



Shenandoah County Public Schools

Family Life Education

Curriculum Guide

**Shenandoah County Public Schools
600 North Main Street; Suite 200
Woodstock, VA 22664
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Preface

The first Shenandoah County Family Life Education Curriculum, K12, was developed from 1983 through 1985 through the extensive efforts of many parents, teachers, school principals, selected public school supervisors, and community resource persons including various medical and health agencies and the clergy. The Shenandoah County School Board approved the curriculum for implementation in the schools beginning in the fall of 1985. This first Family Life Education Curriculum was used as one of the models for developing the Virginia Family Life Education Curriculum mandated by the Virginia General Assembly in 1987.

The 1985 Shenandoah County Family Life Education Curriculum, K - 4 objectives and content were included in the Skills for Life, K - 4 curriculum which was written and approved for the primary grades in 1992. This was the only revision made in the County since 1985.

In the 1994-95 school year, the Family Life Education Community Involvement Team (FLECIT) and the Family Life Education Central Organizing Team (FLECOT) strongly urged that the curriculum be reviewed for age and developmentally appropriate objectives and content. Additional recommendations were made by both teams that the curriculum should (a) be grade specific with firmly established parameters and guidelines, (b) have additional varied activities, and (c) be provided with easily accessible and up-to-date resources. The FLECIT and FLECOT members submitted a proposal to the School Board office for a curriculum review and working team to address the recommendations. The proposal was approved for funding to be implemented during the Spring and Summer of 1995.

The Family Life Education Curriculum Review Team sent five thousand letters to all parents of school-age children, community leaders and agencies and to interested groups. These letters advised the recipients of the pending curriculum review and asked for their comments, suggestions, additions or changes, and for their assistance. Also, the coordinators of the Curriculum Review Team made presentations to school parent groups at their 1995 spring meetings to explain the intent of the review process.

From June 19th to the 30th, the Review Team was engaged in intensive work sessions reviewing objectives and providing additional content on all grade levels, Grades 4 through Grade 12. During this process, the Review Team listed major areas of concern. Out of these areas, strands or themes which run throughout the curriculum were identified as follows:

- Characteristics or traits of a healthy family
- Relationships and communication skills
- Goal-setting, decision-making, and problem-solving
- Rites of passage including emotional and social growth
- Responsibility and behavior consequences
- Health and reproduction including sexuality
- Societal messages, modeling, and mentoring
- Availability and use of resources

The Family Life Education Curriculum Review Team continued with school and community presentations describing the curriculum additions. The School Board approved the curriculum additions in the Summer of 1995 for implementation in the 1995-96 school year.

The Curriculum Review Team reviews and updates the curriculum annually making additions and changes as the needs become evident. Educators, parents, and community persons are invited to participate in this continuous curriculum assessment and revision. The program is alive and vital as long as the school and community are alert to the physical, social, emotional, and cultural changes that impact children and their families.

Teacher resources are updated by a review team comprised of teachers from the elementary, middle, and high school levels and is chaired by the coordinator of the Family Life Curriculum Team. The resources are updated quarterly in October, January, and April. Meeting minutes citing a list of resources by grade level and content is available on the Shenandoah County Public Schools website at www.shenandoah.k12.va.us. Copies of the current curriculum are available for preview at the School Board office, in the schools, and at the Shenandoah County Library.

Acknowledgements

The Shenandoah County Public Schools Family Life Education Curriculum is an accumulative product of all those parents, school personnel, community persons and agencies who believe that education and caring can make a difference in the lives of the children and their families in our community. This curriculum is presented with the philosophy that 'It takes a village to raise a child'. The village can only be as strong, through the generations, as is the villagers' commitment.

The concern and commitment of the many individuals and community groups responsible for the initiation, production, and completion of the Family Life Education Curriculum has been tremendous. It is important to acknowledge and thank these dedicated people.

Special thanks are extended to the members of the Family Life Education Community Involvement Team and the Family Life Education Central Organizing Team for providing the initial impetus and endorsement of the Family Life Education Curriculum Review project. Several of those team members were also involved in the Review Team efforts.

