# **Comprehensive Health and Physical Education FAQ**

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| **Physical Education (PE)** | |
| Questions about alignment to the SHAPE America National Physical Education standards (which are under revision)[[1]](#footnote-2). | The [Comprehensive Health and Physical Education Framework Crosswalks](https://www.doe.mass.edu/sfs/healthframework/chpe-alignment-crosswalks.docx) show that the Comprehensive Health and Physical Education Framework (CHPE) includes all five SHAPE America National PE standards, as well as almost all of its Grade Level Outcomes (GLOs). Additionally, the Department has reviewed the proposed revised SHAPE America National PE Standards to confirm that the Frameworks would continue to align with those standards.  When drafting the CHPE, DESE sought and received feedback from state and national experts in physical education, including the chair of the revision committee for SHAPE America’s National PE standards, all of whom agreed that the CHPE contains a comprehensive set of standards for students to learn in physical education. |
| Are there standards clearly designated as physical education (PE) standards? | There is coding of the standards to identify the sub-discipline(s) in which the standard might be included (i.e., physical education, health education, etc.). The codes are suggestions and are intended only as a guide for schools and districts to support unpacking of the standards to design programming, curricula, units, and/or lessons. Many of the standards could be included as goals of one or both of the sub-disciplines and/or as part of a social and emotional learning program and are coded accordingly. |
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| **Sexual Health and Sexual Orientation** | |
| Questions about age and developmental appropriateness, including concerns regarding using medically accurate terms for genitals in PK-2. | The CHPE reflects research and best practices for sexuality education and is aligned with National Sex Education standards. A “[r]eview of the literature of the past three decades provides strong support for comprehensive sex education across a range of topics and grade levels. Results provide evidence for the effectiveness of approaches that address a broad definition of sexual health and take positive, affirming, inclusive approaches to human sexuality.” [[2]](#footnote-3)  The CHPE provides standards and links them to specific grade-spans. As stated in the document itself, these standards are meant to be attained by the end of the respective grade span.  State law ([G.L. c. 71, § 1](https://malegislature.gov/Laws/GeneralLaws/PartI/TitleXII/Chapter71/Section1) and [G.L. c. 71, § 3](https://malegislature.gov/Laws/GeneralLaws/PartI/TitleXII/Chapter71/Section3)) requires all public schools to teach health and physical education. Curriculum frameworks like the CHPE “are constructed to guide and assist teachers… in the development and selection of curricula, textbooks, technology and other instructional materials, and in the design of pedagogical approaches and techniques for elementary, secondary and vocational-technical schools.”  State law ([G.L. c. 71, § 32A](https://malegislature.gov/Laws/GeneralLaws/PartI/TitleXII/Chapter71/Section32a)) gives parents/guardians the right to opt-out their children from lessons related to human sexual education or human sexuality issues, a small portion of the knowledge covered in this framework. |
| Questions about religious objections, and concerns about schools teaching values and beliefs, in general and with respect to this specific topic. | State law ([G.L. c. 71, § 1](https://malegislature.gov/Laws/GeneralLaws/PartI/TitleXII/Chapter71/Section1) and [G.L. c. 71, § 3](https://malegislature.gov/Laws/GeneralLaws/PartI/TitleXII/Chapter71/Section3)) requires all public schools to teach health and physical education.  State law ([G.L. c. 71, § 32A](https://malegislature.gov/Laws/GeneralLaws/PartI/TitleXII/Chapter71/Section32a)) gives parents the right to opt-out their children from lessons related to human sexual education or human sexuality issues, a small portion of the knowledge covered in this framework.  Sexual orientation is included as a protected class in Massachusetts law and the Department is committed to providing all students with equal rights of access and equal enjoyment of the opportunities, advantages, privileges, and courses of study in public schools. |
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| **Gender Identity** | |
| Questions about age-appropriateness, terminology, religious objections, and concerns about schools teaching values and beliefs, in general, and with respect to this specific topic. | Gender identity is included as a protected class in Massachusetts law and the Department is committed to providing all students with equal rights of access and equal enjoyment of the opportunities, advantages, privileges and courses of study in public schools.  The CHPE standards related to gender identity are based on research and are aligned with National Sex Education standards.  Both the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) acknowledge and affirm gender identity as an important part of effective patient care. |
