

BOARD OF EDUCATION OF HARFORD COUNTY
INFORMATIONAL REPORT
ANNUAL REPORT OF THE CITIZEN ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON
FAMILY LIFE EDUCATION
NOVEMBER 7, 2016

Background Information:

The Harford County Citizen Advisory Committee on Family Life Education (herein referred to as “the Committee”) 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 Committee has been an integral part of every decision made to strengthen family life education for over four decades. The 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 sexuality 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 realignment of Family Life and Human Development content in elementary, middle, and high school curricula to align with the Maryland State Curriculum for Health Education.

Discussion:

Over the past school year, the Committee notes the following accomplishments, recommendations, and proposed charge for the 2016-17 school year.

Accomplishments

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

The Committee reviewed two DVDs, heard a presentation from Ms. Laurie Namey, Supervisor of Equity and Cultural Proficiency, and provided conceptual feedback for curriculum development of inclusive instructional materials. All 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 2016 charge to "evaluate the Family Life and Human Development Education program in Grades K-12 in terms of compliance with the new Code of Maryland Regulations (COMAR) for Comprehensive Health Education and evaluate curriculum models for Grades 5-9." They reviewed and approved curriculum for Family Life and Human Development Units in Grades 5-9 for implementation during the 2015-16 school year. Teachers received professional development on the new units of study. Based on the recommendations of the Committee, elementary teachers new to teaching this unit will be trained in October 2016 and will be instructed to teach the unit sometime between the elementary training session on November 5, 2016, but before April 1, 2017 to avoid conflicts with state testing.

Recommendations

Members of the Committee recommend three actions to the Board of Education to strengthen Family Life Education programs in Harford County. The Committee strongly requests the Board:

1. Support the 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 hiring of certified health educators in all middle schools to ensure every child receives comprehensive health education each year as required in the COMAR for a Program in Comprehensive Health.

Progress to date: At the elementary school level, the unit on family life and human development for Grade 5 as part of the Elementary Comprehensive Health Curriculum was completed and approved by the Citizen Advisory Committee on Family Life Education and the General Curriculum Committee. Teachers received training on this new unit at the school and county levels. At the middle school level, the units on family life and human development for Grades 6, 7 and 8 as part of the Middle School Comprehensive Health Curriculum were completed and approved by the Citizen Advisory Committee on Family Life Education and the General Curriculum Committee. Nine of nine middle schools have certified health educators delivering instruction on Family Life and Human Development content to all students in Grade 7 and seven of nine middle schools have certified health educators delivering instruction on Family Life and Human Development content to all students in Grade 6 and 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.

2. Reinstate 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.

Progress to date: The Supervisor of Elementary and Middle School Physical Education and Health has this responsibility.

3. Provide funding for purchasing instructional materials and approve programs related to Family Life and Human Development. The content of these presentations is current and timely and can

be utilized during teacher training sessions or in the classroom.

Progress to date: No funds have been designated for the Family Life and Human Development program; however, operating funds from other departments are utilized to support purchase of materials for schools.

4. Create an elementary health education committee with one representative from each elementary school. This committee would receive professional development on health education and be expected to provide this professional development to the teachers in their school who provide health education instruction.

Progress to date: There is minimal professional development for health education with elementary school teachers.

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 2017-18 Operating Budget deliberations

Proposed Charge for 2016-17 School Year

The Committee requests to pursue the following charge for the 2016-17 school year.

1. 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 revise curriculum and instructional materials to be inclusive of all individuals and meet the needs of every child.

The Committee would like to thank the Harford County Board of Education for allowing the Committee the opportunity to present our views. These views are from professionals, parents, and students in many of our public schools throughout Harford County. We would like to thank Superintendent Mrs. Barbara Canavan, Mrs. Ginny Popiolek, and all of the current Committee members. We look forward to serving the Board of Education and the citizens of Harford County by providing the citizens' perspective and advice related to Family Life Education in Harford County Public Schools.

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 is approximately two weeks long and is taught as a part of the health education curriculum. The content includes: family relationships and responsibilities, interpersonal relationships and responsible behavior, the male and female reproduction systems, puberty and hygiene. HIV/AIDS content includes: definitions, descriptions, and ways HIV/AIDS is and is not spread. 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.

Grades 6-8

In schools that have sixth grade health classes, students receive instruction during the Family Life and Human Development Unit on how the body changes during puberty to be prepared for reproduction and the process of human reproduction. The seventh grade Family Life and Human Development Unit is approximately three weeks long and is taught within the health curriculum. 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.