

**BOARD OF TRUSTEES
AGENDA**

<input type="checkbox"/> Workshop	<input type="checkbox"/> Regular	<input type="checkbox"/> Special
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(A) Report Only Recognition

Presenter(s):

Briefly describe the subject of the report or recognition presentation.

<p>PRESENTATION BY HEALTHY FUTURES OF TEXAS ON PARTICIPATION IN A 5-YEAR STUDY OF YOUTH DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS TO PREVENT TEENAGE PREGNANCY.</p>

(B) Action Item

Presenter(s):

Briefly describe the action required.

(C) **Funding source: Identify the source of funds if any are required.**

(D) **Clarification: Explain any question or issues that might be raised regarding this item.**



**Grant Opportunity for Texas School Districts:
Big Decisions Teen Pregnancy Prevention Study**

As many educators know, teen pregnancy is too common in Texas. Being a young parent means a steeper educational pathway, and their babies more often have poor health, long-term learning problems, and a life in poverty. *Big Decisions* programs are designed to help young people make healthy decisions and avoid teen pregnancy.

Grant Opportunity: Healthy Futures of Texas is seeking Texas school districts to participate in a 5-year study of youth development programs to prevent teenage pregnancy. The funding opportunity ([AH-TP2-15-002](#)) has been announced by the federal Office of Adolescent Health (OAH), and the grant application is due on **April 10, 2015**. In order to participate, school districts must complete a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with Healthy Futures of Texas prior to April 1.

If awarded, the 5-year grant project would study the effectiveness of three approaches to youth development: the *Big Decisions* curriculum, the *Big Decisions with Community Service-Learning* curriculum, and the *Big Decisions: Youth Voices* program. The programs are designed ideally for 9th grade students, but can be used in 8th grade, if 9th grade is not possible.

Overview of the Programs:

- *Big Decisions* in an “abstinence-plus” sexuality education curriculum ideal for 8th and 9th grade students. The 10-session curriculum includes medically accurate lessons on goals and dreams, healthy relationships, anatomy/reproduction, abstinence, refusal skills, contraception, and STDs. *Big Decisions* conforms to the Texas Education Code and has been approved and used in more than 26 Texas school districts.
- *Big Decisions plus Community Service-Learning* incorporates the entire *Big Decisions* curriculum plus 10 lessons that guide students in designing and completing a Community Service-Learning project.
- *Big Decisions: Youth Voices* is a program for students to participate in facilitated discussions about the issues facing today’s adolescents. This program provides group sessions in which guided discussions encourage students to describe and share their perspectives.

Frequently Asked Questions:

1. How long are these 3 programs?

- The *Big Decisions* curriculum is 10 sessions long, with each session the length of a class period (45 or 50 minutes).
- The *Big Decisions plus Community Service-Learning* program is 20 sessions long. It incorporates the 10 *Big Decisions* lessons and also 10 sessions for students to develop and evaluate their Community Service-Learning experience. This curriculum also requires students to complete a Community Service-Learning project, which may require out-of-school time, depending on the project the students and teacher/facilitator develop.
- The *Big Decisions: Youth Voices* program requires 3 facilitated discussion sessions.

2. **Who would receive the curriculum?** 9th grade students (males and females) would be ideal for the study. Healthy Futures of Texas will also consider doing the study with 8th grade students, if necessary.

3. **Who would facilitate or teach the curriculum?** Healthy Futures of Texas will work with the selected school districts to determine who would be the best fit to facilitate the program (e.g., teachers, or Healthy Futures of Texas facilitators). All facilitators would be trained to implement the program with fidelity.

4. **When would this happen?** Healthy Futures of Texas will submit the grant application by April 10, 2015. If the grant is awarded, the project period will begin on July 1, 2015. However, the first year is a planning year, in which school districts and Healthy Futures of Texas will jointly plan and pilot the programs—and ensure that the programs meet the needs of the students involved. Actual implementation of the 3 programs will begin by July 1, 2016.

5. **What is the study design?** The study would be a randomized control trial comparing the 3 interventions. Schools or classes within a district would be randomly assigned to receive the *Big Decisions* program, the *Big Decisions plus Community Service-Learning* program, or the *Big Decisions: Youth Voices* program. The exact study design will depend on the several factors (e.g., the number of school districts in the study, and the number of students in each participating district). The final study design will be developed in collaboration with the school district(s) and the study evaluator.

