DEXTER COMMUNITY SCHOOLS
BOARD OF EDUCATION
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October 29, 2025

Dear Dexter Community,

Happy fall to you and your families. The school year always seems to begin with a sprint and before we know it the leaves have turned and we are knee deep in projects. The school board feels the same way! While a number of updates have come out through the Superintendent communications this fall, the Board wanted to take a moment to send a personal letter with an update on where things stand with the sex ed curriculum revisions that are underway.

Background
In Dexter, “sex ed” is taught in grades 4, 5, 6, 7, and 9-12 (one class at some point in high school). In 7th grade and in high school, the sex ed curriculum is a segment of a larger “health” course. The current sex ed curriculum is quite dated- the resources are on VHS tapes and xerox copies, rather than on digital platforms and sources that are more easily manageable for our teaching and technology staff! In addition, the world has changed since the last curriculum was adopted- cell phones, social media, and a wide variety of resources are now available to students.

Process
State of Michigan law prescribes the process districts must follow when there is a sex ed curriculum. The law requires that a Sex Ed Advisory Board (SEAB) be appointed, and tells us who must be on it and what its charge is. By law, the SEAB consists of individuals who fill many roles in our community, from staff members and students, to parents and community members, to health care professionals and clergy. It further describes how many of the individuals must be parents of children in Dexter schools. The SEAB includes individuals with different ideological backgrounds. The diversity of perspective on the SEAB is a feature of the law, allowing the school board to understand where individuals coalesce in their views and recommendations to the Board of Education (BOE). The SEAB has been working for two years to evaluate our current curriculum, survey students and caregivers, pull relevant data about student risk behavior (as required by law), set priorities for curriculum updates, and evaluate and put together a recommendation for a new curriculum. All SEAB meetings were publicly noticed and open and available for the community to attend over the two years they met. The BOE is immensely grateful to the members of the SEAB who volunteered their time and effort towards this curriculum update.

The SEAB does not include BOE members. The SEAB makes curriculum recommendations to the BOE. The district then shares the curriculum with the community and provides opportunities for feedback. The district held three curriculum review sessions (one each in the morning, afternoon, and evening) during the month of October. During this time, over 100 individuals shared their time in order to review and provide feedback on the specific topics, lessons, and resources that were being proposed. We received a great

deal of thoughtful feedback and had helpful conversations. The BOE thanks everyone who participated in the review process for their time.

What's Next?
The BOE has public hearings scheduled for 7pm at the Bates Board Room on November 3rd and November 10th, 2025. These public hearings are required by law in order for the Board to hear public comment on the curriculum. The Board recognizes that public comment is not the right setting for all individuals to best communicate their thoughts, and we recognize the scheduling difficulties that all of these in-person meetings present. The BOE is also accepting feedback at boe@dexterschools.org. All email communications will be given the same consideration as an in-person comment.

The Board has personally reviewed the curriculum materials and we are actively accepting community feedback. The Board will not begin our group discussion of the curriculum until the end of the public comment period on November 10th.

It is the Board's responsibility to vote on the suggested curriculum. We can vote to accept all, to reject all, or to accept parts of the recommendation and provide the SEAB with specific feedback for revision.

Parental Involvement
All parents have the right to review sex ed materials before their students participate in the class. Parents can choose to opt their students out of any or all of the sex ed curriculum with no penalty. Students in high school must take the health class for graduation, but they do not need to participate in the portion of the course that falls under sex ed.

The curriculum review that was recently offered was for overall feedback to the Board on the topics and resources being suggested to update our curriculum. This review is separate from any individual review parents might want to do for their individual student on a grade by grade basis. Parents should contact their building principal for grade-specific information.

Parents can find further information, including curriculum outlines, on the SEAB portion of the district website.

In Conclusion
The process for a sex ed curriculum update is extensive and involves quite a number of people from the community who speak on behalf of different viewpoints. The board has received a significant amount of feedback and we really appreciate the thoughtful and specific nature of the comments. This curriculum update is about more than adding any one single topic. While there may be differences of opinion and things to consider, there are also many new topics that have received widespread, significant praise- like a focus on what healthy relationships look like and media literacy.

The Board thanks the community for being part of this process.

—Elise Bruderly (President), Melanie Szawara (Vice President), Jennifer Kangas (Treasurer), Daniel Alabré (Secretary), Trustees Brian Arnold, Michael Cipolla, Amy Reiser