

Suggested Job Interview Questions for Prospective Health Education Teachers

Hiring qualified teachers to provide instruction in every subject, including health education, is a critical responsibility for schools and school districts. To help school leaders fulfill that responsibility, SHAPE America – Society of Health and Physical Educators has developed some guiding questions devised to identify highly qualified teachers from among a pool of candidates. As with teachers of other subjects, a health education professional should have, at a minimum, these qualifications:

- A bachelor's degree or higher in health education or a related field;
- Full state certification, as defined by the state; and
- Demonstrated competency and endorsement to teach health education, as defined by the state.

The interview questions that follow will test candidates' basic knowledge of current trends in health education. We suggest that you download and read SHAPE America's [*Appropriate Practices in School-Based Health Education*](#) to review the latest guidance of this critical subject in education.

We encourage you to share this resource with other school administrators and principals, as well as with the supervisor or chair of your health education department. We're confident that this resource will help you identify promising faculty members for your health education program.

1. ***What is skills-based health education?***

Key Concepts: Health education is an academic subject that demands the same rigor as other subjects. Health education provides students with a planned, sequential, preK-12 standards-based program of curricula and instruction designed to develop students' capacity to access information, resources and services necessary for maintaining and promoting health. Curriculum goals are developed with an emphasis on skill development while incorporating functional health information as a context through which the skills are practiced and developed. Effective health education uses participatory teaching and learning instructional methods. Those skills are based on the National Health Education Standards and include analyzing influences, accessing valid and reliable information, interpersonal communication, decision making, goal setting, self-management and advocacy.

2. ***What is a health-literate individual?***

Key Concepts: A health-literate individual has the ability to access, understand, appraise, apply and advocate for health information and services in order to maintain or enhance their own health and the health of others.

3. ***What are appropriate practices or best practices in health education?***

Key Concepts: The health teacher is able to establish and maintain a positive, supportive learning environment that is inclusive and responsive to the needs of all students in the classroom. The health teacher is able to identify curricula and instructional materials that support best practice and meet student needs. The health teacher delivers instruction that is guided by, and focused on, the achievement of learning objectives that connect content with skill development, leading to proficiency. The health teacher designs and implements authentic, performance-based assessment that provide students with an opportunity to demonstrate and apply knowledge and skills. The health teacher promotes a positive, health-enhancing school culture within and outside of the classroom.

4. ***How will you use student data to inform planning or assessment?***

Key Concepts: The health teacher collects and utilizes student data to determine priority areas for health education. The health teacher is able to identify and access various sources of health-related data (such as the Youth Risk Behavior Survey from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention) as well as pre-assessments that can be conducted in the classroom. The health teacher designs and implements a variety of authentic and personalized assessments that are relevant and meaningful to students. The teacher uses formative and summative assessments to determine what students actually know, and then applies that insight to plan and teach lessons. With regular assessment, the teacher can monitor the growth of each individual student. The teacher

also uses assessment data to help decide which topics to include in the curriculum, as well as which skills to emphasize in meeting the needs of each unique population. The health teacher utilizes data from assessments to guide professional reflective practice to determine strengths and areas for improvement in curriculum and instruction.

5. *Health education addresses multiple sensitive subjects. How do you ensure a safe learning environment for all students in your health education classroom?*

Key Concepts: The health teacher creates an environment that is inclusive and supportive of all students, regardless of race, ethnic origin, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, religion, cognitive ability or physical ability. All students, without exception, are acknowledged, appreciated, valued and respected. For example, the health teacher involves students in the creation of classroom norms and expectations, uses materials that are diverse, inclusive and representative of all students, and develops positive rapport/relationships with all students.

[See the Appropriate Practices document for more examples.]

6. *How will you differentiate instruction to meet the learning needs of all students?*

Key Concepts: Differentiated instruction is based on assessment data, strategic planning, and interventions to meet the needs of every student. Differentiation includes tapping into students' interest areas, presenting challenging activities, providing choices, and creating moments of wonder and discovery. The health teacher consults with other teachers who work with the student to develop activities for remediation, enrichment or enhancement.

