

Educational Standards & Professional Learning Requirements in NC Schools

**Human Trafficking Commission Meeting
August 28, 2025**

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School Social Work Consultant

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Vision

NC students, staff, and families are healthy, safe, supported, engaged, and prepared for future success.

Mission

Provide support to schools and community stakeholders so they can promote the health, well-being, and success of NC.

How We Do It

We use the Whole School, Whole Community, Whole Child (WSCC) framework, and related best practices, to guide our partnerships, priorities, products, and recommendations.



**NORTH CAROLINA
Healthy Schools**

WHOLE SCHOOL, **WHOLE COMMUNITY**, WHOLE CHILD

Healthy Children
Learn Better





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Project AWARE



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School Counseling



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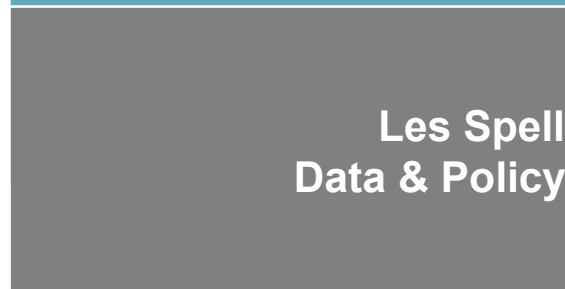
Lillian Pinto
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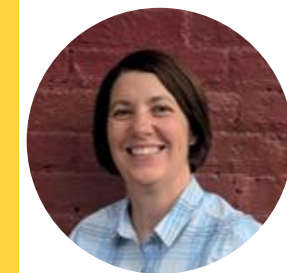
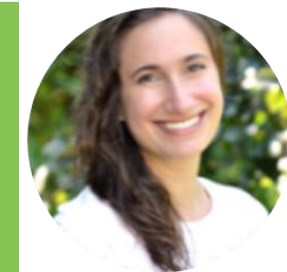
Lisa Queen
Healthy Schools



