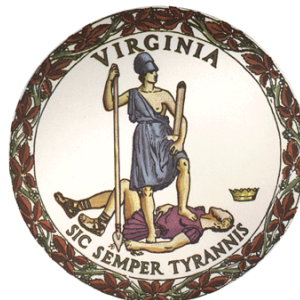


# **Health Education Standards of Learning**

**for  
Virginia Public  
Schools**



# **Health Education Standards of Learning for Virginia Public Schools**

**Adopted January 2020 by the  
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## **Preface**

The 2020 Health Education Standards of Learning for Virginia Public Schools utilize the best practices from the 2015 Standards of Learning and elevate them to meet the health challenges facing today’s youth. Students will learn essential health concepts, develop understanding of health information, and actively advocate for their own health, as well as the health of their peers, families, and communities.

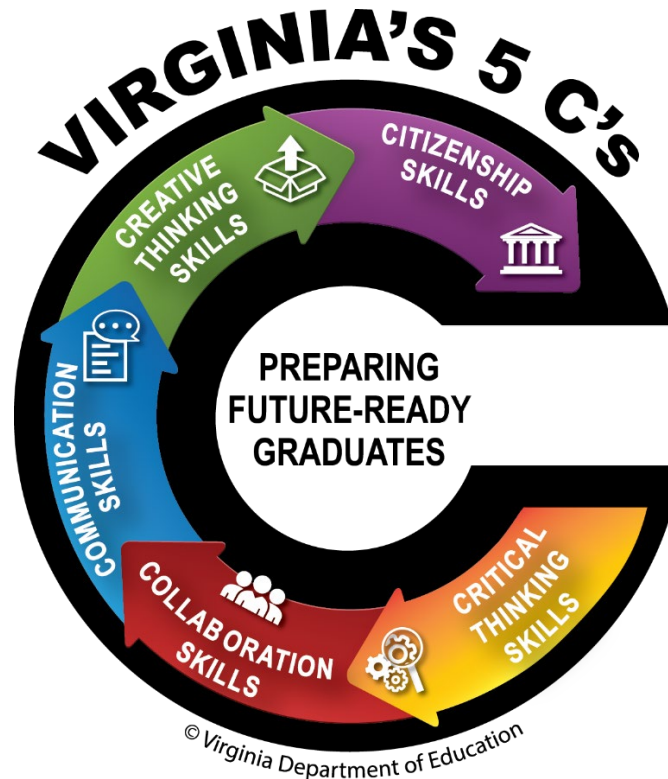
The 2020 Standards of Learning reflect age-appropriate knowledge and abilities, increasing in depth and complexity as students mature. The standards are designed to provide a core body of knowledge (i.e., Body Systems, Nutrition, Physical Health, Disease Prevention/Health Promotion, Substance Abuse Prevention, Safety/Injury Prevention, Mental Wellness/Social and Emotional Competence, Violence Prevention, Community/Environmental Health), while also allowing flexibility for students to develop personal values and beliefs and shared positive group norms and for individual school communities to address local health issues and emerging health concerns.

The standards follow the research-based recommendations of mental, social, emotional and behavioral health, substance abuse prevention, nutrition, and public health subject matter experts and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention for health education curricula by teaching functional health information; shaping personal values and beliefs that support healthy behaviors; shaping group norms that value a healthy lifestyle; and developing the essential health skills necessary to adopt, practice, and maintain health-enhancing behaviors. The standards are also designed to support the social and emotional development of students (<https://casel.org/core-competencies/>), enhancing students’ capacity to integrate skills, attitudes, and behaviors to deal effectively and ethically with daily tasks and challenges, understand and manage emotions, set and achieve positive goals, feel and show empathy for others, establish and maintain positive relationships, and make responsible decisions.

