



# Oregon

Tina Kotek, Governor



OREGON  
DEPARTMENT OF  
EDUCATION

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**Dr. Charlene Williams**

Director of the Department of Education

Dear School Leaders and Educators,

To ensure students have accurate information and develop skills to help avoid substances, minimize use, and/or reduce harm, the 2023 and 2024 legislatures expanded the Oregon Department of Education's (ODE) role in opioid prevention education through [Senate Bill 238](#) and [House Bill 5204](#).

**Beginning this school year, all Oregon school districts, and public charter schools are required to annually teach the ODE Understanding Fentanyl: Synthetic Opioids and Oregon's Good Samaritan Law lessons in grades 6, 7, 8 and at least once in high school as part of OAR [581-022-2045](#) Substance Use Prevention and Intervention Plan.**

The Oregon Department of Education (ODE) collaborated with the Oregon Health Authority (OHA) and staff of the Alcohol and Drug Policy Commission (ADPC) to develop the required lessons. These lessons incorporate:

- Youth input seeking a strengths-based approach with space for dialogue, relevant information and Oregon specific data.
- [Research-based practices](#) promoting positive norms over shame or fear-based tactics.
- Alignment with the [2023 Oregon Health Education Standards](#).

ODE **highly recommends** these lessons be part of a comprehensive substance use prevention unit. Some reminders for school leaders and educators:

- Substance misuse and substance use disorder impacts our students and communities in many ways, seen and unseen. Stigma and discrimination create major barriers to seeking help. Using trauma-informed language and approaches will make a difference.
- Review the recently updated [Fentanyl Toolkit for Schools](#) that includes local resources and supports, including culturally specific and community-based organizations.
- Encourage students to seek support as needed. Grief, trauma, heightened emotions, and additional questions are possible with conversations about synthetic opioids.
- Substance use disorders, overdoses, and deaths impact all of us. Take care of yourself and access employee benefits as needed.

Beyond these required lessons, ODE will be sharing additional substance use prevention lessons, virtual professional development opportunities, and operationalizing more support for districts throughout the school year. As part of a continuous improvement process, ODE will be seeking feedback regarding the lessons.

For more information or if you have any questions, contact ODE's Substance Use Prevention Education Coordinator at [ode.healthed@ode.oregon.gov](mailto:ode.healthed@ode.oregon.gov).