

## Policy Component: Physical Education and Physical Activity

### Goal

School districts will provide students with a variety of opportunities for daily physical activity and quality physical education. The district's physical activity component will provide opportunities for every student to develop the knowledge and skills for specific physical activities, and to maintain physical fitness, to regularly participate in physical activity, and to understand the short- and long-term benefits of a physically active and healthy lifestyle.

### Rationale

Physical education plays a critical role in helping children learn necessary skills and develop confidence in their physical abilities. Schools can help children and adolescents become more physically active and fit by providing a wide range of accessible, safe and affordable opportunities to be active. Appropriate practices guided by competent, knowledgeable and supportive adults influence the extent to which students choose to engage in activities, enjoy physical activity and develop healthy lifestyles.

### Policy Recommendations

Policies for Physical Education and Physical Activity will address the following areas:

- Standards-Based, Sequential Physical Education
- Daily Physical Education Prekindergarten to Grade 12
- Daily Recess
- Physical Activity Opportunities Before and After School
- Physical Activity and Punishment
- Safe Routes to School
- Use of School Facilities Outside of School Hours
- Incorporating Physical Activity into the Classroom

Specific guidance regarding the implementation of each Physical Education and Physical Activity policy recommendation follows under *Implementation Guidance*, after this section. Resources to assist with implementation of each policy recommendation are found in *Resources* at the end of this section.

*This section provides **recommendations** (not requirements) for policy language for Physical Education and Physical Activity. This language represents recommended best practice for developing school nutrition and physical activity policies. School districts may choose to use the policy recommendations as written or revise them as needed to meet local needs and reflect community priorities. When developing nutrition and physical activity policies, districts will need to take into account their unique circumstances, challenges, opportunities and available resources. Policies should meet local needs and be adapted to the health concerns, food preferences and dietary practices of different ethnic groups.*

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### **Policy Recommendations**

#### **Standards-Based, Sequential Physical Education**

Physical education shall be standards-based, using national or state-developed standards, such as Connecticut's *Healthy and Balanced Living Curriculum Framework* and National Association for Sport and Physical Education (NASPE) guidelines. Physical education classes shall be sequential, building from year to year, and content will include motor skills, concepts and strategies, engagement in physical activity, physical fitness, responsible behavior and benefits of physical activity. Students shall be able to demonstrate competency through application of skills, health wellness literacy, concepts and plans, and advocacy.

#### **Daily Physical Education Prekindergarten to Grade 12**

All students in prekindergarten to Grade 12, including students with disabilities and special health-care needs and in alternative educational settings, shall receive daily physical education (150 minutes per week for elementary school students and 225 minutes per week for middle and high school students) for the entire school year. All physical education shall be taught by a certified physical education teacher. Student involvement in other activities involving physical activity (e.g., interscholastic or intramural sports) shall not be substituted for meeting the physical education requirement. Students shall spend at least 50 percent of physical education class time participating in moderate to vigorous physical activity.

#### **Daily Recess**

All elementary school students shall have at least 20 minutes a day of supervised recess, preferably outdoors, during which schools should encourage moderate to vigorous physical activity and provide space, equipment and an environment that is conducive to safe and enjoyable activity. Districts shall ensure that students with special physical and cognitive needs have equal physical activity opportunities, with appropriate assistance and services. Districts shall discourage extended periods (i.e., periods of two or more hours) of inactivity. When activities, such as mandatory schoolwide testing, make it necessary for students to remain indoors for long periods of time, schools shall give students periodic breaks during which they are encouraged to get up from their chairs and be moderately active. Districts shall prohibit withholding of recess or the use of exercise as punishment, and shall develop alternative practices for promoting appropriate behavior. Recess shall not be withheld as a consequence of incomplete school assignments.

#### **Physical Activity Opportunities Before and After School**

All elementary, middle and high schools shall offer extracurricular physical activity programs, such as physical activity clubs or intramural programs. All high schools, and middle schools as appropriate, shall offer interscholastic sports programs. Districts shall offer a range of activities that meet the needs, interests and abilities of all students, including boys, girls, students with physical and cognitive disabilities, and students with special health care needs. After-school, child care and enrichment programs shall provide and encourage – verbally and through the provision of space, equipment and activities – daily periods of moderate to vigorous physical activity for all participants.

