



ABUSE PREVENTION LEARNING STANDARD

Health Education Standards Update - Inclusion of Abuse Education for K-12 students in WA State

ISSUE & BACKGROUND

KEY ISSUE

Washington's K-12 youth currently receive limited education on certain types of abuse, specifically omitting physical, psychological, and financial abuse in health education standards.

CONTEXT

While existing standards include sexual abuse and substance abuse, different forms of abuse have been identified as critical areas for youth awareness and prevention. As youth increasingly face complex social and familial dynamics, education in these areas could enhance their ability to recognize and respond to harmful situations.

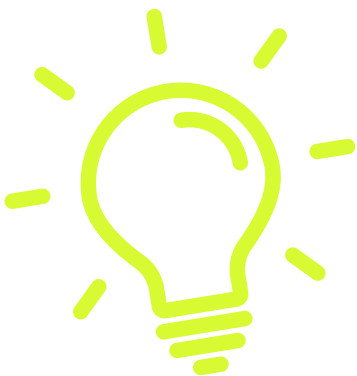
The Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) maintains health education standards for K-12 students; however, these standards have not been updated recently to reflect a comprehensive view of abuse, which puts youth safety and wellness at risk in childhood and adulthood.

IMPACT

Students across the state, particularly those at pivotal developmental stages (5th, 8th, and 11th grades), lack exposure to critical education on identifying and understanding the signs and effects of these forms of abuse, leaving gaps in essential life skills and safety knowledge.

PROPOSED SOLUTION

- **Legislative/Regulatory Action:** The Mockingbird Society is working closely with OSPI to propose revisions to the existing health education learning standards. The updated standards would be focused on:
 - Physical Abuse
 - Psychological/Mental Abuse
 - Financial Abuse
- **Resolution:** This update addresses critical gaps in the current standards, preparing students with holistic awareness around all forms of abuse, potentially reducing risk and promoting safer, healthier communities.
- **Legislative Pathway:** This policy priority focuses on a regulatory update within OSPI, no direct legislative action is required.





BENEFITS & OUTCOMES

Positive Outcomes:

- Enhanced student understanding of personal safety and individual well-being
- Early prevention and intervention through education

Who Benefits:

All K-12 students in Washington State, particularly youth in 5th, 8th, and 11th, grades.

Social, Economic, or Public Health Benefits:

Long-term reduction in abuse cases through prevention and awareness; improved public health outcomes as students learn to recognize and prevent various forms of abuse.

Measurable Results:

Trackable metrics include Healthy Youth Survey data done by the state each year. We also predict reduced incident rates related to abuse, and qualitative feedback from educators and students on the impact of the updated standards.

TAKE ACTION

With rising cases and awareness of various abuse types, it is imperative to equip students with essential knowledge to recognize, prevent, and seek help if experiencing or witnessing abuse. TMS will work with OSPI to initial a review of the current standards and draft updated language for inclusion for the upcoming academic year.

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