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House Education Committee

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HB 2199 – Support**Parental Permission for Sexual Education Classes**

Chairman Highland and committee members, thank you for the opportunity to testify in favor of legislation that would put parents back in control of what type of sexual education their children are receiving.

Our state laws should safeguard the rights of parents to shield and protect their children from harmful material, especially in schools.

In 2014, the prominent display of a poster on a classroom door in middle school was reported by a child to their parent. It was a shock to many parents that this poster was part of a sexual education curriculum. The poster had a list of phrases which were so obscene, they cannot even be displayed by television stations without violating FCC rules. The X-rated terms are blurred so no one can see them.

This poster could have caused irreparable harm to a child being sexually abused, giving the impression that these sexually explicit acts were just another way of showing affection. The damage done to children as young as 11 years old cannot be undone. It likely spurred many confused conversations among the students.

This school district had an “opt-out” policy. If the policy had been “opt-in,” this episode would likely have never happened. Parents would have been able to give it the proper oversight.

Last year I had an intern who did significant research into how this poster came about. It was part of a “health and human sexuality” curriculum, used by 75 school districts around the country, including the Shawnee Mission School District, and was titled, “Making a Difference.”

- “Making a Difference” was considered to be an “abstinence plus” program
- According to the publisher’s website, the goal of the program was:

“...To empower young adolescents to change their behavior in ways that will reduce their risk of pregnancy and HIV or other STD infection. Specifically, this curriculum emphasizes that young adolescents should postpone sexual activity and that practicing abstinence is the only way to eliminate the risk for pregnancy and STDs, including HIV.”

Clearly the sales hype on the website does not match with giving students (ages 11-13) a complete menu of X-rated sexual acts.

- This “health and human sexuality” curriculum was on a list of 31 “evidence based programs” to prevent pregnancy recommended by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.
- The curriculum could be found on Planned Parenthood’s website under “curriculum and manuals.”
- The program was being used by the Johnson County Department of Health, but at least optional classes were offered to parents about what was being taught to their children and the parents *must* sign a consent form before their children could participate in the class.
- According to an evaluation found on the HHS website, girls (ages 11-13) who were sexually inexperienced at the baseline, were less likely to report having had sexual intercourse three months after the program. However, the program’s impact was not statistically significant after 6 or 12 months.
- According to an HHS evaluation, “Making a Difference” delays sex for three months.

Current Law

- The Kansas State Board of Education has the authority to set standards.
- The KSBE states the instruction of sex education or “human sexuality” is a criterion for accreditation.
- K.A.R.(91-31-32)(9)(G) “programs and services to support student learning and growth at both the elementary and secondary include the following: (G) physical education, which should instruct on health and human sexuality”
- The KSBE has model curriculum for health education, along with letters for either parent approval (opt in) or refusal (opt out) of the program. These are optional. The state does not require schools to seek a parent’s permission.
- Kansas does not require schools to follow any curriculum. The model set forth by KSBE is simply a guideline and it is up to each individual school district to set the curriculum.
- The SMSD and many other school districts have adopted an “opt out” sexual education policy. Children can automatically be enrolled in a human sexuality class without parental knowledge or permission.

Most decisions within education should be left up the local school districts, but this episode begs the question: Do we really think as state legislators that it would ever be in the state’s interest for teachers to discuss highly offensive sexually explicit acts with young children without the knowledge of a parent?

Please give parents back the control they should have over their child’s sexual education and give parents the opportunity to be actively involved with this subject.

Here, I will quote my college intern, “In closing, how comfortable would you be with this poster on your wall?”

HOW DO PEOPLE EXPRESS THEIR SEXUAL FEELINGS?

ORAL SEX	HUGGING
SEXUAL FANTASY	TOUCHING EACH OTHER'S GENITALS
CARESSING	KISSING
ANAL SEX	VAGINAL INTERCOURSE
DANCING	TALKING
MASSAGE	SAYING "I LIKE YOU"
MASTURBATION	GRINDING
POUNCE HANDS	
TALKING	
CURDING ONE THE OTHER	