



OVERVIEW 2010-2011

The Cleveland Metropolitan School District (CMSD) completed its fifth year of implementation of the Responsible Sexual Behavior (RSB) initiative during the 2010/2011 school year. Through the RSB initiative, CMSD aims to provide comprehensive sexuality education to CMSD students each year from kindergarten through twelfth grade. The evidence-based curricula chosen for the initiative include *All About Life* (for grades K through 3), *Family Life and Sexual Health (F.L.A.S.H.)* (for grades 4 through 6), *Making Proud Choices!* (for grades 7 through 8), and *Safer Choices* (for grades 9 through 12). The curricula were modified so that the lessons could be taught in CMSD classrooms over a number of years.

This brief provides an overview of the 2010-2011 evaluation activities, findings and recommendations. The full evaluation report is available on the CMSD website at www.cmsdnet.net.



IMPLEMENTATION

Nearly 17,000 students received RSB lessons during the 2010-2011 school year.

A total of 16,944 CMSD students in grades K-12 received programming during the 2010-2011 school year. This number included:

- 4,835 Kindergarten through third grade students;
- 3,770 fourth through sixth grade students;
- 2,313 seventh and eighth grade students; and,
- 6,026 ninth through twelfth grade students.

Facilitators received high marks for project implementation.

Outside observers, classroom teachers, and facilitators themselves indicated that the lessons were being delivered capably and in a manner that was generally consistent with the project plan.

- More than 90% of the 49 observations indicated that the teachers delivering RSB curricula invited students to ask questions, provided accurate answers to all of the students' questions, checked with students to make sure they understood the material and covered all of the topics included in the lesson.
- Classroom teachers, who observed external facilitators, agreed that the RSB curriculum lessons were age-appropriate, that the curricula should continue to be incorporated into the classroom, and that the benefits of the program outweigh the burden of interrupting class time.
- Trained physical education and health teachers as well as external facilitators gave themselves high marks for implementation. Most also indicated that they felt comfortable discussing the topics included in the lessons, that they managed to cover all of the topics included in the lessons, and that they invited students to ask questions about the material. Many also indicated that they made modifications to the lessons and felt that they did not have enough time to get through the entire lesson.
- Trained physical education and health teachers rated their overall ability to teach topics included in the curricula as "good." Fewer of these teachers felt able to teach about resources in the community, sexual orientation, and sexual abuse prevention compared to other topics, although the majority still scored themselves highly. The teachers felt most able (rating "good" or "excellent") to teach about decision-making skills, prevention of HIV/STDs, and male reproductive anatomy.

STUDENT OUTCOMES

Students who were exposed to the curriculum showed positive change.

Students who received the RSB lessons demonstrated positive outcomes, including the following. After receiving the lessons:

- Students in grades 5 through 12 demonstrated significant knowledge gains;
- Students in grades 9 and 10 demonstrated attitudes more consistent with responsible sexual behavior; and,
- Behavioral intent scores of students in grades 9 through 12 were more consistent with the behaviors promoted by the lessons.

In addition, the following were the most frequent responses to the post-test question “What is the most important thing you learned?”

- The topics mentioned most often by fourth graders were good touch/bad touch or sexual abuse (26%);
- Fifth graders most frequently reported learning about HIV/AIDS/STDs (22%);
- Sixth graders most frequently mentioned condom use, protection or safer sex (37%);
- The importance of learning about abstinence, learning to say no or delaying sex were mentioned most often by seventh and eighth graders (37%); and,
- High school students cited HIV/AIDS and STDS most often (39%).

For additional information about student outcomes, please refer to the Student Outcomes Brief.

STAKEHOLDER PERCEPTIONS

Principals indicated that they were pleased with the RSB initiative.

School principals are supportive of the initiative.

- Most of the principals who oversee buildings in which the RSB lessons were delivered felt satisfied or very satisfied with the intervention.
- Most were also aware that the lessons are included in CMSD’s Scope and Sequence.
- Principals indicated that additional supports for the initiative would be beneficial including training for parents, additional staff training, and referrals to outside agencies with expertise in reproductive health and responsible sexual behavior.

Students were very satisfied with the initiative.

Feedback from students about the RSB initiative was overwhelmingly positive.

- More than 80% of students in high school indicated that they would recommend *Safer Choices* to other students.
- More than half of the students in each grade level indicated that they learned a lot from the lessons.

Physical education and health teachers value the RSB initiative.

Though physical education and health teachers offered some suggestions for improvement, such as providing them with feedback after observations and including more role-playing in training, they were generally very positive about the initiative and felt that they were prepared to teach the curriculum.

- Most physical education and health teachers agreed or strongly agreed that the benefits of offering sexuality education outweigh the burden of interrupting classroom time and that they were comfortable teaching about sexuality education in the classroom.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The completion of the fifth year of the Responsible Sexual Behavior initiative in CMSD offers a timely opportunity for reflection about what the initiative has accomplished so far. The initiative has, indeed, made a lot of progress. However, there is still considerable work to be done in order for the initiative to meet all of its outcome goals. The following recommendations are offered as suggestions to be considered as the stakeholders plan for the next phase of the project.

