



Expanded Health Curriculum Mandate

The Executive budget proposal has a requirement to dramatically change the existing health education mandate to include healthy relationship instruction to all students in grades 6-12.

As drafted, the proposal would expand the scope of the mandated health instruction to include comprehensive sexual education, self-worth, teen dating violence, safe uses of technology and reporting of sexual harassment, among other topics. Details of the instructional requirement would be further informed by a group of stakeholders. Although districts would be mandated to provide the instruction, school districts would also be required to notify parents and guardians of such instruction and provide them the opportunity to opt their children out of the program.

NYSSBA recognizes the importance of these issues. However, this proposal infringes on the autonomy of both the State Education Department and local boards of education throughout the state. NYSSBA supports the periodic review of educational standards including health education standards by the Board of Regents and encourages interested parties to request such a review. However, once SED completes such a review, the details of the day-to-day lessons and curriculum should remain with school districts.

Moreover, NYSSBA has serious concerns about the establishment of such a broad and intensive mandate for instruction that parents would be allowed to opt their students out of, leaving districts to need to determine alternative activities, supervision and instruction for those students.

For these reasons, NYSSBA opposes this proposal, and urges that it be rejected from the final budget. For additional information, please contact NYSSBA Governmental Relations at 518-783-0200.