

Senate File 175 - Introduced

SENATE FILE 175
BY COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

(SUCCESSOR TO SSB 1028)

A BILL FOR

1 An Act incorporating provisions related to pregnancy and fetal
2 development into the human growth and development and health
3 curricula provided by school districts, accredited nonpublic
4 schools, charter schools, and innovation zone schools to
5 students enrolled in grades one through twelve.

6 BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF IOWA:

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1 Section 1. Section 256.11, subsections 3 and 4, Code 2025,
2 are amended to read as follows:

3 3. The following areas shall be taught in grades one
4 through six: English-language arts, social studies, mathematics,
5 science, health, physical education, traffic safety, music,
6 visual art, and, subject to section 279.80, age-appropriate and
7 research-based human growth and development that incorporates
8 the standards established under section 279.50, subsection
9 2, paragraph "b". Computer science instruction incorporating
10 the standards established under section 256.7, subsection 26,
11 paragraph "a", subparagraph (4), shall be offered in at least
12 one grade level commencing with the school year beginning July 1,
13 2023. The health curriculum shall include the characteristics of
14 communicable diseases. The state board as part of accreditation
15 standards shall adopt curriculum definitions for implementing the
16 elementary program.

17 4. The following shall be taught in grades seven
18 and eight: English-language arts; social studies, including
19 instruction related to civics; mathematics; science; health;
20 age-appropriate and research-based human growth and development
21 that incorporates the standards established under section 279.50,
22 subsection 3, paragraph "b"; career exploration and development;
23 physical education; music; and visual art. Computer science
24 instruction incorporating the standards established under section
25 256.7, subsection 26, paragraph "a", subparagraph (4), shall
26 be offered in at least one grade level commencing with the
27 school year beginning July 1, 2023. Career exploration and
28 development shall be designed so that students are appropriately
29 prepared to create an individual career and academic plan
30 pursuant to section 279.61, incorporate foundational career
31 and technical education concepts aligned with the six career
32 and technical education service areas as defined in subsection
33 5, paragraph "h", incorporate relevant twenty-first century
34 skills to facilitate career readiness, and introduce students
35 to career opportunities within the local community and across

1 this state. The health curriculum shall include age-appropriate
2 and research-based information regarding the characteristics of
3 sexually transmitted diseases. The state board as part of
4 accreditation standards shall adopt curriculum definitions for
5 implementing the program in grades seven and eight. However,
6 this subsection shall not apply to the teaching of career
7 exploration and development in nonpublic schools.

8 Sec. 2. Section 256.11, subsection 5, paragraph j,
9 subparagraph (1), Code 2025, is amended to read as follows:

10 (1) One unit of health education which may include personal
11 health; food and nutrition; environmental health; safety and
12 survival skills; consumer health; family life; age-appropriate
13 and research-based human growth and development that incorporates
14 the standards established under section 279.50, subsection 3,
15 paragraph "b"; substance use disorder and nonuse; emotional and
16 social health; health resources; cardiopulmonary resuscitation;
17 and prevention and control of disease, including age-appropriate
18 and research-based information regarding sexually transmitted
19 diseases.

20 Sec. 3. Section 256E.7, subsection 2, paragraph g, Code 2025,
21 is amended by adding the following new subparagraph:

22 NEW SUBPARAGRAPH. (01) The educational standards of section
23 256.11 relating to the human growth and development curriculum
24 for grades one through eight or the health curriculum for grades
25 nine through twelve.

26 Sec. 4. Section 256F.4, subsection 2, Code 2025, is amended
27 by adding the following new paragraph:

28 NEW PARAGRAPH. r. Be subject to and comply with the
29 requirements of section 256.11 relating to the human growth
30 and development curriculum for grades one through eight and the
31 health curriculum for grades nine through twelve.

32 Sec. 5. Section 279.50, subsections 2 and 3, Code 2025, are
33 amended to read as follows:

34 2. a. Subject to section 279.80, each school board shall
35 provide age-appropriate and research-based instruction in

1 human growth and development including instruction regarding
2 self-esteem, stress management, interpersonal relationships, and
3 domestic abuse in grades one through six.

4 b. The age-appropriate and research-based instruction in
5 human growth and development described in paragraph "a" shall
6 include all of the following:

7 (1) Instruction related to human development inside the womb.

