



PARENTAL READINESS AND  
EMPOWERMENT PROGRAM

A PROGRAM OF  
THE LAWYERS'  
COMMITTEE FOR  
CIVIL RIGHTS

○ SUMMER  
2015

○ VOL. 5

○ Issue 2



# NEWSLETTER

## Summer

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## PepsiCo Foundation Grant Announcement

*PREP is proud to announce our upcoming national online platform to expand our program!*

The PepsiCo Foundation awarded the Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights Under Law a generous three year grant in the amount of \$250,000 to expand PREP's sphere of influence nationwide. The grant will be used to enhance PREP's city based training program with a national online platform that can be accessed by parents across the country via a personal computer or mobile device. PREP has been successful in teaching parents in Minneapolis, San Diego, and New York City how to effectively navigate the school system. The PepsiCo Foundation grant will expand PREP's ability to reach and serve underserved communities.

PREP's national platform will allow parents in communities across the country access to PREP trainings and using multiple access points to online guides, videos, webinars, a mobile website and an e-Clinic (online forum and live video appointments). PREP will be a destination for critical information to help families understand their education rights under federal and state education law.

The national platform will facilitate an online community for parents, and will serve as a wealth of information and resources that can also be used by partner organizations and sponsors. Parents across the country will have the opportunity to interface with education experts and advocates through the e-Clinic to post and respond to questions, to share experiences, and receive advice from pro bono attorneys and trained volunteers. Similar to the site-based work, these services will be provided in multiple languages as needed.

We would like to thank the PepsiCo Foundation for their generous support.



**PEPSICO**  
FOUNDATION

We are extremely excited for the launch of this dynamic and innovative platform, as well as the opportunity to work with many more parents in the future! Stay tuned to [www.PREPparents.org](http://www.PREPparents.org) and our twitter feed for updates!

### Want to Learn More?

Click [Here](#) for a short video with more information about our national platform!

*"The PepsiCo Foundation has a strong commitment to education for diverse youth . . . We are honored to be the founding partner of PREP's National Platform and to help empower parents and better position them to help their children succeed in school. ."*

*~Kristina Mangelsdorf, Senior Director Global Citizenship, PepsiCo*



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# Our Successful Year in Minneapolis

On September 27<sup>th</sup>, PREP facilitated a successful parent advocacy workshop for over 50 parents, including English, Spanish, Hmong and Somali speaking parents. The workshop included information about how to effectively navigate the school system and how to help their children succeed.

In the session for Spanish-speaking parents, the discussion focused on the rights of immigrant students, who are too often unaware of their rights under law. Parents learned how to read a transcript as well as what classes their child needs to graduate. Parents also had the opportunity to meet with a volunteer advocate to discuss their child's educational needs. Through this workshop, parents built their skills to take effective action for their children.



*Parent at the Sept 27th Workshop*

On Saturday, November 15th, PREP returned to Minneapolis for a Parent Advocacy and Mobilization Skills Workshop. Parents learned how to put their rights into action, how to mobilize around their child's education and develop their advocacy skills.

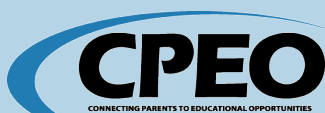
On Saturday, February 7, PREP held a Negotiation and Mediation Skills Workshop. Parents developed techniques for handling negotiation and mediation in the context of their child's educational rights. Parents developed their communication skills and learned the formal processes for coordinating with school officials

PREP's School Discipline & Grievance Procedure Workshop on April 11th focused on informing parents about their child's rights in the school system. Parents developed tools to recognize and address violations of those rights, especially in instances of undue discipline for ELL and special education students.



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## PREP Travels to Bronx and Harlem

On October 28th and 29th, PREP had successful workshops and clinics in both the Bronx and Harlem. Parents learned effective ways to advocate for their children's educational success, as well as their rights and responsibilities in their children's education. In the Bronx, there were approximately 50 parents, both English and Spanish-speaking.

The next day in Harlem the presentation was translated into French, Spanish and Arabic. Eleven parents met with eight volunteers at the Educational Consolation Clinic. Parents were able to ask questions about their child's education, and meet with a volunteer advocate to assess their child's needs in order to develop an action plan to resolve them.