Susanne Schmal
Partnerships & Policy



Les Spell
Data & Policy

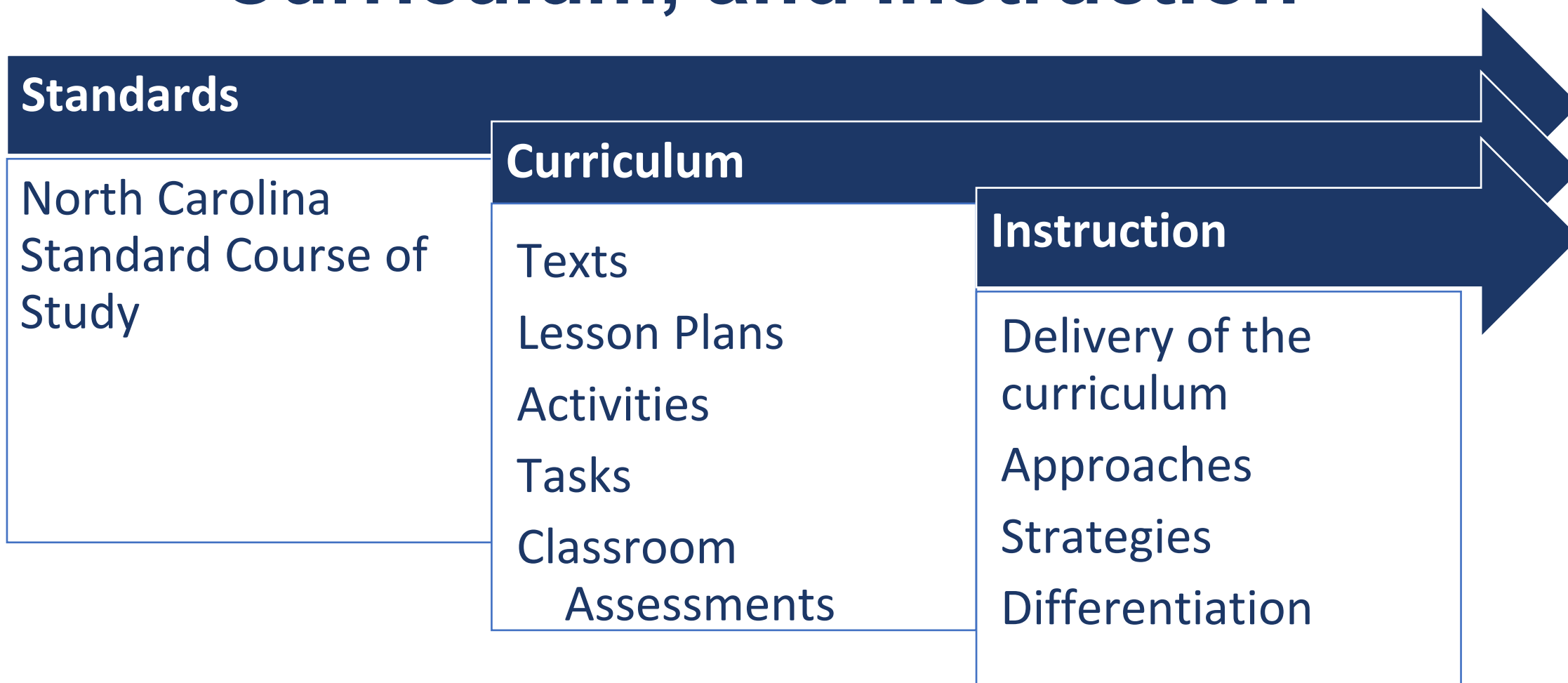


Education Standards Overview

Lillian Pinto

Reproductive Health Consultant
NC Healthy Schools, NCDPI

The Difference Between Standards, Curriculum, and Instruction



NC Standard Course of Study

General Statute 115C

- Defines the appropriate content standards for each grade or proficiency level and each high school course.
- Uniform set of learning standards for every public school in North Carolina.
- What students should know and be able to do by the end of a year or course.

Standard Course of Study

[Arts Education](#)

[CTE and Career Pathways](#)

[Computer Science](#)

[English Language Arts](#)

[English Language Development](#)

[Guidance](#)

[Healthful Living](#)

[Information and Technology](#)

[Mathematics](#)

[Science](#)

[Social Studies](#)

[World Languages](#)

Reproductive Health and Safety Education Requirements

General Education Statute 115C-81.30

- Schools must provide RHSE in grades 7th – 9th and include:
 - Abstinence as the expected standard
 - Healthy relationships, avoiding peer pressure
 - Factual and age-appropriate information
 - STIs and HIV
 - FDA-approved contraceptive methods for pregnancy prevention
 - Sexual abuse and sex trafficking, reporting procedures and resources



Sexual Assault and Sexual Abuse



Teach awareness of sexual assault, sexual abuse, and risk reduction. The instruction and materials shall:

- a. Focus on healthy relationships.
- b. Teach students what constitutes sexual assault and sexual abuse, the causes of those behaviors, and risk reduction.
- c. Inform students about resources and reporting procedures if they experience sexual assault or sexual abuse.
- d. Examine common misconceptions and stereotypes about sexual assault and sexual abuse.

Sex Trafficking Prevention and Awareness

Teach about sex trafficking prevention and awareness. Each local school administrative unit shall:

- a. Collaborate with a diverse group of outside consultants where practical, including law enforcement with expertise in sex-trafficking prevention education, to address the threats of sex trafficking.
- b. Collaborate with a diverse group of outside consultants, including law enforcement with expertise in sex trafficking, on a referral protocol for high-risk pupils and minors.



