



PIAC Update – September 24, 2019

Overview of the New Ontario Health & Physical Education Curriculum, Grades 1 -8

On August 21, 2019 Education Minister Stephen Lecce announced the release of the elementary Health and Physical Education (HPE) curriculum which takes effect immediately. This is the third HPE elementary curriculum that has been released in the last five school years.

The HPE curriculum continues to emphasize the importance of our students' physical and health literacy, with an additional learning strand devoted to social-emotional learning skills. This new learning strand is dedicated to foster the overall health and well-being of our students through positive mental health. The specific expectations of social-emotional skills that will be integrated throughout the curriculum are: emotions, coping, motivation, relationships, self, and thinking. This strand aligns well with the TDSB's Multi-Year Strategic Plan and our system goal of creating a culture of student and staff well-being.

Safety, including physical and emotional safety, is a major theme throughout the HPE curriculum. Students will acquire the knowledge associated with current issues such as cannabis, prescription and non-prescription drugs, signs and symptoms of concussions, cyber safety (including bullying prevention and digital privacy), as well as reducing the stigmatization of mental health by empowering students with the knowledge and information to seek professional help in the school and the community.

The HPE curriculum has defined expectations related to the topic of Human Development and Sexual Health. The following Ministry of Education website (<https://www.ontario.ca/document/health-and-physical-education-grades-1-8/human-development-and-sexual-health-education-grade>) contains details on what students will learn about human development and sexual health and why these concepts are being taught at certain age levels. Starting in Grade 1, students will learn how to care for and use the correct names of their body parts. Another noteworthy change is that the topic of puberty will now be taught in Grade 4, where it was previously taught in Grade 5. In Grade 8 students will learn about the importance of abstinence, contraception and consent in order to make safe and healthy decisions about sexual activity. In Grade 8 students will also learn about gender identity, gender expression, sexual orientation, and to identify factors that can help all young people to develop positive personal identities.

Additional resources aligned to the new HPE Curriculum are being developed by TDSB Teachers and The Ontario Health and Physical Education Association (Ophea). System-wide support for the implementation will consist of Adobe Connect sessions for administrators and teachers, as well as professional learning opportunities for teachers with dates to be announced in the near future.

The HPE Curriculum 2019 states that:

Parents are the primary educators of their children with respect to learning about values, appropriate behaviour, and ethnocultural, spiritual, and personal beliefs and traditions, and they are their children's first role models. It is therefore important for schools and parents to work together to ensure that home and school provide a mutually supportive framework for young people's education (The Ontario Curriculum: Grades 1-8: Health and Physical Education, pg.14).

The government has issued Policy/Program Memorandum (PPM) 162(Exemption from Instruction related to Human Development and Sexual Health Expectations in The Ontario Curriculum for Health and Physical Education, Grades 1-8, 2019) that requires school boards to develop a policy/procedure allowing parents to exempt their child from instruction of the human development and sexual health education component of the elementary HPE Curriculum. Parents/guardians may exempt their child from the **entire component**, not specific expectations. A procedure will be developed in accordance with the new PPM prior to the November 30, 2019 deadline. It is important to note that instruction in Human Development and Sexual Health will begin after the TDSB's exemption procedure has been finalized and communicated to staff and parents/guardians and not prior to December 2010.

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