7. *What is your understanding of the National Health Education Standards (NHES)? How do those standards relate to our state standards and/or local curriculum?*

Key Concepts: The goal of health education is to develop health-literate individuals. Appropriate instruction in health education focuses on skills that are aligned with content that address community issues. Standards-based instruction aligns assessments and learning activities with student objectives and outcomes that are rooted in the state or national standard(s). The NHES identify general content statements and set performance indicators related to seven particular skills. National standards provide school districts and schools with guidance and direction for clarifying the common general outcomes expected in health education programs. National and state health education standards address various health-related content and skills, including accessing information, analyzing influences, goal setting, decision making, interpersonal communication, self-management and advocacy.

[View the National Health Education Standards.](#)

8. Why is it important to have a written health education curriculum?

Key Concepts: The health teacher designs or uses a curriculum based on current health frameworks, including but not limited to the National Health Education Standards, state-level frameworks and/or standards, locally required resources and other related standards/frameworks/guidance documents. The health teacher designs and/or uses curricula that support the development of health literacy and health-enhancing behaviors. Having a written curriculum helps guide effective practice and facilitates ongoing evaluation and revision.

9. What strategies would you use to motivate students to engage in health education learning experiences?

Key Concepts: Health education is authentic and easily relatable to a student's environment. Student motivation is connected to teacher-student relationships and depends on the teacher's creation of a safe learning environment. Another strategy for motivating students is identifying a clear purpose while creating authentic learning activities. To ensure that topics are relevant to students, the health education teacher should provide opportunities for personalizing instruction and for students to internalize the material. Also, the health education teacher should create ample opportunities for developing positive relationships among the students and between the teacher and students.

10. What are your plans for professional involvement and personal professional development?

Key Concepts: The prospective health teacher might talk about engagement in a health education professional association, such as SHAPE America. Within SHAPE America, for example, professionals can access free resources, such as *Appropriate Practices in School-Based Health Education*, as well as additional benefits, including: workshops, webinars, podcasts, online networking, journals, newsletters, conferences, Twitter chats and more. The prospective health teacher might also describe the importance of health education professional development scheduled within the school and/or district throughout each year, as well as professional development opportunities within the state. Social media groups can offer a chance to network with other educators and learn about trends in the health education profession. These opportunities allow for the reflective practitioner to identify and pursue areas of professional growth.

11. How can health education contribute to a school's cross-curricular instructional approach?

Key Concepts: Health education provides an opportunity to support schools' broader academic goals. The health teacher supports cross-curricular instruction within school goals and as appropriate within each state. For example, the health teacher can integrate math concepts when examining health behavior data from the Youth Risk Behavior Survey. Additionally, the health teacher can make connections to English Language Arts standards through written assignments. The health teacher can collaborate with teachers from other subject areas to determine strategies for including health content and skills throughout the school day.

12. Describe what a typical health education class period would look like in your classroom from the time the students enter until the class ends.

Key Concepts: When the students enter they immediately engage in classroom routines, such as a "Do Now" activity. Students demonstrate an understanding of classroom expectations. The health teacher uses student-centered instruction that is standards-based, provides opportunities for social interaction, and provides ample learning opportunities for students to reflect on their health and wellness. The teacher incorporates formative assessment into learning activities and adjusts instruction to meet the needs of each student. The class provides opportunities for project-based learning, cooperation, and kinesthetic activities to help students grasp the importance of developing the skills for leading a healthy lifestyle.

13. Gaining buy-in from your principal, classroom teachers and parents is critical for continuing and expanding school-wide support for health education. Please share your one-minute stairwell pitch on how you plan to promote health education at your school site.

Key Concepts: Research shows evidence of an inverse relationship between certain health-risk behaviors and academic achievement (CDC, Making the Connection). Health education is the class in which students learn to apply functional knowledge and develop skills based on the National Health Education Standards, to reduce health-risk behaviors and support health-enhancing behaviors. Also, providing instruction that supports student health can increase attendance rates and decrease behavior issues while raising academic achievement. The teacher promotes health education at the school site through:

[The prospective health teacher may state several ideas, such as ones listed below, to complete their one-minute stairwell pitch.]

- Recognizing students' work in the school hallways, on morning announcements, at

- PTA nights, and in other ways that address students' diverse needs in reducing health-risk behaviors and practicing health-enhancing behaviors;
- Communicating the expectations and outcomes of health education to parents and guardians;
 - Providing assignments that incorporate parents and guardians, such as healthy meal planning;
 - Sharing student learning outcomes with school and district administrators;
 - Connecting to community resources that can support and enhance the health education program;
 - Supporting a schoolwide approach to cross-curricular instruction by providing professional development for teachers that trains them to understand and support health education; and
 - Connecting the content to district wellness goals for students and staff, when appropriate.