1. Increase teacher participation.

Though the physical education and health teachers who implement the lessons consistently give the initiative high marks, there are still teachers who are choosing not to implement the curricula. Feedback from their peers indicates that personal discomfort with the subject matter as well as a lack of accountability are contributing factors to their unwillingness to participate despite the fact that the lessons are a part of the Scope and Sequence. In order to increase teacher participation, the district ought to consider:

- requiring more training aimed at increasing comfort with the material for teachers who have not yet taught the lessons;
- closely monitoring and supporting these teachers as they implement the curricula for the first time;
- encouraging or supporting physical education teachers in getting their health certification;
- enforcing accountability measures for teachers who continue to refuse to participate; and,
- whether other internal teachers who are interested (e.g., science teachers) could deliver the RSB lessons, or whether additional funds must be raised to increase the amount of teaching being done by external facilitators.

2. Communicate the plan to bring the intervention to scale to the District's upper level management.

Bringing the initiative to scale is likely to require greater awareness and engagement of the District's upper level management staff. Developing a strategy to communicate both the initiative's successes and challenges to District administration should be a central part of the planning process for the next phase of the initiative.

3. Place more emphasis on sexual abuse prevention in the lower grades.

For the fourth year in a row that more than 50% of fourth grade students incorrectly believed—after receiving the RSB lessons – that most people who abuse children are strangers. Learning that most children who are abused are abused by someone they know is an important tool for sexual assault prevention. Physical education and health teachers who implement the lessons with students in elementary school may need some additional support, guidance, and training to successfully convey this message to their students.

4. Increase the intensity of the intervention.

While knowledge gains among students have been consistently demonstrated, gains in attitudes, skills, and behavioral intent have been sporadic. These types of gains generally require a more intense intervention than knowledge gains. Creative approaches to increasing the intensity of the interventions should be considered in order to achieve greater gains. Suggestions include adding school assemblies, homework related to the curricula, or interactive multi-media approaches that can be accessed outside of school time.

5. Continue to monitor and evaluate the impact of these modified curricula on CMSD students.

Though the initiative is based on evidence-based curricula, the actual implementation includes substantial modifications and looks very different than the original interventions that were scientifically tested. Thus, it is essential that the intervention continue to be evaluated in order to understand the impact that these modified approaches are having on CMSD students.

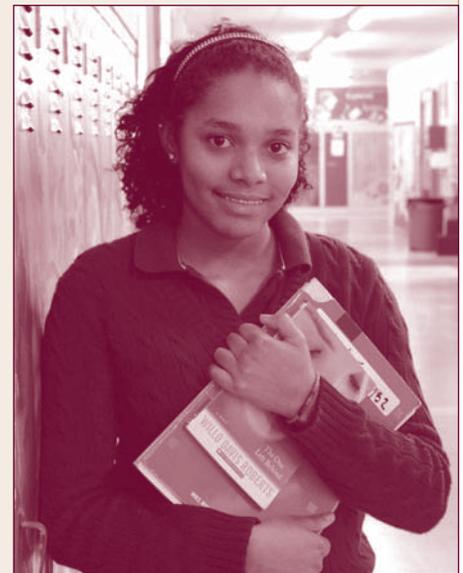
STUDENT OUTCOMES 2010-2011

The Cleveland Metropolitan School District (CMSD) completed its fifth year of implementation of the Responsible Sexual Behavior (RSB) initiative during the 2010/2011 school year. Through the RSB initiative, CMSD aims to provide comprehensive sexuality education to CMSD students each year from kindergarten through twelfth grade. The evidence-based curricula chosen for the initiative include *All About Life* (for grades K through 3), *Family Life and Sexual Health (F.L.A.S.H.)* (for grades 4 through 6), *Making Proud Choices!* (for grades 7 through 8), and *Safer Choices* (for grades 9 through 12). The curricula were modified so that the lessons could be taught in CMSD classrooms over a number of years. The lessons included in the RSB curricula cover a wide range of topics related to responsible sexual behavior, from good/ bad touch and friendship in the younger grades to puberty, abstinence and STD and HIV prevention in the upper grades. RSB lessons are taught by facilitators from external agencies in grades 9 and 10 and by trained CMSD physical education and health teachers in all other grades.

