



NASPE Resource Brief **Waivers & Exemptions**

A quality physical education program 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. Quality physical educators assess student knowledge, motor and social skills, and provide instruction in a safe, supportive environment. Classes and activities that provide physical activity (e.g., marching band, ROTC, cheerleading, school and community sports) have important but distinctly different goals than physical education. Any opportunity for students to participate in sustained periods of meaningful physical activity can be valuable for their health and fitness but these activities do not provide the content of a comprehensive, standards-based physical education program and therefore should not be allowed to fulfill a physical education requirement.

In *Fit, Healthy, and Ready to Learn*, a document published by the National Association for State Boards of Education, exemptions are specifically addressed: “Physical education teaches students essential knowledge and skills; for this reason, exemptions from physical education courses shall not be permitted on the basis of participation on an athletic team, community recreation program, ROTC, marching band, or other school or community activity.”

Athletics

- School athletics is a great extension of the educational day. However, the content covered in physical education is very different than athletics. Students need to learn about lifelong physical activities and the information on how to stay fit after their competition days are over.

Community Recreation Programs

- Recreation programs offer great opportunities for students to participate in recreational sports and activities. These programs are a logical extension of the physical education program but not a substitution for physical education.

JROTC

- Junior Reserve Officers’ Training Corps is a federal program and is offered in Grades 9-12. Congress established JROTC in 1916 with the broad mandate to develop good citizenship and responsibility in young people not to replace required physical education classes.
- JROTC is an elective course taught in nearly 3,000 high schools nationwide.

Marching Band

- Marching is a physical activity but physical education is much different. Physical education should not be compared to or confused with other physical activity experiences such as recess, intramurals, or recreational endeavors.
- Students in marching band only march during football season which is August to November. However, many of the students who are allowed to substitute marching band for physical education, are out of physical education the entire year.

NASPE Resources

- [Opposing Substitution and Waiver/Exemptions For Required Physical Education](#) – NASPE position statement stating that all K-12 students should take all required physical education courses and that no substitutions, waivers, or exemptions should be permitted.
- [Appropriate Instructional Practice Guidelines](#) – Guidance for teachers, administrators, parents/guardians, and policymakers on creating and maintaining appropriate PE learning environments, instructional strategies, curriculum, assessment, and professionalism.



National Association for
Sport and Physical Education
an association of the American Alliance for Health,
Physical Education, Recreation and Dance

NASPE Sets the Standard

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NASPE Resources, con't

- [Why Children Need Physical Education](#) – Benefits provided to children by a quality physical education program.
- [Is It Physical Education or Physical Activity?](#) – NASPE believes every child deserves both a quality physical education and physical activity program. Understanding the difference between the two is critical to understanding why both contribute to the development of healthy, active children.

Other Resources

- [Fit and Ready to Learn: A School Health Policy Guide](#) – School health programs can help ensure that students are fit, healthy, and ready to learn every day. This policy guide complements CDC's school health guidelines, which provide state-of-the-art, scientifically reliable information on what constitutes effective school health programs. It was created to help states, districts, and schools develop policies that would help prevent long-term chronic diseases.

Contact Info

- NASPE: 1-800-213-7193 x410; naspe@aahperd.org



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