On December 10th, fourteen parents attended our Harlem workshop and responded enthusiastically, with all reporting that they increased their knowledge on education as a civil right and planned to engage in their children's schools.

In total, 55 parents attended our January 26th workshop in the Bronx and our January 27th workshop in Harlem. Parents learned effective ways to advocate for their child's educational success, as well as their rights and responsibilities in their child's education.

Almost all parents reported being more likely to advocate for their children.

In total, 134 parents attended our April 27th workshop in the Bronx and our April 28th workshop in Harlem. Both workshops developed parents' negotiation and mediation skills by giving parents instruction on how to develop effective communication with school officials. Almost all parents reported having increased their knowledge of techniques for negotiation and mediation. The Bronx workshop materials were translated in Bengali, English and Spanish, and the Harlem workshop materials were translated in English, Spanish, French, and Arabic.

*After attending this workshop, I will want to know how my child learns and what kind of environment they're growing in and I want the preservation of my rights and my child's own rights.*

- Harlem Workshop Parent



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# PREP Loves San Diego!

Saturday, October 11th brought another successful collaboration of PREP parents, children and teens in San Diego. Both English and Spanish speaking parents learned how to put their rights in action and mobilize around their child's education, developed their advocacy skills, and met with volunteer advocates to discuss their child's educational needs.

Law students from the University of San Diego Law School's Advocates for Children and Education educated middle school students on cyber bullying, healthy relationships, and international human rights. High school students discussed bullying, healthy relationships as well as building one's self-esteem. Everyone in attendance had a positive experience!



*Brenda Shum (far right first row), Director of the Educational Opportunities Project, and Genevieve ("Genzie") Bonadies (far left front row), Associate Counsel for the Legal Mobilization Project, at the PREP Workshop & Clinic in San Diego.*

PREP was excited to return to San Diego on Saturday, December 6th for our Special Education workshop and clinic. Parents learned about the special education process as well as what an Individualized Education Plan (IEP) meeting is and how to prepare for one. In our Youth Workshops, the students learned about speech and privacy, the bill of rights, and various study tips. Volunteers from Qualcomm and DLA Piper met with parents and helped develop action plans to address their child's educational needs.

On March 21, 2015 PREP held a Common Core and Testing workshop. Parents learned about Common Core testing standards as well as new testing standards. The Youth Workshop was well-attended and reviewed. Six volunteer attorneys from Qualcomm and DLA Piper met with seven parents, developed action plans, and gave advice on special education, ESL programming, access to gifted and talented programs, safety in schools, and



***"Everything has been great! Especially people's attitudes towards children and parents. Great job! I am ready for the next one"***

*- Parent at Oct. 11th Workshop*



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# PEP TALK FROM PREP!

## How to Navigate your Child's School System

*Knowing how to work the system is one of the most important advocacy skills! This requires patience, persistence, and courage. You must be willing to continue to demand the highest level of service and competence, while remaining respectful.*

*Here are a few tips to be a better advocate:*

**1. Who should I talk to first?** Each school may have slightly different resources, however when confronting any issue with your child's education, the first person you contact is generally the teacher or principal.

**2. Do I stop there?** No— If you cannot receive the help you need at that level, ask who you should talk to. Don't be afraid to contact someone higher up the chain. Keep asking. Don't stop until you find someone who can help you.

**3. Relationships Matter.** Developing relationships are the best source of conflict resolution and will improve your child's education

- Develop professional, helpful connections with all of the important players in your child's education: teachers, specialists and health providers. Follow-up frequently.
- Meet with them and talk about issues

**4. Get Involved!** Join your local and school parent groups, or organize your own and advocate for policy change. Let your voice be heard!



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## Special Thanks to Our Partners

### PREP National Platform Founding Partner



**PEPSICO**  
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And Stay Tuned  
for the 2015-16  
PREP Calendar!

### Minneapolis Partners



Check  
[PREPparents.org](http://PREPparents.org)  
for updated info

### NYC Partners



### San Diego Partners



*The work of the Parental Readiness and Empowerment Program (PREP) is possible thanks to our generous supporters. For more information on how to donate or volunteer, please visit our website, [www.PREPparents.org](http://www.PREPparents.org)*