

November 28, 2007

Beverley Wheeler, Executive Secretary  
Washington, DC State Board of Education  
[Beverley.wheeler@dc.gov](mailto:Beverley.wheeler@dc.gov)

Ms. Wheeler,

We the undersigned are writing to congratulate the State Board of Education on creating comprehensive and well-written academic standards for health education. In our judgment, the draft standards will provide an excellent starting point for a more effective and systemic health education for all students in DC Public Schools. We urge the Board to vote to adopt them as permanent.

The need for setting broad standards for health education in the District's classrooms is long overdue. We know the many poor health outcomes for young people in our city: nationally noteworthy rates of adolescent obesity and HIV – coupled with inconsistent health education across all of DC's schools – make the need for standards that much more crucial. We strongly support the process of standards creation and believe that the draft standards are an excellent start to more consistent and effective health education.

After reviewing the standards, we believe that they are age-appropriate, medically accurate, unbiased, and complete – some of the main qualifiers for a comprehensive health and sex education. And a comprehensive sex education will bring us in line with Mayor Fenty's previously stated request in addition to the endorsements of our nation's most trusted medical and scientific institutions, such as the American Medical Association, the Society for Adolescent Medicine, the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists, and the American Public Health Association.

So, again, please adopt the draft health learning standards as permanent so that DC's schools can move forward with the creation of health education curriculum and implementation in the classroom.

Signed,

American Civil Liberties Union of the National Capital Area

Bread for the City

City Year, Washington DC

Gertrude Stein Democrats

Children's National Medical Center

District of Columbia Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics  
DC Assembly on School Health Care  
DC Campaign to Prevent Teen Pregnancy  
DC Youth Advisory Council  
Healthy Generations Program, Children's National Medical Center  
Parents, Families, and Friends of Lesbians and Gay of Metro DC  
Metro TeenAIDS  
Metropolitan Washington Public Health Association  
National Black Justice Coalition  
Planned Parenthood of Metropolitan Washington DC, Inc.  
Religious Coalition for Reproductive Choice  
Regional Addiction Prevention, Inc.  
Sasha Bruce Youthwork, Inc.  
Sexual Minority Youth Assistance League  
The Washington AIDS Partnership, a project of the Washington Regional  
Association of Grantmakers  
Trinity Episcopal Church  
Whitman Walker Clinic  
Young Women's Project

**The DC Healthy Youth Coalition** is an alliance of individuals and organizations dedicated to ending the HIV/AIDS epidemic among youth in Washington, D.C. We seek to support the right of every young person to access the information and health services necessary to make safe and responsible choices about their health. We support:

- medically accurate, age-appropriate abstinence-based HIV and sex education for youth in all Washington, DC public and charter schools;
- in-school access to health services such as non-invasive diagnosis and care for pregnancy, STIs, and HIV as well as the availability of barrier technologies; and
- public policies which support our efforts and campaign goals.