



Pittsburgh Public Schools

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Dear Pittsburgh Public School Family:

As a part of revising the District's Health Curriculum, a 29-member committee that included health teachers and District administrators, parents, community members, and experts from the medical community examined the District's Sexual Education Policy.

Although no formal policy exists, "Abstinence Only" has been the District's current practice which emphasizes abstaining from all sexual behaviors. Our Health curriculum does not include information about contraception and disease prevention methods. After 30-hours of meetings over three months, the committee made a presentation at the Board's February 3rd, Education Committee meeting and recommended the District move to a Comprehensive K-12 Sexuality Education Policy.

A Comprehensive K-12 Sexuality Education Policy, sometimes referred to as Abstinence Plus, has as its' core the message that abstinence is the only way to protect with 100% certainty against unplanned pregnancies and sexually transmitted infections and diseases. The proposed policy defines Comprehensive (abstinence plus) Sexuality Education as age appropriate sexuality education, from kindergarten through twelfth grade, providing students with adequate and accurate information on human sexuality while preparing students to deal responsibly with social, physical, emotional and mental aspects of human sexuality. As with the District's current practice, parents have the right to withdraw their children from sexuality education classes at any time with notice to their child's school.

Curriculum under the new policy will cover six major categories: Human Development, Healthy Relationships, Personal Skills, Sexual Health, Society and Culture, and Sexual Behavior. Sexual behaviors will be discussed in terms of scientific facts and consequences only. More specific content includes anatomy, human reproduction, decision making, body image, gender roles, attitudes, sexual orientation and stereotypes, risk reducing behaviors and decision making, and pregnancy and STI prevention (both abstinence and contraception).

The public can review the K-12 Health Committee presentation and the proposed Sexual Education Policy by visiting the Pittsburgh Public Schools web site at www.pps.k12.pa.us, visiting the Division of Communications, Room 201, by calling the Parent Hotline at (412)622-7920 and requesting a copy, or by visiting your child's school. Principals will have copies of the recommended policy and presentation in the school's main office.

Public comment on this and other topics will be reviewed and considered at the Public Hearing on Monday, February 16, 2009 at 7:00 PM in Conference Room A, 341 South Bellefield Avenue, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, 15213. Please contact the Superintendent's Office at 412-622-3600 by noon on the day of the hearing if you would like to speak at the Public Hearing. The Board is scheduled to vote on the proposed Sexual Education Policy at the February 24, 2009 Legislative Meeting.

At Pittsburgh Public Schools our mission is to improve the life prospects of our students. With the gift of the Pittsburgh Promise, graduates of Pittsburgh Public Schools will be able to access significant dollars to further their education after high school. We must work together to protect our children by providing them with information so they make good decisions, healthy choices and take advantage of opportunities for success.



We are an equal rights and opportunity school district