

What are School Districts Required to Teach?

School districts are required to teach about dangerous communicable diseases, including, but not limited to, HIV/AIDS. Instruction regarding dangerous communicable diseases must be offered at least once a year at every building level (elementary, middle/junior, senior high).

Why a Human Sexuality Advisory Committee?

School districts may choose to teach sex education. If they do, they must do so in accordance with those sections of the Michigan Compiled Laws related to sex education and reproductive health. In 1992, the Pennfield Board of Education chose to establish and implement a K-12 sex education program. By doing so the Board of Education was required by law to establish a sex education advisory committee.

Who Serves on the Advisory Committee?

The advisory committee includes: parents of children attending the district's schools, pupils in the district's schools, educators, local clergy, and community health professionals. At least half of the members should be parents who have a child attending a school operated by the school district.

Additionally, from the membership of the advisory committee two co-chairs are appointed to chair the Human Sexuality Advisory Committee. Currently, one is a parent of a child attending school in the district and the other is a school employee.

What are the Roles of the Advisory Committee Members?

In general, advisory board members are expected to:

- Regularly attend advisory board meetings and prepare for being an effective member at the meetings as needed.
- Seek accurate and current information regarding content and instructional strategies that will help them make informed decisions as board members and practical recommendations to the board of education based on best practice.
- Be advocates and spokespersons for the board decisions and the adopted program.
- Share ideas and concerns and work cooperatively in a way that maintains the board as a partnership of people who are willing to work toward healthy sexual development of youth and reducing sexual risk behaviors.
- Support the public hearing process for proposed program revisions.
- Contribute to an evaluation plan and report regarding attainment of program goals and objectives.

- Respect the decisions of the board of education regarding their recommendations.

What are the Responsibilities of the Advisory Committee?

The advisory committee is responsible for:

- Establishing program goals and objectives for pupil knowledge and skills that are likely to reduce the rates of sex, pregnancy, and STDs.
- Reviewing and recommending materials and methods to the board, taking into consideration the district's needs, demographics, and trends including, but not limited to, teenage pregnancy rates, STD rates, and incidents of sexual violence and harassment.
- Evaluating, measuring, and reporting the attainment of program goals and objectives and making the resulting report available to parents in the district at least once every two years.

Is There an Emphasis on Abstinence?

Instruction in HIV/AIDS and sex education must **stress that abstinence** from sex is a responsible and effective method of preventing unplanned or out-of-wedlock pregnancy, and that it is the only protection that is 100% effective against unplanned pregnancy, sexually transmitted disease, and sexually transmitted HIV infection and AIDS. (§380.1169, §380.1507, §380.1507b)

Instruction in HIV/AIDS must include the principal modes by which dangerous communicable diseases are spread and the **best methods for the restriction and prevention** of these diseases. (§380.1169)

Human sexuality materials discussing sex must be **age-appropriate, medically inaccurate**, and do the following:

- Discuss the **benefits of abstaining** from sex until marriage and the benefits of ceasing sex if a pupil is sexually active.
- Include a discussion of the possible emotional, economic, and legal **consequences** of sex.
- Stress that unplanned pregnancy and sexually transmitted diseases are **serious possibilities of sexual intercourse** that are not fully preventable except by abstinence.
- Advise pupils of the **laws pertaining to their responsibility as parents** to children born in and out of wedlock.
- **Teach pupils how to say "no"** to sexual advances and that is wrong to take advantage of, harass, or exploit another person sexually.
- Teach **refusal skills** and encourage pupils to resist pressure to engage in risky behavior.

- Teach that the pupil has the **power to control personal behavior**, and teach pupils to base their actions on reasoning, self-discipline, a sense of responsibility, self-control, and ethical considerations, such as respect for self and others.
- Provide instruction on **healthy dating relationships** and on how to set limits and recognize a dangerous environment.
- Provide information for pupils about how young parents can learn more about **adoption services** and about the provisions of the Safe Delivery of Newborns Law.
- Include information clearly informing pupils that **having sex or sexual contact with an individual under the age of 16 is a crime** punishable by imprisonment and that one of the other results of being convicted of this crime is to be listed on the sex offender registry on the internet for up to 25 years. (§380.1507b)

What are Parental Rights and Exclusion From Instruction?

For HIV/AIDS and sex education instruction, parents and/or legal guardians are annually notified of:

- The **content** of the instruction.
- Their **right** to review materials in advance.
- Their **right** to observe instruction.
- Their **right** to excuse their child without penalty. (§380.1507, §388.1766)

For sex education only, if a parent or legal guardian files a **continuing written notice** (i.e., a request to have their child permanently excluded from sex education classes), the student shall not be enrolled in the class(es) unless the parent or legal guardian submits a written authorization for that enrollment. (§380.1507a)

Is There a Parent Resource Library?

The Human Sexuality Advisory Committee has developed for Pennfield parents a library, which contains pamphlets, books and videos that are designed to provide current information regarding issues dealing with human sexuality. The purpose of this library is to make available to parents materials that may help anywhere from how to talk with your child about their sexuality to what to expect at different levels of maturation of the child. The library is located in the Pennfield High School Media Center. Any parent may go to the library and check out any of the materials that are available. These materials have come highly recommended to our district and are a great resource for parents.