

Title 24 Pa. S. Education
Chapter 1. Public School Code of 1949
Article XV. Terms and Courses of Study
(D) Special Instruction and Observances

§ 15-1553. Dating violence education

(a) The department, through its Office for Safe Schools, and in consultation with the State Board of Education, shall:

(1) Develop, within six (6) months of the effective date of this section, a model dating violence policy to assist school districts in developing policies for dating violence reporting and response.

(2) Consult with at least one (1) domestic violence center and at least one (1) rape crisis center in developing the model dating violence policy.

(b)(1) Each school district may establish a specific policy to address incidents of dating violence involving students at school.

(2) The policy may include, but need not be limited to: a statement that dating violence will not be tolerated; violence reporting procedures; discipline procedures for students that commit violence at school; and contact information for and resources available through domestic violence programs and rape crisis programs.

(3) A school district that establishes the policy shall:

(i) Publish the policy in any school district policy or handbook that specifies the comprehensive rules, procedures and standards of conduct for students at school.

(ii) Make the policy available on its publicly available Internet website.

(iii) Provide parents and guardians with a copy of the policy.

(4) The State Board of Education shall conduct a study of the benefits and detriments of mandatory dating violence education and shall submit a report of its recommendations to the chairman and minority chairman of the Education Committee of the Senate and the chairman and minority chairman of the Education Committee of the House of Representatives within three (3) years of the effective date of this section.

(c)(1) A school district may provide dating violence training to guidance counselors, nurses and mental health staff at the high school level. Upon the recommendation of the district superintendent, other staff may be included or may attend the training on a voluntary basis. The school district may also provide dating violence training to parents.

(2) The dating violence training may include, but need not be limited to: basic principles of dating violence; warning signs of dating violence; the school district's dating violence pol-

icy; appropriate responses to incidents of dating violence at school; and services and resources available through domestic violence programs and rape crisis programs.

(d)(1) A school district may incorporate dating violence education that is age appropriate into the annual health curriculum framework for students in grades nine (9) through twelve (12). In developing such a policy, the school district shall consult with at least one (1) domestic violence program or rape crisis program that serves the region where the school district is located.

(2) Dating violence education may include, but need not be limited to: defining dating violence and recognizing dating violence warning signs; characteristics of healthy relationships; information regarding peer support and the role friends and peers have in addressing dating violence; and contact information for and the services and resources available through domestic violence centers and rape crisis centers, including detailed information concerning safety planning, availability and enforcement of protection from abuse orders and the availability of other services and assistance for students and their families.

(3) The department, through its Office for Safe Schools, in consultation with at least one (1) domestic violence center and at least one (1) rape crisis center, shall provide school districts with grade-appropriate educational materials regarding dating violence and healthy relationships for the purpose of assisting school districts in preparing an instructional program on dating violence. The department may use educational materials that are already publicly available for this purpose.

(4) A parent or legal guardian of a student who is under eighteen (18) years of age, within a reasonable period of time after the request is made, shall be permitted to examine the dating violence education program instructional materials at the school in which the student is enrolled.

(5) At the request of a parent or guardian, a student shall be excused from all or parts of the dating violence education program. The principal shall notify all parents or guardians of their ability to withdraw their children from instruction in the program by returning a signed opt-out form.

(e) Nothing in this section shall be construed as preventing a person from seeking judicial relief from dating violence under any other law or as establishing or modifying any civil liability.

(f) As used in this section, the following words and phrases shall have the meanings given to them in this subsection:

"At school." The term shall have the meaning given to school property as defined in section 1301-A.

"Dating partner." A person, regardless of gender, involved in an intimate relationship with another person, primarily characterized by the expectation of affectionate involvement,

whether casual, serious or long term.

"Dating violence." Behavior where one person uses threats of, or actually uses, physical, sexual, verbal or emotional abuse to control the person's dating partner.

"Department." The Department of Education of the Commonwealth.

"Domestic violence center." The term shall have the meaning given in section 2333 of the act of April 9, 1929 (P.L. 177, No. 175), known as "The Administrative Code of 1929."

"Domestic violence program." The term shall have the meaning given in section 2333 of the act of April 9, 1929 (P.L. 177, No. 175), known as "The Administrative Code of 1929."

"Rape crisis center." The term shall have the meaning given in section 2333 of the act of April 9, 1929 (P.L. 177, No. 175), known as "The Administrative Code of 1929."

"Rape crisis program." The term shall have the meaning given in section 2333 of the act of April 9, 1929 (P.L. 177, No. 175), known as "The Administrative Code of 1929."

HISTORY: Act 2010-104 (H.B. 101) P.L. 996, § 17, approved Nov. 17, 2010, eff. in 60 days.