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To NDE and NDE Standards Committee:

We are writing this letter to provide our viewpoint on the draft of the new health standards proposed by NDE.

While we feel that standards are absolutely necessary for what we teach, we also feel that the standards proposed by the state should be looked at as a “floor” and not the “ceiling” of what we teach at our schools. We feel that the current draft of the health standards are too extensive and assume too many parental responsibilities teaching subjects that should be taught at home.

While we know Rule 10 is going through a revision process, there are pretty clear rules set out there (and ones that we must follow until the revision is complete). Rule 10 indicates that elementary health curriculum should cover Body Systems, Nutrition, Wellness, and Healthy Living Habits (Rule 10 – 004.02A5). Middle School Health should cover body systems and factors which can affect health, including man-made and natural threats and individual choices (Rule 10 – 004.03A6). High school health sciences can include nutrition & food, Family Health, Medical Terminology, Health Informatics, Therapeutic Services, Diagnostic Services, Certified Nursing Assistance, and Health Care Sciences (Rule 10 – 004.046d).

There are also standards that we feel are problematic for schools to be covering at certain ages. We will have parents that will want to opt-out of these topics. These include:

- Any indicators that involve naming, identifying, or describing functions of genitalia, especially for students younger than 4<sup>th</sup> grade. Parents should be the deciders of when their children are ready to learn these things. Anything that is done by the school for students approaching puberty should have an opt-out option for parents that choose to cover this themselves.
- Any indicators that involve discussions of puberty, especially for those younger than 4<sup>th</sup> grade. Again, anything done by the school should have an opt-out plan for parents that choose to cover this themselves.
- Any indicators that include gender identity/expression, sexual orientation, or sexual intercourse (outside of an advanced high school course).

While we strongly agree with the need for us to have programs/curriculum in place to cover topics such as sexual abuse prevention and treating everyone with respect and compassion, no matter what, we don't feel the above topics are the responsibility of schools. We know trafficking is a major issue and that we need to protect our kids, but we think that can be accomplished without exposing our students to very “adult” concepts and topics.

“Thedford Public Schools will prepare students for challenges of life with an environment that fosters positive educational growth.”

In conclusion, while there are certainly some sensitive topics that we do not feel should be included in the standards, our main concern is the extensive scope of the standards presented. We would be more than happy to have a discussion about this with anyone on the committee if you choose to contact us. Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,