

## Oregon Human Sexuality Education

Oregon State Rules require all public school districts to provide age-appropriate human sexuality education in elementary and secondary schools as an integral part of the health education curriculum, as “a normal and healthy aspect of human development”.

Besides helping students in understanding their own developing bodies and encouraging them to seek out safe adults to talk as needed, the over-all worth of this program has radically reduced the teen pregnancy rate in the state.

In 2018, The Daily Astorian reported that: “In Oregon, the teen birth rate was 17.2% in urban counties in 2015, compared to 32.2% in 2007, a 46.6% fall. In rural counties, the rate was 29.3% in 2015, compared to 42.8% in 2007, a 31.5% drop.” “The pattern was evident in Clatsop County, where the Oregon Health Authority put the teen birth rate at 30% in 2015, higher than the statewide rate — 25.1% — and the rates of metropolitan counties such as Multnomah — 27.7% — Washington — 19.5% — and Clackamas — 15.6%. Researchers have tied the steep decline nationally to more effective use of contraceptives and higher-quality sex education.

Our attention has recently been drawn to a controversy at meetings of the Board of the Knappa School District in Clatsop County, where a portion of parents have protested the use of the curriculum. Parental involvement is an important and integral part of school life, but bullying and harassing behavior by parents and parent groups who disagree with school curriculum should not be acceptable. Schools provide parents the means to voice their concerns and effect change through various school board activities, and to opt out of this program for their children if that is their desire. But they should not make that decision for all of our children and teens.

## **RESOLUTION REGARDING OREGON SEXUAL EDUCATION IN OUR SCHOOLS**

**Whereas,** Science is not a “progressive’s or liberal plot” as stated by opponents, it is a product of human intelligence and educated experience which we need to use in teaching and in dealing with human problems; and,

**Whereas,** Those who create fear through making human knowledge into an “enemy” or calling information “toxic” keeps us from creating positive change in our health system or in educating our children to stay safe from predation or bullying; and,

**Whereas,** Groups and individuals who are motivated by these untruthful belief systems are present in our county and are actively organizing to force school districts to reject Oregon educational curriculum related to children’s personal safety, human sexual education and human rights; and,

**Whereas,** Such activity in past years have prevented the establishment of a school health clinic, rejecting federal funding and keeping school children from having accessible and safe health care, and that this is regrettable to our community; and,

**Whereas,** Parents do have a right to educate their own children and the right to “opt out” of organized sex education. This right should be clearly and frequently stated by school district personnel; and,

**Whereas,** Women should have a right to the control of their own bodies and the use of methods to limit unwanted pregnancies, and that young women need the ability to find this information in a safe and supportive environment; and,

**Whereas,** Children, middle school student and high school students benefit by having age- appropriate information about their bodies and sexuality; and,

Young children need to know to talk with a safe person if touching feels uncomfortable, and should be protected from predators.

Older children need information in dealing with changes in their bodies and a safe environment for discussion.

High school young people need alternatives and sound counsel as they become adults., and should not become teen age parents out of ignorance.

Since this information is not always provided in the home, school personnel are best positioned to impart knowledge in a safe environment.

That each individual can best determine who she/he/they are in a supportive environment which allows diversity and individuality without judgment, exclusion or bullying.

**Whereas,** Normal human diversity includes people who have been historically marginalized and face hateful discrimination simply because of who they are or who they love; and,

All people are valid and public school students have the right to express their identity while invisibility and discrimination too frequently lead to further harm and even suicide.

Knowledge offers students the best options for making informed choices that will impact their future.

Our counties schools are part of the Oregon State Public School system and subject to State laws preventing discrimination based on gender identity, gender presentation and sexual orientation.

Students in our schools have the right to form a social club of their own if other clubs are operating and they have a faculty member supporting them

That it is important for the entire community to be able to discuss these issues in a non-confrontational and transparent manner. This will build on our shared community and ability to deal with other issues as they arise.

**Whereas,** We encourage local school districts to:

Have open and transparent discussions about the Oregon Human Sexuality Education materials and their use in Clatsop County classrooms.

Make clear that parents can opt out of this curriculum for their children.

Resist well-funded and organized pressure coming from outside our area and creating fear and hostility between parent groups and threatening board members.

Offer this program in our schools as a useful and necessary part of growth and self-empowerment.

**Therefore, Be it resolved that the Clatsop County Democratic Central Committee supports the use in our schools of the State of Oregon's Science based Curriculum and recognizes the merits of using current information and ideas to move our society forward.**