The standards articulate learning goals in the terms of what students should know, understand, and do. Standard 1, Essential Health Concepts, provides foundational health knowledge—what students should know. Standard 2, Healthy Decisions, broadens student understanding of health content at the same time it develops skills to allow students to transfer information in a variety of contexts to make healthy and safe life choices—what students should understand. Standard 3, Advocacy and Health Promotion, provides relevance for student learning and opportunities for students to demonstrate or design realistic outcomes for application of health information—what students should be able to do to advocate for their health and the health of others. The standards enable students to immerse themselves in a health topic from content to understanding to application and advocacy. As a result, Virginia students will be better prepared to make healthy decisions for themselves and influence others to do the same.

### Profile of a Virginia Graduate

The 2020 Health Standards of Learning support the Profile of a Virginia Graduate through the development and use of communication, collaboration, creativity, critical thinking and civic responsibility skills necessary to adopt and maintain health-enhancing behaviors, manage feelings, build healthy relationships, successfully navigate social environments, make safe life choices and advocate for personal health and the health of others.

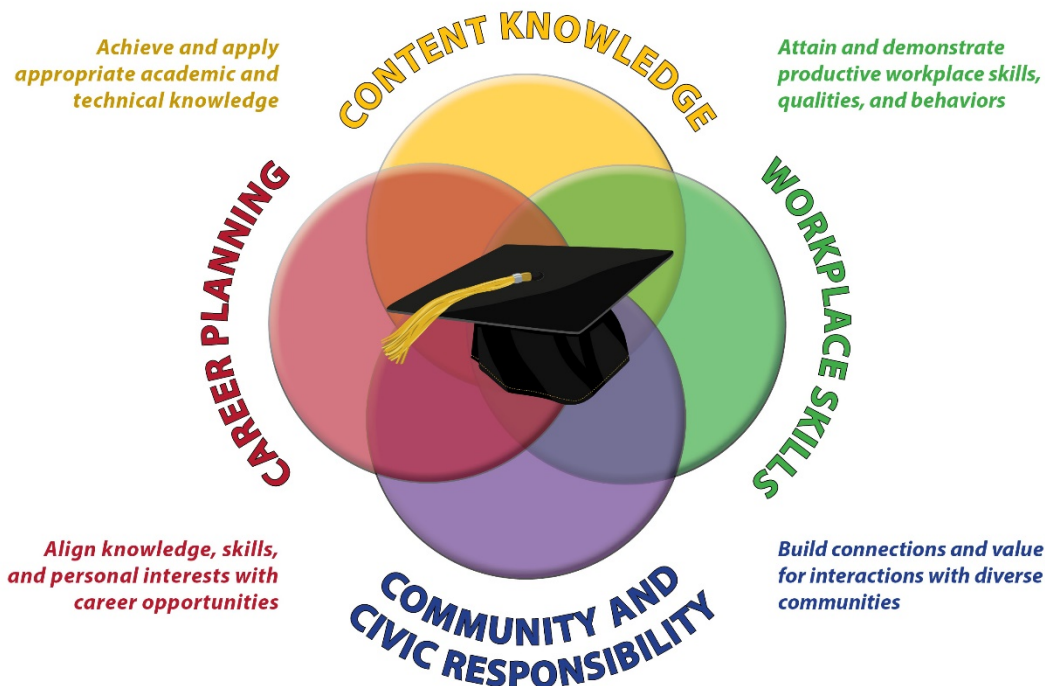


Through Health Education, students will

- ✓ *Acquire, interpret, and understand health concepts; and develop and apply a range of health skills needed to make appropriate health decisions (Content Knowledge)*
- ✓ *Acquire and practice effective communication, relationship-, cooperation-, self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, responsible decision-making, and stress-management skills (Workplace Skills)*
- ✓ *Engage in home, school, and community projects to enhance physical, mental, social, emotional, and environmental health (Community Engagement and Civic Responsibility)*
- ✓ *Explore a variety of health-related career opportunities in health promotion, disease, injury, and substance abuse prevention, mental health, nutrition, and community health (Career Exploration)*

