

Dear Ladies and Gentlemen of the Committee,

I am writing to support the common-sense approach of having families "opt-in" to sexual education classes. Some families may prefer to have their children taught such delicate topics by their school. Meanwhile, I believe a large number of families would prefer to teach their own children about this very personal part of growing up. I understand either approach. And I think the best way to honor all families is to use an opt-in standard instead of stigmatizing families who "opt-out".

Ideally, an after-school course could be offered. But, even if such classes are offered during regular school hours, clear options should be available for both kids who opt-in and those who do not. (In practical terms, this would mean that you don't just have a handful of kids sitting in the library or resource room while other class instructions are going on. This can seem like "detention" if there is not some planned activity, however simple.)

Both physically and emotionally, there is a wide variety of growth patterns in young people. While some ten year olds may be "ready" to talk about sexuality, many others are not. This is not even touching on various religious or philosophical beliefs, but just admitting that each child is unique, and that the parents are almost always the most aware of their own child's disposition and maturity level.

Thank you for helping make public schools a place where a wide variety of children can gather, without compromising their own traditions or belief systems.

I believe the "opt-in" option would serve families best.

Sincerely,

Laura Erdahl Weinberg
(Olathe, KS)