

# 2025 Michigan Health Education Standards Guidelines



Michigan School Health Coordinators' Association

The Michigan State Board of Education approved the updated [Michigan Health Education Standards Guidelines](#) (HESG) on **Thursday, November 13, 2025.**

The updated guidelines make several shifts from the 2007 standards:

- **Greater emphasis on skill development** rather than memorizing facts (e.g., decision-making, communication, goal-setting, advocacy).
- **Integration of emotional health**, trauma-informed practice, and mental wellness across all grade spans.
- **Consolidated grade-band structure** (K–2, 3–5, 6–8, 9–12) that provides districts greater local control and more flexibility when teaching health education.
- **Expanded attention to media, technology, and digital influences** on health behavior.
- **Updated topic areas that reflect today's realities**, including substance misuse trends, violence prevention, injury and safety, reproductive health, and chronic disease prevention.
- **Inclusion of Michigan Laws** and required instructional content such as HIV/AIDS education, CPR/AED, and substance use prevention.

## It's Important to Note...

- The standards guidelines are **NOT** a curriculum, they only establish what a student should know and be able to do by the end of each grade span.
- There is no curriculum that covers all of the standards guidelines, and the guidelines **do not officially endorse one specific curriculum**, one commonly used resource in Michigan is the [Michigan Model for Health™](#) (MMH)
- Michigan law states that **“Health and physical education for pupils of both sexes shall be established and provided in all public schools of this state.”** [MCL 380.1502](#)

## It's Important to Note...

**The law has not changed in regards to parental rights.** Michigan law (MCL §380.1507 and §MCL 380.1169) outlines clear parent and caregiver rights related to health and sex education:

- Parents must receive **prior notification** when HIV/AIDS or sex education is taught.
- Parents have the right to **review all materials** before the instruction occurs.
- Parents may **opt their child out** of sex education or HIV/AIDS instruction **without penalty**.
- If a district chooses to teach sex education, it must have a **Sex Education Advisory Board (SEAB)**, and at least 50% of the board must be parents.

## It's Important to Note...

While the standards guidelines themselves do not create new civil rights requirements, they must operate within the protections guaranteed by Michigan law, including the Elliott-Larsen Civil Rights Act, which prohibits discrimination based on protected characteristics.

In practice, this means:

- Instruction must be free from bias and discriminatory practices.
- Districts must provide safe, supportive learning environments for all students.
- Content should reflect inclusive, legally compliant practices.

# It's Important to Note...

## Our district needs to:

- review their current curriculum,
- compare it with the new standards,
- determine gaps,
- work with their SEAB (if applicable),
- plan professional development for educators, and
- update pacing guides, course descriptions, and assessment practices as needed.

# It's Important to Note...

The Standards Guidelines serve as a comprehensive framework, not a short list of topics. The length reflects:

- A detailed explanation of the vision, purpose, and guiding principles for health education.
- Definitions of the skills (practices) that students should develop over time.
- Grade-band expectations across all topic areas.
- Clarification of mandatory content required by Michigan law.
- An appendix of relevant state statutes and legal references.
- Additional guidance to help districts, families, advisory boards, and educators understand how decisions are made locally.
- Strengthened language on parental rights, including opt out options (in multiple areas of the document)
- Standards were consolidated into one document spanning K-12th grade. The previous standards were separated by grade level.
- There are **107 fewer standards** in the new guidelines compared to 2007 — a reduction from **514 to 407** — creating a more streamlined and focused framework.

# Practices for Comprehensive Health Education

The kindergarten through grade 12 practices for health education are the processes and skills that students will learn throughout the elementary, middle, and high school years that promote and maintain lifelong health and well-being.

These practices support the development of skills that students need throughout life and are reinforced and applied across disciplines and settings. This approach is evidence-based and aligns with best practices outlined in the "Characteristics of an Effective Health Education Curriculum" from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the "Essential Components of Health Education" from the Society of Health and Physical Educators (SHAPE) America. The practices closely align with the skills in the National Health Education Standards (NHES).

