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Focusing on the Boys:

Implementing Wise Guys in Davenport, Iowa

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Focusing on the Boys: Implementing *Wise Guys* in Davenport, Iowa

February 2016

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CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS iii

OVERVIEW ix

I INTRODUCTION 1

II THE COMMUNITY CONTEXT FOR IMPLEMENTING *WISE GUYS* IN EASTERN IOWA 7

Bethany's past experience and reputation in the community opened the door to implement *Wise Guys* in the Davenport area schools 7

Study schools are located in and near Davenport and serve a relatively disadvantaged population 8

Pregnancy prevention and adult preparation programming in the community is limited 9

Parents and community members are somewhat reluctant to address teen pregnancy prevention issues 10

III PLANNING AND PREPARING FOR *WISE GUYS* IMPLEMENTATION 13

The *Wise Guys* curriculum focuses on giving boys the information and tools they need to become responsible males 13

Bethany tailored *Wise Guys* activities to the time available and the needs of 7th grade boys 14

Wise Guys provided a substantial supplement to the sex education content offered to all students at study schools 16

Recruiting boys to participate in *Wise Guys* required getting them interested in the program and obtaining their parents' written consent 18

Study participants are diverse and face various risks and needs 19

Many study participants had little knowledge of contraceptives prior to participating in *Wise Guys* 21

IV PREPARING AND SUPPORTING FACILITATORS TO DELIVER *WISE GUYS* 23

The diverse backgrounds and extensive experience of the *Wise* Guys facilitators were important strengths for implementing the program 23

IDPH provided support designed to help Bethany staff implement *Wise Guys* as intended 24

Facilitators received adequate support and resources to deliver *Wise Guys* 24

Strong communication and coordination between *Wise Guys* facilitators and school counselors supported implementation 25

V ADHERING TO THE IMPLEMENTATION PLAN AND ENGAGING YOUTH 27

Bethany staff generally adhered to their implementation plan; they made adjustments when scheduling issues arose 27

Fitting planned activities into the class period proved challenging 28

Participating boys attended three-quarters of the offered programming 29

Both the facilitators and the boys who participated liked *Wise Guys* 30

The facilitators worked to create an environment in which boys felt comfortable asking questions and participating actively 32

Most boys appeared to be engaged in *Wise Guys* activities 32

Participating boys indicated that they thought being in *Wise Guys* would affect how they behaved in the future 33

VI CONCLUSION 35

REFERENCES 37

APPENDIX A DESCRIPTION OF *WISE GUYS* OBJECTIVES, ACTIVITIES, AND CHANGES OVER TIME, BY CURRICULUM TOPIC A.1

APPENDIX B METHODOLOGICAL APPROACH B.1

TABLES

II.1 Characteristics of the study schools 9

III.1 Overview of the planned *Wise Guys* curriculum in Iowa 14

III.2 Timing and dosage of sex education provided in study schools (beyond that provided by *Wise Guys*) 17

III.3 Baseline characteristics of participating boys in the evaluation 20

III.4 Study participants' prior exposure to sex education and knowledge of contraceptive effectiveness at the time of study enrollment 21

V.1 Number of *Wise Guys* sessions offered by school and semester 28

V.2 Length of class periods 29

V.3 *Wise Guys* attendance during 2013–2014 and 2014–2015 30

A.1 *Wise Guys* objectives, activities, and changes over time, by curriculum topic A.3

B.1 Data sources collected at each implementation site visit B.4

FIGURES

I.1 Implementation framework for *Wise Guys* in Davenport, Iowa 4

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OVERVIEW

Few programs are designed specifically to delay sexual activity and prevent adolescent fatherhood. Moreover, only one program designed specifically for adolescent males is recognized by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) as having evidence of effectiveness. To address this research gap, the Administration for Children and Families within HHS directed Mathematica Policy Research to collaborate with the Iowa Department of Public Health (IDPH) to conduct a rigorous evaluation of *Wise Guys* in and near Davenport, Iowa. The *Wise Guys* curriculum is designed specifically for adolescent males and aims to promote male responsibility while helping to prevent teenage pregnancy. This programming was funded through the state's Personal Responsibility Education Program (PREP) grant, which it received in 2010.

The *Wise Guys* curriculum includes topics and approaches designed to meet the specific needs of adolescent males. For example, content on puberty focuses specifically on the developmental changes that boys experience. In addition, by implementing *Wise Guys* in boys-only groups, the program aims to create an environment in which boys feel comfortable talking about topics related to male responsibility and sexual health. The curriculum also aims to strengthen communication between boys and their parents; increase knowledge related to sexual attitudes and the consequences of risky behavior; and enhance boys' ability to identify personal values and beliefs related to sexuality.

For the evaluation, Mathematica partnered with a community-based organization, Bethany for Children and Families, which delivered the *Wise Guys* curriculum to 7th grade boys in seven Davenport-area middle schools. Bethany offered the curriculum as a voluntary pull-out program during the school day. This report summarizes Bethany's experience implementing *Wise Guys* during the 2013–2014 and 2014–2015 school years.

A strong team of two experienced Bethany facilitators implemented *Wise Guys* as intended. They received training on the curriculum and had strong support from IDPH and Bethany leaders. During the study period, the facilitators offered all planned sessions except when schools closed due to bad weather or school scheduling conflicts arose. When this happened, the facilitators combined sessions and streamlined activities so that all content could be covered. On average, students in the study sample attended 77 percent of scheduled sessions.

According to the facilitators, school staff, evaluation site visitors, and the participants themselves, boys liked participating in *Wise Guys*. During classroom observations, participating boys were actively engaged in program activities and discussions. Participants indicated that they thought the program would help them make better decisions in the future. The main challenge identified by both the facilitators and participants was limited time for implementing the program. Many boys expressed a desire for *Wise Guys* to meet for longer sessions or more often.

This implementation study was conducted in conjunction with a rigorous impact study based on a random assignment research design. Upcoming impact reports, scheduled for release in 2017 and 2018, will examine the effects of the program on participating students' sexual activity and other outcomes one and two years after they completed the program.

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I. INTRODUCTION

Few teen pregnancy prevention programs target the specific needs of young adolescent males. In recent years, researchers and policymakers have increasingly recognized and prioritized the need to support young men in achieving positive educational and career outcomes, in part to help them become responsible and successful fathers. However, many of these efforts target young men only after they become fathers (Avellar et al. 2011). Fewer programs aim to support young adolescent males in delaying the onset of sexual activity and avoiding the risk of adolescent fatherhood. Among the teen pregnancy prevention programs recognized by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) as having evidence of effectiveness, only one—*Rikers Health Advocacy Program*—is designed specifically for use with males (Goesling et al. 2014).

Recognizing this need, the Administration for Children and Families (ACF) within HHS directed Mathematica Policy Research to collaborate with the Iowa Department of Public Health (IDPH) to conduct a rigorous evaluation of the *Wise Guys Male Responsibility Curriculum*. The *Wise Guys* curriculum is one of few teen pregnancy prevention programs designed specifically for young adolescent males. According to the curriculum's distributor, The Children's Home Society of North Carolina, the program was originally developed more than 20 years ago and has been implemented in communities across the country with diverse groups of adolescent males. However relatively little research exists on its effectiveness in changing youth behaviors. The present study will provide rigorous evidence on the effects of *Wise Guys* in delaying sexual initiation and improving other outcomes of primary interest. For this evaluation, Mathematica partnered with Bethany for Children and Families (Bethany), which implemented *Wise Guys* with Personal Responsibility Education Program (PREP) funding in seven middle schools in and near Davenport, Iowa.

Evaluation of *Wise Guys* in Davenport, Iowa – A snapshot

- Part of the evaluation of the Personal Responsibility Education Program (PREP)
  - Funded by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families
  - Conducted by Mathematica Policy Research, with support from its subcontractors Twin Peaks LLC, Child Trends, and Decision Information Resources
  - The Davenport, Iowa, area is one of four sites chosen for in-depth implementation and impact analyses as part of the PREP multicomponent evaluation
- All 7th grade boys in 7 participating middle schools were invited to apply to the voluntary, supplemental *Wise Guys* program. Applicants were randomly assigned to participate in *Wise Guys* or be part of the control group
  - The *Wise Guys* curriculum was delivered to the treatment group in pull-out sessions each semester from fall 2013 through fall 2015
  - The control group did not receive the supplemental *Wise Guys* program. Both the control group and the treatment group received usual sex education in health or science class.
  - Follow-up surveys were administered in 8th and 9th grades to gather outcomes for impact analysis
- *Wise Guys* covers a mix of topics including: values, masculinity, communication, puberty, abstinence, sex, contraceptive methods, sexually transmitted infections, parenthood, decision making, mental health, social media, and dating violence.
- *Wise Guys,* as implemented and tested in Davenport, consists of 14 sessions delivered once a week in pull-out sessions by a team of facilitators from Bethany for Children and Families
  - One male and one female facilitator
  - Session activities selected from curriculum to fit in 40- to 50-minute class period

When preparing its application for PREP funding, IDPH formed a PREP Advisory Council that included agency representatives and community members. With the Council's guidance, IDPH selected three curricula from which subawardees could choose—*Teen Outreach Program (TOP), Sisters Informing, Healing, Living, Empowering* (*SiHLE)* (in select counties), and *Wise Guys.* Although *Wise Guys* was not originally on the Iowa Department of Education's list of approved curricula, the Advisory Council arranged to have it added based on an evaluation study in a peer-reviewed journal.[1] IDPH and the PREP Advisory Council also decided to target communities in Iowa with high risk factors. The target population in this evaluation is disadvantaged youth who are considered to be at risk for early sexual activity and unintended pregnancy.

Wise Guys was developed by the Family Life Council as one of the only teen pregnancy prevention programs to focus exclusively on young males.[2] The first *Wise Guys* program was offered on a volunteer basis to males at a Greensboro Boys and Girls Club in the summer of 1990. The program asked young men to explore manhood and sexual decision making in a safe, respectful environment. The curriculum, which has been updated periodically since it was first published, has attracted the attention of national organizations involved in teen pregnancy prevention and is now offered in diverse settings nationwide. The program has been implemented in more than 350 communities in 32 states (Gruchow and Brown 2011).

The program has two different curricula, each targeted to a distinct age group. The original "Level 1" curriculum targets adolescent males ages 11 to 17. The newer "Next Level" curriculum is designed for older males, ages 18 to 29. The two curricula may be used independently or in combination. The Iowa program uses only the original curriculum for younger males, since the program targets middle school youth. Bethany is implementing *Wise Guys* with 7th grade boys, most of whom are 12 years old. Program staff noted that 7th grade is a good time for these lessons because the boys are still in their formative years of adolescent development.

The original *Wise Guys* curriculum includes 10 lessons that can be delivered either in school or in community-based settings over a period of 5 to 12 weeks (Family Life Council 2011). To meet PREP requirements to cover multiple adult preparation topics, IDPH required program staff to supplement the 10 *Wise Guys* lessons with two selected lessons on healthy life skills and adolescent development IDPH also provided an optional supplemental lesson on healthy relationships. These lessons focused on appropriate use of social media, mental health and depression, and healthy relationship choices, respectively. Bethany also planned a celebration session at the end of the program to recap key messages and recognize boys' participation. It planned to implement *Wise Guys* as a voluntary program during the school day for which youth

[1] Gruchow and Brown (2011) conducted a randomized controlled trial evaluation of *Wise Guys* among middle school students in Guilford County, North Carolina, between 2005 and 2007. The study found some evidence of favorable program effects, but its small sample size and high attrition undermined the quality of its causal evidence, and *Wise Guys* is not included on the HHS list of evidence-based programs.

[2] The Family Life Council has merged with The Children's Home Society of North Carolina, which now distributes the curriculum.

would be pulled out of their regularly scheduled class. Bethany planned to offer *Wise Guys* in 14 weekly sessions, with a different group of 7th grade boys each semester.

After the *Wise Guys* program in Davenport was selected for the national PREP evaluation, Mathematica worked with Bethany to adjust implementation plans in order to improve its ability to meet sample size targets for the evaluation. Originally, Bethany proposed to implement *Wise Guys* in six Davenport middle schools. After the program became part of the national PREP evaluation, Bethany added a seventh middle school in a neighboring school district to boost the number of boys that it could serve.

