

Friday, August 31, 2007

News Nuggets

"SEX" is a Four-Letter Word for Politicians: Maybe "Virginity" is a Four-Letter Word for Educators
How can these be "Four-Letter Words?"
Sidebar
The phrase, "A Four-Letter Word" is an idiom that means "bad-words, cuss words, or words that we are not supposed to say, especially in school.

What we are referring to in this article is an attitude against what that word represents.

Here is the problem…

Certain politicians want to fund "Church Schools" because the people who voted them in want to see our country adopt their version of "family values."

What does "Sex"and "Virginity" mean to politicians?One man, one woman marriages

Sexual activity only after marriage, to one partner, for life

No abortions

Funding for "abstinence only" sexuality education programs in our schools

A "flight of fancy," out-of-touch, understanding of the real worldWhat does "Sex"and "Virginity" mean to

teachers?Wasted, scarce funds for programs that do not work

Wasted student time

Students who don't get the contraceptive and safe-sex information that they need

Teachers favor family values, moral behavior, and any learning that helps students take better care of themselves as they become productive citizens.

But, teachers also favor success, and they favor allocating their time to strategies and programs that pay off for students. Teachers view projects, programs and initiatives that don't stand a "snowball's chance" in a bad light."Tempest in a Teapot" or a Real Educational Issue?What set off this discussion is the following article headline…

Abstinence Education's Future UncertainAnd some of the rest of the article…

For the first time, however, Virginity Rules and 700 kindred abstinence education programs are fighting serious threats to their future. Eleven state health departments rejected abstinence education this year, while legislatures in Colorado, Iowa and Washington passed laws that could kill, or at least wound, its presence in public schools.Opponents received high-caliber ammunition this spring when the most comprehensive study of abstinence education found no sign that it delayed a teenager's sexual debut. And, after enjoying a fivefold increase in their main federal appropriations, the abstinence programs in June received their first cut in financing from the Senate appropriations committee since 2001.But the final outcome is in question. Some \$176 million in federal support has survived several early maneuvers in the House, and the full House plans to debate the issue July 18 as part of the proposed Health and Human Services budget.Lost in the political rancor, however, is that teenagers throughout the country are both abstaining more, and, especially among older ones, more likely to use contraception when they do not abstain."Source:AOL News Story: http://news.aol.com/story/_a/abstinence-educations-future-uncertain/20070718091209990001 (No longer available online)Success is the ThingDespite the fact that so much money has been wasted on the "Abstinence Only," "making Virginity the ticket to living sainthood" program; teachers are more concerned about instructional success. If these programs could be successful in any way, shape or form; teachers would stand behind them.

Schools squander and waste so much money that news of yet another hemorrhage of lost revenue doesn't phase them. But, like everyone, teachers want to be successful.

So, why would a teacher want to be mixed up in a program that has limited (or no) chance of success?

Trick Question: Answer: Most don't. Most know better.How Bad is This?Teachers might just as well teach "Swimming in Quicksand" as teach "Abstinence Only." Of course, the Quicksand Swimming would have a better success rate than teaching "Intelligent Design" to chimpanzees, but the dangers are greater.SidebarFYI: Swimming in quicksand is possible. The trick is to not make any sudden moves, gently lie flat, and spread your whole body across the mud. Struggling and fighting just causes sinking more quickly.

Actually, quicksand is more buoyant than water in the same way that salt water is more buoyant than fresh water. The only thing is that the quick sand mud sticks to you, while the fresh or salt water doesn't.

Spread your body's surface area over the mud and slither and slide out.But, what is the danger?

Anyone that has seen the number of pregnant teens that we have in our schools knows the danger of focusing on programs that don't work.

How do we know that our students are "failing the abstinence test?" The growing bumps on their abdomens are a give-a-way.SidebarAnyone that works in our schools where this issue is a problem (what school doesn't have this problem?) knows that the girls that become pregnant are not the "bad girls" that the politicians think they are. These are often nice girls, sweet, loving (maybe a bit too loving); who will make good mothers. They will also have a much more difficult life and a real challenge to get out of and stay out of a low socioeconomic fate.But is Teen Pregnancy a School

Problem? Teen pregnancy is a social problem, not a school problem.

Teen pregnancy is a problem that society sends to our schools.

And, rather than blame our schools, and forcing our teachers to teach useless "Abstinence" courses, our politicians should focus their "talents" on eradicating one huge source of the problem.

How can we expect our students to keep their bodies and minds pure until marriage with the amount of sexually explicit imagery, sexual banter, and sexually exciting content ravishes our air waves and movie screens>

Titillating, barely covered bodies, cleavage, blatant sexual banter that bypasses the entendre stage, and "matter of facts of life" attitudes and on-screen, on-tube behaviors assail our students, moment by moment. Sidebar We're referring to mainstream, network TV, not the specialty channels or the Internet, though many children have access to "cable TV" from the privacy of their rooms.

These are the big campaign donors who deserve support for their "Freedom of Speech" First Amendment rights.

The fact that they feed the mouth of the hand that protects them by the lavish "extra curricular perks of office is not relevant to our discussion of our schools complicity in teen pregnancy issues, is it?

The stimulation of broadcast media upon our students seems similar to placing our student on a strict diet (fast, where abstinence is concerned), then wafting cooking smells and delicious aromas under their noses.

Solving social problems such as Teen Pregnancy, like so many other societal issues that schools take the blame for, is beyond the scope of our schools' mission.

So, when politicians ask schools to teach non-functional, non-results-producing, "doomed to failure," "no-way to succeed" programs; teachers should, "Just say, No!"

Posted by Classroom Toolkit Newsletter in News Nuggets at 11:00