisons have been crucial to improving homeless children and youth access to educational and related services. Staff members who serve as liaisons between expectant and parenting students and school administration and personnel can also be the same staff members who serve as liaisons for students who are survivors of domestic or sexual violence. They should be responsible for communicating with these students, making referrals and connecting them with appropriate services, assisting these students in their efforts to exercise their rights, and providing staff development to help establish a positive and sensitive learning environment. These liaisons have also been referred to by the Task Force as “specially trained personnel.”

At a minimum, designated staff members should be trained to understand and address the following issues related to expectant and parenting students:

- education and employment rights, responsibilities, and opportunities;
- public benefits and housing;
- health care (including adolescent consent and confidentiality rights);
- child care;
- child health and development; and
- family planning.

Comprehensive On-Site School Health Centers

Student access to comprehensive on-site school health centers that deal with reproductive and sexual health is crucial to promoting student health and ensuring that students do not have to miss an extensive amount of school to meet their health needs. Health professionals within schools should be able to give accurate information about the full range of reproductive health services and recommend a course of action regarding student pregnancies so that students may make fully informed decisions. School health centers play a critical role in filling a health service shortage experienced by Illinois youths: over 80 percent of Illinois school health center enrollees are either Medicaid All Kids patients or uninsured.⁵⁵ By providing preventative services that reduce the likelihood that youths will engage in high-risk behaviors, school health centers offer a cost-effective health care delivery model that reduces future health care expenses.

Transportation for Parenting Students

Testimony collected from across the state indicates that transportation problems present a significant barrier to school attendance. Many students presented concerns about the daily challenge of traveling with their child from home, to child care, and then on to school in a timely manner. Even in instances where students were lucky enough to attend a school with on-site child care, means of transportation accommodating a young child are difficult to obtain.

Tracking Graduation, Dropout, and Transfer Rates

The Illinois State Board of Education must submit to the General Assembly and the Governor an annual report that includes the statewide high school dropout rate broken down by grade level, sex, and race.⁵⁶ While a recent amendment prevents dilution of the dropout rate by ending the practice of reporting dropouts as “transfer students” when many do not enroll in a new school, tracking methods must be further modified to help determine why students are dropping out. To learn more about the educational needs of children and youths who are parents or expectant parents, Illinois needs to develop an accurate method of counting and reporting separately these students’ graduation, transfer, and dropout rates.

In New Mexico, for example, school districts submit an annual “accountability report” that details high school graduation rates for each public high school. In that report, each district must “indicate contributing factors to non-graduation such as transfer out of the school district, pregnancy, dropout and other factors as known.”⁵⁷ Illinois should modify the State Board of Education’s student tracking system to track separately the transfer rates of students who are expectant parents or parents, and Illinois should make these data public along with the dropout and graduation rates.

Best Practices

Examples of Legislation from Other States

Schools need the flexibility and resources to craft accommodations to meet students’ diverse needs. Wisconsin law stipulates that school boards must “make available to any school age parent who is a resident of the school district program modifications and services that will enable the pupil to continue his or her education.”⁵⁸ In turn, school districts must not require students to participate in services or seek accommodations.

Similar to the recommendations of this Task Force, Florida law requires school districts that run teenage parent programs to help parenting students with ancillary services—including child care, health care, social services, and transportation—necessary for school success. School districts in Florida may provide these services directly or “through the coordination of existing programs and services and through joint agreements between district school boards and early learning coalitions or other appropriate public and private providers.”⁵⁹

In New York school districts have discretion to help with transportation for the children of parenting students. New York law stipulates that a board of education may transport the non-

school-age child of students 21 or younger who have not yet received a high school diploma to and from the school that the student parent attends. The parent must accompany her non-school-age child on the bus, and the transportation must be “furnished for the purpose of allowing the child to receive child care services and/or attend a nursery school, preschool, or parenting program.” New York school districts are eligible for state aid to cover the expenses that they incur in providing such transportation to the non-school-age children of students in the district.⁶⁰

The California School Age Families Education Program (Cal-SAFE), enacted in 1998, offers comprehensive school-based and community-linked services to foster educational achievement, effective parenting, and healthy families.⁶¹ The programs are open to any female or male student 18 or younger who has not earned a high school diploma or its equivalent and is an expectant or custodial parent or a noncustodial parent in an active role caring for and supervising the student’s child.⁶² Children of students enrolled in a Cal-SAFE program may also receive services until they turn 5 or enter kindergarten.⁶³ Through Cal-SAFE, schools may provide on-site services such as academic support, parenting education, life-skills training, career counseling, peer support groups, family support services, and child and domestic abuse prevention education. Cal-SAFE programs also offer transportation from home to school and free meal supplements for pregnant and lactating students.⁶⁴

Effective Practices Found in Illinois

Quincy: An advocate from the Teen Parent Services Program in Quincy Public Schools testified that young parents’ greatest barrier to school attendance is child care. By offering free on-site child care, both Quincy’s regular high school and alternative school have helped adolescent parents stay in school. The advocate’s further testimony indicated a number of issues addressed in the program’s policies:

- Expectant and parenting students, whenever possible, should be able to choose whether to separate themselves from their regular school of attendance to attend an alternative school or receive homebound instruction.
- Central to effective programs for parenting students is recognition of the importance of the parent-child bond.
- Schools must respect teen mothers’ right to breast-feed their infants.
- New mothers should receive a reasonable maternity leave of at least six weeks, and schools should be flexible with homebound study so that expectant and parenting students do not fall behind.
- Expectant and parenting students should have access to pregnancy and parenting classes.
- Absences while new mothers transition back into school as well as absences due to child illness and maternal fatigue should be respected.
- Teen fathers who are involved with the child need access to supportive services and should be given leniency with absences related to parenting.
- For pregnant students, schools should provide accommodations, including allowing snacks and drinks in the classroom, trips to the bathroom as needed, and excuses from strenuous activities such as physical education.
- Parenting students need accommodations—including changes and more flexibility in school schedules, on-site child care and access to their children at any time, and excused

absences to take care of parenting-related issues—that recognize their parenting responsibilities.

- Ideally, policy should be changed so that students who are parents who have fallen behind in coursework could continue to be served by high schools even if the students are not able to graduate before their twenty-first birthday.

Elgin: Elgin school district U-46 has an effective collaborative program linking community groups, school personnel, and advocates to coordinate a combination of educational, health, and social services needed by pregnant and parenting students. Representatives of the school district and key community partners formed the Healthy Support System for Teen Parents Committee to meet the needs of pregnant and parenting students and promote their school completion through improved community-school partnerships and enhanced delivery of support services. In working to create a systemic approach to serving teen parents rather than leaving each school in the district to develop its own responses and resources, the committee created a “U46 Protocol for Teen Parents” to delineate steps needed throughout the course of the student’s pregnancy to increase communication within the network of service providers and school district.⁶⁵ This support model

- designates the school nurse as the “point person” for the expectant or parenting student and establishes a formal intake form for school nurses to utilize to ensure that they obtain necessary information, including the student’s child care arrangements and needed health or social services;⁶⁶
- identifies at each school a Teen Parent Liaison who meets with students regularly to discuss students’ questions or concerns, gives referrals, and increases communication among the student, school, and community organizations;
- calls for—seven months into a student’s pregnancy—a “transition meeting” where all the service providers and school personnel who have worked with the pregnant student discuss what services the student currently has in place and strategizes about what she needs before she goes on leave from school so that she can successfully return to school.

The alternative school in Elgin offers flexible block scheduling, and students have access to a school counselor, social worker, teen parenting groups, a family literacy program that promotes positive parent-child interactions, and free health clinics.

Springfield: An advocate who works with the Parents as Teachers Program in Springfield testified about the program’s positive impact on the development of parenting and expectant youths. The Parents as Teachers Program provides home visitations with young parents and their children who are 3 years old and younger. In emphasizing the importance of the parent-child bond during the early years, advocates talk with young parents about how their children should be developing and at what age their children should be achieving developmental milestones. Once a month, advocates from the Parents as Teachers Program go to high schools to make presentations on parenting topics during the school lunch hour, which provides young parents with an outlet to discuss their concerns. The advocate’s testimony highlighted that, to be effective, programs must build a relationship of trust with the young parents and provide a supportive atmosphere.

Another Springfield advocate discussed her organization's efforts to support adolescent fathers. She noted that a teen father often feels like he has no place in the pregnancy time or his baby's life, and most teen fathers are confused about determining what their role should be. Emphasizing that both parents have the right to support their children, she outlined her program's work to help teen fathers bond with their babies and develop positive self-images as fathers. She testified about the effectiveness of having adult men serve as these teen fathers' mentors and teach them how to be committed parents. Communication between adolescent parents and engaging the entire family unit are also key to this program's success.

Mount Vernon: Testimony from a Carbondale Community High School nurse at the Mount Vernon public hearing illustrated positive practices aimed toward keeping expectant and parenting students in school by accommodating their needs. The school nurse's testimony indicated that in the year prior to adopting a program aimed toward retaining pregnant students, fourteen of the sixteen pregnant students enrolled at the high school dropped out. In the year after implementing the support program, which includes assistance in securing WIC (the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children) and Medicaid, developing a parenting and educational plan, and obtaining housing and other needs, only three of the nineteen pregnant students at the high school dropped out. The program's structure centers on recognizing the unique needs of expectant and parenting students and providing them with accommodations:

- After a comprehensive initial assessment by the school nurse, the high school's plan of support includes allowing rest in the nurse's office as needed, allowing snacks and drinks in class, giving an elevator pass and excuse from physical education at the seventh month of pregnancy or earlier if medically indicated, and assisting in obtaining maternity clothes and baby equipment and clothes if needed.
- Important to the program's success has been ongoing follow-up throughout students' pregnancies and a monthly support group with educational presentations about infant health, nutrition, and parenting. The support group has also served as an important resource in providing moral support for students so that they do not become pregnant for a second or third time.

Such drastic improvements in student retention rates show that when students receive the assistance they need, they are much less likely to leave school.

Chicago: An advocate from Chicago testified about the need for school districts to take a systemwide approach—such as the Cradle-to-Classroom program had provided—to promoting the academic achievement of expectant and parenting students. Identified in successful models of expectant and parenting programs are these common elements:

- Intensive supportive services, including case management, counseling, classes on child care and development, and incentives for students who complete program components.
- Flexible schedules and nontraditional educational options, including online classes and independent study.
- Dedicated staff members focused on working both one-on-one and in groups with participants;

- Dedicated space within a school setting in which participants can access resources and attend classes or meetings.

A school nurse from West Chicago’s Community High School District No. 94 gave the Task Force information about the school’s teen mother’s health and wellness class. The class seeks to empower teen parents by

- teaching health, nutrition, and physical fitness; pre- and postnatal care; newborn care; positive parenting skills; family living skills; early childhood development; and availability of community resources;
- offering social and emotional support throughout and after pregnancy, especially in regard to depression, relationships, family matters, and self-esteem;
- emphasizing the importance of providing the healthiest possible physical and emotional environment for their children and themselves;
- helping expectant and parenting students cultivate the ability to make wholesome decisions regarding lifestyle choices; and
- creating an inclusive atmosphere that aims to establish each student as a contributing member of the school and community.

A Chicago advocate working with homeless and at-risk adolescent parents and their children testified that, in order for young parents to complete their education, they need access to

- compassionate teachers and counselors trained in the unique needs of expectant and parenting teens;
- creative schedules and assignments to help them balance parenting and school;
- child care resources, including care for sick children;
- school-and-service-provider partnerships that offer parenting education and support; and
- transportation assistance.

Recommendations Regarding Policies Affecting Expectant and Parenting Youth

Based on our analysis, we offer the following recommendations—arranged by expected time frame for implementation—for supporting students who are parents or expectant parents.

