Massachusetts Association for Health, Physical Education, Recreation & Dance

PO Box 182, Attleboro, MA 02703
774-254-4657
www.ma-hperd.org

Fall 2026 Newsletter

Mark Your Calendar

MAHPERD Legends Golf Tournament
Pine Ridge Country Club
Saturday, Oct 17, 2026

2026 MAHPERD Convention
DCU Center, Worcester
Monday & Tuesday,
November 2&3, 2026

2027 Health Educators Conference
Publick House
Sturbridge, MA
January 29, 2027

2027 Adapted PE Conference
Special Olympics, Marlboro
March 19, 2027

2027 Leadership Conference
Publick House
Sturbridge, MA
March 25, 2027

MAHPERD Awards Banquet
Publick House
May 2, 2027

97th Annual MAHPERD Convention at the DCU Center in Worcester November 2 & 3, 2026

Convention Keynote Speaker
Monday, Nov 2nd

Tom Filline

Convention Keynote Speaker
Tuesday, Nov 3rd

Jenna Wolfe

Preliminary Convention Program

Saturday, October 17th
11:00 am
Pine Ridge Country Club

MAHPERD Legends Golf Tournament

MAHPERD Legends Golf Tournament

October 17, 2026

11:00 AM

Pine Ridge Country Club
North Oxford, MA

$135 per person
Visit www.ma-hperd.org

Price includes lunch, golf, cart and dinner!

Lots of fun activities before, during, and after the tournament including:

- Pre-round mulligans and strings for sale
- Prizes for long drive and closest to the pin
- Putting competition on the practice green
- After round dinner, raffle, and silent auction

All proceeds benefit Adaptive Sports New England

Honoring Our 2026 MAHPERD LEGEND

Jack Mosko

Jack served the profession for 6 decades as a teacher, coach, and MAHPERD board member.

Jack continues to volunteer his time with Boston Beep Baseball, a program through

Adaptive Sports NEW ENGLAND

Sign Up Today!

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President's Message

by Deb Pinto

Modern, Inclusive Approaches to Health, Physical Education, Recreation, and Dance

I hope everyone has had a great start to the school year!

Summer is a time for reflection, fun, and recharging our batteries. For me, it was filled with hiking, walking the dog, spending time with family, and, of course, **"**Camp Auntie." Every Monday throughout July and August, our four- and six-year-old grandnephews climbed in my car for a day of adventure and fun.

Just like in the classroom, there was plenty of sharing, learning rules and limits, repeating myself, and teaching self-regulation. It was all fun and games until I had to pull out my teacher's voice! Those Mondays were a fun reminder that teaching happens everywhere. We are constantly helping children learn, grow, problem-solve, connect, and become more confident.

That connection makes this year's MAHPERD Convention theme especially meaningful: **Ahead of the Game: Modern, Inclusive Approaches to Health, Physical Education, Recreation, and Dance.**

Being ahead of the game means continuing to learn, adapt, and find new ways to meet the needs of our students. It means embracing inclusive practices, promoting physical literacy and wellness, increasing student engagement, challenging yourself to teach new activities, and continuing to strengthen the important work we do in our professions.

This is where MAHPERD matters**.** Our association gives us a place to learn from one another, share ideas, grow professionally, advocate for our professions, and connect with colleagues who understand the work we do.

As I begin my term as president, I am honored to help lead MAHPERD into this next chapter. I encourage you to get involved, attend the annual convention, take advantage of professional learning opportunities, and connect with fellow members. Your involvement is what makes MAHPERD strong.

I look forward to working with all of you as we continue to support one another, strengthen our professions, and keep MAHPERD Ahead of the Game.

Here's to a wonderful school year and an exciting year ahead!

And remember—sometimes, even the most experienced educators have to pull out the **teacher's voice!**

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From the Desk of the Executive Director....

Maria Melchionda, M.Ed

It has been a busy spring/summer and a good one!

It started with an extraordinary day at our MAHPERD Banquet on May 3rd recognizing wonderful educators in our state and professionals that have been behind the scenes supporting MAHPERD. I always love this event because it really reflects the bright shine on everything that is good in all of us.

