

June 24, 2020

State Board of Education
1701 North Congress Ave.
Austin, Texas 78701-1494

Dear State Board of Education Members,

Thank you for taking your time to read our recommendations and present our work to you. We are a state-wide team of subject matter experts with knowledge of human trafficking coming together to provide informed recommendations for the TEKS Health Curriculum Standards. Our goal, to provide recommendations that provides a safe and age-appropriate way to educate middle school and high school students on the issues of online safety, human trafficking, and other interconnected issues, while building their protective factors, as well as for elementary students.

We acknowledge that a tremendous amount of work has gone into training key stakeholders as a result of HB 1272, and we applaud that work. However, we feel the ultimate key stakeholders are the students and educating them is the greatest prevention tool available.

According to Lokia M. Scott, Ph.D., an Assistant Professor in the Department of Curriculum & Instruction at Baylor University, children's lack of awareness about this global epidemic is to their own detriment. Adding that educators and parents must be unafraid to begin having these conversations with their students and children now.

Our team's work involves providing thoughtful recommendations as to when (at what ages) and what material should be introduced in the curriculum. For instance, to incorporate human trafficking into positive behavior and character-building messages that are overarching statewide. Throughout this process we remained sensitive to the terminology and language used.

There are 79,000 victims of youth and minor sex trafficking in Texas at any given time. A frequently quoted mantra of traffickers is that they can sell a drug once, but a girl they can sell 1000 times. Money fuels this industry and traffickers are becoming more ruthless in their pursuit to get more. However, age-appropriate education, awareness and skill-building activities should be added into the curriculum as an effective tool to combat this global health crisis that is invading our schools.

Over the past decade, annual estimates of the number of gangs have averaged about 25,000 nationally and the number of gang members has been about 750,000. Teens join gangs for a variety of reasons. Some are seeking excitement; others are looking for prestige, protection, a chance to make money, or a sense of belonging.

In Texas, more than 3 children die from abuse or neglect on average every week, 182 children are confirmed victims daily, and more than 7 children are maltreated every hour.

These statistics are as daunting as the urgency of implementing our proposed recommendations. HCR 35 recognizes in part that there are estimated 80,000 minors identified as human trafficking victims in Texas, and that Texas has the second-highest number of human trafficking reports in the country. Through HB 10, the Child Sex Trafficking Team (CSTT) was created. CCTT's Strategies to Protect Children include providing prevention education for all youth, educators, and caregivers.

Important to our work was the shared framework of ensuring that each recommendation was evaluated through the lens of trauma-informed approaches and being cognizant to not cause secondary trauma.

The education of our children is vitally important. Frederick Douglass made a powerful statement that speaks to the urgency of our work, “It is easier to build strong children than to repair broken men.”

Having said that, a major issue in trauma reactions, regardless of the age of the trauma victim, is an alteration of one’s self-view and a change in how the environment is perceived.

In working through this process, our subject matter expert detailed for us the normal stages of development, developmental stunting and developmental trauma/neglect. Her instruction gave us another important lens to view as we worked through making our recommendations. This was yet another filter of promising practices that informed our work.

Another anchor was the knowledge that awareness and education in our schools is the key. When students are aware of their choices, actions, and consequences, their self-esteem increases, and their protective factors improve as do their outcomes.

Our team was methodical in our approach and strategic about our recommendations. We took a broad look at many areas but had a laser focus on the following sub-strands:

- Human Trafficking and Gangs
- Sexting and Digital Pornography
- Online Safety
- Legal Ramifications and Consequences, and
- Child Abuse and Neglect

Each one of these topics, although separate and distinct, are inherently connected. For instance, human trafficking is a form of child abuse under Section 261.001 of the Texas Family Code. Statistics reveal that at any given time an estimated 750,000 predators are online. The internet has made it easier for children to be manipulated, bullied, exposed to pornography, abused, and disturbingly, bought and sold online. The more decision-makers recognize the threads that knit these topics together, the more informed decisions can be made to keep our students safe.

Again, thank you for your time. We value your commitment to the education and well-being of our children, we share your passion.

