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## MEMORANDUM

TO: Vermont Elementary School Education Community  
FROM: Rebecca Holcombe, Secretary, Agency of Education  
COPY: Jeff Francis, Executive Director, VSA; Ken Page, Executive Director, VPA  
SUBJECT: Elementary School Guidance on Health Education  
DATE: September 15, 2014

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We know that in order to improve academic achievement, school leaders and teachers must first establish a safe and healthy school climate and culture. Furthermore, in Vermont, we aspire not only to help our students be academically successful, but also to help them develop the social and emotional competence they need to thrive and participate in civil society, in spite of what challenges they encounter. For this reason, it is also our responsibility to ensure that our students have the knowledge and skills they need to access information and analyze factors that influence their choices, so that they can make decisions and set goals to enhance their own health. If students make healthy decisions, they are more likely to be academically successful and to feel positive about themselves and school. And, in schools, high quality health education can help cultivate these skills.

The [Education Quality Standards](#) adopted by the State Board of Education April 5, 2014, Section 2120.5, require all schools to enable students to engage annually in rigorous, relevant and comprehensive learning opportunities that allows them to demonstrate proficiency in (e) physical education and health education as defined in [16 V.S.A. §131, 906, 909](#). Additionally, as required in 16 V.S.A §1692, Section 2121.2 of EQS requires that all professional staff be licensed and properly endorsed for their assignment.

In grades K-6 an elementary educator's license allows him or her to teach health education within a class as part of the overall educational experience. In this case, the elementary educator is responsible for assessing health knowledge and skills, even if he or she occasionally partners with other experts from in or outside the school community to support instruction. If K-6 health education is provided on a regular basis by someone other than the elementary classroom teacher, that person must hold a K-6 health education endorsement to assess health knowledge and skills.

For educators interested in pursuing an endorsement in health education, or seeking additional professional development, the Vermont Higher Education Collaborative (VTHEC) provides graduate level course work to help fulfill the necessary competencies. Information about the program can be found at [VTHEC](#).

The Vermont Agency of Education also provides professional development opportunities which support individuals seeking the health education endorsement and those who are already licensed health educators. The *Vermont Community of Health Educators* (VCHE) is a dynamic network which provides professional development and personal support for health educators. Click [here](#) for more information about VCHE.

Donna McAllister, Health Education Consultant, is available to answer questions and assist your district on curriculum development and assessment. She can be reached at [donna.mcallister@state.vt.us](mailto:donna.mcallister@state.vt.us) or 802-828-1636.