I'd like to remind all of you of our many resources on our association website. First, we have our **Speakers Bureau**; the professionals that are on here are experts at what they do! Whether it be health or physical education, they are here for your needs. If you are interested in having professional development at your school throughout the year, give me a call. If you haven't listened to our **MAHPERD Podcast "Voices From the Field,"** I suggest that you go on there and listen to host and Advocacy Chair Jake Bersin who has interviewed many professionals that give us insight as to how to make our teaching, curriculums, and environments within our classroom a better place for our students to learn. We also have a plethora of **books** that you could use as well as **national and state websites** to explore. Don't forget to scroll down to the bottom of our website as we have **17 partners** who have many more resources that you could utilize on their respective websites. Between MAHPERD and our partners, the goal is the same: to serve our students in Pre-K-12 to the best of our ability within our discipline. If you need a Justification Letter for the Convention to give to your principal or superintendent as to the reason why this Convention in November is so important, please look under the Convention materials. Click on the letter and download it for yourself.

Mary Connolly, MAHPERD Higher Education Chair, and I have visited and worked with many school districts on their health and physical education curriculums in conjunction with the MA Frameworks. We are available to you and have been in 25+ districts already, so don't forget if you're having concerns to come to us and we can easily outline your needs and talk to you about next steps.

From the Desk of the Executive Director (Continued)

Maria Melchionda, M.Ed

As you all know, I am a huge fan of the affective domain. It is important to me to tell you how much I value you and what you do for our students across the state each and every day. I need to tell you what a privilege it is to serve all of you and to work beside a MAHPERD Executive Board that you have elected that is *second to none.* Many states look to us for what we do in MAHPERD, and many states send their members to attend all of our professional development opportunities as well. If you know someone in another state who has never experienced professional development in MAHPERD, bring them along with you, as I believe that we not only provide the best in programs and services, but also have a wonderful sense of community and togetherness within our association. There is nothing better than feeling valued. I look forward to seeing all of you in November at the Convention. Please let me know if there's anything that I could do for you. I would be most happy to help.

Warmly, Maria Melchionda

Update!

The DCU Center, host of the Annual MAHPERD Convention, has a new general manager, Peter Doyle. If you see him around, give him a solid handshake; he's a wonderful person to work with, as was Jim Moughan who retired last year after 25 years of Service to our association at the DCU Center in Worcester.

We had an informative meeting with the MIAA regarding the particulars of secondary physical education and athletics and the differences in both programs. They support us in our educational endeavors. We discussed the shortage of officials in many sports, and they are looking for our support in acquiring more referees/officials for the future.

Our meeting with the Massachusetts PTA was extraordinary. Our parents support us to a great degree, and we are even co-branding some advocacy materials with them to put out to parents and educate them on what quality health and physical education entails.

In meeting with our Content Specialist from DESE, we continue to work on the issues of providing the best education for those in the special populations within adapted physical education. Licensure in both health and physical education continues to be a work in progress as well.

From the Desk of the Executive Director (Continued)

Maria Melchionda, M.Ed

Our golf committee had a wonderful conversation with Adapted Sports New England. All of the proceeds will go to them and their programs; so, if you have a golf team, be sure to sign up for the MAHPERD Legends Golf Tournament on October 17th! It's a great cause and they do so much for others! Former board member and long-time and current member of our association, Jack Mosko, is our honorary legend who picked Adapted Sports New England as our cause this year.

The summer was spent with your MAHPERD Executive Board working hard getting all of the sessions for the Annual MAHPERD Convention. Your three presidents have worked on finance goals for the year. Our board and leadership continue to strive to give the provide professional development possible that is effective for every single health and physical educator in our state.

MAHPERD has teamed up with the Children's Advocacy Center of Suffolk County as partners.

Through this digital ad campaign, the Children's Advocacy Center of Suffolk County's Support to End Exploitation Now (SEEN) program and the Commonwealth's Anti-Trafficking Task Force are working together to raise awareness and help the community identify youth who are at risk for trafficking and exploitation.

97th Annual MAHPERD Convention
at the DCU Center in Worcester
November 2 & 3, 2026

Monday Keynote Speaker
Tom Filline

From the school gym to the comedy stage, Tom is a former elementary school PE teacher turned stand-up comedian, viral content creator, and keynote speaker. With a background as a professional wrestler and a love for all things fitness, Tom brings a unique blend of high-energy humor and real-life parenting chaos to both his live shows and online audience.

After training at iO Chicago and The Second City Conservatory, Tom began performing stand-up comedy in 2015. In 2020, he launched his social media alter ego, The Angry Gym Teacher, and quickly gained traction with his wildly relatable sketches and teacher life parodies. Tom's comedic style is sharp, honest, and hilariously wholesome, drawing from his experiences as a teacher, twin dad, and former athlete. He's performed at top comedy clubs including Zanies, Helium, and Funny Bone, and currently tours nationally as part of the Bored Teachers Comedy Tour.