Sincerely,

Connie Espino, Probation Officer Dallas County E.S.T.E.E.M. Court, Dallas, TX

Cynthia Horton, President, Shift to Grow Company LLC., El Paso, TX

Alisa Jordheim, Founder/Director, Justice Society Inc., San Antonio, TX

Ryan Morris, COO/Ex. Director, Pure Hope Foundation, Tyler, TX

Barbara Rodriguez, Founder, Refuge City, Richardson, TX

Denise Wilkin, Vice President/Co-founder, Advocates 4 Freedom, El Paso, TX

Contents

Team Biographies	1
Human Trafficking and Gangs (p. 66)	4
Recommended Student Expectations.....	7
Sexting and Digital Pornography (pp. 71-72)	9
Online Safety (pp. 72-73)	10
Legal Ramifications and Consequences (p. 73)	10
Recommended Student Expectations.....	12
Child Abuse and Neglect (pp. 77-78)	15
Recommended Student Expectations.....	16
Safety Plan Template.....	18
Conclusion	19
References.....	20

TEAM BIOGRAPHIES

Connie Espino - Dallas, TX

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I have been a Dallas County Juvenile Probation Officer for 13 ½ years. I work with all age groups from 10 to 18 years old. I have specifically been working with girls who are at risk of, or have been commercially sexually exploited, or trafficked for the past 8 years, through the Dallas County E.S.T.E.E.M. Court program. Previously, I was a Parole Officer with the State of Texas for 6 years.

Cynthia Horton - El Paso, TX

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Cynthia Horton served as the interim and Executive Director of the Center of Hope for two years. She went to enormous lengths to establish the groundwork and facilities for the organizations' efforts and partnerships regarding human trafficking in El Paso. She was a deeply involved leader for the organization, working personally with victims of trafficking, accompanying them to travel for court appearances, and listening to their stories. She has very moving and meaningful examples to share about her work with these victims. Cynthia was also a foster parent for seventeen years, fostering more than 50 children. Although she now has her training and development company, she continues to provide presentations and remains focused on collaborating with organizations and systems to do a better job identifying, interfacing, supporting, and protecting trafficking victims.

Alisa Jordheim - San Antonio, TX

Founding Director, Justice Society

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Alisa's experience includes working with trafficking survivors (particularly children), safe-home development, legislative consultation, and domestic and international anti-trafficking program development. She served on the Texas Attorney General's task force developing mandatory statewide anti-trafficking training for educators and is a regular speaker to educators, government agencies, civic groups, and non-profit organizations on the subject of domestic and international sex trafficking and is the author of *Made In the USA: The Sex Trafficking of America's Children*.

Ryan Morris - Tyler, TX
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Pure Hope Foundation Residential restorative programming for survivors of sex trafficking, retreats for advocates, and events to strengthen individuals and families to end demand. Also 5 years leading operations for residential programming for survivors and equipping of advocates; previously a secondary level teacher and coach.

Barbara Rodriguez - Richardson, TX
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Barbara has decades of work with high risk youth through Teen Challenge, My Guardian Angel, YWAM Dallas as well as abroad. Barbara started Refuge City, an anti-human trafficking organization in 2011 focusing on Domestic Minor Sex Trafficking. She started the Refuge City Restorative Care program as well as the Refuge City GED school. Barbara is a trainer and speaker to high risk youth, churches, law enforcement, colleges and many other groups.

Denise Wilkin - El Paso, TX 79912
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Advocacy, Shelter and Support for Victims of Human Trafficking
Relevant Experience: Educational Level: Master's Degree in Educational Leadership
Career: 24 years in public education in New Mexico
13 years - teacher in public elementary school
6 years - Instructional Leader serving 7 public elementary schools
5 years - elementary school principal of K-5 public school.
2 1/2 years as co-founder and vice president of a nonprofit organization that assists victims and survivors of human trafficking.

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Emerge Counseling and Consulting - Emerge Counseling and Consulting (ECC) provides hope and growth for individuals and organizations alike. Through counseling, consulting, and training ECC brings insight into areas of self or business that need change and advancement. Melissa Herrmann has spent the past 19-years focused on working directly with children-at-risk and vulnerable women across the globe. Her efforts have entailed establishing and directing numerous children's homes and residential facilities (including homes designed for child victims of sex trafficking), developing community-based programs, training thousands of professionals and organizations around the world, and providing trauma counseling and psycho-education. Melissa has sat on numerous counsels, collaborative groups, and NGO board of directors seeking to provide insight into policy reform and program development for traumatized populations. Melissa has her MA in Human Services and Counseling from Regent University (2017) and her BA in Sociology from Vanguard University (2003).

HUMAN TRAFFICKING AND GANGS (p. 66)

Law: HB 111 (5-31-2019), Relating to public school policy and training for public school employees addressing the prevention of sexual abuse, sex trafficking, and other maltreatment of certain children.

Issue #1: Introducing a standardized human-trafficking education to low risk students prematurely may cause unintended secondary trauma.

Recommendation #1: Initiate model of Low and Higher Risk curricula to protect low risk populations from secondary trauma while providing higher risk populations with needed education.

