



## National Association for Sport and Physical Education

*an association of the American Alliance for Health,  
Physical Education, Recreation and Dance*

### **NASPE Sets the Standard**

1900 Association Drive  
Reston, VA 20191

**Phone:** 703-476-3410

**Fax:** 703-476-8316

**Email:** [naspe@aahperd.org](mailto:naspe@aahperd.org)

Elizabeth:

I read with interest your recent contribution on Oregon Live.com entitled, "School PE cut undesirable but doable."

As a former school board member I can also appreciate the challenges that school boards face in these difficult budget times. Unfortunately, I am less convinced that cutting PE teachers is the solution especially in view of considerable evidence showing the positive impact of school based physical education and physical activity on health AND academic performance.

I am not sure if you are aware that just recently the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) released a review of 50 research studies showing a positive relationship between physical education and physical activity with test scores, attention/concentration, and on-task behavior. It's available at [www.letsmoveinschool.org](http://www.letsmoveinschool.org)

For many of the 50 million children in our public schools, physical education classes are the only assigned time each week that they receive instruction designed to motivate them to adopt healthy and active lifestyles and also get physical activity. In your comment, you suggested that other classroom teachers could lead students in "some type of kickball or laps around the track." Perhaps you were not aware that quality physical educations, taught by a qualified teachers have more extensive and comprehensive goals than simply providing (or forcing) them to be active.

Rather than simply "giving them fish" good physical educators strive to provide young people with the skills and knowledge they need to become and stay healthy and physically active. For most physical educators the measure of success in their jobs is not what their students do when in class but what they choose to do when outside of class. It is for this reason that physical educators try to teach young people physical skills that will give them the competence and confidence to develop healthy habits. Simply making kids run laps or play kickball (a very sedentary activity incidentally) is not very motivating to most children and turns many off from physical activity. If we are ever to solve obesity encouraging sedentary living is clearly going to be counterproductive.

When viewed from this broader perspective, I hope that you can appreciate that classroom teachers in most instances lack the professional preparation to teach motor skills and prepare young people to become physically active for a lifetime. It would be similar to having untrained teachers responsible for teaching English, math, and other classroom subjects.

If you would like a better understanding of what physical educators are striving to do please visit the National Association for Sport and Physical Education web site. I will provide a direct link to our National Standards for you:

<http://www.aahperd.org/naspe/standards/nationalStandards/PEstandards.cfm>

Finally, you might be interested to know that the Portland area has an exceptional physical education teacher called Meg Greiner whose innovative physical education programs have been widely recognized nationally. Here is a story on her "TEAM Time" program. I think it will help you appreciate the contribution of quality physical education teachers like Meg.

<http://www.pelinks4u.org/archives/interdisciplinary/100107.htm>

In these tough financial times one of the simpler solutions is to propose cutting physical education teachers. Unfortunately, as I hope I have pointed out this appears to be rather counterproductive to the academic mission of our schools and to the long-term health of our students.

Best Regards,

Steve Jefferies