

# Educating the Student Body: Taking Physical Activity and Physical Education to School.

## 5 Approaches to Physical Education in Schools

### Key Messages

- Because it is guaranteed to reach virtually all children, physical education is the only sure opportunity for nearly all school-age children to access health-enhancing physical activities.
- High-quality physical education programs are characterized by
  - (1) instruction by certified physical education teachers,
  - (2) a minimum of 150 minutes per week (30 minutes per day) for children in elementary schools and 225 minutes per week (45 minutes per day) for students in middle and high schools, and
  - (3) tangible standards for student achievement and for high school graduation.
- Students are more physically active on days on which they have physical education.
- Quality physical education has strong support from both parents and child health professional organizations.
- Several models and examples demonstrate that physical education scheduled during the school day is feasible on a daily basis.
- Substantial discrepancies exist in state mandates regarding the time allocated for physical education.
- Nearly half of school administrators (44 percent) reported cutting significant time from physical education and recess to increase time spent in reading and mathematics since passage of the No Child Left Behind Act.
- Standardized national-level data on the provision of and participation, performance, and extent of engagement in vigorous- or moderate-intensity physical activity are insufficient to allow assessment of the current status and trends in physical education in the United States.
- Systematic research is needed on personal, curricular, and policy barriers to successful physical education.
- The long-term impact of physical education has been understudied and should be a research priority to support the development of evidence-based policies.

Physical education is a formal content area of study in schools that is standards based and encompasses assessment based on standards and benchmarks. It is defined as “a planned sequential K-12 standards-based program of curricula and instruction designed to develop motor skills, knowledge, and behaviors of healthy active living, physical

fitness, sportsmanship, self-efficacy, and emotional intelligence.” As a school subject, physical education is focused on teaching school-aged children the science and methods of physically active, healthful living ([NASPE, 2012](#)). It is an avenue for engaging in developmentally appropriate physical activities designed for children to develop their fitness, gross motor skills, and health ([Sallis et al., 2003](#); [Robinson and Goodway, 2009](#); [Robinson, 2011](#)).

*\*Note: To read the full article please go to; <http://www.nap.edu/read/18314/chapter/7>*