“Jennifer was an 8th grade child in a loving, upper middle-class home. When she learned about the reality of human trafficking, she was overcome with fear. At the time she had an age-appropriate level of independence. After learning about the reality of kids in her area being trafficked her level of independence drastically regressed due to the secondary trauma from hearing trafficking accounts.”

– Melissa Herrmann, Emerge Counseling & Consulting

We recommend introducing human trafficking and gang preventions and awareness education options offering either low or higher risk curriculum for its students. The low risk curriculum would be the minimum for all schools, and the higher risk curriculum would have “added elements” to meet the needs of the student population. This option provides a suitable and effective human trafficking education for all Texas students while ensuring compliance with Texas Administrative Code §74.1, “A school district must provide instruction in the essential knowledge and skills of the appropriate grade levels in the foundation and enrichment curriculum...**A school district may add elements at its discretion** but must not delete or omit instruction in the foundation” (Nov. 24, 2019). We recommend each School Health Advisory Council (SHAC) recommend the appropriate low or higher risk curriculum based on the community’s human trafficking and gang vulnerability factors.

Considering the far-reaching implications of education and children, we must not overlook the risk of secondary trauma on children who are presented with difficult subject matter before they are emotionally ready. Secondary trauma is the experience of witnessing or hearing another individual’s trauma and then experiencing significant and lasting fears that interfere with daily life and relationships (Motta, 2005). While we may not initially view human trafficking education as a “trauma” we must consider the fact that the introduction of human trafficking, gangs, and other forms of sexual violation can be quite overwhelming for the child who has lived a predominantly sheltered life. A new understanding that they can be groomed and “tricked” with such devastating consequences can leave a child anxious to trust anyone new.

The fear that they could be assaulted could hinder their abilities in independence. “A major issue in trauma reactions, regardless of the age of the trauma victim, is an alteration of one’s self-view and a change in how the environment is perceived” (Motta, 2015). When a child goes from believing they are secure and valued to feeling at-risk and

vulnerable; believing their world is safe and good to realizing there are real dangers that could affect them, the abrupt transition can create a sense of powerlessness, fear, and emotional flooding-similar to those in trauma.

As the necessity for human trafficking and gang education sweeps the nation, it comes with the threat of traumatizing low risk child populations. While the education itself is important, there must first be an assessment of when the information should be introduced-which will likely vary depending on the demographics the child comes from. Those that come from inner-city/urban or other high crime, low-income regions may need this education sooner than the child who lives in a small family-style suburban area.

Assessing for low-risk and higher-risk children prior to delivering the curriculum could be the difference between decreasing trauma and unintentionally increasing trauma of our Texas children.

Issue #2: Before the age of 12, children process information egocentrically or logically, creating a gap in their ability to think abstractly and effectively recognize possible unsafe people (Wadsworth, 1996).

Recommendation #2: To ensure prevention and awareness, incorporate comprehensive age appropriate lists: Grades 2-4: *possible unsafe people* and Grades 5-8: *possible recruitment tactics*.

Grade 2-4 List of possible unsafe people to include: strangers, friends, boyfriend/girlfriend, classmate, family, cousin, uncle, grandparent, parent's boyfriend/girlfriend, anyone living or visiting the home.

