

Fit, Healthy, and Ready to Learn

**Chapter D:
Policies
to Promote
Physical Activity
and Physical
Education**

NASBE

National Association of
State Boards of Education



Fit, Healthy, and Ready to Learn

A School Health Policy Guide

Chapter D: Policies to Promote Physical Activity and Physical Education

Second Edition

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NASBE

National Association of
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Printed copies of "Policies to Promote Physical Activity and Physical Education" are available for \$16.00 plus \$4.50 shipping and handling from the National Association of State Boards of Education. To order this and other guides in the *Fit, Healthy, and Ready to Learn* series call (800) 220-5183, order online at nasbe.org/nasbe_marketplace/index.php?dispatch=categories.view&category_id=87, or write to NASBE at 2121 Crystal Drive, Suite 350, Arlington, Virginia 22202. Orders under \$50.00 must be prepaid; purchase orders, VISA, and MasterCard are accepted. Volume discounts are available.

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Foreword

Rarely is a policymaker presented with an opportunity to promote a “win-win-win” policy initiative. Encouraging more physical activity and physical education in schools is just such an opportunity.

Consider the following findings, which are detailed later in this chapter:

- providing more opportunities for physical activity for students will help them concentrate better, improve cognitive function, and have positive effects on their academic performance;
- more time in the school day spent on high-quality physical education (PE) provides students essential knowledge, skills, and attitudes for a lifetime of physical activity;
- the health benefits of lifelong physical activity will help contain health care costs in the long term—costs that continue to consume a growing proportion of resources of families, businesses, and all levels of government;
- where it is possible, establishing safe routes for students to walk and bike to school reduces unnecessary road trips, energy consumption, and air pollution emissions; and
- providing a range of opportunities for enjoyable physical activity after school promotes positive social skills and reduces opportunities for students to engage in undesirable behaviors.

When *Fit, Healthy, and Ready to Learn: A School Health Policy Guide* was first published in 2000, there was little public awareness or sense of urgency about the nation’s steadily rising rates of overweight and obesity. Since then, the issue has exploded into the public’s consciousness through widespread media attention and the dire warn-

ings of health groups, politicians, and government agencies. Policy changes to promote healthy eating at school have been adopted with amazing rapidity. In recent years, for example, more than a dozen states have adopted strict nutrition standards for all foods and beverages available on school grounds. But the rapid progress on nutrition policy has not been matched with policy changes to promote physical activity at school. In 2000, Illinois was the only state to mandate daily physical education in every grade, K–12. Today, Illinois is still the only state to mandate daily PE for all students, and even there many waivers and exemptions are allowed.

As with the original edition, the primary audiences of this updated and expanded edition of *Policies to Promote Physical Activity and Physical Education* are state and local education policymakers and administrators. Secondary audiences are advocates who work to influence education decision-makers. The publication includes current scientific findings and refers readers to new and valuable sources of information and assistance. The evidence-based model policies at the heart of the original chapter have needed only minor refinements; the policy solutions identified in 2000 generally remain valid today, while additional evidence has accumulated as to their value and effectiveness.

NASBE has long recognized that education and health are inextricably intertwined. We will continue our mission to draw the attention of education policymakers to every proven strategy that supports high student achievement, educational equity, and lifelong health and success. A comprehensive school-based physical education and activity program is one such strategy.

Let’s all perform a policy “slam dunk” for our kids.

Jim Kohlmoos
Executive Director
National Association of State Boards of Education

School-Based Physical Activity Is a Long American Tradition

“Give about two [hours] every day to exercise; for health must not be sacrificed to learning. A strong body makes the mind strong.”

— Thomas Jefferson¹

Executive Summary

An active lifestyle is essential to health, well-being, and the enjoyment of life at every age. As U.S. Secretary of Education Arne Duncan said, “We as educators need to do everything we can to ensure kids have a wide range of options when it comes to physical fitness and nutrition at school. Bad choices during the school day can quickly lead to bad habits and burdensome health problems, making it difficult for students to succeed.”²

Schools can and do play a powerful role in shaping students’ lifelong physical activity behaviors. An invigorating, high-quality physical education program provides students the knowledge, motivation, and skills needed for lifelong physical activity and is the cornerstone of a comprehensive policy for school-based physical activity.³ Education leaders can also promote other opportunities for students to be physically active by scheduling daily recess periods, making it easier for students (and staff members) to walk or bike to school, and offering numerous opportunities to participate in after-school intramural programs, interscholastic athletics, and other school-sponsored or community-based sports and recreation programs.

The federal government’s 2008 Physical Activity Guidelines for Americans recommends that all children and youth need to participate in 60 minutes or more of moderate to vigorous physical activity every day.⁴ Multiple opportunities before, during, and after school

exist to enable young people to accumulate at least 60 minutes of physical activity on most days. The Institute of Medicine recommends that schools at every level should aim to provide students with at least half of the total, or 30 minutes of moderate-to-vigorous physical activity every school day.⁵

This extensively revised chapter of *Fit, Healthy, and Ready to Learn* provides guidance on developing a multifaceted set of policies aimed at establishing comprehensive school-based physical activity opportunities that promote lifelong habits of physical activity among children, adolescents, and school staff. The model policies included here are intended to address all aspects of the school setting that influence a young person’s physical activity patterns. Recent research findings and high-quality resources are available to assist in the development of policies and implementation of programs.

How This Guide Is Organized

Following an introduction (“An Issue for Education Leaders”), each of the subsequent sections features model policy language based on scientific evidence and best practices. States, territories, tribes, school districts, and schools may wish to adopt an overarching, integrated policy as presented in section 2. Alternatively, more detailed policies on specific topics are presented in sections 3 through 7. At the end of each section is a brief list of selected resources.

1. An Issue for School Leaders

Our nation's obesity rate is staggering—and this should be of great concern to our nation. Students should be able to engage in meaningful physical activity. However, we also need to teach students about good health habits: there is the action side, and then there is the learning side of the issue.

— Zahn Okuda-Lim,
Student Member, Nevada State Board of Education

The 2008 Physical Activity Guidelines for Americans recommend that children and youth participate in 60 minutes or more of physical activity every day.⁶ Yet results of national surveys that have examined physical activity among U.S. children and adolescents have found that a substantial proportion of them are not sufficiently active to achieve health benefits;⁷ in 2007, for example, 81.6 percent of high school students did not meet the recommendation.⁸ Another national study measured physical activity in children and youth and found that 42 percent of children ages 6-11 met the recommendation; but as the students became adolescents, their activity levels dropped dramatically, with just 12 percent of male and 3 percent of female adolescents achieving the recommendations (and with almost no time spent in vigorous physical activity).⁹

In this section:

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Schools can help foster lifelong physical activity habits and improve the health of young people by providing quality instruction, programs, and services that promote enjoyable, lifelong physical activity. Multiple opportunities exist before, during, and after school to enable young people to accumulate at least 60 minutes of physical activity on most days. The Institute of Medicine (IOM) recommends that schools provide students with at least half of the recommended amount, or at least 30 minutes of moderate-to-vigorous physical activity every day.¹⁰

The Physical Activity Guidelines for Americans¹¹

In 2008, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services issued its first-ever physical activity guidelines for Americans, including school-age children and youth. The Guidelines recommend that all “children and adolescents should do 60 minutes (1 hour) or more of physical activity daily.” It is important that the activities are enjoyable and varied. Over the course of the week, opportunities for physical activity should include:

Moderate-to-vigorous physical activity that is aerobic: Most of the daily 60 or more minutes should be either moderate- or vigorous-intensity aerobic activity, and three days per week should include vigorous-intensity activity. These activities involve large muscle movement. For example: walking, running, skipping, rollerblading, fast dancing, swimming, etc.

Muscle strengthening physical activity: At least three days per week, part of their daily 60 or more minutes of physical activity should include muscle strengthening activity. These activities would require more effort from muscles than regular, daily activities. Examples include climbing on monkey bars, using resistance bands, weight lifting (supervised), or doing push-ups and sit-ups.

Bone strengthening physical activity: At least three days per week, part of their daily 60 or more minutes should include bone strengthening activity. These activities provide more impact on bones. Examples include running, playing basketball or tennis, jumping rope, playing hopscotch, or doing gymnastics.

Health Benefits of Lifelong Physical Activity

The scientific evidence supporting physical activity’s role in maintaining health and improving well-being has been extensively documented.¹² Regular physical activity offers young people many health benefits, including:

- improved aerobic endurance and muscular strength;
- better weight control, increased lean muscle mass, and reduced fat mass;
- greater bone mass, which may help prevent osteoporosis in adulthood, particularly among women;
- healthier joint growth and maintenance;
- prevention or delayed development of high blood pressure;
- reduced blood pressure in some adolescents with hypertension; and

- favorable effects on blood lipid profiles and blood sugar.

As children grow into adults, the long-term health consequences of an inactive lifestyle are serious. Physical inactivity increases the risk of dying prematurely, dying of heart disease, and developing diabetes, colon cancer, and high blood pressure.¹³ Some studies have found that physically inactive people are almost twice as likely to develop coronary heart disease as people who engage in regular physical activity.¹⁴ A CDC study determined that 15 percent of all U.S. deaths in 2000 could be attributed to poor diet and activity patterns; only tobacco use contributed to more deaths.¹⁵

A growing body of evidence suggests that a healthy and physically active student is more likely to be academically motivated, alert, and successful.¹⁶ A national study of more than 5,300 elementary school students found a small but significant benefit on both math and reading tests among girls who spent the highest amount of time in physical education (PE) compared with girls who spent the least

Exercise: “Miracle-Gro for the Brain”

While the exact mechanisms are not yet known to explain the beneficial effects of exercise on the brain, scientists say that an increase in brain growth factors and neurotransmitters during physical activity, especially aerobic exercise, may play a role.

Harvard psychiatrist John J. Ratey calls these growth factors “Miracle-Gro for the brain” because of their role in the birth and survival of new brain cells. “We don’t know why these neurotransmitters increase during exercise,” says Dr. Ratey, “but we suspect it has to do with increased blood flow to the brain during physical activity. This blood flow causes the brain to release an increased amount of neurotransmitters, increasing things like our attention and focusing power.”

In younger populations, studies have shown that voluntary running boosts the growth of new nerve cells in the brain and helps improve learning and memory. Dr. Ratey says exercising for at least 20 minutes a day can lead to increased mental abilities among schoolchildren.

From “On the Brain”: *The Harvard Mahoney Neuroscience Institute Letter*¹⁷

amount of time in PE.^{*18} Other studies demonstrate important increases in positive classroom behavior and cognitive function, including concentration and memory, when physical activity is offered over the course of the school day through activities such as recess and short physical activity breaks.¹⁹

Current Trends in Student Physical Activity

A 2002 nationwide survey found that a large majority (62 percent) of children aged 9–13 years did not participate in organized physical activity during their non-school hours in the week preceding the survey.²⁰ Even more seriously, nearly a quarter (23 percent) reported that they did not engage in any free-time physical activity, either. African-American and Hispanic children reported less physical activity than white children.

At the high school level, fewer than one-quarter (24.8 percent) of all young men and just more than one-tenth (11.4 percent) of all young women participate in the recommended minimum of 60 minutes per day of physical activity (fig. 1 on page 12).²¹ High school

Students need to learn how to exercise in school so they can continue to exercise and be healthy for their entire lives. In order to learn their best, kids also need to be physically fit.

— Andrea Levinsky,
Student Board Member, Maine State
Board of Education

students of color, particularly young women, are less likely to be active than their white peers: nearly four out of five African-American and Hispanic females do not meet the recommendation.

The proportion of students who meet recommended levels of physical activity decreases through each high school grade.²² Some students are almost completely sedentary;

*Throughout this document, physical education is often abbreviated as “PE.” This is a conscious editorial decision intended to help the reader differentiate between physical education and physical activity, terms that are easy to confuse but which have a crucial distinction.

in 2005, 8 percent of young men and 11 percent of young women reported not participating in any vigorous—or even moderate—physical activity.²³

These findings emphasize the critical role schools play in providing safe and convenient opportunities for enjoyable physical activity. Students are not likely to seek out and obtain the necessary amount of physical activity on their own.²⁴

Status of School-Based Physical Activity

In the school environment, the 2006 School Health Policies and Programs Study (SHPPS) found that when it comes to providing opportunities for physical activity in the school setting, there is much room for improvement.²⁵ Following a rapid decline of the number of students participating in daily PE at the high school level in the early 1990s, participation has since remained low, with less than one-third of students reporting participation in daily PE (fig. 2).²⁶ Over-

all, 79 percent of schools require students to participate in some physical education. But these requirements usually do not apply to all grades, so in reality PE is offered variably across the grade spectrum. For example, 50 percent of kindergarteners and just 20 percent of 12th graders have required physical education classes.