He is a regular face on Bored Teachers, and his videos have been featured on multiple Chicago news outlets. Whether he's on stage or on screen, Tom is proof that a little chaos, a lot of honesty, and a killer punchline go a long way.

MAHPERD "Voices from the Field"

In this podcast, you will hear from educators and professionals in the field sharing their insights and experiences in the HPE (Health Physical Education) and allied fields. I hope you find this podcast informative, and inspiring. Learn about best practices and tools that you can implement in your teaching practice. We want to know not only what you do, but also the action steps you took to get you where you are. The Status Quo is not in our vocabulary folks, my guests are leaders in the field who are taking action to make an impact in their respective fields. If you have any questions or would like to be a guest on the show email mahperdpodcast@gmail.com

97th Annual MAHPERD Convention
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Tuesday Keynote Speaker
Jenna Wolfe

Jenna Wolfe is an energizing journalist, author and fitness dynamo who redefines empowerment. With warmth, wit and authenticity, Jenna often shares intimate moments from her personal experiences, from growing up in the Caribbean, to raising her two daughters (Harper and Quinn) to coming out on national television and most recently, to having conquered adversity after a double mastectomy. Whether addressing an audience of women, school kids, or corporate sales teams, Jenna has spent the last few years sharing practical and actionable strategies for crushing goals, cultivating resilience, and igniting success.

Jenna was the first ever Lifestyle & Fitness Correspondent on NBC News' *Today,* as well as the host of *Weekend Today.* She is the author of *Thinner in 30*, a 30-day diet and fitness book where she blends athletic wisdom, laugh-out-loud humor, and easy-to-follow advice. From 2017 to 2022, she was the host of *First Things First*, a daily sports talk show on FOX Sports. Prior to joining NBC News in 2007, Jenna spent 12 years as a sportscaster. She is a Certified Personal Trainer, health and wellness expert and motivational speaker.

A CHANCE TO BE A LEADER IN MAHPERD!

If you would like to be involved and volunteer with the MAHPERD Board, ***NOW*** is your chance!

We would love to utilize your skills and talents!

Contact: Maria Melchionda- maria@ma-hperd.org

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Physical Education

by Steven Carra, VP Elect PE

My name is Steven Carra, and I am honored to serve as your Vice President-Elect for Physical Education this year. Our team is hard at work recruiting the best candidates for programs and presenters for our upcoming events. We want to ensure attendees experience a wonderful balance of sessions that can meet your various learning styles. We will have opportunities where people can move during presentations, engage through active listening, or contribute during interactive sessions to help personalized the content.

On a personal note, this summer has been filled with memorable moments watching our eight-month-old daughter thrive at our newly opened and refurbished local park. She has quickly become the world's biggest fan of the swings, and it is truly a beautiful thing to see her experiencing the world through movement and play.

We are back kicking off the year with professional development and started reviewing Bloom's Taxonomy. While it is always meaningful, it was about to feel a little repetitive when we went on a much deeper dive into Self-Determination Theory (SDT). SDT by Deci and Ryan essentially serves as a Bloom's Taxonomy for a student's social-emotional side.

Building the key pillars of connectedness, autonomy, and competence are essentially prerequisites (like Bloom's work) before true learning and optimal growth can take place. SDT and noticing how its parts impact our students will be a major focus this year, and maybe it can be a helpful tool in your world, too.

More than ever before, the magic of watching my little girl grow through movement and play has only reinforced how important our work as physical educators is for creating resilient bodies, and strong curious minds. To echo the timeless words of Frederick Douglass, *"It is easier to build strong children than to repair broken {adults}."*

Move well and play often!

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CTAHPE

by Co-Chairs: Melonie Bennett & Katie Simes

Are You a Leader in Health Education, Physical Education, or Family & Consumer Sciences? If so, have you heard about the CTAHPE group?

What is CTAHPE?

CTAHPE (Cities and Towns Administrators of Health and Physical Education) has a long history of bringing together leaders in Health Education, Physical Education, and Family & Consumer Sciences to share ideas, resources, challenges, and successes.

What began as regional CTAPE groups across Massachusetts evolved over time. The Northeast CTAPE group continued meeting through the 1980s, 1990s, 2000s, and 2010s and eventually grew into the 100+ member CTAHPE community we have today, supported by MAHPERD and the power of professional collaboration.