#### **Physical Activity and Punishment**

Teachers and other school and community personnel shall not use physical activity or exercise (e.g., running laps and pushups) or withhold opportunities for physical activity (e.g., recess and physical education) as punishment. Recess or other opportunities for physical activity shall not be withheld as a measure to enforce the completion of academic work. Appropriate alternate strategies shall be developed as consequences for negative or undesirable behaviors.

**Policy Recommendations**

***Safe Routes to School***

When appropriate, the district shall work together with local public works, public safety and/or police departments to make it safer and easier for students to walk and bike to school.

***Use of School Facilities Outside of School Hours***

School spaces and facilities shall be available to students, staff members and community members for physical activity before, during and after the school day, on weekends and during school vacations. These spaces and facilities shall also be available to community agencies and organizations offering physical activity and nutrition programs. School policies concerning safety shall apply at all times.

***Incorporating Physical Activity into the Classroom***

Students in all grades shall be provided with opportunities for physical activity beyond and in addition to physical education. Classroom health education shall complement physical education by reinforcing the knowledge and self-management skills needed to maintain a physically active lifestyle and to reduce time spent on sedentary activities, such as watching television. Opportunities for physical activity shall be incorporated into other subject lessons and can be used as reinforcement, reward and celebration for achievement, positive behavior and completion of assignments. Classroom teachers shall provide short physical activity breaks between lessons or classes, as appropriate.



## Implementation Guidance

### *Standards-Based, Sequential Physical Education*

#### **Curriculum Development**

The Connecticut State Department of Education (SDE) *Physical Education – A Guide to K-12 Program Development* (2000) is a comprehensive guide to program development. The SDE *Healthy and Balanced Living Curriculum Framework* presents a vision for healthy and balanced living by showing the interrelated concepts and skills in comprehensive school health and physical education. The purpose of the curriculum framework is to guide the development of curriculums that challenge and motivate students and contribute to student learning and achievement. Districts are encouraged to use the SDE *Healthy and Balanced Living Curriculum Framework* as a best practice document to develop their physical education curriculum.

The *Healthy and Balanced Living Curriculum Framework* provides guidance for curriculum development in comprehensive school health education and physical education and shows connections between these two content areas. The curriculum framework leads students to make connections and apply the concepts and skills of health and physical education for the purpose of developing and maintaining well-being. The design of the curriculum framework begins to move instruction in this direction.

The *Healthy and Balanced Living Curriculum Framework* standards provide guidance for teachers on how to teach students to live actively, energetically and fully in a state of well-being and what concepts and skills are necessary to accept responsibility for self and well-being. The comprehensive school health education and physical education standards are based on the *National Health Education Standards* and *Moving into the Future: The National Standards for Physical Education, 2nd edition*.

#### **Differentiating Physical Education and Physical Activity**

While physical education and physical activity are often used interchangeably, they differ in important ways, with both being necessary to contribute to the development of healthy, active children. The National Association for Sport and Physical Education (NASPE) provides the definitions below.

“School **physical education**, taught through a well-defined curriculum by highly qualified physical education teachers, offers the best opportunity to provide physical activity to all children and to teach them the skills and knowledge needed to establish and sustain an active lifestyle. Physical education teachers assess student knowledge, motor and social skills, and provide instruction in a safe, supportive environment. Based on sequence of learning, physical education should not be compared to or confused with other physical activity experiences such as recess, intramurals, or recreational endeavors. A quality physical education program must provide learning opportunities, appropriate instruction, and meaningful and challenging content for all children. Appropriate instructional practices in physical education recognize children’s development and movement abilities.

**Physical activity** is bodily movement of any type and may include recreational, fitness and sport activities such as jumping rope, playing soccer, lifting weights, as well as daily activities such as walking to the store, taking the stairs or raking leaves. Similar health benefits to those received during a physical education class are possible during physical activity bouts when the participant is active at an intensity that increases heart rate and produces heavier than normal breathing.”

### Physical Activity Recommendations for Children

The Dietary Guidelines for Americans recommend that children and adolescents engage in at least 60 minutes of physical activity on most, preferably all, days of the week. The National Association for Physical Education and Sport has developed specific physical activity recommendations for children.

