

# Dexter Reproductive Health Curriculum Update Proposal

## District Mission, Core Beliefs, Focus Areas

**Mission:** We will encourage and develop each student's individual abilities, skills, and character, to shape tomorrow's world through positive relationships, best practices, and a shared sense of purpose.

**Core Beliefs:**

- Providing quality educational opportunities for *all* learners at all levels
- Eliminating prejudice and discrimination to promote tolerance and a respectful school environment
- Ensuring a safe and secure learning environment to maximize student achievement

**Focus Areas:**

- Positive Human Connections: Develop a culture of respect and caring for one another that exists within the entire school community
- Student Learning: Provide a world class education that develops, challenges and inspires *all* students

<https://dexterschools.org/page.cfm?p=777>

## Why Should Children Learn About Reproductive Health?

*Developmentally appropriate and evidence-based education about human sexuality and sexual reproduction over time provided by medical providers, parents, schools, other professionals is important to help children and adolescents make informed, positive, and safe choices about healthy relationships, responsible sexual activity, and their reproductive health.*

Developing healthy sexuality is a developmental milestone, depends on acquiring information and forming attitudes, beliefs, and values about

Consent  
Sexual orientation  
Gender identity  
Relationships  
Intimacy

Sexuality Education for Children and Adolescents Clinical Report. *Pediatrics* 2016

## Why Should Children Learn About Reproductive Health?

Prevent adverse outcomes in adolescents:

- Unwanted pregnancy
- Nonvoluntary/unwanted sexual encounters (dating violence, stranger assaults, intrafamilial sexual abuse/incest)
- HIV infection and other sexually transmitted infections (STIs)

Develop healthy sexuality:

- Promote and preserve significant interpersonal relationships
  - Values one's body and personal health
  - Interact with both sexes in respectful and appropriate ways
  - Express affection, love, and intimacy in ways consistent with one's own values, sexual preferences, and abilities
- Sexuality Education for Children and Adolescents Clinical Report. *Pediatrics* 2016

\*\*Students want information\*\*

## Sources of Reproductive Health Information

- Parents
- Schools
- Health care professionals
- Religious organizations
- Community organizations (girl scouts, boy scouts)
- Peers
- Partners
- Media
- The school bus
- Pornography sites

Topics covered by each of the above sources varies widely in quality AND accuracy of information

States differ in requirements for reproductive health education and content in their schools

## Reproductive Health Education in Schools

Formal sexuality education in schools that includes instruction about healthy sexual decision-making and STI/HIV prevention can improve the health and well-being of adolescents and young adults.

Provides:

- Medically accurate information based on scientific principles and evidence from research
- Recognition of diversity of values and beliefs represented in the community
- Complements and augments sexuality education provided by families, religious and community groups, health care professionals.

Results in:

- Delay in the initiation and reduction in the frequency of sexual intercourse
- Reduction in number of sexual partners
- Increase in condom use
- Less truancy, improvement in academic performance in some studies

Sexuality Education for Children and Adolescents Clinical Report. *Pediatrics* 2016

## Why is a new Reproductive Health curriculum necessary?

The curriculum currently in use for grades 7-12 (The Michigan Model) has not been updated since 2010. There are no plans to update it.

Important health disparities and discrimination of the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer/questioning (LGBTQ) population have been recognized over the past 10 years.

In schools, LGBTQ students experience stigma and discrimination through

- Bullying
- Physical assaults
- Sexual harassment/inappropriate touch
- Verbal assaults and harassment

Johns, *LGBT Health* 2019

Sources of these experiences include peers and school staff.

## Schools and LGBTQ Youth

Feeling unsafe at school has a negative effect on academic success. LGBTQ youth have

- Increased absenteeism
- Lower GPAs than their gender-conforming peers
- More likely to drop-out of school

Discrimination and harassment of LGBTQ adolescents also leads to

- Higher rates of suicidal ideation and attempted suicide (29-35% vs 6.4% for heterosexual students)
- High rates of depression, anxiety, eating disorders, self-harm
- Higher rates of substance use
  - 190% higher odds compared to heterosexual youth
  - 1.5-4.8 times higher prevalence of lifetime use of certain substances
- Higher rates of high-risk sexual behaviors resulting in HIV, STIs, unintended pregnancy

Johns, *LGBT Health* 2019

## Why select a LGBTQ+ Inclusive Curriculum?

Schools are a critical site of adolescent development and provide an important opportunity for intervention work with LGBTQ youth. Schools may be a site of stigma-related risk factors OR protective factors.

