

Making the Case for Comprehensive Sexuality Education in NY State

Introduction of the Problem

Students in NYS public schools are not receiving the quality Comprehensive Sexuality Education (CSE) they need to make safe and healthy decisions about their lives, their bodies, their relationships or their well-being.

- Young people make decisions about sexual health and sexual risk taking with limited education and inadequate supports.
- Many adolescents are engaged in high risk sexual behaviors that result in unintended pregnancy and sexually transmitted diseases, including HIV.
- Many are involved in unhealthy and unsafe relationships and experience dating and sexual violence and coercion.
- Many students are unfamiliar with the various resources available to help keep them safe and healthy.

There are **NO requirements** for teaching a variety of CSE topics that are medically accurate, or developmentally, age, and culturally appropriate, such as:

- Sexual health; sexually transmitted disease prevention; pregnancy prevention
- Healthy relationship development; child sexual abuse prevention; consent; dating and intimate partner violence prevention
- Available health services and supports, and other critical CSE topics.

And there are **NO requirements** for:

- School policies supporting high quality, best practice CSE; teacher professional preparation, teacher certification or on-going professional development for those who teach CSE

There are a few specific CSE topics required in health education by law or NYS Commissioner's Regulation.

- K-12 instruction in HIV/AIDS – specific to the nature of the disease, methods of transmission and methods of prevention, (However, parents may opt their children out of how to prevent HIV/AIDS, K-12)
- At the high school level only, instruction in:
 - Child development, parenting skills and responsibilities
 - Detection and prevention of breast and testicular cancer

The Solution

The New York State Council on Adolescent Pregnancy supports statewide implementation of Pre-K-12 CSE and promotes a school CSE model that includes six quality, best practice components:

1. CSE policy
2. Parent and family engagement in CSE
3. Community involvement in CSE
4. Pre-K through 12th grade age appropriate CSE curriculum, instruction and assessment
5. CSE professional development for adults, including teachers and other school professionals
6. Implementation, monitoring and sustainability of CSE within a comprehensive health program.

This model is important because, through Comprehensive Sexuality Education, public school students can:

- Improve academic achievement and overall success
- Increase and/or maintain healthy and safe sexual knowledge, beliefs and behaviors
- Increase abstinence from unsafe, unhealthy and/or high risk sexual behaviors
- Delay the onset of first involvement with unsafe, unhealthy or high risk sexual behaviors
- Decrease unsafe, unhealthy and/or high risk sexual behaviors

For more information about Making the Case for Comprehensive Sexuality Education in NYS schools, please go to www.nyscap.org