

Providence Public School Department

Proposed Wellness Policy Amendment for Review by district H&W Committee

As approved by Healthy Relationships Subcommittee: 8/14/18

As approved by PPSD Lead Health educators: 9/4/18

As approved by PPSD H&W Committee: 9/26/18

As approved by PPSD School Board: 2/12/20

BACKGROUND: Drafting this amendment was one of the HR Subcommittee's three Goals. It was written to help support and bring greater awareness to the comprehensive PPSD Health Curriculum as it relates to Healthy Relationships content, laws, regulations, national best practices, and the recent data from the RIDOH on the surge in STDs among 15-19 year-olds in Rhode Island.

CONTEXT: There are significant biological, social and emotional developmental milestones that occur during the school-age years. As a result, schools will invariably deal with sexuality and relationship-related issues among their student population. Developing pro-active language about sexual health education within a district health and wellness policy can:

- 1) Emphasize a school culture and climate that embraces and addresses issues regarding the health and wellbeing of students and focuses directly on several key outcomes outlined in the *RIDE Strategic Plan for Public Education 2015-2020*.
- 2) Mitigate controversy by providing consistent direction for staff practices and communication regarding sexual health.
- 3) Support K-12 health educators and the K-12 PPSD health curriculum as part of a coordinated and comprehensive health education for PPSD students.

The Subcommittee welcomes an inclusive process to develop and adopt language for the district wellness policy that reflects the needs of students, staff and community and helps alleviate concerns and build lasting community support for the health of PPSD students.

Section 2. Health Education & Wellness Promotion

ADDENDUM:

d) Healthy Relationships Education and Wellness Promotion

Comprehensive sexuality education in schools promotes social and emotional competencies that contribute to academic success, reduces risk-taking and supports safe, positive and affirming environments that are inclusive of students of all gender identities and sexual orientations. Sexuality curriculum in PPSD shall be developmentally appropriate, use gender identity inclusive language and be aligned with the core content in the National Sexuality Standards and the RI Health Education Framework. Sexuality curriculum must be taught in accordance with RIGL 16-22-17 (AIDS education), RIGL 16-22-18 (Health and Family Life) and RIGL 18-85-1-2 (Lindsay Ann Burke Act regarding teen dating violence). PPSD sexuality education shall be LGBTQ+ inclusive and include discussions of sexual orientation and gender identity throughout the curriculum.

All PPSD high school students shall have available to them resources and information that support healthy relationships and sexual and reproductive health. This includes access to information about where to find on and off site sexual and reproductive health services, and how to connect with counseling and local organizations that promote violence-free dating, delayed sexual activity, and prevention of HIV, STIs, and unintended pregnancies.