WISE Lessons Learned: Assessing and Building Capacity of Communities and Schools to Effectively Deliver Sexuality Education

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Mission

Improve organizations’ abilities to deliver accessible, high quality, culturally proficient, and compassionate services to their clients
Objectives

1) Describe school and school district challenges to implementing comprehensive sexuality education.

2) Identify best practices and effective strategies in the implementation of sex education.

3) Describe the importance of building school/district capacity to ensure the sustainability and institutionalization of sex education programs.
About WISE

Working to Institutionalize Sex Education (WISE)

WISE aims to implement
good state sex ed policy
in a sustainable way in schools.
Goal

Increase the number of youth in public schools who have access to and receive CSE.
What is comprehensive sex education (CSE)?

- CSE is defined generally as education that addresses both abstinence and, at a minimum, age-appropriate, medically accurate information about contraception.
What is comprehensive sex education (CSE)?

• CSE is also developmentally appropriate, and may include additional information on topics such as healthy relationships, decision-making, assertiveness, and skill building to resist social/peer pressure, depending on grade-level.
What is CSE institutionalization?

- When it becomes established as a convention or norm.
- Necessary supports (e.g., policy, community, human resource, financial, etc.) exist to sustain CSE instruction over time.
WISE Strategies

1) Focus on school-based sex ed

2) Go for institutionalization
WISE Sites

The Mary Wohlford Foundation

States: CA, WA, OR, CO, IA, NY, WV, NC, GA
Lessons Learned...Early

• Knowing how to work with schools is critical
• Each state has a unique infrastructure that can be leveraged
• Coordination with DASH, whenever possible, increases success
• Yes, there is a method and it can be learned and diffused
“The WISE Method”

**Planning**
- Conduct environmental scan
- Identify districts to assess

**Engagement**
- Engage champions, include administrators
- Assess readiness/capacity

**Implementation**
- Connect sex ed to ed standards
- Review/map curriculum
- Select curriculum
- Train teachers
- Implement sex ed in classroom
- Monitor implementation

**Policy**
- Address district policy
The WISE Method Toolkit

A practical framework and reference document to support the institutionalization of comprehensive sex education in public
The CSE Institutionalization Process

Five phases:

- **Phase 1:** Planning and Environmental Scan
- **Phase 2:** School District Engagement
- **Phase 3:** Community Awareness and Mobilization
- **Phase 4:** School District Policy
- **Phase 5:** CSE Implementation
Capacity Assessment Tool

• Who makes the curriculum decisions in your district?

• Does the school/district have any teacher training requirements for teaching sexual health?

• Is there a written policy that governs your sexual health education program (K-12)?

• Are there any topics that teachers are not allowed to discuss?

• Are parents informed they may opt their child out of parts or all of the sexual health education curriculum?

• What barriers, if any, does your district face in improving sexual health education in your district?
WA WISE Approach: Staging

High

Medium

Low

Limited

Preparation and Action
TA & Training Provided

- Align curricula with HYA & WA State Guidelines
- Establish Sexual Health Policy
- Choose Curricula
- Adapt Curricula
- Community Buy In
- Create Sustainability Plans
- Assess Community Attitudes
DISTRICT A: >> PRE-CONTEMPLATION

Community Mobilization
DISTRICT B: >> CONTEMPLATION

Intense TA and Policy Adoption
DISTRICT C: >> ACTION

TA and Training
What does successful completion of conducting a planning and environmental scan look like?

• Understanding of **state and district CSE policies** and how they can or cannot be leveraged
• Understanding of the **funding landscape** and opportunities to leverage resources to support CSE implementation efforts
• A capable set of **partners** is engaged and working together on institutionalizing CSE
• A **list of school districts** or schools is developed for initial assessment
How do planning and environmental scan processes sustain and thrive?

- Create **linkages** between relevant state and local programs
- Consider a partnership with your state’s Division of Adolescent School Health (DASH) HIV/AIDS coordinator.
What is the community awareness and mobilization phase and why is it important?

• **Leverage** existing relationships to identify districts for assessing readiness.

• **Focus** planning and environmental scan activities on **critical areas** rather than the “nice to haves.”
What does successful completion of school district engagement look like?

• It is **not** necessary to implement CSE **simultaneously** in all participating districts.
• Districts that are **not ready** for CSE implementation should **not be targeted** for participation.
• Do not apply a “**one size fits all**” approach.
• Do not **rely** on one person to “carry the water.”.
What does successful completion of school district policy look like?

• School district leadership and CSE implementers understand state policies affecting the teaching of CSE
• School district leadership and CSE implementers review and understand existing district policies affecting the teaching of CSE
• District policy is either affirmed or updated to comply with state law and/or bolster CSE
How does school district policy sustain and thrive?

• Monitor and evaluate **adherence** to CSE policy.
• Incorporate **CSE responsibilities into key job descriptions**, establishing a basis of accountability.
• Include **policy provisions for** minimum, ongoing professional development requirements.
• Include **CSE as a graduation requirement** (or a required component of a health education requirement) to position CSE as an important academic component.
What does successful completion of CSE implementation look like?

• Districts and schools select, adopt, and implement CSE curriculum
• Teachers receive CSE instruction and can access ongoing training, resources, and/or professional development
• Students receive high-quality CSE in classrooms across multiple grade levels
How does CSE implementation sustain and thrive in schools?

• Establish **quality improvement and quality assurance processes** to ensure ongoing, high-quality implementation of CSE.

• Develop a **cadre of trainers** within the district to build capacity and support for teaching CSE and to reduce the need for external trainers.

• Ensure **dedicated funding** to support future curriculum purchases and ongoing professional development.
“WISE project has brought the 4 C’s to our sexual health education program – content, consistency, connection, and confidence.” (Superintendent)

“It (readiness assessment) laid the ground work because it gave us a picture of where we were, where we wanted to go and what gaps existed” (School District)
Questions
Contact

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