## Profile of a Virginia Graduate

In Virginia, the Life Ready Individual Will  
During His or Her K-12 Experience:



### INTRODUCTION

Health education increases health literacy, helps students understand how to achieve and maintain a healthy lifestyle, and fosters the motivation, skills, and self-efficacy necessary to make informed and healthy choices, avoid high-risk behaviors, and build healthy families, relationships, schools, and communities. The *Health Education Standards of Learning for Virginia Public Schools* identify the concepts, processes, and academic, social and emotional skills for a continuum of learning experiences for students from kindergarten to grade ten. The standards provide school divisions and teachers with a guide for creating aligned curricula and structured learning experiences in health education that will provide students with the necessary knowledge, processes, and skills to make healthy choices (goal-setting and planning skills, communication and assertive skills, responsible decision making), prevent chronic disease, and avoid health-risk behaviors identified by the national Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (e.g., tobacco use, dietary patterns that contribute to disease, sedentary lifestyle, alcohol and other drug use, behaviors that result in intentional and unintentional injuries).

The standards for each grade level are grouped into three content strands—Essential Health Concepts, Healthy Decisions, and Advocacy and Health Promotion—that align with the overarching learning goals of the *Health Education Standards of Learning*. The content strands identify a core set of concepts and skills that facilitate the formation and promotion of healthy behaviors and practices. Indicators that align with the three content strands and address four dimensions of health (i.e., physical, emotional, social, environmental), as well as health careers,

are embedded at each grade level. These indicators identify the minimum standards for a sequential course of study within a comprehensive health education program. The indicators are sequenced to progress in complexity from grade level to grade level across several topic areas (i.e., Body Systems, Nutrition, Physical Health, Disease Prevention/Health Promotion, Substance Abuse Prevention, Safety/Injury Prevention, Mental Wellness/Social and Emotional Skills, Violence Prevention, Community/Environmental Health).

### **Goals and Strands**

The purpose of health education is to develop health-literate students—students who acquire an understanding of health concepts and the skills needed to make healthy decisions to improve, sustain, and promote personal, family, and community health. These skills align with core competencies (i.e., self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship building, responsible decision making) identified in the CASEL framework for social and emotional learning (<https://casel.org/core-competencies/>). As a result of health education instruction, students will be able to:

- Access, evaluate, and synthesize information to protect, enhance, and advocate for their own and others' health, well-being, and safety across their lifespan;
- Critically analyze health information from a variety of sources (e.g., credible scientific and institutional sources, health brochures, media messages, websites) to make appropriate health decisions and access services needed to prevent or treat illness; and
- Develop and use personal, behavioral, social, and cognitive skills and strategies to promote a sense of personal identity and well-being and to build and manage respectful relationships.

The content for the Standards of Learning for health education is organized around the following three essential strands:

1. Demonstrate the knowledge and skills to make healthy decisions that reduce health risks and enhance the health of oneself and others. **(Essential Health Concepts)**

*The intent of this goal is for students to become health-literate, self-directed learners who recognize the relationship between personal behavior and personal health and can skillfully apply health-promotion and disease-prevention strategies as a foundation for leading healthy and productive lives. This includes the development of the capacity to acquire, interpret, and understand health concepts and the development and application of a range of health skills. Instruction will focus on the topics of hygiene, communicable and noncommunicable disease prevention, dental health, nutrition, sleep, mental wellness and social and emotional skills, drug use, physical activity, body systems, safety, intentional and unintentional injury and violence prevention, Internet safety, gangs, bullying, and preventive health care. As a result, students will have a comprehensive understanding of essential health concepts related to health promotion and risk/disease prevention, self-awareness and social awareness, and an enhanced ability to engage in lifelong health behaviors.*

2. Demonstrate the ability to access, evaluate, and use health information, products, and services that influence health and wellness in a positive manner. **(Healthy Decisions)**

