



*Healthy School Communities for Successful Students Partnership*

**Stratford Connecticut Success Story 2015-2016**

**1. SUCCESS STORY TITLE:**

**Adoption of Standards-Based Secondary Health Curriculum with an Emphasis on Reproductive Health in Stratford, Connecticut**

**2. STORY ABSTRACT:**

In Fall 2015 the district successfully achieved approval of a K-12 health education curriculum, with an emphasis on reproductive health. The new curriculum is aligned with national health education standards, Common Core standards, and Connecticut’s Healthy and Balanced Living Curriculum Framework and Guidelines for the Sexual Health Education Component of Comprehensive Health Education.

**3. IDENTIFIED NEED:**

Stratford is a small coastal city with a diverse population of approximately 50,000. The area experiences a relatively low poverty rate with a median household income of slightly below the state median. The community has 13 schools with almost half of students eligible for free/reduced price meals and a minority population of over 50%.

The community faces high rates of HIV and other sexually transmitted diseases including 93 cases of HIV and 203 individuals with either chlamydia, gonorrhea or syphilis in 2011. Many of these cases occur in children between the ages of 15 and 18 with those numbers rising between 2012 and 2015.

**4. PROGRAM/ACTIVITY DESCRIPTION:**

The school district initiated efforts to implement a health curriculum for grades 7-12 that was standards-based with an emphasis on reproductive health during 2013.

The Supervisor of HE and PE identified the establishment of trust between all parties and the availability and use of accurate data as the cornerstone of any process to achieve successful curriculum adoption. As a result, prior to and during the revision process, data related to STD rates was shared with and discussed with key stakeholders including principals, teachers, administrators and health department staff.

The improvement process was initiated through a discussion with the superintendent and presentation to the Board of Education. Local STD data was shared to emphasize health needs in the school population. After receipt of approval, the Supervisor of HE and PE worked closely with school principals and obtained their input and feedback. Upon completion, he utilized funding available through the Healthy School Communities for Successful Students grant funded by CDC-DASH to engage four HE teachers to work with him to write the curriculum.

The Supervisor set parameters for the writing process including alignment with required standards and an emphasis on concepts related to sexual health as well as overall health to ensure that the curriculum was not perceived as a “sexual education” curriculum. These concepts included communication skills, access

to health care, school climate, minor's rights, prevention of bullying and harassment and healthy relationships. To support teachers to incorporate the content, HE teachers and the Supervisor of HE and PE attended a large number of professional development sessions provided through the Healthy School Communities for Successful Students project funded by CDC-DASH.

Each curriculum component was developed over a one year period and were reviewed Connecticut's Health Education Consultant as necessary to support standards alignment.

**5. PROGRAM/ACTIVITY OUTCOMES:**

The revised curriculum was presented to the BOE in December 2015 and unanimously embraced. The curriculum was implemented in January 2016.