Recommendations that Can Be Implemented Immediately

- Exempt youths who are parents or expectant parents from minimum attendance requirements for absences related to their pregnancy and parenting responsibilities. School districts should not be permitted to consider a student who is an expectant parent or parent a chronic or habitual truant or truant minor because of one or more absences related to the student’s status as an expectant parent or parent; such absences may be due to the student’s illness or the illness of the student’s child, attendance at pregnancy-related medical appointments, or fulfillment of parenting responsibilities, including arranging for child care, caring for the student’s sick child,

- and attending medical appointments for the student's child. This provision should apply equally to fathers and expectant fathers and to mothers and expectant mothers.
- Allow students who miss class work—including lessons, assignments, quizzes, and tests—because of absences related to pregnancy and parenting responsibilities to make it up. The responsibility to provide the opportunity to make up missed work is the classroom teacher's. Costs associated with these activities should be waived by school districts for any students whose parents or guardians are unable to afford them.
 - Authorize special flexible scheduling and attendance arrangements, including allowing absences for medical or child care needs and providing homebound instruction.
 - Develop protocol for assisting expectant and parenting youths with ancillary services, such as child care, health care, social services, transportation, support groups, mentoring programs, and classes in parenting skills, prenatal care, and child development through referrals to school- or community-based support services.
 - To promote school stability for expectant and parenting students, provide necessary accommodations in school including, but not limited to, larger desks, individual hall passes for frequent bathroom use, trash receptacles for illness, elevator access when necessary and possible, permission to eat and drink in class, additional time for class changes and getting lunch, leniency in school uniform and dress code policies, private nursing rooms, special consideration during classes that may require strenuous physical exertion, sufficiently private settings and time-off for meetings with counselors or other service providers, and any other accommodation that may facilitate the student's participation in school.
 - Prohibit school administration and staff members from pressuring or requiring expectant or parenting students to attend an alternative program, and ensure that, in accordance with Title IX, expectant and parenting students have the opportunity to make a voluntary decision about which academic programs they would like to pursue.

Recommendations that Can Be Implemented Within the Next Two Years

- Amend the School Code to recognize expectant parenting and parenting responsibilities—including, but not limited to, arranging child care, caring for the student's sick child, attending medical appointments for the student's child, and attending prenatal appointments and childbirth—as a valid cause for absence for students who are fathers and mothers and expectant fathers and mothers.
- Amend the homebound instruction provision to include a student's right to homebound instruction due to pregnancy-related conditions and the fulfillment of parenting obligations related to the health and safety of the student's child. Allow student homebound instruction for as long as needed to care for the student's ill child when a health care provider indicates in writing that the student needs to provide care to the sick child and the student or school is unable to arrange alternative child care. Home instruction services should be equivalent to the regular education program, in accordance with Title IX, and students receiving home instruction should not be penalized in grading, course completion, grade-level advancement, or graduation, providing that the students comply with home instruction requirements.

- Ensure that alternative education programs offer the same quality of academic courses and extracurricular activities provided at the regular school setting.
- Give students on-site access to health centers that provide comprehensive services, including reproductive and sexual health services.
- Amend the Illinois School Student Records Act to maintain confidentiality of student records and ensure that any documentation regarding a student's status as a parent or expectant parent be kept confidential and separate from the student's permanent record, and not be released, transferred, disclosed, or otherwise disseminated without the student's consent.⁶⁷
- Require school districts to (at a minimum) track separately the transfer rates of students who are expectant parents or parents, and make these data publicly available along with dropout and graduation rates.
- Allow school transfers when necessary to accommodate parenting youths' child care needs. A parenting student in need of child care should be permitted to transfer to another school in the same district as the previous school if such transfer facilitates the student's drop-off and pickup of that student's child from child care, nursery school, or preschool, or a parenting program or otherwise facilitates a parenting student's ability to continue to attend school while fulfilling parenting responsibilities. Transfer for child care-related reasons should be permitted if the student's travel time from home to child care and then directly to the student's school exceeds sixty minutes; the student states that there is no safe, appropriate, available, or affordable child care alternative that would reduce travel time; and the student presents from the student's child care provider a letter stating that the child is receiving or has been accepted to receive child care services. In accordance with the federal McKinney-Vento Homeless Education Assistance Improvements Act of 2001 or the Education for Homeless Children Act, school transfers should also be allowed for youths who become homeless because they are parents or expectant parents. School districts should waive tuition for students who transfer to a school district where they do not reside.

Section 3: Student Survivors of Domestic and Sexual Violence

- According to a Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) study, 8.8 percent of high school girls in the United States reported that a boyfriend or girlfriend had hit, slapped, or physically hurt them on purpose in 2007. In Chicago 10.6 percent of high school girls reported this, and in Illinois 8.6 percent.⁶⁸
- A national survey of students in Grades 8–11 found that eight in ten students (81 percent) experienced some form of sexual harassment during their school lives, and girls were more likely than boys to experience sexual harassment ever (83 percent compared to 79 percent) or often (30 percent compared to 24 percent).⁶⁹
- Adolescents are more likely to be victims of trauma than any other age group. Each year approximately 8.8 million adolescents nationwide witness severe interpersonal violence, 3.9 million are severely abused or assaulted, and 1.8 million are sexually assaulted.⁷⁰
- Teens between the ages of 16 and 19 are the age group most likely to be victims of sexual assault, and 54 percent of female sexual assault victims were under 18 when they experienced their first rape.⁷¹
- In 2007, of female high school students, 9.4 percent in Illinois and 11.3 percent in Chicago reported ever being physically forced to have sexual intercourse.⁷²
- A lack of safety in school is affecting Illinois girls' performance in school: 10.7 percent of Chicago high school girls, nearly twice the national average of 5.6 percent, skipped school for at least one day in the prior thirty days in 2007 because of safety concerns. Statewide 4.3 percent of high school girls reported this.⁷³
- In the 2008 fiscal year 50 percent of reports of suspected abuse and neglect to the Illinois Department of Children and Family Services were girls (48,201). Girls are the victims in over 80 percent of indicated reports of child sexual abuse in Illinois.⁷⁴
- Women who are between 16 and 24, are African American, and have an annual household income of less than \$7,500 report the highest rates of nonlethal violent victimization by an intimate partner.⁷⁵
- CDC found that 11.7 percent of female high school students nationwide had been harassed at least once in the past year because someone thought they were gay, lesbian, or bisexual.⁷⁶
- Gay, lesbian, and bisexual students are from two to four times more likely to report sexual assault victimization than their heterosexual peers.⁷⁷

Findings

The emotional, social, and psychological impact resulting from exposure to domestic or sexual violence can create serious problems for both those who witness and those who experience such traumatic situations. Experiences of violence often have detrimental effects on children's and adolescents' abilities to cope with the normal stressors of the maturation process and consequently hinder them from focusing on their education. Children and youths who are exposed to violence may exhibit a range of developmental difficulties and symptoms, both internal (e.g., depression or anxiety) and external (e.g., aggression or conduct problems).⁷⁸ When exposed to incidents of domestic or sexual violence, individuals may develop toxic, or traumatic, stress where the body responds to the situation by frequent or prolonged activation of the body's

stress management system. These individuals live in a constant state of alert and crisis, which, if not resolved, can produce neurochemical changes and adaptations that can adversely affect brain development. The estimated risk of developing posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD) is 49 percent for survivors of rape, 32 percent for survivors of severe beating or physical assault, and 24 percent for survivors of other types of sexual assault.⁷⁹

Key to helping children and youths cope with and recover from major adverse experiences such as domestic or sexual violence is the presence of caring adults. Children and youths need a safe and supportive environment where they have access to interventions that can help mitigate the effects of exposure to violence and improve their capacity to cope with ongoing stressors. Consequently teachers and school administrators especially need training to ensure that they understand and are sensitive to these children's and youths' needs. School districts should be required to establish clear protocols regarding how to deal with a student's disclosure about domestic or sexual violence and implement procedures that accommodate survivors in a manner that prioritizes confidentiality, safety, and educational success. One advocate from Chicago testified about her concern for the lack of consistent school policies regarding the needs of student survivors of violence: "We cannot leave ... survivors at the whim of how a school deems it fit to handle a situation—one school may have excellent training, adequate staffing and compassionate understanding of the issue but other schools, more often, may not. School must be a safe space. So with guidelines, appropriate staffing and training [are] essential."

Children's and Youths' Exposure to Domestic Violence

Exposure to family violence has significant negative repercussions for children and youths: childhood exposure to violence can be associated with increased display of aggressive behavior, increased emotional problems such as depression, anxiety, and reduced self-esteem, lower levels of social competence, and poorer academic performance.⁸⁰ In homes where domestic violence occurs, children are at high risk of suffering physical abuse themselves. Studies of the link between domestic violence and child abuse show that between 45 percent and 70 percent of children exposed to domestic violence are also victims of physical abuse and that as many as 40 percent of child victims of physical abuse are also exposed to domestic violence.⁸¹ Violence in the home also affects youths' abilities to form trusting relationships, resulting in a higher probability that these adolescents will end up in violent relationships themselves.⁸²

Child Abuse

While we must be aware of the increased risk of child abuse victimization in the context of domestic violence, we must keep in mind that not all abuse against children and youths happens in this context, nor is the abuse always covered by the Illinois Abused and Neglected Child Reporting Act. For example, most forcible rapes occur before the victim is 18 years old, and nationally 34.1 percent of all rape or sexual assault victims are under 12.⁸³ In most cases the perpetrator is known to the victim but is not necessarily a family or household member or even a boyfriend or girlfriend. Acts of relationship or sexual violence against children perpetrated by other children also have an impact on a child's school performance, safety, and well-being and should be covered by the policies recommended here.

Dating Violence

Dating violence is a serious public health concern that has damaging effects on students' academic and personal development.⁸⁴ Between 12 percent and 35 percent of high school students engage in or are victims of violence, both physical (scratching, slapping, pushing, kicking, biting, and forcing sex) and psychological (intentionally hurtful comments, threats of harm, insulting remarks made in front of others, and prohibiting the girlfriend or boyfriend from doing activities with other people), in a dating relationship.⁸⁵ Survivors of domestic or sexual violence often face harassment at school not only by the perpetrators but also by the perpetrators' friends and other students. Harassment through text messages and online social networking sites (i.e., cyberbullying) has become especially problematic. Students who experience sexual harassment or bullying may react by participating less in class, not wanting to go to school, changing their seat in class to distance themselves from the aggressor, and finding it hard to pay attention in school.⁸⁶ Sociologists argue that youth exposure to violence, particularly violence in romantic relationships, "forces a premature end to adolescence through early exits from conventional teenage roles."⁸⁷ Since teens have lower levels of social skills and less relationship experience than adults, they are more vulnerable to intimate partner violence. Adolescent girls are primarily the victims in violent dating relationships, and their experience of dating violence increases their risk of engaging in seriously harmful behavior, such as substance abuse, unhealthy weight control, sexual risk behavior, pregnancy, and seriously considering or attempting suicide.⁸⁸

With nearly 1.5 million high school students nationwide experiencing physical abuse from a dating partner each year, schools cannot afford to ignore this safety concern.⁸⁹ Since many incidents of dating violence occur on school grounds, this form of violence affects not only the individuals in the abusive relationship but also the security of entire schools and communities.⁹⁰ However, dating violence occurring off-school grounds is equally dangerous and distracting for youths and school communities. Young victims of violence are more likely to engage in high-risk activities and tend to report higher rates of truancy, more negative contact with their teachers, and increased conflict with other students.⁹¹

Schools' Roles in Responding to Children's and Youths' Exposure to Violence

As children and youths spend much of their time in school, schools are uniquely positioned to respond to child abuse, dating violence, and sexual violence and harassment. Often young people who have been assaulted are extremely reluctant to report the incident and, in situations of dating violence or sexual assault, are afraid to tell their parents what has happened to them because of the shame they feel. The first disclosure often occurs at school, either to a peer, counselor, or teacher. Schools should proactively respond to students' exposure to violence by establishing policies and procedures to assist student survivors of domestic, sexual, and dating violence. Effective policies must outline both preventative measures that support vulnerable students and protocols on how to intervene sensitively to help children and youths experiencing violence, harassment, and bullying. Schools should aim to provide necessary accommodations so that these students are not forced to transfer to another school, rely on homebound instruction, or resort to involuntary homeschooling because of safety-related concerns.

