



GEORGIA WISE 2023-2024 EVALUATION REPORT

JUNE 2024

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CONTENT

PROJECT BACKGROUND.....	3
PROJECT FINDINGS	3
Strategy 1. Scan and Engage.....	3
Strategy 2. Design.....	4
Strategy 3. Implement.....	4
Training Evaluation Findings	5
Implementation findings	6
Student Changes in Knowledge, Attitudes and Intentions	7
District Profiles.....	11
SUMMARY OF FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS.....	11
Strategy 1. Scan and Engage.....	11
Strategy 2. Design.....	11
Strategy 3. Implement.....	12

PROJECT BACKGROUND

The Georgia Campaign for Adolescent Power and Potential (GCAPP) is a statewide nonprofit organization whose mission is to improve the overall health and well-being of young people in Georgia to ensure a more powerful future for all. **The Working to Institutionalize Sex Education or WISE program** is a national initiative that supports school districts in implementing quality sex education, thereby paving the way for institutionalizing sex education. GCAPP serves as the lead agency for Georgia WISE.

Each year, GCAPP evaluates Georgia WISE to identify successes, challenges and lessons learned. In the 2023-2024 school year, GCAPP was successful in **training 371 teachers and school administrators and reaching nearly 73,467 students with comprehensive sex education***. Findings indicate that teachers gained valuable knowledge and skills and were able to successfully implement CSE. Results also suggest that students increased their knowledge, attitudes and intentions towards delaying sexual behavior.

*Note: The number of students reached is based on the number of students in the grades where CSE is taught (5th-9th grades, varies by district) across the districts served.

PROJECT FINDINGS

In the 2023-2024 school year, Georgia WISE:



Reached **73,467**
students



Trained **363**
teachers & 8 administrators



Supported CSE in **219**
schools in 9 districts

GCAPP continued making significant progress towards building infrastructure for school based CSE by actively working in 9 school districts which includes three charter/private schools across 10 priority counties.

STRATEGY 1. SCAN AND ENGAGE

Strategy Area 1 focuses on identifying potential new district partners, developing relationships with key stakeholders in identified districts and working to increase knowledge and support for CSE among key stakeholders, assess the level of readiness for CSE implementation and increase district partners' ability to develop effective strategies to select and implement age-appropriate, evidence-based curricula that fit with community mores and values.

In 2023-2024, GCAPP signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with 1 county, Clayton County. GCAPP is awaiting information from Clayton County regarding the expected implementation date.



GCAPP team members participated in a number of statewide advocacy efforts including the Sex Education Collaborative, the Sex Education Policy Action Council, and the Resilient GA Education and Training Committee. GCAPP’s Vice President of Programs and Training serves as the Chair of the Georgia Society for Public Health Education (SOPHE) Advocacy Committee and provides monthly reports on current policy issues and recommends policies that GA SOPHE should support. School-based Intervention team members presented at the Society of Public Health Educators Advocacy Summit, SIECUS Sex Ed Advocacy Summit, Sister Reach Faith Advocacy and Religion Symposium in September 2023. Team members are also developing a free online advocacy training module in partnership with the National Network of Public Health Institutes.

STRATEGY 2. DESIGN

Strategy Area 2 focuses on engaging key stakeholders in a review of current sex education policies and the adoption of more comprehensive policies and on building greater infrastructure and support for CSE throughout Georgia. Schools in GA are required to teach sex education, but the language in the sex education mandate is vague. GCAPP supported House Bill (HB) 822, which is a bill that requested the addition of the following terminology to the existing sex ed mandate: age-appropriate, medically accurate, HIV/AIDS and consent.

A GCAPP’s Program and Training representative and advocacy consultants met individually with members of the House Education Committee as well as members of the Senate Education Committee. Through these meetings, we secured a legislator to be the lead signer of the bill and secured additional signers. A GCAPP’s Program and Training representative provided language to update HB 822, testified at the Capitol, and provided information to help legislators understand why they should support HB 822 and not support the opposing bill. The bill was passed in the House Education Committee, but ultimately did not pass out of the Rules Committee.

