

## **SPARRK-12**

*Sexual Protection And Robust Relationships K-12*

*Tejas Dinesh, Camille Howarth, Aleah Brown, Clayton Lawing*

## Table of Contents

Identified Issue.....	2
Historical Context.....	4
Relationship with Community Partner.....	5
Proposed Plan of Action/Anticipated Outcomes.....	7
Role Breakdown/Description.....	10
Proposal Timeline.....	15
Budget.....	17
References.....	18

## Identified Issue

Human sexuality is an integral part of the human experience; it encompasses gender identity, sexual orientation, social and intimate relationships, physical health, and more. The importance of being educated on sexual health cannot be understated, yet many believe such curriculums do not need to be taught. This proposal will address this misconception by describing what a comprehensive sexual education curriculum entails and demonstrate the need for such a curriculum. It will also specifically look at how the state of Alabama is affected by this issue and efforts to address it.

One way to quantify the need for sexual education is examining rates of sexually transmitted infections and teen pregnancies. Among developed nations in the world, the United States ranks first in teenage pregnancies and sexually transmitted infections (1). In a 2017 report, the CDC declared, “the nation experiences deep and sustained STD increases,” with chlamydia increasing 22%, gonorrhea increasing 67%, and syphilis increasing 76% from 2013 (2). In the first half of 2019 in Alabama, there have been 26,890 cases of chlamydia alone; Tuscaloosa county accounted for 1,603 of them, comprising 56.2% of the cases in the West Central District (3). One in four United States women will become pregnant at least once by the age of 20 (4). In 2017 in Alabama, there were an estimated 5,922 teenage (age 10-19) pregnancies (3). A woman who had a teenage pregnancy is more likely to not seek maternal healthcare, drop out of school, not receive higher education in her lifetime, all which affect her employment opportunities for the rest of her life (5). In addition to the statistics, there are more personal, nuanced narratives exposing the need for such education.

Comprehensive sexual health curriculum describes just that- education on all things affecting sexual health. This goes beyond informing the risk of STIs and benefits of abstinence. Based on United Nations guidelines, sexual health curriculum should cover positive aspects of sexuality as well, such as the importance of mutual respect and equality in a partnership. In addition, discussions on social cultural aspects of relationships are vital; as stated in “International Technical Guidance on Sexuality Education: an Evidence-Formed Approach,” discussions “relat[ing] to broader aspects of relationships and vulnerability, such as gender and power inequalities, socio-economic factors, race, HIV status, disability, sexual orientation, and gender identity” are critical components of health literacy (5). Unfortunately, this kind of comprehensive sexual education is not in line with Alabama curriculum.

There is much backlash towards efforts to introduce comprehensive sexual education in public schools. One common concern is that exposing kids to sexual health information makes kids more likely to engage in risky behavior. A highly cited study dispelled this belief by comparing state sexual health curriculums and teen pregnancy rates in the state. Curriculums were assigned ordinal values of 0 to 3 based on the state policy’s exclusivity, emphasis, mention, or lack thereof of abstinence. Alabama was given the highest score of 3, given the state’s abstinence-only curriculum. This review found those states with abstinence-only curriculums were correlated with higher teen pregnancy rates than those who taught birth control options, even after correcting for socio-economic status, teen educational achievement, ethnic composition, and availability of Medicaid waivers covering family planning services in the state. (1). There has been much research done on this topic, and there is strong evidence that demonstrates comprehensive sexual health curriculum reduces sexual risk-taking behavior (6).

## **Historical context of the issue in this community**

Only 24 states mandate sex education to public school children, and only 20 states stipulate the curriculum must be medically, factually, or technically accurate (4). Under current Alabama law, sexual education is neither mandatory, nor must information that is taught be medically accurate. This leads to misleading, limited curriculums that are not in line with recommended evidence-based practices. In March 2019, state senator Tom Whatley introduced SB140, a bill to modernize Alabama's sex education by modifying the existing Alabama Code 16-40-A2. It stipulated information must be medically accurate, corrected factual inaccuracies, and removes language criminalizing homosexual relationships. The existing law dictates, "an emphasis, in a factual manner and from a public health perspective, that homosexuality is not a lifestyle acceptable to the general public and that homosexual conduct is a criminal offense under the laws of the state" (7). This is false, since, as of 2003, same-sex relations are not illegal in the United States, yet 16 years later, the law still falsely teaches so (8).

