

Pipeline Newsletter: Vol. 01- Issue 1, Fall 2010

COORDINATOR'S BRIEF

Welcome to our first Pipeline Project Newsletter. The Project's staff and I are looking forward to working with you to achieve our shared goal of increasing gender equity in CTE/Technology schools and programs.

One of the goals of this newsletter is to share with you strategies that will encourage and increase girls participation in technology and career education. In addition it will offer tips and guidelines for implementing strategies and conducting gender equity events. I will also be using this newsletter to remind you of important activities that you should include in your respective school calendars.

The new school year presents us with new and exciting challenges and I look forward to meeting these with confidence in what promises to be an outstanding year for all of us.

CHALLENGING GENDER STEREOTYPES

Unfortunately many girls do not understand the importance of studying science or technology. Some of them believe that these subjects are only for "the boys." You can change this thinking by incorporating career discussions in the classroom curriculum. This would especially help the girls at your school discover that science and technology are useful and should be a part of their future career options. Start with something simple like talking about their use of technology and science and how vital it is to everyday life. Remind your students how chaotic life would be if people had no access to technology and science. Then discuss some vital technology careers they may be unaware of, for example:

- Without **emergency service technicians** many lives would be lost.
- An **electrician** not only installs electrical wiring. They also test for electrical defects and diagnose safety hazards that can cause fires.

Emphasize and explain that girls should not avoid technology or science since both are crucial for our survival and can open the doors to one of the many rewarding careers that women pursue.



Photo by Robert Vega, Electrical Shop Dean, Queens V.T. H.S. – 2010.

MIDDLE SCHOOL ZONE

Gender stereotyping continues to be a serious obstacle to girls' participation in technology and career studies. Both girls and boys in career and technical schools still opt for career choices that reflect traditional gender roles. An important tool to helping middle school students overcome these biases is providing improved career guidance to grade eight articulation staff. Increasing your school counselors' gender awareness and knowledge about modern technology careers can help them to better guide students and challenge gender stereotypes.

Grade 8 Guidance and Articulation Staff Professional Development

Several CTE high schools host a professional development (PD) meeting and tour between the months of September and November for grade eight articulation staff. All middle school **guidance counselors**, **social workers** and **parent coordinators** (and PTA executives) should participate in this meeting to learn about new developments at neighboring CTE high schools as well as important strategies to identify which students are best suited for the CTE dual diploma high school experience.

The following schools are hosting Professional Development Meetings for Guidance staff:

- Ralph McKee HS - November 12**
- Westinghouse HS - November 17**
- Coop Tech - December 16**

Principals are the ones who can set the tone which is essential in adopting policies that ensure, gender equity.

Principal Highlight

Congratulations to Denise Vittor, formerly principal of Queens Vocational High School, in her new role as Transformation Mentor Principal. All of us on the Equality Works team want to thank her for allowing us to pilot several gender equity best practices at QVTHS. Her leadership and commitment to securing gender equity in nontraditional CTE courses at QVTHS has been important to our success. Ms. Vittor, like all the principals in our pilot project, recognized the complexity of gender inequity in CTE programs and treated the issue with the seriousness it deserved. With so many competing priorities in our schools her commitment and willingness to adopt strategies sums up our belief that school leadership can ensure the elimination of discrimination and gender imbalance in enrollment. Many of her efforts at the school have inspired others to tackle gender equity issues in their own schools and we look forward to continuing this work and building upon the legacy of leadership she started for many years to come.

--- A special welcome to our two new pilot school principals - Ms. Melissa Burg, (QVTHS) and Mrs. Jocelyn Santana (Frances Perkins)

High School Open Houses

Westinghouse - Nov. 13, 17 & 18 and City Poly - Nov. 17, 22 & 30

The subject of girls inequality in education is frequently ignored because seemingly girls are doing better in our schools. However, the true measure of gender inequality is observed in the long term effects on women's financial independence. The following two articles discuss the practical effects on gender inequality.

Read: "The Promise of Middle Skill Occupations," in the May 2010 issue of *Techniques* published by the Association for Career and Technical Education (ACTE). This article gives "an overview of the characteristics of middle-skill occupations and the role CTE plays in preparing workers for those jobs."

Also see: "Separate and Not Equal? Gender Segregation in the Labor Market and the Gender Wage Gap," briefing paper published by The Institute for Women's Policy Research (IWPR), September 2010. This paper looks at the effects of occupational segregation on women's earnings.

THE NEWSLETTER WILL BE ISSUED MONTHLY.

Next issue: December 2010. If you have gender equity activity/event Submit information to bwatson@legalmomentum.org Deadline for the next issue: Tuesday, November 30, 2010.

Female professionals in non-traditional careers are important role models that should be brought into schools frequently, to ensure girls participation in technical studies. These female speakers can enrich students' classroom experience. Their stories and unique perspectives about a career can help students understand the link between their formal education and the implications it has for their future. Each month we will highlight one of these amazing female role models.

Carpentry Professional

Veronica Session switched to carpentry from a middle management bank job 18 years ago and hasn't looked back. Her work as a journey level carpenter includes framing, woodworking, sheetrock, hardware, concrete and ceilings. She is a shop steward, looking out for the carpentry crew as the eyes and ears of the union on construction sites. She is also a Steering Committee member of the Women's Committee of the New York City District Council of Carpenters, the co-leader of the Habitat for Humanity women carpenters - coordinating teams of women carpenters to work on Habitat projects - a middle and high school career day speaker for the carpenters, and a member of the women carpenters' education committee.



Veronica at Pelham train renovation Station [photo by Joan Roth© 2007]



At I.S. 126, Albert Shanker Career Day 2010

The Pipeline Project is designed to create effective recruitment and retention strategies for girls exploring non-traditional career opportunities; provide technical assistance on compliance with the gender equity requirements of Title IX and the Carl Perkins Act; and develop systemic approaches to gender segregation in CTE schools and career training tracks.

Legal Momentum is dedicated to advancing rights and opportunities for women and girls. Founded in 1970 as the NOW Legal Defense and Education Fund, our work focuses on economic security/justice and freedom from gender-based violence. Legal Momentum has developed nationally-recognized expertise and precedent-setting cases focused on the employment rights of women, as well as programs that challenge discrimination and expand opportunities for women and girls in historically male-dominated fields such as the skilled trades.