

**YOUTH
DEVELOPMENT
IN CHESTERFIELD
COUNTY**

**TODAY'S YOUTH
TOMORROW'S
LEADERS**

August 1999

CHESTERFIELD COUNTY COMMITTEE ON THE FUTURE

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August 2, 1999

The Honorable Members of the Board of Supervisors
Chesterfield County
Chesterfield, Virginia 23832

Dear Members of the Board:

On behalf of the Chesterfield County Committee on the Future, I submit to you the committee's report on Youth development.

People frequently observe that the future of a community lies with its young people. The more difficult issue is how to insure that our young people enjoy successful adult years. As a broad answer to this issue, the Committee urges the adoption of a community ethic that developing the potential of youth is the responsibility of every citizen and business in the County. The Committee also recommends specific steps to implement that ethic. The outcome will be young people who grow with an important sense – a feeling of confidence and belonging. That sense of confidence and belonging is the root from which spring successful adults.

In working on this report, the committee reviewed literature on youth development, met with experts on adolescents, and talked with public through focus groups and citizen meetings. Most importantly, the committee met with young people themselves. Those meetings demonstrated that our teenagers want to contribute to the growth and welfare of their communities, now and in the future. Our meetings, with young people underscored the enormous untapped resources which the County can enjoy in the coming years.

The Committee looks forward to meeting with you on September 1, 1999 to present this report and to receive your comments.

Respectfully Submitted,

Dorothy K. Jaeckle

Dorothy K. Jaeckle
Chairman
Committee on the Future

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PREFACE

Origins and Mission of the Committee on the Future

The Committee on the Future was authorized by the 1987 Chesterfield County Charter. The Committee is composed of ten county residents, two from each of the county's five magisterial districts. The Committee serves at the pleasure of the Board. Chesterfield County is located southwest of Richmond, Virginia and has a population of approximately 256,000.

The mission of the Committee is to forecast comprehensive and long-range conditions facing the County in the 21st century. The Committee then develops recommendations concerning these forecasts and submits its recommendations to the Board of Supervisors. The recommendations of the Committee on the Future expand beyond present day limitations, presenting a view not necessarily bound by present constraints, but embracing the future's possibilities.

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YOUTH DEVELOPMENT

TODAY'S YOUTH - TOMORROW'S LEADERS

Throughout Chesterfield County and our nation, concern over the development and problems of young people continues to grow. Traditional approaches to the issues of teenagers do not always work. In this report, the Committee on the Future recommends that adolescents be addressed as untapped resources and not as potential problems.

The County government, schools, and the private sector should devise a different strategy for youth by which Chesterfield can more effectively work as a community to guide young people to productive lives. The Chesterfield community should adopt a belief that our young people are an asset, and that all of us have a social and moral obligation to protect and develop that asset.

Traditional Methods of Solving Youth Problems Have Not Worked

Typically, problems with teenagers are addressed with a treatment model. When an adolescent gets in trouble or is designated at risk, he or she becomes the subject of treatment, punishment, or both. Traditional punishment/treatment has proven ineffective to stem the tide of adolescent problems. The Committee believes that by adopting a community based approach to the development of all adolescents, the incidence of those who need intervention will diminish.

Adolescence – A Time of Change

Adolescence is probably the most complex period of life. It is a time of expanding horizons, self-discovery, and emerging independence, as a child moves toward adulthood. Above all, adolescence is a time of energy. Teenagers are doers, whether involved in positive activities or various forms of delinquency. They are also risk-takers. Youths' risks and activities need not be inappropriate. Rather, our community can channel teenagers' energy into worthwhile and life enriching activities, such as volunteerism, community service, and career exploration.

The difficulties with today's young people are well documented and follow familiar trends. Chesterfield County shares those trends with all other metropolitan localities. Teenage sexual activity, pregnancy, and drug use have grown in Chesterfield as elsewhere. Juvenile crime has increased. These problems reflect more than typical adolescent risk taking. They stem from too much idle time, a lack of supervision, and a poor sense of values and competence.

Need for Adult Supervision

Many of today's adolescents have more free time than they are filling with useful activities. The impact of idle time has increased due to a lack of supervision of young people. Central to the lack of supervision is the absence of parents at home, particularly during the after school hours. The countywide trend involving single headed households has increased

dramatically over the past twenty years. These statistics, coupled with the growth of dual wage earners who both work outside the home, highlight a drop in the most important type of supervision, that provided by parents.

Changes in our communities have made the problem worse. In many communities, neighbors simply do not know each other. In some instances, neighbors are unwilling to become involved in the lives of each other. This isolation further diminishes the level of supervision. The lack of supervision also leads to a perception by youth that standards and expectations of them have fallen. With a decrease in these two variables, youth will be less likely to become high achievers. When young people perceive lower expectations of themselves, their self image plummets, and they act to fulfill what they see as a limited destiny.

**Youth Should Be
Involved in
Productive Activities**

There are many county youth who are already involved and are an important part of building healthier communities. The major premise of this report is that all our youth have the opportunity to be productive citizens. As the Committee on the Future studied successful youth, a number of trends appeared. The single characteristic of successful young people is that they are engaged in productive activities during and after school. They have jobs, play sports, participate in school, church, and community activities, and perform in the arts. Their parents show interest in them and actively steer them into appropriate activities. They also have contact with other adults who serve as role models and guides. They associate with contemporaries and older teenagers who share their values. They have high expectations of themselves, and they understand that their family and community hold them to high standards.

They do not become active young citizens by accident. Invariably, someone has guided, led, or sometimes prodded the successful teenagers to do something good and productive.

This report recommends steps designed to result in Chesterfield County adopting the community standard that active productive youth are a singular priority. In essence, the Committee suggests that Chesterfield must institutionalize mechanisms which give all of us roles in guiding, leading, and prodding adolescents along the right path.

**Many Different
People Inspire
Youth to Action**

The Committee researched how to increase youth involvement by looking at who motivates young people, what they like, what activities are currently available, and where improvements could be made. The Committee quickly realized the impact that role models play in the development of youth. Through a review of research and focus groups with high school students, the Committee identified many different people who inspire youth to action. These people include celebrities, business

people, and community leaders. The four leading role models, however, are closer to home: parents, peers, older youth, and teachers.

The primary influences on youths fall into six categories, which form the subject areas of the report. The categories are parents, other youth, schools, community based organizations, businesses, and the local government. Each has a unique impact on children. Parents obviously exert the most influence in youths' lives. Youth often assist each other, and, properly guided, develop a high level of responsibility and accountability. Children spend a large amount of time within the school environment, whose impact cannot be underestimated. Community based organizations provide services to young people and help connect them to their neighborhoods. Businesses play a major role in youth development as teachers of skills; equally important, businesses control many aspects of the lives of parents and affect their ability to spend time with their children. The local government not only provides services to youth but also can serve as a coordinator of existing public sector programs and private sector activities to increase efficiency and effectiveness.

