

April 21, 2012

Dear Mr. Smith,

I am writing in response to your email and want you to know I appreciate your concerns. I enjoy having your son John in my class. I admire his energy and his enthusiasm to learn. Let me begin by answering your inquiries as follows: Speed Stacks cups are not a required purchase. I would never make my students purchase any equipment for class. It is all provided for them.

As part of the curriculum, we are taking a few days in PE to learn Speed Stacking.

I have had several students and parents ask me if they could get some Speed Stack Cups for their home. The least expensive way for me to do this was to set up a group order so as to minimize the cost for those who want to participate. I sent home a flyer with each student to inform anyone who was interested and who wanted to participate in the order. The school has had the Speed Stacking Cups set for over five years. We have enough sets on hand for each child to use a set during class.

Speed Stacking is an activity that helps a student academically as well as physically.

Speed Stacking has done research to show how stacking improves fitness, self-esteem and academics. <http://www.speedstacks.com/about/benefits.php> explains the aspects of speed stacking as an activity and the benefits to the participants. On the bottom of the benefits page are several great articles on research and benefits of Speed Stacking.

During the Speed Stacking classes we do fitness movements integrated with the stacking. NASPE (National Association for Sport and Physical Education) states, "In a physical education class teachers involve all children in activities that allow them to participate actively, both physically and mentally." Speed Stacking meets 4 of the 6 National Standards for Physical Education.

Here are the National Standards for Physical Education.

- 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.

We have many activities at the school and Speed Stacking is one of them. The Speed Stacking activity does not cut out any other appropriate activity or sport. As a physical educator and a member of UAHPERD (Utah Association for Health, Physical Education, Recreation and Dance) and AAHPERD (American Alliance for Health, Physical Education, Recreation and Dance), I incorporate activities that benefit the students in health and fitness. We learn skills needed for a student to be able to play activities such as soccer, football, basketball, volleyball, field hockey, racquetball, yoga, dance and Frisbee. We learn movement skills to keep students active such as running, throwing, kicking, stretching, strength training, and other movements of the body. We learn about health issues including eating healthy, exercising, self-esteem, anti drug, and heart rate.

There are some activities that are not in the program, which may have been included several years ago. A few of these are kickball and dodge ball. Kickball is a great activity for friends at home or at recess. We learn the skills used in kickball. However there is only one ball and up to 36 students, depending on the class. Many students are not moving and get bored sitting around waiting for their one turn to kick the ball during a 30 minute class time. Around 2001 dodge ball was banned in many states, including the State of Utah school system. I do not teach, nor do we participate in this activity in our program. NASPE put out a statement on why dodge ball is not appropriate in the schools. I have attached their statement. Here is the link to find out more statements from NASPE about physical education. <http://www.aahperd.org/naspe/standards/PEPS.cfm>

I believe every person has the right to learn as much as they possibly can to be able to live a healthy lifestyle throughout their lifespan. Besides teaching students skills and giving them information in school on how to accomplish this, I set up an eight week healthy student challenge for the students, faculty and all of their families to incorporate at home. This is a voluntary challenge that incorporates healthy lifestyle choices we have learned in class. It is a progressive challenge that adds to the previous week without forgoing the previous learned habits. The following are included in this challenge.

Week 1 – drink at least 24 oz. (3 cups) of water a day or more. No caffeine drinks.

Week 2 – 30 minutes of aerobic exercise each day. (60 minutes a day is recommended for children)

Week 3 – eat 3 servings of fruits/vegetables each day

Week 4 – No sugar treats from the store or bakery, (homemade treats are encouraged instead)

Week 5 – at least 8 hours of sleep each night. (9 – 10 hours is recommended for children)

Week 6 – eat breakfast every day (it starts the brain and body moving for the day)

Week 7 – increase fruit/vegetable servings to 5 a day

Week 8 – practice a stress relief activity for 30 minutes each day.

We are starting week four on Monday. Many students, their families and teachers report these simple activities have already made a difference in their lives. If the information for this challenge did not make it home, it is available in the school newsletter emailed to parents, and we have many extra copies at the office. If you would like to participate in this challenge everyone is encouraged to join in at any time. It is never too late to be healthy. Even if a student struggles on one day or one week, they are encouraged to jump back in and not give up.

As you know, every student is different. They have different dreams, desires, and they all participate in different activities (depending on their interests). Many students will find an activity they love which, they have never tried before. Student will find something they are good at and become excited and ultimately excel during that particular activity. I want all of my students to know that they are successful; even if they are not an athlete. They have all been very successful this year and I believe that they will continue to succeed in all they do.

Thank you so much for inquiring. I am excited about our Physical Education program and hope you are excited as well about the benefits your son is getting from it. Next year will bring even more benefits for students as SPARK PE is incorporated into our program. The following link can assist in any questions you might have about SPARK PE.

<http://www.sparkpe.org/physical-education/>

I hope this answers your questions.

Thank you for your concern,

Mrs. Jones

*notes about response letter: (1) names were changed to protect student privacy, and (2) the NASPE position paper on dodgeball was attached to the letter