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# Human Sexuality as Public Policy in the Omaha Public Schools: A Case Study

Marlene Karen Wilken  
*University of Nebraska at Omaha*

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HUMAN SEXUALITY AS PUBLIC POLICY IN THE OMAHA PUBLIC SCHOOLS:

A CASE STUDY

A Thesis

Presented to the

Department of Political Science

and the

Faculty of the Graduate College

University of Nebraska

In Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree

Master of Arts

University of Nebraska at Omaha

by

Marlene Karen Wilken

August 1987

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THESIS ACCEPTANCE

Acceptance for the faculty of the Graduate College, University of Nebraska, in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts, University of Nebraska at Omaha.

Committee

<u>Baker T. Swanson</u>	<u>Public Admin. / Urban Studies</u>
Name	Department
<u>James D. Johnson</u>	<u>Political Science</u>
	<u>Bernard R. Kolasa</u>
	Chairman
	<u>September 4, 1987</u>
	Date

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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

#### The Study of Public Policy

Public policy in America affects a vast range of activities. Examples of public policy readily come to mind, and these policies can affect each person in hundreds of different ways. Public policy may be directly confronted, as in paying taxes, or may be largely forgotten, as in benefiting from the fire and police protection provided by the taxes. Regardless of the public policy, "The study of public policy is, in a specialized way, the study of politics in society."<sup>1</sup> Public policy is political in nature because it involves conflict and struggle among individuals and groups having conflicting desires.

Public policy is not a new concern of political science. Early political philosophers revealed an interest in the policies pursued by governments. This early political science, termed "traditional," described the institutions in which public policy was formulated and the philosophical justification for government. The approach involved the study of constitutional arrangements, powers and duties of official bodies, intergovernment relations, and the organization and operation of

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<sup>1</sup>Richard I. Hofferbert, The Study of Public Policy (Indianapolis, New York: The Bobbs-Merrill Company, Inc., 1974), p. 6.

government agencies.<sup>2</sup> With the traditional political science focus, the linkage between the institutional arrangements and the content of public policy were largely unexplored.<sup>3</sup>

Modern behavioral political science focused on describing the processes by which public policy was determined. This focus utilized the sociological and psychological sciences to help explain public policy. The "behavioral" approach included but was not limited to consideration of individual and group behavior, the functioning of interest groups, and the description of various processes and behaviors in the government arena.<sup>4</sup> "Although this approach described the processes by which public policy was determined, it did not deal directly with the linkage between various processes and behaviors and the content of public policy."<sup>5</sup>

In more recent years, political scientists have given the study of public policy increased attention and interest because of the methodological and conceptual progress that has been made in political science. With the development of more rigorous techniques for observing and measuring political action and the recognition of the scientific benefits of comparative inquiry, political scientists can apply scientific knowledge to solve practical problems related to public policy. In addition, political scientists can attempt to develop and test explanatory general-

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<sup>2</sup>Thomas R. Dye, Understanding Public Policy, 5th ed. (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1984), p. 3.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid.

izations about the political behavior of individuals, interest groups, and institutions.

Also, within the last decade, political scientists have shifted their focus related to public policy. This shift of focus involves several aspects, among them a description of the content of public policy, an analysis of the impact of social and political forces on the content of public policy, and inquiry into the effects of various institutional arrangements and political processes on public policy.<sup>6</sup>

#### Definition of Public Policy

According to Dye, "Books, essays, and discussions of a 'proper' definition of public policy have proven futile, even exasperating, and they often divert attention from the study of public policy itself." For Dye, definitions of public policy all seem to boil down to the same thing: "... whatever governments choose to do or not do."<sup>7</sup>

Political scientist James Anderson feels, however, that Dye's definition, although roughly accurate, "...does not adequately recognize that there may be a divergence between what governments decide to do and what they actually do."<sup>8</sup>

Other political scientists such as Harold Lasswell, Carl Friedrich, and Richard Rose embody the notion that public policy is a

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<sup>6</sup>Ibid.

<sup>7</sup>Ibid., p. 2.

<sup>8</sup>James E. Anderson, Public Policy-Making, 3rd ed. (New York: Holt, Reinhart and Winston, 1975), p. 2.



course or pattern of activity, not simply a decision to do or not do something, and that public policy is directed towards accomplishment of some purpose or goal.<sup>9</sup> In contrast, Dye suggests that insisting that government actions relative to public policy must have goals creates the problem that "We can never be sure whether or not a particular action has a goal, or if it does, what that goal is."<sup>10</sup> Anderson acknowledges that the purpose or goal of government action may not always be easy to discern, but he maintains that public policy analysis should designate "what is actually done rather than what is proposed."<sup>11</sup>

Realistically, the concept of public policy needs to include all actions of government. Political scientist Charles Jones breaks down this general notion into various component parts, which include decisions, programs, goals, and effects. Dye's concern with Jones's interpretation is that it assumes that the four components are linked. Dye argues that in public policy areas one sees "decisions of government having little to do with announced programs and neither are connected with national goals."<sup>12</sup>

#### Approaches to the Study of Public Policy

Despite the problems raised by trying to define public policy and the vast number of definitions, certain characteristics can be found

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<sup>9</sup>Ibid.

<sup>10</sup>Dye, Understanding Public Policy, p. 2.

<sup>11</sup>Anderson, Public Policy-Making, p. 3.

<sup>12</sup>Dye, Understanding Public Policy, p. 2.

repeatedly in the literature. These common characteristics include an authority source, a course of action, and a stated outcome. For purposes of this thesis, public policy will be defined as "a purposive course of action followed by a government body or officials in dealing with a problem or matter of public concern."<sup>13</sup> In considering this definition some assumptions must be made.

The first assumption is that public policies are those policies developed by government bodies or officials. Second, it is assumed that, in this definition, public policy is formulated by officials or government bodies which are considered "authorities." The term "authorities" comes from David Easton's definition in which he identifies authorities in the political system as

...persons who engage in the daily affairs of a political system, are 'recognized' by most members of the system as having responsibility for these matters and take actions that are 'accepted as binding' most of the time by most of the members so long as they act within the limits of their roles.<sup>14</sup>

The third assumption is that a purposive course of action is goal-oriented action rather than random behavior or accidental occurrences.

To date, no clear theory or methodology for the study of public policy has evolved. The bulk of policy-related research has followed either the institutional approach or case study approach. The case study approach will be used for this thesis.

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<sup>13</sup>Anderson, Public Policy-Making, p. 5.

<sup>14</sup>Ibid., p. 3.

In the social sciences, case studies enrich our understanding by "putting flesh on the skeletal generalizations about society."<sup>15</sup> This brings a sense of human dimension to the policy-making process.<sup>16</sup> Case studies provide an in-depth examination of a particular instance of something and they can tell a story. Case studies offer richness of detail and a lucidity that illuminates the dynamics of public policy process. One of the fruits of the contextual richness of the well-written case study is that it can provide an insightful appreciation of the psychological dimensions and symbolic implications of the policy-making activity. "No other mode of analysis conveys so well the consequentiality of symbols in the policy process."<sup>17</sup> In addition, the case study affords hypotheses that can be tested individually in many contexts.

The difficulty with case studies is in how one determines whether or not a particular case is representative of the policy process. This involves answering the following questions:

Where are the cutoff points; when does a continuous process constitute a decision; how do we know we have uncovered all those who might be behind the scenes; and how can we be sure that the persons and groups appearing to engage in policy relevant activity are having any consequential impact?<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>15</sup>Hofferbert, The Study of Public Policy, p. 89.

<sup>16</sup>Ibid., p. 94.

<sup>17</sup>Ibid., p. 138.

<sup>18</sup>Ibid., pp. 139-140.

In essence, "The case study gives us a snapshot, when a movie may be more appropriate."<sup>19</sup>

Despite weaknesses of the approach, case studies can be and have been used to teach us about the policy-making process. High quality case studies have been conducted on policy-making issues at all levels of government, with several examples serving as classics of systematic political science.<sup>20</sup>

The emphasis on the actions, hopes, and expectations of the individuals in the case study bring to light the human dimension in the policy-making process. Bailey summarizes the case study's creed: "The birth of a public policy is, after all, the result of the impact of seminal ideas on strategic persons and propitious times."<sup>21</sup>

#### What is a Policy Problem?

Events in daily life may cause problems. Natural disasters, inventions like the automobile, and the issue of desegregation touch millions of lives, while events such as moving to a new neighborhood normally have only limited consequences. The conditions for resolving the problems, however, depend on how the observers perceive the event. "Congruity in identifying and acting on needs is by no means guaranteed,

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<sup>19</sup>Ibid., p. 139.

<sup>20</sup>Ibid., p. 95.

<sup>21</sup>Ibid., p. 94.

and therefore many problems may result from the same event."<sup>22</sup> Those affected directly or indirectly may or may not identify specific needs created by the event. But those who do identify specific needs, will seek relief. The relief may be sought by a simple decision to do something, and have only a private effect. But sometimes the actions taken by persons to meet their needs and solve their problems will have consequences for others and be considered significant enough to be controlled. A policy may likely develop.

Policies are also a part of our life. Policies designate behaviors of some actor or set of actors and thus imply a course of action. Political scientist Carl Friedrich adds the requirement that

...policy is directed toward the accomplishment of some purpose or goal. Policy should also, however, ...designate what is actually done rather than what is proposed in the way of action on some matter.<sup>23</sup>

To better understand the term "policy problem," its two component terms need to be defined, "policy" and "problem." A policy is a course or pattern of activity, not simply a decision to do something. According to Jones, a policy is a "...standing-decision characterized by behavioral consistency and repetitiveness on the part of both those who make it and those who abide by it."<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>22</sup> Charles O. Jones, An Introduction to the Study of Public Policy, 3rd ed. (Monterey, CA: Brooks/Cole Publishing Co., 1984), p. 39.

<sup>23</sup> Anderson, Public Policy-Making, p. 3.

<sup>24</sup> Jones, An Introduction to the Study of Public Policy, p. 26.

In defining what a problem is, a simple definition that speaks of seeking relief from human needs could suffice. The definition, however, should be expanded to include the following assumptions. People are affected differently as a result of problems or needs, and there may not be unity with respect to the problems people actually have, the way in which they perceive the problem, or their interests or values. Furthermore, each of these elements may change over time. One person's problem may be another person's profit.<sup>25</sup> The shape of priorities in policy-making regarding the problem will depend upon whose definition of policy problem prevails.

#### What Makes it a Public Problem?

People take actions or propose actions to control their environments, to meet their needs, and to solve their problems. Sometimes those actions have consequences for others. "When these consequences are perceived by others and considered significant enough to be controlled, a public is born."<sup>26</sup> According to Dewey, a public is "...all those who are affected by the indirect consequences of transactions to such an extent it is deemed necessary to have those consequences systematically cared for."<sup>27</sup> The public is that which intervenes between the perceived problem and the governmental outcome. A public has the characteristics of being aroused, engaging in conjoint activity, growing conscious of

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<sup>25</sup>Ibid., p. 38.

<sup>26</sup>Ibid., p. 39.

<sup>27</sup>Ibid.

itself, organizing, and seeking to influence officials.<sup>28</sup> "Directly or indirectly, many people become involved or perceive themselves as being affected, and this then creates a public problem."<sup>29</sup>

For purposes of this study, a policy problem is a condition or situation that produces needs or dissatisfactions on the part of people for which relief or redress is sought through a political process.<sup>30</sup>

Policy problem identification is one step in a sequential pattern of action involving a number of functional categories that can be analytically distinguished in the public policy process. These categories include problem identification and agenda formation, formulation, adoption, implementation, and evaluation.

This case study will focus only on the first three categories of public policy process in relation to the human growth and development curriculum in the Omaha Public Schools. Four theses are proposed: (1) The problem identification stage in public policy development relative to human growth and development in the Omaha Public Schools was determined by a single elite. (2) The agenda formation stage in public policy development relative to human growth and development in the Omaha Public Schools was determined by a group process of competing elites. (3) The dynamics of group theory identify the relevant variables in the formulation stage of public policy relative to human growth and development

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<sup>28</sup>Ibid.

<sup>29</sup>Anderson, Public Policy-Making, p. 46.

<sup>30</sup>Ibid., p. 45.

in the Omaha Public Schools. (4) The adoption stage of public policy development relative to human growth and development in the Omaha Public Schools was determined by a group of competing elites.



## CHAPTER II

### PROBLEM FORMATION

#### Why and How Did Human Growth and Development Become a Public Problem?

One area that has generated public controversy in recent years has been the issue of education in human sexuality in the public schools.

Human sexuality is related to physical, social, and emotional aspects of human relationships. It is the latter two aspects, social and emotional responses to sexuality, that contribute to the controversy.)

In order to better appreciate this controversy, a look at the development of the topic in the public schools is necessary.

As early as Plato, political elites recognized the role that schools played in the maintenance of social values. (The earliest legal documents (1642) in the colonies established that one public education mission was a belief that schools "...make the moral person."<sup>31</sup> In 1647, the Massachusetts Bay Law required the establishment of schools to provide children with the "...ability to read the Scriptures and this will foil the old deluder Satan."<sup>32</sup>

When writing the Constitution of the United States, our founding fathers believed that the only ground on which to base resistance against

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X <sup>31</sup>R. Wilson and G. Schochet, Moral Development and Politics, ed. (New York: Prager Publishing Co., 1980), p. 260.

<sup>32</sup>Ibid.

imposed order was "Divine Providence."<sup>33</sup> The laws of nature and nature's God were basic cornerstones of our laws and jurisprudence. Absolute values of traditional theism represented the essential higher sacred truth upon which allegiances could be founded. Thus our first schools were religiously based.

In the nineteenth century in the United States, nationalistic education emerged to replace religious indoctrination in the schools. Nationalistic education became the most important form of moral education. Horace Mann stated that "The state shall have secured in all its children that basis of knowledge and morality which is indispensable to its security."<sup>34</sup>

As society became more notably complex and diverse in the late 1800's, the family and church had greater difficulty keeping abreast of the changes. During the late 1800's the progressive-era school programs included health, recreation, nutrition, vocational training, physical education, and more. (By 1900, temperance education had been mandated in the primary schools of all the states, to instruct young children in the dangers of alcohol. This type of mandated education provides a vivid example of what the concerns of the public can accomplish.)

The expansion of the roles and goals of American schools was based on two premises. First, the institutions of society, both private

<sup>33</sup>John Whitehead and John Conaln, "The Establishment of the Religion of Secular Humanism and Its First Amendment Implications," Texas Law Review 10 (1978), p. 1.

X <sup>34</sup>James Hottois and Neal Milner, The Sex Education Controversy (Lexington, MA: Lexington Books, 1975), p. 6.

and governmental, were duty bound to promote the best interest of society as a whole, regardless of the wishes of the individual.) Secondly, the unspoiled but malleable child was the most promising target for social engineering.<sup>35</sup>

A new consciousness was being conceived. There was an abundance of information regarding discoveries in science and medicine. The interpretations of Darwinian and Freudian theories alone served as premises for public argument and imparted a profound effect on science, education, and philosophy. "Sex-related problems began to be viewed as preventable."<sup>36</sup>

In 1908 Harvard Professor Palmer noted, "There is an increasing conscious dependency upon the school as the molder of character."<sup>37</sup> In 1912 the Journal of Education stated, "It is the modern theory again repeated, what the home neglects, the school must do."<sup>38</sup> In 1920 the United States Public Health Service justified sex education as the next logical step in the previously mentioned new progressive-era school programs. It failed. Silence surrounded sex education. Reformers had been actively trying to get sex hygiene in the schools to help curb venereal disease. The germ theory of 1876 had demonstrated that venereal

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<sup>35</sup> Michael Imber, "Toward a Theory of Educational Origins: The Genesis of Sex Education," Educational Theory 34 (1984), p. 279.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid., p. 276.

<sup>37</sup> Wilson and Schochet, Moral Development and Politics, p. 260.

<sup>38</sup> Imber, "Toward a Theory of Education," p. 278.

disease affected everybody, not just the lower class, yet as late as 1935 it was still not permissible to say the word "syphilis" on the radio.<sup>39</sup>

[Not until the mid-1960's did controversy about sex education arise. In 1966, the United States Office of Education took the position that

[each community and educational institution must determine the role it should play in the area of sex education; that only the community and its agencies and institutions can know what is desirable, what is possible, and what is wise for them in this realm.]<sup>40</sup>

#### Sex Education, Ethics, and Morality

Vietnam and Watergate have been cited as responsible for much of the current interest in moral education. These two events aroused considerable public interest and opened the government to questions regarding ethics and morality. A range of approaches for moral education have since evolved and with the evolution came conflict. It is this conflict of moral values that seems to be at the heart of the Human Growth and Development controversy.

The question of whether the schools should be institutions of social control seldom arouses political conflict. (What does raise political conflict among some of the public, is the issue of how much control is desirable and how successful the schools might be in relation to human sexuality.)<sup>41</sup>

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<sup>39</sup>Ibid., p. 282.

<sup>40</sup>Joe Hanna, "Family Life Education Program," 30 August 1966.

X <sup>41</sup>Hottois and Milner, The Sex Education Controversy, p. 6.

The American classroom, being a recognized agent of socialization, expresses the values, preoccupations, and fears found in our culture as a whole. Some believe that schools have no choice but to train the children to fit the culture. But the United States has demonstrated an

...ambivalence over whether to have solicitous concern for the maintenance of diverse moral views or whether to be more concerned with getting diverse subcultures to accept a more homogeneous morality.<sup>42</sup>

The term "ambivalence," however, does not reflect current Americans thinking regarding the issue of human sexuality in the public schools.

Most Americans do have an opinion on the subject. The majority, 77%, favor the teaching of physical, social, and emotional responses to human sexuality.<sup>43</sup> A poll in the Omaha World-Herald indicated that 82% of Nebraskans of voting age favored such teaching.<sup>44</sup> Of course, a minority of Americans hold the opposite opinion. People do know how they feel about the issue; most are not ambivalent.

\* [c] "Our failure to tell children what they want and need to know is one reason we have the highest rates of out-of-wedlock teen pregnancy and abortion of any highly developed country in the world."<sup>45</sup> Although lack

<sup>42</sup>Ibid.

<sup>43</sup>Olivia Nordberg, "Sex Education: Does It Belong in Public Schools, or Should It Be Left to Parents?" Parents Magazine (February 1987):30.

X <sup>44</sup>"82% in Poll Backed Sex Education in Schools," Omaha World-Herald, 19 March 1987, p. 1 (Midlands Section).

<sup>45</sup>Sol Gordon, "What Kids Need to Know," Psychology Today (October 1986), p. 22.

of relevant human sexuality education is only one cause of teenage pregnancy, there is ample evidence to show that such education is part of the solution to teenage pregnancy.) (It is estimated that fewer than 10 percent of American school children are exposed to anything approaching a meaningful education in human sexuality.) ("Sex education in the United States today, where it exists at all, is usually a course in plumbing--a relentless pursuit of the fallopian tubes."<sup>46</sup>) (Yet this is not the kind of information that students want to know.) In a review of more than 50,000 questions from teenagers all over the country,

...not one teenager has ever asked a question about a fallopian tube. Young people want to know about homosexuality, penis size, masturbation, female orgasm, and the answers to such questions as how can I tell if I'm really in love, what constitutes sexual desire, what is the best contraceptive, when are you most likely to get pregnant and various questions about oral and anal sex.<sup>47</sup>

(These kinds of questions pose social and moral issues which are at the heart of the Human Growth and Development curriculum controversy.)