'Protective factors' can improve the health and well-being for LGBTQ adolescents:

- support from peers
- school connectedness
- supportive educators
- anti-bullying policies
- inclusive and comprehensive sexuality education

## Rights, Respect and Responsibility Curriculum

- Recommended by Laurie Bechhofer, HIV/STD Education Consultant, Michigan Department of Education
- We are proposing that we adopt a selection of 7th-12th grade lessons
- Covers all of the Michigan HIV and Sexuality standards for 7th grade and high school
- This curriculum would be an update from information already in the Michigan Model Curriculum (Last updated in 2010) along with additional topics covering sexual orientation and gender identity
- This curriculum is free

## Michigan Profile for Healthy Youth 2017-2018

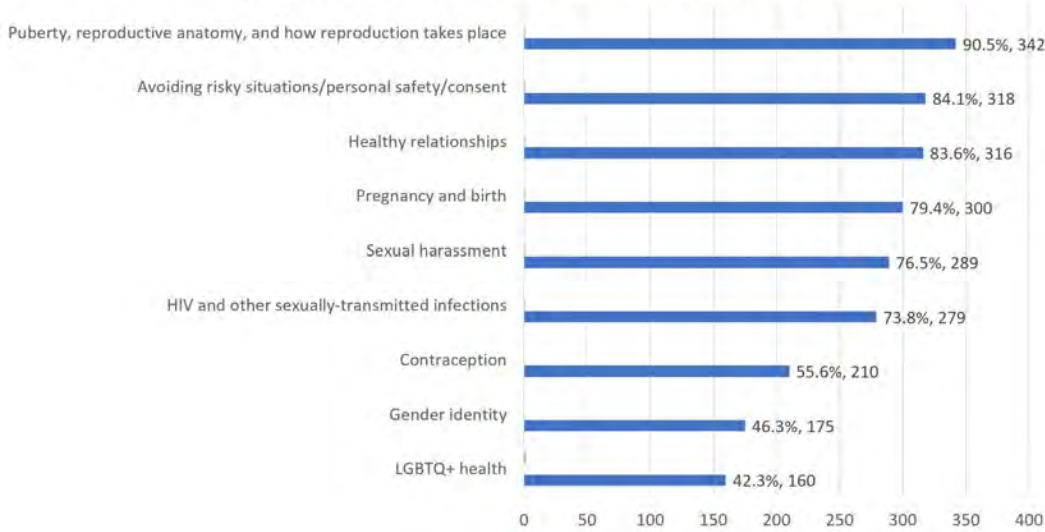
Given to all students in grades 7, 9 and 11

- 7th Grade at Mill Creek Middle School - 4.9% (11 students) identify as gay, lesbian or bisexual
- 9th and 11th graders at Dexter High School - 7.9% (35 students) identify as gay, lesbian or bisexual
- Extrapolating data to include grades 8, 10, 12 - approximately 100 students
- 7th graders in Washtenaw County - 8.8% identify as gay, lesbian or bisexual
- 9th and 11th graders in Washtenaw County - 12.1-12.5% identify as gay, lesbian or bisexual

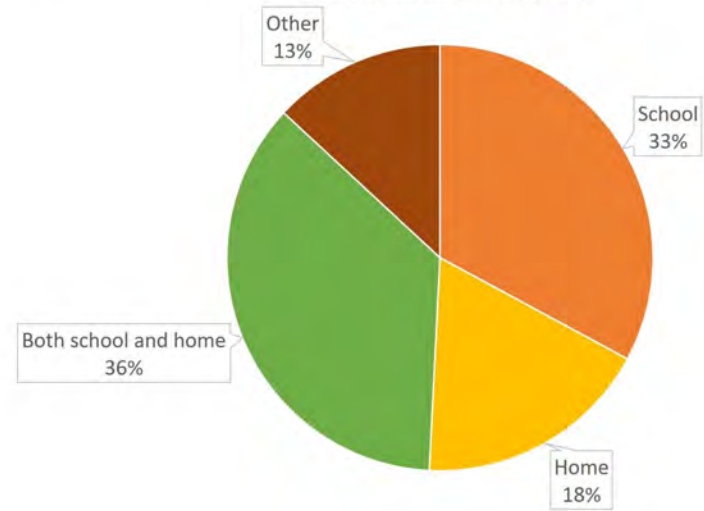
## RHAC Survey of Dexter Middle School and High School Students

