

Ohio school has 64 pregnant students

CANTON, Ohio (AP) - Thirteen percent of the female students at Timken Senior High School in Ohio are pregnant. High school senior Monica Selby thought she would be busy this year planning for college, not preparing for the birth of her first child.

"I've been crying every day and every night. I keep on blaming myself for this," said the 18-year-old Selby, who is six months pregnant.

She cries about starting classes this week at Timken Senior High School with a bulging belly, about the emotions of planning an adoption, about becoming part of a statistic that has snagged the nation's attention: 64 of Timken's 490 female students — 13 percent — are pregnant. The statistic at the school in the heart of this old steel city contrasts with a decade of declining teen pregnancy rates nationwide. But teen pregnancy experts say the problem is not exclusive to Timken High.

Experts, parents and students themselves struggle to explain why such pockets of high teen pregnancy rates appear. Are teens getting appropriate sex education? Do they have access to birth control and are they using it consistently? Has the stigma of unwed motherhood lost its edge?

"This might be a school that is forthright with its problems while others are not," said Jay Green, chairman of the Education Reform department at the University of Arkansas. "But this is a widespread issue."

Green wrote a study last year for the conservative New York-based Manhattan Institute for Policy Research that found 20 percent of urban teenagers have been pregnant, compared with 14 percent of suburban teens.

Urban teens as a whole don't use birth control as consistently or often, according to his research, and often have less to lose financially and socially than those in the suburbs. But Green couldn't say whether those factors applied to Timken. The school of about 1,000 students draws teens from across the neighborhood and economic lines in the state's ninth largest city.

Eric Wilson, 18, who works at a hot dog shop a few blocks from the school while making plans to get his GED and caring for his 2-year-old son, said the spotlight on Timken is magnifying an old problem.

"My mom had a kid when she was in school and now I have a kid," he said. "It goes back to how you were raised. Down here, it's not looked too down upon because a lot of parents had kids when they were kids."

Last school year, both high schools in the city's district reported 55 pregnancies. Ninety-nine pregnancies are expected in the district this year, most of them at Timken, where expecting students get six weeks of maternity leave.

"This has gotten to horrible proportions. I wish I knew the answer to why it's happening," principal Kim Redmond told the city's daily newspaper *The Repository*. Redmond did not return several messages left by *The Associated Press*.

Joanne Hinton, whose 16-year-old daughter, Raechel Hinton, is eight months pregnant, said she believes the school's abstinence-based sex education program isn't enough.

"It's time to take the blinders off and realize that these kids are having sex," she said. "Obviously, abstinence is not working. If we have to, just give them condoms."

Abstinence-based programs have been growing nationwide at schools over the past few years. In Ohio, the Bush's administration and the state's health department have awarded \$32 million in grants to Ohio agencies for abstinence education since 2001. Hinton stresses that she doesn't condone teenage sex and that her daughter doesn't fit the mold some may think pregnant teens come from: The Hinton household has two loving parents with a strong relationship who asked the straight-A Raechel "45 times a week if she was having sex, doing drugs, drinking. We were constantly checking on her."

Raechel, who plans to return to the 10th grade at Timken after delivering and completing an adoption, said many students are sexually active and need more information about birth control. "It can happen to anybody no matter who you are, not just bad girls," she said.

Beckford sues Diddy over his image

NEW YORK (AP) - Tyson Beckford has sued companies owned by Sean "Diddy" Combs, saying his image and likeness were used without his permission to promote a clothing line after his contract expired.

In the lawsuit, filed in U.S. District Court, Beckford said he agreed in May 2004 to be paid \$1.2 million to endorse Combs' Sean John brand apparel line and accessories in advertising and promotional campaigns.

According to the lawsuit, Beckford was paid \$600,000 but Combs reneged on the rest of the payment, even as his company continued to use Beckford's image in its ad



Tyson Beckford has filed a lawsuit against Sean Combs.

campaigns. The lawsuit seeks \$5 million in damages.

Beckford's representatives were unable to persuade

the company to complete its payment despite several demands for the money, including a June 7 conversation

with Combs, Sean John Clothing Inc.'s chief executive officer, the lawsuit said.

The lawsuit, filed Aug. 12, said the continued use of Beckford's image was an attempt to deceive, defraud and confuse the public and constitutes false advertising.

Besides the clothing company, the lawsuit also names as defendants Christian Casey LLC and Bad Boy Entertainment Inc.

A lawyer for the companies, Kenneth Mieselas, did not immediately return a telephone message for comment Wednesday.

Beckford has appeared in the films "Biker Boyz" and "Into the Blue."

UPN set to premiere Rock's new series

NEW YORK (AP) - The reaction so startled Dawn Ostroff that she thought someone was onstage behind her, playing a joke.

The UPN president had only said the name of Chris Rock's new series, "Everybody Hates Chris," and the audience of media executives there to preview her fall schedule was laughing. Then she showed highlights and walked off knowing UPN — of all networks — had the most hotly anticipated comedy of this month's new television season.

"The laughs were so loud and continual," she said. "I just couldn't believe how large the response was. It was a great feeling."

"Everybody Hates Chris," which premieres 8 p.m. EDT Sept. 22, is based on Rock's childhood in Brooklyn with a penny-pinching dad and tough but loving mom. It's a family comedy, albeit one that refers to drive-by shootings and contains the n-word in its first episode.

It was chosen best upcoming show in Broadcasting & Cable magazine's poll of TV critics, an opinion echoed by many in the advertising community.

"I think there's a lot of buzz about it because it looks like UPN has a show for the first time that could conceivably be a grand slam out of the park," said Sharianne Brill, analyst for the ad-buying firm Carat USA.

Whenever there's a hit in the small universe of Hollywood, there's always someone who's able to say they should have been there first.

If that turns out to be true here, it's Fox that will be answering uncomfortable questions.

Ostroff saw a script for

"Everybody Hates Chris" when she was looking at writing samples from co-creator Ali LeRoi, and fell in love with it. There wasn't much she could do about it, though, knowing the project was under development at Fox.

She hunted down Rock's cell phone number and e-mail address to badger him about it.

"She just really liked the script and... I responded to that," Rock, who narrates the show, told reporters recently.

Ostroff had to keep her feelings quiet, figuring Fox would become more interested if it heard a rival network executive was interested.

When Fox's option ran out, she pounced.

LeRoi said Fox's rejection was for financial, not creative, reasons.

"Everybody Hates Chris" is a single-camera comedy, which are more expensive to produce than series filmed live on a soundstage, and Fox already had several of those projects going.

"You can't be mad at them," he said.

There were also rumors that Fox was worried Rock would have minimal involvement, something the comedian dismissed with a quip: "I don't think I've ever done anything and walked out... My name's Rock, not Chappelle." (The reference, of course, is to Dave Chappelle pulling the plug on the third season of his Comedy Central show).

Fox entertainment spokesman Scott Grogan declined to comment, noting a management change since the decision was made.

The early word has been so positive that Ostroff has been asked whether she's worried that CBS will steal "Everybody Hates Chris." The two networks are part of Viacom and share several executives.

"It was flattering that everyone thought so much of the show that they felt it should be on CBS, the biggest network," she said.

But, no, she's not fretting that CBS will snag it.

"UPN is getting behind it," LeRoi said. "They're putting in everything they have in terms of support. That's (See *Chris Rock*, Page 18)

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