

Debbie DeFranco – Sample Letter

I appreciate the opportunity to speak today to provide comments on the Profile of a Virginia Graduate.

I am Debbie DeFranco, the Supervisor for Health, Physical and Driver Education & Athletics for Arlington Public Schools. I am very pleased that this proposal includes health and personal wellness throughout the 4 domains and I urge the state to maintain the 2 credits of health and physical education as part of its graduation requirement.

Every day each of us makes almost one hundred decisions that affect not only one's personal wellbeing but also impact our community's health. Whether it be as simple as washing your face or brushing your teeth, to wearing a seatbelt while driving – life is full of decisions that influence our health. And let's think about it, without your health – all your knowledge and skills are worthless.

The newly adopted health and physical education standards of learning are written to align well with the 4 domains in the Profile of a Virginia Graduate. In physical education, students will learn the knowledge and skills to achieve and maintain a healthy level of personal fitness as well as understanding the importance of energy balance and nutrition to maintain wellness and prevent disease. Students will also demonstrate skills to be safe and respectful not only in a variety of sport and fitness settings, but in life events.

The Profile focuses on career exploration and readiness I believe it is very appropriate and timely that the Board of Education is looking into the requirements that our high school graduates should meet when leaving and entering the workforce or higher education.

Health and physical education is the only content area to work with Career & Technical Education to offer a career-ready credential in its Personal Fitness Trainer. Since the sports and fitness industry surpassed \$84 billion dollars in sales and services last year, Virginia students can earn this credential and immediately enter this booming business by working in gyms and fitness centers.

In health education, students will gain the knowledge and skills to make healthy decisions to reduce health risks and disease for themselves and others. Students

will learn to advocate for their wellbeing and promote a safe and healthy community. **These standards address the Whole Child.**

As the United States struggle with its \$3 trillion healthcare industry, our students must learn how to care and feed their bodies and **mind**.

The world we are living in is traumatic and unfortunately filled with violence, bullying, and sexual assault. Our students need social-emotional health education now more than ever.

In fact, recent NIH research shows that most mental disorders follow a developmental course that typically starts early in life. Children and teens can sometimes experience intense emotions as they get older or go through stressful or traumatic events in their lives. Mental disorders are different. They can cause ongoing, severe symptoms that affect how a child feels, thinks, acts, and handles daily activities, such as going to school, sleeping, eating and maintaining friendships. Virginia's health SOLs teach students how to recognize these signs and seek help. Depression is the 'common cold' of mental illness and students will learn to dispel the myths associated with mental health disorders and learn that they are illnesses just like cancer and diabetes.

Health and physical education address the social, emotional, and physical health of all of our students. We teach to the Whole Child. Please continue to include health and physical education as a key indicator for school quality and student success in the ESSA implementation plan and *Profile of the Virginia Graduate*.

Thank you for your consideration and for doing what is best for the health and wellbeing of Virginia's children.

Debbie DeFranco
Supervisor, Health, Physical and Driver Education & Athletics
Arlington Public Schools

Chad Triolet – Sample Letter

Good evening members of the Virginia Board of Education, thank you for providing citizens of the Commonwealth to share public comments related to ESSA and the Profile of a Virginia Graduate.

My name is Chad Triolet, I am an assistant principal from Chesapeake, VA and am also the current president for the Virginia Association for Health, Physical Education, Recreation, and Dance. I would like to express my appreciation to the Board of Education for acknowledging the importance of student health and wellness in original documentation for the Profile of a Virginia Graduate. This aligns very well with the language in the Every Student Succeeds Act which identifies the importance of educating the “whole child”.

Quality health and physical education programs provide students with the skills and knowledge needed to positively impact their social, emotional, and physical health. HPE programs provide strategies for bullying and harassment prevention, addresses drug use prevention, nutrition education, and provides students with multiple opportunities to develop and utilize critical 21st century skills including; communication, collaboration, critical and creative thinking and citizenship through health promotion and advocacy.

At the high school level, students receive training for Basic First Aid, CPR, and AED use as required by the Code of Virginia. In 10th grade, the health curriculum includes driver education which is an essential job readiness skill for our high school graduates...students can't be employed if they can't get to work.

Quality health and physical education programming has impacted me in many ways over the years. While in 10th grade at Albemarle High School, I learned basic first aid and CPR as part of our health classes. During my senior year, my best friend at school began choking on his school lunch. I immediately recalled my training and performed the Heimlich maneuver and was able to help my friend dislodge the food. That episode drove home the importance of that lifesaving skill and was a driving force for continuing to update my basic first aid and CPR for over 20 years. In 2009, I also needed to use CPR to resuscitate my father. These skills and many others taught in health and physical education positively impact citizens for a life-time and can ultimately be a lifesaver.

Including health and physical education as part of a well-rounded student-centered education is an investment in the future. Benjamin Franklin famously said that “an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure”. Virginia needs to continue to support the health and wellness of our students and at the very least keep the two year high school requirement for health and physical education in high school as part of the new Profile of a Virginia Graduate.

Did you know that Starbucks spends more money in health care than it does on coffee beans? Research clearly shows a positive link between employee health, productivity, and attendance; therefore, social, emotion, and physical health is an essential component of work-readiness.

Thank you for your consideration and for doing what is best for the health and well-being of students across the Commonwealth.

Please continue to include health and physical education as a key indicator for school quality and student success in the ESSA implementation plan and *Profile of the Virginia Graduate*.

Chad Triolet

2016 President of the Virginia Association for Health, Physical Education,
Recreation, and Dance

Chesapeake, VA

Jeannie Trainum – Sample Letter

Good evening members of the board,

My name is Jeannie Trainum and I am a retired health and physical education teacher and Curriculum Coordinator for the Williamsburg James City County Public Schools. I am presently an adjunct professor in the Health Sciences Department at Thomas Nelson Community College and an adjunct faculty member at Old Dominion University. Thank you for recognizing the importance of student health and wellness in the Profile of a Virginia Graduate, and for maintaining the two year requirement for health and physical education.

I believe it is important and timely that the Board of Education is looking at the requirements that our high school students should meet when leaving and entering the workforce or higher education. As a health and physical education department, one of the things we talked about is the fact for many students high school is the last time they will have a health and physical education class. Ensuring that all of Virginia's student's receive health and physical education instruction taught by a qualified, well trained instructor will ensure that these learning experiences give students the skills needed for social, emotional and physical health. Throughout the school experience students will build a skill foundation to development healthy relationships, healthy decision making and healthy food and activity choices.

The recent adoption of the Standards of learning for health and physical education by the board of education provides the access to strong health and physical education programs throughout the K-12 experience. The program will help today's students cope with extreme issues like abuse, sex trafficking, relationships, bullying, depression and all of the other challenges our world presents.

All of our children deserve the opportunity to be healthy and successful at school. The fact is healthy children learn better. As Virginia develops its ESSA state accountability plan and report cards daily physical education should be introduced as a core component. A Center for Disease Control analysis concluded that physical education improves student attendance, test scores, participation and enthusiasm for other academic subjects, motivation to learn, and reduce student referrals. Research also illustrates that health and physical education can have a positive impact on cognitive ability, help students avoid tobacco and reduce their risk for insomnia, depression and anxiety.

You currently have an important opportunity to support healthier children by supporting health and physical education. As you convene the relevant stakeholders to develop and finalize Virginia's Student Succeeds Act implementation plan, I strongly encourage you to include physical education as a key indicator for school quality and student success.

Thank you for your consideration and for thinking of the health and well-being of our children as a critical building block of a successful education.

Jeannie Trainum
Health and Physical Education Teacher