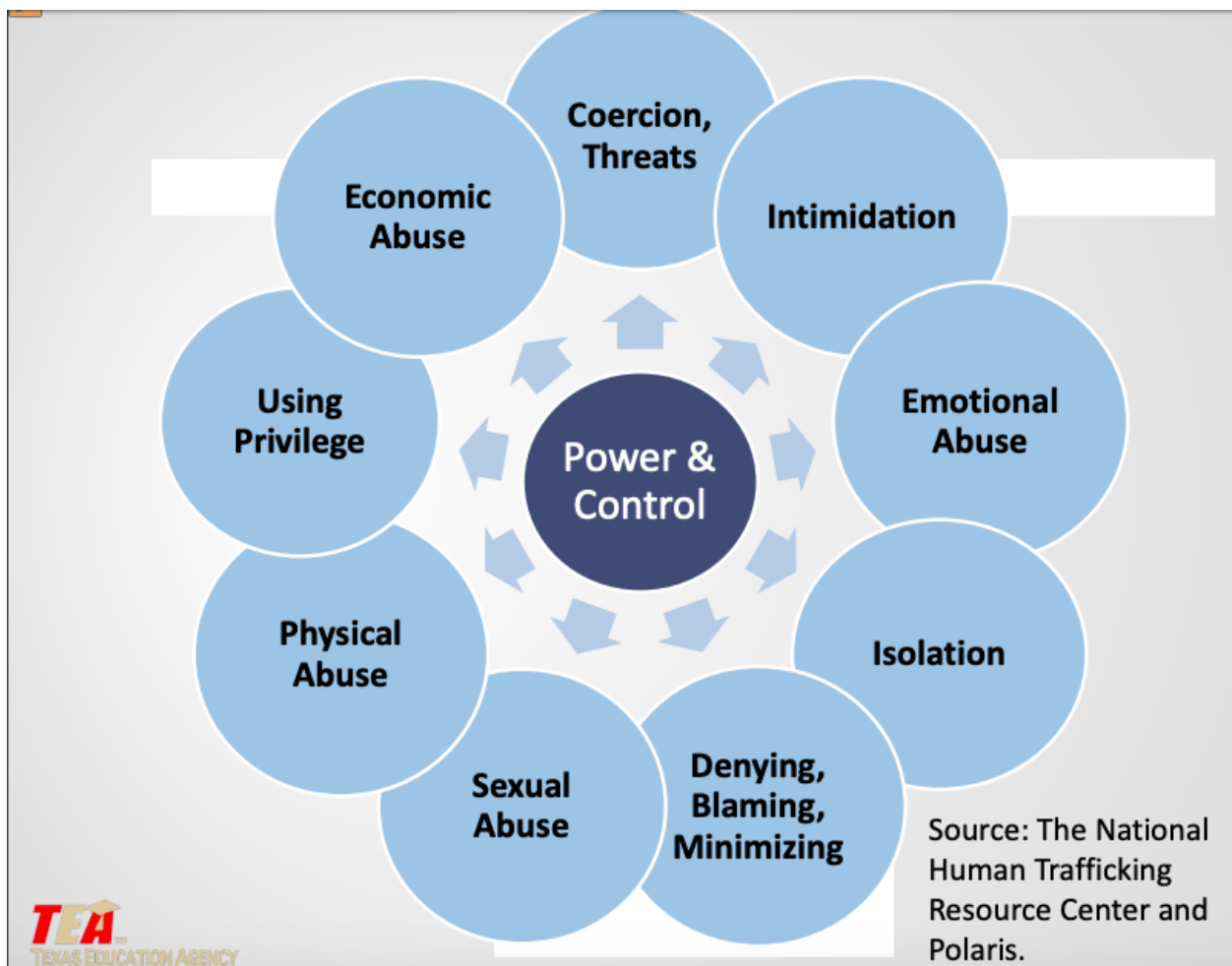
“A fourteen-year-old girl suspected of prostitution told police her mother and grandmother, both convicted prostitutes, forced her to sell her body to pay their living expenses.” - Houston Chronicle, 2010

“Children are most often sexually abused by someone they know and trust. Approximately three quarters of reported cases of child sexual abuse are committed by family members or other individuals who are considered part of the victim's ‘circle of trust’” (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration on Children, Youth, and Families, 2007). With the rise of traffickers who are known to their victims, it is vital we educate young children to rightly discern ALL persons in their life as safe or unsafe. When a controlling family member or acquaintance is the trafficker, it can be difficult for a child to leave the home or report the abuse. Fear, shame, and threat of violence are the primary silencers that stop children from seeking help.

Grade 5-12 List of possible recruitment tactics to include: manipulation, threats, intimidation, violence, coercion, drugs, isolation, grooming, and jealousy.

“Many pimps often use a “lover-boy” technique to recruit girls from middle and high schools. A lover-boy will present himself as a boyfriend and woo the girl with gifts, promises of fulfilled dreams, protection, adventure – whatever she perceives she is lacking. Traffickers use social media sites to recruit teenagers. After securing her love and loyalty, he will force her into prostitution.” – Shared Hope International

Unicef document *How to Talk to Your Kids About Trafficking: Key Messages to Share With Kids* encourages parents and educators to talk openly with youth about the tactics of trafficking recruiters, “Be aware of how traffickers recruit people, and pay attention to your surroundings” (2016). Through explaining, analyzing, and choosing recruitment strategies students will be equipped to recognize and avoid the strategies of recruiters, traffickers, and gangs.