As a division of MAHPERD, CTAHPE provides Directors, Coordinators, Department Heads, and Lead Teachers with opportunities to connect, collaborate, and advocate for our disciplines. Our Co-Chairs also serve as voting members of the MAHPERD Board, giving CTAHPE a voice within the larger organization.

Why CTAHPE?

Leadership can sometimes feel like you are navigating challenges on your own. CTAHPE provides a professional network where you can ask questions, share solutions, learn from colleagues, and connect with others who understand the unique challenges of leading Health, Physical Education, and Family & Consumer Sciences programs.

Throughout the school year, CTAHPE hosts four meetings, offered through a combination of in-person and virtual opportunities, providing members with regular opportunities to connect, collaborate, share resources, and learn from one another.

CTAHPE (Continued)

by Co-Chairs: Melonie Bennett & Katie Simes

We also offer a mentoring program specifically designed to support administrators in their first three years in the role. Whether you are new to administration or looking to connect with someone who has experience navigating the position, our mentoring program provides an opportunity to build relationships, ask questions, share ideas, and receive support from experienced CTAHPE members.

Our success depends on all of us. Whether you attend meetings, share resources, contribute to discussions, provide district updates, mentor a colleague, or simply learn from others, your participation strengthens our professional community.

Our Mission
Empower. Inspire. Collaborate.

CTAHPE is committed to fostering a professional community where leaders can share expertise and resources, strengthen leadership and advocacy, and promote Health Education, Physical Education, and Family & Consumer Sciences across Massachusetts. Together, we work to support the health, well-being, and success of both students and educators.

Join the CTAHPE Community
If you are a leader in Health Education, Physical Education, or Family & Consumer Sciences, or know someone who is, we invite you to connect with CTAHPE!

For more information, please reach out to our Co-Chairs:

Melonie Bennett
melonie.bennett@braintreeschools.org

Katie Simes
simesk@chelmsford.k12.ma.us

We look forward to another year of connection, collaboration, mentoring, and support!

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Health Division

by MJ McGillicuddy, VP & Jack Harvey. VP Elect

Hello MAHPERD members! This newsletter hits at an exciting time of the year, as we educators head back into our buildings to start anew, change what needed changing, and continue to work on our craft. This year for myself, as I know it is for many of you, is also a stressful time of the year!

I have a new position in a different district (as I have just bought my first house, yay!), with a variety of challenges facing me, none bigger than how to take a dry, older curriculum, and revamp it to something that can resonate with students.

The theme of the 97th Annual MAHERD Convention is *Ahead of the Game*, which focuses on how to take a modern approach to physical education, health education, recreation, and dance. My own personal goal for the year is to live this motto to the fullest. I plan to do so in several ways, and felt the newsletter would be a good opportunity to share some tips.

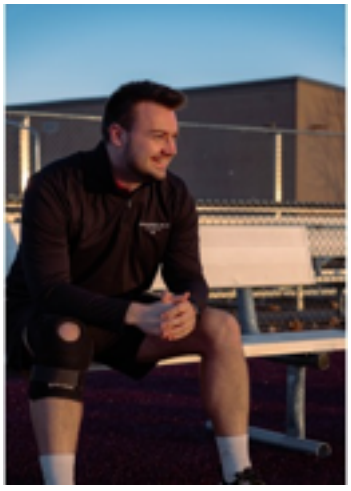
First and foremost, I want to always center my focus on giving my students opportunities to practice the skills that I am truly teaching in a variety of ways, and spread those opportunities throughout the school year. More and more, what we do in the Health realm is critical to our students' success beyond the boundaries of the classroom, and our students need a safe space to practice their communication, self-advocacy, and goal setting skills.

Secondly, I want to draw from relevant topics that our students can relate to while teaching these skills. As a younger teacher, I have the benefit of engaging in many of the same hobbies, and seeing much of the same media as our students, but even still, I want to pull from students' own lived experiences to connect the dots from theory to practice. Relating a skill to a real-world situation, and giving students the opportunity to practice that scenario is powerful.

Finally, I want to challenge students. I feel as though too often physical education and

health education are looked at as the class between classes, the one where a good grade is guaranteed, and effort is not needed. I will strive this year to challenge students to go beyond their comfort zone and gain new experiences. I want my classes to build new relationships, and strengthen existing ones. Most of all, I want students to engage in high level thinking, discussion, and collaboration in an environment where they feel safe to learn.