- Children should accumulate at least 60 minutes, and up to several hours, of age-appropriate physical activity on all, or most days of the week. This daily accumulation should include moderate and vigorous physical activity with the majority of the time being spent in activity that is intermittent in nature.
- Children should participate in several bouts of physical activity lasting 15 minutes or more each day.
- Children should participate each day in a variety of age-appropriate physical activities designed to achieve optimal health, wellness, fitness, and performance benefits.
- Extended periods (periods of two hours or more) of inactivity are discouraged for children, especially during the daytime hours.

Reprinted with permission from *Physical Activity for Children: A Statement of Guidelines for Children Ages 5-12, 2nd Edition*. National Association for Sport and Physical Education, 2004.

[http://www.aahperd.org/naspe/template.cfm?template=ns\\_children.html](http://www.aahperd.org/naspe/template.cfm?template=ns_children.html)

## Daily Physical Education Prekindergarten to Grade 12

### Quality Physical Education

NASPE recommends that quality, daily physical education which is developmentally and instructionally appropriate be available to all children. Appropriate instructional practices in physical education recognize children's development and movement abilities. Quality physical education incorporates practices, derived from current research and documented teaching experiences, into a method of instruction that maximizes opportunities for learning and success. NASPE's publication *Appropriate Practices for Elementary School Physical Education* (2000) highlights these best-known practices. National content standards, specifying what students "should know and be able to do," are featured in NASPE's *Moving into the Future: National Physical Education Standards: A Guide to Content and Assessment* (1995) and *Moving into the Future: National Physical Education Standards, 2nd Edition* (2004). Connecticut's recommended content standards, curricular outcomes and sample performance indicators by grade cluster are contained in *the Healthy and Balanced Living Curriculum Framework* (Connecticut State Department of Education, 2006). Together these documents provide programmatic support with the ultimate goal of ensuring that children are physically educated. *Physical Education: A Guide to K-12 Program Development* (Connecticut State Department of Education, 2000) includes program development guidance for quality physical education.

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### Implementation Guidance

#### Components of a Quality Physical Education Program

In *What Constitutes a Quality Physical Education Program? NASPE Sets the Standard*, NASPE defines the importance of a quality physical education program.

“NASPE believes that every student from kindergarten through grade 12 should have the opportunity to participate in quality comprehensive physical education. It is the unique role of quality physical education programs to develop the health-related fitness, physical competence, and cognitive understanding about physical activity for all students so that they can adopt healthy and physically active lifestyles. Quality physical education programs are important because they provide learning experiences that meet the developmental needs of youngsters, which help improve a child’s mental alertness, academic performance, readiness to learn and enthusiasm for learning.”

According to NASPE guidelines, a high-quality physical education program is developed and led by qualified teachers and includes opportunity to learn, meaningful content and appropriate instruction. The criteria for quality programs include pupil-teacher ratios equivalent to that in the classroom context, as well as adequate equipment to promote maximum practice time. Quality physical education programs follow the national standards for physical education as outlined in:

- *Moving into the Future: National Standards for Physical Education, 2nd Edition*. National Association for Sport and Physical Education, 2004.  
<http://www.aahperd.org/naspe/template.cfm?template=publications-nationalstandards.html>

Additional resources to help districts develop quality physical education programs include NASPE’s *Appropriate Practices* and *Opportunity to Learn* documents. These resources are found in *Guidelines and Standards* and *Curriculum, Best Practices and Programs* under *Resources* at the end of this section.

#### Teacher Qualifications

A high-quality physical education program is taught by trained professionals who:

- meet state and national standards;
- are certified in physical education; and
- serve as positive role models of personal health, fitness, skills and the enjoyment of participating in physical activity. (For additional information on teachers as role models for physical activity, see *Staff Members as Role Models* in *Section 3 – Nutrition Education and Promotion*.)

In Connecticut, certified physical education teachers deliver the majority of instruction in their discipline. Skilled physical educators play an important role in helping students master important subjects, both as providers of instruction and as expert partners with other teachers who incorporate physical education into their teaching. The teaching competencies required for Connecticut physical education teachers can be found in Connecticut’s *Physical Education: A Guide to K-12 Program Development* at <http://www.sde.ct.gov/sde/cwp/view.asp?a=2618&q=320982>.