When it comes to recess and other physical activity breaks, a 2010 NASBE report examining obesity prevention policies found that recess is required in only 12 percent of states and 57 percent of districts, and that no state policy exists to support physical activity breaks for high school students.²⁷ While local policies exist to support physical activity breaks, at the high school level only 4 percent of districts require, and another 9 percent recommend, this policy to support greater integrated physical activity throughout the day.

With ongoing efforts to improve scores on high-stakes tests in selected subject areas, especially reading and math,

School-Based Physical Activity and Academic Performance²⁸

A report from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, *The Association Between School-Based Physical Activity, Including Physical Education, and Academic Performance*, analyzes the results of studies connecting academic performance to school-based physical activity. Overall, the results show that physical activity offered throughout the school day supports student learning. As education policymakers are creating high-performance school systems, physical activity must be considered a necessary component.

Physical education: Devoting time to physical education may have a positive relationship to academic achievement or may not negatively affect it. There are also favorable associations with cognitive skills and attitudes.

Physical activity breaks and activity offered throughout the day: Offering breaks for physical activity may be associated with decreases in classroom misbehavior, increases in cognitive functioning including memory and concentration, and academic achievement.

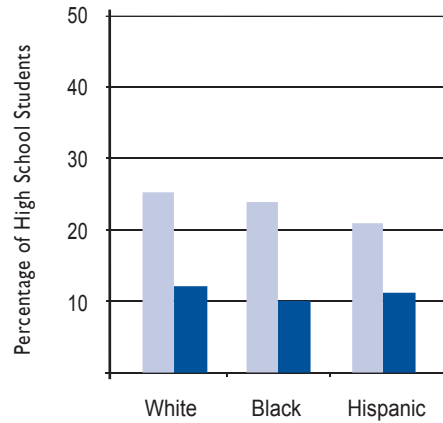
Recess: Offering students recess has been associated with improved cognitive skills such as time on task, attitudes, and academic behavior. One study found that overall classroom behavior was better for students who had at least 15 minutes of recess every day.

Extracurricular activities: Providing extracurricular activities like intramural sports, interscholastic sports, and other physical activity outside of regular school time was found to have a positive association with academic performance, including higher grades and grade points averages, as well as lower high school dropout rates.

Figure 1.

Percentage of High School Students Who Met Recommended Levels of Physical Activity,* 2009

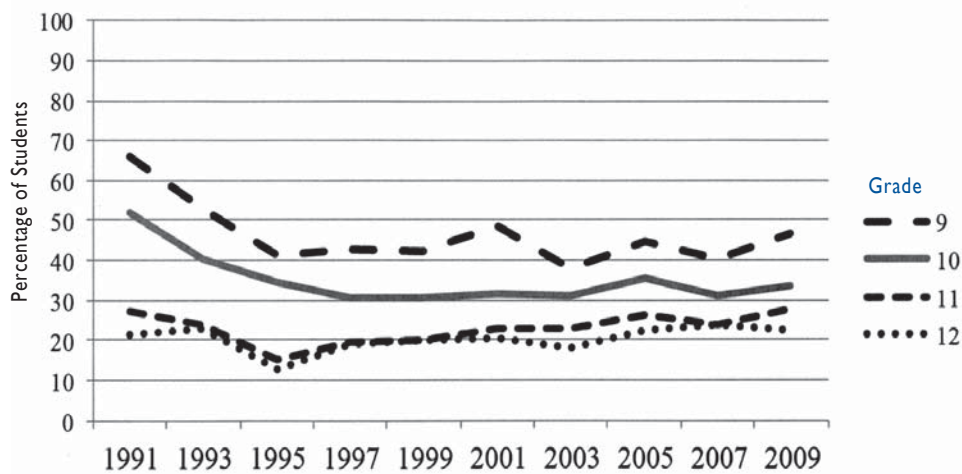
■ Male
■ Female



Source: CDC²⁹

*Were physically active doing any kind of physical activity that increased their heart rate and made them breathe hard some of the time for a total of at least 60 minutes/day on all seven of the seven days preceding the survey.

Figure 2. Percentage of U.S. High School Students Who Attended Physical Education (PE) Classes Five Days in an Average School Week, by Grade, 1991-2009



Source: CDC³⁰

We Do Not Have to Make These Hard Choices

The problem, in stark terms, is that some leaders in education believe they have to choose between meeting local, state, and federal standards and the health of the children. We hear conversations about cutting time for health, physical education, and physical activity. We even hear discussions about reducing graduation requirements that are dedicated to physical education. We hear conversations about budget reductions for health and physical education, about redirecting funds to core subjects. In the process, people with very good intentions risk shortchanging youngsters in very significant ways.

I believe that the health crisis we are contemplating...is not unrelated to the issue of high-stakes accountability in our schools. I will argue that we do not have to make these hard choices. I honestly believe that we can have it all.

— Dr. Michael Ward, former North Carolina State Superintendent of Public Instruction³³

competition for class time devoted to non-tested areas has become intense. Yet as educators and policymakers focus on leaving no child behind academically, some state board of education members are wondering if “schools are inadvertently leaving half of the child’s education behind.”³¹

What Education Leaders Can Do

“All schools should...promote the building of lifelong regular physical activity.”

— Public Education Position of the National Association of State Boards of Education

Education decisionmakers have an important leadership role to play in promoting a broad view of academic success: one that prepares students for a healthy, satisfying, and productive adult life in which regular physical activity is a valued part. As educators work to ensure students have the skills and dispositions needed for lifelong learning, physical education, recess, sports programs, and other opportunities for physical activity at school should not be viewed as optional frills, but as vital components of a complete education.³²

High-profile education policymakers and administrators at all levels can be vocal cheerleaders for the truth that an active lifestyle at every age is essential to health, well-being, and the enjoyment of life. Following are some of the actions policymakers can take to promote physical education and physical activity within the education system:

- establish strong policies as recommended in this policy guide, whether an integrated policy as presented in the next section or topic-specific policies as detailed in sections 3 through 7;
- use evidence-based, best practice programs to support implementation of current and newly developed physical activity and physical education policies;
- periodically visit exemplary programs during the school day to observe skill-building activities in progress and encourage students and teachers (such visits are good opportunities to attract local media attention); and
- personally model healthy active lifestyles.

In the larger community, where education leaders are respected and viewed as advocates of children, policymakers can actively promote complementary laws, policies, practices, and programs that encourage physical activity for all people in their homes, neighborhoods, schools, and workplaces.³⁴ Following are some policy and program actions that school and community leaders can usefully work together to promote:

- revising state and local land use plans, zoning designations, and transportation designs to facilitate increased walking and biking for routine and safe trips near home, school, and work;
- increasing the availability and accessibility of recreational opportunities through joint use agreements, such as sharing tennis and basketball courts; swimming pools; bicycle, hiking, fitness, and nature paths; skateboard parks; and other places for people of all ages to be active; and
- conducting integrated school/community health education campaigns and health fairs, particularly focusing on sedentary, minority, and other at-risk populations.

Selected Resources for Statistics, General Information, and Policy Advocacy

- Your state or local departments of education, public health, and/or recreation should have data to assist in program planning and other valuable resources.
- Check with your local, state, and national-level professional associations on policy advocacy activities and coalitions with which you can become involved.
- CDC's Division of Adolescent and School Health (DASH) maintains a website that links to a large number of valuable resources at www.cdc.gov/HealthyYouth/PhysicalActivity, including the Guidelines for School and Community Programs to Promote Lifelong Physical Activity Among Young People. DASH administers the Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS) each odd-

"A Community Responsibility"

Many people believe that dealing with overweight and obesity is a personal responsibility. To some degree they are right, but it is also a community responsibility. When there are no safe, accessible places for children to play or adults to walk, jog, or ride a bike, that is a community responsibility. When school lunchrooms or office cafeterias do not provide healthy and appealing food choices, that is a community responsibility. When we do not require daily physical education in our schools, that is also a community responsibility. There is much that we can and should do together.

— David Satcher,
Former U.S. Surgeon General³⁵

numbered year to collect data on behaviors of high school students nationally and in most states, including physical activity and other health-related trends over time. Every six years DASH also administers the School Health Policies and Program Survey (SHPPS) at the state, district, and school levels. Visit www.cdc.gov/HealthyYouth for summary fact sheets and full results of these important sources of data.

- CDC's Division of Nutrition, Physical Activity, and Obesity (DNPAO) does extensive research on nutrition and physical activity and works to inform policymakers and the public about critical issues related to obesity. Visit www.cdc.gov/nccdphp/dnpa.
- The U.S. Surgeon General's landmark 1996 report, *Physical Activity and Health*, summarizes the findings of scientific research and makes specific policy and

program recommendations. The document is available at www.cdc.gov/nccdphp/sgr/contents.htm.

- The President’s Council on Fitness, Sports, and Nutrition advises the U.S. President about programs to promote regular physical activity for the health of all Americans. Visit www.fitness.gov.
- The U.S. Departments of Health and Human Services (HHS) and Agriculture (USDA) jointly publish the Dietary Guidelines for Americans (DGA) every five years, available at www.healthierus.gov/dietaryguidelines. DGA 2010 provides authoritative advice for people on how good dietary habits and a physically active lifestyle can promote health and reduce risk for major chronic diseases. HHS has also developed the 2008 Physical Activity Guidelines for Americans. For more information, visit www.health.gov/PAGuidelines.
- The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation (RWJF) publishes numerous health-related materials, including a weekly news digest that features childhood obesity—sign up to receive it at www.rwjf.org. The RWJF Center to Prevent Childhood Obesity is the coordinating center for all RWJF efforts on this topic. They have valuable reports and tools to support policymaking and policy implementation efforts at www.rwjf.org/childhoodobesity/?cid=xdr_rco_001.
- The American Heart Association (AHA) and RWJF jointly produced *A Nation at Risk: Obesity in the United States—A Statistical Sourcebook*, which shows how prevalent obesity has become and examines the factors that contribute to it. It is available online at www.rwjf.org/files/publications/other/AH_NationAtRisk.pdf.
- Action for Healthy Kids (AFHK) hosts a clearinghouse of state and local resources used to support and change the nutrition and physical activity environment in school. Their materials can be accessed at www.actionforhealthykids.org.
- Alliance for a Healthier Generation provides technical assistance and resources to support physical activity and physical education to school districts across the nation. Resources and support can be found at www.healthiergeneration.org.
- The Council of State Governments (CSG) produces a variety of publications addressing important public health issues, including physical activity among youth. Visit knowledgecenter.csg.org/drupal/content/childhood-obesity.
- The National Conference of State Legislatures (NCSL) maintains health resources web pages that contain constantly updated legislative and policy resources regarding children and adolescents at www.ncsl.org/programs/health/health.htm.
- The Trust for America’s Health produced *F as in Fat: How Obesity Threatens America’s Future 2012*, which examines each state’s obesity rates and related health statistics and is periodically updated. Visit www.healthyamericans.org.

NOTE: The organizations included as resources in this guide offer a broad range of assistance, have a national scope, are easily accessed, have materials available at either low or no cost, and/or offer specialized expertise. The lists are not exhaustive. Scores of other organizations provide high-quality assistance and advice to educators; in addition, hundreds of informative books and articles are available. Consider the resources listed here as starting points only.

All Internet sites listed in this publication were accessed during January 2012 to check for accuracy and ensure the links were live at that point in time.

