

**BOARD OF EDUCATION OF HARFORD COUNTY**  
**INFORMATIONAL REPORT**  
**ANNUAL REPORT OF THE CITIZEN ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON**  
**FAMILY LIFE EDUCATION**  
**OCTOBER 27, 2014**

Background Information:

The Harford County Citizen Advisory Committee on Family Life Education was established by the General Curriculum Committee following the adoption of the 1967 bylaw, (COMAR 13A.04.01), pertaining to family life and human development. This committee, working jointly with the Family Life Education Curriculum Committee, was charged with the responsibility to oversee the implementation of the bylaw including the development of curriculum and selection of instructional materials appropriate to the ages, needs and interests of the students in accordance with the bylaw regulations and requirements. As HIV/AIDS education, teenage pregnancy, and other similar issues were incorporated into the comprehensive health education bylaw, the scope of the responsibilities of the existing committees was expanded to include the additional programs and the materials to be used (Attachment A). The Advisory Committee has been an integral part of every decision made to strengthen family life education for over four decades. The Advisory Committee has:

- Worked collaboratively with the Health Department, Upper Chesapeake Health System, other health agencies and the school community to establish partnerships that promote education on family life and human development and HIV/AIDS prevention;
- Been involved in the planning, implementation, and evaluation of programs on family life and human development and HIV/AIDS prevention;
- Developed guidelines for presenters on family life and HIV/AIDS prevention;
- Reviewed textbooks, pamphlets, videos/DVDs, models, presentations, computer programs, web sites, and other resource materials for appropriateness; and,
- Endorsed the revised Middle School Family Life and Human Development Unit to include content related to abstinence, sexually transmitted infections, contraception and teenage pregnancy.

Discussion:

The Committee notes the following accomplishments from September 2013 to June 2014:

**1. Approval of instructional resources related to Family Life and Human Sexuality content, Grades K-12.**

The committee reviewed an updated HIV Disease Timeline, two DVDs, one PowerPoint presentation, one birth control options chart, and one contraceptive sample kit. Three of these items were approved for classroom use.

**2. Evaluation of the Family Life and Human Development Program.**

Committee members worked on addressing the Board of Education's FY 2014 charge to "evaluate the Family Life and Human Development Education program in Grades K-12 in terms

of compliance with the new COMAR for Comprehensive Health Education and investigate possible delivery models for realigned family life education content in grades four and five.” Ramifications for staffing, professional development and curriculum development were identified if current content would be moved to another grade level or to a different time period during the fifth grade school year. Currently, elementary students receive instruction on family life and human development content at the end of grade five. With the age of puberty steadily decreasing, the timing of this instruction no longer meets the needs of many in the student population. The recommendation of the committee is to implement a two-year plan to gradually move the delivery of the Grade 5 Family Life and Human Development Unit from the end of the school year to earlier in the school year. For the 2014-15 school year, teachers will be instructed to teach the unit as soon as possible after the teacher training session in February. For the 2015-16 school year, teachers will be trained in the fall and will be instructed to teach the unit sometime after parent conferences in November but before the second week in March.

### Committee Recommendations:

Members of the Citizen Advisory Committee recommend three actions to the Board to strengthen Family Life Education programs in Harford County and support the Harford County Strategic Plan. The Committee strongly requests the Board:

1. Support the development and implementation of a comprehensive health education curriculum for elementary and middle schools which aligns with the Maryland State Curriculum for Health Education. This curriculum includes units on Family Life and Human Development which address two Maryland Health Education Standards related to family life and human sexuality and disease prevention and control. The implementation of this curriculum would require the development of a sequential elementary school program in multiple grade levels and the hiring of certified health educators in all middle schools to ensure every child receives comprehensive health education each year as required in the Code of Maryland Regulations (COMAR) for a Program in Comprehensive Health.