- Students were asked to complete a brief, 7-question survey to determine how well the current reproductive health classes are meeting the needs of students
- Mill Creek and DHS parents were informed of the survey in advance and were able to opt their students out of taking the survey
- Survey link was emailed to students in grades 7 to 12 via school email accounts
- Students responded to the survey between 12/3/2019-12/8/2019
- 378 students responded to the survey

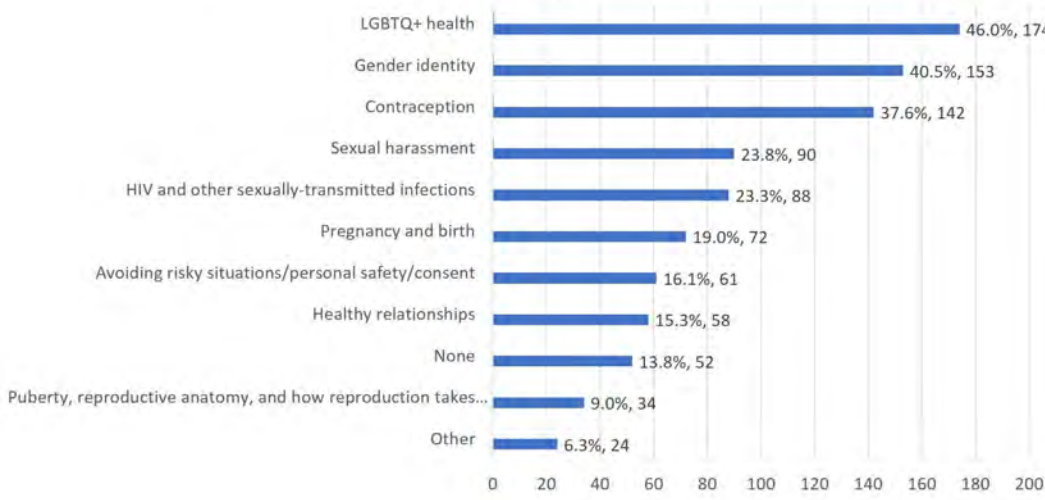
What topics below do you feel you understand well? (N=378)



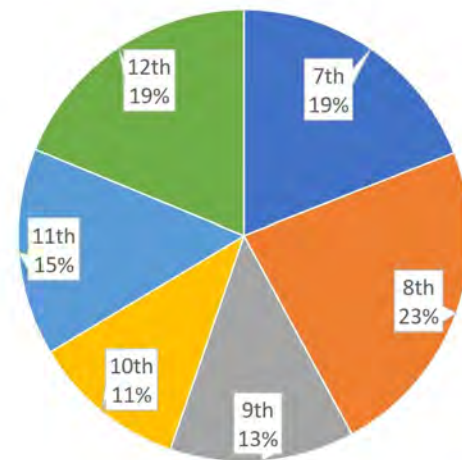
Where do you feel you've received the most knowledge about reproductive health and the topics listed above? (N=374)



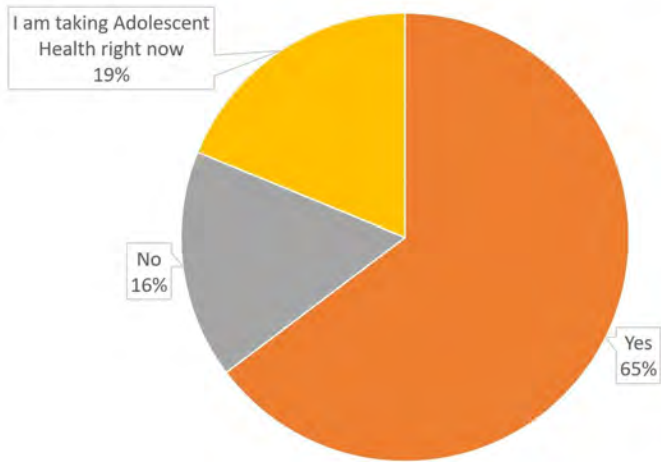
What topics below do you want or need more information about? (click all that apply) (N=378)



