

# Physical Education

Mary Thissen-Milder, PhD  
Health and Physical Education  
Minnesota Department of Education  
[Mary.thissen-milder@state.mn.us](mailto:Mary.thissen-milder@state.mn.us)

---

## I want to Know

- The difference between physical education and physical activity
  - What is happening with physical education across the country?
  - What does a quality physical education program look like?
  - What are the national physical education standards and why are they so important?
  - What does physical education look like in Minnesota?
-

---

## The difference between physical education and physical activity

- With heightened attention to childhood obesity prevention efforts, there seems to be some confusion between the terms physical activity and physical education. Often the words are used interchangeably, but they differ in important ways.
-

---

## The difference between physical education and physical activity

- Physical activity is a **behavior** and regular physical activity promotes health and fitness.
  - Physical Education is a **curricular area** that teaches individuals about physical activity. Quality instruction helps students develop the knowledge, skills and attitudes necessary for selecting in physical activity safely, competently, and with a personal satisfaction for a lifetime.
-

- Physical Education teachers assess student knowledge, motor and social skills, and provide instruction in a safe, supportive environment.
- National recommendations are that schools provide 150 minutes each week of instructional physical education for elementary students and 225 minutes each week for middle and high school students for the entire school year. Based on sequence of learning, physical education should not be compared to or confused with other physical activity experiences such as recess, intramurals, or recreational endeavors.

---

## School-based Physical Activity Opportunities

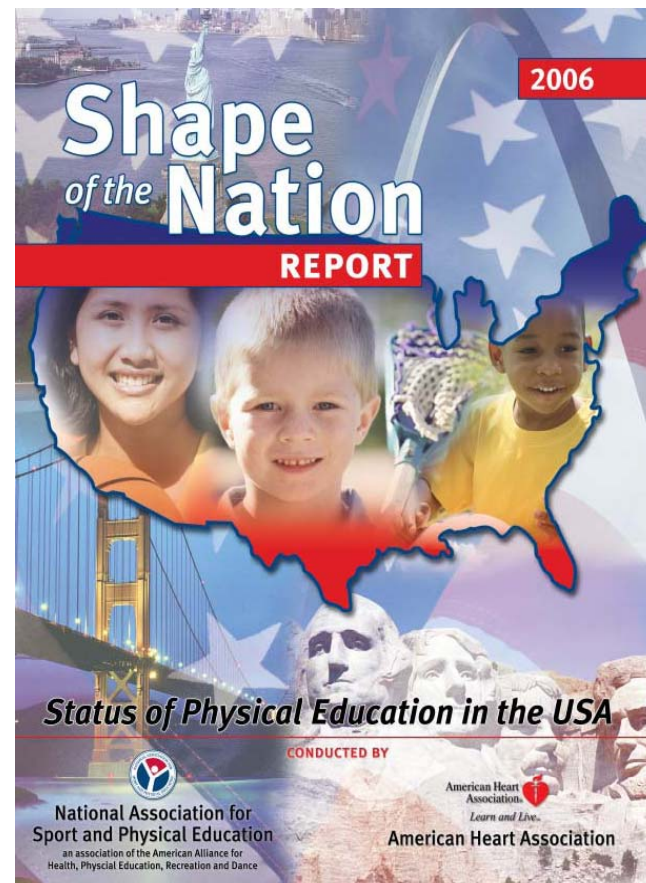
- Along with physical education classes, students need physical activity opportunities throughout the school day to meet the recommended minimum requirements of at least 60 minutes of physical activity each day. These physical activity opportunities are not to take the place of physical education, but rather supplement physical activity time accumulated during physical education class, and use the skills and knowledge learned in physical education to successfully be physically active.
-

---

To pursue a lifetime of healthful physical activity, a physically educated person:

- HAS learned skills necessary to perform a variety of physical activities
  - KNOWS the implications of and the benefits from involvement in physical activities
  - DOES participate regularly in physical activity
  - IS physically fit
  - VALUES physical activity and its contribution to a healthful lifestyle
-

# What is happening with physical education across the country?





---

## Keep in Mind That

- There is no federal law that requires physical education to be provided to students in the American Education system, nor any incentives for offering physical education programs
  - States may set general or minimal requirements, but individual school districts provide specific direction and may exceed minimal expectations
  - Many states delegate responsibility for educational decisions to local school districts
-

---

Quality physical education is provided to all students as  
an integral part of K-12 education