SB140 passed the Alabama Senate 26-1 and died in the House. The House Majority leader reported that there was not much opposition to the bill, but they simply ran out of time to pass it (9). Whatley introduced a similar bill last year that also did not pass (8). This demonstrates the crux of the issue: sexual health policy is not a priority for the majority of the population. Changing this perception is the most important battle: people realizing the prevalence of ignorant, misguided assumptions about relationships, and how that leads to an epidemic STIs, teen pregnancies, and rampant sexual assault and coercive behaviors. Changing this perception will be no easy task, but as Adora Svitak once said, "the first thing anyone can do about any issue is to get informed."

## **Relationship with identified community partner**

Throughout different phases of our project, we will encounter many different community partners. However, the root of our community partnership lies with the Alabama Campaign for Adolescent Sexual Health. The Executive Director of the Alabama Campaign, Christina Clark Okarmus, described to us the current status of Alabama's sexual health education in the following email:

“If I had to say what the biggest issue with sex ed in Alabama is, I would have to say it's a lack of training and support for teachers to teach sex education. I know anecdotally that many teachers in the state believe young people need sex ed, but they are afraid that they will break the law, they don't feel comfortable teaching it, etc. A close second biggest issue is a lack of transparency on what, if anything, is taught to students. The Alabama Campaign's mission is to champion healthy adolescent development through evidence-informed sexual health education and services. Without transparency we don't know if what's being taught is evidence-informed or just someone's personal beliefs that they're imposing on young people.”

Our group is using the connection with the Alabama Campaign to provide data and research with the resources we have available. Executive Director Christina Clark Okarmus mentioned that the Campaign has been limited on reaching out to areas of the state due to funding droughts. With our help, we can provide the Alabama Campaign with a connection to Tuscaloosa County and a direct line to the University of Alabama student voice.

Outside of the Alabama Campaign, we want to work with experienced voices in regards to facilitating and understanding curriculum management. It is the belief of our group, that we will partner with the College of Education in the creation of our curriculum. While we cannot, at

this time, name a direct liaison, we do want to find a direct connection to a professor or staff member that has experience in curriculum creation.

## **Proposed Plan of Action and Anticipated Outcomes:**

### Plan of Action

#### 1. Surveys:

We intend to send out two surveys as a means to create a sexual health education curriculum that is more comprehensive in nature, while conforming to state law and teachers' comfort levels in teaching the material. The first survey will be sent to UA students in an attempt to understand what was and what wasn't taught to them about sexual wellness in class prior to college. By classifying the results as 'in-state' vs 'out of state' we hope to better understand where Alabama students stand in relation to other students in regards to understanding the full consequences of sex/how to prevent negative consequences of sexual activity. We also want to collect data on what students wish they'd been taught about sexual health and relationships prior to college. At the same time, we want to send surveys to teachers and school board members in Tuscaloosa county in order to understand what schools are and are not willing to teach in class about the aforementioned topics.

#### 2. Curriculum Building

We will analyze our survey results and work with UA college of education faculty in order to create a novel curriculum that balances the need for more comprehensive sex education curriculum with community/school standards and Alabama law. Under this new curriculum, we want to focus specifically on STD/STI prevention, unintended pregnancy prevention, and healthy relationships.

In order to create a new curriculum we will receive assistance with faculty and graduate students from the College of Human Environmental Science and College of Education here at UA.

### 3. Workshop

We will host a workshop for teachers in Tuscaloosa to look at the curriculum and offer suggestions/voice concerns. Our College of Education and Alabama Campaign partners will be leading this workshop and go through different curriculum development models and the legislative landscape for sexual education. The ensuing discussion will produce revisions to the curriculum, until it is deemed satisfactory to a majority of those present.

### 4. Final Curriculum Submission

We intend to submit our final curriculum to Alabama Campaign on May 1st after making revisions following the workshop.

### Anticipated Outcomes

Once this curriculum is created, we hope to implement it in schools in Tuscaloosa county from whom we received feedback in our surveys. Meanwhile, we'll send it to the Alabama Campaign For Adolescent Sexual Health to include in their curricula resources for educators throughout the state, thereby extending its reach across Alabama. Through conversations with the Alabama Campaign, we've discovered that many teachers want to provide more comprehensive sex ed for their students, but are worried about breaking the law (current policy can be found here: <https://siecus.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/03/ALABAMA09.pdf>) or backlash from their school boards. By allowing these parties' perspectives to guide our

curriculum, we hope to create a standard for superior sex ed that conforms to state policy, while providing instruction more progressive than the norm.

