

## What does the 8<sup>th</sup> grade sexuality education curriculum really say?

Outline of the current 8<sup>th</sup> grade curriculum:

- Examine factors that influence stereotyping and generalizations about gender roles
- Discuss how cultural and family values affect relationships and marriage
- Explore the effect of family stress and divorce on the family and society
- Describe the process of pregnancy and birth, recognizing the importance of prenatal care for the mother and fetus
- Discuss the effects of hormonal changes on the body and on behavior throughout the life cycle
- Analyze the influence of peer pressure and other factors on an individual's decisions regarding sexual behavior
- Analyze consequences of sexual activity
- Examine myths and misconceptions about human sexuality
- Discuss the social, emotional, and economic impact of teenage parenting
- Discuss how family values, culture, religious views, and other factors influence family planning
- Identify abstinence from sexual intercourse as the most effective means of pregnancy prevention
- Identify and describe methods of pregnancy prevention

(For more details, see "Resources" at TeachtheFacts.org: <http://www.teachthefacts.org/resources.html>)

✓Parents must OPT IN their children to this curriculum with written permission

✓Sexually transmitted diseases (STDs) are covered in detail in a separate unit

✓The current curriculum does not contain any information about sexual orientation

The tabled revisions to the curriculum approved unanimously by the Board of Education in November 2004 and scheduled for piloting in Spring 2005 included basic information on sexual orientation:

- Definition of sexual orientation, heterosexual, homosexual and bisexual from American Academy of Pediatrics and the American Psychiatric Association.
- Definitions and examples of stereotyping regarding sexual identity and sexual orientation
- The statement "different religions take different stands on sexual behaviors and there are even different views among people of the same religion."
- A section on myths regarding sexual orientation:
  1. Myth: Homosexuality is a mental health disorder.  
Fact: All major professional mental health organizations affirm that homosexuality is not a mental disorder.
  2. Myth: If you are "straight", you can become homosexual.  
Fact: Most experts in the field have concluded that sexual orientation is not a choice.
  3. Myth: A person is a homosexual if he or she has ever been sexually attracted to, or ever had sexual contact with someone of the same gender.  
Fact: Fleeting attraction or contact does not prove long-term sexual orientation.  
*(Point #3 was revised to this final form by staff after board approval in November 2004)*
  4. Myth: Children of homosexual parents/guardians will become homosexuals.  
Fact: Having homosexual parents/guardians does not predispose you to being homosexual.

The following was included for Teacher Reference Only

**Questioning** refers to people who are uncertain as to their sexual orientation. (No source). **Transgender** refers to someone whose gender identity or expression differs from conventional expectations for their physical sex. This term includes transsexual and transvestite.(Source: American Academy of Pediatrics, Pediatrics, Vol. 92, No. 4 (Oct. 1993), pp. 631-34). **Coming Out** refers to the process in which a person identifies himself or herself as homosexual or bisexual to family, friends and other significant people in his or her life. (Source: American Psychiatric Association Fact Sheet: Gay, Lesbian and Bisexual Issues (May 2000)). **Intersexed** refers to people who are born with anatomy or physiology (ambiguous genitalia) that differs from cultural and/or medical ideals of male and female.