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AFFILIATED GROUPS NEWS



New collaborative effort by NJAHPERD and DOE seeks to make “every child stronger”

“‘Every Child Stronger, Every Life Longer’ isn’t only the name of our program. It’s our mission and our mantra,” explains Jackie Malaska, executive director of the N.J. Association for Health, Physical Education, Recreation and Dance (NJAHPERD). “Given the complexity of the educational system, we all find ourselves, at times, having to serve more than one master at a time. It’s possible to lose focus. As a mantra, Every Child Stronger, Every Life Longer reminds us of why we all do what we do, and exactly what’s at stake.”

NJAHPERD, along with the N.J. Department of Education (NJDOE) and other partners, is calling on all educators and education policy makers—from school board members to elected officials in Trenton—to leverage their expertise and resources to work towards a measurable physical improvement of New Jersey’s student body.

It was a data measurement project that gave birth to the endeavor. NJAHPERD partnered with the DOE to undertake the state’s first-ever comprehensive Health and Physical Education Survey. Although the survey is slated to be released by the NJDOE later this month, it became clear that a broader discussion could strengthen physical education in New Jersey, and “Every Child Stronger” was born.

“Why not use the Internet to open the lines of communication throughout the state,” explains Malaska, “so that teachers, administrators, school board members, parents and students could share best practices, address deficiencies and most importantly, clarify what we all want from our health and

physical education programs at all grade levels, along with what resources and class time we’re all willing to commit to those objectives.”

The mission is ambitious, Malaska admits, and that’s why the group has shaped a set of clearly defined initiatives with which to begin. The first focuses on modernizing fitness testing practices to help students learn to set and attain fitness goals. A second, the Administrative Partnership Initiative,

recognizes that many supervisors and principals do not have a health and physical education background, and is designing methods by which busy administrators who are willing can access easily understood primers on the latest health and physical education practices. The third will focus on providing elementary level



teachers guidance in teaching health education and recommend teaching materials.

A website, www.everychildstronger.org, has been launched and will become a resource for health and physical education professionals as well as the hub of the program’s communications and outreach efforts.

NJAHPERD and the NJDOE welcome your thoughts. Send your comments via everychildstronger.org, using the “contact” button at the top of the home page.