Parents Should Encourage Children's Involvement In Positive Activities The first section of the report focuses on the most important people to youth: their parents. Considering all that the Committee heard about youth success, the most consistent message was that parental involvement and high expectations are crucial to positive youth development. Parents need to supervise children, to know about and encourage their children's activities, and to serve as a positive role model and coach. Parents should recognize the importance of encouraging their children's involvement in positive activities.

Major Role Models for Youth are Friends and Older Youth Two of the major role models identified by young people are friends and older youth. When adolescents' friends are involved in an activity, they will likely follow and become involved themselves. In a different way, older youths, acting as positive role models and mentors, have a great impact on the actions of younger adolescents. The "Youth" section of the report deals with ways in which adolescents can be harnessed to help each other, possibly the most effective method for engaging youth to become more involved.

Schools and Teachers Have a Great Impact on Youth The County school division has a major impact on the lives of youth. In addition to teaching academic subjects, the schools model social accountability and moral responsibility. Teenagers typically include teachers as one of their most important role models. The Committee recommends that schools and teachers enhance their efforts to encourage youth to become involved. Further, the Committee also finds that there are areas where activities and opportunities could be increased, particularly in the middle school age group. Finally, the Committee found

that the transportation needs for students to extracurricular activities need to be addressed.

Community Organizations Offer Numerous Opportunities for Youth Today's youth do not live in a vacuum that only includes home and school. As noted above, the community in which a young person lives can affect his or her actions a great deal. Indeed, when youth reach the beginning of adolescence, they begin to pull away from their parents to enjoy new experiences while gaining some level of independence. Community based private organizations, such as Boy and Girl Scouts, the YMCA, and local churches, provide safe environments and expose young people to caring adult role models. These organizations also offer innovative educational and recreational programs to youth. Although Chesterfield has a large number of these organizations, relatively few County youth take full advantage of these opportunities. Thus, the Committee has recommended strategies not only to enhance collaboration among the groups but also to increase participation by youth.

Businesses Can Contribute in a Number of Ways Chesterfield's business community has a great deal of contact with youth, primarily as employers and retailers. Business, however, can play a much broader role. Employers can uniquely offer not just simple part-time jobs, but real life work experiences which teach and reinforce positive work ethics. Corporate representatives can also provide career exploration and mentoring programs within schools. In a different area, businesses should offer flexible work schedules to parents so that they may be more involved in their children's lives. The community would also benefit if employees were allowed time off to perform youth related services.

County Government Can be a Catalyst for Youth Development Chesterfield County government currently offers many programs for youth, primarily through its human service departments such as Parks and Recreation and the Library system. As noted above, however, private organizations also offer invaluable services to young people. The Committee recommends that the local government continue to offer direct services, and also begin to serve as a coordinator of existing youth development programs, both public and private. In this way, available programs can work as efficiently as possible to provide better service to youth and the community.

Report Methodology The Committee began its discussion of youth issues while researching its last report on Neighborhood Preservation. Inappropriate conduct by unsupervised teenagers was a frequent concern among people trying to build cohesive communities. As its next task, the Committee decided to embark on the task of investigating how Chesterfield addresses its youth.

The Committee interviewed many public and private sector youth experts to determine their concerns regarding young people in the County. The Committee identified the County's available programs and services. With

the cooperation of the school system, the Committee surveyed Chesterfield's middle and high school activities, and received input from school principals. Some of the most valuable information came from numerous focus groups that were conducted from March to June 1998. During this process, over 250 people were asked detailed questions probing how better to involve youths in productive activities. Many of the Committee's recommendations originated from comments and discussions which took place at these meetings. Most importantly, the Committee talked with representative groups of teenagers from throughout the County.

**Youth Should be
Recognized as a
Community
Resource**

Ultimately, the goal of this report is to have the public and private sectors develop a strong new ethic. Our community as a whole must recognize that young people are a priority, that they can be an important resource for the community, and that our collective obligation is to work for the fullest development of our young people. The most certain way to achieve these ideals is to institutionalize ways for adolescents to be involved actively in their community, and to insist that such involvement is our community norm. By implementing the recommendations in this report, Chesterfield County cannot only increase its current quality of life but also insure better futures for our young people.

THE IMPORTANCE OF PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT

Parents are the single most crucial element in the success of children. Their influence permeates young peoples' lives. Parents serve as coaches, disciplinarians, and role models. Yet, the demands of modern life--especially job requirements--often divert parental attention from the children. Parents need to combat the forces pulling them away from children and family, and must make clear that their children are the first priority.

Parents Should Exercise Guided Freedom Adolescents need guided freedom. Raising teenagers is a task full of contradictions. On the one hand, teenagers require independence to grow into adulthood. At the same time, they are closely tied to their families and, (contrary to their frequent complaints) actually want guidance and control – an invisible leash. From its research and discussions with parents, children, and people involved with youth in the community, the Committee has found that adults can wield this “invisible leash” in three ways. First, they remain involved in children’s activities, although often in a changed capacity from their roles in the elementary school years. Second, they set high expectations--for behavior, school performance, and participation in activities. Third, they serve as role models for the behavior, performance, and participation they expect of their children.

Teenagers Want Parents Involved in Their Lives The Committee found several common fallacies about the relationship between parents and children. The first fallacy is the belief that teenagers do not want their parents involved in their lives. Contrary to what adolescents often say, they actually want to know that their families are interested in them, and crave the advice and guidance that parents provide. The second fallacy is that unstructured independence is an empowering opportunity for growth. In fact, freedom without direction results in children who not only fail to achieve their potential but also frequently make harmful choices. Although middle school children can care for themselves physically, it is a fallacy that they can care for themselves developmentally. They are not ready to supervise themselves on a day to day basis.

Evolution of Parental Involvement The parental role evolves, as children grow older. The parents of a toddler control the child’s total environment. In the elementary years, adults still manage most activities, and directly participate in their children’s interaction with society by coaching teams, volunteering in the classroom, and similar efforts. All this changes when children reach the adolescent years. Although the teen years offer different opportunities for direct involvement, parental involvement is still extremely important. Parents need to attend activities at school, church, and in the community. Parents need to take advantage of opportunities to serve in support roles, such as a band booster or activity chaperon.

But direct involvement in children's activities is the smallest part of parental involvement in the teen years. Other, less tangible types of involvement move to the forefront with adolescents.

