
DIGEST

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Smith

HB No. 369

Abstract: Requires rather than authorizes sex education in public schools.

Present law authorizes any public elementary or secondary school, including a charter school, to offer instruction in sex education in grades seven and above, provided such instruction and subject matter is integrated into an existing course of study. Provides that the content of such instruction is limited to scientific information and shall not include religious beliefs, practices in human sexuality, or subjective moral and ethical judgments. Provides that the major emphasis of any sex education instruction shall be to encourage sexual abstinence between unmarried persons.

Proposed law requires public school governing authorities, including those of charter schools, to provide instruction in sex education each year to students. Specifies that such instruction be medically accurate and developmentally and age appropriate and include the following:

- (1) Information about human sexuality as a normal and healthy aspect of human development.
- (2) Information stressing that abstinence is the most reliable way to prevent pregnancy and sexually transmitted diseases.
- (3) The health benefits, side effects, and proper use of contraceptives approved by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) to prevent unintended pregnancy and of FDA-approved barrier methods to prevent sexually transmitted infections.
- (4) Information which helps students develop skills necessary to form healthy, age appropriate relationships.
- (5) Lessons to help students develop skills in critical thinking, problem solving, decision making, and stress management.
- (6) Emphasis on encouraging students to communicate with parents about sexuality and intimate relations.

Present law provides that the qualifications for all teachers or instructors in sex education shall be established and the selection of all such teachers or instructors shall be made by the school board. Requires approval of materials to be used by the school board and a parental review

committee.

Proposed law requires public school governing authorities to make sex education materials available to parents. Requires the State Board of Elementary and Secondary Education (BESE) to prescribe guidelines and recommend curricula and teaching materials, to prescribe qualifications and training for instructors, and to adopt rules and regulations.

Present law excuses students from instruction upon parental request. Provides that no part of sex education instruction shall in any way advocate or support abortion and authorizes public school governing authorities to accept federal funds when their use does not violate proposed law. Proposed law retains present law.

(Amends R.S. 17:3996(B)(15); Adds R.S. 17:267; Repeals R.S. 17:281)