### **Components of a Quality Physical Education Program**

#### **Opportunity to Learn**

- Instructional periods totaling 150 minutes per week (elementary) and 225 minutes per week (middle and secondary school) during the school day for the entire school year
- Qualified physical education specialist providing a developmentally appropriate program
- Teacher to pupil ratio no greater than 1:25 for optimal instruction
- Adequate and safe equipment and facilities
- A comprehensive curriculum that reflects national/state physical education standards
- Appropriate facilities, equipment and materials.

#### **Meaningful Content**

- Instruction in a variety of motor skills that are designed to enhance the physical, mental, and social/emotional development of every child
- Fitness education and assessment (e.g., the *Connecticut Physical Fitness Assessment, Second Generation*) to help children understand, improve and/or maintain their physical well-being
- Development of cognitive concepts about motor skill and fitness
- Opportunities to improve their emerging social and cooperative skills and gain a multicultural perspective
- Promotion of ongoing, appropriate physical activity throughout life

#### **Appropriate Instruction**

- Full inclusion of all students
- Maximum practice opportunities for class activities
- Well-designed lessons that facilitate student learning
- Out-of-school assignments that support learning and practice
- No use of physical activity for punishment
- Regular assessment to monitor and reinforce student learning

Adapted with permission from *What Constitutes a Quality Physical Education Program? NASPE Sets the Standard*. National Association for Sport and Physical Education, Council on Physical Education for Children, 2004.  
<http://www.aahperd.org/naspe/template.cfm?template=qualityPePrograms.html>

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#### Content

Physical activity is crucial to the development and maintenance of good health. The goal of physical education is to develop physically educated individuals who have the knowledge, skills and confidence to enjoy a lifetime of healthful physical activity. In *Moving into the Future: National Physical Education Standards*, NASPE defines a physically educated child or adolescent as one who:

- has learned the skills necessary to perform a variety of physical activities;
- knows the implications of and benefits from involvement in physical activities;
- participates regularly in physical activity;
- is physically fit; and
- values physical activity and its contribution to a healthful lifestyle.

NASPE further defines the content standards for quality physical education programs. “Physical education programs should help children and adolescents obtain the knowledge and skills they need to become physically educated. Six national standards and accompanying benchmarks exist for determining whether a child or adolescent has the knowledge and skills needed to be considered physically educated:

1. Demonstrates competency in motor skills and movement patterns needed to perform a variety of physical activities;
2. Demonstrates understanding of movement concepts, principles, strategies, and tactics as they apply to the learning and performance of physical activities;
3. Participates regularly in physical activity;
4. Achieves and maintains a health-enhancing level of physical fitness;
5. Exhibits responsible personal and social behavior that respects self and others in physical activity settings; and
6. Values physical activity for health, enjoyment, challenge, self-expression, and/or social interaction.”

The benchmarks for each of these standards provide goals or targets for assessing the child’s or adolescent’s learning or achievement, designing instructional units and lessons, and selecting learning experiences and movement activities.

#### Instructional Practices

Physical education teachers should include the following instructional practices in their efforts to help children and adolescents become physically educated:

- plan for and provide instruction that is based on students’ individual needs and interests, and supports a variety of learning styles;
- include exposure to and skill development in a variety of experiences, e.g., games, fitness and sports;
- ensure that a high proportion of instructional time is devoted to learning and practice;
- conduct authentic and meaningful assessment while skills are forming as well as culmination assessments;
- provide a learning environment and an approach to teaching that are inclusive and challenging;

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- incorporate concepts and principles in all domains of learning throughout physical education, and advocate for the infusion of concepts throughout all other academic subjects;
- provide regular and systematic feedback that is personal, constructive, and meaningful;
- refrain from using exercise as punishment and avoid withholding instruction and opportunities to learn as a consequence of behavior;
- engage in teaching practices that do not embarrass, discriminate or otherwise dishearten students or single them out for negative treatment;
- give assignments that are appropriate and meaningful to students' learning, with real-life application of information and skills; and
- maintain an emphasis on the enjoyment, fun and personal satisfaction that comes from competent, confident and joyful movement.