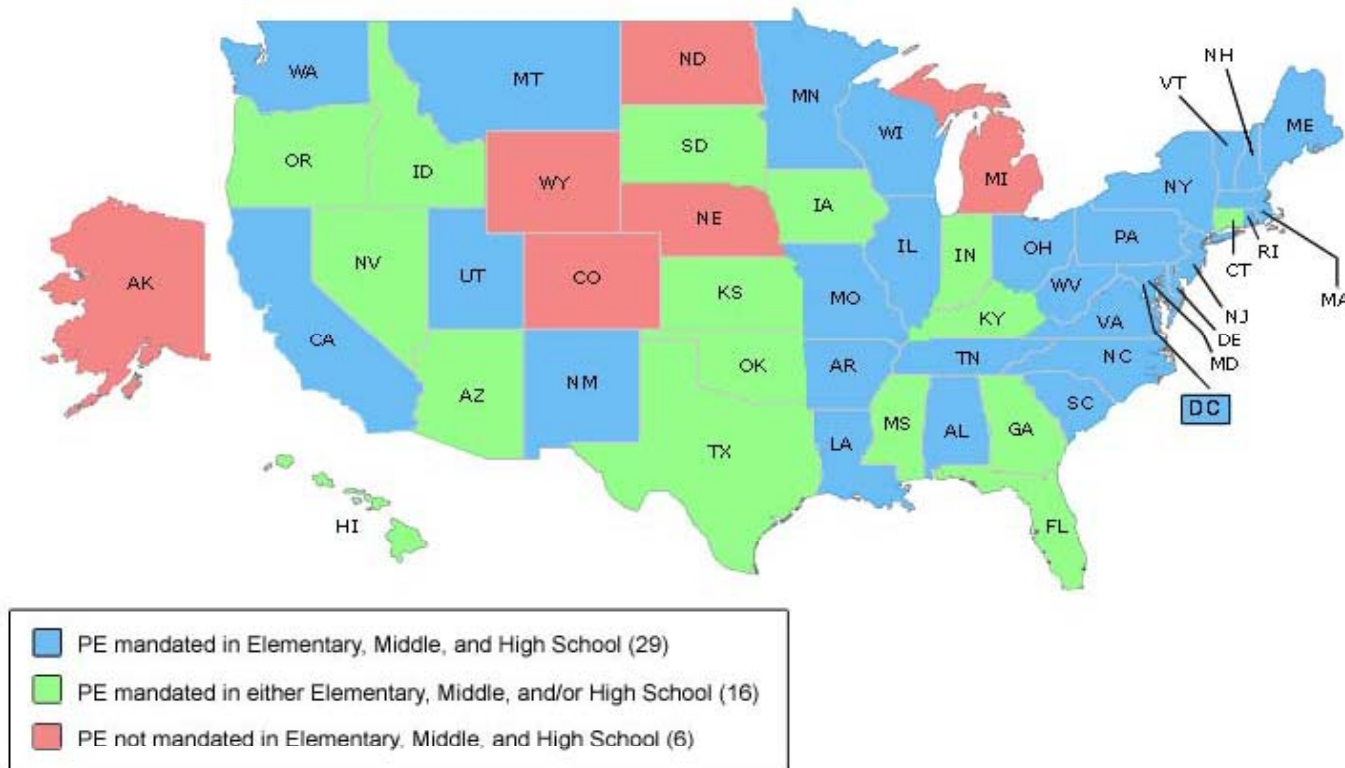
## States mandate physical education

- Elementary school – 36 states (71%)
- Middle school – 33 states (65%)
- High school – 42 states (83%)

*Approximately **1/3** of states DO NOT  
mandate physical education at the  
elementary and middle school level*

---

# State Mandates for Physical Education



2006 *Shape of the Nation Report: Status of Physical Education in the USA*  
National Association for Sport and Physical Education (NASPE)

---

## State Mandated Time Requirement

Elementary school – 11 states (22%)

Middle schools – 7 states (14%)

High school – 10 states (20%)

---

---

## States Meeting National Time Recommendations

- Elementary school (150 minutes/week) – 2 states
    - Louisiana
    - New Jersey
  - Middle school (225 minutes/week) – 1 state
    - Montana
  - High school (225 minutes/week) – 4 “states”
    - District of Columbia
    - Indiana
    - Montana
    - South Carolina
-

---

## State Standards

47 states and the District of Columbia  
have state standards for physical  
education

Three do not:

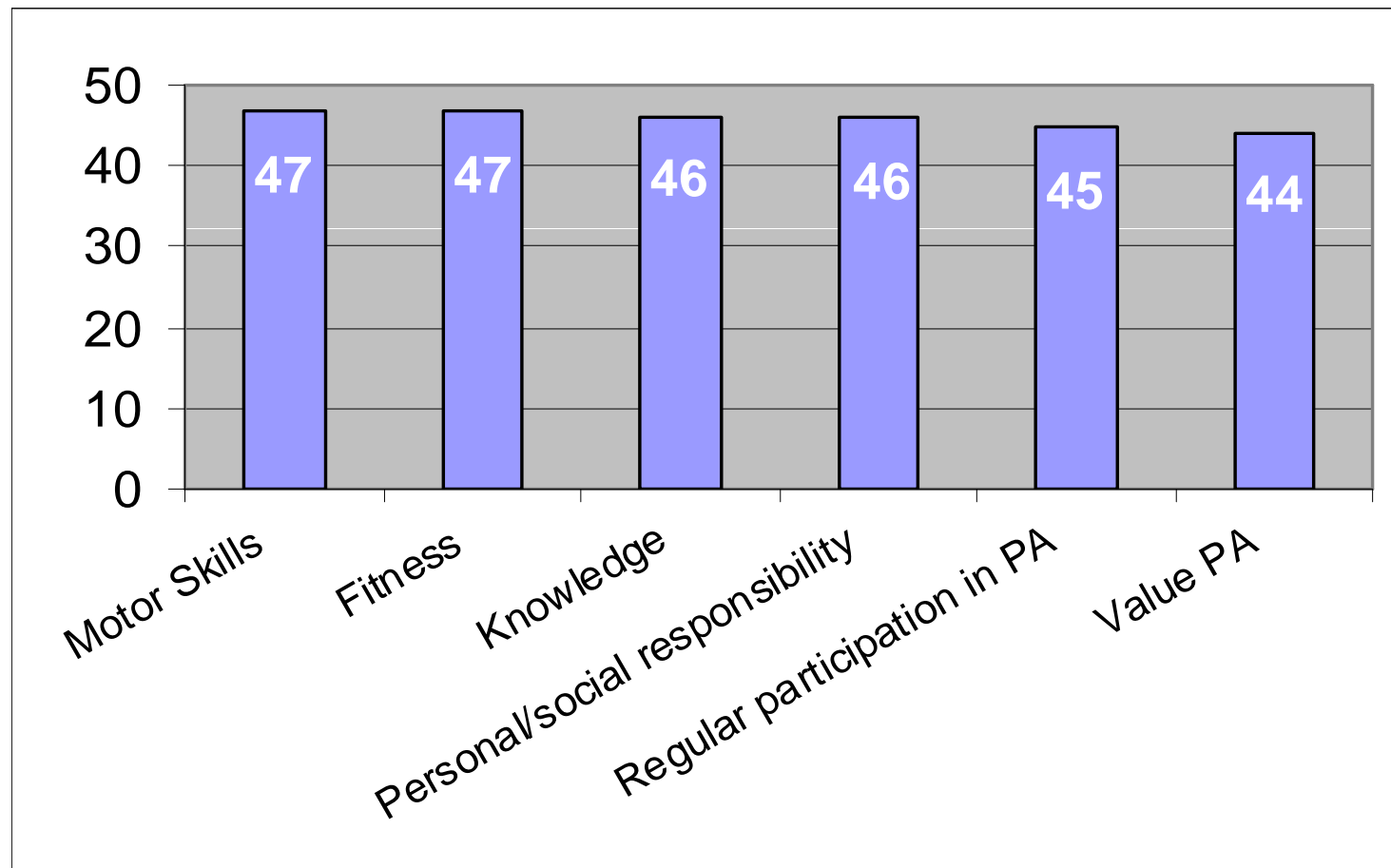
Iowa

Minnesota

Ohio

---

## Alignment of state standards with national standards



---

## Minimum Graduation requirement

### Required HS credits

- 0.5 credit – 8 states
  - 1 credit – 14 states
  - 1.5 credits – 6 states
  - 2 credits – 6 states
  - 3.75 credits – 1 state
-



---

## Other courses and activities that include physical activity should not be substituted for instructional physical education

- 18 states (35%) – provide exemptions/waivers to school districts
  - 27 states (53%) – permit schools districts/schools to allow substitutions by students
    - ROTC – 18 states
    - Interscholastic sports – 17 states
    - Marching band – 11 states
-

---

Physical education is delivered by certified/licensed physical education teachers