The Central Office Staff was responsible for the funding and implementation of the proposal and the total project. The initial completed curriculum could not have become a reality without the guidance and encouragement of Jane Gaidos and David Brill. The Central Office staff continues to play a vital role in revision and implementation guidelines of the Family Life Education Curriculum.

The parents and community persons who responded with their comments and suggestions provided vital information which was used in the curriculum review. The parents who attended the formal reviewing sessions gave strong support and invaluable assistance in reviewing objectives and needed content.

Family Life Education Defined

Family Life Education is defined as those educational concepts and experiences that influence attitudes toward family living, personal relationships, sexual development, and other aspects of human sexuality. It should help develop knowledge of physical, emotional, and social growth and maturation, understanding of individual needs, and the ability to make decisions. It should involve an examination of male and female roles in society and their relationships to each other.

Philosophy of Family Life Education

The youth of Shenandoah County are growing up in a rapidly changing society wherein many traditional ways and standards are being challenged. Of paramount importance in helping students respond to environmental exposures and societal confrontations is assistance in their development as sensitive, knowledgeable, self-respecting, and responsible citizens.

Family Life programs have existed in some public schools in Virginia for many years. Frequently, these programs have been offered as part of other programs. In primary classes, teachers have used rabbits, gerbils, and guppies to present the "facts of life" to young children. Science classes have long included plant and animal reproduction. For a long time, Family Consumer Science teachers have considered family living courses a necessary part of their curriculum. Teachers of health education have included anatomy and physiology and growth and development patterns in their instructional programs.

Although Family Life Education begins in the home and continues to be the parents' privilege and primary responsibility, the schools will supplement the family by offering the Family Life Education curriculum within the general education program in order to assist parents in this important growth process. Family Life Education must not be an isolated, special facet of education, but must be an integral part of the total instructional program which involves all children.

Such a program shall encompass education in communication skills, self and other appreciation, growth (inclusive of physical, mental, social, emotional and ethical), sex role identification, and skills in decision making. It should be appreciated and encouraged that parental guidance forms the major foundation for individual moral decisions. Any Family Life Education Curriculum initiated within the public schools will help the student critically evaluate cultural changes occurring within the realm of human behavior and will help the student appreciate the traditional values which have guided such behavior in the past.

Aided by such information, the youngster should be able to choose, both intellectually and morally, a life pattern which will permit him or her to relate normally, naturally and meaningfully to other people.

The purpose of this guide is to provide direction to schools and to assist teachers and parents in further developing an effective program in Family Life Education.

Policy

The Shenandoah County School Board supports the locally adopted Family Life Education Curriculum Guide and the selected materials for use by grade level. The following policy guidelines are recommended:

1. Only identified professional personnel at all grade levels shall conduct classes in Family Life Education.
2. Professional development sessions will be held each year for those teaching the Family Life Curriculum to learn about new teaching techniques, up-to-date information, and newly approved resources. Teaching staff will be updated as the need arises on any changes in the curriculum and its resources.
3. NO substitute teacher shall teach the sensitive areas of the Family Life Education Curriculum unless specifically trained and approved to address these topics.
4. Parents will have access to the curriculum outlines throughout the school year. They may review it either at their child's school or on the school division website. The curriculum is also available at the School Board Office and the Shenandoah County Public Library.
5. Parents may visit classrooms after following established procedures for classroom visitation.
6. An "opt out" procedure shall be provided to ensure communication with the parent or guardian for permission for students to be excused from any or all parts of the program.
7. Students will be segregated by gender for specified sections of the curriculum.
8. An alternative study will be available for students whose parents do not wish their children exposed to certain areas of the curriculum. Parents are welcome to use any or all parts of the curriculum to instruct their child at home.
9. Upon recommendation of the classroom teacher, guidance counselor, school nurse, or school psychologist, a student may be recommended for exclusion from the program.
10. Individual counseling by identified professional personnel is recommended for students who have needs beyond the curriculum prescribed for his or her grade level.
11. Concerns pertaining to the program will follow the stated procedure for resolution. See Shenandoah County School Board, Policies and Regulations, Community Relations, 2.10.1. Also, see Suggested Procedure attached.
12. The Family Life Program shall be evaluated annually by a committee established for this purpose. Teacher resources shall be evaluated quarterly and revisions posted on the school division website.