All 7th grade boys in the study schools were invited to apply to the *Wise Guys* program. Beginning in fall 2013, boys with parental consent who volunteered for *Wise Guys* were randomly assigned to either a treatment group that could participate in *Wise Guys* or to a control group that could not participate. Between fall 2013 and spring 2015, 294 boys were assigned to the treatment group and 225 boys were assigned to the control group.[3] Random assignment will continue through the 2015-16 school year—with a target total study enrollment of 750 boys.

The evaluation's primary objectives are to carefully document the implementation of *Wise Guys* in and near Davenport, Iowa, and test the effectiveness of the curriculum as implemented in Iowa on sexual initiation, rates of unprotected sex, and other sexual risk behaviors. The primary implementation hypothesis behind *Wise Guys*, as planned in Iowa, is that the curriculum, delivered in schools by an experienced team of facilitators from a local community-based organization, will yield: (1) coverage of the intended dosage and content, and (2) high youth attendance and engagement. Ultimately, program staff expect that the boys participating in *Wise Guys* will strengthen communication with their parents, be better able to identify their values and beliefs related to sexuality, increase their knowledge of healthy behaviors and consequences, delay sexual activity if they are not yet sexually active, and increase contraceptive use if they are sexually active. The program has the ultimate goal of reducing incidence of teen pregnancy and prevalence of sexually transmitted infections (STIs)/HIV among participants (Figure I.1).[4]

The study of the implementation of *Wise Guys* is being conducted in conjunction with a rigorous impact study of the program based on a random assignment research design. The study of *Wise Guys* will add to the evidence base on effective teen pregnancy prevention programs targeting males. Impact reports, scheduled for release in 2017 and 2018, will examine the effects of the program on student outcomes one and two years after participation.

[3] Bethany has found that involving a mix of higher and lower risk boys in their *Wise Guys* sessions promotes better group interactions. To ensure this mix within each group, school counselors grouped boys who applied into lower-, moderate-, and higher-risk groups based on their knowledge of the boys' circumstances. The evaluation team then conducted random assignment within these groups to ensure a mix of risk levels in the *Wise Guys* sessions and that those selected for the program accurately reflected the mix of risk levels among the boys who applied.

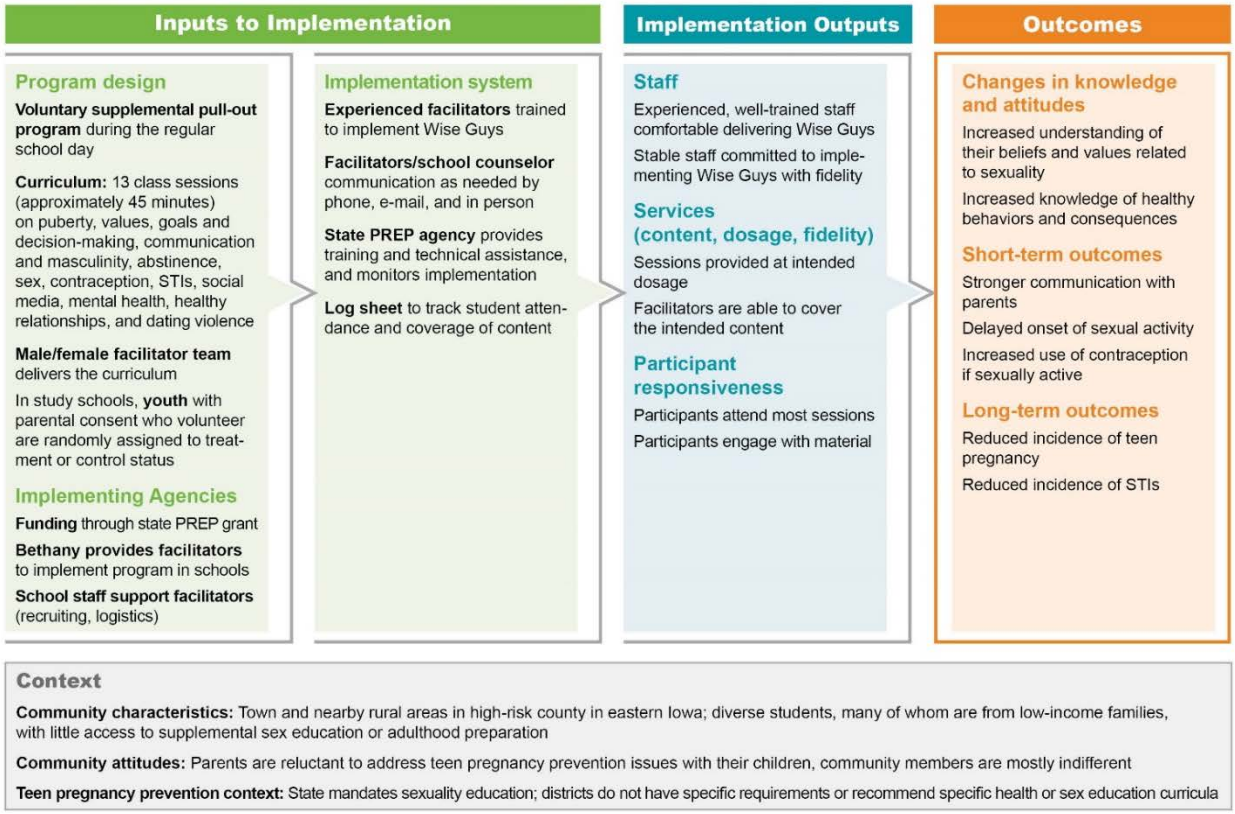
[4] The implementation framework focuses not only on whether the program was implemented with fidelity and whether participants were responsive, but on the factors that influenced fidelity and responsiveness, including the program's design, characteristics of the agencies implementing it, the support systems for implementing the program, and the context in which this all takes place. The development of the implementation framework was guided by the implementation factors defined by Damschroder and Hagedorn (2011), Durlak and DuPre (2008), Fixsen et al. (2009), and Berkel et al. (2011).

The findings presented in this report are based primarily on data that members of the PREP in-depth implementation study team collected during site visits conducted in April 2014 and March 2015. During these visits, site visit staff conducted interviews with the state PREP coordinator, Bethany *Wise Guys* co-facilitators, school staff, and community stakeholders. They also conducted focus group discussions with groups of participating students and observed *Wise Guys* sessions. During site visits, the team also asked the *Wise Guys* co-facilitators to complete self-administered surveys concerning their experiences with delivering the program.

These findings also rely on some additional data sources. In preparation for site visits, the team collected documents related to the Iowa PREP grant and *Wise Guys* implementation in Iowa, including the *Wise Guys Male Responsibility Curriculum: Level I*, Bethany session plans, Bethany's PREP proposals, program report forms, and agency and school information from websites. This analysis also relies on data from self-administered baseline surveys that sample members completed at study intake, as well as service use data collected by the *Wise Guys* facilitators. The analysis also uses information from aggregate summaries of facilitator-administered end-of-program evaluation surveys.

Evaluation team members coded the data using qualitative data analysis software. Site visitors then examined the coded data to identify emergent themes. They triangulated across all qualitative and quantitative data sources to develop the findings included in this report. Appendix B provides more information on the methodological approach and data sources.

Figure I.1. Implementation framework for *Wise Guys* in Davenport, Iowa



This report presents findings from the implementation of *Wise Guys* in and near Davenport, Iowa, during the 2013–2014 and 2014–2015 academic years. In the following chapters, the report describes the context in which *Wise Guys* was implemented, how *Wise Guys* was configured for use with 7th grade boys in middle schools, the support that staff received for implementing *Wise Guys*, adherence to the implementation plan, and youth responsiveness. It concludes by summarizing the main findings from the implementation of *Wise Guys* in and near Davenport, Iowa.

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II. THE COMMUNITY CONTEXT FOR IMPLEMENTING *WISE GUYS* IN EASTERN IOWA

The community context played an essential role in how *Wise Guys* was implemented in Davenport. Key elements of this context include the experience and reputation of the implementing organization, the schools in which services were delivered, the students the program ultimately served, prevailing community attitudes about early sexual activity and teen pregnancy, and the other teen pregnancy prevention services available in the area. This chapter describes the context for implementing *Wise Guys* in Davenport.

Bethany's past experience and reputation in the community opened the door to implement *Wise Guys* in the Davenport area schools

In 2011, Bethany received a subaward from the PREP grantee in Iowa, IDPH, to implement *Wise Guys* in middle schools in and near Davenport, Iowa. Bethany is a nonprofit, nonsectarian organization serving the Quad Cities (Davenport and Bettendorf, Iowa, and Rock Island, Moline, and East Moline, Illinois). It describes its mission as keeping children safe, strengthening families, and building healthy communities.

Bethany has offered foster care and child welfare services since 1938. In the past 30 years, it has moved beyond the provision of child welfare and adoption services to address issues in the Quad Cities that affect children, youth, and families. The *Wise Guys* program provided through the PREP subaward adds to teen pregnancy prevention programs that Bethany already offers.

Bethany aims to educate youth, parents, and community members about early sexual activity and its consequences. Among the voluntary school-based programs it offers for teens are *Boys to Men* and *Wings to Fly*, which teach high school boys and girls, respectively, to become responsible adults; *Learning About Me* and *Making a Difference!*, pregnancy prevention programs that emphasize abstinence; and a clinic that offers free reproductive health services to teens once a month. Bethany also offers *Know What to Say*, a program that provides guidance to parents and agency staff in communicating with children about sex to help them postpone sexual activity and prevent pregnancy.[5]

Over its long history of providing teen pregnancy prevention programs, Bethany has gained recognition as the community expert in teen pregnancy prevention and has earned a strong reputation among schools and other agencies in the Quad Cities. Bethany staff, a community health educator, and school district officials reported that Bethany is the agency that schools and other community agencies call when they want someone to do a presentation or provide teen pregnancy prevention programming. Bethany staff and school counselors noted that other organizations have offered some smaller teen pregnancy prevention programs in the past, but they lacked commitment and follow-through.

[5] In most cases, Bethany offers other adolescent pregnancy prevention programming outside the Davenport area. One exception is *Making a Difference!*, which it offers to Davenport area 8th grade students, including those in one study school (as discussed later in the report).

Bethany began working in Scott County, Iowa (where Davenport is located) when it received state Community Adolescent Pregnancy Prevention (CAPP) funding in 2006. At that time, *Wise Guys* was not on the state list of evidence-based programs used by CAPP, so Bethany could not implement *Wise Guys* under that grant. When PREP funds became available, *Wise Guys* had been added to the state's list, and Bethany saw PREP as a good opportunity to begin implementing *Wise Guys* in Davenport schools.

Bethany has developed strong linkages to the community through more than 30 years conducting teen pregnancy prevention programming in the Quad Cities. Bethany maintains these linkages in part by convening representatives from community organizations to work together on teen pregnancy prevention activities. Seven years ago, Bethany formed a Teen Pregnancy Advisory Committee with 13 members from both Iowa and Illinois that meets quarterly. It includes representatives of faith-based groups, health professionals, Bethany staff, and business leaders from the community. The Committee picks one teen pregnancy prevention project every year. For the last two years, the Committee organized a conference for male adolescents. In the past, it has organized a press conference in which students and adults, led by a facilitator, identified 10 outcomes related to teen pregnancy. Another year, it created posters and posted them in the community to draw attention to Teen Pregnancy Prevention Month.

According to Bethany staff, the organization's strong reputation in the community for its work in teen pregnancy prevention was essential to overcoming reservations about implementing *Wise Guys* in Davenport schools. To get buy-in for implementing *Wise Guys*, Bethany staff met first with school administrators, then with school counselors in each middle school. School administrators were reluctant at first to consider sex education programming, because they wanted to avoid controversy among parents and were skeptical that an outside organization would follow through on its commitment to the program. Still, they eventually agreed. School staff noted that it was only because of Bethany's reputation that they even considered implementation of *Wise Guys* in their school.

Administrators at one of the Davenport middle schools did not agree at first to implement *Wise Guys*, because the program included discussions about sex. However, after hearing about Bethany's success in implementing *Wise Guys* in other Davenport schools and how boys in those schools liked the program, the administrators decided to allow Bethany to implement *Wise Guys* in their school.

