

HEALTH STANDARDS FOR AIR QUALITY CURRICULUM

The Joint Committee on National Health Education Standards, funded by the American Cancer Society, has published National Health Education Standards: Achieving Health Literacy (1995). The committee developed seven standards, each with rationale statements and "performance indicators" for students at grades K-4, 5-8, and 9-11. These are available on-line at: http://www.ed.gov/databases/ERIC_Digests/ed387483.html

The following standards are met using a number of the case studies in this unit:

Standard 1: Students will comprehend concepts related to health promotion and disease prevention. Performance indicators center around identifying what good health is, recognizing health problems, and ways in which lifestyle, the environment, and public policies can promote health.

Standard 2: Students will demonstrate the ability to access valid health information and health-promoting products and services. Performance indicators focus on identification of valid health information, products, and services including advertisements, health insurance and treatment options, and food labels.

Standard 3: Students will demonstrate the ability to practice health-enhancing behaviors and reduce health risks. Performance indicators include identifying responsible and harmful behaviors, developing health-enhancing strategies, and managing stress.

Standard 4: Students will analyze the influence of culture, media, technology, and other factors on health. Performance indicators are related to describing and analyzing how one's cultural background, messages from the media, technology, and one's friends influence health.

Standard 7: Students will demonstrate the ability to advocate for personal, family, and community health. Performance indicators relate to identifying community resources, accurately communicating health information and ideas, and working cooperatively to promote health.

Curriculum Content and Teaching Practices:

"The school health education program should be based upon local needs--the health behaviors and problems within the school population--and national data suggesting the health status of children and youth. Experts have identified 10 content areas as necessary for a comprehensive school health education program (American School Health Association, 1994):

- * community health
- * consumer health
- * environmental health
- * personal health and fitness
- * family life education
- * nutrition and healthy eating
- * disease prevention and control
- * safety and injury prevention
- * prevention of substance use and abuse (alcohol, tobacco, drugs)
- * growth and development

The objective is to offer an ongoing, sequenced, and developmentally appropriate program that is consistent with community needs and providing at least 50 hours per year of health instruction."

"The most effective methods of instruction in health are student-centered approaches: hands-on activities, cooperative learning techniques, and activities that include problem-solving and peer instruction to help students develop skills in decision-making, communication, setting goals, resistance to peer pressure, and stress management. As with other instructional areas, the teacher should promote parental involvement by sending materials home, involving parents in classroom activities, and creating assignments that involve parents. Because of time limitations in the school day, some teachers find it helpful to infuse health topics into other subject areas."