



Health Education

Curriculum Update

Understanding PPS 8th Grade Sexual Health Curriculum

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Agenda

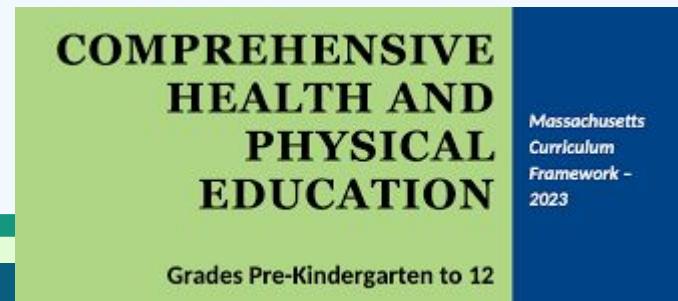
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Massachusetts Health Standards

Update and Alignment

- Updated in 2023 for the first time since 1999
- Includes PE and Health
- Practice-Based (Skills-Based)
- Summer 2025 Curriculum Work to update PPS middle school scope and sequence





Massachusetts Health Education Standards

Practices/Skills	Topics
Practice 1: Decision-Making and Problem-Solving.	Healthy Relationships [HR]
Practice 2: Self-Management and Goal Setting.	Mental and Emotional Health [MH]
Practice 3: Social Awareness, Relationship, and Communication Skills.	Nutrition and Balanced Eating [NE]
Practice 4: Movement Skills.	Personal Safety [PS]
Practice 5: Self-Awareness and Analyzing Influences.	Physical Activity and Fitness [PF]
Practice 6: Information and Resource Seeking.	Physical Health and Hygiene [PH]
Practice 7: Self-Advocacy and Health Promotion.	Public, Community, and Environmental Health [CE]
	Sexual Health [SH]
	Substance Use and Misuse [SU]



Updating PPS Health Curriculum

~Commitment to our students

- Identify gaps in our current curriculum
- Align with Standards
- Sexual Health Education was missing in the middle school

STATE OF SEXUAL HEALTH EDUCATION 2025

The Massachusetts Comprehensive Health and Physical Education (CHPE) Framework, updated in 2023, contains recommendations surrounding sex education standards. These recommendations are **not mandatory** and districts are left to decide what if any curricula are implemented. This local control creates **large disparities**. Check out the data below to better understand the state of Sex Education in MA.

NO SEX ED? As of 2025, our data represents 222 out of Massachusetts' 276 public school districts*. Of those 222, **11 districts reported having no sex education curriculum** in any grade K-12. This number is likely an underestimate since **we lack information on 54 districts**.

Scan QR code for more information!



What is Comprehensive Sexual Health?

Comprehensive Sexual Health is a broad term that includes many topics:

Anatomy, Reproductive Health, Self-Image, Decision Making, Relationships, Respect, Bodily Autonomy & Consent, Values, Self Image, Sexual Behavior, Sexual Consent, Disease Prevention, Pregnancy Prevention, Sex Assigned at Birth, Gender, Gender Expression, Sexual Orientation, etc.



Comprehensive Sexual Health in MA

- Massachusetts mandates that any school offering sexual health education must provide a medically accurate, age-appropriate, and comprehensive curriculum consistent with the state's Comprehensive Health Framework.
- This education is intended to help students develop healthy relationships, delay sexual activity, prevent pregnancy and STIs, and understand topics like consent, gender identity, and sexual orientation.
- While local districts have discretion, state guidelines provide the framework and standards for these programs, and **parents have the right to opt their children out of all or part of the instruction.**

Why teach Sexual Health?



PROVIDES ACCURATE INFORMATION

In this age of phone, technology, and social media, students need accurate information more than ever



SUPPORTS SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Helps students navigate relationship pressures, body image and self-esteem, respectful communication



PROMOTES SAFETY, CONSENT, AND BOUNDARIES

Teaching about healthy relationships and communication skills early helps to prevent sexual harassment, abuse and coercion, and unsafe or uninformed decision-making



ENCOURAGES CONVERSATIONS TO BE CONTINUED AT HOME

Families are partners in this process. Health education teaches factual information. Parents and caregivers teach values.



