

WISEtoolkit

Welcome to the Toolkit

We're glad you are here. From concept to classroom, the WISE Toolkit is a practical guide to help schools implement sex education. As you read through the toolkit, please keep in mind that the WISE Method is primarily written for state-based or regional non-profits who work with school districts to implement sex ed. If you work within a school district there's a lot of helpful information for you too.

wisetoolkit.org

WISEtoolkit The Four Phases

The toolkit is a compilation of experience-based best practices divided into four phases. We call this approach the "WISE Method." Each phase is aimed at helping schools institutionalize sex education so that sex education is an ongoing part of a school's curricula.



1. SCAN current efforts and policies

The purpose of this phase is to gain an understanding of the sex education landscape to inform an action plan for sex education institutionalization.



2. ENGAGE school districts

The purpose of this phase is to assess school readiness and ensure ownership and active participation among key school district stakeholders.



3. DESIGN rollout plan

The purpose of this phase is to create the systems, processes, policies, and guidelines that will be the backbone of long-term, sustainable sex education.



4. IMPLEMENT sex education

The purpose of this phase is to prepare for, and actually deliver, a sex education program!

1. SCAN

current efforts and policies

The purpose of this phase is to gain an understanding of the sex education landscape to inform an action plan for sex education institutionalization.

The Four Phases



ENGAGE

school districts

The purpose of this phase is to assess school readiness and ensure ownership and active participation among key school district stakeholders.

DESIGN

rollout plan

The purpose of this phase is to create the systems, processes, policies, and guidelines that will be the backbone of long-term, sustainable sex education.

IMPLEMENT

sex education

The purpose of this phase is to prepare for, and actually deliver, a sex education program!

About This Phase

Scanning activities provide essential context, such as state and local policies and available resources. A great place to start is with the [SIECUS State Profiles](#). A key part of this phase is identifying school districts, or individual schools, who want to implement sex education or improve existing programs but need some guidance and resources in order to do so effectively. This phase helps answer the questions: “What policies, partners, and resources can support this work?” and “Which districts show promise for sex education readiness?”

Steps to Scan Current Efforts and Policies

STEP	RESULTS
1. Learn the Policy Landscape	Clear understanding of the sex education components that are allowed, mandated, or restricted.
2. Determine the Funding Landscape and Explore Potential Resources	Identification of potential sex education funding streams as well as the currently funded efforts already underway
3. Identify School Districts for Potential Sex Education Implementation	List of promising school districts that show strong readiness for sex education institutionalization

Sustainability

The long-term sustainability of gains made during this phase of work is supported by:

- Creating linkages between relevant state and local programs, including mechanisms for ongoing sharing about successes and strategies, to maximize support.

Step 1: Learn the Policy Landscape

RESULTS

- Clear understanding of the sex education components that are allowed, mandated, or restricted.
-

Ensure you're familiar with existing requirements and regulations that govern sex education. School-based sex education must comply with different types of policy, including: state legislative policy, state education department policy, and local school board policy. Requirements may include a mandate that school districts form a school health advisory committee (SHAC) to participate in the review, selection, and adoption of sex education curricula or they may define what topics are mandated to cover (or avoid).

TIPS

A. This activity can be a low intensity effort.

There is not a need to do extensive assessment or scanning; all that is needed is a clear understanding of the "do's" and don'ts" of existing state and education policies as well as the political environment with respect to sex education.

Identify the key influential sex education advocates and adversaries. Equally important to understanding the policy environment is identifying key political forces that influence sex education. Knowing the extent to which elected/appointed influential officials, such as the chief state school officer or local school board members, can support (or block) sex education progress will help to secure sex education commitment and avoid potential pitfalls.

Step 2: Determine the Funding Landscape and Explore Potential Resources

RESULTS

- Identification of potential sex education funding streams as well as the currently funded efforts already underway
-

Identify public and private programs and funding sources that are currently supporting sex education and engage with partners who are working on sex education efforts.

State-level departments (e.g., departments of education, health and/or human services) often support adolescent sexual health, including work in schools. Creating a map of state- or regional-level programs provides a more complete picture of the funding landscapes, potential resources, and opportunities for collaboration.

