

March 6, 2013

To Whom It May Concern:

I applaud the individuals who are supporting the grant program established in HB-1081 to ensure the State has a mechanism to prioritize bringing federal grant money to Colorado to help schools and districts who WANT to implement comprehensive sex education programs, but cannot because of lack of resources.

- Often, the reason schools or schools districts do not implement comprehensive human sexuality education in Colorado is not because of a lack of desire from parents, but because of a lack of money.
- 85% of Colorado parents want comprehensive human sexuality education taught in school to complement the education and values taught at home.
- Comprehensive human sexuality education is a public health issue which can be extremely beneficial in the life of the young adolescent in the 21st century.

As I recall, in the 1990s, the Denver Public School Board of Education supported a well developed school district sex ed curriculum that included well trained persons who were itinerant teachers who would visit schools to instruct grade 5 and 6 boys and girls in separate classrooms. 5th and 6th grade teachers were also provided with professional development in order to support the students who participated in the sessions. Parents signed parent permission slips so that students could participate in the program.

This successful sex education curriculum could easily be implemented as a model again and the former health department personnel could be located for expert professional advice and development.

For years, public school educators have been concerned about the teenage pregnancy and dropout statistics and the inevitable hardships not only on the teenage parents but also on the newborn child. The newborn child is always in need very unique and special care beginning at birth and lasting through age six.

Of the four stages for human growth and development, birth to age six are the most important for the foundation of life. The next most challenging and delicate time of the stages of human growth and development is during pre-adolescence and adolescence. If pre-adolescents, at least at grade six, in middle school, have the appropriate information and knowledge about their physical, mental, and emotional health and well-being, they will be able to more appropriately understand their opportunity to avoid teen age pregnancy and all of its lifelong responsibility. This is the most crucial time for the pre-adolescent to deal with sexual-identity issues and a well developed sex education curriculum can provide a much needed approach toward the maturity which will be needed during the adolescent years in high school.

Our youth depend on the kind of necessary support that will strengthen their physical, mental, and emotional well-being during one of the most important times of their human growth and development.

I commend the state legislators who are willing to support our youth with this very important public health priority. I also urge state legislators and others to take action on HB 1081.

Sincerely,

**Dr. Martha M. Urioste
Former Denver Public School Principal**