

Linking Health & Learning Newsletter

The newsletter for Vermont's Health and Physical Educators and supporters

August 2019

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Welcome to the 2019-2020 School Year!

Welcome back to school! I hope you have had a relaxing and enjoyable summer. This newsletter will focus on embracing equity literacy and accessing resources that can support teaching and student learning, communicating pertinent information about the 2020 Vermont Physical Education Assessment (VTPEA) and the Vermont Council of Health and Physical Educators (VCHPE) professional learning community. Additionally, the newsletter will introduce several new instructional resources that can support the delivery of high-quality health and physical education.

Equity Literacy – Part I

Equity literacy, trauma-informed teaching practices, and social-emotional competence are all hot topics in education today and pertinent to effectively educating all children. “Vermont educators are taking deliberate steps toward improving their teaching practices (Act1/H.3) using the tenets of Equity Literacy,” Emily Titterton, the Arts Specialist at the Agency of Education, recently wrote this in the *Equity Literacy in the Art Classroom* July-August, 2019 [Arts Newsletter](#). The article defined Equity Literacy, using the work of Paul Gorski, the founder of the Equity Literacy Institute and EdChange. Gorski has developed the [Equity Literacy Framework](#), “a framework for cultivating the knowledge and skills that enable us to be a threat to the existence of inequity in our spheres of influence. More than cultural competence or diversity awareness, equity literacy prepares us to see even subtle ways in which access and opportunity are distributed unfairly across race, class, gender identity, sexual orientation, (dis)ability, language, and other factors.”

After reading Emily’s article, I wondered how health and physical educators could use this information to improve their teaching practice. According to Gorski, “equitable educators should be proficient not only with cultural knowledge, but also with the knowledge and skills to ensure and advocate for equity.” The first step is to become familiar with [Equity Literacy: Definitions and Abilities](#) and then self-examine your teaching practices considering your abilities to recognize biases and inequities, responding to biases and inequities in the immediate term, redressing them in the long term, and creating and sustaining bias-free and equitable classrooms, schools and institutional cultures.

The second step would be to take a deep dive into learning about Equity Literacy. The Agency of Education (AOE) has published [Equity Literacy Resources](#), a document that includes a list of resources and potential partners for equity literacy learning. [Teaching Tolerance](#), is one resource that provides K-12 educators with free professional development, classroom resources, magazines and publications, and a learning plan. Educators can use the materials to supplement their curriculum, to inform their teaching practices, and to help create civil and inclusive school communities where children are respected, valued and welcomed participants. [Equity Resources](#) also has free downloadable handouts and resources from EdChange and the Equity Literacy Institute to support teachers and schools. This is how you can start learning more about equity literacy. The next issue of Linking Health and Learning will include Equity Literacy – Part II, which will focus specifically on embedding Equity Literacy in health and physical education classrooms.

Vermont Physical Education Assessment News

Preparation for the 2020 Vermont Physical Education Assessment has begun! Feedback collected from 2019 VTPEA teacher leaders has been reviewed and is being used to inform 2020 VTPEA trainings. This year's teacher leader training will focus less on FitnessGram protocols and more on using the Alt-VTPEA. The AOE VTPEA team is developing training materials and resources for Vermont's two Alt-VTPEA assessments that will support physical educators, special educators, and health care specialists in the planning and administration of the Brockport Physical Fitness Test (BPFT) and the Individual Fitness Assessment (IFA). The AOE-VTPEA team is also working with Cooper Institute to develop training materials to support the use of FitnessGram's report features.

This year, the AOE hopes to conduct VTPEA teacher leader trainings from October to early December in five regions: the Northeast Kingdom, the Burlington area, central, southeast and southwest Vermont. The AOE is expanding the number of trainings and training sites to support attendance of all Superintendent or Headmaster appointed VTPEA teacher leaders. Trained VTPEA teacher leaders serve as local trainers for educators who will be administering the VTPEA in 2020 in their Supervisory Union, School District, or Independent School.

