



CALDWELL-WEST CALDWELL PUBLIC SCHOOLS

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Christopher Conklin, Ed.D., Superintendent of Schools
Kaitlin Jones, Assistant Superintendent

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September 23, 2022

Dear Parents/Guardians,

When the New Jersey Department of Education adopted the updated [New Jersey Student Learning Standards \(NJSLs\) for Comprehensive Health and Physical Education \(PE\)](#), the district began the process of updating the curriculum by establishing a curriculum committee comprised of the Supervisor of Health and PE and several PE teachers. This committee was tasked with ensuring alignment with the standards and ensuring that the content would be taught at a developmentally appropriate level. The committee worked together to draft a revised curriculum that was submitted to the Board's Curriculum and Technology Committee for review. In response to feedback, the committee was asked to continue its initial curricula revisions.

The district wants to be respectful and mindful of the community members' questions and concerns related to the new standards. Accordingly, the school district will complete the following activities and adhere to the listed timelines:

- October 14th - present a draft copy of the Health and Physical Education (PE) curriculum to the community. A notice will go out to the community informing them that the curriculum is available for review and will have a link to a Google form for comments. The district will make the curriculum available for comment and feedback through a Google form through October 28th.
- November 1st through November 21st - each school will schedule an in-person meeting with the parent(s)/guardian(s), the PE/Health teacher(s), a building administrator, and a district administrator. At this meeting, the PE/Health teacher will preview the activities and instruction aligned with the new standards. The building administrator will discuss and review the process for parent(s)/guardian(s) to opt out of any of the standards or lessons that are in conflict with their personal beliefs.
- November 21st through December 2nd - the Board's Curriculum and Technology committee will convene to discuss and review the final draft of the PE/Health curriculum.
- December 5th - the full board will review the curriculum. The community members will have an opportunity to provide public comments related to the adoption of the updated/revised PE/Health curriculum.
- December 12th - Board will reconvene and hold the vote on the PE/Health curriculum. The community members will have an opportunity to provide public comments related to the adoption of the updated/revised PE/Health curriculum.

The district will establish a clear process for parents to opt-out of any of the standards when they believe the topics or instruction conflicts with their personal beliefs. Fortunately, the new standards provide the district some flexibility as the new standards are not required to be introduced until the end of specific grade levels. This will help ensure that the students' families who do not opt out can be introduced to the new standards by the end of the 2022-23 school year. As outlined in my April 2022 letter to the community, the staff respects your personal choices concerning your child's health education; pursuant to [N.J.S.A. 184:35-4.7](#), "Any child whose parent or guardian presents to the school principal a signed statement that any part of the instructions in health, family life education or sex education is in conflict with his conscience, or sincerely held moral or religious beliefs shall be excused from that portion of the course where such instruction is being given and no

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penalties as to credit or graduation shall result therefrom." [The Caldwell-West Caldwell Board Policy 5250](#) provides that:

The Board of Education directs that a pupil be excused from any part of the instructions in health education, family life education, sex education, or instruction that includes dissection of animals that the parent(s) or legal guardian(s) of the pupil or the adult pupil finds morally, conscientiously, or religiously offensive. A request for excusal must be presented in a signed statement and submitted to the Principal.

An excused pupil shall be assigned to an alternate program of independent study on a substitute topic within the health education, family life education, or sex education program. The parent's or legal guardian's right of excusal applies to any alternate program as well.

No excused pupil will be penalized by loss of credit as a result of his/her excusal, but a pupil will be held accountable for successful completion of any alternate program assigned.

Thank you in advance for your thoughtful feedback and partnership. Wishing everyone a positive and productive school year.

Sincerely,

Christopher Conklin

Christopher Conklin, Ed.D.
Superintendent Caldwell-West Caldwell School District