

Linking Health & Learning Newsletter

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

March 2021

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Spring 2021 Message

I can't remember a time when people longed for spring weather as much as they have this year. The anticipation of being outside in warm weather on grass again is great and will be here in no time. Spring also brings the end of a school year that is unprecedented by any other. As you begin to focus on education recovery process, take a breath and reflect on what you have learned this year. In the December 2020 Edutopia article [Has the Pandemic Ushered in New Norms in Education?](#), author Heather Wolpert-Gawron identifies four ideas that will hopefully stick moving forward: assessments are 'a-changing' meaning there is discussion about the need for high-stakes tests, connecting with students comes first, communicating with the community and families is vital in the partnership of learning, and engagement strategies must be used if students are going to tune into their learning. As you think about what you have learned and begin thinking about next year, what are you going to change about your teaching practices to connect with and engage your students so they can move forward in their health and physical education?

Education Recovery

On March 12, 2021, the Agency of Education (AOE) released the [Vermont's Education Recovery Framework and Overview](#). Recovery will focus on three pillars:

- Socioemotional functioning, mental health, and well-being;
- Student engagement; and
- Academic achievement and success.

"In practice, these areas are overlapping and interconnected. However, it is important to identify and work on each separately to assure that we adequately assess student need and implement plans to address that need in all three areas. Ensuring that local systems are shored up for meeting all three areas of need is the best way to achieve long-term successful student outcomes" (p. 4).

As Health and Physical Educators, we know students need to '[Maslow Before You Bloom](#)' in order to engage in their education and achieve academically. SHAPE America has published two documents that may be helpful planning forward.

- [Health Education/SEL Crosswalk](#): The Health Education/SEL Crosswalk shows how the NHES are aligned with the [SEL competencies](#) and sub-competencies developed by the Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL).

- [Physical Education/SEL Crosswalk](#): This document serves as a resource for those aligning [SEL competencies](#) into the existing SHAPE America National Standards and Grade-Level Outcomes for K-12 Physical Education™ and allows physical education teachers to incorporate SEL competencies into their standards-based lesson plans. The crosswalk identifies standards that are applicable to teaching and/or reinforcing one or more of the SEL competencies.

Legislative Update

[Senate Bill S.32](#) was introduced to the Senate Education Committee on January 29, 2021 and was amended on February 24, 2021. In the crossover, this bill was combined with others and is now in [House Bill 115](#). The bill proposes to revise [16 V.S.A. § 136](#) to include comprehensive health education in the definition of a school wellness program; require the Advisory Council on Wellness and Comprehensive Health to include at least three members with expertise in health services, health education, or health policy and to meet not less than twice per year; require the Agency of Education to update and distribute to school districts a model wellness program policy; and ensure that female students attending public school or an approved independent school have access to menstrual hygiene products at no cost and without the embarrassment of having to request them. If this bill passes during this legislative session, planning for comprehensive health education will become part of the school Wellness Program.

Reminder: On July 1, 2021, [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. In a memo titled [Comprehensive Sexual Health Education and Condom Availability Program](#), dated January 30, 2020, Dr. Daniel French and Dr. Mark Levine recommended that “school districts and supervisory unions have in place appropriate policies, procedures and/or practices to implement a comprehensive health curriculum that includes sexual health education and make barrier methods (condoms and dams) available to students.”

VTPEA News

For the second year in a row, the Vermont Physical Education Assessment (VTPEA) will not be administered to students. In a time when education is inconsistent across supervisory unions and school districts, and students do not have equitable access to physical education and physical activity, this is the right decision. At the local level though, teachers can be using fitness assessment to check on the status of their students' fitness and help students create need-based

personal fitness plans to regain healthy levels of fitness if loss has occurred. At the AOE, work with the VTPEA continues. Recently, I had the opportunity to pilot the VTPEA certification review modules and test with Norwich University pre-service teachers. The students were studying assessment and the VTPEA suite of assessments was a great tool for them to learn how assessments can be extended to include all students. The Norwich students attended two lectures, did protocol reviews using FitnessGram resources, and successfully completed the five-module VTPEA review series and certification test. The AOE learned that the VTPEA review modules and certification test were easily accessed and worked properly, a win-win!

Vermont's VTPEA will be presented at the [Virtual Human Kinetics Conference](#) this spring. Gabriel McGann, Linda Moreno, Ana Kolbach, and I are excited to share the state's physical education assessment on a national level! We are especially proud of the Alt-VTPEA work we have done with the support of our teachers and health care specialists. The Human Kinetics conference is free to attend. Go Vermont, go!

Project-Based Learning Part III - Let's Get Going!

Parts I and II of this Project-Based Learning series were published in the [November 2020](#) and [January 2021](#) Linking Health and Learning newsletters. Part I described what Project-Based Learning is and the benefits it brings to students learning. Part II provided an example of Project-Based Learning that was used to engage students in physical education.

The next logical step to learning more about Project-Based Learning is to participate in formal professional learning. The AOE has developed a professional learning series called *Making the Shift: Foundations of Project-Based Learning*. Registration to participate in this series has been very popular, so popular the AOE is already organizing a second cohort.

[Making the Shift: Foundations of Project-Based Learning – Cohort B:](#) This is an introductory-level professional learning opportunity to support educators in developing the knowledge, skills, and tools needed to begin shifting their instruction to a Project-Based Learning approach. Participants will take a deep dive into essential elements and phases of Project-Based Learning. Along the way, they will identify components of their current instructional practice that can be integrated into a Project-Based Learning unit. They will also learn new strategies and develop new tools to support authenticity and student-centered learning across contexts. Over a series of five two-hour sessions, participants will collaborate to write a Project-Based Learning plan adapting a current lesson or unit to align with essential elements and phases of the approach.

Participants who attend all sessions and complete a unit plan with accompanying materials will receive an attendance certificate for fifteen hours. There is no cost to participate in the sessions. (Note: This set of sessions is for those who are interested and were not able to register for the first session. If additional cohorts are needed, they will run in June and August 2021.) [Register online](#) or email [Kyle Anderson](#) for more information or questions.

Professional Learning Opportunities

- Free [Virtual Human Kinetics Conference](#), March 22 – April 4, 2021.
- [2021 SHAPE America National Convention and Expo](#) (Virtual), April 13 – 17, 2021.
- [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

Resources for Health and Physical Education

- [AOE Guidance: Return to Play after COVID-19](#)
- [FitnessGram Learning at Home Modules](#)
- OPEN – [Back to School 2020 Planning Tools](#)
- [PBS Learning Media](#), ([filtered by Health and P.E.](#))
- [RMC Health Education Resources and Tools](#)



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