6. **How long is the study?** This is a 5-year federal grant from the Office of Adolescent Health. Students will participate in follow-up questionnaires 9 months after they complete the program.

7. **Can students randomized to one group get the other program?** It is essential for the study's validity that the students in one group not receive the other program. However, after students complete the 9-month post-program questionnaire, they can be offered the

other program components that they did not receive in the study. Healthy Futures of Texas will work with school districts to offer all 3 program components to their students who have completed the study, if desired by the district.

8. **Will there be any cost to the district?** There is no financial cost to the district in terms of being charged for services. Rather, the grant would provide resources to participating school districts so they could help coordinate study activities. Healthy Futures of Texas anticipates budgeting for some funds to assist the school district to participate.
9. **What about our current sex education programs?** In order to determine if the study outcomes are a result of the *Big Decisions* program, it will be important for school districts to discontinue other sex education programs that the students in the 3 study groups may receive while they are in the study. If the school district already offers *Big Decisions* programs before or during the 9th grade, these will need to be stopped during the study period, so as not to interfere with the study. It is recommended—but not required—to discontinue other sex education programs that occur before or after students participate in the study.
10. **What about parent permission?** Healthy Futures of Texas is clear that ONLY students whose parents want them to participate will be in the study. Healthy Futures of Texas will have an informed-consent process for parent consent and for students to assent to participation.

To express interest, or for additional information, please contact:

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About the Author of *Big Decisions*



Janet P. Realini, MD, MPH is the President and founder of Healthy Futures of Texas, a non-profit organization dedicated to reducing teen and unplanned pregnancy. Dr. Realini is the author of *Big Decisions*, a Texas-friendly “Abstinence-Plus” teen sex education program, which she gives away free on the internet. *Big Decisions* has been implemented in more than 25 Texas school districts and numerous community agencies.

Dr. Realini served 18 years teaching Family Medicine at the UT Health Science Center in San Antonio and 10 years as Medical Director of the San Antonio Metro Health’s Family Planning Program, where she founded Project WORTH, the City of San Antonio’s teen pregnancy prevention program.

Dr. Realini received her medical degree at the University of California San Francisco and her Master’s in Public Health from the University of Texas School of Public Health. She completed her Family Medicine residency at the University of Texas Health Science Center at San Antonio and is board certified in Family Medicine. Dr. Realini serves as Clinical Professor of Family and Community Medicine at the UTHSCSA, as Adjunct Professor of Public Health at the UTSPH, and as a Consultant to the Texas Medical Association Committee on Maternal and Perinatal Health.

As President of Healthy Futures of Texas, Dr. Realini provides leadership and support for the Healthy Futures Alliance (HFA), a community coalition dedicated to reducing teen and unplanned pregnancy. HFA includes both “pro-life” and “pro-choice” members, and all are working together for prevention--to ensure that more parents are prepared, more pregnancies are planned, and more families are healthy. Healthy Futures also leads the Texas Women’s Healthcare Coalition, a statewide coalition of organizations dedicated to improving the health and well-being of women, babies, and families by assuring all Texas women access to preventive healthcare.

Dr. Realini’s honors include the 2011 John P. McGovern Award from the Texas School Health Association, the 2011 “Women Who Dare” award from the Texas Chapter of the National Council of Jewish Women, the 2010 Spirit of Service Award from the Healthy Teen Network, election to the San Antonio Women’s Hall of Fame, a special award from the Texas Society for Adolescent Medicine in 2009, and the 2008 Public Health Award from the American Academy of Family Physicians. She also serves on the Board of Directors of the Texas Campaign to Prevent Teen Pregnancy and of SA2020.



OUR MISSION: Healthy Futures of Texas is dedicated to reducing teen and unplanned pregnancy in San Antonio, in order to support the development of strong families and positively impact the future of our city. We envision a community where every child has parents who are ready to care for them and every teen is able to reach their full potential.

WHAT WE DO: Healthy Futures of Texas provides and promotes strategies that work to help young people make healthy decisions and avoid unplanned pregnancies. We provide education programs for parents, teens, and young adults. We educate and mobilize our community to know and to use what works. We also advocate for policies to help teens and young adults take responsibility for their health and their future—and avoid unplanned pregnancy.