### Daily Recess

#### Guidelines for Recess

Quality physical education and daily recess are necessary components of the school curriculum that enable students to develop physical competence, health-related fitness, self-responsibility, and enjoyment of physical activity so that they can be physically active for a lifetime. Recess should not replace physical education. Recess is unstructured playtime where children have choices, develop rules for play and release energy and stress. It is an opportunity for children to practice or use skills developed in physical education class. The following guidelines for recess are adapted with permission from NASPE's *Recess in Elementary Schools* (2001).

- Schools should develop schedules that provide for supervised, daily recess in pre-kindergarten through Grades 5 or 6.
- The use of facilities for recess activities should not interfere with instructional classes (separate locations for each activity).
- If possible, recess should not be scheduled back-to-back with physical education classes.
- Recess should not be viewed as a reward but a necessary educational support component for all children. Students should not be denied recess as a means of punishment or to make up work.
- Periods of moderate physical activity should be encouraged and facilitated, while recognizing that recess should provide opportunities for children to make choices.
- Children should be encouraged to be physically active at recess so that recess provides some of children's daily recommended activity time.
- Schools should provide the facilities, equipment and supervision necessary to ensure that the recess experience is productive, safe and enjoyable. Developmentally appropriate equipment, as outlined in NASPE's *Guidelines for Facilities, Equipment and Instructional Materials*, should be made available. Adults should regularly check equipment and facilities for safety.
- Physical education teachers and classroom teachers should teach children positive skills for self-responsibility during recess.

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- Adults should direct or intervene when a child's physical or emotional safety is an issue. Bullying or aggressive behavior must not be allowed, and all safety rules should be enforced.

#### Recess Before Lunch

Scheduling recess before lunch is an effective strategy to increase meal consumption and promote better behavior. Students who play before they eat have improved behavior on the playground, in the cafeteria and classroom. They waste less food and drink more milk, which leads to increased nutrient intake. The cafeteria atmosphere is improved during mealtime, and children are more settled and ready to learn upon returning to the classroom. *Recess Before Lunch: A Guide to Success* (Montana Office of Public Instruction, 2003) provides schools with strategies for promoting and implementing recess before lunch (<http://www.opi.state.mt.us/schoolfood/recessBL.html>). Additional resources are found in *Recess* under *Resources* at the end of this section.

#### Physical Activity Opportunities Before and After School

Physical activity in school is important, but opportunities for children and adolescents to participate in regular physical activity (e.g., intramural sports, yoga classes, ski club and hiking club) should extend beyond the school day. These opportunities can assist children and adolescents with meeting daily physical activity recommendations. The following considerations are important when assessing or organizing extracurricular physical activity programs at school or in nonschool settings (adapted with permission from *Bright Futures in Practice: Physical Activity*, National Center for Education in Maternal and Child Health):

- Children's and adolescents' interests are important when planning physical activities.
- Children and adolescents need successful physical activity experiences.
- Children and adolescents need positive feedback that focuses on participation, not outcomes (e.g., a child who actively participates during a soccer game should be complimented, regardless of the game's outcome).
- Effective physical activity programs focus on enjoyment.
- Children and adolescents need positive role models (e.g., parents and other adults who participate in physical activity themselves and with others).
- Children's and adolescents' physical activity interests may differ from those of adults.
- Children and adolescents benefit when they are encouraged to participate in physical activity.
- Physical activity programs should help children and adolescents increase physical competence and self-confidence.
- Physical activity goals should be realistic.

A summary of the characteristics of quality extracurricular physical activity programs for children or adolescents is found on the next two pages.

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**Characteristics of Quality Extracurricular Physical Activity Programs**

Physical education class is not the only opportunity to help students engage in and enjoy physical activity. In order for positive attitudes toward physical activity to be developed for a lifetime, children and adolescents need ample opportunities to develop skills and interests. They also need regular opportunities to use the skills they develop. It is important that children and adolescents have many opportunities for physical movement, engagement in structured and unstructured play, sport and recreational activities.

Schools and communities can provide numerous opportunities, as well as physical facilities, for students to engage in structured and unstructured physical activity. Structured activities may include organized individual and team sports and instructional programs (e.g., youth sports leagues, instruction in dance, gymnastics, swimming, self-defense, and other fitness activities) during after-school programs (e.g., school-based, after-school and child-care programs, Boys' and Girls' Clubs, YMCA, YWCA, Jewish Community Centers). Such activities and programs should be staffed by qualified, caring adults who are positive role models and have been trained in best practices in working with, coaching and/or supervising children during physical activity. Unstructured activities can include self- and parent-directed activities such as hiking, bicycling and neighborhood play.



