

## Back to School Basics

In today's educational world, as parents we need to be vigilant. You are your child's greatest advocate and protector from government intrusion into issues and subjects, many of which were historically not the purview of public education. Stay alert, learn what to watch for and ask questions. What may sound harmless and innocent may not be the case.

As you probably are aware, government has inserted itself into many aspects of our private family lives and in the health care and education of our children. Below are some items we recommend keeping on your radar throughout the year.

**School Forms** - Don't sign anything until you fully understand the implications on your child's education, health, safety, privacy and your rights as parents. Always keep a copy of what you sign. Put all questions to the school in writing, request a written response, and save all of your correspondence.

**Opt-Out** - As a parent you can choose to opt your child out of a number of school-related events and subject matter; for example: human sexuality courses, guest speakers, assemblies, school surveys and state testing. You can do this at any time during the school year. You may ask your school district for an 'Opt-out' form or modify an existing Opt-out letter. See: [Sample Opt-out Letters/Resources](#). Always save a copy of the form and any other correspondence regarding Opt-out. We recommend sending a copy of your Opt-out form to the child's teacher(s) and principal.

**K-12 Comprehensive Sexuality Education** - Find out specifically what your child will be learning/discussing in regards to human sexuality. This would include K-12 child sex abuse prevention programs, anti-bullying curricula, non-district resources and gender-related issues. Oregon parents and guardians have the **right to inspect** the instruction materials, **be notified in advance**, **refuse to take part or participate**, **opt-out and request disclosure of public records** relating to presentation of human sexuality or HIV/AIDS instruction and other subjects under federal and state law. See: [Tips for Requesting Info about Sex Ed](#)

**School-Based Health Clinics** - Not every school district has a school-based-health-clinic (SBHC). Even so, parents and guardians need to find out what health-related information, services and referrals are given to their child(ren) such as wellness checks, sports physicals, invasive physical exams, mental

health assessments, vaccinations, retina scans, dental exams, etc.. As the parent or guardian you have the right to know who is touching, inserting, injecting, recommending, prescribing, referring treatments to your child. [SBHCs and the Oregon legislature](#) have created opportunities for your child to receive services without your knowledge or consent.

There are individuals who are encouraging children to make their own health care decisions. In fact, a 15 year old does not need parental consent for any health care decisions they may make at an SBHC or a referral by the school to an off-school-grounds clinic. Do not sign any waivers without fully understanding them and the implications on your rights to know or give parental consent. In Oregon, confidential reproductive services are provided or referred to minors at any age without your consent. These services could include a guest speaker or "peer educator" who visits your child's classroom. It would be wise to complete an opt-out form because private non-profits such as Planned Parenthood and TransActive Gender Center have been allowed into your school.

**Surveys** - The Oregon Department of Education and the Oregon Health Authority are amassing data from students about parents' behavior and your child's thoughts and beliefs in surveys given to them. The [Federal Protection of Pupil Rights Act](#) requires all instructional materials, surveys, etc. to be made available for inspection by parents and guardians. We highly recommend that you ask your administrator and teachers (in writing) before letting your child participate in these surveys. These surveys ask intimate and personal questions that are irrelevant to the education of your child. Questions such as: When was the last time you had sex? How often do you have sex? How many different partners do you have? Are you heterosexual, homosexual, trans or other? How many times has your family moved in the last year? Does a member in your family smoke? Did a family member have an alcoholic beverage at dinner and then drive? How many vegetables did you eat last week?

The three main surveys are the **Wellness Survey**, **Healthy Teen Survey** and the **School Climate Survey**. All surveys are optional. We recommend you opt-out of all surveys.

**Books and Other Literature** - The Federal Protection of Pupil Rights Act requires all instructional materials, surveys, etc. to be available for inspection by parents and guardians. Ask teachers to inform you in advance of any and all sexually graphic content. Ask how and when you can see this. You have the right to review, at any time, any and all curriculum, materials, books, videos, surveys, etc. before and during instruction. Ask the school for a copy of their district policy about preventing porn or sexually explicit content via school

computers, literature, videos, etc. Check out this resource: 'Safe Schools-Safe Libraries' at <http://endsexualexploitation.org/sssl/>

**Bathrooms, Showering Facilities** - On August 22, 2016, Texas Federal Judge Reed O'Connor issued a nationwide injunction which blocked the Obama administration's "Guidelines" that would force schools to allow a student to use shower, locker rooms and bathrooms opposite their biological sex. Earlier, on August 3, 2016, the Supreme Court put a temporary hold on a similar policy thus allowing the Virginia Gloucester County School board to bar a student from using a bathroom opposite his biological sex.

Ask you child's principal (in writing) what the district policy is (save all email, responses, communications); ask who you need to contact about seeing the district policy. Your school district may have already made a policy change where they are allowing students into showering facilities and bathrooms opposite their biological sex or other housing arrangements with opposite sex students during athletic trips or other off- school-grounds activities.

If they have a policy that does not protect your child's bodily privacy rights, consider asking (in writing) for an "accommodation" (<http://parentsrightsined.net/perch/resources/201608generic-sd-letter-requesting-accomodationtitle-ix-issue.pdf>). If they have not been bullied into changing their current policy of separate showers, locker room and bathroom facilities based on biological sex, be sure to thank your school board and district superintendent.

**Statewide Testing** - Some parents/guardians are concerned about the content and extent of state testing their child has to take during the school year. In Oregon, students can opt-out of the statewide summative Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium (SBAC) tests. There is an official form via the Oregon Department of Education's (ODE) website. There is no requirement to note any reason (ie: religious, disability, etc) for alternative assignment recommendation. See: <https://optoutoregon.org/how-to-opt-out/> <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2ayYajsQjg8>