

RWB
SALON

EXTREMISM IN OUR SCHOOLS:

RED
WINE
& BLUE
CIVICS

WHY ABSTINENCE- ONLY SEX ED IS BACK

**NORA
GELPERIN**

ADVOCATES FOR YOUTH



**TAZMINE
WEISGERBER**

ANSWER



AUGUST 4 | 7:30 PM ET | VIRTUAL EVENT

FoSE Partners

**Advocates
for Youth**

Rights. Respect. Responsibility.

answer
sex ed, honestly

**Planned
Parenthood®**
Care. No matter what.

SIECUS
SEX ED FOR SOCIAL CHANGE

Recording, screenshotting, downloading, reproducing, or **sharing this presentation or its contents in any format**—including uploading to websites, social media, or third-party platforms such as WebinarTV—**is prohibited without prior written permission.**

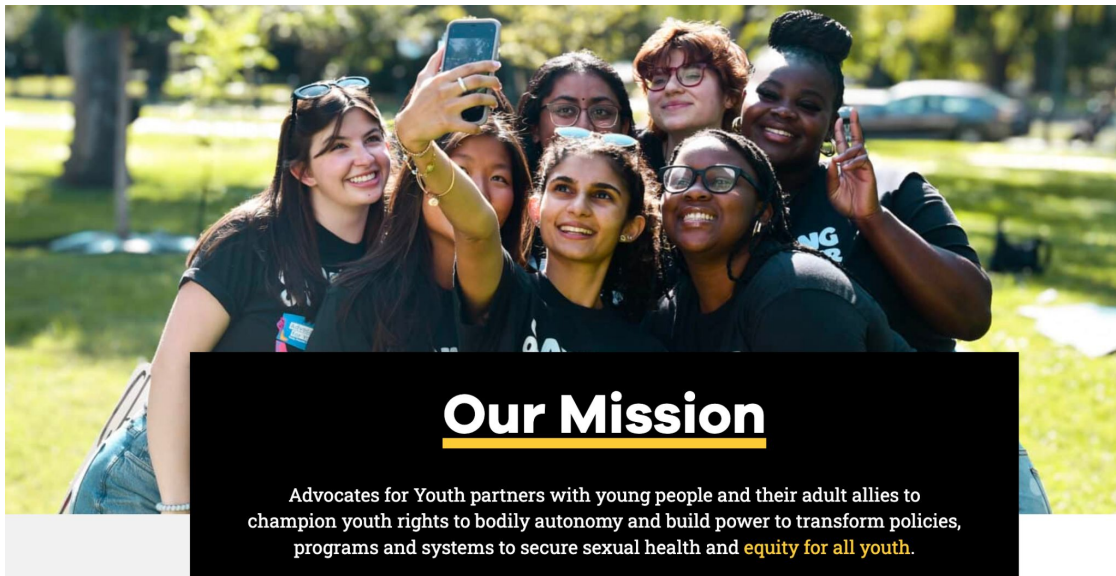


Answer | Sex Ed, Honestly



Advocates for Youth

Young. Powerful. Taking Over.



Our Mission

Advocates for Youth partners with young people and their adult allies to champion youth rights to bodily autonomy and build power to transform policies, programs and systems to secure sexual health and **equity for all youth**.

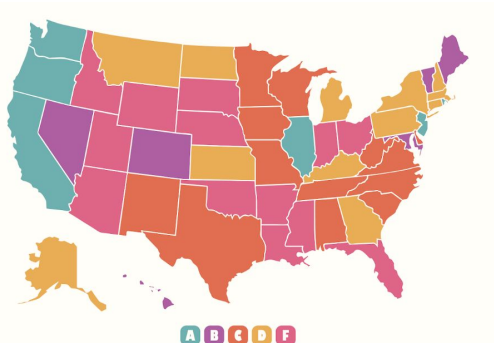
What is FoSE?

The **Future of Sex Education (FoSE) Initiative** is as a partnership between **Advocates for Youth, Answer, Planned Parenthood Federation of America**, and **SIECUS: Sex Ed for Social Change**.

Mission: **Champion sex education** and **create conditions** that **prioritize** and **protect the wellbeing of all young people**.

