

# 2024

## Parental Engagement in Public Schools Resource Guide



**Texas Catholic  
Conference of Bishops**



**A**s Christians, we are called to be a light in the world. It is our moral responsibility to engage in the public square and bear witness to the fundamental truths that enable individuals, families, communities, our state and our country to flourish.

As the primary educators of their children, parents have the right and responsibility to direct their children’s education, whether they choose Catholic, private, homeschool, or public school. Most Texas parents, whether by choice or because a private or homeschool alternative is financially impossible, will enroll their children in Texas public schools.

The purpose of this resource guide is to encourage and assist Catholic parents of children in public schools to actively engage in their children’s education, particularly regarding human sexuality instruction.

This guide includes:

- Overview of public-school governance, including school boards and advisory groups
- Texas laws all public school parents should know
- Overview of secular sex education and Texas public school human sexuality curriculum
- Catholic resources on the meaning and purpose of human sexuality
- Action steps

## Table of Contents

Public school decision-making authorities .....	2
Know the Law .....	4
Sex education overview .....	9
Catholic Resources.....	14
Conclusion.....	15
How to Testify .....	16



# Public school decision-making authorities

## Texas Education Agency (TEA)

The Texas Education Agency oversees primary and secondary public education. The agency's mission is to improve outcomes for the 5.5 million public school students in the state by providing leadership, guidance, and support to school systems. The agency's budget for the 24-25 biennium is more than \$76 billion, which includes all federal, state, and local funding.

TEA is led by Commissioner of Education, Mike Morath. This is a position appointed by the governor.

## State Board of Education (SBOE)

The State Board of Education is the policy making body of the TEA. The board is comprised of 15 members elected to two- or four-year terms. Each member represents a district of about 1.8 million Texans.

## **School boards**

Every independent school district in Texas has a board of trustees commonly referred to as a "school board." The trustees oversee the district's management and work with the superintendent to accomplish public education goals as dictated by state law. One of a school board's most important duties is to engage with the local community.

## **Advisory bodies**

Districts and campuses have various advisory bodies made up of community members. These councils, committees, or task forces exist for a broad range of areas such as school safety and security, special education, career and technical education, legislative advocacy, etc.

## **School Health Advisory Council (SHAC)**

The School Health Advisory Council is an advisory body required by law for all school districts. The SHAC assists the district in ensuring local community values are reflected in health education instruction, which includes human sexuality instruction.

Members are appointed by the board of trustees. A majority of members must be parents of students within the district who are not employed by the district. Other members may be students and teachers within the district, counselors, healthcare professionals, law enforcement, clergy, senior citizens, or representatives of other groups in the community.

For information on eligibility requirements and applications to serve in an advisory capacity, search your district or school's website or contact the administration.



## Parent Teacher Associations and Parent Teacher Organizations (PTA/PTSA/PTO)

Parent Teacher/Parent Teacher Student Associations and Parent Teacher

Organizations exist to foster collaboration between schools and families. Local PTAs and PTSAs are part of [Texas PTA](#) and [National PTA](#); PTOs are independent. Membership dues and leadership eligibility vary.

### Action steps

- ✓ Find [who represents you](#) on the State Board of Education.
- ✓ Find your school board members on your school district website.
- ✓ [Register to vote](#). Deadline before November election – Oct. 7, 2024.
- ✓ Attend an SBOE meeting in Austin or watch a [live broadcast or recording](#).
- ✓ Attend a school board meeting or watch a live broadcast or recording. Check your district website for viewing options.
- ✓ Attend a SHAC meeting or watch a recording on the district website.
- ✓ Meet with members and/or leaders of the PTA/PTSA/PTO and other advisory bodies to learn about their work. Bring a friend or two.
- ✓ Consider joining your school’s PTA/PTSA/PTO.
- ✓ Consider serving on the SHAC or another advisory body.
- ✓ Testify at meetings of the SBOE, school board, or SHAC (See How to Testify)
- ✓ Consider running for a seat on the school board. Candidate qualifications are:
  - US citizen
  - Texas resident for a minimum of 12 months and district resident for a minimum of six months prior to election
  - Registered to vote in district
  - At least 18 years of age
- ✓ Consider running for a seat on the State Board of Education. Candidate qualifications are:
  - US citizen
  - District resident for a minimum of 12 months prior to election,
  - Registered to vote in district
  - At least 26 years of age



## Know the Law

Online resources can assist you in being informed and help you engage at your children’s school and all levels of government.

