

Brielle Parent Night - Q & A Session

Q: Recently 1/6th of the parents in Barnegat opted their children out of this new curriculum. Could you please comment on how that data point may contrast to opt-outs in previous years and what kind of signal that might be sending Curriculum Directors and the NJDOE?

A: I would again just ask everyone here in Brielle to try not to pay attention to what other school districts are doing. And please try to listen to the presentation that Taz and myself gave tonight and really do your own due diligence by looking at our curriculum and how hard we have worked to create a curriculum that is for our community and our students

Q: Can this be an optional class after school? If parents want to sign them up they can?

A: There will not be an optional class after school, but you are always welcome to opt out if you choose that for your family.

Q: Where can we read the actual curriculum and see the videos that will accompany the curriculum?

A: All of the curriculum is on atlas. Some of the videos will be on there, and as we choose videos, I will try to add them when I can.

Q: Is mid november when curriculum is available to view on atlas? thank you - very informative!

A: The curriculum is already posted on Atlas so you can go on at any time to view it.

Q: And coursework would begin in december?

A: Health will begin the second trimester, so that will be in early December. So the opt out forms will go out in mid November, which will give everyone plenty of time to view the curriculum on Atlas and decide whether or not you are going to have your child stay in the health classes or you are going to opt out. You will also have the opportunity to just opt out of certain units, so that will be on the form as well. You don't have to opt out of the whole trimester of health. You will also be able to just pick certain units or topics that you might be uncomfortable with.

Q: Can you walk through again how to access the curriculum?

A: If you just go on to our school website, and under administration, click on my name and click on Rubicon/Atlas, the cover sheet there walks you through how to get on to the curriculum. And if you have any further questions please feel free to email me or give me a call and I can walk you through it again

Q: When you teach the kids about the use of birth control, both oral and internal such as IUD etc, will they also be taught the long term impact it can have on their health? You know, so they are well educated and safe

(TAZ) A: Mostly they're taught about how they work, how they can access them and unfortunately there's a lot of myths surrounding a lot of sexuality topics, birth control being one of them. Where many folks think that they can cause infertility, and that's actually a very very rare circumstance for that to happen. But yes of course, they always taught that, talk to your doctor and this is a decision that most people do

make with their doctors, so that if there are any health conditions, or things that may interact, that that wouldn't be a method that they would use.

Q: How will parents be notified if their child has questions about their gender identity or sexuality with adults at school?

(TAZ) A: In New Jersey, as well as many other states, there is actually a law, a confidentiality clause, so schools and school staff are actually not able, by law, to share any of that information unless the child gives permission to do so. So what I always recommend to parents and caregivers, is that if that is something that you would not want kept from you to make sure that your young people know that it's okay to talk to you about those things. The only time that young people often don't want to share that information with folks at home is if the trusted adults in their life have made negative comments about certain identities, and so that if they hold that identity, they may feel that the parent may not care for them anymore at that point. And there are also certain times where a young person wouldn't be safe. So for example, when I did a training once, an educator shared with me that at a school district they were in, there was a student who was this exact scenario. They were questioning their sexual orientation, I believe it was. So they called up the parent to let them know and hope they could help this young person with this struggle. Unfortunately that student came in the next morning with a black eye. So that is only one example of something that could potentially happen. Young people who deal with issues related to their gender identity and sexual orientation, do experience higher rate of abuse, neglect, and homelessness, and sometimes, unfortunately are even murdered by their family members, due to that identity. So for that reason, that is why New Jersey only allows staff members to share if the child says that it is okay and can often encourage, try to encourage a young person to share that information with family members. Or would you like us to bring your family in and we could have that conversation together. It's not that schools want to keep this information, it's more about the safety of young people.

Q: Have the health teachers received any additional training for these new standards?

A: Yes, they have been receiving training since Fall of 2021. I have gone with them on many different occasions and they have received probably close to a dozen different training throughout the past year and they will continue to receive training.

Q: Are these standards cross curricular or only taught in health?

A: Right now our standards are only being taught in our health curriculum

Q: Wouldn't allowing us to view the videos prior, allow us to discuss our family values based on the topics presented?

A: I think that's really more of a family decision. I have to think about that a little bit more. I think it might be better to view it afterwards, because since some of the students will not be seeing it before and then the discussion may start prior to the lesson being given, I think it might be better for them to see the lesson first and then continue with the discussion at home.

*****After speaking with the health teachers following the webinar,** they said in the past, parents usually discuss the video with their child prior to the lesson.

Q: Someone else asked if we would be providing each lesson, when it was going to be taught, what week.

A: We're not going to be doing that, but when the form comes home, like I said, in the lower grades be by unit and in the upper grades, by topic. Once you opt out of that unit or topic, the health teachers and myself will be making a spreadsheet, so your child will just not be attending that class.