

Need Help in Working Against a Physical Education Waiver?

Here are some suggestions to help prepare you to speak against a proposed waiver.

1. Educate yourself with the laws regarding waivers. www.isbe.net
2. Contact your parent clubs for support.
3. Contact your local pediatricians for testimony either in person or in writing.
4. Contact your local American Heart Association for testimony either in person or in writing.
5. Prepare justification for your current curriculum with local assessment statistics. Send to Board Members ahead of time.
6. Have as many staff members from your District as possible attend the hearing. (Elementary, Middle School, and High School members)
7. Prepare supportive articles from your own research dealing with obesity, brain research, overall well being of youth, stress reduction & depression, health issues, self esteem, self confidence, etc. Get these to your Board members ahead of time.
8. Offer alternative solutions to the perceived problem this waiver is supposed to solve.
9. Contact your local union representative for support.
10. Keep records as to whether the law regarding the hearing was followed exactly as outlined in the School Code.
11. Contact IAHPERD.

The following information is found in the “NASPE Sport and Physical Education Advocacy Kit”

Question: **Why do children need daily physical education?**

Children need enough time to be able to participate in all the activities and instruction that make up a quality physical education program. A quality program must comprise a variety of activities including:

- aerobic exercises designed to improve children’s cardiovascular fitness (at least 3 times a week for 20 minutes)
- exercises designed to improve strength and flexibility (at least 3 times a week)
- motor skills; development through instruction in a variety of movement forms (sports, dance, gymnastics, aquatics)
- instruction about how physical activity improves personal health and well-being.

In order for a program to incorporate all these components and provide opportunity for adequate practice and physical activity, it must be offered every day. The National Association for Sport & Physical Education (NASPE) recommends for maximum benefits that elementary school children receive a daily minimum of 30 minutes of physical education a day and middle and high school students a minimum of 45-55 minutes.

Question: **What are the benefits of physical education?**

We know that physical activity can benefit participants in many ways.

- Reduce Risk of Heart Disease – Physical education can counteract major risk factors of coronary heart disease: obesity, inactivity, and high blood pressure.
- Improved physical fitness – A good program improves children’s muscular strength, flexibility, muscular endurance, body composition and cardiovascular endurance.
- Stronger Bones – Regular physical activity increases bone density to create a sturdier skeleton.
- Weight Regulation – A good program can help children regulate their weight by burning calories, toning their bodies and improving their overall body composition.
- Health Promotion – Appropriate physical activity prevents the onset of some diseases and postpones the debilitating effects of old age.
- Improved Judgment – Quality physical education can influence moral development. Students have the opportunity to assume leadership, cooperate with others, question actions and regulations, and accept responsibility for their own behavior.
- Self Discipline – A good program teaches children they are responsible for their own health and fitness.
- Skill Development – Physical education develops skills which allow for enjoyable and rewarding participation in physical activities. New skills become easier to learn.
- Experience Setting Goals – Physical education gives children the time and encouragement they need to set and strive for, personal, achievable goals.
- Improved Self-Confidence and Self-Esteem – Physical education instills a stronger sense of self-worth in children. They can become more confident, assertive, emotionally stable, independent and self-controlled.
- Stress Reduction – Physical activity becomes an outlet for releasing tension and anxiety.
- Strengthened Peer Relationships – Physical education can be a major force in helping children socialize with others more successfully. Especially during late childhood and adolescence, being able to participate in dances, games and sports is an important part of fitting in.
- Reduced Risk of Depression – A good program is effective in the promotion of mental health.
- More Active Lifestyles – Physical education promotes a more positive attitude toward physical activity.

Web sites that could be helpful.

www.pe4life.com

<http://presidentschallenge.org>

www.aahperd.org

www.americanheart.org

www.presidentschallenge.org

www.brainconnection.com

www.isbe.net

Doctors lay out how, why PE should return to schools

Monday, May 08, 2006 / LEE BOWMAN (Scripps Howard News Service)

Once upon a time say, back before color television and PDA schedulers in backpacks, the notion of kids not getting enough exercise in most of the United States seemed kind of silly.

Kids, being kids, ran and played around the neighborhood in spurts punctuated by the occasional flop under a shade tree. Of course there were still sedentary, overweight youngsters, but they were relatively rare.

Today, the government says, more than a third of American children are overweight, and 17 percent are considered obese. The direct result is more diabetes and less lung function, and doctors seeing in teens the heart and circulatory-system illnesses that used to be worries only of the middle-aged and older.

Down the road, many more overweight kids pay a price. Studies show that overweight teens have a 70 percent chance of being overweight adults.

Sandlot games seem like a thing of the past. A 2003 survey found that more than 3 in 5 children ages 9 to 13 did not participate in any organized physical activity during non-school hours.

Health experts are full of ideas about why this has happened. It's easy to blame the lure of electronics, the loss of "play time" to more organized activities, or social woes that discourage kids from roaming their street or neighborhood unsupervised. Either there's no public play space in a subdivision with too-small yards, or what parks there are don't offer a safe environment.