Since 2007, FoSE has worked to **build a national foundation** that empowers policymakers, school administrators, and educators to **implement and sustain sex education** and **cultivate supportive learning environments**.

It has never been more important to champion sex education that WORKS.



The SIECUS US Sex Ed Report Card provides a color-coded, state-by-state analysis of sex education policies, with each state graded on an A-F scale.

A B C D F

NO MATTER WHO YOU ARE OR WHERE YOU LIVE, YOU DESERVE ACCESS TO SEX EDUCATION THAT IS AGE-APPROPRIATE AND COVERS A WIDE RANGE OF TOPICS.

#SexEdForAll

In 2026, the fight for sex education is more urgent than ever. Join us as we celebrate **Sex Ed for All Month** and voice our commitment to a world where all young people, no matter who they are or where they live, get the sex education they deserve.

#SexEdForAll

**THE RESEARCH IS CLEAR:
SEX EDUCATION SUPPORTS:**

1. healthier relationships
2. better health outcomes
3. safer communities

PLUS

Parents support it, young people need it, and every community should have access to it.

Abstinence-Only-Until-Marriage Curricula Reviews

Methodology, Cross-Cutting Themes, & Examples

The Looming Threat to Sex Education: A Resurgence of Federal Funding for Abstinence-Only Programs?

Document Type: Grants Notice

Opportunity Number: HHS-2026-ACF-ACYF-SR-0012

Opportunity Title: General Departmental Sexual Risk Avoidance Education (GDSRAE)

Opportunity Category: Discretionary

Opportunity Category Explanation:

Funding Instrument Type: Grant

Category of Funding Activity: Income Security and Social Services

Category Explanation:

Expected Number of Awards: 43

Assistance Listings: 93.060 -- Sexual Risk Avoidance Education

Cost Sharing or Matching Requirement: No

Version: Forecast 1

Forecasted Date: Apr 23, 2026

Last Updated Date: Apr 23, 2026

Estimated Post Date: Jun 22, 2026

Estimated Application Due Date: Jul 29, 2026 Electronically submitted applications must be submitted no later than 11:59 pm Eastern Standard Time on the listed application due date.

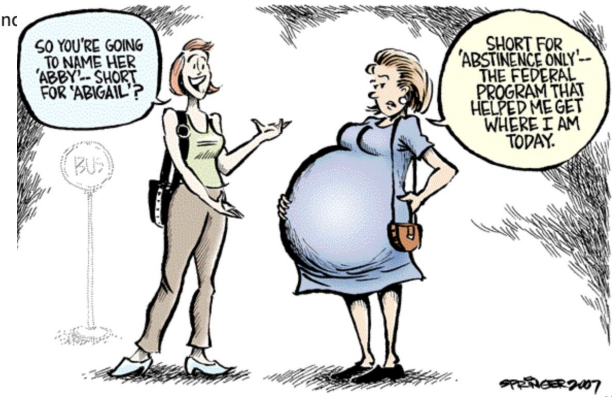
Estimated Award Date: Sep 15, 2026

Estimated Project Start Date: Sep 30, 2026

Fiscal Year: 2026

Estimated Total \$ 19,217,650

Funding:



Trump administration abruptly cancels grants for teen pregnancy prevention

JULY 8, 2026 · 7:00 AM ET

The new criteria say that grant recipients must teach abstinence as the only means to prevent teen pregnancy. Courses must stress the importance of marriage and procreation and instruct young people how to safeguard their fertility. They make scant reference to preventing sexually transmitted infections and virtually none to lesbian, gay and transgender sexuality.

