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Book Policy Manual

Section 100 Programs

Title Comprehensive Sexuality Education

Code 121

Status Active

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**Purpose and Goals**

It is in the public's best interest to ensure that young people are equipped with medically and scientifically accurate, developmentally-appropriate information that will help them make informed decisions about their sexual and reproductive health throughout their lives. The primary responsibility for sexual health education is with parents and guardians. However, this responsibility also extends to schools and other youth-serving community groups. Thus, the Pittsburgh Public School Board affirms its commitment to providing high-quality comprehensive sexuality education to its students.

This Policy reflects the Board’s commitment to provide students from kindergarten through graduation with sexual health education that:

1. Is comprehensive;

2. Is developmentally appropriate;[1]

3. Is medically accurate;

4. Emphasizes sexual abstinence as the expected norm and the only protection that is 100% effective against unintended pregnancy, sexually transmitted infections, and HIV when transmitted sexually;

5. Is inclusive, holistic, anti-racist, and culturally responsive;

6 Includes information required to provide instruction designed to promote a comprehensive understanding of the emotional, psychological, physiological, and social aspects necessary for healthy relationships.

Definition

**Comprehensive Sexuality Education.** Developmentally appropriate sexuality education, articulated kindergarten through graduation, providing students with adequate and accurate information on human sexuality; preparing students to deal responsibly with social, physical, emotional and mental aspects of human sexuality. Curriculum will utilize the National Sex Education Standards in conjunction with the National Health Education Standard to ensure students receive comprehensive sexuality education.

These categories and topics will be reviewed as needed by the Superintendent or their designee, using the [HECAT](https://www.cdc.gov/healthyyouth/hecat/index.htm) (health education curriculum analysis tool) in conjunction with the updating of curriculum and/or textbook adoption, to ensure they continue to be aligned with the National Sex Ed Standards and best practices as they evolve over time.

Comprehensive Sexuality Education has the following characteristics:

* Teaches complete and medically-accurate, culturally-responsive, anti-racist, inclusive, developmentally appropriate information;
* Includes information in seven major categories:
  + Consent and Healthy Relationships,
  + Anatomy and Physiology,
  + Puberty and Adolescent Sexual Development,
  + Gender Identity and Expression,
  + Sexual Orientation and Identity,
  + Sexual Health, and
  + Interpersonal Violence;
* Explores risk and risk reduction behaviors along with healthy decision making
* Addresses consent and violence prevention
* Provides medically accurate information about the health benefits and side effects of all contraceptives and barrier methods as a means to prevent pregnancy and/or STDs, including HIV.
* Uses materials and instruction that are evidence based, medically accurate and free of fear and shame based strategies;
* Is taught by trained, qualified instructors, utilizing the Professional Learning Standards for Sex Education (PLSSE) [Assessment Tool](https://drive.google.com/file/d/1lXuIU5Ak7V-o8ywkqNzlQeg32ZR8MI96/view?usp=sharing)  & [Standards;](https://drive.google.com/file/d/0B1-S91Ks0poRY2xoc3RXQ1pZMWhFY2k3aEdsek0zVGRnSTFR/view?usp=sharing&resourcekey=0-qz62oPywlC8Ery9dCRQrQA)
* Requires continued training and professional development opportunities including optional guidance for those responsible for teaching sexuality education; and
* Encourages open communication between parents/guardians/caregivers and youth on the issues addressed by comprehensive sexuality education, while acknowledging that this is not safe or possible for all young people;
* Answers all student questions accurately, inclusively, and free from stigma and shame.

Parental/Guardian Consent

Prior to the commencement of instruction, the District shall publicize the curriculum outlines and materials to be used in conjunction with classroom instruction. This information will be available to parents and guardians during normal school hours or at parent-teacher conferences. Additionally, opt-out forms shall be publicized and made available to parents/guardians who desire to have their child excused from specific topic areas of the curriculum and provided with an alternative assignment for such portion of the curriculum. Parent(s) or guardian(s) have the right to withdraw their child from sexuality education classes at any time with notice to the school. Curricular materials, if practical, shall be made available by the District for home instructional use by a parent or guardian if the student has been excused from any portion of the District’s Sexuality Education course. Title 22, Sec. 4.4, 4.29.

Use of Outside Consultants as Instructors

Any school may retain the services of an outside consultant to supplement its comprehensive sexuality education program, consistent with state law and District policy for hiring independent contractors. However, any outside consultant must first be approved by the Superintendent designated group/committee, and must demonstrate their use of developmentally- appropriate, inclusive, medically-accurate, culturally-responsive, anti-racist, evidence-based lessons.

If an outside provider is unable to offer services which align within the guidelines outlined in this policy, the consultant will not be permitted to provide services within Pittsburgh Public Schools.

**Delegation of Responsibility**

The Board recognizes the need for a comprehensive approach to sexuality and reproductive health education that is consistently applied throughout the District and that will serve as a guide to local school administrators and teachers who deliver instruction or who select outside consultants to deliver comprehensive sexuality health instruction.[3][4]

The HIV/AIDS and sexually transmitted infections and disease prevention education in the human sexuality education comprehensive plan shall provide adequate instruction for all students in grades 6 through 8 and at least twice during grades 9 through 12.

The Board hereby directs the Superintendent or designee to work with representatives of the school board and applicable community based organizations committed to developing and maintaining guidelines for the provision of a comprehensive sexuality education program for District students from kindergarten through graduation that are consistent with state and federal law, as well as all applicable Board policies.

Legal 1. 24 P.S. 1512

2. 22 PA Code 4.29

3. 24 P.S. 1511

4. 22 PA Code 4.12

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