OUR STRATEGY: As a small nonprofit, our strategy is to collaborate with other organizations to help them be more effective. We provide the tools and the training—and sometimes the facilitators—to assure that schools, community agencies, parents, and teens are able to address this important “piece of the puzzle.” Our greatest success has been helping our community overcome controversy to work together for young people.

OUR PROGRAMS

EDUCATION:

Youth Development/Youth Education:

Healthy Futures provides abstinence-plus education in schools and agencies in low-income areas of San Antonio. Using evidence-based and evidence-informed curricula—and always with parental consent—our educators facilitate sessions that help teens make responsible choices. Our programs reached 1,573 youth in 2013.

Parent Education: Healthy Futures provides parent empowerment workshops, where parents learn to communicate more effectively with their teens. In 2013, our programs reached 641 parents.

Big Decisions is a Texas-friendly abstinence-plus curriculum for teens available free on the internet. Deemed “promising” by Baylor College of Medicine researchers, Big Decisions is used by more than 20 Texas school districts, as well as by many agencies.

ADVOCACY:

The Healthy Futures Alliance (HFA) is a coalition of nearly 400 individuals working together to prevent teen and unplanned pregnancy in San Antonio. HFA includes “pro-choice” and “pro-life” members and advocates for science-based policies at both the state and local/school district levels.

Texas Women’s Healthcare Coalition: Healthy Futures leads this statewide coalition of healthcare, policy, and faith organizations that helped to restore women’s healthcare funding and ensure access to preventive care for low-income Texas women.

Youth Advocacy Council: Healthy Futures works with a group of high school students who serve as youth educators and advocates on issues of adolescent sexual and reproductive health, with an emphasis on teen pregnancy prevention.

Prevention of teen and unplanned pregnancy is much more than abstinence, sex education, and contraception. It is about goals and dreams -- and moving toward a bright future!



Healthy Futures of Texas

We Offer These Programs:

40 Developmental Assets

5 (45 – 60 min.) sessions

1st – 5th grade, approx. 8 – 12 years old

The Search Institute identified 40 building blocks of healthy development that help young children grow up to be caring and responsible adults. The activities in the 40 Developmental Assets are designed to target these 40 skills and encourage positive growth in adolescents.

Draw the Line/Respect the Line

5 (45 min.) sessions in grade 6; 7 (45 min.) sessions in grades 7 and 8

6th – 8th grade, approx. 10 – 14 years old

This curriculum helps students develop personal sexual limits and practice the skills needed to maintain those limits when challenged. This evidence-based program stresses that postponing sexual activity is the best plan; covers setting limits to prevent HIV, STDs and pregnancy; and discusses social pressures, challenges to personal limits, and communication and refusal skills.

It's Your Game... Keep It Real

12 (45 – 60 min.) lessons in Level I; 12 (45 – 60 min.) lessons in Level II

6th – 8th grade, approx. 10 – 14 years old

It's Your Game (IYG) is a classroom- and computer-based program for middle school youth. The curriculum is grounded in theory and was developed to prevent teen pregnancy and sexually transmitted diseases (STDs), including HIV. IYG emphasizes abstinence but also teaches students how to protect themselves from pregnancy and STDs using medically accurate information.

The curriculum includes eight classroom-based lessons including interactive activities that facilitate group discussion, including role-plays for students to practice refusal skills. Four computer-based lessons include a virtual world interface, educational quizzes, animations, and fact sheets that target determinants of sexual risk taking and are tailored to gender and sexual experience.

Making Proud Choices

8 (1 hour) modules

6th – 8th grade, approx. 11 – 13 years old

This HIV risk reduction curriculum acknowledges that abstinence is the best choice. But it also emphasizes the importance of condoms to reduce the risk of pregnancy and STIs, including HIV, if participants choose to have sex.

The curriculum consists of eight, one-hour modules. Making Proud Choices involves group discussions, videos, games, brainstorming, experiential exercises, and activities to build skills. The curriculum encourages participants to take pride in themselves and their community, to behave responsibly for their own sake and for the sake of their community, and to consider their goals for the future and how unhealthy behavior might thwart those goals.

