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# Comprehensive Sex Education

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## Planned Parenthood's "Nevada Parent Activist Packet"

"Our school system needs to provide age appropriate information about human sexuality as early as second grade - kids have questions and we need to be able to have those conversations in the home and in their learning environment - public schools. Second graders are learning from their friends fear messages about their health. Our kids should be able to ask trusted teachers these questions, because not all parents can tackle this subject. We don't have enough health education teachers to go around."

-Concerned Nevada Parent

You might feel confident that your local school would never teach inaccurate, biased information in their sex education program. **Knowing that the law (NRS 389.065) requires sex education for disease prevention and responsible behavior, you might assume that all public schools comply with the law; however, this is not the case. Inaccurate abstinence-only education is being taught in many schools across Nevada, and one of them may be yours.** Many of these schools won't change their programs without active oversight from parents and the community.

In this "*Parent Activist Packet*" you'll find:

**1. Nevada Sex Education Basics:**

Information you need to understand the laws and Nevada rules about sex education programs in our schools.

**2. Comprehensive Sex Education Resources:**

Know your research! The research shows the effectiveness of giving our young adults accurate and complete information, and the ineffectiveness of abstinence-only programs.

**Actions Parents Can Take:**

1. As a concerned parent you can use our "**Planned Parenthood Sex Education Curriculum Review**" form to find out what is going on in your local school.

2. If your local school district isn't teaching comprehensive sexuality education, you can take action! Please fill out the "**Planned Parenthood Sex Education Report Card**" to let us know how your local school program measures up, and so that we can collaborate with you to bring comprehensive sex education to your local school.



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# 1. Nevada Sex Education Basics

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In 1987, Nevada adopted its sex education law on HIV/AIDS prevention in public schools. The law, known as the Nevada Revised Statute 389.065, sets out important standards for all sexuality education programs that reach Nevada's youth in our public schools.

## Information about NRS 389.065:

1. **Sex education is required in Nevada public schools.** HIV/AIDS prevention education is required once in middle school and once in high school.
2. **Schools have the option to provide an abstinence-only program.** Abstinence-only programs present abstinence as the only option for preventing pregnancy or the spread of sexually transmitted diseases, and may include misinformation about condoms, and use gender stereotypes or present religious beliefs as fact.
3. **The school is only required to meet these standards:** Factual instruction concerning acquired immune deficiency syndrome (AIDS). Factual instruction on the human reproductive system, and related communicable diseases and sexual responsibility.
4. Each of the 17 school districts (one per county) Board of Trustees must:
  - a. Appoint an advisory committee consisting of five parents and four representatives of the community in each of these professions: medicine or nursing, counseling, religion, pupils who attend schools in the district, or teaching. This committee is responsible for recommending the content of and the materials to be used in sexual health instruction.
  - b. Make the final decision on matters discussed by the committee.
5. The course may only be taught by a teacher or school nurse whose qualifications have been previously approved by the Board of Trustees.
6. The parent or guardian must receive a written notice that the course will be offered. Upon receipt of the written consent from the parent, the student may attend the course. If there is no written consent, the student must be excused from attendance without penalty.
7. All instructional materials must be available to the parent or guardian for inspection.



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## 2. Comprehensive Sex Education Resources

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There are many online resources with studies and information on the effectiveness of comprehensive sexuality education, the ineffectiveness of abstinence-only education, and other information about taking action to ensure that the sex education programs in your local school comply with the requirements of NRS 389.065.

### Web Site Resources:

<http://www.advocatesforyouth.org/>

<http://www.siecus.org/>

<http://www.ncsse.org/>

<http://www.gutmacher.org>

<http://www.plannedparenthood.org>

### Study showing ineffectiveness of abstinence-only programs:

<http://www.mathematica-mpr.com/publications/pdfs/impactabstinence.pdf>

### What is being taught in my area - to my kids? You have the power - just ask...

1. Do you teach sex education in your district?
2. Who determines the curriculum for sex education?
3. Do parents have an opportunity to view the curriculum prior to it being taught?
4. Can I get a copy of the curriculum? Can I review a copy of the unit test? How do I do that?
5. Do parents have to sign a permission slip? If so, is it opt-in or opt-out?

### Talking Points for Parents/Guardians:

- We are (I am) concerned about the comprehensiveness of the sexual health education taught to students in \_\_\_\_\_ district.
- NRS makes it clear that it is the responsibility of school districts to provide instruction.
- We would like to see the advisory committee and the Board of Trustees undertake a commitment to sex education that is medically accurate, comprehensive, objective, free of bias, appropriate for all students, and taught by teachers or experts in communicating with teens.
- \_\_\_\_\_ school uses \_\_\_\_\_ textbook to teach sex education. This textbook is not comprehensive, medically accurate or age appropriate.

You can contact the local Planned Parenthood public affairs director for support and additional resources:

**Northern Nevada, Planned Parenthood Mar Monte**

Email: [renopa@ppmarmonte.org](mailto:renopa@ppmarmonte.org),

or call (775) 688-5560 x277

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# Sex Education Curriculum Review

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Complete this checklist to review your school's sex education program!

