



Agenda Request Form

Meeting Date	Agenda Item Number
May 21, 2020	E-1

Title
Health and Puberty, Sex Education and AIDS Education (PSEAE) Curriculum Resources Adoption for Grades 6-9
Requested Action
School Board Consideration of Superintendent's Recommendation for Approval of Health and PSEAE Curriculum Resources Adoption for Grades 6-9
Summary Explanation and Background
<p>The Superintendent's Annual Comprehensive Health and Physical Education Review Committee convened its annual meeting during Spring 2020. The Committee reviewed new instructional resources from <i>Choosing the Best</i>, an abstinence-centered education program which teaches relationship education and refusal skills, promotes character education, and encourages parent involvement.</p> <p>Based on the findings of this review committee, the Superintendent recommends for School Board approval the adoption of <i>Choosing the Best</i> curriculum resource materials for students in grades 6-9 to meet statutory requirements and Georgia Department of Education Health curriculum standards.</p>
Priority Area
Student Achievement: Equity and Access
Financial Impact
\$75,000
Exhibits: (List)
<i>Choosing the Best</i> Program Overview
Source of Additional Information
Dr. Brian V. Hightower 770.479.1871 Dr. Nicole H. Holmes 770.479.1871

I. Choosing the Best Overview

Choosing the Best (CTB) is a leading provider of abstinence-centered/sexual risk avoidance sex education curricula, training, and resources. Over three million students nationwide have completed CTB curriculum modules. Research based, Choosing the Best programs promote healthy relationships and have resulted in reducing teen sex by 47% versus a comparison group that did not receive the program.

A randomized, controlled study, two-year evaluation of the CTB 9th grade curriculum was initiated in September 2009 and accepted for peer review and publication in early 2012. The study's primary objective was to evaluate the efficacy of CTB in preventing sexual involvement among high school students. Key findings:

- Students who received *Choosing the Best* were nearly 1.5 times more likely to delay the onset of sexual behavior than the control students at the end of 9th grade.
- The more lessons a student received, the less likely that student was to initiate sex.

The Administration for Children, Youth and Families (ACYF) within the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) has completed a thorough and objective review of the medical and scientific information in CTB programs and found them to be medically accurate. CTB's medical information is based on sources such as peer-reviewed, published journals and government agency publications.

CTB materials foster a dynamic learning environment to engage students, teach relationship education and refusal skills, promote character education, and encourage parent involvement.

II. About Choosing the Best Curricula

CTB offers five age-appropriate abstinence-centered education programs for both middle and high school students. Middle school programs include: ***Choosing the Best WAY*** (grade 6); ***Choosing the Best PATH*** (grade 7); and ***Choosing the Best LIFE*** (grade 8); High school programs include: ***Choosing the Best JOURNEY*** (grades 9-10); and ***Choosing the Best SOUL MATE*** (grades 11-12).

All five curricula provide abstinence and relationship education. WAY, PATH, LIFE, and JOURNEY each cover the risks of teen sexual behavior, the rewards of delaying sexual activity, peer pressure and refusal skills, consent definitions and sexual violence prevention, character education, self-esteem exercises, relationship education, and include parent interview assignments. The information is presented in a manner that is age-appropriate and maximizes learning for students given their stage of development. The videos used and classroom exercises increase the interactive impact in the classroom. For example, the *Choosing the Best WAY* program, for 6th graders, covers making good decisions and developing the qualities of a good friend, important topics for the younger age groups. *Choosing the Best PATH*, for 7th grade students, provides a strong emphasis on teen role models who are choosing abstinence. Both WAY and PATH utilize experiential learning techniques to capture the attention of these young students. *Choosing the Best LIFE*, for 8th graders, provides an in-depth discussion of key issues

affecting the sexual decision making of this age group, such as the use of alcohol, while *Choosing the Best JOURNEY* for 9th graders expands the discussion to topics such as date rape and pornography. *Choosing the Best SOUL MATE* inspires upper high school students to develop the communication skills and personal qualities essential for successful relationships of all kinds – with parents, peers, co-workers, teachers – and ultimately, for a lasting marriage. A logical sequel to *Choosing the Best* programs for teens, *SOUL MATE* continues to emphasize that sexual abstinence can be critical to preparing for a lifelong, lasting relationship.