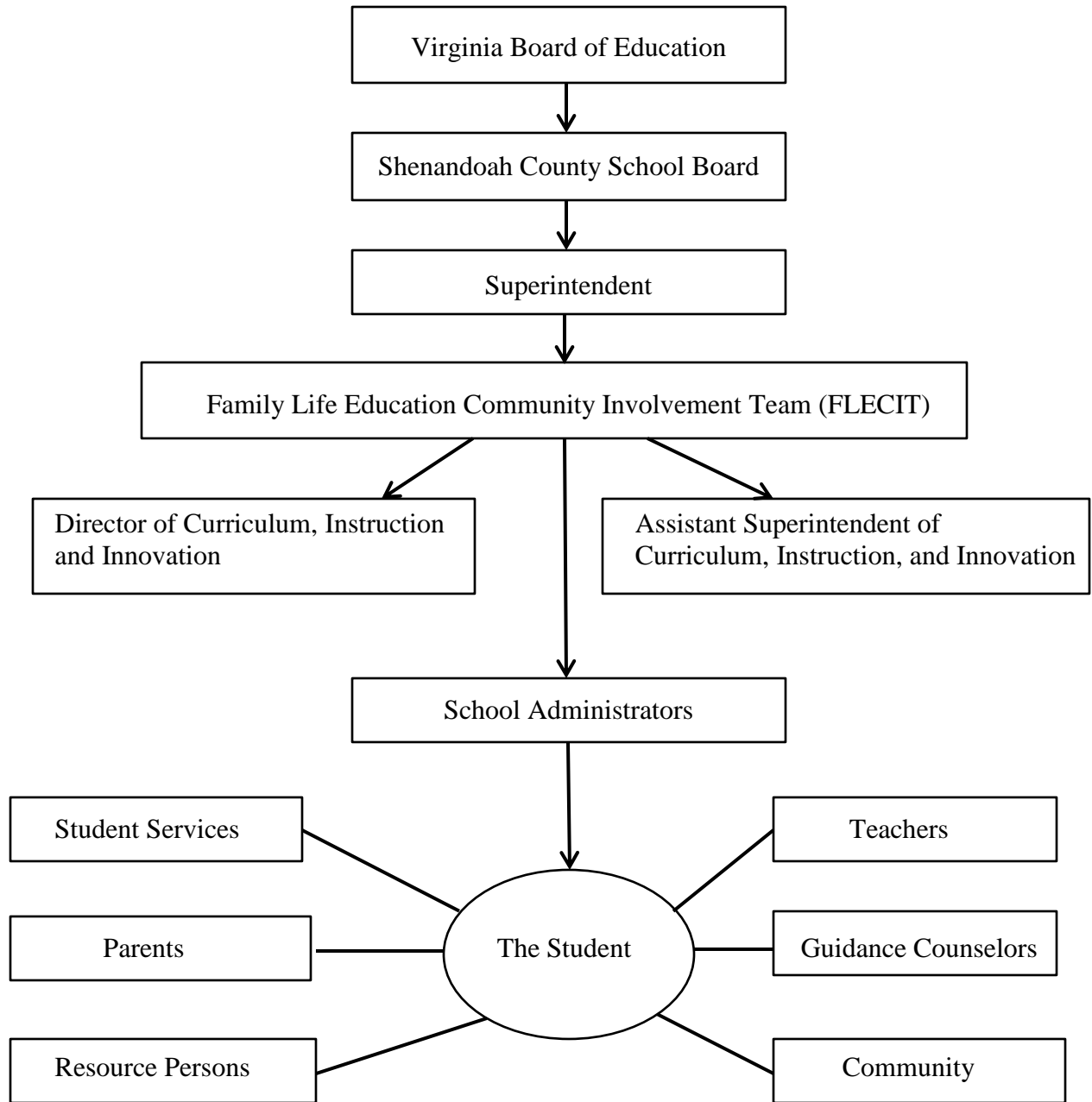
Suggested Procedures for Resolution of Parental Concerns

1. Read the Family Life Education Curriculum and Guidelines in the area of concern.
2. Make your complaint specific and in writing. Then, make an appointment with the teacher who is presenting the Family Life curriculum area or with the Family Life Coordinator to discuss your concerns.
3. If there is no resolution of your concerns, make an appointment for a joint meeting with the principal and the teacher.
4. If your concerns are still not mutually resolved, then follow procedures outlined in School Board Policy KL – Public Complaints in the Shenandoah County School Board Policy Manual.