Study schools are located in and near Davenport and serve a relatively disadvantaged population

Bethany is implementing *Wise Guys* in and near Davenport, Iowa. Davenport is a city on the Mississippi River with a population of approximately 100,000; it is the largest of several small cities in eastern Iowa and northwestern Illinois that make up the Quad Cities region. The population is mostly white (81 percent in the 2010 Census); 11 percent of the population is African American, and most of the remaining population (7 percent) is Hispanic. The city has income levels that are somewhat below the national average. During 2009–2013, the median household income was $44,817, 16 percent below the national median household income of

$53,046. In 2009–2013, the poverty rate in Davenport was 18 percent, compared with 15 percent nationwide.[6]

Davenport is located in Scott County, which has a relatively high teen birth rate. In 2012, the teen birth rate in Scott County was 31 births per 1,000 females ages 15 to 19, compared with 24 births per 1,000 statewide and 29 births per 1,000 nationally (EyesOpenIowa 2014; Martin et al. 2013). Bethany is offering *Wise Guys* to 7th grade boys in seven middle schools serving 6th to 8th grade students in two school districts: (1) Davenport Community School District (with six study schools), and (2) North Scott Community School District (with one study school).[7] Davenport Community School District serves Davenport, as well as the surrounding towns of Walcott, Bluegrass, and Buffalo. One of the study schools is located in Walcott, in a more rural setting. North Scott Community School District serves rural areas in northern Scott County.

Many of the students in the study schools come from disadvantaged families. The five study schools located within the Davenport city limits enroll a substantial proportion of minority students (46 percent), and two-thirds of students in these schools receive free or reduced-price lunches (compared with about half nationwide) (Table II.1). The two study schools located in rural areas outside of Davenport enroll mostly white students, and one-third or fewer of their students receive free or reduced-price lunches.

Table II.1. Characteristics of the study schools

School	Within Davenport city limits?	Number of 7th grade males[a]	Percentage eligible for free or reduced-price lunch[b]	Percentage minority students[b]
School A	Yes	129	83	61
School B	No	246	21	8
School C	Yes	177	79	43
School D	Yes	230	54	43
School E	No	172	35	12
School F	Yes	243	60	44
School G	Yes	253	60	47
Total				
Schools Within Davenport		**1,032**	**67**	**48**
Schools Outside Davenport		**418**	**28**	**10**
All Schools		**1,450**	**56**	**37**

Source: Common Core of Data.

[a] Total number in 2013–2014 and 2014–2015. Numbers are approximate.

[b] Numbers are from the 2012–2013 school year, the most recent year for which these data are available.

Pregnancy prevention and adult preparation programming in the community is limited

Bethany conducts other teen pregnancy prevention programs, but during *Wise Guys* implementation, Bethany offered these mostly outside the Davenport area. In Davenport,

[6] See http://quickfacts.census.gov/quickfacts/table/PST045214/1919000,00.

[7] Two of the schools serving middle school grades also serve elementary grades.

Bethany did not conduct any other programs targeting 7th grade boys. However, the Bethany staff conducts *Making a Difference!*, a nine-session abstinence-based program, in 8th grade mixed-gender classes in one of the study schools.[8] Bethany also collaborates with Edgerton Women's Health Clinic to offer the Free Access Clinic for Teens one day per month, during which students can obtain free pregnancy and STI testing, counseling, and birth control. A Bethany staff member noted that the clinic mainly serves high school students.

School counselors, students, and the community health educator were unaware of other programs in the Davenport schools or community that address teenage pregnancy prevention, especially for boys. They also did not identify any specific programs that cover male responsibility or adult preparation topics. Some school staff did report that some schools and community agencies have after-school programs that may cover some male responsibility or adulthood preparation topics. For instance, college readiness programs (such as *Gear Up*) offered in some schools might cover goal-setting and decision-making skills, and drug-use prevention programs (such as *Too Good for Drugs*) might teach refusal skills. Bethany staff mentioned a couple of agencies that may offer programs addressing adulthood preparation topics, but described them as "hit or miss."

Parents and community members are somewhat reluctant to address teen pregnancy prevention issues

Sex education in the community is limited. In addition, school counselors reported that many parents appear to be reluctant to discuss teen pregnancy prevention issues with their children. Some school counselors observed that many parents are uncomfortable talking to their children about topics related to sexual health and appreciate that these topics are addressed in school. School staff reported that they did not believe boys are learning about sexual health from their parents, and boys lack this knowledge when they enter 7th grade. One health teacher noted, "Some students have zero sexual health knowledge and some have a lot of knowledge. There are some students where their parents haven't talked to them at all about sex. So some kids really need the education." Another health teacher indicated that there appears to be "no resistance with sexual education or the health relationship topics, despite the sensitive nature of the topics….There is never any resistance. In fact, parents thank teachers for providing the information to the students. The parents are glad kids are learning." School staff explained that few parents deny their child permission to participate in the sex education offered in health and science classes.

School counselors, Bethany staff, and a community health educator described community attitudes toward teen pregnancy prevention as indifferent, neither supportive nor negative. According to the staff and others, teen pregnancy prevention is not a prominent issue in the community. Professionals in the field support teen pregnancy prevention, but people in the

[8] *Making a Difference!* was offered to 8th grade students in one of the seven study schools (School B) during the study period. The curriculum aims to increase knowledge about prevention of HIV, STDs, and pregnancy, reinforce positive attitudes/beliefs about abstinence, and increase confidence in participants' ability to negotiate abstinence (see a description at http://recapp.etr.org/Recapp/index.cfm?fuseaction=pages.ebpDetail&PageID=127). It does not focus on values, goal setting and decision-making, parenthood, healthy relationships, dating violence, social media, or suicide, all topics included in *Wise Guys* or the supplemental sessions required by IDPH.

community generally do not pay attention or seem to care, as it may not affect them directly. According to one respondent, unless someone raises the issue of teenage pregnancy publicly, community leaders would rather not talk about it. A district official observed that the community is desensitized to high school girls becoming pregnant, believing that "it is what it is, and it's okay."

Bethany staff and another site visit respondent indicated that while the community broadly supports programs that help prepare youth for adulthood and address teenage sexual risk behaviors, some in the community have reservations about providing sex education programs that discuss contraception in schools. When approached about offering *Wise Guys* to their students, school administrators were initially concerned that some parents would object to a sex education program that includes contraceptive information. In one rural school, the counselor described community attitudes as guarded and cautious. Adults want youth to have information to make good decisions, but they also want to preserve youth's innocence. This counselor noted that comfort with teaching abstinence is universal; teaching about contraception, however, can be controversial. Another site visit respondent noted that, although the number of schools in the Quad Cities that are taking an abstinence-only approach is declining many school administrators are still reluctant to bring in sex education programming that includes instruction on contraception because of the potential for controversy.

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III. PLANNING AND PREPARING FOR *WISE GUYS* IMPLEMENTATION

Many factors come together in planning and preparing to implement a teen pregnancy prevention program. Central to planning is the choice of a curriculum. To address the needs of the community, Bethany applied for and received PREP funding to implement *Wise Guys*, a curriculum written specifically for young males. Bethany staff tailored the curriculum by choosing activities for each session to fit into the available time.

Wise Guys was implemented in Davenport as a voluntary, pull-out program during the school day to supplement the sex education that boys were receiving in their health education or science classes. Because Bethany offered *Wise Guys* as a voluntary program, a key part of planning and preparation focused on recruiting boys to participate.

The following sections discuss these aspects of planning and preparing to implement *Wise Guys* in Davenport and provide background for understanding the implementation results.

The *Wise Guys* curriculum focuses on giving boys the information and tools they need to become responsible males

As described in program materials and on the program website, *Wise Guys* aims to promote male responsibility while helping to prevent teenage pregnancy. *Wise Guys* teaches boys to redefine male strength as a man's character, values, and ability to make wise decisions rather than a man's physical force, and it provides them with the tools and techniques necessary to become responsible males. *Wise Guys* aims to strengthen communication between boys and their parents; increase knowledge related to sexual attitudes, behavior, and consequences of risky behavior; enhance boys' ability to identify personal values and beliefs related to sexuality; and improve school attendance, behavior, and academic performance. By enhancing these outcomes, *Wise Guys* aims to enable boys to make better decisions and have healthier relationships, which will in turn reduce their likelihood of getting a girl pregnant and increase the likelihood that those who get a girl pregnant will remain involved after the baby is born.

According to Bethany's proposal, the immediate goals of the *Wise Guys* program as implemented in Davenport were to: (1) increase family communication between participants and their parents; (2) enhance knowledge related to healthy sexual attitudes and behavior and consequences of risky behavior in order to reduce teen pregnancy and HIV/AIDS; and (3) improve participants' ability to identify personal values and beliefs related to sexuality and sex role stereotypes, which influence behavior in relationships. Ultimately, Bethany expects *Wise Guys* to decrease the number of teen pregnancies in Davenport.

The *Wise Guys* curriculum includes topics and approaches designed to meet the specific needs of adolescent males. For example, the lesson on puberty focuses much more than other co-educational programs on the nature and sequence of developmental changes that boys experience. In addition, by implementing *Wise Guys* in boys-only groups, the program aims to create an environment in which boys feel comfortable talking about topics related to male responsibility and sexual health. It promotes discussion of topics and questions of interest to boys, and boys' concerns get more attention than they are likely to receive in a co-educational group. Table III.1 presents an overview of the topics covered in *Wise Guys* sessions.

Table III.1. Overview of the planned *Wise Guys* curriculum in Iowa

Session	Objectives
Orientation, myself	Set expectations for the program and explore issues of self-esteem and confidence
Personal & family values	Help participants articulate and identify influences on their personal values
Communication & masculinity	Identify and practice effective communication skills; discuss the concept of "masculinity" and what it means to be a male
Sexuality	Provide information on the physical changes that occur during puberty; discuss the meaning of "sexuality"
Abstinence & contraceptives	Discuss abstinence as the only risk-free method of staying safe; identify the advantages and disadvantages of other contraceptive methods
Sexually Transmitted Infections (STIs)	Provide information on types of STIs and how they are transmitted
Goal setting[a]	Introduce the importance of goal-setting and discuss how unintended pregnancy and STIs can alter life plans
Decision making[a]	Identify and practice effective decision-making skills
Parenthood	Identify the roles and responsibilities of fatherhood and how having a baby can affect a teen's life
Stress/mental health[b]	Discuss how stress can affect mental health and how to effectively manage stress
Dating violence	Identify and discuss the signs and risks of dating violence and unhealthy relationships
Healthy relationships[c]	Identify the features of healthy relationships and discuss how to achieve them
Social media[b]	Discuss the risks of social media and how to stay safe
Celebration	Review highlights of the program and recognize youth for participating

[a] Goal setting and decision making were combined into one session in the 2014–2015 school year.

[b] Supplemental sessions required under Iowa state PREP funding.

[c] Supplemental session optional under Iowa state PREP funding.

Bethany tailored *Wise Guys* activities to the time available and the needs of 7th grade boys

Wise Guys is a flexible curriculum with 10 topics (lessons) that can be implemented over 5 to 12 weeks. The manual indicates that, ideally, *Wise Guys* should be implemented as a 10-session program with a minimum of 45 to 60 minutes available for each lesson (Family Life Council 2011). *Wise Guys* teaches responsibility and teen pregnancy prevention through lessons on self-esteem, values, healthy relationships, human sexuality, decision making, and goal setting. Once a week, over the course of 14 weeks, Bethany facilitators began with the 10 *Wise Guys* lessons covering the topics outlined in Table III.1, then conducted the three supplemental adulthood preparation lessons to fulfill the requirements of the federal PREP grant, and ended with a celebration session.

Wise Guys allows facilitators considerable latitude in planning lessons. The manual indicates that program leaders are expected to plan and implement a program that reflects their educational style, their priorities, and the age and needs of the youth they work with (Family Life Council 2011). The curriculum offers numerous activities for each lesson, which allows facilitators to

tailor lessons to the youth they serve (see Appendix A for a summary of all included activities). The manual acknowledges that the number of activities that can be conducted during the available time in a session depends on the time required for each activity and the time allowed for discussion. Possible activities include lectures, small- and larger-group discussions, brainstorming, films and DVDs, worksheets, games, role plays, and other structured activities. The facilitators can tailor the specific activities they offer during each session based on what works best with their participants.

Typical *Wise Guys* session plan: Sexually transmitted infections

A typical *Wise Guys* session begins with facilitators welcoming participants. The facilitators review the previous session and ask an open-ended question (for example, at the beginning of the lesson on sexuality, the facilitators ask, "What did you learn about your body [last week] as it relates to puberty?" to initiate discussion). The session plan continues with one to three activities from the *Wise Guys* curriculum, which may include completing worksheets, viewing a video, or engaging in an activity, followed by small group or full group discussion. Each session plan ends with open-ended statements for boys to complete (for example, at the end of the session on sexuality, "When I am with someone I care about, I display intimacy by…."). Below is a typical session plan.

