

# Linking Health & Learning Newsletter

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

June 2021

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## End of the Year Message

The 2020 – 2021 school year; what a year it has been! Educators across the state have risen to the challenge of teaching in multiple learning environments, adapting curricula and teaching methods to engage students. The experience of teaching through a pandemic has been challenging, yet many educators have identified ‘silver linings’ moving through the year (e.g., forming stronger relationships with students and guardians, learning new technologies and teaching strategies). These silver linings will help reshape education as recovery is planned for the upcoming school year. As summer vacation becomes a reality, please take the time to relax, refresh, and rejuvenate.

## News Alert!

SHAPE America has announced that two task forces are being formed to update both the Health and Physical Education Standards. Collaboration between the task forces will take place to assure language is aligned and both sets of standards will be intentionally grounded by equity, diversity and inclusion, and social justice. This work will take place over the next couple of years. For more information go to the SHAPE America [Health Education Standards](#) or [Physical Education Standards](#) webpages.

## Summer Rejuvenation for Students

This summer promises renewed freedoms and socialization for people of all ages! After a year of living with restrictions, before the school doors close for the summer, encourage your students to move away from computers and screens and get outside to enjoy summer activities and increase their physical activity. This will rejuvenate their overall health and refresh their sense of well-being. Feel free to share the following programs with your students.

## Vermont Afterschool

[Vermont Afterschool](#) has been working since 2009 to increase access to afterschool and summer programs for all Vermont’s children and youth. The goal is that no child is left out because of where they live, what languages are spoken at home, how much money their families have, any special needs or disabilities that may require special accommodations, their race, religion, gender, sexual orientation, or any other factor.

## FitnessGram Playground

The Cooper Institute recently announced a new online [FitnessGram Playground](#) to improve students’ physical fitness and mental well-being. The purpose of the online tool is to address low levels of physical activity in youth through providing resources to get students moving! The FitnessGram Playground includes learning modules, exercise videos, FitnessGram PACER Test Remixes, FitnessGram Activity Tracker app, and The Cooper Institute YouTube channel.

### **Agency of Education/Public Broadcast System Partnership**

The Agency of Education (AOE)/Public Broadcast System (PBS) partnership would like to highlight some online and printable resources for spring and summer learning. The [Summer of Possibilities](#) provides children with opportunities to play and learn through hands-on activities, games, and tips that support literacy, math, science, and life skills. Both the [Summer Learning Collection](#) and the [Science of Summer](#) invite students in grades 6-12 to learn while exploring everyday summer activities. For more information about the partnership between the Vermont Agency of Education and Vermont PBS, visit the [AOE's Vermont PBS webpage](#) or the [Vermont PBS Distance Learning page](#).

### **Legislative Update**

[Senate Bill 115](#) has been passed by both the House and Senate. This bill updates Title 16 V.S.A. § 136 (Wellness Program; Advisory Council on Wellness and Comprehensive Health). To read updated bill language go to page 19. Key updates include:

- The definition of “Wellness program” to mean a program that includes physical fitness and comprehensive health education as defined in [Title 16 V.S.A. § 131](#).
- On or before January 15, 2022, the Agency of Education, in collaboration with the Advisory Council on Wellness and Comprehensive Health created under Title 16 V.S.A. § 136 and the Vermont School Boards Association, shall update and distribute to school districts a model wellness program policy, using the expanded definition of “wellness program” under Title 16 V.S.A. § 136, as amended by this act, that shall: (1) be in compliance with all relevant State and federal laws; and (2) reflect nationally accepted best practices for comprehensive health education and school wellness policies, such as guidance from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention’s Whole School, Whole Community, Whole Child Model.
- Title 16 V.S.A. § 1432 is added stating “all students attending a public school, or an approved independent school have access to menstrual products at no cost and without having to request them. Additionally, school districts and approved independent schools shall bear the cost of supplying menstrual products and may seek grants or partner with a nonprofit or community-based organization to fulfill this obligation.”

### **Condom Availability Guidance**

On July 1, 2021, [Title 16 V.S.A. § 132](#) (Secondary School, Provision of Contraceptives) takes effect. This law states that, to prevent or reduce unintended pregnancies and sexually transmitted diseases, each school district shall make condoms available to all students in secondary schools, free of charge. The AOE, the Vermont Department of Health, the School Nurses Advisory Council, and Planned Parenthood of Northern New England are collaborating to develop guidance, sample Supervisory Union/School District (SU/SD) policies and school procedures and associated professional development to support SU/SDs and schools in this law. These materials will be available this summer.

## 2021 – 2022 Professional Learning Communities

During the 2020 – 2021 school year, the AOE supported three Health and Physical Education professional learning communities (PLC); two focused on creating and sharing personalized and proficiency-based performance assessments and a third PLC offered professional learning related to teaching sexual health education. Participants had the opportunity to learn, network, and collaborate with peers and exchange ideas to improve their teaching practice.

Summer is a great time to begin planning 2021 – 2022 professional learning activities. The Proficiency-Based Learning Team is excited to offer educators opportunities to fine tune their skills designing performance assessments and project-based learning units and participate in content specific professional learning communities. To begin this process for health and physical educators, readers are asked to complete [this questionnaire](#). Your feedback will be used to plan meaningful and pertinent professional learning opportunities in the upcoming school year.

## Professional Learning Opportunities

- [ASCD Webinars – Free Professional Learning](#)
- OPEN's Free - [Teacher Learning School](#)
- PE BLOG - [10 Professional Development Websites](#) (Free)
- [Prevent Child Abuse Vermont](#) - Free professional learning events
- Vermont Higher Education Collaborative (VT-HEC)
  - [Summer Course Offerings](#)
  - [If You Teach Nothing Else, Teach This! Essential Topics in Sexual Health Education](#) (Free Webinar)

*Special Note:* Donna McAllister, who has been the Program Coordinator for the Health Education Program for VT-HEC is retiring from this position. Susan Yesalonia will assume her duties starting July 1, 2022. Thank you, Donna, for the time, energy and support you have provided health educators across Vermont.

## Resources for Health and Physical Education

- [FitnessGram Learning at Home Modules](#)
- [PBS Learning Media](#), (filtered by Health and P.E.)
- [RMC Health Education Resources and Tools](#)
- [SHAPE America](#)
- [SHAPE Vermont](#)

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