Revictimization of Survivors by School Staff Members and Administration

When school staff members and administration fail to deal with student survivors of violence in a respectful and sensitive manner, they revictimize the survivors by denying them the support they need to help them cope and move past their traumatic experiences. Testimony gathered by the Task Force reveals that school staff members and administrators across the state are consistently approaching survivors' situations in problematic ways that further traumatize the survivors. An advocate from Chicago testified that, throughout the course of her work in Illinois, she found "numerous educational institutions to be not only ignorant of the extraordinary impacts a sexual assault has on a young person's ability to learn, but even hostile to making any efforts to ensure that these victims are able to return to a safe school environment." Further testimony highlighted examples of how schools have established fear and mistrust in the relationship of survivors with their schools:

Many school officials [in Illinois] are ill-equipped to deal with the complex and sensitive issue of sexual assault.... At one school,... administrators refused to inform law enforcement despite the victim's parents' repeated requests because the school principal felt that it would be better to have a meeting between the victims' parents and the perpetrators' parents first. Some school officials take a punitive attitude towards the victim. In some cases, victims had engaged in some wrongful conduct such as underage drinking or leaving school without permission prior to the assault. When school authorities choose to blame or even punish the victim for that behavior, they reinforce the shame and self-blame that most victims of sexual assault experience. In some cases, victims have been threatened with expulsion, rendering a trusting relationship with school officials impossible.

One parent from Chicago recounted the insensitive response of her daughter's school after her daughter was raped by two of her classmates off-campus. The survivor's mother said that, in telling a key administrative staff member of the assault, her daughter "was never brought to a quiet place by this adult to inquire if she needed help." Another administrative staff member then approached the survivor and told her to forgive the perpetrators and threatened to transfer the survivor to another high school if she did not cooperate. After the perpetrators were arrested for the sexual assault, they returned to school the next day, and the survivor became further victimized by the perpetrators' friends who verbally harassed her. During expulsion hearings of the perpetrators, the survivor was required to sit in the same room as the perpetrators and testify with no protection other than her parents. Ultimately the survivors' parents decided to relocate the family out of the school district so that they could protect their child better.

A key step to preventing schools' inappropriate responses to survivors' situations is to require that school districts establish protocols that set up a clear guide for how staff members and administration should proceed after witnessing acts of harassment, bullying, or violence, as well as what action to take after receiving disclosures about survivors' experiences of violence from the survivors or others. Testimony across the state illustrated the dangers of relying on informal agreements and not having written guidelines: in many cases the actions of one school administrator determined whether a survivor received the accommodations she needed to continue attending school. In her testimony an advocate emphasized the importance of moving

away from an ad hoc basis of addressing violence to set consistent policies and a centralized system of response: “It is essential that all school officials including teachers, coaches, counselors, and administrative staff know how to speak to a sexual assault victim in a manner that establishes trust and confidence rather than fear and distrust. They should be bound by certain protocols and procedures, and principals and other administrators in leadership roles must be required to set a positive example for other staff on these issues.”

Confidentiality Issues

Revictimization may also occur when school teachers and administrators pressure students who have disclosed information about their experiences of domestic or sexual assault to inform their parents about the incident. While state law allows students who are 12 years old or older access to mental health and medical services for five sessions without parental consent, oftentimes school personnel make students feel as if they will be punished if they do not tell their parents about their situation. A McLean County advocate on behalf of sexual assault victims recognized that this created “not only a trust issue but a safety issue if the student has a history of a violent home environment that has not been disclosed.”⁹²

When school teachers and administration breach student confidentiality, survivors experience even greater difficulties in regaining a sense of normalcy. An example of schools’ lack of sensitivity for student confidentiality emerged from the Springfield public hearing, where an advocate from Jacksonville gave testimony about an elementary school student who was sexually abused by a school staff member. In investigating the case, the school board requested that the survivor testify about the details of what happened in front of the board and any public attendees at the hearing. This caused the survivor to have even more anxiety and fear about the situation. Such a lack of consideration for survivors’ need for confidentiality jeopardizes survivor safety and prevents survivors from recovering from their trauma.

Social workers and counselors are bound by professional standards that prevent them from disclosing information about a client without the client’s consent. However, social workers’ and counselors’ testimony to the Task Force show that school administrators are not respecting these professional obligations to preserve confidentiality either for in-school or externally-based professionals. A Chicago social worker testified that “[e]ffective school social work services are many times threatened by school administrators who are either misinformed about confidentiality, or don’t care about confidentiality, or are perhaps poorly advised by legal counsel regarding the parameters of confidentiality.” The 2009 amendment to the Illinois School Student Records Act clarified that information communicated in confidence by a student to a school social worker, school counselor, school psychologist, or any interns working with such professionals must be afforded the full protection of professional standards of confidentiality.⁹³ The Act already stipulated that client confidentiality must be upheld for information communicated in confidence by a student to a physician, psychologist, or other psychotherapist. Furthermore, as the amendment made clear, school employees who act to protect communications as privileged or confidential pursuant to applicable state or federal laws or regulations may not be subjected to adverse employment action or the threat of such action. We hope that these clarifications will guide school districts in better respecting social workers’

responsibility to preserve student confidentiality; however, school districts should separately establish their own protocols outlining these standards to ensure compliance.

With regard to student records, schools should ensure that all documents related to the student's status as a survivor of domestic or sexual violence, including copies of protection orders or safety plans, written requests for accommodations, referrals, or any other type of document, be kept confidential and separate from the student's permanent record and not be released, transferred, disclosed, or otherwise disseminated without the student's consent.

Student Needs

In-School Accommodations

Students who are survivors of domestic and sexual violence want to stay in school and graduate, but fear for their safety and well-being often forces them into involuntary homeschooling, forces them to seek alternative programs, or forces them to drop out entirely. In order to ensure that these students preserve access to meaningful education and safety on campus, schools must make accommodations to meet students' concerns. All requests for accommodations should be kept strictly confidential, and survivors must be informed that they have the right to decline or rescind any accommodation at any time. In declining an accommodation, no student should be subject to disciplinary action for this decision and must not lose the right to request and receive future accommodations.

Students, counselors, and service providers testified to a persistent problem facing student survivors of domestic and sexual violence across the state: schools are not accommodating these students' needs in order for them to continue their education in a safe environment. An advocate's testimony about her experiences with schools in Cook County illustrates the inconsistency inherent in schools' responses to survivors' needs for accommodation:

At one school, our client was able to switch out of classes with the perpetrator but her request to have the perpetrator transferred to another school was denied. At another school the Principal told the victim's family that if she saw the perpetrators in the hallways at school, she should look the other way, and if the school cameras "caught her" talking to the perpetrators she would be expelled. At another school, our client stayed home from school after she was assaulted for the remainder of the school year because her repeated requests to transfer to another school were ignored.

Small measures taken by school staff members to help a survivor transition back into school can make a significant difference in ensuring that the survivor will be able to remain in school. Simple changes in class schedules, lunch periods, and seating and locker assignments can help survivors of violence get the distance they need from their perpetrators to regain a sense of security and be able to focus better in class. A sexual assault survivor who experiences panic attacks on a regular basis may need a permanent hall pass so that she may excuse herself from

class without having to explain the situation to each teacher. In making these accommodations, schools should not place the burden of change on the survivor but rather require the perpetrator to make the necessary changes.

A Quincy high school student's testimony points to how schools should approach the educational and related needs of students who are survivors of domestic and sexual violence to ensure that they stay safe in school. The student recounted how she had very different experiences in securing the accommodations she needed at the two different schools she attended after surviving a sexual assault by a fellow student. She stated that her experience at the first school was negative with "a school administration that was, at best, indifferent to my problems, had no idea how to handle the situation, and refused any help from experts in the community." By contrast, she testified that the second school's administration "did not claim to know all the answers, but was willing to talk with my parents and me, make accommodations, and use resources in the community to find solutions." This positive approach taken by the second school was an affirming experience for the survivor and established an open line of communication that allowed for collaboration between the school and community-based organizations to ensure that the survivor and her family had access to essential resources.

Designated Staff Liaisons to Assist Student Survivors of Domestic or Sexual Violence

In order to ensure that students who are survivors of domestic or sexual violence receive the assistance they need, the Task Force recommends that each school designate at least one staff person as the point person on campus (as recommended in the previous section on expectant and parenting students) who is trained to address the needs of children and youths who are survivors of domestic or sexual violence. These staff members—who can also serve as the liaison for students who are parents or expectant parents—should be trained to understand, give information and referrals, and address the following issues pertaining to children and youths who are survivors of domestic violence:

- theories and dynamics of domestic violence (including a definition of domestic and dating violence);
- power, control, and cycles of violence;
- barriers to leaving abusive relationships;
- aspects of healthy and unhealthy relationships;
- effects of domestic violence on survivors;
- perpetrator characteristics and accountability;
- medical and legal advocacy (including orders of protection and civil no-contact orders);
- the Illinois Domestic Violence Act of 1986 and the federal Violence Against Women Act of 1994; and
- crisis intervention, safety planning, and referrals.

These staff members need to be trained on the following issues pertaining to survivors of sexual violence:

- theories and history of sexual violence and oppression;

- types of sexual violence (including stranger rape, acquaintance and campus rape, child sexual abuse and incest, multiple assailants and gang rape, and same-sex rape);
- medical and legal advocacy on behalf of sexual violence victims; and
- crisis intervention, safety planning, and appropriate referrals.

Schools do not have to expend more resources by hiring new staff members to meet this recommendation—current staff members may be utilized to perform these duties. This point person should not be expected to be an expert on these issues but should be knowledgeable about existing resources, where to seek more information, and how to make referrals. Such liaisons have also been referred to by the Task Force as “specially trained personnel.”

Grievance Procedures

An advocate from the Chicago public hearing expressed concern about survivors not being aware of their rights to appropriate grievance procedures:

Even though Federal mandates under Title IX of the U.S. Civil Rights Act require that all schools have appropriate remedies and grievance procedures for victims of sexual harassment and sexual assault in educational settings, most school administrators remain unaware of their obligations. Families of victims are not notified of their right to file a grievance against the perpetrator under Title IX, and school officials are unaware of how to carry out such grievance procedures. The result is that most perpetrators remain at school [with neither] the victim nor the school taking any action against them.

Testimony heard by the Task Force indicates that survivors of domestic or sexual violence often face harassment at school not only by the perpetrators but also by the perpetrators’ friends and other students. Harassment through text messages and online social networking sites (i.e., cyberbullying) has become especially problematic. Harassment by the perpetrator’s friends and other students should not be tolerated on or off–school grounds. Schools need policies in place to confront bullying and harassment in all its forms effectively.

Honoring Safety Plans and Court Orders

Schools must honor orders of protection and civil no-contact orders obtained by student survivors and help these students devise safety plans. One student from Kasbeer testified that, after the school refused to honor a civil no-contact order that the student had obtained, her parents chose to homeschool her rather than force her to continue to attend school with a fellow student who sexually assaulted her. A sexual assault counselor from McLean County testified that too many schools do not have policies regarding safety planning or use the resources they have to keep students safe: “While the school has limits on what they can do to separate the victim and the perpetrator, they often have a police officer on campus that could easily be trained to coordinate with the school nurse or counselor and create a safety plan with the student.” Student safety must be the chief consideration of school districts when handling these situations. To facilitate the safe return to school of survivors who have been assaulted by a fellow student, schools must have a supportive environment that prioritizes the safety needs of the survivor. If a

student has a safety plan that they created with the assistance of an external service provider, schools should honor its provisions and keep a copy of it in a confidential file.

Testifiers also voiced concerns about school officials relying on the decisions of law enforcement to address allegations of sexual assault within their schools. A Chicago advocate recognized that, given that police and state’s attorneys make charging decisions based on whether there is enough evidence to prove a case beyond a reasonable doubt in a criminal court, schools are often “too willing to take law enforcement’s decision not to charge a perpetrator criminally as complete exoneration of wrongdoing.” Her testimony went on to recognize that

[s]chool disciplinary procedures operate separately from the criminal justice system, under a different standard of proof, because they serve a different purpose. Disciplinary procedures are intended to keep schools safe and hold offenders accountable. School officials have an obligation to take appropriate disciplinary actions against perpetrators of sexual offenses when they have a strong reason to believe that the offense occurred . . . , not just when criminal charges are filed.