- The American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) periodically releases policy statements, reports, and parent handouts that synthesize credible research findings and represent the current scientific and medical consensus on key child health issues. These resources are found at aappolicy.aappublications.org. Related policy statements include the following:
 - Active Healthy Living: Prevention of Childhood Obesity through Increased Physical Activity (2006);
 - Physical Fitness and Activity in Schools (2000, revised 2006);
 - Prevention of Pediatric Overweight and Obesity (2003, reaffirmed 2007); and
- Organized Sports for Children and Preadolescents (2001).
- The National Coalition for Promoting Physical Activity (NCPA) is a broad advocacy group of agencies, organizations, and industry representatives that addresses issues pertaining to physical activity, including education, health, science, environments, population-specific outreach, and activity behavior. Visit www.ncppa.org.
- PE4LIFE, a policy advocacy organization largely sponsored by the sports equipment industry, has produced a Community Action Kit, a video/CD-ROM package of ready-to-use presentations and information that make the case for quality physical education. Visit www.pe4life.org.

Meta-analysis Links Physical Activity with Academic Performance

“According to the best-evidence synthesis, we found strong evidence of a significant positive relationship between physical activity and academic performance. The findings of one high-quality intervention study and one high-quality observational study suggest that being more physically active is positively related to improved academic performance in children.”

— Angelika Singh et al., “Physical Activity and Performance at School: A Systematic Review of the Literature Including a Methodological Quality Assessment,” *Archives of Pediatrics and Adolescent Medicine*, Vol. 166, No. 1 (January 2012)

2. An Integrated Policy to Promote Comprehensive School-Based Physical Activity

The overall learning climate of every school should consistently promote a “culture of physical activity” so students look forward to physical education, recess, activity breaks, and after-school physical activities as fun and important parts of their day. All aspects of the education environment need to be conducive to making physical activity a natural, convenient, and frequent choice for students and staff alike.

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Developing an Integrated Policy

The list of resources at the end of this section highlights a number of tools that provide valuable guidance on policy development. Particularly useful is the CDC’s *School Health Index: A Self-Assessment and Planning Guide*, which enables schools to identify the strengths and weaknesses of their current policies and practices and develop a practical improvement action plan.³⁶ Also, refer to Chapter B: of NASBE’s *Fit, Healthy, and Ready to Learn* series, “The Art of Policymaking,” which describes basic tasks

that need to be accomplished to move from good intentions to policy adoption and effective implementation.

Effective policy initiatives often involve collaborating with a coalition of proponents with a stake in the outcome. Community recreation, public health, juvenile justice, and public housing agencies might be glad to participate in the development of coordinated efforts. Youth-serving organizations with expertise at implementing positive youth development initiatives can also be effective partners, such as YMCA, YWCA, Scouting, Girls Inc., Boys and Girls Clubs, fraternal organizations, and faith-based institutions.

Foundation Policies

Before adopting any new physical activity policy, whether at the state, school district, tribal, or school level, the current set of school health “foundation policies” should be critically assessed for quality and completeness. Policy advocates could decide to initially focus on strengthening these foundations and filling gaps, as discussed in chapters A through C of *Fit, Healthy, and Ready to Learn*, Vol. 1. Foundation policies include the following:

- a vision statement, which expresses an educational philosophy that includes addressing students’ overall mental, social, and physical growth and development and recognizes that the schools share a responsibility for protecting health and fostering students’ lifelong health behaviors (addressed in Chapter A: “Education and Health Goals”);
- policy development procedures and rules that define the necessary participants in the policymaking process and establish a fair and open process with protocols, timelines, and means for involving the public (addressed in Chapter B: “The Art of Policymaking”);
- a coordinated school health program policy that establishes an overall framework of eight school health components as recommended by CDC and many other organizations (addressed in Chapter C: “School Health Foundation Policies”);
- a school health council policy that establishes a standing coordinating body composed of family members, community representatives, and education staff to oversee the development, operation, and evaluation of all aspects of the school health program (Chapter C);
- requirements for a PK–12 health education program that promotes lifelong physical activity (Chapter C); and
- a staff health promotion program designed to motivate all staff members to adopt personal prevention behaviors (Chapter C).

A policy to require PE and other school-based physical activity can be adopted at the state, territorial, tribal, school district, or school level—or all of these levels—depending on the education governance system. A policy may be short and concise or long and detailed. Some jurisdictions prefer to adopt brief goals statements as policies and then develop separate guidance documents containing more detailed instructions for implementation. To assist with policy development, model language for an integrated policy to promote PE and physical activity is provided at the end of this section.

Leveraging Local School Wellness Policies

Every school district that participates in federal school meals programs is required to have a local school wellness policy that includes physical activity goals.³⁷ Congress intended this mandate to stimulate ongoing discussions at the local level on ways to help students establish healthy physical activity and eating behaviors while at school.

The local wellness policies have brought positive attention to physical activity policymaking at the local and state levels. In an analysis of local wellness policies across the nation, more than 86 percent of students were enrolled in districts with physical activity policy goals written into their local wellness policies.³⁸ However, the local wellness policies generally do not meet national recommendations or lack strength to support strong implementation. Less than 10 percent of students were in districts with policies requiring opportunities for physical activity to be provided throughout the school day, approximately 18 percent were in districts with required daily recess for all elementary school students, and while most districts (87 percent) had policies requiring physical education, less than 4 percent re-

Engaging Local Boards of Education

“A successful engagement requires that you develop a meaningful relationship before requesting action or resources. Team members should take time to get to know the targeted school board and its key members, researching their past positions on relevant issues and identifying their most pressing priorities. Provide several realistic options as to how the board might strengthen its support for school wellness over time.

“When engaging school board members, begin by identifying areas of mutual agreement about wellness issues, and then work toward a specific plan. Given the financial pressures facing many boards, consider an initiative that would require little or no funding to implement. And remember that timing is very important when planning your engagement strategy. Pay attention to the news, attend (or watch on television, if possible) school board meetings, and read recent board minutes to evaluate the climate, and then determine the best time to move forward.”

*Action for Healthy Kids*³⁹

quired a minimum amount of time for physical education weekly, and less than 7 percent required at least half of class time to include moderate-to-vigorous activity.⁴⁰ Building and improving on this foundation is one important way to achieve greater physical activity for children.

Policy Implementation and Accountability

Adopting sound policy is just a start. A new policy is more likely to be smoothly implemented and consistently enforced if it receives strong administrative support and if all staff members are oriented to the policy and the rationale behind it. These leadership actions can convey the importance of the initiative to staff and encourage them to incorporate healthy lifestyle messages in their interactions with students.

An excellent policy may fade away unnoticed unless the responsibility for its implementation is clearly placed and mechanisms are established to ensure ongoing accountability. At every level, either the policy itself or administrative directives need to clearly state who is in charge of ensuring that the spirit and specific provisions of the policy are implemented with fidelity.

CDC recommends that state education and health departments work together and that each state employ a full-

time coordinator for school physical activity programs.⁴¹ At the local level, a person in the district central office and each school building can be given responsibility for coordinating the various aspects of an integrated policy. This could be a physical education coordinator, school health coordinator, school nurse, principal, or other appropriate staff person.

A school health advisory council, school improvement team, or similar representative committee is a logical choice for overseeing and evaluating the impact of an integrated policy (see Chapter C: “School Health Foundation Policies”). Such a committee can meet regularly to assess needs; consider and respond to student, family, or community suggestions and concerns; discuss implementation progress, challenges, and enforcement strategies; and oversee evaluation of policies, programs, and services. The committee can, in turn, prepare reports to the school board and the community on implementation challenges and recommendations for policy improvement.

The model policy beginning on page 21 is suggested by the research findings and best practices discussed throughout this chapter. Keep in mind that what is reasonable, feasible, and acceptable in any given jurisdiction depends on local resources, community attitudes and priorities, and the results of the policymaking process.

State Policy Examples: Establishing School Accountability for Physical Activity and PE

Policy researchers have noted that state physical education requirements are often poorly enforced. Accountability may be best assured if PE and physical activity policies are integrated within the general education accountability system, which typically consists of some combination of reporting, strategic planning, periodic state inspections, and state accreditation procedures. A recent analysis by NASBE of state-level strategies to support local implementation of school wellness policies found that three states—Arkansas, Rhode Island, and South Carolina—have integrated physical activity goals into their general education accountability systems.⁴³ Each state does it differently, in line with their different accountability strategies:

Arkansas' Act 1220 of 2003 requires each school district to 1) establish a Nutrition and Physical Activity Committee to advise the school board; 2) administer CDC's *School Health Index: A Self-Assessment and Planning Guide*; 3) measure each student's body-mass index (BMI) and send parents/guardians a confidential Child Health Report that contains results and guidance; 4) develop a district Wellness Priority Plan that includes physical activity goal statements, benchmarks, interventions, and planned actions; and 5) incorporate physical activity goals and objectives into the annual Consolidated School Improvement Plans submitted to the state.⁴⁴

Rhode Island Public Law (section 16-21-28 of Chapter 16-21 of the General Laws entitled "Health and Safety of Pupils," 2005)⁴⁵ requires each school district to establish a Coordinated School Health and Wellness Subcommittee to implement school physical activity and nutrition policies and plans. In addition, section 16-7.1-2 (2005)⁴⁶ requires that "All [district] strategic plans...include strategies to decrease obesity and improve the health and wellness of students and employees through nutrition, physical activity, health education, and physical education."

South Carolina Code 59-10-330 (2005) requires each school district to establish and maintain a Coordinated School Health Advisory Council, which is required to assess, plan, implement, and monitor district and school health policies and programs. Districts must collaborate with the Council to develop a school health improvement plan to be included in the five-year strategic improvement plan required of every district.⁴⁷

Model Policy: Integrated Policy to Promote Physical Activity and Physical Education

Note: Users will need to adapt this model policy to fit their unique education governance structure and established policy format, particularly the phrases in italics.

GOALS. An active lifestyle at every age is essential to health, well-being, and the enjoyment of life. Every student shall develop the knowledge and skills necessary to perform a variety of physical activities, regularly participate in physical activity, understand the short- and long-term benefits of physical activity, and value and enjoy physical activity as an ongoing part of a healthy lifestyle.

RATIONALE. All schools need to promote physically active lifestyles among young people for the following reasons:

- through its positive effects on concentration, attention, mood, anxiety and stress, physical activity can help increase students' capacity for learning;
- the evidence is compelling that regular physical activity could improve academic performance;
- physical activity has substantial health benefits for children and adolescents, including favorable effects on endurance capacity, muscular strength, body weight, and blood pressure;
- regular physical activity reduces the risk of premature death in general and of heart disease, high blood pressure, colon cancer, diabetes, and osteoporosis in particular; and
- positive experiences with physical activity at a young age help lay the basis for a person to become physically active throughout life.

INTEGRATED POLICY. With guidance from the *school health advisory council*, each *school/district/school* shall develop and implement a multifaceted, integrated policy to encourage physical activity that incorporates the following components:

1. at least half of a students' recommended daily physical activity shall be provided daily in grades PK-12;
2. a sequential program of physical education for all students on a daily basis in grades PK-12 (150 min/week for elementary and 225 min/week for secondary) that a) provides at least 50 percent of time devoted to moderate-to-vigorous physical activity; b) teaches knowledge, motor skills, goal-setting, self-management skills, and positive attitudes; c) promotes activities and sports that students enjoy and can pursue throughout their lives; d) is taught by qualified, well-prepared, and well-supported physical education specialists; and e) is coordinated with the health education curriculum;

3. adapted physical education lessons for students with disabilities or chronic health conditions;
4. a sequential program of PK–12 health education that reinforces the knowledge and self-management skills needed to maintain a physically active lifestyle, maintain a healthy weight, and reduce time spent being sedentary;
5. collaboration with community planning and public safety agencies to establish safe routes for walking and biking to schools and promote active commuting by students and staff members;
6. daily periods of supervised recess (either outdoor or indoor) in elementary schools that may not be denied for disciplinary reasons or to make up lessons;
7. daily periods of physical activity breaks incorporated throughout the day for all grades that may not be denied for disciplinary reasons or to make up lessons;
8. opportunities and encouragement for students to participate in before- and after-school physical activity programs, including activity clubs, intramural sports, and interscholastic athletics, that equitably serve the needs and interests of all students;
9. coordinated school and community recreation activities at times when school is not in session;
10. opportunities and encouragement for staff members to be physically active;
11. strategies to encourage students' families to support their children's participation in physical activity and to be involved in program development and implementation;
12. designation of one or more persons charged with operational responsibility for policy implementation; and
13. a plan to measure policy implementation fidelity and policy effectiveness.

