

Steve Terrill, Advocate for Behavioral Health Education in our Schools

Chairperson Lehner, Vice Chair Brenner, Ranking Member Fedor and Members of the Ohio Senate Education Committee:

My name is Steve Terrill and thank you for this opportunity to address the committee. I am a strong and determined Advocate for Behavioral Health Education in our Schools, including High Education.

I am here to convey our support for the passage of SB 121 to establish Health Education Standards for the state of Ohio.

I support state policies that establish curriculum aligned with the specialized knowledge and skills. Ohio needs curriculum standards to facilitate university faculty members' ability to prepare teacher candidates effectively so they are able to design standards-based instruction for districts throughout the state.

I strongly believe that health education will lead to healthier citizens and ultimately save billions of taxpayer dollars currently being spent on addressing health crises in our state through services and treatment. Ohio is in the lower quartile in almost every state health ranking.

We now have legislation that mandates that programs incorporate content about trauma-informed care to help educators work with the whole child and the Ohio Department of Education has adopted social-emotional learning standards to guide the work of educators in addressing social and mental health issues. However, it is not effective to address health issues in such a piecemeal fashion rather than dealing coherently with the full spectrum of health-related issues.

Having Health standards would clearly outline what students need to learn and will provide much needed guidance for local districts, health teachers and general education teachers covering health education topics. These standards would provide a valuable resource for teacher educators to guide Ohio's future health teachers.

We are well past time for the General Assembly to approve the creation of health education standards to provide guidance to teachers and schools, to ensure appropriate preparation of health teachers, and to ensure that Ohio's children learn to live healthy lifestyles.

I urge you to vote in favor of SB 121. If you have any questions, feel free to contact us directly at sterrill11@gmail.com or 919-623-0952

Sincerely,

Steve Terrill