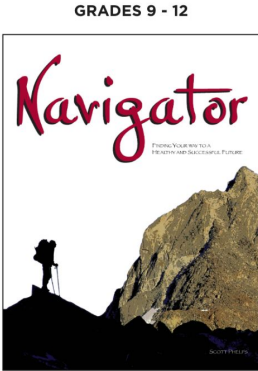
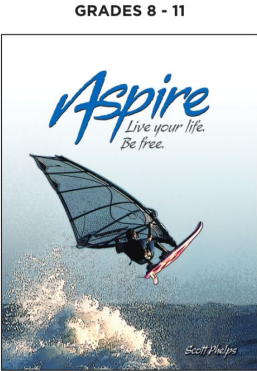
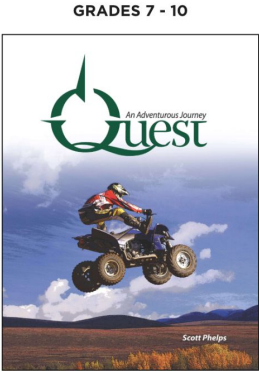
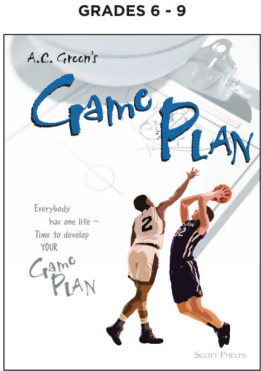
Methodology

Staff from Advocates for Youth, Answer, Planned Parenthood Federation of America and SIECUS: Sex Ed for Social Change reviewed the programs selected most often by SRAE grantees.

Selected the top 14 programs to review against the National Sex Education Standards, 2nd Edition.

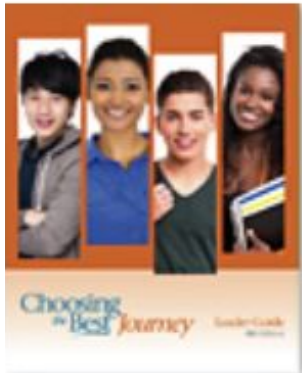
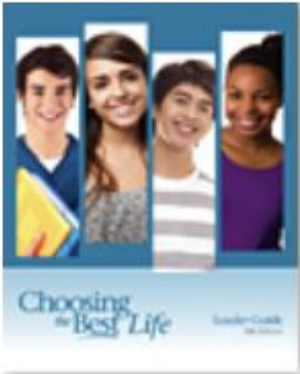
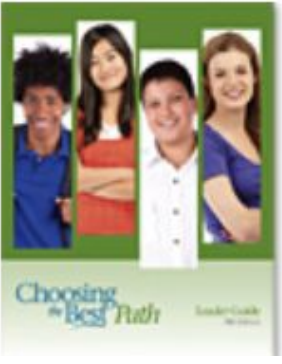
Created in-depth analysis and one-page summary of each program and a cross-cutting report highlighting nine common themes.

Reviewed: 14 Most Popular Abstinence-Only Programs

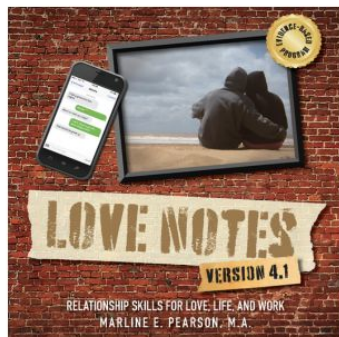
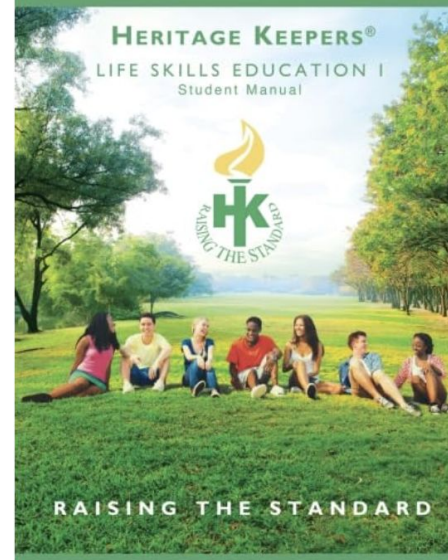


Abstinence & Marriage Education Partnership
Restoring the Dream for America's Youth

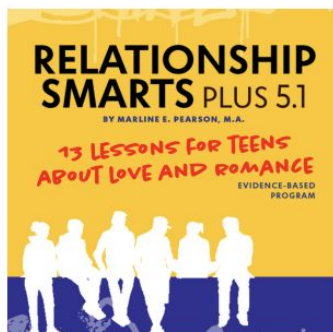
Choosing
the Best



Reviewed: 14 Most Popular Abstinence-Only Programs (cont'd)