*The intent of this goal is for students to demonstrate the ability to identify valid and accurate health information, products, and services. This ability is critical for the prevention, early detection, and treatment of most health problems. Valid health information raises awareness of the long-term consequences of unhealthy decisions and enables students to make decisions that support lifelong health. Students will experience many opportunities across their school years to use information-analysis and responsible decision-making skills as they compare, contrast, analyze, synthesize, and evaluate materials, products, and services related to a variety of health issues. As they become informed consumers, students will become aware of and able to analyze the influence of culture, media, technology, and other factors on health. Upon the completion of the health education program, students will be able to make constructive choices about personal behavior and social interactions based on ethical standards, safety concerns, and social norms, and accept responsibility for personal health practices and engage in healthy decision making.*

3. Demonstrate the use of appropriate health practices and behaviors to promote a safe and healthy community when alone, with family, at school, and in other group settings. **(Advocacy and Health Promotion)**

*The intent of this goal is for students to become responsible, health-literate citizens who demonstrate an understanding of how to create and maintain an environment that serves to protect and promote the health and wellness of individuals, families, and communities. Students will develop awareness of social and media influences that affect their decision making and develop skills to effectively navigate and resist negative influences while building positive, healthy rewarding relationships with diverse individuals and groups. Students will develop healthy habits for managing emotions including stress, anger, and impulse control, and learn how to effectively advocate for themselves and their communities, which also supports equity. Specifically, upon completing their health education program, students will demonstrate a variety of healthy practices and behaviors and advocate for ways in which peers, families, and community groups can work together to promote safe and healthy communities.*



## Grade Four

Students in grade four learn and apply health skills to the following health areas: disease prevention, nutrition, healthy relationships (relationship skills), and drug-abuse prevention, including alcohol, tobacco, and other harmful substances. Students distinguish fact from fiction and set simple goals (self-management) for promoting personal health and preventing disease. Students assume personal responsibility for helping promote health at school and in the community, which aligns with responsible decision making as a critical part of healthy social and emotional development.

### Essential Health Concepts

4.1 The student will explain how nutrition and other health-enhancing behaviors affect personal health and academic achievement.

#### Body Systems

a) Identify the major structures and functions of the immune system.

#### Nutrition

b) Identify foods that contain saturated and trans fat.

c) Describe the importance of protein for growth and development.

d) Determine how serving sizes, additives, preservatives, sodium, and added sugar content for a variety of foods and beverages affect health.

#### Physical Health

e) Describe the benefits of rest, sleep, and a physically active lifestyle.

#### Disease Prevention/Health Promotion

f) Describe causes of communicable disease (i.e., how viruses, bacteria, parasites, and fungi are spread).

g) Describe the types and causes of noncommunicable/chronic diseases.

#### Substance Abuse Prevention

h) Compare the short- and long-term consequences of the use of alcohol, tobacco, nicotine products, marijuana, inhalants, and other drugs.

i) Identify effective verbal and nonverbal communication skills to resist/refuse alcohol, tobacco, nicotine products, marijuana, inhalants, and other drugs.

#### Safety/Injury Prevention

j) Explain appropriate protective gear when engaged in physical activities such as cycling, rollerblading, skateboarding, and water sports.

k) Describe safe and unsafe use of the Internet, including online gaming.

#### Mental Wellness/Social and Emotional Skills

l) Identify feelings and emotions associated with loss and grief and their impact on one's health.

m) Describe self-concept and how it can be influenced by internal and external factors.

n) Identify effective verbal and nonverbal communication skills (e.g., speaking, listening, eye contact, body language).

o) Recognize that every person is different and has different needs.

#### Violence Prevention

p) Explain the difference between teasing and taunting and when teasing and taunting can be considered bullying.

q) Describe steps to resolve a conflict.

r) Recognize harmful or abusive relationships.