GCAPP also supported HB 174 which was introduced to provide parents and guardians of students entering the sixth-grade information regarding recommended adolescent vaccinations including the HPV vaccine. The HPV Vaccine is not among the required vaccines for public school enrollment. Since parents have the option, many are declining, and the HPV vaccine and rates are low in GA. Cervical cancer (and other cancers are associated with HPV). The HPV vaccine is to help reduce the rates of HPV-related cancers. This bill also did not pass out of the Rules Committee.

STRATEGY 3. IMPLEMENT

Strategy 3 focuses on building teachers’ capacity to implement CSE with fidelity and quality in the 2023-2024 school year. To assess improvements in capacity, GCAPP collects and analyzes data from participating teachers, district coordinators and students and uses findings to improve upon program implementation and sustainability. In the 2023-2024 school year:

- GCAPP trained a total of 363 school-based staff and 8 administrators.
- Teachers reported increased capability and comfort level implementing CSE.
- *FLASH and the Rights, Respect and Responsibility (3 R’s)* were implemented in 219 schools in 9 different districts.
- A total of 73,467 students throughout GA were eligible to receive CSE.

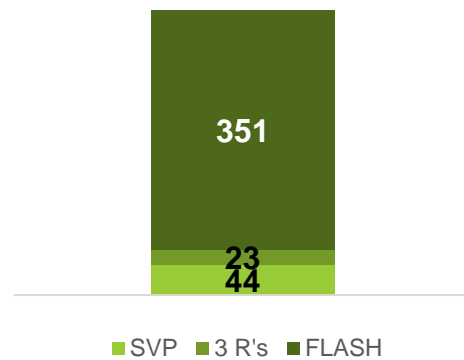
- Student pre-post data indicates increases in knowledge about abstinence, anatomy, STDs, HIV, effective communication and healthy relationships and improvements in attitudes, intentions and motivation to negotiate sexual behavior and take preventive action.
- Teacher focus group data indicates that teachers feel that the selected curricula meet the needs of students and that they are comfortable and capable of implementing CSE.

A summary of key findings from teacher training evaluation and student pre-post-test data is below. While CSE was implemented in 219 schools, the number of students for whom we have pre and post survey data is only X. As a result, findings may not be representative of those served.

TRAINING EVALUATION FINDINGS

In 2023-2024, GCAPP trained 363 teachers and 8 administrators (371 total) in the FLASH curriculum, the Rights, Respect and Responsibility (3 R’s) curriculum and sexual violence prevention (SVP) in one individual school (International Community School) and nine different school districts –Atlanta Public Schools, Bibb, Bulloch, Clarke, DeKalb, Dougherty, Savannah-Chatham, Grady, and Walton counties. Some counties were trained in both FLASH and the 3 R’s/SVP.

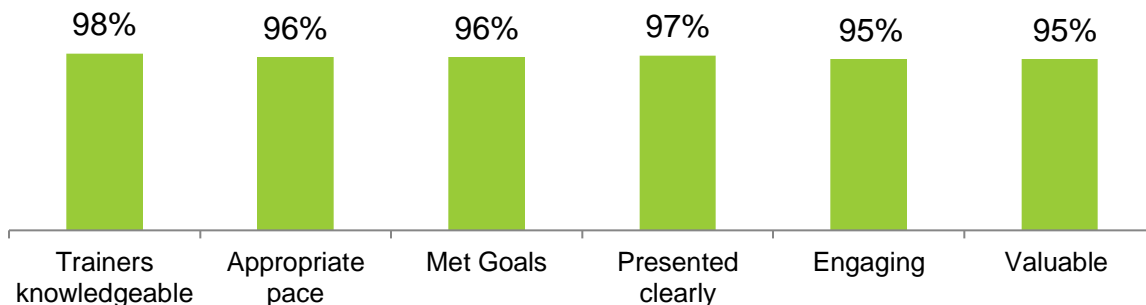
Figure 1. Teachers/Administrators Trained



Upon completion of each of the trainings, participants were asked to provide feedback on the training and describe their knowledge and skills gained. Training evaluation data from 272 of the 371 individuals trained was collected (74% response rate).

