

LWVBC WOMEN'S ISSUES COMMITTEE

2012 End of Year Report by Kay Forsythe

Four years ago, the Women's Issues Committee became concerned about the small number of pregnant and parenting teens graduating from high school in St. Vrain Valley School District. We began researching and building a coalition to work with the district on graduating more of these teens. A Task Force was formed with representatives from 13 agencies and our League attempting to improve the support systems to this high-risk group of students.

What has this Task Force accomplished?

A questionnaire was prepared with 144 pregnant and parenting teens sharing their experiences and reasons for staying in school, dropping out, and re-enrolling in school. The League of Women Voters of Colorado funded the evaluation of this survey that was completed by the end of 2011.

The Task Force has been instrumental in working with the school district to improve the supports for students choosing to stay in their regular school, to expand the childcare ages in their Teen Parent Program, and to develop a Review Team of school and agency staff to communicate issues and problems in school.

The district has now developed a Digital Learning Lab to help students who fall behind in their classes, plus an E-credit Recovery program. A new on-line program has given these teen parents another option to complete school. Adult Education has always been an option for some parents returning to school.

This Task Force will continue to network and work to encourage pregnant and parenting teens to complete school. These teens continue to need much support from the schools and community. The involvement of our League is now complete, as a group overseeing the educational welfare of these teens is in place, communicating, and effective.