1. Welcome.
2. Share thoughts regarding abstinence and contraception (review of previous session).
3. Introduce topic of STIs (lecture).
4. Risky Behaviors Activity (boys complete a worksheet individually and then discuss it as a group. The worksheet lists 30 behaviors and asks boys to rate how risky each behavior is on a scale from "definitely not a risk" to "definitely a risk").
5. Word Association Activity (boys write a word describing feelings associated with phrases, such as "A girl who carries condoms" and "A 17-year-old boy who is a virgin," then the group discusses societal attitudes).
6. Complete open-ended statements (for example, "I would talk to my partner about contraception, by saying…").

The two Bethany facilitators reported that the curriculum topics follow a logical sequence and build on each other, which is why they placed the adulthood preparation lessons at the end. Before implementing the program, they proposed only one minor adaptation to the program—moving the dating violence session from early in the sequence to right before the adult preparation lesson on healthy relationships that addresses some of the same topics, where they felt it fit better. IDPH consulted the Director of Program Expansion at the Children's Home Society of North Carolina, the organization that distributes the *Wise Guys* curriculum. He agreed that the change in sequence made sense, and IDPH approved the plan.

Each semester, Bethany staff worked with counselors to design the program schedule in each school to maximize attendance and minimize disruption to other scheduled classes. Some schools offered *Wise Guys* during an elective or "free" period. Other schools pulled students from their regular school schedule to attend *Wise Guys*, but the class period varied from week to week to minimize the number of times a student missed any given class.

An examination of the *Wise Guys* curriculum reveals that the length of the class period constrained the Bethany facilitators' choices of activities for each lesson. The description of each

activity includes the range of time needed for the activity. Many activities require more than 20 minutes, and some require as much as 40 to 60 minutes. Taking into account time for sharing thoughts about the previous session and introducing the day's activities, any activity requiring more than 30 minutes could not fit within the available class periods. One of the facilitators noted that other *Wise Guys* activities would be appropriate for participating boys, but they would not fit within a class period.

Wise Guys provided a substantial supplement to the sex education content offered to all students at study schools

Students in the study schools—including those in both the treatment and control groups—received some sex education through their health or science class. *Wise Guys* served as supplemental comprehensive sex education programming specifically tailored for boys.

The Davenport and North Scott Community School Districts do not have specific requirements for youth sexual and reproductive health education, nor do they require or recommend use of specific health or sex education curricula. There is a state mandate for sexuality education, but no standard concerning when or how sexuality education must be provided.[9] The Davenport Community School District indicates on its website that its human growth and development curriculum is "abstinence-based while including information on STD and unintended pregnancy prevention." The district has set broad benchmarks for sex education content for grades 6 to 8 and identified a range of resources for teachers to use to teach this content. The listed resources are very general, suggesting use of a textbook, Center for Disease Control materials, videos on relevant topics, and local organizations that may offer resources. The North Scott Community School District policy states that health education for students enrolled in 7th and 8th grade should include instruction about human growth and development. Beginning no later than 7th grade, health education should also include information about sexually transmitted diseases.

All students in the study schools receive some sex education during middle school. However, due to the lack of a standardized curriculum, the specific content and dosage differ. The sex education classes cover topics such as abstinence, contraceptives, STIs, and puberty. In four of the seven study schools, sex education is taught during 7th grade health class; in two schools, it is taught in 8th grade science or health class; and one school offers sex education in 6th through 8th grade (Table III.2). The dosage ranges from 2 or 3 sessions to 20 sessions dedicated to sex education (Table III.2).[10] Therefore, by the time the boys in the evaluation finish 8th grade, they would have had exposure to some sex education even if *Wise Guys* had not been offered.

[9] The state mandate states, "Each school board shall provide age-appropriate and research-based instruction in human growth and development including instruction regarding human sexuality, self-esteem, stress management, interpersonal relationships, domestic abuse, HPV and the availability of a vaccine to prevent HPV, and acquired immune deficiency syndrome…in grades one through 12." Research-based instruction includes information "recognized as medically accurate and objective by leading professional organizations and agencies with relevant expertise in the field." (Iowa Code 279.50.)

[10] Students enrolled in school F, which reported offering the largest amount of sex education, represent 19 percent of the evaluation sample. In all schools, members of both research groups received this content.

Table III.2. Timing and dosage of sex education provided in study schools (beyond that provided by *Wise Guys*)

School	Grade level	Number of sessions
School A	7th	5
School B	8th	9
School C	7th	n.a
School D	8th	10
School E	7th	2 to 3
School F	7th	20
School G	6th–8th	n.a

Source: Interviews with school counselors in spring 2014 and health teachers in spring 2015.

Note: Information about the number of sex education sessions offered in schools C and G was not provided during the site visits.

n.a. = Not available (site visitors were unable to confirm this information with school officials).

Wise Guys, which supplements the sex education offered to all students, goes beyond the basic information presented in health and science classes. As one focus group participant explained, "Some of the topics we talk about are the same, but we learn more in *Wise Guys*; they [facilitators] go deeper into it." Rather than presenting only facts about sex education, Bethany facilitators discuss the information in a decision-making context with relevant real-life examples. For example, during an observed session on STIs, the facilitators discussed risky behaviors and their consequences with the example of Magic Johnson—a professional basketball player, familiar to the boys, living with HIV.

Some of the boys who participated in focus groups said they learned about contraception and STIs in health class: "Our teacher brought in birth control methods and showed us how to use a condom." Not all the topics are the same, however; boys in *Wise Guys* also receive lessons related to male responsibility, such as values, communication, and masculinity. One focus group participant noted, "It is better than health class. You learn more things than in health class." As one school counselor explained, "The boys in the control group are just getting the science, facts. They don't get the perceptual pieces on social-emotional aspects, relationships. That's make it or break it when they get older. It's that piece that they needed."

Wise Guys serves as a distinct and meaningful supplement to the sex education students receive in their health or science class. Unlike the standard sex education instruction offered in these schools, students enrolled in *Wise Guys* learn in a small-group, boys-only setting with two trained facilitators, one of whom is a male who aims to model responsible male behavior. Because the groups include only boys, the curriculum activities can present information in ways particularly relevant for males. In contrast, activities in mixed-gender health and science classes must present information in less targeted ways. One focus group participant explained that, in health class, teachers do not describe topics in detail and tend not to focus on boys: "… they [health teachers] just say things and don't go over it. They also talk about females more than males. We saw a video on how girls give birth." Unlike health class, the *Wise Guys* group provides a comfortable setting for boys to discuss the topics. In addition, *Wise Guys* groups tend to be smaller than most health or science classes, with a median group size of 12 boys. A focus group participant said, "In health, there are a lot of people you're embarrassed to talk in front of.

There are both boys and girls in health. *Wise Guys* is a small group where you feel good to explain yourself. Nobody is going to judge you."

Recruiting boys to participate in *Wise Guys* required getting them interested in the program and obtaining their parents' written consent

In order to implement *Wise Guys* as a voluntary program, the Bethany facilitators had to work with school counselors to recruit 7th grade boys to participate. Prior to each school year, the schools sent consent forms to parents of all 7th grade boys. To address parents' questions, Bethany staff made themselves available to during school registration and in some schools made presentations. Bethany also recruited students to *Wise Guys* by hosting assemblies in which former participants talked about their experience in the program.

Several things attracted boys to *Wise Guys*. According to the facilitators, the fact that no girls are involved, other than the female facilitator, appealed to boys. The facilitators also noted the title, *Wise Guys*, piqued boys' interest—they were curious to know what *Wise Guys* was about. Furthermore, past participants drew boys to the program through word of mouth. In the focus groups, some boys reported that the program content interested them—they said they participated because they wanted to learn about sex, why they should wait to have sex, and what to do if they do have sex. Finally, although it was a minority, a few boys noted that getting out of class was a reason they participated in *Wise Guys*, and a few mentioned that their parent enrolled them.

In order to enroll boys in the evaluation, Bethany staff also reached out to parents. According to school and program staff, the level of parental involvement varied substantially across the study schools and this pattern was reflected in the variation in parents' level of interest in *Wise Guys* across schools. In one school with a high level of parental involvement, many parents expressed interest and asked questions after Bethany staff made a presentation at a parent meeting about the *Wise Guys* program. At other schools where parents were less engaged, parents did not show as much interest in *Wise Guys*. Bethany staff observed that parents were often letting their children decide whether to participate in *Wise Guys* without taking time to learn about it themselves.

Bethany encountered some challenges in recruiting boys into the evaluation. One counselor noted that it was "a little work to beat the bushes or remind kids to get consents in, remind kids to bug their parents to get their consents in, and finally bugging parents myself to get consents in." In addition to parents who objected to teaching about sex or values in school and parents who were nonresponsive in general, Bethany staff reported that random assignment was a deterrent for getting boys to sign up. "Some of the kids in the control group, they're very disappointed…I think some of the other kids hear this and say, 'Well, I'm not going to sign up then if I'm not gonna get it.' " Also, the *Wise Guys* class was sometimes scheduled at the same time as a class that boys did not want to miss, such as gym.

About 4 in 10 7th grade boys obtained their parents' consent to participate in *Wise Guys* during the 2013–2014 and 2014–2015 academic years. Overall, based on information from the schools and estimates from Bethany, the seven study schools enrolled approximately 1,450 7th grade boys across these two school years. Of those 1,450 boys who were eligible for the program, 569 boys (39 percent) obtained parental consent and submitted an application to

participate in *Wise Guys*. Of the boys who applied to participate during the 2013-2014 and 2014-2015 school years, 294 were assigned to the treatment group, 226 were assigned to the control group, and 49 were assigned to a non-research group.[11] In total, 520 youth (including both the treatment and control groups) were assigned to the research sample during these two academic years. Study enrollment will continue into the 2015–2016 school year with an ultimate enrollment target of about 750 boys.

Study participants are diverse and face various risks and needs

The study population is racially diverse and relatively disadvantaged. Among the boys enrolled in the study, just over half were non-Hispanic white (52 percent); the rest were Hispanic (21 percent), non-Hispanic Black (14 percent), non-Hispanic mixed race (8 percent), or non-Hispanic other (4 percent) (Table III.3). Just under half lived with both their biological parents at sample enrollment, compared with the national average of 67 percent for children ages 12 to 14.[12]

Consistent with their young age, most of the boys in the study did not report engaging in risky behavior. In line with national rates of sexual initiation, 4 percent had ever had sexual intercourse.[13] Four percent or fewer reported smoking, drinking, or using marijuana during the past month. Slightly more than one-quarter of boys participating in the study considered themselves to be in a dating relationship.

Most boys enrolled in the evaluation (95 percent) described themselves as heterosexual. One percent reported that they were gay or bisexual and four percent reported that they were something else or unsure about their sexual orientation. Less than one percent reported that they were transgender.

Although the nature of the boys' risks and needs varied across the study schools, program staff and counselors consistently described their boys as disadvantaged and at risk of teen pregnancy. The counselor at one of the Davenport schools noted, "The *Wise Guys* population pretty much resembles the school population, with a high proportion of low-socioeconomic status kids from single-parent and blended families.[14] The biggest thing is just that they're very [economically and emotionally] needy." According to Bethany staff and school counselors, lack of parent involvement and follow-through is a common challenge faced by the schools. Some parents are involved in their child's education, but many are not.

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[11] In some study schools in certain semesters, the evaluation team could not conduct random assignment because of the small number of boys who applied for *Wise Guys*. In these cases, Bethany enrolled these boys into *Wise Guys* and the evaluation team designated them non-research cases.

[12] Data available at http://www.census.gov/hhes/families/data/cps2014C.html.

[13] Nationally, 4 percent of 12-year-old boys and 7 percent of 13-year-old boys have initiated sexual activity (Finer and Philbin 2013).

[14] The boys who enrolled in *Wise Guys* were more likely to be nonwhite than the general population of 7th grade boys in the study schools (48 percent, compared with 37 percent for the general student populations in these schools).