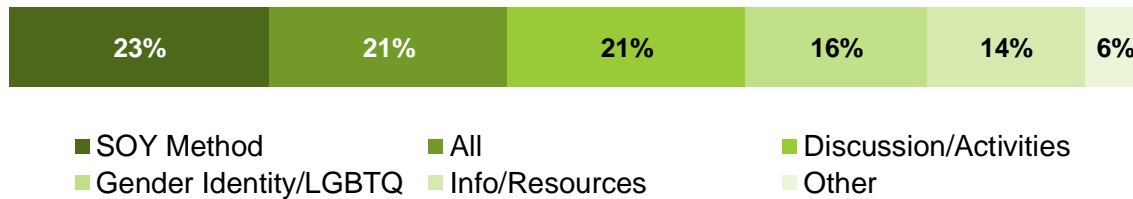
Over 30% teach/work in high schools while 45% teach/work in middle schools. The remaining 24% work in elementary schools. Over half (54%) of respondents had attended a GCAPP training previously. All but 75 of the 190 teaching FLASH said they had a FLASH binder and/or online FLASH access. Evaluation findings indicate that participants liked the training and felt they gained valuable knowledge and skills.

Figure 2. Percent that Strongly Agreed/Agreed that Training was Useful (n=272)



When asked what aspects of the training were most useful, almost one-quarter of participants shared that the SOY method of answering difficult questions was the most useful. Just over 20% of participants reported that all aspects of the training were helpful and 21% noted that the discussions with peers and the interactive nature of the trainings were most useful. Nearly 30 training participants (16%) appreciated the information on gender identity, pronouns and how to address LGBTQ topics. Several appreciated the information received and the resources such as the lessons, videos and teaching strategies. Finally, a few noted that the presenters were very good.

Figure 3. Most Useful Aspects of Training (n=112)



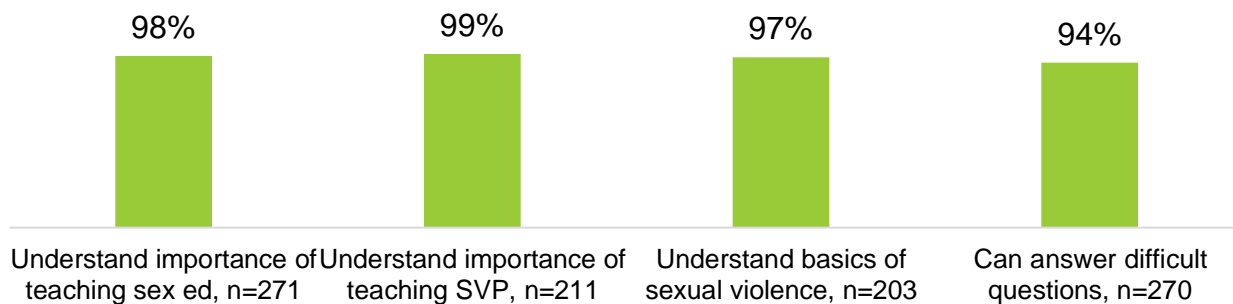
When asked what aspects of the training were least useful, **88%** of participants indicated that the training was useful and did not have any least useful aspects. Seven participants did not like the gender identity content and focus on the pronouns. Seven did not enjoy the breakout groups or some of the activities while three did not like the anatomy sections. Four participants noted that the training was too long and three noted that the speaker needed a microphone.

Participants were asked to rate their level of agreement with one or more of the following statements relating to knowledge and skills built during the training:

- I understand the importance of teaching sex education to my students.
- I understand the importance of teaching sexual violence prevention (SVP) to my students.
- I understand the basics of sexual violence.
- I am confident I can answer difficult questions from my students.

The chart below presents the percent that strongly agreed and/or agreed with these statements. Nearly all participants reported understanding the importance of teaching sex education to their students and felt prepared to answer difficult questions.

