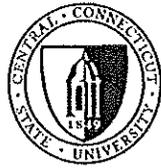


CCSU



Central Connecticut State University

Re: *House Bill No. 5467 (Raised), An Act establishing a Red Ribbon PASS Program*

From: **Dr. Kimberly Kostelis**, Professor and Department Chair, Central Connecticut State University,
Department of Physical Education and Human Performance

Dear Members of the Education Committee My name is Dr. Kimberly Kostelis, Central Connecticut State University, Department of Physical Education and Human Performance Department Chair. This written testimony is to urge you to support the PASS Red Ribbon School Program *House Bill No. 5467 (Raised), An Act establishing a Red Ribbon PASS Program*.

The 2008 Physical Activity Guidelines for Americans, the first-ever national guidelines for the U.S. population, recommend that children and adolescents engage in 60 minutes or more of physical activity daily, mostly at the moderate- or vigorous-intensity levels (USDHHS, 2009). These guidelines also recommend that young people engage in vigorous-intensity activity, muscle strengthening, and bone strengthening at least 3 days a week. These guidelines promote physical activity as a mainstay of the PE curriculum. Physical activity during PE is especially important for those living in disadvantaged communities who typically have fewer opportunities for physical activity outside of classes, as well as for those at increased risk for cardiovascular disease, diabetes, obesity, and osteoporosis. The overweight and obesity rate for children in Connecticut is 29.7%. In an average week 48.2% of High School students did NOT attend Physical Education classes and 68.5% of students did NOT attend daily PE classes.

There are 4 C's that have been identified as critical in framing the PASS initiative: connect, communicate, collaborate, and cooperate. The first C is most important in that it is about connecting the mind and body. There needs to be an understanding that making this connection is crucial to the success of the program and on a bigger scale, to have an impact on childhood obesity along with motivating students to engage in physical activity outside of physical education. The positive effects of connecting physical activity to learning have been around for many years starting with Berg and Sady (1983); (McKenzie et al., 1996; Sallis & McKenzie, 1998; Stone, McKenzie, Welk, & Booth, 1998; U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (USDHHS, 2000). However, it wasn't until Ratey (2008) published his book, *Spark: The Revolutionary New Science of Exercise and the Brain*; that we have begun to take notice and use it to our advantage to promote physical education as a core subject and take its rightful place in education.

It takes a village to raise one healthy child, and in that vein, a mass communication effort needs to take place to craft the message and image of physical activity and physically active learning as an expectation and a right! We need to advertise the good news regarding physical activity and learning, and the cooperation and collaboration that is taking place among the schools, community leaders, legislators, and parents for the success of their children and our future. As a parent of school age children, who participate in PASS, I have witnessed first hand the direct benefits of engaging in small brain breaks during classroom instruction. Not only has the exposure of PASS activities during the school day made my two boys more aware of how long they sit before they take a "wiggle break", but has created an excitement for engaging in purposeful activities

that help them focus better. When I asked my 7-year-old why he enjoys taking these breaks, he responded that it is "fun and gets us moving, which is good for us". Beyond him sharing his thoughts, the impact goes beyond words. For example, he has started to teach us to take a minute to do exercises by modeling PASS activities at home.

As a school administrator of pre-service teacher candidates, who incorporate PASS at CCSU, as well as within public schools, the rewards have been tremendous. Pre-service teacher candidates within physical education and elementary education have been trained implementing PASS into the classroom. Other CCSU faculty have seen the benefits of PASS and incorporating them into our Exercise Science courses; students are loving it! Partnerships with area school systems where our teacher candidates go out have positively impacted our teacher candidates, as well as the teachers and students at the schools. The first semester we partnered with Cromwell Public Schools, we received emails from the principal and a few teachers asking when we were coming back so their students could get brain breaks again. However, with time teachers started incorporating their own brain breaks and we started receiving emails about how beneficial it was to take breaks throughout the day. This example is the reason a PASS Red Ribbon School Program should be supported. School districts should be recognized for implementing a physically active school system.

Comprehensive school health and physical education programs are a good start, but as we know from past experience, they are not enough on their own. Physically active classrooms, intramurals, before and after school programs, community outreach programs, and parks and recreation programs all have to work together to provide the most optimum experiences for children and adults to participate in physical activities. This is why it is critical that the PASS Red Ribbon School Program become a reality for the health and well-being of the children, youth, and adults of Connecticut.