



# PASS COMPREHENSIVE SEX EDUCATION

## HEALTHY STUDENTS, HEALTHY SCHOOLS

New York State does not currently require comprehensive sexual health education (CSE) in public schools. As a result, many schools across New York do not provide any sex education and of those that do, the curriculum is often inaccurate, incomplete, biased, and stigmatizing. New York students deserve better.

Comprehensive sex education is more than just teaching young people how to improve health outcomes and avoid unintended pregnancy; comprehensive sex education promotes gender equality by breaking down sex stereotypes, supports young people to make healthy decisions and have healthy relationships, prevents sexual assault and violence, and is critical to the well-being and educational outcomes of young people.

## WHAT WILL THIS BILL DO?

This piece of legislation is a common-sense measure that requires the Commissioner of Education to identify or create a comprehensive sex education (CSE) program for students in grades K-12 that includes model curricula to ensure easier implementation for districts and resources for teachers to support implementation. Districts and schools maintain flexibility to teach the CSE curriculum that is right for their student population so long as it meets the standards included in the Commissioner's curriculum. This ensures that all public and charter school students receive comprehensive, age-appropriate, medically accurate sex education – no matter their zip code.

## WHAT WOULD COMPREHENSIVE SEX EDUCATION LOOK LIKE?

Experts and researchers agree that comprehensive sex education should begin in elementary school (K-5) and continue through subsequent grade levels so that students can build upon their knowledge and skills as they mature. Kindergarteners need to learn foundational skills for healthy friendships, communication, and bodily autonomy just as much as teenagers need medically accurate, non-stigmatizing education about healthcare and relationships.



Comprehensive &  
medically accurate &  
age-appropriate &  
honest &  
Consent-informed &  
LGBTQ-inclusive &  
trauma/healing informed  
SEXUALITY EDUCATION

**“I think comprehensive sex-ed is important for many reasons, but partially because it teaches students to be comfortable and confident in themselves and their bodies, and comfortable communicating about boundaries and needs.”**

**TESS,  
CAMPUS ORGANIZER**

# WHAT A SEX ED CURRICULUM COULD LOOK LIKE

Grades K-2	Grades 3-5	Grades 6-8	Grades 9-10	Grades 11-12
<p>Talk about different family structures, friendships, and how to positively express feelings.</p> <p>Define personal boundaries and demonstrate how to show respect for someone else's boundaries.</p> <p>Explain why bullying and teasing are wrong.</p> <p>Learn the proper names for body parts.</p>	<p>Explain puberty, hygiene, and reproductive systems with medically accurate information.</p> <p>Describe healthy relationships, and define harassment and sexual abuse.</p> <p>Communicate personal boundaries and demonstrate respect for others' personal boundaries.</p> <p>Identify strategies to call attention to or leave uncomfortable or dangerous situations, including situations of sexual harassment.</p> <p>Explain that some survivors are not believed when they talk about sexual harassment or violence and that it is important to keep telling trusted adults until an adult takes action.</p> <p>Define sexual orientation and gender identity and demonstrate dignity and respect.</p> <p>Explain how pregnancy can occur.</p> <p>Define sexually transmitted infections (STIs), including HIV, and hold age-appropriate discussions of transmission and prevention.</p>	<p>Analyze consent and power dynamics in healthy relationships.</p> <p>Analyze how a person's intersecting identities, peers, and family can influence attitudes and expectations about gender and gender roles.</p> <p>Explain methods of preventing STIs and pregnancy, and describe signs of pregnancy.</p> <p>Discuss ways to communicate about whether to engage in sexual behaviors and how to reduce risk.</p> <p>Define interpersonal and sexual violence and identify community resources and supports for someone who is being sexually harassed, abused, or assaulted.</p> <p>Describe strategies to intervene, when it is safe to do so, when someone is being sexually harassed or perpetrating harassing behaviors.</p> <p>Describe strategies to end an unhealthy relationship.</p> <p>Identify credible sources of information about sexual health.</p>	<p>Describe the cognitive, social, and emotional changes of adolescence and early adulthood.</p> <p>Analyze how a person's intersecting identities, peers, family, and the media can influence body image, self-esteem, and expectations about gender and gender roles.</p> <p>Differentiate between sex assigned at birth, sexual orientation, and gender identity.</p> <p>Demonstrate the ability to differentiate between medically accurate/credible information and misinformation.</p> <p>Define reproductive justice and discuss the impact of racism on sexual health.</p> <p>Compare and contrast the advantages and disadvantages of different contraceptive methods.</p> <p>Describe effective communication, including communication with a partner about abstaining from sexual behavior, using contraception, and preventing and getting tested and treated for STIs.</p> <p>Demonstrate ways to show respect for others' boundaries as they relate to intimacy and sexual behavior.</p> <p>Analyze federal and state laws that impact reproductive and sexual health.</p> <p>List the milestones of fetal development.</p> <p>Describe the legal consequences of sexual behavior without consent.</p>	<p>Analyze personal and societal factors that can influence decisions about pregnancy.</p> <p>Assess the skills required to be an effective parent.</p> <p>Demonstrate skills to communicate with a partner about STI prevention, and analyze individual responsibility for STI testing.</p> <p>Demonstrate communication and decision making regarding contraception.</p> <p>Describe the potential impacts of power and privilege within relationships and analyze ways intersectionality and systemic oppression impact the agency of people of color and other marginalized people.</p> <p>Analyze the personal and societal factors that could prevent someone from leaving an unhealthy relationship.</p> <p>Analyze the impact of stigma and bias on pregnancy and STI – including HIV – prevention, testing, and treatment.</p>

