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September 05, 2008

Abstinence-only sex ed suspended while under review

By LINDA TRIMBLE
 Education writer

DAYTONA BEACH -- The abstinence-only sex education program used for years in Volusia County public schools has been suspended until an advisory committee takes a look at whether it should be continued or a broader-based curriculum should be adopted.

The 36-member School Health Advisory Committee was assigned an ambitious timeline Thursday as it met for the first time on the issue. It is expected to make a recommendation to Superintendent Margaret Smith by January, with the School Board to decide a month later how to proceed.

Smith asked for the committee's review after an Ormond Beach mother, Lynn Koller, complained to the School Board this summer about the abstinence-only Pure Energy program used in Volusia schools since 2000.

She complained the program, developed by the Central Florida Pregnancy Center in Deltona, fails to provide information about birth-control methods other than abstinence, discriminates against gay and lesbian students and hasn't been evaluated for its effectiveness.

Both Koller and Jessica Errico, who helped develop Pure Energy, are serving on the committee reviewing the sex education curriculum. Errico has defended the abstinence-only program as an effective deterrent to sexual activity outside of marriage that poses physical and emotional risks and could derail a teen's future goals.

Florida law requires the school district to "teach abstinence from sexual activity outside of marriage as the expected standard for all school-age students while teaching the benefits of monogamous heterosexual marriage."

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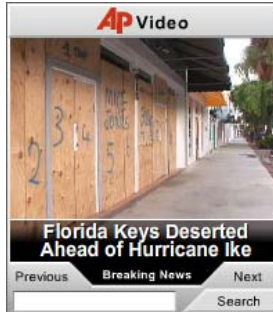
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#1 FC - Here - 9/5/2008 6:11:00 AM

Why is this being taught? All the statistics show that abstinence only programs do not work. Look at that loon Sarah Palin. All she supported in Alaska was abstinence only, and her under age daughter got pregnant. Kids are gonna have sex regardless of what their parents or school programs say. They ought to be taught to use some type of protection.

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#2 CITIZENX - OB - 9/5/2008 7:19:00 AM

HOW MUCH WOULD IT SAVE THE BUDGET TO CUT THE PROGRAM ALL TOGETHER? I DON'T WANT THESE RELIGIOUS FREAKS PUSHING THEIR VERSION OF MORALITY ON MY KIDS AND I DON'T WANT THE OPPOSITE BUNCH OF FREAKS TEACHING MY KIDS HOW TO HAVE GAY SEX EITHER. HOW ABOUT SCHOOLS JUST TEACH THE BASIC ANATOMY AND PHYSIOLOGY OF REPRODUCTION IN SCIENCE CLASS WITH AN EMPHASIS ON HEALTH CONCERNS. SCHOOL PROGRAMS SHOULD NOT ADDRESS ISSUES OF MORALITY OR CHOICE OF PARTNER.

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#3 Cat - Florida - 9/5/2008 7:26:00 AM

ROFL!!! Koller wants to teach homosexual kids about birth control?? That is just TOO darned funny!!

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#4 cg - FL - 9/5/2008 8:54:00 AM

How about the parents step up and do their job and teach their children about sex? It is not the schools responsible to be informing our children about sex, it's ours, THE PARENTS!

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#5 More Fan - Pitt Falls - 9/5/2008 10:15:00 AM

How about using reverse psychology on these kids? Tell them it's cool to be pregnant, go out and get pregnant today! They never listen to adults so maybe this would work better.

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#6 bystandr - standing by - 9/5/2008 11:52:00 AM

How many parents have actually sat down and explained the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth about sex to their children? Not many. I never got "the talk" from my parents. I never gave "the talk" to my kids. If some parents don't want their children to know about the variety of birth control available - including abstinence - then the sex ed class should post a schedule and the school can offer a study period for those children so they do not have to attend the class. My own opinion is that teenage pregnancy is way, way up and someone needs to teach these kids what's what.

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#7 More Fan - Pitt Falls - 9/5/2008 12:19:00 PM

Reply to #6 bystandr: I try to teach my kids but all they say is "GROSS!!"

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#8 Akira - NsB - 9/5/2008 1:01:00 PM

Reply to #7 More Fan: That's because they are picturing you doin it...

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#9 Il Duce - Daytona Beach - 9/5/2008 9:13:00 PM

Just puttin' this out there...wasn't sure if any of you knew: all caps means that you're yelling when you're on the internet. Just....you know.....fyi. Yeah. ;-)

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