

Ministry of Education

Minister

Mowat Block
Queen's Park
Toronto ON M7A 1L2

Ministère de l'Éducation

Ministre

Édifice Mowat
Queen's Park
Toronto ON M7A 1L2



March 24, 2016

Mr. Chris Sherman
Ms. Alison Bochsler
OSPAPPH co-chairs
chriss@chatham-kent.ca
Alison.bochsler@hamilton.ca

Dear Mr. Sherman and Ms. Bochsler,

Thank you for your letter about physical literacy in education and childcare settings. As the Minister of Education, I appreciate the opportunity to respond.

I can assure you that the well-being of all learners is a key priority of our government. We are committed to making schools, child care and early-years programs healthier places for students, children and families that support their achievement and well-being. We know that healthy, active living — along with nutritious food and a healthy environment — support learning and growth, and are vital to helping learners reach their full potential.

Promoting well-being is one of the goals and a key component of *Achieving Excellence: A Renewed Vision for Education in Ontario*. We have created opportunities to support and learn about well-being across the curriculum. All recently renewed curricula include a section related to supporting students' well-being and ability to learn.

To support physical health and wellness in child care settings, *Ontario Regulation 137/15* under the *Child Care and Early Years Act, 2014* (CCEYA), sets out that children receiving care for six hours or more must be outdoors for a minimum of two hours (section 47), and that programs have goals and approaches to promote the health, safety and well-being of children, and incorporate active play into the day (section 46).

In addition, child care settings are required to have a program statement that shows how they comply with *How Does Learning Happen? Ontario's Pedagogy for the Early Years* (2014), our ministry's policy statement on programming and pedagogy. *How Does Learning Happen* includes goals for children and expectations for programs organized around four foundations, one of which is well-being. The goal of this foundation is that every child is developing a sense of self, health and well-being.

We expect programs to work towards this goal by providing regular daily opportunities for children to be physically active; limiting activities where children are sedentary for extended periods of time; creating safe and stimulating outdoor spaces that offer challenges; and facilitating children's efforts to take reasonable risks, test their limits and gain increasing competence and a sense of mastery.

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Further regulatory changes being proposed under the *Child Care and Early Years Act* (CCEYA) would require before- and after-school programs to include at least 30 minutes of outdoor time each day, weather permitting. This proposed requirement and others are outlined in the [Phase 2 regulatory proposals consultation document](#). You may be interested to know that we are seeking feedback from early years partners and stakeholders from February 1, 2016 to April 1, 2016.

Our ministry believes that it is important for students to participate in a wide range of physical activities in safe and positive learning environments in our schools. As you know, the goals of our revised Health and Physical Education curriculum (Grades 1-8 and 9-12) include students developing the skills and knowledge that will enable them to enjoy being active and healthy throughout their lives. Through opportunities to participate regularly and safely in physical activity, students learn how to develop and improve their own personal fitness. Students will also learn the skills needed to participate in a range of physical activities, and to apply movement concepts and strategies in games, sports, dance, and various other physical activities. These activities can help students gain an understanding of the factors that contribute to healthy development, a sense of personal responsibility for lifelong health, and an understanding of how living healthy and active lives is connected with the world around them and the health of others.

Please note that while our ministry is responsible for developing curriculum policy, boards are responsible for implementing policy and allocating resources. Teachers plan units of study, develop a variety of teaching approaches, and select appropriate resources to address the curriculum expectations, taking into account the needs and abilities of their students. Assessment and evaluation of the curriculum expectations – including those which lead to the development of physical literacy – is done according to [Growing Success](#), the provincial policy for assessment, evaluation and reporting.

The policies and requirements that govern the secondary school program, including diploma requirements for optional and compulsory courses, are set out in an Ontario school policy document called *Ontario Schools, Kindergarten to Grade 12: Policy and Program Requirements, 2011 (OS)*. It is available on our ministry website at www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/document/policy/os/index.html.

These requirements were determined by our ministry after extensive consultation with a broad range of education stakeholders, including public input from parents, subject associations, postsecondary education institutions, community partners, and students. The requirements are specifically designed to ensure that all students are equipped with the skills and knowledge they need to succeed after graduation, whether they choose to pursue apprenticeship training, college, university or the workplace. At this time, our ministry is not considering revisions to compulsory courses for the Ontario Secondary School Diploma (OSSD).

It is important to note that secondary school students must take one compulsory credit course in Health and Physical Education to complete their OSSD. They may also use a Health and Physical Education course to fulfill a second mandatory credit ("Group 2 – one of French as a Second Language, the Arts, Business Studies, Health and Physical Education or Cooperative Education). As well as the Healthy Active Living Education (PPL) courses, students may take Recreation and Fitness Leadership (PLF4C), Health for Life (PPZ30) or Introductory Kinesiology (PSE4U) as a mandatory credit.

As you may know, one part of the elementary Health and Physical Education curriculum is Daily Physical Activity (DPA). Since October 2005, all publicly funded elementary schools are required to provide a minimum of 20 minutes of sustained, moderate to vigorous physical activity each school day during class time. The goal of DPA is to make sure that all elementary students have the chance to improve or maintain their physical fitness and their overall health and wellness, and enhance their learning opportunities. The curriculum states that:

"The principal is responsible for ensuring that all students, including students with special education needs, have the opportunity to participate in health and physical education in a safe manner and that students have an opportunity for daily physical activity. Timetables should have sufficient flexibility to allow the use of some same-sex and some co-educational groupings for curriculum delivery where appropriate or where needed."

Our government is also working towards its goal of providing all children and students with the access and opportunity to 60 minutes of physical activity connected to the school day. This goal is supported through an Ontario Physical and Health Education Association's (Ophea) Healthy Schools Certification currently being piloted in over 180 schools across the province. Our ministry is working in partnership with ACTIVE AT SCHOOL, Ophea and other education, health and sport and recreation organizations, along with the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care and Ministry of Tourism Culture and Sport to support this goal.

We believe that promoting physical activity is a shared responsibility where schools, parents and the community can work together to encourage children and students to be active not only at school, but also at home and in the community.

Thank you again for your important work and advocacy. I look forward to continuing to work together to support the health and well-being of Ontario's children and youth.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Liz Sandals". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke extending to the left.

Liz Sandals
Minister