These goals are lofty, even abstract at times, but the reality of teaching Health in 2026 demands we meet these challenges. Health education has the enormous power to develop better humans, in perhaps the most direct way compared to other courses. As teachers, we need to be *Ahead of the Game.* Have a wonderful school year, and see you at the Annual MAHPERD Convention in November!
-MJ McGillicuddy



Looking Forward: Humanizing Health and Physical Education
I am Jack Harvey, a health and physical educator, researcher, coach, and teacher educator currently working in Massachusetts. I completed my MS in Physical Education: Advanced Pedagogy at Springfield College and currently teach Health and Physical Education at Chelsea High School. My wider work focuses on physical education pedagogy, instructional models, holistic assessment, and the relationship between the historical foundations of our profession and contemporary practice. As a new member of the MAHPERD Executive Board, I am excited to contribute to the organization and connect with educators across the state.

I am particularly looking forward to the **Annual MAHPERD Convention**. For me, professional development should be more than collecting activities to use on Monday morning. Its real value comes from having our thinking challenged and leaving with a stronger rationale for the decisions we make on Monday morning. I am excited to share some of my own work, but equally to learn from the ideas and experiences of educators working across Massachusetts.

One area that has shaped my thinking over the past year is the development of a more **humanistic approach to health education**. In my own classroom, I have been exploring what happens when health education moves beyond simply delivering health information, or even teaching health skills in isolation, and instead

deliberately considers the development of the whole person. This has meant designing learning around communication, advocacy, self-management, positive engagement, creativity, character, reflection, and meaningful decision-making.

A recent article by Benes and Scanlon (2026), *Humanizing Health Education—Part 1*, provides an important contribution to this conversation. Drawing upon Freire's work on humanizing pedagogy, they position health education as fundamentally concerned with helping students develop the knowledge and skills to become more fully human (Benes & Scanlon, 2026). Particularly significant is their suggestion that we move beyond being simply **student-centered toward being human-centered**, recognizing students' lived realities, sociocultural resources, knowledge, and experiences as integral to teaching and learning (Benes & Scanlon, 2026).

For me, this does not require another new initiative or program. Instead, it provides a lens through which we can reconsider the decisions we already make. *Who are my students? Why am I teaching this? Is this knowledge functional and meaningful for them? What experiences do they bring? How does my curriculum respond to their community and context?* Benes and Scanlon (2026) similarly encourage educators to build planned and sequenced curricula around what is meaningful and relevant to their students, beginning with the knowledge and experiences students already possess.

I believe this is an important direction for the future of both health and physical education. **Forward-thinking practice does not always mean finding something new.** It can mean becoming more deliberate about why, when, how, and for whom we use the practices we already have. Standards, instructional models, assessment practices, and teaching strategies are tools; their value ultimately depends on the pedagogical decisions behind them.

That is a conversation I am excited to continue through MAHPERD this year and at the upcoming Convention: **how can we create health and physical education that is increasingly thoughtful, human-centered, and responsive to the young people in front of us? Reference:** Benes, S., & Scanlon, D. (2026). Humanizing health education—Part 1. *Journal of Physical Education, Recreation & Dance, 97*(6), 76–77. https://doi.org/10.1080/07303084.2026.2674534

-Jack Harvey

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Higher Education Division

by Mary Connolly, Chair

Congratulations to the many districts that are aligning their comprehensive health programs to the Massachusetts Framework and replacing content units with Practice units. The work is tedious but very worthwhile when you see the difference a skills-based lesson makes in your classroom.

Try this:

1. Align your current program to the Practices.
2. Examine your gaps.
3. Determine what to do to decrease the gaps and increase instruction across the practices.
4. Compare your map with the programs below and above to provide continuity of instruction.
5. Make each practice a unit: Example Decision Making unit, Self-Management/ Goal setting unit. Each unit will have different topics which allows you to teach more content through a variety of skills.
6. Design skills-based, backwards design lessons that incorporate UDL.
7. Enjoy the results!!

This process requires time but is facilitated with professional development. Contact Maria Melchionda (maria@ma-hperd.org) for help with both Physical Education and Health Education alignment and unit development.

Mary Connolly

Program Leader at Bay Path University; Health Education consultant

maconnolly@baypath.edu; connolly_mary@hotmail.com

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Adapted Health Division

by Ashley Peterson, VP Elect Adapted Health

Returning to school can be an overwhelming time for educators. In addition to managing the many responsibilities that come with the start of a new school year, it is important to not only get to know your students, but also become familiar with the specific accommodations and supports outlined in their IEPs and 504 Plans.

