



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

San Francisco Unified School District (SFUSD) offers a rich array of sexual health education programs through both internal resources and community partnerships. SFUSD augments classroom-based education through the San Francisco Wellness Initiative, a collaborative effort to support student health and well-being at the secondary level. Established in response to the needs identified by a wide-scale youth survey, the initiative links students to a comprehensive array of physical, reproductive and behavioral health services through both on-campus programming and community-based partnerships.

With leadership from SFUSD, the Department of Children, Youth and Their Families,¹ and the Department of Public Health,² the initiative is building on existing resources to improve the way government agencies, the school district and community-based organizations work together to address student health needs. In collaboration with school site administrators, the initiative manages Wellness Programs in 15 public high schools. The programs bring community-based organizations onto campuses, provide referrals to public and private health providers, and educate youth about resources and services available both on and off campus. As part of this initiative, the school board endorsed a condom education and availability program in the high schools, and passed a resolution³ regarding meeting the needs of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender students.

SFUSD dedicates resources to selecting K-12 sexual health education curricula and preparing staff to deliver this education. Curricula are selected by a Curriculum and Materials Review Task Force, which includes school teachers, staff, parents, and representatives from community based organizations, faith communities, and other community members. SFUSD is funded by the Centers for Disease Control to conduct comprehensive HIV/AIDS education, which supports district infrastructure for staff development. Classroom teachers are offered three training events a year to learn how to deliver the sexual health education program. Teacher-delivered education is augmented by educational sessions delivered by school nurses, learning support services staff, and community agency educators. SFUSD has a carefully reviewed and approved list⁴ of acceptable human sexuality presenters.

The district is careful to stage the content to make it appropriate for each age group as follows:

- Grades K-1/2 and 3/4-5: *Tell Me About AIDS*.
- Grades 4-5: Puberty/ growth and development education uses the following resources: *Changes, The New and Improved Me, A Girls Guide to Growing up, A Boys Guide to Growing up, and It's So Amazing!*
- Grades 7-8 and 9-10 (in science): *Positive Prevention HIV/STD Prevention Education for California Youth, Health Smart, Peer-to-Peer: Facts About HIV, and Decisions for Health*.

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In addition, SFUSD partners with New Conservatory Theatre and Kaiser to provide youth with age appropriate and culturally sensitive theatrical performances and guest speakers from community agencies regarding HIV prevention education. For example, last fall, elementary, middle and high schools reported hosting 101 school-wide HIV awareness events reaching more than 13,458 youth.

Each high school has a Youth Outreach Coordinator who delivers classroom and school-wide health education on a variety of topics, including sexual health. These youth teams are trained and supported by a Community Health Outreach Coordinator. Involved youth say the program has “given [them] the opportunity to help other people by giving [them] the resources to educate peers.” On the topic of peer pressure, one participant shared, “The Community Health Outreach Workers and Youth Outreach Workers are all positive influences, and they help people grow. We tell other people what we learn, so we’re spreading the wellness.”

SFUSD’s health education programs coordinator recommends that school boards *require* health education as a part of both primary and secondary education programs. She suggests that SFUSD’s programs are strong because of partnerships with the Department of Public Health and many community-based organizations. Also, their high school wellness teams serve as a model for effectively coordinating myriad programs to best assess and serve students’ health needs.

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¹ <http://www.dcyf.org>

² <http://www.sfdph.org>

³ <http://portal.sfusd.edu/data/board/pdf/memberreso/LGBTQ.pdf>

⁴ <http://healthiersf.org/Resources/index.cfm#speakerLists>