

## 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.