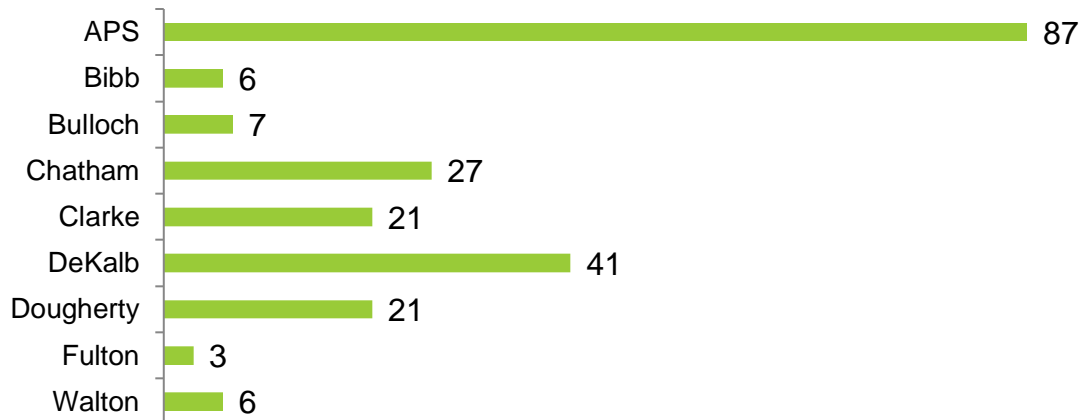
Figure 4. Percent of Participants with Knowledge and Skills Built during Training



IMPLEMENTATION FINDINGS

CSE is currently being implemented in 219 schools throughout GA. Implementation was maintained in legacy school districts.

Figure 5. Number of Schools Implementing per District



STUDENT CHANGES IN KNOWLEDGE, ATTITUDES AND INTENTIONS

Pre and post-test data from approximately 244-277 elementary, 1349-1893 middle and 1101-1526 high school students from APS, Bibb, Bulloch, Chatham, DeKalb and Dougherty County Schools and the International Community School (ICS) was analyzed to assess changes in students' knowledge, attitudes, and intentions. Surveys assessed knowledge using a variety of questions about abstinence, anatomy, pregnancy, puberty, HIV and STI's. Questions varied by district, grade level and content. To determine changes in knowledge, the percentage of questions answered correctly was calculated and compared. The figures below present the total knowledge scores before and after implementation for all students for whom we have pre-post data. Knowledge among middle and high school students increased, with Bulloch middle schools and DeKalb high schools exhibiting the largest increase in knowledge. **Overall, elementary, middle and high school students exhibited fairly high levels of accurate knowledge of key concepts delivered after participating in the curriculum in all districts.**

Figure 6. Change in Knowledge among Elementary School Students by District, n=244-277

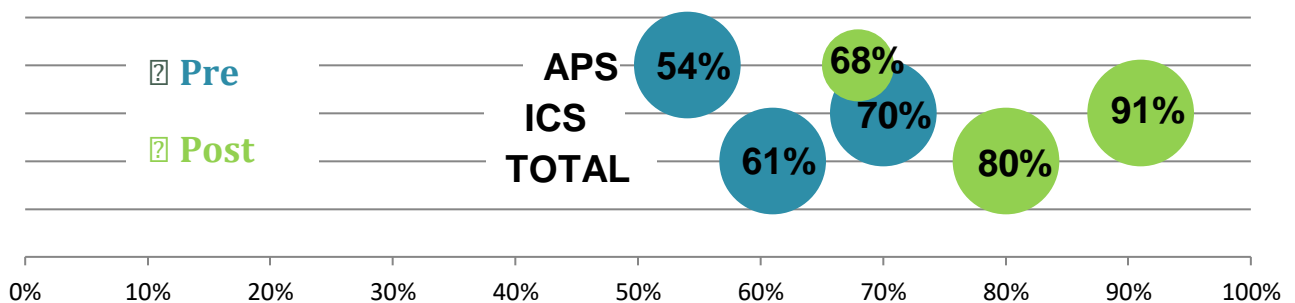


Figure 7. Change in Knowledge among Middle School Students by District, n=1349-1893