*Current status: At the elementary school level, work was completed during the summer of 2014 on the family life and human development unit for Grade 5 as part of the Elementary Comprehensive Health Curriculum. This unit will be submitted to the Citizen Advisory Committee on Family Life Education and the General Curriculum Committee for approval during the 2014-15 school year. At the middle school level, work was completed on the family life and human development units for Grades 6, 7 and 8 as part of the Middle School Comprehensive Health Curriculum. These units will be submitted to the Citizen Advisory Committee on Family Life Education and the General Curriculum Committee for approval during the 2014-15 school year. Eight of nine middle schools have certified health educators delivering instruction on Family Life and Human Development content to all students in Grade 7 and five of nine middle schools have certified health educators delivering instruction on Family Life and Human Development content to all students in Grade 8 as part of a comprehensive health curriculum. Due to staffing and budgetary constraints, not all middle schools can follow this delivery model at this time.*

### **Board of Education Strategic Plan Objectives:**

- 3.1 Increase student achievement by providing all Harford County Public Schools’ staff with the skills and content knowledge necessary.
  - 3.4 Fill all staff vacancies in accordance with urgency and system needs.
  - 4.2 Promote programs that support student wellness.
2. Reinstatement of an administrative staff position with part of the responsibility to provide the instructional and administrative leadership for the comprehensive health education program K-12, including Family Life and Human Development content. Counties are held accountable to implement the State Curriculum for Health Education, including units on drug education,

personal body safety, fitness, nutrition, human growth and development, family life education and HIV/AIDS education. This requires the development of curriculum and assessments, professional development for all health teachers and teachers of Family Life and Human Development units, and oversight of the Family Life Citizen Advisory Committee and the Family Life Curriculum Committee.

*Current status: The Supervisor of Career Programs and Art and Supervisor of Elementary and Middle School Physical Education and Health share these responsibilities.*

**Board of Education Strategic Plan Objectives:**

- 3.1 Increase student achievement by providing all Harford County Public Schools' staff with the skills and content knowledge necessary.
  - 3.3 Provide all staff with professional development, resources, and services.
  - 3.4 Fill all staff vacancies in accordance with urgency and system needs.
  - 4.2 Promote programs that support student wellness.
3. Provide funding for purchasing instructional materials related to Family Life and Human Development and for compensating guest speakers who provide classroom, school or countywide presentations. Several outside agencies provide Family Life Committee approved presentations on a variety of Family Life and Human Development topics. The content of these presentations is current and timely and can be utilized during teacher training sessions or in the classroom.

*Current status: No funds have been designated for the Family Life and Human Development program.*

**Board of Education Strategic Plan Objectives:**

- 2.2 Provide ongoing opportunities and structures for two-way communication between the school system and the community.
- 3.1 Increase student achievement by providing all Harford County Public Schools' staff with the skills and content knowledge necessary.
- 3.3 Provide all staff with professional development, resources, and services.
- 4.2 Promote programs that support student wellness.

The Citizen Advisory Committee on Family Life Education recommends that the members of the Board of Education consider these recommendations as part of the Fiscal Year 2015-16 Operating Budget deliberations. The Committee proposes the following charge for the 2014-15 school year: evaluate the Family Life and Human Development Education program in Grades Pre-K-12 in terms of compliance with the State Standards for Comprehensive Health Education and evaluate curriculum design models for Grades 5-9.

## **Family Life and Human Development Education in Harford County Public Schools**

Harford County Public Schools has developed a comprehensive health education curriculum for elementary and secondary schools which includes the content standards identified in the Code of Maryland Regulations for a Program in Comprehensive Health (COMAR 13A.04.18) and is aligned with the Maryland State Curriculum for Health Education. This curriculum includes units on Family Life and Human Development which addresses two Maryland Health Education Standards:

**Family Life and Human Sexuality:** Students will demonstrate the ability to use human development knowledge, social skills, and health enhancing strategies to promote positive relationships and healthy growth and development throughout the life cycle.

**Disease Prevention and Control:** Students will demonstrate the ability to apply prevention and treatment knowledge, skills, and strategies to reduce susceptibility and manage disease.

