

# Region 12 Offers Sexual Assault Awareness, Prevention Program

by Loumarie I. Rodriguez

BRIDGEWATER - ROXBURY-WASHINGTON — Region 12 is currently offering a new comprehensive sexual assault awareness and prevention program to all grade levels.

The program is in compliance with the state law Public Act 14-196.

Each grade level will have their own age appropriate program that conveys the importance of sexual assault awareness and prevention.

Director of Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment Teresa DeBrito introduced the curriculum for grades pre-K through grade 12 during a Board of Education meeting on Monday, April 23.

Ms. DeBrito sent out a letter in December 2017 to district parents and guardians making them aware that Connecticut state laws requires the school district to comply and “the efforts to prevent sexual assault can benefit students.” She added in the letter students are not required to attend.

Ms. DeBrito told Voices there has been significant concern from a large number of students that not enough is being done to prevent or address sexual assault. She added there needs to be a better dialogue in order to keep children safe.

“The program is not putting any child on the spot,” said Ms. DeBrito. “The curriculum offers a safe and comfortable way to talk to them.”

In the letter she noted the district will be working with the Women’s Center in Danbury to provide the educational programs and to ensure students “receive age-appropriate content and materials.”

She said parents are welcome to attend the programs to better understand how to talk with their children on the subject.

Public Act 14-196 went into effect on July 1, 2014, which was a collaboration with the Department of Children and Families, Department of Education and the Connecticut Sexual Assault Crisis Services, Inc., for a statewide sexual abuse and assault awareness and prevention program.

Ms. DeBrito explained the program’s language is tailored for each grade level so students can grasp the material properly.

The younger grades (pre-kindergarten through first grade) are taught to recognize the “uh oh” feeling and puppets are used to demonstrate how to understand emotions such as disappointment, silliness, anger and stress.

The curriculum specifies students will learn how to express their feelings in a healthy way, understand care and kindness, coping, recognizing mean behavior, safe touch, instincts, boundaries and more.

They will also learn how to identify trusted adults at home and school.

By the second and third grade, students will begin to learn how

to identify behaviors of bullying and how to respond to or stop a bully. In the fourth and fifth grade students will explore school relationships, understand healthy relationships, personal boundaries and non-verbal communication. They will also learn how to express themselves and be assertive in a proper manner.

In the middle school level healthy relationships, conflict resolution, boundaries, sexual harassment, understanding the law and a theme of respect are explored along with cyber safety.

“There are more predators because of technology,” said Ms. DeBrito.

At the high school level dating violence, sexual assault and harassment are explored. Ms. DeBrito said the program looks further into red flags to watch for and that people do not always assert their discomfort because the perpetrator was “nice.” She

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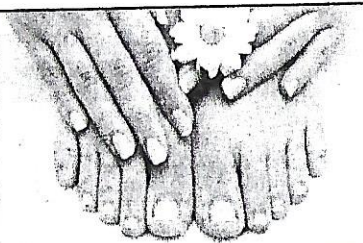
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added people who commit sexual assault or harassment can be someone the victim knows or trusts.

The high school program will continue to teach students how to better communicate, understand boundaries and learn how to use more direct dialogue to prevent sexual assault.

Ms. DeBrito said the seniors' student program aims to teach about the dangers of college campuses or "Know Before You Go" so that when they graduate the lessons are still fresh in the back of their minds.

"We are trying to keep the momentum going from Kindergarten to grade 12," said Ms.

DeBrito.

The Connecticut Association of Boards of Education cited the Cochrane Database of Systematic Reviews on their website, which states "children who are educated about sexual abuse prevention were more likely to report an incident to an adult than those who did not receive any such education."

CABE also cited children who

## Letters

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wiretaps by the former president. These have all been found false or baseless.

From my observation, however, this inappropriate behavior no longer receives criticism. Democrats are weary of calling it out. Journalists no longer see it as

experience sexual abuse "are more likely to become victims of sexual assault when they grow up and are also at higher risk of depression, suicide, eating disorders, drugs and alcohol abuse."

Public Act 14-196 also specifies there should be a uniformed child sexual abuse and assault response police and reporting procedure.

without evidence is not normal and undermines the rule of law. This is not normal. We can't be silent to this undermining of our Republican form of government.

Ben Franklin is said to have responded to a question about whether the Constitutional Convention had delivered a Republic or a Monarchy: "A Republic, if you can keep it."