

Appendix A

Comprehensive Sexual Health Education Frequently Asked Questions

1. Public Act 102-0522 references two similar terms. What is the difference between “comprehensive personal health and safety education” and “comprehensive sexual health education?”

The National Sex Education Standards/Illinois Sex Education Standards are separated into different “grade bands.” These represent the knowledge and skills taught to specific grades. The term “comprehensive personal health and safety education” refers to the learning standards for students in kindergarten through fifth grade. The term “comprehensive sexual health education” refers to the standards for students in grades 6 through 12.

2. The National Sex Education Standards were developed by The Future of Sex Initiative. What happens if they decide to change the standards in the future?

While the standards were developed by The Future of Sex Initiative, they were also reviewed and adopted by our State Legislature, Illinois State Board of Education, and JCAR. The State Board of Education has stated that the adoption/incorporation of these standards “includes only the specified edition and not any future editions or revisions.” Additionally, the State Register (Volume 46, Issue 31) identified the 2020 version of the standards as the adopted standards, further stating “no later amendments to or editions of these standards are incorporated by this Section.” If an organization outside the State of Illinois makes modifications to the current version of the standards, the State Board of Education would have to follow existing procedures and processes to engage the legislature to approve and adopt new standards.

3. There is a flyer circulating around the District community that states that District 211 will teach children “how to define oral and anal sex,” “how to masturbate,” and “about the potential role of hormone blockers.” Is this true?

The National Sex Education Standards/Illinois Sex Education Standards are divided into standards for different grades. Since our curriculum is delivered through freshman and sophomore wellness courses, we have analyzed and proposed to follow the standards for grades 9 and 10. The concepts mentioned above are not present in the verbiage in the standards for grades 9 and 10, therefore will not be part of our curriculum.

4. May the comprehensive personal health and safety and comprehensive sexual health be taught in some grades and not others?

Yes, the standards cover grades K-12. Districts adopting the standards must incorporate them in any grade receiving instruction in sexual education but may choose which grades receive such instruction. District 211 teaches sex education in grades 9 and 10 through the Freshman and Sophomore Wellness courses.

5. Public Act 102-0522 states that “a student’s parent or guardian may opt the student out of comprehensive personal health and safety and comprehensive sexual health education by submitting the request in writing.” What is this process in District 211?

If approved, the comprehensive sexual health education curriculum will be taught during second semester. Parents of students enrolled in freshman and sophomore wellness will receive information

about the curriculum content and the District 211 opt-out form at least two weeks prior to the beginning of the lessons.

What happens to students who are opt-ed out by their parents?

If a parent chooses to opt their student out of engaging in the comprehensive sexual health education curriculum, their student will not attend their scheduled wellness class when the curriculum is being facilitated. Those students will be provided an alternate learning environment and alternate curriculum consistent with the mandated health requirements that exist outside of comprehensive sexual health education. Students will still be expected to be in attendance in their alternate environment and complete all assignments associated with the alternate curriculum.

6. Public Act 102-0522 also states that “an opportunity shall be afforded to individuals, including parents or guardians, to review the scope and sequence of instructional materials to be used in a class or a course under this Section.” What is the process in District 211 for this?

The general understanding is that scope includes the content, topics and skills to be studied, while the sequence refers to the order in which they are studied. In District 211, a majority of our teachers utilize Schoology as a learning management system. Schoology provides students and parents access to the specific curriculum, including assignments and class materials used in their classroom. All parents of freshman and sophomore wellness teachers will have access to the instructional materials utilized during comprehensive sexual health education. In addition, parents can request to view curriculum materials in-person in their school. During this process, parents are provided a more generalized curriculum unless they request a specific teacher.

7. Public Act 102-0522 requires that “a school district shall annually post, on its Internet website if one exists, which curriculum is used to provide comprehensive personal health and safety and comprehensive sexual health education.” What will District 211 post?

Many schools, especially elementary and middle schools, purchase pre-developed curriculum that they use as their health education curriculum. Examples that you may have heard include Candor Health, HealthSmart, or Get Real. District 211 creates its own curriculum based on National and State Standards, therefore, we will post the scope and sequence that we have developed.

8. Does the ISBE collect information about which districts are opting in or out of sexual health education in the coming year or publish a list of this data?

No, the ISBE will collect data on whether or not instruction was offered in sexual health education in the past school year during the summer and report the data to the General Assembly.

9. Why is the discussion regarding the new standards coming to the District 211 Board of Education in November?

The standards were officially approved by the Illinois State Board of Education in summer 2022. All changes to the standards of courses taught within District 211 go through a review process including teachers, department chairs, principals and administrators. The Board of Education receives updates on these curricular conversations and recommendations three times a year (fall, winter and spring). The November Board of Education meeting agenda includes possible recommendations from

all departments and courses regarding course software, textbooks, novels and changes to course standards (critical learning standards).