

Grade 5 Health

Teaching
Puberty in 5th Grade

What is the change?

**Puberty would be taught in Grade 5,
instead of where it currently is taught,
in Grade 6.**

Steps up to this point

During the 2013-2014 school year, Monica Frender (health teacher), Rosemary Peterson (head of nursing), Heather Blake (nurse) and Kristen St. George (principal) collaborated on a PLT to bring stand-alone puberty lessons to 5th grade.

What the PLT found:

Belmont's neighboring school districts (Newton, Arlington, etc.) teach about puberty in 5th grade.

Nurse Peterson and Nurse Blake found that medical research cites ages 9-10 as the most developmentally appropriate to learn about puberty.

At CMS, the students are 11-12 when first taught.

The Curriculum

Using nursing funds the group purchased a curriculum titled, "The Great Puberty Workshop." The curriculum was created by health educators and physicians.

The curriculum includes short videos (approximately 15 minutes long) for boys and girls about the physical, social and emotional changes of puberty.

Logistics

Ms. Frender worked with Jon Hartunian (5th grade assistant principal) and the PTO to schedule a way of presenting the information to the 5th grade students this year.

The students would be separated by boys and girls. Both groups would watch their sex-specific video about puberty and write down questions or reflections.

The following day, Ms. Frender and a male staff member would visit each 5th grade class. The boys and girls would be separated and the health teacher would answer the questions that the students had written down the day before.

Logistics

This format would require about 45 minutes of class time on two consecutive days.

The PTO offered to pay for sub coverage for Ms. Frender and the male staff member while they are teaching the 5th graders.

The Proposal

Pilot the lessons with Grade 5 in June