## Role Breakdown/Description:

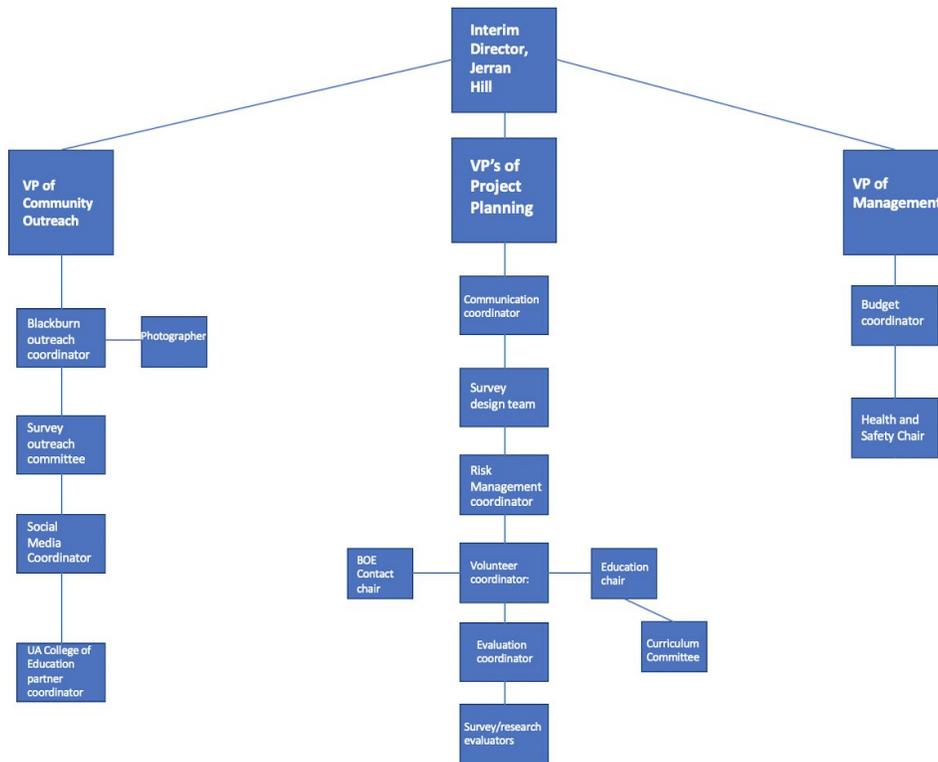
- **VP of Community Outreach \*(Clayton):** Oversee all communication between Blackburn and community, University, Community partners, and State.
  - Blackburn outreach coordinator: Serves as communication head between project VP's and Blackburn community (Current students, Fellows, Alumni, Advisory Board) (*2 people*).
  - Survey outreach committee: These people will be responsible for getting the surveys out to a wide array of diverse student organizations on campus by utilizing campus connections, The Source, and members of the Blackburn Community (*5 people*).
    - Under this team, we will need 20+ Blackburn students to disperse the survey to their colleges, organizations, and fellow students
    - Will have a running spreadsheet of all organizations that will be sent the survey
  - Social Media Coordinator: responsible for all graphics/post regarding panel/survey (*2 people*)
    - This includes creating graphics and working with communication director to send them out
  - UA College of Education partner coordinator: This person will be the liaison between the 2019 Blackburn class and the University of Alabama's College of Education. We hope that this position would allow for the creation of a novel

curriculum that balances the need for more comprehensive sex education curriculum with community/school standards and Alabama law (2 people)

- **VP's of Project Planning (\*Aleah and Camille):** oversee all actions pertaining to recruitment for volunteers, education, communication between Blackburn, risk management, and evaluation
  - Communication coordinator: Sending out graphics, sending out information to mailing list/GroupMe, working with Social Media Coordinator, oversees a photographer (*1 person*)
    - Photographer would be taking pictures at education panels (*1 person*)
  - Survey design team: These people will be responsible for creating the surveys that will be distributed to University of Alabama students and Tuscaloosa County educators. Once they create the survey questions they will create a Qualtrics link that will be distributed by the communication coordinator with the help of the 2019 Blackburn class of students (4 people).
  - Risk Management coordinator: responsible for making sure everyone is physically, emotionally, mentally, reputably acting in ways indicative of Capstone Creed. (*1 person*)
    - This includes educating people on the things that could go wrong with day, making sure everyone is mentally stable throughout process (working with education director).

