

Health Education Standards Summary of Changes

The proposed 2024 South Dakota Health Education Standards introduce several key updates designed to modernize instruction, promote health literacy, and align with national best practices. These revisions reflect a shift toward a more skills-based, student-centered approach to health education. The most significant changes are outlined below:

1. Structural and Organizational Enhancements

- **Standards Framework Alignment:** The 2024 standards are aligned with the 2023 National Health Education Standards, replacing the previous alignment with the 2007 version. This update ensures consistency with current national expectations and research-based practices.
- **Grade Band Consistency:** The standards continue to be organized by four grade bands—PreK–2, Grades 3–5, Grades 6–8, and Grades 9–12—but now include more detailed and developmentally appropriate performance indicators within each band.
- **Performance Indicator Coding:** A consistent and intuitive coding system has been introduced to help educators easily reference standards and track student progress across grade levels.
- **Expanded Rationale Statements:** Each standard is now accompanied by a rationale that explains its importance and instructional intent, supporting deeper understanding and implementation.

2. Content Refinements and Emphases

- **Health Literacy Focus:** A major philosophical shift in the 2024 standards is the explicit emphasis on health literacy. Students are expected not only to understand health information but also to apply it in real-life decision-making.
- **Modern Health Topics:** The standards now address contemporary issues such as digital wellness, mental health, and access to care, reflecting the evolving health landscape students face today.
- **Expanded Skill Development:** Each standard includes more robust performance indicators that emphasize critical thinking, communication, decision-making, and advocacy. These skills are scaffolded across grade levels to support long-term development.
- **Examples for Implementation:** Many indicators now include sample applications or scenarios, helping educators visualize how to bring the standards to life in the classroom.

3. Instructional Shifts

- **Skills-Based Instruction:** The revised standards prioritize the development of practical health skills over rote knowledge. Students are expected to analyze influences, access valid information, set goals, and advocate for themselves and others.

- **Integration of Cognitive Domains:** Performance indicators are designed to engage students across all levels—from remembering and understanding to analyzing, evaluating, and creating.
- **Real-World Application:** There is a stronger emphasis on applying health knowledge in real-world contexts, including personal, family, and community health scenarios.

4. Improving Clarity and Usability

- **Simplified Language:** Terminology has been revised to ensure clarity and accessibility for educators, students, and families.
- **Streamlined Structure:** Redundant or overlapping standards have been consolidated, and the overall document is more user-friendly and logically organized.
- **Support for Assessment:** The performance indicators are designed to serve as a blueprint for both instruction and assessment, helping educators measure student growth in meaningful ways.

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