



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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What is a Core Subject Under the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA)?

Under the ESEA statute, the term "core academic subjects" means English, reading or language arts, mathematics, science, foreign languages, civics and government, economics, arts, history, and geography.

Any subject that is not listed as a core subject within the provisions of the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB), which revised the ESEA in 2001, is at risk of being marginalized and eventually eliminated as public school principals and administrators struggle to meet annual yearly progress (AYP) for core subjects so they can maintain federal funding. Focus has been placed heavily on student achievement in a limited number of curricular areas, and not on preparing children to lead a healthy, active and productive life.

Within its "Blueprint for Reform," the U.S. Department of Education expands core subject areas to include financial literacy and environmental education, but not health or physical education.

The benefits of health and physical education as "core academic subjects" include:

- Only teachers in core subjects are required to be highly qualified—they must hold a bachelor's degree, full state certification, and demonstrated competence in each content area taught
- Highly qualified teachers are held accountable for subject matter and helping students achieve competence in each subject area
- Effective teachers help to engage students and provide individual motivation and assessment
- Highly qualified teachers use classroom management techniques that reduce disruptive behaviors, helping to improve the performance of all students on reading and math tests
- Professional development is geared toward teachers of core subjects
- States are required to have academic content standards for curriculum development
- States hold students accountable for mastering content in core subjects

The consequences of not including health and physical education on the "core academic subject" list would be:

- Greater focus on test scores for math and reading
- Diminished time for health and physical education
- Lack of attention to standards and curriculum for non-core subjects
- Students do not receive a well-rounded, complete education