Wyman's Teen Outreach Program (TOP®)

At least 25 (1 hour) sessions across 9 months

6th – 12th grade, approx. 10 – 18 years old

TOP® is an evidence-based program specifically designed for teens from 6th to 12th grade. Guided by a nine-month curriculum, TOP® reduces the risk of problem behavior while promoting healthy choices and empowering teens to lead successful lives and build strong communities. TOP® also includes a Community Service Learning component; a minimum of twenty hours that will allow the students to better their community while learning life skills and building a sense of purpose.

There are three essential goals that every teen in the program can build a foundation of success from: healthy behaviors, life skills, and a sense of purpose. TOP® has demonstrated a 52% lower risk of suspension, 60% lower risk of course failure, and 53% lower risk of pregnancy.

Big Decisions

10 (1 hour) sessions

7th – 12th grade, approx. 11 – 18 years old

An abstinence-plus, medically accurate, easy-to-use curriculum that has been evaluated as a "promising program". The 10-session curriculum includes lessons on anatomy/reproduction, healthy relationships, contraception, STDs, goals and dreams, and much more! *Big Decisions* is compatible with Texas law and has been approved and used in more than 23 Texas school districts. For more information about *Big Decisions*, visit www.BigDecisions.org.

Families Talking Together

2 (2 hour) sessions

For parents of children ages 10 - 14

A parent-based intervention program focused on improving parent-child communication and parental monitoring, with the goal of delaying sexual initiation and preventing risky sexual behavior among middle-school aged youth. Parents are given information and skills to help them guide their teens to form healthy relationships, set goals, and increase self-esteem.

Prevention of teen and unplanned pregnancy is much more than abstinence, sex education, and contraception.

It is about goals and dreams -- and moving toward a bright future!

BIG DECISIONS

Making Healthy, Informed Choices about Sex

The goal of the *Big Decisions* Curriculum is to help young people make healthy and informed decisions about sex. *Big Decisions* is designed to vigorously—and effectively—encourage young people to postpone sexual involvement and also to provide the guidance and information young people need to reduce their risks when they do become sexually active.

Big Decisions is an abstinence-plus sexuality education curriculum that is suitable for grades 7 to 12. *Big Decisions* is easy to use, medically accurate and is compatible with Texas law and has been approved and used in more than 26 Texas school districts.

The *Big Decisions* Sexuality Curriculum contains 10 LESSONS plus a PARENT SESSION

1. RULES OF THE GAME: Forming a Respectful Group
2. ANATOMY AND REPRODUCTION: How it Works
3. RELATIONSHIPS AND ROMANCE: What is Healthy? What is Love?
4. SEXUALLY TRANSMITTED DISEASES (including HIV/AIDS)
5. ABSTINENCE: Why Should I Wait?
6. CONTRACEPTION: Pregnancy at the RIGHT Time
7. INFLUENCE: Friends, Culture, the Media, and Sex
8. GOALS AND DREAMS: My Decision
9. THE POWER TO SAY NO: Sticking to My Decision
10. WRAP-UP AND EVALUATION: How Did We Do?

What people are saying about *Big Decisions*:

"It's honestly been so engaging and fantastic!"

--Facilitator

"It helped me understand more about sex and waiting."

--9th Grade Student

"We need this in our school district!"

--High school teacher

"In short, the BIG DECISIONS™ curriculum is promising."

--Arturo Vega, Ph.D.
Center for Policy Studies

APPROVED AND USED in Texas schools:

- ✓ San Antonio ISD
- ✓ Northeast (San Antonio)
- ✓ Hays Consolidated ISD
- ✓ Brackett ISD
- ✓ Edcouch Elsa HS
- ✓ Alief ISD
- ✓ Lufkin ISD
- ✓ Comfort ISD
- ✓ Donna ISD
- ✓ Irving ISD
- ✓ Pasadena ISD
- ✓ Pearsall ISD
- ✓ San Marcos Consolidated ISD
- ✓ Dripping Springs ISD



Community Service-Learning Lessons available

Dissemination of *Big Decisions* is a project of


Healthy Futures
of Texas
www.HF-TX.org

Available to download for **FREE** at www.BigDecisions.org

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