# Organization of the Standards Guidelines

The standards guidelines document is organized first by sections:

- Section 1 is content required by state law and includes HIV, cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR)/automated external defibrillation (AED), and physiology and hygiene as it relates to substance use;
- Section 2 is the bulk of the general health education standards guidelines; and
- Section 3 is sex education standards guidelines with specific laws governing district responsibilities and parent choice. There are appendices with all Michigan laws governing health and sex education.

# A Quick Breakdown...

Michigan Health Education Standards Guidelines p. 11, 12

- Within each section, content standards guidelines are organized by grade span: K-2, 3-5, 6-8, and 9-12. The change from individual grade levels to grade spans allows more flexibility for districts.
- The term Standard has been replaced with the term Practice.
  - There are six practices
    - The practices outline opportunities for students to demonstrate behaviors that support health and well-being and increase health outcomes through the development of self-efficacy, health literacy, and physical literacy.
  - Within each practice, there are eight indicators
    - The indicators are considered learning goals, which are intended to be achieved by the end of each grade span, respectively. Within each grade span, the indicators are first grouped by practice. This reflects the importance of the practices for students across the discipline of health education and in developing social and emotional competencies.

# The Practices

**Practice 1: Self-Awareness and Analyzing Influences:** Examine how emotions, thoughts, needs, values, beliefs, and other factors (both internal and external) influence behaviors, and articulate how these influences affect health behaviors and outcomes.

**Practice 2: Social Awareness, Relationship, and Communication Skills:** Enhance relationships, personal health, and the health of others through social awareness and effective communication.

**Practice 3: Information and Resource Seeking:** Access, evaluate, and use valid and reliable health information, products, services, and related resources.

# The Practices

**Practice 4: Decision Making and Problem Solving:** Make health-promoting, informed, responsible decisions and solve problems in a variety of health-related situations.

**Practice 5: Self-Management and Goal Setting:** Set goals, engage in health-promoting behaviors, and avoid risky behaviors.

**Practice 6: Advocacy and Health Promotion:** Promote personal, family, and community health and well-being.

# The Indicators and Topics

Within each practice, the indicators are grouped by the following topics:

- Balanced Eating and Physical Activity [BEPA]
- Community and Environmental Health [CEH]
- Healthy Relationships [HR]
- Mental and Emotional Health [MEH]
- Personal Health and Wellness [PHW]
- Safety [SAF]
- Substance Use and Misuse [SU]
- Sex Education [SE]

Example...

**Grades K–2** (Grade span meaning by the end of Grade 2)

**Practice 4:** Decision-Making and Problem Solving

*Make health-promoting, informed, responsible decisions and solve problems in a variety of health-related situations.* (Definition of the Practice)

Balanced Eating and Physical Activity [2.4.BEPA] (Topic)

1. Identify and describe strengths and interests related to physical activity.

(Indicator)

# Updated Sex Ed Standards K-2

## Section 3: Sex Education Standards Guidelines

Grade Span: K-2 (by the end of Grade 2)

Purposely Blank

There are NO standards guidelines in this grade span.

# Updated Sex Ed Standards 3-5

**Practice 3:** Information and Resource Seeking Access, evaluate, and use valid and reliable health information, products, services, and related resources.

## Sex Education [5.3.SE]

Sexual relationship topics fall under sex education in these standards guidelines and must

follow state laws on sex education instruction.

1. Identify valid and reliable information, products (deodorant, period products, medicine for cramps, etc.), and resources related to growth and development, puberty, and personal hygiene.
2. Locate resources from home, school, and community that provide medically accurate sources of information about puberty, personal hygiene, and growth and development.
3. Use valid, reliable, and medically accurate resources to find information about the human reproductive systems, growth and development, and the effects of hormones.

# Updated Sex Ed Standards 3-5

4. Explain human reproduction and identify valid and reliable resources for additional information.
5. Identify parents, guardians, or other trusted adults (e.g., counselors and other health care professionals) whom students can ask questions about puberty, abstinence, and adolescent health issues (including abuse and neglect).
6. Define communicable diseases, including Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV), and identify how they are and are not transmitted.

# Updated Sex Ed Standards 3-5

Practice 5: Self-Management and Goal Setting Set goals, engage in health-promoting behaviors, and avoid risky behaviors.