8 (2) A high-definition ultrasound video showing the presence
9 of the brain, heart, and other vital organs in early fetal
10 development.

11 (3) A high-quality, computer-generated rendering or
12 animation, or an ultrasound or other real image, that depicts
13 the humanity of the unborn child by showing prenatal human
14 development, starting at fertilization, noting significant
15 markers in cell growth and organ development throughout every
16 stage of pregnancy.

17 c. The state board of education shall adopt rules pursuant to
18 chapter 17A to administer and interpret this subsection.

19 3. a. Each school board shall provide age-appropriate and
20 research-based instruction in human growth and development
21 including instruction regarding human sexuality, self-esteem,
22 stress management, interpersonal relationships, domestic abuse,
23 and the prevention and control of disease, including sexually
24 transmitted diseases as required in section 256.11, in grades
25 seven through twelve.

26 b. The age-appropriate and research-based instruction in
27 human growth and development described in paragraph "a" shall
28 include all of the following:

29 (1) Instruction related to human development inside the womb.

30 (2) A high-definition ultrasound video showing the presence
31 of the brain, heart, and other vital organs in early fetal
32 development.

33 (3) A high-quality, computer-generated rendering or
34 animation, or an ultrasound or other real image, that depicts
35 the humanity of the unborn child by showing prenatal human

1 development, starting at fertilization, noting significant
2 markers in cell growth and organ development throughout every
3 stage of pregnancy.

4 c. The state board of education shall adopt rules pursuant to
5 chapter 17A to administer and interpret this subsection.

6 Sec. 6. Section 279.50, subsection 10, paragraph b, Code
7 2025, is amended to read as follows:

8 b. "Research-based" means ~~all of the following:~~

9 ~~(1) Complete complete, unbiased information that is verified~~
10 ~~or supported by the weight of research conducted in compliance~~
11 ~~with accepted scientific methods, recognized as medically~~
12 ~~accurate and objective by leading professional organizations and~~
13 ~~agencies with relevant expertise in the field, such as the~~
14 ~~American college of obstetricians and gynecologists, the American~~
15 ~~public health association, the American academy of pediatrics,~~
16 ~~and the national association of school nurses; and published in~~
17 ~~peer-reviewed journals where appropriate.~~

18 ~~(2) Information that is free of racial, ethnic, sexual~~
19 ~~orientation, and gender biases.~~

20 EXPLANATION

21 The inclusion of this explanation does not constitute agreement with
22 the explanation's substance by the members of the general assembly.

23 This bill incorporates provisions related to pregnancy
24 and fetal development into the human growth and development
25 and health curricula provided by school districts, accredited
26 nonpublic schools, charter schools, and innovation zone schools
27 to students enrolled in grades 1 through 12.

28 The bill requires that the human growth and development
29 curricula provided by school districts, nonpublic schools,
30 charter schools, and innovation zone schools in grades 1 through
31 8, and the health curriculum in grades 9 through 12, include
32 instruction related to human development inside the womb. The
33 bill also requires that such curricula include a high-definition
34 ultrasound video showing the presence of the brain, heart,
35 and other vital organs in early fetal development, and a

1 high-quality, computer-generated rendering or animation, or an
2 ultrasound or other real image, that depicts the humanity of
3 the unborn child by showing prenatal human development, starting
4 at fertilization, noting significant markers in cell growth and
5 organ development throughout every stage of pregnancy. The
6 bill requires the state board of education to adopt rules to
7 administer and interpret these provisions. If interpretive
8 rulemaking authority is clearly vested in the discretion of an
9 agency by statute, the applicable judicial standard of review
10 is whether the rules constitute an irrational, illogical, or
11 wholly unjustifiable interpretation of law by the agency (Code
12 section 17A.19(10)(1)). If interpretive rulemaking authority is
13 not clearly vested in the discretion of an agency, the applicable
14 judicial standard of review is whether the rules constitute an
15 erroneous interpretation of law (Code section 17A.19(10)(c)).

16 The bill modifies the definition of "research-based" for
17 purposes of human growth and development instruction, and for
18 purposes of the state's educational program, to provide that such
19 term means complete, unbiased information that is verified or
20 supported by the weight of research conducted in compliance with
21 accepted scientific methods, recognized as medically accurate and
22 objective by leading professional organizations and agencies with
23 relevant expertise in the field, and published in peer-reviewed
24 journals where appropriate.