Other School Board policies related to instruction and curriculum are:

- IGAH – Family Life Education (FLE)
- IF – Curriculum Development and Adoption
- IIA, IIA-R – Instructional Materials
- IIAB – Supplementary Materials Selection and Adoption
- INB – Teaching About Controversial Issues
- KLB, KLB-E – Public Complaints About Learning Resources

Organizational Chart



Guidelines For Implementation

Materials

State regulations provide that local School Boards are responsible for the selection, approval, and utilization of educational materials. Our community involvement team has reviewed and recommended materials which are current and appropriate for specific grade levels.

Parent/Community Involvement

We encourage all parents, guardians, and interested members of the community to become familiar with the intent and content of our curriculum. Family Life Education units are outlined, and parents are welcome to preview teaching materials, consult with principals and faculty, and visit classes during these units. Once informed of the content, parents or guardians must sign the form provided if they wish to opt their child out of a specific part or parts of the curriculum. Parents may choose to use the curriculum to instruct or to enrich the classroom learning in any of the subject areas of the Family Life Curriculum.

At different levels of instruction, effective teaching should reveal observable evidence that each student:

1. Demonstrates through oral and written expression, an understanding of what makes a family, what role each child and others play as family members, and some positive ways of interacting within the family setting.
2. Expresses feelings and emotions naturally and appropriately giving evidence of building self-understanding and positive self-esteem.
3. Demonstrates increasing ability to communicate with others and establish wholesome friendships with peers.
4. Expresses through oral and written language, an understanding of sex role stereotyping and what effects it can have on males and females.
5. Identifies various stresses on family living, potential abuse and neglect, and how to cope with family problems.
6. Expresses through oral and written language, an ability to identify the stages of the human growth cycle.
7. Expresses through oral and written language, characteristics that promote healthy male/female relationships.
8. Expresses through oral and written language, the implications and possible effects of early sexual involvement and teenage pregnancy. (7th -10th)
9. Expresses through oral and written language, the availability of community resources for communication problems, family conflict, emotional stress, child abuse or neglect, family planning, and sexually transmitted diseases. (7th - 10th)
10. Exhibits an understanding of the factors which should be considered concerning one's own possible marriage, childbearing, and parenting. (8th - 10th)

Evaluation is an ongoing process to be accomplished at regular intervals through input from the community involvement team. Suggestions for changes may come from students, parents, guardians, community, or from the school staff responsible for carrying out this curriculum. It is envisioned that the Family Life Education Curriculum may be revised in content and resources each year to keep it relevant and up-to-date.

INTRODUCTION TO TEACHERS' GUIDE

The purpose of the Teachers' Guide is to provide assistance in providing an effective program of family life development. This is not to be thought of as an added program, but rather as an integrated part of the regular school curriculum of Shenandoah County Public Schools. It is intended to supplement and reinforce the experiences provided by the family, the community, and the church to strengthen and enrich our youths' lives so they may become knowledgeable, well-balanced, responsible citizens.

The Shenandoah County Family Life Education Curriculum is presented in a format which encourages students to question, reflect, and seek answers about what is most important to them concerning family life. Family Life Education is a continuous process of instruction and should contribute to the overall goals of the educational program. The following goals have been selected to help each student:

1. Develop appreciation of the ways family members relate to each other and recognize the ways in which these relationships may change and affect each other;
2. Understand the interpersonal attitudes, skills and responsibilities that strengthen effective family life;
3. Develop interpersonal skills for effective family life and for communication;
4. Develop a positive self-concept, as well as, an appreciation of interpersonal skills for effective family life and for communication;
5. Grow in understanding of self and others;
6. Understand his/her emotional, social and physical growth and development;
7. Understand how reproduction occurs – plants, animals, humans;
8. Appreciate how growth and development are influenced by heredity and environment;
9. Develop a wholesome attitude towards, and an understanding of human sexuality as a basic factor throughout life; and,
10. Build and develop insights to enable an individual to make responsible decisions through his/her life.

