

## Facts on Physical Education

### Did you know...?

- Physical education is mandated for elementary students in 43 states<sup>i</sup>
- 41 states require physical education for junior high/middle school students (up from 40 in 2010)<sup>ii</sup>
- Three states (Montana, West Virginia and Utah) recommend the nationally recognized amount of physical education for junior high/middle school students<sup>iii</sup>
- More than half of all states (28) permit waivers and/or exemptions for students from taking PE<sup>iv</sup>
- Fifty of 51 respondents (including DC) (98%) have their own state standards for physical education, but only 35 states (76%) require local districts to comply or align with these standards.<sup>v</sup>
- More states (26 vs. 14 in 2010) require physical education grades to be included in students' grade point averages.<sup>vi</sup>
- In 2009, the New York City Health Department and Department of Education reported that physical fitness was associated with higher academic achievement among their public school students.<sup>vii</sup>
- A 2010 CDC report analyzed a large body of evidence linking physical education and school-based physical activity with academic performance, including cognitive skills and attitudes, academic behaviors and academic achievement.<sup>viii</sup>

### Why is physical education important?

- Physical education is unique to the school curriculum as the only program that provides students with opportunities to learn motor skills develop fitness and gain understanding about physical activity.<sup>ix</sup>
- Benefits gained from physical activity in physical education class include: disease prevention, safety and injury avoidance, decreased morbidity/premature mortality, and increased mental health.<sup>x</sup>
- The physical education program is the place where students learn about benefits gained from being physically active as well as the skills and knowledge to incorporate safe, satisfying physical activity into their lives.<sup>xi</sup>
- Research suggests participation in a high-activity physical education program may strengthen scores for elementary-age children on standardized tests.<sup>xii</sup>
- Increased time for physical education does not negatively impact achievement in other subjects.<sup>xiii</sup>
- Students who report getting A's and B's in all subjects are more likely to report higher levels of engagement in moderate to vigorous physical activity during physical education class.<sup>xiv</sup>
- Physical education contributes directly to development of physical competence and fitness. It also helps students understand the value of leading a physically active lifestyle.<sup>xv</sup>

### What can schools do to improve physical education?

- Require daily quality physical education taught by a licensed physical education teacher
- Ensure that lessons and teaching strategies are designed to engage students to be moderately to vigorously active for at least 50% of physical education class time
- Implement a physical education program that is based on a written and sequential curriculum that is aligned to the national/state standards for physical education
- Provide professional development opportunities on effective practices
- Ensure all students are assessed in mastery of skills and content in physical education and include results on the report card every term that physical education is required

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- Maintain student/teacher ratio in physical education that is comparable with other classes at all grade levels
- Ensure that physical education credits are not waived for other physical activities
- Deliver physical education classes that are appropriately modified or adapted to promote the participation of all students, in particular students with chronic health conditions and/or special needs
- Conduct annual health-related fitness assessments and utilize results to direct instruction and create individualized plans that include goal-setting and monitoring
- Ensure that physical education instructional strategies and other practices meet the diverse needs and interests of all students
- Utilize the CDC's Physical Education Curriculum Analysis Tool (PECAT) to assess physical education curriculum

## What is the Healthy Schools Program?

- The Healthy Schools Program is an initiative of the Alliance for a Healthier Generation, a partnership between the American Heart Association and the William J. Clinton Foundation.
- The Healthy Schools Program focuses on helping schools:
  - improve the food and beverages during the regular and extended school day
  - increase physical activity
  - improve the quality of health and physical education programs
  - establish wellness programs for school employees
- Participation in the Healthy Schools Program is an excellent way to jump start the implementation of the district wellness policy at your school and to be recognized for your efforts. By joining the program, your school will gain access to best practice tools and resources through telephonic and online support. Examples of support include: online trainings with a cadre of experts, Implementers' Toolkits on a variety of topics, and tangible resources to help with implementation.

The Healthy Schools Program team can help your school every step of the way!

**For more information on Physical Education please contact Dana Roberts at  
[Dana.Roberts@HealthierGeneration.org](mailto:Dana.Roberts@HealthierGeneration.org)**

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<sup>i</sup> Shape of the Nation, (2012). <http://www.aahperd.org/naspe/publications/upload/2012-shape-of-nation-full-report-web.pdf>

<sup>ii</sup> <http://www.aahperd.org/naspe/publications/upload/2012-shape-of-nation-full-report-web.pdf>

<sup>iii</sup> <http://www.aahperd.org/naspe/publications/upload/2012-shape-of-nation-full-report-web.pdf>

<sup>iv</sup> <http://www.aahperd.org/naspe/publications/upload/2012-shape-of-nation-full-report-web.pdf>

<sup>v</sup> <http://www.aahperd.org/naspe/publications/upload/Executive-Summary.pdf>

<sup>vi</sup> <http://www.aahperd.org/naspe/publications/upload/Executive-Summary.pdf>

<sup>vii</sup> *Childhood Obesity is a Serious Concern in New York City*, (2009). Web site:

[www.nyc.gov/html/doh/downloads/pdf/survey/survey-2009fitnessgram.pdf](http://www.nyc.gov/html/doh/downloads/pdf/survey/survey-2009fitnessgram.pdf)

<sup>viii</sup> U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (2010). The association between school-based physical activity, including physical education, and academic performance. Atlanta, GA: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. 2010.

<sup>ix</sup> National Association for Sport and Physical Education. (2001). Position Paper: *Physical Education is Critical to a Complete Education*. Web site: [www.aahperd.org/naspe/pdf\\_files/pos\\_papers/pe\\_critical.pdf](http://www.aahperd.org/naspe/pdf_files/pos_papers/pe_critical.pdf)

<sup>x</sup> [www.aahperd.org/naspe/pdf\\_files/pos\\_papers/pe\\_critical.pdf](http://www.aahperd.org/naspe/pdf_files/pos_papers/pe_critical.pdf)

<sup>xi</sup> [www.aahperd.org/naspe/pdf\\_files/pos\\_papers/pe\\_critical.pdf](http://www.aahperd.org/naspe/pdf_files/pos_papers/pe_critical.pdf)

<sup>xii</sup> American Heart Association. Fact Sheet: *Children's Need for Physical Activity*.

<sup>xiii</sup> Coe D.P., et al. (2006). Effect of physical education and activity levels on academic achievement in children. *Medicine & Science in Sports & Exercise*, 38,1515-19.

<sup>xiv</sup> Centers for Disease Control. (2003). *Unpublished analyses of National Youth Risk Behavior Survey, 2003*.

<sup>xv</sup> [www.aahperd.org/naspe/pdf\\_files/pos\\_papers/pe\\_critical.pdf](http://www.aahperd.org/naspe/pdf_files/pos_papers/pe_critical.pdf)