- Elementary school – 28 states (57%)
  - Middle school – 43 states (84%)
  - High school – 46 states (90%)
-

---

## Body Mass Index (BMI)

- Three states require schools to measure body mass index (BMI) of students
    - Arkansas
    - California
    - Illinois
  - Uses of BMI data
    - Aggregate data is sent to the state – 2 states
    - Individual student results sent to parents – 2 states
    - Research study – 2 states
-

---

## “Best” States

**Rhode Island** – Requires 1-12, and does not allow exemptions, waivers, or substitutions

**Massachusetts** – Requires K-12, but permits school districts or schools to allow students to substitute other activities for required PE

**Illinois** – Requires K-12, but grants exemptions/waivers for school districts re time or credit requirements and permits school districts or schools to allow students to substitute other activities for required PE

**New Jersey** – Requires 1-12, requires 3.75 credits of high school PE, but permits school districts or schools to allow students to substitute other activities for required PE

---

---

## “Worst” States (not in any order)

**Alaska** – Does not require PE for ES, MS, HS; does not require certified/licensed PE teachers for ES, MS, HS

**Colorado** – Does not require PE for ES, MS, HS; does not require certified/licensed PE teachers for ES, MS, HS

**Hawaii** – Does not require certified/licensed PE teachers for ES, MS, HS

**Iowa** – No state standards for physical education

**Michigan** – Does not require PE for ES, MS, HS

**Minnesota** – No state standards for physical education

**North Dakota** – Does not require PE for ES, MS, HS

**Ohio** – No state standards for physical education

**South Dakota** – Does not require certified/licensed PE teachers for ES, MS, HS

**Texas** – Does not require certified/licensed PE teachers for ES, MS, HS

**Wyoming** – Does not require PE for ES, MS, HS

---

---

## Key Recommendations

- Quality physical education is provided to all students as an integral part of K-12 education
  - Adequate time (i.e., 150 minutes per week for elementary school students; 225 minutes per week for middle and high school students) is provided for physical education at every grade, K to 12
-

---

## Key Recommendations (cont'd)

- All states develop standards for student learning in physical education that reflect the National Standards for Physical Education
  - All states set minimum standards for student achievement in physical education
  - Successfully meeting minimum standards in physical education is a requirement for high school graduation
-

---

## Key Recommendations (cont'd)

- Other courses and activities that include physical activity should not be substituted for instructional physical education
  - Physical education is delivered by certified/licensed physical education teachers
-



---

## Federal Legislation

- Carol M White Physical Education program (PEP) – part of NCLB
    - Funds to initiate, expand, and improve physical education programs
    - Designed to assist students in making progress towards meeting state standards
    - Funding used for equipment, training education of teachers and program implementation
-

---

## Federal legislation

- **Local Wellness Policies – Child Nutrition and WIC Reauthorization Act of 2004**
  - **S. 2173 - [FIT Kids bill](#)**
  - **H.R. 3257 - [Fitness Integrated with Teaching Kids Act \(FIT Kids Act\)](#)**
-

---

## What does a quality physical education program look like?

- According to NASPE guidelines, a high quality physical education program includes the following components:
    - opportunity to learn
    - appropriate instruction
    - meaningful content
    - student and program assessment
-

---

## Opportunity to Learn:

- Instructional periods totaling 150 minutes per week (elementary) and 225 minutes per week (middle and secondary school)
  - Qualified physical education specialist providing a developmentally appropriate program
  - Teacher/student ratio in elementary no greater than 1:25; and 1:30 middle/high for optimal instruction
  - Adequate equipment and facilities for all students to be active at the same time
  - An curriculum aligned to state/national standards and assessments
-

---

## Appropriate Instruction:

- Use of instructional strategies that provide meaningful inclusion of all students regardless of skill or fitness level, gender, race or ethnic group
  - Maximum participation and ample practice opportunities for class activities
  - Well-designed lessons that facilitate student learning
  - Out of school assignments that support learning and practice
  - Appropriate discipline and class management (physical activity should never be used for punishment)
  - Use of regular assessment to monitor and reinforce student learning
-

---

## Meaningful Content:

- Instruction in a variety of motor skills that are designed to enhance the physical, mental, and social/emotional development of every child
  - Fitness education and assessment to help children understand, improve and/or maintain their physical well-being
  - Development of cognitive concepts about motor skill and fitness
  - Opportunities to improve their emerging social and cooperative skills and gain a multi-cultural perspective
  - Promotion of recommended amounts of physical activity now and throughout life
-

---

## Student and program assessment

- Assessment is an ongoing, vital part of the physical education program
  - Formative and summative assessment of student progress
  - Student assessments align with state/national physical education standards and written physical education curriculum
  - Assessment of program elements that support quality physical education
  - Stakeholders periodically evaluate the total physical education program effectiveness
-

---

## What are the national physical education standards and why are they so important?

- The national physical education standards were designed to guide physical education programs in the development of physically-educated individuals who have the knowledge, skills, and confidence to enjoy a lifetime of healthful physical activity
-



---

## Standard 1:

Demonstrates competency in motor skills and movement patterns needed to perform a variety of physical activities.

