

SB20-072 - Human Sexuality Education Notification Requirement

Concerning the requirement to provide information to parents regarding the materials used during comprehensive human sexuality instruction.

SPONSORS:

Senate: Senator Bob Gardner

House: Representative Colin Larson

BILL SUBJECT & SUMMARY: Education & School Finance (Pre & K-12)

Current law requires a public school that offers human sexuality education to provide to the parent or legal guardian of each student, prior to commencing the planned curriculum, written notification of the ability to excuse a student and a detailed, substantive outline of the topics and materials to be presented during the planned curriculum.

The bill is not an attack on Comprehensive Sex Ed but instead supports it and eliminates confusion for the opt out feature of the bill. It requires an electronic notification to be provided to the parent or legal guardian of each student, in addition to the written notification, 90 days prior to commencing the planned curriculum. The notification will include the date the planned curriculum will be taught, and it must be sent separately from any other school notifications. In addition, any materials used during the planned curriculum will be made available for viewing online 90 days prior to the commencement of the planned curriculum.

WHY IS THIS BILL IMPORTANT?

Ongoing research shows:

- **Informed parental engagement improves school achievement**
 - Reduces absenteeism and increases graduation rate
 - Restores parents' confidence in their children's education
 - Increases overall classroom success and support from parents
- **Informed parental engagement improves student achievement**
 - Students earn higher grades and test scores, have higher graduation rates
 - Have better social skills, improved behavior, reduced bullying
 - Have lower teen pregnancy, STIs, HIV and suicides
- **Schools and parents are unnecessarily burdened under the current system**
 - Usually requires parents to come into the school to see the curriculum or necessitates schools respond to individual parental requests
- **Minority, single and dual income parents are unduly burdened by the current system as they are often unable to come into schools or reach out to educators**

- **Nearly 2/3^{ds} of children live in dual income homes**
- **Approximately 1/3rd of Colorado children are raised by single parents**
 - **Minorities disproportionately affected**
 - **66% of African American children**
 - **42% of Hispanic Children**
 - **52% of Native American Children**
- **Helping their parents be informed and engaged partners in their education will help these children flourish and succeed**

WHAT WILL THIS BILL CHANGE?

- Parents will be notified 90-days prior to comprehensive sexuality instruction materials being taught, both electronically and in writing
- Notification will be sent separately from any other school notification
- Any and all materials that will be, or are planned to be used, with human sexuality instruction whether by the school or an outside organization, must be made available for viewing online ninety days prior to the commencement of the planned curriculum.
 - Such materials include but are not limited to:
 - Audio and visual resources
 - Written handouts
 - Teacher and consultant scripts
 - Lesson plans; and
 - Student questionnaires

THIS BILL WILL BENEFIT SCHOOLS, PARENTS AND CHILDREN

- **When it comes to Sex Ed, parents across the state have found it difficult to be informed about the Sex Ed curriculum for their children**
 - Many parents have repeatedly emailed and called schools to see the teaching materials
 - Frequently told that they have to come into the school to see the teaching materials, or don't receive any response
- **Not good for schools:** a burden on them to accommodate parents coming into the school or deal with individual requests
- **Not good for teachers:** don't have the partnership of parents to help students process important information like sex education
- **Not good for children:** parents not able to support and have conversations with them about what they are learning
- **Not good for parents: especially single parents, minority families, dual income families and parents of student with disabilities who are disproportionately burdened and unable to go into schools to view curriculum or follow up repeatedly to see the curriculum**
- These parents are calling out for help, and that is what this bill does... help parents support their children's education and simplifies the process for schools

QUESTIONS TO ASK WITNESSES:

1. Why should we not make it easier for parents and caregivers to see the comprehensive human sexuality instruction materials?
2. When the current process is incredibly burdensome to single parents, minority families and dual income households, why would we not want to simplify the process?
3. Why would we want to burden schools with the need to respond to multiple parents' inquiries versus simplifying the process for educators?
4. With the technological advances in online materials and resources for all other curriculum, why should Sex Ed, the only curriculum with an opt out aspect, not also be presented online?
5. The perception amongst growing numbers of parents is that the actual teaching materials are being hidden since only a vague overview is usually provided when parents ask? Are there aspects of the comprehensive sex ed curriculum that schools don't want parents to see?

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:

- Part of an educator's role is to ensure that their curriculum is shared with every stakeholder in the community.
- When anything more than the biology is taught, someone's values are going to be presented.
- It is imperative to the protection of children who have been past victims of sexual exploitation that comprehensive human sexuality instruction materials be reviewed by their parent/guardian with ample time to prepare the child, who may be suffering from natural modesty issues, and assess their readiness to participate in the instruction.
- Parent/Guardian review of comprehensive human sexuality instruction materials is extremely important to children who have suffered unwanted sexual advances from their peers.
- Unlike other academic subjects, comprehensive human sexuality instruction deals with the extremely sensitive areas of sexuality. Parents/guardians have a right and responsibility to receive full and complete access to comprehensive human sexuality instruction so they can adequately assess their child's maturity and psychological readiness level to receive this instruction.
- Learner outcomes and curriculum objectives do not provide adequate information for parents to fully and completely assess their child's readiness to receive comprehensive human sexuality instruction.
- The focus on body parts, functions, and experimentation in comprehensive human sexuality instruction should be fully accessible to parents/guardians to make sure they are prepared to protect the privacy and safety of younger children in their home.

Peer reviewed scientific and psychology journals have proven that active and informed parental engagement is proven to be key to lowering teen suicide, dropout rates, STIs, drug use, and bullying.

REDUCES HEALTH ISSUES AND SUICIDE:

Numerous studies show parental engagement decreases the likelihood of suicide in children and youth by 21%, and also reduce STIs, HIV and teen pregnancy

- Anteghini, Fonseca, Ireland, & Blum, 2001;
- Borowsky, Ireland, & Resnick, 2001;
- Borowsky, Resnick, Ireland, & Blum, 1999;
- Cheng et al., 2009;
- Eisenberg, Ackard, & Resnick, 2007;
- Flouri & Buchanan, 2002;
- Garcia, Skay, Sieving, Naughton, & Bearinger, 2008;
- Kaminski et al., 2010; Logan, 2009).

INCREASES ACADEMIC SUCCESS:

Research shows a strong relationship between parent engagement and educational outcomes, including:

- School attendance
- Higher grades and classroom test scores.
- Classrooms with engaged parents perform better as a whole.
- Higher graduation rates
- Develop self-confidence and motivation in the classroom
- Have better social skills and classroom behavior
 - Epstein J, Sheldon S. Present and accounted for: improving student attendance through family and community involvement. *The Journal of Educational Research* 2002;95(5):308-318.
 - Fan X, Chen M. Parental involvement and students' academic achievement: a meta-analysis. *Educational Psychology Review* 2001;13(1):1-22.
 - Henderson, A., & Berla, N. (1995). *A New Generation of Evidence: The Family Is Critical to Student Achievement*. Washington, DC: Center for Law and Education, pp. 14-16.

RESOURCES:

American Psychological Association:

<https://www.apa.org/pi/lgbt/programs/safe-supportive/parental-engagement/index>

Science Daily

<https://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2010/05/100503074239.htm>

Journal of Crisis Intervention and Suicide Prevention

<https://www.researchgate.net/publication/10844910> The Protective Role of Parental Involvement in Adolescent Suicide

Loma Linda University Health

<https://news.llu.edu/patient-care/parent-involvement-key-child-suicide-prevention>

Waterford

<https://www.waterford.org/education/how-parent-involvement-leads-to-student-success/>