

House Bill 165: Written Testimony (Proponent)
House Primary and Secondary Education Committee
June 3, 2019

Members of the House Primary and Secondary Education Committee:

My name is Brett Baisch, and I have served as a Health and Physical Education teacher in Ohio for 8 years. I have also received my education degrees from universities in Ohio. Thank you for the opportunity to provide written testimony as a proponent of House Bill 165.

Repealing Ohio Revised Code (ORC) section 3313.0718 and enacting a new section proposed in HB 165 would benefit all key stakeholders involved in K-12 Health Education by providing standards. Standards will provide school districts with a framework for curricular decision-making by specifying what students should know and be able to do in Health Education. It is important to note that the adoption of Health Education Standards would not take away local control of curriculum and how teachers meet students' needs. Furthermore, the permitted adoption Health Education Standards would enable the Ohio Department of Education to provide more guidance and resources to educators.

Ohio Revised Code (ORC) section 3313.60 specifies important Health Education topics a school district's board of education should include in its prescribed curriculum for schools under its control. However, ORC 3313.0718 does not permit the State Board of Education to adopt or revise Health Education Standards. As a result, the Ohio Department of Education (ODE) is limited in its ability to provide resources to educators involved in Health Education. The ODE Health Education webpage currently includes resources helpful in detailing required Health Education topics and general support for curricula. Without standards, districts are without guidance regarding many contextual aspects in which Health Education topics should be taught.

For example, ORC 3313.60 states that health education shall include instruction on "the harmful effects of and legal restrictions against the use of drugs of abuse, alcoholic beverages, and tobacco." While this Health Education topic is required to be included in a prescribed curriculum, a school district would have no state-guided framework for developing student learning outcomes, quality instructional practices, developmentally-appropriate learning activities, student assessment, etc. These are just a few benefits standards provide educators even when a Health Education topic is a legislative requirement. Standards simply provide a framework for developing curricula and resources and do not limit school districts' control in making Health Education most conducive for the students it serves.

State standards also would specify the overall goals of Health Education for what students should know and be able to do. This would provide a framework for school districts developing prescribed curriculum which might include other possible Health Education topics not required in ORC 3313.60, such as mental and emotional health. Regardless of whether a Health Education topic is a legislative requirement or not, standards would provide districts with a contextual framework for developing curriculum. ODE website is able to provide numerous resources to educators developing curricula in other content areas, ranging from mathematics to the fine arts, because the state permits the State Board of Education to adopt such standards.

In comparison, ORC 3313.60 states that a school board's prescribed curriculum shall also include Physical Education. A school district developing the Physical Education portion of its curriculum could identify the standards to be addressed on the ODE website. The district could then use the standards as a framework for the prescribed curriculum, while also having control over exactly what and when various topics are taught. Ohio Physical Education Standards have been available since 2007. Over time, the state has continued to build upon these standards, improving Physical Education in the state without giving up local control of curriculum. Today, educators can visit the ODE website and receive further guidance from available benchmarks and performance indicators, data collection and evaluation instruments, documents on student learning objectives (SLOs), and more.

Adopting the current National Health Education Standards or standards developed by the State Board of Education are both viable options for providing guidance to educators involved in Health Education. In summary, standards would have a broad, but important influence on Health Education in Ohio for all the reasons previously noted without taking away local control. I encourage support for House Bill 165.

Thank you for your consideration of this testimony,

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Health and Physical Education Teacher