

OKEMOS PUBLIC SCHOOLS
Membership Application
Personal Health and Sexuality Education Advisory Board
(PHASE)

Name Karen Holt

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City Okemos, MI

Phone

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Occupation Professor, Michigan State University

Please check an appropriate category (you may check more than one):

Interested Citizen

Community Health Professional

Elementary/Middle/High School Parent

Ages of any children 10 and 8

1. **Overall, what are your perceptions regarding health and sexuality education within public schools? I would say that overall, most schools lack comprehensive health and sexuality education. The curriculum does not always reflect the reality of navigating sexual health and education for children and minors and is not always grounded in evidence-based practices or research. Most take a risk-based approach rather than focusing on sexual health and the positives of development and social relationships. I believe it is important to highlight risks but also to teach how to navigate them and to focus on the positives of healthy development and fulfilling relationships with ourselves and others.**

2. **Do you have any comments about sexuality education within the Okemos district in particular? So far, I have been impressed with the education within Okemos. In 4th grade, my oldest daughter completed the Healthy For Life program. I appreciate the emphasis on online safety as well. I also enjoyed the parental discussion piece of the program where she would come home with questions for us to consider. The information she learned was accurate and appropriate for her age.**

3. **Why are you interested in serving on this committee? I study individuals who commit sexual offenses. I feel strongly that we can do better in terms of teaching our children in a developmentally appropriate manner about things like body safety, consent, and sexual health. I also think we can improve and update sexual abuse prevention and response education, specifically including topics such as image-based sexual abuse. I would like to serve so that I can apply my knowledge, experience, and research to help my community. I would like to be part of the decision-making process about the sexual health education our children can access, to learn from others on the committee about their knowledge and experience, and to help our kids be safe and happy members of a community that is respectful, healthy, and informed.**

4. **What specific issues do you believe this committee should address? Please list in order of priority. Cognitive, emotional, and physical aspects of sexual development, consent, body safety, navigating relationships, safe tech use, the pillars of sexual health from public health research, media literacy, sexual abuse prevention and response**

5. **What assets, background, past experiences, useful knowledge, etc., do you have that may assist this committee?** I am a professor and criminologist who studies sexuality and sexual offending. I have conducted research on topics related to criminal and deviant sexuality both among minors and adults, media and offending, and image based sexual abuse. I serve on several boards, including the Michigan Association for the Treatment and Prevention of Sexual Abuse and Small Talk, a children's advocacy center in Lansing that works with children who have been abused. I work across the state of Michigan with criminal justice stakeholders to create evidence-based research, policy, and practice when it comes to sexual abuse and sexual offenses. Most importantly, I am a mother to two wonderful daughters who are growing up in the Okemos community. They continue to teach and challenge me in the best ways possible, and they inspire me to make this community safe and inclusive. I want them to be informed as they continue to grow and thrive in this community, and serving on this committee is one way to help them and others to do so.
6. **Are you an employee of the Okemos school district?** Yes No
7. **Are you willing to come regularly to four to five evening meetings per school year for a period of three years?** Yes No

Information for the Applicant

The Health and Sexuality Education Advisory Board has been charged with the following responsibilities:

1. Review and recommend instructional materials, guest speakers, and programs which are a part of the comprehensive sexual health program
2. On a regular basis, review methods of instruction and assist in evaluation of the comprehensive sexual health program, reporting to the Board of Education as required
3. Work closely with the school administration in the implementation of this program.
4. Review with policy and/or State guidelines and make recommendations to the Board of Education for needed changes.
5. Perform other duties as suggested by the Supervisor of Reproductive Health, Board of Education, or the Superintendent of Schools.

A reasonable effort shall be made to ensure that the advisory board shall consist of members representing a cross-section of community viewpoints.

Applications are due by October 18, and should be mailed or emailed to:

Stacey Molenda
Administrative Assistant to the Assistant Superintendent

4006 N. Okemos Rd.
Okemos, MI 48864
stacey.molenda@okemosk12.net

Your application will be forwarded to a subcommittee of the Okemos Parent Council, who review the applications and recommend applicants to the Okemos School Board. This process may take up to two months. You will be notified in writing (e-mail) about the status of your application after school board approval.

Thank you very much for your interest in participating in the process of personal health and sexuality education in Okemos Public Schools.

