

It's ok to learn math, but what use is it if you die from an STD or other preventable disease? Health class can help you learn how to prevent it."

~Emily, 8th grade student



Why Middle School Health?

There is Support for Making Health Education More Than a One Shot Deal

Even with the continuous belt tightening in our schools, it is important to know that there is support for a comprehensive health education curriculum. Why? Research has shown that the quickest way to academic achievement for our students is to make sure they have the knowledge and skills necessary to make healthy decisions. Middle school is the ideal place to reach and teach students before they engage in unhealthy behaviors. The good news is you have support:

- ◆ Public Act 451, 380.1502 states that health education "shall be established and provided in all public schools of this state". Law requires health and physical education in our schools.
- ◆ The Michigan Merit Curriculum requires 1 credit of health education and physical education to graduate from high school. A student who has received health education in middle school will be better equipped to make health choices and will excel in their high school health class. (Michigan State Board of Education policy on Comprehensive Health Education)
- ◆ The comprehensive health education policy passed in 2004 recommends 50 hours of health education at every grade level to give all students sufficient time to learn health skills and habits for a lifetime, building functional knowledge from year to year.

[Children]....who face violence, hunger, substance abuse, unintended pregnancy, and despair cannot possibly focus on academic excellence. There is no curriculum brilliant enough to compensate for a hungry stomach or a distracted mind.

National Action Plan on Comprehensive School Health Education, 1992

"For tomorrow belongs to the people who prepare for it today"

~African Proverb

Research studies by national organizations like the American Cancer Society provide evidence that promoting and establishing healthy behaviors for younger people are more effective and often easier, than efforts to change unhealthy behaviors established in adult populations. Even by 9th grade, unhealthy behaviors are already becoming habit.

- ◆ 10% of students are daily smokers (at least one cigarette every day for 30 days).
- ◆ 24% of students had their first drink of alcohol (other than a few sips) before age 13.
- ◆ 27% of students have had sexual intercourse.
- ◆ 20% ate 5 or more servings of fruits and vegetables during the past 7 days.

Source: 2009 MI YRBS



Middle School: A Critical Age

Rapid physical and emotional changes, combined with the hazards of today's society, make early adolescence a crucial period for developing healthy habits. Middle school students are at a crossroads of sorts: they are too old for the day care setting and possibly too young to participate in after-school sports and activities that often begin in high school. Cognitive growth occurs gradually and irregularly, so most middle school students require ongoing, concrete, experiential learning in order to develop intellectually. Many adolescents also begin experimenting with sex, tobacco, alcohol and other harmful drugs, all of which pose serious threats to personal health.

-National Middle School Association, On Target

More 2009 YRBS Data

- 56% of 9th graders were physically active for 60 minutes per day, on 5 or more of the last 7 days
- 11% had been threatened or injured with a weapon on school property
- 10% attempted suicide one or more times in the last 12 months

Health is important to learn about in school, because lots of kids don't have healthy influences in their lives, so they don't learn about drugs and alcohol until it's too late.
~Hannah 8th grade student

Help is Available

Many resources are available to help administrators and teachers deliver an effective and comprehensive health education program for their middle school students.

The State of Michigan has its own nationally recognized, comprehensive, skills-based, K-12 curriculum, *The Michigan Model for Health*® (MM). This curriculum assists in building the skills needed throughout a student's life with foundational knowledge.

The curriculum is continuously going through an extensive revision process and now provides even more resources and support for teachers. The

curriculum now includes various assessments to assist the teacher. These assessments come as rubrics and checklists for teachers and students.

A curricula cannot be effective unless teachers are trained. Michigan has a unique network of Regional Health Coordinators that train teachers in the MM curriculum and provide technical assistance for quality implementation. To find out who is the Regional School Health Coordinator in your area visit www.cshca.org.

Parent engagement is an important key to every child's success. MM fosters

parent engagement through Family Resource Sheets (FRS). FRS reinforce and extend classroom learning by providing parents information and activities centered on what is being taught in the classroom.

The curriculum has recently gone through a very rigorous evaluation and showed statistically significant behavior change. For more information on evaluation results go to <http://www.emc.cmich.edu/mm/revision/evaluation.htm>



Michigan Standards

In 2006, Michigan developed and approved Grade Level Content Expectations and Michigan Merit Curriculum guidelines that align with the National Health Education Standards.

These standards consist of 7 strands: Nutrition and Physical Activity; Alcohol, Tobacco and Other Drugs; Safety; Social and Emotional Health;

Personal Health and Wellness; and HIV Prevention and Reproductive Health. The strands are further broken down into 8 standards (seven of the eight are skills-based). These standards include Core Concepts, Accessing Information, Health Behaviors, Influences, Goal Setting, Decision Making, Social Skills and Advocacy.

Course content guided by these standards and expectations will prepare

students for responsible and healthy living at school, home and the future.

To find more information on the Michigan Grade Level Content Expectations and Michigan Merit Curriculum visit: www.michigan.gov/healthed

For healthy students, you need a healthy education.

~Abi 8th grade student

Online Resources

Michigan State Board of Education Policy on Comprehensive Health Education: www.michigan.gov/documents/Health_Education_Policy_final_94135_7.pdf

MDE Coordinated School Health and Safety Programs: www.michigan.gov/cshsp

Michigan Department of Education (MDE) Youth Risk Behavior Survey Fact Sheets: www.michigan.gov/yrbs

National Health Education Standards: <http://www.cdc.gov/healthyyouth/sher/standards/>

Michigan Model for Health®: <http://www.emc.cmich.edu/mm/>

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Healthy Youth Resources: www.cdc.gov/healthyyouth

ASCD Whole Child Initiative: <http://www.wholechildeducation.org/>

