

# Raising the Bar With health. moves. minds.™

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When I first started teaching, I didn't realize the impact that federal funding and accountability would have on my career path. But, after the *No Child Left Behind Act* (NCLB) was passed in 2001, it was used to mandate accountability measures and school priorities for nearly 15 years.

NCLB was the only public education system/legislation I worked under — as is the case for most current school administrators — and I've since come to realize through my work at both the state and national levels that the NCLB legislation deeply dictated high-stakes accountability assessment and reporting for educational leaders and policy makers.

However, this educational paradigm began to change in 2015 with the passage of the *Every Student Succeeds Act* (ESSA). The core of ESSA is the concept of a well-rounded education and the opportunity to redefine how schools measure student success. Luckily for our field, ESSA is just the start of a bigger conversation and opportunity.

ESSA creates fundamental changes like identifying school health and physical education as part of a student's "well-rounded education." It allows school health educators to obtain professional development that is supported for the first time with federal funding. And, ESSA also gives tremendous flexibility to states to create their own accountability measures, thus dictating where federal dollars may be spent.

However, while ESSA has helped shift some of the conversation, it hasn't changed the fact that local teachers need direct access to funds for improving their programs and student outcomes.

## A FUNDING SOLUTION

At the 2019 National Convention & Expo in Tampa, SHAPE America officially unveiled its new service-learning program, health. moves. minds. This program includes a fundraising component with a simple, yet important core value — to return half of the funds raised directly back to the school that raised them. That is where the greatest need has been and will be — with you and your students!



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Funds raised through health. moves. minds. will also be critical in helping support the overall mission of SHAPE America and its state affiliates. But, this program is so much more than just a fundraising platform. It's a statement to your school and your community about the importance of the whole child.

If schools want to really invest in whole-child outcomes, it is important those outcomes be based on improving physical literacy and health literacy. The health. moves. minds. program includes educational lessons and activities that will help teach kids to thrive physically

and emotionally — as well as the fundraising component that will help schools purchase equipment and resources that can make an impact for their students.

The program gives us the opportunity to clearly articulate the value of health education and physical education — not only for our students and schools, but for our society as a whole.

## WHAT IF?

I'd like to propose that we consider and answer several much-needed questions, such as:

- *What if* health education and physical education were prioritized in school every day just like math and reading?
- *What if* health education and physical education were funded at the same level as science and social studies?
- *What if* 12th-grade educational outcomes for health literacy and physical literacy were given the same importance as ACT and SAT scores?

While these questions may seem too lofty or like impossible realities, the fact is we need a vision that can be articulated to a diverse group of policy makers and influencers. The health. moves. minds. program provides our profession exactly that. It will allow us to collectively raise the bar for those within our profession — and those outside our field.

And, if we continue to advocate what an abundance of research demonstrates — healthy, active students have greater success in school and become healthier, more productive adults — we may move the needle forward.