

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’

As a subset of an in-depth review of comprehensive sex education (CSE) programs, researchers looked for program effects of the 18 school-based CSE programs that met the criteria to be designated by the U.S. Teen Pregnancy Prevention (TPP) program for inclusion of its list of evidence based interventions.

While TPP placed a high priority on the quality study methodology, it used less rigorous standards for the program outcomes designated as indicating effectiveness. Consequently, a program may be deemed as showing “evidence of effectiveness”:

- by virtue of just one positive evaluation study conducted by the program’s developer,
- by showing only one significant effect on a less-protective outcome (such as reduced number of sex partners) while showing failure to impact the most-protective outcomes like abstinence or condom use,
 - without achieving any “main effect” (i.e., impacting only a subgroup of the intended population), and
 - without showing a sustained (12-month) effect on any outcome.

While these programs are deemed evidence-based and effective, this report proves that: “in U.S. schools there is no evidence that these programs have been effective at achieving the dual benefit from which the term ‘comprehensive’ was originally derived—increasing both teen abstinence and condom use.”

Key findings on lack of effectiveness of 18 school-based CSE programs on the TPP list:

Teen Pregnancy: None of the 18 school-based CSE programs showed effectiveness at reducing teen pregnancy. The Teen Outreach Program (TOP) reported a reduction in teen pregnancy, but that effect was short term, and a subsequent study in a different location found the program actually *increased* pregnancy rates.

STD Prevention: None of the school-based CSE studies demonstrated a reduction in teen STDs, in fact, none measured it.

Teen Abstinence: None showed effectiveness at increasing teen abstinence.

Consistent Condom Use: None of the 18 school-based CSE programs showed effectiveness at increasing consistent condom use by teens. (Consistent use is necessary to provide meaningful protection from STDs.)

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 adolescent population. No program produced sustained effects on both outcomes.

Negative Effects: Three of the 18 school-based CSE programs evaluated by these 33 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**

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).