

## What the HECAT Can Help You Do:

- Identify a curriculum that best meets the school district's health education course of study and is of the highest quality.
- Focus on the most relevant health outcomes and critical health behaviors of youth.
- Analyze any curriculum, locally or commercially developed, for elementary, middle, and high schools.
- Analyze acceptability, appropriateness, and affordability of curricula.
- Analyze teacher materials, instructional strategies, and assessment of student learning.
- Assess affordability and feasibility of implementing curricula.
- Accommodate local revision to address priorities, interests, and needs; allow for community review; and accommodate local school board review and approval.
- Identify strengths and weaknesses to inform decisions about curriculum selection and to guide revision.

### To obtain a copy of the HECAT, choose one of the following options:

Download the document and related materials from the CDC Web site:  
[www.cdc.gov/HealthyYouth/HECAT](http://www.cdc.gov/HealthyYouth/HECAT)

Request by e-mail: [cdc-info@cdc.gov](mailto:cdc-info@cdc.gov)

Request by phone: (800) CDC-INFO

Request by phone for hearing impaired: (888) 232-6348

### Go to the following CDC Web sites for information about:

- National Health Education Standards: [www.cdc.gov/HealthyYouth/SHER/standards/](http://www.cdc.gov/HealthyYouth/SHER/standards/)
- Characteristics of Effective Health Education Curriculum: [www.cdc.gov/HealthyYouth/SHER/characteristics/](http://www.cdc.gov/HealthyYouth/SHER/characteristics/)
- Adolescent and School Health: [www.cdc.gov/HealthyYouth](http://www.cdc.gov/HealthyYouth)
- Centers for Disease Control & Prevention: [www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov)

# HECAT

## Health Education Curriculum Analysis Tool



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The Health Education Curriculum Analysis Tool (HECAT) is an assessment tool developed by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention in partnership with health education experts representing state education agencies, school districts, schools, colleges, and national organizations.

The HECAT contains guidance, appraisal tools, and resources to conduct a clear, complete, and consistent examination of health education curricula. HECAT results can help schools select or develop appropriate and effective health education curricula, enhance existing curricula, and improve the delivery of health education.

## NEED FOR THE HECAT

Health education is a fundamental part of an overall school health program. Health education provides young people with the knowledge and skills they need to become successful learners and healthy and productive adults. Choosing or developing the best possible health education curriculum is an important step towards ensuring high-quality health education. The HECAT provides a structured process to improve curriculum selection and curriculum development.

## HECAT USERS

The HECAT is designed to be used by those who select, develop, or use school health education curricula and those who are interested in improving school health education curricula. Users can include

- Curriculum committees or educators in school districts, schools, or community-based organizations that work with schools.
- State or regional educational agency staff.
- Other curriculum developers.
- Faculty and students in institutions of higher education teacher preparation programs.

## FOUNDATION OF THE HECAT

The HECAT is aligned with the National Health Education Standards and is based on the Characteristics of Effective Health Education Curricula that help young people adopt and maintain health-enhancing behaviors. The National Health Education Standards are a widely accepted framework of written expectations of what students should know about health education and what they should be able to do as a result of this education. These standards provide a foundation for health education curricula at the state and local levels.

The Characteristics of Effective Health Education Curricula is a synthesis of the professional literature based on research evidence on the types of information and learning experiences that help young people adopt and maintain health-enhancing behaviors.

## ORGANIZATION OF THE HECAT

The HECAT includes all the needed guidance and appraisal tools for carrying out a thorough assessment of a health education curriculum. Information, materials, processes, and tools include:

- Overview of school health education, curriculum, and the relevance of the HECAT to curriculum selection and development.
- Step-by-step guidance for organizing a health education curriculum review and conducting a curriculum analysis using the HECAT.
- Tools for scoring accuracy and acceptability of curriculum content, feasibility of curriculum implementation, and affordability of the curriculum materials, including cost of implementation.
- Tools for scoring fundamental characteristics of a health education curriculum, including learning objectives, teacher materials, curriculum design, instructional strategies and materials, and promotion of norms that value positive health behaviors.
- Tools for scoring important concepts and skills that are relevant for curriculum topics, such as alcohol and other drugs, healthy eating, mental and emotional health, physical activity, safety, tobacco, and violence.
- Overall summary forms useful for summarizing scores for the appraisal of a single curriculum or comparing scores across curricula.