A summary of the characteristics of quality extracurricular physical activity programs for children and adolescents is found on the next page. Guidelines for assessing and organizing school and community programs to promote physical activity for children and adolescents include:

- *Guidelines for School and Community Programs to Promote Lifelong Physical Activity Among Young People*, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 1997:  
<http://www.cdc.gov/HealthyYouth/physicalactivity/guidelines/>
- *Guidelines for After-School Physical Activity Intramural and Sport Programs*, National Association for Sports and Physical Education, 2005:  
[http://www.aahperd.org/naspe/pdf\\_files/pos\\_papers/intramural\\_guidelines.pdf](http://www.aahperd.org/naspe/pdf_files/pos_papers/intramural_guidelines.pdf)

These guidelines address policy, environment, physical education, health education, extracurricular activities, parental involvement, personnel training, health services, community programs and program evaluation. Additional resources are included in *Guidelines and Standards* under *Resources* at the end of this section.

### Implementation Guidance

#### **Characteristics of Quality Extracurricular Physical Activity Programs for Children or Adolescents**

##### **Philosophy**

- The program has a written philosophy or mission statement that incorporates skill development, educational focus, fair play and enjoyment.
- Fun is a priority.
- Performance and success are based on age- and developmentally appropriate standards.
- Fair play, teamwork and good sportsmanship are taught and reinforced.

##### **Administration and Organization**

- There are published guidelines for child, adolescent, parent, coach and spectator involvement.
- Coaches are carefully selected and trained, undergo a background check, meet certification requirements and are monitored by qualified administrators. Coaches who do not meet certification requirements are provided with additional training or are removed.
- Sufficient and appropriate safety equipment is available for all program participants.
- All aspects of children's and adolescents' growth and development (e.g., size, emotional development, skill level) are considered when practice groups or teams are selected.

##### **Safety**

- Facilities are clean.
- Equipment and practice and competition areas are safe and in good condition; regular inspections are conducted; and maintenance and replacement policies are enforced.
- Appropriate safety equipment (e.g., mats, helmets and wrist, elbow and knee guards) is provided.
- Coaches and staff members are trained in injury prevention, first aid, cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) and automatic emergency defibrillator (AED) use.
- The ratio of coaches and staff members to children and adolescents is appropriate. The ratio allows for adequate instruction and supervision and ensures safety at all times. (Ratios vary depending on the physical activity and on the age and skill levels of children and adolescents.)

##### **Child's or Adolescent's Readiness to Participate**

- The group or team's interest level, desire to have fun, skill level and emotional development match those of the child or adolescent.
- The program's level of intensity and competitiveness matches the child's or adolescent's needs.
- All children and adolescents are treated with respect and are given meaningful opportunities to learn skills and participate fully.

Adapted with permission from *Bright Futures in Practice: Physical Activity (Tool D: Characteristics of Excellent Physical Activity Programs for Children and Adolescents)*. National Center for Education in Maternal and Child Health, Georgetown University, 2001. <http://www.brightfutures.org/physicalactivity/tools/d.html>

### **Physical Activity and Punishment**

One of the prime goals of physical education programs, exercise and opportunities to engage in physical activity is to provide students with positive experiences that will motivate them to pursue and develop active lifestyles. The practice of using physical activity as punishment develops student attitudes that are contrary to this goal.

Districts should review their policies regarding physical activity and punishment to ensure that exercise is not being used as punishment (e.g., doing push-ups or running laps) and that opportunities for physical activity are not being withheld (e.g., not being permitted to play with the rest of the class, or being kept from recess or physical education class as a consequence for behavior or incomplete assignments). Policies for athletic and intramural programs should also be reviewed.

Districts should develop purposeful, educationally sound strategies that provide teachers, coaches, supervisors and other school personnel with appropriate actions and measures that are consistent with district philosophy to reinforce positive behaviors and messages while discouraging undesirable behaviors. Teachers do not punish children with reading and then expect them to develop a love of reading. Neither should teachers punish with exercise and expect children to develop a love of activity.

