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Newsletter Article: The Argument for Abstinence Education

At Smithville High School we are committed to educating the whole child. For many decades there have been discussions centered around teens and their sexual behavior. After reviewing countless amounts of research, it has been determined by our school board that we will teach students sex education based on the abstinence approach.

Parents are welcome to request a copy of the curriculum highlights by contacting our school counselor, Juanita Solace. If you have questions about the information your child will be learning in health class centered around sex education, please do not hesitate to reach out at any time.

For the purpose of today's newsletter, we will share research from Abstinence Education in Context: History, Evidence, Premises, and Comparison to Comprehensive Sexuality Education. This article was written by Dr. Thomas Lickona and Dr. Stan Weed, both of whom are well known psychologists in the area of character development.

Our school board decided on abstinence education as our platform because research has shown us that there have been longer lasting positive effects with this platform. "...evidence is emerging showing that well-designed abstinence education programs can be effective. Five peer-reviewed studies of abstinence curricula have found positive effects still present one to two years after the program." (Lee, 2014. p. 5)

There are many positives for teen age students delaying their sexual intercourse. When students delay, we see a decline in teen pregnancy. Teen pregnancy makes many tasks much more difficult for teenage mothers, including graduating from high school. “Compared with women who delay childbearing until their 20s, teen mothers are more likely to drop out of school and have low educational attainment; to face unemployment, poverty, and welfare dependency; to experience more rapid repeat pregnancy; to become single mothers; and to experience divorce, if they marry.” Teaching the abstinence model will help support teenage girls in many areas; often areas that we do not think about without reviewing research.

Next, teaching abstinence will also help decrease the number of teenagers who acquire a sexually transmitted infection. “While teen pregnancy—the most visible consequence of adolescent sexual activity—has been decreasing, STIs have been called a “hidden epidemic” (Centers for Disease Control (CDC), 2001; Fortenberry, 2002).” (Weed & Lickona. p. 5) Decreasing the amount of STI’s students are acquiring, has a positive effect on students, society, and future sexual partners.

While the first two positive outcomes to teaching abstinence education are physical, the final reason to support the program is for the psychological protection abstinence gives our teens. Research shows us that teens who are sexually active often struggle psychologically. “Sexual initiation has been associated with poorer emotional health for adolescents, including lower self-esteem, regret of sexual activity, depression, and suicide, as well as a higher likelihood of experiencing sexual exploitation (such as statutory rape), dating violence, and unwanted or forced intercourse/rape.” (Weed & Lickona. p. 6) Students during the teenage years often

struggle with some of these mental health difficulties. According to research, sexual intercourse can exacerbate these difficulties.

Overall we have chosen this platform because of the support given to the programs by research done by credible researchers. We feel this program will be most beneficial for our students. We are committed to your child's success both in and out of the classroom and appreciate your support in this endeavor.

References

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