Counseling Services

Student survivors should be allowed to leave class to see a counselor or social worker to talk about their experiences of violence or the threat of violence. Students must have access to counseling services on their school campus so that they avoid missing time in the classroom due to transportation to and from counseling off-campus. Schools must provide children and adolescents with a safe and familiar environment for them to do their therapy work. In order to maintain the students’ confidentiality, schools should ensure that students have access to private rooms for their meetings with counselors. Also, survivors who need to be escorted to and from class for counseling sessions should be accompanied by school administrators rather than counselors so that survivors are not put in the stressful position of receiving inquiries from other students about why they are obtaining counseling services. Many service providers’ and school counselors’ testimonies recounted negative experiences when school administrators failed to set aside a private meeting space for therapy sessions with survivors.

One counselor’s testimony at the Mount Vernon public hearing emphasized her concerns about this problem:

Despite my explanation to both administrative assistants and school principals of why a confidential, private meeting place was necessary and important, I was told I would only be able to meet with survivors on the playground, in the hallway, in the gymnasium, in the library, or in the cafeteria. Obviously none of these destinations provide privacy. Many times there were other students around who could see me with the student [and] . . . even overhear our conversations. Many survivors . . . in scenarios like this reported that other students would later ask the survivor who I was, what we talked about, or even mentioned details of a session that they had overheard.

Public areas are inappropriate settings for counseling work. Besides jeopardizing confidentiality, the lack of a private space for counseling may hinder a survivor's healing process by resulting in constant interruptions in the student's trauma work and reflecting the idea that the school community does not respect the survivor's needs.

Excused Absences and Homebound Instruction

Survivors of domestic and sexual violence often experience some form of PTSD, with symptoms—anxiety, panic attacks, insomnia, inability to concentrate, or depression—that interfere with their ability to learn and succeed in school.⁹⁴ Students should receive excused absences for classes missed due to domestic or sexual violence. Students should be allowed to make up class work—homework, quizzes, tests, and any other graded work—for classes missed due to survivors dealing with their experience of violence. In cases where students cannot immediately return to school, homebound instruction is necessary so that survivors do not fall behind in their course work. However, schools should be expected to make every accommodation possible so that student survivors have the choice to remain in school safely. A sexual assault counselor from Granite City testified at the Mount Vernon public hearing that “[w]hile homebound [instruction] is a necessary option for some students for a period of time and needs to be available to survivors, it is not a long-term solution.... The goal should always be to get the student functioning as close to normal as soon as possible—that means back at school, feeling safe in school, performing well at school and looking forward to the future.”

School Transfers and Transportation

When in-school accommodations are inadequate to protect students, school transfers may be necessary to allow students to continue their education safely. The School Code currently allows school transfers for survivors of violence only in cases of violent crimes that occur on school grounds during regular school hours or during a school-sponsored event.⁹⁵ However, many survivors of domestic or sexual violence face safety-related problems as they travel to and from school and on and off-school grounds. In order to broaden protections for survivors, schools should permit survivors to transfer whether or not they were victims of a crime that meets the definition of a “violent crime” under Section 3 of the Rights of Crime Victims and Witnesses Act, and whether or not that crime occurred on school grounds during school hours or at a school-sponsored event. School districts should waive tuition for students who transfer to a school district where they do not reside so that cost does not prohibit survivors from attaining relief. Even if a perpetrator who is a student at the same school as the survivor has never attacked the survivor at school, the survivor is vulnerable as she follows her routine schedule in traveling to and from school and attending classes.

Special Consideration During Disciplinary Proceedings

Testimony has shown that sometimes school administrators, because of adherence to aggressive “zero-tolerance” policies or ignorance about the dynamics of domestic or sexual violence, penalize victims who report abuse. The Illinois School Code provision on suspension and expulsion does not take status as a survivor of domestic or sexual violence into account in disciplinary proceedings.⁹⁶ An advocate from Arlington Heights testified about a situation that

serves as an example of this problem: a female student who was sexually assaulted by a classmate off-school grounds did not disclose the incident immediately because she was struggling with depression. While she struggled to cope with the aftermath of the assault, her grades dropped. The school principal approached her to discuss her grades and see if she was experiencing any problems, but she remained silent about the assault. Eventually she told a friend about the incident, and the friend disclosed the incident to a staff member. As a result, the survivor was suspended for lying because she did not adhere to the school's honor code of honesty.

School officials should have the discretion to consider a student's status as a survivor of domestic or sexual violence or as an expectant or parenting student during a disciplinary process. When there is a substantial relationship between a student's behavior that gives rise to suspension or expulsion proceedings and the student's status as a survivor of domestic or sexual violence or as an expectant or parenting student, then the district superintendent should look to modify the suspension or expulsion requirement on a case-by-case basis. This provision would allow for flexibility by recognizing that survivors may be involved in an altercation at school for which they are not to blame if, for example, they engage in an act of self-defense or respond to an abuser's taunts and harassment.

Collaborating with External Service Providers

Testimony of domestic and sexual violence advocates across Illinois revealed strained relationships with local school officials, at a cost to the students who stand to benefit when schools and service providers cooperate. School districts should develop relationships with external service providers and community-based organizations to ensure that services provide a coordinated continuum of care for youths and their families. In fostering cooperation with other organizations, schools will engage in a cost-effective approach that reduces duplication, shares expenses, spurs new development of programs, and improves outcomes for students and their families. Increasing visibility of available community resources through referrals is crucial to ensuring that survivors have the resources they need to cope with their experiences of violence and continue their education.

Best Practices

Examples of Legislation from Other States

There is legislation in several states related to school safety and violence prevention. Many of these encompass conflict resolution and bullying and harassment. Other states directly address domestic or sexual violence, particularly between students. Rhode Island's dating-violence policy requires its department of education to develop a model dating-violence policy and assist school districts to develop and implement a policy and train all administrators, teachers, nurses, and mental health staff members.⁹⁷ Texas requires every school district to adopt and implement a dating-violence policy that includes safety planning, enforcement of protective orders, school-based alternatives to protective orders, and training for administrators and teachers.⁹⁸

Effective Practices Found in Illinois

The Task Force found that Illinois schools do not have comprehensive policies or examples of effective programs that address the needs of students who are survivors of domestic or sexual violence. In its policy manual the Chicago Public Schools has a section entitled “Domestic Violence, Dating Violence and Court Orders of Protection, Restraint or No Contact.”⁹⁹ The policy addresses all types of abusive situations experienced by children and youths, including students as witnesses of domestic violence in their homes, students as survivors of child abuse in their homes, and students as survivors of dating and sexual violence. It also addresses an important point in situations where the survivor and perpetrator attend the same school by identifying the school principal or other administrator as responsible for following investigation and incident-reporting procedures and implementing appropriate interventions and consequences regardless of whether the incident occurred on or off-school grounds. Furthermore, the Chicago Public Schools policy provides for the transferring of the perpetrator to another school when the victim’s safety is jeopardized or being disrupted by allowing the victim and perpetrator to remain in the same school. While the Chicago Public Schools policy offers an example of how to incorporate some of the recommendations of this Task Force, the policy is bare-bones, mostly serves as a legal document designed to limit liability, and is not the sort of policy that will encourage survivors to step forward, seek help, feel safe, and perform well in school. While the policy seeks to help students, it does so mostly through parental notification and getting students to counseling. School policies must do more by delineating how the school will accommodate students, ensure confidentiality, provide for survivors’ safety, and collaborate with students so that they perform well in school. Students and their parents must be able to make an informed decision about coming forward and putting their trust in school administrators and other school personnel.

Recommendations Regarding Policies Affecting Students Who Are Survivors of Domestic or Sexual Violence

Based upon our analysis, we offer the following recommendations—arranged by expected time frame for implementation—for supporting students who are survivors of domestic or sexual violence. Many of these recommendations are similar to or direct reflections of the recommendations offered for supporting students who are parents or expectant parents because of the similarities in the circumstances faced by these two student population groups.

Recommendations that Can Be Implemented Immediately

- Exempt children and youths who are survivors of domestic or sexual violence from minimum attendance requirements for absences related to domestic or sexual violence. School districts should not be permitted to consider a student who is a survivor of domestic or sexual violence a chronic or habitual truant or truant minor because of one or more absences related to the student’s status, including absences due to the student’s having received services for domestic or sexual violence such as counseling, health services, and legal advocacy, and absences needed to recover from physical and psychological injuries related to the violence.

- Students who miss class work, including lessons, assignments, quizzes and tests, because of absences related to domestic or sexual violence as described above should be allowed to make it up. Giving the opportunity to make up missed class work is the classroom teacher's responsibility. Costs associated with these activities should be waived by school districts for any students whose parents or guardians are unable to afford them.
- For students who are survivors of domestic or sexual violence, provide necessary accommodations in school, including, but not limited to, sufficiently private settings and time-off for meetings with counselors or other service providers, transfer of the student survivor or student perpetrator to a different classroom, change of locker assignment, change of seating assignment, early dismissal from classes to allow safe passage in the hallways, implementation of an individualized in-school safety plan, and any other accommodation that may facilitate the student's participation in school.
- Honor any orders of protection or no-contact orders granted.
- Require schools to treat school disciplinary procedures separately from findings in the criminal justice system. Recognize the obligation to keep schools and students safe by taking appropriate action against perpetrators of domestic violence and sexual violence offenses even when criminal charges are not filed.
- In situations where a survivor and perpetrator of domestic or sexual violence attend the same school, require schools to place the burden of making changes to meet the accommodation needs of the survivor (e.g., schedule and locker changes) on the perpetrator so as to avoid revictimizing the survivor.
- Prohibit school administrators and staff members from pressuring or requiring survivors of domestic or sexual violence to request or accept any accommodations, and ensure that survivors of domestic or sexual violence have the opportunity to decide voluntarily about which academic programs they would like to pursue.

Recommendations that Should Be Implemented Within Two Years

- Amend the School Code to recognize absences related to the student's status as a survivor of domestic or sexual violence, including absences due to the student's having received services such as counseling, health services, and legal advocacy, and absences needed to recover from physical and psychological injuries related to the violence, as valid causes for absence.
- Amend homebound instruction provisions to include students' right to homebound instruction due to circumstances related to domestic or sexual violence, and allow student homebound instruction for as long as needed to treat physical or mental health complications due to domestic or sexual violence when a health care provider or sexual or domestic violence service provider indicates in writing that such care is needed. Home instruction services should be equivalent to the regular education program, in accordance with Title IX, and students receiving home instruction should not be penalized in grading, course completion, grade-level advancement, or graduation, providing that the students comply with home instruction requirements.
- Amend the School Code to allow a student who is a survivor of domestic or sexual violence, regardless of whether the survivor has obtained a protective order, regardless of whether the perpetrator has been criminally charged or convicted, and

regardless of whether the incident occurred on school grounds during regular school hours or during a school-sponsored event, to transfer to another school immediately and as needed, including to another school district without the payment of out-of-district tuition if the student's continued attendance at a particular school poses risk to the student's safety or well-being. In accordance with the federal McKinney-Vento Homeless Education Assistance Improvements Act of 2001 or the Illinois Education for Homeless Children Act, school transfers should also be allowed for youths who become homeless as a result of domestic or sexual violence.

- Amend the School Code to allow a school district to require the transfer of a student who is the perpetrator of domestic or sexual violence, including to another school district, when the victim's safety or well-being is jeopardized or being disrupted by allowing the victim and perpetrator to remain in the same school.
- Amend the Illinois School Student Records Act to maintain confidentiality of student records and ensure that any documentation regarding a student's status as a survivor of domestic or sexual violence be kept confidential and separate from the student's permanent record, and not be released, transferred, disclosed, or otherwise disseminated without the student's consent.

Section 4: Related Issues and Special Considerations

In considering the changes that must occur in school policy and procedure to ensure that students who are parents, expectant parents, or survivors of domestic or sexual violence are safe in school and receive the accommodations they need, schools and policymakers must maintain an inclusive perspective that takes into account the situations of all students.