### **School and district websites**

School and district websites are critical sources of information. State law requires certain information to be posted on a district’s website, such as information regarding school board meetings and SHAC meetings. Volunteer opportunities, student handbooks, grievance policies, and school library catalog searches may also be available on school websites.

### **Texas Legislature Online (TLO)**

<https://capitol.texas.gov/>

Research Texas statutes including the education code, track legislation, find who represents you, and much more at Texas Legislature Online (TLO). The site has an excellent [FAQ](#) section and clear and concise information about the legislative process and how to read a bill.

The Texas legislature meets for 140 days in the first half of odd numbered years. The 89th legislative session begins on Jan. 14, 2025.

### **Texas Administrative Code (TAC)**

[https://texreg.sos.state.tx.us/public/readtac\\$ext.viewtac](https://texreg.sos.state.tx.us/public/readtac$ext.viewtac)

Another critical resource for researching state law is the Texas Administrative Code. The legislature authorizes agencies

and commissions to create rules to help administer and carry out the law. The rulemaking process does not happen behind closed doors; all Texas governmental bodies, including agencies and commissions, are subject to the Open Meetings Act. Notices of meetings, proposed rules, attorney general opinions, and other information related to the rulemaking process are published weekly in the [Texas Register](#). Once adopted, the rules are codified in the Texas Administrative Code.

### **Open Meetings Act**

<https://statutes.capitol.texas.gov/Docs/GV/htm/GV.551.htm>

Government transparency is one of the pillars of democracy, which is why open meetings are essential. Chapter 551.002 of the Government Code states: “Every regular, special, or called meeting of a governmental body shall be open to the public, except as provided by this chapter.”

The Open Meetings Act requires the following:

- Public testimony
- Minutes or recording of meeting are public record
- 72 hours public notice of meetings (general rule)
- Seven days' notice for meeting of body with statewide jurisdiction



The Texas House and Senate adopt their own rules for procedure. Public notice of a committee public hearing is five days in the House and 24 hours in the Senate.

Exceptions to the open meetings act are permitted to protect confidentiality. For example, closed meetings are allowed for contract negotiations, personnel matters, or disciplinary matters of a public-school student. Closed meetings require the following:

- Open meeting must convene first to announce a closed meeting
- Final action or vote must take place in open meeting
- Certified agenda or recording of closed meeting

State Board of Education (SBOE) meetings and school board meetings are subject to the Open Meetings Act. Student Health Advisory Council meetings are not subject to the Open Meetings Act. (See more on SHACs below)

### **Parental Rights and Responsibilities**

<https://statutes.capitol.texas.gov/Docs/ED/htm/ED.26.htm>

Chapter 26 of the Education Code states its purpose as: “Parents are partners with educators, administrators, and school district boards of trustees in their children's education. Parents shall be encouraged to actively participate in

creating and implementing educational programs for their children.”

Parents have the right to the following:

- Access to student records including academic, health, counseling, discipline, etc.
- Access to all instructional materials
- Request instructional material review by school board
- Access to board meetings

Parents also have the right to:

#### Sec. 26.008 FULL INFORMATION

CONCERNING STUDENT. (a) *A parent is entitled to full information regarding the school activities of a parent's child except as provided by Section 38.004. (Sec. 38.004 references reports of child abuse).*

(b) *An attempt by any school district employee to encourage or coerce a child to withhold information from the child's parent is grounds for discipline under Section 21.104, 21.156, or 21.211, as applicable.*

#### Sec. 26.010. EXEMPTION FROM

INSTRUCTION. (a) *A parent is entitled to remove the parent's child temporarily from a class or other school activity that conflicts with the parent's religious or moral beliefs if the parent presents or delivers to the teacher of the parent's child a written statement authorizing the removal of the child from the class or other school activity. A parent is not*





*entitled to remove the parent's child from a class or other school activity to avoid a test or to prevent the child from taking a subject for an entire semester.*

*(b) This section does not exempt a child from satisfying grade level or graduation requirements in a manner acceptable to the school district and the agency.*

The school board is required to adopt a grievance procedure to address complaints regarding a violation of any of the rights guaranteed in Chapter 26.

