

Submitter: Mackenzie Weber
On Behalf Of:
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I think students should have input into school board elections. I grew up with my health curriculum being censored by adult community members in such a way as to do a disservice to our personal growth, intellectual development, and safety. Even in a relatively progressive district in Clackamas county, our teachers were required to emphasize abstinence even as they taught other contraceptive methods, were not allowed to demonstrate appropriate application of or hand out condoms, no one ever discussed resources for STI testing/pregnancy testing/seeking an abortion safely. Consent was discussed briefly, healthy relationships and healthy communication/conflict resolution not at all, no discussion on recognizing or seeking help for predatory behaviors from family or community members. I am a public health worker and current nursing student, and our curriculum is wildly out of touch with evidence based practice for reducing dating violence, sexual violence, teen pregnancy, and STI transmission. The current curriculum excludes gay and trans sexual and reproductive health. I and many of my peers came away feeling like our questions were not answered and we were ill-prepared to safely enter the adult world, and our teachers expressed frustration that school board actions contradicted evidence based practice and student needs and inquiry, while privileging the handful of conservative community members who pushed for board engagement. Students should be heard when they have questions and should be taught in an evidence based manner. I believe that if students are the best voice for student needs and a currently underrepresented demographic in the conversation around education, preparation for adulthood, and the role of the school board.