



FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS ABOUT HEALTH EDUCATION ENDORSEMENTS

Updated August 12, 2008

Question 1: How does an endorsement differ from a teaching certificate?

A: A teaching certificate refers to the grade levels at which a teacher is prepared to teach. A teacher will have an elementary or a secondary certificate. Every secondary certificate also carries endorsements for particular subject areas. Elementary certificates do not necessarily carry subject area endorsements.

There is some historical variation in the grade ranges that are covered by either certificate, so teachers need to check their own certificates to confirm the grades and subject areas they are qualified to teach. This is especially critical at the middle school level, since teachers may teach middle school grades in Michigan with either an elementary or a secondary certificate.

Teachers need to determine which authorizations are designated on their teaching certificates. Teachers should check their certificates to be certain. If the certificate can't be located, go to www.michigan.gov/teachercert and click on "Teacher Certification Verification" in the box labeled "Featured Programs and Services."

Question 2: What endorsements authorize teachers to teach health education?

A: A teacher with an elementary certificate is qualified to teach health education for the grades designated "All Subjects" on the certificate. A teacher with a secondary certificate is authorized to teach health education with any one of the following endorsements: MA (health), MX (health, physical education, recreation and dance group), or KH (family and consumer science).

PLEASE NOTE: Although the law allows elementary teachers to teach health education without a specific endorsement, it is highly recommended by the Michigan Department of Education that teachers receive professional development from an approved program in health and sexuality education that includes training in curriculum implementation, best practice, and current state legislation related to health education. The in-service programs offered by the regional Comprehensive School Health Coordinators located at specific Intermediate School Districts and large urban school districts are approved programs. For more information on sexuality education, go to www.michigan.gov/healthed and click on HIV/STD and Sexuality Education under "Health Topics."

Question 3: What grades does the "All Subjects" designation on an elementary certificate cover?

A: That depends on the certificate. Those teachers who received their certificates before September 1, 1988 may have elementary certificates that state, "K-8 All Subjects." These teachers may teach health education in any of grades K-8, regardless of whether they are assigned to an elementary building or a middle school building.

Elementary certificates issued on or after September 1, 1988, specify "K-5 All Subjects (K-8 Self CC)" meaning the teacher may teach health in grades K-5 and in self-contained classrooms at grades 6-8.

Question 4: What grades does the "All Subjects" designation on a secondary certificate cover?

A: That depends on the certificate. Those teachers who received their certificates before September 1, 1988 may have secondary certificates that state, "7-8 All Subjects." These teachers may teach health education in grades 7-8, regardless of the building to which they are assigned. NOTE: These secondary certificates do not authorize teaching "all subjects" in grade 6.

Secondary certificates issued on or after September 1, 1998, were not issued with the "All Subject" designation. In the absence of other authorization, teachers with such secondary certificates would need to have MA, MX, or KH endorsements to teach health education.

However, if a teacher holding a secondary certificate (issued before September 1, 1988) also completed an elementary education endorsement, that teacher may have a secondary teaching certificate that states, "K-6 All Subjects, 7-8 All Subjects". Such a certificate would authorize teaching health education at grades K-8.

Teachers need to determine which authorizations are designated on their teaching certificates. Teachers should check their certificates to be certain.

Question 5: If teachers don't have hard copies of their certificates, how can they verify them?

A: Teachers can verify their certificates online at www.michigan.gov/teachercert. Click on "Teacher Certification Verification" in the box labeled "Featured Programs and Services."

Question 6: The secondary certificate I received has an MA (health) endorsement, and notes that I'm authorized to teach grades 7-12. But the online Teacher Certification Verification page says I'm authorized to teach 6-12. Am I authorized to teach sixth grade health with my secondary MA endorsement?

A: YES. In 2006, the State Board authorized a change in the Administrative Rules, extending the secondary certificate down to grade six. This was done to "fill the gap" that was left when the elementary certificate was reduced from K-6 to K-5.