For maximum impact, it is recommended that all five programs be used simultaneously and consecutively (referred to as a “scope and sequence” approach) to give students an age-appropriate, consistent, compelling message for delaying sex during their critical adolescent years.

III. Choosing the Best Intervention

CTB is a theoretically based curriculum that has been taught to approximately three million middle and high school students in 48 states. A key feature of CTB is its sequential exposure of topics targeting the developmental level of the students. To this end, students are able to assimilate similar fundamental information as they mature. The core information included in the program includes: emotional, physical and health risks of teen sexual activity; rewards of abstinence; refusal skills in dealing with sexual pressures; relationship education; the effect of alcohol and sex; building self- esteem; character education; and parental involvement and discussion. CTB provides age appropriate versions of this core material for middle school (CTB WAY, PATH and LIFE), and high school (CTB JOURNEY). The CTB program is designed to fit into the existing schedule and curricula of school districts, and to utilize on-site educators through teacher training components and the packaging of Leader Guides. The program materials include student manuals, leader manuals, videos, relevant posters, and parent components.

CTB is based upon three learning theories: Experiential Learning Theory, Social Learning Theory, and Cognitive Learning Theory. **Experiential Learning Theory** (C. Rodgers, 1994) suggests that significant learning takes place when the subject matter is relevant to the personal interests of the student instead of just the delivery of content. To create interest in the subject, CTB utilizes real-life video vignettes at the beginning of each lesson. Learning is also facilitated by directly confronting practical, social, and personal problems. For instance, the health risk of STDs and pregnancy are confronted through real-life video interviews of teens who are struggling or have struggled with these problems. The CTB curriculum emphasizes that abstinence is the only 100% certain method to avoid these risks.

Social Learning Theory (Bandura) emphasizes the importance of learning by observing desired behavior and the outcomes of those behaviors. CTB curriculum uses Social Learning Theory through role-plays and activities that demonstrate how to resist unwanted peer and relational pressure to have sex. The role-play activities in the classroom helps students develop confidence that these same skills will work in their personal situations.

Cognitive Learning Theory (Holder et al, 1991; Miller et al., 1995) underscores the importance of gaining attention, stimulating recall of prior learning and providing guidance and feedback to enhance retention. CTB utilizes a student manual which was developed based on this theory. Each student records responses to discussion questions and receives feedback on key learning points. In addition, large classroom posters are used to reinforce key messages. Retention is further encouraged by highlighting key action steps for the student. For example, the three steps to resisting peer pressure and being assertive are: Set it! (setting boundaries for sexual activity and determining how far the individual will go), State It! (verbalizing those boundaries) and Show it! (showing that they mean no).

Parental discussions and involvement are important elements of the CTB program. Several strategies were used in the CTB program to foster parent involvement and discussion.

IV. About Choosing the Best Teacher Training

When teachers are trained in the philosophy of abstinence education and the specifics of how to teach the CTB curricula, the best results occur in the classroom. CTB provides teacher certification training for all curricula. The goal of the CTB certification training is to ensure that teachers are both completely comfortable and highly effective when presenting the programs in the classroom. To achieve this goal, master trainers will educate teachers about SRAE education, review all CTB materials, and provide teachers with “hands on” practice in presenting the materials. Each of the classroom exercises will be demonstrated to help the teachers become comfortable with the mechanics of these highly effective student interactions. Over 95% of trained teachers surveyed said that the training was beneficial and that they felt prepared to teach the material to their students.

Number of hours of material available:

Curriculum	Age appropriate for	Hours of material
<i>Choosing The Best WAY</i>	6 th grade	6 each 50 minute lessons
<i>Choosing The Best PATH</i>	7 th grade	8 each 50 minute lessons
<i>Choosing The Best LIFE</i>	8 th grade	8 each 50 minute lessons
<i>Choosing The Best JOURNEY</i>	9 th - 10 th grades	8 each 50 minute lessons
<i>Choosing The Best SOUL MATE</i>	11 th - 12 th grades	5 each 50 minute lessons

Model(s) for ideal implementation:

CTB curricula are based on Social Learning Theory. Ideal implementation is in a classroom scenario in consecutive sessions.