### **Safe Routes to School**

When appropriate, school districts can work with community partners to make it safer and easier for students to walk and bike to school. Ideas for safe routes to school include:

- establishing a walking club;
- initiating a community “walking school bus” (<http://www.walkingbus.org/>); and
- organizing neighborhood watch groups or cooperatives to take turns walking children to the bus stop or to school.

Several websites contain additional ideas, strategies and resources on developing, implementing and promoting safe routes to school. These include:

- *Pedestrian and Bicycle Information Center*: A clearinghouse for information and resources regarding pedestrian and bicycle issues. <http://www.bicyclinginfo.org/> and <http://www.walkinginfo.org/>
- *Safe Routes to School Programs*: Information and resources on programs to improve the health of kids and the community by making walking and bicycling to school safer, easier and more enjoyable. <http://www.saferoutesinfo.org/>
- *International Walk to School Week*: Information about a worldwide program to promote physical activity. <http://www.walktoschool-usa.org/>

Additional resources are found in *Safe Routes to School* under *Resources* at the end of this section.

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#### ***Use of School Facilities Outside of School Hours***

Schools that function as centers of their communities must be accessible to the people who benefit from them. Well-planned school facilities can support the teaching and learning process and activities, as well as meet the specific needs of different communities. Model policies for use of schools as centers of community activities can be found in the following resources:

- *Recommended Policies for Public School Facilities*, Building Education Success Together (BEST) Collaborative, 2004: <http://www.21csf.org/csf-home/publications/modelpolicies/PlanningSectionMay2005.pdf>
- *Recommendations to Increase Physical Activity in Communities*, Task Force on Community Preventive Services, Community Guide Branch, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2002: <http://www.thecommunityguide.org/pa/pa-ajpm-recs.pdf>
- *The Community Guide: Promoting Physical Activity*, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention: <http://www.thecommunityguide.org/pa/index.html>

Adequate facilities and equipment are critical to support the success of physical activity programs in school facilities. These programs may be modified and adapted to meet the budget and space available. NASPE's *Guidelines for After-School Physical Activity and Intramural Sport Programs* (2001) provides basic guidelines for facilities and equipment.

- Facilities should be adequate to meet the needs, interests and number of participants.
- Safety standards must be considered and met for each activity in the program; damaged equipment should be repaired or discarded.
- The amount of equipment depends upon specific programs, but should meet the needs of participants so that programs can serve the maximum number of participants under established safety standards.
- Equipment should be modified according to age, size and/or physical ability of the participants.
- Regular inspections should be implemented to ensure safety in all activities.

Detailed best practice guidelines for the use of facilities and equipment outside of school hours, as well as guidelines for the health and safety of program participants, can be found in NASPE's *Guidelines for After-School Physical Activity and Intramural Sport Programs*, available at [http://www.aahperd.org/naspe/pdf\\_files/pos\\_papers/intramural\\_guidelines.pdf](http://www.aahperd.org/naspe/pdf_files/pos_papers/intramural_guidelines.pdf).

### ***Incorporating Physical Activity into the Classroom***

For students to receive the nationally recommended amount of daily physical activity (at least 60 minutes per day) and to fully embrace regular physical activity as a personal behavior, students need opportunities for physical activity beyond physical education class. Physical activity can easily be incorporated into the classroom, as part of the learning process or as an energizing break (see *Physical Activity Breaks* on the next page). The resources below provide ideas for physical activity breaks in the classroom setting.

- *Brain Breaks: A Physical Activity Idea Book for Elementary Classroom Teachers*, Michigan Department of Education, 2005: <http://www.emc.cmich.edu/brainbreaks/>
- *Energizers*, East Carolina University: <http://www.ncpe4me.com/energizers.html>
- *Mind and Body: Activities for the Elementary Classroom*, Montana Office of Public Instruction, June 2003: <http://www.opi.state.mt.us/PDF/health/Mind&Body.pdf>
- *TAKE 10!*<sup>TM</sup>, International Life Sciences Institute (ILSI) Center for Health Promotion. Ordering information at <http://www.take10.net/whatistake10.asp>

Schools can also incorporate schoolwide physical exercise in which each classroom participates in exercise as a collaborative activity. This can be accomplished by allocating a set time or by leading classroom exercise announced over the intercom.