The AOE is currently seeking regional host sites for one-day VTPEA teacher leader trainings. To host a training, your school needs to provide a large activity space with seating that can accommodate approximately 50 educators. If you would like to host a regional training in your school, please contact [Susan Yesalonia](#).

2019-2020 Vermont Council of Health and Physical Educators

The Vermont Council of Health and Physical Educators (VCHPE) is a professional learning community (PLC) for health and physical educators. For the last two years, the group has met three times a year in the central Vermont area. The PLC has focused on networking and sharing curriculum ideas, unit and lesson plans, performance-based assessments, lesson hooks, and resources. This year the AOE will support two VCHPE PLCs – one in central Vermont, and the second in Rutland. The focus of each PLC will be on embedding social emotional competencies and equity literacy into classroom practices. The dates and locations of 2019-2020 VCHPE meetings will be announced in the AOE Weekly Field Memo in September. For more information, please email [Susan Yesalonia](#).

Health Education Resources

- [Toolkit for Mental Health Promotion and Suicide Prevention:](#)
This toolkit was created in response to a need for schools to address student mental and emotional wellness to prevent suicide, and in particular, how to respond after a suicide loss. This toolkit has three sections: Promotion of Mental Health and Wellness, Intervention in a Suicidal Crisis, Postvention Response to Suicide, and many additional resources. Promotion of Mental Health and Wellness provides educators with a comprehensive approach for teaching students what mental health is and the skills needed to achieve it, including the social-emotional skills needed for mental and physical well-being.
- [Toolkit Now Available to Address Youth Vaping Epidemic:](#)
In partnership with the Burlington Office of Local Health, Vermont Department of Health Tobacco Control Program is pleased to share a new Electronic Vapor Education Toolkit for Schools to support administrators, nurses, Substance Abuse Professionals (SAPs), and school professionals in their efforts to prevent youth vaping use, promote cessation, and establish policies and enforcement strategies.
- [A Guide to SAMHSA's Strategic Prevention Framework:](#)
Prevention planners are pressed to put in place solutions to urgent substance misuse problems facing their communities. Research and experience have shown that prevention must begin with an understanding of these complex behavioral health problems within their complex environmental contexts; only then can communities establish and implement effective plans to address substance misuse. To facilitate this understanding, SAMHSA developed the Strategic Prevention Framework (SPF). The five steps and two guiding principles of the SPF offer prevention planners a comprehensive approach to understanding and addressing the substance misuse and related behavioral health problems facing their states.

- [AOE Sexual Health webpage](#):
This webpage has many resources that support quality sexual health education, including LGBT education HIV/AIDS and STD education, sexual violence prevention, and healthy relationships.
- [HealthSmart](#):
This free K-12 health curriculum is aligned with National Health Standards as well as the National Sexuality Standards. Resources are provided along with instructional guidelines.

Physical Education Resources:

- [Vermont Comprehensive Assessment Portal](#):
This site provides VTPEA information and resources.
- [Unified Physical Education](#) (UPE):
The concept behind this document brings students with and without disabilities together in a physical education setting where all students earn physical education credit, thus putting all students on equal footing. This document includes strategies and resources for educators to create a UPE course or infuse the Unified concept into an existing course. It includes options for integrating physical activity, fitness, sports, health, wellness, nutrition, and student leadership into physical education and the broader school community. A component of the Special Olympics Unified Champion Schools program, UPE may complement inclusive activities already taking place in the school, or it may serve as a pathway for increased inclusion and eventual participation in the broader Unified Champion Schools program.
- [OPENPhysEd](#):
This a free resource that includes tools for K-12 Physical Education curriculum, early childhood movement exploration, and after-school physical activity programs.

Announcements and Professional Learning Opportunities:

- [2019 SHAPE-VT Conference](#) will be held at the beautiful Killington Grand Hotel, October 24-25, 2019.
- [Vermont Higher Education Collaborative](#) is providing fall 2019 courses and workshops.
- [SHAPE America Health Literacy Month](#) – October 2019. This month SHAPE America invites health educators to reflect on how they go about teaching students to lead healthy lives.
- [SHAPE America Professional Development](#) is for PreK-12 educators, college/university faculty, coaching educators and researchers.

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