(While teenage sexual activity and pregnancy were seldom discussed openly as recently as ten years ago, these matters are now under serious consideration both in the local community and at the federal level.) Policy-makers at all levels have come under attack in relation to decisions regarding what to do about these concerns.

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<sup>46</sup>Ibid., p. 24.

<sup>47</sup>Ibid.

Omaha Public Schools and Human Sexuality Education

The Omaha Public Schools took action to develop a human sexuality program during the late 1960's, in response to the nationwide controversy. According to Dr. Joe Hanna, secretary of the board of education, the "Omaha Public Schools curriculum on human sexuality did not change in those twenty years from 1966 to 1986."<sup>48</sup>

When the issue of human sexuality education was introduced in April 1985, many of the concerns raised nationally were evidenced in the Omaha community. There are basically three concerns repeatedly raised. The first concern is that in teaching human sexuality education, one cannot separate moral from religious values. If indeed these values cannot be separated, then the question becomes one of deciding whose values and what values will be taught. The second concern is with whether knowledge is harmful or helpful. Some people believe that if human sexuality information is given to the student, the information will cause the student to experiment sexually. The third concern is that if human sexuality could be taught in a neutral manner, the neutrality would be conveyed to the student as passive acceptance of any or all forms of sexual behavior, and this may undermine the family.<sup>49</sup>

Those opposed to human sexuality education fear that it teaches situational rather than absolute morality. Most educators and parents

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X <sup>48</sup> Joe Hanna, interview at the Joselyn Castle Omaha Public Schools Administration Building, Omaha, Nebraska, 2 July 1987.

X <sup>49</sup> Marlene Wilken, "Clerics and Sex Education" (Graduate paper for Constitutional Law 819M, University of Nebraska-Omaha, May 1986).

believe, however, that "the challenges of contemporary life are too great for moral absolutes to be the child's only guidepost for behavior."<sup>50</sup>

In summary, education in Human Growth and Development is a public problem because it is a situation that produces dissatisfaction on the part of people for which relief or redress is sought through the political process. In this case specifically, the problem is the introduction of a Human Growth and Development curriculum for kindergarten through 12th grade in the Omaha Public Schools.

"Essentially, there existed a tremendous misunderstanding about just what the concept of Human Growth and Development is."<sup>51</sup> The misunderstanding centers around what information is to be taught, at what age, how it is taught and whether it is mandatory.

The issue of what the Omaha Public Schools were doing about the teenage pregnancy crisis was first introduced at an Omaha Public Schools committee meeting in April 1985. The committee decided to look into the problem of teenage pregnancy in relation to human sexuality education in the Omaha Public Schools. After that meeting, actions included nine public hearings, ten public forums, nineteen full school board meetings and committee meetings, and the appointment of a task force. Between April 1985 and June 1986 the Omaha World-Herald published twenty-two straight news stories, five editorials, 30 letters to the editor and one

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X <sup>50</sup> Peter Scales, "Arguments Against Sex Education," Children Today 22 (September-October 1982):23.

<sup>51</sup> Joseph Gaughan and Richard Workheiser, "Superintendent's Task Force on Human Growth and Development Report and Recommendations," Omaha Public Schools, 22 December 1986.



"Another Point of View" column.<sup>52</sup> In April of 1987 the task force presented its recommendations to the Board of Education and the board voted to adopt the Human Growth and Development curriculum as presented by the task force majority report. There was, however, a minority task force report presented to the board, but not approved by the board. The result is a plan to implement the curriculum in the fall of 1987 in the elementary grades and the entire curriculum in the fall of 1988.

### Agenda

The term "agenda" is broadly defined as a list of things to be done, items for action. According to Cobb and Elder, there are two types of agendas, systematic and institutional. The systematic agenda refers to "...all issues in the political community that are commonly perceived as meriting public attention and within the legitimate jurisdiction of existing governmental authority."<sup>53</sup> This systematic agenda, in essence, constitutes a personal assessment of what ought to be acted on by government. Hofferbert feels that it is society that more often than not provides the forces that structure the agenda.<sup>54</sup>

The institutional agenda narrows the list of items to those explicitly under active and serious consideration by authoritative decision-makers. It reflects what is currently thought to deserve attention

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<sup>52</sup>Marlene Wilken, "The World-Herald and Sex Education" (Graduate paper for Seminar in American Government and Politics 804V, University of Nebraska-Omaha, 8 July 1986).

<sup>53</sup>Jones, An Introduction to the Study of Public Policy, p. 58.

<sup>54</sup>Hofferbert, The Study of Public Policy, p. 259.

and supports the idea that "the agendas of policy-activity reveal the scopes of concern that distinguish one polity from another."<sup>55</sup>

Various explanations have been offered as to why one issue rather than another is scheduled on the agenda of policy-makers. Hofferbert refers to "elaborate and intricate mechanisms filtering issues prior to their being scheduled for consideration." The relevance and linkages of many environmental characteristics help to identify the range of policies that exist. The range for human sexuality education includes many aggregations. An aggregation is a collection of persons affected by what goes on in society, and the aggregation may or may not be organized.<sup>56</sup>

Depending upon what aggregation is doing the defining, different formulations of the issue will likely result. In addition, Hofferbert identifies two types of constraints on the policy-making process. One is the socioeconomic and political environments within a jurisdiction which act to limit the magnitude and forms of outputs that policy-makers can devise and produce.<sup>57</sup> The other constraint is the routines and patterns of action and decision-making that serve to structure and simplify the environment of the policy-maker. Eulau and Eyestone also identify that "predilections, preferences, orientations, and expectations of policy-makers influence the policy agenda." All of these environmental characteristics can vary across time and between policy areas. Such differ-

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<sup>55</sup>Ibid.

<sup>56</sup>Jones, An Introduction to the Study of Public Policy, p. 61.

<sup>57</sup>Hofferbert, The Study of Public Policy, p. 263.

ences will be evident in the following discussion of aggregations related to the issue of human sexuality curriculum in the Omaha Public Schools.

In examination of the socioeconomic and political environment with regard to the subject of human sexuality in the public schools, the first two aggregations explored will be the nation and the states. The federal government as a whole has no policy regarding human sexuality education in the public schools. Nationally, the president of the United States and the National Institutes of Health share an interest in reducing the number of teenage pregnancies but are divided over how to accomplish this goal.<sup>58</sup>

It is generally recognized that pregnant teenagers and teenage parents often need a variety of services to enable them to finish high school, begin employment, or go on to higher education, but there is debate over whether a federal responsibility exists to provide these needed services.<sup>59</sup> Title X of the Public Health Service Act of 1971 does provide birth control to teenagers, but teenage pregnancies continue to increase.<sup>60</sup> In 1978, the Adolescent Health Services, Pregnancy Prevention and Care Act was passed by Congress. This was the first piece of legislation enacted that aimed specifically at reducing the consequences of teenage pregnancy. But despite its ambitious title, it addressed only

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<sup>58</sup>Ibid.

<sup>59</sup>Jan Fowler, "Teenage Pregnancy: Statistics, Current Research, and Federal Legislation," Congressional Research Service (Washington, D.C.: Library of Congress, [3 August 1984]), p. 2.

<sup>60</sup>Ibid.

one aspect of the problem, the need for a variety of support services to pregnant girls, teenage parents, and their children. This legislation expired in 1981 and was replaced by the \$16 million Adolescent Family and Life bill. But federal government support for human sexuality education has been at a standstill, and few program innovations have been introduced.<sup>61</sup> Political leaders appear divided on the issue.

The local school districts are left to determine how much education in human sexuality will be provided and at what age.<sup>62</sup> Two states, Maryland and New Jersey, plus the District of Columbia require human sexuality education in the public schools. Twenty-three other states' boards of education, including Nebraska's, encourage local districts to offer such courses, with seven states discouraging this practice.<sup>63</sup> In December 1986, the Nebraska Statewide Health Coordinating Council, which oversees health planning for the state, announced recommendations establishing health strategies for Nebraska for the next five years. The report recommended that education in all aspects of "human growth and development" be created by local school districts and be required at all levels of public school.<sup>64</sup>

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<sup>61</sup>Teenage Pregnancy: The Problem That Hasn't Gone Away, (New York, NY: Allan Guttmacher Institute [1981]), p. 65.

<sup>62</sup>Jones, et al., "Teenage Pregnancy in Developed Countries: Determinants and Policy Implications," Family Planning Perspectives 17 (March-April, 1985), p. 59.

<sup>63</sup>Susan Foster, Preventing Teenage Pregnancy--A Public Policy Guide (Washington, D.C.: The Council of State Planning Agencies, [1986]), p. 59.

<sup>64</sup>"Health Council Urges," Omaha World Herald, 7 December 1986, p.

The pervasiveness of teenage pregnancy, along with its social and economic cost is real. Every year, 1.1 million teenagers become pregnant, and of these, approximately 400,000 are under 17 years of age and 30,000 under age 14. In Nebraska in 1984 there were 4,281 pregnancies among teenagers. Of these 4,281 pregnancies, 2,537 babies were born.) At least 1,744 of these were accidental or unintended pregnancies that resulted in abortions, and 137 of the babies were born to girls under the age of 15. At the current rate in Nebraska, it will cost \$60,480 in Aid to Dependent Children payments alone to rear a child to the age of 18.<sup>65</sup>

In the Omaha Public School District in 1984, there were 59 live births to girls aged 12-15 years in the Omaha Public School census tracts in Douglas County and as many as 10 live births within the Omaha Public School census tracts in Sarpy County. For 16-to 17-year-old girls the live births numbered 272 in Douglas County and as many as 22 in Sarpy County. The minimum number of live births was 170 in Douglas County and 10 in Sarpy County.<sup>66</sup> Two-thirds of families headed by teen mothers are poor, and teen mothers will have more children as well as unintended children during their lifetimes. Compared with other teenagers, teen

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<sup>65</sup>Nebraska Fact Sheet (Omaha, NE: Planned Parenthood [September 1985]).

<sup>66</sup>Marlene Wilken, "Demographics of Teenage Fertility in the Omaha Public Schools" (Graduate paper for 884V Interdisciplinary Seminar on the Urban Community, University of Nebraska at Omaha, July 1986).

mothers are three times more likely to get divorced or separated, if they marry at all, and twice as likely to never finish high school.<sup>67</sup>

The mass media play a crucial role in defining and shaping the perceptions of political reality for millions of Americans. "The decade of the 60's witnessed a relaxation of restrictions on the newsstands, in the bookstores, in the cinema, on the stage, and to some extent on television."<sup>68</sup> This relaxation of the mass media is thought to be closely linked to a liberalization in the public's attitude towards sex. There was a decline in censorship by the courts, which in turn led to the establishment of Congressional committees and Presidential Commissions to discuss the meaning and role of obscenity. The liberalization of sex roles, the women's and gay rights movements, and the issue of human rights in general were upon us. The media provided the nation with shared political experiences which form the basis for developing public opinion and uniting people for public action. "The media reflect the mass culture as much as they influence it."<sup>69</sup>

The socioeconomic and political environmental linkages described above help to identify the constraints upon the human sexuality agenda while emphasizing the urgent need for some policy decision. But as stated earlier, it is not only the socioeconomic and political forces

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<sup>67</sup>Fact Sheet FS 36. Planned Parenthood Federation of America, Inc. [30 January 1986]).

<sup>68</sup>Lawrence Haims, Sex Education and the Public Schools (Lexington, MA: Lexington Books, D.C. Neath and Co., 1973), p. 19.

<sup>69</sup>T. Berry, Journalism in America (New York: Hastings House, 1976), p. 3.

that shape public policy but the impact of individual leadership and idiosyncratic events.

In the Omaha situation, there was a potential for at least two administrative leaders to affect the agenda formation process. These two individuals were Dr. Norbert Schuerman and Dr. Hawthorne Faison.

Hawthorne Faison was Director of Educational Services for Omaha Public Schools during the 1983-84 school year. During this time the superintendent for Omaha Public Schools was Jack Taylor. According to Dr. Faison, the subject of exploring the human sexuality curriculum came up while he was serving under Superintendent Taylor. Dr. Faison stated that the subject was brought to his attention by the instructional supervisors in Omaha Public Schools with the primary impetus coming from the supervisor of home economics. A committee was established in response to inquiries, and a Human Growth and Development committee was established to conduct an extensive study.

Superintendent Taylor resigned from Omaha Public Schools and Norbert Schuerman was made interim superintendent. Dr. Schuerman stated that as interim superintendent he was informed of the ongoing study regarding human growth and development but the issue, in his mind, was not "on the front burner nor on the back burner, but luke-warm, something that we weren't going to get after right away."<sup>70</sup>

After being appointed superintendent, Dr. Schuerman directed Dr. Faison to continue the study on human growth and development and to

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<sup>70</sup>Norbert Schuerman, interview at Joselyn Castle Omaha Public Schools Administration Building, Omaha, Nebraska, 25 June 1987.

submit a report upon its completion. Dr. Faison stated, "There was no indication that the superintendent hoped to change directions since full directions had not been proposed in the area of human growth and development."<sup>71</sup>

According to Superintendent Schuerman, the

sex education issue was in my mind because of what was happening across the country, my philosophic base from the standpoint of believing schools needed to do more in this area, in my judgment that parents and the church were not doing as much as they should, and that this three-pronged approach, hopefully, would help society and kids in general make good decisions.<sup>72</sup>

There was no quarrel with the fact that Omaha Public Schools needed to address the issue of sex education and to do a better job. "We weren't consistent throughout the district,"<sup>73</sup> said Superintendent Schuerman.

The superintendent's decision to keep the issue of sex education on "luke-warm" was strengthened by his admission that "it is such a volatile subject and I had just become superintendent and anticipated controversy on this issue because Omaha is a very conservative community."<sup>74</sup>

Political scientist Charles Jones states that there are at least three agenda-setting options. One can either wait and let it happen,

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<sup>71</sup>Hawthorne Faison, personal letter to Omaha Public Schools, 10 June 1987.

<sup>72</sup>Schuerman, interview.

<sup>73</sup>Ibid.

<sup>74</sup>Ibid.



encourage it to happen, or make it happen.<sup>75</sup> Superintendent Schuerman, at this point, was willing to wait, knowing that it could happen, but not wishing to encourage or make it happen.

There was, however, another elite, who had decided that April 1985 was the time to bring up the issue of human sexuality in the Omaha Public Schools. This individual was David Wilken, a member of the Omaha Board of Education and chairman of the Staff and Student Personnel Services Committee of the Omaha Public Schools.

He, like the superintendent, had been attentive to the issue of human sexuality education as a national, state, and local issue. During a meeting of local South Omaha agencies a representative of the South Omaha Girls Club stated that three club members under the age of fourteen were pregnant. The point of the agencies' meeting was to determine whether the South Omaha agencies could do anything about the teenage pregnancy problem. The agencies realized that the probability of reaching teenagers directly was rather small. In addition, all the agencies involved had other projects at the time, and although dealing with the teenage pregnancy problem was worthwhile, it would not be very satisfying due to the small success expected. At this time, Mr. Wilken resolved personally to bring the issue to the Omaha Public Schools, knowing that Omaha Public Schools was not doing much about the problem.<sup>76</sup>

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<sup>75</sup>Jones, An Introduction to the Study of Public Policy, p. 63.

<sup>76</sup>David Wilken, interview at his home at 362 N. 41 Ave., 27 June 1987.

Within days after the agency meeting, Mr. Wilken contacted the Assistant Superintendent of Student Services, Dr. Rene Hlavac, to have the subject of teenage pregnancies in Omaha Public Schools put on the agenda of the Staff and Student Personnel Services Committee. Mr. Wilken requested "information on what Omaha Public Schools was currently doing regarding teenage pregnancies."<sup>77</sup> He assumed that the Student Services department would have data on those pregnant teenage girls who remained in Omaha Public Schools.

At the Staff and Student Personnel Services Committee meeting, Chairman Wilken asked Dr. Hlavac, "How many pregnant girls do we have in Omaha Public Schools and what do we do for them?" Mr. Wilken knew from the media and research studies that there was general community support for dealing with this issue and assumed support within the Omaha Public Schools community. "Since it was the administration that was responsible for what we weren't doing in relation to teenage pregnancy, there was no point in my imposing the issue individually, but rather impose it upon the district via the school board," Mr. Wilken said.

As chairman of the committee, Mr. Wilken could do virtually anything he wanted to do with the issue. The only thing that could stop him would be the active vote of the full school board to stop the inquiry. There was no precedent for this, however, and Mr. Wilken had

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<sup>77</sup>Ibid.

already calculated that "at worst, the individual board members were evenly divided on the issue."<sup>78</sup>

Dr. Hlavac informed Superintendent Schuerman in advance of the committee meeting that the issue of teenage pregnancy had been brought up by Mr. Wilken, and that it was on the committee agenda. Dr. Schuerman looks at all committee agenda items prior to the meetings, but noted during an interview that "I have no control over what gets put on the agenda."<sup>79</sup> He did, however, recommend that the issue belonged in a different committee, and so two weeks after it was introduced, the issue was placed in the Instruction and Americanism Committee, which is responsible for curriculum.

Mr. Wilken stated that for the first two to three committee meetings after the issue was introduced, he personally had to motivate key persons to attend the committee meetings. Such key persons included Gloria McGrath, home economics supervisor, and Doug Baker, of Planned Parenthood of Omaha. In addition, Mr. Wilken stated that he "knew Dr. Hlavac well enough to realize that I had to phrase questions and requests correctly in our formal meetings; otherwise, Dr. Hlavac would not bring the information we discussed candidly and informally to the committee meetings." According to Mr. Wilken, after about the third committee meeting, at which various key people had been present, Dr. Schuerman became nervous. Mr. Wilken said "from that point, my own role became one

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<sup>78</sup>Ibid.

<sup>79</sup>Schuerman, interview.

of orchestration rather than motivation of individuals regarding the issue.<sup>80</sup>

Agenda setting can be a complex and tricky business. Although success is never assured, there are features of an issue that will increase the probability that the issue will receive attention. These features include an impact or potential impact on large numbers of people and convincing evidence that the problem is real and serious. Another condition that is helpful is the existence of an easily understood solution for the problem being addressed.

As noted earlier in this case study, the issue of human sexuality education involves not only large groups of people, but is recognized as a real and serious problem. The proposed solution--inclusion of a Human Growth and Development curriculum in the Omaha Public Schools--addresses just a part of the nation's problem regarding human sexual activity and is not easily understood. Although there was a potential for several individuals in leadership positions to take a role in putting the issue of human sexuality on the agenda, it appears that one individual, Mr. Wilken, was identified as the most influential elite involved.

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<sup>80</sup>Wilken, interview.