### **School Health Advisory Council (SHAC) and Human Sexuality Instruction**

Chapter 28 of the Education Code mandates what students are taught in public schools. This is known as Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS). The State Board of Education, with input from community stakeholders (educators, parents, employers, etc.), is responsible for adopting curriculum and choosing textbooks.

[Sec. 28.004](#) addresses SHACs and health instruction, including human sexuality instruction.

Health instruction is required in grades k-8. A district may decide whether health instruction is a requirement in high school.

The local school health advisory council duties include recommending policies, procedures, strategies and curriculum

appropriate for specific grade levels and methods of instruction for the following:

- Human sexuality
- Prevention of obesity, heart disease, Type 2 diabetes, and suicide
- Dangers of opioids
- Child abuse, family violence, dating violence, sex trafficking

A SHAC must meet at least four times each year, provide 72 hours advance notice of a meeting, keep meeting minutes, and make an audio or video recording. The minutes and recording must be posted on the district's website. Every meeting is not required to be open to the public. You can request the bylaws of your district's SHAC to confirm the meeting policy.

Human sexuality instruction is not required by state law. The decision is left to the school board which must adopt a policy for establishing the process of adopting curriculum materials. The policy must require the local SHAC to:

- Make recommendations regarding materials
- Hold two public meetings before adopting recommendations
- Provide adopted recommendations at a public meeting of the school board

The school board must take a record vote on the adoption of the recommendations at a public meeting.





If adopted, human sexuality instruction and materials must:

- Present abstinence as the preferred choice of behavior for all unmarried persons of school age
- Devote more attention to abstinence than to any other behavior
- Emphasize that abstinence is the only 100% effective method in preventing pregnancy, sexually transmitted diseases, HIV, and emotional trauma associated with adolescent sexual activity and direct adolescents to this standard of behavior

If instruction on contraception and condoms is provided, it must be taught in terms of human use reality rates instead of theoretical laboratory rates.

## Action steps

- ✓ Bookmark your child's school website and district website for quick access
- ✓ Instead of waiting for the human sexuality instruction notification at the beginning of the school year, research the district policy in the summer and prepare to opt out if necessary
- ✓ Share your knowledge with other concerned parents

A school district may not distribute condoms in connection to instruction on human sexuality.

Students may be separated according to sex for human sexuality instruction.

A school district may not omit any of these state requirements; however, they may add to them. A school district may vote to adopt a comprehensive sex education curriculum that includes instruction on gender ideology, sexual orientation and abortion.

### Opt-In/Opt-Out

Before each school year, school districts are required to provide written notice to a parent of each student regarding whether human sexuality instruction will be provided. For the last two years, state law required that schools must receive written consent from a parent or guardian for their child to receive human sexuality instruction.

This opt-in language expired on Aug. 1, 2024. TEA, however, has issued [updated guidance on the parental opt-in requirement](#), reminding school districts that the other statutory provisions regarding human sexuality instruction remain in effect and, notwithstanding expiration of the statutory opt-in mandate, school systems should continue requiring parental consent prior to offering human sexuality instruction to students, which is fully permitted by the authority granted to local school systems under TEC, §11.151.



Bills are expected to be filed in the 2025 legislative session to reinstate the opt-in requirement. Meanwhile, although TEA is urging districts to remain opt-in, for the 2024-2025 school year parents will need to be on alert for the notice on human sexuality instruction and be prepared to **opt out** if they do not wish their child to receive human sexuality instruction in whole or in part.

### **READER Act (HB 900)**

The purpose of the READER Act is to remove harmful material from school libraries. It requires the Texas State Library and Archives Commission (TSLAC), with approval by majority vote of the SBOE, to adopt standards for school library collection development that prohibits the possession, acquisition, and purchase of “harmful material” as defined by the penal code.