- Volunteer coordinator: Responsible for gaining public interest on topic/panel, working with community outreach to get the word out, designates roles for the day of panel, oversees education chair (2-3 people).
  - Education chair: Prior to panel, this person would educate the audience on status of sex education in the state, as well as comparing the results of the surveys between in state and out of state students, will also oversee the curriculum committee (utilize statistics/research done prior) (1 person).
    - Curriculum Committee: Committee is responsible for working with partners to help create a sustainable sexual health curriculum that follows community and state standards (5 people)
  - Tuscaloosa County Board of Education contact chair: Create a contact list for Tuscaloosa County educators that could potentially take the ‘educator’ survey (this list will include their name, school, and email), create the prompt to utilize to send to educators in county (2 persons).
- Evaluation coordinator: responsible for evaluating how panel performed. What went wrong? What went right? What could have gone better? Will send out a follow up email after panel to get feedback from the audience and evaluate panel’s success (2 people).
  - Also work with photographer/Social Media coordinator to create a final graphic

- Survey/research evaluators: These people will be responsible for evaluating the results from the survey and working with the education chair, and panelist to create a cohesive presentation on the needs of sex education in the state (5 people)
  
- **VP of Management (\*Tejas):** Oversees all events from a logistics POV
  - Budget coordinator: decide where the money is going to go and how to use money most effectively (*1 person*)
    - Printing program for panel that will be created by the social media coordinator and education chair that will be distributed to the audience of the panel.
  - **Health and Safety Chair:**
    - DCS Group 6 will draft a statement ensuring students and participants are fully aware that this survey is completely voluntary and the data that is gathered will be utilized in furthering our group's project. Additionally, we will not ask participants for their names but rather their gender, whether they are in-state/out-of-state, and, contingent upon their response, their respective county (in-state) or state (out) (1 person).
    - Will also secure space in public venue on campus for this panel



## **Proposed Timeline**

- Weeks of December 1st 2019 -January 5<sup>th</sup>, 2020: Begin creating survey questions that will be sent out to Tuscaloosa County K-12 school teachers and Board of Education members, University of Alabama students and professors.
- January 8<sup>th</sup>, 2020: Send surveys out to teachers and students.
- Weeks of January 8<sup>th</sup>-27<sup>th</sup>, 2020: Open window for Tuscaloosa County High school teachers and UA Students to respond to the survey questions that were sent out January 8<sup>th</sup>.
- Weeks of January 27<sup>th</sup> -February 3rd, 2020: Go through the survey responses, of these responses invite respondents to a on-campus workshop that will occur During April.
- Weeks of February 3<sup>rd</sup>-February 14<sup>th</sup>: Finalize plans for workshop.
- Week of February 17<sup>th</sup>-March 2nd: Begin building curriculum based off of survey responses and information received during the survey.
- Weeks of March 9<sup>th</sup>: Work with community partner to assure curriculum is in line with evidence-based practices, as well as respects legal and community standards.
- Weeks of March 16<sup>th</sup>- March 22<sup>th</sup>: Receive feedback from community partners, Tuscaloosa County teachers and Board of Education members, and UA students.
- Week of March 23<sup>rd</sup>: Begin plans for workshop.
- Week of April 6<sup>th</sup>: Work with Community Partner and College of Education on feedback for workshop proposal.
- Week of April 13: Finalize Workshop Plan

- Week of April 20: Host Workshop with College of Education and Alabama Campaign.
- Week of May 1<sup>th</sup>: Revise and submit final curriculum based off of feedback received during Surveys and Workshop

