

**Draft letter**

The Honorable John Kline, Chairman, Education and the Workforce Committee  
The Honorable George Miller, Ranking Member, Education and the Workforce Committee

The Honorable Duncan Hunter, Chairman, Subcommittee on Early Childhood, Elementary and Secondary Education

The Honorable Dale Kildee, Ranking Member, Subcommittee on Early Childhood, Elementary and Secondary Education

Dear XXXX,

As the Education and the Workforce Committee continues its work to reauthorize the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), we ask that you include and support legislative language that would acknowledge and recognize the vital role health education and physical education play in a student's school day, academic achievement, and overall health and well-being.

The Committee's vote to grant schools greater flexibility in using federal funds for education cannot be deemed true flexibility if schools and districts are not allowed to use those funds for any subject they deem appropriate. Excluding health education and physical education will severely hinder student access to programs and activities that will enable them to reach their full potential.

At a time when one-third of our nation's children are overweight or obese, educating them in physical competence, health-related fitness and healthy behaviors is critical to their development and long-term success as healthy and productive citizens. And while we realize that schools are but one component in this process, quality health education and physical education programs are essential components of a comprehensive K-12 curriculum.

Recent studies show that health and fitness are linked to improved academic performance, cognitive ability, and behavior as well as reduced truancy. Healthy graduates are less likely to rely on government health care, use public services such as food stamps or housing assistance, and are more likely to raise healthier, better-educated children. Further, the lack of physically fit and health-literate graduates has become a national security issue—being overweight or obese has become the leading medical reason why applicants fail to qualify for military service.

Unfortunately, many schools today do not provide adequate health education or physical education, as recommended by leading health-related national organizations and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Subjects that are not considered "core" under the current law, are frequently at risk of being marginalized and eventually eliminated due to a lack of funding or administrative priority. To rectify this dangerous trend, we strongly encourage the Committee to recognize physical education and health education as "core" subjects (at the same level as art and

civic education) thus ensuring that schools *have the option to use* Title I and Title II funds for physical education and health education programs and teacher professional development.

Thank you very much for your consideration.

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