

Sparta Area Schools Reproductive Health Program Overview

Background Information

Sparta Area Schools has a comprehensive Reproductive Health Program which begins in the early elementary and extends through High School. Not all school systems elect to provide reproductive health education. However, the Sparta Board of Education supported the recommendations of the District's Reproductive Health Advisory Board by approving that the students of Sparta Area Schools receive formal instruction in Reproductive Health and Family Planning (Sparta Area Schools Board Policy and Guidelines # 2414). The Reproductive Health Program approved by the Board is considered to be an *Abstinence-Based* program.

Reproductive Health: Reproductive Health is defined as *the state of an individual's well-being which involves the reproductive system and its physiological, psychological, and endocrinological functions.*

Mission Statement: *To equip students with the knowledge and skills in order to develop healthy relationships, make responsible and healthy life choices and to avoid behavior which places them at risk of sexually transmitted diseases, and unplanned pregnancy.*

HIV/AIDS: As required by Michigan Public Act 380.1169, our district provides instruction about dangerous communicable diseases including HIV/AIDS at every level. Our teaching staff received formal training through Kent ISD specifically designed for appropriate grade level instruction as represented in the Michigan Health Model Instruction guidelines. Each building provides appropriate instruction ranging from washing hands so to prevent the spread of germs through the transmission, prevention and incidences of HIV/AIDS and other STIs/SRDs (Sexually Transmitted Diseases/Infections). Each Building Plan Overview located in the Nurses Corner (see link below) provides the specifics regarding the instruction about communicable diseases including HIV/AIDS .

Overview of Skills and Concepts

Early Elementary: Beginning in the classes of Young 5s, early elementary students (K-2) receive a series of lessons designed to identify and address potentially unsafe situations. Through age-appropriate literature and videos, the students engage in lessons which include:

- How to identify potentially unsafe situations
- How to stay safe during Public outings
- How to stay safe when dealing with bullies and strangers
- How to recognize the difference between safe and unsafe touches
- How to use appropriate refusal skills with strangers and with someone that is known
- Where and how to seek help to seek help

Most lessons come from the Michigan Model Health Curriculum and are taught by trained building staff members.

Upper Elementary: In grades 3-5 the focus of instruction is on the human body. The lessons are designed for students to understand the changes during puberty. Additionally, the 5th grade science units include instruction regarding Body Systems. Through videos and informational text and presentations, students engage in lessons which include:

- What body changes occur during puberty
- What to expect and how to deal with the physical and emotional changes during puberty
- Why physical changes create reasons to emphasize personal hygiene during puberty and adulthood
- The purpose, functions and general anatomy of the reproductive system
- How the body systems work together to perform specialized activities

The lessons regarding physical and emotional changes are taught by taught during Physical Education classes. The students are separated into groups by gender, and the PE Teacher and School Nurse instruct the students. The lessons regarding the Reproductive System are taught by the 5th grade science teachers using the district curriculum which is aligned with the required state content expectations.

Middle School: In grades 6-8 the students begin to deepen their understanding of the concepts and skills regarding the "A-K" required components of the State of Michigan. These eleven components are instructed in age appropriate, medically accurate lessons during required health courses at the 6th and 8th grades. The instruction uses a variety of

informational text, perceptual surveys, videos, role playing and group work which is designed to engage students in lessons which include:

- The benefits of obtaining from sexual activity until marriage
- Emotional, economic and legal consequences of sexual activity
- Potential stress and consequences of unplanned pregnancy
- Healthy and responsible choices, self discipline, healthy relationships, peer pressure and refusal skills,
- The State laws and consequences pertaining to sexuality, including responsibilities as parents of children.

The instruction at the Middle School is provided by local experts specifically trained for instruction of Middle School and High School age students. Two agencies provide representatives as guest instructors: Pregnancy Resource Center (PRC) and Kent County Health Departments. PRC representatives provide a series of 7 sessions as outlined in the *Willing to Wait, Sex and Relationship Program*. The PRC program includes pre- and post-training assessments. The assessments evaluate both content specific understandings students' perceptions regarding responsible and healthy decisions. The Kent County Health Department Representatives provide instruction to students through their Life Skills Program. While the session topics include multiple age appropriate Life Skills, the lessons which specifically address Reproductive Health include healthy relationships, refusal skills, peers pressure and the role and influences of drugs and alcohol may have on responsible decisions and healthy choices.

High School: In the state of Michigan, all students are required to take a Health course as a requirement for graduation. The units of instruction in the Sparta Health course are aligned with the course level content expectations as outlined in the Michigan Merit Curriculum (MMC). The district's Reproductive Health Program for HS students is an extension of the Middle School units of instruction. Using a variety of interactive strategies, students engage in a designed sequence of instruction which directly address the "A-K" required content. Below is a listing of the required content and instructional lessons in the *Willing to Wait Program* series for High School Students:

- A. Benefits of abstaining from sex until marriage. Benefits of ceasing sex, if a pupil is sexually active.
- B. Discussion of possible emotional, economic and legal consequences of sex.

- C. Unplanned pregnancy and sexually transmitted diseases are serious consequences that are not fully preventable, except by abstinence.
- D. Advise pupils of the laws pertaining to their responsibility as parents to children born in and out of wedlock.
- E. Ensure that pupils are not taught in a way that condones violating the laws of this state pertaining to sexual activity, including those relating to: sodomy, indecent exposure, gross indecency, criminal sexual conduct.
- F. Teach pupils how to say 'no' to sexual advances and that it is wrong to take advantage of, harass, or sexually exploit another person.
- G. Teach refusal skills and encourage pupils to resist pressures to engage in risky behavior.
- H. Teach that the pupil has the power to control personal behavior. Pupils shall be taught to base their actions on reasoning, self-discipline, a sense of responsibility, self-control, and ethical considerations such as respect for self and others.
- I. Provide instruction on healthy dating relationships, how to set limits and recognize a dangerous environment.
- J. Provide information for pupils about how young parents can learn more about adoption services and about the provisions of the safe delivery of newborns law.
- K. Clearly inform pupils that having sex or sexual contact with an individual under the age of 16 is a crime punishable by imprisonment and that one of the other results of being convicted of this crime is to be listed on the sex offender registry for up to 25 years.
- L. Compare and contrast the pros and cons of methods used for pregnancy and disease prevention, including abstinence and use of contraception.

The instruction at the High School level is also provided by representatives from PRC. While the content of the instruction in the Willing to Wait, Sex and Relationship, Program is similar to the Middle School curriculum, the High School students explore the "A-K" components in greater depth. Additionally, the Pregnancy Resource Center (PRC) Program at High School includes an additional unit of instruction at which addresses contraception as a barrier of STIs/STDs and pregnancy.

Additional Information about the Sparta Reproductive Health Program

For more information regarding Sparta Are Schools Reproductive Health Program, visit the *NURSES CORNER* located within the *Nurse Information* section under the *Other Information* tab on the Sparta School's Website @ www.spartaschools.org.