## CHAPTER III

### ACTIONS IN GOVERNMENT

#### Formulation

Formulation, the first phase of the policy development, refers to the development of pertinent and acceptable proposed courses of action for dealing with public problems. The formulation process can be systematic, almost scientific, or quite haphazard. "It is a sort of second-level process of problem definition that requires looking back at the event and the problems it caused and then looking ahead to the options for solving those problems"<sup>81</sup> Formulation incorporates both rational planning and subjective reacting and is very much a political, though not necessarily a partisan, activity.<sup>82</sup> According to Lynn, "Policies determine political relationships."<sup>83</sup>

In the early stages of formulation many alternatives usually surface. In this case study, the issue first presented itself as a question from board member Wilken related to what Omaha Public Schools was doing about the pregnancy crisis, and what educational and support services were being provided to pregnant Omaha Public Schools students.

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<sup>81</sup>Jones, An Introduction to the Study of Public Policy, p. 78.

<sup>82</sup>Ibid.

<sup>83</sup>Laurence Lynn, Designing Public Policy: A Casebook on the Role of Policy Analysis (Santa Monica, CA: Goodyear Publishing Co., Inc., 1980), p. 20.

This inquiry led directly into the area of curriculum and the issue of human sexuality education was opened two weeks later, when the Student Staff and Personnel Services Committee Chairman asked, "Is it possible for a student to go from kindergarten to twelfth grade in Omaha Public Schools currently, and never have been informed that unprotected intercourse could result in unexpected pregnancy?"— The director of educational services, Dr. Faison replied, "Yes," and what was initially a teenage pregnancy investigation was now a human sexuality education issue.<sup>84</sup>

With the issue of human sexuality education now in the open, several subactivities of the formulation process started to take place. The subactivities included research, review, projection, and selection.<sup>85</sup> These activities would help to legitimate the course of action. School boards have the formal authority to make public policy. Legitimation helps strengthen the legal force of public policy. "School boards chiefly act to legitimate the policies of the school system to the community, rather than representing the various segments of the community to the school administration."<sup>86</sup> This statement raises the question of who governs the schools. According to Mosher, "the public representatives,

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<sup>84</sup>Wilken, interview.

<sup>85</sup>Jones, An Introduction to the Study of Public Policy, p. 77.

<sup>86</sup>Sam Sieber and David Wilder, The School in Society: Studies in the Sociology of Education (New York: The Free Press, McMillan Publishing Co., 1973), p. 381.

professional educators and the general public" govern the schools.<sup>87</sup>

Each group, however, has differing amounts of governance and influence.

"The politics of urban education is in large part a confrontation between the masses and elites distinguished, among other things, by their vastly differing information bases."<sup>88</sup> Taken in this context, both the superintendent and the Board of Education would be considered elites.

In the early 1920's, the superintendent and his professional staff were considered the influential and dominant authority. Some, including Gove, still believe this to be true. "Policy and problem alternatives are now too complex for the public and its representatives to evaluate." Therefore school board members often solicit and follow the recommendations of the professional administration. "The major source of power is information and the new norm of policy decision-making is deference to expertise."<sup>89</sup>

The superintendent's role is considered to be one of expertise. Superintendent Schuerman confirmed that notion by stating that he relies on his expert wisdom in most cases. This is possible because the superintendent has the benefit of knowledge of day-to-day operations and can draw upon resources of administration and professional staff to

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<sup>87</sup>Edith Mosher and Jennings Wagoner, The Changing Politics of Education: Prospects for the 1980's (Berkeley, CA: McCutchan Publishing Co., 1978), p. 195.

<sup>88</sup>Frederick Wirt, The Polity of the School (Lexington, MA: Lexington Books, D.C. Heath and Co., 1975), p. 14.

<sup>89</sup>Samuel Gove and Frederick Wirt, Political Science and School Politics (Lexington, MA: Lexington Books, D.C. Heath and Co., 1976), p. 39.

propose alternatives to a policy. The professional staff was utilized in the policy-making process of the human sexuality issue. Selected staff members were chosen for their expertise and interest in the issue, and appropriate administrative personnel were designated to take charge of the formulation process. The three individuals chosen were administrators from the Department of Instruction.

During the time when the issue of human sexuality curriculum was being considered, the superintendent took a number of actions. He discussed the issue with his executive council, the Omaha Education Association Board of Directors, and the Citizens Advisory Committee.<sup>90</sup> During his routine visits to the local schools he talked with school teachers and principals.<sup>91</sup>

Dr. Schuerman used the executive council as a sounding board. The council is made up of the six assistant superintendents, the superintendent's administrative assistant, and the secretary of the Board of

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<sup>90</sup>The Omaha Education Association is a professional teachers' union and includes administrators in Omaha Public Schools. The Citizens' Advisory is a group of residents of the Omaha School District with varied backgrounds and interests who get together on a monthly basis to receive information and give advice to the superintendent in all matters of district affairs. This group is composed of approximately 100 members (parents of OPS students), 14 students--2 from each OPS highschool, 7 at large (members of community organizations), and 15 Omaha Public School staff. The students, at large members, and OPS staff have no vote on the committee.

<sup>91</sup>Joe Hanna, interview at Joselyn Castle Omaha Public School Administration Building, 1 July 1987.



Education. He utilized the other groups to get information to them as well as to receive input from them.<sup>92</sup>

The school board is also afforded an information base, not as extensive as the superintendent's, but more comprehensive than that of the general public. In addition, school board members are "generally better educated than their constituents."<sup>93</sup> A look at the persons who compose the Omaha Board of Education would confirm this notion.<sup>94</sup> The composition of the board may lead one to question just how representative the local school board is. "Within any given district, board members are likely to reflect community sentiment as to whether or not general societal problems deserve a place on the policy-making agenda."<sup>95</sup> But even though board members and constituents agree on what the major problems are, there is no guarantee that they will agree on how to handle them.

This lack of agreement over how to handle the sex education problem is evident in the individual board members' responses to the proposed inclusion of human sexuality education in the curriculum. One board member was adamantly opposed. He was quoted in Time as saying he will "keep on opposing any program because the kids are getting too

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<sup>92</sup>Ibid.

<sup>93</sup>Thomas Sergiovanni, et al., Educational Governance and Administration (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1980), p. 171.

<sup>94</sup>Fourteen of 16 Board members spanning April 1985 to April 1987 have college educations.

<sup>95</sup>Ibid.

inquisitive; we're arousing their curiosity"<sup>96</sup> Another board member was initially opposed to any changes in the curriculum because of his perception of the political heat it would generate. A third member was unenthusiastic about changing the curriculum to include any expansions. She felt the program in place was good enough. A fourth member appeared uncommitted, but ultimately supported curricular change as long as there would be ongoing parental involvement. The remaining eight board members were in favor of changing the curriculum.<sup>97</sup>

The voting patterns of board members in relation to the issue of human sexuality education help support the idea that board members are representative of community sentiment. In addition, the board members are elected by district which is intended to create a more representative board.

Prior to 1970, the school board was elected at large. According to Dr. Joe Hanna, secretary of the Omaha Board of Education, the boards elected at large had a greater proportion of city leader types, those who owned big businesses in the community. Dr. Hanna feels that changing to district elections is one of the most historically significant policy changes that Omaha Public Schools has made.

With regard to policy-making, a school board has the formal authority to bring about major changes in district policy. A board shoulders the ultimate legal responsibility for the education of children

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<sup>96</sup>J. Leo, "Sex and Schools," Time (24 November 1986), p. 60.

<sup>97</sup>Wilken, interview.

in the district. A board is politically accountable also and "may be far more influential than it appears."<sup>98</sup> Nevertheless, some experts claim that the patterns of influence in relation to public policy are changing. "We are entering an era of participatory consensus. Public education organizations must provide for the broadest involvement of the public."<sup>99</sup>

The role of public opinion has been identified by political scientists as one of helping to shape the broad boundaries and direction of public policy. The amount of influence public opinion has on elites, however, is difficult to measure. Political scientist V.O. Key states "To speak with precision of public opinion is a task not unlike coming to grips with the Holy Ghost."<sup>100</sup>

Although there is the temptation to plan for people rather than with them, both the superintendent and the board of education realized that citizens' input related to the issue of human sexuality education was a vital safeguard of democracy. With this in mind, the board directed the superintendent to appoint a task force to study the issue and make recommendations to the board.

On December 2, 1985, the Board of Education established a "representative school-community Task Force on Human Growth and Development Instruction."<sup>101</sup> The task force was charged with developing

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<sup>98</sup>Sergiovanni, Educational Governance and Administration, p. 133.

<sup>99</sup>Gove, Political Science and School Politics, p. 66.

<sup>100</sup>Anderson, Public Policy-Making, p. 63.

<sup>101</sup>Gaughan, Superintendent's Task Force Report.

a systematic approach to human growth and development offerings for possible inclusion and use in the Omaha Public Schools. Concerted efforts were to be made to seek community viewpoints.<sup>102</sup> The superintendent appointed the members of the task force. Thirty-four nominations were received and twenty-six members were selected. Nineteen other people were identified as needed to represent the community, for a total of forty-five members (see Appendix 1). On February 5, 1986, the task force began their deliberations. They met on a regular basis through November of 1986.<sup>103</sup> The average attendance was thirty persons. After the first meeting, two individuals did not attend any other task force meetings. Two other members were high school seniors and after graduation in May, one stopped attending and the other left for college in late summer. The seven members who drafted the task force minority report were attentive participants.<sup>104</sup>

During April and May of 1986 the task force conducted ten community input forums at different junior high schools in the school district. At these forums, the average attendance was thirty, with about half of the citizens present speaking. The majority of participants were parents and/or Omaha Public School district residents.<sup>105</sup>

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<sup>102</sup>Ibid.

<sup>103</sup>Ibid.

<sup>104</sup>Nancy Schugrue, interview via telephone, 14 July 1987.

<sup>105</sup>Gaughan, "Superintendent's Task Force Report."

According to the task force report, "What became obvious to the task force was that there existed tremendous misunderstanding about just what the concept of Human Growth and Development is and that the book, Finding My Way, used as a supplemental book for the elective course in Family Living, had become a point of serious discussion."<sup>106</sup>

"Schools are the least insulated of our public institutions. I know of no other delivery system for public services that casts as wide a net in terms of participation or that has as many entry points for citizen pressure as do schools."<sup>107</sup> These entry points include individuals and groups. Although the individual can and does participate in the policy-making process, the individual is frequently associated with some identifiable group. These groups can range from large, loosely associated groups such as the general public, to small and narrow interest groups that may have only one purpose. The groups may or may not be well organized and may or may not have established access. In a pluralist society such as the United States, the "existence of a multitude of organized groups serve to diffuse and moderate political power."<sup>108</sup> Nevertheless, "power is quite unevenly dispersed in American

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<sup>106</sup>Ibid.

<sup>107</sup>Gove, Political Science and School Politics, p. 63.

<sup>108</sup>James Anderson, David Brady, and Charles Bullock, Public Policy and Politics in America (North Scituate, MA: Duxbury Press, 1978), p. 16.

society. Some segments of the population are much better organized, more active and more effective in politics than others."<sup>109</sup>

Private, non-government pressure groups are a major source of demands for public policy.<sup>110</sup> This phenomenon is demonstrated to some extent in the case of the human sexuality issue and the Omaha Public Schools. There were a few identifiable groups that participated in the human sexuality issue. The groups speaking against human sexuality education included the Citizens for Excellence in Education, Glad Tidings Church and Christ Community Church of Omaha, and the Faith Baptist Church of Louisville, Nebraska.

Citizens for Excellence in Education is a national organization of citizens dedicated to re-establishing academic excellence in the public schools. In the Omaha area, this group is designed to work in cooperation with local district school boards to re-establish traditional moral values in the classroom.<sup>111</sup> The three churches opposing human sexuality education were identified by the media as fundamentalist organizations.

The groups in favor of human sexuality education included-Planned Parenthood, Parent-Teacher's Association and the Parent-Teacher-Student Association, Girls Club of Omaha, and the Girl Scouts. The majority of

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<sup>109</sup>Ibid., p. 17.

<sup>110</sup>Ibid.

<sup>111</sup>"A Report on Current Human Sexuality Education in the Omaha Public Schools," Omaha, NE: Citizens for Excellence in Education, 11 November 1985.

persons who requested to speak, however, spoke not for a group, only for themselves.<sup>112</sup>

But even in a democracy, not every citizen can influence policy. Only those who have some reason to think it matters, who possess the skills and resources of citizenship, whose aspirations and expectations are stimulating rather than paralyzing and who are-- and feel they are--members of a political community.<sup>113</sup>

When referring to individuals and their level of participation, one must remember that we are talking about only a fraction of the population. Most people do not become involved.

There are specific triggers that start the citizen on the path of active involvement. These triggers may be explicit agents or may consist of mechanisms that have been internalized in the individual and respond when a particular stimuli occurs.<sup>114</sup>

Among those triggers identified are the desire to know, the concern for child and sense of duty, a contact made by another individual, or the issue and event itself.<sup>115</sup>

The issue of human sexuality education which emerged in the late 1960's created a definite opposition movement to such education in the public schools nationwide. This concerted opposition has been interpreted as an overall attack on public school education. The dispute can be seen to center on church-state relationships and the use of

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<sup>112</sup>This is evidenced in the tapes of committee meetings and board minutes of April 1985 through March 1987.

<sup>113</sup>Charles Lindblom, The Policy-Making Process (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1968), p. 115.

<sup>114</sup>Robert Salisbury, Citizen Participation in the Public Schools (Lexington, MA: Lexington Books, D.C. Heath Co., 1980), p. 82.

<sup>115</sup>Ibid.

science rather than revelation in teaching about sex and the kind of society sought by conflicting political groups.<sup>116</sup>

"The primary threat to the implementation of human sexuality education programs in the public schools is the John Birch Society, which is often found joined together with fundamentalist religious opposition."<sup>117</sup>

Although no one requesting to speak in this case study was identified with the John Birch Society, three fundamentalist religious groups did choose to identify themselves when speaking. Zazzaro, who conducted a cross-country study of school districts involved in human sexuality education controversies, identified thirteen elements in the pattern of anti-human sexuality education campaigns.<sup>118</sup> Many of these elements can be identified in the Omaha case study. For example, some churches gave support, some speakers used emotional appeals, and half-truths and dubious documents appeared. In addition, publications were sent to board members, the superintendent, and the secretary of the board, along with hundreds of letters. The opposition attempted to put pressure on the board by circulating petitions to have certain board members recalled. Petitions were submitted to the secretary of the board, with only a small percentage of the signatures necessary to accomplish a goal. Board members reported receiving few telephone calls from opponents. Despite these efforts, it was the impression of board member Wilken that the

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<sup>116</sup>Haims, Sex Education and the Public Schools, pp. 39-40.

<sup>117</sup>Ibid., p. 40.

<sup>118</sup>Ibid., p. 42.



opposition as a whole was not organized and they were, therefore, ineffective.

This lack of organization may be explained by the fact that the religious community as a whole, in the Omaha area, tended to favor sex education. This attitude was evidenced in interviews involving nine clerics who represented the major demonimations of Omaha churches. When individual clerics were asked if they approved of sex education being taught in the Omaha Public Schools, five said yes, three gave a "qualified" yes, and one said no. In response to the question "Is it imperative to you that any sex education program that is taught in the Omaha Public Schools be attended by 'values' instruction?", all nine said yes. However, when asked what values, the responses included such comments as, "my values," "Judeo-Christian values," "traditional values," and "absolute values." All nine clerics agreed that education regarding reproduction is not adequately handled by the family and the church.<sup>119</sup> The fact that the Catholic Archbishop of Omaha remained neutral on the issue prevented a large block of support from being used by the opposition.

Other examples showing a lack of organization include the February 1987 circulation of petitions by two Omaha churches urging the school district not to teach sex education without moral values and not to let sex education lead to school-based clinics. According to the Omaha World-Herald, one of the churches circulating the petition is located in the Millard School District, and many parishioners of the other church

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<sup>119</sup>Marlene Wilken, "Clerics and Sex Education."

send their children to a parochial school. The petitions were circulated at two Omaha churches, but the pastors of both of the churches did not know who had dropped the petitions off at their offices.<sup>120</sup> In a news article dated March 17, 1987, the group that started the anti-sex education petition drive was identified as the Protect Our Children Omaha organization.

The proponents of human sexuality education included professionals in education, administration, medicine, psychology, human services, the national and local Parent-Teacher Associations and so called "main-stream" Protestant and Jewish groups.<sup>121</sup> Like the opposition, the proponents tended to speak for themselves rather than for a group. Proponents did attend meetings and send literature, as well as write letters. The proponents argued that knowledge is helpful in the decision-making process and that the more students know about human sexuality, the better equipped they will be to deal with situations as they arise.

During conflict, the role of the media can be crucial to the opinion formation process regarding public policy. A content analysis of twenty-two straight news stories printed in the Omaha World-Herald

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<sup>120</sup>"Sex Education Battle Spreads Beyond Parents," Omaha World-Herald, 25 February 1987, p. 21.

<sup>121</sup>This is evidenced in letters and taped speeches presented to the Board of Education April 1985 to March 1987.

reporting on the issue found that the stories were balanced in their representation of both sides of the issue.<sup>122</sup>

The editorials, however, were in favor of human sexuality education. The first editorial appeared in June of 1985. It stated that "Members of an Omaha school board committee are doing the responsible thing to raise the question of whether the schools are providing enough sex education."<sup>123</sup> The second editorial appeared in October, 1985 and it took the position that the school board deserved the community's support in the face of opposition from some of the people who contend sex education does not belong in the schools. The editorial presented such opposition arguments as the contentions that sex education sends the message that sexual activity is condoned, sex education infringes on the responsibilities of the family and the church, and sex education is immoral. In response the editorial made such statements as, "The Omaha school board, to its credit is considering changes in the program, in part because of the unacceptably high number of pregnancies among high school girls."

The Omaha school board deserves the community's support in the face of opposition from some people who contend that sex education does not belong in the schools...But teaching people how their bodies work does not encourage misuse of the body,...and sex education is not immoral. Immorality is denying adolescents the information they need to help them make informed, ethical decisions about sex,...a person who believes that sexual activity

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<sup>122</sup>Marlene Wilken, "The World Herald and Sex Education."

<sup>123</sup>"Sex and the Omaha Public Schools," Omaha World-Herald, 5 June 1985, p. 26.

can be suppressed by withholding information about contraception is out to touch with reality.<sup>124</sup>

The editorial also indicated what other cities around the Midwest were doing regarding sex education.

The third editorial dealt with parental and societal responsibility for sex education.<sup>125</sup> The fourth editorial commended the Omaha School Board on its inquiry into sex education in the Omaha Public Schools, while citing local high school students' comments about the need for better sex education.<sup>126</sup> The fifth editorial dealt with the problem of "babies having babies."<sup>127</sup>

In October of 1986, the Omaha World-Herald again supported the sex education efforts. The editorial stated that

the Omaha district now offers less information in sex education courses than some of the other school districts in the metropolitan area. The issue of mandatory vs. voluntary classes has been one of the sticking points. If the schools are to do an effective job, ...it would make little sense to set up optional classes that admitted only those students who had special permission.<sup>128</sup>

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<sup>124</sup>"Omaha Could Offer More in Area of Sex Education," Omaha World-Herald, 7 October 1985, p. 14.