Implementing Comprehensive Antibullying Policies and Procedures

Bullying and harassment create an unsafe environment where distractions force students to divert their attention from their academic development to find ways to cope with these negative experiences. A 2006 study reveals that more than half (52 percent) of Illinois students report having been verbally harassed and nearly a quarter (23 percent) of students report having been physically harassed or assaulted in school.¹⁰⁰ In light of this, schools need comprehensive policies and procedures for dealing with bullying and harassment and well-trained school personnel and students who can intervene in incidents of mistreatment:

- School teachers should be required to receive training in antibullying measures and cultural diversity as part of their accreditation and professional development.
- Policies must be oriented around the goal of empowering students to resolve conflict positively and prevent the escalation of conflict.
- Comprehensive whole-school bullying programs are necessary to increase awareness of the problem and encourage staff members and students to intervene when witnessing bullying.
- Policies must explicitly address the specific dynamics resulting from harassment based on an individual's gender, sexual orientation, race or ethnicity, disability, or status as a parent, expectant parent, or survivor of domestic or sexual violence. Less than half (45 percent) of Illinois students in a 2006 report said that they were protected by school antiharassment policy that specifically mentioned sexual orientation or gender/identity expression.¹⁰¹
- Prevention is key to eliminating youth violence. In order to create safer schools in Illinois, students need a social and emotional learning curriculum that emphasizes diversity and promotes cultural acceptance. Only half (52 percent) of Illinois students report feeling very safe in their schools, and over a third (37 percent) say that at least one personal characteristic makes them feel unsafe, including physical appearance (17 percent), race or ethnicity (9 percent), gender expression (7 percent), and actual or perceived sexual orientation (5 percent).¹⁰²

Crucial to facilitating a positive school climate free of violence and harassment are professional school personnel and staff members who set examples of how to act respectfully and treat others with regard. In Illinois 81 percent of students reported hearing sexist comments at school, 74 percent had heard homophobic slurs, 19 percent had heard staff members make sexist remarks, 12 percent had heard staff members make racist comments, and 11 percent had heard staff members make homophobic comments.¹⁰³ When school staff members engage in such behavior or fail to intervene in situations of harassment or bullying, students are less likely to trust school

personnel and consequently not report incidents of harassment or bullying. With a majority (59 percent) of students in Illinois who have experienced verbal or physical harassment or assault not reporting the incidents to school staff members, schools are not fully aware of this problem.¹⁰⁴ Furthermore, in hearing their school authorities use biased language, students may believe that such language is permissible. Effective school policies and training for school personnel are imperative to prevent bullying and harassment in Illinois schools.

Homelessness Services and Prevention

Homelessness is a pervasive problem for students who are parents, expectant parents, or survivors of domestic or sexual violence. Oftentimes the only point of stability in homeless children's and youths' lives is the school environment. Each school in Illinois needs programs and policies in place—in accordance with the federal McKinney-Vento Education for Homeless Children and Youth Act provisions, the Illinois Education for Homeless Children Act provisions, and the Illinois State Board of Education policy on homeless education—that accommodate the situations of homeless students by ensuring equal access to education, upholding the dignity of these children and youths, and preventing them from feeling isolated or stigmatized due to their being homeless.¹⁰⁵ Schools must also be mindful that lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, and questioning children and youths are especially vulnerable to homelessness. Since homeless students are forced to move locations frequently, school stability and continuity in school enrollment are essential to these students' academic success.

In meeting the requirements of the federal McKinney-Vento Education for Homeless Children and Youth program, states must provide transportation to and from the homeless student's school of origin (i.e., the school that the student attended when permanently housed or the school where last enrolled) and provide for immediate school enrollment to the school in which enrollment is sought by the student's parent or guardian even if the student is unable to produce records normally required for enrollment. Illinois law further stipulates that the choice of whether a student remains at the student's school of origin belongs to the student's parent or guardian.¹⁰⁶ States are prohibited from segregating homeless children or youths.¹⁰⁷ Federal law also provides in every school district for a homeless liaison who must, among other duties, ensure that homeless children and youths receive educational services for which they are eligible as well as referrals to health, mental health, dental, and other appropriate services.¹⁰⁸ School districts must also coordinate with housing assistance providers to ensure that eligible students have access and reasonable proximity to available educational and related support services. Schools are required to give special attention to homeless students not currently attending school. In meeting homeless children's and youths' educational needs, school districts' main priorities should be to remove barriers to enrollment, attendance, and success. State and local educational agencies should review and revise any policies or practices that act as barriers (i.e., if a student is pregnant or parenting and homeless, schools have a duty to review relevant policies and make necessary accommodations based on the student's unique circumstances).¹⁰⁹ Reenrolling homeless students is key to addressing Illinois's dropout crisis—if a student has dropped out, the school should work to reach out to the student and reenroll the student whenever possible. Public testimony heard by the Task Force reveals that homelessness is a concern common to all areas of Illinois and that our state's school districts should do more to meet better the needs of these children and youths and ensure that they receive the same education and services offered to other students:

- Advocates from Quincy discussed the problems that homeless youth under 18 encounter in accessing subsidized housing.
- A homeless youth advocate from Kane County testified at the Elgin hearing that schools needed assistance in implementing the McKinney-Vento federal provisions regarding homeless students and must better train staff to recognize signs of homelessness and assist homeless students.
- Several advocates from Elgin, Carbondale, and Chicago noted the lack of homeless shelters specifically covering the needs of youths who are parents or expectant parents.
- A school nurse from Carbondale related the importance of counseling students who are parents or expectant parents about planning for their housing needs; she testified about one of her students whose mother refused to provide housing for the student unless she gave her baby up for adoption.
- A parenting high school student from Chicago explained her experiences of homelessness when she left her parents' home after her father abused her child. The student noted that tracking down the contact information about her school's homeless liaison was very difficult for her and advised that schools should better publicize the resources available to homeless students. She also wished that her school had the resources to help her find day care since she had had to disrupt her schooling by having to move her daughter around to different child care arrangements.
- An advocate from Elgin told a story about how little changes in school policies and provision of services can be an immense aid and relief to homeless students—a group of school bus drivers in Elgin agreed to make it their policy to pick up homeless children from the shelter where they were staying before the rest of the students and drop them off last so as to avoid putting these homeless students in an uncomfortable situation.

Best practices found from discussions with advocates at the Task Force hearings included helping ensure that homeless children do not feel stigmatized by

- providing school supplies, including backpacks and/or uniforms to each child;
- coordinating efforts of district transportation and external resources to take students to and from school as needed;
- making all school activities, including before- and after-school programs accessible to each child;
- providing accessibility to tutoring and counseling;
- helping parents and students complete enrollment forms and assisting in obtaining school records, immunization records, birth certificates, and other records as needed
- coordinating efforts with local community agencies to provide basic needs and services, including medical, vision, and dental care, for homeless students and families;
- creating awareness of, and promoting sensitivity toward, the educational and legal rights of homeless children and youths among school personnel.

Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, and Questioning Students

Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, and questioning (LGBTQQ) children and youths face significant barriers to success in school due to their lack of safety both in school and at home. A 2005 survey of Chicago students conducted by the Chicago Public Schools and the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention found that lesbian, gay, and bisexual students had a heightened risk of violence exposure: LGB student responses indicate that, compared to their heterosexual peers, they are two times more likely to be threatened at school, two to four times more likely to be treated for injuries resulting from a fight, two to four times more likely to report being victims of sexual assault, and three to four times more likely to have attempted suicide in the past year.¹¹⁰ A national study of LGBT students of color in middle school and high school found that these students were especially vulnerable to victimization. Across all minority racial or ethnic groups surveyed, more than four out of five students reported verbal harassment in school because of sexual orientation and about two-thirds because of gender expression. At least a third of each group reported physical violence in school because of sexual orientation.¹¹¹ Less than half of the minority LGBT students who reported being harassed or assaulted in school in the past year said that they reported the incidents to school staff members. More than half of those who did report an incident believed that the school's responses to the incident were ineffective.¹¹²

An LGBTQQ advocate and counselor from Chicago testified about how many of the young people with whom she worked frequently shared stories about how faculty and staff members did not intervene when they witnessed bullying of LGBTQQ students and even made derogatory remarks about a student's sexual orientation or gender expression. She discussed how parents and guardians who disapproved of or were hostile to their children's sexual orientation or gender expression used tactics of power and control to abuse their children and deny them basic survival needs, including food, financial support, and housing. Once LGBTQQ children and youths are homeless, violence becomes a common occurrence in their everyday struggle to survive.

The problem of LGBTQQ youth homelessness and victimization is widespread: one national study found that half of gay teens experienced a negative reaction from their parents when they came out, and 26 percent were kicked out of their homes.¹¹³ Another study found that more than one-third of youths who were homeless or in the care of social services experienced a violent physical assault when they came out, consequently leading these youths to leave a homeless shelter or foster home because they actually felt safer on the streets.¹¹⁴ For LGBTQQ children and youths, a lack of safe housing can lead to a multitude of difficulties including mental health issues, substance abuse, and risky sexual behavior.

Based on the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force Policy Institute's research findings that between 20 percent and 40 percent of all homeless youths identify as LGBT, between five thousand and ten thousand of the estimated twenty-five thousand youths in Illinois who experience homelessness in the course of a year are LGBT.¹¹⁵ Given that school is often the only environment that provides some basis of consistency and normalcy for LGBTQQ children and youths, Illinois must take action to ensure that schools are safe spaces for these students.

Illinois should mandate that all school administration and personnel participate in LGBTQQ awareness training and demonstrate cultural competency as part of their professional licensing process. Health education curricula should be inclusive of LGBTQQ students—information about healthy relationships and health issues should be accessible to students of all sexualities. Lack of inclusion and visibility in curricula can stigmatize LGBTQQ students, lead to their increased isolation, and prevent them from recognizing and avoiding abuse in their own relationships.

Recommended actions that schools should take to eliminate the harassment of LGBTQQ students and prevent homelessness among these students include

- facilitating student clubs that take up LGBTQQ issues, such as Gay-Straight Alliance;
- training faculty and staff members to be sensitive to the issues faced by LGBTQQ children and youths and be supportive of these students;
- ensuring that students have access to LGBTQQ-inclusive curricular resources and LGBTQQ-related resources in the school library; and
- establishing a comprehensive policy to address in-school harassment and assault and provide specific protections based on sexual orientation and gender identity and gender expression.

Children and Youths with Disabilities

Children and youths with disabilities are especially in need of educational support services that meet their unique needs. Schools would greatly benefit from enhanced coordination with community-based organizations and government agencies to improve delivery of services for this population of students.

In situations where a student who is a parent, expectant parent, or survivor of domestic or sexual violence has had an individualized education program (IEP) to meet the student's special education needs, but has dropped out of school and is seeking reenrollment, school districts should reenroll the student in the type of school listed on the student's most recent IEP even if the IEP is no longer valid. In the IEP schools should also incorporate services relevant to the student's status as a parent, expectant parent, or survivor.

Foster Children and Youths

Children and youths in the foster care system have unique stressors in their lives that may negatively affect their personal development and limit their abilities to succeed in school. Frequent placement moves and lack of coordination among agencies prevent young people in foster care from completing their education. Studies indicate that fewer than half of foster youths leave care with a high school education or employment.¹¹⁶ Foster youths are also more likely than their peers to be held back in school, suspended, or expelled.¹¹⁷

Young people living in foster care are at greater risk of early pregnancy and childbearing than their peers. In fact, teen girls in foster care are 2.5 times more likely than their peers not in foster care to experience a pregnancy by age 19.¹¹⁸ Young adults who lived in foster care at some point are 1.9 times more likely to have ever experienced forced sex than their peers, with young women who ever lived in foster care being nearly 3 times more likely than young men who ever lived in foster care to have experienced forced sex.¹¹⁹ One study of Illinois youths living in foster care found that 72 percent of the young women had ever been pregnant, and repeat pregnancies were more the rule than the exception among those who had ever been pregnant. Of these young women who had ever been pregnant, 30 percent had wanted to become pregnant, and only 25 percent were using birth control around the time that they conceived.¹²⁰ Half of Illinois's young men in foster care from this same study reported that they had ever gotten a female pregnant, compared with 19 percent of their peers not in foster care.¹²¹

Children and youths in foster care who have experienced abuse may especially have difficulties in school due to their special needs. Behavioral and emotional problems, learning disabilities, and medical or health problems often prevent these children and youths from succeeding in the classroom. In working to improve the educational outcomes of children and youths in foster care, school districts must work to enhance the provision of educational and related services to foster children and youths who do not qualify for special education programs.

