

**Pono Choices:**

*A Culturally Responsive Teen Pregnancy and STI Prevention Programs:*

Grades: 6 – 8

<http://www.cds.hawaii.edu/ponochoices/faq/>

The Pono Choices curriculum is funded through a federal Office of Adolescent Health grant awarded to the University of Hawaii (UH) at Manoa Center on Disability Studies. The overarching goal of Pono Choices will be to reduce the number of teenage pregnancies and incidences of sexually transmitted infections (STIs); increase positive bonding in the school and community; increase sense of self-identity and self-efficacy; and improve expectations for the future. The project was designed to develop, implement, and study the impact of a first-of-its-kind teen pregnancy and STI prevention curriculum developed exclusively for youth in Hawaii.

The curriculum was developed through a collaborative workgroup process and reviewed by the federal Office of Adolescent Health for medical accuracy. UH applied to the Department for approval to pilot the curriculum in Hawaii schools to inform the study. Following review of the curriculum, the Department approved participation in the study as part of a randomized controlled trial.

The study runs from 2012-2015 with teachers that were trained by the developers to implement the curriculum with fidelity. External evaluator Berkeley Policy Associates (BPA) is conducting the study's impact analysis examining the impact of the Pono Choices program on initiating sexual activity and avoiding unprotected sexual intercourse.

It is a scripted 10 module, 9.5 hour curriculum that provides middle school youth with the knowledge and skills necessary to reduce their risk of unintended pregnancy and STIs by providing medically accurate information within a Native Hawaiian place-based framework. Topics include: Effective communication skills, Refusing unwanted sexual pressure, Information on how STIs are transmitted, and Recognizing healthy and unhealthy relationships.

**Parent opt-out for child****Board of Education Policy 101.13**

Student discussion of issues which generate opposing points of view shall be considered a normal part of the learning process in every area of the school program. The depth of the discussion shall be determined by the maturity of the students.

Teachers shall refer students to resources reflecting all points of view. Discussions, including contributions made by the teacher or resource person, shall be maintained on an objective, factual basis. Stress shall be placed on learning how to make judgments based on facts.

**Opt-out process**

Instructional staff or administration will notify parents or legal guardians of controversial issues that will be discussed in the classroom or through other school activities. This notification may be done through a general letter about the lesson or activity. Parents or legal guardians may also, on their own volition, write a letter to the school administrators or a teacher to have their child excluded from a specific lesson or activity. If such a letter is received, the student must be provided with an alternative learning activity. The parents or legal guardians have an obligation to notify the school administrator or teacher prior to the lesson or activity.

If parents and legal guardians receive notification from instructional staff or administration of controversial issues to be discussed in the classroom or through other school activities, that notification will include an area for the parent/legal guardian to sign in order to exclude their child from the event, instruction or activity. This signed opt-out must be sent even if the parent/legal guardian had previously written a letter to exclude the student from a specific lesson or activity.