Setting High Standards and Expectations

For instance, one critical area of parental involvement is the setting of standards for youth. Young people flourish in a life characterized by warmth and mutual respect. High parental expectations reflect a respect for the child as a person who can and should meet high standards of personal conduct. Young people respond positively to high expectations. Thus, parents need to require that homework be done in order to maximize the full potential of youth. Parents should encourage teenagers to use their free time wisely by participating in extracurricular activities, church events, and community activities. Equally important, parents must demand that teenagers behave appropriately in all environments--at home, in the school, and in the community.

Parents must define appropriate choices for teenagers. They should guide their children to fill their time with productive endeavors, such as school activities, church projects, community ventures, or jobs. It is in this area of parental control that the idea of guided freedom is most important. Adolescents have a cornucopia of good opportunities, and have the freedom to pick and choose. The teenagers fill their need for freedom by making choices and moving ahead with independent participation. But parents guide the freedom, first, by insisting that children make a choice and, second, by helping their children pick choices which are appropriate for them. A number of young people told the Committee that a parent's initial response to a proposed activity was a key element in a decision to move forward with the activity.

Another important aspect of parental involvement in the teenage years is knowledge. Parents must insist on knowing what their children are doing, where they are doing it, and with whom. They must also make an effort to know what is happening at school, and what work their children should be doing. When parents are involved in school, they develop a confidence in the school as a valuable institution and convey that importance to their children.

Parents as Role Models

Equally significant is the role of parents as role models. As all parents know, teenagers often rebel at overt advice and teaching. Yet, they need and want counsel from adults. They often accept counsel indirectly by modeling themselves after the adults they meet, especially parents. Thus, parents themselves need to participate actively in their communities, to conduct themselves appropriately, and to exhibit a positive work ethic. Teenagers are quick to criticize adults they perceive as hypocrites who do not meet the standards to which youth are held. Although they are

unlikely to comment openly, teens also recognize, respect, and imitate adults who live up to high standards.

Impact of Work on the Parental Role Work is possibly the major source of disruption of parental involvement in family matters. Parents simply cannot overlook economic demands, and today's exacting workplace requires greater time and energy than ever. Under the section of this report for business, the Committee has suggested that employers take steps not only to provide services to enhance family life but also to accommodate parents with scheduling flexibility that allows participation in their children's lives. Parents are seldom in a position to demand that their employers take family issues into consideration in running the work place. But parents can and should ask employers to give them the flexibility to have a full family life. More to the point, in making career choices, parents must consider an employer's attitude toward family matters as an important factor, perhaps outweighing other career goals the adult might have.

Family Should be the Main Priority Ultimately, this kind of conscious effort to put family first is the key to parental involvement. Parents must know what their children are doing with their free time. Whether in making career choices, in attending school activities, in changing behavior to be a better role model, parents need to consider the messages--both spoken and unspoken--they convey. Parents need to make a concerted effort to convey a number of messages: that children count, that adolescents must meet high standards, and that participation in the school and community is valuable. The families who convey these messages produce children who will most likely be successful.

Strategies	Details
<p>C. Support youth serving organizations and school extra- curricular activities</p> <p>D. Set example of involvement</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide financial support • Provide volunteer support • Advocate to governing bodies for youth • Volunteer to help in activities as a coach, chaperone, or other leader • Volunteer at school • Serve in community organizations

YOUTH PART OF THE SOLUTION

Chesterfield County has young people who are bright, creative, and responsible. They represent a valuable resource which we can use to address the very issue raised in this report: how to guide youth to active and productive lives, and away from the lethargy which leads to delinquency.

In researching this report, the Committee spent a great deal of time talking with teenagers. The Committee held four focus groups for young people alone, and a number of youth attended the Committee's other focus groups. The teens identified three primary concerns which prevented young people from taking active roles in their schools and communities. First, many adolescents lacked motivation to become involved: some youth are apathetic, while others cannot understand the short or long term benefits of participation in activities. Second, many youth activities simply do not appeal to their target group: teens view some programs as boring or, equally important, they do not like the other teens involved in them. Third, lack of support systems keeps some youths uninvolved. Examples of this third problem can be little support from family, friends who do not participate themselves, or lack of transportation.

Older Youth and Peers are Major Role Models While adolescents alone cannot solve all these problems, they can address some of them. The starting place to harness youth as an asset is to remember that young people *always* look for role models. We often think of grown ups as the models, but adults are only part of the picture. Young people themselves frequently serve as mentors and guides for each other--for better or for worse. Many children who have troubled lives find themselves following the lead of other teens who have problems. Given the opportunity, young people will follow their peers into rewarding endeavors.

The magnetism of peers as role models can be systematically harnessed to attract young people to productive activities. One-on-one recruitment is one of the best ways to involve adolescents in activities; all programs should institutionalize ways to have the young people who participate reach out to others to join. In addition, older teens should be used to appeal to younger children. Elementary and middle school children respond particularly well to older adolescents. If older teens work with their younger counterparts early enough, they can set a norm of participation before an unwritten rule of apathy takes control. Other steps can occur which will increase positive communication among young people. One possible tool is a Chesterfield youth web site which could formalize communication among teens about productive activities.

Teenagers Have Good Ideas – They Should be Used The role of youth should not simply end with serving as recruiters for activities. They have an important contribution to make in selecting the content of youth programs. The Committee made two observations about activities planned for youth. First, many of the best-laid plans of adults simply do not appeal to young people. Second, teenagers have many good ideas about what they would like to do in programs for their benefit. Just as adults do, they want activities which are fun and appeal to their tastes; any program which ignores their desires will founder and die. Individuals and organizations setting up activities for young people must get the input of the target group in order to succeed.

The Committee's experience shows that the input from young people will be positive and insightful. Our youth have much to offer the community at large, and a good starting point to use their skills is in setting up and promoting activities which work for teens. They should be the first source of ideas and constant contributors of input and feedback in the formation and operation of programs for our young citizens.

Strategies	Details
<p>C. Identify opportunities for youth to serve as mentors to younger youth</p> <p>D. Develop recruitment initiatives</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish a buddy system between juniors and seniors to freshmen • Encourage high school athletes mentoring younger youth • Participate in high school programs that interact with elementary and middle school youth • Use personal contact • Encourage friends to participate • Utilize county web sites

SCHOOL SYSTEM CATALYST FOR YOUTH DEVELOPMENT

No institution has a greater effect on young people than our schools. Just as parents do, the personnel in our schools serve as educators, role models, guides, or coaches. Many youth spend more time in schools than they do with their parents. They attend school over six hours each day, 180 days each year. In our age of dual working parents, few children spend as many of their waking hours with their families as they do in school.