14. Describe your experiences with using technology in health education. How would you incorporate technology into your health education class?

Key Concepts: The health teacher plans and implements instructional strategies that allow students to use available technology to enhance their learning. Students can complete quizzes on Plickers, which helps the teacher collect real-time formative assessment data without the need for student devices. The use of technology can enhance teachers' creativity in planning instruction, as well. The candidate also might describe experiences using interactive whiteboards, instructional software programs, interactive websites, technology that supports student assessments, or other means of technology that support student learning and enhance instruction.

15. Describe the Whole School, Whole Community, Whole Child (WSCC) model. How has this expanded the Coordinated School Health model, and how can this model help a school enhance student health and academic achievement?

Key Concepts: Education is about engaging and teaching the whole child. Health affects daily activities, attitudes and one's motivation to do a little better each day. Healthy students are more ready and able to learn (CDC, 2014). The WSCC model provides a framework for enhancing students' health and academic achievement that expands upon the Coordinated School Health model. Components of the WSCC model are: health education; physical education and physical activity; nutrition environment and services; health services, counseling, and psychological and social services; social and emotional climate; physical environment; employee wellness; family engagement; and community involvement. The model recognizes that schools draw on resources from the community and coordinates the components around a whole-child approach to education to support student health and learning. Coordinating school policies with school practices related to components of the model can provide the direction to help

enhance student health and learning.

View SHAPE America's [position statement](#) on the Whole School, Whole Community, Whole Child (WSCC) Model to learn more.

16. As the key health education professional at our school, how would you describe your role in supporting a WSCC environment?

Key Concepts: The health teacher's primary role would be to develop and implement effective health education instruction. The candidate might suggest pursuing opportunities for collaboration by joining a school health or wellness committee or the district's school health council to support the implementation of WSCC model components. The candidate might suggest using the Health Education Curriculum Analysis Tool to review and enhance the current health education curriculum. Through planning, a health teacher can connect with other components of the model to support instruction, including the nurse in health services, nutrition services, physical education, community organizations, and families. The candidate also might suggest supporting a school or district employee wellness program.

Additional Questions of Significance

The following questions can be included in order to gain a deeper understanding of the candidate's qualifications.

- Explain how you will incorporate other academic subjects into your health education instruction.
- Describe the components of your lesson plans and how each segment helps students meet the identified student outcomes in a lesson.
- Explain how you address individualizing instruction for students with special needs in an inclusive classroom.
- How do you inspire and motivate your students to practice health-enhancing behaviors and avoid or reduce health risks?
- Describe a plan for communicating effectively with parents regarding your health education course.
- How will you collaborate with classroom teachers to promote health-enhancing opportunities?
- Provide an example of a student learning objective [substitute what your school calls them] and describe how you would measure it.
- How do you stay current with research and trends in health education?

- Describe your classroom management style.
- Classroom management is a vital component of an effective learning environment. Describe the techniques that you use to create a purposeful classroom that engages students.
- Share some of your strategies for managing discipline issues.
- List two challenging student behaviors and describe strategies that you would use to manage the students and the class.
- Describe the importance of health education in a student's education experience.
- Define diversity and discuss its implications for classroom instruction.
- How will you assess your teaching?
- How will you apply theoretical foundations of learning and health behavior to your planning and instruction?
- What needs-assessment data would you collect and analyze to plan effective health education instruction for you students?
- Describe formative and summative assessment strategies for health education. How would you use these strategies to guide instruction?
- What steps would you take to gain support from the school staff, parents and the community for the health education program?
- Why is being a reflective educator important? How do you plan to reflect on your instruction and how will that help to enhance student learning?

References

Making the Connection: Health Risk Behaviors and Academic Grades

https://www.cdc.gov/healthyouth/health_and_academics/pdf/DASHfactsheetHealthRisk.pdf

Health and Academic Achievement

https://www.cdc.gov/healthyouth/health_and_academics/pdf/health-academic-achievement.pdf

About SHAPE America

SHAPE America – Society of Health and Physical Educators is the nation's largest membership organization of health and physical education professionals. Since its founding in 1885, the organization has defined excellence in physical education, and our National Standards for K-12 Physical Education serve as the foundation for well-designed physical education programs across the country. We provide programs, resources and advocacy to support health and physical educators at every level, from preschool to university graduate programs. For more information, visit www.shapeamerica.org.

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