

Physical Activity for Youth Policy Initiative

Presented by the



on behalf of the Physical Activity for Youth Steering Committee.

SCHOOL PROGRAMS: QUALITY, DAILY PHYSICAL EDUCATION FOR ALL STUDENTS

RATIONALE:

Physical education is at the core of a comprehensive approach to promoting physical activity through schools. Physical education helps students develop the knowledge, skills, behaviors, attitudes, and confidence needed to be active for life while providing an opportunity for students to be active during the school day. Qualified and appropriately trained physical education teachers are the most essential ingredients of a quality physical education program.

RECOMMENDED POLICY OPTIONS:

1. Require that every student in each grade shall participate in daily 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 for at least 150 minutes during each school week, and students in middle schools and high schools shall participate for at least 225 minutes per week.
2. Require that certified physical education teachers teach all physical education courses.
3. Require schools to provide and implement a sequential, developmentally appropriate curriculum in physical education.
4. Require schools to provide daily physical activity breaks for all elementary school students.

POLICIES IN ACTION:

The following policies provide some examples of how the above policy initiatives regarding school programs have worked in action:

Carol M. White Physical Education for Progress Program (PEP)

The U.S. Department of Education manages the Carol M. White Physical Education for Progress program. Designed to award grants to local education agencies and community-based organizations to initiate, expand, and improve physical education programs, the PEP program has attracted a great deal of positive attention since its development. Initiated in FY 2001, the PEP program awarded \$5 million to 18 local education agencies. The passage of the No Child Left Behind Act (H.R. 1) expanded PEP's potential recipients to include community-based organizations. Congress demonstrated its support for PEP by increasing FY 2002 funding to \$50 million—a tenfold increase over previous levels.

Texas Physical Education Rule

In March 2002 board meeting, the Texas State Board of Education (SBOE) adopted a new rule that requires students in elementary schools to participate in physical activity for a minimum of either 30 minutes daily or 135 minutes weekly.