



Exciting New Partnership Opportunity: School-Based HIV/STD and Pregnancy Prevention

- ❖ Funded by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)
- ❖ 15 school districts partner with NJDOE for 5 years
- ❖ Districts receive free training and technical assistance from state and national experts

The New Jersey Department of Education (NJDOE) is one of 19 state education agencies to be awarded a five-year grant from the CDC Division of Adolescent and School Health (CDC/DASH), entitled *Promoting Adolescent Health Through School-Based HIV/STD Prevention*. This funding allows the NJDOE to partner with 15 school districts for the five-year period to improve student health through instruction, school climate, health services, parent engagement and community linkages.

Read on to learn how your district would benefit from joining this partnership with the NJDOE and CDC.

The Goals

Build the capacity of New Jersey school districts to develop and implement sustainable activities in grades 7-12 that:

- ✓ Reduce HIV and other sexually transmitted diseases (STDs) among teenage students and young adults;
- ✓ Reduce teen pregnancy; and
- ✓ Reduce disparities in HIV, other STDs and pregnancy found among specific teen sub-populations, including those who are lesbian, gay bisexual, transgender and questioning (LGBTQ).

Program activities are expected to also reduce chronic absenteeism and dropout rates while improving student-school connectedness and academic achievement. The program will include a focus on referrals to community agencies that provide mentoring, service-learning and sexual health services.

School-Based Strategies

The NJDOE will provide free training and technical assistance to school districts to do the following:

- ✓ Deliver exemplary sexual health education in grades 7-12;
- ✓ Improve students' access to key sexual health services (e.g., testing for HIV, other STDs and pregnancy; contraception; and HPV vaccinations) whether at school or in the community;
- ✓ Provide supportive learning environments for students and staff that prevent gender bias and sexual harassment while improving school climate and reducing bullying;
- ✓ Facilitate student participation in mentoring and service-learning experiences;
- ✓ Strengthen school-parent engagement.
- ✓ Develop, implement and assess district policies and practices to institutionalize program improvement.

Why Is This Needed ?

In 2010, youth ages 13 to 24 accounted for 18% of all new HIV infections in the United States. Over half of New Jersey youth newly diagnosed with HIV live in just 20 of New Jersey's 565 municipalities. Nearly half of new STDs reported annually are among youth ages 15 to 24. Pregnancy and parenting are significant contributors to high school drop-out among girls. School programs of health education, health services and student support services are effective at addressing these issues when they are also coordinated with community services.

Benefits to Partner School Districts

- ✚ Receive funding of \$5,000 annually in years two through five to off-set district costs of providing leadership, in-service professional development, travel to professional development and substitutes. Title I school-wide funds may also be used.
- ✚ Network with similar partner districts about successes, challenges, strategies and resources for implementation.
- ✚ Receive free technical assistance to align with state requirements.
- ✚ Receive free technical assistance on activities such as running effective school health-related teams, selecting quality curricula and school-wide programs, and providing effective in-service professional development.
- ✚ Receive free professional development on implementing exemplary sexual health education for grades 7-12, supportive school climate practices, means to facilitate student participation in mentoring and service-learning experiences; parent engagement; and effective systems of referral for sexual health services with feedback on how well local referral systems are working.
- ✚ Receive the latest evidence-based resources, practices and research.
- ✚ Implement sustainable policies, programs, and practices to support prevention of HIV, STDs and pregnancy that will last beyond the duration of the initiative.

Your district in-service for health teachers, counselors and school nurses will be focused and purposeful.

Expectations of Partner School Districts

- ✚ Sign a memorandum of understanding with the NJDOE.
- ✚ Designate two district administrators to provide leadership and participate in three full-day in-person meetings annually;
- ✚ Designate a district-level team or coordinate the work of several designated teams to help steer project components dealing with health education, student health services, student social services, school climate and parental engagement.
- ✚ Complete a structured review of district policies and practices using tools provided by the NJDOE (unless already completed by the district using other tools) and share the findings and documentation with NJDOE. Subsequently, track changes in policy and implementation.
- ✚ Establish a written course of study for sexual health education in grades 7-12 that is: aligned with New Jersey Core Curriculum Content Standards; evidence-based; developmentally appropriate; and detailed concerning content, materials, instructional strategies and methods for student assessment.
- ✚ Establish a system of referral for student access to key sexual health services and participate in evaluation of the referral system's effectiveness.
- ✚ Promote staff participation in professional development and networking events provided in-person, by Web and by phone. Note that the district personnel who are appropriate for participation will vary.
- ✚ Provide turn-key professional development within the district to health teachers, social services staff and student health services staff to support implementation of district policies and procedures for sexual health education, access to sexual health services, and supportive learning environments that prevent gender bias and sexual harassment.
- ✚ Participate in required data collections if selected in the sample, including a short biannual survey of principals and lead health teachers called the New Jersey School Health Profiles (2014, 2016 and 2018) and a survey of a sample of students in grades 7-12 called the New Jersey Student Health Survey (2015 and 2017). Participation in these surveys does not entail costs to the district.

Your district's commitment to the health and education needs of your school community will be showcased at state and national levels.

NJDOE Commitments to Partnership School Districts

The NJDOE's commitment to the 15 partner school districts is to:

- + Assist districts with curriculum alignment to New Jersey Core Curriculum Content Standards and national standards of exemplary sexual health education.
- + Facilitate regional professional learning communities for partnership districts and their community agencies.
- + Facilitate linkages between schools and community-based agencies that provide youth-friendly sexual health care providers and provide feedback on how well referral systems are functioning.
- + Facilitate linkages between schools and community-based agencies that provide opportunities for mentorship and service-learning.
- + Provide current resources, tools, data and turn-key materials.
- + Establish systems and metrics to document district progress.
- + Provide free professional development and one-on-one technical assistance on:
 - ❖ content and methods of exemplary sexual health education in grades 7-12;
 - ❖ research-based evaluated curricula for sexual health education in grades 7-12;
 - ❖ documenting effective instruction through student assessment and teacher observation;
 - ❖ effective systems of referral to sexual health services;
 - ❖ school practices conducive to supportive learning environments that prevent gender bias, sexual harassment and bullying;
 - ❖ parent engagement concerning student healthy development;
 - ❖ building and sustaining effective school teams and professional learning communities; and
 - ❖ access to state and national experts

Your district will have measurable indicators of improvement provided by NJDOE.

Next Steps

- (1) Share this information with others in the district such as board members, assistant superintendents, program directors, principals, school nurses, counselors, lead health teachers and members of student health & wellness teams.
- (2) Learn more and find the open recruitment **District Statement of Intent to Participate** at the NJDOE project website: <http://www.nj.gov/education/students/safety/cdc/>.
- (3) Submit the signed statement to NJDOE by **March 5, 2014**.

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