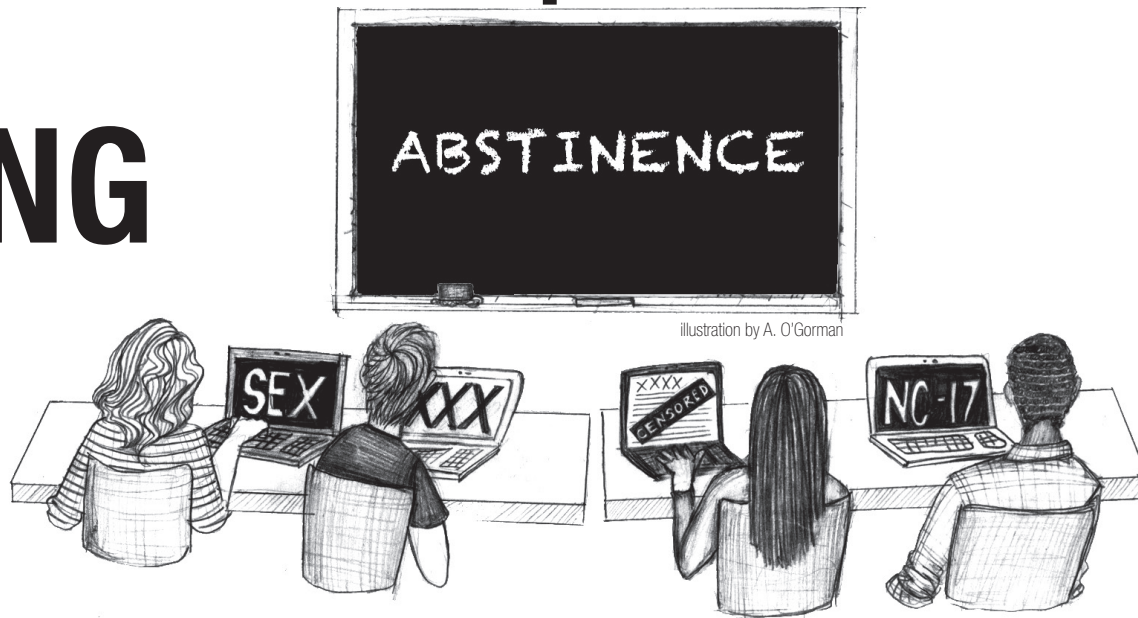


EDITORIAL

GETTING SEXY

Students need more effective sex education



According to the national and state trends, Texas has the fifth highest teen birthrate in the nation, according to the Office of Adolescent Health. It's also ranked No. 1 for repeat teen pregnancies. However, the Texas Board of Education remains committed to promoting an abstinence-only approach to sex education.

In 2004 the Texas State Board of Education adopted new health textbooks that did not include medically accurate information about contraception and sexually transmitted disease prevention. Research by the Texas Freedom Network Education Fund has also shown that most schools in the state employ strict abstinence-only-until-marriage policies on sex education.

It is no question that change is needed. While abstinence-only remains the main approach in Texas schools, there has been a recent rise of school districts who have decided to include at least basic information about contraception.

These days students are learning more about sex through crude videos on their cell phones, not through proper education. Students have easier access to pornographic websites than they do a helpful teacher or textbook.

Abstinence should still be a component in sex education, but teachers should also explain the technicalities of sexual relations. Sex happens, and it's constantly around us. Teen sex happens. The problem is that not all teens understand the biological effects of sex.

Kids don't understand the seriousness of an unplanned child and all that comes with it. It is not only a serious medical issue, but a serious, emotional commitment. Children deserve to have financial stability and emotionally available parents, too many times they're left alone with a teenage mother who doesn't know what to do.

Although some say that school is no place for sex education, school is a place for learning. Equipping students with the proper knowledge to go through life is the objective of school. Too many kids don't understand how sex works and still attempt to have sexual relations.

According to an American Life League research, one in four teens contract a sexually transmitted disease every year. Also, 15 to 24-year-olds account for half of all new STD infections according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. With the teaching of basic contraceptives and safe sex methods, there would be fewer STDs and

pregnancies in the teen atmosphere.

Basic contraceptive ideas include abstinence, condoms and female birth control pills. All of these help prevent pregnancies or the spread of STDs. Teaching students appropriate ways to deal with sexual frustration, how to apply condoms and where to go for birth control is a healthy and helpful way to improve sexual education. According to the National Survey of Family Growth, only six in 10 sexually active high school teens reported using condoms during their most recent sexual intercourse.

Children are constantly bombarded with sexual slurs, images and thoughts that involve even the most outlandish of sexual activities. This results in a growing problem that some teenagers don't understand which technicalities actually result in pregnancy. Students should be taught to understand the risks of different sexual activities.

The abstinence-only approach has failed Texas schools. It is time to educate our teens by providing them the proper information to stay healthy. By adding medical explanations and information about contraceptives, the conditions of many young adults can be improved and the Texas' high rate of teen pregnancies can be lowered.

SPEAK OUT

Do you think sex ed should be taught in high school?



"I think the school should teach sex ed because it's good for teenagers to understand and for it to be something not so shunned and put away. Many families don't talk about these things openly, so kids don't know who to go to."

Bree Barnett, 10



"I think it is important to know about sex education and have it at school. Since I have been here, I have seen a lot of girls who are 15 and 16 that are pregnant. This isn't good. It is important to know about safe sex and to teach it."

Jaime Vega, 11



"I feel that sex ed is very important. The rate at which teens are getting pregnant is getting higher by the year. Texas High doesn't teach sex ed besides the classes that you choose. It would benefit everyone to know about this."

Dalton Underwood, 11

tiger times

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