The law also requires library material vendors to rate materials as “sexually explicit” or “sexually relevant,” as defined in the penal code, and prohibits the sale of sexually explicit material to school libraries. A student may not check out materials rated sexually relevant without the written consent of a parent.

Book sellers sued the state in July 2023 to bar the law from enforcement, arguing that the ratings requirement is costly, onerous, and unconstitutional. The district court sided with the plaintiffs and issued a preliminary injunction upheld by the 5th Circuit Court of Appeals. The state may appeal to the U.S. Supreme Court, or the case will return to district court for a full hearing on the constitutionality of the law.

Regardless of the final court decision regarding the library vendor ratings, the remainder of the law is still in effect. As mandated by HB 900, the SBOE voted in December 2023 to approve [new library standards](#) which were unanimously adopted by TSLAC. The standards require school districts to institute a collection development policy that includes the following:

- Recognition that obscene content is not protected by the First Amendment
- Publicly available online library catalogs
- Uniform procedures for the evaluation, selection, acquisition, reconsideration, and deselection of materials



## Sex education overview

This section reviews the types of sex education provided in public schools, specifically what the state of Texas includes in its standards. Refer to Catholic resources for the Church’s teaching on human sexuality.

The secular approach to sex education ranges from sexual risk avoidance, which focuses on delaying sexual activity to avoid the negative consequences of non-marital pregnancy, sexually transmitted infections/diseases, and emotional trauma, to sexual risk reduction, which encourages sexual activity and exploration while reducing the risk of negative consequences.

Sexual risk avoidance focuses on abstinence while sexual risk reduction focuses on “safe sex.”

Comprehensive sex education goes beyond “safe sex” and risk reduction and includes teaching consent, gender ideology, sexual orientation, and abortion as healthcare.

Parents may assume that consent in the context of sex education means teaching children about boundaries and how to say no to unwelcome behavior. The definition of consent, however, is permission for something to happen or agreement to do something. Consent in

### Action steps

- ✓ Talk to your child’s health teacher about reviewing the curriculum.
- ✓ If you choose not to opt your child out of human sexuality instruction, discuss what they are learning with them in the context of God’s plan for their lives.
- ✓ Study the Church’s teaching on human sexuality (see Catholic resources)

sex education means teaching children how to agree to sexual activity.

The State Board of Education voted to adopt new health curriculum standards in 2020 amid intense pressure to incorporate comprehensive sex education statewide. The board rejected many of the most harmful elements of comprehensive sex education. Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS) for Health Education for each grade can be found in the Texas Administrative Code (TAC).

[TEKS for Health Elementary \(K-5\)](#)

[TEKS for Health Middle School \(6-8\)](#)

[TEKS for High School](#)



**GRADE 5 TEKS REPRODUCTIVE AND SEXUAL HEALTH STRAND**

<p><b>Healthy Relationships</b></p> <p>The student understands the characteristics of healthy romantic relationships.</p>	<p><b>Personal Safety, Limits, and Boundaries</b></p> <p>The student understands how to set and respect personal boundaries to reduce the risk of sexual abuse and harassment.</p>	<p><b>Anatomy, Puberty, Reproduction, and Pregnancy</b></p> <p>The student identifies the processes of adolescent development, fertilization, and healthy fetal development.</p>
<p>The student is expected to identify characteristics of healthy dating/romantic relationships and marriage, including sharing, kindness, honesty, respect, trust, patience, communication, and compatibility.</p>	<p>The student is expected to:</p> <p>(A) define sexual harassment, sexual abuse, sexual assault, and sex trafficking;</p> <p>(B) identify ways of reporting suspected sexual abuse involving self or others such as telling a parent or another trusted adult;</p> <p>(C) identify refusal skills such as saying "no" to any unwanted touch that violates personal boundaries in relationships; and</p> <p>(D) discuss and explain the importance of making decisions regarding setting personal boundaries and respecting the boundaries of others.</p>	<p>The student is expected to:</p> <p>(A) explain the physical, social, and emotional changes that occur in males and females during puberty and adolescent development;</p> <p>(B) describe the process of the menstrual cycle;</p> <p>(C) identify and describe the role of hormones in the growth and development of secondary sex characteristics such as body hair growth and voice change in males;</p> <p>(D) define the processes of fertilization and reproduction; and</p> <p>(E) identify significant milestones of fetal development.</p>