For additional ideas on incorporating physical activity in the classroom, see *Physical Activity Breaks* on the next page and *Classroom-Based Physical Activity* under *Resources* at the end of this section.



### Implementation Guidance

#### Physical Activity Breaks

The ideas below indicate how easily physical activity can be incorporated into the classroom. Even 10 minute bouts of physical activity can enhance learning. All of the ideas can be adjusted for developmental appropriateness.

##### Math

- Have students measure their jumping skills by measuring the distance covered when jumping, leaping and hopping.
- Call out a math problem. If the answer is less than 20, have students give their answer in jumping jacks or other gross motor movements.
- Have students calculate and graph their resting heart rate and elevated heart rate.

##### Science

- Test the shapes of movement equipment and analyze why they are shaped as such.
- Take nature walks.

##### Language Arts

- Ask students to record in their journals the amount of time they spend watching television and being physically active, and what activities they enjoyed the most.
- Read health-related books to the students as a reward.

##### Spelling

- Host a spelling bee with a physical activity theme. Ask students to act out verbs such as skip, hop and jump.
- Have students spell out health-related words using their bodies to form letters.

##### Geography

- Rhythmic Activity: “Body Mind Map” uses the body as a model of the globe. North Pole: touch head, South Pole: touch toes, Equator: hands around waist, America: Left hand, Europe: nose, etc.
- Have students research and demonstrate what physical activities are done in other countries.

Adapted with permission from *Idaho Implementation Guide for School Wellness Policy*. Idaho Action for Healthy Kids, April 2005. <http://www.sde.idaho.gov/site/cnp/wellness/docs/AFHK%20Wellness%20Policy%20rev%202007.pdf>

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## **Resources**

Resources are listed by main category. Many resources contain information on multiple content areas. For additional resources, consult each policy component section of the *Action Guide*.

### **Behavior Management**

Click on the SDE's [Healthy School Environment Resource List](#), then click on *Behavior Management* under *Physical Activity and Physical Education* to access resources on this topic.

### **Classroom-Based Physical Activity**

Click on the SDE's [Healthy School Environment Resource List](#), then click on *Classroom-Based Physical Activity* under *Physical Activity and Physical Education* to access resources on this topic.

### **Data and Trends**

Click on the SDE's [Healthy School Environment Resource List](#), then click on *Data and Trends* under *Physical Activity and Physical Education* to access resources on this topic.

### **Evaluating Physical Education**

Click on the SDE's [Healthy School Environment Resource List](#), then click on *Evaluating Physical Education* under *Physical Activity and Physical Education* to access resources on this topic.

### **Guidelines and Standards**

Click on the SDE's [Healthy School Environment Resource List](#), then click on *Guidelines and Standards* under *Physical Activity and Physical Education* to access resources on this topic.

### **Physical Activity Before and After School**

Click on the SDE's [Healthy School Environment Resource List](#), then click on *Physical Activity Before and After School* under *Physical Activity and Physical Education* to access resources on this topic.

### **Programs to Promote Physical Activity**

Click on the SDE's [Healthy School Environment Resource List](#), then click on *Programs to Promote Physical Activity* under *Physical Activity and Physical Education* to access resources on this topic.

### **Recess**

Click on the SDE's [Healthy School Environment Resource List](#), then click on *Recess* under *Physical Activity and Physical Education* to access resources on this topic.

### **Safe Routes to School**

Click on the SDE's [Healthy School Environment Resource List](#), then click on *Safe Routes to School* under *Physical Activity and Physical Education* to access resources on this topic.

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Additional resources can be found in the SDE's *Healthy School Environment Resource List* ([http://www.sde.ct.gov/sde/lib/sde/PDF/DEPS/Nutrition/hse\\_resource\\_list.pdf](http://www.sde.ct.gov/sde/lib/sde/PDF/DEPS/Nutrition/hse_resource_list.pdf)) and *Nutrition-Related Resources* ([http://www.sde.ct.gov/sde/lib/sde/PDF/DEPS/Nutrition/nutrition\\_resources.pdf](http://www.sde.ct.gov/sde/lib/sde/PDF/DEPS/Nutrition/nutrition_resources.pdf)). These lists are updated regularly.