Physical Education Advocacy Letter (written by Matt Devito)

         Physical education is a necessity and plays a vital role within education for all students. By removing this subject, you are putting all students being affected by this at a large disadvantage, compared to if PE was still being provided.  It’s a fact that active children learn better and providing all students a quality physical education program teaches students lifelong skills and activities that will keep them active and in turn, healthy for a lifetime. Providing a quality physical education program also means that students will be exposed to content that explains and provides some sort of physical activity, however, by doing this, students are not only exercising their bodies, they are also exercising their minds. Studies go to show that exercising the body has quite a large positive impact on things such as mental health, and emotional health. According to shapeamerica.org, “Studies show that active and fit children consistently outperform less active, unfit students academically in both the short and the long term. They also demonstrate better classroom behavior, greater ability to focus, and lower rates of absenteeism.” This quote proves that when students are provided with a QPE program, the benefits are incredible, and will lead to higher student success rates in other subjects, not just PE class.

         Eliminating physical education programs and replacing them with physical activities such as athletics, marching band, and other recreational activates is quite inappropriate. A physical education class and high school athletics team share many similarities, however when closely comparing the two, they are vastly different. In high school sports the main objective is to of course win, and sometimes that involves a great amount of favoritism specifically towards the more talented players. The focus for the players during sports is to demonstrate higher-level athletic ability. While on the other hand, a QPE class will focus on skill improvement, participating with full effort, and mastering a task at hand. The skills that should be being introduced to students should help them improve upon and hopefully master lifelong skills, that can be done to stay healthy for a lifetime.  I firmly believe that terminating QPE teachers and the subject as a whole is stripping away many benefits in comparison if QPE was being provided. PE teachers are certified and qualified to teach PE. Saying that you can replace a PE teacher with a high school coach is very inaccurate. A QPE program focuses on providing a balanced fitness plan, addressing all components of health. Whereas, in high school sports the focus isn't usually as broad. High school sports is simply not the same as PE, and replacing recreational activity with PE is putting students at a large disadvantage.

(Sample letter written by Jocelyn Hanna)

Dear Education District Board,

My name is \*\*\*\*\*\*\*, a fellow member of this community who is concerned about why physical education is a necessity and why it should not be eliminated from our school systems especially at the high school level. I understand that there are many opportunities for physical activity, however, physical activity is not the same as physical education. By definition, physical activity is a movement that gets the blood flowing through the body; whereas, physical education does include physical activity however, it also “provides learning opportunities, appropriate instruction, meaningful and challenging content for all” (SHAPE America). When you decide to eliminate physical education teachers, you are choosing to just roll out the ball and taking away the opportunity of having quality physical education. Quality physical education is necessary to create physically literate individuals who are competent and confident in multiple environments of activity for a long and healthy lifestyle. If quality physical education is not provided at the high school level, how are these students supposed to learn how to create a healthy lifestyle once they are adults and living on their own? Through the high school physical education curriculum, that’s when students are supposed to learn how to meal plan, find activities they can stick with for life such as individual and dual sports or outdoor activities like hiking or rock climbing, and understand that exercise helps relieve stress, anxiety and even depression. High school is a stressful time for many, so taking away physical education takes away the student’s outlet for stress relief. Physical education has also been proven to boost academic performance in other subject areas especially if students are to be active before an important test, the blood is flowing throughout the body to the brain, making it easier to think more smoothly.

In conclusion, physical education is important for all students and should not be overlooked at the high school level. Just because you provide options for athletics, yes, the students are moving, however, they are not learning about how to maintain a healthy lifestyle for a lifetime. Please consider quality physical education over just providing activities.

Sincerely a Concerned Member of the Community,

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(Sample letter written by Eddie Green)

Dear Members of the School Board,

I am writing to you today, with a considerable amount of concern for our youth’s health. I do not believe that we realize how crucial a physical education class is. Yes our school has it’s choice for other forms of physical activity, but physical education goes so much further. In my physical education classes students aren’t throwing a ball back and forth, but instead they are learning a variety of games and activities so they can be active for life. I will be the first to admit that historically physical education teachers/ classes have not had the best reputation, and many of you may not have fond memories of your P.E. class. I assure you that is not the modern physical education philosophy. We introduce a variety of games that go beyond typical two-sided game play, and build on skills. We teach essential skills that can help keep them physically active for life, instead of having them bombard each other with balls. One of the main causes of America's weight epidemic is the fact that most adults don’t know how to exercise by themselves. My class teaches several activities that can be enjoyed with a group or by yourself, it also teaches healthy habits that can be used as they get older as well. My point being that sure students may be temporarily active in these physical activity classes, but they are not receiving the same educational benefits and information that can help them for a lifetime. Please keep the health of our students in mind and please keep Physical Education as part of the curriculum. Thank you.

Sincerely,

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(Sample letter written by Brittany Hester)

To Whom It May Concern,

I am writing to you to urge you to rethink the elimination of Physical Education classes at our high school. Physical education classes are an essential piece of educating the whole child and should be required for all students. These classes allow for the positive impact of social, emotional, and physical health of the students, by teaching them how and why they should stay active. In a society where obesity is on the rise, we should be teaching our students to be physically active well into adulthood.

Though I appreciate your proposal to replace physical education with marching band, athletics, and various recreation activities, it simply isn’t enough for our students. There are many differences between Physical Education classes and the above mentioned, and it is not an even substitute. As stated in the California Education Code (EC Section 10901: c) athletics and recreation activities are any type of activity voluntarily engaged in, which contributes to the physical, mental, or moral development of the individual. Physical Education programs on the other hand focus on non-competitive activities that students of all skill levels can participate in and enjoy. These classes focus on skill building, as well as allow the students, especially those who do not engage in outside recreation or athletics, to learn many different sports. In doing so, we are introducing our students to skills and sports they wouldn’t have otherwise participated in, with the hopes that they find something they love doing well after they leave our program.

As you can see, we would be doing our students a disservice by replacing their quality Physical Education class with various recreation activities and athletics, as we would be leaving out a large population of our students in doing so, we would be taking away an opportunity to learn new skills and negatively impacting their ability to be physically literate well into adulthood. I urge you think of your student’s health and rethink your initial proposal.

Sincerely,

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