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August 6, 2020

TO: Pender Makin, Maine Commissioner of Education

FROM: Maine Association for Health, Physical Education, Recreation and Dance (MAHPERD)

RE: State of Maine Diploma Requirements for Health Education and Physical Education

Dear Commissioner Makin:

Recently it was brought to the attention of the MAHPERD Board that Health Education and Physical Education are currently not diploma requirements in the State of Maine. We know that Governor Mills signed PL 2019, Chapter 202 into law on June 5, 2019, repealing proficiency-based diplomas, and adding the ability to count equivalent standards achievement in place of course credit. This change took place effective September 19, 2019.

The Diploma requirements posted on the Maine Department of Education website state “secondary schools must provide a comprehensive program of study that includes instruction for all students in career and education development, English language arts, **health education and physical education**, mathematics, science, social studies, visual and performing arts, and world languages.”

This is followed with verbiage stating, “All students must complete the following minimum requirement for a high school diploma and these requirements reflect the minimum required by the State in order for a school administrative unit (SAU) to award a high school diploma.”

- A. English--4 years or the equivalent in standards achievement;
- B. Social studies and history, including American history, government, civics and personal finance--2 years or the equivalent in standards achievement;
- C. Mathematics--2 years or the equivalent in standards achievement;
- D. Science, including at least one year of laboratory study--2 years or the equivalent in standards achievement; and
- E. Fine arts, which may include art, music, forensics or drama--one year or the equivalent in standards achievement.

Health Education and Physical Education are missing from this list.

We know that before proficiency-based and common core requirements, 1 credit of Physical Education and a .5 credit for Health Education were required for graduation. This was recorded in Chapter 127. We know that the Maine Learning Results law is still in place for meeting the standards for all eight content areas and that Physical Education and Health Education courses have to be provided by a certified teacher.

Our discussions have led us to the question: “was Health Education and Physical Education inadvertently left out the requirement for a high school diploma or was this the intent?”

Below is a link to H.P. 740 – L.D. 985 An Act To Maintain High School Diploma Standards by Repealing Proficiency-based Diploma Standards and Adding the Equivalent in Standards Achievement

<https://legislature.maine.gov/legis/bills/getPDF.asp?paper=HP0740&item=3&snum=129>

We do appreciate your time and your leadership at the Maine DOE. We also appreciate how busy you and your staff are at this time. We know that there are many anxious teachers, parents, and children in Maine right now who need the knowledge, skills and benefits of health education and physical education. It is our hope that the Maine DOE will make the necessary amendment to H.P. 740-L.D. 985 to put Health Education and Physical Education requirements back in the diploma law. We look forward to your response and being able to share your actions with the members of MAHPERD.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Deb Smith". The signature is fluid and cursive, written over a light blue rectangular background.

Deb Smith, MAHPERD Executive Director
Dana Welch, MAHPERD President
Maria Minor, MAHPERD Past President
Andy Gray, MAHPERD Past President
Lynn D'Agostino, Board Member
Becki Belmore, Board Member
Charlie Bingham, Advocacy Committee Member
Jamie Dillon, Board Member