

# Gervais Human Sexuality Policy

## **Why didn't I know about a change in the Human Sexuality Policy?**

Our board has discussed this topic five times in the past 14 months. Two of the meetings included presentations by students from OHSU (Oregon Health Sciences University); one in May of 2013 and the other in November 2013.

Our **board meetings** are held on the **3<sup>rd</sup> Thursday of every month**. The board agendas are published on the district website and in the newspaper (Woodburn Independent), and are posted at the Post Office, City Hall, and in each school.

There were two agenda items relating to human sexuality and condoms in the May 14, 2014 board packet:

- Agenda item **8.1 Policy Second Reading: IGAI Human Sexuality Policy;**
- Agenda item **8.2 Availability of Condoms at the High School?**

As directed by the board at the meeting, the administration has been making preparations to contact all parents over the summer to implement the policy prior to the beginning of next year.

## **When can we get some answers regarding this policy?**

I will attempt to answer some of the more obvious questions regarding the change in the human sexuality policy. I will not be able to answer detailed questions however, because the board approved an overarching policy, not the details of its implementation. Those details will be worked out over the course of the next 4 months prior to implementation in the fall.

Fortunately, the media understood the importance of the issue and has provided the district with much needed support and exposure to the issue.

Although the topic won't be on next month's agenda, the board meetings include a public forum in which people may address a topic of concern.

### ***What is the name of the curriculum that was adopted?***

**iCuidate!** The program is recommended for urban Latino youth ages 13-18. Evaluation found that the program assisted participants to reduce frequency of sex, reduce the number of sex partners, reduce incidences of unprotected sex, and increase condom use.

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### ***Do the teachers teach abstinence in class?***

Yes. As prescribed by law, common sense, and the norms of our community, abstinence is always the preferred method of birth control and is taught in the curriculum.

With abstinence remaining the foundation of the curriculum, the Gervais School Board, (in some cases contrary to their individual beliefs) voted to accept a curriculum that endorsed/encouraged the issuance of condoms as a method of birth control.

### ***How are condoms going to be made available?***

Again, because the board approves policies, it's now the responsibility of the administration to create the procedures to support that policy. The procedures will be developed over the summer.

**All parents will know the details of the procedure before the plan is implemented.** Although several options for condom access were recommended (dispensers in restrooms, a bowl of condoms in the counselor's office), the board chose the most restrictive and most educationally sound manner of distribution. Students would be required to have a discussion with a designated and trained teacher, counselor, nurse or administrator before condoms are issued.

### ***Why the change in the Human Sexuality Policy?***

Over the past few decades, teen pregnancy in our community has remained somewhat constant, but higher than the board felt comfortable with. In April of 2013, middle school and high school parents received a letter requesting permission for the OHSU students to conduct a human sexuality survey. The results of that survey added to the concern. Based on the information obtained from the survey, and the presentation and recommendations made by the OHSU students, the board felt that the district's educational approach was not providing students with the information necessary to make an informed decision about human sexuality.

### ***Why include 6th grade students in the policy?***

There are two answers to this question:

First and foremost, **for the last 4 years the middle school and high school** have been closely aligned. They share the same principal, vice principal and some teachers and have an identical bell schedule. In fact, although not officially adopted, the two buildings have been referred to as Gervais 6-12 School, and essentially **been treated as one building**. As such, a curriculum adopted for any segment of the school could, by proximity, be applied to all grades within the purview of the building administration.

Additionally, every few years, a middle school student either becomes pregnant or is associated with a pregnancy. The board felt that the curriculum should reach the students of the middle school.