Understanding and implementing these plans can be challenging, particularly when you are responsible for a large number of students. Here are a few practical steps to help you get organized and start the school year with confidence:

1. Build Collaborative Relationships

Develop strong working relationships with special education teachers, student case managers, and guidance professionals. These colleagues can be valuable resources in helping you understand students' IEPs and 504 Plans, clarify accommodations and supports, and maintain consistent communication about student needs.

2. Build Working Relationships with Paraprofessionals

Develop a collaborative working relationship with the paraprofessionals who support students in your classroom. Remember that you are both part of the student's support team, working toward the same goal: providing the student with the support they need to be successful. Establishing clear communication, mutual respect, and shared expectations can help create a consistent and supportive environment for the student.

3. Create a System for Tracking Accommodations and Modifications

Develop a personal chart or tracking system to help you organize which students require specific accommodations. A clear, easy-to-reference system can help you quickly identify student needs and ensure that accommodations are consistently implemented throughout the school year. Consider organizing accommodations by class, student, or type of support to make the information easy to access when

needed.

Remember: Keep this information confidential and secure. IEPs and 504 Plans contain sensitive student information and should only be shared with staff members who have a legitimate need to know. Your personal tracking system should be kept private and stored securely.

4. Work Smarter, Not Harder!

Look for ways to support the needs of all of your students while making your workload more manageable. If one student benefits from a reference sheet, consider providing a copy to the entire class. This can ensure that the student receives their needed accommodation while also providing a helpful resource for other students who may benefit from it.

Remember: **Education is not a competition.** Providing a support or resource to one student does not take anything away from the others. Sometimes, a strategy or accommodation that helps one student can benefit the entire class. Use your best judgement on what works for all and what doesn't.

5. When You're Struggling, Don't Be Afraid to Ask for Help!

They say it takes a village - and your village is the support system you build with your colleagues. Remember **Step 1: Build Collaborative Relationships.** When you have questions, concerns, or are unsure about how to best support a student, lean on the people around you. Reach out to special education teachers, case managers, guidance professionals, paraprofessionals, and other colleagues who can help you problem-solve and find effective strategies.

You are not expected to figure everything out on your own. **We are all here for the same reason: to support our students and help them be successful.** Asking for help is not a sign that you are struggling; it is a sign that you are committed to doing what is best for your students.

As health educators, we strive to create learning environments where every student feels supported, included, and capable of success. We are not alone. By building relationships, creating organizational systems, asking questions, and working together, we can better understand and meet the needs of our students and help make this school year a successful one for everyone.

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Adapted Physical Education Division

by Greg Coogan, VP Adapted Physical Education

MAHPERD's Adapted Physical Education Division would like to welcome back our fellow educators, coaches, and movement professionals to the 2026-2027 school year. Our division is currently preparing for the Annual MAHPERD Convention at the DCU center November 2-3. We are welcoming presenters from local colleges and K-12 adapted PE programs. Sessions will include content on adapted martial arts, adapted team sports, switch modifications, and accessible technology.

We are also looking forward to the MAHPERD's Adapted Physical Education Conference in March and we are currently recruiting presenters for that conference. If you would be interested in presenting, please contact Greg Coogan at gcoogan@westfield.ma.edu. The APE division is supported by Greg Coogan, Courtney Quinn, and Josh Sideman. We are looking forward to connecting with our MAHPERD family in November.

Our MAHPERD Convention Host Hotel
Hilton Garden Inn

35 Major Taylor Boulevard
Worcester, Massachusetts, 01608
508-753-5700

King bed is $141.00/night
(2) Queen Beds is $141.00/night

* Guests can use the group code MAHPE2 when making reservations.

Professional Development Opportunities for YOU!

MAHPERD Annual State Convention
DCU Center, Worcester, MA
November 2-3, 2026

MAHPERD School Health Educator's Conference
Publick House, Sturbridge, MA
Friday, January 29, 2027

Adapted PE Conference
Special Olympics Complex ~ Marlboro, MA
Friday, March 19, 2027

Leadership Conference
Publick House, Sturbridge, MA
Thursday, March 25, 2027

MAHPERD Awards Banquet
Publick House, Sturbridge, MA
Sunday, May 2, 2027

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Athletics

by Nick Morse, Past VP Athletics

I hope you all had a restful and relaxing summer! This past summer, I completed my master's degree in Physical Education at Bridgewater State University. Throughout my final courses, I was continually reminded of the importance of research-based pedagogy in effectively instructing and assessing students in physical education. This led me to consider how many of these same principles of effective teaching could be applied to coaching to further enhance athlete development.