In addition, there are three significant U.S. Department of Health and Human Services funding streams supporting adolescent sexual health: 1) the [Office of Adolescent Health, Teen Pregnancy Prevention Initiative \(TPPI\)](#), which seeks to demonstrate the effectiveness of innovative, community-wide initiatives in reducing rates of teen pregnancy and births in communities with the highest rates; 2) the [Administration for Children and Families, Personal Responsibility Education Program \(PREP\)](#), which supports implementation of evidence-based or evidence-informed sex education programs as well as life skills education to help reduce risk of pregnancy and sexually transmitted infections among young people. PREP funding is typically administered through state departments of human or social services; and 3) the [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's Division of Adolescent and School Health \(DASH\)](#) which funds 17 local education agencies and 19 state education agencies to help districts and schools deliver exemplary sexual health education emphasizing HIV and other STD prevention (ESHE); increase adolescent access to key sexual health services (SHS); and establish safe and supportive environments for students and staff (SSE).

TIPS

A. Nurture state-level partners.

State-level organizations such as state departments of education, state departments of public health, and/or state collaboratives (e.g., Health and PE Associations) can be instrumental partners. However, it is important to approach these partnerships with realistic expectations and identify and prioritize state-level partnerships that are mutually beneficial.

Step 3: Identify School Districts for Potential Sex Education Implementation

RESULTS

- List of promising school districts that show strong readiness for sex education institutionalization
-

With a clear sense of what's possible (the policies and regulations governing sex education) and an understanding of current sex education funding streams and programs, it is time to reach out to school districts. Many school districts are willing and ready to work on sex education – they just need help to tip the balance from their current state to effective and sustainable sex education. That means the focus of this step should be finding ready and willing school districts that are eager for sex education implementation assistance. This work falls into two stages: 1) identifying school districts; and 2) exploring the likelihood of success. At the end of this step the goal is to have a limited pool of promising school districts that are worth investing time to conduct a sex education readiness assessment.

TIPS

A. Network and build relationships.

Use existing relationships, “warm leads,” and/or the convenience of existing efforts and events (e.g., conferences) to connect to key public education and sex education players to determine where to focus identification efforts. Consider bringing together multiple school districts to one shared workshop to discuss your sex education offerings. These workshops provide an opportunity to learn, share, and have a conversation about sex education.

TIPS

B. Be clear about the value proposition of how sex education benefits school districts and students as well as the knowledge, skills, and experience you bring to the school district.

Provide clear information to potential school districts including the benefits of sex education, how you will support the school district's sex education work, and the time and commitment expectations from school district leadership and personnel. Many school districts want to provide sex education, but they may not have the expertise or time to do it on their own. School districts may also be nervous that an outsider will bring in a specific agenda and may not meet their unique needs. Showing that you'll bring a flexible and tailored approach that provides solutions and critical information can be effective for under-resourced schools.

C. Determine and use criteria to select the most promising school districts.

Identify promising school districts by looking at different characteristics and criteria of interest (e.g., total student enrollment, current policy, teen pregnancy rates).

D. Create tailored fact sheets for interested school districts.

Bring valuable data to exploratory meetings with school districts to document the school district's sex education context and demonstrate the value, resources, and skills you can bring to bear on the sex education work. For example, bring an analysis of the level of the school district's current alignment between the school district policy and the state policy or public health data such as rates of teen pregnancy and sexually transmitted infections. Check out the [Sample School District Message Development Tool](#).

Establish a pipeline of prospective school districts in case the work is slower than expected. The ability of school districts to engage and commit to sex education work varies. For some school districts, getting their "house in order" to launch the project may take over a year, for others substantial progress can be achieved in a matter of months. Therefore, it is important to develop a list of prospective school districts to have a backup in place in case work with one school district is slower than anticipated. This [pipeline tracking tool](#) can help you.

TIPS

E. Conduct a preliminary assessment of school district readiness.

While the next phase of the WISE method includes an in-depth readiness assessment, some sites have found a light-touch preliminary assessment valuable to provide an early gauge of whether or not a school district shows promise. The [preliminary assessment](#) can include questions to ascertain the level of school district administration buy-in, frequency and quality of communication and identified community champions to get a snapshot of the current readiness and supports that are likely to be needed for a successful engagement.

