

Linking Health & Learning Newsletter

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

January 2019

Articles:

- Vermont Physical Education Assessment Update
- Vermont Council of Health and Physical Educators Spring Meeting
- Creating a Stronger Community for All Youth
- News on Marijuana Use
- Anti-Vaping Resources
- List of 2019 Health and Physical Education Awareness Days

Resources

Announcements and Professional Learning Opportunities



Vermont Physical Education Assessment Update

The Agency of Education (AOE) staff have been busy finalizing the 2019 Vermont Physical Education Assessment (VTPEA) suite and data reporting processes. The following highlights the work that has been done since November, 2018.

- The VTPEA includes FitnessGram, the Brockport Physical Fitness Test, and the Individual Fitness Assessment (IFA). This suite of assessments is designed to support all students in accessing health-related fitness assessment.
- The 2019 Vermont Physical Education Assessment Guide has been updated and is now called the *VTPEA Technical Assistance Manual*. This manual provides guidance for using the VTPEA suite, local VTPEA management, and data reporting. The guide has been posted on the [Vermont Comprehensive Assessment Portal](#).
- On November 15, 2018 and January 8, 2019, the AOE completed the VTPEA 'Training of Trainers' for appointed Supervisory Union/School District/Independent School (SU/SD/IS) educators. The powerpoint used in the January 8, 2019 training is now available in the Vermont Comprehensive Assessment Portal.
- Additional regional VTPEA trainings may be arranged. Collaboratively, regional SU/SD/IS's may request a VTPEA training; the training site must be provided at no cost and be open to educators outside the SU/SD/IS to attend. To request a regional training, please contact Susan Yesalonia at susan.yesalonia@vermont.gov.
- Any educator administering the VTPEA to students must complete the VTPEA certification process. This process includes attending SU/SD/IS VTPEA trainings that review the VTPEA administration and data reporting as well as passing the VTPEA certification test with an 80% or better. The link to the VTPEA certification test can be found in the [Vermont Comprehensive Assessment Portal](#).
- A sample letter for student's parents or guardians explaining the VTPEA has been developed and posted on the Vermont Comprehensive Assessment Portal.

Vermont Council of Health and Physical Educators (VCHPE) Spring Meeting

Save the Date! VCHPE members will be meeting on March 28, 2019 at the Sally Fox Conference Center in the Waterbury State Office Complex, from 8:30 to 3:30. This will be the final meeting for the school year. Meeting topics include creating good 'hooks' to engage students, sharing specific skills-based units and performance assessments, and establishing systemic proficiency-based grading consistency. Attendees of the first two VCHPE meetings will be sent registration information the first week of February. If you would like to join this professional learning community, please email Susan Yesalonia at susan.yesalonia@vermont.gov.

Creating a Stronger Community for All Youth

In 2017, the Human Rights Campaign (HRC) Foundation partnered with researchers at the University of Connecticut to survey the experiences of 12,005 youth who identify as Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender or Queer (LGBTQ,) aged 13 – 17, and from all 50 states. The results of the of the HRC’s Youth Survey reveal persistent, serious challenges for LGBTQ youth. “In many cases, the cards remain stacked against LGBTQ-identified youth in terms of acceptance and support from their families, their mental health and safety in schools (p. 3).”

Because youth spend the majority of their time in school, their experiences in the classroom, in the halls, at lunch and during extracurricular activities can have a critical impact on the overall health and well-being. “For some LGBTQ youth, schools offer safe, supportive and affirming spaces that enable them to realize their full potential. The majority of LGBTQ youth, however, still experience negative and even hostile school environments (p. 8).”

[The 2017 Vermont Youth Risk Behavior Survey](#) data showed 11% of high school students identified as LGBTQ and 7% of middle grades students identified as Lesbian, Gay, or Bisexual (LGB). Survey results showed that these groups of students were more likely to be bullied, experience physical and sexual dating violence, harm themselves, feel sad or hopeless, plan and/or attempt suicide, and abuse drugs, especially middle grades students. Additionally, these groups of students were less active, had higher levels of screen time, performed lower academically, and had less of a connection to the school and community.

Take a look at HRC’s [2018 LGBTQ Youth Report](#). It offers valuable reflections about the lived experiences of today’s LGBTQ youth. It also offers positive steps for families, school personnel, health professionals, policy makers and advocacy leaders to take to create welcoming school environments that supports the health and well-being of all students. For more information and resources about how you can support LGBTQ youth, please visit the [HRC website](#).

Note: SHAPE America provides educators with valuable [resources to support transgender inclusion](#). The purpose of this resource is to:

1. Provide K-12 physical educators and athletic leaders with information about transgender identity and the participation of transgender students in physical education and athletics.
2. Recommend inclusive policies for including transgender students in athletics and physical education.
3. Recommend best practices for transgender students’ use of locker rooms, bathrooms and showers, education of coaches, implementation of dress codes and other decisions related to providing an inclusive physical education and athletic experience for transgender students.
4. Provide additional resources on transgender inclusion in physical education and athletics.