Too often, coaches can become heavily focused on the X's and O's of the game while overlooking one of the most important components of youth and high school athletics: skill development. Establishing a strong foundation of fundamental skills allows athletes to develop confidence, make better decisions, and ultimately take greater advantage of their tactical knowledge. By prioritizing skill development, coaches can create athletes who are not only more technically proficient, but also better equipped to understand and execute the tactical demands of their sport. Just as educators are encouraged to stay current with research and evidence-based teaching practices, coaches should make a consistent effort to expand their knowledge of effective coaching strategies by seeking out reputable, research-based resources and professional organizations. Continuing to learn and evaluate our coaching practices allows us to make informed decisions about how we teach, develop, and support our athletes.

The Annual MAHPERD Convention is coming up November 2-3. Presentation proposals are being reviewed for last-minute presenters. If interested in presenting a session for Athletics, reach out to me at nkmorse@hotmail.com. Additionally, we are also still seeking a Vice President-Elect of the Athletics Division; please email me if interested in serving!

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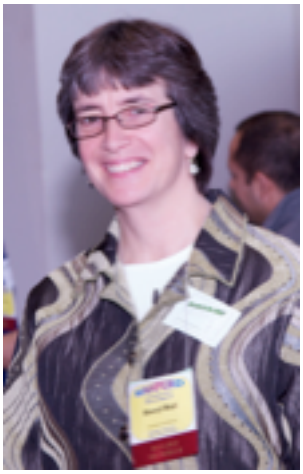
Dance

by John Parker, VP Dance

As we begin a new school year, the Dance Division of MAHPERD is excited to reconnect, celebrate the work happening in dance education across our schools, and look ahead to another year of movement, creativity, and collaboration. Summer provides a wonderful opportunity to step away from the school routine and reconnect with our own movement practices, attend workshops, explore new choreography, and gather fresh ideas to bring back to our students. Whether you spent the summer dancing, teaching, creating, or simply finding inspiration, we hope those experiences have renewed your energy for the year ahead. Dance continues to be a powerful way to build confidence, creativity, connection, and community - and we look forward to supporting educators as they bring those experiences into their classrooms.

We are also looking forward to the Annual MAHPERD Convention and the opportunity to connect with colleagues from across the state. The Dance Division hopes to make this year's convention a place to share ideas, discover new resources, and celebrate the many ways dance can support the physical, social, and emotional development of our students. We encourage dance educators, physical educators, and anyone interested in movement education to join us, participate in sessions, and connect with fellow educators. As we move into the school year, our division is excited to continue building opportunities for professional learning and collaboration. We hope you will be part of the conversation and help us make this a creative, active, and inspiring year for dance education in Massachusetts!

Call For Applications



In 2012, Past President Sheryl Hall had an idea to assist new professionals. She wrote,
"The transition from college student to new professional can be overwhelming. These new professionals are busy settling in to a new position, managing finances, potentially relocating and adjusting to a new school community.
I believe that it is during these early years that attendance at the state convention can really make a difference in the new professional's approach, comfort and commitment to the teaching profession. The opportunity to network with other professionals and attend session's specific to their grade level can be truly motivating. I also believe that if we can reach out to new professionals and help them attend the convention we have taken a huge step in creating life-long members. Therefore I am happy to announce the "Past President's Scholarship Fund". The scholarship will be awarded to new professionals to help defray the cost of attending the annual convention."

To be eligible an applicant:

1. Must be in their first 3 years of teaching in the fields of Physical Education and/or Health.
2. A current MAHPERD member.

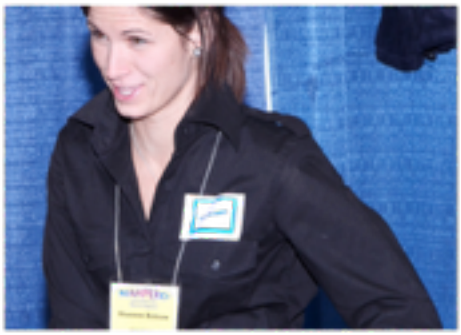
The scholarship will be completely funded through donations so the number of awards and amount of the scholarship given will likely vary year to year. The scholarships are only for registration at the annual MAHPERD Convention. MAHPERD membership is not included in the scholarship.