Staff reported that peer pressure, the feeling of invincibility, and attitudes the boys bring from home are key challenges to reducing risky sexual behavior among the boys targeted by *Wise Guys* in Davenport area schools. According to Bethany staff, boys talk openly about the peer pressure they experience, including youth who say they are having sex, even if they are not. Bethany staff observed that boys in middle school think they are invincible and nothing will happen to them. Bethany staff and some of the school counselors also noted that some boys come from homes in which parents were teen parents themselves and may not feel that avoiding early pregnancy is important. One counselor noted that attitudes that boys learn from their families can present challenges: "Many kids are from families that provide no information or think it is okay to do the wrong thing. Some kids lack information and guidance from their parents."

Health teachers also identified risky family situations and lack of appropriate, accurate information as important risks for the boys in their schools. One health teacher said boys are exposed to risky behaviors at home; school is a safe zone where others' behavior does not put them at risk. Health teachers noted that boys are often getting information from inappropriate sources (the internet and media) and may be getting information for which they are not ready.

Table III.3. Baseline characteristics of participating boys in the evaluation

Measure	Percentage
Demographics	
Age	
11 years old	1
12 years old	75
13 years old	23
Race/ethnicity[a]	
White, Non-Hispanic	52
Hispanic	21
Black, Non-Hispanic	14
Mixed race, Non-Hispanic	8
Other	4
Sexual orientation[b]	
Straight	95
Gay or bisexual	1
Something else or unsure	4
Family relationships	
Lives with biological mother	85
Lives with biological father	54
Lives with biological mother and father	47
Biological parents are married	42
Romantic relationships and risk behaviors	
Currently in a dating relationship	28
Ever had sexual intercourse	4
Smoked in past 30 days	4
Drank alcohol in past 30 days	4
Used marijuana in past 30 days	3
Sample size[c]	**519**

Source: Baseline survey administered in fall 2013, spring 2014, fall 2014, and spring 2015.

[a] Percentages sum to less than 100 percent due to rounding.

[b] Youth could select more than one category, so percentages can sum to more than 100 percent.

[c] Reported sample size is the number of students who completed the baseline survey. The exact sample size for each baseline measure might be slightly lower due to item nonresponse.

Many study participants had little knowledge of contraceptives prior to participating in *Wise Guys*

Study participants reported little exposure to sex education prior to study enrollment. Only about one in four boys in the study sample reported receiving any sex or relationship education in the year prior to study enrollment (Table III.4). In addition, the boys generally had limited knowledge of contraception and STIs. For example, only 37 percent were aware that condoms reduced the risk of pregnancy "a lot." Only 14 percent knew that birth control pills do not decrease the risk of HIV/AIDS.

Table III.4. Study participants' prior exposure to sex education and knowledge of contraceptive effectiveness at the time of study enrollment

Measure	Percentage
In the past year, attended classes/sessions on:	
STIs	19
Abstinence from sex	13
Relationships, dating, or marriage	11
Methods of birth control	11
Where to get birth control	6
Any of the above	26
Condoms decrease the risk of pregnancy	
A little or not at all	23
A lot	37
Completely	8
Don't know	32
Condoms decrease the risk of HIV/AIDS	
A little or not at all	21
A lot	32
Completely	7
Don't know	41
Birth control pills decrease the risk of pregnancy	
A little or not at all	21
A lot	30
Completely	5
Don't know	43
Birth control pills decrease the risk of HIV/AIDS	
Not at all	14
A little	15
A lot or completely	18
Don't know	54
Sample size[a]	**519**

Source: Baseline survey administered in fall 2013, spring 2014, fall 2014, and spring 2015.

[a] Reported sample size is the number of students who completed the baseline survey. The exact sample size for each baseline measure might be slightly lower due to item nonresponse.

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IV. PREPARING AND SUPPORTING FACILITATORS TO DELIVER *WISE GUYS*

In order to implement *Wise Guys* with fidelity, resources and processes that support implementation need to be in place. Two experienced Bethany staff members co-facilitated all *Wise Guys* sessions throughout the study period. For this reason, some supports and oversight that would be needed in larger programs or programs implemented by less experienced staff were less essential for the implementation of *Wise Guys* in Davenport. The primary resources and supports that were needed included the facilitators themselves and Bethany resources to support them, technical assistance and monitoring, and systems for communicating and coordinating with the schools.

The diverse backgrounds and extensive experience of the *Wise* Guys facilitators were important strengths for implementing the program

The Bethany facilitator team includes an African-American man, who a school counselor described as a leader whom boys can look up to for lessons in masculinity and healthy relationships, and a white woman, whom district and school staff described as a nonjudgmental grandmother figure. They come from outside the schools, which increases boys' confidence that what they say will be kept private. In addition, the inclusion of both a black facilitator and a white facilitator on the team may have enhanced community receptiveness to *Wise Guys*. A district official noted, "Two white people may not have been as well received [by nonwhite parents]." According to school and district staff, the combination of the facilitators' characteristics and their strong relationship and experience working together is ideal.

The facilitators' education and work experience also supported the implementation of *Wise Guys.* One facilitator has a master's degree in education and previously taught at the high school level; the other has a bachelor's degree and a background in psychology and social work. The facilitators have worked together implementing similar teen pregnancy prevention programs in the past. The female facilitator specializes in sex education and reproductive health and leads the sessions on those topics. The male facilitator leads the sessions on male responsibility topics. The facilitator who is not leading the session plays a supportive role, helping with classroom management and helping to respond to questions as appropriate.

Although the *Wise Guys* curriculum manual does not specify required or desired qualifications or characteristics for facilitators, Bethany staff feel it is essential to have a male facilitator or co-facilitator for *Wise Guys*. In their view, the program needs a male facilitator who can model and discuss with the boys what it means to be a man. This is important throughout the program as boys' questions and concerns arise, but especially in the sessions that focus on communication and masculinity, values, and fatherhood. Bethany staff noted that the male program facilitator is the only father figure in some of the boys' lives. The male facilitator must be able to relate to the boys and share his own experiences. A school counselor observed, "It's a little easier for [the male facilitator] to develop relationships [with the boys]. He'll talk sports, but he'll also talk gangs, or his childhood…he does a lot of self-disclosure." The facilitators also noted that having a female co-facilitator for a curriculum tailored specifically for boys also had advantages, because the female co-facilitator can provide the girls' perspectives on the issues discussed in class.

IDPH provided support designed to help Bethany staff implement *Wise Guys* as intended

The Bethany facilitators were well prepared to implement *Wise Guys* in the study schools. In addition to learning about *Wise Guys* by implementing it with boys in Illinois before applying for the PREP grant, staff received ongoing training in two primary ways: (1) through in-person training provided by IDPH (in initial *Wise Guys* training and regular steering committee meetings, described below); and (2) through training webinars, as well as in-person training available at a regional conference of professionals working in adolescent health and sex education. The *Wise Guys* staff also reviewed materials and implementation strategies together.

Bethany facilitators received training to prepare them to deliver the curriculum. IDPH required subawardees implementing *Wise Guys* to attend a two-day training it sponsored. The Director of Program Expansion from Family Life Council (the organization that developed *Wise Guys*) led the training. In the training, he reviewed the curriculum and discussed what to talk about in each lesson.

Iowa PREP subawardees (including Bethany) were required to attend steering committee meetings with other subawardees twice a year. Sometimes these meetings also included grantees receiving state funding to provide abstinence education programs. During these meetings, IDPH brought in presenters on various topics that arise with youth, such as substance abuse. The meetings were intended to help grantees make connections with one another and get needed information, and to educate them on other adolescent health issues.

IDPH encouraged PREP subawardees to attend outside conferences and trainings and allowed subawardees to use PREP funds to attend such trainings if their budget allowed. For example, EyesOpenIowa sponsored a one-day training by a sexual health educator and trainer for Answer, a national organization providing sex education resources. This included a segment on "What about the boys?" which Bethany facilitators attended. With IDPH encouragement, the Bethany facilitators also attended annual regional conferences on sexual health and HIV/AIDS in Kansas City, Missouri and participated in webinars addressing relevant topics that the state PREP coordinator had brought to their attention.

The state PREP coordinator played a key role in providing ongoing technical assistance to the *Wise Guys* staff in Davenport. The coordinator, who is a community health consultant at IDPH with a master's degree in community health education, also co-coordinates state efforts to improve adolescent health. She visited Davenport to observe sessions and meet with staff twice a year, and she provided technical assistance in monthly telephone calls. The state PREP coordinator reviewed the data and reports submitted by Bethany and discussed them with staff during the monthly calls. She provided feedback and helped subawardees work through challenges, such as recruitment shortfalls. She disseminated information back to subawardees and others.

Facilitators received adequate support and resources to deliver *Wise Guys*

The *Wise Guys* facilitators are experienced and committed to their roles at Bethany. Both facilitators have worked for Bethany for many years, one as the Division Director for Community Services and the other as a Program Coordinator. The Division Director for

Community Services also directed the *Wise Guys* program and was responsible for administrative tasks. Both facilitators worked with the schools and co-facilitated *Wise Guys* sessions during the full implementation period.

Bethany's organizational leadership provided top-down support and resources to the *Wise Guys* facilitators. The program director, who recommended implementing *Wise Guys* to Bethany's CEO and Board of Directors, reported having their support when issues affecting the program arose. Both *Wise Guys* facilitators reported that *Wise Guys* is a priority for Bethany. *Wise Guys* was described as fitting well with Bethany's values and philosophy, and the facilitators' responses to the self-administered staff survey revealed that they strongly agreed that *Wise Guys* addresses many of the risks that youth in their community face. Bethany leaders and program staff feel strongly that *Wise Guys* can make a difference for youth. They want to continue implementing *Wise Guys* after the current PREP grant ends.

Wise Guys staff responses to the survey indicated that they have adequate resources to implement *Wise Guys*. They feel they have the necessary financial resources, time, training, and equipment to implement *Wise Guys* as planned. Funding for *Wise Guys* came from the PREP grant. Bethany received supplemental funding through the PREP evaluation contract to support the additional time required for participation in the evaluation and to expand the number of schools in which it was operating.

Bethany facilitators reported having adequate time to implement *Wise Guys*. They noted, however, that implementing the program has been more time consuming than anticipated. Not only do the facilitators implement the curriculum, they are also involved in recruitment and logistics planning. Travel time to the schools and the rotating schedule in some schools have made scheduling other work commitments challenging. Bethany supports the facilitators by allowing them flexibility in their hours, and Bethany colleagues support them by covering their other responsibilities if needed.

Bethany facilitators also received support from the study schools. School counselors were unanimous in their support for *Wise Guys* and indicated that their schools' leadership supported it. Several noted that they wished that all 7th grade boys were participating in *Wise Guys*, and some expressed a desire to have a similar program for girls. One counselor said, "I hope we can continue to work with the local people and do *Wise Guys*, and eventually get it out to all 7th grade boys."

Strong communication and coordination between *Wise Guys* facilitators and school counselors supported implementation

Bethany facilitators overcame some logistical challenges in implementing *Wise Guys* during the school day. These included recruiting participants, developing an implementation schedule, communicating about the schedule as conflicts arose, and managing other logistics such as arranging a location for sessions and audio-visual equipment if needed.[15] To address these

[15] These challenges are described in more detail in the next section.

challenges, each school principal appointed a school counselor to serve as the point of contact for the Bethany facilitators.

All of the school counselors who served as their school's liaison for *Wise Guys* implementation were satisfied with their communication and coordination with the facilitators. They did not identify any challenges in working with them. Instead, they noted how easy it was working with the facilitators. One counselor said, "I have good communication with [the facilitators]. They're good about email, phone communication. They're flexible with us." Another counselor noted that coordination with Bethany works well—the facilitators say what they need, and he says what the logistics will be.

V. ADHERING TO THE IMPLEMENTATION PLAN AND ENGAGING YOUTH

This study of the implementation of *Wise Guys* in Davenport is being conducted in conjunction with a rigorous study of the program impacts. Impact results will be available beginning in 2017. To interpret and draw lessons from these results, it is important to document the services that were actually delivered and whether these services were delivered with fidelity. Implementation fidelity encompasses adherence to plans for the delivery of curriculum content and dosage, the quality of program delivery, and the responsiveness of the boys (attendance and engagement in program activities). Assessing fidelity also requires that adaptations to implementation plans be well documented and understood. The implementation processes and resources described in Chapters III and IV were put in place to support the implementation of *Wise Guys* with high fidelity. Despite these supports, some aspects of implementing *Wise Guys* proved challenging and required the facilitators to adjust schedules and program activities in response to the challenges that arose.

