



STATE OF CONNECTICUT
STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION



TO: Superintendents of Schools

FROM: Charlene M. Russell-Tucker, Commissioner of Education 

DATE: March 28, 2022

SUBJECT: Health Education and Physical Education: Standards, Guidelines, and Statutory Requirements

Attached please find the updated [Healthy and Balanced Living Curriculum Framework-2021](#), adopted by the State Board of Education on November 3, 2021. The Framework prescribes health education and physical education standards to help ensure that students acquire the skills and knowledge they need to achieve personal and academic success. **The Framework is not a curriculum, it includes standards, essential questions, suggested learning goals, and additional information to assist in the development of high-quality curriculum and high-impact instruction.** The standards are worded broadly to allow for local decision-making in designing specific curriculum. District leaders and teachers should use the Framework as the foundation for identifying key issues or trends to prioritize content and or topics based on the needs of students and norms of the school community for intentional planning. The choices made about the content and skills taught at each grade level should reflect district and student learning goals, strengths and needs, align with the required standards, and incorporate all state mandates related to school health education and physical education.

Below is additional information to ensure adherence with Connecticut's education laws, standards, and teacher certification requirements pertaining to health education and physical education. Programs of study in health education and physical education must be offered to Grades K-12 in a planned, ongoing, and systematic fashion, taught by appropriately certified teachers and be delivered like any other content area regarding quality of curriculum and instruction.

Connecticut General Statutes (C.G.S.) Statutory Requirements

[C.G.S. Sec. 10-221a](#) addresses the new graduation requirements for classes graduating in 2023. Students must satisfactorily complete one credit in health and safety education, as described in [C.G.S. Sec. 10-16b](#) and one credit in physical education and wellness in order to graduate in 2023. Only courses taken in grades nine to twelve, inclusive, and that are in accordance with the statewide subject matter content standards (i.e., Healthy and Balanced Living Curriculum Framework), adopted by the State Board of Education on November 3, 2021, pursuant to [C.G.S. Sec. 10-4](#), satisfy these graduation requirements.

[C.G.S. Sec. 10-19\(a\)](#) requires instruction regarding the use of alcohol, nicotine, tobacco and drugs every academic year to all students in Grades K-12 in a planned, ongoing and systematic fashion. Required content includes teaching about the knowledge, skills and attitudes required to understand and avoid the effects of alcohol, of nicotine or tobacco and of drugs on health, character, citizenship, and personality development.

[C.G.S. Sec. 10-19\(b\)](#) requires that instruction in Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS/HIV) be offered during the regular school day in Grades K-12, in a planned, ongoing, and systematic fashion. This statute further requires local and regional boards of education to adopt a

policy, as the board deems appropriate, concerning the exemption of pupils from such instruction upon written request of the parent or guardian.

Family Life Education Programs

Additionally, [C.G.S. Sec 10-16c](#) required the State Board of Education to develop curriculum guides to aid school boards in developing family life education programs, which included, in part, family planning, human sexuality, parenting and other aspects of family life. [C.G.S. Sec. 10-16d](#), however, provides that school boards are not required to develop or institute such family life education programs. [C.G.S. Sec.10-16e](#) expressly states that if a school board chooses to provide family life education instruction, no student shall be required to participate in any such family life education program. Furthermore, this section clarifies that a written notification by the student's parent or legal guardian shall be sufficient to exempt the student from such program in its entirety or from any portion of the instruction. Lastly, [C.G.S. Sec. 10-16f](#) provides that any such family life program instituted by any local or regional board of education shall be in addition to and not a substitute for any health, education, hygiene or similar curriculum requirements.

Standards, Guidelines, and Implementation Resources

For a program to be planned, it should have curriculum that contains written goals and learning objectives. An ongoing program ensures continuity with learning objectives that evolve from one grade, or group of grades to the next. A systematic planned program ensures that implementation is equitable for each specific grade, or group of grades, or course. For example, all third-grade students receive instruction for the same agreed upon learning objectives in every third-grade classroom in every school within the district.

Teacher Certification

Certification to teach physical education at the primary or secondary level requires a PK-12 physical education teaching certificate endorsement (044). Certification to teach health education at the primary or secondary level requires a PK-12 health education teaching certificate endorsement (043) or a school nurse/teacher certificate endorsement (072). At the primary level (Grades K-6), an elementary teacher may deliver health education, but cannot be the sole provider per Section 10-145d-435(a) of the certification regulations. Elementary classroom teachers may provide a part of health education instruction, but a certified teacher in health education must also provide a portion. At the middle and secondary levels (Grades 7-12), teachers must be certified in health education or hold a school nurse/teacher certificate in order to teach health education.

The Department would like to thank all of the individuals and organizations that gave a significant amount of time and effort in the Framework's development. Please see the Framework for a complete list. For specific certification questions, superintendents and human resources personnel can reach the Bureau of Educator Standards and Certification through the designated superintendent phone lines. For general inquiries, public phone lines are available Mondays and Thursdays from 12:00 p.m. - 2:00 p.m. at (860) 713-6969. For additional information regarding the Healthy and Balanced Living Curriculum Framework, please contact Chlo-Anne Bobrowski at chlo-anne.bobrowski@ct.gov.

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