California has taken steps to support educational opportunities for children and youths in foster care by

requiring that placement decision makers take the child's educational needs into consideration, permitting foster children to remain in their school of origin for the remainder of the school year even if they are placed out of the district, mandating prompt transfer of education records and immediate enrollment if the child must change schools, and requiring school districts to appoint an educational liaison for foster children to facilitate placement, enrollment, and efficient transfer of records.¹²²

Young people in foster care in California have also benefited from the state's law that grants these youths who are over 16 the right to information about available postsecondary educational options, including information about course work necessary for vocational and postsecondary programs and financial aid.¹²³ The law requires state universities and community colleges to work with child welfare agencies to promote foster youth enrollment by providing technical assistance in admissions and financial aid applications.¹²⁴ Illinois youths in foster care would benefit from similar provisions.

Section 5: General Recommendations

The following recommendations—including recommendations specifically related to the implementation of these policies—address overarching themes regarding school support of children and youths who are parents or expectant parents, and children and youths who are survivors of domestic or sexual violence:

- Establish that children and youths who are expectant parents, parents, or survivors of domestic or sexual violence have the right to attend school, receive the same or equivalent educational instruction as other children and youths in accordance with the goals of the Constitution of the State of Illinois to promote “the educational development of all persons to the limits of their capacities,” and complete their education successfully and in a safe, secure, and encouraging learning environment. Upon establishing this right in the School Code, school districts should be required to implement specific and continuing steps to notify all current students, former students under 21, applicants, and the parents of students about this right.
- Enhance interpretations and enforcement of antidiscrimination and education laws in order to
 - protect students who are expectant or parenting or are survivors of domestic or sexual violence from discrimination;
 - ensure that girls and young women are encouraged and able to enroll in and complete career and technical education courses that are nontraditional for their gender;
 - protect students fully from sexual harassment, bullying, and other forms of violence in school;
 - ensure that schools appoint, and broadly publicize information about, a Title IX coordinator and adopt antidiscrimination policies and grievance procedures to address any sex discrimination complaints; and
 - Adopt and implement amendments to the state Title IX regulations that clarify and refine current language. These amendments were unanimously approved and recommended for adoption by the Illinois State Board of Education’s Gender Equity Advisory Committee.
- Adjust the attendance formula so that there are no fiscal disincentives for schools to alter attendance policies better to accommodate students who are parents, expectant parents, or survivors of domestic or sexual violence.
- Require each school to designate a liaison on staff trained to address in a confidential and sensitive manner the needs of children and youths who are expectant parents, parents, and survivors of domestic or sexual violence.
- Comply with current law that requires in-service training sessions for all school personnel who work with pupils; such personnel include, but are not limited to, school and school district administrators, teachers, school guidance counselors, school social workers, school counselors, school psychologists, and school nurses, and such training should be conducted by persons with expertise in domestic and sexual violence and the needs of expectant and parenting youths.¹²⁵
- Require school or school district employees who become aware of or suspect a student’s status as an expectant parent, parent, or survivor of domestic or sexual violence to inform

the student about available school and community resources and refer the student to the school's designated liaison or specially trained personnel.

- Adopt a common definition of “dropouts” for all data collection and reporting requirements, and require that data be fully cross-tabulated to allow analysis of subgroups of students.
- Ensure that all students have access to quality health services and information by establishing comprehensive school health centers in every school.
- Establish coordinated efforts with community-based organizations and an effective referral system to ensure that students receive a comprehensive continuum of health and social services.
- Require that all materials for students and parents pertaining to rights and policies for student parents or expectant parents and student survivors of domestic or sexual violence be presented in a culturally competent manner. This includes supplying materials in other languages when necessary and appropriate.
- Prioritize confidentiality for students by requiring schools to accommodate on-campus counseling services with private rooms for counseling work.
- Require school districts to establish a policy and protocol to preserve the confidentiality and privacy of students who disclose their status as an expectant parent, parent, or survivor of domestic or sexual violence or who seek assistance, services, or accommodations due to their status.
- Require school districts to develop and implement policies to enable parents and guardians of children or youths who are expectant parents, parents, or survivors of domestic or sexual violence to be informed of actions taken with regard to the status of the children or youths. In cases where students indicate that their health or safety would be threatened if they were to reveal their status to a parent or guardian, school staff members should not be permitted to inform the students' parents or guardians. In such cases, school staff members should refer the child or youth to community-based organizations that provide appropriate services. School district employees are not precluded from disclosing information about a student who is an expectant parent, parent, or survivor of domestic or sexual violence when reporting to the Department of Children and Family Services is required under the Abused and Neglected Child Reporting Act, when a parent who is not barred from accessing their child's school records seeks access under the Illinois School Student Record Act and the school record contains information about the child's or youth's status, or when communication with the child or youth reveals the intended commission of a harmful act and disclosure is necessary to protect public safety.
- Require school officials to assist each child or adolescent who is a parent, expectant parent, or survivor of domestic or sexual violence to develop a student success plan based on an assessment of the youth's educational and social functioning and skills. The student success plan should establish goals and objectives for satisfactory performance with the assistance of support services and should specify how the school will assist the student in making up missed work. A student's decision not to develop a student success plan or failure to comply with components of the student success plan should not be the basis of any subsequent disciplinary action or punitive academic measures against the student.
- Require school districts to enroll or reenroll immediately a youth under 21 who is an expectant parent, parent, or survivor of domestic or sexual violence even if the youth is

unable to produce records normally required for enrollment. The enrolling school should immediately contact the school last attended by the student to obtain relevant records. School districts should be required to assist such youths in obtaining immunizations and health examinations, if necessary. No youth may be denied enrollment or reenrollment for absences or tardiness accrued due to circumstances related to the youth's status as a parent, expectant parent, or survivor of domestic or sexual violence.

- Require school districts to reenroll youths who are expectant parents, parents, or survivors of domestic or sexual violence and who were previously enrolled in a special education program in the type of school listed on their most recent individualized education program (IEP), even if the IEP is no longer valid. Require schools to include in the IEP services relevant to the student's status as a parent, expectant parent, or survivor of domestic or sexual violence.
- Pay special attention to ensuring the enrollment and attendance of children and youths who are expectant parents, parents, or survivors of domestic or sexual violence and are not attending school. If a school or school district is aware or suspects that a former student is an expectant parent, parent, or survivor of domestic or sexual violence, school district personnel should inform the former student of the student's right to reenrollment and work to remove barriers to enrollment and school attendance. Schools should coordinate efforts with organizations and agencies where children or youths who are parents, expectant parents, or survivors of violence typically receive services in the community.
- In situations where a student who is a parent, expectant parent, or survivor of domestic or sexual violence is at risk of academic failure or displays poor academic performance, school districts should be required to provide education and support services directly or by collaborating with public or private state, local, or community-based organizations. Schools should be required to inform students of their right to receive these accommodations. Educational and support services needed to meet Illinois learning standards and help students complete their education in a safe and encouraging learning environment include
 - case management services;
 - mentoring;
 - safety and well-being accommodations;
 - individualized psychological and other mental health services;
 - individual, peer, group, and family counseling;
 - individualized and flexible instruction and scheduling;
 - alternative learning environments and strategies, such as home-based learning and independent study;
 - home and hospital instruction;
 - career, family, and child development classes; and
 - other social, health, or supplemental services.
- In situations where a student who is a parent, expectant parent, or survivor of domestic or sexual violence has missed a substantial amount of school or schoolwork because of the student's status as such, alternative educational opportunities should be made available, including
 - instruction before and after school;
 - evening and weekend classes;

- summer courses or extended-year programs;
- home or hospital instruction;
- community college credit toward graduation;
- Internet or other correspondence courses;
- tutoring;
- independent study or home-based learning;
- individual completion of lesson plans; and
- other appropriate alternative learning programs.

Alternative education programs should be equivalent to the regular education program, in accordance with Title IX, and students pursuing alternative programs should not be penalized in grading, course completion, grade-level advancement, or graduation, providing that they comply with the alternative program requirements.

- Establish the provision that whenever there is evidence that a student’s status as an expectant parent, parent, or survivor of domestic or sexual violence may be the cause for expulsion or suspension, an advocate of the student’s choice must be permitted to consult with the school administration and board. Require that students who are parents, expectant parents, or survivors of domestic or sexual violence receive special consideration in reviews during the disciplinary period. Require that if there is a substantial relationship between a student’s behavior that prompts a suspension or expulsion proceeding and the student’s status as an expectant parent, parent, or survivor of domestic or sexual violence, the district superintendent may modify the suspension or expulsion requirement on a case-by-case basis.
- Fund research on the dropout crisis that examines risk factors for dropping out, particularly as they relate to youth who are parents, expectant parents, or survivors of domestic or sexual violence, as well as effective interventions for dropout prevention.
- Regularly evaluate programs and interventions in order to promote effective practices and improve schools’ responses to the needs of students who are parents, expectant parents, or survivors of domestic or sexual violence.
- Ensure that school districts are accountable for proper implementation of all federal and state laws, regulations, and policies, such as federal and state laws governing homeless children and youths, to counter inconsistent or nonexistent application.
- Require that school districts adopt and implement the model policies and procedures as found by this Task Force, or require that they form a local working group comprising representatives of the school district, educators, social workers, counselors, psychologists, representatives of the local nonprofit domestic violence and sexual violence community, and students and parents of students who are parents, expectant parents, or survivors of domestic or sexual violence to develop and implement their own policies and protocol to address the issues set forth in this report.

Issues Needing Further Research and Discussion

- Whether and how to track the graduation rate of students who are survivors of domestic or sexual violence.

- Addressing risk factors for teen dating violence and examining how both community and family violence contributes to teen dating violence.
- How effectively to connect community-based service providers with schools.
- How better to ensure school district compliance with federal and state laws, regulations, and policies.
- The extent to which students who are survivors of domestic or sexual violence in Illinois are pushed into involuntary homeschooling as a result of unmet needs related to their safety and well-being.
- Using restorative justice techniques to address dating and sexual violence, harassment, and bullying in schools.

Endnotes

¹105 ILL. COMP. STAT. 5/2-3.147 (2009).

²See *Davis v. Monroe County Board of Education*, 526 U.S. 629, 650 (1999) (Title XI “funding recipients are properly held liable in damages only where they are deliberately indifferent to sexual harassment, of which they have actual knowledge, that is so severe, pervasive, and objectively offensive that it can be said to deprive the victims of access to the educational opportunities or benefits provided by the school”).

³ILL. CONST. art. 10, § 1; *id.* art. 1, § 18.

⁴105 ILL. COMP. STAT. 5/27-1 (2009).

⁵ILL. ADMIN. CODE tit. 23, § 200.50(e)–(f) (2009).

⁶Illinois State Board of Education, *Mission, Goals*, http://www.isbe.net/board/pdf/mission_statement.pdf.

⁷The Ensuring Success in School Task Force did not address or recommend changes regarding the Abused and Neglected Child Reporting Act, 325 ILL. COMP. STAT. 5/1 *et seq.* (2009). When the perpetrator of domestic or sexual violence is a person whose actions are covered under the Act (a parent, an immediate family member, a person responsible for the child’s welfare, an individual residing in the same house as the child, a paramour of the child’s parent, or anyone who came to know the child through an official capacity or position of trust (*id.* § 3)), mandated reporters, including school personnel, should comply with that law.

⁸Illinois State Board of Education, *2009 Illinois State Report Card 3*, http://webprod.isbe.net/ereportcard/publicsite/getReport.aspx?year=2009&code=2009StateReport_E.pdf. Note that the data used to calculate a graduation rate or a dropout rate vary greatly, thus the variations in the numbers and percentages in reports cited here and elsewhere and the lack of correspondence between graduation rates and dropout rates.