But there's more to the problem than PlayStations outnumbering playgrounds. Barriers to activity take many forms.

For instance, University of Florida researchers recently documented that peer bullying and ridicule keeps overweight kids from elementary school on up away from sports, the gym and most types of exercise.

"We found that as rates of peer victimization went up, rates of physical activity went down," said Eric Storch, an assistant professor of psychiatry who led the study.

Inactivity levels have become enough of a health concern that the American Academy of Pediatrics this week issued a policy statement urging children's doctors to monitor how much exercise their young patients are getting, and counsel parents about doing more to encourage their kids to move.

Parents are urged to "become good role models by increasing their own level of physical activity," and to make being active part of the family routine from a child's earliest days _ by taking walks and playing with infants, and encouraging older kids to be active at least an hour a day.

Pediatricians are also asked to question how active children and parents are when the kids do come in for checkups. Academy guidelines recommend that kids younger than 2 watch no TV at all, and that "screen time" of any kind be limited to two hours a day for older children.

"A little (activity) is better than nothing. You don't have to play with your child every day, but on your day off, make a point of doing something outside with your child," said Dr. Jorge Gomez, a policy author and a pediatrician at the University of Texas Health Science Center.

The pediatricians also want schools to require daily physical education from kindergarten through grade 12. But they also encourage organizers of PE programs to customize activities for kids who are already overweight and might otherwise give up if they have to jog or play competitive sports in gym class.

However, revving up PE may be an uphill climb, based on the findings of a report put out this week by the National Association for Sport and Physical Education (NASPE), and its new partner, the American Heart Association.

The survey of education departments in all 50 states and the District of Columbia found that most states' PE requirements are weak and full of loopholes, like exemptions, waivers and even online physical-education classes that let children and teens avoid exercise.

In many high schools, for instance, students who play a sport, are part of the Junior ROTC or even the marching band are allowed to skip PE, even though those activities don't necessarily teach what kids need to know to maintain fitness into adulthood, the experts argue.

While most states do have some PE standards, nearly a third don't mandate the classes for children in elementary and middle schools, and only a handful require high-school students to take PE for more than a year.

Although about 40 percent of states require PE grades to be included in a student's grade-point average, in no state does a student have to meet any PE standard to graduate.

The growing focus in schools at all levels to meet minimum test standards is particularly worrisome to educators who focus on the body as well as the mind. Several recent studies showing how kids who are physically active tend to learn better in class don't seem to have helped the cause.

"Schools teach to the test," said NASPE executive director Charlene Burgeson. "And with the focus on student achievement in core academic subjects, something like PE that's not on the test becomes a lower priority and gets less time and resources in school."

The report recommends about 150 minutes a week for PE in elementary schools and 225 minutes a week for middle-school and high-school students. There is more likely to be a falloff in activity levels among teens, and particularly teen girls, after puberty, studies show.

On the Net: <http://www.aap.org>

www.naspeinfo.org

(Contact Lee Bowman at [bowmanl\(at\)shns.com](mailto:bowmanl@shns.com).)

Physical Education Can Lead to Better Grades

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Emily Halevy |CWK Producer

http://www.connectwithkids.com/tipsheet/2006/300_sep27/thisweek/060927_exercise.shtml

“There is a connection between physical activity and learning and it is a positive one - children who are more physically fit do better academically. They concentrate better in the classroom [and] they perform better on math and reading examinations.”

– Dr. David Satcher, former U.S. Surgeon General

In an effort to boost test performance, many schools are taking time away from physical education and using it for more time in class.

But studies now show that rigorous physical activity can actually lead to better grades.

In Broward County, Florida, many schools are getting the message.

Fourth grade teacher Katherine Bennett takes her students out for a five-minute walk after a long lesson.

“I found that when my children start yawning and they start not paying attention, then one way I can refocus those children is to take them out for a brief, little fun walk,” she says. “And by the time we’ve got them back into the room again, they’re ready to study some more.”

In fact, according to new research from Michigan State University, kids who are physically active get ten percent higher grades in math, science and English.

“Children who are physically fit do better academically - they perform better on standardized examinations, they concentrate better,” says former U.S. Surgeon General Dr. David Satcher.

Jackie Lund, president of the National Association for Sports and Physical Education, explains: “If kids feel better about themselves, if they feel better, period, they’re going to be more likely to learn.”

“On the other hand,” says Satcher, “children who are obese are four times as likely to be depressed, very likely to be absent from school - so it’s just the opposite of what schools have thought.”

What’s more, many kids say it’s easy to get distracted if you have to sit still, all day long, in school.

“After a while I just get antsy and I want to move around - cause I start to get stiff and it’s like, I want to get up and walk around,” complains 18-year-old Eric DeGreeff. “But in class you can’t really get up and walk around,”

That’s why, experts say, if your child’s school does not provide vigorous physical education, you have to speak up.

“If parents go out and demand quality physical education, where their kids are learning and they’re moving and they’re involved in activities that are going to create the next steps for a life time, then they will be heard,” says Lund.

