

Descriptor Term:
COMPREHENSIVE HEALTH EDUCATION PROGRAM

Descriptor Code:
3.4320

Legal References: G.S. 115C art. 9; 115-C-36, -81(e1); State Board of Education Policies GCS-D-000, GCS-F-007; Policies Governing Services for Children with Disabilities

Cross References:

The board is committed to a sound, comprehensive health education program that provides students with accurate information and encourages them to be responsible for their own health and behavior. The board recognizes the primary role of parents in providing for the health and well-being of their children and seeks to involve parents in the schools as provided in this policy. The health education program provided by the school system shall meet all requirements established by law, including the Basic Education Program, 115C-81(e1). The board may, in its discretion, expand on the subject areas to be included in the program and on the instructional objectives to be met.

A. COMPREHENSIVE HEALTH EDUCATION PROGRAM FOR GRADES KINDERGARTEN THROUGH NINTH GRADE

A comprehensive health education program shall be taught to students from kindergarten through ninth grade. As required by law, the health education program must include age-appropriate instruction on bicycle safety, nutrition, dental health, environmental health, family living, consumer health, disease control, growth and development, first aid and emergency care, mental and emotional health, drug and alcohol abuse prevention, prevention of sexually transmitted diseases (STDs), including HIV/AIDS and other communicable diseases, and reproductive health and safety education.

As required by law and beginning in seventh grade, reproductive health and safety education shall include age-appropriate instruction on sexual abstinence until marriage, STDs, the human reproductive system, effective contraceptive methods for preventing pregnancy and awareness of sexual assault and sexual abuse.

Each year, a copy of all program objectives and instructional materials for reproductive health and safety education, abstinence, avoidance of out-of-wedlock pregnancy, and STDs programs shall be available for review in the school's media center at any school where the program(s) shall be taught. Before students may participate in any of these programs, the school must notify the parents of the opportunity to review the materials. This notification shall occur annually through the Parent Handbook.

The principal or designee shall also notify parents of the right to withhold or withdraw consent for their child's participation in all reproductive health and safety education instruction or in specific topics such as STDs, the effectiveness and safety of contraceptive methods, and awareness of sexual assault and sexual abuse. Parents may also withhold consent to student preparation in other separate instruction on the prevention of STDs, including HIV/AIDS, or the avoidance of out-of-wedlock pregnancy. Any parent wishing to withhold consent must do so in writing to the principal.

The school system and each school shall continually evaluate and improve the effectiveness of the health education programs. This process shall involve obtaining input from the school community, which should include teachers, guidance counselors, school administrators, parents, students and professionals from the public health community.

B. STANDARDS FOR INSTRUCTION

The health education programs shall be taught by certified teachers who shall receive sufficient training to effectively teach these programs. Staff development opportunities shall be provided, as necessary, to ensure sufficient training.

For reproductive health and safety education, instructors shall follow the program objectives and only use the age-appropriate materials that have been made available to parents for review in accordance with this policy. Information conveyed during instruction will be objective and based upon scientific research that is peer reviewed and accepted by professionals and credentialed experts in the field of sexual health education.

Furthermore, a determination of what shall be an appropriate education for any student with identified exceptionalities shall be made in accordance with the individualized education plan, following all procedures as provided in the *North Carolina Procedures Governing Programs and Special Services for Children with Special Needs*.