Therefore, the on-line Teacher Certification Verification page, which can be accessed as noted above, may be different from your printed certificate. The State Board of Education Teacher Certification Code, Rule 390.1101, Rule 1(p) indicates that a "Secondary certificate" means an authorization to teach in grades 6 to and including 12 in subject area endorsement on the teaching certificate." If you would like to view the full Administrative Rules governing teacher certification, go to http://www.state.mi.us/orr/emi/admincode.asp?AdminCode=Single&Admin_Num=39001101&Dpt=ED&RngHigh=.

Question 7: I have been teaching health education classes for years, but I don't have an appropriate endorsement. I love teaching health education and I think I'm a good teacher! What should I do?

A: We don't want to lose good health teachers! The Department of Education has worked with willing institutions of higher education to develop "alternative preparation/endorsement programs." These programs are offered at some institutions of higher education, but not all, for a limited time. An alternative preparation/endorsement program provides credit for teaching experience and approved in-service training in health education, and will transfer course credit from other preparation programs, as appropriate and as determined by the institution. Check with your regional Comprehensive School Health Coordinator to find out more information. If you don't know the name of your coordinator, go to www.michigan.gov/healthed, and scroll down to "Professional Development."

Question 8: Will First Aid, CPR or other health-related trainings count toward credit in an alternative endorsement program? Will biology teachers who have taken a 20-clock-hour sexuality education training receive credit toward an endorsement in an alternative endorsement program?

A: The participating institutions are willing to grant credit for approved in-service training and experience in teaching health education. Each institution of higher education has the authority to award credit in the way that best fits its state-approved health education program, and reviews each application individually. No teacher, however, is guaranteed credits toward an endorsement. *Teachers should talk with their regional Comprehensive School Health Coordinators to find out more.*

Question 9: If teachers are seeking only to add an endorsement to their teaching certificate (rather than pursuing a degree) will they have to take the Michigan Test for Teacher Certification (MTTC) in order to be qualified?

A: Yes, teachers do have to take the MTTC for health education in order to receive the endorsement from the State of Michigan.

Question 10: Can teachers just take the MTTC to receive an endorsement in health education?

A: No. Just taking the MTTC does not qualify teachers for the endorsement. They must also successfully complete the required coursework from an institution of higher education that has a state-approved teacher preparation program for health education.

Question 11: If teachers have to take the MTTC in addition to the coursework in order to be endorsed, will endorsement also make them highly qualified according to NCLB standards?

A: Health education and physical education were not included in NCLB; therefore NCLB standards do not apply. Michigan requires teachers to have appropriate certificates and endorsements to teach. Health education teachers need the appropriate subject area endorsement (MA, MX, or KH) or the "All Subjects" designation on their teaching certificate to be considered qualified to teach health education. Subject area endorsements are earned through successful completion of an approved teacher preparation program, and successful completion of the appropriate MTTC.

Question 12: Does a special education endorsement allow a certified teacher to teach health and sexuality education at the elementary, middle and high school levels?

A: It does when the teacher teaches health and sexuality education in a self-contained special education setting (that is, in a setting in which he or she works with the same students for more than 50% of the day). It is highly recommended that these teachers receive in-service training in health and sexuality education that is relevant to the developmental needs of their students, so that they can be knowledgeable about state law, best practice in health education, and available resources. Special education teachers who support students in the general education classroom are not qualified to teach the health education course in that setting unless they also have the appropriate certificate designations and subject area endorsements: "All Subjects," MA, MX, or KH.

Question 13: If health education is part of a skills course which incorporates instruction in computers, physical education, and writing, does the teacher need a health education endorsement?

A: The answer depends on the nature of the certificate that the teacher holds. The teacher does not need a health education endorsement if the teacher has an elementary certificate that states, "All Subjects," and is teaching at the grades allowed by the "All Subjects" designation.

If the teacher has a secondary certificate that states "7-8 All Subjects," he or she may teach any subjects at grades 7 and 8, including those listed in the question above.

If a teacher has a certificate without the "All Subjects" designation at the grades in which the teacher is placed, then the teacher needs the appropriate endorsements to teach the various subjects. For example, to teach health education, the teacher would need an MA, MX, or KH endorsement. To teach physical education, the teacher would need an MB, MX, or SP endorsement. To teach "writing" (which is taken to mean basic writing skills) the teacher would need an English Language Arts endorsement. The teacher would not need a specific endorsement to teach computer applications.

