

WAIT will have to wait

T. M. Fasano – Greeley Tribune
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Windsor parents favoring an abstinence-until-marriage program called WAIT Training will have to wait -- at least until the school district develops a health curriculum.

School officials say a health curriculum needs to be in place before other programs such as WAIT can be added to it.

And that will take some time.

Developing a new kindergarten-12th-grade health curriculum will take at least a year, said Laura Richardson, director of instruction for the Windsor Re-4 School District.

"There is no way you can whip out a K-12 curriculum this year," Richardson said. "It'll go into next year."

At the Windsor Middle School parent advisory committee meeting Monday night, usually attended by 10 parents, about 40 people came out to listen to an update on WAIT, which stands for "Why Am I Tempted?" and includes the value of healthy relationships, behavioral restraint and abstinence until marriage.

A group of middle school parents researched the WAIT program as a potential replacement to the eighth-grade Healthy Sexuality program, which is offered for 10 days through science classes.

The middle school held three parent-information meetings. Program critics said WAIT Training misleads students, includes information that is outdated or inaccurate and focuses on students who will choose to marry while ignoring students who will not marry because of sexual orientation or other reasons.

"For us to proceed with a program when we don't have a curriculum is not the right thing to do," said Windsor Middle School principal Doug Englert, who added that 95 percent of the people who have talked to him support WAIT Training. "We don't have a comprehensive health curriculum, let alone a sexuality curriculum."

Re-4 Superintendent John Karbula said this process gave the district a good realization that it couldn't move forward because the right tools aren't in place.

"It's not any different than a science or math text book," Karbula said. "You don't choose the materials first and then build the curriculum around the materials."

Windsor parent Debbie Elliott, who is in favor of implementing some form of WAIT in the schools, said she was disappointed, but she understands that a kindergarten-12th-grade health curriculum is necessary.

"Our whole goal is what's the best thing for the kids," Elliott said. "I think it's great that all the schools now get a chance to get some type of health curriculum, and I definitely think we need

that in Windsor."

Elliott said developing curriculum is a positive that came out of the WAIT meetings.

"I don't know that we'll adopt the entire program," Elliott said. "There are some things even in WAIT that I can say I'm not real crazy about. I'm hopeful that WAIT will be at least a part of it somewhere."

Until the district develops a new curriculum, the middle school will continue to teach the board-approved Healthy Sexuality program for eighth-graders, which Englert said is abstinence-based but doesn't talk about safe sex.

That's not good enough for Windsor parent Dave Ellingson, who would like to see the human sexuality program scrapped until the new curriculum is developed.

"The current program is not acceptable to me," said Ellingson of the program that has been taught for the last decade. "The WAIT program is certainly much more acceptable. Maybe we ought to at least give some consideration to saying we won't do anything until we do come up with something that has a buy-in from the majority of the community, and that will encourage us to move faster instead of slower."

WHAT'S NEXT

Windsor Middle School principal Doug Englert will meet with school district nurse Joni Heiden, superintendent John Karbula and director of instruction Laura Richardson about developing a kindergarten-12th-grade health curriculum on Monday.

"We'll plan together as far as what teachers need to be involved from each building, community members, and I would like to see some students at the secondary level involved, too," Richardson said. "This will be like we do with any other curriculum. We bring folks together from all the buildings, get some community folks and parents involved and start working away."