

## SUMMARY FINDINGS:

### “RE-EXAMINING THE EVIDENCE: SCHOOL-BASED COMPREHENSIVE SEX EDUCATION IN THE UNITED STATES”

#### CSE programs show ‘far more evidence of failure than success’

In an in-depth review of 60 of the best peer-reviewed studies of 40 different comprehensive sex education (CSE) programs used in U.S. school classrooms, researchers looked for program effects:

- On most-protective indicators (increased abstinence and/or condom use, decreased pregnancy or STDs),
- Lasting 12 months after the program,
- For the main (intended) teen population,
- Based on the preponderance of research evidence.

Applying these criteria to studies by both independent evaluators and program developers, the researchers found “there is **no scientific justification** for the designation of comprehensive sex education in U.S. schools as ‘evidence-based,’ nor for its broad dissemination in school settings.”

#### Key findings on CSE’s lack of effectiveness in U.S. schools:

**TEEN PREGNANCY:** Only one of the 40 school-based CSE programs evaluated by the 60 studies reported a reduction in teen pregnancy, but that effect was short term, and a subsequent study in a different location found the same program actually *increased* pregnancy rates.

**STD PREVENTION:** None of the school-based CSE studies demonstrated a reduction in teen STDs, in fact, only two measured it.

**TEEN ABSTINENCE:** Although four of the 60 school-based CSE studies reported 12-month increases in teen abstinence, 12 other studies of the same programs found no such positive effects and one negative effect.

**CONSISTENT CONDOM USE:** None of the school-based CSE programs showed effectiveness at increasing consistent condom use by teens. (*Consistent* use is necessary to provide meaningful protection from STDs.) Although there was one program that reported a long-term effect, a subsequent replication study conducted by independent evaluators—not the program’s developer—actually found that the program *increased* teen sexual risk behavior.

**CSE’S INTENDED DUAL BENEFIT:** None of the school-based CSE programs showed success at achieving the purported dual benefit of the “comprehensive” strategy—increasing both teen abstinence and condom use within the same teen population. No program produced sustained effects on both outcomes.

**NEGATIVE EFFECTS:** Five of the 40 school-based CSE programs evaluated by these 60 studies produced significant negative effects (i.e., increases in sexual initiation, recent sex, oral sex, or pregnancy) for the target population or a substantial subgroup of teens.

The detailed report with citations can be found at: **[SexEdReport.org](http://SexEdReport.org)**

***The Institute for Research and Evaluation (IRE)*** is a nonprofit research organization that has gained national recognition for its work evaluating sex education programs over the past 20 years. *IRE* has conducted program evaluations for federal Title V, CBAE, and Title XX projects in 30 states, and has evaluated sex education in three foreign countries, collecting data from more than 900,000 teens, and conducting over 100 evaluation studies. *IRE* staff members have published articles in professional journals and presented at professional conferences and workshops. Dr. Stan E. Weed, Founder and Director of *IRE*, has served as a national consultant for federal Title XX and CBAE projects, and was a charter member of the National Campaign to Prevent Teen Pregnancy. He has been invited to provide expert testimony about sex education to state legislative bodies, the U.S. Senate, the U.S. House of Representatives (April, 2008), and the White House (June, 2009).