<sup>125</sup>"If Parents Don't, Who Does," Omaha World-Herald, 13 November 1985, p. 20.

<sup>126</sup>"Omaha Students Make Sense," Omaha World-Herald, 20 February 1986, p. 18-19.

<sup>127</sup>"Fewer Babies Having Babies? A Major Problem Still Exists," Omaha World-Herald, 6 March 1986, p. 21.

<sup>128</sup>"A Class Most Kids Should Have," Omaha World-Herald, 29 October 1986, p. 40.

In response to the opposition's attempts at preventing sex education from being introduced in the Omaha schools, another editorial headline read, "Opponents Raise Phony Issue In Sex Education Discussion." This referred to the attempt by the opposition to link school-based family planning clinics to the general subject of sex education. The editorial stated,

The demand that the board disavow school-based clinics or be convicted of secretly supporting them is improper. School officials and board members have handled the issue of sex education with commendable deliberation. They have made every effort to involve people with various points of view. They have allowed sufficient time for a thorough study. They have worked to keep the discussion on a factual level.<sup>129</sup>

One local television station reporter developed a series of reports on the sex education issue. The series was advertised in the local paper. Total television time for the entire series was sixty minutes.<sup>130</sup>

Conflict is considered both natural and necessary in political decision-making views. "Schools in particular, are public organizations with few rules governing who can play the game of bargaining and since many players are outside of direct authority of administrations, bargaining cannot be avoided."<sup>131</sup> There are, however, institutional mechanisms for holding conflict within the bounds of normal decision-making. One mechanism is the formal channels which groups outside the

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<sup>129</sup>"Opponents Raise Phoney Issue," Omaha World-Herald, 4 March 1987, p. 52.

<sup>130</sup>John Mason, interview via telephone, 18 July 1987.

<sup>131</sup>Sergiovanni, et al., Educational Governance and Administration, p. 67.

institution use to express disagreement with policy-makers. The other mechanism is cooptation, which allows for bringing potential opposition into the decision-making process. Cooptation makes conflict take place within a decision-making body and thus provides some control over the process as well.<sup>132</sup>

By building in dissent, the institution can forestall the intensification of conflict in two ways. First, the "system can drain off in small everyday disputes, the hostilities and dissatisfactions which otherwise accumulate and break out in controversy." Secondly, disagreement is not expressed against the institution but against specific officials.<sup>133</sup> In the case study, examples of building in dissent can be seen by the fact that a task force was formed, forums were held, committee meetings and board meetings were open to everyone, and the superintendent was continually meeting with various groups throughout the process.

In the policy-making process, the "maximum for the best of all possible policies is not usually worth what it costs, and it may be impossible to accomplish."<sup>134</sup> "The alternative is not to try too hard, but to decide instead on some acceptable level of goal accomplishment short of maximization."<sup>135</sup> This process is referred to as "satisficing."

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<sup>132</sup>Wirt, The Polity of the School, p. 69.

<sup>133</sup>Ibid.

<sup>134</sup>Lindholm, The Policy-Making Process, p. 24.

<sup>135</sup>Ibid.

On issues that include narrow and particular values, such as the issue of human sexuality, careful attention must be paid to trying to win agreement or avoid unnecessary sacrifice of one value for another. What usually results is a compromise.

On June 10, 1985, the first two speakers appeared at the Staff and Student Personnel Services Committee meeting. They came at the request of the committee chair Mr. Wilken, and represented the Girls Club of Omaha and Planned Parenthood. On July 22, 1985, again at Mr. Wilken's request, a staff member of Planned Parenthood submitted results of a survey which Planned Parenthood had conducted in relation to unwanted teenage pregnancy in Omaha. One other speaker asked to be heard on the subject of unwanted teenage pregnancies. On September 16, 1985, two more speakers appeared before the committee with concerns about the human sexuality curriculum.

After September, the issue was transferred from the Staff and Student Personnel Services Committee to the Committee on Instruction and Americanism, since it is this latter committee that handles curriculum matters.

From October 1985 until March 1987 there were ten committee meetings at which persons spoke on the issue of the human sexuality curriculum. The total number of persons requesting to be heard was ninety-four.

From October 1985 through April 1987 there were ten Board of Education meetings, and a total of seventy-eight persons requested to be heard at these meetings. It is not possible to identify exactly how many

spoke in favor of the issue or against, since the issue involves so many aspects. It was interesting to note, however, that about the time the task force was finishing its report, in October 1986 the opposition was looking for other arguments to present to the board of education. As mentioned earlier, some opponents tried to link school-based health clinics to the issue of sex education. This argument was quickly dispelled via the media and the board of education.

#### Adoption

In the Omaha Public Schools, once a policy has reached the adoption stage, it is brought before the appropriate committee and voted on. Adoption requires a simple majority vote or the policy can be tabled or fail to be adopted. If the committee fails to adopt the policy, the policy can still be brought before the full board for consideration.

The school district is required to make available to the media the committee agenda five days in advance of the committee meeting. The full board meeting agenda must be made available twenty-four hours in advance of the meeting.<sup>136</sup> This mechanism allows for the citizens to be made aware of issues and to request to be heard by the committees or the board. All policy decisions must go through a first and second reading at two different full board meetings. To make or alter policy requires an aye vote from two-thirds of all board members, which means a total of

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<sup>136</sup>Hanna, interview.



eight aye votes out of twelve; an abstention is considered to be a no vote.<sup>137</sup> However, this was a curriculum matter, not policy, and could have passed with as few as four votes of seven passed.

In December 1986 the task force submitted its recommendations to the Committee on Instruction and Americanism. The committee voted to accept the report, and all the board members received a copy. The task force report was then presented to the full board and the board was reminded that at this point, the task force recommendations were not at the action point. The task force report was given to the superintendent in December 1986. The superintendent, according to previous board agreement, would be given time to look at the report and submit his own report to the full board.

According to the secretary of the board, the superintendent's report was very significant. The superintendent had the power to make any changes he desired in the task force report. In the preamble to the superintendent's report, Dr. Schuerman carefully spelled out the "will not's" in relation to the human growth and development curriculum (see Appendix 2). Dr. Hanna said that the superintendent's report was written to insure no misinterpretation of the curriculum.

At the January 5, 1987, full board meeting, after the task force report had been made public but before the superintendent's recommendations, one person requested to speak in favor of the report and four persons spoke in opposition. At the full board meeting on

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<sup>137</sup>"Policy and Regulations of the School District of Omaha," policy 1.17C (1987 ed.), p. 7.

January 10, nine persons spoke in opposition to the task force report. Among those who opposed it were two representatives of the Nebraska Conservatives for Freedom. The chairman of this group said,

Sex ed given to 6-to 12-year-olds interferes with proper maturation by keeping certain impulses unnaturally high. Such programming will promote unnatural introspective thinking, obsessive thinking, and a questioning of parental values.<sup>138</sup>

Another opponent responded that, "The right to teach children about sex belongs to the parents, not the schools, and not even the churches."<sup>139</sup>

At the February 10 meeting sixteen persons gave their opinions of the task force report. No identification was made in the board minutes as to whether those speaking were for or against the recommendations. On March 2, seven persons spoke before the full board in support of the Human Growth and Development curriculum, and three against. One of those speaking in favor was a former board member who had not been re-elected the past November to the board. The person who had won that district election and replaced this proponent was a recognized opponent of sex education. Before being elected to the board, she had spoken frequently at committee and board meetings. At the next two board meetings, a total of twenty-three persons spoke. "At a rally before Monday night's meeting (March 16), sex education opponents carried placards reading, 'Abstinence, not contraceptives,' 'Task force or farce?' and 'Woe to

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<sup>138</sup>"Nine Speak in Opposition to Sex Education Report," Omaha World-Herald, 20 January 1987, p. 20.

<sup>139</sup>ibid.

those who call evil good-Isaiah 6:20.'"<sup>140</sup> During the meeting "...opponents spoke against the curriculum, ...as the audience clapped, cheered, and shouted 'Amen'."<sup>141</sup> The only person testifying in favor of the proposed sex education curriculum was an Omaha Northwest High School student, and he received a "...frosty reception from the crowd." He's not a Christian, one member of the audience said to a friend. He wasn't raised right.<sup>142</sup> Dr. Schuerman said, "We're going to be moral in the deliverance of our program. Those people who believe we don't teach values in our school system are incorrect....the values that the schools teach are the same as those sex education opponents say they want the schools to teach."<sup>143</sup>

At the April 13, 1987 meeting of the Instruction and Americanism Committee, now chairman Mr. Wilken moved that approval be given to the superintendent's recommendations regarding the Human Growth and Development curriculum, and that Dr. Schuerman's introductory comments be included as a supporting and clarifying document to this program.<sup>144</sup> The unanimous vote sent the proposal to the full board. However, board member Jeannette Anderson who does not sit on the committee chastised the committee members, saying they

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<sup>140</sup>"Schuerman Says Sex Ed Program 'Will be Moral,'" Omaha World-Herald, 17 March 1987, p. 1.

<sup>141</sup>Ibid.

<sup>142</sup>Ibid.

<sup>143</sup>Ibid.

<sup>144</sup>Committee and Board minutes April 1985 through May 1987.

disregard public opinion. There has apparently been majority public opposition to this program, through letters, petitions, and board meeting attendance we have received. If we are not going to take into account majority public opinion on this issue then we cannot claim majority public support for any other issue."<sup>145</sup>

Board member Sandra Kostos, who also does not sit on the committee, urged the board to adopt the proposed curriculum and to endorse Dr. Schuerman's comments as well.<sup>146</sup>

During this time, letters were continued to be received by the board members and the superintendent. The letters reflected many of the same arguments that had been presented verbally. The opponents wrote, "Sex education belongs in the home and in the church. Families should have the responsibility to teach the next generation, along with the church, moral values instead of just physical facts."<sup>147</sup> Another opponent wrote, "It now appears that Omaha Public Schools is in the process of becoming the arch enemy of traditional moral values....don't be surprised when the exodus from Omaha Public Schools begins."<sup>148</sup> In another letter, the writer stated,

Dr. Schuerman, we appeal to your sense of justice and ask that you submit a recommendation reflecting the 60% majority who favor

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<sup>145</sup>Ibid.

<sup>146</sup>Ibid.

<sup>147</sup>Joan Jensen, personal letter to Omaha Public Schools, 30 January 1987.

<sup>148</sup>Jeanne Effreer, personal letter to Omaha Public Schools, 19 March 1987.

non-expansion, to preserve the freedom of choice for both students and parents in regards to this matter.<sup>149</sup>

A proponent wrote,

Despite what a very vocal and visible minority would have us believe, the plan would acknowledge values common to our community and encourage the ability to 'say no' to sexual activity....I believe that it is vitally essential that our schools provide adequate instructions in the areas of responsible decision-making skills...and urge the board adopt this moderate plan...<sup>150</sup>

A second proponent, a former teacher and now physician responded,

...it is vital that our young people be educated about the physical and health aspects of their bodies and particularly sex-related illnesses...I find myself continually educating my patients in regards to all aspects of their bodies and health...and find those patients who cooperate best with my recommended treatments are those who understand best the nature of their illness....I think this is also true of young people. They are best able to avoid unwanted pregnancies and sexually transmitted diseases if they understand how these things occur and how they can be prevented.<sup>151</sup>

A former Omaha Northwest high school student wrote:

I wish we would've had sex education back then (1977). I grew up in a home where we didn't talk about sex openly. I got whatever information I could about sex from my friends...Why not give them the opportunity to receive good, correct information about the subject of sex to help them make their future decision?<sup>152</sup>

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<sup>149</sup>Mr. and Mrs. Wiebe, personal letter to Omaha Public Schools, 20 March 1987.

<sup>150</sup>Sandra Lundholm, personal letter to Omaha Public Schools, 20 March 1987.

<sup>151</sup>Dr. Judith Stern, personal letter to Omaha Public Schools, 29 January 1987.

<sup>152</sup>Anonymous, personal letter to Omaha Public Schools, 18 March 1987.

On May 20, 1987, the full board voted on the superintendent's proposal. There were eleven votes for and one against. The vote against was by the newly elected board member who had been an adamant opponent all along. Three other members were new to the board and had not had much involvement with the issue.

## CHAPTER IV

### CONCLUSION

"Thomas Jefferson was the first American to give firm voice to the connection between public education and the basic tenets of democratic government."<sup>153</sup> According to political scientist Stephen Bailey, many of Jefferson's themes that emerged from his "life and writings connect our educational past to the present and hold meaning for prospects in the 1980's and beyond." One such theme is "Jefferson's insistence that education be useful, that it bear directly on the issues and problems of the living generation...."<sup>154</sup> Certainly, the issue of human sexuality education and the public schools would find meaning in Jefferson's theme.

[Sometimes, in establishing useful education that bears on the issues, conflict arises in the public community. This conflict usually necessitates a solution to the problems created. One solution is through the establishment of public policy.] The process of making such public policy has received increased attention in recent years by political scientists.

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<sup>153</sup>Mosher and Wagoner, The Changing Politics of Education.

<sup>154</sup>Ibid.

This increase in the study of public policy by political scientists has produced a better understanding of the political behavior of individuals, interest groups, and institutions. Local institutions, such as school boards, have not been studied to a great extent in relation to political behavior and the policy-making process. In light of this case study, however, it is apparent that dynamics of political behavior can be examined and generalizations tested. Such dynamics included the rational planning and subjective reacting of elites, the selection of agenda setting options, the identification of triggers that evoke citizen involvement, the creation of political relationships, and the impact of environmental characteristics.

Generalizations demonstrated in this case study included the notions that: conflict is necessary and natural in public policy formation, power is unevenly distributed among groups, some groups are more organized than others, and school boards are representative of the community.

The issue of sex education in the public schools has generated conflict and evolved into public policy in the Omaha public schools. It is the dynamics of political behavior involved in the policy-making process that this case study has addressed. The framework used was an adaptation of political scientists James Anderson and Charles Jones. Both have developed public policy frameworks and theories.

The four theses investigated in this case study were shown to be correct. A single elite, according to the first thesis, did determine the problem. School Board Member Wilken brought the problem to the



board's attention by introducing the topic in a committee meeting. The problem was stated in such a way as to shape the direction of the policy. The agenda formation stage was systematic and incorporated rational planning on the part of Wilken. Subjective reacting occurred on the part of competing elites. These elites included the superintendent, other school board members, the media, and selected community members. Because these competing elites were not opposed to the agenda formation, the agenda setting option selected by Wilken was to make it happen rather than waiting to let it happen or encouraging it to happen. These findings bear out the second thesis, that competing elites did participate in the agenda formation process. The third thesis states that the dynamics of group theory identified the relevant variables in the formulation stage. This thesis is shown to be correct by examining the role of the superintendent, the school board, the appointed task force, citizen input, the media, and pro and con aggregations that evolved and interacted throughout the process. The generalization that conflict is necessary and natural is apparent in this study. The adoption stage, as indicated in the fourth thesis, involved the competing elites of school board, superintendent, and the majority and minority task force reports.

It is interesting to speculate on what may have happened if any of the major factors in this case study had been different. Such speculation raises additional hypotheses that could be investigated and tested. The case study supported the hypothesis that competing elites were involved in the agenda formation process. The competing elites, the majority of board members and the superintendent, were generally suppor-

tive of the policy proposal. This raises at least two questions: What is the influence of a board member or members if the superintendent is opposed to a policy proposal, and, in such a situation, is it possible for a single elite to have as much agenda setting success as Mr. Wilken did?

The study appears to support the hypothesis that the formulation stage was strongly affected by school elites in the face of the lack of a strong, organized opposition. In this case study, those aggregates of the community which had the requisite organization remained essentially neutral. But what would have been the situation had the school elites been faced with concerted community and media opposition, such as local Catholic leadership and the Omaha World-Herald? In addition, one might investigate what other factors were involved in the way the opposition chose to organize and effect change and if the proponents' strength was due to organizational factors or some other force such as support of public opinion and having the majority of competing elites on their side?

This case study raises further questions regarding public policy and the schools. To what extent will changes in family life style influence public policy? Will the ideological context of the 1980's favor conservatism with liberals continuing to exert influence or will the reverse be true? And finally, How much can the public expect of its schools in relation to educating children in the vast amounts of technological information and moral and ethical dilemmas?

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APPENDIX 1

Human Growth and Development Task Force Selection

HUMAN GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT TASK FORCE SELECTION

Total Nominations Received 34

People Nominated but not Selected:

From LaVista	1	
Nurse in favor of reducing teen pregnancy	1	
Teacher from Millard	1	
Omaha Public School Science Teacher	1	
Citizen in Favor	1	
Citizen Against	1	
President of Omaha Girls Club (Girls Club already represented)	1	
Omaha Public School Specialists (Betty Barr)	1	- <u>8</u>

Selected from Nominations for Task Force 26

Others Identified As Needed to Represent Community:

Omaha Home for Boys	1	
Principals	3	
Junior League of Omaha	1	
PTA/PTSA Council	1	
Instruction	3	
Citizens Advisory Committee	2	
Students	2	
Omaha Interdenom. Ministerial Alliance	1	
National Council of Jewish Women	1	
Archdiocese of Omaha	1	
Omaha Education Association	1	
Sr. High School Science Teacher Dept. Head	1	
General Administration	1	+ <u>19</u>

Total Membership of Task Force 45



APPENDIX 2

Superintendent Schuerman's Introduction

INTRODUCTION

FIRST, I WANT TO PUBLICLY EXPRESS MY APPRECIATION TO THE TASK FORCE AND THE STAFF MEMBERS WHO HAVE BEEN INVOLVED. A COUNTLESS AMOUNT OF TIME WAS SPENT IN MEETING THE RESPONSIBILITIES ASSOCIATED WITH THE CHARGE GIVEN THEM. COMMENDATIONS SHOULD ALSO GO TO THE PARENTS AND COMMUNITY MEMBERS WHO HAVE CARED ENOUGH TO PUBLICLY EXPRESS THEIR OPINIONS AND VIEWPOINTS, WHETHER THEY BE POSITIVE OR NEGATIVE TOWARDS THE EXPANSION OF THE HUMAN GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM. AND I SINCERELY FEEL THAT BOTH THE PRINT AND ELECTRONIC MEDIA HAVE DONE A GOOD JOB OF COVERING THE DELIBERATIONS, DISCUSSIONS AND ISSUES RELATED TO THIS TOPIC. THE BOARD OF EDUCATION SHOULD ALSO BE COMMENDED FOR TACKLING THE TOPIC, FOR IT IS A VERY VOLATILE, CONTROVERSIAL AND PERSONAL SUBJECT, AND PERHAPS RATHER EASY TO "SWEEP UNDER THE RUG," SO TO SPEAK.

