

School Health Advisory Board

Concerning High School Implementation:

What should SHAB advise for FLE at TCWm? Continue Opt-In, return to mandatory instruction?

This is worthy of discussion. I don't think we're going to gain much ground in student representation from simple promotion of the class—there simply exist too many exciting alternatives. And I don't know the effect that reversing the mandate will have as undoubtedly we'll have to re-popularize the idea of opting out. I think that the answer is to continue to offer part of the mandatory pieces (dating violence and abusive relationships) through high school health, and then require a summer class for students—that they need to take once during their HS years—that covers the remainder of the mandates (mental health, domestic abuse, marriage, etc.). I think we're going to have to be creative if we don't want to end up robbing our HPE (Health and PE) teachers of their time—meaning implementation through that class exclusively.

What suggestions could be made to overcome barriers to instruction? On-line course development?

The online class idea is a good one, in my opinion, but I'd have to see a model of it in use. With the content as sensitive as it is, group dynamics and discussion really form the basis of the course. The meaningful discourse that occurs in a class is how the kids form opinions and become educated. I just don't know if that can happen in an online environment.

What is the current enrollment in the course? What are the competing electives? AP classes?

There are currently 154 students enrolled in Issues Impacting Today's Teens at Minnie Howard, and 84 at TC (International Academy). And here is the answer I received from Melissa Deak, head counselor at TC regarding competition: "As for competitors, all electives are competitors, I guess. This includes World Languages, the Arts, CTE (Career and Technical Education) classes, AVID (Advance via Individual Determination), STEM (Science Technology Engineering and Math) electives and now the Gov HSA (Health Services Academy). Also, in order to get a standard diploma, students must earned credits in sequential electives and the Issues class is a stand alone."

Perhaps making a group of electives that would serve the definition of sequential electives in which the FLE content is interspersed. For example: couple the Issues class with an introductory course of health services informatics. The goal of the course would be to teach students how to use various electronic medical and insurance records that would enable them to graduate high school prepared to take a position in health care as a EHR or insurance data manager.