Set High Standards for Achievement and Conduct

Given their extensive contact with our children, the Chesterfield County Public Schools have an enormous opportunity to influence them. In addition to imparting academic knowledge, our schools have another equally important duty to assist in shaping the values and lives of our youth.

To fulfill its mission, the School Division must emphasize three general goals for faculty and students alike. First, the school system must set high standards of achievement and conduct for our youth. Although they may not often admit it, adolescents want adults to have lofty expectations of them. When teenagers consistently face high expectations, they meet or exceed them. Being held to high standards is a sign that young people are responsible citizens and is a major source of self-esteem. It can be tempting to “write off” some of our children. The students in our public schools run the spectrum from the brightest young people in our country to children who seem to have little motivation, who spurn involvement in school and community, and who enjoy no support from their homes. Yet, all young people crave personal attention from adults, and teachers may be the only ones who can provide it. The schools should expect the best from all students, not only in academic achievement, but in behavior in general.

Teachers are Important Role Models

Second, the schools should remember that teachers are important role models. In talking with young people, the Committee found that the input and examples of teachers is often a critical factor in students' decisions. When teachers are involved in their community, set high standards for themselves, and show interest in others, students learn important implicit lessons about how they should conduct their own lives. In this regard, it is important for teachers to communicate with students about their own personal involvement in the school, family, and community at large.

Third, the personnel at the schools must explicitly emphasize important values. These values include, of course, some basic characteristics of civilized society, such as honesty, responsibility, patriotism, and respect for others. But there is another value, frequently overlooked, which deserves more emphasis: the importance of being an involved citizen in

one's community. The involvement can be in the school community or the greater society in which students live. The crucial element is that the schools must teach our children to get outside themselves, and to give part of themselves to others. Students who are active benefit the community at large. More importantly, active adolescents fulfill their personal potential and become adults with rewarding lives.

Developing Well-Rounded, Active Youth In preparing this report, the Committee spoke with a number of teachers and administrators from the Chesterfield County School Division, and it found that our school system already embraces the three general goals outlined above. Through talking with school officials, studying activities in other school systems, and reading literature in the area, the Committee concluded that eight specific actions help schools achieve the goal of developing well-rounded, active young people.

The school division should consider changes to the curriculum which would require or encourage student involvement outside the basic course work. The possible activities might include school-based extracurricular activities, work in community service organizations, or other worthwhile programs. The schools already impose these kinds of requirements in the International Baccalaureate programs at Meadowbrook and Midlothian High Schools. In addition, a Community Service elective course is offered at Manchester High School.

Even if not requiring participation in outside activities, the school system should include in its curriculum specific didactic content which shows the value of an active life and which encourages young people to become active members of their community. The "Success Through Education and Proactive Policing" (STEPP) and Family Life Programs are areas in which these values should be emphasized.

The Committee surveyed Chesterfield County's principals on the availability of, and participation in, extracurricular activities. At the high school level, the principals said that, although many activities are available, a relatively small percentage of students participate. As noted above, teachers need to encourage uninvolved students to take part, and the schools as a whole need to emphasize the point that participation is important.

Provide More Activity Opportunities at the Middle School Level In contrast, the middle schools offer fewer opportunities for extracurricular activities. Yet, experience shows that introductory programs at an early stage serve to set a pattern of involvement which stays with the student through high school and into adulthood. Activities for middle school students expand interest in the community, raise self-esteem, and eliminate some of the idle time in which poor behavioral choices are made. Thus, the middle schools need more extracurricular

activities in all areas--arts, music, academics, sports, and community service. In particular, a variety of junior level service organizations, such as Key Clubs, should exist at all the middle schools.

At all levels, but particularly in the middle schools, transportation prevents some participation in extracurricular programs. The school division should consider wider use of activity buses. Falling Creek Middle School has successfully provided one for its students, and may serve as a model for the division. In addition, a change in the hours of the schools, so that the middle school day ends later, would permit parents to pick up children after their extracurricular activities on their way home from work.

Community Involvement In Schools The community has tremendous assets to offer the school system. The school division should encourage private businesses, community groups, and religious organizations to become more involved in the schools. These organizations respond best to requests for specific help with defined projects. The schools, therefore, should develop lists of specific needs which can be met by outside entities. When outsiders assist in the schools, it is important to recognize their role. The school division has already begun work in this area, and recently held an appreciation breakfast for businesses and community groups which assisted the schools.

With respect to church involvement, the Committee found that sometimes unfounded legal concerns impede religious organizations from providing nonsectarian services to the schools. The First Amendment to the Constitution does restrict some kinds of involvement by religious organizations in schools; within the constitutional mandates, however, religious organizations may offer some services. Schools should disseminate the guidelines concerning religious activities in the public schools to religious organizations which serve their communities.

Utilize Older Students As Role Models Older teenagers can serve as role models for younger students. In particular, middle and elementary students respond well to high school students who come to their schools. These students can serve as mentors and examples to younger children. They can offer assistance in the arts, music, sports, and academics. Older adolescents fascinate children, and this attraction can be harnessed into a powerful force to guide students into productive activities.

On a limited basis, the school division already uses older teens to help younger ones. For example, students from Carver Middle School routinely work with and tutor students at Harrowgate Elementary. In addition, in the SODA ("Students Organized to Develop Attitudes") program, high school students meet with elementary children to discuss schoolwork and the transition to the teenage years.

The school division has the best inventory of buildings, public or private, within the county to serve children. School buildings already have heavy use for community activities, such as sports. Many community groups have youth programs they would like to offer, but no place to stage them. The school system should emphasize the efficient use of its buildings so that they become a focal point to the community, as well as school activities. Rental costs should be kept to the minimum to cover the costs of outsiders using the buildings. The school division should publicize that its facilities are available for community use.

School Size and Districting To the extent possible, students should stay in their own communities when attending school. The community tends to become more involved in neighborhood schools, and, conversely, students at neighborhood schools are more likely to participate in service projects which help their own community. Particularly at the secondary level, smaller schools develop stronger community ties. Clustering of new elementary, middle, and high schools can also help foster the relations between the community and the schools, as can attendance lines that hold neighborhoods intact.

In this area, the schools face a difficult balance among a number of legitimate concerns. Economic considerations obviously play a role in school construction and student assignment. More importantly, the school division can never ignore the need for socioeconomic and ethnic diversity in the schools. Still, the system should always consider the role of the school in the neighborhood as one factor in the complex equations which govern school construction and student attendance zones.

