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A school district in California's Central Valley is putting teens' health at risk by failing to provide students with information about condoms and contraception, two parents and a coalition of groups said in a lawsuit filed Tuesday over the district's sex education program.

The lawsuit is the first of its kind in California since the passage of a 2003 law requiring that sexual health education in public schools be comprehensive and medically accurate, the American Civil Liberties Union said.

"The sex ed in Clovis high schools violates state law and gives inaccurate, biased information to students," said Phyllida Burlingame, Reproductive Justice Policy Director at the ACLU of Northern California.

"Schools should teach teens about building healthy relationships, the benefits of delaying sexual activity, and accurate information about condoms and birth control. That's what state law requires and that's what meets the needs of teens," she said.

Instead, according to the lawsuit, the school district teaches students that all people, even adults, should avoid sexual activity until they are married.

"Our kids need complete, accurate information to help them protect themselves against STDs and unintended pregnancy. That's information they'll need at whatever point in their life they become sexually active," said Aubree Smith, a plaintiff in the suit and mother of a 17-year-old daughter at Clovis High School.

The lawsuit against the Clovis Unified School District was filed in Fresno County Superior Court by the California District of the American Academy of Pediatrics and the Gay-Straight Alliance Network. The ACLU is representing the groups and the two parents.

In a statement, district spokeswoman Kelly Avants said the school district was reviewing the suit. "It appears from an initial review that the concern raised in this lawsuit stems from a question of differing interpretations of the depth and breadth of a school district's obligation to cover detailed sexual content in its family life-sex education materials," the statement said.

"The District notes that some of the information contained in the suit does not accurately describe existing procedures and practices in Clovis Unified related to parent notification," the statement said.

The school district operates more than 40 schools, with more than 39,000 students from Clovis and surrounding Fresno County communities enrolled for the 2012-2013 school year, according to its website.

<http://www.foxnews.com/us/2012/08/22/calif-school-district-s...> [1]

News Article

Associated Press

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