Look out for warning signs that a school district may not be ready or have the capacity to dedicate time and support to sex education. The current educational change climate is crowded with competing priorities. School districts may be over-committed and unable to attend to sex education institutionalization work. Further, if key leadership roles are newly filled (e.g., a first-year superintendent) it is unlikely that there will be sufficient leadership capacity within the district to effectively move sex education institutionalization forward. Therefore, it is important to assess the likelihood of school district leadership to earnestly move the sex education work forward. Similarly, if there are early warning signs of staunch opponents or fear of controversy, it is important to understand how those may impede the work.

2. ENGAGE

school districts

The purpose of this phase is to assess school readiness and ensure ownership and active participation among key school district stakeholders.

The Four Phases

SCAN

current efforts and policies

The purpose of this phase is to gain an understanding of the sex education landscape to inform an action plan for sex education institutionalization.



DESIGN

rollout plan

The purpose of this phase is to create the systems, processes, policies, and guidelines that will be the backbone of long-term, sustainable sex education.

IMPLEMENT

sex education

The purpose of this phase is to prepare for, and actually deliver, a sex education program!



About This Phase

A readiness assessment is critical to determining whether and how to move ahead with sex education implementation. Ensuring there is commitment from administrators – such as school principals, district superintendents, school board members – is essential to success. Without support from key administrators in the district, sex education efforts will be stalled or stopped altogether and teachers will not have the support they need for implementation.

Steps to Engage School Districts

STEP	RESULTS
<p>1. Assess School District Readiness and Capacity to Implement Sex Education</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Completed assessment of sex education, including current practices, goals, and readiness to implement Decision regarding school district readiness to make meaningful progress on sex education implementation.
<p>2. Secure Commitment from Key School District Stakeholders</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Established team comprised of people with policy and program decision-making authority engaged in reviewing and reflecting on the current status of sex education in the district and goals for moving forward A documented action plan to improve sex education A signed agreement is in place (e.g., Memorandum of Understanding or letter of engagement; this is only necessary if you’re working from outside an educational system)

Sustainability

The long-term sustainability of gains made during this phase of work is supported by:

- Key administrators and teachers speaking publicly about their commitment to sex education and its value to students.
- An interdisciplinary team supporting ongoing sex education implementation.
- A document, such as an MOU, that articulates the school district sex education goals and path toward attaining and sustaining sex education.



Step 1: Assess School District Readiness and Capacity to Implement Sex Education

RESULTS

- Completed assessment of sex education, including current practices, goals, and readiness to implement
- Decision regarding school district readiness to make meaningful progress on sex education implementation

In order to commit to working with a school district, it is important to have a strong level of confidence that the school district truly wants to work on sex education institutionalization, including the ability for the superintendent to support the vision for the project. It is not sufficient to have teacher-level champions without the prospect of support from school district leadership, including the school board. It is critical to ensure that there is a specific commitment of time to engage in the work (e.g., key personnel to champion the work internally, ability for teachers to get release time to attend professional development). A formal assessment of the school district establishes the readiness of a school district. The assessment phase focuses on capturing the: 1) status of current sex education offerings; 2) school district stakeholders’ familiarity with state sex education governance and school-district policy; 3) strength of existing sex education policies and procedures; 4) commitment of key stakeholders to sex education; 5) barriers that are currently interrupting effective sex education; and 6) school district’s goal for sex education.

TIPS

A. Use a consistent tool to assess readiness.

The assessment process is a structured conversation, or series of conversations, that maps out the sex education strengths, opportunities, and current state of affairs in the school district. This assessment will inform the final “go” / “no go” decision and will determine the action plan in school districts that meet a basic readiness threshold that indicates that sex education success is possible and likely. The [Capacity Assessment and Planning Tool](#) (CAPT) was developed by WISE Initiative leadership, based on the work of Cardea Services, aids in determining how ready a school district is to engage in sex education efforts.

Districts that are not ready for sex education implementation should not be targeted for participation. Doing an assessment of districts’ readiness is important to predict the likelihood for meaningful impact. It is okay to determine that a school district isn’t ready for partnership.



