

Linking Health and Learning

A Newsletter for Vermont's Health and Physical Educators

Winter 2024

Happy New Year!

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Working Group

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Happy New Year!

I want to first pass on my well-wishes to all of you in this new year. I hope everyone had a great holiday season. My four-year old daughter got a microphone for Christmas, so still feeling the holiday joy (pain?) myself.

Health and Physical Education Proficiency-Based Graduation Requirement Working Groups

SHAPE will be releasing new Health and Physical Education standards in March. I am hoping to convene two state level working groups after the release of these standards to develop state model 9-12 Proficiency-Based Graduation Requirements (PBGR) Hierarchies for Health and Physical Education. The Agency of Education (AOE) has done this state level work for other content areas, see [Proficiency-Based Graduation Requirement Hierarchies Development Process](#). The work of developing PBGRs for both Health and Physical Education will start in the Spring, shortly after the release of the standards, and be completed in Fall 24. If you are interested in joining a state level work group to develop 9-12 PBGR Hierarchies in Physical Education please fill out this [interest form](#). If you are interested in joining a state level work group to develop 9-12 PBGR Hierarchies in Health Education please fill out this [interest form](#).

The first stage in developing PBGR Hierarchies is to prioritize learning outcomes in content standards within grade bands (K-2, 3-5, etc.). I will develop a survey/platform where educators across the state can select which indicators in health and physical education are the most essential for student success/wellbeing and need the assessed across a student's K-12 journey (for more information on prioritized standards please read this [resource](#)). Data from this survey will serve to help the work group in creating state PBGR Hierarchies for Health and Physical Education.

Interdisciplinary Comprehensive Health Framework

The Agency of Education (AOE) has released a new document titled, [Interdisciplinary Comprehensive Health Framework](#). This document outlines some simple ways that health content/standards can be integrated into other subject areas. In this document a few interdisciplinary lessons/units are also provided to model connections between Health and Math, Science, ELA, etc. The AOE is gathering [feedback](#) on this document, and is taking requests from the field on professional learning or technical assistance that Supervisory Unions/Districts may need to provide a **comprehensive** health education. The goal of this document, and the subsequent trainings/resources, will further the ability of schools to provide a

“systematic and extensive elementary and secondary educational program” in health ([16 VSA 131](#)). As stated in this document, however, the purpose of this framework is to not supplant health educators and education from their role in schools, but to expand students’ access to important health knowledge.

Education Quality Standards Final Revisions

The State Board of Education has been revising the Education Quality Standards (Rule Series 2000) over the past several months. After an extensive public comment period, final revisions are being put forth by the board. In the most [recent iteration](#), the following is included under 2120.1 Instructional Strategies,

“Educators shall be supported in: (k) teaching students how to develop metacognitive and social emotional skills that improve their academic outcomes; (l) designing learning experiences that improve students’ wellbeing, including opportunities for physical movement in the classroom;”

This echoes what many health and physical education educators already know, that students learn best when their health needs are met and health knowledge/ skills are developed. The identification of these key instructional strategies in Education Quality Standards elevates the expertise/knowledge that many health and PE educators hold, and hopefully provides the grounds for further instructional connections between PE/Health and other subject teachers.

School Health Profiles

ALL middle and high schools across Vermont are being asked to complete the School Health Profiles (SHP). The SHP allow both the Vermont Department of Health and the AOE the ability to assess current health policies and procedures in schools across the state. The data from this survey are critical for the design, improvement, funding, and administration of quality health policies, programs, and practices. The SHP includes two questionnaires – one for school administrators and one for a health educator at each school. These online surveys will be sent out by email January 18th and are due to be completed by the end of March. You may view a copy of the questionnaires on the Vermont Department of Health [School Health Profile website](#). If you have any questions or do not receive an invite to complete the survey, please contact Kristen Murray, Kristen.murray@vermont.gov

Local Wellness Policy Technical Assistance

The Agency of Education (AOE), in collaboration with the Vermont School Board’s Association (VSBA) and the Advisory Council on Wellness and Comprehensive Health (Advisory Council), has developed an updated [Vermont Local Wellness Policy \(LWP\) Guide](#) to support SU/SDs in aligning their existing LWPs in accordance with [Act 66 of 2021](#). The AOE is developing a number of guidance documents on LWP development and implementation. Please review the [Healthy and Safe Schools](#) webpage as documents are released. The AOE is also providing technical assistance to SU/SD local wellness policy teams that are interested in receiving more direct guidance in LWP work. If your SU/SD is interested in receiving this additional support, please reach out to me directly (lan.burfoot-rochford@vermont.gov).

Ian Burfoot-Rochford

Health and Physical Education
Content Specialist
Proficiency-Based Learning
Team

Vermont Agency of Education
1 National Life Drive, Davis 5
Montpelier, VT 05620-2501

E-MAIL:

[Ian.Burfoot-
Rochford@vermont.gov](mailto:Ian.Burfoot-Rochford@vermont.gov)

Resources

[Promoting Mental Health and Well-Being in Schools: An Action Guide for School and District Leaders \(cdc.gov\)](#)

[The Characteristics of Effective Health Education \(sophe.org\)](#)

[Social Emotional Learning \(SEL\) and Mental Health Well Being - Agency of Education \(vermont.gov\)](#) - UPDATED

[Comprehensive Sexual Education for Adolescents \(naspag.net\)](#)

[Lessons from the Field Webinar- Promoting Whole Student Health Through Safe Digital Habits \(safesupportivelearning.ed.gov\)](#)

Professional Offerings

- **SHAPE VT Conference**
The 2024 Society of Health and Physical Educators of Vermont Conference will be held at the Killington Grand Hotel Thursday March 28th and Friday March 29th, 2024. Registration information can be found [online](#).
- **NAMI VT Mental Health Advocacy Day**
Join CHL and VTSPC, co-hosts of the 9th Annual Mental Health Advocacy Day titled Welcoming and Caring Communities — Belonging for All, with NAMI VT, on Tuesday, January 29, 2024 from 10:00 am until 2:00 pm in a virtual format, via Zoom. The morning includes a legislative panel discussion followed by a panel discussion among community leaders, moderated by Robin Shabazz. The afternoon will include reflections of hope and recovery, as stories and experiences are shared in community. [Register for this event](#).
- **AOE to Offer ISTE AI Series Free to SU/SD**
AOE is working with the International Society for Technology in Education (ISTE) to create a Vermont cohort for their popular eight module series "[Artificial Intelligence Explorations and Their Practical Use in Schools](#)." To prepare students for success, educators need to understand how AI technologies can be leveraged to facilitate learning and solve real-world problems. AOE will make 50 slots available free-of-charge to educators for a specific Vermont cohort group. The asynchronous sessions are scheduled to begin in early February and conclude by the end of March. You may register your interest in attending this class series through the [AOE registration link](#).

Other Announcements

- [Talkspace](#) - The Vermont Agency of Education is partnering with Talkspace to provide message-based therapy and self-guided resources to educators in Vermont. For more information contact Meg Porcella, Meg.porcella@vermont.gov