**GRADE 6 REPRODUCTIVE AND SEXUAL HEALTH STRAND**

<p><b>Healthy Relationships</b></p> <p>The student understands the characteristics of healthy romantic relationships.</p>	<p><b>Personal Safety, Limits, and Boundaries</b></p> <p>The student understands how to set and respect personal boundaries to reduce the risk of sexual harassment, sexual abuse, and sexual assault.</p>	<p><b>Anatomy, Puberty, Reproduction, and Pregnancy</b></p> <p>The student analyzes adolescent development, the process of fertilization, and healthy fetal development.</p>	<p><b>Sexual Risk</b></p> <p>The student understands that there are risks associated with sexual activity and that abstinence from sexual activity is the only 100% effective method to avoid risks.</p>
<p>The student is expected to:</p> <p>(A) define and distinguish between friendship, infatuation, dating/romantic relationships, and marriage;</p> <p>(B) describe how friendships provide a foundation for healthy dating/romantic relationships;</p> <p>(C) list healthy ways to express friendship, affection, and love;</p> <p>(D) describe characteristics of healthy dating/romantic relationships and marriage, including sharing, kindness, honesty, respect, trust, patience, communication, and compatibility;</p> <p>(E) explain that each person in a dating/romantic relationship should be treated with dignity and respect; and</p> <p>(F) describe how healthy marriages can contribute to healthy families and communities.</p>	<p>The student is expected to:</p> <p>(A) identify that physical, emotional, and sexual abuse and exploitation are all forms of abuse;</p> <p>(B) identify the social and emotional impacts of sexual harassment, sexual abuse, sexual assault, and sex trafficking;</p> <p>(C) list the characteristics of unhealthy or harmful relationships, including anger, controlling behavior, jealousy, manipulation, and isolation;</p> <p>(D) identify ways of reporting suspected sexual abuse involving self or others such as telling a parent or another trusted adult;</p> <p>(E) explain how a healthy sense of self and making and respecting decisions about safe boundaries and limits promote healthy dating/romantic relationships;</p> <p>(F) identify communication and refusal skills and how they can be applied in dating/romantic relationships; and</p> <p>(G) explain the importance of clearly communicating and respecting personal boundaries and using refusal skills related to physical intimacy such as holding hands, hugging, and kissing.</p>	<p>The student is expected to:</p> <p>(A) describe changes in male and female anatomy and physiology during puberty and how rates and patterns of development can vary between individuals;</p> <p>(B) describe the process, characteristics, and variations of the menstrual cycle;</p> <p>(C) analyze the role of hormones related to growth and development and personal health;</p> <p>(D) describe the cellular process of fertilization in human reproduction; and</p> <p>(E) explain significant milestones of fetal development.</p>	<p>The student is expected to:</p> <p>(A) identify teen pregnancy as a possible outcome of sexual activity;</p> <p>(B) identify life goals that one wishes to achieve prior to becoming a parent;</p> <p>(C) define sexually transmitted infections (STIs) and sexually transmitted diseases (STDs) as infections or diseases that are spread through sex or sexual activity;</p> <p>(D) identify what emotional risks are associated with sexual activity between unmarried persons of school age;</p> <p>(E) define abstinence as refraining from all forms of sexual activity and genital contact between individuals and discuss the importance of seeking support from parents, other trusted adults, and peers to be abstinent;</p> <p>(F) explain why abstinence is the preferred choice of behavior in relationship to all sexual activity for unmarried persons of school age;</p> <p>(G) identify why abstinence from sexual activity is the only method that is 100% effective in preventing pregnancy; STDs/STIs, including human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) and acquired immunodeficiency syndrome (AIDS); and the emotional risks associated with adolescent sexual activity;</p> <p>(H) list the benefits of abstinence from sexual activity such as increased self-esteem, self-confidence, student academic achievement, and alignment with personal, family, and moral or religious beliefs and values; and</p> <p>(I) explain how laws protect victims of sexual harassment, sexual abuse, and sexual assault.</p>