The SHAPE America transgender inclusion webpages include federal and state laws that guide inclusion of transgender youth, best practices and model policies of inclusion, barriers to inclusion, terminology, and F.A.Q.'s. Educators can use these resources to create learning environments that value and meet the needs of all students, including those that identify as transgender.

News on Marijuana Use

In mid-January '[Just a little bit of cannabis is enough to change the teen brain](#)' was published in the ZME science newsletter. According to the article, the brain is plastic, meaning it constantly changes its 'wiring', strengthening and weakening neural connections throughout life. The phenomenon is most pronounced from the months before birth to age 21. UVM researcher Hugh Garavan says even one or two joints can cause changes in the gray matter of the brain. The areas of the brain affected, the amygdala and the hippocampus, are involved in emotion-related processing, learning, and forming memories.

According to [Healthline](#), Patricia Conrod, Ph.D., professor of psychiatry at the University of Montreal, reported cannabis may be worse for teen brains than alcohol according to a study conducted with 3,826 teens from 31 Montreal-area schools. Study authors reported that teens who used cannabis more often than others had cognitive function changes that appeared to be more pronounced than those observed for alcohol. Danielle Ramo, Ph.D., a psychologist at the University of California, San Francisco (UCSF) told Healthline that alcohol and cannabis both affect the teen brain impacting memory and executive functioning. If cannabis use persists throughout adolescence, the impacts on cognitive functioning are great over time, and this effect is stronger among those who start using earlier. According to Ramo, "earlier use that persists throughout adolescence is associated with greater burden on teens' ability to process new information and to 'stop and think' in the face of complex stimuli."

As marijuana laws are becoming more permissive, the message to teens should still be that cannabis use is detrimental to the development of the teen brain. Carefully planned skill-based Health education can play a vital role in deterring cannabis use in teens!

Anti-Vaping Resources:

[How to talk to your kids about vaping](#) offers great ideas for **parents** looking to get educated and learn how to discuss this topic with teens.

[The Real Cost of Vaping](#): Learn about the latest statistics and how the FDA is addressing e-cigarette use among youth in this special message to teachers from the FDA Commissioner.

[Stanford Medicine Tobacco Prevention Toolkit](#): E-cigarettes and vape pens.

[Catch My Breath](#): E-cigarette and Juul Prevention.

List of 2019 Health and Physical Education Awareness Days

- February: [Teen Dating Violence Awareness Month](#)
- March 17-23, 2019 [National Poison Prevention Week](#)
- April: Alcohol Awareness Month
[National Youth Violence Prevention Week](#) (April 8–12, 2019)
[Every Kid Healthy Week](#) (April 22-26, 2019)
- May: [National Teen Pregnancy Prevention Month](#) and [Mental Health Month](#)
[National Children’s Mental Health Awareness Week](#) (TBA)
[National Physical Education and Sport Week](#) (May 1–7, 2019)

Resources:

- [AOE Physical Education webpage](#)
- [AOE Health Education webpage](#)
- Free [Self-Paced courses](#) on Vermont AOE website.
 - Developing and Applying Proficiencies in a Proficiency-Based, Personalized System
 - Practices in Personalized, Proficiency-Based Learning
- [Healthy Lessons](#): This website contains dozens of FREE elementary health-related lesson plans as well as fun, online games. It is intended to help both health educators and busy classroom teachers present excellent health lessons to their students. *All lessons correlate to the National Health Education Standards.* Parents will also find a section of relevant health information.
- [HealthSmart](#): A free K-12 health curriculum aligned with National Health Standards as well as the National Sexuality Standards, HECAT, and others. Resources are provided along with instructional guidelines.
- [OPENPhysEd](#): A free resource that includes tools for K-12 Physical Education curriculum, early childhood movement exploration, and after-school physical activity programs.
- [BOKS](#): A free research-based physical activity program that empowers school communities to improve their children physically, mentally, and socially through the power of movement.
- [Research Brief: Proficiency-Based Grading Practices](#)
- [Vermont Comprehensive Assessment Program Portal Newsletter](#)
- [Weekly Field Memo \(WFM\)](#): The field memo is the weekly communication from the Vermont AOE to the education community. You may subscribe, unsubscribe, and update your email address for the [WFM online](#).

Announcements and Professional Learning Opportunities:

- SHAPE America [Health Education Curriculum Builder](#): Online five-part 20 hour course series
- Vermont Higher Education Collaborative – [Spring catalog](#)
- [2019 SHAPE America Convention](#): April 9-13, 2019, Tampa, FL.

To subscribe or unsubscribe to the Linking Health & Learning e-bulletin, write to susan.yesalonia@vermont.gov or call (802) 479-1284.

Author: Susan Yesalonia

Health and Physical
Education Specialist

Proficiency-Based
Learning Team

Vermont Agency of
Education

219 N. Main St., Suite 402

Barre, VT 05641

susan.yesalonia@vermont.gov

802-479-1284