

Politically motivated special-interest organizations and partisan politicians are actively spreading false information pertaining to New Jersey's Comprehensive Health and Physical Education Standards, which were revised and adopted by the State Board of Education in 2020. These bad actors are intentionally and falsely claiming that New Jersey is forcing an age-inappropriate curriculum on children. Not only are these claims blatantly false, but this hateful rhetoric also has the potential to jeopardize the safety and mental health of New Jersey's students.

### **The Facts**

- In 2020, the New Jersey State Board of Education adopted a [revised set of Health and Physical Education Standards](#) to guide the development of curriculum in local school districts.
- These standards do not mandate specific instruction, but rather, provide a blueprint for local school leaders to develop appropriate curricula for students in their communities.
- These revisions to the Health and Physical Education Standards require students to be able to “demonstrate ways to promote dignity and respect for all people (e.g., sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, race, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, differing ability, immigration status, family configuration)” and also to be able to “differentiate between gender identity, gender expression and sexual orientation.”
- The responsibility to develop and implement curricula rests with local school officials. Once adopted, classroom teachers use the curriculum to write lesson plans to meet the specific needs of their students.
- Parents retain the right to opt-out of sex education curriculum if they feel their child is not prepared for that instruction.
- The curriculum development resource that was shown at a single local school board meeting is NOT being used to develop curriculum or write lessons, according to the district.

### **The Disinformation Strategy**

- Political consultants and partisan pundits have seized upon this curriculum resource to make wild accusations about children being taught sexually explicit and age-inappropriate lessons.
- Conservative politicians are being deliberately disingenuous about the issue, taking the opportunity to grandstand for political gain.
- This strategy mirrors the efforts of partisan politicians around the country pushing dangerous rhetoric that jeopardizes the safety of our children.
- The primary goal of this strategy is to drive a wedge between parents and educators.

### **The Solution**

- Educators know that parental involvement is a key part of student success. Educators should continue to partner with parents to deliver the best and most appropriate education to students. Parents who have questions about their child's education should speak with educators, not politicians.
- The overwhelming majority of sexual education standards are unchanged from prior standards. These revisions serve to provide students with an understanding of different identities they or their classmates may be feeling and helps them to respect and accept each other.
- When children are provided with an accurate and age-appropriate understanding of their bodies, they are more likely to develop safe and healthy relationships with each other and are less likely to struggle with mental health issues.
- New Jersey's public schools must provide a safe and inclusive learning environment for every student, regardless of their sexual identity or preference. The Health and Physical Education Standards ensure that children learn to welcome one another with compassion and humanity.