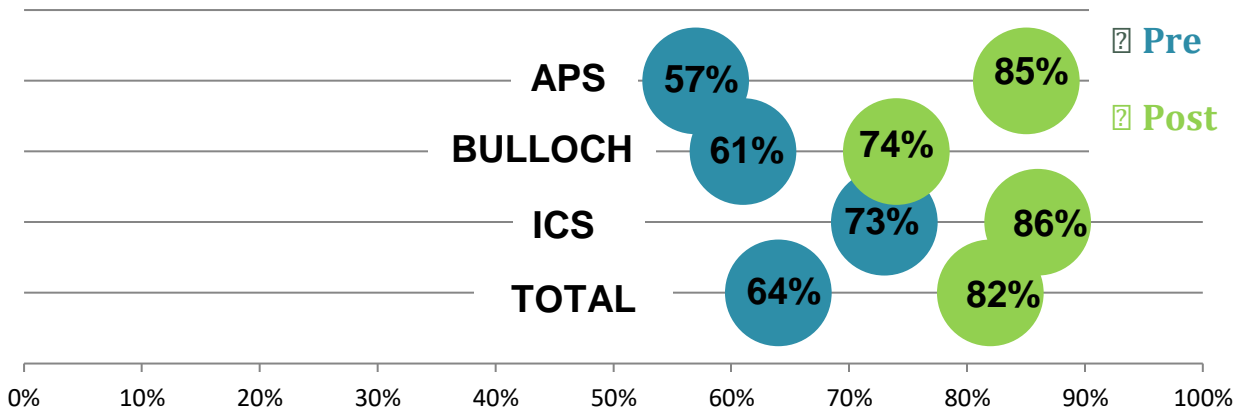


Figure 8. Change in Knowledge among High School Students by District, n=1101-1526

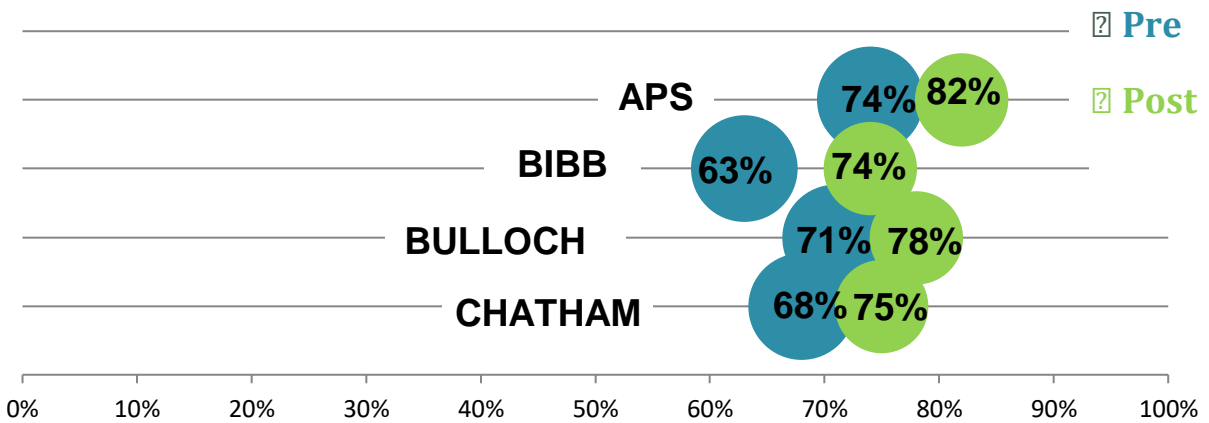
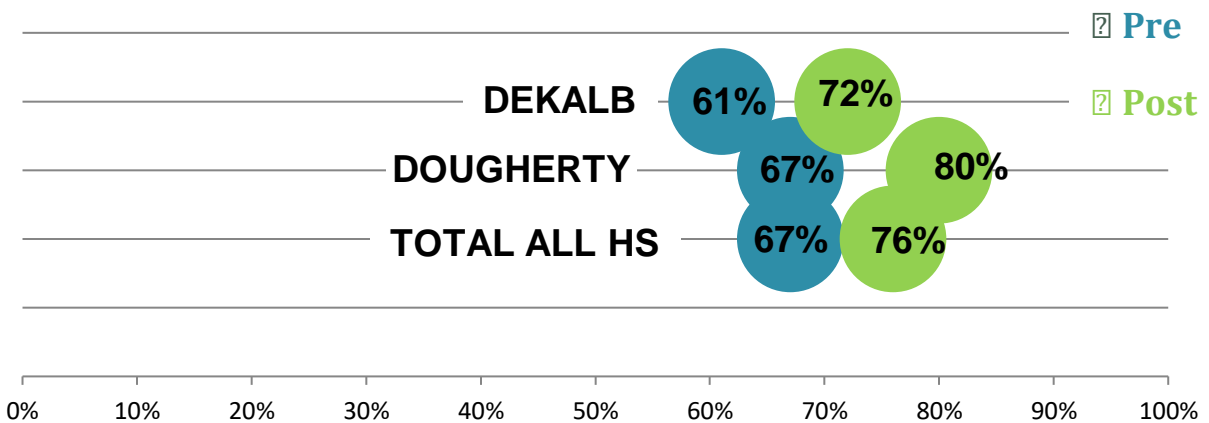


