

# Quality Physical Education



## Objective

- *Increase the quality of physical education programs to support students in being physically active and establishing an active lifestyle into adulthood.*



## Key Messages

**PE is the only sure opportunity for all school-aged children to be physically active and develop knowledge, skills and motivation to engage in physical activity for life.<sup>1</sup>**

- A 2011 national study indicates that less than one-third of high school students participated in at least 60 minutes of physical activity, while 14% reported not engaging in 60 minutes of physical activity of any kind in the week before the study.<sup>2</sup>

- A study of U.S. youth indicates that only 42% of children and 8% of teens engage in moderate- to vigorous-intensity physical activity for at least 60 minutes per day.<sup>3</sup>
- Daily physical education is associated with increased participation in moderate- to vigorous-level physical activity.<sup>4</sup>

**Increased emphasis on testing has resulted in cuts to physical education despite several studies indicating that time spent in school-based physical education has a positive effect (or neutral effect at the very least) on academic achievement.<sup>5</sup>**

- Physical education has been shown to have a positive effect on cognitive skills and attitudes such as attention/concentration, self-esteem, perception of academic competence.<sup>5</sup>
- Several studies have indicated the association between physical education and achievement scores in subjects such as math, reading and language arts.<sup>5</sup>

**All school districts in Minnesota are required to adopt national standards for physical education.**

- In 2010, the Minnesota State Legislature directed the Minnesota Department of Education (MDE) to adopt the National Standards for Physical Education developed by the National Association for Sports and Physical Education (NASPE). Every Minnesota school district was required to adopt these standards and students needed to satisfactorily complete these new standards by the 2012-13 school year.<sup>6</sup> (View the five NASPE standards in the “key resources” section below).
- In addition to the standards, NASPE recommends that schools provide 150 minutes of instructional physical education for elementary school children, and 225 minutes for middle and high school students per week for the entire school year. This minimum level of PE is not mandated in Minnesota.

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## Key Messages (cont'd)

- The Four Components of a High-Quality Physical Education Program are:
  - Opportunity to Learn
  - Appropriate Instruction
  - Meaningful Content
  - Student and Program Assessment
- The Alliance for a Healthier Generation, Healthy Schools Program Framework promotes the NASPE recommendations, and offers a rating system for schools working towards these standards.<sup>7</sup>

Levels	Bronze	Silver	Gold
Elementary	Requires 60 min/week	Requires 90 min/week	Requires 150 min/week
Middle	Requires 90 min/week	Requires 135 min/week	Requires 225 min/week
High	Requires ½ year	Requires 1 year	Requires 1 ½ years



## Key Strategies

- **Require daily quality physical education for all students in grades K-12.** School policy and curriculum should support elementary school students spending an average of 30 minutes per day (150 minutes/week) and middle and high school students an average of 45 minutes per day (225 minutes/week) in PE. At least 50% of this time should be spent engaged in moderate-to-vigorous physical activity.<sup>1</sup>
- **Base physical education instruction on a written and sequential curriculum** that is aligned to national and state standards for physical education.
- **Provide all physical education teachers with annual professional development on effective practices for physical education.**
- **Require all physical education to be taught by licensed physical educators, appropriately trained classroom teachers at the elementary school level, or by licensed or certified physical educators at the middle and high school levels.**
- **Utilize the CDC’s Physical Education Curriculum Analysis Tool (PECAT) to assess physical education curriculum.**
- **Monitor student physical fitness in schools** and include assessment and feedback to individual students and parents on mastery of skills and content in physical education via report cards as well as assessment of school-wide academic achievement related to PE offerings.
- **Adopt and/or strengthen district PE policies.** Require time and activities for PE that aligns with state and national standards.
- **Involve the district wellness committee** in assessing the level and amount of physical activity offered during the school day and advocating for stronger policies and practices.



## Sample Policy Language

“The district will fully comply with state regulations for Physical Education by implementing the National Standards for Physical Education. All necessary preparation will take place so that all students in the district will be able to satisfactorily complete these standards beginning the XX school year.”



## Success Stories

### Sierra Vista Junior High School, Canyon Country, CA

#### Quality, Daily Physical Education: Raising the bar for fitness and academic achievement

Sierra Vista Junior High's physical education (PE) program isn't your usual PE course. They go by the mantra "no child left on their behinds" and they mean it! Their award-winning program, including recognition by the President's Council on Physical Activity/Sports as a Demonstration Center for the Nation, engages students in healthy lifestyles and wellness by teaching them skills to be active for a lifetime. Students have the opportunity to engage in moderate-to-vigorous on a daily basis at Sierra Vista, which has paid off both with improved fitness levels and academic achievement scores over the years. For example, there has been a 94-point increase in the API test score average in the nine years since their new PE program philosophy and structure was implemented. (For more information on the fitness and academic results visit the second link below).

**Watch a brief video on Sierra Vista's PE program in action!** (Video link located on the far right)

<http://www.letsmoveschools.org/what-is-an-active-school#>

**Learn more about the specific features of Sierra Vista's PE program and fitness facility:**

<http://schools.naperville203.org/userfiles/File/George%20Velarde.PE%20program%20at%20Sierra%20Vista%20Jr%20High%20School.pdf>



## Resources for Implementation

- **Physical Education: A Strategy of the Active Schools Minnesota Initiative:**  
<http://education.state.mn.us/MDE/StuSuc/Nutr/PhyActiv/053427>
- **School Physical Education Check List:**  
<http://www.shapeamerica.org/publications/resources/teachingtools/qualitype/upload/School-PE-Program-Checklist-Web-9-14-09.pdf>
- **NASPE National PE Standards (mandated in MN):**  
<http://www.shapeamerica.org/standards/upload/National-Standards-Flyer.pdf>
- **Strategies to Improve the Quality of Physical Education:**  
[http://www.cdc.gov/HealthyYouth/physicalactivity/pdf/quality\\_pe.pdf?source=govdelivery](http://www.cdc.gov/HealthyYouth/physicalactivity/pdf/quality_pe.pdf?source=govdelivery)
- **SPARK PE - Innovative content and strategies to ensure PE is inclusive, fun and active for K-12:**  
<http://www.sparkpe.org/physical-education/>
- **Physical Education Curriculum Analysis Tool (PECAT):** <http://www.cdc.gov/healthyyouth/PECAT/>

#### Sources:

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7. Alliance for a Healthier Generation. (n.d.). *Health schools program framework.* Retrieved online from [https://schools.healthiergeneration.org/\\_asset/1062yk/Healthy-Schools-Program-Framework.pdf%20](https://schools.healthiergeneration.org/_asset/1062yk/Healthy-Schools-Program-Framework.pdf%20)

*Smart Choices is a partnership of the Dakota County Public Health Department and school districts in Dakota County committed to making the healthy choice the easy choice by creating opportunities for healthy eating and physical activity before, during and after school.*

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