Love Notes



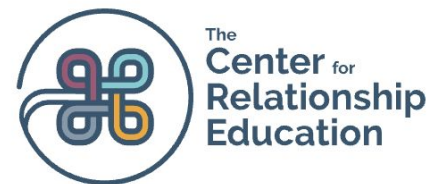
Relationship Smarts PLUS



REAL Essentials
Starting Point



REAL Essentials
Advance



Love Notes 4.1
Comprehensive Sex Ed

Love Notes 4.1
Optimal Health
Sexual Delay

Love Notes 4.1
Abstinence Only

Continuum of Harm: From Bad to Worse



No matter how bad, **they are all harmful for youth.**
Kind of like handing out parachutes that only works
if you don't jump.

Cross-Cutting Themes

1. Sexual risk avoidance curricula prescribe a single morality, void of basic information

“By withholding accurate, developmentally appropriate information, abstinence-only programs directly contradict their stated goal of ‘risk avoidance’ and instead increases students’ vulnerability to harm.”

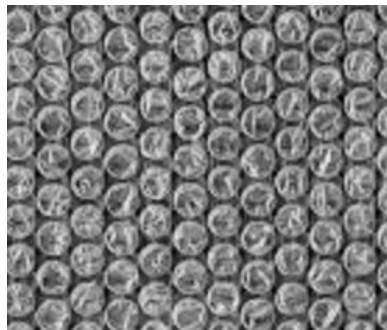
Cross-Cutting Themes #2 & 3: Medically Inaccurate & Fear-Based

“There is ‘insufficient evidence’ that condoms offer protection against the most common STDs in America today.” (Navigator, p. 44)



Cross-Cutting Theme #3: Fear-Based

*Compares discharge from chlamydia and gonorrhea to **slime**, genital warts to the texture of **cauliflower**, and herpes to **bubble-wrap**.
(Choosing the Best WAY, p. 30)*



Cross-Cutting Theme #4: Marriage is presented as the only healthy, moral, and stable relationship

The **'Something Fishy'** lesson uses a live goldfish:

“Reach into the bowl with the net as if you were to place it on the pages. The fish will wiggle in the net, and students will immediately ask you to place that fish back in its bowl. As you put the fish back, ask the class, ‘How is this fish bowl to the fish like marriage is to sex?’” (REAL Essentials ADVANCE, p. 361)



Cross-Cutting Themes (cont'd)

5. Using gender stereotypes and character policing to shape behavior
6. Gender norms increase vulnerability to coercion and abuse
7. LGBTQ+/non-binary identities are erased or marginalized
8. Sex outside marriage is harmful, shameful, or a life “detour”
9. The “success sequence” is promoted as a universal path to wellbeing

“Students are taught that safer sex methods are unreliable while being denied the skills needed to use them effectively.”

Cross-Cutting Theme #5: Gender Stereotypes & Character Policing

“I was there for sex with a ‘throw-away’ girl...they were generally pretty troubled and had rough childhood experiences, including divorce and sexual abuse.”

(Relationships Smarts, p. 93)