Figure 9. Change in Knowledge among High School Students by District, n=1101-1526



Surveys assessed students' attitudes towards sexual negotiation using the following questions and five-point Likert scales (e.g. strongly agree to strongly disagree).

1. I would be comfortable saying "no" to someone pressuring me to have sex.
2. If a person does not have sex with their partner, they will likely break up with them.
3. A person who has had sex can choose to abstain (meaning not have sex) again.

The figures below present students' attitudes before and after implementation for all middle and high school students for whom we have pre and post data. The data depicts the percentages that either strongly agreed/agreed or strongly disagreed/disagreed with each of these statements. Among middle and high school students, there was a slight increase in most of the attitudes overall post-implementation.

Figure 10. Change in Attitudes, Middle School Students from APS, Bulloch and ICS, n=1349-1893

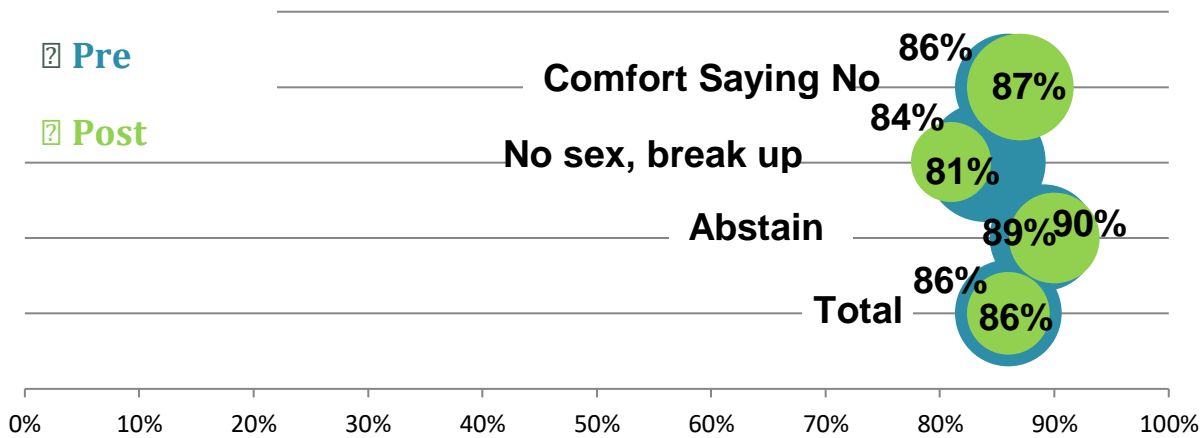
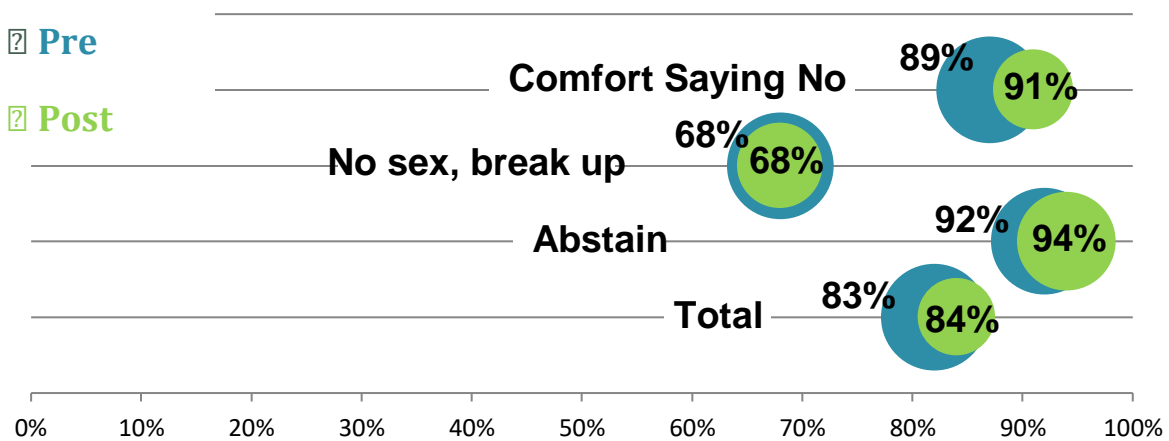