Topic	Kindergarten 115.2	Grade 1 115.3	Grade 2 115.4	Grade 3 115.5	Grade 4 115.6
<p>(14) Injury and violence prevention and safety - healthy home, school, and community climate.</p> <p>The student understands that individual actions and awareness can impact safety, community, and environment.</p>					
Human Trafficking and gangs – prevention, awareness, reporting	<p>(A) Low Risk Name safe play environments</p> <p>Higher Risk: Name safe and unsafe environments and people.</p>	<p>(A) Low Risk Describe the difference between safe and unsafe environments and people.</p> <p>Higher Risk Describe the difference between safe and unsafe environments, including digital environments and people.</p> <p>Identify a trusted adult such as a parent, teacher, or law enforcement officer. <i>Note: moved from 115.4.20 (B)</i></p>	<p>(A) Low Risk Describe unsafe situations including engaging with strangers, family, friends, other adults and youth</p> <p>Higher Risk: Describe safe and unsafe situations, including digital and engaging with strangers, family, friends, other adults and youth <i>*List of possible unsafe people: strangers, family friends, cousins, uncles, parent’s boyfriends, visitors, Grandpa, other family living in the house.</i></p> <p>Identify how to get help from a parent and/or trusted adult.</p>	<p>(A) Low Risk: Identify unsafe behaviors for self and with strangers, family, other adults and youth. <i>*(refer to list)</i></p> <p>Higher Risk: Identify safe and unsafe behaviors for self and with strangers, family, other adults and youth. <i>*(refer to list)</i></p> <p>Identify benefits for avoiding violence, gangs, weapons, and drugs.</p>	<p>(A) Low Risk: Identify benefits for avoiding violence, gangs, weapons, drugs, and human trafficking. Identify strategies for avoiding unsafe situations.</p> <p>Higher Risk: Choose strategies for avoiding violence gangs, weapons, drugs and human trafficking. <i>* (refer to list of recruitment and grooming tactics used by gangs and human traffickers found in Grade 5 (A)).</i></p>
Human Trafficking and gangs					<p>(B) Identify characteristics of gang behavior and other red flags.</p>

	Grade 5	Grade 6	Grades 7-8	Health 1
Topic	<p>(14) Injury and violence prevention and safety - healthy home, school, and community climate.</p> <p>The student understands that individual actions and awareness can impact safety, community, and</p>			
Human Trafficking and gangs – prevention, awareness, reporting	<p>(A) Low Risk: Explain strategies for avoiding violence, gangs, weapons, drugs, and human trafficking. *List of possible recruitment tactics: manipulation, threats, intimidation, violence, coercion, drugs, isolation, grooming and jealousy.</p>	<p>(A) Low Risk: Analyze and choose strategies for avoiding violence, gangs, weapons, drugs, and human trafficking. * (refer to list)</p> <p>Higher Risk: Plan strategies for avoiding recruitment and grooming techniques used by gangs and human traffickers for the use of violence weapons, drugs, and human trafficking.</p>	<p>(A) Low Risk: Analyze and choose strategies for avoiding violence, gangs, weapons, drugs, and human trafficking. * (refer to list)</p> <p>Higher Risk: Compare and contrast the dynamics of gang behavior with healthy family behavior. Note: moved from Health 1 (B) and rewritten. This is the most age appropriate for this one.</p>	<p>(A) Analyze and choose strategies for avoiding violence, gangs, weapons, drugs, and human trafficking. * (refer to list)</p>
Human Trafficking and gangs	<p>(B) Higher Risk: Examine characteristics of gang behavior as well as human traffickers including common recruitment and grooming techniques. * (refer to list of techniques)</p>			<p>(B) Moved to 7-8 and reworded for higher risk students</p>

SEXTING AND DIGITAL PORNOGRAPHY (pp. 71-72)
ONLINE SAFETY (pp. 72-73)
LEGAL RAMIFICATIONS AND CONSEQUENCES (p. 73)

Because the student expectations for these three topics are integrated, they are addressed as one continuous topic.

SEXTING AND DIGITAL PORNOGRAPHY

Law: Texas Penal Code Title 9, Chapter 43, Subchapter B: Obscenity, Sec. 43.27 Duty to Report, Sec. 43.26. Possession or Promotion of Child Pornography, Sec. 43.261. Electronic Transmission of Certain Visual Material Depicting Minor, Sec. 43.262 Possession or Promotion of Lewd Visual Material Depicting Child (d) It is not a defense to prosecution under this section that the depicted child consented to the creation of the visual material.

Issue #1: No recommended case study analysis of teen misuse of online communication, sexting, or pornography.

Recommendation #1: Grade appropriate case study analysis of teen misuse of online communication, sexting, or pornography.

