



House Committee on Education
April 17, 2013

Written Testimony on HB 4465
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The American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network (ACS CAN) opposes HB 4465 in its current form.

Obesity, physical inactivity, and poor nutrition are major risk factors for cancer, second only to tobacco use. One third of the 20,000 cancer deaths in the Michigan this year can be attributed to poor diet, physical inactivity, and overweight and obesity. Currently, approximately two in three adults and one in three youth are overweight or obese.

Overweight and obesity are associated with increased risk for several common cancers, including colon, esophageal, kidney, pancreatic, endometrial, and postmenopausal breast cancer. The biological link between overweight/ obesity and cancer is believed to be related to multiple effects on fat and sugar metabolism, immune function, hormone levels and proteins that affect hormone levels, and other factors related to cell proliferation and growth. Maintaining a healthy body weight throughout life is key to reducing cancer risk.

An obese child will likely die up to 14 years earlier than one of healthy weight. Obesity in teenagers can be as deadly as smoking cigarettes (an obese child is twice as likely to die by the age of 55) and the average yearly medical cost of an obese child is up to five times that of a child of healthy weight.

Schools are positioned to play an important role in health. Health doesn't just happen. Students must learn how to be healthy and given the opportunity to practice the healthy behaviors they learned in a supportive and caring environment. Personal responsibility must be taught, learned and practiced. This is where schools can make a difference.

Through strong school-based policies, including quality health education and physical education, schools can help students adopt and maintain healthy eating and physical fitness and reduce childhood obesity.

**ACS CAN Recommendations for
Physical Education in Michigan**

- 150 minutes of physical education each week for children in elementary school
- 225 minutes of physical education per week for middle school and high school
- At least 50 percent of physical education class time should be spent in moderate to vigorous physical activity
- High schools should make physical education a graduation requirement

Substitutions and waivers to "opt" students out of physical and health education, through sports, band or other areas, are not acceptable. The focus is not simply for kids to be active, but to be learning how to be active now and for the rest of their lives. Those learning skills are not part of other curriculums or sports clubs.

ACS CAN supports the Healthy Kids, Healthy Michigan recommendation for HB 4465 to require one full credit (one school year) EACH of physical and health education (current requirement is ½ credit of each) and to remove the option to substitute other activities to meet these requirements.

Thank you for your consideration.



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**Testimony
House Education Committee**

HB 4465

April 24, 2013

Good morning Charwoman Lyons and committee members. Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this important legislation. I am Mike Maisner, Vice President of Active Communities for the Michigan Fitness Foundation. I also serve as Chair of Healthy Kids, Healthy Michigan, a coalition of more than 150 organizations all dedicated to reducing childhood obesity in our state.

I am here to speak in opposition to HB 4465. We are very concerned with language in the bill which would allow for substitution of the ½ credit for physical education with participation in extracurricular athletics or other extracurricular activities involving physical activity.

As much as we value extracurricular activities such as marching band and high school athletics, they simply are not an equivalent replacement for a quality physical education curriculum. We certainly wouldn't consider teaching students math by simply playing Yahtzee. Similarly, we will not achieve a physically educated society if we simply run our students around by offering "physical activity". Comprehensive, standards based physical education curriculums are designed by some of the best minds in kinesiology, motor development research, and instructional design. Not unlike a math or science curriculum, they follow specific lesson plans with students learning and demonstrating competencies that are measureable and aligned with national standards. Please do not make changes to the Michigan merit curriculum at the expense of quality physical education for our students.

It is important to note that Michigan's current requirement of ½ credit of physical education in high school is nowhere near the national standard. In fact it is only 12½% of the national standard adopted by the National Association for Sport and Physical Education. Michigan's State Board of Education policy recommends that school districts meet this national standard. To further erode our physical education offerings would be a disservice to high school students in our state.

The Healthy Kids, Healthy Michigan Coalition recommends amending HB 4465 to require one full credit (one school year) each of physical education and health education and removing the option to substitute other activities to meet these



requirements.

