



COMPREHENSIVE SEXUAL HEALTH EDUCATION CASE STUDY: San Diego Unified School District

As the second largest district in California, San Diego Unified School District (SDUSD) serves a diverse student population of nearly 132,000 pre-school through 12th grade students, including 31 high schools. SDUSD is able to carry out an exemplary comprehensive sexual health education program with funding through the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), Division of Adolescent School Health, which they have been a grantee of since 1990. Currently, sexual health education offered at three grade levels: 6, 8, and 10 or 11.

A key to the success of SDUSD's comprehensive approach is the partnership the district has developed with community based organizations, such as Planned Parenthood San Diego/Riverside Counties, Operation Samahan, and Teen NOW. These organizations support sexual health education efforts by helping to provide two-day teacher training, participating in the sexual health education advisory committee, and providing community support to promoting student wellness.

Sexual health curricula currently being used include *Family Life* in 6th grade, *Rights Respect Responsibility* in 8th grade and *Drawing the Line* in high school, which was developed by the HIV Prevention and Sex Education Resource teacher and middle school science teachers. The curricula were evaluated many years ago by Educational Development Specialists and have been adapted for use by organizations such as the YMCA, though the district is looking for new funding to complete a more in-depth evaluation. Some components of the curricula have been updated to reflect emerging issues and demographics, such as the addition of a lesson on cyber safety for sixth graders.

The development of a sexual health education advisory committee is a strength of SDUSD's comprehensive approach and is also a CDC grantee requirement. Currently, the committee composition includes staff from school nursing and special education, a pediatrician, two community members, and various community partners. There is no linkage to the school board, though the committee has sent position statements to the board on key issues that may affect student wellness. The committee primarily focuses on sexual health curricula and ensuring compliance to California's Education Code and preparation for grant applications. Meetings are held approximately eight times each year.

Another strength of the program is SDUSD's participation in the Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS), a health risk survey administered nationally every two years since 1991. Results of the survey are used to help guide district staff on determining the focus of the district's educational program. The advisory committee also reviews additional questions that should be added to the survey. For instance, this past year, the committee added questions on gender identity and also reviewed data as it relates to health disparities.

SDUSD feels their sexual health education programs remain strong because of the many services provided by community-based organizations, staff and community participation in their advisory committee, as well as the funding support from the CDC. This investment has paid off: The district's and community's prioritization of sexual health education has improved students' access to accurate health information and fosters healthier student behaviors.

Contact:

Marge Kleinsmith-Hildebrand, Sex Education HIV Prevention Resource Teacher
P.E., Health and Athletics Department, San Diego Unified School District
P: 619.725.7123
E: mkleinsmith@sandi.net