## Budget

	A	B	C	D	E	F
1	<b>Group Number:</b>					
2	<b>Project Name:</b>					
3						
4						
5		<b>Quantity</b>	<b>Revenue per Unit</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>Running Total</b>	<b>Notes / Details</b>
6	<b>Revenue:</b>					
7	Daniel Foundation Grant	1	\$ 5,000.00	\$ 5,000.00	\$ 5,000.00	
8						
9	<b>TOTAL REVENUE</b>				<b>\$ 5,000.00</b>	
10						
11						
12		<b>Quantity</b>	<b>Expense per Unit</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>Running Total</b>	<b>Notes / Details</b>
13	<b>Expenses:</b>					
14	<i>Example: Supplies</i>	30	\$ 2.00	\$ 60.00	\$ 60.00	Example - Coloring Books for Classroom Activity
15	<i>Example: Volunteer Management</i>	50	\$ 3.00	\$ 150.00	\$ 210.00	Example - Snacks for Volunteer Training (50)
16	<i>Example: Ticket Costs</i>	30	\$ 5.00	\$ 150.00	\$ 360.00	Example - Zoo Field Trip for Pre-K Students (30)
17	<i>Example: Transportation</i>	4	\$ 60.00	\$ 240.00	\$ 600.00	Example - Shuttle Rental (4 hours) for Field Trip
18						
19	<i>Workshop</i>	50	\$ 3.00	\$ 150.00	\$ 150.00	Snacks for panel and attendees
20	<i>Workshop</i>	40	\$ 12.50	\$ 500.00	\$ 650.00	Boxed Lunch for panel attendees
21	<i>Transportation Reimbursement</i>	20	\$ 20.00	\$ 400.00	\$ 1,050.00	Gas reimbursement for teachers who attend
22	<i>Workshop</i>	1	\$ 100.00	\$ 100.00	\$ 1,150.00	Print curriculum to mark up at workshop
23				\$ -	\$ 1,150.00	
43						
44	<b>TOTAL EXPENSES</b>				<b>\$ 1,150.00</b>	
45						
46						
47	<b>DIFFERENCE</b>				<b>\$ 3,850.00</b>	<b>Balanced or Budget Surplus</b>

## References

1. Stanger-Hall, Kathrin F, and David W Hall. “Abstinence-Only Education and Teen Pregnancy Rates: Why We Need Comprehensive Sex Education in the U.S.” *PloS One*, Public Library of Science, 2011, [www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3194801/](http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3194801/).
2. “The State of STDs in 2017.” *Centers for Disease Control and Prevention*, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, [www.cdc.gov/std/stats17/infographic.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/std/stats17/infographic.htm).
3. Alabama Department of Public Health. “Alabama STD Reports- January to June 2019.” *ADPH*, [http://www.alabamapublichealth.gov/std/assets/stdreport\\_january-june2019.pdf](http://www.alabamapublichealth.gov/std/assets/stdreport_january-june2019.pdf)
4. “State Policies on Sex Education in Schools.” *National Conference of State Legislatures*. 21 March 2019, <http://www.ncsl.org/research/health/state-policies-on-sex-education-in-schools.aspx#2>
5. “International Technical Guidance on Sexuality Education: an Evidence-Informed Approach.” *United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization*, [unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000260770](http://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000260770).
6. “History of Sex Education in the United States.” *Planned Parenthood*. November 2016, [https://www.plannedparenthood.org/uploads/filer\\_public/da/67/da67fd5d-631d-438a-85e8-a446d90fd1e3/20170209\\_sexed\\_d04\\_1.pdf](https://www.plannedparenthood.org/uploads/filer_public/da/67/da67fd5d-631d-438a-85e8-a446d90fd1e3/20170209_sexed_d04_1.pdf)
7. “Alabama SB140: 2019: Regular Session.” *LegiScan*, 19 March 2019, [legiscan.com/AL/text/SB140/id/1964678](http://legiscan.com/AL/text/SB140/id/1964678).
8. Brownlee, Chip. “Bill Would Strike Language Calling Homosexuality a ‘Criminal Offense’ from Sex-Ed Law.” *Alabama Political Reporter*, 4 Apr. 2019,

[www.alreporter.com/2019/04/04/bill-would-strike-language-calling-homosexuality-a-criminal-offense-from-sex-ed-law/](http://www.alreporter.com/2019/04/04/bill-would-strike-language-calling-homosexuality-a-criminal-offense-from-sex-ed-law/).

9. Moseley, Brandon. "Bill Updating Sex Education Curriculum Fails on the Last Day of Session." *Alabama Political Reporter*, 3 June 2019,

[www.alreporter.com/2019/06/03/bill-updating-sex-education-curriculum-fails-on-the-last-day-of-session/](http://www.alreporter.com/2019/06/03/bill-updating-sex-education-curriculum-fails-on-the-last-day-of-session/).