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## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

**Groundbreaking National Sexuality Education Standards Set the New Gold Standard for Sexuality Education in Public Schools**

Today, four leading health organizations released the first-ever national standards for sexuality education in schools. Published in the *Journal of School Health*, the ground-breaking *National Sexuality Education Standards: Core Content and Skills, K–12* provide clear, consistent, and straightforward guidance on the essential *minimum, core content* for sexuality education that is developmentally and age-appropriate for students in grades Kindergarten through grade 12.

The standards are the result of a cooperative effort by the American Association of Health Education, the American School Health Association, the National Education Association Health Information Network, and the Society of State Leaders of Health and Physical Education, in coordination with the Future of Sex Education (FoSE) Initiative. Nearly 40 stakeholders including content experts, medical and public health professionals, teachers, sexuality educators, and young people developed the standards in a two-year process.

"These *National Sexuality Education Standards* provide teachers, schools, school districts, and state education agencies with a new national standard—the minimum they need to teach to set students on a path to sexual health and responsible adulthood," said Jerry Newberry, Executive Director of the National Education Association Health Information Network (NEA HIN). "They set forth essential sexuality education core content and skills responsive to the needs of students and in service to their overall academic achievement."

For years, research has highlighted the need to provide effective, comprehensive sexuality education to young people. The United States has one of the highest teen pregnancy rates in the industrialized world and teens bear a disproportionate impact of the sexually transmitted disease (STD) and HIV epidemics facing our nation. One in four sexually active teens has a STD and two young people every hour become HIV positive. Furthermore, there is also a pressing need to address harassment, bullying, and relationship violence in our schools, which have a significant impact on a student's emotional and physical well-being as well as their academic success. The *National Sexuality Education Standards* set the groundwork for the minimum of what sexuality education should look like in America's public schools.

"These standards are presented in a user-friendly way, making it possible for a health education teacher or parent, say, of a seventh-grader, to easily find out what is the next step in the learning process for a thirteen-year-old in regards to sexual health," said Stephen Conley, Executive Director of the American School Health Association.

The standards focus on seven topics as the minimum, essential content and skills for K–12 education: Anatomy and Physiology; Puberty and Adolescent Development; Identity; Pregnancy and Reproduction; Sexually Transmitted Diseases and HIV; Healthy Relationships; and, Personal Safety. Topics are presented using performance indicators—what students should know and be able to do by the end of grades 2, 5, 8, and 12—and are based on the *National Health Education Standards*.

"*The National Sexuality Education Standards* translate an emerging body of research related to school-based sexuality education so that it can be put into practice in the classroom," said Brian Griffith, President Elect of the Society of State Leaders of Health and Physical Education. "These standards, developed by education and health professionals, present sexual development as a normal, natural, healthy part of human development that should be a part of every health education curriculum."

*The National Sexuality Education Standards* were developed to address the

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inconsistent implementation of sexuality education nationwide and the limited time allocated to teaching the topic. General health education is given very little time in the school curriculum. Even less time is dedicated to sexuality education. According to the School Health Policies and Practices Study, a national survey conducted by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's Division of Adolescent School Health, a median total of 17.2 hours is devoted to instruction in HIV, pregnancy, and STD prevention: 3.1 hours in elementary, 6 hours in middle, and 8.1 hours in high school. Studies have repeatedly found that health programs in school can help young people succeed academically and programs that included health education have a positive effect on overall academic outcomes, including reading and math scores.

To view the complete *National Sexuality Education Standards*, as a PDF, [Click Here](#). To schedule an interview, please contact Danene Sorace, Consultant to the FoSE Initiative, at 717.585.0503.

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*The **American Association for Health Education** serves educators and other professionals who promote the health of all people through education and health promotion strategies.*

*The **American School Health Association** works to build the capacity of its members to plan, develop, coordinate, implement, evaluate and advocate for effective school health strategies that contribute to optimal health and academic outcomes for all children and youth.*

*The **National Education Association** – Health Information Network works to improve the health and safety of the school community through disseminating information that empowers school professionals and positively impacts the lives of their students.*

*The **Society of State Leaders of Health and Physical Education** utilizes advocacy, partnerships, professional development and resources to build the capacity of school health leaders to implement effective health education and physical education policies and practices that support success in school, work and life.*

*The **Future of Sex Education (FoSE) Initiative** is a partnership between Advocates for Youth, Answer, and the Sexuality Information and Education Council of the U.S. (SIECUS) that seeks to create a national dialogue about the future of sex education and to promote the institutionalization of comprehensive sexuality education in public schools. To learn more and view the complete *National Sexuality Education Standards*, please visit [www.futureofsexed.org](http://www.futureofsexed.org).*

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This press release is from AAHE

*AAHPERD, an alliance of five national associations, six district associations, and a Research Consortium, provides its members with a comprehensive and coordinated array of resources, support, and programs to help practitioners improve their skills to further the health and well-being of the American public. It is the largest organization of professionals involved in physical education, recreation, fitness, dance, health promotion and all specialties related to achieving an active, healthy lifestyle. AAHPERD serves 20,000 members and has its headquarters in Reston, Virginia, 25 miles west of Washington DC. To learn more, visit [www.aahperd.org](http://www.aahperd.org).*

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