

SUMMARY OF A BILL ESTABLISHING COMPREHENSIVE FAMILY LIFE AND SEXUALITY EDUCATION PROGRAMS

Minnesota was the first state to enact an HIV curriculum requirement in 1988. The curriculum requirement was based on principles of comprehensive sexual health education. In 1997, that curriculum requirement was expanded to include STDs. A provision was also added that included abstinence until marriage as something that could be addressed as part of a comprehensive sexual health curriculum. Subsequently, opponents to comprehensive sexual health education have confused interpretation of the statute by advising school districts that solely offering abstinence until marriage curriculum would satisfy the state requirement.

Due to confusion created by this change, and based upon lessons learned from the effectiveness of the HIV/STD K-12 Regional Training Site service that the state funded from 1998 through 2003, a significant change in the HIV/STD curriculum requirement is proposed.

The Comprehensive Family Life and Sexuality Education Programs represent the propose change. The following is a summary of the bill introduced to enact these changes.

Section 1. Subd. 1. **Definitions.** Defines the general content of “comprehensive family life and sexuality education.” Also defines “age appropriate” and “medically accurate.”

Section 1. Subd. 2 **Curriculum Requirements.** Changes existing law so *the curriculum mandate applies only to grades 7 through 12*. Schools may offer comprehensive family life and sexuality education that is age appropriate for kindergarten through grade 6, but that is up to the local school district.

School districts have complete authority to determine how they will satisfy this curriculum requirement.

Section 1. Subd. 3. **Notice and Parental Options.** School districts that offer comprehensive family life and sexuality education need to provide a notice to parents and give parents the opportunity to opt out of having their student participate in the class. School districts can develop their own policies and procedures for administering this requirement, though the statute does give some guidance.

Section 1. Subd. 4. **Assistance to School Districts and Regional Training Sites.** The department of education is given the authority to provide technical assistance to school districts, and to establish regional training sites to help it do so. This provision puts into statute the regional training site structure. It describes the services provided by the regional training sites, based upon the experiences with the sites through the past several years. Sites need to be geographically spread throughout the state. While only school districts can be designated as sites, the bill encourages partnerships between school districts, local public health agencies, and/or nonprofit organizations.

The department of education may provide technical assistance to school districts and the regional sites. The bill specifically delineates what the purpose and content of this assistance could include. It should be clear, these guidelines apply only to the department of education and the content of its technical assistance services. They do not apply to school districts. Again, school districts have the authority to determine how they will comply with this curriculum requirement.

Section 2. Subd. 1. **Appropriation.** Appropriates funds to support up to eight regional training sites, and two statewide training partnerships. Specific dollar amounts are not included. This will be determined based upon available funding.

Section 3. **Repealer.** Repeals the existing HIV/STD K-12 curriculum requirement.

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review a copy of the bill after it has been introduced.