

# The Impact of the PEP Grant on Elementary School Physical Education

Steve Elliott, Ph.D., Starla McCollum, Ph.D., Gavin Colquitt, Ed. D, & Tony Pritchard, Ed.D.



## Overview

A school district in Georgia received a Physical Education for Progress Grant, otherwise known as PEP Grant. PEP grants are part of the Carol M. White Physical Education Program and are administered by the federal government. These grants are available to local educational agencies and community-based organizations to initiate, expand, or improve physical education programs. The purpose of this study was to determine the perception of the impact of the PEP grant on the physical education programs of four elementary schools through interviews with teachers and principals.

## “In the Zone” PEP Grant

The Bulloch County School System in Statesboro, Georgia received PEP grant funding for a project titled *In the Zone*. The proposal focused on the need to increase student motivation for physical activity by incorporating high interest, cooperative activities into the elementary and middle school physical education programs.

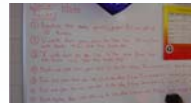
The project had three goals:

“(1) to initiate, expand, and improve, physical education programs to encourage a diverse population of students in developing cognitive, psychomotor and social and emotional skills, while developing long-term healthy lifestyles and behaviors;

(2) increase professional expertise for the physical education teachers and community program staff;

(3) to further develop the collaboration between the Bulloch County School District, the Boys and Girls Club, and the Bulloch County Parks and Recreation Department by increasing the physical activity opportunities provided by after-school and other community programs.”

Contact: Steve Elliott [elliotts@uncw.edu](mailto:elliotts@uncw.edu)



## Methods

The eight participants were selected from four elementary schools that had received funding from the PEP grant. The participants were; (a) four teachers and (b) four principals. The purpose of the data collection phase was to collect in-depth descriptive information from the eight participants on their perceptions of how the PEP grant funding had changed their teaching and physical education programs. Information was collected through interviewing each participant separately for an average of 30 minutes each.

Qualitative data analysis procedures were used to explore participants' perceptions of the impact of the PEP grant monies. The constant comparative method of analysis (Glaser & Strauss, 1967) was applied to the individual transcripts as a method of coding and categorizing the data and to summarize the findings in meaningful ways. This process involved multiple and careful examinations of the data to identify key linkages, themes, and patterns which were used to analyze and interpret the qualitative data (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

## Results

Following the tradition of the phenomenological perspective, the researchers attempted to present the major themes regarding the impact of the recess packs from each of the participant's perspective. These final categories, in no particular order, are listed below:

1. The development and implementation of a “New P.E” curriculum.
2. The more successful inclusion of children with special needs.
3. Increased motivation levels in students and teachers.
4. A focus on interdisciplinary teaching in P.E.
5. Increased use of technology.
6. The P.E Teacher becoming a leader in the school.

## Conclusion

- The reception of the PEP grant highly influenced the physical education curriculums.
- The PEP Grant positively impacted the physical educators' ability to improve student learning and motivation as well as meeting individual student needs.
- The PEP Grant increased visibility and accountability of the physical education programs and teachers within and beyond the school environment.

## Implications

- Teacher education faculty, local school districts, and physical education teachers are highly encouraged to collaborate in seeking federal funding under the newly proposed reorganization and authorization of ESEA.
- It is essential that physical education teachers document changes that occur due to additional funding and support.
- The results of this investigation imply the need for continued professional development of physical education teachers' knowledge and practices for program improvement.
- Need more research on the impact of funding on physical education programs and the healthy lifestyle behaviors of school-aged learners.