EFFECTIVE DATE. Each district/school shall submit its integrated physical activity policy to whom by date. The policy shall be implemented by date. The policy shall be reviewed and updated every number of years thereafter.

REPORT TO THE COMMUNITY. At the end of each school year, the physical education coordinator/school health program coordinator/other shall submit an annual report to the school health advisory council/board of education on the implementation and effectiveness of the physical activity policy with recommendations for improvement. The report shall be posted on the Internet for easy public access.

[POLICY DEFINITIONS. Optional: Many state and local policies incorporate definitions of key terms.]

ACTIVE COMMUTING: Modes of transportation to and from school that involve physical activity, including walking, biking, skating, and rollerblading.

ADAPTED PHYSICAL EDUCATION: Physical education programs that include guidance on how to appropriately modify physical activities, equipment, and assessments for students with a disability or chronic health condition in ways that provide them with the same instruction and opportunity to develop skills that other students receive.

EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES: School-sponsored voluntary programs that supplement regular education and contribute to the educational objectives of the school.

INTERSCHOLASTIC ATHLETICS: Organized and coached individual and team sports that involve competition between schools according to rules established by _____.

INTRAMURAL SPORTS: Organized, supervised sports programs of within-school teams that provide opportunities for all students to participate.

MODERATE PHYSICAL ACTIVITY: Physical exertion that is equivalent in intensity to brisk walking.

PHYSICAL ACTIVITY BREAKS: Opportunities for physical activity provided briefly throughout the day such as during morning or afternoon announcements, integrating physical activity and movement during math, science, or reading classes, etc.

PHYSICAL ACTIVITY CLUBS: Organized or informal groups of students or staff who wish to pursue shared interests in non-competitive physical activities such as yoga, dance, aerobics, martial arts, weightlifting, or active “exergames.”

PHYSICAL EDUCATION: A planned, sequential PK–12 program of curricula and instruction that helps students develop the knowledge, attitudes, motor skills, self-management skills, and confidence needed to adopt and maintain physically active lifestyles.

RECESS: Regularly scheduled periods within the school day for supervised physical activity and play.

REGULAR PHYSICAL ACTIVITY: For youth ages 6-19, participation in moderate-to-vigorous physical activity for at least 60 minutes per day on most, preferably all, days of the week.

VIGOROUS PHYSICAL ACTIVITY: Physical exertion that makes a person sweat and breathe hard, such as basketball, soccer, running, swimming laps, fast bicycling, fast dancing, and similar aerobic activities.

Related NASBE Model Policies

Following are additional model policies related to physical activity at school that are included in other chapters of *Fit, Healthy, and Ready to Learn: A School Health Policy Guide*:

- nutrition education and screening for obesity are addressed in Chapter E: “Policies to Promote Healthy Eating”;
- preventing student athletes’ use of cigarettes and spit tobacco is addressed in Chapter F: “Policies to Prevent Tobacco Use”;
- limiting exposure to harmful solar radiation during outdoor physical activity is addressed in Chapter G: “Policies to Promote Sun Safety and Prevent Skin Cancer”;
- making accommodations in PE classes for students with chronic health conditions, as well as restricting outdoor physical activity when air quality is poor, are addressed in Chapter H: “Policies on Asthma, School Health Services, and Healthy Environments”; and
- sports safety education; safety standards for playgrounds, gyms, and sports equipment; and bullying prevention are addressed in Chapter I: “Policies to Promote Safety and Prevent Violence.”

All the model policies from *Fit, Healthy, and Ready to Learn* are available at nasbe.org/project/center-for-safe-and-healthy-schools/. Users are encouraged to download these model policies to adopt or adapt to fit their governance system and locally determined points of view. They were designed to be used at the state, school district, or school level and are applicable to public or private schools. If used, the following courtesy attribution is requested: “These policies first appeared in *Fit, Healthy, and Ready to Learn: A School Health Policy Guide* by the National Association of State Boards of Education. Reprinted with permission of the author.”

Selected Resources on Policy Development

- State and local education agencies and health departments can be valuable sources of statistical information, advocacy materials, policy referrals, details about state law, and technical assistance for program planning.
- CDC's Division of Adolescent and School Health (DASH) offers many documents and other kinds of assistance for education policymakers at www.cdc.gov/HealthyYouth/PhysicalActivity. Among the many valuable resources are the following:
 - *Guidelines for School and Community Programs to Promote Lifelong Physical Activity Among Young People* (an updated version is forthcoming);
 - *School Health Index: A Self-Assessment and Planning Tool*;
 - *Physical Education Curriculum Assessment Tool (PECAT)*; and
 - *Physical Activity Evaluation Handbook*.
- The National Association of State Boards of Education (NASBE) operates an online state school health policy database that includes every state's laws and regulations regarding physical education, physical activity, and wellness. Visit www.nasbe.org/healthy_schools/hs/index.php.
- The National Schools Boards Association (NSBA) operates a school health resource database that contains many sample policies. Key documents and sample school district policies are compiled in a *Physical Activity 101* packet, available online at www.nsba.org/schoolhealth.
- The National Association for Sport and Physical Education (NASPE) produced a position statement on "Comprehensive School Physical Activity Programs" in May 2008 that summarizes current research on quality physical education, school-based physical activity opportunities, school employee wellness and involvement, and family and community involvement.
- The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation's Active Living Research program produced *Designing to Reduce Childhood Obesity Research Summary*, a round-up of scientific studies about the potential of changing children's environments to counter the obesity epidemic. Visit www.activelivingresearch.org for this and similar research reports.
- The President's Council on Fitness, Sports and Nutrition published a research digest on *The Role of Schools in Preventing Childhood Obesity*. Download it at www.fitness.gov/publications/digests/digest-september2006-lo.pdf.
- The Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) of the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) maintains an informational Wellness Policy website at teamnutrition.usda.gov/Healthy/wellnesspolicy.html.
- The National Alliance for Nutrition and Activity (NANA) convened a work group of more than 50 health, physical activity, nutrition, and education professionals from a variety of national and state organizations, including NASBE, to develop a set of model policies for local school districts. The model policies are available online at www.schoolwellnesspolicies.org.
- Action for Healthy Kids (AFHK), a national non-profit policy advocacy organization, has created an online *Policy Wellness Tool* to provide practical guidance and how-to information about the wellness policy process, including many policy examples and extensive resource lists. It is available at www.actionforhealthykids.org/resources/tools. In addition, AFHK offers several publications with advice on effectively pursuing a policy development process, including *From the Top Down: Engaging School Leaders in Creating a Healthier, More Physically Active School Environment*. Access this and other reports at www.actionforhealthykids.org/special_exclusive.php.

- The Alliance for a Healthier Generation, founded by the American Heart Association and the William J. Clinton Foundation, operates a Healthy School Program involving thousands of schools. Participating schools receive access to action plans, trainings, technical assistance, and opportunities to collaborate with other schools. For more information visit www.healthiergeneration.org.

Selected State and Local Resources

- The Cambridge (Massachusetts) Public Schools received an Innovation in Prevention Award at the 2007 National Prevention and Health Promotion Summit in Washington, DC for its success at promoting healthy living and reducing obesity using an integrated approach. For a complete description of this program, go to www.cpsd.us/web/HPEA/CPS-HealthyChild.pdf.
- Eat Smart, Move More North Carolina, a statewide partnership among state agencies, organizations, communities, and individuals to promote increased opportunities for healthy eating and physical activity, offers *Move More: North Carolina's Recommended Standards for Physical Activity in School* as a practical planning tool for educators, parents, and community leaders. Download it at www.eatsmart-movemorenc.com.
- The Connecticut State Department of Education has produced a comprehensive *Action Guide for School Nutrition and Physical Education Policies*, based on lessons learned from a group of pilot implementation school districts. Access it at www.sde.ct.gov/sde/cwp/view.asp?a=2626&q=320754.
- The California Department of Education produced *Taking Action for Healthy School Environments: Linking Education, Activity, and Food in California Secondary Schools*, which describes how education and community leadership in 18 school districts developed new policy and program approaches to create healthier schools. Download it and several related publications at pubs.cde.ca.gov/tcsii/ch2/physed.aspx.

3. A Closer Look: Quality Physical Education

High-quality PE classes are much more than providing students with the opportunity to participate in healthful physical activity and develop competency in motor skills and movement patterns. Utilizing the national guidelines, standards-based PE is designed to teach students valuable knowledge, personal motivation, and the confidence necessary for making physical activity an essential part of their lives. Among the cognitive development topics in a quality physical education curriculum are the following:⁴⁸

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- Selected Resources on Physical Education	p. 30

- how to develop personal activity plans that include enjoyable activities and sports to help achieve and maintain personal activity goals;
- how to interpret fitness test results and use the information to develop science-based personal fitness goals that support understanding of movement concepts, principles, strategies, and tactics as they apply to the learning and performance of physical activities;
- lessons about the safety issues and protocols that exist within a variety of physical activities, fitness assessments, games, and sports; and
- principles of healthy weight management and reasons to avoid unhealthy weight loss practices.

High-quality physical education, offered daily in all grades PK–12 and taught by well-prepared and well-supported instructional staff, ought to be considered the cornerstone of a multifaceted policy to develop and implement a comprehensive school physical activity program. While PE classes provide students with opportunities to be physically active and learn about the importance of lifelong physical activity, not all physical activity is physical education. Lawmakers are beginning to understand the difference: in 2007, Mississippi adopted a requirement that every student in grades K–8 participate in 150 minutes of physical education per week, not just physical activity,⁴⁹ while Florida adopted the same requirement for grades K–5.⁵⁰ Though this is a good start, high school and middle school students should also be provided with the same opportunities as younger students to be active daily.

Model Policy: Quality Physical Education

GOAL. Every student shall be physically educated: that is, shall develop the knowledge and skills necessary to perform a variety of physical activities, maintain physical fitness, regularly participate in physical activity, understand the short- and long-term benefits of physical activity, and value and enjoy physical activity as an ongoing part of a healthful lifestyle.

ENROLLMENT. Every student in each grade, prekindergarten through grade 12, shall participate in physical education for the entire school year, including students with disabling conditions and those in alternative education programs. Students in the elementary grades shall participate in physical education at least 150 minutes each school week (preferably 30 minutes each school day), and students in middle schools and high schools shall participate at least 225 minutes per week (preferably 45 minutes each school day). Because students learn essential knowledge and skills in physical education, enrollment in physical education class may not be waived on the basis of participation in athletic programs, ROTC, band, chorus, or similar activities that provide physical activity but are not physical education.

Students who are unable to participate in the regular physical education program due to a disability or chronic health condition shall be provided with adapted activities or courses in accordance with an individualized education plan (IEP) or individualized health plan (IHP).

CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION. Schools shall implement a sequential, developmentally appropriate physical education curriculum that helps students acquire the knowledge, motor skills, self-management skills, attitudes, and confidence needed to adopt and maintain physical activity throughout their lives. The physical education program shall:

1. be consistent with the National Standards for Physical Education and/or the state/district's physical education standards;
2. devote at least 50 percent of class time to moderate-to-vigorous physical activity either indoors or outdoors weather permitting. Children should be permitted to participate in physical education outdoors provided the wind chill is above 15° F or the heat index or temperature is below 90° F. In cold weather, children should be dressed warmly and in layers. Air quality risk should be determined by the supervising adults based on the air quality index;⁵¹
3. meet the needs of all students, especially those who are not athletically gifted;
4. actively teach cooperation and fair play;
5. promote participation in physical activity outside of school; and

6. focus on helping students at the high school and middle school levels develop an active lifestyle that will be carried on throughout their lives.

Student/teacher ratios in physical education classes shall be comparable to those in other curricular areas.

Teachers shall aim to develop students' self-confidence and maintain a safe psychological environment free of embarrassment, humiliation, shaming, taunting, or harassment of any kind. Physical education staff shall not withhold or order performance of physical activity as a form of discipline or punishment.

Physical education staff members shall coordinate their curriculum goals with other components of the school health program to reinforce common instructional messages. Staff shall collaborate with community agencies and organizations to provide opportunities for students to participate in physical activity beyond the school day.

