

Teen Talk, by Health Connected (for all eighth-graders)

Why is MVWSD using Teen Talk curriculum?

In order to comply with the new California Healthy Youth Act passed in January 2016, as well as the health and wellness standards, MVWSD is using Health Connected. This decision was made in large part because the District's materials were out of date, thus we were not in compliance with the new State law. For more information on the California Healthy Youth Act: www.cde.ca.gov/ls/he/se/

What is unique about this program?

The developers are knowledgeable experts who also teach our students. Their vast experience in working with many students shows in the warmth and sensitivity with which they have approached our fifth-graders and will now work with our eighth graders. Additionally, Teen Talk is the only local program that is consistent with recent changes in law.

Health Connected is one of the leading providers of puberty and comprehensive sexual health education both in the Bay Area and throughout the state. In 2016 alone, Health Connected served over 13,000 Bay Area youth in over 90 schools. Teen Talk Middle School went through a review for legal compliance with the state Ed Code in 2016.

Is Teen Talk very different than the previous program?

The content is similar to that was covered in previous classes, however the old curriculum was not thorough enough to address the new requirements of the California Healthy Kids Act. The California Healthy Kids Act requires that school Districts provide students the knowledge and skills to:

- Protect their sexual and reproductive health from HIV and other sexually transmitted infections and from unintended pregnancy
- Develop healthy attitudes concerning adolescent growth and development, body image, gender, sexual orientation, relationships, marriage, and family
- Have healthy, positive, and safe relationships and behaviors
- To promote understanding of sexuality as a normal part of human development

Does Health Connected directly align to the California Health and Wellness standards for seventh and eighth grade and the California Healthy Youth Act adopted in January 2016?

Yes. Each lesson is directly connected to an eighth-grade standard both California and national, and is aligned to the new California Healthy Youth Act.

For more information on California Health Content Standards (Grade 8 - pages 33-35):

<http://www.cde.ca.gov/be/st/ss/documents/healthstandmar08.pdf>

What does the Health Connected curriculum cover?

Teen Talk is a curriculum designed for seventh- and eighth-graders that covers subjects ranging from reproductive anatomy and physiology to HIV/AIDS and STI (aka STD) prevention and birth control with an emphasis on abstinence. This curriculum lays a foundation for additional comprehensive sexuality education in high school. We are using health professionals from Health Connected who are experienced in answering these kinds of questions from kids.

Health Connected worked with local school districts to provide sexual health courses for eighth-graders for 15 years prior to developing a 5th grade program, Puberty Talk in 2011. The Puberty Talk 5th/6th grade curriculum was developed in response to teachers, administrators and parents expressing the need to provide sexual health information prior to eighth grade.

Lessons include:

- Increase knowledge and decision-making capacity about pregnancy prevention, STI protection, and birth control
- Reduce misinformation and myths about sexual health topics
- Increase comfort communicating with parents or other trusted adults
- Teach tolerance and respect
- Increase refusal and negotiation skills
- Increase self-efficacy to engage in protective sexual health behaviors
- Increase knowledge about accessing clinical services

Can I opt-out my child from participating in the Health Connected program?

Yes, the District understands that this subject may be something you prefer to discuss with your child and supports that choice. The law allows parents or guardians to remove their child from comprehensive sexual health and HIV prevention education, as defined in the statute (EC 51931(b), (d), 51932, using an “opt-out” process. Schools may not require active consent “opt-in” for participation in comprehensive sexual health and HIV prevention education in any grade, including elementary school. (EC 51938(a).) Parents must make their request in writing to the school or district.

Are the materials available for parent review?

Yes, the Teen Talk curriculum is available at the District Office for any parent that would like to review it. Parents are also welcome to contact Health Connected to discuss parent questions or to see the curriculum.

If I have further questions and concerns who may I contact?

If you have questions or concerns, please contact any of the following staff members:

Jennifer Thornton, District Nurse: jthornton@mvwsd.org

Cathy Baur, Chief Academic Officer: cbaur@mvwsd.org

Tara Vikjord, Director of Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment: tvikjord@mvwsd.org