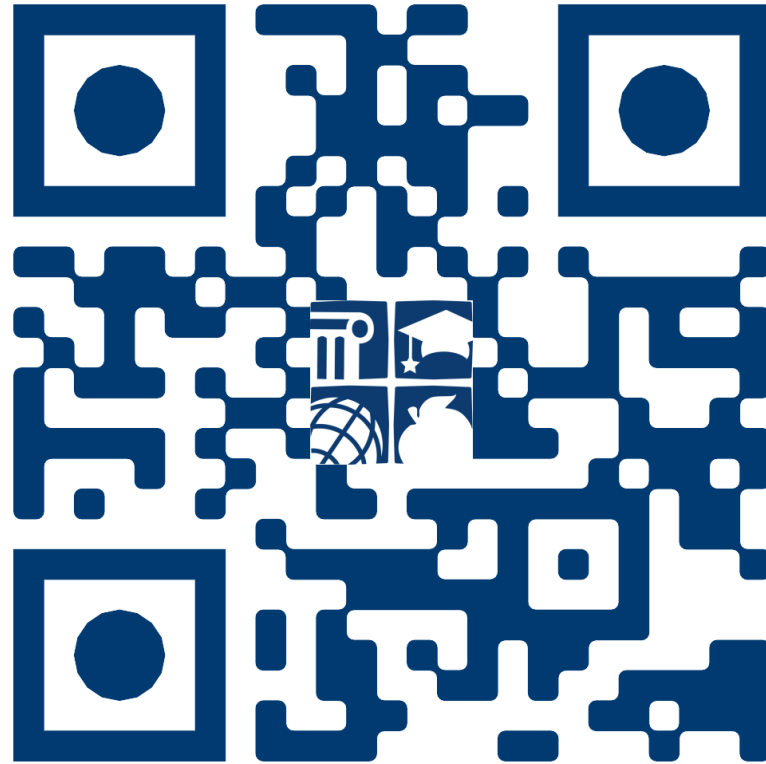
Standards Related to Sex Trafficking



Key concepts covered in 2024 standards grades 7-9

- Healthy and unhealthy relationships
- Communicating boundaries
- Violence prevention, dating violence and IPV
- Online bullying and exploitation, and trafficking
- Sexual assault and abuse awareness
- Laws and age of consent

Healthful Living Hub



<https://go.ncdpi.gov/48qrt>

Common Challenges & Opportunities

Challenges

- Opt in vs. Opt out policies
- Health education time and competing educational priorities
- Differences across districts
- Free and open curricula

Opportunities

- Partnering with community-based organizations
- Partnerships with experts, guest speaking
- Including as many standards as possible
- Talking about the importance of this education for all students
- Free curricula

NC Required Training for School Staff: Child Sexual Abuse & Sex Trafficking

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SL 2019-245 (SB 199) –Requirements

- All public school units must adopt and implement a child sexual abuse & sex trafficking training program (G.S. 115C-375.20).
- Who must be trained
 - School personnel who work directly with K–12 students (teachers, instructional support, principals, assistant principals).
- Minimum frequency
 - At least 2 hours of training in even-numbered years beginning in 2020.

SL 2019-245 (SB 199) –Requirements

- Content to cover
 - Prevention best practices; grooming tactics; warning signs of sexual abuse & sex trafficking; how to intervene/respond; mandatory reporting duties; available resources.
- Who can provide
 - Local NGOs with expertise, law enforcement, court officers, or PSU-adopted programs.

SL 2020-7 (SB 476) – School-Based Mental Health

- Requires each K–12 public school unit to adopt a mental health training program and suicide risk referral protocol.
- Training hours
 - Initial training: ≥ 6 hours (within first 6 months of employment).
 - Subsequent training: ≥ 2 hours (periodic/annual per PSU plan).

SL 2020-7 (SB 476) – School-Based Mental Health

- Required topics (integrate with SB 199)
 - Youth mental health and suicide prevention; substance use; sexual abuse prevention; sex trafficking prevention.
- Delivery & cost
 - Provide at no cost to employees; may be in-person, virtual, or self-study per PSU policy.

Implementation & Timelines

- Adoption deadlines
 - SB 199: PSUs adopt programs by Jan 1, 2020; implement training in 2020–21.
- Ongoing cadence
 - SB 199: ≥ 2 hours in even-numbered years (2020, 2022, 2024, 2026, ...).
 - SL 2020-7: Initial 6 hours for new staff; ≥ 2 hours for refreshers as set by PSU plan.
- Alignment tips
 - Bundle SB 199 content within your mental health training plan to meet both laws efficiently.
 - Use DPI's model plan and approved modules to standardize content and documentation.
- Documentation
 - Track completions, provider, date, hours, and topics; maintain certificates/rosters for audits.



Questions

Contact Information

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