Bethany staff generally adhered to their implementation plan; they made adjustments when scheduling issues arose

Facilitators mostly adhered to their plans for implementing *Wise Guys* in Davenport schools. According to classroom logs completed by the two facilitators, they offered 96 percent of planned sessions with study youth.

Weather closures or scheduling conflicts arising from testing or school assemblies forced Bethany to cancel some scheduled *Wise Guys* sessions. During the 2013–2014 school year, Bethany canceled a scheduled session in 5 of the 10 groups it offered to boys in the study (Table V.1). In one of these 10 groups, it cancelled 2 of the 14 planned sessions. When Bethany cancelled a scheduled session, the facilitators either omitted a session from the curriculum or combined sessions into one class period. The facilitators most often chose to drop the *Dating Violence* session because they felt that the material in this *Wise Guys* session was similar to the material in the supplemental adult preparation session called *In Their Shoes*.[16] When they combined sessions, the facilitators chose to combine goal setting and decision making because they felt those topics were a "natural fit." The *Wise Guys* developer also indicated that he advises programs to combine these two sessions when they face time constraints because of the similarity in the content they cover. To combine these sessions, facilitators cut back on their lecture time and changed the activities to save time. For example, they reduced the number of scenarios that they worked through during the decision-making portion of the session, which presented dilemmas and guided the boys to decide how to resolve the dilemma. During the goal-setting portion of the session, they conducted discussions with students rather than having them complete worksheets.

In response to the challenges facilitators faced delivering all 14 planned sessions during the 2013–2014 school year, Bethany reduced the number of planned sessions to 13 for the 2014–

[16] *In Their Shoes* is an optional session under Iowa state PREP funding to cover the adult preparation subject of healthy relationships. Like the *Dating Violence* session, *In Their Shoes* covers elements of a healthy relationship and discusses dating violence.

2015 school year. Bethany accomplished this by combining the goal-setting and decision-making sessions for all *Wise Guys* groups with approval from IDPH. After Bethany reduced the number of planned sessions to 13, session cancellations still occurred but were somewhat less common. During the 2014–2015 school year, Bethany omitted one session in 4 of the 11 *Wise Guys* groups (Table V.1).

Table V.1. Number of *Wise Guys* sessions offered by school and semester

School	Fall 2013	Spring 2014	Fall 2014	Spring 2015
School A	14	no sessions offered	13[b]	13[b]
School B	14	14	13[b]	13[b]
School C	13[a]	12[ab]	13[b]	12[bf]
School D	14	13[b]	13[b]	12[ab]
School E	13[a]	13[b]	13[b]	no sessions offered
School F	13[a]	11[cd]	13[b]	12[be]
School G	13[a]	12[ab]	12[ab]	12[bf]

Note: In fall 2013, School A offered *Wise Guys* sessions every other week, so that the program took about six months to deliver and did not have a new round of programming spring 2014. In spring 2015, School E did not provide programming.

Shaded cells represent schools that provided programming, but students were not in the evaluation sample.

[a] Did not offer *Dating Violence* session.

[b] Combined *Goal Setting* session with *Decision Making* session.

[c] Combined *Goal Setting* session with *STIs/HIV/AIDS* session.

[d] Combined *Decision Making* session with *Parenthood* session.

[e] Did not offer *In Their Shoes* session.

[f] Did not offer *Stress/Mental Health* session.

Fitting planned activities into the class period proved challenging

The facilitators identified completing *Wise Guys* in the available time as their greatest challenge. Although facilitators planned the same activities for each school, class periods in the schools ranged from 41 to 60 minutes, and on average lasted 47 minutes (Table V.2). In schools with shorter class periods, the facilitators reported that they had to push to get through the material in each lesson. Facilitators acknowledged that they sometimes had to rush through the material and did not always have time to address all boys' questions fully. They had to end discussions sooner than they did in the other schools, discuss worksheets with the boys instead of giving them time to complete the worksheets on their own first, and discuss fewer of the open-ended questions at the end of the lesson. Some of the boys were aware of the rushed pace; in a focus group, one boy said, "I would like longer sessions. Sometimes we get off [topic] on more examples and have to skip part of it [planned activities]."

Table V.2. Length of class periods

School	2013–2014	2014–2015
School A	60 minutes	47 minutes[a]
School B	41 minutes	41 minutes
School C	43 minutes	42 minutes
School D	47 minutes	47 minutes
School E	48 minutes	47 minutes
School F	60 minutes	42 minutes[a]
School G	49 minutes	49 minutes

[a] These schools shortened the length of their class periods in 2014-15.

The challenges of fitting the material into a class period were apparent in the sessions observed by the site visit team. In one session, visitors noted that the facilitator moved quickly through the materials and did not always stop to make sure the boys fully understood the content. In another session, the facilitator stopped to respond to boys' questions, but sometimes the answers were very rushed or incomplete. The site visitors noted that, in some of the sessions they observed, the facilitators did not cover some part of the written curriculum plan nor complete activities as intended because of time constraints. For instance, in sessions presenting the lesson on STIs, some sections of the lesson plan were abbreviated—the boys completed the planned worksheet, but did not discuss it as a group, or the facilitators discussed all or part of the worksheet, but did not ask the boys to complete it first.

Participating boys attended three-quarters of the offered programming

Attendance was generally high in the *Wise Guys* program. Almost all boys (97 percent) enrolled in *Wise Guys* attended at least one session. On average, participants attended 77 percent of the sessions offered (Table V.3). The average overall session attendance rate ranged from 58 to 85 percent across schools. The two schools with the lowest attendance rates (School A and School C) serve particularly disadvantaged student populations, with the highest percentage of students receiving free and reduced-price lunch among the seven schools in the study (Table II.1). Students in these schools have poorer school attendance, which likely contributed to their lower attendance in the *Wise Guys* sessions.

During focus groups, boys mentioned several reasons for missing sessions, including having to take a test, forgetting to leave class to attend *Wise Guys*, illness, and field trips. In order to attend *Wise Guys*, boys needed teacher permission to leave class. School counselors noted that teachers were supportive of boys' participation in *Wise Guys*, so that lack of teacher support was not a barrier to their attendance. Initially, the school counselors checked to make sure all the boys were attending and reminded them to attend if needed. The facilitators asked them not to continue this practice, however, because in their view the boys needed to learn responsibility and come on their own. To promote attendance, each week the facilitators drew a name from among those attending for a $5 gift card. In focus groups, the boys mentioned the gift cards as something they liked about being in *Wise Guys*.

While attendance rates in *Wise Guys* sessions were high overall, some boys dropped out before the program ended. Across both school years, 12 percent of boys dropped out of *Wise Guys* before the end of the program (not shown). In some cases, boys dropped out because they moved to another school district. Others remained in the school but chose to stop attending the program. In some cases, the facilitators dropped boys from the program because of poor attendance. Boys were dropped from the program after four or five absences unless they asked to rejoin.

Table V.3. *Wise Guys* attendance during 2013–2014 and 2014–2015

School	Total number of *Wise Guys* students	Percentage who attended at least: One session	50% of sessions	75% of sessions	100% of sessions	Attendance rate (%)
School A	20	95	80	55	10	71
School B	57	96	88	70	21	78
School C	28	96	61	46	7	58
School D	56	96	93	64	7	77
School E	24	96	92	92	46	85
School F	52	96	87	79	23	79
School G	57	98	93	82	35	84
Overall	**294**	**97**	**87**	**71**	**21**	**77**

Source: 2013–2014 and 2014–2015 *Wise Guys* logs completed by facilitators. These logs contain information on curriculum attendance and content. Data are restricted to only boys in the research sample.

Both the facilitators and the boys who participated liked *Wise Guys*

The facilitators expressed support and enthusiasm for the curriculum. They liked the latitude to choose from several activities for a topic, allowing them to tailor the curriculum to their youth. The facilitators noted that they did not dislike any lessons, which is not true of other curricula they implement. They liked that the lessons built upon one another and "told a story."

Facilitators explained that some activities did not work as well as expected, and after reviewing how things went during previous implementations of *Wise Guys*, they changed some of their choices of activities over time. Facilitators explained that some activities were not as effective as expected because they were not engaging or there was a lack of student response. These changes were within the scope of the *Wise Guys* curriculum—as the curriculum manual indicates—facilitators are allowed to change their choice of activities if an activity does not work well. Appendix A details these changes.

Program participants were enthusiastic about *Wise Guys*. School staff noted that the boys enjoy the program and are eager to attend class. At the beginning of each semester, counselors often have to remind boys to attend the class, but as the semester continues, the boys go on their own because they enjoy the program. One counselor said, "The kids love *Wise Guys*. It is scheduled so they are missing exploratory [elective] classes they like, and they are still committed to [*Wise Guys*]. That says a lot." The school staff noted that the boys like the program so much that they are the best advocates for the program during the program recruitment phase.

Boys gave the program high ratings in both the focus group discussions and facilitator-administered end-of-program evaluation surveys. During focus groups, when asked how they would rate the program on a scale from 1 to 5, (1 being the worst and 5 the best), nearly every boy rated *Wise Guys* a "5." Also, 92 percent of the fall 2014 *Wise Guys* participants who responded to the program evaluation survey rated the program "excellent" —the rest rated the program "good."

School staff reported that the boys were receptive to the content and eager to learn it. A health teacher noted, "The boys really enjoy the program. They find it very informative. During health class, some boys say, 'I learned that in *Wise Guys*.'"

What school staff had to say:

- "Students like *Wise Guys*. They talk about it. They just like the subjects because they're current topics. They have time to just be with [the facilitators], who are (people) not from school that they can talk to."
- "They like that it is all boys and they get to talk. They feel comfortable talking and they trust [the facilitators]. It's a safe place for them to learn."
- "They talk about the cool stuff, stuff they don't get to talk about in other classes or talk to their parents about. They enjoy that. The boys like the feeling of being part of something, being part of the 'in' group."

Boys appreciated that *Wise Guys* provided them with important information that they did not know prior to the program. Boys explained that they learned about the changes currently happening to their bodies and what to expect in the future: "We learn about our bod[y], how it develops." They also appreciated learning how to think critically and develop decision-making skills: "They're teaching us about how to go ahead in life and not make poor decisions, to be smart about everything, like about what to do."

While most focus group participants said they "liked everything," the structure of the program was an essential reason the boys liked *Wise Guys*. The boys enjoyed outside facilitators leading a small group that only included boys. Participants felt they could trust the group and the facilitators to keep what is discussed private, and they were comfortable being honest and open: "You can say whatever you want without being judged." Boys recognized that *Wise Guys* provided them the opportunity to talk about topics they do not generally discuss or learn about elsewhere: "It's fun to be here and talk about your feelings that you are uncomfortable to say outside of this group." Beyond the overall structure of the program, boys frequently mentioned that they liked the gift cards and snacks provided by the facilitator during class.

Even though both facilitators and participating boys liked the program overall, they wanted more time for *Wise Guys*. Facilitators noted if they could change anything, they would add more time for implementing *Wise Guys*. Many boys who participated in focus groups expressed a desire for more time for *Wise Guys*—more sessions, longer sessions, or both. For example, one boy said, "I'd make it longer, to learn more," and another boy said, "Have it, like, every day or twice a week." Participating boys also expressed the desire for more time in the comments they provided on the facilitator-administered, end-of-program evaluation surveys. One boy wrote, "The program really helped/prepared me for the future, but it should last longer." Another said, "You need more time for the activities." A common end-of-program comment was, "Too short."

The facilitators worked to create an environment in which boys felt comfortable asking questions and participating actively

The facilitators noted that relationships are key to implementing *Wise Guys* effectively. One of the school counselors agreed, noting, "[The facilitators] have experience working with kids and can build a relationship with them. Building a relationship is key. They are a 'dynamite duo'." Another counselor said: "With these kids, if you can't develop some sort of relationship or get them to connect with you, it doesn't matter what you're trying to convince them or tell them or teach them, they're just not going to [get it]."

Observations of *Wise Guys* sessions show that the *Wise Guys* facilitators created an environment in which boys felt comfortable asking questions and trusted that the discussion would be kept private. One boy in a focus group said, "It's fun to be here and talk about your feelings that you are uncomfortable to say outside of this group." Another boy said, "Some of the questions, they were, like, really personal, but people in the group weren't afraid to, like, share stuff with other kids when they were asking questions."