Step 2: Secure Commitment from Key School District Stakeholders

RESULTS

- Established team comprised of people with policy and program decision-making authority engaged in reviewing and reflecting on the current status of sex education in the district and goals for moving forward
 - A documented action plan to improve sex education
 - A signed agreement is in place (e.g., Memorandum of Understanding or letter of engagement; this is only necessary if you're working from outside an educational system)
-

Now that you've determined a school district is ready and willing to achieve their sex education goals, it is time to establish which school district stakeholders will have ownership and accountability for the sex education efforts. You'll need a "sex education team" within the school district and this team should include at least one administrator that has policymaking authority (e.g., assistant superintendent, curriculum director, and/or principal) as well as a health coordinator, teacher, and/or other school health staff that can make informed programmatic decisions.

TIPS

A. Ensure foundational support from school district leadership.

The support from superintendents and leaders (e.g., principals and curriculum directors) is critical for sex education change and sustainability. Clear commitment from these stakeholders and the buy-in from teachers is necessary for successful classroom-level implementation. Without this level of support from school district administration and school building leaders, teachers may become fearful and/or hesitant to move forward.

TIPS

B. Choose the right champions.

Engaging the right champions can mean the difference between the smooth execution of an implementation plan and being bogged down in process and/or indecision. Each school district is unique in terms of the power structures and decision-making channels, so do your homework to find the right committees, processes, and decision-makers to engage.

Do not rely on one person to "carry the water." Changes in staffing in public education systems are common, and so institutionalization requires a group of champions, not just one individual teacher, to ensure success over time. Being thoughtful and inclusive regarding sex education team membership in the beginning of the project will pay dividends down the road. If you only have one key champion and that person leaves you are back to square one. Cultivating foundational support for sex education may require different messages for different stakeholder groups. For example, school district administrators will likely need to connect to the school's mission and vision, whereas teachers may need to see how sex education connects to education standards. Check out the Sample School District Message Development Tool for more.

C. Create and document a plan.

One successful way to establish a plan is through a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU). MOUs provide an opportunity to articulate project outcomes and expectations, including roles and responsibilities. These MOUs help to set clear goals and are an important planning document. Including details such as articulating the primary steps and including timelines and key activities ensures that all stakeholders can share not only a vision of what will change in the school district, but also when those changes – and the steps along the way – will be realized. MOUs can be especially helpful during times of turnover so that if there is a new school district liaison, they can quickly understand the project scope and have the confidence of school district buy-in that MOUs help document. Here's a [template for a MOU](#) to get you started.



TIPS

D. Cultivate effective relationships with school district stakeholders.

Once the work ensues, relationship building and maintenance continue to be of paramount importance. Schools are very relational and often rely on in-person meetings to commit and engage in the work. Email and phone calls can keep some momentum going, but meeting and spending time at the school and district office are often a necessity to maintain the relationship.

E. Manage the fear of controversy.

Many school districts fear that community stakeholders, especially parents, will react strongly against school-based sex education. However, in practice, the fear of backlash is much greater than what actually transpires. School districts may simply need support to understand that sex education efforts are unlikely to be as controversial as they fear when planning is done well. One of the easiest ways to mitigate this fear is to conduct a short and simple [parent poll](#) to gauge the actual level of support for sex education. Despite national, state, and regional polls consistently showing broad approval for sex education, school district stakeholders often want to see those supportive responses holding true for their specific communities.

F. Family engagement approaches and intensity will vary by school district.

Family engagement in sex education is critical, however it is important to be thoughtful about the best way to engage parents and guardians. Before you begin, you should answer the questions “How could engaging families further our sex education efforts?” “What information would be helpful?” “When we decide to engage families, what is the best way to involve parents and guardians?” Check out these [Best Practices for Family Engagement](#) and consider what you can do before, during and after implementation of sex education efforts.

3. DESIGN

rollout plan

The purpose of this phase is to create the systems, processes, policies, and guidelines that will be the backbone of long-term, sustainable sex education.

The Four Phases

SCAN

current efforts and policies

The purpose of this phase is to gain an understanding of the sex education landscape to inform an action plan for sex education institutionalization.

ENGAGE

school districts

The purpose of this phase is to assess school readiness and ensure ownership and active participation among key school district stakeholders.