Figure 11. Change in Attitudes, High School Students from APS, Bibb, Bulloch, Chatham, DeKalb, and Dougherty, n=1101-1526

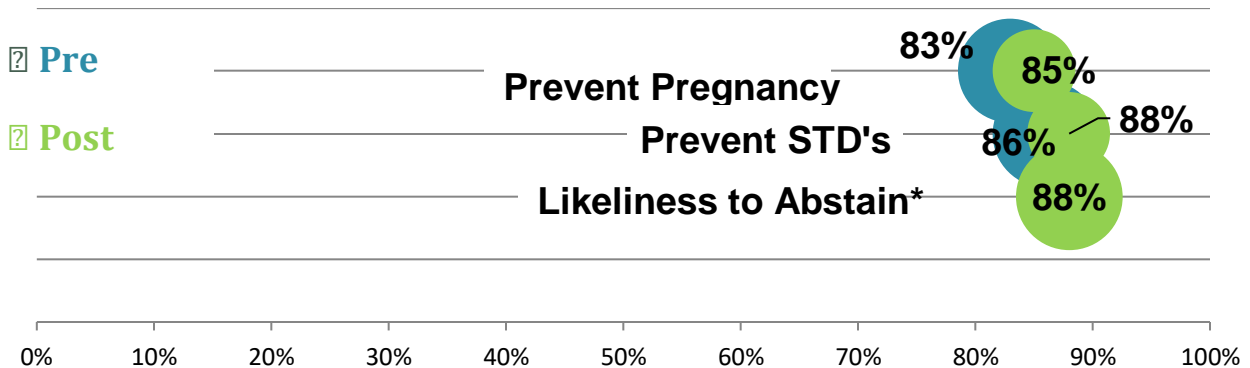


Surveys assessed students' intentions regarding sexual behavior using the following questions and Likert scales (e.g. strongly agree to strongly disagree):

1. I feel motivated to avoid getting pregnant or getting someone pregnant at this time in my life.
2. I feel motivated to avoid getting or spreading an STD at this time in my life
3. After this class, I am more likely to abstain from having sex.

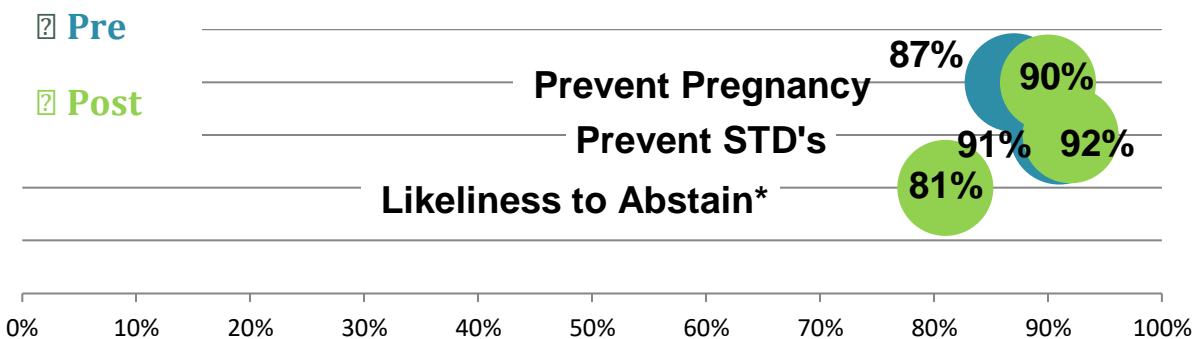
The figures below present students' intentions before and after implementation for all middle and high school students for whom we have pre and post data. Intentions among both middle and high school students were already fairly high and changed slightly from pre to post. The majority of students agreed that they were more likely to abstain after the class, with fewer high school students reporting that they were likely to abstain.