We are facing an obesity epidemic across this country and especially here in Michigan. The harsh reality is that for the first time in history, we have a whole generation of young people that will have a shorter life expectancy than their parents (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention).

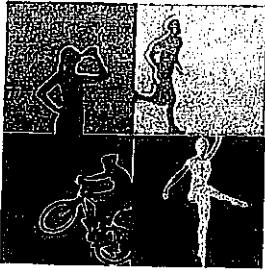
Quality health education and physical education is part of the solution to this growing problem. Students can acquire the skills to improve their lifelong health, thereby reducing health care costs. We also know that physically fit students perform better academically. A study in the *Journal of School Health* found that physically fit kids scored better on standardized math and English tests than their less fit peers.

If there are any concerns about the public's support of physical education, the *Harvard Forum on Health* commissioned a study and found that 91% support more physical education in schools as a way to combat childhood obesity. In a National Association for Sport and Physical Education (NASPE) survey of parents, 95% think a physical education curriculum should be part of the school experience for all students in grades K-12 and 76% think more school physical education could help control or prevent childhood obesity.

Quality physical education provides our students with the knowledge, skills, competence, and therefore confidence to be active for life. Your support of quality physical education will be a critical step in the right direction for Michigan's students for generations to come.

Thank you.

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MAHPERD

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April 17, 2013

Chairwoman Lyons and members of the committee, thank you for the opportunity to address you today.

My name is Roger Jackson, and I have the privilege of representing several organizations. I am the Executive Director of the Michigan Association for Health, Physical Education, Recreation and Dance (MAHPERD), a member of the Steering Committee of the Healthy Kids, Healthy Michigan Coalition for Healthy Weight in Children (HKHM), and current chair of the Public Policy Advisory Committee for the National Association for Sport and Physical Education (NASPE).

My purpose here today is to address concerns with the portion of HB 4465 that allows for substitution of the ½ credit for Physical Education with participation in extracurricular athletics or other extracurricular activities that involve physical activity.

While the organizations I represent would certainly like to go in the opposite direction and see an increase in the requirements for physical education, as well as require minutes for K-8th grade physical education, we certainly do not want to see erosion of the current language.

The benefits of modern day, quality physical education programs that are standards based are well documented, and continue to be substantiated with additional research. I would certainly be happy to provide you with specific data at your request. Whether we are talking about giving students a knowledge base and skills to help enhance the chances of them making better decisions regarding how to live an active, healthy lifestyle, or looking at the correlation between physical fitness and academic achievement, one of the goals of education is to prepare healthy citizens that are not only capable of making informed decisions in their personal lives, but also contribute to our society as a whole. If we fail to address the needs of the whole child, we cannot accomplish that goal.

Representative McBroom, in his testimony before this committee on April 10, 2013, mentioned that some physical education programs are no more than dodgeball and weightlifting. Honestly, I would unfortunately have to agree that those types of programs still do exist. It is a legacy that today's dedicated physical education professionals are working to eliminate.

Instead of marginalizing these programs even further, I would hope that individual school districts would be encouraged to address the issue just as they would a problem with any other curricular area. Sample programs are readily available, and the recent changes in teacher evaluation would help insure that the state standards are being addressed in an effective approach. Change can be accomplished, and can be done without spending a lot of money.


I have been a dedicated member of the education profession for almost forty years, and have spent over twenty of those years coaching several sports for many age groups and serving as a Director of Athletics at the college level. It is my professional opinion, when comparing sports to *quality physical education programs*, that no sport, no matter how well it is coached, can give a student the knowledge and comprehensive skill base they need to prepare them to be problem solvers and decision makers when it comes to making choices about how to pursue an active lifestyle.

Please, do not adopt the language in HB 4465 that allows for substitution of the physical education credit. According to the 2011 Youth Risk Behavior Survey, 28% of high school students describe themselves as overweight or obese. During the school day, their activity level is very low, with 66% of Michigan high school students reporting they do not attend a physical education class in an average week. It is clear that we are not addressing all of their needs.