## **1: Material that a comprehensive sex education program SHOULD include:**

- Instruction and materials are age-appropriate
- Teachers/Instructors are knowledgeable and have been trained in the appropriate courses
- All information presented is medically accurate and objective
- Instruction and materials encourage students to communicate with their parents or guardians about human sexuality
- Does not teach or promote religion
- Include skill-building activities for decision-making
- Does not reflect or promote bias against anyone on the basis of any protected category, which includes: sex, sexual orientation, gender, ethnic group identification, race, ancestry, national origin, religion, color, or mental or physical disability
- Instruction is available on an equal basis for students who are English learners
- Appropriate for use with students of all races, genders, sexual orientations, ethnic and cultural backgrounds
- Accessible to and appropriate for students with disabilities
- Teaches respect for marriage and committed relationships
- Teaches that abstinence from sexual intercourse is the only certain way to prevent unintended pregnancy and abstinence from sexual activity is the only certain way to prevent sexually transmitted diseases
- Provides information about the effectiveness and safety of all FDA-approved contraceptive methods, including emergency contraception
- Provides information about sexually transmitted diseases, including modes of transmission, all FDA-approved methods of prevention, and local resources for treatment and diagnosis
- Provides information on the law on surrendering custody of newborn infants
- Covers the nature of HIV/AIDS and its effect on the body
- Provides information on HIV transmission
- Discusses methods to prevent HIV transmission, must emphasize abstinence as the most effective means of prevention, must also include statistics based on the latest medical information citing the success and failure rates of condoms and other contraceptives in preventing sexually transmitted HIV infection, must also include information on methods to reduce the risk of HIV transmission from intravenous drug use.
- Discusses the public health issues associated with HIV/AIDS
- Provides information on local resources for HIV testing and medical care
- Discusses societal views of HIV/AIDS, including stereotypes and myths. Emphasizes compassion for people living with HIV/AIDS
- HIV instruction is provided at least once in middle school and high school
- Instructors receive periodic in-service trainings to learn new developments in the scientific understanding of HIV/AIDS



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# Sex Education Curriculum Review

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Complete this checklist to review your school's sex education program!

## **2: Material a comprehensive sex education program should NOT include:**

- Instruction and materials promote gender stereotypes  
Example: Program suggests that girls are more emotional than boys, or that boys have a harder time controlling their sexual desire and girls need to know when to say no. Instruction suggests that girls are inviting sexual assault by wearing "suggestive" clothing.
- Instruction and materials are biased on sexual orientation  
Example: Homosexuality is described as unnatural or wrong or in a negative light, and LGBT youth and adults are only mentioned in the context of HIV/AIDS.
- Instruction and materials include religious teaching or bias  
Example: Christians are portrayed as more virtuous than people of other faiths
- Instruction and materials are NOT objective  
Example: Program states that pre-marital sex will usually lead to heartache, and that abstinence leads to self-esteem. Suggests that condoms are very hard to use. Suggests that married couples are better parents than unmarried couples. Uses fear or shame as a way to dissuade students from sexual activity. Program gives extensive coverage of abstinence and barely mentions contraceptive options.
- Instruction and materials are NOT medically accurate  
Example: Program falsely asserts that condoms do not protect against STDs, particularly HPV or HIV. Program falsely asserts that abortion leads to future problems with fertility or psychological problems. Program asserts that an embryo or fetus is a person from the moment of conception. Program falsely states and exaggerates failure rates of condoms/contraception.
- Instruction and materials uses culturally inappropriate materials  
Example: Program assumes that all students have a white middle-class perspective. Illustrations depict only one racial/ethnic group.
- Program is taught by instructors with no special training  
Example: The instructor teaching the course has never been trained or is inadequately trained in the curriculum and/or has outdated information.
- Information on contraceptives is incomplete  
Example: The curriculum does not cover all FDA-approved methods (which include: the pill, male and female condoms, the ring, the patch, the shot, the implant, and emergency contraception)
- Information is represented unequally on materials and tests  
Example: All of the textbooks and testing materials only include abstinence, but the school claims that the contraceptive and STD information is "presented orally." The comprehensive information should be present on all materials, readings, and tests.



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# Sex Education Report Card

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## Contact Information

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Email Address: \_\_\_\_\_

School Name: \_\_\_\_\_

School Address: \_\_\_\_\_

School Phone Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Does the school teach a sex education program? YES NO

Were you able to review the sex education program materials? YES NO

Is a specific sex education program used? If so, please list program title: \_\_\_\_\_

Does an outside group teach the sex education curriculum? YES NO

If an outside group teaches the sex education curriculum at this school, does that group have any affiliations that would indicate that they may teach a biased program? \_\_\_\_\_

In your review of this school's sex education program, do you have concerns about the content of the curriculum? If so, please list your concerns:

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Have you ever attended a local school board meeting? YES NO

Would you be willing to bring up your concerns about the sex education curriculum at an upcoming school board meeting? YES NO

Would you be willing to apply to be on the advisory committee of your local school district? YES NO

Please fax or mail this form to:

**Northern Nevada:**

FAX: (775) 688-5599

MAIL: Attn: Public Affairs, 455 West Fifth Street, Reno, NV 89503