

Comprehensive Sex Education Fact Sheet

[SB 672 Sen. Chappelle-Nadal](#) University City (D-14) | [HB 2491 Rep. Smith](#) St. Louis (D-85)

This comprehensive sex education legislation builds on the progress of 2015 with the passage of the [Internet Safety Sex Education Law](#) by requiring that voluntary sex education courses include information on both abstinence and the benefits of contraception. These bills would also once again allow local schools to choose which trained sex education professionals to invite into their classrooms. Improving access to preventive health care and supporting healthy families should be a shared goal in Missouri. If we are committed to reducing the number of unintended pregnancies and abortions in Missouri, we must get to the root of the problem through common sense prevention programs. One such program is comprehensive and medically accurate sexuality and reproductive health education in schools.

We aren't getting rid of abstinence education—we're improving it. Allowing trained sex education professionals to be invited into public schools doesn't mean abstinence behavior will stop being encouraged. Comprehensive sex education legislation would require schools that choose to offer sex education courses to include medically accurate information on **both** abstinence and the benefits of contraception and sexually transmitted infection (STI) prevention. Materials would also address issues around healthy relationships and the importance of family communication.

We know comprehensive programs work. Medically accurate, age-appropriate education that includes information about both abstinence and contraception is effective in delaying the onset of sexual intercourse, reducing the number of sexual partners, and increasing contraception and condom use among teens (SEICUS). Teens who receive sex education that includes abstinence and contraception are more likely than those who receive abstinence-only-until-marriage messages to delay sexual activity and use contraception when they do become sexually active (SEICUS).

Missourians want comprehensive sex education. 86% of Missourians support teaching comprehensive sex education in schools, according to a Missouri poll conducted by Peter D. Hart Research Associates. Leading public health and medical organizations all stress the need for sex education that includes messages about abstinence and provides young people with information about contraception for the prevention of teen pregnancy, HIV/AIDS, and other STIs. Some of these supporters include: the American Medical Association, the American Academy of Pediatrics, the American Psychological Association, the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists, the Institute of Medicine Society of Adolescent Medicine, the American Nurses Association, and the American Public Health Association.

Investing in sex education prevents unintended pregnancy AND makes good fiscal sense. Unintended teen pregnancies cost U.S. taxpayers \$11 billion every year (Guttmacher). If we want our government to be fiscally responsible, we must invest in sex education and family planning services. According to the National Campaign to Prevent Teen and Unplanned Pregnancy, if those giving birth during their teen years instead had their children during adulthood, U.S. taxpayers would save about \$1,600 per person annually. **For every dollar invested in family planning programs, the government saves approximately \$7** (Guttmacher).

