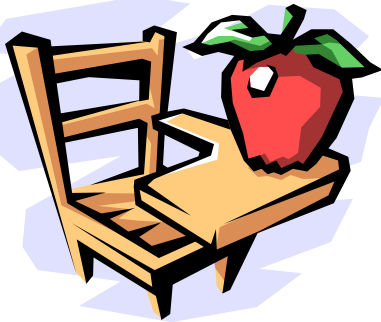


How to Talk to Your School Board about Sex

Do you agree with the sex education policy at your child's school?



Do you believe that abstinence and safe sex practices should be taught in school?

Tips for getting involved and making changes in your child's school:

- ✓ **Go to parent teacher conferences.** If the teacher schedules a meeting at a time when you can't come, ask to reschedule it. Come prepared to listen and make sure to ask questions about what will be taught, homework policy and classroom behavior.
- ✓ **Participate in the PTA (Parent Teacher Association)** or other parent organization. Check to see if you have a PTA in place in your community. Even if you don't use an organized agency like the PTA it important that you use -- ORGANIZATION, you will be more effective that way.
- ✓ **Know your stuff.** Being well informed on current information and data will help you make informed decisions and responsible choices about your child's education.

Below are some tips from the PTA which lay-out how to organize parent/family involvement at your school. Following each step are some ways to specify this approach for sexuality education initiatives.

1. Create an **Action Team** of parents, educators, administrators and others to develop a plan.

You cannot do this alone. An action team will help you to be effective. We recommend including students in the action team.

2. **Examine** current practice. Survey staff and parents.

Once again, we recommend including students in the survey. During this step, the student voice is vital. Their views on what they need to know about sexuality is much more accurate. Remember, they will seek out the answers whether or not a responsible adult provides the information - so now is an opportunity to have an impact.

3. **Develop a plan** based on the results of the evaluation.

Perhaps this will involve going to the Superintendent, the Department of Education or the Health Education Supervisor. You may research new curriculum. You may research what other successful schools are doing.

4. Develop a written parent/family involvement **policy**.

Once the plan is developed, and then there needs to be a written agreement that lays out what is expected of all the players and what is acceptable behavior.

5. **Secure support**. Keep those responsible for implementation, those who will be affected, and those outside the school who have influence over the outcome aware of the plan and willing to lend support.

Talk is only talk. Now you need to act. Public Relations is very important here - let your supporters know what's happening.

6. Provide professional development for staff. Effective **training** is essential. The best training will provide staff with several opportunities to examine the issues, work together, and monitor and evaluate the progress.

Once you influence change, for example a more comprehensive curriculum, then you need to insure that the teachers are prepared to deliver these lessons. Sexuality is not a topic that's easy to discuss. Teachers need to be given the skills to be effective and comfortable teaching.

7. **Evaluate and revise** the plan. Parent/family involvement is not a one-time goal. It requires continuous review and long-term commitment to ensure long-term success.

Do a pre- and post-test of the changes and a yearly review so that you can monitor differences in students' knowledge and teachers' satisfaction.

**** For more information go to Campaign for Our Kids, Inc. at**

<http://www.cfoc.org>

