



## **PRESS RELEASE**

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## **SHAPE America Applauds Passage of the *Every Student Succeeds Act***

RESTON, VA, December 9, 2015 – Today the U.S. Senate joined the U.S. House in passing the *Every Student Succeeds Act* – the long overdue reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, replacing *No Child Left Behind*.

As a result of today's vote the role of both school health and physical education has been elevated and acknowledged as part of a student's "well-rounded" education. Other subjects noted in the definition of well-rounded education include art, civics, history and geography. The term well-rounded education replaces the term "core subjects" that was used in previous Elementary and Secondary Education Act proposals.

"We applaud the U.S. Congress for recognizing the importance of school health and physical education as key components of a well-rounded education," says SHAPE America Chief Executive Officer E. Paul Roetert, Ph.D. "Health and physical educators are uniquely qualified to ensure that all of America's students develop the skills, knowledge and confidence to enjoy healthy, meaningful physical activity for a lifetime."

This is a significant designation for school health and physical education, and something that members of SHAPE America – Society of Health and Physical Educators have worked on tirelessly for over half a decade. Health and physical educators from across the country have communicated relentlessly with their members of Congress and participated in the organization's annual advocacy event, SPEAK Out! Day, to gain support for the inclusion of these critical subjects in federal education law.

Designation as part of a well-rounded education means that school districts and schools will have the opportunity to utilize federal funds for physical education programs – something that was limited under *No Child Left Behind*.

In addition, school health, physical education and physical activity programs will have access to significant funding under Title IV of the bill. Block grants will be distributed to states under the Safe and Healthy Students program. School districts and schools will apply to their state for funding for a wide range of safety, health and school-climate programs, to include health education and physical education.

Over the past two decades, physical education has undergone a transformation in rigor and focus. It is now recognized as essential to a young person's overall education experience and a foundation for lifelong healthy living. Research shows a positive relationship between participation in physical education and academic achievement. The inclusion of health and physical education as part of a well-rounded education in federal legislation will help to ensure that every student succeeds.

**About SHAPE America®**

SHAPE America – Society of Health and Physical Educators® is committed to ensuring all children have the opportunity to lead healthy, physically active lives. As the nation's largest membership organization of health and physical education professionals, SHAPE America works with its 50 state affiliates and national partners to support initiatives such as the Presidential Youth Fitness Program, *Let's Move!* Active Schools and the Jump Rope For Heart/Hoops For Heart programs. In September 2015, SHAPE America launched "50 Million Strong by 2029." The goal of this initiative is to ensure that by the time every child now in pre-school graduates from high school, all of America's students will have the skills, knowledge and confidence to enjoy healthy, meaningful physical activity for a lifetime. For more information, visit [www.shapeamerica.org](http://www.shapeamerica.org).