IMPLEMENT

sex education

The purpose of this phase is to prepare for, and actually deliver, a sex education program!



About This Phase

While the previous phase, “Engage School Districts,” creates an action plan to improve sex education (e.g., MOU with the school district), this phase results in a clear articulation of the school district’s vision and commitments for sex education, including “in the weeds” details to guide sex education implementation now and in the future. This phase of the work relies heavily on the input of the “sex education team” – the interdisciplinary team created during the Engage Phase. At the end of this phase of the work the key documents that formalize how the school district will reach and sustain its sex education goals are in place (e.g., curriculum, policy, procedures, and curriculum scope and sequence) and all key school district stakeholders are clear about the school district’s commitment and approach to sex education.

Steps to Design a Rollout Plan

STEP	RESULTS
<p>1. Create the Sex Education Rollout Plan</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sex education implementation goals and objectives defined • Sex education curriculum selected, procured, adapted and adopted
<p>2. Ensure Policies and Procedures are in Place to Guide and Sustain Sex Education</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School district leadership and sex education implementers review and understand existing policies and procedures that govern the teaching of sex education • Formal policies are in place that support sex education institutionalization • Procedures and regulations articulate the school district’s plan and support for sex education institutionalization
<p>3. Communicate the Sex Education Institutionalization Plan</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School district leadership are aware of and promote sex education institutionalization • Teachers understand their roles and responsibilities for sex education institutionalization



Sustainability

The long-term sustainability of gains made during this phase of work is supported by:

- Clear, written documentation that are go-to resources to inform sex education instruction (e.g., via the established policies, procedures, guidance documents, and frameworks).
- Sex education responsibilities embedded into key job descriptions, establishing a basis of accountability.
- Ongoing investment and leadership support – a one-time communication strategy will not sustain the work. Be sure to keep communications consistent over time so that sex education gains don't “fall off the radar.”



Step 1: Create the Sex Education Rollout Plan

RESULTS

- Sex education implementation goals and objectives defined
 - Sex education curriculum selected, procured, adapted and adopted
-

The sex education rollout plan sets the vision and provides the details for sex education implementation and sustainability. The final plan may be a collection of documents including, but not limited to, sex education curriculum, policy, procedures, curriculum scope and sequence, implementation timeline, staff responsibilities, professional development requirements and annual budget. The sex education rollout plan should be easily understood by school district stakeholders to ensure there is a shared understanding of sex education at the school district among current and future staff.

TIPS

A. Get a grasp of current sex education implementation and determine the school district's sex education goals and intentions.

Work with your sex education team to envision and then define what sex education will look like in the school district as a result of your work together. This includes determining what grade levels will receive sex education, how sex education will be built into the school day (e.g., via a PE course? health course?) and who will be responsible for teaching sex education.

Be sure that your sex education team is set up for successful participation. Bolster your team's ability to understand, participate in, and support CSE institutionalization planning. Consider offering training to school district administrators, and others involved, so that they can contribute to planning with a strong understanding of the value of sex education and how sex education ties into academic goals.

TIPS

B. Review applicable education standards; map and align potential curricula to standards.

Involve an interdisciplinary team to choose potential sex education curricula and then conduct mapping and alignment of potential curricula to applicable standards and policies to identify the degree to which sex education curricula meet local, state, and federal guidance. Include a plan for the timing of sex education delivery and its placement within the school day and school year.

C. Integrate sex education with educational standards.

Educational standards are commonplace in public education. They provide clear expectations about what students should know and be able to do at the conclusion of specific grade levels. Consider using the [Health Education Curriculum Analysis Tool](#) or the [National Sexuality Education Standards mapping and alignment tool](#) along with your individual state standards, if applicable.

D. Select, procure, adapt, and adopt curriculum.

Based on the mapping and alignment exercise, select a curriculum that is appropriate for the student population and grade levels, and that meets the requirements and needs of the district. Be sure to consider the costs of the materials and any training requirements the curriculum provider has in place. This [curriculum assessment tool](#) can help.