STUDENT ASSESSMENT. All students shall be regularly assessed for attainment of physical education learning objectives. Course grades shall be included in calculations of grade-point average, class rank, and academic recognition programs such as honor roll in the same manner as other subject areas.

Except in kindergarten through second grade, appropriate assessments of health-related physical fitness shall be integrated into the curriculum as an instructional tool. As a person's level of physical fitness is influenced by factors beyond the control of students and teachers (such as genetics, physical maturation, disabling conditions, and body composition), fitness results **shall not** be used to determine course grades or to assess the performance of individual teachers. Staff will maintain the confidentiality of individual fitness test results, which will be made available only to students and their parents/guardians. An annual summary of aggregated results without individual student identifiers shall be published in the local newspaper, posted on the district/school website, or otherwise made available to the public. Aggregated results will also be reported annually to the state department of health/other.

PREPARED TEACHERS. All physical education classes shall be taught by highly qualified physical education teachers who have completed accredited physical education teacher education programs and are certified to teach physical education.

All physical education teachers shall participate in professional development activities that provide skill practice in appropriate physical education instructional techniques at least annually.

SAFE AND ADEQUATE FACILITIES. Schools/districts shall provide and properly maintain safe and adequate spaces, facilities, equipment, and supplies necessary to achieve the objectives of the physical education program. Safety and hazard assessments of gymnasiums, playgrounds,

athletic fields, and sports-related equipment shall be conducted monthly/other. Identified hazards shall be repaired before further use by students, staff, or community members. Schools/districts shall report annually on safety and hazard assessments to the state education agency/district superintendent/other. Written inspection reports shall be kept on file for 10 years.

PROGRAM ASSESSMENT. The school health council/other shall establish and oversee the ongoing implementation of a plan to assess the quality of the physical education program. The physical education coordinator/school health program coordinator shall submit an annual report to the school health advisory council/board of education on the implementation and effectiveness of the program, including recommendations for improvement.

Selected Resources on Physical Education

➤ The National Association for Sport and Physical Education (NASPE), the primary national membership association of PE professionals, seeks to promote knowledge and professional practice in sport and physical activity through scientific study and dissemination of research-based and experiential knowledge to members and the public. Its resources include the following:

- *Moving into the Future: National Standards for Physical Education*;
- a series of detailed position statements on appropriate instructional practices for teachers at different grade levels;
- NASPE-L, a listserv for K–12 physical educators; and
- an extensive array of other useful resources, available at www.aahperd.org/naspe.

➤ CDC’s Division of Adolescent and School Health

(DASH) developed the *Physical Education Curriculum Analysis Tool (PECAT)* to help school administrators and PE program planners assess and compare curricula. Access this valuable resource at www.cdc.gov/HealthyYouth/PhysicalActivity.

➤ The U.S. Department of Education (ED) administers the Carol M. White Physical Education Program, which awards competitive “PEP grants” to school districts and community-based organizations as Congress makes funds available. Grants can be used for curriculum development, teacher training, student fitness assessments, data collection, evaluations, and equipment, but not to provide new playgrounds or facilities. For more information go to www.ed.gov/programs/whitephysed.

➤ The American Association for Physical Activity and Recreation (AAPAR, a sister organization of NASPE) has a mission that focuses on inclusion of children with disabilities, disabled and older adults, and inactive “pre-athletic” people. AAPAR offers continuing education for professionals by sharing guidelines, credentials, standards of practice, position papers, and information on adapted physical education and other programs. Visit www.aahperd.org/aapar.

- The National Center on Physical Activity and Disability (NCPAD) provides fact sheets and bibliographies on many popular activities, games, recreational pursuits, and sports that have been adapted to allow people with disabilities to participate as fully as they wish. Go to www.ncpad.org.
- The University of Texas School of Public Health is the home of the CATCH (Coordinated Approach to Child Health) program, which was originally sponsored by the federal National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute of the National Institutes for Health (NIH-NHLBI) and has been extensively evaluated in dozens of scientific peer-reviewed publications. CATCH is a coordinated school health program for grades K–8 that includes a physical education program, classroom health curriculum, a school nutrition guide, and family activities designed to reinforce positive healthy behaviors throughout a child’s day. Visit www.sph.uth.tmc.edu/catch/about.htm.
- SPARK is a research-based organization dedicated to creating, implementing, and evaluating programs that promote lifelong wellness. It is widely known for its Project SPARK (Sports, Play, and Active Recreation for Kids), a health-related physical education and behavior change program for elementary schools that was also funded by NIH-NHLBI and extensively evaluated. Today SPARK offers a variety of research-based curricula and programs spanning early childhood through high school. Visit www.sparkpe.org.
- The Harvard University Prevention Research Center offers *Planet Health*, a research-based, thoroughly evaluated interdisciplinary curriculum focused on improving the health and well-being of students in grades 6–8 while building and reinforcing skills in language, arts, math, science, social studies, and physical education. A companion, *Eat Well and Keep Moving*, for grades 3–5 is also available. Visit www.planet-health.org and www.eatwellandkeepmoving.org.
- The U.S. National Institutes of Health developed a national public outreach program called “We Can! (Ways to Enhance Children’s Activity and Nutrition)” that provides resources to educate parents

and caregivers about how they can support healthy choices for their children. For more information, visit wecan.nhlbi.nih.gov.

- PELINKS4U is a privately sponsored online information site operated by Central Washington University that features a weekly online newsletter promoting active, health-enhancing lifestyles and quality, success-oriented programs in health and physical education. Visit www.pelinks4u.org.
- P.E. Central is another privately sponsored online information site for physical education teachers, students, and interested parents and adults. Go to www.pecentral.org.

Physical Education should be better defined... [too many] kids could be sitting in the classroom learning about exercise, when the idea is to get them to exercise.

— Gardiner Kreglow,
Student Board Member, Pennsylvania
State Board of Education

4. A Closer Look: Recess and Other Physical Activity Breaks

If we could make small changes to the school day to include activity, I think kids would learn better and behave better because they have gotten some of their energy out.

— Madeline Cumbey, Student Advisory Board Member,
Alliance for a Healthier Generation, Indiana

This section covers the numerous opportunities outside of PE classes for students and staff to participate in moderate-to-vigorous physical activity while they are at school. Experts recommend that students in elementary and middle schools regularly participate in spontaneous, supervised play during scheduled periods of recess or unstructured time.⁵² At all levels, classroom teachers can conduct brief activity breaks to keep students alert and attentive.

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| - <i>Model Policy: Recess and Physical Activity Breaks</i> | p. 35 |
| - Selected Resources on Recess and Physical Activity Breaks | p. 36 |

Recess

Recess provides many students with a significant amount of the physical activity they need every day. One study found that recess contributed to 15 percent of daily physical activity for elementary school students and nearly 10 percent of daily physical activity for middle school students.⁵³ Most children spontaneously engage in moderate physical activity

without prompting.⁵⁴ Researchers monitoring students in grades 3–5 found that boys spent 78 percent and girls spent 63 percent of their recess periods engaged in physical activity.⁵⁵ Students who are not able to participate in recess or PE during the school day do not engage in enough additional physical activity outside of the school day to compensate.⁵⁶

SHPPS 2006 found that although 97 percent of U.S. elementary schools provide regularly scheduled recess in at least one grade, only 74 percent provide it for all grades.⁵⁷ A recent national survey of PTA leaders found that more than half thought their daily recess was at risk of elimination and only 9 percent said they were confident that recess will not be reduced in their school.⁵⁸

Some large school districts have eliminated recess altogether due to efforts to increase the amount of time devoted to academic instruction and/or concerns about student safety. In a 2005 report, the U.S. Department of Education documented that on average, high-poverty schools schedule significantly less recess (102 minutes per week, or an average of 20 minutes per day) than other schools (148 minutes per week, or 30 minutes per day).⁵⁹

Some state education decisionmakers have taken action to counter this trend. Although to date Virginia is the only state to mandate daily recess in every elementary school statewide, at least five other states (California, Indiana, Iowa, Michigan, and North Carolina) actively recommend it in law or policy.⁶⁰

Physical Activity Breaks

Students have been found to think and work less efficiently when engaged in long periods of instructional time without a break.⁶¹ Child development experts discourage extended periods of two hours or more of inactivity for children, especially during the daytime hours.⁶² NASPE recommends that teachers periodically conduct a 3–5 minute “energy release break” to help improve student performance and reduce potential boredom.⁶³

SHPPS 2006 found that about two-thirds (67 percent) of middle schools reported giving students physical activity breaks outside of physical education.⁶⁴ But only 22 percent of high schools gave such breaks, even though high school students are already receiving the least amount of physical education. NASPE suggests that older students be encouraged to “drop in” to school fitness centers for unscheduled physical activity sessions when they have free time.⁶⁵

In response to a North Carolina State Board of Education policy calling for physical activity through-

Guidance for Recess, from NASPE

- All children in elementary schools should engage in at least one daily period of recess for at least 20 minutes per period.
- Recess does not replace physical education classes.
- Recess is not viewed as a reward, but as a necessary educational support component for all children. Therefore, students should not be denied recess so they can complete class work or as a means of punishment.
- Adequate and safe spaces and facilities are provided for all students to be physically active at the same time. Outdoor spaces are used whenever the weather allows.
- Adequate, safe, and developmentally appropriate equipment is provided for students to engage in enjoyable physical activity.*
- Physical education and classroom teachers teach children positive personal and social skills (e.g., cooperation, conflict resolution) for use during recess.
- Safety rules are taught and enforced.*
- Recess is properly supervised by qualified adults.*
- Bullying or aggressive behavior is not tolerated.*
- Adults intervene when a child’s physical or emotional safety is an issue.*
- Recess is not scheduled immediately before or after physical education class.
- Recess does not interfere with physical education classes that are taking place in a common environment.

National Association for Sport and Physical Education⁶⁶

*Playground safety, student supervision, and bullying prevention are among the topics addressed in *Fit, Healthy, and Ready to Learn*, Chapter I: “Policies to Promote Safety and Prevent Violence.”

The benefits of recess and physical activity breaks are such that many experts believe students should not be deprived of it as punishment for poor behavior, nor should recess be used as extra time for making up schoolwork. SHPPS 2006 found that 82 percent of elementary schools allowed faculty or staff to exclude students from participating in all or part of recess for bad behavior. However, 17 percent of schools actively discouraged this practice.⁶⁷ Among school system policies that discourage the practice is the following from the Cambridge, Massachusetts Public Schools.

Cambridge, Massachusetts Public Schools Recess Policy

It is the expectation of the Cambridge Public Schools that recess provides opportunities for physical activity which helps students to stay alert and attentive in class and provides other educational and social benefits. It is also the expectation of the Cambridge Public Schools that all elementary schools will provide a daily recess for all students.

Further, it is the expectation of the Cambridge Public Schools that students in grades K-8 will have supervised recess, preferably outdoors, during which the schools will encourage moderate-to-vigorous physical activity verbally and through the provision of space and equipment. Principals will examine the feasibility of having recess before lunch, especially in the younger grades. The Cambridge Public Schools recognizes that recess is a necessary education support component for all children. It is the expectation of the Cambridge Public Schools that Physical Education teachers will teach students active games for recess time.

It is also the expectation of the Cambridge Public Schools that principals will inform teachers that it is not recommended to deny students recess as a means of punishment or to make up work unless under unusual circumstances and/or a student denial of recess is a consequence of circumstances during recess.

Students will not be kept from recess or excluded from a Physical Education class except if the removal is necessary to protect the health, safety and welfare of other students and staff and/or is related to the students engaging in conduct that is violative of the codes of conduct set forth in the Cambridge Public Schools Rights and Responsibilities Handbook and/or in school-based rules or other Cambridge Public School policies (e.g., anti-bullying policy, anti-hazing policy, anti-discrimination policy).

Cambridge Public Schools, Healthy Children Initiatives⁶⁸

out the school day, the state's Department of Public Instruction sponsored the development of a series of brief classroom-based activities called "energizers" that integrate physical activity with academic concepts across several disciplines.⁶⁹ The activities last approximately 10 minutes, integrate grade-appropriate learning materials, involve no equipment, and require little teacher preparation. A rig-

orous study found two meaningful benefits: a significant increase in physical activity, equivalent to a student walking approximately 70 additional miles per year; and an 8 percent increase in students' on-task behavior during instructional time.⁷⁰ The latter effect was particularly strong among the least on-task students, who improved their on-task behavior by 20 percent.