Cross-Cutting Themes #5 & 7: Character Policing & Erasing LGBTQ+ Identities

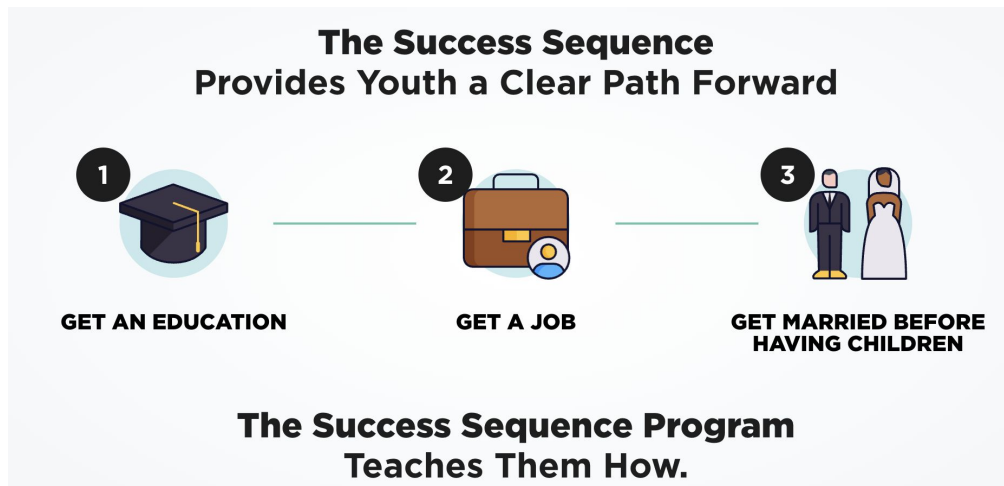
Students review their desired characteristics in a partner, referred to as "*compatibility characteristics*." These statements include **stigmatizing language**—

- “How important is **eating right**?
- How important is being the **right weight**?
- What is my view of the **husband's role**?
- What is my view of the **wife's role**?”

(Choosing the Best RELATIONSHIP, p. 36)

Cross-Cutting Theme #9: Success Sequencing

“The success sequence program teaches the optimal pathway for future success, with a clear emphasis on the benefits of reserving all sexual activity and childbearing for marriage. Step 1 - **get an education**, Step 2 - **get a job**, and Step 3 - **get married before having children** is the **best and only path to success in life.**” (Quest, p. 1)



MISSING Topics

- **LGBTQ+ youth** and their unique needs
 - Coming out, same-sex romantic/sexual relationships, etc.
- **PrEP** is medication that is 99% effective at preventing HIV
- How to use **condoms** correctly
- How **effectively contraception works** to prevent STIs and pregnancy
- Missing female anatomy, even though **half the population has a vulva and clitoris**

From Explicit to Sneaky

- **Underlying concepts**
 - **White supremacy**
 - **Rigid gender role stereotypes**
 - **Patriarchy**

“It’s important to clearly resist all pressures and to remove yourself from the situation. Although date rape may occur without the use of drugs or alcohol, the use of substances will make it much more difficult to successfully defend yourself against it.” (Aspire, p. 67)

The Evidence: Abstinence-Only Harms Youth

Review article

Abstinence-Only-Until-Marriage: An Updated Review of U.S. Policies and Programs and Their Impact

John S. Santelli, M.D., M.P.H. ^{a,*}, Leslie M. Kantor, Ph.D., M.P.H. ^{a,b}, Stephanie A. Grilo, M.A. ^c



JOURNAL OF
ADOLESCENT
HEALTH

Ideology or Evidence? Examining the Population-Level Impact of US Government Funding to Prevent Adolescent Pregnancy

[John S Santelli](#) ^{1,∞}, [Laura D Lindberg](#) ¹, [Stephanie A Grilo](#) ¹, [Leslie M Kantor](#) ¹

Funding for Abstinence-Only Education and Adolescent Pregnancy Prevention: Does State Ideology Affect Outcomes?

[Ashley M Fox](#) ^{1,∞}, [Georgia Himmelstein](#) ¹, [Hina Khalid](#) ¹, [Elizabeth A Howell](#) ¹

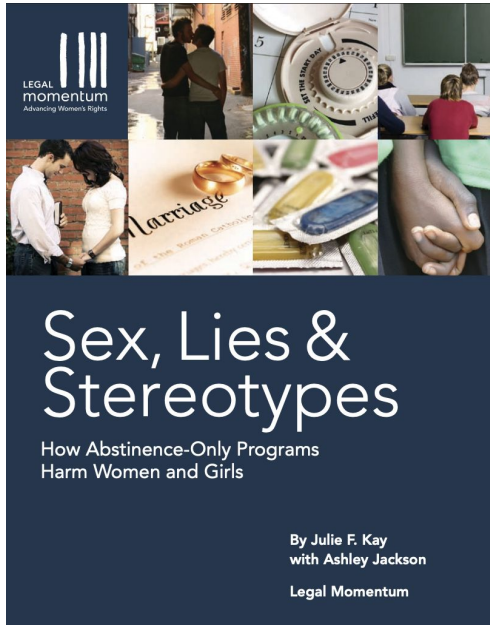
Promising the Future: Virginity Pledges and First Intercourse¹