## Sex Education [5.5.SE]

Sexual relationship topics fall under sex education in these standards guidelines and must follow state laws on sex education instruction.

1. Describe the range of physical, social, and emotional changes during puberty and adolescence and the individual variations in puberty timelines and experiences.
2. Explain various health-promoting practices to manage the social, physical, and emotional changes associated with puberty and adolescence, as well as when help or support might be needed.
3. Describe health-promoting behaviors during menstruation, including ways to cope with emotional changes, manage pain, and identify when help or support is needed.
4. Practice healthy habits related to puberty and personal hygiene.

# Updated Sex Ed Standards 6-8

## Practice 2: Social Awareness, Relationship, and Communication Skills

### Sex Education [8.2.SE]

Sexual relationship topics fall under sex education in these standards guidelines and must follow state laws on sex education instruction.

1. Define gender identity, gender expression, and sexual orientation, and explain that they are distinct components of every individual's identity.
2. Explain how biological sex, gender identity, and gender expression are distinct concepts and how they interact with each other.
3. Explain that romantic, emotional, and/or sexual attractions can be toward an individual of the same and/or different gender(s), and that attractions can change over time.
4. Discuss signs, symptoms, and potential effects of sexually transmitted infections, including HIV.

# Updated Sex Ed Standards 6-8

Practice 3: Information and Resource Seeking Access, evaluate, and use valid and reliable health information, products, services, and related resources.

## Sex Education [8.3.SE]

Sexual relationship topics fall under sex education in these standards guidelines and must follow state laws on sex education instruction.

1. Analyze the validity of claims for health information, products (e.g., period products, personal hygiene, over-the-counter pain medications), services, and resources about sexual and reproductive health.
2. Access credible sources of information about sexual and reproductive health.
3. Locate valid and reliable information on puberty, personal hygiene, menstruation, and personal health products from various resources in one's home, school, and community.

# Updated Sex Ed Standards 6-8

Practice 4: Decision Making and Problem Solving Make health-promoting, informed, responsible decisions and solve problems in a variety of health-related situations.

## Sex Education [8.4.SE]

Sexual relationship topics fall under sex education in these standards guidelines and must follow state laws on sex education instruction.

1. Analyze personal and family values related to relationships, abstinence, sexual behaviors, and sexual health.
2. Identify valid and reliable sources of information and resources to inform and support sexual health decisions, including abstinence.
3. Analyze ways to prevent pregnancy and sexually transmitted infections (STIs), including strategies that can be used before becoming sexually active (e.g., abstinence, communicating with a partner, HPV vaccine, contraception).
4. Describe possible short- and long-term impacts of engaging in sexual activity and identify ways to avoid negative or potentially harmful consequences.

# Updated Sex Ed Standards 6-8

5. Explain the importance of, and ways to identify, setting personal limits to avoid unintended outcomes from risky or unwanted sexual behavior and to make sexual health decisions.
6. Articulate the benefits of abstinence, postponing sexual activity, and setting personal limits (e.g., aligning with personal or family values, understanding the changing nature of relationships, avoiding early or unintended pregnancy, reducing risk of STIs) based on individual beliefs and values.
7. Describe strategies that can be used to make decisions that adhere to personal and family values.
8. Apply an effective decision-making process in situations related to sexual health.

# Updated Sex Ed Standards 6-8

Practice 5: Self-Management and Goal Setting Set goals, engage in health-promoting behaviors, and avoid risky behaviors.

## Sex Education [8.5.SE]

Sexual relationship topics fall under sex education in these standards guidelines and must follow state laws on sex education instruction.

1. Examine various considerations (e.g., personal and/or family values, cultural and societal norms, and beliefs) for determining emotional readiness for sexual behaviors.
2. Assess personal health practices and develop short- and long-term goals that support healthy sexual behaviors (e.g., abstinence, delay, use of contraception, use of barriers, giving and obtaining consent).
3. Determine strategies, including abstinence, that will reduce the risk of HIV and other sexually transmitted infections and pregnancy.
4. Describe how sexual health values and priorities may change with age, maturity, knowledge, and responsibilities.

# Updated Sex Ed Standards 6-8

Practice 6: Advocacy and Health Promotion Promote personal, family, and community health and well-being.

