

INITIATIVE PETITION FOR A LAW RELATIVE TO PUBLIC HEALTH EDUCATION

BE IT ENACTED BY THE PEOPLE, AND BY THEIR AUTHORITY

A Law Relative to Comprehensive Public Health and Epidemiology Education

SECTION 1: Section 1D of chapter 69 of the General Laws, as appearing in the 2020 Official Edition, is hereby amended by inserting after the word "languages," in line 7, the following words: ", public health and epidemiology education."

SECTION 2: Paragraph 3 of said section 1D of said chapter 69, as so appearing, is hereby further amended by striking out the fourth sentence and inserting in place thereof the following sentence: "The standards for public health education shall be age-appropriate, medically accurate, and shall, at minimum, provide for instruction in the following areas: epidemiology, etiology, disease prevention and control, communicable disease transmission, and visualization and analysis of epidemiological data."

SECTION 3: The Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education shall coordinate with the Massachusetts Department of Public Health to establish a commission with the express purpose of outlining the educational requirements within two years of the passage of this legislation. The commission shall be chaired by the Commissioner of the Department of Public Health, and committee members shall be assigned upon the discretion of the Commissioner's Office. The commission shall be established within two years of the legislation's passing. Educational requirements ought to be structured around a framework of critical thinking and evaluation of information credibility. Such requirements shall be construed as a guide for local school districts in the development and selection of curriculum, textbooks, and instructional materials.

Initials: ASK, OC, DM, AK, JK, MF, CCB, AS, BY

SECTION 4: Section 11 of said chapter 69, as so appearing, is hereby amended by inserting after the words "nutrition and wellness," in line 206, the following words: "public health and epidemiology."

The comprehensive public health and epidemiology education curriculum shall include, but not be limited to, the following topics:

(a) Epidemiology: Students shall be introduced to the basic concepts, principles, and methods of epidemiology, including the study of disease patterns, risk factors, and the role of epidemiology in public health.

(b) Etiology: Students shall learn about the causes and origins of diseases, including infectious and non-infectious diseases, and understand the importance of etiological research in preventing and controlling diseases.

(c) Disease Prevention and Control: Students shall be educated on strategies and measures aimed at preventing the occurrence and spread of diseases, including vaccination, hygiene practices, health promotion, and the role of public health agencies.

SECTION 5: The Department of Elementary and Secondary Education and Department of Public Health shall provide resources and support for teacher training and professional development in the field of public health and epidemiology education. The established commission outlined in Section 3 shall collaborate with relevant public health agencies, universities, and professional organizations to develop and deliver resources for classroom education.

SECTION 6: Nothing in this act shall be construed to require an MCAS exam on health education.

SIGNATURES

Initials: ASK, QJQU, BM, AK, PK, AMF, CCBAs, KG