[Peter S. Bearman](#) and [Hannah Brückner](#)



UNITED STATES HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT REFORM — MINORITY STAFF
SPECIAL INVESTIGATIONS DIVISION
DECEMBER 2004

THE CONTENT OF FEDERALLY FUNDED ABSTINENCE-ONLY EDUCATION PROGRAMS



The Evidence: Abstinence-Only Increases Risk for Perpetration of Sexual Violence

“Fear-based sexuality education teaches **rigid gender norms**, leading to acceptance of beliefs that **put college men at risk for committing sexual assault.**”



THE PREPARATION PROBLEM: HOW THE SYSTEM IGNORES YOUNG MEN'S SEX EDUCATION NEEDS

M. Colleen McDaniel, Ph.D.,
Director of Research and Program Development, It's On Us

Emily Hilty, Ph.D.,
Senior Director of Analytics and Impact, Civic Nation

Kyle Richard,
Director of Men's Engagement, It's On Us

April 2026

CIVIC NATION

Arielle Haughee

Florida Mom

Fought for better sex ed



What Can I Do to Prevent Abstinence-Only in My School/Community?

- **Read** the report, multi-page reviews and/or one-pagers
- **Check** if these programs are in your district/community
 - If yes, share evidence of how harmful they are
- **Share** this info with your superintendent, school board, district sex ed committee, co-workers, supervisor, and parents of your students, etc.

What Can I Do to Prevent Abstinence-Only in My School/Community?

Don't Be Fooled: Sexual Risk Avoidance Education in Practice

Executive Summary

Despite being marketed as Sexual Risk Avoidance Education, SRAE programs are just **rebranded abstinence-only-until-marriage curricula, teaching a prescribed, single morality and void of even the most basic medically accurate information, leaving young people at risk.** Across grade levels and publishers, students are consistently guided toward a single, misguided conclusion: abstaining from sex until heterosexual marriage is the only morally responsible choice for everyone. Rather than offering an evidence-based, medically accurate, inclusive, and youth-centered approach, SRAE peddles the misuse of research, fear-based messaging, and moralized character education—while systematically withholding and distorting the information young people need. In practice, SRAE curricula:

- **Define "risk avoidance" as abstinence**, while failing to provide information about risk reduction, including information about birth control and condoms, despite the fact that approximately 90% of people have sex before marriage (CDC, 2017).
- **Present medically inaccurate or incomplete health information**, selectively citing public health sources while omitting instruction on consent, condoms, contraception, STI/HIV prevention, sexual assault prevention, and access to resources and care.
- **Position marriage as the only healthy context** for sex, relationships, and family life, marginalizing students whose families or futures do not fit this narrow model.
- **Reinforce rigid gender stereotypes**, framing girls and women as the target of sexual behavior and the gatekeepers of self-control, purity, and compliance.
- **Erase or marginalize LGBTQ+ and nonbinary students**, centering heterosexual, cisgender relationships and reinforcing rigid gender norms.
- **Moralize sexual behavior through character policing**, encouraging students who have had sex to "start over" or "stop"—without consideration for survivors of sexual violence—framing sexual decision-making as a moral test and reinforcing shame rather than supporting wellbeing.
- **Frame sex not within marriage as universally harmful**, relying on fear-based narratives about regret, emotional damage, pregnancy, and disease rather than skills-building or harm reduction.
- **Replace skills-based education with obedience-based messaging**, disregarding the importance of skills-based instruction and failing to provide young people with the information and skills they need to make informed, healthy decisions throughout their lives.
- **Promote a rigid "success sequence"**—education, employment, marriage, then children—as a proven, evidence-based path to financial stability and happiness. The programs overemphasize

Executive Summary

Quest is an abstinence-only curriculum centered on the concept of "success sequencing." The curriculum relies on fear-based messaging, outdated and misleading research, and rigid moral judgments about sex, relationships and gender: it equates abstinence until marriage with strength, character, and future success and happiness, while portraying sexual activity outside marriage as inherently damaging, shameful, and unsafe. The curriculum provides little to no medically accurate sexual health information, including on reproduction, anatomy, menstruation, birth control, pregnancy, STI testing or treatment, condoms or contraception, accessing resources and services, and makes no explicit mention of gender identity, gender expression, or sexual orientation.

