



DATED: August 17, 2020

TO: Vermont School Superintendents and Principals of Schools

I am contacting you on behalf of the Society of Health and Physical Educators of Vermont (SHAPE VT) to let you know that we are dedicated to helping educators provide high quality, equitable, skills based health education and physical education. The current pandemic serves as a strong reminder to us all that health and physical education is a necessary and significant part of the well-rounded education of our Vermont students. Empowering our K-12 students with the skills needed to make healthy choices to positively impact themselves, their families, and our communities will help move us forward and ensure learning continues. Healthy students are students with strength of mind and body. Health education and physical education help to ensure this.

It is the position of SHAPE VT that health education and physical education are crucial to the health and wellbeing of our Vermont students. This is perhaps more true now than it ever has been. With this in mind, we make the following recommendations:

- Allow for adequate physical education and health education instruction so our members (your health and physical educators) can provide the guidance students will need to overcome this pandemic and learn how to lead healthy lives into the future.
- Provide safe and appropriate space for physical education to occur. During warmer weather, physical educators can hold classes outdoors to allow for proper distancing and ventilation. When the weather does not allow for this, or for schools without access to outdoor facilities, we recommend that physical education classes have first priority access to gymnasiums where social distancing and proper sanitization can take place. Physical education held in students' classrooms should be an option if outdoor or gymnasium space (or similar) is not available.
- Provide safe opportunities, such as recess, for students to engage in regular physical activity for their physical, emotional, and immune health. Physical activity breaks should be offered in addition to adequate physical education instruction for all students.

The demands that the COVID-19 pandemic has placed and will continue to place on Vermont's schools means that adjustments must be made to schedules, instructional methods, and more. Along with guidance from the CDC, Vermont Agency of Education, and the Vermont Department of Health, our national association (SHAPE America) has released guidance specific to adapting health and physical education instructional practices during COVID-19. This document is available here:

https://www.shapeamerica.org/advocacy/K12_School_Reentry_Considerations.aspx.

SHAPE VT wants to be part of the effort to continue the education of our Vermont students during this health crisis. We extend our assistance in any way that is needed. We offer up-to-date teaching resources to all through our website www.shapevt.org as well as our social media platforms. We believe that health education and physical education are crucial to the post-pandemic recovery when school begins. SHAPE VT members are

committed to advocating for the development of the whole child. Please reach out if I can answer any questions or be of assistance.

Take care,

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