

Professional Learning Standards for Sex Education

The *Professional Learning Standards for Sex Education (PLSSE)* is the newest set of standards designed to help improve educators' ability to effectively address sexuality in the classroom.

The PLSSE were developed to provide guidance to school administrators and classroom educators about the content, skills, and professional disposition needed to implement sex education effectively.

Format of the Professional Learning Standards for Sex Education

The Standards are divided into four domains, which are then divided into topics and indicators that relate to educators' knowledge of content, familiarity with teaching methods, or understanding of best practices.

DOMAIN #1: CONTEXT FOR SEX EDUCATION

- **TOPIC 1:** Sex education in schools

DOMAIN #2: PROFESSIONAL DISPOSITION

- **TOPIC 2.1:** Values
- **TOPIC 2.2:** Conscious and unconscious bias about race, ethnicity, and culture
- **TOPIC 2.3:** Disclosure

DOMAIN #3: BEST PRACTICES FOR SEX EDUCATION

- **TOPIC 3.1:** Racial and reproductive justice
- **TOPIC 3.2:** Creating an inclusive and affirming learning environment
- **TOPIC 3.3:** Effective teaching strategies
- **TOPIC 3.4:** Responding to challenging questions

DOMAIN #4: KEY CONTENT AREAS

- **TOPIC 4.1:** Healthy relationships
- **TOPIC 4.2:** Consent, interpersonal and sexual violence
- **TOPIC 4.3:** LGBTQ+ identities
- **TOPIC 4.4:** Transgender and gender expansive identities
- **TOPIC 4.5:** Puberty and adolescent development
- **TOPIC 4.6:** Sexual and reproductive anatomy and physiology
- **TOPIC 4.7:** Contraception, pregnancy, and reproduction
- **TOPIC 4.8:** HIV and other sexually transmitted diseases/infections



How to Use the Professional Learning Standards for Sex Education

THE PLSSE HELP EDUCATORS TO

- recognize the positive impact quality sex education can have on young people;
- examine their personal values and biases as well as the impact these may have on their ability to teach the subject effectively;
- identify strategies to foster a safe and engaging learning environment for all students; and,
- demonstrate proficient knowledge and skills related to the subject matter.

SCHOOL ADMINISTRATORS AND EDUCATORS CAN USE THE PLSSE TO

- create professional development plans in sex education for an entire school district, a school building, or an individual educator;
- determine the areas in which teachers are most proficient and those in which additional professional development may be needed;
- identify and evaluate professional development opportunities designed to help educators increase their knowledge, learn new skills, and hone effective teaching techniques; and,
- assess whether specific professional development opportunities focus on one or more of the domains, address the skills listed in the indicators, and provide sufficient opportunity to practice these skills.

INDIVIDUAL EDUCATORS CAN USE THE PLSSE TO

- guide continuing education as they work to hone their skills and stay up to date on new content, advances in public health and medical technology, and best practices in sex education pedagogy.

ORGANIZATIONS PROVIDING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT FOR SEX EDUCATORS CAN USE THE PLSSE TO

- create trainings and resources by indicating which Standard they align to.

Why create the Professional Learning Standards for Sex Education

Sex education aims to help young people navigate sexual development and grow into sexually healthy adults.

Teaching sex education is different from teaching about other school-based topics.

Educators must navigate the diversity of views and experiences of their students while being careful not to perpetuate fear and shame. And they must often do so with limited time and resources. In addition, many classroom teachers assigned to teach this subject report they did not receive adequate pre-service training to feel confident effectively implementing sex education.

The PLSSE closely align to the *National Sexuality Education Standards* (NSES) and the *National Teacher Preparation Standards for Sexuality Education* (NTPSSE).

Creation of the Professional Learning Standards for Sex Education

The PLSSE were created by the Sex Education Collaborative (SEC), a collaboration of 20 national, regional, and state-based organizations with extensive experience training educators to deliver school-based sex education. The SEC's mission is to advance and scale K-12 school-based sex education across the U.S. by leveraging its collective leadership, networks, and resources.

The SEC aims to shift the training paradigm that has focused teacher training in sex education over the past ten years on the implementation of individual curricula. The PLSSE provides those tasked with teaching this subject the opportunity to learn and practice the overall skills needed to effectively implement school-based sex education.