

The Honorable John Kline, Chairman, Education and the Workforce Committee
The Honorable George Miller, Ranking Member, Education and the Workforce Committee
The Honorable Duncan Hunter, Chairman, Subcommittee on Early Childhood, Elementary and Secondary Education
The Honorable Dale Kildee, Ranking Member, Subcommittee on Early Childhood, Elementary and Secondary Education

Dear XXXX,

As the Education and the Workforce Committee continues its work to reauthorize the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), we ask that you include and support legislative language that would acknowledge and recognize the vital role health education and physical education play in a student's school day, academic achievement, and overall health and well-being.

The Committee's vote to grant schools greater flexibility in using federal funds for education cannot be deemed true flexibility if schools and districts are not allowed to use those funds for any subject they deem appropriate. Excluding health education and physical education will severely hinder student access to programs and activities that will enable them to reach their full potential.

At a time when one-third of our nation's children are overweight or obese, educating them in physical competence, health-related fitness and healthy behaviors is critical to their development and long-term success as healthy and productive citizens. And while we realize that schools are but one component in this process, quality health education and physical education programs are essential components of a comprehensive K-12 curriculum.

Recent studies show that health and fitness are linked to improved academic performance, cognitive ability, and behavior as well as reduced truancy. Healthy graduates are less likely to rely on government health care, use public services such as food stamps or housing assistance, and are more likely to raise healthier, better-educated children. Further, the lack of physically fit and health-literate graduates has become a national security issue—being overweight or obese has become the leading medical reason why applicants fail to qualify for military service.

Unfortunately, many schools today do not provide adequate health education or physical education, as recommended by leading health-related national organizations and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Subjects that are not considered "core" under the current law, are frequently at risk of being marginalized and eventually eliminated due to a lack of funding or administrative priority. To rectify this dangerous trend, we strongly encourage the Committee to recognize physical education and health education as "core" subjects (at the same level as art and civic education) thus ensuring that schools *have the option to use* Title I and Title II funds for physical education and health education programs and teacher professional development.

Thank you very much for your consideration.

National Organizations

Active Network

American Alliance for Health, Physical Education, Recreation and Dance

American Association for Health Education

American School Health Association

Directors of Health Promotion and Education

HOPSports

National Association for Sport and Physical Education

Richard Simmons Ask America

Society for Public Health Education

Society of State Leaders of Health and Physical Education

Sporting Goods Manufacturers Association

Street Soccer USA

The SPARK Programs

Up2Us

State Organizations

Alabama State Association for Health, Physical Education, Recreation and Dance

California Association for Health, Physical Education, Recreation and Dance

Colorado Association for Health, Physical Education, Recreation and Dance

Eastern District Association for Health, Physical Education, Recreation and Dance

Great Lakes Chapter, Society for Public Health Education

Greater New York Society for Public Health Education

Illinois Chapter, Society for Public Health Education

Michigan Association for Health, Physical Education, Recreation and Dance

Missouri Association for Health, Physical Education, Recreation and Dance

New Hampshire Association for Health, Physical Education, Recreation and Dance

New Jersey Association for Health, Physical Education, Recreation and Dance

New York State Association for Health, Physical Education, Recreation and Dance

North Carolina Society for Public Health Education

Ohio Association for Health, Physical Education, Recreation, and Dance

Oklahoma Association for Health, Physical Education, Recreation and Dance

Pennsylvania State Association for Health, Physical Education, Recreation, and Dance

Rhode Island Association for Health, Physical Education, Recreation and Dance

Southern District Association for Health, Physical Education, Recreation and Dance

Tennessee Association for Health, Physical Education, Recreation and Dance

Texas Association for Health, Physical Education, Recreation and Dance

Virginia Association for Health, Physical Education, Recreation, and Dance

Wyoming Association for Health, Physical Education, Recreation and Dance