**“I have had zero comprehensive sex education in school, and the sad reality is that I have to learn things through my peers and social media.”**

**VIVIAN,  
TEEN ACTIVIST PROJECT**



# COMPREHENSIVE SEX ED...

## ENABLES HEALTHY RELATIONSHIPS AND PREVENTS SEXUAL HARASSMENT AND VIOLENCE

Nationally, more than two-thirds of teenagers who are or have been in a relationship report experiencing some form of sexual, physical, or emotional abuse.

When schools educate their students about consent, bodily autonomy, and dating violence, and enact school policies aimed at prevention, teens are less likely to be victimized, and more likely to avoid perpetrating intimate partner violence. Sexual harassment is also significantly reduced.

## PROMOTES RESPECT AND INCLUSION

LGBTQI youth face a disproportionate risk for school victimization, which has been linked with decreased academic achievement, increased suicide ideation, increased rates of absenteeism, and negative impacts on emotional health. Gay, lesbian, and bisexual students are almost twice as likely as heterosexual students to report not going to school because they felt unsafe at, or on their way to or from, school.

For transgender and gender non-conforming students, school can be even more difficult. In New York, 74 percent of transgender students experience some form

of mistreatment: 50 percent were verbally harassed, 23 percent report being physically assaulted, and 12 percent experienced sexual violence between kindergarten and 12th grade. Fourteen percent of these students faced such severe mistreatment that they left their schools.

CSE helps students understand sexual orientation and gender identity, destigmatizes discussions of sexuality and gender, cultivates social and emotional competencies, and promotes respect, understanding, and inclusion. By showing diverse sexual orientations, gender identities, and family structures, comprehensive sex ed shows LGBTQI youth that they are not alone and shows their straight, cisgender classmates that they exist.

## REDUCES PREGNANCY AND STIS

Among New York high school students surveyed in 2017, 50 percent had engaged in sexual intercourse; and of these, only 11 percent reported using a prevention method to protect against pregnancy and STIs.

In addition, teens ages 15 to 19 represent more than 50 percent of new STI cases in our state.

Adolescents who receive CSE are not more likely to become sexually active; in

fact, CSE was associated with a lower likelihood of engaging in sexual intercourse – and when young people do become sexually active, those who have had CSE tend to engage in safer behaviors.

## IMPROVES ACADEMIC OUTCOMES

Nearly one-third of young women who have dropped out of high school cite early pregnancy or parenthood as a key reason.

A 2015 Centers for Disease Control and Prevention analysis of programs to prevent school dropout demonstrated that social-emotional skills programs like CSE led to significant reductions in dropout rates, from an average of 21 percent in control groups to 10 percent in program groups.

## IS A FINANCIALLY SOUND INVESTMENT

CSE is a cost-saver for New York. For every \$1 invested in CSE, the state would save \$2.65 by reducing poor health outcomes.

The cost of treating STIs in the US is approximately \$16 billion annually and New York State has the 12th highest rate of reported cases of chlamydia. The lack of consistent comprehensive sexual health education in New York State is costing hundreds of millions in associated health care costs.

# HOW TO GET INVOLVED IF YOU ARE A...

## STUDENT

- Spread the word to your friends.
- Share your stories about your experience with sex-ed in schools.

## TEACHER

- Push to have trained sex-ed teachers in schools.
- Create an inclusive school environment where students feel comfortable asking questions about sex-ed.

## PARENT

- Educate yourself on the issue.
- Talk to your kids about their experience with sex education in schools.
- Discuss sex education with other parents who may be hesitant.

## LEGISLATOR

- Co-sponsor/support the bill.
- Host events to educate the community on sex-ed, centering youth voices.

**SIGN THIS PETITION TO URGE YOUR ELECTED OFFICIALS TO CO-SPONSOR AND PASS THE BILL.**