---

---

## Standard 2:

- Demonstrates understanding of movement concepts, principles, strategies, and tactics as they apply to the learning and performance of physical activities.
-

---

## Standard 3:

- Participates regularly in physical activity.



---

## Standard 4:

- Achieves and maintains a health-enhancing level of physical fitness.



---

## Standard 5:

- Exhibits responsible personal and social behavior that respects self and others in physical activity settings.



---

## Standard 6:

Values physical activity for health,  
enjoyment, challenge, self-expression,  
and/or social interaction.

---

---

## National Physical Education Standards

- Grade levels are grouped into grade-level ranges representing K-2, 3-5, 6-8, 9-12
  - Content standards
  - Student expectations
  - Sample performance outcomes
-

---

## Why is Quality Physical Education Important?

Quality physical education programs help all students develop:

- health-related fitness,
- physical competence,
- cognitive understanding,
- positive attitudes about physical activity

so that they can adopt healthy and physically active lifestyles.

---



---

## What does physical education look like in Minnesota?

- Instruction in physical education must be provided to ALL STUDENTS K-8 EVERY YEAR; and at least ONCE in high school
  - Every district is required to develop their own standards in physical education
    - MDE QTN developed a Benchmark document utilizing the national pe standards districts may use as they develop their standards
  - Local school districts determine if physical education is required for graduation
-

---

## Physical Education Quality Teaching Network

- Developed a model districts could utilize in their standard development process
  - Utilized the national physical education standards
  - Developed grade specific benchmarks for each standard
  - Identified sample activities for each benchmark
-

---

Grade 2  
Standard 1

Demonstrate competency in motor skills and movement patterns needed to perform a variety of physical activities.

Benchmark

Activity/Example

1. Students will demonstrate skills of chasing, fleeing, and dodging in a variety of situations

- Play a variety of tag games (midnight, crows and cranes, dragons tails)
  - Travel through space avoiding people and objects during movement
-

---

Grade 7

Standard 5. Exhibit responsible personal and social behavior in physical activity settings.

- | Benchmark  | Activity/Example   |
|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Students will follow appropriate rules, procedures and etiquette that are safe and effective for specific activity situations</li></ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Demonstrates rule following during an activity</li><li>Demonstrate safe participation during a physical activity</li><li>List 3-5 rules of an activity</li><li>Demonstrate etiquette in class</li><li>Stays on task without teacher monitoring</li></ul> |
-

---

## Minnesota Schools meeting national recommendations

- Minnesota Specifics:
    - Kindergarten 7%
    - Elementary 13%
    - Middle school 7%
    - High School 9%
  - MN Elementary Minute average per week is 101 minutes
  - MN EI PE Class was between 29 to 36 minutes a session.
  - Most schools require students in grades 6-8 to take PE with an average of 26 weeks a year and 50 minutes per class period.
-

2008 SCHOOL HEALTH PROFILES RESULTS

Minnesota Trend Report - Principal Survey

	Prevalence Survey Year				2006	2008	Linear Change	Quadratic Change
	1998	2000	2002	2004				
<b>Required Physical Education</b>								
Percentage of schools that required physical education for students in any of grades 6 through 12			96.7	98.8		87.6	Yes	Yes
Percentage of schools that taught a required physical education course in the following grades:*								
6th grade				94.1		75.7	Yes	
7th grade				95.3		80.7	Yes	
8th grade				94.7		79.2	Yes	
9th grade				90.6		75.5	Yes	
10th grade				87.2		67.6	Yes	
11th grade				13.8		21.2	No	
12th grade				12.4		20.1	No	
Percentage of schools that taught a required physical education course in all grades in the school				44.6		41.6	No	

\* The 2008 results published here differ slightly from the 2008 results published in site reports. This is because 2008 site reports excluded data from schools that did not contain the grade in the question. Because grade information is not available in a consistent format for all years, data from these schools are included in the trend analysis. 2