



June 9, 2010

Denver Public School Board  
Board of Education  
900 Grant Street  
Denver, Colorado 80203

Dear DPS Board Members:

This letter is regarding the proposed Adolescent Sexual and Reproductive Health Resolution. The Colorado Coalition Against Sexual Assault (CCASA) is pleased that this resolution will recognize the need to ensure that all young people have access to science-based, comprehensive, medically-accurate, culturally relevant and age-appropriate sexuality education, information, and resources to make informed decisions about their health and relationships.

CCASA believes that comprehensive sexual assault prevention education is a critical component of adolescent sexual and reproductive health education. The research clearly demonstrates the need for student access to this vital information. According to a 2005 CDC study, one in four Colorado women and one in seventeen Colorado men are raped each year. Statistics also tell us that 93% of juvenile sexual assault victims know their attacker (U.S. Bureau of Justice, 2000). The recently released Healthy Kids Colorado Youth Risk Behavior Survey showed a 2.6% increase in forced sexual intercourse (between 2005-2009) for both males and females. Additionally, The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's recently released national study, "Teenagers in the United States: Sexual Activity, Contraceptive Use, and Childbearing, National Survey of Family Growth 2006-2008, surveyed females who had their first sexual intercourse at fourteen years of age or younger. According to the study, 18% reported that they "really didn't want it to happen."

Denver Public School System students are affected by sexual assault every day. According to a 2002 World Health Organization study, victims of sexual assault are three times more likely to suffer from depression, six times more likely to suffer from post-traumatic stress disorder, twenty-six times more likely to abuse drugs, and four times more likely to contemplate suicide. The Colorado Department of Education adopted Comprehensive Health and Physical Education state standards on December 10, 2009. At the high school level, the standards specifically state that students should be able to "access valid information and resources that provide information about sexual assault and violence." We recommend implementing these standards in Denver Public Schools by utilizing best practice curriculum and establishing relationships with community-based sexual assault prevention organizations. CCASA can provide information about these organizations as well as serve as a resource to Denver Public Schools to ensure that these standards are implemented as effectively as possible.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Erin Jemison  
Interim Executive Director

Karen Moldovan  
Outreach and Education Specialist