VERY FEW PEOPLE ARE NEUTRAL ON THIS ONE. THE SUBJECT ITSELF DEALS WITH SOME TRUTHS AND FACTS THAT MANY PARENTS AND SOME COMMUNITY MEMBERS WOULD REALLY RATHER NOT OPENLY DISCUSS. IN ADDITION, MANY EDUCATORS HAVE DIFFICULTY APPROACHING THE SUBJECT BECAUSE OF NOT WANTING TO BE IMPALED FOR TAKING STEPS WHICH THE PUBLIC IS NOT PREPARED TO ACCEPT. DESPITE THIS HESITANCY, EDUCATORS MUST HAVE THE COURAGE AND CONVICTION TO DO WHAT IS BEST FOR STUDENTS REGARDLESS OF THE CONTROVERSIAL NATURE THAT MAY SURROUND CERTAIN ISSUES. OUR PRODUCTS ARE KIDS (ADOLESCENTS AND PRE-ADOLESCENTS) AND IT IS THEIR BEHAVIOR THAT WE WISH TO ESPECIALLY INFLUENCE IN AN EFFORT TO DO WHAT WE CAN TO PREPARE THEM FOR THE FUTURE.

THERE IS NO PAINLESS ROUTE TO SOCIAL CHANGE AND CHANGE IS NEEDED BECAUSE OF SOME SERIOUS PROBLEMS SOCIETY IS CURRENTLY FACING IN THE AREAS OF SEXUAL AND CHILD ABUSE, AN AIDS EPIDEMIC, AND THE LARGE NUMBERS OF CHILDREN BEING BORN TO UNWED TEENAGERS. HISTORY WOULD INDICATE THAT SOCIETY HAS LOOKED TO THE PUBLIC SCHOOLS TO HELP SOLVE THE SOCIAL PROBLEMS IT FACES. BECAUSE OF THE PROBLEMS JUST MENTIONED, AND SOCIETY'S EXPECTATIONS OF THE PUBLIC SCHOOLS, IT APPEARS AS IF THE TASK OF THE PUBLIC SCHOOLS IS TO DO EVEN MORE IN HELPING CHILDREN GET OFF ON THE RIGHT FOOT, AND TO HELP AND SUPPORT BUSY, WORKING PARENTS MEET THE DEMANDS OF THE VERY IMPORTANT RESPONSIBILITY OF BEING A GOOD PARENT.

THE IMPORTANCE OF GOOD SCHOOLING FOR THE YOUNG DURING THEIR FORMATIVE YEARS CANNOT BE OVER-EMPHASIZED. FOR EDUCATION TO BE EFFECTIVE, TEACHERS, PARENTS, CHURCHES, THE COMMUNITY, THE ADMINISTRATION AND THE BOARD OF EDUCATION NEED TO ACTIVELY COLLABORATE AND WORK TOGETHER. THIS IS EXACTLY WHAT HAS BEEN HAPPENING DURING THE PAST YEAR IN THE DISCUSSION AND CONSIDERATION OF THIS PROGRAM. THE CONCLUSIONS REACHED BY THE BOARD OF EDUCATION, STAFF AND COMMUNITY ON THIS ISSUE SHOULD ANSWER THE QUESTION OF WHAT THIS COMMUNITY EXPECTS OF ITS PUBLIC SCHOOLS IN PROVIDING GOOD AND ACCURATE INFORMATION TO THE YOUNG ABOUT HUMAN GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT.

WE CAN NO LONGER AFFORD TO SIDESTEP FRANK, OPEN DISCUSSION ABOUT HUMAN GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT AND THE CONSEQUENCES OF BECOMING SEXUALLY ACTIVE DURING THE TEENAGE YEARS. WE NEED TO APPROACH DRUG EDUCATION WITH THE SAME KIND OF EMPHASIS. OUR YOUTH MUST ALSO BE MADE AWARE OF THE NEGATIVE CONSEQUENCES THAT WILL OCCUR IN USING AND EXPERIMENTING WITH DRUGS. THE IMPACT OF THESE PROBLEMS CHALLENGE THE LEADERSHIP OF THIS COMMUNITY TO DO MORE THAN JUST PREACH. IT IS MY BELIEF THAT THESE PROBLEMS CREATE THE NECESSITY FOR US TO DISPLAY THE COURAGE TO DEVELOP A POSITIVE EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM WHICH IS NOT PANIC-DRIVEN BUT IS DESIGNED TO SERVE IN THE BEST INTERESTS OF THE YOUNG WE WORK WITH.

I WOULD NOW LIKE TO HIGHLIGHT SOME OF THE PROGRAM IMPACTS OF THE RECOMMENDATIONS BEING CONSIDERED. FIRST, THE PROGRAM WILL NOT:

1. DEAL WITH OR PROVIDE INFORMATION ON ABORTION
2. DISCUSS HOMOSEXUALITY OR OTHER DEVIANT LIFE STYLES
3. PROMOTE BEING SEXUALLY ACTIVE NOR TELL STUDENTS IT IS "OK" TO ENGAGE IN SEXUAL ACTIVITIES
4. PENALIZE CHILDREN WHOSE PARENTS "OPT" THEM OUT OF THE PROGRAM
5. UTILIZE INFORMATION OR MATERIALS THAT PARENTS HAVE NOT HAD AN OPPORTUNITY TO PREVIEW
6. REPLACE THE CHURCHES' RESPONSIBILITY OR OBLIGATION TO TEACH AND INTERPRET WHAT IS RIGHT AND WHAT IS WRONG
7. PLACE A PRIMARY FOCUS ON SEX EDUCATION AT THE ELEMENTARY LEVEL

THE PROGRAM WILL:

1. ENCOURAGE STUDENTS TO SEE THE IMPORTANCE OF SAYING "NO" TO BEING SEXUALLY ACTIVE DURING THE FORMATIVE TEENAGE YEARS OF THEIR LIVES AND BEFORE MARRIAGE. IT WILL PROMOTE ABSTINENCE.
2. ENCOURAGE ADHERENCE TO FAMILY MORALS, VALUES AND BELIEF SYSTEMS
3. PROMOTE COMMUNICATION BETWEEN PARENTS AND CHILDREN
4. PROVIDE AMPLE OPPORTUNITIES FOR PARENTS TO BE INCLUDED IN THE PROGRAM
5. INCREASE SELF-CONTROL, SELF-ESTEEM AND THE TAKING OF RESPONSIBILITY FOR ONE'S ACTIONS AND BEHAVIORS
6. EXPAND SUGGESTIONS ON HOW TO PREVENT SEXUAL ABUSE RELATED TO RAPE, FAMILY VIOLENCE AND INCEST
7. PROVIDE A CLEAR OPPORTUNITY FOR PARENTS TO "OPT" THEIR CHILDREN OUT OF ANY OR ALL COMPONENTS OF THE PROGRAM
8. PROVIDE OPPORTUNITIES FOR SELF-ANALYSIS, SELF-AWARENESS, QUESTIONING, DISCUSSIONS AND IDEA SHARING TYPE ACTIVITIES
9. PROVIDE FACTUAL INFORMATION ABOUT THE EMOTIONAL FEELINGS ASSOCIATED WITH BOY/GIRL RELATIONSHIPS, DATING RELATIONSHIPS AND MARRIAGE
10. PRESENT THE EMOTIONAL, EDUCATIONAL, ECONOMIC AND HEALTH PROBLEMS ASSOCIATED WITH TEENAGE PREGNANCY
11. PROVIDE ROLE-PAYING ACTIVITIES AND EXAMPLES ON HOW TO SAY "NO" IN A PEER PRESSURE ENVIRONMENT
12. TEACH THAT SEXUAL ABSTINENCE IS REALLY THE ONLY 100% EFFECTIVE BIRTH CONTROL METHOD
13. ESTABLISH PARENT WORKSHOPS, TRAINING SESSIONS AND FORUMS ON TOPICS RELATED TO THE HUMAN GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM
14. INCLUDE AN ORGANIZED DRUG AND AIDS EDUCATION COMPONENT

THE PROGRAM BEING RECOMMENDED TODAY WILL BE ADMINISTERED CONSISTENTLY ACROSS THE TOTAL SCHOOL DISTRICT. IT HIGHLIGHTS THE DISTRICT'S FUNDAMENTAL BELIEF IN DOING ONLY WHAT IS BEST FOR OUR STUDENTS. THE PROGRAM WILL BE RESPONSIVE TO PARENTS AND SENSITIVE TO THE NEEDS OF CHILDREN. IT IS OUR HOPE THAT BY OFFERING THIS PROGRAM TO OUR STUDENTS, RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN PARENTS AND THEIR CHILDREN WILL BE STRENGTHENED AND AS A RESULT CHILDREN WILL MAKE BETTER PERSONAL DECISIONS ABOUT THEMSELVES AS THEY MOVE THROUGH THE ADOLESCENT AND PRE-ADOLESCENT YEARS OF THEIR LIVES.

I KNOW NOT WHETHER THE BOARD OF EDUCATION WILL VOTE TO IMPLEMENT THIS PROGRAM. HOWEVER, NO MATTER WHAT THE DECISION IS, THIS COMMUNITY HAS BEEN WELL SERVED BECAUSE OF THE HEIGHTENED SENSITIVITY THAT NOW EXISTS BECAUSE OF THE DELIBERATIONS AND DISCUSSIONS WHICH HAVE TAKEN PLACE DURING THE LAST 12 MONTHS.

I DO FIRMLY BELIEVE THE CHILDREN OF THIS SCHOOL DISTRICT NEED AND DESERVE THE OPPORTUNITY TO PARTICIPATE IN THE HUMAN GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM BEING RECOMMENDED.

Norbert J. Schuerman

APPENDIX 3

Sample Letters and Literature of  
Opponents of Sex Education

Omaha, Ne. 68104  
Feb. 17, 1987

Dr. Schuerman,

As Omaha Public School system residents we are writing with regards to the Human Growth and Development Majority Task Force recommendations for a comprehensive K-12 sex education program.

We believe sexual education is best provided by loving concerned parents who know when their child is ready for and needs sex ed. information.

Taxpayers pay teachers in public systems to teach academic subjects, and those should be taught without any personal preferences or prejudices slanting the material. It would be impossible for you to guarantee that the teachers would present the material, with a moral background that would be consistent with my views, given that there are teachers with diverse faiths & sometimes no faiths, that teach in a public school system.

Moral decisions should be left to parents. Teenagers are not ready to make decisions regarding personal sexual activity, and often submit to peer pressure. Peer pressure for premature sexual activity would be greater, if schools contained clinics that provided contraceptives.

We oppose any installation of sexual training or teaching in a public-tax supported system. The system must be subject to the residents that pay the taxes, and can not establish policies inconsistent to their wishes.

We request acknowledgement of this letter and ask a copy be sent to each school board member.

Thank you,



February 25, 1987

Copies to all members of the Omaha School Board

Re: Sex Education

Dear Ladies and Gentlemen:

After attending many of the hearings on the sex education where the majority of people gave excellent reasons as to why sex education should not be taught in the schools, and listening to the Task Force members on television Sunday, February 22, I would like to ask that you do not follow the Task Force's recommendations on sex education through the Human Growth and Development program.

Their suggestion of teaching traditional values and learning about family life itself is an excellent idea but the sexual development part of it should be left to the parent. Develop a program for the parents, teaching them how to accept their responsibilities in this area as well as the other areas of raising their children. Another program that would be of great benefit to the parent, child and Society as a whole would be one that would help parents and Society to inform the Media (all forms but especially television) to accept their responsibility in the material they thrust upon Society which effects adults as well as the children.

Many of us have wondered how the Task Force can recommend mandatory classes with a required credit and yet say the parents will be able to take their children out of the class. Something doesn't sound quite right?

As for the statement made on the television program by one of the Task Force members on not putting heavy emphasis on "saying no" to pre-marital sex for fear of offending some of the children of one parent families whose parent has an illicit sexual partner in the home, what about offending the children and parents who feel traditional values and "saying no" are very important for a happy, healthy and secure future?? NO ONE seems to be looking at the fact that a child who is from a one parent family needs to know that for a healthy and secure future for themselves and their country traditional values and "saying no" are very necessary tools! It appears people are more concerned about not offending them than giving these children the TOOLS that will really help them.

There are many of us who were offended by the manner in which the Task Force was formed, i.e., the ignoring of the large percentage of people who appeared before the Omaha School Board. The Task Force also ignored them in the hearings around the District. There were over two-thirds of the people at the hearings who spoke out against it and yet the Task Force recommended sex education in the schools and want to make it mandatory as well.

PLEASE DO NOT VOTE FOR IT.

Sincerely,

Omaha, Ne 68106

July 17, 1987

Dear Dr Schurman,

As a resident of the Omaha Public School District, and a parent of two teenagers, I wish to discourage you and the school board about supporting a comprehensive K-12 sex education program.

Most people agree that sex education of children is the responsibility of the parents of said children. Admittedly, there are many parents who fail for one reason or another to fulfill this duty. Maybe that is the area for public education: to help parents understand and deal with the subject.

I would be very anxious to have a sex ed. program presented to and required by all students. There are just too many variables. Only as an elective class with parental



approval should such a course be considered and then the instruction should be kept objective and general.

Nor should we have school-based adolescent clinics provided for our youth. These would place a stamp of approval and encourage adolescent sexual activities.

My moral values are based on the traditional Judeo-Christian code and are already being abused and disregarded by those of opposing values but who have access to captive audiences.

As an Omaha taxpayer, we pay dearly for public education and feel betrayed when this education is counterproductive. Basic academics should remain the focus of our public schools.

Sincerely,

# Ohio Digest

## Slide show on chastity gains in popularity, sales

From wire services

CINCINNATI — A family planning group is enjoying strong early sales of an educational slide show telling teen-agers that chastity is the only acceptable way to avoid pregnancy.

The 26-minute color slide show is aimed at a mixed audience of seventh- to 12th-graders, and outlines reasons why abstinence should be considered preferable to intercourse. Kevin Banet, information director for the Cincinnati Couple-to-Couple League that produced it, said 285 sets of the \$95 slide show have been sold. The league, the largest "natural family-planning" group in the country, hopes to sell up to 1,000 by year-end. Banet said the main market has been Catholic groups, but some Protestant organizations are becoming interested.

## Chastity Program for Youth

The Couple-to-Couple League, a natural family planning organization, has released an audio-visual program for teenagers that is designed to promote chastity. The half-hour program illustrates 17 reasons why youths should not get sexually active before marriage.

Called "The Springtime of Your Life," the program is designed for use in public and private schools and is



one of the first pro-chastity programs available, says John Kippley, president of C.C.L. and creator of the program.

According to Kippley, "Springtime" describes 12 "freedoms from" bad effects of pre-marital sex and five "freedoms to" that are gained by practicing chastity. Among the benefits explained are the freedom from guilt and from sexually transmitted diseases and the freedom to understand the true meaning of sex and to resist temptation.

Further information is available from C.C.L., P.O. Box 11084, Cincinnati, OH 45211.

# Chastity? It's Not a Dirty Word

By Richard Bautch

Special to the Register

CINCINNATI — Classroom lights dim as "The Springtime of Your Life" appears on a portable screen. Thus begins an unlikely pitch to sell teens on chastity. And here's the zinger: They're buying.

On paper, "Springtime" might inspire little more than yawns. The 140-slide, 25-minute program discusses chastity's 17 "freedoms." Not a very dramatic or appealing topic, right?

But the program's producer, the locally based Couple to Couple League, has perceived fo: years that

these freedoms are linked to some perennial teen concerns: friendship, good health and future happiness. Thus, with convincing statistics sprinkled throughout, the end product strikes a positive chord with many adolescents.

"Springtime" became available last Oct. 1 and has sold well — 170 copies to date, according to Kevin Banet, Couple to Couple League spokesman. Purchasers include parishes, schools and libraries; viewing teens have commended the program's straightforwardness and lucid arguments against premarital sex.

"The freedom from agonizing

decisions if you're pregnant," is the sort of freedom teens really want, Banet argued. "Springtime" recognizes the loneliness and sexual pressure teens often experience. But sex, it explains, is no solution. "It requires no character to give in to temptation, but to say no, you need self-control, the power and strength called chastity," the audio advises.

"It's that spiritual energy that makes you more free to do what you know is right."

Such virtues, Banet told the Register, should be advocated to teens diplomatically: "We don't tell kids they're too immature for sex; they

don't always see this. We ask them to save sex for marriage; this they can buy."

"Springtime" carefully documents its claims, examining the impact of contraceptives (20 years after their introduction earlier this century the divorce rate doubled), teen pregnancy (every Saturday night 2,000 girls conceive) and sexually transmitted diseases (new cases of gonorrhea rose 300 percent from 1960 to 1980 and syphilis cases rose by 260 percent).

Implicit throughout the program is what Banet called a "tough stand."

"Young people today are looking for a strong statement from someone in authority: 'Sex is good, but only in marriage,'" he said.

"Springtime" borrows heavily from Catholic moral teaching, but its inspiration, "traditional family values," is universal, according to Banet. Both Catholic and public schools have responded well to the program, Banet claimed, stressing that "There are many public school teachers who are aware of chastity's value."

## Couple to Couple League Slide Show Stresses Abstinence for Teens

A.L.L. About Issues/March 1984/33

CINCINNATI. The Couple to Couple League has released a new, pro-chastity slide program for teenagers that positively presents premarital chastity. "The Springtime of Your Life" is a half-hour, 140-slide program that describes 12 freedoms "from bad effects" and five "freedoms to" that are gained by practicing chastity.

The American Life Lobby staffers

who reviewed the program were impressed with the program's "very positive approach . . . avoiding the negatives that turn teens off." The program gives no specific religious reasons for chastity so as to encourage wide use in both private and public schools nationwide.

According to John Kippley, president of the league, the program "provides some ideas about sex, love and freedom that support the traditional view that sex is truly a marital activity."

For additional information or a trial screening, write the Couple to Couple League, P.O. Box 11084, Cincinnati, OH 45211.

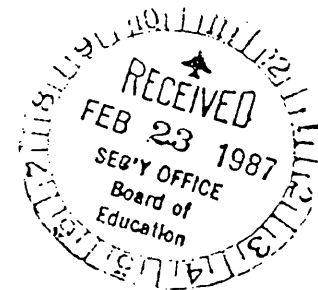
**ABOUT ISSUES**  
March 1984  
Vol. 6, No. 3

For further information, contact:  
Couple to Couple League, P.O. Box  
11084, Cincinnati, Ohio 45211.



APPENDIX 4

Sample Letters and Literature of  
Proponents of Sex Education



February 19, 1987

Dr. Joe Hanna  
Secretary, Board of Education  
3902 Davenport  
Omaha, NE 68131

Dear Dr. Hanna,

I am an Omaha Public Schools parent and taxpayer. I have read the Superintendent's Task Force on Human Growth and Development Report and Recommendations. I think the recommendations are sound and worthwhile for the children in our district and I urge you to take action on the recommendations so that they can be incorporated as soon as possible.

I believe that your curriculum should be mandatory (with dissenting parents able to "opt out") so that the curriculum reaches children district-wide who need information and the teachers get district support. I think the Task Force was made up of community leaders and concerned parents whose deliberate hours of work provided a good blueprint for O.P.S. I appreciate the emphasis on a strong parent component recognizing this is a shared topic between family/school and religion. In short, I believe the curriculum recommendations are appropriate, realistic and integrated.