**GRADE 7-8 REPRODUCTIVE SEXUAL HEALTH STRAND**

<p><b>Healthy Relationships</b></p> <p>The student understands the characteristics of healthy romantic relationships.</p>	<p><b>Personal Safety, Limits, and Boundaries</b></p> <p>The student understands how to set and respect personal boundaries to reduce the risk of sexual harassment, sexual abuse, and sexual assault.</p>	<p><b>Anatomy, Puberty, Reproduction, and Pregnancy</b></p> <p>The student analyzes adolescent development, the process of fertilization, and healthy fetal development.</p>	<p><b>Sexual Risk</b></p> <p>The student understands that there are risks associated with sexual activity and that abstinence from sexual activity is the only 100% effective method to avoid risks.</p>
<p>The student is expected to:</p> <p>(A) compare and contrast the difference between friendship, infatuation, dating/romantic relationships, and marriage;</p> <p>(B) explain how friendships provide a foundation for healthy dating/romantic relationships;</p> <p>(C) describe healthy ways to express friendship, affection, and love;</p> <p>(D) describe appropriate and effective methods of communicating emotions in healthy dating/romantic relationships and marriage;</p>	<p>The student is expected to:</p> <p>(A) explain that physical, emotional, and sexual abuse and exploitation are all forms of abuse;</p> <p>(B) explain the social and emotional impacts of sexual harassment, sexual abuse, sexual assault, and sex trafficking;</p> <p>(C) define dating violence and the characteristics of unhealthy or harmful relationships, including anger, controlling behavior, jealousy, manipulation, and isolation;</p> <p>(D) identify protective strategies for avoiding unsafe situations that heighten the risk of sexual harassment, sexual abuse, sexual assault, sex trafficking, and teen dating violence;</p>	<p>The student is expected to:</p> <p>(A) compare and contrast the physical, hormonal, and emotional changes in males and females that occur during puberty and adolescence;</p> <p>(B) identify how the process of fertilization occurs between a man and a woman through sexual intercourse;</p> <p>(C) explain significant milestones of fetal development and the harmful effects on the fetus of certain substances such as alcohol, tobacco, and prescription drugs and environmental hazards such as lead;</p> <p>(D) describe the importance of telling a parent or another trusted adult,</p>	<p>The student is expected to:</p> <p>(A) explain how teen pregnancy is a possible outcome of sexual activity;</p> <p>(B) explain the short- and long-term educational, financial, and social impacts of pregnancy on teen parents, the child, families, and society;</p> <p>(C) identify the difference between bacterial and viral sexually transmitted diseases/sexually transmitted infections (STDs/STIs), including long-term or lifetime effects such as infertility and cancer;</p> <p>(D) describe various modes of transmission of STDs/STIs;</p> <p>(E) identify the prevalence of STDs/STIs among teens by referencing county, state, and/or federal data sources;</p> <p>(F) list the signs and symptoms of STDs/STIs, including human papillomavirus (HPV), human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) and acquired immunodeficiency syndrome</p>





<p>(E) evaluate the importance of mutual respect, trust, support, honesty, commitment, and reliability in healthy dating/romantic relationships and marriage;</p> <p>(F) describe behaviors in dating/romantic relationships that enhance dignity and respect; and</p> <p>(G) describe the benefits of healthy marriages, including companionship and social, emotional, financial, and health benefits.</p>	<p>(E) explain the importance of reporting to a parent or another trusted adult sexual harassment, sexual abuse, sexual assault, sex trafficking, and dating violence involving self or others;</p> <p>(F) describe how a healthy sense of self and making decisions regarding setting and respecting personal boundaries promote healthy dating/romantic relationships;</p> <p>(G) discuss and practice how refusal skills can be used to resist negative peer influences and reinforce personal boundaries to avoid dangerous situations and behaviors that increase sexual risk in dating/romantic relationships; and</p> <p>(H) explain the importance of clearly communicating and respecting personal boundaries and why individuals have the right to refuse sexual contact.</p>	<p>obtaining early pregnancy testing, and seeking prenatal care if signs of pregnancy occur; and</p> <p>(E) define the emotional changes that may occur during and after pregnancy, including postpartum depression, and discuss resources for support and treatment.</p>	<p>(AIDS), chlamydia, syphilis, gonorrhea, herpes, and trichomoniasis, and explain why not all STDs/STIs show symptoms initially;</p> <p>(G) explain the importance of STD/STI screening, testing, and early treatment for sexually active individuals, including during yearly physicals or if there is a concern;</p> <p>(H) identify community resources, a minor's right to consent under certain circumstances, and the importance of parent or other trusted adult support for STD/STI testing and treatment;</p> <p>(I) identify emotional risks that can be associated with sexual activity for unmarried persons of school age, including stress, anxiety, and depression;</p> <p>(J) identify support from parents and other trusted adults to be abstinent from sexual activity and create strategies for building peer support to be abstinent;</p> <p>(K) analyze the importance of abstinence as the preferred choice of behavior in relationship to all sexual activity for unmarried persons of school age;</p>
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# Catholic Resources

