

Sistas on the Rise Recommends:

 ...the transformation of the P School Program into a **full-length alternative school** for pregnant and parenting students, which would address problems arising in the transition process and create a stable and supportive academic environment, thus reducing the number of young mothers that drop out of high school in New York City.

 ...a formal P School **policy book** that can be referred to by all students and staff. In addition a course booklet, delineating the classes offered at the P Schools and the school's credit system should be readily available for all current and potential students.

 ...**academic curriculum** in P Schools be maintained at a level consistent with other City schools to ensure a quality education and smooth transitions between schools, as well as providing adequate preparation for required City and State exams.

 ...a **strong parenting curriculum** that is consistent in all four schools, teaching students necessary health, pregnancy, and parenting information to promote the wellbeing of themselves and their children.

 ...that **support from school staff** be received by pregnant and parenting students particularly during transition periods in and out of the P School and while on maternity leave.

 ...**mandatory home visits** by school social workers and nurses during Code 45 maternity leave, as promised in the Department of Education's P School guide.

 ...**expansion of the Lyfe Center Program** to meet the needs of more students, the addition of more slots throughout the academic year, more than one site per borough in the summer, and the establishment of a middle school Lyfe Center to meet the childcare needs of younger student mothers.

Methodology



This research project was conducted by members of Sistas on the Rise in partnership with the Community Development Project of the Urban Justice Center. In the fall of 2004, a 38-question survey was developed, which was administered by Sistas on the Rise members to 123 current students in all four P Schools and 55 former students. Following the survey, three focus groups were conducted with current students from the Martha Nielson School, the Mid-Manhattan P School, and Ida B. Wells. Further one-on-one interviews were also conducted with former students. The findings outlined in this brochure are only a small sample of the results of this extensive research process.



Interested in becoming more involved with Sistas on the Rise?

If you are interested in volunteering, want to learn more about the Education Campaign or Sistas on the Rise, or would like to become a member and participate in more of our programs, campaigns and activities, please contact us!

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Pregnant and Parenting School Survey Results

What is Sistas on the Rise?

Sistas on the Rise is a space for young women of color ages 13-21 to take ownership and power over their lives and to create a healthy community by developing their leadership skills and organizing without being marginalized. We realize that many young women who become pregnant drop-out of existing youth programs because they do not receive the support necessary for their continued participation.

Sistas on the Rise is a space where young mothers and women of color raise consciousness, build sisterhood and take action for social change. We provide workshops, activities and trips that develop leadership skills and teach our young women to be critical and active members of the community.

The Education Campaign

Sistas on the Rise has been organizing around education for young mothers at the four NYC Pregnant and Parenting Schools to explore if and how this program addresses the many needs of pregnant students.

After spending the 2004-05 school year talking to students about the P School Program, we discovered that overall the program has been effective in providing support to young women, helping them become good parents while continuing their education so they can achieve greater goals.

Both former and current P School students have spoken their minds, and told us of their desire to be in a safe and productive environment for the betterment of their own futures and those of their children. P Schools are greatly valued, which is evident by the fact that once enrolled, a full 83% of students never considered dropping out.

There are some serious problems and gaps in the overall program, however. For example, a major setback for young students is in getting the support needed from school staff to make the transfer in and out of P School smoother. Another striking result was the fact that a majority of both current and former students would prefer to have the opportunity to graduate from P School and not to have to return to their former schools.

In the following pages, based on our findings, we will show you where the most urgent concerns arise, and give recommendations on how to address these areas.

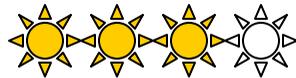
"Before becoming pregnant, my grades were bad. Being pregnant motivated me, and this school gave me the push I needed."

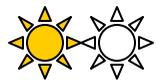
Current P School Student

Support and Follow-Up

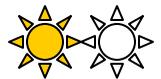
Through our focus group discussions, surveys, and interviews we discovered a lack of support from school officials for students planning their transition into and out of the P Schools and trying to stay connected while on maternity leave (Code 45).

Regarding current students:

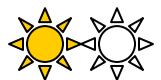
 3 out of 4 (76%) current students have not yet been contacted by anyone at their P School regarding their plans for leaving the P School

 Nearly half (48%) of current students do not know when their last semester at their P School is

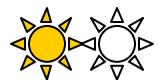
Regarding former students:

 Just under half (42.3%) of former students said that they received no support from school staff when transferring out of their P School

 One out of three (33%) former students transferred out of their P School to a school that was not their preference

 Over half (53%) of former students said that no one from their school followed up with them after they transferred out of their P School

Regarding maternity leave:

 Half (51%) of students received no follow up support from school staff while on maternity leave

P School Preferences

The responses students gave in the surveys clearly show that they would benefit from a full four-year alternative school for pregnant and parenting students, rather than the current semester-based program. Data gathered from focus groups and interviews further supports this and other structural recommendations, such as a more flexible daily schedule, and the offering of night classes.