Our Sexual Health Curriculum Development

- Team of 6 teachers over the course of 3 months
- Input from local districts, parents, consultants
- Administration involvement
- Based off of several standards-based curricula
- 8th grade only for this year
- 3 class lessons
- Lessons instructed by licensed health teachers



Opt-Out Procedure

- Opt-Out form sent home prior to lessons being taught, with lesson topics and teacher contact information
- Syllabus sent home with unit overview and another link/option to opt-out
- Opt-Out form deadline is updated each term to allow for sub planning for students who have opted out
- Students who have been opted out receive an alternate assignment in another location while lessons being taught
- Parents and caregivers may view lessons in entirety upon request
- Additional information including lessons and videos posted on the PPS Website for review



Climate-Setting

Topics	Objectives and Resources	MA Standards Addressed
1.Climate Setting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><input type="checkbox"/> Provide a definition of sexual health education<input type="checkbox"/> Provide students with an overview of upcoming lessons<input type="checkbox"/> Review skills practiced and embedded in health curriculum<input type="checkbox"/> Establish an inclusive classroom culture by identifying norms and expectations	Practice 7- Self-Advocacy and Health Promotion-8.7.SH.1, 8.7.SH.2, 8.7.SH.3 Why: Lesson introduces expectations for respectful, inclusive discussions; boundary-setting; and self-advocacy.



Human Anatomy

Topics	Objectives and Resources	MA Standards Addressed
2. Human Anatomy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><input type="checkbox"/> Identify male and female reproductive anatomy.<input type="checkbox"/> Understand body part functions.<input type="checkbox"/> Learn about the menstrual cycle.<input type="checkbox"/> Use inclusive and factual language.	<p>Practice 6- Information and Resource Seeking-8.6.SH.1, 8.6.SH.2</p> <p>Why: Lesson covers medically accurate reproductive anatomy and the menstrual cycle. Lesson teaches accurate reproductive system structure and function.</p>



Reproduction

Topics	Objectives and Resources	MA Standards Addressed
3. Human Reproduction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><input type="checkbox"/> Define sexual intercourse and reproduction.<input type="checkbox"/> Learn the steps of conception.<input type="checkbox"/> Discuss when pregnancy can and cannot occur.<input type="checkbox"/> Understand how abstinence and contraception prevent pregnancy.	<p>Practice 6- Information and Resource Seeking-8.6.SH.1, 8.SH.2</p> <p>Practice 7- Self-Advocacy and Health Promotion-8.7.PS.2, 8.7.SH.3</p> <p>Why: Lesson addresses conception, menstrual cycles, sexual intercourse, and pregnancy prevention.</p>



Healthy Boundaries and Consent

Topics	Objectives and Resources	MA Standards Addressed
4. Personal Boundaries and Consent	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><input type="checkbox"/> Define personal boundaries and consent.<input type="checkbox"/> Learn self-advocacy and respect for others.<input type="checkbox"/> Analyze scenarios about boundaries<input type="checkbox"/> Practice refusal skills<input type="checkbox"/> Learn about the law in regard to the age of consent for sexual intercourse<input type="checkbox"/> Reinforce that the responsibility always lies with the person who violates consent.	<p>Practice 7- Self-Advocacy and Health Promotion-8.7.SH.1, 8.7.PS.4</p> <p>Practice 3- Social Awareness, Relationship, and Communication Skills- 8.3.HR.2, 8.3.HR.5, 8.3.HR.6</p> <p>Why: The lesson teaches defining boundaries, communicating limits, and recognizing when to seek help.</p>



Understanding and Preventing STIs

Topics	Objectives and Resources	MA Standards Addressed
5. Understanding and Preventing STDs/STIs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><input type="checkbox"/> Define STDs/STIs and HIV.<input type="checkbox"/> Learn how they are transmitted and prevented.<input type="checkbox"/> Compare risk levels of different behaviors.<input type="checkbox"/> Emphasize abstinence, protection, and reliable information sources.	Practice 1- Decision-Making and Problem Solving 8.1.SH.3, 8.1.SH.4, 8.1.SH.7, 8.1.HR.5, 8.1.HR.6 Practice 2- Self-Management and Goal-Setting 8.2.SH.1, 8.2.SH.2 Why: Lesson teaches how STDs/HIV are transmitted and how risk differs by behavior.

Anonymous Questions- End of each class



- Write down one question you may still have relating to the topics that were discussed during this lesson
- Do not put names on the cards
- Everyone writes something
- If you do not have questions, write "no question" on your card



Caregivers as Partners- Resources for Families

- Lesson overview sent out via email to parents before the unit begins
- Topics and Videos provided
- Additional resources to encourage conversation at home



Clarification regarding Curriculum Planning Process

- Review and re-evaluation of materials
- Meetings as a team
- Respectful discussions about what content to include and how to deliver lessons
- Made adjustments as needed, based on many factors



Curriculum Expansion

- 2026-2027 school year
- Include grades 6-8
- Comprehensive and scaffolded
- Include a parent information session
- Similar opt-out procedure

Thank You!

School Committee



Administration

PCIS and PSMS Principals

Health Education Teachers