



# Most Ohio adults think state should adopt health education standards

The **Ohio Health Issues Poll (OHIP)** is conducted every year to learn more about the health opinions, behaviors and status of adults in Ohio. In 2017, OHIP asked Ohio adults about state health education standards.

## WHAT DID OHIP FIND?

Current Ohio law does not permit the State Board of Education to adopt specific Learning Standards in the area of Health Education.<sup>1</sup> Learning Standards clarify for educators what students should know and be able to do within a particular topic. For example, a learning standard for a second-grade math student is “solve word problems involving time and money.” A learning standard for health education might be that students can “use the decision-making process to make a healthy choice related to alcohol or other drug use.”

OHIP asked, “Do you think Ohio law should be changed to permit the State Board of Education to adopt Health

<sup>1</sup> Ohio Department of Education. (2017). *Health Education*. Retrieved on Mar. 5, 2018, from <http://education.ohio.gov/Topics/Learning-in-Ohio/Health-Education>.

## Do you think Ohio law should be changed to permit the State Board of Education to adopt Health Education Learning Standards?



## Percentage of Ohio adults who think Ohio law should be changed to permit the State Board of Education to adopt Health Education Learning Standards, by political party identification



Education Learning Standards, or do you think the law should not be changed?” About 6 in 10 Ohio adults (62%) think the law should be changed to permit the adoption of learning standards. That compares with 3 in 10 adults who think the law should not be changed (32%) and fewer than 1 in 10 who don't know (6%).

## Health education standards popular across political parties

Majorities of Ohio adults in all political parties agreed that the law should be changed to allow for the adoption of

health standards. However, Democrats (77%) were more likely than Republicans (57%) or Independents (57%) to agree.

## WHY DO WE ASK THESE QUESTIONS?

While the Ohio Revised Code does not allow the State Board of Education to adopt standards for health education, it does direct schools to include certain topics in health education curricula. Content differs from standards. Content focuses on what to teach, including specific health topics such as nutrition

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and substance use. Standards are the outcomes expected from students' learning. In health education these are skills-based and can be applied to a broad range of topics. Some Ohio adults say that without standards, these topics will be taught differently across the state, and there is no way to ensure that all students are learning skills related to healthy behaviors. Other Ohio adults say that decisions about these skills should be left to local school districts. We ask this question to better understand public opinion about whether Ohio should adopt Health Education Learning Standards.

## WHAT'S HAPPENING NOW

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention publishes the National Health Education Standards (NHES) to provide a framework for health education curriculum development nationwide. These standards have been in use since 1995, updated in 2007, and have been adopted by every state except Ohio. The NHES provide clear expectations for specific, age-appropriate skills and knowledge students should demonstrate to promote health.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (2016). *National Health Education Standards*. Retrieved on Mar. 5, 2018, from [www.cdc.gov/healthy-schools/sher/standards/index.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/healthy-schools/sher/standards/index.htm).