Encourage Parental Involvement While many parents are actively involved in the schools in the elementary school years, in the middle and high school years their role often vanishes. Involving parents in adolescent activities is a difficult task, especially since most teenagers do not want their parents to be publicly associated with them. To the extent possible, however, the school division should adopt policies which promote parental involvement in middle and high school levels. These policies might include open class trip chaperoning, volunteering in the school, and tutoring. Costly entry fees to school events should never be a barrier to parental attendance. In addition, scheduling school events when parents are available can foster adult attendance.

Schools can serve important roles in gathering and disseminating information. If community service becomes a focus in schools, the schools can become a resource on the needs of the community which students can meet. To become such a resource, the schools must evaluate not only their students' abilities but also survey the community's needs. Further, schools should have a designated source of information for students about opportunities to volunteer in the community. Finally, the schools can take the lead in developing a community access channel

which promotes volunteer activities, extracurricular programs, sports events, and community events.

An active life in the community is one key element of the growth of youth into successful adults. The schools are at the center of teenagers' "community". Community service, volunteerism, and participation in the arts and sports build a well-rounded person. Active teenagers have high self-esteem, identify talents, and connect with adults who are positive role models.

The schools can emphasize the importance of active participation in the life of the community. When the school system does so, it fulfills most fully its mission to develop students who are not simply academically instructed, but fully educated.

SCHOOL SYSTEM

Provide opportunities in school through curricular and extracurricular offerings for youth to be involved in constructive activities whether it be athletic, academic, community service or employment

Strategies	Details
<p>A. Motivate students to take advantage of the opportunities available through curriculum</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider curriculum changes to require after-school activities in middle and high school whether at school or elsewhere • Advocate curriculum based volunteerism • Seek inclusion of the concept that active community involvement promotes a healthy lifestyle into the “Success Through Education and Proactive Policing” (STEPP) and the “Family Life Education” (FLE) programs • Consider additions to the curriculum which stress the importance of community involvement to a well rounded life • Expand JROTC programs
<p>B. Expand mentoring programs</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Involve high school students in upper elementary and middle schools as extracurricular activity in arts, music and sports enrichment programs • Expand programs such as the “Students Organized to Develop Attitudes” (SODA) Program • Encourage athletes to act as role models in an academic setting

Strategies	Details
<p>C. Encourage upper elementary and middle school student involvement in extracurricular activities</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expand extracurricular opportunities in upper elementary and middle schools • Involve high school students in upper elementary and middle schools in arts, music and sports enrichment as extra-curricular activities • Develop junior level service organizations at middle schools • Provide activity buses for after-school programs • Establish later middle school hours to help solve transportation problems for after-school programs
<p>D. Reflect the importance of a sense of community in School Board policy</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage the construction of smaller elementary, middle and high schools • Require feeder patterns to keep children together from elementary to middle to high school wherever possible always keeping in mind the social-economic diversity of the student population • Cluster new elementary, middle and high schools • Continue the school within a school concept • Survey parents and community to see what is needed
<p>E. Provide a focal point for information gathering and dissemination</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Designate school personnel such as guidance counselors or principals to serve as a one stop information source • Create a community access channel dedicated to youth information

Strategies	Details
<p>F. Emphasize and promote parental involvement beyond the elementary school level</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Open class trip chaperoning opportunities • Reduce event fees for family members • Provide tutoring opportunities for parents • Encourage creative scheduling of activities
<p>G. Encourage high school student involvement in extracurricular activities and volunteerism</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Involve high school students in upper elementary and middle schools in arts, music and sports enrichment programs as extracurricular activities with encouragement by teachers • Encourage diversity in clubs
<p>H. Promote community and business involvement with school activities</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a list of specifically defined programs for community groups and businesses to support • Inform supporting organizations about any legality issues regarding separation of church and state • Designate program coordinators to work with community groups and businesses

COMMUNITY BASED ORGANIZATIONS ESSENTIAL FOR YOUTH DEVELOPMENT

The entire community has a role and duty in the development of our young people. Although the importance of family and school is obvious, the community at large also guides youth in growth into productive citizens. Chesterfield enjoys a wide variety of community-based organizations, nonprofit entities which provide programs, activities, and services to the area. These organizations can help young people develop a strong sense of commitment, competence, and ethics--three keys to successful adulthood.

Involved Youth are More Likely to Avoid Negative Behavior Studies have shown that children involved in structured activities, whether at school, in the church, or in the community at large, are more likely to avoid negative behavior. There is a positive correlation between productive youth behavior and involvement in a religious organization. More importantly, youth who participate in constructive activities are more likely to develop into productive, successful adults. Community organizations have an important role in providing these activities and making them more accessible to youth.

Community Involvement Develops a Sense of Usefulness Community organizations foster the growth of healthy personal characteristics. The Oasis Center in Nashville, Tennessee, identified four personality traits that contribute to young people staying out of trouble: a sense of competence, a sense of usefulness, a sense of belonging, and a sense of power. In addition, the Committee believes acceptance of ethical responsibility correlates closely with successful, happy lives.

Community organizations develop these personal characteristics because of their very nature and goals. Many of these groups (such as the Boy Scouts, YMCA, and religious bodies) offer activities specifically designed for young people. Typically, those activities involve recreational, cultural, educational, and volunteer opportunities. These activities can help youth develop a real sense not only of accomplishment but also of belonging.

Other organizations (such as charities, environmental groups, and service clubs) utilize adolescents as volunteers to serve the community at large. The young people who work in them feel a strong sense of achievement and personal satisfaction by helping others. The benefit to Chesterfield is twofold, for the community receives a direct service from youth, while at the same time the young people grow into productive citizens.

Community Groups Serve as Outlets for Youth Independence Community groups are particularly significant in the development of adolescents. During adolescence, young people search for independence from family and home. They want to take risks and expand their boundaries. Community groups offer safe outlets for this independence, where children can accomplish something by themselves and where

parents know they are in an environment which provides guidance and direction.

Many of the benefits of taking part in the activities of community based organizations stem from the very nature of the organizations themselves. In working on projects or in activities, young people develop skills, contribute to society, form friendships, and learn new ideas. Other benefits, however, are less obvious. First, community groups typically foster high ethical standards because they openly espouse philosophies of service to others and, more importantly, live their philosophy by embodying volunteerism. Second, the adults who participate in community groups serve as role models to the young people who work with them. Third, the sense of comradery among adolescents in community groups helps fend off the less healthy temptations posed by their peers.

**Strengthen the
Role of Community
Organizations**

The Committee suggests six steps to strengthen the role of community based organizations in the lives of Chesterfield County's youths:

Adult volunteerism in community organizations should be encouraged by the County government and the business community. This encouragement should include flexible scheduling. Adults not only form the backbone which allows these groups to flourish, but, as noted above, adult activism is an important positive role model for young people.