More than three decades of public health research consistently shows that comprehensive sex education that is inclusive, nonjudgmental, medically accurate, and developmentally appropriate supports young people in making healthy, informed decisions. [\(Citation\)](#) In contrast, students exposed to Sexual Risk Avoidance Education (SRAE)/abstinence-only-until-marriage curricula are at a greater risk for negative sexual health outcomes.

Given these concerns, school districts implementing the Quest curriculum are encouraged to re-evaluate its alignment with evidence-informed standards and the needs of their students.

Why the Curriculum is Harmful

1. **Abstinence-only framing promotes shame and fear.** Quest teaches that abstinence until marriage is the only healthy and safe lifestyle, and that sexual activity before marriage is as a result of poor self-control and undermines future success and healthy relationships. Sexual activity is framed as a moral failure and a threat to one's future, rather than a normal part of adolescent development. This framing stigmatizes sexually active youth and discourages critical thinking and decision-making skills.
2. **Lacks medically accurate sexual health information.** The curriculum includes little to no information about anatomy, reproduction, menstruation, birth control, pregnancy, or STI testing, prevention, and treatment. The effectiveness of condoms is downplayed using outdated and misrepresented research, while modern, evidence-based prevention and treatment methods are omitted entirely.
3. **Promotes heteronormativity and ignores LGBTQ+ students.** All relationships are presented as between a man and a woman, and marriage is portrayed as inherently protective and superior. LGBTQ+ identities are completely erased.
4. **Frames marriage as a guarantee of safety and well-being.** Marriage is presented as a protective barrier that ensures emotional, physical, and sexual safety, while omitting essential content on healthy relationships, including consent, communication skills, and access to resources. This framing stigmatizes households with divorced, single, or same-sex parents.

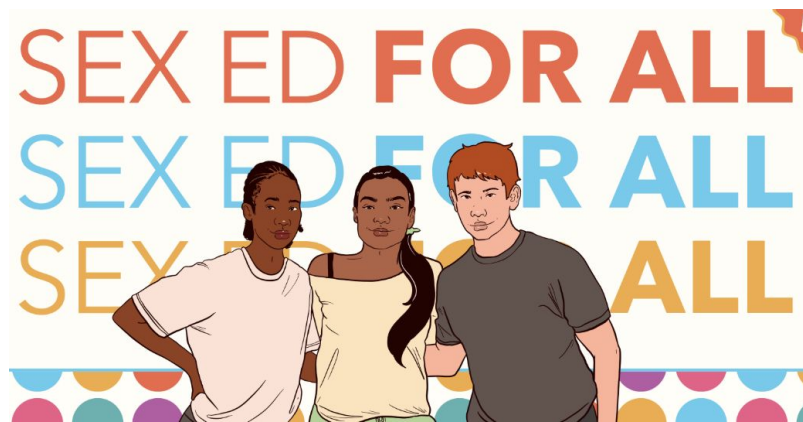
Ensure sex ed materials are selected that help students – not ones that harm them and increase risk for sexual violence.

Tools to Fight for Effective Sex Education

Sex Education Toolkit

Future of Sex Education

FoSE
Future of Sex Education



educate
US
CHANGING SEX ED
FOR GOOD

SO YOU WANT TO SPEAK UP FOR SEX EDUCATION

A quickstart guide to speaking
at school board meetings,
public hearings, and more

Community Action Toolkit

A Guide to Advancing Sex
Education in Your Community

SIECUS
SEX ED FOR SOCIAL CHANGE



Questions & Answers

Comprehensive sex ed is what happens when you follow the science and data. Abstinence-only is what happens when you ignore and deny it.

Resources

All available at futureofsexed.org

- Ab-only Curricula Reviews and Full Report
- Three Decades of Research briefs
- FoSE Sex Education Advocacy Toolkit
- And more!