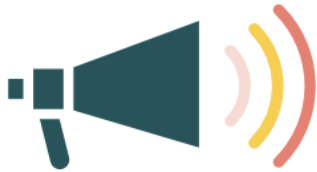


## **ACT NOW: Send comments of support by August 28, 2023**

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Dear GBPFLAG friends,

Governor Maura Healey's administration has proposed an updated draft of the Comprehensive Health and Physical Education Curriculum Framework to the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education (BESE) this month. The LGBTQ+ inclusive, medically accurate, and developmentally- and age-appropriate framework outlines guidelines for health and physical education for preK-12 public school students in Massachusetts. It would compel the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) to update the existing Comprehensive Health Curriculum Framework, which was last updated in 1999, **almost a quarter of a century ago**.

The DESE heard a presentation on the draft framework at its meeting on June 27 and voted to send it out for public comment. **Educators, parents, advocates, and members of the public have 60 days to comment on the draft framework, which can be viewed here** on the mass.gov website. After the public comment period, DESE will consider the feedback and bring the draft back to the Board for a vote on adoption.

### **WHAT YOU CAN DO:**

1. **Email** letters of support to [chpef@mass.gov](mailto:chpef@mass.gov)
2. Complete the **survey** here
3. **Mail** written comments to Kristen McKinnon, Assistant Director, Office of Student & Family Support, Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, 75 Pleasant St, Malden MA 02148
4. **Activate your network** — share this call to action with your school's health teachers, principal, and superintendent, your school committee, your family, and friends
5. **Sign up to join the GBPFLAG Advocacy Committee** to stay involved!

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Not sure what to write? Here is a sample statement of support:

**Thank you to the Healey Administration for updating DESE's outdated health and physical education framework and providing all students with sex and relationship education that is inclusive, medically accurate, and age-appropriate. All students deserve comprehensive, consent-focused, LGBTQ+-inclusive health education; it is critical to supporting students' mental and physical well-being and empowering young people to make informed, health-promoting choices. The 2023 Health and Physical Education Framework emphasizes reliance on accurate sources, incorporation of diverse perspectives to ensure all students' identities are reflected, and collaboration with parents and community to provide wraparound support and reduction of health disparities.**

**I fully support the updated framework and look forward to its implementation.**

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Why is this important? **All students**, particularly LGBTQIA+ students, suffer when not given sufficient education in critical developmental, social, and reproductive health.

**MA YRBS data and most recent recommendations** show:

- LGBTQIA+ students are not sufficiently educated in issues such as consent; healthy relationships; accessing reproductive, mental and general healthcare
- LGBTQIA+ students are at higher risk for early and/or nonconsensual sexual encounters, substance use, self-harm and suicidal ideation

**Research conducted by GLSEN** shows:

- LGBTQIA+ topics in curricula corresponds to **all** students reporting that they feel safer in school, regardless of sexual orientation or gender identity
- **Inclusive curriculum standards benefit all students** by promoting student wellbeing and educational attainment; advancing equity for marginalized youth; and preparing all students to thrive and reach their full potential in an increasingly diverse, global society

Also...it's the law!

The **Regulations for the Massachusetts Student Rights Law (MGL Ch. 76, Sec. 5)** state that "all public school systems shall, through their curricula, encourage respect for the human and civil rights of all individuals regardless of race, color, sex, gender identity, religion, national origin or sexual orientation."

G.L. c. 76, § 5, was amended in 2012 in the Massachusetts Department of Education **Guidance for Massachusetts Public Schools Creating a Safe and Supportive School Environment** and states that "all students need a safe and supportive school environment to progress academically and developmentally" and reminds school and district administrators of "each school's obligation to provide equal educational opportunities for all students."

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today!**

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