



Mental & Emotional Health Education
Rule 6A-1.094121, Florida Administrative Code
Frequently Asked Questions
September 17, 2019

- 1. When does the teaching/instruction begin?**
Five hours of instruction must occur during the 2019-2020 school year.
- 2. Do the five hours need to be continuous within a certain period of time?**
No.
- 3. Is the requirement of five hours total from grades 6-12, or five hours per year?**
A minimum of five hours is required for each student each year while in grades 6-12.
- 4. Are we correct in assuming that by requiring a minimum of five hours annually, students will have received at least 35 hours of mental and emotional health instruction when they graduate high school?**
Yes.
- 5. Does the instruction need to occur during a credited course or is there flexibility to use alternative times (e.g. homeroom/time before classes begin, grade level presentations/whole group, etc.)?**
Yes. A school district plan and report must identify specific courses where instruction is delivered as part of a course. Instruction can be integrated into events and presentations occurring during that course time.
- 6. If the instruction must occur during a credited course, a class period of instruction may not equate to 60 minutes. Is there flexibility to develop a plan that will be accepted at five class periods of instruction (minimum)?**
No. Each student must have a minimum of five hours of instruction each year in grades 6-12. As an example, if you are implementing this instruction in a 50-minute class period, there would need to be six periods total to meet the requirement. The time increments for this instruction are a district decision.
- 7. Are students allowed to “waive” or be excused from this instruction? Are parents allowed to request that their child not participate in this instruction?**
There is no statutory waiver option at this time.
- 8. Although a plan must be developed by December of this school year, is the instruction required to occur during this school year or can it be rolled out in the fall of 2020?**
A minimum of five hours of instruction must occur during the 2019-2020 school year.



9. Will the Office of Healthy Schools share suggested course titles/course code numbers from the Course Code Directory as recommended courses of study (at each grade level, 6-12) to deliver the instruction?

Although not required to comply with the mental and emotional health rule, the middle and high school health education courses are a natural fit to deliver this instruction. The high school physical education course entitled HOPE Core also has numerous health education benchmarks included. The health education and HOPE Core courses can be viewed at <http://www.cpalms.org/Public/search/Course>.

10. If a district is planning to provide this instruction district-wide at a specific time each month for students in grades 6-12, is that allowable since it wouldn't be one specific course that is being used to deliver the content? For example, a district is planning to provide 30-minute lessons each month that will occur simultaneously district-wide for students in grades 6-12. All lesson plans and resources will be provided to teachers and will focus on one of the 10 topics included in the rule. Is this allowed since it would not occur during one specific course?

Yes. See #5 above.

11. Are districts expected to develop their own curriculum for each grade level or will the FDOE be providing/recommending specific curriculum/resources suitable to each grade level?

Curriculum choices will be made at the district level. FDOE's Office of Healthy Schools will be developing a list of no cost resources and will share this with school districts.

12. Can the curriculum be delivered in a blended learning environment (online and face-to-face instruction)?

Yes.

13. Is there a recommended way to document the planning and delivery of instruction?

Districts can create a template that meets their needs as long as all three elements for each grade level outlined within the rule are included. Please send your implementation plan to MentalHealthEducation@fldoe.org by December 1, 2019, and post your district plan on the school district website.

14. How should students participating in full-time dual enrollment receive the instruction in mental and emotional health education?

For students who are full-time dual enrolled or early admit, districts must make arrangements to ensure those students participate with their cohort.

15. Are charter schools or private schools required to provide mental and emotional health education per Rule 6A-1.094121, F.A.C.?

The rule implements Section 1003.42, Florida Statutes, Required Instruction. Charter schools are exempt from many statutes in the educational code (Section 1002.33(16), F.S.), with a few exceptions, and 1003.42 is not one of the listed statutes that require charter school compliance. We have heard from many charter school operators that do intend to meet this requirement as they believe it is in the best interest of students. Charter schools have full access to our Office of Healthy Schools should they need assistance on how to implement this requirement. Charter school staff, the same as for all public school personnel, must receive youth mental health



awareness and assistance training (Section 1012.584, F.S.), which includes: (a) An overview of mental illnesses and substance use disorders and the need to reduce the stigma of mental illness; (b) Information on the potential risk factors and warning signs of emotional disturbance, mental illness, or substance use disorders, including, but not limited to, depression, anxiety, psychosis, eating disorders, and self-injury, as well as common treatments for those conditions and how to assess those risks; and (c) Information on how to engage at-risk students with the skills, resources, and knowledge required to assess the situation, and how to identify and encourage the students to use appropriate professional help and other support strategies, including, but not limited to, peer, social, or self-help care.

16. Are full-time virtual students required to receive five hours of mental and emotional health education?

Yes. School districts should include information on district virtual schools in their annual plan and report, so that each district submits only one annual plan and report.

17. Are students enrolled in Department of Juvenile Justice (DJJ) programs required to receive five hours of mental and emotional health education?

No, although it is strongly encouraged. FDOE will provide resources and support in order to assist DJJ schools with this instruction.

18. Do you anticipate that there will be required FDOE training as a qualification for staff delivering mental and emotional health instruction?

No. However, as a potential resource the Office of Healthy Schools has been working in collaboration with Title IV, Part A, to develop a 10-15 hour online *Professional Development Course to Strengthen K-12 Health Education Instruction in Florida*. This course is in development and will be available in September, 2019 on the Comprehensive Health Education [website](#).

19. Who is responsible for teaching the material? Will new teachers/mental health professionals be brought into the schools or will current teachers be required to teach the new material?

This is a district decision.

20. Will there be a mandate of the specific certification/credentials that the trainer/person delivering the instruction will need to have?

No. This falls under required instruction and is up to the district to determine specifics. In the event the district incorporates this into a course delivered by a district-employed teacher, certification for that particular course will apply. For example, if it is in a health education course, it would be a certified health education teacher. If in another content area other than health education, it would be the teacher certified to teach that course. A district also could choose to bring in experts from the community to deliver some or all of the instruction within the chosen course.

21. Do these Mental/Emotional Health topics need to be embedded into core courses (all students at each grade level receive instruction) or can they be placed into elective PE/Health courses (only students that select the elective course at each grade level receive instruction)?

This is a district decision. The rule includes all students in grades 6-12. School districts must provide this instruction to all students in those grade levels.



22. How will it be funded? Will local school districts be required to cover any costs?

This component of health education has already been in required instruction for over two decades, so no new funding is necessary. This rule provides a structure for documenting implementation, specific topic areas to address and a minimum number of hours of instruction.