

Human Growth And Development
Frequently Asked Questions

Q: How long has Human Growth and Development been offered in the Omaha Public Schools?

A: The course has been offered for close to 30 years, beginning in the 1986-1987 school year.

Q: At what grade levels are Human Growth and Development offered?

A: At the elementary level, Human Growth and Development is offered in fourth, fifth and sixth grades with parent permission. Boys and girls are separated during the lessons. In middle school, it is offered for nine weeks in grades seven and eight, and at the high school level it is offered for one semester during the tenth grade.

Q: Does that mean that OPS will not start Human Growth and Development curriculum in kindergarten?

A: That is correct. There will be no HGD lessons until fourth grade.

Q: Does everyone have to take Human Growth and Development?

A: No, parents have the opportunity to “opt-in” their child for Human Growth and Development lessons in fourth, fifth and sixth grades. In seventh, eighth and tenth grades, parents may “opt-out” their child for all or any part of Human Growth and Development.

Q: Who decides what is to be taught and at what grade levels?

A: Decisions about what is to be taught..[Keep Text]...Approximately 150 parents, teachers and community members attended the April event. Teachers also added their input as standards were written. A second community forum was held in October 2015 to gather input from families and the community about possible standards and generalizations by grade level. Then, parents were able to attend four curriculum review nights between February 25 and March 2, 2016. The School Board will be voting on a selected curriculum in May 2016.

Q: Will Human Growth and Development content standards be posted and available for all parents to review?

A: Yes, the content standards have been approved by the Board of Education and are available online at www.district.ops.org.

Q: What is the process for approval of Growth and Development curriculum now that the standards are approved?

A:

- Parent review nights were hosted to gather parent input on the materials and products between February 25, 2016 and March 2, 2016.
- Field testing of the highest rated curriculum will take place between April 2 and 22, 2016.
- Submission of the recommended curriculum to the School Board as an information item will take place on May 2, 2016.
- The final approval vote by the School Board will occur on May 16, 2016.

Q: What does the majority of the Human Growth and Development content standards currently cover?

A: Much of the current curriculum teaches students to make wise decisions using a decision making process. To use healthy communication skills, learn about healthy relationships, prevent alcohol and chemical abuse, practice refusal skills and help prevent bullying. Abstinence is communicated and stressed throughout the standards. Reproductive anatomy, pregnancy, pregnancy prevention and sexually transmitted diseases have been taught in the past and are proposed for the new standards as well.

Q: What is potentially new in the updated Human Growth and Development content standards?

A: LGBTQ topics of discussion proposed in grades seven and eight will center on teaching individuals to be respectful of one another, even if ideas and beliefs are different from personal beliefs. At the high school level only, emergency contraception, as well as using the decision making process to review consequences of abortion will be discussed. Students will be encouraged to talk with parents about consequences and family beliefs.

Q: Will teachers be trained?

A: Teachers are regularly trained in the Human Growth curriculum content during professional development days. Any additional training deemed important will be conducted during the summer.

Q: Will there be resources and training available for parents/families that are interested?

A: Parents are encouraged to be the primary educators for their children's sexuality education. Based on feedback from the April 2015 community forum, parents requested resources and training to support conversations at home. A Family Communication "Let's Talk" toolkit, which provides extensive age appropriate sexuality information on how and when to talk to your kids, is available for download on www.GetTheSexFactsOmaha.com.

Q: How can I as a parent make sure my child is not indoctrinated with values that are different from what my family believes?

A: The Omaha Public Schools believe that parents should be the primary educators of their children in matters of sexuality education. The school will present information about different topics and encourage students to make use of optional discussion assignments to talk with their parents about family beliefs. Parents also have the opportunity to opt their children out of topics they are not comfortable with their child learning about or opt their student out of the whole course.

Q: Will students be encouraged to abstain from sexual behavior?

A: Absolutely; no one wants teens to be sexually active. We believe that by preparing students to set goals, use refusal skills and by looking at the consequences of their decisions, we are preparing them for the future. Abstinence will always be encouraged as the only 100% effective way to prevent pregnancy and STDs.

Q: Is OPS encouraging high risk sexual behaviors?

A: No, absolutely not. OPS will always encourage abstaining from all sexual activity, especially high risk behaviors.

Q: Does OPS support consensual sexual behavior between school age students?

A: No, absolutely not. Abstinence remains the best and safest decision for students to make.

Q: Will you be teaching students about homosexuality?

A: Topics of discussion will center on teaching individuals to be respectful of one another, even if ideas and beliefs are different from personal beliefs. The parent survey suggested that sexual orientation and gender identity topics begin in grades six, seven and eight.

Q: Will students receive contraceptives as a part of this Human Growth and Development class?

A: No, OPS does not permit the distribution of contraceptives in any school setting now or in the future.

Q: Will OPS take students to get abortions?

A: Absolutely not. These are personal decisions between a student and parents/caregivers. We always encourage students to talk with parents about any personal or sexual situations.

Q: Will the school district redefine what we call families?

A: A family will be defined by saying, “There are many different types of families and they serve many functions such as love and affection, education, economic support, protection, guidance and socialization.”

Q: How have parents/families been involved so far in the development of content standards?

A: They have been engaged in numerous ways. A parent survey was conducted by an outside consultant to gather input; a community forum was held in April 2015; numerous individual parent meetings and phone conversations have occurred; and an additional community forum was held on Tuesday, October 20, 2015. After standards were approved, parents were able to attend four curriculum review nights between February 25 and March 2, 2016.

Q: Will OPS be showing pornography?

A: Absolutely not.



7602 Pacific St. #300
Omaha, NE 68114
402-827-9280

A project of the Women's Fund of Omaha