⁹Editorial Projects in Education, *Diplomas Count 2008—School to College: Can State P–16 Councils Ease the Transition?*, 26(40) EDUCATION WEEK (2008).

¹⁰Illinois School Board of Education, *2009 Expulsion by Gender, Grade Cluster, and Race/Ethnicity* (2010), http://www.isbe.state.il.us/research/pdfs/eoy_ex_0809.pdf; *id.*, *2007–2008 Number of Expulsions, by Gender, Grade Cluster, and Race/Ethnicity* (2008), http://www.isbe.state.il.us/research/pdfs/eoy_ex_0708.pdf; *id.*, *2006–2007 Number of Expulsions by Gender, Grade Cluster, and Race/Ethnicity* (2008), http://www.isbe.state.il.us/research/pdfs/eoy_ex_0607.pdf.

¹¹The National Center for Education Statistics records the 2008 high school dropout rate for U.S. youths 16 to 24 at 8 percent (National Center for Education Statistics, *Digest of Education Statistics: Table 108—Percentage of High School Dropouts Among Persons 16 Through 24 Years Old (Status Dropout Rate), by Sex and Race/Ethnicity: Selected Years, 1960 Through 2008* (2009), http://nces.ed.gov/programs/digest/d09/tables/dt09_108.asp). The Illinois State Board of Education reports on the number of dropouts every year: 3.37 percent of students in 2009 were reported to have dropped out of high school (2.93 percent for females and 3.80 percent for males) (Illinois State Board of Education, *2009 High School Dropout Rate by Grade Level, Gender, and Race/Ethnicity* (2010), http://www.isbe.state.il.us/research/pdfs/eoy_dropouts_glgr0809.pdf). A 2009 study conducted by Northeastern University and the Alternative Schools Network in Chicago found that 13.2 percent of Illinoisans 16–24 dropped out of high school in the 2006–2007 school year (Center for Labor Market Studies at Northeastern University & Alternative Schools Network, *Left Behind in America: The Nation’s Dropout Crisis* 3 (2009), http://www.clms.neu.edu/publication/documents/CLMS_2009_Dropout_Report.pdf). The U.S. Census Bureau’s American Community Survey data show that 17.7 percent of Illinois men 18–24 have not completed high school, and 13.7 percent of Illinois women 18–24 have not completed high school (U.S. Census Bureau, *2006–2008 American Community Survey 3-Year Estimates: Table B15001—Sex by Age by Educational Attainment for the Population 18 Years and Over*).

¹²See Signe-Mary McKernan & Caroline Ratcliffe, The Urban Institute, *Events that Trigger Poverty Entries and Exits* (2002), http://www.urban.org/UploadedPDF/410636_PovertyEntries.pdf.

¹³National Women’s Law Center, *When Girls Don’t Graduate We All Fail: A Call to Improve High School Graduation Rates for Girls* 6 (2007), <http://www.nwlc.org/pdf/DropoutReport.pdf>.

¹⁴*Id.*

¹⁵U.S. Census Bureau, *supra* note 11. From that same data set, 13.84 percent of adult men 18–64 and 11.18 percent of adult women do not have high school degrees.

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- ¹⁶Center for Labor Market Studies at Northeastern University & Alternative Schools Network, *supra* note 11, at 3. The study finds that the combined lifetime fiscal benefits of high school graduates—including the payment of payroll, federal, and state income taxes—could amount to more than \$250,000 per graduated student.
- ¹⁷Henry Levin et al., Columbia University, *The Costs and Benefits of an Excellent Education for All of America's Children* 1 (2007), http://www.cbcse.org/media/download_gallery/Leeds_Report_Final_Jan2007.pdf.
- ¹⁸Illinois Task Force on Re-enrolling Students who Dropped out of School: Final Report 9 (2008), http://www.isbe.state.il.us/reports/reenrolled_students08.pdf.
- ¹⁹Andrew Sum et al., Chicago Alternative Schools Network, *An Assessment of the Labor Market, Income, Health, Social, and Fiscal Consequences of Dropping Out of High School: Findings for Illinois Adults in the 21st Century* 12 (2007), http://www.clms.neu.edu/publication/documents/An_Assessment_of_the_Consequences_of_Dropping_Out_of_High_School_in_Illinois.pdf.
- ²⁰*Id.* at 19.
- ²¹*Id.* at 16.
- ²²National Women's Law Center, *supra* note 13, at 8.
- ²³Sum et al., *supra* note 19, at 52.
- ²⁴*Id.* at 53. The report also found that high school graduates with no college education accounted for 24.5 percent of the adult female population (age 18 to 44) in the state but represented over 52 percent of Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) recipients, making them overrepresented in the TANF ranks by 2 to 1. By contrast, adult women (age 18 to 44) with one or more years of postsecondary schooling accounted for only 1.7 percent of TANF recipients, even though they represented nearly 65 percent of the adult female population in that age group in 2005.
- ²⁵*Id.* at 33.
- ²⁶*Id.* at 32.
- ²⁷Illinois Department of Public Health, *Illinois Teen Births by County 2006–2007*, <http://www.idph.state.il.us/health/teen/teen0607.htm>.
- ²⁸Guttmacher Institute, *U.S. Teenage Pregnancies, Births and Abortions: National and State Trends and Trends by Race and Ethnicity* (2010), <http://www.guttmacher.org/pubs/USTPTrends.pdf>.
- ²⁹Joyce A. Martin et al., *Births: Final Data for 2006*, 57(7) NATIONAL VITAL STATISTICS REPORT Jan. 7, 2009, http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/data/nvsr/nvsr57/nvsr57_07.pdf.
- ³⁰Center for Law and Social Policy, *Leave No Youth Behind: Opportunities for Congress to Reach Disconnected Youth* 8 (Jodie Levin-Epstein & Mark H. Greenberg eds., 2003), <http://www.clasp.org/admin/site/publications/files/0135.pdf>.
- ³¹Kate Perper et al., *Diploma Attainment Among Teen Mothers*, CHILD TRENDS FACT SHEET, Jan. 2010, http://www.childtrends.org/Files/Child_Trends-2010_01_22_FS_DiplomaAttainment.pdf. Diploma and General Educational Development (GED) attainment was the lowest for Hispanic teen mothers (46 percent) followed by white teen mothers (55 percent) and black teen mothers (67 percent). The report also showed that younger teen mothers were less likely to attain their diplomas or complete their GED than older teens: 57 percent of those who had given birth before age 18 received a diploma or GED, where 73 percent of those who gave birth at 18 or 19 did.
- ³²Illinois Pregnancy Risk Assessment Monitoring System (PRAMS), cited in Mariame Kaba et al., Women & Girls Collective Action Network, *Status of Girls in Illinois* (2009), http://www.girlsinthegame.org/uploads/files/SOG_Report2009.pdf.
- ³³Kaba et al., *supra* note 32.
- ³⁴JM Bridgeland et al., *The Silent Epidemic: Perspectives of High School Dropouts* 6 (2006).
- ³⁵*Id.* at 14.
- ³⁶See 105 ILL. COMP. STAT. § 5/26-2a, 10-22.6a (2009).
- ³⁷D.R. Polit et al., New York: Manpower Demonstration Research Corporation, *The Challenge of Serving Teenage Mothers: Lessons from Project Redirection* (1988).
- ³⁸Helene M. Marcy, Center for Impact Research, *Prepped for Success? Supporting Pregnant and Parenting Teens in Chicago Schools* 10 (July 2003), <http://www.impactresearch.org/documents/prepped.pdf>.

³⁹See Robin Hood Foundation, *Kids Having Kids: A Robin Hood Foundation Special Report on the Costs of Adolescent Childbearing* 9–10 (Rebecca A. Maynard ed., 1998), <http://www.robinhood.org/media/7490/khk.pdf>. The Robin Hood Foundation study shows that only 77 percent of the children of teen mothers earn their high school diplomas by early adulthood, compared with 89 percent of the comparison group. Although a part of this difference in graduation rates can be accounted for by background differences, 57 percent of the graduation rate gap is due to adolescent childbearing and closely linked factors. When compared to their counterparts born to older childbearers, the daughters of teen mothers are 83 percent more likely themselves to become mothers before age 18. After background factors are accounted for, adolescent childbearing and closely linked factors account for about 40 percent of this difference in adolescent pregnancy rates.

⁴⁰Glenn Wolfner & Richard Gelles, *A Profile of Violence Toward Children: A National Study*, 17 CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT, 197–217 (1993).

⁴¹Elena Cohen et al., *Understanding Children's Exposure to Violence*, SAFE START CENTER ISSUE BRIEF, Aug. 2009, http://www.safestartcenter.org/pdf/IssueBrief1_UNDERSTANDING.pdf.

⁴²Angie Kennedy, *Urban Adolescent Mothers Exposed to Community, Family, and Partner Violence: Prevalence, Outcomes, and Welfare Policy Implications*, 76(1) AMERICAN JOURNAL OF ORTHOPSYCHIATRY 44–54 (2006).

⁴³Sally Leiderman & Cari Almo, Center for Assessment and Policy Development & Healthy Teen Network, *Interpersonal Violence and Adolescent Pregnancy: Prevalence and Implications for Practice and Policy* (2001), http://www.healthyteennetwork.org/index.asp?Type=B_PR&SEC={2AE1D600-4FC6-4B4D-8822-F1D5F072ED7B}&DE={7E3779AE-DOF1-44C0-B5ED-8A5CA85EE7DB}. Pregnant adolescents also report significantly higher rates of physical abuse than pregnant adult women (*id.*, quoting A.C. Gielen et al., *Interpersonal Conflict and Physical Violence During the Childbearing Year*, 39(6) SOCIAL SCIENCE MEDICINE 81–87 (1994); B. Parker et al., *Physical and Emotional Abuse in Pregnancy: A Comparison of Adult and Teenage Women*, 42 NURSING RESEARCH 173–78 (1993)). A small study, using a nonrandom sample, of Chicago adolescent parents receiving TANF found that 55 percent had experienced domestic violence in the past twelve months (Center for Impact Research, *Domestic Violence and Birth Control Sabotage: A Report from the Teen Parent Project* (2000)).

⁴⁴Kennedy, *supra* note 42; Angie Kennedy & Larry Bennett, *Urban Adolescent Mothers Exposed to Community, Family, and Partner Violence: Is Cumulative Violence Exposure a Barrier to School Performance and Preparation*, 21 JOURNAL OF INTERPERSONAL VIOLENCE 750–73 (2006).

⁴⁵Kennedy & Bennett, *supra* note 44, at 750.

⁴⁶Kennedy, *supra* note 42, at 50.

⁴⁷Leslie Landis, *Assessment of the Current Response to Domestic Violence in Chicago*, (Presentation to City of Chicago Domestic Violence Advocacy Coordinating Council, Oct. 8, 2009).

⁴⁸Leiderman & Almo, *supra* note 43.

⁴⁹Kennedy, *supra* note 42, quoting N.A. Cazenave & M.A. Straus, *Race, Class, Network Embeddedness, and Family Violence: A Search for Potent Support Systems*, in PHYSICAL VIOLENCE IN AMERICAN FAMILIES: RISK FACTORS AND ADAPTATIONS TO VIOLENCE IN 8,145 FAMILIES 321–39 (M.A. Straus & R.J. Gelles eds. 1990); B.A. Wauchope & M.A. Strauss, *Physical Punishment and Physical Abuse of American Children: Incidence Rates by Age, Gender, and Occupational Class*, in *id.* at 133–48).

⁵⁰Betsy McAlister Groves & Marilyn Augustyn, *Pediatric Care Settings*, SAFE START CENTER ISSUE BRIEF, Aug. 2009, http://www.safestartcenter.org/pdf/IssueBrief2_PEDIATRIC.pdf.

⁵¹See 105 ILL. COMP. STAT. § 5/26-2a (2009).

