



## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

September 26, 2023  
N-3, 2023-24

### CHANCELLOR BANKS LAUNCHES UPDATED HIV CURRICULUM ACROSS ALL GRADES

**New York City, NY** – Schools Chancellor David C. Banks today announced the launch of a newly updated curriculum, *Growing Up and Staying Safe: New York City K-12 HIV Education Curriculum*, the first major update to New York City Public School's HIV curriculum since 2012. The new curriculum is skills-based, student-centered, and culturally responsive, and reflects advances in HIV prevention and treatment guidelines that have changed substantially in the past decade. The curriculum is designed to increase essential knowledge and teach potentially life-saving skills for students living in New York City, where 37% of people newly diagnosed with HIV in 2021 were 13-29 years old.

*Growing Up and Staying Safe* supports local, state, and national efforts to end the HIV and AIDS epidemic. Both New York State and New York City Public Schools require all students in kindergarten through grade 12 to receive annual lessons on HIV and AIDS as part of a comprehensive health education program. The new curriculum aligns with the state's emphasis on health education that promotes health, well-being, and dignity, and ensures that, each year, students will receive HIV education that is age-appropriate, medically accurate, inclusive, affirming, and representative of the students that make up our diverse school system.

"New York City is the largest public school system in the nation, and a pioneer in best practices in student education. That is why it is so critical that we ensure our young people are receiving the most updated information to keep them safe and healthy," said **Schools Chancellor David C. Banks**. "This new HIV curriculum incorporates direct feedback from our educators and student focus groups, is grounded in equity and anti-bias, and is aligned with Social-Emotional Learning Competencies. This work represents an ongoing commitment to student health and well-being, inclusivity and respect, and access to quality sexual health education."

"Ensuring that our young New Yorkers are equipped with the knowledge and tools to keep themselves safe now and in the future is absolutely paramount," said **Deputy Mayor Anne Williams-Isom**. "I'm thrilled to see this new curriculum launch, which is designed specifically for our students, age-appropriate and puts our children's health front and center."

As part of the new curriculum, The New York City Public Schools' Office of School Wellness Programs, in partnership with HIV and medical experts, educators, and community members,

developed new family-facing and teacher training materials, including lesson overviews for parents and caregivers, and a 30-minute self-guided Introduction to HIV Education course for teachers on WeLearn NYC. Teachers and students from across the city also provided valuable feedback to ensure that the new lessons are relevant for today's students. The 71 all-new lessons for grades K-12 include engaging videos and stories that highlight the strength and diversity of New York City students. New York City Public Schools and the New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene will regularly review and update the curriculum moving forward to ensure that educators and students have timely, medically accurate information.

"I am thrilled to congratulate New York City Public Schools on the release of its long-awaited Growing Up and Staying Safe: New York City K-12 HIV Curriculum," said **Adrian Guzman, Director of Policy and External Affairs for the New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene's Bureau of Hepatitis, HIV, and Sexually Transmitted Infections**. "My Health Department colleagues and I are proud to have supported efforts to ensure the new curriculum reflects advances in HIV science and public health practice, and emphasizes minors' right to consent to HIV and sexual health services. While ensuring access to comprehensive sexual health education for all young people remains our goal, Growing Up and Staying Safe is a critical step. Age-appropriate, medically accurate, LGBTQ-affirming sexual health education sits alongside condoms, PrEP, and emergency PEP as a fundamental tool in the HIV prevention toolkit for all New Yorkers, including youth."

"New York City's newly updated HIV education curriculum, the result of a long-standing partnership with CDC, is more accessible and inclusive and will help take us one step closer to ending HIV," said **Kathleen Ethier, director of the CDC's Division of School and Adolescent Health**. "New materials for teachers, students, and parents will help ensure that young people have the healthy future they deserve."

"Advocates for Youth was thrilled to partner with the NYC Department of Education in the creation of this K-12, LGBTQ-affirming HIV curriculum. With over 70 new lessons and six new teacher trainings, Advocates applauds New York City's commitment to provide its students with up-to-date information and skills to help them protect their health and make safe decisions now and into the future," said **Debra Hauser, MPH, President, Advocates for Youth**.

"As a high school Health teacher, I feel strongly that it's so important for students to practice the skills needed to help them make good decisions about their overall health: physical, emotional, and social health. I'm excited to implement this curriculum with my high school students because it provides student-focused, engaging lessons," said **Karen Susnitsky, Health Education teacher, Edward R. Murrow High School**.

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Contact: Chancellor's Press Office [press@schools.nyc.gov](mailto:press@schools.nyc.gov)