

TO: Board Members
FROM: David Meadows
SUBJECT: First Reading of Revised Policy IHAMB-E, Abstinence Education

During the 2011 Legislative Session, HB 999 was passed and subsequently signed by the governor. HB 999 amended Section 137-13-171, Mississippi Code of 1972 to require every public school to adopt a policy on either abstinence-only education or abstinence-plus education by June 30, 2012. The Tupelo Public School District has had an abstinence education policy in place since at least February 2000.

Attached for first reading, consideration, and discussion by the Board of Trustees is a draft of revised Policy IHAMB-E Abstinence Education with proposed changes to bring Policy IHAMB-E dated February 8, 2000 into compliance with the requirements of HB 999.

As previously stated, by June 30, 2012, each public school district is required by HB 999 to adopt a policy on either abstinence-only or abstinence-plus education. In addition, HB 999 requires school districts to submit the selected policy, curriculum and protocol for implementation to the Office of Healthy Schools by June 30, 2012 with instruction to begin no later than the start of the 2012-2013 school year.

I am recommending through revised Policy IHAMB-E that the Tupelo Public School District continues to adhere to the state standard of abstinence education as part of any course on sex education by updating Policy IHAMB-E to meet the requirements of an abstinence-only education policy as required by HB 999. The key to an abstinence-only versus abstinence-plus education policy is the inclusion of the word MAY in terms of what can be included in the abstinence curriculum of the school district. Abstinence-plus education MUST include all components required by HB 999.

These components are included in revised policy IHAMB-E, Section 1, Letters A-F and are preceded by the phrase "Abstinence Education MAY include instruction on" Letters A-F are as follows:

- A. The social, psychological and health benefits of abstaining from sexual activity and the negative psychological and physical effects of not abstaining;
- B. The harmful consequences to the child, the child's parents and society that bearing children out of wedlock produces including the potential health, educational, financial and other difficulties the child and his or her parents are likely to face.
- C. The inappropriateness of unwanted sexual advances and how to reject unwanted sexual advances including how alcohol and drug use increases vulnerability to sexual advances.

- D. Abstinence before marriage is the only way to avoid out-of-wedlock pregnancies, sexually transmitted diseases and related health problems.
- E. Review of current state law related to sexual conduct; and
- F. Mutually faithful, monogamous relationship in the context of marriage as being the only appropriate setting for sexual relationships.

Hopefully, revised Policy IHAMB-E along with the information contained in this memorandum will provide the Board with the necessary background for considering the adoption of the abstinence-only policy for implementation in the Tupelo Public School District.