

Dear ECISD Board Members,

We thank you for the trust placed in us as we work in partnership with you to reduce the alarming teen pregnancy epidemic in our community. As you know, in Ector County we average 93 teen births per 1,000* — a number that outpaces those for the state by two-to-one, and for the country by about three-to-one. In order to truly have an impact on teen pregnancy rates in Ector County, it must be a communitywide effort. While the schools play an important role, research shows that truly effective teen pregnancy reduction programs have to incorporate 5 key partnerships: School-based Sex Education, Parent Involvement, Community Involvement, Peer Leadership, and the Medical Community. Communities which have adopted this approach have seen significant reductions in the rate of teen pregnancy. Our hope is that here in Ector County, the schools can move forward in collaboration with parents, community and faith-based organizations, and medical providers to ensure that our teens live healthy and productive lives.

Based on this concept, the SHAC makes the following recommendations to you as we seek to reduce teen pregnancies and advocate for healthy choices among the ECISD student population.

1. We will need another year to work on finding appropriate curricula. Given the limited amount of time ECISD has allowed for classroom-based HGD education, it may be difficult to find an evidence-based/evidence-informed curriculum to which we can fully adhere. In other words, we may not be able to do the complete set of lessons as required to maintain fidelity to that model, but we can at least choose the lessons we need from evidence-based or evidence-informed curricula. Our intent during the next year is to find one “abstinence plus” curricula which has lessons that both the Life Center and TTUHSC will be able to use, as well as local organizations, the faith community, and parents. Our goal is a consistent message throughout the community.
2. In the meantime, we recommend that TTUHSC continue using their adaptation of “Big Decisions” and that the Life Center use the curriculum presented which was presented to the SHAC (Impact, YWUDI, and No Gray).
3. We recommend adding a Human Growth and Development presentation for the 9th graders who are now at the high schools. We do not currently present to this age group. We think the need for sexuality education for 9th grade is critical especially now that they are at the high school with older students. The Life Center has a 9th grade curriculum ready for use.
4. We recommend that the ECISD school board publicly and institutionally support the 5 key partnerships needed for a successful teen pregnancy prevention program. Our community needs to receive the message that it is not up to our schools alone to prepare students for responsible sexual activity. We will only improve our teen pregnancy rates if parents, schools, community organizations, medical entities, and students themselves work together to create a different future for our youth.

Thank you for your consideration of these recommendations.

The SHAC

*From www.countyhealthrankings.org Robert Wood Johnson