

Curriculum Corner

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Health and Wellness Curriculum May 2016

As part of our curriculum review cycle, the Health Subcommittee met throughout the year. The members of the subcommittee included teachers, parents, students, administrators and community members. The charge of the committee was to propose recommendations for the 2016-2017 school year across K-12.

The committee's work was extensive. The current programming was reviewed and deemed very limited. Consultation with other districts was expansive as was review of our own student health data and that of other communities. The committee explored research on health instruction and the national health standards. Most importantly, there was significant discussion of what a comprehensive health curriculum in Duxbury should include. The committee then reviewed the current Massachusetts Comprehensive Health Frameworks and the draft of the Massachusetts Computer Science Digital Literacy Frameworks. The committee identified priority topics as substance abuse, mental health, human sexuality and digital literacy.

For the 2016-2017 school year, the current structures will remain the same. The prioritized standards will drive the focus at each developmental level. The following substantial changes are of note:

- Grade 5: In the middle of the school year, students will be separated by gender to watch a movie regarding changes in adolescence followed by discussion.
- Grade 8: The semester long Health course will emphasize human sexuality, substance abuse, mental health and coping strategies as well as digital safety and literacy.
- Grade 9: The human sexuality unit currently in place will expand to include interpersonal relationships, boundaries, communication and limits as well as consequences of risky behavior.
- Grade 10: At various times during the year, students from physical education classes will partake in mini-units as follow-up to the discussion of substance use, sexuality, mental health and digital safety.

The complete set of priority standards, the report of the subcommittee and presentation made to the School Committee is found on the district's home page.

Parents will be able to preview all materials prior to instruction and always have the option to elect to have their child not participate in any given topic. As per Massachusetts state law, parent notification of the coming discussions will occur in September and again just prior to the start of instruction.

A parent question and answer session will be held on **Wednesday, May 25, 2016 at 6 p.m.** in the library of the co-located middle and high school which is found on the third floor above the cafeteria. Other questions can be sent to the assistant superintendent's office at the contact information listed above. Partnering with parents and the community is an important component of an effective Health and Wellness program. We look forward to working together to support Duxbury's children.