

Linking Health & Learning

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

September 2021



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How to Access this Newsletter:

- ✓ Request subscription by emailing susan.yesalonia@vermont.gov (your name will be added to a Listserv)
- ✓ The [AOE Weekly Field Memo](#)
- ✓ The AOE Website: [Health Education](#) [Physical Education](#)

It is Time to Prioritize Health and PE!

Welcome to the 2021-2022 school year! Hopefully, your summer was full of fun, relaxation, and an opportunity to rejuvenate. This past year has illuminated the need for schools to consider students' physical, mental, and social-emotional health above all else and an important part of the solution must be health and physical education. It is time to [Prioritize Health and PE!](#) Kaiser Permanente has also released [Planning for the Next Normal at School](#) playbook, a resource that "curates the best thinking and guidance from national experts to support school in preparing for the next normal to ensure that teachers can do their best teaching and students can do their best learning" (p. 2). This playbook prioritizes considerations of policy, equity, and family and community engagement, which can all contribute to a safe and healthy learning strategy and may be useful as you plan instruction for the year. As you begin the journey through the school year these resources may help in your planning.

Fall 2021 Physical Education

This fall the use of masks continues to be recommended by the CDC and state agencies when students are inside schools. While the weather is warm, physical education should be planned outdoors as much as possible. SHAPE America's [School Reentry Considerations](#) (2020), continues to be a useful guide for planning physical education instruction. This resource provides schools with recommendations and guidelines for K-12 physical education, health education, and physical activity considering various learning environments, as well as strategies for equity, inclusion, social-emotional learning, and creating trauma-sensitive learning environments.

As students return to full time in-person instruction, it is understood students may have experienced loss of motor skills, fitness, social, and self-regulation skills. To understand learning loss, physical educators should take the time to collect baseline data at the beginning of the school year to inform instruction that can bridge the gaps in fitness and learning. Health-related physical fitness data can be collected using FitnessGram protocols and results can be used to set fitness goals. Cooper Institute has developed [recommendations for school-based fitness assessment](#) using FitnessGram. Students can also be taught to [perform the FitnessGram tests on their own](#) if circumstances allow for at-home fitness assessment. Motor skills can be assessed through observation as well as social and self-regulation skills as students participate in fun, safe, and engaging physical activities. This information can be used to plan instruction that bridges gaps and moves learning forward. [OPENphysed](#) also

has free back to school resources that can support physical educators as they move through this [phase](#) of education recovery. The website includes elementary and secondary resources and tools that are designed to help educators plan instruction that will help students build relationships, build routines, and rebuild a love of health-enhancing physical activity.

Vermont Physical Education Assessment 2022

All state assessments are planned to be administered in 2022, including the Vermont Physical Education Assessment (VTPEA). The Agency of Education (AOE) is updating the VTPEA Test Administration Manual, fine tuning the new VTPEA certification system and the Alt-VTPEA reporting procedures. As in the past, the AOE will use the train-the-trainer model for annual state trainings. Superintendents and school leaders have been asked to identify this year's VTPEA teacher leaders who will attend a required AOE training that prepares them to conduct local trainings for their Supervisory Union, School District, or Independent School (SU/SD/IS).

This year, the AOE is planning two types of teacher leader trainings. In-person VTPEA trainings will be required for SU/SD/IS VTPEA teacher leader teams that include a **new teacher leader**. Two-hour virtual trainings will be provided for **veteran** VTPEA teacher leader teams that have no new members. The training schedule is being developed. Training dates and times will be communicated to SU/SD/ISs and announced in the AOE's Weekly Field Memo and the next issue of *Linking Health and Learning*.

Integrating Health and Physical Education

In March 2019, Woodstock Middle and High School was featured in *Linking Health and Learning* with a spotlight on their Wellness Program, a combined health and physical education program anchored by Vermont standards. Approaching health and Physical Education (PE) using an integrated approach gave teachers more time to work with students and the opportunity to connect interrelated disciplines to develop health and physical literacy. Other Vermont schools are opting to design similar programs.

This year, teachers at Middlebury Middle School are implementing an integrated health and PE program at their school. Dual certified teachers, Kristen Carra, Izzy Gogarty, and Justin Martelle are each assigned to teach either 6th, 7th, or 8th grade health and PE. They have collaborated to design a sequential program that will prepare students to transition into the high school's health and PE program. As a team, Kristen, Izzy, and Justin have mapped out the middle grades curriculum to assure required content is addressed and that proficiency develops over time. Students in grades 6-8 will receive five 75-minute classes every two weeks. The teachers have one gym and one classroom to work with, so outdoor teaching spaces will be used regularly to support the program. Health skills and topics will be

integrated into physical education supported by classroom teaching. These teachers are excited to strengthen their program in a holistic way to improve student learning. Izzy stated “In a small rural school, the Wellness Model is the thing to do!” Later in the year, I will check back with these educators to see how the school year is going. Stay tuned!

Note: Research supports the integration of health and PE programs. Canada requires schools to integrate their programs using the [Ontario Curriculum, Grades 1–8: Health and Physical Education \(2018\)](#) guidelines. This comprehensive document frames the importance of using an integrated approach for teaching health and PE and provides readers with many tools and resources to develop curriculum at the elementary and early secondary levels. If you are thinking about integrating your health and PE curricula, the Ontario Curriculum may be a very useful tool!

New Resource! Essential Topics in Sexual Health Education

The Vermont Sexual Health Stakeholders Group has developed the [Essential Topics in Sexual Health Education](#) to address and support sex educators in schools and community settings while reflecting the reality of what teaching this subject often entails. This guide identifies seven high priority topics in sexual health education and provides best practices for teaching these topics to ensure that teachers and educators are aware of the essential content that all students must learn to lead healthy lives. The *Best Practices* and *Essential Content* within each identified topic guide teachers and educators as they develop, select, and modify lesson plans and build curricula.

What are your professional learning needs?

The AOE is interested in learning about your 2021 – 2022 professional learning needs as we move into the new school year. Data was collected in June 2021; this is your opportunity to update the AOE of your needs. 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.

State and National Professional Learning Opportunities

- [ASCD Webinars – Free Professional Learning](#)
- Center for Health and Learning: Fall 2021 [Substance Misuse Prevention Course: Personal, School and Community Health Concepts](#)
- OPEN’s Free - [Teacher Learning School](#)
- PE BLOG – [10 Professional Development Websites](#) (Free)
- [Prevent Child Abuse Vermont](#) – Free professional learning events
- 2021 SHAPE Vermont - [Conference and Events](#)
- Vermont Higher Education Collaborative (VT-HEC) – [Fall 2021 Catalog of Workshops and Courses](#)

Resources for Health and Physical Education

- [FitnessGram Learning at Home Modules](#)

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- New! [Digital 2021 Health Education Curriculum Analysis Tool \(HECAT\)](#)
- [PBS Learning Media](#), ([filtered by Health and PE](#))
- [RMC Health Education Resources and Tools](#)
- [SHAPE America](#)
- [SHAPE Vermont](#)
- [Thriving Schools](#)

We're on the Web!

[Health Education](#)

[Physical Education](#)