Sincerely,

DOCTOR STANEK, LADIES AND GENTLEMEN:

I WISH TO SPEAK IN SUPPORT OF THE TASK FORCE RECOMMENDATIONS ON THEIR PROPOSALS FOR INSTRUCTION IN OUR SCHOOLS IN HUMAN GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT. MY WIFE AND I RETURNED TO OMAHA IN 1947, OUR FAMILY HAS GROWN UP IN OMAHA AND ATTENDED DUNDEE, LEWIS AND CLARK AND CENTRAL HIGH. DURING THIS TIME I HAVE BEEN PRIVILEGED TO PRACTICE OBSTETRICS AND GYNECOLOGY IN OMAHA. I AM SURE THE 40 YEARS OF PRACTICE IN OBSTETRICS HAS EXPOSED ME TO GREATER NUMBERS OF TEENAGE SEXUAL PROBLEMS THAN MOST FAMILIES OR GROUPS MIGHT SEE; HOWEVER, I AM IMPRESSED AND CONCERNED WITH THE INCREASING NUMBERS OF TEENAGE PREGNANCIES WE ARE SEEING! STUDIES HAVE SHOWN THAT ABOUT 1,000,000 TEENS BECOME PREGNANT EACH YEAR (96 OF 1000 GIRLS AGE 15-19). OF THIS TOTAL SOME 400,000 HAVE ABORTIONS, 458,000 KEEP THEIR BABIES AND 12,000 CHOOSE TO ADOPT THEIR BABIES. NEBRASKA IS NO EXCEPTION WITH APPROXIMATELY 10 % OF OUR PREGNANCIES OCCURRING IN GIRLS UNMARRIED AND UNDER AGE 20. THESE NUMBERS SHOULD DISTURB EVERYONE IN THE ROOM AND ANYTHING THAT WE CAN DO THAT WILL MAKE AN IMPACT ON THE PROBLEM SHOULD BE DONE!

IN ADDITION TO THE PROBLEM OF TEENAGE PREGNANCY I WOULD LIKE TO BRIEFLY DISCUSS ANOTHER PROBLEM WHICH I CONSIDER OF EQUAL OR PERHAPS GREATER SIGNIFICANCE WITH WORRISOME LONG RANGE IMPLICATIONS. THIS WOULD GENERALLY COME UNDER THE HEADING OF SEXUALLY TRANSMITTED DISEASES. MUCH HAS BEEN WRITTEN AND TALKED ABOUT CONCERNING AIDS AND HERPES AS A SERIOUS AND EVEN LIFE THREATENING PROBLEM; HOWEVER, THERE ARE OTHER DISEASES THAT TOO MAY HAVE LIFE

THREATENING IMPLICATIONS. FOR APPROXIMATELY TEN YEARS I HAVE WORKED IN A CLINIC AT THE UNIVERSITY OF NEBRASKA MEDICAL COLLEGE STUDYING AND TREATING DISEASES OF THE MOUTH OF THE WOMB - THE CERVIX. MEDICAL LITERATURE SHOWS IT TO BE INCREASING APPARENT THAT A LARGE PER CENT OF THESE DISEASES ARE A DIRECT RESULT OF FREQUENT, UNPROTECTED INTERCOURSE WITH MULTIPLE PARTNERS. IN OUR CLINIC WE ARE REGULARLY SEEING THE YOUNG 15, 16, 17 YEAR OLDS WITH SEVERE AND RECURRING CHANGES IN THE CELLS OF THE CERVIX WHICH REQUIRE BIOPSY DIAGNOSIS AND OFTEN EXTENSIVE TREATMENT. SUBSTANTIALLY INCREASED RISK OF CERVICAL CANCER IN OUR YOUNGER AGE GROUPS ARE BECOMING EVER APPARENT!

ONLY THROUGH POINTED AND PERSISTENT EDUCATIONAL EFFORTS FROM ALL SOURCES, OUR HOMES, OUR SCHOOLS, OUR YOUTH GROUPS AND EVERYONE ELSE WILL WE BE ABLE TO MAKE AN IMPACT ON THESE FIGURES. WE CAN'T HAVE TOO MUCH EDUCATION AND I STRONGLY URGE THAT THE RECOMMENDATIONS OF OUR TASK FORCE BE SUPPORTED, AND THE PROGRAM INITIATED IMMEDIATELY AND UNDATED AS THE NEED REQUIRES. I WOULD HOPE THAT MEANINGFUL STATISTICS BE GENERATED BY THE OMAHA SCHOOL BOARD AS THIS PROGRAM IS UNDERTAKEN AND THIS INFORMATION USED TO ENHANCE AND IMPROVE THE EDUCATIONAL ENDEAVORS IN THE FUTURE. IF EVEN ONE PREGNANCY OR WORSE DISEASE COULD BE PREVENTED THROUGH THIS PROGRAM YOUR EFFORTS WOULD BE WORTH WHILE AND THE SAVINGS TO SOCIETY AS A WHOLE WOULD GO FAR IN PAYING FOR THIS TYPE OF TRAINING IN OUR SCHOOLS. THANK YOU FOR YOUR ATTENTION.

RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED

March 3, 1987

Dr. Joe E. Hanna, Secretary  
Board of Education  
Omaha Public Schools  
3902 Davenport Street  
Omaha, NE 68131

Dear Dr. Hanna:

The Executive Committee of the Medical/Dental Staff of Bishop Clarkson Memorial Hospital has discussed the Report of the Superintendent's Task Force on Human Growth and Development. The Committee wishes to commend the Task Force for developing the document.

We understand and respect the concern among certain citizens who, primarily on moral grounds, have expressed negative opinions on the program. Nevertheless, the Executive Committee of the Clarkson Medical/Dental Staff approves and supports the program as outlined and urges that it be implemented.

Sincerely,

Executive Committee

cc Dr. Joseph Gaughan, Assistant Superintendent,  
Instruction and Special Education Services

Metro Omaha Medical Society



**west hills** presbyterian church

PHONE: 402/391-0788  
3015 SOUTH 82ND AVENUE  
OMAHA, NEBRASKA 68124

March 5, 1987

Mr. Joe Hanna  
Secretary Board of Education  
3902 Davenport  
Omaha, NE. 68131

Dear Mr. Hanna:

In light of some of the critical articles in the World Herald from pastoral colleagues I want to affirm the work of the Omaha Public Schools Task Force on Human Growth and Development. I believe that the curriculum recommendation regarding sex education in the Omaha Public Schools is very appropriate and much needed. The Task Force has been more than sensitive to hearing concerns and insights from everyone in the community. I am also confident that there will be adequate monitoring of the program in the selection of speakers and curriculum. I encourage the Task Force and the Board of Education to continue in the direction set by the Task Force despite some of the criticisms being received from a minority of local clergy in our community. I heartily support the findings and the direction of the Task Force.

I thank the Task Force for the time and effort which they have devoted to this endeavor.

Sincerely,

West Hills Presbyterian Church

# A GALLUP POLL:

## "SEX EDUCATION SHOULD BE IN OUR SCHOOLS"

Most American adults believe sex education classes should be included in high school instructional program, covering such topics as birth control, venereal disease, and the biology of reproduction. That's one of the findings of the 17th Annual Gallup Poll of The Public's Attitudes Toward the Public Schools, sponsored by Phi Delta Kappa, an international fraternity of public school educators. The results were printed in the September 1985 issue of the **Phi Delta Kappan**.

The sample consisted of 1,528 adults from across the nation, surveyed through personal, in-home interviews during the period of May 17-26, 1985.

### Sex Education

The 1985 findings show an increase in support for sex education in both the elementary school and the high school since the last survey on the subject, conducted in 1981. In 1981, 70% supported including sex education in the high school curriculum, and 45% favored sex education for elementary school students. Today, the comparable figures are 75% for high school and 52% for elementary school.

The questions:

**Do you feel the public high schools should or should not include sex education in their instructional program?**

	National Totals	No Children In School	Public School Parents	Nonpublic School Parents
	%	%	%	%
Should	75	72	81	80
Should not	19	21	16	15
Don't know	6	7	3	5

**Do you feel the public elementary schools should or should not include sex education in grades 4 through 8?**

	National Totals	No Children In School	Public School Parents	Nonpublic School Parents
	%	%	%	%
Should	52	50	54	64
Should not	43	43	43	31
Don't know	5	7	3	5

	In High School		In Elementary School	
	1985	1981	1985	1981
	%	%	%	%
Should	75	70	52	45
Should not	19	22	43	48
Don't know	6	8	5	7

## Topics to Be Covered in Sex Education

When those respondents who support the idea of sex education are asked to indicate which topics should be covered, large differences emerge between the topics deemed acceptable for high school and those deemed acceptable for the elementary classroom. The sole exception is the biology of reproduction, which more than eight Americans in 10 feel should be covered at both levels.

More than 80% of the respondents favor covering the topics of venereal disease and birth control at the high school level, but slightly less than 50% feel that these topics should be included in the elementary sex education curriculum. About six Americans in 10 favor discussing premarital sex, the nature of sexual intercourse, and abortion at the high school level. At the elementary level, inclusion of those topics is favored by only 34%, 45%, and 28% respectively.

The question:

**Which of the following topics, if any, should be included in high school? In elementary school?**

Should be Included In High School	National Totals	No Children In School	Public School Parents	Nonpublic School Parents
	%	%	%	%
Birth Control	85	85	83	88
Venereal disease	84	85	81	89

	National Totals	No Children In School	Public School Parents	Nonpublic School Parents
	%	%	%	%
Biology of reproduction	82	82	79	90
Premarital sex	62	63	59	69
Nature of sexual intercourse	61	62	57	73
Abortion	60	61	57	68
Homosexuality	48	48	45	62

Should be Included In Elementary School	National Totals	No Children In School	Public School Parents	Nonpublic School Parents
	%	%	%	%
Biology of reproduction	89	87	91	99
Venereal disease	49	50	45	60
Birth control	48	49	44	51
Nature of sexual intercourse	45	48	37	54
Premarital sex	34	35	28	48
Abortion	28	28	26	42
Homosexuality	28	29	22	41

	Topics That Should be Included			
	In High School		In Elementary	
	1985	1981	1985	1981
	%	%	%	%
Birth Control	85	79	48	45
Venereal disease	84	84	49	52
Biology of reproduction	82	77	89	83
Premarital sex	62	60	34	40
Nature of sexual intercourse	61	53	45	36
Abortion	60	54	28	26
Homosexuality	48	45	28	33

Strongest recommendations to date issued:

## NAS takes on problem of teenage pregnancy

Last December the National Academy of Sciences (NAS) issued what perhaps are the most emphatic and far-reaching policy recommendations to date on the problem of teenage pregnancy, thus aiding immeasurably the efforts of ACOG and others to address the problem.

The recommendations derived from a two-year, \$600,000 study of the problem directed by the National Research Council, which is a research arm of the NAS. Chartered by the U.S. Congress in 1916, the Council has the responsibility for examining questions of science and technology at the request of the federal government. Funding for the project was provided by five major foundations: the Ford Foundation, Rockefeller Foundation, William and Flora Hewlett Foundation, Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, and Charles Stewart Mott Foundation.

Actually probing the matter was a 15-member panel of physicians, social scientists, and public health clinicians that included Ezra C. Davidson Jr., MD, who is secretary of ACOG and chairman of its Committee on Adolescent Health Care, as well as Judith E. Jones of Columbia University's Center for Population and Family Health, who also sits on the ACOG committee.

Under strategies issued by the panel, responsibility for stemming the tide of teenage pregnancy, abortion, and childbearing, estimated to be higher here than in any other industrialized nation, would be shared by a number of public and private entities that include both government and volunteer social service agencies and programs, local school systems, public health clinics, hospitals, and others. About a million U.S. teenagers become pregnant each year, or 96 per 1,000 girls aged 15-19. Of that total, approximately 400,000 have abortions, 458,000 keep their babies, and 12,000 offer their babies for adoption.

Adolescents who become pregnant do not belong to any single ethnic group, geographic location, or socioeconomic level, the panel emphasized. "Like the teenagers they seek to serve, programs must reflect many different values and attitudes and must be acceptable to many different cultural and economic backgrounds," a news release publicizing the panel's recommendations said.

But where trade-offs must occur, the panel urged that highest priority be given to those at highest risk, including young adolescents and those from the most socially and economically disadvantaged backgrounds, for whom the consequences

of early unintended pregnancy and birth are apt to be most severe. Among those consequences, the panel cited, are a heightened risk of pregnancy complications and poor birth outcomes, subsequent pregnancy, and limited educational and employment opportunities leading to a cycle of poverty and welfare dependency. There would be additional advantage to society at large, since it is estimated that current federal assistance under various programs to the families of teenage parents amounts to \$16.6 billion each year. Nationally, more than half of all Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC) payments support families in which the mother gave birth as a teenager.

Three overriding goals set forth by the panel include first, the reduction of adolescent pregnancy; second, the provision of alternatives to adolescent childbearing and parenting; and third, the promotion of positive outcomes for adolescent parents and their children. Within that framework, there were several specific policy recommendations in each area.

### Contraception

- Contraceptive services should be available to teenagers at low or no cost, and providers should make efforts to improve the effectiveness of their programs by 1) enhancing their outreach efforts to encourage earlier use of contraceptive methods; 2) exploring more effective counseling approaches to encourage compliance; and 3) enhancing their follow-up of clinic patients to track their contraceptive use.

• School systems, in cooperation with various health care and youth-serving agencies, should further develop and refine comprehensive school-based clinic models for implementation and evaluation in schools with large, high-risk populations. (Panel members pointed out that such clinics, in addition to making services more accessible, hold greater potential for integrating male involvement since school-aged boys attend such clinics for other health care needs.)

• Sex education programs should include information on methods of contraception, how to use them, and how to obtain them.

• Use of the contraceptive pill is the safest and most effective means of birth control for sexually active adolescents, and aggressive public education is needed to dispel myths about its health risks for girls in this age group. Contraceptive service programs

should explore nonmedical distribution models.

- Promoting condom use among young men may result in greater use of contraceptives by teenagers at first intercourse or soon thereafter and holds the added benefit of protecting against sexually transmitted diseases. Distribution programs should be developed, implemented, and evaluated.
- Efforts should be undertaken to develop and test the effects on contraceptive use and unintended pregnancy of paid promotional messages for contraceptives that are directed at sexually active adolescents.

### Alternatives to adolescent childbearing and parenting

- There is at present no scientific basis for restricting the availability of abortion to adolescents. There should be no compromise in the medical and personal supportive care of the 400,000 adolescents who have an abortion each year. Abortion services should include both decision counseling and contraceptive counseling for adolescents. Whenever possible, supportive services should also be available for the parents of pregnant teenagers.
- Minor adolescents should be encouraged, but not required, to involve their parents and partners in the decision-making process. Evidence shows that to require minor teenagers to seek parental consent often causes them to delay abortions, with attendant health risks.
- Relevant public agencies, in cooperation with the private sector, should explore ways of strengthening adoption services. (Approximately 12,000 adolescent mothers each year choose this alternative. The panel found that such services are often fragmented and poorly coordinated and frequently focus on the prenatal period but overlook the young woman's need for support and assistance following delivery.)

### Promotion of positive outcomes for adolescent parents and their children

- At each step along the path from sexual initiation to parenting, regardless of whether one might wish that step had not been reached, the girl or woman should be treated with the same dignity, confidentiality, kindness, and excellence of health care that are due any patient.

(over)

- Appropriate health and nutrition services should be provided, including prenatal, labor, and delivery care for pregnant adolescents and regular and emergency pediatric care for the children of teenage mothers, through Medicaid; the Early and Periodic Screening, Diagnosis, and Treatment Program; and other federal and state maternal and child health programs.
- Contraceptive services should be available and accessible to adolescent parents at low or no cost. (The panel points out the substantial risk of a repeat pregnancy among this group.)
- A broad array of special education programs and services for pregnant and parenting teenagers should be developed and implemented to assist these young people in completing their education. In addition, age-appropriate employment programs should be expanded for pregnant girls and teenage parents, both male and female. Model child care programs that are targeted towards their needs and parenting

programs should be developed by schools and other community organizations.

Two of the panel's recommendations—those concerned with contraceptive advertising and parental notification provisions in abortion statutes—would appear to support efforts ACOG has taken in the past. ACOG has adopted a stance specifically in favor of contraceptive advertising on television and it was influential in convincing the three major networks to, for the first time, air public service announcements with a message about pregnancy prevention. And, in a current court case, ACOG has argued against a mandatory parental notification prior to teenage abortion on the basis of the health consequences that might result from the delay.

*The NAS report is titled Risking the Future: Adolescent Sexuality, Pregnancy, and Childbirth. To order the report, send \$21.95 (includes shipping and handling) to National Academy Press, 2101 Constitution Ave., NW, Washington, DC 20418.*

## ACOG to assume role with sex education curricula, outreach

Last May ACOG President Harry S. Jonas, MD, announced his commitment to reducing the need for abortion, especially among teenagers (see July 1986 ACOG Newsletter). An important part of his plan was sex education, and Dr. Jonas envisioned a role for ACOG in developing sex education programs.

A package of informational materials is being put together by ACOG's Committee on Adolescent Health Care for use by ob-gyns and nurses who are asked to speak in schools or to parents or community groups. Already a similar program has been tried successfully by Ortho Pharmaceutical Corporation (see information below). In the Ortho project, about 60 ob-gyns spoke to students on contraception and some sexually transmitted diseases. The ACOG package should be available in the next few months.

The Adolescent Health Care Committee has also been examining many sex education curricula and talking to other educational groups to determine how ACOG might be of the most help in convincing school systems to start or to upgrade sex education programs.

Sex education for adolescents, and even for younger children, finally appears to be receiving greater acceptance from the public and some government officials, notably U.S. Surgeon General C. Everett Koop, MD.

"The threat of AIDS [acquired immunodeficiency syndrome] should be sufficient to permit a sex education curriculum with a heavy emphasis on prevention of AIDS and other sexually transmitted diseases," Dr. Koop wrote in his recent report on AIDS. He urged that AIDS information be provided at "the lowest grade possible as part of any health and hygiene program" and wrote that "there is now no doubt that we need sex education in schools. . . ."

In a previously reported Gallup poll (see May 1985 ACOG Newsletter), 78% of the respondents approved of sex education before high school, and about half approved of it for children in elementary school (grades 1-6).

"Straight Talk," a program sponsored by Ortho Pharmaceutical Corporation, sends ob-gyns into high school classrooms to talk about sexuality and contraception. Educators interested in bringing the program to their community may call (800) 722-7786 for more information.

## Newest PSA achieves media success

The second ACOG public service announcement (PSA) aimed at preventing unintended pregnancy among teenagers is following in the footsteps of the first, the "I intend" announcement. If success can be measured in terms of media acceptance, then the latest PSA is doing its job quite well. The spot has run on more than 275 local TV stations and over 100 radio stations. The Spanish Information Network has also picked up the spot, airing it on over 20 independent stations and 200 satellite pickups. On cable, MTV is among the channels running the announcement.

