

Methodology for curriculum review

To objectively evaluate each school district on the sexual health education they offer we began by looking at the requirements adopted into the California Education Code through SB 71.

We broke down the major components into three broadly based categories: overall requirements, human development and healthy relationships, and sexual health. The sexual health category was further broken down to the prevention and treatment of STDs and pregnancy prevention. These four categories were equally weighted in our allocation of points.

We created a checklist of topic headings that are explicitly outlined in the requirements for comprehensive sexual health education by SB 71. We used a 100-point scale to assign number values to each topic area, with heavier weighting given to topics that required the most content. For example, the majority of topics were weighted as 5 points as a binomial measure of either meeting the requirement or not; points were completely allotted or not allotted at all. All categories were evaluated for medial accuracy and objectivity.

Public Affairs and Health Education staff solicited curriculum from all public school districts in Orange and San Bernardino Counties. Once received (if at all), curricula was assessed by Health Education staff for accuracy and completeness. Textbooks were purchased for districts that utilize text books for curricula. In addition, districts were provided an opportunity to share their policies regarding sex education.

The assessments were made based on the information provided by the districts; if information was missing from a curriculum then the points were not allocated for that category.

The first broad category for evaluation (overall requirements) details five requirements of the California education code that are explicitly outlined and apply to all aspects of sexual health education for a total of 25 points. These include:

<b>Appropriate for and accessible to students with disabilities</b>	5
<b>Does not teach or promote religious doctrine</b>	5
<b>Does not reflect or promote bias against any person who is protected by the non-discrimination policy</b>	5
<b>Educates about skills for responsible decision-making</b>	5
<b>Compliant with credible sources (APHA, CDC, etc.)</b>	5

These topics are all assigned 5 points that are awarded completely or not at all based on submitted information and curricula.

The next area evaluated human development and healthy relationships. The following components fall into this category and total 25 points.

For comprehensive sexual health education to be medically accurate and objective, the inclusion of reproductive anatomy, reproduction processes and puberty should be included. This category was broken into sub-categories to allot points for specific topics covered.

<b>Reproductive anatomy &amp; puberty</b>	
<i>Reproductive Anatomy/Physiology – Female</i>	1.16
<i>Reproductive Anatomy/Physiology - Male</i>	1.16
<i>Reproduction</i>	1.15
<i>Puberty</i>	1.15

In order to adhere to the purpose of the education, we assessed the curriculum’s promotion of healthy image for students. This was another category that was broken into sub-categories to account for the various aspects of this requirement.

<b>Promote healthy image?</b>	
<i>Self-esteem</i>	1.16
<i>Positive body image</i>	1.15
<i>Self-care</i>	1.15
<i>Sexual orientation</i>	1.16
<i>Gender Roles</i>	1.15

We also assessed the coverage of relationships using a similar approach.

<b>Promote healthy relationships?</b>	
<i>Relationships</i>	1.15
<i>Dating</i>	1.15
<i>Respect for others</i>	1.15
<i>Recognize and respect people with differing personal and family values</i>	1.16

The education code explicitly requires discussion of respect for marriage and committed relationships. We split this requirement into two categories that total 5 points with points allotted for discussion of marriage (2.5) and committed relationship (2.5). This allowed for credit to be given for discussion of marriage, but also reflects the inclusion or exclusion of committed relationships. Another requirement under human development and healthy relationships encourages communication between students and parents about sexuality. This category also received 5 points.

<b>Encourages students to communicate with their parents or guardians about sexuality</b>	5
<b>Teach respect for marriage,</b>	2.5
<b>And committed relationships</b>	2.5

This category as a whole was allocated 25 out of the total 100 points. To allot points we gave the required topics 5 points each (split the marriage topic), then divided the remaining points evenly among the sub-categories.

The third broad category, titled sexual health, encompasses 50 out of the total 100 points.

Two requirements of the education code apply to all aspects of sexual health, and each received 5 points. Those were:

<b>Teach that abstinence is the only 100% effective method to prevent pregnancy and STDs</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Offer local resources for testing and treatment</b>	<b>5</b>

The remaining 40 points were evenly distributed between the sub-categories of STDs: Prevention and Treatment, and Pregnancy Prevention.

STDs: Prevention and treatment included how STDs are and are not transmitted and methods to reduce risk of STD transmission. Based on data about the most common STDs among high school age youth and content that is most often available in published curricula and the CDC, we included the following:

<b>How STDs are and are not transmitted?</b>	
<i>Chlamydia</i>	2.19
<i>Gonorrhea</i>	2.18
<i>HIV</i>	2.19
<i>HPV</i>	2.19
<i>Herpes</i>	2.19
<i>Syphilis</i>	2.18
<i>Others</i>	2.19
<b>Methods to reduce risk of STD transmission</b>	<b>5</b>

The “Others” category is a catchall that is used for any curricula that addresses other major STDs such as trichomoniasis, or vaginal infections of any kind that are symptomatically similar to STDs (such as bacterial vaginosis).

Contraceptive methods were approached similarly to the STD section, with heavier weighting allotted because of the quantity of potential sub-topics. Implanon, long term methods and sterilization are grouped together because long term methods are more age appropriate for older populations. Implanon is a newly approved FDA method so our expectation is low that it will be included in many curricula.

<b>Safety and effectiveness of all FDA contraceptive methods,</b>	
<i>Emergency Contraception</i>	2.19
<i>Male condom</i>	2.19
<i>Female condom</i>	2.18
<i>Pill</i>	2.19
<i>Patch</i>	2.19
<i>Ring</i>	2.19
<i>Implanon/Long Term methods/Sterilization</i>	2.19
<i>Depo</i>	2.19
<i>Female barrier with spermicides</i>	2.18

To allot points to the sexual health category we gave the required topics 5 points each, then divided the remaining points evenly among the sub-categories.

Scores were calculated by adding up all the points given for each topic. If a district submitted materials from more than one source, points were allotted according to the more comprehensive option. Thus, a school district which uses a textbook where condoms are not mentioned as a method to reduce STD risk and pregnancy also offers a text where condoms are mentioned, would receive points based on the text that does include the information.