### **Grade 5**

The fifth grade Family Life and Human Development Unit, aligned with the State Curriculum for Health Education, is approximately three weeks long and is taught during science time. The content includes: family relationships and responsibilities, interpersonal relationships and responsible behavior, growth patterns, the male and female reproduction systems, and pre and post-natal development. Teachers use classroom materials approved by the county Family Life Committee and often team teach with school nurses. All teachers of this unit must attend a training session. Parents may request that their children not participate in this unit (opt-out); the students are provided with appropriate alternative assignments. HIV/AIDS content is taught in the Elements of Life Unit. Basic information, including the definition, description, and way HIV/AIDS is and is not spread, is covered during instruction on the circulatory system.

### **Grades 7 and 8**

The seventh grade Family Life and Human Development Unit, aligned with the State Curriculum for Health Education, is approximately three weeks long and is taught within the health curriculum or science time. The content includes: family forms and functions; the maturation process; human reproduction systems, conception to birth; definition and advantages of abstinence; and consequences of not remaining abstinent, including sexually transmitted infections (STIs), HIV/AIDS, and teen pregnancy. STIs and HIV/AIDS content includes: types, causes, modes of transmission (including oral, anal and vaginal intercourse), symptoms, treatment and prevention. Content on teen pregnancy emphasizes the social, emotional and economic impacts on the mother, father and baby. In schools that have eighth grade health classes, students also receive instruction during the Family Life and Human Development Unit on the consequences of teen pregnancy, the birth process, fetal development and contraception methods. Teachers use classroom materials approved by the county Family Life Committee. All teachers of these units must attend a training session. Parents may request that their children not participate in these units (opt-out); the students are provided with appropriate alternative assignments.

### **Grade 9 Health**

Family Life and Human Development content is taught in ninth grade in the mandatory Health Education Curriculum. This semester course includes units on: wellness; mental health and stress management; nutrition and fitness; alcohol, tobacco and other drugs; disease prevention; family life and human sexuality, and safety and injury prevention. Content on family life and human sexuality includes: dynamics of relationships; sexual decision making; personal body safety; anatomy and physiology; fertilization, fetal development and the birth process; abstinence; consequences of sexual activity (teen pregnancy and STIs); HIV/AIDS; and contraception methods. Teachers use classroom materials approved by the county Family Life Committee. All teachers of this course must attend a training session. Parents may request that their children not participate in this unit (opt-out); the students are provided with appropriate alternative assignments.

### **Grades 10-12 Electives**

Harford County Public Schools offers students a variety of high school elective courses that contain Family Life and Human Development content. The content standards identified in the Maryland State Curriculum for Health Education, Family and Consumer Sciences, or Science are utilized as the basis for curriculum development. Teachers of these high school elective courses use classroom materials approved by the county Family Life Committee. All teachers of these courses must attend a training session. Parents must provide written permission (opt in) for students to enroll in these courses.

**Independent and Family Living**

This Family and Consumer Sciences course includes content on: interpersonal relationships, family composition and function, abstinence, consequences of sexual activity (teen pregnancy, STIs and HIV/AIDS), mate selection; marital decisions (sexual communication and contraception methods), and other lifestyle choices.

**Learning about Children**

This Family and Consumer Sciences course includes content on: parenting, contraceptive methods, pregnancy, childbirth, pre and post-natal development, the effect of HIV/AIDS and STIs on child development, and human growth and development through age eight.

**Human Growth and Development through Adolescence**

This Teacher Academy of Maryland course within the Family and Consumer Sciences Department includes content on human growth and development through age eighteen, human reproduction, and the birth process.

**Advanced Health**

This elective Health Education course includes content on types and characteristics of relationships, dysfunctional relationships, the reproductive system, stages of pregnancy, abstinence, health risks during adolescence including pregnancy, sexually transmitted infections, and contraceptive methods.

**Public Health**

This elective Health Education course includes content on the organizations and programs that provide maternal care services including pregnancy prevention, prenatal and postnatal care, and related epidemiology.

**Anatomy and Physiology**

This elective Science course includes content on the anatomy of the male and female reproductive systems, female reproductive functions and cycles, pregnancy and embryonic development, and developmental aspects of the reproductive system.