Since children have particular needs at various stages of growth and development, it is important that instruction in individual and family life development and human relationships be given. Teachers should realize that adequate knowledge is important if pupils are to understand sexuality as it relates to their total growth and developmental processes - intellectual, emotional, attitudinal, physical and social. Emphasis should be placed upon the development of wholesome attitudes which will become a part of one's daily living.

Due to the nature of this material, the following guidelines should be observed:

A. Teaching Techniques and Procedures

1. Teachers should not permit students to discuss private, personal or intimate family experiences in class sessions. Teachers should use discretion in revealing personal information about themselves in classroom discussions, especially that of a sensitive nature.
2. Teachers should expect students to use proper terminology, but should avoid drill work in this area.
3. Since boys and girls, as well as different grade levels, may use the same classrooms, discretion must be used in materials displayed on bulletin boards.
4. Surveys and questionnaires should be avoided, particularly concerning sensitive areas. If you believe this technique is necessary for background, such documents must have prior approval of the building principal.

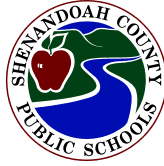
5. Teachers may give written tests as part of evaluation of curriculum objectives; however, any test grades of sensitive instruction will NOT be reflected in the student's grade for the marking period.
6. If debates are to be used as a teaching technique, the teacher should be careful to see that all viewpoints are presented by teams of equal ability. The teacher should summarize the debate to assure all points of view are well represented.
7. Teachers should be sensitive to the modesty and privacy of each student.
8. Resource speakers shall be carefully chosen and briefed by the teacher concerning the purpose, the topic, the scope, and any limitations, as well as points of emphasis.
9. Teachers should not feel compelled to answer all questions. They may answer students individually after class or refer them to their parents, counselors, school nurse, or pastors for answers.
10. Teaching materials should be utilized only at the grade level designed in the curriculum.
11. All resource people must be approved by the building principal or School Board administrator in the principal's absence, or be on an approved resource list for the specific topic being addressed.

B. Sensitive Areas

Any topics related to, or including human sexuality are considered "Sensitive Areas of Instruction" and should be dealt with accordingly. The readiness level of the students will vary and should give direction to the scope of the topics discussed.

Although these topics are an important part of the curriculum, they should be taught within the boundaries of the curriculum content. It is not the intent of this program to expand in depth on these areas, but to present the basic information.

Individual teacher judgment is an important factor in handling topics and questions which will arise spontaneously within a class. Teachers should continuously reflect upon the objectives for their grade level.



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FAMILY LIFE EDUCATION CURRICULUM NOTICE

Date _____

Dear Parent:

The Family Life Education Curriculum that has been adopted by the Shenandoah County School Board is an integral part of the Health classes. It will be taught throughout the school year. The materials that will be used during instruction have been evaluated and recommended by the Family Life Education Community Involvement Team. These materials have been adopted by the Shenandoah County School Board.

The Family Life Education curriculum is available for your preview at several locations. You may preview it on the Shenandoah County Public Schools division website (www.shenandoah.k12.va.us) or you may go to your child's school and preview it online. It is also available at the Shenandoah County Public Library.

Parents and guardians have the right to review the family life education program offered by their school division, including written and educational materials used in the program. Parents and guardians also have the right to excuse their child from all or part of family life education instruction.

Ref .- Shenandoah County Public Schools Policy IGAH.

If, after previewing the curriculum, you decide to opt your child out of specific areas of instruction, you **must** print out the Opt-Out Form for your child's grade level, complete and sign it and return it to your child's school. Copies of the forms are also available at your child's school.

You are welcome to personally preview any of our Family Life Education materials. If you wish to preview any of the materials, please make arrangements with your child's Health teacher or the principal. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to ask your child's teacher and/or principal for clarification.

Rebecca T. Cooper, BSN RN
Chairperson
FLECIT