

NORTH HUNTERDON-VOORHEES REGIONAL HIGH SCHOOL DISTRICT
BRIEFING PAPER – Unified Physical Education (396)

CURRENT STATUS

We currently offer Modified Physical Education with the addition of Unified Leadership to provide students with disabilities peer mentors throughout the course.

Our goal is to replace the current Modified Physical Education course with a Unified Physical Education course. Unified Physical Education will bring students with and without disabilities together into one physical education class. All students who participate in this course would receive physical education credit.

GOAL: To successfully implement the Unified Physical Education course.

PROPOSAL

- Begin offering the Unified Physical Education course (396) for the 2019-20 school year as a course listed under the Physical Education department course offerings.
- This course will focus on the physical, intellectual, and social growth of all participants. Engaging in physical activity and sport, peers with and without disabilities will foster important social relationships.
- Students with and without disabilities will enter the class on an equitable social footing; typical students are not meant to serve as mentors, but equitable classmates. All students will be encouraged to use their unique skills to support each other.
- Typical peers can enroll in Unified Physical Education in place of general physical education, and receive full credit for the course.

ADVANTAGES

- Improved sports skills and fitness for youth with and without intellectual disabilities
- Improved positive attitudes and perceptions among youth without disabilities toward their peers with intellectual disabilities.
- School climate improvement through acceptance, friendship, and social inclusion.
- Social-emotional learning through student interactions and activities.
- Genuine inclusion and sports experiences for students of diverse ability levels.
- Students empowered to educate and impact the entire school community; continuing the education of equity, inclusion, and school unity that the VHS Unified message defines.

DISADVANTAGES

- Possible cost for resources for program
- The course may take away from the number of students enrolling in the general PE courses

SPECIFIC ACTION REQUIRED:

- Approve the program and courses.
- Identify need for course at both schools.
- Who will teach the courses at both schools.
- Allocate of money to purchase resources for the courses, including professional development.
- Teachers complete required professional development:
 - Review the Unified Physical Education curriculum from Special Olympics New Jersey
 - Review the Adapted Physical Education National Standards (APENS) and align the content of the Unified Physical Education curriculum to the standards
 - Attain a free online certification of “Coaching Unified Sports”

EVALUATION: Success of the program will be evaluated by the number of students signing up for the courses and their success with physical and behavioral health, sport skill development, and individual student growth in an inclusive setting.