Tips for Parents

* Talk to your children to find out what kind of physical education programs their school has available. Get involved in the PTA. Insist on better standards for physical education. (Dr. David Satcher, former Surgeon General)

* The prediction is that stress will be the number one problem with kids in the next 20 years. Physical activity is one of the best ways to decrease stress levels and release tension. (Dr. Jackie Lund, National Association for Sport and Physical Education)

* Physical education is important in all aspects of life, not just academics, stress and depression. Obesity is a growing epidemic which, if not stopped, will lead to one out of three children born in the year 2000 having diabetes. (Dr. Howell Wechsler, EdD, MPH, CDC- Director of the Division of Adolescent and School Health)

* Kids need a release after school. Before making them sit down and do homework, let them run around outside for a half hour. This will give them time to decompress and process all the information they've learned during the day. (Dr. Jackie Lund, National Association for Sport and Physical Education)

The Illinois School Code reads as follows:

105 ILCS 5/27-6 Courses in physical education required; Special activities (2006 Illinois School Code Book page 544)

Sec. 27-6. Courses in physical education required; Special activities. (a) Pupils enrolled in the public schools and State universities engaged in preparing teachers shall be required to engage daily during the school day, except on block scheduled days for those public schools engaged in block scheduling, in courses of physical education for such periods as are compatible with the optimum growth and development needs of individuals at the various age levels except when appropriate excuses are submitted to the school by a pupil's parent or guardian or by a person licensed under the Medical Practice Act of 1987 [225 ILCS 60/1 et seq.] and except as provided in subsection (b) of this Section.

Special activities in physical education shall be provided for pupils whose physical or emotional condition, as determined by a person licensed under the Medical Practice Act of 1987 [225 ILCS 60/1 et seq.], prevents their participation in the courses provided for normal children.

(b) A school board is authorized to excuse pupils enrolled in grades 11 and 12 from engaging in physical education courses if those pupils request to be excused for any of the following reasons: (1) for ongoing participation in an interscholastic athletic program; (2) to enroll in academic classes which are required for admission to an institution of higher learning, provided that failure to take such classes will result in the pupil being denied admission to the institution of his or her choice; or (3) to enroll in academic classes which are required for graduation from high school, provided that failure to take such classes will result in the pupil being unable to graduate. A school board may also excuse pupils in grades 9 through 12 enrolled in a marching band program for credit from engaging in physical education courses if those pupils request to be excused for ongoing participation in such marching band program. In addition, a school board may excuse pupils in grades 9 through 12 if those pupils must utilize the time set aside for physical education to receive special education support and services. A school board may also excuse pupils in grades 9 through 12 enrolled in a Reserve Officer's Training Corps (ROTC) program sponsored by the school district from engaging in physical education courses. School boards who choose to exercise this authority shall establish a policy to excuse pupils on an individual basis.

(c) The provisions of this Section are subject to the provisions of Section 27-22.05 [105 ILCS 5/27-22.05].

**105 ILCS 5/27-7 Physical education course of study
(2006 Illinois School Code Book page 544)**

Sec. 27-7. Physical education course of study. A physical education course of study shall include a developmentally planned and sequential curriculum that fosters the development of movement skills, enhances health-related fitness, increases students' knowledge, offers direct opportunities to learn how to work cooperatively in a group setting, and encourages healthy habits and attitudes for a healthy lifestyle. A physical education course of study shall provide students with an opportunity for an appropriate amount of daily physical activity. A physical education course of study must be part of the regular school curriculum and not extra curricular in nature or organization.

The State Board of Education shall prepare and make available guidelines for the various grades and types of schools in order to make effective the purposes set forth in this section and the requirements provided in Section 27-6 [105 ILCS 5/27-5 to ILCS 5/27-6], and shall see that the general provisions and intent of sections 27-5 to 27-9 [105 ILCS 5/27-5 to 105 ILCS 5/27-9], inclusive are enforced.

**105 ILCS 5/2-3.25g Waiver or modification of mandates within the School Code and administrative rules and regulations
(2006 Illinois School Code Book pages 97- 98)**

The information is only a summary of the section in the School Code book. Please refer to the Code book to get complete details.

1. A waiver may be requested when an eligible applicant demonstrates that it can address the intent of the rule or mandate in a more effective, efficient, or economical manner or when necessary to stimulate innovation or improve student performance.
2. A public hearing must be preceded by at least one published notice occurring at least 7 days prior to the hearing in a newspaper of general circulation within the school district that sets forth the time, date, place, and general subject matter of the hearing.
3. The public hearing shall be held on a day other than the day on which a regular meeting of the board is held.
4. Your union and those State legislators representing your area must be notified of such a public hearing at least 7 days prior to the date of the hearing and shall be allowed to attend such public hearings.
5. The request for a waiver shall be submitted to the State Board of Education within 15 days after approval by the board or regional superintendent of schools. Following the receipt of the request the State Board shall have 45 days to review the application and request. If the State Board fails to disapprove the application within the 45 day period, the waiver or modification shall be deemed granted.
6. An approved waiver or modification may remain in effect for a period not to exceed 5 school years and may be renewed upon application by the eligible applicant.