



February 2015

To: BOCES District Superintendents
Superintendents of Public Schools
Principals of Public and Non-Public Schools
Charter School Leaders

From: Candace H. Shyer *Candace H. Shyer*
Assistant Commissioner, Office of Assessment, Standards and Curriculum

Renee L. Rider *RLR*
Assistant Commissioner, Office of Student Support Services

Subject: Clarification of the Modernization of Health Education Curriculum Law

This memorandum provides information on the new requirements for school districts regarding the modernization of health education curriculum regarding alcohol, tobacco, and other drugs. Paragraph a of subdivision 4 of section 804 of the Education Law, as amended by Chapter 181 of the laws of 2000, was amended in response to the recent increase in heroin and opioid abuse in New York State and across the nation.

Each school district is required to update its health education curriculum to include the most up-to-date, age-appropriate information available regarding the misuse and abuse of alcohol, tobacco, and other drugs, including but not limited to heroin and opioids. Such curriculum must include, but not be limited to, information regarding drugs and other substances that are more prevalent among school-aged youth.

School districts, while updating their K-12 school health education curriculum, should ensure that it is grade level appropriate and aligned to the New York State Learning Standards. The Standards can be found at:
<http://www.p12.nysed.gov/sss/schoolhealth/schoolhealtheducation/healthPEFACSLearningStandards.pdf>.

As part of a coordinated State effort, the New York State Education Department has been working collaboratively with the NYS Office of Alcohol Substance Abuse Services and the NYS Department of Health on a statewide communication to schools and school communities. This is a campaign to help schools build understanding about the dangers of heroin and opioid use. Resources can be found at:
<http://www.combatheroin.ny.gov/resources>.

In addition, there will be continued collaboration between the State agencies as they work together to develop a supplemental guide for drug, alcohol, and tobacco prevention education in support of the “Guidance Document For Achieving the New York State Standards in Health Education”. This document can be found at: <http://www.p12.nysed.gov/sss/documents/GuidanceDocument4.25.update.pdf>.

Related questions may be directed to the Office of Curriculum & Instruction at (518) 474-5922 or emscurric@nysed.gov and/or the Office of Student Support Services at (518) 486-6090 or studentsupportservices@nysed.gov.