
MEMORANDUM

TO: Superintendents, Headmasters, Curriculum Directors, School Leaders, Educators

FROM: Zoie Saunders, M.Ed., Interim Secretary of Education

SUBJECT: Updated Elementary School Guidance on Health Education

DATE: November 22, 2024

Updated: Elementary School Guidance on Health Education

This memo serves to update guidance for Supervisory Union/Districts (SU/SDs) and schools on the provision of comprehensive health education (CHE) in the elementary grade levels. In 2014, the [Elementary School Guidance on Health Education](#) memo was issued, which states:

In grades K-6, an elementary educator's license allows him or her to teach health education within a class as part of the overall educational experience. In this case, the elementary educator is responsible for assessing health knowledge and skills, even if he or she occasionally partners with other experts from in or outside the school community to support instruction. If K-6 health education is provided on a regular basis, by someone other than the elementary classroom teacher, that person must hold a K-6 health education endorsement to assess health knowledge and skills.

This memo serves to replace the 2014 memo in full and clarify that school nurses (excluding associate school nurses) may collaborate with elementary and health educators in the development of curriculum but may not serve as teacher of record, or assess, for health education. School nurses may also provide instruction in health education as a guest lecturer in collaboration with a properly licensed elementary or health educator serving as the teacher of record. This activity must not interfere in their primary responsibility of providing school health services to students.

Statutory Reasoning:

Health Education Requirements in Vermont

Under [16 V.S.A. §906](#), public, independent schools, and home study programs must offer a minimum course of study, including comprehensive health education (CHE). Defined in 16 [V.S.A. §131](#) and [Education Quality Standards 2120.5](#), CHE provides systematic K-12 learning experiences



Contact: AOE Licensing, aoe.licensinginfo@vermont.gov

focused on human health. Vermont adopted the National [Health Education Standards](#) in 2014, requiring schools to assess and instruct health concepts/skills per these standards and state law. [Act 66 of 2021](#) mandates SU/SDs to publicly report health education policies and practices. Please see the [Vermont Local Wellness Policy Guide](#), for more information.

Health Educator Endorsements and Responsibilities

Health educators can hold endorsements for PreK-8, PreK-12, or 5-12 instruction and are responsible for the provision of health education (curriculum, instruction, and assessment). However, in elementary schools where an endorsed health educator is not employed, the classroom teacher is responsible for all aspects of health education including curriculum, instruction, and assessment, under the K-6 Elementary Education endorsement.

If someone other than the elementary classroom teacher serves as the teacher of record for comprehensive health education, they must hold a health education endorsement. However, there are two ways a school nurse, guidance counselor, health professional, or expert may assist with health education in elementary classrooms under state law and administrative rule:

1. A licensed school nurse (excluding associate school nurses) or outside professional works in partnership with the classroom teacher to develop curriculum and instruction and may provide input on assessments. The classroom teacher, as the teacher of record, must be involved in delivering instruction and assessing students even if led by the outside professional.
2. A licensed school nurse (endorsement 65, excluding 65A Associate School Nurse) or outside health professional/organization provides instruction to students in the classroom of an elementary or health educator. In this case, the classroom teacher remains responsible for the curriculum, instruction, and assessment of state-adopted CHE standards as the teacher of record.

No matter the individual who is supporting health education instruction (e.g., guidance counselor, school nurse, etc.), this work should not infringe on their other duties as assigned. School nurses, for instance, should not be engaged in responsibilities that put at risk their ability to provide a continuation of care for students. Furthermore, while exceptions may be permitted for school nurses, guidance counselors, etc. to support health education, it does not provide grounds to compel these persons to provide support to health education provision in the SU/SD.

Next Steps

The Agency of Education is currently building out supports for educators in providing integrated comprehensive health instruction (see [Comprehensive Health Interdisciplinary Framework](#)). Please share your insights and questions on interdisciplinary/integrated health education, and the framework document linked above, through this [feedback form](#).