Make sure you engage the right stakeholders before you commit to curricula. Curriculum adoption is a significant decision point and it is worth engaging a larger group of stakeholders beyond the core sex education team to vet and approve curricula adoption. Having the support of teachers and parents for sex education curricula adoption will facilitate the use of these instructional materials in classrooms. Be aware of and responsive to any school district instructional materials adoption requirements such as board approval. Avoid selecting curricula that are not feasible to implement due to such factors as cost, training requirements and accessibility, number of lessons and program intensity.



Step 2: Ensure Policies and Procedures are in Place to Guide and Sustain Sex Education

RESULTS

- School district leadership and sex education implementers review and understand existing policies and procedures that govern the teaching of sex education
 - Formal policies are in place that support sex education institutionalization
 - Procedures and regulations articulate the school district’s plan and support for sex education institutionalization
-

With a clear institutionalization plan in place, it is time to ensure that the school district’s guiding documents align and uphold the sex education institutionalization plan. Both the formal policies, such as those passed by a school board, and the informal processes that guide instruction, are important aspects of sex education institutionalization. Without embedding sex education into guidance documents, there are significant risks to initial buy-in and long-term sustainability. For example, teachers may not feel they have sufficient assurances that they are allowed to teach sex education, or after staff turnover the historical knowledge about how and when to implement sex education may be lost. Establishing district policies and guidelines that mandate and support sex education can have an enduring impact.

TIPS

A. Review school district policy to assess compliance with state law and school district goals.

Ideally districts have a policy in place that supports, and even mandates, the institutionalization of sex education. First, review existing school district policy to determine if the policy needs updating to comply with state-level policy or to better align with the school district's sex education goals. Questions to ask include: “Does it comply with state policy or regulations?” “What content does the policy specify?” “When was the policy last revised?” “Does it mandate or allow for sex education?” “Is there an opt-out policy ?” “Does the policy specify the grade levels in which sex education should be taught?”

TIPS

B. Affirm or update school district policy to comply with state law and/or bolster sex education institutionalization.

After the review and assessment phase, update district policy in favor of sex education, where needed. While 21 states plus Washington D.C. require sex education to be taught, many states have state-level policies that allow, but don't mandate, sex education. That means there's an opportunity to require sex education at the school district level. Some states provide little guidance whatsoever, placing greater responsibility on individual districts to determine their policies for sex education in schools. There are opportunities to further strengthen sex education through the policy phase. For example, consider including sex education as a graduation requirement (or a required component of a health education requirement) to position sex education as an important academic component. Graduation requirements are often decided at the state level but it may be possible to provide tailored, localized graduation requirements.

There may be a strong, model policy to adopt. Using model school district policies that have already been developed and implemented can save time, ensure compliance with state mandates, and make the policy development process less daunting to school districts. For example, in favorable policy environments, statewide associations or departments of education may promulgate model policies, making approval relatively easy and ensuring consistency in sex education policy across districts.

C. Develop a strategy for policy adoption.

If a new or revised policy is needed, be sure to understand the process for policy change and make a plan accordingly. Identify and engage key district and community stakeholders as champions and develop a communication strategy. Ensure that partners are aware of their roles, responsibilities, available resources, and the pathway to policy approval. Involving district superintendents or other key district-level decision makers lends powerful support and brings an important internal perspective to sex education policy adoption. Some school districts may not want to tackle policy change and that might be an indicator of insufficient support for sex education. It is important to demonstrate the link between strong school district policy and long-term institutionalization. Some school districts may not be ready to enhance or create a supportive policy because they want to pilot sex education implementation first. While this might be a strategic path for some districts, it is critical that school district stakeholders understand the long-term sustainability gains that district policies foment.

TIPS

D. Determine the key guidance documents and frameworks that inform school district instruction and embed sex education within them.

School districts have a wide variety of guidance documents and policies that articulate instructional expectations. For example, there might be a “scope and sequence” or pacing guide template that classes such as English or Math use to document how and when instructional units will be taught. Developing these documents with sex education-specific instructional content puts sex education documentation on par with other courses and creates an instructional map to guide sex education teaching that ensures all sex education lesson plans will be covered. Consider embedding sex education within job descriptions to ensure it is seen as a key responsibility for the role (e.g., PE teacher job description; curriculum director job description). It is also important to look to school frameworks. School frameworks include district-level or school-level improvement plans and/or strategic plans as well as state and local educational standards. Sex education must be nested within these frameworks which specify the key priorities for a particular school districts (e.g., school improvement plans) as well as what students should know and be able to do at the end of a grade (e.g., standards). Also consider including provisions for minimum ongoing professional development requirements.