“I sat with a mother and her 7-year-old son, Antonne, watching as he hit the side of his head, “get out of my head, get out of my head! Mom! Why can’t I get these pictures out of my head!?!” The mother had tears pouring down her face as she held her son’s hand. She began to explain to me that a little neighbor boy, who was just one year older, had been showing her son pornographic videos while she thought they were playing video games.” – Melissa Herrmann, Counselor

“According to the United States Department of Justice, ‘sextortion’ is labeled as the most important and fastest-growing cyberthreat to children, with more minor victims per offender than all other child sexual exploitation offenses” (Galoustian, 2018). Since “story” is an effective way to reach visual, auditory, and kinesthetic learners alike, we recommend grade appropriate case study analysis as a means for students to comprehensively learn from stories of teen online communication, sexting, and pornography experiences. Harvard Business School article, *What Makes Storytelling So Effective for Learning* tells us, “Good stories do more than create a sense of connection. They build familiarity and trust, and allow the listener to enter the story where they are, making them more open to learning. Good stories can contain multiple meanings so they’re surprisingly economical in conveying complex ideas in graspable ways. And stories are more engaging than a dry recitation of data points or a discussion of abstract ideas” (Boris, 2017).

ONLINE SAFETY

“We are seeing a huge trend in middle-school-aged children who go missing. They’re not being abducted, they’re going missing because they’re leaving home to go meet someone that they met on social media. In our day when we were mad at our parents we would go to school, complain to our friends, and it would be over. But our kids can now tell the entire world how mad they are – and the entire world talks back to them.”

- FBI Special Agent Kelly Liberti, 2018

Social media is now the number one tool used by traffickers to lure and entrap youth into sex trafficking. A University of Toledo study indicates traffickers are “connecting to vulnerable youth online, grooming children to form quicker relationships, avoid detection, and move the connections from online to in-person” (Kunz, 2018). This lack of an in-person meeting eliminates the traditional cues that alert children to a potentially dangerous people.

LEGAL RAMIFICATIONS AND CONSEQUENCES

Issues #2: No mention of the permanence of digital communication and images.

Recommendation #2 Grade appropriate assignments to analyze, identify, research, and examine the permanence of digital communication and images with particular emphasis related to sexting/pornography.

“A friend’s fourteen-year-old daughter took a picture of her face and breasts and sent the picture to one person at her junior high school. That person forwarded it to someone else, who sent it on to others. The girl was suspended from school...[and] has no rights to her own picture. Once she hit send, anyone could use it, see it, and display it.”

- Routledge Handbook of Deviant Behaviour

Educating children on the permanence of digital communication and shared images is vital for their protection and future well-being. “Many people, including children, believe that Internet browsing is anonymous. Educat[ing] child[ren] on the permanence of their ‘digital reputation’ - whenever they visit a website, share content, post something on a blog or upload information - they are adding to their ‘digital footprint’. This can be gathered under their real name and accessed by interested parties such as future employers or marketing departments. This may occur without you or your child’s consent or knowledge” (Internet Safety for Children).

10 THINGS TO KNOW ABOUT DIGITAL FOOTPRINTS

1 When you search and interact online, a **trail of info** is left behind.

2 Elements of your digital footprints can be **searched or shared**.

3 Digital footprints can be **helpful or harmful** to your reputation both now and in the future.

4 Once online, things can exist **forever** (even if deleted).

5 Always **think** before you post online.

6 Personal information or opinions sent to one person can be **shared** with a larger audience.

7 **Googling yourself** can be a worthwhile exercise.

8 Old or inactive accounts should be **disabled or deleted**.

9 Keep personal details private and control the **privacy settings** on your accounts.

10 Be mindful of the digital footprints of **others** (e.g. Ask before tagging photos).

NOTE: NO K-4 SEXTING AND DIGITAL PORNOGRAPHY EDUCATION RECOMMENDED

	Kindergarten 115.2	Grade 1 115.3	Grade 2 115.4	Grade 3 115.5	Grade 4 115.6
Topic [1]	(15) Injury and Violence prevention and safety-digital citizenship and media.				
	The student understands how to be a safe and responsible citizen in digital environments. The student is expected to:				
Online safety (including identity protection, see something-say something, online predators)		(A) demonstrate how to get help from a teacher, parent, or trusted adult when made to feel bullied, uncomfortable, or unsafe online	(A) recognize unsafe requests made in a digital environment	(A) identify and discuss the need for safety awareness in a digital environment	
Online safety (including identity protection, see something-say something, online predators)			(B) explain why obtaining help, especially from parents or trusted adults, can be helpful when making decisions regarding digital use	(B) identify appropriate ways to communicate in an online environment	(A) identify appropriate and inappropriate ways to communicate in an online environment
Online safety				(C) discuss who is appropriate to communicate with online and what is appropriate information to share in the digital environment	(B) explain who is appropriate to communicate with online and what is appropriate information to share in the digital environment
Online safety				(D) describe the importance of taking personal responsibility in a digital environment	
Legal ramifications and other consequences			(C) identify consequences that result from cyberbullying and inappropriate online usage	(E) explain consequences that result from cyberbullying and inappropriate online usage	(C) discuss the consequences of cyberbullying and inappropriate online usage