Model Policy: Recess and Physical Activity Breaks

GOAL. Students in all grades will be provided opportunities throughout the school day to participate in healthful and refreshing physical activity.

RECESS AND UNSTRUCTURED TIME. Scheduled recess and other periods of unstructured time in the school day help students stay alert and attentive in class and provide other educational, social, and health benefits. School leaders shall implement schedules that cumulatively provide at least 30 minutes within every school day for students to enjoy supervised recess or other unstructured time. Recess will be offered either outdoors or indoors if weather, air quality or facilities do not permit outdoor time. Children should be permitted to play outdoors provided that the wind chill or temperature is above 15° F or the heat index or temperature is below 90° F. In cold weather, children should be dressed warmly and in layers. Air quality risk should be determined by the local authorities or smog alerts. Recess and unstructured time shall complement, not substitute for, physical education classes.

Every preschool, kindergarten, elementary, and middle school shall have safe playgrounds, other facilities, and equipment available for free play. Lunch-time recess shall be scheduled before meal-time. Staff shall not deny a student's participation in recess or other unstructured time as a form of discipline or punishment, nor shall it be used for instructional makeup time.

PHYSICAL ACTIVITY BREAKS. Teachers shall provide brief movement and/or physical activity breaks at appropriate times in the school day. Students shall not be required to engage in more than two hours of sedentary instruction without an opportunity to move and stretch. Teachers and school staff should support learning through movement by integrating physical activity in lessons such as math, reading, and science when appropriate. Activity breaks should be used to complement, not substitute for, physical education classes.

POLICY EVALUATION. The school health coordinator/other shall regularly monitor, evaluate, and submit an annual report to the school health advisory council/board of education/other on the implementation and effectiveness of this policy. The report shall include recommendations for improvement.

Selected Resources on Recess and Activity Breaks

- The National Association for Sport and Physical Education (NASPE) has a position paper on “Recess for Elementary School Students” (2006), available at www.aahperd.org/naspe/standards/upload/Recess-for-Elementary-School-Students-2006.pdf.
- The American Association for the Child’s Right to Play provides resources on the benefits of recess and an activity guide, *Elementary School Recess: Selected Readings, Games and Activities for Teachers and Parents*. Visit ipausa.ning.com/page/recess-1.
- The Association for Childhood Education International also provides information on the benefits of recess at www.acei.org.
- The Montana Office of Public Instruction offers *Recess Before Lunch: A Guide to Success* at opi.mt.gov/pdf/schoolfood/RBL/RBLGuide2008.pdf.
- Be Active North Carolina offers a series of classroom physical activity Energizers (approved by the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction) for free download at www.beactivenc.org/getactive/youth/schools/energizers/.
- The Michigan Department of Education offers *Brain Breaks: A Physical Activity Idea Book for Elementary Classroom Teachers* at www.emc.cmich.edu/brainbreaks.
- The International Life Sciences Institute developed the TAKE 10! teaching tool for grades K-5 that is designed to reduce sedentary time in the school day while promoting positive health messages about physical activity and nutrition. Visit www.take10.net.
- The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation’s Active Living Research program offers SOPLAY, a validated, direct observation tool for assessing physical activity and associated environmental characteristics in recess and other free play settings. Visit www.activelivingresearch.org/node/10642.
- SchoolDesigner.com is a website for school architects with sketches, pictures, and descriptions of innovative design elements. Two issues of their newsletter addressed “How Strengthening School Design Can Help Reduce Childhood Obesity,” indoors and out. Visit www.schooldesigner.com/Articles/Designing-Schools-to-Fight-Childhood-Obesity-Part-1.asp for interior design and www.schooldesigner.com/Articles/Designing-Schools-to-Fight-Childhood-Obesity-Part-2.asp for exterior design.
- Peaceful Playgrounds is a program to introduce staff and students to multiple opportunities for play at recess and on the field. Playground blueprints are offered to help schools envision how to facilitate active, safe play. Visit www.peacefulplaygrounds.com/.

5. A Closer Look: Walking and Biking to School

High rates of overweight among children, and the fact that students tend to participate in less physical activity as they move into adolescence, have helped draw the attention of policymakers to the benefits of “active commuting”—that is, pedestrian and other active modes of transportation such as walking, biking, rollerblading, scootering, and skateboarding. The U.S.

Surgeon General has recommended routine walking and biking as part of an active lifestyle that is associated with decreased risks for heart disease, diabetes, hypertension, and colon cancer, as well as an increased sense of well-being.⁷²

Active commuting can be either encouraged or discouraged by the “built environment,” including man-made factors such as school location, street layout, intersection design, zoning, and housing developments.⁷³ Schools and communities need to work together to identify and fix practical barriers that inter-

fer with students and staff members actively commuting to school and ensure that new schools are constructed within a convenient distance from their students’ homes.

In the past several decades the percentage of trips made by walking has declined among U.S. children and adults.⁷⁴ An estimated 48 percent of students aged 5 to 14 walked or biked to school in 1969, but by 2001 less than 15 percent of students in this age range did so.⁷⁵ To some extent,

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this decline is due to increased distances between homes and schools; however, children who live close to school are also being driven often. In 1969, 88 percent of students who lived within one mile of school walked or biked, compared to only 31 percent in 1999.⁷⁶

In a 2004 survey of more than 6,200 parents of students aged 5-18 years, 84 percent reported that it is difficult for their children to walk to school.⁷⁷ When asked to list barriers to walking (multiple answers were permitted), the most commonly reported difficulty was distance to school (62 percent), followed by traffic-related danger (30 percent), weather (19 percent), “other” (15 percent), crime (12 percent), and school policy (6 percent). Research indicates that parental concerns about traffic and crime have a strong influence on children’s physical activity levels; children are five times more likely to walk to school if their parents feel their neighborhoods and streets are generally safe.⁷⁸

Education leaders can provide more support for walking and biking to school by evaluating existing policies that may ban or discourage active transportation or including model policies in their current requirements. According to the 2006 SHPPS report, less than 14 percent of states had policies encouraging schools and districts to promote student walking and biking to school.⁷⁹ Safe Routes to School, a federally funded program, provides financial and other resources to schools and districts to promote safe pedestrian and bicycle travel to and from school. All states and Washington, DC are participating in the program.⁸⁰

Selected Resources on Walking and Biking to School

- CDC’s Division of Nutrition and Physical Activity (DNPA) offers the Kids Walk-to-School program at www.cdc.gov/nccdphp/dnpa/kidwalk.
- The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) of the U.S. Department of Transportation offers an online resources/guide titled Safe Routes to School: Promise and Practice at www.nhtsa.gov/people/injury/pedbimot/bike/Safe-Routes-2004/index.html.
- The National Center for Safe Routes to School, supported by the U.S. Department of Transportation’s

Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), provides program guidance materials and contact information for the SRTS Coordinator of each state. These coordinators serve as a central point of contact. Visit www.saferoutesinfo.org.

- The Pedestrian and Bicycle Information Center provides current information on bicycling and walking programs, including environmental assessment checklists. Visit www.pedbikeinfo.org.
- The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation supports a strong Active Living Research program that has developed numerous valuable policy resources, including:
 - the Active Living Resource Center, which provides detailed information on safe routes to school programs at www.activelivingresources.org/saferout-estoschool.php; and
 - Designing for Active Living Among Children: Research Summary, which provides an overview of how environmental factors and policies affect young people’s physical activity and sedentary behavior patterns and identifies some of the most promising environmental and policy changes for increasing physical activity among young people. Access it at www.activelivingresearch.org/alr/alr/files/Built_Design.pdf.
- The Transportation Research Board of the National Academy of Sciences produced *Does the Built Environment Influence Physical Activity? Examining the Evidence*, which reviews the broad trends affecting the relationships among physical activity, health, transportation, and land use; summarizes what is known about these relationships; and examines implications for policy. For a report summary, background papers, and online access to the report visit gulliver.trb.org/news/blurb_detail.asp?id=4536.
- The National Clearinghouse for Educational Facilities provides comprehensive information on planning, designing, funding, building, improving and maintaining safe, healthy, high-performance schools. Visit www.edfacilities.org.

Model Policy: Active Commuting to School

GOALS. Students and staff members will be encouraged and supported to safely walk or bike to and from school as often as possible.

SAFE PEDESTRIAN AND BICYCLE ROUTES. School/district leaders shall collaborate with local transportation, land-use planning, law enforcement, and other community agencies to plan, construct, and encourage the use of safe, accessible, and convenient pedestrian and bicycle routes to school.

SCHOOL SITING. New elementary schools shall be located within one mile, and middle and high schools within two miles, of the homes of as many of their students as possible. Siting decisions will include a safety assessment of pedestrian and bicycle routes around the school, and campus exits will be designed to safely separate auto/bus traffic from students walking and biking.

STUDENT TRANSPORTATION. Elementary school students living more than one mile away from the closest school in their district, and middle and high school students living more than two miles from the closest school in their district, are eligible for transportation to and from school at no cost to their families. Transportation shall also be provided to students with disabling conditions whose need for transportation services is documented in an Individualized Education Plan (IEP) or Individual Health Plan (IHP). Transportation or an adult escort shall also be provided to students whose route to school has been surveyed by whom and determined not to be reasonably safe for walking or biking.

HELMET USE. All persons on school grounds riding a bicycle, other pedal-powered vehicle, scooter, motorcycle, off-road vehicle, or any other conveyance associated with a significant risk of causing a head injury shall wear a safety helmet that meets the standards of the federal Consumer Product Safety Commission. Health education and physical education curricula shall include topics of pedestrian and cyclist safety and traffic rules at appropriate grade levels. Bicycles must be locked to school-provided racks when left unattended.

WELLNESS POLICY. Each school district/school shall incorporate active transportation to school in the wellness policy as a means of increasing physical activity levels. Health education and physical education curricula shall include topics of pedestrian and cyclist safety and traffic rules at appropriate grade levels. School/district leaders shall also change any existing policies that ban or discourage walking or bicycling to and from school.

POLICY EVALUATION. The school health coordinator/other shall regularly monitor, evaluate, and submit an annual report to the school health advisory council/board of education/other on the implementation and effectiveness of this policy. The report shall include recommendations for improvement.

- The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) published *Travel and Environmental Implications of School Siting*, available online at www.epa.gov/smartgrowth/pdf/school_travel.pdf.
- Smart Growth America, a broad coalition of national, state, and local organizations, has compiled a number of thoughtful articles and resources on children and schools at www.smartgrowthamerica.org/children.html.
- The Local Government Commission (LGC) assists local elected officials and city managers in helping communities become more livable, walkable, and bike friendly. A variety of resource publications are available at www.lgc.org/healthycommunities.

6. A Closer Look: Before- and After- School Programs and Physical Activity

Children and adolescents need a wide range of accessible, safe, and affordable opportunities to be physically active. There are four broad types of extracurricular programs that provide students physical activity beyond school hours:

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- *before- and after-school student care programs* for children of working adults who are not home when their children are out of school;
- *intramural sports*, which are within-a-school organized sports that often emphasize fun as well as competition and involve students of all skill levels who may not want to be in an interscholastic sport;
- *physical activity clubs* that allow students to pursue specific interests or explore new activities; and
- *community recreation programs* offered by outside agencies or youth-serving organizations in collaboration with schools on evenings, weekends, and during breaks in the school calendar.

