

Rhode Island Needs A more Flexible High School Gym Requirement

By Ryan Lukowicz

I am currently a Senior at North Kingstown High School and I have been placed into a Adaptive Physical Education class since my Freshman year due to my total blindness. This means that I attend the class alongside other students with disabilities in addition to “partners” who are recruited to support us in meeting our IEP goals. The reality is that the number of partners who are willing to enroll in these APE classes has been low since it has to be taken in addition to a regular Physical Education Class. As one can imagine, this is difficult due to the limited space in schedules as students are already being required to take certain classes to begin with per graduation requirements. These classes do more than promote active lifestyles for all; less obvious rewards are the possibility for lifelong friendships and a more connected student body within a school. This is why I am proposing a bill via the legislature which has been introduced by representative Cassimiro and Senator DiMario. The bill if passed would allow students to take this class in place of regular PE to learn different skills while still staying active. The work for this project has already included finding sponsors to submit the bill, creating a survey to gather feedback from students and putting together an Annotated Bibliography after researching the topic thoroughly. The next step includes mobilizing people who would benefit from this to testify on the legislation when it gets scheduled for hearings in the House and senate Education committees. I hope that Rhode Islanders will appreciate students having more flexibility and set the foundation for building connections with others they would not have otherwise.