



Connecticut Association for Health, Physical Education, Recreation and Dance

www.ctahperd.org

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2015 – 2016

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S.B. 378 (Raised) An Act Concerning the Recommendation of the High School Graduation Requirements Task Force

Testifier Name: Constance Kapral, Executive Director, March 4, 2016

Dear Members of the Education Committee:

The Connecticut Association for Health, Physical Education, Recreation and Dance does not fully support S.B. No. 378. As an organization with a 95 year history of advocating for healthy lifestyles by providing leadership and professional development opportunities that increase knowledge and sound professional practices for our members, this bill raises major concern. Our concern is with the potential impact of elimination of the .5 health education credit from the state high school graduation requirement. I am writing to urge you to vote “NO” on this bill (or reject this bill).

The Task Force may not have known about the potential issues of their recommendation due to the recently enacted ESSA in Congress. The proposed bill will negatively impact quality Health Education in Connecticut and the well-being of our future generations in the following ways:

- 1) Loss of Title IV funding. Removal of the .5 credit will negate the new ESSA law in which health just became recognized as a critical component to a student’s “well rounded” education with the availability of funding opportunities.
- 2) Without a required comprehensive quality Health Education requirement, student behaviors such as smoking, heavy drinking, school misbehavior, drugs and violence will become more prevalent in our state.
- 3) Loss of support under the “The Affordable Care Act” in Health Education that teaches students to self-advocate and make healthy choices.

If we want to build a healthier Connecticut, we must celebrate the recognition of Health Education under ESSA as a critical component of a student’s education instead of eliminating it. Research has shown that quality health and physical education instruction improves student attendance, test scores, participation, motivation to learn, and reduces discipline referrals.

Teachers help promote the social and emotional learning skills students need to be college and career ready, such as collaborating with others, monitoring their own behavior, and making responsible decisions. Social-emotional learning is critical to the introduction of college and career readiness standards, which increase the demands on students’ ability to engage in deeper learning and shift the focus and rigor of instruction (National Governors Association Center for Best Practices [NGA Center] & Council of Chief State School Officers [CCSSO], 2010a; NGA Center & CCSSO, 2010b). Health Education plays a critical role in this process. It provides the opportunities for students to develop and practice the following health life skills which directly relate to the development of the whole child through social and emotional learning. These skills include: Decision-making, Goal

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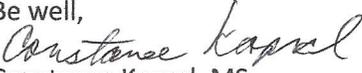
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Setting, Communication Skills, Resisting Peer Pressure, Assertiveness, Knowing, Recognizing & Managing Emotions, Anger & Stress Management, Relationship Skills, Social Awareness & Empathy, Appreciating Diversity, Using Resources, Analyzing Influences and Health Advocacy.

We urge you to make a firm commitment on the health of our future generations and vote "NO" on S.B 378 or amend the bill. There is another bill before you that proposes additions to the health education curriculum in our schools - S.B. No. 377 (RAISED) AN ACT CONCERNING THE SCHOOL HEALTH CURRICULUM AND CANCER AWARENESS. How could this additional content be taught if there is not a mandated minimum .5 credit of Health Education in the graduation requirements?

Your continued support of quality Health Education along with Health Education credit as a requirement for graduation will set the standard for promoting healthier schools and a healthier Connecticut. We appreciate your service and commitment as members of the Education Committee.

Be well,


Constance Kapral, MS

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