## Sex Education [8.6.SE]

Sexual relationship topics fall under sex education in these standards guidelines

and must follow state laws on sex education instruction.

1. Demonstrate ways to show courtesy and respect for others when aspects of their sexuality or gender are different from one's own.
2. Practice skills to intervene if teasing or bullying based on sexuality is occurring, and how to support those affected.
3. Encourage others to refrain from teasing or bullying others based on their sexuality (e.g., sexual activity [including abstinence], sexual orientation) or gender (e.g., gender expression, gender identity).
4. Identify behaviors, policies, and practices in the school community that promote or hinder dignity and respect for all individuals.

# Updated Sex Ed Standards 9-12

Practice 1: Self-Awareness and Analyzing Influences Examine how emotions, thoughts, needs, values, beliefs, and other factors (both internal and external) influence behaviors and articulate how these influences affect health behavior and outcomes.

## Sex Education [12.1.SE]

Sexual relationship topics fall under sex education in these standards guidelines and must follow state laws on sex education instruction.

1. Analyze a variety of internal and external influences (e.g., family, peers, media, society, community, culture) on a person's attitudes, beliefs, and expectations about abstinence and sexual behavior.

# Updated Sex Ed Standards 9-12

Practice 2: Social Awareness, Relationship, and Communication Skills Enhance relationships, personal health, and the health of others through social awareness and effective communication.

## Sex Education [12.2.SE]

Sexual relationship topics fall under sex education in these standards guidelines and must follow state laws on sex education instruction.

1. Summarize the importance of talking with parents, guardians, or other trusted adults about issues related to growth and development, abstinence, and sexual health.

# Updated Sex Ed Standards 9-12

Practice 3: Information and Resource Seeking Access, evaluate, and use valid and reliable health information, products, services, and related resources.

## Sex Education [12.3.SE]

Sexual relationship topics fall under sex education in these standards guidelines and must follow state laws on sex education instruction.

1. Summarize the benefits of respecting individual differences in aspects of growth and development
2. Summarize the importance of talking with parents, guardians, or other trusted adults about issues related to growth and development and sexual health.

# Updated Sex Ed Standards 9-12

Practice 4: Decision Making and Problem Solving Make health-promoting, informed, responsible decisions and solve problems in a variety of health-related situations.

## Sex Education [12.4.SE]

Sexual relationship topics fall under sex education in these standards guidelines and

must follow state laws on sex education instruction.

1. Discuss reasons why it is harmful and illegal to trick, threaten, or coerce another person into sexual activity.
2. Analyze factors that contribute to behaviors that increase the risk of pregnancy, HIV, and other STIs.
3. Explain the importance of STI (including HIV) testing and treatment, where to get tested, and why it is essential to communicate with a partner about STI status.
4. Identify situations, signs, and symptoms that might indicate a need to seek medical consultation.

# Updated Sex Ed Standards 9-12

5. Evaluate readiness, options, and their respective outcomes regarding decisions about whether to engage in sexual activity, including abstaining, postponing sexual intercourse, engaging in risk reduction practices (e.g., using condoms and other barriers, using birth control).
6. Demonstrate the ability to apply a thoughtful decision-making process in situations related to sexual activity and sexual health.
7. Explain age of consent laws and examine the various components of consent (e.g., consent must be asked for and verbally given, consent cannot be given if under the influence, consent can be taken away at any time).

# Updated Sex Ed Standards 9-12

Practice 5: Self-Management and Goal Setting Set goals, engage in health-promoting behaviors, and avoid risky behaviors.

## Sex Education [12.5.SE]

Sexual relationship topics fall under sex education in these standards guidelines and must follow state laws on sex education instruction.

1. Evaluate personal responsibility and the consequences related to pressuring someone for sexually explicit pictures, sending, or posting sexually explicit pictures or messages.

# Updated Sex Ed Standards 9-12

Practice 6: Advocacy and Health Promotion Promote personal, family, and community health and well-being.

## Sex Education [12.6.SE]

Sexual relationship topics fall under sex education in these standards guidelines and must follow state laws on sex education instruction.

1. Discuss how to foster empathy, inclusivity, and respect around issues related to gender and sexuality.