



SB 71 Overview:

Sex Education & HIV/AIDS Prevention Education in California Public Schools

What Students, Parents/Guardians, and Educators Need to Know

As of January 1, 2004, California enacted new laws covering sex education and HIV/AIDS prevention education in public schools. These laws were outlined under Senate Bill 71 (SB 71). As a teacher, principal or school board member, here are some things you may want to know.

- **SB 71 makes it absolutely clear that instruction or materials that discuss gender, sexual orientation, or family life and do not discuss human reproductive organs and their functions are not "sex education" and therefore do not trigger a requirement of parental notification prior to discussion in the school.**
- **Sex education must respect and address the needs of students of all sexual orientations.**
- **Sex ed is not required. HIV/AIDS prevention education is required once in middle school and once in high school.**
- **If schools offer sex ed, they cannot provide an abstinence-only program.**
- **Abstinence-only education offers abstinence as the only choice for preventing pregnancy or sexually transmitted diseases; the law requires that other methods be included. Many abstinence-only programs are religious in nature; sex education cannot promote any religious ideas.**
- **Sex education must be medically accurate, age-appropriate, and, starting in 7th grade must cover abstinence, effectiveness and safety of contraception, protection from sexually transmitted diseases, and decision-making.**
- **This means that if schools are offering sex ed, they must cover these subjects. They must look to trusted sources of information, like the American Academy of Pediatrics, to determine medical accuracy. All pregnancy and STD prevention devices that have been approved by the Food and Drug Administration must be covered.**
- **Parents must be notified that their child will have sex ed or HIV/AIDS education and be allowed to see the materials before the classes start.**
- **If parents don't want their children to take the class they must request that in writing.**
- **Teachers of both HIV/AIDS education and sexual health education must be trained in the subject.**
- **Schools may use outside organizations or speakers, if they have training, but those organizations must also follow the law governing the content of instruction.**
- **English language learners and students with disabilities must get sex education and HIV/AIDS education that is right for them.**
- **Schools must make sure that all students can get sexual health education and HIV/AIDS education in a way that works for them.**

One classroom at a time...