

## Welcome, Dr. Gibson-Alonso!

Health Education Coordinator



Tamara Gibson-Alonso joined the Florida Department of Education Office of Healthy Schools on August 12<sup>th</sup> as the Health Education Coordinator. Since 2005, Tamara has served as a health and science educator in Osceola, Miami-Dade, and Duval counties. She holds a Master's degree in Public Health and a Doctor of Education degree in Educational Leadership. Practicing mindful meditation, frequent cycling, and trying new, colorful recipes are a few healthy habits that Tamara enjoys.

## Florida Healthy School Districts



Building a healthy school district requires a collaborative approach to learning and health. Guided by the Center for Disease Control's (CDC) Whole School, Whole Community, Whole Child (WSCC) model, the Office of Healthy Schools provides support to districts working towards connecting physical, emotional, and social health to education. Schools can receive bronze, silver, and gold healthy school district awards. Districts are designated as a Florida Healthy School district for a two-year period. The 2019-2021 awardees will be announced on September 9th. What designation is your district? Click [here](#) for more information.

Send a photo along with a paragraph description of your healthy district in action related to health education to [Tamara.Gibson-Alonso@fldoe.org](mailto:Tamara.Gibson-Alonso@fldoe.org) – we'd like to feature your district in an upcoming FLDOE update.

**Obesity is a chronic disease.** One in 5 children in the United States have obesity, according to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. **September is National Childhood Obesity Awareness Month.** Childhood obesity puts kids at risk for health problems that were once seen only in adults, like type 2 diabetes, high blood pressure, and heart disease. To prevent childhood obesity, encourage children to: get active outside, limit screen time to 2 hours or less a day, and enjoy healthy meals. Click [here](#) for tips to participate in this national health observance.



[theglobeandmail.com](http://theglobeandmail.com)

September is also **Suicide Prevention Awareness Month.** Suicide is the second leading cause of death of 15-29-year-olds. One in 5 youth ages 13-18 have, or will have, a serious mental illness. Half of all mental illness begins by age 14 (WHO). The National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI), the nation's largest grassroots mental health organization, developed an [infographic](#) relating to mental health factors for children and teens. You can use this tool as a conversation starter when promoting [mental](#) and emotional health education and the importance of building **mental resilience**. You can also access the Florida Youth Behavior suicide related [infographics here](#).

# Florida Leadership Supports Health Education

On August 21, 2019, First Lady Casey DeSantis issued the following [statement](#) applauding the State Board of Education for officially implementing an initiative regarding substance abuse and mental health education for students in grades K-12.

“Nothing is more important to parents than the safety and well-being of their children, which is why this accountability initiative is vitally important,” **said First Lady Casey DeSantis.** “Ensuring Florida students understand the implications and ramifications of drug abuse will not only save lives but also help foster a healthy and productive learning environment. I commend the Commissioner of Education, Richard Corcoran, and the State Board of Education for continuing to put an emphasis on the personal health and well-being of every student.”

## The Rules.

Pursuant to Florida State Statute [1003.42 \(2\)\(n\)](#), mental and emotional health and substance use and abuse education are two of the 12 concepts of required instruction in comprehensive K-12 health education.

[Rule 6A-1.094121, F.A.C.](#), approved by the State Board of Education (SBOE) on July 17, 2019, requires school districts to report on the implementation plans for minimum of five hours of required mental and emotional health education instruction for students in grades 6-12. Organized by 10 required topics, the FDOE will share a standards alignment and no-cost resources list to assist districts with implementing this rule soon.

[Rule 6A-1.094122, F.A.C.](#), approved by the SBOE on August 21, 2019, requires school districts to report on their implementation plans for teaching substance use and abuse health education.

[Rule 6A-1.094123, F.A.C.](#), Child Trafficking Prevention Education, is currently under review and will be presented to the SBOE for consideration on September 20, 2019.

# Florida Statutes Related to Health Education

Three Florida Statutes are related to standards and instruction for health education. Access the statutes at these links:

- [Section 1003.41, Florida State Statutes](#)  
Next Generation Sunshine State Standards
- [Section 1003.42 \(2\)\(n\), Florida State Statutes](#)  
Required Instruction
- [Section 1003.46, Florida State Statutes](#)  
Instruction in Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome

## Youth Mental Health and Romantic Relationships

Research articles from the American Sociological Association and the National Institutes of Health Library of Medicine, indicate a significant link between romantic relationship and mental health issues in youth, particularly in young women. The articles listed below provide insight in two areas; the link between suicide attempts due to inauthenticity in romantic relationships and efforts to provide support for adolescents seeking help for romantic relationship concerns.

- Caught in a Bad Romance: Adolescent Romantic Relationships and Mental Health  
[American Sociological Association](#)
- Young Love: Romantic Concerns and Associated Mental Health Issues among Adolescent Help-Seekers  
[National Institutes of Health](#)

This research underscores the need for additional and more effective relationship and sexual health education.

## Sexual Health Education Instructional Resources

- [Rights, Respect and Responsibility](#) (3R's) Curriculum – Florida specific lesson for grades 6-12
- [Dating Matters](#) – This evidence-based curriculum focuses on teaching 11-14-year-olds healthy relationship skills before they start dating and reduce behaviors that increase the risk for dating violence, like substance abuse and sexual risk taking.

[Youth Sexual Behaviors](#) –The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has a plethora of information to use in making the case for improved HIV/STD and teen pregnancy prevention education in school districts. Refer to the link above for data and resources.



**Informed Families** provides fun and effective universal drug prevention programs for students and families in K-12 schools and communities. The campaigns focus on Family Day, Red Ribbon Week, Lock Your Meds and Safe Homes, and Smart Parties. Connect with **Informed Families prevention campaigns** by clicking [here](#) or call (305) 856-4886.

---

## Start With Hello Week

[Start With Hello](#) is the perfect opportunity to welcome students back to school and to engage students in creating and sustaining a culture of inclusiveness and connectedness.

Start With Hello Week, September 23–27<sup>th</sup>, raises awareness about social isolation and educates students and the community through: Start With Hello trainings, advertising, activities, public proclamations, media events, student contests and school awards. Start With Hello Week is free, easy to implement, and will make a lasting impact on the people in your school, students and adults alike.



### Mark Your Calendars!

\*September is Sexual Health Awareness Month ([ASHA](#))

\*September 23-27, Start With Hello Week ([Sandy Hook Promise](#))

\*October 2, National Walk or Bike to School Day ([UNC](#))

\*October 10, World Mental Health Day ([WHO](#))

\*October 21-25, National Health Education Week ([SOPHE](#))

\*October 23-31, Red Ribbon Week ([National Family Partnership](#))

\*November, American Diabetes Month ([USDHHS](#))

If you have any questions about health education or would like to share no-cost resources with us, please contact us at the Office of Healthy Schools, Bureau of Standards and Instructional Support, Florida Department of Education. [fldoe.org/schools/healthy-schools/](http://fldoe.org/schools/healthy-schools/)