Throughout 1986 an average of 100-150 calls were made each day to the toll-free telephone number (1-800-NOTENDS), from which *The Facts*, an ACOG-produced brochure on contraception, may be ordered. The first PSA had the benefit of airing during *The Cosby Show*, and the number of calls to the 800 telephone number rose shortly after the announcement aired, reflecting the show's wide audience. The second announcement did not enjoy that peak air time but still generated about the same number of calls over a year, indicating that it did well on its own momentum.

The success of the first two PSAs



has led to plans for a third. Creative approaches are now being explored for an announcement which will focus on parents and what they can do to help their sons and daughters prevent unintended pregnancy.

Teen Age Pregnancy Fact Sheet  
Douglas County/1985

There were 697 births to teenagers in Douglas County in 1985.

26% of these were second births

Approximately one out of every 10 women in Douglas County in 1985 giving birth was under the age of 19.

Nearly 90% of all teens having babies in Douglas County were unmarried.

68% of white teens were unmarried  
96% of black teens were unmarried

17% of teens delivered a low birth weight infant, compared to 6.5% in the general population.

Teenage mothers are twice as likely to deliver a low birth weight baby as are non-teens.

Low birth weight babies are at high risk of suffering from cerebral palsy, seizure disorders, mental retardation, chronic disease, or death.

55% of all infant deaths among teens were related to low birth weight.

The IMR among black teens was 38.0 (The IMR for all black mothers was 23.0)

The IMR among white teens was 18.0 (The IMR for all white mothers was 9.0)

The infant mortality rate among teens is twice that of non-teens.

Costs of Teen Pregnancy

80% of teen mothers fail to complete their education.

Children born to single teen mothers are ten times more likely to be raised in poverty than are children with non-teen mothers.

The Nebraska Department of Social Services estimates that it costs the tax payers \$60,480 to raise one child on ADC only. (This excludes medicaid costs)

In 1985, over five million dollars was spent on ADC and medicaid payments to adolescent parents in Douglas and Sarpy Counties.

It is further estimated that adolescent headed families spend an average of \$150/month more in medicaid expenses than do other ADC families.

APPENDIX 5

Human Growth and Development Forums

HUMAN GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT  
COMMUNITY FORUMS

<u>School</u>	<u>Present</u>	<u>Speakers</u>	<u>Parents</u>	<u>OPS Residents</u>
Beveridge	49	17	15	14
Bryan Jr.	37	13	10	12
Hale	18	8	5	8
Lewis & Clark	40	22	14	21
Mann	4	4	2	4
Marrs	21	10	7	10
McMillan	20	12	7	11
Monroe	60	22	15	20
Morton	40	13	11	13
Norris	35	24	15	22
TOTALS	324	145	101	135

APPENDIX 6

Superintendent's Recommendations  
Regarding Human Growth and Development



Omaha Public Schools  
Department of Instruction and Special Education  
March 23, 1987

Superintendent's Recommendations Regarding Human Growth and Development Program

Concepts and Outcomes

It is recommended that the concepts and outcomes provided in the Task Force report be adopted. These concepts and outcomes would provide the framework within which the topics inherent in discussion of Human Growth, Development and Sexuality would take place in Grades K-12. It is also recommended that the Task Force definition of Human Growth and Development be adopted. I believe it important for all to realize that the vast majority of the concepts and outcomes do not deal with human sexuality. Suggesting these outcomes are all directed toward sex education minimizes the importance of physical, social, and emotional growth as it relates to the children and youth of our community. These outcomes are replete with the concept of responsible decision making and the vital need for self-control. So there can be no mistake regarding the intent of this recommendation, I wish to make it clear to the public and the Board that school based or school affiliated health clinics are not part of this recommendation.

Participation Requirement

It is my recommendation that this program be considered required for all students with two exceptions.

The first exception is regarding Concept VI: Human Reproduction Is a Natural Method of Continuing the Human Species. This concept is targeted for students, Grades 4-6. Students will be exposed to this concept only upon approval from their parents/legal guardians (opt in).

The second exception is that students whose parents/guardians wish them not to participate in any specific part of this program for any given year may do so by conveying their desires in writing to the principal of the building that their student attends. Prior notification will be provided to parents/guardians regarding this option. At the senior high school level, though participation is required, lack of participation based on this exception will not negatively affect a student's graduation status.

Implementation Schedule

It is recommended the program of instruction in Human Growth and Development be implemented during the next two school years. During the 1987-88 school year, staff attention needs to be focused on community information forums, staff identification, staff development, teacher training, parent information programs, and parent training programs. In addition, staff, community members and the Board of Education will be selecting materials and resources to be utilized for instruction. Staff and community will also be developing concept and outcome statements for instruction in drug education as well as the selection of appropriate textbooks and materials for this topic.

Existing programs relative to Human Growth and Development will continue during the 1987-88 school year. During the second semester of the 1987-88 school year Concept I: Self Protection Can Be Learned At an Early Age, will be implemented for first and third grades district-wide.

Program Expenditures

The estimated financial impact of this proposal over the next two years is \$180,000. Forty thousand dollars will be required for 1987-88 to implement the self protection program as well as the parent/staff training. An additional \$140,000 will be required to implement the suggested program Grades 4-12. These funds will be utilized for textbooks, materials, parent workshops and staff training and the employment of two full time equivalent nurses to implement the elementary program Grades 4-6 and the drug education program K-6.

Existing Supplemental Material

It is recommended that a selection committee be formed immediately to identify a possible alternative to the book Finding My Way currently used to supplement the textbook used in the high school elective course Family Living.

Textbook/Material Approval

All textbooks and supplementary books for use in this program will be presented to the Board of Education for review and approval.

Textbook/Material Recommendations

An ongoing textbook and material selection committee should be formed and charged with reviewing and recommending to the Board of Education all materials to be used in the Human Growth and Development Program. This committee will be organized with a steering committee and three subcommittees (Elementary Subcommittee, Junior High Subcommittee, Senior High Subcommittee). The approved concept and outcome statements will serve as the basis for material review. Specific bylaws will be developed for this committee, and will contain guidelines for membership and selection to the committee.

ELEMENTARY SCHOOL HUMAN GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT

The Human Growth and Development program will encompass the scope and sequence as outlined in the Superintendent's Task Force Report. As a result of the Superintendent's Drug Coordinating Committee report, a particular emphasis will be placed on the learning outcomes dealing with drug education K-6.

Program Content

The elementary program will be made up of two major concepts and eight expected outcomes for Grades K-3 and four major concepts and fourteen outcomes for Grades 4-6.

There are no recommended changes in concepts or in expected outcomes as presented by the Superintendent's Task Force on Human Growth and Development.

Kindergarten - Third Grade Program

Parent/Student Participation Options

Participation in Concept I, Self Protection Can Be Learned At an Early Age, will be mandatory for all students with an opt out provision by parents/guardians for their children.

Programs on child sexual abuse will be presented in cooperation with community agencies such as the Omaha Girls Club, (Kidability), the YWCA (Get Away Gang), and the River City Camp Fire Council (Bubylonian Encounter). This recommendation differs from the Task Force report, in that grades one and three will be the district's instructional focus. Schools in conjunction with their community organizations will choose which programs they want to offer. All schools will have as a part of their first and third grade curriculum the district supported and required child sexual abuse prevention program.

Implementation - Time Line

Concepts I above, and II, Human Beings Need Families, will be implemented during the second semester of the 1987-88 school year. Concept II is infused in the health, social studies, and science curriculum.

Information Component - Staff, Parents, Community

First semester 1987-88 will focus on the establishment of, 1) staff information forums and in-service on the total program and specific program needs for K-3, 2) community information forums, to describe the total Human Growth and Development program, 3) parent Human Growth and Development workshops by schools (offered twice a year, in the fall and second semester) and 4) parent information presentations for Grades K-3, 4-6.

### Financial Implications

In order to provide consistency, continuity and equity in a district-supported program on child sexual abuse, monies need to be targeted for 1) support approved program offerings, 2) extra duty pay for teachers to attend in-service classes, and 3) for parent training programs as stipulated by the identified prevention program models, and 4) the purchase of student materials and/or programs which require a fee. Projected expenditure - \$40,000.

### Grade 4-6 Program

#### Parent/Student Participation Options

Concept III: Friendships Are a Vital Part Of Growing Up; Concept IV: The Importance of the Family and Each Member, and Concept V: Individuals Develop at Different Rates, outcomes A, B and C, are infused in the health, social studies, science, physical education and language arts curriculum. Participation in the instruction of these concepts is mandatory, with an opt out provision for parents and students.

Outcome D, To understand the importance of proper personal hygiene under Concept V, and all outcomes under Concept VI: Human Reproduction Is a Natural Method of Continuing the Human Species, are a part of the maturation unit to be presented by the school nurse. Because of the unique nature of elementary students, the established practice and precedent of obtaining parent permission for student participation, the wide variance in the onset of maturation, and the 98-100% present participation in the viewing of the maturation film, it is recommended that the once a week, four to six week course for this subject matter for fourth, fifth and sixth grades be on an opt in basis.

#### Implementation - Time Line

During the 1987-88 school year, a committee composed of staff, parents, and community will serve on a material selection committee to identify audio visual and print materials to be utilized in the maturation unit.

Implementation of the Human Growth and Development program for Grades 4-6 will begin in the fall of the 1988-89 school year.

### Information Component

Staff, parents, and community will be involved in on-going information forums. In-service for staff along with Community Information Forums, Parent Human Growth and Development Workshops, and Parent Information Presentations will focus on Grades 4-6 specifically and on the K-6 program as a whole.

### Financial Implications

Implementation of the Maturation Unit, plus the Drug Education recommendations, will necessitate the following financial considerations:

1. Staffing - The equivalent of 2 FTE for nurses
2. Student materials, audio visual aids
3. Extra duty pay - Staff In-service - Training
4. Parent Workshops
5. Community Information Forums

Projected Expenditures - \$60,000

### JUNIOR AND SENIOR HIGH HUMAN GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT

### Recommendations

The equivalent of a nine week course is recommended at both the seventh and eighth grade levels for all junior high school students. Parents/guardians may "opt" their child out of all or any portion of the junior high Human Growth and Development courses. At the senior high school level, all students will enroll in a one semester Human Growth and Development course during grades 10 through 12. Parents/guardians, again, may "opt" their child out of this course and this graduation requirement would be waived for this student.

No changes are recommended relating to the concepts, expected learning outcome statement, and objectives identified in the Task Force report at the junior and senior high school level. Concepts and outcome statements will guide all instruction at these two levels.

#### Implementation

During the 1987-88 school year, a Secondary Human Growth and Development Curriculum Study and Materials Selection Committee will be organized to develop the instructional program for both the two junior high courses and the senior high course. The existing concepts and expected outcome statements will be carefully examined by the Curriculum Study and Materials Selection Committee to incorporate and include information on drug and alcohol education as recommended by the Drug Coordinating Committee. If necessary, outcome statements will be added to include appropriate drug information and prevention instruction. The selection and recommendation of materials to be used in the developed Human Growth and Development courses at both the junior and senior high school levels will be the responsibility of this committee. Approval for use of materials by the Board of Education will be targeted for the spring of 1988. The junior and senior high courses will be implemented during the 1988-89 school year.

#### Information Forums

During the second semester of the 1987-88 school year, it is recommended that Human Growth and Development Information Forums be scheduled for community members, parents and staff. The purpose of these forums will be to provide a general overview of the program on a K-12 basis. The forums will be designed to involve parents, staff and community members in open, informative and supportive discussions dealing with the school district's program and respond to questions asked by members of these groups. Initially, these forums will be held twice during the school year. Materials selected for classroom use will be available for review by parents, staff and other interested community members at the forums.

#### Parent Workshops

It is recommended that parent workshops be designed to specifically respond to issues and content included in the junior and senior high school Human Growth and Development courses. A central purpose of these parent workshops will be to help participants understand the physical, emotional, cultural and social aspects of human growth and development, as well as to communicate their own values about related issues more clearly and effectively to their children.

Parent workshops will be designed and structured based upon the most pressing concerns of parents in the area of adolescent human growth and development. Community resources and agencies dealing in such areas in health, adolescent counseling, and drug prevention will be involved in the development of parent workshops. The intent of these workshops is to help parents by providing them assistance and support when dealing with their adolescent child in sensitive areas such as human sexuality and drug abuse.

#### Staff Identification

Because the teacher is considered the single most important factor in determining the success of a program, it is important to select respected teachers who are highly motivated, properly trained, and interested in being trained in the area of human growth and development. Teachers being considered to teach the junior and senior high courses should also be capable of establishing rapport with students, and exhibit sensitivity to student concerns.

Each junior and senior high school principal will be asked during the 1987-88 school year to identify teachers on staff who possess characteristics and qualities necessary to provide effective instruction in human growth and development. Staff Personnel Services will also assist in the identification process.

Staff Development

Teachers selected to teach the junior and senior high courses will be involved in teacher training and in-service activities on a regular basis during the second semester and summer of the 1987-88 school year. In order for in-service training to be effective, it must prepare teachers to implement a Human Growth and Development Program that is responsive to student needs and parent concerns.

Videotapes will be developed to be used on an ongoing basis with those teachers involved. Videotapes will deal with teaching strategies and techniques and available to be "checked out" by teachers. Staff teaching at the same grade level from across the school district will meet and learn together. Staff from the Department of Instruction and Special Education Services will be responsible for planning and developing staff development activities.

Financial Implication

The following are estimates of expenditures necessary to implement the recommended secondary Human Growth and Development courses. No increases in teaching staff is anticipated.

Junior High (Grade 7 and 8)

- \$40,000 per year
  - . textbooks and materials
  - . parent workshops (extra duty pay)
  - . information forums (extra duty pay)
  - . teacher training (extra duty pay)

Senior High

- \$40,000 per year
  - . textbooks and materials
  - . parent workshops (extra duty pay)
  - . information forums (extra duty pay)
  - . teacher training (extra duty pay)

Prepared by:  
Norbert J. Schuerman  
Superintendent of Schools

Approved by:  
Norbert J. Schuerman  
Superintendent of School

Joseph P. Gaughan  
Assistant Superintendent  
Instruction and Special Education Services

Richard Werkheiser  
Director, Secondary Education

Joyce Buckner  
Director, Elementary Education

APPENDIX 7

Superintendent's Task Force on Human Growth  
and Development Report and Recommendations

SUPERINTENDENT'S TASK FORCE ON HUMAN GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT  
REPORT AND RECOMMENDATIONS

December 22, 1986

Joseph P. Gaughan, Chair  
Richard Werkheiser, Co-Chair

Omaha Public Schools  
Instruction and Special Education Services  
December 22, 1986

SUPERINTENDENT'S TASK FORCE ON HUMAN GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT

On December 2, 1985, the Board of Education moved that a "representative school community Task Force on Human Growth and Development Instruction be created. This Task Force will develop a systematic approach to human growth and development offerings for possible inclusion and use in the Omaha Schools. Particular emphasis shall be addressed to students between the ages of ten and sixteen and concerted efforts are to be made to seek community viewpoints regarding the subject."

Dr. Norbert Schuerman, Superintendent of Schools, appointed the membership of the Task Force representing the varying aspects of the Omaha community. (See Appendix A). The Task Force began its deliberations on February 5, 1986 as "The Superintendent's Task Force on Human Growth and Development." The Superintendent's charge to the committee can be found in Appendix B. In general he outlined the responsibilities of the Task Force as follows:

1. To examine carefully our current program and other districts' programs.
2. Analyze whether the program should be expanded, reduced, or maintained.
3. Keep in mind what must be taught with sensitivity and respect for the cultural, family and religious backgrounds and belief systems prevalent in the community.
4. Recommend an approach which supplements the primary responsibilities of parents.
5. Recommend an approach which involves parents, for parental support and involvement are vital.
6. Recommend an approach which promotes the concept of individual worth and dignity with the objective of raising the level of self-esteem in each of our students.
7. Recommend an approach which has a heavy component and message which says "it is ok to say no."

The Task Force has met on a regular basis from February through November of 1986 to address the charge of the Board of Education and the responsibilities outlined by the Superintendent. The Task Force has examined the offering of the Omaha Public Schools, as well as the types of programs available in communities in Nebraska and other states. During April and May of 1986 the Task Force conducted ten community input forums at different junior high schools in the school district. What became obvious to the Task Force was that there existed tremendous misunderstanding about just what the concept of Human Growth and Development is and that the book Finding My Way, used as a supplemental book for the elective course Family Living, had become a point of serious discussion.

The Task Force immediately arrived at three specific recommendations.

1. The book "Finding My Way" excellent or controversial, had become a focal point for some community members as to what Human Growth and Development Instruction is. Consequently the school district should seriously consider forming a book review committee to see if there is an alternative text that would better match the total content of the existing course or at least a better supplemental text to be used in areas of human sexuality.
2. That all textbooks and supplemental books that are to be used in this sensitive instructional area receive Board of Education review and approval.
3. That the following be used as the definition of Human Growth and Development as it is used within the remaining pages of this report.

Human Growth and Development Education means helping students acquire knowledge and responsible decision-making skills related to the physical, social and emotional aspects of personal maturation, human sexuality, and family life.



The Superintendent's Task Force on Human Growth and Development recognizes that the instructional program in this instructional area is important to the basic education of the children and youth of the Omaha Public Schools. To be meaningful, such a program should reflect and support the general values and beliefs of the community and therefore should involve the cooperative participation of parents, relevant organizations, including churches, synagogues, community agencies/organizations, and the Omaha Public School staff.

Within the context of shared responsibility the Task Force believes and maintains the conviction that the home is most important, and presents the best location for the provision of instruction in morality and values. The Task Force recognizes that while the Omaha Public Schools, as a tax supported institution, cannot espouse or promote any particular religious viewpoint, teaching young people to make responsible choices within the context of ethical considerations and moral values is a legitimate and important goal. Furthermore it is the collective belief of the Task Force that the Omaha Public Schools has the responsibility of making available to students a carefully planned program of instruction that provides accurate information and understanding about human growth and development and reproductive health and which teaches the need for an informed decision making process with a particular emphasis on "saying no."

The Task Force further emphasized that within the framework of the instructional program a strong parenting program be developed that parallels the instruction in the classroom so parents will have available activities, materials and other resources to carry out their responsibilities to their family. It is also the hope of the Task Force that community organizations, churches, P.T.A./P.T.S.A. and others will become actively involved in the implementation and conduct of this program of instruction, as well as provide leadership for the overall development of the children and youth of our community.

The Task Force, by providing this option, believes that instruction in this area is so vitally essential that the program should be considered mandatory at all grade levels. However, in all phases of the Human Growth and Development program, parents will be provided the option not to have their youngsters participate in the program.

HUMAN GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT IN THE ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS K-6

The suggested Human Growth Development program was developed based on the idea of major concepts and expected learning outcomes. It is molded on the Omaha Instructional Process which incorporates a method of analyzing curriculum by defining expected student learning outcomes and evaluating student achievement. The elementary program will reflect two major concepts and eight expected outcomes for grades K-3 and four major concepts and 14 outcomes for grades 4-6.

CONCEPT I: Self Protection Can Be Learned At an Early Age

Expected Outcomes

Grades K-3:

- A. To become aware of child and sexual abuse.
- B. To understand the importance of sound safety habits.
- C. To understand the importance of taking care of yourself and personal hygiene.
- D. To recognize good and bad medicines/drugs.
- E. To identify body parts and private areas.
- F. To become aware of the importance of decision making.