The Church’s teaching on human sexuality is deeply countercultural, upholding the dignity of the human person and our desire to emulate God’s perfect love. Resources ranging from papal documents to podcasts can help parents share the essential, beautiful and life-affirming truth of the Church’s teaching on human sexuality.

## Church teaching

[Theology of the Body](#) - One of the greatest gifts of Saint Pope John Paul II’s pontificate is the Theology of the Body. Originally delivered in a series of public Wednesday audiences between 1979 and 1984, it was compiled and has been adapted for students of all ages.

[Humanae Vitae](#) - Pope Paul VI wrote the prophetic encyclical Humanae Vitae in 1968 amid intense pressure to alter the Church’s teaching on contraception after the development of the birth control pill.

[“Male and Female He Created Them” Towards a Path of Dialogue on the Question of Gender Theory in Education.](#)

[THE TRUTH AND MEANING OF HUMAN SEXUALITY Guidelines for Education within the Family](#)

## Books

[Theology of the Body for Middle School](#)

[MADE THIS WAY: How to Prepare Kids to Face Today’s Tough Moral Issues](#) by Leila Miller and Trent Horn

## Ascension Presents

Fr. Mike Schmitz - [Bruce Jenner and the transgender question](#)

Jason Evert - [Homosexuality, Gay Marriage and Holiness](#)

Jackie and Bobby

- [How Far is too Far](#)
- [How Catholics Should date](#)

- [Can I be Gay and Catholic?](#)
- [The Christian Response to Attraction](#)
- [Finding Freedom after a Homosexual Lifestyle](#)

## Websites

[Theology of the Body Institute](#)

[Chastity Project](#)

[Overcome](#)

[Courage](#)

[Desire of the Everlasting Hills](#)

[Diocese of Austin Developmental](#)

[Guidelines for Chaste Living](#)



## Conclusion

Opportunities abound for parents to be heard and influence the direction of public education at the campus, district, and state level. By speaking up and getting involved you will find that you are not alone, and you will embolden others to do the same.

Pray always.

Study the Church's teaching on human sexuality and how it is an integral part of our theology on the dignity of the human person. Form a small study group with other parents.

Resist complacency, apathy, and cynicism.

Connect with other parents at your child's school and at your parish for support and encouragement and to share and collect information.

Vote in local and statewide elections. Their outcomes can have greater consequences for our day-to-day lives than the outcome of a presidential election.



## How to Testify

Whether testifying before a SHAC, school board, or legislative committee, preparation is key for effective testimony. The following is a general guide. Consult public notices for specific details.

Attend a public meeting or watch a recording to familiarize yourself with the proceedings.

Testimony is usually limited to two or three minutes. Write your testimony and practice your delivery to ensure you stay within the time limit.

Always begin your testimony by identifying yourself and your position on the issue or bill.

“My name is ....., and I am testifying in support of the removal of sexually explicit material from school libraries....

Or

“My name is ....., and I am testifying against the adoption of comprehensive human sexuality standards...

Provide research or data points to support your position.

Personal stories can be very persuasive but avoid overly emotional testimony.

Conclude by thanking the members of the body.



## For more information

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And visit our website  
TXCatholic.org  
where you can sign up for our regular e-newsletter  
Texas Catholic Voice



**Texas Catholic Conference  
of Bishops**