

www.chicagotribune.com/news/local/chi-sexed16_bothjan16,1,5955890.st ory

chicagotribune.com

Some Maine South High School parents denounce birth-control lesson

Some parents say Maine South freshman biology unit was inappropriate

By Andrew Schroedter

Special to the Tribune

January 16, 2008



A freshman biology class unit on birth control has been denounced as inappropriate by some Maine South High School parents who asked school officials to pull the lesson from its curriculum.

Some parents complained that the lesson, which includes instruction on how to put on a condom, came at the expense of more important educational topics.

"It bothers me that there's emphasis on this curriculum," Corky Allegretti told the Maine Township High School District 207 School Board on Monday. "This is unconscionable."

The board didn't respond to Allegretti or to other parents who fell on both sides of the emotional issue, which drew about 100 people to the standing-room-only meeting.

"I'm disturbed by the depth of the material," Mary Beth Sullivan told the board. "I'm so in favor of removing it."

The district has not discussed removing the unit, titled "Meiosis/Reproduction," but "that's not to say we wouldn't at another time," Supt. Joel Morris said Tuesday.

"We'll continue to look at the curriculum and determine what's appropriate," he said. "We're ensuring that all parents have that opt-out provision for any class that deals with the sex-ed topic."

Some sex-education backers were adamant that the Illinois Family Institute of Glen Ellyn not attempt to influence the school's curriculum decisions. The conservative institute works to "promote and defend biblical truths," according to its Web site.

One parent compared not teaching kids about birth control and sexually transmitted diseases to skipping the

Holocaust in history class because it made some people squirm.

"It's a fact of life that these kids have sex," said Mark Anderson, father of a sophomore at Maine South. "The more they know about contraception, the better."

Allegretti said she asked the institute for help last year after seeing her 14-year-old son's class materials for a biology lesson that outlined methods of birth control.

Further upsetting some parents is that the lesson, taught by a male teacher in a coed setting, is exclusive to Maine South and is not taught at the other high schools in the district -- Maine East and Maine West. Morris couldn't explain the discrepancy, but suggested that Maine East and West could be using older textbooks.

Maine South uses state-approved teaching materials and its lessons are in accordance with the Illinois School Code, which states that sex-education courses should include AIDS education, promote abstinence and teach about sexually transmitted diseases, he said.

Morris didn't know when Maine South included the lesson in its biology curriculum, though some parents suggested it was introduced within the last few years.

Copyright © 2008, [Chicago Tribune](#)