

**TOLEDO SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. 237**

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March 20, 2020

Governor Jay Inslee  
Office of the Governor  
PO Box 40002  
Olympia, WA 98504-0002

RE: ESSB 5395 – Sexual Health Education

Dear Governor Inslee:

The Toledo School Board took the past two weeks to consider the ramifications (also called unintended consequences) of the Comprehensive Sexual Health Education Bill (ESSB 5395) that is currently awaiting your signature. This bill has been approved by both the House and the Senate. At our monthly meeting last night, we formalized our opposition to this bill with the decision to write to you in protest – urging your veto on this piece of legislation.

While we understand, and even agree, with the need for Human Growth and Development education in our schools, we feel that this bill is flawed in some very specific ways.

**Local Control:** This is a very delicate and highly controversial subject area. It touches on not just what should be taught, but when (at what age) and by whom. We strongly believe that school districts need to maintain the control and discretion they currently enjoy when it comes to meeting the education needs of students. Asking that we submit our curriculum on this subject to OSPi (or anyone outside our own district) is unprecedented and would not even be considered for Math, Science, English, or History.

**Cost:** This bill creates yet another unfunded mandate. Money is tight and resources are scarce. We are a relatively poor district. It is only with the aid of the Distressed Schools Grant that we were able to break ground on our high school project last month. We do not have room in the budget to find, evaluate, and purchase a new K-12 curriculum to address the requirements of this legislation.

We don't have the money, and if the State had the money, they would have provided the funding for the program.

**Community:** As a Board, we've worked hard to build strong relationships between the District and a wide variety of community groups. We've worked to create a curriculum regarding sexual health and education that meets the current State requirements while respecting the beliefs and comfort levels of our constituents and staff. This bill changes our ability to do that. While **we** understand that the changes are a State mandate, that is not how it will be perceived in our community. This has the potential to damage some of those carefully crafted and nurtured relationships.

Thank you for your consideration of our concerns. We urge you to think carefully about the unintended consequences generated by this legislation and to veto ESSB 5395.

Sincerely,

Jerad Buswell  
President, Toledo School Board