⁵²Currently, under Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, 20 U.S.C. §§ 1681 *et seq.*, and its implementing regulations, 34 C.F.R. § 106.40 (b) (2009), pregnancy-related absences should be excused. Likewise, in Illinois, sex equity regulations ensure that pregnancy may not be the basis for dismissal from a school-operated program or activity (ILL. ADMIN. CODE tit. 23, § 200.50(e) (2005)). Neither Title IX nor state law expressly requires schools to help pregnant young women and girls keep up with their course work even if the schools must excuse pregnancy-related absences.

⁵³See 105 ILL. COMP. STAT. § 5/10-22.6a (2009).

⁵⁴This recommendation is modeled on Tennessee law (see TENN. CODE ANN. § 49-6-3002 (2009)).

⁵⁵Illinois Coalition for School Health Centers, *Illinois School Health Center Report Card FY 2008: Statewide*, <http://www.ilmaternal.org/ICSHC/reportcard/fy082sided.pdf>.

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- ⁵⁶105 ILL. COMP. STAT. § 5/1A-4 (E) (2009).
- ⁵⁷See N.M. STAT. ANN. § 22-2C-11 (2009).
- ⁵⁸See Wis. STAT. § 115.915 (2009).
- ⁵⁹See FLA. STAT. § 1003.54 (2009).
- ⁶⁰See N.Y. EDUC. LAW § 3635 (1)(f) (2009).
- ⁶¹See CAL. EDUC. CODE §§ 54740–54759.5 (2009); *id.* § 54746 (listing support services that may be funded under Cal-SAFE).
- ⁶²*Id.* § 54747.
- ⁶³*Id.* § 54746(c)(2).
- ⁶⁴*Id.* §§ 54746, 49533, 49559.
- ⁶⁵For U-46 Protocol for Teen Parents (High School) 12/6/07, see Appendix A.
- ⁶⁶For U-46 Teen Parent Intake Form, see Appendix A.
- ⁶⁷105 ILL. COMP. STAT. 10/1 *et seq.* (2009).
- ⁶⁸*Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance—United States, 2007*, CENTERS FOR DISEASE CONTROL AND PREVENTION MORBIDITY AND MORTALITY WEEKLY REPORT, June 6, 2008, at 7, 48, <http://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/PDF/ss/ss5704.pdf>.
- ⁶⁹AAUW Educational Foundation, *Hostile Hallways: Bullying, Teasing, and Sexual Harassment in School 4* (2001), <http://www.safeschoolscoalition.org/hostilehallways.pdf>.
- ⁷⁰Ruth DeRosa & David Pelcovitz, *Working with Traumatized Youth in Child Welfare* ch. 12 (“Treating Traumatized Adolescent Mothers”) (2006).
- ⁷¹U.S. Bureau of Justice Statistics, National Crime Victimization Survey, *Criminal Victimization, 2008*, at 4 (2009); Patricia Tjaden & Nancy Thoennes, *Prevalence, Incidence, and Consequences of Violence Against Women: Findings from the National Violence Against Women Survey*, NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF JUSTICE CENTERS FOR DISEASE CONTROL AND PREVENTION RESEARCH IN BRIEF, Nov. 1998, at 6, <http://www.ncjrs.gov/pdffiles/172837.pdf>.
- ⁷²*Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance*, *supra* note 68.
- ⁷³*Id.* at 53–54. Of twenty-two major metropolitan areas surveyed, Chicago had the third highest overall percentage of students who had skipped at least one day of school in the last month for safety concerns.
- ⁷⁴Illinois Department of Children and Family Services, *Child Abuse and Neglect Statistics Fiscal Year 2008* (2008), <http://www.state.il.us/DCFS/docs/CANTS2008.pdf>.
- ⁷⁵C.M. Rennison, U.S. Department of Justice, *Bureau of Justice Statistics Special Report: Intimate Partner Violence and Age of Victim, 1993–1999* (2000) (cited in Kennedy, *supra* note 42).
- ⁷⁶Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2007 Youth Risk Behavior Survey, quoted in Kaba et al., *supra* note 32.
- ⁷⁷2005 Chicago Public Schools Youth Risk Behavior Survey, cited in Illinois Safe Schools Alliance, *Chicago Public High Schools Differential Risk Factors for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual Identified Students: 2005 Youth Risk Behavior Survey Results*, http://www.illinoisafeschools.org/page_attachments/0000/0008/2005_CYRBS.pdf.
- ⁷⁸Cohen et al., *supra* note 41.
- ⁷⁹Sidran Institute, *Posttraumatic Stress Disorder Fact Sheet* (n.d.), <http://www.sidran.org/sub.cfm?contentID=66§ionid=4> (last visited Sept. 14, 2009).
- ⁸⁰John W. Fantuzzo & Wanda K. Mohr, *Prevalence and Effects of Child Exposure to Domestic Violence*, THE FUTURE OF CHILDREN, Winter 1999, at 21.
- ⁸¹*Id.* at 27.
- ⁸²American Bar Association Commission on Youth at Risk, *Family Conflict: The Effects of High Family Conflict and Domestic Violence on Teenagers* (n.d.), <http://www.abanet.org/youthatrisk/factsheets/familyconflict.shtml>.
- ⁸³Howard N. Snyder, Bureau of Justice Statistics, U.S. Department of Justice, *Sexual Assault of Young Children as Reported to Law Enforcement: Victim, Incident, and Offender Characteristics* (2000), <http://bjs.ojp.usdoj.gov/content/pub/pdf/saycrlr.pdf>.
- ⁸⁴For an example of model policy on dating and sexual violence, see Break the Cycle, *Safe Schools Model Policy: A Comprehensive Approach to Addressing Dating Violence and Sexual Violence in District of Columbia Schools*, <http://www.breakthecycle.org/pdf/dc-model-school-policy.pdf> (last visited Sept. 22, 2009).
- ⁸⁵Shaista Malik et al., *Community and Dating Violence Among Adolescents: Perpetration and Victimization*, 21 JOURNAL OF ADOLESCENT HEALTH 291 (1997); William James et al., *Youth Dating Violence*, 35 ADOLESCENCE 455 (2000).

Between one-fifth and one-quarter of all adolescents experience psychological and physical abuse in dating relationships (see John Hagan & Holly Foster, Youth Violence and the End of Adolescence, 66 AMERICAN SOCIOLOGICAL REVIEW 874 (2001)). One study of high school students found that 31.5 percent of sexually active adolescent girls reported ever experiencing physical or sexual violence (Michele R. Decker et al., *Dating Violence and Sexually Transmitted Disease/HIV Testing and Diagnosis Among Adolescent Females*, 116 PEDIATRICS 272 (2005)).

⁸⁶AAUW Educational Foundation, *supra* note 69.

⁸⁷Hagan & Foster, *supra* note 85.

⁸⁸Jay Silverman et al., *Dating Violence Against Adolescent Girls and Associated Substance Use, Unhealthy Weight Control, Sexual Risk Behavior, Pregnancy, and Suicidality*, 286 JOURNAL OF THE AMERICAN MEDICAL ASSOCIATION 572 (2001).

⁸⁹M.C. Black et al., *Physical Dating Violence Among High School Students—United States, 2003*, MORBIDITY AND MORTALITY WEEKLY REPORT, May 19, 2006 (cited in Break the Cycle, *supra* note 84).

⁹⁰In a study about dating violence in teens 13 through 18 years old, 42 percent of boys and 43 percent of girls who reported abuse said that the incidents of abuse took place either in a school building or on school grounds (Christian Molidor & Jennifer Kober, *Gender and Contextual Factors in Adolescent Dating Violence*, PREVENTION RESEARCHER, Feb. 2000).

⁹¹Michell Nunez & Madeline Wordes, National Council on Crime and Delinquency & National Center for Victims of Crime, *Our Vulnerable Teenagers: Their Victimization, Its Consequences, and Directions for Prevention and Intervention* (2002) (cited in Break the Cycle, *supra* note 84).

⁹²See *supra* note 7.

⁹³Illinois Public Act 96-0628, passed as Senate Bill 1508 by the 96th Illinois General Assembly in 2009 (codified at 105 ILL. COMP. STAT. 10/5(f)) (2009).

⁹⁴National Center for Posttraumatic Stress Disorder, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, *What Is PTSD?* (2010), http://www.ptsd.va.gov/public/pages/handouts-pdf/handout_What_is_PTSD.pdf.

⁹⁵See 105 ILL. COMP. STAT. 5/10-21.3a(c) (2005).

⁹⁶See *id.* 5/10-22.6.

⁹⁷R.I. GEN. LAWS § 16-21-30 (2009).

⁹⁸TEX. EDUC. CODE § 37.0831 (2009).

⁹⁹Chicago Public Schools Policy Manual § 704.4, (“Domestic Violence, Dating Violence and Court Orders of Protection, Restraint or No Contact”) (adopted June 25, 2008).

¹⁰⁰Joseph G. Kosciw et al., Gay, Lesbian and Straight Education Network, *From Teasing to Torment: A Report on School Climate in Illinois* 10, 12 (2006), http://www.glsen.org/binary-data/GLSEN_ATTACHMENTS/file/000/000/700-1.pdf.

¹⁰¹*Id.* at 15.

¹⁰²*Id.*

¹⁰³*Id.* at v.

¹⁰⁴*Id.* at 13.

¹⁰⁵See 105 ILL. COMP. STAT. 45/1-1 (2009); Illinois State Board of Education, *Policy of the Illinois State Board of Education on the Education of Homeless Children and Youth* (n.d.), <http://www.isbe.state.il.us/homeless/pdf/policy.pdf>.

¹⁰⁶See 42 U.S.C. §§ 11432(g)(1)(J)(iii), 11432(g)(3); 105 ILL. COMP. STAT. 45/1-10 (2009).

¹⁰⁷42 U.S.C. § 11432(e)(3).

¹⁰⁸*Id.* §§ 11432(g)(6), § 11432(g)(5).

¹⁰⁹*Id.* §§ 11432(g)(7)(C), 11431; 105 ILL. COMP. STAT. 45/1-1 (2009).

¹¹⁰See *supra* note 77.

¹¹¹Elizabeth M. Diaz & Joseph G. Kosciw, Gay, Lesbian and Straight Education Network, *Shared Differences: The Experiences of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Students of Color in Our Nation’s Schools*, at xi (2009), http://www.glsen.org/binary-data/GLSEN_ATTACHMENTS/file/000/001/1332-1.pdf.

¹¹²*Id.* at 24.

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- ¹¹⁴*Id.*
- ¹¹⁵National Gay and Lesbian Task Force, *Fact Sheet: Homeless Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender (LGBT) Youth in Chicago, Ill.* (n.d.), http://www.thetaskforce.org/downloads/reports/fact_sheets/HomelessYouthChicago012507.pdf.
- ¹¹⁶See J. Curtis McMillen & Jayne Tucker, *The Status of Older Adolescents at Exit from Out-of-Home Care*, 78 CHILD WELFARE JOURNAL 339–60 (1999).
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- ¹¹⁸National Campaign to Prevent Teen Pregnancy, *Science Says: Foster Care Youth* 1 (2006), http://www.thenationalcampaign.org/resources/pdf/SS/SS27_FosterCare.pdf.
- ¹¹⁹National Campaign to Prevent Teen and Unplanned Pregnancy, *Fast Facts: Reproductive Health Outcomes Among Youth Who Ever Lived in Foster Care* (2009), http://www.thenationalcampaign.org/resources/pdf/FastFacts_FosterCare_Reproductive_Outcomes.pdf, (citing the National Longitudinal Study of Adolescent Health).
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- ¹²²Alice Bussiere et al., *Adolescents, the Foster Care System, and the Transition to Adulthood: What Legal Aid Lawyers Need to Know*, 39 CLEARINGHOUSE REVIEW 166–67 (2005), <http://www.povertylaw.org/clearinghouse-review/issues/2005/20050715/chr501081.pdf> (citing CAL. WELF. & INST. CODE § 16501.1(c) (2009); CAL. EDUC. CODE §§ 48853.5 (b), (d) (2009)).
- ¹²³CAL. WELF. & INST. CODE § 16001.9(a)(24) (2009).
- ¹²⁴CAL. EDUC. CODE §§ 89341–89342 (2009).
- ¹²⁵105 ILL. COMP. STAT. 5/10-22.39 (2007).