Behind the boys' comfort talking about sensitive topics during *Wise Guys* sessions is their trust of the facilitators and confidence that they will not be judged. One boy said in the focus group, "They tell life stories, trust you, so you trust them." Another boy said, "You can say anything without being judged." A school counselor observed that the facilitators do a lot of self-disclosure and commented: "To be honest, it fascinates me to see [the facilitator] talking to the boys, I mean, to see how attentive they are."

School counselors noted that boys are comfortable talking with the facilitators in part because they are not from the school. One said, "There may be some things [the boys] don't feel comfortable talking to me about as a counselor for fear that I'll go back and tell their parents or some teacher here. I think they feel safer when outside people come in to talk about [teen pregnancy prevention topics]. They are more open to talk to them about it than (to) me or another teacher."

Most boys appeared to be engaged in *Wise Guys* activities

In the 2013–2014 and 2014–2015 school years, the site visit team visited each school to observe a program session and record information about what they observed. Across the schools and years, the team observed several different program sessions, including the sessions on abstinence and contraception, STIs, fatherhood, and appropriate use of social media.

Site visitors noted that most boys were engaged and interested in program activities and all students participated in the session discussions. Many students were eager to respond to questions or other participants' remarks, and the facilitators called on other students to bring them into the discussion. One site visitor reported, "Students [were] very engaged; [they] wanted to continue [beyond the class period]." Site visitors observed that the atmosphere in most observed sessions was warm and respectful, and students asked many questions and often were not hesitant to participate in discussions despite the sensitive topics. Some boys did not actively participate or volunteer to answer questions, but the facilitators engaged the boys by having each boy provide his own response during group activities.

Participating boys indicated that they thought being in *Wise Guys* would affect how they behaved in the future

Focus group participants explained that the program taught them valuable information about their own bodies, what to expect when they are older and smart decision making. One participant said, "This program shows you how to make good decisions, and shows you what to do and what not to do, and how to be more mature." Respondents reported that they appreciated information on issues they currently face, such as how puberty is affecting their body. A few boys noted that the program helped them recognize how current decisions could affect their future. As one boy explained, "I think it has been very useful to know all these things about consequences…if you make dumb decisions early in your life, and then the consequences happen and you can't do stuff for the rest of your life that, like, if you hadn't done that, you could have. It almost makes you think, like, make sure that you don't do that thing."

What *Wise Guys* participants had to say:

- "I will be more mature, like know when to have sex, when not to, the age to make a decision."
- "I won't have sex at a young age."
- "I will be more mature. I will know more things about the system/stages of puberty. Stuff like that…I'll act more masculine."

Because of what they learned in *Wise Guys*, focus group participants believed the program would change their future behavior. Nearly all fall 2014 *Wise Guys* participants who responded to the facilitator-administered end-of-program evaluation surveys agreed or strongly agreed that the "information will help me in the future." Focus group participants most often noted the behaviors they would change included waiting later in life to become sexually active, using contraception when they do become sexually active, and acting like a mature man. One boy noted, "I think it'll help me be more smart about things, because before *Wise Guys*, if I had sex, I wouldn't be as careful, but after I'd be smarter about it. I know to wear a condom, check if the girl has an STD, make sure to be safe."

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VI. CONCLUSION

In recent years, researchers and policymakers have increasingly recognized and prioritized the need to support young men in achieving positive educational and career outcomes, in part by helping them avoid early fatherhood. However, most research addresses teen pregnancy prevention programs that serve a general adolescent population or that focuses primarily on adolescent females. This report addresses the need for research on programs designed specifically for adolescent males by examining the implementation of one such program, *Wise Guys*, in Davenport-area middle schools.

An experienced team of facilitators from a community-based organization successfully implemented the *Wise Guys* curriculum with 7th grade boys in middle schools in and near Davenport, Iowa, during the 2013–2014 and 2014–2015 school years. *Wise Guys* is one of only a few adolescent pregnancy prevention programs designed specifically for adolescent males. The facilitators implemented *Wise Guys* as a voluntary pull-out program offered during the regular school day. As intended by the developer, the facilitators selected activities from the curriculum that were appropriate for the age group they were serving (7th grade boys) and short enough to fit within a class period.

The *Wise Guys* program in Davenport aimed to address a pressing service need in the community. Teen pregnancy rates in the Davenport area are substantially higher than the state average. In addition, youth in the area have access to few teen pregnancy prevention programs or services beyond the sex education that they receive in school. School staff reported that many parents are reluctant to talk with their children about sex and prevention of pregnancy and STIs. When they enrolled in the study, boys in the research sample reported limited knowledge of contraceptive methods and STIs.

The team of facilitators who implemented *Wise Guys* was highly respected by school staff and trusted by the boys who participated. The team included a younger male facilitator who provided a strong role model for the boys and an older female facilitator who could provide a female perspective on the topics discussed. They had experience co-facilitating similar programs and worked together well. One facilitator was African American and the other was white; this diversity was helpful in gaining acceptance of the program in the community. Because the facilitators were not school staff, participating boys trusted them to keep information confidential.

The *Wise Guys* facilitators offered all planned sessions except when schools closed due to bad weather or school scheduling conflicts (such as all-school assemblies) arose. When this happened, they adjusted by combining sessions and streamlining the planned activities, or by dropping a session that overlapped in its content with another session. Due to challenges with scheduling issues in the first year of implementation, Bethany reduced the planned number of sessions from 14 to 13 beginning with 2014-2015 school year.

Finding enough instructional time for supplemental programs is often a challenge for programs implemented in school during the regular school day, and Bethany's implementation of *Wise Guys* is no exception. The main challenge identified by both the facilitators and participants was limited time for implementing the program. Many boys expressed a desire for *Wise Guys* to

meet for longer sessions or more often. The facilitators cited short class periods and limited time as their biggest challenge. Site visitors noted that the facilitators moved very rapidly through the material in each session in order to fit it into the class period; some activities had to be abbreviated when boys' questions took time, and not all questions could be discussed fully.

According to the facilitators, school staff, evaluation site visitors, and the participants themselves, boys liked participating in *Wise Guys*. During classroom observations, participating boys were actively engaged in program activities and discussions. Participants indicated that they thought the program would help them make better decisions in the future.

Participants received most of the program content that was offered. On average, the attendance rate at *Wise Guys* sessions was 77 percent. For most participating boys, absences from program sessions did not appear to reflect lack of motivation to attend. According to focus group participants, when boys missed sessions, most often their absences were due to absence from school on the day *Wise Guys* was scheduled, having to take a test in the class that they would have missed, or attending a field trip or special event for another class.

In *Wise Guys*, the Bethany facilitators delivered content that provided a substantial supplement to the sex education programming offered in health classes at the schools. They discussed sexual health and behavior. They also covered topics designed to help boys become responsible men, such as values, decision making, and healthy relationships. The facilitators delivered *Wise Guys* in a safe, boys-only environment for discussing teen pregnancy prevention and adulthood preparation topics. The supplemental *Wise Guy*s program stood in sharp contrast to the lack of similar supplemental programming available to boys in the control group.

This study of the implementation of *Wise Guys* in Davenport was conducted in conjunction with a rigorous impact study based on a random assignment research design. Upcoming impact reports, scheduled for release in 2017 and 2018, will examine the effects of the program on participating boys' sexual activity and other outcomes one and two years after they completed the program. These reports will provide important new evidence on the effectiveness of an adolescent pregnancy prevention curriculum designed specifically for boys.

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APPENDIX A

DESCRIPTION OF *WISE GUYS* OBJECTIVES, ACTIVITIES, AND CHANGES OVER TIME, BY CURRICULUM TOPIC

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Table A.1. *Wise Guys* objectives, activities, and changes over time, by curriculum topic

Topic	Objectives	Activities in published curriculum (selected activities in bold)	Other activities and changes over time
Myself	• To become aware of my positive qualities • To identify things about myself I can change • To identify my potential skills and strengths	Get the Picture (40–50 minutes) Body Image (40–50 minutes) Man on a Mission (homework to do with a parent) **Looking at Myself worksheet (10–20 minutes)** **The Name Game (15 minutes)** Looking in the Mirror worksheet (20 minutes) Know Who You Are (20–30 minutes) Strengths and Weaknesses worksheet (20–30 minutes)	In this first session, the facilitators also introduce the program, set the ground rules for *Wise Guys*, and administer the pre-test. In 2014–2015, The Name Game replaced the Looking in the Mirror activity.
Personal and family values	• To learn what values are • To learn what my own values are and where they came from • To understand how my values affect my behavior • To learn how to communicate my values to others	Family Messages (40–45 minutes) Man on a Mission (homework to do with a parent) Rank Your Values worksheet (30–40 minutes) **Values Voting (15 minutes and up)** The Two-Timer role play (20–30 minutes) The Desert Island (10–15 minutes)	Before the selected activity, the facilitators introduce what values are and discuss identifying values, sharing values with the group, behaving in a manner consistent with values, and who affects our values.
Communication and masculinity	• To examine my own thinking about masculinity and femininity • To understand how important good communication is in all of our relationships • To practice good communication skills and identify what stands in the way of good communication	Stereotypes conversation (20–25 minutes) Gender roles and relationships (30–40 minutes) Sex Roles in the World of Work worksheet (30–40 minutes) Media Messages video and worksheet (20–30 minutes) **Tall Tales (15–20 minutes)** I'm Glad I Am/If I Was small-group activity (20–30 minutes) Hit or Miss (20–30 minutes) How to Make a Peanut Butter and Jelly Sandwich (45–60 minutes) Positive Communication worksheet (40–60 minutes) Are You Listening (40–60 minutes) Assertiveness: Standing Up for Yourself Without Putting Others Down worksheet (15–30 minutes) Test Your Assertiveness worksheet (15–20 minutes)	Before the selected activity, the facilitators discuss the importance of effective communication versus masculinity as it relates to communicating our feelings, accepting others' feelings, communicating clearly, being assertive, and overcoming stereotypes. They also introduce signs of good communication skills and good listening skills. The planned activities include discussion of clips from a DVD (Big Choices—The Smorgasbord Approach). Before 2013–2014, two sessions were devoted to this topic, and the planned sessions included the Hit or Miss, the Tall Tales, and the I'm Glad I Am/If I Was activities.

Table A.1 *(continued)*

Topic	Objectives	Activities in published curriculum (selected activities in bold)	Other activities and changes over time
Sexuality	• To learn a broader definition of sexuality • To become more comfortable talking about sexual concerns • To learn facts about puberty, sexuality, pregnancy, and conception	Grains of Sand (10 minutes) Puberty conversation (15–20 minutes) **Body Clocks (20 minutes)** Sexuality: What Is It? (20–30 minutes) The Five Dimensions of the Whole Person (10–15 minutes) Through the Eyes of Media (20–25 minutes) Man on a Mission (homework to do with a parent) Expressions of Intimacy (20–30 minutes) Myths (30–45 minutes) Sexuality Facts conversation and worksheets (30–45 minutes) DVD: The Miracle of Life (20–45 minutes)	After the Body Clocks activity, the facilitators discuss the differences between sex, sexuality, and intimacy. Before 2013–2014, two sessions were devoted to this topic, and The Five Dimensions of the Whole Person activity was included, along with more general discussion of sexuality.
Abstinence and contraception	• To convey that abstinence is the only 100 percent effective way to prevent pregnancy and STIs • To identify and discuss methods that can deter transmission of all STIs	**Why/Why Not? (10–30 minutes)** Non-Verbal Communication (40–50 minutes) Pressure Lines (30–45 minutes) Practice Role Playing (40–60 minutes) Contraception Chart (30–45 minutes) **Condom Usage (10 minutes)** A Health Facility: Who? What? (50 minutes)	After the Why/Why Not activity, the facilitators discuss peer pressure, abstinence, and contraceptives. After the Condom Usage activity, the facilitators plan to use a role play asking boys to discuss abstinence and/or contraceptives with a partner. The Condom Usage activity and the role play were added in the 2014–2015 implementation plan.
Sexually transmitted infections	• To increase knowledge about HIV, AIDS, and other STIs • To identify and discuss methods that can deter transmission of all STIs and HIV • To identify resources for additional information about HIV, AIDS, and STIs	AIDS Vocabulary worksheet (45 minutes) 3 Cup Gross Out (5–15 minutes) Transmission Pyramid (5-15 min) Lemon Wedges (5–15 minutes) STIs & HIV Infection: What's the Difference? (25 minutes) **Rating Behaviors worksheet (30 minutes)** **Word Association worksheet (15–20 minutes)** Man on a Mission (homework to do with a parent) News on HIV/AIDS (15 minutes) Handshake Game (35–50 minutes) Seeing Is Believing (40–45 minutes) Catch the Ball (20–30 minutes) STI Trivia (varies)	The 2014–2015 plan did not contain the Rating Behaviors worksheet but did include an activity called STD-Glitter Galore, which is no longer part of the *Wise Guys* activities. Session observations in spring 2015 suggested that the facilitators went back to the previous plan that included both the Rating Behaviors and Word Association activities.