Establish dedicated time in the school year to incorporate sex education. In order to ensure the sustained provision of sex education, specific time needs to be allocated for it. This way, sex education is not viewed as something that is optional or extra, but rather a planned and required activity built into the academic calendar. For some districts, this may mean including sex education as part of an existing Health or PE class (a common way to integrate sex education) while for others more creativity may be needed.

Step 3: Communicate the Sex Education Institutionalization Plan

RESULTS

- School district leadership are aware of and promote sex education institutionalization
 - Teachers understand their roles and responsibilities for sex education institutionalization
-

Now it is time to promote and communicate the school district’s sex education plan to all stakeholders affected by sex education. This ensures they are clear regarding the district’s sex education goals, the institutionalization plan, and the supporting documents (e.g., policies and regulations), as well as their roles and responsibilities. There is often a lot of misconception about what is (and is not) allowed in terms of sex education instruction and the purpose of this step is to provide a refresher on information that hasn’t changed as well as an update on how sex education is changing in the school district and the implications at the classroom-, school-, and school district-level.

TIPS

A. Create clear, tailored communications to key stakeholders.

School district leadership and teachers may harbor fear or confusion about what sex education policies allow. Ultimately, confusion about sex education policy may result in teachers being overly cautious and opting out of critical elements of curricula. Formal policies and procedures need to be translated into practical messages, otherwise they can be ignored or forgotten. Once stakeholders understand the rationale, policy, and procedures, their comfort with and dedication to sex education implementation will increase.

Parents are an important constituent group to keep in the loop. Don’t forget to determine how best to engage parents to update them on the school district’s commitment to sex education and give them a “heads up” about what sex education students will be receiving at school.

4. IMPLEMENT

sex education

The purpose of this phase is to prepare for, and actually deliver, a sex education program!

The Four Phases

SCAN

current efforts and policies

The purpose of this phase is to gain an understanding of the sex education landscape to inform an action plan for sex education institutionalization.

ENGAGE

school districts

The purpose of this phase is to assess school readiness and ensure ownership and active participation among key school district stakeholders.

DESIGN

rollout plan

The purpose of this phase is to create the systems, processes, policies, and guidelines that will be the backbone of long-term, sustainable sex education.





About This Phase

All of the important foundational work achieved in previous phases finally leads to classroom instruction of the selected curriculum. There are also the practical, logistical challenges of coordinating staffing, scheduling instruction, and allocating sufficient time for professional development. Check out the [Implementation Planning Worksheet](#), which can help you think through who will be delivering sex education and when.

Steps to Implement Sex Education

STEP	RESULTS
1. Train Teachers to Provide Sex Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Teachers receive sex ed instruction and can access ongoing training, resources, and/or professional development Teachers are ready and excited to teach sex education
2. Implement Sex Education in Classrooms	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students receive high quality sex education in classrooms
3. Monitor and Review Sex Education Implementation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There is a systematic approach to ensuring sex education is being implemented and that the sex education curriculum is a strong fit for students' needs

Sustainability

The long-term sustainability of gains made during this phase of work is supported by:

- A plan for new teacher and ongoing teacher training to mitigate the impact of teacher turnover and to support teachers in the long-term.
- A monitoring or accountability plan to ensure sex education implementation and that the school district maintains compliance with state and school district policy.

Step 1: Train Teachers to Provide Sex Education

RESULTS

- Teachers receive sex ed instruction and can access ongoing training, resources, and/or professional development
 - Teachers are ready and excited to teach sex education
-

Teacher trainings will assist teachers in preparing to teach sex education, including increasing their content/curriculum knowledge, skills, and comfort level. Financial resources should be allocated, as needed, to provide trainings and to facilitate teachers' attendance and to cover related costs such as transportation and substitute teachers. Training offerings should be ongoing and accessible to new and existing teachers. Teacher training should review relevant state and district policies and emphasize teacher comfort and skills in delivering the curriculum.