The County government should identify the need for selected service projects and coordinate an "adopt a service" program. For example, one week's project could involve beautification of a county park. Neighborhood groups could participate in the project and contribute to the community.

Community groups should use their young members to recruit new participants. They should encourage their older children to recruit younger children to participate in organized community activities.

Adult service clubs should expand their sponsorship of middle and high school service clubs. Expanding service clubs to the middle schools will allow younger teens to develop the habit of participation and service.

Community groups should take advantage of the services offered by the County government. For instance, the Parks and Recreation Department can create programs for which the community demonstrates a demand, and will find facilities and leaders for the programs. Any community based program can take advantage of this service to create needed activities for its young members.

Community service organizations should seek the aid of the business community. Business leaders want to help the people of the area, but they want to provide focused assistance. If community groups seek assistance for specific, targeted projects, the business community will serve as an important ally.

**Community
Organizations
Model the Best of
Human Behavior**

Young people develop as part of a family, a school, and a community. Community based organizations represent the best of human conduct-- providing service to others without personal gain. Further they give opportunities to families of all income levels. Adolescents can be an important part of their activities, either as the target of youth programs, or as partners in providing service to the community at large. Either way, when community groups include young people in their agendas, they play a critical role in guiding them past the troubled waters of the teenaged years and toward a productive adulthood.

COMMUNITY BASED ORGANIZATIONS

Support the development of youth through recreational, cultural, learning and volunteer opportunities

Strategies	Details
<p>A. Encourage young people to become participating members of the community</p> <p>B. Increase the number of youth participating in community based organization activities</p> <p>C. Offer mentoring opportunities with supportive adults</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Initiate or expand service clubs in middle schools • Participate in the development of an “adopt-a-service” program • Expand volunteer programs such as junior firefighters and police explorers • Encourage older children to recruit younger children to participate in organized community activities • Provide opportunities for participation for families of all income levels • Market youth-related community based organization activities through schools (newspapers, PTA events, announcements) and community (cable television, community newsletters, county web page) • Expand the number of mentors from religious organizations • Encourage more seniors to conduct enrichment programs for youth, e.g. A.A.R.P, the Retired Officers Association • Expand the number of mentors from service clubs, such as Kiwanis, Lions, and Ruritans

Strategies	Details
<p>D. Utilize other resources in the community</p> <p>E. Increase the number of youth involved in faith based organizations</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify community interest in programs and form a partnership with the Parks and Recreation Department to develop these programs • Network with businesses to support specific defined programs • Encourage religious organizations to take an active role in promoting youth involvement, such as musical programs, habitat for humanity, youth athletes and cultural activities • Take advantage of opportunities to provide secular resources to schools

THE DIVERSE ROLE OF THE PRIVATE SECTOR

Many of our businesses focus on their community responsibility to youth, but when the entire private sector does so, its focused efforts will be a powerful force in the lives of Chesterfield's young people. Frequently, we imagine young people working minimum wage jobs that offer little development for the future. However, the commercial sector can provide guidance and leadership to the County's youth, and can also play a significant role in deciding how involved parents and other adults can impact the lives of our young people. Our private enterprises should adopt, as part of their business ethic, the notion that raising productive, healthy young adults is the duty of the entire county.

Youth Employment Provides a Sense of Achievement Having a job can be one of the most enlightening experiences in the adolescent years. Employers should recognize that they serve as role models for their young workers, and that every day in the work place is a lesson in business ethics, public relations, and personal responsibility. Young workers get a sense of achievement and pride in their efforts, and this can be particularly significant to teens who may not be class leaders in the academic arena. At the same time, businesses which hire students should insist as a condition of employment that teens maintain acceptable grades in school.

All businesses should make a point of hiring young people, if only for a few hours each week. Too often, only certain businesses--such as fast food establishments and grocery stores--offer employment to teens. All businesses, from individual proprietorships to the largest corporations, should offer employment to adolescents. Every enterprise, by setting high standards, can offer lessons to teenagers, and those lessons are best learned by participating directly in the workplace.

County "Seal of Approval" Program for Businesses The Committee believes that businesses should participate in a county "seal of approval" program. The program would recognize businesses which adhere to certain standards in connection with youth employment. These standards would include the availability of a training program, limited total hours, limited school night hours, and maintenance of an acceptable grade point average as a condition of employment.

Beyond hiring teens, businesses can affect their lives in a number of other ways. Many local companies participate in career exploration programs. Businesses which sponsor them promote interest in their industry or profession. These experiences are valuable to both the students and the businesses who participate in them.

Businesses in Schools Businesses can take direct roles in the schools. Some companies have adopted schools, and have sent their adult employees to the schools to provide services and instruction. Many corporations are also willing to provide specific services to schools when needed. When schools have

needs in discrete areas, members of the business community feel very comfortable in providing assistance, and do so when requested. However, interviews with business leaders revealed that they did not know the schools' needs. The school division should assemble databases of specific areas of need, and use them to approach businesses for support. Further, the school division should continue its program of publicly recognizing businesses which help the schools.

Another valuable business effort is in public acknowledgment of the positive efforts of young people. Several companies in the County sponsor programs which publicize and praise the contributions of teenagers. Typically, these programs focus on achievement in sports and academics. These programs as well as programs recognizing other achievements should be expanded.

**Businesses as
Employers of
Parents**

Businesses can make another equally significant but less tangible contribution to the growth of young people: flexibility in scheduling of work hours can help adult employees play important roles in young lives. As part of their operational ethics, businesses should recognize that parents need to take time from their ordinary duties to participate in the lives of young people. Parents need to volunteer at school, to attend events at churches, schools, and community organizations, and to be present for important family occasions. It is impossible to overestimate the importance of parents simply being there. It may be necessary to allow parents to work early or late, to split up shifts, or to job share in order to take care of their families. As pointed out in other parts of this report, the need for parental involvement is pivotal for the development of young people. The point is that managers need to take the extra time to accommodate their employees' needs to be involved in the lives of young people.

By the same token, even adults who do not have children need time to contribute to the community. For instance, many adults want to volunteer in the schools, but are unable to do so because of work schedules. The small number of service clubs at the middle school level can be attributed, in part, to the difficulty in obtaining adult support. Businesses can help adults be involved in youth activities by making flexibility in scheduling a priority.

**Good Corporate
Citizenship is an
Excellent Form of
Advertising**

The benefits to business are significant. A healthy community leads to a better business atmosphere. Studies have shown that employees with happy family lives are far more productive at work. Equally important, employees who have the freedom to participate in community activities have a strong sense of pride and satisfaction. Good corporate citizenship is an excellent form of advertising. The development of successful young

adults assures a strong base of future business leaders, employees, and customers.