	Grade 5 115.7	Grade 6 115.22	Grade 7-8 115.23	Health 1 115.32	Advanced Health 115.33
Topic [1]	(15) Injury and Violence prevention and safety-digital citizenship and media.				
	The student understands how to be a safe and responsible citizen in digital environments. The student is expected to:				
Sexting and digital pornography	(A) distinguish between appropriate and inappropriate boundaries for online communication, texting , social media usage , and researching	(A) discuss appropriate personal online communication boundaries	(A) Analyze case studies of teens and misuse of online communication, sexting, and pornography specific.	(A) Analyze case studies of teens and misuse of online communication, sexting, and pornography specific.	
Sexting and digital pornography		(B) develop strategies to resist inappropriate online communication such as sending photos, sexting, and pornography	(B) develop strategies to resist inappropriate online communication such as sending photos, sexting, and pornography	(B) develop strategies to resist inappropriate online communication such as sending photos, sexting, and pornography	
Online safety (including identity protection, see something-say something, online predators)		(C) discuss and analyze the consequences resulting from inappropriate online communication such as sending photos, sexting, and pornography	(C) discuss and analyze the consequences resulting from inappropriate online communication such as sending photos, sexting, and pornography	(C) discuss and analyze the consequences resulting from inappropriate online communication such as sending photos, sexting, and pornography	
Online safety (including identity protection, see something-say something, online predators)			(D) evaluate strategies and techniques for identity protection in a digital environment. [2]	(D) evaluate strategies and techniques for identify protection in a digital environment.	

Online safety	(B) explain the benefits of identity protection in a digital environment	(D) discuss strategies and techniques to identity protection in a digital environment	(E) identify and respond to situations where online safety is at risk, including identity protection and recognition of online predators	(E) identify and respond to situations where online safety is at risk, including identity protection and recognition of online predators	
Online safety					
Legal ramifications and other consequences	(C) analyze the consequences of cyberbullying and inappropriate online communication, including the permanence of online communication and images in relation to home, school, and community environments	(E) identify the consequences of cyberbullying and inappropriate online communication, including the permanence of online communication and images in relation to home, school, and community environments.	(F) research the consequences of cyberbullying and inappropriate online communication, including the permanence of online communication and images in relation to home, school, and community environments.	(F) examine the consequences of cyberbullying and inappropriate online communication, including the permanence of online communication and images in relation to home, school, and community environments.	

CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT (pp. 77-78)

Law: Texas Penal Code Title 5, Chapter 22, Sec. 22.04 (a) A person commits an offense if he intentionally, knowingly, recklessly, or with criminal negligence, by act or intentionally, knowingly, or recklessly by omission, causes to a child... (1) serious bodily injury; (2) serious mental deficiency, impairment, or injury; or (3) bodily injury.

Issue: Missing the beneficial tools of *personal safety plans* for students.

Recommendation: Have each student create an age appropriate *personal safety plan*.

“A 14-year-old boy ran away from home directly to the El Paso Runaway Shelter. I received a call from a shelter case manager saying they had a boy who wanted to place himself in foster care. After 16 years of fostering, this was a first for me. I met with him the next day and asked him about his situation and why he ran away, but most importantly, why he wanted to place himself in foster care. He said he wanted to graduate and have a better life. He witnessed and experienced a lot of violence and was determined that that would not be his future. His need for self-preservation and a safety plan he developed, led him to take those steps. When asked how he knew what resources to reach out to, he said his friends shared their experiences and then developed his plan. He is a social worker today.”

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- Cynthia Horton, President, Shift To Grow LLC.

Safety plans are a valuable tool to protect vulnerable children and families in violent or potentially violent living environments. In order to protect themselves, children should receive early education on valuing and relying on their *personal safety plan*. Our recommendation is the introduction of an age appropriate *personal safety plan* in Kindergarten, built upon each subsequent year. Psychology Today author Vanessa Lobue praises repetition as a valuable education tool, “Not surprisingly, research has shown that children learn better from reading a book over and over again than just reading it once or twice” (2019). Utilizing the benefits of repetition, we recommend students participate in age appropriate association with their *personal safety plan* annually. This repetition is to foster the child’s automatic response to activate their *personal safety plan* when faced with potentially harmful situations.

