

Dear Parent/Guardian,

The purpose of this letter is to inform you that your child will be engaging in classroom lessons mandated by Florida legislation for the remainder of the school year in the following areas: mental health education, child trafficking education, and substance use and abuse prevention.

Mental Health

Florida is third in the nation for number of reported cases of human trafficking and the average age of trafficked youth is 11 to 13 years old. In 2018, there were 767 human trafficking cases reported in Florida. Of those cases, 149 were minors. Up to 70 percent of sex trafficking and exploitation begins with predators connecting with youth online. According to the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children, one out of eight endangered runaway youth is likely a victim of human trafficking.

Students in grades six will receive all education through Grade 6 Health Course. 7th and 8th grade students will receive this through classroom instruction with school counselors using the Safer, Smarter Teens program.

Substance Use and Abuse

Tallahassee, Fla., August 21, 2019—Today, Commissioner of Education Richard Cocozan applauded the State Board of Education for requiring accountability in the delivery of age-appropriate substance use and abuse health education for students in grades K-12. This initiative builds on similar requirements for mental health education adopted by the State Board of Education last month. The new requirement takes effect this school year.

“The State Board of Education is committed to putting the needs of students first,” said Chair Andy Turk. “We firmly believe that a balanced education that includes instruction on substance use and abuse is absolutely essential to a student’s lifelong success.”

Students in grades 6-8th will have two options to receive this education. The first option is school participation in Red Ribbon Week in the fall semester. The second option is education with the use of Everfi (7th-8th) or Health Smart curriculum (6th). The option is to be determined by the school administration.

If you have any questions related to this letter, you may contact your school’s administration and/or student services team. For more information on the state standards, please visit: <http://www.flde.org/>