

# Local Matters

PARTNERING for HEALTHY COMMUNITIES

## Ohio Senate Education Committee

Senator Peggy Lehner, Chair

Senator Lou Terhar, Vice Chair

Senator Teresa Fedor, Ranking Member

Interested Party Testimony on Senate Bill 121

Regards creation of health education standards

Sarah Miller, Local Matters on behalf of 18 organizations

December 3, 2019

Chairwoman Lehner, Vice Chair Terhar, Ranking Member Fedor, and members of the committee:

On behalf of eighteen healthcare, education, and nonprofit organizations across our state, please accept the attached letter of support of health education standards in Ohio.

Our organizations understand the importance of health education standards in providing Ohio's children with the most robust, up-to-date health education possible, as well as providing teachers and schools with the support and resources they need.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

Testimony submitted by:

Sarah Miller, Communications & Advocacy Manager

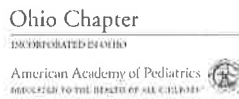
Local Matters

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*Local Matters is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization in Central Ohio working to build healthy communities through food education, access, and advocacy.*



November 2019

To Whom It May Concern:

Our organizations advocate for and work toward a future where all people have an equal opportunity to live a healthy, productive life. It is with this goal in focus that we support health education standards for K-12 students in Ohio.

Ohio is the **only** state in the country that does not have health education academic standards,<sup>1</sup> despite schools being uniquely poised to deliver cost-effective and life-saving education. Standards would offer a baseline for the skills and understanding students must learn to adequately navigate the many public health concerns that face Ohioans today.

From opioid addiction to teen suicide, Ohio's communities are facing preventable health crises. One specific health concern of our organizations is the increasing rates of early-onset diet related disease. Over 33% of Ohio's children have enough excess weight to put them at risk of developing early onset diet-related diseases such as diabetes, hypertension, heart disease, arthritis, and some cancers.<sup>2</sup> Additionally, diet-related disease is creating significant strain on Ohio's economy. The cost of healthcare required to treat diet-related disease in Ohio is estimated at \$6.36 billion.<sup>3</sup>

We must look toward holistic solutions that can both prevent and reduce diet-related disease. Health education standards are a fundamental piece of any such solution.

Public health heroes like yourself can help generate positive health outcomes and state-wide change. Thank you for leading the way in uplifting Ohio's children by supporting health education standards.

<sup>1</sup> Ohio Association for Health, Physical Education, Recreation, and Dance. (n.d.). Health Education. Retrieved July 31, 2018, from <https://ohahperd.site-ym.com/page/healthed>.

<sup>2</sup> Trust for America's Health & Robert Wood Johnson Foundation. (2017). Ohio State Obesity Data, Rates and Trends. *The State of Obesity: Better Policies for a Healthier America*. Retrieved June 5, 2018, from <https://stateofobesity.org/states/oh/>.

<sup>3</sup> Ohio Department of Health. (2014). Ohio's Plan to Prevent and Reduce Chronic Disease: 2014-2018. Retrieved from <https://www.odh.ohio.gov/en/health/ocdp/Chronic-Disease-Plan>.

Your leadership and partnership to support Ohio's children is appreciated. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact us directly.

Sincerely,

Michelle Moskowitz Brown  
Executive Director  
Local Matters

Melissa Wervey Arnold  
Chief Executive Officer  
American Academy of Pediatrics, Ohio Chapter

Jeff Stephens  
Ohio Government Relations Director  
ACS - Cancer Action Network

Dustin Holfinger  
State Government Relations Director  
American Heart Association

Tracy Nájera, PhD, MPA  
Executive Director  
Children's Defense Fund-Ohio

Judy Mobley  
President & CEO  
Children's Hunger Alliance

Michael Corey  
Executive Director  
Human Service Chamber of Franklin County

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Live Healthy Appalachia

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Executive Director  
Ohio Public Health Association

Nicole L. Miller  
President  
Ohio School Counselor Association