Well-planned after-school activities can be a worthy extension of a good education program.⁸¹ As noted by the U.S. Department of Education, “Extracurricular activities offer opportunities for stu-

Physical Activity in Student Care Programs

Before- and after-school student care programs provide an ideal opportunity to collaborate with on-site school programs as well as community programs to encourage children and youth to get more than 60 minutes of daily physical activity. With a full day of school, students need to have ample opportunities for physical activity and free play provided to them. Education leaders can support these efforts by:

- Writing minimum time and quality requirements for physical activity into contracts with before- and after-school programs on school sites. For instance, the Delaware YMCA instituted a statewide initiative to use the evidence-based program CATCH Kids Club in all school-age care sites. The initiative required at least 20-30 minutes of after-school time to be spent in moderate-to-vigorous physical activity.
- Working with state child care licensing officials to require moderate-to-vigorous physical activity in school-age care and early childhood regulations. For example, the states of Alaska and Delaware require all children attending licensed child care to engage in at least 20 minutes of moderate-to-vigorous activity for every three hours a child is in the program.

dents to develop skills and dispositions that are important in the workplace and in society, such as those involving team values, individual and group responsibility, physical strength and endurance, competition, and a sense of community.”⁸²

Not only are the programs important, but access to facilities is integral to promoting physical activity among young people.⁸³ Through coordination and collaboration, schools and community agencies can expand the variety of available activity options, maximize facility use, minimize program overlap, and help keep young people active when school is not in session. For example, to supplement the school physical activity program, schools might be able to obtain access to recreation centers, parks, and even privately owned golf courses, tennis courts, swimming pools, and health clubs. Such collaboration goes both ways: many schools have facilities that are generally closed in the evenings, on weekends, and during school breaks that could be used for community recreation programs.

Selected Resources on After-School Activities

STUDENT CARE PROGRAMS

➤ The National AfterSchool Association (NAA, formerly the National School-Age Care Alliance) is a

professional membership association of more than 7,000 child care practitioners, policymakers, and administrators representing public, private, and community-based sectors of after-school programs. The NAA Standards for Quality School-Age Care is the basis for an accreditation program, and the association produces valuable program guidance materials. Visit www.naaweb.org.

- The National Institute on Out-of-School Time (NIOST) publishes many documents related to afterschool activities, including *Healthy Choices Afterschool*, a report that investigates the links between the NAA standards and 20 available physical activity and nutrition programs and curricula. The report is available for download at www.niost.org/pdf/healthy%20choices%20afterschool.pdf.
- National Policy and Legal Analysis Network to Prevent Childhood Obesity (NPLAN) provides legal technical assistance to those seeking to develop policies supporting childhood obesity prevention. Visit www.nplanonline.org.
- The Center for Collaborative Solutions produced a guide for program directors, site directors, and leadership team members called *Changing Lives, Saving*

Lives: A Step-by-Step Guide to Developing Exemplary Practices in Healthy Eating, Physical Activity and Food Security in Afterschool Programs (2010). The six model practices have been vetted by experts and practitioners. Access the guide at www.ccscenter.org/afterschool/Step-By-Step%20Guide.

- The Afterschool Alliance is a nonprofit organization dedicated to raising awareness of the importance of afterschool programs and advocating for quality, affordable programs for all children. The Alliance's website provides tools and tips on accessing funding and using communications to build support for programs among local residents, community groups, businesses, and policymakers. Visit www.afterschoolalliance.org.
- The University of Texas School of Public Health offers the CATCH Kids Club (CKC), a physical ac-

tivity and nutrition education program designed for elementary school-aged children (grades K–5) in after-school and summer settings. Visit www.sph.uth.tmc.edu/Catch/KidsClub.htm.

- The Strang Cancer Prevention Center developed the Healthy Children Healthy Futures program, a replicable after-school program focused on healthy eating and physical activity for underserved young people ages 9–13 in large urban areas. For more information visit www.healthychildrenhealthyfutures.org/ForSchools.htm.

INTRAMURAL SPORTS AND OTHER AFTER-SCHOOL ACTIVITIES

- The National Federation of State High School Associations (NFHS) and its 50 member state high school athletic/activity associations publish playing

Joint Use of Facilities

Pools and sports/activity facilities are important community resources that provide children and residents opportunities to be physically active and stay fit. They are also expensive to build, maintain, and staff. Some cities, school districts, and institutions of higher education have found ways to share these costs, which also allows them to broaden access for students, competitive sports teams, and the general public. For example, by working with the local jurisdiction, a school district can make use of adjacent parks and open space as play areas for students.

Examples of successful joint use of facilities agreements include:

- The Seattle School District 1 and Seattle Parks and Recreation entered into a joint use agreement specifying that “all public facilities and grounds, either owned by the City or District, shall benefit and be used by Seattle children, adults, and families to the maximum extent possible.” The joint use agreement states that each organization will make use of facilities a priority to the other agency, with priority given to programming that would benefit youth. Each agency is responsible for the maintenance and care of the facilities and equipment. Many logistical issues related to program continuity and scheduling are addressed in the agreement.⁸⁴
- The city of Temecula, California and the Temecula Valley Unified School District entered into a joint use agreement to share in the planning, design, construction, maintenance, and scheduling of the Temecula Valley Aquatic Facility. The city was able to invest capital reserves, developer fees, and state park bond monies to pay \$3.1 million for design and construction costs. The school district will reimburse the city for 50 percent of construction costs over a 10-year period. The new pool opened in 2002 and offers competitive swimming and water polo, an expanded physical education program, public swimming, and swimming lessons.⁸⁵

rules in 16 sports and provide guidance on other after-school activities. Visit www.nfhs.org.

- The National Association for Sport and Physical Education (NASPE) offers an extensive number of useful resources, including *Guidelines for After School Physical Activity and Intramural Sports Programs*, which provide teachers, school activity directors, school administrators, and program leaders with basic information for planning and implementing after-school physical activity and intramural programming for children in grades K–12. Available at www.aahperd.org/naspe/standards/upload/Guidelines-for-After-School-PA-Intramural-Sport-Programs-2001.pdf.
- Action for Healthy Kids, in partnership with the National Football League, developed ReCharge! Energizing After-School™, a program that fully integrates nutrition and physical activity through team-work-based strategies for youth in grades 3–6. Core lessons have been incorporated into Game On! The Ultimate Wellness Challenge, a back-to-school activity program designed to kick off the school year. For more information visit www.actionforhealthykids.org.
- The San Diego County Office of Education, in partnership with the California Department of Education and CDC, developed the After School Physical Activity Website with numerous activities for students in grades 4–8. Visit www.afterschoolpa.com.
- The Team Nutrition program of the U.S. Department of Agriculture developed a free, downloadable after-school activities guide for young people ages 11–13 titled *The Power of Choice: Helping Youth Make Healthy Eating and Fitness Decisions*. Access it at www.fns.usda.gov/tn/Resources/power_of_choice.html.
- The California Department of Health Services produced *Do More, Watch Less: A TV/Screen Reduction Tool*, a hands-on activity tool kit to help young adolescents (“tweens”) reduce passive screen time by incorporating more screen-free activities into their lives. It is available at www.cdph.ca.gov/programs/schoolhealth/Documents/FINAL%20English%20DMWL%204%2007.pdf.

COMMUNITY-BASED PROGRAMS

- The Communities Putting Prevention to Work initiative, supported by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, funded state and local programs connecting communities, schools, child care and other sectors together to promote physical activity and nutrition. For more, go to www.hhs.gov/recovery/programs/cppw/factsheet.html.
- The California Adolescent Nutrition and Physical Activity (CANFit) program developed the Promoting Healthy Activities Together (P.H.A.T.) campaign. It is designed to engage communities and build their capacity to improve the nutrition and physical activity status of California’s low-income African American, American Indian, Latino, Asian American, and Pacific Islander youth age 10–14. The P.H.A.T. Campaign uses a community-based approach which embraces music, dance, emceeing, and other elements of hip-hop culture in community centers, schools, afterschool programs, and other organized settings. For more information, go to www.canfit.org/phat.
- The Cities, Counties and Schools Partnership of California (CCS), a joint effort of the California School Boards Association, League of California Cities, and California State Association of Counties to promote collaboration among their members, offers several case studies of school/community joint use agreements. Visit www.ccspartnership.org.

Model Policy: Before- and After-School Sports and Activities

GOALS. To supplement the school-based physical activity and physical education program, students will be provided ample opportunities to participate in before- and after-school physical activity clubs, intramural sports programs, interscholastic athletics, and community-based recreation programs that help meet their needs for physical activity.

STUDENT CARE PROGRAMS. School-age care programs that serve students without a supervising adult at home before or after school or during breaks in the school calendar shall provide participating students daily, frequent opportunities for moderate-to-vigorous physical activity, unstructured play, and organized physical activities regardless of weather. Children should be permitted to play outdoors provided the wind chill is above 15° F or the heat index or temperature is below 90° F. In cold weather, children should be dressed warmly and in layers. Air quality risk should be determined by the supervising adults based on the air quality index.⁸⁶ All such programs are required to meet the physical activity requirements of the National AfterSchool Association's *NAA Standards for Quality School-Age Care*.

EXTRACURRICULAR SPORTS, CLUBS, AND ACTIVITIES. A diverse selection of competitive and noncompetitive, structured and unstructured extracurricular physical activities shall be offered at no cost to students' families to the extent that staffing, facilities, transportation, and other resources permit. Students shall be involved in the planning, organization, and administration of the extracurricular activities program. Equal opportunity on the basis of gender shall permeate all aspects of program design and implementation. Each activity conducted on school grounds, whether sponsored by an in-school or nonschool organization, shall be approved by the school principal/ physical activity director/athletic director on an equal-access basis.

A student with a chronic health problem or other disabling condition is permitted to participate in any extracurricular activity, with reasonable accommodations if necessary.

STAFFING. Each physical activity club and intramural sports activity shall be overseen by a designated staff member under the general supervision of the school's health program coordinator/physical activity director/athletic director. Family members and other adult volunteers are encouraged to become involved with physical activity clubs, intramural sports, and other activity programs. All volunteers shall receive orientation about relevant state, district, and school policies, procedures, and standards of conduct and may be subject to background and reference checks. Volunteer sports aides shall satisfactorily complete a training program consistent with Level 1 of the *National Standards for Athletic Coaches*.

JOINT USE AGREEMENTS. Districts/schools shall work with recreation agencies and other community organizations to coordinate and enhance opportunities available to students and staff for physical activity during their out-of-school time. Schools are encouraged to negotiate mutually acceptable, fiscally responsible, legally binding joint-use agreements with community agencies

and organizations to keep school- or district-owned facilities open for use by students, staff, and community members during nonschool hours and vacations. Joint-use agreements should describe specific activities, times, and eligible participants and address supervision of minors; injury liability protections; funding sources; cost-sharing of utilities; and respective responsibilities for maintenance, cleanup, and security.

FUNDING OF EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES. To help support the costs associated with extracurricular activities, students are encouraged to participate in organized fundraising campaigns that involve student physical activity. Food or beverage items sold for fundraising purposes must be consistent with established nutrition standards for foods at school.

School leaders are encouraged to solicit financial support for extracurricular activities or events from local businesses, and any such sponsorship shall be gratefully acknowledged in public. However, advertising or other promotional activities on behalf of commercial interests are not permitted on public school grounds. Commercial relationships must be continually monitored to maintain the integrity of the school and its mission.

POLICY EVALUATION. *The school health coordinator/school physical activity director/school athletic director/other* shall regularly monitor, evaluate, and submit an annual report to *the school health advisory council/board of education/other* on the implementation and effectiveness of this policy. The evaluation may include satisfaction surveys of students, families, and staff. The report shall include recommendations for improvement.