Figure 12. Change in Intentions, Middle School Students, APS, Bulloch and ICS, n=1349-1893



*Post only

Figure 13. Change in Intentions, High School Students from APS, Bibb, Bulloch, Chatham, DeKalb, and Dougherty, n=1101-1526



*Post-only

Students provided feedback on the lessons with most reporting that they enjoyed the lessons and had no suggestions for improvement. Several students would like to see more fun, engaging activities and discussions while others wanted more comprehensive information on STDs, HIV and pregnancy prevention. Students reported gaining valuable information from the classes. As one student shared *“it is good to know the consequences we can have by not taking care of ourselves and the responsibility that one has.”*

DISTRICT PROFILES

To assess the effectiveness of the training and technical assistance provided to school districts, the evaluator conducted focus groups with Bulloch, Clarke and DeKalb teachers and interviews with District coordinators in Bulloch, Clarke and DeKalb counties in May 2024.

Findings suggest that teachers were able to implement CSE effectively, that they feel the selected curricula meet students' needs and that GCAPP provides useful and high-quality training and technical assistance. One teacher shared that *"They need it every year and earlier than 8th grade. The kids are very knowledgeable. They know a lot more than we give them credit for."*

Several teachers reported that students need sex education. As one teacher shared, *"Yes, it meets the needs. A lot of kids are talking about sex for the first time. The material we have gives them a basis without getting into too crazy detail. We talk a lot about abstinence, self-control, consent, and relationships. It's important to talk about these issues and it prepares them for high school."*

Results also indicate that teachers need more time to implement the programs with fidelity and that some of the materials need to be updated. Teachers would like more training, resources and support to implement human trafficking lessons. One shared that they would like *"a virtual training during the school year since they don't go into FLASH off the bat."*

District coordinators were very satisfied with GCAPP's support and technical assistance. As one shared, *"It's a great partnership, they communicate well and are very supportive. They respond. They're always in your corner if you need something. If they don't have the answer, they will go find that. I appreciate that."*

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Findings from the evaluation of GA WISE indicate that while the adoption and implementation of comprehensive sex education policies and programs has increased throughout the state, the need to continue to advocate for and provide support for CSE is great.

STRATEGY 1. SCAN AND ENGAGE

GCAPP is currently actively working in 9 school districts in six priority regions. In 2023-2024, GCAPP signed an agreement with one new district who will implement in the 2024-2025 school year. GCAPP should:

- Continue to leverage existing relationships to cultivate new partnerships.
- Continue to identify and assess district readiness and guide additional new districts towards CSE implementation beginning with the mandated sexual violence prevention.

STRATEGY 2. DESIGN

GCAPP advocated for statewide adoption of HB 822, which would amend Georgia law to require that school-based sex education be medically accurate and HB 174, which would provide parents and guardians of students entering the 6th grade with information regarding recommended adolescent vaccinations including the HPV vaccine. GCAPP should:

- Continue to develop and participate in statewide and national partnerships and advocate for CSE throughout the state.
- Continue to meet with key legislators throughout Georgia to encourage and build support Comprehensive sex education and HPV awareness education advocacy efforts.

STRATEGY 3. IMPLEMENT

In the 2023-2024 school year, **GCAPP trained 371 teachers and administrators in evidence-based curricula**. After receiving this training, **teachers provided students with comprehensive sex education curricula**. Evaluation data indicates that teachers gained increased knowledge and skills and that the curricula were effective in increasing students' knowledge and increasing their intentions and motivation to take preventive action. To ensure continued effectiveness of teacher training and implementation, GCAPP should:

- Continue to use evaluation data to make improvements to the implementation process.
- Continue to capitalize on demand for the mandated sexual violence prevention and human trafficking programs and provide existing and new district partners with these curricula.