CONCEPT II: Human Beings Need Families

Expected Outcomes

Grades K-3:

- A. To define a family.
- B. To recognize the importance of who I am.

Considerations/Cautions:

The Task Force urged that the concepts and outcomes for grade K-3 reflect a strong emphasis on self protection, self worth, saying no, and the importance of family.

The use of community agencies such as the YWCA, Girls Club, and River City Camp Fire Council would be utilized to present information on child and sexual abuse. The school could decide which programs they wanted based on communication with their parent groups. The programs are designed so that a youngster could participate in a program in grades K-1, second and third.

Concern was expressed by the Task Force that information should not be too specific at the primary age regarding body parts. At the kindergarten level, the private areas covered by a bathing suit is the appropriate method to deal with this subject in a classroom setting and the terminology used by several organizations that present programs dealing with child and sexual abuse. Curiosity at the primary level is very normal and it is important to deal with students correctly and honestly if specific questions are raised. The importance of teachers answering only questions asked and not expounding beyond that point, was emphasized. Taking advantage of the "teachable moment" would allow teachers to use the correct name for body parts.

Instruction would focus on making children feel good about themselves, recognizing their own identity, the importance of family and the fact that families come in a variety of sizes including single and extended families.

Grades four through six included the following concepts and outcomes:

CONCEPT III: Friendships Are a Vital Part of Growing Up

Expected Outcomes

Grades 4-6:

- A. To understand the importance of peer relationships.
- B. To recognize and develop communication skills with friends.
- C. To understand the importance of developing decision making skills as related to peers.
- D. To understand that confrontation exists.

CONCEPT IV: The Importance of the Family and Each Member

Expected Outcomes

Grades 4-6:

- A. To recognize the uniqueness of each family member.
- B. To identify the contributions and responsibilities of each family member.

CONCEPT V: Individuals Develop at Different Rates (Maturation)

Expected Outcomes

Grades 4-6:

- A. To identify and recognize the different body systems.
- B. To understand the differences of emotional and social development.
- C. To recognize the differences of physical development.
- D. To understand the importance of proper personal hygiene.

CONCEPT VI: Human Reproduction Is a Natural Method of Continuing the Human Species

Expected Outcomes

Grades 4-6:

- A. To recognize that the male and female each have roles and responsibilities in human reproduction.
- B. To understand the concept of sexual maturity.
- C. To understand the biological development of the fetus.
- D. To identify A.I.D.S. as a sexually transmitted disease and to recognize how it may endanger health.

Considerations/Cautions:

Instruction should continue building on those concepts presented in grades K-3 in terms of the emphasis on family and self worth. Maturation should begin at grade four with instruction presented separately for girls and boys. Content however should contain the same subject matter for both groups. The focus on peer relationships and correcting misinformation regarding the maturation process would be the thrust of instruction. The school nurse would be responsible for the presentation of this unit to fourth, fifth, and sixth grade students during a three to four week block of time, 35-45 minutes once a week.

It was strongly recommended by the Task Force that an outcome on A.I.D.S. be added to the list for grades four through six. Thus Concept VI: Human Reproduction Is a Natural Method of Continuing the Human Species, contains the following outcome:

- D. To identify A.I.D.S. as a sexually transmitted disease and to recognize how it may endanger health.

Discussion: Persons of any age can become infected with one or more sexually transmitted diseases such as A.I.D.S. by having sexual relations with an infected person. The best prevention for sexually transmitted diseases is abstinence, and saying no to sexual activity. A.I.D.S. can also be transmitted via blood transfusions, and contamination from intravenous injections. Instructional activities focusing on the dangers of A.I.D.S. would include discussion of homosexuality but only in the context as a leading cause of A.I.D.S. transmission in the United States.

The use of a question box to facilitate questions and answers for students would be utilized. Questions would be answered by the school nurse as a part of the classroom discussion. Based upon the discretion of the nurse, the option to answer questions privately would exist.

#### GUARANTEES

Several topics revolving around parents and staff were reiterated within the task force. They were perceived as absolutely essential in the development of a Human Growth and Development program. They include the following:

##### Parent Involvement

Consensus was reached by the Task Force that all students would be included in all aspects of a Human Growth the Development program unless parents indicated that they wanted to opt their child out. The school would be responsible for making reasonable efforts to insure that parents are informed and provided an opportunity to question any aspects of the program and to preview materials selected. Parent training programs and workshops would be offered to parallel the instruction taking place in the classroom. The objective of which would be to increase the comfort level of parents so discussion could take place in the home at an earlier age. Also areas outlined for higher grade levels would be discussed with parents so appropriate discussion would take place in the home. It is believed that the family and church play a vital role instructionally in human growth and development. The Task Force strongly encourages families and the religious community to discuss with youth the cultural, psychological, moral and religious issues related to this topic.

##### Staff Inservice

Staff would be involved in inservices to create a sensitivity and awareness of issues in this area. Human Growth and Development is infused at the elementary level within the science, health, and social studies and language arts curriculum taught by the classroom teacher. The school nurse would be responsible for presentation of the maturation unit.

In conclusion, the Task Force urged parents to be made aware of the negative influences of television, contemporary music, videos and the romanticizing of sex in the imagery that these media portray.

JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL HUMAN GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM

At the junior high school level, a nine week Human Growth and Development Course would be proposed at both the seventh and eighth grade levels. All seventh and eighth grade students in the Omaha Public Schools would be expected to enroll in a nine week course at sometime during the school year. Parents would be able to "opt" their child out of all or any portion of the junior high Human Growth and Development courses.

Each nine week Human Growth and Development course would focus upon five major concepts. Under each of the five broad concepts, expected student learning outcome statements would be in place that would guide all classroom instruction for the seventh and eighth grade courses. Instruction would focus on traditional values, factual information about human sexuality, responsible decision making and realizing and accepting the consequences for one's actions. Those classroom activities developed to support the expected student learning outcomes would encourage thinking, stimulate questioning, provide opportunities for self analysis, promote goal setting and improve communication skills with both peers and parents.

Following are the concepts and expected student learning outcomes for the seventh and eighth grade courses that were endorsed by the Superintendent's Task Force on Human Growth and Development. Considerations/cautions are also included to clarify issues or matters of contention that exist. Since six concepts have previously been stated in the Elementary Human Growth and Development Program, the Junior High Program begins with concept number seven below:

CONCEPT VII: The Family is a Constantly Changing Unit

Expected Outcomes

Grade 7:

- A. To recognize that families do change and identify the effects of this change on the family structure.
- B. To examine the effects of adolescent changes on family relationships.

Grade 8:

- A. To describe the different responsibilities that males and females have in various family structures.
- B. To practice skills related to improving communication.

Considerations/Cautions:

Instruction would focus on students examining influences that can bring about or attribute change within the family structure. It is important staff be sensitive to the different types of family structures of students that can exist in any classroom situation. Also, a student's right to privacy regarding family situations and relationships must be respected.

CONCEPT VIII: Puberty is a Time of Many Changes

Expected Outcomes

Grade 7:

- A. To understand the influences of physical changes that occur in males and females during puberty and how these changes affect self-esteem.
- B. To understand the structure and functions of the male and female reproductive systems.
- C. To understand new feelings and physical changes during puberty.
- D. To recognize that there are a variety of emotions involved in relationships with others.

Grades 7 & 8:

- A. To understand the importance of being able to say "NO" to sexual activity.
- B. To practice personal health care and hygiene.

Considerations/Cautions:

As part of this student learning outcome, the study of emotions that are involved in relationships with others, including sexual relationships, are discussed for the first time as part of classroom instruction. With this initial discussion, the understanding of the importance of both boys and girls to saying "NO" to sexual activity be incorporated into classroom discussions and activities. Also, students would be asked to consider the consequences and dangers of adolescent sexual activity at this point.

CONCEPT IX: Peer Relationships and Their Influences

Expected Outcomes

Grade 7:

- A. To understand group relationships and their effects on the individual.

Grade 8:

- A. To understand the importance of independence.
- B. To understand that disagreements are a normal part of a relationship.
- C. To understand the importance of developing decision making skills.

CONCEPT X: Human Reproduction Involves Many Responsibilities on the Part of Men and Women

Expected Outcomes

Grade 7:

- A. To understand the biological process of fertilization.
- B. To understand the development of the embryo and the fetus.
- C. To understand the birth process.

Grade 8:

- A. To recognize the importance of prenatal care for the mother and her developing fetus by both parents.
- B. To identify the emotional and social effects of pregnancy and childbirth.
- C. To recognize the social, emotional, and physical effects of an adolescent pregnancy.

Grades 7 & 8:

- A. To understand that a variety of birth control or pregnancy prevention methods do exist but abstinence is the only method that is 100 percent effective.

Consideration/Cautions:

Through Task Force consensus, the topic of abortion would not be dealt with in a classroom setting or included as a part of the outcome statement on birth control. Information should also be included that deals with fatherhood, particularly teenage fatherhood. This information would be incorporated in relation to the outcome statement dealing with the social, emotional and physical effects of an adolescent pregnancy.

A multitude of efforts must be made ongoing by schools to insure that parents are informed and provided an opportunity to preview all aspects of junior high Human Growth and Development courses and preview materials selected. A strong parent program must parallel instruction taking place in the junior high classrooms.

Particularly relating to Concept X above, the Task Force discussed at length whether classes should be co-educational (boys and girls together) or separated for classroom instruction. The Task Force suggests that boys and girls be separated initially for instruction in sensitive areas but be co-educational for discussion. Depending upon the maturity level of the students and the comfort level of the teacher, staff would use sensitivity and professional judgment to make this determination.

A balanced representation of community health agencies within the Omaha area would be incorporated where appropriate into the program. Agencies would deal with specific topics and not be allowed to go beyond the objectives designated for them to address.

CONCEPT XI: Sexual Health Care is the Responsibility of Each Individual

Expected Outcomes

Grades 7 & 8:

- A. To identify sexual transmitted diseases and recognize how they endanger health.
- B. To identify methods of protection against sexual assault, i.e. - rape, sexual abuse, date rape, incest.

Considerations/Cautions:

Instruction and information on A.I.D.S. and other sexually transmitted diseases would be focused under this concept. Abstinence from sexual activity would be strongly emphasized within this unit of instruction. Teachers would need to be prepared to answer questions honestly and appropriately when presenting and discussing sensitive issues such as sexually transmitted diseases and homosexuality. Actual information presented would need to be current and updated as more research is conducted in the areas of A.I.D.S. and other sexually transmitted diseases in the future.

SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL HUMAN GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM

At the senior high level, the Task Force proposes that all students would be expected to enroll in a one semester Human Growth and Development course sometime before graduation. At the senior high level, parents would be able to "opt" their child out of this course. For any student opted-out, this course requirement for graduation would be waived. Students would not be penalized in any way if parents opt their child out of the Human Growth and Development Course.

The Task Force recommends that all instruction at the senior high level be co-educational. Classes would not be separated by sex for any part of this course. A strong parent component would also be provided at the senior high level.

The instructional program at the senior high level would be guided by three overarching concepts. Expected student learning outcomes would focus the classroom instruction and activities within the concepts.

Following are the concepts and expected student learning outcomes for the senior high course that were endorsed by the Superintendent's Task Force on Human Growth and Development. Considerations/cautions are also included to clarify issues or matters of contention that exist. The concepts below will begin with number twelve, since concept number eleven was the last concept listed in the junior high program.

CONCEPT XII: Starting and Maintaining a Family Involves Responsibility

Expected Outcomes

- A. To understand the role of love in the family and personal relationships.
- B. To identify elements which contribute to a successful marriage.
- C. To identify life choices.
- D. To understand the importance of communication about family planning.
- E. To describe available family planning methods.
- F. To identify the skills and responsibilities involved in parenting.
- G. To understand the importance of prenatal care.
- H. To understand that adoption is an alternative..

Considerations/Cautions:

The Task Force suggests that information and activities pertaining to the subject of abortion should not be included in the senior high course. If students ask questions about abortion in a classroom setting, Board of Education policy 6.22 on the study of controversial issues would govern the teacher's role in the classroom on this topic. The subject of adoption would be discussed as part of the senior high course within the context of family planning. Information pertaining to community adoption agencies should be included.

Additional information would be included about genetics, infertility, birth defects, etc., in the context of marriage and starting a family. This information would incorporate into discussions on prenatal care. Within this concept, "Starting and maintaining a family involves responsibility," emphasis should be on the complexities of marriage. Family planning and contraception should be discussed within the context of marriage. Teenage sexual activity or birth control information for teenagers would not be discussed within Concept XII, but under other concepts and outcome statements as part of the senior high course.

Instruction which takes place to help students understand the importance of practicing proper prenatal care should focus on both the mother and father's role. Information would be presented reinforcing that both parents have a responsibility for proper prenatal care.



CONCEPT XIII: Understanding the Importance of Personal Adjustment During the Adolescent Years

Expected Outcomes

- A. To identify physical changes during adolescence that influence self-concept.
- B. To describe the changing roles and behavior of men and women in today's society.
- C. To identify and consider those influences which encourage responsible decision making and goal setting.
- D. To understand dating as a part of social development.
- E. To identify and practice skills related to improving communication of emotions.

Considerations/Cautions:

Emphasis should be placed on the importance of students learning to respect the rights, values and beliefs of others in a nonjudgmental manner. It is important for students to learn how to deal with both positive and negative "peer pressures" in order to make appropriate decisions and set goals for themselves. The importance, once again, of understanding the right and responsibility to say "NO" should be included in discussions and activities pertaining to dating, particularly in regards to sexual activity.

CONCEPT XIV: Sexual Health Requires Responsibility to Oneself, One's Family, and Society

Expected Outcomes

- A. To recognize factors in making responsible decisions regarding sexuality and the right to say "NO."
- B. To recognize the importance of regular medical checkups.
- C. To understand the life-long effects of sexually transmitted diseases.
- D. To review the human reproduction systems.
- E. To determine ways we can reduce the incidence of abuse, assault and rape.

Considerations/Cautions:

Within this concept the importance of providing students accurate information on the dangers of sexually transmitted diseases, with particular emphasis on the danger of A.I.D.S., is strongly endorsed by the Task Force. Instructional activities focusing on the dangers of A.I.D.S. would include discussion of homosexuality, but only in the context as a leading cause of A.I.D.S. transmission in the United States. It should be emphasized that saying "NO" to sexual activity is a right of both males and females. Also, discussion would include the dangers, i.e., social, physical, emotional, economical, of teenage pregnancy.

GENERAL CONSIDERATIONS/CAUTIONS

Parent Involvement and Workshops

Throughout the entire Human Growth and Development Program, a strong, available parent component must parallel the student program. Parents must be provided ample opportunities to preview materials used, ask questions, make suggestions for improvement and be informed of the goals and purposes of the program. Opportunities, primarily through parent workshop formats, would be scheduled throughout the school district to help accomplish this. A major purpose of these parent workshops would be to provide open, informative and supportive discussions dealing with different issues and topics included in the program. Also, participants would be helped to understand the physical, emotional, cultural and social aspects of human growth and development, as well as to communicate their own values about issues and topics included in the program more clearly and effectively to their children. It has been expressed by Task Force members that the "lines of communication" between parent and child can be enhanced by offering a program such as the one proposed. Hopefully, for some parents, "comfort levels" would increase so that more discussion in the home could take place. It is also hoped that parents will be able to discuss with their children at an earlier age aspects of the Human Growth and Development Program. The intent being that information be provided to children before events or situations occur that may cause danger or permanent damage physically, emotionally, socially, and economically.

Selection of Staff

Because the teacher is considered the single most important factor in determining the success of a Human Growth and Development program, it is important to select teachers who are highly motivated, properly trained, or are willing to be trained in the areas proposed in this program. Also, it is important that teachers are respected by colleagues, administrators and parents. Teachers considered for this program should also be capable of establishing rapport with students and exhibit sensitivity to student concerns. At the secondary level, several of the current Home and Consumer Economics teachers in the school district have had experience and training to teach many of the concepts outlined in the proposed courses. Teachers in other subject areas also have had necessary training and interest to teach courses such as those proposed.

Staff selected would be involved in inservice activities on a regular basis to insure that desired instructional approaches and appropriate information are practiced and provided to students. In order for inservice training to be effective, it should prepare teachers to effectively implement a Human Growth and Development Program that is responsive to student needs and parent concerns.

Utilization of Community Resources

A balanced representation of community resources and agencies would be utilization by staff where appropriate to help accomplish the concepts and outcomes included in the program. Speakers and professionals from the community can offer a valuable resource to the classroom instructional program. Complete assurance should be made by the community agency or professional considered that presentations would be made in a fair and objective manner, while respecting the religious and cultural values of students in the class. Resource speakers should be selected from agencies that have received approval from the school district for involvement in the Human Growth and Development Program.

Selection and Use of Materials

A Human Growth and Development Advisory Committee, which would include parents, would be involved in the selection of materials for the program and courses proposed. Because of the sensitive nature of this program, it is strongly recommended that only approved textbooks and other supportive materials be utilized in the classroom. In those instances where teachers wish to use materials not previously approved because it is felt that such materials would enhance the learning in the course of study, the teacher must consult with the appropriate staff member from the Department of Instruction and Special Education. Approval for use must be granted by the district advisory committee and the Board of Education. All instructional materials would be available for review by parents and other interested community members.

MINORITY OPINION:

Throughout deliberations there were positions taken that did not reflect the views of the majority of the Task Force. Rather than try to characterize the minority position in a framework of either, the proceeding report going too far, or not far enough, we will try to characterize the minority positions based on major votes or position grouping from an analysis of the proceedings of the Task Force. Readers should keep in mind that minority opinion, as represented here, will not reflect positions of individuals, or groups that individuals represent. The opportunity to share those views with either the Superintendent of Schools or the Board of Education is made available to committee members immediately following this portion of the report.

Consequently the major expression of minority opinion would be directed at the need for educational programming in the area of Human Sexuality. The minority view point would not favor educational programming in this area and at a minimum would recommend that participation in programming on sexuality be elective. That even as an elective, controversial issues would be avoided and that the same guarantees as present in the report for parent participation would be included.

Further concerns are expressed in relationship to what has been reported by developmental theorists regarding latency periods of growth and development. Interference in the natural developmental process creates difficulty physically and psychologically for children and youth and can activate certain biological processes which potentially could have a negative short term as well as long term effect.

It is strongly felt that instruction in this area cannot be delivered without the inclusion of instruction in the basic absolute principals of morality. There is some question as to the legality of providing educational programming in this area in relation to Sec. 79-214 of the State of Nebraska School Laws. This issue is reflected in the October 30, 1986 Task Force minutes found in Appendix C.

Finally, the instruction in this area would result in additional costs to the school district and its taxpayers. This financial burden comes at a time when resources are already limited for quality basic education programs.

Other specific minority positions on individual items are reflected in the minutes found in Appendix C.

Some individual Task Force members, and in some cases groups of Task Force members, have developed their own position statements. Those statements follow as part of the addendum to the minority report.