

## HUMAN SEXUALITY EDUCATION

### The Curriculum

The curriculum for providing education about human sexuality will be part of the human growth and development instruction in the district's comprehensive health education program. The curriculum for that program is to be developed by a curriculum review project team or committee (including teachers, administrators and parents) using input from students and assistance from state and local health department staff and others with expertise in the field. Student standards and outcomes will be specified at benchmark levels, with curriculum agreements about human sexuality education content being designated to particular grade-levels. Age-appropriate instruction in human growth and development will occur at each grade level K-12, with specific reproductive terminology beginning at grade 4.

As part of the district's health program, instruction in human sexuality will stress the value of abstinence, as indicated in this district position statement about abstinence:

"Abstinence from sexual activity and other high-risk behaviors will be taught as the only totally effective means of prevention of teen pregnancy and sexually transmitted diseases (STDs/HIV) and the most appropriate course of action for young people during their school-age years.

"Abstinence is to be stressed. However, it will not be emphasized to the exclusion of other materials and instruction on contraceptive and disease reduction measures which emphasize the risk factors associated with any method other than abstinence, and are presented as adult choices.

"Therefore the curriculum will: (1) promote abstinence for school-age youth; (2) incorporate refusal skills and self-esteem building activities; (3) reinforce the benefits of abstinence without devaluing or ignoring those young people who have had or are having sexual intercourse; and (4) promote mutually monogamous relationships with an uninfected partner for adults as the safest and most responsible sexual behavior.

"Providing guidance for youth in this period of development is a crucial function of the home and school working together to help students develop into responsible adults whose behavior reflects concern for self and others and incorporates family values."  
*(Health Curriculum Review, 8/97)*

Instruction will include information about:

1. Responsible sexual behaviors and hygienic practices which eliminate or reduce the risks of pregnancy, exposure to human immunodeficiency virus, hepatitis B and other infectious or sexually transmitted diseases;

2. Abstinence for school-age youth and mutually monogamous relationships with an uninfected partner for adults, without the devaluing or ignoring of those young people who have had or are having sexual intercourse;
3. Contraceptive and disease reduction measures;
4. Statistics based on the latest medical information regarding both the possible side effects and health benefits of all forms of contraceptives, including the success and failure rate for prevention of pregnancy, and the efficacy of contraceptives in preventing HIV infection and other sexually transmitted diseases;
5. Emotional, physical and psychological consequences of early sexual involvements, including the consequences of disease or an unintended pregnancy;
6. Sexually transmitted diseases as serious possible hazards of sexual contact;
7. Oregon laws that address young people's rights and responsibilities relating to childbearing and parenting;
8. Laws pertaining to persons 18 years of age or older having sexual relations with persons younger than 18 to whom they are not married;
9. No form of sexual expression being acceptable when it physically or emotionally harms oneself or others;
10. Unwanted physical or verbal sexual advances, and how to decline or accept them;
11. The wrongness of taking advantage of or exploiting another person;
12. The importance of honesty with oneself and others, respect for each person's dignity and well-being and responsibility for one's actions;
13. Development of self-esteem, the development and practice of effective communication skills and the ability to resist peer pressure; and
14. Responsible decision making.

### **Parent Information and Notification**

The principal of each school is responsible for ensuring that parents are informed prior to instruction in human sexuality (within the classroom, an assembly or other school-sponsored activity) that the content will be covered, when such instruction will occur, the particular content of that curriculum for the specified grade level and the materials which will be used during instruction. Parents must be provided the opportunity to view all materials. At the same time, parents shall be informed that no student will be required to take or participate in any instruction in human sexuality if the student's parent(s), after having reviewed the materials, submits written objections to the school.

### **Exemption from Instruction**

Any parent may request his/her student be excused from the instruction by putting that request in writing to the principal. That exemption may be for all of the instruction related to the topic of concern or for specified elements of that instruction (such as a single video presentation or speaker).

It is the teacher's responsibility to ensure that appropriate alternative materials be available for the student, and that assignments in those alternative materials be handled in a way which does not single out or embarrass the student. The criteria for appropriate alternative materials include:

1. Activities/Lessons must have a specific purpose;
2. Activities/Lessons must be related to health;
3. The amount of time and effort required for the alternative activity/lesson must match approximately the amount of time and effort required were the student included in the regular instruction;
4. Lesson products and/or discussions about learning need to be shared with the teacher (versus having the student make a report in front of the class, which may single him/her out).

Although alternative lesson suggestions are provided to teachers as part of the human sexuality instructional program materials, teachers have the latitude to work with parents to devise effective alternative experiences and credit for students which are in agreement with the above criteria.

### **Program Verification**

The K-12 administrator for curriculum and staff development is designated as the staff person to facilitate verifying program implementation annually to the state Department of Education for purposes of the report to the Legislative Assembly at each regular session.