

Health Education K-12 Learning Standards Definitions and Requirements

The Washington State K-12 Learning Standards for Health and Physical Education were adopted in 2016. The wording of the standards gives school districts flexibility when selecting curricula while also giving more specific guidance to teachers, including suggested outcomes for each grade. Below are terms and definitions used in the standards, as well as any applicable state laws.

Term	Definition	Examples	Required?
Standard	What all students should know and be able to do in a specific content area. There are eight Health Education standards.	Students will demonstrate the ability to use decision-making skills to enhance health (standard 5).	Yes. Basic education is defined by state law (Revised Code of Washington 28A.150.210). The Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction develops the state’s learning standards (RCW 28A.655.070).
Core Idea	Typical units of study in a Health Education course. The standards contain six core ideas, which organize outcomes related to the eight learning standards.	Wellness Safety Nutrition Sexual Health Social Emotional Health Substance Use and Abuse	No. While not required (other than sexual health - see below), the six core ideas represent a balanced, comprehensive approach to health education with a focus on the Whole Child .
Topic	Adds specificity to each standard and fall into one of the six core ideas. The standards contain 36 topics.	Nutritional Planning Hygiene Self-Identity Stress management	Only a few topics are required: HIV/AIDS prevention for students in grades 5-12 (RCW 28A.230.070); comprehensive sexual health education (RCW 28A.300.475); mental health and suicide prevention (28A.230.095); CPR and AED instruction for high school students (RCW 28A.230.179); STD prevention, physiology, hygiene, and the effects of alcohol/abuse (RCW 28A.230.020). No other topics are required.
Grade-level Outcome	Examples of student learning, for grades K through 12, designed to enable students to reach competency in one or more standards.	Within the topic of injury prevention, an outcome for kindergarten students is: “Identify safety hazards in the home.” An outcome for high school students is: “Describe how to prevent occupational injuries.”	No. While not required, using grade-level outcomes ensures students are meeting state standards and receiving comprehensive instruction.



Term	Definition	Examples	Required?
Curriculum/Instructional Materials	Materials and resources chosen to support the implementation of state learning standards. OSPI does not recommend or require the use of any specific curriculum. OSPI regularly reviews and reports on sexual health education instructional materials.	Textbooks Lessons DVDs Handouts Worksheets Programs	No. However, state laws exist for district selection of instructional materials (RCW 28A.320.230). Specific requirements exist for comprehensive sexual health education (RCW 28A.300.475). Also of note are the regulations and guidelines to eliminate discrimination (RCW 28A.640.020) and bias in instructional materials (WAC 392-190.055).

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For more information

- [The 2016 Washington State K-12 Learning Standards for Health and Physical Education](#)
- [Health and Physical Education in Washington State](#)
- [Sexual Health Education in Washington State](#)



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