If you are a new professional and interested in learning more about this scholarship or have any questions please email: Executive Director, Maria Melchionda: maria@ma-hperd.org
If you are interested in applying for the Past President Scholarship to help defray the cost of the annual MAHPERD Convention please complete the below application form

Link: https://ma-hperd.org/the-mahperd-past-presidents-scholarship/

The deadline is Wednesday, October 21, 2026

Remember When - 2011 MAHPERD Convention Nov 7 & 8 DCU Center



Massachusetts Association for Health, Physical Education, Recreation & Dance

PO Box 182, Attleboro, MA 02703
774-254-4657

Retirees/Pre-retirees/Necrology

by Brian McNally, Retirees/Pre-retirees/Necrology Chair

I hope that your school year has gotten off to a great start. Your MAHPERD executive board is here to serve you and provide whatever assistance that we can to help you in your profession.

I am more than happy to help all MAHPERD members, and especially those of you who are planning to retire soon or are semi-retired or retired now. If you are looking at retiring soon or are semi-retired or retired, please let me know. If I can help you in any way, please do not hesitate to contact me.

In my position, I also look to honor and recognize former MAHPERD members who have passed away. If you know of anyone who should be recognized, please let me know. You can email me at BMcNally.derry@gmail.com. Have a great school year!

Stronger Together

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Ready for a course and a discount?

Bay Path University offers a Master of Science degree in Education. Join us for an enriching skills-based health professional journey toward a Master's that can include a licensure or non-licensure track.

If you already have your Master's but want to update your skills-based health/SEL or physical education/SEL practices, join our online certificate program.

Because MAHPERD and Bay Path University are partners, the best news is that as a MAHPERD member, you get 10% off every course!

Enroll now for a spring 2027 start!

Contact Mary Connolly for more details. maconnolly@baypath.edu

MAHPERD

Student Volunteers!

MAHPERD CONVENTION

NOV. 2 & 3, 2026

DCU CENTER, WORCESTER, MA

Sign up today!

FULL-TIME COLLEGE STUDENTS
Volunteer 2 Hours

COMPLETE FORM BY: **October 21st**

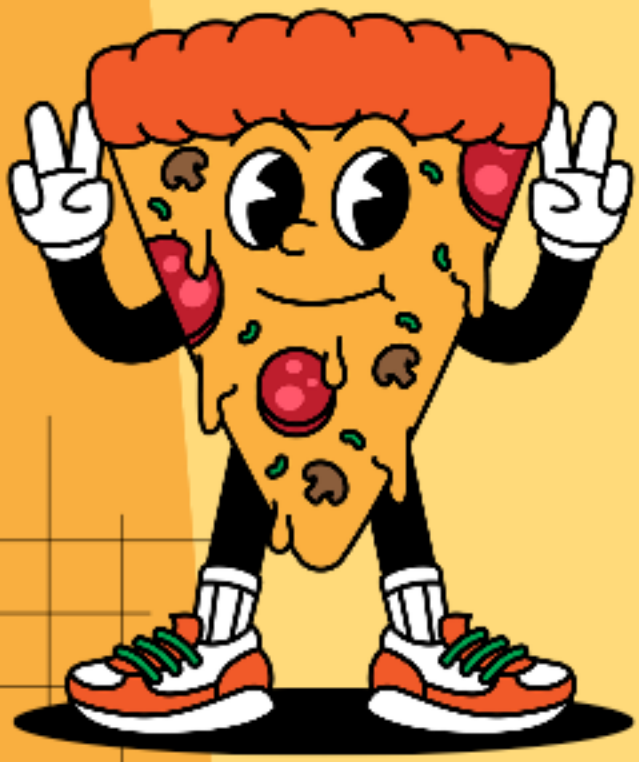
in return for your volunteering time, receive FREE convention registration & 2026-2027 MAHPERD Membership!

Scan QR Code or Link in bio to register!

Council of Future Professionals

It's a PIZZA LUNCH & LEARN

Students are invited to join the MAHPERD Council of Future Professionals for a free lunch and roundtable discussions.



MONDAY, NOVEMBER 2

11:30AM

At the MAHPERD Fall 2026 Convention: DCU Center, Worcester, MA

In between the activity areas

Massachusetts Association for Health, Physical Education, Recreation & Dance

PO Box 182, Attleboro, MA 02703

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Past President - Mitch Finnegan
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VP Adapted Physical Education - Greg Coogan
VP Elect Adapted Physical Education - Courtney Quinn
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