

**Holly Raffle, PhD, MCHES**  
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**Proponent Testimony – HB165**

**Short Title:** Regards adoption of health education standards

**Long Title:** To enact new section 3301.0718 and to repeal section 3301.0718 of the Revised Code regarding the adoption of health education standards.

Good Evening, Chairman Blessing, Vice Chairman Jones, and Ranking Member Robinson. My name is Dr. Holly Raffle, and I thank you for the opportunity to appear as a subject matter expert to express my support for House Bill 165 regarding the adoption of health education standards.

To provide you some context for my expertise, I began my career as a health teacher; teaching 9th grade health for the Logan-Hocking School District in Logan, OH. In addition to previously holding an Ohio Teaching license for 7-12th grade health, I am also a Master Certified Health Education Specialist. Currently, I am a faculty member at Ohio University's Voinovich School of Leadership and Public Affairs where my scholarly work focuses on community-based efforts to prevent substance abuse and promote mental health.

Ohio is the last state in the Union that has not addressed content standards for health education<sup>1</sup>. Currently, Ohio law<sup>2</sup> does not permit the State Board of Education to adopt Health Education Standards in Ohio. However, Ohio law<sup>3</sup> does direct schools and districts to include health education and other related topics at various times throughout its K-12 curriculum.

There is no question that Ohioans are faced with serious challenges to good health such as obesity, diabetes, asthma, depression, anxiety, suicidal ideation, and substance use. High quality, skills-based education is a continuum of learning experiences that supports the development of a health-literate citizenry by creating spaces for individuals to become:

1. critical thinkers and problem solvers prepared to confront health problems and issues;
2. responsible, productive citizens who help ensure their community is healthy, safe, and secure;
3. self-directed learners who have the competence and confidence to use basic health information and services; and
4. effective communicators who organize and convey beliefs, ideas, and information about their own health as well as health issues at large.<sup>4</sup>

If we think of high quality, skills-based education as a continuum of learning experiences to create a health-literate citizenry, then it is clear that school health education is the foundation of all public health efforts.

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<sup>1</sup> National Association of State Boards of Education.

[http://www.nasbe.org/healthy\\_schools/hs/bytopics.php?topicid=1100&catExpand=acdnbtm\\_catA](http://www.nasbe.org/healthy_schools/hs/bytopics.php?topicid=1100&catExpand=acdnbtm_catA)

<sup>2</sup> <http://codes.ohio.gov/search/3301.0718>

<sup>3</sup> <http://codes.ohio.gov/orc/3313.60>

<sup>4</sup> Joint Committee on National Health Education Standards. (1997). *National Health Education Standards: Achieving Literacy*. Washington, D.C.: The American Cancer Society.

Adopting health education standards in Ohio would provide a framework for school districts to shape the direction of health education instruction for Ohio's students. Statewide health education standards would provide school districts with the backbone for designing and implementing health education curriculum (perhaps guided by the new Ohio Model Curriculum for Health Education) that will ensure that all Ohio students receive high-quality health education in kindergarten through high school. That said, we all know that "it takes a village to raise a child;" as such, schools and communities must work together to develop a health-literate citizenry. In order for schools and communities to work together effectively, there must be a shared understanding of what knowledge, skills, and attitudes that students should have at each grade level. Adopting health education standards for Ohio would also create a "blue print" for local health departments, mental and behavioral health providers, prevention specialists, and other allied health professionals to use when working with schools to select and implement evidence-based programs that support and extend the high-quality health education that students receive in the classroom.

The current status of health education in Ohio has multiple health-related topics being mandated in the Ohio Revised Code without offering standards, a scope and sequence, learning theories, or student behavior outcomes. The mandates are disjointed, which leaves the entire content area of health education without an overall, unifying framework or scope. I believe that health education should have a framework that encompasses standards, benchmarks, and student learning objectives – just like all other academic subject areas in Ohio. In 2007, the Joint Committee on National Health Education Standards published the 2nd edition of the National Health Education Standards (NHES) to reinforce the positive growth of health education and to challenge schools and communities to continue efforts toward excellence in health education.<sup>5</sup> I believe that Ohio is ready to rise to this challenge and adopt health education standards to promote personal, family, and community health.

Chairman Blessing, thank you for this opportunity to express my support for House Bill 165. I will be happy to respond to questions at the pleasure of the Chair.

### **About Dr. Holly Raffle**



Dr. Holly Raffle is an Associate Professor at Ohio University's Voinovich School of Leadership and Public Affairs. She serves as a research methodologist for qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods research projects including program evaluation. Dr. Raffle primarily works in the disciplines of K-12 education, post-secondary education, and public health. Additionally, she is a Master Certified Health Education Specialist and has taught health in the public school system as well as health, kinesiology, psychology, public administration and education courses at the collegiate level. In 2013, Dr. Raffle was the recipient of the Firefly Award from the Fairfield County Family, Adult, and Children First Council recognizing her commitment to community-level prevention. In 2014, Dr. Raffle was the recipient of the Ohio Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services' Prevention Champion Award; recognizing her efforts to help state agencies, ADAMHS Boards, and prevention providers rethink or redesign their prevention systems through the Strategic Prevention Framework.

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<sup>5</sup> <http://www.cdc.gov/healthyschools/sher/standards/index.htm>