7. A Closer Look: Interscholastic Athletics

Sports are played everywhere in America—in urban neighborhoods, spread-out suburbs, and rural towns. Participation in high school athletics reached a record high in the 2008–2009 school year when 4.4 million young men and 3.1 million young women were involved.⁸⁷ In 2006, 91 percent of public and private high schools nationwide, and 77 percent of middle schools, offered students opportunities to participate in at least one interscholastic sport.⁸⁸ Often, a community’s very identity is tied to the local high school and to the mascot chosen to symbolically represent the school’s teams.⁸⁹

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In addition to the academic and health benefits, young people’s participation in physical activity and sports programs has also been found to promote their social well-being by fostering skills such as teamwork, goal-setting, self-discipline, sportsman-

ship, leadership, and socialization.⁹⁰ Numerous studies have demonstrated that appropriately structured and presented activities can make a contribution to the development of pro-social behavior, and can even combat antisocial and criminal behaviors in youth.⁹¹ For example, one study found that students who participate in interscholastic sports are more likely to stay in school, exhibit good conduct, and achieve to high academic levels.⁹² Such students may also be more vigorously active, have a more healthful diet, and less likely to be regular smokers, heavy smokers, or drug users.⁹³

At their best, interscholastic athletics provide an opportunity to teach good sportsmanship, healthy lifelong physical activity, and core values of discipline, respect, responsibility, fairness, and trustworthiness. Quality sports programs that cultivate the ideal of the “scholar-athlete” complement a school’s academic program. Given their entrenched popularity and capacity for shaping character, well-run sports programs are a positive social force.⁹⁴

Selected Resources on Interscholastic Athletics

- Your state education department, state school boards association, or state athletic/activities association should be able to provide detailed guidance and assistance about policies, programs, rules, and eligibility requirements for athletic and other extra-curricular activities.
- The National Association of State Boards of Education (NASBE) and the Institute for Global Ethics (IGE) collaborated in developing a special theme issue of the *State Education Standard* on “Promoting and Supporting Standards for High School Interscholastic Athletics in an Era of Reform.” The August 2007 issue updates NASBE’s 2004 Athletic Commission report and presents original case studies on three high schools that are particularly effective at keeping high school athletics aligned with their school system’s values, mission, and academic aspirations. Access this and other issues of the *Standard* at nasbe.org/our-resources/publications/the-state-education-standard/.
- The Arizona Interscholastic Association (AIA) and the Josephson Institute actively promote Pursuing Victory with Honor: Creating a Healthy Sport Experience, a nationwide initiative that helps schools establish, sustain, and implement the 16 pillars of the Arizona Sports Summit Accord. Visit www.aiaacademy.org/pursuing_victory.php or www.charactercounts.org/sports.
- The Maine Center for Sport and Coaching (MCSC) provides professional development for coaches at all levels and guides the implementation of Sports Done Right, a community action-based model for improving interscholastic and youth sports through positive learning experiences. Visit www.sportsdonerightmaine.org.

Sports in America

The love of sports is deeply embedded in our national consciousness. The values of millions of participants and spectators are directly and dramatically influenced by the values conveyed by organized sports. Thus, sports are a major social force that shapes the quality and character of the American culture.

— Arizona Interscholastic Association⁹⁵

- The Washington [State] Interscholastic Activities Association (WIAA) promotes a statewide sportsmanship and citizenship program called Just Play Fair! that is supported by the Washington State Board of Education and several state education associations. Access the program manual at www.wiaa.com/subcontent.aspx?SecID=348.
- The National Federation of State High School Associations (NFHS) and its 50 member state high school athletic/activity associations publish playing rules in 16 sports and provides guidance on other after-school activities. Visit www.nfhs.org.
- The National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) produces *The NCAA Guide for the College Bound Student-Athlete*, a summary of the rules and regulations of related to recruiting, eligibility, financial aid, and college freshman eligibility requirements. The guide is available at www.ncaastudent.org/NCAA_Guide.pdf.
- The National School Boards Association (NSBA) published a *Legal Handbook on School Athletics* that addresses a broad range of legal issues, including discipline of school athletes, eligibility rules, participation of nonpublic school children, testing for substance abuse, Title IX, prayer at athletic events, liability for spectators, and athletic personnel and volunteers. Look for copies at online booksellers.

Model Policy: Interscholastic Athletics

GOALS. Interscholastic athletics are a valuable aspect of the educational experience. In addition to supporting the academic achievement of scholar-athletes, the district/school shall actively encourage students to prize wholesome competition, an active lifestyle, and core values of good character, including sportsmanship, teamwork, excellence, discipline, respect, responsibility, and fairness.

INTERSCHOLASTIC ATHLETIC PROGRAM. The district/school shall offer a diverse selection of competitive team and individual sports to **ALL** students at no cost to families to the extent that staffing, facilities, transportation, and other resources permit. The athletic interests and abilities of male and female students shall be equally and effectively accommodated. The program shall be managed under the general supervision of a district/school athletic director and adhere to the policies, rules, regulations, and schedules of the state interscholastic athletics/activities association.

All sports programs must be conducted in a manner that enhances the academic, emotional, social, physical, and ethical development of scholar-athletes and fosters good character and positive life skills. This mission shall be communicated to students, families, and staff in the school handbook and conveyed to the public in other appropriate ways.

CODE OF CONDUCT. The district/school shall adopt, publicize, and enforce a code of conduct that addresses standards of acceptable behavior of students, staff, and spectators at school athletic events. At the start of each athletic competition, the announcer shall review expectations for appropriate conduct. Administrators, coaches, aides, and other athletic program staff shall consistently model sportsmanlike attitudes and behaviors and will ensure that scholar-athletes refrain from disrespectful conduct, such as verbal abuse of opponents and officials, profane or belligerent insults, taunting, or inappropriate celebrations. Athletes or spectators who do not behave in a sportsmanlike way may be expelled from the school grounds.

ATHLETIC AND EXTRACURRICULAR PROGRAM ELIGIBILITY. School authorities should encourage and support the voluntary participation of all students in athletics and other extracurricular activities. Schools/districts may establish and equitably enforce reasonable eligibility requirements and probationary periods for participation in extracurricular activities. Such requirements may be based on:

- appropriate age;
- enrollment status or residency;
- satisfactory academic performance;
- acceptable attendance record;
- continued good conduct, including abstinence from gambling and the use of steroids, performance-enhancing substances, tobacco, alcohol, and other harmful drugs;

- agreement to testing for substance abuse;
- other criteria essential to safety and fairness; or
- the specific requirements of particular activities or sports.

A student with a chronic health problem or other disabling condition shall be permitted to participate in any extracurricular activity, including interscholastic athletics. The school shall make reasonable accommodations, if necessary, to allow the student to participate. *A student enrolled in a home school, charter school, or online cyberschool shall be permitted to participate at no cost in one extracurricular sport, club, or activity each school term, if the student is otherwise qualified to participate in the activity.*

Eligibility requirements and appeal procedures shall be published in a regularly updated student activities handbook that is annually distributed to students and families. Students denied permission to participate in an extracurricular activity shall receive a prompt explanation of the reasons, have an opportunity to respond, and be provided with opportunities to reestablish their eligibility.

PRE-PARTICIPATION PHYSICAL EXAMINATION. Middle and high school students wishing to participate in after-school sports or other activities involving vigorous physical activity are required to complete a pre-participation physical examination by a licensed physician within 12 months prior to commencing the sport or activity. The examination shall be consistent with the recommendations of the National Athletic Trainers' Association's "Appropriate Medical Care for Secondary School-Age Athletes" and include personal and family history-taking, updated annually, and a screening physical examination conducted by a physician at least every two years.

REQUIRED RECORDS. The parents or legal guardians of a student who chooses to participate in intramural programs, interscholastic athletics, or school-linked community recreation programs shall be informed in writing of potential risks associated with a given activity. Schools must keep documentation on file for each participating student that includes:

- a statement signed by the student's parent/guardian granting permission for the student's participation;
- emergency contact information for the student's parents/guardians and health care providers;
- certification that the student has completed a preparticipation physical examination by a licensed physician within the past 12 months and has been cleared to participate in specific sports or physical activities;
- proof of current accident or health insurance coverage; and

- a release signed by a parent/guardian that absolves the school or district from liability for injuries that may result from participation in school-sponsored physical activities unless negligence on the part of staff or coaches is proven.

STAFFING. The school athletic director and all head coaches, who may or may not be certified teachers or employed by the school/district, shall satisfactorily complete courses or professional development programs consistent with Level 3 of the *National Standards for Sport Coaches, 2nd edition* within one year of appointment to their positions. Associate coaches shall satisfactorily complete courses or professional development programs consistent with Level 2 of the *National Standards* within one year of appointment to their positions.

Family members and other adult volunteers are encouraged to become involved with physical activity clubs, intramural sports, and interscholastic athletic activities. Volunteer coaches and athletic aides shall be instructed about relevant state, district, and school policies, procedures, and standards of conduct; and satisfactorily complete a training workshop consistent with Level 1 of the *National Standards for Sport Coaches*, a drug screening test, and a criminal background check before being permitted to supervise students.

All schools with an interscholastic athletics program shall establish an Athletic Medicine Unit that includes a licensed physician director, a certified athletic trainer, and other necessary personnel. All athletic contests shall be appropriately staffed with personnel who can provide for on-site recognition, evaluation, and immediate treatment of injury and illness and make appropriate referrals for additional care. The school shall develop and implement a comprehensive emergency action plan and facilitate rehabilitation and reconditioning of injured scholar-athletes.

All athletic program staff and volunteers shall comply with the regulations, rules, and enforcement measures codified in a regularly updated coach's handbook. Athletic program staff and volunteers shall also ensure that their education and character development responsibilities are never compromised to achieve sports performance goals and that the academic, social, emotional, physical and ethical well-being of scholar-athletes is always placed above desires and pressures to win.

HEAD INJURIES. Any athlete who is suspected of having a concussion must be removed from play until evaluated by a medical professional trained in sports-related concussions. Coaches and staff will be trained to identify symptoms related to head injuries.

POLICY EVALUATION. The school athletic director/school health coordinator/other shall regularly monitor, evaluate, and submit an annual report to the school health advisory council/board of education/other on the implementation and effectiveness of this policy. The evaluation may include satisfaction surveys of scholar-athletes, their families, and athletic event spectators. The report shall include recommendations for improvement.

- The Office for Civil Rights (OCR) of the U.S. Department of Education provides technical assistance to help schools achieve voluntary compliance with federal civil rights laws. For more information visit www.ed.gov/OCR.
- The Office of Safe and Drug-Free Schools (OSDFS) of the U.S. Department of Education administers a School-Based Student Drug Testing program, which awards grants to school districts to develop and implement mandatory random or voluntary drug-testing programs. For more information visit www.ed.gov/programs/drugtesting.

COACH EDUCATION AND TRAINING

- The National Association for Sport and Physical Education (NASPE) has produced numerous valuable publications related to coaching, including *Coaching Issues and Dilemmas: Character Building through Sport Participation* and *Quality Coaches, Quality Sports: The National Standards for Sport Coaches*. The national standards are summarized at www.aahperd.org/naspe/standards/nationalStandards/sportCoaches.cfm.
- The American Sport Education Program (ASEP) develops and delivers online and instructor-led courses and resources for coaches, officials, sport administrators, athletes, and parents of athletes. Visit www.asep.com.
- The National High School Coaches Association (NHSCA) aims to provide leadership and support to coaches and their programs. Go to www.nhsca.com.
- The National Athletic Trainers' Association (NATA) facilitated the development of *Appropriate Medical Care for Secondary School-Age Athletes Task Force, Consensus Statement: Appropriate Medical Care for the Secondary School-Age Athlete* (2004). It is available online at www.nata.org/sites/default/files/AppropriateMedCare4SecondarySchoolAgeAthlete.pdf.
- The American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) periodically releases policy statements, reports, and parent handouts that synthesize credible research findings and represent the current scientific and medical consensus on youth athletics. These resources are found at aappolicy.aappublications.org. Some policy statements related to athletics include the following:
 - Athletic Participation by Children and Adolescents Who Have Systemic Hypertension (2010);
 - Overuse Injuries, Overtraining, and Burnout in Child and Adolescent Athletes (2007);
 - Promotion of Healthy Weight-Control Practices in Young Athletes (2005);
 - Use of Performance-Enhancing Substances (2005);
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 - “Response to Cardiac Arrest and Selected Life-Threatening Medical Emergencies: The Medical Emergency Response Plan for Schools. A Statement for Healthcare Providers, Policymakers, School Administrators, and Community Leaders,” published in *Pediatrics* 133, no. 1 (January 2004).
- CDC's Office on Smoking and Health (OSH) offers resources for tobacco-free sports initiatives at www.cdc.gov/tobacco/youth/sports/index.htm, including the following:
 - *The Tobacco-Free Sports Playbook* provides examples of promoting sports participation as a healthy and positive alternative to tobacco use. Fact sheets and posters help support the tobacco-free sports concept.
 - The *Smoke Free Soccer Coach's Manual*, which is available in English and Spanish, features creatively designed soccer drills that help coaches integrate tobacco control and healthy lifestyle messages into their practices.
- The National Spit Tobacco Education Program (N-STEP), a collaborative effort of Oral Health America, Major League Baseball, Major League Baseball Players Association, American Baseball Coaches Association, and Little League Baseball, assists with the development of state and community coalitions involving organized dentistry. For information and materials, visit oralhealthamerica.org/programs/nstep.

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