

TEN THINGS YOU SHOULD KNOW ABOUT QUEBEC'S NEW SEX-ED



1. IT STARTS IN KINDERGARTEN

Quebec's new sex-ed is intended for all public and private schools by September 2018. This explicit program starts in kindergarten, introducing 5-year olds to themes related to sexual organs, pregnancy and vaginal/caesarean birth, also answering questions like "Why does mommy bleed?" and "What is a penis for?"

Quebec's sex-ed is even *more aggressive* than Ontario's controversial curriculum, which generated massive parental protests and resulted in an increase in homeschooling. Topics such as *sexual pleasure* are introduced in Quebec schools in grade 2, versus grade 7 in Ontario. However themes related to *sexually transmitted diseases* are the LAST to be introduced in Quebec, starting in grade 8.

Going above and beyond neutral biology, reproduction, prevention of sexually transmitted diseases, safety in social media/cyberspace and sexual assault, Quebec's sex-ed contains *more content* than any other sex-ed program in Canada. To read the 12-year program in its entirety, visit www.sexeducationquebec.org.

2. IT'S THE LONGEST MANDATORY SEX-ED PROGRAM IN CANADA WITHOUT THE RIGHT TO OPT-OUT

Unlike parents in other parts of Canada, the United States and Europe, Quebec parents would have fewer rights in regards to sex-ed. They would not be informed beforehand of teaching materials used (books, videos, movies, etc.) or asked their *authorization* on any part of the 12-year program. They would not be provided with the choice of an alternate activity for their child, although this is regularly done for *other* learning activities (such as off-site trips).

In Alberta (where sex-ed lasts only 6 years), parents may withdraw their child from any sex-ed lesson without fear of academic penalty, and schools must offer *alternative learning experiences*. Parents may place a grievance to the Human Rights Commission if they feel they were not properly notified of a lesson plan. In Manitoba, parents have the right to opt-out their child (for "alternate delivery" at home) when the content is in conflict with family, religious and/or cultural values. In British Columbia, parents may also opt-out their children for "alternate delivery" at home. In P.E.I. parents must be informed of the content beforehand and sign an "opt-in" form. In the United States, parents may be given the choice to *opt-out* their child of a sex-ed class. Even in sexually-liberal Netherlands, parents have the right to withdraw their child from themes not related to biology.

3. IT'S NOT A SEPARATE COURSE

Unlike other provinces of Canada where sex-ed is taught within *specific* courses (such as "Health-Ed"), Quebec's sex-ed would be invisible in the curriculum and *integrated within other subjects*. This would render it impossible for parents (without being told beforehand) to know *when* sex-ed would be taught, or *how*. Sexual themes could appear within courses such as French, English and mathematics, compromising the way core competencies are taught and graded.

The Quebec government states that this approach results in the *lowest* rates of sexually transmitted diseases and has been used successfully elsewhere for years – *namely in Sweden*. However, in 2013, Sweden

was identified as the *sex disease capital of Europe*. The government is also going against the recommendation of Quebec teachers' and principals' unions to teach sex-ed within a *separate course*.

4. ANYONE CAN TEACH IT...



There is no requirement for health care professionals to teach the program in Quebec, despite the sensitive nature of sex education, and the implications on children's physical and

psychological health. The Quebec government believes that up to 12 *hours* is sufficient to train ANY VOLUNTEER willing to explain themes ranging from sexual growth and body image, to pregnancy and birth, identity, gender stereotypes, roles and social norms, emotional and romantic life, sexual assault, general understanding of sexuality, sexual activity, sexual violence, sexually transmitted infections, and pregnancy prevention. Sexologists, teachers' unions and principals' unions are advocating for *professionals only* to teach the content. According to an April 2017 government report analyzing feedback from 19 schools piloting the program, several schools skipped teaching parts of the program due to *lack of expertise and general discomfort among its staff*.

5. ...ANY WAY THEY SEE FIT

Even though the government *may* provide schools with some teaching materials, the content remains *open* to each teacher's personal interpretation. Sexologists, who are trained to teach sex-ed in an *impartial* fashion, express concerns with this approach. They argue that those *without* such university training are prone to *imparting their own* beliefs and experiences onto children, which could be potentially harmful.

6. IT'S NOT NEUTRAL OR INCLUSIVE

Unlike other parts of Canada and the United States, Quebec's sex-ed does not reflect the diversity of its population's beliefs or values in a *neutral or inclusive* manner. Despite the fact that a person's upbringing, along with their cultural and religious affiliations are determining factors in their psycho-sexual development,

the program represents *only one* view of sexuality, and is *prejudicial* to others. The program does not follow the example of Quebec's own "ERC" program (Ethics and Religious Culture), which aims to present *several* diverse points of view, without bias.

7. IT PROMOTES THE "EXPLORATION OF NEW SEXUAL VALUES AND NORMS BEYOND THOSE OF THE FAMILY."

Quebec's sex-ed states that parents are the primary educators of their children, however it *undermines* parental authority. Starting in grade 3, the program encourages children to "observe" their family ("rules", "prejudices", "expectations", "stereotypes", "images", "messages", "activities", "preferences", "activities"). The program then invites children to "take action" should *their* values not align with those of their parents.

8. IT INFRINGES ON PARENTAL RIGHTS

...to educate their children in a manner consistent with their family values, beliefs, and morals.

9. IT INFRINGES ON CHILDREN'S RIGHTS

Quebec's sex-ed offers no flexibility to adapt to each child, particularly during the ages of 5-11 when children are in the *dormant* stage of their psycho-sexual development. The *same* approach is used to teach *all* children about sensitive, intimate and personal matters, regardless of their level of maturity, development, comfort, curiosity or pre-exposure to sexual influences, assaults, or abuse. The program does not provide any intervention plan for children affected by any lesson plan, for whatever reason.

10. IT'S BEING PILOTED INADEQUATELY

The Quebec government is currently conducting a pilot project mainly *outside* the Montreal area (with only 3 schools there out of a total of 19), thus *under-representing* 50% of Quebec's population and the province's hub of cultural and religious diversity.



WITHOUT REPRESENTATION WITHOUT TRANSPARENCY WITHOUT CONSULTATION

Quebec's sex-ed pilot project is being conducted in *less than 1%* of all schools, leaving parents in over 99% of schools in the dark about its very existence, content, or impact on the academic curriculum.

The Quebec government held *no* public consultations with parents *responsible by law* for the children directly impacted by this program.

Parent committees failed to *inform, poll, and represent* the majority of Quebec parents sitting *outside* of those selective committees, regarding *their* views on this program.

IN THE DARK

TAKE ACTION

Visit www.sexeducationquebec.org and sign the petition to make Quebec's new sex-ed inclusive, transparent and democratic:

1. **REVISE THE CONTENT TO BE NEUTRAL AND INCLUSIVE OF ALL QUEBECKERS;**
2. **MAKE SEX-ED A SEPARATE COURSE, not impacting other academic subject matters;**
3. **REQUIRE TEACHERS TO BE PROFESSIONALS IN THE MATTER;**
4. **ENSURE TRANSPARENCY TOWARDS QUEBEC PARENTS;**
5. **ALLOW THE RIGHT TO WITHDRAW, AS IN OTHER PARTS OF CANADA, THE UNITED STATES AND EUROPE.**



**SIGN THE PETITION
INFORM YOUR M.N.A.
SHARE THIS PAMPHLET**