

I am writing to convey my deep disappointment and condemnation with the Teaching Tip that was published in this month's Professionally Speaking magazine by Jacqueline Kovacs, Managing Editor, Professionally Speaking.

Health and Physical Education is a part of the prescribed Ontario curriculum and is not an option for teachers to deliver or to deny any child. This learning is fundamental to every child's healthy growth and development so to suggest that it is appropriate to deprive students of learning the Ontario Curriculum as a consequence of getting "too loud" in a classroom setting, something that is a daily occurrence in a grade 6 classroom, is unprofessional and atrocious. Evidence Based research is absolutely clear that daily physical activity is fundamental in engaging all children in learning. It helps them govern their own behaviour, it improves concentration, increases memory retention, motivation and morale. Daily physical education supports children in developing their physical literacy so they learn to move with competence and confidence and learn the joy of physical activity to encourage their lifelong participation in recreational pursuits. Advocating that children be robbed of this fundamental right is incomprehensible, especially when it is delivered by the very college that is charged with supervision and regulation of teacher professional practice and competence.

In addition, the entire education community of Ontario is working diligently to end bullying, promote positive mental wellness and create safe, positive, inclusive places to learn. Condoning a teaching practice that is nothing more than using intimidation and negative peer pressure to control behaviour is contrary to this mandate and direction and wrong.

It is deeply grievous that the very College who represents all Ontario Teachers, including Health and Physical Educators, publically advocates that this action is appropriate for any teacher and devalues our discipline to such a degree. At the very minimum, there should be a retraction and an apology to all Health and Physical Educators in the province of Ontario and members of the Ontario College of Teachers. In addition, a future publication of Professionally Speaking should be dedicated to BOTH the disciplines of Health and Physical Education and the Arts, advocating for the quality delivery of both disciplines as part of a child's daily curriculum and providing valuable and appropriate strategies to engage children in learning.

I look forward to your reply

Joanne Walsh, OCT, Health and Physical Educator