

Health Education TEKS Review Consensus Recommendations

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The goal of health curriculum standards should be to provide classroom instruction and support to allow youth to develop and sustain health-promoting behaviors throughout their lives. The standards should address the foundation of healthy behaviors in K-8 so that all students have the opportunity to be exposed since not all students will take Health as an elective in high school. The standards should promote safety and healthy behavior for all students. The standards should have a positive approach and rely on evidence-based research. This should include the lifelong habit of goal setting and pursuit of those goals in life. There are multiple health-related epidemics such as diabetes, obesity, suicidality, STDs, and teenage pregnancy that make it essential to equip students to achieve their optimal health.

Strand	Recommendations
Physical Health and Hygiene	<p>Consider any gaps in the personal health and hygiene substrand related to prevention of disease. Ensure that the important health literacy issues are addressed such as washing hands, covering your mouth, etc. These are basic practices for maintaining physical health. Additionally, students can identify current health-related issues and recommendations or guidelines.</p> <p>Ensure that in addition to vector-borne illnesses such as West Nile that common illnesses, including colds and flu, are also addressed across grade levels as a part of preventative health. There is currently one student expectation related to colds.</p> <p>At grades 2-4, students just need to know what they need to do to avoid heart disease and stroke such as diet and exercise. The do not need to know signs and symptoms and actions for these diseases. However, it's important for students to recognize signs and symptoms related to diabetes, asthma, and epilepsy so that they can alert an adult. These topics should be separated in the student expectations (SEs).</p>

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<p>Mental Health and Wellness Strand</p>	<p>The mental health and wellness strand includes inaccuracies and out of date information; current research shows how cognitive processes influence our emotions, which is expressed in behavior. This should be the focus of the social emotional development topic. Work groups should develop SEs based on current research on how cognitive process is connected to emotions and ultimately influences behavior. This instruction should begin at kindergarten.</p> <p>Goal setting is a lifelong process. We make goals, learn from our failures, process what we learn, and keep going. Students should learn how to set short-term and long- term goals and develop a plan that includes recovery from failure to achieve their goals. This instruction should begin at kindergarten.</p> <p>The standards should have a more positive approach toward building a healthy life and relationships rather than overly focusing on the negative things to avoid.</p> <p>Conflict resolution should also begin at kindergarten.</p>
<p>Alcohol, Tobacco, and Other Drugs Strand</p>	<p>Review appropriateness of verbs used at kindergarten, e.g., K.17.A, replace “discuss” with “list” or “define.”</p>
<p>Healthy Eating and Physical Activity Strand</p>	<p>Reinstate SEs 1.1.A, 2.1.E, 3.1.A, 4.2.A, 5.8.B, and 6.1.F related to personal health habits and types of physical activity. These are essential skills for students in kindergarten-grade 6 in health education.</p> <p>Ensure that SEs deleted by Work Group E related to portion size (7), goal setting and decision-making (9), and consumer literacy (9) are covered in other SEs.</p> <p>Support the addition of a new topic on allergies and the new SEs focusing on chronic conditions and their relation to physical activity and dietary choices.</p>
<p>Injury and Violence Prevention and Safety Strand</p>	<p>Edits supported by the content advisors include</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ change the term “prohibiting” to “regarding” and remove reference to drugs in 6.14.D. The topic is related to weapons only; ○ online safety should be addressed beginning at kindergarten; ○ sexting and digital pornography SE should be brought down to grade 5. These behaviors are becoming more common with younger students; and ○ review appropriateness of verbs used at kindergarten, e.g. replace “discuss and demonstrate” with “role-play” in K.12.A.

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Reproductive and Sexual Health

The content advisors reaffirm the recommendation in the initial consensus recommendations to align directly with the language in statute 28.004(e)(1)-(4), including abstinence as the preferred choice.

The human use reality rates and the risks associated with other types of contraception use must be addressed, including the risks of pregnancy, STDs, and emotional trauma. Revise the knowledge and skills statement (25) to read as, “The student understands that there are risks associated with sexual activity, that abstinence is the only 100%-effective method to avoid risks, and that other methods will have increased risk.”

There are multiple viewpoints regarding how consent is addressed in the TEKS.

Some members recommended deleting SEs related to consent added by Work Group E (grade 23.G, grades 7-8 23.J, and Health 1 23.I). These content advisors indicated that the addition of these SEs creates redundancies, and the concepts are appropriately addressed in the refusal skill and setting boundaries topics. Consent is moving toward a behavior, while setting boundaries and avoiding the risky behavior is the goal. There are also serious legal implications related to requiring or discussing consent in classrooms.

Other content advisors recommended maintaining the new SEs. Consent is a concept that needs to be taught because it is a fundamental aspect of life. It is essential in the setting of reproductive and sexual health.

Other edits supported by the content advisors include

- remove references in marriage topic (SE 6.22.F and 7.22.F, Health 1.22.F), to committed relationships since they are not the same as a marriage;
- address sexual abuse and harassment in grade 6;
- introduce the menstrual cycle in 4th grade and introduce the “reproductive system” in the physical health and hygiene strand at grade 4 for vertical alignment. It is developmentally appropriate to introduce the basics of the reproductive system in grade 4 and continue instruction in grade 5; and
- reinstate the SE that reads, “emotional risks that can be associated with sexual activity for unmarried persons of school age, including potential stress, anxiety, and depression” at grade 6.

There are multiple viewpoints regarding SEs in grades 7-8 25.E and Health 1 25.D:

- reinstate the modes of transmission deleted by Work Group E and include anal sex; this is appropriate information that students need to know at these grade levels
- maintain the Work Group E recommendations; talking about STD transmission can be done without going into explicit detail and the multiple methods by which an STD can be transmitted