Ultimately, however, there is no economic measure of ethical values. Throughout this report, the Committee has suggested that all of Chesterfield County--its families, schools, charities, and businesses--recognize that children are a community responsibility. The business sector of the County shares that responsibility, and, in making business decisions, its members need always to think about the effect on youth.

PRIVATE SECTOR

Involve the private sector in connecting youth to the community

Strategies	Details
<p>A. Promote policies that allow flexibility for parental involvement</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Job sharing • Flextime • Time off for school activities • Time off to volunteer • Telecommuting • Time off versus monetary awards
<p>B. Offer opportunities for youth employment and career exploration</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expand student internship programs • Participate in the county “seal of approval” program to recognize businesses • Encourage small businesses, through the County’s business councils, to hire teens • Recognize the commitment and effort of small business owners to employ teens
<p>C. Develop school/business partnerships</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Volunteer time for the mentoring and tutoring of youth • Support specific programs or projects as defined by individual schools • Participate in an “adopt-a-school” program • Seek opportunities to provide recognition for youth achievement

Strategies	Details
D. Develop community/business partnerships	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Sponsor teams and other programs for youth• Encourage employees to engage in community-based activities that benefit youth by giving employees flexibility in work scheduling to participate in activities, such as sponsoring a junior level service club at a middle school• Seek opportunities to provide recognition for youth achievement

GOVERNMENT SUPPORTING A NEW ETHIC

No single institution or individual can ensure the healthy development of young people. While the family is of primary importance, youth need support throughout the community. The Chesterfield County local government has a significant role in the process. The County should provide leadership in the coordination of all services offered to youth. It should provide services to youth and the other organizations which support them. It should disseminate information about opportunities for young people, and spread the word about the importance of youth activities. It should also broaden the opportunities available for youth to participate in the county's decision-making process.

**County Should
Take Lead in
Coordinating
Efforts**

As noted throughout this report, a plethora of individuals, community based organizations, business, religious bodies, and educational institutions provide programs for young people. Sometimes these many well-meaning bodies actually duplicate efforts, while, in other areas, they unwittingly leave some needs unmet. The County should take the lead in coordinating and promoting these groups' offerings, as well as the County's own programs, in order to make the most efficient use of available resources. The coordination of opportunities would reduce overlap in services, maximize the use of existing facilities, and make the best use of existing buildings and resources.

Connected with this effort, a comprehensive survey of youth development needs and enrichment programs should be conducted. Specifically identifying all existing programs is the first step not only toward coordinating all activities, but also toward the County's serving as a useful conduit of information to members of the public. Additionally, identifying facility needs is equally important. A number of community leaders told the Committee that they had trouble finding facilities for their programs. The survey of needs should identify requirements for underutilized facilities, such as meeting rooms and sports centers. If adequate public facilities do not exist, they should be included in the County's Capital Improvement Program.

The County provides a number of services to young people, and to organizations which assist young people. Those services should continue and, where appropriate, expand. For instance, the Parks and Recreation Department will establish needed programs when community interest is sufficient. This is an ideal form of government service directed by the recipients of the services themselves. In a different area, the County should expand the mission of the "Success Through Education and Proactive Policing" (STEPP) program. This program has replaced DARE as the Police Department's anti-drug curriculum in the public schools. STEPP is broader than DARE, and should emphasize the value of performing public service and community volunteering to young people.

**Develop an
“Adopt-a-Service”
Program**

The County should also consider an “adopt-a-service” program. The County would identify public needs which could be performed by young people, such as help at the nursing home or cleaning up a park. Then, the government would promote and coordinate services, which would be provided by volunteer youth under the supervision of county staff or private adults.

**Assistance to
Community
Groups**

The County can also expand its services to existing organizations. The Committee found three areas of potential assistance to community groups: First, the County should initiate the development of Boys and Girls Clubs where needed. These organizations provide safe havens where children can have fun and experience educational activities after school and in the summer. The County should lend support in finding grants to assist in the initiation and operation of the Clubs.

Second, the County should offer greater logistical services to charities. Many churches and other organizations have programs which provide public service or which help young people in educational and recreational areas. The County should provide assistance to those organizations that support youth in the community.

Finally, the government’s special expertise in applying for and obtaining grants should be available to private organizations. Some County employees know how to locate and obtain charitable and governmental grants. Most private organizations lack this skill; therefore, the County should make its expertise available to the community.

Advertising the availability of youth programs and services goes hand in glove with providing and coordinating those activities. Having surveyed that is available, and what is needed, the County will have a unique advantage both in steering youth to opportunities and in recruiting individuals and organizations to provide programs for young people. By the same token, many private organizations stage activities of benefit to young citizens. Although most of these organizations hold their programs open to the public, word of the activities seldom spreads beyond those close to the organization.

Two methods for better communication involve cable television and the Internet. The Committee recommends that the County explore a youth access channel on local cable television. The channel would promote jobs, services, and school activities. It could also broadcast programs produced by or for County young people.

The County should also consider establishing an Internet youth site with information specific to the County. The site would offer information

about job openings, volunteering, and chances to mentor. It could include chat rooms for schools, classes, and homework help. These chat rooms may need security devices to insure that only Chesterfield children use them. The web site should be operated and maintained by young people and it would also have the capability of receiving input from youth.

Spreading the Message of Importance of Youth Perhaps equally important is the County's role in spreading the message of the importance of youth. The local government should take the lead in letting the public know that we view children as our first priority, and that we view their development as a community--if not a regional--responsibility. The government should take steps to recognize and applaud its own employees who work successfully in this area. It should also place a positive spotlight on local businesses, charities, and individuals who help young people. The County should sponsor a "seal of approval" program for businesses who agree to implement certain criteria for youth employment. But awards are not the extent of the County's obligation.

The County should expand the role of youth in the decision making process. By forming an advisory committee solely of youth to provide input on youth issues, the county will demonstrate to youth the value the county places on their involvement. The advisory committee will be a forum for the boundless potential of youth for positive contribution.

Encourage Youth Input in County Decision Making The County should develop a youth observer program. The program would promote interaction between County government officials and County youth by pairing youth and a government official for an academic year. The youth would learn about leadership while providing a new perspective to the government official that they shadow.

Beginning in the early 1980's, Chesterfield successfully promoted itself as a good place for industry to locate. Several years ago, it started a campaign that placed customer service at the top of its priorities. It advertises these messages in the regional and national media, coins slogans to capture the principles, and prints brochures to communicate these ideas. It is time to do the same thing for our community responsibility to our children. The County should drive home the point to both its current and potential citizens that the County's ethic is that the community has a shared responsibility for our children's success.

