

LETTERS

*To the Editor***Reducing Teen Pregnancy**

For far too long, Washington has had one of the highest teen pregnancy rates in the country. Each year there have been enough pregnant teens to fill more than two dozen school buses.

Although most District residents believe that things are going pretty well these days in the city, they feel that children and teens are being left behind. Teen pregnancy ranks among their top concerns. Indeed, they are almost as concerned about teen pregnancy as they are about drugs, violence and poor public schools. D.C. residents also feel that beyond parents and teens themselves, schools are the most important factor in preventing pregnancy.

As Clifford B. Janey takes over as superintendent of schools, we hope he will involve schools in sexuality education. It is already mandated for grades K-12 in the District, but there is no curriculum for teaching this crucial subject.

If reducing teen pregnancy sounds like a tall order for a school system with so much on its plate, consider this sobering reality: Children of teen parents are very likely to become teen parents themselves.

On the other hand, school success from an early age helps protect children from a wide range of troubles, including teen pregnancy. When children feel connected to their schools and teachers, that sense of belonging protects them from teen pregnancy as well.

With the many daunting challenges facing Dr. Janey, it is possible that

of goodwill in the youth-serving community are eager to offer support and encouragement. We want to help him be successful because we know the vital role education should play in the lives of D.C.'s children.

GEORGE L. GARROW JR.

Executive Director

National Organization of Concerned Black Men Inc.

ANGELA M. JONES

Executive Director

D.C. Action for Children

LORI KAPLAN

Executive Director

Latin American Youth Center

LORAL PATCHEN

Executive Director

Teen Alliance for Prepared Parenting at Washington Hospital Center

Center

BRENDA RHODES MILLER

Executive Director

DC Campaign to Prevent Teen Pregnancy

Pregnancy