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| **Media Literacy, Cell Phone Use, and Social Media** | |
| Concerns raised related to addictive behaviors related to cell phone use and social media, personal safety when using social media, and the importance of both digital and media literacy on overall health and well-being. | Social media is referenced throughout the framework, starting in grades 3-5 in the context of relationships, personal safety, and addiction.  Media literacy is specifically referenced as an element of Practice 6: Information and Resource Seeking, and the role of media on health is incorporated as a part of various other practices and across topic areas.  The CHPE standards align with and are supplemental to the [2016 Digital Literacy and Computer Science Framework.](https://www.doe.mass.edu/frameworks/dlcs.pdf) |
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| **Nutrition** | |
| Concerns were raised about ensuring nutrition education was inclusive and equitable. | Implementation supports will include best practices in teaching nutrition. |
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| **Disability** | |
| Concerns were raised about a lack of acknowledgment of disability and that some standards (mainly movement-focused standards) were ableist. | A definition of “developmental appropriateness” is included in the introduction to articulate the intended inclusivity of the term. |
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| **Family Engagement** | |
| Requests for information about opt-out laws. | The opt-out process remains unchanged.  State law ([G.L. c. 71, § 1](https://malegislature.gov/Laws/GeneralLaws/PartI/TitleXII/Chapter71/Section1) and [G.L. c. 71, § 3](https://malegislature.gov/Laws/GeneralLaws/PartI/TitleXII/Chapter71/Section3)) requires all public schools to teach health education and physical education, but school districts have the discretion to determine how standards are implemented at the local level, including what curriculum and materials they will use. State law ([G.L. c. 71, § 32A](https://malegislature.gov/Laws/GeneralLaws/PartI/TitleXII/Chapter71/Section32a)) gives parents the right to opt-out their children from lessons related to human sexual education or human sexuality issues, a small portion of the knowledge covered in this framework. |
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| **Implementation** | |
| Concerns were raised about providing equitable access to opportunities for CHPE for all students (e.g., students with disabilities, multi-lingual learners, etc.) and lack of time or dedicated courses/classes to implement comprehensive health and physical education. | State law ([G.L. c. 71, § 1](https://malegislature.gov/Laws/GeneralLaws/PartI/TitleXII/Chapter71/Section1) and [G.L. c. 71, § 3](https://malegislature.gov/Laws/GeneralLaws/PartI/TitleXII/Chapter71/Section3)) requires all public schools to teach health and physical education. Curriculum frameworks like the CHPE “are constructed to guide and assist teachers… in the development and selection of curricula, textbooks, technology and other instructional materials, and in the design of pedagogical approaches and techniques for elementary, secondary and vocational-technical schools.”  School districts have the discretion to determine how standards are implemented at the local level, including what curriculum and materials they will use. |
| Questions were raised about educator preparation and teacher licensure. | As with other Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks, upon adoption of the revised standards, the Department will update the [Subject Matter Knowledge (SMK) Guidelines](https://www.doe.mass.edu/edprep/domains/instruction/smk-guidelines.docx) requirements to align with the revised framework.  Additionally, DESE will revise the subject matter knowledge of the Massachusetts Tests for Educator Licensure (MTELs) in the coming years to be consistent with the revised framework and SMK Guidelines. |
| Will there be technical assistance or other guidance for district Curriculum Directors and educators? | DESE will provide resources to support implementation, including on the following topics:   * + Orientation to the framework   + Support for unpacking the standards and selecting/developing curricular resources for all students   + Equity, inclusion, and family engagement |
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1. In early 2021, SHAPE America's National Physical Education Standards Task Force began the national standards revision process. Its third round of public review and comment closed on August 31, 2023. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
2. Goldfarb ES, Lieberman LD. Three Decades of Research: The Case for Comprehensive Sex Education. J Adolesc Health. 2021 Jan;68(1):13-27. doi: 10.1016/j.jadohealth.2020.07.036. Epub 2020 Oct 12. PMID: 33059958. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)