I applaud your efforts to continually look for ways to improve the education system in our state. I believe there is no cookie-cutter, carved in stone approach to educating all students, regardless of age. We strive to meet the individual needs of the students in all areas. While we may not always agree on what are the best pathways to follow, we certainly must be on the same page when it comes to the well-being of our children, giving them every opportunity we can to live healthy, happy, productive lives.

Thank you for your time, and I will certainly try to answer any questions you have, either now or in the future.

Sincerely,



Roger Jackson



**FOR YOUTH DEVELOPMENT
FOR HEALTHY LIVING
FOR SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY**

**Testimony Before the State House Education Committee in Opposition to
the Proposed Amendments to House Bill 4465**

Submitted by

**Fran Talsma, MSW
Director, Pioneering Healthier Communities
State Alliance of Michigan YMCAs**

**Emily Greenberg
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Intern, Michigan State Alliance of YMCAs**

Thank you for allowing us to share the YMCAs response to House Bill 4465 on the proposed changes to allow substitutions for high school physical education graduation requirements. The Michigan YMCAs oppose House Bill 4465 in its current form.

Michigan is in the midst of an obesity crisis. It is estimated that approximately one in four of Michigan's adolescents are overweight or obese, and almost 80% of these youths will go on to be overweight as adults.¹ Trust for America's Health projects that without major changes, 60% of Michigan's entire adult population will be overweight or obese by the year 2030.²

Weak physical education requirements in high schools will only perpetuate this cycle of inactivity and obesity. Preliminary findings from the National Bureau of Economic Research show that physical education classes reduce the probability of obesity among children, and therefore must be a top priority in our schools.³ Physical activity also has a demonstrated effect on school performance. Again and again, studies have illustrated this positive association between exercise and academic achievement.⁴

The proposed legislation will weaken physical education requirements and decrease opportunities for high school students to become fit, healthy, and productive adults later in life. Governor Snyder recognizes this connection and even stated in a special message on health and wellness that "To combat the problem of childhood obesity...the Michigan Department of Education [needs] to work with schools to facilitate participation in physical activity and health education throughout all grade levels."⁵

How can we expect our adolescents to place value on fitness and take personal responsibility for their health if we weaken standards for physical education in our high schools.

The proposed legislation not only harms students on an individual basis, but also has potentially devastating consequences for military recruitment and the readiness of Michigan's future workforce. Lieutenant General Mark Hertling stated in an interview with PHIT America, "Increasing obesity and lack of physical education standards [in schools is negatively] affecting military readiness".⁶ In his remarks, Lieutenant General Hertling placed a strong emphasis on the importance of physical education in high schools, as military enlistment requires the ability to be physically active on a daily basis.⁶ Lack of physical education in high schools can lead to both increases in direct costs in healthcare dollars and indirect costs through lost military training time for individuals who are not physically fit upon entrance into the military.⁶

The same logic holds true for the workforce. Lack of physical stamina and subsequent obesity have negative financial implications on workforce productivity.⁷ In addition, many workplaces are highly sedentary and do not provide opportunities for daily physical activity.⁸ In light of this research, many workplaces in Michigan have begun to recognize the importance of active and healthy employees, and have started investing dollars into workplace wellness programs that encourage and promote health and wellness among their employees during work hours.

Students spend about the same amount of time sitting in schools as employees do in these workplaces, yet in contrast to the solution-focused response from many workplaces, we are proposing weakening physical education requirements for our high school students.

In order for our students to take personal responsibility for their health and fully utilize resources such as workplace wellness programs in the future, they must develop lifelong health habits such as those taught in physical education in school. Marching band and school sports simply cannot substitute education that directly addresses physical fitness and provides students with the necessary tools to take personal responsibility and remain active and healthy along the lifespan.

In sum, high school physical education sets regular physical activity as the status quo. The Michigan YMCAs fear that allowing substitutions for quality physical education sets Michigan high school students up for increased challenges and barriers to a healthy and productive future.

The State Alliance of Michigan YMCAs urges you to maintain the current physical education graduation requirements. We feel Michigan's high school students deserve this investment in their futures.

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