

# ClarionLedger.com

AdChoices 

## Sex ed: Well, ignorance isn't working

4:07 PM, Aug. 26, 2011 |

Mississippi has now authorized a sex education curriculum for the public schools beyond the previous "abstinence only" requirement, and it's an acknowledgement of a reality that should have been self-evident.

When it comes to teaching teens about preventing pregnancy, ignorance doesn't work.

As Anne Norwood, director of three school-based health clinics in Jackson Public Schools, who also serves as a professor of nursing at the University of Mississippi Medical Center recently told The Clarion-Ledger: "By the 12th grade, 61.6 percent of students in the U.S. have had intercourse, and it's probably higher in Mississippi."

Mississippi leads the nation in per capita teen births - a figure that continues to rise, with more than 83 percent of teen pregnancies unintended. Pregnancies and births cost Mississippi taxpayers at least \$135 million annually, not including the costs of treating sexually transmitted diseases,

At least 17 Mississippi schools are using an abstinence-only program titled Choosing

the Best. While abstinence certainly, as the program says, is 100 percent effective, without some accurate knowledge of how contraception works, it's asking for trouble.

Plus, much of the information teens were relying upon was simply misinformation picked up from other teens.

Mississippi's growing sexually transmitted disease statistics - including HIV - may in part reflect such erroneous ideas.

Thankfully, the Legislature OK'd an expansion of the sex education program that starts this school year.

"Abstinence-plus" education also would encourage abstinence but would include information on contraception and disease prevention when the students do become sexually active.

Unfortunately, sex education for students has become wrapped up in political debates, rather than being simply a practical solution to a common problem.

Advertisement



**Protect Your Home  
with ADT!**

**Click Here  
to Learn More!**

ADT AUTHORIZED DEALER

Print Powered By  FormatDynamics™

# ClarionLedger.com

It's undeniable that a far better strategy than any program is frank talk at home about sex. Unfortunately, here, too, the reality falls far short - with studies saying that kids do not seem to have helpful conversations with their parents regarding sex. Peer pressure may play a greater role.

Sex education does start in the home. If, for a teen, abstinence is just a word, not a lifestyle, parents need to know it so they can help their kids make the right, informed choices regarding risks and potential consequences.

Sex education is helpful; frank discussion at home is better.

[Get Listed Here](#)

## Ads by Pulse 360

### **Mortgage Rates Hit 2.75%**

If you owe less than \$729k you probably qualify for 3.1% APR Govt Refi Programs  
[www.MortgageRatesExperts.com](http://www.MortgageRatesExperts.com)

### **Six Sigma Training**

Villanova offers 100% Online Six Sigma Training & Certification Prep!  
[www.VillanovaU.com/SixSigma](http://www.VillanovaU.com/SixSigma)

### **Free Credit Score From All 3 Bureaus**

View your latest Credit Scores from All 3 Bureaus in 60 seconds for \$0  
[FreeScoreOnline.com](http://FreeScoreOnline.com)

Advertisement

An advertisement for ADT security services. The top half features the text "Protect Your Home with ADT!" in a white serif font against a dark background. Below this is a photograph of a person's silhouette in a doorway, with a blue light source on the wall. At the bottom left is the ADT logo with the text "ADT AUTHORIZED DEALER". At the bottom right is the text "Click Here to Learn More!" in a white serif font.

**Protect Your Home  
with ADT!**

**ADT AUTHORIZED DEALER**

**Click Here  
to Learn More!**

Print Powered By  FormatDynamics™