TIPS

A. Demonstrate school district leadership support.

Principals and teachers must see and feel that their administrators (e.g., superintendents and assistant superintendents) support sex education implementation. This high-level administrative support can assuage any concerns and increase teachers' confidence in sex education delivery. One way to demonstrate this support is to have a school district leader make a guest appearance at a training to emphasize the importance of the work; another way to demonstrate the support is to have an email from an administrator that shows their support for sex education teacher training and classroom implementation.

TIPS

B. Engage teachers as partners.

Teacher trainings are most successful when they are designed using [adult learning theory](#) and attend to the comfort, knowledge and skills of the group. Trainings that are highly interactive and increase teachers' abilities to implement sexuality education by acknowledging the importance of comfort, knowledge and skill will help implementation be more successful which in turn fosters sustainability. Trainers should also keep in mind that teachers bring a rich skillset with them – they're accustomed to adopting and implementing new curriculum and getting up to speed on new content. They often need the most support in the development of core skills (how to answer difficult questions; how to comfortably discuss sex education; how to teach lessons in a way that is inclusive of diverse students; etc.) Outstanding advice on how to best develop effective professional development is provided by Deb Christopher, Director of Professional Learning Systems at ETR can be found [here](#).

Make a plan for training new teachers. Teacher turnover or shifts of assignment are quite common. Sex education training needs to plan for both the current and future needs of teachers. This means planning to train the current cohort of teachers, as well as anticipating the training needs of future teachers who will be new to sex education or existing teachers who may need supplemental training. Solutions to the ongoing training needs of sex education teachers include: 1) creating a cadre of expert teachers who can “train up” new staff; 2) using on-line resources that cover the basic sex education information so that new teachers can access training resources as-needed; and 3) finding a local organization that can provide core skills teacher training on an as-needed basis. Don't assume that “if you build it, they will come.” Recruitment of teachers for participation in training and professional development opportunities may require ongoing efforts and visible support of key district leaders. Create a smooth experience for attendees by making sure teachers understand the purpose and rationale for the training ahead of time so that there aren't any surprises on the day of the training. School districts also may need to plan for teacher time out of the class, including lining up substitute teachers.



Step 2: Create the Sex Education Rollout Plan

RESULTS

- Students receive high quality sex education in classrooms
-

Ready, set, go! It is time to get high-quality sex education into classrooms. All the groundwork has been laid: policies and procedures are in place, the curriculum is clear, and teachers have received training. Now it's time to deliver sex education to students in classrooms.

TIPS

A. Plan to support teachers during implementation.

Teachers must be comfortable with and confident in the curriculum they implement to ensure that sex education continues to be taught in future years. Providing an opportunity to revisit the curriculum and/or provide additional training supports teachers' ongoing support for sex education.

Create a mechanism to monitor sex education implementation. Determine who will oversee implementation. Having a sex education accountability point person will help the school district maintain compliance with state and school district policy. Do not sever ties with teachers after training. Having access to real-time support and sustained relationships during sex education implementation allows teachers to ask questions and problem solve as unforeseen challenges arise.



Step 3: Monitor and Review Sex Education Implementation

RESULTS

- There is a systematic approach to ensuring sex education is being implemented and that the sex education curriculum is a strong fit for students' needs
-

Once a sex education program is in place, efforts to monitor implementation can provide accountability and ensure program continuity and quality. Monitoring could take a variety of forms including a simple worksheet teachers complete and submit to document sex education lessons taught; regular assessments of student learning related to the standards/objectives; teacher or principal evaluations; and/or structured department meetings of sex education teachers to facilitate sharing lesson plans, challenges, strategies, etc. The level of monitoring will depend on the context, capacity, and compliance measures of each site.

TIPS

A. Confirm curriculum is a good fit after implementation.

Teachers must be comfortable with and confident in the curriculum they implement to ensure that sex ed continues to be taught in future years. Providing an opportunity to revisit the curriculum and/or provide additional training supports teachers' ongoing buy-in and support for CSE.

Create a mechanism to monitor sex education implementation. Determine who will oversee sex education implementation. Having an accountability point person will help the school district maintain compliance with state and school district policy.