Question 14: May certified teachers, who have gone through training in sexuality education at the ISD, teach sexuality education even if their endorsements are in areas other than health education?

A: No. State law, MCL 380.1507(5) states: A school district that provides a class as permitted by subsection (1) shall offer the instruction by **teachers qualified to teach**

health education. *[Subsection (1) of MCL 380.1507 defines sex education, stating that sex education includes “family planning, human sexuality, and the emotional, physical, psychological, hygienic, economic, and social aspects of family life.”]*

Question 15: Does the November 2006 revised Administrative Rule R 390.1143(3) make it possible for teachers of other content, such as biology, to teach lessons on sexuality education embedded in their courses?

A: No. Michigan law MCL 380.1507(5), supersedes this administrative rule for sexuality education. The law states that “A school district that provides a class as permitted by subsection (1) shall offer the instruction by **teachers qualified to teach health education.**”

Further, MCL 380.1507 differentiates between “class” and “course,” in that a “class” is of limited duration within a “course.” Specifically, 1507(9) states: (a) **“Class” means an instructional period of limited duration within a course of instruction and includes an assembly or small group presentation.** (b) “Course” means a series of classes linked by a common subject matter.

Therefore, the administrative rule, which allows school districts to give substitute teachers assignments of 90 calendar days or less outside of the grade level and subject area validity of their teaching certificates, is limited in scope with regard to sexuality education. R 390.1143(3) is superseded by the state law which defines requirements for qualified teachers of sexuality education in terms of time durations shorter than days and shorter than courses.

Teachers with other subject area endorsements may continue to teach content that is relevant to the standards for teacher preparation for their content area. For example, biology teachers may continue to teach reproductive biology.

Question 16: Can puberty instruction at the fourth or fifth grade be taught by a teacher who has an elementary certificate, with an authorization for “All Subjects?”

A: Yes, a teacher with an elementary certificate with the “All Subjects” authorization and who is teaching at the grades indicated with the “All Subjects” designation may teach puberty education. It is highly recommended that the teacher receives in-service instruction in puberty and sexuality education from the regional Comprehensive School Health Coordinator in order to be informed about current state legislation, best practice, and available resources for health education.

Question 17: Can a teacher with a secondary certificate, and an MA (health), MX (health, physical education, recreation and dance group), or KH (family and consumer science) endorsement, teach health education in an elementary setting?

A: If a teacher has a secondary certificate and is teaching in an elementary setting, then he or she needs a **K-12** MA, MX, or KH endorsement to teach health, puberty, or sexuality education. A teacher with a secondary certificate and a secondary MA, MX, or KH endorsement may provide sexuality education only at the grade levels indicated on his or her teaching certificate.

Question 18: We offer our sexuality education unit in our biology department at the high school. These teachers are not health endorsed. Can we continue with our current staffing for one more school year?

A: Yes, the district has until 2010 for interested teachers to receive their health education endorsements. The district will need to apply for a full year permit if your biology teachers are regularly teaching health education content that is beyond the State Board of Education standards for biology teacher preparation, and the district plans to assign these teachers to teach health education courses. The district should contact Karen Taylor at TaylorKS@michigan.gov to apply.

The intent of the full year permit in this instance is to provide an opportunity for teachers who desire to teach health education, but who do not yet have the endorsement, to earn the endorsement. The Department will not issue a full-year permit for the purpose of allowing biology teachers to continue teaching sexuality education units in their biology courses.

Question 19: We plan to have our biology teachers teach the reproductive biology content; then have a teacher with a health endorsement go into their classroom for 2-3 days to teach sexuality education. Can we do that?

A: It would be legal, though not best practice, to bring a health-endorsed teacher into a science class to teach the content that is specific to the health standards. Best practice would be to provide sexuality education within the larger context of a comprehensive health education course, and for the biology and health teachers to coordinate their programs.

NOTE: These statements should not be used to replace statute. For the exact language of Michigan Compiled Laws, go to www.michiganlegislature.org. Concerns regarding interpretation should be directed to legal counsel.