

Delaware Township School District Health Education Curriculum Guide

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Delaware Township School

Health Education Curriculum

Statement of Philosophy

April, 2008

The Delaware Township School district believes that the practice of healthful living will positively affect students in all areas of learning and life. The purpose of our curriculum is to provide students with increasingly sophisticated information regarding physical growth, personal health, disease prevention, safety and family living that correlates with the New Jersey Core Content Curriculum Standards. Our comprehensive, sequential curriculum is based on research and incorporates current best practices. The instructional units and techniques are developmentally appropriate, differentiated where needed, and integrated with other curricular areas. It is designed to assist students in making positive decisions that improve overall health (physical, mental, emotional and social), prevent disease, and reduce health-related risk behaviors. It promotes critical independent thinking skills within a holistic framework to enable our students to make value-based decisions.

- Researched, Drafted and Finalized by the Health Education Curriculum Committee, 2008

Health Education Program Parameters

The New Jersey Core Curriculum Content Standards (NJCCCS) for Comprehensive Health and Physical Education is the foundation for what students should know and be able to do to support a healthy and active lifestyle. At Delaware Township School district, these standards have been used as the basis for the school's health curriculum.

Grade Level Structure

The N.J.S.A.C. 18A:35, 7 and 8 requires that all students in grades K-12 participate in health education classes. In DTS, the health education program is offered to grades kindergarten through third for thirty minutes weekly. In grades 4 and 5 students receive health education classes once a week for a full class period each week. And in grades 6, 7 and 8, students receive health education classes for a full trimester (12 weeks) each year. The health education curriculum works in tandem with the physical education curriculum and the guidance curriculum to meet the NJCCCS for Comprehensive Health and Physical Education.

Standard Bands and Developmentally Appropriate Practices

The Comprehensive Health and Physical Education Standards are organized into small grade level bands (K-2, 3-4, 5-6, 7-8, and 9-12) so that content can more easily be taught across grade levels. While many of the standards spiral through the bands, emphasis between the grades within a band is often similar. The DTS health curriculum has been designed to address these bands of instruction and to keep all content developmentally appropriate for the students.

Developmentally appropriate practices include:

- many active learning experiences for students,
- the use of varied instructional approaches,
- a balance between teacher directed and student directed activities,
- and an emphasis on the integration of curriculum.

The DTS Health curriculum provides for **active learning experiences** that allow students to explore, interact and communicate with others while learning. Learning centers, field trips, role playing scenarios, dramatic presentations, and group collaborative projects are all examples of active learning experiences.

In addition, **varied instructional strategies** have been used to ensure that all types of learning styles are addressed. Many of these approaches are common to other content areas of curriculum as well. Such strategies and approaches include process writing, cooperative learning, independent learning activities, thematic instruction, projects, learning centers, and problem-based learning. By providing a wide array of engaging activities, students with different learning styles are able to develop their skills, abilities and knowledge in health education.

Developmentally appropriate practice promotes a balance between **teacher-directed and student-directed activities**. Teacher-directed learning involves the teacher as a facilitator who models learning strategies and guides instruction. Student-directed learning allows the child to assume responsibility for learning and many of the activities are collaborative and open ended.

Emphasis has been placed on integrating the health curriculum as appropriate. An **integrated curriculum** connects content material and subject matter across disciplines to unify concepts. In addition, this helps to relate the learning to "real life." Much of the DTS health curriculum interfaces with the PE curriculum and the guidance curriculum in content. In addition many science standards are also addressed through the study of the human body, medicines and drugs. Many of the strategies used to implement lessons are also considered to be "best practices" in the field of literacy.

Alternative Instructional Content

Pursuant to N.J.S.A.C. 18A:35-4.7, DTS must notify parents of their option for alternative instructional content if the parent or legal guardian finds that any part of the health curriculum is in conflict with one's conscience, moral beliefs or religious beliefs. The student may be excused from that portion of the health course and provided with alternative instructional content and activities aligned with the NJCCCS for Health and Physical Education.

Prior to exemption from an area of the health curriculum, DTS is also required to provide parents with clarification of the content in question. A discussion may occur with the parents or guardian to clarify any misconceptions about the school's program. Should a parent still decide to exempt their child from this portion of the health curriculum, the law requires that the parent or guardian present a written, signed statement to the school principal explaining why the instruction is in conflict with his or her conscience, moral beliefs or religious beliefs.

A district form is used for this process and can be found in the appendix section of this curriculum. Once the letter has been received by the school administration, the student is excused without penalty from the content found in conflict; however, the student must still complete instructional activities that support achievement of the NJCCCS for Comprehensive Health and Physical Education.