	Kindergarten 115.2	Grade 1 115.3	Grade 2 115.4	Grade 3 115.5	Grade 4 115.6
Topic	(16) Injury and violence prevention and safety-interpersonal violence.				
	Student understands the impact of interpersonal violence and the importance of seeking guidance and help to maintain personal safety. The student is expected to:				
Child Abuse (including sexual abuse, such as human trafficking) and neglect (characteristics and consequences of, reporting and seeking help) People and places to seek help (safe havens, safe space, community helpers)	(D) Identify how to get help from a parent or trusted adult when made to feel uncomfortable or unsafe by another person	(D) Identify how to get help from a parent or trusted adult when made to feel uncomfortable or unsafe by another person.	(E) Explain why obtaining assistance especially from parents or trusted adults, can be helpful when making decisions about personal safety.	(B) Explain importance of seeking assistance in making decisions about personal safety	(C) Explain the importance of seeking guidance from parents and other trusted adults on critical issues in order to make healthy decisions.
Child Abuse and neglect and people and places to seek help.	(E) Memorize personal home address as part of a safety plan.	(E) Memorize parents/caregiver's phone numbers as part of a safety plan.	(F) Identify two safe adults not part of immediate family. Memorize those two individuals phone numbers as part of a safety plan.	(C) Identify examples of abuse and neglect and describe how to respond.	(C) Identify types of abuse and neglect and know ways to seek help from a parent or trusted adult.
Child Abuse and neglect and people and places to seek help.				(D) Discuss reason why you might need a personal safety plan and why it is beneficial.	(E) Create a personal safety plan.

	Grade 5 115.7	Grade 6 115.22	Grade 7-8 115.23	Health 1	Advanced Health
Topic	(16) Injury and violence prevention and safety-interpersonal violence.				
	Student understands the impact of interpersonal violence and the importance of seeking guidance and help to maintain personal safety. The student is expected to:				
Child Abuse (including sexual abuse, such as human trafficking) and neglect (characteristics and consequences of, reporting and seeking help) People and places to seek help (safe havens, safe space, community helpers)	(E) Create a personal safety plan that includes a list of safe places, org., and people to contact for help with abuse or neglect.	(F) Create a plan that you would use whenever faced with a decision that affects your own personal safety, include the input of parents and other trusted adults.	(H) Summarize the advantages of seeking advice and feedback regarding the use of decision - making and problem - solving skills.		
Child Abuse and neglect and people and places to seek help.	(F) Explain the impact of abuse and neglect and the importance of reporting.	(G) Identify strategies for coping with unhealthy behaviors in the family or household.	(I) Discuss the importance of reporting suspected abuse or neglect of self and others.		

Safety Plan Template

IDENTIFYING DANGER

1. List behaviors that you know should never be done to you:
Example: nobody should ever lock me in a room

2. List behaviors that you know you should never witness between family members:
Example: my parents should never hit each other

KNOW WHEN TO FIND HELP

1. What are the warning signs that I am feeling unsafe? These can include thoughts, situations, feelings, or behaviors.

2. Where can I go to find immediate safety while I am waiting for help? Example could be going into the bathroom and locking the door, going outside in the front yard, etc.

3. Are any of the people I live with acting in a safe way? Can they help me right now?

If none of the people you live with can help you, who is another safe adult you can call? List their name(s) and phone number(s) here.

Name	Phone Number	Address

4. Remember if you feel very unsafe, are being hurt, or watching someone get hurt, you can call 911 and a police officer can help you.

Conclusion:

We have presented to you a thoroughly vetted pathway for the integration of difficult topics into the curriculum that reflects the laws and mandates of the State of Texas and the SBOE. These will help enhance on-going state-wide prevention efforts and SBOE objectives that students are empowered personally to make good decisions to stay safe.

Our recommendations thoughtfully weave together the interconnectedness of these topics so that students have a complete understanding of the health information and skills necessary to become healthy adults and learn about behaviors in which they should and should not participate. If we don't include this information in the curriculum, will they be truly prepared to meet the complexities of these challenges and the dangers associated with them? We firmly believe that our recommendations add to the statewide blueprint for awareness, prevention, and intervention that will improve student outcomes.

As community leaders and stakeholders, we are the "tip of the spear." The term tip of the spear is used by military tacticians and historians referring to war. It refers to a combat force used to puncture the enemy's first lines of defense, to be quickly followed by concentrated forces which destroy any remaining threat. Together, we are the tip of the spear. We must get this done for the protection and well-being of our students. We are in a war, our students are currently at risk for, are being recruited, or are currently in trafficking situations. We can't wait and hope that it gets done, we must collectively see to it and its implementation now.

Kenneth B. Morris, Jr. said, "To be heard, our demands should be made in a strong voice. To be successful, they must be made collaboratively, strategically, and safely."

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