A total of 16,944 CMSD students in grades K-12 received programming during the 2010-2011 school year. This number included:

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- 3,770 fourth through sixth grade students
- 2,313 seventh and eighth grade students
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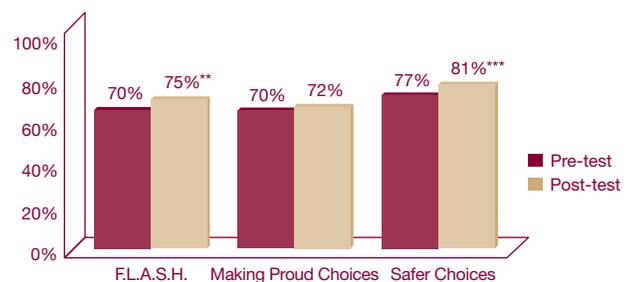
The results presented below are from pre- and post-tests administered to 1,314 students from a random sample of 5 elementary (4th through 8th grades) and 11 high schools. The full evaluation report is available on the CMSD website at www.cmsdnet.net.



Finding 1: Students who received the program showed positive change.

Figure 1 presents a summary of the overall changes in student knowledge, attitudes, skills and behavioral intent across the three curricula included in the outcome assessment. Students who received each of the curricula showed improvements. The improvements made by students receiving the *F.L.A.S.H.* and *Safer Choices* curricula were statistically significant.

Figure 1. Percent Correct by Curriculum



**Difference is statistically significant at $p < .01$
***Difference is statistically significant at $p < .001$

STUDENT OUTCOMES 2010-2011

Finding 2: Students in almost every grade level demonstrated significant knowledge gains.

Figure 2 summarizes students' knowledge gains by grade level. Students in each grade level who received the curricula demonstrated gains in knowledge. These changes were significant for students in grades 5 through 12. For example, by the end of the lessons:

- 60% of fifth graders knew that menstruation (having a period) is a sign that a girl is able to get pregnant;
- 77% of sixth graders and 87% of seventh and eighth graders knew that you cannot tell if someone has HIV by looking at them;
- 93% of ninth and tenth graders knew that choosing not to have sex (even if a person has had sex before) is the safest choice; and,
- 91% of eleventh and twelfth graders knew that making sure that there is room at the tip of the condom is important for proper use of a condom.

In addition, the following were the most frequent responses to the post-test question "What is the most important thing you learned?"

- Fourth graders most frequently mentioned good touch/bad touch or sexual abuse (26%);
- Fifth graders most frequently mentioned HIV/AIDS/STDs (22%);
- Sixth graders most frequently mentioned condom use, protection or safer sex (37%);
- Seventh and eighth graders most frequently mentioned the importance of learning about abstinence, learning to say no or delaying sex (37%); and,
- High school students most frequently mentioned HIV/AIDS and STDS (39%).

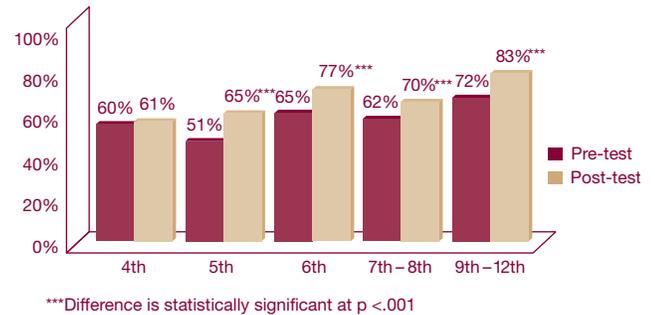
Finding 3: Students who received the program had more favorable results than students in a similar comparison group.

For each curriculum, overall scores of students who received the intervention improved more than those for a comparison group of students that had not received the curricula. This difference was statistically significant for participants receiving the *Making Proud Choices* and *Safer Choices* curricula (Figure 3).

Finding 4: Students in 1st through 3rd grade most frequently reported that they learned about safety from sexual abuse.

After the final session of *All About Life*, facilitators asked 1st through 3rd grade students the question, "What have you learned in these classes?" Students most frequently mentioned good touch/bad touch and ways to stay safe. Other frequently mentioned lessons learned included learning about feelings and family.

Figure 2. Knowledge Change by Grade

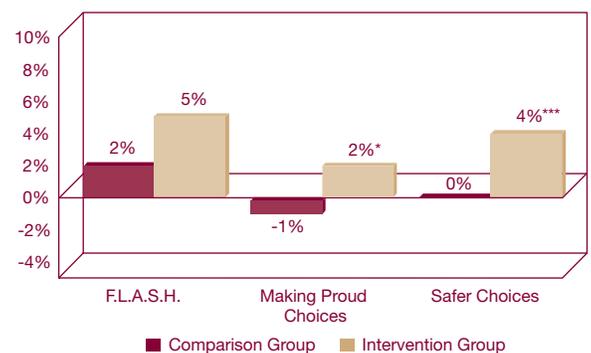


***Difference is statistically significant at $p < .001$

"I learned about the importance of protection and how to prevent pregnancy."

"I learned that it's best to not have sex and that's a safer way to prevent trouble in your health."

Figure 3. Improvement by Curriculum



*Difference is statistically significant at $p < .05$

***Difference is statistically significant at $p < .001$