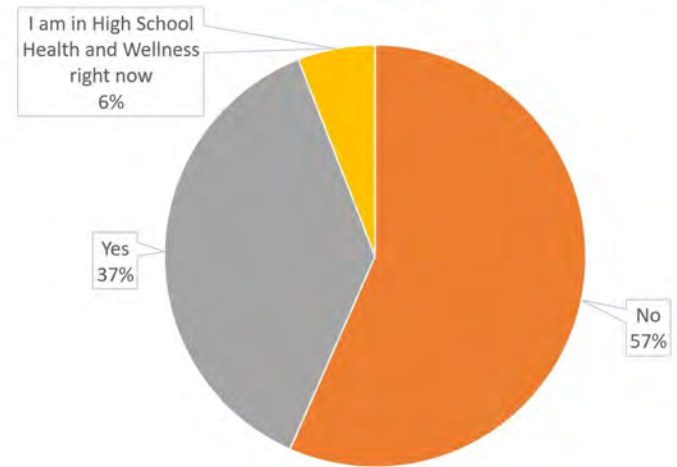
What grade are you currently in? (N=378)



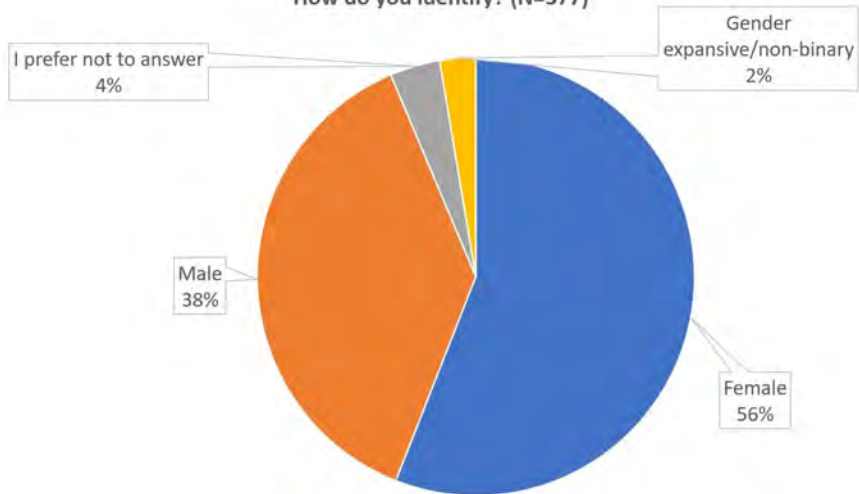
If you are in grades 7-8, have you had the Adolescent Health class? (N=170)



If you are in grades 9-12, have you had the High School Health and Wellness class? (N=219)



How do you identify? (N=377)



What topics below do you want or need more information about? (click all that apply)

	1	2	3
7th grade	Contraception (54.8%)	LGBTQ+ health (50.7%)	Gender identity (38.4%)
8th grade	LGBTQ+ health (43.2%)	Gender identity (40.9%)	Contraception (37.5%)
9th grade	Contraception (41.2%)	Gender identity (23.5%)	Sexual harassment (21.6%)
10th grade	Gender identity (44.2%)	LGBTQ+ health (41.9%)	HIV and other sexually-transmitted infections (30.2%)
11th grade	LGBTQ+ health (49.1%)	Gender identity (40.4%)	Contraception (35.1%)
12th grade	LGBTQ+ health (62.5%)	Gender identity (59.7%)	HIV and other sexually-transmitted infections (45.8%)

## Mill Creek Student Perspectives

- "People should be taught about the LGBTQIA+ community so they don't stereotype people and make comments about the community that isn't true. So people who are in the community don't have to deal with people saying stuff like that to them that make them feel uncomfortable or feel unwelcome. "
- "A lot of people when they are uneducated about a topic tend to assume and neutralize or stereotype that particular thing and a lot of people don't understand the community because they were never taught about it. So if we teach and educate people about the LGBTQ+ community then there will be less negative energy pointed and forwarded at the community."
- "LGBTQ+ students may get STDs, such as HIV, if they continue to remain uneducated in the ways of safe intercourse"

## District Mission, Core Beliefs, Focus Areas

**Mission:** We will encourage and develop each student's individual abilities, skills, and character, to shape tomorrow's world through positive relationships, best practices, and a shared sense of purpose.

### Core Beliefs:

- Providing quality educational opportunities for *all* learners at all levels
- Eliminating prejudice and discrimination to promote tolerance and a respectful school environment
- Ensuring a safe and secure learning environment to maximize student achievement

### Focus Areas:

- Positive Human Connections: Develop a culture of respect and caring for one another that exists within the entire school community
- Student Learning: Provide a world class education that develops, challenges and inspires *all* students

<https://dexterschools.org/page.cfm?p=777>