Chesterfield has made itself a leader in our region and our nation in a number of ways--educational achievement, economic growth, and general quality of life. The County should lead its residents and neighbors in community efforts to insure that today's young people grow into tomorrow's productive citizens.

Strategies	Details
<p>C. Develop a “seal of approval” program for businesses that employ youth</p> <p>D. Disseminate information on youth activities</p> <p>E. Broaden opportunities for youth in the County’s decision-making process</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish criteria for program, such as type of training, amount of hours worked and maintenance of acceptable grades • Disseminate details regarding the “seal of approval” program • Establish a youth web page with chat rooms containing career, job, volunteer, mentoring, and other opportunities • Promote and market via media youth programs and activities • Improve group access TV channel • Utilize Police STEPP program to emphasize the positive aspects of youth involvement in the community • Develop an advisory board comprised solely of youth to broaden their input in the county decision making process • Develop a youth observer program • Continue Model County Government Day

CREATION OF THE YOUTH DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION

During the Committee's focus groups, many organizations in the county informed the Committee of numerous positive programs for youth. These programs are frequently underutilized or could benefit from other programs or resources. Although programs for at risk youth or adolescents who have entered the juvenile justice system are well organized, the Committee found that there is no county department or agency to oversee the coordination of proactive youth development programs for the energetic, capable, cooperative youth who comprise a majority of the County's young people. The County possesses a tremendous opportunity to organize these types of programs. If better organized, youth development programs throughout the County could be more efficiently operated, receive promotional attention, and be utilized by more young people. Thus, the Committee proposes the creation of a permanent Youth Development Commission whose job it would be to promote youth development throughout the County.

Purpose of the Commission The Commission would have a number of purposes. Its primary task would be to work toward the goal of involving all youth in their communities through worthwhile activities. The group would promote the concept that all youth in the County should take advantage of the youth development opportunities available in their areas. Therefore, youth development would be coordinated as an institution in Chesterfield. The Commission would research, study, and recommend new developments in positive youth activities. The group could also serve as a clearinghouse for all youth activities in the County whether they are provided by community groups or the County government. The Commission would also assist in the improved coordination of County youth development programs as well as assist community based groups in their proactive youth offerings. It would actively promote the concept that young people who are involved in school and community activities tend to make healthy choices and are more likely to be productive contributors within the community.

Rather than creating another arm of the government, the Youth Development Commission should be a community group composed of individuals representing organizations in the County. To further this concept, Commission members should be appointed by their respective groups as opposed to being appointed by the Board of Supervisors or the School Board. In this way, the Commission's focus will be community based instead of government based.

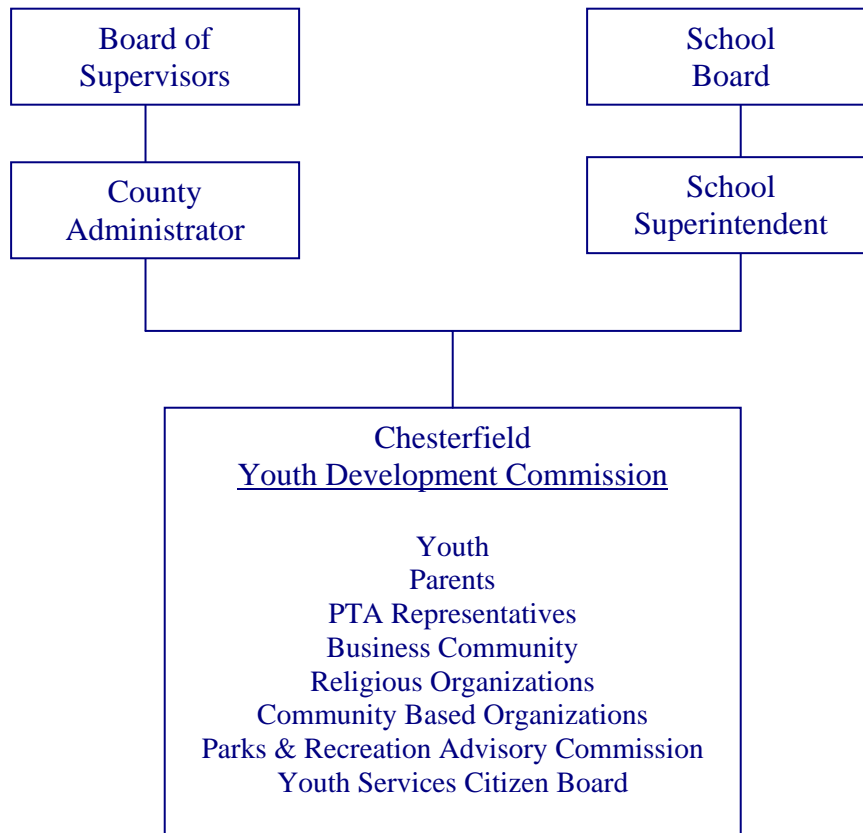
Make Up of Commission Composition of the Commission should include representation from those groups who have the greatest influence on the lives of youth. Youth, parents within the community, and PTA representatives would make up the cornerstone of the Commission in order to give direct insight to the group. Groups within the community, such as religious organizations and

community based organizations, should be included on the Commission to represent the support systems within the County. Business representatives can offer the Commission views consistent with their role as employers of parents and youth, mentors, and role models. Finally, the County could be represented by such groups as the Parks and Recreation Advisory Commission and the Youth Services Board.

The Commission The Committee recommends that the Youth Development Commission
Would Report report directly and equally to the County's Board of Supervisors and the
Equally to the School Board. The County Administrator and the School Superintendent
Board of would each designate appropriate staff to serve the Commission. It would
Supervisors and be the responsibility of these staff members to communicate the
School Board Commission's work throughout their respective organizations.

The adoption of the proposal to create the Youth Development Commission would send a strong message to the community that our young people are a priority in the County. The formation would highlight the message that raising our young people is a community responsibility. Increasing expectations for all segments of our populations – parents, youth, schools, community based organizations, businesses and the government – and providing the tools to meet those expectations will help Chesterfield remain a “FIRST CHOICE” community.

**Chesterfield Youth Development Commission
Structure & Composition**



ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

In preparing this report, the Committee met with numerous County organizations, leaders, officials, high school students, and persons who work daily with youth. The Committee would like to sincerely thank everyone who it interviewed or who attended the Committee's focus groups and public meetings. These citizens took valuable time from their busy schedules to assist the Committee and to produce a report which reflects the opinions and observations of the County.

The Committee was assisted by the group's staff person Strategic Planning Analyst, Lynne Wasz. The report also could not have been completed without the patient help of Claire Lau who produced the report. The Committee wishes to express its sincere gratitude to everyone who helped in the development of this report.

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