



TO: Dr. Menzel and SUSD Governing Board
FROM: Dr. Karen Benson, Advisory Committee Chair
DATE: June 21, 2024
RE: Update on Progress: Sex Ed/HGD Advisory Committee

Note slight adjustments to B Memo indicated in red font – July 23, 2024
(B Memo reposted July 23, 2024)

Update on Progress: Sex Ed/HGD Advisory Committee

Reminders/Key Context:

- SUSD paused teaching Human Growth and Development (HGD)/Sex Ed at the middle and high school levels at least 4 years ago. Catalysts for the pause included: District adopted HGD curricular materials hadn't been updated since 2011, the complexity of offering "opt in" lessons while students were learning virtually during the Pandemic, and anticipation of revisions to legislation that would impact the review and selection of HGD/Sex Ed curriculum.
- Since pausing, middle level principals and District team members received requests from parents, teachers and school nurses to reinstate lessons offered pre-pandemic – affording parents with the choice to allow their student to participate in the lessons/content ("opt in").
- In response, District team members drafted a timeline and plan to launch a committee for the purpose of identifying instructional materials and lessons for a sex education course of study at grades 5-9. The tentative timeline and initial plan were shared with Board members by B Memo in November, 2023.
- Interested staff and community members were invited to apply to serve on the committee in December, 2023. Seeking a balance of perspectives from SUSD staff (teachers, nurses, and principals) and SUSD parents – District team members reviewed applicants and identified 5 staff and 5 parents to recommend to serve in this capacity. (Representation from all five learning communities and experience or expertise specific to the work of the committee were prioritized in determining committee make-up – along with priority consideration given to applicants not already serving on a committee to "expand opportunities for stakeholder collaboration to inform school and district decisions" in keeping with the SUSD Strategic Plan.)
- To ensure compliance with all legislation, admin code, and Board policy - the launch of the committee was delayed until January, 2024.

Important Clarifications:

- A.R.S. § 15-711 (effective September 29, 2021) establishes processes public school must follow when adopting curricula for the purposes of sex ed, including timelines for parents to review materials, and clear guidance on affording parents the opportunity to choose to have their student to participate in the lessons ("opt in" only). **Thus, student participation will be determined by parent opt in permission only.**
- As is common, SUSD refers to lessons on puberty as "human growth and development" or HGD. The statute situates this content as "sex education."
- A.R.S. § 15-711 refers to instructional materials and lessons as a "course of study." Recognizing the importance of the content and information in the course of study *and* the importance of academic/instructional time – the initial course of study proposed by the SUSD Advisory Committee includes 1-5 typical lessons at each level.



Update on Progress of Committee:

On January 30, 2024, the SUSD Governing Board approved a committee of thirteen members to serve on the Sex Ed/Human Growth and Development Advisory Committee (10 applicants from Committee Hub, as mentioned above – plus two board members indicating a desire to serve in this capacity, plus a Committee Chair).

The Governing Board approved the Sex Ed Advisory Committee Charter on March 5th.

The Committee met 5 times during the spring semester with 100% attendance. Given the scope of work, an additional meeting was added in June with 11 of 13 members attending. Meeting dates included:

- February 14 - March 27 - May 8
- March 6 - April 17 - June 10

Detailed accounts of all meetings are reflected in the minutes and agendas for each meeting – accessible on SUSD's Committee Hub ([linked here](#)).

Key highlights of the committee's progress includes:

- All legal authority impacting the work of the Committee (including AZ statutes, SBOE admin code, and SUSD Governing Board Policy) was shared and repeatedly revisited to guide the work of the committee.
- The committee reviewed systems of communication and resources identified in courses of study from other Valley Districts – as examples.
- Proposed, initial courses of study at grades 5, 7 and 9 have been developed.
- Rubrics to review resources to support the Course of Study were established – in keeping with legal authority.
- Using the rubrics, committee members identified *Choosing the Best* as the primary resource/vendor to recommend that best fits the Course of Study at all levels (again, aligned with legal authority).
- To respect copyright and content, an internal website was created to invite parent/community member review and feedback on all resources received for the purposes of this committee. (All resources submitted to the Committee for consideration continue to be available for parents and community members to review and/or share feedback at the MDA, building A.)

Proposed next steps:

- The Committee Chair will work with *Choosing the Best* to align content to our proposed Course of Study and generate detailed lessons for each area/topic.
- The complete, proposed course of study (including detailed lessons) will be brought to the Governing Board as a first read on August 20.
- The proposed course of study will be available for public review and comment for 60 days, ~~July 24–September 24~~ **August 15 – October 15-**
- Two public hearings to gather additional public input on the proposed course of study will be held on August 20 and September 10.
- The Advisory Committee will reconvene to review public feedback prior to the second read of the proposed Course of Study. (Date to be confirmed)
- Second read of the proposed Course of Study will be brought forward at the ~~October 1~~ **October 22** Governing Board meeting - with possible Governing Board action/adoption.