Community/Environmental Health

- s) Describe the effects of water pollution on health.
- t) Identify community health issues.

## Healthy Decisions

4.2 The student will describe health concepts and behaviors that prevent illness, disease, and injury and that promote positive relationships.

### Body Systems

a) Describe how the immune system defends the body against germs and disease.

### Nutrition

b) Describe the effects of saturated and trans fat on overall health.

c) Identify a variety of animal and plant-based protein foods.

d) Compare the serving sizes, additives, preservatives, sodium, and added sugar content of a variety of foods and beverages.

### Physical Health

e) Explain how physical activity, rest, and sleep affect physical and mental health.

### Disease Prevention/Health Promotion

f) Analyze strategies for preventing communicable diseases.

g) Explain the role of heredity in some chronic diseases.

### Substance Abuse Prevention

h) Examine factors that can influence an individual's decision to use or avoid alcohol, tobacco, nicotine products, marijuana, inhalants, and other drugs.

i) Describe the effects of peer pressure on use of alcohol, tobacco, nicotine products, marijuana, inhalants, and other drugs.

### Safety/Injury Prevention

j) Explain the health consequences of not following safety practices for recreational activities.

k) Explain the consequences of unsafe Internet use.

### Mental Wellness/Social and Emotional Skills

l) Describe healthy coping skills for handling the emotions of loss and grief.

m) Describe how developing a healthy self-concept is an ongoing and essential life skill.

n) Explain how bullying impacts individuals and affects one's health.

o) Analyze positive strategies for resolving conflict.

### Violence Prevention

p) Explain the importance of seeking assistance from a trusted adult when in unsafe or uncomfortable situations.

q) Demonstrate effective communication skills.

r) Explain why bullying or teasing someone who may have different needs or abilities is inappropriate.

### Community/Environmental Health

s) Explain the health consequences associated with water pollution.

t) Discuss the benefits of volunteering, and identify local volunteer opportunities.

## Advocacy and Health Promotion

4.3 The student will describe the importance of identifying and accessing health resources for personal and community health.

### Body Systems

a) Describe the effects of nutrition, personal hygiene, and sleep on the immune system.

### Nutrition

b) Identify ways to moderate intake of foods high in saturated and trans fats, including understanding the role of serving sizes.

c) Design snack options that include protein, vegetables, and fruit.

- d) Explain how serving sizes, additives, preservatives, and added sugar affect one’s health over time (e.g., increased vulnerability to disease and obesity).

Physical Health

- e) Create a plan to meet the daily requirement for physical activity, rest, and sleep, using valid and reliable resources.

Disease Prevention/Health Promotion

- f) Develop a plan to prevent the spread of communicable disease.
- g) Explore methods to reduce risks associated with noncommunicable/chronic disease.

Substance Abuse Prevention

- h) Determine the importance of resistance/refusal skills in saying no to alcohol, tobacco, inhalants, and other drugs.
- i) Demonstrate effective refusal skills for situations involving peer pressure to use harmful substances.

Safety/Injury Prevention

- j) Promote safe participation in recreational activities.
- k) Develop strategies for safe Internet and online gaming use.

Mental Wellness/Social and Emotional Skills

- l) Identify strategies and resources, including understanding the role of school counselors, psychologists, and social workers, to manage feelings that may result from loss and grief.
- m) Explain how challenges and successes provide learning experiences to help develop a healthy self-concept.
- n) Practice initiating, sustaining, and ending conversations.
- o) Describe ways to show compassion for others.

Violence Prevention

- p) Promote strategies to report bullying and aggressive behaviors and to safely advocate and stand up for others.
- q) Demonstrate strategies to resolve conflict in a variety of situations.
- r) Identify trusted adults at home, in school, and in the community who can help with unsafe or uncomfortable situations.

Community/Environmental Health

- s) Identify possible solutions for a community health issue and volunteer opportunities to address the issue.
- t) Develop strategies to reduce water pollution.