Table A.1 *(continued)*

Topic	Objectives	Activities in published curriculum (selected activities in bold)	Other activities and changes over time
Goal setting and decision making	• To identify long- and short-term goals • To practice goal-setting • To learn how to achieve goals • To think about how parenthood might affect goals • To become aware of the process of decision making • To learn a model for decision making • To practice steps in a decision making model	Short-Term Goals: My Contract worksheet (20–30 minutes and another discussion 2–4 weeks later) My Life: Present and Future worksheet (15–20 minutes) My Ten-Year Class Reunion worksheet (20–30 minutes) **Life Plans worksheet (15–20 minutes)** The Bag Game (15–20 minutes) **Making Decisions Step by Step worksheet (25–30 minutes)** Have You Weighed Your Opinions? (30–45 minutes) The Decision Is Yours (15-20 minutes) X's and O's (15–20 minutes)	This is two sessions in the published curriculum. Before the Life Plans activity, the facilitators discuss short- and long-term goals. Before the Making Decisions activity, the facilitators plan to introduce decision making by emphasizing that there are multiple solutions for every problem, every decision has a consequence, the best decision is consistent with values, and better decisions result from conscious decision making. *Before 2014–2015, two sessions were devoted to these topics. The session on Goal Setting also included the My Ten-Year Class Reunion activity. The session on decision making also included a discussion on making to the decision of whether to be sexually active.*
Parenthood	• To examine how I feel about becoming a father • To learn about the responsibilities and costs of raising a child • To learn about the special problems that come with being a teenage father	**Wanted: A Job as a Father (50–60 minutes)** Monthly Budget (45–60 minutes) Costs of Parenting worksheet (20–25 minutes) The Costs of Fatherhood worksheet (20 minutes) Fatherhood: Now or Later (30–40 minutes) Man on a Mission (homework to do with a parent)	Before the activity, the facilitators introduce the topic of fatherhood; after the activity, the facilitators talk more about the job of parenting.
SOS/stress, depression, and suicide	• To identify the symptoms of depression and suicidality in themselves or their friends • To encourage help-seeking through the use of the ACT technique (Acknowledge, Care, Tell)	Discuss stress and techniques for handling it Show and discuss SOS DVD on depression, stress, and suicide	Supplemental sessions required under Iowa state PREP funding

Table A.1 *(continued)*

Topic	Objectives	Activities in published curriculum (selected activities in bold)	Other activities and changes over time
Social media	• To identify potential problems and challenges of using technology to communicate • To personalize and increase perception of risk for problems when communicating using technology • To identify potential negative consequences of making poor choices about privacy settings or harassing others using technology • To identify positive action steps that can prevent problems when using technology to communicate	Before You Hit Send video and small-group activity Discuss brochure TECH CONFIDENTIAL: What to Know Before You Hit Send Sexting YouTube clip	Supplemental sessions required under Iowa state PREP funding
Dating violence[a]	• To identify qualities of healthy and unhealthy relationships • To increase students' awareness of dating violence and abuse • To examine ways to prevent dating violence	A New Perspective role play (20 minutes) **Rape Trials (15–40 minutes)** Identifying Personal Stereotypes (30 minutes) Life Relationships (45–60 minutes) Man on a Mission (homework to do with a parent) Domestic Violence quiz (20–30 minutes)	Before the Rape Trials activity, the facilitators discuss characteristics of healthy relationships, signs of unhealthy relationships, and abuse statistics. The Identifying Personal Stereotypes activity and the Life Relationships Activity were replaced with the Rape Trials activity in 2014–2015.
In their shoes	• To identify elements necessary in healthy relationships • To enable teens to have conversations about relationships and dating violence	In Their Shoes interactive, scenario-based activity	Before the activity, the facilitators discuss the necessary elements of healthy relationships. Supplemental session that is optional under Iowa state PREP funding
Celebration	• To review highlights of the program • To present certificates and program incentives		During this session, the facilitators review the previous session, review highlights of the *Wise Guys* program, have each student share his thoughts about the program, and distribute attendance certificates and t-shirts.

Source: Family Life Council (2011).

[a] In the published curriculum, this session follows the session on sexuality. Bethany received approval from the developer to use it in a different order.

PREP = Personal Responsibility Education Program; STI = sexually transmitted infection.

APPENDIX B

METHODOLOGICAL APPROACH

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This appendix describes the methods Mathematica Policy Research used to collect and analyze data about the Bethany for Children and Families (Bethany) implementation of *Wise Guys* for the Personal Responsibility Education Program (PREP) in-depth implementation study. It also discusses the limitations of the data and analysis.

Data sources

Two members of the PREP in-depth implementation study team visited Davenport, Iowa, in late April 2014 and early March 2015 to collect information about the planned and actual implementation of *Wise Guys*, as well as the organizational influences, implementation system, and context for Bethany's implementation of *Wise Guys*. The research team conducted the following key data collection activities, which are further specified in Table B.1:

- The July 2011 revision of the *Wise Guys Male Responsibility Curriculum: Level I* and Bethany session plans
- Two in-person interviews with the state PREP coordinator
- One telephone and two in-person interviews with the Bethany program director
- Two in-person group interviews with the two Bethany *Wise Guys* co-facilitators
- Twelve in-person individual interviews with school counselors
- Five in-person and telephone interviews with school health teachers
- In-person interviews with three community stakeholders (a community health educator, a member of Bethany's Teen Advisory Council, and a school district administrator)
- Focus group discussions with six groups of participating students, at six of the schools participating in the study (38 boys)
- Observations of 13 *Wise Guys* sessions to collect qualitative and quantitative implementation data in the field
- A self-administered survey of the *Wise Guys* co-facilitators in spring 2014
- Service use data collected by the *Wise Guys* facilitators on dosage and content that participating boys received in the 272 *Wise Guys* sessions offered to study participants from fall 2013 to spring 2015
- A self-administered baseline survey of 519 students regarding demographics, education, sexual activity, and knowledge before participation in the intervention
- Aggregate summaries of facilitator-administered end-of-program evaluation surveys for each class

In addition, the site visit team collected documents related to the Iowa PREP grant and *Wise Guys* implementation in Iowa, including Bethany's PREP proposals, and agency and school information from websites.

All staff involved with *Wise Guys* who were available during the data collection periods formed the pool of study participants. Interview respondents included the state PREP

coordinator, both Bethany staff involved in implementing *Wise Guys*, the Bethany chief executive officer, a Bethany staff member who was on the Teen Pregnancy Advisory Council, seven school counselors who worked with Bethany staff to implement *Wise Guys* in their schools, five health teachers who worked at five of the schools, a school district administrator, and representatives from community stakeholders. Focus group participants included all boys enrolled in six *Wise Guys* classes who had parental permission to participate. All participation in the study was voluntary. Focus group participants received a $20 gift card.

Staff from Mathematica, Twin Peaks Partners, and Decision Information Resources conducted the interviews, focus groups, observations, and document collection. The site visit team collected data using Office of Management and Budget and institutional review board-approved semistructured interview and focus group protocols developed for the PREP implementation study. Interviews ranged from 60 to 90 minutes in length. The focus groups took place during a class period (about 45 minutes). Staff from Mathematica and Twin Peaks Partners and observers hired by Decision Information Resources conducted observations. During the visit, the site visit team requested relevant documents from program staff.

Telephone and in-person interviews, as well as the focus groups, included the following key topics: (1) overview of the purpose of the interview or focus group; (2) informed consent process (oral for interviews, written for the focus groups); and (3) a facilitated discussion of themes related to the development, implementation, operation, challenges, and successes of designing and supporting *Wise Guys*. Following in-person interviews, the Bethany *Wise Guys* staff were asked to complete a written survey composed of key implementation measures. Focus group participants completed written consent, participated in a facilitated discussion of *Wise Guys*, and received gift cards for their participation.

Table B.1. Data sources collected at each implementation site visit

Data source	Spring 2014	Spring 2015
Interviews		
IDPH PREP coordinator	X	X
Bethany staff		
Facilitators	X	X
Chief executive officer		X
Teen Pregnancy Advisory Council member		X
Community stakeholders		
Clinic-based health educator	X	
School district administrator		X
School counselors		
School A	X	X
School B	X	X
School C		X
School D	X	X
School E	X	
School F	X	X
School G	X	X

Table B.1 *(continued)*

Data source	Spring 2014	Spring 2015
School health teachers		
School A		X
School B		
School C		X
School D		X
School E		
School F		X
School G		X
Focus groups		
School A		X
School B	X	
School C	X	
School D		X
School E		
School F		X
School G	X	
Observations		
School A	X	X
School B	X	X
School C	X	X
School D	X	X
School E	X	
School F	X	X
School G	X	
Other data		
Facilitator survey	X	
Curriculum and session plans	X	X
Service use data	X	X
Baseline survey data	X	X
Bethany and school documents	X	X

IDPH = Iowa Department of Public Health; PREP = Personal Responsibility Education Program.

Data analysis

During the interviews and focus groups, the site visit team took detailed notes on all responses and used probes to capture and clarify views and perspectives. The notes were then typed, cleaned, and cross-checked against site documents. These notes, as well as documents that Bethany staff provided, were imported into qualitative data analysis software. The research team then systematically reviewed and assessed the data by (1) developing a set of site- and respondent-level attributes and a hierarchy of conceptual categories and classifications linked to the study's research questions and conceptual framework, (2) generating a set of hierarchical codes to classify the data, (3) establishing a process to guide data coding and the identification of

emergent themes and patterns from the data, (4) piloting the codes, and (5) conducting informal inter-coder reliability testing.

A trained team-coder used the qualitative data analysis software to assign codes to the data. The primary topic areas used to code the interview, focus group, observation, and documents followed the implementation study framework and included (1) planned intervention and control conditions, (2) implementation context, (3) organizational influences, (4) participant and staff characteristics, (5) implementation system, (6) reach and retention, (7) implemented intervention, and (8) fidelity of implementation. The coding scheme also included subtopics under each primary code to support more nuanced coding of the data within many of the primary topic areas. Coding the data in this way enabled the team to access data on a specific topic quickly and organize information in different ways to identify themes and compile evidence supporting them.

After coding of all site-specific qualitative data, the software was used to retrieve data on the research questions and subtopics to identify common themes across data sources and individual respondents. All retrieved data were assessed relative to (1) an estimated relative frequency of mention by topic (without collecting a strict frequency), (2) an estimated relative amount of data devoted to a specific topic, (3) triangulation and assessment of primary patterns and trends within the topic and across data sources, (4) identification of illustrative quotations, and (5) summation of primary themes in the data. Descriptive statistics were generated from the staff survey and observation data. Using these themes and descriptive statistics, the site visit team developed a descriptive summary of the primary patterns, trends, and themes across respondent and data types. The report highlights as key findings patterns and trends related to key aspects of program implementation that were highly consistent across respondents and documents.

Study limitations

The study design and methods for this report have two primary limitations: (1) respondents represent a small convenience sample whose data might be subject to self-selection and (2) data could reflect a social desirability bias. Interview and focus group participants represent a convenience sample of participants drawn from the site based on their roles in *Wise Guys*. Bethany staff had to be working on *Wise Guys* during its implementation, and focus group participants had to be current *Wise Guys* participants. Respondents participated voluntarily in the interviews, focus groups and observations, and might not have been drawn from the entire population of staff and participants, creating the potential for self-selection bias. It is possible that those who chose to participate in the site visit differed in important ways from those who did not. For example, boys who agreed to participate in the focus groups might have had stronger positive or negative feelings about *Wise Guys* and/or Bethany than those who did not.

Another limitation is the potential for self-report data to be subject to a social desirability bias. Social desirability bias is the tendency for study participants to respond in a way they believe will be pleasing to others (for example, exaggerating their positive reactions to a program to please program staff).

In spite of these limitations, the research yielded compelling data from which to draw findings about the implementation of *Wise Guys*. In particular, the opportunity to explore themes and trends across diverse respondents and data collection activities increased the evidence for findings and our understanding of them.

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